

DIALOGUE

a journal of mormon thought

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.

Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought is published quarterly by the Dialogue Foundation. *Dialogue* has no official connection with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Contents copyrighted by the Dialogue Foundation. ISSN 0012-2157. *Dialogue* is available in full text in electronic form at www.dialoguejournal.com and is archived by the University of Utah Marriott Library Special Collections, available online at www.lib.utah.edu/portal/site/marriottlibrary. *Dialogue* is also available on microforms through University Microfilms International, www.umi.com.

Dialogue welcomes articles, essays, poetry, notes, fiction, letters to the editor, and art. Submissions should follow the current *Chicago Manual of Style*. All submissions should be in Word and may be submitted electronically at <https://dialoguejournal.com/submissions/>. For submissions of visual art, please contact art@dialoguejournal.com.

Submissions published in the journal, including letters to the editor, are covered by our publications policy, <https://dialoguejournal.com/submissions/publication-policy/>, under which the author retains the copyright of the work and grants Dialogue permission to publish. See www.dialoguejournal.com.

EDITORS EMERITI

Eugene England and G. Wesley Johnson

Robert A. Rees

Mary Lythgoe Bradford

Linda King Newell and L. Jackson Newell

F. Ross Peterson and Mary Kay Peterson

Martha Sonntag Bradley and Allen D. Roberts

Neal Chandler and Rebecca Worthen Chandler

Karen Marguerite Moloney

Levi S. Peterson

Kristine Haglund

CONTENTS

ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

Authority and Priesthood in the LDS Church, Part 2: Ordinances, Quorums, Nonpriesthood Authority, Presiding, Priestesses, and Priesthood Bans	<i>Roger Terry</i>	1
The Provo Tabernacle and Interfaith Collaboration	<i>Kim Abunuwara</i>	41
Mormon-Catholic Relations in Utah History: A Sketch	<i>Gary Topping</i>	61
“A Portion of God’s Light”: Mormonism and Religious Pluralism	<i>Brian D. Birch</i>	85
“Behold, Other Scriptures I Would that Ye Should Write”: Malachi in the Book of Mormon	<i>Colby Townsend</i>	103

PERSONAL VOICES

I Am Not Your Trigger	<i>John Gustav-Wrathall</i>	139
In Memoriam: Neil Longo	<i>Margaret Blair Young</i>	149
Reverse Perspective	<i>Neil Longo</i>	151
La’ie Mud Rhymes	<i>Neil Longo</i>	161

POETRY

Agency of all that matters	<i>Robert J. Frederickson</i>	165
A Better Country	<i>Kevin Klein</i>	167
Soft	<i>Kevin Klein</i>	168
the fog	<i>Elisabeth Richardson</i>	170
Raking	<i>Melissa Young</i>	172

FICTION

- City of Saints *David G. Pace* 175
- Light Departure *Ryan Shoemaker* 199

REVIEWS

- Expertly Built: Stories within Stories *Gabriel González N.* 211
Tim Wirkus. *The Infinite Future.*
- Nothing by Itself *Sheldon Lawrence* 214
George B. Handley. *American Fork.*
- “Twisted Apples”: Lance Larsen *Darlene Young* 219
Takes on Prose Poetry
Lance Larsen. *What the Body Knows.*
- Lost in Translation *Robert A. Rees* 224
Adam S. Miller. *The Sun Has Burned
My Skin: A Modest Paraphrase of
Solomon’s Song of Songs.*
- Traveling “the undiscovered country” *Susan Elizabeth Howe* 229
Stephen Carter, ed. *Moth and Rust:
Mormon Encounters with Death.*
- A Life Worth Living *Zach Hutchins* 232
George B. Handley. *Learning to Like Life:
A Tribute to Lowell Bennion.*
- The Gift of Language *Michael Andrew Ellis* 235
Heidi Naylor. *Revolver.*
- Helping Us Think and Be in the World *Lisa Bickmore* 240
Linda Sillitoe. *Owning the Moon.*
- Horror Becomes Banal Under Scrutiny *Rachel Helps* 245
but Loss is Lasting in *The Apocalypse of
Morgan Turner*
Jennifer Quist. *The Apocalypse of
Morgan Turner.*

Envisioning Mormon Art	<i>Sarah C. Reed</i>	248
Laura Allred Hurtado. <i>Immediate Present</i> .		
Not Alone	<i>Cristina Rosetti</i>	252
Stephen Carter, ed. <i>Moth and Rust: Mormon Encounters with Death</i> .		
The Empty Space between the Walls	<i>Mark D. Thomas</i>	255
Joseph M. Spencer. <i>The Vision of All: Twenty-five Lectures on Isaiah in Nephi's Record</i> .		
ART		
“In Brick and Stone”: The Art of Paul L. Anderson		261
ART ESSAY		
The Loss of Art, The Art of Loss	<i>Christian N. K. Anderson</i>	271
FROM THE PULPIT		
My Mother's Eclipse	<i>Steven Peck</i>	279
CONTRIBUTORS		
		289

AUTHORITY AND PRIESTHOOD IN THE LDS CHURCH, PART 2: ORDINANCES, QUORUMS, NONPRIESTHOOD AUTHORITY, PRESIDING, PRIESTESSES, AND PRIESTHOOD BANS

Roger Terry

In the prequel to this article, I discussed in general contours the dual nature of authority—individual and institutional—and how the modern LDS concept of priesthood differs significantly from the ancient version in that it has become an abstract form of authority that can be “held” (or withheld, as the case might be). In the ancient world, *priesthood* was used to describe either the condition of being a priest or the collective body of priests. And in the ancient world, the duties of “the priesthood” revolved around rituals, with the priests standing in the place of the Lord, being his agents, as it were. By contrast, in the modern Mormon version of priesthood, those who “hold” this authority, especially the Melchizedek Priesthood, generally have only occasional opportunity to officiate in religious rituals, which we call ordinances. *Priesthood* is now much more expansive, involving many functions that have little to do with the ancient duties of priests. In certain ways, it is also less clearly defined.

Ordinances

According to the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, “The word ‘ordinance’ is derived from the Latin *ordinare*, which means to put in order or sequence; or to act by authorization or command. . . . The power to perform ordinances whose validity is recognized by God is inseparably connected with the divine authority conferred on mortal man, that is, the priesthood of God.”¹ Robert Millet and his coauthors, in a thick volume some see as a replacement for McConkie’s now out-of-print and out-of-favor *Mormon Doctrine*, give a dual definition: “In a broad sense, a gospel ordinance is a law, statute, or commandment of God (D&C 52:15–16; 64:5).” In a narrower sense, “an act or ritual done with proper priesthood authority is known as an ordinance.”²

The Millet book lists several of these ordinances and divides them into two categories—those that are necessary for salvation and those that are not. Gregory Prince, looking at ordinances from a historical perspective, makes an interesting observation: “In a Latter-day Saint context whatever tradition has defined as an ordinance is one. Otherwise what Latter-day Saints accept as ordinances defies simple definition.”³ Prince points out that some ordinances are tied scripturally to priesthood; others are not. He lists seventeen separate ordinances, including casting out evil spirits, raising the dead, and the second anointing. Millet and his coauthors mention setting people apart for callings and dedicating graves, which Prince omits, thus helping underscore his point that the LDS definition of *ordinance* appears to be somewhat fluid.

1. Immo Luschin, “Ordinances,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, edited by Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 3:1032.

2. Robert L. Millet, Camille Fronk Olson, Andrew C. Skinner, and Brent L. Top, *LDS Beliefs: A Doctrinal Reference* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 464.

3. Gregory A. Prince, *Power from On High: The Development of Mormon Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 79.

The original version of the fourth article of faith, which was finally changed to its current wording in 1902, reads, “We believe that these ordinances are First, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; Second, Repentance . . .”⁴ indicating that Joseph Smith initially regarded faith and repentance as ordinances. Even disregarding this historical anomaly, the necessity of having priesthood authority is not always clear. For example, during Joseph Smith’s and Brigham Young’s administrations, women were permitted to lay on hands and heal the sick,⁵ and today they still help administer the endowment and perform washings and anointings in the temple. So ordinances may not always require priesthood for participation. Again, we run into definitional difficulties here.

Taking this line of thinking a step further, since our definition is not exactly set in stone, there may be some wiggle room for declassifying certain ordinances. This has already been done for the practice of cursing those who reject the gospel message, an ordinance that is

4. See, for instance, *The Pearl of Great Price: Being a Selection from the Revelation, Translations and Narrations of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Latter-day Saint Printing and Publishing Establishment, 1878), 63. For a detailed description of the textual change, see Lyndon W. Cook, “The Articles of Faith,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 17, no. 2 (1977): 254–56.

5. See Jonathan A. Stapley and Kristine Wright, “Female Ritual Healing in Mormonism,” *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 1 (2011): 1–85. Female participation in the priesthood ordinance of blessing the sick still occurs, though rarely. Stapley and Wright relate an incident in September 1979, when Elders Bruce R. McConkie and Marion D. Hanks were called to the bedside of President Spencer W. Kimball after his first surgery for a subdural hematoma. Elder McConkie invited President Kimball’s wife, Camilla, to join them in laying hands on her husband’s head during the blessing (84). A similar occurrence was related to me by an elderly high priest whom I home taught and who served earlier in his life in a stake presidency. He said that once, when giving a blessing to a family member, he laid his hands on the afflicted person’s head, but his mind went blank. He then had a strong impression that his wife was to join him in the ordinance. He invited her to lay her hands on the family member’s head, and when she did, the stupor of thought left him, and he was able to proceed with the blessing.

mentioned in eight different early revelations but is no longer practiced in the Church.⁶ A similar though not identical change could occur, for instance, if Church leaders were to determine that dedicating a grave is not really a priesthood ordinance. They might conclude that there is no necessary reason why women or non-LDS family members cannot offer this particular prayer. Dedicating a grave is certainly not an ordinance of salvation. Expanding participation in ordinances might also extend to serving as witnesses for ordinances such as baptism or temple sealings. I can think of no reason, for instance, why a woman could not serve as a witness to a baptism.

Ironically, Millet and his coauthors point out that “ordinances set things in order within the Church,” but our difficulty in specifying exact criteria for defining what an ordinance is seems to work against that desired order. Regardless, any attempt to define Mormon priesthood narrowly, as merely the authority to perform ordinances, becomes problematic. This is due both to the haziness of our notion of what an ordinance is and to the abstract nature of LDS priesthood authority, which allows it to extend far beyond the performance of priestly rituals.

Specifically, a significant function of priesthood is to be a governing institutional authority in the Church. It could easily be argued that presiding has become the most significant function of priesthood, far outweighing the ritualistic role that priesthood played in ancient times. Even our vocabulary reveals our priorities in the modern Church: rather than *performing* sacred rituals, Mormons speak of *administering* ordinances. Priesthood is inseparably connected to institutional administration.

Priesthood as Institutional Authority

Because priesthood is an abstract principle in modern Mormondom, it does not necessarily have to be attached to the institutional Church, although in our day this is always the case. Joseph and Oliver, for instance,

6. See Prince, *Power from On High*, 108–09.

were not members of the Church when they received authority that was later termed priesthood, nor were they members when they baptized each other, but we explain this fact by observing that they had to receive the authority first *in order to establish the Church*; otherwise, the organization would not have been *authorized* by the Lord. Still, as pointed out in the predecessor to this article, Joseph Smith did not invoke priesthood at all in organizing the Church. Indeed, the word *priesthood* does not appear in early Church documents until more than a year after its organization.⁷ Nevertheless, since the founding of the Church, priesthood has always been bestowed and exercised within its institutional confines.⁸ Indeed, Orson Hyde, in a May 1844 article titled “Priesthood What Is It,” declared that priesthood “is the right and the power to establish and govern the Church of the Living God, and is the same to that body, that government is to the nation.”⁹ This definition entirely sidesteps the more elementary and historical notion that priesthood has a necessary connection to being a priest and performing priestly rituals; it is instead the authority to establish an organization and then govern it. It is institutional authority. D. Michael Quinn makes this insightful observation: “When the Church

7. In part 1 of this pair of articles, on page twenty-six, I mistakenly stated that the word priesthood first appears in early Church documents in October 1831. The word actually appeared in the minutes of a June 3–4 conference, indicating that several men were “ordained to the High Priesthood,” meaning they were ordained high priests. The point, though, is still valid. Priesthood was not on Joseph’s radar at the organization of the Church or for at least a year afterward. See Michael Hubbard MacKay and others, eds., *Documents, Volume 1: July 1828–June 1831*, the Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2013), 326–27.

8. As I explained in the previous article, men were ordained to offices, but they did not receive priesthood. Just as in the Book of Mormon, there were elders (Joseph and Oliver were first and second elders but were not ordained such), priests, and teachers. Later, biblical offices were added: deacon and bishop. But priesthood, as was explained in the previous article, was not a concept yet, other than meaning the state of being a priest.

9. Orson Hyde, “Priesthood What Is It,” *The Prophet*, May 25, 1844, 3.

was organized in April 1830, there was still little sense of hierarchy. Smith was seen as one prophet among potentially many. Neither was there a structured sense of authority or priesthood. . . . It was priesthood—and eventually a highly structured priesthood—which required the hierarchical institution that Mormonism became.”¹⁰ Priesthood and hierarchy are inextricably intertwined in the modern Church. One does not exist without the other. In fact, one spawns the other.

The Organizational Impulse

Priesthood in modern Mormonism has hatched a hierarchical institution that is, organizationally speaking, on steroids. The LDS Church is so massively organized that it makes even the Roman Catholic Church look like amateur hour. Even if we completely ignore the general Church hierarchy of First Presidency, apostles, seventies, and general auxiliary presidencies as well as all area- and stake-level officers, we still see that each fully staffed ward in the Church has not just a bishop and his counselors, but twelve (yes, twelve) presidents with two counselors each (if you count the bishop as president of the priests quorum with his two assistants), a handful of clerks, a ward mission leader, an employment specialist, a music chairperson, dozens of teachers, secretaries, advisers, and other assorted official positions. This irrepressible organizational impulse makes Mormonism easily the most highly structured religion on earth, but it also opens the door to several significant and as yet unanswered questions regarding authority. One very simple question is: how much of this organization is absolutely necessary? This is a question that has been studiously avoided. The idea of giving every member a “calling” has certainly trumped every call for organizational reduction and simplification.

Returning to the idea that priesthood and institutional hierarchy are inseparable in modern Mormonism, I should point out that it is, of

10. D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 7–8.

course, theoretically possible for the Lord to bestow priesthood authority upon someone not baptized into the Church, but as far as we know, this has not happened since the Church was organized. In earlier dispensations, however, prophets sometimes received authority and spoke and acted in the Lord's name without any sort of corresponding formal organizational structure (Moses in exile and Abinadi among the apostate colony of King Noah, for instance), but this pattern does not prevail in our day—the priesthood and the Church are inseparable. Without the priesthood, there is no authorized Church, and without the Church, there is no valid framework within which the priesthood can operate, although this framework has changed and evolved significantly since the early days of the Restoration.¹¹

At times in the ancient world, priesthood was directly responsible for leading the people, not just performing sacred rituals. At the time of Jesus' ministry, for instance, the religious leader of the Jewish people was the high priest. As I understand it, this is because the temple was the central pillar of the Jewish religion, and the high priest was the chief of the priests who performed sacrifices in the temple. A similar situation prevailed at times among the Nephites, but the direct connection to priestly rituals is missing from the record. Alma₁ and his successors in the office of high priest did function as head of the church, but just how the Nephite temple figured into this arrangement is unclear. Indeed, there is only one mention in the Book of Mormon of sacrifices being performed in connection with Nephite temples, and this was long before the church was established. It is also not a very specific or clear connection: "And . . . the people gathered themselves together throughout all the land, that they might go up to the temple to hear the words which king Benjamin should speak unto them. . . . And they also took of the firstlings of their flocks, that they might offer sacrifice and burnt offerings according to

11. See William V. Smith, "Early Mormon Priesthood Revelations: Text, Impact, and Evolution," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 46, no. 4 (2013): 1–84, especially 13–19 and 46–48.

the law of Moses” (Mosiah 2:1, 3). The temple here is only tangentially connected to priestly rituals (priests and priesthood are not even mentioned). The temple is instead a place where the king teaches the people. We must assume, since the Nephites followed the law of Moses, that they performed sacrifices in their temples, but the specifics of this practice are not mentioned. In the Book of Mormon, as opposed to the Bible, the temple is not ever directly connected to either priesthood or the office of high priest. In the Nephite record, at least after Alma¹ founded the church of Christ, priesthood served as a form of institutional religious authority. In this particular regard, the Book of Mormon church is similar to the modern LDS Church, even though the concept of priesthood among the Nephites differed from our understanding of priesthood today.

In terms of the two types of authority discussed in my previous article—personal and institutional authority—priesthood in the modern LDS Church is entirely an institutional authority. It is not an authority based on personal influence or a divine dispensation to an individual. It is conferred by and through the organization. Granted, some leaders possess a set of personal qualities that have been labeled *charisma*, and this may give them greater influence over those they lead than the leverage exerted by others whose personality and attributes are less alluring. But charisma alone does not give any member of the Church the right to act officially in Church affairs. It certainly does not give a person the right to preside over the organization.

Leadership Succession

After the death of Joseph Smith, there were two major non-institutional claims to succeed him as the presiding authority in the Church and two significant institutional claims,¹² as well as several marginal claims. James

12. Three if you count the early effort by Emma Smith and some members of the Quorum of the Anointed to promote William Marks, president of the Nauvoo high council and an opponent of polygamy, as Joseph’s successor. This

Strang sought to succeed Joseph Smith on the basis of a letter he claimed Joseph had sent him and visions he claimed to have had. This could be viewed as a charismatic appeal for authority. Another group held that authority to lead was a hereditary matter (a notion Joseph actually encouraged), and they eventually convinced Joseph Smith III to accept the presidency of their movement, which became the Reorganization. The largest body of Saints, however, chose to follow the apostles, who claimed the right to succession based on their priesthood and on keys they said Joseph had conferred upon them. This was a formal institutional claim to authority. Sidney Rigdon also claimed the mantle of institutional leadership by virtue of his position in the First Presidency, which created competing priesthood claims.¹³ In September 1844, the Twelve excommunicated Rigdon in an attempt to extinguish his claim that he was the only ordained prophet, seer, and revelator remaining after the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum. Rigdon moved to Pittsburgh with a group of his followers and continued to stake his priesthood claim to leadership. In terms of sheer numbers, though, the apostles prevailed, and since the 1844 succession crisis, the right to preside in

effort was nipped in the bud before the entire Quorum of the Twelve returned to Nauvoo. See Merina Smith, *Revelation, Resistance, and Mormon Polygamy: The Introduction and Implementation of the Principle, 1830–1853* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2013), 186.

13. Sidney Rigdon, who likely suffered from bipolar disorder, would have been a poor choice to lead the Church had his claim succeeded, an assessment his son John Wycliffe Rigdon agreed with. “I do not think the Church made any mistake in placing the leadership on Brigham Young,” he wrote. “Sidney Rigdon had no executive ability, was broken down with sickness, and could not have taken charge of the Church at that time. . . . The task would have been too great for Father. I have no fault to find with the Church with doing what they did. It was the best thing they could have done under the circumstances” (quoted in Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994], 360. See pages 116–18 for a discussion of Rigdon’s mental health).

the LDS Church has come only through regular and formal priesthood channels, established and maintained by the apostles.¹⁴

But are presiding and priesthood necessarily connected? I will examine that issue later in this article.

Nonpriesthood Authority

We come first, though, to an interesting question. Although priesthood today does not exist without the institutional Church, is priesthood the *only* authority in the Church? There are two views on this. One is the perspective I grew up with—that priesthood and authority in the Church are synonymous (in other words, priesthood is the only form of authority in the Church). This view of authority is a fruit of the unique Mormon definition of priesthood as an abstract idea, a general power that people can possess. If priesthood is God's authority delegated to men

14. It is interesting to note, as Michael Quinn has point out, that before 1847, the First Presidency of the Church was not an apostolic quorum (*Mormon Hierarchy*, 37–38). Four of Joseph's counselors (Gause, Rigdon, Williams, and Law) did not come from among the Twelve, nor were they ever ordained apostles. Amasa Lyman was ordained an apostle and took Orson Pratt's place in the Quorum of the Twelve when Pratt was excommunicated. When Pratt was reinstated, Lyman was bumped from the quorum but was made a counselor in the First Presidency. Two of Joseph's assistant presidents (Cowdery and Hyrum Smith) were ordained apostles but never served in the Quorum of the Twelve. Assistant President John C. Bennett was not ordained an apostle. After Joseph's death, the First Presidency became an apostolic quorum. All members of the First Presidency (with one exception noted below) either came from the Quorum of the Twelve or were ordained apostles shortly before or after their call to the presidency. J. Reuben Clark Jr. and Alvin R. Dyer, for instance, never served in the Quorum of the Twelve, but they were ordained apostles. Clark served in the First Presidency for eighteen months before being ordained an apostle. Dyer was ordained an apostle in October 1967 but was not added to the Quorum of the Twelve. In April 1968, he became an additional counselor to President David O. McKay, serving with first counselor Hugh B. Brown, second counselor N. Eldon Tanner, and additional counselor Thorpe B. Isaacson, the only counselor since 1847 who was never ordained an apostle.

on earth, then what other authority can there be in the Church? This is the perspective behind Elder Oaks's 2014 general conference talk on the authority of the priesthood, in which he gave the following explanation:

We are not accustomed to speaking of women having the authority of the priesthood in their Church callings, but what other authority can it be? When a woman—young or old—is set apart to preach the gospel as a full-time missionary, she is given priesthood authority to perform a priesthood function. The same is true when a woman is set apart to function as an officer or teacher in a Church organization under the direction of one who holds the keys of the priesthood. Whoever functions in an office or calling received from one who holds priesthood keys exercises priesthood authority in performing her or his assigned duties.¹⁵

I will give some reasons why I find this explanation inadequate, or at least incomplete, but for now let me just say that the other view on priesthood—the view I have come to see as more convincing—is that priesthood is not the only authority in the Church, which may open a side door through which we can get around the impasse we are now experiencing on this very difficult issue.

Four Examples of Nonpriesthood Authority

Now, don't misunderstand me. I am not saying that priesthood is not the presiding, supervisory authority in the Church. No one would argue this. What I am saying is that there seem to be types of authority in the Church that, while created and directed by priesthood leaders, do not seem to be part of the priesthood. Let me illustrate what I mean by other forms of authority with some examples.

1. The Relief Society president in my ward has authority. In fact, I would argue that in a practical sense she has more institutional authority in our ward than I do, even though I am a high priest and a member of

15. See Dallin H. Oaks, "The Keys and Authority of the Priesthood," Apr. 2014, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/04/the-keys-and-authority-of-the-priesthood?lang=eng>.

the stake high council. She certainly has more institutional authority than the president of the teachers quorum, even though she does not “hold” the priesthood or possess priesthood keys and her calling is not a priesthood calling, as is the teachers quorum president’s. She can call meetings, give sisters ministering assignments, coordinate the care of the afflicted, participate in ward council, and preside over Relief Society meetings. Of course, she acts and presides under the supervision of the bishop, but so does the president of the teachers quorum. According to the first view presented above, both of these presidents “exercise priesthood authority,” but there is obviously a distinct difference between the two. One is a priesthood office; the other is not. And we can’t just gloss over this difference.

The relationship between Relief Society and priesthood is no simple matter, particularly if we consider statements such as the following, which Joseph Smith reportedly made when organizing the women’s organization: “I am glad to have the opportunity of organizing the women, as a part of the priesthood belongs to them.”¹⁶ What we may be encountering here is simply a question of semantics, perhaps even somewhat careless semantics. Joseph loved to give people authority, as long as it was subordinate to his authority as presiding officer of the Church, and he established a complex institutional hierarchy that required multiple (and sometimes overlapping) levels of authority, but he called that authority *priesthood*, even when it had nothing to do with the office and ritual duties of a priest. Whatever authority Joseph was intending to bestow upon the Relief Society, however, it was suspended by his death, and when Brigham Young resurrected the society several years later, in certain ways it was not really the same organization Joseph authorized.

2. Today we have a highly organized Church, with a complex hierarchical pyramid of authority that we call priesthood, but the institution—particularly the corporate support structure that has grown

16. Sarah M. Kimball, “Auto-Biography,” *Woman’s Exponent* 12, no. 7 (Sept. 1, 1883): 51.

up around the ecclesiastical core—cannot easily fit within the naturally restrictive bounds of an all-male priesthood. Similar to the Relief Society president example mentioned above, middle managers in the departments at Church headquarters exercise authority in a variety of ways. None of these managers, however, exercise authority as a function of their priesthood. Indeed, some (the female managing editor of the *Friend* magazine, for example) do not hold the priesthood. Rather, these individuals exercise institutional authority in a manner very similar to that of a middle manager in any worldly corporation. They do this under the supervision of priesthood advisers, but they are not exercising priesthood in their jobs.

3. Another example of nonpriesthood authority in the Church occurs in its missions. Young male missionaries are called to be district leaders, zone leaders, and assistants to the mission president as if these were priesthood offices, but they are not. Missionaries called to these positions of leadership and administrative authority are not set apart or ordained or sustained by the vote of other missionaries. (I should add that mission president and temple president are perhaps the only high-level callings in the Church that are not sustained by the vote of those over whom they preside, which places them at variance with the law of common consent.) Because so many sister missionaries are now entering the field, new leadership positions have been created for them, called “sister training leaders.”¹⁷ Although these new positions are of course not priesthood offices, neither are the leadership positions occupied by male missionaries. But they *are* positions of institutional authority. Which brings up the question of why a sister missionary could not serve as a zone leader or assistant to the president.¹⁸ The argument may be

17. Newsroom, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Church Adjusts Mission Organization to Implement ‘Mission Leadership Council,’” Apr. 5, 2013, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/church-adjusts-mission-organization-implement-mission-leadership-council>.

18. I heard recently of a mission in which the mission president organized an entire zone of female missionaries, complete with female district and zone

made that this would allow women in the mission to preside over men, but we already have this arrangement in the Primary auxiliary in almost every ward in the Church, including my calling a couple of years ago as a teacher, in which I answered to the Primary president.

4. A final example that is quite different but very much related to the previous three can be illustrated by the frequent situation that occurs in part-member families where the wife is a member but her husband is not. Who presides in the home when a son turns twelve and is ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood? Certainly not the twelve-year-old, even though he is the only priesthood holder in the house. And what about six years later when that son turns eighteen, becomes an adult, and is ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood? In no less an official source than “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” we find this statement: “By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families.”¹⁹ This statement in no way insinuates that the father must have the priesthood in order to preside. According to President Joseph F. Smith, “There is no higher authority in matters relating to the family organization, and especially when that organization is presided over by one holding the higher Priesthood, than that of the father.”²⁰ The

leaders. It is significant to note that these female leaders did not preside over any male missionaries.

19. The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles, “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129, available at <https://www.lds.org/topics/family-proclamation>.

20. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1968), 286–87. *Father, Consider Your Ways*, a pamphlet published by the Quorum of the Twelve in 1973, concurs: “Fatherhood is leadership, the most important kind of leadership. It has always been so; it always will be so. Father, with the assistance and counsel and encouragement of your eternal companion, you preside in the home” (4–5, quoted in Ezra Taft Benson, “To the Fathers in Israel,” Oct. 1987, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1987/10/to-the-fathers-in-israel?lang=eng>). See also Dallin H. Oaks, “Priesthood Authority in the Family

parenthetical clause here is just that, parenthetical, which means that it can be dropped from the sentence without impairing its basic meaning. Therefore, according to President Smith, the highest authority in any family is the father, whether he is a baptized member or not. But how can this be possible? The home is the fundamental unit of the Church, we are taught. How, then, can someone who is not even a Church member preside over the fundamental Church unit, and in some cases preside over someone who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood? Apparently, the biological (or even adoptive) authority of the father outranks priesthood authority. And what about the situation where an aged high priest goes to live in the home of his son who became inactive at age fifteen and is still only a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood. Who presides? In this case, home ownership would probably trump priesthood rank.

This concept of the father, or husband, presiding in the family runs into difficulties, however, when considered in tandem with another statement in the family proclamation: “Fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners.” How can fathers and mothers be equal partners if the father presides over the mother? I will have more to say about the sometimes-confusing notion of presiding, in families and elsewhere, later in this article, but for now let us merely acknowledge the very real possibility that priesthood is not the only authority in the Church, nor does it preside in every circumstance.

Women and Authority

What is the difference, then, between priesthood authority and these other possible types of authority in the Church? One of the primary differences is that performing certain ordinances is limited to the priesthood

and the Church,” Oct. 2005, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2005/10/priesthood-authority-in-the-family-and-the-church?lang=eng>, where Elder Oaks explains why his single mother presided in the home even when he was ordained a deacon.

(the only function the word itself actually suggests). But, as mentioned in the previous article, even this was not always as strictly defined as it is today. Women and girls at an earlier time, for instance, were allowed to prepare the sacrament for church meetings and perform other tasks that are now the domain of priesthood holders.²¹ And for decades after the establishment of the Church, women also laid hands on the sick and afflicted and blessed them. They performed these healings not through the priesthood but through their faith, in harmony with this declaration in the Book of Mormon: “And these signs shall follow them that believe—in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover” (Mormon 9:24). We might well ask how laying hands on the sick and healing them through faith in Jesus Christ can be construed as *not* “acting in the Lord’s name,” which again illustrates the difficulty associated with the abstract definition of priesthood we embrace today. We might also ask how, in a more official ritualistic capacity, women are permitted to officiate in certain temple ordinances. How can they perform priestly functions without holding an authority we define as priesthood?

One answer is to insist that women do indeed exercise priesthood authority, but without actually having the priesthood. If we accept the idea that priesthood is the only authority in the Church, this explanation

21. Many of the duties associated today with Aaronic Priesthood offices evolved over time and were not institutionalized until as late as the 1950s. Of course, at one time, youth were not given the priesthood at all, and adult men were ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood offices. For a recounting of the evolution of the Aaronic Priesthood and a listing of current priesthood duties that do not actually require the priesthood, passing the sacrament among them, see William G. Hartley, “From Men to Boys: LDS Aaronic Priesthood Offices, 1829–1996,” *Journal of Mormon History* 22, no. 1 (1996): 117–18, 129–31. This article is reprinted in William G. Hartley, *My Fellow Servants: Essays on the History of the Priesthood* (Provo: BYU Studies, 2010), 37–86. Hartley quotes President Heber J. Grant saying that “there was ‘no rule in the Church’ that only priesthood bearers could carry the sacrament to the congregation after it was blessed” (130).

does indeed have some merit. But it leaves too many questions unanswered and even creates new questions that are very difficult to answer.

I don't want to be difficult here, and I don't want to openly argue with an apostle, especially Elder Oaks, who has always been one of my favorite General Authorities. I realize that his assertion (that anyone who receives a calling from someone with priesthood keys is exercising priesthood authority) is a generous gesture toward women in a spirit of inclusion, but in the attempt to make space for women under the umbrella of priesthood authority, this assertion actually expands our already nebulous definition of priesthood and creates further ambiguity. If that is all priesthood is—the performance of a necessary function under commission from someone who holds priesthood keys—then everyone who performs any function in the Church, from the lowliest Primary teacher to the general president of the Relief Society, exercises priesthood authority in their calling. And this includes nonmembers, who are sometimes given minor callings in wards and branches. They too would be exercising priesthood authority.

This is where an expanding definition gets us into murky waters and can bruise already tender feelings. Regardless of how broadly we try to define priesthood, female Primary teachers, sister missionaries, and Relief Society general presidents know that they do not actually *have* the priesthood, an abstract authority that is bestowed only on men and boys through *ordination* and that enables them to perform *priesthood* functions such as baptizing, blessing the sacrament, and anointing the sick. If sister missionaries are really exercising priesthood authority in their labors, why then are they not allowed to baptize their investigators who desire to join the Church? If they really do have priesthood authority (you really can't exercise it without having it), it is difficult to understand why they should not be able to baptize under the keys held by the mission president. But they cannot, which means, quite plainly, that they do not have priesthood authority, and to tell them they do in

an effort to smooth over troubled waters may only make things worse and bring a new level of confusion to the issue.

This notion (that anyone who has received an assignment from a priesthood leader is exercising priesthood authority) is also undermined by the status of black male members of the Church before 1978. Some of them served faithfully in their wards and branches in various nonpriesthood capacities. They received these callings from priesthood leaders. According to this reasoning, these black men were exercising priesthood authority by teaching Primary, leading the music, and coaching Young Men basketball teams. But according to teachings of Church leaders at the time, they were “denied the priesthood; under no circumstances [could] they hold this delegation of authority from the Almighty.”²² Any attempt to explain to them that they were actually exercising priesthood authority while being specifically denied that authority would have been confusing at best, offensive at worst. So why is this reasoning deemed acceptable when addressing questions about women and the priesthood? This is perplexing.

As suggested above, many women do have some sort of unnamed, undefined institutional authority, but I would argue that it is not priesthood. Consequently, all our attempts to try to include female Church members in the priesthood in some indirect or tangential way only end up offending and alienating many of them, because there are so many things this oblique “exercise” of priesthood does not include. If we are really serious about claiming that priesthood is the only authority in the Church and that anyone who fulfills a calling under priesthood direction is exercising priesthood authority, reason suggests that we simply make this official by ordination. Otherwise, we find ourselves in increasingly troubled definitional waters with no clear way to resolve the confusion created by our problematic priesthood lexicon.

22. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 527.

Presiding and Nonpresiding Positions

Because of our abstract definition of priesthood, exercising this authority in Mormonism involves more than just performing ordinances; it also encompasses the right of presidency, or the right to preside. All presiding positions at the general Church level and in all major subdivisions of the organization (stakes, missions, districts, wards, and branches) are reserved for priesthood holders—for men.²³ But what about nonpresiding positions? Is there any apparent reason why women could not be called as, say, high councilors or clerks, which are not priesthood offices and really have nothing to do with presiding? And what about a presiding position such as Sunday School president, which is not a priesthood office?

Interestingly, when we move past the “important” leadership positions, there are other presiding positions in the Church that seem almost of a different species. For instance, presiding positions in ward priesthood quorums are, in practice, very similar to presiding positions in auxiliary organizations, especially Relief Society and Young Women. Thus, at lower levels in the Church hierarchy, there seem to be presiding positions for men and presiding positions for women. Both types are positions of authority, but only one is called priesthood, even though they are quite analogous in practice. I will explore the differences and similarities between these two types of presiding positions later in the context of priesthood keys and quorums.

For now, though, let me merely suggest that the only acceptable avenue out of this increasingly confusing maze of explanations

23. Some would bring up the general auxiliary presidents in this context, but the Relief Society general president no longer presides over the Churchwide Relief Society. Ward Relief Society presidents are presided over by their bishops, not, I should add, by their stake Relief Society presidents. This fruit of correlation creates the strange situation in which we have presidents who do not preside. General and stake auxiliary presidents function more in the mode of consultants, not file leaders.

regarding priesthood and authority in the Church seems to be the admission that priesthood is only one kind of divine authority and that there are, in fact, other kinds. This admission may lead us to consider new possibilities, such as the validity of the ancient scriptural notion that priesthood and authority are distinct concepts, that priesthood is linguistically and logically connected to officiating in priestly rituals, and that priesthood and institutional leadership may not necessarily be coterminous. These are certainly radical ideas, but they have a solid basis in the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

What I have tried to point out thus far in this article and in the previous one is that our unique definition of *priesthood* leaves us somewhat in no-man's-land.²⁴ We are stuck somewhere between a rather restrictive scriptural/historical idea of priesthood as merely the capacity of being a priest (performing the ritualistic functions that a priest performs) and the more expansive (and apparently still expanding) modern idea of priesthood as the institutional authority that enables a person to lead or speak or act in the Church in an official or governing capacity. The idea that there are other types of authority in the Church that are not designated "priesthood" illustrates the problematic nature of a priesthood that is neither completely restrictive nor completely expansive.

Organizational Imbalance

One circumstance that arises from the LDS view of authority is that lesser (local) priesthood keys are bestowed upon leaders in one branch (male) of the organization, but they are not bestowed in the other branch (female), thus creating a situation in which there are presiding officers who have keys and there are other presiding officers who do not have keys. This

24. It is tempting to render this idiom "no-woman's-land" here, but I'm sure any attempt at either humor or political correctness would be offensive to someone, so I will resist the temptation. By the same token, "no-man's-land" will probably offend others, so I'm in a no-win situation. Nevertheless, the term is exactly right, regardless of its sexist overtones, so I will use it.

produces not only organizational confusion but also inequalities that cannot be easily explained away.

Perhaps Joseph Smith would have eliminated these inequalities had he lived long enough. We cannot know. As mentioned earlier, Joseph saw the Relief Society as having some part in the priesthood, and on April 28, 1842, “he spoke of delivering the keys to this Society and to the church.”²⁵ What keys these might be he did not explain clearly, but he did say that “the keys of the kingdom are about to be given to them [the Relief Society], that they may be able to detect every thing false—as well as to the Elders.”²⁶ If this seems confusing, it is likely because Joseph used many terms loosely, *keys* included. For Joseph, a particular word could mean many things, and meanings often shifted over time. For instance, in 1842, Joseph, speaking about the keys of the kingdom, explained that “the keys are certain signs and words by which false spirits and personages may be detected from true, which cannot be revealed to the Elders till the Temple is completed.”²⁷ Regardless of the several meanings he may have attached to the word *keys*, the general figurative idea of keys was obviously important to him.

So, where does this leave us? I’m not sure. Priesthood keys serve a purpose in the Church—of maintaining order, particularly in terms of succession at the top—but they also add a layer of complexity and of perplexity to the lower levels of the organization. For instance, we make a big deal of the fact that a deacons quorum president holds priesthood keys. But what do those keys do? Frankly, nothing. They purportedly permit the deacons quorum president to assign other deacons to pass the sacrament and collect fast offerings (activities that were not always

25. Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book, Apr. 28, 1842, 36, The Joseph Smith Papers, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book/33>.

26. Ibid., 37, The Joseph Smith Papers, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book/34>.

27. *History of the Church*, 4:608.

priesthood functions), but he could just as easily do this without the concept of keys. According to our standard explanation, these keys permit the deacons quorum president to preside over his quorum. But how is this different from what the Beehive class president does?

So, just for the sake of asking the obvious, what would happen if we removed the term *priesthood keys* from our LDS vocabulary? Would the organization, in practice, function any differently? Would the Church become simpler or more chaotic? Would the absence of this concept open the door to greater equality? These are questions we perhaps ought to examine more carefully.

Priesthood Quorums

Temple ordinances, we are told, like most other ordinances in the Church, must be performed under the specific authority of priesthood keys. As pointed out in the first article in this series, priesthood keys constitute a rather confusing topic, partly because they do not pertain only to the performance of ordinances. They also allow certain individuals to preside over the whole Church or certain segments of it. But what, we might ask, do priesthood keys have to do with priesthood quorums? The answer may be surprising. Indeed, in certain ways it is almost as if the keys governing ordinances and the keys for presiding over quorums are different sets of keys.

Priesthood keys in the modern Church are generally said to be exercised within the parameters of a priesthood quorum—sort of. This is fairly straightforward with, say, a deacons quorum president. He presides over a quorum of up to twelve deacons because he holds the priesthood keys for that quorum. But this pattern is not so simple in higher levels of the hierarchy. A stake president, for instance, presides over the stake quorum of high priests because he holds priesthood keys pertaining to that quorum. But he also presides over all members of the stake, most of whom do not hold the priesthood. So priesthood keys do

not govern just members of a priesthood quorum. They can govern all Church members who live within a certain geographic area. But there are limitations. The deacons quorum president does not preside over all twelve- and thirteen-year-olds within the ward boundaries.

Setting these questions of presiding aside for the moment, let us look more closely at priesthood quorums. A priesthood quorum is, at present, a body of men or boys within a particular geographic area who hold the same office in either the Aaronic or Melchizedek Priesthood. In the twenty-first-century Church, however, we must ask how these groups function and how they differ from other groups within LDS wards, such as the Relief Society or the Beehive class.

The elders quorum in my ward meets weekly, discusses gospel topics as determined by quorum leadership, and engages in various service projects organized by the elders quorum presidency. The Relief Society in my ward meets weekly, discusses gospel topics as determined by auxiliary leadership, and engages in various service projects organized by the Relief Society presidency. The only priesthood-related function specifically directed by the elders quorum presidency is the ministering program. But this is not an ordinance. In fact, there are no ordinances in the Church that the elders quorum is uniquely responsible for. And the Relief Society is also involved in the new ministering program. So there is no appreciable difference between the two organizations.

The Aaronic Priesthood quorums are specifically responsible for one ordinance—the sacrament. But a priesthood quorum is not necessary to perform this ordinance. The deacons could receive assignments to pass the sacrament, the teachers to prepare it, and the priests to bless it through direct invitation from the bishop, without the intervention of a quorum presidency (although the bishop *is* the priests quorum president). In other words, the quorum organization itself is superfluous to the performance of the ordinance of the sacrament. There is no necessary connection between quorums and ordinances, which is why I

suggested above that the keys for presiding and the keys for performing ordinances seem quite distinct.

So why do we need quorums? Apparently for the same reason we need an organization for women and classes for young women. Organizationally speaking, there is no appreciable difference between priesthood quorums and parallel female groupings. Priesthood is connected to ordinances, but these can take place without the involvement of quorums. Some quorums, in fact, have no direct connection with any ordinance. Elders and high priests may give health blessings, but these are performed upon request on an individual basis and are not organized by the quorum presidency. Again, the purpose of the quorum appears to be unrelated to the primary purpose of the priesthood as depicted in ancient scripture, which is ritualistic in nature, not instructional or administrative. Given this fact, we might well ask what purpose priesthood keys bestowed on elders, teachers, or deacons quorum presidents serve. Since those keys do not specifically relate to the performance of ordinances, they serve only to allow the president to preside over the group, which is no different from what a Relief Society, Laurel, Mia Maid, or Beehive president does without keys.

An Irreconcilable Situation

In essence, we have presidents in the Church who preside *with* the priesthood and we have presidents who preside *without* it. This fact presents a very difficult conundrum. In essence, we must ask what the connection is between priesthood and presiding. In the ancient world, there was either no connection or, at best, an inconsistent one. But in the modern Church, presiding is one of the primary and necessary functions of priesthood, a function made possible only by our unique understanding of priesthood as an abstract principle rather than as a ritualistic office. How this plays out in the family creates tensions that are difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile, and we must wonder how much

of the male-dominant aspect of family governance is strictly cultural and how much is based on some sort of eternal pattern. The Church seems of two minds on this question, as illustrated by the conflicting message sent by the proclamation on the family—that the father presides *and* that the husband and wife are equal partners.

Of course, in the early years of the Restoration, there was no talk at all of equality in marriage relationships. Women had few rights in society—in terms of property ownership and voting rights, for instance—and the Church was very patriarchal in every way. And when polygamy became a public institution, in which one man could have multiple wives but the reverse was not true,²⁸ there was no way to construe the relationship as equal. It was not an equal partnership of one woman and one man—if one man had ten wives, then each wife had one-tenth of a husband. But since the Church abandoned polygamy and moved closer and closer to a somewhat hypothetical ideal of equal partnership in marriage, the patriarchal rhetoric has dissipated even though we still insist that the husband presides in this theoretically equal relationship.

Personally, I have been very reluctant to use the term *preside* in my family. If I *preside*, that means I am the *president*, the one who presides. *Preside*, from the Latin, means literally to “sit at the head of,” and *president* is derived from the present participle of the Latin verb.²⁹ But what does that make my wife? Vice president? Not if we are truly equal partners. Co-president? Well, apparently not, because according to Church dogma the wife does not preside in the family unless the husband is absent. If the husband is present, he presides, which means he presides over the wife too, which means they are not really equal partners, unless we come up with a special definition of *equal* (which, of course, we have done). This

28. In the earliest days, Joseph Smith did marry already-married women, but this practice did not prevail after the Saints arrived in the Salt Lake Valley and eventually acknowledged publicly their practice of plural marriage.

29. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, s.v. “preside” and “president.”

dilemma seems to place marriage partners in an irreconcilable situation, and there is no comfortable way to spin this into something it is not.

According to Elder L. Tom Perry, “There is not a president or a vice president in a family. The couple works together eternally for the good of the family. . . . They are on equal footing. They plan and organize the affairs of the family jointly and unanimously as they move forward.”³⁰ If this is truly the Church’s understanding of family governance, then it needs to officially move away from the language of “presiding,” because partners cannot really be equal if one presides over the other. But there seems to be no inclination to do so. Thus, in the same talk, Elder Perry, quoting from a 1973 pamphlet published by the Quorum of the Twelve, included the following declaration: “Fatherhood is leadership, the most important kind of leadership. It has always been so; it always will be so. Father, with the assistance and counsel and encouragement of your eternal companion, you preside in the home. It is not a matter of whether you are most worthy or best qualified, but it is a matter of [divine] appointment.”³¹ So which is it? On this point, the Church cannot have its cake and eat it too. One spouse cannot preside over the other if both are equal.

My wife and I discussed this conflict, and we came to the conclusion that the only way I really exercise this presiding prerogative in our family is in calling on people to pray, mostly at the dinner table. We decided that the notion of being equal partners trumped the idea of the husband presiding, so we now take turns, a week at a time, in asking someone to pray. In all other situations, we were discussing options and making important decisions as a team anyway, so this change in our

30. L. Tom Perry, “Fatherhood, an Eternal Calling,” Apr. 2004, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2004/04/fatherhood-an-eternal-calling?lang=eng>.

31. Perry, “Fatherhood,” quoting The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, *Father, Consider Your Ways: A Message from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (pamphlet, 1973), reprinted in *Ensign*, June 2002, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2002/06/father-consider-your-ways?lang=eng>.

household management methods was far from disruptive. But in more than a symbolic way, it does bring us closer to the ideal.

There is no real one-to-one correlation between marriage and the way authority is exercised in the institutional Church, but we can draw some insights from this personal example. We are often told by Church leaders that women are equal to men in the Lord's eyes, but that they have different roles. This may be true. My wife and I have chosen different roles, some of them culturally derived, some of them perhaps biologically determined, but in terms of authority, we are attempting to share presiding duties. In the Church, although men and women are said to be equal, they are not really, because women are denied the opportunity to preside over wards, stakes, and the Church as a whole. So this is not really about different roles. It is about one gender having an open door to higher supervisory positions and the other gender being limited primarily to lower-level supervisory positions in the institution.

It is interesting to note that the word *preside* does not appear at all in the Old Testament, New Testament, or Pearl of Great Price. It appears only once in the Book of Mormon, when Alma consecrates priests and elders "to preside and watch over the church" in Zarahemla (Alma 6:1). But it appears thirty-eight times in the Doctrine and Covenants. Similarly, the word *president* appears only five times in the Bible, all in the sixth chapter of Daniel, referring to an office in the Persian government. It appears only once in the Pearl of Great Price (Articles of Faith 1:12, referring to worldly government officials) and not at all in the Book of Mormon. But it appears fifty-four times in the Doctrine and Covenants. *Preside* and *president* are words that arise from and require an organizational hierarchy. A president is "an official chosen to preside," and to preside is "to occupy the place of authority."³² The connection between these two words in the early instructions given through Joseph Smith can be seen in a revelation given on November

32. Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. "president" and "preside."

11, 1831, which later evolved into part of what is now section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Here, we read, “<6>{t\T}hen cometh the high Priest hood, which is the greatest of all: <7> wherefore it must needs be that one be appointed of the high Priest hood to preside over the Priest hood: <8> & he shall be called President of the ~~hood~~ high Priest hood of the Church; <9> or in ~~o~~ other ~~high~~ words the Presiding high Priest hood over the high Priesthood of the Church.”³³ The difference in usage between ancient and modern scripture once again suggests that the current LDS view of priesthood and presiding is a modern notion that originated in the nineteenth century. While the patriarchal nature of society persisted from ancient times to more recent times, in the past few decades cultural norms have shifted decidedly in favor of women’s equal rights. The Church’s rhetoric has also shifted somewhat in an attempt to accommodate this societal change, but the patriarchal nature of priesthood has remained unaltered.

Whether a male-only form of authority reflects some eternal necessity, we do not know. In spite of all that has been said about Mother in Heaven,³⁴ nothing has ever been revealed about her. Perhaps this is

33. Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Manuscript Revelation Books*, facsimile edition, Revelations and Translations, vol. 1, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, edited by Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2009), 217.

34. See David L. Paulsen and Martin Pulido, “‘A Mother There’: A Survey of Historical Teachings about Mother in Heaven,” *BYU Studies* 50, no. 1 (2011): 70–97. This article runs the gamut on what Church leaders have said about Mother in Heaven. All of it is simply conjecture. None of it is revelation. Significantly, the most definitive statement is by George Q. Cannon: “There is too much of this inclination to deify ‘our mother in heaven.’ . . . Our Father in heaven should be the object of our worship. He will not have any divided worship. . . . In the revelation of God the Eternal Father to the Prophet Joseph Smith there was no revelation of the feminine element as part of the Godhead, and no idea was conveyed that any such element ‘was equal in power and glory with the masculine.’ Therefore, we are warranted in pronouncing all tendencies to glorify the feminine element and to exalt it as part of the Godhead as

because no one has asked persistently enough to obtain this knowledge. Or perhaps God has his own reasons for remaining silent. But we do have the prophet's efforts to give authority, after the pattern of the priesthood, to women, and we do have the perplexing word *priestess* that surfaces here and there in our doctrine. What is obvious is that there are enough inconsistencies in our doctrine and definition of priesthood that there is plenty of room for both inquiry and discussion.

Priesthood is certainly more than just institutional authority. Multitudes of effective priesthood blessings testify that there is a power in the priesthood that God honors. But just because there is power in the priesthood doesn't automatically mean that we understand it very well, that we always bestow or use it appropriately, or that we shouldn't be asking questions about it—lots of questions. As President Kimball so capably demonstrated in the years leading up to the June 1978 revelation that ended one particular priesthood ban, if we don't ask questions, and don't ask persistently, we likely won't get any answers. And no answer is not necessarily an answer. Certainly, enough unanswered questions exist to allow us to at least explore some possibilities for significant change. To simply close off all discussion does not really resolve anything.

Priestesses

Despite the absence of women in positions of authority in either the Book of Mormon or the Doctrine and Covenants, women do indeed

wrong and untrue, not only because of the revelation of the Lord in our day but because it has no warrant in scripture, and any attempt to put such a construction on the word of God is false and erroneous" (George Q. Cannon, *Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon*, compiled by Jerreld L. Newquist, 2 vols. [Salt Lake City: Zion's Book Store, 1957], 1:135–36, quoted in Paulsen and Pulido, 78). This sobering little reminder is significant because Cannon is right. We really do have no revelation from God on this subject, and we have no revelation telling us why he has been so silent about his supposed female counterpart. So, without such a revelation, we really are shooting in the dark here.

have authority, as indicated earlier, in both the Church and the family. We just do not have a name for this authority. It is not “moral authority,” as was recently suggested.³⁵ And it is not *priesthood*, because women, in spite of institutional attempts to put a positive spin on the matter, do not “hold” the priesthood. It is, however, an official form of organizational authority. We just do not know what to call it.

At the organization of the Relief Society, Joseph Smith seemed to be attempting to broaden his concept of priesthood authority so that it included women. Perhaps he would not have ordained women to the priesthood, but he was certainly seeking to establish a women’s organization after the pattern of the male priesthood. According to the minutes of the Nauvoo Relief Society, Joseph taught “that the Society should move according to the ancient Priesthood, hence there should be a select Society separate from all the evils of the world, choice, virtuous and holy—Said he was going to make of this Society a kingdom of priests as in Enoch’s day—as in Paul’s day—that it is the privilege of each member to live long.”³⁶ Unfortunately, we do not know how Joseph would have set up this kingdom of female priests (or priestesses) over the long run, and his successors have retreated from the language he employed and even some of the practices he encouraged, which leaves us today with an authority dilemma that seems unsolvable.

One of the practices Joseph specifically approved was the female laying on of hands to heal the sick. “Respecting the female laying on hands, he further remark’d, there could be no devils in it if God gave

35. See D. Todd Christofferson, “The Moral Force of Women,” Oct. 2013, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/10/the-moral-force-of-women?lang=eng>. The examples I mentioned above are not some sort of nebulous moral authority. They are official, nonpriesthood forms of institutional authority.

36. Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book, Mar. 31, 1842, 22, The Joseph Smith Papers, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book/19>.

his sanction by healing—that there could be no more sin in any female laying hands on the sick than in wetting the face with water—that it is no sin for any body to do it that has faith, or if the sick has faith to be heal'd by the administration.”³⁷

Sometimes we use loaded terms without really understanding the implications of their meaning. One of these is *priestess*, which appears today primarily in the context of temple rituals. According to Cannon, Dahl, and Welch, “By 1843, the temple’s full import and design seem to have crystallized in the Prophet’s teachings. The doctrines of sealing and of becoming kings and queens, priests and priestesses were often discussed.”³⁸ The expression “kings and queens, priests and priestesses” will be familiar to anyone who has received his or her endowment in the temple. The implication, however, seems to slip past us: namely, if we teach that women will someday be priestesses, we mean, by the very definition of the term, that they will also receive the priesthood. Just as you cannot be a priest without having priesthood, you also cannot be a priestess without having priesthood. Linguistically, the relationship is similar to *parent* and *parenthood*. If you are a parent, you also experience parenthood. Therefore, according to what is taught in the temple, at some point in the hereafter, women will not be banned from holding the priesthood. This implication of our temple terminology should give us pause.

President Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth President of the Church, stated, “It is within the privilege of the sisters of this Church to receive exaltation in the kingdom of God and receive authority and power as

37. Ibid., Apr. 28, 1842, 36, The Joseph Smith Papers, <http://www.josephsmith-papers.org/paper-summary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book/33>.

38. Donald Q. Cannon, Larry E. Dahl, and John W. Welch, “The Restoration of Major Doctrines through Joseph Smith: Priesthood, the Word of God, and the Temple,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1989, <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1989/02/the-restoration-of-major-doctrines-through-joseph-smith-priesthood-the-word-of-god-and-the-temple?lang=eng>.

queens and priestesses.”³⁹ Taken literally, this means that in the celestial kingdom, women will have priesthood, or “priestesshood,” if we want to be nitpicky. They will be priestesses. They will have authority. But what does this even mean? What does a priestess do that is different from what a priest does? To my knowledge, this office has never been defined, which is too often the case with words we use frequently and simply assume everyone understands.

At a minimum, since these two sets of titles—king and queen, priest and priestess—are listed as pairs, we can probably assume that they are parallel in meaning. Kings and queens rule, priests and priestesses officiate in rituals, or ordinances, perhaps in a manner similar to what we see in the temple. So, do women have the priesthood in this life? In the temple, they *seem* to, although there is no ordination involved. Of course, we have no evidence that prophets such as Abinadi and Alma received authority through ordination, so ordaining may be only one way in which authority can be bestowed. In our modern context, ordination by the laying on of hands is the generally approved pattern, but perhaps we should ask if someone can have authority to officiate in a sacred ordinance without having been *ordained* to do so. It appears this is exactly what is happening in the temple. But for consistency’s sake, perhaps we ought to rethink this aberration.

Traditionally, a priest (or a priestess) is someone who stands between God and his children by officiating in sacred rituals. In the temple, women are thus functioning as *de facto* priestesses without what we (perhaps incorrectly?) consider a necessity—ordination. Should this oversight be corrected? Since ordination is considered necessary in the modern Church to exercise priesthood authority, should female temple workers be ordained? Temple workers are *set apart* for their callings, but only men receive a priesthood ordination in order to perform the duties of this priestly calling. A man who does not hold the priesthood cannot

39. Joseph Fielding Smith, “Relief Society—an Aid to the Priesthood,” *Relief Society Magazine*, Jan. 1959, 5–6.

officiate in temple ordinances; in fact, he cannot even enter the temple. Women, by contrast, are not only permitted to enter the temple, but they can also officiate in priesthood ordinances without an ordination. So, the logical question is, if women will be priestesses in the hereafter and will receive, we must assume, an ordination to that office, why are they not permitted to receive this ordination here, since many of them are already acting as *de facto* priestesses? This question has not been answered satisfactorily. A related question has also never been answered: If women can officiate in temple ordinances through the priesthood keys held by the temple president, why could not an unordained but righteous man do the same?

The 1978 Revelation and Temple Service

Much has been written about the priesthood ban and the 1978 revelation that ended it, but my wife, through her studies, became aware of a question that has not received much attention. Why did the priesthood ban prevent baptized black men and women (and boys and girls) from entering the temple to perform baptisms for the dead? Apparently, the only consistent requirements for serving as a proxy in this ordinance are having been baptized and living a righteous life. Prior to 1978, young nonblack women who did not hold the priesthood were allowed to serve as proxies in being baptized for the dead. If priesthood was not required for their participation in these ordinances, why, then, were faithful blacks not permitted to enter the temple and be baptized for their deceased ancestors?⁴⁰

We might also ask why, to this day, young men who are not ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood are not permitted to serve as proxies in these

40. Apparently, there was one notable exception to this rule. Jane Manning James, a black member known well to Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, was permitted to perform baptisms for the dead but was repeatedly denied the opportunity to receive her endowment. See John G. Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 229.

vicarious baptisms. It makes sense that to serve as proxy, a person would need to be baptized. But what does being given the Aaronic Priesthood have to do with being baptized *for* someone else? There is no apparent connection, especially since young women can be baptized vicariously without the priesthood. In this case, there is actually a reverse inequality. For example, a young man, a baptized member whose non-LDS father has forbidden him from being ordained to the priesthood, is not permitted by the Church to go to the temple and serve as proxy in baptisms for the dead, while his sister *is* permitted to do so. This policy makes little sense. Restricting participation to those age twelve and above, when baptism itself can occur at age eight, is also difficult to understand.

Taking this a step further, since faithful nonblack women (who did not hold the priesthood) were permitted to receive their endowments prior to 1978, why were faithful black men and women not permitted to receive their endowments? The lack of priesthood was not a barrier, apparently, for nonblack women. The Church does have a very vague tradition, dating back to Joseph Smith, that women somehow (though not by ordination) receive the priesthood through the endowment,⁴¹ but if that were the case, why do we not acknowledge that priesthood in the everyday Church? Apparently, this is a doctrine that has been abandoned over the years. And so we are again in no-man's-land: we have a requirement that males must hold the priesthood to participate in any ordinances in the temple, but women are not so restricted. Black women prior to June 1978, however, were not permitted to receive temple ordinances for themselves or to serve as proxies in vicarious ordinances, almost as if they were being told they should have had the priesthood, since the priesthood ban was what was keeping them out of the temple. But, of course, nonblack women were allowed to participate in temple ordinances without the priesthood.

41. See, for instance, Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy*, 36–37.

This seeming cauldron of confusion regarding priesthood and temple policies both past and present stems almost entirely from one of the first notions introduced in the first article in this two-part series—that the Mormon priesthood is unique in all the world of religion in that it is an abstract concept, a power or authority one can hold separate from any priestly function in performing rituals or ordinances. Indeed, as pointed out in the previous section, in the case of temple ordinances we have the unique situation where individuals perform priestly functions without any official priesthood ordination.

Since 1978, of course, my wife's question has become moot. Members with black African heritage are able to participate in all temple ordinances. But other questions, both those suggested above and others beyond the scope of this study, remain unanswered. Perhaps we need to take a lesson from President Spencer W. Kimball about persisting in seeking answers until we receive them. Even though I am a white male who grew up in the LDS Church, President Kimball's dogged determination has played a significant role in my own life.

A Little Personal History, Followed by a Personal Perspective

I have a confession to make. I grew up a racist. No, I wasn't a member of the junior Ku Klux Klan. But I grew up in North Ogden, Utah, a very Mormon suburb of Ogden. I attended Weber High School. There was not one black student in the entire school of 1,500 students. We had maybe three or four Asian-Americans, a couple of Native Americans, and perhaps a couple of Hispanics (I don't think either of them spoke Spanish). We did have a few genuine cowboys, but that's another ethnic category altogether. In short, this was a very, very Caucasian school. Lily white. The student body came from the suburbs north of Ogden, the farming communities west of Ogden, and the frozen villages over the mountains in Ogden Valley where David O. McKay grew up. To my knowledge, I did not meet a black person until I played high school

basketball against Bonneville High, and even then my only interaction with my black opponent was maybe a foul or two. We didn't strike up a conversation during free throws. So I grew up believing the racial stereotypes that prevailed in a school such as Weber in the early 1970s. And I am not too proud to admit that I likely used a racial slur or two. This was simply the culture I grew up in. It was based on ignorance.

Then I was called on a mission to Germany. In my second assignment, we had a black member in the ward. He was a sweet, humble man from the Ivory Coast who accepted the fact that he couldn't hold the priesthood. He impressed me, even though he spoke very meager German and English. Later, in my fourth assignment, my companion and I were street contacting in the city one day and spoke with a blond-haired German farmer who told us we could visit him at his home. We bicycled out into the countryside east of town one day and found an ancient farmhouse with an attached barn and a heavy thatched roof. We knocked on the door, and Hans invited us in. He then introduced us to his wife, Josephine, who hailed from Ghana. What a shock. As it turned out, he was as spiritually alive as a piece of petrified wood. She was very interested in our message. So we began teaching them, and soon Josephine told us she had some friends who would be interested.

Her friends were Leo and his wife (whose name I can't remember). They were from Nigeria, and Leo was attending the university in Hamburg. Leo was perhaps the most Christlike man I had ever met. I knew instantly that he was a better Christian than I would ever be. He was intensely interested in our message and soon developed a conviction that Joseph Smith was a prophet. This was 1977. We knew we were not supposed to actively proselytize black people, so we were careful in our teaching. I counseled with the mission president a couple of times. I remember two things he said. First, "Elder Terry, I'm glad this is your problem and not mine." I think he meant this simply as a vote of confidence that I would handle the situation with care. Second, "Whatever you do, don't offend the Lord." Well, that gave me something to think about.

We taught our three black investigators slowly and carefully, and we eventually reached the point where we had to tell them about the priesthood ban. I think the most difficult day of my mission was the day I had to tell Leo that he couldn't hold the priesthood. He took it hard and wanted to know why. So we opened up the Pearl of Great Price and read a bit. We tried to explain how he and his people had been fence-sitters in the premortal world. We taught him about the blood of Cain that he obviously had running through his veins and the curse that attended it. In other words, we taught him all the standard LDS rationales for the priesthood ban. And everything we taught him was false.

Fast forward now a little more than a year into the future. It is June 1978, and I am teaching German-speaking missionaries at the MTC (it may have still been called the LTM at that point). One day, after teaching, I bounced on over to the teachers' lounge. As I was entering the building, another teacher passed me and said, somewhat excitedly, "Have you heard the news? Blacks can have the priesthood." Something in the way he said it made me think he was joking. I replied, "That's not funny." He insisted, "No, I'm serious. President Kimball's had a revelation." I ran out to my car and turned on the radio, and of course it was the only thing everyone was talking about. I sat there in that hot car and wept. I wept for the change, and I wept for Leo.

Fast forward again to 2007. I had been working for BYU Studies for just over a year. I was reading Ed Kimball's biography of his father's years as Church president, *Lengthen Your Stride*. But I wasn't reading the Deseret Book version. I was reading the longer account that was on the CD pocketed inside the back cover. BYU Studies had edited and prepared the CD. In that version, I found four chapters describing in great detail the history of the priesthood ban and the events surrounding the revelation. Ed had access to his father's journals, so this was possibly the most complete and moving version of these events that will ever be written. I said to myself, "We need to get this out where people will read it." I knew few would take time to read the longer version of the book on

the CD. So I combined those four chapters into a long article, worked with Ed to make sure he was happy with it, and published it in *BYU Studies* as “Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on Priesthood.”⁴² It is an incredible account and is available free for download at the BYU Studies website.

Over the years, as I have studied and contemplated the reason it took so long for this change to come, I, along with others, have reached the conclusion that it did not come earlier because, essentially, the Church wasn’t ready for it. The members, not the Lord, were quite likely the reason for the delay. David O. McKay prayed about this issue frequently during his administration and was eventually told, “with no discussion, not to bring the subject up with the Lord again; that the time will come, but it will not be my time, and to leave the subject alone.”⁴³ My own suspicion is that there were too many Mormons who shared the culturally embedded racism that I grew up with. It was only after the hard-fought gains made through the civil rights movement that much of this racism dissipated. My views changed because of Josephine and Leo. By 1978, enough Latter-day Saints were ready for the change that there were celebrations in the streets and many prayers of gratitude from Saints in all walks of life. The Church, as a whole, was ready in 1978.⁴⁴

So, what does this have to do with the other priesthood ban, the one preventing women from receiving the priesthood? Obviously there are differences. As mentioned earlier, there is actually more positive

42. Edward L. Kimball, “Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on Priesthood,” *BYU Studies* 47, no. 2 (2008): 5–78. Available for download at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/spencer-w-kimball-and-revelation-priesthood>.

43. Church architect Richard Jackson, quoted in Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005), 104.

44. Eugene England called for Latter-day Saints to prepare and pray for the priesthood ban to be lifted. See his “The Mormon Cross,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8, no. 1 (1973): 78–86.

scriptural basis (if interpreted a certain way) for denying blacks the priesthood. The scriptural evidence against ordaining women is mostly negative—in other words, an absence of evidence, although that absence is now being questioned by some very good scholarship.⁴⁵ But women, like blacks, have had to wage a long battle to achieve the rights and privileges and equalities they now enjoy in American society. Society has changed dramatically.

Now, let me be perfectly clear on this. I am not advocating that women be ordained to the priesthood. I have no reason to do so. What I am advocating is that we keep an open mind, much as President Spencer W. Kimball did regarding blacks and the priesthood, and that we do our homework, just as President Kimball and others did. An article that every Latter-day Saint ought to read is historian Craig Harline's 2013 Hickman Lecture, "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," delivered at BYU on March 14, 2013.⁴⁶ Harline puts change in historical context and shows just how wrong we usually are when we assume some things will never change.

As members of a church that believes in ongoing revelation, we should never hold the attitude that things can't change. President Kimball showed us how flimsy that argument is. I often wonder how much earlier the 1978 revelation might have come if Church members had been more open to change. In this context, I believe the only appropriate answer

45. See, for instance, Cory Crawford, "The Struggle for Female Authority in Biblical and Mormon Theology," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 48, no. 2 (2015): 1–66.

46. 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 Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (2013): 49–79. Available for download at <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/what-happened-my-bell-bottoms-how-things-that-were-never-going-change-have-sometimes-changed>.

to the question “How would you feel if the prophet announced that women will be able to receive the priesthood?” is “I would be delighted.” The answer “He would never announce such a change” is restricting the prophet in ways the Lord might not choose to restrict him. Who are we to tell the Lord what he can and cannot do? I think we often do that unwittingly by assuming we know more than we do. I have come to the point where I would welcome such a change, if it came about through the appropriate channels. As these two articles have demonstrated, I hope, our understanding of priesthood is not perfect. It is a complex topic that still holds many inconsistencies and perplexities. We don’t have it all figured out, even though we sometimes speak as though we do. We should be wiser.

THE PROVO TABERNACLE AND INTERFAITH COLLABORATION

Kim Abunuwara

In October of 1996, Father William Flegge and his St. Francis of Assisi parish in Provo had a problem. Renovations had left their beautiful Spanish Mission–style building unsafe for the high volume of parishioners expected for the upcoming Christmas services. That was when Father Flegge telephoned LDS Church headquarters to ask if Christmas Mass could be held at the Provo Tabernacle. In addition to welcoming Father Flegge and his flock to the tabernacle, LDS leaders invited them to bring into the tabernacle whatever sacred dress, objects, and symbols they needed to realize this important ceremony.¹ Julie Boerio-Goates,

This paper uses interviews and a survey to explore the Provo Tabernacle's rather unlikely function as a space for people of different faiths to meet (see Provo Tabernacle Online Survey in appendix A). I conducted interviews with Kathryn Allen, Linda Walton, Julie Boerio-Goates, Ben Pykles, and Sid Unrau. Kathryn Allen, a Mormon, directed the Provo Arts Council; Linda Walton, a Seventh-day Adventist, founded the Utah Valley Interfaith Club; Julie Boerio-Goates, a BYU chemistry professor and St. Francis pastoral coordinator, helped stage the 1996 Christmas Mass; Ben Pykles, Curator of Historic Sites for the LDS Church History Department, and Sid Unrau, a Mormon attorney, attended the 1996 Mass with Mormon friends. Each interviewee shares interfaith experiences, some positive and some negative, and each remembers how the tabernacle brought the various denominations of Utah Valley together. In addition, I collected data using a small survey of randomly selected Utah County residents concerning the tabernacle's transformation into an LDS temple.

1. Julie Boerio-Goates (pastoral coordinator, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church), Orem, Utah, in discussion with the author, Mar. 17, 2015. Digital recording.

pastoral coordinator for the parish, had plenty of experience staging Mass in the three-hundred-seat St. Francis building but was nervous about staging it in the two-thousand-seat tabernacle. The parish moved a lot of materials necessary for Christmas Mass from the St. Francis church, but since the tabernacle was so much bigger than St. Francis, more set dressing was needed. Serendipitously, seminarian Patrick Elliot had just been assigned to the parish as an assistant. Elliot had a good eye and knew where to find additional decorations. On December 24, two Christmas Masses were held in the evening and one at midnight.² These services provide a vivid illustration of the Provo Tabernacle's use for interfaith cooperation.

The Provo Tabernacle was imprinted with its builders' devotion to God. A carefully crafted Gothic Revival structure with detailed woodwork, stained glass, and beautiful masonry, it was a substantial and impressive edifice built to host a community's most important religious and civic meetings, present great artists, and symbolize Mormon faith and vision. Throughout the twentieth century, however, as the Mormon population increased and its architecture became standardized, aging tabernacles like this one struggled to maintain their quality and position as houses of worship.³ Though it continued to host religious services, the Provo Tabernacle also became the principal venue for events sponsored by the Provo Arts Council, as well as the home of the Utah Valley Symphony. Most of its cultural events were religious—live performances of Handel's *Messiah*, nativity scenes, bell-ringing concerts, National Day of Prayer ceremonies—and some were secular. Because of its community function, its audience became somewhat nondenominational, and its

2. Associated Press, "Catholics Celebrate Mass in Provo Tabernacle," *Deseret News*, Dec. 25, 1996, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/532776/CATHOLICS-CELEBRATE-MASS-IN-PROVO-TABERNACLE.html>.

3. Mark Leone, "Why the Coalville Tabernacle Had to be Razed," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8, no. 2 (1973): 38.

aura inclusive.⁴ The three services of Catholic Mass in 1996 brought together people of different denominations, and those services stand as an extraordinary moment in Utah Valley's religious history.⁵

After the tabernacle was gutted by fire in December 2010, the LDS faith provided a framework for interpreting this terrible loss. When the Church announced that the tabernacle would be rebuilt as a temple, the fire seemed almost to have played a helpful role in transforming the building for a higher purpose. The metaphor of the temple rising from the ashes was invoked and captured a consummate mood that persisted after reconstruction began.⁶ Such a mood leaves little room for mourning the loss of Provo's historic center of interfaith activity. In the tabernacle, Utah County citizens could all come together and enjoy various activities, regardless of belief; but now that the tabernacle is an LDS temple, that is no longer the case. My interviews and survey results suggest that religious groups in Utah Valley have remained isolated from each other and that the area's believers need *more* places, not fewer, to come together.

The role the tabernacle played in creating interfaith community was highlighted at its memorial service on December 19, 2010 at Utah Valley University. On that occasion, UVU president Matthew Holland said this:

The tabernacle has been the place of my sweetest moments of communion with believers not of my particular faith. As Provo Seventh-day Adventist pastor Carlos Garcia and head elder Brad E. Walton said, "Our congregation has been welcomed to that facility on many occasions. . . . It was not only a beautiful, historic building, but a place where we were

4. Genelle Pugmire, "1898–2010: Provo Tabernacle Remembered as Gathering Place," *Daily Herald*, Dec. 18, 2010, http://www.heraldextra.com/special-section/tabernacle-totemple/provo-tabernacle-remembered-as-gathering-place/article_f78997a6-0a3b-11e0-abe0-001cc4c002e0.html.

5. Associated Press, "Catholics Celebrate Mass in Provo Tabernacle."

6. Judy Fletcher Davis and Wilson J. Ong, *Out of the Ashes: From Tabernacle to Temple* (Salt Lake City: Covenant Communications, 2015).

all part of a greater community.” What a unifying and uplifting power those moments have been.⁷

Provo city fire marshal Lynn Schofield remembered the announcement of the new temple this way: “It was bittersweet. I love the concept of a temple, but I also know how much the tabernacle meant to the greater community. . . . There will never be another organ recital or concert or Mass or community event there.”⁸ While there are large secular buildings able to host citizens of all denominations in Utah Valley, the tabernacle was unique in that it was a religious space in which people of different faiths could gather. The comments of Holland and Schofield attest to the fact that interfaith gatherings are powerful and can teach a diverse community about respect, love, and unity.

The 1996 Christmas Mass held at the tabernacle assembled an unusual collection of worshippers. Julie Boerio-Goates described the effect the Mass had on the relationship between Mormons and Catholics:

[It] opened a door for collaboration, for participation, that has continued to accelerate, to broaden, and to accelerate. So, I’m just thrilled. I mean, when I look back at it I think it was one of the highlights of my life to be involved in it.⁹

During the midnight Mass, the crowd applauded when Father Flegge said the Mormons would be blessed for welcoming them into their building.¹⁰ It was a moment of palpable goodwill. Boerio-Goates said,

7. Genelle Pugmire, “Provo Tabernacle: A Gem in Utah History,” *Provo City Center Temple: A Special Publication of the Daily Herald*, Jan. 10, 2016, 17. Available to view online at <https://issuu.com/dailyheraldofutahvalley/docs/provocitycentertemple2016>.

8. Ibid.

9. Julie Boerio-Goates, Orem, Utah, in discussion with the author, Mar. 17, 2015.

10. Genelle Pugmire, “Provo Tabernacle a Gem in Utah History,” *Daily Herald*, Mar. 4, 2016, http://www.heraldextra.com/special-section/provocitycentertemple/story/provo-tabernacle-a-gem-in-utah-history/article_b3b92a15-8ca0-5d25-b499-f03cb28157cb.html.

“The experience for a lot of the Catholics who had lived here all their lives, who’d always felt that they were just, you know, that they’d had to deal with kids who weren’t allowed to play with them . . . there were some who were kind of unrighteously [saying] ‘Ha ha ha, let’s put as many crucifixes in there as we can.’”¹¹ But Boerio-Goates reminded them that this attitude was not consistent with the spirit of the season:

[The Mormons] allowed us to do things that they would not ordinarily, like [have] candles and wine and crucifixes. We were told we could do Mass however we needed. We had incense. We had all the things that are associated, especially . . . for a Christmas Mass . . . that are generally . . . toxic. You know, right now it wouldn’t be such a surprise to me, but I do think that in some ways that opened a door.¹²

The “door” Boerio-Goates refers to is perhaps not one between the religious institutions themselves but between their members. She has written before about the challenges of being a Catholic in a Mormon community:

As I socialize with non-Mormon friends in Utah and listen to the latest Mormon horror story, I feel compelled to remind my friends that Mormons don’t hold the patent on insensitivity and that the majority should not be condemned because of a few. On the other hand, I find that Latter-day Saints, particularly those who have served missions in Mexico or South America, have a very skewed view of the American Catholic Church. Many do not realize that crucifixes and holy cards serve the same function in our homes as pictures of prophets or temples do in theirs.¹³

When the Mormons welcomed all the Catholic symbols and objects into the tabernacle, Boerio-Goates felt this was a step toward a better relationship between these communities.

11. Julie Boerio-Goates, Orem, Utah, in discussion with the author, Mar. 17, 2015.

12. Ibid.

13. Julie Boerio-Goates, “Through a Stained-Glass Window,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24, no. 1 (1991): 1.

Almost twenty years later, many parishioners have no memory of the Christmas Mass held at the tabernacle. The St. Francis parish has relocated to a beautiful twelve-hundred-seat church in Orem, and there is an annual gathering in the new building that is reminiscent of the inclusive spirit of that Christmas Mass in 1996. Each year, the new St. Francis parish hosts UVU's primarily Mormon choral showcase. According to Boerio-Goates, some members aren't too happy about this arrangement:

The Spanish community don't like the idea of having, especially Mormons, come to sing in this space. They've been quite angry about it. And one of the lines that I have taken is that for me, personally, it's a way of saying "Thanks." Most of them weren't here in 1996 . . . so they don't know. It's a way of saying thanks for letting us have the tabernacle. When we needed a space, they opened the doors. Sharing sacred space continues to be a means of building relationships between members of different faiths.¹⁴

Mormons and Catholics in the valley often live their lives without much interaction, except on rare occasions when sacred spaces bring them together. For example, Catholic Brigham Young University student Vanessa Moffatt says she often feels like an outsider "when she is not invited to ward activities or discussions that revolve around the LDS Church."¹⁵ When a Catholic woman considering relocating to Provo asked for advice on the Catholic Answers Forum website, one response cautioned her that she may feel isolated from neighbors because "most of the things they do revolve around their local ward (like a parish). So,

14. Julie Boerio-Goates, Orem, Utah, in discussion with the author, Mar. 17, 2015.

15. Kristine Hoyt, "Catholic Utahns Share Experiences Living Within LDS Community," *The Daily Universe*, May 12, 2017, <http://universe.byu.edu/2017/05/12/final-story-catholic-utahns-share-their-experiences-while-living-among-lds-people>.

if you're not a member of the ward and attending there, you're likely to be left out of a lot of things."¹⁶

Interfaith relations can also be impeded by the fear that collaboration implies acceptance or endorsement of a set of beliefs. The St. Francis parish wanted to restage Christmas Mass at the tabernacle in 1997, but the diocese was opposed. Publicity from the film *The God Makers* (a critical exposé about perceived negative aspects of Mormon doctrine), released fifteen years earlier, had created antipathy toward the Mormons among other Christian denominations; this atmosphere put pressure on the diocese to avoid a relationship that could appear to condone Mormon doctrine.

A similar apprehension concerned the associates of Sid Unrau, a Mormon and a Provo attorney. Unrau has the habit of annually attending Christmas Mass. His Mormon friends were typically uneasy about going with him, but when, in 1996, Mass was held at the tabernacle, it was much easier to convince them to join him. Unrau said, "It was a very beautiful experience. One of the things that was noticeable to me was there was about a nine-foot cross or something, it was . . . a big cross right up in front of the organ pipes."¹⁷ Unrau's experience illustrates both the trepidation people feel about participating in the practices of other faiths, but also the power of this shared experience to create common ground. He continued, "We really have a lot in common [with Catholics]. I mean, every Christmas carol they sang was the same as ours . . . and . . . it's about half in Spanish and half in English."¹⁸

The apprehension Unrau's friends felt about attending a Catholic service underscores the courage it takes to venture beyond one's own

16. anp1215, reply to 2cherubs, "Catholics in Mormon Country," Catholic Answers Forums, Mar. 13, 2012, <https://forums.catholic.com/t/catholics-in-mormon-country/277095/2>.

17. Sid Unrau (attorney), Provo, Utah, in discussion with the author, Dec. 2015. Digital recording.

18. Ibid.

community. Interfaith relationships can be frightening if a person senses their faith will be attacked. Unrau said:

Mormons are especially hated. . . . I've been to gatherings, professional gatherings where I cannot imagine other people being maligned like Mormons are. We're called liars, worshippers of a different god, things like that. . . . I can't imagine someone taking sacred experiences from another religion and making a play like the *Book of Mormon* musical. . . . I think sometimes Mormons think we need to be isolationist.¹⁹

Like the reference Boerio-Goates made to Catholic children not being welcome to play with Mormon children, these experiences of insensitivity create fear on both sides. The Christmas Mass at the tabernacle was a powerful gesture of openness and support that helped to dispel fears and right wrongs on a local level. Unrau continued:

One of the things they say when they meet in the beginning is . . . "We look forward to the day when there will be one faith and one baptism. Then all of our Christian friends will recognize that we're all part of the body of Christ." And I loved that part. . . . And so, they said that they were so thankful that we welcomed them.²⁰

Opening the tabernacle to the St. Francis parish healed the wounds of minority Catholics and provided an occasion for the Mormon majority to get to know their neighbors. Unrau's friends were more willing to venture into a Catholic Mass when it happened in a familiar space.

The tabernacle also hosted a handful of National Prayer Day services organized by Seventh-day Adventist Linda Walton. Member of the Utah Valley Ministerial Association,²¹ Walton said, "We've had people come in from out of the area and they are completely flabbergasted at how

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Note that the organization changed its name to Utah Valley Interfaith Association in 2016, after I spoke with Linda.

friendly and not antagonistic that event is.”²² She reminisces proudly about a year she welcomed a group of picketing atheists who had gathered outside the prayer meeting. Walton appreciated the value of having the flexible religious space a tabernacle provides: “There’s no big hall to have a Fourth of July thing, a National Day of Prayer thing. I guess I could have it at one of the other places, but we like to have it in a religious place because it gets people into places they’ve never been.”²³ The tabernacle’s special presence lent a solemn tone to hybrid sacred/secular events.

Though it was an impressive religious space, the tabernacle could also be transformed into a secular arena. For many years the tabernacle was the main venue for the Provo Arts Council, providing an inexpensive space for many well-attended musical events. Kathryn Allen, former director of the Provo Arts Council, recalled:

Most of the programming in there was free, even though there were several nonprofits that were allowed to charge at the door, such as the Symphony. And the Provo Arts Council was also allowed to charge for certain programs because we were, as such, a nonprofit so . . . I was sorry. I was sad to hear they were not going to recreate it as a tabernacle, but delighted that they were going to keep it.²⁴

Allen helped create the Community Music Series in 1983, which started in the Provo Council Chambers, then was “moved to the foyer, then to the Provo Tabernacle, [and] at the end of the series, more than twenty thousand people were attending free concerts on Monday nights.”²⁵ In

22. Linda Walton (founder, The Walton Group), Provo, Utah, in discussion with the author, Nov. 5, 2015. Digital recording.

23. Ibid.

24. Kathryn Allen (former director, Provo Arts Council), Provo, Utah, in discussion with the author, Dec. 28, 2015. Digital recording.

25. Genelle Pugmire, “Provo to Have an Arts Council, Again,” *Daily Herald*, Dec. 8, 2016, https://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/central/provo/provo-to-have-an-arts-council-again/article_4e2b6019-44e8-5673-bdae-22e253e59239.html.

1954, this was called the Community Concert Series. It was sponsored by Brigham Young University, free of charge to the public, and included “classical, Romantic, and contemporary composers.”²⁶ Ironically, this series ended when, in 2002, the LDS Church closed their buildings on Monday nights in order to support family home evening.²⁷

Some audience members were uncomfortable with more secular performers in the tabernacle, as the following story illustrates:

We had a new set of service missionaries . . . and we had Ryan Shupe and the RubberBand. People got up and started dancing in the aisles. And this couple sat there as long as they could bear seeing people dancing in their beloved tabernacle and they [left the room]. . . . Bless their hearts. And yes, I did hear about it from someone on a stake level. And I said, “You know, it is a community center.” . . . The idea was to have enough variety to bring people in and so that every type or culture of people would want to come to something.²⁸

Though this building housed a variety of meetings, it was indelibly a religious space.

To further understand the significance of the building in interfaith cooperation, I conducted a small survey to hear from random Utah citizens.²⁹ Respondents were asked about their knowledge of the tabernacle and their attendance habits. Eighty-six percent of respondents reported

26. *Daily Herald*, Nov. 21, 1954. Available online with a subscription at <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/7742422>.

27. Gordon B. Hinckley, “To Men of the Priesthood,” Oct. 2002, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2002/10/to-men-of-the-priesthood?lang=eng>.

28. See n. 24.

29. In the spring of 2015, an email database was used to field a survey of nineteen statements to one hundred Utah County residents, to which they responded using a Likert scale. Twenty-three percent of those surveyed reported residing in Utah for fewer than five years, 45 percent for six to twenty years, and 32 percent for twenty-one years or longer. Sixty-four percent identified as female and 36 percent as male, and 42 percent were younger than thirty while 58 percent were older.

knowing the tabernacle was used as a community center for the arts and other activities, but only 54 percent reported knowing that it was used for events of religious groups other than Mormon, such as Catholic Mass. Forty-nine percent of respondents had attended something other than a Mormon meeting there.

At the middle and end of the survey, respondents had the opportunity to write comments. Most middle section comments referred to musical events, a few to graduations, a few to nativities, one to Catholic Mass, and one to the National Day of Prayer. Because the end of the survey focused on the tabernacle's interfaith role, the exclusive nature of temples, and the fact that some will lose access to the tabernacle after its reconstruction as a temple, respondents' final comments tended to address these issues.

Because the question of temple attendance is of such importance to this study, respondents chose from the following list of religious identifiers: unaffiliated (4 percent), non-believer (1 percent), temple-attending Mormon (54 percent), church-attending Mormon (24 percent), inactive believing Mormon (10 percent), inactive nonbelieving Mormon (1 percent), religion other than Mormon (6 percent), and atheist (1 percent). These distinctions are important in studying attitudes about transforming a building the access to which depends upon one's relationship to temple attendance. A total of 116 options were checked for the one hundred completed surveys. Eighty-eight percent of the options checked identified the respondent in some way with Mormonism. Using more nuanced religious identifiers allowed an examination of not only the interfaith community between Mormons and other denominations, but more particularly, that within Mormonism itself.

It is interesting that 93 percent of respondents expressed at least some agreement with the statement "It is important for Provo to nurture its interfaith community," yet only 44 percent agreed with "I will miss the interfaith opportunities the tabernacle provided." For some reason, respondents very strongly support interfaith community in the abstract,

but that support drops off considerably for the tabernacle in particular. An even larger drop-off in support occurs in response to the statement “I wish it had been restored as a tabernacle” which receives only 24 percent agreement of any kind. Seventy-nine percent of respondents expressed at least some agreement with the statement “I am pleased it is being rebuilt as a temple.”

Maybe these contradictions can be explained by age and attendance rates. With 40 percent of respondents under the age of thirty—and of those, 30 percent never having attended the tabernacle, and 47 percent attending five or fewer times—it could be that respondents simply didn’t have enough experience with the tabernacle to appreciate its value. After all, 46 percent of respondents were not even aware that the tabernacle hosted events of faiths other than Mormon. Whatever the reason, a cross tabulation of responses to “I wish it had been restored as a tabernacle” with religious affiliation indicates that the desire to nurture interfaith community on the one hand and enthusiasm for temples on the other creates a dissonance for temple attenders.

As temple attendance declines among respondents, the desire for tabernacle restoration increases. There could be a number of reasons for this. First, the decision to transform the tabernacle into a temple had already been made when the survey was administered; therefore, the loss of the tabernacle is in conflict with the gain of a temple. Second, temple-attending respondents may feel that to wish for tabernacle reconstruction is to disagree with Church leadership. Third, it simply makes sense that temple attenders are less likely to miss the tabernacle since they will still have access to it as a temple.

The statement “I feel bad that people without temple recommends will lose access to the former tabernacle,” with which 46 percent of respondents expressed some agreement, goes the furthest to suggest that the respondent has some responsibility in the interfaith relationship. When temples are new buildings, their exclusive function is not emphasized, but when a public space is redesigned to become private,

the celebration that typically accompanies a temple opening also involves some disappointment. The phrasing “I feel bad people without recommends will lose access” reminds temple-attending respondents that in the case of the tabernacle reconstruction their gain is someone’s loss: someone with a different faith. A cross tabulation of the “I feel bad” statement with religious affiliation shows that 41 percent of temple-attending Mormons feel bad that people without recommends will lose access to the former tabernacle. The percentage of people who feel bad about lost access increases among populations who are not temple-attending, with 46 percent of church-attending Mormons and 83 percent of inactive believing Mormons reporting feeling bad. Perhaps non-temple-attending Mormons feel bad about lost access because they are part of the population losing access. It could also be that their reasons for not attending the temple, such as faith crises, make them more sensitive than temple attenders to populations that will lose access such as non-religious people.

Comments at the end of the survey include the most evident mental grappling with responsibility to a local interfaith community. Consider the following: “I think it is fine being built as a temple. Since they won’t be able to have the multi-faith activities there anymore though there should probably be another option for that. It is good for people of different faiths to find common ground in different things.” Some seemed to only realize the consequences the tabernacle’s reconstruction would have on the community as they were taking the survey: “I didn’t know it was being rebuilt as a temple[. I]t was a beautiful building and there are not many places if any like that in Provo so it’s sad that the public won’t be able to enjoy it anymore.”

Several comments try to make sense of the reconstruction by suggesting the city build a new venue for interfaith activities.³⁰ What these

30. “I feel it will be an asset to the community and will be a beautiful part of town for people of many faiths to visit. It also provides Provo with another opportunity to build something that can host more intercultural events, which

comments don't consider is that a new structure would most likely not be religious. Tabernacles, which are large religious structures that can be used for both civic and religious meetings, are no longer built by the LDS Church. The closest analogue is the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, which does host art events that can be attended by the entire community. Perhaps the LDS Church decided that the number of resources necessary to restore the tabernacle after the fire could not be justified for any other structure than a temple; priority was given to temple work rather than community work. This is understandable given the LDS Church's mission, but the loss of a public religious venue like the tabernacle means that citizens have fewer and fewer opportunities to share their faith with each other.

Some comments suggest BYU or the Covey Center as a solution to this.³¹ But unlike the tabernacle, BYU and the Covey Center require fees for the use of their buildings. Significantly, the tabernacle, due to the generosity of the LDS Church, was made available to various organizations for free. One respondent argues for restoring the building as a tabernacle out of respect for early Utah settlers.³² Ironically, this argument is often used to advocate for its restoration as a temple. For example, LDS Church historic sites curator Dr. Benjamin Pykles notes significantly that once the temple is operating, all of the saving ordinances

might also help stimulate the economy"; "It was nice, but it burned down in a fire. Even if it was rebuilt, it wouldn't be the same. If the city needs a cultural center it can build it somewhere else."

31. "I'm afraid I never visited it as a tabernacle. I feel that interfaith activities could be held elsewhere—there are many places to meet in Provo—why not a BYU center or something that can accommodate a lot of people?"

32. "It seems more special to remodel for the purpose the pioneers had meant it for, which is a tabernacle. I do appreciate the fact that the [C]hurch cleaned up and made downtown Provo much more beautiful, but I think they could have done so while still remodeling the building as a tabernacle. If the [C]hurch felt they really needed a second temple in Provo, they probably could have built an entirely new one in addition to the tabernacle."

(baptism, sacrament, temple endowment) will have been performed on this one city block, making it a “cosmology of Mormon worship.”³³

Some comments, however, simply seem to ignore the question of Provo’s interfaith community: “It’s great they are turning it into a temple. Modern day revelation”; “I think it’s wonderful that it has been turned into a temple. I think it will bless the lives of the people in Provo to have two temples.” But most still reveal a struggle to reconcile the excitement about the new temple with the reality of excluding the non-temple-attending public: “I’m super excited for it to become a temple. I think it’s awesome! I’m sorry some people feel bad about that, but I can’t wait for it to be completed as a temple!!!”; “It is a historic and beautiful building and it will continue to be that but most of all it was created to glorify and serve the Lord and there is no better way of doing that than being a temple. There will be other places and opportunities to support interfaith involvement and community activities.”

More than one comment skirts the question of lost access by suggesting that non-temple attenders visit during the limited open house period.³⁴ One comment identifies the respondent as part of the population who will lose access: “I’m glad it’s being fixed up but kind of sad I will be locked out.” Others express the bitter experience of being a minority: “I honestly do not care whether or not there is a tabernacle or temple. Either do not matter to me. They do not recognize my religious beliefs”;

33. Benjamin Pykles (historic sites curator, LDS Church), Orem, Utah, in discussion with the author, Jan. 30, 2014.

34. “Anyone who wants to go through the temple when it’s done can, before it is dedicated,” or “There are many other venues where people of all faiths can hold interfaith meetings, performances, and concerts. This decision by the LDS Church preserves and repurposes an historic building which has been an important part of the community for more than a century. I’m just grateful that it will continue to be a part of the skyline. The exterior will still be accessible to others in the community and they will be able to visit the interior and learn more about its renovation and new purpose during the ‘open house’ prior to the dedication.”

“The separation of church and state never happens anywhere in Utah so the ‘church’ deciding Provo needed another temple was strictly a money grabbing event once again.” Others express their concern without letting on which group they are part of, for instance: “I wish it was open to all faiths. Utah used to be home to so many Mormons. Now I’ve heard less than half the population is Mormon. It saddens me that such a wealthy church shuts its doors to others during time of need or for any reason.”

Finally, one comment implied that non-temple attenders need only address their own unworthiness and become temple-attending again in order to enjoy the building: “If there are LDS people who are sad that they cannot attend anything in the former Provo Tabernacle, then I am sure that everyone would invite them to alter whatever must be altered to be able to attend. I am sad, too, but if they are LDS, and it means so much to them, then that is what they would need to do.” In addition to ignoring non-LDS citizens, this comment seems to me unwilling to consider reasons other than irresponsibility that an individual may have for not obtaining a temple recommend, such as a struggle for faith in general or regarding a particular doctrine. The comment may illustrate the need among Mormons to better acknowledge the many gradations of faith within Mormon communities and those struggles that require greater patience and increased communication to overcome.

This study shows that the more intimately individuals were connected with the tabernacle and its function in support of interfaith community, the more they wished it had been restored as a tabernacle. The interviews were conducted with individuals who had considerable experience with and love for the tabernacle, and therefore express more admiration for its ability to build bridges between denominations. Survey data, on the other hand, show that a dissonance has been created for temple-attending Mormons between an abstract support of interfaith community and a more concrete enthusiasm for temple-building. One example of this dissonance is that relatively low rates of temple attenders report feeling bad about others’ lost access to the building, but a propor-

tionally higher number address and struggle with the issue of lost access in their concluding comments. Thus, the value of interfaith community comes up against the value of temples, and while a few are dismissive of people who are not temple-attending Mormons in their final comments, the majority are not: the majority address the problem and are trying to solve it. The survey also highlights that interfaith boundaries are not only found between Mormons and other denominations, but also within Mormonism itself.

The interviews clearly show the effectiveness of events like the 1996 Christmas Mass in generating goodwill and understanding between religious groups. By making the tabernacle available for interfaith events, the LDS Church opened doors and reached across religious boundaries to establish friendships. The tabernacle, as a community religious space, created opportunities for interfaith experience—something temple-attending Mormons say they value. A challenge exists, therefore, for this group in particular to continue, in the absence of shared sacred space, to find ways to build interfaith bridges.

Appendix A

Provo Tabernacle Online Survey

1. How long have you been a resident of Utah?

0–5 years 6–10 years 11–15 years 16–20 years 21+ years

2. I am

Male Female

3. What is your age?

Under 20 21–30 31–40 41–60 61–80 Over 80

4. Which of the following best describes your religious status. Check one or more.

Unaffiliated

Nonbeliever

Temple attending Mormon

Church attending Mormon

Inactive believing Mormon

Inactive non-believing Mormon

Religion other than Mormon

Atheist

5. Estimate how many events you have attended at the tabernacle.
0–5 6–10 11–20 20+

6. I am aware that the tabernacle was a center for community arts, activities, and performances.

Yes No

7. I am aware the tabernacle hosted events of faiths other than Mormon such as Catholic Easter Mass.

Yes No

8. I have attended an event at the tabernacle other than a Mormon ward or stake meeting.

Yes No

9. Do you remember details about that event or another that you would like to share?

Participants were given a scale of Strongly Agree-Agree-Somewhat Agree-Somewhat Disagree-Disagree-Strongly Disagree to respond to statements 10–19.

10. It is important for Provo to nurture its interfaith community.

11. I will miss the interfaith activities the tabernacle provided.

12. The new temple will improve downtown Provo aesthetically and/or economically.

13. I have strong feelings about the Provo Tabernacle.

Screening statements added at various points in the survey to assure participant residency and engagement result in this omission of numbers 14–15.

16. I wish it had been restored as a tabernacle.

17. I plan on attending the new temple.

18. I feel bad that people without temple recommends will lose access to the new temple.

19. I am pleased it is being rebuilt as a temple.

20. Are there any other experiences of or feelings about the Provo Tabernacle that you would like to share?

MORMON-CATHOLIC RELATIONS IN UTAH HISTORY: A SKETCH

Gary Topping

One of the happy surprises that makes history so interesting is the fact that Utah ever became Mormon Country, for during the roughly one hundred years before 1847 it had been, if anything, Catholic Country. Catholic explorers, soldiers, fur trappers, and traders had repeatedly plied their trades back and forth through the territory. Brigham Young University historian Ted J. Warner offers an intriguing speculation as to what might have happened if the Franciscan friars Dominguez and Escalante had been able to fulfill their promise to the Indians at Utah Lake that they would return and establish a mission among them.¹ If they had, when Brigham Young started looking for a place no one else wanted where he could bring the Latter-day Saints, he would have seen a thriving Catholic community in Utah and perhaps turned his gaze elsewhere, to Mexico, Texas, or somewhere else. But of course, for various reasons, they did not, and so the friars became one more entry in the long list of transient Utah Catholics. By 1866, when the Catholics made their first attempt at a permanent institutional presence in Utah, the territory had for almost two decades become home to a large and

1. Ted J. Warner, ed., *The Dominguez-Escalante Journal* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1976), xvii. Notes for this essay document only sources not previously cited in the two articles upon which it is based: Gregory A. Prince and Gary Topping, "A Turbulent Coexistence: Duane Hunt, David O. McKay, and a Quarter-Century of Catholic-Mormon Relations," *Journal of Mormon History* 31, no. 1 (2005): 142–63 and Gary Topping, "Mormon-Catholic Relations in Utah History: The Early Years," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 81, no. 3 (2013): 230–48.

well-entrenched Mormon population. The Catholics would henceforth never become more than a tiny minority in Mormon Country, and getting along with their numerous Mormon neighbors became an imperative priority. That imperative has occupied a very large part of Utah Catholic history.²

The task of establishing that first permanent Catholic presence fell to Father Edward Kelly, a Chicago priest assigned to the Diocese of Marysville, California (now the Diocese of Sacramento), which had the responsibility of ministering, as best it could, to the far-flung mining towns of Nevada. At one point, Fr. Kelly received a sick call from Salt Lake City, where someone was dying and requested the services of a priest. Upon his arrival in Salt Lake City, he discovered a population of Catholics that, tiny though it was, seemed to him to merit establishment of a parish. He contacted his bishop, who tendered his permission. A search for property turned up a lot with a small adobe structure in a very auspicious location on the west side of 200 East between South Temple and 100 South, at the eastern end of Social Hall Avenue. It was close to the bustling heart of the city, with residences and businesses of important people nearby. He made an offer, closed the deal, and set out for Nevada to collect his personal belongings.

Upon his return, however, he found that the deal had gone sour, for title to the property was being contested. Not wanting to get his new parish off to a bad start with a protracted lawsuit, he decided to submit the case directly to Brigham Young, who, he had obviously already

2. Although Catholics are the largest religious minority in Utah, the comparison must be made with tongue firmly in cheek, for we have never constituted more than about ten percent of Utahns. Or so we think. The truth is that no one really knows how many Catholics there are in the state because many of them are undocumented immigrants who cannot risk having their presence recorded, and others are lax about registering for parish membership.

learned, *was* the law in Utah.³ Fr. Kelly must have been an extraordinary young man, for, although he had been ordained barely a year, he was already nicknamed by his bishop “the windfall from Chicago” and did not shrink from confronting none other than the Lion of the Lord. Perhaps it was his audacity that pleased the audacious Brigham Young, for the prophet not only ruled in Kelly’s favor but even offered a donation of five hundred dollars if the priest would create a Catholic school. Kelly never did, as health problems forced him to withdraw to California (other priests came to continue the work), but things had gotten off to a promising start. Fr. Edward Kelly became the first Utah Catholic to learn that if he extended friendship to the Mormons, they would warmly reciprocate tenfold. It was a good lesson to keep in mind as history moved forward.

No trumpets blared, no bells pealed in Salt Lake City on September 15, 1873, but well they might have, for that date marked the arrival of Fr. Lawrence Scanlan to assume the pastorate of St. Mary Magdalene parish. He would become the first bishop of the diocese in 1891 and continue in that capacity until his death in 1915. During that time, he stamped his personality on the diocese more indelibly than any other person, including establishing the tenor of Mormon-Catholic relations that has continued to the present day.

From the beginning, Scanlan knew he was going to need outside financial help, for the tiny Catholic population was barely going to be able to sustain the ongoing work of the parish, let alone the hospitals and schools and charitable functions that are characteristic of Catholicism. Accordingly, almost at the outset he began appealing for funds to

3. We Catholic historians have pretty consistently garbled this story, proudly trumpeting the tale of Kelly’s appeal to Brigham Young in order to avoid a lawsuit. Denis Kiely, Bernice Mooney, and Gary Topping have all repeated the story while Mooney and Topping ignore that fact that the matter *did* go to court (Bernice even cites the case number). The full story, as I have tried to straighten out here, is that the court would have done anything Brigham told it to do. See Topping, “Mormon-Catholic Relations,” 232, n. 6.

an organization known (in English) as the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, a group of French lay people dedicated to raising money for struggling dioceses and parishes such as the one in Utah. Anyone donating money is going to want some accounting of how it is spent, so Scanlan's reports to the Society from 1874–88 constitute useful vignettes of the activities and well-being of the church in Utah—including glimpses of relations with the Mormons. Useful as the reports are, though, they require judicious interpretation on the historian's part, for they are to some degree propaganda pieces in which Scanlan told the Society what he thought they wanted to hear, and that included some effort to convert the Mormons.

Although Scanlan's reports sometimes contained very intemperate characterizations of Mormonism, "whose superstition, & fanaticism have no parallel in modern times," his efforts to convert Mormons were entirely passive, bearing no resemblance to the public debates promoted by the Protestants, nor even the home visits and public preachings of Mormon missionaries. Instead, Scanlan hoped to make inroads into Mormonism by the exemplary piety he expected of his fellow Catholics, to which he hoped the Mormons would be attracted.⁴ The Holy Cross Sisters, for example, who had established St. Mary's Academy in Salt Lake City as early as 1875, had, by their pious lives, made great progress "not only removing all prejudices from [Mormon] minds, but even gaining their respect and admiration." And, if one can trust the statistics in Scanlan's 1876 report, his strategy was experiencing some success: "During the past year, many of the [Mormon] pupils expressed a desire to be baptized. I baptized about a dozen and refused to comply with the desires of many others, through motives of prudence and objections raised by their parents." One assumes that those Mormon parents who did accede to their children's baptism had lost their Mormon faith, and

4. Motivated probably by such texts as Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (RSV).

one imagines that those who objected to such baptism would have been gratified by Scanlan's refusal to grant it.

Gradually, though, even such passive missionary efforts seem to have receded from Utah Catholicism. One reason for that was that as Scanlan (and presumably other Utah Catholics as well) got better acquainted with his Mormon neighbors, despite whatever "superstition and fanaticism" he might have found in their theology, he learned that the people themselves were honest, hardworking, and moral and were living a species of Christianity not too different from his own. As Utah Catholicism expanded into rural parts of the territory remote from Salt Lake City, Scanlan felt an obligation to bring pastoral care to those far-flung locales.⁵ Often, in those travels, he was able to find hotel and restaurant accommodations, but on other occasions he could not and found himself dependent upon the hospitality of isolated Mormon farm and ranch families. Invariably, he found that hospitality warmly extended, with his hosts sometimes curious to learn about Catholicism to the extent that he would be invited to give talks about it in Mormon churches. One doubts that such events occurred as frequently as he seems to intimate, but the fact that they took place at all is remarkable.

Perhaps the most remarkable episode in Mormon-Catholic comity during Scanlan's day took place on May 25, 1879 in, of all places, Silver Reef, Utah, almost three hundred miles from Salt Lake City, where a rich vein of silver ore had been discovered and many Catholic miners had moved in to work it. With the help, once again, of the redoubtable Holy Cross Sisters, Scanlan built a church, a school, and a hospital, the latter funded by the first group health care plan in Utah history.

5. The Most Reverend George H. Niederauer, eighth bishop of Salt Lake City (1995–2006), was in awe of his great predecessor's stamina on those long journeys. "Bishop Scanlan and I had to cover the same territory," he would observe, "but I have a Ford Taurus and he had a horse and buggy." Things were actually much worse than that, for prior to 1931 when the Diocese of Reno was created, the eastern counties of Nevada were part of the Diocese of Salt Lake City.

Although Silver Reef frightened the Washington County Mormons by quickly becoming the largest town in the county with the possibility of becoming the county seat (it never did), there was a mutually beneficial symbiosis between the Mormons and Gentiles: the miners needed food and building materials, which the Mormons could provide, and the Mormons needed the cash and the markets available in Silver Reef.

On his trips to Silver Reef, Scanlan boarded at the same hotel as John M. Macfarlane, deputy US mineral surveyor and director of the St. George Tabernacle choir. The two discovered a mutual love of choral music, which led to a remarkable offer from Macfarlane to loan his choir for a Mass to be said by Scanlan in the tabernacle. Scanlan reportedly traveled repeatedly to St. George to train the choir in proper pronunciation of the Latin text, then brought his Catholic flock with him for the actual Mass on May 25. Scanlan was even invited, either as part of his homily or (more likely) after Mass, to give a talk explaining the Catholic faith to his largely Mormon audience.

It was a remarkable ecumenical gesture, but in the end it accomplished nothing permanent. The event was never repeated before the silver ran out, and Silver Reef ceased to exist in the mid-1880s. Charles L. Walker, the indefatigable Mormon diarist, reported that in a Mormon service that afternoon, after the Catholics had departed, the resident apostle in St. George, Erastus Snow, got up and rebutted Scanlan's talk point by point. Thus, on that lovely spring day of May 25, 1879, Mormon-Catholic dialogue in Utah began and Mormon-Catholic dialogue in Utah ended. It has never again gained traction, and, given the mutually exclusive theologies of the two churches, it will not and cannot. Fortunately, that fact has not generated ill will, and instead of theological dialogue, we have found ways to join forces on social, political, and charitable endeavors we have mutually supported.⁶

6. Not, perhaps, without a few bumps in the road, as the rest of this essay will detail. In addition, there are thousands of undocumented episodes like this: The Good Samaritan Program, operated out of the Cathedral of the Madeleine,

The best feelings Scanlan ever generated within the Mormon community came during the 1880s, though it almost did not work out that way. As the anti-polygamy crusade during that decade began to gather momentum, Protestant clergymen in Salt Lake City called a series of meetings of all non-Mormon clergy for the purpose of drawing up an anti-polygamy petition to send to their colleagues in the East as a tool for them to use in lobbying Congress for legislation to suppress the Mormons. Scanlan attended one of the meetings in 1881 but walked out when he saw what was happening and told the others not to put his name on the petition. To his great dismay, and that of his Mormon friends, they included his name anyway. Finding himself attacked in the Mormon press for the first time, he hurried to issue a retraction. His position vis-à-vis Mormonism, he said, was that if Mormonism is right, there is nothing he can do to stop it, and if it is wrong, it will naturally fail. That was good enough for the Mormons, and for the rest of his life the *Deseret News* could hardly stop praising the bishop.

In view of the demonstrable success of such a policy, the next few Catholic bishops thought they could do no better than just follow Scanlan's example. Besides, they had other fish to fry and saw no point in distracting themselves with inevitably futile controversies with the Mormons. Scanlan's successor, Joseph S. Glass (1915–26), for example, was preoccupied with redecorating the interior of Scanlan's cathedral, which Scanlan had left in a simple Irish green and white. Glass brought in woodcarver Johannes Kirchmayer and muralist Felix Lieftuchter, who between them imparted the intricate artwork and brilliant colors that bedazzle visitors even today.

provides, among other things, free sack lunches to anyone during daylight hours who requests one. A friend of mine, who supervised the volunteers who make the sandwiches, reported that one of them, upon being informed that the bread and bologna for the sandwiches had been provided by the Mormon Church, immediately resigned in a pious huff. The homeless people lined up at the door presumably had not been aware that there was a theology of bologna sandwiches.

Privately, though, Glass was no more impressed with Mormon theology than Scanlan had been, and he found an opportunity in the redecoration project to take a few jabs at the Mormons. High on the walls of the transept and the apse, Glass had Lief Tuchter inscribe in gold letters several scriptural passages that he no doubt interpreted in an anti-Mormon way. One is the almost inevitable “Thou art Peter,” from Matthew 16:18, which Catholics regard as legitimatizing the apostolic succession from Peter, the first pope. Another is the “Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you,” from John 6:54–55, which Catholics interpret as the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. A third one is St. Paul’s admonition to the Galatians (1:8) that “Though we or an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you let him be anathema”—an obvious dig at the heavenly visitations through which Joseph Smith claimed to have restored primitive Christianity.

Yet if those inscriptions are indeed—as I think they are—manifestations of Glass’s anti-Mormonism, I have been unable to document any deleterious effect on Mormon-Catholic relations. I propose two reasons for that: one is that in Glass’s day, and indeed before the mid-1980s, the cathedral was solely a Catholic structure that Mormons and other non-Catholics would presumably have no reason to enter, and thus even to be aware of the inscriptions. The other reason is that Mormons of course have their own view of church history in which the “Thou art Peter” and the “anathema” statements were made before the Great Apostasy, after which the church fell into darkness and they became irrelevant. The “body and blood” quotation could be interpreted, as it is by many Protestants, as simply figurative language.

Mormonism figured once again in a 1921 correspondence between Glass and Mother Augustine, prioress of a Carmelite convent in Santa Clara, California. Glass knew that even though the Carmelite foundation had only been created in 1916, it was thriving, and he also knew that the Carmelite Rule prohibited their convents from having more

than twenty-two members. Would Mother Augustine, he wondered, have a few nuns that she could send to Utah? “Prayer and sacrifice are absolutely necessary if we are going to make any impression on the [Mormon] people of this community,” he argued.⁷ She picked up on it immediately, responding that “the thought that those benighted souls sunk in the depths of such a so-called religion should urge one to go immediately to their rescue.”⁸

In the end, as much as she obviously wanted to create a Carmelite foundation in Utah, Mother Augustine determined that her own house was of such recent origin and her nuns green enough in their Carmelite vocations that she deemed it unwise to be trying to establish satellite houses. It was not until 1952 that other Carmelites, from Alhambra, California, established the convent that exists in Holladay, Utah today.

Mormons, of course, were and are to this moment completely unaware of the correspondence between Glass and Mother Augustine, so it had no effect on relations between the two churches. I bring it up here, though, simply to illustrate that Bishop Glass held to the same philosophy of evangelization of Mormons as Scanlan. Cloistered nuns are certainly not going to be riding around on bicycles and knocking on doors like Mormon missionaries, but through their prayers and lives of exemplary piety they could hope to win people—not just Mormons—over with love.

Finally, there is another episode during the time of Bishop Glass that is hard to explain but impossible to ignore. The Utah State Historical

7. Bishop Joseph S. Glass to Mother Augustine, June 21, 1921, in records of the Carmel of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Archives of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City, hereafter cited as Diocesan Archives. For non-Catholic readers, the Carmelites are a contemplative, cloistered order reformed as the Discalced Carmelites in the sixteenth century by Saints Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross. They do not leave the cloister, and their basic function is to pray.

8. Mother Augustine to Bishop Joseph S. Glass, July 24, 1921, in records of the Carmel of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Diocesan Archives.

Society has the papers of one John Frederick Tobin, a Catholic lawyer in Salt Lake City who also happened to be the football coach at Judge Memorial Catholic High School. At one point in 1923, Tobin had been out of town for a period, and a fellow lawyer, Ira R. Humphrey, wrote to catch him up on the doings of some of his friends. Apologizing for a typing error in a previous paragraph, Humphrey offered the following explanation: "The spelling of 'guess' in the second paragraph is due to the fact that I played poker last night until after three o'clock this morning with Heber J. Grant, Rev. Goshen, Bishop Glass, and Charley Quickley." The Salt Lake City directory reveals that Reverend Goshen was pastor of First Congregational Church, and Charles *Quigley* (Humphrey's typography was still unreliable) was a mine operator in the firm of Quigley and Welch.

Is the letter credible? There seems no reason to suspect that Humphrey was perpetrating some kind of joke, and the three religious leaders, a lawyer, and a business owner would all have been members of roughly the same social class, and thus finding them in attendance at such a gathering should not raise eyebrows. But the image of the puritanical Grant with loosened necktie bluffing a pair of deuces certainly seems out of character. And we can be sure that Grant, who insisted upon strict observance of the Word of Wisdom, would not have partaken of the whiskey and cigars one often finds at such events.

There is little evidence of formal contact between the Mormon and Catholic Churches during the following two episcopates, John J. Mitty (1926–32) and James E. Kearney (1932–37), and this is largely attributable to the fact that the Catholic diocese had its gaze fixed inwardly during that time. Those two bishops were preoccupied with bringing financial solvency back to the diocese after the extravagant spending of Bishop Glass, largely on redecoration of the Cathedral of the Madeleine. Ever since his days as a priest in Los Angeles, Glass had exhibited a reverse Midas touch in his financial affairs. Although his personal needs were in part taken care of by the Doheny family, he otherwise spent money

he did not have, leaving the diocese almost hopelessly mired in debt on the verge of bankruptcy. Unneeded real estate had been purchased, loans were taken out to cover the interest on previous loans, and the Catholic people were so demoralized by the fiscal irresponsibility that donations had sunk to pennies per person per year. Not until 1936, when the last debts of the cathedral had been paid off (remarkably, during the depth of the Great Depression), was the diocese able to redirect its attention to affairs in the outside world, including its relations with Mormons.

That hiatus, though, was the lull before the storm, because the next bishop, Duane G. Hunt, found himself in the midst of an almost constant storm of conflict with the Mormon Church. That most of that conflict was a result of misunderstanding of Catholicism on the part of the Mormons and ignorance of Mormon sensitivities on the part of Hunt's auxiliary bishop, Leo J. Steck, did not make it any less bitter, and eventually it was only the developing friendship between Hunt and President David O. McKay that saved the day for the comity that has characterized later years.

Hunt was raised a Methodist in the Midwest. Though he desired a career in law, his eyesight was poor from an early age, and he settled for a major in rhetoric instead during his college years. Confronted for the first time with the claims of Catholicism at about that time, he set out to refute the Church but instead became the proverbial scoffer who converted to Catholicism.⁹ Eventually his professional career brought him to Salt Lake City, where he became a professor of speech at the University of Utah. During that time, he became interested in the priesthood, entered the seminary in 1916, and was ordained by Bishop Glass in the Cathedral of the Madeleine. He proved to be a uniquely valuable

9. Hunt tells the story of his conversion in "Not for Mental Cowards," in Severin and Stephen Lamping, O.F.M., eds., *Through Hundred Gates: By Noted Converts from Twenty-Two Lands* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1939), 27–32 and at greater length in his *My Conversion to the Catholic Faith* (New York: The Paulist Press, n.d.)

priest to Bishops Glass and Mitty, the latter of whom encouraged him in 1927 to begin “The Catholic Hour,” a weekly broadcast explaining various points of Catholic teaching and dogma on the radio station KSL. His strengths as a speaker did not go unnoticed, and in 1935 the CBS network picked it up for a national feed, the first for KSL.

Hunt was a prolific writer. In addition to keeping an almost daily diary (our only bishop so far to have done so), he published the texts of his “Catholic Hour” broadcasts in a long series of booklets, along with autobiographical essays and a couple of small volumes of apologetics in which he defends Catholic teaching against Mormon assertions.¹⁰ It is vital to understand that neither of those apologetic volumes were attacks on the Mormon Church. The first, *The People, the Clergy, and the Church*, was a response to two articles attacking the Catholic Church by a Professor James L. Barker, published in the *Relief Society Magazine*. As such, its intended audience was anyone—Mormon, Catholic, or anyone else—who might be interested in the debate. The other one, *Great Apostasy? No! Unbroken Chain? The Continuity of the Catholic Church*, was intended for Catholic eyes only, for it gave a Catholic response to the essential Mormon idea of a great apostasy at some point in the early history of the church, so that Catholics would have some idea what to say when the missionaries came knocking.

So why was it, then, that Hunt aroused such suspicion in the minds of Mormon leaders like President David O. McKay, J. Reuben Clark, and Mark E. Petersen? It is an important question because the evidence contains no grounds for such suspicion. Perhaps one can assign some blame to both sides. For one thing, it is clear that the Mormon leaders had an imperfect understanding of the function of religious orders like the Trappists, whom they suspected of being a beachhead for an effort to

10. *The People, the Clergy and the Church: An answer to accusations against the Catholic Church made by a Mormon writer of Utah* (New York: The Paulist Press, 1936) and *Great Apostasy? No! Unbroken Chain? The Continuity of the Catholic Church* (London: The Queen’s Work, 1959).

convert Mormons, and of terms like “mission,” which means something very different to each faith. On the Catholic side, even though Hunt was careful never to attack Mormonism, he did have a polemical style (he had been a professor of rhetoric, after all) that seems to have triggered suspicion. And one of the roughest episodes in Mormon-Catholic relations was provoked, as we shall see, by a leaflet published by Auxiliary Bishop Leo J. Steck, who had freshly arrived from St. Louis as Hunt’s assistant and who had a very limited knowledge of Mormonism and of Mormon sensitivities.

Let us begin, though, with a controversy triggered by Fr. Robert J. Dwyer, editor of the *Intermountain Catholic* and rector of the Cathedral of the Madeleine, who was one of Bishop Hunt’s most valuable lieutenants.¹¹ Dwyer grew up on Second Avenue in Salt Lake City, just a short trolley ride from the cathedral where he was baptized and ordained. A sophisticated theologian and historian, Dwyer had received a PhD from the Catholic University of America, and his dissertation, published as *The Gentile Comes to Utah*, is a classic of Utah historiography.¹² But Dwyer thought of himself as a member of a persecuted minority in Mormon Country, had no use whatsoever for Mormonism, and missed no opportunity to skewer his Mormon neighbors.

He got a splendid opportunity in 1945 when Fawn M. Brodie published her trailblazing but controversial biography, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith*.¹³ Although a blue-blooded Mormon

11. Dwyer (1908–76) was, in 1932, the first native Utahn to be ordained to the priesthood. He later became Bishop of Reno and Archbishop of Portland, Oregon. A useful summary of his life and anthology of his writings is Albert J. Steiss, ed., *Ecclesiastes: The Book of Archbishop Robert Dwyer* (Los Angeles: National Catholic Register, 1982).

12. Robert J. Dwyer, “The Gentile Comes to Utah: A Study in Religious and Social Conflict” (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1941).

13. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945).

herself (David O. McKay was her uncle), Brodie had become disaffected, and her biography was an attempt to demonstrate that Joseph Smith and the religion he had created could be accounted for completely by “naturalistic” means, i.e., that heavenly visitations and golden plates were unnecessary and incredible, and that Smith’s creative genius and the materials present in his environment were sufficient to explain the religion.

It was an opportunity made in heaven for Dwyer, who rushed into print in his own newspaper with a review praising Brodie’s book to the skies. Dwyer knew that the Mormon leadership was going to be unbending in its refusal to accommodate any of Brodie’s assertions, and also that they were going to insist that the rank and file hold tenaciously to the received interpretation, which was to accept Smith’s claims at face value. Rather, Dwyer hoped to appeal to Mormon scholars and intellectuals who might find Brodie’s ideas at least somewhat cogent, and thus drive a wedge between them and the leadership.

That Dwyer would review such a book favorably was to be expected, but what was not expected was the vehemence of his denunciation of Mormonism. By asserting a belief in a physical deity, “Mormonism definitely places itself outside the realm of rational inquiry and rests its case upon a physical impossibility,” Dwyer stated, and its doctrine of eternal progress “is demonstrably an intellectual absurdity.” Such inflammatory remarks inevitably drew a rebuke from the *Deseret News*, but remarkably they even drew a rebuke from the Catholic-owned and -edited *Salt Lake Tribune*, which called Dwyer’s review “Ill-Timed, Ill-Natured, and Very Ill-Advised.”

Bishop Hunt’s position in all this is undocumented, but it is a reasonable speculation that, in the interest of comity between the two churches, he may have asked Dwyer to pen a conciliatory response. If so, he was frustrated, and indeed Dwyer had stuck his neck out so far by that time that one wonders what kind of conciliation would have been possible. His actual response in the *Intermountain Catholic*, later

reprinted under the title “The Uses of Disagreement,” was brilliant but not conciliatory, and even a bit disingenuous. It asks why, when discussion and even debate of a wide range of serious issues like politics, foreign policy, artistic matters, and cultural issues is routinely accepted and even assumed, similar debate about religious matters is frowned upon. It was perhaps disingenuous in that Dwyer’s insulting rhetoric was on the margins of, if not actually outside, the scope of measured discourse.¹⁴

In any event, Bishop Hunt realized that things had gotten out of hand and that Dwyer clearly had no intention of backing down. The only alternative he could see to maintain whatever good will remained between the Catholic and Mormon Churches was to silence Dwyer. Accordingly, on December 1, 1946, Dwyer’s name silently disappeared from the masthead of the *Intermountain Catholic*, and it would be almost four years before it returned. By that time, Dwyer had only two years left before his departure to take over the Diocese of Reno, and Hunt must have been relieved that nothing controversial came along during that time to rile his controversy-loving priest.

Things were not helped during that period, though, by the appearance in 1949 of a leaflet authored by Bishop Leo J. Steck. Steck, a native of St. Louis, had been appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Salt Lake City at Bishop Hunt’s request, Hunt assuming that his failing eyesight would soon mandate his retirement, at which time Steck would be prepared

14. One wonders why Hugh W. Nibley, the brilliant BYU professor and Mormon apologist who had as much of a zest for polemics as Dwyer, did not enter the lists at this point to engage Dwyer in protracted debate. Nibley’s *No Ma’am, That’s Not History* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946) was his self-appointed answer to Brodie’s book, and perhaps he felt he had already said enough on the issue. But Dwyer’s article had been as much an assault on Mormonism itself as it was a review of the book, and Nibley might well have seen Dwyer’s work as an escalation that deserved a response. The debate would have been highly entertaining, if ultimately unedifying. Boyd Jay Petersen, *Hugh Nibley: A Consecrated Life* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2002) discusses the Brodie affair on pp. 223–28.

to take over the diocese. Steck had at that time little understanding of Mormons and Mormonism and an equally limited sense of what might trigger Mormon suspicions of Catholics.

The leaflet was titled “A Foreign Mission Close to Home!” Its intended audience was not Mormons, but rather wealthy Catholic donors in the East whom Steck wished to inform of the difficult circumstances under which Utah priests had to operate and to appeal for financial support. Mormonism is nowhere mentioned or even implied. When the leaflet got into Mormon hands, though, two things aroused their ire. The first was a map of the United States that depicted Utah in black, as though it was a blot on the character of the country. The other was the term “mission,” which Mormons naturally interpreted as a field for proselyting. David O. McKay was outraged by the leaflet, which he roundly denounced during a conference in his hometown of Huntsville. An apostle Mark E. Petersen, editor of the *Deseret News*, began organizing ward committees to resist the anticipated onslaught of Catholic missionaries.

A crisis was clearly emerging, and Bishop Hunt requested a meeting with President McKay. The meeting, which took place in Hunt’s office at Holy Cross Hospital, produced little healing, though he did finally convince McKay that he was misinterpreting Catholic intentions, and through subsequent correspondence the crisis was eventually averted.¹⁵

Peace between the two churches did not long endure, however. In July 1958, Elder Bruce R. McConkie published his encyclopedic *Mormon Doctrine*, which referred to the Catholic Church as the “Church of the Devil” and characterized it as “most abominable above all other churches.” When a copy found its way into Hunt’s hands, he was stunned. During a congratulatory visit to his Mormon friend, newly-elected congressman

15. My colleague Gregory Prince, a practicing Mormon, points out that Hunt’s Mormon opponents were guilty of a double standard: for a church that at any given time fields tens of thousands of missionaries, often attempting to convert Catholics, to object that Catholics could not legitimately turn the tables is inconsistent.

David King, Hunt carried a copy of McConkie's book and with tears in his eyes he protested that "We are your friends. We don't deserve this kind of treatment." Not content to employ King as his middleman, Hunt took the matter up directly with President McKay, asking, "Is this the attitude of the Church, that the Catholic Church is the 'Great and Abominable Church'?" As things worked out, although McKay asked McConkie to tone down his anti-Catholic rhetoric in a couple of places, he saw that offending Catholics was only one of many worries generated by the book: a study disclosed that there were no fewer than 1,067 doctrinal errors in the volume, with at least one found on most of its 776 pages.¹⁶

The peace that ensued was symbolized the following year when Bishop Hunt and John F. Fitzpatrick, publisher of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, attended the funeral for McKay's counselor Stephen L. Richards, eliciting an effusive note of thanks from McKay. McKay reciprocated in 1960 when Hunt himself died and he attended the funeral, the first Catholic Mass he had ever witnessed. This comity extended into the term of Hunt's successor, Bishop Joseph Lennox Federal, who personally greeted and thanked McKay for his presence at the service. When McKay himself died in 1970, Federal not only attended the funeral, but, "as the cortege passed the Cathedral of the Madeleine on its slow, sad journey along South Temple Street to the Salt Lake City Cemetery, he ordered the bells tolled in a final demonstration of respect."¹⁷

The rest of Bishop Federal's term as bishop (1960–80) was a time of calm between the two churches, mercifully free of offensive books and pamphlets and obstreperous editorials. In fact, there is little evidence of any but the most perfunctory contact at all, as the two churches seemed to have issues of their own to deal with that did not involve the other. This is certainly true on the Catholic side, for the 1960s were largely occupied with implementing the profound changes of the Second Vatican Council

16. Prince and Topping, "A Turbulent Coexistence," 160–62.

17. *Ibid.*, 163.

(Bishop Federal attended all four sessions). The 1970s, on the other hand, were preoccupied with an external restoration of the Cathedral of the Madeleine, an expensive and time-consuming project that left both Federal's budget and he himself taxed almost to the breaking point.¹⁸

Federal's cathedral renovation plans, which were to have included restoration of the interior artwork and the stained-glass windows, proved to be beyond both his financial and personal resources, so that was left to his successor, Bishop William K. Weigand (1980–95). Weigand recalls that he was given notice by diocesan officials at the time of his arrival that the interior renovation was something they expected of him.¹⁹ Together with his close associate, cathedral rector Monsignor M. Francis Mannion, he began formulating plans for the project, and almost paradoxically, relations with the Mormon Church, or at least the Mormon people, became once again a top priority.

Mannion's strategy, probably bolstered by Bishop Federal's experience, was based on the realization that such a huge undertaking simply could not be sustained only by funding from the state's relatively small Catholic population. Instead, he set out to build, in the minds of the Utah population at large, an image of the cathedral as a "public church," one of Utah's great architectural treasures and worthy of maintenance at public expense (though through voluntary individual and corporate donations), and as a venue for free public programs in the arts and humanities. It was to be, as the slogan had it, "A Cathedral for All People." Although the Mormon Church itself would not be a contributor, individual Mormons and Mormon foundations, like those funded by the wealthy and generous Eccles family, would be heavy supporters.²⁰

18. Gary Topping, *The Story of the Cathedral of the Madeleine* (Salt Lake City: Sagebrush Press, 2009), 59–74.

19. Bishop William K. Weigand, comments made at the Bishop's Dinner, Oct. 1, 2015, video recording available in Diocesan Archives.

20. Gary Topping, interviews with Msgr. M. Francis Mannion, Feb. 4, 2009; Bishop William K. Weigand, Oct. 2 and Dec. 1, 2009; and Gregory Glenn,

Mannion was center stage again during a potential flare-up of Mormon-Catholic hostility early in the term of Weigand's successor, Bishop George H. Niederauer (ordained November 3, 1994). At issue was a general conference talk on April 2, 1995 by Elder Dallin H. Oaks titled "Apostasy and Restoration," in which he discussed the central Mormon teaching of a Great Apostasy early in Christian history, an apostasy that rendered necessary the Restoration of the true Church under Joseph Smith. Catholics are well aware of that Mormon teaching, and ordinarily its discussion at conference would be expected and would not merit comment by any Catholic spokesman. In this instance, though, Mannion, as official theologian of the diocese, was challenged by the Associated Press to offer a response. He ordinarily would have declined, but the AP, with its national audience, would provide a huge forum for the Mormon position alone, so since they had invited him to respond, he chose to. His strategy was a measured response that, while reaffirming traditional Catholic doctrine, was couched in a respectful tone regarding Mormons and Mormonism. Although referring appreciatively to "The basis for a solid dialogue [that] exists in the very positive interreligious relations that have been building in recent years," he nevertheless cites the "intense modern scholarship [that] has strengthened rather than weakened Catholic appreciation of . . . the continuity of normative church teaching with that of the apostolic church."

In order that his comments would not be misunderstood by "a media reduction of them," Mannion sent his complete text to Elder Oaks, adding that "In my response, I sought to be constructive, fair and respectful. . . I have the greatest concern that our good relations continue to grow and thrive." Oaks responded in kind, graciously reassuring Mannion that

Feb. 19, 2009, all in Diocesan Archives. See also Mannion, "Public Church, Public Support: A Case Study in Ecclesiastical Fund Raising," an address given to the Partners for Sacred Places national conference, July 19, 1992, also in Diocesan Archives, and "The Church and the City," *First Things* 100 (February 2000): 31–36.

“Your comments are surely ‘constructive, fair and respectful.’ And your responding is entirely understandable and necessary from your point of view, which I honor,” concluding with the hope that “any mistakes I may have made in representing the content or origin of someone else’s faith will not detract from the great common interests that unite us.”²¹ Crisis averted.

Looking ahead to the close personal relations that would develop between Niederauer’s successor, Bishop John C. Wester and the LDS leadership, one would have to say that comparatively, those relations during the Niederauer years were cordial, if not intimate. But that intimacy could spring up occasionally. One example (which also exhibits Niederauer’s memorable sense of humor) came in the fall of 2004 when President Cecil O. Samuelson of Brigham Young University invited Niederauer to a BYU-Notre Dame football game on September 4. “We do hope to see you on the fourth,” he concluded, “though we may be rooting for different teams!” Niederauer accepted gratefully, but added the warning, “Don’t be too certain of how I will be rooting: I am a graduate of the University of Southern California, a longtime, militant rival of the school in South Bend!”²²

Most of Mormon-Catholic relations during the Niederauer years, though, with the exception of exchanges of routine holiday greetings and the like, were occupied with putting out occasional brush fires like the Oaks-Mannion incident. One of them occurred in 1997 when the newsletter for the Bountiful Twenty-Third LDS Ward reported a foot injury to a young man that would delay his departure on his mission to Rome. The newsletter expressed the hope, though, that in time he would be ready to go up against the “Papal Princes of the FEL (Forces of

21. M. Francis Mannion to Elder Dallin Oaks, Apr. 6, 1995 (with enclosure); Oaks to Mannion, Apr. 7, 1995, papers of Bishop George H. Niederauer (hereafter Niederauer Papers), Diocesan Archives.

22. Cecil O. Samuelson to Niederauer, Aug. 9, 2004; Niederauer to Samuelson, Aug. 11, 2004. Niederauer Papers, Diocesan Archives.

Evil).” Ordinarily such an inflammatory statement in a ward newsletter of limited circulation would go unnoticed by the Catholic community, but in this case it was picked up by Rolly and Wells’s column in the *Salt Lake Tribune* and a copy was passed along to Niederauer by a presumably Catholic woman.²³ Niederauer fired off a letter to the ward bishop, one Kent L. Worthington, pointing out that “Such language directed at another religion damages tolerance and good relationships between churches at any time, but is particularly unfortunate at this moment [pending the imminent arrival in Salt Lake City of Cardinal Edward Cassidy, cardinals often being referred to as “princes of the Church”].” The phraseology of the newsletter, he continued, “is particularly obnoxious and insulting. Some people might write the matter off as youthful high spirits. I cannot do so. Thinking and speaking of people of another religious faith in disparaging and derisive terms is puerile at best and bigoted at worst. I am hopeful that this matter can be satisfactorily resolved so that our two churches may live together in peace and mutual respect.”²⁴ In order to ensure that such resolution took place, Niederauer sent a copy of his letter to President Gordon B. Hinckley.²⁵

23. Rolly and Wells, *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 5, 1997, D2. Paul Rolly and JoAnn Jacobsen-Wells wrote a popular column exposing various foibles in Utah life, taking particular pleasure in skewering all things Mormon and Republican. Eventually Jacobsen-Wells dropped out, but at this writing Rolly is still doing the column. Ann Marie Helms to Niederauer, May 5, 1997, Niederauer Papers, Diocesan Archives.

24. Niederauer to Kent L. Worthington, May 7, 1997, Niederauer Papers, Diocesan Archives.

25. A copy of the Hinckley letter apparently has not survived, but Niederauer received an appreciative acknowledgment from First Presidency Secretary F. Michael Watson in which the First Presidency distances itself from the newsletter language, adding that “President Hinckley reaffirms to you a commitment to congenial relations with those of all faiths and has asked that I express his appreciation for the warm association enjoyed with you” (F. Michael Watson to Niederauer, May 12, 1997, Niederauer Papers, Diocesan Archives).

Worthington lost no time in making an effusive apology, copying his letter to President Hinckley. "The statement . . . was in very poor taste," he admitted, "and should never have been used by anyone." He further promised to print an apology in the next newsletter. "I am most grateful for your kind words and I join you in your wish to maintain good relationships with all neighbors," Niederauer replied, adding that "It is my prayerful hope that we can now put this matter behind us and proceed to cooperate together in peace and mutual respect."²⁶ Once again, crisis averted.

Although it is true to say that relations between the Catholic and Mormon Churches became much more frequent and personal during the terms of the two most recent bishops, Niederauer and John C. Wester (2007–15), it is also clear that Wester's years mark the high-water mark in the entire history of the two churches. Much of that, no doubt, is due to the happy dearth of the kinds of incidents that had caused friction during previous years, and much of it, too, is undoubtedly a result of warm personalities on both sides of the aisle that simply meshed together well.

It would be a meaningless task to try to rank the bishops of the Diocese of Salt Lake City in order of greatness because each has made positive contributions to the diocese in very different ways. But by any standards one might wish to pose, Bishop Wester would rank very close to the top. Youthful, handsome, talented, articulate, and funny, he is the kind of person that people naturally feel attracted to. Much of his charisma, too, emanates from a deep and unfeigned warmth and compassion that one immediately feels in his presence. When he met similar qualities among the leaders of the LDS Church, good things began happening.

Elder M. Russell Ballard and President Thomas S. Monson attended Wester's ordination at the Cathedral of the Madeleine, to Wester's sincere

26. Kent L. Worthington to Niederauer, May 15, 1997; Niederauer to Worthington, May 20, 1997, Niederauer Papers, Diocesan Archives.

delight.²⁷ But that much would have been expected, no matter who the respective church leaders might have been. But the fact that Elder Ballard and their golf partner Ellis Ivory journeyed all the way to Santa Fe for Wester's 2015 installation as Archbishop of Santa Fe surely exceeded any formal institutional obligation.

Those official contacts quickly became personal, especially when golf came into the picture. Wester is very athletic and loves outdoor recreation: fishing, hiking, and golf. Eventually he became part of a regular golf foursome, with Elder Ballard, LDS real estate developer Ellis Ivory, and prominent Catholic physician Dr. Dominic Albo. Those golf outings became the vehicle for much good-natured ribbing and self-deprecating humor. To Ivory, for example, Wester wrote, "You are very kind and most thoughtful. And, I may add, a good golfer! The match was a lot of fun, despite all my 8s." And in handwriting at the bottom of the letter, "Thanks for the great picture . . . US Open here we come!" Ivory responded in kind: "Thanks for the fantastic golf outing last Thursday. Never has being whipped been more enjoyable."²⁸

A curious feature of Bishop Wester's term that one struggles to explain is an almost sudden upsurge in local Mormon interest in Catholicism. Perhaps it was fueled by Wester's charismatic personality or something going on within the Mormon Church that the present writer is unaware of, but there was an amazing flurry of events, both formal and informal, in which various Catholics were invited to explain aspects of Catholicism to Mormon audiences. These ranged from Deacon Lynn Johnson being asked to give a tour of the Cathedral of the Madeleine and answer questions about various Catholic doctrines and practices to an institute group from Utah County, to Bishop Wester being invited to address the Quorum of the Twelve in Salt Lake City and a symposium

27. Wester to Ballard, Mar. 22, 2007, and to Monson, Mar. 28, 2007, Wester Papers, Diocesan Archives.

28. Wester to Ellis Ivory, July 18, 2012; Ivory to Wester and Dr. Dominic Albo, Aug. 7, 2012, Wester Papers, Diocesan Archives.

(with question and answer period) at the Utah Valley University Institute, to formal addresses to the BYU Forum by Cardinal Francis George, OMI, of Chicago and President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, OFM of Philadelphia, who addressed the Forum twice.²⁹

On the other hand, amid all this flurry of Mormon inquiry into Catholicism, one drily notes that the Catholic diocese has never exhibited a reciprocal interest in the nature of Mormonism. It seems an odd reversal of the intuitive: surely one can expect a basic familiarity with Catholicism, a two-millennia-old religion, on the part of any reasonably well-educated person, whereas Mormonism, not yet two centuries old, would seem to be the religion that begs explanation. Nevertheless, however one chooses to interpret this strange and lopsided phenomenon, it is clear that as Bishop Wester departed for New Mexico in 2015, Catholic-Mormon relations in Utah were better than they had ever been. With the installation of Rev. Oscar A. Solis as the new Catholic bishop on March 7, 2017, Utahns in both churches can well hope for Mormon and Catholic leadership that will build on that solid foundation and generate even more ecumenical energy in the future.

29. A more meticulous search of the Wester correspondence and the files of the *Intermountain Catholic* may turn up even a few more examples. See the itinerary for Cardinal George's visit (as well as the text of his speech), Feb. 22–24, 2010; Vance Theodore and Allen Blake Boatright to Wester, June 21, 2012; Itinerary for Wester's UVU visit, Sept. 18, 2012; Richard E. Bennett to Wester, Apr. 4, 2013 (thanking him for their visit to the cathedral during Holy Week); Wester to Elders L. Tom Perry and Quentin L. Cook, Apr. 26, 2013 (thanking them for their invitation to speak to the Twelve and presidents of the Quorums of the Seventy about the Catholic diocese and possible ecumenical activities); and Kent Hunter to Wester, Apr. 29, 2013 (thanking him for the tour of the cathedral by Orem Institute students led by Deacon Lynn Johnson). Some of these events are reported in the *Intermountain Catholic*, Apr. 9, 2010; Jan. 30, 2015; Mar. 18, 2016; and Apr. 1, 2016.

"A PORTION OF GOD'S LIGHT": MORMONISM AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Brian D. Birch

In 2015, the Catholic Church celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its landmark proclamation *Nostra aetate*. As one of the key documents of the Second Vatican Council, *Nostra aetate* laid the foundation for contemporary Catholic interreligious engagement. Promulgated by Pope Paul VI, the document opened up multiple pathways to dialogue and identified the theological parameters within which these dialogues and collaborative projects could be undertaken. Referring specifically to non-Christian traditions, the document states that the Catholic Church "rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men."¹

By comparison, on February 15, 1978, the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints released an official statement entitled "God's Love for all Mankind." Despite its brevity, the document contained the most theologically inclusive language ever released in

A version of this paper was delivered at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship on November 11, 2016.

1. Second Vatican Council, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra aetate*, Oct. 28, 1965, sec. 2, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.

the form of an official Church statement or proclamation. “The great religious leaders of the world,” it said, “such as Mohammad, Confucius, and the Reformers, as well as philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God’s light. Moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals.” The paragraph that follows is particularly germane to this discussion: “Consistent with these truths, we believe that God has given and will give to all peoples sufficient knowledge to help them on their way to eternal salvation, either in this life or the life to come.”²

This paper seeks to engage the implications of these ideas through the comparative exploration of Catholic and Mormon thought. I will do this within the field of study known as the “theology of religions.” Broadly speaking, this field addresses theological questions that arise *between* faiths (as contrasted with questions arise *within* a faith community). As theologian Mark Heim describes it, those working in the field are often “driven by concern for religious diversity as an intellectual and perhaps apologetic problem.” In its simplified form, he asks: “How can Christians account for the existence, the power and the virtues of other religious traditions?”³ One may enter this discussion from many angles, but Catholic theology provides an especially helpful comparison

2. “Statement of the First Presidency regarding God’s Love for All Mankind,” Feb. 15, 1978.

3. S. Mark Heim, “The Shifting Significance of Theologies of Religious Pluralism,” in *Understanding Religious Pluralism: Perspectives from Religious Studies and Theology*, edited by Peter C. Phan and Jonathan S. Ray (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 243. See also Gavin D’Costa, “Theology of Religions,” in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology Since 1918*, 3rd ed., edited by David F. Ford (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 626–44, and Catherine Cornille, “Soteriological Agnosticism and the Future of Catholic Theology of Interreligious Dialogue,” in *The Past, Present, and Future of Theologies of Interreligious Dialogue*, edited by Terrence Merrigan and John Friday (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 201–15.

for drawing distinctions and clarifying the issues at stake in thinking about the diversity of religions from an LDS perspective.

Among the overarching aims of Vatican II was to “renew” the Catholic Church and reassert its relevance in the modern world. Pope John XXIII described the proceedings of the council as an effort to “throw open the windows of the Church and let the fresh air of the Spirit blow through.”⁴ Recognizing the inadequacies of traditional Catholic teaching on the subject, many bishops and theologians were anxious to rearticulate the work of God outside the confines of the visible Catholic Church. From their perspective, the quality and depth of devotion found in a variety of religious traditions necessitated a more inclusive theology.

Another key document, *Lumen gentium*, offered a more expansive treatment of the Church and its function in relation to non-Christians. “Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience.”⁵ Among the more knotty issues with which the document grappled was the longstanding theological tenet known as *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (which translates as “outside the Church there is no salvation”). This idea can be traced to the third century and was employed in response to a variety of encounters across the centuries. Pope Innocent III put the matter succinctly in 1208: “We believe in our hearts and confess with our lips that there is one church, not that of heretics, but the holy Roman Catholic and apostolic church, outside of which we believe no one can be saved.” Pope Pius IX followed

4. Quoted in James Rudin, *Cushing, Spellman, O'Connor: The Surprising Story of How Three American Cardinals Transformed Catholic-Jewish Relations* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2012), 84.

5. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*, Nov. 21, 1964, sec. 16, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

suit in 1854: “we must hold it as of faith that no one can be saved outside the Apostolic Roman Church: that this is the only ark of salvation . . . that anyone who does not enter this will perish in the flood.”⁶

However, by the time Vatican II rolled around, the stage had been set to settle widely divergent accounts of this dogma. How did the council deal with it? It concluded that the traditional understanding of this tenet could no longer be maintained. Though dogmas of the Church are said to be unchanging, the way they are expressed can take different forms. “[I]t sometimes happens that some dogmatic truth is first expressed incompletely (but not falsely), and at a later date, when considered in a broader context of faith or human knowledge, it receives a fuller and more perfect human expression.”⁷ Such was the case with *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. It wasn’t that the Church abandoned the dogma; rather, they refined the concept of the Church to include those who are *in* the grace of God, but yet who remain unbaptized. “We have to distinguish between the *soul* of the church, which consists of the invisible society of all the souls that are actually in the state of grace and a right to salvation, and the *body* of the church, which consists in the visible society of Christians under the authority of the Pope.”⁸

6. Pope Pius IX, *Singulari Quadam* (1854). Both statements are found in Francis A. Sullivan S.J., *Salvation Outside the Church?: Tracing the History of the Catholic Response*, reprint edition (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), 5–6. *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* had been expressed in a number of decrees and definitions across the centuries. For example, this dogma was reaffirmed in the Fourth Lateran Council and later in the councils of Florence and Trent.

7. Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Declaration: In Defense of the Catholic Doctrine Against Certain Errors of the Present Day*, June 24, 1973, sec. 5, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19730705_mysterium-ecclesiae_en.html.

8. Auguste Castelein, *Le rigorisme, le nombre des élus, et la doctrine du salut*. See Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church?*, 126. See also Emile Mersch S.J., *The Theology of the Mystical Body*, translated by Cyril Vollert (St. Louis: Herder, 1951).

Theologians have also utilized the distinction between the “Church visible” and the “Church invisible” to flesh this out. Traditionally, the Church invisible had referred to a *subset* of those who are baptized into the visible, institutional Church. Yet both before and after Vatican II, theologians were working to extend the reach of the Church to include those with the right kinds of desires. “God, in His infinite mercy,” wrote the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, willed that “salvation can, in certain circumstances, be obtained when the helps are used only in desire or longing. To gain eternal salvation it is not always required that a person be incorporated in reality (*reapse*) as a member of the Church, but it is required that he belong to it at least in desire and longing (*voto et desiderio*).”⁹ Those within God’s grace would be part of the mystical body of Christ known only to God.

Thus, the position embraced by the council has often been categorized as an *inclusivist* approach to the theology of religions.¹⁰ Though a person may be saved outside the confines of the institutional Church, the source and goal of that fulfillment remains the triune Christian

9. Letter of the Holy Office to Archbishop Cushing, Aug. 8, 1949, published in *American Ecclesiastical Review* CXXVII (October 1952): 307–11.

10. Inclusivism is often identified as a middle position between *exclusivism* and *pluralism*. In a Christian context, exclusivism defends the position that salvation is only attainable within the confines of the visible Church. Theologian Hendrick Kraemer argued, for example, that religious tenets and dogmas cannot “be taken one by one as independent items of religious life” that “can arbitrarily be compared with, and somehow related to, and grafted upon, the similar item in other religions” (*The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* [New York: Harper, 1938], 135). Other terms in this category include *particularism* and *restrictivism*. Pluralism is the position that salvation can be accomplished through multiple religions. A well-known proponent of this view was John Hick, who argued that each of the great world religions “constitutes a valid context of salvation/liberation; but none constitutes the one and only such context.” See John Hick, “The Philosophy of World Religions,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 37, no. 2 (1984): 231, and *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989).

God. Since Vatican II, there has been vigorous debate regarding the appropriate implications of *Nostra aetate*. Some progressively leaning theologians began to characterize the Catholic Church as existing *alongside* other faith traditions as one path to salvation. In response, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (something akin to the LDS Correlation Committee) published *Dominus Iesus* to reel in positions they viewed as too relativistic and too inclined to diminish the unique role of Jesus Christ and the Church. “The Church’s constant missionary proclamation is endangered today by relativistic theories which seek to justify religious pluralism.” Any theory that maintains that “the limited, incomplete, or imperfect character of the revelation of Jesus Christ, which would be complementary to that found in other religions, is contrary to the Church’s faith.”¹¹ These issues have received renewed interest of late in recent years as Pope Francis continues his efforts to extend Catholicism’s reach.

Mormonism

Having identified key features of Catholic theology on these questions, we can address distinctions on the work of God outside the confines of the LDS Church. From the earliest days of Joseph Smith’s revelations, Mormonism has maintained a very capacious understanding of salvation. God not only desires the salvation of all but established the conditions whereby (nearly) all of his children would be resurrected and occupy a degree of glory. This position can usefully be described as *soft universalism* (“universal” because it applies to all—or nearly all—and “soft” because it does not imply that all will return to the presence of God). Though all will be *saved* by virtue of being resurrected, not all

11. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church, *Dominus Iesus*, Aug. 6, 2000, sec. 6, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html.

will be *exalted*—the highest station in Smith’s richly graded heaven. In his 1832 vision, Smith describes a condition in which occupants of the lower degrees (or “kingdoms”) “shall be servants of the Most High; but where God and Christ dwell they cannot come, *worlds without end*.”¹² This clause has been traditionally understood to imply that, once assigned, there will be no opportunity for progression between the kingdoms.

Christian Universalism has been generally understood as the position that “all intelligent beings” will ultimately be saved by the grace of God.¹³ Its legacy begins with the writings of Origen, who taught that since God desires to bring all souls back to himself, his purposes will eventually be accomplished beyond this life. Origen’s teachings were famously condemned by later councils, and universalism was thus viewed with wide suspicion until its revival in seventeenth-century England. By the time of Joseph Smith’s 1832 vision in which he describes three degrees of glory, debates over universalism had swept across the American theological landscape. Traditional Calvinism taught that the elect of God are predestined to salvation, with all others to be confined to an everlasting hell. Universalists, on the other hand, were preaching, with increasing success, that limiting grace “to the narrow span of this life” was opposed to both “reason and equity.”¹⁴

12. Doctrine and Covenants 76:112. This 1832 revelation was called simply “The Vision” in the early days of the Mormonism. Several followers of Smith reported their initial discomfort with the inclusiveness of its teachings.

13. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. rev., edited by F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 705. The more technical term for this position is *Apocatastasis* (ἀποκατάστασις).

14. Paul Dean, *Course of Lectures in Defence of the Final Restoration* (Boston: Edwin M. Stone, 1832), 43. Dean was the minister of the First Universalist Church of Boston. See Peter J. Thuesen, *Predestination: The American Career of a Contentious Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) and Ann Lee Bressler, *The Universalist Movement in America, 1770–1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

A recurrent theme in arguments against Universalism is the idea that embracing the position leads to spiritual complacency—and Mormonism is no exception in this regard. One of the foremost villains in the Book of Mormon narrative is Nehor, whose universalist teachings are associated with subversion, licentiousness, and greed. In his legendary 1980 address, Bruce R. McConkie inveighed against kingdom progression, characterizing it as one of the “seven deadly heresies” of Mormonism. Employing imagery reminiscent of the Book of Mormon, McConkie declares that the doctrine “lulls [one] into a state of carnal security” and “lets people live a life of sin here and now with the hope that they will be saved eventually.”¹⁵

Yet despite these considerations, the issue has neither been universally held nor has it been established as a fully settled point of doctrine. Numerous sermons and publications emphasize the full implications of “eternal progression.” Wilford Woodruff, for example, taught that “If there was a point where man in his progression could not proceed any further, the very idea would throw a gloom over every intelligent creature.”¹⁶ This point is underscored by the fact that, on two separate occasions (1952 and 1965), the Church released official statements in which it declined to take an official position. The 1965 letter from the secretary of the LDS First Presidency stated that “[t]he Brethren direct me to say that the Church has never announced a definite doctrine upon this point. Some of the Brethren have held the view that it was possible in the course of progression to advance from one glory to another, invoking the principle of eternal progression; others of the Brethren have taken the opposite view.”¹⁷

15. Bruce R. McConkie, “The Seven Deadly Heresies” (Brigham Young University fireside address, June 1, 1980), https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/bruce-r-mcconkie_seven-deadly-heresies.

16. Wilford Woodruff, Dec. 6, 1857, *Journal of Discourses*, 6:120.

17. LDS Church, First Presidency letters, March 5, 1952 and December 17, 1965. See Gary James Bergera, “Grey Matters,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15, no. 1 (1982): 181–82.

In either case, every person is said to be given an opportunity to receive the gospel—whether in this life or the next. The dynamic of preaching and conversion extends to the afterlife and will eventually reach those “who have never heard.” This has been a remarkable feature of Mormon theology given the challenges other traditions have faced. There is, for example, an active debate in Evangelical circles regarding the appropriateness of what they call “post-mortem evangelism.” As Richard Mouw puts it, LDS teachings offer “more hope than is typical of traditional Christianity for those who have not accepted the claim of the gospel in this life.” He is in a good position to judge given both his Calvinist leanings and his longstanding commitment to Evangelical–Mormon dialogue.¹⁸

I would submit, however, that questions regarding those outside the faith do not end here. Though post-mortem evangelism goes a long way toward answering questions regarding the justice of God, it does not adequately address the purpose of *this life* for the 99.9 percent of God’s children who have lived and died outside the context of gospel teachings. Is there a theologically *adequate* way to account for the lives of the seventh-century Buddhist peasant or the pre-colonial Zulu or the third-century Coptic Christian monk?¹⁹

18. Richard J. Mouw, “Mormons and Interfaith Relations,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Mormonism*, edited by Terryl L. Givens and Philip L. Barlow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 629. See also Mouw, *Talking with Mormons: An Invitation to Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2012); John Sanders, “Those Who Have Never Heard: A Survey of the Major Positions,” in *Salvation in Christ: Comparative Christian Views*, edited by Roger R. Keller and Robert L. Millet (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2005), 299–325; and John Sanders, *No Other Name: An Investigation into the Destiny of the Unevangelized* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1992).

19. See Eugene England, “Becoming a World Religion: Blacks, the Poor—All of Us,” *Sunstone* 21, no. 2 (July 1998): 49–60; David L. Paulsen, “The Redemption of the Dead: A Latter-day Saint Perspective on the Fate of the Unevangelized,” in *Salvation in Christ: Comparative Christian Views*, edited by Roger R. Keller and Robert L. Millet (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University,

This question invites a deeper examination into the role of mortal life—insofar as it serves as the essential condition for growth and development toward exaltation. Important among these is the necessity of gaining of a body and experiencing the freedom and contingencies that attend human life. The challenge lies in offering an account of mortality that moves beyond these universally shared conditions and addresses the vast array of human experiences across cultures.

For example, the idea is often expressed that an important purpose of life is to learn faith. However, if only a minute portion of God's children are able to exercise genuine faith while in mortality, then this purpose does not obtain for them.²⁰ A similar consideration applies to keeping the commandments. For the ninety-nine percent of those who have not been explicitly aware of the commandments, this purpose would not obtain for them either. This all goes toward the point that the more specifically one describes the purpose of life in relation to Church teachings, the less applicable it becomes outside the Church. But there are theological dangers on both sides. The more inclusive the theology, the less relevant the Church becomes. The less inclusive the theology, the more solipsistic the Church becomes.

This leads us to consider ways in which the criteria for success in mortality might be expanded and highlighted without losing vitality and relevance. How much inclusivism can Mormon theology accommodate? What forms could it take? As we noted above, the 1978 statement refers to “moral truths” received by the great religious teachers that led to “higher levels of understanding.” In the current literature of the LDS Church, this connects closely to the discourse surrounding the Light

2005), 263–297; and Sheila Taylor, “The Hope for Universal Salvation,” *Element: A Journal of Mormon Philosophy and Theology* 2, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 39–54.

20. LDS theology has long maintained that in order for faith to be genuine, it must be related to a true object. Among the more oft-quoted scriptures in Mormonism is the dictum that faith is to “hope for things which are not seen, which are true” (Alma 32:21).

of Christ, described as “the divine energy, power, or influence that proceeds from God . . . and which influences people for good and prepares them to receive the Holy Ghost.”²¹ Now in this case, the extent to which people act in ways consistent with the Golden Rule or other generalized moral principles, they are said to have a “portion of God’s light.” So in addition to gaining a body, living in accordance with moral principles is understood to be another critical feature of mortality. However, the Light of Christ is often described in terms lacking in specificity relative to the central principles of the LDS gospel—and the extent to which they are connected to the purpose of mortality. If this is so, questions still remain regarding our ninety-nine percent.

Spiritual Progression

Swirling in the background thus far have been questions regarding the features of religious traditions that are essential in mediating salvation. I will examine three candidates: 1) propositional belief, 2) ritual performance, and 3) virtue acquisition. Propositional belief has to do with the cognitive dimensions of religious life. There are certain beliefs that are said to be true of a religion and others that are said to be false (e.g., that Jesus is Lord or that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God). Ritual performance has to do with specific actions such as baptism, confirmation, communion, or temple marriage. Christian denominations differ regarding the extent to which these rituals need to be performed for their effects to be realized. Finally, we come to virtue acquisition. In an LDS context, this is closely tied to the idea of eternal progression. Central to the plan of redemption is God’s effort to create the conditions whereby human souls can progress from a rudimentary and immature state to “becoming like God.” A superb example can be found in Joseph Smith’s

21. “Light of Christ,” Gospel Topics, <https://www.lds.org/topics/light-of-christ?lang=eng>, accessed Apr. 8, 2018. The Light of Christ has served as a critical form of *general* revelation in LDS thought.

King Follett Sermon: “Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation.”²²

Latter-day Saints are committed in various ways to each of these three areas. There are propositional, ritual, and virtue-building dimensions to the faith. But our question involves which of these is the most vital link to the other traditions. Around which of these could Latter-day Saints could build a theology of religions? I believe we can dispense with propositional belief in short order because we know how few people receive the opportunity to hear the propositional teachings of the gospel and are able to accept or reject them. Ritual practice lies in much the same boat. Catholicism, as we observed, affirms the necessity of baptism but conceptualizes it such that it can be effective in the absence of the physical ritual. Latter-day Saints, by contrast, maintain the necessity of ritual performance but expand the conditions under which it occurs. Vicarious work for the dead is a central part of the Latter-day Saint plan of redemption and serves as the primary means through which Mormons defend the justice of God in the face of diversity and ignorance of the LDS gospel plan. However, both of these workarounds are indicative that ritual performance cannot be the critical link within mortal life.

This brings us to virtue acquisition, which I believe to be the most fruitful area from which to build an adequate theology of religions. From an LDS perspective, peoples of other religions do not possess the

22. Joseph Smith, King Follett Sermon, “7 April 1844 (2) (Sunday Afternoon),” in *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, edited by Lyndon W. Cook and Andrew F. Ehat, vol. 6 (Provo: Religious Studies Center, 1980), available at <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/words-joseph-smith-contemporary-accounts-nauvoo-discourses-prophet-joseph/1844/7-april-0>. See also Stan Larson, “The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text,” *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (1978): 8.

propositional content of the gospel, and they do not possess efficacious rituals. In the absence of these other features, however, they do possess many of the virtues necessary for salvation, and in some cases, I would argue, possess them to a greater degree than many Latter-day Saints. This position may fairly be characterized as a form of virtue inclusivism. On this account, exaltation is being effected in a variety of religious traditions through the cultivation of virtues necessary to become like God. On this account, propositional belief and ritual practice are secondary features that may be added at some later point. Virtue inclusivism would allow Latter-day Saints to honor other religions such that we may stand in awe and reverence in the face of what God can achieve through diverse forms of religious life. Among the more challenging implications of this approach lies the idea that there are equally efficacious forms of spiritual life across religious traditions—and by “efficacious” I mean that which positively leads human beings toward exaltation.

I understand this to be an extension of what Howard W. Hunter said in his powerful address entitled “The Gospel: A Global Faith”: “All men share an inheritance of divine light. God operates among his children in all nations, and those who seek God are entitled to further light and knowledge, regardless of their race, nationality, or cultural traditions.”²³ The LDS Church’s 2011 Mormon Newsroom commentary on divine revelation echoes this same sentiment: “In its broad meaning, revelation is divine guidance or inspiration; it is the communication of truth and knowledge from God to His children on earth, suited to their language and understanding.”²⁴ It has not gone unnoticed that the LDS Public Affairs Department has, of late, been fond of using Krister Stendahl’s three rules of religious understanding. The late dean of Harvard Divinity

23. Howard W. Hunter, “The Gospel—A Global Faith,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1991/10/the-gospel-a-global-faith?lang=eng>.

24. “Divine Revelation in Modern Times,” Mormon Newsroom, Dec. 12, 2011, <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/divine-revelation-modern-times> (*italics mine*).

School said that when trying to understand another religion, 1) you should ask the adherents of that religion and not its enemies, 2) don't compare your best to their worst, and 3) leave room for "holy envy."²⁵ If there truly are enviable features to be found in other religions, then one could argue that there are ways of being that are efficacious in ways not found in one's own tradition.

Among my favorites from Joseph Smith is his 1842 editorial for the *Times and Seasons*. Though the piece is titled "Baptism for the Dead," he deals with a variety of theological issues related to the providence and justice of God. It is quoted often in Church curriculum and fits nicely in relation to Catholic thought and its implications:

[God] is a wise Lawgiver, and will judge all men, not according to the narrow, contracted notions of men, but, "according to the deeds done in the body whether they be good or evil," or whether these deeds were done in England, America, Spain, Turkey, or India. He will judge them, "not according to what they have not, but according to what they have," . . . He will award judgment or mercy to all nations according to their several deserts, their means of obtaining intelligence, the laws by which they are governed, the facilities afforded them of obtaining correct information, and His inscrutable designs in relation to the human family."²⁶

Smith's editorial may, I believe, be usefully compared to statements in *Lumen gentium* that we quoted above.

Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the

25. See Krister Stendahl, "The Art of Religious Conversation," *Books and Religion* 19, no. 1 (1992): 13–44.

26. *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 12, Apr. 15, 1842, 759, The Joseph Smith Papers, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/times-and-seasons-15-april-1842/9>.

Church as a preparation for the Gospel. She knows that it is given by Him who enlightens all men so that they may finally have life.²⁷

Both Catholics and Latter-day Saints advocate a form of *fulfillment inclusivism*. Whatever work God is doing in the lives of Buddhists, Sikhs, Muslims, or Jews, it is to be seen as a preparation for the full gospel as mediated in their respective ecclesiastical communities. However, fulfillment inclusivism may be perfectly consistent with the form of *virtue inclusivism* described above. On this view, even if one maintains that other traditions are incomplete in doctrinal formulation or ritual performance, one can *also* maintain that other traditions are equally—and in some case more—efficacious in key aspects of eternal progression.

Finally, a concluding word is in order regarding Joseph Smith's 1836 vision of the celestial kingdom, wherein he describes the presence of Abraham; Adam; his mother, Lucy Mack Smith; and his brother, Alvin, who had died of illness in 1823. Regarding the presence of Alvin, Smith reports that he "marveled how it was that he had obtained an inheritance in that kingdom" given that he "had not been baptized for the remission of sins." The answer comes in the following verse wherein Smith records "the voice of the Lord" saying:

All who have died without a knowledge of this gospel, *who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry*, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; Also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom.²⁸

27. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, sec. 16.

28. Doctrine and Covenants 137:7–8 (italics mine). The death of Alvin was a tragic event for the Smith family and had an especially profound impact on Joseph. Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph's mother, reports, for example, the family's astonishment when the local Presbyterian minister "intimated very strongly that he had gone to hell, for Alvin was not a church member" (J. S. Peterson interview with William Smith, 1893, *Zion's Ensign*, Jan. 13, 1894, reprinted in *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, Feb. 26, 1894, 133).

From a theological standpoint, these seventy-six words carry profound significance. If taken in straightforward fashion, this situation would apply to many of our ninety-nine percent. It is an exceptionally accommodating pathway for those outside the reach of LDS gospel teaching and ordinances. However, it may also present a challenge given our form of virtue inclusivism. The revelation could be read to imply that God must have knowledge of every “counterfactual of freedom”—i.e., knowledge of every action that would have occurred if a different choice had been made by a person in any given situation.

There has been a longstanding debate in philosophical theology regarding the usefulness of this type of divine knowledge—commonly referred to as “middle knowledge.”²⁹ Some theologians employ this category as a way of addressing the justice of God. In Evangelical circles, for example, Donald Lake argues that “God knows who would, under ideal circumstances, believe the gospel, and on the basis of his foreknowledge, applies that gospel even if the person never hears the gospel during his lifetime.”³⁰ Others, however, have argued that middle knowledge is irrelevant with regard to divine judgment and justice. If God may award salvation based upon how a person would have acted

29. The term “middle knowledge” is attributed to the Spanish theologian Luis de Molina, who argued that there is a type of divine knowledge that lies between *natural knowledge* (God’s knowledge of all logical and metaphysically necessary truths) and *free knowledge* (God’s knowledge of contingent truths that are dependent on his will). See E. Dekker, *Middle Knowledge—Studies in Philosophical Theology* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000); Thomas P. Flint, *Divine Providence: The Molinist Account* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998); William Lane Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom—The Coherence of Theism: Omniscience* (New York: Brill Academic, 1991); and David Basinger, “Middle Knowledge and Classical Christian Thought,” *Religious Studies* 22, nos. 3–4 (1986): 407–22. For an informative account of middle knowledge in LDS thought, see Blake T. Ostler, *Exploring Mormon Thought: The Attributes of God*, vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2001), 137–86.

30. Donald Lake, “He Died for All: The Universal Dimensions of the Atonement,” in *Grace Unlimited*, edited by Clark H. Pinnock (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 1999), 43.

rather than how they actually acted, how far might this situation extend? Would it not ultimately render actual choices irrelevant? For our purposes, if virtue inclusivism is correct—and experience is necessary for eternal progression—then attaining exaltation based on counterfactual knowledge would appear to eliminate the need for actual choices in a contingent world.

Another intriguing feature of Smith's revelation is the passage immediately following the quotation above: "For I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts."³¹ Contemporary LDS discourse places particular emphasis on this clause and tends to steer clear of the implications of counterfactual knowledge. Church curriculum, rather, inclines toward connecting this revelation to receiving the gospel in the afterlife. "The true desire of our heart determines our future. If we have had the opportunity to hear the gospel, our obedience to it demonstrates our true desire. If not, our desire will determine whether we accept it when we are given the opportunity, either in this life or the spirit world. All whose hearts are right will receive and live the gospel whenever they have the opportunity."³² This returns us to the issues raised above in our discussion of the Catholic sacrament of baptism. "Every man who is ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and of his Church, but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it, can be saved. It may be supposed that such persons would have desired Baptism explicitly if they had known its necessity."³³

31. Doctrine and Covenants 137:9.

32. Church Educational System, *Doctrine and Covenants Study Manual*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001), 355.

33. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed., 1260, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c1a1.htm. There has been considerable disputation regarding the theological merits of "baptism by implicit desire." See Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol. 14, translated by David Morland, O.S.B. (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1983) and Gavin D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions: Disputed Questions in the Theology of Religions* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 19–23.

Though both traditions leave room for debate regarding the scope and application of their inclusive theologies, Catholicism and Mormonism share important sensibilities that deserve careful and respectful attention. Though religious diversity remains among the most challenging areas of theological studies, there is a compelling need to engage these questions with both candor and humility. In doing so, we may well find that God's light comes in healthier portions than we expected.

"BEHOLD, OTHER SCRIPTURES I WOULD THAT YE SHOULD WRITE": MALACHI IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

Colby Townsend

The years following the return of the Jewish captives from Babylon were filled with tension. While literal walls were being built around Jerusalem to keep the city safe, pious Jewish leaders were constructing religious walls around the Jewish faith to ensure that YHWH would never again become angry enough to allow his holy city to be destroyed. It was during this period that an unknown author, known later as "Malachi," produced the final book of the *Nevi'im* or "Prophets." Written to correct what the author viewed as improper religious and social behavior, Malachi calls for the post-exilic Jewish community—particularly the priests—to see the exile as a divine punishment for failing to honor their sacred covenant with YHWH and to correct their ways.

Despite its significance as the final book of the Christian Old Testament, the New Testament shows no explicit knowledge of the book of Malachi. In the case of the Book of Mormon¹ this is true up until

I am grateful to several friends, family members, and professors who have read and engaged with this essay since I originally wrote it for the undergraduate course, "The Book of Mormon as Literature," taught by David Bokovoy at the University of Utah during the fall 2013 semester. I thank the following for their comments, encouragement, and helping me to rethink portions of this paper: David Bokovoy, Joshua Lipman, Kelsey Townsend, Christian Larsen, Bradley Parker, Margaret Toscano, and Robin Jensen.

1. Throughout this study I will use the 1830 edition as the base text of the Book of Mormon unless otherwise noted, and I am dependent on the one provided by the Joseph Smith Papers Project, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/book-of-mormon-1830/1>. I will also note variants between the 1830

3 Nephi 24 with the formal citation of Malachi by Jesus when he visits the Nephites at the temple in Bountiful. The fact that the Book of Mormon shows no direct knowledge of the text of Malachi until 3 Nephi 24 is intriguing because there are many quotations, allusions, and echoes² throughout the text prior to this part of the book.³ This is interesting for many reasons. First, with this in mind, students of the Book of Mormon can study those places in the text where Malachi is used and analyze them through source-critical means to answer the following questions: (1) How does the Book of Mormon utilize a text from the Bible, in this case the book of Malachi? (2) How is the text similar and how is it different? (3) Are there any significant differences between the two? Second, the use of Malachi in the Book of Mormon is dependent solely on the King James Version of the Bible, which will be demonstrated below. This has implications for understanding how the Book of Mormon came to be written. Third, the sections where the Book of Mormon uses the text of Malachi can substantially help us obtain a better grasp of the composition date of those sections in the Book of Mormon. They provide evidence against a “tight control” translation theory,⁴ which has been offered by a number of scholars on the translation process of the Book of Mormon.

and the original (O) and printer’s (P) manuscripts. For the printer’s manuscript I have relied on Royal Skousen and Robin Scott Jensen, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations Volume 3: The Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian’s Press, 2015).

2. Malachi has influenced at least thirty-nine verses in the Book of Mormon directly, some more substantially than others. These verses together are only a preliminary list at the present moment and will be expanded upon in my future work: 1 Nephi 2:23; 3:7; 11:27; 14:17; 17:13; 22:15, 24; 2 Nephi 25:13; 26:4, 6, 9; 45:13a, 14a; Alma 45:14; 3 Nephi 24:1–18; 25:1–6; Ether 9:22.

3. Andrew E. Hill makes a similar statement about the use of Malachi in the New Testament in *Malachi: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 25D (New York: Doubleday Publishing, 1998), 84.

4. The main proponent of this theory is Royal Skousen, the leading text critic of the Book of Mormon. See his “How Joseph Smith Translated the Book of

Traditionally, Malachi was the last prophet to write in the biblical canon (although historically it was the book of Daniel),⁵ and the text and ministry of the prophet are generally dated to the first half of the fifth century BCE, anywhere from 500 to 450 BCE.⁶ Scholars agree that it is composed of six oracles, and that the structure of each oracle is, in Andrew Hill's words, "a prophetic declaration followed by the hypothetical audience rebuttal and concluding with the prophet's refutation." While there is a scholarly consensus about the six oracles, Hill notes that

Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, no. 1 (1998): 22–31 and his essay, of which the former is an updated, shorter version, "Translating the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript," in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins*, edited by Noel B. Reynolds (Provo: FARMS, 1997), 61–93.

5. Daniel was written around the 160s BCE. See John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 38; Norman W. Porteous, *Daniel: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), 13; and Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, "The Book of Daniel," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, edited by Leander E. Keck (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1996), 7:20–32, who seems to purposefully skirt the dating of the text of the book of Daniel. While he utilizes John Joseph Collins's earlier *The Apocalyptic Vision of the Book of Daniel*, Harvard Semitic Monographs 16 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977) to argue for the dating of the "traditions," he never uses Collins's full commentary on Daniel, which explicitly dates the text later.

6. See Hill, *Malachi*, 80–84, who assigns 500 BCE; W. Neil, "Malachi," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by George A. Buttrick (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1962), 3:229, who assigns 460–450 BCE; John Carmody, Denise Lardner Carmody, and Robert L. Cohn, *Exploring the Hebrew Bible* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1988), 257, who assign 500–450 BCE; David Noel Freedman, et al., *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 848, who offer different dates ranging from ca. 605–550 BCE, 515–456 BCE, or into the late Persian period, but these earlier dates are highly unlikely because of Malachi's affinities with other post-exilic texts; and Michael D. Coogan, *The Old Testament: A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 436, who says "a date in the fifth century BCE is likely."

“the same cannot be said for the structure of the entire book itself.”⁷ Although almost all scholars agree that there are six oracles or units in the text,⁸ they do not agree on whether or not one can assign firm structures within each of these units.⁹

Malachi has suffered little from additions or alterations to the text, as far as historical- and text-critical methods can discern. Scholars have expressed doubts concerning the authenticity of some of the different sections of the book of Malachi, but the general consensus is that only Malachi 2:11–12 and 4:4–6 are thought to be non-genuine.¹⁰ There have been disagreements over whether or not the superscription at 1:1, the “universalist” intrusion at 1:11–14, the shift to third person narrative at 3:1–4, or the smoothing over of 2:15–16 are at all original to the text.¹¹ It is possible that any of these are correct. It appears that at least ten of the thirty-nine verses in the Book of Mormon are influenced by two of the pericopes from Malachi that may or may not be original to the book. These sections support my purposes here but ultimately they are not technically necessary to consider for the present investigation since the entire book of Malachi post-dates Lehi and Nephi in Jerusalem and therefore would not have been available to the Nephites in any form.

Intertextuality and Textual Dependence

In order to fully describe the relationship between the text of the Book of Mormon and Malachi, I will briefly describe current methods in biblical

7. Hill, *Malachi*, 26.

8. See Carmody, et al., *Exploring the Hebrew Bible*, 257. They state that the “traditional division of the brief text is into eight sections,” citing Eric M. Meyers, “Malachi, the Book of,” in Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., *Harper’s Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 598.

9. See Hill’s discussion of the differing views in Hill, *Malachi*, 26.

10. *Ibid.*, 19.

11. *Ibid.*, 19–20.

criticism used to establish dependence and label the relationship of parallel texts. There have been numerous studies over the last three decades that have reviewed how the books in the Hebrew Bible influenced one another,¹² how the books in the Hebrew Bible influenced later Jewish apocryphal and pseudepigraphic texts,¹³ how the Septuagint (i.e., the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) influenced the New Testament,¹⁴ how the books of the New Testament influenced one another,¹⁵ and how

12. For example, see John E. Harvey, *Retelling the Torah: The Deuteronomistic Historian's Use of Tetrateuchal Narratives*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 403 (London: T&T Clark International, 2004); Michael A. Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy: Ezekiel's Use of the Holiness Code*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 507 (New York: T&T Clark, 2009); G. Brooke Lester, *Daniel Evokes Isaiah: Allusive Characterization of Foreign Rule in the Hebrew–Aramaic Book of Daniel*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 606 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); and Jeffrey Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah: Literary Revision in Deuteronomy and the Holiness Legislation*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 52 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

13. See John R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism: From Sirach to 2 Baruch*, Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 1 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988); G. W. E. Nickelsburg, “The Bible Rewritten and Expanded,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*, edited by Michael E. Stone, *Compendia rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*, section 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 89–156; and Devorah Dimant, “Use and Interpretation of Mikra in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha,” in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, edited by Martin Jan Mulder and Harry Sysling, *Compendia rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*, section 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 379–419.

14. See Steve Moyise, *Evoking Scripture: Seeing the Old Testament in the New* (London: T&T Clark, 2008) and Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders, *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 148 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

15. See Anne M. O’Leary, *Matthew’s Judaization of Mark: Examined in the Context of the Use of Sources in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, Library of New Testament

the New Testament influenced the first few centuries of Christian thought and beyond.¹⁶ These studies have created a storehouse of information on how to approach the methodological questions of availability and influence of one author on another.

There are two classic texts on inner-biblical exegesis and intertextuality in this field. Michael Fishbane's study *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*¹⁷ provides an exhaustive investigation of how the texts of the Hebrew Bible interpreted and expanded one another prior to the formation of the Hebrew canon. He presents evidence of exegesis similar to the later development of interpretation in rabbinic literature within the texts of the Hebrew Bible themselves. Although his study is exhaustive and has moved forward the field of inner-biblical exegesis, the terms that he uses are often difficult to follow for both lay and academic readers. In order to keep this study as clear as possible, I will therefore rely more on a second classical text, Richard Hays's *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*,¹⁸ and a more recent study by Christopher Beetham,¹⁹ for describing the relationships that I have found between the Book of Mormon and the King James Version text of Malachi.

Studies 323 (London: T&T Clark, 2006).

16. For example, see Carroll D. Osburn, *The Text of the Apostolos in Epiphanius of Salamis*, New Testament in the Greek Fathers, no. 6 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004) and Jean-Francois Racine, *The Text of Matthew in the Writings of Basil of Caesarea*, New Testament in the Greek Fathers, no. 5 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004).

17. Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

18. Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989).

19. Christopher A. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians*, Biblical Interpretation Series 96 (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

Hays focuses primarily on describing the phenomenon of literary echo²⁰ and therefore leaves other types of relationships, such as quotations, allusions, and parallels, between texts alone. Beetham expounds on Hays's descriptions and comes up with a more complete list. These criteria are central to this study and, as defined by Beetham, they are the following:

Quotation: An intentional, explicit, verbatim or near verbatim citation of a former text of six or more words in length. A *formal* quotation is a quotation accompanied by an introductory marker, or *quotation formula*; an *informal* quotation lacks such a marker.²¹

Allusion: A literary device intentionally employed by an author to point a reader back to a single identifiable source, of which one or more components must be remembered and brought forward into the new context in order for the alluding text to be understood fully. An allusion is less explicit than a *quotation*, but more explicit than an echo. In this study, a linear marker of five words or less is considered to be an allusion.²²

Echo: A subtle, literary mode of reference that is not intended for public recognition yet derives from a specific predecessor. An author's wording may echo the precursor consciously or unconsciously and/or contextually or non-contextually.²³

Although Nicholas Frederick has seen the need to alter Beetham's definitions for his dissertation,²⁴ for my present purposes Beetham's definitions

20. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 29–32.

21. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 17.

22. *Ibid.*, 20.

23. *Ibid.*, 24.

24. Nicholas Frederick, "Line Within Line: An Intertextual Analysis of Mormon Scripture and the Prologue of the Gospel of John" (PhD diss., Claremont Graduate University, 2013), 12–13. See also his more recent monograph, Nicholas J. Frederick, *The Bible, Mormon Scripture, and the Rhetoric of Allusivity*, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press Mormon Studies Series (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2016).

capture a simple and concise way of describing the phenomenon of intertextuality and textual dependence as I see it occurring in the Book of Mormon's use of the Bible, and he tends to capture many of the nuances noted in other studies on intertextuality and textual dependence in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament.²⁵

The Presence of Malachi in the Book of Mormon

I will begin by examining the claim that the Book of Mormon is dependent on the King James Version of Malachi through comparing the two source- and text-critically. I will then offer ways of interpreting the text's internal claims in light of those findings. This will allow me to focus on the major issues of having the King James Version not only in 3 Nephi, but also in 1 Nephi, 2 Nephi, Alma, and Ether. With this understanding, this paper will provide more examples of the influence of the King James Version on the Book of Mormon that can help us to better understand the book's message, composition, and nature as a literary text.

In his recent PhD dissertation, Nicholas Frederick described the presence of the King James Version in the Book of Mormon by stating that the King James language was invoked to lend biblical authenticity,

25. Many of the studies since Fishbane and Hays have been dependent on either of these two scholars, but more have followed Hays's terms than Fishbane's. There have been a number of studies that have challenged Hays's terminology and criteria, but even those studies use his research. See in particular Charlene McAfee Moss, *The Zechariah Tradition and the Gospel of Matthew*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 156 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 7–12; Marko Jauhiainen, *The Use of Zechariah in Revelation*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2, Reihe 199 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 18–36; Shiu-Lun Shum, *Paul's Use of Isaiah in Romans: A Comparative Study of Paul's Letter to the Romans and the Sibylline and Qumran Sectarian Texts*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2, Reihe 156 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 5–11; and Patricia Tull Willey, *Remember the Former Things: The Recollection of Previous Texts in Second Isaiah*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 161 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 81–84.

and that Joseph Smith was reliant on the King James Version for his translation. I agree with Frederick. The fact is that King James Version texts are everywhere in the Book of Mormon. This needs to be examined in more detail to fully appreciate and understand the Book of Mormon.²⁶ I will examine thirty-nine verses from the Book of Mormon to establish the extent of their dependence on the King James Version of Malachi. I will compare the King James Version of Malachi with the earliest versions of the Book of Mormon, mainly the printer's manuscript (P) and the first published edition (1830). The original manuscript is unfortunately not extant at 3 Nephi 24–25,²⁷ but I will utilize it for other verses where it is relevant.

I begin my comparison with a formal quotation from the King James Version of Malachi 4:1. The underlined text in all comparisons below indicate places of lexical correspondence between the Book of Mormon and the King James Version. The underlined phrases correspond only to Malachi and are found nowhere else in the King James Version unless otherwise noted. The breaks in the underlining are meant to point the reader to how the language is still similar between the two texts but with slight variation.

1 Nephi 22:15 = Malachi 4:1

BM: For behold, saith the prophet, that the time cometh speedily, that Satan shall have no more power over the hearts of the children of men: for the day soon cometh, that all the proud and they which do wickedly, shall be as stubble; and the day cometh that they must be burned.

KJV: For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

26. Frederick, "Line Within Line," 30.

27. The extant manuscript of O jumps from 3 Nephi 21:11 to 3 Nephi 26:3. Royal Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Extant Text* (Provo: FARMS, 2001), 524–25.

The entire verse of 1 Nephi 22:15 is dependent on Malachi 4:1. Although not named, the prophet Malachi is formally quoted with the use of the citation formula, “For behold, saith the prophet.” 1 Nephi 22:15 is dependent on the King James Version of Malachi for twenty-seven words. The parallel in Isaiah 47:14, noted by Brant Gardner in his commentary,²⁸ does not come close to matching 1 Nephi 22:15 the way Malachi 4:1 does here. This is consistent throughout the Book of Mormon when a passage of the Book of Mormon, Isaiah 47:14, and Malachi 4:1 are compared and contrasted. This can be seen in the following:

Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.²⁹

While there are similarities between Isaiah 47:14 and 1 Nephi 22:15, the Isaiah text does not include anything about “the proud,” those who “do wickedly,” the day that is coming, and Isaiah 47:14 also describes fire burning them up rather than saying the day will burn them like you find in Malachi 4:1 and 1 Nephi 22:15. A close comparison reveals the dependence of 1 Nephi 22:15, as well as several other passages in the Book of Mormon, is on Malachi 4:1 and not Isaiah 47:14. Even if Gardner’s view was accurate, it would still be problematic for the Book of Mormon historically, as Isaiah 47:14 would fall into those chapters of Isaiah (roughly 40–66, but the list also includes chapters 1, 13–14, 24–27, 34–35, and 36–39)³⁰ that were written either during or after the

28. Brant A. Gardner, *Second Witness: Analytical and Contextual Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Volume One: First Nephi* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2007), 411–12.

29. Isaiah 47:14 (KJV).

30. See Ulrich F. Berges, *The Book of Isaiah: Its Composition and Final Form*, Hebrew Bible Monographs 46 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2012); and David P. Wright, “Isaiah in the Book of Mormon: Or Joseph Smith in Isaiah,” in *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon*, edited by Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 157–234.

Babylonian exile and are therefore assigned to Deutero-Isaiah. As will be apparent as other verses are explored below, Gardner has the habit of connecting several verses in the Book of Mormon with Isaiah 47:14 where they are instead dependent on Malachi 4:1.

As noted above, Beetham defines a quotation as an intentional, explicit, and verbatim citation of a former text of at least six words or more, and a formal quotation is accompanied by a citation formula.³¹ In light of this criterion 1 Nephi 22:15 is formally quoting Malachi 4:1 by its use of the citation formula “saith the prophet” along with twenty-seven words from the source text. This is one of the most direct connections between the Book of Mormon and the King James Version of Malachi outside of 3 Nephi 24–25, but there are a handful of other formal quotations of the King James Version of Malachi in the Book of Mormon.

1 Nephi 22:23–24 = Malachi 4:1a, 2b³²

BM: 23 for the time speedily shall come, that all churches which are built up to get gain, and all they which are built up to get power over the flesh, and they which are built up to become popular in the eyes of the world, and they which seek the lusts of the flesh and the things of the world, and to do all manner of iniquity; yea, in fine, all they which belong to the kingdom of the Devil, it is they which need fear, and tremble, and quake; it is they which must be brought low in the dust; it is they which must be consumed as stubble; and this is according to the words of the prophet. 24 And the time cometh speedily, that the righteous must be led up as calves of the stall, and the Holy One of Israel must reign in dominion, and might, and power, and great glory.

KJV: 1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. 2 But unto you that fear my name

31. Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture*, 17.

32. Gardner does not mention these verses either, which could have possibly altered the way he saw the dependence in v. 15 of this chapter. See Gardner, *Second Witness*, 1:414.

shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

This passage in 1 Nephi 22:23–24 is very similar to that of the previous verse, 1 Nephi 22:15. This is not surprising when one realizes that verses 23–24 are only eight verses away from 22:15, and it appears that there is an extended use of Malachi 4 that subtly runs through the chapter. Along with the quotation formula, “this is according to the words of the prophet,” at the end of verse 23, the phrases that match up are collectively unique to Malachi in the King James Version. These four connections, along with the unique verbiage and context are only found in Malachi and the fact that verse 15 is also explicitly dependent on Malachi, make it certain that 1 Nephi 22:23–24 is dependent on Malachi 4:1a, 2b. According to the criteria explained in the introduction, 1 Nephi 22:23–24 formally quotes Malachi 4:1–2 due to the use of the citation formula and the unique language.

2 Nephi 26:4 = Malachi 4:1b³³

BM: 4 Wherefore, all they that are proud, and that do wickedly, the day that cometh shall burn them up saith the Lord of Hosts, for they shall be as stubble.

KJV: 1b . . . and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts.

This is very similar to the previous two passages. The dependence here is so strong it would be hard to deny that 2 Nephi 26:4 is not dependent on Malachi 4:1, especially considering how 2 Nephi 26:4 uses twenty-five words from the King James Version of Malachi. According to the standard of six or more words, this is an informal quotation, continued into the next verse. However, in a move that would disconnect this passage from Malachi, Gardner has argued that “Nephi purposefully alludes to Isaiah

33. Gardner does not mention the dependence of this verse on Malachi 4:1. See below for further explanation. See Gardner, *Second Witness*, 2:354.

47:14: ‘Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.’”³⁴

Brant Gardner and John Tvedtnes³⁵ have argued that 2 Nephi 26:4 is dependent on Isaiah 47:14 and other passages³⁶ in Isaiah, Obadiah, and Nahum, but not on Malachi 4:1 because “Malachi lived two centuries after Lehi’s departure from Jerusalem and could not have been known to the Nephites.”³⁷ It becomes clear when these verses are side by side, as they are above, that this explanation must be rejected. Just like the verses previously mentioned, the number of parallels between 2 Nephi 26:4 and Malachi 4:1 far outweigh the parallels found in Isaiah 47:14. This becomes even more clear given the connections between 2 Nephi 26:6b and Malachi 4:1.

2 Nephi 26:6b = Malachi 4:1³⁸

BM: 6b . . . and they shall be as stubble, and the day that cometh shall consume them, saith the Lord of Hosts.

KJV: 1 . . . and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts. . .

This verse continues the use of Malachi 4:1 in 2 Nephi 26:4 and is further evidence that this section of the Book of Mormon is dependent on Malachi 4. The similarities are the same in this verse in regards to

34. Gardner, *Second Witness*, 2:354.

35. John Tvedtnes, “Review of Wesley P. Walters, *The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Mormon*,” *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 4, no. 1 (1992): 223.

36. Tvedtnes points out that “the concept (and much of the wording) in Malachi 4:1 is found in Isaiah 5:24; 33:11; 47:14 (cf. Obadiah 1:18); and Nahum 1:10” (“Review of Wesley P. Walters,” 223).

37. *Ibid.*, 223.

38. Gardner notes that this may be a reference to Malachi 4:1. The inconsistent argumentation of dependence on Isaiah 47:14 and Malachi 4:1 in the Book of Mormon by Gardner is perplexing. See Gardner, *Second Witness*, 2:355.

verse 4 above, and the pronoun “they” is referring back to “they that are proud, and that do wickedly” in verse 4. Therefore, “they” is the equivalent of that part of Malachi 4:1. This entire section of the verse is dependent on Malachi 4:1 for its terminology and context, although the Book of Mormon updates a number of the details in between the verses of 2 Nephi 26:4–9. 2 Nephi 26:6b is dependent on the text of Malachi 4:1. Due to its use of nineteen words from the King James Version of Malachi, 2 Nephi 26:6 informally quotes Malachi 4:1.

2 Nephi 26:9 = Malachi 4:2³⁹

BM: 9 But the Son of righteousness shall appear unto them; and he shall heal them. . . .

KJV: 2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.

Continuing on from where 2 Nephi 26:6 left off, verse 9 picks up in Malachi 4:2. The Christianized view of the “Son” of righteousness, rather than the “Sun” of righteousness, is apparent here, as in other Restoration scriptures that make this change. In this verse, the “Son of righteousness” is “appearing” rather than arising. This is reminiscent of the use of “appeared” in the gospels of Mark and Luke in describing how when “Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to. . .” (Mark 16:9; cf. Luke 24:34). The author of 2 Nephi 26:9 has taken Malachi and updated it, interpreting it in view of these New Testament gospel narratives. The only part of the text that does not seem to match up as nicely here is “unto them” and “unto you that fear my name.” 2 Nephi 26:8 actually describes for us who these people are: “the righteous, that hearken unto the words of the Prophets, and destroy them not, but look forward unto Christ with steadfastness for the signs which are given, notwithstanding all persecutions.” It appears that even

39. Gardner argues for dependence here on Malachi 4:2. The way he discusses it will be reviewed below. See Gardner, *Second Witness*, 2:356–57.

the pronoun “them” is dependent on Malachi 4:2 because they are the righteous, those that “fear my name.”

Due to the use of ten words from the King James Version, 2 Nephi 26:9 informally quotes Malachi 4:2, but the entirety of 2 Nephi 26:4–9 should also be considered as a whole. Collectively, these verses are dependent on Malachi 4:1–2 for fifty-four words. These verses together comment on and expand the beginning of Malachi 4, blending the language and ideas from these verses with language and ideas from the New Testament⁴⁰ and other texts from the Hebrew Bible.⁴¹ While previous commentators like Gardner and Tvedtnes have attempted to take the focus away from the influence of Malachi 4 on this section of the Book of Mormon by pointing to some of these other connections, it is more methodologically sound to incorporate all of them together. Malachi 4:1–2 provides the framing for these Book of Mormon verses, while some of the other biblical texts provide the filler ideas and language all brought together and appropriated in a way similar to how Terryl Givens has noted bricolage in Smith’s work on the Book of Abraham.⁴²

40. Compare 2 Nephi 26:5 (“and they that kill the prophets”) and the sentiment found in the KJV only in the New Testament in Matthew 23:31 (“the children of them which killed the prophets”); Luke 11:47 (“the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them”); and 1 Thessalonians 2:15 (“Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets”).

41. Compare 2 Nephi 26:5 (“the depths of the earth shall swallow them up”) with Numbers 16:30, 34 (“the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up . . . Lest the earth swallow us up also”) and Exodus 15:12 (“the earth swallowed them”); and 2 Nephi 26:5 (“and mountains shall cover them”) with Hosea 10:8 (“they shall say to the mountains, Cover us”) and Luke 23:30 (“they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us”).

42. Terryl Givens shared this insight in a paper he presented on March 16, 2017 at a conference at Utah State University in Logan, Utah. The conference was called New Perspectives on Joseph Smith and Translation. Bricolage comes from the French anthropologist and ethnologist Claude Lévi-Strauss. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 21–35.

2 Nephi 25:13 = Malachi 4:2⁴³

BM: 13 . . . he shall rise from the dead, with healing in his wings. . . .

KJV: 2 . . . shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings. . . .

The dependence here is clear and does not need to be demonstrated any more than providing the parallel above. The addition of “from the dead,” making this about Jesus’ resurrection rather than about describing the sun rising in the sky as Malachi does, alters the context of the scripture. Also, the “Son of Righteousness,” as this phrase is usually rendered in the Book of Mormon, is absent in this passage. If we look to verse 12, we discover that the subject (“he”) is “the Only Begotten of the Father,” which is similar to how the other passages dependent on Malachi 4:2 in the Book of Mormon interpret that verse. Due to its use of seven words from the King James Version of Malachi, 2 Nephi 25:13 informally quotes Malachi 4:2.

1 Nephi 2:23 = Malachi 3:9⁴⁴

BM: 23 . . . that they rebel against me, I will curse them with a sore curse. . . .

KJV: 9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me. . . .

The phrase “I will curse them with a sore curse” is dependent on the King James Version of Malachi 3:9 in the phrase, “ye are cursed with a curse.” 1 Nephi 2:23 preserves the literal reading of the cognate accusative found in the King James Version. An example of a modern translation not dependent on the King James Version is the JPS Tanakh, which has

43. Gardner notes the literary dependence (but not direct quotation) here on Malachi 4:2 but argues that this could not have been a direct quotation because Malachi would not have been on the plates. His further arguments will be discussed below. See Gardner, *Second Witness*, 2:331.

44. Gardner makes no mention of the similarity here. See Gardner, *Second Witness*, 1:98–99.

rendered the verse as “You are suffering under a curse.”⁴⁵ There is one other verse in the King James Version that has the literal structure of the cognate accusative rendered “cursed . . . curse,” and even has “grievous curse” in comparison to “sore curse,” but the verse does not share the same context with 1 Nephi like Malachi 3:9 does.⁴⁶ The text of Malachi 3:9 is a warning to an entire group, the Israelites of the Second Temple period. In 1 Nephi the warning is against the entire group of Lamanites (presumably also of the Second Temple period, but now on the western hemisphere). If the Lamanites were to rebel against Nephi the Lord would “curse them with a sore curse.” We are to conclude, then, that the text in 1 Nephi 2:23 is dependent on Malachi 3:9 due to similar terminology and context. Due to the looser lexical link, 1 Nephi 2:23 echoes Malachi 3:9.

Ether 9:22 = Malachi 4:2–3

BM: 22 . . . and he even saw the son of righteousness, and did rejoice and glory in his day. . . .

KJV: 2 . . . shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing . . . 3 . . . in the day that I shall do this . . .

The reference to the “son of righteousness,” especially in this eschatological context, in Ether 9:22 cannot be understood without having Malachi 4:2 in the background. We would be left to wonder who this “son of righteousness” is and what tradition the Book of Ether was alluding to. It is clear when one takes into account the fact that each time Malachi 4:2 is referenced in Restoration scripture, the same change to the source is made: “Sun” to “Son.” In this passage, the “Sun” has not only been changed to the familial “Son” but has also been specified as an individual in history. This verse is clearly dependent on Malachi 4:2. Brant Gardner discusses this passage and the changing of the phrase “Sun of righteousness” to “Son of righteousness” in this light: “[This phrase] is

45. Taken from Malachi 3:9 in Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1273.

46. See 1 Kings 2:8.

either a new term used in the New World, or it is Joseph's phrase that is used in translation, and is the result of his speaking the phrase from Malachi and assuming that it refers to the "son" without checking the spelling. I lean toward this latter possibility."⁴⁷

I agree with Gardner in arguing that this latter possibility is the more probable. The phrase "Sun of righteousness" is specific to Malachi 4:2. Where I differ with Gardner is in how Joseph came to this new spelling, which I will discuss further below. I think Smith was fully aware that the text in Malachi 4:2 was spelled "Sun," and that he altered the spelling because he saw Malachi 4:2 as a prophecy of the coming of Jesus' birth and life.

1 Nephi 3:7 = Malachi 3:1⁴⁸

BM: 7 . . . save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing . . .

KJV: 1 I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. . . .

This literary connection between the two verses is found in the phrase from 1 Nephi 3:7, "he shall prepare a way," which is similar to Malachi 3:1, which says, "he shall prepare the way," speaking of the messenger the Lord would send before the coming eschaton. This is not merely a semantic similarity or similar terminology one can find throughout the Bible and the Book of Mormon. There are five verses in Ezekiel that share this phraseology, and none of them fit 1 Nephi 3:7 the way that Malachi 3:1 does.⁴⁹

In Malachi, a messenger is being prophesied of in the future tense who "shall prepare the way before me." In 1 Nephi, Nephi is declaring his

47. Gardner, *Second Witness*, 2:357.

48. Gardner makes no mention of the similarity here. See Gardner, *Second Witness*, 1:103.

49. Cf. Ezekiel 45:17, 23, 24; 46:7, 12.

faith that God “shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.” The only differences are the variants “a way” and “the way,” and “for them” and “before me.” Although this is not grounds enough to argue for direct literary dependence, this passage appears to have provided the conceptual framework for the phrase in 1 Nephi 3:7. Therefore, 1 Nephi 3:7 echoes Malachi 3:1.

1 Nephi 14:17 = Malachi 3:1; 4:1⁵⁰

BM: 17 And when the day cometh that the wrath of God is poured out upon . . .

KJV: 4:1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven . . .

BM: 17 . . . in preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants . . .

KJV: 3:1 I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me . . . the messenger of the covenant. . .

The dependence here is found in two phrases, “the day cometh,” and “preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants.” At first glance, these appear to have little dependence on Malachi, but on a closer reading it becomes apparent that this verse has synthesized Malachi 3:1 together into one phrase, with the beginning of verse 17 taken from Malachi 4:1. Malachi 4:1 begins, “For behold, the day cometh. . .” and shares this phrase with no other verse in the King James Version. Malachi 3:1 reads, speaking again of the messenger, “*he shall prepare the way* before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even *the messenger of the covenant*, whom ye delight in. . .”⁵¹ Similar to 1 Nephi 3:7, this passage probably has no direct literary dependence, but it does seem that 1 Nephi 14:17 is dependent on King James Version Malachi 3:1 and 4:1 in the form that Joseph Smith received the text. 1 Nephi 14:17 echoes both Malachi 3:1 and 4:1.

50. Gardner makes no mention of the similarity here. See Gardner, *Second Witness*, 1:250.

51. Emphasis mine.

1 Nephi 17:13 = Malachi 3:1⁵²

BM: 13 . . . and I will prepare the way before you, if it so be that . . .

KJV: 1 . . . my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me . . .

The intertextual connection between these verses with the phrase “will prepare the way before you” is similar to 1 Nephi 3:7 and 1 Nephi 14:17 above. It is dependent on Malachi 3:1, and the only variants found in 1 Nephi are the changes of “shall” to “will” and “me” to “you.” There is only one other verse in the King James Version that shares this terminology, Mark 1:2, which reads “which shall prepare thy way before thee.” The language found in 1 Nephi is closer to Malachi 3:1 than Mark 1:2. Therefore, 1 Nephi 17:13 echoes Malachi 3:1 in the direct use of four words.

Alma 45:13a, 14a = Malachi 4:5

BM: 13a . . . and when that great day cometh . . . 14a . . . that great and dreadful day . . .

KJV: 5 . . . the coming of the great and dreadful day . . .

At first sight Alma 45:13a appears to be only superficially related to Malachi 4:5. The similar terms used are “cometh” and “coming” and “that great day” and “the great . . . day,” but alone this would not be enough to establish textual dependence. It is only when one ignores the verses that were later assigned to the text that we can see the clear dependence here on Malachi 4:5.

Alma 45:14a clarifies the dependence of Alma 45:13a on Malachi 4:5. The phrase “great and dreadful day” is unique to Malachi 4:5 in the King James Bible, and a review of nineteenth-century literature that employs this term shows that many texts that use this phrase are also

52. Gardner makes no mention of the similarity here. See Gardner, *Second Witness*, 1:300.

dependent on the King James Version Malachi.⁵³ The only other place where “great” and “dreadful” are used in a similar construction is found in Daniel 9:4, “the great and dreadful God.” The beginnings of both of these verses are dependent in their terminology on Malachi 4:5, and both echo that verse.

3 Nephi 24–25 = Malachi 3–4

I know of no one who would argue against 3 Nephi 24–25 being dependent on Malachi 3–4, however one defines “dependence.” Besides including a citation formula within the text itself, the chapter heading of the LDS edition of the Book of Mormon has noted that these chapters are a lengthy quotation of Malachi 3–4 since the 1879 edition. This is the most firmly established dependence of the Book of Mormon on the King James Version Malachi and therefore needs no more support here. After analyzing the text-critical data, though, I will argue that 3 Nephi 24 and 25 are dependent specifically on the King James Version of Malachi.

Out of the two full chapters quoted directly from Malachi 3 and 4, the printer’s manuscript of the Book of Mormon text only has eight variants, although it is likely only seven, as will be described below. This is a very low ratio of divergence when compared to the lengthy quotations of Isaiah in 1 and 2 Nephi, and even in comparison to the version of Matthew 5–7 in 3 Nephi. The verses in 3 Nephi 24–25 correspond with the English verse numbers, although they differ in Hebrew at Malachi 3:19 (which never included a fourth chapter), where the English has 4:1. This does not affect my analysis of the Book of Mormon because these chapter and verse numbers were added years after the first publication of the Book of Mormon. I will analyze each of these variants. It will be best to group similar variants to show the frequency of common types.

53. See Isaac Watts, *The Works of Rev. Isaac Watts. D. D. in Seven Volumes, Vol. I: Containing Sermons* (Leeds: Printed by Edward Baines, 1800), 460.

The printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon shares 735 of 740 words in 3 Nephi 24–25 with the King James Version of Malachi 3–4.⁵⁴ This commonality of words is specifically found with the later 1769 edition of the King James Version, whereas if we were to compare the Book of Mormon with the earlier editions of the King James Bible up to 1769, this amount of agreement would not be found, though it would still be relatively close. These 735 words are the same and share the same tense and gender with that of their counterpart in the 1769 King James Version of Malachi 3–4. This means that the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon version of Malachi, the earliest extant copy of this part of the Book of Mormon, agrees with the King James Version of Malachi 99.32% of the time. On this basis alone one could argue for dependence on the King James Version, but other factors such as the variants need to also be examined before a conclusion can be reached.

Italics

Five of the eight variants between the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon and the King James Version are based on the italics in the King James Version.⁵⁵ The original King James translators wanted to be careful about the words they inserted in the translation that were not represented in the Hebrew, so they printed those words as regular font instead of the more common text in bold font. The italics vary from

54. To specify, the eight words spelled differently are not all the same as the eight variants being discussed here. The King James Version of Malachi 3–4 has 748 words, and the disparity between the Book of Mormon and King James Version is due to the exclusion of words found in the King James Version. These exclusions will become evident in the discussion.

55. It is commonly believed that the italics originate in the 1611 printing of the King James Version, but this is not necessarily true. Many of the italics that are common to printed King James Versions today were added a century or more after the 1611 edition. They were added by later printers and editors of the text of the King James Version, and most printed editions of the King James Version today are the 1769 edition, including the current LDS edition of the Bible.

printed edition to printed edition in the early print history of the King James Version. Italics are significant for understanding Smith's early scriptural productions not only because they often explain variants but because of the prevailing view in the early nineteenth century about them. W. W. Phelps voiced this view well in an editorial in July 1833 for the *Evening and Morning Star*. After noting the forthcoming edition of the Bible prepared by Noah Webster, Phelps explains, "As to the errors in the bible, any man possessed of common understanding, knows, that both the old and new testaments are filled with errors, obscurities, italics and contradictions, which must be the work of men."⁵⁶ According to Phelps it was common knowledge that italics were grouped together with other "errors" in the Bible that had their origin with "the work of men." Therefore, the italics were an easy target to fix while working on the production of the Book of Mormon, and, in the process, of correcting the scriptures.

In the verses presented from the King James Version below the italics are all original. The first of these variants encountered is in 3 Nephi 24:5. The King James Version includes a clause that is left out in the Book of Mormon. The King James Version of Malachi 3:5 has, "and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me." The 1830 Book of Mormon and P both have, "and that turn aside the stranger, and fear not me." The Book of Mormon excludes "*from his right*." This follows a common approach, although not the rule,⁵⁷ of the lengthy quotations in the Book of Mormon to alter the quotation at the location of many

56. W. W. Phelps, "Errors of the Bible," *Evening and Morning Star* 2, no. 14, July 1833, 108.

57. It is common for the variants between the Book of Mormon and the King James Version to center around the italics in the King James Version, as has been noted in numerous other studies, but many italics are also not removed and were kept in the text of the Book of Mormon. It is important to note that a statistically high number of the variants between the Book of Mormon and King James Version in these sections are centered on italics.

of the italics in the King James Version, especially when there are two or more words in italics.

The second variant based on italics is found in 3 Nephi 24:13. The King James Version of Malachi 3:13b has, “Yet ye say, What have we spoken *so much* against thee?” whereas the 1830 Book of Mormon and P have, “Yet ye say, What have we spoken against thee?” The Book of Mormon simply skips over the italics in the King James Version and leaves out the words as if they were never part of the text.

The third variant based on italics is found in 3 Nephi 24:14. The Book of Mormon has, “It is vain to serve God: and what doth it profit that,” whereas the King James Version of Malachi 3:14 has, “It *is* vain to serve God: and what profit *is it* that.” Here the Book of Mormon changes the italicized “*is it*” to “doth it,” retaining the essential meaning but going back to a more archaic version of the expression “does it.” The King James Version phrasing was a common way to translate Malachi 3:14 in the pre-modern world, as neither the Geneva nor the Bishop’s bibles, both translated in the latter half of the sixteenth century, has this more archaic version of the expression found here in the Book of Mormon,⁵⁸ but rather agree with the “is it” of the King James Version. This verse follows the other variants as previously noted in being based solely on the italics found in the King James Version.

The fourth variant is found in 3 Nephi 24:15. The King James Version has, “yea, *they that* tempt God are even delivered,” whereas the 1830 Book of Mormon and P have “yea, them that tempt God are even delivered.” The Book of Mormon simply changes the plural found in the italics “*they*” into the ungrammatical “them.” What is found in the Book of Mormon does not change the meaning of the verse, although “they” is more grammatical English in this context than “them.” This

58. See *The Bible and Holy Scriptures Conteyned in the Olde and Newe Teftament. Translated According to the Ebrue and Greke, and conferred With the beft tranflations in diuers languages.* (Geneva: Printed at Rouland Hall, M. D. L. X. [1560]); and *The. holie. Bible. conteynyng the olde Teftament and the newe.* (1568).

variant is also to be explained by being altered because of the italics found in the King James Version.

The fifth variant is found in 3 Nephi 24:16. The King James Version of Malachi 3:16 has, “the Lord hearkened, and heard *it*,” whereas the 1830 Book of Mormon and P have, “the Lord hearkened, and heard.” This variant is best explained as a deletion based on the fact that “it” is found in italics in the King James Version.

I have shown how all five of the above variants are based on the italics as found in the King James Version and they are all therefore based on the English version of the text of Malachi. Nothing was different in substance to most of the examples, and the only ones that did change the substance deleted words from the King James Version. A word must be said about the words that the Book of Mormon shares in common with the King James Version that are italicized there but are still found in the Book of Mormon.

In Malachi 3–4 there are twenty-seven words italicized in late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century printings of the King James Version (whereas there are twenty-four words in regular font, or italics, in the 1611).⁵⁹ The printer’s manuscript of the Book of Mormon retains nineteen of the twenty-seven italicized words, whereas it alters the text of eight of them. The 1830 Book of Mormon agrees with the King James Version against P in five instances, but never when the changes are related to italicized words. The majority of these italicized words are single words like “is,” “this,” “with,” etc., and highlight the difference in four of the five variants above. The place where we should expect alteration in the Book of Mormon text is at the end of 3 Nephi 24:10, where the King James Version of Malachi 3:10 has, “that *there shall not be room enough to receive it*.” The fact that the Book of Mormon does not alter

59. At Malachi 3:9 the later editions of the King James Version have italics at “Ye *are* cursed . . .” and Malachi 4:4 “*with* the statutes and judgments,” whereas the 1611 King James Version does not have regular font (i.e., italics) for either of these.

this line is surprising but explainable. The mass of variants in this part of Malachi 3:10 would require altering the phrasing completely. It was much easier to allow the phrasing to stay the same than attempt to create new wording when the only recourse Smith had was to the English of the King James Bible. The fact that the language was kept the same also fits into the category of the 735 of the 740 words the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon uses directly from the King James Version.⁶⁰

A final note on italics is in order. In comparing P with the King James Version and the 1830 Book of Mormon it becomes clear that E. B. Grandin corrected the text of P toward the King James Version in several places. In 3 Nephi 24:11 Cowdery accidentally left "and" out of "for your sakes, and he shall not destroy." Since Grandin was checking the text of P against a copy of the Bible he corrected the mistake and included "and" in the 1830 edition. Of all the corrections Grandin made for obvious errors in P he left the differences whenever the change was made to an italicized word. He could have easily viewed the variant in 3 Nephi 24:16 as an accident, where "*it*" is left out of P, and included it in the 1830 Book of Mormon. The fact that he left these variants dealing with italics completely alone, even when their grammar was suspicious and similar to other corrections he made, suggests that Grandin had been instructed on what kinds of variants between P and the King James Version to fix and what kinds to leave alone. In this case, since all of the variants he left alone were based on italics, I suggest that he was likely instructed by Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, or Martin Harris to not change the variants between P and the King James Version when they were related to italicized words in the King James Version.

60. This should at least give us pause for applying too freely the idea that italics had as much influence in the Malachi quotations as it does in the Isaiah quotations. But still, the fact that five of the eight (possibly seven, see 3 Nephi 24:10 below) variants occur at the italics is telling for labeling these five dependent on the italics.

Other Variants

Along with the variants influenced by the italics found throughout the King James Version of Malachi 3–4 there are three other variants that need evaluation. The first of these is in 3 Nephi 24:10. In the King James Version of Malachi 3:10 it says, “that there may be meat in mine house.” The Book of Mormon seems to alter this verse slightly when it says, “that there may be meat in my house,” but this is not necessarily true. There might be a better way of explaining the apparent variant.

Although the current LDS edition of the King James Version retains the archaic “mine house,” which appears to be altered in 3 Nephi 24:10 to a more modern “my house,” this variant is already known in printings of the King James Version available in the vicinity of Joseph Smith and his associates. It is known that Smith and Oliver Cowdery purchased a Bible printed in 1828 by H. and E. Phinney in Cooperstown, New York from the E. B. Grandin bookstore in Palmyra, New York on October 8, 1829.⁶¹ Although this exact printing would have been purchased too late to be used while working on the Book of Mormon, in this printing the variant found in the Book of Mormon at 3 Nephi 24:10 is found in Malachi 3:10. The 1827 and 1828 printings both agree with the 1830 Book of Mormon in that they both have “my house.” Therefore, the 1830 Book of Mormon and P follow the spelling in the printed editions of the King James Version in the geographical region that Smith was working in regard to 3 Nephi 24:10 and Malachi 3:10. This is, therefore, probably not a variant but agrees with the printed edition Smith and his associates had at the time of the translation.⁶²

61. Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004), 4–5.

62. It is also possible that the scribe could have misheard “mine” for “my,” but this seems unlikely due to the high percentage of exact correspondence between 3 Nephi 24–25 and King James Version of Malachi 3–4.

The second variant is found in 3 Nephi 24:14. The King James Version of Malachi 3:14 has, “and what profit *is it* that we have kept his ordinance,” whereas the printer’s manuscript of the Book of Mormon changes the singular “ordinance” to the plural “ordinances.” This is an interesting alteration because, although the MT⁶³ has the singular *mishmeret* (“obligation” or “ordinance”),⁶⁴ a number of ancient translations such as the Septuagint, Vulgate, and the Targum have the plural reading *mishmarot* (“obligations” or “ordinances”). The plural “obligations” or “ordinances” occurred because of the later association of the term *mishmeret* with the stipulations of the covenants of YHWH. There are other passages where *mishmeret* occurs in this context, for example in such passages as Leviticus 8:35; 18:30; and 22:9.⁶⁵ Although the three ancient text traditions mentioned above (i.e. the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the Targum) translated “obligation” as “obligations,” the text in the printer’s manuscript would at face value, although the claim is problematic, predate these later traditions and not be aware of the later developments in thought and interpretation of the term *mishmeret*. The singular reading is also verified by 4QXIIa, the Qumran scroll of the Twelve Prophets.⁶⁶ It would follow, then, that the printer’s manuscript of the Book of Mormon alters the English rendering of the King James Version here at 3 Nephi 24:14 to read “ordinances” rather than “ordinance.” E. B. Grandin recognized this variant in P as he was setting the type for the 1830 Book of Mormon, and corrected the text of P to agree with the singular “ordinance” of the King James Version.

The third variant is found at 3 Nephi 25:2 and concerns the confusion between the terms “Sun” and “Son.” This will be described in

63. i.e., The Masoretic Text, or standard Hebrew Bible.

64. See Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol 1. א- ט (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 650.

65. For much of this discussion and more examples, see Hill, *Malachi*, 333.

66. See Eugene Ulrich, et al., eds., *Qumrân Cave 4: The Prophets*, Discoveries in the Judean Desert 15 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 227.

detail further below. I have shown how one of the eight variants should probably not be considered a variant but dependent on the printed version that was available at the time of the work of producing the Book of Mormon. I have also demonstrated that the other seven variants are all dependent on the English text of the King James Version of Malachi 3–4 and either add or take away a few words based simply on the text that you find there in the King James.

Malachi and the Book of Mormon

I will now examine more closely one of the Book of Mormon pericopes that I earlier established as being dependent on Malachi, Ether 9:22. I will first discuss what the book claims regarding its appropriation of Malachi where it uses it explicitly, namely 3 Nephi. Then I will turn to other places in the Book of Mormon influenced by the King James Version of Malachi.

In 3 Nephi, Jesus visits those who are left in the land after the great destruction, the ones who were the, “more righteous part of the people . . . who received the prophets and stoned them not; and it was they who had not shed the blood of the saints, who were spared.”⁶⁷ These people gathered at the temple in Bountiful when Jesus visited them, presumably about a year after his death.⁶⁸ Jesus first gives commandments on how to baptize and then presents a revised version of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7). After a number of subsequent meetings and commands, Jesus explains to the group the importance of scriptures,

67. 3 Nephi 10:12.

68. The destruction after Jesus’ death begins “in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month,” (3 Nephi 8:5) and then the text goes on to say that “it came to pass that in the ending of the thirty and fourth year, behold . . . insomuch that soon after the ascension of Christ into heaven he did truly manifest himself unto them (3 Nephi 10:18).

especially Isaiah.⁶⁹ He then focuses on making sure they have all of the scriptures he wants them to have. He makes it clear in 3 Nephi 23:6 that there are scriptures that they do not have but need to have when he states, “Behold, other scriptures I would that ye should write, that ye have not.” He then proceeds to instruct them to write down the prophecies of Samuel the Lamanite (which had been spoken to them but had not been written down) and then, immediately following, gives them Malachi 3 and 4 in 3 Nephi 24 and 25.

I have examined the change in 3 Nephi 25:2 (=Malachi 4:2) from the “Sun” rising in the sky to the familial “Son” and have found that it is based on the English language rather than on any Hebrew *urtext*. In the Hebrew the difference is between *shemesh*, “sun,” and *ben*, “son.” These two are semantically incompatible, and it is difficult to imagine accepting the possible argument that the variant is based on a misunderstood scribal reading at some point in the transmission history of the Hebrew text because of the drastic dissimilarity between the two words in Hebrew. The two Hebrew terms simply do not sound alike, but the two terms in English are homophones.

Some scholars have also argued that this change may have been based on Oliver Cowdery’s mishearing the word in the dictation process. For instance, Brant Gardner has said that if we are to assume that the phrase “Son of Righteousness” should always follow Malachi, then it is possible for us to suggest that in 2 Nephi 26:9, 3 Nephi 25:2, and Ether 9:22, Oliver Cowdery actually heard “sun” but wrote “son.” Gardner recognizes that this phrase would not have been on the brass plates because Malachi was written well after the departure of Nephi from Jerusalem. He assumes in his assessment of the evidence that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery never checked Oliver’s spelling against the

69. 3 Nephi 23:1–4.

spelling found in the King James Version of Malachi before being copied into the original or printer's manuscripts.⁷⁰

There are a number of problems with Gardner's description of the text. He begins by noting the fact that this verse "echoes" Malachi because the phrase "sun of righteousness" is only found there, thus the need that it would "always follow Malachi." Gardner makes the problematic assertion that Ether 9:22 should have "sun" when it is obvious that the use of "Son of Righteousness" is meant specifically as that, the "Son," Jesus, and is actually the interpretive key for understanding Malachi 4:2 in the Book of Mormon. In Ether 9:22 the "Son of Righteousness" is an individual person, and there is no way to understand the verse if we are to change "Son" to "Sun." It would read, "yea, and [Coriantum] saw the Sun of Righteousness, and did rejoice and glory in his day; and he died in peace." The key here is whether the pronoun in the phrase "in his day" is pointing to Coriantum or to the "Son of Righteousness." It applies to the latter far better than the former and provides much greater explanatory power. With Smith's tendency to Christianize the Hebrew Bible,⁷¹ especially whenever he used this phrase from Malachi 4:2, I would argue that this is the most direct evidence that the Book of Mormon deliberately changed Malachi 4:2 from "Sun of Righteousness" to "Son of Righteousness" because of the view that Malachi was predicting Jesus' Second Coming. This explains why in every instance in LDS scripture the text of Malachi 4:2 is changed in this way. If the text of Ether 9:22 were changed to "Sun of Righteousness," instead of

70. Gardner, *Second Witness*, 2:356–57.

71. Thomas A. Wayment, "Intertextuality and the Purpose of Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible," in *Foundational Texts of Mormonism: Examining Major Early Sources*, edited by Mark Ashurst-McGee, Robin Scott Jensen, and Sharalyn D. Howcroft (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 74–100. See also Grant Underwood, "Joseph Smith's Use of the Old Testament," in *The Old Testament and the Latter-day Saints*, edited by Carlos E. Asay (Orem, Utah: Randall Book Company, 1986), 381–413.

the form it has always been in throughout its transmission history, there would be no allusion to Jesus even though that is what is clearly meant by the verse.

To argue that this change is somehow based on the brass plates is unnecessary; we have the source in our possession: the King James Version of Malachi 4. It is much easier to explain that Smith and Cowdery Christianized this passage to fit their interpretation of it, expecting ancient prophets to “rejoice and glory in [Jesus’] day” in the way that Coriantum is portrayed as doing here. They did not need to check the spelling because they were aware of the change and its importance to them for understanding Malachi’s prophecies. Even if one were to grant that it is a new term used in the New World, one must wonder how the Nephites came to the same misunderstanding of this verse that later Christians in an English-speaking world would come to a couple of thousand years later. This suggests that all of the variants between 3 Nephi 24 and 25 to Malachi 3 and 4 are based on the King James Version and represent Smith’s engagement with the King James Bible rather than differences based on an earlier Hebrew text.

Those engaged with the academic study of the Book of Mormon’s claims for ancient authenticity should acknowledge that 3 Nephi 24 and 25 are based on the King James Version of Malachi. It should also be noted that these are the only chapters in the Book of Mormon that quote lengthy portions and state that they are directly from Malachi. There are a few examples in the Book of Mormon of the author of the text using a quotation formula when citing Malachi, but this is similar to how Malachi is used in the New Testament in that none of these places use the name Malachi except 3 Nephi 24 and 25.

Directions for Future Work

I have argued that there are many places in the text of the Book of Mormon that are dependent on the text of Malachi both literarily and

textually. Some of these places in the list show direct quotation and exact duplication of the text of Malachi, while others seem to be allusions to or echoes of Malachi. For many exegetes this presents a problem for discussing the historicity of the Book of Mormon, which in many ways has become a deterrent for a critical study of the text. This kind of viewpoint should be abandoned.

For scholars looking critically at the question of the historicity of the Book of Mormon⁷² it is a problem that suggests that the book was at least a fictional story and maybe even a forgery. For apologists it is a problem because, according to a number of them, it works against the historical setting that the book claims. Both parties are right in saying that the Nephites would not have had the text of Malachi, but this does not indicate that the King James Version of Malachi had no influence on the text as it stands today. The Book of Mormon's use of Malachi requires that scholars reexamine the Book of Mormon through the lens of source criticism to understand its compositional development and the meaning of its several parts. Once the sources are located, then the texts can be compared to understand how the source text influenced the writing of the new text and can help to better interpret the Book of Mormon. I have shown that all thirty-nine verses examined, including the variants in 3 Nephi 24–25, are based on the King James Version of Malachi.

Numerous passages in the text of the Book of Mormon are dependent on Malachi, but the Book of Mormon is also dependent on other later texts that the Nephites would not have had. The New Testament is also used in the Book of Mormon. The discoveries made when comparing the use of texts like Malachi, the prologue of John, as in Nicholas Frederick's dissertation, and several others in the Book of Mormon suggest that there is a lot more to be found and a lot of work to be done.

72. Cf. Wesley Walters, *The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1990).

Theories about the production of the Book of Mormon need to also be reexamined, primarily because almost none of them have ever included extended observations about how the King James Bible was used as a source in the production of the Book of Mormon. This suggests that the “tight” and “loose control” translation theories that Skousen and others have argued before, and even Blake Ostler’s 1987 essay,⁷³ need to be reexamined. Recently, scholars have begun to directly reject Skousen’s theory that Smith saw the exact words of the Book of Mormon on the seer stone in his hat. That was the theme of a recent conference at Utah State University.

One of the findings in my undergraduate honors thesis on the use of Genesis 2–4 in the writing of the Book of Mormon was that the Book of Mormon was not simply dependent on one of the sources of the Pentateuch as had previously been argued,⁷⁴ or even that Joseph Smith’s revision of Genesis 1–6 and the Book of Mormon quotations of these verses had a similar source,⁷⁵ but that the passages in the Book of Mormon that were dependent on Genesis 2–4 incorporated language and ideas from all over the King James Bible. Most of those other texts are found in the New Testament.⁷⁶ My previous studies, along with this research on Malachi and current research that will be published in the future, all suggest that the source of biblical ideas in the Book of Mormon, called the brass plates, was actually nothing more than the

73. Blake T. Ostler, “The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 1 (1987): 66–123.

74. John L. Sorenson, “The ‘Brass Plates’ and Biblical Scholarship,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 10, no. 4 (1977): 31–39.

75. Noel B. Reynolds, “The Brass Plates Version of Genesis,” in *By Study and Also By Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley*, vol. 2, edited by John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), 136–73.

76. Colby Townsend, “Appropriation and Adaptation of J Material in the Book of Mormon” (unpublished undergraduate honors thesis, University of Utah, 2016).

King James Bible. The author of the Book of Mormon is well-versed in the language, tropes, motifs, stories, and ideas found in that English edition of the Christian Bible and incorporated aspects of it that were unique to an early-nineteenth-century setting in western New York.

One thing is certain: the Book of Mormon is much more dependent on the Bible in its later, English canonical form, and therefore much more “biblical” than is often noted by students of the text. By employing recent comparative, text-critical methods that have been used to compare the New Testament and Hebrew Bible, this study shows that the Book of Mormon is, without doubt, dependent on the King James Version of Malachi and suggests that the author of the Book of Mormon was situated in a time and place that allowed the English Bible to influence the composition of the Book of Mormon.

I AM NOT YOUR TRIGGER

John Gustav-Wrathall

I feel the need to call attention to a pattern of destructive behavior that I believe needs to stop immediately. Like all destructive behavior, the only people we ultimately hurt with it is our ourselves. The one I want to talk about is labeling other individuals and their life paths as “triggering.”

Before I can fully address that, I feel I need to discuss a different but related damaging pattern in the Church, that I think is at the root of this other problem. I call this pattern of behavior FUBAR, because it messes up the gospel in a way that makes the gospel virtually impossible to recognize. FUBAR is a military acronym from the 1940s that means Effed Up Beyond All Recognition.

The pattern I’m referring to as FUBAR is when we tell people that there are a bunch of rules that they need to follow, and if they don’t follow these rules, they are damned. Then we hold up as examples people that we think are following the rules the way we think they need to be followed. And we shame people for not living up to that standard. That is not the gospel. That is a perversion of the gospel. That is a distortion of the Gospel that makes it virtually impossible to recognize the gospel for what it is. The gospel is, in case we need to name what it actually is, an invitation into a relationship with God where the only rule is to love him, love others, and love ourselves.

When we start to preach the FUBAR gospel, it creates hierarchies. It inculcates feelings of deep, fatal unworthiness. That’s actually what the gospel is supposed to free us from. But that’s what the FUBAR gospel does. It traumatizes us and makes us vulnerable. The FUBAR gospel enlists our own hearts and our own minds against us, making us our own worst haters and critics. This is not the gospel. Most of the trauma

(and the triggers related to that trauma) I've observed in the LGBT Mormon community are a result of this very anti-gospel, antithetical-to-the-gospel type of behavior that masquerades as the Gospel. Anybody calling themselves a disciple of Christ ought to be on the watch for this and name it and exorcize it the moment we see it.

OK, so let's talk about triggers. I have triggers. I'm pretty sure everybody has triggers. The important thing about triggers is owning them. My triggers are inside of me. They belong to me. I might be triggered by something that somebody else says or does, or even by some aspect or characteristic of somebody else. (The color of their hair? The timber of their voice? I was once told by somebody that I triggered him because I looked like his ex-boyfriend. OK, so what do I do with that?) I might be triggered by these things, but these things are not my trigger. My trigger is inside me. It is my own. And I do not ultimately help myself by externalizing it, by making my stuff somebody else's, by blaming somebody else for the fact that I am triggered. And if something that you say or do or are causes me to be triggered, it's not up to you to be less of who you are. It's up to me to do the soul work to figure out what is bothering me and why.

I would never deliberately try to trigger somebody else. That's just mean. That's bully behavior. And we certainly see a lot of that. Especially on the internet. But I want to say that situations that trigger me are actually some of the most important learning situations in my life. They become learning situations when I do the soul work that the triggering prompts me to do.

I learned a poignant lesson in how this can work just a few weeks ago. A little over a year ago, in March 2017, I attended the North Star conference and was present for a presentation by Bennett and Becky Borden, who are currently the president and a member of the board of North Star, respectively. Bennett and Becky told the story of how they were each led to end their respective same-sex marriages in order to marry each other. It's not the first time I've been exposed to a story

of this nature, so I had some mental space to process this. But I would be lying if I said it didn't push some of my buttons. At the end of the presentation, Bennett said something that I felt went over the top. It was something along the lines of, "So all of you out there who have given up hope that you could ever be in a happy marriage, there's still hope for you!" I rolled my eyes. I thought, this is exactly what LGBT/SSA Mormons, regardless of their path, shouldn't do. So that was one strike against the Bordens in my mind.

Later that afternoon, I had a chance encounter with them. They sat down at the table where I was eating lunch with a few other Affirmation leaders. They had no idea who I was, that I was the president of Affirmation and that I was soon to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of a very happy relationship with my husband. They were busy carrying on a conversation with friends, saying something to the effect of, "Oh, gay couples will tell you that they are happy in their relationships. But they aren't really. They don't really know how unhappy they are." I thought I had just heard them, on stage, proclaim their heterosexual marriage as attainable and emulatable for other gay folks. Now it wounded like they were telling people when I told people about the joy I have with my husband that I was either lying or deluded. I'm not a confrontational kind of guy. My inclination under the circumstances was to just listen and see how far they were willing to go with this and file it all for future reference. But a member of the Board of Affirmation who was present apoke up and said, "Well, this is John Gustav-Wrathall, the president of Affirmation. He and his husband have been together for twenty-five years, and they seem pretty happy to me. What do you have to say, John?" I awkwardly found the presence of mind to turn to Bennett and said, "Well, I usually wait until I know somebody well to have this kind of conversation. But, I suppose, if we must discuss this here and now. . . . Surely, you would acknowledge that your personal experience with a same-sex relationship was unique. Maybe your relationship was

unhappy, but surely you acknowledge that there may be others out there whose relationships are very happy.” Bennett responded simply, “No.”

If I hadn’t up until then, at that moment I had well and truly been triggered. I pretty much shut down. My focus turned to the food sitting in front of me, and that was the end of that conversation. That night I did not sleep. I tossed and turned and relived that conversation over and over and over in my mind, and felt more anguished and indignant with every turn. I finally gave up on trying to sleep at about two in the morning and got up and went to my computer. I began writing a letter to Bennett and to other leaders of North Star. You can imagine more or less the tenor of the letter. (It felt really good to get it off my chest!) I finally finished with the first rays of morning sunlight beginning to glimmer through the night shades. I was about to copy and paste it into an email, and then thought better of it. Instead, I sent a copy of the letter to my very patient and reasonable friend, Tom Christofferson. Tom, bless his heart, read the letter very quickly and thoroughly. He made some suggestions throughout, softening its tone. I knew Tom wasn’t about to get in the way of me saying what I thought I needed to say. He never suggested that I shouldn’t send it. But after reading Tom’s comments, and having time to cool off, I gradually came to the conclusion on my own that, while my feelings were eminently valid and reasonable, and while Bennett and others might even “need” to hear what I had to say on the subject, now was not the time nor this the method. I realized that if I did not have the confidence of my path in life without needing to defend myself in a verbal boxing match that may or may not prove a single damn thing, maybe I needed to be triggered.

If that were the end of the story, I wouldn’t be sharing it here. I was still left with a very sour taste in my mouth from this encounter. As I described it later to others who knew the Bordens, they generally expressed surprise. “That doesn’t sound like Becky or Bennett,” they would say. Well, I didn’t know what to say. When I heard later that Bennett was to become president of North Star, I decided that I really

needed to have a conversation with him, but I dreaded the idea of another encounter. I imagined his mental image of me was “the man who doesn’t know how truly unhappy he really is.” It wasn’t until I confided some of my concerns to mutual friend Ty Mansfield that it dawned on me how silly I was being. Ty and I have never agreed on everything, but we have let our mutual love of the Gospel become the common ground within which a very deep friendship has flourished, a friendship I cherish. I realized that with Ty I had been willing to overlook our differences so that we could become *friends*, and I ought to extend the same courtesy to the Bordens.

When I met the Bordens for lunch in March 2018, a year after the unfortunate lunch we shared at the North Star conference, I had a chance to share some of my story, which they received appreciatively. As I shared bits of my story and they shared bits of theirs, I found ample common ground, and found myself feeling increasingly grateful for their qualities as human beings. I began to see why others I’d spoken to who knew them spoke so highly of them.

At that lunch, we didn’t talk about that “close encounter of the third kind” (that encounter between two alien species) we’d experienced a year earlier. We certainly weren’t aliens to one another anymore. Initially I was content to let that bad first impression take its place within a more complex matrix of memories. But eventually I called Bennett and we talked about it. He apologized. He offered that he in fact couldn’t know how other people experience their relationships; that in fact relationships are unique and that same-sex relationships can be very, very good. More importantly, before he and I had that conversation, I had been able to let go of what I thought they might think about me, and hope that friendship could provide more opportunities for their image of me to be complicated, as it allowed my image of them to be complicated. And that is in fact what happened. And we are learning from each other.

The trauma experienced by LGBT Mormons is real. As we study and learn more about the extent and nature of that trauma, we’re learning

that it's severe and shouldn't be minimized or dismissed. It can even be life-threatening. The point is not that people should "just get over it." It's actually, rather, the opposite. It's that we need to take our healing seriously. We need to find our voice, yes. But in the process, we need to not reinjure one another. We need to not deny others the space that each of us needs to find our footing in life, even when the way they find and define that space looks alien and threatening to us.

Soul work is just that. It is work. Work is hard. And sometimes we're tired. If we are too tired to do the work, that is OK. If we're being triggered by a particular situation or person, it's OK to pull back. There's no shame in it. But be aware that if you are feeling triggered by a person, just because of who they are, or how they are, that is not their fault. It's OK to call somebody on bullying behavior. That's one thing. But it's not OK to label another person triggering.

One of the things that I love about being a Latter-day Saint is that I chose to be one. I am excommunicated, so I don't get any brownie points for studying the scriptures, for praying, for living the Word of Wisdom, for going to church on Sunday. I do all those things not so I can keep a temple recommend, not so I can please my husband or our son (who I think would find it an enormous relief if I would just let go of this Mormonism thing). I do these things for the connection I feel with God and with the Spirit as I do them. I embrace Mormonism because the doctrine and the teachings help me to understand my world a lot better. They help me to put the adversity I experience, including the adversity of homophobia, in perspective. Mormonism teaches me that I am made of the same stuff as God, and that there is a glorious future awaiting me, and all that is made possible by the struggles and the challenges and even the suffering that I experience in this life. My religion makes me happy. It makes me whole. And it roots me in a community! A community that is blessedly imperfect! A community that occasionally wounds me, and even triggers me! A community that

allows me ample opportunities to do the soul work that allows my God potential to shine through.

There's nothing about my path as a gay Mormon that I feel ashamed of, or that I see any reason to hide under a bushel. And if I am not going to be in the closet about being a gay man and loving another amazing, beautiful man who has been my life partner through the twenty-five best years of my life, I sure as *hell* am not going to go into the closet about being a Mormon. I sure as hell am not going into the closet about claiming any aspect of my faith as part of me and as part of my journey.

I am not your trigger. And I am not your role model either. Don't take my path as a sign that anything you are doing is inadequate or wrong. That's the FUBAR gospel. Just because I go to church doesn't mean you should be going to church. The only "should" in your life is what you are doing right now, which for the majority who are reading this who are LGBT, is probably not going to church. Unless you decide differently! And that's the whole point. It needs to come from within you, whatever you do. If there's any aspect of me that you want to take as a role model, let it be that. Not that I'm going to church! But that I've come to where I am today, to a place of profound peace and happiness, because I listened to my heart. Because I did what I knew I needed to do. I left the Church for nineteen years, and I did that because that was what was in my heart to do. And when I came back, it wasn't because I had some nagging sense that I'd been neglecting some duty for nineteen years. It's because I knew that that was the right thing for me to do here and now.

In terms of our relationship with the Church, in terms of our decisions about whether or how to be related to a significant other, you and I might be completely opposite of each other. But we could both equally be role models in our authenticity. Parenthetically, that's what I think is admirable, or praiseworthy, about Josh Weed. Not that he was in a mixed orientation marriage. Not that he's now chosen to end his marriage. Neither of those things did I ever see as praiseworthy in and

of themselves. But that he listens carefully to his heart, and he's willing to change course when that's where his heart leads. In that way, I want to be just like Josh when I grow up. This was part of the common ground I found in the personal connection I made with the Bordens too. I recognized in conversing with them that they too have been following their hearts, they too have been responding with integrity. They may have drawn some conclusions that don't fit with my experience. They may have even shared some of those conclusions in ways I found jarring. But I respect the integrity of the experience.

I frequently hear people say about LGBT Mormons who have shared their story things like, "I don't care what decisions he makes for his personal life, but he should just shut up about it. He shouldn't put himself out there as a role model." I've heard something along those lines about Josh, five years ago when he shared his experience of being married, and again recently when he shared their decision to get divorced. I've heard the same thing about Tom Christofferson, or Ty Mansfield, by folks who've left the Church. That was the filter through which I heard the Bordens share their story. I've heard it ad nauseum on the Church side about folks who have left the Church. "They leave the Church, but they can't leave it alone! And if they want to leave the Church, why don't they just leave and keep it to themselves?" That's bullying behavior. On both sides, that's bullying and that's shaming. That's telling people that they need to go into the closet about some aspect of themselves. They can't share their path or their journey with us.

Well, I reject that. I'm here to say that they can and should. I want to hear their stories, even (maybe especially) the ones that trigger me. Our stories are sacred! Our stories are our holy text; they are our scripture! There's no reason why we should be ashamed of our stories, and there's no reason why we should have to hide them under a bushel. There's no reason why we should protect others from our lives, from who we are. Let's protect that which is sacred within us! Let's protect and hold sacred our journey. And let's protect and hold sacred our triggers as well! That's

part of the path! Let's do the soul work that we need to do when we are able, and rest when we need to.

And if we can find it in our hearts to do this, to be authentic, to be fully who we are, without holding any of it back, and embrace others and support others in doing the same, no matter how different their individual choices and lives may look from ours, we will find the deepest and best possible kind of holy unity, happiness, and peace it is possible to find.

And at some point, we'll stop being triggered. We'll just be whole and happy in the divine intricacies of this sacred journey of life.

IN MEMORIAM: NEIL LONGO

Margaret Blair Young

Neil Longo, a lover of nature and of thought, ended his life on November 29, 2017. He was my student five years earlier and kept in touch with me. I had picked up hints of his depression but was stunned by the news of his death.

Neil took life's journeys passionately and eagerly. He hiked mountains enthusiastically and cherished every view his hikes gave him. He always wanted more of everything, and sometimes before others thought he was ready. He wrote a memoir for me titled *Unendowed*. It might seem strange for a nineteen-year-old to write his memoir, but it was not strange to Neil. *Unendowed* was the story of his conversion to Mormonism and his bold declaration that he, though yet a teenager, was ready for the temple endowment even though his bishop thought him too young. His sojourn into Mormonism was as passionate as everything else he did, but it also had an early end. He had left the church by the time of his death.

Whenever we hear of the suicide of someone we care about, we ask ourselves if there wasn't something we could have done or said to prevent it. Sometimes, we try to identify a unique reason for their final decision, which can somehow protect us from responsibility or from fear that someone else we know might do it. These are our impulses, but they do nothing to resolve the real questions.

How could such a deep-thinking, life-loving man end his own life? How do we continue with the reality of his death as a part of our own life's context?

I have no answers except that we do continue, and we can't understand the pain that would lead someone to suicide.

I do wonder, though, if there was not only pain for Neil but yearning for a new experience—something he was far too young to enter? There is some hint of this in Neil's writing, though the words hardly explain his death. Nonetheless, let them stand as Neil's own epitaph:

We have an inherent sense that we are incomplete. There are holes in our lives that we frantically try to fill. We long to be back with our Heavenly Father. Joseph longed to be back with Alvin. Brigham longed to be with Joseph. I long to be with all those I have loved and lost. Our sense of longing is what propels us to challenge death itself as Mormonism as a combined movement tears through the veils that bind us and into an earthly Zion. Thus the Zion of Mormonism exists not only in the building of grand temples and the coming of an embodied Savior, but also the emotionally welling and overflowing as we see those we love back and more alive than ever before. Mormonism seeks to conquer death in all of its forms. It looks evil in the eye and boldly reclaims life, death, love, and heaven. Death cannot conquer that prophet, or any other, again.

REVERSE PERSPECTIVE

Neil Longo

May 14, 2017

I dreamt of Pavel Florensky, black-bearded, white-robed, scrunched and sharpened face, quizzical eyes, stepping into a dark classroom, eerie light in a still shaft from the rain-battered skylight above, unblinking student cadets in drab soviet uniforms arranged in the dark like a monotonous phalanx of the state. He walks quietly to the front of the room, a point of white stepping into the brightness, and wheels around to face his students, careless of the fact that he represents the world they will work to bury the memory of. Ignorant of the fact that he's lucky to be alive, that the world he is teaching will soon kill him. His dark, small eyes are piercing with love and judgment.

I have taken lately to afternoons in the green grassy hills of Pennsylvania, reading Florensky on the rolling blankets of grass and tame, edenic groves of trees. It's an almost insufferable tameness and order. I think it would be stifling were it not for the playful breeze that alone in all the landscape is unpredictable.

I have taken to reading what he wrote about icons. They cannot, he argues, be judged along the same lines as modern art. Their purpose is different. Their context is different. Placed in a museum on flat walls, in soft, bright light, they appear primitive, careless, unrealistic, otherworldly (and not in the appealing sense). Their value is reduced to symbolism and technique—historical artifacts no longer the proper avenue for the provoking thought or the exploration of the soul. We must resist the resignation of our memory to mere archaeology, mere analysis.

For Florensky, the key to understanding icons is their reverse, or Byzantine, perspective. It's simple, when you visualize it. There are three

aspects to any painting that work as trinity to create the sensation of a single thing, of which the viewer is a part, in which viewers can lose themselves. There is the object of the painting, the viewer, and the screen (or visual plane) upon which the shadows of reality are cast. In Renaissance painting, as in photography, the layout is straightforward: the plane (which vanishes) is the two-dimensional object itself, paint on canvas, ink on paper. The subject is before the plane, the object behind it. This creates the sense that the viewer is looking down a rectangular tunnel, which narrows in the distance until it becomes but a point at the center of the painting. Thus, two trees of exactly the same height and in line with one another will appear beside each other, the one farthest from the viewer will be smaller and closer to the center of the painting. This type of perspective draws the viewers out of themselves, lets them enlarge themselves, magnifies the operations of light and color on the two-dimensional plane not only of the painting itself, but of the retina, which becomes like the painting and transmits the painting to the brain. All very nice and comfortable, which is why few things are as pleasant as looking at a renaissance or realist work of art in a museum on a gloomy May Saturday.

Byzantine perspective works very differently. The screen or visual plane is placed behind the object of the painting. Think of the non-descript infinity of gold that surrounds every seraphic angel or Virgin Mary in every medieval work of art you've ever seen. The frame, the lines—they converge not in the distance of the painting, but stretch out of the painting; they converge upon you. Thus, two trees directly in a line and of exactly the same height will appear very strange, with the farthest tree being closer to the frame, perhaps slightly larger. Distant space expands, close-up space contracts. This creates a sort of ethereal multi-dimensionality to the object of the painting, as though you were seeing the thing from multiple angles at once. It is not a familiar or comfortable perspective, but neither does it cause the object to appear

misshapen or amorphous. The object the painting seems intently focused upon the viewer, pointed at them, almost menacingly. Art lovers rarely spend gloomy May Saturdays in the iconography section of a museum.

For Florensky, context is critical. We pass by the various Theotokoses and Ascensions of the museums on our weekend strolls because, in harsh light on a flat wall, they seem primitive, combative, blunt.

But in the proper context, with the proper viewer, they come to life. Instead of as an image in a textbook or a painting hung from the bare walls of a museum, we must imagine the icon in its natural home, in the circular domed space of a sanctuary, dark and filled with still clouds of incense, pierced here and there by shafts of sunlight, color and gold, deep and rich, glowing and glimmering in the light of a few dim flickering candles, all swirling with the deep elegant strains of the cantor in his shimmering robes of silver. We must imagine the worshipper, a humble peasant woman, a babushka in her scarf, in the midst of this place, forgetting the world outside—the walls are her world now, the light. All around her are the faces of angels and saints, of the Theotokos, of the Savior, and no matter where she quietly steps, their eyes follow her, full of judgment and love, their faces emotionless and stoic. All of the perspective lines come out of the icons, converge on her, and being suddenly at the center of it all, she feels small, crippled with awe, reminded in this small and holy place of the angelic, transcendental world, which shines and expands beyond the third dimension in all directions around her. It becomes an expansive space, not one that can be photographed or painted, space itself become playful, dynamic, disorienting, humbling. The irony here is that, when all points converge upon the viewer, the space around the viewer becomes more expansive, the viewer becomes smaller, humbler. She senses that the world around her is suddenly much larger than it is, and that all this flowering expanse of space, filled with the faces of those she worships and emulates, is focused precisely, intently on her, watching her carefully, opening up around her, flowering as she crosses herself, lights a candle, prays silently, is with God. The sacred

eyes follow her movements around the cavernous space. It is a crippling blow of awe and reverence, which, of course, is precisely the point.

This insight haunted me—that when all lines converge on me, my world is bigger, more awe-inspiring, more humbling, and that I myself am just an infinitely small point where all these gazes of love and judgment converge. It is first unsettling and then comforting to know that the whole world is outside of me, and that, had I the vision of God—not manipulated into the two-dimensional frame of my retina, but with the viewing plane behind the things themselves, I could see them in three-dimensions, I could see them almost as they are in-themselves, I could realize the ways in which they are focused upon me and outside of me. The world becomes more communicative, more independent, more complex. This, Florensky says, is precisely the point.

On a weekend trip to Washington DC, I determined I had to investigate this sensation.

St. Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral was filled with the smoke of incense, bringing a strange life, a strange vitality to the shimmering halos on the icons and murals of saints that cover every inch of the place. It's a vertical structure, small and crowded with icons and flowers and candles, soaring up into the dome, to the Savior painted, his face a sort of emotionless serenity that, years ago, I would have mistaken for being intimidating and lifeless, but now I see as merciful, sublime.

The chants of the priests and deacons in their flowing silver robes rang and echoed through the dome, around the pillars, and the sounds could have been coming from any of the hundreds of holy, emotionless faces all around, and the Bishop in his crown went through the liturgy solemnly, and the women in their veils stood listening reverently, unaware of their beauty as the light from the windows through the incense haze lit the outline of their faces and scarves brilliantly.

All was a swirl of color and light and darkness and the smell of frankincense and the millennia-old chants and a sacredness impenetrable to me, and I lit a candle before the icon of the Theotokos and

crossed myself, kissed the feet of the Christ-child she bore, and quietly slid out between the worshippers to the door before the communion was brought forth from behind the iconostasis and distributed to the waiting people of God.

It's true, I thought, standing there by the column farthest from the iconostasis and the altar. This building is small from the outside, certainly nothing compared to the Greek Orthodox Cathedral up the way, or the National Cathedral crowning the hill just farther. But inside, the world expands outward—every inch is covered in richly, darkly painted icons and murals, and they all open up a world, throwing the viewing plane back farther, the strange, amorphous, unrealistic sacred figures highlighting the optical illusion, and because of this illusion one gets the sense that they can never quite escape the sacred eyes peering down stoically from every corner of the dome, the archways, the pillars, the walls, the dark multifarious corners and behind the brilliantly lit screens of still incense sunlit from the tall narrow windows. I felt small, at the center of it all. I felt small, in the gaze of so many bearded holy men and angels haloed in the every corner of this timeless world of dynamic space. I felt I was in the presence of God.



Reverse perspective is new to me. I'm so used to being the observer, sitting in rational judgment of the world arrayed around me, not being the focus of any gaze, not being the center of any perspective. My whole time as a Mormon I conducted myself as an anthropologist, trying to repress the emotional reactions, the messy entanglement, the meddlesome communitarianism of it all. It all seemed so straightforward to me. Almost brutally so, in fact. Legalistic. Square. I found myself in a foreign culture and survived by taking things at face value, building a fiction that Mormonism, for some odd historical or sociological reason, could actually be taken at face value.

And then things fell apart, and it became obvious I was no longer wanted, so I left, just casually walked on like a visitor to a museum who comes across a painting she can no longer decipher.

After St. Nicholas, I decided to go to my old ward in Friendship Heights. I had been there, so long ago, when the labyrinth of my soul became a graveyard, and then a storm, and it felt like the whole world was a high-pressure system inside of me waiting but unable to explode. I cried a lot then, and don't remember much of what I saw or heard except that it all seemed fake, like a painting with too much grey.

I had driven from the Cathedral to the ward building so automatically, so focused on the sensory high of that sacred place, that it wasn't until walking in the foyer that I realized that this was my first time back at Sacrament meeting since things with the Church had fallen apart.

I stepped into the chapel, trying to avoid some of the familiar people from my old days in the ward. Light flowed here, too, but there was a fresh crispness, the lack of incense and icons, the lack of centuries, just the bright optimism of a young single adult ward in a young, single, adolescent church.

It was a beautiful day and sunlight flowed through the big windows, catching every little particle in the air and making the whole front of the room playful with light. The people all around were chatting and laughing, hugging and smiling in their bright-colored Easter-season church clothes. No one noticed me or the smell of nicotine on me. I used to stress over whether I would be greeted and welcomed at church, but this time no such angst or worry arose. I was happy to see them, these bright and wonderful people, and their simple, happy way.

The stake president was there, and as people shuffled in, bid everyone to sit next to someone so no one sat alone, but no one sat next to me, and I alone was alone, which I was grateful for. There was a time when I would have been upset, distressed at the thought that, for all my sacrifices to the church, no one could bring themselves to sit near me, to make a little conversation, try to be pleasant. This time, though, I didn't care.

I was happy to observe, I preferred sitting alone, not because I wanted distance from these lovely, friendly people, but because I didn't want small talk to distract me from the taste of this place, the familiarity of the smells, the sounds, the play of light on hair and faces and pews and walls.

My old bishop, Bishop Gibbons, was on the stand as a new member of the stake presidency. It was he to whom I had confessed that fatal sin of smoking, he who had threatened me with excommunication, he who had ignored my insane pleas for help as I realized I was sinking, sinking, away from the light, he to whom I had thrust up my hand, he who had ignored it. I felt very big then, and very damned, as though the entire world were a storm brewing in the high-pressure system of my mind and my heart. He shut me up and compressed me, reminding me of all my sins, asking how I could be so stupid and selfish, refusing to give me a calling, pointing out the smell of cigarettes on my Carhartt on those days when I went about the promethean task of silencing my angst enough to make it to Sacrament meeting. He pushed me so far inside myself I popped, and one day I walked up to him and handed him my letter, the mercy-killing of my Mormonism, and left him stunned at the pulpit as I walked calmly outside and sat on the grass and tried to cry but could not. There was a time when I couldn't stand to be in the same room as Bishop Gibbons, so existential was the threat he posed to the Mormonism that I carried precious and guarded within me. There was a time when I would have walked out of the room right then, or else glared at him the whole time. As it happened, I glanced quickly at him, chatting to the stake president sitting next to him, shrugged a little, and kept looking around.

My older bishop, Bishop Dickie, was on the stand, still a bishop in the ward after all these years. He always seemed to me a great fountain of freshness and compassion. He was being released. It was he who had cried with me, before the smoking, before Bishop Gibbons, when things had begun to fall apart. It was the only time in that period that I sensed something outside of me was focused on me. It was the only time I

could see how my storm was spilling over, and seeing that released some of the pressure for a moment, allowed me to breathe knowing I wasn't completely alone. It was he who had remembered my name, and said hello to me those few occasions when, hungover and depressed, I had dragged myself to church. It was he who had pretended never to notice that I was hungover, he who alone seemed aware of how depressed I was. I tried to make eye contact, but he too was rapt in the conversation with another of the men on the stand.

He choked back tears as he tried to tell the congregation how much he loved them, how much had valued the sacred moments when we young people had shared our pains and our hopes with him. He was, for the first time I had ever seen him so, serious and sad-looking. The light made a halo of his grey hair, shone the tears welling in his eyes, and he stood there at the stand, in the sunlight, in the midst of the ward, and he was saintly and beautiful.

Bishop Gibbons glowered at me as he saw me refuse the sacrament, but I ignored him, suddenly cognizant of the straining of the muscles in my face. I was surprised at how little indignance I felt, how little anguish, as though now he were just some silly child with his silly conceptions of morality, and that none of it was worth me distracting myself from the beauty of the sacrament, the beauty of the congregation, the tantalizing taste of home I was being granted for a brief moment only. There is nothing he can do to me now.

It was Mother's Day. A girl from the ward got up and said such beautiful things about mothers and motherhood, about family and community, about the gospel of love. I remembered, as I always remember, the late nights, my mom realizing the futility of trying to stop me from joining the church, realizing that she was losing me. I remembered, as I always remember, the swiftness with which the conclusion came, that I would embark on this journey of life alone, utterly alone, and my months of wondering whether it was hard for her, whether she too was sleepless, whether she too felt that lump of death welling up at the top of

her chest, or if it was as easy and logical for her as it had appeared. But this time remembering all of those things did not bring angst or anger, grief or anguish, but only a soft sadness that lay over the beauty of the day and the beauty of the words like a white lace covering, accentuating them. The words spoken were really so beautiful, and the people in the congregation so silent. The backs of their heads were still and attentive, the focus of the congregation sharp and unwavering, and though I could see very few faces, I could sense that the room was filled with soft, angelic smiles.

After the sacrament meeting had ended, I went up to Bishop Dickey.

“Do you remember me?”

“Of course I remember you!” he said, as though I were his child and it would be ludicrous to imagine him forgetting me ever.

“I didn’t know this would be happening today, but I’m glad I get to be here and thank you for everything you did for me.”

“Neil, I was worried about you when you left. You were in such a hard place, such a dark place. It brought me so much joy to see you here today,” he said, cracking a warm and serious smile. “How are you?”

There was so much I could say, so much I could tell him, so many images of dark nights, cigarette after cigarette, the shining stream of liquor into glass after glass after glass, so many flesh-rolling nights of lust and lonesomeness with strangers, so many hours spent running, running, driving down the abandoned highways of America looking for a way out, wheels under feet rolling into the night, and the final daylight of San Francisco when I had fallen and realized at last that my Mormonism had died, that I must acknowledge its death, that it was a home, but one not built for me, that no matter how hard I tried, there was a fatal flaw and it just wouldn’t work, not this time.

“I’m doing fine,” I said slowly, tentatively, as though just saying it could destroy the fragile seed of truth in it. “I’m doing just fine,” I said, smiling.

How strange, this reverse perspective of mine; a few saintly gazes on the vanishing point I have become. How expansive the world, full and dynamic, no more taking space and perspective for granted. This is how the dead must feel, the storm of existential crisis having finally blown away, and being dissipated, left only to see the world in its beauty and splendor, to tenderly bless it. True, I lost God when I lost the dark stage in my mind, set for a stormy tragedy. True, I lost my only real traveling companion, and noticed Him most keenly only when He left me. But this strange world I find myself in is a bright one. There's a freshness to it, a calm, and I cannot help but think that in the flowering of the world outside me God lingers, waiting to be found, waiting for the reunion when I at last have become nothing and am ready once again to listen, simply listen, and appreciate the Word, which flows like living water from the seams of this effulgent world.

I walked outside and was blinded by the flood of light. The whole world was the quiet neighborhood before me, another sun-drenched Sunday, the trees and sunlight and grassy lawns and light playing on the surface, in the depths of it all. A beautiful world unfocused, flowing airily around me. I could still hear singing and laughing from the foyer and the classrooms. Sunlight was flowing white and golden through the trees. The flowers were blooming and smelled like heaven. The birds flitted here and there. They were singing.

The sun burned warm and comfortable on my face, dried the quiet and peaceful tears from my cheek and my jaw. I felt small in that moment, and safe.

The whole world is outside of me.

I'll be just fine on my own.

I always have been.

La'ie Mud Rhymes

Neil Longo

I write for my friend Michael,
who alone on our island
had grace I could dive into.
Boyhood buddy of beach-night bonfires,
creosote, sage, and sand,
mud on face and feet and hands,
all-American Adonis, baptist,
lean with a smile of simplicity
and the face of a genius.

“God is in the earth” he told me
mirthfully from atop the mountain we conquered.
I ran the way down to the sea
through frangipani, fern, and banyan tree,
feet bare, with freedom,
Michael ran behind me.
Plop of feet in the mud of God
humidity drip from the lilikoi leaves
tangy iron gnarled sod
til we reached the sandy beach
aglow in the twilight.
Mud rhymes,
chimes, twinkling off the mountainside
off the waves in our island paradise.
Innocent seaside savagery,
 (hair bleached by saltwater and sun
 blown by crisp hibiscus winds
 drenched in the gold-blue waters of day,

soaked in obsidian seas of night,
drowned in depths beyond my reach,
lost in jungles beyond my sight.)
Sand between toes, blistered feet,
laughter of many colors,
we swam in oceans of light.

Fever-broke, sunstroke,
carnivorous cannabis kava-tea dreamscape;
God spoke from the jungle where the taro grows,
knock of hallow koa, booming off the sea
tribal on the ridgelines,
ferocity by torchlight;
my eyes were made of fire.
I ran primal, chest bare, careless but for hunger
back up the mountain
to far-flung wayfaring stars,
 (arranged in trapezoidal constellations
 mystic tropical emanations
 geometric god-shapes twinkling in the night)
to the luminescent pool atop the mountain
incandescent beneath the crescent moon,
calm water, and cool.
Rhythmic vibrational surface
aglow in green and orange and blue,
universe phosphorescent in the depths,
primordial intricacies of grace
suspended in the inky infinite.
 I shed myself, stood graceless
 and naked, submerged myself in it.

Awake before atomic sunrise,
we swam in oceans of silence
I glared grief-stricken at the sea
 for stealing god-sand away from the beaches
 pulling our island away from beneath us
 spec by granular spec.
I grabbed the silty God-sod mud
clumped with salt and sand and weeds
 (you sat there, smiling, but not for me)
wind in the palms, fire in sky
 I have hunted in my dreams
 I have spread you into my eyes.

Agency of all that matters

Robert J. Frederickson

Images, of now, in time, examined by five senses
change when science lifts the edges of perception
and we see what used to be legend laid bare
by numbers and their manipulation.

The flat earth, center of all starlight, gave way,
not easily, to a rather indelible normal planet,
one of a billion or so just in our galaxy
not really round but lumpy.

The idea of time had been set until Einstein
stretched it into a, sort of, dough,
with space as leavening that took a long time to cook,
though still bent easily, and was more malleable
than most would want in an absolute law.

Two trains of thought have been bumping into each other
and then collide with another, leaving me
picking through the wreckage, leaving these few conclusions.

1. Moses saw the beginning and the end as one vision,
therefore the element of time must have been suspended.

2. God said, "Let there be light," and a release of energy
large enough to create the universe denied any rule,
but left the universe to its own agency,
which it did in creating time, space, and matter,
which we can sense with our five senses.

3. Moses, the creation, and string theory
seem to combine and let us see
the different dimension
having different laws of physics than our own.
Apparently the casual effect of the creation

was out of our sense of time or space,
so must have been either left to its own devices
or shepherded by the power that created it.

4. The idea of agency and a dimension
free of time, space or, for us, normal rules of physics,
shown to Moses then explained to the people of his time
in any sort of language they could understand,
creates an image of Celestial existence
in the terms of Telestial understanding.

5. There is no argument between science
and religion. There is just, like the flat earth,
a lack of understanding. As both sides disapprove
of the other they lose the chance of furthering
the knowledge that communion could bring.

In conclusion: The beginning came from a place
that had no limits and formed space-time
with strict rules, and all will end in a singularity
which suspends all the rules again.
Both religion and science agree on this
and should find more and better common ground.

A Better Country

Kevin Klein

Hebrews 11:13–16

With seedling splintered bone and seminal tears
They planted furrows of themselves to please
The God of distant rest, whose mysteries
Confirmed the city and sustained its seers.
And they confessed their strangeness, pioneers
In wilderness too harsh for enemies.
The land tamed them with hunger and disease;
They grew into the vigor of their fears.

Those pilgrim bones sent roots that ground the rock
Of their foundation into useful dirt.
We raise our fortunes where they plowed, possessed
By an inheritance that we must walk
Away from, for their faith to be preserved,
And lead us to the city of the blessed.

Soft

Kevin Klein

A drive for its own sake
five o'clock on a lazy New Year's Day,
our kids, aged two and one, coming down
from the cocktail of cousins and sugar.

Car-seat straps sink into puffy coats.
Babble and rattling blend
with our parental murmurs,
the heater's whirl with hum
of road and engine. Warmth
old as the birth of stars,
as old as breath, melts
the crystals of window-frost.

The glow of afternoon fading into dark,
a peace as tenuous as a little kid's nap.
The world comes unwrapped
in a tin box. Nothing here is new,
nothing new is needed. It's dangerous
this day and age to feel so complete.

The kids might remember
if the womb was any better,
but there's no use asking.
As we slow for a stop sign I turn
to see their sleep-closed faces
in streetlights that glide over them
quiet as snowflakes.

I whisper to my wife, who nods. The silence
becomes our silence. With it we stir
this softness like swizzle sticks
through hot-chocolate froth
that will close over
in its own gentle time.

the fog

Elisabeth Richardson

“And the bow shall be in the cloud;
and I will look upon it, that I may remember . . .”

but then when I was crazy
broken exiled to the downtown dark
hidden in a red brick fist of space
between the sanctuary of First Presbyterian
and the seedy entryway to Chez Pierre
the soggy air was not a token or a sign
the divine made tangible
not an anointing kiss
on my lids and lashes
not water in its spirit form
immersing me
it was just a sodden fallen
God-forsaken cloud
a smudged stupor of despair
that veiled the moon
and my pale prayers
that thickened every thread that I had on
with wet
breached every cell with frost
and made me forget
the possibility of warmth
the hope of warmth
or deliverance

that third night of five
spent speechless faithless barely alive
only feeling real
with the slats of bench to underline my length
I didn't know yet
that as bad as it got (and would get)
it could have been much worse
I didn't know yet that I'd been heard
and given strength to make it through
to dawn
that the silence was response repose
a chance to know the grace of extremity
the bench that I was on a pew
in the sanctum of the elements
and I an answered suppliant
wrapped and protected
in the sacrament
of the airborne dew

Raking

Melissa Young

I'm pretty sure I would consent
to consignment in a hell comprised
of raking leaves
forever,

the rhythmic, rustling pull
being the only sound of tide this child
of the desert has known.

Banish me
to the smell of crushed summer,
faded from its autumn brilliance
into an unassuming,
curled, and papery brown
on which is written
the leaf-strewn laughter
of every child who has ever lived
among trees in October.

A great irony
that buried in this crackling decay
is youth itself,
revealed in the urge
to jump
kick
and revel
in fragrance.

Promise me this hell.

Give me a falling—
a wind-fueled dance
in descent
to an earthy oblivion—

and I will promise
to steal every scrap of warmth,
get drunk on broken sunlight,
and cheat winter
of the delusion
that it has won.

CITY OF SAINTS

David G. Pace

When Dennis Cormier arrived on the fifteenth floor of the Church Office Building in downtown Salt Lake City, his first appointment was already waiting. The visitor was fleshy, jowls and hips, about Dennis' age, and carried a large manila envelope, opened and stuffed with papers. He wore a light London Fog, despite the warming weather, and a thoughtlessly tied tie. His worn shoes seemed to be collapsing from the inside out. Dennis invited the man in and shut the door to his office.

"JoAnn said your name was Brother Fournier?" Dennis pronounced the name with a long "e" and no "r."

"Yes," said the man, who sat without taking off his coat. "Do you know French?"

"Enough to know that folks around here probably mangle your name all the time, just like they do mine." Dennis smiled. He had a ways to go to acclimate fully to his new home; words like "folks" and the single-syllable pronunciation of words like "believe" ("blieve"), and the relentless shaking of hands that was almost competitive compared to handshakes in Louisiana, where the church had hardly any presence. Brother Fournier's hand in Dennis's had withered when they shook. And now, sitting across from his desk, the man seemed categorically out of place.

In the hall, outside the office was Lloyd, his deep voice, resonant and fresh with the office staff as his mentor performed his morning routine. He waved at Dennis through the glass. Lloyd was a huge man with shoulders that filled elevator doors. He liked to pull you off balance when he shook hands. Dennis liked him. Lloyd was rural, from Sanpete County, one year ahead of Dennis in their callings as Seven-

ties. He could see Lloyd lumbering toward his office, looking through the Levelors and sizing up the occupants of the room, giving Dennis a querying look, then waving again.

Dennis turned toward his visitor, leaned back in his chair and asked what he could do for him. Brother Fournier turned the manila envelope over and removed its contents to his lap. The sheaf looked like the old family group sheets which Latter-day Saints filled out with the names and dates of ancestors for their Books of Remembrance. Corners were folded, pages yellowed and punched holes ripped as though hastily taken from a binding.

"I am appealing to you," said the man as he turned over the top sheet. Dennis could see tiny square photos of blurred ancestors staring out, the look of a previous age suddenly haunting the room. "This is a picture of my grandmother, Eunice Hickman." The man held up a photocopy of an elderly woman with a narrow face, severe eyes and lips that thinned to nonexistent corners. The man's fingers shook. "She went by her maiden name, Fournier."

"She is a handsome woman," said Dennis in a tepid attempt to put the man at ease. Fournier put the picture back in his lap face down and smoothed the sheets. Dennis thought of his own genealogy, the boxes full of photos, birth and marriage certificates. Vivian had just started to sort through them after Dennis had been set apart and they were readying to move to Salt Lake. And then the accident happened. The day before that he had joked with her that if the Brethren knew how much of his family records were in disarray they would never have called him to be a general authority.

"My grandmother was never allowed to take my grandfather's name," said Fournier. "At least not publicly."

"Your grandfather?"

"Jacob Hickman. You see, Elder Cormier, my grandmother was Jacob's polygamous wife. His second. A church elder known as Joseph Summerhays married them in Mexico in 1906."

Dennis looked at him puzzled. He felt there was a trap being set. "1906?"

"That is correct. *After* the second manifesto."

In 1890 the prophet Wilford Woodruff had disavowed polygamy to save the Mormons from extinction. That was the only Manifesto Dennis knew of, and that was all he wanted to know of the Church's polygamous past, unlike some of the locals who seemed lost in church history to the point of obsession. Prior to his ordination, in his short interview with the current prophet and president, Dennis had mentioned meekly that he was more familiar with public education than the finer points of religious history. The prophet, an octogenarian who seemed to speak only in paragraphs, had reassured him. "Elder," he said, always opting for Dennis's ecclesiastical title, "each of the Brethren has his special calling in the Church. Yours, perhaps, is still unknown to you. We don't need another church historian. We need *you*."

Though his first year as a Seventy had been uneventful Dennis figured that there would be some point in his tenure when he would feel out of his depth. But then the prophet called him to be the inter-faith liaison to the region that included Salt Lake, and Dennis saw the remainder of his five-year term stretch in front of him rather enjoyably.

Dennis looked at Fournier and cleared his throat. "What is it that I can do for you, Brother?"

"Issue a formal acknowledgment."

"I don't understand . . ."

"And give my grandmother her rightful name, on the church rolls."

"With all due respect, Brother Fournier, your grandmother is dead."

"You are only as good as your ordinances," said Fournier, flinching. "What your children and grandchildren can write about you in their family histories." His jaw was set, his lips thinning like those in the picture, but through the shadow of a beard. He looked down again, spreading his fingers on the sheets of paper. Then he looked back up

at Dennis. "As a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, surely you know that," he said.



Later that day, after the interview with Fournier, Dennis sat waiting at a table for Lloyd to get through the lunch line. Lloyd joked with the hair-netted ladies behind the counter—all of whom he knew by name—before smiling his way over to the table, his perpetually red face open with ease. He was in shirt sleeves, his suit jacket left behind, the hair on his forearms blanched from the sun, like a construction worker's. The only time Lloyd wore his jacket was when they gave press conferences in the lobby in front of the mural of the resurrected Christ, the skyline of ancient Jerusalem baked and sanitized in the background.

Dennis explained Fournier's request. Lloyd shook his head. "What's his real beef?"

"He told me that the church has never admitted to secret marriages after the Manifesto. So he has no assurance that these marriages are recognized by the Lord."

"If the family doesn't believe it was a legitimate marriage, why don't they just have her sealed to her husband by proxy? It's done all the time."

"They say the original marriage was authorized by the prophet at the time. They just want it acknowledged by the church leadership now."

Lloyd stopped chewing his sandwich. Swallowed hard. "Now? Sounds like you've got a live one."

"They lived their lives in shame," continued Dennis, inexplicably pressing for his new charge. "No one, including Sister Fournier's bishop, recognized she was a married woman. Just a single woman who kept having children."

"And this was when?" Lloyd wiped his fingers on a napkin.

"The '20s and '30s."

"And he wants some kind of public acknowledgment?"

“That this was going on, yes.”

“He’s going to have to take this one on faith,” said Lloyd.

Dennis had hoped his colleague wouldn’t say that. Dennis was young—forty-seven—and he wasn’t from The Corridor, that religious-cultural stretch from Colonial Juarez, Mexico through Utah and Idaho and into southern Alberta. He had made his mark as a school district superintendent in New Orleans, as far as you could get from the legal world or the world of the Big Eight (or was it now the Big Four?) accounting firms from which most of the other general authorities seemed to have been plucked. Of course, as a youth, Dennis had visited the Church’s headquarters regularly. He spent two months in Utah for training before he’d left on his mission to Montreal. There he was the only missionary who spoke French with a Cajun accent. Even so, he had always claimed the Gulf Coast as home, especially after the Hurricane. Katrina was the Lord’s preamble, he believed, to what would have otherwise seemed to be the pointless and thus unbearable death of his wife in a car accident. Now, he thought, he would be leaven to a church hierarchy made up of men primarily from the Great Basin and California. What Lloyd had just said about “taking things on faith” was the recurring phrase repeated endlessly in the Church Office Building when someone just didn’t want to deal with something directly. Dennis had arrived in “Zion,” a man tried by flood and fire, and in his new post he would be an agent himself of transformation.

“How’s your son John?” said Lloyd, diving back into his Reuben. Like everything else, eating seemed to be an athletic event for him. “How long has he been in Ireland?”

“He just got transferred to a town in the West. Lisdoonvarna. Viv and I stayed there once, actually. On our honeymoon.” Dennis paused, dropping his gaze in an attempt to collect himself. “He seems to be doing okay. Says his companion is depressed.” Dennis was remembering his wife’s funeral, the open casket, Viv, the mother of his two children, dressed in the pleated robe over the right shoulder, the shock of green in

the ritual silk apron. The almost fetid smell of flowers. He remembered how he had bent over to lower the veil across his beloved's face before the funeral director closed the lid.

"Those Irish Catholics can be tough," Lloyd said.

Dennis knew that there was something else his missionary son wasn't telling him, something more relevant to his state of mind than the fact that locals were not responding to the gospel. After all, that's what it meant to be a Mormon missionary, right? Get doors slammed in your face.

"I thought I was going to be doing ecumenical work here." Dennis brought the conversation back around. "Not meeting with disgruntled church members. Anyway, I told Brother Fournier that I would call him next week."

Lloyd looked at Dennis and sighed. "Dennis, you're going to have to take this Fournier fellow on faith as well. Don't try to reconcile the church's history with its mission today. It never, ever turns out okay. A lot of people just end up getting hurt." He stabbed at his macaroni salad. "Eat your lunch," he said, his fork aloft. "You're losing too much weight."



That afternoon Dennis visited the church archives downstairs. He asked for the lists of temple marriages of the early 1900s.

"Those particular records are still being digitized," explained the librarian. "I can get you the microfilm, if you'd like."

Dennis sat in front of the metal bulk of the reader. He suddenly felt as if he were about to transgress something. He felt small. Point of fact, he *was* losing weight, the effect of running every morning in Liberty Park near his new home. At first, just getting around the park once was an adjustment because of the elevation. But now, perhaps because he had dropped ten pounds, he was winging four and five times around

the wood-chipped track every day. That morning, he'd gotten a cramp in his calf. Maybe it was time to back off a little.

The librarian threaded the machine for Dennis, then turned away without a word. Dennis found the date Fournier had given him in the grid, but in the lists there was no evidence of the man's grandmother being sealed in celestial matrimony to a Brother Hickman. Not in 1906.



The next morning Dennis added another lap, despite the soreness in his calf. When he had run in New Orleans and the weather had warmed in the spring, the sap beginning to flow up, he would begin to notice other people, their bodies, and feel the high-tension wires under his own skin vibrate to a distant planet. It was no different here in Salt Lake, and the phenomenon, now that he was single again, both pleased and worried him. "Surely, the Lord will protect me," he said aloud to himself in a tone that sounded scriptural. Didn't he deserve special protection from common, everyday sin? Just "hold fast to that which is good," he reminded himself using the stock phrase. Though poised to make a unique contribution to the Kingdom as the prophet had directed, Dennis Cormier had the road map of the gospel. Now, he just had to follow it. Wasn't that the value of being a member of the restored church of Christ? To know absolutely what it was one had to do—or not do?

The cottonwood trees billowed their refuse through the summer air. The first July he had been here he had thought the airy bits a menace, even dirty. But now he found them comforting, how they pillowed on the ground and piled against the curb. The vegetation reminded him how many things in this dry valley were utterly improbable, the cottonwoods for one, but even more so the tall, planted poplars as an accent to the land, an impulse to make the area something other than what it was—a flat, dry desert. Funny how he had thought of New Orleans the same way at first after the hurricane and after Viv died. That other city of

saints, with parishes rather than Mormon “wards.” Perhaps ecologically the high desert of the Rocky Mountains wasn’t any more habitable than the lowlands of the Mississippi Delta, so prone to flooding.

He moved off the running path to pass a slower-moving runner, a younger but much heavier man who looked like he was just starting a regimen—new shoes, a large, un-tucked T-shirt that still had the folds in it. An iPod.

During his scripture study earlier that morning, Dennis had made a survey through the topical index on faith, then turned to an old commentary by the brilliant apostle B.H. Roberts, long-deceased. But Dennis had found no hook upon which to hang his angst. There was an air of desperation in Fournier that reminded Dennis of his days as a bishop in New Orleans and later as a mission president back in Montreal with his young family, the way some of his fellow saints saw him not so much as a pastor but as a rigid judge, one who either rules in their favor or becomes an instant enemy. Even his missionary charges who had the courage to express their doubts—or act them out—seemed to intone, “*Tell me what it is I want to hear, or I will hate you.*”

Dennis slowed to a jog at the entrance to the aviary, lessening the pull on his lungs. In this post-Viv world, continually telling himself the unvarnished truth remained the most important thing. More important than belief. Than faith, maybe. It’s not my job to make the past okay for Fournier, he thought. The past that the Church couldn’t permit for fear, perhaps, that it would be irreparable to its reputation. At worst, start some kind of avalanche. I’ll just tell him to take it to the Lord. To ask in prayer and in faith for peace. But Dennis knew that was a cop out. It was what Lloyd would have told him. It was what Lloyd *had* told him. Surely Fournier had already done that before showing up in a General Authority’s office with his worn-down genealogy, pleading for justice. Few church members would have gone that far. That’s what made the man sort of admirable, thought Dennis. What was it called, someone with *chutzpah*?



On his way home, Dennis stood waiting for the traffic light. He could hear the train whistle to the west of the city, a plaintive cry that moved away in its Doppler slipstream. The frequent whistles in the dry air had come to signify to Dennis a lingering, aural presence of Viv, as if she had followed him back to Salt Lake after the burial. And yet he realized that he now longed for something that was not Viv. He couldn't put his finger on it, but it was something taking form slowly—primeval and filled with buzz. The rising sun ablaze before him, he saw the two white lines of the crosswalk before him as if they extended into infinity. He pressed the large, industrial-strength button for the light again and waited, then pulled at the waist of his now too-big sweat pants. Was it because he'd lost his appetite or that he couldn't stop running since he'd come to Utah? Now, even against this thoroughfare, threading the day's workers into the city, the sound of the distant train presented itself as little more than background, what they used to call in movies "incidental music." And yet, the whistle penetrated him, impelling him to move on to the black top, between the lines, to cross the street against the light. Sweat beaded on his back under his shirt. He punched the button again. The light turned. The lines merged into a single, shining rod, blinding him. But he just stood there.



The following week Dennis picked up the phone, as he had promised, and called Fournier, but there was no answer and no voice mail to leave a message on. He was relieved.

There had been no file on Fournier from the Strengthening Church Members Committee. No signs of apostasy. No publications, nothing in the press. Fournier probably ran a small business, Dennis surmised, somewhere in the greater Salt Lake area. A dry cleaners or a print shop.

His wife was more than likely conventional. A stay-at-home mom with several children. At church Brother Fournier probably functioned as the ward clerk, collecting tithing and keeping statistics on its members. Or he was an usher. Not exactly leadership material. Obviously, he did do his genealogy, maybe even taught the module on it once a month in the high priests quorum. Yet despite his humble, faithful service, Fournier would not be pacified by the only answer Dennis was authorized to provide.

“Only half of your problem is your job description,” exclaimed Lloyd later that day. “The other half is your expectations.” They were standing on the observation deck of the Church Office Building. Twenty-six stories below them, the burnished, east doors of the Temple, narrow and antique, receded into granite block. South and west of them, the valley lay, alternately stitched together and ruptured by the world.

“What expectations? To be honest with this man? Help him resolve his issue?”

Lloyd turned to him. In the fierce sun he seemed exposed, the signature undergarment luminous as it pressed against his thin, white dress shirt. “It’s a classic top-down arrangement here, Dennis, maybe one of the last hierarchies with all this talk of flat management.”

Dennis could feel himself leaning away from this imposing man. “But we’re a ch-church . . .” stammered Dennis.

“...with a prophet at its head,” said Lloyd without missing a beat. “A CEO.” They stood silent for a while, the wind flogging the Soviet-styled skyscraper, pin-striped with cast, quartzite columns, a blinking light on top. Up here a veritable blast furnace of dry, sterile heat blew steadily. Dennis suddenly missed the messy humidity of the South.

“There’s a reason why they call us ‘the body of saints,’” continued Lloyd. He stretched out a burly arm and wiggled his fingers. “You get too far out there on the tips and you’re likely to lose perspective. That’s where Brother Fournier seems to have gone. When the Brethren tell you to back down, you do it because you have the perspective. The eternal one.”

But what about one's calling, Dennis wondered. The persisting, straight-to-the-bone confirmation of the Spirit the saints referred to non-stop as their "testimony"? Maybe it wasn't the world at large that needed rebooting anymore. Maybe it was *this* world. This valley that needed change. He recalled the prophet's words during his interview with him: *We don't need another historian, Elder Cormier.*



That night, Dennis woke to the enduring whistle of the cross-valley train. The mayor, a lapsed Mormon and cranky Democrat in, now, a thoroughly Republican state, had complained to Union Pacific that the tracks needed to be moved farther west, away from the downtown area. The shrill whistles in the dead of night annoyed his constituents. In response, the irascible engineers blew through the city limits, laying on the horn. When agitated himself, Dennis perhaps alone welcomed the intrusion, as though it were Viv now coming forcefully into this world with her unfinished business, and perhaps his, putting a sharp point on all of it.

The neighborhood where Dennis lived just east of the park seemed as far from Mormon Gothic as he could get without living in the resort town of Park City thirty minutes into the Wasatch Mountains which truly would have raised eyebrows among the Brethren. He thought of Becky, his daughter. "Zion is the perfect place for you." She had told him this the day of the funeral before his return to Salt Lake, newly ordained but now, suddenly a widower. She was already rounding at the belly, he remembered, Josh smiling nearby. Good kid, that Josh, he thought, even if he does strike me as a little lost, still puttering around at Tulane. Was he even a junior yet?

"You've always talked about wanting to gather with the saints," Becky had told him. "And who knows? Maybe there's a sweet spirit out there working at Temple Square who you'll fall in love with." She had

winked at him when she said this, and he saw the freckled, still grieving girl before him, his little girl. She was too young to be a mother, he'd thought at the time. "The Brethren don't want a general authority who's not married," she reminded him. The love he had for this young woman now made Dennis ache.

A "sweet spirit"? he said under his breath. He thought of his secretary, JoAnn. Single. Always blushing when he smiled at her. She was beautiful, he thought, in that Anglo-Scandinavian-Utah way. But still. . .

Dennis pulled his bathrobe across his chest, narrowing by the day it seemed, and looked at the clock. After two. In Ireland, John would be in the middle of companionship study. He called. When his son picked up the phone, Dennis almost hung up. Even for general authorities, it was against the rules to call a missionary except on Christmas and Mother's Day. Well, he reasoned to himself, there was no Viv and no Mother's Day call, so he was justified.

"Son?"

"Oh. Hello, Dad. It's you. What time is it there?"

"Early. I couldn't sleep."

They talked about John's work. The hours of walking long County Clare roads. The meeting they had with an investigator in a pub, even though it was against the rules because of the presence of alcohol. They talked about the weather. In the background, Dennis could hear his son's companion at the sink, the clinking of dishes, the sound of shoes on hard wood. Then there was a pause in the conversation.

"John, to tell you the truth, I'm not sure why I called. Is everything okay?" Another pause.

"We've got a pretty good teaching pool here: eight."

"Better than we ever had in Quebec. That's great! How are they responding, John? Are they progressing through the discussions?"

"Oh, you know how it is, Dad. For every bit of progress we get a disappointment. A massive disappointment."

“How do you manage that?” Dennis leaned back in his chair, settling in with ease at the sound of his boy, his beloved son. He put his feet up.

“I just remind myself that, you know, Mormonism isn’t for everyone, and then I move on. I’ve been seeing a counselor,” he said abruptly.

Dennis knew that. The mission president had called him to let him know, but he had decided to let his son tell him.

“A counselor?” he said.

“A church counselor. For anxiety. Don’t worry. It’s all okay. Mission president set it up.” His son had just referred to the gospel as “Mormonism.” Dennis dropped his feet to the floor and leaned in. They talked about faith. How the Prophet Joseph despaired in Liberty Jail before his martyrdom. How the Lord spoke to him in that dark hour. About hope.

Dennis told his son that he loved him. They said goodbye, then hung up. Dennis sat there in the dark, the traffic on 7th East a half block away almost still this time of the morning. Things were clearly getting out of hand. Dennis had been here just over a year, and not only had he not married, he hadn’t even dated—a red flag, he was sure, in a church that enshrined marriage as its highest ordinance. And now this. John seeing a counselor on his mission. This couldn’t be good.



“I can’t help you with this, Brother Fournier,” said Dennis, firmly. It was the following Monday, and he had invited Fournier back for a second interview. Dennis was in his shirtsleeves, arms crossed over his chest, and sitting on the edge of his desk, his knee nearly touching the chair Fournier sat in. “You’ll need to be satisfied with a proxy sealing in the temple to your grandfather. I’m not denying that there were men who illegally married women—your grandmother. That was a very difficult time in the church’s history, as I’m sure you know.”

“The prophet, Joseph F. Smith. He authorized it,” responded Fournier, “secretly.” Dennis was ready.

“So they say. The evidence is sketchy. Mostly hear-say.” He walked to the window and stood, looking down at Temple Square. “And to make a public statement that the church was wrong in not acknowledging the marriage . . . well, that can’t really happen.”

Fournier stood. “She was sixteen!” he said, heatedly, and walked to the window as well. Dennis waited for him to speak. But he didn’t. They just stared at each other, Fournier’s breath shallow and uneven.

“I understand that she was young,” Dennis heard himself say. Sounded as if he were writing another letter to his missionary son, senatorial, conciliatory, utterly self-assured. Still, while it was okay for him to question the gospel, to criticize, it somehow wasn’t okay for others to do that. He felt the hot mantle of purpose descend on him, the first time since he was set apart as a Seventy, and it felt lofty—heavy even.

“You have to understand what’s at stake,” he continued, turning full-on to Fournier. “And, frankly, the covenants you made in the temple to protect the kingdom of our Heavenly Father. You need to have faith that all will be made right in the hereafter.” He reached out and put his arm around the man’s shoulders as Lloyd would have, to comfort him. But suddenly to Dennis it felt false. As if he were compensating for something. His own private questions? His own disobedience by not re-marrying?

Brother Fournier was eye-to-eye with Dennis, but he did not speak. He had moved from the picture of deep grief to fury, then just as suddenly to an eerie quiet. Surprisingly, Dennis realized that here, now, he preferred Fournier’s temporary spike of rage to this sense of calm. At least he knew what to do with anger: be paternal.

“My faith in the restored gospel,” said Fournier finally, shaking off Dennis’ arm, “requires that there be healing. And there can be no healing without justice.” Dennis recoiled. He placed his hands in his pockets. His slacks seemed impossibly baggy, now that he was down to 155 pounds.

Fournier turned to pick up his envelope. Despite his look of resolve, the air was thick with emotion. Dennis was thankful for the sound of the buzzing, overhead light. And he was sorry. “You will get justice,”

Dennis said to the man's back and in his best pastoral voice, softly and with as much feeling as he could muster.

"But justice requires courage," said Fournier, without turning. Then he walked to the door, opened it and left. Only then was it that Dennis remembered the man had children, and that he would be going back empty-handed to them and to his siblings, his cousins—back to his father, now ailing and who had grown up believing that he was a bastard child, a second-class saint.



Six months later and things were clearly not going as expected. Dennis had not even been dating, even though he had had hesitating talks with JoAnn at times when the office was quiet, and work was slow. There were whisperings going on, but no announcement from Dennis. Then there was the fact that at 5-foot-10 he was slipping below 145 pounds. Still, he kept running, even in the December slush, around the wood chip track at Liberty Park.

And then he received a phone call unexpectedly from John's mission president. John would return to Utah the next day from Shannon International. He was returning home early from his mission. Dennis was in his office working late, the cosmic blur of the Christmas lights of Temple Square like nebulae far below him. Families gathered, bundled up, strollers laden with the provisions for a night out in the cold.

"What about when Mom died?" said Dennis, closing the door to his office a little too fast. After hearing from the mission president, he had called John. "What about everything you said, John, before you left for Ireland. How you had a testimony and that this was something you wanted to do. To serve the Lord?"

"I lied, Dad. I wanted to protect you. I knew you were going to Salt Lake. But . . . yes, I guess I lied." What was that he then heard? Through the receiver? His boy. He was weeping.

Dennis sat in numbness, the phone pressed forcefully into his ear. He could hear his son sobbing now on the other end through a light static buzz.

"It will be okay, son. Just come home. He waited for John to collect himself. Finally, the boy was reduced to sniffles.

"The counselor said something very interesting," John said, finally. "But I don't think he meant it the way I took it. He said, 'Elder Cormier, the decision is yours. You can be yourself and what you believe in or you can go on and live an empty life, devoid of all meaning.'"

"You know, John, you can hold whatever opinions you wish in this church," said Dennis in return. He sounded now as if he were reading from the script. "You keep them in your heart, in a private room. But you can still have them. Your faith will grow. You just have to give it time."

There was a pause on the other end, and then a deep sigh. "I feel like for the first time I *have* found my faith, Dad. Mormonism may be a beautiful thing, you know. It just . . . it just can't be what it has always claimed to be. And no one here wants to listen to that."

Dennis sat for a long time. Swallowed hard. He swiveled in his chair, pulled his suit jacket over his shoulders. So this is what it was going to be like. The inevitable challenge, he had to expect that, but this, this he had never imagined: that it would be his family who would betray him. Family was supposed to be a refuge from that, a support to his work. Like Viv had been. Like Becky was—married and starting a family. Dennis had come to Church headquarters to make a difference as an outsider, even if it was just with disgruntled fellow saints like Fournier. But now his son . . . maybe at the funeral he should have insisted that John delay his mission. Yes, his mother's death. It was too much for John. And now his son had lost his faith, his testimony that the Church was true.



Shortly after Christmas Dennis received a phone call from the Assistant to the President of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, asking him to come in for an interview. Elder D. Howard Glenn, a career general authority who was old enough to be Dennis's father, had a kind but inevitable way about him. The day of the interview, Elder Glenn was in good form, but due to his age, he also tired easily, sometimes lapsing into listlessness. Dennis waited for him to end a phone conversation about a golf game the next day in the relatively warm climate of St. George near the Nevada border. After he hung up the phone, he looked longingly at it for a few seconds before turning his attention to Dennis.

"Damn grandson. He's got a swing that will be the end of my game. Suffers a bit from too much self-confidence, if you ask me." Dennis smiled kindly at the old man. The mild profanity, he knew, was designed to put him at ease, to send the signal that this man was no ordinary servant of the Lord, that he was secure enough in his seventy-ninth year that he could present *all* of himself. Elder Glenn stood slowly, a halt in his straightening back, then crept around the desk to what the missionaries Dennis once served as President jokingly referred to as the "visiting-from-on-high chair." Dennis stood to assist him, and the man did not resist, falling back into the duplicate captain's chair with a heavy sigh.

"Since that whole prostate thing," said Elder Glenn, "I never did get my full strength back. Still . . ." he looked at Dennis carefully, and Dennis leaned in solicitously, "I'm grateful to still be here in the second estate, as much as I'd love to slip through The Veil. To move on. How are you, Elder? How's that new interfaith program going?"

Dennis began to explain the rounds he made. The deference of other faith leaders to him that made him feel uncomfortable. Their concerns about social issues, the war in Iraq. When he looked up, Elder Glenn was drifting off. He seemed to be waiting for his turn to speak, or maybe he was having a mini-revelation of the kind that the general authorities were said to have. Ones that, thus far, had seemed to elude Dennis, especially concerning his troubled son. This time, however,

instead of just continuing on, Dennis stopped. He even touched the man's sleeve. Elder Glenn looked at him and smiled. "I'm supposed to ask you why you're not married," he said. "So tell me. Why haven't you gotten re-married? Let's get this over with." Suddenly, Dennis was grateful to this man, grateful for the question, because until it had been asked in a familiar setting, he didn't know why he felt so uncomfortable about the issue. Now he did. But Elder Glenn wasn't finished. "I know you loved your wife, Vivian was her name, right? I know you are a good man, Dennis, but we need you to set the example. We don't want you to end up like Elder Petersen, propped up everywhere by an outspoken divorced daughter at all his meetings. You may not remember that. Back in the 80s. Very embarrassing for the brethren."

"Elder Glenn," Dennis responded. "Do you remember the scripture about the body of Christ? Would you mind?" he said, pointing to the scriptures in large print on the desk.

"Please," said Elder Glenn. Dennis turned the tissue-thin pages to *Romans* and read:

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office. So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

"Paul," said the old man, nodding. Dennis then turned to the Doctrine and Covenants and read.

The keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth. . . .

"The stone cut without hands. Yes," Elder Glenn said, turning away almost as an afterthought. "The gospel will fill the whole earth. Temples will dot the land."

"That is our understanding," said Dennis, and closed the book. "But we aren't all of the same office. Our calling is to do something unique and specific to our talents."

"Which is why you were called to do ecumenical work here in Utah. We've got to start reaching out to our brothers and sisters of all faiths

and lifestyles. Let them know that they need ordinances performed by the true priesthood.”

“I agree with you,” said Dennis, but it came out sharper than he intended. As mollifying, paternal. He stood to return the book of scriptures to the desk. “But as I understand it, what that mission or calling *is* . . .”

“Dennis, sit down” interrupted Elder Glenn. “Now I’m not sure that I’m following you.” Dennis sat. He waited for Elder Glenn to speak again.

“Dennis, your calling has already been given to you by the Quorum. And you can’t have the Lord’s inspiration in that office unless you are first keeping the commandments.” He paused. “Your son, God bless him, needed to see his father set the example of obedience to authority. But now he’s confused. Lost his testimony.” For just a split second, Dennis couldn’t believe what he was hearing, but then in the next moment it all snapped into place, the certainty of not only the gospel but of the terrible price of his belief in that certainty.

“You need to re-marry,” said Elder Glenn. “You need to re-marry or we will have to release you.”

When Dennis returned to his office, Lloyd stood in the doorway, waiting for him. “I want you to know, Dennis,” he said, “that when I first came here, I had some big ideas about how I was going to re-vamp the young men’s program, to make it something more relevant. I admit it was disappointing when nothing I seemed to say went anywhere. But the best advice I got is what I’m going to give you. Our job is to be a soldier, not another Joseph Smith or Brigham Young. The age of prophecy of that kind is over. Our job is to obey.”

Dennis looked at his friend. “I don’t want to be a prophet. I just can’t find a place in me where the real truth can live. Where I can learn to accept all of this so that I can act on it.” Lloyd cleared his throat, dropping his head, and in that one, single gesture, Dennis felt the kinship between them drain away, and he knew that he would have to change something about himself or the rift between them would be permanent.

Lloyd looked up and performed a smile and a warm, persisting hand to Dennis's diminished back.

"What do you say we go over to the Beehive House and fatten you up on some of that bread pudding?" he said. "Better still, JoAnn, she hasn't gone to lunch. Why don't you take her?"

Just then, from outside came a muted concussion of sound and a loud crack. Through the glass from the hall, JoAnn was looking at them, startled. Lloyd walked to the open door, told her to stay put, and he and Dennis moved to the elevator, but when the car finally arrived, it was nearly full, employees with worried faces. Dennis held the door while Lloyd collected JoAnn. "I will take the stairs," Dennis said to both of them as the door closed. Entering the stairwell, Dennis knew he was not going down with the rest of them. Instead, he ascended.

The observation deck was empty. The entire floor evacuated. He pushed through the glass doors on the west side and out into the cold winter air. Below, he could hear a commotion. He could see smoke. He felt alone high above the crowd that was gathering, moving with caution towards the imposing, six-spired temple. At first, he couldn't see that anything was different. But he kept following the smoke. Then he saw it. One set of the temple's heavy east doors lay slightly tilted from their frames, violating the building's perfectly ordered lines. Dennis leaned against the Plexiglas, strained to look through the smoke. He stood with his hands on the glass, fingers spread as if he were visiting an inmate at the pen, and peered from this distance into the cracked frame, straining to see into the darkness behind the door. More smoke.



The morning after the bombing, Dennis didn't get to the park for his run. So, later, when he returned from work, he took a long nap before waking, suiting up and then walking down to the intersection, stopping at the light to stretch. It was cold. He wore John's sweats, which were

smaller and fit him better now that he was so thin. The rush hour traffic was over and in the park only a few runners were trailing around the path in the dark. That morning, during his executive meeting with the other seventies from his quorum, no one had said anything about the temple doors which only the city's secular newspaper had reported to have been vandalized. When he asked Lloyd about the incident as they returned to their offices, it was clear how the bombing was officially to be viewed, if it were even to be acknowledged. "Yes, we'll have to get those fixed, Dennis."

"But what does it mean? Do they know who did it?"

"We will have to get them fixed," repeated Lloyd, forcefully. And then, "Dennis, the Brethren do not take counsel from our fears."

Still breathless from his run, Dennis entered the house. John was sitting at the dining room table in the dark. He sat down opposite his son. John rarely left the house these days. The boy, now a man really, still carried his mother's face, though these days it was drawn and pale, like a black-and-white version of her in a tiny oval photo from a family history. He had Dennis's slight build but his musculature still had the taut look of feverish growth. Dennis often found himself looking at this young man with unabashed ardor that at first he thought was suspect, even carnal. But it had turned out to be something else. John was silent for a few minutes, then he spoke.

"You know how it is when new missionaries come into the field? They rely entirely on their senior companion. They would strap a bomb to their bodies if you told them to. But I knew it right away. My companion, Elder Carmichael, the one I was supposed to train? He was just like Dave."

"Your mother's brother?"

"Someone who doesn't believe. And for good reasons, not just because he was intellectually proud or, what was it someone said of him, sexually impure?"

“Your companion was struggling with doubts about the Church’s claims, about polygamy and other things. That was explained to me when I talked to your mission president. Sounds as though he sowed the seeds of doubt for you?” John turned toward his father. In the boy’s eyes lived something he recognized but could not look at directly, and Dennis finally felt the cowardice of the script he had been following like an echo—what he had been saying about his brother-in-law ever since Dave had left the church, what he had been saying about so many things. And Dennis now knew he was at risk of becoming something other than what he was destined to be.

“Elder Carmichael asked me what I thought about all the truth claims we were repeating to the Irish,” continued John. “So I told him what I thought. I let him know he wasn’t the only one out there with doubts about how he had been raised. What he’d been told.”

“And then what happened?” asked Dennis.

“Elder Carmichael asked that, as the senior companion, if I would still give him a blessing. And so I did. Even though I knew I was going to be going home early myself.” Dennis was silent, a sudden aperture in the traffic of his soul. “I laid my hands upon his head and by the power of the priesthood I gave him a blessing. The Catholics believe despair is the unforgivable sin. But I think the only unforgivable sin is to dismiss someone’s pain.” John turned his hands palms up on the table. “To make an idol of an ideology.” John looked away, out the front window, and he breathed out something old and tired, and his father marveled at his son for doing what he could not.

That night Dennis lay on the couch thinking of what he might have to do in the morning. The television was on in the other room, a program from the History Channel. He lay there somnolent, feeling alternately calm and then utterly defeated. He was dozing off when, suddenly, he opened his eyes with a start. There was a train whistle repeating itself over and over from the next room, the rising embellishments of other sounds surrounding it, the clack of metal wheels on a track. The sounds

were being used as part of a score, and it occurred to him that the whistle had a meaning to it based on the music it was a part of. A meaning he could not ascertain as he was only a bystander in the other room. But he also knew that from then on, when he heard the Union Pacific whistling its way through the City of Saints that it would be only that. A runaway train in the distance, forcing itself onwards, unable to stop.

It was then that he said his final goodbyes to Vivian, and it was like what he imagined a revelation to be. A wonder.

When Dennis arrived at work the next morning, he walked past the front of the temple. Plywood had replaced the doors while the historic, pioneer-crafted hinges, he assumed, were being re-cast. How strange, he thought. Even doors as heavy as the temple's could be unhinged, literally, with just the right placement of a relatively small explosive. In his office, he took off his coat and looked out the window at the Square that had become his life and the thing he defended with all his might. Except the night before. After hearing John out, in a brief moment of weakness, he had put his hand on the strong forearm of his boy and said to him, "You are a good and faithful servant, son. Welcome home." Today, he knew he would keep defending "the Faith," but from now on it would always pain him, in an exquisite, ever-accelerating way.

It did not escape Dennis that morning that Lloyd had not tapped on the glass, had not stepped in to give him his usual good morning. He knew that what he had said to Lloyd the day of his interview with Elder Glenn had changed everything. Amazing, he thought, how simple it was to step over a line. Just one right hook to the one right place, and what had seemed implacable, huge could be dropped to its knees. "We do not take counsel from our fears," he had been told.

Seated at his desk, Dennis opened his email. There was a message from Becky about his granddaughter—one year old—and about their trip out to Utah the following week. There was a meeting schedule for the next month from JoAnn. An ad for Viagra that had gotten by the seemingly vigilant spam filters downstairs. A newsletter advertising the

latest church titles from Deseret Book. Dennis methodically clicked through all of them, deleting most, saving the one from his daughter. Then at the bottom there was one with the subject line "Justice." He hesitated before opening it. The message came from an address he did not recognize. "There can be no healing without justice," it read. "And justice takes courage."

For a split second he wished he could be his son. But when he deleted the message, he knew he would be getting married again.

LIGHT DEPARTURE

Ryan Shoemaker

For Doug Thayer

There was a knock at the apartment door. My companion, Carr, slouched at his desk, tinkering with a delicate butterfly he'd just formed from a piece of thin copper wire he'd retrieved that morning from the gutter outside our building. The wire butterfly slipped from his thick fingers and fell to the tile floor. He glanced nervously at me through a pair of plastic, square framed glasses, his gray eyes cartoonishly big behind the thick lenses.

"Maybe that girl again," I said, looking up from the open suitcase on my bed, half full of the sixty rare bootlegs I'd amassed over the last two years. Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Led Zeppelin, The Doors—all bands I'd loved in high school. "I think she wants you," I told Carr.

At least once a week the teenage girl from across the hall, always heavily made up and in a low-cut v-neck t-shirt, knocked at our door. To practice her English, she'd tell us coyly, snapping a wad of pink gum between her glossy lips, as she interrogated us about life in America and what we thought about Italian women and if we ever felt sexually repressed by all the rules we had to follow.

There was another knock, louder and more insistent. I winked at Carr. "It's all that smoldering manliness you radiate. Why don't you see what she wants?"

"Hey, I don't even look at her." Carr's voice pitched higher and cracked. "I've never even talked to her. I wouldn't know what to say."

I lifted my suitcase, testing its weight. "Confidence, elder," I said.

Carr rolled his eyes and exhaled an annoyed groan as he stood and left the bedroom. But he returned quickly.

"She try putting the moves on you?" I asked.

"No. It's some African guy," Carr whispered. "He says he knows you. Michael, I think."

I looked up from my suitcase. "Michael? Here? I baptized him in Bologna. Tell him to come in."

"That's against the rules," Carr said, fingering the corner of the small mission rulebook in his breast pocket.

"You want to tell him that?" I asked. "A new convert. A new member of the church." I straightened my tie in the full-length mirror next to my bed, frowning at Carr's reflection. "How about you tell him to have a seat in the stairwell, elder?"

"Fine," Carr said.

And then, incredibly, Michael was there, smiling as he long-stepped across the room with his hand extended. "Allred," he said. "A prayer answered. At this hour, I didn't think you'd be home. I was ready to walk the streets searching for you."

"I can't believe it," I said, shaking Michael's hand. His presence felt unreal. I hardly recognized him. He wore some kind of traditional African clothing, a long blue shirt embroidered with gold thread around the neck and the sleeves, loose-fitting pants, and a black, flat-topped hat without a brim.

The last time I'd seen Michael, almost two years before, his limited wardrobe consisted mostly of baggy warm-up pants and faded sweatshirts with sleeves so long that only his fingertips were visible, handouts from a Catholic charity that assisted refugees. At that time, he'd only been in Italy a couple months, living in a drab tenement apartment outside Bologna and working at a shoe factory. He'd immediately invited us in, eager to talk. There was a humble, asexual quality about him, I remembered, something so refreshingly unlike the bravado and perverse innuendo we often experienced when speaking with Italian men.

After I left Bologna, Michael and I had written monthly. He promised to visit me in Trento, if he could get time off from work. And then he promised to visit me in Vicenza. Soon, though, Michael's letters came sporadically, and by the time I transferred to Ravenna, there hadn't been a letter in months. I'd tried his number in Bologna but found it disconnected.

"Didn't I promise to visit you?" Michael said, straightening the black hat on top of his head. "Yesterday, by the grace of God, I ran into the Bologna missionaries. They said you leave tomorrow. I wanted to say goodbye."

"What a surprise," I said. "And you." I touched the gold embroidery on Michael's sleeve. "What's this?"

"A gift from my parents," Michael said. "A *dashiki*. Very popular in West Africa, very comfortable in the summers, though Italians hate it. Too colorful. Too ethnic. I suddenly become a suspicious person. We work in their factories and pick up their trash, but they'd prefer not to see us." Michael stepped back to look at me. "And you. More grown-up. You were still a boy in Bologna."

"I send pictures home and my parents say the same thing." I slid the chair from my desk toward Michael and then sat on my bed. "You've met my companion, Elder Carr."

Michael sat, placing both hands on his knees. "I have," he said. He tipped his head toward Carr, who'd retreated to his bed, an open Bible propped up on his chest. He'd slipped on a yellow sweatshirt, raising its peaked hood. The hood cast a shadow over his broad face.

I felt the need to explain Carr's palpable silence. "Elder Carr isn't much of a conversationalist," I said, loud enough for Carr to hear. "But he's working on it. Right, Carr?"

"Perhaps this silence is a virtue," Michael said, turning to Carr. "Wisdom is the reward of listening. My mother always told me that." Michael turned back to me, his gaze falling on my open suitcase. "You're ready for the journey, I see."

“Almost,” I said, running my finger along the blunt edge of an open shoebox on the bed, a pair of Gucci loafers snug inside, a recent purchase, along with some Brioni hand-sewn ties, I’d bought with money my parents sent me. I had this image of myself after the mission, striking a charming, cosmopolitan pose—*la bella figura*, as Italians called it—at church and on dates, in a blue silk tie and designer shoes that glowed like caramel.

“And these shoes,” Michael asked. “These beautiful shoes are yours?”

I lifted one from the box, savoring its solid weight and the smooth touch of the cool leather on my palm. “A gift to myself. Something to remember Italy by.”

“May I?” Michael asked.

I passed the shoe to him. “What do you think?”

Michael delicately held the loafer with both hands. “Double monk-strap, Goodyear welting, hand-stitched calfskin, and look at the detailing on the leather. You’ll make quite an impression on the ladies.”

“You still work at the shoe factory?” I asked.

“Not anymore,” Michael said, examining the shoe’s leather sole. “But I learned a few things there, more than I care to about something I could never afford. I also learned that Made in Italy really means Made in Italy by Africans. Nigerians, Kenyans, Moroccans, Somalis. Every day at work was like an African Union Summit, but instead of debating economics and politics we made shoes.” He returned the shoe to me. “Now I work in a home furnishings factory. All very boring, but much closer to my apartment. And it pays more. You didn’t get my letters?”

“It’s been months,” I said. “I began to think you went back to Nigeria.”

Michael slapped his knee. “Why am I still shocked by the incompetence of the Italian Post when every morning I see my mail carrier in the café drinking espresso and reading *la Repubblica*? I moved apartments three months ago and am still waiting for my forwarded mail. But in the great scheme of things, these are small problems.” Michael rubbed

his palms together. "What's important is that you'll soon be with your family. They'll be glad to have you home."

"I'm only home a couple weeks," I said, "and then it's off to Brigham Young University. They accepted me for fall semester."

Michael's dark eyes moved to the ceiling. "Praise God. All is well when we let him take control." He touched his chest. A sly grin creased his lips. "And I, too, have some good news. I've won a visa to America. Fifteen million applicants, and I was one of fifty thousand. I still can't believe it. In two months, I interview with the American Embassy in Milan. If all goes well, I'll be in America by November. Can you believe this miracle, Allred? An American citizen. God is faithful, isn't he?"

"A blessing," I said, almost in a whisper. "You deserve it. After all you've been through."

"A new beginning, yet so many unknowns," Michael said, the energy draining from his voice. "I'd be a fool to think I can start a new life alone. By nature, I'm prideful, but I mustn't let pride bring me low. Maybe what I ask is too much, Allred. Forgive me if it is, and then we'll never speak of it again. But you once showed me a picture of your parents' house. Big and beautiful. Plenty of rooms. I was hoping I might stay with them for a month or so. I'll be a mouse, but not even a squeak. I can help. I can clean. I've read that there's opportunity in Seattle. Colleges. Jobs. Just until I find work and an apartment. I'll pay them back."

I was touched by Michael's request. I imagined myself, soon standing at the pulpit in front of my ward, recounting Michael's story: a man fleeing the political and religious unrest of his country for a better life, the treacherous journey at sea, a refugee in a foreign land, his conversion, and now this miraculous golden ticket to a new life in America. And then three months later Michael would suddenly materialize for my ward, smiling, shaking hands, the very fruit of my mission. That Michael would land in my apartment the night before I was to leave Italy, that, against the odds, he'd won this visa, that I could help him

build a life in America—all this seemed beyond coincidence. It seemed the hand of God.

“Of course, I’ll speak with my parents,” I said. “I’ve told them about you. How could they say no?”

I looked at Carr, who lay inert on his bed. His wilted black socks had sunk around his chunky ankles, exposing two pale, hairless swatches of goose-pimpled skin. I hoped he was listening, hoped he understood this is how he needed to love and serve others, by opening up rather than crawling into himself.

“Thank you,” Michael said softly, letting go a long breath. “What a relief to hear those words. God will bless you and your parents.” He interlaced his fingers and touched them to his forehead.

“Though I’m sure the members in Bologna will miss you,” I said. “How are they? The Rossi family? Brother Pavone?”

Michael stared at his interlocked fingers. “Honestly, I haven’t been to church in a long time,” he said. “Many months.”

My stomach tightened. “Was there a problem? You didn’t feel welcome?”

“Nothing like that,” Michael said. “Everyone was kind. It’s just that I’ve changed. My life has changed, my beliefs. I cannot pretend to be something I am not. I cannot be something different from how God created me.”

“I don’t understand.” I could hear my voice ticking higher, an undercurrent of panic there I had to check. “You have doubts?” I suddenly felt the need to teach Michael, just as I’d done in his small apartment, to quote scripture and bear testimony, to answer questions and resolve his concerns.

“It’s because of somebody I met,” Michael said, “somebody I love deeply. I cannot be with him and be Mormon. And I want to be with him.”

A noisy motor scooter passed on the street below, but its shrill whine couldn’t penetrate the silence in the room. I felt the clunky thud of my heart. I picked a loose thread from my luggage and worked it

between my thumb and index finger until it formed a tight ball. I let it fall through my fingertips. I'd known, maybe intuitively, from the very first time I met Michael. "You're gay?" I asked.

"Perhaps I've always been," Michael said. "I remember in grade school, a feeling whenever I saw an attractive boy. Why did I find boys attractive? I thought God had made a mistake. Maybe my father suspected. He pushed me to sports. Soccer, boxing, running. But the feeling wouldn't go away. As a teenager, I told my pastor. The demon, he called it. He made me promise never to tell anyone. He told me to pray and read the Bible, to cover my private parts when bathing. But still those feelings. In Nigeria, people talk about gays with such disgust. And in the news, beatings, killings. I thought of a new start. I would leave the demon there. That's what I told myself. That's why I invited you into my apartment. A new faith, a new beginning. But really, I wouldn't admit then that I left Nigeria to find the freedom to be myself."

I leaned forward, elbows on my knees. I wanted to fix Michael, to find the words that would steer him back, to persuade him of the error of this path, yet I felt something in me sinking, drifting beyond my grasp. "You have to pray for strength to overcome this," I said. "It's just weakness, the natural man."

"And I believed that, too." Michael spoke slowly, patiently, as if he were now teaching me. "But how can this love be wrong? Abasi. That's his name, a Kenyan who knows what I know about the shame and loneliness of hiding a secret. With him, I feel only acceptance. We've found a community in Bologna, other Africans and Italians like us. Christians. There's so much love there, Allred."

Michael looked at the floor. "I know this isn't what you expected, Allred, but to be dishonest, to hide, is weakness. After meeting Abasi, I vowed to no longer live a lie. No more shame and guilt." A faint chime sounded. Michael frowned at the silver watch on his wrist. "This is a lot to tell you. Maybe too much. I wish there was more time, but I must go. The last train to Bologna will leave soon. I must work tomorrow."

Michael stood and pulled a slip of paper from his pant pocket. "My email and cell number. You can write or call after you speak to your parents. Please, tell them I won't be a burden. Tell them it will only be for a short time." Michael stared down at the paper that hung between us. "But if the arrangement doesn't work, if circumstances change, I understand. It will never change my gratitude. The missionary lessons. Your letters. Your friendship, Allred. You helped me through dark times, brother." Michael touched my shoulder. "It's late and you're still packing. I'll let myself out."

I listened to Michael's footsteps in the hallway, and then to the heavy closing of the apartment door. Through the open double window above my bed, the sun was setting over the Museo Nazionale, reflecting warmly on its terracotta roof. Beyond the city, the Adriatic Sea was a gray ribbon spread over with a blue-ochre sky.

Carr was still sprawled across his bed, the Bible fallen over his round belly, his chest rising and falling rhythmically.

I touched the Gucci shoebox on my bed. The loafers' silver buckles radiated light. The pleasant aroma of polished leather was intoxicating.

I gazed at the slip of paper in my other hand, suddenly resentful and angry by Michael's talk of needing me to start a new life in America, and then his revelation—abandoning the faith, loving a man—after I agreed to help. I sensed something new in him that I disliked: the conspicuous tribal clothes, the hint of political activism, a lack of humility and meekness. I rubbed my thumb over the neat rows of letters and numbers Michael had written in blue ink. The thin paper felt insubstantial. It could fall through my fingers, under the bed or behind the nightstand—and cease to exist.

I quietly opened the wooden armoire next to my bed. My mission clothes hung in a neat row, the slacks frayed around the cuffs and belt loops, the shirts, once as white as new snow, now tinged a dull yellow and smelling of mildew, all ravaged by two years of walking and riding bikes.

With no intention of filling my suitcase with these tattered clothes, I striped a pair of gray slacks from a hanger and pressed them into a tight ball, the thin slip of paper detaching from my fingers and disappearing into the swirl of worn fabric. I dropped the slacks into a plastic wastebasket next to my desk.

"You should give those clothes to someone," Carr said. His voice, suddenly filling the quiet room, surprised me. He stared at me, his mouth a gaping, disapproving hole. He sat on the edge of his bed, bent toward me, his face still shadowed by the sweater's peaked hood, a ghoulish inquisitor.

"And who'd want old clothes?" I asked, dropping a white shirt into the wastebasket.

"What about that guy from Senegal who sells CDs?"

"What guy from Senegal?" I had no idea who Carr was talking about.

"The guy in Piazza del Popolo. His clothes are all torn up and dirty."

I stripped another pair of slacks from a hanger. "Should I give him my nametag, too?"

"I just think it's wasteful," Carr said, "throwing away all those clothes."

"Of course you do." My eyes flicked quickly down into the wastebasket and then back to Carr. A creased corner of the paper peeked out from under the gray slacks. I wondered if Carr could see it from across the room.

I quickly pulled more shirts and slacks from the armoire, their metal hangers clattering to the floor. I dropped the clothes into the wastebasket and then reached into the armoire for more when Carr spoke again. His eager rush of words startled me:

"Your parents will say yes, right? They'll let Michael stay for a month in that big house. Just for a month."

I turned to Carr.

"I don't know." My voice sounded strange, too high, trembling slightly. "They'd wonder why this man I baptized doesn't go to church."

Even if I didn't say anything, what if Michael tells them? They wouldn't like it."

Carr gestured emphatically with those huge hands. He looked agitated, a pink flush, like a fresh sunburn, seeped up out of his collar and colored his fleshy jowls. "Then he can be your roommate. Utah Valley University's close to BYU. He can go there. You can help him get started."

I looked at my open suitcase, at the bootlegs laid in neat rows, at a thick stack of envelopes bound with a rubber band, letters from my friends. Soon they'd be home from their missions. We'd planned to room together at BYU. In a steady back-and-forth over the last two years, we'd constructed a college life of long road trips, late night movies, and pretty girls. Michael didn't figure into that plan.

"I have roommates," I said.

"But you can help," Carr said, his voice imposing and emphatic. "If you really think about it, you'll find a way. And then you'll take that paper out of the garbage."

We both looked at the wastebasket, overflowing with pants and shirts.

I was tired of pretending that I wanted to help Michael. "He's not the person I baptized," I said, pressing my open palm into the mass of clothes and hearing a puff of air and then the thin crackle of paper. "If he were still that person, it would be different. I'd help. But what he does now. He's chosen a different life. He's not my responsibility." I stood and pulled the orange drawstrings of the plastic bag lining the wastebasket.

Suddenly, Carr was on his feet, rushing toward me. I stood to block him, but with a heavy swipe of his arm, he shoved me aside, and then stooped down, rooting through the clothes until he found the paper.

I was incensed. Something in me burst, a hot flash of anger and revulsion for all of Carr's grating piousness, boorishness, and social ineptitude I'd had to endure in our two months together.

I lunged for his fleshy throat, but he swatted me away. My head knocked against the armoire door, my legs collapsing beneath me. My eyes brimmed with tears, though I didn't know if I was crying or laughing.

“Take him home with you,” I said, as Carr retreated to his bed, the paper cupped in his hands, as if it were one of his fragile wire creations. “And what can you really do for him? You? You with all your good intentions.”

Night had darkened the bedroom windows. My head pulsed with a dull pain. My arms and legs felt leaden. The floor seemed to quiver and jerk as I set my hands on the bed and stood up.

I carefully placed the Gucci shoebox in my suitcase, next to the bootlegs and the letters. I didn’t say anything to Carr that evening, or even the next morning as I lifted my luggage onto the express train for the mission home in Padova. I watched Carr from the train window. He sat on a wooden bench, a train schedule spread over his lap. His new companion would arrive in a few hours. I felt light and at ease, finally done with Carr, untethered and free from all his strangeness and self-righteous judgment.

The train lurched from the station and picked up speed, Ravenna receding into the green and gold countryside. I stared down at the cement ties of the adjoining track ticking hypnotically past. The train cut through a vast, rolling wheat field. I squinted. The wheat was a blinding, silvery white, shimmering and rippling in the breeze. For a moment, I experienced a dull guilt that radiated from my guts and washed up over my chest and shoulders. But when I touched the suitcase under my seat, the feeling subsided. Soon, I thought, one life would end and a new one—my life after the mission—would begin.

But in that new life, I soon came to know a persistent and troubling disappointment, even as the names of people and places, the finer details of that once consuming mission life, blurred and dimmed. With time, the Brioni ties, probably cheap designer knockoffs, lost their stitching and then completely unraveled. The bootlegs were unlistenable, static and the boisterous crowds drowning out the music. And the Gucci loafers—somehow they were different from what I remembered buying, too effeminate, too elaborate and showy. “Oh no,” my friends would shriek whenever I wore them, “Allred’s got his fairy shoes on again.”

Something from that time, though, seemingly impervious to decay, remains vivid and unforgettable: the image of Carr, like a sun-drenched still life, parked on that bench as the express pulled from the station, the open railroad schedule on his lap, his pudgy features—a face so placid and serene, turned in my direction but not seeing me. It was the same gaze I encountered years later one breezy April morning as I rounded a corner in downtown Salt Lake and saw Michael striding toward me. His unexpected presence stopped me cold. I wanted to hide my face until he passed—but there was no escape. Our eyes met. I braced for a scathing, venomous look, the hard set of a mouth and accusing eyes. But nothing. He was smiling, a bounce in his step, a man at peace with the world. He looked at me as Carr did so long ago from that wooden bench—as if he never knew me.

Expertly Built: Stories within Stories

Tim Wirkus. *The Infinite Future*. New York: Penguin Press, 2018. 400 pp. Hardcover: \$28.00. ISBN: 9780735224322.

Reviewed by Gabriel González N.

Okay, I'm going to let the cat out of the bag, so if you don't want the single, major twist of this novel spoiled, please walk away now.

...

For those of you still here, my review:

About two thirds of the way into Tim Wirkus's *The Infinite Future*, the readers are informed that the career of one Eduard Salgado-MacKenzie, supposedly the author of a number of outlandish short stories and a mediocre, drug-induced novel, was a hoax. The story of Salgado-MacKenzie's admittedly modest rise is satirical, a not-so-subtle criticism of literary and art critics. It is, perhaps, a warning against taking *The Infinite Future* seriously. So, at the risk of doing the very thing the book mocks, I'll provide a (foolish?) review.

The Infinite Future is Tim Wirkus's second novel, and in a lot of ways it feels like something Jorge Luis Borges might have written had he ever written a novel. It has many of the trademark Borgesian elements: a mystical book, secret societies, a translator, summaries of stories within stories, labyrinths (both real and metaphorical), false identities, and surprising last-minute reveals. Except that had this been written by Borges, the novel's American setting would be transposed to Ireland, and Brazil would become Argentina. Oh, and you won't find lesbian nuns in Borges either.

While Borges's influence is very obvious in the text (with the Argentinian author being explicitly mentioned more than once), there is something about the telling of the story that is decidedly postmodern. The text is heavy with intertextuality, often making literary references

to the work of other authors, both real and imagined. Thus, mentions of the made-up Salgado-MacKenzie are intertwined with references to real-world authors like Clarice Lispector and Elizabeth Bishop. Like good postmodern novels, this one is heavy with a sense of irony, especially in the first half. Additionally, the plot is told through many narrators and multiple points of view. By my count there are ten narrators, and some of these are metafictional. The whole book is heavy with metafiction, in fact. This leads to a multilayered plot where the author introduces a translator, who then tells a story through several first-person narratives before providing his own translation of a novel which in turn has more than one narrator. The novel packs in all of it: a fictional introduction by "Tim Wirkus," the translator's personal quest, the translated sci-fi novel. And all throughout the intertextuality, irony, multiple narrators, and metafictional elements, the reader is treated to stories within stories galore.

The result is a complex and flat-out weird story. It is expertly built, the brick and mortar coming together in very satisfying ways. Due to the interplay between all these various elements, the novel can be given many different readings. It can be read as a novel about the meaning of literature, as a straight-up mystery, as a kind of road-trip novel, as an unforgiving satire (of academia or of religion, take your pick), as a critique of Mormonism, etc. For the remainder of this review, instead of juxtaposing these various possibilities, I will focus on this book as a Mormon novel.

As a Mormon novel, there are at least two possible readings. One has to do with the different types of Mormons that are out there and their relationship to their faith. Two key characters in this sense are Harriet Kimball and Craig Ahlgren. Kimball is an excommunicated historian whose story is explicitly linked to that of the September Six. She loses her Church membership as a result of some writing on Mormon history. She loves the Church and the restored gospel, but she is too honest to recant her writings. The whole excommunication episode is narrated by

Harriet to Sérgio Antunes, a non-Mormon, so sure enough, it sounds like it's meant to resonate with non-Mormon readers somewhere in New York. The villain in this story is her bishop, Craig Ahlgren. He comes across as an honest yet overbearing and uncompromising chauvinist. At one point he tells Daniel Laszlo, another Mormon, the story of how he came to be so committed to the Church, and that episode is told in a way that would resonate with an active Mormon somewhere in the Rocky Mountains. In the middle of these two types is Daniel Laszlo, who seems to just be cruising along in his relationship to Mormonism. He goes through all the stereotypical rituals (mission, BYU, temple), but finds no fulfillment in any of it. He is ever searching. He's not particularly committed to the Church or the restored gospel and mostly seems to drift along in life. All it really takes for him to remain active during this period of aimlessness is the promise of a good job by his stake president, who is none else than the overpowering Craig Ahlgren.

Overall, this division of Mormons into three types—the honest-and-persecuted, the drifters, and the well-meaning-but-overbearing—seems somewhat lacking. It's probably fair to say that most Mormons are far too concerned with trying to get through their day-to-day endeavors to devote their energies to issues of Church history or power struggles with the hierarchy. In my own conversations with most Mormons, these issues hardly ever come up. The energies of most members of the Church in terms of their religion seem to be devoted to matter of raising a family and finding the presence of the divine in their lives. In this sense, Daniel Laszlo is probably more representative of your average Mormon than the other two characters. Except it is never really clear what Mormonism does for him, if anything.

As a Mormon novel, this book can also be read as a critique of Church history. There is something in the story of the fictional Irena Sertôrian that sounds like an exploration into how individuals become religious icons. In this sense, the parallels between Irena Sertôrian and Joseph Smith do not seem purely coincidental. People pour into figures such as Sertôrian and

Smith whatever they need to pour into them (even if, for a select few, the real-life, flesh-and-blood person behind the myth is what actually matters). Along similar lines, another theme in the book is how sacred texts become sacred. In this sense, the parallels between Salgado-MacKenzie's *The Infinite Future* (the novel-within-the-novel) and Smith's *The Book of Mormon* likewise do not seem purely coincidental. These texts are more complex than we like to believe—they are ambiguous, but what believers want from them is exactly the opposite. And here's the thing about *The Infinite Future*: by the end everyone knows it's a hoax, but that doesn't keep Laszlo from having a spiritual experience when reading it and becoming a fervent enthusiast of this made-up story.

In the end, the novel touches on so many productive themes, both Mormon and non-Mormon, and can thus provide for many an interesting discussion. Those who identify with Ahlgren's simple moral compass will probably be turned off by the novel. Those who identify with Kimball's complex views of Mormonism will probably feel reassured by it. Those who simply read it for its literary value will more than likely enjoy this absolutely weird, multilayered, well-crafted yarn.



Nothing by Itself

George B. Handley. *American Fork*. Alresford, UK: Roundfire Books, 2017. 400 pp. Paper: \$22.95. ISBN: 978780995403.

Reviewed by Sheldon Lawrence

It's difficult to know where to start in discussing a novel as thoughtful as *American Fork*. Politics, religion, belonging, family history, ecology,

sense of place, the high costs of love and our dogged willingness to pay that price over and over again—these themes are not just touched upon but probed with sensitivity and skill. Perhaps the reason for this daring breadth of concerns is found in the mantra of Zacharias Harker, an ill-tempered retired botanist and lapsed Mormon: “Nothing exists by itself and nothing exists without context” (13). For Mr. Harker, as he is known throughout the novel, it is folly of the worst kind to try to understand a plant species, or even an ecosystem, removed from its larger context. Instead, a plant is one component of a complex system of relationships and histories. If this is true of plants, then how much more so is it for human beings and their individual stories? While *American Fork* takes as its subject the friendship of Mr. Harker and Alba, a BYU student and talented painter of Chilean descent, the novel reveals an intricate ecosystem of interrelated stories set in the mountains of Utah and Chile. Only in understanding these stories—the context of each of their lives—do the characters see one another, and themselves, in truth and compassion.

At first, viewing Mr. Harker with compassion is no small task. He is cantankerous and opinionated to the point of arrogance, not the trope of the grumpy-but-harmless old man. Imagine a mixture of Hugh Nibley and Edward Abbey in their more irritable moments. His observations are often cutting, and his discourses on ecology devolve into full-throated diatribes against Mormon environmental indifference and nearly every technological development since the Industrial Revolution. He hires Alba to paint illustrations for a book that would be his life’s opus, a work that studies wildflowers of the Wasatch Mountains in their proper ecological context. The plants in his book must be painted in this context, and in this Alba proves an able artist who shares with Harker a sense of being a cultural outsider.

Mr. Harker’s exasperation with Mormons (or rather the sometimes painfully accurate stereotypes he rails against) comes up against a puzzle in Alba, whose life resists his caricatures in every way. She is not a

multigenerational white Mormon of Utah Valley mindlessly submitting to cultural inertia. Yet neither is she the disgruntled Mormon looking for ways to define herself against an oppressive majority. Her faith is intelligent, independent, and courageous. She doubts Mr. Harker's professed atheism, as well as his disaffection with the Church, and pushes back on many of his observations, but she has no aim to make him her reactivation project. Over the course of their budding friendship and lengthy conversations about the interconnectedness of life, Alba grows increasingly frustrated at the fragmented nature of her family's story. Unlike her husband who comes from pioneer heritage and boasts an extensive family tree, Alba knows nothing of her family's past. The story of her father who "disappeared" (a Chilean euphemism for being secretly executed) during the dictatorship of Pinochet remains a mystery closely guarded by her mother.

At four years old, Alba and her mother had come to the United States as political refugees after her father's disappearance. Alba is left to piece together a story in which she imagines her father as a heroic member of the leftist resistance to Pinochet's regime, a dangerous work that left thousands of Chileans imprisoned, tortured, and disappeared. At Mr. Harker's urging and financial support, Alba returns to Chile to discover the truth of her father and, more importantly, make contact with a culture and heritage she wishes to embrace, rather than flee, as she believes her mother has done.

At this point the novel came alive in a particular way for me, as I served my mission in Chile in 1995, just six years after the dictatorship ended. I was interested, and somewhat apprehensive, to see how Handley would treat the complexities of Chile's recent past. President Allende, a Marxist, was democratically elected in a close, three-way election in 1970. His efforts to nationalize major industries were met with strong opposition from the Chilean congress and military. The United States, fearing Chile would become a Cuba-style client state of the Soviet Union, supported General Pinochet's military coup and deposition of Allende on September 11, 1973.

Pinochet's brutal suppression of political dissidents is well-documented and not to be downplayed. The legacy of the coup, however, is more complicated than the story of noble socialists resisting a brutal dictator. Sweeping economic reforms jump-started the Chilean economy, and the dictatorship did come to an end in 1989. To this day, Chile is one of the most stable and prosperous democracies in South America, yet the deep wounds and division of the past remain. During my mission, I marveled at how the legacy of Pinochet was still a deep source of division. In one Chilean home, he was a hero who rescued the country from communism. In another, he was a tyrant who should be tried and executed. Would Alba's journey to Chile acknowledge this complexity? To that point in the novel, she had idealized what she imagined as her father's political heroism.

Without revealing too much, I will say that Handley skillfully avoids an abstract historical debate by focusing on the human toll of the dictatorship, the concrete way in which it tore families apart, both physically and ideologically. Alba discovers, through those who were no friends of Pinochet, that healing and reconciliation will best come through keeping alive the stories of those who suffered, by bringing to light the names and faces of the "disappeared." Understanding her own family story in Chile, Alba is set free to love her mother and forgive her secrecy. Freed from the mystery, she is empowered to define her own place in her family and community in America and find belonging in it.

Mr. Harker's restlessness is a different kind of problem, entrenched by years of regret and pain. Unlike with Alba, it is not the sins and stories of others he must make peace with, but his own. A significant portion of *American Fork* consists of lengthy letters written to his absent daughter, letters he will not send but continues writing for his own healing. The letters reveal a softer and more vulnerable Harker, one who loved his daughter and her mother deeply (the reason for their absence is not revealed until later in the novel) but who is haunted by failures for which he has not forgiven himself. We see a man whose passions will not leave

him in peace. He withdraws into his home mountains for peace, but even this withdrawal does not bring him comfort. The intensity of his devotion to the landscape and its ecology turn him into a fretful, angry parent whose children—the mountains and valleys of Utah—are under constant threat of global warming and overdevelopment.

The Mormons receive the brunt of his anger. Joseph Smith bequeathed a doctrine that could have allowed for a radical theology of environmental stewardship. Instead, the Mormons squandered this birthright for a mess of American consumerism. Apart from old-fashioned greed, there is the problem of an eschatology that has Jesus cleansing the Earth with fire and setting everything straight. What is the point of caring given such a prospect? Harker's anger at God and Mormonism is not the sneering of a true secularist so much as the pain of one who lost his faith through crushing disillusionment. That he is not resolved in his renunciation of God or the Church is evident in his mixed use of pronouns. Harker sometimes forgets himself as the hardened outsider and refers to Mormons as "we" rather than "they."

American Fork is a novel rich in deep and thoughtful dialogue. This strength could also be viewed as a weakness. The characters' extensive conversations at times resemble well-composed essays. It may require a suspension of disbelief that so many of the novel's people are capable of the kind of heady and articulate speech that is put into their mouths. But for those who relish in such depth of discussion, this aspect of the book will be a delight.

I don't often get choked up when reading fiction, but by the end of *American Fork* I found myself blinking back tears to keep the page in focus. The final chapter indulges in no easy sentimentality, but the tenderness and authenticity of seeing flawed people loving one another imperfectly, turned my attention to my own wife and children. The book caused me to reflect on how much I need their forgiveness, and how fearful it is to love deeply when we know that at any moment, through accident or choice, love can turn to pain. Indeed, every moment of affection and vulnerability is juxtaposed with the threat of loss or

rejection. And yet we sign up again and again, because nothing exists by itself, and as the novel beautifully illustrates, life only flourishes in the context of our relations to others. *American Fork* is a moving and thought-provoking work that makes a significant contribution to not only Mormon literature, but the literature of ecology and place in the American West.



“Twisted Apples”: Lance Larsen Takes on Prose Poetry

Lance Larsen. *What the Body Knows*. Tampa, Fla.: University of Tampa Press, 2018. 83 pp. Hardback: \$25.00. ISBN: 9781597321594.

Reviewed by Darlene Young

What makes something a poem? How do you recognize one, even if it has no broken lines? For most of us who read and love poetry, the answer is, “I just know.” There is the buzz of new vision from a surprising metaphor or imaginative framing, the sensual delight of rhythm and rhyme. But even more, there is the feeling. A good poem sends sparks through our synapses, makes us feel more alive. “I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off,” says Emily Dickinson. It’s visceral.

It seems appropriate, then, that poet Lance Larsen has titled his latest (fifth) collection, which consists entirely of prose poetry, *What the Body Knows*. What the reader “knows” after experiencing this collection is what poetry feels like, even when it’s in paragraph form. Because Larsen, former Poet Laureate of Utah and winner of the Pushcart Prize (among others), is a master of poetic language—sound, imagination, image, and metaphor.

The title poem presents a microcosm of the collection as a whole, a gathering of disparate thoughts and images, unconnected but juxtaposed like compartments in a shadowbox so as to glance off each other, sparking and resonating. It begins,

Until I was five I could only fall asleep holding my mother's earlobe. A single crocus can melt a snow bank. On my desk I keep the jawbone of a deer. When I rub its three bleached teeth, it tells me secrets. Funerals hum when they begin with a honeymoon story.

Four different topics in three lines, and the poem continues similarly to the end, image after image, a zigzag between personal and universal, specific and general. Paul Valéry argues that poetry is to prose as dancing is to walking,¹ and these pieces dance with their subjects just as they dance within language and image.

This disjunctive style, common in many poems in the collection, forces the reader's mind to make leaps the way electrons jump synapses. The effect is that each sentence or section reads like its own mini-poem. Prose poetry theorist James Longenbach says that in prose poetry, "the absence of the line would not be interesting if we did not feel the possibility of its presence."² Disjunction is one way that Larsen creates a feeling of lineation within its absence. Another is through recurrence of specific words or phrases. For example, in the opening poem, "Almanac," the objects in the poem sigh repeatedly:

Arm chairs sighing, old cars and young mothers sighing, graves sighing both before they devour the dead and after, motes of dust sighing in twisted columns of light, broken crayons sighing to be held once again, sighs of rapture, sighs of never again in this life, the garden sighing for the spade, emergency rooms sighing over spilled blood, when will it end, sigh sigh sigh, . . .

1. Paul Valéry, "Poetry and Abstract Thought," *The American Poetry Review* vol. 36 no.2 (March/April 2007): 61–66.

2. James Longenbach, *The Art of the Poetic Line* (St. Paul: Graywolf, 2008), 88.

The collage of images in “Almanac” presents a perfect opening to a collection that is itself mosaic-like in its motley. Larsen’s attention to the details of the world in their particularity, their mundanity and grit, makes them holy. This first poem’s book-ending partner, “Curating a Mostly Forgettable Saturday in June,” is another collage poem that makes use of a refrain, this time “not the/but”:

And not the parade downtown but the homeless woman strolling her baby through the crowds after. And upon closer glimpse not a baby at all but a doll—swaddled in aluminum cans, as if settling in for a lazy recyclable nap. . .

Here the speaker takes us by the chin, turning our heads to look away from the parade. “Don’t get distracted by the shiny,” he seems to be saying. “Real life is in the small details.” The poem ends in a gesture of pointing:

And not the limp flag at half mast, someone famous dying at flagpoles all over town, but the Barbie leg I found at the park hidden under a picnic table. A left leg, not scuffed or slashed, teal sandal still intact, so the struggle must have been minimal. And the way I planted it beside the teeter-totter, in soft mud, toes up, so it could talk straight to the sky without shadows trying to run the show.

Barbie’s leg points us to the sky, the final image of the collection, pulling our attention up and away, the way a camera might pull back to a long shot before fade-out. Thus an insignificant broken toy directs us to the universal in the wide sky. And isn’t that what poetry is for—to help us “see a world in a grain of sand” (William Blake)? With its tender fin-gering of quotidian details, this poem becomes a curation of suburban holinesses from a “forgettable Saturday in June.”

While I enjoy the disjunctive surprise of the collage-like poems, my favorites are the more anecdotal pieces. Narrative is risky in a prose poem, where the sense of story, and the way sentences follow each other more logically than in non-narrative pieces, could make the paragraph too prosy or less poetic. But no worries here. With Larsen, no poem is ever simply an anecdote; each piece makes use of poetic strategies to make

the familiar strange. These strategies can include musicality, startling metaphors, surprising structure (such as in the four “Q and A” poems), and imaginative framing.

Take, for example, “Elegy, with Bra and Peppermints, 1969,” in which the story is told from the point of view of a character twice removed from the story. Before leaving for a business trip, a man positions his wife’s bra on the bed for her to find, complete with two peppermints to mimic nipples. The wife responds by bringing her daughter, “a novice to bras,” to see what her father has done, “because a spectacle like that—satin meets sweet, brazen vs. shy—must be shared.” But the poem’s speaker wasn’t there for that scene; he, the couple’s son, hears about the whole thing from his sister only years later as they watch over their mother’s deathbed. The windows that the poem creates—ours that looks onto the whole situation, the son’s as he hears the story, and both children’s window into their parents’ marriage—are its greatest delight, though the language does dance, as do the images:

Sunlight mottled her bed, tubes umbilically bright, morphine a warmish pool into which she floated towards the wavery deep. Her breaths came ragged then, serrated, stabs of air going in and out.

The sense of peering through windows permeates another narrative piece, “Driving the West Desert at Night.” Here we watch through a windshield as a couple converses during a long drive. The use of the word “meaning” as refrain charges the language and intensifies the situation. The poem begins,

Tell me a story, she said, meaning don’t you dare drift off, I need a voice to help me keep my hands on the wheel, a little narrative to convert breaths into miles.

Shall I add a deer, he said, meaning an iconic buck on a cliff.

“Meaning” enables the speaker to comment on the subtext, of course, freezing the action to create a lyric mood in each line despite the narrative propulsion, and signaling the loaded language of poetry. With

the accumulation of each character's unspoken "meanings," it becomes gradually apparent how these two people are failing to connect. It ends,

Funny, she said. Look, she said, a little morning rain, meaning dribs and drabs hitting the windshield, meaning the darkness they had traveled through would soon be traveling through them.

They travel on into the dark, leaving unspoken their individual loneliness, though the image has spoken to us, making the loss felt.

Arresting images have always been the biggest reason I read Larsen. One of the most breathtaking comes in the end of "Q and A Decoy Boyfriend," in which the speaker himself, in the form of strips of his own dried skin, disappears into dust on the breath of his beloved. His disappearance is mirrored in the disappearance of writing—both within the poem, as the words written in aloe on his back evaporate, and outside of the poem, as the poem winds to an end. Other of Larsen's memorable images come in the form of stunning metaphors. Some of my favorites: "my newborn was pure mouth," "fermatas of longing," "a static of birds," "the sky makes a sound like it's gargling stars," and, about metaphor itself: "Metaphor is . . . our air guitar, our Big Gulp, our winning Lotto ticket, or piece of chewed gum stuck under a desk." Good metaphor enables us to see something in a new way—as does a good poem, of course.

If I had to create a metaphor for the collection itself, I couldn't do better than the images in the collection's epigraphs. Paul of Tarsus speaks of being instructed to be "both full and hungry," an apt description of how prose poetry plays with both what is present and what is absent, and how these poems in particular relish the joys of this world while yearning for somewhere and something else. And Sherwood Anderson's "sweetness of twisted apples" describes the promise of poetry's tang, its prickle and slant that jolts us into clearer vision, sweet, sharp, and beautifully twisted. This collection well fulfils that promise.

Lost in Translation

Adam S. Miller. *The Sun Has Burned My Skin: A Modest Paraphrase of Solomon's Song of Songs*. Salt Lake City: BCC Press, 2017. 68 pp. Paper: \$7.95. ISBN: 0998605255.

Reviewed by Robert A. Rees

In my review of Adam Miller's wonderfully imaginative and provocative book of criticism, *Rube Goldberg Machines: Essays in Mormon Theology* (2012), I stated: "At times, Miller seems as much poet as theologian. Essay after essay does what Robert Frost says poetry is supposed to do: 'begin in delight and end in wisdom,' although at times Miller's essays begin in wisdom and end in delight. In reality, Miller's writing is often theology as poetry."¹

Miller's newest rewriting and reconfiguring of a sacred text (albeit one not universally regarded as scripture) causes me to slightly alter that assessment: "Miller's writing is sometimes poetry as poetry." In other words, his riff ("a rapid energetic often improvised verbal outpouring"²) on Solomon's Canticle or Song of Songs owes as much to his poetic as to his critical skills. Like Miller's midrashim on Romans and Ecclesiastes (respectively, *Grace is Not God's Backup Plan* and *Nothing New Under the Sun*), *The Sun Has Burned My Skin* both renews and expands our understanding of the text.

The Song of Songs (or Song of Solomon) has a long and controversial history. When so many books were thrown out of the canon, one wants to ask why a text so overtly sexual and erotic was kept in, although the answer is obviously found in the question: this ancient Hebrew love

1. "Theology as Poetry," review of Adam S. Miller's *Rube Goldberg Machines: Essays in Mormon Theology*, *Dialogue* 47, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 178–87.

2. See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/riff>.

poem has proven too desirable and delicious for the keepers of the canon over the millennia to excise it. Much better to rationalize it, knowing that any defense was an obvious rationalization. Thus, the arguments put forth by the rabbis that the book is an extended metaphor for God's relationship with Israel, or by Christian clerics that it is a metaphor for Christ's love for the Church, was likely transparent to all but hardened fundamentalists and sexual puritans. Women who read it (if they were permitted) or knew of men reading it must surely have rolled their eyes or winked at one another. Some might have wondered (and rejoiced) at the post-reading ardor it inspired! The fact that it is told through the voice and vision of a woman makes its narrative point of view nearly as remarkable (and rare) as its subject.

From the outset, Miller acknowledges, "Solomon's Song of Songs is canonized erotica. It's scripture about sex" (1). Citing Joseph Smith's assessment when he was working on his revision of the Bible—"the Songs of Solomon are not inspired writings"³—Mormons do not consider it scripture and in reality seem to pay little attention to it, even though it confirms an important teaching that, at least in the nineteenth century, tended to separate Mormons from Catholics and Protestants. As the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* states, "In LDS life and thought, sexuality consists of attitudes, feelings, and desires that are God-given and central to God's plan for his children. . . . The purposes of appropriate sexual relations in marriage include the expression and building of joy, unity, love, and oneness. To be 'one flesh' is to experience an emotional and spiritual unity. This oneness is as fundamental a purpose of marital relations as is procreation."⁴

3. This assessment was made in the JST manuscript. See note regarding the title of the Song of Solomon, available at <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/ot/song/1?lang=eng#note>.

4. Terrance D. Olson, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, online edition, s.v. "Sexuality" (New York: Macmillan, 1992), available at <http://eom.byu.edu/index.php?title=Sexuality&oldid=4918h>.

Miller refines the traditional view about the Song of Songs, affirming that it “isn’t just about sex. It’s also about love. . . . [It’s] about what happens when a billion years of blind, reproductive pressure gets packed inside the fragile walls of a single human body—and then it’s about what happens when this blind pressure is alchemically paired with the disarming specificity of an enduring love for just one other person” (1).

Miller’s retelling of the Song is, as he acknowledges, “not a translation. It is a loose paraphrase.” And, as his subtitle states, “modest”: “What you’ll get here is that ancient, feminine voice refracted through the heart of a long-married, middle-aged, bourgeois, first-world, twenty-first century white guy with literary pretensions and three kids.” Acknowledging such limitations and qualifications, he adds, “Such a refraction comes with real costs. My renderings are, inevitably, skewed by my masculinity and tinged by my domesticity. Important parts of the original are lost along the way” (5).

Something is lost in Miller’s retelling, especially some of the more explicit eroticism and sensual imagery of the original. But not all of it, by any means. And his use of modern English makes the imagery more naked to the reader:

The Woman alludes to the amour and aromas of after love-making:

I fear everyone I meet
will catch the scent of you
lingering on my hands,
between my breasts,
tattooed like blossoms
up and down my arms. (20)

Miller repeats some biblical imagery of love and intimacy (lilies, roses, pomegranates) and invents some of his own (or makes biblical imagery fresh):

The Woman
You are an apple tree
in a forest of pines

I tuck into the shade of your boughs
the tang of fruit on my tongue. (25)

The Woman

Where do you go?
What lost sheep are you looking for? (16)

The Man

Come, fold your flocks with mine.
Rest in the shepherd's tent. (17)

He changes Elizabethan biblical phrases into modern colloquial language: "I was faint with love" becomes, "My head spins / and my knees are weak" (26).

Anyone who has been in the clutch of love, anyone who has felt that "billion years of blind, reproductive pressure . . . packed inside the fragile walls of a single human body" (1) will recognize the urgency of the man and woman burning with passion that Miller captures in such phrases as:

Hurry—take my hand.
Forget the sun
and come back to bed. (13)

Quick—we're already home. (22)

I needed you.
When you finally came
through the door
I didn't wait. (35)

I've pulled off my clothes,
washed my feet,
and slipped into bed. (47)

I want you to wake
in the night
burning,
and reach for me. (59)

The ice is cracking,
winter has passed. (29)

Hurry—take my hand.
It's time. (68)

The Supremes sang, “You can’t hurry love,” but this poem reveals that sometimes you can’t slow it down or stop it either!

Miller skillfully employs imagery of sexual desire and luxurious ecstasy, including the imagery of spices, flowers, and aromas; phallic and yonic imagery such as keys and locks, mountains and valleys, a dove and a cleft of a rock; as well as secret gardens, hidden wells, and sealed springs. He uses such conventional imagery for sexual passion as lightning, rain, storms and warm sheets, but uses it in fresh ways.

In short, Miller provides glimpses of the beauty and passion as well as the sensuality and sacredness of love, of coming together and parting, and of tasting and remembering. The following is one of my favorite poems from this small but enticing book. It is like looking at a painting or photograph of specific and intimate love:

You are beautiful.
I wake early to watch you sleep—
The lock of hair tucked behind your ear,
The laugh lines around your eyes,
Your crooked tooth and parted lips,
How the sheet clings
In the gray morning light
To the curve of your hip.
I lay my head on your breast and
Listen to your heart,
Your breath warm on my neck.
You stir and pull me closer. (39)

Such lines cause one to rejoice in a poet-philosopher who celebrates a theology that not only jubilates sexual intimacy in mortality, but elevates it to the realm of the holy, and gives glimpses of its promised eternity.

Traveling “the undiscovered country”

Stephen Carter, ed. *Moth and Rust: Mormon Encounters with Death*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2017. 257 pp. Paper: \$23.95. ISBN: 9781560852650.

Reviewed by Susan Elizabeth Howe

Death comes into our lives all too often; we don't seek it out. As much as possible, we focus on essential, everyday concerns and keep death in the distance, at the edge of the horizon. Consequently, it is something of an anomaly to find a book of essays, poetry, fiction, drama, and art whose organizing subject is death. Asked to review *Moth and Rust*, I opened it with trepidation, not particularly eager for such a long and intense engagement with, as Shakespeare calls it, “The undiscovered country from whose bourn / No traveller returns” (*Hamlet* 3.1.80–1). But this collection has been an altogether satisfying and thought-provoking read. It is original and extremely well-written, and the authors' musings about and personal experiences with death have left me with much to consider.

As I began to read, I immediately noticed that each of the forty-six authors is intelligent and talented and has an extensive publishing record. These writers care about words and use them well, the evocative and mellifluous title *Moth and Rust* being the first example of such care. The excellence of both the prose and the poetry is one of the greatest pleasures the book offers. Flannery O'Connor said that in a literary work of art, the method of presenting the work (the language with which it is written and how that language is arranged) is an aspect of the art and can't be separated from it; it is impossible to summarize what a piece says, because the very way of conveying the story or ideas is an inseparable aspect of how and what the work means. The individual pieces in this collection function in that way, offering more than a reader can comprehend in a single reading. Furthermore, I can describe them only incompletely;

there is so much more to be gained by reading them one by one. And a word about the poems: to feel their full impact in the collection, the reader must slow down, reread each one three or four times in a sitting to absorb the way the images and symbols expand and echo, extending the meaning of the words.

The unusual focus of this book is one of its strongest assets; I've never read anything even remotely like it. Editor Stephen Carter has divided the contents into five loosely arranged sections. The first, "Passages," includes works about the death of someone close to the narrator. Usually that closeness is loving and sustaining; in one essay it is based on cruelty, and in others what should be closeness is complicated by the taciturn or flighty, irresponsible personality of the beloved person. Five of the works are about mothers, four about fathers, three about grandmothers or great grandmothers, one about a brother, and one about a beloved woman friend. Some are more about the narrator than the dying person, often the way the narrator comes to a new understanding of death or of his or her relationship with the departed loved one. There are five poems, nine personal essays, and one joke—the dying person's joke.

The second section is "Piercing the Veil," about visitations from those who have passed. I expected that in this section, the personal essays would be more hesitant than the stories in making claims about communication with ghosts and angels, but two of the three essays are as emphatic in tone as the stories. In one essay, the writer describes matter-of-factly all the ghosts that have visited his family. In the other, a message from children who had died a century before teaches a chaplain of the relationship between this world and the next. The more tentative essay begins with a dream a gay man has of his partner drowning in churning, muddy water, at the actual time he was drowning in the Mississippi River. The stories, being fictional, are free to speculate. The first imagines how "mothers in heaven," women of one family who have passed on to the spirit world, come back to the mortal world to bless their daughters and granddaughters during times of great stress. The

other is about a teenaged girl whose dead boyfriend returns to be with her constantly.

I found “Fleeting,” the third section, about the deaths of children, to be the most painful. There is no fiction in this section; these are personal stories of a miscarriage, an abortion, the deaths of a one-day old son, a three-year-old son, and other equally poignant pieces, including a poem about a mother reading the letter that tells her how her dead son’s organs have been donated.

In the fourth section, “A Wider View,” writers look at death as a subject of philosophical speculation. These pieces ask difficult questions: how can a biologist, comprehending his discipline’s perspective that all life on Earth will eventually be extinguished, enjoy planting peas with his wife in their garden? How can God have required, with the Fall, the pervasive and horrendous suffering of animals, which must prey upon each other to survive? What is one’s responsibility for the animals he personally has killed? As they were about to be separated by Eve’s death, how did Adam and Eve feel about her choice to lead us all into this suffering, mortal world? Why are some Mormons protected from death by heavenly warnings while others aren’t? This section presents readers with troubling paradoxes about death that cannot be reconciled, only examined and accepted within the limits of our current knowledge of eternal truth.

The fifth section, “A Single Soul,” presents individual takes on death. Some of them are quirky—one about the writer’s dissatisfaction with the slowly rusting 1965 Ford Fairlane he bought because it was like the one he had in high school, another about the narrator’s fear of dying at night in an automobile accident as he drives from one comedy gig to another. One informational essay admonishes readers to create a bucket list that reflects their personal dreams, not the culture’s or the Church’s expectations. The other pieces in the section are profound personal essays about such subjects as dealing with severe chronic pain or life-threatening cancer.

The variety of genres is another pleasure of this collection. There are personal essays, informational essays, experimental essays, sermons, stories, poems, a play (not surprisingly, by Eric Samuelsen), and three drawings titled “Three Grand Keys,” with text explaining in three different languages how to tell if an otherworldly visitor is an angel, a just man made perfect, or the devil appearing as an angel of light. Carter has done an extraordinary job of weaving all these genres together so that in turning to the next piece, the reader is surprised and has to adjust expectations for how the narrative will develop.

As Carter says in the introduction, being confronted with death “brings us squarely into the present,” and only in the face of death are we “so intimately connected to life, so unburdened and unsupported by the past and future.” There are such a variety of responses to death that each reader will find some pieces to fit and others to challenge his or her paradigm of what happens at death, of how the dead interact with the living, and of how we create meaning in or come to an acceptance of this mortal experience that ultimately awaits us all.



A Life Worth Living

George B. Handley. *Learning to Like Life: A Tribute to Lowell Bennion*. Self-Published, CreateSpace, 2017. 122 pp. Paper: \$12.99. ISBN: 9781975992699.

Reviewed by Zach Hutchins

The highest achievement for a volume of *Festschrift* is to prompt readers to revisit the life and teachings of that individual in whose honor it has

been composed and move them to act in furtherance of the honoree's legacy. Handley's slim collection of essays, whose proceeds benefit the Birch Creek Service Ranch inspired by Lowell Bennion's ranch in the Teton Valley, accomplishes both tasks. Before I began reading this book, I knew of Bennion only anecdotally, as an author of lesson manuals for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But as I read *Learning to Like Life*, I found myself searching bookstores for copies of Bennion's books and printing off Birch Creek application forms. Handley's essays capture the worldview of a man whose life and teachings were radical with respect to twentieth-century values in precisely the same way that New Testament Christians were considered radicals by their contemporaries.

Handley begins the book with an anecdote that sets the tone for his meditations on the life and legacy of Lowell Bennion. Describing Bennion's death in 1996, Handley recalls that

President Gordon B. Hinckley, the President of the LDS church at the time and [Bennion's] former neighbor, commented at his funeral that he had seen a lot of cars in the church parking lot that day that Lowell Bennion would have never driven. . . . [Bennion] was not afraid to suggest that people ought not to own homes and cars that were too big and too expensive because he knew how much these things distract us from our deeper purposes. (9)

Like the first followers of Jesus, who left their nets and material possessions straightway, the Bennion remembered by Handley is a man who cared more for the kingdom than his career. His many acts of service included running the Boys Ranch every summer for more than twenty years, where he conversed and played and worked side-by-side with hundreds of young men, inviting each to the labor of self-actualization.

Fittingly, given his funereal tribute, Handley's book is organized around a series of aphorisms reminiscent of those in President Hinckley's bestselling *Way to Be!: 9 Rules for Living the Good Life*. All but one of Bennion's aphorisms begin with the same three words: "Learn to like." Those words express a belief in the malleability of the human soul, a

belief that we can educate our desires and cultivate a love for the finest things in life. Such a perspective is fundamental to Mormon theology, and although Bennion's aphorisms "do not explicitly mention Christ or his atonement, they do describe the transformative power of partnering our desires with God so as to 'learn to like' what is higher, better, and more worthy of our affections" (107).

In keeping with those paradoxes fundamental to Christianity, Bennion found what is "higher, better, and more worthy" in thrift, simplicity, and sweat. His aphorisms endorse the pursuit of:

what doesn't cost much;
conversation;
plain food, plain service, plain cooking;
fields, trees, brooks, hiking, rowing, climbing hills;
work;
the song of birds; and
gardening, puttering around the house, and fixing things. (11)

Bennion's aphorisms urge the use and appreciation of that which we already possess or have access to, rather than the acquisition of more. His rejection of consumerism and *haute cuisine*, as well as an attitude of indifference to technology, should register as bracingly radical for many Americans, but Handley encourages his readers to embrace this embodied, measured, industrious approach to life.

In amplifying Bennion's aphorisms, Handley both speaks to the philosophical underpinnings of each directive and offers practical suggestions for "learning to like" the simple things of life. For example, in his discussion of fields, trees, and brooks, Handley suggests that contemplating nature reveals "how strange and unnecessary beauty really is, as strange and unnecessary as love or grace or forgiveness and mercy. And when we see them unnecessary but nevertheless real, we see them as gifts of a Giver" (54–55). Interspersed with his lyrical celebration of landscapes and similarly profound passages are more pragmatic exhortations, encouraging the reader to avoid "walking on treadmills on a

perfectly beautiful day” (47). Handley is at his best and most compelling when he delves into the theological rationale for Bennion’s beliefs.

Occasionally, Handley wanders fairly far afield from Bennion’s aphorisms. His exegesis of the directive to “Learn to like what doesn’t cost much,” for example, lingers on a desire for social justice whose connections to Bennion’s directive is tangential and tenuous. Bennion, he writes, “never limited his service to people of his own faith or to those in his own circles. His commitment was to broaden his circles however and whenever he could. I suppose the alternative is to risk believing that the world consists of people in the conditions of those most immediately around us. There is poverty in such an imagination” (18). These are beautiful sentiments, artfully expressed; their relation to “what doesn’t cost much” remains, for me, unclear. If, here and elsewhere, Handley strays from the task at hand, his wanderings are, at least, worthwhile ventures.

Learning to Like Life is an easy book to like. And for those like me, who never knew Lowell Bennion, Handley’s book does the important service of turning our minds and hearts to his consecrated life and wise teachings—both are worth revisiting.



The Gift of Language

Heidi Naylor. *Revolver*. Salt Lake City: BCC Press, 2018. 190 pp. Paper: \$9.95. ISBN: 9781948218009.

Reviewed by Michael Andrew Ellis

The stories in Heidi Naylor’s short story collection *Revolver* present characters who have experienced regret, grief, loss, and even death. As

readers, we have the opportunity to peer into the abyss of their lives, while still garnering from the experience some little hope to carry on. Sounds grim, perhaps, but literature allows us to experience vicariously the circumstances, situations, and tragedies we would rather avoid in our own lives, perhaps with the hope that we might learn therefrom. To walk in another's shoes. Naylor's stories don't "preach," rather, they present life as it is, refusing to offer easy answers or comforting reassurances that "all is well" within Zion or without. In short, they present life in all its ugliness, beauty, and irony. The language is fresh, and the images exquisite. The collection is almost equal parts Mormon-themed and not, but the Mormon-themed stories have a universality to them that broaden their appeal beyond a Mormon literary audience. I will highlight a few of the best stories.

The title story, "Revolver," tells of a World War II veteran who attends a Memorial Day ceremony at the local cemetery and recalls a regrettable incident from his days as a soldier. The irony is that Klink was a former Nazi who fought in Russia, but after the war, he came to America, settled in Idaho, married, changed his name, became a respectable citizen, and reared a daughter. Americans will forgive anything, he thinks. Klink dwells on the time, however, when he and his commander stumbled on a Russian woman and her children hiding in a cellar. Klink's commander leaves him to have his way with the woman and then to kill her and the children, but the situation goes in an unexpected direction. The story was nominated for a Pushcart Prize and won the fiction award at *New Letters* magazine in 2010.

"A Season of Curing" introduces us to Margo and Ripley, who are divorced, but meet for drinks to commemorate Ripley's fifty-eighth birthday. The introductory paragraph is genius, luring us in with Ripley's thoughts about the nature of "success" and "failure," only we don't know in the first paragraph that these thoughts are Ripley's. "People do things. It's the lament of the people who don't." The meeting of Margo and Ripley is strained with memories of Ripley's finding

other women attractive, but not so much Margo. This is a great story of a failed marriage and the ensuing tension between the parties even when they attempt to be civil with each other. But even more than the failed relationship, what stands out is Ripley's sense of having failed in life and how depressed that makes him. The final lines are haunting, although portending a possible second chance: "It was too bad. For when it came down to it he doubted he could change. Revision was for the young. It may well be too late."

Of the stories that have no apparent Mormon characters or themes, "The Hardness of Steel" is my favorite. Conrad is visiting the house of his late parents in a Pennsylvania steel town and reflects on the town's decline because of imported steel. He remembers his father's confrontation with a neighbor who lost his job at the mill. Naylor portrays desperation, loss, and longing so well. Another great closing line, on bleakness: "The hard energy, dry as feathers, that pushes forward at all expense."

In her "Mormon" stories, Naylor uses a character's Mormonness as one of many aspects, not unlike ginger-colored hair. In other words, these are characters who just happen to be Mormon.

"The Mandelbrot Set," a story that is shaped by the meaning of its title and the stressed phrase of "time, patience, repetition, belief," presents events from the life of Ginger, one of the "rare Mormons in the Delaware Valley," from her youth through her graduate-level study of mathematics. For purposes of this story, a Mandelbrot set is less its mathematical definition and more its "aesthetic appeal . . . as an example of a complex structure arising from the application of simple rules."¹ Ginger is gifted at the piano, and one of her practice sessions is where we are first introduced to the phrase "time, patience, repetition, belief." Ginger works at a bakery, and one afternoon the baker molests her. Naylor juxtaposes memories of a young women leader's

1. Wikipedia, s.v. "Mandelbrot set," last modified Jan. 27, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandelbrot_set.

admonitions about modesty with the act of molestation, as well as the image of Ginger as violated dough in the baker's hands. It's a beautifully rendered, heartbreaking scene. We then follow Ginger through graduation and on to studying higher mathematics. At a conference about the Mandelbrot set, she meets and becomes involved with an older man who is none other than Ripley McCord, the character from "A Season of Curing." In high school Ginger moved away from Mormonism, which tends to find teleological meaning in just about everything, yet curiously in the closing paragraphs she finds meaning in the way events have conspired to create a moment where the patterns that have been there all along are clear, in the Mandelbrot set, and in the possibility of love with Ripley. She's still finding patterns. The irony is that the reader, already familiar with Ripley, is uncertain whether he is prepared to give her what she anticipates.

"The Home Teacher" can be read as a homage to Levi S. Peterson's "The Christianizing of Coburn Heights." Brock, the home teacher, is asked by his bishop to help an older couple make their money stretch. The couple wants food orders, but the bishop wants them schooled in self-reliance. The narrative of Brock's seemingly futile attempts to get Merv and his wife to budget is juxtaposed with Brock's memory from his mission of helping a homeless man addicted to heroin get clean and begin a new life in the gospel. If Brock could help Clive then, why can't he help Merv now? The story compels the reader to ask where the line between being used and being helpful lies. Also, while Brock has faith in planning down to the cent, we wonder how much this ability comes from the comforts he takes for granted.

"Name" places Lisbeth, a teenage Mormon girl, squarely in the sordid circumstances of "the World." She works as a lottery ticket agent at a newsstand in a Pennsylvania strip mall, uncomfortably peddling "gambling, pornography, and nicotine like they were pure pulled taffy." By cleverly setting up an exchange with Donny Osmond, Naylor introduces the idea that names hold power. After an experience

with an obnoxious customer, Lisbeth comes to realize the power that someone speaking your name can give or take from you. In an artful twist, it's an autographed name that saves Lisbeth.

"Jane's Journey" is an incredible story set in England that begins with the courtship of Jane's mother and father, Tom and Mariane Munday. Dirt poor, they live on the land of a man named Granger. They have two children, Walter and Jane. They are happy at first, but after Granger's wife gets sick, Granger requests Mariane to come nurse his wife. Granger continues to call for her until it becomes clear that his interest in her is for more than as a nurse. It's during this time that Walter goes off to war. Tom and Mariane's relationship is strained, and Mariane loses respect in the eyes of Jane. Then there is the door, a gift from Granger, that Tom and Jane turn into a table. But its fit inside the little cottage they live in symbolizes the influence for ill that Granger has had in their lives. Over the years, Walter goes missing, and Tom dies in a freak accident. Jane marries, and then decides to go to America with the Mormons. I'll leave the ending in question, but what is remarkable about this story is that one reads the sections as "true" history, but then in the final section the narrator admits to creating these stories from "scanty [family] narratives long on piety, short on details." It causes the reader to view everything they have read up till then in a new light.

In conclusion, Heidi Naylor has a gift for language and evoking characters with whom you can relate and feel. You will not be disappointed with what they have to offer.



Helping Us Think and Be in the World

Linda Sillitoe. *Owning the Moon*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2017. 200 pp. Paper: \$22.95. ISBN: 9781560852667.

Reviewed by Lisa Bickmore

In 2016, the poet Solmaz Sharif said, “More and more, I am becoming convinced that poetry is not a form of writing, but a form of reading. And a form of thinking and being in the world.”¹

I recalled this remark as I was reading *Owning the Moon*, the book of poems by Linda Sillitoe, published posthumously by Signature Books. I’m struck by the aptness of the remark for Linda’s last poems, which are both a great gift to us, now several years after her too-soon passing, and a reminder of what we lost in her. While these poems must have been written over the course of many years, they seem aware of their own lateness—of what has been lived and then lost, of what has been taken, and what has been relinquished. It is awash in memory, beautifully reconstituted, animated, revived. This is one of the things, I think, that Sharif means when she says that poetry is “a form of reading”—that is, it holds the text of the world and inspects it closely. Poetry can also give form to the ways we think and are in the world, and Sillitoe’s book is engaged in this life-altering work.

The great mystery of being human, one could argue, is the nature of the bodily self, taking up space in the world, breathing its air, eating its plants and animals, feeling the surges of desire and want and will: and the fact of other people, who also breathe and consume and feel

1. Asian American Writers’ Workshop, “War on Terror Poetry with Solmaz Sharif, Ricky Laurentiis, Mariam Ghani, Cathy Park Hong,” YouTube, accessed Aug. 10, 2016, <https://youtu.be/d9xmaXcThSo>.

and surge. “Ballad from the wilds” speaks to this mystery, in fierce and enchanting song:

In the wilds of love you seek the other
who’s seeking you. In forest, needles fall
to east the random slope where you take cover.

By sea, the moon bedazzles sight, as salt
sparks everything to flame upon your tongue.

The world cannot help itself—it must stagger us with its sensate glory, and we are a part of it and also at its mercy. In its alchemy, we are made, we fashion ourselves and are fashioned:

yet don’t expect
to confront behind so many shrubs or palms

unmasked and varied selves: who you were;
who you are; and who you always were. (42)

The poet knows the self is always simultaneous and various, and in so many ways: the selves we assemble to meet our infinite circumstances (“there will be time / To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet,” as Eliot’s Prufrock muses, in a different register), the selves that represent our pasts, and our enduring always-present. Even in a poem about a slow morning, “For now,” the speaker recognizes that her circumstances are both transitory and to be cherished:

We move carelessly.
The cat snoozes in the curl of the quilt,
knowing I can’t make my bed.
My daughter sleeps so soundly
she may wake whole again.

The savor of this quiet, almost still, moment is part and parcel of the speaker’s recognition of its fleetingness. What is to be done in the face of it?

A sun ray flings a diagonal
 Across my keys, my work.
 I must work and work well
 on this empty beach of morning
 That promises like a lover's goodbye,
 Hoping soon, meaning *now*.

The divide between being and doing—is the self whole as it is, or must it be understood as its actions?—is here bridged in a performance that only appears to be simple. The sleeping of the beloveds, cat and daughter, the stillness of the house, are a space in which the poet registers sunlight and recognizes that the work at hand is what she will, she must, make of the stillness.

Sillitoe's poems help us to see that these necessary words are to be assembled, and to be meted out in the kairotic moment, the exact, opportune moment when speech is necessary and ideal. In "White space," the poem's speaker recounts the ending of a phone call, "a silence [that] thickens / between mouth and mouthpiece / tying both ends of the line / until we manage goodbye." She considers: "How does it halt and hold us?":

We could try to say more
 or feel less. No, leave it
 to savor later—

that eloquence.

This is the dilemma of what to say, when to say it, whether to say anything at all, and every writer—every human being—stumbles into it sooner or later. The eloquence of not saying, of implying, is the perplexing conundrum of every kind of speech. Here, the poet knows what speaking risks—that pushing past reticence can mean the loss of eloquence. In "Saguaro lake," we see more of what this reticence, this holding something back, might look like: the poet recounts events at and around the lake, including a drowning and a fire nearby, where

“brittlebush and poppies / [are] torched as tinder.” But the afternoon of the poet’s visit, “seven eagles / hunted the deep red cliffs,”

tracing circles above the cholla, whose needles
cupped the light.
Nearer earth, birds winged around the secrets
we cached in the air.

The air full of secrets, kept hidden there? Sillitoe’s poems brim with this magic, so casually loosed, yet so carefully held.

The poems show a person who has chosen a kind of exile—no accident, in fact or in the relevant myths, that the new home is a desert—but who gives us lessons in how to dwell in a landscape, how to make a home of a place. In “Arizona wind,” the speaker queries the “wind’s howl,” wondering about its provenance, about what it wants:

Is this a choir of ghosts
Blown south from the caves
Near Hopi mesas where bones
Of their ancestors sing?

What, near my urban pueblo,
Justifies the crescendo and roar
Of the dry gusts now shaking
The jacaranda trees like rags

The wind is hostile, but the speaker faces it, inquires of it, personifies it, imagines it into a spirit. She seeks to know it, in other words. What a contrast with the people, in “Return to the Rockies,” who are not curious whatsoever about whence the speaker has returned, and what she experienced there:

People don’t request those stories.
They say, *Welcome back*
To this, the right place.
Crickets translate:
About time.

To really be in a place, the poet suggests, requires opening oneself to it, and then remembering to tell the tale of how one arrived and how one left.

A quiet but insistent inquiry of these poems is how to address what is sacred—how to see it, remember it, conjure up a form of worship. In “Broken sonnet,” Sillitoe names herself the “pagan daughter” at the death of her father, and, in “Imposter,” she describes speaking outside a church with an interlocutor:

you say you hate the god
ranting this scripture and that
like the leader of a cult.

As you speak, God glitters along the leaves,
hovers by a nest,
and rests in your dark eyes

The disquiet the speaker sees in this person is consuming—in the poem, it gestures at some form of abuse—and yet the person

still harbor[s] that same light
of God silking the leaves
and tending nests,
seeing everything
the faithful will unsee.

This is a powerful kind of gnosis, and the poet summons the numinous again and again. Sometimes, it’s the ghost of a beloved, as in “Encounter,” when she opens the medicine cabinet at her parents’ house and catches the drift of her dead father’s scent: “The room wavered like my knees.” But the poet is unafraid of more explicit forms of prayer. The poem “Lost moons” speaks the names of many different moons, which appeared in all their guises to humankind at various suitable times:

We would wake in the haze of the Plant-in-Secret-Moon,
Anticipate languid lovemaking under the Corn-in-Tassel.
Sorrow, borne by the Moon-When-Reindeer-Return-from-the-Sea,
Or hunger below the Cold-Meal-Moon, would fit like lost skin
if each year thundered forth the Moon-When-the-Buffalo-Ruts.

That the body of the moon, showing its avatars, might be imagined to somehow clothe a human being in skin that had been lost: surely this is prayer, a plea for what is missing and what might only be possible to find through a celestial apparition, one that could know the weather, connect broken lands, gather people to the dance.

The poems in *Owning the Moon* do the good work Sharif described, of helping us think and be in the world. The poet Rickey Laurentiis, in talking about the ways poems work for us, notes that “We only have so much time on this planet, really. For some of us, because of political or social or national agendas, even shorter. If I’m reading a poem, I want to be taught how to live, and how we can live better. I want to be reminded how precious life is, really.” Reading *Owning the Moon* caused me to grieve the loss of Linda Sillitoe, but I am grateful for these parting words, for their irreplaceable reminders.



Horror Becomes Banal Under Scrutiny but Loss Is Lasting in *The Apocalypse of Morgan Turner*

Jennifer Quist. *The Apocalypse of Morgan Turner*. Berkeley, Calif.: Linda Leith Publishing, 2018. 300pp. Paper: \$18.95. ISBN: 9781988130620.

Reviewed by Rachel Helps

Although courtroom dramas can be entertaining, providing a formula for introducing new information through surprise witnesses or new evidence, simple procedurals can grow tired. An antidote is a realistic

courtroom novel, where inner change and contemplation outshine lawyerly details. Jennifer Quist's *The Apocalypse of Morgan Turner* is a short but carefully crafted literary novel that gives readers a view into the impact continual court appearances can have on a victim's family. Characters in the book contemplate the origin of evil and mental illness, as well as friendship and self-expression.

The central character is Morgan Turner, whose sister Tricia has been murdered by her boyfriend. The Canadian government has appointed Joshua Lund as the prosecuting attorney. Through Joshua, she meets his sister Gillian, a graduate student in literature, and their mentally ill brother Paul, all former Mormon missionaries.

Morgan wants to understand madness and horror in order to understand Tricia's murder. She becomes interested in exorcisms and wants to perform one. While watching pigs walk into the slaughterhouse, Paul tells her about how Jesus cast devils into pigs. He says that Jesus doesn't have to use any special words—he simply commands the devils and they obey him. The way the pigs march into the slaughterhouse without “squealing panic” is a metaphor for the way evil plays out in the novel. Morgan may want to purify her life of evil, but it is everywhere. As Gillian states, “We've all got some natural, selfish badness in us. It's in the dirt we're made of—it's the stuff that makes us grow. But then there's evil outside of us, gnawing away at the good things we're made of.”

Quist's prose is intimate, laced with dry humor. She uses original ways to describe characters, employing small details to humanize them. Morgan has one friend whose text exchanges are “variations on intricate emojis drawn with punctuation marks” (135). Morgan's brother Tod is the kind of person who goes to work early to read philosophy in his car. Quist's asides are matter-of-fact: “most of the time, all blood means to a girl is that everything is exactly as it should be” (87).

The Mormons in this book feel like outsiders. They are very human, and try hard to do good things, but they don't really help Morgan through her apocalypse. Josh works to achieve a harsher prison sentence

for Tricia's murderer, but it doesn't help Morgan mourn Tricia's death. Gillian reminds me of myself. I see my own sporadic, aggressive, and formulaic friendship overtures in the way Gillian takes Morgan under her wing. She has my same smug way of explaining minutiae—minutiae that matter less than the people surrounding them. I feel giddy when I read that her thesis topic is looking at legal transcripts as “incidental found literature,” and I feel kind of robbed that I didn't get to read any of it. She seems more interested in Morgan because of her connection to the murder case, rather than in her as a person. Their friendship is an unequal one where Gillian is constantly trying to help Morgan, but the material support—taking her to the hospital, giving her rides, buying her a juice—are insufficient to soothe Morgan's psychological discontent. Yet Gillian's eye for detail and unfailing check-ups on her brother Paul are a large part of what allows him to live on his own. That kind of service has value, because some people are unable or unwilling to take care of themselves.

In contrast to Gillian, her brother Paul grew up Mormon, but no longer believes. His mental illness humbles him, and he cooperates when Morgan asks him to accompany her in several of her revelatory moments. Morgan herself wonders at how she can befriend a mentally ill man when mental illness might have played a role in her sister's murder; since their relationship is not romantic she feels she is safe from passionate murder. He doesn't have answers for Morgan but offers his thoughts to her as an intellectual equal.

Morgan starts the book wondering if it's possible for a body to be negatively identified—by the end of the book she imagines that others “negatively identify” her as Tricia's sister—the one who isn't dead. Part of Morgan's identity is in not being Tricia; her sister's death requires Morgan to define herself independently.

After Morgan begins working in a cafeteria with Chinese coworkers, she starts learning Chinese words and phrases. Her coworkers are friendly in subtle ways, like when they choose to watch Korean dramas

with English as well as Chinese subtitles for Morgan's benefit. Learning Chinese helps Morgan move on. Usually Morgan's dialogue is conveyed indirectly. In one of the few times she speaks "out loud", it is loudly and in Chinese. In the end of the book, Morgan starts a new life as an English instructor in China. Perhaps English was so loaded with old thought patterns and memories that Morgan had to start thinking in a different language to start anew. Away from the sphere of influence of Tricia's murder, she can be "positively" identified as Morgan.



Envisioning Mormon Art

Laura Allred Hurtado. *Immediate Present*. New York: Mormon Arts Center, 2017. 132 pp. Paper, \$24.95. ISBN: 9780692890196.

Reviewed by Sarah C. Reed

Last summer, the Church History Museum was busy preparing to send art from Salt Lake City to New York City. The backstory of this move was the foundation of the Mormon Arts Center. This nonprofit is the brainchild of historian Richard Bushman and author Glen Nelson, trying to fill a gap in what they saw in Mormon arts and arts scholarship. Nelson, in a post on *By Common Consent*, bemoans that Mormons don't know their own art and that Mormon artists and "the individual components of Mormon culture are in place, but they are like islands needing some serious bridge-building."¹ The Mormon Arts Center seeks to bring Mormon art to new

1. Glen Nelson, "Mormon Art in New York," *By Common Consent* (blog), May 2, 2017, <https://bycommonconsent.com/2017/05/02/mormon-art-in-new-york>.

audiences and to bring Mormon artists together. On their website they explain their threefold mission: “to display and perform Mormon art in New York City and elsewhere; to publish scholarship and criticism about Mormon art to reach a wider public; and to establish a comprehensive archive of Mormon Arts, 1830 to the present.”²

One result of these efforts was the first of a projected annual Mormon Arts Center Festival June 29–July 1, 2017 in the Riverside Church in New York City. In addition to music and spoken word, a significant portion of the festival was an art exhibition of Mormon artists curated by Laura Allred Hurtado, the Global Acquisitions Curator of the Church History Museum in Salt Lake City. The exhibition, titled *Immediate Present*, featured artwork from the 2010s by Mormon artists, many of those pieces loaned by the Church History Museum. The artists included in this exhibition were: Pam Bowman, Whitney Bushman, Stephanie Kelly Clark, Caitlin Connolly, Jeff Decker, Daniel Everett, Rachel Farmer, Jeff Hein, Ben Howell, Levi Jackson, Brian Kershnik, David Chapman Lindsay, Jason Metcalf, Annie Poon, Walter Rane, J. Kirk Richards, Jean Richardson, Ron Richmond, Jorge Cocco Santángelo, Mary Sauer, Casey Jex Smith, Page Turner, and Chase Westfall.

To accompany these works of art, the festival commissioned written responses from a variety of Mormon thinkers—“a lawyer, a doctor, a game warden, a poet, a children’s book author, a composer, a musician, and a women’s rights advocate,” as the website states. Each writer was paired with an artist and wrote a piece that interacted with that art, from criticism to lyrics, from personal memoir to poetry, from an interview to a theological treatise. The authors were: Claire Åkebrand, English Brooks, Joanna Brooks, Sam Brown, Claudia Bushman, Alex Caldiero, Tyler Chadwick, Steve Evans, Fiona Givens, James Goldberg, Ryan Habermeyer, Julie de Azevedo Hanks, Ashley Mae Hoiland, Garrick Infanger, McArthur Krishna, Igor Coelho Arantes Santana Marques,

2. “About,” *Mormon Arts Center*, <https://www.mormonartscenter.org/about-main>.

Neylan McBaine, Carol Lynn Pearson, Jennifer Reeder, Analisa Coats Sato, Rachel Hunt Steenblik, Paul Washburn, and Chrysula Winegar.

The work under review here is the exhibition catalog put together by Laura Allred Hurtado and also titled *Immediate Present*. The coffee-table, soft-covered volume features color reproductions of the art alongside their accompanying written responses. The art underscores the great variety of styles and media that Mormon artists employ and the responses offer us models of how to engage with this art: sometimes direct interpretations, sometimes parallel musings, sometimes with another piece of art. The result is a wonderful synergy of art and audience and a treasury of performance and pedagogy. The Mormon Arts Center seeks to bring together artists and to bring them to an audience; this catalog shows exactly how this is accomplished by putting these Mormon artworks together in one exhibition and one volume and then instructing us with the ways we could react to this art through the diversity of thoughtful reflections. I found the poetry particularly fruitful in showing the creative and productive potential of the enterprise.

Laura Allred Hurtado's essay "The Immediate Present" introduces the volume and provides the necessary historical and critical context for the exhibition and the Mormon Arts Center Festival in general. Hurtado begins with President Spencer W. Kimball's speeches "Education for Eternity" and its adaptation in "The Gospel Vision of the Arts." The latter was given in 1967, so the 2017 festival marks the fiftieth anniversary and, as the promotional material says, "will explore the legacy of President Kimball's groundbreaking message" (2). Kimball muses on the relationship of the gospel to the arts. He encourages "Mormon artists, writers, thinkers, and musicians to aim for greatness," while also speculating on how a full knowledge of Mormon beliefs could have added to the greatness of artists like Rembrandt, Raphael, Paganini, Handel, Goethe, and Shakespeare. He also bemoans that the full drama and majesty of the Mormon story had not yet been "written nor painted nor sculpted nor spoken" (2). But Hurtado wonders what the aims and ideological underpinnings are of Kimball's

“call for greater cultural development and pursuit among Mormon artists” (4). Would it bring the LDS church out of obscurity? Would it legitimize the Church by proving that great people produce great art? Does a single great work of art serve as a metonym for the larger community? Drawing on the work of Benedict Anderson, Hurtado asks what single artist could represent the “imagined community” of Mormonism, concluding that “a call for multiplicity” must be necessary (4).

Hurtado then turns to the history of Mormon arts festivals, beginning with the Art and Belief Movement at BYU in 1964. The artists involved began to display their art and by the late 1960s the Festival of Mormon Arts (later changed to Mormon Arts Festival) was born. The festival was conceived of broadly with “no restriction on style” but sought a unity of message, asking that artists express their “sincere convictions” and that their works exert a “positive influence in the building of the kingdom of God on earth” (5). The details of the kinds of artists and art displayed at these festivals that continued until 1987 are a fascinating look at what counts as Mormon and the elastic definition of “Mormon” and “belief.”

Hurtado takes up the perennial question “what is Mormon art.” For the most part, her analysis here is descriptive rather than prescriptive, that is, she surveys what others have claimed as Mormon art and sketches out the implications for those definitions. In doing so, she provides a useful critical summary of various viewpoints. I wished in the context of the exhibition she could have expounded more on Amanda Beardsley’s stance that Mormon art is that “produced or commissioned by LDS church headquarters.” Hurtado, and perhaps Beardsley, sees this as art found in free copies of the Book of Mormon, the art from the gospel art kit, and the ubiquitous prints of Del Parson’s *Christ in the Red Robe*. I wondered how Hurtado would see art owned by the Church for the Church History Museum as a part of this, not just the mass-produced reproductions. Glen Nelson’s definition of Mormon art for the Center and festival is much more expansive: “If you self-identify as a Mormon, and you’re making art, then the art you are making is Mormon art” (9). M. Ephraim Hatch, from a

1969 proposal for a Mormon Arts Center, gave the definition of Mormon art as made by, for, or about Mormons. Hurtado asserts that she blended Nelson's and Hatch's definitions in curating the exhibition.

The last part of the essay is dedicated to using Jewish and American art as patterns for a Mormon arts movement. In particular, the Center was consciously modeled on the Jewish Museum in New York City. Hurtado offers the journeys of Jewish and American art as a road guide to recognition for Mormon art. However, Mormon art, for the moment, occupies a null space. It's not even a "minor" art yet; we're still trying to convince people it exists. The process that legitimizes a Mormon arts movement is still creating an audience for this art and raising the capital that could bring this art to that audience. Hurtado is hopeful, though, that "this festival and the others that follow will influence definitions, cultivate great artistic productions, and expand the notion of Mormon art out of its perceived colloquial status." Lofty goals, but even as this catalog shows, the grand talent and artistic interchange made possible may be the reward in itself.



Not Alone

Stephen Carter, ed. *Moth and Rust: Mormon Encounters with Death*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2017. 257 pp. Paper: \$23.95. ISBN: 9781560852650.

Reviewed by Cristina Rosetti

Death is one of the great anxieties and mysteries that permeate human existence. Through various art forms, and across different contexts,

people have sought to alleviate the sorrow and grief that stem from death. *Moth and Rust: Mormon Encounters with Death* is one such piece of art. In the opening pages of his introduction, editor Stephen Carter indicates that this text is not a “how-to guide to help you overcome grief” (xi). Rather, it is “a sharing of raw emotion that may only add to your anxiety, but will remind you that you are not alone” (xi). The volume, comprised of a compilation of essays by authors such as Devery Anderson, Steven L. Peck, Boyd J. Petersen, John Hatch, Lisa Torcasso Downing, Phyllis Barber, and Eugene England, lives up to this promise.

The contributions in this volume are organized into five sections: “Passages,” “Piercing the Veil,” “Fleeting,” “A Wider View,” and “A Single Soul.” The first gives particular attention to the passing of a loved one and the contributors’ heartfelt responses to these moments. “Piercing the Veil” offers insight into the soul after death, including visitations from departed family and insight into the continued presence of the deceased. The third section takes up death outside of the human experience of dying, offering accounts of the prevalence with death in the surrounding world. The final section presents individuals grappling with death and the way it manifests in the life of an individual. The contributions include personal narrative, poetry, and creative fiction.

The greatest strength of this compilation is its demonstration of the diversity of belief within Mormonism. The essays within the volume highlight complexity and the ways in which individuals from various backgrounds hold a variety of perspectives on death. In the introduction to the volume, Carter indicates that a book on encounters with death in a Mormon context should be boring because Mormonism figured out death and provides answers for the uncertainties of the hereafter. He writes, “We know that death is a veil separating our mortal sphere from the immortal sphere, and that when we cross to the other side there will be a potluck and relatives to greet us” (ix). However, the reality is much different. Although doctrines and insight from General Authorities abound in the Church, the lived understanding of death reflects the

perspectives of each individual Mormon. It is often the case that these extend beyond simple narratives of the plan of salvation.

Illustrative of this strength are the essays by Paul Malan in “Passages” and Angela Hallstrom’s essay in “Piercing the Veil.” Malan’s essay, “Mormon Enough,” tells the story of his father’s stroke while serving a mission in Santo Domingo. Knowing his father’s wishes, Malan’s family asked doctors about removing life support. Unfortunately, this was an impossibility in the Dominican Republic. Turning to old emails from his father, Malan read through his father’s words, particularly an email exchange in which his father told him to “remember who you are.” It was these words that sparked Malan to succeed in bringing his father back to the US and removing life support, as his father would have wanted. Although inactive, Malan gave his father a blessing before he passed knowing he was “Mormon enough.” He writes, “But I am Mormon enough to bring him home to say goodbye to his Mormon family. I am Mormon enough to belong in that family. And that’s certainly Mormon enough for me” (12). In this short essay, *Moth and Rust* offers readers an account of a Mormon outside of an orthodox LDS paradigm who nevertheless identifies as Mormon and grapples with death in a meaningful and profoundly spiritual way.

A second essay that reflects the diversity within the volume is Angela Hallstrom’s “Visitations” found in the section titled “Piercing the Veil.” Within this essay, Hallstrom reflects on the visitations from women who have passed to the other side. These women come at particular times to minister, comfort, and protect. As she closes her description of the women who enter into the mortal realm at various points, she writes, “Mostly they are proud of you. How tough you are; how hard you try. They love you so much. That’s what they want to tell you most of all when they visit you in the night” (76–77). Through her narrative on the heavenly mothers that watch after their children, Hallstrom embodies the mission of the volume by sharing with her readers that they are not alone.

Each essay within this volume is worth acknowledgment for its profound impact. As I sat in my office and read through the accounts of sorrow, hope, grief, and love, I was met by the comfort of forty-six individuals who offered their story as a guiding light for life's journey. I would recommend this volume to anyone, Mormon or otherwise, who seeks the knowledge that they are not alone.



The Empty Space between the Walls

Joseph M. Spencer. *The Vision of All: Twenty-five Lectures on Isaiah in Nephi's Record*. Salt Lake City: Kofford Books, 2016. 298 pp. Paper: \$25.95. ISBN: 9781589586321.

Reviewed by Mark D. Thomas

The intellectual strength of Mormon scholarship lies in the academic study of its own history. As important as the study of that history is, less than one percent of the world's population has any interest in it. If Mormonism wishes to become more than a local sect, if it wishes to become a global religion, it must stop being so self-absorbed and start speaking a moral language comprehensible to a larger portion of the world. The Hebrew Bible would make a wise starting point for engaging in global moral dialogue and influence. The Hebrew Bible is accepted by three billion people across the globe, nearly half the world's population. The influence of the book of Isaiah is already an important part of that moral and artistic dialogue in the world—in famous pieces of high art, in European cathedrals, in works of feminist exegesis, in articles by liberation theologians and environmentalists, and even in

the lyrics of Bob Dylan. Knowing Isaiah better would also change the writing of Mormon history. Mormon history, sermons, publications, and revelations are full of unnoticed echoes from Isaiah. The writing of Mormon history would be very different with a better understanding of Isaiah. Mormon history itself would be very different without the Hebrew prophet.

Mormonism's traditions of reading, alluding to, quoting, and echoing Isaiah provide us with ambivalent perspectives. On the one hand, Mormonism provides us with a creative and prophetic midrash on Isaiah of great value and creativity that speaks to a modern populist reader. On the other hand, Mormonism's treatment of Isaiah is largely devotional, isolated, sect-like, and genuinely embarrassing to anyone familiar with mainstream scholarship on the Hebrew Bible. With few exceptions, we do not have the competence to engage anyone in a discussion of Isaiah beyond the local ward Sunday School teacher. This is the general context as Joseph Spencer enters the room with his examination of Nephi's reading of Isaiah. How does Spencer fare?

First, style. Spencer tries to engage the reader by using the very informal style of a casual lecture. "Yikes! We've gone down a rather long tangent here, haven't we?" (23). Call me old fashioned, but this is one of the most distracting and annoying styles that I have ever read in any book. It seriously gets in the way of my reading and appreciating Spencer's book. And there is much to appreciate in his book.

Second, scholarship and theology. In addition to consulting mainstream biblical scholarship, Spencer brings in a careful reading of textual variants of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon, the original chapter structure, and text of the Book of Mormon to explore the Nephite view of Isaiah. His advocacy of mainstream scholarship is laudable, but he recommends sticking to very conservative scholars. He thus avoids serious discussion of the revolution in scholarship on Isaiah that has taken place during the past few decades, which has witnessed a major paradigm shift in studies on Isaiah. The trend is no longer to view Isaiah as a single text

or a text segmented into two or three simple authors. Current scholars see a careful and prolonged organizing of the book; there is compelling internal evidence of creative compiling, editing, reinterpreting, reapplying, emending, and adding to the text over a period of at least four centuries before it became relatively stable sometime in the second temple period, after 530 BCE. Rather than a book, Isaiah is often seen today by many of those who study it most competently as an anthology whose authors are often inconsistent.

Spencer is not neutral about critical scholars. Since he does not speak Hebrew, Spencer flatly states that he is not competent to assess David Wright's work on the Hebrew Bible and so avoids the issues that Wright raises entirely (98). But as a philosopher, he is not above committing the ad hominem fallacy, by labeling Wright's work as "antagonistic" (95–96). As a philosopher, it would be better for Spencer to stick to Hebrew rather than to commit the most common logical fallacy.

Also, as a philosopher, Spencer's interest in Isaiah is to interpret Isaiah under uniform, theological themes. This is a perfectly legitimate approach. In this he is following the lead of Brevard Childs in calling for a theology based on the final state of the text. But Spencer's theology ignores careful exegesis. For example, he is very interested in the Abrahamic covenant, which (according to Spencer) is a central theme throughout Isaiah. The problem with this approach is that there are multiple and very different notions of covenant in Isaiah, not just one. The Abrahamic covenant is present primarily in the later chapters. Earlier chapters represent varying notions of covenant.¹ The weight of Spencer's building has exceeded the strength of its foundation.

Third, Christ and Isaiah. According to Spencer, there are kings, and deliverers, but no Messiah, as Christians conceive of one, in Isaiah. "*Stop looking for Jesus in Isaiah . . .* Isaiah's chief purpose wasn't to predict the Messiah" (33–34). Spencer thinks that the Messiah is there in some small

1. See Marvin A. Sweeney, *TANAK: A Theological and Critical Introduction to the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 7, 269–92.

form, but only rarely and obliquely. Spencer argues that in the original Isaiah there is almost no unambiguous passage pointing to anything like Jesus as Christ (203–14). According to Spencer, Nephi’s whole reason for quoting Isaiah is to explore one, grand theological theme: the redemption and expansion of Israel (285).

But Nephi tells us otherwise. He quotes Isaiah extensively to explicitly prove the divinity and atonement of Christ. Spencer states that Nephi is largely mistaken in his Christocentric reading of Isaiah. Spencer is right. Yet, Spencer supports Nephi’s rereading of Isaiah because he had “the spirit of prophecy.” In fact, Nephi’s interpretation is exemplary in Spencer’s mind.

Fourth, interpretive methodology. The book appeals to a very useful methodology. In addition to consulting mainstream biblical scholarship, Spencer brings a careful reading of textual variants of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon, the original chapter structure, and text of the Book of Mormon to explore the Nephite view of Isaiah.

Fifth, midrash of Nephi. The most important contribution of Spencer’s book is to try to distinguish how the original intent of Isaiah differs from Nephi’s reading of Isaiah. This approach is not original, as we shall see. But Spencer’s attempt at making such a distinction is well worth the price of the book. The distinction is also fundamental to reading the Book of Mormon well.

Spencer offers an extension of what has been happening in Mormon studies in the past few decades. He does not trace that history in this work. Let us take Isaiah 29 as an example of how he distinguishes Isaiah from Nephi’s reading of Isaiah. There is wide acceptance among non-Mormon readers of Isaiah that the plain and simple meaning of Isaiah 29 is as a prophecy of an enemy assault on ancient Jerusalem. The Isaiah text is very clear that that is its plain meaning. Nevertheless, the conventional and widely held Mormon reading of this chapter is as a simple and direct prophecy of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Mormon Restoration in the last days. The voice from the dust

and the sealed book in Isaiah 29 are understood in this conventional Mormon view to be Isaiah's prophecy of the Book of Mormon. Verses 11–12 in this chapter are understood in the conventional Mormon view as a remarkable prophecy by Isaiah of the visit of the Mormon disciple Martin Harris to Charles Anthon of Columbia College in 1828 to discuss a sealed book—the gold plates.

The Book of Mormon espouses this conventional Mormon understanding of Isaiah 29. Sidney Sperry is typical of this Mormon conventional position when he states that “well-meaning scholars and commentators have misconstrued most of Isaiah’s words” in Isaiah 29. Mormon apostle Mark E. Petersen agreed and stated that “only the Latter-day Saints” can interpret Isaiah 29 as a prophecy of the last days, without typology or double meaning. This traditional Mormon reading of chapter 29 has been remarkably intact and uniform throughout Mormonism from the 1820s (before the Book of Mormon) down to the present day among Mormon leaders, commentators, and scripture.

However, in the past few decades, a small group of revisionist Mormon authors (including Spencer) have been influenced by conservative Christian scholarship when interpreting Isaiah 29. This new Mormon interpretation of Isaiah 29 sees it as being fulfilled in one or more sieges of Jerusalem by Assyria, Babylon, and Rome. These authors portray the traditional Mormon interpretation as a secondary, creative rereading of the original meaning of the text of Isaiah.

Spencer concludes that Nephi is totally misreading the original authorial intent of Isaiah 29, which is describing a siege of Jerusalem. According to Spencer, Nephi does “*some mangling of Isaiah’s text. Who doesn’t?*” (276). But Spencer gives Nephi his interpretive blessing in misreading Isaiah, because he has been given the “spirit of prophecy.” According to Spencer, Nephi is our model for reading Isaiah well (289–92).

There are many ways to understand texts, especially scriptural texts, with typology, spiritualizing, allegory, reader response, and so forth. I

would be willing to give Spencer the benefit of the doubt in his unusual interpretive methods, if he were consistent. But he is not.

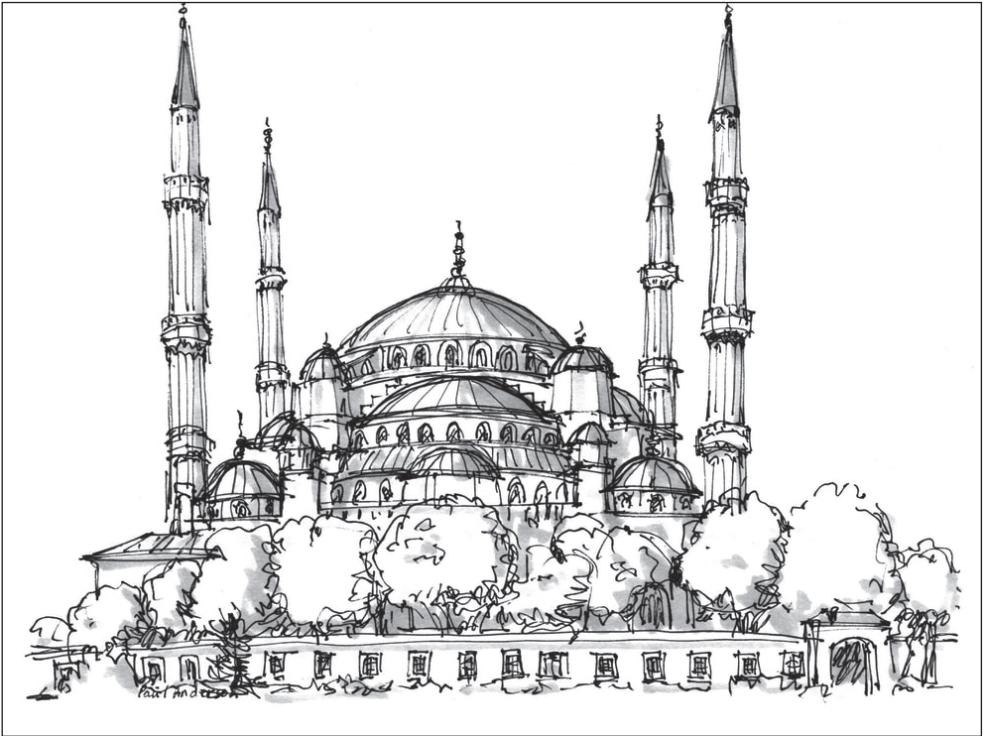
Here is one example. The Book of Mormon is an advocate of a well-known method of reading prophecy on two levels: the literal/historical level and the spiritual/mystical level. Nephi interprets his own dream of the tree of life with this two-tiered method (1 Nephi 22:1–3). But Spencer encourages us to dismiss Nephi’s method, when he tells us to avoid “mystical” readings of Isaiah (35). So is Nephi’s method for reading Isaiah legitimate, according to Spencer? I do not know.

It is clear that Spencer’s work on this topic is not finished. I hope he continues on the topic. He is making nice strides, even when he trips into an empty room. But whether his edifice is the lighthouse that guides that voyage or just a grand edifice of sand on the shore, will now largely depend on the empty space it created and on who gathers there.

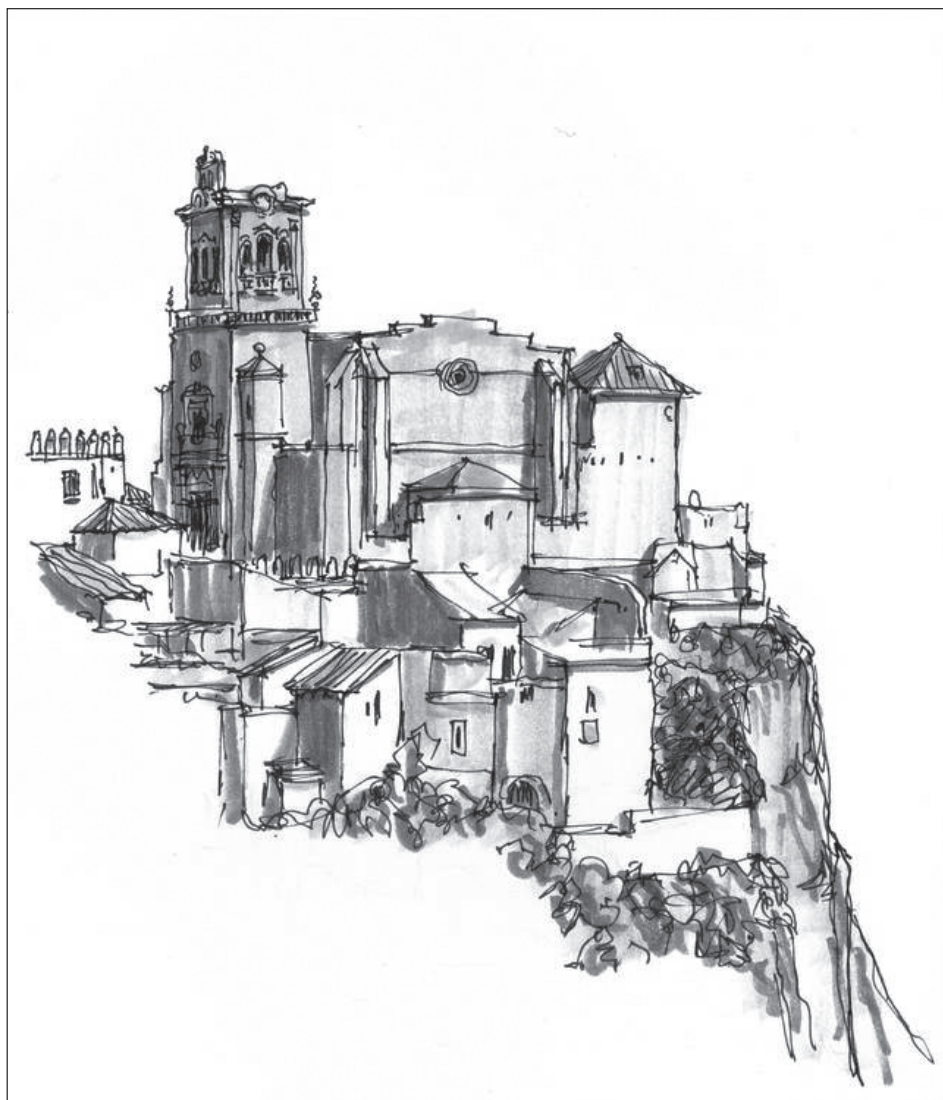
ART

"IN BRICK AND STONE"

The Art of Paul L. Anderson



Blue Mosque, Istanbul



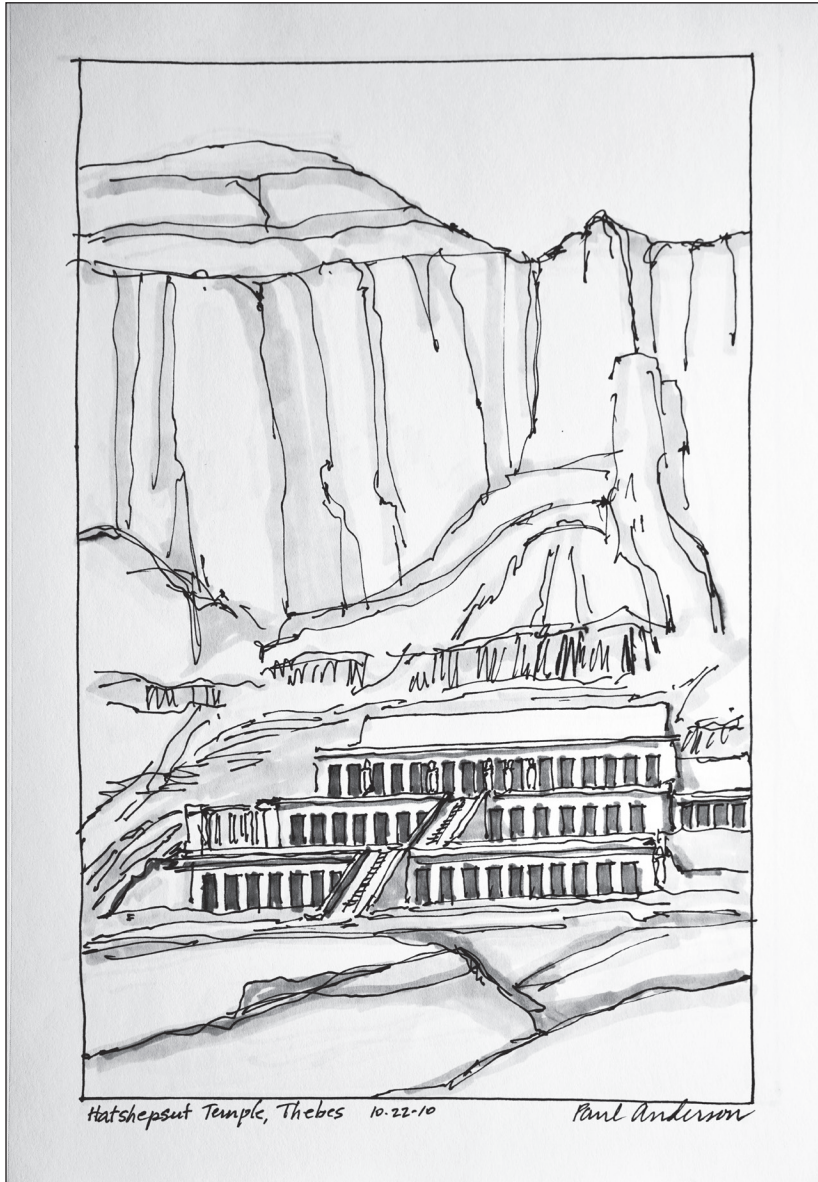
St. Peter's Church, Arcos de la Frontera
2011



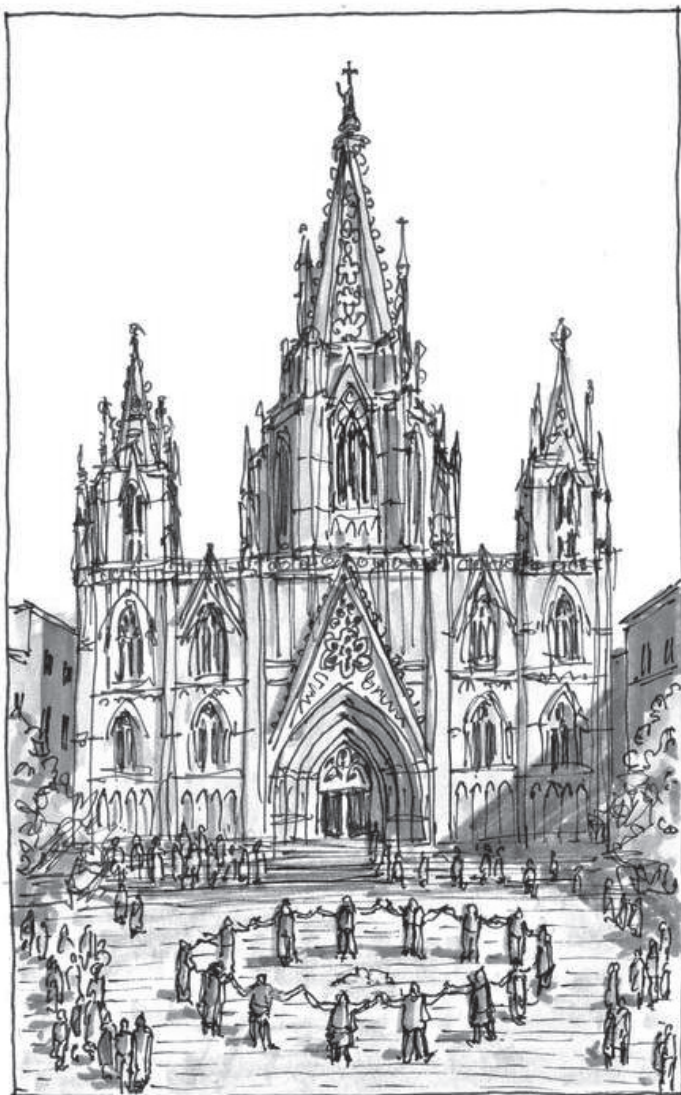
Sagrada Família Church, Barcelona
2011



Lucy Smith House



Hatshepsut Temple, Thebes
2010



Cathedral of Barcelona

Paul Anderson 11-3-11

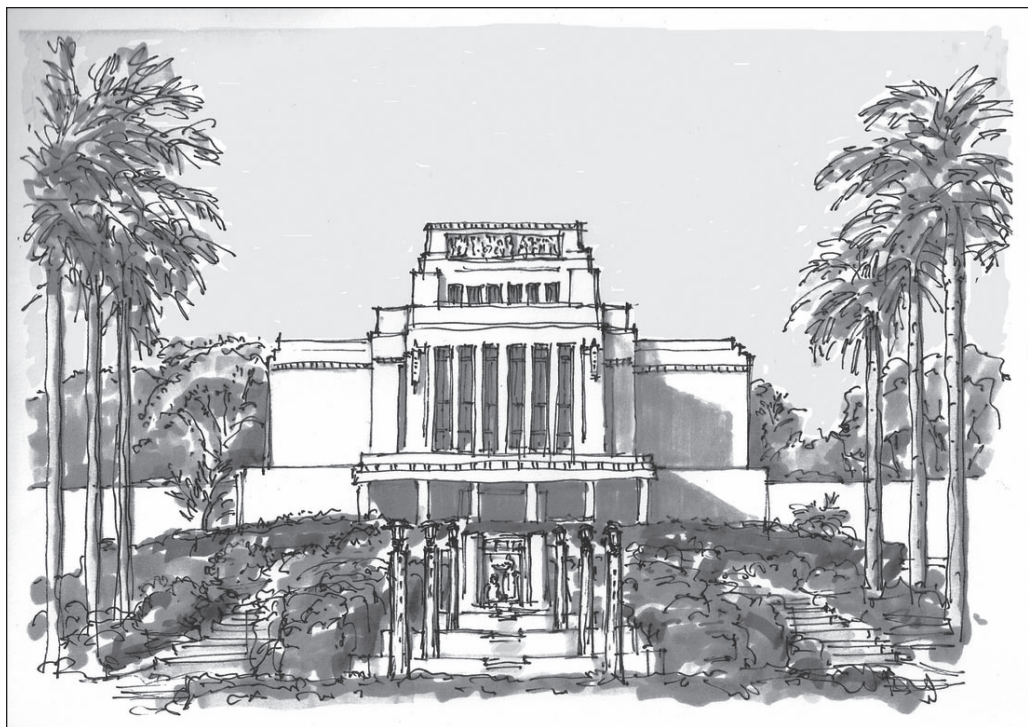
Cathedral of Barcelona
2011



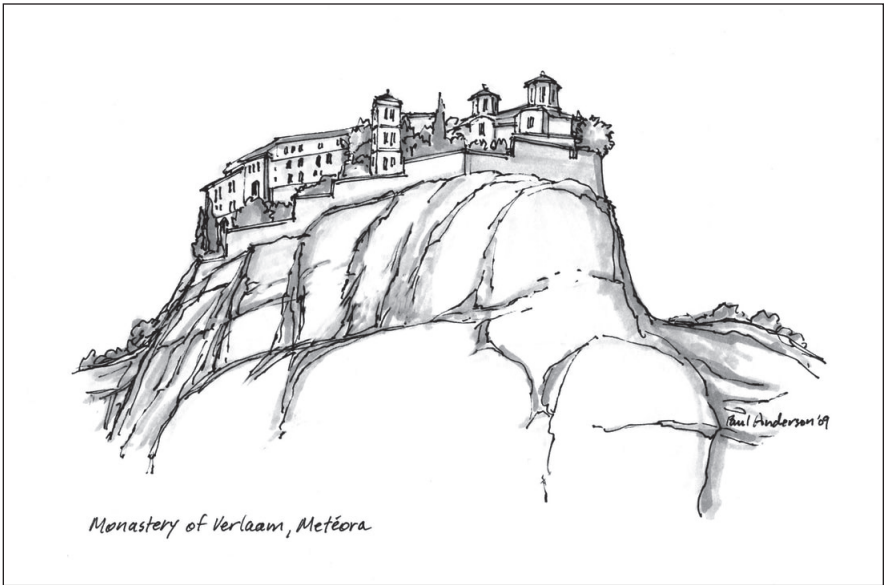
Unnamed Church



Hagia Sophia, Istanbul



Hawaiian Temple



Monastery of Verlaam, Metéora

Monastery of Verlaam, Metéora
2009

THE LOSS OF ART, THE ART OF LOSS

Christian N. K. Anderson

Note: Adapted from an address, delivered at the memorial service of Paul L. Anderson, March 29, 2018.

Sylvia Plath wrote “Dying / Is an art, like everything else.” Perhaps there is an art to grieving as well. People talk about “closure” and “saying goodbye” like discrete events: things you do once—well or poorly—and then move on. But where exactly do we move on to? As Mark Strand points out, “In a field / I am the absence / Of field. / This is / always the case. / Wherever I am / I am what is missing.” Since my father’s death, my missing place keeps converging with his ever-shifting empty place in surprising ways. I miss Paul, miss him the same way I might miss an imagined top stair on an unfamiliar staircase in the dark: the same betrayal of expectation, the same queasy-falling feeling in the stomach, the same jolt against reality.

About thirty-six hours after he said “I think I’m going to faint,” sat down at our kitchen table, and then died between one breath and the next, I walked to the church of my childhood, feeling that empty space beside me. In our family’s unofficial pew, where he wrote hymn lyrics during dull moments in sacrament meeting, one of his favorite Bill Holm poems came to me, modified for the situation:

*Who does Paul think he is?
Walking with us to church,
Not opening the doors,
Not holding up his end of the conversation,
All the way to the chapel,*

*Where he sits beside us in the pew,
Not jotting down new hymn lyrics
Not conducting his choir
Mischievously leaving blank spots on our programs
Where his name was.
And at home:
Leaving himself all over every room, every book, every piece of furniture
Leaving himself all over our memories, our futures, our lives
The dead get by with everything.*

Paul was a difficult man to forget in life, and his death doesn't make it any easier. There are few places where his loss isn't felt. His artist's soul was drawn to beauty everywhere, both places where many saw it, and places where few others saw it. His keen mind, trained at Stanford and Princeton, let him carry far his many enthusiasms in many directions. It seems that in everything he touched, he found something to love. And what he loved, he found ways to share.

Some of this ability to care widely for the world comes through in his sketches. His love of architecture converted the world's cities into his own personal theme park, and he traveled like a kid determined to go on every ride. It genuinely surprised him that the rest of his family didn't feel the same endless delight, that we weren't so jazzed after seeing eight old churches in one day that we just *had* to go see a ninth. I think in his last years, his sketches served as a way to explain himself—the deep joy he felt in beautiful spaces—“faith expressed in brick and stone,” as he put it in one of his unpublished hymns.

His career with the Church Historic Sites and as an exhibit designer at the Church History Museum and BYU Museum of Art was also an extension of this need to find the beauty in painting and sculpture that touched his core of joy and to show others how to find that same feeling. Though capable of writing impressively erudite academic treatments of the works in his galleries, he instead always brought people into the painting itself, reveling in the immediate sensuous experience of color and light. For years, it bothered him that an exhibition in another state showed a highly abstract Picasso next to the painting of a sentimental,

but undeniably masterful, Landseer dog, with a pamphlet on the wall between them begging people to like/appreciate the Picasso more. He understood that appreciating some modern art required additional intellectual machinery, but to him, imposing those sorts of hierarchies on aesthetic response wasn't just a mistake. It was incomprehensible.

This penchant to measure worth in individual-human-sized units extended also to Paul's enthusiasm for history. He served as president of the Mormon History Association (1997–1998), but what he most often talked about from his time in the LDS Historical Department was his friends. What he loved was the ability to gossip about founding Church members like personal friends.

In each of these fields of Paul's life, I feel the blows of Paul's loss. I see both him and the loss of him in art, architecture, travel, museums, and history. Because his infectious love and knowledge in these domains will always provide the lens through which I see them, I ask again: how do you say goodbye and move on from someone so embedded in the substrate of your identity?

The answer is simple: you don't.

Not just because it isn't possible, but because it isn't right to let someone like that slip away. My relationship with dead Paul is going to be different than with living Paul. That's fine. Relationships change, but you work to keep the good ones, and this one is one of the best. My relationship with Paul once meant knocking over enormous towers of paper towels and toilet paper following semi-monthly bulk store shopping. Later it meant late night DinoGrahams and milk, then endless puns during weekly phone calls, then trips together. As I look into this next stage of my relationship with Paul, I think it will mean more awareness of the extent to which I'm following his example.

His loss will help remind me to be more patient, to look harder to see the soul-touching joy around us, to be quicker to see the comical. People who only know Paul through his art and writing will have trouble understanding the difficult blend of humor and sincerity he brought to everything. Friends will remember his laughter, not just for

its warmth and genuine delight, but because he was so often the first to see the humor in a situation. You can see it in *Return to Jackson County*, which is full of visual jokes but also illustrates a personal religious belief. The painting is done in the American Primitive style of early Church painters like C. C. A. Christensen (whom Paul famously impersonated at BYU and Mormon History Association events), but it is the modernized primitivism of Grandma Moses, showing his dialogue between Mormon heritage and contemporary sensibilities. In the foreground, a family's car has broken down, and they are continuing onward hauling their trailer by hand: a twentieth-century handcart. In the bottom left corner, a yellow dog wags his tail in a nod to a widely-quoted prophecy attributed (third-hand) to Brigham Young.¹ As the homes of the Saints and sinners burn around it, Paul's beloved Salt Lake City house remains untouched in the middle distance. Like so much of Paul's faith, this painting seems to say, "I believe this, but I don't think it's going to happen that way."

But I think the ideal I'll work hardest for, one where the space he left keeps interfacing with our family, is that Paul was a man who embodied unpretentious kindness in the way he treated friends, colleagues, enemies, strangers, and not least his wife, son, and daughter-in-law. People—some dear friends and some Lavina and I barely know—keep telling us in tears about a small tenderness or generosity that he had never even mentioned to us. The space left by Paul's absence is in a funny way still full, filled by these recollections of the sort of kindness that only comes from a heart built around Christ-like love.

One characteristic of Paul I will *not* be striving to emulate was his "horizontal filing system," which resulted in knee-deep snow-drifts of papers in his bedroom and office, and over 300 files cluttering almost every available pixel of his desktop computer. It is perfectly fitting that

1. Amanda H. Wilcox reported Heber C. Kimball as saying in 1868: "The western boundaries of the State of Missouri will be swept so clean of its inhabitants that, as President Young tells us, when we return to that place, 'There will not be left so much as a yellow dog to wag his tail.'"

when Marina began organizing his computer, the first file she opened contained just two short quotes.

From Mother Teresa: "I see Jesus in every human being. I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus, I must feed him. This is sick Jesus, I must heal him. . . . It is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the doing; it is not how much we give, but how much love we put in the giving. Let us do something beautiful for God. The dying, the cripple, the mental, the unwanted, the unloved—they are Jesus in disguise."

And from Etienne de Grellet: "I shall pass this way but once; any good that I can do or any kindness I can show to any human being; let me do it now. Let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

So let's not say good-bye to Paul. Instead, let's invite him to stay with us awhile, even if he's less talkative than he's been. That way, when the end comes for each of us, our minds may be full of such generous thoughts as those I read, and our friends will think they apply aptly to each of us, the way we think they apply to Paul.



Return to Jackson County
Paul L. Anderson

Perhaps the World Ends Here
by Joy Harjo

The world begins at a kitchen table. No matter what, we must eat to live.

The gifts of earth are brought and prepared, set on the table. So it has been since creation, and it will go on.

We chase chickens or dogs away from it. Babies teethe at the corners. They scrape their knees under it.

It is here that children are given instructions on what it means to be human. We make men at it, we make women.

At this table we gossip, recall enemies and the ghosts of lovers.

Our dreams drink cocoa with us as they put their arms around our children. They laugh with us at our poor falling-down selves and as we put ourselves back together once again at the table.

This table has been a house in the rain, an umbrella in the sun.

Wars have begun and ended at this table. It is a place to hide in the shadow of terror. A place to celebrate the terrible victory.

We have given birth on this table, and have prepared our parents for burial here.

At this table we sing with joy, with sorrow. We pray of suffering and remorse. We give thanks.

Perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table, while we are laughing and crying, eating of the last sweet bite.



Paul Lawrence Anderson 1946–2018

MY MOTHER'S ECLIPSE

Steven Peck

This talk was given in sacrament meeting in the Battlecreek 9th Ward in Pleasant Grove on the subject of Gratitude.

My Mother died on July 13, 2017.

One late afternoon about a month later, on August 20, 2017 to be exact, my friend Steve and his wife Jill picked me up along with my adult son Jaron to chase the total eclipse tacking across the United States the next day. We all knew it may be a once in a lifetime event, but none of us were that excited. We've been to several partial eclipses, and while amazing, this more-of-the-same-except-even-more seemed like a lot of work at a busy time. School was starting. I had loads of projects and deadlines screaming at me. I kept asking myself—why are we doing this? Time with one of my sons and good conversations with friends were really the only things that kept me from canceling.

The conversation was lively all the way to Soda Springs, Idaho where we spent the night with Jill's mom and then got up at 5 am to make a run for the “zone of totality,” the area north of us where the moon would cover the sun completely. A lucky cosmic accident positions the size and distance of Earth's companion and the sun such that their relative sizes almost precisely match, making this event possible.

We understood that the freeways and major roads might be a nightmare of vehicles as clogged up as a gorilla's shower drain as multitudes of eager astral pilgrims pushed north and south, wending their way to this narrow band of land from which to view the anticipated celestial spectacle. We decided when we first started planning this trip that we

Originally published on bycommonconsent.com, Nov.19, 2017.

would avoid this tide of humanity at all costs. Better not to go at all than face what for me is a terror worse than being placed in a closet with a bobcat—getting stuck in traffic. For weeks we pored over detailed maps of Idaho and marked out a rat's maze of unimproved farm and ranch roads that would spirit us past the convoys west and east of us. It might take us a while to get up there, but at least we would be moving the whole time.

And so it was. We saw maybe three cars on our pleasant trek to the appointed site. Rambling through the wide-open Idaho flatlands was a pleasure in itself, and soon the joy and excitement of the eclipse were starting to bubble up through the stressful haze of this hectic trip. Once we were embedded deep into the band where the sun's light would be wholly elided save for the occult corona, we found a wheat field on a small plateau situated well above the surrounding flats, and we parked and waited for the appointed time.

With proper eclipse glasses covering our eyes we repeatedly peered at the sun, waiting for the first hint of the moon's passing. When it finally did, we cheered and called to each other, "It's started!"



The first hint that something was wrong with my mom came at her surprise eightieth birthday party. All her children had gathered or Skyped in for the occasion. Multiple generations of extended family and numerous friends joined the *soirée*, and my mom seemed to be having a great time. However, at some point she seemed strangely out of sorts and she pulled me aside. "Darrell is trying to poison me."

I knew my dad well enough that this made no sense. But she was insistent. People, she said, were coming around uninvited and dad was spending time partying at night in the parking lot with other residents of their apartment complex. It turned out that she had been

not drinking the water in the refrigerator because she was sure my father was trying to kill her.

My sister came to stay with them to see what was happening to my mom, and the full extent of my mother's delusions became apparent. One night, mom awoke screaming that she was covered in bugs. My sister and father took her to the emergency room.

This began the long process of diagnosing and treating late-onset Alzheimer's. The eclipse of my mother's mind had started.



As the moon bit a larger and larger chunk from the sun, it did not really appear any darker, and any dimming of the light was scarcely noticeable, despite the moon's shadow blocking almost half of the sun. Yet the quality of light changed. It was not dimmer, but everything around us seemed new in aspect as if we had entered into an altered land, a different earth than we had been in, yet the same. I had not experienced this before; it was an aspect unique to the eclipse and hard to describe. It was not as if quantitative measurements of ambient light, read off a light meter in units of lux, had decreased, but like a new subtle lens had been lowered before our eyes, as if we had entered into something like Narnia or an elven kingdom. Everything was the same, and yet it all felt so different.



They put my mom on new medicines, which helped. It slowed the decline and her paranoia vanished. But slowly she began to change. At first, she would forget small details, or have to search a long time for the names of things. She was frustrated and tried to hide that these changes were occurring. She did not like acknowledging the gathering holes in her memories and carefully skirted their edges. She became both more silent and more talkative. She was changing. She was not the

same mother I'd grown up with. Her humor was slowly departing. Her memories of events and people from the past became more focused on a small set of stories that she would repeat when she needed to join a conversation. Not like they were rote recitations, instead she expressed them because they became comfortable and were entrained in accessible recollections. Still, she was not herself. She was narrowing. Collapsing in expression and abilities.



As the moon continued to pull in front of the sun, it finally became notably darker and cooler. Soon, all but a sliver remained, yet glancing at the sun (carefully) with the naked eye, I saw it still blazed in glory. Were it not for the dark glasses I'm not sure I would have noticed the sun was being covered, so bright was that small rind of light, yet everything was changing. The colors were different. The earth no longer looked the same. The shadow of every tree and leaf, of every blade of wheat straw still standing in the field bore the mark and expression of the eclipse—a thousand repetitions of a crescent sun splashed over the ground, every instance a camera obscura simulacrum of the eclipse.



As time went on, my mother forgot more and more. She could not remember my wife's name. She would ask, during conversations about my kids and her other grandkids, who we were talking about. She could not bear for my dad to be out of her sight and she followed him everywhere. He was so patient and endured his inability to escape her for very long with equanimity. For example, when my dad went into the kitchen to prepare dinner, she would ask every few minutes,

“Where's Darrell?”

"He's in the kitchen cooking dinner," we would answer.

"I'd better go make sure he doesn't need help."

Of course, by then, she could not cook a meal. She could not use a stove and even carrying dishes from the kitchen to the table seemed a challenge. She still remembered me and was filled with delight when I entered the room, but she was less than the vibrant and caring mother I had grown up with.

During her decline she had to stay in the hospital for a time due to a heart arrhythmia, for which she needed a cardiac monitoring device. I stayed with her because my dad had also been hospitalized for pneumonia. It was a dark time with both parents hospitalized. When she was left alone, she became panicked and unmanageable; she was terrified when she awoke not knowing where she was and in the presence of strangers; she was confused because she did not know where my dad had gone; and she was scared because she could not find him. Even so, it was nice to sit with her and comfort her. Then she could still talk about some things, and we chatted from time to time. While sitting with her one day, we had this exchange, which I wrote as a poem:

My Mom Became Chatty at St. Marks
and It Didn't Sound Like the Alzheimer's Talking

You woke up worried about a gathering,

We would all be dressed nicely,

Because that's what Swedish people do.

We need lots of red things,

Do we have enough red things?

We do Mom. I'll make sure.

Swedes love red things.

She stops to breathe in pure

oxygen from a tube.
Is Aunt Thelma Alive?

I don't think so.
*I don't know who's alive and who is dead,
But we must love each other, That's the way it always was,
We loved each other. Both my grandmothers always
loved each other*
I give her a drink.
*There is so much to do. At the thing we will all
love each other. That's the important thing.*



The eclipse would be complete at any moment. Now a mere speck of light, it blazed from behind a single corner of the moon as bright as the buzzing arc of a welder's rod. Even in the last seconds, when nearly the entire celestial orb was covered by the moon, this last pinprick of the sun shone forth—a final audacious gasp of light sent earthward as if refusing to be extinguished. The landscape was visibly dark and strange, like no gloaming I'd ever seen, a deep, otherworldly shade that was both dreadful and wondrous.



This past Mother's Day in May was the last time mom showed a modicum of her former self. She had trouble opening gifts, the wrapping seemed a puzzle that largely escaped her, but we helped, and she lit up with delight as the presents and offerings were unveiled. She sat in her comfortable rocking chair smiling, asking questions, remembering her children and her sister but few others, and ever wondering where my father was and saying she'd better go look for him.

She took a fall one day a few weeks later and could no longer manage going down the stairs to the front room. She had become bedridden, not leaving her room. Her ability to speak at all was draining away. In early July, my brothers and I determined to get her outside into the nature she loved. We hoisted her huddled in her wheelchair down the stairs. She was frightened riding through the air like a djinn but her sons held her aloft and of course, not one of us would have let her fall even if we had to bear her full weight alone.

We took her to Sugar House Park, one of her favorite haunts, and had a picnic. She sat in her wheelchair enjoying the sun on her face and eating the KFC we shared. She seemed grateful and spoke a few words that we felt blessed to receive. Not many. But more than we expected. It was the last spark of coherence in her beautiful life.

She never left her bed after that, and my dad rarely left her side. Hospice had been helping with her daily needs for some time, but we all knew this was the end. She would sometimes hum and softly sing or say things that seemed random and incomprehensible. We knew she was going. Her spark of life was disappearing.



When the sun slipped behind the moon, the universe changed in ways I had never before experienced. I cannot describe what the event itself was like: the sudden darkness, the shock of the fiery corona blazing in the darkness like a sign from a time of more ancient warrior gods and goddesses. To find the heavens I've known throughout my life suddenly alive with a new and powerful presence, so other—it destabilized my familiar world. It was as if every electron in my body reversed and was now spinning in a new direction. I was struck dumb. Awestruck and wordless. I'd never been left so discomfited by any natural phenomenon. I was surprised by how the heavens so familiar to me were changed and

enlivened in an instant. I've often heard the word sublime, but now I understood it, and viscerally so. I still feel it in my mind's eye.



When I walked into the room, my mother was making a sound I'd never heard a human make. It was horrible and frightening. Loud and unnatural. My sister had called me at my BYU office and told me to get up there right away. My sister, one of my brothers, and I watched with my dad. We each spent some time with her alone, saying our goodbyes, and although she could not understand us, we let her know how much we loved her, and how very grateful we were for the things she had taught us and the life she had lived.

After an hour or so, she suddenly made a different sound. We rushed to her bedside. She took a breath and, empty-eyed, settled softly back into the bed. She had suffered the debilitating effects of this disease for years, and now it was over. Like with the eclipse, the world darkened and became wholly other. My mother was gone.



Suddenly, the sun blazed from behind the moon. We stood in awe as things returned to the way we knew them to be. And soon we were packing up our things, loading the car, and preparing for our return to Utah.



For my mother, the end of her eclipse and the return of the light must wait a little longer before it shines forth again, when the entire world may be made anew in an everlasting light.



I was asked to speak on gratitude, and such a subject kept circling back to my mother's life and the things she taught me about living a thankful life. Her teachings have been instrumental in framing who I am. As such, I am grateful also to my Heavenly Father and Mother. Through my mother, I learned to express gratitude to them as well. Not just for the good things they give that lighten my load or open opportunities and blessings. I am grateful that they are there and grace the dark times when the world shatters and crumbles, or when I am overwhelmed with care and concern for those I love. I no longer feel that thanking them for obvious blessings is enough because blessings are often hard to identify as such. Now, I think it necessary to thank them just for being there with me in darkness and in light. When I feel them, or when I don't. Living a grateful life, I think, entails more than being thankful when obvious advantages come our way, or when we can see and enjoy some gifted result. Living a life of gratitude means being thankful that they are ever there: morning, night, and noon. Weeping with us. Holding us in their way. And being with us in grace. Eclipsed by nothing. Ever.

CONTRIBUTORS

KIM ABUNUWARA {kim@abunuwara.com} is an Associate Professor of Humanities and Integrated Studies at Utah Valley University, and an actress. She can be heard as the Widow of Nain and Mary Magdalene in *The Light of Men* on the Mormon channel (2012), and reading the standard works on lds.org.

CHRISTIAN N. K. ANDERSON {weird.attractor@gmail.com} is a geneticist living in Southern California with his wife and their four rabbits. He studied at Stanford University, the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, and Harvard University. In addition to his three previous articles in *Dialogue*, he has published biological research in *Nature*, and the proceedings of both the National Academy of Science and the Royal Society. His mother, Lavina Fielding Anderson, remains a fixture of the LDS scholarly community; his father, Paul Lawrence Anderson, whose passing in March 2018 this article commemorates, was a president of the Mormon History Association and curator at the BYU Museum of Art.

LISA BICKMORE {lisa.bickmore@gmail.com} is a poet and professor of English at Salt Lake Community College. She is the author of three books of poems: *Haste* (1994), *flicker* (2014), and *Ephemerist* (2017). Her poetry, scholarship, and video work have been published in *Glass: A Journal of Poetry*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Sugar House Review*, *SouthWord*, *Caketrain*, *Hunger Mountain Review*, *Terrain.org*, *Bite Size Poems project*, *Quarterly West*, *The Moth*, *MappingSLC.org*, *Fire in the Pasture*, and elsewhere. In 2015, her poem “Eidolon” was awarded the Ballymaloe International Poetry Prize.

BRIAN D. BIRCH {Brian.Birch@uvu.edu} is the director of the Religious Studies Program and Center for the Study of Ethics at Utah Valley University where he teaches philosophy of religion, ethics, and Mormon Studies. He is the founding editor of *Element: The Journal of the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology* and co-editor of the Perspectives on Mormon Theology series.

MICHAEL ANDREW ELLIS {kwssau@gmail.com} Michael Andrew Ellis’s fiction has been published in *Dialogue*. He is currently helping his

wife write her memoir about her escape from 1975 Communist Laos. He blogs at michaelandrewellis.com.

ROBERT J. FREDERICKSON {rjtjof@hotmail.com} Bob is an eighty-three-year-old home-bound poet originating from Twin Falls, Idaho. He left Twin as soon as he could, by way of an LDS mission. On returning he realized that a farm community must export its educated teenagers so this one headed for Salt Lake, where his father originated. The details of his life in Twin are: Born and raised in an ice-cream and candy store; Well educated in everything but math which he took twice; Upon leaving went to Idaho State Collage where he got lost and only found his way to class once; After a month there was called on his mission; Upon coming to Salt Lake after his mission he sold radio advertising in the surrounding towns; Coming back to Salt Lake he stopped for gas and there in the next isle was a girl he knew he would marry; The next day he proposed, she accepted. Four children and more grand and great grand kids than he can keep track of and forty-five years as a bindery man and here he is. We cannot leave Arletta Lou Hales out of this. She married him three months after his proposal and gave him, besides the children, sixty-one years of counsel, love, and nursing care. He was born sick and stayed that way through most of his life, which she has saved on several occasions, and as council of the exchequer has kept him solvent. Shortly after joining the Utah State Poetry Society he was chapter president, president, and now administrative adviser. The poetry started in grade school and has continued to this day.

JOHN GUSTAV-WRATHALL {gustavwrathall@gmail.com} is Executive Director of Affirmation: LGBT Mormons, Families & Friends. He has served as a board member, senior vice president and president of Affirmation, and has written extensively about the challenges faced by LGBT Mormons and their families and friends in *Sunstone*, *Dialogue*, on his personal blog, and in other forums in the bloggernacle. Legally married to his husband of twenty-five years since July 2008, he is a believing Latter-day Saint and, for the last twelve years, has been active, though excommunicated, in his south Minneapolis ward.

RACHEL HELPS {rachelmeibos@yahoo.com} is the Harold B. Lee Library's coordinator of Wikipedia initiatives, where she writes and edits Wikipedia pages related to the library's holdings. She has contributed significantly to pages for Lucinda Lee Dalton, Leonard Arrington, and Mormon Folklore, among others. She helped her sister, Andrea Landaker, write a newlywed relationship simulation called *Our Personal Space*, and they are working on the sequel, which focuses on parenting choices.

SUSAN ELIZABETH HOWE {saltpoemssue@gmail.com} Susan Elizabeth Howe's second poetry collection, *Salt*, was published in 2013; her third is in the works. Her poems have recently appeared in *Poetry*, *Pleiades*, *Atlanta Review*, *Western Humanities Review*, and other journals. A reviewer and contributing editor of *Tar River Poetry*, she lives with her husband Cless Young in Ephraim, Utah, and loves southern Utah's spectacular canyons and deserts.

ZACH HUTCHINS {Zach.Hutchins@colostate.edu} teaches courses in American literature and culture at Colorado State University. He is the author of *Inventing Eden: Primitivism, Millennialism, and the Making of New England*, a prehistory of the edenic impulse in Mormon theology and culture, as well as several essays on the influence of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on nineteenth-century literature.

KEVIN KLEIN {kevinmklein575@gmail.com} likes learning and writing about things, including poetry, picture books, family building, instructional design for gospel learning, math education, and bean-to-bar chocolate. His greatest interest is people. Kevin studied at Brigham Young University, Utah Valley University, and Edith Cowan University before teaching high-school English for the space of a time at a Catholic school in Perth, Australia. He now lives back in Utah County, where he creates teacher training materials for the K-12 crowd and lives after the manner of happiness with a wonderful woman and two kids.

SHELDON LAWRENCE {lawrences@byui.edu} is the director of the Writing Center at Brigham Young University-Idaho, and the current president of the Association for Mormon Letters. In addition to numerous essays,

he also authored *Hearts of the Fathers: A Story of Heaven, Hell, and the Hope of New Life after Life* (2016).

GABRIEL GONZÁLEZ N. {gabriel.gonzaleznunez@utrgv.edu} is a professor of translation and interpreting at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. He is the author of *Estampas del Libro de Mormón*. He has also published several short stories and a few poems in Spanish. Additionally, he has published reviews of academic books in a number of scholarly journals and reviews of literary works in the Association for Mormon Letters's blog.

DAVID G. PACE {davidgpace@gmail.com} is author of the novel *Dream House on Golan Drive* (Signature Books) and literary editor at *15 Bytes: Utah's Art Magazine*. He blogs on culture, literature, and politics at www.davidgpace.com.

STEVEN PECK {Steven_Peck@byu.edu} is a professor of evolutionary ecology at Brigham Young University. He has published award-winning fiction and poetry in a variety of places. He is the author of the novel *A Short Stay in Hell*. His novel *The Scholar of Moab* was the Association for Mormon Letters Best Novel of 2011. A collection of his short stories called *Wandering Realities* was published by Zarahemla Books and includes his AML Best Short Story of 2014, "Two-dog Dose," which was also published in *Dialogue*. His most recent works include a collection of essays on science and religion, called *Evolving Faith*, published by the Neal A. Maxwell Institute as part of their Living Faith series, the novel *Gilda Trillim: Shepherdess of Rats* (2017), a theological exploration titled *Science the Key to Theology: Volume One: Preliminaries* (2017), and a collection of short stories titled *Tales from Pleasant Grove* (2018). He lives in Pleasant Grove, Utah with his wife, Lori Peck. They have five children.

SARAH C. REED {screed@wisc.edu} is a PhD candidate in the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

ROBERT A. REES {bobrees2@gmail.com} is Visiting Professor and Director of Mormon Studies at Graduate Theological Union in Berke-

ley. His collection of poems, *Waiting for Morning*, was published by Zarahemla Press in 2017. The second volume of his edited collection, *Why I Stay: The Challenges of Discipleship for Contemporary Mormons*, has just been submitted to Signature Press.

ELISABETH RICHARDSON {lisa792271@gmail.com} lives, mothers, writes, does art, and walks about in any weather, in Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada.

CRISTINA ROSETTI {crose005@ucr.edu} is a doctoral candidate at the University of California, Riverside. Her research focuses on Mormon practices of spirit communication and contemporary Mormon movements in the United States.

RYAN SHOEMAKER {shoemakerryan@hotmail.com} Ryan Shoemaker's fiction has appeared in *Gulf Stream*, *Santa Monica Review*, *Booth*, *Juked*, *Silk Road Review*, *Dialogue*, and *Sunstone*, among others. His debut short story collection *Beyond the Lights* was recently released through No Record Press and is available on Amazon. Novelist and short story writer T. C. Boyle called it a collection that "moves effortlessly from brilliant comedic pieces to stories of deep emotional resonance."

ROGER TERRY {mormonomics@gmail.com} is editorial director at *BYU Studies*. He is the author of books (fiction and nonfiction), articles, essays, short fiction, book reviews, editorials, and commentary on economics, politics, and Mormonism. He blogs at mormonomics.blogspot.com.

MARK D. THOMAS {mdthomasconsulting@gmail.com} is a former Scriptural Studies Editor of *Dialogue* and a contributor to a forthcoming book, entitled *The Mormon Annotated Isaiah*.

GARY TOPPING {toppinggary@gmail.com} has been Curator of Manuscripts at the Utah State Historical Society and Professor of History at Salt Lake Community College. Since 2001 he has been Archivist of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City. He is author of, among other

books and articles, *Utah Historians and the Reconstruction of Western History* and *The Story of the Cathedral of the Madeleine*.

COLBY TOWNSEND {colby.townsend@aggiemail.usu.edu} is currently a graduate student working on an MA in History at Utah State University under the direction of Dr. Philip Barlow. He previously completed two HBA degrees at the University of Utah in 2016, one in Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies with an emphasis in Religion and Culture, and the other in Religious Studies—the latter of which was awarded the Marriott Library Honors Thesis Award and is being revised as *Eden in the Book of Mormon: Appropriation and Retelling of Genesis 2–4* (Kofford, forthcoming).

DARLENE YOUNG {youngbookshelf@gmail.com} is the poetry editor for *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. She teaches creative writing at Brigham Young University and has published in various journals and anthologies. She lives in South Jordan, Utah with her husband and sons.

MELISSA YOUNG {melissa.writing@gmail.com} has an MA in TESOL from Brigham Young University and currently teaches a community ESL class. Working in adult education, along with her own experience of returning to school after years of motherhood, has generated a deep respect for those who return to school as adults, especially non-native English speakers. She and her husband have four children and currently live in Cache Valley, Utah.