"I Will Sing to the Lord": Women's Songs in the Scriptures

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The scriptures include many references to creative women. Hannah and Dorcas created treasured textiles (1 Samuel 2:19; Acts 9:39), but we don't know what those garments looked like. Sarah created memorable meals for her guests (Genesis 18:6), but we don't know her recipes. The daughters of the Lamanites danced in delight (Mosiah 20:1), but no technology could capture their creative whirl. So most of the results of women's creative efforts have been lost to history. But one form of women's ingenuity has survived: contained within the canon itself are several examples of women's sacred songs. This paper will explore some of these songs; we'll see that sacred songs have been a central venue for women's theological activity.

We begin with Miriam. After crossing the Red Sea, Miriam the prophet[1] took a small drum, danced, and sang: "Sing[2] ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea" (Exodus 15:21). That's not a long song.[3] But it is enormously significant. The story of the Exodus begins with Miriam's actions beside the waters that hold her helpless baby brother,[4] and the story ends with Miriam again beside the waters, this time celebrating Moses' victory over the waters. Rescue from the waters and the centrality of Miriam's words are

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key elements in both stories.[5] So Miriam bookends the Exodus story. This brief song is also theologically provocative: it was typical for women to greet their men with praises when they returned victorious from battle (e.g., 1 Samuel 18:7), but in this case it is not a human army but the Lord of Hosts whom Miriam praises. By subverting expectations, Miriam makes a profound and profoundly theological statement.

It is significant in another way as well, which gets to the heart of the matter of women's involvement with sacred song. The biblical tradition suggests that there was something along the lines of tripartite leadership during the Exodus, with three people called "prophet": Moses, Miriam, and Aaron; they are remembered later in the Bible as a leadership unit (Micah 6:4). A distinction can be made between early worship led by Aaron, resulting in the unfortunate incident with the golden calf (see Exodus 32), and the worship led by Miriam, who set the precedent for worshipful song and dance. J. Gerald Janzen writes,

> If Miriam and Aaron are the first two cultic leaders in Israel's celebrations of the Exodus, then Israel's centuries-long tendency to accommodate cultic idolatry is given its exemplar in Aaron the priest, while the countervailing impulse for true worship of the God of the Exodus is given its exemplar and prototype in Miriam, who in such a context is, significantly, identified as "the prophetess."[6]

With both Aaron's calf and Miriam's song, there is a festive, worshipful atmosphere of dancing, but Aaron's includes idolatry while Miriam's focuses on words of praise to the Lord.

Central to Miriam's song is that she, a mere slave woman, is celebrating the fact that she has done something Pharoah's army could not do: cross the Red Sea on dry ground. And she did it because the Lord is on the side of the oppressed. Most importantly, the meaning and purpose of the Exodus—a focal point in all of Israel's history—is explained through the words of a woman. She is given the position of chief interpreter of the Exodus; in the text, it is her words that explain the ultimate meaning of that key event.

We now turn our attention to Deborah. A prophet and the leader[7] of Israel during terrible times, she is responsible for orchestrating an important military victory (Judges 4). Afterward, she sings a hymn of praise.[8] Much like the pattern found in Exodus 15, here is a military victory followed by a song of praise of-

fered by a woman. The woman's song explains the event's theological significance and provides closure to the incident.[9] The songs also create a space where readers are invited to join in the celebration.[10] Another resonance between Deborah's song and Miriam's is found in the theme of idolatry; Judges 5 implies that idolatry was the root of Israel's problems, but the rise of Deborah was the key to overcoming it.

The most compelling aspect of Deborah's praise song is its ruminations on motherhood. While Deborah is identified as the wife of Lapidoth,[11] she is not identified as a mother. Militarism, not maternity, is the major focus of her story. Nonetheless, in her hymn, she describes herself as a "mother in Israel" (Judges 5:7). It may be that she is using that term since both prophets (e.g., 2 Kings 2:12; 13:14) and military leaders (e.g., Isaiah 22:21) were sometimes described as fathers. But it may also be because her hymn complicates what it means to "mother" in fascinating ways. The song presents the military victory as ultimately belonging to Jael who, in effect, mothers the enemy leader Sisera to death. Jael shelters him in her tent, tucks him into bed (Judges 4:18), gives him milk, and then ruins this picture of maternal care by beheading him. Jael is called "blessed above women" (Judges 5:24) not in spite of, but because of, her violent act. And then the hymn references Sisera's actual mother (Judges 5:28), who wonders why her son has not returned to her. This song explores what it means to "mother"—for Deborah, for Jael, and for Sisera's mother—in very unexpected and compelling ways. In Deborah's vision of motherhood, acting as a prophet and a leader is mothering, killing an enemy using the tools of a mother's trade is mothering, while the hopes of a mother who is opposed to Israel are thwarted. Certainly Deborah's role in theologizing this significant military victory is not what the average Israelite might have expected; while it follows the pattern of Exodus, it focuses a military victory song on the meaning of mothering and ties the practice of mothering to the success of a nation.

This leads us to Hannah, whose song is also linked to her experience of motherhood. Tormented by her infertility and by a vengeful—and fertile!—sister wife, and living in a time of increasing wickedness, Hannah weeps uncontrollably in the shadow of the temple (1 Samuel 1). She vows that if the Lord will give her a

child, she will consecrate him to the Lord to serve in the temple. Despite the hostility, arrogance, and wickedness of the temple leadership in her day, she fulfills her promise. At that point, she sings a song of praise (1 Samuel 2:1). Note that the song does not come after the confirmation of the pregnancy or the birth of the child, but rather when the child is sent to the temple. Her victory is obviously not a military one, but neither is it physical birth; it is in the consecration of the child to the temple and the keeping of her covenant to do so. Hannah's song would have had a deeply personal significance, but for Hannah, the personal was also political. She wanted the child not for companionship, but so that he could serve the Lord and help Israel depart from its horrid path.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of her hymn is the use of the word "anointed" in 1 Samuel 2:10. This is generally regarded as the first reference to the concept of an anointed leader in the Old Testament (note that the Hebrew word for "anointed" comes into English as "messiah" and the Greek word as "Christ"). It is also one of the few references to God raising up an anointed king ever made by a rank-and-file Israelite. It is perhaps not coincidental that her own son would have the role of anointing Israel's first king (1 Samuel 10:1); we can only wonder whether he understood this doctrine and practice because of his mother. When, at the conclusion of the books of Samuel, David sings a psalm that mentions the horn, the anointed, the rock, and salvation, we hear him echoing Hannah from the beginning of the story (2 Samuel 22). And when Jesus is anointed in the New Testament, it will be by a woman (Mark 14:3-9).

The anointed at the end of Hannah's poem is more specifically "the horn of his anointed" (1 Samuel 2:10) and it is bracketed by a reference at the very beginning of the hymn to Hannah's own horn (1 Samuel 2:1). Because animals used their horns for defense, the horn became a symbol of strength. So we can read this hymn as Hannah celebrating the link between her own strength and the strength of the anointed leader that the Lord would provide to Israel. Hannah refers to a variety of body parts—heart, horn, and mouth—but not breast or womb, as would be more traditional for the celebration of bearing a child (e.g., Luke 11:27–28). Hannah has seen the link between her own circumstances and those of her nation:

> The prayer opens with Hannah and closes with the King. It opens with her own personal praise and closes with a confident assertion of God's victory over every adversary and of his sovereign rule. It opens in Shiloh; it closes at the ends of the earth. It opens with a local reversal; it closes with a cosmic reversal. It opens in the present age; it closes with the age to come.[12]

And the story of the kingdom of Israel begins with the story of a barren woman, one who creates the theological meaning of her motherhood through song, with reference to God's anointed.[13] Hannah tweaks the expected song that follows a battle victory to one where it follows the birth of a long-anticipated child. A woman's theologizing leads us to find victory not just in military success but in the birth of a child. It also, of course, sets the stage for Mary in the New Testament.

Mary's song (Luke 1:46–55), commonly known as the Magnificat,[14] is uttered to Elisabeth[15] after Elisabeth praises Mary. While custom would have called for Mary to praise Elisabeth in return, Mary instead praises the Lord.[16] A major theme of Mary's song is reversals. While Deborah and Hannah also speak of reversals, the concept reaches its full flowering here as Mary reflects on her change in status from the low position of God's slave to someone who will be called blessed by all generations (Luke 1:48). Mary then extends her personal experience to a universal one, much as Hannah did, and reflects on the reversals that affect the hungry and low. Because the hymn uses some past tense verbs, there are various theories for understanding it. Some scholars have understood Mary to be speaking prophetically of future events as if they had already occurred.[17] Others see Mary reviewing the history of Israel, and still others see her interweaving past and future. In any case, she is emphasizing God's ability to transform not only her personal life but also the broader social, cultural, and political realities into a new creation (Luke 1:51–54).

While the image of Mary has historically been focused on the pliant and maternal, this hymn is also one of judgment, with harsh condemnation of the proud, mighty, and rich. When, a few chapters later, Jesus pronounces woes on the rich (Luke 6:24–26), he is echoing his mother's words. Mary's song also changes her story from one of passive acceptance of God's will to the active creation of theological reflection. Mary's song incorporates themes and

language from its Old Testament predecessors, including the songs of Deborah and Hannah.[18] Raymond Brown describes the Magnificat as almost a mosaic[19] due to its abundance of Old Testament references; by some counts, more than a dozen different texts are quoted. We see Mary as someone familiar with the Old Testament and capable of applying it to her own situation: she creates a new scriptural text from relevant passages.[20] She finds in her own experience both resonance with and departure from the experiences of her predecessors.

Similarly, Mary is offering a praise song—not, as Miriam and Deborah did, after a military victory, but in celebration of the impending birth of a child. Mary's song celebrates not battlefield success but faithfulness and obedience, as Hannah's song did, and while Mary's song does include judgment on some groups, it is missing the condemnation of political enemies found in some of the earlier songs.[21] Jael was blessed above women for killing an enemy, but Mary is blessed above women for faithfully mothering Jesus.

So Mary both conforms to and subverts expectations as she incorporates previous scriptural texts into her own song. Mary gathers and shapes the tradition available to her in order to emphasize what is theologically significant.

Transitioning from the biblical world to the Restoration, we find another woman associated with religious song—Emma Smith. While Emma herself did not write hymns, she was tasked by revelation (D&C 25:11) with selecting hymns for the church.[22] According to Carol Cornwall Madsen,

> It took two years for Emma to complete the hymn selection, and another three passed before the hymns were printed in a single volume. From July 1830 to April 1832, when the selection process was completed and W. W. Phelps was instructed to correct and publish the hymns, Emma worked despite a growing antagonism toward the Church in Kirtland and a series of personal tragedies.[23]

The hymnal was eventually printed, with editorial assistance from W.W. Phelps,[24] in 1836.[25] Just under half of its hymns were written by Latter-day Saints,[26] and several hymns written by non-Latter-day Saints were altered, which was an accepted practice at the time.[27] The hymnal was pocket-sized and therefore frequently carried about, and such hymnals were sometimes used to teach

children to read. It was common for the lyrics to be read aloud before the hymn was sung in a meeting, which, according to Mary Poulter, "stressed the importance of the textual content."[28] In this context, the importance of hymn selection as a tool for shaping the doctrine and culture of a church is maximized, so it is very significant that this task was given to a woman. As Poulter writes, "Often, long sermons are forgotten and only small portions of great discourses are remembered, but texts expressed in the rhythms of poetry and music are easily memorized and can become an integral part of a belief system."[29] Much as the biblical women we have encountered shaped theology through their individual hymns, Emma Smith had a different task but with much the same result: her work in selecting hymns formed the early Saints' understanding of their doctrine and beliefs to a great extent.[30] The early church even interpreted Emma's task as an exclusive one; Carol Cornwall Madsen writes,

> The idea that Emma Smith should be the sole compiler of the Church's hymnal emerged in 1839 when the high council authorized an expanded hymnbook. David Rogers, a New York convert, had previously published for the New York Saints a hymnal that had drawn heavily on Emma's 1835 selection, and Brigham Young had taken a collection of hymns to England with the intent of publishing a hymnal there. But the Nauvoo high council voted to destroy all copies of Rogers's hymnbook and to forbid Brigham Young to publish a British edition.[31]

While discussions of the revelation commanding Emma Smith to select hymns tend to focus on publication, Michael Hicks is surely right to point out that "the revelation said nothing about publication. Indeed, as it was first delivered to Emma Smith, the revelation appeared to be principally a command to decide what hymns already known to church members were proper to be sung."[32] This is significant because it (along with W.W. Phelps' editorial role for the hymns that Emma had previously selected) emphasizes that Emma and the early church understood her task not as a practical nor an editorial one, but rather as a spiritual and creative one: selecting which hymns—and, therefore, doctrines—would be the backbone of the Restoration. Mary Poulter's article "Doctrines of Faith and Hope Found in Emma Smith's 1835 [sic] Hymnbook" does an excellent job of tracing the ways in which

Emma's songs promulgated distinctive doctrines of the Restoration, particularly regarding the Second Coming. Much as faithfulness and a hopeful attitude were found in the other women's songs we have discussed, these also were themes in the hymns that Emma selected.

Emma's commission to select songs is rare in that a reason is given for the commandment: Doctrine and Covenants 25:12 reads, "For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads." Three reasons are given here for Emma's task: that the Lord likes hymns, that hymns are a prayer, and that singing hymns results in blessings. Because Emma is the one selecting the hymns, and because hymns are prayers and conduits for blessings, this meant that the revelation gave Emma a role in shaping prayers, perhaps somewhat analogous to what Jesus did when he taught, "after this manner therefore pray ye" (Matthew 6:9; 3 Nephi 13:9). The preface[33] to Emma Smith's hymnal echoes the language of Doctrine and Covenants 25 nearly verbatim when it states that "the song of the righteous is a prayer unto God,"[34] suggesting the role that the revelation played in Emma's work on the hymns. So Emma's work should not be viewed as merely secretarial but rather as an executive role, assigned to her by revelation, in crystallizing the doctrines of the Restoration.

The distinctive role women have played in sacred music in general and in the Restoration in particular reaches a crescendo with Eliza R. Snow's[35] "O My Father."[36] This hymn is best known as the earliest and clearest expression of the Restoration belief in a Mother in Heaven; Eliza wrote that, through reason and through revelation, one could know of the reality of a divine female. Less frequently explored are the roles that the hymn assigns to Heavenly Mother. Note that the final stanza uses the plural forms 'you' and 'your' as opposed to the first stanza's singular 'thou' and 'thy.'[37] Where the plural pronouns refer to deity, we can mine the text for the doctrine Eliza was teaching about a Mother in Heaven. In the final stanza, the hymn envisions a reunion with Mother and Father after death, but only with permission from both of them. The line "Then, at length, when I've completed/all you [which is plural] sent me forth to do" implies that

mortal assignments came from both the Father and Mother. Finally, dwelling with them again will require the "mutual approbation" (or joint approval) of both. So Mother in Heaven is given two specific roles in this hymn: issuing mortal assignments and participating in the judgment. In this hymn, no division of tasks or status between the Father and Mother is implied—when they act, they act in unity. While Gordon B. Hinckley counseled that prayers addressed solely to Mother in Heaven are not appropriate,[38] this hymn features what we might call a "tandem prayer," since the hymn itself is, in effect, a prayer to both Mother and Father in Heaven.

Perhaps because of the focus on the hymn's reference to a Mother in Heaven, other aspects of its theology have received less attention. One noteworthy exception is President Spencer W. Kimball's comment that this hymn "speaks to the whole gospel program."[39] And it is true that the entire plan of salvation, as Latter-day Saints would later come to call it, from pre-existence to post-mortal life, can be found within Eliza's four famous stanzas. As Jill Mulvay Derr notes, "'O My Father' is primarily a hymn of orientation. It speaks of place, habitation, sphere, wandering, residing, and dwelling"[40] and thus describes the soul's journey through the eternities. From our vantage point, we can see how Eliza Snow, through her creative writing, has shaped the doctrine and culture of the church.

Given that so many of the sacred songs attributed by name to a specific person in the scriptures[41] are associated with women,[42] we might speak of sacred songs as, to borrow a phrase from yet another example of the genre, part of "the errand of angels . . . given to women."[43] In the examples that we have considered, the woman's song was crucial in constructing the theological meaning of a key event in sacred history. Taken as a whole, women's songs define and delineate theological themes including the central role of God, the importance of faithfulness, expected reversals of fortune as the Lord makes his will felt, the importance of rejoicing, and the concept of motherhood both on earth and in heaven.[44] Sacred songs appear to be one of the primary venues in the scriptures open to women not only for the exercise of their creative gifts, but also for the definition and promulgation of doctrine.[45]

Notes

1. I use the term "prophet" instead of the KJV's "prophetess" since feminine word endings unfortunately tend to connote a lesser status (e.g., majorette versus major, mistress versus master, governess versus governor). The word "prophetess" is used in six places in the Old Testament with reference to a female: Exodus 15:20 (Miriam), Judges 4:4 (Deborah), 2 Kings 22:14 (Huldah), 2 Chronicles 34:22 (Huldah), Nehemiah 6:14 (Noadiah), and Isaiah 8:3 (the wife of Isaiah). Counts vary, but approximately 13 percent of the named prophets in the Old Testament are female.

2. Because of the ambiguity in the English translation, some readers have understood 15:21 to be directed only to the women. But in Hebrew, the word we have as "sing" is a masculine plural verb, indicating that Miriam is speaking to either an all-male or to a mixed-gender group. The latter is more likely given the context.

3. Many scholars believe that although the longer praise song in Exodus 15:1–19 is attributed to Moses, it is more likely to have been originally attributed to Miriam. Certain ambiguities in the text allow for this possibility. It is also possible that Miriam's song in 15:21 is older and the song attributed to Moses in 15:1–19 is a later expansion. Since 15:21 quotes 15:1, it is also possible that what Miriam is singing is the entirety of 15:1–19, with only the first verse reiterated for reasons of brevity, much as we might substitute a title for an entire work. See Richard D. Patterson, "Victory at sea: Prose and Poetry in Exodus 14–15," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 161, no. 641 (1984): 42–54. See also J. Gerald Janzen, "Song of Moses, song of Miriam: who is seconding whom?" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (April 1, 1992): 211–220. See also Frank M. Cross and David Noel Freedman,"The Song of Miriam," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 14 (October 1955): 237–250. These questions about authorship, priority, and content cannot be definitively settled, so the following analysis assumes no particular position.

4. The sister who takes the infant Moses to Pharoah's daughter in Exodus 2 is not named and some scholars think that she might have been a different sister. While these details may be lost to history, it is nonetheless clear that in literary terms, the story of the Exodus is bookended by the faithful sister(s) of Moses.

5. J. Gerald Janzen, "Song of Moses, song of Miriam," 211–220.

6. Ibid., 220.

7. The KJV translation "judged" may be misleading for English speakers used to the modern role of a judge. Deborah has an executive

role—not just a judicial one—as her leadership of military affairs in Judges 4 implies.

8. See Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary* (Lousville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 78. Judges 5:1 has a feminine singular verb for "sang," implying that the speaker is Deborah. It has also been suggested that the reference to Barak is a later addition. Note that Judges 5:7 credits Deborah with the composition of the song as well.

9. "The psalms used in narratives as victory songs (Exod. 15, Judg. 5, 1 Sam. 2, Jdt. 16) have in common their nationalistic themes, association with female prophets (Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Judith), and concluding positions." James W. Watts, "Song and the Ancient Reader," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 22, no. 2 (June 1, 1995), 139.

10. "Study of the individual texts suggests that hymnic poetry in this position invites readers to join in the celebration, an effect which is especially strong in the victory songs of Exodus 15, Judges 5, and Judith 16." James W. Watts, "Song and the Ancient Reader," 139.

11. But note that "wife of Lapidoth" in Judges 4:4 could be translated as "woman of fire" or "fiery woman." See Danna Nolan Fewell, "Judges," in *Women's Bible Commentary*, edited by Carol Ann Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 75.

12. Stanley D. Walters, "The Voice of God's People in Exile," *Ex Auditu* 10 (January 1, 1994), 73–86.

13. There is an interesting comparison with Anna in Luke 2:36–38. Anna and Hannah share a name (Anna is the Greek form of Hannah), focus on the temple, reflect a desire for a long-anticipated child, invoke a statement of praise, and are called "prophetess." Hannah prophesies of the anointed; Anna rejoices in the realization of that prophecy.

14. "Magnificat" is the first word of the song in Latin.

15. A small number of scholars argue that Elisabeth, not Mary, should be credited with the Magnificat, but this idea has not persuaded the majority.

16. Note that this is similar to what Miriam did in praising the Lord in a situation where praise of the military was expected; cf. Exodus 15:20–21.

17. Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 362–363.

18. It also appears to refer to Judith's song from the deuterocanonical Book of Judith.

19. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 357.

20. "The use of the language of tradition is not necessarily a sign that creative ability is lacking. Traditional language is language already heavy with meaning. It carries the weight of its use in the past, and a

skilled poet can awaken this past meaning and use it for his own purposes. In the case of the Magnificat, there seems to be a deliberate attempt to speak so that one always hears the echoes of the biblical tradition in the background." Robert C. Tannehill, "Magnificat as Poem," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93, no. 2 (June 1, 1974), 263–275. Tannehill's close reading of the poetry of the Magnificat itself serves to illuminate Mary's skill and creativity.

21. Historically, some interpreters have imported violent imagery into Mary's story by reading her as the new Eve whose seed would bruise the serpent's head (see Genesis 3:15), but most modern interpreters see the martial imagery as absent from Mary's story. See Brittany E. Wilson, "Pugnacious Precursors and the Bearer of Peace: Jael, Judith, and Mary in Luke 1:42," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 1, 2006), 436–456.

22. In the nineteenth century in the United States, it was unusual but not unprecedented for women to write hymns. One study found that about 4% of hymns written in this period were written by women. See Mary de Jong, "'Theirs the Sweetest Songs': Women Hymn Writers in the Nineteenth-Century United States," in *A Mighty Baptism: Race, Gender, and the Creation of American Protestantism,* edited by Susan Juster and Lisa MacFarlane (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 144–145.

23. Carol Cornwall Madsen, "The 'Elect Lady' Revelation (D&C 25): Its Historical and Doctrinal Context," in *Sperry Symposium Classics: The Doctrine and Covenants*, edited by Craig K. Manscill (Provo: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 2004), 117–133.

24. "Ordered by the Council that the Hymns selected by sister Emma be corrected by br William W. Phelps." See Minutes, April 1832, http://Josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/minutes-30-april-1832 #2, accessed July 21, 2012.

25. The hymnal has a publication date of 1835, but most scholars believe that it was not actually printed until 1836. See Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith: Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe* (Champaign.: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 57.

26. Karen Lynn Davidson, "The Book of Mormon in Latter-day Saint Hymnody," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9, Number 1 (2000), 22.

27. See Michael Hicks, "Poetic Borrowing in Early Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18 (Spring 1985), 134–135.

28. Mary D. Poulter, "Doctrines of Faith and Hope Found in Emma Smith's 1835 Hymnbook," *BYU Studies* 37, no. 2 (1997–1998), 34.

29. Ibid., 33–34.

30. Note that virtually no hymnbooks were compiled by women in this period of history. According to Mary de Jong, "Hymnbook making was subject to men's control. Almost 99% of nineteenth-century American hymbooks were edited by men or by all-male committees that often consisted largely of ministers." Mary de Jong, "'Theirs the Sweetest Songs'": Women Hymn Writers in the Nineteenth-Century United States," in *A Mighty Baptism: Race, Gender, and the Creation of American Protestantism*, 147.

31. Apparently Brigham Young didn't get this message in time; eventually, Joseph Smith did permit other people to compile hymnals. See Carol Cornwall Madsen, "The 'Elect Lady' Revelation," 117–133.

32. Michael D. Hicks, *Mormonism and Music: A History* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 10.

33. The preface is unsigned but Emma probably wrote it. Michael Hicks suggests that, while we cannot be certain, it is likely that she wrote it since it was also used in the 1841 hymnal, which Phelps did not assist her with. (Personal communication from Michael Hicks in the author's possession.) Carol Cornwall Madsen also concludes that the preface was written by Emma. See Carol Cornwall Madsen, "The 'Elect Lady' Revelation," 117–133.

34. Emma Smith, comp., *A Collection of Sacred Hymns, for the Church of the Latter day Saints* (Kirtland: F. G. Williams, 1835), iv.

35. It is possible that Eliza Snow had a formal role similar to Emma's. She is widely known as "Zion's poetess" and that title seems to go back to Joseph Smith. Derr speaks of her being "appointed" that title by Joseph Smith, although it is difficult to know to what extent either of them might have thought of this as a formal calling. See Jill Mulvay Derr, "The Significance of 'O My Father' in the Personal Journey of Eliza R. Snow," *BYU Studies* 36 (January 1996), 88.

36. The hymn was originally a poem titled "My Father in Heaven," published in *Times & Seasons*, November 15, 1845. It was later published as "Invocation, Or the Eternal Father and Mother" in a book of her poems. See Derr, "The Significance of 'O My Father' in the Personal Journey of Eliza R. Snow," 105.

37. Ibid.,101.

38. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Daughters of God," *Ensign*, November 1991, 100.

39. Spencer W. Kimball, "The Blessings and Responsibilities of Womanhood," *Ensign,* March 1976.

40. See Derr, "The Significance of 'O My Father' in the Personal Journey of Eliza R. Snow," 86.

41. One exception to this might be the Psalms, where about half of

the psalms contain a notation that they are "of David." This has traditionally been interpreted to mean that David wrote them. However, most scholars are not convinced that David wrote (all of) these psalms; they note that the phrase "of David" could also be translated as "to David" or "in the style of David" or "on behalf of" or "for David" or "about David," and "David" might refer to any Davidic king. Furthermore, the superscriptions that contain the phrase "of David" were probably written much later than the psalms themselves, making their attribution to David further suspect. Once the authorship question is opened, it is possible that some of these anonymous psalms may have been written by women; scholars in particular point to Psalm 16 and 131 as having evidence of a female hand in their construction. See John Goldingay, *Psalms: Volume 1: Psalms 1–41* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2006), 25–27.

42. There are several other candidates for women's sacred songs that have not been considered herein, including Eve's statement in Moses 5:11, Huldah's pronouncement in 2 Chronicles 34:23–28, and Sariah's response in 1 Nephi 5:8, all of which fit the pattern of (1) containing a statement of hope/joy, (2) occurring after a trying incident, and (3) including a reflective theological statement, and all of which (with a little work) could be read as poetry.

43. From "As Sisters in Zion" in the 1985 LDS hymnal. The original lyrics to Emily H. Woodmansee's hymn, which was first known as "Song of the Sisters of the Relief Society," referred to "the office of angels, conferred upon woman" as a "right" that women claim. See *The Woman's Exponent,* 3, no. 13 (November 1, 1874), 98.

44. Derr links Hannah, Mary, and Eliza to the theme of rejoicing. See Derr, "The Significance of 'O My Father' in the Personal Journey of Eliza R. Snow," 100.

45. In a recent General Conference talk, Elder Richard G. Scott suggested the possibility of female authors of scripture when he said, "Throughout the ages, Father in Heaven has inspired select men and women to find, through the guidance of the Holy Ghost, solutions to life's most perplexing problems. He has inspired those authorized servants to record those solutions as a type of handbook for those of His children who have faith in His plan of happiness and in His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. We have ready access to this guidance through the treasure we call the standard works—that is, the Old and New Testaments, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price." In Richard G. Scott, "The Power of Scripture," October 2011 General Conference, http://www.lds.org/general-conference/2011/10/the-power-of-scripture?lang=eng (accessed August 6, 2012).