

with the evidence. Certainly the idea that any revelation has both a human component and a divine component seems non-threatening. In fact, D&C 1 (Marquardt Document 73) supports such an idea: "these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding." The inspiration is from God, but the language is of man, and fallible. The difficulty is that many see revelation as 99.9% God and .1% man. The textual tradition of the Doctrine and Covenants shows that the human component in Joseph Smith's revelations is much higher than that and, thus, that even documents headed "Thus saith the Lord" have time-and-place-specific cultural and historical perspectives. Howard writes, "If the total meaning of revelation is beyond human comprehension, then it follows that any attempt to express this imperfect understanding also will be less than perfect. . . . Scrip-

tures reflect the growth of the prophets and of the faith communities to which they minister. Couched in human language, they reflect patterns of thinking and life of the places and times in which they were written" (p. 215). Such a view is not an attack on revelation; it is a defense of revelation, granted the complexity of the documentary and historical evidence.

Marquardt has produced an extremely interesting, valuable, and important book. Certainly, there is room for discussion and disagreement on specific details in interpretive sections of this book. But *The Joseph Smith Revelations* is easily the most important book on the Doctrine and Covenants now available. It is a key book for understanding Joseph Smith's revelatory process. It will be the essential reference book on that scripture for years, and no Mormon, or serious student of Mormonism, should be without a copy.

## The Dangers of Missionary Work

*Evil Among Us: The Texas Mormon Missionary Murders*, by Ken Driggs (Salt Lake City, Signature Books, 2000), 210 pp., \$19.95 paper.

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On a quiet Monday evening in 1974, two Mormon missionaries visited a Texas trailer house—oddly situated behind a taxidermy shop—at the invitation of the occupant, Bob Kleason, an inactive member of the church. Instead of a pleasant family home evening, perhaps consisting of dinner

and gospel conversation, Kleason shot the two young men at close range and dismembered their bodies with the taxidermist's bandsaw. His action was not motivated by personal animosity toward the missionaries, Gary Darley from California and Mark Fischer from Milwaukee; rather, he was angry in general at church members for their lack of support during a recent jail term he had received for felony theft.

The paranoid Kleason was 42 years old at the time of the murders, with a long history of unstable and violent behavior. In spite of earning a college degree in sociology, he had never maintained a job, a marriage, or

a stable lifestyle. He had been interested in the LDS church for many years, questioning missionaries near his New York home and even disrupting a Denmark congregation by his attempts to pass himself off as a member. In 1973, he was finally baptized, although he rarely attended meetings. Within weeks of the event, local leaders were warned by general authorities in Salt Lake City of the deceptive and violent behavior he had exhibited while living among other Mormon congregations. Nevertheless, members and missionaries continued to attempt to "love him into the church" in spite of witnessing his recurring displays of anger. To a former missionary he wrote: "few thought of me when I begged for help, now I listen to no one, I go for the kill. . . I am going after all my oppressors with vengeance. . . I have learned to hate. . . I want BLOOD" (pp. 86-87). Within days of this warning, the two missionaries were dead.

Ken Driggs, an attorney who specializes in the death penalty, has written a comprehensive account of these tragic murders, including an update on the current and worrisome activities of the murderer. His text is lawyerly, expressing his knowledge and fascination with the legal maneuverings of the case, though his style is plodding and somewhat lifeless. He never pulls the reader into the internal perspective of the perpetrator, or of the victims, as do great true-crime writers like Ann Rule, nor does he illuminate the story with gossipy, personal detail as is done so effectively by Dominic Dunne. Nevertheless, one cannot help but be jolted by the pointless and meaningless infliction of misery revealed in Driggs's chronicle.

The reader is provoked to wonder why church members and missionaries continued to visit such an obvi-

ously psychotic individual. At Kleason's trial, a witness was asked that very question: "If Kleason was such a scary guy, why did you keep visiting him?" The witness responded foolishly: "I'm a member of the Mormon church, he is a member, and I was trying to fellowship him along with the missionaries" (p. 148). This example of how readily members accepted the task of fellowshipping dangerous felons creates a picture of Mormons as credulous and easily duped, making the motto "every member a missionary" a bad joke.

The gullibility of young, unsophisticated and unschooled missionaries, fascinated by guns and romantic adventures, is more easily understood than the absence of responsible leadership in this tragedy. Kleason spun stories portraying himself as a wronged ex-CIA agent, former test pilot, big-game hunter and expert gun owner. His thrilling tales of defecting from the CIA due to his dissent about the Vietnam War and then becoming a target for assassination by his ex-employers are guaranteed to enthrall twenty-year-old boys, but they should have been seen as fiction by an older, more skeptical and experienced audience. It is a shame that the settled, adult church members and leaders fell for his act, providing no guidance to the youngsters.

Of course, Kleason is not the first Mormon to cook up such a dramatic new identity to aggrandize himself among his acquaintances. More than one character in the church has invented ties to the FBI or the CIA. It is an effective way to fool their LDS peers, since the CIA rarely provides hard evidence to prove or disprove the identities of their undercover operatives. One strange example occurred some years ago in a BYU ward where