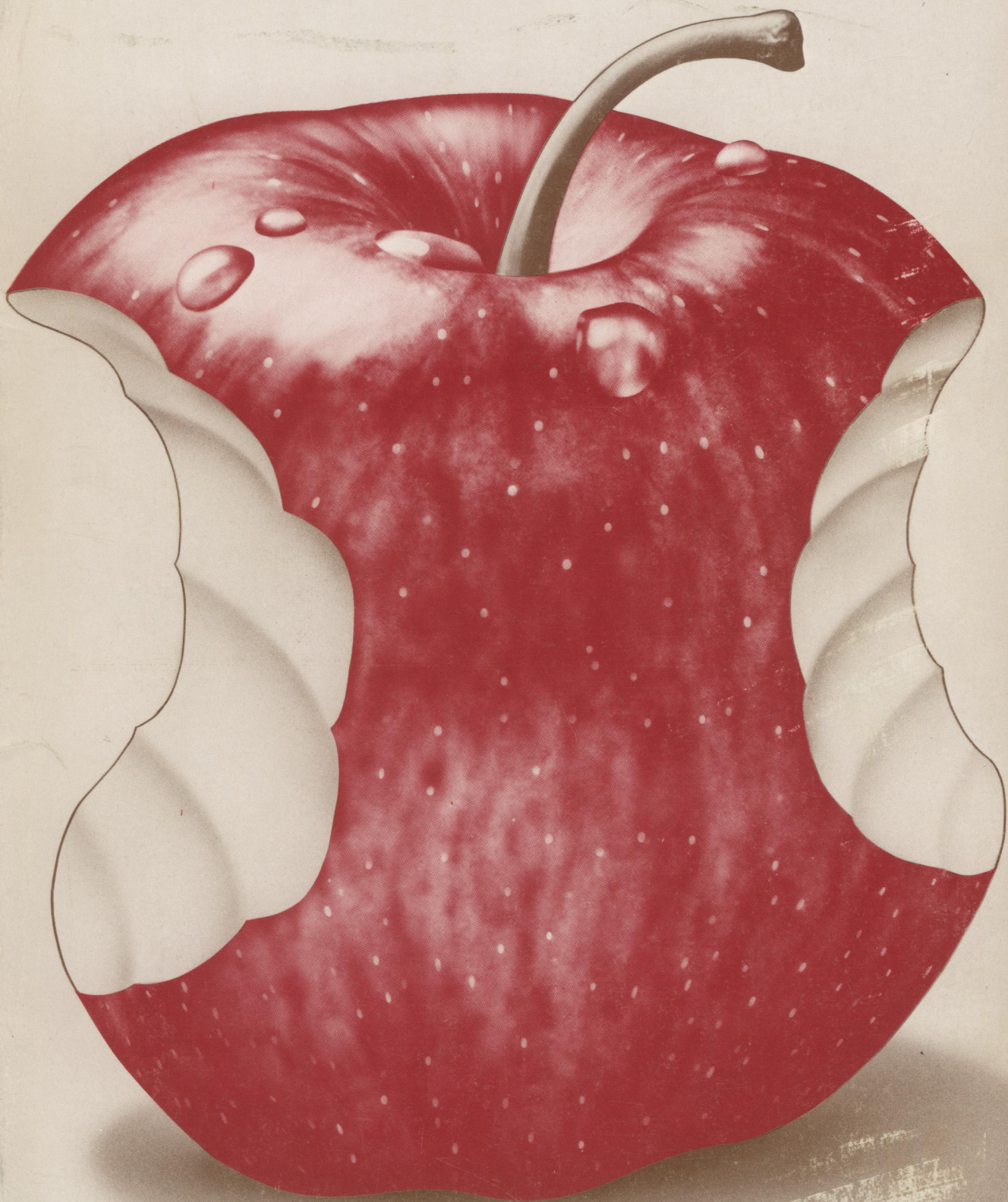


DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT



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foster artistic and scholarly
achievement based on their cultural
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variety of viewpoints; although every
effort is made to insure
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those of the individual authors and are
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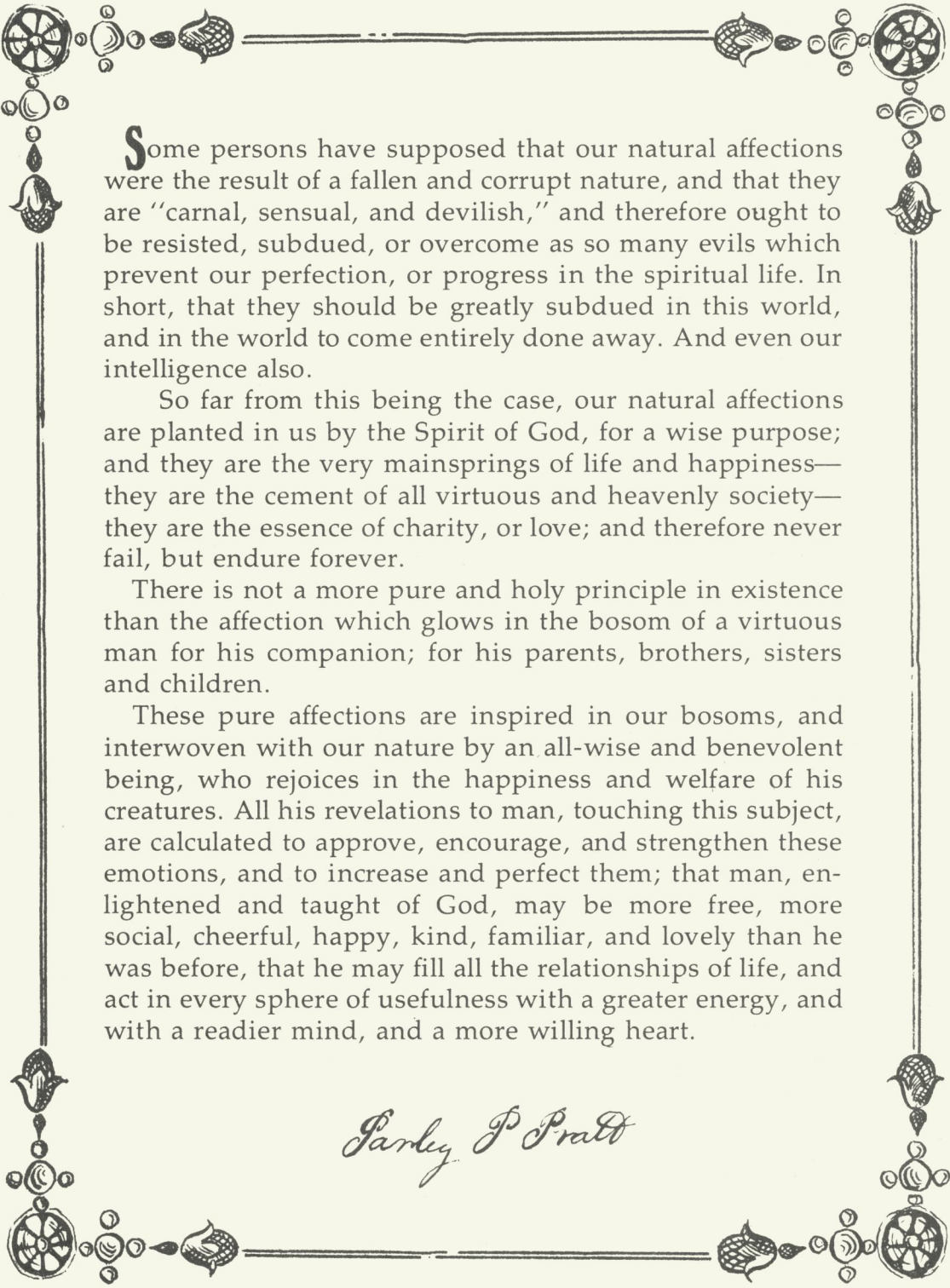
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Sexuality and Mormon Culture

Guest Editors:
Harold T. Christensen
Marvin B. Rytting



Some persons have supposed that our natural affections were the result of a fallen and corrupt nature, and that they are "carnal, sensual, and devilish," and therefore ought to be resisted, subdued, or overcome as so many evils which prevent our perfection, or progress in the spiritual life. In short, that they should be greatly subdued in this world, and in the world to come entirely done away. And even our intelligence also.

So far from this being the case, our natural affections are planted in us by the Spirit of God, for a wise purpose; and they are the very mainsprings of life and happiness—they are the cement of all virtuous and heavenly society—they are the essence of charity, or love; and therefore never fail, but endure forever.

There is not a more pure and holy principle in existence than the affection which glows in the bosom of a virtuous man for his companion; for his parents, brothers, sisters and children.

These pure affections are inspired in our bosoms, and interwoven with our nature by an all-wise and benevolent being, who rejoices in the happiness and welfare of his creatures. All his revelations to man, touching this subject, are calculated to approve, encourage, and strengthen these emotions, and to increase and perfect them; that man, enlightened and taught of God, may be more free, more social, cheerful, happy, kind, familiar, and lovely than he was before, that he may fill all the relationships of life, and act in every sphere of usefulness with a greater energy, and with a readier mind, and a more willing heart.

Parley P Pratt

"Intelligence and Affection."
from *Writings of Parley P. Pratt*.

Letters to the Editor

is bach a mormon?

After reading the music issue of *Dialogue*, I was disappointed to note the narrow and ethnocentric attitude that permeated the thinking of almost every contributor. I looked in vain for mention of some alternative to the standard European-based classical mode for church music. I think everyone agrees that current music used in worship services is mediocre and dull, but why must the solution lie exclusively in European style music?

We should not judge God, for whom the music is really meant, to be as musically and artistically simple or dull as 18th-century Europeans. To picture heavenly choirs singing Bach or Handel is as ridiculous as to think that all the diverse cultures in other worlds, or even a 24th-century earth culture, would still find European classical music the most suitable for worship.

Perhaps it is too much to ask that Chinese, Arabian, Indian, Polynesian or African music sometimes be chosen, but certainly contemporary American music, sung worshipfully by contemporary Americans, is just as pleasing to God. There is certainly nothing less holy about a syncopated beat. One article disparaged the "over-use of dominant or diminished seventh chords." What does this have to do with worship?

I once mentioned to a friend that it was biased of us *not* to have music in our hymnbooks by Maoris, Japanese, Philipinos. "Oh, but they have Maori songs in the hymnbook" was the answer. Upon further questioning, it became evident that the songs were really the same old 18th Century Methodist and Victorian hymns but with Maori words (and awkward translations at that).

I'm afraid if the attitudes of even *Dialogue* contributors towards music for church services remains conservative, unimaginative and ethnocentric, there is certainly no hope for official changes in the Church. Young people brought up on contemporary music will continue to sing from the church hymnal only because they 1) have a testimony strong enough to tolerate what they sing and hear; 2) equate Sabbath boredom with Sabbath rest; 3) have already been acculturated to the false concept that only conventional music is acceptable to the European-Caucasian image of our Father in Heaven.

Unfortunately, those who do not fit the above categories may seek to worship elsewhere, or we may begin to see heads bobbing on the last row with stereo head phones attached!

Robin R. Lyons
Pearl City, Hawaii

The advantage "folk/rock" has is the mixing of all the styles of the past and of various parts of the world plus the unrestricted use of exotic instruments. . . . Of course, most of youth's music is tasteless! But we can seek virtue in all things. Rejecting the good with the bad shows the same sense as critics of the *Book of Mormon* who refuse to read it.

I find it sad that the young people of the Church are often made to feel that finding inspiration in the music of the counterculture is immoral and satanic. I doubt that the Tabernacle Choir and Moody Blues would ever appear in concert together, but at least we could allow unorthodox musicians through the Pearly Gates when the time comes. I think God may get bored with the same kind of music day in and day out. . . .

Scott S. Smith
Lost Angeles, California

I have been reading *Dialogue* from its inception, and have found it a thoughtful and moderate voice for the exploration of Mormon beliefs and practices. Now and then it has printed a critical comment, but usually within a context of pro and con interaction. But, with the publication of the article "The Organ and Mormon Church Music" I feel for the first time a sense of attack on the Church. Even more, the attack is caustic and obviously exaggerated in its interpretation of that which is being attacked. I am disappointed and left to wonder if we are to expect more of this intemperate expression.

What you have done offends me as follows: You quoted a policy statement said to have been issued by the Church. You then printed eight negative responses and no supportive reactions. This may be construed as deliberate bias on the part of the editor. Following the eight, you printed a short statement by Alexander Schreiner which, by virtue of its position at the end of the eight criticisms, carries the clear tone of an apology to the musical world, with an implied hope for better days.

I regard the reactions as intemperate because for the most part they distort policy statements, e.g., "Are organs . . . to be bought to satisfy the most musically illiterate members of the worshippers?" or "A church with iron bars instead of stained glass. . . ." or "I suppose we will hear electronic chord organs from the Tabernacle next!" This is not the language of a thoughtful discussant, and certainly not of an informed person, nor is this what the policy statement says.

The Church is an institution for the spiritual education of people. As such, it uses many resources, including music, art, drama, science and other forms of inquiry and expression. It does not follow that the Church should therefore have the most professional theatres or laboratories or kitchens or anything else of

that kind. What it does attempt to have is the most generally effective human development program it can provide to all of its members in light of all of its resources, with the emphasis on Christ-like behavior. Whatever some musicians may think to the contrary, this means that music is a subordinate means. Even so it can be, and usually is, an element of beauty within the total picture.

Asahel D. Woodruff
Director, Cumorah Mission
Bureau of Information
Palmyra, New York

It is sheer folly to argue the pros and cons of pipe organs as long as our chapels are designed so that the (acoustical!) ceilings hit us just above the ears. Any sound sounds about the same!

Marielle Mitchell
Los Angeles, California

conversation about a conversation

"That's strange, Agnes. The men do the talking and the women chiefly listen in this discussion. Fifty-nine of the speeches are from the men and only fifteen speeches were made by the women."

Judith had picked up my Winter 1974 *Dialogue* and had read "A Conversation About Mormonism" while Sam and I settled the children down for the night. Judith, a non-Mormon, had arrived at our home early for the women's consciousness raising group we recently formed. It had been a long day, beginning with Relief Society in the morning, and I looked forward to the casual evening with Judith and the others.

As I sat down, Judith leaned over and showed me a tally she had penciled:

		Sheila	1
Jerry	13	Cheryl	8
Dick	18	Marilyn	3
Robert	17	Maureen	2
Brent	11	Bonnie	1
	59		15

Looking at her tally, one had to admit that if the article had been a scene from a play, only the male parts would be worth having.

"Is it always this way for you Mormons, too?" Judith asked.

I was about to say "of course not" and defend my tribe, but I hesitated, thinking maybe I'd take up some counting of my own and check out her question.

"Do you always go around counting like this, Judy?" I asked back.

"Sure. Women can learn a lot by counting, Agnes."

Agnes Hume
Berlin, Germany

dilemma of the mormon intellectual

Since I came to Utah a little less than three years ago to pursue graduate study in anthropology, I have avidly read both recent and past issues of *Dialogue*. Although I am not a Mormon, for some time I have been fascinated by Mormonism—an interest which resulted in my doing fieldwork on the Aaronic Order, a Mormon schismatic group. Many of the original members of the Aaronic Order were disaffected working class Mormons who felt that their Church no longer subscribed to egalitarian and communal ideals.

The dilemma of the Mormon intellectual who often does not take the beliefs of his heritage literally but still perceives desirable traits in his culture is only one of the interesting areas in Mormonism for social scientists to consider. Although I do not wish to categorize all *Dialogue* contributors or readers as being a part of the alienated Mormon intellectual group, I am sure that the journal provides an important avenue by which this group can air opinions that are not welcomed in ward meetings.

On the other hand, I cannot help but feel that many Mormon intellectuals are fighting a "losing battle" in attempting to deal with the fundamentalism, racism and political conservatism of modern Mormonism. Despite my cynicism, I must commend the editors of and the contributors to *Dialogue* for the courage to deal with issues that are often viewed dogmatically or as too sensitive for discussion by many Mormons.

Hans A. Baer
Salt Lake City, Utah

dialogue in the antipodes

May I express my appreciation for *Dialogue*. I find it a great source of strength and uplift—a challenge. Unfortunately Gospel scholarship is not well advanced in Australia, and if your American readers find the Church over there to be intellectually barren, they don't know how good they have it.

I was grateful for Eugene England's article in the Winter '74 issue. I appreciate somewhat the message he expressed, particularly the need for LDS intellectuals to be faithful in fulfilling their Church callings so that they can be better accepted. It seems so many of those who show an intellectual interest over here immediately fall into inactivity.

Thanks for the effort and the courage.

Gary Sturgess
Queensland, Australia

Some months ago our home teacher gave me a copy of *Dialogue* to read. I should now like to subscribe. I am looking forward to much enjoyment and enlightenment from your publication.

Almira A. Busch
Albuquerque, N. Mexico

from a peak in darien

With every new copy of *Dialogue* I am thrilled. My first contact made me feel like Keats upon reading Chapman's Homer. *Dialogue* has been helping me build and maintain my testimony of the Restored Gospel. I will do without food before I will do without *Dialogue*.

Milton MacInnis
Nova Scotia, Canada

a delicate balance

I honestly thought that *Dialogue* was going to fold. Congratulations on your survival. I have always enjoyed the journal. One of the most curious features of your journal is the extremely delicate balance between criticism and promotional themes.

Garr Cutler
Eugene, Oregon

I enjoyed your brochure with the Washington monument in the background. Enclosed find my new subscription as a "Person." Best wishes for this challenging venture. You have my 100 percent support.

Carolyn W. D. Person
Boston, Massachusetts

I love *Dialogue*. I long for the day when the mailman will bring the next issue. Its value to me is immeasurable. The articles it has contained have answered questions that have been troubling me for years. Who knows where I would be today if I had never received a copy. Thank you.

John T. Scott
Christchurch, New Zealand



INTRODUCTION

In the early days of the Church, members were at odds with the larger society over sex norms related to the practice of polygamy. After the Manifesto, Mormon mores grew to be more compatible with American middle-class values. But, in recent years, as American society has become more permissive and more openly occupied with sex, Mormon culture has become more restrictive, and once again there is a major gap between the views of Mormons and their contemporaries. At the same time, we as Mormons are less secluded from American culture. We are no longer so heavily concentrated in Utah, and are increasingly influenced by the secular mass media. Thus we feel—perhaps more keenly than ever before—the conflict between our values and those of “the world.”

During the past two years, we have been asked many times why we were editing a special issue of *Dialogue* on sexuality in Mormon culture, and our answer has always been the same: Sex in Mormon culture, even more than in the broader American culture, is a significant stress point, a serious source of personal conflict. We sense a compelling need, therefore, not only to understand sexuality, but to bring the discussion into the open where it can be dealt with constructively.

One researcher has pointed out that it is important to distinguish between *inhibition* and *discrimination* in sexual decisions. Inhibition is currently denigrated (and often ridiculed) in contemporary American culture; but a good case can be made for being discriminating—that is, knowingly and intelligently choosing to control sexual behavior within meaningful bounds. If, however, our standards appear to be nothing more than inhibitions, can they have a positive effect on the larger society? And, can they act as effective safeguards against the permissiveness of that society? We must develop a positive and well-articulated philosophy of sex.

Sex is also a stress point *within* Mormon culture. While our socialization works well for most members, it is strong enough to make significant deviation almost unbearable. Individuals who do not fit the mold are made to feel so guilty that they may even become alienated from the circle of the Saints. While “black and white” positions may keep many people in line, they may also cause unnecessary anguish. An effective way to deal with such problems is to talk about them.

Sadly, the conflict within Mormon culture is probably most intensely felt within the individual. Many comments received in the preparation of this issue testified of the pain and heartache of unresolved sexual problems. We firmly believe that as individuals we can and should make sex a positive force, integrated within a righteous life, rather than a source of frustration and guilt. There is a world of difference between the naive person whose only knowledge of sex is a list of forbidden fruits, and the person who faces his own sexuality intelligently and realistically, learning to express *and* control it.

It is commonly argued that sex is strictly a personal or family matter, and that simply “living the gospel” will take care of all problems. While we fully agree with the need for personal and marital privacy, we feel that this privacy is not diminished—in fact may be enhanced—by honest inquiry and responsible discussion. Indeed, “living the gospel” requires intelligence as well as obedience. The Lord has said he expects us to grow in knowledge and understanding, and by so doing to gain control over our impulses and ultimately our own destinies. Too many people are unprepared for this challenging growth.

Thus we approach this special issue confident that a responsible discussion of sexual issues will neither destroy faith, lead to immorality, nor discredit gospel principles, but rather, that it will help to clarify principles and lead to happier living. We firmly believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ offers the most positive, indeed the correct view of sexuality—one that brings joy. We also believe that Mormons as a people can make an important contribution to American sexual attitudes if only they prepare for the battle. To confront the “new morality” with worn-out and discredited Victorian platitudes does no justice to our cause. As Truman Madsen observed, the best way to “overcome fake fires that are omnipresent in our culture is neither with wet blankets nor cold water, but to burn with a brighter, richer flame.”

In seeking manuscripts for this issue, we did not seek contributors with any pre-selected perspective. We asked only that they approach their topics responsibly, with thoughtful, honest expression. It was our intention to avoid the sensational potential of the subject, and to produce a balanced and comprehensive treatment. The response to our call was overwhelming. We received material enough to fill several issues, and there was simply not enough space for many fine articles, essays, stories and poems. Among those not included:

- an LDS bishop and his wife commenting on their experience with an unwed, pregnant teenager who lived with them under the sponsorship of the Church Social Services program;
- a young man pleading for understanding on the subject of masturbation and its accompanying guilt;
- excerpts from a missionary journal reflecting the stress for both missionaries and local young women while living “an arm’s length away,” yet preaching a gospel of love;

- a turn of the century memoir on learning the “facts of life” as a youth in Ferron, Utah.
- a young woman’s description of the sexual pressures and personal conflicts faced by divorcees in the Church;
- the frustrated voice of a professional counselor witnessing the attitudes of family, friends or Church leaders who discourage troubled families from obtaining effective counseling; and
- a letter from a “sensuous grandmother” on the beauty of marital sex in later years.

We read an historical article relating the modern sexual attitudes to early Hellenistic influences on Christianity and another presenting the intriguing argument that our current negative Church rhetoric was traceable to the polygamy period, with its charges of Mormon licentiousness. Other articles dealt with transexualism and other sexual miscues; sexuality in literature; abortion; the advantages of polygamy; and there was even one on “sex-ways in the hereafter”!

It was only with great difficulty that we—together with the regular editor and his associates—reduced this abundance to the space limitations of this issue and selected from among many fine articles, those which we felt should open our discussion of sexuality in Mormon culture. Those selected, as will be seen, represent a variety of exceptional scholarly, scientific and personal experience. Still, they only introduce the multitude of important facets of sexual life in our culture.

So, let the dialogue begin. . . .

HTC
MBR

BIRTH CONTROL AMONG THE MORMONS: INTRODUCTION TO AN INSISTENT QUESTION

LESTER E. BUSH, JR.

*"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful
and multiply, and replenish the earth . . ."*

Genesis 1:28

"Birth control" is a relatively new expression, coined only sixty years ago. The desire to control births is several thousand years older. Early Egyptian, Chinese, Greek, Roman and Moslem medical lore all included potions and practices to limit fertility. Semi-reliable contraceptive measures were known in sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe, and at least some early American colonists were familiar with them as well. The extent and use of this knowledge is difficult to measure. Most students of the Western experience believe that except in France, contraception was uncommon before the nineteenth century. Within the Christian world, public morality almost unanimously condemned such practices as interference with Divine will.¹

In early nineteenth century America, published discussions of contraception were both rare and risky. The first publications dealing with specific techniques did not appear until the early 1830's. Neither (there were two) were well received, and the more explicit earned its physician-author an obscenity conviction with several months at hard labor.²

Lester E. Bush, Jr., a physician with special interests in Mormon and medical history, will be the new Associate Editor of *Dialogue*. He is the author of "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview" (*Dialogue*, Spring, 1973).

A topic of theoretical relevance, which was more socially acceptable, did receive considerable national attention—the Malthusian thesis that the rate of population growth would eventually exceed the earth's "sustaining capacity." Even the Mormon *Evening & Morning Star* joined in by reprinting a "table of population" correlating births and deaths with the price of corn.³ Several years later the *Latter-Day Saints Messenger and Advocate* went considerably further. The March, 1837 issue carried a short article entitled "Preventive Check" that extolled the custom in Germany and Moravia of delaying one to four years "between betrothal and final rite" as "the best Malthusian plan . . . being founded on prudence." The author, presumably editor Warren Cowdery, noted that this interposed "a seasonable pause before young parties enter into the expense of a family and house"; that it also provided an opportunity to discover "any cause, such as drunken or idle habits or poverty which might make marriage unsuitable"; and that it served as a limited deterrent to population growth.⁴

Such comments were unusual. For most Mormons, as with Americans in general, population pressures were at best only theoretical considerations. Their home, the archetypal land of plenty, was accommodating the highest national birth rate in the Western world.⁵ In considering demographic problems, the Mormons, among others, were as willing to turn to scripture as to official figures and projections. Gloomy predictions of overpopulation were incompatible with the first great commandment to multiply and replenish the earth. Since the Lord had not rescinded this directive, it was unreasonable to assume that he would send more spirits to the earth than could be accommodated.⁶

Notwithstanding the lack of credence given Malthusian projections, Apostle Orson Pratt made one curious concession to the compelling mathematics of Malthus' argument. Combining the latest in science and scripture with characteristic enthusiasm, he reached the unique conclusion that the timing of the creation of the earth was related to population pressures in the pre-existence. Our previous estate, he surmised, had become "overstocked with inhabitants" and the "superficial contents too limited to yield sufficient sustenance for the innumerable millions of [the] father's family."⁷

With the Mormon move west, Malthusian rhetoric lost whatever marginal credence it previously had been accorded. The Kingdom needed more men, not fewer. Isolated in an empty Great Basin, the Saints apparently sustained a very high birth rate for most of the remainder of the nineteenth century—and in so doing distinguished themselves in yet another way from their countrymen to the east. While the Mormons probably maintained a rate near 50 births per thousand population, the national birth rate fell from about 50 in 1830 to less than 40 in 1875; by 1900 a new low was reached nationally, 28 per thousand.⁸

Most demographers cite voluntary family limitation as a major factor in the declining national fertility. Although the specific methods by which this limitation was achieved have not been fully delineated, contemporaries (most often appalled by the decline) frequently identified three principal causes: the use of preventive (contraceptive) techniques, abortion, and infanticide. The last of these, although not strictly a form of fertility control, usually was not distinguished from the preceding two (particularly abortion) in the heated national polemics of the mid- to late nineteenth century. Moreover, while legal distinctions were made among the three, ethically and statistically there frequently

was no distinction.⁹ Vestiges of this association are evident in anti-birth control discussions well into the twentieth century. It is important, therefore, to review briefly the early national and Mormon commentary on these alternative methods of "fertility control."

Despite its prominence in the polemics, infanticide was apparently never a common practice in America. In Europe, however, where several Mormon Church leaders served missions, it was reportedly one of the major factors limiting population growth.¹⁰ Initially, abortions were also apparently rare in America. Few states had legislation on the subject; those that did generally considered it a misdemeanor, and then only when performed after "quickening" (usually about the 18th to 20th week of pregnancy).¹¹ By mid-nineteenth century, however, abortions had become much more common. Around 1860 a national anti-abortion crusade developed, spearheaded by the medical profession, the Catholic and some of the Protestant clergy, and the Eastern press, aimed primarily at strengthening and standardizing state anti-abortion statutes. The ensuing sensational public discussion peaked in the 1870's, with allegations that the number of annual "foeticides" or infanticides was in the tens of thousands (or millions!).¹²

The extensive national attention had a demonstrable impact in Utah. In 1876 the territory's first anti-abortion law was enacted, carrying a penalty of two to ten years for performing an abortion; a woman convicted of having an abortion received one to five years "unless the same is necessary to preserve her life." It was also during this period that one finds the first real discussion of fertility control by leading Mormons.

The abortion issue had provided Church leaders a timely, ready-made vehicle with which to wage a moral counterattack against the critics of polygamy. They argued that while Mormons were openly and honorably living with several women, their "monogamous" critics were living dishonorably with mistresses and prostitutes, and compounding their sin by destroying the offspring of their illegitimate alliances.¹³ Capitalizing on the widely circulated reports of an increasing national incidence of abortion and infanticide, Church leaders repeatedly castigated the "whited walls and painted sepulchers" of the East for practicing "their hellish arts" at the very time the Easterners were self-righteously inveighing against Mormon "innocence, virtue, and integrity."¹⁴ The argument was not entirely fair, for it had been the highly publicized campaign *against* abortion that provided the data on which the Mormon accusations were based. Regardless of the private practice in America, public advocacy of abortion was always uncommon. At the least, the Mormons argued, the Easterners should "sweep out their own Augean stables" before looking to the West for a cause.

There had been sporadic references to abortion in Mormon publications and discourses from the 1840's on, but it was not until 1878 that the subject became a common theme. Then, following the decade of John Taylor's administration (1877-1887), abortion again received little additional attention for nearly a century.¹⁵ The motivation for the extensive Church attention apparently was not concern over a local problem. The infrequent concessions that such practices were present in Utah usually linked them with non-Mormon elements,¹⁶ though there was also acknowledgment that a few of the less faithful were involved.¹⁷ Overwhelmingly, the leadership viewed the prodigious child-bearing among

the membership as evidence of a resounding rejection of such practices, and frequently help up Mormon fertility as a standard of righteousness to the world¹⁸

Despite the extensive Mormon commentary on abortion during this period, there was no single comprehensive treatise on the ethical issues involved. An underlying "doctrinal" position, however, can readily be identified in these early discourses. First and foremost, abortion was termed "murder" by the Church leadership. Especially during the period of the most vigorous polemics (1878–1885), virtually every leader who dealt with the subject was unequivocal on this point.¹⁹ Essentially no attempt was made to distinguish between abortion ("foeticide," "destruction of embryos") and child murder ("infanticide," "infant murder"). The eternal implications of each was described in the same terms. Understandably, then, any involvement in abortion was considered to have grave personal consequences. In the words of George Q. Cannon,

... they will be damned with the deepest damnation; because it is the damnation of shedding innocent blood, for which there is no forgiveness. . . . They are outside the pale of salvation. They are in a position that nothing can be done for them. They cut themselves off by such acts from all hopes of salvation . . .²⁰

Those assisting the principals were equally guilty. Even "a man that would sanction such a thing in his family, or that would live with a woman guilty of such acts, shares in the crime of murder."²¹ More immediately, President John Taylor instructed bishops and stake presidents to insure that those involved in abortions not be allowed in the temples, and "to sever them from the Church; they shall not have a place in the Church and Kingdom of God. . . ."²²

Unlike some religious groups concerned with the abortion/murder issue, the Mormon position did not derive from a doctrine fixing the time when a spirit entered an embryo or fetus, nor to an assumed irreversibility of this union. Even today there remains no official Church doctrine on this relationship. Brigham Young believed that the spirit entered the fetus at the time of quickening,²³ but his understanding of the relationship presupposed a surprising degree of flexibility,

... when some people have little children born at 6 & 7 months pregnancy & they live but a few hours then die they bless them &c. but I dont do it for I think that such a spirit has not a fair chance for I think that such a spirit will have a chance of occupying another Tabernacle and developing itself . . .²⁴

Early Mormon references to contraception were almost non-existent except for the few associated with condemnations of abortion and infanticide. John Taylor, for example, lamented, in 1882, that "already are licentiousness and debauchery corrupting, undermining and destroying society; already are we interfering with the laws of nature and stopping the functions of life, and have become the slayers of our own offspring. . . ."²⁵ Speaking, as he was, of American society in general, Taylor's observations were well-founded—both in the case of abortion and contraception. In spite of the seemingly hostile reception afforded the early public advocates of contraception, their writings gained increasingly wide circulation in the United States in the mid- and late nineteenth century.²⁶ The techniques advocated, rudimentary by modern standards, were often capable of significantly reducing average fertility. Withdrawal (coitus interruptus), vaginal sponges or tampons, spermicidal douching solutions, and

primitive condoms were all described in the works published in the 1830's. A decade later the vulcanization of rubber led to a more effective and economical rubber condom. By 1866 these contraceptives were allegedly for sale "by every druggist and in all pharmacies. . . ." ²⁷ Within another decade public manifestations of the fertility control industry had reached such proportions that distribution of contraceptive literature was banned nationally under the "Comstock" obscenity statutes. Later, still other effective contraceptives were introduced—the diaphragm and stem pessary (predecessor to the IUD). Regardless of the public antipathy to contraception, knowledge and availability of these techniques probably played an increasing, if not dominant, role in the declining national fertility in the last half of the century.

Mormon references to the specifics of contraceptive technique were euphemistically vague. Brigham Young spoke of "attempts to destroy and dry up the fountains of life"; Erastus Snow of "taking villainous compounds to induce barrenness and unfruitfulness" and of "devices of wicked men and women" that resulted in "apparent sterility"; and Parley Pratt found scripture proscription of "untimely union, excess, or voluntary act, [which] prevented propagation. . . ." ²⁸

The Saints apparently withstood such worldly incursions. As Erastus Snow succinctly recapitulated:

They do not patronize the vendor of noxious, poisonous, destructive medicines to procure abortion, infanticide, child murder, and other wicked devices, whereby to check the multiplication of their species, in order to facilitate the gratification of fleshly lusts. . . . ²⁹

Mormon opposition to contraception was not based solely on association with abortion; nor was abortion condemned solely in the context of the sixth commandment. Again, in the words of Erastus Snow, ". . . that abominable and soul-destroying doctrine of devils, infanticide and foeticide, which is practiced to no little extent in the Christian world . . . is in open violation to the laws of nature and the law of God to our first parents, to 'multiply and replenish the earth. . . .' " ³⁰

Although secondary in the abortion polemics, the "first great commandment" was easily the major focus of nineteenth century Mormon commentary on the broader subject of fertility (and its control). Joseph Smith spoke of "the blessings . . . to multiply and replenish, with the addition of long life and posterity." ³¹ This theme was continued in Utah, and when the practice of polygamy became public, "replenishment" was cited as one of its major justifications. According to semi-official apologist Orson Pratt:

The object of marriage is to multiply the species, according to the command of God. A woman with one husband can fulfill this command, with greater facilities, than if she had a plurality . . . But a plurality of wives would be the means of greatly increasing a family, and of thus fulfilling the command, not only to a far greater extent on the part of the husband, but also on the part of the females who otherwise might have been under the necessity of remaining single forever. . . . ³²

Brigham Young was more direct: "This is the reason why the doctrine of plurality was revealed, that noble spirits which are waiting for tabernacles might be brought forth." ³³ There was never any equivocation; the command had been to multiply, and the prime reason for the institution of marriage—plural or otherwise—was to carry out this instruction. ³⁴

It did not follow that everyone ought to (or should even be permitted to) marry and have children. Beginning with the early *Messenger and Advocate* suggestion that "drunken or idle habits or poverty . . . might make . . . marriage unsuitable,"³⁵ certain groups were consistently identified as unfit for marriage. Parley Pratt was certain that "a wise legislation, or the law of God . . . would not suffer the idiot, the confirmed, irreclaimable drunkard, the man of hereditary disease, or of vicious habits, to possess or retain a wife. . . ."³⁶ Orson Pratt took a somewhat broader view:

. . . have the wicked the same right to the blessings of a numerous posterity, under this divine institution [of marriage], as the righteous? We answer, they have not.

. . . Who can . . . believe that the wicked ought to multiply upon the earth and raise up candidates for the devil's kingdom? No person can believe this, who believes in the Bible. . . .³⁷

Yet the wicked *were* multiplying and thereby creating bodies unworthy of the many righteous spirits awaiting their earthly experience.³⁸ To Brigham Young the implications were clear:

Do you understand this? I have told you many times that there are multitudes of pure and holy spirits waiting to take tabernacles, now what is our duty?—to prepare tabernacles for them; to take a course that will not tend to drive those spirits into the families of the wicked, where they will be trained in wickedness, debauchery and every species of crime. It is the duty of every righteous man and woman to prepare tabernacles for all the spirits they can. . . .³⁹

This particular tenet was integral to the justification of polygamy. Church leaders rarely argued that there were insufficient numbers of men to marry the available women; rather, that there were not enough *worthy* men.⁴⁰

Twentieth century advocates of contraception generally assume the validity of a non-procreative role for sex in marriage. Although this was not a major point of discussion in the nineteenth century, at least some early Mormon leaders would have agreed. Orson Pratt believed that God had "ordained that pure and virtuous love should be incorporated with sexual love; that by combination of the two, permanent unions in the marriage may be formed, and the species be multiplied in righteousness." "Pure and virtuous love," he added, "should always exist between a husband and each of his wives, as well as sexual love."⁴¹ Parley Pratt in similar language, declared:

The object of union of the sexes is the propagation of their species, or procreation; also for mutual affection, and cultivation of those eternal principles of never-ending charity and benevolence which are inspired by the Eternal Spirit. . . .⁴²

It did not follow that one could legitimately separate the roles of sex in marriage. Those who intentionally did so deprived themselves of the ennobling aspects of each. Husbands and wives who succumbed to their "fleshly lusts" and secured for themselves "the pleasure of self-gratification without bearing the responsibilities of maternity" were one and the same with those who engaged in abortion and infanticide, or otherwise drying up the "wellsprings of life."

Nonetheless, in some special circumstances coitus was permissible when it could not have resulted in pregnancy. Responding to a question by Parley Pratt who had asked what was "strictly right" in the "connection of a man with his

wife," Brigham Young advised, "As to sexual connection during pregnancy, just as they pleased about that, they could suit themselves."⁴³ Additionally, although nursing mothers are frequently infertile, coitus was also permissible 40 (or 70) days after the time of delivery.⁴⁴

Thus, by the close of the nineteenth century, the Church had developed a comprehensive, if not systematic or exhaustive, set of beliefs and teachings relevant to the subject of fertility control. Although public expressions had been motivated primarily by indirectly related theoretical considerations, there was clearly no place within the Kingdom for such "hellish" practices. Marriage (and sex) was instituted by God for the propagation of the species, and on the Saints themselves rested the greatest obligation to have large families. Their performance in fulfilling this obligation was an obvious source of pride to Church leaders.

It should not be inferred, however, that there was no form of fertility control among the nineteenth century Mormons. Although there is no direct evidence to date that the spread of effective contraception (or abortion) had any impact on Mormon fertility for most of the century, in a very real sense child spacing was almost universally evident from the earliest days. Notwithstanding an early assumption by the *Messenger and Advocate* that most women had 22 potentially fertile years, and Orson Pratt's sanguine supposition that women could bear a child a year, the average (monogamous) Mormon mother reportedly bore "only" about eight children.⁴⁵ Frequently there were 20 to 30 month intervals between births.⁴⁶ This can probably be attributed primarily to the lengthy periods mothers breastfed their infants.⁴⁷

Another practice which would have contributed to child spacing was conjugal abstinence or (for the married Mormon missionary and polygamist Church leader) marital absence.⁴⁸ Such "techniques" were not necessarily voluntary. There was no safe alternative to breast feeding,⁴⁹ nor could the marital abstinence of missions nor logistical limitations of polygamy necessarily be avoided.⁵⁰ These were fertility controlling factors nonetheless. The most significant limitations on Mormon family size may well have been infant mortality and maternal morbidity, which remained high for most of the century. Finally, there is some evidence of intentional "spacing" as well—such as the rotational pattern of childbirth suggested in some polygamous families, and the reproductive delay often apparent after the birth of twins.

All these influences were continually present, and so had little impact on fertility trends. A decline in overall fertility would have required a new development. If Mormon birth rates were falling late in the century, the decline was apparently not evident to the Church leadership. Perhaps their view was obscured by a lower infant and child mortality—for things were not all that they seemed.⁵¹

II

. . . there is a certain class of Latter-day Saints that have come to think as the gentile world does—that it is not stylish, not nice to have large families; and therefore we find, much to our sorrow, that in some instances steps are being taken to prevent these spirits being tabernacled by them. . . .

Apostle Abraham O. Woodruff, 1900

With the arrival of the twentieth century, two significant changes emerged in Mormon discourses on fertility control. First, although abortion and infanticide

were still occasionally spoken of, by far the greatest attention was devoted to "preventive" practices. Second, the remarks no longer were directed at the non-Mormon world, but toward Zion itself.

Apostle Abraham Woodruff was among the first to note that there was "a spirit creeping in among certain classes of Latter-day Saints which is not of God, but of the world." "Reliable sources," he announced during General Conference in April, 1900 had informed him that steps were being taken by some individuals "to prevent spirits being tabernacled." He hoped that "some of the older members of this quorum, or . . . the Presidency" might address the subject.⁵² President Joseph F. Smith responded to Woodruff's call with an expression of his own concern, adding,

Those who have taken upon themselves the responsibility of wedded life should see to it that they do not abuse the course of nature; that they do not destroy the principle of life within them, nor violate any of the commandments of God. The command which he gave in the beginning to multiply and replenish the earth is still in force upon the children of men. Possibly no greater sin could be committed by the people who have embraced this Gospel than to prevent or to destroy life in the manner indicated. . . .⁵³

Two years later Woodruff's information was largely corroborated by the Church statistical report for 1901 (possibly the earliest reporting a Church birth rate). "There is something wrong," reported the *Juvenile Instructor*, "either with ourselves or with our statistics—possibly with both; but we trust it is with the statistics, as that is the lesser evil." Not only had the marriage rate declined, but "our average birth rate, if we can believe our statistical reports, is far too low. It is below that of the nations of modern Christendom to whose birth rate we have been able to obtain access. Ours, as reported, is a little over thirty-five per annum in each thousand souls."⁵⁴

The reaction to this discovery was predictable. A charge was given to review the statistics and to keep more accurate records, and markedly increased attention was given in Church discourses and publications to the obligation to have large families. Throughout the remainder of the decade, the Saints were enjoined to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth," and to abandon the "tendency to postpone the responsibilities [of marriage] until middle life." Bachelorhood and "wilfully motherless wives" came under particular attack, while the mothers of large families were singled out for special recognition.⁵⁵

The mothers of Zion (or the statisticians) responded to the call. Within a decade, the Church could announce a birthrate of 38 per thousand, up ten percent. Although not as high as desired, there was still room for considerable pride that this was "the highest birth-rate in the world, as far as available statistics show."⁵⁶ (By comparison, the national rate was nearly ten per thousand lower. At these rates, a representative Mormon mother would average nearly five children, while her non-Mormon counterpart would be closer to 3½.)

Nonetheless, ground had been lost, and it became an accepted if lamented fact that fertility control had had an impact on the Mormon community. Paraphrasing a letter from a physician, President Joseph F. Smith wrote in 1908,

The doctor is authority for the statement that a great many people, even among the Latter-day Saints, hold to the view that parents should control the size of their families; that they should not be the means of bringing children into the world unless they are able in every way to

provide for their children's wants in keeping with modern requirements'; that prevention is justifiable, even where parents are in strong physical health, provided criminal measures are not resorted to. He admits that, without doubt, there are ways by which it is possible. . . .⁵⁷

The doctor had written to ask, "Is it proper and right in the sight of God for parents intentionally to prevent, by any means whatever, the spirits . . . from obtaining earthly tabernacles? I have, of course, only reference to parents lawfully married, and specifically to Latter-day Saints."⁵⁸ Similar questions were raised by a sister in Chicago, "Is it wrong for married people to refuse to have children when they can have them? Is it right for a poor couple to have a large family when the mother is sickly and the children receive very little care?"⁵⁹

The sister's questions were handled by B. F. Cummings, editor of *Liahona The Elders' Journal*, who turned for his answer to the rhetoric (and undifferentiated perspective) of the not too distant past. Refusal to have children was "a great sin":

. . . Neither poverty nor impaired health on the part of either or both parents can be pleaded in justification of pre-natal destruction of offspring. The soundness of this view will become apparent if the form of the question is slightly changed, thus: 'Is it right for a poor couple to kill some of their children when the wife is sickly and they receive very little care.' . . .⁶⁰

President Smith's response to the physician, published several months later in *The Improvement Era*, was in significant contrast:

In a general way, and as a rule, the answer to this question is an emphatic negative. I do not hesitate to say that prevention is wrong. It brings in its train a host of social evils. It destroys the morals of a community and nation. It creates hatred and selfishness in the hearts of men and women, and perverts their natural qualities of love and service, changing them to hate and aversion. It causes death, decay, and degeneration instead of life and growth, and advancement. And finally, it disregards or annuls the great commandment of God to man, 'Multiply and replenish the earth.'

I am now speaking of the normally healthy man and woman. But that there are weak and sickly people who in wisdom, discretion and common sense should be counted as exceptions, only strengthens the general rule. It is not necessary to go into detail concerning the wisdom of prevention in such cases, only to say that in my estimation no prevention, even in such cases, is legitimate except through absolute abstinence.⁶¹

This statement probably represents the first published acknowledgment that under selected circumstances, a form of intentional fertility control was acceptable to the Church. The overall thrust of the Church position remained unchanged.

Despite the growing and acknowledged change in national fertility patterns during this period, President Smith's perspective was typical of most commentary of the day. On this subject the Mormons remained in the social mainstreams. The marked decline in American fertility, particularly among the "old American stock" and the more highly educated, had for some time been the cause of considerable national concern. It was in this context that Theodore Roosevelt popularized the expression "race suicide," which quickly became the rallying cry for critics of voluntary family limitation.⁶² Publicly, contraception remained an unacceptable, legally proscribed, threat to the national well-being, openly advocated primarily by the radical fringe.

The following decade, 1910–1920, brought several new and significant de-

velopments. The most notable, perhaps, was the organization of a widely reported national movement to legalize "birth control" and free American wives from "compulsory" childbearing. Identified most frequently with activist Margaret Sanger, the movement initially remained associated with radicalism, and had only a limited national following. But not all who openly advocated birth control were radicals. The *Relief Society Magazine* noted in 1916 that there were also "fashionable women, and . . . fashionable doctors and ministers who advocate this movement." In view of these developments, editor Susa Young Gates requested that some of the "leading brethren" express themselves once again on the subject.⁶³ In response she received and published commentaries from six of the Apostles, and the Presiding Bishop.⁶⁴

These articles, collectively the most extensive discussion of birth control to date, precipitated "animated and sometimes heated discussion" in the Relief Society.⁶⁵ Because of the "widely distributed interest and . . . inquiries" which followed, the First Presidency was asked "if they approved in full" the statements that had been published. In response, the Presidency wrote:

We give our unqualified endorsement to these articles, including that of Elder Joseph F. Smith, Jr., and commend the sentiments to members and non-members . . . everywhere.⁶⁶

Retroactively, then, these discussions represent to some extent the first explicitly sanctioned "official" statement of a Church position on birth control.

The essays were all in essential agreement; none departed substantially from the established position of the Church. The commandment was clear, and those who failed to comply did so at grave eternal risk.⁶⁷ Moreover, those women who took preventive measures risked serious health problems,⁶⁸ as well as the emotional trauma of old age without children.⁶⁹ In the rare circumstances in which some fertility control was appropriate, the only acceptable means would be by conjugal abstinence.⁷⁰ While few concrete guidelines were given as to what constituted an acceptably large family, several articles expressly rejected the "fashionable" notion that families should be restricted to only two to four children. Apostle Rudger Clawson thought most women capable of having a family of eight to ten, and encouraged reproduction to the "utmost limit."⁷¹

The particular attention attracted to Joseph Fielding Smith's remarks were probably due to two assertions. First,

. . . those who attempt to pervert the ways of the Lord, and to prevent their offspring from coming into the world . . . are guilty of one of the most heinous crimes in the category. There is no promise of eternal salvation and exaltation for such as they. . . .⁷²

If Church "modernists" disapproved of the tone of this statement, they either ignored or were unaware of the ample nineteenth century precedents.⁷³ A second probable source of discussion was Smith's condemnation of those who were concerned with the relatively high fertility of the "so-called 'lower classes' . . ." So far as he was concerned, "the old stock is surely being replaced by the 'lower classes' of a sturdier and more worthy race. . . ." These remarks touched not only on a major tenet of birth control proponents, but were also directly relevant to the intensely discussed eugenics movement, then at its height nationally. This movement commanded a great deal of attention among the Mormons—perhaps in part because the Mormon defense of polygamy had anticipated popular eugenics theory. It was not long, however, before this

enthusiasm lost much of its attraction for both Mormons and non-Mormons alike. Though initially many Church leaders praised the “new science,” their endorsement never extended to the use of birth control as part of its program. The eugenicists themselves were split on this point.⁷⁴

The Relief Society dutifully responded to the exhortations of the leading brethren. At their next conference (April, 1917), an extensive resolution was “unanimously passed” on the subject of “birth control or race suicide.” After listing birth control organizations in fifteen foreign locales, and twenty U.S. cities which advocated “the use of contraceptive devices to prevent child bearing,” it was resolved:

... That we call upon our Latter-day Saint women everywhere to repel this pernicious doctrine both in private conversation, in public talks, in our own homes and families; to pass similar resolutions in all our stakes and ward organizations and live up to them.

... That we sever all connections with any club, society, or associates who advocate and practice birth-control or race suicide. That we refuse to sustain papers, magazines, publishers and physicians who teach this doctrine.

... That we sustain by our voice and vote all laws and law makers who advocate and maintain laws prohibiting every unnatural and immoral birth-control propaganda. . . .⁷⁵

Shortly thereafter President Joseph F. Smith again addressed the Relief Society on birth control. These comments are among the most frequently cited on the subject. While somewhat stronger than his earlier remarks, they also included another exception to the general rule—reflecting no doubt the recent attention given eugenics:

... I regret, I think it is a crying evil, that there should exist a sentiment or a feeling among any members of the Church to curtail the birth of their children. I think that is a crime whenever it occurs, where husband and wife are in possession of health and vigor and are free from impurities that would be entailed upon their posterity. I believe that where people undertake to curtail or prevent the birth of their children that they are going to reap disappointment by and by. I have no hesitancy in saying that I believe this is one of the greatest crimes in the world today, this evil practice. . . .⁷⁶

Although admonitions against birth control continued to be common for the next few years, by 1920 their frequency had diminished. The influence of Joseph F. Smith during the formative years of Mormon teachings on birth control is unmistakable. Much as John Taylor’s administration reflected the greatest concern over abortion, the years that Joseph F. Smith led the Church (1901–1918) show the greatest concentration of discourses on birth control (matched only in the post-Pill era).

Mormon fertility probably held its own during this period of intense exhortation; the birth rate among members was frequently announced as higher than the national average, or even as “unequaled by anything in the world. . . .”⁷⁷ Indeed, the fertility reported in several communities was spectacular. Birth rates, per thousand, of 45, 50 or higher were achieved in some Utah counties, rates twice the national average.⁷⁸ Demographer Warren Thompson, writing a decade later after an extensive study of the 1920 census, concluded that the Mormons were “the one clear case of the influence of religion on the size of the family. . . .”⁷⁹

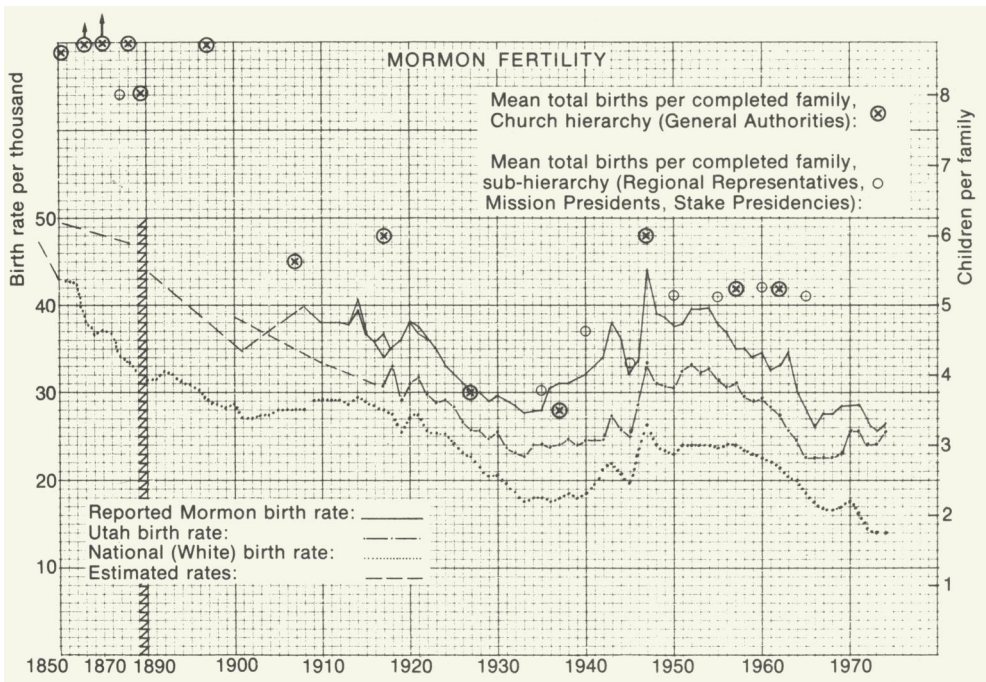


Figure 1 The striking similarity in the trends of Mormon, Utah, and national birth rates, and family sizes of general authorities and "subhierarchical" Church leaders is subject to several qualifications.¹²⁰ First, "fertility rates" (births per 1000 women ages 15-44) is a better measure than birth rates, but fertility rates are not available for the Mormons. Second, completed family size is arbitrarily imposed on birth rate data at a ratio of 1 to 8 (i.e., four children being equated with a birth rate of 32 per thousand). This assumes certain population characteristics present in the U.S. from 1850 to the mid-1940's, but *not known* for the Mormon groups. Third, the reported Church birth rate probably has been erroneous until relatively recently, and is no longer directly comparable to U.S. national figures because of the growth of the international Church.

Church statistical data is replete with inconsistencies. The natural growth rate (births minus deaths) added to annual converts yields a total growth rate well in excess of that reportedly experienced for every decade for which figures are available (1920-1970). Natural growth alone accounts for over 100% of total growth for most years between 1920 and 1950. In particular, the birth rates for the Forties are almost surely too high. In addition to accounting for 150% of reported Church growth, the rates were uncharacteristically independent of the Utah rate (which is paralleled rather closely every other decade from 1920 to 1970). Additionally, the annual number of children blessed, which normally was about 100% of theoretical births, dropped to 80% of claimed births during most of the decade. Several other years (e.g., 1963) are characterized by similar inconsistencies.

Twentieth century fertility trends have proven to be remarkably volatile manifestations of the American psyche, sensitive to a number of pragmatic as well as ethical considerations. Notwithstanding the established and unequivocal position of the Church on voluntary family limitation, twentieth century Mormons have been influenced by some of these pragmatic considerations as well. The early Twenties brought hard times to Utah, a decade ahead of the nation. Possibly the discussion of economic justifications for family

limitation was no longer an abstract doctrinal exercise. Whatever the cause, the effect was unmistakable. Beginning with 1920, Mormon birth rates declined steadily for over a decade, falling from a reported 38 per thousand in 1920 to less than 28 for the years 1933–1935 (a low surpassed only within the past decade). Nor was this decline limited to the “rank-and-file” of Mormondom. Those individuals later selected to serve as general authorities of the Church who were in their child-bearing years during this period averaged about half as many children as their immediate predecessors. In comparison to the fertility of the senior authorities who had led the anti-birth control campaign of the preceding decade, the drop was even more pronounced.⁸⁰

Paradoxically, as the Mormon birth rate declined, so also did the frequency of public references by Church leaders to birth control and the obligations to have large families. Doctrinally, however, there were no major changes. Much of B. H. Roberts’ lengthy discussion of marriage in 1928, for example, could as well have been dated a decade before. All of the major elements remained—emphasis on having large families, condemnation of “indulgence in the sensual delight of sex without incurring the risks, the pains and the responsibilities of parenthood,” and allusions to the “physical and moral and spiritual” evils of birth control. There was one interesting adjustment:

Of the over-prolific poor and ignorant, multiplying beyond all reason of hope to provide for bare necessities, to say nothing of opportunities for good prospects in life, wholesome nourishment, decent clothing and education—for these, enlightenment and patient instruction, education. . . .⁸¹

Education, Roberts explained, should include “proper sex information,” not in “mechanical and chemical” contraception, but in “prudential self-restraint,” “periods of continence self-imposed” that would “keep a family within hailing distance of rugged well being.”

The decline in birth rate ended for both Mormons and non-Mormons in the mid-to-late Thirties, and by the early Forties rates had returned to pre-depression levels. On the issue of fertility control, however, there was no turning back. The gap between increasing personal practices and longstanding public repudiation had almost been closed. Judicial decisions (with major cases in 1933, 1936, 1940) had ended most legal restrictions on contraceptives. In 1937 the conservative but representative American Medical Association endorsed contraception in “voluntary family limitation.” Popularly published polls indicated that by the mid-Thirties a majority of American women believed in the practice of birth control.⁸² And a large majority of the Mormon students at Brigham Young University also shared this view. When asked in a survey in 1935, “Do you believe in the practice of birth control in any form?” over 80% of the nearly 1300 respondents answered *yes*.⁸³

Although Church leaders returned occasionally to the subject of fertility control, the overall Mormon commentary during the period from 1929 to 1940 was significantly less than in any other decade in the twentieth century. This was nonetheless a period of continued, if subtle, doctrinal adjustment. President Heber J. Grant’s reply to an inquiry on birth control in 1939 had a slightly different emphasis. He quoted the frequently cited statement of Joseph F. Smith, and also wrote.

. . . Married couples who, by inheritance and proper living, have themselves been blessed with mental and physical vigor are recreant in their duty if they refuse to meet the natural and rightful responsibility of parenthood. Of course, in every ideal home the health of the mother, as well as the intelligence and health of the children should receive careful consideration.⁸⁴

Another development shortly became evident. Responding privately to a personal inquiry, Apostle John A. Widtsoe in 1942 wrote that "as far as I know the Church has not expressed itself as to birth control. It is generally understood by Church members that marriage should be accomplished by the begetting and rearing of children. . . ." ⁸⁵ Later the same year Widtsoe published a much expanded discussion on this "insistent question." In a remarkably even-handed treatment he considered various arguments, pro and con, on the use of birth control and having large families, and for the most part reached the traditional conclusions. Widtsoe did not reject all non-health related justifications for birth control as erroneous, but rather observed that "the economic excuse for birth control is seldom convincing." Then, covering new ground, he wrote,

Birth control when necessary should be accomplished in nature's way, which does not injure the man or the woman. A careful recognition of the fertile and sterile periods of woman would prove effective in the great majority of cases. Recent knowledge of woman's physiology reveals 'the natural method for controlling birth.' This method 'violates no principle of nature.' . . . ⁸⁶

Widtsoe was not alone among Church leaders in believing that abstinence was not the only legitimate means of fertility regulation. Shortly thereafter, David O. McKay of the First Presidency also advised an inquirer, ". . . when the health of the mother demands it, the proper spacing of children may be determined by seeking medical counsel, by compliance with the processes of nature, or by continence. . . ." ⁸⁷ "The viewpoint of the Church," he wrote on another occasion, ". . . is that the use of artificial preventatives is strictly out of line, as long as the health of the wife is not seriously impaired by childbearing." ⁸⁸

The accommodations evident during these years were by no means equally evident in the public remarks of all the Mormon leadership, nor should these changes be viewed as a complete capitulation to the birth control movement on the part of anyone. No Church leader at any time had advocated "small" or "limited" families, nor did anyone give much credence to economic or educational justifications for deferring or controlling family size. Nor was there any explicit suggestion that there was a legitimate role for sex in marriage without the associated responsibilities of parenthood. Moreover, several of the brethren apparently remained unwilling to sanction the use of actively employed birth control (be it "natural" or otherwise), regardless of the indications.

Most noticeable, perhaps, was the difference in tone between the statements of leaders such as Widtsoe and McKay, and those who appeared more traditionally oriented. Notable among this latter group were Joseph Fielding Smith and J. Reuben Clark. Apostle Smith never departed from the position set forth between 1910 and 1920 by himself and others under President Joseph F. Smith. Those "who wilfully and maliciously design to break this important commandment shall be damned. They cannot have the spirit of the Lord. . . ." ⁸⁹ Clark, a counselor in the First Presidency, was equally direct: "Remember the prime

purpose of sex desire is to beget children. Sex gratification must be had at that hazard. . . .'⁹⁰

During the 1950's and early 1960's there were no new developments in the Church position on fertility regulation. Although birth control appears to have been widely accepted by the general membership, Mormon families during this period tended to be large (by twentieth century standards), swelled by the post-war baby boom to an average of four or more children per family. The birth rate again began a gradual decline in the mid-Fifties, but was still at pre-depression levels as late as 1963. There continued to be no open advocate of birth control among the Church hierarchy, but differences in their public emphasis became somewhat more pronounced. Apostle Hugh B. Brown, who had recently succeeded J. Reuben Clark as counselor to President McKay, espoused probably the broadest guidelines ever published by a Church leader:

The Latter-day Saints believe in large families wherever it is possible to provide for the necessities of life, for the health and education of their children, and when the physical and mental health of the mother permits.⁹¹

Although Brown was a strong advocate of large families, and supported the Church opposition to "birth control," his explicit flexibility clearly separated him from the traditional treatment of the subject. Responding to a personal inquiry he also wrote in October 1961 that the Church opposed birth control but added,

However, we advise mothers, and fathers, to be wise in their intimate relations and, if the health of the mother is involved and the welfare of the rest of the family is at stake, parents are justified in following the advice of good physicians, preferably members of the Church, who are of high moral standards and will advise such measures only for the protection of the health and life of the mother and other children. . . .⁹²

Joseph Fielding Smith remained most widely identified with the traditional view, but was not alone. In 1958, for example, Bruce McConkie published *Mormon Doctrine* (almost immediately a standard reference on Church doctrine for many Mormons in spite of its "unofficial" status), in which he briefly reviewed the situation and concluded, "Those who practice birth control—the regulation of births in a family by the employment of artificial means or contraceptives to prevent conception—are running counter to the foreordained plan of the Almighty. They are in rebellion against God and are guilty of gross wickedness."⁹³ A number of others spoke with a similar emphasis, though perhaps not quite so pointedly.

The year 1960 witnessed a development so significant in the history of contraception that many are now unaware that a "birth control movement" even existed prior to that date. The development, of course, was the introduction of the "pill" into American life, and with it the first seemingly safe and completely reliable means of conception control. This development was followed not long after by the rehabilitation and popularization of a second highly reliable fertility control device, the IUD. By mid-decade these two contraceptives were widely accepted, and were being used by millions of Americans. The impact on group fertility was not long in coming: by 1965 the national and Mormon birth rates had dropped to new lows, eclipsing even the records established in the depths of the depression three decades before.

These developments did not elicit a formal response from the Church. President McKay and the First Presidency continued to respond privately to personal inquiries. Copies of many of their letters (or extracts from them) were reproduced and circulated among interested Mormons. Viewed collectively, they reflect a consistent, moderately well-defined position very close to the philosophy espoused by President McKay while an Apostle and counselor in the Presidency.⁹⁴ In 1969, after the Mormon (and national) birth rates had once again begun to stabilize or rise, the First Presidency issued the first formal statement on birth control since 1918, the only formal discussion of the subject ever published over their name.⁹⁵ In effect it summarized, with few exceptions, the views set forth by the First Presidency and President McKay in private correspondence over the previous decade:

The First Presidency is being asked from time to time as to what the attitude of the Church is regarding birth control. . . .

We seriously regret that there should exist a sentiment or feeling among any members of the Church to curtail the birth of their children. We have been commanded to multiply and replenish the earth that we may have joy and rejoicing in our posterity.

Where husband and wife enjoy health and vigor and are free from impurities that would be entailed upon their posterity, it is contrary to the teachings of the Church artificially to curtail or prevent the birth of children. We believe those who practice birth control will reap disappointment by and by.

However, we feel that men must be considerate of their wives who bear the greater responsibility not only of bearing children, but of caring for them through childhood. To this end the mother's health and strength should be conserved and the husband's consideration for his wife is his first duty, and self-control a dominant factor in all their relationships.

It is our further feeling that married couples should seek inspiration and wisdom from the Lord that they may exercise discretion in solving their marital problems, and that they may be permitted to rear their children in accordance with the teachings of the Gospel.⁹⁶

Beyond a public restatement of the Presidency's views, these few paragraphs also effectively recapitulated fifty years of Church attitudes toward birth control. Beginning with an extract taken directly from Joseph F. Smith's remarks in 1917 (with some notable modifications), the statement adds (paragraph four) sentiments quite similar to the advice given by Heber J. Grant in 1939, and concludes with advice clearly anticipated in the previous words of David O. McKay, particularly those in the early Forties.⁹⁷ Although a doctrinal "oneness" may thereby have been conveyed, the incorporation of advice delivered in such radically different social contexts as these led to a certain ambiguity. Mormons of all shades of opinion found support in the statement for their personal views.

The undefined use of terms such as "birth control," "artificially," and "self-control" further complicated the picture. "Artificial" was (and continues to be) particularly confusing. Since it was first used shortly after the popularization of "natural" means of controlling fertility, and was frequently used as an adjective to describe birth control ("artificial birth control"), an obvious assumption is that it referred to the use of contraceptives. However, McKay (who most often used the expression) accepted the use of contraceptives for health reasons, but never condoned the use of any form of birth control for non-health reasons—in which case "artificial" might have been more akin to "arbitrary." At different times the context of McKay's remarks (and those of others) supported each of these alternatives.

Possibly the ambiguity in the 1969 statement was intentionally retained—to reinforce McKay's judgment that the final decisions rested solely within the family. In a particularly well-known letter, he had written, "It is the policy of the Church to discourage the prevention of conception by any means unless the health of the mother demands it. It is also the policy of the Church to regard marital relations of husband and wife as *their personal problem and responsibility to be solved and to be established between themselves as a sacred relationship*."⁹⁸ (emphasis added) Notwithstanding an occasional zealot, questions about birth control practices were not to be (and are not now) a part of the periodic moral evaluations Mormons undergo—for temple recommends, advancement in the priesthood, or when assuming positions of leadership.

The absence of a formal statement of Church position throughout most of the Sixties had not inhibited spokesmen from confidently setting forth "the Church position" any more than it had in previous decades. The Sixties, in fact, probably mark the high water point in total Mormon commentary on fertility control. Historical precedents, though by then providing a broad spectrum of interpretations, continued to provide substantial support for a conservative view, and the position most vigorously asserted was significantly harsher than the statement eventually released by the First Presidency. Still prominent in the conservative camp was Joseph Fielding Smith, whose discourses in 1965 and 1968⁹⁹ could easily have been interchanged with others he delivered on the subject over the preceding five decades. Apostle Mark E. Petersen, as author of the *Church News* editorials for much of this time, also waged a highly visible "Church" campaign against birth control and related issues.

In addition to the traditional arguments, two long standing minor themes reemerged during this period, and came to dominate the "unofficial" (i.e., other than public or private statements by the First Presidency) Church commentary. First, evidence of the physical risks associated with the use of contraceptives was repeatedly introduced into the discussions. The accompanying quasi-medical assertions frequently conveyed an ominous and distorted picture of the nature and incidence of the known risks (culminating in 1973 with a quotation from an "obstetrician" that "the pill is killing more women than automobile accidents").¹⁰⁰

The second major focus was the issue of overpopulation. As previously noted, allusions to this subject occasionally appeared in nineteenth century Church discussions. These references continued to appear sporadically until 1960. In the Sixties, however, great national concern developed over population problems, and the "population explosion" became an increasingly frequent theme in Church discourses.

As had been the case a century before, those who addressed the subject overwhelmingly denied that there was either a present or potential population problem. God had "commanded his children to multiply and fill the earth, and the earth is far from full": that commandment had never been "altered, modified, or cancelled." For some even the suggestion that there might be a problem verged on blasphemy.

Are we so naive as to believe God would fail to provide for his own offspring as they come into the world? That would be to regard the Infinite as being less considerate than finite mortals. . . .¹⁰¹

No one denied that parts of the globe suffered from a disproportion of people and food supply, but the solution was seen in agriculture rather than population control. Had not the Lord declared, "For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare. . . ." Long range predictions were also considered ill-conceived, for they neglected to take into consideration "God's plans for this planet." Rather than fear "the danger of starving because of lack of food," we should be fearing the "burnings" of the wicked, which "in the not-too-distant future" would accompany Christ's return, leaving the earth "empty," "with few men left."¹⁰²

Understandably, from this perspective there was no justification for the use of fertility control in dealing with population problems. Efforts to subsidize birth control in heavily populated areas of the world were "in direct opposition to the plans and laws of God."¹⁰³

In the years since the First Presidency statement was issued in 1969, there have been no official changes in the Church position on birth control. The Mormon birth rate, after an increase between 1967 and 1971, has returned for the past few years to the lows of the mid-Thirties. Although the presidents of the Church since David O. McKay were outspokenly against birth control as Apostles, their administrations have been characterized only by a shift in tone, and not by an official return to earlier interpretations.

There are probably several reasons for the continuity. A moderate doctrinal position had been officially established, making an immediate, major change in emphasis awkward if not impossible. Moreover, this official position was interpreted as placing the responsibility for the ultimate decisions with the family itself. While the Church continued to encourage having a large family, and to condemn family limitation for "selfish" reasons, the actual decisions regarding family size and spacing and the means by which these were achieved had in effect been placed above ecclesiastical review. In the popular phraseology, these matters were strictly "between the husband, wife, and the Lord." Finally, the reemergence of the ethically overshadowing abortion question has drawn most of the attention away from the subject of birth control.¹⁰⁴

The infrequent references to birth control by Presidents Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, and Spencer W. Kimball nonetheless retained much of the tone of their earlier remarks. For Presidents Smith and Lee, conjugal abstinence apparently remained the only approved method of limiting births in those rare instances when it was justified.¹⁰⁵ President Lee emphasized the Church's continued antipathy to the use of birth control in a broader geographical context. It is "a grievous sin before God," he declared, "to adopt restrictive measures in disobedience to God's divine command . . . [and take] measures to prevent life or destroy life before or after birth" even where there is "abject poverty in some heavily populated countries."¹⁰⁶

Most of President Kimball's remarks on fertility control have encouraged parenthood or condemned abortion. He has spoken against voluntary sterilization, a subject largely neglected heretofore.¹⁰⁷ President Kimball also has commended J. Reuben Clark's dictum: "Remember the prime purpose of sex desire is to beget children. Sex gratification must be had at that hazard." To this he added that he knew "of no scriptures or authorities which authorize young wives to delay their families or to go to work to put their husbands through

college.”¹⁰⁸ More recently he has enlarged on one aspect of the subject not usually discussed:

The union of the sexes, husband and wife, . . . was for the principle purpose of bringing children into the world . . . We know of no directive from the Lord that proper sexual experience between husbands and wives need be limited totally to the procreation of children, but we find much evidence from Adam until now that no provision was ever made by the Lord for indiscriminate sex.¹⁰⁹

As noted, recent changes in tone have not been reflected in the general Mormon birth rate, which continues to be about as low as it has ever been (despite the growth of the Latin American church to nearly 10% of total membership!). The rate for 1975, 27.8 births per thousand, is about the average for the Seventies. If this average continues, it will be lower than for any preceding decade.

Thus, Mormon attitudes toward birth control have followed a general evolutionary path. Initially treated as indistinguishable from abortion, contraception achieved its own identity in Mormon thought at the turn of the century. Although abortion remained allowable only when a mother's life was threatened, fertility limitation through abstinence soon became permissible if the health of the mother was in jeopardy. Shortly thereafter this was extended to cases in which either parent had transmissible diseases or defects. By the end of the depression, the intelligence and health of the children, and extreme poverty also had been identified as acceptable reasons to some Church leaders for limiting fertility.

A major development came in the Forties when “natural” birth control (i.e., the rhythm method) became an acceptable alternative to abstinence. Shortly thereafter there was another significant modification, as birth control with contraceptives was no longer condemned when there were medical reasons for limiting fertility. This position has remained essentially unchanged to the present day. Throughout these developments the importance of having large families has been a consistent theme, but only rarely has a standard been suggested. The use of birth control for solely economic or educational purposes never has been publicly sanctioned, nor have most Church leaders condoned arbitrary spacing between pregnancies. Ultimately, however, the decisions in this area have been left almost entirely to the family involved, and no sanctions have been applied to those practicing birth control, artificial or natural, regardless of the apparent motive.

A measure of the degree to which birth control has become defused as an issue within the Church was the recent publication by noted Mormon obstetrician, Lindsay Curtis, of *A Sensible Sex Guide for the L.D.S. Bride and Groom*.¹¹⁰ This popular handbook provides both general counsel to newlyweds, and explicit guidance on the merits of various contraceptive practices. It has been a long time since Dr. Charles Knowlton's equally well-intended *Private Companion of Young Married People* landed him in a Cambridge, Massachusetts jail.

III

For those Mormons who have viewed the Church as engaged in an ongoing moral struggle against the various manifestations of fertility control, the record of the past century must not be very encouraging. The movement to control

fertility, having made its public debut in America almost simultaneously with the advent of Mormonism, now finds support among tens of millions of Americans. Moreover, for the past four decades surveys have suggested that a majority of the Mormons themselves have become "family planners." As society at large has reconsidered and modified the acceptable indications for the use of fertility controlling measures, so also has the Mormon leadership revised (albeit to a lesser degree) their ethical guidelines.

A significant hiatus nonetheless remains between the judgment of the Church and the judgment of society as to the legitimate means and indications for birth control. Contrary to the broader societal norms, the Mormon leadership has not condoned economic limitations, educational obligations, or "arbitrary" restriction of family size as acceptable reasons for the use of any form of birth control. On the other hand, medical or mental health factors, narrowly defined, are considered by most Church leaders to be legitimate indications for using even the "artificial" forms of birth control (i.e., contraceptives). In the ill-defined area between these two categories, many sanction only "non-artificial" birth control (i.e., abstinence, rhythm, extended breast feeding).

For many, if not most, married Mormons in their childbearing years, such distinctions quickly become blurred. Relatively few consider it logical to distinguish between artificial and natural birth control (short of abstinence).¹¹¹ Viewing coitus as a positive and inherent part of a healthy marital relationship, they also reject conjugal abstinence as unrealistic, unjustified, even abnormal—in many ways as "artificial" a method of controlling fertility as any other.¹¹² If fertility control is to be employed, Mormons, like others, tend to prefer a method "that is sure" and aesthetically satisfactory, and which will allow them to maintain what they view as a normal married life.

Such sentiments, though alien to the nineteenth century, now reflect both the views of contemporary society and modern medical thought. Early enthusiasm for the rhythm method of birth control has been replaced by a more realistic appraisal of its value. While highly (if not completely) effective for many women, it is totally unreliable for others. Similarly, breast feeding is not an effective contraceptive for all women; even when it is effective, it is rare today for women to nurse long enough for it to be a significant spacing factor. Perhaps more importantly, medical science has demonstrated the relative safety of most contraceptives, dispelling in theory, at least, one of the longest standing objections expressed by Church leaders.¹¹³

Another point on which most young married Mormons apparently differ with the established position of the Church is over the legitimate indications for the use of birth control. A limited survey in the mid-Forties found that nearly two-thirds of the married Mormon students surveyed at Brigham Young University approved the use of birth control, and that 60 per cent considered economic problems as a legitimate reason for limiting family size.¹¹⁴ More recently 70 per cent of another group of Mormon students (married an average of 2½ years) reported that they were practicing birth control (overwhelmingly "artificial")—though most stated that they disapproved of the use of birth control for economic reasons or to complete schooling!¹¹⁵ A comparable incidence of contraceptive use was found among married Mormons recently graduated from BYU.¹¹⁶ The average ages of these groups clearly belie a justifi-

FIGURE 2
SOME SURVEYS REFLECTING MORMON ATTITUDES
TOWARD BIRTH CONTROL

YEAR	GROUP	QUESTION	Yes	No	Unsure
1935	1297 BYU students ¹²¹	"Do you believe in the practice of birth control in any form?"	82%	8	10
1941-2	356 BYU students ¹²² (most were single women)	"Do you believe that married couples are justified in having smaller families than nature intended, that is, in practicing birth control?"	56	26	18
1942-3	438 BYU students ¹²³ (most were single women)	same	54	26	20
1943-4	404 BYU students ¹²³ (most were single women)	same	55	25	20
1946-7	125 married BYU men ¹²³ 1385 single students "()"	same	66 (55)	24 (24)	10 (22)
1963-4	383 LDS women ¹²⁴ students (U of U)	"Will you try to plan the spacing [or number] of children in your family?"	94	6	
1968-9	LDS students (U of U) ¹²⁵ n = ?, <300	(approve the use of contraceptives?)	~90		
1970	354 married women, ages 24-48, recently graduated from BYU ¹²⁶	"Do you use contraceptives?"	66	34	
1971	184 married BYU students; 543 single students "()" ¹²⁷	"Have you and your spouse ever practiced birth control?"	70	30	
		(Acceptable indications:			
		wife's physical health	90(84)	5(7)	5(9)
		wife's mental health	82(75)	6(10)	12(15)
		child spacing	60(40)	26(47)	14(13)
		husband going to college	38(32)	50(53)	12(15)
		prevent additional children	26(21)	52(61)	22(18)
		get ahead economically	9(7)	84(85)	7(8)
1972	132 LDS families Salt Lake City suburb ¹²⁸	(using/have used birth control?)	83	17	

cation based on narrowly defined medical grounds. To one observer the evidence was unmistakable: "The Lord's commandment to multiply has been broken by the use of contraceptives."¹¹⁷

More fundamentally, most Mormons probably would deny the assumption of Church leaders that birth control is a violation of the "first great commandment"—rather they see their planned, but still large families as an indisputable sign that they are replenishing the earth. Over the years Mormons have, in fact, clearly demonstrated their desire to have "large" families. Although un-

mistakably responsive to the pressures that have influenced national fertility, they have maintained a birth rate approximately 11 per thousand higher than the national rate—for as long as Church statistics have been reported (see Figure 1).¹¹⁸ On observing the remarkable consistency of this pattern, one wonders how much impact Mormon polemics against birth control have had on the membership. The data suggests that the real impact rather has come from the high value Mormonism places on having large families—this in turn having led to the observed pattern of increased fertility and larger families *despite* the general acceptance by Mormons of birth control as a legitimate part of their married life.

For a significant number of Mormons, the greatest personal impact of the Church stand on birth control has been the emotional discomfort caused by the strained rationalizations used to reconcile personal practices with their view of the Church position. "Conserving the strength" and "guarding the mental health" of the mother have become the elastic clauses of Mormon birth control doctrine, even though there is little justification for a liberal interpretation of these expressions in the published views of Church leaders. Medically, however, such a rationale finds genuine support among most physicians on the basis of preventive medicine, if nothing else. Unfortunately, the individual's peace of mind in this latter instance becomes dependent on the philosophy of the physician. For many faithful traditionalist members the end point remains a Mormon variant of the Peter Principle in which babies continue to arrive until the mother's health is obviously affected, or her capability exceeded. At this point contraception becomes justified, rather than at an earlier time "before" there were medical indications. However, as physicians (Mormons included) have become more socially oriented in their definition of legitimate "medical" grounds for using contraception, even the conservatively oriented Mormons are finding early, yet doctrinally acceptable grounds for controlling the growth of their families.¹¹⁹

In an informal conversation, a "subhierarchical" Mormon leader once asked what percentage of normally fertile Mormons use birth control during their married lives. There are as yet no studies capable of answering this question. The guess at the time was about ninety per cent. "It's interesting," he then observed, "that while the body of the Church rarely has a chance to vote on Church doctrine any more, they effectively have voted on this subject." A case can be made that such a "vote" influenced the Church leadership during the late Thirties and Forties. Whether a more recent "referendum" will eventually bring about additional changes remains to be seen. Practically speaking, the potential impact of such a change would probably be small. The "insistent question" long since has had an insistent answer.

NOTES

¹The best general history of contraception remains Norman C. Himes, *Medical History of Contraception* (New York, 1936). The American experience is treated more specifically in David M. Kennedy, *Birth Control in America: the Career of Margaret Sanger* (New Haven, 1970); Peter Fryer, *The Birth Controllers* (London, 1965); John B. Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* (Urbana, 1974); and Milton Rugoff, *Prudery & Passion: Sexuality in Victorian America* (New York, 1971). Also see, Robert V. Schnucker, "Elizabethan Birth Control and Puritan Attitudes," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 5(4):655-667 (Spring 1975), and Wilson Yates, "Birth Control Literature and the Medical Profession in Nineteenth Century America," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 31(1):42-54 (January 1976).

Serious attempts to survey the Mormon experience in this field are virtually nonexistent. Two uneven articles touching on the subject are Donald W. Hastings, Charles H. Reynolds and Ray R. Canning, "Mormonism and Birth Planning: The Discrepancy between Church Authorities' Teachings and Lay Attitudes," *Population Studies* 26:19-28 (May 1972), and Judith C. Spicer and Susan O. Gustavus, "Mormon Fertility Through Half a Century: Another Test of the Americanization Hypothesis," *Social Biology*, 21(1):70-76 (1974).

²Rugoff, *op. cit.*, p. 164. The books in question were, Robert Dale Owen, *Moral physiology; or a brief and plain treatise on the population question* (New York, 1831), and Charles Knowlton, *The Fruits of Philosophy, or the private companion of young married people* (Boston, 1833).

³*Evening and Morning Star*, 1(1):7 (August, 1832). The figures, from a Paris correspondent of the *New York Courier and Enquirer*, showed an inverse correlation between the annual excess births over deaths and the mean price of corn in both France and Prussia for the years from 1821 to 1830.

⁴*Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* (hereafter *M&A*), 3:480 (March, 1837). Malthus would have agreed; initially at least he considered deferred marriage and abstinence ("moral restraint") the only acceptable methods for limiting population growth.

⁵For the American view see E.P. Hutchinson, *The Population Debate: the Development of Conflicting Theories up to 1900* (New York, 1967); for comparative fertility, see Ansley J. Coale and Melvin Zelnik, *New Estimates of Fertility and Population in the United States* (Princeton, 1963), pp. 34-35.

⁶A revelation dated April 23, 1834, provided circumstantial evidence, reading in part, "For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare . . ." (*D&C* 104:17). See also Heber C. Kimball, *JD*, 4:224 (1857); Brigham Young, *JD*, 12:120-121 (1867); and Erastus Snow, *JD*, 20:374 (1879), 24:74-75 (1883), 25:111-112 (1884), and 26:219-220 (1855).

In 1834 the estimated world population was about one billion. For one contemporary Mormon observer, the 1976 figure of *four* billion would not have been impressive. In 1835 he computed an actual world population (versus the reported 700 million) at about 3½ billion. The accepted figures had neglected to take into account the "thousands of millions of Israelites" who probably lived "at the north pole." (*M&A*, 2:194 (October 1835).

⁷Pratt first raised the possibility in a series of "Questions on the Present State of Man" in the *Latter Day Saints Millennial Star* (hereafter *MS*), 6:174 (November 15, 1845), and provided an indirect answer two months later when he computed the number of spirits in the pre-existence at 1,020,000,000,000,000 (*MS* 7:30-31). In reviewing the situation in March, 1853, his conclusion was unequivocal: God "organizes a new world, after a similar order to the one which we now inhabit" when "his Heavenly inheritance becomes too small, to comfortably accommodate his great family . . ." (*The Seer*, 1:37).

The calculation which led to the population estimate was initially directed at determining how much older the firstborn of the spirits was than the last born. Acknowledging that the calculations were based "upon suppositions which are of very imperfect data," Pratt assumed that the earth would have an 8000 year life, with an average of 500 million inhabitants every 50 years; he added 50% to the total spirits thus required to allow for the "one-third part of the hosts of heaven who fell;" assumed that there were thirty other worlds in our solar system populated in proportion to the earth also drawing from the same pre-existent family (adds a factor of 12,750); and thus reached his grand total. To determine the age difference, he assumed that spiritual gestation was comparable to that on earth, and concluded that one spirit was born per year. Thus the process took one quadrillion, twenty trillion years, and the age difference was established.

Hesitating briefly at the magnitude of the figures, Pratt considered the possibility that the gestation period might be shorter. If the spirits were born at the rate of one per minute, he computed, the time required could be shortened to 1,900,000,000 years; and "at a rate of one per second, . . . thirty million of years." (*MS* 7:30-31). Accepting Pratt's assumption that the physical processes involved were analogous to the earth experience, this rate might pose logistical problems for the

father as well as the mother of these spirits; for whatever reason, Pratt later dismissed a shortened gestation period as "very improbable."

Several years later Pratt recomputed the number of spirits "born in Heaven before this earth was formed" and found some relief for Heavenly mother. This time he limited the earth's functional life to seven thousand years, ignored any other potentially inhabited spheres, and concluded that the figure was somewhat over 100 billion spirits. Since polygamy by now had been made public, he was able to make a final reduction by assuming that these spirits were the products of 100 polygamous wives, thus requiring only a billion years of annual child bearing per wife. (*The Seer*, 1:38-39)

The foregoing is only a portion of Pratt's mathematical incursion into celestial demography; the references should be consulted for the ramifications of such fecundity through several generations of heavenly hosts. Interestingly, Pratt's considerations were not entirely without precedent. Feldman reports an early Jewish tradition which postulated that during the millenium the gestation period would be shortened to one day (David M. Feldman, *Birth Control in Jewish Law*, New York, 1968, p. 181).

⁸For national figures see Coale and Zelnik, *op. cit.*, 21-23, 34. There are no reliable data on nineteenth century Mormon fertility. The present assumption derives from several fragmentary bits of evidence. Occasional reports appeared in early Mormon publications allowing a crude birth rate calculation (e.g., figures for total population and births in October, 1853, yield a rate of about 50 per thousand). Stanley Ivins, in "Notes on Mormon Polygamy," *Western Humanities Review* (10:229-239), reports that polygamous Mormon wives during this period averaged just under six children, while those who were monogamous (the majority) averaged eight. These figures are commensurate with a general birth rate of at least 50 per thousand. The U.S. Census for 1880 reported admittedly inaccurate birth rates for the states and territories. Utah was reported at 41.9, with the caveat that U.S. figures were probably 15% low (i.e., yielding a "corrected" figure of about 48 per thousand). My own limited review of a number of genealogies suggests that there was not a significant decline in the number of births at least through the 1880's.

⁹For early illustrative examples from the national press, reprinted in Mormon publications, see the *Deseret News* editorial, "A Damning Crime," (November 13, 1878) and *JD*, 25:352-354 (October 19, 1884).

¹⁰William L. Langer, "Checks on Population Growth: 1750-1850," *Scientific American*, February, 1972, pp. 92-99; see also his "Infanticide: A Historical Survey," *History of Childhood Quarterly: The Journal of Psychohistory*, 1:353-365 (Winter, 1974).

¹¹Eugene Quay, "Justifiable Abortion," *Georgetown Law Journal*, 49 (Spring, 1969), provides a detailed historical survey of the legal status of abortion in each of the states.

¹²R. Sauer, "Attitudes to Abortion in America, 1880-1973," *Population Studies*, 28(1):56-67 (March, 1974), especially pages 54-60. Mormon estimates of the magnitude of the problem were probably accurate reflections of the inflated national rhetoric. These varied from tens or hundreds of thousands of annual abortions (and infanticides) (*JD*, 23:19; 21:116) to "millions" (*JD*, 21:167).

¹³Polygamy was not "an infringement upon the rights of others, neither men nor women, but gives all women an opportunity to become wives and mothers, and thus to shut out what is politely called the social evil, with all its horrid concomitants of seduction, foeticide, infanticide and all the train of sexual monogamic evils which haunt and infest Christendom . . ." (Franklin D. Richards, *JD*, 26:540, 1885; see also Joseph F. Smith, *JD*, 24:11, 1884.)

¹⁴"A Damning Crime," *Deseret News* editorial, November 13, 1879. See also John Taylor, *JD*, 23:238-239, August, 1882. The Mormons were able to capitalize as well on the concurrent national "purity crusade" which conveniently resulted in extensive press coverage of prostitution in America. See David J. Pivar, *The Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868-1900* (Westport, Connecticut, 1973).

¹⁵Taylor's remarks also suggested greater knowledge of the specifics of the problem. He accurately described the practice of "baby farming," which was the vehicle for most infanticides in Europe, and also alluded to the notorious Madame Restell, probably the most widely known abortionist in America. She had been actively in practice in New York during Taylor's sojourn there as editor of *The Mormon*. (E.g., *JD*, 23:238)

¹⁶E.g., John Taylor, *JD*, 25:352 (1884)

¹⁷E.g., John Taylor, 25:315-317; George Q. Cannon, *JD*, 28:14-15, both 1884. John C. Bennett had been labelled an abortionist by Hyrum Smith at the time of his banishment from Nauvoo in 1842. See *The Times and Seasons* (hereafter *T&S*) 3:870 (August 1, 1842).

¹⁸"The Latter-day Saints are proverbial for NOT murdering their children. They have hosts of them, and they do not try to destroy them neither before nor after birth . . ." (Joseph F. Smith, *JD*, 24:11, October 22, 1882). Similar remarks were common. Joseph Smith was even alleged (in 1890) to have stated that "the time would come when none but the women of the Latter-day Saints would be willing to bear children." (*The Young Woman's Journal*, 2(no. 2):18)

John Taylor effectively reversed this point: "It has become unfashionable in the east for women to have large families. I have heard remarks like this: one lady was asked, How many children have you? One or two. Is that all? What do you take me for, do you think I am a cow? Why no, you are not a cow, for cows do not murder their offspring." (*JD*, 23:667). Erastus Snow carried the analogy a step further, and characterized those who "employ hellish means to prevent the increase of their species" as "not only beneath the brute, but beneath the vegetable creation, by refusing to bear fruit . . ." (*JD*, 24:74).

¹⁹" . . . pre-natal murders . . ." " . . . many of their murders are committed while the children are pre-natal; they kill them either before or after they are born, just as it happens . . ." (both John Taylor, 1879) " . . . they have a fashionable way of murdering them—either before or after they come into the world . . ." (Taylor, 1882); " . . . children murdered among them . . . either before or after their birth . . ." (Joseph F. Smith, 1882); " . . . where women murder their offspring before they are born, are guilty of this pre-natal murder . . ." (George Q. Cannon, 1884). See *JD*, 20:355, 21:167, 23:238–239, 24:11, and 26:14–15. Similarly, see Orson Hyde, *JD*, 2:77 (1854), Heber C. Kimball, *JD*, 5:91–92 (1857) and others. Brigham Young was not quite so explicit, but the association was still clear (*JD*, 12:120–121, 1867).

²⁰*JD*, 26:14–15 (1884). John Taylor was equally explicit, " . . . They are murderers and murderesses of their infants . . . and you that want them, take them, and you that do will go along with them, and go to perdition with them; and I tell you that in the name of the Lord . . ." (*JD*, 22:320, 1881; see also *JD*, 20:355, 1879).

²¹George Q. Cannon, *JD*, 26:14–15 (1884); also, Erastus Snow, *JD*, 24:74 (1883).

²²*JD*, 25:317 (1884). George Q. Cannon "would no more perform the ordinance of laying on of hands on a woman guilty of that crime, if I knew it, than I would put my hands on the head of a rattlesnake. . . ." Nor would he "administer to such women, baptize them, or perform any ordinance of the Gospel for them . . ." (*JD*, 26:14–15).

²³*JD*, 17:143 (1874). By contrast, the Catholic view assumed a fixed time for the arrival of the spirit (ensoulment). See John T. Noonan, Jr., *Contraception: A History of Its Treatment by the Catholic Theologians and Canonists* (Cambridge, 1966), or his more recent, "An Almost Absolute Value in History," in *The Morality of Abortion: Legal and Historical Perspectives*, John T. Noonan, Jr., ed. (Cambridge, 1970).

²⁴Journal of Wilford Woodruff, October 16, 1857 (original in the Historical Department of the Church). Woodruff adds, "this is new doctrine yet it looks Consistent[;] what period of Debarkation or age the spirit would take another Body we are not informed."

²⁵*JD*, 23:62 (April 9, 1882).

²⁶This increased circulation was acknowledged and bemoaned as early as 1856. See Wm. A. Alcott, *The Physiology of Marriage* (Boston, 1852), pp. 180–186. Alcott, with many others, treated preventive and abortifacient techniques as comparable practices. He noted, as the Mormons also accurately observed, that the impact of this new information was earliest and most extensively evident in New England.

²⁷Edwin M. Hale, *A Systematic Treatise on Abortion* (Chicago, 1866), pp. 297–298. The first Utah legislation relating to the regulation of condoms was not passed until 1937, and then dealt with their use in prophylaxis of disease. Hale considered the regulation of the timing of coitus to be an effective contraceptive 94% of the time if "not performed until ten days after cessation of the menses, nor within four days previous to, or during their occurrence" (p. 293) (cf. note 36 below). Hale termed all such preventive techniques "ovular abortion" and also characterized embryonic or fetal abortion as "morally and legally . . . a crime, equal to, if not identical with, murder . . ." (p. 290).

²⁸*JD*, 12:120–121, 20:375, 26:219; Parley P. Pratt, *op. cit.*

²⁹*JD*, 25:111–112 (1884).

³⁰*JD*, 20:374 (1879). Similar expressions are found in *JD*, 20:355 (John Taylor) and in *JD*, 24:116 (Moses Thatcher). Snow was particularly fond of this point (*JD*, 23:230–231; 24:74–75; 26:216–221).

³¹Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Period I*, B.H. Roberts, ed. (Salt Lake City, 1902–1912), 2:320, November 24, 1835. A similar expression is found in the revelation on polygamy, July 12, 1843 (D&C, 132:63): “. . . for (the virgins) are given unto him to multiply and replenish the earth, according to my commandment. . . .”

³²Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, 1:60 (April, 1853). Pratt returned frequently to this theme throughout a series on “Celestial Marriage” (especially installments between February and October, 1853), as well as in a companion series, “The Pre-Existence of Man.”

³³JD, 4:56 (1856). He added, “If my wife had borne me all the children that she ever would bear, the celestial law would teach me to take young women that would have children. . . .”

³⁴In addition to Orson Pratt’s thorough coverage (note 32 above), see also Parley P. Pratt’s *Key to Theology* (Liverpool, 1855), Chapter 17. The obligation to marry and propagate is implicit in most of the references cited throughout the nineteenth century. E.g., Brigham Young, JD, 12:262 (1868), 15:132 (1872); Wilford Woodruff, JD, 18:129–130 (1875); George Q. Cannon, JD, 13:206–207 (1869).

³⁵M&A, 3:480 (March, 1837). Poverty or economic considerations, it should be noted, were not again included as a contraindication to marriage. One of the most frequent accusations against those who limited their families in the nineteenth century was that they had done so to avoid the expense involved.

³⁶Parley P. Pratt, *op. cit.* At this more purely “medical” level, others had specific eugenic suggestions as well. Brigham Young once advised not to “unite with a woman, in view of impregnation till seven days after the cessation of the menstrual discharge, in order for the most healthy procreation of our species.” (*Journal History*, April 29, 1849). The basis for his recommendation is presumably Leviticus 15:19–28. While the advice would not have maximized the chances for conception, it would have been more useful than the advice of contemporary physicians, who believed women to be maximally fertile immediately before, during, or shortly after menstruation. See Charles M. McLane and Midy McLane, “A Half Century of Sterility, 1840–1890,” *Fertility & Sterility*, 20:853–870 (1969), and Noonan, *op. cit.*, pp. 438–439.

³⁷*The Seer*, 1:93, 95 (June, 1853)

³⁸Pratt had explained, “Multiplication . . . was originally designed only for the righteous; but the wicked have presumed to take this blessing to themselves, and have thus been the instruments in bringing hundreds of millions into the world which God is obliged from time to time to cut off and send to hell in order that the world may not be brought wholly under their dominion. . . .” (*Ibid.*, p. 94). Orson Hyde had a slightly different explanation (see JD, 2:116–117, also 1853).

³⁹JD, 4:56 (1856) and JD, 12:262 (1868); see also Wilford Woodruff, JD, 18:129–130 (1875), Joseph F. Smith, JD, 24:11 (1882), and Moses Thatcher, JD, 24:116 (1883). More direct action against the wicked was not advocated, except perhaps by Heber C. Kimball who once announced, “If I am not a good man, I have no just right in this Church to a wife or wives, or to the power to propagate my species. What then should be done with me? Make a eunuch of me and stop my propagation” (JD, 5:29, 1857). Some zealots may have accepted this view literally; see the isolated accounts of punitive castrations in *On the Mormon Frontier: the Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844–1861*, Juanita Brooks, ed. (Salt Lake City, 1969), p. 653 (“dragged him out of bed with a whore and castrated him by a square & close amputation”), and p. 663 (“castrated . . . lately for adultery”)—both the year after Kimball’s remarks.

⁴⁰“If the men of the world were right, or if they were near right, there might not be the necessity (for polygamy) that there now is. But they are wholly given up to idolatry. . . .” (Brigham Young, JD, 4:56 [1856]).

⁴¹Orson Pratt, *The Seer*, 1:155 (October, 1853)

⁴²Parley P. Pratt, *op. cit.*; see also George Q. Cannon, JD, 13:206.

⁴³*Journal History*, April 25, 1849. Coitus during pregnancy was apparently an ongoing topic of discussion. A number of years later Erastus Snow advised that intercourse should be continued during pregnancy “where it was right and consistent that they might not entail on their offspring unholy desires and appetites. . . .” (Charles Walker Journal, November 3, 1883, Excerpts Typed, Salt Lake City?, 1969, p. 40). It was several decades before geneticists discredited the notion that attitudes and “appetites” in pregnant women were transmitted to their offspring. A warning similar to Snow’s was voiced by Brigham Young who warned expectant mothers not to hanker after such things as tobacco, tea, coffee, and liquor (JD, 13:3). Orson Pratt cautioned specifically about “the state of the parent’s mind at the time of conception” (*The Seer*, 1:155).

⁴⁴*Journal History*, April 24, 1849. Forty if a boy; seventy if a girl (cf. Leviticus, 12:1–5).

⁴⁵The data limitations cited in note 8 still apply. This estimate nonetheless is probably generous.

⁴⁶The wives of Parley Pratt, for example, averaged 30 months between consecutive births. See the genealogy appendix to *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* (Salt Lake City, 1970), pp. 462–464.

⁴⁷In comparable situations prolonged breast feeding may be associated with a transient infertility lasting a year or longer. Jeroen K. Van Ginneken, "Prolonged Breastfeeding as a Birth Spacing Method," *Studies in Family Planning*, 5(6):201–206 (June, 1974). Expectedly, then, Mormon genealogies frequently show a *shorter* interval between births when the first infant dies within the first two months.

⁴⁸As previously noted, polygamists averaged two children less per wife than the monogamists (although when expressed as children per adult their collective reproduction is nearly comparable). The fertility limiting impact was greatest among those with many wives, and thus was most evident among the Mormon leadership. Brigham Young, for instance, averaged less than two children per wife, as did Heber C. Kimball. Even when one considers only those wives who had at least one child in a polygamous marriage, the net fertility is significantly reduced (e.g., Young's productive wives averaged 3½ children). Yet this was not the way they chose to view the situation, for the Mormon leadership preferred to speak in terms of the *male* fertility. Brigham Young fathered 57 children, Heber C. Kimball 64 or 65, Joseph F. Smith, 44, etc., etc.

⁴⁹Safe artificial feedings were largely a twentieth century development. In the nineteenth century artificial substitutes were, nonetheless, not uncommon. Some of the associated risks were publicized from time to time in national publications. One, entitled "Death in the Nursing Bottle," was reprinted in the *Woman's Exponent*, September 1, 1876 (p. 56), with the comment appended that "many infants" had died in Salt Lake City and the Utah Territory through the use of a patented nursing bottle condemned in the article.

⁵⁰Not necessarily to be weighted too heavily, for Parley Pratt managed to father a collective child every seven months throughout two decades of polygamous life, and missed only 1852 and 1856 over a fourteen year stretch during which he served several missions away from home. Others had similar records, and occasionally averaged over eight children per wife for three wives or more.

⁵¹Infant and child mortality in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century claimed the lives of an estimated 30% of the children before age 15. By 1900 this figure was much closer to 20% (and was probably even lower among the Mormons). Coale and Zelnik, *op.cit.*, p. 170. There were areas in which the declining birth rate so matched the declining death rate that essentially the same number of children reached age 15. By 1900 birth rates were dropping faster than death rates, and any masking effect would have begun to dissolve.

II

⁵²*Conference Reports* of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter CR), 70A(Annual):39–40, April 5, 1900.

⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁵⁴*Juvenile Instructor* (hereafter *Jl*), 37:241–242, an editorial, April 15, 1902. Particularly galling was the discovery that the French marriage rate was higher than that of the Mormons. The French had long been identified with the use of contraception and were frequently cited as an indication of what would happen to a nation who adopted such practices. One wonders about the source of the Church's comparative statistics, for the birth rates in Europe were nearly all below 35 per thousand at this time. On the other hand, the rates in Africa, Asia, and Latin America remain collectively above that level even to the present day.

⁵⁵Joseph F. Smith, July 1, 1902, in *Jl*, 37:400–402, "This command [to be fruitful and multiply] He has never changed, abrogated, or annulled. . . ." See also CR, 73A:54 (Reed Smoot, 1903); *Jl*, 40:240–241 (Joseph F. Smith, 1905); CR, 78S(Semiannual):35–38 (George Albert Smith, 1907); *Improvement Era*, 11:959–961 (Joseph F. Smith, 1902), among others.

Regarding mothers of large families: "I met one sister who was the mother of eighteen children. I looked upon her as a veritable queen among women; her crown was studded with eighteen precious jewels. I have met other sisters in the Church who were the mothers of fourteen, fifteen or sixteen children, which we will all concede are very large families. There are hundreds of mothers in Israel who have eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve and thirteen children, which reflects great credit and honor upon them." (Rudger Clawson, CR, October 5, 1907)

⁵⁶CR, 81S:4 (April 6, 1911). Chagrin that the figures were not higher still was explicit the following year (CR, 82A:33). As before, the international comparisons must have been limited to European nations.

⁵⁷*Improvement Era* (hereafter IE), 11:959–961 (October, 1908).

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

⁵⁹*Liahona The Elders' Journal*, 8 (no. 2):36–38 (1908).

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁶¹IE, 11:959–961 (October, 1908).

⁶²The expression became as common within the Church as it did nationally; e.g., CR, 74A:54 (1903), *Liahona The Elders' Journal*, 8(2):38 (1908), CR, 79A:116 (1909). Kennedy, *op.cit.*, provides a thorough review of the relevant national developments early in the twentieth century.

⁶³*Relief Society Magazine* (hereafter RSM), 3:363 (July, 1916). The subject had not really been dropped from Church discourses during this time. See, for example, CR, 82A:33 (Hyrum M. Smith, 1912), CR, 84S:89 (Heber J. Grant, 1913), and the *Juvenile Instructor*, 50:250–251 (Joseph F. Smith, 1915).

⁶⁴Rudger Clawson, George F. Richards, David O. McKay, Orson F. Whitney, Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., Hyrum M. Smith and Bishop David A. Smith. The views of the first five were published in the June issue (3:363–368); the last two appeared in August (3:433–435). A final essay from George Albert Smith was published early the next year (RSM, 4:71–73).

⁶⁵RSM, 3:433.

⁶⁶RSM, 4:68 (1917). The Presidency had been asked specifically about the views of Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., who had “treated the matter authoritatively,” and with considerably more finality than some of his colleagues.

⁶⁷Thus wrote Clawson, Richards, and Hyrum M., George Albert, and Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr.

⁶⁸Richards and David A. Smith. Richards wrote (with the support of most contemporary physicians): “As to the danger and hardship of child-bearing to the mothers, I have to say that from my observations, I conclude that the answering of nature’s laws which are God’s laws is far less injurious and dangerous than the efforts made to defeat these laws.”

⁶⁹Clawson, Richards, George Albert Smith.

⁷⁰Clawson and Whitney. McKay warned against putting “the marriage relationship on a level with the panderer and the courtesan. . . .” or befouling “the pure fountains of life with the slime of indulgence and sensuality.”

⁷¹Richards spoke with pride of his wife’s 15 children, any fewer than which would have been “less than her duty.” He was twitted for this remark by *The Birth Control Review* (1[2]:9), which also took note of Clawson’s remarks. Lengthy excerpts from the first group of essays published in the *Relief Society Magazine* were also carried in the *Journal of Heredity* (7:450–451). Their interest was primarily from the eugenics standpoint, and they included a brief rebuttal to some of the Mormon comments. In turn, the *Relief Society Magazine* carried excerpts of the *Journal of Heredity*’s excerpts (minus the rebuttal) shortly thereafter (RSM, 4:68–73).

⁷²RSM, 3:367–368.

⁷³Compare, for example, note 23 and accompanying text. Smith continued, “It is just as much murder to destroy life before as it is after birth, although man made laws may not so consider it; but there is One who does take notice and his judgment is sure.”

By contrast a much more conciliatory tone was evident in David O. McKay’s remarks, which made allowances for those who “honestly [“even if misguided”] limit the number of children . . . to two or three because of insufficient means to clothe and educate a large family as the parents would desire to do. . . .” He also included what was to become a familiar theme for him, “In all this, however, the mother’s health should be guarded . . .” (RSM, 3:366–367).

⁷⁴For the national developments, see Kenneth M. Ludmerer, *Genetics & American Society: A Historical Appraisal* (Baltimore, 1972); Donald K. Pickens, *Eugenics and the Progressives* (Nashville, 1968); Mark H. Haller, *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought* (New Brunswick, 1963).

There is no study of the Mormon response to this movement, though there are numerous contemporary discussions in Church publications between 1913 and 1930. In general the Mormons accepted many of the tenets that underlaid eugenics theory. Following the national trend, their enthusiasm had lapsed noticeably by the late Teens. The only long lasting impact of the general interest in eugenics were state sterilization laws. Utah's law, passed in 1925, remains in effect today; it reflects some of the earlier medical thinking associated with the eugenics debate by authorizing sterilization under certain circumstances of a person who "is habitually sexually criminal, or is insane, mentally deficient, epileptic, or is afflicted with degenerate sexual tendencies, and . . . unlikely to perform properly the functions of parenthood. . . ."

⁷⁵"Birth Control and Fashions are Denounced," *Deseret News*, April 4, 1917.

⁷⁶RSM, 4:317-318 (June, 1917).

⁷⁷*Liahona The Elders' Journal*, April 18, 1916, p. 683.

⁷⁸As noted by W.A. Evans, MD, in his "Public Health Column," *Chicago Tribune*, October 5, 1920, cited in Joseph R. Morrell, *Utah's Health and You* (Salt Lake City, 1956), p. 200. Evans gave birth rates for Duchesne (52.8), Garfield (51.5), Piute (51.5) and Washington counties (45). Equally startling was the low death rate. It had been virtually axiomatic that high birth rates were associated with high death rates.

⁷⁹Warren S. Thompson, *The Ratio of Children to Women, 1920* (Bureau of Census, Washington, D.C., 1931), p. 184; see also pages 135-136.

⁸⁰A review was made of the families of the general authorities, including those listed in the *Deseret News 1974 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City, 1974), pp. 120-156. Genealogy records and a variety of Church publications identified the number of children fathered by 179 (about 90%) of these men, including all but five Authorities born since 1810. Below are the averages, by decade of birth (for polygamists only the children of the most productive wife are counted):

Decade of birth	(n =)	number of births		Decade of birth	(n =)	number of births	
		mean	median			mean	median
1770-1800	(12)	8.3	8½	1870-1880	(22)	5.6	5
1800-1810	(17)	8.1	9	1880-1890	(11)	5.9	6
1810-1820	(15)	8.6	8	1890-1900	(15)	3.7	3
1820-1830	(6)	9.0	10½	1900-1910	(15)	3.5	3
1830-1840	(7)	10.9	11	1910-1920	(10)	6.0	5½
1840-1850	(8)	8.8	9	1920-1930	(13)	5.3	5
1850-1860	(14)	8.1	8	1930-1935	(7)	5.3	5
1860-1870	(7)	8.9	8				

Those born prior to 1890 averaged about 8 children; those after 1890, about 4½. Involuntarily reduced fertility (or sterility) affected at least two of the authorities born after 1890, and may artificially reduce the averages to some degree. The raised families of those born prior to 1860 were not as large as these numbers suggest, for infant mortality recorded in their family genealogies not uncommonly exceeded thirty per cent.

⁸¹IE, 31:181-192 (January, 1928)

⁸²Kennedy, *op cit.*, pp. 269-270, 216, 140-141; see also Peter Smith, "The History and future of the legal battle over birth control," *Cornell Law Quarterly*, 49:274-303 (1963).

⁸³Unpublished survey of 1297 Brigham Young University students (1935), conducted by Harold T. Christensen. Responses to birth control questions in the survey were as follows:

	Yes	No	Doubtful
Do you believe in the practice of birth control in any form?	82%	10	8
Do you believe in the practice of birth control by artificial devices (contraceptives)?	35	47	18

Six years later Christensen conducted another survey of Mommon students at BYU. In each of the years (1941-1945) covered in this study approximately 55% reported approval of the use of birth control, 25% opposed, and 20% were uncertain. Harold T. Christensen, "Factors in the Size and Sex Composition of Families: A Survey of Student Opinion," *Proceedings of the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters*, 23:107-113 (1945-1946).

⁸⁴Letter from Heber J. Grant to Arnold Haymore, May 1, 1939, copy in my possession. The quotation from Joseph F. Smith was taken from his remarks to the Relief Society in 1917 (see note 76 and text).

⁸⁵Letter from John A. Widtsoe to Cardon Klinger, April 15, 1942, copy in my possession.

⁸⁶*IE*, 45:801, 803 (December, 1942), "Should Birth Control Be Practiced?" Though physicians thought they had identified a "sterile period" within the menstrual cycle nearly a century earlier, the correct timing of ovulation (and infertility) was not discovered until the mid-1920's. The book which introduced the "rhythm method" into American life was published the following decade—Leo Latz, *The Rhythm of Sterility and Fertility in Women* (Chicago, 1932).

⁸⁷Letter of May 27, 1946, from the "files of LaMar Berrett, Professor of Religion, Brigham Young University" as reported in an unpublished compilation of "Statements of the General Authorities on Birth Control" obtained from the Department of Religion at Brigham Young University.

⁸⁸Letter of June 16, 1947, extract in *ibid.*; elsewhere this letter is dated October 28, 1952 (see Phillip C. Smith and Phillip R. Kunz, "Population control and Church Policy," unpublished paper, 1973). McKay spoke similarly in 1943; see *CR*, October 2, 1943, pp. 30–31, or *IE*, 46:657.

⁸⁹*IE*, 34:643–644 (September, 1931). Or, sixteen years later, "When a man and a woman are married and they agree to covenant, to limit their offspring to two or three, and practice devices to accomplish this purpose, they are guilty of iniquity which eventually must be punished . . ." (*Church News*, July 12, 1947, p. 5). McKay, though speaking of the "scourge of artificial birth control," consistently added that "intelligence and mutual consideration . . . be ever-present factors in determining the coming of children to the household" (*IE*, 46:657 [1943]).

⁹⁰*CR*, October 1, 1949, pp. 194–195.

⁹¹Hugh B. Brown, *You and Your Marriage* (Salt Lake City, 1960), pp. 135–136.

⁹²Letter of October 6, 1961; he wrote similarly January 23, 1962. Extracts in Smith and Kunz, *op.cit.*

⁹³Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City, 1st edition, 1958), p. 81. From Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* (Salt Lake City, 1955), 2:86–89.

⁹⁴For some expressions of President McKay's view, see *Church News*, February 27, 1952, p. 3; *CR*, April 5, 1952, p. 86–7; *Church News*, June 11, 1952, p. 3; *CR*, April 4, 1953; *IE*, 56:401–402, June, 1953; *The Instructor*, January, 1958, p. 1.

⁹⁵A First Presidency statement was issued on "Parenthood" in 1942, which emphasized the commandment to "multiply and replenish the earth;" it included no reference to birth control. *CR*, October 3, 1942, p. 12–13. On August 30, 1965, the Presidency also signed a letter in response to a private inquiry on birth control (Smith and Kunz, *op.cit.*), but this was actually a copy of an earlier letter from Heber J. Grant (as quoted in note 84 and accompanying text).

⁹⁶First Presidency Statement of April 14, 1969, available at the Historical Department of the Church.

⁹⁷Compare the text (above) accompanying Notes 76, 84, and Note 73. Previous responses to personal inquiries to the First Presidency also had contained almost identical wording to much of the April statement (e.g., letters of January 7, 1969 and February 19, 1969; copies of both in my possession).

⁹⁸See "Statements . . .," Note 87; Smith and Kunz, *op.cit.*; or similar compilations available at the LDS Institute at the University of Utah. The secretaries to the First Presidency wrote similarly on several occasions during the Sixties.

⁹⁹*CR*, October 1, 1965, pp. 28–29 (or *IE*, 68:1107–1108); "The Blessings of Eternal Glory," speech delivered at Brigham Young University, April 23, 1968.

¹⁰⁰"The Population Bomb," *Church News* editorial, June 2, 1973. See also "Birth Control and Virtue," *Church News* editorial, February 26, 1966; "God's Wisdom—and Man's," *Church News* editorial, October 28, 1967; "The Pill is No Panacea," *Church News* editorial, April 19, 1969; "The Controversial Pill," *Church News* editorial, May 24, 1969. Widtsoe had been similarly concerned in 1942, as had his predecessors in 1916.

See note 113 for a brief review of the relative safety of modern contraceptives. Regarding the comparative mortality of automobile accidents and the pill—The annual "pill mortality" was about 3 per 100,000 users. By contrast, women in 1968 were killed in motor vehicle accidents at

rates from 19 per 100,000 for ages 20–24 to about 13 per 100,000 at ages 35–44 (men ranged from 95 to 37 per 100,000). When speaking of absolute number of deaths (as the editorial appeared to do), this disparity is increased severalfold because relatively few women use oral contraceptives in comparison to the number who use automobiles. (Accident data from Metropolitan Life *Statistical Bulletin*, May 1971, p. 7.) A more accurate, though equally irrelevant comparative statement would have been that a white woman on the pill had about the same chance of suffering a fatal complication as she did of being murdered. (*Statistical Bulletin*, November 1974, p. 2; figures from 1970–1971.)

¹⁰¹“God’s Wisdom—And Man’s,” *Church News* editorial, October 28, 1967. Or, “. . . are we to believe also that He is so blind and thoughtless that He will over-populate this earth? Where is our faith?” *Church News* editorial, May 2, 1970.

¹⁰²“Population Explosions,” *Church News* editorial, April 18, 1970. There are many similar editorials; e.g., “The Population Bomb” (June 2, 1973) and others listed above. The oft quoted verse from the D&C (104:17) dates from 1834, and should be consulted directly for the original context.

¹⁰³Petersen was joined in this view by a number of others. See Ezra Taft Benson’s remarks, April 4, 1969 (CR, p. 12); also Harold B. Lee, CR, October 7, 1972, p. 63; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City, 1966), p. 86.

Though not professing official Church sanction, a recent BYU Press publication, *Population, Resources and the Future: Non-Malthusian Perspectives*, edited by Howard M. Bahr, Bruce A. Chadwick and Darwin L. Thomas (Provo, 1972), is viewed by many as an indirect effort by the Church to provide an academically respectable alternative to some neo-Malthusian predictions. In preparation it was actively supported by Church Commissioner of Education, Neal A. Maxwell, and on publication was placed in Church seminaries and institutes. Without entering into a discussion of world population problems, it should be noted that it is those *opposed* to the neo-Malthusian predictions whose arguments presuppose widespread acceptance and use of effective birth control. See, for example, the essays of Wattenburg, Barnett and Dyke in Bahr et al, *ibid.*, pp. 23, 28–29, 48–49, 314–315, 319–320.

¹⁰⁴The national movement to liberalize state anti-abortion statutes reached Utah in January, 1969. A proposed law (Utah S.B. 121) would have authorized termination of pregnancy in cases likely to result in serious impairment of the physical or mental health of the mother, in cases of incest or rape, or if the likely result was a child “with grave and permanent physical deformity or mental retardation.” Just over a week after the introduction of the bill, a short note was released by the First Presidency indicating that they were “opposed to any modification, expansion, or liberalization of laws on these vital subjects.” The law did not pass. (See “Church Opposes Abortion Bill,” *Deseret News*, January 23, 1969.)

In February, 1971, the Church issued another brief statement on abortion, reaffirming its opposition to a change in current laws, but adding, “Nevertheless there may be conditions where abortion might be justified, but such conditions must be determined in each instance upon the advice of a competent, reliable physician, preferably a member of the Church, and in accordance with the civil laws pertaining thereto.” (Utah law did not authorize exceptions other than cases threatening the life of the mother.) The following year the potential exceptions were specified as cases where “the life or good health of the mother is seriously endangered or where the pregnancy was caused by rape and produces serious emotional trauma in the mother. . . .” “Even then,” the statement added, “it should be done only after counseling with the local presiding authority and after receiving divine confirmation through prayer.” Subsequently, this statement has been reissued or reprinted on a number of occasions, notably in early 1973 following the Supreme Court decision striking down nearly all state (including Utah) anti-abortion laws.

Notwithstanding the “liberalization” of Church guidelines during these years, the major emphasis—as was the case with birth control early in the twentieth century—has remained on the “revolting and sinful” nature of abortion. Unlike the record with birth control, recent months have brought a *more* restrictive attitude toward abortion—with increased sanctions for offenders, and vacillation on the exception for those pregnant after rape. (See Priesthood Bulletin, February 1971, June 1972, and February 1973; more recently, see *Church News*, March 27, 1976, p. 6, and *Ensign*, July 1976, p. 83.)

Paradoxically, these developments have taken place in a theological framework which has rejected the nineteenth century assumption that abortion was murder. As early as 1934, Apostle McKay wrote that the Church had not made an “authoritative answer” to the question, was abortion “termed murder or not?” Two decades later, President McKay and the First Presidency reaffirmed this position, “As the matter stands, no definitive statement has been made by the Lord one way or another regarding the crime of abortion. So far as is known, he has not listed it alongside the crime of the unpardonable sin and shedding innocent blood. That he has not done so

would suggest that it is not in that class of crime. . . ." Not surprisingly, McKay believed that the spirit took possession of the body at birth, and that "life manifest in the body before that time would seem to be dependent upon the mother." The Presidency under Joseph Fielding Smith concluded that "there is no direct revelation upon the subject . . . it has always been a moot question. That there is life in the child before birth is an undoubted fact, but whether that life is the result of the affinity of the child in embryo with the life of its mother, or because the spirit has entered it remains an unsolved mystery. . . ." (See letter from McKay to Tiena Nate, October 31, 1934; First Presidency statement, *The Ensign*, March, 1973, p. 64; and letter from the First Presidency, February 12, 1970; copies in my possession.)

¹⁰⁵I have interviewed individuals who were so advised by Apostles Smith and Lee.

¹⁰⁶*CR*, October 7, 1972, p. 86.

¹⁰⁷Although there is no formal Church statement on sterilization, the following was prepared by the Church Commissioner of Health, with the knowledge of the First Presidency, as a statement of Mormon belief:

"The Lord's commandment imposed upon all Latter-day Saints is to 'multiply and replenish the earth.' Nevertheless there may be medical conditions related to the health of the mother where sterilization could be justified. But such conditions, rare as they may be, must be determined by competent medical judgment and in accordance with laws pertaining thereto." ("Attitudes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Toward Certain Medical Problems," June 3, 1974, obtained from the office of the Church Commissioner of Health.)

¹⁰⁸"Marriage—The Proper Way," *The New Era*, February 1976, pp. 4–7, from an address given at Stockholm, Sweden, August 1974.

¹⁰⁹"The Lord's Plan for Men and Women," *Ensign*, October 1975, pp. 2–5, from an address given at June Conference, June 27, 1975.

¹¹⁰Lindsay R. Curtis, "*And They Shall Be One Flesh*": *A Sensible Sex Guide for the L.D.S. Bride and Groom* (Salt Lake City, 1968). Curtis, whose syndicated column, "For Women Only," is carried throughout both Canada and the United States, is currently serving on the Sunday School General Board. The foreword to one of his recent books was written by Apostle LeGrande Richards. (*The Making of a Prophet*, Salt Lake City, 1974)

III

¹¹¹As indicated, these are largely my own observations from talking with Mormon patients and physicians. There are no good published studies dealing with Mormon attitudes and practices in this field. Figure 2 summarizes some of the available data.

¹¹²Even Mormons opposed to family planning are inclined to agree on this point—but with an explanation. Rodney Turner, for example, writes, "The sexual relationship is justified even though a wife is past the childbearing years or the couple are incapable of having children. We are judged not only by what we do, but also by what we would do if circumstances permitted. . . . The Lord intended that women should rest from the labors of childbirth. In doing so, they are not expected to damn their emotional needs." (*Women and the Priesthood*, Salt Lake City, 1972, p. 230, fn. 42)

Whatever the merits of Turner's rationalization, one must credit him with acknowledging the problem. Traditionally those who have condoned coitus only when conception was possible have ignored the philosophical problem posed by "natural" infertility in marriage. Numerically, the oversight is considerable—when one adds sterile marriages to those that are either in a pregnant, post-partum, or post-menopause phase, the total probably approaches 50% of everyone currently married.

¹¹³No serious medical risks have been associated directly with the use of such traditional contraceptives as the diaphragm, condom, or spermicidal foams. There are significant risks associated with the pregnancies which result when these methods fail (i.e., the risks of pregnancy *per se*—from about 10 deaths per 100,000 live births at age 20, to 40 deaths at age 40; over 40, the death rate is from 70 to 80). Both the pill and IUD are associated with a very small incidence of serious side effects, some of which have only recently come to light. For women over age 40, the risks from the pill are substantially greater (as they also are with pregnancy). Although recent studies of long term usage may lead to a revision of the figures, the mortality associated with use of the IUD is usually cited as one per hundred thousand users per year; for the pill the mortality ranges from 1.3 per 100,000 users per year among those less than age 30, to 5–7 for those ages 30 to 40, and 25 deaths per 100,000 users per year among those ages 40–44 (cf. the pregnancy figures above).

When one adds the risks associated with the pregnancies resulting from contraceptive failures, the absolute mortality among "average" users of mechanical or traditional means of birth control is significantly higher than that believed attributable to the IUD or pill. Among highly motivated individuals (with less than half as many contraceptive failures), the risks are about comparable

among the different techniques (for women less than age 40). A very useful comparative study is Christopher Tietze, John Bongaarts and Bruce Schearer, "Mortality Associated with the Control of Fertility," *Family Planning Perspectives*, 8 (1):6-14 (January/February 1976).

¹¹⁴Harold T. Christensen, "Mormon Fertility: A Survey of Student Opinion," *American Journal of Sociology*, 53(4):270-275, January, 1946.

¹¹⁵Erland D. Peterson, "Attitudes Concerning Birth Control and Abortion as Related to LDS Religiosity of Brigham Young University Students," Master's Thesis (BYU, 1971). See his Tables 12, 23, and 41. (Some of his data is included in Figure 2 of this article) Only 9% reported that they were using rhythm or abstinence. A similarly paradoxical finding between expressed attitude and actual practice is reported by Robert Kane, Wayne Spencer, and Barry Rigby, in "Birth Control Attitudes and Practices in Mormonville," University of Utah College of Medicine, Salt Lake City, 1972?.

¹¹⁶Phyllis Ann Roundy, "An Analysis of BYU Women Graduates' Present Status as Mothers in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Master's Thesis (BYU, 1970). Sixty-six per cent of the women ages 24-48 reported that they used contraceptives; about half of these were using the pill.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 75.

¹¹⁸As early as 1880 admittedly doubtful census data yielded a Utah birth rate 10½ above the U.S. figure. See Mortality and Vital Statistics of the United States, Tenth Census (Washington, D.C., 1886), cxl, cxlii. For apparent exceptions to the general pattern, see the note accompanying Figure 1.

¹¹⁹Such, for example, was the case at the formerly Church-run Latter-day Saints Hospital in Salt Lake City, where Church funds paid for the contraceptives supplied to Church welfare patients.

¹²⁰Figures for the national birth rates are from *Vital Statistics Rates in the United States, 1940-1960*, covering the years 1909-1960. Figures subsequent to 1960 were obtained from the National Center for Health Statistics; prior to 1909 the figures are as estimated by Coale and Zelnik, *op.cit.*, pp. 21-22. Utah rates are from *Utah 1970 Vital Statistics* (Salt Lake City, 1973), supplemented with census data prior to 1930, and after 1970. The Mormon birth rate is as provided by the Historical Department from the records of the annual conferences. Prior to 1920, the rates are directly from the conference reports.

Data on the "fertility" of the General Authorities is based on the figures in note 80 above. A similar survey was undertaken of the family sizes of the subhierarchy (Regional Representatives, Mission and Temple Presidents, and Stake Presidencies), based on information given in the *Church News* on approximately 2000 men called to these positions between 1969 and 1974. Average number of children for those who were at least 40 at the time of their call is as follows, by year of birth:

	(n =)	number of children
1900-1904	(24)	3.79
1905-1909	(52)	4.67
1910-1914	(93)	4.14
1915-1919	(221)	5.11
1920-1924	(357)	5.12
1925-1929	(447)	5.27
1930-1934	(250)	5.13

¹²¹See note 93.

¹²²Harold T. Christensen, "Factors in the size and sex composition of families: A survey of student opinion," *Proceedings of the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters*, 23:107-113 (1945-1946).

¹²³Harold T. Christensen, "Mormon Fertility: A survey of student opinion," *American Journal of Sociology*, 53:270-275 (1948).

¹²⁴Charles F. Westoff and Raymond H. Potvin, *College Women and Fertility Values* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1967); a composite of data presented on page 53.

¹²⁵Hastings et al, *op.cit.*, pp. 27-28.

¹²⁶Roundy, *op.cit.*, based on figures given in her Table XVIII, p. 55.

¹²⁷Peterson, *op.cit.*, Table 13, p. 55. Six per cent were using "rhythm" method of birth control, and 3% "abstinence."

¹²⁸Kane et al, *op.cit.*, p. 19.

Mormon Sexuality and American Culture

KLAUS J. HANSEN

In a recent essay on the Mormons, David Brion Davis observed that "their history, in relation to American history, is much like Hamlet's play-within-the-play."¹ Although analogies have their limitations, this one may prove useful in delineating the changing contours of Mormon sexuality. I am suggesting that Mormon culture experienced a transformation from a traditional to a modern society analogous to the one occurring in the larger American culture but within a different time frame.

Much of the friction between Mormons and Gentiles was a result of the fact that the two metamorphoses were out of phase. In the first half of the nineteenth century, when American culture was experiencing intense cultural transformation or "modernization," the Mormons were attempting to establish their traditionally oriented and yet innovative "restoration movement." By the twentieth century, as the Saints adopted the "modern," nineteenth-century values of their erstwhile antagonists, American society was beginning to move into what some commentators have called a "post-modern" phase. For the purposes of this article the term "traditional" identifies a society in which norms are sanctioned by external controls—by the force and weight of the community; while the term "modern" defines a society in which external controls and communal sanctions have broken down, and have been replaced by an individualistic ethos in which internalized values are maintained by mechanisms of self-control.²

In colonial America sexual attitudes and behavior were firmly rooted in a biblically oriented Calvinism or Anglicanism and in a social order reflecting the values of these religions. Fornication and adultery, as well as other less common sexual transgressions, were regarded not only as heinous sins but crimes, and were punished severely. For later generations, "Puritanism" became a synonym for sexual repression. As Edmund Morgan's revisionist study pointed out long ago, however, the Puritans were far from being the sexual prudes that a hostile literature made them out to be. They regarded sex in marriage not only as a means of procreation but also as a natural expression of the love between husband and wife. Celibacy in healthy persons was regarded as unnatural and against the will of God, as, of course, was sexual transgression. In either case, man was wilfully rejecting the laws of God.³

However severely they condemned sin the Puritans realized that living as they did in a fallen world, even they could not be absolutely certain about the state of their souls. Virtue could be achieved only at the cost of eternal vigilance.

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The first and foremost responsibility of the family was to monitor the behavior of its members. The community, likewise, saw to the enforcement of morals, a task made easy by a relative lack of privacy.⁴ If these institutions should fail, the law held immorality in check. When sin did occur, the Puritans rarely panicked. A relatively relaxed attitude toward transgressors prevailed, no doubt encouraged by a stable social order in which rather infrequent premarital pregnancies and illegitimate births suggest a close correlation between prescription and behavior.⁵

From about 1675 on, however, we can observe an increasing divergence between belief and conduct. By 1790, the premarital pregnancy record in America exceeded 25 percent of firstborn children, prompting historians Daniel Scott Smith and Michael Hindus to surmise that such statistics point to a dissolution of the social and intellectual underpinnings of traditional society. As the social controls of the community slackened, sexual mores slackened also. From this time on the statistics begin a steady downward trend that reaches a low point of less than ten percent by 1860.⁶

Interpreted without a context, such data might suggest that nineteenth-century Americans had reestablished the stable social order of a traditional society. The social and intellectual climate of the period, however, points to a different conclusion. By the 1820s and 1830s, the decades of the birth of Mormonism, American culture had moved a long way down the road from the relatively stable social order of colonial America to the increasingly atomistic society of capitalistic individualism; from the traditional Calvinism which saw God as the center of the universe to an Arminianized evangelism which saw man as the center; and from a society in which behavior was largely controlled by the norms of the community to a society in which moral standards were internalized. In other words, the social order was changing from traditional to modern. Teetotalism and sexual restraint became two of the most important means of expressing this modern attitude. Once again, as in colonial society, prescription and behavior coincided, but for very different reasons.⁷

As social control gave way to self-control, Americans developed a perfectionism that would brook no compromise with the world or sin. In colonial society, sex within marriage was regarded as intrinsically wholesome. In the nineteenth century, however, an army of sexual reformers began to extol the virtues of sexual continence bordering on celibacy, even in marriage. If we can believe the rising chorus of antisexual rhetoric, severe doubt was cast upon God's wisdom or at least propriety for having made human propagation a function that at best was indelicate. Relatively perfunctory in their attacks on public vice, these reformers raised their crusade to a pitch of near-hysteria as they inveighed against the supposedly ubiquitous sexual excesses practiced within the privacy of the marriage bed or, even worse, by the individual alone.⁸

In the opinion of one historian, such attitudes "may have had a therapeutic value when [they] took hold in the 1830s, giving men and women an explanation and a set of cures for the frightening world they found themselves in."⁹ Another explanation for this seemingly puzzling shift in attitudes may be found in the individualistic, anti-institutional ethos of the period, which placed the burden of reform on the individual rather than on society. If the world was less than perfect, it was the fault of the individual. As a result, private sins assumed

an unprecedented, monumental significance. Charles Rosenberg's assertion that masturbation was widely regarded as the "master vice" of the period finds a plausible explanation in the social and intellectual climate of antebellum America.¹⁰

Sexual attitudes thus had undergone a profound transformation. To colonial Americans the idea that one particular form of sexual transgression was a "master vice" would have been incomprehensible. As vigorously as they disapproved of departures from the sexual norms, such lapses were merely sins among many other sins. For many nineteenth-century reformers, however, sin had virtually become synonymous with sex.¹¹

These were the kinds of sexual attitudes emerging as Mormonism made its debut in America. Such values, however, were not congenial to the early Saints, who scarcely fit into the pluralistic cultural pattern emerging in the antebellum period. Joseph Smith's millennial kingdom was intended as an alternative to the presumed deficiencies of American society rather than as an instrument for its reform. Mormonism, at least in its early phase, attempted to restore a society that reflected traditional values, although eventually, Joseph Smith envisioned a radical reordering of the family and of relations between the sexes.¹² Though Puritans would have regarded Smith's idea of modern revelation as heretical, they would have been comfortable with Book of Mormon theology that asserted that the Fall "was the cause of all mankind becoming carnal, sensual, devilish."¹³

To the early Mormons this passage appears to have been a fact of life rather than a source of anxiety. There is little evidence suggesting that the Saints—at least prior to the death of Joseph Smith—shared the sexual concerns of their more modern American contemporaries. As in traditional society, adultery, fornication, and other less common sexual transgressions were severely condemned, and unrepentant sinners excommunicated. But an examination of early Church trials suggests that sexual offenses were but one cause among many for excommunication.¹⁴ Although demographic evidence for this early period is scant, it is quite likely that the sexual conduct of the Saints was on the whole exemplary by the standards of the period. This supposition is supported by studies of converts to evangelical religions, which point to stricter sexual behavior of those who had been "saved."¹⁵ Unfortunately, it is all but impossible to document such changes. A perusal of diaries, journals, and letters for this early period is most unrewarding. When it comes to sex, the Saints left little record.

To modern, psychologically-oriented scholars, this silence may itself speak volumes. Perhaps the sexual repression was so severe that it remained totally submerged. Yet it should be remembered that this was the age in which the sexually obsessed reformers articulated their concerns *ad nauseam*. If sexuality had been one of the Mormons' chief concerns, it is unlikely that they would have remained silent on that issue, especially since the new religion, like Puritanism, was very much a religion of the word. That, in fact, was one of its great attractions. Ideally, aspiring Saints would be baptized only after the Truth had been revealed to them by the Spirit, but the preparation for that manifestation involved a rational process of study.

Mormonism, above all, was an ideology preparing the way for a new social

and religious order, and was therefore not particularly evangelical or revivalistic in its appeal.¹⁶ The converted Saints, to be sure, would manifest through their conduct that they had been "born again," but what set the Mormons apart from the world more than anything was their beliefs. After all, many of the Gentiles likewise lived lives of moral rectitude. What they lacked was the True and Everlasting Gospel. Most of those who accepted the Gospel followed its moral proscriptions gladly. Yet it is unlikely that these proscriptions, rather than belief in the Restoration, in priesthood authority, and in the gifts of the Spirit, became the central concerns of their lives.

In addition to these intellectual or theological motivations, there were social reasons that may help explain why the early Saints did not share the sexual concerns of their contemporaries. It appears that during the antebellum period, concepts of sexuality were tied to changing perceptions and conditions of class. Some historians have suggested that at this time in England and on the Continent middle-class sexual morality became a necessary adjunct and expression expected of those who became the managers of the nation.¹⁷ In an upwardly mobile society, this ethos was initiated by those who had middle class aspirations. This kind of "Victorianism" also served to provide a sense of identity, to set the middle class off from both the lower classes and the aristocracy, who were either unable or unwilling to live by bourgeois moral precepts.¹⁸ In spite of increasing stratification, class boundaries in America were clearly less defined than in Europe. Charles Rosenberg argues persuasively that "a good many Americans must . . . have been all the more anxious in their internalization of those aspects of life-style which seemed to embody and assure class status."¹⁹

Sociologist Joseph Gusfield's study of the "bourgeoisification" of antebellum American cultural values provides striking support for this argument. For the overwhelming majority of those involved in the temperance movement, for example, "abstinence became a part of necessary moral action rather than a matter of personal choice."²⁰ Because "there would be no compromise with Evil in any of its forms," sexual conduct would be of equal concern to upwardly mobile Americans.²¹

The Saints, however, clearly felt that they had escaped the psychological, social, and economic pressures of class. As a millenarian religion envisioning the creation of a "new heaven" and a "new earth," Mormonism, in its attempt to "restore" a more traditional society, promised a radical reordering of nineteenth-century religious, political, social, and economic institutions. Although in this new society temperance and sexual restraint were part of the social order, neither served as a means of social transformation, nor as a response to modernization. Finally, because of its strong emphasis on the concept of free agency, early Mormonism placed personal choice ahead of concepts of "necessary moral action" prevalent among the Gentiles.

The response to the Prophet's dietary rules as revealed in the "Word of Wisdom" illustrates this clearly. Viewed superficially, these directives appear to be a typical expression of the temper of the times. Yet the very wording of the revelation is alien to the emerging spirit of "necessary moral action": "To be sent greeting; not by commandment or constraint, but by revelation and the word of wisdom, . . ."²² It is, of course, too much to say that among the Mormons the use of alcohol was governed by the same legal and moral sanctions

that made moderate drinking in colonial America socially and morally acceptable. Nevertheless, Joseph Smith remained an occasional drinker all his life, and it is perhaps safe to suggest that until his death the Word of Wisdom was honored almost as much in the breach as in the observance—a further indication that Mormon social norms, in many ways, resembled those of the seventeenth century more than those of the nineteenth.²³

There is a point at which the analogy between drinking and sex breaks down. Neither Mormons nor Puritans would have agreed with Benjamin Franklin's moderate use of "venery," if it occurred outside of marriage. When applied to fornication or adultery, the concept of moderation ceases to have meaning. Rather, it can be said that the Mormons, like the Puritans, had a positive attitude toward sex in marriage and, quite possibly, did not share the hysterical attitude of the reformers regarding masturbation. Lest I be misunderstood, I am not suggesting that the Saints condoned the "secret vice." All I am saying is that having removed themselves from the presumed corruptions of the Gentiles, they had no reason to invent a "master vice" in order to cope with the pressures of modernization. Mormons, for example, exhibited little if any anxiety over gender roles. Yet as Charles Rosenberg has shown, concern with masturbation was strongly connected to such anxieties, and was, by some, regarded as an "ultimate confession of male inadequacy."²⁴ Masturbation was also regarded as socially isolating, thus conflicting with the male role demands for social and economic achievement. The social and economic communitarianism of Mormonism may well have minimized such pressures.²⁵

Because the early Saints failed to articulate their attitudes regarding this delicate topic, it is only by way of circumstantial evidence that it may be possible to document this supposition. An autobiographical statement by Joseph Smith suggests an implicit lack of concern over issues that agitated moral reformers of the day. We cannot of course know what transgressions the Prophet conjured in his readers' minds as he confessed, "I was left to all kinds of temptations; and, mingling with all kinds of society, I frequently fell into many foolish errors, and displayed the weakness of youth and the corruption of human nature, which I am sorry to say led me into divers temptations, to the gratification of many appetites offensive in the sight of God."²⁶ But given the preconceptions of the day, it is hard to believe that his detractors would have gone out of their way to read trivial foibles into the passage. The sentence surely has a potential for offending the squeamish. Those editors who much later changed "corruption" to "foibles," and struck out the phrase, "to the gratification of many appetites," must have been sensitive to the uses that could be made of this passage.²⁷ By that time [1902], as we shall see, Mormons had adopted the "modern," nineteenth-century attitudes of their erstwhile antagonists. Quite possibly, the young Joseph was not only more ingenuous but also more "traditional" in his response to his imperfections.²⁸

Having thus far stressed the traditional aspects of Mormon culture and Mormon sexuality, I hasten to add that even in its early phase, Mormonism contained many of the germs of its later evolution into a "modern" religion. Emerson's statement that Mormonism was "an after-clap of Puritanism," while containing a great deal of insight, was clearly an oversimplification. Even the Book of Mormon contains too many Arminian heresies to make the comparison stick; and the Prophet's later pronouncement that "men will be punished for

their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression" was fully compatible with the beliefs of one form of liberal Protestantism. Taken out of context, the Mormon doctrine of free agency had the potential for placing an undue burden on the individual conscience in the free-for-all of Jacksonian individualism. Like the Puritan community before it, however, the supportive system of the Mormon community seems to have mitigated the possibility of such stress. In a way Mormonism may well have combined the best of both worlds: the optimistic theology of the nineteenth century with the social cohesion of the seventeenth. In fact, this may have been one reason why the liberal side of Mormon thought could find expression in some rather radical social experiments. Having extricated themselves from the pressures of modernization, the Mormons, unlike their Gentile contemporaries, were not compelled to push for a frantic internalization of mores—sexual or otherwise.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that many of Joseph Smith's unorthodox ideas were already contained in the Book of Mormon. By 1833, with the publication of the Prophet's early revelations in the Book of Commandments, the novel side of Mormonism became more apparent. Continual altercations with the Gentiles for the time being prevented the full realization of many of these ideas. It wasn't until the early 1840s, when the Mormon prophet believed he had placed the Kingdom of God on a firmer footing in Nauvoo, that he was able to press for the further realization of his innovative religious, political, and social ideas.

Plural marriage was the most dramatic of these. Aware of its explosive potential, the Prophet initiated only his closest and most trusted associates into its theory and practice. Even then, rumors concerning "polygamy" were sufficient to further alienate disaffected followers, whose resistance to Joseph's "Kingdom" played into the hands of anti-Mormon Gentiles.

By the time of his martyrdom, Joseph's theological and social innovations had accelerated at such a pace that they threatened to spin out of control. Social cohesion, in Nauvoo, was clearly loosening. The Prophet's experimentation with "celestial marriage," if continued in the ad hoc fashion of those secretive liaisons of the last year before his death had a potential for sexual anarchy. Certainly the impact even on his most trusted followers was nothing less than traumatic. In fact, the Prophet himself seems to have had second thoughts as he launched social and sexual practices in direct conflict with the Judeo-Christian ethic and the established mores of American society. According to one of his followers, Smith had to be assured by revelation that he had not committed adultery.²⁹ To his detractors, particularly those within the Church who were beginning to look askance at his vigorous round of experimentation and innovation, such a revelation could be viewed as justification for sexual transgressions.³⁰

It is therefore not surprising that after the death of Joseph Smith, Mormonism continued to totter in precarious balance, and began to split into numerous sects. Brigham Young, who insisted that he was the legitimate heir of Joseph, became the leader of the largest and most successful of these. Although he professed to continue in the tradition of his predecessor, Young's more conservative policies imply a recognition of the centrifugal forces that were pulling Mormonism apart during the second stage of its history. If polygamy in Utah, publicly announced in 1852, was a major aberration from the social mores of

Protestant America, its public, institutionalized, carefully regulated practice implied social controls going far beyond those recorded in the days of Joseph Smith. At the same time, its external controls contrasted sharply with the internal controls and self-repression that were the essential features of "modern," antebellum American morality.³¹

There is some evidence to suggest that in this stage of their history Mormons developed a greater degree of self-consciousness about matters sexual. An increasing defensiveness in Mormon publications seems directly related to the announcement of polygamy in 1852. Anticipating or responding to charges of sexual profligacy, the Saints began to compare their supposedly superior sexual morality to a sexually corrupt Babylon.³² The Gentiles not surprisingly stressed the idea that polygamy provided a convenient means of sexual gratification for the man. It was partly in response to this charge that the Saints emphasized the idea that the *primary* if not the *only* purpose of marriage—monogamous or polygamous—was to have offspring. Sexual relations, said Heber C. Kimball, were not "to gratify the lusts of the flesh, but to raise up children."³³ One of sociologist James Hulett's informants reported that "his father was sexually interested in his wives only for the purposes of procreation, and the Principle could not be lived in any other way."³⁴

When M. R. Werner, a biographer of Brigham Young, coined the phrase "puritan polygamy," he probably was not far off the mark.³⁵ It was an impression consistent with the observations of Richard Burton, the famous English traveller and linguist, who visited the City of the Saints in 1861. Burton reported that "All sensuality in the married state is strictly forbidden beyond the requisite for ensuring progeny,—the practice, in fact, of Adam and Abraham."³⁶ He quoted one of his informants, Belinda Pratt, as saying that according to the Old Testament, during prescribed periods of gestation and lactation, sexual relations were prohibited: ". . . should her husband come to her bed under such circumstances, he would commit a gross sin both against the laws of nature and the wise provisions of God's law, as revealed in His word; in short, he would commit an abomination."³⁷

Such restrictions were not necessarily inconsistent with a point of view somewhat more liberal than that reported by Burton. As for modern scriptures, none are extant to suggest that procreation is the only justification for sexual relations. Significantly, I have been unable to discover a pronouncement to that effect by Joseph Smith. Of equal interest is the fact that Brigham Young himself did not fully share Belinda Pratt's opinion. When asked on one occasion "as to sexual connexion during pregnancy," his advice was "just as they please about that suit themselves."³⁸ Clearly, Young's authoritative opinion was sexually less repressive than that of Pratt. What appears to have happened is that sexual folklore, supported by the "science" of the day, was elevated to a position of quasi-doctrine, not by the authorities, but by the members.

This seemingly innocuous example may well provide a first glimpse into the incipient state of a fourth period of Mormon history, during which the Saints adapted to the forces of modernization by internalizing their sexual mores. This process cannot be imposed by ecclesiastical fiat, but is by its very nature a spontaneous response to cultural change to which the institution must adapt itself if it wishes to survive. This theory is supported by the work of anthropologist Mark Leone, in whose opinion modern Mormonism developed a high

degree of "adaptability" in its value system, which derived to a large extent from the sensitivity of its members to the cultural environment, as well as the ability of the Saints to influence the world around them: "Under the guise of strict literalism exists a diffuseness, individual inventiveness, and variability through time that contradicts usual views of the Mormon belief system."³⁹ What Leone has done, essentially, is to apply sociologist Robert Bellah's concept of "modern religion" to Mormonism; both have an ability to absorb and generate change. Without this adaptability it is doubtful that Mormonism would have been able to survive the elimination of those social, economic, and political institutions that were virtually synonymous with its cultural identity in the nineteenth century. These institutions rested on a theology that made Mormonism a "religion of the word," one that had a strong ideological orientation, stressing belief over behavior. As late as 1867, this emphasis is illustrated in the Godbeite heresy, which represented a more "modern" view by refusing to acknowledge the Prophet's right to dictate to them "in all things temporal and spiritual."⁴⁰ In its excommunication trial, "the High Council affirmed that this was contrary to church doctrine," and that the defendants "might as well ask whether [they] could honestly differ from the Almighty."⁴¹

The social and intellectual transformation that occurred is perhaps best illustrated by the statement of Church president Joseph F. Smith in 1903, during the controversy over the seating of Reed Smoot in the United States Senate: "Our people are given the largest possible latitude for their convictions, and if a man rejects a message that I may give him *but is still moral* [my italics] and believes in the main principles of the gospel and desires to continue his membership in the church, he is permitted to remain and he is not unchurched."⁴² By this time Mormonism was well on its way to adopting the kind of self-revising value system that Bellah describes in *Beyond Belief*, and that Leone sees as the key to modern Mormonism.⁴³

Among American Protestant churches, this transformation had largely occurred in the antebellum period. Under the impact of a pluralistic denominationalism, the churches emphasized conduct more than belief, thus serving as effective tools of modernization.⁴⁴ Mormonism now went the route of its erstwhile antagonists. Between 1880 and 1920 Mormonism experienced a profound cultural transformation reminiscent of the shift from Puritan to Yankee, of the shift from belief to behavior, of the shift from the total system in which religion encompassed all facets of life and society to one in which religion became "self-revising," able to adapt itself to social, economic, and political change.

Internalized moral norms became an essential gyroscope in this restless new world. As among the modernizing Protestants of antebellum America, abstinence from alcohol and sex became the most important means of acquiring those basic characteristics that could help them survive effectively in an individualistic, capitalistic, competitive environment. It is therefore no accident that in this period we perceive an intensified campaign for observance of the Word of Wisdom and an increase in excommunications due to sexual transgressions (even though excommunication in general declined in this period).⁴⁵ As among antebellum Protestants, sin was increasingly equated with sex—if not according to official doctrine, certainly according to a popular and extremely pervasive folklore. It should not be surprising that as an indicator of this changing climate of opinion Joseph Smith's autobiography was expurgated.⁴⁶

These changes were not only necessary but perhaps inevitable. As long as the Saints controlled not only the religious, but the social, economic, and political institutions of the Kingdom of God, numerous sanctions could be applied to enforce sexual morality. As in Puritan society, sexual transgressions were not only sins but crimes, punishable by the legal code.⁴⁷ And as in colonial society, the community enforced its moral values informally. This was facilitated by a relative lack of privacy reinforced by settlement patterns. Like the New England Village, the Mormon Village consisted of houses clustered in close proximity. Few families could afford separate rooms for each of its members.⁴⁸

At the same time, in a society that was primarily agrarian, sexual pressures were somewhat minimized because most young people were able to marry early. Brigham Young encouraged young men to marry at the age of eighteen.⁴⁹ Richard Burton reports that "girls rarely remain single past sixteen."⁵⁰ Thus the need for strict sexual control of adolescents was diminished. But as society became more urbanized and industrialized, early marriage became less socially desirable. As marriages were postponed to a later age, sexual pressures understandably increased, thus necessitating greater sexual control. The need for greater control, however, coincided with the dissolution of traditional institutions. Given the premium Mormons continued to place on sexual purity, internalization of sexual mores was a necessary and inevitable response to social change. At the same time, it was precisely because of profound cultural changes that sexual morality became all the more important to the Saints. Leonard Arrington suggests that in this period the Word of Wisdom became a symbol of identification.⁵¹ Sexual morality, I submit, may well have become an even more profound symbol of identity. Again, we are reminded that sex served an analogous function among upwardly mobile, antebellum middle-class Americans.

This social transformation began at about the same time Mormonism was experiencing an internal backlash against polygamy. Having been branded sexual outcasts, the Saints may well have felt that they had to "out-Victorian" the Victorians in order to become respectable members of American society. Quite possibly, Mormons went through a response analogous to the one Charles Rosenberg has observed among aspiring members of the lower orders of Victorian England and America, who achieved a modicum of autonomy and respectability through "repression of sexuality."⁵² If the polygamy backlash contributed to the bourgeoisification of Mormon culture, a more profound and important reason, I believe, was the internalization of modern behavior patterns, a process that probably would have occurred if polygamy had never existed. In fact, development of the modern Mormon personality may have contributed as much to the ultimate demise of polygamy as did the crusade of the Gentiles. Unlike its "twin relic of barbarism"—slavery—polygamy might have died with a whimper rather than a bang had the purity crusaders only understood the internal forces at work in Mormon culture. But if the stiff resistance engendered by the crusade retarded modernization, it could not stop it. Clearly, in the first decades of the twentieth century Mormons became every bit as "modern" as their nineteenth-century antagonists.

Meanwhile, another scene has opened in the American drama. Some commentators have called its sexual ethos *post-modern*, characterized by norms that are becoming increasingly tolerant of pre- and extramarital sex, and a non-

judgmental attitude toward such practices as masturbation and even homosexuality. As twentieth-century American society moves away from the inner-directed norms of nineteenth-century individualism, Americans are once again following standards of the community which are ceasing to exert social control and are pointing toward "sexual liberation."

Mormons understandably see such norms as a threat to their own values, and are discovering that internalization of morals leading to expressions of self-control are increasingly difficult to achieve. Considerable evidence points to an emerging tendency of Mormons to return to traditional, externally sanctioned mechanisms of social control. In recent times these have found expression, not only in strict surveillance of sexual morality and the Word of Wisdom, but in enforced standards of grooming and dress. More than anything such standards are symbolic of sexual attitudes and behavior. For better or for worse, it is these that are increasingly determining who and what a Mormon is.⁵³

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NOTES

¹In "The Mormons as a Test Case" (unpublished ms).

²Those familiar with the work of David Riesman will recognize that I am indebted here to his *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1950). On the concept of modernization in American history see especially Richard D. Brown, "Modernization and the Modern Personality in Early America, 1600–1865: A Sketch of a Synthesis," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 2 (Winter 1972), 201–228; "Modernization: A Victorian Climax," *American Quarterly*, 27 (December 1975), 533–548. I am fully aware of the inadequacy of ascribing substantive and ideological significance to such terms as "modern" and "traditional." Nevertheless, as analytical tools, and as a shorthand for describing change, the terms have their uses.

³Edmund S. Morgan, "The Puritans and Sex," *New England Quarterly*, 15 (1942), 591–607; *The Puritan Family. Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Rev. ed., New York, Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 29–64; John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1970); Michael Vernon Wells, "Sex and the Law in Colonial New England," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1974).

⁴I am in obvious disagreement here with David H. Flaherty, who has argued that privacy was a central concern in colonial New England. *Privacy in Colonial New England* (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1972). See the review by John J. Waters in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 30 (Jan. 1973), 168–170.

⁵Daniel Scott Smith and Michael S. Hindus, "Premarital Pregnancy in America, 1640–1971: An Overview and Interpretation," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 5 (Spring 1975), 538.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷On this transformation see especially Rowland Berthoff, *An Unsettled People: Social Order and Disorder in American History* (New York, Harper & Row, 1971); James A. Henretta, *The Evolution of American Society, 1700–1815: An Interdisciplinary Analysis* (Lexington, Mass., D.C. Heath, 1973).

⁸Much of this literature has been conveniently collected by Ronald G. Walters in *Primers for Prudery. Sexual Advice to Victorian America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1974).

⁹Stephen Nissenbaum, "Sex, Reform, and Social Change," summarized in Walters, *Primers for Prudery*, p. 17.

¹⁰"Sexuality, Class and Role in 19th-Century America," *American Quarterly*, 25 (May 1973), 136.

¹¹David Brion Davis, *Homicide in American Fiction, 1798–1860* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1957), pp. 147–178; Ronald G. Walters, "The Erotic South," *American Quarterly*, 25 (May 1973), 172–201.

¹²This is the theme of Marvin S. Hill, "The Role of Christian Primitivism in the Origin and Development of the Mormon Kingdom, 1830-1844" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1968); and "The Shaping of the Mormon Mind in New England and New York," *Brigham Young University Studies*, 9 (Spring 1969), 351-372.

¹³The Book of Mormon, Mos. 16:3.

¹⁴Based on 84 cases prior to the death of Joseph Smith culled from Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, B.H. Roberts, ed. (6 vols., Salt Lake City, 1956 ed., Deseret Book Co.). Sexual transgression is mentioned specifically in only three cases. Out of twenty-seven disfellowshipping cases, only two involved sexual irregularities.

¹⁵See for example Smith and Hindus, pp. 544-545, 551.

¹⁶Marvin Hill makes this point in "The Shaping of the Mormon Mind," p. 361.

¹⁷Steven Marcus, *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England* (New York, Basic Books, 1966).

¹⁸Ronald Walters makes this point in "Sexuality and Reform in 19th Century America" (unpublished paper presented at Seminar in American Civilization, Columbia University, September 19, 1974).

¹⁹"Sexuality, Class and Role," p. 143.

²⁰Joseph R. Gusfield, "Temperance, Status Control, and Mobility, 1826-1860," in David Brion Davis, ed., *Ante-Bellum Reform* (New York, Harper & Row, 1967), p. 127.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

²²Doctrine and Covenants, Section 89.

²³See for example Leonard J. Arrington, "An Economic Interpretation of the 'Word of Wisdom,'" *Brigham Young University Studies*, 1 (Winter 1959), 40-41. Significantly, references to violations of the Word of Wisdom were eliminated from the 1902 edition of the *History of the Church*.

²⁴"Sexuality, Class and Role," p. 145. H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., "The Disease of Masturbation: Values and the Concept of Disease," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 48 (Summer 1974), 234-248.

²⁵"Sexuality, Class and Role," p. 46.

²⁶Quoted in Davis Bitton, "B.H. Roberts as Historian," *Dialogue*, 3 (Winter 1968), 31-32.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸These changes appeared almost simultaneously in the revised version of the Pearl of Great Price as edited by James E. Talmage, and in B. H. Roberts' edition of the *History of the Church*, both of which were published in 1902. See P of GP, Joseph Smith, II:28, and *History of the Church*, I, 9-11. See also Davis Bitton, "B. H. Roberts as Historian," *Dialogue*, III (Winter 1968), 31-33; and Dean Jessee, "The Reliability of Joseph Smith's History," forthcoming in *Journal of Mormon History*, III (1976).

²⁹Joseph Lee Robinson, *Journal*, (ms, LDS Historical Department), p. 22.

³⁰The accusations in the Nauvoo *Expositor*, for example, make this quite clear.

³¹I am taking my cue here from Leonard Arrington, who has argued that "the conditions under which Brigham Young and the Twelve Apostles assumed leadership assured a hierarchical structure designed along authoritarian lines. The theophanous works of Joseph Smith were canonized into doctrine, and the doctrine and organizational structure of the Church became more dogmatic and inflexible." "The Intellectual Tradition of the Latter-day Saints," *Dialogue*, 4 (Spring 1969), 18; see also Ephraim E. Ericksen, *Psychological and Ethical Aspects of Mormon Group Life* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1922), pp. 35-36. My argument here is admittedly somewhat hypothetical, and needs to be sustained by further empirical research.

³²See for example *Millennial Star*, 17 (1855), 725-726; *Journal of Discourses*, 16 (1873), 176; 17 (1874), 152-153; William I. Appleby, "History of the Signs of the Times for the Benefit of the Church of Latter Day Saints" (unpublished ms, LDS Historical Department), pp. 119-120.

³³*Journal of Discourses*, 5 (1858), 91.

³⁴James Edward Hulett, "The Sociological and Social Psychological Aspects of the Mormon Polygamous Family" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1939), p. 37.

³⁵Brigham Young (New York, Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1925).

³⁶*City of the Saints* (London, Longmans, 1861), p. 520.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 529.

³⁸Record of Meetings, Microfilm 348, April 29, 1849 (LDS Historical Department), p. 40.

³⁹Mark P. Leone, "The Economic Basis for the Evolution of Mormon Religion," in Irving I. Zaretsky and Mark P. Leone, eds., *Religious Movements in Contemporary America* (Princeton, 1974), pp. 751-752.

⁴⁰Edward W. Tullidge, "The Godbeite Movement," *Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine*, 1 (1880), 32.

⁴¹*Ibid.*

⁴²U.S., Congress, Senate, *Proceedings Before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate in the Matter of the Protest Against the Right Hon. Reed Smoot, A Senator from the State of Utah, to Hold His Seat* (4 vols.; Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1904-1907), I, 97-98.

⁴³Robert Bellah, *Beyond Belief* (New York, Harper & Row, 1970).

⁴⁴See especially Sidney E. Mead, "Denominationalism: The Shape of Protestantism in America," in *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York, Harper & Row, 1963), 103-133.

⁴⁵See for example the Minutes of the St. George Stake High Council, 1862-, as reported in Nels Anderson, *Desert Saints* (Chicago, 1966), pp. 346-348.

⁴⁶Bitton, "B.H. Roberts as Historian," pp. 31-32.

⁴⁷This is borne out by an examination of both the laws of the State of Deseret and those of the Territorial Legislature. According to the laws of the Kingdom of God, adultery was punishable by death, though it is uncertain whether or not this was enforced. Gustive O. Larson suggests the possibility of enforcement in "The Mormon Reformation," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 26 (1958), 60-63. It is clear, however, that the standards of the community condoned and perhaps encouraged extra-legal action. A famous case that was clearly precedental was *The United States v. Howard Egan*, in October, 1851. Egan had tracked down and killed the seducer of his wife, James Monroe. In his plea for the defense George A. Smith argued that by the standards of the community Egan had no choice but to kill Monroe. Egan was acquitted. See *Journal of Discourses*, 1 (1854), 95-103.

⁴⁸See Lowry Nelson, *The Mormon Village: A Pattern and Technique of Land Settlement* (Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1952).

⁴⁹*Journal of Discourses*, 12 (1869), 194.

⁵⁰*City of the Saints*, p. 518.

⁵¹Arrington, "An Economic Interpretation of the 'Word of Wisdom,'" p. 47.

⁵²"Sexuality, Class and Role," p. 149.

⁵³Harold T. Christensen and Kenneth L. Cannon have provided striking evidence for a shift towards conservatism in "The Fundamentalist Emphasis in Contemporary Mormonism: A 1935-1973 Trend Analysis of Brigham Young University Student Responses" (unpublished ms).

Needed: An LDS Philosophy of Sex

KENNETH L. CANNON

Parley P. Pratt once defined “union of the sexes” as “mutual comfort and assistance in this world of toil and sorrow.” In our day President Spencer W. Kimball has affirmed that an important function of sex is to contribute to the couple’s “becoming one.” Despite this, an LDS philosophy of sex has yet to emerge. There is a need for carefully designed research implemented in a way that will not cause offense, but which will help the Church to face critical problems as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of Church programs in solving these problems.

The gospel provides healthy and enlightening teachings about sexuality, including the belief that sex is both God-given and eternal. Gospel teachings focus directly upon interpersonal relationships. Since sexual intercourse is among the highest expressions of these relationships, these teachings are directly applicable.

The Church strongly supports the concept of chastity and the importance of sexual fidelity, both of which firmly contribute to the success and permanence of marriage. The success of the Church’s teachings and programs in holding the line can be seen in the data presented by Wilford Smith elsewhere in this issue. It indicates that, at a time when nonmarital and extramarital sex are increasing rapidly, LDS youths have not shown a substantial increase in non-marital sexual experience.

Such courting guidelines as the Church could offer are greatly needed to help couples develop close relationships with a reasonable minimum of affectionate intimacy. When affection is so vital to marriage, it seems unreasonable simply to advise young people against kissing; the point must be made that when sexually stimulating activity dominates the relationship, other modes of sharing are crowded out. Couples can cheat themselves out of the supportive friendship so vital to marriage.

In 29 years of thinking, teaching, writing and researching on marriage and the family—the last 20 years as a faculty member of the College of Family Living at BYU—I have come to recognize that while sex is only a part of marriage, it can contribute much fulfillment and can strengthen the marriage relationship. I also am convinced that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will increase the happiness of any person who will apply its teachings, and particularly that it has much to contribute to marital fulfillment and to the improvement of family relationships.

The responsibility for providing sex education to children within the gospel framework was specifically given to parents by President Alvin R. Dyer in his Conference Address in April, 1966. But teaching children about sex is no easy

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matter and many parents feel unqualified to tackle it alone. What role should the Church play in defining goals, developing materials, and providing training?

President Dyer organized a committee to write a manual on "Human Maturation." Hundreds of hours went into the manual's preparation. This guide—designed primarily for those who speak and write for the Church—was submitted, but has not been seen since.

Despite the Church's shy stand on sex information for parents, I believe that Church leaders recognize the problems members are having with sexuality. Several years ago a member of the First Presidency shared with me his perception that 75 percent of the problems crossing his desk each day were sex-related.

This lack of a positive focus on sex education shows up among the college students attending BYU. Approximately half of the students in my classes have had inadequate sex education, with only 10 percent indicating that their parents had explained reproduction, had communicated to them the fulfilling aspects of sexual love, or had given thoughtful reasons for refraining from premarital sex.

The students in my marriage classes are asked to prepare term papers on their reasons for refraining from premarital sex, and their strategies to prevent such involvement. About half of the students invariably reveal their vulnerability to stressful temptations in dating. The Church could do much to assist parents and teachers in giving youth thoughtful reasons for refraining and could help them develop effective strategies of sexual control.

The instructor of a BYU religion class had his students search the teachings of the "living prophets" concerning the goals of sex education. They found only one goal—chastity—which may be achieved at a cost of strong fears and negative attitudes toward sex, with such fears and attitudes causing sexual maladjustment and dissatisfaction in marriage.

There is evidence for this in Harold Christensen's data, reported in this issue. It appears that when LDS youth do lose their chastity, they tend to think all is lost and may therefore become promiscuous. Christ gave us the principle of repentance as a means of accepting our sinfulness in relation to his forgiving love, and it is important that we learn to use that principle in sexual matters.

The emphasis on chastity also leads some members to larger-than-life expectations about marriage. Parents and teachers often create the impression that chastity alone will guarantee a fulfilling marriage. It is not uncommon for the reality to be shocking. A philosophy of sex is needed which would help us not only to maintain chastity but to develop healthy attitudes toward sex.

The role of sex after marriage continues to pose questions for Latter-day Saints. How can sexual love be enjoyed if every encounter threatens pregnancy? It is meaningless, therefore, to talk about some of the purposes of sex as being beyond procreation unless there is freedom to use contraception.

I have noticed that students at BYU tend to be caught in a crossfire. There is active teaching of the belief that contraception is "rebellion against God and gross wickedness" and that "children are not to be delayed for social, personal, or educational reasons." Yet there are professors, branch presidents, bishops and stake presidents who have the opposite view, suggesting to students that they give thought and attention to the matter of planning their children and spacing them through the use of medically safe contraceptive measures.

Many students feel the need to achieve a reasonably high level of professional competence and income. They face pressure to marry in order to avoid affectional intimacy during courtship and also to fulfill their responsibility to become husbands and fathers or wives and mothers. At the same time, they face financial pressure in seeking to complete their educations and to have children. The prospect of such responsibilities is overwhelming for some who would like to marry now. While there are those who manage, somehow, to work, to stay in school, get married, have a family and complete their educations, many try and then drop out. Among my vivid memories is that of a very capable pre-med student who was studying to be a physician on a scholarship. Three children in three years caused him to give up school; several years later he was still in a stop-gap job, still with three children and going nowhere in particular.

Recently a couple with a new baby—their 13th—asked: “What now? We are still very fertile, but we can’t handle anymore.” A 31-year-old woman married to a 35-year-old bishop has just had her sixth child and insists that she can never have another, yet her husband persistently believes and teaches that contraception is “gross wickedness.” How are they going to handle this conflict during their remaining child-bearing years?

A close friend’s wife, while earning the living during two of the years he worked on his doctorate, insisted that they refrain from sexual intercourse because she was afraid she would get pregnant, be unable to work, and thus cause him to drop out of school. This abstinence almost ended their marriage.

About ten years ago a senior student who had been accepted for medical school at the University of Utah talked to me about his situation. He had no outside financial support, but his fiancée was a teacher in the Salt Lake schools. They felt they could make it if she could continue to work for most of his three years in medical school, but she was strongly opposed to the use of contraception. They sought counsel from a general authority who advised them that it would be the better part of wisdom to delay a family until the husband’s last year of medical school. They now have four children and are planning two more. The husband was able to obtain his medical degree and now has the earning power to support his family. In my files is a copy of a letter written in 1967 by the First Presidency to a BYU professor concerning the Church’s stand on contraception. It concludes with this statement: “. . . nevertheless, this is a personal matter left up to the couple.”

Years ago one of my friends became engaged to a young woman who worked in a general authority’s office. They asked him if he would talk to them about marriage. During the interview they asked about contraception. He answered that his conditioning was such that he could not have used any method to control conception, but that he fully expected his own children to. He recognized this decision as resting on culture rather than on basic religious teachings.

Because the issue of contraception is a matter that regularly comes up in our marriage classes, I developed an approach to family planning and contraception, which is summarized below:

1. The issue of family planning and the use of contraception is not a criterion for determining the worthiness of a person being considered for a position in the Church. In planning their family and spacing their children, a couple do not violate any doctrine of the Church.

2. There is not any real moral difference between a couple using the rhythm method to control conception if it works for them and another couple using contraceptive methods.
3. Conception takes place when a compatible ovum and sperm meet in the proper part of the female anatomy. One cannot make the assumption that if conception occurs, it is because God wanted it to occur.
4. People differ in their ability to manage. Some couples could manage a dozen children and others are not capable of managing two or three. The decision to have children and to space them is between the couple and the Lord; and the couple should recognize their abilities, feelings, situation and obligation to themselves and their children.

I submitted this approach to the First Counselor in the First Presidency and asked for his reaction and suggestions. In his reply he did not suggest any changes or additions.

When the issue is squarely faced, does the use of contraception to space children really violate any religious principle? Does opposition to contraception reflect a cultural position from the past? I encounter many situations where the use of birth control has contributed favorably to the husband-wife relationship, to marital satisfaction and unity, and to the mother's body being in proper condition to carry through with the pregnancy. It is also related to the child's receiving needed care, love and attention.

Such examples of families facing decisions, and coming to radically different interpretations of a "Church" position, only point out the need for an integrated approach.

Several years ago, while serving as a member of a Church writing committee on a lesson manual on marriage and parenthood, I expressed the view that it was absurd to have such a manual without some lessons on the sexual aspect of marriage. The committee agreed, and assigned the lessons to me. I prepared them, using Gospel scriptures as the basis; and these lessons were presented with other lessons to two Sunday Schools in Salt Lake City. All the lessons were anonymously evaluated, with the lessons on sex receiving high marks. We sought permission from the Church Correlation Committee members in charge of the project to include the lessons on sex. They agreed, and asked that we submit the basic ideas on a tape. Four of us worked several months preparing it; we submitted it, but we have not heard of it since. The project was terminated, without explanation.

Such decisions are not necessarily being made by the general authorities in charge of the projects. In the outline for the Relief Society Manual for 1975-1976, which was submitted to the writing committee, one lesson was to focus on sex education. A well-qualified physician wrote an excellent lesson on the topic. When the manual was submitted for approval, the lesson on sex education was removed as being unsuitable. This was done before it ever reached the general authority in charge.

Some change, however, is taking place. In the past year, an issue of the *Ensign* had three articles which focused on sex education and related matters. President Kimball's statement on sex relationships was another favorable sign. It is my hope that more will come.

For family life educators, the question must be squarely faced. We have—

I believe—shirked our responsibility by saying, “We can’t do anything until the Church changes its view.” This has provided a convenient excuse.

But the fact remains that, while the general authorities rightfully must shoulder the responsibility for the Church, they not only seek inspiration from God, putting themselves fully into the work, but they also search for the best thinking and writing on the subject.

On several aspects of sex, insightful writing and analysis would be warmly welcomed and accepted. For example, guidelines on conducting the affectional aspects of courtship; the best positive reasons for not participating in non-marital sex; strategies to use in the management of one’s life so that premarital sexual involvement doesn’t take place; the application of Gospel teachings and principles to the sexual aspects of marriage; careful definitions of goals of sex education, development of suitable materials; training approaches for parents: all these are needed and would be used.

Before an LDS philosophy of sex can emerge, family life educators must join with enlightened church members and their leaders in developing clear guidelines for all.

Man is endowed with appetites and passions for the preservation of his life and the perpetuation of his kind. These, when held under proper subjection, contribute to his happiness and comfort; but when used for mere gratification, lead to misery and moral degradation.

President David O. McKay
Gospel Ideals, page 474.

MORMON SEXUALITY IN CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

HAROLD T. CHRISTENSEN

This paper summarizes some of the major findings from an on-going, cross-cultural study of premarital sex among college students begun in the late 1930s. Previous publications have developed theoretical propositions of interest to sociologists but without special attention to Latter-day Saint culture. Here I shall attempt to bring Mormon sex norms into focus, while contrasting them with those of non-Mormons.

Mormons Are More Conservative

It is to be expected that attitudes will influence behavior, although no perfect fit can be presumed. Since the Mormon sex norms covered by this review are more restrictive or conservative than those of most non-Mormons, there should be little surprise that the behavioral data show Mormon sexual behavior to be more conservative.

Table 1 compares data collected at nine colleges and universities from widely scattered cultures in Asia, Europe and the United States.¹

Table 1. Percentages Who Approve and Who Have Experienced
Premarital Coitus
(International Comparisons, 1968)

		Approval		Experience	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
Europe					
(1) Denmark	(state U.)	100.0 (1)*	100.0 (1)	94.7 (1)*	96.7 (1)*
(2) Sweden	(state U.)	96.9 (2)	96.3 (2)	87.0 (3)	80.7 (2)
(3) Belgium	(Catholic U.)	56.9 (4)	39.7 (4)	13.1 (7)	13.3 (7.5)
United States					
(4) South	(Negro, state)	92.0 (3)	63.5 (3)	93.2 (2)	64.4 (3)
(5) Midwest I	(state U.)	55.4 (5)	37.6 (5)	50.2 (4)	34.3 (4)
(6) Midwest II	(Catholic U.)	50.0 (6)	—	33.2 (6)	—
(7) Midwest III	(Mennonite)	12.5 (9)	13.2 (8)	3.8 (9)	13.3 (7.5)
(8) Intermountain		38.4 (8)	23.5 (7)	36.5 (5)	32.4 (5)
Mormon subgroup		22.4	16.4	23.2	25.0
Asia					
(9) Taiwan	(state U.)	45.3 (7)	7.9 (9)	8.5 (8)	.8 (9)

*Numbers in parentheses show rank order.

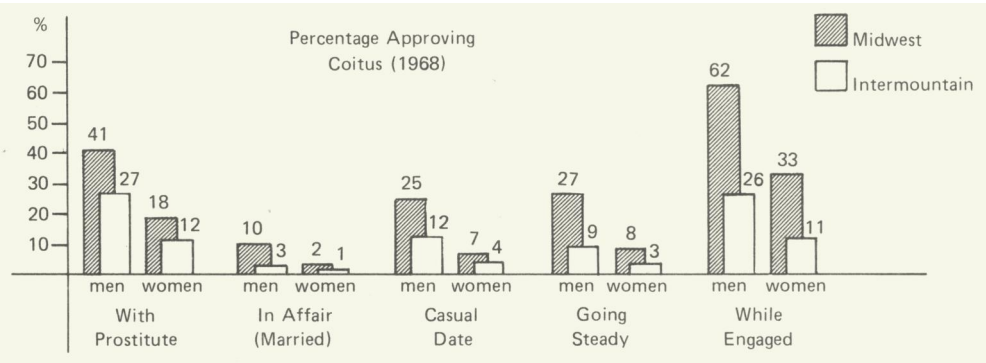
Guest Editor, Harold T. Christensen, is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at Purdue and Visiting Professor at San Diego State University. He is the author of 6 books and more than 60 articles.

As might be expected, differences among cultures are considerable. With two exceptions, rank order among the cultures is approximately the same for approval as it is for experience. The exceptions—where approval and experience rankings are inconsistent—are Belgium and Intermountain. Belgium, basically a Catholic sample, is high on approval but low on experience; while Intermountain, basically a Mormon sample, is low on approval but higher than expected on experience. This latter finding suggests that there may be a discrepancy between behavior and values within Mormon culture.

In the interest of brevity, discussions which follow are for the most part limited to comparisons between Midwest I and Intermountain groups. The Midwest I samples are from a largely non-Mormon area, but one that is basically religious. It reflects both agriculture and industry, and its people lean toward political conservatism. Although the Intermountain sample is primarily Mormon, it is similar to the Midwestern sample in most other respects. Both areas encompass one or more large Universities.²

When asked about circumstances under which premarital coitus might be acceptable, Intermountain respondents are consistently more conservative in all categories—though slightly less opposed to coitus with a prostitute than might have been expected.³

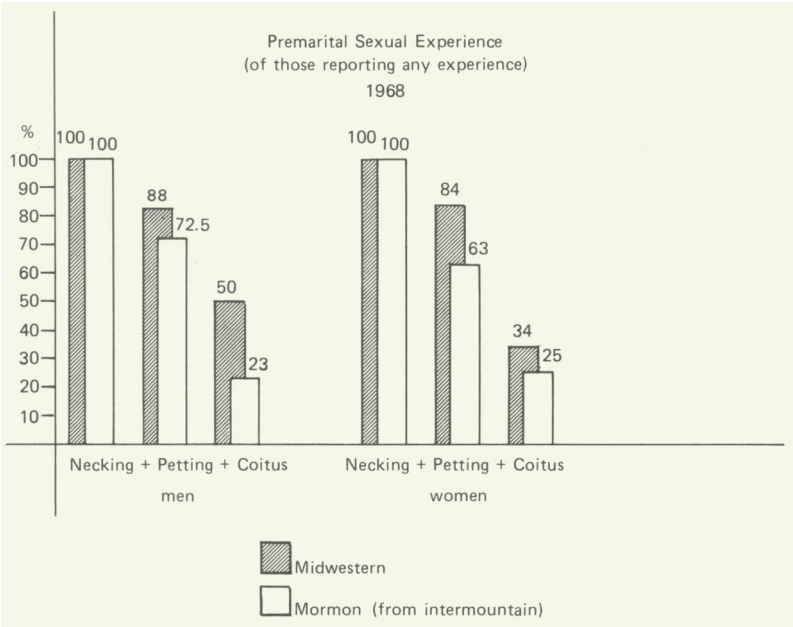
Figure 1



Apparently premarital coitus is apt to receive greatest approval when there either is no commitment (as in prostitution) or there is high commitment (when engaged).

Figure 2 shows respondents with any premarital sexual experience who had engaged in necking, petting, or coitus. Necking was defined as “light kissing and embracing”; petting as “any kind of body fondling below the neck but without sexual intercourse”; and coitus as “complete sexual intercourse.” The percentages reflect how far respondents had progressed in intimacy up to the time of the survey.⁴

FIGURE 2



Not only do Mormon college students hold back from premarital intimacy more than do non-Mormons, but the women tend to hold back more than the men—which is a similar pattern to that found for attitudes toward sex. More women than men stop with necking or petting and fewer go on to coitus. Among those who do *not* go on to coitus the Mormons are less likely to have engaged in petting (64% of the men, 51% of the women) than are their Midwestern counterparts (about 75% of both men and women). For some unknown reason a larger than expected number of Mormon women respondents in my survey went on from petting to coitus. This distorted the expected cross-cultural petting pattern and also showed the Intermountain women students to be more coitally active than actually may have been the case in the population from which the sample was drawn.⁵

My data also suggest that living in close proximity serves to accentuate differences between Mormon and non-Mormon respondents. Non-Mormons with Mormon neighbors (in the Intermountain sample) are more liberal (e.g., in coital experience) than are other non-Mormons (Midwestern sample). Although my samples are small, and some of the differences found are not large, the consistency of pattern is remarkable. It holds across the board for men and women alike.

If this suggested relationship proves to be valid, the question is “Why.” Is selection operating through the conversion process, whereby more conservative non-Mormons in Mormon communities are more likely to be converted to Mormonism, leaving the remainder disproportionately weighted with liberal elements? Or does living among Mormons cause a counter reaction which makes some non-Mormons more liberal as an offset against the conservatism of the Church? Although I suspect that both processes are at work, the problem clearly needs further study.

Premarital coitus, of course, exposes participants to the hazards of premarital pregnancy; and since my Intermountain (Mormon dominated) samples were found to be low on the former, they might be expected to be disproportionately low on the latter as well. This is precisely what was found.⁶

Official government statistics regularly picture counties and states containing high proportions of Mormons as having below average illegitimacy rates. For example, one comparison drawing upon these sources reported the illegitimacy rate for Utah County, Utah, as being only about one-third of what it was for Tippecanoe County, Indiana.⁷

Illegitimacy refers to cases in which both conception and birth occur outside of marriage, while premarital pregnancy is used to designate cases in which the wedding takes place *after* the child is conceived, but *before* it is born. My research on child spacing has focused almost entirely upon the latter. The method (record linkage) has been to match marriage and birth records and then to calculate the interval separating marriages from the birth of the couple's first child. Where this interval is found to be abnormally short—say six months or less—one can infer premarital conception. Record linkage is more reliable than either the questionnaire or the interview for gathering sensitive data like this because the subjects cannot refuse to answer nor can they falsify answers. The researcher simply makes his calculations from the recorded sources.

My record linkage studies have shown substantially lower premarital pregnancy rates for the Mormon dominated (Utah and Salt Lake Counties, Utah) as compared with the non-Mormon samples (Tippecanoe County, Indiana). Percentage of first marital births within the first six months of marriage, for example, was only 3.4 in the first instance, but 9.4 in the latter; and percentages within the first nine months of marriage were 15.7 and 24.5 respectively. While the nine-month-interval comparison obviously mixes prematurity and premarital pregnancy, the six-month-interval comparison may be presumed to reflect premarital pregnancy alone.⁸

There is also a difference between Mormon and non-Mormon timing patterns in *postmarital* conception. Not only is Mormon culture low on premarital conception, it is high on *early* postmarital conception. In the Utah sample, for example, 25.2 percent of all first marital births occurred during the tenth through twelfth months of marriage (conception in the first three months) as compared with only 17.3 percent in the Indiana sample. The data also show proportionately more Utah than Indiana first births occurring during the second year of marriage, and fewer during all subsequent years. Thus, the Mormon pattern is one of reduced premarital conception along with an expanded emphasis upon conception occurring relatively soon after the wedding.

But Value-Behavior Discrepancy is Higher

Through socialization, society's norms become internalized within the personalities of its members—showing up as private attitudes and value positions. The public attitude has its private counterpart, and vice versa; social norms and personal values are two different sides of the same coin. The socialization process is seldom complete, however, and there always are unique or idiosyncratic aspects of the personality. Although the correlation may never be perfect, norm violation usually equates with violation of personal standards.

I first used the phrase “value-behavior discrepancy” with my 1958 data to describe differences between culturally held sex norms, on the one hand, and actual sexual behavior on the other. More Danish respondents, for example, approved premarital coitus than had actually experienced it, while the reverse held for the two American samples. Midwestern respondents showed only a slight excess of experience over approval, but the Intermountain (largely Mormon) picture showed great discrepancy—especially with women.⁹

By 1968 both American samples had moved toward a reduction in value-behavior discrepancy (due to a greater liberalization of attitudes than of behavior), but the position of each relative to the other remained essentially the same. It will be noted in Table 2 that the traditional restrictive standard (first column) is substantially higher in the largely Mormon sample as compared with the non-Mormon sample (a fact made doubly clear from the Intermountain with Midwest I comparisons of Table 1). But it also will be noted here that the *discrepancy categories* put Midwest high on approval-exceeding-experience while Intermountain is high on experience-exceeding-approval. (Although both of these patterns reveal a lack of congruence between values and behavior, it is the second that is of most concern, since this implies a breakdown of control and may be presumed to result in an anguish of conscience.)

Table 2. Premarital Coitus Approval-Experience Combinations
(Percentages are from never-married respondents, 1968)¹⁰

	Value-Behavior Congruence		Value-Behavior Discrepancy	
	Disapproval and no experience	Approval and experience	Approval but no experience	Disapproval but experience
Intermountain				
Men (total)	50.0	28.2	14.1	7.6
Dating without commitment	50.8	26.2	14.8	8.1
Going steady or engaged	48.4	32.2	12.9	6.5
Women (total)	65.9	18.7	3.3	12.1
Dating without commitment	76.1	15.2	4.3	4.3
Going steady or engaged	55.6	22.2	2.2	20.0
Midwest				
Men (total)	37.7	39.2	16.2	6.9
Dating without commitment	37.1	41.2	16.4	5.2
Going steady or engaged	38.3	37.4	15.9	8.4
Women (total)	57.3	24.8	10.6	7.3
Dating without commitment	71.1	10.5	14.5	3.9
Going steady or engaged	50.0	32.3	8.5	9.2

In each of the comparisons more of the Intermountain than Midwestern respondents violated their own standards when they engaged in coitus without being married. This underlines the greater value-behavior discrepancy in the Mormon culture. (Notice, however, that Intermountain respondents were more likely to have had coital experience if they approved it than were the Midwesterners.)

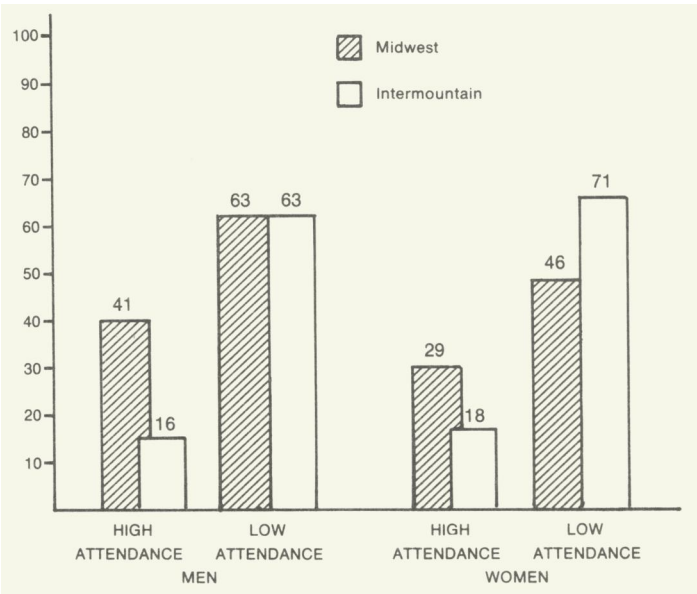
Similarly, more women than men and more of the committed (e.g., engaged) than uncommitted showed this type of discrepancy—in both cultures. Since women generally are more conservative in sexual matters than men, it is understandable that proportionately more of them might feel pressured into coitus and then be disapproving about what they had done.

The fact that it is the committed who most frequently violate their own standards suggests that being committed either makes one more conservative or makes one more vulnerable to sexual temptation. It may be that both of these tendencies are in operation. Those going steady or engaged seem to be thrown off guard to some extent by virtue of their commitments to each other; at the same time they appear to be taking their values more seriously and become more concerned when they step over the boundaries.

The problem of value-behavior discrepancy (of the experience-exceeding-approval variety) is clearly greatest with women and, most especially, with the Intermountain women who are either going steady or engaged. Perhaps a new look should be taken at the kinds of pressures the Mormon woman finds herself under when she commits herself to love.

Thus far it has been noted that Mormon culture is high on sexual conservatism and low on sexual deviancy, while at the same time showing above average value-behavior discrepancy. Perhaps it is not just denominational affiliation that makes the difference, but quality or intensity of devotion as well. Figure 3 compares premarital coital experience with frequency of Church attendance.¹¹

FIGURE 3



It can be seen that premarital coital experience is substantially greater among those who attend church infrequently. This is true of both men and women, and within both the Intermountain and Midwestern cultures. The effect of religious activity, however, was found to be greater for Intermountain than Midwestern respondents. It would appear that for *active* members, the Mormon faith is more influential than most other faiths in limiting premarital sexual activity; inactive Mormons, however, are no more restrained than non-Mormons.

And Negative Accompaniments are Greater

Mormon sex norms are among the strictest in the world, sometimes even placing unchastity next to murder. Not unexpectedly, then, the Intermountain respondents who had engaged in premarital coitus more often reported unpleasant feelings following their first experience.¹² They also reported more frequently that the first experience was either forced or was engaged in from a feeling of obligation.¹³ (Characteristically these percentages were higher for women in both categories.) The sexually experienced Intermountain respondents also were more likely to have been without contraception.¹⁴

I also found that sexually experienced Intermountain respondents were more likely to have been drinking before their first premarital experience than were the Midwesterners.¹⁵ Has the heavy emphasis the Church places on the Word of Wisdom led some to equate it with the chastity code? Perhaps having "fallen" in one direction, a young person finds it easier to "fall" in another. Or perhaps the Intermountain group was less able to control the effects of alcohol.

It is a well-recognized phenomenon that strict controls often lead to rebellion on the part of some, and to excesses among many who do break loose. Chafing under restraints they seek freedom; unaccustomed to freedom, they are not prepared to cope with it. Condemned for small or first-time offenses, they think, "Having the name, I may as well play the game."¹⁶

To measure sexual promiscuity, I compared the percentages of those who had extended their premarital contacts to more than one partner. The percentage is generally higher for Intermountain respondents than for Midwesterners (see Figure 5 below), but I suggest that this be viewed with caution because it did not hold for men in 1958, and because some other measures seem to contradict it.¹⁷

My record linkage data show that premaritally pregnant couples in Utah, more than in Indiana, tend to hurry up the wedding and subsequently are divorced. Estimated dates of conception can be determined by subtracting the normal gestation period (266 days) from the first child's birth date. Both of my American samples—in contrast to the Danish group, which showed virtually no hurried weddings—gave evidence of having stepped up the wedding dates after coitus. Among the Midwesterners, the tendency was to get married as soon as possible after pregnancy had been diagnosed (about two months after conception); whereas with the Intermountain group there was also the tendency to hurry into marriage after coitus without waiting for pregnancy. I speculate that Mormon couples with their strict sex codes are more sensitive to religious and social pressures. Guilt and fear may compel the offenders into marriage once the law of chastity has been broken.¹⁸

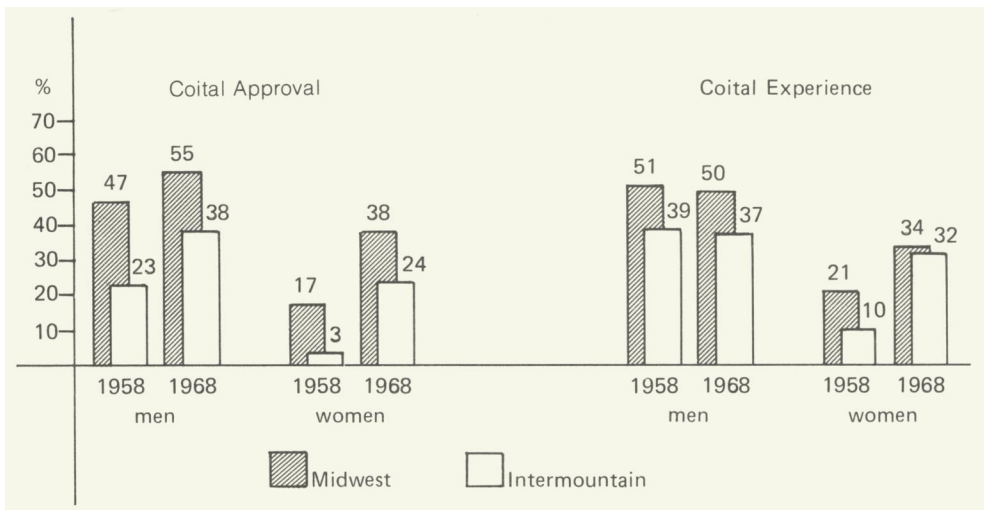
I then found higher divorce rates among premarital conceivers in each of the three cultures. Divorce rate differentials between pre- and post-marital conceivers were almost insignificant in the Danish culture; somewhat higher in the Midwestern culture; and highest of all in the Intermountain culture—evidence that in the Mormon setting premarital pregnancy is highly associated with divorce.¹⁹ It may be that a larger proportion of ill-prepared Mormon couples are getting married just because they are pregnant, but it may also be true that Mormon culture puts offenders under greater strain.²⁰

Thus, while restrictive sex norms do put a damper on disapproved behavior, they may also be causing some young people who have already entered forbidden territory to rebound in an unintended direction. Norms that paint life either black or white provide little to guide or to stabilize the offender.²¹

Changes, 1958–1968

From a mass of data, I have selected four items to illustrate changes over a ten year period, 1958–1968.²² Figure 4 pictures approval and experience trends.

FIGURE 4



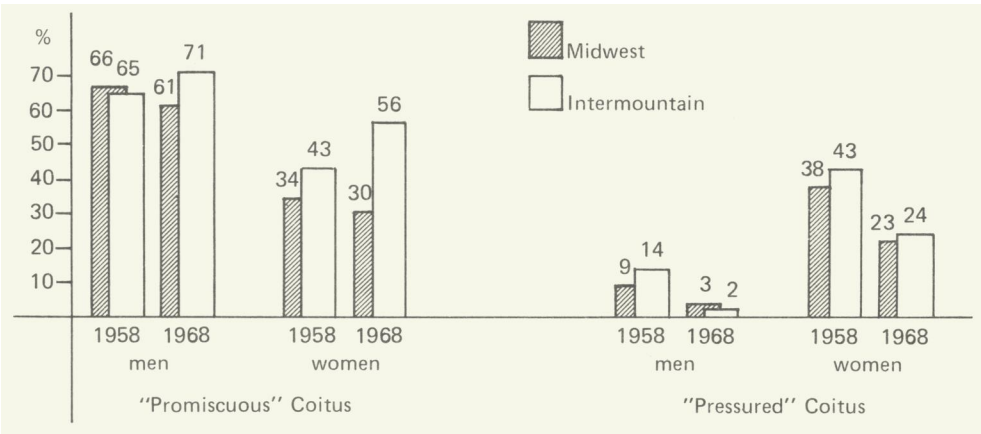
These trends show that the movement was toward more acceptance and greater sexual activity, especially among the women students. Although the women were still somewhat more conservative, the patterns for men and women were converging.²³ Intermountain college men had liberalized their attitudes to a greater extent than Midwestern men, while attitudes of women remained in approximately the same relationship. Although Intermountain women became more liberal in their actual experience than did Midwestern women, the men's percentages remained static. It would seem, then, that Intermountain sexual values and practices were becoming secularized more rapidly than in the non-Mormon environment, thereby blurring the distinctions between them.²⁴

While in 1958 more respondents from both cultures experienced than approved premarital coitus, by 1968 this picture had reversed. The exception was Intermountain women students. Their values and behavior both liberalized as much or more than the others, but these changes paralleled each other, so

that the relationship between them remained the same. This is the group that seemed out of character by having lower than expected percentages for those who had progressed only to petting, along with a higher than expected coital experience percentage. This is the only group to retain a clear discrepancy between experience and expressed values.

Except for the Intermountain women, then, the responses revealed a greater balance between attitude and behavior in 1968 than in 1958. Traditional moralists are apt to see this trend as an unfortunate lifting of deterrents to sex; mental hygienists may welcome it for its guilt-reducing effects.

FIGURE 5



As Figure 5 shows, the trend between 1958 and 1968 has been for sexual promiscuity (pre-marital sexual experience with more than one partner) to decrease somewhat for Midwestern respondents, but to increase for Intermountain men and women, especially the latter. Though these are percentages of those with some pre-marital coital experience (rather than all respondents), when one recalls that total pre-marital coital experience has also increased, it is apparent that there has been a substantial increase in total promiscuity. These developments suggest the need for further study—and corrective guidelines.

The trend over the decade was toward a decrease in pressured coitus (i.e., either forced, or induced by a feeling of obligation) for both men and women, and within both the Intermountain and Midwestern cultures (also Figure 5). This decrease was greater for women than men (an "intersex convergence") and greater for Intermountain than Midwestern respondents (a "cross-cultural convergence"). I definitely think that this trend derives from the reduction in the value-behavior discrepancy; it may therefore lessen the guilt traditionally associated with premarital sex.²⁵

Unfinished Business

My data have revealed conditions that should be a source of both satisfaction and concern for Latter-day Saints. They show Mormons to be considerably more conservative than non-Mormons: fewer of them accept open pornography, fewer of them like the idea of marrying a non-virgin,²⁶ fewer approve either petting or coitus before marriage, fewer actually engage in premarital coitus or become pregnant. These values line up with gospel teachings, and they demonstrate that the Church controls are reasonably effective.

There are sexual problems within Mormon culture, however, which need further attention. Some of these are shared with the general culture, but others are unique, in intensity if not in kind. Although Mormon rates are lower, it might be argued that the one-fourth of students with premarital coital experience and the small percentage who are premaritally pregnant still represent too high a number.

Even more disconcerting are other problems. My data suggest that Mormons are somewhat more promiscuous when they *do* have premarital coitus, that they may be expected to step up the wedding day following coitus, and are more divorce-prone than others in cases involving premarital pregnancy. They are also less likely to use contraception during their first experience, more likely to have felt "forced," and are more likely to suffer unpleasant feelings afterward.²⁷

Mormons more than others who engage in premarital sex are violating their personal standards and those of the Church. The undesirable side effects accompanying these violations appear to be greater than among non-Mormons. It is important to ask whether there is some way to maintain the Church's high standards, yet minimize the unwanted effects of a rigid sex code. Society can either control behavior to fit standards, or adjust standards to fit behavior. I prefer a combination of the two—reinforcing as many positive supports of the chastity norm as feasible while acknowledging that there will always be an irreducible minimum of deviance. I, therefore, favor a continuous reexamination of the framework, not by lowering standards, but by making procedural adjustments to keep standards meaningful and effective.

Our young people are too important to the Church, and marriage too important an institution, to allow a disproportionate number of the youth to make hasty decisions because in a weak moment they "went all the way." This is not to minimize the gravity of sexual indiscretions; rather, it is meant to emphasize the importance of marriage. It must not be entered into out of guilt or simple passion. Even when there is premarital pregnancy, marriage may not be the most promising alternative. Certainly coitus without pregnancy or even sexual passion without coitus do not justify hasty marriages. When young Mormons marry hastily, they too often pay the heavy price of failure in their marriages.²⁸

I believe that young Mormons can be helped to understand their own sexual nature and its relationship to the Gospel plan. Instructions and specific guidelines, rather than frightening or vague exhortations, can foster positive attitudes, meaningful social relationships, and effective self-control. Sex can be incorporated into one's life and can be given appropriate expression while being held in check. Standards are meant to be kept, but the buttresses of fear and guilt can be built too high and too wide, trapping young people between

a sensuous society on the one hand, and a judgmental, inflexible sex code on the other. The Gospel can and should give meaning to the decisions a young person faces while at the same time allowing the healing catharsis of repentance.

NOTES

¹For the most part the study was based on questionnaires administered in sociology classes and other social science classes, for which response rates were very high. Completed sample size for each culture, in the order listed (men, women) are as follows: 134, 61; 206, 250; 260, 120; 104, 175; 245, 238; 291, 12; 82, 145; 115, 105 (Mormons included); 106, 127—a total of 2776 respondents.

²Although the majority of the Intermountain sample was Latter-day Saint (Mormon) some 32 men and 15 women did list another church, and in addition 14 men and 4 women failed to specify religion. When categories for the Mormon subgroup were large enough to compare with the Midwestern respondents, this has been done; otherwise, as indicated in the text, all comparisons are based on the entire Intermountain response.

The interested reader may turn to some of the references listed in the bibliography for further amplification, including discussions of research limitations.

³See reference 23, Chapter 2, of the bibliography listed below for further discussion.

⁴Respondents were asked to indicate which of necking, petting, and coitus represented the most advanced stage of their own premarital experience. For Figure 2, percentages in all three categories have been added to produce the necking percentages, and percentages in the last two categories have been added to produce the petting percentages—on the assumption that each advanced intimacy level implies the lower-level intimacies as preliminaries. Although there may be exceptions which, strictly speaking, would partially invalidate this assumption (experience with a prostitute, for example) it seems generally true and therefore appropriate for the cross-sex and cross-cultural comparisons as presented.

⁵Though relatively fewer Mormons engage in petting than their Midwestern counterparts, it is worth noting that more Mormons reported the final stage of their premarital intimacy to be petting (49.3% for men, 38.1% for women) than either necking (27.5%, 36.9%, respectively) or coitus (23.2%, 25.0%). The contrasting pattern is that of Scandinavia, where coital rates are high and necking, petting, and coitus are seen as belonging together as a single “package.” Although the merits and disadvantages of these two systems might be debated, at least we can recognize that by drawing a sharp line separating coitus from the preliminary intimacies that lead up to it, we perhaps may be overstressing the importance of *technical* chastity while inviting the potential frustrations and pressures of petting as the “terminal” activity. (cf. reference 24:22–24 below).

⁶See references 1, 3, 9, 11, 14, 16, and 20 in bibliography below.

⁷Reference 11:33 below.

⁸Reference 16:121 below.

⁹Reference 28:70–72 below.

¹⁰See references 28, 29:621–624 below. Table 2 considers only the never-married portions of the samples (the married, widowed, and divorced excluded). Numbers of respondents in this category are, from top to bottom: 92, 61, 31; 91, 46, 45; 204, 97, 107; 218, 76, 142.

Separate calculations for percentages of the *sexually experienced* (combined second and fourth columns) who disapproved such experience (fourth column) revealed the following, for males and females respectively: Midwest 14.9, 22.9; Intermountain 21.2, 39.3.

¹¹Each of the samples divided about equally between those whose church attendance over the past year was less than once a month, and those who attended once a month or more. For present purposes, I have labeled the first category “low attendance” and the second “high attendance” (meaning high only in a relative sense). In my Intermountain sample 55.7 percent of the males and 72.5 percent of the females turned out to be high attenders (as defined), compared with 57.3 percent and 67.8 percent respectively in my Midwestern sample.

My record linkage data give added support to the claim that religious conformity and sex-norm conformity go together. They show significantly lower premarital pregnancy percentages for couples married by a religious ceremony, in contrast to a civil ceremony, regardless of the denomination or the culture studied; and there is almost zero premarital pregnancy in the temple-marrying LDS group (11:34–35; 26:29–31).

Kinsey found that religion is the “most important factor in restricting premarital activity in the United States.” He reported little difference among the denominations, but considerable difference between the religiously active or devout on the one hand and those less active or devout on the other. The former showed up with substantially lower rates on all of the socially disapproved forms of sexual behavior that Kinsey studied. See Alfred C. Kinsey, *et. al.*, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1953), pp. 324, 686–687 and *passim*.

¹²The eight items constituting the negative-feelings index are as follows: guilt, remorse, disgust, tenseness, fear of religious punishment, fear of others knowing, fear of pregnancy, and fear of disease. Combined percentages from 1968 data for Intermountain and Midwestern respondents respectively are men, 56.4 and 40.7; women, 76.0 and 67.3.

¹³Data presented in Figure 5.

¹⁴

	Intermountain sample		Midwestern sample	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1958 Data				
No contraception	73.0	100.0	53.2	55.2
1968 Data				
No contraception	69.0	65.6	56.9	56.3

¹⁵

	Intermountain sample		Midwestern sample	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
1958 Data				
Drinking	32.4	0.0	22.4	24.1
1968 Data				
Drinking	34.2	30.0	28.3	13.6

¹⁶Strauss and Bacon reported that the Mormon college students of their samples had the lowest incidence of drinking, compared with students from other church groups, but that, *of the drinkers*, the Mormons had a disproportionately high rate of alcoholism. This is essentially the same relationship reported for premarital sex. See Robert Strauss and Sheldon D. Bacon, *Drinking in College* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953).

¹⁷See reference 29:624–625 below.

¹⁸See 11:35–36; 14:275–278; 18:64–66 below.

¹⁹Percentage differences between divorce rates of premarital and postmarital conceivers—for samples adjusted to control for marriage duration—turned out to be 8.7 for the Danish, 116.7 for the Midwestern, and 224.5 for the Intermountain. (See 16:126 below).

²⁰See 14:276–278, 16:119–129 below.

²¹Cf. 13:136–137.

²²Cf. 23, 29.

²³Although I have data no more recent than 1968 for the Intermountain sample, Leonor B. Johnson repeated the study in the same Midwestern university during the 1972–73 school year (“Afro-American Premarital Sexual Attitudes and Behavior: A Comparison with Midwestern and Scandinavian Whites.” Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1974). She reported coital experience percentages of 56 and 50 for Midwestern males and females, respectively. When these are seen alongside the corresponding percentages of 50 and 34 for 1968, and 51 and 21 for 1958 (Figure 4), they show a recent upward trend for males. They seem to demonstrate that female liberalization continues and that the two sexes continue to converge. My hunch is that this is also true of Mormon culture.

²⁴There is some evidence to the contrary, however. Kenneth L. Cannon and I (in an unfinished study comparing 1935 with 1973 ethical and religious norms among Mormon youth) are finding shifts toward greater orthodoxy—the opposite of secularization. Wilford Smith, elsewhere in this issue, reports a movement toward greater chastity for *frequent church attending Mormons*. But his non-Mormons and infrequent-attending Mormons reflect an opposite trend. It seems reasonable to assume that many of the patterns revealed by my own data apply only (or largely) to the

religiously inactive, and that the remainder may be moving away from secular norms toward religious conformity. Future research must take this into account.

²⁵My data show percentages feeling "guilt or remorse" following first premarital coitus to have decreased between 1958 and 1968 in every category: from 29.7 to 7.1 for Intermountain males, from 28.6 to 9.1 for Intermountain females, from 12.1 to 6.6 for Midwestern males, and from 31.0 to 11.1 for Midwestern females.

²⁶Percentages of the 1968 samples opposing the censorship of pornography were 49.3 and 52.3 (for men and women respectively) in the Mormon subgroup of the Intermountain sample, as compared with 71.0 and 58.6 in the Midwest sample. For these same categories, percentages accepting the non-virginity of a marriage partner were 14.5 and 20.0, compared with 24.6 and 43.8.

²⁷Certain of these problem areas have been rather clearly delineated by the data, while others have received only tenuous support. But even as hypotheses requiring further testing—which is all I intend them to be at this stage of research—they can provide valuable clues for understanding the forces affecting sexual patterns within Mormon culture.

²⁸Cf. 16, 19, 26 below. Utah is near the top in the nation in percentage of teenage marriages. It is also known that more teenagers become premaritally pregnant than do older couples, and that disproportionate numbers of both teenage marriages and premaritally pregnant marriages end in divorce.

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There be three things which are too wonderful for me,
yea, four which I know not: the way of an eagle in the air;
the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the
midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.

Proverbs 30:18–19 (Solomon speaking)

MORMON SEX STANDARDS ON COLLEGE COMPUSES, OR DEAL US OUT OF THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION!

WILFORD E. SMITH

To test the assumption that sexual behavior is socially rather than biologically controlled, and to see if Mormon emphasis on avoiding sexual activity out of wedlock has been effective, I have, on three occasions over a twenty-two year period (1950, 1961, and 1972), surveyed several thousand college students (8,584 total respondents). I asked the students who were enrolled in sociology classes at five large universities and two small colleges in the northwestern part of the United States, about their coitus outside marriage, heavy petting, masturbation, and homosexual experiences. I also asked them to judge the morality and sinfulness of their conduct.

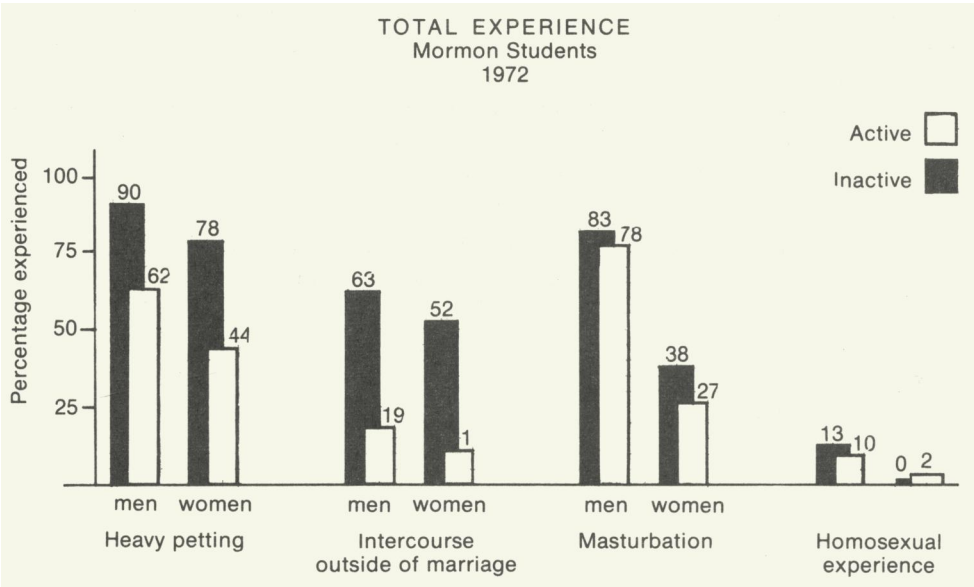
It was expected that the Mormons in the group would reflect decades of Church emphasis on chastity by reporting less involvement in forbidden sexual activities and that the level of reported abstinence would be positively related to reported level of church activity. It is not surprising that the present research verifies both of these expectations. As I have reported elsewhere, although Mormons responded differently from other students, the response of Mormons in a large church university did not differ significantly from response of Mormons in state universities when age and church attendance were held constant.¹

Admittedly church attendance is not the strongest indicator of commitment to religious beliefs and standards, but it does appear to be one reasonably good index. Infrequent church attenders (the "inactive") were defined as those who said they attended church rarely or never. All others were classed as frequent attenders ("active") including those who said they attended "occasionally." Dramatic differences would probably be seen if only regular attenders were compared to those who attended rarely or never.

In the latest survey (1972) Mormon students who attended church frequently show a remarkable lack of sexual experience.

Wilford E. Smith is Professor of Sociology at Brigham Young University and secretary-treasurer of the Utah Sociological Society and the Utah Conference of AAUP. He has recently retired as LDS chaplain in the USAR after 32 years.

FIGURE 1



It is clear that reported participation in heterosexual petting and intercourse is closely related to church attendance, while masturbation and homosexual activity do not seem to be influenced as much by church activity. It is useful to see how these levels of sexual behavior have changed over time and to compare them with non-Mormon students. The pattern of total sexual activity is very similar to that of *present* activity, so only the latter figures will be reported.

In Table I, percentages of respondents who said that in their present conduct they did not engage in heavy petting are shown to differ greatly by both church affiliation and church attendance. Mormons of both sexes who reported frequent church attendance in 1950 were nearly twice as likely as those who were inactive to report no heavy petting, and this difference became much greater in 1961 and again in 1972. Note that greater abstinence was reported for each succeeding decade by the active Mormons, while the inactive moved toward greater indulgence, just as did all the non-Mormons (excepting the frequently attending men). By 1972 active Mormon respondents were nearly twice as likely to report abstinence as were non-Mormon church attenders. Interestingly, inactive Mormons also reported less participation in sexual activities than non-Mormons who didn't attend Church.

Judgments of the immorality of heavy petting became more liberal over time for all respondents except the active Mormons, who became stricter. The category "Do think it immoral" included only students who declared that non-marital petting was definitely immoral in and of itself regardless of extenuating

circumstances. Many who generally opposed petting would not oppose it this strongly. In 1972 only 2.6 per cent of the active Mormon women, but 24.8 per cent of the church-attending non-Mormon women, said it was definitely *not* immoral. For infrequent attenders, the percentages were 13.3 vs. 42.1. For men the percentages were similar but more liberal.

Clearly, something in Mormon culture seems to set active Mormons apart from others. It seems logical to conclude that Church teachings which reject heavy heterosexual petting account for the difference.

TABLE I
Percent Reporting No Present Participation In Heavy Petting
and Judging It To Be Immoral

		MORMONS		NON-MORMONS	
		Frequent Church Attenders	Infrequent Church Attenders	Frequent Church Attenders	Infrequent Church Attenders
<i>Do Not Now Participate</i>					
MALES	1950	59.8	34.5	37.3	31.5
	1961	66.7	24.5	33.5	23.4
	1972	77.4	31.4	44.1	23.6
FEMALES	1950	70.1	47.5	62.9	50.9
	1961	77.6	34.4	57.4	58.7
	1972	82.6	35.6	42.8	26.8
<i>Do Think It Immoral</i>					
MALES	1950	49.4	32.5	42.2	22.7
	1961	47.6	41.1	34.6	24.9
	1972	51.1	16.9	21.9	6.1
FEMALES	1950	49.5	32.5	43.9	25.1
	1961	46.5	31.4	48.6	41.0
	1972	56.0	26.7	13.5	7.5

The power of church influence is also shown in Table II, in which strong LDS opposition to non-marital coitus is reflected in trends toward higher chastity among active Mormons of both sexes; Mormons of both sexes who reported infrequent church attendance reported increasing heterosexual activity right along with the non-Mormons, especially in 1972.

Even so, the decline in chastity among non-Mormons was much smaller among frequent church attenders than among infrequent church attenders, the modal response for frequent attenders still being well on the side of chastity in 1972. This was not true for the infrequent attenders, however. By 1972 nearly two-thirds of the men and over half of the women indicated they were participating in premarital sex.

Judgments of the morality of coitus out of wedlock followed a pattern similar to reported levels of participation, the 1972 response being far more liberal for all but the active Mormons of both sexes.

The fact that 48 per cent of *all* non-Mormon women in 1972 (not shown in Table II) said they definitely did *not* consider coitus outside marriage to be immoral in and of itself is indicative of current trends and accentuates the Mormon difference; only 2.3 per cent of *all* Mormon women surveyed in 1972 said that extramarital coitus was definitely *not* immoral. Only 7.1 per cent of all Mormon men in 1972, compared to 61.3 per cent of all non-Mormon men, said that coitus outside of marriage was definitely *not* immoral in and of itself.

TABLE II
Percent Reporting No Present Participation In Coitus Out of Wedlock
and Judging It To Be Immoral

		MORMONS		NON-MORMONS	
		Frequent Church Attenders	Infrequent Church Attenders	Frequent Church Attenders	Infrequent Church Attenders
<i>Do Not Now Participate</i>					
MALES	1950	91.8	62.5	66.6	55.4
	1961	94.5	62.3	74.2	60.6
	1972	96.2	52.1	63.0	36.8
FEMALES	1950	95.6	85.0	90.4	87.8
	1961	96.7	78.8	93.9	87.1
	1972	97.0	62.2	70.8	48.8
<i>Do Think It Immoral</i>					
MALES	1950	66.8	58.0	64.3	37.8
	1961	57.0	64.3	61.7	51.2
	1972	59.2	32.4	31.4	9.9
FEMALES	1950	57.1	60.0	67.8	49.1
	1961	57.5	48.6	72.7	64.9
	1972	62.7	35.6	32.7	13.5

Table III shows differences in reported masturbation, and follows a pattern similar to the responses on heavy petting and coitus, although differences by sex are much greater in this case. The great difference between male and female response could suggest that masturbation is predominantly a biological phenomenon, but the great difference in Mormon response by church attendance and the great increase in non-Mormon female indulgence in 1972 indicate that biological factors alone do not explain their behavior. Interestingly, all re-

TABLE III
Percent Reporting No Present Participation In Masturbation and
Judging It To Be Immoral

		MORMONS		NON-MORMONS	
		Frequent Church Attenders	Infrequent Church Attenders	Frequent Church Attenders	Infrequent Church Attenders
<i>Do Not Now Participate</i>					
MALES	1950	34.7	29.3	31.9	32.4
	1961	50.3	29.1	34.4	36.2
	1972	65.1	28.6	32.2	23.3
FEMALES	1950	86.9	67.5	82.8	75.3
	1961	89.2	87.5	87.8	82.5
	1972	92.0	66.0	70.0	56.2
<i>Do Think It Immoral</i>					
MALES	1950	39.1	30.8	36.8	24.2
	1961	42.0	42.9	37.2	25.4
	1972	48.4	16.9	19.0	8.7
FEMALES	1950	30.4	35.0	27.3	16.7
	1961	31.5	25.7	36.9	29.3
	1972	46.4	26.7	13.5	5.6

spondents but the Mormons of both sexes who reported frequent church attendance had become more liberal in their judgment of the morality of masturbation by 1972. The active Mormons had become more strict. Church influence is clearly reflected in these data.

TABLE IV
Percent Reporting No Present Participation In Homosexuality and
Judging It To Be Immoral

		MORMONS		NON-MORMONS	
		Frequent Church Attenders	Infrequent Church Attenders	Frequent Church Attenders	Infrequent Church Attenders
<i>Do Not Now Participate</i>					
MALES	1950	97.3	95.8	95.1	95.7
	1961	98.4	98.1	98.9	97.5
	1972	98.7	94.3	98.5	97.0
FEMALES	1950	97.8	92.5	99.4	99.5
	1961	99.4	96.9	99.1	100.0
	1972	99.7	100.0	98.5	98.5
<i>Do Think It Immoral</i>					
MALES	1950	61.0	54.4	60.5	52.0
	1961	52.4	52.5	67.6	67.2
	1972	60.3	49.3	44.5	26.7
FEMALES	1950	47.2	30.0	48.8	37.6
	1961	44.7	51.4	57.9	59.5
	1972	55.5	31.1	30.1	15.6

The consistency of response over time concerning homosexuality was remarkable (Table IV). Homosexual behavior was definitely not popular with these college students. Very few women and only 10 to 13 per cent of the men reported past experimentation (except in 1950 when the figure was nearly 20 per cent for non-Mormon men).

Differences between Mormons and non-Mormons were generally negligible, and frequency of church attendance seemed to make little difference except for Mormon men in 1972. Judgment of the morality of homosexuality, however, showed a strong trend toward liberality, except for active Mormons of both sexes who remained constant (men) or became steadily less permissive over time (women).

These findings indicate that homosexual behavior is not common among college students and that it is not increasing; nevertheless, the majority of students in 1972, except active Mormons, were not prepared to say that such behavior was definitely immoral regardless of circumstances. Apparently, growing tolerance of others' behavior need not lead to greater participation in it. For college students, homosexuality remains a highly deviant activity.²

In summary, these findings show a clear trend toward greater acceptance of non-marital sexual behavior by non-Mormon college students. But Mormon students who reported frequent church attendance revealed a trend opposite to the prevailing pattern. These findings add to an ever increasing fund of knowledge demonstrating the strength of cultural influence on human behavior.

It would be a mistake to discount religious influence upon any type of behavior that may be related to church doctrine or emphasis. Just as Mormons have been shown to be markedly different in matters of sexual chastity and the Word of Wisdom, so members of other churches have been found to be different in their own ways. The tendency of social scientists to give too little credit to the importance of religion in human behavior has been due, no doubt, to a failure to recognize the fact that *commitment* is necessary for religion to be a strongly meaningful variable. Too often nominal membership is used to classify a person into a religious category for which he does not really qualify.

The view that our culture is going through a sexual revolution finds strong support in the research reported here. The "Scarlet Letter" puritanical emphasis on chastity has given way to a level of sexual freedom and tolerance which would have been incomprehensible to the Puritans. In the face of this great change, the high degree of Mormon adherence to moral standards is remarkable. It will be interesting to see how far the sexual revolution will go, and how the Mormon emphasis on chastity will fare under its onslaught in the years to come.

I expect that the fruits of chastity will be seen to be so rewarding in terms of family happiness that others will be encouraged to follow the Mormon pattern, and that the benefits of keeping sexual behavior within the limits of marriage and family control will attract increasing numbers of people to the Church. Nevertheless, the struggle toward sexual freedom for which some have been striving since the days of puritanical suppression is not likely to end in the near future. Without the pressure of religious commitment and belief in eternal life to keep them in check, many no doubt would relish the new freedom and expand it even further. Fundamentalist churches will continue to see this as a great threat to the lasting happiness of mankind—happiness based on family harmony, fidelity, and enduring love.

¹Smith, Wilford E., "The Constancy of Mormon Chastity," in Glenn M. Vernon, ed., *Research on Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: The Association for the Study of Religion, Inc., 1974), pp. 624-641.

²Sagarin, Edward, "The Good Guys, The Bad Guys, and The Gay Guys." Survey Essay in *Contemporary Sociology*, 2 (January 1973), 3-13.

I lose my respect for a man who can make the mystery of sex the subject of a coarse jest, yet when you speak earnestly and seriously on the subject, is silent.

Henry David Thoreau

SHALL THE YOUTH OF ZION FALTER?

MORMON YOUTH AND SEX

A TWO-CITY COMPARISON

ARMAND L. MAUSS

This brief note summarizes findings from two surveys taken among Mormons during 1967–1969, one in Salt Lake City and one in “Coastal City,” northern California.¹ Among the questions asked was the following:

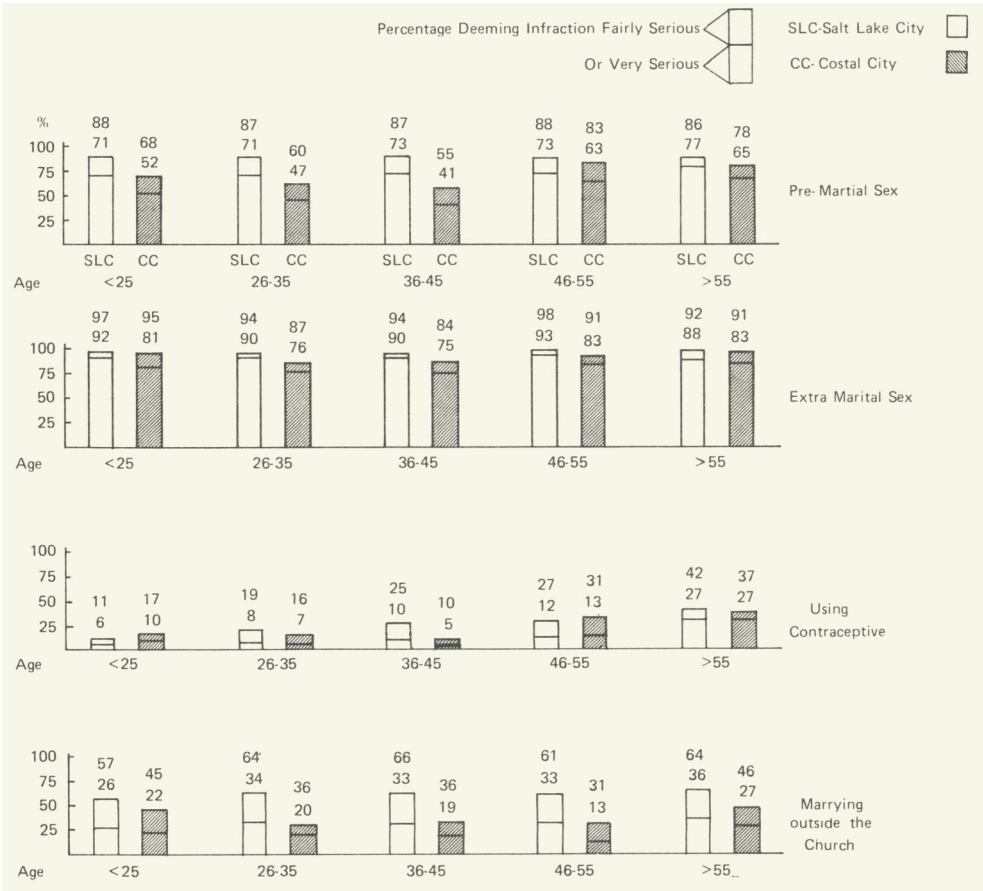
Most of us probably feel that failure to live up to the Lord’s commandments will have an adverse effect on our standing in His eyes, but that weakness in some commandments might be more serious than weakness in others. By circling the appropriate numbers below, please indicate how serious you believe each of the following to be.

Then followed a list of twenty-two “infractions” of various kinds, including items related to sexual conduct, the Word of Wisdom, Sabbath observance, and many other practices. For each item, the respondent could circle one of five numbers, from “very serious,” “fairly serious,” to “not very serious,” “scarcely matters at all,” and “can’t decide.” Four of the items related to sex and marriage: pre-marital sex, extra-marital sex, the use of contraceptives, and marrying outside of the Church.²

Figure 1 summarizes the responses from the two surveys:

Armand Mauss is Associate Professor of Sociology and Coordinator of the Religious Studies Program at Washington State University in Pullman, Washington. He is the author of *Social Problems as Social Movements*.

FIGURE 1

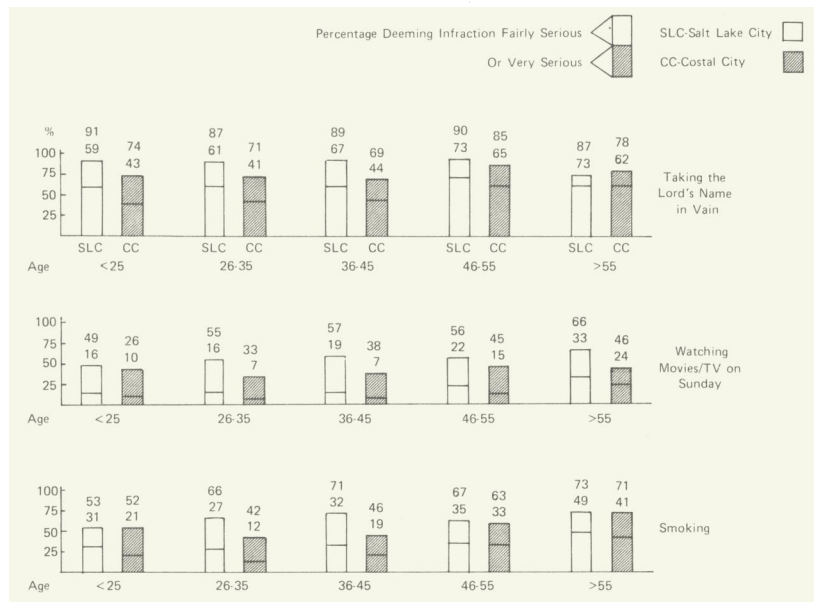


Among the four sex/marriage related items there is a noteworthy difference by age *only* for the belief about contraceptives. Those 25 years old or younger were less inclined to condemn contraceptives, particularly as compared to those over age 55. With the average total disapproval percentage for all ages on the contraception question being less than 30% in both the Salt Lake City and Coastal City surveys, it is difficult to conclude that even on this issue the younger people are running against a very clear consensus. For the other three items (pre-marital and extra-marital sex, and marrying outside the Church), the strong convergence of both youthful and older age groups seems to suggest indeed that “No!” The youth of Zion are not faltering.

It is striking to compare the responses in Salt Lake City where the Saints are considered the “establishment,” and the Coastal City, where they are a minority.³ Levels of disapproval are similar *only* for extra-marital sex (94% vs 89%). For the rest of the “infractions,” the Saints in the two cities are 20 percentage points or more apart. The “youth,” 25 years old or younger, for the two cities are actually somewhat more similar than are the two total samples.

For comparative purposes, some non-marriage/sex related items are included in Figure 2:

FIGURE 2



We find again that the young people compare “favorably” with the older age groups—if not matching them quite so closely as on the sex/marriage items. One does wonder at the priorities which rank swearing in about the same way as pre-marital sex, and close even to extra-marital sex!

I remain far more impressed by the *conforming* tendencies in our youth (at least at the verbal level) than by their “faltering” tendencies. I think I shall hereafter be singing my “No!” a tiny bit louder when we sing “Shall the Youth of Zion . . .?”

NOTES

¹ Approximately a thousand useable questionnaires comprise the Salt Lake City sample and nearly 300 the California sample. For more methodological detail see text and footnotes in my “Moderation in All Things: Political and Social Outlooks of Modern Urban Mormons,” *Dialogue* (Spring, 1972); and “Saints, Cities, and Secularism: Religious Attitudes and Behavior of Modern Urban Mormons,” *Dialogue* (Summer 1972).

² In the actual questionnaire, these were worded, respectively, as “having sex relations before marriage,” “having sex relations after marriage with someone other than spouse,” “using artificial birth control measures,” and “marrying someone who is not LDS.”

³ Much more caution is required in relying on (and interpreting) the data from “Coastal City,” because they are based on much smaller age sub-samples (none even as large as 80).

THE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: A POSTSCRIPT

Our three LDS sociologists—Harold T. Christensen, Wilford E. Smith, and Armand L. Mauss—have agreed to continue the dialogue begun in their articles.

Dialogue: Your studies have covered different facets of the same subject. Do you find your results to be in agreement?

Mauss: I see some interesting differences. In Wilford's studies, level of approval for various secular activities runs quite consistently ahead of levels of participation. In general, this is just the opposite of Harold's findings.

Smith: This difference, I think, is due to the phrasing of the questions. In my study, students were asked if they considered an act immoral regardless of the circumstances. My goal was to pin the students down to a specific and encompassing judgment. Some, however, would not be pinned down, and declined to judge an act in which they themselves did not participate.

Christensen: Wilford asked respondents if they thought behavior was "immoral," while I asked if they "approved" of it. Since disapproval may exist for reasons other than immorality—like fear of pregnancy—one would expect my "approval" percentages to be lower than his "moral" percentages. Wilford also reported on present participation, while I reported cumulative experience.

Mauss: The generalization still seems to be that Wilford's students are more likely to abstain than they are to disapprove, and that this tendency has increased recently. Might this not mean that the students simply have not had enough *opportunity* to indulge? Or, might they be less willing to admit misbehavior than to admit approval? Isn't it premature then to "deal us out of the sexual revolution?"

Christensen: When sexual attitudes are more liberal than behavior, it is usually because some respondents accept sex in the abstract, or later on—when they are older or closer to marriage—but not *now*. It is difficult to explain Wilford's findings. Maybe the more extensive strictures—like denying temple recommends, disfellowshipping and excommunicating—are controlling *behavior* more effectively than they are controlling *beliefs*.

Smith: The remarkable fact is that so many *are* willing to make all-inclusive condemnations of the acts in question.

Dialogue: Armand's data showed quite a difference between Mormon youth in Utah and those on the coast. Why is this?

Smith: The percentage of inactivity is probably higher away from Utah. I reached the conclusion in 1956, after interviewing several hundred families in Arizona, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake City, that Mormons who went to Church and were actively involved were the same—no matter where they lived.

Christensen: My subjective impression is that active Mormons outside of Utah are more—not less—orthodox and committed. I assumed this was because they are exposed to greater opposition and worldly influences which may serve to heighten commitment.

Mauss: Terms like “orthodox” and “committed” have to be defined in measurable terms. By measures such as reported belief, coastal Mormons are not less orthodox than those in Salt Lake City. Statistics on attendance, tithing, and home teaching suggest that they may even be more committed. The key is in what orthodoxy and commitment mean to different Mormons. It’s hard to generalize, but it does seem that coastal Mormons are more at ease with their commitment—though not complacent—more open to gentile friendships, more inclined to tolerate various kinds of non-conformity.

Dialogue: Is there any conflict between Harold’s claim that there seems to be a convergence between Mormon and non-Mormon attitudes and behavior, and Wilford’s finding that active Mormons are resisting the sexual revolution?

Christensen: I don’t believe there is any basic conflict between our findings on this point. The apparent discrepancy between our two studies may be accounted for by the proportions of active or inactive Mormons.

Dialogue: Why should the active Mormons be more successful now in withstanding the sexual revolution than in previous years?

Smith: Mormonism is becoming an ever stronger influence on its adherents. The Word of Wisdom is much more influential now than it was fifty years ago. It’s logical to expect other Church requirements to become more institutionalized. The moral revolution has made it easier for Mormons to be different—to develop their own ethnocentrism. In addition, the Church is becoming a more effective socializing agent—as in the youth programs—and it is becoming more conservative as its doctrines become more accepted.

Dialogue: How about future trends?

Mauss: My data certainly do not speak of “trends” unless we can argue—and I have—that Coastal City Saints may represent the “modal” Mormon of the future, at least in direction, if not in extent—if only because the modal Mormon of the next generation will not be living in the Mountain West.

If this is true, and if other factors remain constant, Mormons will gradually follow national trends toward greater permissiveness, but more slowly. If the policy of the Church hardens and becomes more punitive, we can expect an increase in excommunications to accompany the trend toward permissiveness, so that, *by definition* those remaining in the Church will comprise a less permissive population.

Christensen: It can surely be said that contemporary Mormonism is extremely vocal on the chastity theme, perhaps more so than at any other period in its history. As part of this new emphasis, excommunications for sexual reasons have been stepped up, and any open dealing with sexual issues—including such things as sex research, public sex education and even publications such as this special issue—have been subtly and not so subtly discouraged.

Mauss: I was interested in the comments toward the end of Harold's article about the apparent implications of Church policies on sex-related infractions, especially the evidence that the policies may have more of an alienating effect than a healing effect.

Christensen: I would have preferred a fuller discussion of these negative effects. They are relevant to the findings on both the chastity of active Mormons and the inactivity of the sexually experienced. And they must be studied carefully if we are to reduce the undesirable effects while still reinforcing chastity.

Mauss: There is surely something in our culture that overreacts to sexual misbehavior, or even intimations of it. One need only look at the relative apathy characterizing the official and modal Mormon reaction to murder and violence in the media, compared to the hard campaigning against pornography, prostitution and the like.

Of course, when asked, the good Mormon will say that it is better *not* to watch shoot-outs on the television, but he does little to keep his children from watching depictions of cold-blooded murder, presumably the cardinal sin. By contrast the sin "second only" to murder can scarcely be hinted at on the screen without bringing a condemnation. I find a paradox in that.

Christensen: I could not agree more. It is paradoxical that contemporary pronouncements seem to stress sexual sin more than the sins of violence.

Smith: When comparing the propensity of the Church to be more condemning of sexual deviation than of violence, I think that we must remember that these two differ greatly in risk. Sexual sin is so much more prevalent than child abuse, aggravated assault and murder—terrible as these things are. The Church is concerned about violence. Consider the stand on abortion. But it has to put the emphasis where it is most needed.

Dialogue: Many Mormons wonder why anyone would choose to study sex in the first place.

Smith: I began my studies because I wanted to test assumptions about "ethno-centric sub-cultural influences"—if you don't mind the jargon. Stories about the wayward children of bishops and other aberrant conduct among the "religious" intrigued me, and I wanted to know what the facts were. It was clear that sex was not a safe subject, but what subject is safe when emotional and moral judgements are involved? I also could see what my students were struggling with, and I thought I owed it to them to get them some of the facts of life!

Christensen: My point of view is that sex is a God-given aspect of life, and that the idea that “the glory of God is intelligence” applies as much to sexual matters as to other aspects of living and progressing. Intelligent and responsible behavior requires understanding. And understanding depends on inquiry and research—whether the issue is earning money, avoiding conflict, or living together in harmonious marriage.

Dialogue: What is the most important finding of your research?

Smith: The dramatic difference in both attitude and behavior between the active and inactive Mormon.

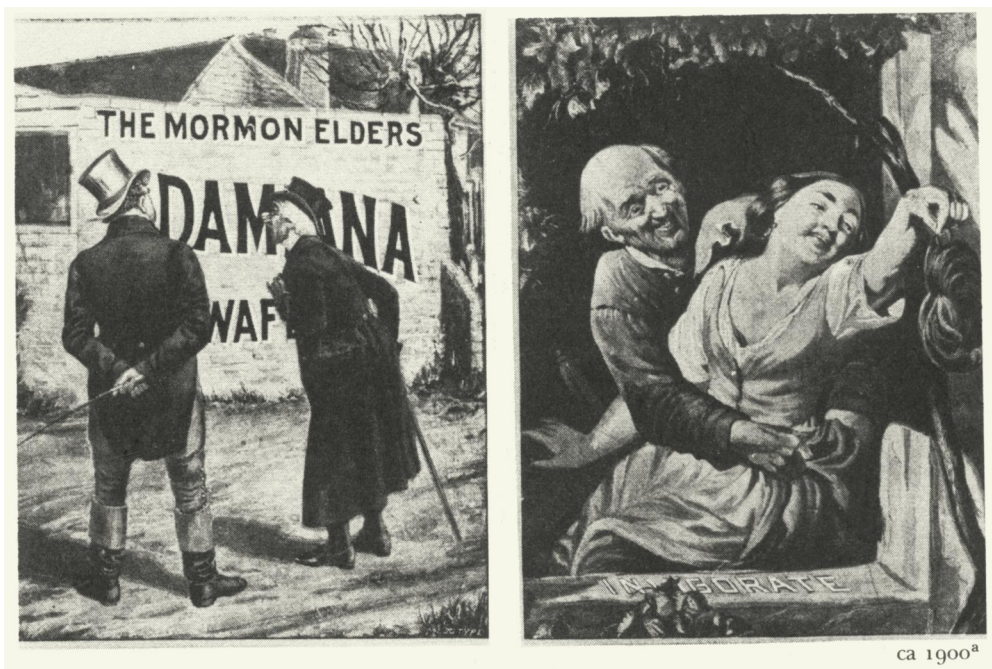
Christensen: Certainly that is one of the most important. And it has a happy ending. It points to a workable way out of the sexual dilemma. If chastity is the goal, stress religious values; if religious activity is the goal, strive for virtuous living.

Mauss: I think the studies also point up the important fact that punitive responses won’t serve our needs in the long run. We are going to have to get into the sex education business. The youth must be shown the positive outcomes of LDS values and standards. We must not be so wary of addressing this crucial subject. Ambivalence, we must remember, can be every bit as subversive of moral commitment as permissiveness, and far more conducive to pain, guilt and anxiety. If we really believe that sex is good, that it brings joy and happiness in the right context, we must start teaching unambiguously, with honesty and openness.

God is the Author of sexual or conjugal love, the same as He is of all other kinds of pure love. . . . God has ordained that pure and virtuous love should be incorporated with sexual love; that, by the combination of the two, permanent union in the marriage covenant may be formed, and the species be multiplied in righteousness.

Orson Pratt

The Seer, 1:154–5 (Oct. 1853)



Mormon Elders' Wafers:

Images of Mormon Virility in Patent Medicine Ads

LESTER E. BUSH, JR.

Some may be surprised to learn that the stereotypical image of the hyper-virile nineteenth century Mormon male had a special appeal to the “lost manhood” sector of a thriving American patent medicine industry. There was a time when men anxious about the dissipation resulting from an early indiscretion or fearful of a faltering masculinity could turn not just to such products as Glandol, Man Medicine, and Sir John Hampton’s Vital Restorative, but could also experience the rejuvenation of Mormon Elders’ Damiana Wafers, Brigham Young Tablets, and Mormon Bishop Pills.



There is something back of this

The Mormon Elders Damiana Wafers.

GOOD SELLER. FULL PRICE. NO KICKING.

Unique advertising matter on application,

Address,

F. B. CROUCH & CO.,


2653-2655 Broadway, New York.

1904-1905^b



THE MORMON ELDERS' DAMIANA WAFERS.

ca 1900^c



THE MORMON ELDER'S
Damiana Wafers.


The Most Powerful
INVIGORANT
*Ever Produced. Permanently
 Restores those Weakened
 by Early Indiscretions.
 Imparts Youthful Vigor.
 Restores Vitality,
 Strengthens and Invigorates the
 Brain & Nerves.
 A positive cure for Impotency
 and Nervous Debility.*
PROMPT, SAFE and SURE!
*\$1.00 per box, Six for \$5.00.
 Mailed to any address on receipt
 of Price. Send for circular.*
Sole Agent for United States.
F. B. CROUCH,
202 Grand St., New York.

FOR SALE BY THE JOBBING TRADE.


1884-1888^d

The Mormon Elders' line appears to have enjoyed the greatest success. Marketed by F. B. Crouch & Company of New York City, the Damiana Wafers were available in pink or white, and sold for \$1.00 to \$2.00. Their ads appeared in catalogues for two decades or more around the turn of the century. For those with other problems, there were also Mormon Elders' Attraction and Mormon Elders' Complexion, as well as a Fruit Laxative, and Sandalwood wafer.

The therapeutic claims for Mormon Bishop Pills which were available in red, white and blue, are typical. Little is known about this preparation, except that it attracted the passing attention of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in a 1906 article on quack medicines.


MORMON BISHOP PILLS

This Remedy has been in use for fifty years by the heads of the Mormon Church and their followers. . . . Many men suffer from the evil effects of self-abuse, over-indulgence, excesses in use of tobacco and liquors, anxiety and worry. These bring on one or more of the following diseases: Lost Manhood, Nervous Prostration, Nervous Debility, Dizziness, Headache, Indigestion, Loss of Will Power or Memory, Nocturnal Emissions, Pain in the Back, Loss of Semen, Impotency, Incapacity for Marriage, Sleeplessness, Spermatorrhea, Loss of Vital Fluids, Prematureness of Discharge, Varicocele, Atrophy, Hydrocele and Constipation. . . . If you suffer from any of these symptoms take Mormon Bishop Pills and be cured before it is too late. . . . Do not become discouraged, no matter if you have tried many of the so-called cures. Take Mormon Bishop Pills and cure is certain.



1906⁶

Brigham Young Tablets, the most recent of these three, were a product of the West Medicine Company of Denver, Colorado. They appeared in the late Twenties, the creation of one Amos C. West, whose "upstairs" clinic also specialized in a remedy for syphilis called "909." He was put out of business in 1931 by the U.S. Post Office Department for fraudulent use of the mails.

Alas, none of these products are presently available. For those who keenly feel the loss and would like to prepare a home batch, the ingredients of Brigham Young Tablets were mostly sugar, starch and talc, with green vitriol (ferrous sulphate), baking soda, a little zinc phosphide, and a trace of nux vomica.

CREDITS and CITATIONS

- a. Courtesy of the Bella C. Landauer Collection in the New-York Historical Society.
- b. 1904–1905 Catalogue of the Charles N. Crittenton Company
- c. Gerald Carson, *One for a Man, Two for a Horse* (Doubleday: Garden City, N.Y., 1961), p.33.

**Brigham Young
Tablets**

Greatest nerve and gland tonic on earth, for men only, \$2.00 per box, 3 for \$5.00. Mail orders filled in plain wrapper. Clinic is always open. Western Medical Clinic, 1513 Stout St., Denver.

1928–1931^f

Solus

ANONYMOUS

It was October general conference, and I was sitting in the Tabernacle with several friends, attending the priesthood session. The meeting had been especially good, and I was where I most wanted to be, surrounded by close friends, sitting in that sacred building listening to a prophet's voice. President Harold B. Lee spoke as he always did, seemingly off-the-cuff and from the heart, a speech which would become famous throughout the Church. The subject was marriage. Why are there those in the priesthood who are postponing this sacred obligation? Why do some, even among the active brethren, refuse to follow counsel? Such unmarried priesthood bearers are outside of God's house. My friends nudged me good-naturedly. It had become one of the rituals of our association. I wiped mock beads of sweat from my brow and said, "Ouch!"

Looking back on my childhood, I cannot remember how it felt not to be haunted by homosexuality. Not that I would ever have used the word! I was well into middle age before I would bring myself to say "homosexual" even in private prayers—which always concluded with a plea for help in "overcoming my problems."

When I was about six, a stranger had pulled his car up to where I was playing with some friends, and asked for help. He was going to buy groceries and needed someone to help carry them to the car. When I hesitated, he said my parents had told him to find me, so I reluctantly climbed in. What followed was a terrifying experience, one that I have spent a lifetime trying to block out. I was taken up to one of the canyons east of the city and homosexually assaulted. It was both frightening and painful. My own guilt was so heavy that I could never relate the experience to my parents. It has been a heavy burden to bear alone.

Maleness and sexuality became so terrifying to me that I began a long—and successful—flight from my own manhood. As a child I chose girls as playmates, but when adolescence arrived, I could no longer remain exclusively in their company, so I turned back to boys. I soon began "admiring from afar" the masculine qualities I couldn't find in myself.

My junior high school years were an unending nightmare. I was too much of a "sissy" to be accepted by the boys, and my own confusion about sex kept me an arm's length from girls. I took refuge in Church activity. Once a girl in my class asked me to a "preference dance." I bought a corsage, shined my shoes, and reluctantly started off on my first real date. After the dance we went to an

ancient apartment near the business district where all her friends were meeting for a party. After the lights went off, couples started groping and petting in the dark. After a few moments I fled in panic.

My high school years were anxiety-filled but tolerable. I dated infrequently—only enough to avoid suspicion—and I developed my first “crush” on another young man. He was dating the girl who lived across the street. During one whole summer I peered out of the window in a darkened room trying to see him across the street. My feelings of disgust and revulsion at my own actions were exceeded only by my compulsion to watch him. When he made the school basketball team, I went to every game, safely hiding in the anonymity of the crowd. I was always careful not to appear too interested in his scoring.

In college I usually dated only girls with whom I had established a platonic relationship, but once a friend in my priests’ quorum invited me to double date with him. We drove to the canyon and parked. He and his date kissed and petted in the front seat for what seemed an eternity while my date and I sat in the back seat trying to make small talk. I was miserable. Obviously more was expected of me than I was producing. It was a hellish night.

College was interrupted by a draft notice which raised unimaginable anxieties. How would I survive in a totally male environment? Could I mask my “problem?” What if I talked in my sleep? To my great relief, I managed quite well. After basic training I was called on a part-time mission and went out proselyting three nights a week. It got me out of the bawdiness of the barracks, and bunkmates always assumed that the suit and tie meant I was going off on a date. I said nothing to correct their misinterpretation. After two years I was honorably discharged. I felt great: I had held my own in a male society; had not given myself away; had survived group showering even among those I was physically attracted to; and had survived two years without a date and without anyone asking why.

Returning to college was another matter. Parents and friends, whether knowingly or not, were escalating their subtle suggestions that I start dating more frequently. I didn’t date often, but when I did, I got a lot of mileage out of it, making certain everyone knew I had gone out. It was now impossible to avoid kissing without really being suspect, so I tried my best. The whole evening was often ruined by my anxiety about that good-night kiss. There were times when I was certain the girl was deliberately trying to arouse me. What if I failed? All the world would know the truth. Sometimes I pretended she was a boy.

I was rescued by a mission call. To my great relief none of the interviews raised the question of masturbation, and aside from that I was worthy to go. When I was set apart for my mission the general authority said, “Those things in your life which have been amiss have been forgiven.” There it was. God knew after all, but was willing to let me serve as His emissary. Tears ran down my face as I promised not to disappoint Him. My mission was a beautiful religious experience. I grew very close to the gospel. My resolve to put homosexual thoughts behind me worked most of the time, and the garments eliminated much of the sensuality of sleeping with my companion.

The next several years are a blur of parents and bishops and friends and neighbors and former missionary companions and total strangers all asking me the same question: “Isn’t it time you were getting married?” I always answered with good humor (part of the “cover”), but the question always cut me to the

quick. I certainly had not written off the possibility of marriage, but I knew something would have to change. While completing my work at the university, I attended Institute regularly. One Sunday I heard Elder Joseph Fielding Smith say that homosexuality was so filthy and abhorrent that he would rather see his sons dead than homosexual. In growing confusion I tried to analyze my problem. Was I forever lost? Did my eternal destiny hinge on my reaction to a chance encounter with a deviate, when I was too young even to realize what was happening? Was it really a “chance encounter”? Was I given homosexuality as a test to mold or strengthen me? Was there any meaning in my suffering? Would my infirmity be corrected at the Resurrection? Was marriage an absolute requirement for everyone in life? If I married, should I tell my wife? Could I hide it from her? Would Joseph Fielding Smith want me in his family? Would anyone else? Was I better off dead?

For all my pondering, I found only more questions. I decided to ask my stake patriarch for a special blessing. He lived in our ward and knew our family well. While I could not tell him my problem, I could rely on his inspiration for whatever counsel God had for me. I fasted and prayed and went to his home for the blessing. The patriarch gave me a beautiful blessing concerned mainly with choosing a proper career, but he said nothing about marriage or dating.

I decided to try another fast and go to the temple, seeking an answer through prayer and “good works.” After asking a temple worker where I might go for private prayer, I was directed to a tiny hall closet. There was no room to kneel, but I offered a lengthy prayer pleading for some direction. I went home and lay awake most of the night, anticipating some message. None came.

The pressure to marry increased almost to my breaking point. It seemed everyone wanted to line me up with “a friend.” Even total strangers called and said they had heard of me and wanted to introduce me to somebody special. I started dating with more regularity, hoping that somehow the magic would strike. But a man can go out with the same woman only so many times before the relationship must either end in marriage or be broken off. Somehow we always broke off. The young woman would want to marry, and I could not do it.

About this time the bishop asked me to start teaching the priests’ quorum each Sunday. The request brought a new crisis. I was physically attracted to every boy in the quorum. I knew I could do a good job—I had taught classes for years. I felt I could reach some boys who needed strengthening in the gospel. But what if I slipped? The question was larger than just one teaching assignment for a group of priests. I had to know if there were any place in the Church for people “with problems” like mine. Does a homosexual have the right to participate? Was I worthy of a temple recommend? Could I continue to attend all my meetings, teach classes, pay tithing, and accept leadership positions without being a hypocrite? I felt that only a general authority could tell me.

After tremendous soul-searching I went to the Church Office Building, but it took over an hour to get up enough courage to enter the front door. There were so many imponderables. Whom should I ask to see? I certainly didn’t want to be told I’d be better off dead. On the other hand, was I being honest if I avoided anyone who might criticize me? Should I use a phony name? My father was well-known enough that someone might connect my name to his. I finally walked in the lobby, scanned the roster of names, and decided on the one who had set me apart as a missionary; perhaps he could help me now.

The secretary said I could not get in without an appointment. Perhaps I could come back another time. My face must have shown my inner turmoil, for she invited me to stay. She took my name and asked the purpose of my visit. I replied "personal counsel" and nervously sat down and waited. Finally, just before 5:00 I was told I could see him. He said he was tired and anxious to spend some time with his family, but he graciously consented to hear me out. I briefly stated my problem, putting it in the best possible light. He seemed to understand, and encouraged me to take the priests' quorum assignment, and any other assignment I was asked to fill. He mentioned a prominent citizen with a similar problem who had recently died, and said much good could be done by those with such problems. As a final thought he suggested that I might aim for more masculine activities in my life, such as playing basketball. The advice was given in good faith and was appreciated. But I wondered if he saw the dilemma. Had I confessed to heterosexual problems, would he have prescribed more physical contact with girls, culminating in the showers?

He concluded by writing an address on a card and directing me to the top floor of the Union Pacific building across from Temple Square. There a kindly gentleman greeted me and asked me to hear his story about the beauty of physical love between a man and a woman. He went into explicit detail, in great humility and candor. He asked me to picture myself capable of such love-making. I really tried. He felt I should marry but counseled me definitely not to tell my wife I was a homosexual as it would strain the relationship too severely.

I left determined to take whatever Church callings came my way. I would live all the commandments possible, and live as normal an existence as possible. But I felt certain that a marriage built upon such a deception could never succeed.

Upon graduation from the university I moved into my own apartment and began teaching high school. My teaching has brought tremendous satisfaction to me. I have developed a reputation for being able to communicate with students no one else could reach. I identify totally with them and am willing to work with them long after most adults have lost all patience.

Like many singles, I fled the marriage pressure in my resident ward and joined a singles ward at the university. Things got better. My parents were pleased just knowing that I was surrounded by all those eligible girls. I appreciated the freedom from interference by neighbors and family, but student wards also exact a price. Marriage is the name of the game, and few priesthood meetings went by without strong reminders of that fact. I was swept up in the new ward activities which weren't exactly dates, but served as good substitutes. I was also named president of the elders' quorum.

My new position forced me to look at the other quorum members more carefully, and I began to wonder if many of them were just like me. Were some dating so frenetically just to remove all doubt about their virility? One that I felt confident shared my problem managed to be seen with a copy of *Playboy* in his briefcase at priesthood meeting. Better to be thought a lecher than a homosexual.

Through this period, my parents, especially my mother, began a not-so-gentle chastising of me, urging me to find the right girl and settle down. My close friends long since married, started inviting me to their home where un-

escorted girls seemed always to be waiting. In my teaching job, I was always being named to the prom committee, along with eligible faculty members.

Before age thirty I could reasonably carry off the charade of being eager to find "the right one." After thirty it got much harder. Any interest in a thirtyish female led inevitably to a tremendous push. I really couldn't blame the woman. However unsatisfactory I might be as a marriage partner, I was male and an active priesthood bearer. Marriage would end for my partners the same kind of nightmarish pressure I was experiencing.

By age thirty-five I decided that dating was terribly unfair to my partners. I was using women only as a convenience, a smoke screen for conformity's sake. I had no right to raise someone's hopes about marriage when my intentions were otherwise, so I quit taking partners to proms, dinners and social gatherings. If people didn't want me along, they soon learned not to invite me.

Outwardly my new resolve was a tremendous relief. Inwardly, it was no answer at all. I learned for myself that it is not good for man to be alone. For the first time in my life loneliness became a gnawing concern. During the winter I had my work, my students, and activities I was expected to attend with or without a partner, but during the summers I could literally go days at a time without speaking a word to anyone. Sometimes the loneliness was so unbearable that I drove up and down the streets hoping to find a hitchhiker with whom I could strike up a brief conversation. My actions were totally circum-spect if my thoughts were not.

The worst time of the year was always New Year's Eve. There is simply nothing a single, active Latter-day Saint can do on a New Year's Eve without a partner. Every ward or stake in the Church holds a dance. You either sit at home alone and brood about the passing of the years, or you get a date. On one such occasion I joined the crowd in the traditional kiss at the stroke of midnight. On the way home, my date slid over in the seat and started kissing me again. At her apartment, I made a concerted effort at nominal petting. I tried everything, including the old ploy of thinking of boys. It was awful. I found myself growing physically ill. It was so shoddy I could no longer stand myself. Breaking things off, I left and started home. Soon I was crying so hard I had to pull myself off the road. What does an elder do who knows the gospel is true, who believes fervently in marriage for time and all eternity, who sustains the president of the Church as a prophet of God, and yet is so warped that even kissing a girl can be accomplished only by cheap and demeaning subterfuge?

I arrived at home, undressed for bed, and started to say my prayers. Soon I was sobbing uncontrollably, stifling the sounds in the covers. I knew I couldn't go on without some resolution. For the first time, some thirty years after the fact, I told God I was a homosexual, and begged for help. My initial "Thou knowest of my problem," gave way to "Please, God, you've got to help me deal with my homosexuality; you are the only one I can talk to." I prayed more intimately and familiarly than I have ever done before or since. For about an hour, I poured out my soul, and then went to bed and stared at the ceiling until almost dawn. When I awoke I felt a tremendous peace. God would not require marriage of me in this life. For all the dark corners of my heart, I was still a child of God. I would live as exemplary a life as possible and give all I had to the building up of the Kingdom, but I would never marry.

My friends at the Tabernacle continued poking me all through President Lee's talk. My mother later clipped it out of the Sunday paper and had it waiting for me when I arrived for a visit. Another copy arrived anonymously in the mail. Both my bishop and my stake president called me in to talk with me about it. Couldn't I see my mistake? Didn't I sustain the Prophet? What was wrong with me?

During this time I was having trouble with my eyes. I had consulted several physicians who were unable to find the cause. Finally one asked me bluntly, "Is there anything in your life that might be creating undue anxiety?" To my own surprise I found myself answering, "Well I'm forty and still a bachelor." Then I added, "The reason I'm still a bachelor is because males interest me more than females, and I can't very well marry a male."

I couldn't believe myself. There it was, the great secret of my life, the secret around which my whole life had been structured, blurted out to a near stranger. The doctor was as nonchalant as if I had commented about the weather. He asked if I wanted to leave things as they were or if I wanted to work on them. I replied that if my problems were creating enough turmoil inside to affect me physically, maybe I had better do something about them.

He recommended to me a psychiatrist, "very discreet" and new to the area, who would not be apt to have any ties with anyone I knew. The prospect scared me to death. It was finally arranged that the psychiatrist would come to my home every Sunday right after Church. These sessions were extremely helpful and allowed me to understand myself better. But then the psychiatrist advised me that the only way I could end my male fixation was to experience male sex. He reasoned that I might discover that it was not all I had fantasised it to be. While that advice carried a certain logic, and the intellectual side of my nature responded affirmatively, my spiritual side was horrified. Where would I draw the line? If male sex proved unsatisfactory, should I experiment heterosexually?

To whom then should I turn for an answer to my excruciating dilemma? In a lifetime of Church activity I have yet to hear a single word of compassion or understanding for homosexuals spoken from the pulpit. We are more than a family oriented church. Our auxiliaries and priesthood quorums presuppose marriage. A single, much less a homosexual, simply does not fit in. Even the new Special Interest program, which is excellent for those eager to marry, is just one more humiliation in a whole lifetime of humiliations for people like myself. High council members now seek out partners for me, or tell me how to make myself more attractive to the opposite sex. The new program leaves no place to hide. The written temple interview has new questions specifically about masturbation and homosexuality. I must either lie and continue a life of "Let's Pretend," dating often enough to throw the Special Interest committee off my track; or come out of the closet, proclaim my homosexuality openly and pay whatever price must be exacted. I doubt that my community is ready to accept a self-proclaimed homosexual teacher, and it is highly unlikely that the Church will accept a declared homosexual into fellowship.

Still, I have a strong testimony of the gospel. I know the Church is true and I want to remain loyal and active. I can only hope that He who welcomed to His side sinners, publicans and harlots will grant the same grace to me—and that His church will also.

MARY BRADFORD

CHANT FOR GROWING OLDER

Nothing in nature was meant to be sudden

(Hold me, hold me, let our love ripen)

The sun takes all night to lift

The child takes all year to live

(Don't leave, like a leaf we are turning)

Cloud scallops begin in far away currents

Storm shouts leap from invisible caves

Death eats first the succulent cells

And leaves the bright bones until last

(Hold me, O lover, and hear me past singing)

Mary Bradford, who will be the new Editor of *Dialogue*, is a teacher-consultant at the American University and various government agencies.

MARY BRADFORD

You kept me from falling

by lowering me gently
into a basket lined with silk.
You spooned your knees into mine,
lifted me up the well's damp sides,
your hand planing my knee,
your arms locked against the noises strange
below in the streets and in the halls,
your body a boat rocking me.
Sleep is not death,
but only a deeper life
with you as much alive to me
as in your waking speech.
Sleep is not parting, then, as I
the first child, the only girl
believed in the lonely bed.
I now learn your teaching:
Sleep is the intimate journey.
Sleep is the silent dance of love.

MARY BRADFORD

the grammarian blows her mind

all i'd ever heard from you was I
then I switched to We and included Me:
now only you you you—from you—in me—
over us—through us—lost in prepositions
propositions—positions of love—engendering
particles of praise—determiners of ecstasy—
relational roots—you to me and we to us—
active, passive, predicate nominative—
connect, ah connect!

Greg

DOUGLAS H. THAYER

When Greg woke up he lay on his stomach. The shaft of sunlight coming through the window hit his gold tennis trophy, Kellie's gold-framed picture and his clock on top of the dresser. Priesthood meeting was at nine. Greg buried his face in his pillow, closed his hands into fists and shoved them under his chest. He had promised Kellie again last night that during priesthood he would see Bishop Swensen in his office, confess what he had done, explain that she was pregnant, and ask what he had to do to repent. At ten-thirty he would pick up Kellie; they would go see her bishop, and then go tell their parents and make arrangements for the wedding that week. He tightened his fists, pushed his face deeper into the pillow. This was one of the sins you had to confess to your bishop to be forgiven of, but he knew that he still couldn't do it.

He wanted to get in his Mustang and drive as far away from Provo as he could get, say goodbye to everything and everybody. If he left he would still feel sinful all the time, no matter how often he showered and changed his clothes, but at least he wouldn't be around his family and friends who loved him. He had prayed, tried to repent, made all kinds of promises to God if only Kellie wouldn't be pregnant and he was clean again and wouldn't have to get married. But she didn't have a miscarriage. He wanted everything the way it had been. Kellie had always been popular at school.

His face in the pillow, Greg heard Kim running the shower in the hall bathroom. Kim had just turned twelve and been made a deacon; he had his new suit to be ordained in and to pass the sacrament in. During the week he had just finished collecting his fast offerings for the first time, and he had his packet of blue envelopes ready to turn in this morning. They had shared the end bedroom before Steve went on his mission, and since April they had played a lot of tennis together.

Douglas Thayer, Associate Professor at Brigham Young University, is the author of many published short stories in *Dialogue* and elsewhere. He has a book length collection ready for publication and is working on a novella.

Kim always said, "Hey, Greg, come on, hurry, or we won't get a court." Kim went out and sat in the Mustang to wait for him after he got home from work at Carson's Market, where he was a bagger. Like Roger and Steve, Greg had earned his Eagle Scout badge (he didn't get his Duty to God Award) and graduated from seminary. Already Kim had his First Class badge. Greg couldn't stand to think about his father and older brothers knowing about Kellie, but it was even worse if his mother and Kim knew.

Downstairs in the living room Roger's, Steve's, and Kim's pictures stood on the fireplace mantel, in order of age, all of them smiling (they were Roger's and Steve's missionary pictures). In his picture he was still the same as his brothers. He and Kim always went to watch Roger and Steve when they played on the Provo High tennis team.

The hall phone rang three times, then stopped. Greg lifted his head out of the pillow. His mother had taken it on the kitchen extension. His father had already left for his high council meeting. He let his head sink. For three months their ringing phone stopped him, made him turn. It scared him that somebody had found out about Kellie and him and was calling to tell his mother and father. Now sometimes he had an ache in the back of his throat and his eyes would suddenly fill with tears. He didn't ever cry, although he was afraid he would.

He tightened his jaws, pushed his face deeper into the pillow. He had to black out his mind when he started to think that people would know that he had gotten Kellie pregnant in her father's cabin in Provo Canyon. His former Primary and Junior Sunday School teachers came up to him in church to shake his hand. "Well, now that you've graduated from high school you'll be going on your mission in a year, won't you, Greg," they said. "Your parents are proud of their boys" (a miscarriage was natural).

Sundays he stood at his bedroom window and watched the neighbors walking to their meetings. He had been blessed, baptized, and confirmed in the chapel, received all of his priesthood ordinations there. He passed it every day driving up Ninth East to Kellie's. It was as if he had lied to everybody, so he couldn't be happy.

He had been named the best-dressed boy at Provo High last year, he would start at B.Y.U. next month, and he was going on his mission in a year (his father had started a mission savings account for him when he was born). But if he and Kellie got married, he might as well publish an announcement in the *Herald* that she was pregnant. All the other priests in the quorum would know. Every six months Bishop Swensen talked to the quorum about chastity and the feeling of being clean. They were supposed to see Bishop Swensen if they had any problems. He would be the only married priest in the ward. He had known some of the priests in the quorum all of his life. Everybody at Provo High knew who slept around and who didn't, although it was supposed to be a secret.

One night he drove his Mustang out on the freeway at ninety miles an hour to crash into the big square cement overpass supports near the American Fork exit, a note in his shirt pocket. But he imagined himself after death as a suicide (he could actually see himself as a person), so it was stupid. He and Kellie should have gone to Reno and gotten married that first week, but they couldn't be sure that early. Because an abortion was murder, he hadn't been able even to talk to Kellie about one. It would only make her unhappier than she already was. Being married changed too many things.

He wanted to join the army and volunteer for hazardous duty somewhere, just say goodbye and go, everything simple again and in order. But he couldn't imagine his life away from his family, and Kellie, pregnant, had become somebody he shouldn't leave. Yet he couldn't stand people loving him if he didn't deserve it; he wanted to tell them not to. He felt better when he thought about the wrong things other people did.

Greg raised his face out of the pillow and looked at his clock. He listened to the shower. Kim had ridden with him the last three Sundays, since he had become a deacon. He would tell Kim he wasn't going this morning, make some excuse, and then go get Kellie to talk again. The full-length mirror on the back of the open closet door reflected his clothes, all hung in order, and his line of polished shoes. When he went downstairs on Monday mornings, his mother already had his dirty clothes in the washer. By Tuesday his fresh, ironed shirts hung in the closet and his other clean clothes were in his drawer.

"Bishop Swensen, Kellie and I have made a mistake I need to talk to you about." He pushed his face back into the pillow, grabbed his upper arms, squeezed, curled under the sheet. Every Sunday ward members sat on the foyer chairs waiting to see the bishop in his office. Whatever he planned to say, it meant the same thing. Bishop Swensen always shook his hand, complimented him; he knew the whole Swensen family. He had gone through school with David.

He wanted to go on a mission (every day he saw the elders from the language training mission at B.Y.U.), graduate from college, go to dental school, live in Provo the rest of his life and raise a family, be a part of everything. Roger was in law school at Stanford, married to Stephanie, and they had Sammy, who was one now. Steve, still on his mission in Italy, was going to be an engineer. If they hadn't started going up to Kellie's father's cabin to do the yard work, nothing would have happened.

The high-school biology films showed the fertilized human egg, the weekly growth of the fetus, how it grew and grew, Kellie getting bigger and bigger, which he couldn't stop, his whole life hard because of just one mistake. He had planned to do a lot of different things before he got married and became a father. Kellie was great, but he hadn't thought of any girl as his wife. He wanted to have a son, hold him, feel his weight, hear his sounds, see his face, choose his name (over the front-room desk his mother had the framed family pedigree chart, little oval face pictures by some of the names).

He wanted to name his son, bless him, have his father, Roger, and Steve in the circle with him in front of the whole ward. He wanted to bear his testimony of Christ afterward about how wonderful it was to be married and have a son, an eternal family of his own, now that he was back from his mission. But it took a year to repent and be worthy, so they wouldn't make him an elder in time to bless his own son. Blessing his own son was one of the things they would take away from him. The Relief Society could help Kellie go away and have the baby, get it adopted by members, but Kellie didn't want to do that. He didn't want her to be any unhappier than she was, even though some of it was her fault. Before he had known exactly how his life would be.

He loosened his arms, straightened out under the sheet. He turned his head. Particles of dust floated in the bright shaft of window sunlight. After his shower he used to like to stand in the sun and lift his weights to see his body

better. Now it was like he had grown scales. He wanted to stab himself in the chest with a knife until the tight feeling went away and his body was light and free again. It scared him that sometimes he wanted to live with Kellie all the time, not caring about anything else, be carnal, just let his body take over and always be that way. (In his Book of Mormon seminary class they studied repentance and what carnal meant. He felt carnal now. He knew what it meant now.)

"Greg, oh, Greg," Kellie had said when they drove back down Provo Canyon from her father's cabin, and started to cry again. Still numb with surprise at what he had done, he drove up on the B.Y.U. campus, and while they walked from one quad to the next in the darkness between the lamps, he explained *again* that nobody else had to know. As long as they repented, never did it again, tried to perfect their lives, everything was just between them and Jesus Christ. Even though a person's sins were as red as scarlet, they would be washed away, made as white as snow, and then the Lord didn't remember them any more if the person repented. It was supposed to be a wonderful feeling.

In the Bible and the Book of Mormon, David, Paul, Alma, and the sons of Mosiah had committed sins, but they had repented, became great church leaders, some saw Christ even. He told Kellie that everything would be all right if they repented, kept clean for a year before they got married in the temple (his mission would take twice that long). They wouldn't even know that they had done something wrong, couldn't remember it, feel the pain. Their lives wouldn't be hard or complicated anymore. He *liked* Kellie. He really wanted her to get married in the temple so that she could go to the celestial kingdom. It surprised him that he could only think of time as eternal; he wanted all of his good feelings back.

Every night and morning that first month he prayed on his knees for forgiveness and that Kellie wouldn't be pregnant. She couldn't be pregnant. It had really only happened just that once. He prayed over and over again in the name of Jesus Christ, promised that he would dedicate his whole life to the Church, go on two missions. He tried every day to be perfect in his thoughts and actions to prove that he was serious, to test God. But all the time he knew that he had to confess to Bishop Swensen even if Kellie had a miscarriage, or was not even pregnant.

"Hey, Greg, you can have the shower."

He raised his head off the pillow.

"Hey Greg."

"Okay."

Greg turned from the window and lay on his back looking up at the white ceiling. He never knew when he would have the ache in his throat, his eyes filling with tears. It was always sudden, and he had to turn away from people.

The pain was physical, a tight growing heaviness he couldn't take medicine for. He wanted to fly, rise up above Provo, his arms wings, grow lighter and freer the higher he went until he vanished even to himself.

Once he had tried to joke with Kellie about what had happened, but that meant he didn't know how to feel anything, not right or wrong. But if he confessed, told his parents, everybody would see him as a different person. When he thought about telling his mother, he had to close his eyes. At the family

reunions his uncles and older cousins held up the new babies born the past year and told their names. The whole family would know what he had done. It was as if he had made people sick or broken their bones.

In the six-month interviews with Bishop Swensen, he'd only had to confess a little fooling around, but now he felt just like the bishop said an immoral priest would (he wanted to go down into a deep mine shaft and have it cave in). Kim liked to sit with the deacons, all the deacons wearing dress shirts and ties and some of them jackets. Even if nobody told Kim about Kellie, he would understand later.

"We have to confess, Greg," Kellie kept saying. It was as if confession were more important for her even after she knew that she was pregnant, than it was for him. Even though Kellie was one of the nicest girls he'd ever gone steady with, he sometimes now wanted her to vanish, dissolve, melt, so that nobody would ever know she was pregnant, his life simple again, happy.

Yet, assigned to bless the sacrament, he had to sit on his hands to keep from jumping up in front of the whole ward and shouting that Kellie was pregnant. He wanted to tell every customer at Carson's whose groceries he bagged, write Roger and Steve, wanted to go down on his knees to tell his mother and Kim (his mother loaned him money when he needed it). He wanted there to be a movie of all the rotten things each priest in the quorum had ever done, and they would have to sit through the movies with him so that they couldn't ever laugh at him because of Kellie.

He lay there still looking up at the white ceiling, then got out of bed. He put on his robe, looked down out of the window. His Mustang glistened in the sunlight. Every Sunday men and boys walked by their house going to priesthood. He had gone to church in the ward his whole life. He raised his hands into the shaft of sunlight palms up. He didn't like to hear people were getting married or see babies or pregnant women. He had liked being twelve. Kim had the same fast offering packet he'd had, except the envelopes were blue now. He kept thinking of all the things his parents had done for him.

He turned from the window. The sunlight still hit his tennis trophy and Kellie's graduation picture. "Yes," he always said when she asked him if he loved her, and he always put his arm around her shoulder. After he bought her the wedding band and took her to Salt Lake to get the test so that they would know for sure, she asked him more often. He would have to get a better job, work full-time, go to college only part-time, rent an apartment, pay bills. Kellie had always been fun, but it scared him to have to imagine his whole life with her. He didn't know how to feel.

He had to see her once more and figure out everything again. Last week they had decided to go to California; they would write their families to say goodbye, that they would be married in Nevada on the way and be back in a year. Figuring things out so much was like telling lies.

Kellie directed the singing in Junior Sunday School. Her father was in the stake Sunday School presidency, and her mother taught Primary. "Greg, it's nice to see you again," her mother always said; her little brother and two sisters wanted him to come to their family night. He pressed his forehead against the wall, closed his eyes, shoved his fists under his arms, squeezed. He wanted to phone Kellie's parents to tell them, not have to watch their faces. He never felt happy any more.

Roger and Stephanie had sent out over six hundred reception invitations, and they spent a whole day in their apartment opening wedding presents, the living room full of white tissue paper and white boxes. He and Kellie wouldn't be able to have a reception now, which was stupid.

He wanted to go up to Alta on a clear blue day after it had snowed all night, be the only person on the lift, not take Kim, who had skied with him all winter (Roger and Steve liked to ski Alta best). And he wanted to ski the powder to his waist, make the only trails, be surrounded by all that white, and the cloudless blue sky. And he wanted to ski and ski, the powder swirling up around him, feel only the smoothness and absolute control of skiing, ski until he remembered nothing but white. His new Lange boots were a Christmas present from his parents last year.

Standing there, Greg opened his eyes and moved his forehead from contact with the wall. He held his tingling hands under his arms. He had wanted to smash his hands against the rock wall of Kellie's father's cabin. He couldn't stay busy enough not to think. He had tried to change the feeling alone. Christ needed to be somebody he could phone or go to his office to see.

In seminary they had discussed how a person could become dead to all righteousness, his life stopped, if he didn't repent so the Lord could help him. He wanted to lose all memory of what he had done wrong and not feel anything. They had only done it once, not over and over again every day, which would have been like everything getting darker.

"Greg?" His mother knocked. "It's after eight. You don't want to be late for priesthood. Breakfast is almost ready."

Greg turned to face the door. "Okay, Mom."

"Don't fall back to sleep, son."

"Okay, Mom."

His mother called Kim and then walked back down the hall. After he had taken Kellie home that night and got her to stop crying, he wanted to drive down to the Provo Cold Storage Plant, go in the big room where their locker was, and freeze, stop the feeling. He wanted everybody to have done something wrong.

Greg opened his door and walked across the hall to the bathroom. Kim's wet footprints showed on the tile floor and beads of water ran down the shower walls. Kim had gone back three times to collect the Snyders' fast offering. He wore his new clothes only on Sunday (with his birthday money he had bought shoes, socks, tie and shirt to go with his new suit). He always stopped in the chapel foyer to look at Steve's and the other missionaries' pictures. When they turned twelve, their birthday present from their parents was the new suit.

Greg turned on the shower hard to let the water beat against the top of his head and face. He would tell Kim that he had a headache. His mother would leave right after breakfast for her Sunday School inservice meeting. He closed his eyes. He didn't like to shower anymore; he wanted his body always covered with layers of clothes. (He kept trying to remember what it was like to be twelve and have the priesthood new.) He had to force himself to play tennis with Kim.

After he took Kellie home, he drove around for two hours before he parked in the driveway (he had driven by Bishop Swensen's house three times). He sat in the Mustang and looked at his parents' bedroom window, rested his head against the steering wheel, the ache coming in his throat, but he didn't cry. He

wanted to ring the doorbell and ask if he could come in. He showered, soaped his body again and again that night, but there wasn't enough soap and hot water in the world to make him happy. The next morning he showered again, turned the shower on full-force cold to numb his body and mind, wore all clean clothes, polished his shoes again, but he couldn't change how his body felt.

He couldn't stop thinking about the biology film, the human egg already growing if it was fertilized. He wanted to pull a lever to make everything again like it had been. He didn't have any right to even say goodbye. He wanted repentance to feel great and then to tell everybody about it.

The hall phone rang again. Greg opened his eyes and turned down the shower. He wanted to press his whole body against the cool tile wall. The phone stopped. His mother always started Sunday dinner before she left for Sunday School.

He had been terrified of going downstairs to breakfast the first morning because he thought that his parents and Kim would know just by looking into his face what he had done. "Son," his father said as they knelt around the table by their chairs for family prayer, "it's your turn." The tablecloth touching his cheek, he had prayed, stunned that he could because he was lying, expected to be struck dumb, but he hadn't been. (His mother ran the boat when the family went waterskiing.)

He met Kellie after every class they didn't take together, held both her hands, put his arms around her shoulder. And it amazed him that none of their friends stopped and said, "What's wrong with you two? You're different." He practiced with the tennis team, showered, talked to his teachers. He saw kids who had reputations for sleeping around. He didn't want anybody to think that about him or Kellie. Girls had dropped out of school during the year because they got pregnant. The night he and Kellie graduated he watched the face of every person who walked across the stage to get a diploma.

In seminary they had learned that to be carnally minded was death. The pioneers used to stand up in meetings and confess all of their sins to the ward. After the first month, every day he waited for Kellie to phone him and say she'd had a miscarriage, so they wouldn't have to get married. Her mother baked him a birthday cake; her little brother and sisters bought him a present. He had ruined it all. Stupid.

Blessing the sacrament was the hardest thing he did. That first Sunday when he stood to break the bread into the silver trays, he thought that Bishop Swensen would suddenly stand up in front of the whole ward and say into the microphone, "No, Greg, stop. You shouldn't bless the sacrament." The silver bread trays glinted in the sunlight as the deacons carried them from row to row under the windows. He blessed the water. His mother, Kim, and the whole ward looked up at him and the other two priests (his father had a high council assignment).

Sitting at the sacrament table, he had put his hands under his arms and squeezed against the pain. The Relief Society washed and ironed the linen sacrament cloths. He had lost the feeling for blessing the sacrament, singing hymns, listening to prayers, hearing talks and lessons. When he was a deacon he would open his eyes to watch Roger's face when he blessed the sacrament. Even the meaning of words had changed. He needed to jump off a cliff, but

keep falling, fall off the world, just have that sensation forever. Reaching up, he turned off the shower and got out.

In his room, he combed his hair first, and then started to dress. He'd always liked the feel of a fresh long-sleeved dress shirt against his skin; sometimes he didn't wear a jacket so that he could feel the shirt. His mother bought him new clothes for Christmas and his birthday. He kept a wax shine on his Mustang because of the feeling. Sitting on the edge of his bed, he put on his polished shoes. He put on his watch and dug for a handkerchief in his drawer. He was afraid of crying.

An abortion or Kellie going away to have the baby so that it could be adopted by a member family seemed simple, sometimes. He looked up at Kellie's picture. He didn't drive by the temple now unless he had to. At night, illuminated, the temple was almost white. He and Kellie had only done it once, but he felt like he had burned down the house or something. What he had done seemed written down. He and Kellie had always had their own set of rules about what was wrong for them to do.

"Hey, Greg, you ready?" His door opened and Kim stuck just his head in. "Mom said to hurry. It's eight-thirty."

He looked at his clock. "Go ahead. Tell Mom I'll be down in a minute."

"Okay, but hurry." Kim closed the door. He didn't put on his jacket until after he ate. Kim shined his new shoes every Sunday; they were just like Greg's newest pair.

Greg combed his hair again in the dresser mirror. The sun had left Kellie's picture and his tennis trophy. He would eat first and then tell Kim he wasn't going; his mother would think that he wasn't feeling well. Kim would be disappointed. Already Kim looked forward to saying one of the prayers at his missionary farewell, next spring. Kim and he had said the prayers at Steve's farewell, and Roger had flown out from Stanford to speak.

But there wouldn't be any farewell for him now. The other priests in the quorum would go on missions, have their pictures in the chapel foyer, learn foreign languages, convert people, but the Church wouldn't let him go. Roger, who had gone to Germany, had been a first assistant to his mission president. He put his comb in his pocket. He didn't like to see the groups of missionaries from the language training mission; they were happy; they did something.

He didn't turn from the mirror. He wanted Bishop Swensen to have a big book in the office with all of his awards, certificates, Scout badges listed, the tithing he had paid, all of the hours he had spent working on the stake welfare farm, at the cannery, and with his attendance at all the meetings he had been to all his life. And he wanted the bishop to say, "Well, Greg, I will just cross off your Eagle badge, your seminary graduation, and all your tithing to pay for what you have done. Now the Lord forgives you. You don't have to worry about Kellie or the baby, or get married. You can go on your mission. You will feel clean like you were before, and Kellie is a nice girl."

He would have to start all over if he stayed in Provo. A carnal person's body was different from a good person's; he felt and understood things in a different way. He couldn't change back, really repent, unless he went to his bishop so Christ could help him. Greg turned from the mirror. He'd stopped praying three weeks ago. He couldn't believe that his mother and father or brother had ever done anything really wrong (Kim was too young).

He walked to his door, opened it and went down the hall. He stopped at the head of the stairs and turned to look back at the family pictures on the wall. Some of the family lines connected to Bible genealogy and went clear back to Adam. In the resurrection a person had a bright recollection of all of his unrepented sins and knew everybody else's unrepented sins.

At the bottom of the stairs he stopped again. Kim was talking to his mother. His father was gone to his meeting. He turned and looked at the front door. He could get in his Mustang and drive away, pick up Kellie; he would just leave a note saying goodbye. Sunday had always been a relaxed good day. Everybody was happier and kinder on Sunday.

Kellie would be in maternity clothes for at least five months. Sunday after Sunday he would have to sit next to her in church, and every week she would be a little bigger. Even if they lived in another Provo ward after they got married, some people would know about them, and feel sorry for them and their families. But people couldn't ask when the baby would be born. Both his and Kellie's families were among the most active in their wards. He walked down the hall. Sammy had received a lot of presents when he was born.

"Hey, Greg, come on. We'll be late. I already said the blessing."

"Oh." He sat down, spread his napkin on his lap, and drank half his orange juice. Kim had his tie tucked inside his shirt while he ate. On Sundays they had family prayer at dinner, when his father was home.

"Good morning, Son."

"Good morning, Mom," he said, but he didn't look above the level of the gleaming white stove and dishwasher.

"How many eggs do you want this morning, Greg?"

He raised his head. His mother, two eggs in her right hand, held the refrigerator door open. "I'm not very hungry. I'll just eat some cereal." The top door shelf was full of eggs.

"Don't you feel well, son?"

"I'm okay, I guess."

"Would you like something else?" His mother closed the refrigerator door.

"No thank you."

He poured milk on one shredded wheat, cut it with his spoon. He looked up at his mother who faced the cupboards. The heavy knife lay on the sideboard by the half of loaf of homemade bread. Yesterday when he was adjusting the timing on the Mustang, he had wanted to push his hands into the whirling fan, afterwards walk into the kitchen and show his mother, tell her about Kellie then.

"The deacons quorum is going to plan a swimming party to Saratoga, Greg."

He closed his eyes, tightened his jaws. Roger and Steve would shake his hand, put an arm around his shoulder, and ask him what they could do to help, say that they loved him. He would want to explain how it all happened, how one thing just led to another; how did he tell them that it only happened once? He pushed back his chair, stood up. "I guess I wasn't even as hungry as I thought. Excuse me."

"Are you sure you're all right, son? You've looked a little pale lately."

"I'll go brush my teeth."

"Now Kim, you sit there and finish your breakfast. You don't have to be running after Greg every minute."

"Ah, Mom, isn't Greg going to priesthood?"

After he had brushed his teeth and combed his hair, he stood by his window looking down at the street. Jeff Walker and his dad passed along going to priesthood, Brother Cory behind them. Greg looked over at his clock. If he confessed to Bishop Swensen today and married Kellie during the week, next Sunday the whole quorum would know. He would be the only married priest. If the bishop let him meet with the elders, he would be with all the married returned missionaries, all of them married in the temple. When they brought their first new babies to church, all through the meeting they kept bending down to kiss them. Roger had sent Sammy's hospital picture and Greg's mother had a miniature made for the family pedigree chart hanging in the front room.

"Greg." He turned from the window. Kim stood in the doorway.

"Hey, Greg, it's time to go. Aren't you going?" He carried his packet of blue fast-offering envelopes in his right hand.

Greg turned. More men and boys walked to priesthood; two cars went by. Later, mothers and fathers would pass taking their children to Sunday School, and then in the evening again whole families would be going to sacrament meeting.

"Greg, you feel all right don't you?"

The priests sat together on the right side of the chapel. Bishop Swensen always stopped to shake hands with each priest and ask him if he'd had a good week and if he was happy. Greg turned back to Kim, who had walked into the room. The closet door mirror held both of them.

"Let's go, Greg."

He looked at their shoes. He turned from the mirror to look at Kim. He was smiling. (Kim had had him go with him to buy his new shoes at Clark's so he would be sure to get the same kind.) Greg walked slowly to the closet and got his blue blazer. "I'll be okay, I guess," he said. As he put on the blazer he looked at Kellie's picture.

"Great," Kim said.

He followed Kim down the stairs. In the hall he stopped before the mirror. He buttoned the blazer and then felt to see that he had his handkerchief.

"Goodbye, son!"

Greg stopped on the porch, turned, saw his mother framed in the hallway, but he did not speak. He turned slowly and walked down the front steps, the storm door closing behind him.

Kim already sat in the Mustang; he had the windows rolled down. Greg backed out and drove down the street. Kim had him stop to pick up Brian Madsen and David Tuttle, two deacons who were walking. They had their fast-offering packets. "You guys get all your fast offerings collected?" Kim asked.

"Sure."

"Sure."

"So did I."

Greg watched the car ahead of them slow down to turn into the chapel parking lot.

"Good," he said.

REVIEW

SEX EDUCATION MATERIALS FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS

SHIRLEY B. PAXMAN

One of the responsibilities facing Latter-day Saint parents today is that of teaching children about reproduction and sexual relationships. Most Mormon parents feel as Dr. Benjamin Spock does—"that sex should be taught in a framework that emphasizes its spirituality. It is a distortion of sexuality in human beings to act as if it were merely a matter of anatomy and physiology."

It is a challenge to parents to develop healthy sexual attitudes and values of their own. It is a greater challenge to find ways to convey these attitudes and values lovingly to their children. In an effort to assist parents in teaching sex education within the family framework, several LDS writers have published books which deal with the subject in various ways. In reviewing materials written in the context of the Latter-Day Saints, I found it helpful to put them into three categories: 1) Books suitable for young children; 2) Books written primarily for teen-agers and young adults; 3) Books written as instructive aids for couples already married, or for those approaching marriage.

Children's Books

Unfortunately, there are no really first-rate books in this category written by LDS authors. One book obviously written for young children is *Spiritual Truths of Reproduction*, by Lenet Read and Shauna Valentine. The spiritual concepts in the book are abstract and the facts about reproduction incomplete, and, in some ways, misleading. Following a description of nursing a baby, the authors state: "Father begins a new life by using a pattern that is similar to nursing." This statement seems to leave an erroneous impression with the child that would have to be corrected later on.

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You Were Smaller Than a Dot, a book hardly larger than a dot, was written by Dr. Glen C. Griffin, and has a very limited text, one line to a page. Each statement is accompanied by a simple line drawing. It is a factual book, but not very substantial.

In my opinion, the best book for young children is the non-LDS classic, by Sidonie Gruenberg, *The Wonderful Way You Were Born*. Available now in paperback, this remarkable book deserves its popularity because of its excellent text and charming illustrations. Gruenberg handles the story of reproduction with love and concern that Mormon parents can approve.

Books For Teens and Young Adults

Several LDS writers have made contributions in this category. *About Life and Love*, by Dr. W. Dean Belnap and Dr. Glenn Griffin, subtitled, "Facts of Life for LDS Teens," is written by two M.D.'s with broad experience in counseling young people. The text relates LDS scripture, doctrine, and values to sex education, thoroughly explaining the biological facts of human reproduction. The authors consider sexual experiences normal, happy, and praiseworthy gifts when confined to the marriage relationship. They discuss the broad spectrum of human relationships involved in family living and the growing processes of young people. One of the book's strengths is the calm, understanding way in which it discusses perplexing problems of teen-agers and their parents.

The weaknesses are in the attitudes of the authors on woman's place in society. Statements such as, "The thing that disturbs us is the role of the male and female in our culture. The evil is not in the emancipation of woman—but some women want to be governors, generals, and even presidents. This problem has reached an extreme in America today with woman doctors, lawyers, marines, police and politicians demanding equal pay as men and displacing men in the ranks of the unemployed" (p. 32). The authors go on to say, "We feel that girls and woman are happier in the role of girls and women. We feel that these types of careers are not in the best spiritual and psychological interest of a young girl today" (p. 10).

I feel that Drs. Belnap and Griffin are showing their male-authoritarian-chauvinism by making such arbitrary comments. Their concept of "suitable" roles for girls and women is an extremely narrow one. These statements are, however, typical of the attitudes found in all of the books reviewed.

Another false assumption found in *About Life and Love* is that "women have a weak or moderate sex urge but a very strong maternal instinct" (p. 104). Both premises are as out of date as the hobble skirt. Women, like men, feel the entire spectrum of sexual desire, capacity, and interest. These doctors should know that sex roles, including the so-called maternal "instincts," are more often learned than genetically inherited.

Virtue Makes Sense, by Mark Peterson and Emma Marr Peterson, is another book written for teenagers. It discusses virtue by exploring questions the authors consider relevant: Is there a God?, Darwin's theories of evolution, dress standards, modesty, smoking, drinking, alcohol, and premarital sex. The text is written as a series of lectures given by a fictional LDS institute instructor. It lacks warmth, emphasizing the more negative aspects of sex education. The

discussion on Darwin seems irrelevant and contrived. The book does provide some guidelines for the young person seeking spiritual reinforcement.

Sacred or Secret, by Ernest Eberhard, Jr., is identified as a "parent's handbook for sexuality guidance of their children." The author explains the use of the term "sexuality" as its "full, positive and divine meaning—not in the narrow physical sense in which sex is used and portrayed by a sensual and perverted world which knows little or nothing of its eternal purpose and the possibilities of man's procreative power" (p. 21).

The book is meant to help parents teach their children about reproduction in stages defined from early childhood through the teen years. It is accurate, factual, and positive. The author tries to dispel the myth that sex is dirty, mysterious, taboo, or unhealthy. The book is family oriented with much material about family attitudes, values, and the sharing of knowledge. The information about reproduction and the birth process is valuable to parents needing help in explaining these processes to their children.

The book is hampered by statements such as "Patriotism is a form of sexuality expression" (p. 60). The assertion that "self abuse does not quickly lead to insanity or severe permanent physical or mental degradation if it is stopped" (p. 108) carries unfortunate implications. In spite of some repetition and redundancy, the book is recommended as one that could be helpful to parents looking for ways to teach sex education in the home.

Adult Books for the Married or About To Be Married

And They Shall Be One Flesh, by Dr. Lindsay Curtis, is an excellent book for married or soon-to-be married couples. Formerly called "A Sensible Guide to Sex," the book is exactly what it says it is—a sensible guide. It is not only concise, factual, and accurate, but it lacks the sermonizing and "preachiness" of the other books. Dr. Curtis takes the same positive attitude toward sex that some of the other authors do, trying to dispel the notion that sex is only for procreation. "To relegate sexual intercourse to the single purpose of procreation is to equate it with the same act in lower animals since this is its only purpose in other than human beings" (p. 35). He emphatically states that the sexual union is a gift from God given for the pleasure and joy of the participants. Dr. Curtis covers such subjects as the sex act (about which he is very explicit), control of conception, the man's role (great advice from a woman's point of view), the in-laws, the woman's role, the need for communication in sexual fulfillment, and various other sex-related subjects. This book, with its helpful approach to the sexual experience, offers valuable insights into the often limited information many LDS couples have. It would be worthwhile reading for any married couple.

A book of even more explicit help is Dr. Curtis' *Increasing Sexual Fulfillment*. In this short book the author discusses some of the complaints couples have in trying to achieve a successful and fulfilling sexual relationship. Some of the subjects include premature ejaculation, impotency, failure to achieve a climax, unnecessary modesty, myths and misunderstandings—both cultural and religious—that hamper a good sexual relationship. Dr. Curtis provides up-to-date information about current sex research in terms the lay reader can understand.

Offering realistic solutions and expert advice, this book is recommended for the more mature married couple who might need special help.

In general all of the books mentioned in this review have much valuable information; they also have weaknesses. Each one could be improved by a first-rate editing job. The rhetoric is sometimes stilted and the grammar poor. The illustrations are merely adequate. At least one (*About Life and Love*) distorts information about the female reproductive system (p. 47).

Most of the books recommend that people with problems seek counsel and advice from their bishops or other church leaders. This is appropriate advice if the church leader has some competence in and knowledge of sex counseling. Unfortunately, not all do.

If readers are aware of inaccuracies and inadequacies, these books can be helpful resources to sex education in a family setting.

List of Books Reviewed

The Spiritual Truths of Reproduction, by Lenet Read and Shaunna Valentine (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press), \$2.95; *You Were Smaller Than a Dot*, by Glen Griffin, M.D. (Bountiful, Utah: Better Books), \$1.95; *The Wonderful Way you were Born*, by Sidonie Gruenberg (New York: Doubleday), \$.95; *About Life and Love*, by W. Dean Belnap, M.D. and Glen C. Griffin, M.D. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book), \$4.95; *Sacred or Secret?* by Ernest Eberhard, Jr. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft), \$2.95; *And They Shall Be One Flesh*; by Lindsay R. Curtis, M.D. (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press), \$3.00; *Increasing Sexual Fulfillment*, by Lindsay R. Curtis, M.D. (Salt Lake City: Hawkes Publishing Co.), \$2.95; *Virtue Makes Sense*, by Mark E. and Emma Marr Peterson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book), \$2.95.

And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone. . . . Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Genesis 2:18, 24-25

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Dialogue's plan, announced in the last number, to match issue dates with actual publication dates has received vigorous—even irresistible—encouragement from the United States Post Office. Accordingly, the transition has been completed somewhat earlier than anticipated—the current issue being Volume X, number 2, but dated *Autumn* 1976. Subscribers will not be losing any issues, nor will any be combined. The dating will just coincide more closely with reality. Volume X, numbers 3 and 4 will appear as separate winter 1976 issues. Volume XI, number 1, will be out in Spring 1977, the first of four 1977 issues.

