

# DIALOGUE

a journal of mormon thought

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## LETTERS

### *Transcendent Sacrament*

I was particularly touched in *Dialogue* 44, no. 3 (Fall 2011), by “To Bless and Sanctify: Three Meditations on the Sacrament.” I was stirred and stimulated by Kris Wright’s “Baking a Sacrament Prayer” (203–7), by Matthew Bowman’s “This Is My Body: A Mormon Sacrament” (208–14), and especially by the culture-transcending experience related in Kristine L. Haglund’s, “Holy, Holy, Holy” (214–17).

It brought to mind a culture-transcendent experience of my own on Russian Easter, April 30, 1989, before the fall of the Soviet Union, in our family’s Long Beach Third Ward.

In January, we had met Marina, our young tour guide. She had just received permission to leave the Soviet Union for the first time and asked if she and her best friend, Lena, could stay a few days with us. We said yes, of course. Our home was their first stop.

Both were devout Russian Orthodox believers; and we shared their most important holy day by attending midnight services at the closest Russian Orthodox Church. Later that same Easter Sunday, they attended sacrament meeting with us in Long Beach Third Ward. As the bread tray was being passed along that hard wooden pew, Marina whispered, “Is it permitted? We are not members of your church.” I replied spontaneously, “Of course! We are all Christians and believers here.”

A short time later, I began to realize that I had just taken the sacrament for the first time in a mysteriously new and wonderful way. I realized that I was more than a member of the Mormon Church but part of a universal

community of Christians. I began to experience an extraordinary new freedom to participate with any other believer in any other worship setting. The setting became insignificant. The institution became insignificant. It no longer mattered whether it was formal or informal. By that simple act of taking bread together, I realized I had joined a far more fundamental and universal spiritual community.

As I struggled to express this experience in words, I wrote a poem, “Russian Easter in Long Beach Third Ward,” the last stanza of which reads:

Then we three as one  
with tear-stained smiles  
and Slavic souls communing  
thus took the broken loaf  
and through the Ancient date  
the Mystery rose to fuse  
the Awful Fission.

The experience did not stop there. Looking back to when I was an undergraduate at Berkeley three decades earlier, I had had a powerful transpersonal experience that left me with a strong sense of some kind of responsibility having something to do with Russia. Being born and raised Mormon, I naturally interpreted that meaning to be a proselytizing mission some day. I had perceived the responsibility as a burden. But now, I sensed the same message, not as responsibility but as *responsibility*—full of opportunity and joyful promise.

Nor did the experience stop there. Looking ahead, I did not anticipate that two decades later I would join a

daughter church of the Russian Orthodox Church that would enable me to integrate and transcend the Russian revolutionary tradition of my father and the Mormon pioneer tradition of my mother.

My thanks again to Kris, Matthew, and Kristine for sharing their own sacred encounters with the sacrament and its ability to transcend, even erase, barriers and distinctions.

*Eugene Kovalenko  
Los Alamos, New Mexico*

### ***Spirit Birth and “Chains of Belonging”***

Samuel Brown’s scholarly article, “The Early Mormon Chain of Belonging,” (*Dialogue* 44, no. 1 [Spring 2011]: 1–52) provides a fascinating view of “the Great Chain of Being” that he describes as defining “the afterlife fate of believers” (3). According to Brown, the “chain of belonging” is comprised of “a hierarchy of power patterned on family relationships . . . one boundless family of eternal intelligences” (20, 27). However, the “family” pattern discussed by Brown is not actually familial. It is determined by mortal relationships that are welded by priesthood ordinances to create the “distinctive celestial family” (26). According to Doctrine and Covenants 128:18 (an epistle Joseph Smith wrote to the Saints in Nauvoo on September 6, 1842), a chain or “welding link of some kind or other” must be established “between the fathers and the children . . . from the days of Adam even to the present time,” which must be established through temple ordinance work (D&C 128:18).

Absent from Brown’s discussion, however, is a reference to a possible second genealogical pedigree (or “chain of belonging”) based upon the family organization we presumably experienced in the premortal world. While the original source of this premortal familial organization—whether it came from Joseph Smith<sup>1</sup> or was deduced by Church leaders immediately after his death,<sup>2</sup>—is controversial, its description includes exalted Heavenly Parents who create bodies for spirit children (“spirit birth”). This belief constitutes accepted LDS doctrine today.<sup>3</sup>

According to the spirit birth interpretation, as time and eternity progress, the spirit offspring, through obedience to celestial law, become exalted, thereby perpetuating procreative “rounds” that form endless generations of divinities. In contrast, Brown explains, “To [Joseph] Smith, in a way he never entirely worked out, the family of divinities had no end” (30). While it is true that our extant documents do not contain a Joseph Smith revelation of the complete theology of this belief, Brown implies that Joseph did not teach about spirit birth and therefore concludes that the mechanism through which an endless “family of divinities” is generated is unidentifiable and that the Prophet must have “never entirely worked out” the process.

In his article, Brown also describes unexalted beings as “neutered angels who would endure salvation” (26; see D&C 132:16–17). The term “neutered angels” seems to mean that they are sterile—incapable of producing offspring after the resurrection. Im-

plied also is that exalted individuals are not “neutered” and are therefore capable of creating progeny in the eternal worlds. However, without “spirit birth” as the mechanism of having children after the resurrection, it is unclear how exalted beings would be any different from unexalted “neutered angels.”

Brown quotes W. W. Phelps’s funeral sermon for Joseph and Hyrum Smith (32) but does not include Phelps’s comments in that sermon that speak of “multiplying and replenishing new worlds,” seemingly referring to spirit births of the crowned “faithful” after the resurrection. Phelps states: “The best of saints from many creations, will hold a grand jubilee, of prophets, priests and kings, with their wives, and children, for the purpose of crowning the faithful to enter into the joys of their Lord; prepar[a]tory to their going into eternity to multiply and replenish new worlds.”<sup>4</sup>

While some authors take the position that Joseph Smith did not teach of spirit birth, my review of available documents on this subject leads me to conclude that he did, in fact, teach this doctrine privately but avoided broaching the subject publicly.<sup>5</sup> The evidence that Joseph actively taught it privately but not publicly is not conclusive; but if my conclusion is accurate, then three pedigrees or “chains of belonging” (or simply “chains”) can be identified: The first is a strict biological pedigree; the second is a genealogical pedigree of parent-children relations sealed through temple ordinances that is similar, but not identical to the biological pedigree because individuals may

be sealed to someone other than their biological parents. From a strict familial standpoint, both of these chains will be static and finite at the end of mortality, experiencing no increase thereafter. The third chain is a divine pedigree made of exalted beings (gods) who produce spirit offspring who progress to exaltation and have spirit children in the resurrection, thus producing an endless family of divinities.

If my interpretation regarding Joseph Smith’s teachings is accurate, all mortals are members of the first and third pedigrees and have the potential of being members of the second, which brings with it the possibility of enjoying an ever-expanding position in the third pedigree by obeying the gospel and attaining exaltation.

It appears that Brown’s “chain of belonging” possesses characteristics of all three of these pedigrees. It is based upon mortal family relations like chains 1 and 2. It is sealed through temple ordinance work (24) like chain 2. It can “increase” and be “enlarged” (26), a feature exclusive to chain 3. It allows for polygyny (25, 29) and is hierarchical (25, 30). What is unclear from Brown’s article is how an exalted member of the “chain of belonging” might fulfill Joseph Smith’s teachings in the King Follett Discourse about deification, a process by which an individual progresses to the status of our current Deity, a God empowered (with or without a spouse) to create a new “chain of belonging” on a newly created world through a process that does not include spirit birth.

Brown’s remarkable research and

writing style have provided an interesting and informative introduction to the “chain of belonging.” I would hope that these additional observations may prompt Brown or others to revisit this topic with additional insights.

#### Notes

1. For evidence that Joseph Smith taught “spirit birth,” see D&C 132:17, 19–20, 22, 24, 30, 55, 63; Franklin D. Richards, “Scriptural Items,” July 16, 1843, MS 4409, LDS Church History Library; George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 102; Stanley B. Kimball, ed., *On the Potter’s Wheel: The Diaries of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books/Smith Research Associates, 1987), 52; Orson Pratt, *Prophetic Almanac for 1845*, No. 1 (New York: *The Prophet* Office, 1844), 5–7; and Lorenzo Snow to “Elder Walker,” February 14, 1842, in Lorenzo Snow Notebook, typescript, 75–76, MS 2737 Box 1, fd. 1, LDS Church History Library.

2. Authors who have written that “spirit birth” may not have been taught during Joseph Smith’s lifetime include Charles R. Harrell, *“This Is My Doctrine”: The Development of Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011), 209–11; Van Hale, “The Origin of the Human Spirit in Early Mormon Thought,” in Gary James Bergera, ed., *Line upon Line: Essays on Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 124; Blake T. Ostler, “The Idea of Pre-Existence in the Development of Mormon Thought,” *Dialogue* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 68.

3. See *The Family: A Proclamation to the World* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1995); “God the Father,” in [no editor/compiler iden-

tified], *True to the Faith* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 74–76; *Gospel Principles*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2009), 275, 277; *Doctrine and Covenants and Church History Gospel Doctrine: Teacher’s Manual* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999), 110; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 257.

4. W. W. Phelps, “The Joseph/Hyrum Smith Funeral Sermon,” edited by Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, *BYU Studies* 23, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 11–13.

5. See Brian C. Hales, “A Continuation of the Seeds’: Joseph Smith and Spirit Birth,” *Journal of Mormon History*, forthcoming.

Brian C. Hales  
Layton, Utah

#### Brown Responds

I am grateful for the opportunity to respond to Brian Hales’s comment on my essay on the early Mormon Chain of Belonging. I hope to clarify my arguments in this brief response.

First, though, a disclaimer. There is a palpable hunger in much Mormon history to bring the figures of the past into harmony with our own sensibilities. I feel it myself, sometimes acutely. This hunger is manifest in generations of Saints attempting to conjure Smithian Mormonism through the later reminiscences that have reconstituted early Mormon history for many observers, including, in this case, Hales. In my historical writing, I have attempted to allow the actors of the past to disagree with their heirs



and with me, sometimes utterly. For that reason, in my research on earliest Mormonism, I have generally avoided the use of post-Smithian reminiscences.

I also try to keep my own devotional needs, insights, and impulses at arm's length when I write—not because I think my devotional concerns are invalid but because I believe that devotion is highly particular and dependent on a striving for accuracy in its historical and textual grounding. Separating history and devotion formally improves, I hope, both the history and the devotion.

My sense from reading Hales's letter is that echoes in later Mormon culture and theology may color the interpretation of the earliest documentary record in his analysis. That said, I must confess that I am likely guilty of such a sin myself and am ever grateful for feedback that directs me to improve the honesty and accuracy of my writing.

As I read his letter, Hales understands me to be arguing that novel relationships in the afterlife are excluded from my account of Smith's Chain of Belonging. I apologize that the exposition of this point in my "The Early Mormon Chain of Belonging" (44, no. 1 [Spring 2011]: 25–26) does not seem to have been sufficiently clear. I do believe that Smith anticipated the expansion of the Chain with new associations in the afterlife. Hales's interest in the traditional Mormon doctrine of "spirit birth" appears to have compounded my expository infelicities to leave him unclear about the substance of my argument.

Hales has merged two importantly distinct concepts. The first is whether

Smith's Chain of Belonging was generative, capable of further expansion in the afterlife. (It is, as we both agree.) The second is, mechanistically, how precisely is it generative? (Therein lies the rub.) Smith was suggestive but never explicit on the mechanistic question in reliable contemporary documentation. What is called "spirit birth" has historically been most popular and seems to originate largely (though not exclusively) with the Pratt brothers.

My review of the evidence (not explicitly engaged in the essay under question but covered in "Early Mormon Adoption Theology and the Mechanics of Salvation" (*Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 3 [Summer 2011]: 3–53) suggests that a sacerdotal adoptive model may be a compelling alternative. Jonathan Stapley and I jointly came to believe this was a possible account of divine parenthood around 2007, during our collaboration on early Mormon adoption theology. (See our co-authored observation in "Mormonism's Adoption Theology: An Introductory Statement," *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 3 [Summer 2011]: 1–2). By this account, which is not crucial to my basic argument that Smith familiarized the *Scala Naturae*/Great Chain of Being, families may continue to expand in the afterlife through a kind of sacerdotal adoption rather than through the familiar physical processes of conception, gestation, and parturition.

In some respects the tension between "spirit birth" and sacerdotal adoption models of divine-human relating reflects a question of what the

metaphysical law of correspondence really means and entails. As the Pratts expounded spirit birth, they seem to have believed that the microcosm of earthly gestation and parturition defined the macrocosm of eternal increase. Their choice was not the only one available to the Saints after Joseph's death. There are several ways to connect microcosm to macrocosm, and the choice between human parturition and sacerdotal adoption is not inevitable. What I believe were the essential characteristics of the generative cosmos Joseph Smith revealed are a sacerdotal power known by various names (most durably "priesthood") and the creation of relationships among eternal beings at various stages of maturation and development. The earthly echoes of this grand, cosmic process are the saving rituals of the temple, inflected by the sacred experience of parenthood. The beauty and the power of Restoration teachings on the parenthood of God do not rely on the Pratt formulation.

Hales also objects to my employment of the metaphor of "neuter[ing]" to describe post-mortal beings who are not allowed to participate generatively in the Chain of Belonging. My choice of that term may have been ill advised, but I hope it is clear that a metaphoric "neutering" could apply equally to adoption and spirit birth.

Hales also objects to my suggestion that Joseph Smith did not fully explore the theological implications of his Chain of Belonging. I am grateful for the opportunity to clarify what I meant, though I do not want, then or now, to exhaust readers with blow-by-blow descriptions of the theological

controversies that have resulted as Latter-day Saints attempt to understand the implications of the Chain of Belonging. The questions of infinite regress, divine finitism, the existence of a universal Creator, the relationships between Adam and Elohim, and the identity of the God of the Hebrew Bible are still open for debate almost two centuries later; most of these controversies were reviewed by Sterling McMurrin several decades ago in his *Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1965), and a new generation of LDS philosophers and theologians continues to hash out the details, to good effect. Even had Smith been clear about spirit birth (versus sacerdotal adoption), this would not change the fact that Smith did not systematize the theological implications of his Chain of Belonging.

The trifurcate view apparently proposed in Hales's letter, in which Hales proposes mortal-biological, mortal-sacerdotal, and spirit-biological chains, unnecessarily complicates and unfortunately obfuscates the meaning of Smith's Chain of Being and the fundamental tensions inherent in the opposition of biological/genetic and sacerdotal/ecclesial families that Smith proposed. (I discuss these tensions in my *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2012], 216, 241–46, 302–4.) While there is a broad consensus favoring metaphysical and taxonomic trifurcations throughout the history of Western religion, I do not believe that such a triple classification is nec-

essary or illuminating in the present case. For the earliest Latter-day Saints, there was one Chain, which spanned mortality and immortality, biology and sacerdotalism. While biological kin were the most natural initial candidates for inclusion, there could be no lasting relationships that were not validated (sealed) by the priesthood power animating the temple. To propose parallel chains would downplay the importance of the tensions that existed between usual human affections (which are generally, at least in Western cultures, tied to biological and affinal kin) and the sacerdotal associations that constituted the Chain of Belonging, while also eliding the central unity of mortal and post-mortal life within early Mormonism.

I hope that Hales's request for clarification will be met by my *In Heaven as It Is on Earth*, which contextualizes adoption theology and the Chain of Belonging within the Mormon Prophet's quest to solve the problems of death. I wish him all good fortune in his ongoing research and writing.

Samuel M. Brown  
Salt Lake City

### ***Response to Bradshaw Review***

While I welcome legitimate criticisms and opinions based on different worldviews, I must interpret the review of my book, *Encouraging Heterosexuality: Helping Children Develop a Traditional Sexual Orientation* (co-authored with A. Dean Byrd [Orem, Utah: Millennium Press, 2009]) by William Bradshaw in "Short Shrift to the Facts," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 44, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 171–

91, more as a personal attack on the authors than as a scholarly debate about the scientific evidence.

During the five years I worked on this book, I reviewed more than three hundred journal articles and dozens of academic books. In addition, I studied the words of Latter-day Saint prophets and apostles. I prayed and fasted many times that I would do an accurate and informative exposé on the topic. The manuscript was reviewed by eight different Ph.D. students and professors in psychology, education, and family studies whose comments and critiques I carefully considered. Dean Byrd joined me during the last year of writing, helped to edit the book, and added his comments. I was not acquainted with him until I sought his assistance.

While it is difficult to respond to all of Bradshaw's concerns, I will attempt to address eight major ones.

1. I directed the book to a lay audience; hence the lay language and simplified interpretations (instead of scientific terminology) used throughout the book. Bradshaw objects to this simplification, but I believe our generalizations are accurate and supported by scientific data.

2. I combined scientific data with religious doctrine, which is an uncommon practice in academia; but in my worldview, revelation is a source of truth, just as scientific methods provide us with other facts.

3. Bradshaw suggests that we should not identify the sexual orientation of the major researchers on homosexuality. With 2–4 percent of the population identifying as homosexual, perhaps as much as 50 percent of

the research is conducted by scientists who are homosexual.<sup>1</sup> Such men and women have a vested interest in the results of their research so bias could be a problem.

4. I stated clearly that homosexuality results from some combination of nature and nurture, and that Bradshaw's simple biological theory has not been substantiated. I offer research that supports a variety of factors which may be involved, concluding that the research supports neither a simple biological theory nor a simple psychological theory. Ultimately, all behavior has a biological substrate, but I conclude that the current research supports the polygenic, multifactorial genesis of homosexuality. I don't discount biological factors; rather I simply conclude that, based on current research, biological factors alone are insufficient to explain the genesis of homosexuality.

After years of supporting a simple biological theory of homosexuality, the American Psychological Association leaders reviewed the research and concluded: "Although much research has examined the possible genetic, hormonal, developmental, social, and cultural influences on sexual orientation, no findings have emerged that permit scientists to conclude that sexual orientation is determined by any particular factor or factors." Further, they offer a scholarly consensus: Most scientists think that nature and nurture both play complex roles.<sup>2</sup> This view is consistent with the view expressed in our book; but it's at odds with Bradshaw's biological view.

Three basic studies led the media and others to trumpet the notion that

homosexuality is biologically determined. These studies were conducted by Simon LeVay, Dean Hamer, and the research team of Michael Bailey and Richard Pillard. At the time of his research, LeVay was a biological research scientist at the Salk Institute in San Diego. He conducted research on the brains of two groups of men: homosexual men and men who LeVay presumed were heterosexual. With a fairly small sample size (nineteen homosexual men and sixteen presumed heterosexual men), LeVay conducted a postmortem analysis, focusing on a particular cluster of cells in the hypothalamus known as the INAH-3. He reported that he had found "subtle but significant differences" between the brains of homosexual men and the brains of heterosexual men.

LeVay's research had a number of important limitations. (1) He had very little information about the sexual histories of the research participants. (2) Most of the subjects died of AIDs and the disease itself could account for the differences in brain tissue size. (3) Although there were differences between the groups, some presumed heterosexual men had small brain nuclei in the critical area, and some homosexual men had nuclei large enough to be within the normal heterosexual range. LeVay offered the following interpretation of his own research: "It is important to stress several limitations of the study. First the observations were made on adults who had already been sexually active for a number of years. To make a really compelling case, one would have to show that

these neuroanatomical differences existed early in life—preferably at birth. Without such data, there is always at least the theoretical possibility that the structural differences are actually the result of differences in sexual behavior—perhaps the ‘use it or lose it’ principle. Furthermore, even if the differences in the hypothalamus arise before birth, they might still come about from a variety of causes, including genetic differences, differences in stress exposure, and many others. It is possible that the development of the INAH-3 (and perhaps other brain regions) represent a ‘final common path’ in the determination of sexual orientation, a path to which innumerable factors may contribute.”<sup>3</sup>

Further, LeVay summarized his research in the following way: “It’s important to stress what I didn’t find. I did not prove that homosexuality was genetic, or find a genetic cause for being gay. I didn’t show that gay men are born that way, the most common mistake people make in interpreting my work. Nor did I locate a gay center in the brain.”<sup>4</sup>

From this summary, it appears that Bradshaw is making the common mistake referenced by LeVay— an acceptable mistake by the lay public but an inexcusable mistake by a professional. Perhaps even more significant are the additional comments offered by LeVay in his book, *Queer Science*: “No one even remembers being born, let alone being born gay or straight. When a gay man, for example says he was born gay, he generally means that he felt different from other boys at the earliest age he can remember. Sometimes the differences involved sexual

feelings, but more commonly it involved some kind of gender-nonconformist or ‘sex-atypical’ traits—disliking rough and tumble play for example—that were not explicitly sexual. These differences, which have been verified in a number of ways, suggest that sexual orientation is influenced by factors operating very early in life, but these factors could still consist of environmental factors such as parental treatment in the early post-natal period.”<sup>5</sup>

Michael Bailey and Richard Pillard studied identical twins and found a 52 percent concordance rate, which means that, for every homosexual twin, the chances are about 50 percent that his twin will also be homosexual.<sup>6</sup> The most fascinating question, however, is this: If something in the genetic code made an individual homosexual, why did all the identical twins not become homosexual, since identical twins have the same genetic endowment?

Bailey himself acknowledged a probable selection bias since he recruited in venues where participants considered the sexual orientation of their twin before agreeing to participate in his study.<sup>7</sup>

Bailey and Pillard conducted a second study using the Australian Twin Registry, which had an anonymous response format that significantly reduced the risk of such bias. From that study, Bailey and Pillard reported a concordance rate of 20 percent to 37.5 percent depending on how loosely one defined “homosexuality.”<sup>8</sup> Bailey’s first study received a great deal of media coverage; his second study received almost no press.

Other studies in Scandinavian countries have reported concordance rates below 20 percent.<sup>9</sup>

The third and final study was heralded by the media as the discovery of the “gay gene.” Dean Hamer and his group attempted to link male homosexuality to a stretch of DNA located at the tip of the X chromosome, the chromosome that some men inherit from their mothers. In his study, Hamer examined forty pairs of non-identical twin gay brothers, and asserted that thirty-three pairs—a number significantly higher than the twenty pairs that chance would dictate—had inherited the same X-linked genetic markers from their mothers.<sup>10</sup>

Criticism of Hamer’s research came from a surprising source: Dr. Neil Risch and colleagues at Yale University School of Medicine invented the method used by Hamer. Risch commented, “Hamer et al. suggest that their results are consistent with X-linkage because maternal uncles have a higher rate of homosexual orientation than paternal uncles, and cousins related through a maternal aunt have a higher rate than other types of cousins. However, neither of these differences is statistically significant.”<sup>11</sup>

From Dean Hamer and his colleagues: “We knew that genes were only part of the answer. We assumed the environment also played a role in sexual orientation, as it does in most if not all behaviors.”<sup>12</sup> They further noted: “Homosexuality is not purely genetic.” Environment plays a role. There is not a single master gene that makes people gay: “I don’t think that we will ever be able to predict who will

be gay.”<sup>13</sup> Citing the failure of this research, Hamer and Peter Copeland concluded, “The pedigree study failed to produce what we originally hoped to find: simple Mendelian inheritance. In fact, we never found a single family in which homosexuality was distributed in the obvious sort of pattern that Mendel observed in his pea plants.”<sup>14</sup>

What is even more intriguing is that when George Rice and his associates replicated Hamer’s study with more robust methodology, the genetic markers were found to be insignificant. Rice and his fellow researchers concluded: “It is unclear why our results are so discrepant from Hamer’s original study. Because our study was larger than that of Hamer et al.’s, we certainly had adequate power to detect a genetic effect as large as reported in that study. Nonetheless, our data do not support the presence of a gene of large effect influencing sexual orientation at position XQ28.”<sup>15</sup>

Further, when asked by Anatasia Toufexis, a *Time* reporter, whether his theory ruled out social and psychological factors, Hamer’s response was: “Absolutely not. . . . From twin studies we already know that half or more of the variability in sexual orientation is not inherited. Our studies try to pinpoint the genetic factors, not to negate the psychosocial factors.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, Bradshaw’s opinion that homosexuality is primarily biologically based has little support in the research literature.

5. Bradshaw takes issue with my description of DNA. He says that his detailed criticism “should not be dismissed as academic nitpicking” but



describes the passage in question as “written by someone who is uninformed about the basics of the subject. Most importantly, however, none of this detail is necessary—although the authors allege that it is—for a reader to judge the validity of the concept that sexual orientation has its roots in biology” (Bradshaw, 174). I disagree. The book was written for the lay audience, not a scientific audience. Our explanation is accurate and similar summaries can be found in many biology books. I claim there is no gay gene that forces a person to be homosexual and this is the consensus of the scientific community. Dr. Francis Collins, former head of the Human Genome project states: “Sexual orientation is genetically influenced but not hardwired by DNA, and . . . whatever genes are involved represent predispositions, not pre-determinations.”<sup>17</sup>

6. Most disturbing is the following quote from Bradshaw: “Abbott and Byrd attempt to deal with the question of the genetic basis for sexual orientation, not by citing published research as evidence, but by offering quotations from four scientists (two geneticists and two psychologists), none of whom have published the results of laboratory or other work directly bearing on the question” (Bradshaw, 175). Assuming that Bradshaw is referring to William Byne and Bruce Parsons as well as to Richard Friedman and Jennifer Downey, he has grossly misrepresented their credentials and experience.

Both Byne and Parsons have M.D.s and Ph.D.s in neuroscience and immaculate reputations. Byne, in particular, is a stellar scientist. He is the director of the Laboratory of Neuro-

anatomy and Morphometrics at Mount Sinai School of Medicine; he also serves on the editorial boards of both the *Journal of Homosexuality* and the *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Psychotherapy*. Both of these physician-scientists have outstanding credentials. Byne and Parsons’s review of human sexual orientation was published in the prestigious *Archives of General Psychiatry*, in which they offered the following conclusion: “Recent studies postulate biologic factors as the primary basis for sexual orientation. However, there is no evidence at present to substantiate a biologic theory, just as there is no compelling evidence to support any singular psychosocial explanation. While all behavior must have an ultimate biologic substrate, the appeal of current biologic explanations for sexual orientation may derive more from dissatisfaction with the present status of psychosocial explanations than from a substantiating body of experimental data. Critical review shows the evidence favoring a biologic theory to be lacking. In an alternative model, temperamental and personality traits interact with the familial and social milieu as the individual’s sexuality emerges.”<sup>18</sup>

In this exceptional review, Byne and Parsons further note, “Conspicuously absent from most theorizing on the origins of sexual orientation is an active role of the individual in constructing his or her identity.”<sup>19</sup>

Richard Friedman and Jennifer Downey are both M.D.s and research scientists. They have academic appointments at Cornell and Columbia Universities respectively in the medi-

cal schools. Friedman and Downey authored a review very similar to that of Byne and Parson, published in the *Journal of Neuropsychiatry* and arrived at a conclusion that is remarkably similar to Byne and Parsons' (and to ours): "The authors conclude that human sexual orientation is complex and diversely experienced and that a biopsychosocial model best fits the evidence."<sup>20</sup>

In their premier text *Sexual Orientation and Psychoanalysis: Sexual Science and Clinical Practice*, Friedman and Downey state: "At clinical conferences one often hears discussants commenting that homosexuality is genetic, and, therefore, that homosexual orientation is fixed and unmodifiable. Neither assertion is true."<sup>21</sup> . . . The assertion that homosexuality is genetic is so reductionistic that it must be dismissed out of hand as a general principle of psychology."<sup>22</sup> In this forum and others, Bradshaw continues to offer his simplistic biological view of the genesis of homosexuality.

7. Bradshaw's review of the research on childhood sexual abuse (CSA) and homosexuality is inaccurate. First, he lists George Rekers as a neuropsychiatrist (Bradshaw, 180). He is not. Rekers is a clinical psychologist and is perhaps the most prominent "reparative" or change therapist in the nation. I personally contacted Rekers, and he was fully supportive of our interpretation of his research. He deemed that Bradshaw had grossly distorted his findings regarding CSA and later homosexuality.<sup>23</sup>

Regarding the effects of sexual abuse, Rekers cites, as I do, the Shrier and Johnson studies and the Fink-

elhor survey research among others.<sup>24</sup> Focusing on the Van Wyk and Geist published research, Rekers emphasizes their conclusion that "learning through experience seems to be an important pathway to later sexual preference."<sup>25</sup> Among the experiences cited were being masturbated by another male.<sup>26</sup> Rekers referred us to peer-reviewed research in the *St. Thomas Law Review* and his *Handbook of Child and Adolescent Sexual Problems*.<sup>27</sup> Rekers in his *St. Thomas Law Review* article concluded, "Child sexual abuse is frequently not reported to the authorities because many, if not most, homosexually-abused boys are reluctant to report the sexual molestation because it implies to them that they are nor normal."<sup>28</sup>

In 2005 Rekers articulated, in much the same way that we have, the research on child sexual abuse and later homosexuality, noting that a substantial proportion of individuals who later identify as homosexual experience some form of sexual abuse or exploitation.<sup>29</sup>

I, like Rekers, agree that such data are correlational and cannot establish cause and effect. Jones and Yarhouse, like Rekers, summarized the research on CSA and homosexuality, and their interpretations and conclusions are remarkably similar to ours. Citing one major study, Jones and Yarhouse noted the following: "Experience of sexual abuse as a child, in other words, more than tripled the likelihood of later reporting homosexual orientation."<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps the most disturbing of Bradshaw's commentaries on child sexual abuse was his interpretation



and dismissal of the sexual abuse experienced by Olympic diver Greg Louganis. The Louganis book offers a narrative about a young adolescent boy who has sex with a known perpetrator who is the age of the young boy's father.<sup>31</sup> Consider Louganis's description of his perpetrator: "At some point he told me that he was concerned about seeing me because I was under eighteen. Apparently, he'd been jailed in the past for picking up minors."<sup>32</sup>

Bradshaw's misinterpretation of the Tomeo et al. research is equally disturbing. Bradshaw cites personal contact with Don Templer (Bradshaw, 183) so he must have known of Templer's new study on child sexual abuse and homosexuality which has direct relevance to this topic. In this new study, Steed and Templer summarize: "The present study extends the research of Tomeo, Templer, Anderson, and Kotler. They found that 56% of gay men in contrast to 7% of heterosexual men, and 22% of lesbian women in contrast to 1% of heterosexual women, had reported homosexual molestation. Previous research also reported a history of molestation."<sup>33</sup>

Templer summarizes his research in a way that is very compatible with our interpretation. Further, in this new study, Steed and Templer concluded that individuals who were homosexually molested were more apt to indicate that the molestation had an effect on their sexual orientation than those who were heterosexually molested.<sup>34</sup>

It's clear that, on the issues regarding sexual abuse, Bradshaw is outside the boundaries of his "expertise." And

his interpretation or misinterpretation of the literature is reflected in his serious misunderstandings of harm caused by the sexual abuse of children.

The above comments call attention to just a few examples of Bradshaw's carelessness—dismissal of qualified researchers who have published in peer-reviewed journals, omission of research studies, and distortions of what the research can and cannot say about homosexuality.

8. Bradshaw takes issue with my belief that some individuals with unwanted same-sex attraction can be helped (Bradshaw, 187). I support the freedom of individuals to seek psychological care for any distress, including the distress of unwanted sexual attractions. Perhaps Bradshaw is unaware of the current psychiatric text, *Essential Psychopathology* and its view of psychological care for those distressed by unwanted homosexuality: "While many mental health care providers and professional associations have expressed considerable skepticism that sexual orientation could be changed with psychotherapy and also assumed that therapeutic attempts at reorientation would produce harm, recent empirical evidence demonstrates that homosexual orientation can indeed be therapeutically changed in motivated clients, and that reorientation therapies do not produce emotional harm when attempted."<sup>35</sup> Certainly, Bradshaw's views and opinions are at odds with this highly regarded, perhaps most authoritative, psychiatric textbook in the nation.

In conclusion, I believe that

Bradshaw's negative review of my book amounts to an attack and that it was both inaccurate and inflammatory. He says: "By taking the position that homosexuality is a chosen and changeable condition, Abbott and Byrd have written a dangerous publication that is likely to be harmful to families with gay and lesbian children" (Bradshaw, 189). He is wrong. This book provides help for those who want to diminish or eliminate their homosexual attraction and make changes in their lives. Those with unwanted same-sex attraction should be recognized and enabled to bring their lives back in harmony with God's commandments.<sup>36</sup>

#### Notes

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4. *Ibid.*, 1037.
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24. George A. Rekers, "The Development of a Homosexual Orientation," in Christopher Wolfe, ed., *Homosexuality and American Public Life* (Dallas, Tex.: Spence Publishing Company, 1999), 62–84.
25. *Ibid.*, 73.
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28. Rekers, "The Development of a Homosexual Orientation," in the *Handbook of Child and Adolescent Sexual Problems*, 415.
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### Bradshaw Replies

Some of Douglas Abbott's criticisms of my review of his book (*Encouraging Heterosexuality: Helping Children Develop a Traditional Sexual Orientation*, re-

viewed 43, no. 4 [Winter 2010]: 171–91), co-authored with Dean Byrd, merit a response; some do not. I will attempt to address the former in ways that permit *Dialogue* readers to judge the validity of the arguments.

*With regard to bias.* No one who conducts an empirical investigation in or out of science begins on completely neutral ground. We all begin with a certain point of view; the questions we ask reflect a particular perspective. Is the work of a Harvard biologist suspect because he refocused his research on the development of the pancreas on learning that his child was afflicted with Type I diabetes? What is disturbing is Abbott's implicit suggestion that LGBT investigators exploring an aspect of homosexuality are incapable of honesty and that their work is therefore not trustworthy. "Let him who is without bias cast the first stone."

*With regard to cause.* Please note Abbott's model and his strategy for defending it: There can be a role for biology ("I don't discount biological factors")—but not really. "Please note that when we use the term *genes* as a contributing factor we are not referring to biology as a direct, causative agent in homosexuality. When we say genes we mean genetically based physical or personality traits that may influence a person's temperament and social interaction. This could in turn lead to opportunities for homosexual socialization and interaction. Genes are NOT posited to be a direct cause of homosexual behavior" (*Encouraging Heterosexuality*, 49). Though "causes are difficult to find and to prove absolutely," "contributing actors have been identified such as poor parent-child re-

lationships and sexual abuse" (*Encouraging Heterosexuality*, p. 34). That's the model.

The strategy, then, is to attempt to discredit high-profile scientific studies by parading the tired inaccuracies that Dean Byrd has employed repeatedly over the years. First, Simon LeVay's observation that a collection of neurons in the hypothalamus (INAH-3) is larger in heterosexual men than in straight women or gay men is valid. It has been confirmed in the laboratory of William Byne, who also showed that this difference in the brain could not be attributed to the presence of HIV AIDS. It is time for responsible individuals to stop denying this reality. The irony here is that this is the same Byne whose credentials Abbott applauds in his letter and whose 1993 review article Abbott holds up as *the* source for evaluating homosexuality research. Readers are free, like Abbott and Byrd, to accept Byne's appraisal of the state of the art in 1993 as currently applicable, thus ignoring the enormous body of research data that has accumulated in the nineteen years since then.

Second, Dean Hamer twice found evidence that one of the responsible genes might be found on the X chromosome. The Canadian group (Rice) was not able to replicate his findings. This does not mean that there is no such gene on that chromosome or that other relevant genes are not located elsewhere. It means that finding the genes that influence sexual orientation is hard.

*Third, the twin studies.* The various international studies share the common factor of demonstrating a strong

genetic component to homosexuality. Why, then, are some pairs of identical twins discordant for sexual orientation? Environment? If so, does environment mean "poor parenting and sexual abuse"?

Please endure a brief biology lesson. A chromosome consists of a molecule of DNA, one very, very long double helix. But that's not all. The DNA is packaged in a structural complex with aggregates of proteins (histones). The whole assembly is called chromatin. The histones in chromatin tend to prevent the genes (linear units of biochemical information) in the chromosome from being expressed. When a gene is expressed, the information in DNA is processed by complicated mechanisms, the end result of which is the production of proteins. Think insulin, hemoglobin, collagen, and the thousands of other biochemical "machines" that enable blood cells, heart cells, brain cells, etc., to perform their specialized functions.

This is a summary description, at the molecular level, of biology. (Apologies to my ecologist colleagues.) Steroid hormones (or lack thereof) change a person's reproductive physiology and romantic attractions; development of the brain results in left- or right-handedness and the fact that men and women (and gays and straights) differ in some aspects of hearing—all of these events have been preceded by the switching on or off of genes. Biological factors are ultimately genetic factors. There is no meaningful distinction.

So with regard to sexual orientation, have the specific relevant genes been identified to date? No. Is it possi-

ble that the many demonstrated biological differences between LGBT and straight people could have resulted without the expression of genes? No. What do the most qualified and reputable geneticists see as the result of future research? "It is likely that such genes [controlling sexual orientation] will be found in the next few years," according to Francis S. Collins, current director of the National Institutes of Health.<sup>1</sup>

Now, one more important concept. Pick out a cell from any two organs, brain and skin, for example. Compare the sequence of information in DNA between the two. They are identical. I repeat: identical. There is absolutely no difference between the two. That means brain genes are expressed (turned on) in brain cells and brain genes are turned off in skin cells. And so on. How is this differential regulation of gene function achieved? The responsible mechanisms are termed "epigenetic," meaning "on top of the genes." Epigenetic chemical modifications of both the DNA and the histones around which the DNA is wrapped can cause some genes to function and other genes to remain silent. Such regulatory events are responsible for what happens in an embryo—differentiating brain and skin.

With regard to sexual orientation, subtle variations in the timing, location (type of cell), or magnitude of these events in the brain are the likely explanation for why one man in an identical twin pair is straight, and his brother is gay. In this case, the "environmental" regulation of gene expression is not to be found in the ex-

ternal surroundings of an individual (temperature, diet, parental care, social interactions, etc.), but, instead, in the molecular interactions taking place internally, in the environment in which DNA finds itself in the nuclei of cells, in chromatin.

*Simplifying science.* To offer simplified explanations of complex phenomena is certainly laudable. But Abbott's description of the structure of DNA is not simplified, it's just wrong. In addition, I don't understand why there is uncertainty about the identity of the "two geneticists and two psychologists" cited in *Encouraging Heterosexuality* following the DNA discussion just mentioned. There they are (*Encouraging Heterosexuality*, 21–22): Collins, Lewontin, Stein, and Baker—not the others about whom Abbott feels he must guess.

In defense of his misreporting the data in a paper (Tomeo et al.) that he cited in *Encouraging Heterosexuality*, Abbott suggests that I should have acknowledged the work in another paper (Steed and Templer) by the same senior author, which he did not cite because it was published *after* his book was in print. The contention is that this new paper "is very compatible with our interpretation" that childhood sexual abuse is a causative factor in adult homosexuality.

Please note these important details. A single item that was employed in the Steed and Templer survey is relevant: "Do you believe that experience [sexual contact] has an impact on your sexual orientation?" These authors acknowledge the ambiguity inherent in this wording ("it is not known what various participants meant by 'im-

pact'"). They then list the possibilities: homosexuality would not have occurred absent the molestation, molestation accelerated an already emerging homosexual orientation, molestation had a non-sexual negative consequence; or the experience may have stimulated hypersexuality. Thus "*The reader is urged to use great caution regarding the making of cause-and-effect inferences.*"<sup>2</sup> How is it possible for Abbott to believe that he can accurately convey the significance of this paper by omitting mention of this crucial commentary by its authors?

It is more than a little curious that Abbott should introduce George Rekers into the conversation. Please note, first, that my complaint in the review was not about Reker's views, but about Abbott and Byrd's misquotation of his words; and second, he is listed at the University of South Carolina as a professor of neuropsychiatry.) This is the same George Rekers who gained widespread notoriety in May 2010 when he hired a male prostitute through Rentboy.com in Miami to accompany him on a trip to Europe. ("His function was to carry my luggage.") Rekers subsequently resigned his role as consultant and board member with NARTH. One's personal hypocrisy does not necessarily invalidate his professional work. But in this case Reker's behavior certainly invites the question of whether or not his vehement efforts to prevent adoption by LGBT couples, as one example of his anti-gay activism, are a reflection of the internal self-loathing of a gay man.



Readers who remain in doubt about any of the issues of fact or interpretation discussed above, or those not addressed (such as whether or not the sexual relationship that Greg Louganis had with an older man was the cause of his homosexuality) are invited to search the original documents for themselves. It will take some time and effort, but all are accessible awaiting the reader's independent judgment.

*Regarding changing a person's sexual orientation.* Indisputable evidence is accumulating that failure to realize the promises made by ecclesiastical leaders and reparative therapists that a change in sexual orientation is possible has had dire consequences for a large number of LGBT Latter-day Saints. Consider the impact on belief when years, even decades, of fervent pleadings with God, hyper-activity at church, accelerated efforts at personal righteousness, and therapeutic counseling do not change one's same-sex erotic attractions. How long can self-esteem remain intact in the face of this experience? When does one begin to conclude that he or she is not worthy before God, or that "God doesn't care," or that "God doesn't care about me," or that "maybe there's no God after all"? Many of our brothers and sisters, thankfully, adopt more rational goals. Others take their own lives.

And what of the spouses, who consciously or unknowingly entered into marriage with a gay husband or lesbian wife supposing that together they could succeed where others had failed? There had been assurances from authoritative sources: "After you're married, it will all work out." What happens when the homosexual

attractions remain, and the self-respect of those spouses is severely damaged by a sense of not being adequate, and once-unthinkable strains crack the relationship beyond the point when it can endure? What of the hurt? What of the heartache?

I say: Enough of empty promises. Acceptance, instead, of reasonable options that hold some hope for happiness.

Abbott's letter, rather than providing vindication of the claims of his book, is a perpetuation of its very serious flaws.

#### Notes

1. "Geneticist Francis Collins Responds to NARTH'S Dean Byrd," <http://www.boxturtlebulletin.com/2007/05/25/389> (accessed May 2008).

2. J. J. Steed and D. I. Templer, "Gay Men and Lesbian Women with Molestation History: Impact on Sexual Orientation and Experience of Pleasure," *The Open Psychology Journal* 3 (2010): 36-41; quotation from p. 40, emphasis mine.

William S. Bradshaw  
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#### *Insider's Vantage Point*

I was most gratified to read Armand L. Mauss's analysis of a cultural shift that I contribute to every day but rarely have the perspective to appreciate in a broader historical context. (See "Rethinking Retrenchment: Course Corrections in the Ongoing Campaign for Respectability," 44, no. 4 [Winter 2011]: 1-42.) My perspective is that of an external marketer at Bonneville Communications directly

with the Church on the “I’m a Mormon” campaign and Mormon.org.

From my insider’s vantage point, I believe I can build on Mauss’s study of our current assimilation by clarifying that it is the Missionary Department, not the Public Affairs Department, that is sponsoring and championing Mormon.org and the “I’m a Mormon” campaign. While this might seem an insignificant distinction for one not familiar with the Church’s institutional structure, it actually puts a finer point on Mauss’s proof that the institutional Church is broadly supporting assimilation. While Mauss is correct in identifying Public Affairs as the most “transparent” Church department engaged in the current outreach because of its direct and personable interaction with the popular media, it is not the only department to be praised as “proactive” or “expansive.”

There are, in fact, are a host of individuals and departments up to the top levels of the hierarchy who are producing and supporting media communications that more effectively and relevantly place Mormonism in the cultural conversation, and Mike Otterson’s visionary and capable leadership is a public extension of a broad-based emphasis. For instance, the Church’s media and technology departments, in partnership with my team, have just released an iPad app with interactive maps and information to support the Bible videos currently being filmed in Goshen, Utah. This unusually ecumenical “gift to the world” was conceived and produced completely apart from Public Affairs.

Additional projects such as the Mormon Messages videos (which have

recently used some very un-Mormony stylized animations), the Mormon.org Facebook page (which promoted a “Countdown to Christmas” series of artistic posts with no Church branding on them), and BYUtv (which recently launched a new lineup of shows with an extremely light institutional footprint) demonstrate a pervasive and proactive effort to represent ourselves with rhetoric, art, and imagery that resonate outside our own culture.

Mauss wonders aloud if these institutional nudgings are specifically intended to shift perceptibly our own internal culture as well as the general public’s understanding of who we are, or whether this self-reflection is merely an “unintended consequence” of defining ourselves so publicly. While not the primary motivation for projects coming out of the Missionary Department or any other Church department, awareness of the internal impact is always close to the surface of strategic conversations. The internal cultural tensions we are working out among ourselves are very much intended, even though Mauss assumes the “external image-making professionals” such as myself are not specifically tasked with such a shift.

I argue as a marketer that, although academia is where our thinkers capably work out what we believe in this era of assimilation, it is through externally asserting our definition of self that our people work out how we act on those beliefs. Even though Mauss cites in his conclusion a “discrepancy” between internal and external image-making, I say it is this “exaggerated impression” of our pub-



lic communication that shifts internally; thus, the two cannot and should not be so cleanly delineated.

*Neylan McBaine  
Salt Lake City*

### ***Post-Heterosexual Theology***

Let me begin by outlining what does and does not motivate me in writing a response to Taylor Petrey's carefully executed, unmistakably informed, rightly concerned, and entirely productive essay, "Toward a Post-Heterosexual Mormon Theology" (44, no. 4 [Winter 2011]: 106-44.)

I'm not particularly exercised—*theologically or ethically*—by the issue of homosexuality and the Church. I have read with interest most of the major publications on the question, but my interest has been and is driven by what most would call ancillary concerns. That said, I share Petrey's project in many ways—especially if his project is kept within the bounds set by the title of his piece. If the task is to get clear about divine embodiment, to sort out what's at stake in Joseph Smith's beautiful vision of sociality coupled with immortal glory, to determine what can be meant by the relatively recent idea of eternal gender, and to do all this by critiquing every crippling limitation of these concepts to a post-war American nuclear family life that has as often masked infidelity, abuse, and boredom as it has been the locus of genuine joy (post-heterosexual in that sense), then I couldn't be happier to take up with Petrey in the theological battle he announces in the article.

You see, for all Petrey says about

theologically envisioning the possibility of sealed homosexual relationships, he doesn't do any actual work on constructing a Mormon queer theory in his essay. He takes as his task, rather, just to clear the theological ground for the possibility of a Mormon queer theory, and that's worth doing—though for me that clearing of the ground serves other purposes. Of course, I'd be interested to see a well-done Mormon queer theory, but I've got no inclinations for or against it in advance. I'm just not particularly exercised by these questions.

So what exercises me? The Restoration—nailing down what's at stake in what I wish we wouldn't hesitate to call the truth of Mormonism. If that truth is—I would say: has always been—post-heterosexual (as I suspect it is and has been), then our theological work should reflect it. And so I welcome Petrey's work. But I want also to offer a point or two of criticism linked to three major issues of his article: the tensions it highlights, reproduction and sealing, and eternal gender.

There is a crucial tension in Petrey's essay, one that threatens—but only threatens—to unsettle the whole undertaking. This tension is most clearly on display in the essay's conclusion. Petrey says there: "The possibility of creating theological space within Mormonism for homosexual relationships rests not on the abandonment of any central doctrine of the Church, but rather on the revival of past concepts, the recovery of embedded theological resources, and the rearticulation of existing ideas in

more expansive terms in order to rethink the possibilities of celestial relationships” (128).

My heart beats to the rhythm of these words. But then Petrey goes on:

The numerous critiques of the category of gender in recent years cannot be ignored, even if Latter-day Saints opt for a continued emphasis on binary sexual difference. Whether from the critique of gender roles, gender essentialist notions of innate characteristics, or even the notion of biological difference itself, LDS theology faces serious credibility issues by continuing to hold to precritical assumptions about sexual difference. At the same time, however, there is nothing preventing Latter-day Saints from moving past these assumptions in order to more clearly focus on Mormonism’s distinctive teachings about kinship and salvation, which does not require an appeal to the suspect category of gender at all. (129)

The rhythm seems suddenly off here. Petrey is unquestionably right that the category of gender as usually understood by Latter-day Saints is suspect, but to call for an abandonment of the idea of eternal gender is, quite precisely, to claim that there is need to abandon a central doctrine of the Church. This tension is crucial to critiquing “Toward a Post-Heterosexual Mormon Theology.” Is there a way to sort out the question of gender without simply “moving past” it? Are there “past concepts,” “embedded theological resources,” or “existing ideas” that can be drawn on to counter the “gender trouble” Petrey quite rightly identifies?

Petrey’s article comes in three parts, each associated with one aspect of “the theological objection to homosexual relationships . . . in current LDS understandings of the afterlife and the kinds of relationships that will exist there” (108). The first section of the article tackles the question of “celestial reproduction,” the second that of “sealings as kinship,” the third that of “eternal gender.” Before coming to gender, I want to say something about the first two sections of the essay, the sections where I think Petrey’s work not only succeeds but shines.

The strategy Petrey employs in “Celestial Reproduction” is to produce a doctrinal *reductio ad absurdum*. He does this in two ways. First, he makes clear that there is no official account of the idea and that the several unofficial accounts are at best problematic (and at worst incoherent). Second and more provocatively, he turns to actual official sources (principally scripture) to show that there are accounts of divine creation, production, and even reproduction that provide an anything-but-heterosexually-reproductive picture of divine creation.

Everything Petrey does here is brilliant, and it is all something that has been needed for a long time—whether it is subsequently to be employed in constructing a Mormon queer theory or whether it is simply to be used to clarify what is at stake in divine embodiment and the basics of Mormon theology.

The strategy in “Sealings as Kinship” is different. Here Petrey takes up the role, not of the doctrinal stu-

dent of scripture, but of the historian. In a kind of Foucauldian gesture, he shows that the way Latter-day Saints currently think about the meaning of the sealing ordinance is anything but the only way it has been thought about in the relatively short history of Mormonism. He argues that current attitudes about the nuclear family derive from distinctly twentieth-century sources (sources most Latter-day Saints would cringe at!), and then goes on to describe how earlier generations of Latter-day Saints—with prophets leading the way—have conceived of what is at the heart of the sealing ordinances. Drawing on these historical sources, Petrey shows that the current interpretation prevailing in Mormon discourse is a remarkably narrow conception that misses the richness of Restoration—the richness that folks like Kathleen Flake, Jonathan Stapley, and Samuel Brown have been talking about in settings too far removed from everyday Mormons to receive the attention they deserve. Here, again, everything Petrey does is brilliant and revealing.

So far, then, so good. Everything in the first two parts of the essay see Petrey modeling precisely what he talks about in the beautiful words from his conclusion: “the revival of past concepts, the recovery of embedded theological resources, and the rearticulation of existing ideas in more expansive terms in order to rethink the possibilities of celestial relationships” (128). This is clearly what Petrey aims to do—even, I believe, in the last part of the essay, where the tension I’ve already mentioned begins to be felt.

Petrey starts out, I think, quite well in the third part of his essay on eternal

gender. He points out that Latter-day Saints—at least in official publications—use the word “gender” in a lazy way. The consequence is that it is used to refer to three distinct things all at once: “the morphological bodies of males and females,” “an ‘identity’ that males and females are supposed to possess,” and “different ‘roles,’ purposes, and responsibilities that some Church leaders understand to be assigned to males and females” (121).

That’s right. And Petrey is more than right to suggest that this sloppy usage is problematic. He’s right also when he goes on to point out: “When one adds the idea of gender as an eternal characteristic, these three definitions become even more complicated” (121). Even more complicated? Yes. But is that complication a bad thing, as I think Petrey implies? No. Or that, at any rate, is what I want to argue.

Now, before I take up my quibble, I want to make sure I’m not misunderstood. In arguing on behalf of eternal gender, I do not mean to suggest that there is *nothing* problematic with the way Latter-day Saints talk about gender. I entirely agree with Petrey that “LDS theology faces serious credibility issues by continuing to hold to precritical assumptions about sexual difference” (129). I offer no defense of natural or inherent sexual identity. My argument is rather that the theological gesture, made in “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” concerning eternal gender, can be utilized as a theological resource against naturalism or inherentism, rather than being interpreted

as an attempt at securing naturalism or inherentism. And I want to claim further that the fully faithful tone Petrey strikes in the first two parts of his essay might only be sustainable in a critique of gender if eternal gender is taken as an existing idea to be rearticulated in more expansive terms and not as a theological *faux pas* to be abandoned.

Now, Petrey's discussion of gender in the third part of essay remains, it seems to me, within a classic polarity. Gender is either essential or constructed. He aligns the Latter-day Saint position—taken, he says, from the “semi-canonical 1995 document ‘The Family: A Proclamation to the World’” (p. 120)—with essentialism, and he positions himself on the side of constructivism. That wouldn't necessarily spell trouble in itself, except that Petrey goes on to claim, more implicitly than explicitly, that essentialism is always precritical. That simply isn't the case. There are sophisticated, critical essentialist positions (the work of Luce Irigaray comes naturally to mind), and it is more than possible—and perhaps worthwhile—to explore the compatibility of Mormon theology with such positions. Consequently, Petrey comes across as believing that constructivism, particularly as articulated by Judith Butler, has had the last—and only critical—say on gender. That, too, simply isn't the case.

It isn't the case in part because there are sophisticated and perhaps defensible essentialist positions. But it also isn't the case because there are positions one can take that break with the essentialist/constructivist polarity, something Petrey fails to acknowl-

edge. I'll cite just one name: Alain Badiou. Whatever one thinks of Badiou's work, he has unquestionably provided a position on gender that is neither essentialist nor constructivist, and I, for one, am convinced that it deserves the attention of Mormon theologians. In particular, I think Badiou's take on sexual difference deserves attention because it argues for a strong notion of eternal gender without falling into any of the confusions Petrey associates with the essentialist position.

Taking the Badiouian road in thinking about gender, one can affirm what has become a central Mormon doctrine (the eternal nature of gender) without having to argue problematically that gender is inherent or natural. In other words, Badiou points up a way of embracing claims about eternal gender without falling into the difficulty Petrey rightly assigns to most Mormon thinking about gender: “gender ‘identity’ cannot be both inherent and taught” (p. 124).

Thus, while it's crucial for Latter-day Saint theologians to move past precritical notions of gender—on this point Petrey is absolutely right, and he has my thanks for putting this point in print—to do so is not necessarily to move past gender essentialism, as Petrey seems to suggest, nor is it necessarily to settle into gender constructivism, as Petrey also seems to suggest.

My concern here is not that Petrey is a gender constructivist—though I'd certainly like to debate the merits of Butler and Badiou when he and I have some time to do so. My concern

is rather that his way of staging his predilection for gender constructivism ends up introducing into his work the tension I discussed earlier. It is quite as important in this third stretch of the post-heterosexual theological road as in the previous two stretches to sustain an unmistakably faithful tone. I worry, in other words, about Petrey's discussion of gender because it is there—and there alone—that some might accuse him of a kind of unfaithfulness.

I don't want Petrey to be accusable of such a thing, not only because I'm convinced that his motivations are indeed faithful, but also because I'm convinced that real headway on Mormonism's truth can only be made when the theologian's faithfulness can't be missed. (I'm thinking here of Elder Neal A. Maxwell's comment about Hugh Nibley in the documentary *Faith of an Observer*: "His commitment is so visible and has been so pronounced and so repetitively stated that that's not even the issue. So we get on to 'What is Hugh saying?'" )

In conclusion, I believe, then, that I can travel the whole of Petrey's road with him, though I think I have a few animated words to share during the last leg of the journey—optimistic words, words in the spirit of his own instructive words during the first two legs of the journey. But at the end of "Toward a Post-Heterosexual Mormon Theology," we come to a crossroad. I'm happy to see Petrey travel down the path of imagining positive possibilities for homosexual relationships within Mormon theology. Indeed, I'm eager to see what he discovers as he travels that way, and I hope he writes back with news. My own journey,

driven by other theological concerns, takes me down a different path, onto which I should hurry.

In the meanwhile, though, I'm more than happy to have had the company. And hopefully Petrey has been happy to have had mine as well.

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### ***Schlock or Shock?***

I enjoyed Michael Hicks's insights and interpretation of the Broadway musical, *The Book of Mormon*. (See Michael Hicks, "Elder Price Superstar," 44, no. 4 [Winter 2011]: 226–36.) However, I was surprised that he endorsed profanity as the language best suited for helping the masses understand what makes the Church tick and talk. He used his pious mother's one-word description of her failed marriage as an example of how "cursing is the most honest speech" (226). Actually, her one word, "shitty," conveys feeling, not honesty. If, instead, she had used a more precise, yet similarly pithy explanation, like, say, "abusive" or "unfaithful" or "alcoholic" or "boring," Hicks would have been much more enlightened about the marriage.

But profanity allows reason and understanding to hide behind surprise. That's because profanity is more inciteful (if that's a word) than insightful. It exclaims, not explains. And used often enough, it doesn't even do that, so those interested in shock and awe theatrics continually reach for new highs by plunging to new lows. For example, repetition long ago wore out the once mighty

meanings of “son of a bitch” and “bastard,” phrases that now dribble from the mouths of the angered, surprised, or amused rather than from dutiful genealogists.

Quite probably, the success of the play depends more on introducing new approaches to titillating jaded au-

diences than to the joy of its music. In short, the artists behind the staging of *The Book of Mormon* offered a skewed insight into most things Mormon by offsetting schlock with shock.

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# Home and Adventure: An LDS Contribution to the Virtues and Vices Tradition

*Shawn R. Tucker*

Recent years have seen renewed scholarly interest in the tradition of the virtues and vices.<sup>1</sup> This tradition has roots in both Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman ethics, and reached the height of its Western cultural importance during the medieval period. Since that time, many artists and thinkers have continued and further developed the virtues and vices tradition. Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96) and Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* (1791) both expand this tradition, with Spenser's lively stories about the power of virtue and the danger of vice and with Franklin's description of his aborted attempt at a handbook on "The Art of Virtue." In addition, Oscar Rejlander's landmark photograph *Two Ways of Life* (1857) is an allegory of the contrasting paths of virtue and vice. Other artists have focused particularly on the seven deadly sins, notably Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht in their *The Seven Deadly Sins* (1933) and the series by American artist Paul Cadmus titled *The Seven Deadly Sins* (1945-49).

Though Mormons are, of course, interested in virtue and vice, the lack of direct engagement with this tradition raises this question: Could there be a meaningful LDS contribution to the virtues and vices tradition? This article explores the possibility of just such an LDS contribution, beginning with a brief introduction to the tradition and an examination of four lists of virtues common to LDS culture. Such a survey reveals the important pedagogical aspect of the virtues and vices tradition.

To this examination is added an LDS configuration of virtue



and vice founded on Mormonism's theological views about a premortal existence. I argue that, based on that belief, virtue or vice are proper or improper expressions of human drives for "home" and for "adventure." While humans come to earth with no clear recollection of the premortal world, it could be said that LDS theology makes possible the notion that people have an innate desire to again experience the love felt in an original heavenly "home." But it was in that heavenly home where those who are now mortal made the choice to journey on and face the "adventure" and challenge of mortality. These premortal experiences can be seen as the source of twin, complementary desires for the security and acceptance of "home" and the drive to "adventurously" grow to achieve a divine potential.

This LDS configuration of virtue and vice as proper or improper expressions of drives for "home" and "adventure" becomes clearer when it is compared with other traditional configurations. One such configuration is the medieval tradition of Trees of Virtue and of Vice. Such images, like the LDS lists of virtues, served an important pedagogical function, as they illustrated the opposing "fruits" or outcomes of lives dominated either by humility or by pride. In addition to such visual configurations, Dante's second book of the *Divine Comedy*, the *Purgatory*, provides a compelling configuration in the form of a metaphorical "whip" and "bridle." Dante's metaphor compares the training of animals by using the stimulating "whip" and the restraining "bridle" to how people might be compelled toward virtue and controlled from vice. Similarly, drives for "home" and "adventure" must be properly encouraged as well as controlled. When such drives are successfully or unsuccessfully employed, they bring about the "fruits" evident in the Trees of Virtue and Vice. The complementary interplay of these drives, therefore, either results in one's most fundamental wilting and death or ultimate growth and flourishing.

#### **LDS Lists of Virtue**

As mentioned at the outset, the virtues and vices tradition has both Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman roots.<sup>2</sup> Plato's *Republic*, for example, lists and describes four key virtues: wisdom, temperance, fortitude, and justice. Paul's faith, hope, and charity add the



completing trio to produce the conventional list of seven virtues. The seven standard vices of pride, anger, envy, sloth, gluttony, greed, and lust developed independently of the virtues, adapted over time from lists of nefarious “evil thoughts” described by Evagrius and John Cassian.<sup>3</sup> One of the first texts to bring these two lists together was Gregory the Great’s *Magna Moralia* or *Commentary on Job* (CE 578–95).

Over time, the virtues and vices tradition served a number of different purposes. The tradition of seven deadly sins is at the heart of early medieval penitential manuals like the *Penitential of Cummean* (ca. 650).<sup>4</sup> St Thomas Aquinas employs the virtues and vices tradition in the *Summa Theologica*’s systematic doctrinal compendium. The tradition is part of powerful dramas about the human soul, like Hildegard of Bingen’s *Ordo Virtutum* (ca. 1151) and Christopher Marlow’s *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1594). Works dealing with the preparation of one’s soul for death like Thomas More’s *The Four Last Things* (1522) and Hieronymus Bosch’s *The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* (1500–1510) also strongly engage this tradition. Finally, there is also a substantial tradition of satirical works that use the virtues and vices as their basis, including Gervais de Bus and Chaillou de Pestain’s *Le Roman de Fauvel* (1310–16), Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht’s *The Seven Deadly Sins* (1933), and even a recent story in *The Onion* with the headline, “All Seven Deadly Sins Committed at Church Bake Sale” (2001).

As one key purpose for enumerating and describing virtue and vice is to encourage positive attributes and discourage negative ones, these schemata often appear in pedagogical contexts. Such an aspect goes back to Plato’s description of ideal Guardians in his *Republic* and Cicero’s commendation of virtue to his son in his work *Of Duties* (44 BCE). Decorations on churches and cathedrals as well as monastic and princely manuals vividly portrayed lessons of virtue and vice. Paintings and prints by artists like Giotto, Peter Brueghel the Elder, and Paolo Veronese served similar functions. Even in an increasingly nonreligious world, murals by artists like Diego Rivera and films like Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927) persuade people away from vice by showing its dire consequences.

While Mormons produce innumerable sermons about partic-

**TABLE**  
**FOUR “LDS” LISTS OF VIRTUES**

<i>D&amp;C 4:5–6</i>	<i>Thirteenth Article of Faith</i>	<i>Scout Law</i>	<i>Young Women Values</i>
Faith (repeated twice)	Honest	Trustworthy	Faith
Hope	True	Loyal	Divine nature
Charity (repeated twice)	Chaste	Helpful	Individual worth
Love	Benevolent	Friendly	Knowledge
An eye single to the glory of God	Virtuous	Courteous	Choice and accountability
Virtue	Doing good to all men	Kind	Good works
Knowledge	Faith	Obedient	Integrity
Temperance	Hope	Cheerful	Virtue
Patience	Perseverance	Thrifty	
Brotherly kindness	Seek after the virtuous, the lovely, that which is of good report or praiseworthy	Brave	
Godliness		Clean	
Humility		Reverent	
Diligence			

ular virtues and vices, they do not specifically engage the virtues and vices tradition. In fact, most Mormons would probably be hard pressed to list either the canonical virtues or vices. That is not to say that Mormons do not have their own tradition of virtues and vices; rather, it means that Mormon iterations are largely detached from the older, more established tradition. However, there are in fact four lists of virtues that are common and prevalent in Mormon culture, all strongly tied to pedagogy. Mormons do not typically use systematic ideas of virtue and vice for confessional purposes, to prepare for death, or for satire, but the inculcation of specific virtues is a dominant goal. (See the four lists of virtues in Table 1.)

While there may be other lists, these four are the most commonly encountered and repeated lists of virtues in current LDS

culture. The chart presents these lists in the chronological order in which they entered Mormon culture. Of the four, the Scout Law is the most anomalous, for the obvious reason that it was not developed by LDS authors for a specific LDS purpose. This list also seems the least God-centered, as “reverent” is the only quality that has a religious resonance.

The Young Women Values is also idiosyncratic, though not as divergent from standard lists of virtues as the Scout Law. The Young Women Values are not stated exactly as a “list of virtues” but instead as a list of key, cherished principles. It is also important to note that, in the Young Women’s list, “virtue” has little to do with its original meaning, taken from the Latin to mean qualities of “manliness,” or human power, excellence, and achievement. Rather, it is perhaps better stated as sexual purity, the meaning it typically held in the eighteenth century as, for example, in the novels of English author Samuel Richardson.

The other two lists, both scribed by Joseph Smith, seem to differ only by how they elaborate on the qualities one should develop. Both place a premium on the traditional Pauline theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity or love. The list from the Doctrine and Covenants is a revelation for those who would “embark in the service of God” (D&C 4:2). As such, this list emphasizes those qualities that would align an individual with God and ensure completely consecrated service—service carried out with one’s entire “heart, might, mind, and strength” (D&C 4:2). Joseph’s enumeration for the Articles of Faith lists qualities that all members should seek and that the Church as a whole upholds and encourages. Seeking that which is “virtuous, lovely, of good report, or praiseworthy” gives the sense of how Mormons would bring all that is good to Zion, but having an “eye single to the glory of God” is a more pointed directive to those attempting to do God’s work as missionaries.

It may be appealing to create even greater harmony in the lists. Could one not make a single, comprehensive list that would take into account all of the virtues? Could not such a list apply to those who would serve—to Zion as a whole, and then more specifically for training young men and young women? I take the position that part of these lists’ value is their very variety, the way that they call to the mind different but complementary qualities.

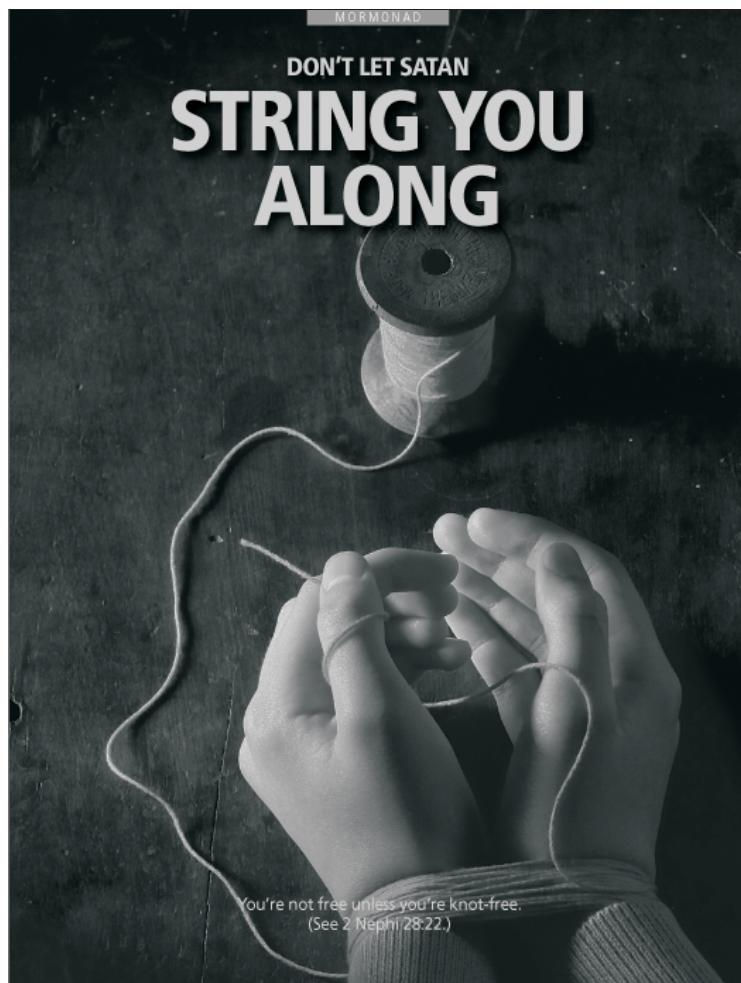
“Brotherly kindness” suits one list while being “helpful,” “friendly,” and “courteous” on another list gives beneficial variety in describing similar qualities. Another example of this helpful variety is how “honest” appears on one list, seems to appear as “trustworthy” and “loyal” on another, while a third list could account for a similar quality with “integrity.”

Finally, what is perhaps most obvious about these lists is their pedagogical place and power. This chart shows the virtues that are encouraged by those in the pre-teen Primary program (the memorized and recited thirteenth Article of Faith), the Scouting program (the Scout Law), the Young Women program (the Young Women Values), and missionary training (D&C 4:5–6). Examined in this respect, the Scout Law, Young Women Values, and Doctrine and Covenants 4:5–6 are carefully attuned instructions in virtue for their particular audiences. It is clear, then, that Mormons have a strong tradition of the pedagogical use of lists of virtues. Those lists share a similar Pauline source with the traditional virtues but seem to be derived independently and have only their shared pedagogical purpose in common with historical iterations of virtues and vices.

Finally, while there is no tradition of a list of vices or seven deadly sins in Mormon culture, the bold and graphic ways that MormonAds encourage virtue and discourage vice connects them, tangentially, to similarly functioning traditional images. One example is a 2008 MormonAd that uses the image of a vise to teach how “small vices” can put one in a “big squeeze” (Figure 1). MormonAds typically use visual and verbal plays on words with the simple, graphic imagery that contemporary youth are familiar with in advertising. Taken as a whole, MormonAds seem much less systematically developed and deployed for a particular audience than the four lists explored above.

### **Home and Adventure**

Lists of virtues and MormonAds are examples of pedagogical uses of virtue and vice in Mormon culture. Though they are useful and though they show similar functions as works in the established tradition, they do not, of themselves, make a significant contribution to the tradition. They do not help us reexamine the tradition. A configuration based on LDS beliefs that does poten-



*New Era, February 1992, 37. Photography by Jed Clark.*

tially help us reexamine the tradition is one founded on the idea of an innate desire for “home” and “adventure.” My discussion of a powerful drive for home has its genesis in insights that Barta Heiner, an acting and theater professor at Brigham Young University, offered during her 2008 BYU forum presentation, “Counterfeits: A Mess of Pottage.” In this presentation, Heiner talks about how she teaches her acting students that, in order to play a charac-

ter, one must connect with that character's objectives and super-objectives. She explains that objectives are what a character wants from a scene or act; super-objectives are what characters want from life. Heiner refutes the commonly taught idea that all super-objectives are essentially sexual.

To teach her approach to acting, Heiner reports that she sometimes talks with her students about the premortal existence. In that premortal world, she remarks, "we enjoyed the all-encompassing love of a Father in Heaven."<sup>5</sup> She further elaborates that, although we have no clear memory of that place, "the longing is still there"<sup>6</sup> and that what we hunger to feel again is that divine love. Heiner proposes that some people glimpse and understand that yearning, while others know that they have a need but cannot properly identify it. Those who do not know what their real need is often find only counterfeits. Heiner comments that "some choose power, fame, drugs, lust, or other forms of gratification."<sup>7</sup> The longing that Heiner describes is what could be called the desire for home. This desire, stemming from our premortal existence, is a powerful super-objective or overarching and compelling drive.

To Heiner's insight about our longing for home, we could postulate a complementary drive, the drive for adventure. We can extrapolate from the little that is presented in Mormon belief about the premortal existence that people here in mortality chose to leave home, to go away, and to take a great risk when they chose to keep their "first estate." Mormon theology does not explain how much we knew about the risk we were taking, or the adventure upon which we were embarking. Still, it seems logical to conclude that, from these earliest experiences, our souls are driven both toward home and toward adventure. Brigham Young seems to have had this idea of adventure in mind when he spoke about the importance of improvement. On this subject, he said:

The first great principle that ought to occupy the attention of mankind, that should be understood by the child and the adult, and which is the main spring of all action, whether people understand it or not, is the principle of improvement. The principle of increase, of exaltation, of adding to that we already possess, is the grand moving principle and cause of the actions of the children of men. No matter what their pursuits are, in what nation they were born, with what

people they have been associated, what religion they profess, or what politics they hold, this is the main spring of the actions of the people, embracing all the powers necessary in performing the duties of life.<sup>8</sup>

Brigham Young uses the word “improvement,” and it is common among Mormons to hear mortality described as a test, a trial, or a school. Elder Bruce C. Hafen comments: “This earth is not our home. We are away at school, trying to master the lessons of ‘the great plan of happiness’ so we can return home and *know what it means to be there*.”<sup>9</sup> “Improvement,” “test,” “trial,” “progression,” or “school” are all similar terms for an impulse that can also be described as the drive for adventure. I prefer this term to other options because “adventure” is uncommon and therefore may be fresher to the mind, but also because it seems to honor the risk-taking, the courage, and even the righteous ambition inherent in this primary motivator, super-objective, or “grand moving principle and cause” of human action.

We can see the interplay of both of these grand motivating drives—for home and for adventure—at work in many archetypal stories, stories that echo the individual’s journey from home into adventure. Abraham left home and sought the adventure of the priesthood “blessings of the fathers” (Abr. 1:2). The sons of King Mosiah had to plead to get their father’s permission to leave home and face the adventurous challenge of a mission to the Lamanites (Mosiah 28:1–8). Often the search for adventure seems imposed upon people, yet those exiles find that, with the pain and the risk, come otherwise unattainable understanding and growth. Some Bible scholars read the account of the tower or city of Babel (Gen. 11:1–9) as just such an exile. They note that the people wanted to build a community to maintain their security and isolation, but such an “action constitutes a challenge to the divine command to fill the earth.” God’s confusion of the languages and subsequent scattering “thereby promotes diversity at the expense of any form of unity that seeks to preserve itself in isolation from the rest of creation.”<sup>10</sup> These scholars see in Babel a parallel to Christ’s command to preach His gospel throughout the world (Matt. 28:18–20) and in the miraculous endowment to do just such a work at Pentecost.<sup>11</sup> A commanded or compelled expulsion also seems to be the case with Adam and Eve, Abraham, Joseph who was sold into



Egypt, Lehi and his family, and the early Latter-day Saints, to name a few. Perhaps the gravitational pull of home is so strong that God has to give us a push to seek the growth-inspiring adventure.

Finally, Christ is our example as well. A comparison of Christ's pre-atonement words in Matthew 5:48 and his post-resurrection reiteration in 3 Nephi 12:48 gives the impression that His completeness or perfection resulted from His willingness to face the infinite challenge of leaving His throne and descending below all things in order to give humankind the opportunity to finally return home. This interplay of the simultaneous drives for home and adventure is a comparison, a figuration, or a configuration that can yield new insights into the virtues and vices. Heiner elaborates the ways that lust, greed, gluttony, envy, vanity, and the desire for power can all be counterfeits for the real satisfaction that one longs for but which can come only from feeling at home with God. One could add that these vices are not mere distortions of the desire for home but may also be expressions of a counterfeit drive for adventure.

It is easy to see how greed is the perverted quest for greatness and accomplishment, for the adventure of improvement. We witness moguls who amass fortunes and empires dwarfed only by their egos and yet who still insatiably desire more. But even the impulse to greed can show a twisted desire for home. C. S. Lewis insightfully connects greed, or at least a lack of giving to the poor, with the desire for control and security: "For many of us the great obstacle to charity lies not in our luxurious living or desire for more money, but in our fear—fear of insecurity."<sup>12</sup> Greed can reveal a desire for security, control, and even peace, or home, but when this desire takes the place of relying on God, it is a counterfeit for the home only God can provide.

Greed is one example of how we can examine the vices as perverted substitutes for home and adventure. Lust is another: the lecherous may constantly and erroneously seek the new adventure of another encounter, another conquest, while simultaneously and futilely seeking the oneness and deep connection of home. The envy of those who lack patience and gratitude causes them to covet both the improvements and the security of others. Anger can be an extreme expression of frustration with one's failure in



either securing home's safety and acceptance or the rewards of adventure. Sloth seems to entail a complete and cowardly lack of adventure in which an inordinate desire for home, peace, and ease replaces healthy ambition, work, effort, "hungering and thirsting after righteousness," and faithful risk-taking.

If sloth is the most obvious perversion of the desire for home, pride is the clearest perversion of the desire for adventure and improvement. Here again Lewis is insightful in his description of vice when he defines pride as counterfeit accomplishment and adventure based on comparison: "Pride is *essentially* competitive—is competitive by its very nature—while the other vices are competitive only, so to speak, by accident. Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man." Lewis further clarifies that pride "is enmity. And not only enmity between man and man, but enmity to God."<sup>13</sup> The particular danger with pride is its powerful counterfeit of home and adventure. Pride makes God and others the enemy, selling the proud short with something false while keeping them from the real adventure of lovingly interacting with others, of learning, and of growing to be like God and enjoying His security, comfort, peace, and rest. Pride's perversions cause its victims to be trapped in the solipsism of self-deification, selfishness, and despair.

Where the vices are perversions of drives for home and adventure, the traditional virtues display those drives being properly used and encouraged. Temperance is the self-control necessary to keep these drives correctly focused. Fortitude, or as Lewis calls it, "guts," is the power and courage to hope for home while struggling as an adventurer and exile.<sup>14</sup> Faith, among other things, is a healthy and exalting blend of trust and risk-taking. Charity is receiving and reflecting Christ's love in ways that support, encourage, and empower others while also providing comfort and security. In contrast with lust, properly used and controlled sexual passion powerfully binds a couple and provides a compelling and breathtakingly satisfying experience of adventure and exploration as well as profound oneness.

### **Trees of Virtue and of Vice**

As just described, the configuration of innate drives for home and adventure offers unique insights into the traditional virtues

and vices. While other religious and philosophical traditions engage notions of a premortal existence, none of those traditions uses those concepts to describe fundamental human drives in this way, nor do they use those concepts to explore the nature of virtue and vice. The value of this configuration comes into greater focus when it is compared with other configurations, like medieval Trees of Virtue and of Vice. Before talking about these trees, it is important to note that many different configurations have emerged over time to suit the needs of many different artists, preachers, philosophers, and audiences.<sup>15</sup> One common and early configuration is the battle motif where virtue and vice fight for possession of the soul.<sup>16</sup> Another configuration is the image of the ladder, where souls attempt to climb successive steps toward a final, celestial goal while the devil and earthy “gravity” attempt to thwart that progress.<sup>17</sup> Sometimes the virtues are understood and visualized as a tower or castle, whereas in other works a House of Pride contrasts with a House of Holiness.<sup>18</sup> These and other configurations are powerful comparisons, useful in understanding the nature of virtue and vice, and these metaphors often lend themselves to visual representation. Such comparisons make the otherwise abstract concrete. They also anchor the abstract in concrete things that can be encountered in daily life, thereby not only making the principles more vivid but also triggering remembrance of those principles through chance daily encounters with their metaphorical analogues.

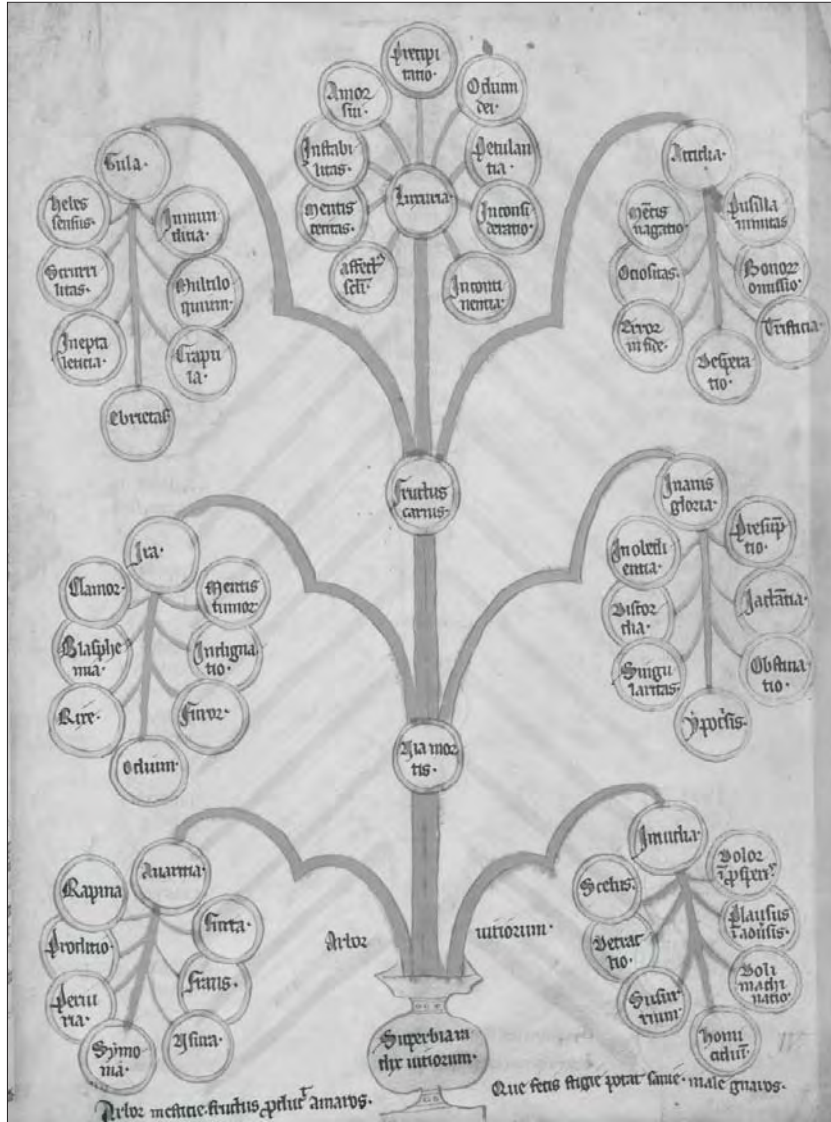
Such reciprocity between daily object and abstract principle would have surely been the experience of students in medieval monastic schools when they saw trees. Schools like those attached to the Cistercian abbey of Kemp in Germany used diagrams to teach theological principles. Those diagrams included the Tree of Virtue and the Tree of Vice, diagrams that are part of a *Speculum Theologiae* collected at Yale as Beinecke MS 416. Such diagrams are powerful teaching tools and effective configurations of virtue and vice. At the base of the Tree of Vice from Beinecke MS 416 (Figures 1 and 2), the inscription reads, “The tree of sadness produces bitter fruits, which makes those knowledgeable of evil drink from the brine of the Stygian dregs.” With its sagging branches and drooping fruit, this tree illustrates, in one complete image, the sad and sickly outcomes of a life dominated by pride,

since, as the inscription on the tree's pot reads, "pride is the root of the vices."

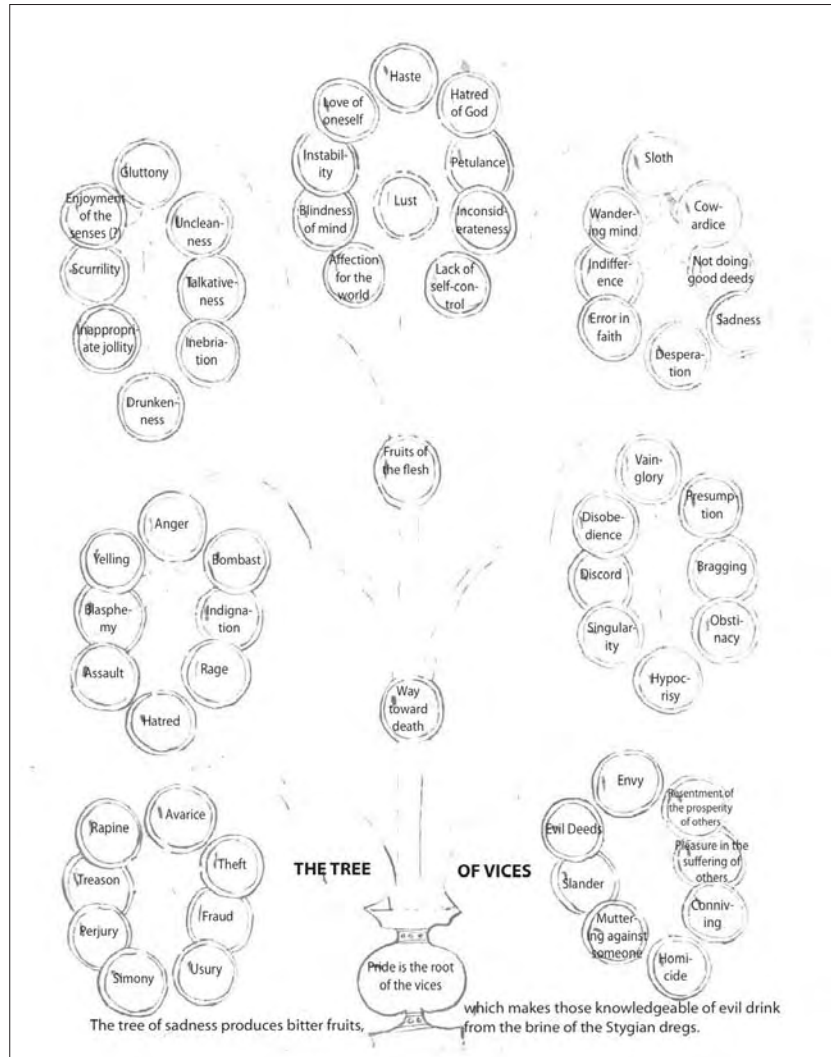
Each branch coming from the tree's trunk reaches a principal vice first, with subsidiary vices clustered around it. On the two lowest branches are avarice and envy accompanied by vices like "theft" and "fraud" or "slander" and "pleasure in the suffering of others." A knot or medallion in the lower third of the tree's trunk warns that this tree marks the "way toward death" with the branches of anger and vainglory emerging from the trunk. The top three vices, gluttony, lust, and sloth, are marked by another medallion describing them as the "fruits of the flesh." With gluttony comes vices like "drunkenness" and "inappropriate jollity." "Blindness of mind" and "lack of self-control" sprout around lust, while "cowardice" and "indifference" grow with sloth.

The opposing, positive parallel for this tree is the Tree of Virtue (Figures 3 and 4). The format for this diagram is identical to that of the Tree of Vices except that here the branches lift upward in physical and spiritual vitality. Instead of a drooping tree of sadness, the inscription here explains: "The tree of joy does not bear bitter fruit, but, extending itself abundantly, it bears the knowledgeable to celestial things." The first two virtues to emerge from the tree, whose root is humility, are prudence and fortitude. Just up the trunk, justice and temperance branch out above a knot/medallion. The tree's designer thus puts the four "classical" and humanistic virtues as emerging first and most fundamentally from the tree. They are the "way toward life" in many respects, including how they secure both "worldly" success and can lay a foundation for the "fruits of the spirit." Those "fruits" appear at the tree's uppermost region as the three theological virtues of faith, charity, and hope.

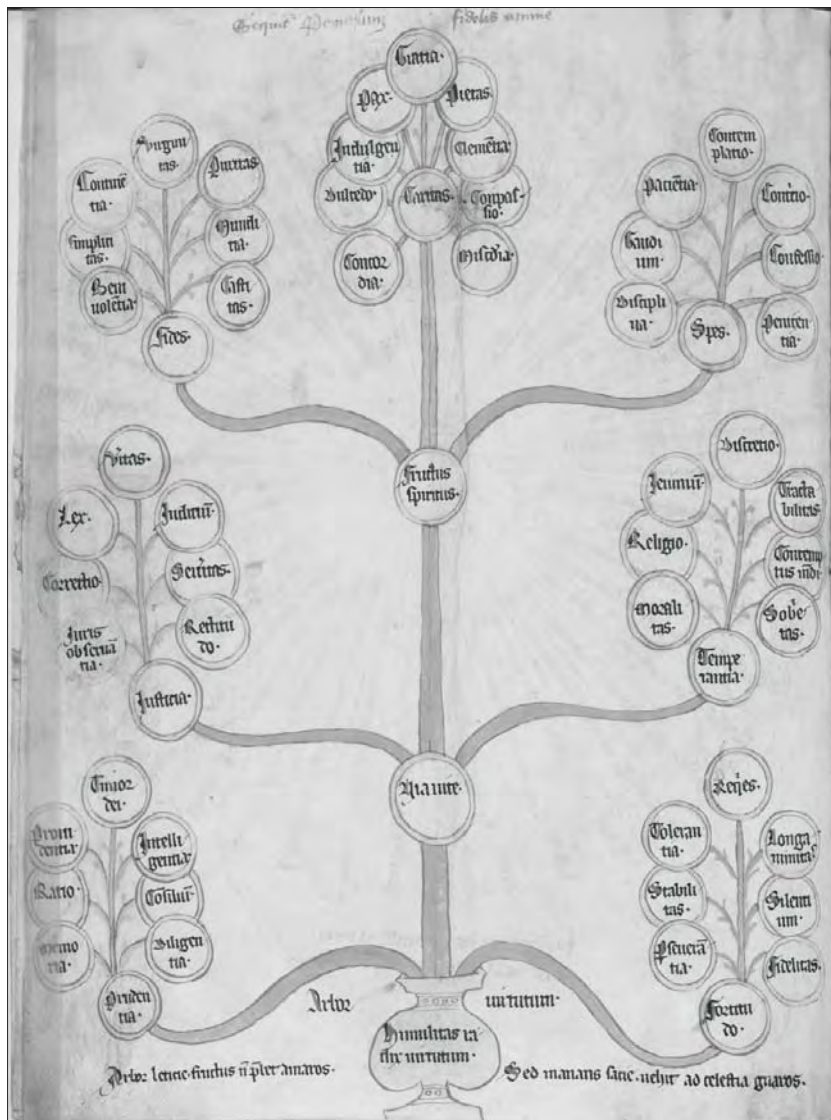
When we place the two diagrams next to one another and examine them carefully, it becomes clear that the vices and virtues on the two trees do not exactly oppose one another. It is hard to see avarice, for example, as the opposite of prudence or faith as the opposite of gluttony. This mismatch is partly because the virtues and vices historically developed separately from one another, converging in late antiquity or the early medieval period. But where it may seem to make more sense to have vices matched with



Anonymous late thirteenth-century or early fourteenth-century *Tree of Vices*. Caption translation by Brian Noell. *Speculum Theologiae*, Beinecke MS 416, Yale University.

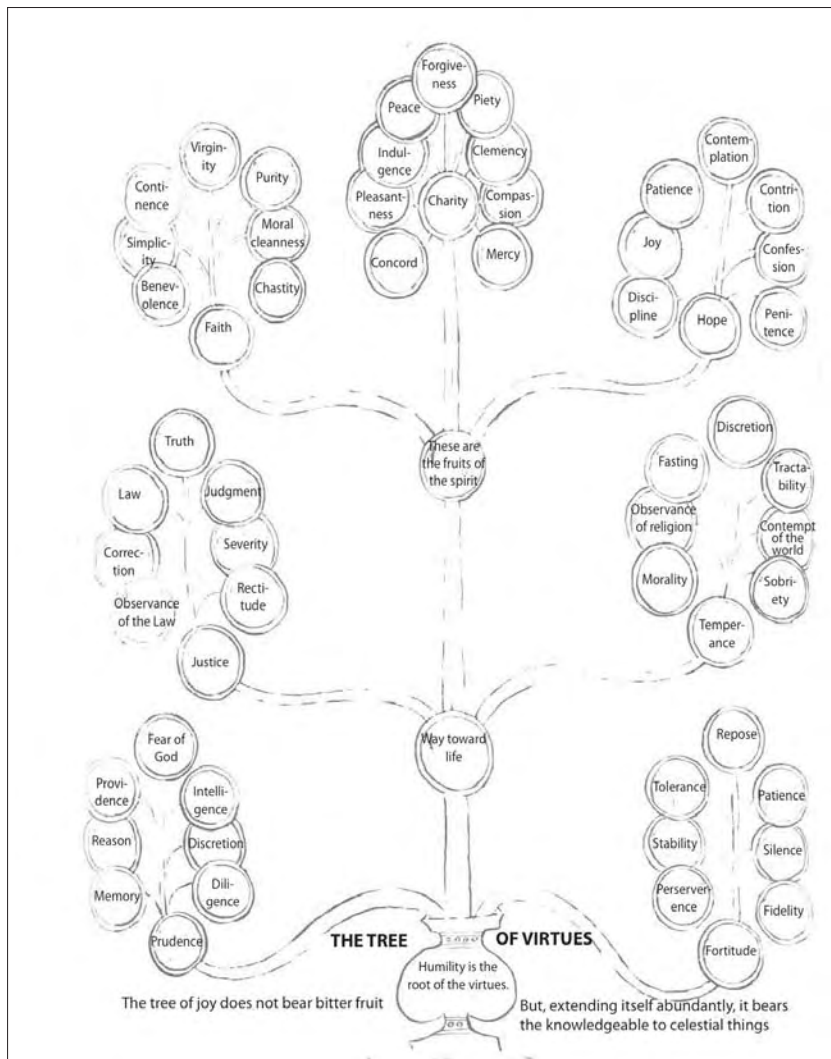


*Anonymous late thirteenth-century or early fourteenth-century: Tree of Vices. Caption translation by Brian Noell. Speculum Theologiae, Beinecke MS 416, Yale University.*



*Anonymous late thirteenth-century or early fourteenth-century Tree of Virtues. Caption translation by Brian Noell. Speculum Theologiae, Beinecke MS 416, Yale University.*





*Anonymous late thirteenth-century or early fourteenth-century Tree of Virtues. Caption translation by Brian Noell. Speculum Theologiae, Beinecke MS 416, Yale University.*



clearly opposing virtues, to have foolishness oppose prudence, injustice oppose justice, or despair oppose hope, for example, what we find may be more complex and interesting. Some of the parallels, when we examine the entire cluster, do seem to match. Hope's opposition to sloth may seem somewhat mismatched, but with sloth comes "cowardice," "sadness," and "despair," thereby making this cluster an interesting play of contrasts. Even where there seems to be greater slippage, such a slippage could actually trigger new connections and insights. The two diagrams invite contemplation about how temperance's cluster of "discretion," "fasting," and "contempt of the world" contrasts with vainglory and its "discord," "bragging," and "obstinacy." The contrast between faith and gluttony, which may strike us as a counterintuitive comparison, becomes more interesting when "inappropriate jollity," "uncleanliness," and "enjoyment of the senses" are compared with "benevolence," "simplicity," "continence," and "purity."

The intellectual rhymes and half rhymes, like a motet, create beautifully complex and contemplative echoes in the attentive soul. Students who viewed these diagrams would not only see the play of contrasting principles of virtue and vice, but could easily connect them with other trees, specifically trees mentioned in their other biblical training. Such trees include Jesus's teaching that good and evil trees bear good or evil fruit (Matt. 7:17–19) or His teachings at the Last Supper about vines and branches (John 15:1–10). Isaiah celebrates a "rod" growing out of the stem of Jesse and upon that "rod" would be the spirit of the Lord (Isa. 11:1–10). The connection of fruit and the interconnected nature of virtues demonstrated in the diagram also match Peter's discussion about how partaking of the "divine nature" and "giving all diligence" allows one to add successive virtues like faith, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, and others so that one can avoid being "barren [or] unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:4–8). Perhaps most importantly there is the "evil" tree that accompanied Adam and Eve's proud "fall," a tree that is contrasted with the sacrificial "tree" upon which Christ died to redeem them and their descendants.

Besides these trees, the students would also observe the literal trees that surround them. A student who saw the drooping branches and withering leaves of a dying tree might instantly recall the

Tree of Vice and compare that tree to a thriving tree nearby which stands as a natural embodiment of a Tree of Virtue. Such a chance daily encounter could trigger the rich reciprocity of all the above ideas and connections with the literal, physical world.

### Dante's Whip and Bridle

Diagrams like the Trees of Virtue and Vice visually configure virtue and vice in compelling and insightful ways. Such literal, graphic representations evoke relationships and invite recollection through connections with everyday experiences. Dante uses powerful images in the *Purgatory* to also make strong connections and to convey his configuration of how to inspire virtue and curtail vice. This configuration also provides new insights into the nature of virtue and vice. It is on the various levels of the mountain of Purgatory that Dante's sinful spirits are purified of their pride, envy, anger, sloth, greed, gluttony, and lust. What readers encounter at the beginning of each level can be described as a "whip." This metaphorical "whip" forcefully prompts or impels the sinner toward virtue with the presentation of various examples of the virtue that opposes the level's sin.

In Canto 13, where Dante describes the level of the envious, the "whip" is composed of love that opposes envy. The first example is taken from Mary's life, as is the pattern at each level. The envious hear Mary's voice say "Vinum non habent" or "They have no wine."<sup>19</sup> Mary made this sad comment at the wedding feast at Cana; and in response, Jesus performed his first recorded miracle: turning water into wine. What is significant about this act for the envious is that Mary did not rejoice in the misfortune of others. Mary's words express her genuine and heartfelt concern, a concern that seems to have inspired the miracle. The second sound the envious hear is "I am Orestes" (13:32–33), an allusion to the selfless friendship of Orestes and Pylades. When Orestes was condemned to death, Pylades disguised himself as Orestes in order to die in his place. Both friends argue "I am Orestes" in an effort to save the other's life. The final voice is Christ's command spoken in the Sermon on the Mount to "Love your enemies" (13:35–36). These three voices express love for others, friends, and even enemies in sharp and compelling contrast with envy's self-absorption.

When Dante asks Virgil what these voices mean, Virgil replies: “This circle whips the / guilt of envy, and therefore the cords of the whip / are braided of love” (13:37–39). Love is the whip or lash which prompts the envious to act differently. Virgil next promises: “The bridle needs to be of the opposite sound: I / believe, from what I perceive, that you will hear it / before you reach the pass of pardon” (13:40–42). The envious hear just such a restraining “bridle” when they hear the voice of Cain lamenting that, now that his envy has compelled him to kill Abel, everyone will seek to kill him (14:133). The warning here is that envy not only breeds murder but fosters intense fears that others will respond in like manner. After the thundering voice of Cain, the envious hear the voice of Aglauros (14:139). Aglauros took a bribe from Mercury to allow the god to sleep with Aglauros’s sister; but when Aglauros’s envy of her sister led her to thwart Mercury’s plan, the god turned her to stone. These booming voices of warning show how envy can transform tender feelings of family love first to bitterness and then murderous jealousy or stony insensitivity.

Dante’s use of positive examples with the “whip” of virtue contrasted with negative examples with the “bridle” of vice makes these ideas graphic and concrete. In addition, as Dante draws upon a variety of stories from the Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman traditions, as well as from other tales and even the lives of people he knew, he reinforces the broad application and relevance of those concepts. When Dante’s audience returned to biblical accounts of Cain, Mary, or the Sermon on the Mount or classical stories of Orestes or Aglauros, those readers could reconnect those stories with love and envy. In other levels, Dante shows the power of humility over pride, meekness over wrath, zeal over sloth, poverty over greed, abstinence and moderation over gluttony, and chastity over lust.

### **Complementary Configurations**

What helps push Dante’s penitent up Purgatory’s mountain is the “whip” or prod of virtuous examples—examples taken from the Old Testament, New Testament, and classical world. Images of their vice “bridle” or restrain those souls, helping them turn away from those errors. When Dante’s images come together with

notions of innate desires for home and adventure, what emerges is the synthesis of those drives properly encouraged, harnessed, and directed. As Alma warns his son Shiblon, we are to “bridle all our passions” (Alma 38:12). Dante’s configuration is examples of those who properly and improperly encourage and bridle those passions; the home and adventure configuration explains the source and power of those same passions. Mary and Pylades can eschew the vice of envy because they do not seek a sense of security or home in the misfortunes of others. Instead, they find peace and power in lovingly and courageously extending themselves for others. The home and adventure of love is so great that Pylades finds it worth the risk of his own life. Cain and Aglauros seek their own satisfaction, security, and sense of accomplishment through vice’s counterfeit means and find, in the end, only isolation and destruction. Such an overlay of these complementary configurations of virtue and vice gives a more complex and nuanced view than either could give on its own.

Trees of Virtue and Vice illustrate the fundamental sources of those positive or negative attributes. They also show the complex interrelatedness of the fruits or outcomes of lives dominated by pride or humility. According to these images, humility is the source of all virtue; pride is the root cause of all vice. Here again the configuration yields new insights when compared with that of drives for home and adventure. The “pride” that is the source of all vice is the fundamental misdirection of drives for home and adventure away from God. Such pride is what Lewis would describe as “the complete anti-God state of mind” and being.<sup>20</sup> This anti-God state is the “way toward death” listed in the tree’s first medallion and the bitter “fruits of the flesh” described in the second. Such misdirection bears fruits that are counterfeits of the fruits of the Tree of Virtue, bringing forth “indifference” and “cowardice” instead of “patience” and “joy,” “instability” and “lack of self-control” instead of “peace” and “concord,” and “hatred” and “yelling” instead of “truth” and “justice.”

And just as pride is the complete anti-God state of misdirected and misused drives for home and adventure, so humility is the complete Godlike state of those drives’ perfect focus and harmony. An intimate, harmonious connection with the divine brings about humility’s “enthusiasm,” or the energy, vigor, power,

and compassion of an “en-theos,” or God within oneself. The “powers” or virtues that come from such a connection naturally result in prudence and fortitude, temperance and justice, in faith, hope, and charity, as well as the many other fruits that thrive on the Tree of Virtue.

This notion of harmonized and harnessed drives that result in humble enthusiasm yielding the fruit of the Tree of Virtue can shed new light on one of the most unique items on the LDS lists of virtues, namely “divine nature.” This item seems to propose that, by nature, or in the most fundamentally innate manner, all mortals are made to thrive just like the upturned branches on the Tree of Virtue. In fact, when we use all of the configurations—drives for home and adventure, whips and bridles, and trees of virtue and vice—we can see those LDS lists of virtue in a new way.

While the Scout Law seems the least connected to humility as divinely inspired desires and drives, it includes some virtues uniquely appropriate to its audience. Such young men may have a hard time grasping the idea of having “an eye single to the glory of God,” but qualities like “helpful” and “friendly” are readily understood. The Scout Law, not unlike the Aaronic Priesthood, has a preparatory function similar to the way that the theological virtues build on the humanistic ones in the Tree of Virtue. When those young men become missionaries, they will be well prepared to build on the Scout Law’s foundation and to add to it the more God-centered qualities listed in Doctrine and Covenants 4. Sister missionaries will similarly be well prepared to add those attributes in Doctrine and Covenants 4 so as to exercise the faith to do this good work with a knowledge of their divine nature and their individual worth. Even the MormonAds are like Dante’s examples in the way that they prod toward virtue and draw one back from vice. MormonAds also make virtue and vice graphic and real, connecting those principles with real-world experiences just as the metaphorical Trees of Virtue and Vice connect with common, everyday analogues.

One final insight that emerges from this comparison is virtue and vice’s pedagogical importance. The LDS lists of virtues, MormonAds, and the Trees of Virtue and of Vice were all made specifically for the training of young people. Those young people are not only impressionable, but they also find themselves poised

between home and adventure. They find themselves negotiating the desire to metaphorically (and sometimes literally) stay at home, with its security and comfort, and the desire for the adventure of independence and growth. Such a developmental struggle parallels the struggle to negotiate innate spiritual drives for home and adventure. While adolescence seems like a crucial time in this negotiation, and such young people find themselves uniquely at a crossroads between home and adventure, harnessing such powerful drives so that they bear the proper fruits and lead one to God is central to everyone's mortal experience.

A key element of the entire virtues and vices tradition is an exploration of the very nature of virtue and vice. Grasping such complex and important concepts can be difficult. The pedagogical emphasis of that tradition demonstrates that an early understanding is crucial. Thinkers and artists have developed rich and complex configurations to make the nature, dangers, and advantages of those principles clear and concrete. The notion of innate drives for home and adventure provides a powerful metaphor to explain vice's perversion and virtue's proper harnessing, use, and enjoyment of those drives. Such a rich metaphor, founded on premortal beliefs, is a unique LDS contribution to the virtues and vices tradition and to that tradition's commonwealth of configurations.

### Notes

1. See Richard Newhauser, *In the Garden of Evil: The Vices and Culture in the Middle Age* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2005) and his *The Seven Deadly Sins* (Leiden: Brill, 2007) as well as Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung, *Glittering Vices: A New Look at the Seven Deadly Sins and Their Remedies* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos, 2009).

2. It is important to note that this is not a canonical, biblical tradition; neither the traditional list of virtues nor that of vices is found in the Bible. Though there are lists like Isaiah's "gifts of the spirit" (Isa. 11:1-10), the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12), and Paul's "works of the flesh" and "fruits of the spirit" (Gal. 5:19-32), what eventually emerged as the seven virtues and vices resulted from lists, descriptions, teachings, and writings of many different thinkers in antiquity through the early medieval period.

3. Recent treatments of Evagrius's and Cassian's developments and contributions to the development of the vices are the first two essays in

Newhauser's *In the Garden of Evil*, Columbra Stewart's "Evagrius Ponticus and the 'Eight Generic *Logismoi*,'" and Carole Straw's "Gregory, Cassian, and the Cardinal Vices." The seven virtues seem to be codified first in Saint Ambrose's *Paradise*, where he connects the classical or Greco-Roman virtues of prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice with the Judeo-Christian tradition by comparing them to the four rivers of paradise. This brings them into the Christian tradition.

4. John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965). This use of the seven deadly sins as part of the spiritual diagnostics of confession was officially reinforced when Pope Innocent III's Fourth Council of the Lateral (1213) made confession mandatory.

5. Barta Heiner, "Counterfeits: A Mess of Pottage," BYU Forum address, May 13, 2008, 6:27 (mp3 cue) [http://speeches.byu.edu/download.php/Heiner\\_Barta\\_052008mp3.mp3](http://speeches.byu.edu/download.php/Heiner_Barta_052008mp3.mp3) (accessed on May 28, 2009).

6. *Ibid.*, 6:37.

7. *Ibid.*, 7:23.

8. Brigham Young, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997), 87.

9. Bruce C. Hafen, "The Atonement: All for All," *Ensign*, May 2004, 98; emphasis his.

10. Walter Brueggemann et al., *The New Interpreter's Bible: Genesis to Leviticus* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1994), 412–13.

11. *Ibid.*, 414.

12. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Harper, 2001), 86.

13. *Ibid.*, 122, 124.

14. *Ibid.*, 79.

15. Two excellent resources for different images and configurations of the virtues and the vices are Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Mediaeval Art from Early Christian Times to the Thirteenth Century*, translated by Alan J. P. Crick (Rpt., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), and Colum Hourihane, *Virtue and Vice: The Personifications in the Index of Christian Art* (Princeton, N.J.: Index of Christian and Princeton University Press, 2000).

16. The earliest example of this is Prudentius's poem *Psychomachia*. This poem inspired many medieval illustrations and other sculptural decorations. This tradition is also behind works like Andrea Mantegna's *Minerva Chases the Vices from the Garden of Virtue* and Paolo Veronese's *The Choice between Virtue and Vice*. See Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, translated by H. J. Thomson (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949); Helen Woodruff, *The Illustrated Manuscripts of Prudentius* (Cam-



bridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1930); Roger J. Adams, "The Virtues and Vices at Aulnay Re-examined," in *The Twelfth Century*, edited by Bernard S. Levy and Sandro Sticca (Binghamton, N.Y.: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1975), 53–73; Herrad of Landsberg, *Hortus Deliciarum* (London: Warburg Institute, 1979); Joanne S. Norman's *Metamorphoses of an Allegory: The Iconography of the Psychomachia in Medieval Art* (New York: Lang, 1988); and Jennifer O'Reilly's *Studies in the Iconography of the Virtues and Vices in the Middle Ages* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988).

17. The earliest treatment is John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), a work that inspired many medieval illustrations. See also the books by Katzenellenbogen and Hourihane cited above.

18. For early treatment of the tower imagery, see the medieval morality play, D. Bevington's "The Castle of Perseverance" in *Medieval Drama* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975), 791–900; and the houses of Pride and Holiness which are featured in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1979).

19. Dante's *Purgatorio*, translated by Robert M. Durling (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 13:28–29.

20. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 122.

# Mapping Manifest Destiny: Lucile Cannon Bennion (1891–1966)

*John Bennion*

I don't remember ever seeing my grandfather and grandmother together. I seem to remember a picture, him standing a foot taller than her, his face weathered. She wears her wide-brimmed gardening hat. But if it exists, I can't find that picture. During my memory they lived apart. When I was very young she lived in her white, wood-framed house at Greenjacket, near Vernon, Utah, and he lived in his small box of a cabin at Riverbed, fifty miles westward in the desert. Was it her asthma that kept them separate or her desire to support the family with money she earned from selling her paintings? When asked, older relatives mention both reasons, but neither seems sufficient.

The effect for me has been that my grandparents represent opposites. I remember Grandpa—sunburned, whiskery, tall—standing in his irrigation boots at the edge of his alfalfa field. His cabin in the desert, inhabited only by men, held a pail for drinking water, a dirty and scarred table, and an ancient spring bed. The outside walls were tar-papered and there was not a decorative plant anywhere in sight. He was a writer and historian. Gradually he grew less mobile, sitting behind the stacks of historical articles and books about his bed, hobbling to the outhouse on his crutches. That cabin smelled powerfully of juniper smoke and of my grandfather, who never bathed so far as I knew. His main focus later in his life was making it as a rancher and most other considerations were plowed under.

Grandma was short, soft, and white, her face shaded by her

wide hat. Her house had a garden, shade trees, beautiful yellow roses, and was surrounded by a tall woven wire fence with mesh to keep out rabbits. She was a painter and historian. Later she moved to an apartment in Salt Lake City.

The past few years I've been trying to look beyond their separation, their differences in faith and lifestyle, to see how they were alike. Although opposite in many ways, both my grandmother, Lucile Cannon Bennion, and grandfather, Glynn Sharp Bennion, responded with similar fervor to their dreams of pioneering and colonizing. Both admired explorers, those who searched westward for new land. My grandfather took up and abandoned seven ranches, moving farther and farther west. My grandmother painted adventurers—illuminated maps of explorers of new lands, including Abraham, the Vikings, Columbus, and trappers and fur traders. I admire both his ability as a hard-headed rancher and writer of history and her skill as a painter of detailed, complex maps.

My Bennion progenitors experienced the pull of Manifest Destiny as a religious mission. They felt that God had called them to settle the area around the Great Salt Lake. They weren't the only settlers in the West to mingle religious and economic desire, but they were certainly among the most ardent. Under Brigham Young's leadership, pioneers settled communities across the Great Basin, wherever they found sufficient water. Their cultivation of land helped fulfill the prophecy that the desert should "blossom as the rose." My family's love affair with the desert began with the first Bennions to come west and is renewed in succeeding generations. The protagonist of my novel *Falling Toward Heaven* embodies the male Bennions' obsession with the western desert:

Howard could describe to Allison [his wife] or his mother his father's desperation at the thought of selling land [or] Howard's own lust to return, to raise up cattle and children in the desert, but it would be like describing color to the blind, or sickness to the healthy. . . . [L]and, sex, power, and God intermingled in every Rockwood male.<sup>1</sup>

The powerful will in my ancestors and in other pioneers to expand land holdings was not entirely benign. Generally, westward

migration displaced native peoples, and my own family moved into land in southern Rush Valley used by the Goshutes who had earlier befriended them. The western pioneers' desire to skim the desert's marginal bounty often damaged delicate ecosystems; my people allowed their livestock to overgraze land west of the Jordan River in the Salt Lake Valley and in Rush Valley. Often western women had to do without their men who were off ranching or farming; they have lived in poor lodgings and worked long hours in harsh circumstances. The women in my family birthed children midwinter without proper shelter, left lush, prosperous communities for the desert, and learned to deal with isolation from their own families.

Colonization is so difficult that those who succeed feel they must disregard the rights of those they conquer and sometimes also those who give them aid. In their stories and writings, these adventurers praise their own noble efforts, but rarely count all the costs. In my family, both men and women were affected by the impulse toward westward expansion, but in each generation they have responded differently.

Bennion men in my family manifested the romance of western expansion pragmatically and prosaically. My great-great-grandfather John expanded westward from his land in the Salt Lake Valley, Israel organized a community closer to the water, and my grandfather, Lucile's husband, ran a series of ranches as he homesteaded westward. They believed that pioneering the wilderness was a heroic act, universally beneficial. They assumed that a well-managed garden, field, pasture, or range manifests an aesthetic, economic, and philosophical beauty. In making such a thing, organizing the undeveloped land, they believed they participated with God in the work of creation as the artist does in making art: a bodying forth.

I believe that my grandfather's love of a well-ordered field is connected to my grandmother's love of painting maps. Both involve the aesthetic and practical creation of a good thing. She believed that writing history, or drawing it, brought a useful object into existence. In a letter to my father, she described her husband's efforts at historical writing:

Your father has just completed a very excellent article on Brig-

ham Young and Jim Bridger. . . . It really is very, very fine. He is all the time gaining in ability to see, to analyse and to express with conviction the wonderful things he finds in the files of the Historian's Office. I feel too that he has gained this winter a new view of Brigham Young's work which will be helpful to him, to us and to others who read his findings.<sup>2</sup>

Here she demonstrates her belief that a body of knowledge can be a worthwhile creation, perhaps even more important than a ditch bearing water or a tall field of alfalfa. In her illuminated maps, she chose as subjects men who followed, like her husband and his fathers, the exploring and pioneering impulses. She portrayed them with romantic idealism, as heroic colonizing figures.

My grandmother was born in 1891 and died in 1966. In addition to her labor raising my father Colin and his four siblings, she worked as a teacher and an artist. My earliest memories of her have to do with her efforts to stimulate my imagination. Several times one summer, she led me across the hill behind her house at Greenjacket near the small town of Vernon in western Utah where she showed me a pathway through the junipers that she called the fairy tunnel. There was a ring of junipers where she said the deer council met at night. I imagined the bucks, huge as Bambi's father, standing inside the circle.

Her house, with a western porch and exterior pine boards, painted white, was surrounded by rose bushes, which produced a small yellow flower. We thought for many years that these flowers had died off, but apparently they go dormant in drought, because in the recent past they have grown back around the house, now inhabited by my sister.

The house still has lovely maple floors; dark wood frames the windows. I have made this house the setting of a novel and several short stories; truth and fiction mingle in my head.

Grandma kept her paints and brushes inside a lacquered Chinese cabinet. She owned a toy Viking ship, made of brown plastic; it sits in my closet now with its cream-colored sail and tiny brown men wielding the movable oars. I remember an easel with a painting, which I wasn't allowed to touch, set up in her living room.

A copy of her painting, *Abraham: Friend of God, Prince among Early Peoples* (1958, tempera, 35" x 60")<sup>3</sup> was reproduced by the LDS Church for use in Sunday School lessons. I've seen a copy in



*Lucille Cannon Bennion, Abraham: Friend of God, Prince among Early Peoples, 1958, tempera, 35" x 60".*

the LDS Church Library in Salt Lake. It shows Abraham in the center with angels in ranks to the left and the right. The angels extend their arms and bow their heads toward him. The circle in which he stands is violet, with a swirl of blue and white below, as if he stands above the curve of the earth. Scriptures from Genesis and the Book of Abraham are inscribed below his feet.

The background maps the lands Abraham wandered, the area bounded by the Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf, and the Caspian Sea. To Abraham's right is Canaan, to his left Ur of the Chaldees. Sailing ships float on the three seas. Small images of Greek, Roman, and Assyrian statuary and Egyptian paintings ornament the map. To the left and right are twelve smaller images titled Canaanite Captives, Felling the Cedars of Lebanon, Semite and Nubian Captives, Measuring and Recording the Harvest, Egyptian Funeral Rites, Syrians Bring Tribute to Pharaoh, Tribute to Namar, the Moon God, Assyrian Lion Hunt, Scribes Record Plunder, Goldsmiths' Work at Ur, Sumerian Archers, and Babylonian Two-Winged God.

In creating a map of his physical travels, my grandmother emphasizes Abraham as an explorer and colonizer rather his more common identity as a man of God. For Abraham, moving on and living a righteous life intertwined. The Pearl of Great Price, part of the LDS canon, says that Abraham left the land of his father in order to "be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace."<sup>4</sup> He wishes to "obtain another place of residence"<sup>5</sup>—certainly for spiritual advancement (to have greater dominion in the eyes of God), but also for economic benefit. My grandmother read in this Old Testament prophet's life an ideology very close to what the men in my family believed. In fact, she simply painted an ideal narrative that persists today: that the Mormon pioneers follow the pattern of Abraham in their colonizing efforts. She writes in small letters on the painting:

Born among a sinful, idolatrous people, Abraham yet maintained faith in the living God to become his chosen instrument, through whose ministry God's name should be known in the earth forever. Revered by Christian, Jew, and Mohammedan, he was priest, patriarch, prince of peace, exalted father of many nations;

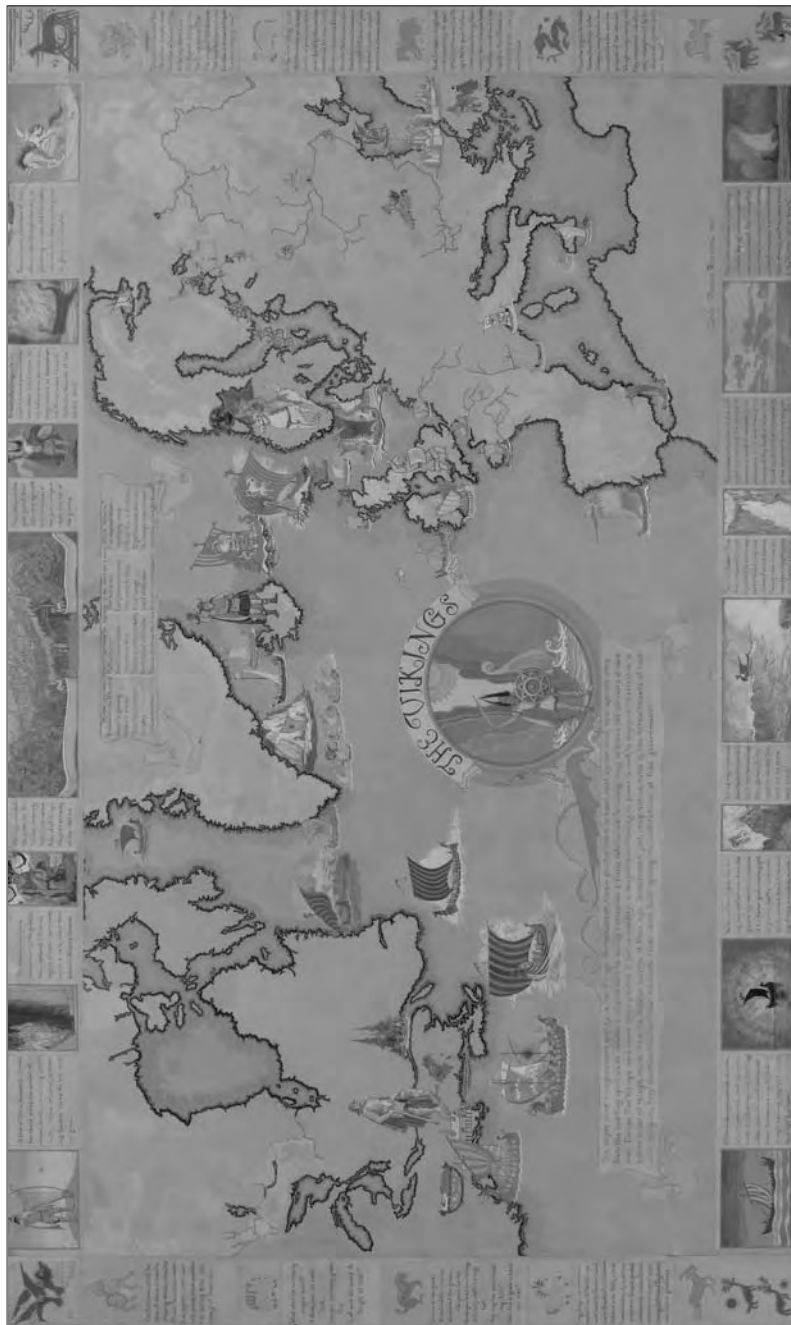


faithful, just, steadfast in righteousness, possessor of great knowledge, through whom all nations of the earth should be blessed.<sup>6</sup>

Both her father-in-law Israel and his father John believed a similar ideology—that those who explored new lands were strong, vital, righteous men. My grandfather Glynn was more of a realist in terms of his historical essays, which showed the cruelty of whites toward the native residents and the carelessness with which they overused the land. Still, he thought of his own enterprises as driven by idealism and when he stopped believing in the LDS Church, he clung to a secular version of that dream.

God promised Canaan to Abram. Apparently Abram didn't have to fight for the land or force anyone out, something unusual for colonizers. The Bible does not record any strife as Abram's herds multiply in their new home, except that between the servants of Abram and Lot. His battles are defensive: when Lot is captured by the invading Kings of Mesopotamia, Abram takes an army to retrieve his nephew. Earlier, when he was worried that Pharaoh would murder him in order to marry Sarai, he chose to avoid trouble by lying. While Abraham may seem less violent than many other colonizers, he was ready to sacrifice his son in obedience to God's command. It seems probable that fulfilling God's desire to move his herds and family to Canaan would have outweighed all other considerations. This is a common trait of many of the subjects of Lucile's paintings, that their highest priority is moving into the new land. Their ethical and religious systems are often reshaped to support this end.

Another of Lucile's maps, *The Vikings* (1936, tempera, 24" x 41"),<sup>7</sup> hangs in the hall of my home. She painted light blue for the ocean, beige for the land, with a rim of dark blue defining the boundary between. The map shows the Americas to the left, Greenland upper center, and Europe and Asia to the right. Ships are the most prominent feature—striped sails decorated with images: a rising sun, rearing horse, or long-tailed dragon. These vessels stream from left to right, showing the movement of colonization outward from Norway to the Baltic Sea, the Gulf of Finland, and to an inland Lake Ladoga inside present-day Russia. Ships also stream southward to England through the Irish Sea, past the coast of Portugal, eastward through the Straits of Gibraltar,



*Lucille Cannon Bennion, The Vikings, 1936, tempera, 24" x 41".*

across the Mediterranean Sea, past Istanbul, and into the Black Sea. Westward the ships pass Iceland, sailing up between the coasts of Newfoundland and Greenland.

Viking figures stand in Europe, Greenland, Iceland, and the eastern coast of America. On the St. Lawrence River floats an Indian canoe. An old Viking warrior/settler stands on Nova Scotia, leaning on his long ax. In the same locale are a lodge and a figure resting on a bier, curved like a ship. A young Viking raises a horn of mead. A horseman rides across Norway. In southern England, a warrior facing an invisible enemy holds his shield before him and raises his sword behind his head, ready to deliver the death blow. She didn't paint the face of the man he was attacking. A trader standing on Turkey offers furs to a Middle Eastern merchant.

Around the border are twenty-eight small inset sketches that alternate between Norse poetry and descriptions. The sketches show Odin, Thor, the Valkyries, the Skalds or singers of the sagas, Niflheim or hell, a dragon ship on a wild sea, and the northern lights. Lucile wrote, "All men who have fallen in fight since the beginning of the world are gone to Odin in Valhalla."<sup>8</sup> The phrase appears to express something close to what she seems to feel toward their heroic nature as explorers and colonizers. Below the drawing of Valhalla is the following poem, taken from the Sayings of Grímnir in the Poetic Edda and inscribed by my grandmother:

Glagsheim  
*in Du Chaiilu*  
 is the fifth called  
 Where the gleaming  
 Valhalla stands;  
 There Odin  
 chooses  
 Everyday

Weapon-dead men.

That hall is very  
 Easily known to those  
 Who  
 come to Odin;

The hall is roofed with shafts;  
It is thatched with shields;  
Benches  
are strewn with armor.

That hall is very  
Easily known to those  
Who come to Odin;  
A wolf hangs  
West of the door;  
An eagle hovers above it.

Five hundred doors  
And forty more  
I think are in Valhalla;  
Eight hundred warriors  
Go through a door at once  
When they go to fight the wolf.<sup>9</sup>

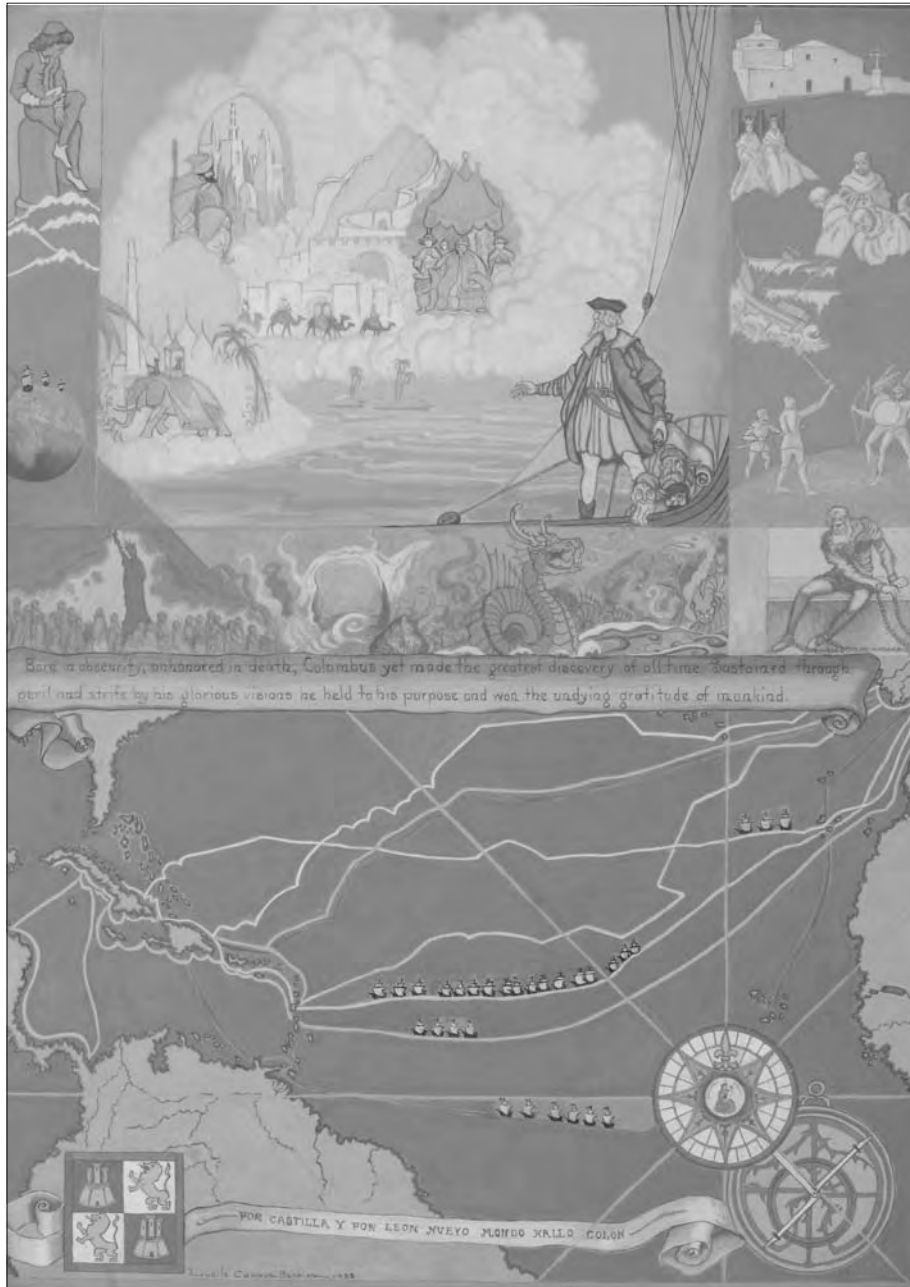
Theirs was not the righteous and peaceful colonization of Abraham. By inscribing this poem onto her painting, my grandmother gives colonizers the status of warriors. Elsewhere on the map, she is more specific about the traits she admires in the Vikings. Next to a picture of a fjord, she wrote: "The small farms of Scandinavia, separated by mountain and fjord, too poor to support a feudal castle, bred a race of proud, freedom-loving men, whose descendants fought tyranny in England and America." A scroll under the central figure on the map contains her description of the values of the Vikings:

The sagas reveal a magnanimous quality in the Vikings, for the contests therein glorified had to be equal, chief against chief, ship against ship. From this sporting spirit, which included a religious zest for daring enterprise and fierce retaliation for wrong, may be traced to the chivalry of medieval Europe. The Vikings were more than pirates. A mature nobility, a magnificent daring, a power to lead, to organize, to establish a better order of things, made them the master spirit of their age. Independent, just, imaginative, ruled by the heroic tenets of their virile religion, they developed the spiritual elements from which have sprung the institutions of free government.<sup>10</sup>

My grandmother thus endows the Viking wanderings with a romance similar to that described by my male ancestors as they wrote about the settlement of the West. She eliminates references to the Vikings' savagery, their acts of plunder and destruction against those they conquered. She makes no mention of the British men they slaughtered or the women they raped. The destruction of monasteries with their priceless manuscripts is invisible to her. She single-mindedly describes an idealized version of their conquest. Of course, she likely responded to the historians of her time, who painted the Vikings as romantic adventurers.

A third painting, *Columbus* (1938, tempera, 15"x11"),<sup>11</sup> is divided horizontally into two parts by the following text: "Born in obscurity, unhonored in death, Columbus yet made the greatest discovery of all time. Sustained through peril and strife by his glorious visions he held to his purpose and won the undying gratitude of mankind."<sup>12</sup> My grandmother thus situates him in the same heroic group as Abraham and the Vikings. In the upper half of the painting, Columbus stands slightly off center to the right, a sail behind him. He extends his arm toward the sea. Above him is a swirl of clouds containing images of the Far East, where he imagined his voyage of discovery would end. Smaller images surround the main scene—a dragon, Spanish monks and warriors, the Statue of Liberty. With this image my grandmother suggests that his voyage paved the way for all those who left Europe for America where they could search westward for their own land. She could have also drawn in a few Mormon pioneers, who believed that Columbus was divinely inspired to prepare the way for the establishment of Zion on the American continent. Below the text she has painted the Atlantic Ocean; white lines record Columbus's various voyages between the Old and New Worlds.

As in her portrayal of the Vikings, my grandmother focuses on Columbus's visionary nature, his bravery and determination. She focuses on his positive achievements and neglects the fact that he kidnapped, enslaved, and killed local peoples. He refused to baptize many natives because that would cause problems for the potential slave trade: Catholic law forbade the enslavement of Christians. Perhaps his most significant act in clearing the New World for Spanish colonization was accidental: the introduction of smallpox to the natives brought the death of millions.



*Lucille Cannon Bennion, Columbus, 1938, tempera, 15" x 11".*



A fourth painting, *Trappers* (1934, tempera, 18"x23"),<sup>13</sup> centers on the Great Lakes, which looks like a cluster of fallen leaves. Surrounding the lobes of the lakes are images of animals: mink, otter, beaver, fox, wolf. Canoes cross the lakes; trappers and Indians meet to the right of the canvas. An Indian leans forward in a battle stance, shield extended, arm raised to strike with an ax. A scroll across the bottom of the painting reads:

For more than 150 years the Great Lakes region, richest beaver lands of America, furnished New France with its sinews of war & peace. The rich profits of the fur trade & the free adventurous life in the wilds lured the most vigorous young men of the colony from the farms & likewise the Indian from his fields & useful village arts. Suited by temperament to pioneer the trade, the dashing coureurs were never more at home, never more happy than when paddling swiftly over the cold waters or passing noiselessly along ancient forest trails with a band of Indian hunters. The Jesuit priest, patriot as well as missionary, zealously aided in diverting the fur trade from Dutch & English rivals to Montreal. From the forts which dotted the shores the coureurs-de-bois each spring rounded up the Indians with their winter's stock of furs for the grand rendezvous at Michiliniackinac or Green's Bay. Here the canoes, at times numbering 400, joined in one great flotilla, proceeded down the Lakes to the annual fair at Montreal, greatest of fur marts. But if the Iroquois were on the war path the lake route was abandoned, portage made & the journey continued by way of the Mattawa & Ottawa rivers.<sup>14</sup>

These images portray the nobility of men who explored the world, moving west to open new lands. For Lucile the most heroic men are those who leave civilization, a mingling of Manifest Destiny and an odd theory of survival of the fittest. To the best men went the rewards of the new lands. In reality those men were generally violent misfits, those who refused or were unable to accept the civilized manner of Eastern cities. They raped native women, stole from each other, became drunken and violent when they gathered, and slaughtered millions of animals for their pelts. Perhaps they valued independence, but this was often translated into antisocial behavior.

In *The Big Sky*,<sup>15</sup> A. B. Guthrie describes the lives of trappers, who were as savage individually as the Vikings and the Spaniards were collectively. Their story is tragic because they cleared the way for farmers and colonizers who civilized the wilderness the





Lucille Cannon Bennion, Trappers, 1934, tempera, 18" x 23".

trappers loved. They created the conditions that eliminated their own lifestyle.

While I have a more cynical attitude toward the land fever that made my ancestors see the desert wilderness as a potential field or garden, my grandmother had a romantic vision in which charting wilderness made way for human communities. I don't know that the cruelty of these people was invisible to her, but she didn't paint cruelty. She used her paintings to teach a specific vision of the history of westward expansion, participating in the creation of an ideology that fused ideals borrowed from Hebraic, Viking, and European traditions. Through these four maps and many others she portrays acts of exploration and colonization as heroic, as embodying the highest cultural virtues of courage, freedom, ambition, and community.

Maybe she didn't share our modern, liberal sensitivity to the violence of these early colonizers. To me she was a kind and gentle woman. In fact, she was so calm and her art is so persuasive that I didn't even recognize that she was telling only half the story until friends in my reading group pointed out the irony of noble Vikings, a heroic Columbus, and civilizing trappers. Certainly violence was a part of the lives of the English and French trappers, the Spaniards, the Vikings, and the Hebrews. The Mountain Meadows Massacre, the Bear River Massacre, the Battle of Provo River, and the many stories of cruelty against the Goshutes offend my peaceable nature. But it may not be accurate to say that those who lived in times when such violence was invisible and accepted were not good people. It's apparent that violence as a means to settle conflict was broadly accepted throughout most of the history of the world.

In her short story, "Where Nothing Is Long Ago,"<sup>16</sup> Virginia Sorensen describes a water killing in a turn-of-the century Mormon village. The story suggests that while we as a modern people presume to abhor violence, the reality is that it isn't that far back in our pasts. In fact, it's clear that violence hasn't passed: it remains present in all our lives. It is legal to execute a man for murder in my home state of Utah—an act straight out of the Old Testament law of Moses. We pay boxers and football players millions to attack each other. We have cities with areas where police don't enter because they would be killed.

I guess what finally causes me the most curiosity about my grandmother is that she doesn't reference any of this violence. It's as if it didn't happen for her. I was a child when she died, and now I long to speak to her, to discover what she thought, to have her tell me why she painted as she did. Even then, I believe my admiration for her will remain strong. She seems to me to embody the nobility she tried to paint.

My grandfather often told me the story of one of her painting expeditions. She drove west toward his homestead and stopped the car in the middle of the wide desert plain just to the south of the present-day Dugway Proving Grounds. She climbed to the top of a bluff, braving any rattlesnakes hidden in the shadows of the boulders. On top she found the vista she had sought as the gray buttes, mountains, and flats spread around her. She set up her easel and started painting. That is how I want to remember her, on top of that bluff, facing west as she sketched the desert.

#### Notes

1. John Bennion, *Falling Toward Heaven* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000), 178.
2. Lucile Cannon Bennion, letter to G. Colin Bennion, 21 March 1940. In possession of author.
3. Lucile Cannon Bennion, *Abraham: Friend of God, Prince among Early Peoples*. Lithograph in possession of George Bennion.
4. Abraham 1:2.
5. Abraham 1:1.
6. Lithograph in possession of George Bennion.
7. Lucile Cannon Bennion, *The Vikings*. Painting in possession of the author.
8. Lucile Cannon Bennion, *The Vikings*.
9. Lucile Cannon Bennion, *The Vikings*. Her transcription closely follows that found in Paul B. Du Chaillu's book, *The Viking Age: The Early History, Manners, and Customs of the Ancestors of the English-Speaking Nations*, Vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890), 420. Two exceptions are that she changed the word *brynja* to "armor" and the word *einherjar* to "warriors."
10. Lucile Cannon Bennion, *The Vikings*.
11. Lucile Cannon Bennion, *Columbus*. Painting in possession of George Bennion.
12. Lucile Cannon Bennion, *Columbus*.

13. Lucile Cannon Bennion, *Trappers*. Painting in possession of George Bennion.

14. Lucile Cannon Bennion, *Trappers*.

15. A. B. Guthrie, Jr., *The Big Sky* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1947). Frederick Manfred and Vardis Fisher have also written novels about trappers.

16. Virginia Sorensen, *Where Nothing Is Long Ago: Memories of a Mormon Childhood* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, c1955, 1999).

# The Richard D. Poll and J. Kenneth Davies Cases: Politics and Religion at BYU during the Wilkinson Years

*Gary James Bergera*

*[My] theme this morning [is] Two Contending Forces. Those forces are known and have been designated by different terms throughout the ages. "In the beginning" they were known as Satan on the one hand, and Christ on the other. . . . In these days, they are called "domination by the state," on one hand, "personal liberty," on the other; communism on one hand, free agency on the other.*

*As a text I say to you, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." (Josh. 24:15.) – David O. McKay<sup>1</sup>*

During the cold war years after World War II, Mormons, including some Church leaders, increasingly infused national concerns about Communism with strong moral and religious overtones. J. Reuben Clark Jr.(1871–1961), first counselor in the First Presidency, asserted in 1949: "Our real enemies are communism and its running mate, socialism."<sup>2</sup> Almost four years later, Church President David O. McKay (1873–1970) urged: "Every child in America [should be] taught the superiority of our way of life, of our Constitution and the sacredness of the freedom of the individual."<sup>3</sup> Communism, he stressed, "has as its ultimate achievement

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and victory the destruction of capitalism” and the “undermin[ing] of the Restored Gospel.”<sup>4</sup> “It is as much a part of the religion of American Latter-day Saints,” the *LDS Church News* asserted, “to accept the Constitution of the United States, and defend it, as it is to believe in baptism or the resurrection.”<sup>5</sup>

This emphasis among LDS authorities on the growth of Communism and what they viewed as allied economic and political evils manifested itself most dramatically in Ernest L. Wilkinson’s 1951 appointment as president of Brigham Young University. A Republican Party convert and critic of the federal government, Wilkinson (1899–1978) personified the conservative economic, political, and social beliefs of his ecclesiastical superiors. He needed little encouragement, for example, when Church official Stephen L Richards (1879–1959) charged him at his inauguration to “implant in youth a deep love of country and a reverential regard for the Constitution of the United States.”<sup>6</sup> “This institution [i.e., BYU],” Wilkinson had earlier vowed in a letter to Apostle John A. Widtsoe, “is definitely committed to a philosophy which is the antithesis of that espoused by the communists. . . . More than any other school, Brigham Young University has a better basis for teaching correct principles of government.”<sup>7</sup> Wilkinson hoped to establish an exemplary institution of higher learning where a loyal, patriotic faculty would “teach ‘correct’ economic doctrines—doctrines which would assist in salvaging the American system of free enterprise from threatened extinction.”<sup>8</sup>

Concurrent with the years of Wilkinson’s presidency (1951–71) was the emphasis nationally on routing “un-American” faculty from U.S. universities. In fact, during the height of America’s involvement in Vietnam, the number of dismissals for “un-American sympathies” more than doubled.<sup>9</sup> For Wilkinson, the possibility—however remote—of anti-American infiltration impacted his governance of the LDS school.<sup>10</sup> Wilkinson believed that the U.S. Constitution was heaven-sanctioned and that both conservative politics and laissez-faire economics were the fruits of divine inspiration. Like the Church’s officers, he endowed free-market capitalism with a religious imprimatur and measured loyalty to the Church and to BYU accordingly. For Wilkinson and others of like orientation, restored religion and conservative politics were in-

separable; unorthodox political beliefs were as potentially dangerous as unorthodox doctrinal beliefs. “We are clearly in the midst of a great campaign to create a socialistic state,” he stated, adding, “Liberals want to make the BYU a pulpit for all of the left-wing groups in the country. . . . How to get [a more patriotic faculty] is a real problem,” he recorded.<sup>11</sup>

As he labored to secure a sufficiently patriotic faculty, Wilkinson adopted a variety of measures to promote and guarantee political and religious orthodoxy. In the early 1950s, he solicited individual reports of alleged faculty misconduct.<sup>12</sup> Later, he convened special “fact finding” committees to investigate and document complaints.<sup>13</sup> By the mid-1960s, he turned to more aggressive approaches. The best known of these, the so-called “1966 BYU student spy” ring, has been treated elsewhere.<sup>14</sup> Two additional instances of Wilkinson’s attempts to promote an “orthodox” faculty are the focus of this article. These instances are the controversial cases of historian Richard D. Poll and economist J. Kenneth Davies. Their cases contribute to an understanding of the intellectual history of BYU and of the Church generally during the mid-twentieth century. They speak directly to Wilkinson’s attempts to cultivate a conservative-oriented political and economic orthodoxy at BYU, illuminate the ways Wilkinson’s own politics and religion affected his relationship with the faculty and theirs with him, and demonstrate that Wilkinson’s conservative beliefs, while reflecting the position of a majority of the Church’s leaders, were not shared by all Church members. Finally, they suggest some of the difficulties that can ensue when political questions are understood in religious terms and political orthodoxies are adopted as matters of faith.

#### **Richard D. Poll**

Born in 1918 in Salt Lake City, Richard Douglas Poll grew up in Texas and graduated twice from Texas Christian University (1938, 1939). He served an LDS proselytizing mission to Germany and later to Canada (1939–41). During World War II, he was a first lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force. In 1943, he married Emogene (Gene) Hill (b. 1920) in the Salt Lake Temple. Five years later, in 1948, he received a Ph.D. in history from the University of California at Berkeley and joined BYU’s History Department. In



1955, he was appointed the department's chair and, four years later, was named founding president of BYU's chapter of the American Association of University Professors. In 1962, he was appointed associate director of BYU's Honors Program. During these years, he also taught classes in U.S., European, and Russian history to U.S. armed forces in Europe through the University of Maryland. Though he was an active Republican and practicing Latter-day Saint, Poll's moderate political and theological views set him apart from members like Wilkinson and eventually earned him a reputation as a liberal apostate among some Church members who took an especially conservative stance on such questions.<sup>15</sup>

*Man: His Origin and Destiny*

A few months after the publication in 1954 of Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith's *Man: His Origin and Destiny* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book), Poll met with members of a loosely knit study group, called the Mormon Seminar, to discuss Smith's sometimes blistering critique of organic evolution and biblical criticism.<sup>16</sup> Smith (1876–1972) was an influential scriptural literalist and his treatise had elicited considerable discussion among supporters and critics in some quarters of the Church's educational system. Smith did not attend the seminar, but his son-in-law Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85), then a member of the First Council of the Seventy and a future apostle, did. Poll told the group that, while he believed Smith wanted to defend the faith of Church members against the use of "science to weaken or destroy testimony," he nonetheless feared that the "harsh . . . tone of [Smith's] book alienated at the outset all those who are not already in agreement with its viewpoint." Poll did not believe that Christ's divinity depended on when the continents were divided or whether death occurred on earth prior to Adam's fall. "I have no wish to upbraid those who are equally persuaded on all these points," he stated, "but I fervently hope that comparable conviction is not to be required of all Latter-day Saints in the days to come."<sup>17</sup> When word of the episode reached Wilkinson, Poll sent him an account of the seminar and copies of his correspondence with Smith.<sup>18</sup> Poll's disagreements with Wilkinson over doctrine—and their repercus-

sions—would set the stage for the later controversy involving Poll’s politics.

Hoping for a better understanding of the Church’s position on Smith’s book, Poll and wife Gene met privately with President McKay on December 29. An educator prior to his appointment as an apostle in 1906, McKay was widely seen as a broad-minded, tolerant Church official, more open to the aims and findings of science than some of his colleagues. McKay admitted that Smith’s book “has created a problem. Being written by the President of the Quorum of the Twelve, it has implications which we can appreciate. The book has not been approved by the Church; we are authorized to quote him on that,” Poll subsequently recorded.<sup>19</sup> “The work represents the opinions of one man on the Scriptures. . . . Striking the desk for emphasis, President McKay repeated that the book is not the authoritative position of the Church. . . . We do not know enough of the facts to take a definite position on evolution,” Poll quoted McKay as saying, “but the concept is certainly not incompatible with faith.”<sup>20</sup>

The Polls next spoke with Smith, who began by insisting that the “Gospel requires a literal acceptance of the Scriptures.” He acknowledged that not all of the Church’s General Authorities agreed about the origins of life on earth, that a “large number of teachers in the Church . . . do not find it possible to accept all the doctrines which [he] presents as fundamental,” and “assured” the Polls that “he did not think that they should be excommunicated or barred from teaching.” Still, in response to Poll’s belief that “the quest for truth flourishes best when the area is rather narrowly defined within which absolute truth is regarded as already known,” Smith “pointed out that insofar as he is concerned, where the Lord has spoken through the Scriptures, there is the truth.” The Polls left the one-and-a-half-hour meeting impressed that “President Smith was quite as concerned about justifying his own position as about criticizing ours. Since both sides are apparently on the defensive, we feel more optimistic about the possibility of ‘peaceful coexistence.’”<sup>21</sup>

Less than two weeks later, the Polls met with Wilkinson to review the meetings. Wilkinson, who thought that Poll was “altogether [worried] too much” about Smith’s book, told Poll that if Smith’s book should ever surface in any of his classes, “he should

give . . . both views but make it plain to the class that the acceptance of either view was not incompatible with the Gospel and that, in any event, it should be handled in such a way that the faith of the students should be built up rather than destroyed.”<sup>22</sup> Poll agreed but was annoyed that some Church members and BYU religion teachers felt licensed by Smith’s book to pass judgment on some members’ faith. “If the folks who subscribe to the literalist position will stop making an issue of it,” Poll said, “there will be no difficulty whatever with the faculty member of [a less literalistic] persuasion.” He later added that “the agitation of the subject of evolution and creation by some members of the [BYU] faculty is not helpful either to the University or to the Church. A student reported to [a colleague] that a member of the Religion faculty had made substantially this statement: ‘The fundamentalist position gives no trouble to really great scientists; it is only pip-squeaks like we have here at the ‘Y’ who cause trouble.’”<sup>23</sup> “We have no desire to be categorical, or to impose our opinions on students or others,” Poll wrote afterwards to one of Wilkinson’s aides. “But we do feel inclined to resist proposals to define the Gospel in historical and scientific terms which we find it impossible to accept.”<sup>24</sup>

Poll decided to share his views with members of his local LDS ward, over which he helped to preside as a member of the bishopric. In a sacrament meeting talk he delivered in late February 1955, Poll described differences of opinion among the Church’s hierarchy. Poll “believed that if he just explained his ideas to others, they would either agree with him or at least recognize that his ideas were understandable and his intentions were good.”<sup>25</sup> According to Joseph T. Bentley (1906–93), who headed BYU’s Accounting Department and would soon join Wilkinson’s staff, Poll told ward members that, faced with Smith’s and McKay’s views on organic evolution, members could decide that (1) one of the men was a false prophet, (2) they were mistaken in how they understood each other’s views, or (3) neither man knew enough about evolution to offer an informed opinion. Poll hoped to point out that the Church’s top officials held different views on the subject and that Church members should be afforded the same courtesy. For Bentley and some others, however, Poll’s comments created

confusion about what and whom to believe.<sup>26</sup> When later pressed about the possible side-effects of his talk, Poll reportedly admitted that “he was unwise in the statements he made, that he had no thought of belittling anyone or creating any conflict in the minds of people. He said that in the future he certainly would be constantly on his guard to say nothing that would in any way inure [sic] the faith of the ‘weakest’ of Saints.”<sup>27</sup>

Word of Poll’s attempts at conciliation eventually reached McKay. Meeting with Wilkinson and William E. Berrett (1902–93), one of Wilkinson’s vice-presidents over LDS education, McKay expressed annoyance when Berrett commented that seminary teachers were commenting about a “rift between President McKay and President Joseph Fielding Smith which could not be healed until President McKay died.” Berrett replied that he had simply been summarizing gossip among seminary teachers and had been “trying to advise them not to play up these differences.” “I know,” Wilkinson recorded, “that President Berrett never had any such thought as this [i.e., the controversy would end only with McKay’s death], but it was a very sensitive moment for Brother Berrett.” Wilkinson then read to McKay Poll’s account of his meetings with McKay and Smith as well as Bentley’s report of Poll’s sacrament meeting talk. “I tried to abbreviate my reading once or twice,” Wilkinson recalled, “but President McKay insisted I read it in detail. At the end he said he was astounded at the unwisdom of Brother Poll in making public a confidential talk which he had, first with him and then with President Smith.”<sup>28</sup> Ironically, while Poll retreated from participation in the Smith-McKay evolution controversy, McKay continued to emphasize privately and unequivocally that Smith’s belief was not official doctrine.<sup>29</sup>

#### *This Trumpet Gives an Uncertain Sound*

Poll next began to take considerable interest in advocating for faculty involvement in BYU governance as well as in responding to the political beliefs of some of the Church’s most conservative members. In February 1958, during a meeting to announce a new BYU fund-raising initiative, Poll expressed pleasure that the administration had “now embarked on a policy that salaries were to be commensurate with those of institutions of comparable size throughout the country or, in effect, that one’s loyalty or faithful-

ness to the Church should not require him to work here for less compensation than any other place.” Wilkinson dismissed Poll’s statements, which Wilkinson interpreted as references to BYU’s low faculty salaries,<sup>30</sup> as “sour” and “petty,” predicting that “we will be able to build a great institution” only if “we [do not] predicate it on” Poll’s secular-oriented “philosophy.”<sup>31</sup> Two years later, when Wilkinson reluctantly allowed the formation of a campus chapter of the American Association of University Professors, a nationwide champion of academic freedom and faculty participation in university affairs (but which Wilkinson believed was a de facto labor union), Poll was elected founding president.

In fact, as Poll became more vocal in a variety of public spheres, including joining the American Civil Liberties Union,<sup>32</sup> rumors of his possible leftist leanings began circulating among some of the school’s partisan boosters. As classes began in September 1961, McKay, who had received letters complaining about Poll, pointedly asked Wilkinson “if there were any Communists on the faculty of the Brigham Young University.” Wilkinson answered that “he was very sure that there are none.” McKay then “mentioned a report that I had received to the effect that someone in Provo had claimed that Brother Paul [i.e., Richard D. Poll], a member of the [history] faculty, is a Communist.” Wilkinson again responded that “he has been unable to get any items of any kind to prove this assertion and that he personally is satisfied that he [Poll] does not favor Communism.”<sup>33</sup>

Early the next year Poll published *This Trumpet Gives an Uncertain Sound*, a rebuttal to *The Naked Communist* (Salt Lake City: Ensign Publishing, 1958), W. Cleon Skousen’s popular anti-Communist manifesto.<sup>34</sup> Skousen (1913–2006) was a former employee of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a BYU instructor, and the Salt Lake City police chief.<sup>35</sup> His 1958 exposé of alleged Communist inroads in American life and government helped to set the stage for his career as an influential, if divisive, political and social commentator. In 1959, McKay had endorsed Skousen’s book during October general conference. However, Poll, among others, had doubts about the accuracy of Skousen’s research and decided not to remain silent.<sup>36</sup> Skousen’s supporters rallied to his defense. Poll “is dangerous,” one man wrote, “because of his bitter vindic-

tive campaign. I shudder when I contemplate the number of students that have passed as will continue to pass under his supervision and instruction.”<sup>37</sup> “Many of our Church members are happy that they can send their children to B.Y.U. so that they won’t be indoctrinated by liberal thinkers who make it a special point to discredit anti-communists and their publications,” another man wrote. “I would prefer that they did not study under men [such as Poll].”<sup>38</sup> Others branded Poll’s booklet “vicious,” “unwarranted,” and “untruthful.”<sup>39</sup> When McKay learned of the brouhaha, he agreed with Wilkinson’s assessment that “the difficulty with Poll and others was that they could not see the forest for the trees.”<sup>40</sup> No doubt, Poll’s earlier disagreements with Joseph Fielding Smith affected McKay’s and others’ view of the present controversy. More ominously for Poll, Apostle Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994), himself a rising star in the anti-Communist ferment and a member of BYU’s Board of Trustees, told Wilkinson: “Many [BYU] students have written me personal letters regarding this man, Poll, and the adverse influence he is having among our students. There are others with similar philosophy. There is a need for a real house-cleaning. I realize that it is easier said than done, but in my judgment it must be done in the best interests of the future leadership of the Church, who are now on the campus of the B.Y.U.”<sup>41</sup>

During a two-hour meeting in January 1963, Wilkinson informed Poll that, because of his leadership in “fringe activity . . . of doubtful validity” (meaning his disagreements with Joseph Fielding Smith, his critique of Skousen’s views, and his involvement in faculty governance issues), he would not be receiving any additional administrative advancements.<sup>42</sup> Wilkinson also intimated that Poll’s days at BYU were probably numbered. Poll promised to toe a less disruptive line. But however much Poll tried, his approach to education continued to attract controversy. When he invited Dorothy Marshall, former trustee and general counsel of Loyola University, past president of the Catholic Women’s Club of Los Angeles, and former director of the Los Angeles office of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, to speak on civil rights to a small class of graduate students, her appearance provoked a minor uproar.<sup>43</sup> Critics pointed to Marshall’s service on the L.A. Citizens’ Committee to Preserve Amer-

ican Freedom and membership on the Executive Committee of the National Council of the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, which the U.S. House Committee on Un-American Activities had accused of being Communist front organizations.<sup>44</sup> In the wake of the controversy, Wilkinson again told Poll that “there was little chance for his further advancement on the campus.”<sup>45</sup> Poll, his frustration mounting, wondered why Wilkinson gave credence to the complaints of “peep [sic] squeeks.” According to Wilkinson, Poll blamed Benson who, he believed, “was behind these students and had been urging them to attack Poll. He said that if Brother Benson had a case against him [the] Board [of Trustees] should know about it and if they wanted him to leave he would.” “I told him,” Wilkinson recorded, “that I was going to give them the same consideration that I was giving him and that I was not going to make any snap judgment in either case.” Poll countered that Wilkinson “should give snap judgment against them.”<sup>46</sup>

Wilkinson hoped to have an answer for Poll regarding his future at BYU before Poll left for nearly a year’s sabbatical in Europe that summer. However, as the president reviewed the situation, Wilkinson decided that he wanted help in evaluating what he termed “charges which are the basis for serious consideration as to the separating him [i.e., Poll] from the University,” and enlisted the head of BYU’s University Relations, thirty-two-year-old Stephen R. Covey (b. 1932), to make a “careful documented brief for me of the evidence to support the complaints made against Richard Poll (or disprove them).”<sup>47</sup>

*“Report on Richard D. Poll”*

After about nine months, and with Poll still abroad, Covey submitted his 54-page “Report on Richard D. Poll” in early April 1966. Covey reviewed and quoted from a variety of sources to assemble a list of seven general “charges” against Poll. During his fifteen years at BYU, Covey wrote, Poll had allegedly:

1. Pointed up disagreements between the Brethren indiscreetly in letters and public addresses in such a way as to put the Brethren in a bad light and to justify his own and other liberals’ actions [specifically Poll’s doctrinal disagreements with Joseph Fielding Smith];
2. In taking issue with W. Cleon Skousen on his book “The Na-



ked Communist”, he also took issue with President McKay who publically commended Skousen’s book on several occasions;

3. Is a member of the American Civil Liberties Union which is considered by many to be [a] Communist front organization;

4. Invited political activist Dorothy Marshall to speak on campus in 1965, in violation of University Policy. Mrs. Marshall and her husband are known affiliates with Communist front organizations;

5. Is a “liberal,” orients his classes towards “liberalism”, and is a rallying point for the “liberal” element on campus; and

6. As a member and leading officer of the B.Y.U Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) Dr. Poll’s influence tends to be both constructive and critical (negative) toward the University and the policies established by the Board of Trustees.

Covey closed with a seventh, more positive, assessment: “Is a popular and effective teacher, a very intelligent and able person, and an effective leader.” Here Covey reported that a majority of Poll’s students found him to be middle-of-the-road politically and an effective, popular teacher whose classes strengthened their understanding of the “American constitutional system and the sense of civil responsibility.”<sup>48</sup> As Wilkinson finished reviewing Covey’s report on April 16, 1966, he decided that Poll was “guilty” or “probably guilty”—Wilkinson’s terms—on all counts, including Poll’s effectiveness and popularity.<sup>49</sup>

At the time, Wilkinson was also dealing with BYU’s decennial reaccreditation of its academic programs and worried what the impact would be on the school’s reaccreditation if he should not renew Poll’s teaching contract. (See also the discussion in the section on Davies, below.) Seeking guidance, he telephoned Apostle and BYU Trustee Harold B. Lee (1899–1973) the week after he received Covey’s report. According to Wilkinson, Lee “advised that I give the contract to Dick; watch him very carefully next year; that he knew he had done some ‘very stupid things,’ but that he thought that we would even have the wrath of the Accreditation Committee on us if we held it up at this time.”<sup>50</sup> The next day, Wilkinson met with Apostle and BYU Trustee Delbert L. Stapley (1896–1978) and “obtained his consent” to Poll’s reappointment as well.<sup>51</sup> According to the minutes of the BYU Board of Trustees, Wilkinson “reported that he had thoroughly investigated all of said complaints; that Brother Poll had been very indiscreet in certain matters, but is currently in Europe on sabbatical leave; and

that, in his opinion, the present termination of Brother Poll's services would not be warranted. He, therefore, stated that, unless the committee had objections, he intended to renew Brother Poll's contract but would carefully observe the latter's conduct during the coming school year." The committee voiced no objections.<sup>52</sup>

"This contract," Wilkinson informed Poll, "has been held up until I had opportunity to confer with members of the Executive Committee . . . with respect to certain complaints which have been made to them and to me over the years. We did not examine only the complaints against you, but also your reputation as a superior teacher, your overall competence and your constant willingness to work in the Church. As the result, . . . I am happy to report that I was authorized to renew your contract."<sup>53</sup> In fact, Poll received a \$700 increase over his previous year's salary, amounting to a total of \$11,900 for 1966-67.<sup>54</sup> Despite the happy resolution, complaints against Poll did not entirely disappear.<sup>55</sup> In early 1968, for example, Apostle Benson informed Wilkinson, "From reports that have come to me and, I am sure, to you also, it is my conviction that this man [Poll] should have been fired long ago."<sup>56</sup>

Poll knew that, in the face of continuing, highly placed, intractable criticism, opportunities for advancement at BYU were nonexistent; and in October 1969, he resigned to accept a vice-presidency at Western Illinois University (Macomb), joining former BYU social sciences dean John T. Bernhard (1920-2004), who had been appointed WIU president the previous year.<sup>57</sup> Also in 1969, Poll was named BYU Honors Professor of the Year. After Wilkinson's own departure in 1971, Poll sometimes sounded out vacancies at BYU, but administrators remained reluctant to provoke Church authorities. In 1975, Poll left the WIU administration to join WIU's History Department. Two years later, he taught a summer term at BYU and, after his retirement from WIU in 1983, taught history at BYU part-time to early 1994. Neither appointment required clearance from BYU's trustees. On February 15, 1994, Poll's wife, Gene, age seventy-three, died in their Provo home. Two months later, on April 27, Poll himself passed away. He had turned seventy-six four days earlier.<sup>58</sup>

### J. Kenneth Davies

The case of economist Joseph Kenneth Davies offers a further glimpse into Wilkinson's attempts to cultivate a conservative faculty at BYU, and the consequences of such attempts. Davies's affront to Wilkinson's sensibilities was around financial issues, particularly questions of salary equity at BYU. Where Poll's case exhibits a wide range of the kinds of issues that could be understood in religious terms, and enforced as matters of orthodoxy, Davies's case offers a "micro"-level view into a particular subset of Wilkinson's political and doctrinal understanding. Born in 1925 in Los Angeles, Davies joined the U.S. Navy at age seventeen in 1942. He subsequently earned a bachelor's degree in naval science from Marquette University (Milwaukee); was stationed in the Philippines, then served an additional twenty years in the Naval Reserves, retiring as a lieutenant. From 1946 to 1948, he filled an LDS proselytizing mission to New England. He married Pauline Beard Taylor (b. 1928) in 1949 in the Logan Utah Temple and earned a master's degree in economics from BYU the next year. In September 1953, he joined BYU's Economics Department; six years later, he received a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Southern California and was named an assistant professor at BYU. From 1959 to 1960, he took a nine-month leave to Durham, North Carolina, teaching at Duke University. From 1964 to 1966, he served as second president of BYU's chapter of the American Association of University Professors and, from 1966 to 1967, took a second sabbatical leave, this time to Washington, D.C., where he worked for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, first as an educational consultant, then as director of the Office of Education and Publications.<sup>59</sup>

Davies was active in Republican Party politics during his early years, describing himself: "I went so far in my opposition to communism that I supported the controversial requirement of anti-communist loyalty oaths for public servants, including teachers at public institutions."<sup>60</sup> However, during the McCarthy anti-Communist crusade of the 1950s, Davies "began to see the harm being done to the body politic by what I perceived as the extreme, unfounded, irresponsible, reputation destroying accusations being made by the Wisconsin politico and his devoted following. . . .

Their cry, that as in any 'war' the innocent might be injured or even destroyed along with the guilty, seemed wrong to me."<sup>61</sup> As a young BYU faculty member, Davies participated in a variety of political controversies: he publicly opposed the John Birch Society and McCarthyism "as extremist and harmful" to the Republican Party, the LDS Church, and America.<sup>62</sup> He soon found himself in opposition to other outspoken, politically conservative BYU faculty such as Joseph Bentley and H. Verlan Anderson (1914–92).

Davies was a vocal supporter of the United Nations, Social Security, civil rights legislation, and especially labor unionism, which he saw as a "necessary adjunct of democratic capitalism and free enterprise." He explained, "I believed that an essential component of a dynamic, fair, democratic, free-enterprise, capitalistic politico-economic system was the institution of collective bargaining between capital and labor." Davies opposed "right to work" laws, which, he believed, could "enhance employer power [such] that it could well emasculate legitimate union strength, not just controlling but destroying the ability of workers to organize and maintain unions and bargain effectively with management." At BYU, he "labored under the impression that academic freedom and vigorous discussion on secular issues, with the freedom to form and advocate my opinion, was an essential part of academic life . . . and my ideas were freely presented in my classroom and in public forums. . . . I did not consider my secular ideas as matters of religious dicta."<sup>63</sup>

*The President's "Private Political Agenda"*

By the mid-1960s, Wilkinson had decided that Davies was one of BYU's "most erratic teachers."<sup>64</sup> He based this appraisal largely on Davies's interest in and support of labor unionism and on Davies's involvement in BYU's AAUP chapter. Wilkinson viewed the AAUP as union-like and described Davies as its "ringleader."<sup>65</sup> Wilkinson saw unionism as an impediment to free enterprise and as a cousin to the false doctrine of socialism. As a member of BYU's AAUP chapter, Davies was especially interested in the equability of faculty salaries. Such information was guarded closely, since amounts sometimes reflected factors other than academic competence and performance.<sup>66</sup> "Many of us had become

convinced,” Davies recalled, “that the salary system was unfair . . . that ‘liberals’ and Wilkinson ‘enemies’ were being discriminated against as were female members of the faculty.”<sup>67</sup>

Sometime during the fall of 1965, Wells A. Grover (1931–95), one of Davies’s colleagues in the College of Business, gained access to faculty salary data, made “a computer runoff” of the material, and gave it to Davies “as a trust.”<sup>68</sup> Davies knew he had a “hot potato” and debated what to do. He decided to make a “detailed private study of the salary system,” taking a school catalog and marking next to the name of virtually every faculty member the salary he or she earned. He concluded that BYU’s salary system “was indeed unfair” and was “used by the president to promote his private political agenda.”<sup>69</sup> (For an analysis of faculty salaries, see below.) Davies shared his study with his department chair, Richard B. Wirthlin (1931–2011), and his college dean, Weldon J. Taylor (1908–2000). According to Davies, when Taylor raised the issue of salary inequities with administrators and was asked about the source of his information, he pointed to Davies. Called to meet with Wilkinson on February 17, 1966, Davies was mostly cooperative but, when pressed to reveal his source, answered that he “could not do so in good conscience.”<sup>70</sup> Wilkinson presented the matter to trustees early the next month, asking if he should “dismiss Brother Davies” and was “authorized to take such disciplinary action as he sees fit.”<sup>71</sup> Davies viewed the charge as a straw man and believed that the real reasons Wilkinson wanted him dismissed were Davies’s political beliefs and activities.

In fact, by this time, Wilkinson had decided to pursue a more focused approach to the school’s “liberal” faculty. On April 21, 1966, he delivered a politically charged speech after which a small group of conservative students recruited for that purpose reported back to the administration on the responses of select professors, including Davies.<sup>72</sup> This surveillance activity, which was publicly exposed in 1967, became known as the “1966 student spy ring.”<sup>73</sup> In arguing for Davies’s dismissal, Wilkinson used the student-generated reports on Davies, supplemented by additional material, to bolster his case—albeit without Davies’s and his colleagues’ knowledge.<sup>74</sup> Wilkinson also learned that BYU’s educational programs would be receiving a three-year provisional reaccreditation, not the standard ten-year reaccreditation, as de facto

punishment for what the outside accrediting agency judged to be an atmosphere hostile to academic freedom.<sup>75</sup> This development further cemented Wilkinson's resolve to do something about BYU's renegade faculty.<sup>76</sup>

When certain of Davies's colleagues learned that Wilkinson intended to dismiss him, they urged that if Davies were allowed to remain for another year, they would encourage him to resign voluntarily. Davies was leaving BYU for a sabbatical at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and, they felt, could be convinced to stay in Washington, D.C., or to relocate elsewhere. Wilkinson agreed on April 25, 1966, not to fire Davies, but made certain to give Davies "a stiff letter of reprimand."<sup>77</sup> "Your contract has been delayed," Wilkinson wrote on April 29, "while we were deciding what should be done in your case because of your serious infraction of the policy and rules of this institution in the following respects:

1. Your acceptance from another faculty member of confidential salary information which had been stolen from our records, making you an accessory after the fact;
2. Your communication of that information to others, and your attempted use thereof for your own purposes;
3. Your failure to assist the administration in ascertaining the perpetrator of the theft, by your refusal to disclose the source of your information, and
4. Your untruthful statements at the beginning of our investigation that you had the salaries of only a relatively small part of our faculty, when it turned out that you had copied and had in your possession practically the entire salary list.

"I trust," Wilkinson closed, "that you fully realize the seriousness of your action and that you will not hereafter violate the policy and rules of this institution. You probably also realize that this is the reason for a relatively small salary increase."<sup>78</sup>

Davies responded on May 9, objecting, first, "You have tried and convicted me of offenses without benefit of written or even oral charges at a pseudo trial at which I was not present to defend myself," and second, "Your charges are inaccurate and prejudicial." Davies reported that he could accept the following reworded statements regarding his conduct: "[Charge 1.] The acceptance from another faculty member of confidential salary in-

formation secured from University records. [Charge 2.] The communication of some of that information to one faculty member after which it was voluntarily communicated to members of the Administration. [Charge 3.] The refusal to reveal to the Administration the name of the person from whom the information was received.”

As to the fourth charge, Davies wrote:

This charge is not true. To my knowledge, I never said that I only had the salary information for a small part of the faculty. As I recall my original conversation with [Academic Vice-]President [Earl C.] Crockett he asked me how many names were on the list. I said that I did not know. I had not counted them. . . . He may have asked if I had a complete list to which I would have replied that I did not know.

As I had already shown my Department Chairman and Dean the results of my study based on all full professors as well as all ranks in two colleges, it would have been foolish to lie.

“The whole problem,” Davies concluded, “would not have arisen if we had an open, honest salary system at B.Y.U. by which a faculty member could evaluate his financial worth to the Administration by comparing his own salary with the minimum, maximum, and average for his rank.”<sup>79</sup> Davies targeted only the stated specifics of Wilkinson’s charges. Though he believed that Wilkinson’s allegations disguised his true agenda, he hoped that, if he could refute them, Wilkinson would either back down or be forced to reveal the real reasons for wanting Davies dismissed.

Davies’s chair, Wirthlin, sided with Davies and in a separate memorandum added: “He [Davies] and many others made the mistake of accepting this confidential information, but it is my opinion that your [Wilkinson’s] letter of reprimand is much too harsh considering all aspects of his case.”<sup>80</sup> Davies’s dean, Taylor, also attempted to ameliorate the situation, though his defense of Davies was somewhat more tentative than Wirthlin’s: “Frankly, since he [Davies] did bring these to me in confidence as an official in the school, I had hoped that he would not suffer unduly from this indiscretion. . . . He has been loyal in keeping the alumni in the Economics Department an active, informed, and interested group. He has a great affection for the school. He is an active member of the church and has inspired many students to



extend their efforts. . . . Nonetheless,” Taylor ended, “we are . . . advising him to seek an opportune position while he is in the East that would be more satisfactory to him and to us than his present association.”<sup>81</sup>

Wilkinson remained unpersuaded, convinced that Wirthlin and Taylor had “mis-stated certain facts” regarding the case.<sup>82</sup> Responding in mid-August to Davies’s May 9 letter, Wilkinson was adamant:

Your promise to protect the one who wrongfully took the information establishes that there had been a theft of which you were aware and, therefore, you became an accessory after the fact. . . .

. . . You admit that you made up comparative lists of salaries in your college with those in other colleges and used this as a basis for argument with your Dean that the salaries in your college should be higher. . . .

. . . Your action in agreeing to protect the identify of the one who stole the information is contrary to all concepts of good citizenship . . .

. . . The reprimand I gave you was minimal. The Board of Trustees has no obligation of any kind to make the salary list public, and as long as I am President of this Institution, I will abide by the regulations of the Board of Trustees. I object vigorously to your statement that the present salary system is not honest. . . .

. . . Were I now adjudicating this matter in the first instance, the action I would have taken would have been more severe.<sup>83</sup>

“I sincerely regret,” Davies wrote from Washington, D.C., three months later, “the conflict which appears to have developed between us. . . . I would hope that our ultimate goals are the same; namely, the development of an outstanding, scholastically respectable LDS institution of higher learning.”<sup>84</sup> “We hope you are enjoying your present position,” Wilkinson replied, noncommittally.<sup>85</sup>

A review of BYU faculty salaries for 1965–66 tends to support Davies’s salary-related concerns. Among eleven colleges, the average salaries for full professors in business (\$10,300) and social sciences (\$10,085) ranked seventh and tenth overall—behind biology and agriculture (\$10,505), education (\$10,935), family living (\$10,700), general education (\$10,500), humanities (\$10,500), and physical and engineering sciences (\$11,665). The same two colleges, across all faculty ranks (full professor to instructor),

came in fourth (social sciences, \$8,650) and eighth (business, \$8,265).<sup>86</sup> Of course, factors other than Wilkinson's disdain of what he saw as the "leftist" tendencies of some faculty members could account for the inequities. Still, Wilkinson's use of salaries to discipline individual faculty, as is clear in Davies's own situation, lends credence to Davies's contentions.

*Return to BYU*

Word that Davies was "very desirous" to return to BYU reached Wilkinson in mid-December 1966.<sup>87</sup> "My understanding," Wilkinson wrote, "is that Dean Taylor and Dr. Wirthlin practically guaranteed that Davies would not come back. If they are not going to deliver on their promise, then I think I will have to take action."<sup>88</sup> When Davies learned in early February 1967 of the administration's decision not to renew his teaching contract, he telegraphed the university that he was appealing the decision and asked for a full hearing of all charges against him.<sup>89</sup> News of the development spread; and many faculty, at BYU and elsewhere, interpreted the administration's action as an attempt to rid the school of dissent.<sup>90</sup> "My dismissal," Davies told supporters, "is the culmination of about 12 years of conflict with and discrimination by the administration."<sup>91</sup> "There was no question of political, social or economic views involved," Wilkinson countered, "and absolutely no question of free speech."<sup>92</sup>

Davies met with N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982) of the First Presidency and Apostle Harold B. Lee on February 2 to explain the situation. Tanner believed that the dismissal was due, at least in part, to Davies's public opposition to the John Birch Society. As Davies left his office, Tanner reportedly said, "We don't want the Birch Society to get a hold on the BYU campus."<sup>93</sup> Both Davies and Wilkinson also continued to argue their case to supporters privately. Under the mounting weight of opinion, administrators informed Davies that he would be granted a hearing, but only "as a matter of grace," as school policy made no provision for such an allowance.<sup>94</sup>

Following the appointment by Wilkinson on February 21 of a three-man committee, all faculty in the College of Business, to investigate the case, administrators drafted five charges against Davies that expanded on previous allegations: (1) "Receiving and Using Stolen Property" in the form of "confidential salary infor-

mation”; (2) “Accusing Administration and Trustees” of a lack of “honesty and good faith”; (3) Stating that Wilkinson “used foul language,” “ranted and raved like a maniac and disgraced the Church,” “is mad and out of his mind,” and is a “rat”; (4) Stating that McKay’s support of “Right to Work law [is] ‘absolutely unfair’” and “that you have stated you do not believe in certain doctrines of the Church; that the Church has no right to say that Adam was the first man, or that we have a mother in heaven”; and (5) Behaving in ways that “demeaned yourself in a manner which is disloyal and offensive to the standards of the University.”<sup>95</sup> School administrators also announced that they retained final authority, regardless of the investigating committee’s recommendations.

Davies replied by taking issue with the administration’s position as both prosecutor and judge, then asked that his accusers be required to appear personally before the investigating committee. He also thought that the hearing should be open to all interested faculty and that the administration should pay for the transportation of witnesses called in his behalf. Committee members agreed that testimony would be accepted only from persons who appeared before them during the hearings but rejected Davies’s other requests.<sup>96</sup>

A few weeks before the committee was scheduled to begin, Wilkinson assured trustees that Davies would not be reemployed.<sup>97</sup> In the meantime, however, news broke of the student spy ring. Fearing the embarrassment and other repercussions that a formal hearing into Davies’s case might bring,<sup>98</sup> administrators disbanded the investigating committee and instead offered to renew Davies’s teaching contract.<sup>99</sup> “Some of the information underlying the charges made against you,” Wilkinson informed Davies, “originally came from one of the students in the [spy] group . . . [and] because of the origin of the information, I have decided to cancel your hearing [scheduled for April 1] and reinstate you as a member of the faculty. . . . I sincerely regret our differences, and I feel that they can be amicably resolved if you can accept the following commitment[:] . . .

1. There should be no comments, in or out of the classroom,

which are clearly disrespectful of the constituted authorities of the Church or University.

2. That the rules and regulations of the institution be accepted and heeded.

3. That you must not advocate views at variance with the concepts of the Restored Gospel as interpreted by the Presiding Officers of the Church.

“To show my good faith,” Wilkinson closed, “we are offering you a contract of \$10,300. This includes a salary increase that is consistent with that which members of the faculty of comparable standing received this year.”<sup>100</sup>

“I, too, regret the impasse which developed between us,” Davies replied, “but as you, I see no reason why our differences cannot be worked out. I am willing to serve under the same conditions and limitations which apply to all faculty members, interpreting them to include the degree of academic freedom we have historically enjoyed at B.Y.U.”<sup>101</sup> Sensing a possible “difference of opinion,” Wilkinson wrote back: “All of us at the BYU are to be governed by any pronouncement of the First Presidency or the President of the Church, even though they be on subjects which individuals may interpret as being beyond the scope of the Gospel.”<sup>102</sup> “I have always made every effort to be guided by the concepts and principles of the Restored Gospel,” Davies answered, “as interpreted by the presiding officers of the Church and would certainly agree with you that we should be so guided.”<sup>103</sup> “On the understanding that you are willing to abide by and follow any pronouncements by the First Presidency or the President of the Church,” Wilkinson replied, “whether they be construed as theological, political, or otherwise in nature, you are correct in assuming that you have a valid contractual agreement.”<sup>104</sup> Davies, who served during this period in a variety of local Church callings, did not press the matter further and returned to BYU that June (“with the largest increase in pay that I had received up to that point”).<sup>105</sup> An elated economics faculty celebrated the outcome.<sup>106</sup>

“Our purpose,” Davies told BYU students in 1970, “should be to widen academic freedom as far as possible, within limitations. Those limitations are dedication to the basic principles of the gospel. But the gospel allows a great breadth on social, economic, and political issues. If we destroy academic freedom, we destroy

this university.”<sup>107</sup> A little more than a decade later, Davies was appointed chair of BYU’s managerial economics department. He retired in 1987 but continued to teach part time until 1991. In 2009, after fifty-nine years of marriage, Davies’s wife, Pauline, passed away. Davies later remarried. As of this writing, he resides in Orem, Utah.

### Conclusion

Poll and Davies both tended to minimize politics and religion as factors in their sometimes stormy relationship with Wilkinson. Poll insisted instead that Wilkinson “never discovered how to relate to the faculty. . . . President Wilkinson had many strengths, but tact was not one of them.”<sup>108</sup> “If only [Wilkinson] could have understood,” he added, “that neither *employee* nor *enemy* is a synonym for *faculty*.”<sup>109</sup> Davies wondered if he was simply too “hard-headed” to get along with the equally stubborn Wilkinson. “From the hindsight of age and many years of contemplation,” Davis wrote, “I must admit that I was, in my younger years, indeed presumptuous, impudent and nervy. And I can see why Wilkinson was more than unhappy with me.” Wilkinson may have accomplished “great things,” Davies continued, but he “never understood or trusted social scientists.”<sup>110</sup>

While some of their problems may be attributable to differences of personality, temperament, and management style, such factors do not entirely account for the nature and extent of the difficulties. If the issues were other than primarily religion and politics, Wilkinson, Poll, and Davies would probably have found ways to construct a tolerable working relationship. However, Wilkinson’s attempts to foster a university-wide approach to “correct” political and economic theory, together with the carefully finessed interpretation of LDS doctrine that underpinned such theory, conflicted in important ways with Poll’s and Davies’s own strong commitments to a broader, more liberal system of belief and practice. Wilkinson’s brand of politics and religion was too rigidly structured to bear the openness and tolerance that Poll and Davies advocated with equal conviction and vigor.

Wilkinson believed that his views represented not only the beliefs of the majority of the Church’s highest authorities but, more importantly, the official positions of the Church. For Wilkinson,

to disagree with him was to disagree with prevailing Church orthodoxy. Others, like Poll and Davies, equally devout, saw things differently. On issues where, they understood, the Church had not adopted authoritative positions, they felt not only free but conscience-bound to express their own views, especially in the face of what they felt to be the beliefs of a well-intentioned, vocal, but mistaken minority of Church members. Not to speak up, they believed, was the real treason. The three men's approaches to politics and religion proved to be too divergent, the distances too unbridgeable, to support a relationship based on respect and trust. Wilkinson's, Poll's, and Davies's experiences highlight the ways such differences impacted BYU and, to some extent, the Church during the 1960s, and leave one to wonder if such tensions are a permanent feature of the LDS intellectual enterprise.

#### Notes

1. David O. McKay, "Two Contending Forces," May 18, 1960, in *BYU Miscellaneous Speeches* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1960), 5.
2. J. Reuben Clark Jr., "America Faces Freedom-Slavery Issue," September 14, 1949, *Church News*, September 25, 1949.
3. David O. McKay, "Education for Citizenship," March 8, 1954, *Church News*, March 13, 1954.
4. McKay, "Two Contending Forces," 5.
5. David O. McKay, Diary, June 3, 1954, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. "The Doctrines of Men," *Church News*, August 11, August 1962, 16. This unsigned editorial was probably written by Mark E. Petersen.
6. Stephen L. Richards, "The Charge," *The Messenger*, November 1951, L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections).
7. Ernest L. Wilkinson, Letter to John A. Widtsoe, August 13, 1949, Wilkinson Papers, Perry Special Collections.
8. Ernest L. Wilkinson, Letter to J. Reuben Clark Jr. and Howard D. McDonald, June 11, 1949, Wilkinson Papers.
9. See, for example, Clarence J. Karier, *Shaping the American Educational State: 1900 to the Present* (New York: Free Press, 1975), 79–91; also Lionel S. Lewis, "The Academic Axe: Some Trends in Dismissals from Institutions of Higher Learning in America," *Social Problems*, Fall 1964, 51–58; and Lionel S. Lewis and Michael N. Ryan, "In the Matter of University Governance during the 1960s," *Social Problems*, Fall 1971, 249–57.

10. This was especially true after his unsuccessful bid for the U.S. Senate in 1964. See Gary James Bergera, "'A Sad and Expensive Experience': Ernest L. Wilkinson's 1964 Bid for the U.S. Senate," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 62 (Fall 1993): 304–24; also Bergera, "'A Strange Phenomena': Ernest L. Wilkinson, the LDS Church, and Utah Politics," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Summer 1993): 89–115.

11. Ernest L. Wilkinson, Diary, September 23, November 13, 1967, and April 14, 1966, Wilkinson Papers. For an elaboration and critique of such a belief, see Stephen C. Clark and Richard A. Van Wagoner, "Christ and the Constitution: Toward a Mormon Jurisprudence," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 22 (Fall 1989): 52–64.

12. See Ernest L. Wilkinson, Memorandum to Sidney B. Sperry, October 24, 1951, Sperry Papers, Perry Special Collections.

13. Wilkinson, Diary, May 12, 1959. See also Ernest L. Wilkinson, Memorandum to Harvey L. Taylor and Wesley P. Lloyd, January 11, 1960, Wilkinson Papers.

14. See Gary James Bergera, "The 1966 BYU Student Spy Ring," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 79 (Spring 2011): 164–88.

15. See Ernest L. Wilkinson, Letter to Lucile Walker, April 27, 1965, and Ernest L. Wilkinson, Memorandum to John T. Bernhard, May 1, 1965, Wilkinson Papers; and Wilkinson, Diary, January 2, 1963. For Poll's politics, see his critique, *This Trumpet Gives an Uncertain Sound: A Review of W. Cleon Skousen's The Naked Communist* (March 1962), and Skousen's rejoinder, *My Reply to Dr. Richard D. Poll and His Critique of The Naked Communist* (Salt Lake City: Ensign Publishing Co., 1962).

16. For more on the Mormon Seminar, see Thomas A. Blakely, "The Swearing Elders: The First Generation of Mormon Intellectuals," *Sunstone* 10, no. 9 (1986): 8–13; and response by Poll, 14–17.

17. Richard D. Poll, Letter to Joseph Fielding Smith, December 3, 1954, typescript, Smith-Pettit Foundation. Smith responded: "If you had seen the number of letters and had witnessed the conversations personally and over the telephone, coming from both old and young people and many of these young people who are fed on the organic evolution theories in the schools, perhaps you would not think that the book was a tragedy so far as the young people are concerned and actually hurt their faith." Smith, Letter to Poll, December 7, 1954, Smith-Pettit Foundation.

18. Poll, Memorandum to Wilkinson, December 15, 1954, Wilkinson Papers.

19. McKay, Diary, December 29, 1954, stressed: "The Church has not approved" of Smith's book, that "so far as evolution is concerned, the Church has not made any ruling regarding it, and that no man has been authorized to speak for the Church on it."



20. Richard D. Poll, "Notes of a Conversation with President David O. McKay . . .," in Poll, *History and Faith: Reflections of a Mormon Historian* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 117–18.

21. *Ibid.*, 118–20.

22. Wilkinson, Diary, January 10, 1955. When Wilkinson met a few days later with Apostle Harold B. Lee, Lee agreed, according to Wilkinson, "that, in view of the conflict of opinion on the particular doctrine as to whether there was any life before Adam, I could take no real position on the same with respect to institute and seminary teachers." *Ibid.*, January 13, 1955. Besides presiding over BYU, Wilkinson supervised the Church's seminary and Institute of Religion programs.

23. Poll, Memorandum to Wilkinson, January 31, 1955, Wilkinson Papers.

24. Poll, Memorandum to William F. Edwards, February 17, 1955, Wilkinson Papers.

25. Nanette Poll Allen, Poll's daughter, email to Bergera, November 13, 2011.

26. Bentley left three drafts of his report of Poll's comments; see also Wilkinson, "Memorandum Re: Richard Poll," March 9, 1955, Wilkinson Papers.

27. Harvey L. Taylor, "Memorandum Re: Conference With Dr. Richard Poll," April 27, 1955, attached to Stephen Covey, "Report on Richard D. Poll," April 1966, Wilkinson Papers. "It was an irresponsible act," Poll later admitted. "I have wished many times that I had just told the good brother involved [i.e., Bentley] to go to hell instead [of sharing his account of his meetings with McKay and Smith]. To what degree I don't know, but to some degree I am sure, it affected a number of people's perceptions of me. . . . It was a dumb thing that I did and it did embarrass me, in ways I'm sure I do not yet know, over the subsequent years of my life at BYU." Poll, Interviewed by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, May–June 1985, James Moyle Oral History Program, LDS Church Historical Department, 1985, 22; copy in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation courtesy of Nanette Poll Allen.

28. Wilkinson, Diary, June 10, 1955. Wilkinson later termed Poll's talking about his meetings with McKay and Smith an "unpardonable sin." *Ibid.*, March 10, 1960.

29. See Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005), 47–49.

30. See Gary James Bergera, "Building Wilkinson's University," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 30 (Fall 1997): 117–20.

31. Wilkinson, Diary, February 6, 1958. Because of what he inter-

preted as Poll's misfires, specifically during the McKay-Smith controversy, Wilkinson believed that no other faculty member would have less success than Poll in representing faculty interests to trustees. See Wilkinson, Diary, March 10, 1960.

32. "I support its fundamental mission of protecting the individual rights and liberties of everyone in our country even those who are unpopular," Poll explained. Letter to Mrs. Richard L. Curts, May 7, 1965, quoted in Covey, "Report," 17.

33. McKay, Diary, September 15, 1961; emphasis McKay's.

34. Poll, *This Trumpet Gives an Uncertain Sound*, 3, critiqued Skousen's book for inadequate scholarship; mishandling his analysis of Communism; misstating history; proposing an unsound program for governmental action; extreme partisanship; and being part of an objectionable national movement. Skousen responded with *My Reply to Dr. Richard D. Poll . . .*; Poll replied with a two-page *Postscript*, which Skousen answered with a two-page *Note to the Reader*. All three items were privately published by their authors.

35. Skousen rejoined BYU's faculty in 1967, teaching religion until he retired in 1978.

36. Negative reaction to Skousen's book began surfacing by mid-1961. At an informal meeting of some faculty in Poll's home in August 1961, Wilkinson complained that Skousen, the invited speaker, "found himself the subject of serious attack." Wilkinson, Diary, August 10, 1961. By the end of the year, Poll had completed the first draft of his review of Skousen's book. Wilkinson, Diary, December 21, 22, 1961.

37. James T. Thorrup, Letter to undisclosed recipient, May 14, 1962, quoted in Covey, "Report," 10.

38. William Higgenbotham, Letter to Wilkinson, May 6, 1962, quoted in Covey, "Report," 9–10.

39. See William E. Fort Jr., Letter to Ernest L. Wilkinson, May 29, 1962, and Richard Vetterli, Letter to Ernest L. Wilkinson, June 6, 1962, quoted in Covey, "Report," 10–11.

40. Ernest L. Wilkinson, "Memorandum of a Telephone Conference Had from Washington, D.C., with President David O. McKay on Tuesday, January 9, 1962," Wilkinson Papers; see also David O. McKay, Diary, January 9, 1962. The following year, McKay said that Poll "must not tear that book [i.e., *The Naked Communist*] to pieces." McKay, Diary, July 26, 1963. Wilkinson admitted that Skousen had "a little tendency to exaggerate." Wilkinson, Diary, August 10, 1961.

41. Ezra Taft Benson, Letter to Wilkinson, March 8, 1965, quoted in Covey, "Report," 15. "I don't know how early Brother Benson decided I was a menace to the university or to the community or to the world," Poll

later said, “but during the 1960s it was apparent that he saw me as somebody who was eminently expendable, insofar as the university was concerned.” Poll, Interviewed by Beecher, 25. Benson emerged during the 1960s as the popularizer *par excellence* of the far-right wing of LDS-informed conservatism.

42. Wilkinson, Diary, January 2, 1963.

43. Some thought that BYU’s Debate Committee, of which Poll was a member, should have cleared Dorothy Marshall. However, invited speakers appearing before individual classes did not require approval. Keith Oaks, Memorandum to Wilkinson, May 3, 1965, quoted in Covey, “Report,” 19.

44. See E. Eugene Bryce, Letter, *Daily Universe*, April 21, 1965; cf. Richard D. Poll, Letter, *Daily Universe*, April 22, 1965.

45. Wilkinson, Diary, April 23, 1965.

46. Combined from Wilkinson, Diary, May 6, 1965, and Wilkinson, “Memorandum of Conference with Dick Poll,” May 6, 1965, Wilkinson Papers. Poll later recalled that, during this period, “things got most difficult, insofar as my relations with the university administration were concerned. I had been involved in several things which had caused uneasiness with President Wilkinson, partly on his own behalf but partly because at least some people [i.e., LDS Church officials] in Salt Lake were made uneasy.” Poll, Interviewed by Beecher, 25.

47. Wilkinson, Diary, July 11, July 19, 1965. Covey later became a popular motivational writer and speaker. His self-help books, including *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Free Press, 1989), have sold 20 million-plus copies in more than thirty-eight languages.

48. Covey, “Report,” 37.

49. Wilkinson, “Memo on Report of Stephen Covey on Richard Poll,” April 19, 1966, Wilkinson Papers.

50. Wilkinson, Diary, April 26, 1966.

51. *Ibid.*, April 27, 1966.

52. Executive Committee, Board of Trustees, Minutes, April 28, 1966, excerpts from these minutes in possession of Smith-Pettit Foundation.

53. Wilkinson, Letter to Poll, April 25, 1966. This date was before the executive committee met, but it was “mailed May 2 due to problems in finding proper address.” Handwritten notation on retained copy, Wilkinson Papers.

54. Earl C. Crockett, Memorandum to Wilkinson, April 28, 1966, Wilkinson Papers. The average nine-month base salary for a professor for 1966–67 was \$11,200.

55. Wilkinson, Memorandum to Stephen R. Covey, October 19, 1966, Wilkinson Papers.

56. Ezra Taft Benson, Letter to Wilkinson, January 30, 1968, Wilkinson Papers.

57. Board of Trustees, Minutes, October 15, 1969; also "Poll Accepts New Post as Western Illinois VP," *Daily Universe*, October 17, 1969. Poll believed that "there was no real likelihood . . . that I would be on his [i.e., Wilkinson's] team, in terms of being one of the close people. . . . He couldn't use me the way he liked to utilize people. . . . So that's why I left." Poll, Interviewed by Beecher, 22, 27.

58. Poll is probably best remembered today for his discussion of "Iron Rod" and "Liahona" Mormons in "What the Church Means to People like Me," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 2 (Winter 1967): 107-17.

59. See J. Kenneth Davies, "The Saga of Joe and Lora Davies," 1997, edited by Mark Davies in 2006; and J. Kenneth Davies, "A Personal Odyssey," 1998-99. Both documents were privately circulated; photocopies in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.

60. Davies, "Personal Odyssey," 6.

61. *Ibid.*, 6-7.

62. *Ibid.*, 7.

63. *Ibid.*, 96, 7, 9.

64. Wilkinson, Memorandum to Stephen R. Covey, January 17, 1966, Wilkinson Papers.

65. See, for example, Wilkinson, Memorandum to Weldon Taylor, July 21, 1955, and attachments, Wilkinson Papers.

66. Sharing such information, Wilkinson believed, "always results in discontent, because one faculty member objectively always thinks he's better than another." Diary, February 14, 1966.

67. Davies, "Personal Odyssey," 45-46.

68. *Ibid.*, 45. Grover graduated from BYU in 1959. He served in the U.S. Navy, worked for the Arthur Young Company (accounting), and joined the BYU faculty in 1963. In late 1965, he moved to California, subsequently worked at BYU-Hawaii, and retired in 1993.

69. *Ibid.*, 45-46.

70. Wilkinson, Diary, February 17, 1966; Davies, "Personal Odyssey," 47-48.

71. Board of Trustees, Minutes, March 2, 1966.

72. For the report on Davies, see "J. Kenneth Davies," May 24, 1966, with statements by students Lyle Burnett and Stephen Hay Russell, Wilkinson Papers. Other targeted faculty included Ray C. Hillam (political science), Richard B. Wirthlin (economics), Louis C. Midgley (politi-

cal science), Stewart L. Grow (political science), Melvin P. Mabey (political science), Jesse R. Reeder (political science), and Briant S. Jacobs (English).

73. For more, see Bergera, "The 1966 BYU Student Spy Ring."

74. See, for example, Lorenzo P. Dunn, Affidavit, July 6, 1966, notarized by Clyde D. Sandgren, Wilkinson Papers. Dunn, a member of the John Birch Society, said he had known Davies for eighteen years. See also Davies, "Personal Odyssey," 53–54.

75. John R. Howard, "Social Studies," in "Report of the Visitation Committee to the Commission on Higher Education of the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools on Brigham Young University," 96, Perry Special Collections.

76. Wilkinson, Diary, April 29, 1966.

77. *Ibid.*, April 25, 1966. That same day, Davies participated in an on-campus discussion, which Wilkinson attended, of "Political Extremism under the Spotlight" sponsored by BYU's Young Democrats and Young Republicans.

78. Wilkinson, Letter to Davies, April 29, 1966, Wilkinson Papers; see also Davies, "Personal Odyssey," 49. Davies remembered the "small salary increase" as "\$100 for the year."

79. Davies, Letter to Wilkinson, May 9, 1966, Wilkinson Papers; see also Davies, "Personal Odyssey," 49–50.

80. Richard Wirthlin, Memorandum to Ernest L. Wilkinson, May 18, 1966, Wilkinson Papers. "Instead of discharging Davies," Wilkinson later replied, "as had been suggested by one of the most respected and beloved members of the faculty, whom I consulted, . . . I merely sent him a reprimand." Wilkinson, Memorandum to Richard Wirthlin, August 20, 1966, Wilkinson Papers. "I have never condoned double standards of conduct for anyone," Wirthlin answered. "You need not lecture me on that point. . . . [I]t was somewhat encouraging to know that you had sought the advice of some unnamed 'most respected and beloved member of the faculty' and that he had recommended discharging Davies. I wish you had extended the same courtesy to Davies." Department Chairman [i.e., Wirthlin], Memorandum to Ernest L. Wilkinson, September 9, 1966, Wilkinson Papers.

81. Weldon J. Taylor, Memorandum to Wilkinson, June 17, 1966, Wilkinson Papers. "A part of my concern for the manner in which Davies was dealt with," Taylor reported, "springs from my desire to preserve a climate in the college that will enable us to hold our good faculty members and attract others." Taylor, Memorandum to Wilkinson, September 13, 1966, Wilkinson Papers. "There comes a time," Wilkinson replied, "if we are going to maintain proper decorum on our campus, that I have

to take action.” Wilkinson, Memorandum to Taylor, September 15, 1966, Wilkinson Papers.

82. Ernest L. Wilkinson, Memorandum to Clyde D. Sandgren and Earl C. Crockett, June 28, 1966, Wilkinson Papers.

83. Wilkinson, Memorandum to Davies, August 20, 1966, Wilkinson Papers. See also Clyde D. Sandgren, Memorandum to Wilkinson, July 13, 1966; and Wilkinson, Memorandum to Sandgren, July 15, 1966, both in Wilkinson Papers.

84. J. Kenneth Davies, Letter to Wilkinson, November 10, 1966, Wilkinson Papers.

85. Wilkinson, Letter to Davies, November 29, 1966, Wilkinson Papers.

86. Lyman J. Durfee, “Brigham Young University Average Academic Salaries—1965–66, 9-Month Contract Basis,” December 22, 1965, excerpts in possession of the Smith-Pettit Foundation.

87. Earl C. Crockett, Memorandum to Wilkinson, December 19, 1966, Wilkinson Papers.

88. Wilkinson, Memorandum to Crockett, December 20, 1966; also Wilkinson, Memorandum to Crockett, January 28, 1967; both in Wilkinson Papers.

89. Crockett, Letter to Davies, January 31, 1967, and Davies, Telegram to Crockett, February 6, 1967, Wilkinson Papers. See also Wilkinson, Diary, January 30, 1967.

90. More than twenty LDS academics rallied to Davies’s support. Leonard J. Arrington wrote, “For Brigham Young University to dismiss a person as moderate, as balanced, and as judicious as Ken Davies, will . . . will call into question the church’s devotion to higher education, to academic freedom, to the truth, and to justice.” Arrington, Letter to H. Smith Broadbent, March 14, 1967, Wilkinson Papers. Broadbent served on the three-man committee to investigate Davies.

91. J. Kenneth Davies, Letter to “Dear Friend,” February 10, 1967, photocopy, Smith-Pettit Foundation.

92. Ernest L. Wilkinson, “Memorandum Re: Ken Davies,” February 7, 1967, Wilkinson Papers; see also Wilkinson, Diary, February 7, 1967.

93. J. Kenneth Davies, Letter to Harold B. Lee, February 20, 1967, photocopy, Smith-Pettit Foundation.

94. Earl C. Crockett, Letter to J. Kenneth Davies, February 21, 1967, Wilkinson Papers.

95. Attached to *ibid.* Davies believed that the expanded allegations were clear evidence of “the president’s, at least temporary, emotional instability” occasioned, in part, by his political loss. Davies, “Personal Odyssey,” 74.

96. J. Kenneth Davies, Letter to H. Smith Broadbent, Robert Smith, and Dean Peterson, February 28, 1967; and Broadbent, Letter to Davies, March 6, 1967, both in Wilkinson Papers.

97. Board of Trustees, Minutes, March 1, 1967.

98. "I now think more than ever we should avoid a hearing if possible," wrote Crockett. "I do not think it possible to separate in hearings the Davies case and the student spy ring case." Earl C. Crockett, Memorandum to Wilkinson, March 9, 1967, Wilkinson Papers. Crockett retired from BYU in 1972.

99. Wilkinson, Diary, March 10 and 11, 1967.

100. Ernest L. Wilkinson, Letter to J. Kenneth Davies, March 10, 1967, Wilkinson Papers. Davies's 1964–65 salary was \$9,533. See also Wilkinson, Memorandum, March 27, 1967, Wilkinson Papers.

101. Davies, Letter to Wilkinson, March 16, 1967, Wilkinson Papers.

102. Wilkinson, Letter to Davies, March 17, 1967, Wilkinson Papers, emphasis Wilkinson's.

103. J. Kenneth Davies, Letter to Ernest L. Wilkinson, March 21, 1967, Wilkinson Papers.

104. Ernest L. Wilkinson, Letter to J. Kenneth Davies, April 3, 1967, Wilkinson Papers.

105. Davies, "Personal Odyssey," 94.

106. See Wayne W. Clark, Memorandum to Wilkinson, March 14, 1967, Wilkinson Papers.

107. Quoted in "Drs. Davies and Ovard Co-author Econ Text," *Daily Universe*, March 23, 1970.

108. Poll, Interviewed by Beecher, 19, 20.

109. Poll, Review of *Brigham Young University: A House of Faith*, by Gary James Bergera and Ronald Priddis, *BYU Studies* 26, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 91, emphasis Poll's.

110. Davies, "Personal Odyssey," 69, 104, 95, 96.





Jen Harmon Allen,  
*Ascension*, stainless  
steel, 2011

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## PERSONAL VOICES

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# Give Me My Myths

*Lynne Larson*

I am a lover of legends, a spinner of tales. Pepper your preaching with anecdotes if you want my attention. Punctuate your sermons with parables, your homilies with flesh and blood, your lessons with people who breathe. Do this for veracity's sake, for as Neal Chandler once so astutely reminded us in *Dialogue*, "Story truths are mostly truer than the truths of exhortation."<sup>1</sup> But great stories are also subjective, ambiguous, multi-faceted, and complex, not conducive to ten-minute talks or Gospel Essentials lessons, and they seem to be fading in importance, even as the need for thoughtful faith increases in this complicated world. In these days of "sound bite" journalism, and discourse reduced to a twitter, brevity is now in vogue. And the trend is sadly reflected at church. The 2010–11 priesthood/Relief Society study guide, *Gospel Principles*, was decidedly long on very basic doctrine and decidedly short on contextual examples. Most auxiliary lesson material is similarly standardized, as if programmed by a computer. The warmth of human experience, which well-written narrative provides, is conspicuously absent from our Sunday curriculum. Telling stories, really great stories, has fallen out of favor. And we are all the poorer for it.

Those among us of a certain age will readily remember the storytellers in our lives: our mothers at our bedside, the Scoutmaster at the campfire, the school teacher who knew how to tell a tale, or dramatically read one, the General Authority who could personalize any theme at conference time with stirring narratives from Church history or the scriptures. Even if the story was familiar, its fresh presentation, and our own maturing point of view, made it new again and meaningful in ways we never would have guessed upon first hearing it. Now we remember most of the old

tales with nostalgia, and cringe sometimes at their limp replacements if, indeed, we ever hear them at all.

There are reasons for the decline in the use of what was once such a rich staple of our religious education. Perhaps we are intimidated by the modern commandment, constantly reiterated and strictly enforced (at least in Relief Society), about not straying from the lesson, and the lesson contains no stories. Perhaps the “assigned topic” of our sacrament meeting sermons leaves room for little else, other than our testimonies and several bulleted General Authority quotations to bolster them. And often the bolstering “quotations” become the entire speech, as some wards and stakes now dictate that all sacrament meeting speakers use General Authority sermons from the most recent conference issue of the *Ensign* for their talks. The fact that some stories and some great storytellers survive at the pulpit, in spite of this micro-management, speaks to the power of narrative and individual voice. But even this tradition may fade, as the next generation is encouraged to trade thoughtful parables for the easy efficiency of downloaded exhortation. The trend away from the “layered” message in favor of the pedantic statement is already fully evident. It’s as if we’re afraid to tell good stories, for lack of time or direction. Even in our Old Testament teaching year, when classic tales make up much of the curriculum, we seem at a loss as to how to use the material. We have forgotten, perhaps, how great stories can change lives. Maybe we don’t read or hear enough of them anymore to know.

There may be another problem. Embarrassed by the Paul Dunn drama of several years ago, when the revered former General Authority was found to be disingenuous in his storytelling, the Church has grown wary, shying away from promoting anything in the curriculum that is hard to control. Elder Dunn, who died in 1998, was famous for the “real life” experiences that peppered his speeches, books, and cassette recordings. His dramatic war adventures and sports stories were particularly appealing to young audiences, and he earned a reputation as a popular speaker at conferences and firesides. When an investigation proved that his first-person stories were often extremely embellished and sometimes outright fabrications, he was “censured” by the Brethren. He felt obliged to issue a letter of apology in the *Church News*

in 1991, admitting that he had “not always been accurate in my public talks and writings.”<sup>2</sup>

Since then, Church leaders have undoubtedly become more careful in their storytelling, justifiably concerned about their personal narratives being misused, misquoted, or misinterpreted, especially on the internet. In 2004, the First Presidency issued a statement officially requesting members not to distribute notes taken from the speeches of General Authorities or other Church officers at regional or stake conferences or at other meetings, “without the consent of the speaker.”<sup>3</sup> In the wake of all this caution, good old-fashioned storytelling may be getting a bad rap, and perhaps will soon be going the way of real letter-writing, in-depth reading, and the land-line telephone.

I have no quarrel with eliminating much that passes for storytelling in our Church curriculum. Even outside of Primary, most of the cautionary tales and “story examples” that remain in our lesson books are simplistic and one-dimensional, provoking no thought or contemplation, exciting no joy over a tale well told and well applied. And *in* Primary, the temptation to completely fabricate for the sake of instilling faith sometimes simply runs amok. I remember once being genuinely surprised when I turned to a Primary counselor who had just presented the children with a miraculous tale of healing. “That’s quite a story,” I whispered. “Where did you get it?”

“I made it up,” she replied without flinching. “It worked for what I needed, and the kids don’t know the difference.”

While I admired her resourcefulness, I was put off by how she had manipulated us, fecklessly passing off as true a story she knew to be completely false. The kids didn’t know the difference then, but someday they may question “real” truth when they find they’ve been jerked around by its shadow. Paul Dunn’s problem was not so much that his stories were false, and he knew it, but that they were presented as true, first-person experiences, and he never corrected the misperception. A story does not have to be true to teach truth, but total fabrications designed to merely push our emotional buttons are not the worthy myths and legends for which I yearn. Great stories, fact or fiction, must rise with authenticity from the human condition and earn their place in our

canon through the integrity of their art and the enduring quality of their message.

But skeptics who look askance at the efforts of gospel writers and speakers to “connect” with their audiences through narrative, should remember that editing, embellishing, and even exaggerating “true” stories to make a point or teach a lesson is nothing new. The technique is ageless. From Genesis to Revelations, from the First Vision to the Last Wagon, poets and minstrels have laced the cold, hard facts of life with their own insight and the eloquence of their pens, artfully controlling their presentation and turning dry doctrine into savored vicarious experience for the benefit of us all.

One of my favorite pioneer stories, for example, is the stirring account of the three teen-aged boys who, as members of the rescue party, stepped forward to carry weakened survivors of the ill-fated Willie-Martin handcart trek through the floating ice of the Sweetwater River in 1856. This incident was conspicuously left out of the recent film, *17 Miracles*, which focused on the plight of the pioneers *before* they were rescued, but it comes quickly to the minds of most of us who are familiar with the entire event. The tale is indeed heroic, and it becomes even more effectively poignant in the hands of a great storyteller, as when President Gordon B. Hinckley related it. His narration backs the images of the Saints trudging through a blizzard on a current Church history DVD titled “*Tried in All Things*.”<sup>4</sup>

I should like to tell you of three eighteen-year-old boys, [President Hinckley begins, his voice breaking]. In 1856 more than a thousand of our people, some of them perhaps your forebears, found themselves in serious trouble while crossing the plains to this valley. Because of a series of unfortunate circumstances, they were late getting started. They ran into snow and bitter cold in the highlands of Wyoming. Their situation was desperate, with deaths occurring every day.

President Young learned of their condition as the October general conference was about to begin. He immediately called for teams, wagons, drivers, and supplies to leave to rescue the bereft Saints. When the first rescue team reached the Martin company, there were too few wagons to carry the suffering people. The rescuers had to insist that the carts keep moving.

When they reached the Sweetwater River on November 3,

chunks of ice were floating in the freezing water. After all these people had been through, and in their weakened condition, that river seemed impossible to cross. It looked like stepping into death itself to move into that freezing stream. Men who had once been strong sat on the frozen ground and wept, as did the women and children. Many simply could not face the ordeal.

And now I quote from the record [Hinckley continues]: “Three eighteen-year-old boys belonging to the relief party came to the rescue, and to the astonishment of all who saw, carried nearly every member of the ill-fated handcart company across the snowbound stream. The strain was so terrible, and the exposure so great, that in later years all the boys died from the effects of it.”

Caught with emotion, President Hinckley concludes the tale with these final sentences: “When President Brigham Young heard of this heroic act, he wept like a child, and later declared publicly: ‘That act alone will ensure C. Allen Huntington, George W. Grant, and David P. Kimball an everlasting salvation in the Celestial Kingdom of God, worlds without end.’ Great was their heroism, sacred the sacrifice they made of health and eventually of life itself to save the lives of those they helped.”<sup>5</sup>

It’s a wonderful story, and I have often felt a thrill of emotion upon hearing it repeated, due in part to President Hinckley’s tone and timing, with his eloquent sense of the importance of name, place, and prophetic declaration. It’s a powerful story, one that has certainly moved and inspired countless young men to a greater commitment and faithfulness. It will always be one of my favorite narratives from Church history, but, according to modern scholars, it’s a story that isn’t quite true.

“It didn’t happen,” David Roberts claims in his compelling 2008 book, *Devil’s Gate*, in which he cites LDS historian Chad M. Orton’s *BYU Studies* article, “The Martin Handcart Company at the Sweetwater: Another Look.”<sup>6</sup> According to Orton, the rescue story departs from reality in several ways: none of the “boys” was eighteen years old; a number of men helped the people across the river, although many pioneers waded without assistance; and the three boys lived long after the rescue, one of them for forty years. Roberts attributes the more colorful and legendary details to David Kimball’s younger brother, Solomon Kimball, who created the version we know and love for the *Improvement Era* in 1914.<sup>7</sup> The family connection to one of the heroes of the rescue, could ei-

ther mean that Solomon made honest and wonderful use of his primary source, or that, as Roberts believes, he was an opportunist whose brother's name lives on because of his hyperbolic pen.<sup>8</sup> Whichever is true, the story is suspect. But if this lack of credibility diminishes its place in our tradition, I regret the loss.

As a lover of factual history as well myths and legends, I can fault neither Roberts nor Orton for uncovering the reality surrounding the handcart saga. Simple factual truth can, and often does, stand on its own, unembroidered and unembellished, to teach us with the very starkness of its image any lesson to be learned. Thus, the striking photographs of Ken Burns's documentaries on the Civil War, or baseball, or jazz, stir our interest and emotion with only a minimum of understated narrative. A straightforward look at the building of the Brooklyn Bridge or of the Panama Canal needs no adorning in David McCullough's fine collection of histories. Reality, well described, is all we may require to be thoroughly impressed. I have long believed, for example, that a straightforward, honest, first-person narrative about polygamy would stir our souls at church, as we learned to more fully appreciate the faith and sacrifices of our ancestors.

Still, with all of my high regard for absolute fact, I love poetic license, that understood the permission that writers have been given to make things beautiful, memorable, and more accessible for those of us who are touched as much by beauty as by truth. "If it didn't happen that way, it should have!" a favorite literature professor of mine once declared, only half in jest. We seekers of truth *and* beauty have to occasionally decide if truth is what *is*, or if truth is what *should be*. Realist or Romantic? Perhaps there is room in most of us for both personas, if we can recognize and accept the unique contributions each of them offers.

During my teaching career in the secondary schools of rural Idaho, I remember presenting an excerpt from Longfellow's epic poem "The Song of Hiawatha" to a group of students and feeling obliged to explain why we were reading this impractical and somewhat antiquated piece of literature. The excerpt was an origin story, a myth, that explained how Hiawatha, through fasting, prayer, and struggle, obtained food for his hungry nation in the form of corn, a plant previously unknown. In the poem, Hiawatha, in a scene reminiscent of Jacob's wrestling with the Lord in



Genesis, is called upon to battle for three days with a powerful golden-haired angel. The supernatural personage is dressed in “garments green and yellow” with “plumes of green bent o’er his forehead,” and Hiawatha is promised a blessing if he prevails. Before the final match, the angel tells Hiawatha that through honest struggle he has proven himself and that, after he has won the battle, he must bury his heavenly opponent carefully:

Make a bed for me to lie in,  
Where the rain may fall upon me,  
Where the sun may come and warm me;  
Strip these garments, green and yellow,  
Strip this nodding plumage from me,  
Lay me in the earth and make it  
Soft and loose and light above me.  
Let no hand disturb my slumber,  
Let no weed or worm molest me . . .  
Only come yourself to watch me,  
Till I wake and start and quicken,  
Till I leap into the sunshine.<sup>9</sup>

Hiawatha obeys all of these instructions once he has defeated the angel. He buries his emerald-clad opponent as instructed and

at length a small green feather  
from the earth shot slowly upward,  
Then another and another,  
And before the Summer ended  
Stood the maize in all its beauty,  
With its shining robes about it,  
And its long, soft, yellow tresses;  
And in rapture Hiawatha  
Cried aloud [in grateful joy]  
[For] this new gift of the Great Spirit.<sup>10</sup>

A gift earned, Hiawatha knew, through his own supplication and obedience.

The poem was included in our anthology to teach the students about American myths and origin stories, about metamorphosis

in literature and in life. It presented the image of a great spiritual leader, willing to pray and fast and fight for his people and their needs. We discussed all of these things, as well as the power of certain myths on people and nations. “How do you think the future generations of Hiawatha’s tribe felt about the gifts of the earth, the spiritual power of their leaders, the necessity of hard work to meet their goals, and the expectation of divine intervention in their lives?” I asked these questions, along with others designed to at least introduce the power of myth. I concluded with the reminder that the story wasn’t true, of course. We don’t get corn from angels dressed in green plumes. But I promised the students that, the next time they saw a ripe cornfield, they would remember Hiawatha and the beauty of the lessons Longfellow taught, perhaps far longer than the actual science involved in agriculture.

As it was with Hiawatha, so it is with many gospel stories, some which border on myth but are filled with “story truths,” as well as the artistry that makes them memorable. The Old Testament is replete with stirring examples: the serpent in the garden, God and Satan wagering on high over the fate of Job, the three faithful Israelites in the fiery furnace, and, in another great origin story, the promise of the rainbow, symbolic of our Father’s pledge that He will never flood the earth again. Like figurative language, these stories, literally true or not, can bring a vivid aspect to our discourse if they are used judiciously and with honesty and understanding, and if we are brave enough to introduce them as they surely are, myths that teach us truths through their beauty and their universal application.

But many of these colorful stories in the scriptures are eliminated altogether from our gospel study because they are so obviously mythological that we shy away from them as mistranslations or perhaps as mysteries into which we should never delve. A dramatic incident in the tragic story of King Saul comes to mind. Because of his disobedience, Saul has lost the companionship of the Lord. David has displaced him, earning the acclaim and loyalty of the people and the armies of Israel. The blessings of heaven that Saul once enjoyed now belong to a servant-shepherd boy. The Philistines are gathering against Saul now, and he is a desperate man, described pitifully as he “enquired of the Lord, and the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by

the prophets” (1 Sam. 28:6). Saul, once a chosen leader of the Lord’s people, has lost his family, his title, and his divine approbation. The Prophet Samuel, his mentor and advocate with God, has died, leaving the king desolate and without hope, “and his heart greatly trembled” (v. 5).

Ashamed of what he is about to do, Saul disguises himself and seeks out a witch, “a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I might go to her and enquire of her” (v. 7). At Saul’s pleading, the woman conjures up Samuel from the grave. “An old man cometh up,” she cries, “and he is covered with a mantle” (v. 14). Out of the earth, the hoary old prophet rises at the witch’s bidding, and there must have been fire in his eyes, for Saul falls face down in fear upon recognizing him. This scene is so dramatic it might have inspired Shakespeare’s evil sisters in *Macbeth*, but its horror is never mentioned in Gospel Doctrine class. We don’t believe in witches, at least not the kind that can bring prophets from their graves, and so the opportunity is lost to vividly and memorably demonstrate the desperation of a king, once favored by God, who has fallen so far from grace that he must seek out an evil medium and beg for mercy from a ghost.

Saul pleads his case, but the phantom-like Samuel offers no consolation. “Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?” he growls, standing angrily before the king he once loved (v. 15). He tells Saul that it is too late to repent, that “the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand and hath given it to thy neighbor, even to David” (v. 17). Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines, and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me [in the grave] (v. 19). Then Saul fell straightway all along the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel, and there was no strength in him” (v. 20). It is a terrible scene, vivid and frightening. It is certainly a myth; but in its imagery, it carries a message far more compelling than the usual Sunday school exhortation, “Brothers and sisters, we should always follow the prophets.”

And the same can be said for tales that are “based on real events.” Good film editors know how to take a thousand hours of celluloid, shot out of sequence, and condense them into a logical, well-plotted visual experience, beautiful in its scope and in its inti-

mate moments, artistically capturing the heart of a message that might have been lost in days and months and years of reality.

Pondering the difference between “true stories” and “story truths,” I have usually found that both are valid and should be recognized and appreciated. Perhaps that’s why I still regard the handcart tale as worthy of my praise, even as its precise facts are questioned. Does it really matter that the three boys named in the story may not have been the day’s only heroes? Does it matter that they were not eighteen, or that they did not die soon after the ordeal? It matters only in this regard: Even if these details are merely the product of poetic or dramatic license, they have enriched and humanized an event that might otherwise have been forgotten in the mists of time, in spite of the very real lessons in sacrifice—story truths—it graphically provides.

As mentioned, Neal Chandler compellingly discussed the importance of “story truths” in his iconic *Dialogue* essay in 1991, “Book of Mormon Stories That My Teacher Kept from Me.” Chandler’s thesis concerned the difficulty we face in teaching and connecting to the Book of Mormon because it has so few “human” stories to tell: “no tales of love or seduction. No long-smiten Jacob at the well. No Samson and Delilah. No desperate eunuch’s wife with Joseph. No terrible passions like Amnon’s for his sister nor David’s for Bathsheba. No song for Solomon.”<sup>11</sup> In the Book of Mormon, Chandler asserts, even war is boring because it is so impersonal. We have no frightened Henry Fleming with whom to identify, no waiting bride with whom to suffer, no bereaved family with whom to mourn. And such characters are conspicuous in their absence.

“When Jesus of Nazareth was asked,” wrote Chandler, “as he often was, some question turning on what everyone around him thought to be high, implacable principle, he did not quote from *Mormon Doctrine* nor from *Answers to Gospel Questions*. Instead he told a story.”<sup>12</sup> And we must imagine that those stories Jesus told had more to do with human truths than with factual events.

And so the question arises: When do we cross the line in our use of myth and fable? If we honestly present our stories, true or not, for the sake of the greater good, suggesting up-front to our listeners that a given tale may be embellished, mythologized, or simply changed, what about reality? What about absolute truth? With

all this allowing of poetic license, will our students and fellow ward members be confused and unable to recognize the “real” truth when they hear it? If the handcart rescue story is not quite factual, there are certainly other staples in our gospel library which also could be questioned. What about the gold plates? What about Moroni? What about the visions in the Kirtland Temple when the Lord stood “upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber” (D&C 110:2)? What about the First Vision, that seminal event upon which all our theology is based? Truth or fiction? If a dozen other sacred stories are suddenly presented as myths and mixed in with factual truth, how are we to know the difference?

For me, the answer to that question is found in yet another story, a splendid piece of fiction written by Thom Duncan, called “The Glowing.” In the story, a Latter-day Saint scientist builds a time machine and travels back to the spring of 1820 in Palmyra, New York. There he meets people who know the Smith family and the boy, Joseph. In great anticipation, Orkney, the scientist, stations himself near the Sacred Grove for several days, hoping to catch a glimpse of the fourteen-year-old future prophet as he makes his way into the trees for that special prayer, that world-changing audience with God the Father and His Son. The time traveler plans to follow Joseph into the grove and discover once and for all if what the young man said was true, if the glorious vision did indeed take place. At some point, Joseph appears across the field, headed for the grove; and Orkney follows at a distance, until he can find a proper hiding place from which to observe the sacred visitation. But in the end, he resists intruding into Joseph’s hallowed sanctuary, ashamed that he has used the wonder of time travel to “shore up the nicks in his own leaky faith,” realizing that “his testimony had never been a spiritual one,” and that now, “faced with the possibility of totally destroying his basis for belief, he couldn’t take the chance of finding out for certain.”<sup>13</sup>

Orkney waits for Joseph to come out of the grove, feeling good about his decision not to “spy” but perhaps a little disappointed that he has come so far for nothing. He could have witnessed the reality of the First Vision! He could have seen it with his own eyes and never doubted or wondered or questioned

again. But he has missed the chance, the golden chance to replace faith with firm and irrefutable fact. Lamenting this forever-lost opportunity, Orkney waits respectfully and curiously for Joseph to emerge from the trees. And then a stunning thing happens. Joseph does appear, walking past the scientist's hiding place. As Orkney's eyes follow him, the boy suddenly looks back, contemplating where he's been, and Orkney sees his face. He sees it "glowing" with a radiance that takes the man's breath away. Orkney is filled with a glowing of his own that "was all encompassing . . . that "seemed to burst beyond its physical boundaries to envelop his body in an aura of fire. He no longer felt supported by the ground, but had the sensation of floating in the air, curiously detached from all things terrestrial. . . . [S]uch exquisite joy accompanied this experience that he felt incapable of supporting it."<sup>14</sup>

The marvelous sensation recedes in Orkney as Joseph moves farther away, going home to farm and family and a prophetic future. But our time traveler realizes, of course, that he has been touched by the power of God. Its reality was reflected in Joseph's face. And Orkney knows without a doubt just what the boy saw in the trees.

Like Brother Orkney, all of us of necessity must stop short of actually witnessing with our eyes the scenes that gird our testimonies. We, too, must depend on faith. The radiance Orkney saw reflected in Joseph's face glows for us, as believers, in the glorious Restoration that came *after* the Prophet emerged from the grove. We learn most things in life indirectly. And, because we are human, great stories, well told, may offer us our best chance at feeling the power, that "aura of fire" that Orkney experienced, as we are touched by their beauty and their truth, whether we can know them as "absolute fact" or not. The question, "Is that true?" perhaps should be answered, "Is it true for you?" And the difference between "true stories" and "story truths" will not matter so much any more.

I long to hear great myths and legends, poems and parables used more assiduously in the classroom and over the pulpit. The beauty of the scriptures is often overlooked in our effort to always be didactic, to always look for the literal and prosaic in our lessons and our gospel study. In the end, we are cheating ourselves.

The writer Joseph Bruchak once described a world I never want to experience: “Long ago, the people had no stories to tell. It was hard for them to live without stories, especially during the long winter nights when the snow was deep outside the lodge and the people longed for something to give meaning to their lives. ‘If only there was something we could listen to,’ the people would say. But there were no storytellers and no stories to be told.”<sup>15</sup>

Fortunately, we still have great stories and wonderful storytellers, both inside the Church and out. If I were teaching young men about chastity, I would not let many lessons go by without reading with them “Greg,” Douglas Thayer’s wonderful cautionary tale.<sup>16</sup> If I were faced with teaching the principle of faith to a group of sci-fi infected teenagers, I would use “The Glowing” by Thom Duncan to demonstrate its importance. I would like to feel free some day to use episodes from Thomas Hardy, Jane Austen, or even John Steinbeck in my Relief Society lessons, where the richness of their language and the power of their insight humanize some of the very gospel principles we try so hard to teach.

Some lessons call for exhortation. Some call for concise lists arranged on a blackboard. The most memorable lessons, the ones we internalize, are learned through experience. We can, and we usually do, gain most of that experience vicariously, even while standing far apart and years removed from the Sacred Grove or the Sweetwater River or anywhere reality is taking place, because we feel the fire of its reflection in our stories, and, if we have the courage, in our story-truths.

#### Notes

1. Neal Chandler, “Book of Mormon Stories That My Teacher Kept from Me,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 30.
2. Paul H. Dunn, “An Open Letter to Members of the Church,” *Church News*, October 26, 1991.
3. “First Presidency Issues Statement,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 29, 2004, C2.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Four B’s for Boys,” *Ensign*, November 1981, 40.
5. *Ibid.*
6. David Roberts, *Devil’s Gate: Brigham Young and the Great Mormon Handcart Tragedy* (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2008),



242–43, quoting Chad M. Orton, “The Martin Handcart Company at the Sweetwater: Another Look,” *BYU Studies* 45, no. 3 (2006): 5–37.

7. Solomon F. Kimball, “Belated Emigrants of 1856,” *Improvement Era*, February 1914.

8. Roberts, *Devil’s Gate*, 242.

9. Henry W. Longfellow, “From the Song of Hiawatha,” *Elements of Literature, Second Course* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1989), 511.

10. *Ibid.*, 514.

11. Chandler, “Book of Mormon Stories That My Teacher Kept from Me,” 26.

12. *Ibid.*, 15.

13. Thom Duncan, “The Glowing,” *Irreantum* 4, no. 4 (Winter 2000–2001) 25.

14. *Ibid.*, 26.

15. Joseph Bruchak, *Return of the Sun: Native American Stories from the Northeast Woodlands* (N.p.: Joseph Bruchak, 1990), 35.

16. Douglas H. Thayer, *Under the Cottonwoods* (Provo, Utah: Frankson Books, 1977), 109.

POETRY

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**San Diego Virgin and Child  
Enthroned with Saints**

*Elizabeth Willes*

The man he will become  
floats above her head  
A look springs up:  
words falling from his skirt  
against the chimney of her thought  
Angels on the roof are comfortless  
in the wooden book  
the stone cold book  
book surviving fire

## Nazarín

*after Buñuel*

*Elizabeth Willes*

Love is the great  
unspoken thing:  
the horse and his oats

To be  
what a mountain would want:  
money on the table,  
the pitcher on the floor

God must be laughing  
at the window, having nothing  
to carry

I walk with my feet  
I want to drink in the stream  
in the cool desert trees

Reject sorrow  
Endure what sorrow leads you to

A scene at a well  
Devotion isn't passion

To look into the face  
and do nothing  
To carry it all  
to the black and white limit

To be given to giving away  
so to not know the difference  
To be taken  
on the road, your body  
at its shadow

The horse will not live  
The donkey won't replace it

The man will, gratefully  
without thinking anything  
of it

## Good Government in the City

*Elizabeth Willes*

To be good  
in Lorenzetti's view  
is to build a piazza  
more enticing  
than a bedroom  
To converse  
on horseback  
or at a table  
To flirt with  
the shoulder  
of a hill  
The mind is  
ecclesiastical  
It finds a place  
for every season  
It hammers  
on distant rooftops  
with a view of both  
the vineyards  
and the square

## Speculations: Wine

*William Morris*

### I

Christ was perfect. Christ turned water to wine at the wedding at Cana. Did Christ create the perfect wine?

Yes. Perfection is possible in mortality. The wine was not perfect in the sense that it achieved some Platonic ideal. But it was perfect—complete, finished. The most the wine itself could be. The best. The grapes grown with the perfect amount of water and sun, drawing the right amount of minerals from the soils of Galilee, and each individually plucked at the peak of ripeness. Aged to maturity. The sugars and the tannins perfectly balanced. The bouquet fruity and floral. The mouth-feel exactly right. A bloom of esters. An explosion of perfect flavor. A perfect wine for the occasion.

No. How could it possibly be perfect? No person has the same taste buds or palate or memories—nor were any of the guests at the same point in their drinking—hence the comment on saving the best wine for last. A perfect wine would have to adjust for those variables from person to person and from sip to sip. It was not a magic wine that always presented perfection to each person with each taste. It was just wine. Created from water. A good version based on the wines Jesus had drunk in his life. No more, no less.

### II

The two of them drank the wine. What were they supposed to do? The little boy was dying from AIDS. The family was poor as dirt. The wine was all they had to offer.

They drank the wine. They had explained and explained again. But the father said that it had been mulling for hours, reducing down in a small, cast-iron kettle on the brazier outside. The uncle said the level of alcohol was close to nil.

They drank the wine. They drank it from small cups of thick, brown, textured plastic that had clearly been washed a thousand times. They sat hunched forward, their white-clad arms on their wool-trousered knees. They sat and nestled the cups in both hands, like a baby bird or a hymnbook, or an offering. Their sips were slow, tentative. Like new kisses.

They drank the wine. It was thick and sour and warm. Mulled but not spiced. It was molten grape skins. It was syrup. It was sin. It was heated grape juice concentrate. It was just-mixed Jell-O ready for the fridge.

They drank the wine. And contemplated the blood. Yes, His blood. But also his blood. The boy who played on the thick carpet rug with a Transformer some foreign aid worker had given him months ago. The boy who was pale and thin and dying. The boy whose blood was wine turned to vinegar.

They drank the wine. And thought it might give them courage to again offer a blessing. Anoint the boy with oil. But the courage didn't come. The parents clearly didn't want it. Or rather, they couldn't muster the hope to even begin to want it. They were beyond hope because their only hope was the unrealistic hope of raising enough money for a trip to Istanbul where some vague miracle cure awaited.

They drank the wine. But one poured half of his cup into the other's and that one, after a second's outrage, dutifully finished it because he was afraid to hand back an ungrateful, unempty cup.

They drank the wine. And afterwards smelled each other's breath and discovered that they didn't smell at like all the men on the streetcars in winter. And they walked crisply in a line. And the alphabet easily rolled backward off their tongues. They felt no buzz, no loss of social inhibitions, no loosening of anxiety. They were clearly not in an altered state. No chemistry was at work—only the bitter alchemy of their visit, the thick sorrow and sour despair trailing from them as they trudged the dirt road to the highway to catch the van back to the metro stop, back to sector 2, back to Bucharest.



### III

*Part of me wants to laugh along at this stuff—“Two Buck Chuck! Repent and snob no more!”—but going from “dying child in Bucharest” to the Jeff Foxworthy-esque “you might be a Mormon” section (and then on to the fashion puns later) is a tonal shift worthy of Dramamine. I find I don’t laugh along even when I want to, I become resentful of this seemingly mercurial author whipping my neck around, etc. Maybe there is some hard and fast logic behind this sequencing, but I can’t make it out.*

If you refuse to eat beef Burgundy because of the wine, you might be a Mormon.

If you refuse to eat beef Burgundy because of the beef, you might be a Mormon.

If you don’t make beef Burgundy at home or order it in a restaurant but will eat it if served to you at a luncheon or in a friend’s home, you might be a Mormon.

If you make beef Burgundy at home with a non-alcoholic red wine, you might be a Mormon.

If you make your beef Burgundy with Two Buck Chuck and bring it to a rolling boil for a good twenty minutes, you might be a Mormon.

If you make your beef Burgundy with a California Burgundy and let it gently simmer for five minutes, you might be a Mormon.

If you make your beef Burgundy with a French Burgundy and take a quick sip before pouring the wine in, you might be a Mormon.

If you have a glass of wine along with your beef Burgundy, you might be a Mormon. But only as long as you either (1) feel as if you’re doing something totally transgressive, or (2) feel guilty about it afterward. Or both.

If you make beef bourguignon instead of beef Burgundy, then you might be a Mormon. But you definitely are a food snob. Repent and snob no more!

If you make bœuf bourguignon instead of beef Burgundy, then you served a mission to France. We’re so sorry. Now get over yourself and call it beef Burgundy like the rest of us.

### IV

Spring fashion took an abrupt turn to the macabre this week-

end as the runways proliferated with looks inspired by recent world events. Although a few designers tried the subtle approach, others went straight to crimson-stained robes—Armanis so freshly pulled from the wine-vat they dripped down the catwalk. Givenchy playfully titled its collection “Trampling Out the Vintage” while Dior (in a clever twist on new wine, old bottles) simply trotted out last year’s looks in a myriad of sanguine shades. The market for haute couture has, naturally, seen a huge drop-off of late, but the major fashion houses seem committed to soldiering on come hell or high water. Whether the *Grapes of Wrath* look will also dominate the fall collections is anyone’s guess; but insiders say that, based on recent orders, the major houses seem to have split into two camps: one focused on ash- and dun-colored mohairs, the other on radiant white woolens.

## Speculations: Oil

### I

The rustic town of Zarapeth brings us this small batch, extra virgin, cold-pressed oil which first presents itself with a very clean but brassy aroma. It smacks the palate with an overwhelming burst of bitter green mixed with chicory and pepper but quickly mellows into hints of clay, grass, and rain. It is not terribly dissimilar from that found in the homes of certain Aaronites, but without the smoky after notes. The only complaint is that it lacks that certain robust culmination that one expects from a fine oil, instead finishing with a feeling almost of acacia honey or dew on the tongue.

Source: Widow Estates; Score: 38/50.

### II

My lamp has burned too long. The nozzle is rimmed with soot and veined with delicate cracks, the wick black and barely flickering. The mouth is yellowed and rancid. The base is sweating oil. My eyes are bloodshot, my fingers stained terra cotta, my robes ripe with sweat and smoke. I am faint with prolonged, ever-heightening anticipation.

And yet the bridegroom tarries. The feast remains uneaten, the wine long since turned to vinegar. The foolish virgins have returned from purchasing oil and, tired of waiting, have left again for the bazaar to browse costlier items: silks, spices, perfumes.

I had been told that he would come in my lifetime. But the wait has been so long that my hope has evaporated. I still have faith that he will come. My conviction remains undimmed. But I no longer believe what I was told. There must have been some mistake in the prophecy. Some minor miscalculation. What's more, the longer I have waited for the joyous hour, the more it has receded. Where once I experienced it as the near present, it now is a distant future.

Once, when my hope began to fade, I saw death as a release. But now I am not so sure. Every wick replaced, every careful refilling with oil is a witness, a tally of fidelity, and as the hours pass, I fear a sudden cry in the night. I came prepared, but I am no longer ready.

### III

A hierarchy of oils for consecration as determined by the teachers' quorum of the Glenwood Ward of the Richfield Utah Stake in case no extra virgin olive oil is available.

Tier 1:

Non-extra virgin olive oil

Tier 2:

Vegetable oil

Canola oil

Safflower oil

Sunflower oil\*

Tier 3:\*\*

Peanut oil

Sesame oil

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\* There was some dispute over whether safflower oil and sunflower oil were the same thing.

\*\*One young man argued for the inclusion of coconut oil; but since he had never seen it and so couldn't verify color, odor, taste, etc., coconut oil was not included in the hierarchy.

All other nut oils\*\*\*

Tier 4:

Motor oil\*\*\*\*

#### IV

One day as my grandfather was preparing vials of consecrated oil to give out to the members of the high priests' group, he spilled one, right as he was about to recite the prayer of consecration. His response: "Aw, shiii-ooooot!"

#### V

In its container of glass, metal, or plastic, it sits dormant, latent. Holy but not static: on its way to rancid. On the crown of the head, it quickly anoints itself into the scalp and the shafts of the hair, its presence soon displaced by the weight of hands, the warmth radiating from suited bodies, the deliberate words that fill the hopeful silence. But in between, there is that moment when it is perched on the forefinger, held there by its viscosity and purpose, golden, catching the light, almost forming a drop, barely emitting a hint of its fruity aroma. There in that moment, it is itself and more than itself: consecrated and pure; organic yet refined; the material presence of its chemistry and immaterial symbol of light and healing and royalty: ineluctably yet rather simply, plainly yet supernally oil.

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\*\*\*Walnut oil, in particular, is of concern because of the potential for allergic reactions. The tragedy of brownies baked with walnuts in them was also discussed as was whether it was a greater crime to bring dry Rice Krispies treats or brownies with walnuts to a fireside.

\*\*\*\*The general consensus, however, was that motor oil was the coolest substitute and the one most likely to happen—a point backed up by at least two verifiable (happened to a relative or a friend of a relative) and one apocryphal (somebody just heard it somewhere) stories about auto accidents/sudden illnesses happening on lonely stretches of the interstate in Nevada, Idaho, and Arizona.

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FICTION

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## Requiem in L Minor

*Karen Rosenbaum*

Today the L's. In the old address book, the L pages are impossible—phone numbers lined out, zip codes scratched in, whole entries x'd or margined with a question mark. Even the H's are more decipherable. Now, on the dining room table, the new address book is lying open waiting for me to carry on. To mark my place, I stick the ragged post-it that Baxter had affixed to the cover five years ago: "Dearest Char, the rest of this present is my offer to copy and correct all entries in legible handwriting." The new book, the cover awash with birds, was a Valentine's gift. Baxter never got around to giving me the rest of the present.

Baxter was awash in good intentions. Now he is just awash—floating, fighting the flow. Sometimes he is all affection. Sometimes he can hardly look at me. Eighteen years, mostly good. More than a partnership, our tiny family. No parents, no children, but Lauren is coming over this afternoon, after her classes. She comes every week now. I know it's her idea, not Ramona's, though I imagine she reports on me to her mother. If Lauren were my daughter instead of my niece, she'd probably feel she *had* to be here. Instead she's relaxed, doesn't say much, just plops down on the floor or on my bed. A gift in a kid who's not even twenty.

Ramona drove up once after the surgery. She couldn't sit for more than a minute. She walked back and forth, from Cocky's cage to the window. She kept asking if she could do anything, laundry, vacuuming. I told her we have a housecleaner, but she seemed not to hear. Two, maybe three times this year, she's phoned, but she can't think of anything to say or maybe she can't make herself say what she is thinking. Instead she mails us notes, lots of notes, on flowered cards, and tells us she is praying for us.

Ever since I started college and stopped church, ever since I let loose of that iron rod and the word of God, she has felt threat-

ened by me, has disapproved of me. Of me and my men, she would say. But sisters share so much. I know she will be devastated when I die.

I chew the top of my pen. It tastes about as good as the mush Baxter brings me for breakfast. Everything tastes bitter. Today is a good day though, just a little dizziness. Moby brushes against my leg, waits for me to massage his neck, then bounds onto my lap and stretches up to the table. He's taken a liking to the big wooden bowl in the center, and he curls up now inside it. The bowl was a gift from Nathan when we were young in Berkeley, two decades ago. I shake my head, rattle and rearrange my thoughts. I have spent the last months stacking and sorting. Now I'm redoing the address book myself, struggling to make my letters legible so that Baxter will be able to find everyone. Well, almost everyone.

### *Angela and Mark Laird*

I was maid of honor when Angie and Mark got married. I was seventeen, two years younger than Angela and the other bridesmaids, all of us stuffed into red velvet dresses and red suede pumps. I didn't go to the actual wedding because it was in the Mormon temple, where you had to do special things and make special promises. Everyone assumed that some day I would have a temple wedding, too; no one was disappointed in me yet. I stood next to Angie during the reception because we were second cousins whose mothers were not just cousins—they were best friends who had long hoped that their daughters, Angela and Charlotte, would become best friends, too.

We never did. I adored Angie's mom. Vilate was lively and funny and quick; Angie was lethargic and simple and slow. Even though I was younger, I found myself bossing her around, and she never seemed to mind. When my folks left me at Vilate's house in Palmdale for a week every summer, I was squished into a three-quarters bed with Angie, who slept very soundly and took up more than her share of the space. I wasn't used to bumping into someone else's arms and legs at night. Even the years Ramona and I had to share a bedroom, she had the upper bunk because she was so much older, and I had the lower bunk to myself.

Except for the nights, though, I liked going to Palmdale.

Angie and I played croquet next door, in her uncle's big backyard, with more cousins, including the handsome Lewis, who bragged that he would join the army when he was eighteen. We tromped downtown to the little grocery store Angie's dad managed, and he gave us Tootsie Rolls and Necco Wafers. We hung out with Angie's friend Bonnie Alice, across the street, and looked through movie magazines.

And then suddenly Angie was nineteen, and her roundness became almost voluptuous, and her white-blonde hair was smooth and fine. She surprised everyone by making it through a year of college and met, through her handsome cousin Lewis, Mark, an almost-as-handsome second lieutenant in the army. They were married just before Christmas. When they moved to Texas, Angie sent me recipes for Marshmallow Jell-O Cool Whip Mousse and German chocolate cake. I was taking a college English course, and I knew that my teacher would have defaced Angie's letters with red marking pens.

Angie and Mark visited Palmdale every summer, and they'd drive over to La Crescenta to see us while I was still living at home. Every summer Angie looked fatter. After half a dozen miscarriages, she finally carried a baby to term, but he died in the hospital, and she almost died, too. Though Mark's faith wobbled, every loss somehow reaffirmed Angie's. Through the Church's social service program, they adopted two boys, who, according to Mom in later years, didn't turn out so well, which probably meant *not* that they turned out to be bookies or burglars, but that they didn't turn out Mormon.

When Vilate died of stomach cancer, Mom felt she had inherited the responsibility to lecture Angie on her weight. "You don't want to lose that attractive husband of yours," she would say. Angie would giggle and agree; but after all, Mark was a loyal, Church-going, tithe-paying Scoutmaster, a little too stout to turn many heads, and about as likely to stray as a turnip. At her dad's funeral, I noticed that Angie panted a lot. She waddled rather than walked. A few weeks after she buried her father, Angie died, too, of a heart attack, and Mark remarried a year after that and moved to Florida, where the more promising of their boys works in a repair shop for golf carts.

In the old book, I trace a light line through Angie and Mark's



address and phone number. Was Angie mostly happy in her life? Did her disappointments force her to reexamine her compliance, her passivity, her beliefs?

I hope not. I hope Angie did what I couldn't do. I hope she kept the faith.

*Nathan Loewe*

At least I know where Angie is. More or less. Mark had her body buried in Palmdale, next to her folks. Now Nathan—Nathan and I were born the very same night. Once we figured out that we were born the very same hour—he in Cleveland, I in Burbank. We met when we were twenty-two. I lived in the apartment directly beneath his in the twelve-unit building close to Cal, where he was a senior architecture student, and close to the hospital, where I was a dietetic intern. Nathan didn't have much hair, but he had class and confidence. I had lots of hair. It exploded around my face and down my back when I took off the net I had to wear at work. I felt a little inferior in Berkeley because I had majored at a small state college in what was then called "food science."

That year, Nathan and I spent countless hours together. We stomped our feet and clapped our hands for the banjo players at the Freight and Salvage. We walked the neighborhoods at night, covertly culling flowers from front yards. We talked about his inconvenient Jewish heritage and my inconvenient Mormon one and our roommates (who were briefly in love with each other) and studies and work and so many things, but I wonder now—has he had a lover of any sort? Was he gay? I'm shocked that I don't know.

I do know crazy things about Nathan—like his being the executor of the will of his elderly, eccentric aunt who lived in Chicago. The aunt always told Nathan that she didn't trust banks and their safety deposit boxes, so when she was gone, he should search for her valuables in her apartment—like hundred-dollar bills between the dinner plates and diamond rings in tubs of margarine in the refrigerator. When she died, he dutifully went to Chicago and ferreted about the kitchen. There were many partially used tubs of margarine in the refrigerator. Not one was the repository for jewels. There were many sets of china in the cupboards. There was no money hidden between the dishes. Nathan grumbled every time

he stuck his finger into margarine, every time he unstacked his aunt's dinnerware.

Until I met Morty, Nathan and I celebrated our birthday together. We exchanged presents—his always something beautiful—a glass music box, a polished serving tray, that big wooden bowl now full of big white cat. Once Nathan cooked the two of us a birthday dinner in his new flat in the city. Once I cooked. Once we made reservations a month ahead for Chez Panisse. Even after Morty, even after I went off to St. Louis and married Baxter and after we moved to San Francisco ourselves, Nathan and I still called each other on our birthday. At least once he came to dinner at the flat on Chenery Street. I can't remember exactly when I lost him, when a funny birthday card I mailed him was returned. I couldn't find him in phone books. I couldn't find him on the internet.

There's a cube of butter, but no tubs of margarine in our refrigerator. And there is only dust between the plates.

What if—most apt and awful of happenstances—Nathan and I are to die on the same day? And unless some sort of spirit whispers such secrets, neither one of us will know.

### *Carole and Ken Lidwell*

Carole may still be around somewhere, maybe even on the next block. One can hide in cities though she wasn't the hiding kind. Carole doesn't have the same phone, but she may have the same name, the same husband, the same address. Somehow, however, I don't think so.

We used to do things together, subscribed to the same symphony series, usually met for dinner first. Though we were both fond of Carole, Baxter didn't like Ken, said he was as "rigid as a robot." I didn't like him much either. Ken was Carole's third husband. When I first met her—in a yoga class at the Unitarian Church—we discovered we had both been Mormons once upon a time. The past seemed to weigh less heavily on Carole though. She was good at getting rid of things—sixty pounds, long hair, gray hair, superfluous husbands, three sisters who had unacceptably right-wing views on everything from abortion to Zionism. Like me, Carole had cats instead of children. Unlike me, she had an executive job with an insurance company and dressed like one of

those women in the full-page newspaper ads: tailored pantsuits, silk blouses, discreet gold earrings.

One spring, Carole said Ken didn't want to renew the symphony subscription, but maybe she'd find someone else to make up the foursome, a woman friend. But she didn't. We exchanged Christmas greetings for a few years. Our Christmas card was always a picture of us surrounded by our feathered and furry menagerie, and Carole and Ken's was always a fancy gold-embossed card with curlicues and just their signatures. Then they didn't send a card at all for a few years, so we stopped sending them one, too.

Where have they gone? Carole and Ken and Nathan. Surely not to graveyards every one. And what does the song mean, "long time passing"?

*Jill Leonard*

Jill's mom Gloria was a long time passing. Gloria was my all-time favorite resident in the Autumn Gardens Nursing Home where I worked until I couldn't. I didn't get to know all the residents as well as I knew Gloria, and I knew only a few of their children as well as I knew Jill. Gloria's face was twisted into a kind of grimace—not a stroke, she said when I first talked with her about her dietary preferences, but a failed operation to remove a tumor above her jaw. Although she would get confused about time and place, Gloria was pretty sharp compared to most of the residents, and she could still walk those first years. She used a walker, one of those sit-down kinds, on which she kept her clipboard and crossword puzzles. "I'm a tough old bird," she boasted. During World War II, she had worked in the Richmond shipyards, "like Rosie the Riveter," she said.

Jill used to sneak through the side door of the kitchen to chat with me in my office behind the massive refrigerator. There were big black lines painted on the floor beyond which only staff members were supposed to go. Jill didn't visit her mother as often as she thought she should; and to my amateur-analyst eyes, she was a classic study in mother-daughter guilt. Jill wasn't an amateur. She was a psychologist, and she knew lots about guilt. She flew around the country, giving papers and listening to other people give pa-

pers. She had a lesbian partner with MS and an adult son with no job and a pregnant girlfriend.

My parents—but not my own guilt—gone, I paid a lot of attention to Gloria, giving her hand and shoulder squeezes and kisses on her powdery cheeks. Gloria was so different from my mom, who had crumpled into a little pile in her kitchen, cerebral hemorrhage they said, and died in a zippered blue housedress. Gloria went through periods of pulling her pant legs high above her knees. “I’ve always had good legs,” she said. She didn’t have bad legs, especially for an old lady in a nursing home, but they were very white, and I always wanted to look away when she was in exhibition mode.

The average stay at Autumn Gardens was two years, but Gloria had over four years before she had to trade the walker for a wheelchair. Unlike some of the residents, she wasn’t occupied with dying. She attended every activity the nursing home had to offer—word games, sing-a-longs, drumming, flower arranging. She went to Shabbat services with Rabbi Marsha on Friday evening, ecumenical Christian services with Reverend Pat on Sunday afternoon. “And I’m not even religious,” she said. “What are *you*?” she asked me. I told her that I didn’t go to church any more, but Mormon hymns kept running through my head. When I sang her the first verse of “Come, Come, Ye Saints,” she squealed with pleasure. Whenever we were more or less alone, Gloria would say, “C’mon, Charlotte. Belt out one of those Mormon ditties.” And I would. Some things you can never forget.

And then Gloria stopped wheeling herself about the way the livelier residents did—using their feet and pulling themselves with the side rails in the halls. Some of the light dimmed in her eyes. She seemed depressed. “I’m not good for anything,” she would say. I reassured her she was good for *me*. Jill became frantic, and I had to reassure her, too, which wasn’t easy because I knew what came next short-term and, unlike my sister, have never known what came next long-term. Gloria slept more and ate less. She liked sweets, so I ordered sweet sauces on everything that wasn’t already dessert. She still paid attention to her appearance though—bright pink and red jackets and knit pants and big baubly jewelry. And she still sometimes showed off her white legs.

“It’s *not* your fault,” I told Jill, who knew it wasn’t her fault but felt guilty anyway. I didn’t tell Jill about my diagnosis.

When Gloria died, Jill and I promised to stay in touch, and I printed Jill’s phone number neatly in the book. We didn’t stay in touch though, and then I got really sick, and I couldn’t imagine Jill would be happy to hear from me. I wouldn’t have been happy to hear from me.

### *Morty Lawler*

10 Locksley Avenue. That’s still right. The phone number too, probably. I know because—though I’ve not had contact with Morty for some years now, one of his ex-sisters-in-law has kept me apprised of his career and marriage changes. He’s an agent for artists, artists who work with metals and sell iron banisters and house and garden sculptures to people who have a lot of money. Morty has always known people who had a lot of money. When I knew him well—or thought I did—he worked for Clorox, which paid him handsomely but didn’t suit his image of himself.

I was the woman after his first wife and before his second. I didn’t last as long as either of them, but I apparently lasted longer than the third. He has children by the second, teenagers, a boy and a girl, whom he takes skiing and surfing, according to the ex-sister-in-law, who is very critical of his parenting skills. I think he’s given up on marriage, but there is another woman in his life, one much younger, I think, an artist.

I was ecstatic the first year Morty and I were together. We biked all over Berkeley and backpacked in the Sierras and went to black churches in Oakland because the music was so fine. Then he took the job in the Midwest and suggested I come too, and it all fell apart. I couldn’t understand why. When he moved back to California, I stayed in St. Louis, too paralyzed to make any more changes. And then I met Baxter and returned to the world of the living. I mattered to Baxter. And he has a wonderfully long attention span.

We’ve seen Morty a few times over the years—run into him at a concert, a museum, once even at the funeral of a friend’s father. The meetings weren’t painful. He’s gained a little weight and lost a lot of hair. Not from chemo either.

I'm not up to analyzing why I've kept Morty's contact info over the years, but this is a good time to divest myself of it. I make three straight lines through his name and two through his phone number and address. Ginny would approve.

### *Ginny Lin*

Ah, Ginny. I never wrote Ginny's entries in pen, even when I had recent addresses for her. Ginny had had so many addresses. In the old days, it seemed she would send a card every November with a new address to alert people with Christmas-card lists. She never included a letter, just a note ("Love hearing from you, girl!"), usually a picture. Usually a picture with a man, a different man from the year before. The last time I heard from her, Ginny had sent a picture of herself with *two* men, one black, one white. That one was from Chicago. Other cards had come from Atlanta and Boston, and a bunch had come from New York—all with different Manhattan or Brooklyn addresses. Baxter looked forward to Ginny's cards. He'd assign whimsical occupations to the guys. "That one probably sharpens knives at street fairs," he'd say. Or "Now she's gone and found a Latvian yoga coach."

Ginny and I had gone through college together, quitting for a couple of quarters to work and get enough money to ride a motorcycle around western Europe. Ginny did the driving; I straddled the rear seat. Back home, we introduced each other to unlikely men. Mom and Ramona had not approved of Ginny. She was too exotic, too wild, too much fun. Too foreign, they thought, but didn't say, even though Ginny's grandparents had come to California before my parents had. When I was in big trouble, it was Ginny I could go to, Ginny who knew who would help.

That has been so long ago. After Baxter and I moved here, she would come visit us, stay a weekend, always coming in very late. We haven't heard from her now for five or six years, and the Christmas letters we have sent were returned stamped with a smeary "Not known at this address." But Ginny is around somewhere. She has too much energy to die. She's probably attached to the King of Bahrain or someone like that. She'll resurface eventually.

But probably not in time. Anyway, I no longer have the kind of problems Ginny can solve.

\* \* \*

Even the new address book looks old. It is rather quaint. Kids like Lauren have probably never kept address books. They just store information on their computers and phones. Once there were rolodexes. Baxter used to have a box with business cards that he would occasionally alphabetize.

I was brought up to believe that there was a God with a really big address book. He kept track of everyone. That wasn't the metaphor used in Sunday School, but that was the idea. Mom and Ramona and maybe Dad accepted that idea. Ramona's girls, Lauren and Nita, don't appear to be believers though, which must cause Ramona more sorrow and shame than a wayward little sister ever could.

I close the old book and trace, with my finger, the birds on the cover of the new one with my finger. I can't remember ever really believing in the devil—the way I never really believed in the Easter Bunny. Santa—now, Santa I had believed in till Ramona shrieked out the truth in an argument when I was six. And Noah and Moses and Jesus, I believed their stories—though Jonah seemed pretty suspect even then. I tried, though, for years, on and off. Until there got to be too many troubles, too many transgressions, I tried.

"She's studying for finals," we used to say about someone who would "get 'ligion" at the nursing home. Not like Gloria. Gloria simply went to every activity at Autumn Gardens; if there had been an atheists' service, she would have attended that too.

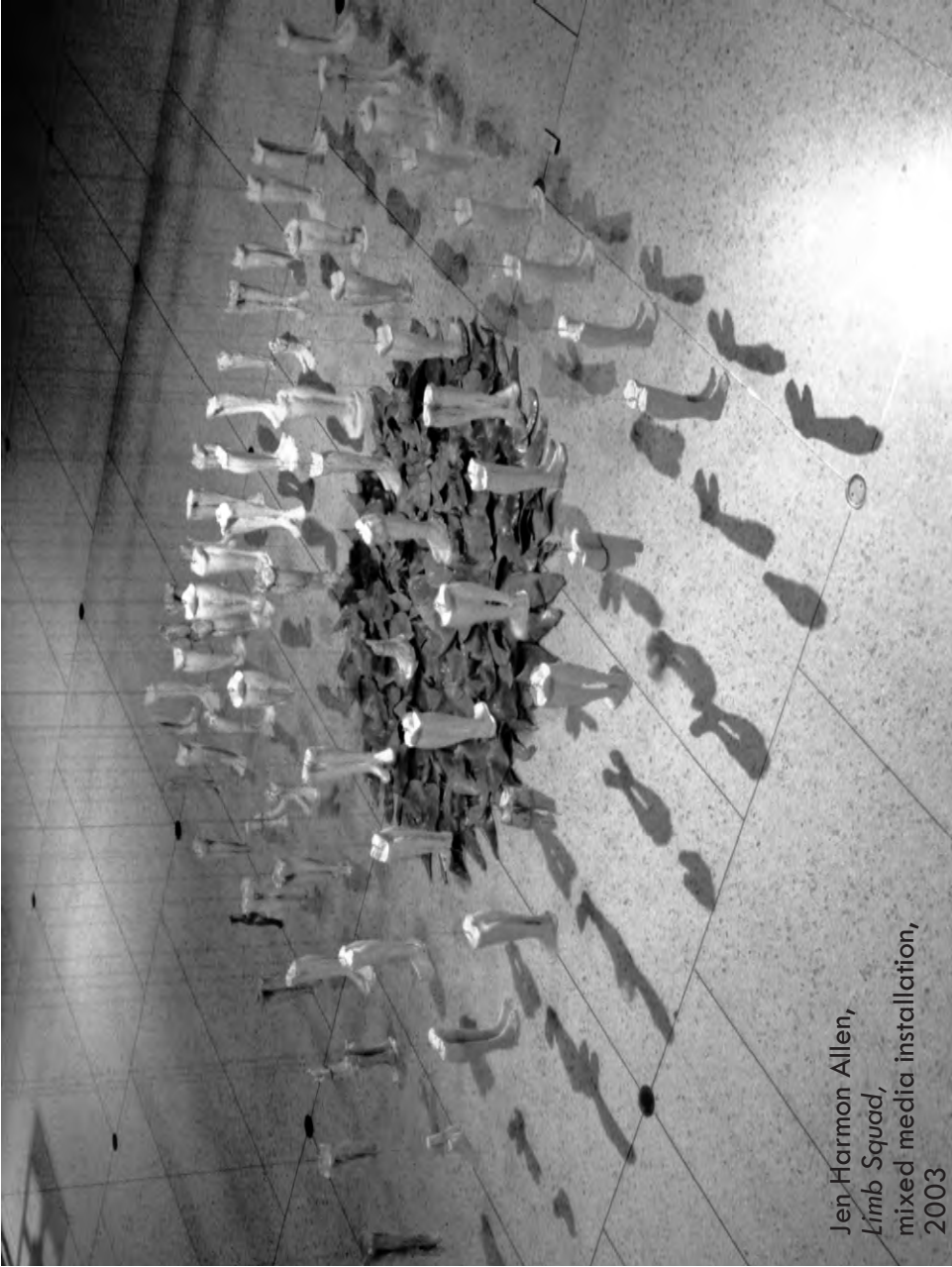
But I wouldn't. Atheists think they know the truth. Even Reverend Pat and Rabbi Marsha aren't as dogmatic as that.

Baxter's black lab Betsy wanders into the room. Starting next week, Baxter is taking a leave of absence so he can be home. Betsy will be rapturous. The cats and the bird are mine; the dog belongs to Baxter. When I was a little girl, I was convinced that all cats were female, all dogs male. It was one of the stories that Ramona would later retell to torment me.

I should write to Ramona. No confession, no conversion. A letter of love. Love, no matter what. Mostly.

I sigh and open the two books again. Back to the L's. Back to those whose names won't vanish. I give Betsy a pat. There is pleasure in starting on an empty page.





Jen Harmon Allen,  
*Limb Squad*,  
mixed media installation,  
2003



Jen Harmon Allen,  
*Dress of Armor 19*,  
ceramic and steel,  
2010



Jen Harmon Allen,  
*Dress of Armor 21*,  
ceramic and steel,  
2010

## “There Is Always a Struggle”: An Interview with Chieko N. Okazaki

*Note: Gregory A. Prince, a member of Dialogue’s board of editors, conducted this interview with Chieko N. Okazaki on November 15, 2005, in her home in Salt Lake City. In addition to her career as an elementary school teacher and principal, she was the first non-Caucasian to serve on any LDS general board (Young Women’s Mutual Improvement Association, 1962–71) and is the first woman to serve on the general level of all three LDS women’s auxiliaries. After serving on the Primary General Board, 1988–90, she went directly from that calling to first counselor in the Relief Society presidency (March 31, 1990–April 5, 1997). She died on August 1, 2011, in Salt Lake City of congestive heart failure.*

*Chieko Okazaki:* In my meetings with the young women or with the Relief Society women, I’m often really surprised that they do not feel that they can function as women in the Church—not all of them, of course, but many of those who come to me and talk to me. I just keep wondering, “How did they get to that point of feeling like they were not worth anything in the Church?”

*Greg Prince:* Did you feel that way when you were younger?

*Chieko Okazaki:* No, not at all! I guess it was because I was raised by my parents, who were really raised by their grandparents, saying that I had a contribution to make in this world. My dad and my mom—we were sort of on the far side of the track, as far as financial things were concerned. My dad was a plantation worker. I know he only made about \$200 a month. At that time, in the Japanese way of life, the oldest son always had to give his money to the parents, and then his parents would give him an allowance for his family. So I just knew, from my earliest childhood, that this was

how things would be as long as my grandparents were there. Even as a child, I noticed that.

But my parents told me, “You are not going to have this life. You are going to the university and you are going to become somebody, and you are going to have another way of life, and not this plantation way of life.” Even as a child I used to think, “How are they going to do that? It costs to go to a university.” One time I asked my mother, “How can I do that?” She said, “You don’t need to worry about that. You need to worry about getting there. You be the best student that you can, and do the best you can in school.” I said, “Okay, I’ll do the best I can, and I’ll study hard, and I’ll do the work that I’ve been given.”

I went both to the Japanese school and to the English school, and did my best. I was popular in school. When it was time for me to go to the university, I don’t know how my mother and father had the money for my tuition, but they did. But I did work for my own personal needs. I worked at Sears, I worked at the Swedish Consulate, and at whatever jobs I could get. And I went to school at the same time. And I did make it.

Then, I discovered—and I write this in one of my stories about “You have to walk in my *zori*,” which means “You have to walk in my slippers,” to understand what my life was like. A few years ago, I thanked my mom for having given me that education and helping me to get to school. She said, “It was a family effort, you know.” I said, “What was the family effort?” “Your two brothers and Dad and I made slippers.” They sold those slippers for fifty cents a pair, and yet on the market they would probably be \$2.50 or \$3.00. She said, “We saved the money from those slippers, and that was your tuition.” I just cried.

*Greg Prince:* You’d known nothing about this?

*Chieko Okazaki:* I didn’t know anything. She didn’t say anything to me. But I remember going back at Christmas and helping them do this. My two brothers would scrape the leaves and take the thorns off, then dry the leaf and roll it. My dad would cut it into the size of the slippers and weave it, and my mother would sew the leaf on the pad. It was hard work. I cried when she told me. My father had died many years earlier, but I also thanked my brothers, and they teased, “Oh, you don’t know how many cuts we had on

our hands from the thorns.” We all laughed, but I said, “Well, that’s a sacrifice you made for me, and I’m very, very grateful for that.”

But anyway, what I see in this world today is that we forget who we are and where we came from. . . . When I first came to Utah in 1950, I noticed that most people didn’t know that there was more than the white race. I came as an exchange teacher. My husband did his graduate work while I was doing this. People didn’t know how to take me—not my education status, but more who *I* was. I looked different. They wondered whether I could possibly be like them and whether I could teach their children, being Japanese.

There were three parents who said they didn’t want their children to be taught by me. But I had a very, very great principal. She was way ahead of her time, in relation to acceptance of different peoples and acceptance of their traditions and ideas. So she accepted me, just like that (snapping fingers), when she saw me. She was so grateful that I was placed in her school. She said to these reluctant parents, “That will be fine,” and she transferred those students to another second-grade class.

I thought many of the parents would feel the same way—not knowing my skills and my qualifications. I used to sew during those days, and I made a fuchsia dress. I had very black hair, and the fuchsia really looked dramatic with my hair, and then I topped it off by putting a flower in my hair. All three of us second-grade teachers opened the door to the schoolyard that first day, and I saw many parents standing there with their children. I knew how unusual that was. Of course, parents bring their children to kindergarten and often for a few days in first grade, but for second-graders to have parents come—that was really a message. I was pretty sure that they came to see who I was.

The other two teachers said, “Why don’t you call your children first?” I said, “That will be fine.” I just said, “I’m very happy to be here in this wonderful school and to be a part of this society here and to work with your children. I’ll start calling the names of the children, and you come up and form a line and I’ll take you to the classroom.” So I said, “James Backman.” He came running up. I said, “Goll, you just had a haircut, didn’t you?” I put my hand on his hair. He said, “Yes, I did.” I said, “Well, you look really great.”

He said, "I want you to know that my dad is the president of the Salt Lake Board of Education." I said, "Oh, that's nice to know."

I called the name of the next child: "Beth Benson." She came up, I said, "Beth, you have beautiful hair. I love your braids." (I found something positive to comment about with each child.) Beth said, "My daddy is an apostle in the Church." I said, "Oh, yes, that's nice to know."

And so it went. Each child's parents were heads of this and heads of that. I thought, "What a class I'm going to have! Thirty-five children of very important parents."

So I took my class in; and within a few days, those three women went to the principal and asked if their children could be returned to my class. The principal looked at them and said, "Well, you know, opportunity just knocks once. I've already changed them to another class. I've had three other children take the places of your children." The principal then came running down and told me what had happened. She was really a great advocate and friend.

I'm telling that story to illustrate that Utah really was something of a closed society in many ways. It was difficult for many of the Saints here to really get to know others and to accept people who were not of their race. Of course, one of the best things that happened was the missionary program. When the missionaries were sent out into the different parts of the world, they began loving the people they worked with. This broadened their scope of understanding about what all human beings have in common. They began to understand the concept of "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold" (3 Ne. 15:21). But Ed and I just accepted that, where the older generation was concerned, there would still be some prejudice and some feeling of "you're not as good as I am."

I remember that one of the really hurtful things that I heard soon after we moved here was: "If you were not born under the covenant, you can never enter the kingdom of Heaven." I'd sit in church, listening to that, and I'd think, "How do you account for the people who are converts to the Church? How in the world can I be in this church?"

My principal used to be on the Sunday School General Board.



She came in one day and said, “Chieko, do you realize that I fought for you yesterday?”

I said, “You did?”

“Yes. In my class, they talked about people who are not born under the covenant—that they will not be able to enter the kingdom of Heaven.”

I said, “You’ve heard that, too?”

“Yes, and I fought for you. I said, ‘Do you mean to tell me that Chieko, who is a convert, will not be eligible for the kingdom of heaven?’ And the teacher said, ‘That’s right. That’s the doctrine.’”

Anyway, we don’t hear things like that anymore, and it definitely *isn’t* the doctrine. But that’s what we’ve progressed from. That’s why I think people of my generation—white members of the Church—always have a little bit of a problem with racial prejudice. They don’t talk about it, and it certainly has mellowed; but I’m sure if they had to make a choice in relation to their child or grandchildren marrying into another race, they’d have hard feelings about it and might try to stop it.

I remember when I was a student at the University of Hawaii during World War II, one of the apostles of the Church at our stake conference spoke. I was a member of the Japanese Branch, and of course we all went, although I have to say it was hard for us to go to the tabernacle, because everybody else was white people. We felt that we were intruding somehow. Many servicemen were present, and this apostle said very bluntly, “I want all of you soldiers to know that you are not to get into the situation where you would like to be married to any of these people. And you women, you are not to get to the point of integrating yourself to the point where you think you are going to be married to one of these men. Each of these men has a person waiting for him in one of the wards in the city they come from.”

I remember how surprised I was. It was a completely new topic to me, and maybe it was a problem for some of the older young adults there. I’d never dated in high school, because I was focusing on my education. In fact, I didn’t date in college until I was a sophomore. So to me, that wasn’t a problem. But I thought, “Why is it that the Church doesn’t look upon us, who are of a different race, as worthy to marry a white Mormon man? If we are daughters and sons of God, I don’t think the Lord would look at

us and say, ‘You’re different, so there are things you can’t do.’” I realized that I was still learning about the gospel, but that was a contradiction that I tucked into the back of my mind.

I had to think more about the contradictions when Ed and I moved to Utah. (Ed was Japanese, like me.) One of our friends was marrying a white person, and they could not get married in the temple because the state had what was called a “Mongoloid law.” They had to go to Canada to get married in the Cardston Temple. That was in 1951. I remember thinking about that scripture when the Lord said, “Other sheep I have which are not of this fold,” and I could understand that, where ethnicity was concerned, I really was not of *this* fold.

So Ed and I really could have left the Church here in Utah. What I understood as the gospel message didn’t match what we encountered so often with the people. There was a big gap in so many ways. Again, my mother’s wisdom helped. She said, “Know that you know the truth”—she wasn’t a Mormon. She was a Buddhist until she died—“and others haven’t learned it yet. So just hold fast and let the rest go.” So that’s what we did. We just held on and tried to look at the doctrines of the gospel rather than how people behaved sometimes, and believed that our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ would not look at us as any different from white members.

For a long time, we weren’t asked to serve in any Church callings. But I’m glad to say that when our wards got to know us and realized that we could contribute, we were asked to serve.

My husband got his degree in social work at the University of Utah. He worked for the American Red Cross for a while, and then with the Veterans Administration as a psychiatric social worker. Then he became the first director of aging for the whole state of Utah.

Then he was offered an excellent position with the government in Denver. That’s when we moved to Colorado. We found a different climate, a lot more openness. We had neighbors of all religions, including Jews. So there we were, Mormons, and we just were part of it. But even the Mormons had a lot more openness about them. I noticed that right away. We felt free to associate with one another and talk openly about things that we couldn’t bring up in Utah. I remember in Utah that a few times Ed and I tried to

express our feelings about some of the things we noticed, and we got a pretty stiff response, like: “Whoa! Are you trying to change our attitude?” So we quickly learned never to discuss the questions we had about the gospel and how we were treated. But in Denver as I listened to other people and the way they talked about things, I thought, “Well, in this society, I probably could.”

*Greg Prince:* Did you?

*Chieko Okazaki:* Yes, I did. People always used to ask me, whenever I gave a talk, “How is it that you are able to do that?” I said, “Well, it is the truth, isn’t it?” “But how did you get away with doing that?” I said, “I’m not getting away with anything. I’m just saying what I think.”

I’ve had a wonderful life, being in Hawaii and being raised by my parents, and then coming here and having all these opportunities. My patriarchal blessing had one section that I did not really understand at the time I received it. Would you like me to read that?

*Greg Prince:* Sure. I’d love it.

*Chieko Okazaki:* It’s kind of interesting. I thought maybe it was answered when I was on the general board of the Young Women. No. Then, when we went to Japan. No. When I became a member of the Primary board. No. This blessing was given to me by Eldred G. Smith, who was the Church patriarch:

Thou shalt also receive the greater blessings promised, of knowledge, wisdom and understanding, and the Lord shall be mindful of thee, as he has been in the past, that thine understanding shall be quickened, that thou shalt recognize truth, that thine understanding and knowledge of the principles of the Gospel and the plan of life and salvation shall continually be increased unto thee. Through thy efforts to impart thereof to others, the Lord shall bless thee with increased abilities and opportunities in teaching, and thine influence and power for good, especially of thy kin and thine associates, shall essentially be increased. And through thy righteous living and thy teachings, they as well as others shall heed thy teachings and counsel, and bless thee for thy interest in their behalf. And the Lord shall be mindful of thee and thy efforts therein, and shall assist thee with success. Thou shalt be an influence and power for good, especially among thine associates. Thou shalt not lack for friends and associates, especially among those of thy sex, for they shall come unto thee seeking counsel and advice, and in thy efforts in teaching unto them

of the principles of the gospel and the plan of life and salvation, they shall bless thee for thy interest in their behalf. The Lord has blessed thee with special gifts and talents and abilities. As thou shalt continue to use them in assisting others and further promoting the work of the Lord on the earth, the Lord shall reward thee richly, giving unto thee additional talents and abilities and means sufficient to be successful therein, for his providing care shall be ever with thee. And thy household shall not be in need for the necessities of life, and many blessings shall be added unto thee in the time of their need. Thy testimony of the divinity of the gospel shall continue to grow with thee, and give unto thee courage and strength to follow thy righteous convictions, through which thou shalt be assisted to withstand the trials and temptations of life, with joy and rejoicing in thy heart.

*Greg Prince:* When was it given?

*Chieko Okazaki:* It was given on December 2, 1952.

*Greg Prince:* When did it dawn on you that it contained a remarkable promise?

*Chieko Okazaki:* Well, I read and read it over and over. Because we were Japanese, people would ask, “Who are you?” We’d go to church, and they would wonder whether I could even speak English. Florence Jacobsen, who was the general president of the Young Women’s Mutual Improvement Association, called me to be on her board. I was the first non-Caucasian to ever be called as a general officer in the Church, on any general board.

*Greg Prince:* Any general board?

*Chieko Okazaki:* Any general board. Even among the Seventies, there was not anyone who came from another race.

*Greg Prince:* Was there resentment?

*Chieko Okazaki:* No. In fact, once I asked Florence, “How did you get my name past President McKay?” (He was president of the Church then.) She said, “Oh, he was fine, as far as that was concerned.” Later, he called Ed as president to open the second mission in Japan when the mission was divided.

I was interviewed by Elder Ezra Taft Benson for the YWMIA board. He knew who I was, because I was his child’s teacher. He said to me, “Chieko, I want you to know that you are a pioneer.” I thought, “Pioneer? In what sense am I a pioneer?”—because it had certainly been impressed upon us that we weren’t pioneers like

those who had crossed the plains. Then I realized that I was the first one who had been called to any of these general boards or any part of the Church hierarchy.

So when I got this blessing and read it, I thought, “Where am I going to have these kind of blessings, where the women will come to me and seek advice?” So this blessing was in my mind in all of my callings. And women did come to me. But at that time, I wasn’t able to speak like I spoke when I was in the general presidency.

*Greg Prince:* Were they coming to you even before you went on the general board?

*Chieko Okazaki:* Not as much. I served on the stake level in Denver; our first callings in Utah were on the ward level. But I was not open. I was still studying the environment and the people. I could tell that there were certain things you could not say and many things to be careful about, so I was. So I didn’t speak as I did when I was in the general presidency. By that time, I had matured and had grown. But as I read my patriarchal blessing, I thought, “When is this going to happen?”

It was interesting when I was on Florence’s board and used to go to conferences. In one of the conferences in the East, I heard that one of the women said, “I came here to see if she could speak English.” They had never been with people of another race in a Church setting. Here I was, representing the YWMA program, speaking to them and teaching them in their classes, and she was curious to know whether I could speak English. So she came.

All those kinds of experiences made me wonder more than ever, “Elder Smith, why did you say these things?” But I realized, when I got called to the presidency of the Relief Society, that this was the time of fulfilling that blessing.

I also have to read to you from my setting-apart blessing when I was called into the Relief Society general presidency.

*Greg Prince:* President Benson was Church president then, wasn’t he?

*Chieko Okazaki:* Yes, but he couldn’t function very well, so President Gordon B. Hinckley was basically in charge. Also present were President Monson and Elder Russell M. Nelson, who was the apostle with oversight for the auxiliaries. President Hinckley spoke to us for about an hour or so about our responsibilities and

what came to his mind. And then he said, “We will now set you apart in your positions. Sister Elaine Jack, you will be set apart by President Monson. And Sister Okazaki, I will set you apart. And Elder Nelson will set you apart, Sister Aileen Clyde.” I thought, “This is not Church protocol.” President Hinckley should have set Sister Jack apart. I think everyone noticed. Even my husband thought that. After we left, he said, “That was really strange. President Hinckley was in charge, and he should have set apart Sister Jack.”

But nevertheless, this is what the blessing was. You know how verbally skilled President Hinckley is. Words just flow out of his mouth. But I noticed he stopped very often, like he was receiving some kind of guidance. He wasn’t as fluent as he usually was.

*Greg Prince:* Was he doing that throughout the blessing?

*Chieko Okazaki:* Yes. It was like he was waiting for something to come to him. As he went on, the words seemed to come more easily. (reading)

Sister Chieko Okazaki,

We, your brethren, holding the holy Melchizedek Priesthood, acting in the authority of that priesthood and in the name of Jesus Christ, lay our hands upon your head and set you apart as First Counselor to Sister Jack in the general presidency of the Relief Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and give unto you every right and responsibility appertaining therein.

We charge you to be true and faithful to the great and sacred trust which is placed in you as you serve in the presidency of this vast organization of members of the Church who have faith in their hearts and testimony concerning this great latter-day work. We compliment you on the call which has come to you. We bless you for your faithful service in the past, in many capacities.

We feel to say unto you that you bring a peculiar quality to this presidency. You will be recognized as one who represents those beyond the borders of the United States and Canada, and as it were, an outreach across the world to members of the Church in many, many lands. They will see you as a representative of their oneness with the Church.

We bless you that you may be free in speaking, that your tongue may be loosed as you speak to the people. We bless you that you may be wise in counsel, that you may be inspired in what you say. We urge you to speak to these issues which come before this presidency and in your board meetings, that you may freely express your

thoughts. But remember then, when a decision is made by your president, that becomes your decision, as it becomes the decision of the entire presidency and the board.

We bless you with health and strength and vitality, according to your needs. We bless you with great happiness in this assignment. We bless you with faith and testimony and the spirit of prayer, that you may implore your Father in Heaven for that light and understanding and knowledge and the strength which you will need while you serve in this capacity.

We bless you with the watch care of the Lord as you travel over land and sea in pursuit of your responsibilities under assignment of the presidency.

We bless you that you may be a strength to Sister Jack, a great strength to her, and to Sister Clyde and to the board and to the work, and that you may speak with inspired wisdom to the people as the occasion may require.

Now, dear Sister Okazaki, you have many friends who love you in various lands. We bless you that your friends may be multiplied and that you may have cause to rejoice and thank the Lord for his great favor upon you.

We bless you in your home that there may continue to be peace and harmony and respect, with you and your husband standing as examples before the people of what family life should be. We bless you and your posterity, and we commend you to our Father in Heaven as his honored and chosen servant, and invoke upon you every needed gift and grace and blessing and you go forward with this assignment, and do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Greg Prince:* That's quite a blessing.

*Chieko Okazaki:* It is! I just listened to that, and I thought, "My gosh!" When people ask, "How is it that you are able to speak the way you do?", I say, "I was given a blessing, that I would speak my mind." It was really interesting, because all of our talks had to go through the First Presidency, and nothing was changed. Nothing in my talks was changed.

*Greg Prince:* These were talks in general conference, or other venues as well?

*Chieko Okazaki:* General conference. But still, I was very open in general conference, too. These are the women and men who said to me, "I heard you in general conference," and that's why they were asking how I could speak the way I could.



When we were called, Aileen and I, it dawned on us that we two were very different women. I give Elaine a great deal of credit, because she could have chosen her friends. We were not her friends, at all. We didn't know each other. We got to know each other when we became a presidency.

*Greg Prince:* So how was it that Elaine chose you?

*Chieko Okazaki:* I asked her, and she said that she just took all the names of the people on the boards, and she prayed about it, and then she looked at each name. Every time she came to my name, her finger would stop. She said she did that several times, and she always stopped on my name. So she said it must be that I would be one of her counselors. I think she did the same thing with Aileen. I think she took names of people from the community and did that.

*Greg Prince:* Did she know you?

*Chieko Okazaki:* No, we didn't know each other. I knew who she was, but we never had any opportunities to speak to each other or be in social groups. So when we were set apart was the first time we met. We shook hands and got to introduce ourselves to each other. She was praying really hard, and the Lord was with her. But some people probably wondered what she was doing calling me. In fact, I got a letter—I should mention that I had only two negative letters from women all the time I was in the presidency—I got a letter from a woman in Texas. She said, "Dear Sister Okazaki, I don't know how you got to be first counselor to the general president of the Relief Society. You have worked, you have only two children." She was very angry about the fact that I had been a working woman. I wrote back to her and said, "Dear Sister So-and-so, I thank you for taking the time to write to me. But I must tell you that I didn't apply for this job." I didn't get a response back.

*Greg Prince:* What was the other letter?

*Chieko Okazaki:* I got the other letter after my first book, *Lighten Up*, came out. This sister wrote: "I'm going to throw your book away. I told my husband I was going to throw it away and he said, 'Don't throw it away. I'll keep it.' It's because you never mention anything about the stay-at-home woman." I don't know if I men-

tioned anything about women who worked, either. I wrote back to her and I said, "Don't throw it away. Send it back to me and I'll send you a check for it." I did get an answer back. She wrote and said, "Well, I thought about it, and I looked at it again, and I decided to keep it." Those were the two negative letters I got. All the others were, "Please help me," or "I loved what you said," or "You made me feel so good in your talk."

*Greg Prince:* What was the feedback that you would get from women? Were you reaching women who hadn't been reached before by anybody?

*Chieko Okazaki:* You just cannot believe the response, especially after I gave the talk in Oregon on sexual abuse and then taped it and Deseret Book sold thousands of copies. Even today, every time I speak, at least two women will come up afterward and, no matter what I was talking about in their meeting, they'll say, "Thank you so much for that tape." And I know exactly what they mean. They'll say things like: "You put me over the hump. I've gone to the psychotherapist for a long, long time, and look at me today. I feel fine. Thank you for that tape."

*Greg Prince:* Had anybody talked about it in that venue before?

*Chieko Okazaki:* No. This was so interesting. Sometimes I tell the Lord, "Why do you put me in such a situation?" Every time I'm invited to speak at a women's conference, I talk to the stake Relief Society president and ask, "What are your needs? Tell me your sisters' needs. What would you like me to talk about." This time, the Relief Society president said, "Sexual abuse." I said, "Say that again?" "Sexual abuse." I said, "Is there anything else?" She had another topic, and I asked, "Which of these would you like me to talk about?" She said, "I hate to say this, but I wish you could speak about sexual abuse." I was thinking, "You must be kidding," but I said I would and then I prayed and prayed. I had worked with some people who had this problem in their past to deal with, but I certainly wasn't an expert. And when I got there, that place was just packed!

*Greg Prince:* Did they know, in advance, that was what you were going to speak on?

*Chieko Okazaki:* No, they didn't. No one knew except the stake Re-

lief Society president and the stake president and the Regional Representative. I didn't want to go over their heads. But just in case, I also prepared another talk.

*Greg Prince:* So they all signed off on it in advance?

*Chieko Okazaki:* Yes. I read that talk over the phone to the stake president, and he said, "Great." I called the Regional Representative and I read it to him, and he said, "That's great."

I saw some men in the audience, and I thought they would be bishops. The other board member I went with was having a great time, making people laugh, doing a light-hearted, encouraging talk. I whispered to the stake Relief Society president, "I don't think I can speak after that." She said, "You're going to." I looked at the stake president, and he said, "Yes." So I thought, "Well, here I go."

I started, and I gave a little bit of humor in the beginning. Then I got into it. There was silence. You could hear a pin drop. And then you could hear sniffles, people crying. There was a woman in the front row who just burst into tears and cried through the rest of the talk. All through the audience there were tears coming down. I thought, "Oh, what have I done?" But I went right on.

After the meeting—it was 8:30 when we were through—until 10:00 there was a line of people who wanted to talk to me. At the end was a man. I thought, "Oh, don't tell me I'm going to talk to a man about being sexually abused." I knew it happened to boys as well, but I just wasn't prepared for it. He said, "I'm a bishop." He thanked me for being brave enough to give this talk. He said, "I have worked with ninety women. It got to the point where I could not say no to these women for therapy. The stake president and the Regional Representative stopped me from using Church funds, so I used my own money so these women could get therapy." Ninety! When inactive women heard that he was helping abuse victims, they had hope and wanted to talk to him. It's awful, when you think about it.

*Greg Prince:* All the women who were in line to talk to you, what was the message they were giving you?

*Chieko Okazaki:* They were saying, "Thank you so much for opening this up. Thank you so much that I don't need to hide by my-

self, and worry and be concerned about me being the person who was wrong and that I did something really bad.” They just recognized that somebody finally had opened this topic up and that now the Church would know that it’s a problem that it’s okay to talk about and that they were okay. Each one said something like, “Thank you so much for talking about this in public to everybody, so that we don’t have to hide.”

Now today, when I go to different places, they will tell me, “Thank you so much for that tape. You helped me.” I was speaking in the Midwest at one conference, and a sister came up afterwards and told me, “I’ve been going to a therapist for fifteen years. I could not get to first base, even with all the therapy. Somebody gave me your tape. I listened to it, and all of a sudden I was released, and I became a different person. So I went back to my therapist and she said to me, ‘You look different. What has happened to you?’ ‘You don’t know about me and my church, but there is a woman that works with the women of the Church, and she gave a talk on healing from sexual abuse. I listened to that, and I believed her. It was just what I needed.’ She said, ‘I want to listen to that tape.’ ‘I’ll bring it to you.’” She did, and the therapist listened to it, and said, “Where can we get more of these tapes?” She said every one of the therapists got one.

*Greg Prince:* Did you speak again on that subject in other places?

*Chieko Okazaki:* Yes. I spoke at BYU. They taped that talk and broadcast it from time to time. I’ve heard from several of my friends and several of these women at the conferences, “I heard you on the BYU channel. I’m a victim of sexual abuse, too. It was so good to hear you speak.” Every time, I think of what President Hinckley said in the blessing. Nobody had talked about it before in an open forum. Nobody would. People were just astonished that I would do it.

*Greg Prince:* Do you have any sense about whether sexual abuse in the Church is a greater problem today than it was a generation or two ago? Or has it always been there and it’s just coming out in the open now?

*Chieko Okazaki:* It’s always been there. I think it’s been a problem for a long, long time. It’s just that people have not been honest about it, and they were afraid. But people never wanted to talk

about it, because it usually happened in the family. It was hard to point out to the priesthood leaders that “it’s my brother” or “it’s my father” or “it’s my uncle.”

*Greg Prince:* Or “it’s my husband.”

*Chieko Okazaki:* Yes, that’s right. And the women always got the message that they were supposed to back up the men in the family. It was hard for them to say anything about it. So that has been a problem. But now I think that there is a great deal more relief on the part of the women who have had this problem. When I read my blessing from President Hinckley, I think, “Is this what you mean, that I can talk about things like that?” I don’t think too many women would be able to do that. I knew that I could be told that I shouldn’t do that from now on, but nobody said anything.

*Greg Prince:* No negative feedback?

*Chieko Okazaki:* No. But I noticed that the Brethren began speaking about abuse. Of course, society as a whole was much more open about it, too.

*Greg Prince:* So part of the secret of your success is that you’ve been willing to tackle hard topics that nobody else has. Any other secrets?

*Chieko Okazaki:* I don’t know if it’s a secret, but I’m very honest when I talk to the women, especially about the gospel. For example, I was in another state where I had a speaking assignment, and there was a luncheon before. I was seated next to a mother and daughter. The daughter was inactive, but she’d come to this luncheon with her mother, who had told me how worried she was about her daughter and the choices she was making. I knew we didn’t have much time, so I didn’t beat around the bush. I said, “You know, you are blessed that you have been born in the Church. What a blessing it is that your mother is still very staunch in doing the things that she knows that she ought to do. But she is not making you do the same things, because she respects your agency. But that means you have to make a choice. Your choice is whether to leave the Church or to be in the Church. So, I’m just going to tell you that you should really study the gospel, get back into the scriptures and read them, and then God will tell you what your choice should be.” Then I said, “You know, I have to make a

lot of choices in life, too; but I'm glad it isn't whether I should leave the Church or not. That's a choice I made when I joined the Church."

But when I was having this conversation with the daughter, I couldn't help thinking that I'd had moments when I thought, "Why should I belong to this Church when I'm not accepted? But it must be for a reason that I'm here." I gradually learned that part of that reason was so people would learn how to accept people who are not of their color."

*Greg Prince:* But let's dig down into that question a little more. At its base, what is the real answer? Why did you stay when you could have left?

*Chieko Okazaki:* I stayed because it was God and Jesus Christ that I wanted to follow and be like, not individual human beings.

*Greg Prince:* And you saw them within this church?

*Chieko Okazaki:* I did.

*Greg Prince:* Isn't that what it comes down to?

*Chieko Okazaki:* It does. But you know what? I brought Buddhism with me. Buddhism teaches love for everybody. The Buddhist values are not limited just to the people in the Buddhist faith. They include the whole wide world. When you talk to the Dalai Lama, you can feel a love that he has for all humankind. He doesn't preach, "You must belong to my church." He preaches, "You must become better people because of what I am telling you." Christians, Muslims, Buddhists go to listen to him, and they become better Christians, better Muslims, and better Buddhists because of the values and morals that he teaches. He makes you think, "I can become a better Christian because of what I heard." He is a messenger or a disciple of God, in a different way.

I came to the Church having all these values. The Church didn't teach me that.

*Greg Prince:* And you didn't have to discard any of them.

*Chieko Okazaki:* I didn't. I brought them with me, and I live them, and I'm grateful that I have them. I can easily relate to Jesus Christ and God, because they have it.

*Greg Prince:* I think we're losing a lot of our youth. I have a seven-

teen-year-old daughter who is a high school senior. I think she is representative of teenagers in the Church. They have so many competing voices that if you don't make it relevant to them, you're going to lose them.

*Chieko Okazaki:* Exactly.

*Greg Prince:* It's the young men and the young women. I watch so many of these kids drift away, and to me it's our fault. It's not theirs. We're the ones who are there to lead them, and we haven't done the job of making the gospel interesting and relevant.

*Chieko Okazaki:* It's a teaching problem partly. When I was on the Young Women's general board, we would go out with the General Authorities to stake conferences and have auxiliary conferences where we taught the teachers and officers. We taught the Young Women leaders while the General Authorities worked with the priesthood leaders. We taught the women of the Church how to teach. We still do that, but the sad thing is the people who lead don't know how.

*Greg Prince:* Your generation, my generation, and earlier generations all looked upon religion as a duty, that there was to be discomfort as part of it. And we accepted that. In some cases, it was a hair shirt that we wore, and that was just part of the deal. Not with the generations now! They are not willing to do that.

*Chieko Okazaki:* That's right.

*Greg Prince:* I don't think that we have realized how different they are in their view of religion from where we were.

*Chieko Okazaki:* A few years ago, I was asked to speak at a high school commencement. When the students heard that the Relief Society person was coming, they thought, "Oh, do we have to listen to a Relief Society lady? My gosh!"

When I walked in, all of them had their Walkman units with them because there was a Utah Jazz game that night. The parents came in with their Walkmans, too. I thought, "I'm going to have a really fun audience!" Then I thought, "I know about kids." In our little village, we boys and girls always played together, so I was just as good at marbles or yo-yo tricks as the boys. So I thought, "I'm going to tell these kids a thing or two."

I had brought my yo-yo, and I started out my speech by saying,



“You know, all you young people here are graduating and going into the world. Sometimes people look at you and think that the only things you’re good for is to just walk the dog.” And I went across the stage, “walking the dog” with my yo-yo. Or “rocking the cradle,” and I would do that with my yo-yo. “But do you know what I think? You’ve got to go ‘around the world,’ and you have to use your ‘silver bullets’ making choices and doing the things that you know best to do, and fighting evil and whatever is happening in your life. That’s what you ought to be doing instead of letting people think that you can only walk the dog.” And those kids clapped. They clapped and clapped. I didn’t see any more Walkman earbuds. They listened, and five times when I was talking, they burst out clapping; and at the end, they stood up—parents and all—and gave me a standing ovation. So when I walked out with them I said, “Who won the game?” They said, “Oh, I don’t know. We didn’t listen.”

*Greg Prince:* And it wasn’t the message. They had heard the message before. It was how you delivered it!

*Chieko Okazaki:* That’s right. So sometimes I see these kids and they say, “Hey, are you still playing with your yo-yo?” And I say, “Yes, once in a while I get it out.” But they remember that.

Sometimes I take my ukulele for the children. I say, “You all know how to sing ‘Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam,’” and I’d play it. I’d say, “That was really great. What other things do you want to sing?” And I’d play them. That got them in the mood. Then I’d say, “You know, we sang about Jesus. He was a really great man, wasn’t he?” We’d just go on from there. You just have to be generational, in relation to who they are.

I was different at conferences, because I brought things. I would teach using objects, and people remember the objects. I was asked to speak to a group of literary writers in the Church, the Association for Mormon Letters. I said, “I’m not a writer, I’m a teacher.” This woman who was organizing it said, “That’s okay. We want you to do it.” There were some people who said they didn’t want me, because I wasn’t a writer, compared to what they were. So I was invited, but I was on notice that I wasn’t what all of them wanted. So I showed up with several of the objects I’d used in my conference talks.

I told them, “I want to ask you what you remember about some talks I have given.” So I took the oar and I said, “What do you remember about this?” And they remembered. I took the hat, the peach, the basket of fruit, my cat’s cradle, everything that I had, and they all remembered the object of the lesson. I said, “Can you understand why I am a teacher and not a writer?” They said that was the best meeting they had ever had.

*Greg Prince:* So how do we stop the hemorrhage? We have lost so many people. To me there is a double tragedy. It’s not just that they leave our church; it’s that usually they don’t leave it to go to another one. They just abandon religion in general.

*Chieko Okazaki:* I heard President Hinckley talk about the importance of retention, and he was really worried. I think we need to teach new members what is going to be happening in their lives. I got these four books that they wrote a long time ago, about the family and priesthood, and I said, “You know the ward missionaries could take the place of the missionaries, and once a week go through the little manual about the family and teach them what it says about prayer.” When I joined the Church, I thought that prayer was just blessing the food and listening to the prayers in church. Then I learned, by osmosis, that I pray to God, personal prayer. I gradually learned, by osmosis, that there are many different kinds of prayers. My husband learned that he could bless his children, so when school started, he did that. And whenever they went on trips, he did that. But it was a gradual thing. Here, in the book, it tells you all the different kinds of prayers. So they can practice this among themselves, so the man would know what to do, and the sons and the daughters and the mother could watch. And they can ask their dad, “I’m not feeling so good. Could you give me a blessing?”

When we talk about retention, it’s not about being in the Church; it’s about retaining the things of the Church that we need to have to become a part of this kingdom!

*Greg Prince:* And then, you want to be in it.

*Chieko Okazaki:* Exactly! Because we know what it is like. But now, we just talk about tithing and giving of yourself by giving your time and all that, but we don’t talk about praying, and different types of things that happen in the Church that would make you

become the kind of person that you would like to become one day. These books tell you why the priesthood is important, and they give the men and the boys—and the women—an understanding, so we don't think that the priesthood is just something for the men and the women don't get anything. No, it analyzes these things, so that they understand that they have a part in the priesthood. And sustaining the priesthood means that we, the women, have that job! It's a job that we give our parents and also our children. We sustain them by what?

Anyway, I went through this entire thing. The retention comes when they have an understanding of who they are and why they're here, and why God has brought this Church back to us. And therefore, you are part of this organization. But nobody teaches this. And so, when the child has a talk to give, these ward missionaries can say, "Let me help you with a talk." And then the father and the mother learn how to give a talk in church and they also learn how to help their children.

And then we need to help new members understand what their role is in class. Let's take a Relief Society lesson. The ward missionaries can teach them by asking, "What does the lesson say? What comes to your mind? You must raise your hand and say, 'I do not understand this. What does it mean?' That's part of your obligation as a member. You cannot just blindly say, 'I don't know what it means, but that's what they say.' So you repeat it, but you don't know what it means, how it applies to you, and what it does for you in your life." They can teach the new member what it means to be called to a position, what you do, who you go to. And always the message is, "If you need help, we are here to help you."

All of this could be part of the retention program. And then when you can tell that they're ready, they'll say, "We feel comfortable. I think we can go and do things on our own. Thank you very much. But we will call on you when we need help." You are always there to help them. And you keep retaining them. Retaining means what? It means that you are holding onto them. You are part of their life, and they are part of your life.

I was a little different. I knew God and I knew Christ immediately. And I knew the Church. Therefore, I retained myself in the Church. There are many who need more help to be retained. I

made these suggestions, but I haven't seen anything come out of it. Somebody told me I should have gone to President Hinckley.

When we went on our mission, I said that the missionary discussions were wrong. It was wrong to start with Joseph Smith in Japan.

*Greg Prince:* We can't do one-size-fits-all.

*Chieko Okazaki:* No, we can't. I said, "We've got to start with lesson four, talking about God! They believe in a God, but you cannot tell them about this young kid who restored a church." We need to start where they are, with the God they learn about in Shintoism and Buddhism and the shrines they have in their homes and temples.

*Greg Prince:* Did you change it in your mission?

*Chieko Okazaki:* Yes. We just said, "You talk about God. You cannot go there and start out talking about Joseph Smith." And another thing, too. I said, "You must tell them, 'You are a blessed nation.' Why? The creation myth of Japan is that these islands were created by a goddess named Amaterasu Omikami. She threw three spears into the ocean and created the northern part, the central part, and the southern part. The imperial family of Japan is descended from this goddess and her husband, according to this legend.

*Greg Prince:* Did the missionaries do it?

*Chieko Okazaki:* Yes. Japan had lost the war and the emperor had officially renounced claims of divinity. That was hard for a proud people. When we held our zone conferences, we told the missionaries to always to be aware that the Japanese people think differently from Americans. They are very family oriented, they have pride in their families, and they are proud of their nation. I said, "They have pride in their God. If you can change that to pride in our God and Jesus Christ, you have a convert."

*Greg Prince:* But then the next mission president came—

*Chieko Okazaki:* —and it changed. But this is why I feel I am really blessed in many different ways. I feel grateful that I did find this Church. I started attending LDS meetings when I was eleven. I've been in the church for sixty-four years. It's just like being born in the Church. It's part of me.

I think that we still have to struggle with many things. There are so many things I can't do anything about. One of those things is teaching children and youth, so that they will be thinking about how a concept applies to them—not just memorizing stuff.

I remember giving a talk to the youth on divine destiny. They sat there and just looked at me like it was the first time they had heard anything like that. I think we just need to talk to them about reality.

When girls ask me some questions about some pretty tough topics, sometimes I say, "You know, that's an interesting question! Tell me more about it." And they do. I say, "Oh, so you find yourself in that dilemma? How would you change that? What would you like to see happening?" As you ask them, they become a lot more honest, and they just say it. If I said, "You shouldn't be thinking like that," that would be the end of the conversation.

*Greg Prince:* They know when you speak to them honestly and want them to answer honestly. They can spot it immediately.

*Chieko Okazaki:* But how do you get these women to learn how to do that? That's the question.

*Greg Prince:* You're supposed to give me the answer!

*Chieko Okazaki:* I know, but I'm not called into those kinds of positions. I was the education counselor, so I worked with one of the men on the curriculum committee. We wanted to change the manual so that it brought up modern-day problems that women have to face and focus on how to implement some of the gospel doctrines and principles in dealing with the problem.

I had written a general outline, and the Relief Society presidency approved it. So I talked about it to a man on the Curriculum Committee. He went to his boss, and the boss said, "We don't need a new manual for the Relief Society." "Why don't we need a new manual?" "We already are writing a manual for them."

So he came back and told me that a new manual was already being prepared. I asked what it was, and he said, "Well, it's the manual on Harold B. Lee." It was the first one in that series of teachings of the Church presidents. I asked, "Why are they writing a manual for us on Harold B. Lee?" He didn't know.

I told the presidency, so we went and asked the Curriculum Committee, "What is this all about?" They said, "Well, we're al-

ready almost finished with the first book.” We said, “You’re almost finished with the first book, and you didn’t tell us that you were doing this? Why is this the first time we have heard about it? Chieko has been writing an outline in relation to what women need.” So I asked, “Who is writing this manual?” It turned out to be five men, and the Melchizedek Priesthood quorums and Relief Society would have the same lessons.

I asked, “Why aren’t the women included in this?” Then they sort of got the point and called three women to the committee. I had one of our board members assigned to be the liaison with these three women. They got to the point where they could go through the manual and write questions in relation to the manual. And for the second one, they were part of it. But that’s how it was. I just thought, “Where are we, anyway, in this entire thing?” It was such a shock! I said, “How did this come about?” “Well, President Hinckley thought that many of the people who live outside the United States don’t have the privilege of having any doctrinal books in their homes. He thinks we should have a manual where we have the prophets speak about their doctrines, so they would at least have a doctrinal book in their home.” That’s a good idea. “He decided maybe this would be a good thing to have for the priesthood and the Relief Society.” “Well, why wasn’t it discussed with us, too?”

We asked one time if we could be on the building committee and the temple committee, because sometimes we think, “Why did they build it this way?”—because it doesn’t work very well for the women’s needs. And we wanted to be on the temple committee, because there are many things that affect women in the temple. But we were never allowed to be a part of those committees. I think we could help a great deal, but you have to have leaders in the Church who are willing to make that possible.

*Greg Prince:* Do you see that as perhaps coming from beneath? That as you have new generations of women who are the wives of bishops and stake presidents, and who are ward and stake Relief Society and Young Women leaders, that they are going to grasp the reins a little bit stronger than their predecessors?

*Chieko Okazaki:* I have to say that, in my sixty-four years in the Church, I sometimes see a little bit of a change that the women

themselves prompt, but most of the time, I haven't seen women who would make that change possible. Wherever I go, I think that they already know their place. Maybe they'd be able to be more open if there were open-minded bishops or stake presidents who would listen to some of the feelings and the ideas of the women. But when women get the message that their job is to be supportive and just agree with the decisions of the bishop, they become clams.

*Greg Prince:* Should the Relief Society president sit in on bishopric meetings?

*Chieko Okazaki:* It would be a great idea. They are in the council meetings, but in many council meetings the person who is in charge is the only one who is talking. I'm on several community boards, and sometimes I'm the only woman there or one of two or three women. I'm on the YWCA advisory board; I'm on the advisory board for the University of Utah Graduate School of Social Work; and I'm on the Belle Spafford Chair board. If I got the message that I was supposed to just sit there and listen to the men, I'd quit that board. I'd say, "What am I here for?" I speak up a lot in all of these board meetings.

In contrast, in 1995 when "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" was written, the Relief Society presidency was asked to come to a meeting. We did, and they read this proclamation. It was all finished. The only question was whether they should present it at the priesthood meeting or at the Relief Society meeting. It didn't matter to me where it was presented. What I wanted to know was, "How come we weren't consulted?"

*Greg Prince:* You didn't even know it was in the works?

*Chieko Okazaki:* No. They just asked us which meeting to present it in, and we said, "Whatever President Hinckley decides is fine with us." He decided to do it at the Relief Society meeting. The apostle who was our liaison said, "Isn't it wonderful that he made the choice to present it at the Relief Society meeting?" Well, that was fine, but as I read it I thought that we could have made a few changes in it.

Sometimes I think they get so busy that they forget that we are there. It's different from the time when Belle Spafford was president of the Relief Society. She was her own boss, as I read her life.



And so was Florence Jacobsen. There's a great deal of difference now.

*Greg Prince:* Don't forget LaVern Parmley.

*Chieko Okazaki:* Yes. "The Big Three," I call them. Boy, they were staunch and strong women!

*Greg Prince:* And it didn't bother David O. McKay one bit.

*Chieko Okazaki:* No! It did not. Sister Spafford was on international and national women's committees. Mormon women were out there! But gradually, things were taken away from Belle Spafford. I remember when the U.N. sponsored a women's international meeting in Beijing. Elaine asked if we could attend, and we were denied. We couldn't go.

*Greg Prince:* Do you see change coming?

*Chieko Okazaki:* There's change in society. Women are now presidents of companies and presidents of countries—

*Greg Prince:* But it's still in transition.

*Chieko Okazaki:* Oh, yes, it's in transition. I guess it's a cultural thing. You know, when we went on our mission, the members would see Ed and me working together, and I would conduct the programs and assignments that I had, and the brethren were taken aback when they saw that. But in the three years we were there, we saw a lot of change about how husbands and wives worked together. Many Japanese women told me how much they appreciated the example that Ed and I were to them.

*Greg Prince:* And not because you were pushing an agenda, but because that's what you *were*.

*Chieko Okazaki:* That's exactly right. And, you know, we need to talk about this to the young women.

*Greg Prince:* And let them know that it's okay for them to speak in an honest voice.

*Chieko Okazaki:* It seems to me like Christ loved the women. I think he really included them in many areas where Jewish society excluded them. He didn't mind breaking those rules.

*Greg Prince:* So where do we need to go to get women in the Church where He wants them to be?

*Chieko Okazaki:* I think women should continue really immersing themselves in the scriptures and praying so that they know what Christ really thinks. We say that we are not perfect yet, but we can become more perfect every time we go to church. Something I'd like to see is better integration between sacrament meeting and the classes. I've commented to several bishops that sacrament meetings are where we hear about the doctrines and principles, and see how Christ has tied it into our lives. It's where everybody listens to the same thing. If speakers were assigned to talk about specific principles, then in the classes, then in the Sunday School, and maybe in the Relief Society and priesthood meetings, that's where the application and the practicum should be.

I'm a teacher. If we just teach doctrine, doctrine, doctrine, and never teach application, how will we learn? If I read the Sunday School lesson and the Relief Society lesson and then the teacher just goes through the manual again, why should I bother to read it? Why can't we talk instead about how to apply it? I think we could have great discussions. Somebody will say, "I've used this principle as I worked with my son or daughter or husband by doing this." "And what success did you have?" "Well, this is what happened." And someone else will say, "Oh! I'm going to try that." "What else can we do to become more perfect in that principle or that doctrine?" And so you say to the sisters or to the Sunday School class, "Try this principle for the whole week, and then come back and tell us in class for five minutes what happened, whether you have improved, and what you need to do to be more perfect." So the next week, you discuss it again, and the other sisters suggest, "Well, have you tried this?"

Now your question, in relation to women, I think that women feel that they need to know every law and every principle of the gospel, and have to live it, so that they can be more perfect. They're hard on themselves because they're not already perfect. Whenever I speak, I try to share this principle with them: "I'm not perfect, but I try to live the principle as best I can. When I see that I can improve, I try to do that."

In one of my books is the talk I gave about the principle of *kigatsuku*. *Ki* means "within your soul." When you get to the point where you can see things and do them without being told, that means it's part of your soul, and you will be doing fine. When my

mom used to teach me, she would say, “Oh, I’m looking for a *kigatsuku* girl.” I’d see her sweeping the floor, so I’d run and get the dustpan. I was just a little girl then. She would say, “Oh, that was a *kigatsuku* girl.” She would be washing clothes and she would say, “I’m looking for a *kigatsuku* girl.” I’d look to see: “Oh, I need to rinse the clothes and hang them.” We had to put our wood in the Japanese bath, and she would say, “I’m looking for a *kigatsuku* girl,” and I’d look to see if she had enough wood. If she didn’t, I’d go and get the wood.

But it got to the point where she didn’t need to tell me anymore. I’d see things and I’d do it on my own. Being *kigatsuku* was part of my soul. I still have that within me. I see something, and I think it needs to be done, and I just go and do it. It becomes part of me, and this is how she taught me. She never lectured me and said, “This is the principle and you must do this.” Instead, she taught me by doing it herself. So when I’m walking through the airport and I see trash, I have a hard time just leaving it there. I pick it up and throw it away. One guy behind me said, “Why are you doing that? They have people for that.” I said, “It makes the place look nicer. Besides that, these men can do something else besides going and picking up trash.” He looked at me like, “Are you crazy?” Well, that certainly explained why there was trash around.

My mother taught me another principle: *on*. It meant that you felt gratitude and recognized your obligation to someone who had helped you. She said, “Don’t ever forget that you have *on* for people who have given you your life, the way you think, lessons in relation to how to become a better person—anything in your life that you didn’t get on your own, that you got from somebody.” I always think, “Christ, I have to thank you. Every night I have an *on* for you, because you have taught me.” The Japanese say that you have *on gaishi*—you have to return help to the person that first helped you. My sixth-grade teacher really helped me in developing my love for teaching. I watched her, and the way she taught and the way she related to us made me realize that that was what I was going to become.

I talked about her influence on me and it was a talk that was published in one of my books. Her nephew happened to be a member of the Church and sent her the book. When I was in Ha-

waii on an assignment, she came to listen to me speak. I told her, "I'm returning *on* to you, because you are the one who gave me the start in my life by showing me that I wanted to become a teacher like you." She cried, and she said, "You are the only person who has ever told me these things."

When I first came to Utah, I expressed my *on* to the elder who baptized me. And when I found the sister who taught me, I went to visit her in Arizona and told her, "I have to give you my *on gaishi*."

My greatest *on* in life is to my mother. She turned ninety-eight this year. [Note: Hatsuko N. Nishimura died at age 100.] She never lectured me, but she never stopped teaching me. I remember once when I was just a little girl and did something wrong. She took me by the hand and we walked into the bedroom and sat on the floor in front of the mirror, so that I could see both her and me. She told me that life is hard and that we learn by experience. She said, "I'm going to tell you some of the experiences I have had, ever since I was a little girl." Her life had been very hard. I just cried the whole time she talked to me. I had always loved her, but that love developed new depths as she talked. I realized then that all of us have to go through struggles to become the kind of person that we want to be.

She had a brilliant mind. Her mother died when she was in the sixth grade, and she left school to take care of the younger children in the family. But she studied on her own. She could read papers and books in Japanese, which I can't do. Once she said to me, "I'm getting to the point where the books are so hard to read that I need a dictionary." So I sent her a dictionary. She taught me, "No matter what you do, there is always a struggle. But when you pass that struggle, you have reached a new level of perfection in your life."

I look at my work in the Church the same way. I'm going to struggle. I have struggled. Christ struggled. When He died, He was struggling the most. Yet He is going to come in His perfection when He comes back the second time, and we can, too.

## REVIEWS

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### **The Truth Will Set You Free**

Errol Morris. *Tabloid*. Sundance Selects, Moxie Pictures, & Air Loom Enterprises, 2010. 87 min. Rated R for sex and nudity.

*Reviewed by Randy Astle*

Tabloids, it seems, make good headlines. When Errol Morris's new film *Tabloid* began its limited release on July 15, 2011, British papers were themselves dominating the news, with the *News of the World* closing its doors on July 10 and Rupert Murdoch appearing before Parliament less than two weeks later. The timing was weirdly appropriate: Morris's film examines an episode from 1977 when the British papers were awash with the story of Joyce McKinney, an American girl alleged to have abducted a Mormon missionary and briefly made him her sex slave. In looking at the tactics of tabloid reporters in 1977, it seems that not much has changed. Surely the reporters then would have hacked McKinney's mobile phone had they been able.

But *Tabloid* is also a film that deals extensively with Mormonism, so it is appropriate that it be released at a time when Mormons are again ascending the world stage. The June 13 *Newsweek* cover proclaimed the headline "The Mormon Moment,"<sup>1</sup> a view seconded a month later by the *New York Times*.<sup>2</sup> As the articles explain, with the phenomenal success of *The Book of Mormon* on Broadway, two Mormon presidential candidates, the culmination of *Big Love* on HBO, and the prominence of Mormons like Harry Reid, Stephenie Meyer, and Glenn Beck, the Church is receiving more scrutiny—and possible acceptance—than ever in its history.<sup>3</sup> Mormon viewers of *Tabloid* can then profitably ask themselves whether public opinion and press coverage of the Church have improved in the last thirty-four years, or if headlines about "the Manacled Mormon" would still find acceptance today.

*Tabloid* tells its story by doing what Morris does best: identifying one remarkable individual and delving as deep into her psyche as possible. And Joyce McKinney is indeed remarkable—Morris has called her his "favorite protagonist."<sup>4</sup> What makes her so

compelling? She's charismatic, persuasive, and determined—great qualities for the camera all—but it is primarily the enigma of her story that lends her so well to Morris's vision. As she tells it, she had a fairytale romance with a young Mormon named Kirk Anderson until his church snatched him away and sent him to England. She followed, rescued him (at gunpoint), and took him to Devon for a weekend of sex, cake, and chicken—her attempt to win him back from his cult. Afterward, Anderson left and McKinney was arrested. The trial became a media circus, with the *Daily Mirror* publishing old nude photos and alleging that McKinney had worked as an S&M prostitute. She eventually jumped bail and fled the country. Great Britain made no attempt to extradite her.

The driving force behind all of Morris's films is the quest to discover the truth. His motto might well be Jesus's statement in John 18:37: "For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." Upon closer examination, however, his working mantra actually seems more akin to Pilate's terse rejoinder: "What is truth?" It's perhaps fitting, for Morris's world, that Jesus gives no recorded answer to that question. The truth is out there but is perhaps ultimately unattainable. On rare occasions—most notably in *The Thin Blue Line* (1988)—Morris arrives at definite conclusions; but generally, instead of giving answers, his films are about the questions, the quest. He examines his own incredulity, his desire to believe but his ultimate restraint. As Roger Ebert says, Morris's films are always "about the intensity of his gaze."<sup>5</sup> Through his famous invention, the Interrotron—a two-way teleprompter that films his subjects from behind a video image of his own face—we stare not just through Morris's lens but literally through his eyes. This makes the Interrotron more than a slick technological innovation: it becomes the symbol of his *oeuvre's* *raison d'être*.

Does *Tabloid* measure up to this standard? It's a lighter, frothier work than Morris's past two films, *Standard Operating Procedure* (2008) and the Oscar-winning *The Fog of War* (2003), returning us to the discomfiting zaniness of titles like *Gates of Heaven* (1978) and *Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control* (1997). It also loses focus in the final third when it deals with McKinney's later life. But it is as complex and probing as anything Morris has done. What is the

truth behind Joyce McKinney's story? What is a lie? And what is the difference? Speaking of her (alleged) lover's (alleged) betrayal, at one point McKinney says, "You know, you can tell a lie long enough 'til you believe it." It's difficult, however, to determine just who exactly she's talking about.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, however, the film ultimately fails in its examination of Mormonism. Kirk Anderson has sagely refused any public comment on the case, this film included, and hence *Tabloid* is left without an authentic voice for the Church.<sup>7</sup> As a result, where every other aspect of the film is generally treated with a degree of nuance, the Church and its teachings are depicted throughout as myopic and ridiculous, its members as prejudiced, cruel, and utterly moronic for believing the cosmic bunk the Church puts out. The token expert is Troy Williams, identified on-screen as a former Mormon and gay activist. Despite his background and presumed ability to speak as intelligently about Mormonism as he does about McKinney's story, Williams does nothing more than regurgitate tired anti-Mormon clichés like adherents' belief that they can one day get their own planets. And Morris buys right into this: It is his voice, from off-screen, that first mentions "magic underwear," and it was presumably his decision to incorporate animated footage from *The God Makers* to illustrate Mormon theology.

In entering the theater I did not expect glowing pro-Mormon propaganda. The story could not be fully told without probing Mormon beliefs on chastity and salvation, or even temple covenants and garments; McKinney reports that she and Anderson burned his as a symbolic gesture during their weekend together. But I did hope a filmmaker as thorough as Morris would seek out a genuine Mormon voice to help navigate those portions of the narrative. What is most intriguing about this omission is the fact that McKinney herself, who blames the Mormons and the wire services for ruining her life, seems to have more in common with the faith she reviles than she might care to admit. She easily uses Mormon vernacular like "Heavenly Father," and her quest is actually quintessentially Mormon: She desires an eternal family. She repeatedly describes her relationship with Anderson as eternal; and when that plan is thwarted, she refuses any other husband and eventually turns her affection to her pets, especially her pit



bull Booger. She describes in detail her attempts to keep her ailing dog alive; and when that failed, she turned to South Korean scientists, reportedly paying \$25,000 to have the deceased Booger cloned into five puppies. Ultimately, she found a way to defeat death and extend her family, apparently eternally.

In the end, *Tabloid* is not a major work, but it comes from one of the world's best documentarians and is a thrilling, hilarious, and thought-provoking film. Ultimately we are left to ponder the issues Morris wants us to ponder. The truth is out there somewhere; and though we may never attain it, it is the search, perhaps, that will set us free.

### Notes

1. Walter Kirn, "Mormons Rock!" *Newsweek*, June 13 and 20, 2011, 38–45, also <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2011/06/05/mormons-rock.html> (accessed July 31, 2011).

2. Peter Applebome, "A Mormon Spectacle, Way Off Broadway," *New York Times*, July 13, 2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/14/nyregion/hill-cumorah-pageant-offers-mormon-spectacle-way-off-broadway.html?pagewanted=1&\\_r=1&ref=todayspaper](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/14/nyregion/hill-cumorah-pageant-offers-mormon-spectacle-way-off-broadway.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&ref=todayspaper) (accessed July 31, 2011).

3. The possibility of mainstream acceptance may seem closer now than at any point in the past, as pointed out in an online July 4 *Times* roundtable called "Are Republicans Ready Now for a Mormon President?," *New York Times*, July 4, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/07/04/are-republicans-ready-now-for-a-mormon-president?ref=nyregion> (accessed July 31, 2011).

4. Roger Ebert, "Tabloid," *Chicago Sun-Times*, July 13, 2011, <http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20110713/REVIEWS/110719989> (accessed July 31, 2011).

5. *Ibid.*

6. Interestingly, McKinney has also been vocal in describing *Tabloid* as full of lies and misrepresentations—what she calls "the Mormon version"—and attended festival screenings around the country to heckle from the audience or seize the stage afterward. John Anderson, "Weathering a Scandal and Now a Movie," *New York Times*, July 8, 2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/10/movies/joyce-mckinney-protests-errol-morriss-tabloid.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/10/movies/joyce-mckinney-protests-errol-morriss-tabloid.html?_r=1) (accessed August 1, 2011).

7. The LDS Church also issued a statement saying it "had no comment on Ms. McKinney or the movie." *Ibid.*

## Truly Significant

Edward Leo Lyman. *Candid Insights of a Mormon Apostle: The Diaries of Abraham H. Cannon, 1889–1895*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2010. liii, 794 pp. Introduction; Cannon family pedigree; frontispiece portrait, biographical sketches; footnotes; index. Cloth: \$125.00, limited edition; ISBN: 978-1-56085-210-0.

*Reviewed by Jonathan A. Stapley*

Abraham H. Cannon was Mormon aristocracy. The son of long-time First Presidency member George Q. Cannon, he accepted a call as an apostle at age thirty. During the latter portion of his life, the period covered in *Candid Insights*, he was also deeply involved in some of the most prominent business concerns of Utah Territory—banks, securities, printing, mines, and more. He served in these areas during the tumultuous period of the first Manifesto and the economic depression of the 1890s leading up to statehood. Also from the age of nineteen until the time he died at thirty-seven, he kept a diary.

The original Abraham H. Cannon diaries were donated by the Cannon family (save the last seven months of the journal, which are not known to be extant) to L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, with photocopies available in various repositories in the state.<sup>1</sup> For example, the Utah State Historical Society has made available online William C. Seifrit's excellent content review and voluminous index of the diaries.<sup>2</sup>

Edward Leo Lyman was one of the first researchers to access the Abraham H. Cannon diaries after they became available, and he mined their beautiful script for his elucidation of territorial politics and economics. In *Candid Insights*, he presents a lightly annotated single volume of Cannon's apostolic diaries. While Dennis Horne previously edited a volume of these diaries (*An Apostle's Record: The Journals of Abraham H. Cannon* [Clearfield, Utah: Gnolaum Books, 2004]), Lyman states that *Candid Insights* offers roughly double the text of the Horne edition, largely by the inclusion of entries relating to Lyman's areas of expertise (xxvi note

35). Horne also claimed to have redacted some material that he deemed too sensitive for public distribution.<sup>3</sup> The publisher claims that Lyman was generally inclusive of such material, but he also deemed it inappropriate to include the text of the Mormon temple sealing ceremony as written by Cannon in one entry (358). Beyond these omissions, compiling a single volume did require redactions; for example, material related to the Millard County irrigation project was not included (xxv note 33). Moreover, daily entries are regularly omitted. While not meeting the threshold of relevancy for this volume, sometimes these entries include important information. For example, of the entries describing Cannon's weekly prayer group in the Salt Lake Temple, only one out of every dozen or so is included in *Candid Insights*.<sup>4</sup>

The diaries themselves are simply extraordinary. They are well deserving of inclusion in Signature Book's Significant Diary Series. They rival and often surpass Wilford Woodruff's diary in detailing the interaction and discussions of the LDS Church's governing quorums. My recent article on adoptive sealing rituals and a co-authored history of baptism for health would have been dramatically less comprehensive without access to these diaries, which comprise approximately 4,000 holograph and typescript pages. Whereas Lyman has mostly been interested political and economic matters, the pages are saturated with details of Latter-day Saint liturgy, belief, and practice as well as general territorial life. My notes from these diaries are more dense on a per-page basis than any other diary from the period. I don't hesitate to consider the Cannon diaries essential reading in Mormon history.

*Candid* is an accurate descriptor of Cannon's journalizing. His entries regarding his brother Frank's binge drinking are explicit. Cannon coolly describes events around him with an air of detachment that could hardly be considered personal. For example, he notes the death of his daughter without pathos, and he had failed to note the birth of the same child seven days earlier (250–51). The moments of greatest emotion are those when his financial security was most in peril.

Lyman uses his extensive experience to realize a generous presentation, though it is one with an emphasis on the diaries' content and not the documents themselves. Lyman only lightly edited the material and occasionally included bracketed clarifications.

Footnotes are generally sparse and seemingly capricious. However, with the volume pushing 800 pages, a minimalist approach to annotation is understandable. Lyman often points people to his own work, which is not out of place considering his expertise and voluminous corpus relating to the period. However, occasionally, he does miss more relevant contextual material.<sup>5</sup> Several notes are very helpful; for example, he includes transcripts for related diary texts held by the LDS First Presidency (396 note 10; 439 note 33). Occasionally a note contains intriguing material, like Lyman's claim to be the source for a text canonized as part of the 1981 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (196 note 10). Chapter 6 feels as if it were annotated afresh without consideration of earlier material, resulting in notes introducing concepts that were frequently discussed in earlier portions of the diaries.

That the diaries of a Mormon apostle who died more than 110 years ago would have a surprising relevance to political and economic issues today might startle some. Harry S. Stout recently commented on his rereading of *From Puritan to Yankee*: "No one can read Bushman's economic characterization of Yankee culture today without being uneasily aware of the resonances with our present: reckless speculation and people 'living beyond their means,' shopkeepers and merchants who 'extended credit ever more liberally,' creating a downward spiral where 'indebtedness embittered relations all across the complex web of credit.'"<sup>6</sup> The resonances of Cannon's diaries today are similarly discomfiting: housing bubbles, opaque securities, credit webs, and failed banks. There are, however, important contrasts as well as parallels. It was the details surrounding Mormon disfranchisement and self-isolation that most stirred my thoughts while reading. With viable Mormon candidates for the U.S. presidency in the running and other prominent Mormon politicians in key leadership positions, there are only faint echoes of Mormons' chasmal otherness.

*Candid Insights of a Mormon Apostle* is more than worth the price of purchase. It is a splendid addition to the scholar's bookshelf, handsomely bound and accessibly typeset. It places thousands of interesting and insightful historical bits within reach, latently awaiting incorporation into our grand narratives. There were only 500 copies printed, however; I recommend getting one while you can.

### Notes

1. Note that the Perry Special Collections has digitized and made available online the first three volumes of these journals: [http://lib.byu.edu/digital/mmd/diarists/Cannon\\_%20Abraham.php](http://lib.byu.edu/digital/mmd/diarists/Cannon_%20Abraham.php).

2. [William C. Seifrit], "Register of the Journal of Abraham Cannon, 1879–1896," Utah State Historical Society (accessed September 17, 2011), <http://history.utah.gov/findAids/B00105/welcome.htm>.

3. Dennis Horne stated: "In the original Abram Cannon journals, there's a page dealing with higher blessings; I took that out of my publication. There is a sentence or two dealing with instructions to temple workers that I omitted; I took out a word-for-word rendition of the temple marriage ceremony when Abram Cannon did a sealing for a relative; that is not in there. In the original journals there are a few pages where the Adam-God theory is referenced and George Q. Cannon talks about it—I took it out of my book[.]" Jared Tamez, typescript notes of Horne's comments, "Notes from the 2009 Eborn Book Event: Dennis Horne on Abraham Cannon and Other Projects," *Juvenile Instructor*, <http://www.juvenileinstructor.org/notes-from-the-2009-eborn-book-event-dennis-horne-on-abraham-cannon-and-other-projects/> (accessed September 17, 2011).

4. See, for example, entries dated October 31, November 7, 14, and 28, December 5, 12, and 26, 1894, January 2, and 9, February 6, 13, 20, and 27, and March 20, 27, 1895.

5. For example, in his discussion of the Parrish-Potter murders (447 note 40), Lyman failed to cite the two most complete discussions of the events, namely those by Polly Aird. In his note about Latter-day Saint prayer circles, Lyman overlooked D. Michael Quinn's treatment. Instead, he relied on faulty material and consequently made erroneous claims (466 note 9). Polly Aird, "'You Nasty Apostates, Clear Out': Reasons for Disaffection in the Late 1850s," *Journal of Mormon History* 30 (Fall 2004): 129–207; Polly Aird, *Mormon Convert, Mormon Defector: A Scottish Immigrant in the American West, 1848–1861* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2009), chaps. 12–15; D. Michael Quinn, "Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles," *BYU Studies* 19 (Fall 1978): 79–105.

6. Harry S. Stout in "A Retrospective on the Scholarship of Richard Bushman," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 44 (Fall 2011): 13.

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FROM THE PULPIT

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## The Great Vigil of Easter

*Andrew Ashcroft*

*Note: This sermon was preached at St. Mark's Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at the Great Vigil of Easter in 2010. The Great Vigil is the highest and longest service in the liturgical churches. It begins in darkness and starts with the kindling of a fire. The congregation then listens in darkness lit only by candles to the readings of the salvation moments in the scriptures: the Creation, the Flood, the Exodus, the Valley of the Dry Bones, the eschatological gathering of God's people, and the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.*

My parents, in a nice haphazard sort of a way exposed me early on to the basic classical literature and ideas that they thought I needed to know. The raciness of some of the Greco-Roman myths was not lost on them, but they thought that perhaps the myths were not much more risqué than the stories that I was likely to encounter in the scriptures (which is true) and besides, surely it was better to learn about the birds and bees from the Greeks and Romans than from the gossip and innuendo of schoolchildren or the pages of a magazine. My father, being a scientist at heart, thought that it wouldn't be a bad idea to learn about the classical version of science, and so he taught me about the four elements, of which the ancients thought that all material was composed: earth, air, fire, and water. All the elements are present in us: the water in our bodies, the earthy fleshiness of us, the air in our lungs, and the fire in our minds and hearts.

I did not long remain with the Greeks and Romans, but moved on into Norse mythology, and on from there into the stories of other religions; and soon it became relatively clear to me, even as a child, that certain images and themes, certain fears and hopes cross the lines of faith, culture, and history. The hero with a

thousand faces, the primal fears of darkness, of drowning in deep waters, the “panic” of the woods at night, of death, the gift and danger of fire—these are images and stories that continue with force and power in all ages and cultures and faiths.

I always feel as if the Great Vigil of Easter is that most fundamental of Christian services because it is composed of those basic images: new fire kindled, water in the baptismal font, earth over a tomb, and air coming back into stilled lungs. And the stories that we recollect tonight, the stories of God’s great salvation wrought over many, long years are stories that are fundamentally about who we are, why we are the way we are, and how God interacts with us.

First, there is the story of creation. God separates the waters and draws forth land from the waters. God sets the lights in the sky, the fiery sun and stars, and then out of the earth draws trees and creatures and finally sculpts humans out of the earth, filled with the breath of God. The first act of God that we comprehend and know is that God has created—has created order—and brought waters, and fire, and earth, and air into some kind of miraculous balance, and declared it good.

But, as has always been, and will be until our final healing, human hearts and minds were capable of darkening; and so the waters that were kept in check were poured out upon the earth; but even in His wrath and destruction, God did not abandon His creation. He saved the earth and air that were animals and humans, and wrote in the air of the sky with water the sign and symbol of His covenant.

Ages later, when His covenanted people—those in the long lineage of Noah and Abraham—were enslaved, God sent His servant Moses to free them and lead them from bondage. He went before them in fire and cloud, parted the waters so that they could walk on dry earth, protected and saved them.

And although again their hearts and minds were darkened, God fed them in the wilderness and gave them water from the rock. Though they were forced to walk the earth for forty years, yet still God protected and fed them and, at the last, brought them into the Promised Land where they were home.

Even there, even full of the knowledge of God’s sustenance and graciousness, brought into the fullness of God’s covenant



with them, symbolized in the gift of land, their hearts and minds were darkened, and so God sent the prophets to call them to repentance, and to declare to them the graciousness of God: the God who gives waters to the thirsty, and rain and snow upon the earth; the God who transforms the skeletal wreck of death into flesh, and breathes upon that flesh, and restores life to it.

Earth and air, water and fire: the great elements that are present tonight in their primal way, that have deep places in the human mind and experience, and that are the signs of God's action and presence in the world throughout the long record of the forging of God's salvation.

Lent began forty days ago, on Ash Wednesday, with the reminder that we are dust and to dust we shall return. As quickly as the grass withers, the air will leave our lungs for the last time, and our loved ones will take our bodies, and cover them with earth, and we will return to the ground from which we and all that lives have been drawn. And so the question of tonight, or perhaps of our lives is a simple one: If, after lives of unending struggle against the darkness that constantly invades our human minds and hearts, those hearts will stop beating, and we—you and I—will go down to death, what does the little fire we have kindled together in this night matter?

What does it matter if God is evident in occasional moments, in fire, water, air, and earth? Where is our salvation?

The question is, "Can these bones live?" (Ezek. 37:3). My bones and your bones?

Tonight matters because the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The Word became earth and air, was washed with the waters of baptism, and flamed with the fire of the Spirit. The God who is evident in the elements, who creates and sustains the creation, did not in the final peak of His salvation simply operate on the creation, on earth and air, fire and water, but became them. He tramped the earth of Palestine and ate of the earth's bounty. He drank and sailed the waters and breathed the wind blowing where it will. And His breath ceased, and His body died, and He was laid under earth, as we all one day will be.

But the story doesn't end there. If it did, tonight might matter little. The air of His lungs dissipated, His flesh as cold as the grave, the fire of His spirit extinguished; for three days, there is si-

lence. And yet He rises glorious. Here is the great reversal, not simply God's power acting again and again to save His people, to call Israel back and restore creation, but the death of death, the destruction of sinfulness, the freedom from bondage and the restoration of our right humanity. For He carries us with Him. And this is not some "sterile" "spiritual" resurrection. His resurrection is abundantly, overwhelmingly, gloriously full of matter. He carries us with Him in all the glory of His elemental physicality.

Since we have been baptized with Christ into His death, death no longer is terrible. Since we are the same earth and air as He, since we have been washed with the water of baptism, and set aflame with the fire of the Spirit, the resurrection raises us up from the darkness and death of our lives and hearts and makes our humanity glorious, our flesh like unto His own.

The Word became flesh and gives of the things of earth to sustain us—wheat for bread, water for wine, the stuff of earth become the things of heaven, all of it changed, redeemed, restored, because Christ is risen.

And this is not mere rhetoric. The darkness of our hearts and minds is there still, the darkness of the world still evident all around us. But as the Word has become flesh, as the light of His fire has burned in the darkness, even so the darkness did not overcome it. Christ rises glorious, scattering matter about Him like fire, His breath is warm and moist, the dust of the tomb still on Him, breaking the darkness around Him. He comes into my darkness, into your darkness, the real inane darkneses in which we often find ourselves, and He bids us rise and follow him. Christ is arisen as he promised. Death no longer has dominion. He is present to us always and makes of our world an endless, material delight. He fills our mouths with laughter and fills the hungry with His own flesh and blood. Alleluia, alleluia.

# A Community of Abundance

*Lant Pritchett*

Editor's Note: *This essay is revised from a talk given in Belmont First Ward, Belmont, Massachusetts, on May 8, 2011.*

I have never spoken on Mother's Day in church before, nor have I wanted to. One cannot talk in church on Mother's Day without venturing into territory like women's role in the Church and its relation to motherhood. Antique maps mark such territories with warnings like "There Be Dragons"; in that territory, there is no safe ground for man.

Once, about twenty years ago, I wrote something flip and sardonic about the environment in a memo which my boss at the World Bank at the time, Larry Summers, signed. This turned out to be a huge mistake—the kind of mistake that my mother, living in Boise, Idaho, read about in her morning paper, a local paper that devotes one small column to national news. You know when you make a mistake in Washington, D.C., that your mother reads about in Boise, Idaho, you've made a big mistake. Sometime later, after the crisis died down a bit, Larry said to me, "You know, this topic is now dead to us. Neither of us can ever say or write anything about the environment without its dredging up this mistake."<sup>1</sup> I have always regarded the topic of women and the church as "dead to me." ) As it turns out, my friend Larry probably should have kept the topic of women dead to him as well, but that's another story.<sup>2</sup>)

My wife, Diane, grew up in the Foreign Service, moving every four years. After about eight years in a D.C. suburb, she said to me: "We've gotta go. I cannot live like this. How do people live like this?" My protestations that staying in one place while raising kids

was, in fact, how nearly everyone lived had no effect. So we moved to Indonesia. If you want to move somewhere that will make you rethink many things, including gender, I recommend Indonesia.

Some years later our daughter, Hannah, returned to Indonesia to study Javanese. She lived in a smallish provincial city. Being a foreigner, a tall white girl, and fluent in Indonesian brought attention. She was invited to appear on local television and radio shows. In her role as a minor celebrity, she was asked to be one of three judges in a local beauty pageant. The other two were a former winner of the pageant and a local government official.

It turns out the beauty pageant was the Miss Indonesia He/She-Male pageant for men dressed as women. We might think this was strange. In Indonesia, however, there is a long history of three genders. In fact, people who exhibit characteristics of more than one gender were not an embarrassment but were thought of as special. It does make some sense that, since most of us plebeians have only one boring gender, people who are able to have aspects of two genders must be gifted.

In this large beauty pageant sponsored by the local government, one of the contestants was a religious Muslim. So when the contestants were first introduced, this Muslim participant came out wearing a *hijab*, the head covering that many Muslim women wear as a sign of religious devotion. Clearly a Muslim man dressing as a woman should dress as a *Muslim* woman. Impressively, throughout the pageant, while most of the contestants went for quite revealing costumes, this one contestant wore modest clothing, such as evening wear with long sleeves.

Clearly as a good and modest young Mormon woman, my daughter was impressed and wanted to vote for the Muslim man who, even when dressed as a woman, was committed to Islamic principles of modesty in dress. He/She did not win in spite of Hannah's vote. In typical fashion the world over, the majority of judges went for the prettiest.<sup>3</sup>

Now I am sure that, when most of you think of Islam, cross-dressing is not the first thing that comes to mind. We think of Islam as conservative. But in Indonesia the religion has mixed with the local culture in ways that produce unexpected results.

If you are not confused yet, let me tell you a second story. Another place we lived as a family was India. When you think of In-

dia and women, it is typical to think of it being a place where women are oppressed. Indeed, in parts of India the ratio of girl-to-boy births has been falling as a result of gender-selective abortion. In some places, it is as low as 800 girls per 1,000 boys. But if you were to go to India, what you would be more likely to *experience* as a foreigner is women yelling at men and men responding with subservience.

One of our good friends while we were in India was a woman I'll call Mita. Mita was from a prominent family. Her father was a politician and minister in the government. I once asked her what her mother did. "She yells at people." "Really?" we asked. "Does she have a purpose in yelling at people, or is it just an avocation?" It turns out that her mother runs a business; and to run her business, she yells a lot. Once Mita said she came upon her mother yelling at some workers and said, "Mom, they haven't even made a mistake yet." The response was: "I am just making sure they won't." When we were having trouble getting a simple household item repaired, Mita offered to have her mother come over and yell at our workers as well. Whenever we were having trouble interacting with the local system, we would ask ourselves, "What would Mita's mother do?"

How was it that, in a place in which women are oppressed, what we personally observed was women yelling at men who immediately reacted with obeisance? Well, in addition to the social stratification of gender, there is also caste in India. The gaps across caste are large enough that caste trumps gender. So as elite foreigners hanging out with high-caste and high-status women, we mostly saw the class and caste divide that allowed women to act with power and authority toward lower-class and lower-caste men, not the gender divide.

Before you start worrying about whether I've forgotten I'm giving a Mother's Day talk, let me tell you where I'm going with these two stories. We all live in complex societies. We are embedded in numerous social roles that come with norms about how we should behave. When we conform to those norms, our respective communities reward us with approbation; and when we rub across the grain of social norms, we get friction. But we are all embedded in multiple overlapping communities with different norms. What trumps what?

When we become Christian disciples, we are freed from existing social norms into communities of abundance. Being followers of Christ trumps the stratifications and distinctions in society at large. As Galatians 3:27–28 says:

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

These were the important social distinctions that existed in the world of the early Christians. Slavery was still prevalent, and “master/slave” was a primary social distinction. “Greek/Jew” distinguished whom people interacted with and had created important distinctions. Male and female roles were carefully prescribed in those cultures, as they are in the cultures we inhabit today. Joining the community of believers included, as a religious duty, erasing those roles.

There is no question that the early Christians took that freedom from existing social strictures on male and female seriously. From the woman at the well, to the women who, without chaperone, accompanied Jesus, to Mary choosing the better part of sitting and listening to the teaching rather than serving busily like her sister Martha, it is clear that something was different. The resurrection story itself reads like the first bishopric-Relief Society meeting: “While you men were here moping, we sisters have been down to the tomb to do service and you might want to know the tomb is empty”—which of course the men dismissed initially as women’s gossip.

One reason the early Church was persecuted was because it was overturning the traditional roles defined for women and allowing the freedom to challenge existing norms.

But this freedom from one set of social norms implies the creation of a new set of norms within the new community. These norms can be different—in that different sets of behaviors are rewarded—but they can also be narrower or wider. The question is: What does the community in Christ that we create in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints require from us to get the love, respect, status, and appreciation that all humans yearn for?

In last week's priesthood lesson, Paul Carlisle talked about our fears. I took away that many of our fears come out of scarcity. We worry that we won't get enough. In our wealthy society, we have material abundance, so the main scarcity we worry about is scarcity of status, of approval, of love from others, of respect. Our fears of scarcity are based on the idea that life is a competition. If someone wins, someone else loses.

What Jesus had to offer to his disciples and what He offers to us today is the teaching that the kingdom of God is a community of abundance. Most of what His New Testament teachings are trying to communicate about the kingdom is *not* that the righteous will rule and the evil suffer but that there is enough of God's love for everyone.

The story of the prodigal son is really about both sons (Luke 15:11-32). The prodigal son wastes his inheritance on riotous living; but when he returns, his father has more for him. The other son thinks of a world of scarcity and complains, only to have his father remind him that he always has abundance and that he can partake of it whenever he chooses.

One of the hardest scriptures for us good modern capitalists to take in is about the workers in the field in Matthew 20. The employer hires some people at the beginning of the day, agreeing on a wage for the day's work. Throughout the day he hires more and more people, who face a workday of progressively fewer hours. At the end of the day, he pays the last hired first and gives them an entire day's wage. The first hired rejoice, thinking they will get more; but when their turn to be paid comes, they get exactly the same: the agreed-upon day's wage. They complain. Their argument is based on an economy of scarcity: "We should get more and they should get less because we worked longer." The response explains that everyone gets the same because there is plenty for everyone.

In offering us freedom to enter into a community with new norms, Christ invites us to create a community of abundance. In a community where love abounds, we don't need to narrow the circle of who gets our love, our respect, our approval, by imposing a new set of narrow norms. We can afford to expand our love, respect, and approval to more and more people in our community.

How do we create abundance? There are two ways.



First, we channel God's abundance. As His love is infinite there is plenty for everyone. When we share God's love for others, there is not less left for us; there is just more in the world.

Second, to have a community of abundance, we have to give more than we get. If we are worried about getting respect and getting status and getting honor and think in scarcity terms, we are tempted to detract from others, to try to get just a little more than they do. To create abundance we have to put in more than we try to take out. We need to give more love than we seek. We need to give respect to more people than we try to make respect us. We need to give support to people who make choices different than ours.

Which finally brings us to Mother's Day. This is what mothers do: give love, give respect, give status, and give nurturing freely away to others without expectation of any reward except more love. On Mother's Day, we shouldn't let social norms or expectations define or divide us. Rather we should consider the ways each of us, male and female, can live up to the freedom granted us through Christ to create and nurture a community of abundance.

#### Notes

1. For the backstory on this episode, see <http://harvardmagazine.com/2001/05/toxic-memo.htm> (accessed October 1, 2011).

2. For yet more backstory, see [http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2005/01/17/summers\\_remarks\\_on\\_women\\_draw\\_fire/](http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2005/01/17/summers_remarks_on_women_draw_fire/) (accessed October 1, 2011).

3. For a first-hand account, see <http://purplepetra.blogspot.com/2007/05/here-she-is-miss-central-java.html> (accessed October 1, 2011).

## CONTRIBUTORS

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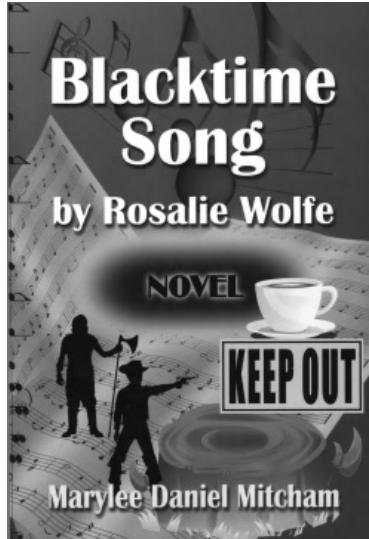
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