



DIALOGUE

a journal of mormon thought

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On the cover: Paige Elizabeth Anderson, *Whole (Woman with an Issue of Blood)*, oil on panel

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is an independent quarterly established to express Mormon culture and to examine the relevance of religion to secular life. It is edited by Latter-day Saints who wish to bring their faith into dialogue with the larger stream of world religious thought and with human experience as a whole and to foster artistic and scholarly achievement based on their cultural heritage. The journal encourages a variety of viewpoints; although every effort is made to ensure accurate scholarship and responsible judgment, the views expressed are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or of the editors.

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THE CONTINUING IMPORTANCE OF DIALOGUE

I am delighted and honored to serve as the new editor of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. It is particularly exciting to be coming on board as we anticipate the journal's fiftieth anniversary. (Stay tuned for details about our September 30th celebration!) I want to thank Kristine Haglund for her fine work over the past seven years, especially for her vision of how bring a global perspective to *Dialogue* and move the journal into the internet age. She is one of the smartest and most talented people I know and will be a hard act to follow.

Dialogue began in 1966, when a group of young scholars at Stanford University envisioned an independent Mormon journal that spoke to both faith and intellect, bringing together academic rigor, artistic quality, diverse perspectives, and heart-felt conviction. In the journal's inaugural issue, Eugene England argued that dialogue—speaking from our hearts and listening compassionately to others—is central to the Mormon project, and he saw the journal as a vehicle for understanding and healing. Constructive and charitable dialogue, England argued, “will not solve all of our intellectual and spiritual problems—and it will not save us; but it can bring us joy and new vision and help us toward that dialogue with our deepest selves and with our God which can save us.”

Dialogue soon became one of the main venues where Latter-day Saints discussed national and international issues of the day, like the Vietnam War, the Equal Rights Amendment, and the Civil Rights Movement; as well as unique Mormon issues, like Blacks and the priesthood and the discovery of the Joseph Smith papyri. *Dialogue* has, I believe, been a positive force in Mormonism, modeling ways to navigate the channels between faith and reason, and providing a better appreciation of Mormonism's bold and expansive worldview.

Before beginning my tenure, I read Devery Anderson's four-part history of *Dialogue* and reviewed its five decades of content. I am surprised at how little has changed and how relevant much of that content remains. I have also realized how revolutionary the internet has been. When *Dialogue* moved from California to Virginia, and then from Virginia to Utah, it required a moving truck. The journal needed extensive office space to house the staff required to publish and distribute the journal. No moving vans were necessary for the move from Boston to Orem, and email and Dropbox allow me to work with editors and production staff from around the world. The internet has also had a huge effect on Mormonism in the twenty-first century. While it has facilitated support for the various subgroups of our community, it has also balkanized the conversation, creating echo chambers for like-minded

individuals. Furthermore, information's free access has sometimes led to disenchantment with and disengagement from the Church.

Dialogue is, I believe, even more important today than it was in 1966. Presently, many Latter-day Saints are struggling with women's status in the Church, with policies about LGBTQ members, and with discovering dusty and often disconcerting corners of Church history that they were unaware existed. *Dialogue* is a venue where we can explore issues like these with greater depth and nuance than an internet meme or blog post allows. *Dialogue* has also become the flagship journal of the burgeoning Mormon studies discipline, the source scholars of Mormonism look to for the best academic writing about Mormonism.

I am committed to continuing the legacy established by my predecessors. Specifically, I envision *Dialogue* providing research and commentary about both contemporary and historical Mormonism that are timely, relevant, respectful, and reliable. I welcome all voices to the conversation and want the journal to model productive discussion that challenges our minds and hearts. I want to continue expanding that discussion beyond the Intermountain West, to encompass global Mormonism in all its varieties, to engage with other religious traditions as well as with secular society.

I take my editorial cues from a letter Joseph Smith wrote from Liberty Jail: "The things of God are of deep import, and time and experience and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O Man [we should add O Woman], if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost Heavens, and search into and contemplate the lowest considerations of the darkest abyss, and expand upon the broad considerations of eternal expanse; he [and she] must commune with God." *Dialogue* is and will continue to be a permanent record of Mormonism's beauty, variety, complexity, and depth.

In this issue, we feature articles that, I believe, further the discussion between Mormons, as well as between Mormons and Catholics. (The inter-faith dialogue included here originated from the 2015 Mormon studies conference at Utah Valley University, where I serve as the Program Coordinator for Mormon Studies.) Sadly, also we note the tragic passing of Stephen H. Webb, a man who championed the conversation between Mormons and Catholics and who, I had hoped, would contribute to *Dialogue*. Webb's recent book, an inter-faith dialogue with BYU Professor Alonzo Gaskill, is reviewed in this issue, and we plan to remember his legacy in an upcoming issue.

—Boyd Jay Petersen, Editor

"THE PERFECT UNION OF MAN AND WOMAN": RECLAMATION AND COLLABORATION IN JOSEPH SMITH'S THEOLOGY MAKING

Fiona Givens

Any church that is more than a generation old is going to suffer the same challenges that confronted early Christianity: how to preach and teach its gospel to myriad peoples, nationalities, ethnic groups, and societies, without accumulating the cultural trappings of its initial geographical locus. As Joseph Milner has pointed out, the rescue of the "precious ore" of the original theological deposit is made particularly onerous, threatened as it is by rapidly growing mounds of accumulating cultural and "ecclesiastical rubbish."¹ This includes social accretions, shifting sensibilities and priorities, and the inevitable hand of human intermediaries.

For Joseph Smith, Jr., the task of restoration was the reclamation of the *kerygma* of Christ's original Gospel, but not just a return to the early Christian *kerygma*. Rather, he was attempting to restore the *Ur-Evangelium* itself—the gospel preached to and by the couple, Adam and Eve (Moses 6:9). In the present paper, I wish to recapitulate a common thread in Joseph's early vision, one that may already be too

1. Joseph Milner, *The History of the Church of Christ*, vol. 2 (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1812), v.; Joseph Milner, *The History of the Church of Christ*, vol. 3 (Boston: Farrand, Mallory, and Co., 1809), 221.

obscure and in need of excavation and celebration. Central to Joseph's creative energies was a profound commitment to an ideal of cosmic as well as human collaboration. His personal mode of leadership increasingly shifted from autocratic to collaborative—and that mode infused both his most radical theologizing and his hopes for Church comity itself. His manner of producing scripture, his reconceived doctrine of the Trinity, and his hopes for the Nauvoo Women's Relief Society all attest to Joseph's proclivity for collaborative scriptural, theological, and ecclesiastical restoration.

Though Smith was without parallel in his revelatory capacities (by one count he experienced seventy-six documented visions),² he increasingly insisted on democratizing that gift. As one scholar remarked, "Joseph Smith was the Henry Ford of revelation. He wanted every home to have one, and the revelation he had in mind was the revelation he'd had, which was seeing God."³ Richard Bushman has noted how "Smith did not attempt to monopolize the prophetic office. It was as if he intended to reduce his own role and infuse the church bureaucracy with his charismatic powers."⁴ This he principally effected through the formation of councils and quorums equal in authority—and revelatory responsibility—to that which he and his presidency possessed.⁵ Most remarkable of all, perhaps, was Smith's readiness to turn what revelations he did receive and record

2. They are treated in Alexander L. Baugh, "Parting the Veil: Joseph Smith's Seventy-Six Documented Visionary Experiences," in *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations 1820–1844*, edited by John W. Welch and Erick B. Carlson (Provo and Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University and Deseret Book, 2005), 265–326.

3. Interview Kathleen Flake, "The Mormons," *PBS Frontline/American Experience* (Apr. 30, 2007), retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/mormons/interviews/flake.html>.

4. Richard Bushman, "Joseph Smith and His Visions," in *The Oxford Handbook of Mormonism*, edited by Terry L. Givens and Philip L. Barlow (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 118.

5. This practice is most clearly evident in his revelation on priesthood, D&C 107.

into cooperative editing projects. With his full sanction and participation, the “Revelation Books” wherein his divine dictations were recorded bear the evidence of half a dozen editors’ handwriting—including his own—engaged in the revision of his pronouncements.⁶

It was in that work of scriptural production that Joseph recognized that theological reclamation necessarily entailed fracturing the Christian canon to allow for excision, emendation, and addition. Arguably, the most important work of reclamation and re-conceptualization is Joseph’s understanding of the nature and attributes of the three members of the Godhead whose own collaborative work and glory are “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Smith believed that the true nature and attributes of the Trinity, the truly “plain and precious things,” were either buried, revised, camouflaged, or expunged from the biblical text (1 Nephi 13). Part of his reclamation entailed a restoration of the Divine Feminine together with a revision of contemporary conceptions of priesthood power and authority in conjunction with “keys” Joseph believed had been lost following the advent of Christianity. Joseph saw himself as midwife in the restoration of the priesthood of the *Ur-Evangelium*. Within this framework, he envisioned collaborative roles for women and men within the ecclesiastical structure and ministry of the nascent LDS Church, evidenced in partial form in the initiatory, endowment, and sealing rites of the LDS temple.

Reclamation of Divine Collaboration

In answer to William Dever’s question “Did God have a Wife?” the LDS faith responds with a resounding affirmative.⁷ Relatively recent excavation of the symbols and modes of worship attributed to the Divine Feminine

6. See *The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations, Manuscript and Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition*, edited by Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2009).

7. William Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005).

both within and outside the ancient Hebrew tradition, together with salient clues within the biblical text, are helping to support Joseph's reclamation of God, the Mother, from the textual absence to which she has been consigned. As Joseph's theology never emerged *ex nihilo*, neither is it reasonable to infer his re-introduction of the doctrine of Heavenly Mother to be without canonical and, given Joseph's penchant for rupturing boundaries, extra-canonical precedent. Joseph showed himself to be quite happy trolling every possible resource in order to reclaim what he considered was most plain and precious (D&C 91:1).⁸

Joseph's theology was Trinitarian, but in a radically re-conceptualized way. A conventional trinity, in its thrice-reiterated maleness, could never have produced the collaborative vision of priesthood that Joseph developed. It is, therefore, crucial, for both historical context and theological rationale, to recognize that Joseph reconstitutes the Godhead of Christendom as a Heavenly Father who co-presides with a Heavenly Mother. In 1878, Apostle Erastus Snow stated: "'What,' says one, 'do you mean we should understand that Deity consists of man and woman? Most certainly I do. If I believe anything that God has ever said about himself . . . I must believe that deity consists of man and woman. . . . There can be no God except he is composed of man and woman *united*, and there is not in all the eternities that exist, or ever will be a God in any other way, . . . except they be made of these two component parts: a man and a woman; the male and the female'" (emphasis mine).⁹ In his 1876 general conference address, Brigham Young suggested a striking equality within that Godhead, when he talked of "eternal mothers" and "eternal daughters . . . prepared to frame earth's like unto ours."¹⁰

8. Among Joseph's reading material is Willam Hone, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament* (London: Hone, 1821). For Smith's library, see Kenneth W. Godfrey, "A Note on the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute," *Brigham Young University Studies* 14 (Spring 1974): 386–89.

9. Erastus Snow, Mar. 3, 1878, *Journal of Discourses*, 19:269–70.

10. Richard S. Van Wagoner, ed., *Complete Discourses of Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Smith-Petit Foundation, 2009), 5:3092.

Prescient but not surprising, therefore, is the merging of Smith's reconstituted Godhead with the traditional Trinity. Elder Charles W. Penrose drew an unexpected inference from Joseph's new theology when he suggested an identification of the Holy Spirit with Heavenly Mother. He responded to a Mr. Kinsman's assertion that "the members of the Trinity are . . . men" by stating that the third member of the Godhead—the Holy Spirit—was the feminine member of the Trinity: "If the divine image, to be complete, had to reflect a female as well as a male element, it is self-evident that both must be contained in the Deity. And they are. For the divine Spirit that in the morning of creation 'moved upon the face of the waters,' bringing forth life and order, is . . . the feminine gender, whatever modern theology may think of it."¹¹ Penrose may have been relying upon Joseph's re-working of the creation narrative in the book of Abraham, where "movement" is replaced with "brooding"—a striking image of a mother bird during the incubation period of her offspring. (One remembers in this context Gerard Manley Hopkins's lovely allusion to the Holy Spirit who, "over the bent/World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.")¹²

Even though recorded third-hand, the following account suggests that the prophet, Joseph, while not expressing the same identification as Penrose, was projecting the same reconstituted heavenly family:

One day the Prophet, Joseph, asked [Zebedee Coltrin] and Sidney Rigdon to accompany him into the Woods to pray. When they had reached a secluded spot Joseph laid down on his back and stretched out his arms. He told the brethren to lie one on each arm, and then shut their eyes. After they had prayed he told them to open their eyes. They did so and saw a brilliant light surrounding a pedestal which seemed

11. "Women in Heaven," *Millennial Star* 64 (Jun. 26, 1902): 410, retrieved from <https://archive.org/stream/millennialstar6426eng#page/408/mode/2up>. Penrose, who was editor at the time this editorial was written, is likely the author.

12. Gerard Manley Hopkins, "God's Grandeur," *Poems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 70.

to rest on the earth. They closed their eyes and again prayed. They then saw, on opening them, the Father seated upon a throne; they prayed again and on looking saw the Mother also; after praying and looking the fourth time they saw the Savior added to the group.¹³

V. H. Cassler has written, “What we have taken as absence was presence all along, but we did not have the eyes to see it.”¹⁴ Even within our tradition, glimpses of Smith’s radical innovation have neither been sufficiently recognized nor appreciated. One such unrecognized symbol resides on the threshold of the celestial room in the Salt Lake Temple. Just above the veil on the west wall stands a remarkable, six-foot statue of a woman, holding what looks very much like a palm frond. She is flanked by two easily discernible cherubs to whom she is linked by garlands of colorful, open flowers. While chubby cherubs are ubiquitous in Renaissance art and could, therefore, be mistaken as merely decorative, the number and placement of the cherubs in the celestial room of the temple draw one back to the majestic, fearful Cherubim—guardians of the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies of the First Temple. The Lady of the Temple is positioned at the portal of the veil—the representation of the torn body of the Lord, Jesus Christ—through which all kindred, nations, tongues, and people shall pass into the celestial kingdom (Hebrews 10:20, Matthew 27:50–51). The original statue was purchased by Joseph Don Carlos Young, who was called by the Church Presidency to succeed Truman O. Angell as decorator of the temple interior. Young purchased the winged statue named “The Angel of Peace” and two cherubs on a visit to New York in 1877. However, during a dream vision

13. Abraham H. Cannon, Journal, Aug. 25, 1880, LDS archives, quoted in Linda P. Wilcox, “The Mormon Concept of a Mother in Heaven,” in Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson, eds., *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 66; see also Maxine Hanks, *Woman and Authority* (Salt Lake: Signature, 1992).

14. V. H. Cassler, “Plato’s Son, Augustine’s Heir: ‘A Post-Heterosexual Mormon Theology?’” *Square Two* 5, no. 2 (Summer 2012), retrieved from <http://squaretwo.org/Sq2ArticleCasslerPlatosSon.html>.

one night Young recorded: "I felt impelled to remove the wings. Now I saw a smile and expression that I never saw before and I can now allow this . . . to be placed there."¹⁵ The enigmatic lady's station at the veil of the temple, replete with crucifixion imagery, makes it unlikely that she represents Eve. Mary, the mortal mother of the Lord, is a possibility, given her maternal relationship to the Messiah. However, the Lady's presence at the entrance to the celestial room, representing the celestial kingdom, suggests someone else. There are several key clues as to her possible identity.

Of note is the palm frond the Lady is holding. Anciently, trees were a potent symbol of Asherah, God the Mother.¹⁶ In fact, the Menorah—the seven-branched lamp—that is reputed to have given light in the original Holy of Holies is fashioned after an almond tree, covered in gold—representing the Tree of Life spoken of at the beginning and end of the biblical text.¹⁷ Not only are flowers fashioned into the Menorah: open flowers are one of the temple's primary decorative motifs.¹⁸ Palm trees also were closely associated with the First Temple with which the interior was liberally decorated together with cherubim: "And it was made with cherubims and palm trees, so that a palm tree was between a

15. Joseph Don Carlos Young, Private Notebook (no date; no pagination), currently in the possession of Richard Wright Young, grandson of Joseph Don Carlos Young, quoted in Alonzo L. Gaskill and Seth G. Soha, "The Woman at the Veil," in *An Eye of Faith: Essays in Honor of Richard O. Cowan*, edited by Kenneth L. Alford and Richard E. Bennett (Provo: Religious Studies Center, 2015), 91–111.

16. Daniel Peterson, "Nephi and his Asherah: A Note on 1 Nephi 11:8–23," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9, no. 2 (2000): 16–25, 80–81.

17. See Exodus 25:31–37, 37:17–22; Zechariah 4:1–3; Genesis 2:9; Revelation 22:2. See also Margaret Barker, *King of the Jews: Temple Theology in John's Gospel* (London: SPCK, 2014), 34–38. Biblical quotations are from the NRSV unless otherwise noted.

18. See 1 Kings 6:18, 29, 33.

cherub and a cherub; and every cherub had two faces” (Ezekiel 41:18).¹⁹ Palm fronds also play a conspicuous role in Jesus’ Passion—in particular his dramatic entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the day that begins the week ending in the crucifixion and resurrection of the Savior. The thronging crowds, waving and throwing palm fronds beneath the hooves of the donkey carrying the Messiah, “chant a Hoshi’ahnna’ (Hebrew “Save Us”)—a clear indication that many, if not all, the Jews present recognized that the man astride the donkey was the promised Messiah.²⁰ The palm fronds together with the chant suggest a recognition on the part of the thronging masses of the presence of the goddess Asherah—the Mother of the Lord—whose primary symbol is a tree.²¹

Asherah, or the Divine Feminine, is referred to in Proverbs 4:18 as the “Tree of Life.” Her “fruit is better than gold, even fine gold” (Proverbs 8:19). Those who hold her fast are called happy (a word play on the Hebrew *ashr*). It can be assumed, therefore, that Asherah and Wisdom (Sophia in the Greek) are different names for the same deity.²² According to the book of Proverbs, Wisdom/Asherah is the name of the deity with whom “the Lord founded the earth” (Proverbs 3:19–20). Before the world was, She was. “Long life is in her right hand; /in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life” (Proverbs 3:16–18). Latter-day Saints are enjoined to search for her in the opening chapters of the Doctrine and Covenants because Wisdom holds the keys not only to the mysteries of God but to eternal life (D&C 6:7, 11:7).

Interestingly, the biblical association of Sophia with the Tree of Life finds powerful echo in the Book of Mormon narrative. Nephi begins the

19. See also Ezekiel 40:16, 31.

20. See John 12:12–13. The Hebrew for “Hosanna” is “Hoshi’ahnna” meaning “Save us” as noted in Margaret Barker, *The Gate of Heaven* (Sheffield: SPCK, 2008), 84.

21. William Dever, *Did God Have a Wife?*, 101.

22. E.g., Proverbs 1:20.

account of his vision by expressing an ardent desire to “see, and hear, and know of these things, by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him [God]” (1 Nephi 10:17, 19). Nephi’s narrative starts in the company of the Spirit, who immediately draws his attention to the Tree of Life—“the whiteness [of which] did exceed the whiteness of the driven snow . . . the tree which is precious above all.” Mary, the mortal mother of the Messiah, whom Nephi sees following the vision of the tree (the Asherah), is similarly described as “exceedingly fair and white” (1 Nephi 11:13, 15, 18). After Mary is “carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time,” she is seen bearing the Christ child (1 Nephi 11:19–20). This association of Christ’s birth with the Tree of Life, with its echoes of a Divine Feminine, is not unique to the Book of Mormon. The oldest known visual representation of the Madonna and Child effects the same conjunction. In the Roman catacombs of St. Priscilla, a fresco dated to the second century depicts the mother and child, with a magnificent Tree of Life overarching both.²³ Immediately following Nephi’s vision of Mary and the Christ child, he watches “the heavens open, and the Holy [Spirit] come down out of heaven and abide upon [Christ] in the form of a dove” (1 Nephi 11:25–27). It does not appear to be coincidental that both “Spirit” and “dove” are gendered female in Hebrew, Syriac, and Aramaic.

Augustine also finds his theological heart strings pulled by the provocative power and logic of the Holy Spirit as in some sense the Wife of the Father and Mother of the Son: “For I omit such a thing as to regard the Holy Spirit as the Mother of the Son and the Spouse of the Father; [because] it will perhaps be answered that these things offend us in carnal matters by arousing thoughts of corporeal conception and birth.”²⁴ At about the same time, the early Church Father, Jerome, interpreting

23. See photographs of the fresco at Catacombs of Priscilla, http://www.catacombpriscilla.com/visita_catacomba_en.html.

24. Augustine, *The Trinity*, Book VII, ch 5. My gratitude to Rachael Givens Johnson for alerting me to this passage.

Isaiah 11:9 in light of the Gospel of the Hebrews, noted that Jesus spoke of “My mother the holy spirit.”²⁵ Even though Jews returning from the Babylonian captivity were essentially monotheistic, there are suggestions that their belief in a deity that comprised the Father (El), the Mother (Asherah), and the Son (Yahweh) from the First Temple tradition and before persisted. For example, in 1449 Toledo some “conversos” (Jewish converts to Christianity) were alarming their ecclesiastical leaders by refusing to relinquish certain tenets of their previous faith: “In as much as it has been shown that a large portion of the city’s conversos descending from the Jewish line are persons very suspect in the holy Catholic faith; that they hold and believe great errors against the articles of the holy Catholic faith; that they keep the rites and ceremonies of the old law; that they say and affirm that our Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ was [a] man of their lineage who was killed and whom the Christians worship as God; that they say that there is both a god and a goddess in heaven.”²⁶ As Margaret Barker has stated: “It has become customary to translate and read the Hebrew Scriptures as an account of one male deity, and the feminine presence is not made clear. Had it been the custom to read of a female Spirit or to find Wisdom capitalized, it would have been easier to make the link between the older faith . . . and later developments outside the stream represented by the canonical texts.”²⁷

Reclamation of Ecclesiastical Collaboration

The reciprocal synergy of the Godhead was a catalyst—or at least precursor—to Joseph’s quest for a universal collaboration of male and

25. Margaret Barker, *The Mother of the Lord*, vol. 1: *The Lady in the Temple* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 104.

26. Kenneth B. Wolf, “Sentencia-Estatuto de Toledo, 1449.” *Medieval Texts in Translation* (2008), retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/site/canilup/toledo1449>. My gratitude to Rachael Givens Johnson for sharing this quotation with me.

27. Barker, *Mother of the Lord*, 331.

female. On March 17, 1842, he took another momentous step in that direction. At that time both male and female members of the Church were actively engaged in the construction of the Nauvoo temple. Women collaborated in the enterprise primarily by contributing financially and by providing the masons with clothing. In addition, they saw to the needs of impoverished members arriving daily seeking refuge. As the number of women engaged in support of temple construction and relief efforts grew, a group of them, at the instigation of Sarah Kimball, formed the Ladies' Society of Nauvoo. Eliza R. Snow drafted the constitution and by-laws and then took them to Joseph, who, while applauding the enterprise, suggested the ladies might prefer something other than a benevolent or sewing society. He invited the sisters to "meet me and a few of the brethren in the Masonic Hall over my store next Thursday afternoon, and I will *organize* the sisters under the priesthood after the *pattern of the priesthood*."²⁸ In other words, just as the male society had been organized after the pattern of the priesthood, the women of the church would form a female society, with Joseph's sanction and blessing, after the same pattern.

Like the men before them, the women were to be organized under the umbrella of the priesthood "without beginning of days or end of years" (Moses 1:3). Joseph further stipulated: "the keys of the kingdom are about to be given to them [the sisters], that they may be able to detect every thing false—as well as to the Elders."²⁹ While it has been argued that the expression "keys of the kingdom" in regard to women refers solely to their initiation into the ordinances of the "greater [or] Holy Priesthood" in the temple, Joseph seemed to attribute to women a priestly standing. In other words, he acted on the assumption that in order to access the priesthood that "holdeth the key of the mysteries

28. Sarah M. Kimball, "Auto-Biography," *Woman's Exponent* 12, no. 7 (Sep. 1, 1883): 51, retrieved from <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/WomansExp/id/10872/rec/17>.

29. *Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book*, 38, retrieved from <http://josephsmith-papers.org/paperSummary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book>.

of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God” together with the temple ordinances in which “the power of godliness is manifest,” one would already need to be a priest (D&C 84:19–22). At least, there is evidence that this is how Joseph understood access to priesthood power and authority.

On March 31, 1842, Joseph announced to the inchoate Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, first, his recognition that collaboration between men and women was key to spiritual and ecclesiastical progress—“All must act in concert or nothing can be done,” he said. Second, “the Society should move according to the ancient Priesthood” as delineated in Doctrine and Covenants 84 (given in Kirtland on September 22 and 23, 1832). And, third, in order to accomplish the above, “the Society was to become a kingdom of priests as in Enoch’s day—as in Paul’s day.” Eliza R. Snow understood that the women’s Society or priesthood would enable women to become “Queens of Queens, and Priestesses unto the Most High God.”³⁰

Joseph’s conception of female authority may have been tied to his understanding of the New Testament. That women as well as men held Church offices in “Paul’s day” has become apparent with the recent, more accurate translations of the Greek New Testament and research into early Christian ecclesiology. In Ephesians chapter four, Paul enumerates the gifts of the Spirit imparted by the Lord before His ascension: “some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the *unity* of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to maturity” (Ephesians 4:11–13). Women as well as men were to be found in possession of each of these “gifts.” Peter Brown demonstrates that, unlike pagans and Jews, “They

30. Eliza R. Snow, “An Address,” *Woman’s Exponent* 2, no. 8 (Sep. 15, 1873): 63, retrieved from <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/WomansExp/id/15710/rec/31>.

welcomed women as patrons and . . . offered women roles in which they could act as collaborators.”³¹

In his letter to the Romans, Paul sends greetings to Andronicus and Junia (perhaps Julia), commending them for their faith and stating that “they are prominent among the apostles.”³² Later writers would masculinize the name, but Chrysostom in the late fourth century had no problem praising “the devotion of this woman” who was “worthy to be called an apostle.”³³ In the second book of Acts, Luke records the following: “I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17–18). The apostle Paul considered the gift of prophecy one of the greatest spiritual gifts: “Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts,” he said, “and especially that you may prophecy [for] those who prophecy speak to other people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation” (1 Corinthians 14:1, 3). Indeed, Orson Pratt stated in 1876 that “there never was a genuine Christian Church unless it had Prophets and Prophetesses.”³⁴ It is, therefore, not surprising to find them mentioned in the New Testament. In Acts 21, we learn that the four unmarried daughters of Philip the evangelist possessed “the gift of prophecy” (Acts 21:8–9).

The primary role of evangelists was to teach the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Raymond Brown has noted that in the Gospel of John the Samaritan, women serve “a real missionary function,” while the women at Christ’s tomb are given “a quasi-apostolic role.”³⁵ As Kevin Giles puts it, “the Synoptic authors agree that it was women

31. Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 145.

32. Romans 16:7.

33. John Chrysostom, “Homilies on Romans 31,” in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament, VI: Romans*, edited by Gerald Bray (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 358.

34. Orson Pratt, Mar. 26, 1876, *Journal of Discourses* 18:171.

35. Raymond Brown, “Roles of Women in the Fourth Gospel,” *Theological Studies* 36 (1975): 691–92.

who first found the empty tomb. And Matthew and John record that Jesus first appeared to women. The encounter between the risen Christ and the women is drawn as a commissioning scene. The Lord says, 'Go and tell my brethren' (Matthew 28:10, cf. John 20:17). The women are chosen and commissioned by the risen Christ to be the first to proclaim, 'He is risen.'"³⁶

Deacons are also listed among the offices in the nascent Christian Church, and women are also included. In his letter to the Romans, Paul commends Phoebe, "a deacon or minister of the church at Cenchreae" (Romans 16:1). The terms "pastors" and "teachers" are joined grammatically in Ephesians 4:11. It appears that the term "pastor" in the New Testament was the universal term referring to spiritual leadership. Among the female pastor-teachers, Priscilla is singled out for her theological acumen, instructing (together with—possibly her husband—Aquila) the erudite and eloquent Apollos of Alexandria "more accurately . . . in the way of God" (Acts 18:18, 24–26). Significantly, of the six times this couple is mentioned, Priscilla precedes Aquila in four of them—according her prominence over Aquila either in ministry or social status—or both. Rodney Stark stated in his book *The Rise of Christianity* that "It is well known that the early Church attracted an unusual number of high status women Some of [whom] lived in relatively spacious homes," to which they welcomed parishioners.³⁷ Priscilla is not the only woman mentioned in connection with church leadership. In addition to Priscilla we learn of Mark's mother (Acts 12:12), Lydia from Philippi (Acts 16:14–15, 40), and Nympha in Paul's letter to the Colossians (Colossians 4:15). The apostle John addresses a letter to the Elect or Chosen Lady

36. Kevin Giles, *Patterns of Ministry among the First Christians* (Victoria: Collins Dove, 1989), 167.

37. Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1997), 107.

and her children (congregation) in 2 John 1:1. All apparently function as leaders of the Church.

The title translated as “Lady” in the New Testament is the equivalent to the title “Lord,” generally denoting social standing but possibly, in an ecclesiastical sense, denoting someone in a position of church leadership.³⁸ According to Stanley Grenz, the nascent Christian Church “radically altered the position of women, elevating them to a partnership with men unparalleled in first-century society.”³⁹ It appears that Joseph was engaged in the same endeavor in mid-nineteenth-century America. During the inaugural meeting of the Relief Society, after reading 2 John 1:1 Joseph stated that “this is why she [Emma] was called an Elect Lady is because [she was] elected to preside.”⁴⁰ While it can be argued that the aforementioned are all gifts of the Spirit that do not necessarily involve priesthood, there is evidence that Joseph saw the Spirit as directing the implementation of these gifts into specific priesthood offices.

I mention these historical precedents because it is clear that Joseph Smith was aware of them and that they influenced his directive to Emma that “If any Officers are wanted to carry out the designs of the Institution, let them be appointed and set apart, as Deacons, Teachers &c. are among us.”⁴¹ On April 28, 1842, after reading 1 Corinthians 12 to the Society, he gave “instructions respecting the different offices, and the necessity of every individual acting in the sphere allotted him or her; and filling the several offices to which they were appointed.”⁴²

38. For example, 2 John 1:1, 4, 13; 3 John 1:4; 2.

39. Stanley R. Grenz and Denise Muir Kjebo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 78.

40. *Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book*, 9.

41. *Ibid.*, 8.

42. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book Company, 1991), 115.

And so we find that the striking degree of collaboration between men and women in the early Christian Church is replicated in the founding of the LDS Church. In this regard, Bishop Newel K. Whitney's words are significant: "It takes *all* to restore the Priesthood . . . without the female all things cannot be restor'd to the earth."⁴³ This implies a much broader role for women in the Church structure than temple service alone. In Joseph's journal account following the Female Relief Society meeting of Thursday, April 28, 1842, he writes: "Gave a lecture on the pries[t] hood shewing how the Sisters would come in possession of the privileges & blessings & gifts of the priesthood—&c that the signs should follow them. such as healing the sick casting out devils &c."⁴⁴ Commenting on Doctrine and Covenants 25, which Joseph read at the inaugural meeting of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, he stated that Emma "was ordain'd at the time, the Revelation was given"—that is, Emma was ordained not by man but by God to the position of Elect Lady ("and thou art an elect lady, whom *I* have called [or chosen]" [D&C 25:3]) as Joseph was ordained/chosen by God to the position of First Elder. It is clear from Emma's remarks two years later at the Female Relief Society meeting of March 16, 1844, that she recognized that her ordination to the position of Elect Lady with its attendant power, privileges, and authority were divinely bestowed: "if thier ever was any authourity on the Earth [I] had it—and had [it] yet."⁴⁵

The second Relief Society president, Eliza R. Snow, who gained and retained possession of the Nauvoo Relief Society minutes, also recognized that Emma's authority to preside over the Female Relief Society gave the women's organization independence: "The Relief Society is

43. *Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book*, 58.

44. Joseph Smith, Journal, Apr. 28, 1842, in Andrew H. Hedges, et al., eds., *Joseph Smith Papers: Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843*, edited by Dean C. Jessee, et al. (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2011), 52 (hereafter JSP, J2).

45. *Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book*, 126.

designed to be a self-governing organization: to relieve the Bishops as well as to relieve the poor, to deal with its members, correct abuses, etc. If difficulties arise between members of a branch which they cannot settle between the members themselves, aided by the teachers, instead of troubling the Bishop, the matter should be referred to their president and her counselors.”⁴⁶ Reynolds Cahoon, a close affiliate of Joseph, understood “that the inclusion of women within the [ecclesiastical] structure of the church organization reflected the divine pattern of the perfect union of man and woman.” Indeed, Cahoon continued, “the Order of the Priesthood . . . which encompasses powers, keys, ordinances, offices, duties, organizations, and attitudes . . . is not complete without it [the Relief Society]”.⁴⁷

The source of women's ordination, Joseph suggested, was the Holy Spirit. He understood the women to belong to an order comparable to or pertaining to the priesthood, based on the ordinance of confirmation and receipt of the Holy Spirit. To the Nauvoo women, he suggested that the gift of the Holy Spirit enabled them to “administer in that authority which is conferr'd on them.”⁴⁸ The idea that priesthood power and authority were bestowed through the medium of the Holy Spirit was commonly accepted among both Protestants and Catholics at that time. The nineteenth-century Quaker, William Gibbons, articulated the broadly accepted view that “There is but one source from which ministerial power and authority, ever was, is, or can be derived, and

46. E. R. Snow Smith, “To Branches of the Relief Society (republished by request, and permission of President Lorenzo Snow),” *The Woman's Exponent* 27, no. 23 (Sep. 15, 1884): 140, retrieved from <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/WomansExp/id/33963/rec/1>.

47. Quoted in Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 39, 50.

48. Ehat and Cook, *Words*, 115. As Ehat and Cook point out, there seems little alternative to reading the “confirmation” in his expression as a reference to the gift of the Holy Ghost (141).

that is the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁹ For, “it was by and through this holy unction, that all the prophets spake from Moses to Malachi.”⁵⁰ *The Reformed Presbyterian Magazine* cites this “holy unction” as “not only the fact but the origin of our priesthood” claiming to be made “priests by the Great High Priest Himself . . . transmitted through the consecration and seal of the Holy Spirit.”⁵¹

Such a link between the priesthood and the gift of the Holy Spirit is traced back to the early Christian Church, based on two New Testament passages. In John 20, the resurrected Christ commissions His disciples to go into the world proclaiming the Gospel, working miracles, and remitting sins in the same manner He was sent by His Father—through the bestowal of the Holy Spirit: “As my Father has sent me, so send I you. When he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:21–23). Peter preached that “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power” (Acts 10:38). And so to the Relief Society sisters Joseph “ask’d . . . if they could not see by this sweeping stroke, that wherein they are ordained, it is the privilege of those set apart to administer in that authority which is confer’d on them . . . and let every thing roll on.”⁵² He called this authority “the

49. William Gibbons, *Truth Advocated in Letters Addressed to the Presbyterians* (Philadelphia: Joseph Rakenstraw, 1822), 107. Quoted in Benjamin Keogh, “The Holy Priesthood, The Holy Ghost, and the Holy Community,” Mormon Scholars Foundation Summer Seminar paper, Brigham Young University, Jul. 23, 2015, n.p.

50. Gibbons, *Truth*, 85.

51. “Hours With Holy Scripture,” *The Reformed Presbyterian Magazine* (Edinburgh: Johnstone, Hunter & Co, 1866), 45. Quoted in Keogh, “The Holy Priesthood, The Holy Ghost and the Holy Community.”

52. On April 28 Joseph again visited the Relief Society meeting and discoursed on the topic of “different offices, and the necessity of every individual acting in the sphere allotted to him or her.” Given what follows it is evident that Joseph is addressing the different spiritual gifts allotted to each member of the community. For, he continues that “the disposition of man [is] to look with

power of the Holy Priesthood & the Holy Ghost,” in a unified expression.⁵³ Elsewhere he stated that “There is a prist-Hood with the Holy Ghost and a key.”⁵⁴ Indeed, Joseph presses the point even further. In a *Times and Seasons* article, he wrote that the gift of the Holy Ghost “was necessary both to ‘make’ and ‘to organize the priesthood.’”⁵⁵ It was under the direction of the Holy Spirit that Joseph was helping to organize—or, more accurately, re-organize—women in the priesthood.

For Joseph, the organization of the Female Relief Society was fundamental to the successful collaboration of the male and female quorums: “I have desired to organize the Sisters in the order of the Priesthood. I now have *the key* by which I can do it. The organization of the Church of Christ was never perfect until the women were organized.”⁵⁶ It was this key Joseph “turned” to the Elect Lady, Emma, and her presidency with which the gates to the priesthood powers and privileges promised to the Female Relief Society could now be opened. The injunction given to recipients of priesthood privileges in Doctrine and Covenants 27 could, therefore, also apply equally to the nascent Female Relief Society to whom the keys of the kingdom were also promised.⁵⁷

jealous eyes upon the standing of others” and “the reason these remarks were being made, was that some little thing was circulating in the Society,” complaints that “some [women] were not going right in laying hands on the sick &c,” instead of rejoicing that “the sick could be heal’d” (*Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book*, 35–36).

53. Ehat and Cook, *Words*, 7.

54. *Ibid.*, 64 (emphasis mine).

55. Joseph Smith, “Gift of the Holy Ghost,” *Times and Seasons*, Jun. 15, 1842. Quoted in “The Holy Priesthood, The Holy Ghost and the Holy Community,” Keogh.

56. Sarah Kimball, “Reminiscence, March 17, 1882,” in *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society: Key Documents in Latter-day Saint Women’s History*, edited by Jill Mulvay Derr, et al. (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2016), 495; emphasis mine.

57. *Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book*, 40; D&C 27:13–18.

The fact that the Female Relief Society was inaugurated during the same period and setting as the founding of the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge is helpful in understanding its intended purpose. Joseph had been raised to the Third Degree of Freemasonry (Master Mason) the day before this auspicious meeting.⁵⁸ And a plausible argument has been made that the prophet considered the principal tenets of Masonry—Truth, Friendship (or Brotherly Love), and Relief—to be in complete harmony with the reclamation of the *Ur-Evangelium*.⁵⁹ It can, therefore, be argued that Friendship, “the grand fundamental principle of Mormonism,” formed the sacred bond between the male and female priesthood quorums in their efforts to proclaim truth, bless the afflicted, and alleviate suffering by providing relief as they worked side by side on their united goal to build the Nauvoo temple, assist those in need, preach the Gospel, excavate truth, and establish Zion.⁶⁰

The organization of the female society also finds instructive parallels with the creation story in the books of Genesis and Abraham. Abraham states that “the Gods took counsel among themselves and said: Let us go down and form man in our image, after our likeness; and we will give *them* dominion. . . . So the Gods went down to organize man[kind] in their own image, in the image of the Gods to form they him, male and female to form they them” (Abraham 4:26–27). In the second biblical creation narrative, Eve is created after Adam when it was decided by the Gods that “it was not good for man to be [act] alone” (Genesis 2:18). After Adam and Eve were organized they were given the family name of Adam. He “called *their* name Adam” (Genesis 5:2). Adam is the family name, the couple’s surname. (One can note here the precedent set by

58. Cheryl L. Bruno, “Keeping a Secret: Freemasonry, Polygamy, and the Nauvoo Relief Society, 1842–44,” *Journal of Mormon History* 39, no. 4 (Fall 2013): 159.

59. Don Bradley has illuminated these connections in “The Grand Fundamental Principles of Mormonism: Joseph Smith’s Unfinished Reformation,” *Sunstone* (Apr. 2006): 32–41.

60. Ehat and Cook, *Words*, 234.

“God” as a family name evidenced in the appellation: God, the Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Spirit). Erastus Snow’s remark bears repeating here: “Deity consists of man and woman. . . . There never was a God, and there never will be in all eternities, except they are made of these two component parts; a man and a woman; the male and the female.”⁶¹

The divinely decreed identity of the couple, Adam, is one of complementarity, two beings separated by a creative act and then reconstituted as one by divine sacrament. Only later does the name Adam come to denote the individual male rather than the couple. It is, perhaps, in this context of Adam as the family name that the following scripture from the book of Moses should be read: “And thus [they were] baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon [them], and . . . [they were] born of the Spirit, and became quickened. . . . And they heard a voice out of heaven, saying: [ye are] baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost. This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever; And [ye are] after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity. Behold, [ye are] one in me, [children] of God; and thus may all become my children” (Moses 6:65–68).

In Moses, we learn that Eve labored *with* Adam. They worship together. They pray together. They grieve the loss of Cain together. Together they preach the gospel to their children (Moses 5:12). The right to preside over the human family was given jointly to Eve and Adam, as were the sacred rights of the temple: “And thus all things were confirmed unto [the couple] Adam, by an holy ordinance” (Moses 5:59). The sacerdotal nature of “ordinance” implies that Adam and Eve were also to collaborate in the powers inherent in priesthood. They were both clothed in holy garments representing the male and female images of the Creator Gods. Adam and Eve, therefore, represent the divine union of the God, El, and His Wife, variously known as Asherah

61. Snow, *Journal of Discourses* 19:266.

(The Tree of Life), El Shaddai (God Almighty),⁶² Shekhina (The Holy Spirit),⁶³ and Sophia (Wisdom). As Heber C. Kimball said, “‘What a strange doctrine,’ says one ‘that we should be taught to be one!’ I tell you there is no way for us to prosper and prevail in the last day only to learn to act in Union.”⁶⁴

It is this union that Joseph appears to be attempting to restore with the organization of the Female Relief Society. The Nauvoo Relief Society minutes indicate that Joseph considered himself to be authorizing the women of the Church to form an institution fully commensurate with the male institutions he had organized earlier. The name the founding mothers chose for their organization was the *Female Relief Society* of Nauvoo, possibly suggesting their recognition that what was being organized was the full and equal counterpart to the already operating male priesthood quorums.⁶⁵ John Taylor’s suggestion to name the female quorum “The Nauvoo Female Benevolent Society” in lieu of the Relief Society presidency’s proposal “The Nauvoo Female Relief Society” was rejected outright by the female presidency. “The popularity of the word benevolent is one great objection,” adding that we “do not wish to have it call’d after other Societies in the world” for “we design to act in the

62. For example, Exodus 6:3. For a discussion of Shaddai/Shadday as a female name, see Harriet Lutzky, “Shadday as a Goddess Epithet” in *Vetus Testamentum* 48, Fasc. 1 (Jan. 1998): 15–16.

63. Raphael Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 3rd ed. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 105–06.

64. Heber C. Kimball, Nov. 29, 1857, *Journal of Discourses*, 6:102.

65. Considering the male priesthood to be the “Male Relief Society” is no stretch. The profound influence of Masonry on Smith, his choice of the Masonic Lodge for organizational purposes, the association of Masonic thought with “Relief,” and the women’s choice to employ that term explicitly in their organization’s name, all suggest that the male organization was effectively in Smith’s conception a “male Relief Society.”

name of the Lord—to relieve the wants of the distressed, and do all the good we can.”⁶⁶

It appears likely that the second president of the Female Relief Society recognized exactly that. As Eliza R. Snow told a gathering of Relief Society sisters on March 17, 1842, the Relief Society “was no trifling thing, but an organization after the order of Heaven.”⁶⁷ Indeed, Eliza stated:

Although the name may be of modern date, the institution is of ancient origin. We were told by our martyred prophet, that the same organization existed in the church anciently, allusions to which are made in some of the epistles recorded in the New Testament, making use of the title, “elect lady”. . . . This is an organization that cannot exist without the priesthood, from the fact that it derives all its authority and influence from that source. When the Priesthood was taken from the earth, this institution as well as every other appendage to the true *order* of the church of Jesus Christ on the earth, became extinct, and had never been restored until now.⁶⁸

In her poem, “The Female Relief Society: What is it?” Eliza expresses her understanding that the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo is the legitimate counterpart to the male organization by emphasizing the word “order” in the sixth and last stanza. She does so by enlarging the word in such a way that it immediately draws attention to itself, implying that she understands the “Relief Society” to be an order of the priesthood.⁶⁹ The “Chosen Lady”: Emma is so called “because [she was] elected to

66. *Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book*, 11–12.

67. Eighth Ward, Liberty Stake, Relief Society Minutes and Records, 1867–1969, vol. 1, May 12, 1868. In *First Fifty Years*, 270.

68. Eliza R. Snow, “Female Relief Society,” Apr. 18 and 20, 1868, in *First Fifty Years*, 271 (emphasis mine).

69. Eliza R. Snow, “Female Relief Society of Nauvoo: What is it?” in *First Fifty Years*, 135.

preside” as Joseph, the First Elder, was also elected to preside.⁷⁰ In the words of President John Taylor, “this Institution was organiz’d according to the law of Heaven—according to a revelation previously given to Mrs. E. Smith, appointing her to this important calling—[with] . . . all things moving forward in . . . a glorious manner.”⁷¹

The female counterpart of the priesthood would be linked to that of the male order in the appropriated grand fundamental of Masonry: *friendship*. One could construe that the name for the women’s organization, “The Female Relief Society, was chosen with the Masonic fundamentals of “truth,” “friendship,” and “relief” in mind—therefore empowering the female and male organizations to work together in mutual support, encouraging each other and meeting together in council—patterned after the Divine Council presided over by El, El Shaddai/Asherah, and Yehovah. If that collaborative vision did not yet come to fruition, it did not go unnoticed by those who constituted the second generation of Relief Society sisters who were very familiar with the founding events of their organization; Susa Young Gates wrote that “the privileges and powers outlined by the Prophet in those first meetings [of the Relief Society] have never been granted to women in full even yet.”⁷²

In turning “the key” to Emma as president of the Female Relief Society, Joseph encouraged Emma to “be a pattern of virtue; and possess all the qualifications necessary for her to stand and *preside* and dignify her Office.” In her article for the *Young Woman’s Journal*, Susa Young Gates, in her recapitulation of Doctrine and Covenants 25, reminds her young, female readership that Emma was not only called to be a scribe but a “counselor” to the prophet and that she was “ordained to expound

70. *Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book*, 9.

71. *Ibid.*, 14.

72. Susa Young Gates, “The Open Door for Women,” *Young Woman’s Journal* 16 (Mar. 3, 1905): 117; retrieved <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/YWJ/id/14738/rec/16>.

the scriptures. Not only set apart but ordained!”⁷³ With Emma in possession of the keys to preside over the Female Relief Society, it was now possible to create a “kingdom of priests as in Enoch’s day—as in Paul’s day.”⁷⁴ As in the ancient church of Adam and Eve envisioned by Joseph and, as in the early Christian Church, women would share the burdens of administering the affairs of the kingdom together with ministering to their congregations, the sick, the poor and the needy, and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.⁷⁵

Indeed, Relief Society sisters performed a vital role in their ministrations to the poor and the sick—including the pronouncement of blessings of healing. For example, Helen Mar Kimball Whitney records being blessed at the hands of Sister Persis Young, Brigham’s niece, who “had been impressed by the Spirit to come and administer to me . . . She rebuked my weakness . . . and commanded me to be made whole, pronouncing health and many other blessings upon me. . . . From that morning I went to work as though nothing had been the matter.”⁷⁶ At the Nauvoo Relief Society meeting of April 28, 1842 Joseph Smith had promised that “if the sisters should have faith to heal the sick, let all hold their tongues, and let every thing roll on.”⁷⁷ Women and men would also be endowed to perform the saving ordinances performed initially in the Masonic Lodge and then in the newly constructed Nauvoo Temple in order to redeem “all nations, kindreds, tongues and people” culminating in the sealing of the human family to each other and to the Divine Family, thereby fulfilling their collaborative roles as “Saviours on Mount Zion.”

73. Gates, “Open Door,” 116.

74. *Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book*, 22.

75. Ehat and Cook, *Words*, 110.

76. Helen Mar Whitney, “Scenes and Incidents at Winter Quarters,” *Woman’s Exponent* 14, no. 14 (Dec. 15, 1885), 106, retrieved from <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/WomansExp/id/12881/rec/69>.

77. *Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book*, 36.

As Susa Young Gates noted, “there were mighty things wrought in those long-ago days in this Church. Every great and gracious principle of the Gospel—every truth and force for good—all these were conceived and born in the mighty brain and great heart of that master-mind of the nineteenth century, Joseph Smith, *the development and expansion of these truths he left to others.*” Susa then added that Joseph “was never jealous or grudging in his attitude to woman. . . . He brought from the Heavenly store-house that bread of life which should feed her soul, if she would eat and lift her from the low estate of centuries of servitude and ignominy into equal partnership and equal liberty with man.”⁷⁸

78. Gates, “Open Door,” 116.

YEARNING FOR NOTORIETY: QUESTIONABLE AND FALSE CLAIMANTS TO AMERICA'S WORST EMIGRANT MASSACRE

Melvin J. Bashore

Benjamin Franklin purportedly offered some counsel for those wanting to be remembered long after they are dead and buried: “Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing.”¹ Sage advice. But for many, if not most people, their writing talents or life events doom them to being remembered on little more than census rolls and tax lists. In the annals of history, most will never be mentioned in so much as a footnote. Even that widely sought-after but short-lived fifteen minutes of fame eludes most people, and only a small circle of friends and family will hold them in remembrance after they die.

The thirteen individuals discussed in this article, for the most part, enjoyed only fleeting celebrity. Their stars flickered for just the shortest of moments in obscure newspaper articles. The moment of fame they achieved really was not for anything which they themselves either wrote or accomplished, but was almost wholly for what they claimed to have done. They latched on to the coattails of the infamous Mountain Meadows Massacre. Only in so doing could most of this ragtag bunch hope for even the tiniest glimmer of fame.

1. Although this quotation is attributed to Franklin in many compilations, the source has not been found.

More than a dozen people linked themselves—some as survivors, some as perpetrators, and others as witnesses—to this heinous crime. But why? Some were outright charlatans, others were confused, and one did it as publicity for his anti-Mormon lectures. Their claims ranged from honest mistakes to outright bald-faced falsehoods. Taken together, they form a collection of oddities and oddballs circling the periphery of America's worst emigrant massacre.

The first and perhaps the only person in this motley crew who might receive attention from historians of the massacre was a genuine criminal. Will Bagley mentioned him in both of his books on the massacre, *Blood of the Prophets* and *Innocent Blood*.² While John D. Lee was in the Beaver jail during his second trial, he was duped by an imposter, Richard Sloan. Sloan, known by the name “Idaho Bill,” conned Lee into thinking that he was one of the surviving children of the massacre.³ He had convinced Lee that he (Sloan) was a son of Alexander Fancher and, in fact, had been harbored in Lee's own house after the massacre. Sloan convinced Lee that he was Christopher “Kit” Carson Fancher, whom Lee had called “Charley,” until the lad was taken from Lee's home by Jacob Forney to be returned to relatives in Arkansas.

It is difficult to pin down the facts about Sloan. He gave different stories about his past at different times. In 1875, he told a reporter for the *Cheyenne Daily Leader* that he was born in American Falls on the

2. Will Bagley, *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 310–11; David L. Bigler and Will Bagley, eds., *Innocent Blood: Essential Narratives of the Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark, 2008), 349, 351.

3. Although published newspaper reports state his name was William Sloan, court records and correspondence written by John D. Lee attest that his name was either unknown or was Richard Sloan. The author thanks Chad Foulger for help in the matter of Sloan's name. Will Bagley correctly named him Richard Sloan in his books.

Snake River (then in Oregon Territory) in 1843. He said that he had spent the bulk of his life “in the mountains and on the Pacific Coast.”⁴

After being convicted of leading a band of outlaws who robbed the Desert Spring stage station, Sloan was sentenced to a ten-year prison term for that crime. In 1877, after he was moved from the Beaver jail to the Utah Penitentiary in Salt Lake City, Sloan was interviewed by Jerome B. Stillson, a Salt Lake correspondent for the *New York Herald*. Clothed in prison garb and unshaven, Sloan told Stillson that he had been raised in Kansas City, Missouri, and had been born about 1850. Thus, in the short space of two years, he had told reporters two distinctly different stories about his past.

Like other desperados living on the edges of the frontier, Sloan could spin an imaginative tale. As he told Stillson one intricate detail after another that he claimed to have remembered about the massacre and his tenure lodging in Lee’s home in Harmony, the reporter became ever more doubtful. Despite Stillson’s skepticism, Sloan held his ground, resolutely sticking to his story.

He showed Stillson a copy of a letter that Lee’s wife, Caroline, purportedly gave him, then just a seven-year-old boy, to hold in safe-keeping. In the letter, supposedly written by Brigham Young, the Church president as much as admitted ordering the massacre. When Sloan talked, one implausible story after another issued forth so that Stillson concluded it was a bunch of “fol-de-rol” and that he agreed with the man who warned him that Idaho Bill was “as freakish and slippery a scamp as there is in all this Western region.”⁵

Sloan had hoped to use his information about the massacre as a bargaining chip to get out of prison, but his inventive stories proved to be nothing but fabrications. When Stillson asked Sloan where he

4. “Idaho Bill, the Scout and Guide of Colonel Carpenter’s Expedition, Arrives in Cheyenne,” *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, May 10, 1875, [4].

5. “‘Idaho Bill,’ One of the Captive Children, Tells His Tale,” *New York Herald*, May 17, 1877.

could find the original of the damning Brigham Young letter to prove that Sloan's copy was not simply a forgery, Sloan told him that it was in southern Utah but refused to be more specific. "I'm in here for ten years," he explained, "and that letter is the only thing . . . that I've got to help me in all this world."⁶

His efforts to bargain his way out of prison came to naught because his claims were not credible. In fact, Sloan's father wrote prosecutors to "see if anything could be done to save" his son from prison, and in so doing, officials knew early on that Sloan's claims were bogus.⁷ Idaho Bill met a violent end just a few years later at the hands of his own father-in-law at the latter's ranch near Evanston, Wyoming. His attempt to influence the history of the massacre failed.

Sloan wasn't alone in falsely claiming to be a child survivor of the massacre. The second of our thirteen individuals was William Garrett, living near Oak Hill, Missouri, in 1879. At that point, he claimed to have been ten years old when he and his six-year-old sister, Malinda, were taken by the Indians "after they had butchered his parents" at Mountain Meadows.⁸ They were purportedly held captive by the Indians for twenty years until soldiers liberated him from the Sioux after the Battle of Little Big Horn. He claimed that his sister had married Red Cloud, a renowned Sioux chief, and had at that time three children by him. History records that Red Cloud was married to only one woman—and it wasn't Garrett's sister, Malinda. Red Cloud and his Indian wife, Pretty Owl, were married for more than fifty years.⁹

Garrett also failed to explain how he was harbored for twenty years by Sioux Indians when it had been Paiutes who participated in the attack at

6. "Idaho Bill Killed," *Deseret News*, Jul. 20, 1881, [385].

7. "Idaho Bill's Ruse," *Pioche Weekly Record*, Apr. 14, 1877.

8. "At Mountain Meadow[s]," *St. Paul Daily Globe*, Mar. 27, 1879: [2].

9. Robert W. Larson, *Red Cloud: Warrior-Statesman of the Lakota Sioux* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 43–44.

Mountain Meadows. He also didn't comment on how he was permitted to survive as a ten-year-old when none of the other surviving children were more than six. He even claimed to have witnessed Brigham Young pay Indians for scalps of white men on a visit he made to Salt Lake with the Indians. He contended that the Mormon prophet's actions in doing this would have given the Indians an incentive to murder non-Mormons.

Although his claims are easily disproved more than a century later, they would have had appeal in the years immediately following John D. Lee's execution when newspapers had been filled with the sensational aspects surrounding the massacre. By inserting himself into the Mountain Meadows Massacre, being held captive by a tribe involved in Custer's last battle, and by making a scandalous assertion about Brigham Young, he received publicity for his business providing Indian healing skills—for he contended he had been adopted by the tribe's medicine man.

Just a few weeks later, Garrett was in Detroit, Michigan, but by then he was evidently going by the name of George Anderson. In all other general respects, Anderson's story mirrored the tale spun a month before in Missouri by William Garrett. He told a newspaper reporter that he had been held captive by the Sioux, was a witness to the Mountain Meadows Massacre when he was fifteen years old, and on a visit to Salt Lake City saw Brigham Young pay Indians for "the scalps of men, women and children." He reiterated that he had been adopted by a medicine man and had become a healer of great skill in the tribe, which gave him the name "Sequoah, the pale face medicine man."¹⁰

The Pale Face Medicine Man traveled from town to town, plying his healing skills and purporting to be the "only Indian Medicine Man and Complete herbalist in the States." He didn't claim to "be infallible, or to know everything, or to cure everything, or to cure everybody," but he attested that he had enjoyed "unparalleled success" in treating

10. "A Strange Experience," *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, May 31, 1879, 1.

from five to six thousand people each year.¹¹ His terms for receiving his healing treatments: cash only. He claimed to be particularly adept at curing female maladies using Indian “Botanical remedies.” “If the doctor cannot cure you he will tell you so,” ads touted.¹² If his claims to having healing skills in any way matched his claims about his personal past, likely few people were healed by him.

Three years later Garrett/Anderson appeared again under yet another name. In 1882 a questionable, swarthy character arrived in Waupaca, Wisconsin. Calling himself Orta Camp, he recited stories similar to those told by William Garrett/George Anderson, aka the Pale Face Medicine Man. He told people that he “had been stolen at the Mountain Meadow[s] massacre.” While three years earlier Garrett had said that his sister, Malinda, had been one of Red Cloud’s wives, Orta Camp claimed that he actually was “the famous Red Cloud.” He also claimed to have carried Custer’s slain body from the battlefield. The story spun by Garrett/Anderson is so similar to that recited by Orta Camp, it suggests Camp was yet another pseudonym of Garrett/Anderson.

One of the first people Orta Camp chanced to meet in Wisconsin was Willard Camp, a local citizen who lived near Waupaca. Willard Camp told Orta that, eighteen years earlier, his brother had been stolen from the family. Orta seized this family tragedy and announced to Willard that he was indeed the long-lost brother. Orta set up speaking engagements in the area, taking in \$125 one night in Waupaca at twenty-five cents a head. But people’s suspicions were raised when his stories about being Willard Camp’s long-lost brother didn’t add up. There was a seven-year difference between when Orta first said he had been stolen at the Mountain Meadows Massacre (1857) and when Willard Camp’s brother was taken (1864). One reporter candidly denounced Orta as

11. “The Pale Medicine Man of the Ogallalla Sioux Indians [advertisement],” *Fort Wayne Weekly Sentinel*, Dec. 17, 1879, [7].

12. “Sequoah, The Pale Face Medicine Man of the Ogallalla Sioux,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, Jun. 3, 1879, [4].

a “humbug” of the first order and a swindler. “It may be that he tells the truth in every particular,” wrote the reporter, “but it is my candid opinion that his whole story is false.”¹³

In addition to jailbird Richard Sloan and Pale Face Healer (Garrett/Anderson/Camp), seven others claimed to be either child survivors of the massacre or escapees. An unnamed man said to be living in Ogden in 1897 claimed to have hidden “himself in [the] bushes” when he was but a boy during the massacre.¹⁴ Upon being arrested for making moonshine in 1878 in Missouri, Peter Stivers announced that he “was one of the few who escaped with their lives” from the massacre.¹⁵ Others who claimed to have survived the massacre included E. J. “Wild Curly” Bartlett, James E. Wood, Daniel Conklin, Alexander Grant, and John M. Robe.¹⁶ None of these men were among the emigrants known to have been attacked at Mountain Meadows.¹⁷

Although those who claimed to be child survivors of the massacre are strange—and some even downright ludicrous—the motivation of men who claimed that they had been perpetrators in the killing are mystifying. The government had successfully prosecuted and executed John D. Lee in 1877 for his role in the massacre and had been hunting for and amassing evidence against other known participants. Given

13. “Believed to Be Bogus,” *Oshkosh Northwestern*, May 17, 1882, [3].

14. “Mountain Meadow[s] Massacre,” *Maysville [Kentucky] Evening Bulletin*, Dec. 30, 1897, 2.

15. “Telegraphic,” *Decatur Daily Republican*, Dec. 2, 1878, [4].

16. See “Wild Curly Is Dead [E. J. Bartlett],” *Mitchell Daily Republican*, Oct. 31, 1889, [2]; “Pioneer Wood Goes Over Divide [James E. Wood],” *Oakland Tribune*, Mar. 12, 1910, 8; “Hero in Potter’s Field [Daniel Conklin],” *Denver Tribune*, Nov. 5, 1903, [6]; “After Many Years [Alexander Grant],” *Richmond Times*, Mar. 16, 1902; and “An Old Trunk [John M. Robe],” *Delphos Daily Herald*, Jul. 27, 1894, [4].

17. See “Appendix A: The Emigrants” in Ronald W. Walker, Richard E. Turley, Jr., and Glen M. Leonard, *Massacre at Mountain Meadows: An American Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 243–49.

that climate, what kind of thinking would motivate a person to confess to having been one of the killers? Yet at least three men made public statements claiming they had participated in the massacre. Their false confessions are puzzling, if not bizarre.

In the world of criminal law, while false confessions seem to make little sense, they occur with some degree of regularity. Recent research has found that up to one-fourth of all DNA exonerations involve innocent prisoners who confessed to crimes they did not commit. Some false confessions, known as pliant false confessions, are made by people who are induced to escape from the stress of a police investigation by confessing. Another type of false confessions are those made by highly vulnerable suspects who, through the process of suggestive interrogation tactics, actually come to believe that they committed the crime.

The type of false confessions made by the three men discussed here fall into a third category: voluntary false confessions. Research has shown that this kind of confession usually happens in notorious, high-profile crimes, of which the Mountain Meadows Massacre is an example. Criminal psychologist Saul Kassin offers several reasons why innocent people might make a voluntary confession. They include “a pathological need for attention or self-punishment, feelings of guilt or delusions, the perception of tangible gain, or the desire to protect someone else.”¹⁸ A “need for attention” seems to be the best explanation for these three men.

Outside of Los Angeles in 1882, Charles Wilkins¹⁹ murdered a man during a highway robbery. It was the cold-blooded killing of a complete

18. Saul M. Kassin, “False Confessions: Causes, Consequences, and Implications for Reform,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 17, no. 4 (2008): 249.

19. When he commits his crime in California in 1861, he gives his name as Charles Wilkins, the name by which he was known until he was hanged. I researched all Charles Wilkinses in Mormon records. I’m not absolutely certain, but I believe he may have been a son of George and Selina Collins Wilkins who sailed aboard the *Ellen Maria* in 1861, arriving in New Orleans. His parents died

stranger who had kindly agreed to give Wilkins a ride in his wagon. After the killing, Wilkins fled north but was captured in Santa Barbara. He confessed to the murder and to other crimes including cattle rustling in southern California in the early 1860s.

He told law officers that he had been born in England and his parents were Mormons then living in Salt Lake City. He told them that he had, as he phrased it, been “in the ‘Mountain Meadow Massacre,’ where he got \$5000 or \$6000, and that with that money he and others went to the State[s] and had a spree.”²⁰ His confession to having taken part in the massacre appears to be merely a bit of empty boasting; but his slaying of the kindly driver, not of his massacre participation, so excited the people in Los Angeles where he was returned to face charges that they lynched him before he could be tried.

While he is easily dismissed as a massacre participant, his other assertions about his English birth and family are more difficult to track. He told 1860 US census takers who found him in San Luis Obispo, California, that he had been born in New York, not England. Listed in that census with several others in the county jail as a convict, he gave his age as twenty-two. He had been convicted of assault with a deadly weapon, sentenced to two years’ incarceration, and was being held in the county jail prior to being taken to the state penitentiary. He escaped from the San Quentin penitentiary during a celebrated prison break in mid-1862. Like other sociopathic criminals, Wilkins was prone to boasting and padded his resume by falsely claiming to have begun his wanton killing career at Mountain Meadows.²¹

and he and his orphaned siblings arrived in Utah in 1852. FamilySearch has this Charles dying in California in the 1920s, but there is no source documentation.

20. “Old Times,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 1887, 10.

21. Biographical information about Wilkins was obtained from William B. Secrest, “The Man Who Escaped,” *True West*, Nov. 1996, 12–16, and *ibid.*, Dec. 1996, 12–16.

The eleventh sociopath, Asa O. Boyce, was another California bad man who claimed to have begun his life of crime by taking part in the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Unlike the enigmatic Charles Wilkins, Boyce's ties to Mormonism and his pedigree are easily traced, but like Wilkins, Boyce's crimes took him to the California state prison at San Quentin.

Asa O. Boyce's family joined the Church in Canada and lived for a time in Nauvoo. Asa, then a teenager, traveled with his family to Utah, arriving there by 1850. They settled in Hobble Creek in Utah County but by 1855 had moved south to Fillmore where Asa's father, Peter, got a job as a government employee at the Corn Creek Indian farm. In 1856 Peter Boyce tried to stop the emigrants in the Turner and Dukes trains, following on the heels of the Fancher company, from trading with the Indians when they passed through Corn Creek. It was Peter Boyce who also told people that he thought these passing emigrants might have poisoned an ox which caused the deaths of Indians and others. While the elder Boyce had a tangential tie to the massacre story, his son Asa had no connection whatsoever.

Asa had married and started a family in Fillmore in 1855 but by 1860 was living in Folsom, California. He reared five children in and around northern California. When he was about sixty-five, he was convicted of robbery and sentenced to serve a fifteen-year sentence at San Quentin. In the 1900 US Census, he was enumerated with other inmates of the state prison. At the time of his arrest in 1897, law officers suspected that he was planning to commit a murder, which they had foiled by arresting him. The old residents of San Mateo County deemed him capable of any crime as he had a long career of "all-round lawlessness."²²

The *Los Angeles Times* article that reported Boyce's arrest mentioned one bit of information that might shed light on his boast of being a perpetrator in the massacre. Boyce said that he arrived in California a few

22. "A Destroying Angel," *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 14, 1897.

years after the massacre “with a companion named Morse” who “was taken back to Utah by a United States Marshal in 1877 to testify” at Lee’s trial. This was Gilbert Morse, a brother-in-law of John D. Lee, who left Utah in 1860 in a company of apostates.²³ He was subpoenaed to testify at Lee’s trial in 1876, but prosecutors decided not to put him on the stand, ostensibly because his testimony would probably be discounted by Mormon jurors.²⁴ Boyce misremembered the year that Morse was called to testify, but seemed to be accurate in other respects. He likely learned details about the massacre from his friend Gilbert Morse.

It is baffling that both Boyce and Charles Wilkins would make false confessions about participating in the massacre at the time of their arrests since in the climate of anti-Mormon sentiment, such confessions could only aggravate bias against them. But they were not alone in falsely boasting of killing the emigrants. However, not as much is known about the twelfth man, who purportedly also made similar claims. All that remains of his story is found in his obituary. When George W. Mattos died, the report of his death stated that he “had a part in the Mountain Meadow massacre.”²⁵ Why that false detail was placed in his obituary is puzzling.

While neither claiming to be a victim nor a perpetrator of the massacre, the thirteenth and last person in this odd parade could, in fact, be characterized as a certifiable lunatic: former-Mormon William Jarman, a British convert who became “one of the most notable anti-Mormon lecturers of his generation.”²⁶ On November 19, 1880, Jarman delivered a presentation in the Brooklyn Tabernacle which he entitled “Mormonism Uncovered.” He had been invited to speak by this

23. John D. Lee, Journal, Sep. 27, 1860, in Robert Glass Cleland and Juanita Brooks, eds., *A Mormon Chronicle: The Diaries of John D. Lee, 1848–1876*, 2 vols. (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1955), 1:274.

24. “Gilbert Morse,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, Sep. 28, 1876, [4].

25. “Wyoming Pioneer Dies at Age 97,” *Billings Gazette*, Sep. 16, 1932, 2.

26. Ardis Parshall, “Jack the Ripper Mormons,” *Keepapitchinin*, May 24, 2012, <http://www.keepapitchinin.org/2012/05/24/jack-the-ripper-mormons/>.

Presbyterian congregation's pastor, T. Dewitt Talmage, a gifted orator, crusader, and clergyman. Only two months earlier, Talmage had delivered a denunciation of Mormonism that Jarman later published in one of his anti-Mormon tracts.

At this stage in his life, Jarman was forty-three. He had been a polygamist, had married and divorced several times, and had escaped from what his first wife labeled a "Lunatic Asylum" in Devonshire, England.²⁷ He spoke and showed photographs on a canvas screen to a standing-room-only audience in the church for nearly two hours.

Jarman stepped to the speaker's platform "carrying an armful of books, newspapers, bows, arrows, and manuscripts." With great flair, he threw a pair of gloves onto a chair and told the audience, "I am going to 'andle this subject without gloves!" He denounced polygamy and Mormon temple ordinances before launching into an exposé of the Mountain Meadows Massacre. "Here are a bow and arrow from Mountain Meadow stained with blood," he asserted. With a dramatic flourish, he held up the arrow and asked, "What shall I say of the young girl, 16 years of age, from whose body this arrow was taken?" Jarman's claim of having an actual bow and arrow from the massacre is almost certainly false. The *New York Times* reporter covering this event deemed it one of the strangest exhibitions ever presented in that church building. In his estimation, the pictures Jarman showed weren't fit to use as advertisements for a low-class museum and were enough to "make a horse laugh." As for the lecture, he deemed it "funny" and without factual merit.²⁸ Although the standing room-only event was, apparently, free to the public, it was announced that Jarman hadn't even told one fourth of that which he knew about Mormonism. In another week, Jarman

27. Maria B. Jarman Ford, "Who Is Mr. Jarman?" Letter from his first wife, extract from the *Barnsley Independent*, Sep. 17, 1887.

28. "Odd Sight in Talmage's," *New York Times*, Nov. 20, 1880.

would lecture again, but then an admission fee would be charged. This particular lecture was to whet appetites of a future paying audience.

For decades after the massacre, that event was a magnet for opportunists who linked themselves to its notoriety for personal gain. Whether as a bargaining chip to get out of prison, a marketing ploy to attract clients, adding spice to a lecture, or simply as a way of getting attention, the claims made by this unusual cast of characters surpass exploitation and twisted psychological motives so that the massacre remained in the collective memory of the nation for decades.

MORMONISM AND THE PROBLEM OF HETERODOXY

R. Dennis Potter

According to the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter, “the LDS church” or “LDS Mormonism”¹), Joseph Smith’s motivation to start a new religious movement began with a particularly difficult epistemological problem. In his history, Smith writes,

Some time in the second year after our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country. Indeed, the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people, some crying, “Lo, here!” and others, “Lo, there!” Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist.

[...]

1. Although I will focus on the LDS tradition (i.e., The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), I will sometimes mention two other Mormon denominations: namely, Community of Christ (formerly The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) and The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (FLDS). These three institutions disagree about who counts as an authority to speak for the Joseph Smith tradition. For a thorough discussion of these and other schisms within Mormonism, see Newell Bringhurst and John Hamer, eds., *Scattering of the Saints: Schism within Mormonism* (Independence, Mo.: John Whitmer Books, 2007). I will use “Mormon” and its cognates to refer to all the various Mormon sects and I will use “LDS” to refer to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “Latter-day Saints” refers to the members of the latter organization.

What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it? (JS–H 5, 10)

Clearly, Smith is concerned with which of the above-mentioned denominations, if any, is correct. This is the concrete problem. But this concrete problem is also an instance of a more general *epistemological* and *semantic* problem concerning the nature and status of religious belief. To see this, first note that Smith mentions only Christian denominations and doesn't mention Islam, Hinduism, etc. Given the time and location, Smith would have known about these religions, but none of them would have been a *live option* for him, to use William James's famous phrase.² It seems apparent that Smith had already decided that Christianity was correct and his problem was to figure out which denomination had the correct interpretation of Christianity. So, Smith's concrete problem is not best understood as an instance of the problem of *interreligious* diversity (i.e., the existence of disagreement between distinct religious traditions). Instead, Smith's concrete problem is better understood as an instance of a problem concerning *intra*-religious diversity, or what I will herein call "the problem of heterodoxy."

Whereas the problem of interreligious diversity deals with how one should respond to the fact that there exists disagreement among religious traditions, the problem of heterodoxy deals with how one should respond to the fact that there exist different interpretations of the same religious tradition. That is, the problem of heterodoxy asks not "which religion is true?" but "which interpretation of *X* is the correct interpretation?" where "*X*" is replaced with the name of one of the religious traditions in question (e.g., Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, etc.). I submit that the latter, and not the former, is Smith's question.

2. William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1956).

The problem of heterodoxy is an under-appreciated problem in the epistemology of religion. Usually, when philosophers deal with epistemological issues relating to religious disagreement, they focus on disagreement *among* traditions and not *within* traditions. This is a serious lacuna in the philosophical literature, since (as I will argue below) the problem of heterodoxy is more fundamental. Moreover, since Smith put this problem at the center of his explanation of the need for a restoration of Christianity, it is important to explore to what extent Smith offered a plausible response to the problem. In this paper, I will offer a reconstruction of LDS Mormonism's theology as a response to the problem of heterodoxy. However, in the end, I argue that the response fails to solve the problem and provides a basis for the ecclesiastical authoritarianism manifested in the present-day Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Interreligious Disagreement vs. Heterodoxy

As mentioned above, it is clear that there are two types of religious disagreement: *external* and *internal*. External religious disagreement occurs when two people from different faiths disagree. For example, Buddhists claim that everything is impermanent and Christians claim that God and the soul are eternal. It appears that the beliefs of Christians and Buddhists cannot both be true. This type of religious disagreement has been the focus of the discussion of religious diversity in contemporary philosophy of religion.³ By contrast, internal religious disagreement is usually ignored or mentioned merely in passing.⁴ Internal religious disagreement occurs when two people from the same

3. For example, see Philip Quinn and Kevin Meeker, eds., *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

4. William Christian mentions the problem of heterodoxy in passing but doesn't give a thorough treatment of the problem in his *Oppositions of Religious Doctrines: A Study in the Logic of Dialogue among Religions* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

faith disagree on some matter pertaining to the faith. There are two types of such disagreements. First, there are disagreements about what the doctrines of the faith are. Second, there are disagreements about how to interpret the doctrines. I'll call the first *doctrinal disagreements* and the second *interpretative disagreements*. An example of a doctrinal disagreement between Protestants and Catholics is over whether the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is Christian doctrine. An example of an interpretative disagreement would be between Social Trinitarians and Latin Trinitarians over the doctrine of the trinity. These categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In this paper, I will focus on interpretative disagreements.

The existence of interpretative disagreements suggests that we need to distinguish between the language used to express beliefs and the beliefs themselves. Indeed, the existence of interpretative disagreements indicates that two believers might utter the same sentence and yet mean something quite different. So, I will refer to these utterances or written expressions as *doxastic expressions*. For example, most Latter-day Saints would be happy to utter "God has a body," but they often mean radically different things by this expression. The expression is the same, but the belief is different. This gives us the illusion that Latter-day Saints believe the same thing, when, in fact, they don't. As Arne Næss puts it, Latter-day Saints are in *pseudo-agreement*.⁵

External and internal religious disagreements pose different philosophical problems. External disagreements raise an *epistemological* question: which belief is true (if any) and how do we know? Internal (interpretative) disagreements raise a *semantic* question: what *are* the beliefs of the faith? The first is an epistemological question because it requires that we figure out how to adjudicate between incompatible claims. The second is a semantic question because it requires that we determine the meaning of the doxastic expressions of the language. In other words, external dis-

5. Arne Næss, *Interpretation and Preciseness* (Oslo: I Kommissjon Hos Jacob Dybwad, 1953), 123–24.

agreements threaten the epistemic status of one's belief whereas internal disagreements threaten the very identity or content of one's belief. This is the first reason that the problem of heterodoxy is more fundamental than the problem of interreligious disagreement.

Moreover, the problem of heterodoxy is logically prior to the traditional problem of external religious disagreement. Indeed, every external religious disagreement depends on how the respective religious faiths are interpreted. On some interpretations, they do indeed disagree and, on other interpretations, they do not disagree. For example, Latter-day Saints could accept Social Trinitarianism but not Latin Trinitarianism. So, whether Latter-day Saints and creedal Christians disagree on this matter depends on what the right interpretation of Christianity is. So, the problem of heterodoxy must be solved first.

Smith's Solution

The LDS understanding of the apostasy and the restoration, as based on the account of the first vision in *Joseph Smith's History of the Church*, is presented as an answer to the problem of heterodoxy. That is, Smith—according to the current LDS understanding—was not concerned with which major religious tradition (e.g., Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, etc.) was correct. He already *knew* that Christianity was correct. He was concerned, instead, with which interpretation of Christianity was the correct one and which Christian organization represented God's will.

Of course, the first source to go to in trying to determine which version of Christianity is correct is the Bible. And Smith did look to the Bible for an answer to his question. But instead of finding a direct answer in the Bible, he found out *how to get an answer* to his question (a "meta-answer") in James 1:5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be

given to him.” In fact, Smith seemed to recognize that the Bible couldn’t really answer his question. He says,

[T]he teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible. (JS–H 1:12)

So, he understands that the Bible itself can’t settle the issue. But James 1:5 does say that there are other ways to find answers to such questions, namely by asking God. Perhaps there are other interpretations of this passage, but that is clearly how Joseph Smith understood it, since that is, in effect, what he did.

Given that the First Vision⁶ is the response that Smith received to his question, not only is the First Vision the medium whereby the problem of heterodoxy is answered, it *constitutes* an instance of the type of event that is central to the answer as well. To be sure, the answer to the question about which church is true is “none.” But the answer to the more general problem of heterodoxy is that we need revelation. And the First Vision itself is an instance of the kind of revelation required. In other words, Smith’s answer to his quandary was that there should be communication between God and humanity.

Latter-day Saints believe that the traditional Christian churches had all deviated from the truth and that, as a result, God was no longer in contact with humanity. They call this *the great apostasy* or, more simply, *the apostasy*.⁷ Joseph Smith initiated a new dispensation in which God would be in communication with humanity through his prophets. This seems to answer the problem of heterodoxy because God can settle disputes about how to interpret Christianity by speaking to his prophets. In other words, the only way to preserve orthodoxy would be to re-initialize

6. For more on the First Vision see James B. Allen, “The Significance of Joseph Smith’s ‘First Vision’ in Mormon Thought,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1, no. 3 (1966): 29–46.

7. James Talmage, *The Great Apostasy* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1983).

contact between God and humankind (i.e., the Restoration) and have that contact continue into the future (i.e., continuing revelation).

Let us be clear about what is implied by this approach to the problem of heterodoxy. Recall that the problem of heterodoxy is the problem of how to determine which interpretation of a particular faith tradition is correct, given competing interpretations. In particular, members of the same faith might accept the same doxastic expressions (e.g., “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God”) and yet interpret those expressions differently. One major factor that leads to the problem of heterodoxy is that the religious leader in question is dead, and so if a question about what he or she meant by a certain doxastic expression arises, we cannot ask him or her.⁸ The first aspect of Smith’s solution to the problem is simple: Jesus is not really dead and so, in effect, we *can* ask him.⁹ And we can use this method to settle all disputes about the content of the faith.

Of course, even if they do believe that Jesus lives, not all Christians believe that you can ask Jesus directly what he meant by a given expression in the New Testament (assuming that he did, in fact, utter some of what appears in the New Testament). So, some Christians must have a different answer to the problem of heterodoxy. One reasonable answer would be to go with the interpretation that best fits with the whole body of data associated with Jesus: the extant texts, the historical background, linguistic analysis, archaeological evidence, etc. However, given the state of scriptural interpretation in the nineteenth century, it would also seem plausible that more than one interpretation could fit with the relevant data. This observation seems even more accurate in light of contemporary biblical scholarship. In other words, it is plau-

8. Although, even if the religious leader is not dead, there could be disputes about whether she is interpreting her earlier statements accurately. We can, after all, misinterpret what we have said in the past.

9. It is true that, for Mormons, one should pray to Heavenly Father rather than to the Son. But this doesn’t make a philosophical difference.

sible that the publicly available evidence concerning what Jesus taught *underdetermines* the best interpretation of Jesus' teachings. Surely, several different approaches to Jesus' teachings are compatible with all the evidence that we can accumulate.

If the available evidence concerning what Jesus taught doesn't favor a unique interpretation of those teachings, then this *intersubjective* approach to solving the problem of heterodoxy (in the particular case of Christianity) doesn't work. Indeed, taking this approach would lead to skepticism, given the assumption that the correct interpretation is underdetermined by the available evidence. Moreover, as cited above, we know that Smith had considered different interpretations of the texts in an attempt to figure out who was correct. These considerations didn't satisfy him and it seems rightly so. For Smith, then, the problem is not solved by the intersubjective approach. Instead, Smith turned to revelation as the answer, and it is important to see that using revelation to solve the problem of heterodoxy contrasts with the intersubjective approach insofar as it appeals to content that is not intersubjective, but rather private or subjective.

To make this clear, it is helpful to be explicit about the distinction between intersubjective and subjective evidence. Intersubjective evidence is evidence for *everybody* if it is evidence for *anybody*. A mathematical proof is a proof for you as well as for me, once we both understand it. Subjective evidence, by contrast, is *non-transferrable* to use van Inwagen's term.¹⁰ If I have subjective evidence, there is no procedure that I could follow that would be sufficient for making that very same evidence available to you. An example of subjective evidence is memory. I recall that the bird I saw on my hike yesterday was a finch. Since I didn't take a photo and am basing my claim on memory, I can't show you my evidence. If you believe me, it is because you trust me.

10. Peter van Inwagen, "We're Right. They're Wrong," in *Disagreement*, edited by Richard Feldman and Ted Warfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 26.

The LDS concept of revelation is essentially the same as the concept of religious experience discussed in recent philosophy of religion.¹¹ As such, revelation is subjective evidence. This is obviously true of most religious experiences, including what Latter-day Saints call the witness of the Holy Ghost. Of course, someone might claim that Joseph Smith's First Vision was a publicly available experience of the Father and the Son—that is, if anyone else had been present in the Sacred Grove on that day, such a person would have seen and heard exactly what Smith saw and heard. But granting that an eavesdropper would have seen personages floating above Smith, it is not clear that such an eavesdropper would have seen the Father and the Son. Indeed, perhaps such an eavesdropper would have seen two demons or two extra-terrestrials. That is, even if a religious experience is simultaneously an ordinary perceptual experience, the religious content goes beyond the publicly available content.¹²

Given that Smith's solution to the problem of heterodoxy invokes subjective content and evidence, it avoids the underdetermination problem faced by the intersubjective approach considered above. Despite there being more than one interpretation of the faith that fits with the

11. William Alston, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993).

12. A reviewer for this journal raised the following point: some claim that the experience of the Holy Ghost is fundamentally practical rather than cognitive and that, hence—given that the practical is intersubjective—the Holy Ghost is intersubjective. My response is that we can grant that the experience of the Holy Ghost is embedded in religious practices and that it has no meaning independent of those practices. In that sense it *is* intersubjective. For example, it is agreed that the experience of the Spirit is calming and warming. But the doxastic content conveyed by these religious experiences is not intersubjective, since people disagree about this. And it's the doxastic content of religious experience that matters at this point in the argument. The response that there is no doxastic content in such religious experiences would undercut the argument being considered. It is, of course, not entirely irrelevant here that some people engage in the practices and never experience the Holy Ghost at all.

intersubjective evidence, it might seem that there would be only one that fits with one's own subjective evidence. Since Smith's solution to the problem of heterodoxy involves reference to subjective experiences that cannot be transferred to others, I will refer to this view as *interpretative gnosticism*. To repeat, interpretative gnosticism is the view that one can settle the question as to which interpretation of a religious tradition is correct by subjective religious experiences.

Also, since we are discussing the epistemology of religious belief, it makes sense to point out that Smith's solution to the problem of heterodoxy has similarities with the approach called *reformed epistemology*.¹³ Advocates of reformed epistemology argue that certain religious beliefs are properly basic. This is because it is assumed that they are created by a reliable belief-forming process, even if the believer is not in a position to say why it is reliable. Religious experience fits into this category, according to reformed epistemologists. If it is from God, then it is reliable and can be trusted. Of course, people do have contrary basic beliefs on occasion. When they do, the question of justification might arise, and the reformed epistemologist would have to admit that her justification is non-transferrable. I will say more about this below.

Problems

Despite being initially plausible, there are complications with Smith's approach to the problem of heterodoxy. The first one arises from the fact that the content of religious experience is subjective. To be sure, there are such things as subjective justifications for beliefs (memory is the example given above). But Smith's use of religious experience as an answer to the problem of heterodoxy is not just an attempt to justify a particular belief over other competing beliefs; it is an attempt *to determine the propositional content that goes with certain doxastic expressions*. This

13. See, for example, Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, eds., *Faith and Rationality* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983).

move from the epistemological to the semantic changes the game. Indeed, given that Smith's solution employs a subjective religious experience to determine the proper content of a doxastic expression, then it seems clear that Smith's solution involves an appeal to subjective content to determine the correct meaning for certain expressions in a language. In other words, Smith's solution assumes that there is a *private* language.

Many philosophers of language have argued that a private language is impossible. It is not clear that there is a common core to these various private language arguments. Ludwig Wittgenstein's argument (or arguments) is the most famous, but its interpretation is a matter of great contention.¹⁴ I want to avoid the controversies associated with interpreting Wittgenstein since I am afraid that my interpretation of him would be considered heterodox by many of his disciples. So, instead, I will explain Neurath's private language argument.

Neurath's private language argument is stated in several places, but can be found in its fullest form in his article entitled "Protocol Sentences."¹⁵ Protocol sentences in this context can be understood as expressions that make basic observations about objects in the experiential environment. He writes,

If Robinson wants to join what is in his protocol of yesterday with what is in his protocol today, that is, if he wants to make use of a language at all, he must make use of the "inter-subjective" language. The Robinson of yesterday and the Robinson of today stand in precisely the same relation in which Robinson stands to Friday . . . If, under certain circumstances, one calls Robinson's protocol language of yesterday and today the same language then, under the same conditions, one can call Robinson's and Friday's the same language. [. . .]

14. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (New York: MacMillan, 1953).

15. Otto Neurath, "Protocol Statements," in *Philosophical Papers, 1913–1946*, translated and edited by Robert S. Cohen and Marie Neurath (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing, 1983), 91–99.

In other words, every language as such is “inter-subjective”; it must be possible to incorporate the protocols of one moment into the protocols of the next moment, just as the protocols of A can be incorporated into the protocols of B.¹⁶

It seems that Neurath argues as follows. His first assumption is that a language requires constancy of use over time. I believe that this is the point of Neurath’s talk of “incorporation” of one moment’s protocols into those of the next moment. And constancy of use implies that sometimes the expression is used correctly and other times incorrectly (if every use were correct then there would be no constancy of use). But then to check correct usage, Robinson stands to his earlier self the way he stands to Friday. If this is the case, then the only way that he can check the correctness of his own usage is similar to the way he checks Friday’s. So, any language is intersubjective.

There is a problem with this argument as it stands. The problem is that Robinson is connected to his earlier self in a way that he is not connected to Friday—namely by memory. Robinson remembers his own earlier usage of the expression in question—call it *E*. Moreover, Robinson also remembers the mental state *M* that accompanied his previous usage of *E*. But to decide whether to use *E* in this new case, Robinson must interpret his own past usage of *E* and the fact that his usage was determined by *M* at that time doesn’t determine whether *E* should be used now. So, even if subjective content can determine correct usage at one time, once that content has passed, there is still an issue about how to interpret the expression.

Neurath’s considerations lead to a problem for Smith’s interpretative gnosticism. As soon as the religious experience that is intended to fix the content of the faith has passed, then the question of how to interpret that experience arises again. Suppose, for example, that Smith receives a revelation that *F* is the right interpretation of the doxastic expression *E*.

16. Ibid., 96.

By supposition, he knows what he means by the words in *F* at the time because he has a private mental state that determines their meaning. But as soon as that mental state is gone, the question of how to interpret those words arises again.

Given Smith's approach, this problem can only be solved by having another religious experience. And so, it would seem that interpretative gnosticism leads to the conclusion that one must be in a constant state of receiving revelation from God so as to fix the content of one's beliefs. So, this objection to interpretative gnosticism leads to the necessity of having continuous revelation. At any moment when a question arises about how to interpret a doxastic expression, one must appeal to religious experience. Thus, we can see that it is reasonable that the doctrine of continuing revelation accompanies the doctrine of the Restoration in LDS theology.¹⁷

Another problem with Smith's approach arises from its subjectivism. The problem is that someone besides Smith might have an experience that confers a belief that disagrees with Smith's conclusions about the proper interpretation of the doxastic expressions in question. If a fourteen-year-old boy with very little education and no training in theology can settle theological questions by asking God, then anyone should be able to do so. But, of course, this opens a Pandora's box. One person could receive a revelation that determines the content of belief *E* to be *F* and another could have a revelation that determines the content of *E* to be *G*, where *F* and *G* are not only distinct, but also incompatible.

Notice that this leads us right back to the problem of heterodoxy. So, it would seem that interpretative gnosticism doesn't really solve the problem after all. Similarly, reformed epistemology must also appeal to interpretative gnosticism in order to solve the problem of heterodoxy.

17. For more on the LDS doctrine of continuing revelation see Henry B. Eyring, "Continuing Revelation," General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Oct. 2014: <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/10/continuing-revelation>.

Reformed epistemologists such as Plantinga believe that they have a special epistemic status that others don't possess. Speaking of the Christian believer's reaction to non-believers, Plantinga writes,

She may agree that she as those who dissent are equally convinced of the truth of their belief, and even that they are internally on a par, that the internally available markers are similar, or relevantly similar. But she must still think that there is an important epistemic difference: she thinks that somehow the other person has made a mistake, or has a blind spot, or hasn't been wholly attentive, or hasn't received some grace she has, or is in some way less epistemically fortunate.¹⁸

First, it is important to note that Plantinga is discussing external religious disagreement rather than internal religious disagreement. Given this, he believes that if the Christian God really exists and is the cause of his religious belief, then he has important knowledge that people from other religious traditions lack. He believes that his tradition possesses a path to knowledge that is not available in the other traditions. Even if the believers of those traditions have some kind of religious experience as well, it would not be sufficiently similar to the experiences of Plantinga's own tradition to be taken seriously. It seems that Latter-day Saints can say the same thing as Plantinga. For the purposes of argument, let me grant that this move works as a response to the problem of external religious disagreement. Even so, it is clear that this response does not work once you try to apply it to the problem of heterodoxy. Heterodox Latter-day Saints can claim that the Holy Ghost witnesses to them that orthodox Latter-day Saints are wrong. One cannot dismiss this heterodox claim on the grounds that it is formed in the wrong way. It is one thing to say to outsiders that they are missing something important (as Plantinga does) and quite another thing to say this to one's fellow religionists.

18. Alvin Plantinga, "Pluralism: A Defense of Religious Exclusivism," in *The Philosophical Challenge of Religious Diversity*, edited by Phillip Quinn and Kevin Meeker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 182.

LDS doctrine has an answer to this problem as well. The answer is to privilege the religious experiences of some over others. This leads to a hierarchy, where those at the top have the power to interpret the faith for everyone else. This would help explain LDS Mormonism's focus on the central role of priesthood authority in the Restoration.¹⁹

If you grant all the assumptions that are made in Smith's solution to the problem of heterodoxy, the solution *seems* to work. And since reformed epistemologists (who are, as the name suggests, usually Protestants) don't accept the kind of authority that is required for this solution, I believe that the LDS solution is more initially promising than the reformed approach. We might call the LDS approach "restored epistemology," which amounts to reformed epistemology plus (what we might call) "epistemic authoritarianism," namely the view that the religious experiences of some trump the religious experiences of others.

Despite its initial plausibility, I believe that restored epistemology fails as well. One of the assumptions here is that the religious experiences of some *trump* the religious experience of others. This assumption of epistemic authoritarianism is itself problematic from an epistemological point of view. The problem is that there cannot be any good reason for accepting the claim that the religious experiences of some trump the religious experiences of others. To see this, let's consider the following scenario:

Josephine lives in a town with three "Mormon" churches: the LDS Church, the Community of Christ and the FLDS church. Josephine considers herself a Christian but she wonders which denomination is truly Christian. Moreover, given where she lives, she has learned a little about Joseph Smith, has read the Book of Mormon and wonders about Smith's claim to having restored Christianity. But in her investigation of Smith's restoration movement, she has discovered that these Mormon

19. For more on the concept of authority in Mormonism, see Mario S. De Pillis, "The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1, no. 1 (1966): 68–88.

denominations disagree about how to interpret Smith's restoration. She wants to discover what Smith really taught in order to assess his claims to having restored Christianity. So, how can she know what Smith really claimed, given the wildly different interpretations of his teachings?

Clearly, Josephine's quandary is formulated to be analogous to the situation in which Joseph Smith found himself. If Smith's quandary were similar to Josephine's, and Smith's restoration was an answer to this quandary, then Smith's answer should work for Josephine as well. What is she to do? Restored epistemology tells her to go with whatever the authorities say when it comes to matters of internal disagreement. But which authorities should she listen to? LDS, FLDS, or Community of Christ?

The LDS approach is that she should attempt to have her own religious experience in order to figure out which Mormon denomination truly represents Smith's approach. So, let's imagine that Josephine does this and concludes that the Community of Christ gets it right. Now, it seems clear that there are plenty of LDS Mormons and FLDS Mormons that would claim that her experience conflicts with their authorities and that, hence, they can dismiss her experiences as being incorrect. She can't use her own religious experience to adjudicate the issue of whether she should trust the leadership of one denomination over the others, since those that adhere to the other denominations are in the same situation as she is with respect to the denomination that she chooses. Indeed, if she gets it wrong, then she is actually violating the epistemic authoritarianism of Smith's approach. Perhaps she can just privilege her own religious experience over everyone else's. This would solve the problem of disagreement with the authorities of the other denominations; but this would be to take the *reformed* approach rather than the *restored* approach to the epistemic quandary. Of course, it is obvious that Josephine's quandary cannot be resolved by an appeal to the authorities of one of the denominations since that is the very question at issue. Finally, there doesn't seem to be

any intersubjective way of settling the dispute about who is interpreting Smith most faithfully.

But without a subjective or intersubjective justification for believing in the epistemic authority of the LDS (the Community of Christ, the FLDS, etc.) leadership, there is no justification for this assumption. If you are an outsider, to accept one version of Mormonism you must trust its authorities without any substantial reason to do so. But now, notice that everyone starts out as an outsider; even if one is born into the LDS Church, one must still be converted.²⁰ Therefore, it follows that even life-long Latter-day Saints themselves have no real basis for trusting their leaders. Restored epistemology amounts to epistemic “boot-strapping” and thus fails.

LDS Mormonism’s epistemic authoritarianism requires that I trust another’s religious experience more than my own, and it requires that I do this without any independent check on this person’s testimony. Indeed, there are cases in which it is rational for me to trust another’s testimony more than my own. For example, I should trust my doctor’s diagnosis of my medical condition more than my own diagnosis, or the scientific community’s nearly unanimous verdict on anthropogenic climate change over my own judgment about it. But these are cases where there is an objective way to determine who the *experts* are, and I am not one of them. In a way, religious authorities count as experts, of course. But there are different groups claiming to be the experts on Mormon doctrine. They each deny the expertise of the other groups, and the only way to determine who the real experts are would be to settle the problem of heterodoxy in the first place (namely to know which denomination gets it right). So, unless we have a solution to the problem of religious experts (i.e., an objective criterion for determining who they are), we don’t have a solution to the problem of heterodoxy; and unless we have a solution to the problem of heterodoxy, we don’t

20. See Grace Jorgensen, “Every Member a Convert,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1980, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1980/04/every-member-a-convert?lang=eng>.

have a solution to the problem of experts. The upshot, I believe, is that we are not in a position for it to be rational for us to defer to experts on matters of religious belief. It would be irrational to do so. And so, it would be irrational for us to accept the orthodox LDS solution to the problem of heterodoxy.

The A-theological Approach

Perhaps there is an alternative approach to the problem of heterodoxy available to Latter-day Saints. One debate within the LDS intellectual community deals with the role of theology in the faith. Some LDS theologians, such as David Paulsen and Blake Ostler, have taken an approach to Mormon theology that does not differ methodologically from theologies in traditional Christian circles.²¹ However, other LDS thinkers, such as Brian D. Birch, James Faulconer, and Adam S. Miller, eschew systematic theology entirely or, at least, claim that it plays no substantive role in the faith.²² Here's Miller on the role of theology:

Theology is a diversion. It is not serious like doctrine, respectable like history, or helpful like therapy. Theology is gratuitous. It works by way of detours. Doing theology is like building a comically circuitous Rube Goldberg Machine: you spend your time tinkering together an unnecessarily complicated, impractical, and ingenious apparatus for doing things that are, in themselves, simple.²³

21. See Blake Ostler, *Exploring Mormon Thought: The Attributes of God, Volume 1* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2001).

22. Brian Birch summarizes previous LDS *a-theological* approaches in "Faith Seeking Understanding: Mormon Atheology and the Challenge of Fideism," in *Mormonism at the Crossroads of Philosophy and Theology: Essays in Honor of David L. Paulsen*, edited by Jacob T. Baker (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2012), 47–68.

23. Adam S. Miller, *Rube Goldberg Machines: Essays in Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2012), xiii.

So, Miller takes theology to be superfluous. Faulconer goes farther and argues that (systematic) theology is *dangerous*:

[T]he absence of official rational explanations or descriptions of beliefs and practices, and the presence of differing and inconsistent explanations for and descriptions of belief within the membership of the church, suggests that we have little if any official systematic, rational, or dogmatic theology. (I use those three terms, systematic theology, rational theology, and dogmatic theology, as synonyms.) We are “a-theological”—which means that we are without a church-sanctioned, church-approved, or even church encouraged systematic theology—and that is as it should be because systematic theology is dangerous.²⁴

Following Faulconer, I will call this the *a-theological* approach.²⁵ If we take this approach, we might tell a different story about the apostasy, restoration, and continuing revelation. LDS a-theologians might argue that the apostasy arises not from interpreting the doctrines the wrong way but from interpreting them at all. Perhaps the problem isn’t having the wrong theology, but doing theology at all. Doing theology leads to disagreement and, eventually, schism, thus dividing the Christian community over trivial issues. Furthermore, LDS a-theologians could argue that the restoration is a return to the basic doctrines plus an imperative to stick to these alone. Indeed, in the above quotation, Miller contrasts “doctrine” with “theology,” considering the former “serious” and the latter superfluous.

The first problem with this approach arises from this concept of “doctrine” that Miller uses. What is doctrine? Perhaps, given the definitions offered above, doctrine consists of a set of basic doxastic expressions that every adherent affirms. Of course, it is not entirely clear that such a set wouldn’t be very small. Nevertheless, it is plausible that there are

24. James E. Faulconer, “Rethinking Theology: The Shadow of the Apocalypse,” *FARMS Review* 19, no.1 (2007): 179.

25. “A-theological” means *without theology* and not *without God*.

some very basic doxastic expressions that every Latter-day Saint would affirm, such as “God exists,” “God loves his children,” etc. But there are a lot of other doxastic expressions that some Latter-day Saints would affirm and others would not (e.g., “marriage in the celestial kingdom will be plural marriage”). Certainly, these disagreements make a big difference to the nature of the belief held by the adherents of the faith. And very often these disagreements hinge on how the basic doxastic expressions (i.e., the “doctrines”) are interpreted. But then, one might define theology as *the interpretation of the basic doxastic expressions of the faith*. If so, then it follows that doing theology would be necessary for adjudicating the disputes about doctrines other than the basic doxastic expressions that everyone agrees about. In other words, to use the terminology introduced above, even if the a-theological approach solves the problem of internal interpretative disagreements, it doesn’t solve the problem of internal doctrinal disagreements.

The LDS a-theologian might respond by claiming that anything above and beyond the set of basic doxastic expressions (i.e., the “doctrine”) is not part of the faith. Instead, one should keep those disputes out of the community entirely. An example of this approach is seen in the LDS approach to the theory of evolution, in which the Church neither endorses nor denies evolution.²⁶

This extra-doctrinal agnosticism comes at a price. One of the important features of religious belief is supposed to be that it gives us a good guide on how to live morally. But the moral implications of LDS doctrine are a matter of dispute among Latter-day Saints. For example, although the majority believes that it was right for the LDS church to campaign against gay marriage, there are heterodox Latter-day Saints who reject this.²⁷ The different views on this issue depend on the interpretation of

26. See William Evenson and Duane Jeffries, eds., *Mormonism and Evolution: The Authoritative LDS Statements* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2006).

27. For a heterodox approach to homosexuality in LDS Mormonism see Taylor Petrey, “Toward a Post-Heterosexual Mormon Theology,” *Dialogue: A Journal*

LDS doctrine. And so, extra-doctrinal agnosticism has the problem of undercutting one of the main functions of religious belief. Religious belief is supposed to have consequences for our practical and moral lives. Of course, most would argue that religious belief doesn't merely reduce to beliefs about morality,²⁸ but few would argue that religious belief doesn't have moral implications. The problem with the a-theological approach to Mormonism is that it disconnects the doctrine from moral practice. Without an interpretation of the basic doxastic expressions, it is not clear what they imply with respect to morality, and once we begin to interpret what the basic doxastic expressions mean, then we are doing theology in the sense addressed in this paper.

The a-theologian might respond by insisting it is only systematic theology that is being rejected. Indeed, note that in the above quotation from Faulconer, he doesn't castigate all theology, but only systematic, rational, or dogmatic theology. So, there might be some other kind of non-systematic, non-rational, and non-dogmatic way of doing theology that would suffice to bridge the gap between the basic doxastic expressions and moral imperatives. Perhaps Faulconer has something like narrative theology in mind. Yet, if this is all there is to the a-theologians' point, it seems that the problem of heterodoxy is not avoided by a-theology. Presumably, even non-systematic theologians can disagree with each other about how to interpret the basic doxastic expressions. So, if this is all there is to Mormon a-theology, it doesn't help with the problem of heterodoxy.

A final attempt to save the a-theological solution to the problem of heterodoxy might be to argue that I have separated questions about belief from questions about practice and that they cannot be so separated. This is a common point to make if you are an a-theologian, but I

of *Mormon Thought* 44, no. 4 (2011): 106–41.

28. Cf. Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, translated by George Elliot (New York: Harper Row, 1957); R. B. Braithwaite, *An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955).

don't think the charge sticks in my case. Indeed, I have emphasized the need to get the beliefs right due to the fact that they have implications for what we should do. This is not to separate belief from practice, but quite the opposite.

Perhaps the problem is that I have prioritized belief over practice and practice is actually more fundamental. So, let's suppose that practice determines belief and not the other way around (I grant this only for the sake of argument). How does this help with the fact that the religious tradition is doxastically indeterminate? Presumably, what matters is that the practices are *not* indeterminate. But this helps only if the practices can then help us adjudicate between the different doxastic interpretations, and it seems obvious to me that they cannot; there are different sets of beliefs that are consistent with any given set of religious practices.

Perhaps, instead, only orthopraxis matters; maybe orthodoxy is beside the point. That is, you can believe whatever you like as long as you engage in pious behavior. However, this approach would be to *separate* belief from practice and this was rejected above. Surely, the fact that LDS theology includes the claim that gender is eternal matters to how the LDS church behaves. Moreover, even if practice could be so separated from belief, there might be divergences in practice and, then, the problem of heterodoxy (heteropraxy?) arises again.

Conclusion

Many Latter-day Saints discuss "Mormon doctrine" as if it involves a set of transcendent propositions. They distinguish between what Mormons actually believe from *doctrine*. That is, they use the concept of doctrine in a normative way. This language presupposes a determinate set of propositions that are the *true* doctrines of Mormonism. They believe that part of the restoration of the gospel is the identification of these doctrines. The problem of heterodoxy leads us to wonder whether we can know what that determinate set is. Latter-day Saints believe that

Smith's restoration does indeed solve this problem and that anyone who wonders which Christian denomination is correct can follow Smith's example. But I have argued that Smith's approach is problematic since it asks us to trust religious authorities without any reason to do so.

Temple

Mark Brown

Orange lightning burns
the Detroit sky tonight.
We just got out of the temple,
two hours of white stillness,
but the bruised, lit-up sky
suggests God's still not happy with us.
Then again, maybe it's fireworks.
Maybe the lightning
and this dark, humid breeze
are a reward, a pop-flash kiss
and a thank you for at least trying
on a day when it would be
just as easy to not.

Grief

Mark Brown

1.
is a volatile fuel
that blazes you far
into the white desert
like some 50s speed test pilot
with goggles and a test track of chaos.
It burns fast,
leaves you stranded,
and then reignites
just when you think
you're about to get off.

2.
A ragged piece of bone
dragged over a bowl's lip.

An oil drum with just enough
left to burn.

A leg that breaks nightly.

A basement drain always welling.

A thousand walls stripped
bare and yellow.

My bones and teeth
turned to chalk.

Every word a wasp
digging under my skin.

3.
If your voice carried any more venom,
this house would fill with corpses.

4.
You wear an anger coat
made of hot coals and raw skin.
In your pockets, you carry sea anemones,
a bottle of gall, rusted chain, and at least two fingers.
Your shoes are made of lava rock.
Your manicure is by De Sade.
You tie your hair with old, dry veins
and powder your face with crushed bone,
and across your white shoulders, a tattoo reads,
There is sunshine in my soul today.

Keeping Fire

Warren Hatch

The moon is up, and the fire has burned down.
Benjamin stoops, coaxes embers to life.
“Hello,” he says.
“Cold?” I ask.
“Not so much,” he says.

His sister died last winter.
And now night under stars overwhelms his father.
So of all the boys, Benjamin camps alone.
I pull my blanket close against dewfall.
Soon, under the weight of stars
boys from other troops arrive
in longjohns and boots.
They lean close to the fire.
“The Utes believed stars were their ancestors,”
I tell them.

Benjamin stokes the fire
then walks the crescent of meadow
among dozens of clustered tent societies.
Where the meadow narrows, he stops,
hearing two voices, trees and water.
On one side, the Palisades River curves away,
slow, like great stones tumbling.
On the other, the bone rattle of willow canes.

From that far edge of the meadow, he sees
how the fire glows beneath the rim of the ground.
He sees that the boys have warmed and gone,
and I bow, tending fire.

He walks on into the willow grove.
Old trees, older than our people in this land.
Brooks seep down to the Palisades.
Under banks, brook trout flop in moonlight,
feeding on a stonefly hatch.
He crouches on an overhanging tuft of meadow,
unfolds his jack knife, cuts willow shoots.

He returns as the moon sets.
I remember, "My father's mare, Old Pal,"
her breath as she prodded along my neck.
"In mountains, Old Pal preferred a fire through night."

Benjamin offers the willow shoots. I choose one,
tilt it to catch firelight, check for scars or branches.
I tap my penknife handle along the bark.
It loosens, slides off, filmy,
the wood bone-white.
I notch one end of the wood, step the notch deeper,
and carve a channel the length of the shoot.
Sliding the bark back on,
I bore seven finger holes over the channel,
press my lips to the shoot.
One thin note floats out.

I teach the boy a ragged scale,
 then bits of *Ave Verum Corpus*.

Then I teach the boy the journey of song:
I face East,
 each note of the canon folding back
 from the willow grove,
 weaving through the melody,
 and I wait a half beat of my heart,
 seeking unison with the notes among the willows,
 with the voice of wind and water.

The notes reach a farm plot below the willow grove,
 following a farmer's water turn,
 a shovel tamping mud to seal a weir gate—
 river flowing to stone-hard highlands.

I turn from the woods,
 each note spreading
 across meadow to river
 like footsteps
 of a thrown stone's passage
 across water. Dawn nears.

The boy sleeps near the fire.

October Above Trial Lake

Warren Hatch

Boo and Yamba climb fast, finding trail in dusk, and I follow
on stiffening mud and snowcrust from last week's first snow.
They skirt Cliff Lake then Petit, Linear, and so between glacial morains,
taciturn boys bewildered by plunging cold and this sudden-setting
behavior of water. The lakes bend in each ascending basin,
like oil, colorless; their light has drained into sky. Above treeline,
a few runt spruce and sparse mountain mahogany.

At the divide, snow glows blue on the highest basin rim
where a stone I know sits altar-like between the two Divide lakes.
We bivouac, pausing to listen for the dry front
rolling up from spruce forests. The boys crouch
between those winds and the squeezing funnel of Notch Pass,
between fear and exultation. "Going to blow tonight," Boo says.
"Yes," I say; then the first gust lifts our tent straight up.
We gather it back, tumble in, shape ourselves in an overlapping circle
around the innerwall. We sit or lie on our sides levered up on elbows
like nomads. Sanctuary. We pray and eat, sop thick stew with sourdough;
steam billows between us.

Boo fiddles with the shortwave, catching long bounces
across the receding troposphere—Oklahoma City, Lubock,
Juarez, Reno, Coeur d'Alene. Yamba reads the Gospel of Luke
aloud in counterpoint to wind, reading because their mother
taught them, so this brings her closer. And Christmas near;

they're imaginative boys. Peregrines far from home,
following a star. Boo pauses on each shifting rockabilly,
mariachi, syndicated-conspiracy-theorist talkshow,
high-school football station. He drifts
past Tuba City, that Navajo station
down south of the four corners. He stops,
hunts back along the spectrum: that coyote voice.
The surging chant of dancers following that voice,
their circling shuffle. As if the walls of the tent were song
and the wind were dance. As if this moment before Tuba City
twists away on the drifting troposphere were always here,
will always be here. Yamba stops reading, says, "I remember
we sang—"

We've been working toward this place of wind, rock,
and those coyote voices drifting out of sky. Questions we have
in the weave of those ancient five-tone songs. We will come here again;
we will walk east for weeks, down the backbone
of this country to its far end, hunting.

But tomorrow we will travel on, the intermittent hard-set snow
keening where we walk. We will lay our fly lines across water,
and trout will rise to our casts as if flying through amber sky.
We will sit on the divide rock under wind-clean sky;
sun will soften snow and mud. The blood of the trout we keep,
crimson on snow and rock.

Stony Places

Sarah E. Page

Very bold,
I saw a star fall from heaven,
Kindle a fire in the valley of decision.
There could be nothing upon earth
So exquisite
Singing and making melody
From everlasting to everlasting—
I am of perfect beauty.
Then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth
Away any human soul, sore cursing
“The stars shall withdraw their shining.”
Dashed to pieces,
Heart fainted within many deep wounds
The stone shall cry out
Of the dust in the darkest abyss
Nothing in me like unto crystal.
Then cometh the Son of God to redeem all:
“What will ye that I should do
That ye may have light in your vessels?”
Touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger.
The Lord stretched forth his hand and touched
The stones one by one, promising
Herein is glory and honor, and
Immortality and eternal life.
Dumb stone, what I tell you in darkness,
That speak ye in light.

Compass yourselves about with sparks
 Out of the good treasure of the heart
 For I am able to make you holy
 When I make up my jewels
 Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you—

And as many as touched were molten matchless.¹

1. “Found poetry” incorporates words, phrases, and lines from other sources—in this case, the Bible, Book of Mormon and Doctrine & Covenants—in order to give them new meaning. The following is a list of scriptural references in the order that they appear in the poem: Matthew 13:5; Romans 10:20; Revelation 9:1; Jeremiah 49:27/Joel 3:14; 3 Nephi 19:25; Alma 36:21; Ephesians 5:19; Psalms 103:17; Ezekiel 27:3; Matthew 13:19/ Matthew 13:19; Mosiah 28:3; 2 Nephi 1:22/ Joel 2:10/ Isaiah 13:16/ Genesis 45:26; Jonah 2:7; Ether 14:30/ Habakkuk 2:11; Ecclesiastes 3:20; Mosiah 27:29/ John 14:30; Doctrine and Covenants 130:9/ Helaman 14:2/ Ether 2:23/ Ether 2:23/ Ether 3:4/ Ether 3:6/ Ether 3:6; Ezekiel 13:22/ Doctrine and Covenants 128:12/ Doctrine and Covenants 128:12/ Habakkuk 2:19; Matthew 10:27/ Matthew 10:27/ 2 Nephi 7:11/ Matthew 12:35/ Doctrine and Covenants 60:7/ Malachi 3:17/ Doctrine and Covenants 88:63/ Matthew 14:36 ; Job 37:18 ; Alma 26:15.

My sister once died

Jenny Webb

My sister once died,
alone, on the operating table.
They brought her back of course
—no harm done—
but I wonder if the sorrow she keeps tucked
beneath her lashes
is there because she now knows divine rejection,
or because upon resuscitation
she received
one too many
shocks to the heart.



Nathan Samuel Florence
Blessed are the Pure in Heart: For They Shall See God
Oil on brocade cloth

THE TRAIL

Stephen Carter

The world was divided into three.

Three shards of sagebrush and sky.

That's how it looked to Emma as she blinked through the thick wooden wagon spokes next to her head. She winced at the odor of ox droppings and then looked to her left where Matthew, Gloria, and Juliette were sleeping as children do. She said a prayer and rolled from under the wagon into the thin light of dawn.

She had not slept well. No one had. Mother had been groaning and calling out all night. She could hardly walk anymore. They had fallen further and further behind the wagon train until the rear leader only showed up every other day to urge them on.

"Emma."

She turned to see her father's wan face peering out of the covered wagon.

"Take care of the oxen and make sure the children have breakfast," he said. "Then you need to run ahead and fetch Sister Fallon."

The sun was already high in the sky—its heat sending trickles of sweat down Emma's back—before she could set off. As she approached the wagon, she heard her mother's voice through the canvas.

"I'm going," Emma whispered into the dimness.

"Quickly, Emma."

Her mother's voice frightened her.

Emma ran.

The wagon trail contorted in front of her like arthritic handwriting, stumbling through washes, jolting around boulders, bumping up and down rises. It had no plan but west. No scheme but forward.

Emma wondered: if she could fly, if she could look down upon this trail as a hawk might, would these marks mean anything? Would the quivering tracks resolve into words, a sentence? A story?

Was the story already written?

Was she only the reader?

Her feet, bare and calloused, tapped out an ellipsis stretching from her mother's labor bed. She ran hard at first, hoping that black figures would sprout from the horizon and grow into the company she was pursuing.

Finally she found the remains of a large campfire, the earth around it trodden and packed, a circle of wagon tracks surrounding it. She stopped and ran her fingers through the ashes.

Cold.

She had only crossed a single day of wagon travel. How many more lay ahead?

She faced west again and ran with the sun.

But her throat was raw from the constant rush of her breath. Her eyes were prickly from the dust. And soon small black spots began jumping in front of the landscape. She realized that the water barrel was far behind and could hear no creek nearby.

Her lips cracked and her tongue dried. The black spots became pools.

Twilight was coming on. Emma was alone. She saw no fires ahead, heard no oxen lowing or wheels rumbling. She had to press on.

And she did.

Until the blackness filled her eyes completely, and the ground felt her impact.

Something called out to her—something like a young woman's voice. A coyote?

The stars, unreadable, illuminated the landscape. And all its prowling creatures.



The world was divided into three.

Three shards of sagebrush and sky.

Emma blinked sleepily between the thick wooden wheel spokes next to her head. She winced at the odor of ox droppings.

Then her eyes opened wide.

She scrambled out from under the wagon. "Sister Fallon! Sister Fallon!" she cried.

She looked around frantically for a few seconds until she realized that she was standing next to her family's wagon, Father peering at her from the canvas covering.

"Is Mother all right?" she blurted. "The baby?"

"If the baby were here, you'd know it," her father said. "Get the oxen fed and make sure everyone has breakfast. Then run on ahead and fetch Sister Fallon."

Emma stared at him.

"Unless *you* know how to deliver a baby."

She hesitated a moment. "Alright," she said. "But I'm taking your water skin with me."

Animals and children sated, Emma rushed by the wagon, water skin in hand.

"Quickly, Emma."

Emma ran.

The trail stumbled in front of her like the tracks of a wounded animal, hobbling through washes, limping around boulders, dragging up and down rises. It had no goal but far. No plan but gone.

She wished she were a hunter reading this trail; discerning her prey; inhaling its scent. She wanted the trail to resolve into words, a sentence.

A story. One propelled by her own movement—the expansion and contraction of her lungs, the arc and kick of her legs, the thrust and pull of her arms—rippling into the world, conjuring an ending.

But instead, her feet touched upon the earth one at a time, leaving only a long, inscrutable cypher. A repeating code spooling out behind her.

She came upon a campsite. But she did not stop. It did not matter what the ashes felt like or how fresh the droppings were. It only mattered how much earth she could push behind her.

Her mouth stayed wet, her lips moist, her eyes clear. But the sun began to dip, rolling toward the horizon. And soon, the sky opened its million eyes.

Emma thought she heard a cry. Something like a young woman's voice.

And then she remembered the reason you light a fire. The reason you stay with the company. The reason you don't step into the night.

Were those legs galloping behind her? Senses extrapolating her from air and earth? Hunger?

She saw ghosts in the corner of her vision. Heard echoes at the edge of her breath. Felt rhythms syncopating with her feet.

The stars, unreadable, illuminated the landscape. And all its preying creatures.



The world was divided into three.

Three shards of sagebrush and sky.

Emma's eyes snapped open, her lungs drawing a frantic breath. She rolled from under the wagon and scrambled to her feet. Mother lay on her side beneath the canvas amid the crates and furniture, huge belly pushing her dress outward. Father sat up in surprise.

"I need your bowie knife," Emma whispered.

He blinked at her a few times, then rummaged around and finally handed the object to her. "Careful," he said.

Emma grabbed the water skin, filled it, and was running before the sun broke the horizon.

The trail was pressed into the earth like lines in a human palm. Creases formed by the clench of an infant's fist, by the wires of ancestral weight, by the crossing of prophetic stars. The washes were dips between tendons, the boulders were knuckles, the rises hidden bones.

Emma wondered: if her heartbeat never came to rest, if she could run for a hundred years, what would she see when she looked back? Would her path turn out to be a mere point? The end of a long, straight line? Would she finally be far enough away to see the trail resolve into a word, a sentence? Or would it merely be one long, undeviating story pulled along lifeless behind her—an accident, an afterthought?

She passed a campsite. Eyes clear. Breath smooth. Throat moist.

The sun slowly disappeared.

Then Emma heard a cry. Something like a young woman's voice.

Or a . . .

Emma stopped.

Her trail would *not* be a single line.

She turned toward the cry.

A girl about Emma's age was sitting on a large rock, her hands pressed to her face, shoulders shaking.

Behind her, a lanky body crept upon the earth with the patience of rust, the certainty of shadow.

Emma curled her fingers around the knife's handle, drew a deep breath, and released a scream: one edged with the blood of two nights, infected with the premature silence of an infant, hallowed by ten thousand strides.

Both the girl and her stalker turned in the same instant.

The shadowy body crouched lower to the ground and growled, its triangular head snapping from girl to girl.

“Move in a circle toward me!” Emma shouted. “But don’t take your eyes off it!”

The girl moved slowly, step by step, around the figure, arms out, breath labored.

Suddenly, the devilled form lunged at the girl, but Emma screamed with a rage that punched a hole in the twilight. She whipped the knife out and slashed at the air.

The thing froze, its eyes trained on her. The girl sidled a few more steps until she and Emma were only a yard apart.

“Where’s camp?” Emma hissed.

The girl pointed to an area beyond the slinking figure. Emma looked toward it but saw nothing but dim horizon.

“I don’t know how much good this knife is going to do,” Emma said. “If we had a fire . . .”

At this, the girl reached into a pocket secreted in her dress and pulled out a black rectangle about the size of a folded handkerchief.

Emma saw her push a small circle at the bottom of the rectangle. And then the luminous face of a boy appeared on its surface. Emma stared.

“I’m totally breaking up with him,” muttered the girl. “So not worth it.”

Then she swiped her finger across his upper lip. A series of colorful symbols appeared and the girl tapped one of them.

A fire sprang to life on the rectangle’s glassy surface.

“Careful,” Emma gasped.

The girl turned the object around and shone it toward the lurker. It backed away slowly until Emma jumped forward with one last cry.

The shadow turned and plummeted into the night.

The two girls watched the creature’s lupine gait and then turned toward one another.

“Which company are you from?” Emma asked.

“Umm, the only one,” said the girl.

Emma got excited. “Is Sister Fallon there?”

“Who?”

“The midwife.”

“Uh . . . sorry.”

“Do *you* know how to deliver an infant?” Emma persisted.

The girl’s eyes grew huge. “NO!” she said. “Gross!”

“Do you know anyone who does?”

The girl held up her luminous stone and used its light to look Emma over for a moment, taking in her bare feet, her worn dress, her dirt-streaked face.

“Are you from *this* trek?” she asked.

“Please,” Emma begged.

The girl furrowed her brow, then hesitantly tapped another symbol. “How do you deliver a baby?” she said.

The rectangle changed and revealed some small blue words. The ones at the top read, “How to Deliver a Baby (with pictures)—[wikihow.com](http://www.wikihow.com).”

The girl tapped them and they turned purple. After a few seconds, the rectangle changed again and big black words appeared: “How to Deliver a Baby (with pictures).”

The girl moved the words upward by drawing her fingertip up the shining field. A color drawing of a pregnant woman lying on a bed appeared below the words.

The girl offered the object to Emma, who reached out for it, her heart beating even more quickly than it had when she had been running.

She read the words. She studied the pictures. Then she touched the surface and moved the words up to reveal more. This was truly a miracle. Like the smooth stones the brother of Jared brought to the Lord, or the seer stone Joseph used to translate the Book of Mormon.

Emma turned to the girl. “Who *are* you?” she asked in awe.

“Sandra,” said the girl, “My great-great-great-grandmother was actually born on this trail. Who are you?”

And then her body winked out.

Emma was alone.

Emma followed her own footprints back toward the wagon, the light of the stone guiding her way. Toward her mother. Toward the baby she would deliver.

She ran down the middle of the two thin inscriptions that stretched for thousands of miles in either direction. If she had the right eyes, the right lens, the right light, would she decipher a word, a sentence, a story in them?

Or would she see two? Parallel but yoked. Distinct but coupled. A veil pulled taut between them.

Sometimes tearing just a little.

The stars, unreadable, illuminated the landscape.

And all its newest creatures.

BAPTISM

Christinah Cross

The first time I remember seeing a baptism was at a tiny Southern Baptist chapel in Chiefland, Florida. All dolled up in my frilly pastel dress, white buckled shoes, and lacy socks, my brother and I walked across the hot parking lot from Grandma's black Mazda truck into the homey brick chapel, each holding a finger of our grandmother's hand. She had pressed her best dress so stiff she may as well have washed it in pure starch. My little brother's six-year-old indoctrinated Southern etiquette displayed itself proudly—church was not a regular outing, and he didn't mind being suited up and shown off. Plenty of others coming into the chapel were in their Sunday best, most of whom gave the air of being "regulars," but medleys of worn denim mixed with the collared shirts and skirts didn't seem out-of-place.

We mounted the steps, crossed the threshold, and adjusted our eyes to the dark and our damp skin to the blasting air conditioning. As we filed into the congregation, Grandma's finger tugged me gently because I kept getting distracted by bright stained-glass windows and forgetting to move. After we sat down, the preacher started in on his sermon and someone passed around the collection plate. We may also have done what I only knew as the bread-and-water thing. (I couldn't remember which churches we had been to that did that, but I liked it—if for no other reason than that it broke up the monotony.) But what I really remember is the baptism.

Sometime during the meeting, the preacher announced that we had a new brother who was being baptized and coming to Jesus. Behind the

pulpit, front and center of the chapel, he dramatically pushed back a glass door to expose the font, which looked to me like a tall bathtub. A young, clean-cut man waited in the water. Smiling, he held out his hand to help another man descend the steps. This other man was older, bearded, and gruff, certainly not dressed for the occasion of coming to Jesus. When the two men met, the younger man said something (unintelligible from where I sat) and quickly dunked the older man under the water. When the older man came back up, he was sopping wet but grinning. He had looked a little nervous before, but now he appeared nothing short of triumphant, as though he had left everything sad or scary in the water. We all clapped and cheered for our new brother.

All of a sudden, I wanted that.



For Southern Baptists, as for many Protestant Christians, baptism is a deliberate act of faith, a declaration to the world of belief in Jesus Christ. As such, you are probably more likely to see an adult baptism at a Baptist church than the baptism of a child. Baptism doesn't "save," but it shows that the person has been saved by accepting the Savior.

For Baptists, baptism is highly symbolic. It must be done by immersion because it represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as the death of your life as a sinner and the birth of your new life as a follower of Christ. It also makes you a member of the church, although the spiritual significance of the ordinance is emphasized much more than is entrance into the church, because nothing about the church is considered necessary for salvation. It's just a community of believers.

Granted, I couldn't have told you any of that at eight years old. But I could have told you that this baptized man looked newly born, he had come into a community, and he believed.



I leaned over excitedly and whispered, “Grandma? Are we going do that?”

She paused. Carefully, she replied, “Umm . . . not this time.”

“Can I, though?”

“Maybe.”

“When?”

“We’ll talk about it later, okay, baby?”

I assumed “later” meant Grandma had politely dismissed my request, but I soon found out that it hadn’t been ignored. My grandmother, who viewed her precious grandbabies as spiritual protégés, was always eager to encourage (but not force) any religious inclination. She was excited when I wanted to attend church, pray, or hear stories of Jesus; my newfound desire for baptism thrilled her. As I’m sure Grandma anticipated, however, my mother was considerably less enthusiastic. She wasn’t strictly opposed, but she was wary of eight-year-olds making decisions of eternal magnitude, especially *her* eight-year-old. But as a single mother working sixty hours a week as a restaurant manager, weekends being their busiest times, she had to entrust Sunday activities to her mother, to whom she gave permission to take me to a few different churches until we found something that satisfied me (or that satisfied her). The only parameters were to stay away from Catholics and Mormons. Only babies could be baptized as Catholics (at least she thought so). And Mormons? Been there, done that.

My mother and grandmother, unknown to me at the time, were both inactive Mormons. Recently the LDS Church has replaced the term “inactive” with “less active,” but for my mother, who smoked several cigarettes a day and went to bed with a Jack Daniels, and my grandmother who had developed a taste for cigars and wine much too expensive for my mother’s income, a point causing frequent household tension, I don’t feel like “less active” quite cut it. In fact, Christianity as a whole may actually have been debatable for my mother. Grandma, however, wasn’t about to take me anywhere that wasn’t Christian.

Grandma was by far the most qualified candidate in our family to take me church-hopping and baptism-shopping. She had always been the most spiritually inclined, and I had always thought of her as a “church-person.” She was a big, round woman with big, kinky black hair, big purple-tinted glasses, and a big heavy pocketbook, and she had more than enough spirit to fill that frame. The few times we had gone to church, she had been the one to take us and she seemed to know everybody there, which was especially impressive considering we didn’t always attend the same place. If she had had her way, I probably would’ve been baptized in all of them, too.

I almost wonder if her spirit was just too big for one church to hold it. She kept a large-printed, worn red-letter edition Bible with her, she zealously watched Benny Hinn and other shouting Pentecostal-style TV preachers who shoved people down into the water of baptism to make them “whole,” and she prayed in tongues. My favorite part of Grandma’s “churchy-ness” was her singing. Her big, low voice gave a certain depth to the hymns, especially the ones she learned in her intermittent affairs with local African-American evangelical denominations. I had experienced a couple of these vibrant services myself. I took pleasure in being the only white people in the room, feeling somehow unique. I adored the color—in paper fans, in hats, in dresses, in people. We would stand for almost the entire service, singing and clapping to the music of the band. Many of the hymns, the ones I can still hear Grandma singing, had been handed down since before the Civil War. They rang out freedom and victory through Jesus. I didn’t know what “victory in Jesus” was, but I liked it.

For these believers, coming to Jesus was a victory over death and sin, and baptism was the most fitting celebration. It meant that you had won your soul from the devil and were giving it to Jesus. An epic fight occurring in each soul calls for a kind of fervor in religious meetings that many of us can’t keep up with. The fervor comes because not only do you have the opportunity to rejoice over the souls that have been

saved, but you never know what worship session is going to spark the saving of another soul.

Anyway, as directed, we visited several churches, although I don't now remember exactly which. I also don't know why Grandma walked us into the Orange Park First Ward, Jacksonville Stake Latter-day Saint sacrament meeting a few weeks after her conversation with my mother. Whether out of sheer defiance or latent guilt for forsaking a faith she had once embraced, we found ourselves in a Mormon chapel that seemed vaguely familiar to me. (As it turns out we had attended an LDS meeting once or twice in Chiefland.) Compared to the stained-glass Baptist windows or the vibrant color of other places we'd been, this building suffered a disappointing lack of color. For once Grandma didn't already know everyone; I could tell she was slightly uncomfortable by the sugary, much more "milk-and-cookies grandma" tone she assumed when anyone welcomed us. The first of those welcomers was a small, elderly woman who greeted us and introduced herself as Sister White. I could remember that because her hair was as white as the beautiful snow I'd only ever seen in Christmas movies.

For most of sacrament meeting, I stared at the ceiling. The hanging lights formed rectangular prisms gathered at a point, and I imagined them to be giant crayons. Mentally I pulled one down, turned it around so that the point faced upward, and traced the bold-lettered word CHURCH across the chapel ceiling. Once I satisfied myself tracing with giant light fixture crayons, I began flipping through the hymnbook to find any songs I might know. I recognized "How Great Thou Art" so I read it a few times over, picturing stars and rolling thunder. There was no baptism, but we did do the bread-and-water thing.

Three hours of church did not faze my enthusiasm; I had always thought church ended too quickly. After sacrament meeting, Sister White led me to meet the other Primary kids. We sang more songs and played a few games. Then a pretty lady with short black hair just happened to teach us a lesson about baptism. It annoyed me that the rambunctious

boys in my class weren't as enthralled by the subject as I was, but I focused on the teacher.

"Who here has been baptized?" she asked. "Raise your hands. What was it like? How did you feel?"

I looked around, jealous of the raised hands and proud faces. I was unimpressed by the vague and almost apathetic descriptions of baptism from the other children, whose sentiments seemed quite inadequate as I remembered the beaming smile of the bearded man who came to Jesus in that Baptist church. I forgot my jealousy and judgment of the other children in time to get a Twizzler and make the small trek to a Sunday School classroom, where I busied myself making a new friend and finding out how "Shad-rack, Me-shack, and Ab-indigo" were rescued from fire.

That night when my mother came home from work, Grandma told her we'd be having the missionaries over later in the week. My mother's raised eyebrow sufficed to communicate her incredulity; Grandma apologetically explained that Sister White, who had talked to her all through Relief Society, had introduced her to the nice elders and Grandma simply couldn't get out of an appointment without being rude. (We found out many years later from one of those missionaries that Grandma had contacted them directly. I'd like to ask her what prompted her to do so, but once she tells a story she becomes so deeply convinced of it that reality is unrecoverable.)

My mother couldn't cancel the appointment or turn the missionaries away either, so come they did. And they came again and again. I loved having the elders over. I grew excited just cleaning up the living room in preparation, and if they ran late I worried that they would forget about us. They played games with us, told cool stories, showed off, and let us wear their nametags and backpacks. When they taught, I felt like I, the stringy-haired girl in her pink cotton pajamas, held the full attention of two grown-ups. They used a coloring book version of the discussions for kids, which they eventually gave up on because it couldn't handle the

questions my brother and I asked them. (I still appreciated the coloring book though.)

And I did ask a lot of questions. For example, I wasn't as impressed as I think I was supposed to be when they told me "families can be together forever" in heaven. I had already figured that, because why else would anybody want to go to there? Instead, the topic only sparked questions about mommies and daddies who got divorced. My mother stayed busy in the kitchen most of the time the missionaries visited—close enough to supervise the conversation without being part of it. I honestly don't remember how the missionaries answered my question about divorce, or any of my other questions for that matter. But I do remember that my mother came quietly into the room and sat down on the couch.

We talked about baptism, too. I bragged that I had seen a baptism and I wanted to be baptized. To explain the concept of priesthood authority and its necessity for baptism, Elder Hann painted the picture of a speeding car pulled over by an ice cream truck with a siren, and the ice cream man handing the speeder a ticket. I thought the analogy was hilarious, but then again I found everything funny in his Australian accent.

The whole thing made sense to me. I figured that if the Mormons were the only church that had gotten it right, I wanted to be baptized there. It seemed that baptism was the same for Mormons as it was for everybody else I knew. The only major difference was that it felt less like the victorious end of a fight and more like the beginning of . . . what, I didn't yet know. Baptism for Mormons, like Baptists and evangelicals, qualified you for membership in the church and showed your belief in, and obedience to, Jesus Christ. It also served as a cleansing from sin and put you in a lifelong covenant with God, to be remembered during the sacrament (the bread-and-water thing) every week for the rest of your life.

I found out that you only have to be eight years old to be baptized, so I felt more than ready. I liked church. I liked the missionaries. I liked my illustrated *Book of Mormon Stories* that I read almost all in one night when Bryan had scarlet fever and we were stuck at the hospital. (Abinadi,

my favorite hero, was not rescued from the fire like Shadrach Meshach, and Abednego, and that disappointed expectation was traumatizing for a few years.) I especially liked how nobody fought on the nights the missionaries came over and my mother smiled more.

If baptism, in at least some of the senses I then understood it, could happen to a home, it was happening to mine. The same two missionaries visited us weekly for eight or nine months. At the time, we didn't appreciate how long that was, either in terms of missionary transfers or in terms of missionary patience. I waited to be baptized.

Scripturally, things end poorly for those who seek "a sign," but God must have deemed my family stubborn enough to need one. One night we had a whole lesson with the elders on fasting. Eager to try a new challenge from the elders, Bryan and I wondered out loud what we could fast for. My mother worked too hard keeping food in the refrigerator to support skipping meals, but she agreed we could try fasting for just one lunch. Brother Scurti, the stout, warm old man who accompanied the missionaries most nights they visited us, spoke up from the other end of the plushy blue couch.

"What if you fasted and asked Heavenly Father to find your mother a job that lets her stay home on Sundays? Then she could come to church with you."

"And with the same pay and benefits," my mother added politely, but cynically.

"Yes," he smiled, pretending not to catch the skepticism, "why don't you fast for that?"

Besides working long hours, my mother also took night classes to earn her degree. Two weeks after our fasting experiment, a classmate spontaneously asked her if she would be interested in a recently opened management position. His company offered the same pay and benefits as her current job, and a consistent schedule Monday–Friday and every other Saturday. My mother stopped waiting for my baptism phase to pass. She began trying to re-discover the whole Mormon thing herself,

because she wasn't about to do anything halfway. And one day she told me I could be baptized.

We set the date for November 22nd. My birthday had passed and I was no longer eight, but I didn't stay disappointed by that very long. I was anxious when I found out there was an interview—I had never been interviewed for anything before—but I was pleased with myself when I found it quite easy to pass. I counted down the days until the 22nd, which fell on a Saturday night. I wore a white frilly dress and felt beautiful. When we entered the now-familiar beige building, Elder Hann showed me the font. His stunning white suit somehow reminded me of bright colored hats and stained glass windows. I leaned my ear up against the cool accordion door and ecstatically reported that I could hear water running behind it. That was *my* water.

Everyone was there—Mommy, Bryan, my aunt and baby cousin, my beaming Grandma; my Primary teachers and the other kids in my Sunday School class; my best friend from school and her mother. (I had also invited my Irish Catholic third-grade teacher, who had declined politely.) We began the ceremony by singing “I Am a Child of God” and Bryan gave the opening prayer. (I had dictated my own program and wanted to make sure everyone got to participate). I had assigned my mother to give a talk on baptism, which she did.

Brother Scurti had teased that if I was good, the water would be warm. I must have been good that day, because descending the steps to the font felt like stepping into a ready-made bath. Elder Hann reminded me where to hold his wrist so I could pinch my nose, which I had rehearsed because I was terrified of inhaling water. He leaned down and asked me to remind him of my middle name. By this point, the silence in the room compelled me to whisper, “Paige.” He stood up straight and said, with an unfamiliar authority but a familiar Brisbane edge, “Christinah Paige Cross . . .” I felt my heart pound faster through the brief, deliberate prayer. I shut my eyes tight, death-gripped my nose, and fell back.

The warm water engulfed my small body, and the rush of being pulled back up was so exhilarating that I almost wished I could do it again.

Someone heard my wish. As the first cold draft hit my dripping face and I turned to leave, Elder Hann's grasp on my arm tightened. "Wait, Christinah!" He was wearing the kind of smile that replaces a laugh in a reverent setting. "We get to do it again!" My toe had popped up out of the water, so I hadn't been fully immersed. We needed to repeat the ordinance, which might have annoyed another missionary or embarrassed another child. But I was delighted. How many people got to be baptized twice? Elder Hann again stood up straight and again assumed the purposeful tone. "Christinah Paige Cross . . ." Eyes closed, nose gripped, warmth, rush, air . . .

He was actually snickering now. "We get to do it a *third* time!" Wow, was I lucky! This time, he secured both my feet under one of his, bent and dunked me as far as I could go, and I'm pretty sure he held me there an extra few seconds. When I finally left the font, I beamed with pride. All I wanted was to be baptized once, and I got to do it three times. Slowly ascending the slippery steps to the bathroom where my mother and grandmother waited for me, I thought how I was clean and perfect three times over. This must be what it feels like to come to Jesus.



An individual's journey to any kind of spiritual rebirth can take countless forms, and I don't think it ever happens in isolation. My Grandma's big church-person spirit, with her red-lettered Bible, praying in tongues, and deep-toned folk hymns nurtured in me a genuine, sometimes even overwhelming, excitement about all things God. That man who was baptized that day in a Southern Baptist chapel in Chiefland showed me the courage and faith made possible by a spiritual community. Gospel-singing evangelicals taught me to celebrate spiritual victories. My mother taught me the importance of asking questions, and two teenage boys

in ties gave me a few of the answers. Without these influences, I may never have “come to Jesus” in quite the way I did, culminating in that exhilarating rush of warm water for the third time. I wouldn’t trade my journey for anyone else’s. In the early days of the Church, Saints were often re-baptized to affirm their commitment to God. Now we just use the sacrament. Doctrinally speaking, it’s the same thing, but while I still like the bread-and-water thing, I confess I love being baptized for the dead in the temple. It never gets old. I don’t do it as often as I did through my teen years, now spending more time on other temple ordinances. Those ceremonies are always special . . . but I do like being baptized.

INTO A FOREIGN LAND: A CATHOLIC AMONG MORMONS

Polly Aird

Although I was brought up in a Congregational church and my husband in an Episcopal church, after reading Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain* in the early 1970s, we converted to Catholicism. There we found a spiritual home. I now help out in a seven-month class for those who want to become Catholic. Why is a Catholic from Seattle interested in Mormon history? My background includes Episcopalians, Quakers, Presbyterians, Mormons, and Unitarians. It involves belief, dissent, and conversion, and then belief, dissent, and conversion all over again, with some large doses of persecution thrown in from time to time.

One branch of my mother's family included seven generations of Church of England (Anglican/Episcopalian) priests. Another branch left the Church of England and joined the Quakers, only to be persecuted in the 1680s, first during the reign of Charles II and then in the "Bloody Assizes" under James II.¹ To escape further persecution, these forebears came to America in 1685 and settled around Philadelphia. With this background, my mother was brought up half Episcopalian and half Quaker.

1. Henry N. Paul, *Joseph Paull of Ilminster, Somerset, England, and Some of His Descendants Who Have Resided in Philadelphia, Penna* (Philadelphia: H. N. Paul, 1932), 1–15; Ellinor Collins Aird, *The Robeson Family in America* (Ardmore, Pa.: privately printed, 2003), 18.

More than a hundred and fifty years after my mother's family came to America, my father's grandparents—the McAuslans and the Airds—arrived from Scotland. Having deserted the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian), they converted to Mormonism in the 1840s in the Glasgow area where they too encountered persecution—anti-Mormons often disrupted meetings by whistling, clapping, stamping, hooting, or more damagingly, breaking chairs or pulling down the gas lamps.² Not long after arriving in Utah in 1853–54, however, the McAuslans became disillusioned with their new faith. The causes were complex, but primarily stemmed from the excesses of the Mormon Reformation of 1856–57.³

Most disturbing for them were the preaching of blood atonement and the Parrish-Potter murders in Springville six months before the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Aaron Johnson, bishop of Springville, had called a series of council meetings after receiving two letters from Brigham Young warning about two drifters who were heading south to California. The second letter ended with “Be on the look out now & have a few trusty men ready in case of need to pursue, retake & punish.”⁴ These letters, broadly interpreted, combined with the Reformation's thrust to purify Zion led Bishop Johnson to appoint two men to spy on the William R. Parrish family who, having lost their faith, planned to leave for California by the southern route. In the end, William Parrish and his son Beason, and, by mistake, Gardiner G. “Duff” Potter, one

2. William Gibson, Journal, 1:23, Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; Polly Aird, *Mormon Convert, Mormon Defector: A Scottish Immigrant in the American West, 1848–1861* (Norman, Okla: Arthur H. Clark Co., an imprint of the University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 85.

3. For a full account of the McAuslan family's Mormon experience, see Aird, *Mormon Convert, Mormon Defector*.

4. Brigham Young to Aaron Johnson, Feb. 3, 1857; and to Bishops and Presidents South, Feb. 6, 1857. Brigham Young, Letterpress Copybook Transcriptions 3, 352, 387.

of the spies, were killed.⁵ Springville was six miles from Spanish Fork where the McAuslans were living and as they too had lost their faith and wanted to leave, they were alarmed.

But leaving Utah was not simple, as this was ten years before the transcontinental railroad was completed. The family feared the Danites, Brigham Young's purported secret band of armed thugs. That there was danger for those who lost their faith is shown by the murder of the Parishes, but whether the McAuslans were targeted is impossible to know. Nevertheless, their perception of peril was real.⁶

In 1858 the US Army marched into Utah to install a non-Mormon governor and effect a separation of church and state. With others, the McAuslans applied to the new governor for help to get out of Utah. Thus in June 1859, some forty families of disaffected Mormons left for California under the protection of an army escort.⁷

Soon after the McAuslans left Utah, my father's paternal family—the Airds—moved to Heber City. There, William Aird, my great-grandfather, also became disillusioned. In 1873—twenty years after the family had arrived in Utah—he told his priesthood quorum that, while he still believed in Joseph Smith, he no longer believed in the Utah church authorities. He resigned from the quorum and withdrew from the church.⁸ Soon afterward he joined the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, today's Community of Christ, another instance of belief, dissent, and conversion.

5. Polly Aird, "‘You Nasty Apostates, Clear Out’: Reasons for Disaffection in the Late 1850s," *Journal of Mormon History* 30 (Fall 2004): 173–91.

6. Peter McAuslan, Letter to Robert Salmon, Dec. 1860, reprinted in Aird, "‘You Nasty Apostates, Clear Out,’” 192–201.

7. Polly Aird, "Escape from Zion: The United States Army Escort of Mormon Apostates, 1859," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly* 44 (Fall 2001): 196–237.

8. Melchizedek Priesthood Minutes 1861–1878, Heber Branch, Wasatch Stake, Dec. 27, 1873, Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

William Aird was a handloom weaver and made most of the cloth worn in Heber, but when he left the Church, he lost his customers. The now economically- and socially-persecuted family was soon starving. William's son, my grandfather, then ten years old, later wrote that the hardest part besides the constant hunger was the taunting of other children. When the stake president, Abram Hatch, discovered their plight, he made sure the family received at least the barest necessities of life. Hatch further said that since it was not the fault of the children that their parents had left the Church, the community should offer the children work so they could support the family. Over time, attitudes changed and the family was accepted once more.⁹

About the time I started high school, my grandmother wrote an account of these family experiences. Years later my father decided to expand her story by adding context. As I had been an editor for many years, he asked me to go over it. What a patchwork quilt—the family stories mixed in with Scottish history, Mormon history, Utah history, and Mormon beliefs! In trying to straighten it out, I became intrigued. Why had these Scots converted in the first place, what happened that disillusioned them, and with what did they fill the spiritual vacuum in their lives?

I knew nothing about Mormonism except what my grandmother and now my father had written, none of it very complimentary. Deciding to keep an open mind, I starting reading and then ordering books through interlibrary loan. The first book I read was Wallace Stegner's *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail*. First published in 1964, its final section, "A Word on Bibliography," speaks of the problem for historians:

The literature on the Mormons is enormous, repetitious, contradictory, and embattled. . . . The more one wades into this morass the deeper he

9. John W. Aird, Letters to Juliaetta Bateman Jensen, Jan. 20, and Mar. 10, 1949, in Emily McAuslan Aird's family history, typescript 1953, copy in the Polly Aird Papers, Utah State Historical Society, 36–38, 44–45.

is mired, and the farther from firm ground. There *is* no firm ground here; there is only Mormon opinion, Gentile opinion, and the necessarily tentative opinion of historians trying to take account of all the facts and allow for all the delusion, hatred, passion, paranoia, lying, bad faith, concealment, and distortion of evidence that were contributed by both the Mormons and their enemies.¹⁰

Well! It looked pretty hopeless. Nevertheless, I wrote letters to the Utah State Historical Society, and then—bravely, as I look back on it—to Leonard Arrington, the dean of Mormon history. Both were generous in their replies, with Arrington writing a long, single-spaced typed letter suggesting books and people I might contact. His letter gave me the courage to keep going. At the Utah State Historical Society, the then curator of manuscripts, Gary Topping (also a Catholic!), was likewise helpful. But it wasn't long before I realized that I needed to go to Utah and do primary research.

After reading relevant records in the Historical Society and Family History Library, it became obvious that I needed to get into the Church archives (formally known as the Church History Library) with their wealth of documents and diaries. I was hesitant, even afraid. I had Stegner's words in mind. Here was I, a Catholic and a descendent of people who had deserted the LDS faith, wanting access to records that involved painful parts of the Church's history. It was now the early 1990s, not that many years after Arrington's dismissal as Church Historian and banishment to Provo. I had read his and Davis Bitton's book, *Mormons and Their Historians*, in which they said that many documents in the archives had become highly restricted.¹¹ That confirmed Stegner's description of the problem with doing Mormon history. I was sure I would not be allowed in.

10. Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail* (Salt Lake City: Westwater Press, 1981), 313.

11. Davis Bitton and Leonard Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), 165.

Gary Topping, however, said to go and introduce myself to Ron Watt, whom he knew through the Utah Historical Society. Ron, he said, was as kind a person as one could hope to meet. Thus, with my heart in my mouth—and no crucifix showing—I found my way to the second floor of the Church Office Building and the archives. There I was confronted with a document to sign giving the Church the right to review anything I published that included material from their collection. I signed with trepidation, for there was no other way to get in. I asked for Ron Watt and introduced myself. To my relief, he was unreservedly friendly.

It wasn't long before I discovered that everyone in the archives would go out of their way to help. Over the years, Ron Barney and Randy Dixon in addition to Ron Watt—as well as many others inside and outside the archives—have patiently and cheerfully answered my questions, no matter how ignorant and off-the-wall they must have sounded. Since then the Church archives has become increasingly open and no longer insists on review rights. With the advent of Richard Turley as Assistant Church Historian, many more records are now available.

The helpfulness of the archives staff puzzled me. Why were they so hospitable, especially in light of the research I was doing? Bit by bit I developed theories. Perhaps it was because Mormons are truly nice people. Or maybe they were intrigued by my project and curious to see what I might turn up. Or maybe they believed the truth would not hurt the Church and felt my interest was not in bashing the Church, but in figuring out what happened to one family. But finally I thought, Oh! They hope I will see how wonderful the Church is and convert!

Later, on a Mormon History Association post-conference bus tour, I sat next to Paul Anderson, now retired curator at the Museum of Art at Brigham Young University. As we chatted I told him my theories of why the staff at the Church archives was so helpful. After recounting my thoughts that Mormons are simply nice, that maybe they did not believe the truth would hurt the Church, or that they hoped I'd convert, he laughed and said, "Oh, Polly, it's that you can't imagine how

delighted we are to have an outsider interested in our history!” I loved his response! But it also reveals what distances remain between Mormon insiders and outsiders.

Throughout this journey, the Mormon History Association has been my home. Lavina Fielding Anderson in her gracious and welcoming way regularly encouraged me and eventually asked me to join the editorial board of the *Journal of Mormon History*. The MHA conferences and especially the tours have made it possible to get to know many Mormons. Almost all have been warm and friendly, though curious about my involvement.

The result of all this is that my first book, *Mormon Convert, Mormon Defector*, about the McAuslan family that escaped Utah with the help of the army, was published in 2009. It was followed by a book edited with Will Bagley and Jeff Nichols titled *Playing with Shadows: Voices of Dissent in the Mormon West*, which includes four previously unpublished journals or autobiographies of nineteenth-century Mormons who had difficulties with Church authorities.¹² I’ve also written several papers and served on the executive board of the MHA. In the process, I’ve become somewhat of a specialist on nineteenth-century Mormon dissenters. I certainly had no idea that this is where I would land when I started researching a family story! But the history of dissent is a wide-open field, and far from what most Mormon historians care to pursue.

This conference has given me a chance to mull over what I have learned about Mormonism, Mormon people, and Mormon dissenters. What I see is this: in the nineteenth century, dissenters were treated as enemies. One was either for the Church or against it. The attitude was that through some character flaw these people had lost their way and allowed Satan to get hold of them. There was little discussion or curiosity

12. Polly Aird, Jeffrey Nichols, and Will Bagley, eds., *Playing with Shadows: Voices of Dissent in the Mormon West* (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark Co., an imprint of the University of Oklahoma Press, 2011).

about the doubts they had and even less about how they might still be accepted as neighbors in spite of leaving the Church.

One historical example will suffice, that of John Hyde Jr. Hyde was born in England in 1833, baptized in London in 1848 at age fifteen, and ordained a Seventy three years later. From 1851 to 1853 he served under John Taylor on a mission to France. After that, he emigrated to Utah, married his English sweetheart, and taught school for a living. He received his endowment in 1854.¹³

Hyde began to find things in Mormonism that distressed him. One was the mixing of the spiritual with the mundane. In Great Britain, the Church stressed biblical teachings and promoted discussions. Gifts of the Spirit and visions were important. But in Utah, Hyde was put off by the typical meeting: “They . . . always commenc[e] by singing and prayer, but [then descend into] discourse on adobe-making, clothes-washing, house-cleaning, ditch-digging, and other kindred subjects. . . . It is no more worship than any thing else they do.”¹⁴

Hyde came to distrust the Church leaders. In England polygamy was regularly denied as a pernicious rumor, but when he got to Utah he realized the missionaries had not told the truth. As he wrote later, “The whole of the apostles abroad had lied in denying it; positively, deliberately, wilfully [sic] lied,—wrote lies,—published and circulated lies,—the heads of the church sanctioned and commanded them. . . . What confidence can we place in the statements of such men, or the pretensions of such a system?”¹⁵

13. Lynne Watkins Jorgensen, “John Hyde, Jr., Mormon Renegade,” *Journal of Mormon History* 17 (1991): 123–29.

14. John Hyde Jr., *Mormonism: Its Leaders and Designs* (New York: W. P. Fetridge & Company, 1857), 39–40.

15. John Hyde Jr., “Utah as It Is,” To the Editor of the *Polynesian*, *The Pacific*, Nov. 27, 1856, in Roger Robin Ekins, ed., “The Pusillanimous Railings of an Apostate Mormon: The Strange Case of Elder Cannon and Mr. Hyde,” *Defending Zion*:

Hyde had other complaints related to the control Brigham Young kept over individuals as well as to the practice of polygamy. The latter did not, he said, make either men or women happy or elevated.¹⁶ Nevertheless, it was a struggle to decide to leave the Church: "Every tie that could bind any one to any system, united me to Mormonism," he wrote. "It had been the religion that my youth had loved and preached; it was the faith of my parents; of my wife and her relatives. . . . I clung [to it] with desperate energy."¹⁷

In May 1856 he accepted a mission to Hawaii because he hoped that "to be actively employed in the ministry might waken up my old confidence; that in the effort to convince others, I might succeed in reconvincing myself."¹⁸ In this he failed. By the time he reached Hawaii, he was persuaded that Mormonism was in error. Returning to San Francisco where he had earlier defended polygamy, he now lectured against it, and then went on to New York City where he published his book, *Mormonism: Its Leaders and Designs*. His wife never joined him and eventually married another man as a plural wife in Salt Lake City.¹⁹

In January 1857 Hyde was excommunicated publicly in the Old Tabernacle in Salt Lake City. It held some 2,500 people, though how many attended that day is not known. In a discourse, Heber C. Kimball moved that:

John Hyde be cut off from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints . . . root and branch. . . . I want you to vote, every one of you, either for or against, for there is no sympathy to be shown unto such a man. . . . All that are in favour that John Hyde be cut off . . . and that

George Q. Cannon and the California Mormon Newspaper Wars of 1856–1857 (Spokane, Wash.: Arthur H. Clark Company, 2002), 122.

16. John Hyde, "Renunciation of Mormonism," letter to *The Pacific*, Nov. 27, 1856, reprinted in Ekins, *Defending Zion*, 120.

17. Hyde, *Mormonism*, 21–22.

18. *Ibid.*, 22.

19. Aird, "You Nasty Apostates, Clear Out," 203.

he be delivered over to Satan to be buffeted in the flesh, will raise their right hands. (All hands were raised.)²⁰

This nineteenth-century example has echoes in the recent excommunications in the Church. A woman recently posted on the Feminist Mormon Housewives blog saying, “In the church, apostasy has been neatly wrapped up in the parable of the wheat and tares. Those who ‘apostatize’ must be the tares and those left in the church pat themselves on the back for being the ‘wheat.’ They see their judgments as having been sure, swift, and Godly.”²¹ In googling “LDS wheat and tares,” I got a number of perspectives on this parable, so I don’t know how representative her post is. Although those recently excommunicated were not turned over to the buffeting of Satan, she certainly felt the judgments were too harsh.

How would a Catholic view this parable? Fr. Dan Dwyer, in his usual generous way, answered my email:

To me it seems that one aspect of the parable is that it is difficult to tell wheat from tares—so rather than make a judgment we should leave people to God’s judgment. Practically speaking that would mean that one should be very hesitant to excommunicate—in case you are ripping up the wheat! Sometimes excommunication is necessary, . . . But we need always [to] remember that excommunication is just that—a withholding of communion for a serious reason. It is not an action that NECESSARILY cuts the person off from God—only God knows when and if that ever happens. I think the parable of the wheat and the tares

20. Heber C. Kimball Blood Atonement Sermon, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: Latter-day Saints Book Depot, 1854–89), 4:165.

21. “Lucy” comment on “Why Aren’t You an Apostate?” Feminist Mormon Housewives (Feb. 15, 2015), retrieved from <http://www.feministmormonhousewives.org/2015/02/why-arent-you-an-apostate/>. The parable of the sower is from Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43. See also Doctrine and Covenants 86:1–7. See also the Primary lesson on the parable at <https://www.lds.org/manual/primary-7-new-testament/lesson-17-the-parable-of-the-sower-and-the-wheat-and-ares?lang=eng>.

calls for as much inclusion as is humanly possible—and has more to do with one's ultimate destiny in the kingdom than in the status of one's church membership here.²²

One Russian Orthodox priest comments, “Christ does not want the tares pulled out that grow alongside the wheat in the Church because he wants the righteous to learn patience and for sinners to feel His loving kindness.”²³

Leaving the subject of dissent, let me turn to working as a Catholic in Mormon history. Early on I decided that I did not need to carry on into yet another generation the negative views of Mormonism inherited from my father's family. Especially thanks to MHA, I have made wonderful friends, both Mormon and Catholic, who have greatly enriched my life. Here in Mormon studies, our little band of Catholics has taken the name “Morlics” (i.e., Mormons-Catholics). We tried Cathmons (Catholics-Mormons), but that didn't have the same ring.

I respect the sincerity of my Mormon friends' beliefs. My research about the past of my dissenting ancestors has led me into corners I never suspected existed. This formerly foreign land of Mormonism has thus become increasingly familiar, populated by friends, and full of fascinating byways.

Nevertheless, I have also had some experiences with Mormons that have been less inviting. In the course of my research, I have met and talked with a number of Mormon cousins—descendants of relatives who did not leave the faith. Most were welcoming, curious to meet me, and generous with family papers or photographs that might be relevant to my work. One experience, however, was different. I had thought this set of cousins would be interested in what I had turned up about our

22. Fr. Daniel Dwyer, OFM (whose essay also appears in this issue), email to Polly Aird, Feb. 20, 2015. Emphasis in original.

23. Fr. Victor Potapov, “Gospel Parables: An Orthodox Commentary,” Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist, Washington, DC, retrieved from http://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/parables_potapov.htm.

common ancestors, but they were not. I puzzled over this for some time. Maybe I'm wrong, but I finally concluded the problem was that they did not want to let go of their picture of our ancestors. The ones they wanted were something like those in a coloring book of handcart pioneers undaunted by any obstacle. They did not want real human beings who experienced the ups and downs of life and maybe even struggled with doubt. They seemed afraid of having their view shaken, of somehow losing their heroic forebears.

Several people over the years have asked if I am LDS, and when I say no, they brightly chime, "We can fix that!" One woman looked puzzled when I said I was Catholic, and then burst out, "But we want you!" Another time, on a tour to the Cedar City Rock Chapel, an elderly friend took my hand and led me downstairs to the baptismal font and hinted that I should join the faith. Yet another person told me that I might find myself walking beside a swimming pool, fall in, and find myself baptized! These people wanted only the best for me, but each instance implied that my Catholic baptism did not really count and that my Catholic faith was inadequate. That's disheartening. I would hope that Mormons and Catholics could come to acknowledge and respect each others' beliefs without one feeling superior to the other.

Although we have come a long way, we Mormons and Catholics, the road still stretches ahead. Hopefully over time we—historians and ordinary folk, Mormons and non-Mormons—will be less quick to judge and more willing to take an interest in each other's religious beliefs. And hopefully non-Mormons will go beyond the seemingly "weird" in Mormonism to find the underlying vibrant faith and culture. May all religions recognize that people—living or dead—are and were questioning people, for questioning—including doubting—is what humans do.

DEUS MEA LUX EST: A MORMON AMONG CATHOLICS

Zina Nibley Petersen

I am the Mormon among Catholics part of this equation. I was raised in Utah Valley—well I got taller, anyway. I got my undergraduate degree from Brigham Young University (BYU) and both of my graduate degrees from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. As an alumna of that school, and especially as a medievalist who studies the Catholic mystics of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, I love Catholicism and the history of Catholic Christianity. I do confess, though, that my knowledge of that vast history is spotty and particular, and that the parts I love most are the wacky bits—but more on that later.

I always loved history and was attracted to the high ritual of Catholicism even as a (weird) Mormon kid, but I didn't expect to go to Catholic school, so here is how that happened. One of the ways God has always answered my prayers is through music. When my father died I spent hours listening to his favorite records of classical music to help with my grief. I have had questions resolved by overheard snatches of Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and have had little epiphanies (epiphanettes, I call them) by recalling seemingly random song lyrics—they pop into my head fortuitously, and God and I share a chuckle.

But probably the most poignant time God answered a prayer with a song was when I was a new graduate student at the University of Maryland (I didn't start out at CUA), and I was terribly homesick. Boyd and I were married about four years and had never lived outside of Utah before. We moved at the new year, which meant unpacking

our van of belongings into a tiny basement apartment during a cold snap harsher than any Maryland had experienced in years. We moved into the basement because it was all we could afford, and though it was adequate—a kitchen, a bathroom, and a bedroom—it also had two unforeseen aspects that did not help my loneliness and depression. The first was that the foundation of the house was severely cracked, which meant we awoke each morning to about an inch of icy water on our floor; and, second, Mrs. Cook, the landlady, who was bedridden in the final stages of aggressive and agonizing stomach cancer. She would cry out in distress and pain, and chain smoke to take some of the edge off. Our bed was about six feet below hers. Her distress, as well as the tobacco and medical waste smells would fill our tiny, splashy bedroom in all the hours she was awake, which was most of them. Dying of cancer is not for the faint of heart.

And I was in a completely inappropriate slough of self-pity as she did. My depression was fierce. I had been the darling of my graduating class at BYU, all the professors knew me and loved me, and here I was, a total stranger at an enormous state school, with professors who drank coffee and smoked cigarettes and did not care at all about the new grad student who paid out-of-state tuition and looked bewildered more often than not. They weren't unkind, particularly, but they were not *my* people, the way BYU professors had been *my* people, and where I had thought school itself could give me a purpose and a distraction from my homesickness, at the University of Maryland it merely exacerbated the longing. There was no financial aid or teaching assignment for me, so the financial sacrifice was shared out between student loans and parental help (Masterdad funding), and I felt guilty about that too.

Through the despair that winter, what I most craved was light. I had to get work as soon as possible—Boyd was on a political internship, which had a laughably small stipend attached—so I worked for a temp agency at a variety of unsavory odd jobs, all of which seem in my memory to be in very dingy and dark places. The sun was hidden

behind dull clouds for those months, our basement had no windows anyway, and my graduate school classes were night classes, since I had to work days. I never seemed to find any light. So I begged for light. One particularly gloomy evening, before Boyd called from the metro station for a ride, I broke down and begged God for some *light—any light!*

And instantly, loudly, joyfully, into my head popped a song—the hymn “The Lord is My Light.” By day and by night, His presence is near—I could use that, I was not forgotten. *I* had just forgotten Who the Light really was. Like the medieval mystics I was in school to study, I had to remember to replace my sadness with the light of His assurance. I lived by that hymn for days. The sun didn’t come out, and Mrs. Cook still shouted for release. But with that song in my head I started to climb out of my depression, and I was able to go to her, hold her hand, make useless but distracting small talk with her, without caving in to my own despair.

One day about a week after this small but crucial epiphanette, I ventured out into our new environs to get myself lost. I had learned how to drive to the essential places—grocery stores, school, work, the metro station for Boyd’s line, by driving until lost and then finding my way home, but on this day I went to get lost on public transit—I needed to learn how to find my way home even without a car. I put as much money as I could onto a metro ticket and just began riding. I changed lines, from orange, to green, to blue, to red . . . and I got out at various stops, never going through the turnstiles, just to check my surroundings. One stop on the red line was labelled Brookland/ CUA. I didn’t even know what that stood for, but I decided to get out, all the way out, at that stop. CUA stands for The Catholic University of America. I took the elevator out of the metro and emerged onto a campus with what looked for all the world to me like a castle—next to a Byzantine dome, near an English country manor house. U of Maryland has a beautiful campus, but it is quintessentially American,

all Georgian and Colonial. *This* was medieval. This was *the* Catholic University of America.

I was entranced. Even in the grim eastern winter, the campus at CUA was lovely. There were buildings with *crenellations*. There was the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception! I wandered into the bookstore. There was the university's banner, with a shield blazoned with the Cross, Mary's crescent moon in the upper left quadrant, and a book lying open in the center inscribed with the words "Deus Mea Lux Est."

And I burst into tears. God was my light, a refrain my sanity had depended on for a week, and here He had led me to a home I hadn't known existed. I visited the admissions office; I went to the English department. Within another term they had not only accepted my transfer from UM, but had also put me to work in the Writing Center and waved my tuition. Though no school experience is halcyon and perfect, I am positive Catholic University was the best place for me to get my degrees. I made friends who are still in my life, I had a brilliant dissertation director (whom I affectionately referred to as Doctor Ego, completing the trio of Doctors Id and Superego), and it launched me into a career I love.

I was already enamored of much of medieval Catholic history, but now I had reason to owe allegiance and gratitude to contemporary Catholicism as well. I hadn't had much exposure to it, growing up in Provo. My sister's best friend in her fourth grade year had been the only Catholic in our elementary school—and the teacher of that fourth grade class had told my sister, privately, not to befriend a non-Mormon. This made us all swell with indignation and loyalty, but I never learned anything about Catholics from Joan D. except not to actually swear during grace before meals. (She got in trouble for that—forgot the words and said dammit.)

My experience of being a Mormon at CUA was relatively unremarkable, academically. Though it is the pontifical flagship (the "*the*"

is a very big deal) and is the only US school to receive direct Vatican funding and require a papal imprimatur on some of its approved dissertations, it was not at all Catholic the same way BYU is Mormon. It is in many of the same categories as a religious school as BYU, but it is a lot more ecumenical, at least for graduate students.

And I will say that the religious element was a welcome relief for me. At UM, I did not know where the boundaries were with discussion that might verge into the religious—which is hard when the texts you want to study are mystical. But at CUA, almost all the faculty and students were religious and respectful of religion, even if it was a religion other than RC. The classmates I am still closest to are Evangelical Lutheran, Anglican/Episcopalian, Methodist, and NeoPagan. (The NeoPagan reads my Tarot for me at medieval studies conferences.) Our conversations about medieval Catholic texts were very, very rich.

The undergraduate students there were also religiously disciplined and understandably reverential toward conservative religious views, but many also hankered for a sense of the university experience of independence and break-away thinking. They demanded, for instance, a gay student club (which no one was willing to join) and free distribution of condoms (which few were willing to pick up during hours of high visibility). Their strident graffitied demands for these radical ideas were all done in chalk. The students wanted freedom and sexual safety and justice! *and* not to lose their scholarships. It was bold for CUA in the nineties, and would have been an expellable offense at BYU, but CUA undergrad rebels struck a cautious, hilarious balance: “Equal rights for Gays!—not that I know any of them!”

The faculty was varied. Of the four Catholics on the English faculty when I was there, one was gay himself, though of the generation to refer to himself with a twinkle as a confirmed bachelor; one was a Sister whose life’s work was the protestant Tyndale Bible; one was raised Catholic but was very proud of his Mormon heritage—as a small boy he had participated in the 1947 centennial re-enactment of the pioneer entry

into Utah—and the last was a staunchly Catholic Irishman. On learning I was Mormon he was the only one to comment: “Mormon! Oh that’s a little *baby* religion! And with a lay-priesthood, too! How adorable!”

My dissertation committee consisted of only one Catholic, from the Church History Department, a fiercely feminist Benedictine nun (Sister Mary—that would be Doctor Superego), one Unitarian Universalist (Doctor Ego, and I’d thank God for him but that’s a bit . . . anthropomorphic, for his style), and—Doctor Id—a gay alcoholic Pantheist son of a bitterly lapsed . . . Mormon. Not the same one as participated in the Days of 47 festival.

Another thing that would not have happened at BYU was the preponderance of interruptions we got for Saints’ feasts and other holy days. We graduate instructors would fight each other for Monday/Wednesday/Friday schedules, the plumb courses being the middle of the day, because school masses would always be held at the Shrine during those times. I knew I had really acclimated to Catholic education when I caught myself staring, brow-furrowed, at the word “STRAWBERRY” written out in all capitals, and wondering vaguely which one was Saint Rawberry.

By only our second year, my grad class friends and I began to refer to all of March as “Saint Patrick’s Month.” It was a wash. Spring break was only supposed to last a week, but I learned that some people can squeeze a lot more out of a liturgical calendar than you’d think. (I suspect it involves trumping up some bogus family devotional saints—possibly Rawberry.) Certain school administrators and the students’ wealthy families managed to stretch the Cancun vacation out to two weeks, and then St. Patrick’s—which they never scheduled to *coincide* with spring break—was its own week and a half celebration. To make it worse, those unlucky students who did, because of family poverty and/or cruelty, find themselves on campus in March, would drink green beer, which flowed from Kitty O’Shea’s taps at a penny a pint starting on about the tenth, to oblivion. One year when St. Patrick’s fell on a

Monday, a group in my writing class convinced one of their members, a particularly prodigious drinker, that Wednesday was really Friday, and that he had drunk and slept his way past the quizzes for that week.

I was never questioned about my religion outside of the box I checked on admissions, “NRC” instead of “RC,” except for once. And then it wasn’t so much my religion as my perceived piety. In my second year, I got pregnant and was in the first few queasy months and carrying food in my pockets to keep my stomach calm. I was taking an evening class on the York Corpus Christi plays, which are biblical re-enactments, and had, I’m sure because of my LDS upbringing and BYU education, gotten a reputation for being the go-to Bible person. During break one night, the class clown passed me in the hall as I munched my crackers and carrots, and sneered, “Actual food? I thought *you* subsisted entirely on Holy Eucharist!” I blinked at him.

“I’m pregnant, Mike. Just fighting the queasy. Plus I’m not even Catholic.” Now it was his turn to blink. “You’re not Catholic?” He broke into a wide smile: “Well, yeah because if you were Catholic and pregnant you’d be dropping out of school!” After that we were fast friends. I guess it wasn’t obnoxiously pious to know the Bible if it was the King James one.

So I didn’t have the kinds of pressure on me to join up that poor Polly Aird has had among her Mormons. Catholics are a grownup religion—not as cynically grownup as Judaism, perhaps, but not insecure and needy, either. Mormonism is a baby religion comparatively, and it is still in its puppy phase, licking people’s faces and begging for everyone to like us and play with us now. *Now!* There was only one time I felt like an outsider for not being Catholic, and it was during a homily in one of the weekday masses, when the priest made an adamant point that One Flock and One Shepherd meant *this* flock, the specific brand of RC that he was preaching, and no other. Straight was the gate and narrow was the way in his speech, and he made it clear that no one, not I nor anyone else who did not follow his lead, was on the path

nor going through the gate without his approval. It didn't feel good. I figure it doesn't feel good for Polly either.

One of the things I found myself doing during my years at CUA was forming an ongoing mental parallel between the major events of early Christian history and specific Mormon history. It's an urge born of my father's affection for syncretistic connections and parallels, but mine are usually useless. Nevertheless, I still find myself doing it—and tripping up when someone other than I has done it too—as when I heard Terryl Givens label the Pratt boys, Parley and Orson, as serving for “our” Augustine, shaping Mormonism's mystical and miraculous beginnings into a praxis and an orthodoxy.

I had wondered about that, but not so much because I had seen, for instance, the split with the Community of Christ as the schism with Eastern Orthodoxy, and the Avignon Papacy as perhaps the claims of Sidney Rigdon. David O. McKay was our Innocent III, and 1950s correlation was the fourth Lateran Council, and those early, years-long missions were a kind of monasticism.

Though we didn't have the eremitic tradition of hermits and anchors, we eventually did get our MTC cenobites, and Jesuits, when Gene England founded *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. I could go interesting places with the Spanish Inquisition, but I won't; though I will mention Brigham Young's clash with President James Buchanan in connection with the twelfth-century investiture controversy (basically, who wins in a politico-religious smack-down between a Holy Roman emperor and a pope).

There are moral failings and financial shenanigans in both histories, hagiographies of great examples and martyrs, and a pilgrimage growth-industry; rogue bishops to reign in in both traditions, uppity women, brilliant orators and philosophers—and at least the promise of some literary and artistic greatness. We haven't had an individual figure to parallel a Martin Luther that I can tell (though I think there

are many who would *love* to claim that function and label), but I do think we have had our Henry VIII, and it was Brigham Young.

Not that the complex and specific English Protestant break with Rome under Henry has exact parallels with the complex and specific reasons for the exodus and defection of the early Saints from the US, but that Brigham, like Henry, was a leader with an enormous ego, fantastic vision, strident insistence on his own near-infallibility, certain outrageous bigotries, an empire to run *his* way. And an impressive array of wives. (Though Brigham beats out Henry both in numbers married and in the moral high road of never having beheaded even one of them.)

For good or ill, England would never have become the England it is without Henry, and Mormonism, and the Jell-O Belt, would not have developed into what they are without Brother Brigham. For good or ill or both, Henry shaped a possibility for religious nationalism the world had never seen before him, and for good or ill or both, Brigham Young shaped Mormonism into a people unlike anything the world has seen either. And I would contend that both groups could use a solid twelve-step program. (In fact, I've thought frequently that the reason the Millennium is 1,000 years is that that is how long the family therapy is going to take—even with Jesus as facilitator.)

The CUA professor who called Mormonism a baby religion was more right than he knew, I think. It may be a baby with a claim to revelation and restoration, but it was neither born nor brought up in a vacuum. The “burned-over district” of nineteenth-century New England was burned over in Protestant sibling rivalry, but all of those quarrelling brother- and sister-denominations came to sweet accord in one thing: agreeing to despise and disown their Papist Roman ancestor.

Joseph Smith famously defended Catholicism when typical protestant, anti-Catholic sentiment crept into early Mormons' rhetoric. As Joan's friend when I was a kid, and as a student of CUA later, I seized on that quote, even having grown up hearing Bruce R. McConkie's identification

of Catholicism as the Great and Abominable Church. At BYU I teach Joseph Smith's repudiation of McConkie (and McConkie's apostolic apology graciously owning his fallibility after the 1978 revelation), and find my Latter-day Saint students there becoming increasingly appreciative of broader views, including Catholicism, themselves. I felt and still feel drawn to this intimidatingly well-established, grownup great-grandparent of my own faith (and especially to the mystical voices within it).

Toddlers can indeed be adorable, as my professor said, but they can also make really stupid choices, and be unpredictably cranky, throwing tantrums and embarrassing onlookers as they test boundaries and establish their own identities. To take the analogy further, children will always have both some attractive and some unattractive features and qualities of their predecessors; *as well as* having their own unique qualities and gifts, attractive or not. Even though I am thoroughly Mormon, I will always maintain a crypto-Catholic identity that comes from my alma mater; I will continue to love, study, teach, and revel in the history of Christianity, and I will always feel great affection toward my Catholic brothers and sisters—and lay folks, too!

ABUNDANT GRACE: THE HUMANNESS OF CATHOLICS AND LATTER-DAY SAINTS AS A BASIS FOR FRIENDSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Daniel P. Dwyer, OFM

At the conclusion of each Mormon History Association's annual conference, there is a "devotional." (Until I became a devotee of Mormon history, devotional was always an adjective, as in "devotional literature," but the Latter-day Saints have shifted my grammatical foundations, and, because of my exposure to Mormons, I'll never hear words like "fireside," "garments," or even "Jell-O" in the same way.) At these devotionals, I always look to see if my favorite LDS hymn is being featured—"The Spirit of God"—number 2 in the LDS hymnal. My Catholic heart is lifted up as we begin to sing "The Spirit of God like a fire is burning! The latter day glory begins to come forth." As a Catholic, of course, the meaning has to be filtered a bit, but in all good conscience I can sing out most of the words. That is, until we come to the end of the chorus where there is a reference to God and the Lamb: "Let glory to them in the highest be given." "Them?" I hesitate. I suppose I can give this a Catholic interpretation, but my Trinitarian scruples cause me to mentally substitute "Him" for them; or, if I am feeling inclusive, I quietly sing "Let glory to 'God' in the highest be given."

When it comes to Catholics and Mormons, it can be both instructive and amusing to look at our hymnody. Imagine what mental

gymnastics it takes for me to honestly belt out number 19, “We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet.” I must publically confess that, though I briefly think of Thomas Monson, I interiorly shift the reference to Pope Francis, or Martin Luther King Jr., or Oscar Romero.

Sometimes the words of an LDS hymn send me immediately to a Catholic hymn. I’m sure Latter-day Saints are familiar with Eliza Snow’s “O My Father” (no. 292). I know very well what she was getting at when she wrote that “truth is reason; truth eternal tells me I’ve a mother there.” But, for me, there is an immediate mental shift to the Catholic hymn “’Tis the Month of Our Mother,” referring to the Blessed Virgin Mary:

Oh! what peace to her children,
mid sorrows and trials to know,
that the love of their Mother,
Hath ever a solace for woe.¹

I like to think Eliza Snow would have found use for those words.

One of the things I’ve noticed over time is that we do borrow from each other. Occasionally the Mormon Tabernacle Choir features a song like “Immaculate Mary,” and the words may not even be changed, so a beautiful Catholic hymn about the Blessed Mother goes forth from the crossroads of the West, thanks to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.² Of course sometimes the words are changed. A Catholic can lustily sing “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty” (no. 72) but will be brought up short when right after “O my soul praise Him for he is thy health and salvation,” instead of “All you who hear, now to his altar draw near,” the lyrics read: “Join the great throng, psaltery, organ and song.” But no theological harm has been done—and even Catholic versions of this one differ.

1. “Catholic First,” retrieved from <http://www.catholicfirst.com/thefaith/prayers/marianhymns.html#TisTheMonth>.

2. Mormon Tabernacle Choir, “Immaculate Mary,” retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K3WxJR7p38>.

Then there are the missing hymns. I would not expect to find “Tantum Ergo” or “Ave Verum Corpus” in the LDS hymnal, but surely, I thought, it would have “Holy, Holy, Holy.” But it was not to be found. Still, I knew I had heard the Tabernacle Choir sing it—so I betook myself to YouTube—ah, there it was!³ It was a beautiful rendition, but—“God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity” had become “God in thy glory through eternity.”

One of the more amusing moments for me was when I wanted to add some Catholic hymns to my iPod. I found an album entitled “Catholic Hymns: Instrumental Piano Music.” There I was able to download that dear old Catholic hymn—“Come, Come, Ye Saints.”⁴ It’s probably best that it was an instrumental version so as not to confuse the faithful.

Mormon songs also help me with my vacation plans. For example, I find that I might visit Adam-ondi-Ahman, or perhaps I could hie to Kolob. These two are a little harder to give a Catholic twist. Fortunately I have already been to Adam-ondi-Ahman, but I very much doubt that I would ever want to hie to Kolob—unless it is part of an MHA post-conference tour. Being an astronaut never appealed to me as a boy. I will note, however, that when I hear the latter song I recognize the tune of one of our own—“I Heard the Voice of Jesus”—same tune, different planet I suppose.

It goes without saying that many of our hymns, Catholic and LDS, are really Protestant. Where would any of us be without Charles Wesley, who wrote “Christ the Lord is Risen Today”; “Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”; “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”; and “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”?⁵

3. Mormon Tabernacle Choir, “Holy, Holy, Holy,” retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qCmtUhiKcA>.

4. “Catholic Hymns: Instrumental Piano Music,” Shamrock-n-Roll Inc., 2009.

5. All of these can be found in the Catholic hymnal, *Worship* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 1986), and several in *Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985).

Two very poignant moments for me came through hymns that I heard among Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City. When I was asked to give the opening prayer at an MHA devotional held in the Assembly Hall on Temple Square, by sheer coincidence, the closing hymn was “All Creatures of Our God and King.” The song is based on St. Francis of Assisi’s “Canticle of the Creatures,” the first poem written in vernacular Italian; it is often called, by friars like myself, the Franciscan National Anthem as we invariably end almost every one of our most important gatherings with it. On an even more personal note, I found myself getting misty-eyed in touring the LDS Conference Center, when, as the guide showed us around, a pianist was playing “Veni Creator Spiritus,” one of my all-time favorites, and a song that I had requested at the very first mass I celebrated after my ordination. Indeed, it is one of those hymns I would like to have at my funeral.

As I thought of all these various tunes, I began to see how music can illustrate both our differences and our similarities: though the theology may be different, we can find ourselves moved in very similar ways; we can find that God has touched us, even if we can’t define God in exactly the same way. So I have begun to read hymn books, comparing and contrasting the words. I’ve also noted the criticisms and critiques of third parties, as in an Evangelical critique of verse four of the hymn “High on the Mountaintop” (no. 5 in the LDS hymnal):

For there we shall be taught
The law that will go forth,
With truth and wisdom fraught,
To govern all the earth.
Forever there his ways we’ll tread,
And save ourselves with all our dead.

What? Save *ourselves*? As a Catholic, my head tends to agree with the Evangelical theology on this one, but my heart sympathizes more with the Mormons’ sense of heartfelt connectedness to the dead.

Nevertheless, I have found that keeping an LDS perspective in the back of my head while I sing causes me to pay more attention to lyrics. When we hear and sing a hymn for decades, there is a tendency not to give the words too much thought. Singing each others' songs can lead to thoughtfulness and to a new level of engagement with the words. While Mormons and Catholics share a great deal of vocabulary (e.g., God, Savior, scripture, salvation, church, prophet, apostasy, Melchizedek, and baptism), we also find words and phrases that make us different (e.g., Liahona, triple combination, Moroni, *Theotokos*, Immaculate Conception). And sometimes we use the same word but with different meanings (e.g., exaltation, sacrament, angel). Being together causes us to think; we cannot help but ask ourselves, "What do we mean by this term?" "How would we explain this to my friend here?" or "Why do I believe what I believe, instead of what he or she believes?" As we enter more and more into each others' experiences, we clarify our own beliefs and just possibly our hearts are drawn closer to God and each other. In short, our interactions have a clarifying effect that can help us build what Mormons might call a stronger "testimony" and Catholics might call a stronger faith.

Coming together also calls upon a sense of humor, even when that humor touches on what is sacred to us. I don't mean so much that we should engage in that sophomoric humor that pervades the popular media, but that we develop a sense of empathy for others and don't let ourselves become too easily offended. I will give just one illustration. I was sitting in the back of the bus on an MHA tour of Southern Alberta. It was late in the afternoon, so I was either dozing off or carrying on a conversation with those in my immediate vicinity. Suddenly, several people began to make their way to the back of the bus to apologize to me. I didn't have the slightest idea what they were apologizing *for* until someone told me that a local person had come onto the bus and thanked us for coming to Alberta. Apparently he said something like "I am so grateful that the Mormons came here. It could have been the

Catholic missionaries who didn't believe that the Indians had souls!" I was touched at the concern of my LDS friends and sorry if anyone had received a distorted image of my Catholic forbears, but it actually struck me as humorous. I remember thinking "Boy, did we waste our time, lives, and energy in countries all over the Americas!"⁶ I suppose I could have taken offense on behalf of my religion, but I came away with a smile because of my friends' empathy and because the whole premise was amusing.

So awareness, clarity, and empathy can come from our singing and even joking together, but let me be clear—faith is a serious business. I draw your attention to Philippians 2:12–13: "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." I believe that our differences are neither trivial nor unimportant. So let us begin with a very bold hypothesis. Both Catholics and Latter-day Saints believe they have the truth, that they belong to the "true church." If that is the choice before us, then there are potentially decisions and points of disagreement before each of us.

Either God is Triune—one God in Three Divine Persons; or Father, Son and Holy Ghost are a godhead made up of three individual beings.

6. In actuality the accusation was not entirely groundless. Some early Spanish explorers had treated the native peoples as less than human. This caused Pope Paul III to issue an Encyclical in 1537 entitled *Sublimus Dei*. It stated "that the Indians are truly men and that they are not only capable of understanding the Catholic Faith but, according to our information, they desire exceedingly to receive it. Desiring to provide ample remedy for these evils, We define and declare by these Our letters, or by any translation thereof signed by any notary public and sealed with the seal of any ecclesiastical dignitary, to which the same credit shall be given as to the originals, that, notwithstanding whatever may have been or may be said to the contrary, the said Indians and all other people who may later be discovered by Christians, are by no means to be deprived of their liberty or the possession of their property, even though they be outside the faith of Jesus Christ; and that they may and should, freely and legitimately, enjoy their liberty and the possession of their property; nor should they be in any way enslaved; should the contrary happen, it shall be null and have no effect" (retrieved from <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Paul03/p3subli.htm>).

Either the one God is the only God, in all the universe, or God had parents and there are other gods in the far reaches of space.

Either God created everything *ex nihilo*, out of nothing; or God shaped and rearranged eternal matter.

Either we all once lived in a pre-existence, or we came to this earth as entirely new creations.

Either God is unfathomable in God's inner essence; or God is originally a man of body, parts and passions.

Either there was a great apostasy and God used Joseph Smith to restore authority to the earth; or there was no apostasy and the Catholic Church has always been and always will be Christ's church with full authority to bind and loose.

These are matters that we disagree on; and they are matters that our scholars should consider and on which they will, hopefully with respect, disagree. So to singing and having a sense of humor, I would add studying together, and studying each others' faith with an open mind. In doing this I think of two scriptures—one that we share and one that is particular to Mormons.

The first, James 1:5, is central to the story of Joseph Smith, and is certainly applicable to Catholics:

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5 KJV)

And from the LDS scriptures:

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things. (Moroni 10:4)

Let us not be afraid to confront our differences.

But there is another, even deeper, level on which we might engage each other. It is a spiritual level that is utterly human. It is the realm of the heart. Let me give just a few examples: if I am a parent and my child is close to death, I will turn to my faith. I will ask for anointing with holy oil and for prayer—whether I turn to my Mormon bishop or my Catholic pastor, the impetus is the same: the love for my child. The concern, the worry, and the attachment to my respective faith tradition are essentially identical. In this case, even the ritual is similar. If I need to go apart, to pray and to seek guidance, I may, as a Latter-day Saint, find myself in the celestial room of the temple; as a Catholic I may find myself kneeling before the tabernacle, which holds the Blessed Sacrament. If I have grievously sinned, and I am a Latter-day Saint, I may confess to my bishop; if a Catholic I will turn to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Recently, one of my LDS friends, Sherman Feher, and I decided to compare spiritualities—not doctrines so much as spiritual practices. Here is an example of one of our comparisons. Sherman wrote that “One of the primary purposes of Mormon temples is to perform ordinances, such as baptisms for our ancestors. While our ancestors still have the ability to choose whether to accept the ordinances or not, this form of service helps draw us closer to our ancestors, by helping us to get to know the background of our ancestors and by doing the ordinances for them.” Even here, when looking at a distinctively LDS practice, I was able to find a Catholic equivalent. I responded this way:

By receiving communion we [Catholics] are not just uniting ourselves with Jesus of Nazareth—though we are doing that; we are also uniting ourselves with the Cosmic Christ—with the entire body of Christ—with all who are receiving this same body and blood throughout the world. It is, for us a sacrament that transcends space and time. Interestingly, I think it provides for us Catholics what Mormons seek in genealogy and temple worship. For example, when I receive the body and blood of Christ, I am in communion not only with someone in China who is receiving the same Christ at the same time; I am in communion with my father who is deceased and with all my baptized ancestors who

have gone before; I am also receiving into myself all the baptized communicants who will live in the centuries to come.⁷

My point here is not that one of us is right or that one of us is wrong, my point is that our faiths are vital parts of our lived reality, and they are lived out in ways that are incredibly human.

So let's not stop at singing, having a sense of humor, and even studying; let us move toward things of the heart. Franciscan spiritual writer Richard Rohr quotes St. Thomas Aquinas who wrote, "Life is prior to doctrines."⁸ At a time of crisis, we turn to our loving savior, not to a theology textbook.

One thing we might all do, separately and together, is to take ourselves to the scriptures that we share: In Matthew 7:21 Jesus says: "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." The standard for judgment is not a matter of having correct answers to the questions, but in how we live our lives. Let us take with utmost seriousness Matthew 25:34–40:

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

7. Daniel P. Dwyer, OFM, and Sherman Feher, "Crossing Bridges: A Catholic and a Mormon Reflect on Spirituality," unpublished manuscript.

8. Richard Rohr, OFM, *Immortal Diamond: The Search for Our True Self* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2013), xxv.

Ultimately, Jesus seems, at least here, to express little interest in correct church membership or doctrinal exactitude, but rather in how we love and care for others.

I would suggest that Latter-day Saints and Catholics should see each other as fellow pilgrims, as brother and sisters who can help each other navigate the challenges of life in a very secular time. And, while it is essential that we be good neighbors and fellow citizens, I think we can do more on the spiritual level. At a very minimum we can pray for each other—and I don't necessarily mean praying for each others' conversion—although I'm okay with that. Years ago I found out that I have a Mormon cousin. (Thanks to the Family History Center at my local stake, I can add that I am also a distant cousin of Emma Smith, Eliza Snow, Lorenzo Snow, Parley and Orson Pratt, and even Mitt Romney.) If you knew how large and spread out my family is, you would know that I could have lived my whole life without ever even finding this out. I'm pleased to say that that cousin is here today. An elderly Catholic cousin who was close to both of us told me that she suspected he would have her baptized after her death but that she didn't mind. It was a sign of his love and care, and it certainly did no harm—and hey, you never know!

I think we should pray that those in "the other church" experience a true and loving relationship with the divine, and trust that the Holy Spirit will ultimately solve the problems caused by our differences. I think we should pray that God's will and not my will be done in the lives of my friends in the other church. I think too we should pray with each other in ways that are honest and sincere; and we should try to be appreciative of the ways in which our friends are nourished by their own faith. We should share our faiths, not use our faiths to enhance our own egos or to resolve our own doubts by finding fault with someone else's faith.

But what of those standards that Jesus set? What of common actions like feeding the hungry and visiting the imprisoned together? While we should, and do, act together for the common good, we must be aware that this is not always as easy as it seems. In part, that is because both

churches face internal difficulties. For example, at the official level both of our churches acted to promote Proposition 8 in California; whether that was right or wrong, it alienated many within our respective ranks and disturbed the consciences of a good many others. But we should take comfort in the fact that, even as institutions, we are together struggling with issues of conscience and dissent; and maybe we can develop a sense of empathy and help to school each other in charity. A case in point was Pope Francis's famous "Who am I to judge?" which, in my humble opinion, has done a world of good, and refocused all of us on what is core in our two faiths. As the prophet Micah wrote: "what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6:8).

So I return again to our songs. One of the verses of the "Veni Creator Spiritus" is, I think, a model for our future together. It reminds us that it is the Holy Ghost/Holy Spirit who must act in each of our hearts.

Thy light to every sense impart,
and shed thy love in every heart;
thine own unfailing might supply
to strengthen our infirmity.⁹

I titled this little talk *Abundant* Grace, and to me grace is nothing more, and nothing less, than the presence of God in each and every second of our lives, in each and every corner of our universe. Which brings me to another song—a Protestant one that we all know—"Amazing Grace." I am not sure about Latter-day Saints, but I never much thought of myself as a "wretch." Still, I can relate very well to the part that says:

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.¹⁰

9. Retrieved from <http://www.oremus.org/hymnal/c/c197.html>.

10. "Amazing Grace," no. 584, *Worship* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 1986).

May it be so for each of us, and for all of us. To each of my Latter-day Saint friends—active, committed, struggling, or excommunicated, with a strong testimony or holding on by your fingertips—I hope I can help each of you be a better Mormon, and I thank each of you for having made me a better Catholic. My testimony has been enhanced by the struggles and the witness of each and every one of you. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ORDINATION AND BLESSING

Robert A. Rees

I grew up in an anti-Catholic world. The first thing I remember hearing about Catholics in the small town in which I was raised was not just negative, it was extremely so. Everyone I knew was distrustful, suspicious, or hateful toward Catholics. When I joined the LDS Church at age ten, I heard more anti-Catholic sentiment, including the branding of the Catholic Church as “the Whore of Babylon,” and “the great and abominable church” or “church of the devil,” based on a biased reading of the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 13:6, 14:9). The first edition of Apostle Bruce R. McConkie’s controversial *Mormon Doctrine* published in 1958 instructed readers to “see Church of the Devil” under the heading of “Catholicism,” and there it described the Church as “singled out, set apart, described, and designated as being ‘most abominable above all other churches.’”¹ As a missionary laboring in a densely Catholic part of Illinois, I heard even more vicious slurs against the Catholics, some of it from fellow-missionaries.²

Anti-Catholic sentiment continues at least to some degree among Saints today as is evident in a comment by Elder Russell M. Ballard at a 2014 fireside in Buenos Aires, where he said, “Most people don’t know where they came from. They don’t know why they’re here, and they don’t know where they’re going. And if they have a Catholic background,

1. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 1st ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), 108.

2. For more on Catholic-Mormon relations, see Matthew J. Grow, “The Whore of Babylon and the Abomination of Abominations: Nineteenth-Century Catholic and Mormon Mutual Perceptions and Religious Identity,” *Church History* 73, no. 1 (Mar. 2004): 139–67.

they don't know who God is. They don't know who the Savior is; nor do they know who the Holy Ghost is."³ On her blog at the Religion News Service, Jana Riess called Elder Ballard's comments "a regrettable step backwards in Mormon attitudes toward other faiths."⁴

Like most childhood prejudices, it took a concerted effort for me to shed negative attitudes toward Catholicism. Four things helped: 1) my personal friendship with a number of Catholics; 2) my involvement in interfaith work that has included not only friendship and fellowship, but opportunities to work closely with Catholic believers; 3) my study of the important role Catholicism has played in the unfolding of Christianity; and, especially, 4) my deeper understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the commandment to love others as myself. Also helpful has been the privilege I have had for the past five years of teaching Mormonism to graduate students of many faiths, including Catholic (Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits, as well as lay members) at Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley, California, where I have had the opportunity to interact with students of the world's major (and some minor) religions. Quite often I learn as much as they do, as they patiently correct my sometimes-embarrassing misconceptions and expand my understanding. For example, a Catholic student once informed me that, while a Catholic can be excommunicated for serious sins, he or she does not cease being a Catholic and does not require rebaptism upon returning to the faith.⁵

3. "Devocional para JAS Elder M. Russell Ballard Elder Ronald A Rasband," Feb. 20, 2014, YouTube, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7c7Yz3Xkeg>. Elder Ballard's comments about Catholics can be found at the 59.00 mark in the recording.

4. Jana Riess, "Mormon Apostle Criticized for Anti-Catholic Remarks," Religion News Service (Oct. 23, 2015), retrieved from <http://janariess.religionnews.com/2015/10/23/mormon-apostle-criticized-for-anti-catholic-remarks/>.

5. I discuss my experiences at GTU in my recently published essay, "Teaching Mormon Studies at a School of Theology and a Public University," *Mormon Studies Review* 2 (2015): 33–41.

Another advantage of teaching students of different religious traditions is that they bring a fresh perspective to LDS theology and culture. They also bring rich, unique backgrounds to the reading of Latter-day Saint sacred texts that help me see and appreciate those texts in new ways. For example, one of my students, a Jesuit named Glen Butterworth, wrote an insightful paper on King Benjamin's address, which he concluded with these words:

Interpreting Benjamin as a champion of equality helps to illumine the king's character with regard to relationships among the people. . . . By establishing the measure of righteousness as located in the care the people have for one another, Benjamin heralds the future teaching of Jesus Christ concerning the greatest of the commandments. And in living within a covenantal relationship with the divine, Benjamin models morality and highlights the intergenerational nature of Mormon worship and service of God.⁶

Seeing this text through the eyes of a bright, thoughtful Catholic gave me new understanding and increased my appreciation for this great Book of Mormon prophet.

Since I require my GTU students to attend a Latter-day Saint worship service and watch at least one session of general conference, I remain open to their invitations to attend services in their traditions. I find these worship experiences both enjoyable and enlightening. In fact, I have found my love of God and my reverence for Jesus broadened and deepened by the faith and devotion of other believers. Occasionally, I have had students invite me to attend their ordination ceremonies once they graduate. Such an invitation came from Glen Butterworth, the student whose paper gave me new insights about King Benjamin. I traveled from Northern California to attend Glen's Mass of Ordination at the Blessed Sacrament Church in Hollywood on June 8, 2013.

6. Glenn Butterworth, S. J., "The Character of King Benjamin," seminar paper presented in "Sacred Texts of the Latter-day Saints," GTU, Spring 2011; copy in my possession.

With the sun shining through its beautiful stained-glass windows, the Blessed Sacrament Church was filled to overflowing with a spirit of anticipation in the air. The parish life director welcomed all asking, "What and who is the Society of Jesus?" She responded, "All are called and many respond to the invitation of Jesus to make the world more humane by entering into this solemn litany." The Introductory Rites began with the entrance of the ordinands: Glen and the four other Jesuit candidates for the priesthood, dressed in simple white albs. They were preceded by forty Jesuit priests dressed in white with gold stoles (symbolizing their ordination). The congregation accompanied their arrival, singing "All Creatures of Our God and King," with its lovely repeated alleluias. I was particularly struck by one verse:

O ev'ry one of tender heart,
Forgiving others, take your part,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
All you who pain and sorrow bear,
Praise God and cast on God your care.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Following the Kyrie and the Gloria was a reading from Isaiah 55 ("All you who are thirsty, come to the water!"), a Responsorial reading of the twenty-third Psalm and a reading from 2 Corinthians ("Whoever is in Christ is a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come"), and finally a "gospel Acclamation" of Alleluias.

Interestingly, the ordaining bishop for this ceremony was John Wester, then bishop of Salt Lake and now the archbishop of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Bishop Wester began the Rite of Ordination with the "Calling of the Candidates," in which he asked, "Do you know them to be worthy [of the priesthood]?" The ordinands' respective religious superiors or provincials responded, "We testify that they are worthy." The bishop then said, "Relying on the help of the Lord God and our Savior Jesus Christ, we choose these, our brothers, for the order of the priesthood." All responded, "Thanks be to God!"

Bishop Wester then questioned the candidates as to their “willingness to undertake the tasks and obligations of the priesthood,” to which they “express[ed] their resolve to fulfill the office of priest in accord with the mind of Christ and the Church.” I was struck by the beauty and meaning of this part of the ceremony and wished that Latter-day Saint boys and men might have a similar opportunity to reflect on the soberness of such a sacred undertaking and to make such a covenant. Each of the candidates then prostrated himself before the altar.

The ordination of the five candidates was impressive, with each of the ordained Jesuit priests laying his hands on each of the ordinands. The program explained that “the Bishop and the celebrating priests confer on the candidates the gift of the Holy Spirit for service as a priest through the laying on of hands. This ancient sign and prayer of consecration constitute the heart of the ordination rite.”

Following the ordination everyone sang, “Veni Sancte Spiritus” (“Come, Holy Spirit”):

Come, Holy Ghost,
send down those beams,
which sweetly flow in silent streams
from Thy bright throne above.
O come, Thou Father of the poor;
O come, Thou source of all our store,
come, fill our hearts with love.

The ordination ceremony concluded with each newly-ordained priest having his deacon stole replaced by a priest stole and a chasuble (a special “Eucharistic garment” worn during the celebration of the mass). The bishop then anointed each new priest’s hands with “Sacred Chrism” or consecrated oil, “a sign of consecration familiar from biblical times.” This was followed by the Lord’s Prayer, the Sign of Peace, and the *Angus Dei* (“Lamb of God”), the part of the mass that pleads for Christ’s mercy.

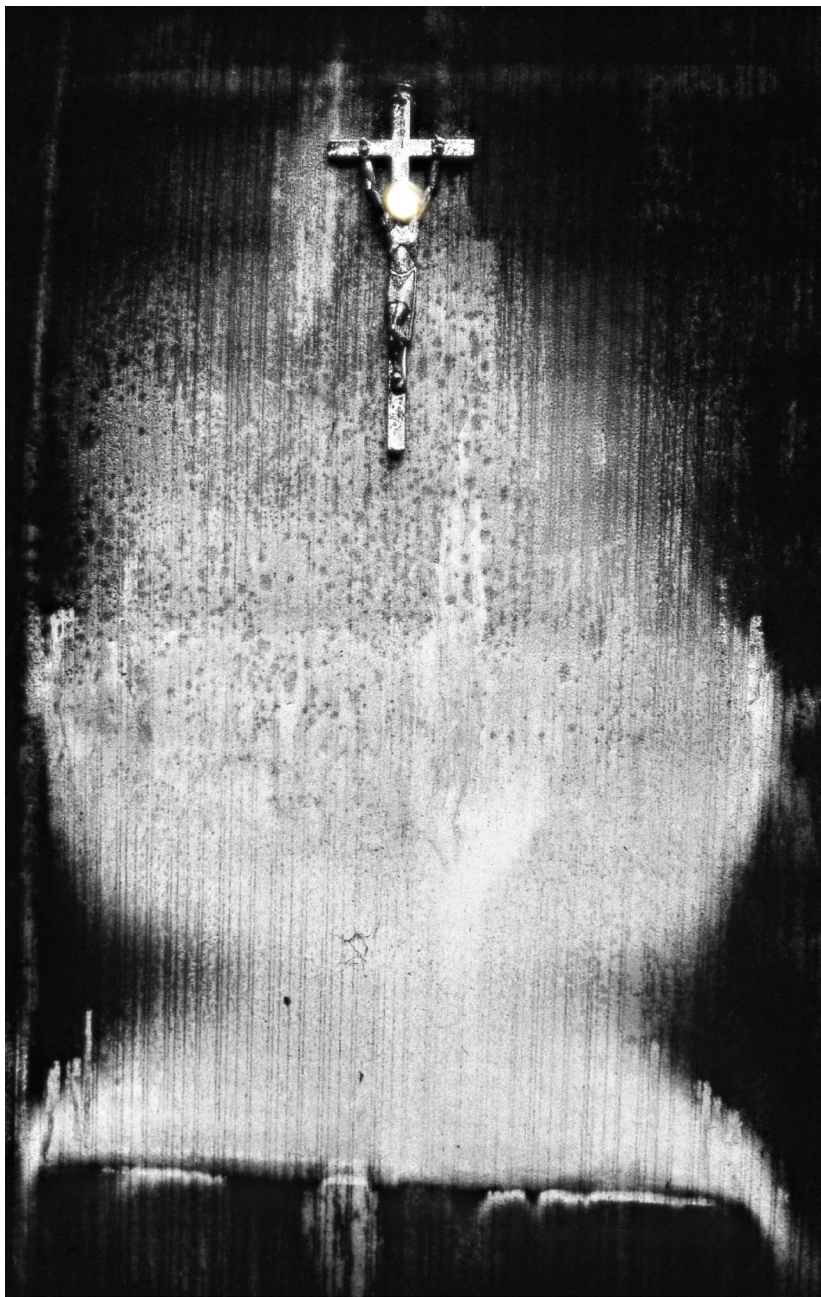
What was a particular joy for me was seeing my former student now robed in the garments of his priestly tradition celebrating the Eucharist

for the first time. I was observing all of this and somewhat lost in the reverie of the occasion when I realized it was my turn to rise and go to the front of the church and take the emblems of the sacrament, which I am always comfortable doing because, no matter the denomination, these symbols are deeply meaningful to me. As I opened my hands to take the wafer, I was surprised to see that it was being offered to me by my newly-ordained student, our roles now somewhat reversed, although beautifully so.

When the communion was finished, there was a “solemn blessing of the new priests” by the Bishop and then a procession sung to the hymn, “O God Beyond All Praising.” After the service everyone adjourned to the courtyard for a reception. When I found and congratulated Father Butterworth on his ordination, he surprised me by asking, “Would you like a blessing?” I said I would and was privileged to be the recipient of the first blessing Father Butterworth gave as a Jesuit priest. After placing his hands on my head, he said, “Loving God, we ask that you send forth your Holy Spirit anew upon this son of yours. We ask that your Spirit fills his heart with light and love and drive away all darkness and doubt. May this son of yours experience the grace of your mercy and may he enjoy good health and a long life. Please answer all of his prayers on behalf of his loved ones.” Then speaking directly to me, he concluded, “May Almighty God bless you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

Having been ordained as both an elder and a bishop in the LDS Church, I have given hundreds, perhaps thousands, of blessings over a lifetime, including on many occasions to my wife and children. I have undertaken this responsibility seriously and soberly, hoping always to speak words of comfort, encouragement, and, especially, love to those on whose heads I placed my hands. I have also received many blessings from other priesthood holders over the years and at times have felt a palpable goodness and even holiness during such blessings. Those were the sentiments I felt as my student and friend, the newly ordained Father Butterworth, blessed me on his first day of ordination. As I have reflected

on that blessing on that blessed day, I have the assurance that Father Butterworth will bless many people through his words and deeds in his ministry as one of Christ's modern disciples. Knowing the largeness of his heart, based on his work in my class and our many discussions of Mormonism, I also know he will speak of my faith fairly and generously, as I will of his.



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MORMON/CATHOLIC DIALOGUE: THINKING ABOUT WAYS FORWARD

Mathew N. Schmalz

Introduction

I would like to begin with an image. There is a tree in the middle of a barren field. A rod of iron extends from it. People jeer from a large building bounded by a river nearby. Those holding on to the rod ignore the jeering from the building and partake of the tree's sweet fruit, but there are some who heed the jeering and become ashamed even after eating the fruit, and are lost. This image is intimately familiar to so many Latter-day Saints as Lehi's dream from 1 Nephi 8 in the Book of Mormon. It is, however, a relatively new image for me. I did not grow up with the image. I do not have a strong sense of the variety of ways in which it could or does become meaningful in LDS religious contexts. I am familiar with the image in an academic context because I teach about Mormonism at a Catholic liberal arts college in Massachusetts.¹ In that context, the image of the tree of life becomes a kind of touchstone not only for what Mormonism means, or can mean, to Latter-day Saints, but also a symbol for the varying perceptions of what it means, or can mean, for Catholics to engage the Mormon tradition.

One way of looking at the image is that it points to the difficulty of dialogue. Those holding fast to the iron rod do not look back, and

1. See Mathew N. Schmalz, "Teaching Mormonism in the Catholic Classroom," *Sunstone: Mormon Experience, Scholarship, Issues and Art* 134 (Oct. 2004): 56–60.

it is at their own peril that they acknowledge the jeers from the great and spacious building. Indeed, some of my students—not all Catholic, but none LDS—see themselves as necessarily in the great and spacious building by default even though they are there not to jeer but to watch respectfully. In fact, some students might want to accompany those on the straight and narrow path on their journey, but find it too daunting to cross the river that separates the rod of iron and the straight and narrow path from the great and spacious building. I will return to this image, not because I mean to give it some definitive Catholic interpretation, rather I want to use a possible interpretation of it to frame something of the conceptual conundra and fears that accompany Catholic and Mormon efforts to engage each other.

Clearly, it is not the case that there is no habitable space between the straight and narrow path and the great and spacious building—the fact that Mormons and Catholics continue to dialogue with each other is testament to that. There are, however, asymmetries when Mormons and Catholics seek to dialogue, and those asymmetries have to be recognized and appreciated. In their general outlines, Catholicism and Mormonism do share some similarities. Both have an all-male priesthood, both emphasize the importance and necessity of rituals of initiation. Both are led by a leader who is considered to be inspired under special circumstances. Both Catholics and Mormons place high importance on the family and associated virtues of chastity and fidelity. But it is also clear that both the Catholic and LDS traditions have very different histories and have developed in very different cultural contexts. Moreover, the theological perspectives of both traditions differ, as does the very role of theology itself in what it means to consider oneself Catholic or Mormon. Catholicism and Mormonism do not have a similar number of adherents, nor do they share the same geographical expanse. The texts they share are few in number and are read through different lenses.

My goal in this short essay is to think about ways forward for Mormons and Catholics to engage each other. I do not intend to list a whole host of

issues that Mormons and Catholics could profitably talk about—though I will certainly mention some. Instead, what I want to focus on are various considerations in dialogue—considerations that acknowledge the asymmetries and difficulties of dialogue while still reaffirming its necessity. To that end, I would like to perform a particularly asymmetrical act by using words and images from the sacred texts from Mormonism to frame what are in my view three essential considerations in thinking about how to move forward with Mormon and Catholic dialogue.

This is asymmetrical on a number of levels: obviously I am not LDS and, as I have mentioned earlier, LDS texts do not have the same significance for me as they do for Mormons. I am also certainly not putting myself forward as some sort of academically astute interpreter, much less an authoritative one. But asymmetries are inevitably part of any human effort at communication, and any effort at dialogue needs not only to acknowledge them but to work through them.

Critical Self-Awareness

Let us begin with the first consideration: critical self-awareness. I would like to quote from Mosiah 4:19:

For behold are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have, for both food and raiment, and for gold, for all the riches we have of every kind.

King Benjamin's sermon contains powerful statements about social justice, about concern for the poor, and about our own obligations to one another. The principles that King Benjamin articulates definitely mirror and complement central themes in Catholic social teaching such as solidarity, subsidiarity, and the proper use of property. But in the passage I just quoted, there is a broader principle implied that has to do with what I would call critical self-awareness—an awareness, simply, that we are similar to those we find different.

In the class I taught in 2015 on Mormonism, one student had a former high school teacher who was LDS and stated that she was quite eager to come to class to speak about what it was like to be Mormon. The offer was made with good and gracious intent, but the idea of a “bring a Mormon to class day” or “Mormon show and tell” made me feel uncomfortable. I was also concerned with the questions my students might ask. Indeed, I had asked students what questions they would like to pose to a Latter-day Saint, and there were questions about polygamy in the celestial kingdom, DNA testing and the Lamanites, and horses in the Book of Mormon. When some students asked these provocative questions, I queried how they would feel if they were asked about the sexual abuse scandal in Catholicism. Not the same thing, many of them insisted; they were asking about Mormon doctrine, Mormon belief. Questions about the sexual abuse scandal were different—they had nothing to do with Catholic doctrine or the Catholic Church’s claims about itself. I told them I wasn’t so sure that they were that different—critics of Catholicism argue that the sexual abuse scandal was the direct result of celibacy and particular and peculiar Catholic attitudes concerning authority. But my point beyond this was a more fundamental one about critical self-awareness. For me the issue was being critically self-aware of the power dynamics surrounding dialogue. In one sense, what I wanted my majority Catholic group of students to reflect upon is how they would feel if they were singled out to speak to some of the more controversial issues surrounding Catholicism and how that might apply to how they would treat or engage a Latter-day Saint who was speaking about her faith in a context in which she would be effectively singled out as some kind of exemplar or spokesperson on difficult or controversial issues.

In thinking about a way forward with Mormon/Catholic dialogue, it seems to me that many opportunities for dialogue also involve asymmetrical power dynamics. One can think of LDS missionaries not just in foreign countries but also in many parts of the United States or Catholics in Mormon-majority contexts. But it also forces us to think

about hidden power dynamics in everyday encounters in which Catholics and Mormons seek to understand each other. In those contexts, some of the hardest questions concern what appears to be different, strange, or other, if not necessarily in a threatening way, then in a way that is often thought to be a barrier or obstacle. But what King Benjamin's sermon reminds us is that often times what we perceive to be other or different merely reflects back what are uncomfortable realizations about ourselves.

Interpretative Charity

If critical self-awareness is a first consideration in thinking about moving forward with Catholic/Mormon dialogue, I would like to offer as a second consideration: interpretative charity. Joseph Smith, in the concluding lines from the King Follett discourse, said:

You don't know me, you never will. You never knew my heart. No man knows my history. I cannot do it. I shall never undertake it. I don't blame you for not believing my history. If I had not experienced what I have, I could not have believed it myself. I never did harm any man since I have been born in the world. My voice is always for peace. I cannot lie down until my work is finished. I never think evil nor think anything to the harm of my fellowman. When I am called at the trump and weighed in the balance, you will know me then. I add no more. God bless you. Amen.²

In reflecting on this passage, it seems to me that much depends on how we read it: "YOU DON'T KNOW ME, YOU NEVER WILL," emphasizing a sarcastic or confrontational tone, or "you don't know, me you never will," which reflects a softer, almost weary, admission of the limits to any effort to "know" what lies in the heart of someone else. Of course, the chief feature of the King Follett discourse is Mormonism's remarkable and quite powerful vision of the afterlife—Joseph Smith states that the

2. Stan Larson, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (1978): 16–17.

first principle of consolation is that we are immortal, and he describes the endless burnings of exaltation.³ But he concludes this discourse in an equally remarkable way—a way that, at least to my ears, speaks of the interpretative charity that is due each other as we discuss religious issues. The interpretative charity that Joseph Smith asks for himself is based upon his own critical, and I would say painful, self-awareness of his own controversial status during his own time. But he also extends that interpretative charity to others—not just in wishing everyone peace, but in articulating what is a very inclusive vision of salvation, at least when compared to conventional Protestant and Catholic Christian visions of salvation prevalent during that time.

Charity is most necessary when defending our beliefs. Mormonism and Catholicism have strong and complex traditions of apologetics. And it indeed can be argued that defending one's own religious tradition is a positive obligation for believers—Mormon and Catholic alike. After all, to extend the argument, at stake is not our own personal sensitivity, tender though it may be, but truth: Truth with a capital T. In this sense, debating what is true is the highest form of charity because it addresses central questions about the nature and destiny of all human beings. What interpretative charity means or can mean depends upon the context of dialogue, and upon the critical self-awareness that is brought to it. But what I would suggest is that dialogue as debate or apologetics has limited utility, at least in the present context. All too often, we judge before we understand and argue before we hear what the other person is saying. Specifically, the consideration of interpretative charity does mean assuming that the other person has good reason for believing what she or he believes, and that she or he believes it sincerely. What this kind of interpretative charity allows is a space for appreciating how Mormonism and Catholicism find life and meaning in the lives of individuals. It creates a

3. *Ibid.*, 8.

space to know one another's testimonies and histories as testimony and history, not as error or heresy.

A Willingness to Tarry

This brings us to the third consideration, which is phrased in a slightly different way than the preceding two. The third consideration is “a willingness to tarry.” I have to admit that my phrasing is intentionally idiosyncratic but hopefully evocative on some level. I have always been struck by the use of the word “tarry” throughout the sacred texts of the LDS tradition—there is much about tarrying, who's tarrying where, when to tarry, when to not tarry. For example, Doctrine and Covenants 7:1–3 speaks about when to tarry:

And the Lord said unto me: John, my beloved, what desirest thou? For if you shall ask what you will, it shall be granted unto you. And I said to him, Lord give unto me the power over death, that I may live and bring souls unto thee. And the Lord said unto me: Verily, verily, I say unto thee because thou desirest this thou shalt tarry until I come in my glory, and shalt prophesy before nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples.

On one level, this verse is a prophetic intervention in what is for some a Christian mystery, whether the apostle John is still alive. But what also follows in both the Gospel of John (chapter 21) and the Doctrine and Covenants version of the story is an admonition to Peter: “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?” Peter wants salvation quickly, he wants things done quickly. But John realizes that he must tarry. In particular, he must tarry to bring the gospel to as many as possible. But it is this notion of being with, of tarrying, that is important for us to appreciate as Catholics and Mormons who live together, work together, and wish to understand each other. We need to tarry, to abide, to be present—to hang out, as my students would say. Because it is in the context of that closeness that new understandings may arise, new pathways for speech, for dialogue, and for sharing.

The kind of tarrying together I mean here is not of the activist kind, such as agitation surrounding Proposition 8 in California, where many Mormons and Catholics joined forces. Instead, the kind of tarrying of which I speak is of the more hidden kind—the kind that involves working together on the job, helping one another in need, and expressing the desire to become friends. That kind of tarrying, a hidden kind, such as that associated with John—as the Doctrine and Covenants describe him—is perhaps the best form of witness to the Gospel that we can all give.

The foregoing discussion, as I have framed it, does beg a crucial question: what is Catholic-Mormon dialogue about? And I hesitate to give some sort of definitive answer to that query simply because individual Mormons and Catholics will be motivated by different intentions. Some will want to understand because they are curious or compelled, some will want to work together more honestly and with greater compassion; still others will want to reflect on the similarities and differences between the Mormon and Catholic visions as a way of probing the diverse ways in which God is understood and followed. For all of them, I would submit, critical self-reflection, interpretative charity, and a willingness to tarry are helpful means to understand the process.

My interest in Mormon/Catholic dialogue stems from my wish to understand what is a powerful religious vision for millions of people and how it reflects back to me, often in oblique ways, elements of my own tradition. As a Catholic who participates in a tradition that has very strong notions of authority, I can see similar possibilities in tensions in the LDS tradition. In the mystical dimensions of Mormonism, in its belief in testimony and prophecy, I can see elements both similar to and different from Catholic forms of mysticism in which prophecy is both explicitly claimed and implicitly offered. But I am also a scholar of comparative religions and both Mormonism and Catholicism are, simply put, religions worthy of study and appreciation in their own rights.

I have pursued an asymmetrical approach to Catholic/Mormon dialogue by trying to engage some of the Mormon tradition's sacred texts.

This reflects part of my belief that we should engage with each others' religious traditions, even if that engagement is limited, partial, and subject to correction and change—as my own remarks surely are. For example, I would be especially interested in how Latter-day Saints would engage elements—whether they be rituals or texts—from the Catholic tradition. Such a reciprocal approach would be most productive if mutual and framed appropriately.

I began my reflections speaking about Lehi's vision of the tree of life, and my initial take was that it was a challenging vision to those who see themselves as outside the LDS tradition. But there are other ways of understanding the vision beyond simply seeing it as some sort of geography of salvation. I think Catholics and Mormons would both agree that the tree of life exists, that it can and does symbolize something meaningful and profound. I also know many Catholics who feel themselves jeered at by people in the modern equivalents of the great and spacious building, so the image in some ways can work well for a particular kind of Catholic sensibility that resists secularism and modernity. But for our purposes, perhaps the most significant aspect of Lehi's dream is the mist of darkness that can soon envelop all of us if we stray from the straight and narrow path. There is the rod of iron, of course, but there are also many helping hands. Indeed, we could perhaps extend the vision to see those hands extended across the river, making a bridge of human connection in and through the darkness.

Finding Mormon Theology Again

Terryl L. Givens. *Wrestling the Angel: The Foundations of Mormon Thought: Cosmos, God, Humanity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 424 pp. Hardcover: \$36.95. ISBN: 978-0199794928.

Reviewed by Taylor G. Petrey

Wrestling the Angel is the first volume in Terryl Givens's latest project on the "foundations of Mormon thought and practice" (ix). The first of a two-volume work, this book deals with theology while the subsequent study aims to deal with practices. The thesis is straightforward: "I hope to illuminate what is continuous with the Christian tradition and what is radically distinct from it" (ix). This is a work of Mormon theology, but it is most immediately a work of comparative theology. Givens is not content with the questions of historians who seek to situate and explain Mormonism in its nineteenth-century environment nor those of theologians who articulate the merits and justifications for specific ideas. Rather, Givens wants to place Mormonism in the larger context of "the Christian tradition" writ large. In his recuperation of theology as a useful mode of thought for Mormonism, Givens sets Mormon ideas against the backdrop of major intellectual traditions and movements in the West.

Givens offers an impressive and learned treatment that manages to put Mormonism into conversation with ancient Israelite religion, Origen, Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, the Cambridge Platonists, Universalism, and other American religious movements. The concept of the book is pulled by competing impulses to both locate Mormonism within the broader stream of Christian thought and establish Mormonism's distinctiveness and exceptionalism. Sometimes the championing of Mormonism appears

on both registers, both for its uniqueness as well as its participation and sharing of ideas found in other Christian thinkers of the past.

Just as “the Christian tradition” becomes the primary interlocutor, there is a kind of Mormon tradition that is produced in this book—an amalgam of Joseph Smith, Parley P. Pratt, Brigham Young, B. H. Roberts, James E. Talmage, and others. The book actively rejects much of the fundamentalist and anti-intellectual trajectories of the Mormon past and sees the reclaiming of theology as an antidote to the reactionary conservatism marked by the “growing unease with worldly learning and with intellectualism generally” that characterized much of twentieth-century Mormonism (15). In doing so, Givens’s work travels among a description, a defense, and a critical re-articulation of Mormonism’s key ideas.

One of the strengths of the book is that it offers a richer, more textured treatment of Mormonism that can acknowledge development and retreat. Yet Givens is clear in affirming essential “foundations” to Mormonism that transcend the runoffs and dead ends of imperfect historical manifestations. The language of “foundations” may also be an homage to Sterling McMurrin’s similar project of laying out the “foundations” of Mormon theology fifty years ago, covering much of the same ground and sharing the same approach as Givens.

As a treatment of Mormon thought, the book concentrates on three classical theological themes already outlined in the title: cosmology, theology proper (that is, discourse about the nature of God), and theological anthropology (discourse about the nature of the human being). Each section is then further broken down into twenty-one separate chapters of varying length (some chapters are only a few pages while others are over fifty). Long chapters are further subdivided, such that the book can function like a handbook of Mormon thought wherein each section can be read as a stand-alone essay. Each section offers overviews of broader Christian thinking on these topics and

how and why Mormonism developed alternative approaches, often locating parallels to these innovations in other Christian movements.

The section on cosmology is very brief, emphasizing monistic materialism and a rejection of creation *ex nihilo*. The section on theological accounts of God emphasizes Mormonism's ontological distinctiveness, its rejection of Trinitarianism and impassibility, and its defense of "anthropomorphism" and male and female gods. It also offers important theological expositions on Christology and the history of the doctrine of the Holy Ghost in Mormonism, plus a treatment of numerous other beings that populate Mormon heavens. The final section on human beings focuses on pre-mortal existence, the nature of human sin, agency, embodiment (including sexuality), salvation (including marriage), and "theosis," or the idea that humans have divine potential.

Each chapter has much to offer, presenting a robust explanation of numerous complex theological and philosophical topics. Some readers may push back against the equivalencies Givens invites us to consider among Mormon notions of a divine feminine, premortal existence, anthropomorphism, and theosis with other Christian traditions because of the fundamental ontological differences among them. Others may feel unsatisfied with Givens's treatment of race and gender, which is often highly selective. At moments in the text, Givens proves inconsistent in his attribution of some historically controversial ideas to provisional deviation (polygamy), others on cultural circumstance (exclusion of black members from priesthood and temple), while yet others receive the stamp of unalterable truth (heterosexuality).

Givens acknowledges that the foundations he emphasizes are partly his own choosing, but some of the absences are notable. For instance, there is no discussion of eschatology, which governed much early Mormon thought, scripture, and revelations, and continues to be relevant today. Further, besides a brief discussion of process theology, there is no effort to put Mormonism in discussion with more modern theological movements, including hermeneutics, various liberation

theologies, ecotheology, or comparative theology beyond the borders of Christianity.

The Christian tradition as Givens defines it proves to be a fruitful point of comparison with Mormonism's principal teachings. At the same time, the limitations of this endeavor are evident when one begins to consider what exactly constitutes this category of thought and how it might draw attention away from other more unique aspects of Mormon thought. For instance, the framework of "the Christian tradition" means that Givens makes only small mention of Masonry, new scientific discourses, and American racism, and there is no mention of how magic, colonialism, or utopianism have shaped Mormonism. Readers may ask what is at stake in the desire to establish Mormonism as both Christian and "radically distinct." What is the explanatory value of putting Mormonism in conversation with "the Christian tradition" in such a way? Givens's project seems to be the result of recent impulses to identify Mormonism as more obviously "Christian" in recent decades, but he does so by appealing to Christianity in a broad sense rather than a narrower Evangelical register.

Givens's offering is successful in laying a foundation for a Mormonism that is less dogmatic and more speculative, willing to engage in theological reasoning beyond its borders. However, what is often missing from the structure of any argument that seeks to locate Mormon parallels within Christian history is an assessment of whether the idea itself is any good. The greater challenges to Mormon thought are not in whether there is precedent for some of its most imaginative ideas in other Christian theologies but whether it is itself coherent and meaningful in its own right—and whether it can maintain relevance in the twenty-first century. The task of Mormon theology going forward may be to transform the traditional theological categories of cosmology, the nature of the divine, and theological anthropology in addressing the world as it is now rather than the intellectual categories of the world as it once was.

A Not-So-Innocent Abroad

Craig Harline. *Way Below the Angels: The Pretty Clearly Troubled but Not Even Close to Tragic Confessions of a Real Live Mormon Missionary*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2014. 281 pp. Hardcover: \$22.00. ISBN: 978-0802871503.

Reviewed by Rosalynde Frandsen Welch

Craig Harline's mission memoir, *Way Below the Angels: The Pretty Clearly Troubled but Not Even Close to Tragic Confessions of a Real Live Mormon Missionary*, is a hilarious, heart-of-gold account of the highs and lows of the author's experiences in the Belgium Antwerp Mission in the early 1970s. The story proceeds chronologically through the events of Harline's mission call and training period in the old LTM, his arrival in Belgium and subsequent travails with uninterested Belgians, and his eventual return home as a slightly-older and probably-a-bit-wiser young man. Throughout, young Elder Harline wrestles with his own unrealistic expectations of grandeur and occasionally encounters a moment of shimmering grace. The events and settings are, on the surface, highly entertaining but hardly exceptional. Non-Mormon readers, who are the primary audience for the book's publisher, Eerdmans, will come away with a lightly-seasoned glimpse of a Mormon mission experience in Europe; Mormon readers familiar with mission culture will respond with recognition and identification.

What makes the memoir exceptional, in addition to its wit and orientation toward an outside audience, is its willingness to tear down the icons of the Heroic Mission Story. This is not a book where the last house on the last block contains the golden investigator, conveniently gift-wrapped for the missionary's homecoming talk. This is a book where the last house on the last block very probably contains a hostile old man ready to literally kick the elders' butts off the porch. Harline is a canny storyteller, however, and realizes that tales of the Heroic Iconoclast are

nearly as hackneyed as tales of the Heroic Missionary. He avoids the problem by creating a confessional, conspiratorial narrative voice that is as game to humorously deprecate itself as it is to gently poke at parts of LDS mission culture. He achieves this appealing voice by blending past with present: equal parts “erudite history professor”—after his mission, Harline made the study of Belgium’s religious history his life’s work—and “clueless California teen” mixed with dashes of down-to-earth folksiness, droll humor, and spiritual reflection. The result is a readable hybrid that somehow shuttles us among early modern Europe, 1970s Belgium, and Harline’s present-day writing desk without a hint of jet lag.

Harline hits upon several strokes of narrative genius that manage to convey the strangeness of missionary life in a foreign country without compromising the clarity of the storytelling, all while keeping things fresh and funny. One of these is his habit of referring to the missionaries as “local businessmen”—a reference to the LTM president’s admonition to “blend in with the local businessmen” of Belgium. This is funny, of course, because shorn-headed, dark-suited, young men most assuredly did not resemble the local businessmen of 1970s Belgium. But it is also brilliant because it keeps both the conformity of mission culture and the essential strangeness of Mormon missionaries in Belgian society at the forefront of the narrative without tiresome repetition of the point. Another device is his syntactical rendering of Dutch into English: while he translates each word into English, he leaves the Dutch syntax intact, resulting in a comprehensible but thoroughly strange—and funny!—approximation of what American Dutch speakers must sound like to Flemish ears. His standard door approach thus reads: “Hello Mevrouw, my companion and I are Americans, here in Belgium for two years as missionaries in order a message with people to share, and we would very gladly with you and your man wish to speak” (78). Two hundred and fifty pages later, it’s still funny.

For a returned European missionary like me, the chief pleasure of the book is the simple *frisson* of recognition. Harline has a gift for sensing

the most universal of missionary experiences and capturing them with humor and insight. He makes fine hay out of something as basic as the elation and fellowship of a shared meal out with your district, or that cocktail of relief, superiority, and guilt you feel when your companion is sick and you get to stay inside. He articulates the difficulty of apprehending your companion's own inner life, minute by minute, and the labyrinth of unstated assumptions about the other's motives and moods that can tangle simple interactions. He skewers the "vending machine" mentality that so often accompanies an emphasis on obedience to rules, the simplistic expectation that God will dispense baptisms in return for obedience. He is razor sharp on the folly of status obsession and the eagerness with which one's fantasies scale the mission hierarchy: his account of the twenty-four hours he (mistakenly) thought he was AP—assistant to the president, or is it assistant president?—feels like an episode of *The Office*. But he is equally sensitive to the occasional moments of prophetic vision that settle on a missionary's gaze, allowing her to see the land and people around her as they really are: that is, glowing with an internal grace and sovereignty so vast that narrow categories of statistical success simply melt away.

Several points for reform are tucked implicitly among Harline's tales, though he never signposts them as such. Among these is his suggestion that missionaries be trained in a more sophisticated theory of conversion, one that acknowledges the wrenching social dislocation that Church membership requires of most converts. Elder Harline arrived in Belgium certain that only the devil, working through the Catholic Church, could account for the rejection he experienced; over time, he came to recognize what he calls the "Multivariate Theory of Conversion," the personal and social complexity of the decision to convert. Setting aside the question of whether young Elder Harline could *really* have been so naive fresh off the plane, it is certainly true that mission training materials, then and now, offer only the thinnest of sociological frameworks for understanding the conversion process. Harline writes:

[O]ur missionary teachers and the people teaching the teachers didn't like any talk about anything even resembling the Multivariate Theory of Rejection (or Conversion), didn't like any talk that structures might play a role in rejection or conversion or especially that those structures made conversion harder or easier in some places than in others, because teachers and people teaching the teachers were afraid that if they said something like that then maybe missionaries in hard places would quit trying or just give excuses for not converting anyone. But maybe those missionaries just would've tried differently. (116)

Together with his theory of conversion, Harline's approach to proselytizing evolved over the course of his mission. Initially obsessed with his discussion tally for the week, he came to value friendship and conversation over formal gospel instruction. By the end of his mission, he writes, "interest in hearing Discussions wasn't my big criterion for talking to people anymore" (233). He continues: "[W]hat I came to realize was that when I felt most connected to other people was also when I felt most timeless and most myself—like these people were seeing me for who I was, not who I was supposed to be. And I was doing the same for them. Maybe just to mutually feel that was what I'd really come to Belgianland for" (237).

I am skeptical that most young missionaries possess the social skills that young Elder Harline did—his extraordinary gift for friendship is apparent on almost every page of the book—and thus I suspect that some kind of formal scaffolding is necessary for young missionaries to organize their connection with investigators. But I certainly agree with Harline's call for a sane, humane, and humanistic approach to proselytizing.

Another critique weaves through Harline's narrative, though it is so pervasive that it is less a recommendation for reform than a central structuring device: that is, the conflict between the heroic mission ideal and the "real self." At the outset of the story, as Harline sets the stage for receiving his mission call, he frets about the legitimacy of his intentions. His reasons for going on a mission are hopelessly mixed, he reports, and it was difficult to discern "which of my motives for going

were pure and which came from all the social conditioning around me" (4). A vocabulary of sexual purity is commonly coupled with missionary service, but Harline cleverly turns the convention on its head in this passage: it is not a contest between lust and chastity that he will undertake but a struggle between the idealized cultural identity of the Mormon missionary and Harline's "pure" self. The contaminant is not carnal lust but enculturation.

This struggle plays out through virtually every episode of the book. Beginning in the LTM and continuing throughout his mission, Elder Harline tumbles through an emotional spin cycle originating with grandiose fantasies of being Super Missionary, a blend of every heroic mission story he has ever heard. When he fails to measure up to the impossible ideal, he vows to be content with who he "really is." Satisfaction with his own humility then sends him spinning back up toward Super Missionary, and the cycle begins again. The trouble, Harline seems to suggest, is that the cultural expectations surrounding missionary identity are too rigid, too totalizing, too idealized, too uniform. The individual self has no room to breathe, stretch its wings, or find its own way. To adopt the language of critical theory, we might say that the missionary subject position is overdetermined. Paraphrasing St. Augustine on this question, Harline writes, "If you were always doing and being what people whose opinions you cared about most wanted you to do and be (even supposedly good things), then you'd not only never figure out what you yourself wanted to do and be but would almost certainly end up doing and being a lot of actually dumb things" (203).

Elder Harline can only find peace, maturity, and true success on his mission when he musters the strength to throw off all the social conditioning, all the culturally-constructed baggage, and just *be who he really is*. He describes the happier, more secure emotional horizon he reaches by the end of his mission: "[I] started feeling . . . a sense of who I really was. I still wasn't entirely sure what that meant, because *myself* could be a long and confusing business, but I knew it first emerged noticeably not

just among but because of the Friendly People of the Pajottenland. . . . [T]hese people were seeing me for who I was, not who I was supposed to be. And I was doing the same for them. Maybe just to mutually feel that was what I'd really come to Belgianland for" (237).

If this all seems a bit too cliché, a bit too pat, well, Harline agrees. A careful thinker and historian of early modern Europe, the seedbed of modern subjectivity, Harline recognizes that every element of his narrative is contestable—from the very notion of a distinct, unconstructed self to his eventual anti-heroic triumph over the oppression of cultural roles. As central as those tropes have become in contemporary personal narrative, they are neither inevitable nor universal. Think of Shakespeare's crafty Prince Hal, who plans a careful ascent from profligate youth to noble king: it is only when he steps *into* cultural expectations that Henry "please[s] again to be himself" (*King Henry IV* 1.2.189). Why is it, then, that Elder Harline—no Hal, surely, but a simpatico hail young fellow well met—can only become himself when he steps *out* of cultural expectations?

Harline acknowledges the problems in his formulation; indeed, he problematizes it himself. At an early crisis point in the story, young Elder Harline finds himself depressed about his spectacular failure to make converts in Belgium. In despair, he throws himself down on his mattress, too spent for prayer. As he lies there in empty misery, a spiritual awareness begins to dawn: "[T]he emptiness wasn't so much filled as reduced to something smaller and smaller and quieter and quieter, until finally it took the form of a totally silent thought/feeling that calmly but overwhelmingly entered the emptiness inside, and it was just this: *Just be yourself*" (120). Here it is: rather than struggling to conform to the impossible cultural expectations around him, Elder Harline should relinquish the struggle, look inside himself, and relax into who he *really is*. One imagines young Elder Harline harmonizing with Queen Elsa in her frozen castle, "Let it go, let it go, can't hold it back anymore."

It's a comforting thought, and Harline immediately begins to deconstruct it. "Just be yourself" is too syrupy, too hackneyed to be a message from God. Too vague. Too complacent. And anyway, who was Elder Harline himself? "[N]ot three minutes later," he writes, "I was mistrusting the *Just be yourself*" (124). After poking at it for a while, he comes to understand his small revelation not as an endorsement of a simplistic Elsa-style pop individualism, the triumphant self throwing off the straitjacket of cultural roles, but instead as its opposite: an acknowledgement that the self is *not* triumphant, *not* victorious, but rather limited, weak, imperfect. But that's okay. He explains:

[I]t turns out you don't always want to be you, because you know very well all the spectacular failures and character flaws lurking around inside, and you think that maybe it'd be nicer to be someone else instead, who obviously doesn't have all those failures and flaws. . . . Maybe it's only when that doesn't work out so well that you finally and mostly out of desperation get enough nerve to let out that teeny tiny odd-ball idiosyncratic part of yourself that actually might make you most you, the part that might allow you to make your own particular and possibly impossible-to-replicate contribution to life. (122–23)

As an acknowledgement of the essential limitation, partiality, unfinishedness of the human self, as a humane acceptance of that weakness, and especially as a comforting affirmation to a struggling young missionary that his earnest, imperfect, idiosyncratic efforts are valuable, Harline's contribution is a welcome, necessary addition to LDS missionary discourse.

For all its personal richness, however, Harline's message feels intellectually unfinished. While he fruitfully complicates the first half of the "real self" vs. "cultural expectation" dichotomy that structures the book, the culture half remains relatively unmined. This is surprising because his sophisticated deconstruction of the self is so deftly—lightly and wittily—handled. But culture, in this book, remains largely under-developed as a category: by the end of the story, the "cultural expectations" with

which he inaugurated the central conflict are still largely understood to be unrealistic myths and unnecessarily rigid roles that deform the real workings of the self with grandiosity in attainment or depression in failure.

Yet doesn't Harline's own nuanced account of the self as weak, imperfect, and unfinished suggest, precisely, that humans need culture, need roles and scripts and norms, at least as a starting place for a life? If the self does not come fully equipped for autonomous operation, how are we to make our way through life, or a two-year mission to Belgium, without recourse to the distilled collective experience of those who have gone before? Indeed, isn't the self in some sense *produced by* the culture in which it exists? Humans produce culture because culture first produced us.

This is not to suggest that cultural roles and expectations can never be too rigid or too overbearing or simply ineffective: they can, and they should be adjusted when they are. It may well be that LDS mission culture needs to be revised to better acknowledge the individuality of each missionary and the folly of perfectionism in Christian discipleship. But such an adjustment is best understood not as an attenuation of culture but as its elaboration; not as a liberation of the "pure" self from the contamination of culture, as Harline frames it, but as culture's more attentive nurture of the self.

I suspect that Harline would not object too strenuously to the foregoing; indeed, he could no doubt frame the idea more elegantly than I. The emphasis on the "real self" in *Way Below the Angels* is probably just that: an emphasis, not a salvo in the subjectivity wars. As an historian, Harline is keenly attuned to the changes in culture over time. He recently wrote an article for *BYU Studies* subtitled, "How Things That Were Never Going to Change Have Sometimes Changed Anyway, and How Studying History Can Help Us Make Sense of It All," and that partial title summarizes his argument pretty well.¹ Perhaps it is as an historian observing an ever-changing parade of cultural efflorescence that Harline develops his sense

1. Craig Harline, "What Happened to My Bell-Bottoms? How Things That Were Never Going to Change Have Sometimes Changed Anyway, and How Studying History Can Help Us Make Sense of It All," *BYU Studies* 52, no. 4 (2013): 49–76.

of the self as a privileged observer, separate and in some sense detached from culture's never-ending, always-changing spectacle. It *is* useful, perhaps even crucially important, to be able to occasionally step back and observe one's culture with critical distance—not only as an historian but as a member of any community. But then, with the wisdom and perspective you've gained, put your stainless-steel missionary suit back on and step back into the parade. Shake hands, lock arms, throw candy, eat the street food. Come on, what's the worst thing you could catch?



Peck's Peak

Steven L. Peck. *Wandering Realities: The Mormonish Short Fiction of Steven L. Peck*. Provo: Zarahemla Books, 2015. 220 pp. Paperback: \$14.95. ISBN: 978-0988323346.

Steven L. Peck. *Evolving Faith: Wanderings of a Mormon Biologist*. Provo: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2015. 211 pp. Paperback: \$19.95. ISBN: 978-0842529440.

Reviewed by Michael Austin

If someone ever asks me what kinds of things Steven Peck writes, the best answer I can give goes like this: the BYU biology professor and raconteur writes primarily in the fields of evolutionary biology, speculative theology, literary fiction, computer modeling, poetry, existential horror, satire, personal essay, tsetse fly reproduction, young-adult literature, human ecology, science fiction, religious allegory, environmentalism, and devotional narrative. You know, that kind of thing.

Given the volume and the scope of Peck's recent writing, we should not be surprised that he published two retrospective volumes in 2015. He is not the sort of writer for whom a single collection would make sense,

and even with two volumes we only get a rough sampling of his work. A complete retrospective will have to wait for the sort of multi-volume collected works projects that usually don't happen until somebody dies or wins a Nobel Prize. Until such a thing happens (and my money is on the Nobel), we will likely have to do with the outstanding-if-not-quite-representative volumes that we have. The two volumes divide imperfectly into two categories: *Wandering Realities: the Mormonish Short Fiction of Steven L. Peck* is made up of fiction that relates to Mormonism and *Evolving Faith: Wanderings of a Mormon Biologist* consists primarily of non-fiction that merges science and theology.

Wandering Realities will be the more accessible volume for most readers. It contains both previously published and as-yet-unpublished fiction—mainly short stories, but also two novellas that appeared separately. Just about anybody who has a favorite Peck story will find it here, and those who have yet to encounter Peck's work will find much that is new and surprising. And so much of what Peck writes is surprising. He is a writer who knows how to use all of his tools—boundary-pushing narrative technique, big ideas, ingenious plot twists, and engaging characters—to expand what we mean by both “fiction” and “Mormonism.” Mormon to their core, these stories constantly ask what it means to be a Latter-day Saint in America today or on Mars a thousand years into the future. Peck asks us to consider the many ways that different contexts and environments shape the way Latter-day Saints understand their common religion.

The first part of the book, “Other Worlds,” sets Mormonism in science-fiction contexts, always asking, “what would the Church be like in a different kind of world?”; “how will we baptize non-corporeal machine converts?” (in “Avek, Who Is Distributed”); or “what will the Church do about genetically engineered bodies that make people look like sharks?” (in “Recreated in His Image”). On a deeper level, Peck uses science fiction tropes to try to understand Mormonism's essential nature. By imagining profound changes in Mormonism, he also imagines what

might remain of today's Latter-day Saint identity. For example, though the far-future Mormons in "Rennect" have a radically different biology from today's American Mormons—they live for centuries and their men have the babies—they still weep when they see re-enactments of the handcart pioneers.

These futuristic Mormonisms are anchored by the wonderful, novella-length story, "Let the Mountains Tremble, for Adoniha Has Fallen," set on a future Martian colony where the people have reverted to a feudal society, with Mormonism functioning as the dominant church. In this setting, Peck explores some of the most important issues that face all religious communities during periods of transition and change—issues like obedience, dissent, authority, and loyalty. It is also an engaging adventure story centered around a profound moral dilemma.

The second part of *Wandering Realities*, "This World," features stories set mainly in contemporary Mormon communities. This does not quite make them "contemporary realism," though, as Peck's Mormons do the sorts of things that test the boundaries of what "realism" means. His Mormon bishops, for example, kill barking dogs ("When the Bishop Started Killing Dogs") and lock stake presidents in closets ("The Best Pinewood Derby Ever")—actions within the realm of possible behavior that should probably be considered more allegorical than aspirational. This section also includes Peck's recent AML Award-winning story, "Two-Dog Dose," one of the most touching and shocking pieces of Mormon literature I have ever read.

The one exception to the "Mormons-in-the-Present Time" organizing principle of Part II is "The Gift of the King's Jeweler," which is set in Babylon in the sixth century BCE. This bit of "early Peck" was published as a separate book by Covenant Communications in 2003. It tells the fable-like story of a Babylonian craftsman who becomes convinced that the God of Israel is real and who, guided by his dreams, manufactures a strange-looking instrument that Latter-day Saints will recognize as the Liahona of the Book of Mormon. It is the most devotional piece in

the collection and one that rounds out the perspective of the author—highlighting the devotional core of everything in the volume.

Like *Wandering Realities, Evolving Faith* is divided into two sections—an organizational logic that does not quite capture the real diversity of the volume. The first section consists of peer-reviewed articles in places like *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* and *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*. These are deeply learned writings situated within a long tradition of scholarly attempts to reconcile the claims of religion with those of science. Part II of this volume consists of shorter pieces—magazine articles, personal essays, and blog posts that treat many of the same issues in somewhat more accessible ways.

As the title promises, there is a lot of wandering in these essays. Peck's puckish meandering takes us in fascinating directions, exploring things like the philosophies of Henri Bergson and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the pseudo-scientific pursuits of Alfred Russel Wallace, and the scientific imagination of Joseph Smith. But the wandering is not aimless. Peck has some very concrete points that he wants to make in his essays on science and religion, and the bulk of the essays in Part I shape up nicely into a coherent line of reasoning that, by the end of the book, we can recognize as something like "the big picture."

The big picture (stripped of all of its nuance and complexity) looks something like this: Religion and science are not mutually exclusive ways of knowing, nor are they completely separate magisteria that must be rigidly confined to their own spheres of influence. Science provides very powerful tools for answering certain kinds of questions, some of which have religious dimensions, and scientific methodologies are "not a threat to spirituality or belief in the existence of God" (13). Because all knowledge incorporates subjective assumptions, both religion and science require an element of faith.

While scientific and religious ways of knowing are compatible, they are not identical, and we misuse both when we try to make scientific treatises out of religious texts designed "to connect us subjectively,

consciously, and spiritually to richer truths and meaning” (18). The book of Genesis, for example, was never designed to answer questions about dinosaurs or the age of the earth. When we insist on reading it this way, we end up cheating both religion, by ignoring what the author of the text was really trying to tell us, and science, by setting up unnecessary oppositions between important religious principles and easily testable facts. Latter-day Saints especially have no reason to fear well-established scientific principles like organic evolution—with all its attendant randomness and contingency. Our doctrines both support and are supported by these principles when they are viewed through the lens of our distinctive beliefs about things like embodied deity, exaltation, and universal laws that constrain even God. With dizzying intellectual force, Peck explains how these theological assumptions support an understanding of a universe in which profound complexity—including life, consciousness, and God Himself—can emerge from designs writ deep within the structure of reality.

And that’s just for starters. Along the way, *Evolving Faith* treats us to thoughts and observations that defy easy categorization. The essays in Part II are more personal and confessional than the peer-reviewed articles in Part I, and they tend to treat a wider variety of topics. Several essays discuss Mormon responses to the environment. Another gives a series of personal experiences to illustrate the deep connections among violence, grace, and the atonement. And still another examines the boundaries between sacred and secular space. But the most engaging and personal essay in Part II—and I would argue the most remarkable essay in the entire volume—is “My Madness,” which gives first-hand account of the temporary insanity that Peck experienced after being infected with a parasite during a research trip to Southeast Asia.² This is quite simply the most engaging and enlightening account of the logic of madness that I have ever read.

2. This essay was first published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 41, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 57–69.

Steven L. Peck is one of Mormonism's best living writers, but he is also one of our most formidable and comprehensive intellects. His interests are as wide-ranging as his experiences, which lead to great satisfaction for his readers and, I suspect, great frustration for his publishers and booksellers. In an age when we expect books (and their authors) to conform to genres and categories, Peck gives us fluid intellectual borders and a genre-busting literary style. It is no accident that both collections contain the word "wandering" in the title; no word better describes Peck as a writer or as a thinker. In both his fiction and his non-fiction, he moves through ideas, topics, and styles at a dizzying pace. By their very nature, retrospective collections like *Wandering Realities* and *Evolving Faith* must try to capture the movements of a peripatetic mind. Both do so admirably, and I recommend them enthusiastically and without qualification.



A Conversation Begins

Stephen H. Webb and Alonzo L. Gaskill. *Catholic and Mormon: A Theological Conversation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 218 pp. Hardcover: \$27.95. ISBN: 978-0190265922.

Reviewed by Joseph Gile

There has never been any official theological dialogue between the Roman Catholic and LDS Churches, but Stephen H. Webb and Alonzo L. Gaskill have opened an unofficial one in *Catholic and Mormon: A Theological Conversation*. The key to appreciating their efforts is located in the subtitle—and what a conversation it is! Stephen Webb is the Catholic here and Alonzo Gaskill the Mormon, with the two authors discussing such theological issues as authority, grace, Mary, revelation, ritual,

matter, Jesus, heaven, history, and the soul in short chapters devoted to each topic. The two theologians take turns opening each chapter, allowing the other to respond, with a chance for a follow-up rebuttal. Even when Webb and Gaskill challenge each other, the conversation never becomes polemical. These are two well-informed friends who respond to each other in a most respectful way. The tone is always generous and mutually sympathetic, though Protestant readers may be put off by the recurring distinctions made with their theological tradition. The book opens with both authors explaining why each left behind his previous religious affiliation. Webb explains how he came to the conclusion that the Protestant Reformation is now “over,” which led him to embrace the Catholic Church, and Gaskill explains why he left Eastern Orthodoxy to become a Mormon. The opening chapter, however, is more than engaging spiritual odyssey; Webb and Gaskill both show how their personal religious journeys were driven by their perceptions of religious authority. What could have been a rather abstract treatment instead becomes quite personal and concrete. This interweaving of honest, personal, religious searching with serious theological issues in a conversational format carries through in all the subsequent chapters. As an example of this conversational deliberation, consider the specifics of chapter 4 on revelation and the Bible. Like other Christian denominations, Catholicism considers the canon of scripture closed after the Apostolic Age, with Mormonism obviously holding to a more expansive canon that includes the revelations to Joseph Smith. Webb tries to bridge this gap by using the category of private revelation, which is Catholic doctrine, but not quite in the way Webb presents it. Catholic theology considers public revelation as the original words and deeds of God in the Old Testament and Jesus Christ in the New Testament; private revelation is the Catholic belief that God does continue speaking with us, with the important proviso that private revelation does not reveal any new truth about God or our salvation. It is Catholic teaching that God has said everything there is to say in his son (*Dei verbum*, sec. 4; cf. 1 Timothy 6:14

and Titus 2:13), though Webb never mentions this. Instead, Webb tries to draw Catholics and Mormons closer together by contrasting them both with Protestant thought when he writes, "Protestants did not necessarily deny that God acts in miraculous ways outside of the events recorded in the Bible, but they did insist that these miracles do not tell us anything about God that we cannot already find in the Bible" (64). This, however, is not just a Protestant position. It is also the position of contemporary Roman Catholic theology, which likewise does not believe that private revelation can provide any new information about God. Webb further blurs the distinction between public and private revelation when he writes that "[p]ublic revelation is not complete, however, in the sense that God is done speaking to us" (66). The language here is not well chosen. Catholic theology does consider public revelation complete with the end of the Apostolic Age; it is private revelation that is ongoing, but that distinction is lost here.

Instead of using the concept of public and private revelation, it would have been clearer for Webb to invoke the contrasting categories of original and dependent revelation developed by Gerald O'Collins SJ in his *Rethinking Fundamental Theology*. According to O'Collins, all private revelation is entirely dependent upon original biblical revelation. Private, dependent revelation is meant to help actualize original (public) biblical revelation in the hearts and minds of subsequent generations after the conclusion of biblical revelation, but private, dependent revelation can never provide any additional truths about God or about salvation. Obviously, Mormonism disagrees. In the next section of chapter 4, Gaskill continues to blur the distinction between public and private revelation, writing that "God has inspired with private revelation many sincere individuals who ultimately preserved public revelations, such as the Bible, the doctrine that Jesus is the Christ, teachings regarding baptism and the Eucharist, and so on" (71).

This confusion of the concepts of public and private revelation carries over into their discussion of the biblical canon. Webb considers the

revelations of Joseph Smith “true and authentic” private revelations (70). Gaskill takes issue with Webb’s use of terminology, since Mormonism considers Joseph Smith’s revelations public, not private, ones from God (71). This, of course, is why Mormonism rejects closing the biblical canon with the end of the Apostolic Age. Gaskill notes that “[f]or Mormons, the idea of a ‘closed canon’ of ‘public revelation’ implies man has some power to limit God’s ability to reveal normatively—simply because man (not God) says ‘all public revelation has been given’” (72). Webb responds to this in the next section of chapter 4. In one of his strongest reactions in the entire book, Webb considers the Mormon position here to be “puzzling” (76). Mormonism may protest against closing the biblical canon of public revelation with the last apostle, but Webb asks, is their canon really all that open? Webb next briefly explores where a truly open canon without any creedal leads, i.e., to “ecclesial chaos” (76). Gaskill responds in the final section of the chapter, accepting these critiques from Webb by noting that “Stephen’s assessment of the Mormon position on scripture, revelation, and creeds is largely accurate and would probably frustrate most Latter-day Saints. Although I know he is not being critical, he does bring up a few points that could be leveled as criticisms against us” (78).

From all of the above, one can see both the strengths and weaknesses of the approach of *Catholic and Mormon*. These are two knowledgeable friends conversing about key theological teachings in their respective churches. They are not holding a debate; they never try to “win”; they are not trying to resolve matters definitively; they are able to respectfully critique and accept criticism concerning their respective churches. Since this is not formal interreligious dialogue where every point is defined, explored, and finally resolved, some points are raised by one author in a section but not addressed by the other in a subsequent one. That’s because it’s a conversation. And, as with any lengthy, wide-ranging conversation, sometimes they get carried away, as Webb does when he claims that, with respect to the Virgin Mary, “Catholics and Mormons

both have a goddess problem” (50). Some facts are simply not checked (given the explosive growth in Africa, did more people truly leave the Catholic Church than enter it after Vatican II as Gaskill claims?); some assumptions are left unchallenged (did the prominent role of Mary truly help facilitate many pagan conversions as Webb claims?). Some of the exchanges do offer novel, fascinating comparisons, such as the role of St. Peter in both denominations; some comments are quite provocative, as when Webb suggests that Mormonism can show Catholics “how to become post-Thomistic without losing their theological way” (102). All in all, this is a fascinating, lively, sometimes controversial, but very robust, theological conversation. A more formal, official interreligious dialogue would be much more restricted in topic, more detailed in its consideration, more careful in its use of language. It would also probably be much less stimulating to read.

THE ELEGANCE OF BELIEF

Phyllis Barber

I may be too old, too apparently single (though I am not; I am married to a Jewish man now, who is respectful of the religion, though not interested in conversion), or too peripheral, but this talk has been given only in my thoughts. I have many speeches to give, but alas, it is now the turn of others. Thanks to *Dialogue* for allowing those who don't give talks to give them here.

Please know that it is my pleasure to speak to you today and convey some of the ideas that flit through my brain. May the Spirit guide and direct these thoughts.

Popular phrases regarding belief float in the contemporary wash of air: I believe I can fly; I believe in love; I believe in you (and me); I believe in miracles; I believe in yesterday; I believe in music. But what is belief? What does it mean to believe something? What is the real meaning of the word belief?

Of course there are the *American Heritage Dictionary* definitions: "(1) The mental act, condition, or habit of placing trust or confidence in another; (2) Mental acceptance of and conviction in the truth, actuality, or validity of something; (3) Something believed or accepted as true, especially a particular tenet or a body of tenets accepted by a group of persons." And a religious person would most likely focus on the shade of the word that speaks of "conviction in the truth" and "something . . . accepted as true."

Belief: BE. LIEF.

The root word BE: to exist in actuality. To be or not to be. I am or I am not, present, past, and future. The Almighty. I am that I am. To be. Being: *be-in*-God.

The root word LIEF: readily; willingly. (“I would as lief go now as later.”)

A rather interesting definition of belief can be extracted from these root words. Be. To be. Being is to *be-in*-God. But willingly? To be, I am. But am I willing to be what I am?

God Almighty is spoken of as the great I Am. We are children of the great I Am. It is logical to consider ourselves as seeds of I Am, thus I Am, at least in embryo. Are we willing to be all of what that infers? To rise to the I Am in ourselves? The crux of the proposed question could be cast in this way: To be. The I am that I am. Willingly. I am willingly a human being who is I Am.

All of this defining and jostling with words can seem like philosophical nonsense, like, get over it. Belief is simple. Just believe. End item. But that may be what this analysis is all about. Parsing words and considering how they were born into the language raises a question: what is it that I personally believe? How am I conditioned by what I believe? It seems we are set in a grand landscape so much larger than we are and that we have many notions about how to find the way from one end to the other. But is a belief an absolute? Is belief divisive? Does it more closely resemble faith and hope? Or do we have anything to say about it?

In 1953, Jane Froman, a popular singer, hosted a television show. She was troubled by the uprising of the Korean War in 1952 so soon after World War II and asked several songwriters to create a song that would offer hope and faith to not only the citizens of the United States of America but possibly everywhere. She talked to songwriters Ervin Drake, Irvin Graham, Jimmy Shirl, and Al Stillman, all together now one, two, three, and they wrote the lyrics to “I Believe.” Crooner Frankie Laine made the song popular. It became a household motif, played on the radio endlessly, or so it seemed in the 1950s. Lately, as I’ve been rum-

maging around with the idea of belief, I've been waking each morning with that song in my head. I hadn't heard it for years but remembered the first verse:

I believe for every drop of rain that falls, a flower grows
I believe that somewhere in the darkest night, a candle glows
I believe for everyone who goes astray
Someone will come to show the way, I believe, I believe.

And I said to myself when I heard these words and their tune inside my head: "Yes. I believe. I believe someone will come to help us find the way. I believe God is love and that a Good Shepherd checks on the strays." But I wonder if it might be a greater challenge to trust a larger context.

I sometimes listen to others whom I respect and love telling me what it is necessary to believe: "If you go in this direction, you will get where you need to go"; "If you do x, y, and z, you will get what you want." But that sort of logic seems closer to a manipulation of divine will: "If I hold tightly to this belief, if I obey blindly no matter what I think about it, God will love and bless me." To me, that seems a bargaining stance rather than a God-like or God-inspired way to proceed or to live. Possibly the text of an insurance policy. A set of rules for a rewards program or for five stars on the forehead. And I ask myself another question: if I believe something totally, have I closed my eyes to other ways of seeing, other possibilities? God is infinite, after all. Can a belief be kept in a box with iron sides? Is belief a solid chunk of granite that never yields until it comes up against a force greater than itself? Is belief like India rubber that can stretch?

It seems a matter of importance to believe because we believe, not because we will be rewarded or gifted or praised. To believe because I am, willingly. To believe that, as the sun rises every morning, God is in us and with us, no matter what our quibbling minds can manufacture. Consider Job, who loved God no matter what happened to him, who never lost his faith even though every circumstance seemed to bend its force against him. He was a faithful man. A steady man. A believer in

the ways of God. He asked his pleading questions of the Lord, his God, but ultimately accepted that God. No quarrel. Acceptance of being. To be, with all that implies: willingly.

THE UNNAMABLE:

Do you show the hawk how to fly, stretching his wings on the wind?
Do you teach the vulture to soar and build his nest in the clouds?

JOB:

I am speechless: what can I answer?
I put my hand on my mouth.
I have said too much already;
now I will speak no more.¹



“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:7–8).

Returning to the scriptures, the state of believing in God’s love differs from the state of being in God’s love. How does one proceed from belief to being? Most of us cannot see through the glass darkly, even those of us who are sustained by belief and hope. But when belief moves beyond hope and trust into being with all that is, that is another matter. But how can that happen, and does it sound too Buddhist?

Each of us has our own particular trials, which can be a path to going beyond trust in God to being with God. Maybe I have been in love with the mystery of the refiner’s fire, of trials, of questions, of the ongoing

1. Stephen Mitchell, trans., *The Book of Job* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987), 84.

effort to sharpen the point of my particular pencil, but I believe that faith is not about knowing. It is about believing, trusting, and surrendering what we think we do know to allow God's arms to surround us.

I sometimes feel doubt rising like a bad stomach ache when I hear others express their absolute beliefs in Sunday School as if they are speaking for everyone everywhere across all time. (I acknowledge the cynicism in my voice, of which tendency I am aware and to which I am attending.) The sheer certainty I sometimes hear can set me on my ear. I also confess to feeling tossed by waves of cultural attitude that remind me of Eric Hoffer's "true believer" captured by the language, the concepts, the emotions, the particulars, and the phrases with little use of one's critical thinking tools. I become judgmental from my "elevated" point of view. But I do believe that doubt is necessary to understanding. Brigham Young said to not "narrow ourselves up."² Thus, our trials. Our challenges to see through the smoky glass. A path to being, willingly.

"The fundamental principles of our religion," said Joseph Smith, "are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it."³ If I get caught up in a wrangle with the details, I can find myself wondering why I am at church. But when I turn my focus back to the unspeakable joy of God, his love, and his creation, I can settle back down to essentials. My focus needs to return to the effort to love well, which is no small effort. Actually, a life-time effort, every day and every hour.

I accept the fact of groping, of seeking, of praying, of studying, of wanting to know. But I know that each day I can cross paths with a moment of wonder: a brilliant orange autumn leaf floating innocently

2. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 8, no. 9 (Mar. 4, 1860).

3. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 121.

on a rambunctious stream, face wide open to the clouds and all of creation; a seven-year-old's front-toothlessness; a robin-egg-blue day; fields of snow; a hawk presiding at the top of a skeletal tree. To me, these are reminders that God lives, that there is "joy unspeakable." As Simone Weil, author of the classic *Waiting for God*, says, "the beauty of the world is almost the only way by which we can allow God to penetrate us. . . . [It is] Christ's tender smile for us coming through matter."⁴

Or I might look into another human face, see a glimpse of the divine, and marvel at what is standing in front of me. This I believe: to look at the flower or a face and behold its glorious design, its intrinsic beauty, and to be humbled by what I see, for I see into the mystery of what is called God and Christ. In this act of compassion, of truly beholding another, I can move beyond mere contemplation into the act of receiving God, just as I believe God beholds and receives each of us. I can be I am, willingly.



The thought of "dwindling in unbelief" is a sad thought, even for a person who reserves the right to doubt anything about a god or a creator. Melting away into nothingness without belief in something or anything seems a despairing state of being. In his remarkable book *St. Francis of Assisi*, G. K. Chesterton quotes Rossetti as saying "bitterly but with great truth" that the "worst moment for the atheist is when he is really thankful and has nobody to thank."⁵

I am grateful for the gift of believing: of being in the ultimate sense of being, willingly. I see God in the clouds shaped like the wing of a bird. The hills. The mountains. The green ecstasy of a rain-washed hillside. I see God in the purple aster and the goldenrod that set off each other in

4. Simone Weil, *Waiting for God*, trans. Emma Craufurd (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), 102.

5. G. K. Chesterton, *St. Francis of Assisi* (New York: Image Books, 1989), 70.

beauty. I believe that God is much larger than I can understand. I believe in this largeness/hugeness/magnificence and am humbled in knowing I have only a mere glimpse of the mysterious ways of the divine. But God's face is everywhere: in small wildflowers, in a face close to mine, in love.

I believe in connectedness, not divisiveness, and people's beliefs can be divisive. We are all together, raising and supporting each other. Our stories, our lives, our experience of trying to love, or of being rebuffed at times, turning away, turning back again. Facing. Avoiding. I believe in reciprocity—giving back to God by receiving God as we look upon each other with tenderness and charity, as we look upon his creation with wonder, gratitude, and care, as we bask in being this creation. The voice of God speaks from this earth and from the bodies created to people this earth—these children of God.

To make it through every day, one needs belief that the sun will rise (though there is sufficient evidence that it will). To doubt that the sun will rise while one debates the truth of the diurnal round doesn't make a difference in the sun's rising. To doubt the change of seasons does not stand in the path of the seasons (however diverse they can be). Our beliefs do not affect the changing of the guard from solstice to solstice, from equinox to equinox.

"I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility" (Mosiah 4:11).

If I believe anything, this would be to honor the greatness of God's goodness and long-suffering toward all of us unworthy creatures. The state of true humility, not false self-effacement, which can be a temptation, is one I have known but have not always remembered. I wish for this state of mind as well as I wish for the guidance to discern what is truth, what is the path I need to follow for my own particular spiritual journey, my own "awful rowing toward God," as Anne Sexton says, though

I might dispute the word “awful.”⁶ It isn’t always easy, this rowing, but we can learn from each phase of our life and in the belief that we are progressing toward a more refined sphere.

I do believe, though my boat glides at its own pace and sometimes wobbles on that watery, sometimes tempestuous, voyage toward God. To be, I am. Willingly. And I wish the same for all of you.

I believe above the storm the smallest prayer will still be heard
I believe that someone in the great somewhere hears every word
Every time I hear a newborn baby cry or touch a leaf or see the sky
Then I know why I believe

In the name of our brother, Jesus Christ, Amen.

6. Anne Sexton, *The Awful Rowing toward God* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1975).

INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITION

For more than a decade the LDS Church has organized an International Art Competition, each with its own theme. Variety and diversity figure centrally into the competition and the exhibit that results from it. Submissions arrive from Church members throughout the world and are judged and incorporated into a show, with a handful of works receiving special awards. This year's theme, "Tell Me the Stories of Jesus," brought entries from nearly a thousand artists from forty-four different countries. A five-person jury selected show entrants and winners, showcasing a wide range of media, techniques, styles, and aesthetic sensibilities. All of these works—paintings, photographs, sculptures, drawings, installations, and other forms—are on display at the Church History Museum in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Featured on both the cover and inside this issue of *Dialogue* are works from the competition and the museum exhibit. Although only a handful of works and artists are represented here (all of the works can be viewed at the Church History Museum's website at <https://history.lds.org/exhibit/iac-2015-tell-me-the-stories-of-jesus>), they convey something not only of the range and diversity of work in the show, but of the expanding aesthetic boundaries of what counts as devotional art within the Mormon tradition. The art on display is often modern, abstract, and even occasionally challenging; it also regularly draws on compositional approaches and imageries that are historically more often associated with Catholic art than with the Protestant aesthetics more commonly present in Mormon art. Consider the prevalence of Passion images and depictions of the cross. For decades, devotional LDS art had a strong but narrow overall aesthetic. As the Church grows and expands globally and Mormon art draws increasingly from diverse parts of the world, it is also drawing on those histories, including local, regional, and national art histories.

—Andrea Davis and Brad Kramer, *Dialogue Art Editors*

Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought
announces a call for entries for the 2016
Eugene England Memorial Personal Essay Contest

In the spirit of Gene's writings, entries should relate to Latter-day Saint experience, theology, or worldview. Essays will be judged by noted Mormon authors and professors of literature. Winners will be notified by email and announced in our winter issue and on *Dialogue's* website. After the announcement, all other entrants will be free to submit their essays elsewhere.

Prizes:

First place, \$300; second place, \$200; third place, \$100

Rules:

1. Up to three entries may be submitted by any one author. Send manuscript in PDF or Word format to englandcontest@dialoguejournal.com by September 1, 2016.
2. Each essay must be double-spaced. All essays must be 3,500 words or less. The author's name should not appear on any page of the essay.
3. In the body of the email, the author must state the essay's title and the author's name, address, telephone number, and email address. The author must also include language attesting that the entry is her or his own work, that it has not been previously published, that it is not being considered for publication elsewhere, and that it will not be submitted to other publishers until after the contest. If the entry wins, *Dialogue* retains first-publication rights, though publication is not guaranteed. The author retains all literary rights. *Dialogue* discourages the use of pseudonyms; if used, the author must identify the real and pen names and the reasons for writing under the pseudonym.

Failure to comply with the rules will result in disqualification.

CONTRIBUTORS

POLLY AIRD {pollyaird@earthlink.net} is the author of *Mormon Convert, Mormon Defector: A Scottish Immigrant in the American West, 1848–1861* (2009, University of Oklahoma Press), which won the best biography award from the Mormon History Association in 2010. She is the co-editor (with historians Will Bagley and Jeff Nichols) of *Playing with Shadows: Voices of Dissent in the Mormon West* (2011), which was named best documentary book by the Utah State Historical Society in 2012. Polly served on the editorial board of the *Journal of Mormon History* for ten years (2000–2011) and more recently on the executive board of the Mormon History Association (2011–2014).

PAIGE ELIZABETH ANDERSON {paige.crosland@gmail.com} graduated with a BFA from Brigham Young University in 2011 and has participated in multiple juried and group exhibitions every year since. Her work seeks to explore how space—whether physical or emotional—is made sacred through repeated events. The use of methodical processes and repetitive forms reference the quotidian routines that make up daily life, the succession of daily rituals that eventually stack up like repeated miracles and create meaning. Methodical processes also underscore the connection her work has to traditional women's work—like quilting—as well as daily family rituals, ceremony, and pursuing genealogical research. This work is an outgrowth of interest in ancestry and patterns that form through families by exploring the idea that she is but one on a string of genetically-linked individuals. This notion has profound implications: that events give birth to events, changes to changes, and actions to actions. Her work is represented by Meyer Gallery in Park City. She lives and works in Salt Lake City and often enjoys time in the studio with her two daughters at her side.

MICHAEL AUSTIN {ma352@evansville.edu} is Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of Evansville in Evansville, Indiana. He is the author or editor of ten books, including *Peculiar Portrayals: Mormons on the Page, Stage, and Screen* (Utah State University Press, 2010). His book, *Re-reading Job* (Greg Kofford, 2014), was awarded the 2014 Association for Mormon Letters Award for religious non-fiction. He lives in southern Indiana with wife, Karen, and their children, Porter and Clarissa.

PHYLLIS BARBER {greenbough7@comcast.net} is a cyclist, hiker, editor, teacher, and award-winning author of eight books—a novel, two books of short stories, two children's books, and a trilogy of memoirs which includes: *How I Got Cultured: A Nevada Memoir* (a coming-of-age story that won the Associated Writing Program Award for Creative Nonfiction in 1991 and the Association of Mormon Letters Award in Biography in 1993); *Raw Edges*, a coming-of-age-in-middle-age story; and *To The Mountain: One Mormon Woman's Search for Spirit*, a collection of personal essays about her twenty-year hiatus from Mormonism and experiences with a wide variety of religious persuasions. She has been inducted into the Nevada Writers Hall of Fame, is the mother of four sons, and taught for the Vermont College of Fine Arts MFA in Writing Program for nineteen years.

MELVIN J. BASHORE {benelliman@comcast.net} retired in 2013 after thirty-eight years as a librarian and historic sites curator with the LDS Church Historical Department. He has published Mormon history articles in *Kansas History*, *South Dakota History*, *Annals of Wyoming*, and *Libraries & Culture*, in addition to all the other usual venues that publish Mormon history. With wide-ranging interests, he is presently working on historical treatises of US drag strips, long-distance bicycle riders, and World War II service football. He lives in West Jordan, Utah.

MARK BROWN {markbrown@delta.edu} teaches composition, film, and creative writing at Delta College in mid-Michigan. He earned an MFA in Creative Writing at Boise State University and a PhD in Film Studies from Wayne State in Detroit. His poems have previously appeared in *Dialogue*, *Bluffs*, *InLand*, *Ethos*, *New Zoo Poetry Review*, and other publications. He served as faculty advisor for student creative writing clubs at Illinois Valley Community College and Delta College. He also helped edit the campus literary journals *Silo*, *River Currents*, and *Pioneer Post*. He is a member of the Broken Nose Poetry Collective. Mark lives in Midland, Michigan, with his wife and three daughters.

STEPHEN CARTER {steveorstephen@gmail.com} is the editor of *Sunstone*. His books include *What of the Night?* (a collection of personal essays), *The Hand of*

Glory (a YA horror novel), and (with co-author Jett Atwood) *iPlates, Volumes 1 and 2* (graphic novels based on the Book of Mormon). He received an MFA in fiction and a PhD in narrative studies from the University of Alaska–Fairbanks. His *Mormonism for Beginners* is due out July 2016 from For Beginners Books.

CHRISTINAH CROSS {christinahpaige@gmail.com} is an undergraduate student of Classical Studies with a Latin Emphasis and Linguistics at Brigham Young University. She works as a student assistant at LDS Philanthropies and a teaching assistant for an honors writing course. This is her first publication.

DANIEL P. DWYER, OFM {ddwyer@siena.edu} has been a member of the Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans) since 1982 and a Catholic priest since 1988. Fr. Dwyer received his Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Siena College, Loudonville, New York. He also holds a Master of Arts Degree in History from the College of St. Rose, Albany, New York; and a Master of Arts degree in Theology from the Washington Theological Union in Silver Spring, Maryland. He received his PhD in History from Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana. Fr. Dwyer is a long time member of the Mormon History Association and currently on its book award committee and on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Mormon History* and *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. He is a former trustee of St. Bonaventure University in Olean, New York. From 1996–1999 he was co-director of the Bonfils Seminar on Islam and Franciscanism of Holy Name Province, Order of Friars Minor; and during that same time he was director of the Niebuhr Institute of Religion and Culture at Siena College. From 2001–2005 Fr. Dwyer was a member of the board of the Shaker Heritage Society in Colonie, New York. In the summer of 2008, he was the Assistant Director of the Francis E. Kelley Oxford Program of St. Bonaventure University at Trinity College, Oxford, UK. He has served in administrative posts within the Franciscan Order, and has ministered in hospitals, soup kitchens, parishes, and prisons. Fr. Dwyer has given retreats and has spoken on numerous topics including the Watervliet Shaker Cemetery, Mormon-Catholic relations, the Dutch colonial period in New York State, Clare of Assisi, monasticism, and male spirituality. He is currently an Associate Professor of History at Siena College and Vice-President of the Academy of American Franciscan History.

NATHAN SAMUEL FLORENCE {nathan@nflorencefineart.com} is a Salt Lake City-based artist and filmmaker who paints in oil, often on woven brocade or printed cloth. He describes his paintings as narrative/figurative in that they often portray figures in some gesture or action that seems to spring from a story. He allows the patterns of the cloth to show through the paint to varying degrees which, he says, “relates to the patterns and textures that hold our lives together individually and bind us together culturally.” Nathan’s work can be seen at Modern West Fine Art and at www.nflorencefineart.com.

AUNDREA LEONNA FRAHM {aundreafrahm@gmail.com} is an interdisciplinary artist and educator currently living in Utah. She is extremely passionate about producing art in the form of experiences and contemporary art educational issues. She has exhibited nationally and internationally in more than forty group and solo exhibitions. Her BFA and art education degrees were both attained at Brigham Young University and her MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Aundrea’s work investigates the ideas of experience related to interconnectivity of the body and nature; the body and the artificial, constructing contemplative experiences; relationships to time; and relationships to technology. Currently, she is constantly thinking about the concept lines of time and growth over ease.

JOSEPH GILE {gilej@newmanu.edu} is Dean of Graduate, Adult and Continuing Studies and Associate Professor of Theology at Newman University in Wichita, Kansas. He received his Master of Arts (MA) in Theology from the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, and then earned both the License in Sacred Theology (STL) and the Doctorate in Sacred Theology (STD) from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

FIONA GIVENS {fionagivens@gmail.com} is a retired modern language teacher with undergraduate degrees in French and German and an MA in European History. She is now an independent scholar who has published in several journals and reviews. Along with her husband, Terryl Givens, she is the author of *The God Who Weeps: How Mormonism Makes Sense of Life* (Ensign Peak, 2012) and *Crucible of Doubt: Reflections on the Quest for Faith* (Deseret Book, 2014).

WARREN HATCH {wrenshatch@gmail.com} is the author of *Mapping the Bones of the World* (Signature Books) and the forthcoming *Fieldguide to the Redshifting Universe*. His work has also appeared in such journals as *Prairie Schooner* and *Western Humanities Review*.

SARAH E. PAGE {tinuviel13@gmail.com} graduated from Southern Connecticut State University with an MS and certification in Secondary English in 2013. She is a 2013 recipient of *Dialogue's* New Voices award for poetry. Her poems have been published in journals including *Connecticut River Review*, *Star*Line*, *Fresh Ink*, *Inscape*, *NonBinary Review*, *Noctua Review*, and included in the anthology *Fire in the Pasture*. She is the co-editor of *Young Ravens Literary Review*.

ZINA NIBLEY PETERSEN {zina_petersen@byu.edu} is a medievalist who got her MA and PhD from The Catholic University of America. She teaches British medieval literature, literary history, and English Christian writings—but mostly she teaches students—at BYU. She is Boyd Petersen's wife, which goes a long way in explaining why this essay appears here. She and Boyd have four children and way too many animals.

TAYLOR G. PETREY {tpetrey@gmail.com} is assistant professor of religion at Kalamazoo College in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He holds a doctorate of theology and a master's of theological studies from Harvard Divinity School in New Testament and early Christianity.

R. DENNIS POTTER {pottered@uvu.edu} is associate professor of philosophy and associate director of religious studies at Utah Valley University. He has previously published in *Dialectica*, *The International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, *Faith and Philosophy*, and *Philosophical Papers*.

ROBERT A. REES {bobrees2@gmail.com} was the second editor of *Dialogue* and currently serves on the *Dialogue* board. He is completing the second volume of *Why I Stay: The Challenges of Discipleship for Contemporary Mormons* (Signature Books) and working to establish a chair in Mormon Studies

at Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. He lives in northern California with his wife, Maya Balenz.

MATHEW N. SCHMALZ {mschmalz@holycross.edu} is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts. His scholarship focuses on South Asian studies, global Catholicism, and modern religious movements. He also writes regularly for the *Boston Globe* website *Crux*. Most recently, he has published *Mercy Matters*, a book of essay-length reflections on mercy. He can be followed on twitter @MathewSchmalz.

JENNY WEBB {jennywebb37@gmail.com} lives in Huntsville, Alabama, with her husband Nick Webb and two children. She has an MA in comparative literature from Brigham Young University and works as an editor and production manager for several academic journals. She has contributed chapters to *Perspectives on Mormon Theology: Scriptural Theology*; *An Experiment on the Word: Reading Alma 32*; and *Reading Nephi Reading Isaiah: Reading 2 Nephi 26–27*, which she co-edited along with Joseph M. Spencer. She is the current president of Mormon Scholars in the Humanities and serves on the Mormon Theology Seminar Executive Board.

ROSALYNDE FRANSEN WELCH {rosalynde.welch@gmail.com} is an independent scholar and writer on all things of Mormon faith and culture. She holds a PhD in early modern English literature, and her approach to cultural criticism incorporates literature, philosophy, and critical theory. Her writing has appeared in *Dialogue*, *BYU Studies*, *Element*, and many on-line venues. She lives in St. Louis, Missouri, with her husband, John, and their four children.

DIALOGUE

a journal of mormon thought

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Michael Barker, Daniel Parkinson, and Benjamin Knoll look at suicide rates among gay LDS teens

A roundtable discussion on Exponent II with Claudia Bushman, Nancy Tate Dredge, Judy Dushku, Susan Whitaker Kohler, and Carrel Hilton Sheldon

And fiction from Levi Peterson and Eric Jepson

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