

“My ‘Word of Wisdom Blues’”

Garth N. Jones¹

Where lucidity reigns, a scale of values becomes unnecessary.

—Albert Camus²

MY DEAR GRANDDAUGHTER, DOLLY SRI, I knew you would cause me problems the first time I held you in my arms. My anxiety became real when I saw you win your first gymnastic meet. It heightened as I watched you walk across the stage as a junior prom princess. When you went to BYU as a freshman, I warned you about newly returned missionaries who

1. This essay underwent considerable soul searching and improvising. Although in my initial drafts I did not realize it, I was in a deep “Blue Mood.” As I pondered, re-read, and redrafted, I sank deeper into the dissonance of “My Melancholy Baby.” I finally discarded my simplistic thesis of a personal struggle with hardened doctrine and inflexible organizational practice. The issue was how to be honest with myself. Hence I retitled the essay, “My ‘Word of Wisdom Blues.’” Upon listening to my fifth version with the “Blues” theme, Marie, my wife of forty-six years, said, “I am beginning to understand you! However, you need to explain to the reader the ‘Blues.’” She went on to say, “Young Nate Brown is home from college. You should talk with him.” Nate Brown is a second-year student majoring in jazz music at Cornish College of the Arts, Seattle, Washington. He helped me immensely in the technicalities of jazz. His cassette tape, Leonard Bernstein’s *What Is Jazz* (Columbia Special Production, 1972), provided the contextual harmony of this personal essay.

Besides my wife, Marie, and neighbor, Nate Brown, I must thank several other people for their assistance. Lavina Fielding Anderson forces me to think in straightforward terms. I am grateful when she takes time out of her busy schedule to read and comment on my writing efforts which are foreign to my research pursuits on technical subjects such as design of population programs. My sons Edward, Kevin, and Drew listened to me, surprised with my revelations of past misdeeds, but still retained their good humor. Janet Burton, assistant to the dean, struggled with my drafts and helped in important ways. To these people and others not mentioned I give my thanks.

2. In Andre Hodeir, *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence*, trans. David Noakes (New York: Grove Press, 1956), 6.

fasted and prayed and through personal revelation knew that you were chosen for them. There were good reasons for their aggressive behaviors—two or more years of pent-up testosterone. You would be a disconcerting figure in their eternal salvation when in your saucy eighteen-year-old way you sauntered over the campus's remote by-ways.

When you were called on a mission, I gained a full measure of relief! You would be in a purgatory for eighteen months. Spanish-speaking El Paso, Texas, was a good place to confine a choice young girl with a good figure. You took it all in good stride and returned home a beautiful young woman. When you returned to BYU, "I woke in the morning with an awful headache, my" (only granddaughter had sped away).³ She was now her own person, playing her own tune of life. I was neither wholly sad nor wholly happy. I could only sing alone my blues. "What will be will be."

In quick time you accepted a returned missionary's proposal. With this act I was "Bout to Wail."⁴ I had not only lost my ski bunny, but your decision had ruined my "Word of Wisdom"! I can only express my exasperation with the Indonesian word, *Adu!* I resigned myself to a terrible fate. I cannot get a temple recommend and would not be able to attend your wedding! For I too often drink forbidden tea! I am one of the "weakest of all ... who are or can be called saints." These are the words of the long-gone apostle J. Reuben Clark, Jr., but in doctrinal intent they are stronger today than when he uttered them in 1935.⁵ I only wish that his contemporary, J. Golden Kimball, had said them. General conference attendees would have clearly understood his intent. Elder Kimball enjoyed his coffee. He'd be tolerant of tea drinkers, although not understanding why one would prefer tea over coffee—especially a sort of person like your grandfather who has a Scandinavian blood-line. Grandmother Sophronia Nell Nielson Jones Dubois believed that she had a special dispensation from those on high to drink her daily morning cup of coffee. She was a wise one because studies show that women who drink pure caffeinated coffee, say two to three cups a day, "are less likely to commit suicide than those who do not."⁶ Grandmother Dubois's life was full of terrible events. I am certain that her morning cup of coffee provided her moments of joy, giving her emotional strength to endure to the end.

3. Bernstein, *What Is Jazz?*

4. *Jazz Creations of Dizzie Gillespie*, American Recording Company, Jazz Division.

5. In Robert J. McCue, "Did the Word of Wisdom Become a Commandment in 1851?" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14 (Autumn 1981): 74. Note 50 states that these remarks were given at the *One Hundred and Sixth Semi-Annual Conference*, p. 92; compare Boyd K. Pack-er, "The Word of Wisdom: The Principle and the Promises," *Ensign* 26 (May 1996): 17-19.

6. "Don't Be Suicidal About Coffee or Cheating for Lent," *Salt Lake City Tribune*, 11 Mar. 1996, 1.

I never told you the reasons why I so sin. Several times tea saved my life, although these tea-drinking acts represented in Mormon tradition and faith a Faustian bargain. I've never been able to extricate myself from Mephistopheles's grip. He is a tough fellow who does not forget or forgive! Once in his control a multitude of other such sins will eventually occur. This fact should never be doubted!

I took my first step toward a fallen state in an innocent and ignorant way. In the month of March 1957 a group of tired foreign service officers escaped the humid heat of Jakarta, Indonesia, by fleeing to a weekend retreat at an old Dutch tea plantation. This was a great place since it had as well a citronella factory. There were absolutely no pesky or deadly mosquitos, if you can believe that.

At that retreat, mindful of my Mormon heritage, I drank Fanta, an orange drink, while others of the party consumed Heineken beer. Tea was also served, which I avoided. I returned home ill with a bad case of dysentery. My friends escaped unscathed. Over the next ten days I steadily got worse. A Texan M.D., Dr. Winfred Wood, who was in charge of the malaria eradication program, recommended that I drink tea. "I know that you are a Mormon," he said. "However, you must realize that tea has several powerful ingredients which will cure you." He mentioned them in technical language which I did not understand then or now. I just had a bad case of gastroenteritis and could not think very well. However, this should not be an excuse for my weak behavior. I was a person of little faith. I took his advice. I was so feeble that I could hardly hold in my trembling hands the first glass of hot tea filled nearly one-third with large grains of brownish sugar. At first I could take only small sips. Before the day was over I'd eaten a slice of toast dipped into the tea. The next day I ate two hard boiled eggs and one banana. After that I steadily progressed. It took me a full month to regain my strength.

From that dreadful experience I learned the medicinal value of tea. The Chinese sages were right! According to their ancient wisdom, tea drinking started in the year 2737 B.C. when a leaf from a tea plant accidentally fell into a pot of boiling water. I am surely thankful for that accident. And for the Dutch who in the mid-1600s introduced tea to my American forebears. Tea was a miracle drink! In my later wanderings across the far-flung Indonesian archipelago, I saw many a board front on Chinese stores touting the powerful health remedy of tea for disorders of the spleen, kidneys, heart, lungs, eyes, digestive tract, and gallbladder, and as a relief for colds and fevers. Tea as well was a great disease "pre-ventor."

For the next decade and a half living in poverty-stricken societies it was hot tea as much as anything else that preserved my health and well-being. My Mormon thought processes also underwent a transformation,

and possibly to the bad. I learned that there were two kinds of Saints, Liahona ones and Iron Rod ones. The former think and practice free agency and the second do the opposite (apologies to the late Richard D. Poll).⁷ This newly discovered and applied syncopation resuscitated as well as liberated my soul.

Let me explain. If you are going to relate with people you have to learn how to "break bread" with them. On this matter Apostle Paul had a difficult time with Apostle Peter. Kosher Peter could not bring himself to eat unclean food with uncircumcised gentiles (see Acts and Matt.). After much argumentation, with the Lord making a strong statement, Apostle Peter conceded his old beliefs and broke bread with worthy gentiles. By eating gentiles' unclean food, Peter opened the way for Christ's gospel to spread throughout history.

In Pakistan tea is the "social-broker." In most instances it is black tea, and often not of the best quality. Like their former British masters, Pakistanis enjoy their tea laced with milk and sugar. The milk I avoided, since it was usually not boiled and thus full of vicious microorganisms.

Black tea poured out of a hot teapot for me was frequently a great "protector" and "preservator," and in more ways than you will ever realize. Some of my most memorable experiences were sharing meals with tribal people, mainly Pathans, of the Northwest Frontier who at times can become very unfriendly and mean individuals. I've squatted with them on dirt floors covered with beautiful carpets eating with my right hand out of a large round tray loaded with warm food. Copious amounts of hot black tea were consumed which was served out of Imperial Russian-made china teapots undoubtedly stolen long ago from some Russian colonial officer. Under no circumstances would I ever abridge their hospitality. You could quickly be "done away with."

On one of these occasions a former British colonial officer informed me that as long as he drank lots of black tea he was never ill. The same applied to these people, even though they were very unhygienic. Except when they prayed at the mosque, I never saw a tribal man wash his hands. On the other hand, his toilet practices made good sense, although we Americans would believe them to be crude. They used only their left hand to assist in bodily "relief" and wiping their rear ends.

In my "Messing Around" (Ray Charles's rendition), I've discovered that there are many different kinds of tea, numbering into several thousands. For some reason in Mormon culture teas grown throughout Asia are *verboten*. The only explanation I've ever heard as to why this should

7. See his "What the Church Means to People Like Me" and "Liahona and Iron Rod Revisited," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 2 (Winter 1967): 107-17 and 16 (Summer 1983): 69-78. Also see his *History and Faith: Reflections of a Mormon Historian* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989).

be the case is that these teas contain a terrible chemical called caffeine! I quickly point out that green tea has no caffeine, so I've been told by good authority. I know that young missionaries in Korea feel free to drink it. My Chinese friends tell me that green tea particularly has a lot of wholesome qualities. It particularly assists in the digestive process after partaking of a heavy meal. I agree with them, especially when I've been served a combination of dog and snake meat. I believe that this was a consequence of the tea's powerful ingredient of *prussic acid*, which in *The Journal of Health*, published between 9 September 1829 and 25 August 1830, had been identified as the "most deadly of poisons." (On this matter I am indebted to Samuel W. Taylor and late BYU sagacious Professor M. Wilford Poulson.⁸)

In spite of the redeeming prussic acid I always refused to drink the blood of poisonous snakes mixed with their venom. My Chinese friends never understood why, since it can be a powerful A. For you I'll just use the letter A, and let you discover from experience what comprises the remaining letters of this forbidden word.

When I observe Mormon eating and drinking habits, I conclude that many in authority are hypocrites. Maybe I am wrong. Just possibly their behavior is correct. There may be found good caffees and bad caffees. Incidentally, I do not like the word caffeine. I prefer the term used by biochemists called xanthines which is a feebly based compound $C_5H_4N_4O_2$. Xanthines contain three closely related substances: caffeine, theobromine, and theophylline. Xanthines are found in cocoa, cola, coffee, and tea.⁹

Several days ago Grandmother Marie and I joined two good members of our ward for a noon Chinese buffet. I drank green tea, and our two friends drank two big glasses of Coke. They admitted that they were addicted to caffeine but preferred not to secure the drug from the forbidden drink. They were soon going off to a temple excursion! This is why I say that there may be good caffees and bad caffees. The green tea that I drank had no caffees. It was just considered bad.

What constitutes tea greatly disturbs me. Nearly every Utah Mormon has heard of Brigham's tea which was ordained by the prophet as good stuff. I hate it. As a child my mother would force me to drink the terrible liquid, especially if I had a bad cold. With a cup half full of sugar I could stomach it. I really have a sweet tooth, or better said sweet teeth, although now many teeth are missing.

I guess that Brigham's tea paved the way for the sanction of herbal teas. President Brigham was a shrewd businessman. Since his passing in

8. See Taylor's "The Closet Crusade of A. C. Lambert," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 28 (Fall 1995): 53.

9. See Clifford J. Stratton, "The Xanthines: Coffee, Cola, Cocoa, and Tea," *Brigham Young University Studies* 20 (Spring 1980): 371-88.

August 1877, I feel certain that he has had made several visitations to Zion to further certain business ventures.¹⁰ "Celestial Seasonings," the nation's leading manufacturer of herbal teas, undoubtedly is one of them. With his blessings this manufacturer extols the high medicinal virtues of its line of herbal teas—"featuring herbs, vitamins and enzymes, Echinacea, Extra Ginkgo Sharp, Detox A.M., Antioxidant Assurance, Diet Partner and steady stomach." These teas are readily available for people who wish "to treat their ailments with natural products."¹¹

I once had a secretary with strong Mormon persuasions who took seriously the health qualities of herbal teas. They would also save my soul. After a few sips of that bad-tasting stuff, I knew that these herbals would lead to my quick demise, and I had not yet experienced enough penance to have a clean spirit. To verify my suspicions, I contacted a fellow University of Alaska faculty member, John French, who was a bio-chemist. This young assistant professor had just completed a research project at the University of Utah on the toxicity of herbal teas. His findings revealed that not only did these herbal teas taste bad but they contained all sorts of toxicities. He warned me against drinking decaffeinated teas and coffees. To get rid of the caffeine the food processors use deadly chemicals.

I knew that herbal teas were bad, but I never realized how dangerous until I was enlightened by a recent marriage announcement in *The Anchorage Daily News*. I must protect my journalistic source by not citing it because one can quickly be pushed out into outer darkness by not giving full obedience to sustaining the authorities.

A former authority in our stake high council broke down and drank some herbal tea, which lead to some deviling behavior. I quote a few of the key words. "The couple met on a crisp fall evening, over a steaming cup of herbal tea at ... cafe ... The conversation flowed for hours and they developed a strong friendship." Both of the participants, so their marriage announcement read, held strong interest in the Bible.

After reflecting on this holy event, which for some individuals could be considered unholy, it becomes clearly evidenced that drinking herbal tea and reading the Bible, especially the Songs of Solomon, at the same time can lead to mischievous behavior. This is especially the case for men and women in their late thirties and early forties. In this instance the low cut of the lady's wedding dress may have possibly added to the ex-councilman's predicament. Think about it! All of this disruptive social behavior was caused by steaming cups of herbal tea that steamed them up. The

10. Full recognition is given to Samuel W. Taylor's observations as found in his *Heaven Knows Why?* 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: RIC Publishing, 1979).

11. See "Teas as Medicine?" *Anchorage Daily News*, 24 Jan. 1996, PE-2.

councilman abandoned his old wife and took to wife this new herbal-tea-drinking woman. Well, he was practicing the old but true doctrine of plural marriage as found in late-twentieth-century norm. "Mean and Evil Blues" is what this story is all about.

After reading this announcement and pondering a little, I informed your grandmother Marie not to worry about me. I am sticking to the genuine stuff. Besides, I still get guilt feelings. I do not read the holy scriptures while drinking the forbidden drink. Our marriage is safe along with being reinforced by our ages. Nevertheless, maybe I should try some herbal teas!

In Indonesia there is a popular tea called *Jamu*. Wives make sure that their husbands each morning and evening drink several cups. My research studies revealed that Indonesia could never bring its burgeoning population under control until this practice of drinking *Jamu* was greatly curtailed. I regard this as a major research finding!

Dolly Sri, I take seriously my Word of Wisdom blues, especially its primitive robustness as embodied in early funeral marches ("As the saints come marching home ..."). Here I regret to relate the following sad story. Thirty years ago a group of faculty members at the University of Southern California (USC) was holding a "working" breakfast at the faculty club. One of these members was an "Iron-Rodder" whom I'd known from my freshman years at Utah State University. He expressed great shock when I ordered my "digestive-saving" breakfast of a pot of black tea, two pieces of toast, one boiled egg, and one banana. He was particularly offended because I displayed such indiscrete behavior within this group of gentiles whom I must admit were not fond of Mormons. Over the next several years these individuals academically exterminated the Mormon faculty. This was before diversity and multiculturalism existed.

I quickly but firmly retorted to my apprehensive colleague: "Look, man. I'm in the prime of physical condition. I play handball three times a week with the ROTC faculty. I'm at my fighting weight of 152 pounds. Not one gentile has really beat me. What of you? You are at least 20 percent overweight." He was just fat, which he never lost until it was too late, passing over the great divide which for his age was way too soon. However, he held a temple recommend to the end.

When I think of the masses of people who are hungry, I cannot sing the blues. I angrily ask myself why don't the hefty ones take seriously Fast Sundays and shed their surplus pounds? I feel the same way about people who keep dogs and cats.

Your grandfather is a shrewd investor. However, my conscientious way will not permit me to invest in the rapidly growing pet-food market which now has annual sales over \$10 billion. In contrast a stagnant \$7 bil-

lion is spent for baby food.¹² Pet owners feed their critters well, while millions of children starve and die.

I really become steamed-up about the way hunters and hunting are treated in our faith. In my youth Utah was an armed camp during the fall deer hunting season. Public schools were closed under the guise that students needed to harvest sugar beets, even though many communities such as mine had no beet fields. In the winter months LDS Boy Scout troops by the droves invaded my Cedar Valley home to slaughter jack rabbits. Now and then they would get a cotton-tail rabbit which was considered to be suitable for eating. Jack rabbits were left for coyotes and foxes.

In Alaska you cannot be regarded as a man, and in some instances a woman, unless you have shot a moose and a caribou. Of course, if you have shot a brown bear and tracked down a dall sheep at a high elevation, you are instantaneously placed in an elite category of "humanhood." A number of my church friends believe in this nonsense. The Word of Wisdom on this matter is very clear: "Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are to be used sparingly; and it is pleasing unto me that they should not be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine."

I hold true to my strong aversion to hunting. I have no rifle. My 12-gauge shotgun has not been fired for over two and a half decades. It was last used seriously when I and several friends in the spring of 1968 responded to the request of a Pakistani village headman to eradicate a "swarm" of pigs which was destroying the farm fields. Incidentally, we failed—killing only one wild boar which was an ugly animal. In the law of the jungle, he got his "just due."

I have mixed reservations about doctrinal prohibitions on the use of "strong drinks," which are defined as those containing alcohol. I have tampered with forbidden beverages but usually for sound purposes.

During the late fall of 1959 and spring of 1960 I was living alone in Jogjakarta, in Central Java, Indonesia. Fortunately, an older couple who were like my surrogate parents, George and Afton Hansen, lived nearby. Professor Hansen was teaching at the University of Gadjah Mada, on leave from BYU. He was a remarkable scholar, a legend in his own time. Afton was equally esteemed.

I also held a professorship at this university along with several other assignments. Nearly every late afternoon the three of us would take long walks along a meandering stream. Sometimes we would stop at a village

12. See Jay Palmer, "Well, Aren't You the Cat's Meow? Like Never Before Americans Have Taken to Pampering Their Pets," *Barrons*, 1 Apr. 1996, 19-20, 34.

to listen to a gamelan orchestra and watch children practice their dancing. We were always courteously treated and served afternoon tea. One of our favorite places was a large ancient Chinese cemetery where we would silently wander around inspecting elaborate graves.

We usually tried to return home in time to watch the tropical sunset. On the veranda were invariably set three small glasses of red wine and a small basket of bread crusts. We'd slowly sip the wine and eat small pieces of the crust. I liked to dip my crust into the glass of wine. It was a quiet and wonderful time to meditate and listen to the jazz-like simplicity and subtlety of Javanese gamelan music.

Soon after your grandmother Marie returned to Indonesia, she learned of this afternoon ritual. I was in deep trouble! In a sobbing voice, she said: "I never thought you'd do such a thing. You and George and Af-ton are terrible people."

I could not stand to see my dear wife and your grandmother cry, so I sadly gave up this terrible but memorable ritual. I've now learned this was probably not a wise decision. Four years ago your father and your two uncles along with Grandmother Marie decided I was in bad shape. I do not know how they reached this decision. I'd seldom lost a racquetball game and had recently trounced your nineteen-year-old brother Matthew. At their urgings I went to a remarkable internist, Dr. John Hall. After a thorough examination he said my thyroid was low, which surprised me since I'm known as the family beaver. He recommended that I consume each afternoon a small glass of red wine to minimize the possibilities of a stroke or a heart attack. When he learned that I was a Mormon, he quietly nodded his head and said: "Too bad." From my recent readings I've learned that wine has medicinal qualities.¹³

What does the Word of Wisdom say in this regard? In searching the Doctrine and Covenants I was again confused. Part of the reason is that it is clear that wine should be used in the sacrament. Let me quote: "That inasmuch as any man drinketh wine or strong drink ..., behold it is not good, ... only in assembling yourselves together to offer up our sacrament before him. And, behold, this should be wine, yea, pure wine of the grape of the Vine, of your own make" (89:5-6).

These verses have qualities of poetic jazz. In the early days of the Utah church Brigham Young took seriously this revelatory charge. He sent a wine mission to St. George. The termination of this mission and the current substitution of water perplexes me. I am not the only perplexed person. I recently read a guest editorial where the writer's grandfather had written a letter to Apostle Ezra Taft Benson on this matter. In his

13. See "To Your Health," *Newsweek*, 22 Jan. 1996, 52-54, and "Wine may spare travelers from gastric distress," *Anchorage Daily News*, 1 May 1996, F-2.

words: "Why do we not use wine in the sacrament as Jesus instructed?" The grandfather received an answer "back from Elder Benson ... with an explanation including reference to D&C 27:2." This grandfather boldly wrote again to Apostle Benson, "pointing out, among other things, that D&C 89:5-6, which was given after Section 27, specifically allows wine to be used in the sacrament." No further exchange of letters occurred. However, this grandfather with his persistence caused a lot of trouble.¹⁴ So your grandfather will quickly depart from this perplexity. I am still thinking seriously about Dr. John Hall's prescription. However, I do not know how to deal with Grandmother Marie. George and Afton Hansen have long gone home; so I have no one in my circle of friends in the faith to share with me this once delightful ritual. It wouldn't be the same with gentiles who would take delight in corrupting me.

I must now put on my Liahona robes. Early Dutch colonials were rather stupid and hard-headed individuals. They could never understand the beauty of jazz. You could say they were steadfast in their Dutch Reform religious belief and, as a consequence, suffered a lot of cognitive dissonance along with other things. When they consolidated their rule over East Java in the late 1600s, they sought to replicate Amsterdam in their new city of Batavia, now Jakarta, West Java. What they created was a haven for tropical diseases, especially malaria. They died by the hundreds, several thousands, and finally several tens of thousands. In the early days a typical young Dutchman lived in his new home for only eighteen months which can easily be verified by visiting the old Dutch Reform church cemeteries. After countless deaths there were two unexpected developments that more than anything else saved and preserved the Dutch Far East empire—Heineken beer and ice.

My discovery of these two remarkable items came by accident. Now I can really sing the blues with jubilation. Professor George Hansen became a good friend of Jesuit priest Father Jugen. In time the three of us fossil hunters were exploring the river bed of the Solo River in Central Java. We especially searched the area where in 1891 Dr. Eugene Dubois found teeth, a femur, and a skullcap from which the much-disputed *Pithecanthropus erectus* or Java Man was determined.¹⁵ Later Dr. R. von Koenigswald undertook extensive surveys in the same river bottom. In the 1930s Koenigswald published extensively on early Neolithic man. We visited the same spot where the skull of his *Homo soloensis* was found, even discovering an old Javanese man who participated in the "dig."

After our searchings we'd retire to a primitive Chinese store which

14. See Christopher B. Rickett, "Questions," *By Common Consent*, Newsletter of the Mormon Alliance, 2 (Jan. 1996): 2.

15. See Fay Cooper-Cole, *The Peoples of Malaysia* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1945), chap. 2, "Prehistory."

usually had as well a cramped restaurant to partake of three-liter bottles of cold Heineken. During these visits gentle Father Jugen explained to George and me, members of the true faith, the amazing qualities of beer. The liquid was pure and contained valuable nourishments. Dehydration was a terrible scourge in the tropics. Beer minimized this cursed condition. Besides these "beneficences," it made one feel joyful.

Dr. George Hansen and I unequivocally accepted his studied opinion. Father Jugen was first a zoologist and second a theologian. He was a good scientist, grounded in chemistry as well as Dutch culture. I am not sure of his Catholicism, but skepticism runs deep in the Jesuit order.

During our conversations I recalled an experience which I had in Ponape, Eastern Carolines. In 1951 as assistant to the administrator, I found myself in charge of the district. I was twenty-six years old with little understanding as to what I should do. However, I had a good mentor and protector, a Boston Irish Catholic accountant by the name of O'Reilly.

Accountant O'Reilly informed me one day that things were bleak at the bachelors' mess. There was no beer, only hard liquor. If this deplorable situation did not soon change, I'd be faced with bad times. I might be shipping out Sea-B bodies. One body was recently removed from the refrigerator, a Lithuanian M.D., which caused some administrative problems. His wife insisted that her husband's remains be shipped some 1,000 miles to Guam, and with this act her "statelessness" would be transformed into refugee status. She could become an American citizen, even though she and her husband harbored Nazi ideals. She won out because the top administrators knew that we badly needed refrigeration space. However, I am not certain if she escaped from Jewish Nazi hunters. They were a diligent lot.

I followed O'Reilly's advice and canceled all mail scheduled on the weekly flight of the PBY amphibian plane. The pilot, Captain Duffy, another helpful Irishman, purchased with his own money several cases of beer. Soon after this near crisis there arrived unexpectedly from Australia a two-mast schooner loaded with many cases of Australian beer. Most of the hard booze I moved to a Japanese bunker. A few months later I left Ponape, without informing the Hawaiian manager of the bachelors' mess where it was stored. My good Mormon values were still in place. I held strong opinions about saving lost souls, even if I had to use subterfuge.

With Father Jugen's sound advice I added beer to my bug-free diet of tea, boiled eggs, toast, and bananas. I could now shout another hallelujah! In times of desperation I would frequent dirty Chinese restaurants where, unlike Indonesian food preparers, the cuisine was served on dirty but hot plates and the soup in stained but hot bowls. I'd drink copious

amounts of teas. I seldom got sick.¹⁶ The food was always delicious, especially the frog legs and sea-turtle steaks!

However, when all of my evolvment into greater and greater carnal sins was considered, it was the tea that I savored most. By this date I was a tea connoisseur. West Java was one of the leading tea-producing regions of the world. The seed of the *camellia sinensis* or tea plant was imported, or better stated, stolen, from China as early as 1826. By 1835 the first tea shipments were dispatched from Batavia. In the 1950s over one hundred varieties were being cultivated for export. I could have easily become a good tea plantation manager.

I believe that I owe one of my nine lives to ice. As you can gather, I've already used several of them. I'm possibly down to my ninth one.

In October 1957 I was lecturing at the Ministry of Home Affairs Academy at Malang, East Java, when I suddenly fell ill with raging fevers followed by intense chills. Every joint ached; my head was filled with ringing sounds; body fluids were being drained by dysentery. Nearly all the blues were driven out of me. I was losing my humanness.

My Chinese-Indonesian associate, Professor Tan, contacted his Chinese-Indonesian herbal doctor who immediately prescribed that my head and shoulders be "packaged" in ice. In his poor English, along with his weak knowledge of western medicine, he informed me that I had contacted dengue or blackwater fever which are two relatives of malaria. These two fevers often afflicted newly arrived occidentals—white-skinned, blue-eyed devils. Some malicious mosquito had infected me. My Yang-Yin, the two basic forces of the cosmos, were out of balance.

I did not appreciate his humor nor his treatment at that time. I didn't know what Yang-Yin was. I was so weak that I couldn't resist his cutting comments. He was a fervent Communist, the Chairman Mao variety. He didn't like white Americans who supported Chiang Kai-shek. Nevertheless, he had enough of the Hippocratic oath in him that he didn't want me to die, just suffer longer than necessary.

He and Dr. Tan were wasted in the 1965-66 abortive Communist coup. I wouldn't have wished that on either one, but several of my Indonesian associates were delighted about their untimely demise.

In my old-age wisdom I believe that all killing, no matter how strongly sanctioned by ideology and doctrine, priestly and secular authority, violates each of our timeless beings. There can be no blues on this score. The only emotion can be one of dark depression. Individuals who

16. As to this utility, see J. E. Spencer, *Asia East by South: A Cultural Geography* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1954), where, on p. 24, "Thus the very old Chinese customs of drinking hot tea and eating chiefly hot foods from the stove serve ... to prevent sickness."

kill or sanction or justify killing defile their own souls. They will surely have a difficult task in cleansing terrible pollutants out from their eternal essences. To even start they must face up squarely to their awful belief. In doing so they may just experience God's generosity—the greatest of all his gifts, the possibility to give and receive love. For these lost souls "Amazing Grace" would suddenly take on meaning.

I doubt that any of my old Indonesian associates opened their hearts to love. They were indoctrinated into the Muslim faith of fate and vengeance. The killings were justifiable under the fallacious reasoning that a few degenerate infidels were sacrificed to save the greater good of the Indonesian Republic. In my doctrinal thinking these two Chinese-Indonesians would still be around if they had known about the 12th Article of Faith. Yet I must acknowledge that in Indonesia's revolutionary madness there was little secular authority and law. As good Communists they wanted a new order of affairs, which was in effect a promised land.

After one week of ice treatment and consumption of hot teas, my Yang-Yin once again was brought into harmony. The Yang (red) or active male element in the form of hot tea regained its rightful position in relationship to Yin (black) or passive female element in the form of ice. During this raging struggle I lost ten pounds, and at that time in my life (thirty-two) I had few surplus pounds. But as promised in D&C 89 I was able to "run and not weary," "walk and not faint." The blessings of the herbal trained Chinese physician worked—along with my stubborn nature. At age thirty-two I was too young to be placed into outer darkness.

During my years in Asia I was never quite able to abide fully by the stricture found in the Word of Wisdom that follows: "All grain is ordained for the use of man and beast ... ," with a qualifier that "wheat for man, and corn for the ox, and oats for the horse." I am surprised that D&C 89 does not mention rice. Well, it is a grain, the most widely consumed throughout the world today.

Oats is the grain that I find interestingly so ordained "for the horse." Since childhood I've eaten almost daily oatmeal cereal except during my overseas years. Oatmeal is now being proclaimed as a miracle food. I guess I'll continue to eat it as if I were a horse, while singing my blues.

In that vast Mormon literature the reasons for the Word of Wisdom and its now doctrinal character have been exhaustively discussed.¹⁷ It is

17. See Lester E. Bush, Jr., *Health and Medicine Among the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), esp. 48-60, and "The Word of Wisdom on Early Nineteenth-Century Perspective," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14 (Autumn 1981): 46-65. In this same *Dialogue* issue, see Robert J. McCue, "Did the Word of Wisdom Become a Commandment in 1851?" 67-78, and Thomas G. Alexander, "The Word of Wisdom: From Principle to Requirement," 78-88.

no longer a sensible health code, and certainly not as it is practiced in daily Mormon life. It has lost its blues quality. A large percentage of the faithful is overweight; they eat the wrong foods; they do not adequately exercise.¹⁸ The Word of Wisdom has become a means to maintain a segmentation between Mormon and gentile worlds. The wisdom in the word has lost much of its relevancy. As found in Proverbs 4:7, "Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding."

I accept William Graham Sumner's notion that to "accept a doctrine and allow it to go on and grow, you will awaken some day to find it standing over you, the arbiter of your destiny, against which you are powerless, as men are powerless against delusions."¹⁹ A good illustration of what Professor Sumner had in mind may be found in the historical account of the Battle of Verdun in World War I. The French military fervently believed in the doctrine of *l'attaque à outrance*. The doctrine held that "every inch of terrain must be defended to the death," and, if lost, "regained by counter-attack, however inopportune." With their bayonets held low, courageous young Frenchmen by several hundreds of thousands charged into the murderous fire of enemy machine guns.²⁰ The young men were "powerless against delusions." Songs of blues cannot be rendered under such dark circumstances. I hear only terrible dirge-like sounds.

I have heard individuals in positions of high authority articulate with authority that the mantle is greater than the intellect. My retort has been: "It all depends." One time I found myself seething with anger when a good Pakistani friend informed me that he met a Mormon in Karachi who would not accept his hospitality of drinking a cup of tea. My Pakistani friend informed this individual that he knew a good man, a Mormon, who drank tea with him and ate as well his food. The individual angrily responded: "Your friend is not a Mormon!" Well, let time be the judge. After thirty years my name as a good Mormon is still remembered in Pakistan. I can sing the blues while the bigot was never given the opportunity. He was quickly reduced to a non-person.

In bringing my soul searchings to an end, I fortunately find myself able to sing the blues in several ways. In maintaining my character and integrity, securing a temple recommend still poses problems. It is not a

18. See Kristen Rogers, "How Healthy Are We? Are Mormons' Claims ... Exaggerated?" *This People* 10 (Fall 1989): 11-19.

19. See his "War" in Albert Galloway Keller, ed. and comp., *War and Other Essays of William Graham Sumner* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911), 7.

20. See Alistaire Horne, *The Price of Glory: Verdun 1916* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962), esp. 10-14.

simple issue of giving up my morning cup of tea. It is one of exercising my full share of intelligence within my God-given right of free agency. Life can be fully lived only by living as a complete player, which can be accomplished only by a lot of improvisation. As the gospel reads: "There is opposition to all things." In the words of Boris Pasternak, in his poem "Hamlet," "Life is not a walk across the field."²¹ To progress, let alone survive, each individual must take that walk of life alone. The Word, if it is read fully and applied correctly, will ease the pain and enlarge the joy of each precious step. Here is to be found that great message of the blues in its various colorations, and they can be no better expressed than in the performance of the late Louis Armstrong's "I can't give you anything but love ..."

My terrible blues is that I do not wish to lie to gain entrance into the House of the Lord. I do not want to become a hypocrite. I am relatively comfortable with myself. I seek to live the word of Christ in loving relationships to the best of my ability. I am intensely a private person, jealously guarding my privacy. I dislike anyone who attempts to invade it. The Lord shall be my spiritual judge, now and later, and no one else. There should be only one question asked by those individuals who control the temple gates: "Are you worthy?" My response could only be: "I am trying."

It is the trying, the courage to act, that makes the Word of Wisdom such a remarkable revelation. Its promises are not to be found in "thou shalt not do as I say" but rather in "thou shalt do as you perceive." Your body is a gift of God, a temple for your soul. God gave you a fair share of intelligence, and he expects you to use it. Blind faith will surely push you or anyone else into the pits of disaster. The Word of Wisdom urges one to think! As you enter into your marriage, you will be called upon to think and act as never before in your life. You will succeed in your marriage only to the extent that you and your husband will learn to freely give of yourselves and freely sacrifice, that you fully understand the covenants you make and abide by. These are the true meanings to be found in the Word of Wisdom which are all wrapped up in the amazing grace of love.

In the final words of my second language, Indonesian, I bid you *Selamat Jalan*, a safe journey.

P.S. Granddaughter Dolly Sri was married on Friday morning, the eighth of March 1996, to Peter Douglas Pixton. The marriage was solemnized in the Bountiful temple. Several weeks later I listened to "Happy Blues," a rendition of Buck Clayton's small jazz combo with Nat Pierce on the piano. Lucidity!

21. See Nobel Prize Library, *Boris Pasternak ...* (New York: Alexis Gregory; Del Mar, CA: CRM Publishing, 1971), 235.