

paragraphs that cover the concept of “foreordination” in the Bible and the eight that cover it in nineteenth-century American Christianity, including Mormonism, and be left with the vague sense that there must have been more to it than this. And indeed, there is.

Harrell’s book is representative of a long stream of works in Mormon theology. Deep attention here is paid to the familiar voices: Joseph Smith, Orson and Parley Pratt, James E. Talmage, and Bruce R. McConkie. Mormonism is contextualized in a rather oversimplified, early nineteenth-century American evangelicalism. The language of theology is used haphazardly by authors as well as by those Mormon thinkers they study. There is little effort to systematize Mormon doctrine or to relate its changes to deeper developments in Mormon culture, American culture, or to the context of American Christianity more generally in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The value of this sort of work should not be downplayed, and I want to stress that I believe Harrell’s work will be useful in any number of ways to scholars of the future. But Mormon historiography is changing, and Harrell’s work is monumental for reasons other than those which now seem most pressing.

Inside the “Loyal Opposition”

Philip Lindholm, ed. *Latter-day Dissent: At the Crossroads of Intellectual Inquiry and Ecclesiastical Authority*. Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011. 236 pp. Notes, index. Paperback: \$24.95. ISBN: 1589581288

Reviewed by Stephen McIntyre

Few books convey the pain and poignancy of Mormon ecclesiastical discipline as compellingly as *Latter-day Dissent: At the Crossroads of Intellectual Inquiry and Ecclesiastical Authority*, a newly published paperback from Greg Kofford Books. The volume is the product of editor Philip Lindholm’s conversations with several prominent Mormons whose writings and speeches have provoked the ire of the LDS Church. While these dissidents’ recollections and reflec-

tions take center stage in *Latter-day Dissent*, Lindholm uses their stories to advance a reinterpretation of Mormon intellectual history. In his telling, opposing intellectual traditions—one advocated by the LDS hierarchy, the other by lay scholars and activists—arose during the latter half of the twentieth century. The irreconcilability of these philosophies led to the purge of the 1990s, when the LDS Church began disciplining the most outspoken constituents of its “loyal opposition.”¹ Though Lindholm expresses hope that the future will bring greater tolerance of dissenting voices, his interviews provide little basis for optimism.

Philip Lindholm is probably not a household name among even the savviest of Mormon readers. The holder of a doctorate in philosophical theology from Oxford, Lindholm has an impressive (and eclectic) resume. He has produced documentaries for the BBC, studied acting, and contributed to the books *Metallica and Philosophy* and *Poker and Philosophy*. He has presented on Mormonism at the Sunstone Symposium and at Cambridge University. Lindholm himself is not a Mormon, but LDS readers may not pick up on this. The ease with which he converses on Mormon topics reflects a deep familiarity with Mormon theology, thought, and culture.

Latter-day Dissent is a collection of interviews that Lindholm conducted with several outspoken Mormons who have undergone ecclesiastical discipline. The book’s primary subjects are the “September Six”—the group of feminists and intellectuals whom the LDS Church excommunicated or disfellowshipped in September 1993. The book contains lengthy discussions with five September Six alumni: Lynn Kanavel Whitesides, Paul James Toscano, Maxine Hanks, Lavina Fielding Anderson, and D. Michael Quinn. Avraham Gileadi, the lone September Six excommunicant to formally return to the fold, declined Lindholm’s interview request. Lindholm also sat down with Janice Allred, Margaret Toscano, and Thomas Murphy, each of whom was disciplined—or, in Murphy’s case, threatened with discipline—subsequent to September 1993. The volume concludes with a dialogue between Lindholm and Donald Jessee, a former bishop, stake president, mission president, and a “former employee” of the Church’s Public Affairs Department. (Lindholm was referred to Jessee after sev-

eral interview requests with General Authorities were denied.) Each interview took place in 2003 or 2004.

Lindholm's stated purpose in conducting and publishing the interviews is to "collect [the dissidents'] ongoing stories, compare their reflections, and assess the implications" (ix). To facilitate this goal, each chapter is divided into topical sections ("Excommunication," "Reflection," and "Belief and Doctrine," to name a few), most of which are consistent from interview to interview. Lindholm repeats a number of questions across chapters as well. This organizational and substantive consistency highlights both striking variance and unexpected similarity in the interviewees' experiences. While Paul Toscano, Maxine Hanks, and Lavina Fielding Anderson have pursued markedly different religious paths since September 1993—Toscano confides that he has "lost [his] faith," Hanks recounts her journey to Gnosticism, and Anderson poignantly describes serving as "permanent substitute organist" in her local ward's Relief Society (43, 61, 78–79, 96)—each received a profound spiritual witness prior to being excommunicated. In "what seemed like a remnant of a dream," Toscano was visited by four heavenly messengers, who informed him that he would be excommunicated; he was summoned to a Church court that very day (26). A "divine feminine figure" appeared to Hanks in a series of dreams in 1993; though Hanks "saw what was coming and longed to avoid it," she knew her excommunication would serve a purpose (61–62). In the spring of 1993, Anderson received "a very clear answer" to prayer: that she would be excommunicated in September, and that "it would be 'some time' before [she] would be reinstated" (90). The spiritual fortitude with which the dissenters approached and coped with their disciplinary proceedings is one of *Latter-day Dissent's* major themes.

Another conspicuous—and unnerving—parallel between chapters is the sobering terms with which the interviewees describe the disciplinary process. Thomas Murphy, whose stake president abruptly halted disciplinary proceedings when they began to attract media attention, states that facing Church discipline "hurt a lot more than I ever thought it would. I really felt rejected. . . . Excommunication is a more powerful weapon than I ever realized" (201). Paul Toscano similarly acknowledges that "the pain of . . . excommunication did turn out to be greater, different, and

prolonged, and it seeped into me more deeply than I thought it would have. Excommunication is terrifying” (48). Margaret Toscano likens her excommunication to physical punishment: “What they did to me in the disciplinary council was violent” (176). (Elsewhere in her interview, she states, perhaps inadvertently, that she knew she was going to be “executed” [168].) Though necessarily one-sided—as Donald Jessee reminds us, because the LDS Church does not publicly comment on individual disciplinary actions (215)—the interviewees’ accounts effectively communicate the tragedy of ecclesiastical discipline. Regardless of how one feels about the particular excommunications at issue in *Latter-day Dissent*, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Church discipline should be approached with sobriety, executed with an eye toward compassion and fairness, and reserved for extraordinary circumstances.

As enlightening as these conversations are, *Latter-day Dissent* is not merely a series of interview transcripts. Lindholm proposes a reinterpretation of twentieth-century Mormon intellectual history and portrays his subjects as living proof of his thesis. In his introduction, Lindholm posits that beginning in the mid-twentieth century, two divergent ideological currents arose in Mormonism: the “dialogical movement” and “correlational movement.” Lindholm traces the dialogical movement to the advent of the New Mormon History. As Fawn Brodie, Juanita Brooks, Sterling McMurrin, Brigham D. Madsen, and other scholars introduced academic training and rigor to the study of Mormonism, “an alternative perspective rooted in a spirit of free inquiry” began to take hold in LDS thought (xiii). The correlational movement was the LDS Church’s institutional response to this trend. The Church established a Correlation Committee in 1961 to standardize Church teachings and programs; and by 1987, Correlation Department approval was required for all Church publications. During these decades, the Church took action to limit the influence of LDS intellectuals, including removing Leonard J. Arrington (a professional scholar) from his position as official Church Historian in 1981.² In the face of institutional antagonism from the 1960s onward, “frustrated scholars and intellectuals . . . evolved into a group with values antithetical to those of correlation” (xiv). The establishment of *Dialogue* (1965) and *Sunstone* (1974) during this

period provided organized forums for uncorrelated Mormon thought. According to Lindholm, the growing conflict between the correlational and dialogical movements culminated in the discipline of the September Six.

The problem with the dialogical movement, however, was not simply its emphasis on free inquiry and academic rigor. The main problem was its publicity. The movement's constituents did not merely hold unorthodox opinions, but shared (even advocated) them openly in magazines and academic journals, and at symposia and other gatherings. This leads to Lindholm's central thesis in *Latter-day Dissent: The September Six* and other dissidents "were not expelled for having personal concerns or scholarly disagreements, but for sharing them in public" (xiv). LDS leaders' insistence that those with alternative views keep quiet or face official discipline, he says, has resulted in an "ideological vacuum" within the institutional Church, in which the presence of diverse and competing views is not even acknowledged (xxiii).

And Lindholm's interviews, in large measure, support this proposition.³ Janice Allred's excommunication provides a case in point. In 1992, the Provo mother of nine presented a paper, "Toward a Mormon Theology of God the Mother," at the Sunstone Symposium. Shortly thereafter, Allred's stake president called her into his office and informed her that, as a result of the speech, Church headquarters had requested that he investigate her. After several more meetings, he instructed her to not publish the paper. Though Allred had no immediate plans to publish it, she said she would notify him if she later chose to do so. When she accepted an offer in early 1994 to publish the paper in *Dialogue*, she planned to notify her stake president just prior to its release; but as it happened, he caught wind of the pending publication before she contacted him. The stake president demanded that she withdraw the article; she refused, and her bishop scheduled a disciplinary council in response. At the Church court, the bishop threatened to excommunicate Allred unless she agreed not to publish a more recent presentation she had given on prophetic fallibility. When she refused, he placed her on formal probation.

Throughout the disciplinary process, Allred kept in contact with the press, doing several radio and television interviews. "The publicity, in and of itself," she says, "became an issue" (140).

Her priesthood leaders became “increasingly upset” with Allred’s public statements and continued presentations (she participated at both the Sunstone Symposium and Counterpoint Conference in 1994), culminating in the scheduling of a second disciplinary council (142–43). This proceeding again centered on Allred’s unwillingness to abide by her bishop’s and stake president’s gag order: In refusing to submit her speeches and writings for prior approval, her priesthood leaders reasoned, she had committed apostasy—even though Allred’s case did not clearly fit within the definition of “apostasy” then mandated by the *General Handbook of Instructions* (143–44).⁴ The bishop excommunicated Allred, just before Mother’s Day 1995.

For his part, former Church spokesperson Donald Jessee does little to controvert Lindholm’s argument. If anything, he endorses it—repeatedly. In the book’s final chapter, Jessee emphasizes that Church members “can think anything they want, and . . . believe anything they want, so long as they keep it to themselves” (225); that members may “speculate all [they] want on any issue or topic as long as [they] keep to [themselves] those matters that are not in harmony with truth and the Church and its teachings” (219); and that it “violates the teachings of the Church” to publicly teach or philosophize about theological issues about which “both the prophets and the scriptures are silent,” such as the doctrine of Mother in Heaven (218). While Jessee is reticent when asked about specific cases, he makes little effort to mask his contempt for dissenters. To him, Church critics are morally suspect individuals whose public disagreement with the Church “lead[s] members astray and destroy[s] faith in God” (218). Whereas many of Lindholm’s interviewees maintain that ecclesiastical discipline is justified only in cases of serious crime or abuse, if at all (e.g., 16, 39, 62, 151). Jessee speaks of contradicting the Church in the same breath as murder, sexual sin, crime, abortion, and idol worship (213–14, 215, 219). Jessee personifies the hostility that *Latter-day Dissent*’s other subjects ascribe to the LDS Church itself.

Brother Jessee’s over-the-top rhetoric makes him an easy target—and something of a straw man. Although the chapter begins with a disclaimer that Jessee does “not speak for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on any issues,”⁵ as the Church’s sole defender in *Latter-day Dissent*, it is tempting to impute his

rigid views to that institution. Lindholm himself succumbs to this trap, fallaciously (and a bit carelessly) equating Jessee with “the Church” in the introduction (x, xxiii). That said, scholars like Lindholm face a dilemma in approaching the September Six and similarly sensitive topics: so long as LDS Church leaders refuse to speak out in an official capacity, their scholarship remains vulnerable to the criticism of being “one-sided.” In declining to comment, General Authorities pass the buck; they avoid taking responsibility for the Church’s actions, while reserving the prerogative of disclaiming those who, like Jessee, undertake the (sometimes unenviable) task of defending the Church’s past. No, Jessee does not officially represent the Church, but it is difficult to imagine a General Authority being any more willing to acknowledge ecclesiastical error in the September Six trials.⁶ Lindholm deserves credit for including an apologetic foil to his unorthodox subjects.

Latter-day Dissent makes an invaluable contribution to the literature on dissent in Mormonism. The volume is not as scholarly as previous works,⁷ but it showcases, with minimal editorializing, the stories of some of the most prominent Mormon dissidents of the past two decades. Lindholm is a skilled interviewer, delicately prompting his subjects to relive difficult experiences while respectfully interjecting challenging and thought-provoking questions. That at least one of Lindholm’s subjects has at times expressed reluctance to comment on his excommunication heightens *Latter-day Dissent*’s value.⁸

The book’s major shortcoming is that it already feels dated. Whereas the September Six excommunications occurred nearly two decades ago, Lindholm conducted most of his interviews at the ten-year anniversary. Lindholm leaves his readers wondering how his subjects would reflect on their disciplinary proceedings today. And except for a brief acknowledgement of the rise of Mormon-themed blogs and the increased acceptance of Mormon studies within the academy (xxiii–xxiv), *Latter-day Dissent* does little to situate controversies involving intellectual inquiry and dissent in the context of present-day Mormonism.

If the correlational and dialogical movements culminated in the crackdown of the late twentieth century, how will intellectual inquiry and religious dissent fare in twentieth-first-century Mor-

monism? Over the past decade, the Church has taken a more conciliatory tone toward professional Mormon academics; one of its official historians even co-authored (with a BYU professor and a headquarters Historical Department employee) a serious scholarly work on the Mountain Meadows Massacre.⁹ And yet, while we have not seen the type of centrally orchestrated, en masse excommunications that occurred in September 1993, intermittent controversies involving outspoken Mormons underscore the LDS Church's continued ambivalence toward its "loyal opposition."¹⁰ The Church and the academy may very well be at a "crossroads"; perhaps the Church really is becoming reconciled with "the vibrant scholarship being produced within its own walls" (xxiv). But then, as Lindholm concedes—and as his interview with Donald Jessee portends—"Perhaps not" (xxv).

Notes

1. At the August 1993 Sunstone Symposium, Levi Peterson presented a paper entitled "The Art of Dissenting among the Mormons," in which he asserted that an "unorganized loyal opposition has always existed within the Mormon church." These "friendly dissenter[s]," Peterson explained, "provid[e] an inside, corrective criticism without which an organization becomes spiritually inert." Levi S. Peterson, "The Art of Dissenting among the Mormons," *Sunstone*, February 1994, 33, 37. The "September Six" crackdown ensued the following month. At October general conference the next month, Apostle James E. Faust stated: "In some legislative assemblies of the world, there are some groups termed the 'loyal opposition.' I find no such principle in the gospel of Jesus Christ." James E. Faust, "Keeping Covenants and Honoring the Priesthood," *Ensign*, November 1993, <http://lds.org/general-conference/1993/10/keeping-covenants-and-honoring-the-priesthood> (accessed June 30, 2011).

2. For more on Arrington's tenure as Church Historian, see Leonard J. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

3. Paul Toscano may be the exception. Both he and his wife Margaret admit that his excommunication probably owed more to the flippancy, irreverence, and insults that he directed at his priesthood leaders than to his scholarship (23, 26, 160–61).

4. Under the 1989 edition of the *General Handbook of Instructions*, the following acts constituted apostasy: "(1) repeatedly act[ing] in clear, open, and deliberate public opposition to the Church or its leaders; (2)

persist[ing] in teaching as Church doctrine information that is not Church doctrine after being corrected by their bishops or higher authority; or (3) continu[ing] to follow the teachings of apostate cults (such as those that advocate plural marriage) after being corrected by their bishops or higher authority.” Quoted by Faust, “Keeping Covenants and Honoring the Priesthood.”

Allred states that she “never claimed to be giving official Church doctrine” (142); and although she did publicly take on the issue of prophetic fallibility, one would not ordinarily consider public disagreement to constitute “clear, open, and deliberate public opposition.” But then, Church leaders have seldom drawn a distinction between disagreement and disloyalty. As Apostle M. Russell Ballard stated in 1999, “One is either for the kingdom of God and stands in defense of God’s prophets and apostles, or one stands opposed.” M. Russell Ballard, “Beware of False Prophets and False Teachers,” *Ensign*, November 1999, <http://lds.org/general-conference/1999/10/beware-of-false-prophets-and-false-teachers> (accessed June 30, 2011).

5. The disclaimer states in full: “The statements that follow are my own opinions. I am not speaking for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on any issues, including the issues below. Only the Church president speaks for the Church” (209).

6. In a rare example of a General Authority discussing the September Six, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles told Helen Whitney, director of the PBS documentary *The Mormons*, that “we don’t discipline people in this church for very much. In a church of over 12 million people, I keep hearing about the September Six.” He explained that the Church has historically been “very, very generous”; but when members cross certain lines—“chief among these is the issue of advocating against the church”—the Church “cannot retain its identity and still allow that.” “The Mormons,” Interviews: Jeffrey Holland, <http://www.pbs.org/mormons/interviews/holland.html> (accessed June 13, 2011).

7. To cite but one example, Bryan Waterman and Brian Kagel’s *The Lord’s University: Freedom and Authority at BYU* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998) provides a meticulously researched examination of the events and controversies surrounding the 1990s crackdowns.

8. Both John Dehlin and John Larsen, producers of the “Mormon Stories” and “Mormon Expression” podcasts, respectively, have indicated that D. Michael Quinn has declined their interview requests. “186–187: Mormon Stories Broadcasts Live with John Larsen and You!”, <http://mormonstories.org/?p=1109> (accessed June 13, 2011).

9. Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley, and Glen M. Leonard, *Mas-*

sacre at Mountain Meadow: An American Tragedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Richard E. Turley is the LDS Church's Assistant Church Historian.

10. Former LDS Institute teacher Grant Palmer was disfellowshipped in 2004 for publishing *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002). In 2008, Peter and Mary Danzig, both members of the Orchestra at Temple Square, resigned their membership in the Church after Peter was threatened with excommunication for publicly criticizing the Church's stance on homosexuality. Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Fallout from Debate over Gays Leads Musician to Leave LDS Church," *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 24, 2008, <http://archive.sltrib.com/article.php?id=8345693&itype=NGPSID> (accessed June 13, 2011).

A Missionary Model Misapplied

Reid L. Nielson. *Early Mormon Missionary Activities in Japan, 1901–1924*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010, 214 pp. Photographs, endnotes, bibliography, and index. Paperback: \$29.95. ISBN: 978-0-87480-989-3

Reviewed by Andrew R. Hall

Reid L. Nielson, the managing director of the LDS Church History Department, takes as his topic a relatively small and limited chapter in early twentieth-century Mormon history but uses it to tell a larger story that goes beyond Mormon studies. From the time the Japanese Mission opened in 1901 until its closure in 1924, the number of missionaries never rose above 1 percent of the total LDS missionary force, and their results were meager. Yet in one short book, Nielson not only fully analyzes the Mormon efforts in Japan but also deftly describes the range of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American Mormon views of Asians, analyzes the nature of worldwide Mormon missionary efforts, and places those efforts within the context of the larger Christian milieu.

The LDS Japanese Mission was active for only twenty-three years, with a total of fewer than ninety missionaries sent over from the United States. They managed to baptize 166 Japanese converts, but few remained in the faith community for long; and by