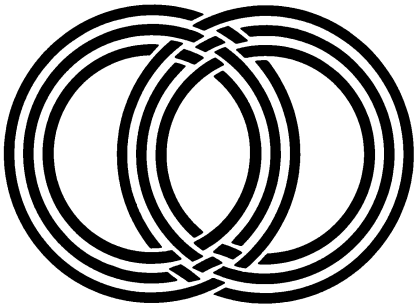
DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT



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A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT

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

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Cover and p. 16: "*The Godmakers*, Take 1," Jess Allen. Airbrush illustration by John Easton, p. 40. Frank McEntire, "Iconographic Affirmation," 1983, pencil, 11½"×19½", p. 140. Property of the artist. Used by permission.

DIALOGUE: A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT is published quarterly by Dialogue Foundation, Editorial Office, 202 West 300 North, Salt Lake City, Utah 84103. DIALOGUE has no official connection with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Third class postage paid at Salt Lake City, Utah. Contents copyright © 1985 by the Dialogue Foundation. ISSN 002-2157.

Subscription rate is $25 per year; students $15 per year; single copies, $7. A catalogue of back issues is available upon request. DIALOGUE is also available on microfilm through University Microfilms International, Dept. F.A., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106, and 18 Bedford Row, London, WCIR 4EJ, England.

DIALOGUE welcomes articles, essays, poetry, fiction, selections for Notes and Comments, and art. Manuscripts must be sent in triplicate, accompanied by return postage, and should be prepared according to the *Chicago Manual of Style* including doublespacing all block quotations and notes. Use the author-date citation style as described in the thirteenth edition. Send manuscripts to DIALOGUE: A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT, 202 West 300 North, Salt Lake City, 84103.

LETTERS

"Heretical Lies"?

In regard to D. Michael Quinn's article "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904," (Spring 1985), a reader has noted that since 1981 university students at BYU and in LDS Church institute courses have been given the following instruction: "Others who refused to follow the commandment of the Lord claimed that the Manifesto was issued only for good public relations and that in secret the Church leaders still performed marriages and supported the practice. To put down such heretical lies, President Joseph F. Smith" issued the Second Manifesto of 1904. See Church Educational System. *The Doctrine and Covenants Student Manual (Religion 324–325)* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), p. 363.

The Editors

Peace at Any Price?

May I express my disappointment with the Winter 1984 issue of DIALOGUE and particularly with those articles that addressed the issue of war and peace in our time.

In dealing with most topics (e.g. Mormon history), the editors insist that contributors meet the highest standards of objectivity and reasoned discourse. Normally, the editors would demand that all sides of an issue be examined fully and completely and that the most difficult questions be raised and explored.

But with respect to the "peace" issue, only one point of view was represented. It appeared to this reader that the editors were taking a peace-at-any-price-stand. If so, this is a point of view that needs to be explored thoroughly.

Are the editors omniscient with respect to this particular issue? What is the source of this omniscience?

Are the editors omnipotent? Can they guarantee that following a peace-at-any-price policy will lead to the best of all possible worlds?

One logical result of pursuing such a course of action is the possible loss of our national sovereignty. We could certainly end up living under some form of one-world government (most probably a communist dictatorship). What would life be like under such a dictatorship? How would the Church progress under such a totalitarian government?

If we had to choose between nuclear war and slavery, can the editors be sure that slavery would be the lesser evil?

Maybe true peace can be built only on a spiritual foundation. Why was not this possibility explored thoroughly?

Is it possible that a strong nuclear deterrent force has helped preserve the peace and prevent a nuclear holocaust?

Why were these issues not explored in depth? Why did the editors abandon the long standing DIALOGUE policy of "encouraging a variety of viewpoints?"

Richard H. Hart
Forest Grove, Oregon

Editors' note: The editors of DIALOGUE do prefer peace to war. It is also true that people of good will differ about the most effective ways to achieve international tranquility. If the winter issue lacked balance as to strategies for peace, it was only be-

cause suitable manuscripts were not submitted from across the full spectrum of informed opinion. We too regret this fact.

Indians Not "Lamanites"?

Professor John Sorenson's recent series of articles, "Digging into the Book of Mormon," Parts I and II, *Ensign* Sept., Oct. 1984, is a milestone in Book of Mormon scholarship because it suggests a major change in the officially sanctioned interpretation of the Book of Mormon. Sorenson, an anthropologist at Brigham Young University, argues for abandoning the long-held doctrine that substantially all North and South American Indians are descended from the "Lamanites" of the Book of Mormon.

Sorenson's articles attempt to solve the most obvious archeological problem of the Book of Mormon — its contradiction with overwhelming evidence that the Indians were descended from nomads who began to migrate from Asia across the Bering Strait more than 20,000 years ago. Considering that there were up to 1,500 Indian languages at the time of Columbus, Sorenson observes that it would be "impossible to suppose that all those languages could have derived from the Hebrew presumed to be the speech of the Nephites and Lamanites." To resolve these conflicts between scientific evidence and religious doctrine, Sorenson sees the Book of Mormon peoples as a small Hebrew culture confined to a limited geographical region in Central American, isolated from widespread Indian populations to the north and south of them.

Notwithstanding Sorenson's printed disclaimer that the articles "are not intended to be an expression of official Church teachings," the articles were published in the *Ensign*, the official monthly magazine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which means that they were screened for orthodoxy by the Correlation Reading Committee (Adult).

Responding to questions about Joseph Smith's claim that the Book of Mormon was an ancient record — including those raised in my own writings (" 'Is There Any Way to Escape These Difficulties?': The Book of Mormon Studies of B. H. Roberts," DIALOGUE Summer 1984; and "Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon," *Free Inquiry*, Winter 1983–84), Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve directed in a 3 July 1984 memorandum to the Church Board of Education Executive Committee and the Special Affairs Commitee that a scholarly defense of the historicity of the Book of Mormon be prepared. Sorenson was named as a possible author, and his articles in the *Ensign* apparently serve as this "rebuttal."

Sorenson's "limited region" theory is not new. Historian and General Authority B. H. Roberts considered and rejected a similar theory more than sixty years ago on the grounds that this solution to "Book of Mormon difficulties" raised a new problem. This theory violates Book of Mormon characterizations of Hebrew migrations into a land "where there never had man been" (Eth. 2:5), and where Lehite populations would eventually "cover the whole face of the land" (Hel. 11:20) to become the ancestors of the American Indians. This designation of Indians as remnant "Lamanites" is expressed in the revelations and edicts, not only of Joseph Smith, but also of his successors, Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff (Smith, DIALOGUE, Summer 1984, p. 104). Even the Book of Mormon prophet Moroni (as reported by Joseph Smith) "said the Indians were literal descendants of Abraham" (Dean C. Jessee, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* [Salt Lake City; Deseret Book, 1984], p. 76).

From the discovery of the New World through the first half of the nineteenth century, American religious writers worried that the Bible contained no mention of Indians. A Bible focused on the Middle East, Greece, and North Africa appeared to lack universal meaning. If the Indians or their ancestors were not mentioned in Genesis, some believed the authenticity of the Bible was open to challenge. Were the Indians

part of a separate creation? Book of Mormon descriptions of Jaredite and Lehite migrations from the Old World echoed popular efforts to trace the genealogy of the American Indian back to Adam and Eve by way of the Tower of Babel and later Hebrew dispersions. In 1830, the Book of Mormon thereby served to validate the Bible.

Although he abandons the outdated LDS doctrine that the Indians are descended from Lamanites, Sorenson's revision leaves other archeological problems unresolved. Even if the Jaredites and Lehites occupied only a limited region of Central America, the Book of Mormon still portrays what appears to be an Old World culture, foreign to pre-Columbian Mesoamerica.

This problem is not merely an absence of evidence which some day we may hope to find. As some knowledgeable LDS Mesoamericanists have observed, the Book of Mormon describes a civilization which is inappropriate for the New World. It describes the wrong culture. Book of Mormon contradictions with early Mesoamerican culture are too pervasive to be explained, as Sorenson tries to do, as problems as "semantics" or due to "limitations" of research.

For example, the cows, pigs, and horses presented in the Book of Mormon were typical of both the Old World cultures found in the Bible and those in the Americas after the Spanish conquest, but not those in the ancient New World. On this mismatch, Thomas Stuart Ferguson, founder of the LDS-funded New World Archeological Foundation, commented: "That evidence of the ancient existence of these animals is not elusive, is found in the fact that proof of their existence in the ancient old-world is abundant" ("Response to Papers by John Sorenson and Garth Norman," Written Symposium on Book of Mormon Geography, 1975; partial typescript in my possession).

Though Mormons may no longer see a "Lamanite" in each Indian, Sorenson's "limited region" theory is ultimately unsatisfactory because it does not explain the discrepancy between Mesoamerican archaeological evidence and Book of Mormon descriptions of a transplanted Old World culture.

George D. Smith
San Francisco, California

German Scriptures

Marcellus Snow's "New German Versions of the Standard Works" (Spring 1984), raises several important points concerning these German translations. I would like to add these suggestions:

1. The newly-revised 1984 Luther text abandons *Umkehr* ("repentance") (an innovation of Karl Barth) and restores the older *Buße*. We should do the same. Baptism means different things in different religious groups but we do not abandon the word and say "faith, repentance, immersion" or "I immerse you . . ." or "John the Immerser." We simply explain what the word means to us. Where it might be misunderstood we say "baptism by immersion." Without doing violence to any theological concept, we could have retained four hundred years of tradition and said *Glaube, Buße, Taufe* instead of *starker Glaube, Umkehr, Taufe* ("strong faith, a change of heart, baptism").

2. Similarly, several other innovations are unnecessary. *Die Andern* ("gentiles") is too general and misleading. We should return to *die Nichtjuden* or *die Andersgläubigen* as some modern translations (*Fotobibel*, etc.) have done. The only possible reason for replacing *Heiland* with *Erretter* "savior" is its parallelism (*erretten, Erretting, Erretter*) with English "save, salvation, savior." *Heiland* is accurate and should have been retained.

3. There are no separate German equivalents for "just/justice" and "righteous/righteousness." They are simply King James variants. So are "charity" and "love." All German Bibles from Luther to the present treat them that way with two minor exceptions, but the LDS stan-

dard works create a new trilogy, *Glaube, Hoffnung, Nachstenliebe* instead of the traditional *Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe* for English "faith, hope, and charity." Similarly, the 1980 Book of Mormon uses *fester Glaube* ("strong, firm faith") for the English "faith" where earlier German editions used *Glaube*. As a result there are now two kinds of faith in the Book of Mormon (*Glaube* and *fester Glaube*) based on the personal interpretation of its current translator.

4. English has obviously been the source language in too many cases. Except for "emblems" (*Symbole*) in Snow's table of Latin and Greek origins, all the words are based on the English in the original text and only secondarily on the Latin or Greek.

Furthermore, the new translation for "the Lord God" (Hebrew *adonai yahwe*) ignores over 400 years of traditional German word order (*Gott der Herr* "God the Lord") to follow the English word order literally (*der Herr Gott*).

5. The distinction between "priesthood" (power, authority) and (men who hold the) "priesthood" should have been maintained throughout: *Priestertum* and *Priesterschaft* respectively.

6. Catholic and Protestant members of the translation commission agreed on uniform spellings for proper names in the Bible, but the Book of Mormon now has nonstandard spellings. Mosiah has been changed to *Mosia*. The biblical Noah, Zedekiah, and Isaiah (*EüNoach, Zidkija, Jesaja*) are *Noa, Zedekia*, and *Isaia* for nonbiblical persons in the Book of Mormon. An impossible German spelling (*Ssezoram*) has been created for English *Cezoram*, modern Yiddish spellings notwithstanding. Some English words ending in *-ah* are now spelled *-a* in German while others are spelled *-ach*. This inconsistency should be resolved by following the form of the name in the language of the original, English.

7. I believe native German speakers will verify that the new versions of the sacrament prayers are rhythmically uneven compared to the older versions because of the deletion of *du*, and the placement of appositives, relative clauses, and infinitive phrases. The use of the distributive singular *die Seele all derer* ("the soul of all those") is theologically disturbing, and modern German Bibles (including the EÜ) use the plural in Rev. 6:9 and 20:4 (*die Seelen all derer*). (See "Thoughts on the 1980 Translation of the Book of Mormon into German," unpublished paper available from the author).

King James translated the Greek *aionios* as *eternal (life)* twenty-nine and *everlasting (life)* thirteen times with no difference in theological meaning. The translator should have followed all earlier German translations and used *ewig* instead of the very nonbiblical *immerwährend.*

The translation guidelines were narrowly interpreted as excluding the German biblical tradition, thus implying that no tradition exists beyond the King James version. In the case of the Book of Mormon, the English text seems to have been considered an original source, even for phrases obviously from the King James Bible.

Perhaps it would be useful to reappraise translation procedures with the idea of eliminating some of these problems. For instance, using a group of specialists rather than a single translator would broaden the collective experience and almost certainly reduce the number of purely personal interpretations.

As another suggestion, we could follow the example of the *Einheitsübersetzung*, which was published in 1972 as a preliminary edition with sufficient time for revision before the final edition in 1980. This plan would have allowed reappraisal of some questionable decisions and also provided a period of accommodation between the two texts.

It would also be helpful if the translation guidelines acknowledged the history of the text. Many of the problems of finding the right words in German would have been simplified considerably if the translator had not felt it necessary to find a "literal translation" for "recurring [King James] expressions." The present guide-

lines seem unaware that neither the King James nor the Luther versions are literal translations. A useful model would allow translators to use the established tradition of the Luther text in the same way that Joseph Smith used the established tradition of the King James version when translating Isaiah and Matthew in the Book of Mormon.

And certainly, as part of the larger question, we should reexamine the place given to the King James text. It seems ironic to use the EÜ because it "comes closest to the King James version" (p. 134) when stylistically it is the Luther text that is closest to the King James. By reversing 150 years of LDS use of Luther's Bible as praised by Joseph Smith, the Church has now approved for German what it has refused for decades to do for English. I believe this is the real problem raised by the new translation. Can we afford to pursue one course in English and a very different course in German? If we should choose to follow for German the course presently followed in English, we would return to the Luther text. If we should choose to follow for English the course recently adopted for German, we would discontinue using the King James version and approve a more modern version or make our own translation. I would hope that guidelines of the future will provide a clear solution to this problem.

Marvin H. Folsom
Provo, Utah

Another View of Scholarship

McMurrin, the Tanners, and some of the rest
Just don't seem to get it at that.
When Packer declares in a most solemn voice
That history is not where it's at.
Now how can that be when some of our best
Are engaged in pursuit of that course?
They've brought forth the issues with élan we see
And shouted them out till they're hoarse.
Well, let's not get down on scholarly views.
They ring with an interesting voice.
But surely we see philosophical thought
And history's no ultimate choice.
They bring home the bacon, are fun for the able —
But both are just gaming at best.
No discipline's able to get us upstairs,
And could be an ultimate test.

So what do you do if you're hanging out there
Wondering if the gospel is true?
Can you give it a test as logic demands
That it meet all criteria for you?
Forget it, dear friends, it may never do that.
King Benjamin says why that's so.
In Mosiah 3 verse 19 you find
The reason some miss the plateau.

Higher critics can hardly aspire
For the case to be rested that way
But you won't find the message thrust into view
By rigor, no matter the day.
Just listen to Alma and try the reverse.
Believe in advance that it's true.
Forget what psychologists say of that trick
And the message will come home to you.

It's been so for others. You won't be the first
To sidestep what rigor demands.
But what do you care if it yields the result
That you know it without show of hands?
Humility's majesty singles few out
From the vast intellectual throng
But the spirit that touches the humble in heart
Will sing you a much sweeter song.

A. B. Leaver
Logan, Utah

Rendering Unto Caesar

The 1 March 1842 issue of the *Times and Seasons* included a copy of a letter to John Wentworth, editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, from Joseph Smith. Designed

to improve the public image of Mormonism, it omitted most of the peculiar teachings in favor of an image of variant Protestantism in its fourteen (now thirteen) Articles of Faith.

Responding to regular accusations that the Church was seditious, Joseph stated: "We believe in being subject to kings, queens [later deleted], presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring and sustaining the law." The Articles of Faith were canonized at the same general conference in which the Manifesto on polygamy was accepted. The year 1890 signaled a dramatic shift in the relationship of the Church to government. In the near-century since, most members have become politically conservative. The thunderings of earlier prophets against the national government are forgotten, Johnston's Army is barely mentioned, and polygamy is thought of as an embarrassment once practiced by a handful of members which ended with the Manifesto. The tendency to yield to authority in secular matters is an extension of our religious passivity as well.

Subservience to the powers that be is not, of course, unique to Latter-day Saints. Christ spoke of rendering unto Caesar what was of the worldly kingdom (Matt. 22:15–21) and the apostles counseled general cooperation with government (Tit. 3:1, Rom. 13:1–7, 1 Pet. 2:13–17). Yet they also made clear the dangers and limits in this approach (Acts 4:18, 31; 5:28–32, 40–42; also see James Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, p. 421).

Indeed, the present Mormon posture faces the same danger. While a low profile may be helpful in dealing with difficult governments, we face the prospect of identity with oppression when we seek the approval of regimes in places such as Chile and the Philippines. If the government is overthrown, might the new government consider expelling the Church or retaliating against members?

While protection of the institution and individual members necessitates a role less heroic than that, say, of Jehovah's Witnesses, we need to face the fact that sins of omission can be as damaging as those of commission when it comes to government-church relationships. Members should be taught Christian principles that will motivate them to work for social reform and to see oppressive governments as accepted by but not endorsed by the Church. While the Church need not encourage civil disobedience as an institution, will it allow individuals to exercise their consciences this way? Will it encourage social consciousness in a way which motivates members to be critical of oppressive governments? Clearly, some priorities need to be weighed or we would give approval to those condemned at Nurnberg and condemn those who struggle for civil rights in Poland and Russia today.

Three modern scriptures which support obedience to secular power have to be reexamined: Doctrine and Covenants 58:21–22 states:

> Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land.
>
> Wherefore, be subject to the powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign, and subdues all enemies under his feet.

Doctrine and Covenants Commentary by Hyrum Smith and Janne Sjodahl (revised and reissued under direction of the First Presidency in 1972), notes that this section refers "to the Constitution and all laws that are constitutional. Civil authority . . . is better than anarchy. Revolutionary movements that aim at the abolition of government itself are contrary to the law of God; those which are aimed at the correction of abuses are not wrong" (p. 139).

Doctrine and Covenants 98:4–7 also emphasizes that the "law" referred to is "constitutional." This does not, however, resolve many problems, conflicts, ambiguities; and it is difficult to apply to countries other than the United States.

The most extensive commentary on the subject is, of course, Section 134. *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*, however, points out that "this . . . is not a revelation. It was . . . prepared by Oliver Cowdery

and was read at the General Assembly of the Church, August 17, 1835 . . . . Joseph Smith and his second counselor, Frederick G. Williams, were in Canada . . . . It should be noted that in the minutes, and also in the introduction to this article on government, the brethren were careful to state that this declaration was accepted as the belief, or 'opinion' of the officers of the Church, and not as a revelation, and therefore does not hold the same place in the doctrines of the Church as do the revelations" (p. 852). Smith and Sjodahl suggest that that first sentence, claiming that "governments were instituted of God" should be changed: "The Lord in the very beginning revealed to Adam a perfect form of government . . . but we do not hold that all governments, or any man-made government, was instituted of God."

Another comment on Section 134 is found in the 1971 Sunday School manual *Scriptures of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*: ". . . but a wise qualification is added, which reflects the experience of many nations — '. . . while protected in their inherent and inalienable rights by the laws of such governments.' In other words, governments are a means to an end. They must serve man, protecting him in his basic rights. When they fail this, they no longer merit man's loyalty and allegiance" (pp. 168–69). This last sentence has radical implications. It is relatively easy for American members to take a conservative, passive stance. Most belong to an assimilated middle class. As the Church expands into the Second and Third Worlds, the complexities of church-state relations will become pressing.

"Non-constitutional law" is termed being "of evil" (D&C 98:7). It would seem fair to suggest that to ignore conscience when secular government commands would make us also "of evil." Perhaps it is time to examine the other side of Caesar's coin and rethink our obligations as citizens of Christ's kingdom.

Scott S. Smith
Thousand Oaks, California

Impossible Task

I agree with D. H. Parker (Autumn 1984, pp. 117–18) that it is "an impossible task" to "elicit a unitary point of view" from the Bible because the biblical text is itself self-contradictory. This is the single best answer to explain why the Bible has been so profoundly influential throughout history. *Both* sides of almost any theological contention can use (and have used) the Bible to prove their own specific truth.

Mormon theology is built squarely upon Joseph Smith, not the Bible. That Mormon doctrine commands respect in light of modern biblical research is evidence that Smith may have merit as an independent source for biblical truth. But Joseph's 1844 pronouncements excoriated the Bible for its theological errors. Joseph was no biblicist.

If the Bible *is* inherently self-contradictory in its important doctrinal pronouncements, a fact to be explained by its historical origins, then is it not "fraudulent" to treat the Bible as if it were unitary and self-consistent? Choosing one of the two (or more) conflicting biblical doctrines as the "true" one is basically fraudulent because there is no way *from the Bible itself* of verifying *that* version, as opposed to other versions equally and legitimately present in the text.

Why not be forthright? Let us *select* (not fuse into harmony) intelligently from the biblical potpourri those doctrines which we determine to be true from exhaustive historical analysis of origins of the Bible, especially the New Testament. Let us then weigh those doctrines in light of our modern *Zeitgeist* to see if they are eternal or were culturally based in their original pronouncement, hence modernly "irrelevant," to borrow Parker's perceptive phrase.

The fact of textual contradiction is a warning that critical examination is needed. Incorrectly to disarm that suspicion by official assurance that one version of the text is true merely covers up the really important question — how did the text get mixed up in the first place?

When Mormons spend the necessary time in the second-century manuscripts of the New Testament canonization process they may begin to see the "fraud" which has been perpetrated upon humanity by Christian orthodoxy since that time. Mormons then will feel less guilty for independently "selecting" (that's what canonization did) the truth among various New Testament doctrines.

"Investigating" the canon anew is an important task, especially in light of the cautions of E. J. Carnell: "When a gifted professor tries to interact with critical difficulties in the text, he is charged with disaffection, if not outright heresy. Orthodoxy forgets one important verdict of history: namely, that when truth is presented in a poor light, tomorrow's leaders may embrace error on the single reason that it is more persuasively defended." (*The Case for Orthodox Theology* [Philadelphia, Westminster, 1959], p. 110)

Gerry L. Ensley
Los Alamitos, California

SF and Religion

I'd like to add a lengthy footnote to Michael R. Collings's "Refracted Visions and Future Worlds: Mormonism and Science Fiction" (Autumn 1984).

Collings is at his best talking about how non-Mormon writers have dealt with Mormonism in science fiction; I'd like to point out a book that was published after Collings wrote his article: *Them Bones*, by Howard Waldrop (Ace, 1984). This novel, part of Terry Carr's new Ace Specials series of science fiction novels, is a wonderful tongue-in-cheek action-packed time travel story, the sort of sense-of-wonder tale that is at the heart of the sf genre.

Mormons will especially take note of the way Waldrop uses Mormonism in a delightful "bootstrap" paradox. In the bootstrap paradox, which was given its most powerful expression in Heinlein's "By His Bootstraps" and "All You Zombies," a character goes back into the past and sets in motion a chain of events that ultimately leads back to himself. For instance, in "All You Zombies," Heinlein gives us a character who, through time travel and a sex-change operation, is her own father and mother—an entirely self-existing, uncreated person. The same thing is done with a watch in the movie *Somewhere in Time* — one character received it as a gift from the other, then went back in time and gave it to her. At no point was the watch manufactured; it could not exist. Utterly impossible, but lots of fun.

In Waldrop's *Them Bones*, Colonel Spaulding, the commander of an expedition that has gone back in time to try to change the future, was born and raised a Mormon. Waldrop gets a few things wrong — does any Mormon ever call our meetings "services"? — but as ancient Indians keep killing off his expedition one by one, he becomes obsessed with the Book of Mormon. Whereupon he copies it over on metal plates and wanders off, presumably to go bury it in a hillside in upstate New York. It's hard to imagine many people besides Mormons getting the paradox — that the Book of Mormon caused its own creation — or even the joke about the Book of Mormon being a "Spaulding" manuscript after all. So we'll have to consider this a freebie that fun-loving Howard Waldrop has tossed in to delight his Mormon friends (and outrage a few who won't realize that this is all done in sport).

In "Refracted Visions," Collings does touch upon, but doesn't resolve, the question of how a Mormon writing science fiction should deal with religion. While George Scithers's proscription of mentions of God and angels in science fiction is about as silly as most of the rest of the things George Scithers says, it still reflects, superficially, the stance that science fiction inevitably takes: radical realism. Science fiction stories must take place within a mechanistic cause-and-effect system — or seem to. Thus, while God and Christ are rather often characters in science fiction, Scithers's blathering to the contrary not-

withstanding, they are always explained away. Most recently this is done in Barry Malzberg's fine story "Quartermain" (*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, Jan. 1985), where Jesus' life is reenacted (or enacted in the first place?) by an obsessive role-player who just can't seem to leave well enough alone. In other science fiction stories, God usually turns out to be an alien (e.g., Arthur Clarke's *Childhood's End*) or a machine or — you get the idea.

So what does a Latter-day Saint do when entering this radically realistic genre?

Since only a handful of us have done it, and at present I'm the most-published Mormon in the genre, it seems most pertinent for me to mention what *I* have done. I resolved long ago, when I was a playwright trying not to lose more than a few thousand dollars a year writing plays for the Mormon audience, that I would never attempt to use my writing to overtly preach the gospel in my "literary" works. That is, when I wrote for the *Ensign*, I of course wrote openly and favorably about Mormonism. But in my plays, the question of faith did not come up. If characters believed, then that was fine; if they didn't, then fine; but I found boring and usually offensive the endless plays about people wrestling with their faith. The sappy plays always ended with conversion. The artsy-fartsy plays always ended with desperate doubt. So what? It was (and is) my belief that most people who suppose they are struggling for faith are in fact struggling with far deeper and less intellectually available desires; and those who actually have faith do not bother with questions about what they *believe* that they believe. Faith exists in actions, not in emotions; I speak more about my characters and to my audience in what I make my characters *do* than in what I have them say or think.

Furthermore, I believe that I present Mormon theology most eloquently when I do not speak *about* it at all. I believe it is impossible for a writer to intellectually control his or her works at the most fundamental level: the most powerful effects of a work emerge from those decisions that the writer did not know he or she was making, for the decision simply felt inevitable, because it was right and true, not to be questioned or examined. In short, every human being's true faith is contained in what it does not occur to us to question.

So when Collings notices "generalized analogues" to Mormonism in my books *Capitol* and *The Worthing Chronicle*, he is actually noticing things that I did not deliberately do. On a conscious level, *Worthing* was an exploration of layers of story-telling, dreams within tales within memories; but I am not surprised that most LDS sf readers who have discussed the book with me have declared that they could tell all the way through that I was a Mormon. As long as I don't interfere with my own storytelling, I suspect that my works will always reveal my beliefs, both orthodox and unwitting heretical. And I believe that such expressions of faith, unconsciously placed within a story, are the most honest and also most powerful messages a writer can give; they are, in essence, the expression of the author's conceived universe, and the reader who believes and cares about the story will dwell, for a time, in the author's world and receive powerful vicarious memories that become part of the reader's own.

Naturally, with this point of view I found the Glen Larson approach both silly and offensive; I also find that most Mormon critics who have commented on my work and Larson's make the same self-contradictory mistake: They at once find Larson's approach — dropping in trivial LDS references — superficial, and then complain that because I don't do the same, I am denying/concealing/ignoring my Mormonism.

Truth is, LDS theology is every bit as radically realistic as science fiction; if Joseph Smith and the rest of us in our subsequent collective theological evolution have done anything, we have explained godhood in a completely rational way. In the process, however, we Mormons have completely abandoned mechanistic causation and adopted final, or purposive causa-

tion: The universe acts the way it does because it *wants* to, say we. The result is that my writing is received in some sf circles as particularly powerful, with a surprising and yet comfortable world view; while many others (a majority of those who care at all) are disturbed, annoyed, or threatened by the religion in my writing even though religion is almost never openly discussed. They are uncomfortable in my fictional universe because it forces the believing reader to accept a causal system that makes every human being completely responsible for his own actions. This is directly contrary to the prevailing Calvinist literary mode, which holds that human beings have no particular free will, but rather respond uncomfortably as Life (not God, who is out of fashion) dangles them like spiders over a fire, sustaining them as long as he feels like it, dropping them when he gets bored. They have become, in other words, uncomfortable with the notion of purpose, free will, and personal responsibility, which LDS theology uniquely proposes.

So LDS readers who natter about the violence in my stories, or the homosexuality in exactly one of my hundred-odd published or performed works, or my failure to "bear my testimony" in *Woman of Destiny*, are in effect asking me to deal with the most fundamental matters in a shallow, trivial, obvious, and inevitably ineffective way, all the while not noticing that I am already dealing with the LDS cosmology — or my version of it — in everything I do; but on an unconscious level that I discover only after the work is finished. I have come to trust that it will always be present in every work that I write with honesty and passion — which is, I believe, all of them.

However, if there are those who would prefer to see Mormon sf writers deal with something that "is recognizably religious and thematically 'Mormon,'" then I can mention a story I just completed, called "Salvage," which will appear sometime in the next year or so in one publication or another. It deals with Mormons overtly because it is set in a future Utah; the main character is a non-Mormon who discovers the community of faith only by realizing that he does not belong to it. It is, I am told, a very religious story, and I see that now; when I wrote it, it was simply a tale about a small-time expedition to try to salvage legendary hidden gold from the Salt Lake Temple, which is half-submerged in the rising waters of the Mormon Sea (a reborn Lake Bonneville).

I will be interested to see what a thoughtful writer like Collings will think of it, though I expect I'll hear much more from the lunatic fringe that believes that a Mormon writer who does not fulfill their personal agenda is somehow corrupt. The fact remains, though, that the story itself dealt with Mormonism only tangentially. Except for my wife, Kristine, no Latter-day Saint has yet read the story. Yet all who have read it have found it very religious, though perfectly compatible with the rationalist requirements of science fiction. So, apparently, it can be done, at least to the satisfaction of non-Mormons. As to satisfying Mormons — well, Mark 6:4 addressed that.

Orson Scott Card
Greensboro, North Carolina

The Godmakers Examined

Introduction

Randall A. Mackey

The Godmakers, which was first shown in 1983, was produced largely through the efforts of Edward Decker, who is currently international director of Saints Alive in Jesus. The film took three years to make at a cost of approximately $250,000. To pay for the film, Decker personally borrowed $65,000, obtained $50,000 from a group of investors and raised the remaining amount from donations.

According to one typical advertisement that appeared in *New Life Magazine* (Aug. 1983), "This hard-hitting film unmasks the myth of Mormonism from family home evening through the actual secret temple rituals." Another recent advertisement discloses that "This controversial film peels back the mask of lies to expose today's most respectable yet deceitful and fastest growing cult."

Decker, a Mormon for twenty years before asking to be excommunicated in 1976, claims that the film is now shown to about 200,000 people per month. It has been shown most often in California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Arizona, and New Mexico; but efforts were being made by so-called ministry teams as of the summer of 1984 to show the film in other states — particularly in communities where there are significant numbers of Mormons. In addition, the film has been shown in England, Finland, and several South American countries. A sequel to this film entitled *The Temple of the Godmakers* was released in the summer of 1984.

The film has created considerable religious controversy in many of the communities where it has been shown. It has been denounced both by Church members and by persons outside the Church. One knowledgeable Mormon, Truman G. Madsen, has described the film as "religious pornography" (*Arizona Republic*, 12 Nov. 1983). A well-known leader of the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith, after having viewed the film several times, concluded: "I sincerely hope that people of all faiths will similarly repudiate 'The Godmakers' as defamatory and untrue, and recognize it for what it truly represents — a challenge to the religious liberty of all" (Statement by Rhonda M.

Abrams, 25 May 1984, Regional Director of Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith).

A question often asked, after viewing the film and the literature distributed by Decker through Saints Alive in Jesus and Ex-Mormons for Jesus, is why has Decker become so obsessed with attacking the Church. In one published interview with a reporter at the *Seattle Times* (3 Nov. 1979) Decker was asked: "Why do you do what you are doing? If you wanted to leave the Church and go into something else, fine. Why not let the Mormons go their own way?"

Decker answered: "Because God loves them."

The reporter then asked: "Couldn't what you are doing be seen as just sour grapes?"

Decker answered: "It could. But, believe me, there are a lot better things in this world that I would like to be able to do. I feel called of God to do what I do."

Tonight we will take a critical look at this controversial film. We will first view several selected scenes from the film which should give those of you who have not yet seen it an idea of what it is all about.

Following these few scenes from the film, our first speaker will be Sharon Lee Swenson. Sharon is currently director of the Utah Humanities Resource Center and an exhibition coordinator of the Utah Media Center. She also does film reviews for *Network* and teaches film theory in the Honors Program at the University of Utah. Sharon has received B.A. and M.A. degrees in English from the University of Utah where she is currently working on a doctoral degree in English. Sharon told me that she is particularly proud of her husband, Paul, who is editor of *Utah Holiday*, and her two children. I might also add that her brother, Fred Esplin, is the business manager and a member of the executive committee of DIALOGUE. Her topic is entitled, "Does the Camera Lie? A Structural Analysis of The Godmakers."

Our second speaker will be Allen D. Roberts. Allen is a historical architect with Wallace N. Cooper, Architects and Associates, and is also the editorial associate and a member of the executive committee of DIALOGUE. He is formerly the co-publisher of *Sunstone* and president of the Sunstone Foundation. Allen has had various theological and historical articles published in *Sunstone*, *Utah Historical Quarterly* and *Utah Holiday*. He and his wife, Dawn, are parents of five children. Allen's topic is entitled, "The Godmakers: Shadow or Reality? A Content Analysis."

Our final speaker will be Donald A. Eagle. Don has been the Arizona regional director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews since 1965. He has also served as Vice President for Field Development of that organization supervising work in ten major cities in the Southwest. Don was ordained to the ministry of the Disciples of Christ in 1948, after having received his master of divinity degree from Drake University. He served as a pastor for the Disciples of Christ for eight years before joining the National Conference for Christians and Jews. He has been given numerous awards over the years, including the Leadership Award from the Church of Castle Hills, the Religious

Award and the Outstanding Award from Phoenix's Human Resources Department, the Liberty Bell Award from the Maricopa County Bar Association for contributions to the advancement of law by a non-attorney, the Distinguished President's Award by Kiwanis International, and the Humanitarian Award by the Lewkowitz Lodge of the B'nai B'rith. Don and his wife, Dorothy, are parents of two children. His topic is entitled, "One Community's Reaction to The Godmakers."

Does the Camera Lie? A Structural Analysis of *The Godmakers*

Sharon Lee Swenson

Before we begin our discussion of the film, which is fifty-eight minutes long, we would like to show you ten minutes of clips we extracted to provide a sample of the film's style and content. Permission to use the clips and the film itself was provided by Ed Decker. They include:

1. The prologue: The opening scenes which show the tone and establish the narrative frame of the story, as we are introduced to the Church and meet Ed Decker and Richard Baer as they approach two Los Angeles attorneys to pursue a suit against the LDS Church.

2. An animation sequence which Decker and Baer show the attorneys to illustrate "the difference between Mormons and Christians."

3. A brief discussion of LDS temple garments and certain semantic "links" with satanism.

4. The closing segment of the film, which opens with Eugene Eliason reading the suicide note left by his sixteen-year-old son Kip (he had appeared in an earlier sequence with a photo of Kip) and ends with a subjective shot of two young men dressed as Mormon missionaries approaching the viewer's door.

[The clips were shown at this point.]

Does the camera lie? Of course it does. If you doubt it, look at the photo on your driver's license or passport. You certainly don't look like that representation of yourself. Moving pictures can also lie. For example, we can show that people are having a wonderful time at this session by focusing on happy, delighted faces or the reverse by showing angry people yelling and stamping their feet. The camera can deceive by what it excludes, how the footage it records is arranged, how sound is added to image, how images are lit, or the angle the camera is aimed from. And don't forget sound. We are not dealing simply with images in a movie but a combination of image and sound.

Well, then, if the camera *can* lie, does it here?

What is *The Godmakers*? Ed Decker says work on it began in 1979. Credits at the end include copyright material from *Conspiracy Cults* and *Journey to Kolob* as early as 1980. It was released in its present fifty-eight minute version in January 1983. A shorter film, *Temple of the Godmakers*

which includes the depiction of the temple ceremony used in this film and some outtakes, is also in release.

Decker calls it "a straightforward documentary critical of the Mormon religion" (*Provo Herald*, 10 April 1983). In the *Seattle Times* (8 April 1983), Decker is quoted as saying, "The actual lies that the Mormons are fed are things we deal with."

Decker told a *Salt Lake Tribune* reporter, 29 October 1983, "The movie is an impact film. It is meant to be an impact film . . . . Our ministry is to bring Jesus of Calvary to the Mormon people."

Posters and ads publicizing the film say: "This hard-hitting film unmasks the myth of Mormonism from family home evening through actual secret rituals." Other publicity is headlined: "This controversial film peels back the mask of lies to expose today's most respectable yet deceitful and fastest growing cult!" It adds, "Why do concerned pastors find this shocking exposé essential viewing for their congregations? Because 30,000 door-to-door Mormon missionaries lure over half their converts from Christian churches!" (*New Life Magazine*, Aug. 1983)

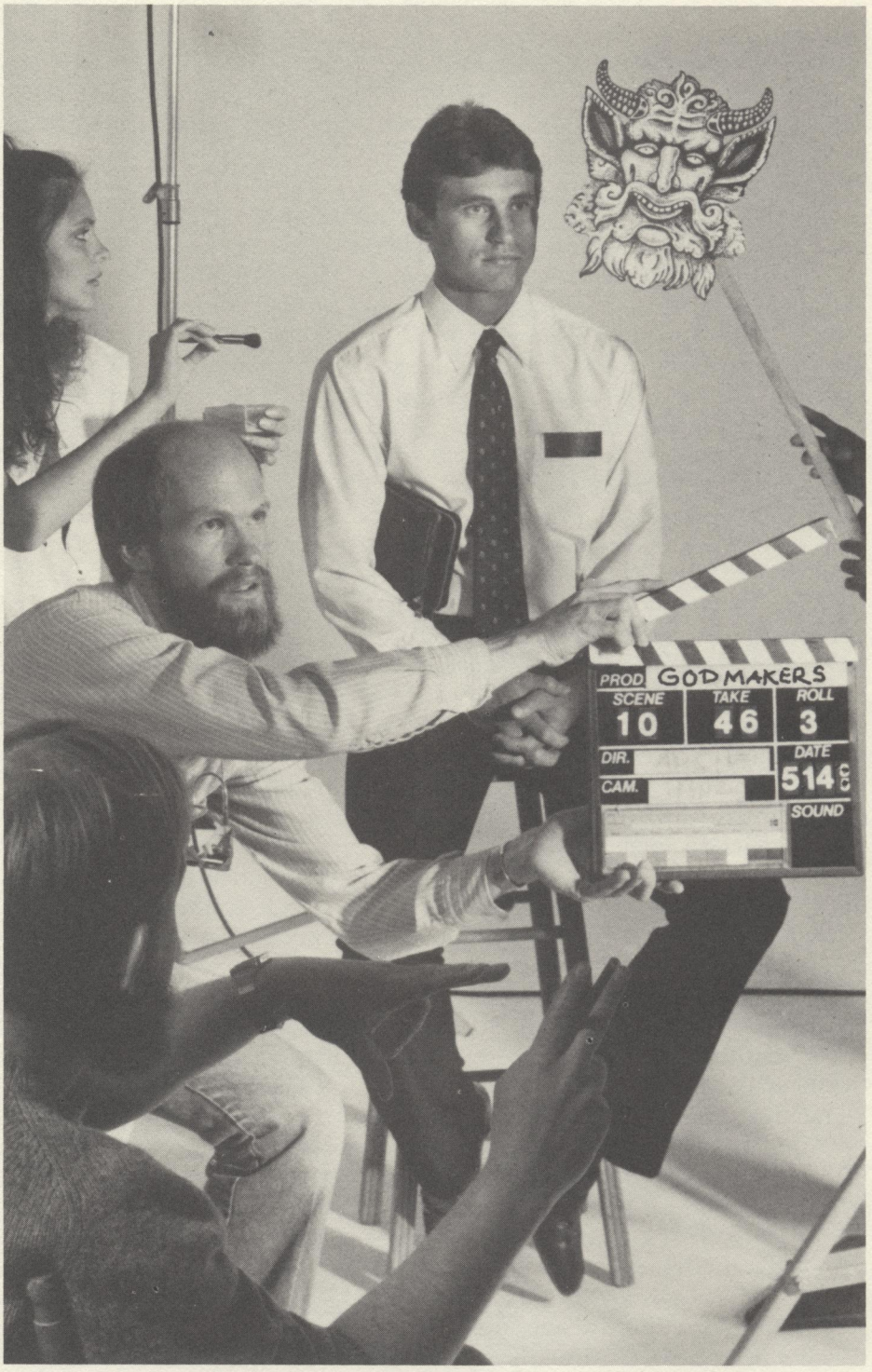
Is *The Godmakers* a documentary, an "impact film," a hard-hitting unmasking of myth, an exposé? Religious pornography? Propaganda? There is an obviously wide divergence of opinion.

I am looking at the film in terms of its structure, or the way its essential elements are arranged. The narrative structure of the film suggests it is a documentary, a celluloid collection of *documents* considered as evidence in a legal trial. These are documents, the film suggests, that are real, factual, actual, and available for examination. Film documentaries have existed as long as the cinema itself. There is a noble tradition of *cinema verité* — or "film truth" — which attempts to record reality as it is, unvarnished. This film-making approach assumes, of course, that we can know reality as it is and agree on it — have a consensus among us.

Is this film an effort to objectively present information so the viewer can learn what Mormonism is and decide how he/she feels about it, or does it provide a specific view of Mormonism which it hopes to persuade viewers to accept?

Any film *structures* meaning in a variety of ways, and my basic critical assumption is that the important determination of what *The Godmakers* means arises from the interaction of the film and the viewer, not from statements of the filmmaker or any critic. How does *The Godmakers* use the elements of the film to *structure* a response? What is that response?

All films — fictional or documentary — are composed of certain elements. These include: (1) the narrative or "story" or plot; the thesis; what happens when to whom over time? (2) the characters, actors, "real people" to whom the action occurs; (3) camera movement and placement; (4) editing: the juxtaposition of images or the way things are put together; (5) sound, which can include voice-over narration, dialogue, music, and special effects; (6) the sets or natural settings which create the "ambience" of a film; (7) lighting which may be totally natural in a documentary, filtered, optically treated, or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angled for a specific reason. (For example, you've probably held a flashlight under your chin to scare someone. That's the basic "Frankenstein" lighting that makes even the most beautiful face appear monstrous. Backlighting, or lighting from behind, can make you look angelic. I always like that kind of lighting; it adds a certain credibility and frailty I otherwise lack.)

The narrative style of *The Godmakers* is ostensibly linear. The action occurs in "real time" (that is, time on and off-screen are presumed to be identical, with no artful ellipses), within an office of two attorneys in Los Angeles. Within this "reality," the film's narration moves fluidly through time and space. A brief animation sequence is projected in the law office (a projector propitiously being present) but interviews with a multitude of people in a wide variety of locations are not explained. We do not know where we are. We are not introduced to the person being interviewed. We do not know who is the interviewer. One of the two central characters, Ed Decker, suddenly speaks to the camera without the jacket he has worn throughout the film, seated in a comfortable chair near a desk in what appears to be his home. No explanation for the transition is made. We, with the camera, move inside and outside of various homes and offices (including an LDS visitors' center), to Hawaii, Great Britain, Seattle, Salt Lake City, and historic Cove Fort, Utah, where one memorable interview occurs beneath a stuffed buffalo head with the interviewee in pioneer costume. No comment or explanation of the voyages is made: we simply move through time and space. And in the course of the film, we accept this convention without protesting. Film time and real time *seem* identical. The only comparable experience I can recall is the Mormon Miracle Pageant where we move from the pre-existence to the Holy Land to nineteenth-century New York, then to pioneer Utah, culminating with flag-waving contemporary Boy Scouts.

We do not see the film through a single person's eyes, or point of view, although the controlling consciousness is clearly that of Decker and Baer. The deep, portentous tones of the narrator suggest an authoritative, informed, even eternal, point of view. We don't know who he is or where the voice is coming from, but we know a great deal about his ability to make decisions based on the fervency and power of his voice.

The impact of the narrative form is relevant to the film's message. You, the viewer, are a judge of the evidence presented. And the implication of the structure is that you are reviewing testimony from witnesses on both sides of the "case." "Witnesses" speak directly to the camera (which is you) and no interviewer is visible or suggested, with one exception which will be discussed later. No cross-examination or clarification of evidence is possible in this pseudo-legal presentation, but the impact of a courtroom drama is suggested and maintained. The viewer is the judge and jury. The film's final scene suggests a course of action as well as an attitude for viewers to adopt.

At this point it may be appropriate to discuss briefly what the style of presentation evokes. No film functions in a vacuum. As T. S. Eliot, in "Tradition and the Individual Talent," pointed out, each new literary or artistic work draws on and transforms the history of its form (1919, 380).

While the ostensible manner of the presentation is documentary in *The Godmakers*, it evokes several other very familiar "classics." The first is Jack Webb's "Dragnet." The music and earnest, searching tone suggest Sergeant Joe Friday's efforts to elicit "just the facts, ma'am." The second is Rod Serling's "Twilight Zone": the narrator's deep voice and the sci-fi music remind us of those bizarre, fascinating episodes.

The other tradition is that of a "Sixty-Minutes" style television news program, a rigorous, reportorial investigation of a matter clearly relevant to the public's well-being, and — by implication — worthy of deeper study. It also evokes the "March of Time" and other kinds of newsreels we're all too young to remember — and which I myself know only through archival footage. The other allusion is more sensitive. Some people have commented that watching the film is like watching pornography. Since I have no experience in this field — and no desire to acquire any — I will leave it to your own sensibility.

The action of the film within the trial framework and ostensibly neutral narration is the presentation of the "highly groomed" image of Mormonism and the horrifying reality that lies beneath the mask.

A very important element in any film is its human characters, those to whom the action happens. All the people in this film are presented as "real people," although several are actually actors re-creating incidents. Quickly, the film includes, in roughly chronological order: an invisible narrator, a middle-aged man whose family is torn from him (I call this man the stevedore; he is portrayed by an actor); a bearded, artistic-looking professorial man who lost his family (an actor); Ed Decker; Dick Baer; two attorneys (I call one the Doubting Thomas — he is wearing a velvet jacket — and the other I call Mr. Silver Gray, a distinguished older man — both actors); Harold Goodman (identified in the film as a "BYU professor, former bishop, and present mission president"); Brian Grant (identified in the film as "director of public relations for the LDS Church in Great Britain and Ireland"); an unnamed and wholesome-looking middle-aged couple with southern accents I call Mr. and Mrs. Sport Shirt; various people waiting in line to see the Seattle Temple before its dedication who are being interviewed by a woman whose voice is heard but who never appears on-camera; the never seen narrator; Floyd McElveen (identified in the film as "author of *The Mormon Illusion*"); Jolene and Craig (she, a pretty, wholesome blond and he, a chunky, healthy football player); an unidentified teenage girl; a "pink daisy" lady in Hawaii; another woman with very short hair who is very lonely; Eugene Eliason, and his surviving son (both refer to their son/brother Kip, whose photo is shown); Thelma Geer, "author, lecturer, and great-granddaughter of convicted Mormon assassin, John D. Lee;" the separate narrator of the animation; "a family portrait," (a sincere open-faced couple and their attractive children); a mature blonde woman; Ron Priddis, identified as "editor of the Mormon underground paper, *The Seventh East Press*"; Sandra Tanner, "author, lecturer, and one of the greatest living experts on Mormonism;" Charles Crane, "author, college professor, and expert on Mormon archaeology;" Richard Thales, "author, lecturer, and archaeologist;" and two unidentified young men dressed as Mormon missionaries.

Everyone addresses the camera directly, except for Decker, Baer, and the two attorneys. Everyone is seated, facing the camera or walking toward it.

The Mormons are wholesome and cheerful: Goodman is rosy-cheeked and cherubic; Grant almost leprechaunish; Priddis's countenance is almost archetypically open and honest.

But their very appearance becomes sinister when we learn of the terrible things they believe and do. Ultimately in the film, Mormons must be viewed as deluded or deceiving. Either they are unaware of the evil the Church commits or they are part of the mask covering corruption.

All the victims are wholesome, too. They look just like Mormons! They are all "real" people and speak simply, directly and spontaneously. They don't seem to be actors reading their lines; but few ordinary people present themselves so professionally. There are no stumblings, no "uh . . . uh. . . . uh . . . 's" of ordinary people trying to collect their thoughts for the next sentence. Everyone in the film seems sincere and earnest, although the Mormons are obviously misguided.

The placement and movement of the camera is a very subtle but important element of filmmaking. In *cinema verité* the camera is often hand held, creating jerky, quick movements that enhance the sense of unmediated reality captured by the camera's unblinking eye. Here the camera is remarkably stable, stationary for virtually all of the interviewing. But when it does move, it is dramatic. The long pans up and down the Church Office Building are terrifying. It contributes to the sinister sense of something rotten behind the gleaming surface of the Church as well as its gleaming, modern headquarters. The nature of the camera movement becomes a structural device contributing to the film's thesis of an innocent exterior that conceals a corrupt interior.

The editing of *The Godmakers* is impressive. It is a style generally called "invisible." Shot is matched to shot so smoothly you are unaware any cut has been made. It is tight and fluid. The sequences flow on linked topics, words, or ideas, so that you have a sense of moving smoothly even though great leaps of time, space, and — to my mind — logic, are being made. The transitions are always gracefully made, never calling attention to themselves with moments of blackout or conceptual gaps. They always appear natural, reasonable, and necessary. This technique works to enhance the seeming logic of the presentation.

Normally in a journalistic interviewing situation, you have shots of the questioner and then a reverse shot of the interviewee answering. Or you have a shot from behind the interviewer that shows a partial profile or back of the head as he/she addresses the person answering the questions. Not here. No interviewer is ever seen or, with the exception of the woman interviewing people outside the Seattle Temple, ever heard. It's as if the speakers effortlessly respond to questions we don't even have to articulate. They know what we want to know. The danger is that we may not formulate the questions that are *not* answered. In fact, we may not even think of those questions.

At one point, three different people describe their obviously genuine pain caused by Church leaders' advice that they should divorce. At least two are

actors, the "stevedore" and the "bearded professor." Their "testimonies" are intercut with comments from Grant (still in his original interview situation) on the Mormon respect for marriage and the family. Then we see again the sorrowful faces of those who genuinely and affectingly share their pain. The effect is to prove Grant a liar, but very smoothly. We have the impression that a witness for the defense has responded very inadequately to the charges made by prosecution witnesses. But in reality, he has never heard nor responded to the particulars that surround his answer in the film. In a trial, an attorney would ask, "How do you answer the charge?" But here the process is swift and unstated — and inaccurate and unfair. This is not a court room where witnesses present evidence and are cross-examined within a legal framework, but the impression is created that it *is*.

The film uses a wide range of sounds to accompany its images, including science fiction music ("the-alien-invaders-draw-near" subgenre—supernatural but hokey), minor chords, the sincere voices of witnesses, the smooth voices of Goodman and Grant (which begin to seem slick), and most notably, the special sound effect of the creaking door at the end of the film.

The traditional film term, "dialogue," meaning lines created by a scriptwriter, seems a misnomer for the language of the film. It honestly appears to be people sharing what they feel and believe. All the interviewees' lines sound real, unstudied, heartfelt, spontaneous. Only Goodman and Grant sound as if they are repeating lines said so often the meaning has been lost. And when the anonymous female interviewer asks a painfully cleancut young man waiting outside the Seattle Temple, he responds, seemingly automatically, "We believe in God the Eternal Father and his son Jesus Christ. . . ." He speaks so mechanically it's as if he has been brainwashed — more proof of this sinister cult's mind-manipulation.

The narrator's deep-pitched, sonorous voice is almost self-parodying. He entones the most incredible lines with the same authoritative voice we know we can trust from all those documentaries that fill Sunday afternoon.

The dialogue does include some instances of loaded language, for instance, "highly evolved humanoids," "the Mormon Jesus," "tithing extracted." But in general the former Mormons speak in everyday, practical terms that make the religious terms of Mormon theology and the temple seem even more bizarre by contrast.

The sets of the film are "real," natural, neutral. But like everything else, the very ordinariness becomes suspect. We feel that the normality is only surface. It's like a cheerful village in a Hitchcock film just before the murder — a veneer, a mask, that conceals evil in the most sunny circumstance.

The lighting throughout is very naturalistic. This is, incidentally, hard to achieve. All the interviews with former Mormons take place in wholesome, well-lit houses — family rooms filled with light and green plants — or in sunny exteriors. There are no dark corners here. Even when Sandra Tanner is interviewed with a snowy scene outside her study window, the light is never harsh or sharp. The attorneys' office in the last scene is darker than I remember ever seeing in "real life," but it reflects the darkening mood of the film.

The exception to the lightness is remarkable. The final scene of the film shows the missionaries approaching *your* door, with the wedge of black moving across the screen and a curious light in their eyes. (All this, remember, is backed by the creaking door that you've heard hundreds of times before in Count Dracula's castle or Dr. Frankenstein's laboratory.)

Using my own responses as a geiger counter registering the peaks of emotional response, I conclude that *The Godmakers* presents the wholesome family image of the Church and then reveals the evil beneath it.

You can only conclude Mormons are brainwashed or corrupt. They are hypocrites who preach family togetherness and love but practice demonic rituals and punish any who deviate from a very rigid norm.

The final result, even if you are skeptical of the kind of *National Enquirer* mentality the film also evokes, is a suspicion of and distaste for all Mormons, and secondarily and unintentionally, the film leads viewers to distrust anyone who talks about Christianity and claims Jesus Christ. The film attempts to show Mormons who discovered Christianity and left the non-Christian church. But the approach generates a queasiness about all charismatic religious expression.

Finally and personally, the film is very well done despite some clumsy touches. After studying it carefully, I acquired a respect for the energy and skill of those who made it.

As a devout Mormon, I am irritated and disturbed by its illogic and anger. (Like much Mormon publicity and film, the film is sexist: all the major characters are male. The women — especially in the animation — are all blond, buxom clones.)

But what disturbs me most is not the depiction of sacred rituals, or misrepresentations of theology, or generalizing from limited evidence. It is the very real pain that I can sense in these people. And I know that the film uses the same kinds of appeal to emotion and poor logic we sometimes use to attract people in the Church.

I can discredit elements of the film, quarrel with the manipulativeness of its presentation, but I am moved by the honest pain I know it shows.

One image from the film haunts me. It is the face of a woman. She is not strikingly beautiful or ugly. She sits alone — the camera in very tight on her. Like many others, she describes the transforming joy of discovering Jesus and leaving the Mormon Church. But more vivid than that change is the description of her pain. "I was alone as a child in the Church. I was alone as a wife. I was alone when I was divorced. Where is the love?" As I look at the reality of her pain, unshared by her sisters in the gospel until she articulates it for the camera, I know that here the camera does *not* lie.

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The Godmakers: Shadow or Reality? A Content Analysis

Allen D. Roberts

As I begin, I wish to state that the following observations and comments are entirely personal. I do not represent the LDS Church in any official way, nor is it my intent to function as a defender of the faith. My remarks are simply the reflections and impresions of one who feels the content of the movie *The Godmakers* is worth discussing.

As the aerial camera pans across the white face of the beautifully situated Hawaiian Temple, a narrator begins the film by stating: "It looks beautiful from the outside but when you pull off the mask and talk to the victims, you uncover another part of the story. The documented evidence you are about to see may seem unbelievable but it is all true." This opening comment thus introduces the idea that viewers will be watching a documentary, that some evil will be uncovered and that "evidence" and "truth" will be the instruments for making this evaluation. Ed Decker and Dave Hunt, in their recent book, *The Godmakers*, confirm that they consider the movie to be "a documentary film" (1984, 16). In support of the claim, we are told in the book that three years of research went into the film. Certainly one might expect this of a documentary effort. Furthermore, aspects of the film's format suggest a documentary approach.

Before attorneys, two would-be plaintiffs, Ed Decker and Dick Baer, outline evidence for a proposed lawsuit. They maintain that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a dangerous organization bent on destroying people's lives and apparently hope to stop the Church's activities through the intended legal action. This setting offers the narrative frame for the film in which the rest of the evidence is presented.

Included in the evidence are brief excerpts from longer interviews held with a variety of "experts," persons both in and out of, for and against, the Church. Typically, an orthodox Mormon spokesman will explain a Church principle or practice. Then a non-Mormon or former Mormon will give information intended to undermine or refute the previous claim. The primary intent is clearly to try to show the failings and anomalies of Mormonism. In some places, animation is used to dramatize Mormon beliefs. All of this material and the form in which it is presented could conceivably be considered a documentary.

And what are some of the "documented" findings and conclusions presented in the film? There are many and they are very wide-ranging. I have identified some of the major themes which follow roughly in the order in which they are shown: the character of Mormonism collectively and the character of individual Mormons; Mormonism as a satanic cult and practitioner of pagan temple rites; the credibility of Joseph Smith as prophet; Mormon sociological patterns; and the credibility of Mormon scriptures.

Within each of these themes, and others, pro and con arguments are developed and many pointed conclusions are drawn. Consider the merits of each of these claims, most of which are quoted directly from the film's transcript or expressed as reasonable paraphrases or extrapolations.

1. There are two aspects of Mormonism — the *unreal* one of friendly, loving, family-centered, Christian appearances (called the mask) and the other aspect of secrets and evil, the *real* Church described in the film as "one of the most deceptive and dangerous groups in the entire world."

2. Mormonism is "incredibly effective in brainwashing" its people.

3. Mormonism is a cult and is tied "into [the] occult and Satanism."

4. Mormonism is based on heretical doctrines, such as: "A worthy Mormon can become a god himself in the life hereafter, ruling over his own planet with a number of goddess wives." "God is a perfected man." "Their [Mormons'] whole doctrine comes from this [idea] about being gods." "Mormonism is far removed from orthodox Christianity."

5. Joseph Smith was a tall-tale teller and treasure-seeker who was involved in the occult. He fabricated visions and made up the fictitious Book of Mormon and book of Abraham. Joseph lied, made untrue predictions, and practiced polygamy behind his wife's back; thus, he is not credible as a prophet of God.

6. The Mormon Church pressures persons into divorcing spouses who do not measure up to Church standards.

7. Church members (women and teens are mentioned most) are under incredible pressure to be perfect. Because they can't be, they become depressed, divorce and/or commit suicide. (The story of Kip Eliason, a sixteen-year-old LDS boy from Idaho who committed suicide because his sexual feelings conflicted with Church prescriptions, is especially forceful.)

8. LDS leaders know that church history, if fully known, could ruin the Church (the nine versions of the First Vision are cited as an example), so the true history is hidden from the members in order to protect the faithful.

9. Mormons rewrite their scriptures and histories to hide inconsistencies and reinforce unity of belief among present members.

10. There is no archaeological evidence to support the claim that the Book of Mormon is an actual history of a real people. It is, to quote a professed archaeologist, "a fairy tale." Mormon claims of archaeological evidence are all untrue.

11. Likewise, the book of Abraham is not an authentic translation as claimed.

12. Unlike Bible scholars, Mormons test their scriptures with a "burning in the bosom" rather than with archaeological evidence and textual criticism.

13. Mormons who have received temple endowments have consented to having their throats slit, and heart and vitals torn out.

14. Temple ceremonies are occultist and include a "fanatical program to evangelize for the dead."

15. Temple garments are magical and will protect faithful wearers from harm.

16. Mormons lie to achieve their ends. They also circulate false stories about former members while attempting to do them harm.

17. Utah, hence Mormon, society leads or is among the nation's leaders in many societal ills including divorce, suicide, child abuse, teenage pregnancy, V.D., bigamy, bankruptcy, and stock fraud.

18. The Church is without love. Former members feel alienated and empty because Mormonism has undermined their faith in the Bible and other churches. Persons leaving the Church are in jeopardy of losing their spouses, children, friends, and jobs.

It is not uncommon for documentaries to make conclusions, even strongly worded conclusions. As I have watched such documentaries as *Life on Earth* and *The Voyage of the Beagle*, I have observed that, like most documentaries, these used the scientific, deductive process of searching for facts, objectively analyzing the facts, and producing defensible, tested conclusions based on the facts. Fiction plays little or no part in a documentary. And while conflicts may be presented, strong preexisting biases are subordinated to sincere investigative intent.

With *The Godmakers*, this process is reversed. A strong anti-Mormon mindset seems to have been firmly in place before the project began. Consider that in meetings of Saints Alive/Ex-Mormons for Jesus, the three stated goals of the Deckerites are said to be: to teach the true gospel to Latter-day Saints and bring them to Christ; keep people from joining the Church by negating the Mormon missionary effort; and offer fellowship to those who have left the Church and help heal their psychological wounds.

Given these underlying purposes, was there any chance for a positive or even balanced result? Probably not. The three-year search seems to have concentrated on gathering information to support a predetermined conclusion about Mormonism. Rather than objectively weighing the evidence and letting it suggest possible conclusions, the filmmakers have manipulated and shaped the evidence to support the anti-Mormon theme.

The Godmakers is really a one-sided exposé, a term incidentally, used by the authors in both the film and on the cover of *The Godmakers* book.

Redefining *The Godmakers* as an exposé rather than a documentary allows us to revise our expectations and better prepares us for the film's sensationalistic content. For in *The Godmakers* we find faulty assumptions, flawed reasoning, over-simplification, innuendo, hyperbole, failure to distinguish between canonized doctrine and speculative theology, distorted interpretations of social statistics, unethical use of Church spokesmen, proof-texting, representing the unusual to be typical, and inflation of qualifications of "experts."

For examples, advertisements for Decker represent him as "a former member of the Mormon hierarchy" (*Sword*, 23). To Mormons, this would imply that he had been a General Authority, not merely one of the tens of thousands of ward or stake officers. Non-Mormons, too, must get the impression that Decker occupied a very high ecclesiastical position, one allowing him to become entirely familiar with the inner workings of the real Mormonism. Obvi-

ously, it would be more faith shattering to Roman Catholics if a cardinal denied his church than if a local priest were to do so. There seems to be deceitful intent here.

And what about the undesignated expert "doctors" (Smith, Sales, and Crane) interviewed for their views on Book of Mormon archaeology? Do they have academic doctorates in the fields they are commenting on? No, at best they are ministers with doctorates of divinity; at worst they are armchair experts cooperating in discrediting Mormonism.

Testimonies of the Mormon experts such as mission president Harold Goodman, are often presented in isolated statements with no context or recording of the questions they were responding to. Non-Mormons are usually quoted at greater length.

It is inferred from state and federal reports on the state of Utah, that Mormons have a higher than average incidence of divorce, teenage pregnancy, suicide, child abuse, alcoholism, etc. This assumption does not acknowledge that better than 30 percent of the state's populace is non-Mormon. Even more importantly, no account is made of the varying levels of religious activity among Mormons. Given that perhaps 50 percent of Mormons are not actively practicing their faith (a higher rate of activity generally than in other Christian churches), as much as 65 percent of the state's population (including the non-Mormons) would not be expected to be fully committed to LDS tenets.

A careful review of social statistics among committed Mormons underscores this point. One study, for example, shows that temple-married Mormons are five times less likely to divorce than LDS couples married outside the temple and three times less likely to divorce than couples married nationally. It should also be remembered that Utah's divorce rate is usually the lowest in the Mountain States, a region in which liberal divorce laws have led to nation-leading divorce rates. And while Utah has a higher rate of teenage marriage than exists nationally, temple-married couples under nineteen have a divorce rate five-and-one-half times lower than the national average for the same age group (Bahr 1981).

It is clear, then, that the point made by *The Godmakers* is true in reverse. Rather than being the cause of higher than normal divorce statistics, temple marriages and religious behavioral orthodoxy are most closely correlated with much lower than average rates.

In an attempt to portray Mormonism as a cult far removed from mainstream Christianity, the filmmakers represent numerous statements to be Mormon doctrine, emphasizing those ideas which would seem most anomalous to Christians. No attempt is made to distinguish between doctrine found in canonized scripture or official pronouncements, and those highly speculative theories originating in obscure or nonauthoritative statements circulating through the Church in oral tradition and folklore. Ideas of this latter type may offer interesting insights but deal with unrevealed matters and open questions not considered binding on members or essential for exaltation. Here are some statements misrepresented in *The Godmakers* as being official Mormon doctrine:

1. Jesus, according to Orson Pratt, had at "least three wives and fathered children, a direct descendent of which was Joseph Smith." This statement seems to be a mistaken reference to Orson Hyde's theorizing that Jesus may have been married to Mary, Martha, and Mary Magdalene (JD 2:79–83). However, Hyde's view is obviously not an official Church position. Even if both Hyde and Pratt personally espoused and commented publically on this hypothesis, these men are only two of many Church leaders, past and present, to speculate on theology and history.

2. "Husbands and wives who have successfully achieved godhood will be required to populate their own planet by procreating as many spirit children as possible." Latter-day Saints do accept that God is literally the father of human spirits, but descriptions of divine marital and domestic arrangements are not doctrinal. Neither are speculations about the state of human beings who may be exalted to godhood in the future. By adding the words "required" and "as many . . . as possible" to a popular Mormon notion, the filmmakers push the idea to an extreme never intended by its creators.

3. Elohim, conceived by "an unidentified god and one of his goddess wives" as "a spirit child," later received a physical body from mortal parents. Then he became a god "through obedience to Mormon teaching and death and resurrection." Whether doctrine or not, this concept of God is considered heretical by many non-Mormon Christians. But the wording here makes it seem even worse by implying that God exists after or is subordinated to Mormon teaching.

4. On Kolob "the god of Mormonism and his wives, through endless celestial sex, produced billions of spirit children." To make an idea seem absurd, the scriptwriters again describe a familiar but noncanonized theory in profane and hyperbolic language.

5. "Elohim and one of his goddess wives came to earth as Adam and Eve to start the human race." Later Elohim came to earth again "to have sex with the Virgin Mary in order to provide Jesus with a physical body." The first statement seems to have reference to the "Adam-God Theory," an idea taught by Brigham Young but found unacceptable and thus non-doctrinal by leaders after him. The content of the next sentence will ring true for many members but the spectacular, single statement, made without any contextual explanation, seems meant to profanize and offend.

6. A woman in the film says, "Without a husband that could take me through the temple, I wouldn't be able to go to heaven and be with my Heavenly Father." Later, another woman says, "Women don't even get out of the grave unless the husband calls them forth on the morning of resurrection." These impressions by former LDS women show a generalization and misunderstanding of the rather specific idea taught by some Mormons that on the morning of the first resurrection, husbands going to the celestial kingdom (or highest of many places in "heaven") will, after being resurrected themselves, help with the resurrection of their wives. I know of no doctrine keeping women permanently in the "grave" or out of "heaven" (given its multiple "degrees") if they are not with their husbands.

7. "Mormons are instructed to use Christian terminology when talking to potential converts." The inference is that LDS and Christian terminologies are different; that LDS deceptively turn to the latter when useful. Actually, they both use similar terms but understand some of them differently. This is a cultural difference with no deceitful intent.

8. "One of the rules in the Mormon Church is that if you want to go to the temple, you can't associate with apostate members." There is no such "rule." Actually, members are encouraged to love and fellowship former members and help them with their burdens. One may "associate with" without sympathizing with another. There is even a little-known Church program which attempts to bring "apostate" members back into the fold.

9. Bishops routinely advise divorce if a spouse does not conform to Church standards, according to the testimony of several former members in the film. In reality the opposite is true. Bishops rarely encourage divorce. *The General Handbook of Instructions* (1975, 21) counsels bishops to try and preserve marriages at almost any cost. Spencer W. Kimball has admonished leaders: "Never encourage your members to get a divorce. Encourage them to be reconverted, to adjust their lives, their own personal lives" (Conference Report 1976, 21.) In fact, the Church has been criticized in some circles for going to extremes to preserve unsuccessful marriages. In any event, Mormon attitudes toward divorce are probably not unlike those of other conservative religions.

10. Putting together Utah suicide statistics and the tragic story of the suicide of Kip Eliason, the film implies that the Church is responsible for the suicides of many of its youth. Yet there is no concrete evidence to support this assumption. (Kunz, 1984). It is doubtful that the moral advice given LDS teens is significantly different than that given by other conservative Christian clergymen. Kip's letter could have been written by any boy in any church. There is no reason to believe his experience was uniquely attributable to Mormonism. *The Godmakers* conveniently fails to mention that the main reasons for adolescent suicides are pressure to achieve academic success, declining participation in religious activity, and difficulty in acquiring a stable personal identity.

The Godmakers also neglects to mention areas in social life, health, athletics, science, the arts, government, business and education where Mormons have been leaders.

11. One particularly troublesome misstatement is that Joseph Smith "claimed that he had done more for us than any other man including Jesus Christ." This is a close rephrasing of Doctrine and Covenants 135:3, with the very important exception that John Taylor's verse reads, "Joseph Smith has done more, *save Jesus only*, for the salvation of men in this world than any other man that lived on it." The apparent paraphrase of Doctrine and Covenants 135:3 may be a conflation borrowing from "Address of the Prophet — His Testimony Against the Dissenters at Nauvoo," an account of a speech made by Joseph Smith on Sunday, 26 May 1844. In it, Joseph repeatedly compared his "perils" and boasting to those of Paul, the ancient apostle. Thomas Bullock reports Smith as saying: "I have more to boast of than ever

any man had. I am the only man that has ever been able to keep a whole church together since the days of Adam. A large majority of the whole have stood by me. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jesus ever did it. I boast that no man ever did such work as I did" (HC, 6:406–7). Joseph Smith was obviously speaking of his organizational ability, not trying to claim he was perfect or a savior, as perhaps implied by the statement the filmmakers attribute to him.

12. Another attempt to place Joseph Smith in a position superior to or at least equal with Jesus Christ informs us that Joseph "shed his blood for us so that we too may become gods." This view seems to make the prophet an atoner in the same way Jesus was. Furthermore, in an animation sequence of the last judgment, Joseph is in the central dominant position flanked by the Father and Jesus Christ. Perhaps the filmmakers were again exploiting their misinterpretation of Joseph's 1844 statement.

13. One of the most unsubstantiated claims in *The Godmakers* is that Mormons worship Satan. The more fantastic the claim, the greater the evidence needed to support it. With *The Godmakers* we find just the reverse. The only "evidence" offered in this instance is that in a satanic bible, which Baer and Decker show the attorneys, the word *Mormo* indicates a god who is "king of the ghouls"; and that in Chinese, a word sounding like "Mormon" means "gates of hell." These coincidences do not constitute worship of Satan. No evidence of rites or rituals involving Satanism are presented. No interviews with persons involved in such behavior are given. In my acquaintance with thousands of Mormons over the years, I have never encountered the faintest hint of Satan worship, nor do I know of anyone else who has heard of such a thing. Certainly one must prove intentionality to justify such an extreme claim. Pointing to a word in a book does not constitute proof.

Some lesser falsehoods reduce the film's credibility for informed viewers but may seem plausible for the uninitiated:

— The Bible is mistakenly said not to be one of the standard works.

— The Church is said to be a "major stockholder" in the *Los Angeles Times*. It actually holds less than 2 percent of the company's stock (Gibson 1983, 24).

— We are told that members pay "mandatory" tithing. In a church which emphasizes the importance of free agency, no behavior is "mandatory."

— The *Seventh East Press* supposedly existed to seek "reform in the Church through exposing Mormon cover-ups." While the *Press* did contain some investigative reporting and research articles, its raison d'être was not to expose cover-ups.

— *The Godmakers* maintains that Mormon teachings are so little known because "Mormons are embarrassed by their own doctrines so they don't talk about them." This seems to contradict the more typical image of Mormons as often talking about their religion and trying to convert friends and neighbors. If Mormon teachings are so unappealing and embarrassing to discuss, why do converts join? Why do members stay? Why do former members return?

The Godmakers implores us to take it seriously. At the same time it is, like most exposés, sensationalistic and melodramatic. It is hard to treat it

neutrally or dispassionately. It almost forces us into personal responses. I would like to conclude with my personal response.

Manipulation and deliberate misuse of information aside, I was bothered by other aspects of the film. The makers of *The Godmakers* seem to have a monolithic view of Mormonism. Repeatedly we hear that "Mormons believe" this or that. But Mormons do not believe or behave uniformly. Recent surveys of LDS belief and behavior, letters to editors, disagreements in classes, the variety of ideas expressed in Church-related publications, and the known ideological differences among General Authorities all reveal some degree of pluralism within the Mormon tradition. It has been that way from the beginning.

The Deckerites seem to have an equally simplistic view of traditional Christianity. It is assumed that there is a unified core of Christian dogma. They draw a false dichotomy between Mormonism and Christianity, as if they were each internally consistent and coherent as well as mutually exclusive entities. To view them in juxtaposition is to see black and white. But if anything characterizes Christian dogma, it is diversity. Yet, *The Godmakers* has no qualms in advocating the replacement of a nineteenth century restorationist brand of Christianity (Mormonism) with a supposedly superior twentieth century brand of protestant fundamentalism.

Predictably, *The Godmakers* makes virtually no attempt to show the Christ-centeredness of Mormonism. Anyone familiar with Latter-day Saint theology and teachings, lesson manuals, music, art, sacrament, ordinances, temple rites, scriptures, and prayers should recognize the dominant position held by Christ in the religion.

Despite its purposes and flaws, *The Godmakers* may prove to be of some value to the Church. How? It may teach us something about ourselves. Why, for example, do some people seem to be vulnerable to this kind of presentation? Obviously, many are not adequately prepared to handle this kind of criticism of the Church. Many are disturbed while some are permanently disabled. I would like to suggest that there are a few lessons Mormons can learn from this film.

1. It seems clear to me that however well-intentioned, well-prepared, and slickly packaged, propaganda has drawbacks for any group using it. We should more thoughtfully examine the impact of Church films, TV, radio and magazine advertisements and other overt, image-forming efforts designed to persuade nonmembers.

2. High visibility, over-claiming, over-promising, and over-expecting also present difficulties. I suspect that what is perceived as the arrogance of claiming to be the "only true church" will continue to create barriers for many. A more ecumenical, tolerant spirit may win more friends by beginning from a base of mutual respect rather than moral superiority.

3. Attempts to provide authoritative answers to all problematic or unresolved questions may paint the Church into inescapable theological corners. While the emphasis always seems to be on "all that God has revealed," I believe that by far the largest body of religious knowledge is unrevealed. Given

all that we do not know about God, humankind, heaven, and earth after millennia of serious study and prayerful searching, we should accept more literally the promise that "He will yet reveal many great and important things . . ." (8th Article of Faith). By studying the important thinking generated by other religions, I feel some of these "things" could be revealed, but we must carefully avoid the tendency to merely adopt and readapt Protestant neo-orthodoxy, process theology, or any other "outside" school of religious thought which would distort or diminish the best aspects of Mormon ideology. There are advantages to our noncreedal, nondogmatic diversity just as there are disadvantages to trying to finalize or over-systematize our theology.

Throughout the film, the Church is depicted as an organization of such vast wealth, power, and influence as to be virtually unstoppable. It would seem to be to the Church's credit, then, that this great force has not been marshalled against either the film or its makers. As far as I am aware, Church leaders have thus far largely been silent with respect to *The Godmakers* and its creators.

Ed Decker and his ex-Mormon cohorts learned many lessons from the Mormons before their excommunications. It is ironic that both Mormons and Deckerites use emotional, propagandistic films to persuade people to follow them. Both groups send out full-time missionaries and hold annual conferences. Both have produced a considerable amount of polemical literature and both try to exploit the Mormon predilection for evidence, the need for tangible information to somehow buttress the temples of faith. Both groups lay claim to specialized knowledge and both rely on a doctrine of apostasy to create a need for their respective higher understandings. The mainstreamers in both groups tend to have a black-and-white, right-wrong mindset and hold to conspiracy theories about opponents. Given these strong dualistic parallels, it should not be surprising that for the leaders of Ex-Mormons for Jesus, Saints Alive in Jesus, and the makers of *The Godmakers*, turnabout is considered fair play.

Another strange irony to me is that while *The Godmakers* accuses Mormonism of devious and deceitful practices, the film is not above using the same tactics to accomplish its end of exposing the Church. In a personal conversation, Ron Priddis of the now-defunct *Seventh East Press* related that the filmmakers misrepresented his intentions by using only brief, out-of-context statements from a longer interview with persons claiming to be preparing a legitimate documentary. Presumably Decker used the same tactics in persuading Harold Goodman and Brian Grant, among others, to participate in what became a blatantly anti-Mormon production. Is their master and mentor Jesus or Machiavelli? For a group so adamantly insistent upon the Bible as its primary source of inspiration, why do we have a film which so radically departs from the loving, forgiving, constructive spirit of Christianity? While Jesus was not above criticizing errors in his society, his mission was almost entirely a positive one. And while Mormon missionary lessons discuss an apostasy, most of the teaching effort is directed at constructing what Mormons consider to be a positive religious

framework. I think one could objectively portray *The Godmakers* film and book as basically negative and destructive in purpose and tone. From the Deckerite point of view, of course, being negative is thought to be a legitimate way of being positive, I suppose. But small wonder that many Christian churches have scorned the film and advised their members not to view it.

Lastly, *The Godmakers* causes us to take a closer look at Mormon perfectionism. The film criticizes the dangers of Mormon strivings for perfection while it simultaneously condemns the imperfect actions of Mormons. It's a classic example of damned if you do and damned if you don't. We should be more willing to acknowledge that there may be aspects of the Church's history, thought, and practice worthy of criticism and that the Church, led at all mortal levels by fallible humans, is imperfect. Mistakes have been made and will be made again. The prophets have been the first to remind us not to expect perfection of the Church or its members. Joseph Smith instructed us that "a prophet was a prophet only when he was acting as such" (HC 5:265). This principle has been held inviolate from Smith to Spencer W. Kimball.

Yet the Church seems always to have been interested in improving itself and its members. The law of eternal progression begins in the here and now. If there are weaknesses and errors, efforts can be made by everyone to make improvements and add to the body of truth. Unfortunately, except for some "consciousness raising," *The Godmakers* will not help us on this quest. In seeking the truth of a thing, one ought not go to another whose only interest it is to disprove and destroy it. At the beginning of the film, the narrator stated that "the documented evidence you are about to see may seem unbelievable." He was never more right. *The Godmakers* is more shadow than reality.

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One Community's Reaction to *The Godmakers*

Donald Alvin Eagle

It is important at the outset to define the National Conference of Christians and Jews. We are a nation-wide, nonprofit, educational agency established some fifty-six years ago. Our purpose was stated by our founders in these words: "The corporation exists to promote justice, amity, understanding and cooperation among Christians and Jews and to analyze, moderate and strive to eliminate intergroup prejudices which disfigure and distort religious, business, social and political relations."

Our membership is composed of individuals of every race and creed, both men and women, clergy and laity, who subscribe to this purpose. They do not represent any group officially but serve out of their personal convictions.

Our genesis was the concern of a group of distinguished American civic leaders for the virulent religious bigotry displayed during the 1928 national election campaign. The NCCJ was established to conduct nation-wide educational efforts designed to reduce and eliminate such bigotry and to make it possible for all citizens, without regard to creed, race, and sex to participate in civic, social and business life free from any impediment based on their personal religious beliefs or ethnic origin.

Being a purely voluntary association, the NCCJ has no power nor any desire to coerce any group or person. We do, however, seek through dialogue and structured discussion to arrive at accommodations which may be accepted by groups or individuals who find themselves embroiled in civic or religious disputation and thus advance civility, peace and harmony within the community.

The Godmakers first came to our attention in Arizona in March 1983 as the result of an editorial which appeared on page B-1 of the Mesa *Tribune*. Executive Editor Max Jennings reported attending a showing of the film before some 1500 people at Centennial Hall, sponsored by a group known as Concerned Christians. Their stated purpose was "to reach out in love to those lost in Mormonism."

Jennings commented:

> If what I saw Tuesday night is love, I must have had the wrong Sunday School lessons back in that dusty west Texas Methodist Church of my childhood.
>
> I didn't hear anyone reaching out in love Tuesday night. I heard people reaching out in hatred of another's right to believe what he wants. I heard people saying that Mormons are terribly wrong for holding the religious beliefs they do, and that as many people as possible must be warned against the terrible Mormonism which destroys families and lives.

After the Mesa *Tribune* article appeared, one of the members of the NCCJ Board in Phoenix, a Roman Catholic businessman, telephoned my office to apprise me of the story and to urge that the NCCJ become involved.

Our first response was to issue a public statement to the Mesa press condemning religious bigotry and urging upon the citizenry, "tolerance, respect and good will toward those of differing religious belief and custom." We also

telephoned several area clergy asking them to issue public statements. Some pastors did write such letters. Subsequently, the NCCJ received a letter from a pastor accusing us of attempting to deny religious freedom and freedom of speech. He defended the group which had shown the film saying: "They see the Mormon people caught in a false religion and bound for hell. Because of their love they are willing to take a stand for what they believe is right and true in order that Mormon people may find Jesus Christ as their personal saviour."

However, a group of citizens which included a rabbi, a priest, and a minister, requested an audience with the Arizona Regional NCCJ Board to express their concerns. They shared Max Jennings's view that "the activities of the Concerned Christian group had the capability of dividing a community" such as Mesa. They asked the NCCJ to study the situation and recommend a course of action. An ad hoc committee was named composed of Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Mormons, blacks, whites, Hispanics, males, females, clergy, and laity.[1]

Through several meetings the group sought to define its mission and to establish limits on what we should attempt to do. Eventually, we requested the leaders of Concerned Christians to meet with us, to show us *The Godmakers* film, to answer our questions, and to discuss how we could arrive at mutual understanding. Seventeen persons from the NCCJ and four from Concerned Christians met for nearly three hours.

No real understanding developed from this meeting, but it became readily apparent that the ad hoc committee needed to hear from an informed Mormon leader to better evaluate what we had seen and heard. Accordingly, Dr. Truman G. Madsen, Richard L. Evans Professor of Christian Understanding at Brigham Young University, was invited to address the NCCJ Board on 1 November 1983.

Madsen discussed Mormon belief, the content of *The Godmakers* film, and the relationship of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with other churches and religions. It was an open meeting, reported in the *Arizona Republic*, 12 Nov. 1983, p. G-1-2. Key points in Madsen's remarks were:

> If we want to know what a church believes, we should go to that source and not accept what outsiders and opponents say it believes.
>
> In any dialogue we have an obligation to accurately present the opposition's position. This is very difficult even when you try to do it with great honesty. What are the chances of accuracy when you are trying to do just the opposite?"

Of *The Godmakers*, Madsen commented: "In the film, converts become victims, sacred commitments become highly secret ceremonies for the elite few, repentance becomes brainwashing, deep commitment becomes obsession, a church becomes a cult."

To those engaged in presenting the film, Madsen said: "If you are against the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, then be against it for the right

[1] Critics have subsequently charged that this committee was dominated by Mormons. For the record, it consisted of four Protestants, three Catholics, seven Jews, one Greek Orthodox, and two Mormons.

reasons. Don't create a monster and then represent it as the true Mormon church."

In the deliberations of the NCCJ ad hoc committee, we were deeply sensitive to the religious freedom expressed in the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." The NCCJ operates with sincere conviction that no body of government, nor any private group of influence, should violate the spirit of the Bill of Rights.

We recognized that Concerned Christians had every legal right to carry on their activities and to show their film to whomever they wished, no matter how the NCCJ or anyone else felt about it. One of the unique things about America is that religious groups may espouse any beliefs they wish about their own church, or about any other group — including calling into question the truth of another church's doctrines, liturgical customs, or the character of the proponents of that religion.

But a careful distinction must be made between our legal right to so act and the morality and wisdom of doing so. The NCCJ believes that we must use our freedom responsibly and that it must be exercised with self-restraint, fairness, and good judgment, and in a spirit of tolerance for the convictions and feelings of others. History is filled with tragic lessons when religious authoritarians, imbued with a sense of their own infallibility, have set out to "convert" nonbelievers, to "correct" those holding "erroneous" beliefs, and to bring the heretical to orthodoxy. How easily persuasion can give way to all manner of coercive methods, whether legal, psychological, or forceful. We need to learn from the wisdom of the Koran which says, "There shall be no compulsion in religion."

On 5 December 1983, the NCCJ ad hoc committee addressed a letter to the Concerned Christians of Mesa, Inc., expressing the reactions of the group of seventeen who had viewed *The Godmakers* film. The letter made these points:

1. We recognized that personalized proselytizing activities are a common practice among numerous religious groups, and that they are a natural expression of our religious freedom.

2. We questioned the wisdom of mass public meetings which had as their primary intent attacking Mormon beliefs or the beliefs, sacred books, or leadership of any other faith. We warned of the danger to community harmony if such activities continued and an acrimonious public controversy developed. We respectfully requested Concerned Christians to voluntarily reconsider their use of such programs.

3. Of *The Godmakers*, the ad hoc committee made these statements:

- The film does not fairly portray the Mormon Church, Mormon history, or Mormon belief. It makes extensive use of half-truths, faulty generalizations, sensationalism, and is not reflective of the true spirit of Mormon faith.
- We find particularly offensive the emphasis that Mormonism is some sort of subversive plot — a danger to the community, a threat to the institution of marriage, and destructive to the mental health of teenagers.

• We are of the opinion that the film relies heavily on appeals to fear, prejudice and unworthy human emotions.

• We believe that continued use of *The Godmakers* poses a genuine danger to the climate of harmony and good will between neighbors of differing religious faith.

• It is basically an unfair and untruthful presentation of what Mormons believe and practice.

The leader of the Concerned Christians group responded that they were "very disillusioned and disappointed" with the letter from NCCJ's ad hoc committee. He made thirteen specific responses in a footnoted analysis of our letter. These examples fairly illustrate the feelings and attitudes of Concerned Christians.

> Restraint, fairness, good judgement and a spirit of consideration for others *is* what we are doing by presenting the hidden side of Mormonism.
>
> We are not attacking people, but we are attacking doctrines.
>
> You are correct that our activities are harmful; but to the Mormon churches proselytizing program and that's why they are upset by what we are doing.
>
> Again, you stated that we are lying in our presentations. Why don't you name these lies or unfair portrayals of the LDS Church, or its history or beliefs. There is no way this committee can do that. First of all, the Mormon can't tell you because he has taken an oath that he can't reveal anything or [he will] jeopardize his life.
>
> Mormonism *is* a subversive plot and a danger to the community. (Italics in original.)

In March 1984, the NCCJ Board held its regular meeting. Each member had been previously supplied by mail with both the letter of the ad hoc committe and the Concerned Christians' response. The board unanimously supported the position taken by its ad hoc committee. However, there was considerable debate on the most responsible way to make the board's view known. There was no desire to give Concerned Christians additional publicity; and we were advised by the publisher of a major newspaper that if we issued a press release, as a matter of policy, his reporters must give equal space to the response of the other side.

Ultimately, the NCCJ Board decided that an advisory letter detailing its findings should be sent to the bishops and executives of the religious denominations headquartered in Arizona and that they be requested to share any relevant portion of our statement with their constituencies. The advisory letter was mailed in mid-March 1984 to twenty-one members of "The Association of Bishops and Executives" list provided by the Arizona Ecumenical Council. Subsequently, the statement was published by the national program office of the NCCJ and sent to all seventy-five regional offices for their information and as a guide for dealing with religious controversy.

Against this narrative backdrop, it is important to make several comments. In a free society such as ours, proselytizing, public evangelistic campaigns, and conversionary efforts are the unquestioned right of every religious group. But are there not some operational ground rules which ought to be considered and self-imposed, especially in the light of the pluralistic nature of

modern American society? Is there not also a responsibility to avoid unnecessary public religious controversy?

When missionizing is done, it should be based on the positive virtues and merits of the adherent's faith. Scrupulous efforts should be made not to denigrate the sacred beliefs, institutions, literature, or historic personages of another religious group. Be honest. Don't deliberately distort or misrepresent what any other group believes in order to advance your own cause. History should be treated objectively and without revisionism. Stereotypes and unfair caricatures of others should never be employed.

We concede the right of any group to claim that it has an absolute corner on all religious truth. But aren't there some considerations which such "true believers" should weigh before they enter the public arena to debate others? What will be the effect on community peace and harmony when contending groups holding opposing absolutes meet and clash? Is the triumph of one's own point of view so imperative that the feelings and beliefs of others can be totally disregarded? To me, there is a proper place for humility when anyone represents himself/herself as "speaking for God." The wise statement from Isaiah springs into my mind: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8–9). Surely this scriptural admonition applies both to the brightest intellect among us and to the most literal, fervant believer! For myself, I doubt that any human interpretor of the Almighty has a monopoly on truth.

We also assert the right of people to be left alone. There are simply those people who do not wish to be the recipients of even the most well-intentioned proselytizing efforts and we ought to respect and accept that. In my work, I learn frequently of Jews who face a steady stream of efforts to "win them to Christ": Mailings sent to their homes. Telephone calls. Radio programs aimed specifically at them. Repeated visits by determined callers. Such attention is not welcomed by most Jews no matter the professed affection, love, or good intentions of the would-be evangelist. I am not alone in suggesting that this sort of activity demonstrates not only a kind of contempt for Jews and their relationship to God but also an affinity for perpetrating "spiritual genocide" on the Jewish people.

Mormons should understand this. Since the issuance of our rather cautious, unemotional statement about *The Godmakers*, my office has received many communications. A typical letter from a "missionary to the Mormons" states: "I happen to care about the Mormons too much *to allow them* to go on in their deception. They need to be saved." (Italics mine.) The language suggests religious paternalism at the least or spiritual dictatorship at the worst, and I find either extremely objectionable. I find far more acceptable the idea that every person has an inherent right to work out his/her own relationship with God. I doubt the validity of conversions made by compulsion, however subtle, however gross.

Part of our heritage is the right to be wrong — in the eyes of other fallible humans — in matters of religious conviction, and not to be harassed because of it. For it is to God alone that we must answer, not to finite human minds.

The right to be left alone exists even if one is totally convinced of the falsity of another faith. I receive word almost daily of the pain felt by Roman Catholics who see many campaigns directed against their church. At present, blatant attacks are being made which blame them for every tragedy of human history, ranging from the assassination of Lincoln to the Holocaust of the 1940s. Leaflets, posters, and newspapers question their patriotism and make slanderous remarks about the current Pope and other prominent clergy. To me, this kind of behavior is intolerable — even from those who reject Catholicism!

The progression from negative attitudes through verbal assault to physical violence is real. In my own community, I witnessed beleaguered Moslems seeking to build a mosque. They were reviled. Bullets were fired into their homes. A pipe-bomb was placed in a mail-box of a believer. I am grateful that the majority within the religious community stood in solidarity with their neighbors of Islamic faith, condemning these attacks. The mosque is complete and is now a showplace for faith.

But this is not new to Mormons. Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton have written: "Theirs is the story of a religious minority, generally unpopular and often harassed — a group that some scholars think was the most persecuted religious community in early America. The intergroup friction between the Mormons and their neighbors tells something about American society and the limits of religious tolerance" (1979, introduction). Surely, in modern America, *the times call for a new relationship of respect* among the religious groups which now live in our land.

I find especially helpful these statements of your Prophet Joseph Smith in July 1843:

> It is a love of liberty which inspires my soul — civil and religious liberty to the whole of the human race. Love of liberty was diffused into my soul by my grandfathers while they dandled me on their knees; and shall I want friends? No. . . . If I esteem mankind to be in error, shall I bear them down? No. I will lift them up, and in their own way too, if I cannot persuade them that my way is better; and I will not seek to compel any man to believe as I do, only by way of reasoning, for truth will cut its own way. (HC 5:498–99)

I can live with that. In fact, we all can.

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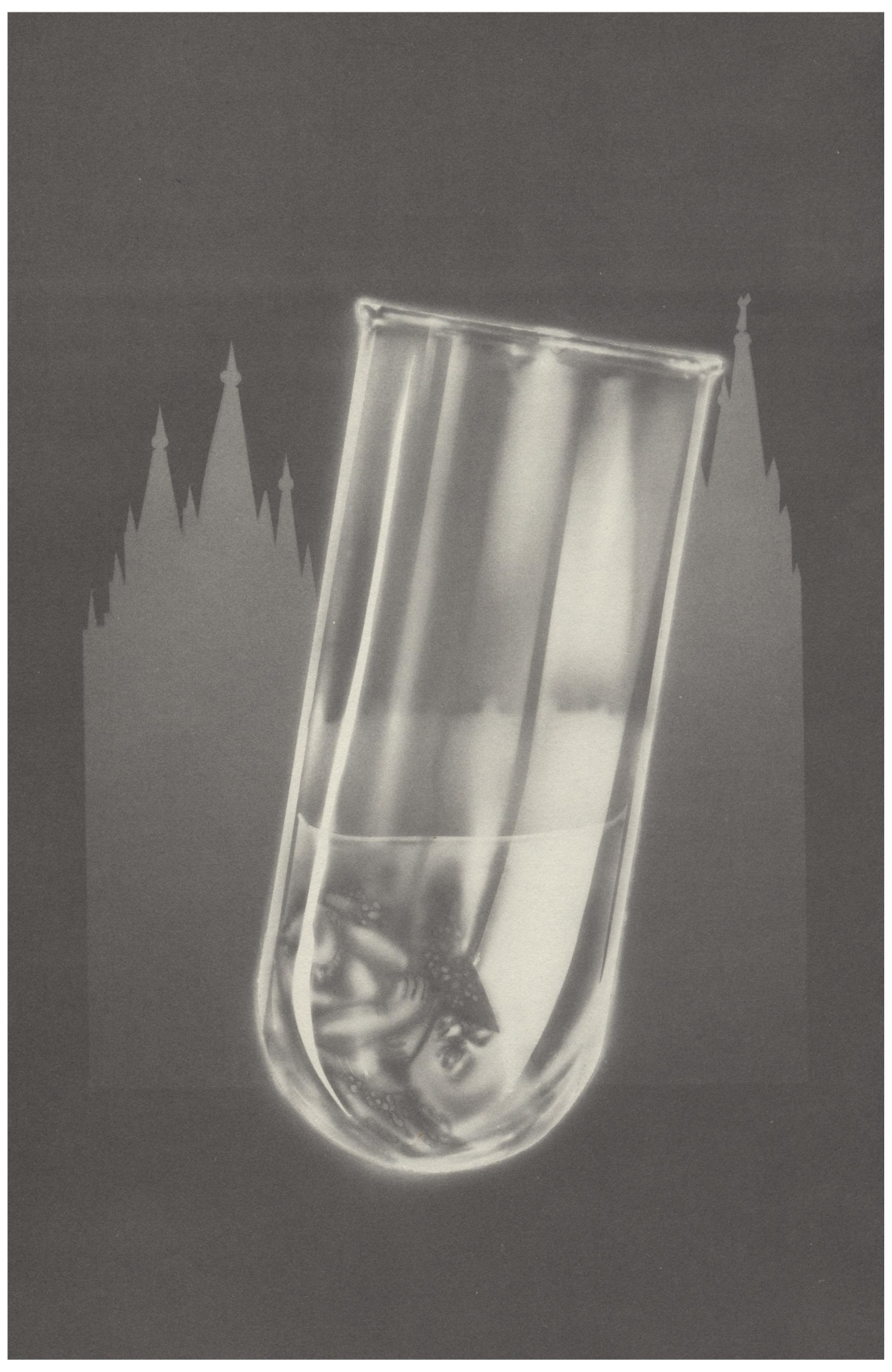

Ethical Issues in Reproductive Medicine: A Mormon Perspective

Lester E. Bush

This presentation is not "the" Mormon perspective but the point of view of "a" Mormon. "The" Mormon point of view, at this moment, does not exist on the subjects under discussion. Certainly many Mormons hold strong views on these subjects, and some argue their views reflect those of the Church.[1] Rather, I mean that if one were to write, as I did, and ask the First Presidency — which is solely entrusted with the authority to establish official Mormon Church policy — if it has "a position, or a doctrine . . . relating to the subject" of any of the four medical processes this symposium addresses, one would receive an answer stating that the Church has not "taken an official position with respect to the issues raised by the scenarios." If, mildly surprised that this should be so despite the explicit or implicit overtones of abortion in two of the four scenarios, one writes again, highlighting this problem, he or she will be referred without elaboration to the "current official policy of the Church with respect to [abortion]" and advised that "the scenarios . . . should be viewed in light of this policy" (Gibbons 1982, 1983).

LESTER BUSH, a physician and former associate editor of DIALOGUE *is completing a monograph, "Health and Medicine in the Mormon Tradition" as part of a multi-volume series sponsored by Lutheran General Hospital's Project Ten. Ultimately about a dozen faiths will be represented in the series which is being assembled under the general editorship of Martin E. Marty and Kenneth L. Vaux. In this paper, delivered at the University of Utah's Fifth Annual Birth Defects, Mental Retardation, and Medical Genetics Symposium, 25 March 1983, Lester Bush was asked to bring his knowledge of Mormon history to bear on four emerging medical ethical issues: the question of terminating pregnancies with fetal abnormalities which will not cause serious impairment until well after birth, genetic engineering,* in utero *surgery, and* in vitro *fertilization.*

This essay was awarded first place in DIALOGUE'S *1984 writing contest in the category of Religious Issues.*

[1] The complex subject of what constitutes an official "doctrine" within the Mormon church is beyond the scope of this essay. In general I will use statements issued by either the President of the Church or the First Presidency as my guide to the doctrine current at any given time. A conspicuous article in an official church journal is also used occasionally to indicate at least the range of acceptable beliefs. Some useful criteria are given in J. Reuben Clark, Jr., "When Are the Writings and Sermons of Church Leaders Entitled to the Claim of Scripture?," reprinted in DIALOGUE 12 (Summer 1979).

With this as one current bottom line, let us now look to history to review the Mormon view of heroic intervention and modern medicine in general, then examine in a little detail the Mormon record on birth control (the most closely related issue on which much doctrinal history exists), abortion, and other related subjects. To the extent that generalizations emerge from this review, I will hazard a guess as to what they might portend for the future Mormon perspective on reproductive medicine.

HEROICS IN MEDICINE

Although not prominent on the agenda of early Mormonism, medical ethical questions, loosely defined, were an early and persistent concern within the Church. The first and most conspicuous of these involved what was then termed the heroic medical practice of orthodox physicians. Joseph Smith and his colleagues regularly condemned what they viewed as dangerous heroics in the treatment of disease.

Given the state of the medical art at this time, this view was pragmatic; but the justification went well beyond what otherwise might have been labelled common sense. As biblical literalists, Mormon leaders felt doctrinally bound to the advice of James who counseled the sick to "call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14). Should an additional step be necessary, according to a revelation announced by Joseph Smith in 1831, sick believers who "[had] not faith to be healed [by priesthood administration] . . . shall be nourished with all tenderness, with herbs and mild food" (D&C 42:43) — guidelines again in harmony with biblical precedents.

Authoritative counsel reinforced these implicitly anti-heroic guidelines in unequivocal terms. During the Mormon trek west, for example, Brigham Young, acting as president of the Church after Joseph Smith's death, advised members of the Mormon Battalion: "If you are sick, live by faith, and let the surgeon's medicine alone if you want to live, using only such herbs and mild food as are at your disposal" (Tyler 1969, 146).

At least at the theoretical level, the anti-heroic ethic extended to the most severe cases, such as that of Elizabeth Morgan, a fifty-five-year-old convert living in London in 1842. She had a "spasmodic affection" which one day developed into an inflammation of the bowel. Despite a rapid deterioration in her condition, treatment was limited to anointing "with oil in the name of the Lord, . . . sage tea with Cayenne pepper, [and] leeches." All efforts failed and the "beloved sister" died.

The lessons drawn from these developments were revealing. The coroner feeling the "remedy . . . worse than the disease," and shocked that no "medical gentleman" or "surgeon" was called in, "had his doubts whether [the case] was not one of manslaughter." A jury was convened to investigate but "after some deliberation returned a verdict of 'natural death,' with a hope that the present inquiry would act as a caution to [the Mormons] how they acted in such cases for the future." The Mormons viewed things differently. They re-

printed a *London Despatch* article on the story in their own official journal and added a hyperbolic editorial observing that "what gives deep interest to the fact [of Sister Morgan's death] and adds solemnity to the scene is that she died a '*natural death!!!!!*' " Among the litany of unnatural alternatives cheerfully suggested was "the privilege of being killed through the administration of the learned medical faculty" ("She Died" 1979, 86–89).

With the passage of time, orthodox medicine became more "scientific," herbalism fell into disrepute, and Church opposition to regular medical doctors began to erode. Late in his life, Brigham Young sent young Mormons back East to be educated in leading orthodox medical schools and hospitals. Under the influence of this growing cadre of well-educated physicians and a few regular physician émigrés, "scientific medicine" came to dominate the Utah medical scene. By the turn of the century, the Church had fully embraced modern medicine. The increasingly heroic "state-of-the-art" medicine espoused and practiced at this time was judged not so much by a doctrinal yardstick as by — in the words of Apostle James Talmage — the "intelligent exercise of common sense" (Talmage 1922, 3). In the words of a *Deseret News* editorial accompanying the opening of a well-equipped Church-sponsored hospital in 1902, "Remedies are provided by the Great Physician or by Nature as some prefer to view them and we should not close our eyes to their virtues or ignore the skill and learning of the trained doctor" (Smith 1979, 50).

While divinely sanctioned herbalism was discarded during this general accommodation, orthodox therapy and priesthood blessings came to be seen as adjuncts to each other, especially when a serious illness was involved. Again, the words of Apostle Talmage, "We must do all we can, and then ask the Lord to do the rest, such as we cannot do. Hence we hold the medical and surgical profession in high regard. . . . When we have done all we can then the Divine Power will be directly applicable and operative." This symbiotic relationship has continued within Mormonism to the present day. On 19 February 1977, in the face of a resurgence of nineteenth-century anti-medical "fundamentalist" theology among some Mormons, the *Church News* repeated editorially that "our belief in the divine power of healing should in no way preclude seeking competent medical assistance."

Looking back on this, Mormons — including, I expect, most Mormon physicians — would say that the Lord had merely commended to the early Saints the most effective and safest treatments of the day and that later Church leaders were simply responding, under inspiration, to changed circumstances. While the case for herbalism, even in 1830, is at best debatable, for our purposes the important point is that general medical judgments were demonstrably pragmatic, even though they were couched in a doctrinal vernacular. This is the same standard against which the Church today seems to evaluate the propriety of even the most heroic medical measures. It is no longer, as it once was, *a priori*, a matter of doctrine. Rather — to paraphrase Talmage — it is a question of common sense and technical feasibility.

While a very sympathetic relationship has been present between modern, often heroic medicine and Mormonism throughout the twentieth century, there

have been a few points of discordance. Most typically, they have been issues involving human reproduction.[2]

BIRTH CONTROL

The national ferment of the sixties and early seventies over abortion is an instructive parallel to the birth-control controversy of a half century earlier. The term "birth control" itself derives from this period, which also saw the first formal statements by the Mormon hierarchy on the subject. These statements, as in the case of the first comments on abortion, were made rather early in what was a radical reform movement, and at a time when many aspects of contraception were illegal.

Joseph F. Smith was the first LDS Church president to address in any detail the question of what was then termed "prevention." Having heard as early as 1900 that "steps were being taken," even among Latter-day Saints, "to prevent . . . spirits being tabernacled," he spoke regularly on the subject for nearly two decades (CF April 1900, 39–40; Bush 1976).

One of his earlier statements was written in response to a physician's inquiry in 1908 as to whether it was ever right "intentionally to prevent, by any means whatever, the spirits . . . from obtaining earthly tabernacles?" Smith's response was that "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." In addition to bringing in its wake selfishness, and a "host of social evils," it would also "disregard or annul the great commandment of God to man, 'Multiply and replenish the earth' " (1908, 959–61).

While the tone and substance of much that he said derived from the undifferentiated perspective of the nineteenth century, he also added a caveat reminiscent of the new pragmatism with which the Mormons viewed medicine in general: "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." The thinking at this time was further from our own than this might suggest: Smith concluded that in such exceptional cases the only legitimate preventive was "absolute abstinence."

While Smith held to the same basic view throughout his presidency, which ended with his death in 1918, his last extensive counsel on the subject intro-

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[2] The most significant other problem to bring the Church into conflict with the received medical view came in 1900. It involved the issue of "free choice," and grew out of a Utah Board of Health initiative to require all school-aged children to have smallpox vaccinations. Although the First Presidency clearly accepted the merits and wisdom of vaccination, other prominent Mormons, notably Charles E. Penrose, the influential editor of the Church's *Deseret News*, felt the procedure itself both dangerous and unwarranted. (In a sense, this was a vestige of the old anti-heroic philosophy.) Penrose, who not long thereafter became a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, led a vigorous crusade against the initiative, and ultimately the Mormon-dominated state legislature banned (over the governor's veto) a compulsory vaccination program. Despite their support of vaccination, *per se*, the First Presidency chose not to exert its pivotal influence in support of an involuntary program. This same ingrained aversion to mandatory programs later created popular opposition to such public health programs as quarantines and fluoridation of water supplies.

duced another exception to his general condemnation of "this evil practice:" "I think that [curtailing the birth of children] is a crime whenever it occurs," he advised the women's Relief Society in 1917, "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" (317–18).

Smith's successor, Heber J. Grant, presided over the Church during Utah's depression years, which had begun in the early twenties, a decade earlier than for the nation. During these years, the birth rate among Mormons declined precipitously, dropping to levels not again reached until the advent of "modern" contraceptives in the sixties. However, senior Church authorities said relatively little in response to this unprecedented evidence of intentional family limitation; even then, advice was generally given only in personal correspondence.

J. Reuben Clark, of the First Presidency, in 1933 wrote privately in response to an inquiring correspondent that the Church did not have an official position on birth control (Quinn 1983, 158).

Several years later, on 1 May 1939, a similar letter from Heber J. Grant set forth his views. He first invoked the counsel of his predecessor, Joseph F. Smith, then added, "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" (Grant to Haymore).

In 1942, the influential apostle John A. Widtsoe advised a personal correspondent that "as far as I know the Church has not expressed itself as to birth control" (Widtsoe to Klinger). Later that year he published an important essay on birth control in the *Improvement Era* forthrightly entitled "Should Birth Control Be Practiced?" It was a remarkably even-handed treatment of the subject, clearly reflecting another phase in the evolution of leadership thinking on the subject. Instead of rejecting economic arguments out of hand, he rather found them "seldom convincing." Equally interesting, he implicitly rejected total abstinence as the sole recourse open to those with legitimate grounds for controlling fertility. His advice was that "a careful recognition of the fertile and sterile periods of woman would prove effective in the great majority of cases" (1942, 801, 803).

Four years later, Apostle David O. McKay (1946) in private correspondence carried this position a step further in advising that "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." While some Mormon authorities were — and still are — willing to label birth control "gross wickedness" (McConkie 1958, 81; Smith 2:86–89), McKay's much more tolerant view was the dominant perspective after he

became president in 1951. The high-water mark in this direction can be found in the writings of his counselor Hugh B. Brown who wrote in 1960 that "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" (135–36).

Ultimately, probably at Brown's prompting, the First Presidency issued a formal statement on 14 April 1969 — the first and only formal statement by the First Presidency specifically on the subject of birth control. In this McKay, Brown, and Nathan Tanner wrote:

> 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. (First Presidency 1969)

This masterpiece of diplomacy effectively combined the essence, if not the bottom lines, of the guidance issued throughout the twentieth century into one ultimately ambiguous statement which in essence transferred full responsibility from the Church to the individual member. Their success is indicated by the fact that Mormons across the entire spectrum of possible attitudes toward birth control cite it in defense of their beliefs. Beyond reiterating the strong pro-family tradition which has sustained nearly all Mormon commentary on the subject, the statement thereby placed specific behaviors above ecclesiastical review.

In a larger sense, perhaps, Church leadership also thus ratified the collective judgment of rank-and-file Mormons. For years, surveys of active Mormons had found a large majority either using or planning to use contraceptives; and by the late sixties, when the First Presidency statement was issued, Mormon birth rates were at historic lows, ranging between 26 and 28 births per thousand.

The point to be made is not that the Church capitulated on the issue of birth control, but rather that a change in societal perspective was accompanied, eventually, by a similar change within the Church. In fact, the Church did not really capitulate on its more fundamental concern — that procreation and family life lie at the heart of human beings' reason for being. While this is

now interpreted in the context of a very broadly defined medical concern for the well-being of the total family, there still has been no formal sanction of arbitrary spacing of births because of educational or economic goals.

The positive injunction given to Adam and Eve to multiply and replenish the earth was really the foundation of all Mormon commentary on birth control. And Mormons at large obviously have responded to this ideal. While unmistakably influenced by changing socio-economic circumstances — much like their non-Mormon contemporaries — Mormon families still collectively average one and a half additional children per family — a distinction held throughout the twentieth century.

Those who have followed McKay to the presidency of the Church have been both more outspoken and more conservative in their commentary on birth control. As expected, however, they chose not to revise the formal guidance already issued on the subject. While the new emphasis may have been associated with a brief rise in the birth rate of Mormons in Utah in the late 1970s, it seems not to have influenced the overall usage of contraceptives within the Church (which by the end of childbearing seems ultimately to approach 90 percent). A recent study based on a small sample from the 1975 National Fertility Studies found that 96 percent of reporting Mormons had made use of birth control (Heaton and Calkins 1983). Though this is somewhat higher than previous reports, surveys since 1935 have found the majority of Mormon respondents either endorsing or using birth control (Bush 1976, 32). Indeed, the most recent guidance on the subject of birth control in official Church forums is essentially indistinguishable in tone and substance from that which appeared in the sixties. The most extensive such commentary appeared in the *Ensign*'s "I Have a Question" column in August 1979. In a thoughtful response to the question, "Is there not any kind of 'gospel family-planning,' for lack of a better way to say it?", noted Mormon obstetrician Homer Ellsworth first rejoiced in "our spiritual obligation, to bear children and to have a family" and decried family limitation for "selfish" reasons. "But, on the other hand," he continued (in part),

> we need not be afraid of studying the question from important angles — the physical and mental health of the mother and father, the parents' capacity to provide basic necessities, and so on. If for certain personal reasons a couple prayerfully decides that having another child immediately is unwise, the method of spacing children — discounting possible medical or physical effects — makes little difference. Abstinence, of course, is also a form of contraception, and like any other method it has side effects, some of which are harmful to the marriage relationship. (Ellsworth 1979, 23–24)[3]

[3] Since the presentation of this paper, a new edition of the authoritative *General Handbook of Instructions* (Sept. 1983) has been issued, including the most open-ended statement on "birth control" yet published by the Church:

> The Lord has commanded husbands and wives to multiply and replenish the earth that they might have joy in their posterity.
>
> Husbands must be considerate of their wives, who have the greater responsibility not only of bearing children but of caring for them through childhood, and should help them conserve their health and strength. Married couples should exercise self-control in all of their relationships. They should seek inspiration from the Lord in meeting their marital challenges and rearing their children according to the teachings of the gospel. (1983, 77)

ABORTION

Although there was no formal statement of Church policy on abortion until very recently, the views of early Church leaders on the subject were very clear: abortion was synonymous with murder. Polemically, at least, no distinction was made between "foeticide," the "destruction of embryos," or abortion on the one hand, and "infanticide" or "infant murder" on the other. John Taylor, for example, spoke with some regularity of "pre-natal murders," or "murders . . . committed while the children are pre-natal;" of infants killed "either before or after they are born;" and of murdering children "either before or after they come into the world." Similar language can be found in the related sermons of nearly all late nineteenth-century Mormon leaders (Bush 1976, 14–16, 42 note 104).

Given this perspective, it is not surprising that the Church viewed those involved in such "hellish" practices as under grave condemnation. George Q. Cannon of the First Presidency in 1884 was perhaps the most graphic: "They will be damned with 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." John Taylor had given the same message in 1881: "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).

Despite this seemingly categorical stance, the condemnation of abortion was not absolute. A few years earlier, in 1876, amid the national anti-abortion crusade which fueled much of the Mormon commentary, Utah had passed an anti-abortion statute. The criminal penalties were not as severe as one might have expected from the sermons. Those convicted of having an abortion received one to five years; those performing an abortion, two to ten. More importantly, there also was an explicit exemption in cases where abortion was "necessary to preserve [the] life [of the mother]." (*Utah Code Annotated*, sec. 1972, 1876; sec. 76-7-301 et seq. 1973.)

In actual practice, abortion seems to have been very uncommon in the Mormon community. After the period of intense national agitation ended, the subject largely disappeared from Church commentary for nearly a century. When it reemerged, the social and medical context was radically different from that faced by John Taylor.

The twentieth century brought an unprecedented public acceptance of active intervention in the reproductive processes. Infant mortality had de-

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This message was repeated in Gordon B. Hinckley's 29 January 1984 address on "Cornerstones of a Happy Home," which subsequently was published as a brochure and delivered by home teachers to every LDS family. Hinckley added, "[The Lord] did not designate the number [of children], nor has the Church. That is a sacred matter left to the couple and the Lord." Paradoxically, as with the relatively liberal guidance of 1969, this statement follows the decline of the Mormon birthrate to the lowest level to date, 24.5 births per thousand for 1983.

clined precipitously, so there no longer was a need to have "insurance" children to guarantee a "full" family surviving into adulthood. Society became increasingly mobile and urbanized. Those with large families encountered emotional and economic challenges from which their parents and grandparents seemingly were spared. And family limitation through birth control, despite a controversial entry into the national arena, became increasingly acceptable — even within the Mormon community.

To a growing number of participants in this social revolution, particularly since 1960, a logical next step was to make therapeutic abortions available in cases other than those threatening the mother's life. The reasons for this change in perception are less evident than the fact of the change. Some fundamentalist Mormons have seen it as yet another symptom of sweeping moral decay. Others found convincing the statistical evidence that, although illegal "abortionists" operated with very high mortality, therapeutic abortions in legal medical settings had substantially less maternal morbidity and mortality than pregnancy itself.

Whatever the reasons, both medical and popular sentiment on abortion unquestionably moved substantially away from the categorical abhorrence of earlier decades. Accordingly many states revised their abortion laws. In 1969, Utah Senate Bill 121 was introduced to revise Utah's century-old statute, proposing to allow abortions where the mother's mental or physical health (not solely her life) was at stake, where pregnancy resulted from rape or incest, or if the child was likely to have "grave or permanent physical disability or mental retardation." As a member of LDS Hospital's house staff in 1968–69, I recall numerous conversations among the hospital's physicians. Many felt that the Church would not oppose the proposed legislation — an indication of how far sentiment within the LDS community had shifted. As startling as this view may seem in retrospect, there are several reasons why it might have been true.

To begin with, as Lohner (1967) documents, there was the practical consideration that a somewhat liberalized policy was already tacitly in effect in most major hospitals in Salt Lake City, including the LDS Hospital itself. Only Holy Cross Hospital reported no therapeutic abortions between 1954 and 1964. Although far from routine, abortions were being performed occasionally for the very indications the new legislation proposed to authorize. For instance, 9 percent of the abortions had been for fetal indications, and 18 percent for psychiatric. Lohner also felt that many of the 73 percent of abortions labelled "medical" were, in fact, performed for other indications.

A second reason was a relatively tolerant attitude toward birth control on the part of the current Church leadership. Notwithstanding a long tradition which once had equated preventive measures with abortion and, thus, infanticide, the use of contraceptives was largely viewed in actual practice as principally a medical judgment. And by the standards of old, such "medical" judgments were very lenient indeed. There were also several theoretical reasons why some relaxation in state abortion laws might have been ecclesiastically acceptable.

First, the Church had never taken a formal stand on the subject of abortion. Given what has been said about the nineteenth-century view, this may

seem a technicality, but it is not. Notwithstanding its authoritarian image, Mormonism in fact has very few authoritative doctrines. Its canon, the standard works, rarely bears unequivocally on twentieth-century issues. Principles continue to be extracted and applied, but there is always a strong subjective or "inspired" interpretive element in these applications.[4] Moreover, unless these interpretations are publicly issued by the First Presidency — which is rarely the case — they do not attain the status of formal doctrines of the Church. Even those so issued are subject to later revision, though an effort is made to avoid explicit rejection of a previously published view. The record on birth control illustrates both these points. What most often passes for "doctrine" within Mormon society is, in reality, a widely held consensus, perhaps espoused in sermon or print by Mormon General Authorities, but ultimately without formal sanction by the First Presidency. In theory, such a consensus is not binding on Church members. In practice, it is not unlikely to change.

Second, despite the precedent of nineteenth-century Church commentary, mid-twentieth century Mormon leaders did not view abortion in entirely the same doctrinal light as their predecessors. While nothing definitive had been stated publicly, as early as 1934 Apostle David O. McKay privately expressed his opinion that the Church had not made an "authoritative answer" to the question of whether abortion should be "termed murder or not" (McKay to Nate). Later, as Church president, McKay and the First Presidency had affirmed that "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" (First Presidency 1973). In 1958, J. Reuben Clark, though generally strongly opposed to abortion, had been willing to advise a pregnant woman who had contracted German measles that on the question of terminating the pregnancy "she should seek the advice of her physicians . . . and also seek the Lord in prayer" (Quinn 1983, 158).

Third, the view that abortion should not be viewed as murder and thus the optimism that there might be no official objection to some modest liberalization in state laws was possible because the Church also had no formal stand on another theologically relevant subject: the relationship between a noncorporeal spirit and the physical body of flesh and blood with which it is associated. Assumptions about this relationship are central to some frequently heard condemnations of abortion, but this is not true of Mormonism.

Mortal existence, as we know it, was represented by Joseph Smith as the union of a spirit with its earthly body to form what was termed a "soul." At death, the spirit and body again separated, to be permanently reunited at

[4] An instructive contrast is the distinctly different approach taken to medical ethical issues by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which, with access to essentially the same body of scripture, rarely makes categorical statements. Decisions on abortion, for example, are considered to be individual decisions. Such decisions may not be lightly made, but church leadership also "recognizes that there may be *rare* occasions which might make it necessary, because of the conditions of the conception or the pregnancy, to terminate a particular pregnancy." (First Presidency 1974, 57).

the time of resurrection. Ultimately this resurrected soul accounts before God for his or her conduct on earth.

The essence of this theological understanding obviously is not unique to Mormonism. Among other common themes, it shares the popular notion — of some medical interest — that the spirit animates the body and that death coincides with the departure of the spirit. As biblical literalists, early Mormons might also have been expected to assume, as did many of their contemporaries, that the spirit was prenatally present, using as proof-text the familiar passage in Luke 1:44 in which Elisabeth's child "leaped in [her] womb for joy" at the news of Mary's pregnancy. The problem with this as a firm Mormon scriptural guide was a Book of Mormon episode in which the adult Christ appeared — presumably in spirit form — the day prior to his birth.

With these paradoxical precedents, it is understandable that leading Mormons held a variety of views over the years about timing of ensoulment — and that none of these views attained the status of a formal doctrine. Brigham Young assumed the spirit arrived at the time of quickening (JD 17:143). This view, the conventional Protestant wisdom of the day, was easier to maintain before modern science demonstrated that fetal motion was present almost from the outset of pregnancy, long before it could be detected by the mother. David O. McKay felt that the spirit joined the body at the time of birth. "Life manifest in the body before that time would seem to be dependent upon the mother" (McKay to Nate). To the best of my knowledge, no leading Mormon ever asserted the third obvious alternative — that the spirit arrived at the time of conception.

Although McKay's position would seem intrinsically more flexible than Young's, this was not necessarily so. Young also believed, as quoted by a successor Wilford Woodruff, that "when some people have little children born at 6 & 7 months from pregnancy & they live a few hours then die . . . I think that such a spirit will have a Chance of occupiying [sic] another Tabernacle and develop itself" (Woodruff 5:109). While it is not clear where he would draw the line, he periodically ridiculed a colleague's notion that babies who died were "resurrected" into new, mortal infant bodies (Woodruff 6:361, 363; JD 12:66). Ultimately the First Presidency (1970) wrote — though it did not formally publish — that "there is no direct revelation upon the subject [of when the spirit takes possession of the body] . . . it has always been a moot question. That there is life in the child before birth is 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" (First Presidency 1970). So far as I am aware, nothing further has been said on the subject.

In practice, Mormon ritual has always distinguished between miscarriages or stillborn deliveries, and neonatal deaths. The former are not formally recorded in Church records; the latter are. Vicarious ordinance work, deemed essential for all humankind in Mormon theology, is never performed in the case of a miscarriage or stillborn delivery. It always is for a deceased infant. In essence, then, whatever the doctrinal uncertainties, Church practice treats birth as though it were the time when an important spirit-body bond takes place.

(Parenthetically, it also should be noted that the Church has not taken any stand on the question of what constitutes a live birth, despite the obvious ecclesiastical implications. I believe in practice it simply follows the variable legal definitions current in different jurisdictions.)

Returning then to 1969, the Church did issue a short statement on the proposed abortion reform bill, about a week after it was introduced in the Utah legislature. In this, the First Presidency stated that after "careful consideration," they were opposed "to any modification, expansion, or liberalization of laws on these vital subjects" (*Deseret News*, 23 Jan. 1969). And, not surprisingly, the bill was not enacted.

Inapparent flexibility in this official opinion became evident just a few weeks later in a private letter from the Secretary to the First Presidency, on their behalf. After reiterating Mormon opposition to a liberalization in the laws, the letter added: "Nevertheless there may be conditions where abortion is justified, but such conditions must be determined acting under the advice of competent, reliable physicians, preferably members of the Church, and in accordance with the laws pertaining thereto" (Anderson 1969). Two years later in February 1971, this private counsel was given much wider circulation when a new First Presidency published an identically worded statement in the official leadership newsletter, *The Priesthood Bulletin*. The following June 1972, the Presidency's views were more fully elaborated in another issue of the *Bulletin*. Their statement at that time remains the most comprehensive official Mormon response to the question of abortion: Because of its importance to the present discussion, I will quote it in full:

> The church opposes abortion and counsels its members not to submit to or perform an abortion except in the rare cases where, in the opinion of competent medical counsel, 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 it should be done only after counseling with the local presiding authority and after receiving divine confirmation through prayer.
>
> As the matter stands today, no definite 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 of innocent human blood. That he has not done so would suggest that it is not in that class of crime and therefore that it will be amendable to the laws of repentance and forgiveness.
>
> These observations must not be interpreted to mean that acts of abortion, except under circumstances explained in the preceding paragraph, are not of a serious nature. To tamper or interfere with any of the processes in the procreation of offspring is to violate one of the most sacred of God's commandments — to multiply and replenish the earth. Abortion must be considered one of the most revolting and sinful practices in this day, when we are witnessing the frightening evidences of permissiveness leading to sexual immorality.
>
> Members of the Church guilty of being parties to the sin of abortion must be subjected to the disciplinary action of the councils of the Church as circumstances warrant. In dealing with this serious matter it would be well to keep in mind the word of the Lord stated in the 59th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, verse 6: "Thou shalt not steal; neither commit adultery, nor kill *nor do anything* like unto it."

This statement clearly stops short of defining abortion as murder, finding it rather "like unto it" — possibly in the sense that some might consider a fetus

not to be identical with human life in the normal usage, but like unto it. As such, abortion was usually to be viewed as a "most revolting and sinful practice." On the other hand, the statement was clearly more liberal than, for example, the existing Utah law at the time and, excepting only the cases of fetal abnormalities and incest-related pregnancy, was compatible with the unsuccessful legislative reform introduced three years earlier.

While a panel of federal judges held in 1971 that Utah's abortion law was constitutional, the statute obviously did not withstand the 1973 Supreme Court ruling which in essence struck down all state laws on the subject. In the wake of this development, the Church reissued its 1972 guideline; and over the past decade, it has periodically republished an essentially identical official statement.

With the advent of the Kimball presidency in late 1973, abortion regained the prominence in sermon and print it had been given a century before. Abortion was again a national issue, and President Kimball regularly cited it in a litany of grave sins besetting society. Although the characteristically hyperbolic *Church News* editorials which accompanied this renewed attack (for example, that of 17 May 1975) occasionally suggested that spirits assigned to aborted fetuses would lose their chance for an earthly experience, I believe this view was generally (and correctly) assumed to be without official basis.[5] It was more the tone than the substance of Church discourse that changed during these years.

One quasi-official departure from the limitations of the 1972 statement was evident in 1976, when the Church distributed to all Mormon congregations a very graphic filmstrip reinforcing its opposition to abortion. In addition to the proscriptions already outlined in the official statement, the following new counsel was included as part of an accompanying discourse by President Kimball entitled "A Visit With The Prophet" which was reprinted in the *Church News*, 27 March 1976, p. 6: "Occasionally the question of pregnancy by rape will be asked. Medical evidence indicates that this is an extremely rare situation. But regardless of how the pregnancy was caused, abortion would greatly compound the wrong. An unborn baby must not be punished for the sins of his father. Letting the baby be born and placing him in an adoptive home would surely be a better solution for an unfortunate situation."

Despite the extensive distribution of the filmstrip and explicit guidance of the accompanying talk, the Church at this time did not officially depart from its former stand—a paradox which illustrates some of the problems in assessing an authoritative or authoritarian religion with few formal doctrines. That there had been no binding departure from previous guidance was clear within just a few weeks when the First Presidency reaffirmed its previous policy on

[5] There is an inherent tension between the Mormon belief that we will be punished only for our own sins and the idea that we can deprive a person of an opportunity to grow through an earthly experience by killing or otherwise harming him or her. The problem posed by the death of young children was handled early by assuming that all who died before "the age of accountability" (eight years) were assured exaltation. That historically this could amount to perhaps 40 percent of all births makes the attempted analogy to abortion a little more intelligible. But our present medical understanding that as many as 85–90 percent of all conceptions fail to reach eight again undermines the whole proposition.

abortion in an "official statement" which contained identical exceptions to those specified in 1972. Among these, of course, was "pregnancy . . . caused by forcible rape and produc[ing] serious emotional trauma in the victim" (*Church News*, 5 June 1976, p. 3).

This is where things stand at present.[6] Interestingly enough, the First Presidency never has specifically condemned the termination of pregnancies involving seriously defective fetuses. Rather, they chose the indirect condemnation of not exempting such cases from a general indictment of abortion. In his remarks accompanying the 1976 filmstrip, President Kimball did assert that "no one, save the Lord himself, has the right to decide if a baby should or should not be permitted to live." One can presume therefore that he personally would counsel strongly against intervening in such cases. Nonetheless, the First Presidency appears to have intentionally avoided singling out this difficult issue for unequivocal condemnation, despite periodic inquiries from concerned physicians on this specific subject or on the related use of amniocentesis.

My impression is that this quasi-silence on the part of the Church coincides with a continuing evolution in perspective among both Mormon physicians and patients, an evolution of just the sort previously seen under similar circumstances on the question of birth control. While I do not see any wholesale rejection of the implied Church counsel against terminating demonstrably abnormal pregnancies, there nonetheless already has been some change in attitude. At the anecdotal level, for example, I am aware of local Church leaders who have availed themselves of amniocentesis for high-risk pregnancies within their own families and of others who plan to do so. They say that they would have gravely abnormal pregnancies terminated, arguing that this option promotes *larger* families, for without it they would not risk further pregnancies. Similarly, though perhaps a distinct minority, there are also otherwise conservative, highly orthodox Mormon physicians who recommend or perform these studies with the same intent. There is, of course, also a growing medicolegal obligation to at least discuss amniocentesis, as an option in high-risk pregnancies, but the motivation is deeper than this.

While I do not know of any reliable statistics on the subject, one LDS obstetrician, not in Utah, estimated that in the general area where his practice was located, about half of the LDS women pregnant after age forty requested amniocentesis. This figure seems generally consistent with a recent Centers for Disease Control study which found that about 10 percent of Utah women

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[6] The 1983 *General Handbook* statement for the first time has added pregnancy from incest to the published list of exceptional cases in which abortion might be justified. The other exceptions remain pregnancy resulting from rape, and circumstances where the "life or health of the woman is in jeopardy" (pp. 77–78). As this essay went to press, Elder Russell M. Nelson, formerly a heart surgeon, spoke in April 1985 conference about "Reverence for Life" (*Ensign* May 1985, pp. 11–14). He acknowledged the possibility of abortion in cases of rape, incest, or danger to the mother's life, and told two stories of the choice not to abort when foetal malformation seemed certain. In the first case the child was born deaf but otherwise normal. The second child was Beethoven. He did not give anecdotal evidence of families in which the decision not to abort resulted in the birth of a seriously handicapped child. Elder Nelson challenged the "pro-choice" argument, reviewed authoritative statements opposing abortion, and reaffirmed the possibility of repentance.

pregnant after age thirty-five also sought amniocentesis — a figure about half the national average (Sept. 1982). It is also compatible with the figures given at this symposium by Dr. Robert Fineman, which were that nationally about 80 percent of pregnancies found to have genetic abnormalities were terminated, and in Utah about 66 percent. While proportionately few amniocenteses reveal abnormalities, in some areas it apparently is not as rare as one might suppose for LDS women discovering significant fetal abnormalities to have these pregnancies terminated.

Despite official Church guidelines encouraging ecclesiastical action against those involved in abortions, I have yet to learn of any Church courts held when known fetal abnormalities were involved. On the contrary, I understand that inquiries about cases of such extreme fetal abnormalities as anencephaly have received unofficial, tacit endorsement. Outside of Utah, one suspects such agonizing personal problems are not infrequently dealt with, or more accurately, not dealt with, entirely by local leaders who counsel the family involved, but indicate that the final moral judgment must reside within the family.

Eugenics

A counter-theme which runs through much of the material on birth control relates to the question of "impurities." As early as 1917, Joseph F. Smith sanctioned marital abstinence when the husband or wife was not "free from impurities which would be entailed upon their posterity." This same caveat can be readily traced throughout the twentieth century, right up to the First Presidency statement of 1969, which in fact quotes Smith verbatim on this point.

A related concern can also be identified in early Church history. Apostle Parley P. Pratt, for example, wrote in *Key to the Science of Theology* — a study second only to the standard works in defining Church doctrine for nineteenth-century Mormons — 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" (1855, 167). Although Utah's Mormon-dominated territorial legislature apparently wasn't sufficiently wise to enact such legislation, the still predominantly Mormon state of Utah eventually did so in 1925. A statute passed that year, in the wake of a national enthusiasm over eugenics, provided for the sterilization of institutionalized individuals (including infants) who were "habitually sexually criminal, . . . insane, mentally deficient, epileptic, or . . . afflicted with degenerate sexual tendencies," if "by the laws of heredity [they were] the probable potential parent of socially inadequate offispring likewise afflicted" (*Utah Code Annotated* Sec. 89-0-1, 1925; Sec. 64-10-1 after 1953).

While such "a taint in the blood" — to use Widtsoe's phraseology — if "known to be capable of transmission, should be hemmed in and not allowed further propagation," the historical Mormon solution to this issue always has been at the other end of the spectrum. Healthy people should have more children. And to whom had the Lord promised good health? It was just this

sort of positive "eugenics" which justified Mormon polygamy. Or, as Brigham Young said in 1856 in terms not infrequently heard even today,

> I have told you many times that there are multiudes 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. (JD 4:56)

There is thus a eugenics heritage within Mormonism which may be doubly relevant to the scenarios at hand. First, there is a clear precedent for taking otherwise unacceptable measures to avoid encumbering awaiting spirits with predictable defective "tabernacles." Second, there is a strong tradition which seeks to provide the best possible chance for "good" people to become parents.[7]

STERILIZATION

Aside from the narrowly-defined exemptions for eugenic reasons, until recently Mormon Utah rejected all grounds for sterilization. Even the tolerant McKay administration opposed an effort to liberalize a state law which as late as 1969 was interpreted as allowing only eugenic sterilizations. The same First Presidency statement which opposed any change in state laws on abortion also opposed a bill which would have authorized voluntary sterilizations "where medically necessary to preserve the life or prevent a serious impairment of the mental or physical health of the patient or spouse." (*Deseret News*, 23 Jan. 1969). While this legislative initiative failed, judicial review a few years later determined that no prohibition against such sterilizations actually existed in Utah law. Unlike the case of abortion, this did not bring about a formal statement of guidance from the Church.

In 1976 the Church Commissioner of Health prepared a short statement on sterilization, obviously patterned after the guidance on birth control — and taken almost verbatim from privately issued First Presidency guidance, which stated, "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" (Bush 1979, 100, 106). Although one Mormon authority warned two years later

[7] Beyond the physically redeeming merits of adherence to its Word of Wisdom and otherwise living righteously, nineteenth-century Mormons were taught that they were literally part of a "chosen lineage." In a sense, this identification was just another aspect of the effort to recreate or restore the biblical ideal. It also promoted a sense of unity and served as an emotional shield during many trying years. Though now perhaps anachronistic, this notion of being elect still appears in popular Mormon lore. Indeed, at least symbolically it is an essential part of the Mormon tradition of patriarchal blessings. In its most fully developed form, this idea extended beyond this-worldly bonds of kinship to the belief that these bonds somehow existed in the pre-earthly spirit world. Certain spirits were said to be destined to be born into specific Mormon families. While not a formal doctrine of the Church, this idea nonetheless in part shapes the way Mormons view, for example, such things as the number of children "destined" for their families.

that those submitting to vasectomy might be ineligible for participation in temple ordinances, this guidance was never formally implemented. Nor have temple-recommend interviews ever officially included questions relating to sterilization (or birth control). Among other reasons, sterilization, like birth control, can be seen as medically justifiable in most cases. Moreover, the increasing frequency with which procedures such as hysterectomy are performed for non-pregnancy-related indications (e.g., uterine prolapse, fibroids, etc.) has contributed coincidentally toward making the question of birth control moot for many women in their later childbearing years.[8]

Artificial Insemination

One might suppose that the Church would look favorably on almost any technique which would lead to successful pregnancies in otherwise infertile marriages. And this is probably true, if the semen is that of the husband. Of potential relevance to this subject is the biblical and nineteenth-century Mormon precedent for "raising up seed" to a dead husband whereby a woman sealed for eternity to him would be married for time to another man. Still, when the question of artificial insemination was first addressed by the Church in 1974, it was made clear that "the Church does not approve of artificial insemination with semen other than that of the husband" because donor semen "may produce problems related to family harmony." At the prompting of the Church Commissioner of Health, this condemnation was softened by the addition of an acknowledgment that "the Church recognizes that this is a personal matter which must ultimately be left to the determination of the husband and wife with the responsibility for the decision resting solely upon them" (Bush 1979, 97).

In view of the record on birth control, it is not surprising to learn that there has been some additional development in the Church position on this subject. Two years later "the Church does not approve" was recast into the more positive counsel that "the Church approves of artificial insemination only in cases where the semen of the husband is used." Then, in 1977, the most recent guideline — and the only one formally published by the First Presidency — softened the wording even further in counseling that "the Church *discourages* artificial insemination with other than the semen of the husband." This final statement clearly implied, moreover, that births through artificial insemination were to be viewed in the same ecclesiastical light regardless of the semen's origin (Bush 1979, 101).

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[8] The 1983 *General Handbook* for the first time combines Utah's legal proviso with Church counsel into what is also the first statement on sterilization to be published by the Church: "Sterilization may possibly be justified in a case where (1) medical conditions jeopardize the health of a mother, or (2) a person is born with defects or has suffered severe trauma that renders him mentally incompetent and not responsible for his actions. Such conditions, rare as they may be, must be determined by competent medical judgment and in accordance with the law." (p. 77) This, of course, endorses the exemption that the Church opposed in 1969.

PATTERNS FROM THE PAST

After this lengthy historical tour, it is clear that attempts to project a specific Mormon perspective on emerging ethical issues must be very tentative. Still, some useful generalizations emerge from the record to date.

First, contrary to its media image, the Church — and specifically the uniquely authoritative First Presidency — often chooses *not* to express itself on issues with obvious ethical or theological overtones. This is especially true when the issues are extraordinarily complex or when important scientific questions remain unanswered. A corollary to this is that there are relatively few fixed doctrines in the Church. For example, in a 7 September 1968 statement on citizen obligations and contemporary social and political conditions, the First Presidency wrote: "The growing worldwide responsibilities of the Church make it inadvisable for the Church to seek to respond to all the various and complex issues involved in the mounting problems of the many cities and communities in which members live. But this complexity does not absolve members as individuals from filling their responsibility as citizens in their own community" (*Deseret News*, 7, 11 Sept. 1968). The large number of statements issued in recent years affirming that the Church has no position on evolution is a parallel case. David O. McKay on 3 February 1959 wrote cogently, "While scientific people themselves differ in their interpretations and views of the theory, any conflicts which may seem to exist between the theory and revealed religion can well be dealt with by suspending judgment as long as may be necessary to arrive at facts and at a complete understanding of the truth" (McKay to Christensen).

Second, when the First Presidency does comment on complex issues, the initial guidance is usually given privately, in response to questions from those most directly involved. I know of no twentieth-century exceptions to this general rule.

Third, formal public statements by the First Presidency on medical ethical issues — those which effectively establish Church policy — generally do not appear until relatively late in the public discussion. At this point, it is not unusual for individual members and local leaders to have reached independent judgments on the questions involved. While inevitably leading to some confusion, this general process is not necessarily viewed as bad. More disruptive are the rare occasions when the first-issued public guidance contradicts that previously given in private. An example is the issue of sex-change surgery, the most recent medical ethical issue to be dealt with by the Church. Within the past few years, such surgery was privately ruled *not* to disqualify one for participation in temple marriage and other ordinances. Subsequent public guidance not only reversed this, but imposed on offenders (patient *or* physician) the severest ecclesiastical sanctions in the history of the Church. In October 1980, ecclesiastical leaders received a replacement for Chapter 8, "The Church Judicial System" for the *General Handbook of Instructions* (1976) which stated: "In cases of . . . transsexual operations, either received or performed, [excommunication is mandatory and] . . . no readmission to the Church is possible."

Prospective converts who have had such surgery may be baptized only "on condition that an appropriate notation be made on the membership record so as to preclude [them] from either receiving the priesthood or temple recommends." Though having or performing an abortion is also potential grounds for excommunication, local leaders are allowed discretion in even bringing offenders to trial. Nor are there any prescribed restrictions on readmission.

A fourth generalization to emerge is that the passage of time almost always sees an evolution in Church guidance on specific medical ethical issues. The public phase of this evolution invariably has been in the direction of greater conformity to the general medical/social consensus on the subject. We have seen this on the issues of birth control, sterilization, artificial insemination, abortion, and medicine in general. Note that this generalization applies to the public record only. As the instance of sex change surgery indicates, there may be a decided hardening of the official view during the pre-public phase.[9]

Fifth, to some extent this evolution is accompanied by the emergence of what in retrospect might be termed the core of ethical concern which motivated the guidance from the outset. This core is generally expressed in terms unambiguously tied to central tenets of the faith: the centrality of marriage and children; the overriding importance of maintaining family harmony and stability, and protecting the health and well-being of mother, children, and "tabernacles-to-be;" the preservation of free agency and personal accountability; and the total unacceptability of decisions based on "selfish" rationales.

Sixth, guidance which eventually is discarded in this evolutionary process, in retrospect generally falls into one of two categories. The first is the case when a view has simply been asserted by fiat, with no effort at ecclesiastical justification — in other words, no doctrinal rationale was ever publicly offered. Church guidance on sex change surgery specifies sanctions without offering any rationale whatever. To some extent, this situation also describes the case with sterilization and abortion.

In the second type of case, a particular view may have been justified with socio-cultural (often emotion-laden) rationales readily identifiable with former societal values. This position is most explicit in the guidance on artificial insemination but is implicit in many other statements as well. At one point in

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[9] A subtle shift also has begun in the case of sex change surgery as well. The 1983 *General Handbook* advises that "a change in a member's sex ordinarily justifies excommunication," (p. 53) and exceptions under this proviso are known to have been made. Formerly the officially published guidance stated flatly, "Members who have undergone transsexual operations must be excommunicated," with the added penalties detailed in the October 1980 version of Chapter 8 (p. 2). Public counsel on such surgery will surely continue to evolve. At the least some provision will have to be made for children whose sex is "changed" as the only solution to ambiguous genitalia or some other purely medical miscue. As the Church encounters (or fails to detect prior to conversion, etc.) well-adjusted adults who have undergone elective sex-change surgery, even further moderation will probably come about.

Another parallel is also apparent in recent counsel on oral sex in marriage. This crystalized from ambivalent or non-existent counsel to a First Presidency directive in January 1982 that married couples involved in such practices be denied access to temple ordinances, which in turn was rescinded in a follow-up directive in October 1982 that instructed local leaders to avoid inquiring into "personal intimate matters involving marital relations between a man and his wife."

late 1976, the guidance on artificial insemination had noted that "the legitimacy of offspring of artificial insemination from semen other than that of the husband is open to question."

Seventh, core beliefs themselves can be modified in accommodating new knowledge which is simply unreconcilable with the previous view. This development does not pose as much a challenge to Church authority as might be supposed. It is in fact a tenet of the Mormon faith that this sort of refinement periodically will take place.

DEVELOPING ETHICAL ISSUES: FOUR NEW SCENARIOS

With these generalities as a backdrop and in the context of the history just covered, let us now turn to some developing ethical issues yet to be dealt with by the Church.

The first scenario raises the issue of aborting fetuses with known genetic defects which will not be manifest until later in life. I think it can safely be said that, if pressed, the Church would oppose any intervention of this sort — even, for that matter, when the defect would be manifest immediately at birth. Indeed, the First Presidency is implicitly on record to this effect — that is, no exemption from their general condemnation of abortion has been granted for such cases.

Were it not for the historical record, discussion of this point could well end here. The problem is that there is substantial historical precedent for further modification in the Mormon stance, and one can readily see several theological or theoretical reasons why this might eventually take place.

Mormon values that would favor interdicting demonstrably abnormal pregnancies are self-apparent and require little discussion. Any measure intended — as Widtsoe put it — to "[hem] in and not allow further propagation" of "taints in the blood" would normally be allowed by the Church, for it thereby would insure more healthy "tabernacles" for those pure spirits beginning their earthly experience. This is, after all, just the other side to counsel already given that expectant parents take no action which might cause infants to be born with defects. An example is the counsel of nineteenth-century church leaders that coitus be continued during pregnancy lest through abstinence "they might . . . entail on their offspring unholy desires and appetites" (Larson and Larson, 2:621). Expectant mothers were also warned against wishing for such harmful things as tobacco, tea, coffee, and liquor (JD 13:3). Moreover, if couples afraid to risk pregnancy because of a history of genetic disorders in the family or advanced age were thereby enabled safely to have as many healthy children as they desired, yet another Mormon ideal would be achieved.

Objections to abortion that outweigh such benefits must of necessity be substantial. At present they are. Abortion has been officially labelled as a grave sin which intrudes in the most violent way possible into the sacred processes of reproduction. In so doing, it brings about the death of a human embryo or fetus, an act once labelled murder and now interpreted as "like unto it." Even

the most cautious step toward liberalizing the grounds for abortion is viewed — probably correctly — as potentially leading to the abandonment of all ethical restrictions on its use. It is feared that the legacy of such a development could be an increasing and grossly self-serving irreverence for the sanctity of human life. In the Mormon mind, this would strike at the heart of the entire purpose of humankind's mortal existence.

As insurmountable as these obstacles seem, it is arresting to recall that virtually identical arguments could have been made — indeed, were made many times — on the subject of birth control. It seems that neither the vigor with which such statements have been expressed nor the length of time over which they are espoused have proven infallible guides to their ultimate fate. To some extent, this situation is due to the difficulty of separating culturally mediated perspectives from those based on underlying theological absolutes, especially when purely emotional (or aesthetic) motives for holding a given belief are strong. While the distinction between culture and eternal principle is rarely easy to make, technological advances have a curious way of clarifying things. My impression is that when new, esthetically less traumatic techniques alone seem to change everything, emotional considerations (or purely scientific ones) are probably involved. For example, as unlikely as the idea may currently seem, the development of a monthly pill or intra-uterine implant which insured the viability of only defect-free conceptions (normal menstruation otherwise occurring) might well be acceptable to individuals who had "ethical" reservations to a D&C at ten weeks.

But doesn't Mormonism have some truly fundamental, theological objection to abortion? Unquestionably the Church will always view a decision to terminate fetal life as a step with profound moral overtones. A selfish or callous decision of this sort will, I expect, always be considered a very serious sin. But when it comes to a broader condemnation or even to a fixed definition of what should be considered an "abortion," the doctrinal record suggests some oftimes unrecognized flexibility. In addition to a tradition which has accommodated a surprising degree of ethical readjustment, the Church has never really taken a stand categorically barring all abortion. Right from the outset, it has recognized legitimate indications for terminating pregnancy. The question since then never has been *if* there were such grounds, but always *which* grounds were legitimate? And the answers have varied with differing times and differing circumstances.

In particular, Mormons have, as noted previously, important doctrinal latitude on the central question of the nature of the embryonic or fetal life potentially jeopardized. Since this issue may alone distinguish selective abortion theologically from birth control, it is worth considering a little further.

The nineteenth-century equation of infant murder with abortion must have derived some intuitive support from the fact that infant deaths were about as common as grossly evident spontaneous abortions. Both seemed to kill perhaps 20 to 25 percent of fetuses or infants at risk. The more recent research showing that 70 to 75 percent of conceptions actually fail to survive to term, and the dramatic decline in infant mortality to near 1 percent has changed this sub-

jective equation markedly (Mishell 1982). In terms of relative risk nine months before or nine months after birth, there is no longer much epidemiological similarity between prenatal and infant life. In a sense, the prenatal period is no longer viewed as only the process whereby human life comes into being. It now also appears to be a process designed to insure — albeit imperfectly — that only the most viable conceptions are carried to term. Thus, the pre- and postnatal survival rates are inherently of an entirely different order of magnitude.

New developments in medical sciences also have undermined other aspects of our traditional understanding. An animating role for a maternal spirit cannot readily be argued when an ova is fertilized in a petri dish, even less when the ova, semen, or early embryo remains frozen but viable well after the death of the original donors. It is similarly awkward to invoke an essential role for a maternal spirit in a brain-dead "mother" sustained on life-support systems until the fetus can be delivered with some chance of surviving. Assumptions about an obligatory role for an "embryonal spirit" encounter equal difficulties when it is realized that twins may develop from what was for a number of days a single individual; or, conversely that more than one embryonal animal may fuse into a single individual (chimera) of normal appearance. A mandatory role for any discrete spirit presence at all can be argued only with great difficulty in the case of living cell cultures, perhaps fetal in origin, alive and well in a petri dish years after the death of the individual from whom they were taken. Most problematic of all is to impute a mandatory spirit presence in the cloning process whereby entirely normal animals are "created" through the biophysical manipulation of individual cells (cells which, in theory, — to underscore the point — could have been obtained from cell cultures, and need not have originated in the reproductive system).

Conceptually at least, medical science is increasingly committed to the notion that early prenatal life may be entirely understood in the bio-physical terms applicable to a cell culture. The record to date suggests that the Church eventually will take advantage of its open theology in this area and once again follow the medical consensus into a tacit acceptance of the same perspective: it may no longer assume that either a maternal or a fetal spirit is essential to prenatal viability. This would not be the concession to secularism that some would label it, but rather a recognition that demonstrated facts simply could not easily be reconciled otherwise. Should this more naturalistic view become commonplace — a development which surely will be facilitated by the widespread use of *in vitro* fertilization techniques — the Mormon perspective on selected therapeutic abortions for known, serious defects would be in a position to change as well.

If in fact the official Mormon view eventually follows such a path, it most likely will not be initially manifest through detailed new guidance on abortion. More likely, there will be acquiescence to the judgment of "competent physicians," whose judgment in turn will reflect this emerging perspective. While I cannot foresee a theological distinction ultimately being made between serious embryonal defects which will manifest at birth and grave defects which

will not become evident until somewhat later, it is possible that during a transitional period such a distinction would be made. Similarly, I would expect that only the most grotesquely abnormal defects — such as anencephaly or serious glycogen storage diseases — would initially be considered grounds for intercession. Even these may well be justified ostensibly by the imputed risk to the mother of continuing the pregnancy. While I expect no public change in the immediate future, a continuation of the general societal approval of such selected abortions[10] and the inevitable development of earlier and less emotionally traumatic means for accomplishing this may well change things eventually.

The next scenario to be considered, involving *genetic engineering*, is the sort of thing which in the past has been labelled by the Church a purely medical question. To the extent that its use is limited to the treatment of disease, I really cannot conceive of a predictable rationale for Mormon objections to this amazing new tool. Certainly the Church does not presently view deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) as theologically any more sacrosanct than any other component of the human body. If a disease can be traced to some defect repairable through such engineering, this would certainly be hailed by Church leaders as yet another scientific miracle. That it might be subject to abuse at some future time would probably not distinguish it in their minds from drugs or other treatments also subject to abuse. To judge from the past, they would still defer to responsible medical expertise as to whether the potential benefits justified the perceived risks.

I would guess that much the same would prevail for *in utero* surgery. Aside from the hope it might offer as an alternative to abortion, it does not strike me as having major ethical overtones — at least in the Mormon context. One obviously must consider again Talmage's standard that such heroic intervention be moderated by the "intelligent application of common sense"; but if such procedures proved to be successful and relatively safe, Church leaders would probably view them as just another extraordinary technological development. I doubt that any guidance would be issued, even privately, on the question of prioritizing who should be treated. So far as I am aware, Mormon leaders have never considered this type of question within their official domain. If they were pressed, I would expect them to defer to the prayerful consideration of those more directly involved.

The final scenario, in the case of *in vitro* fertilization is a more interesting one to assess from a Mormon perspective. It both poses a dilemma and illustrates some of the points made previously. It is at once a technique which enhances the chances of a couple's having children of their own, yet simultaneously raises — in some minds — the specter of abortion.

So far as the official record is concerned, the Church — as I noted at the outset — has not offered and presently will not offer an opinion on the ques-

[10] LeRoy Walters (June 1982) reports that according to national surveys taken 1972–80 by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, "a substantial majority of the adult population (range, 79 percent to 92 percent) finds abortion ethically acceptable in cases involving the so-called hard reasons for abortion (serious danger to the woman's health, rape, serious fetal defect)."

tion of *in vitro* fertilization. If the Church's public communications arm — an alter ego of sorts — is asked, they sometimes will reply that the Church views the subject as a matter to be decided by the individuals concerned. Though both Mormon physicians and patients are apparently now involved, neither counsel nor sanctions have been publicly forthcoming. While the recent record on sex-change surgery shows this to be no sure indicator of even near-term events, the overall record on reproductive questions suggests that the Church will continue its present neutrality.

The over-reaching Mormon concern that members "multiply and replenish the earth" could hardly be more applicable than to a technique specifically designed to make this possible. A rationale for the Church's support of *in vitro* fertilization therefore requires no imagination. Are the potential objections sufficient to nullify this benefit?

Among the ethical arguments put forth against *in vitro* fertilization, one of the most common is that it involves aborting early embryos. One also hears that it is "unnatural," in any of several senses, and that it poses unusual risks to the children so conceived. Of the various reservations I have seen expressed, only those relating to abortion seem to relate directly to contemporary Mormon concerns. Certainly the question of acceptable risk would be considered by the Church as purely in the realm of medical and personal judgment. Nor does the Church normally distinguish between "natural" and "unnatural" medical intervention. On these two counts, the Mormon tradition is by and large fully aligned with the medical mainstream.

What of the abortion question? By now it should be evident that this is not a simple question. While the Church could have assumed that discarding an embryo or even a fertilized egg was tantamount to wantonly committing abortion, it has thus far implicitly rejected such an assumption. Although the theological reasons for this position have yet to carry the day in the case of embryonal defects, other factors may have tipped the balance in the latter instance. In particular, discarding a four-cell blastocyst (that is, a very early "embryo") created by *in vitro* techniques is much closer emotionally to preventing the implantation of a fertilized egg through the use of an IUD than it is to surgically terminating the development of a multi-week embryo or fetus. The Church never has treated use of an IUD as ecclesiastically comparable to abortion, and it seems likely to me that *in vitro* fertilization will be viewed in a comparable, if uneasy, limbo. With the passage of time, and increasing use of these techniques, a *de facto* if not *ex cathedra* judgment will have been affirmed that this is not an ecclesiastically proscribed form of abortion. The commonplace that grossly defective blastocysts or embryos will be among those *not* implanted could well be a stepping stone to interdicting somewhat older embryos that are taking nutrients from the uterine wall rather than from a petri dish. It is just this type of progression which has marked the evolution of Mormon medical ethical thinking in the past.

In conclusion, I will say that my impression, based on admittedly limited reading, is that on science-related issues, scientists shape theology as much as theologians do. This is not so much through confrontation or default on the

part of the theologians, but rather through new discoveries which directly or indirectly force modifications in the old ways of thinking. New facts have to be accommodated. Dated but inapparent sociocultural assumptions are exposed and eroded.

This phenomenon is surely in evidence in the Mormon record. That this is so is seen, paradoxically, as a strength of the Mormon point of view rather than a weakness — because Mormons view scientific and religious truth ultimately as one and the same. The acquisition of knowledge, whether through secular or religious means, is held to be a divinely mediated accomplishment. There are, of course, some practical problems with this position; but in the final analysis, the Mormon point of view is both designed to and disposed to incorporate new truths from wherever they come. For this reason, I would suggest that in theory — and sometimes even in practice — "Mormonism" typically sees frontiers in medicine such as those we have discussed as opportunities for expanding its perspective rather than as occasions for making official judgments.

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The Alienation of an Apostle from His Quorum: The Moses Thatcher Case

Edward Leo Lyman

In 1896 Moses Thatcher, a highly capable member of the second-highest ruling body of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was relieved of his office of apostle. Since this action came soon after he had run for the U.S. Senate without proper consent from his ecclesiastical superiors in the First Presidency of the Church, many contemporaries and recent scholars have seen Thatcher's Democratic affiliation under a strongly Republican First Presidency as the source of conflict (Ivins c1950s; Reasoner, July 1896 and Dec. 1896; Penrose 1896). In fact, this political episode was actually only one final step in a process of alienation that had been developing for at least a decade.

Moses Thatcher was born in 1842 and included among his childhood memories the Mormon expulsion from Illinois, the pioneer trek across the plains to Utah, and the California gold rush. At the age of fifteen, he became a missionary, an activity that would consume more than half of the next twenty years. In 1860, he helped his father locate canal and mill sites in Cache Valley, Utah, and soon emerged as a prominent director of railroad, banking, and other major enterprises. In 1877 he was sustained as Cache Stake president. Church authorities could not fail to note his considerable talents, particularly after his negotiations with President Porfiro Diaz and other high officials of Mexico were instrumental in enabling permanent Mormon settlements in that country. He was ordained an apostle in 1879 and thereafter, Moses Thatcher enjoyed the fullest confidence of the second and third Church presidents, Brigham Young and John Taylor (Tullidge 1889, 129–58; Jenson 1: 244–56; Godfrey 1979).

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However, at some undetermined point during Taylor's presidency, as Thatcher later acknowledged, relationships deteriorated. Fellow apostle Abraham H. Cannon recalled that, in what must have been the waning days of the Council of Fifty, Thatcher had opposed a proposal that Taylor be crowned "prophet, priest and king." A coolness between Thatcher and Taylor's nephew and counselor in the First Presidency, George Q. Cannon, also may have begun as early as 1886. Abram Cannon reported a conversation with his father on a Thatcher sermon that God would send the harassed Saints a scriptural man "like unto Moses" who would be none other than the resurrected Joseph Smith. Counselor Cannon disagreed sharply (20 Aug. 1886; 2 Dec. 1895). Thatcher later claimed that Counselor Cannon corrected the teachings of an apostle he assumed to be himself through the pages of a Church magazine. He obviously resented this action.

Far more significant in the developing ill will between Thatcher and George Q. Cannon was their mutual involvement in John Beck's Bullion Beck silver mine at Eureka. On 11 June 1883, John Taylor and George Q. Cannon agreed to purchase two-thirds of the 100,000 shares of company stock for $50,000. Then, on 3 October they set apart 60,000 shares Taylor could control or dispose of "in any manner and for any purpose" that he might deem wise for the work of God. Beck's papers allude to a revelation by Taylor on consecrated mining stock and mention the purchase of the Jackson County temple site and education for LDS youth as possible uses of such funds.

This agreement stipulated that the three partners should sell sufficient shares to reimburse Cannon and Taylor for some money they had advanced Beck. In February 1884, four prominent Cache Valley residents purchased 3809½ shares of the mining stock. Thatcher paid $5,000; William B. Preston and Marriner W. Merrill each paid $1,000; and Charles O. Card, $500 for a total of $7,500. These men, along with minor holdings by Taylor's clerks, L. John Nuttall and George Reynolds, were apparently the only other stockholders. They too entered into the consecration of Bullion Beck stock, an arrangement probably not widely known beyond this inner circle of participants.

Unfortunately, the Bullion Beck almost at once became embroiled in a disputed claims battle with the neighboring Eureka Hill Mining Company. The lengthy litigation halted most production, while legal expenses and Beck's poor financial management threatened loss of the entire property.

By 1886 George Q. Cannon, worried that involvement in the Bullion Beck might ruin him, concluded with Taylor not to renew Beck's right to operate the mine. They engaged Hiram B. Clawson as mine manager. He was the initial link to a group of prominent Californians who, in mid-March 1887, purportedly purchased the mine and incorporated the Bullion Beck and California Company. Actually, the former owners retained controlling interest in the mine, but the Californians, apparently through highly placed government connections, compromised with the Eureka Hill company owners and saved the Bullion Beck mine from threatened loss (A. Cannon, 20 Aug. 1886; John Beck to George J. Taylor, 5 Dec. 1887).

Just at this time, President John Taylor, in hiding to avoid prosecution for polygamy, was lapsing into his final illness. George Q. Cannon conducted much of the complex business of the Church alone, a challenging affair because Taylor would sometimes approve a transaction but later not remember the decision. Finally, at an important meeting of several Church leaders on 7 July 1887, Cannon confessed the necessity of taking action without consulting the fast-declining Taylor and called upon Apostle John W. Taylor to corroborate his father's condition. During these proceedings, Cannon disclosed that he had been compelled to conduct much Church business unilaterally for the past four months.

Cannon's action disturbed several fellow apostles who had previously expressed private apprehensions about his power. Later that day, Moses Thatcher commented to Apostle Heber J. Grant that those transactions might need to be investigated later since, he claimed to have learned, they were not all "as straight as they might have been" (Grant, 7 July 1887). Thatcher undoubtedly wondered how much the incapacitated Taylor had to do with crucial Bullion Beck decisions, which adversely affected his interests.

Within three weeks, President Taylor was dead. On 3 August 1887, the surviving apostles convened to organize an interim governing body of the Church. Counselors George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith resumed their places in the Quorum of the Twelve and Wilford Woodruff, as senior member, acted as leader of the Church until the First Presidency was reorganized. When the motion was made for Taylor's former counselors to be reinstated in their quorum, Grant, whose journal reports the meeting, urged that certain questions about Cannon needed clarification first. His grievances were really with George Q.'s brother Angus M., president of Salt Lake Stake. Several other apostles agreed that Angus was indeed "tyrannical and insubmissive to apostles." Then Moses Thatcher elaborated at length on the slights, great and small, George Q. Cannon had supposedly dealt to his fellow apostles. Cannon expressed surprise at the allegations, denied some of the most grievous offenses, and, obviously angry, looked squarely at Thatcher while he vowed that no "one man could deprive him of his position as apostle" (Grant, 3 Aug. 1887).

On 5 October, at the next regular meeting of the apostles, Grant recorded continued efforts to reconcile the quorum members. George Q. Cannon expressed pleasure that he had been given opportunity to further explain the causes of misunderstanding as he perceived them, clarified his actions at great length, and stated that the mental anguish he had suffered from the August criticisms had pained him more than anything he had previously experienced in his life. He pleaded for forgiveness of any past slights or errors in judgment. Moses Thatcher would not let matters rest. He confessed that he still harbored unpleasant feelings and again listed offenses Cannon had committed against him. Several senior quorum members, including Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Brigham Young, Jr., and Joseph F. Smith, upheld Cannon. Apostle Franklin D. Richards charged Thatcher and Grant with a lack of charity toward Cannon. Cannon, conciliatory and submissive, recalled that he had

been unable to influence Taylor and argued that, although he had been the instrument for carrying out Taylor's decisions, he should not be responsible for them (Grant, 5–6, 10 Oct. 1887).

The opposition to George Q. Cannon as a counselor to Wilford Woodruff was clearly a factor in delaying the official organization of the First Presidency after the death of John Taylor. The succession of the senior apostle to the presidency was by no means automatic at that time. More than a year and a half later, Wilford Woodruff testified that the Lord had assured him the presidency should be organized with Cannon as a counselor. Thatcher said he was "glad to hear that the Lord had manifested to President Woodruff that President Cannon would be one of his counselors and regretted he had not also manifested the same to him (Grant, 5 April 1889). Cannon offered to remove himself as a possibility for the presidency, but Thatcher was "roundly criticized for challenging Woodruff's decision," and the new First Presidency was unanimously sustained in April 1889.

These negative exchanges between Cannon and Thatcher frequently mentioned the Bullion Beck shares set apart for Taylor's purposes. According to the 2 July 1887 transfer papers, properly witnessed and signed by John Taylor and George Q. Cannon, Taylor conveyed control of the so-called dedicated stock to Cannon with the distinct stipulation that Cannon would not be accountable to the Church but would have absolute control as long as the proceeds were not used for his private benefit. Reacting to Thatcher's criticisms, Cannon informed his associates that he could no longer hold the stock technically belonging to Thatcher (Grant, 5 Oct. 1887).

Yet in the ensuing months, Cannon reconsidered and concluded he had no right to break up consecrated shares of stock he had promised to administer despite the dissatisfaction of Thatcher and some of his associates. During the next year, while Cannon served a prearranged shortened prison sentence for cohabitation, mine-related matters so angered Thatcher that in December 1888, he threatened to sue. For Latter-day Saints schooled in resolving such matters privately or in ecclesiastical courts, this threat was so grave that Joseph F. Smith warned Thatcher if he took such a step he would "regret it as long as [he] live[d]" (Stock Controversy). Thatcher rethought his position and agreed to submit the dispute to arbitration within the Quorum (Grant, 3 Dec. 1888).

In explanation of his anger, Thatcher wrote Wilford Woodruff on 5 and 7 December (Stock Controversy) that Cannon had promised to give him no further trouble on his portion of the "pooled stock." Then, in mid-September 1888, he learned of a $10,000 dividend declared by Bullion Beck from which he had received only two-fifths of what he expected. When a 3 December dividend of $50,000 repeated the pattern, Thatcher concluded that Cannon had violated his promise. The company secretary informed him that no adjustments concerning the withheld pooled-stock dividends could be made without Cannon's express permission, final confirmation in Thatcher's view of Cannon's unfairness.

As Thatcher wrote Woodruff 15 December 1888 (Stock Controversy), his grievance against Cannon had been intensified when the two-fifth dividends were further discounted by 25 percent to pay California Company officials

Thatcher and his associates did not recognize as fully entitled to the money. Cannon contended that they had in fact earned the right to one-quarter of the proceeds from ore sales. But according to Thatcher, after the suit with Eureka Hill Company had been withdrawn, there had been an unauthorized change in the agreements so that the original mine owners neither received the stipulated sale price for part of the mining stock nor retained control of the management. He opposed what he considered an ex post facto agreement allowing them to manage the mine without the monetary compensation he understood the original owners were entitled to.

As the arbitration process began, George Q. Cannon, still in prison, reluctantly wrote out his point of view on 4 December. Denying any wrongdoing, he implied his intention to maintain the dedicated stock proceeds as a separate and independent fund. That was where the crucial difference of opinion lay. Thatcher and other stockholders clearly wanted to withdraw legitimately purchased stock from an arrangement they considered nullified by Taylor's death. Cannon believed himself to be under solemn obligation to maintain the consecrated stock and acted accordingly.

When the Quorum scrutinized the matter in early 1889 after Cannon's release, they determined that Thatcher had technically received all that was due him. But the judgment was based solely on the unconsecrated shares of stock and Thatcher was hesitant to press the consecration matter. Likely he sensed that some of the apostles, particularly Woodruff, had no desire to pursue such unpleasant business while the Quorum was in dire need of greater internal harmony and understanding. As it was, this attempt at arbitration permanently alienated Cannon from Thatcher (Penrose 1896).

By midsummer of 1889, John Taylor's heirs joined Thatcher and his associates in a successful effort to have the dedicated stock reconveyed to the original owners. John Beck, who had been hiding from his creditors and anti-polygamy deputies in Germany, gladly joined the Taylor-Thatcher faction to regain control of the mine (Beck to George J. Taylor, 29 April 1889; A. Cannon, 15 July and 1–2 August 1889; Thatcher to C. O. Card, 28 August 1889).

John Beck returned to Utah, paid off the loan notes against him held by Church treasurer James Jack, and received the Bullion Beck stock certificates that had been held as collateral at the end of June 1889 (Beck Notes). Since he became indebted to the Thatcher Brothers Bank in Logan, his new associates had undoubtedly made him an attractive refinancing offer in exchange for getting his corporate votes.

On 6 August, the day after the dedicated stock was returned to Thatcher and his associates, an important Bullion Beck Company meeting was held. George Q. Cannon delegated his three oldest sons to act in his stead. Frank J. Cannon was the only one elected to the board as the other stockholders "pulled together to get control of the mine" (A. Cannon, 6 Aug. 1889). Thatcher was made president and H. B. Clawson was replaced by Alonzo Hyde, John Taylor's son-in-law.

Abram Cannon notes that Alexander Badlam appeared the next day in behalf of the California Company to confirm the transfer of one-fourth of the

mining stock he and his associates claimed for negotiating the compromise with the Eureka Hill Company. These arrangements were approved, with a completion date in January 1890. But by then, those controlling the mine were less inclined to carry out the transaction. Wilford Woodruff expressed strong disapproval of withholding the stock from the Californians. Apostle John W. Taylor defended his associates' actions by expressing suspicion that H. B. Clawson and his California relative, Isaac Trumbo, were conspiring to defraud Bullion Beck stockholders of shares they were not entitled to (A. Cannon, 20 January 1890).

Wilford Woodruff, feeling that a lawsuit would endanger the whole property, privately encouraged the Cannon faction to protest against Moses Thatcher for "his jeopardizing the interest" of all the stockholders in the Bullion Beck mine "by failing to fulfill his agreement in delivering the California Company their share of the stock" (A. Cannon, Journal, 24, 31 Jan. 1890). In the same private interview with Abraham Cannon, Joseph F. Smith detailed Isaac Trumbo's lobbying services and expressed the First Presidency's conviction that to antagonize these men might jeopardize Church interests throughout the country (A. Cannon, 24, 31 Jan. 1890; Woodruff, 31 March 1890). Trumbo and Clawson subsequently played a crucial role in achieving Utah statehood (Lyman 1981, 137–85).

The struggle continued. George Q. Cannon's stock was "virtually cut off from representation" by other members of the board of directors (A. Cannon, 14 March 1890). Finally, Wilford Woodruff designated Joseph F. Smith to act as mediator to prevent the mining affairs from being taken into court. On 5 May 1890, Joseph F. Smith wrote to Isaac Trumbo to report that he had met several times with Thatcher to establish a price for the stock. The original arrangement apparently gave the California Company the option of purchasing Bullion Beck stock at $4 per share for a limited time. Thatcher and his associates balked. The mine was paying some $250,000 dividends and was worth millions in 1890. Smith warned Trumbo not to trust the troublesome Utah faction.

The Bullion Beck scars were permanent. Abram Cannon and Grant both recorded in their journals a 28 January 1891 meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum to talk out past difficulties and secure greater internal harmony. President Wilford Woodruff confessed he had "seen things in Moses Thatcher which he did not like," specifically his actions regarding the Bullion Beck. Thatcher agreed that he had sensed this tenion and attempted to justify his actions. In a conciliatory mood, he affirmed "he would sooner be in the current with his brethren and lose all that he had than not be one with his brethren and retain his possessions" (Grant, 28 Jan. 1891). George Q. Cannon said that Thatcher and his associates had treated him unjustly in mining matters but such were now things of the past. Joseph F. Smith expressed belief that the Thatcher faction had offended most seriously in not showing "proper respect to the counsel of the First Presidency" when they were attempting to resolve differences with the Californians (A. Cannon, 28, 30 January 1891; Grant 28 January 1891).

This would in fact prove to be Thatcher's major offense. The First Presidency constantly complained of his disregard for their authority, which others conceded extended beyond the ecclesiastical realm. Often in the decision-making process, the First Presidency and Twelve discussed openly and exchanged views freely, but a decision, with or without consensus, required loyal support. Thatcher's independent-mindedness was valued during deliberations; but although he usually voiced approval when a decision was made, he did not always uphold it loyally if he disagreed with it, a course that was first perplexing to his colleagues and ultimately intolerable. Thatcher had established this pattern with the Bullion Beck episode and repeated it when political differences erupted.

The early months of 1891 were the beginning of the difficult and sometimes controversial division of Latter-day Saints along national political party lines. Moses Thatcher had long been involved in the old Mormon People's party as one of its most persuasive orators and writers. Among the few items of his political correspondence still extant is a report to other apostles he coauthored with Franklin D. Richards and John R. Winder in September 1888 advising against the Mormons uniting with Gentile Democrats in the territory. The document also observed that the "great majority of the Saints respected the advice and counsel of the quorum in political as in other matters, and obey it in most instances, at times even against their own judgement" (Utah Politics). Such a statement certainly presupposed involvement of Church authorities in politics, which Thatcher later abhorred but clearly condoned at the time.

The First Presidency recognized the need to distribute the Latter-day Saints between the national parties and also foresaw the need to keep the People's party members from following their political leaders en masse into the ranks of the Democrats. A Republican party defaulting to anti-Mormon Gentiles would perpetuate the political-religious separation which had plagued the state in the past. Overtures from some national GOP leaders indicated great interest in altering the former opposition to the Mormons.

Consequently, the First Presidency approved the diligent, if highly partisan, efforts of Apostle John Henry Smith in the summer of 1891 to help organize the Utah Republican party and recruit prominent local Mormon leaders. Since other General Authorities who preferred the Democrats were simultaneously encouraged to remain silent on political matters, some, notably Moses Thatcher, expressed distinct displeasure. For the next year, Thatcher voiced his dissent on several occasions (Grant, 7 July 1891; A. Cannon, 12 Jan. 1892). Apostle Francis M. Lyman would record on 4 August 1893 that "the policy of the Presidency was clearly defined and made to appear that bro[ther] Moses had been working against instead of in accordance with it."

The conflict became public in May 1892 when Thatcher was invited to address the Utah Democratic Territorial Convention at Ogden. His speech was long and partisan. One of the most controversial portions was construed by the opposing press, including Frank J. Cannon's *Ogden Standard*, to imply that Jesus Christ would have been a Democrat and Lucifer a Republican. Thatcher protested that he had been misquoted, but his Church superiors were

already taking action. President Woodruff assigned John Henry Smith to respond to Thatcher's speech. When Smith reported the First Presidency discussion of the offending remarks in his journal, he indicated that the "satanic part" was a key cause of the reaction (17, 20, 23 May 1892; Lyman 16 June 1892). John Henry Smith and Joseph F. Smith published a letter in the *Ogden Standard* protesting references to Jesus Christ in a political context and adding that to connect the Savior to the Democrats might also make him "accountable for the innocent blood of our martyred kindred" — a reference to the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith which took place, they claimed, in a Democratic locality. (*Ogden Standard*, 23, 24 May 1892).

Thatcher countered with a letter to the editor of the *Salt Lake Herald*, 25 May, expressing regret at the Smiths' "intense partisan feeling" and explaining that Jesus contended for the exercise of every man's individuality and free agency while Lucifer sought exactly the opposite. His own tone was conciliatory; he earnestly desired "to be one with [his] brethren" in religious matters but affirmed his independence in political matters, especially "in reference to the fundamental principles dividing Democracy and Republicanism." Thatcher declared recent GOP efforts related to tariffs and bounties "oppressive and harmful to the masses" although he declared a willingness to encourage others to entertain and maintain opposite views.

At a meeting of the Twelve on 7 July, Quorum president Lorenzo Snow admitted that the political positions taken by Moses Thatcher and John Henry Smith had caused him "serious concern" and he expressed his determination not to allow such matters to divide the Quorum. Comments by the combatants, who had both married daughters of Lorin Farr, indicated no hard feelings, though neither made any political concessions (Grant, 7 July 1892; A. Cannon, 12 July 1892; Lyman, 12 July 1892).

On 30 July, Joseph F. Smith took Thatcher to task in a comparatively private two-hour meeting witnessed only by Lyman and George Q. Cannon. Thatcher countered some of the charges persuasively, according to Lyman, protesting at one point that Smith "had been stuffed with lies about him for fourteen years." Smith warned that the day would come when Thatcher would "regret the stand he had taken upon the question of church and state which tends to prevent the Presidency from counseling the people on political matters." Thatcher retorted he never would and was not afraid to stand by his position.

Thus the battle was joined between the dissident apostle's personal convictions and what his fellows perceived as the rightful prerogative of the First Presidency. Thatcher undoubtedly could foresee that the conflict was irreconcilable and he would ultimately lose, yet he did not seem to hesitate in taking his stand against what he considered undue interference with his rights as a citizen.

Another episode centered on a letter a First Presidency clerk sent to his brother-in-law, a bishop in Cache Valley, advising that Church leaders would be pleased if more Saints there voted Republican. This document ultimately fell into the hands of the Democratic Territorial Committee who angrily con-

fronted the First Presidency on the matter. Abraham Cannon, visiting Logan, recorded in his journal that several reliable men told him Thatcher himself had had possession of the letter before it fell into hostile hands (A. Cannon, 30, 31 July, 2 Aug. 1892).

At a meeting of the First Presidency and Twelve on 4 August, Joseph F. Smith again "arraigned" Thatcher for his political actions, and expressed "hurt" at the strong-minded Democrat's course. He enumerated the occasions in which he felt Thatcher "had been in error, and in opposition to the advice of the presidency in the course he had taken" (A. Cannon, 4 Aug. 1892). Thatcher responded humbly, explaining his motives, denying possession of the clerk's letter, and promising to abide by the counsel of his brethren. George Q. Cannon explained that the First Presidency favored the Republicans then for the "good and deliverance of the people." At the close of these remarks, reportedly delivered with "considerable warmth," all present voted to "carry out the wishes of the presidency in regard to politics, as well as everything else" (A. Cannon, 4 Aug. 1892).

Yet at the close of the meeting, Lyman talked with Thatcher and surmised that he was "not quite satisfied with the way things went in the council." Thatcher's partisan views on the tariff and particularly his criticism of bounties essential to the infant Utah sugar industry, a project particularly important to Woodruff, had greatly dismayed his fellows. Woodruff had pointedly forbidden Thatcher to further express such views. Since bounties and tariffs were the central issue between the political parties, this injunction amounted to a gag. Furthermore, as Lyman recorded in his summary of the meeting, the Presidency forbade apostles to "take up political or other work without their knowledge and approval" (Lyman, 4 Aug. 1892).

Before participating in the ensuing congressional campaign, Thatcher and fellow Democrat B. H. Roberts, one of the Seven Presidents of the Seventy, checked with the First Presidency and were instructed not take a prominent role (Lyman, 11 Oct. 1892). Even though the contest heated up and engendered bitter personal feelings, Thatcher remained generally aloof from the infighting.

After the election, Apostle Franklin D. Richards, an interested but restrained Democrat, recorded a meeting of the Twelve and First Presidency 12 January 1893 to consider "the real or supposed misunderstanding or misapprehension existing between President Joseph F. Smith and Moses Thatcher over or about their political practices in the late political campaign." Richards felt the meeting ended with unity and understanding, but Lyman correctly recognized that "the root of the matter was not reached," so far as the differences between Smith and Thatcher were concerned (Lyman, 11–13 Jan. 1893). Lyman privately tried to persuade Thatcher of his error "in striking out in politics on his own hook" but without success.

President Joseph F. Smith felt so strongly at odds with Thatcher that at one point he refused to partake of the sacrament with the other Church leaders so long as he held such resentments. As Lyman recorded (11–12 Jan. 1892), the apostles decided to use their regular meetings scheduled to begin March 21

and remain together "from day to day" until they had "obliterated all differences, if any there be, so [they could] meet the dedication of the [Salt Lake] temple in perfect condition." Clearly they recognized that without harmony among them, they would impede the hoped-for spiritual outpouring that had made the dedication of the Kirtland Temple so memorable a generation earlier.

At the March meeting, the three members of the First Presidency spoke separately. They pointedly asked if the apostles considered it the First Presidency's right to dictate a political course among others. All present agreed that they had such a right. Abraham Cannon noted that the remarks were directed especially at Moses Thatcher, who joined his fellows in pledging willingness to make right any instances in which "he had failed to show proper respect to the counsel of his superiors." His political activities and views comprised a good deal of the afternoon's discussion and this time even Lyman recorded that good had come of the discussion.

The next day, Thatcher became so ill he had to return home to Logan. The meetings continued without him. Woodruff assured all present that they were in good standing and would never fall away from the truth they mutually espoused. But Lyman and Abram Cannon's journal entries are both worded in a way that excluded Thatcher. Each member of the First Presidency spoke on Thatcher's actions and, Cannon says, "felt to condemn his course during the past few months, especially in regard to political matters." As the meeting progressed, all of the apostles acknowledged that Thatcher's course had been "radically wrong," and that he must be "brought to see that he had been working against the policy of the Presidency, thus heading a faction against the Presidency and bringing them to disgrace in the eyes of the Saints" (Lyman, 23 March 1893). The consensus was that Thatcher must confess his "improper course and ask pardon for the same" before he would be permitted to enter the temple (A. Cannon, 23 March 1892). Abram Cannon also recorded that Lorenzo Snow significantly predicted that if any apostle stood in opposition to the presidency "the Lord would cause such persons to repent, or he would remove them out of the way." The First Presidency decided to leave the matter to Thatcher's quorum to handle as they deemed best.

Within a week, Apostles Lyman and John W. Taylor took the train to Logan. Thatcher welcomed them cordially and invited them to dinner. But, recorded Lyman in his journal 28 March 1893,

> When Bro. Moses learned the object of our visit he manifested a very bad spirit and would not hear any more of the complaints from the presidency. We would continue to tell him what the complaint was against him and the presidency and twelve were one in censuring him severely. He had a spirit of justification and defiance and of cross charges against his brethren. He charged me with self righteousness and then said we are all more or less guilty of it. His talk was very bad. We were cool but determined he should know and hear all we had to say. I drew his attention to the spirit he was influenced by in contrast with the spirit of the Lord he enjoyed at other times when I had labored with him. He held that he had just as much of the spirit of the Lord as I did. He said John and I would yet be crowded upon just as he was now being oppressed. He felt it was tyranny to labor with him so much when he is so

> sick. He wanted no association with a crowd of men that would consent to such treatment as he has had from the presidency. He would never consent to such methods, he was not built that way. When Elder Taylor talked to him as he did as much as me, he would make complaint against Bro. Taylor for something he had said. His heart softened some after we had labored with him till after midnight.

The apostles left for Salt Lake City the next day, hoping Thatcher would yet make the confession deemed necessary. In his report to fellow General Authorities, Lyman mentioned Thatcher felt sorry further misunderstandings existed and expressed his own confidence that though there were yet issues to resolve, Thatcher "would finally come to the point to make all things right" (29–30 March 1893).

Before Thatcher was well enough to travel to Salt Lake City, Woodruff received an undated letter from Thatcher's personal physician, William Parkinson, who said Thatcher was suffering from a "very severe and serious digestive trouble" — probably a chronic stomach ulcer which became more acute under stress. He requested the Church leaders' cooperation in "forbidding him all mental worry and anxiety" and suggested releasing him temporarily from the demands of his Church callings. Parkinson stated Thatcher had no desire to shirk his responsibilities but that overdoing could be fatal. Woodruff wrote to Thatcher 31 March encouraging him not to face the rigors of general conference and the temple dedication. Thatcher was not well enough to attend the apostles' meeting preliminary to the dedicatory sessions on 3 April. However, he telegraphed his intention to come and, despite his continuing weakness, arrived the next evening while an apostles' meeting was in session. The agenda quickly became, in Lyman's words, a "labor of two or three hours" with him in "getting him to yield that he was wrong" (4 April 1893). Finally Thatcher "confessed he had been wrong in the position he had taken in regard to political matters and that he desired the fellowship of the presidency and his quorum." It was nearly midnight when the brethren were assured that he could "see and feel as the rest did" on these points. They finally adjourned with "great joy" that union had been fully established within their body (Richards, 3 April 1893).[1]

Sunday, 6 April was the anniversary of the Church's organization and the key day in the twelve-day temple dedication. Thatcher apparently attended most of the sessions but his only participation was to offer a benediction on 11 April. That same day, the apostles met informally for the first time in their temple council room. The first prayer offered there was Franklin D. Richard's blessing on Thatcher's head. Just three days later, on 14 April, a note arrived from family members that Thatcher had suffered a serious relapse and that he was so close to death that there was "nothing that man can do" to help him (Lyman, 16 April 1893). Each day thereafter, his brethren not only sought

[1] Abram Cannon, Journal, 18 May 1893, recalling the night as April 5, recorded: "My quorum met to consider the case of Moses Thatcher. At first he strongly opposed the brethren in their efforts to reconcile him with the Presidency, but after each one had spoken, and all were unanimous in their statements that he was in the wrong, he yielded, and asked the forgiveness of the brethren, and promised to seek the forgiveness of the Presidency on the morrow before entering the temple."

divine intervention in his behalf but several mentioned him fondly in their public sermons (Lyman, 11, 16–17 April 1893; Grant, 24 April 1893).

Thatcher's condition continued precarious for over a month. His only nourishment for a period was one teaspoonful of buttermilk per hour. But by July, his family reported he was recuperating at a campsite in Logan Canyon. When he rejoined his quorum in October, he testified humbly that his recovery had been brought about largely through the faith and prayers they had offered in his behalf, for which he expressed deep gratitude (Grant, 4 Oct. 1893).

In November 1893, Thatcher had another relapse. Although he recovered relatively quickly, his attendance at meetings of the Twelve became infrequent. On several occasions during 1894, his absences were cited as a partial cause of new disharmony with the First Presidency and the loss of some of the inspiration to which he was entitled.

During the fall of 1893, Church leaders had adopted a policy crucial to Thatcher's subsequent and ultimately decisive difficulties with them. Though not ill, he had not attended the 12 October meeting when ten other apostles discussed whether general, stake, and ward leaders should accept political nominations. The conclusion was no (Lyman, 12, 14 Oct. 1893). Millard Stake President Thomas C. Callister wrote to Wilford Woodruff 28 October 1893 (Woodruff Papers) indicating that local Church leaders were already nominated and asking special permission to remain in the campaigns. The permission was granted. But it was clear that future candidacies would be discouraged.

The Utah election in the autumn of 1894 was especially important because Utah had finally been granted an enabling act to form a state constitution. Thus, candidates for the constitutional convention would enter the contest along with congressional candidates. Woodruff made it clear in July that he wanted the constitutional convention to be conducted in as "nonpartisan" a manner as possible (F. Lyman, 26 July 1894). As the election approached in September, Thatcher and Franklin D. Richards, apparently at the behest of other Mormon Democrats, sought an appointment with the First Presidency. They voiced concern about the implications of banning all Church leaders from participation in the framing of the constitution. The First Presidency expressed willingness for Mormon political activists to "make all proper efforts on both sides to carry their parties — only not slander, throw dirt and demean each other" (Richard, 14 Sept. 1894). The following day, Apostles Thatcher, Richards, and Grant were prominently seated on the platform during the Democratic Territorial convention. Word of the altered policy quickly spread;[2] and among the victorious contestants were ten members of stake presidencies, fifteen of bishoprics, and General Authorities John Henry Smith, Moses Thatcher, William B. Preston, and B. H. Roberts (Richards, 14–15 Sept. 1894; Grant, 15, 17, 21, 17 Sept. 1894).

As the Constitutional Convention got underway in April 1895, the Democratic press frequently accused John Henry Smith, a Republican, of using his

[2] Lyman, Journal, 27 Sept. 1894, correctly states that the policy "was not properly clarified. While some interpreted the new position allowing political participation broadly," others felt it applied only to "the Constitutional Convention, not to ordinary politics."

position as permanent convention chairman to promote partisan politics, but it was Thatcher and Roberts who again incurred the displeasure of President Woodruff and his counselors. Roberts opposed woman suffrage while the First Presidency was in favor. Thatcher, ill again and under medical care, wrote an apology for his absences to his convention colleagues. Comments on the letter's somewhat partisan contents actually provoked the first political conflict of the convention (Ivins 1957). At the same time, Roberts was criticized in a council meeting for having done great damage to the Church. Thatcher was once again reprimanded "for his failure to seek counsel of the Presidency in regard to the Constitutional Convention" (A. Cannon, 25 April 1895).

As the apostles convened before April conference in 1895, Lyman and Abram Cannon both noted on 4 April John W. Taylor's prediction that Thatcher was in danger of death if he did not accept the direction of his leaders, but that if he would sustain the First Presidency and "feel alright in politics and everything else" he would be made whole and strong. Taylor confessed that his spirit was "bowed down" with reference to Thatcher (Grant 4 April 1898).

On 22 April, Brigham Young, Jr., lamented to his journal: "Alas one of our number seems to persist in walking alone and tho weak in body profess to be strong in the Lord." Young expressed fear for his brother's life and, significantly, for his "standing in his quorum."

Over the years, a considerable number of Moses Thatcher's fellow General Authorities had felt the lash of his tongue. Both counselors in the First Presidency, John Henry Smith, Heber J. Grant, Brigham Young, Jr., and Franklin D. Richards had so suffered. Usually Thatcher ironed out the differences, but a residue of negative feeling undoubtedly remained and the pattern was not a pleasant one (Grant, 10 April 1889, 14 Jan. 1891, 3 April 1895; Lund, 5 Jan. 1897.) Early in 1895, Thatcher added Apostle Marriner W. Merrill to the list of those hurt when Thatcher incorrectly said at Paris, Idaho, that Merrill had been "rebuked" by the First Presidency for teaching politics too strongly (Merrill 1937, 184–85).

Quorum of the Twelve reactions recorded by Grant and Abram Cannon between 3 and 17 January provide considerable insight into Thatcher's status among the Twelve and First Presidency. Cannon observed that his father and Wilford Woodruff were anxious that Thatcher's actions be examined thoroughly enough to bring about an essential change in his attitude for "he has not been for a long time in full harmony with his quorum or the presidency" and, according to George Q. Cannon, Thatcher "would lose the faith unless he repents." President Woodruff expressed regret at Thatcher's course, saying he believed it resulted from insufficient association with the Quorum. At that same time, Woodruff charged, Thatcher "had persistently disregarded the wishes of the presidency in regard to his position in politics" (Cannon, 9 Jan. 1895). Joseph F. Smith later expressed the belief that Thatcher had been "dishonest in his actions politically and had continuously opposed his quorum and the presidency" — the cause of Smith's "hurt feelings" toward him (A. Cannon, 14 Jan. 1895). President Woodruff confessed similar sentiments

because of Thatcher's "continual opposition to the course which the presidency desired" (A. Cannon, 14 Jan. 1895).

Thus, long before the final crisis, Moses Thatcher had exhausted the patience of his colleagues. Several had concluded that it was only a matter of time before the final break came. In light of how quickly stubborn dissenters had been excommunicated under Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, the forbearance of Thatcher's associates in the face of what they must have considered repeated insubordination and rebellion is striking.

The final breach developed unpretentiously. In September 1895, Utah Democratic strategists, probably hoping to capitalize on some of the Church influence they would soon be bitterly accusing their opponents of using, nominated B. H. Roberts as their candidate for Congress and designated Moses Thatcher as one of the men their party would select as U.S. Senator should the Democrats garner a majority of seats in the first state legislature. These developments initially caused little stir, even among General Authorities. On 26 September at a Quorum meeting, Thatcher's spotty attendance was criticized; and Heber J. Grant, who had declined a possible Democratic gubernatorial nomination, remarked that Thatcher should not have accepted his candidacy "without having had a full and free chat with his brethren of the apostles and also with the first presidency" (Grant, 26 Sept. 1895). Less than a week later, Thatcher attended a Quorum meeting in the temple marked by good feelings. In fact, the meeting was kept short so as to not fatigue him (Grant, 1 Oct. 1895).

However, later on the same day, Brigham Young, Jr., who had also been mentioned as a possible Democratic candidate for governor, met Thatcher by chance on the street and advised him to talk freely to President Woodruff about "some political complications." Thatcher first refused, then agreed to weigh the suggestion, but accused Young and most of his associates as being "too pliable" and having not only "failed to maintain their individuality" but also their "manhood" (Young, 1 Oct. 1895).

The next day, Thatcher told Woodruff he did not see how Woodruff could "dictate" to him or anyone else in political matters. The presidency, he felt, was trying to deprive him of his free agency, a principle which had figured largely in Thatcher's sermons for many years (Young, 2 Oct. 1895). As his later defenses would make clear, he relied heavily on statements by Joseph Smith which included independence in political affairs as well (Godfrey 1979).

While such arguments were persuasive to a point, they failed to account for the acknowledged role of subsequent prophets to alter the policy and for the peculiar position of General Authorities pledged to lifelong religious service. Brigham Young, Jr., who attended Thatcher's meeting with Woodruff on 2 October, conceded the strong case for free agency, but found it a far greater offense to "throw down the responsibilities of his priesthood and pick up politics without consulting the authorities under which he has covenanted to labor." Wrote Young, Thatcher "throws away the Priesthood and hugs politics, rendering fealty to the world at the same time inconstant to his former

vows." Lorenzo Snow would agree a year later with this evaluation in a letter to several young Mormon businessmen, 30 November 1896: "If he [Thatcher] did not value his Apostleship and Priesthood as of the very first consideration he was not worthy to hold them, and his subsequent course shows that he held them in great esteem in theory but in very small esteem in practice" (Penrose 1896, 27).

Joseph F. Smith may have interpreted Thatcher's comments in the same way, for a few days later at a priesthood session of conference — traditionally the last instruction to local leaders — he stressed that the Church had living oracles whose counsel should be sought in all matters. Specifically, if a priesthood holder undertook to do as he pleased without thought of the directions of his superiors, he was on dangerous ground. A perhaps innocent illustration was one of the apostles and one of the Seven Presidents of Seventies who had recently "done wrong in accepting obligations without first consulting and obtaining the consent of those who preside over them" (A. Cannon, 7 Oct. 1895). This obvious reference to Thatcher and Roberts was followed by asserting: "No man surrenders his manhood by seeking the advice of his superiors." Presidents Cannon and Woodruff endorsed these comments, Cannon candidly confessing that he was "glad Brother Smith had said what he had, but said he would not have said it" (Grant, 7 Oct. 1895).

The stage was set for perhaps the bitterest political controversy in Utah's history. Some Democrats naturally interpreted Smith's comments as a threat to their campaign. Party leaders reconvened their territorial convention and Thatcher joined with Roberts and other avid Democrats in affirming that there should be no interfering with politics by Church authorities (Lyman 1981, 533–40).

In doing so, they allied themselves against the other Mormon leaders with former Utah Territorial judge Orlando W. Powers, whom Brigham Young, Jr., had called the "chief scoundrel in Utah" and saw as the personification of the devil. He continues in his 1 November 1895 journal notation by lamenting, "My confidence in this splendid man [Thatcher] is entirely or, almost entirely gone" because he has "gone over to the enemy."

The Democrats were soundly defeated, and the Republicans garnered all state offices and the right to select the U.S. Senators. Thatcher and Roberts would continue to nurture political ambitions and each would subsequently make another race for the same offices, but the immediate public storm gradually subsided. The Mormon General Authorities continued to hope for evidence of a change of heart in their recalcitrant brethren, but Young and Grant both noted after an 8 January 1896 meeting that Thatcher continued to ignore the First Presidency and most of the apostles.

Woodruff had already announced in mid-December the need to investigate the conduct of both Thatcher and Roberts before they could continue their work (A. Cannon, 12 Dec. 1895). Lorenzo Snow did not feel justified in presenting their names for a sustaining vote from the Saints at the next conference "unless they repent and seek forgiveness of their brethren" (A. Cannon, 12 Dec. 1895). At a meeting on 23 January, Brigham Young, Jr., Heber J.

Grant, and Francis M. Lyman were appointed to attend to the case of Roberts for standing out against the other Church authorities, with Thatcher's case to be taken up "when the time came" — that is, when his health improved (Young, 23 Jan. 1896).

Early in 1896 differing opinions prevailed about the best way to approach the Thatcher case. George Q. Cannon conceded that his longtime opponent was in poor spiritual condition but did not think there was any danger in leaving him alone for the present. Apostle Young expressed a well-conceived dissent, arguing that according to the eternal scheme of justice and mercy it was not merciful to leave Thatcher alone when he might die out of harmony with his brethren. Justice had first to be satisfied by disciplining Thatcher for his stubbornness, after which mercy could be exercised. Young did not wish the physically spent apostle to lose what might be his only chance for reconciliation by waiting until he had completely recovered — if he did.

Yet despite this, little was done in actual contact with Thatcher. Several apostles visited Thatcher informally in Logan and there was considerable fasting and prayer in his behalf. When Heber J. Grant visited him on 14 March, he described Thatcher as "very low indeed" and feeling it would be "a great blessing from the Lord if he could be layed to rest."

Meanwhile, B. H. Roberts had stubbornly refused to concede any error in his past actions and had been relieved of his Church office for three weeks with the understanding that the separation would become permanent if he did not change. Finally on 13 March he had submitted to the judgment of his brethren, amid great rejoicing and many tears (Grant, 12–13 March 1896). Later Thatcher would critically contrast the relative energy expended (Reasoner, Dec. 1896, 112), but it is clear the other General Authorities were limiting time spent with him then out of consideration for his condition.

April conference was approaching. While Thatcher's problems remained unresolved, the other General Authorities did not feel justified in presenting his name to be sustained, but emotional confrontations would further jeopardize his physical well-being. At the 31 March Quorum meeting most of the apostles expressed their still divided views regarding Thatcher. John Henry Smith cautioned that visits should be made during the mornings since Thatcher was taking morphine later in the day and evenings for the pain (Grant, 31 March 1896). Next day Lorenzo Snow found Thatcher too feeble to talk very long but was sure he was improving (Grant, 1 April 1896).

Some have supposed that the opiates explain Thatcher's pattern of submissiveness followed by defiance (Godfrey 1979). Although drug dependency may well have influenced this pattern, more likely Thatcher simply found the pressure of the group gatherings too great to withstand comfortably and thus he voiced conformity but later, away from his quorum members, would violate what others considered clear-cut promises and commitments.

As conference drew nearer, some General Authorities decided it was necessary to draft a "political manifesto," or declaration of rights and wrongs relating to church discipline. It stated that every leading official of the Church, "before accepting any position, political or otherwise, which would interfere

with the proper and complete discharge of his ecclesiastical duties . . . should apply to the proper authorities and learn from them whether he can, consistently with the obligations already entered into with the church upon assuming his office take upon himself the added duties and labors and responsibilities of the new position" (Roberts 6:334–36). There must have been considerable certainty that Moses Thatcher, who had consistently opposed just such political restrictions, would not accept it, but Apostles Young and Snow were delegated to submit it to him nevertheless. They went to his newly acquired residence across from Temple Square late in the morning of April 5. He requested permission to keep the document for several hours for examination but then returned it unsigned saying that he "could not coincide with the whole doctrine" but hoped perhaps he might "see it" when his health returned (Young, 5 April 1896). The entire body of Church leaders was perplexed that Thatcher would not rely on the collective judgment of the other General Authorities who had unanimously approved and signed the manifesto. That very afternoon, the document was read and unanimously accepted by the conference, as was the list of Church authorities — Moses Thatcher not included.

Thatcher later stated he had no intimation that he would be treated so harshly for not signing the manifesto (Reasoner, Dec. 1896, 33). John Henry Smith later observed that, except for his health, "within three days after Brother Thatcher declined to sustain his associates, he would have been dealt with for his fellowship and standing in the Council of the Apostles" (Reasoner, December 1896, 23). Thatcher's illness could have limited his knowledge of the current situation, but he must have known of B. H. Roberts's situation just the month previous. In light of his history of troubled relations with his colleagues, Thatcher's subsequent claim that he knew no Church leaders who "held aught" against him is evidence of either poor memory or a slipping hold on reality.

Public reaction to the omission of Thatcher's name was not unanimously favorable. Many felt that the partially deposed apostle was being unduly pressured during illness. Sensitive to such allegations but convinced their course was correct, the Quorum of the Twelve met 28 May 1896 to discuss Thatcher's case. Grant's summary notes that Thatcher had continued to criticize George Q. Cannon over the long past Bullion Beck mine case. His health had improved sufficiently that he was attending to business and other affairs near Logan.

Joseph F. Smith wanted an ultimatum. The Quorum should "insist upon his harmonizing himself with his brethren, or then he should be disfellowshiped from the quorum." President Woodruff observed that in Thatcher's present state of mind, "the devil has a very strong advocate," reminded the Twelve that dealing with the case was their responsibility, and charged them to take such action as was necessary (Grant, 28 May 1896).

The apostles decided to resolve the matter at once even though John Henry Smith reported that a Logan physician had informed him Thatcher had become "addicted to the use of morphine" and therefore did not think they should "hurry matters." His brother-in-law was "hardly a responsible man."

Heber J. Grant retorted that Thatcher's position "since he commenced using morphine was in perfect harmony with that which he occupied a number of years prior to becoming addicted to this habit." Others agreed. The consensus was to have the council "labor with Apostle Moses Thatcher and learn if he is with us or against us" (Grant, 28 May 1896).

Apparently a communication was sent immediately because Thatcher replied to Lorenzo Snow and Brigham Young, Jr., that he planned to meet with his fellow apostles at the temple annex on 4 June. Young was particularly encouraged at the willingness of his brother to meet for what was expected to be a plain talk "in relation to his rebellion against the church" (Young, 4 June 1896). But on the designated day the apostles learned that Thatcher had suffered a particularly serious relapse, a potentially fatal one unless he would agree to be hospitalized.

This relapse postponed the question until the regular quarterly meeting on 8 July. Most of those present expressed the feeling that immediate and decisive action need be taken on the matter. A sentiment was growing among young Church political activists like attorney James H. Moyle that the apostles were wrong and that Thatcher would be vindicated. Democratic writer Calvin Reasoner's booklet, "Moses Thatcher Memorial Presented by his Friends As a Testimonial in Behalf of Civil and Religious Liberty," had come out in June and kept the controversy hot. John W. Taylor was particularly upset and, according to Grant's journal, designated Thatcher "the leader of all the dissenters in the church," and "one of the worst enemies the church has," "in harmony" with men who would "gladly destroy the Church of God" (Grant, 9 July 1896). President Woodruff felt that the longer they left the case without some action, the worse condition it would be in. Franklin D. Richards and Brigham Young, Jr., were appointed to call on Thatcher and learn the state of his feelings.

The two apostles found Thatcher just embarking for Saltaire resort to bathe in Great Salt Lake. During a twenty-minute conversation, they determined no change in his views on the political manifesto. When Young commented, "Why we have believed those principles all our lives," Thatcher replied, "There are things in that document I never did believe in" and announced his intention to defend his position before the Quorum by drawing on the Doctrine and Covenants. Young reported this conversation to the Quorum and moved that Thatcher "be dropped from his apostleship" (Young, 9 July 1896). But at the suggestion of F. M. Lyman, they decided to give Thatcher another two weeks to appear before his quorum and "answer to the charge of apostacy" (Young, 9 July 1896). When the designated time arrived, the apostles were in considerable turmoil because of the short and fatal illness of their popular fellow apostle, Abraham H. Cannon, and the Thatcher case was again postponed (Richards, 19 July 1896). Apparently, too, Thatcher was noncommital about meeting the Quorum and the summons was indefinite.

Also, some of Thatcher's family had requested a postponement while Thatcher attempted to break his morphine habit. On 16 July John Henry Smith noted that up to the previous evening Thatcher had been over 120 hours

without taking any of the narcotic. He had attended Cannon's funeral on 26 July but afterwards his demands for morphine alarmed the family. Their efforts to keep morphine from him "had greatly agitated him." In desperation, concerned friends and family had gathered to discuss forcibly hospitalizing him. Moses Thatcher, Jr., conceded that part of the time Thatcher was insane because of his addiction, and other close associates concurred (J. H. Smith, 16, 26 July 1896).

While Wilford Woodruff and George Q. Cannon vacationed in California, recovering from the shock of Abram Cannon's sudden death, matters related to Thatcher remained unresolved. Finally, on 17 September 1896, the First Presidency and remaining Quorum members met and took up his case. Young's journal account expresses exhausted patience. The Twelve could "stand his conduct no longer" and his health allowed him to "go anywhere he likes" and continue his opposition. Young himself observed that Thatcher had not attempted to meet with his quorum and feared that he had "passed beyond the influence of his leaders." Young went to Cache Valley to investigate and reported on 24 September that Thatcher, according to Thatcher's brother-in-law, William B. Preston and son, Moses Jr., was in the twenty-seventh day of a sixty-day treatment from the then-popular Keely Institute. According to Franklin D. Richards's journal, Church leaders willingly agreed to let the treatment continue without interruption.

However, at October conference two weeks later, the problem resurfaced. John Henry Smith noted in his journal 5 October that the General Authorities "talked over Bro. M. Thatcher's case" at a council meeting between the morning and afternoon sessions, probably in response to persistent questions. President Woodruff concluded to "make a statement," as did also Snow, J. H. Smith, Young, Grant, Teasdale, and Joseph F. Smith (see text in Penrose 1896, 2–18; Reasoner, Dec. 1896). President Woodruff explained why Moses Thatcher's name was again not read for a sustaining vote: he "had not been with his quorum in spirit for years." Woodruff may have differentiated between these comments and more direct personal dealings with Thatcher for his past offenses, but Thatcher expressed surprise and dismay at these strong public comments. He and his family felt a promise had been broken.

On 14 October Thatcher met Franklin D. Richards and told him he planned to call on President Woodruff, then meet with the apostles in their regular council the following day. When he appeared at the entrance to the Salt Lake Temple, he was denied admittance upon the specific instructions of the First Presidency. Already convened, the First Presidency and Twelve had unanimously concluded that they could not in good conscience admit him into the sanctuary. In the same meeting, they drafted an announcement that Thatcher was suspended from all Church duties and priesthood functions (Young and Richards, 15 Oct. 1896). Apparently Richards had not communicated effectively between Thatcher and the First Presidency and this was the final breach.

The meeting might have been held in another location, but Church leaders had no real desire left for reconciliation. In subsequent weeks, President

Lorenzo Snow exchanged several letters with Thatcher in an attempt to resolve the matter, but Thatcher declined to meet with the Quorum at all and sought to make his defense at a public hearing. Snow refused to countenance such a proceeding and warned that because of unreconciled past actions, several of Thatcher's fellow apostles did not feel they could fellowship him unless amends were promptly made. When Thatcher persisted in his contentions, Snow confessed to the other apostles that he had very little faith in Thatcher's sincerity "as the spirit of technicality was plainly manifest in all his correspondence" (Reasoner, Dec. 1896, 22–33).

After being summoned to meet the Twelve on 12 November, Thatcher sent a lengthy letter justifying his position and informing his brethren that they need not convene in his behalf. The apostles renewed the summons for 19 November. When he did not appear, it was unanimously concluded that he be "dropped from this quorum and prevented from every function of the Priesthood" (Young, 19 Nov. 1896). Young's journal for 22 November added that Woodruff commended the Quorum's action as being needed for a long time. Next day a notice was published in the *Deseret News* that Thatcher had been "severed from the Council of Twelve Apostles and . . . deprived of his Apostleship and other offices in the Priesthood." [3]

Thus the rupture was complete. Certainly there was blame enough for both sides. The Church hierarchy had failed to communicate effectively at several crucial points in the conflict, but the larger measure of responsibility most definitely rests on Moses Thatcher. Admittedly he was standing firmly for fundamental principles of American political liberty, but he had previously covenanted first loyalty to upbuilding the Kingdom of God. His long series of abrasive encounters had eroded the tolerance of his colleagues. His stubbornness, along with a clearly apparent air of aloofness and superiority, also weighed heavily in the final balance.

In an extensive series of comments and recollections expressed repeatedly during the fall of 1896, Church leaders, whether in justification or explanation, became more public about Thatcher's offenses. In an anonymous pamphlet authored by Charles W. Penrose (1896), President Wilford Woodruff stated that "ever since the death of President John Taylor, Brother Moses Thatcher had been influenced by an apostate spirit." It had taken Thatcher "about a week to confess [George Q.] Cannon's sins for him, without making any confession whatever for his own; recalling that Cannon at the time had possessed a righteous and forgiving spirit," while Thatcher's spirit had been "of the evil one." Furthermore, Thatcher had been similarly inclined "more or less ever since." One of Woodruff's most telling indictments was that "Thatcher undertook to control the apostles and run things generally and was

[3] Young, 12 Nov. 1896 quotes Woodruff that Thatcher "would not yield to his brethren." Young concluded "now it looks like he was giving his apostleship for a bare chance of getting into the U.S. Senate." *Salt Lake Tribune*, 15 Nov. 1896, had contained an interview with Thatcher. Asked whether he was again a candidate for the U.S. Senate, he had replied that he was not, but added defiantly that he would accept the nomination if his election would vindicate the principles for which he had contended and help prevent "the forging of chain's upon the people of Utah."

able for a while to influence two or three of the twelve." Heber J. Grant confessed that he had at one time been "led by Brother Thatcher into a wrong spirit" and that the late Erastus Snow, who himself had previously been similarly inclined, "emphatically warned Moses Thatcher and [Apostle Grant] that unless they repented the spirit they were of would lead them away from the quorum of the apostles." Grant testified that from then on he had avoided Thatcher's critical influence (In Penrose 1896).

Lorenzo Snow concurred that Thatcher's trouble had arisen as a consequence of "his spirit and conduct towards Brother Cannon," adding that Thatcher's course in the "Bullion-Beck business ought to be fully exposed." In a public statement published 1 December in the *Salt Lake Herald*, the Quorum president succinctly summarized the many points when he observed, "Moses Thatcher was entirely out of harmony with his brethren the apostles. . . . The dissaffection of Moses Thatcher dates back a long time before political difficulties could enter into the matter." Besides the false predictions of "a man like unto Moses," the Bullion Beck matter, and Thatcher's political activities, Snow also stated that he had "neglected the meetings of his quorum for years," even when his health would have permitted him to be present (in Penrose 1896, 6–10, 20–27).

President Snow in a 30 November letter published in December, added information never previously recorded. When Wilford Woodruff acceded to the presidency, Thatcher's opinion had placed "human smartness and business ability as above that simplicity of character and susceptibility to divine impressions" notable in Woodruff and objected that such a man could not grasp the situation or cope with the difficulties (Penrose 1896, 25). Overruled, he persisted in his views. Snow added personal impressions, concluding that Thatcher's "bearing with his brethren of the twelve was such that he could not brook dissent and resented their non-acceptance of his personal views" (Snow 1896). Francis M. Gibbons, presently secretary to the First Presidency, recently offered a similar insight possibly based on source material not available to other scholars. Thatcher "began to make unfavorable comparisons between himself and those senior to him in the highest circles of church leadership. This was the seed that, once having taken root, grew and spread until it distorted his judgement. He honestly felt that he was right and his less richly endowed brethren were wrong. And so it was that his personal qualities of brilliance and self-confidence fired both Moses Thatcher's spectacular rise and his dramatic, tragic fall" (1979, 107).

On one occasion in the Thatcher controversy, Brigham Young quoted President Wilford Woodruff as explaining the offending party had "sought to rule over his brethren" (13 April 1896). Other apostles agreed that Thatcher had attempted to impose his wishes and ideas upon his fellows in an arbitrary and dictatorial manner. Thatcher had written Lorenzo Snow 18 November: "Only let me remind you, brethren, of how the Lord has required us to use the priesthood — persuasion, gentleness, brotherly kindness, patience, love" (Reasoner, Dec. 1896, 32). Ironically, they accused him of attempting to "exercise unrighteous dominion" upon them.

In the decade during which he had presided over the Quorum of the Twelve, Lorenzo Snow's most concerted effort had been to attain the harmony both the New Testament and Doctrine and Covenants stressed were essential among God's chosen servants. The wonder is not that men such as Snow resented Moses Thatcher's behavior and attitudes but that they tolerated it for so long without taking decisive action.

Public reaction to Thatcher's dismissal was clearly mixed. Many who understood principles of Church discipline accepted the decision as the only one possible. But the steady barrage of newspaper articles — the *Salt Lake Tribune* was especially hostile — and other publications placed Church leaders on the defensive (Scrapbook; Penrose 1896; Nelson 1897). Despite their own recent statements claiming no interest in dominating Utah politics, General Authorities were particularly alarmed by Latter-day Saints' resistance to political guidance. On 5 November 1896, Grant quoted George Q. Cannon as saying "there was a wonderful disrespect for the Priesthood of God being manifested among many of the Saints, and that he felt if this was not repented of it would lead to serious consequences."

Thatcher added further fuel to this conflagration by releasing his correspondence with Lorenzo Snow for publication in the *Salt Lake Tribune.* Church insiders felt the betrayal keenly. Brigham Young, Jr., confided to his journal on 1 December that Thatcher should be tried for his church membership. No action was taken since Thatcher again entered the campaign for United States Senator.

Anything done during his candidacy would again create accusations of Church interference in politics. Nevertheless, Brigham Young, Jr., could not completely restrain himself. As the state legislature deadlocked on the senatorial question, he met 20 January with a Provo representative at the Rickets business building in Salt Lake City. A long-time opponent spotted him and the *Tribune* next morning alleged, not inaccurately, that Young was "influencing the legislature against Thatcher." After fifty-three ballots, Joseph L. Rawlins, who though the son of an LDS bishop considered himself a non-Mormon, defeated Thatcher thirty-two to twenty-nine. There was no question about which candidate the Church authorities preferred, and Grant's journal entry for 25 January indicates that he too was actively lobbying against Thatcher with legislators.

On 18 February, Brigham Young, Francis M. Lyman, and Heber J. Grant were reappointed to bring a complaint of apostacy against Thatcher before the Salt Lake Stake High Council. Young gathered evidence in Logan and Stake President Angus M. Cannon was pressed to set a date for the trial before April conference.

For reasons that are not clear, the case was delayed until 6 August. The proceedings took place in Brigham Young's schoolhouse inside the Eagle Gate (Journal History, 6–14 Aug. 1897). After a week of extensive testimony, Thatcher spoke in his own behalf with marked humility and submissiveness. Where he had earlier been very defensive, he now said that his "dearest hope and ambition for the future was to serve God as a member of the church"

and that "fellowship in the church was to him worth all else on earth." He explained his past actions: "Sometimes men are [too] blind to see, too deaf to hear and with hearts too hard to receive instructions." Admitting that he had been "wrong in many things" . . . he saw no reason now why he should not sustain the Declaration of Principles" or political manifesto, and that he could withstand any negative reaction from "the world" without humiliation. He thanked his brethren for their patience and kindness and declared he was prepared to do whatever they required of him.

The court's decision was that to retain his standing and fellowship in the Church he must publish a statement that the stake presidency found satisfactory. On 14 August 1897, Thatcher met with the presidency and formally accepted the verdict. He also submitted a declaration which they agreed complied with the demands of the high council. Although recrimination continued in the opposition press and political circles and further bitterness at times reappeared, particularly during subsequent senatorial elections, the Moses Thatcher case was finally concluded.

Thatcher's remaining years were quiet. He and his family were convinced he had been treated unfairly, but he made no bitterness public (Ivins 1950s). In 1904, Thatcher was subpoened to testify at the Reed Smoot hearings, where several senators questioned him about the Mormon leaders' attempts to control politics. In his extensive comments, he fully conceded the hierarchy's right to restrict the political activities of General Authorities but argued that there had been no attempt to interfere with the political rights of lay members. He affirmed the value he placed on his membership and otherwise demonstrated impressive loyalty to those who had felt constrained to treat him with considerable harshness (Senate 1:1012–50).

Moses Thatcher lived five more years. Upon his passing 2 August 1909, the *Deseret News* obituary commented that he had been a great man, who had given his time to the Church until recent years. It did not mention that he had been an apostle nor why his Church service had changed. The funeral, held at the Logan Tabernacle, was attended by an overflow crowd. General Authorities B. H. Roberts and John Henry Smith, who had once been close to Thatcher, but whom he had subsequently denounced rather strongly, were assigned to speak at the services. Both elaborated at length on his good qualities and great service Thatcher had once done to his church and his Lord.

The Thatcher case is a painful episode in Church history — painful to him and his family, painful to his associates, and disruptive in the way that any major internal dislocation damages the fabric of an institution. It is not, however, the tragedy of an independent mind crushed by arbitrary rule or of free agency violated by unrighteous dominion. Thatcher's physical illness, his history of vacillation and recalcitrance, and the Quorum's own record of forebearance do not allow such an appealing but oversimplified assessment. Certainly there are grounds for criticism in how the Church hierarchy handled the case, particularly toward the end, but its longsuffering and patience must also be acknowledged.

It is indeed a tragedy for a man with the seeds of real greatness in his chosen field not to develop the humility and cooperation with colleagues and

higher authority that are necessary for retaining a position appropriate to his talents. *That* is the tragedy of Moses Thatcher.

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An RLDS Reformation? Construing the Task of RLDS Theology

Larry W. Conrad and Paul Shupe

Introduction

During the last twenty-five years, Reorganized Latter Day Saints have struggled to discover what it means to be the body of Christ in the modern world. Clifford A. Cole in "The World Church: Our Mission in the 1980s" explains that the RLDS Church entered a new era in the early 1960s when the First Presidency sent Charles D. Neff and D. Blair Jensen as missionaries to the Orient (1979, 42). Their mission marked the beginning of a remarkable period of intense, often critical examination of the basic beliefs and purpose of the church. Such periods of reformation do not occur in churches without considerable controversy and disappointment; the RLDS Church proved no exception. Considerable progress was made, but not without some anguish and deep searching.

The Orient mission itself raised several issues. Cole reports that Neff, in the course of his work in Japan, noticed how little the church's tracts said about the basics of Christian faith. Consequently, Neff wrote to the Basic Beliefs Committee and asked if the church had anything to help him in missionary work. All he could find was material explaining how the RLDS Church differed from other Christian denominations, which was of little help in Japan, where only 3 percent of the population was Christian. Cole summarized the Joint Council's reaction: "That confrontation forced us immediately to recognize that we are called primarily to teach the basic faith rather than the ways we are different from some other Christian people" (Cole 1979, 42).

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This essay received DIALOGUE'S *second place award in Philosophy and Theology for 1984.*

Thus church leaders sought to uncover and clarify what that basic faith entailed. Helpful but nonetheless unsettling information poured in from two major areas: history and biblical criticism. Although many examples could be cited from these areas, we shall discuss only a few. For example, the results of historical research conflicted with the church's traditional view of its history. In a 1962 *Saints Herald* article, James E. Lancaster challenged traditional accounts of the Book of Mormon translation. Testimonies from Emma Smith, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and other eyewitnesses indicated that Joseph Smith "translated" by means of a small seer stone placed in his hat. Thus Lancaster concluded that the "translation" process should be understood as conceptual, not literal (1962, 798–802, 806, 817). Three years later, Robert Flanders's *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* presented startling revelations about the activities of the Nauvoo era, particularly with regard to Joseph Smith's involvement in politics and theological speculation (1965, 179–341).

The church learned of the fruits of biblical criticism as RLDS ministers attended theological schools and Protestant seminaries. Contrary to traditional RLDS teachings, most scholars hold that the New Testament contains no definite prescription for church organization. In fact, Jesus did not found a church. Rather, the loose-knit community of his followers gradually evolved into the church. Biblical criticism also questioned the RLDS notion of the kingdom of God, as well as the view that the gospel is a set of propositions or principles.

These and other internal developments, coupled with changes in American society throughout the 1960s and 1970s caused many RLDS to admit the failure of traditional teachings to respond creatively to the new situation. Church leaders thus recognized the pressing need to do theology. Several publications were the result. In 1967 and 1968 employees of the RLDS Department of Religious Education wrote a series of study papers for the Curriculum Consultation Committee. Whether "position papers" accurately describes their nature and intent, that is how they came to be known. In some ways, the papers represent the climax of the RLDS period of reformation. They admirably attempt a serious examination of the implications of new historical, biblical, and theological findings. The First Presidency presented a series of six papers to church officials and companions at meetings 9–10 January 1979, in Independence.

Other individuals and committees commissioned to write RLDS theology have each attempted to render RLDSism more coherent and consistent internally, and more relevant and palatable to those outside of the church. Yet while this flurry of theological thinking and writing has occurred, we are unaware of any theological discussion of how Reorganized Latter Day Saints ought to understand the task of doing theology. The church has recognized that it must do theology and has, at least in a tentative way, committed itself to the task of thinking theologically. But a discussion of how the task of approaching theology ought to be construed from an RLDS perspective has never appeared in print. It is just such a discussion that this essay hopes to initiate.

We are convinced that the questions and crises of the last two and a half decades remain with the church in the 1980s and that the roots of the problem are theological. Having briefly outlined the characteristics and causes of the period of RLDS reformation, we shall proceed to evaluate three current theological trends. Each attempts to address those developments which led to the shaking of the foundations of RLDSism. Space limitations prevent us from developing an exhaustive typology of the ways that theology is presently understood and approached in the church. The categories employed and the examples cited should be regarded only as representative of general trends. In our analysis of these trends, we will attempt to illuminate the price paid for and the benefits gained by the way in which each construes the task of theology. These are RLDS fundamentalism, theology as history, and the transliteration of Protestant thought. In conclusion, we issue a call for dialogue and elaborate our own model for approaching theology from an RLDS perspective.

RLDS FUNDAMENTALISM

Perhaps the most systematic exposition of the fundamentalist position is Richard Price's *The Saints at the Crossroads* (Independence: Cumorah Books, 1975; see also Bird 1980 and Price 1975d). Fundamentalists correctly charge that the church has changed. They do not, however, like the changes. Price identifies nine "fundamental Restoration distinctives" which, he asserts, set the church apart from other Christian churches (1975s, 232–33). These nine may be summarized in three basic claims. First, Jesus Christ founded a specific church organization which later departed from the truths of the gospel and thereby lost the authority to represent God and administer the sacraments. After centuries of dark apostasy, light again burst forth as God intervened to restore the true church through Joseph Smith, Jr. This restoration is preserved in the Reorganization. Second, the church enjoys and possesses a sacred deposit of modern, infallible revelations given through the founder and his successors in the prophetic office. The Inspired Version of the Holy Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants contain the words of God as dictated to the prophets. Third, the church's chief mission is to participate in God's redeeming activity by building Zion, the literal city of God, at Independence, Missouri.

What kind of task confronts theologians if one begins with these fundamentals? Strictly speaking, theology in the classic sense has no role at all. Fundamentalists regard openness to the various theological trends of the larger Christian community as evidence of "apostasy" (Price 1975s, 20–32). Especially fearful of ecumenical influences and tendencies, they decry the results of the RLDS period of reevaluation and propose a return to the previous teachings of the church. They understand what we would term the theological task almost exclusively in terms of telling the "story of the Restoration," supported by vigorous proof-texting from the three standard books. The greatness of the RLDS tradition lies in its scriptures as seen through the lens of the Restoration. The present crises can be ended by obeying the command to teach all nations

the distinctive RLDS gospel and abandoning the present ill-fated flirtation with the vain "theologies of men."

We find three key insights in the fundamentalist position. First, although the fundamentalist alternative represents an antiquated way of understanding scripture and the divine activity in the world, such a world view dominated the thinking of most church members for many decades and, to a certain extent, still does. Second, the insistence of fundamentalists upon the importance of the identity of the church as a particular historical community represents an important facet of responsible RLDS theology. We are convinced — and we will develop this point more fully below — that a theology can be truly *RLDS* only when it takes our particular and peculiar history seriously. Third, fundamentalist writings reflect a strong fervor for what they regard as the truth. The best theologians approach their task with a determined passion to search out and express the truths of the Christian message, yet with humble recognition that their feeble attempts ever fail to capture those truths.

In many ways, however, fundamentalism does not represent a viable option. This is because fundamentalism is inflexible and insistent on its own infallible apprehension of gospel truths. It has difficulty listening and often becomes arrogant and idolatrous. Paul Tillich observed that a theological system should satisfy two basic needs: "The statement of the truth of the Christian message and the interpretation of this truth for every new generation. Theology moves back and forth between two poles, the eternal truth of its foundation and the temporal situation in which the eternal truth must be received." Few systems achieve an acceptable balance between these two poles, Tillich continues, and either sacrifice elements of the Christian truth or fail to address the contemporary situation. Others, like American fundamentalism, fail on both counts: "Afraid of missing the eternal truth, they [American fundamentalists] identify it with some previous theological work, with traditional concepts and solutions, and try to impose these on a new, different situation. They confuse eternal truth with a temporal expression of this truth" (1951–63, 1:3). RLDS fundamentalists are equally at fault.

Rather than face conclusions required by developments in twentieth-century biblical scholarship, science, psychology, and history, RLDS fundamentalists resort to old arguments and clichés which are no longer convincing. Price, for example, in his chapter on "The Church Misinterpreted," assails the Position Papers for claiming that "there was no divinely established structure" for the first-century church (Price 1975s, 115). Clearly, if the author of this paper is correct, then the RLDS claim to be the restoration of that church would be erroneous. The Papers also argued, to Price's further dismay, that no single organization may rightfully claim to be the only true church (Position Papers, 50). In our view, the author(s) of this Position Paper is on solid ground based on New Testament and historical scholarship. Price's rebuttal, however, merely restates the age-old RLDS position with sixteen proof-text references to the three standard books in one and a half pages (Price 1975s, 117–18). Nowhere does Price even consider the complexities of the New Testament data.

In the final analysis, RLDS fundamentalists have chosen to represent remnants of a nineteenth-century world view. They attempt to respond to twentieth-century questions with nineteenth-century answers, often even refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy of the questions. They unstintingly reject all attempts at revision and modernization of the church's message (Price 1975s, 1–6). Unfortunately, the fundamentalists, in their desire to remain faithful to the RLDS tradition, have foreclosed all possibilities for the creative transformation of that tradition.

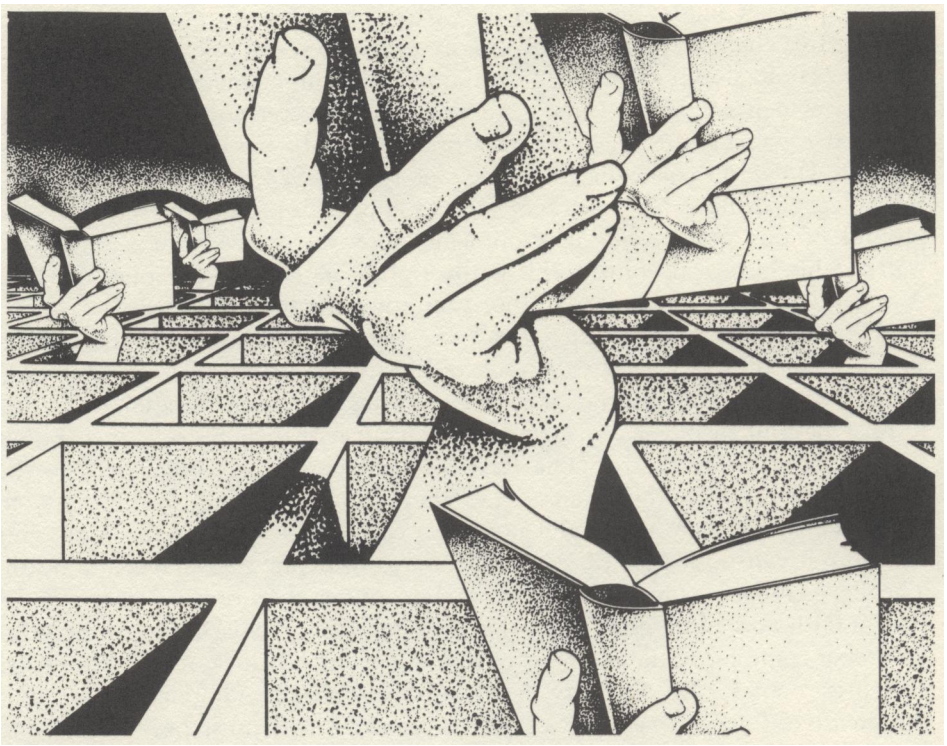
THEOLOGY AS HISTORY

RLDSism is first and foremost a historical faith. It is the story of a people who believe themselves to be called to a unique mission, who were persecuted and driven into the wilderness. The heart of that faith centers on key events: Joseph Smith, Jr.'s, vision in the grove, the appearance of the Book of Mormon, the several attempted gatherings, the martyrdom of its founder, and the Reorganization. RLDS doctrine evolved alongside of these events and the one is not separable from the other. Both are locked together and depend upon each other.

Given this fact, it is not surprising that, in the past, the church has presented its theology by retelling its version of how and why these events occurred. When a later generation of church members comes to believe that doctrines taught and practiced by an earlier one are no longer true, it is likely to dissent, not from the doctrine itself in a straightforward theological manner (thereby admitting the fallibility of past formulations), but rather by arguing that the true church never believed or practiced that doctrine. Thus, for example, the church assigns the system of temple rituals to a post-Nauvoo Brigham Young, moves the command to baptize for the dead to an "appendix" in its canon, and in a recent paper by the Church Historian, admits that while Joseph Smith, Jr., was close to the appearance of polygamy, it was taught only as an "accident of history," as a thing essentially beyond Smith's control (Howard 1983).

It is not our intent to relegate the work of Richard P. Howard to the same category as the first two examples of this trend as though there is no qualitative difference between them. Historical research has come a long way from the parade of "story of the church" volumes.[1] Indeed, it is only when historical scholarship has reached its present level of competency that the inadequacy of this method of doing theology becomes apparent. We do not claim that Howard set out to write a theological treatise or that he regards his work as RLDS

[1] Works in this tradition include Inez Smith Davis, *The Story of the Church: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and of its legal successor, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 7th ed. (Independence: Herald House, 1964); W. J. Haworth, *The Fall of Babylon and the Triumph of the Kingdom of God* (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House, 1911; reprint ed., Independence: Herald House, 1974); William H. Kelley, *Presidency and Priesthood: The Apostasy, Reformation, and Restoration*, 2nd ed. (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House and Bookbindery, 1908); Joseph Luff, *The Old Jerusalem Gospel: Twenty-Nine Sermons Representative of the Faith of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Independence: Herald House, 1903).



theology. We suggest simply that his essay indicates his awareness of and concern about the theological issues raised by his research. Thus, when we say that RLDS theology cannot be undertaken this way, we do not mean to impugn the work of the present generation of historians. Rather, we argue only that the tools of the historian are not those of the theologian: that church members ought to stop expecting church historians to do theology and berating them when their work cannot solve the church's *theological* difficulties. A closer look at Howard's paper better reveals the point.

In the first half of his essay, Howard draws out clearly the connection between the church's insistence that Joseph Smith, Jr., did not teach polygamy and Joseph Smith III's own refusal to believe that his father could be connected with a practice that he found so repulsive. Such an insight goes a long way toward explaining the sensibilities of the Reorganization as a church molded in the image of Joseph Smith III.

In the second half, although he draws only on RLDS sources, Howard concludes that Smith was in fact closely related to and responsible for the initiation of a chain of events which led to the practice of polygamy. Although Howard stops short of putting the teaching in Smith's hands, he does not deny that polygamy was the logical extension of doctrines that Smith promulgated. No non-RLDS historian stops here; the authoritative biographer of Smith, Fawn M. Brodie, is certain that he taught the doctrine. Yet even Howard's modest conclusion places RLDS readers in an awkward position. Traditionally, the RLDS Church has taught that polygamy is immoral. The question then

emerges: What ought the church do with a prophet who made the error of starting this chain of events? Howard, *as a historian*, can only give a historical answer. He focuses on Smith's "repentance" from his connection with the doctrine as evidence that his teachings and his doubts were overpowered by impersonal forces of history. This may or may not be a satisfactory *historical* answer. Howard's colleague, Imogene Goodyear (1984), has her doubts. But regardless of its historical success or failure, Howard's position merely shifts the ground of our *theological* question which now becomes: Can a man who misread his historical context this badly rightly be called a prophet of God? A second follows: What gives authority to the church he founded?

Howard cannot answer these questions, regardless of how good his scholarship is. The difficulty is that the tools of history are inappropriate to the task. He and other RLDS historians are placed in the unenviable position of having to raise painful theological questions in the course of their historical work that they cannot answer there.[2] The RLDS theologian owes a great debt to the present generation of historians. Had they not begun their work twenty to thirty years ago, there would not now be a call for the study of theology. But the church can no longer expect its historians to define and defend the faith. Theologies must be found that adequately consider the historical character of RLDS faith and can use the work that is being done by RLDS historians without being confined to the methods of history for the advance of the theological enterprise. An RLDS theology depends upon both the church's history and the creative, interpretive work of its historians; but it must never be simply determined by that history.

THE TRANSLITERATION OF PROTESTANT THOUGHT

While both RLDS fundamentalism and theology as history contain certain insights into how the RLDS Church has understood and continues to understand and identify itself, neither can be followed exclusively. Indeed, neither can be considered *theology* as the term is generally understood in the broader Christian community. The third trend, however, seeks to be theology in just this sense. This type of theology is promoted by people who comprise what might be accurately called the first generation of RLDS theologians. As there are no RLDS seminaries and almost no published RLDS theological writings of interest to non-RLDS readers, these students have learned their craft in Protestant seminaries that are largely unaware of RLDSism. Hence, what they have learned is mostly Protestant theology, which seldom fits neatly alongside the traditional RLDS language used almost universally throughout the church.

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[2] The fine historical work of William D. Russell exhibits this same quandary. For example, his essay, "A Further Inquiry into the Historicity of the Book of Mormon," *Sunstone*, Sept.–Oct. 1982, pp. 20–27, casts doubt on the traditional church belief about the historicity of the book, yet he concludes the essay with the claim that the book can still be regarded and used as scripture. We find his conclusion interesting and perhaps somewhat surprising, but it cannot fully address the theological issues at stake. For example, if Russell's account is correct, and we think that it is, then what ought the church to do about its claim to have a prophet who claimed to possess gold plates which he translated with the Urim and Thummim?

One should not be surprised, therefore, that these first RLDS theologians are struggling to discover RLDS names for the exciting, even intoxicating, ideas of Tillich, Bonhoeffer, or Whitehead, for example.

This is exactly what we find in Geoffrey F. Spencer's essay, "Revelation and the Restoration Principle." Other RLDS thinkers have read and profited from Protestant theology. For example, see Peter A. Judd and Clifford A. Cole, *Distinctives: Yesterday and Today* (Independence: Herald House, 1983), and Peter A. Judd and A. Bruce Lindgren, *An Introduction to the Saints' Church* (Independence: Herald House, 1976). Spencer alone, however, seeks to deal with this theology on its own terms and makes his debts to particular theologians explicit. Spencer rightly thinks that the church could benefit from Paul Tillich's concept of the Protestant Principle, Tillich's discussion of "ultimate concern" and idolatry. (He understands idolatry as the elevation of proximate, preliminary matters to the level of ultimate concern; Tillich 1957d, 28–29; 1951–63, 1:227, 3:244–45; 1957p, v–xxv). Idolatry often occurs in churches, for instance, when members come to identify the particular, finite forms through which the ultimate finds expression as being the ultimate itself (1957d 96–98). The Protestant Principle is the ongoing, critical protest against such idolatries. Protestantism, which began as an attempt to embody the principle, often fails to remain faithful to it. But the principle continues to beckon and stand in judgment upon the church.

For theologians, the principle is a simultaneous "yes and no" to all theological assertions. Tillich reminds us that all theological formulations are finite, fallible, historically conditioned attempts to express the inexpressible. This profound insight serves to prevent our absolutizing past statements and thus inevitably propels us toward the future and ever-new interpretations. The Protestant Principle is therefore implicitly eschatological, always pressing forward to more accurate and relevant formulations of the truth.

Impressed by this insight, Spencer sees clearly that RLDS theology must either embrace this Principle or drift on toward complete irrelevance. But because the *Protestant Principle* seems less than ideal for a church that has never regarded itself as Protestant (or Catholic), Spencer is wont to describe the truth of the Principle in explicit RLDS language. Thus, after explaining Tillich's concept, Spencer formulates a *Restoration* Principle and considers its possible implications for the RLDS movement. Spencer's Restoration Principle is little more than a transliteration of the Protestant Principle, a Protestant idea with an RLDS name. He explains, "Customarily, to some extent, the Restoration has been seen essentially as the reintroduction of certain realities which existed in a form of purity or completeness in a former era but were lost" (1983, 188). Realizing that historical research puts such a notion in grave danger, he wants the Restoration Principle to aid the church by modifying the way it understands the concept of restoration, so that restoration becomes anticipatory rather than reactionary.

Spencer's attempt to relate the best of Protestant theology to RLDS theology is laudable. But his transliteration of Protestant thought into RLDS categories fails to fully consider or appreciate the RLDS heritage as a particu-

lar people with a particular history. Most importantly, his use of *restoration* is problematic. All denotative and connotative meanings of the term point backward, toward the recovery of something lost. *Restoration* refers to a return to a former or original state. Spencer, however, wishes to interpret *restoration* to mean the opposite: "Restoration exemplifies the readiness to live in the spirit and expectancy of the future in respectful and honest appreciation of our past rather than in bondage to it" (1983, 189). Or again: "The readiness to hold our contingent forms, structures, and doctrines up for further interpretation may be one important way in which we manifest what 'restoration' is" (1983, 189). Yet the entire essence of the church's understanding of restoration has been to look back and recover just those past forms, structures, and doctrines. The very word *restoration* designates such attempts.

Moreover, to say that "to some extent" (Spencer 1983, 188) "Restoration" has meant bringing back the old-time religion is to seriously underestimate the enduring influence of this view and ignore its particular history in the RLDS movement. If Spencer wants to use Tillich's insight, he ought to simply call it the Protestant Principle or find some other way to express the idea to RLDS audiences. He might simply challenge the church to respond to and embody the Protestant Principle. Relabeling it may be an unnecessary concession to the RLDS fear of Protestant and Catholic theology. The church must become willing to openly acknowledge and accept insights from Protestant and Catholic circles. RLDS symbols and images have specific meanings and histories which must be admitted and dealt with, even if it means abandoning the symbol as irretrievable. We regard *restoration* as incapable of undergoing such a radical and unprecedented reversal of meaning. A Restoration Principle can never mean what Tillich meant by Protestant Principle.

Spencer's method of thinking theologically does offer some important advantages. The most striking aspect of this essay is its openness. It encourages the RLDS theologian to utilize the work of past and present Protestant and Catholic theologians. Second, the method recognizes the need for interaction between RLDS symbols and history and the broader Christian community. Third, it recognizes the need to modify and reinterpret church tradition. The church can no longer claim to infallibly possess the truth. "The vulnerable church," Spencer correctly writes, "is the one which has closed down the canon, set the limits of belief, claimed infallibility and finality for its pronouncements and believes it can weather the storm" (1983, 191). Finally, it exemplifies the courage required to make what may be unpopular stands in a church still suspicious of the theologian.

CONCLUSION

We began this essay by making three basic claims. First, we suggested that the RLDS Church is presently involved in a genuine struggle to discover what it means to be the body of Christ in the modern world. This struggle has created a near-crisis of identity and authority. Second, the roots of this struggle are theological. Third, this struggle has prompted the church to do theology.

To these we now add a fourth claim: theology never emerges in a vacuum. Each way of approaching the task of theology grows out of and reflects some particular facet of the theologian's situation and church, in this case, the struggle of the RLDS Church to embody Christ in the world. Thus, from the way each particular theology is done, one may obtain clues to the nature and character of the present situation of RLDSism.

What then can be learned from the three trends discussed above? From fundamentalism, theologians ought to learn that the RLDS community has been and continues to be a people with a particular history and a particular matrix of symbols, stories, and events. From history RLDS theologians should learn that the church tends to claim infallibility for many of its teachings and practices, a tendency destructive as well as false and erroneous. Finally, from the first RLDS theologians, we ought to learn that the church has a certain, though not yet fully defined, kinship with the wider Christian community and is seeking to discern the parameters and depth of that relationship.

Each of these trends fails as a way of approaching the task of RLDS theology precisely because each grows out of only one facet of the church's present situation and focuses its attention on that one problem. Consequently, they seem to ignore other dimensions of the present situation. Fundamentalism, determined to protect the particularity of RLDSism, asserts the infallibility and unsurpassability of the RLDS gospel and ignores the wider Christian community. Historians correctly criticize the church's unwarranted claims of infallibility but lack the methodological tools to answer questions about the enduring value of a movement which possesses no exclusive claim to truth. Historians are not equipped to answer theological questions about what divine authority may inhere in a church which is as fallible and historically conditioned as any other. RLDS theologians transliterating Protestant thought into RLDS categories see the proper relationship between their own church and Protestant and Catholic forms of Christianity but fail to appreciate the enduring influence and value of RLDS symbols and stories. Viewing the RLDS as one Christian church among many prevents claims of infallibility but often gives little hint as to what truth, if any, RLDSism might uniquely contain.

The several successes and failures of these ways of approaching the task of RLDS theology again point out the urgent need to do RLDS theology. Clearly, new models are needed, models that build upon the insights of preceding models and respond more fully to the present situation of the RLDS Church. We offer a few suggestions which may serve as catalysts for further inquiry and discussion.

In our judgment, a truly RLDS theology will be governed or characterized by integration. First, an RLDS theology must come to terms with what RLDSism presently is, its history, and what it moves toward. The work of the RLDS theologian requires historical research, participation in the church as a worshipping community, and internal dialogue. Second, RLDS theology must understand the complexity and diversity of the broader Christian community. Helpful activities include the study of Protestant and Catholic theology, membership in ecumenical organizations, and the active cultivation of friendships

with Christians of all traditions. Finally, such a theology must be attuned to the demands and challenges of the modern world. Awareness of the modern situation emerges from the study of the natural and social sciences, the exercise of Christian discipleship, and attempts to dwell in the same global village with various cultures and religions.

Authentic RLDS theologies hold each of these elements of the present situation in tension with one another, learning from each, using the insights of one to critique the limited understandings of the others. Such theologies are undergirded by the conviction that God is at work in and through all three. Continual application of Tillich's Protestant Principle ensures that theologians appreciate the value of tradition but never rest content with mere repetition of the past for its own sake. Critical but never aimlessly destructive, authentic RLDS theologies require constant dialogue, dialogue which will prohibit claims of infallible apprehension of Christian truth.

To understand the task of RLDS theology in this way offers one additional advantage: it opens the theological enterprise to all church members, and in fact depends upon the participation of each. Theology so conceived is not primarily a task of the institutional church nor is it the domain of a few academicians. Rather, it is done primarily by and for the community of individual RLDS Christians. Those who lack the time and means to read Whitehead or Tillich, or to attend ecumenical conferences, or to labor in a Latin American barrio may still be involved in the theological enterprise by reflecting on and seeking the presence of God in their own communities and aligning their vocational, educational, devotional, and economic choices with the loving, abiding, and chastizing Presence.

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Making "the Good" Good for Something: A Direction for Mormon Literature

Lavina Fielding Anderson

 ver since the classic triumverate of the good, the true, and the beautiful was set up as the literary ideal, the good — meaning the virtuous or moral — has had less success than either the true or the beautiful. The good has all too often been the didactic, the pious, the sniveling, and the terminally petty. The good has also usually been the excruciatingly boring, even though there is, in my opinion, no subject of such intense inherent interest as that of the human soul in conflict with itself and no questions more urgent than those of values. In our decade, "good" Mormon fiction has usually meant the inoffensive, the mildly heartwarming, and the essentially trivial. Its genealogy goes back to nineteenth-century home literature which aimed at producing uplifting inspiration in a Mormon context. Its modern descendants have successfully resisted the attempts of regionalists in the 1930s and 1940s to shift the subject matter to the culture of Mormonism and the attempts of academicians in the 1960s and 1970s to shift to the technique of literature.

As a result, until recently, fiction with literary aspirations has occupied an uncomfortable no-man's land. Although Peregrine Smith published Emma Lou Thayne's idyllic celebration, *Never Past the Gate* (1975), it was Dolphin Books rather than a Mormon publisher who reprinted in 1961 Maurine Whipple's *The Giant Joshua*, unquestionably the most important novel to emerge from Mormon culture since its publication in 1941 by Houghton Mifflin. Part of that prominence has been its lonely eminence, no doubt, for Douglas H. Thayer could not find a publisher for *Under the Cottonwoods* (1977), but fortunately had the resources to do it himself. Béla Petsco faced the same predicament with his *Nothing Very Important and Other Stories* (1979). (In 1983, and 1984, Signature Books reprinted both.) Marilyn Brown self published *The Earthkeepers* (1979), and the success of Don Marshall's self-

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published *Rummage Sale* (1979) prompted Peregrine Smith Press to reprint it and BYU Press to publish his second book, *Frost in the Orchard* (1977). It is to be hoped that Levi Peterson's dazzling short story collection, *The Canyons of Grace* (University of Illinois Press, 1982) will make his future works eagerly sought for. At least Thayer's *Cottonwoods* is back in print (Signature Books 1983) along with his new novel *Summer Fire* (Signature Books, 1983) and Marden Clark's evocative collection of autobiographical short stories, *Morgon Triumphs* (Signature Books, 1984).

While many good works go begging, however, Paul French's novel of under two hundred pages entitled *Nauvoo* (fetchingly subtitled "The Saga of a City of Exiles: The Passions that Built and Destroyed It") appeared in 1983 with hype from a publisher in Orem, and Shirley Sealy's two most recent books *I Have Chosen You*, and *Don't Tell Me No!* (they are not a series) not only have been published but seemingly have hordes of readers.

Meanwhile, I have had the following experiences: I read a novel in manuscript dealing with contemporary Mormon issues during the 1950s and 1960s. The author said, "My family doesn't know I'm writing this. Not a soul knows. I don't think I'll ever publish it unless it's under a pseudonym." Another author with a finished manuscript that deals with contemporary Mormon characters admitted, "If Deseret Book would accept this, it would tell my family that it's all right to write." The predictable rejection was bitterly disappointing. Levi Peterson, standing on the street in front of Steven Sondrup's house on a beautiful fall day in 1982, recited for me the little speech of apology that he had composed to accompany the presentation of his own award-winning *Canyons of Grace* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982) to certain members of his family and ward.

These episodes are a litany of uncertainty that fills me with both shame and anger. There is no question that *Canyons of Grace* was the most important Mormon fiction to appear in 1982. Modesty may have been in order. Apology was not. Furthermore, the other manuscripts I mentioned are, without equivocation, as significant in theme and as polished in technique as any other Mormon fiction available in print — worthy to stand beside Herb Harker's *Turn Again Home* (reprinted by Randall Books, 1984), Maurine Whipple's *The Giant Joshua* (1941, 1961), or Virginia Sorenson's *The Evening and the Morning* (out of print).

I am concerned that all of these writers seem to have the clear message that they are marginal members of their society because of their writing, that to decide to write is to isolate themselves from the fellowship of the Saints. I have no intention of scolding those who are made uncomfortable by fiction that tries to use good techniques and to be good for something in addition to being good. But I do want to provide some aid and comfort to those whom I perceive to be serious Mormon writers. It is difficult enough to clear a patch in the brambles of daily life or on the kitchen table for the typewriter, agony enough to struggle with plot, theme, image and character, absorbing enough to shape without distorting and to refine without destroying, excruciating enough to look at the final result with the cerebral knowledge that it is done as

well as you can do it and the sickening suspicion in the pit of your stomach that it's lousy — without also having to struggle through the paralysis that can be induced by a uniformly accusatory environment: "Writing wastes time. Why don't you write family histories if you want to write?" "These kinds of stories weaken faith. In fact, what's wrong with your testimony that you could write this junk?" "No one in the family will dare hold their heads up if this gets out." Even in the milder forms, such disapproval can shatter the confidence to try, and it can certainly poison the sheer joy of having written.

I have no magic solutions for the lack of community acceptance that many writers of Mormon fiction must face, but I think that the situation is far from hopeless. Lewis Horne recently published *the seventh day*, a volume of poetry (Saskatoon, Saskatchwan: Thistledown Press, 1982). Orson Scott Card's *Woman of Destiny* (New York: Berkeley Books, 1984) has appeared, Levi Peterson's new novel is finished and Linda Sillitoe's is through first draft. Emma Lou Thayne, in addition to her peace poetry (DIALOGUE, Winter 1984), is preparing a major book on the tensions of the writing process. These books, like the manuscripts that I mentioned earlier, are full-length works. Their mere existence constitutes a critical mass that is different in quality from the excellent collections of short stories that have been the chef d'oevre of Mormon literature to date. They represent the assimilation of the neglected novel form and a commitment to make it accessible to a new generation of writers.

The challenge facing these writers is considerable. The majority of published works in the field of Mormon literature today consists of clichés borrowed from the larger world of bad literature. This cheap and easy fiction, the pretty romances, the cute tales of cute adolescents, and melodramatic historical fiction seems preoccupied with its audience, deals in simple conflicts, simply resolved, flops brokenbacked between preaching and entertaining, and usually ignores the craft of fiction. The new Mormon fiction attempts something more ambitious. It is literature of intelligent affirmation, not of alienation, fiction that takes as its province the hitherto unexplored field of spiritual experience and treats it as realism.

A comparison between Clory in Maurine Whipple's *The Giant Joshua* and Levi Peterson's Arabella in the title story of *Canyons of Grace* illustrates this new direction. Whipple's Clory is a Mormon woman doing Mormon things in a Mormon context; however, the spiritual dimension is missing from her fictional world. The relationship between God and his children that qualifies Mormonism to be considered a religion at all is not mentioned. A moment of ultimate reconciliation with the universe concludes the book as Clory dies: "And now there is no more time. Already the radiance is trembling on the horizon, the flushed light leans down from the west, the Great Smile beckons. And suddenly, with the shock of a thousand exploding light-balls, she recognizes the Great Smile at last. That which she had searched for all her life had been right there in her heart all the time. She, Clorinda MacIntyre, had a testimony!" (1961, 517)

The Great Smile has unfortunate echoes of Lewis Carroll's Cheshire cat that makes it unsuccessful as an image of affirmation, faith, and benevolence.

However, beyond its problem as an image is its problem as a statement. Throughout the book Clory fails to make connections between her religion and her life. She does not find in the brutalities and injustices of her colonizing life in St. George the basis for either loving or rejecting God. She barely notices God. The realities of her life are the drugery of survival, her difficult marriage, the emotional devastation of her children's deaths, and the moments when her naturally lively spirit can escape from her concerned but largely joyless community.

In contrast is Levi Peterson's Arabella who was raised in rigid propriety by her painfully orthodox Mormon parents. In the chaotic landscape near Blanding where she is excavating an Anasazi site, Arabella's "seditious thoughts" lead her from the belief, held five years earlier, that "God loved to bless his children" into an act of rebellion against what she now perceives as God's "subtle purpose" — to "demean them" (p. 102). She plans her rebellion to take the form of a casual affair with her colleague, Franklin, an act of "friendly fornication" that would not only express "her sexuality" but would, most importantly, "be an act of defiance, a thousand-megaton blow against the conformities of previous life" (p. 110). However, before Arabella begins the affair, she is kidnapped by representatives of a self-styled fundamentalist prophet who plans to make her his ninth wife. Paralyzed by conditioned passivity, she begs Reuben Millring, the homespun patriarch, to save her from herself, denies her "perverse freedom," and sobs "passionately: 'I want to cut it out of me, to bury it. I want to be obedient, to follow the commandments, I just want peace' " (pp. 128–29). Arabella submits to the grotesque wedding night in an effort to purchase that peace, seeing in Reuben's face the visage of her wrathful God. In the morning, she cracks his skull with a heavy porcelain basin and spends the day and night on the desert, acknowledging a universe without God. As the sun rises the next morning, she literally and metaphorically "take[s] her bearings," then "an ephemeral predator upon a minor planet, she went forward free and filled with grace" (pp. 131–35).

The differences between the Peterson and the Whipple approaches are obvious. Mormonism provides the social setting for both, just as southern Utah provides the physical settings. But there would be no story at all for Arabella without religion, if her human need for freedom — a need radically affirmed at the foundation of Mormon doctrine in both human and divine nature — did not impell her to kill the "God" who stood between her and that precious right.

In spiritual realism, the conflicts that a character may encounter in his or her social settings are primarily important as they provide information about the spiritual life of that person. The experiences move the person toward a greater understanding of the ambiguous nature of human good and human depravity. They affirm or challenge the reality of God. They illuminate by recording those perplexing moments when prayers are not answered and the equally perplexing moments when they are. They shoulder the burden of a community where a vision of holiness and unity stands in contrast to the inevitable pettiness and cruelties of daily living. They attempt to make sense out

of human interaction that includes both deepest doubts and anger focused on a seemingly uncaring God and swelling rejoicing and gratitude focused on a seemingly loving and watchful God.

The complexities of Susa Young Gates's Mormon heroines standing firm against the temptations and wiles of the gentile world are nothing compared to the complexities of Virginia Sorenson's honest but less-than-perfect individuals struggling against the iron insistence of a community that can preserve its heritage only by refusing to look beyond its borders. And this field of social realism seems simple when contrasted with the fictional possibilities of adding doctrine to culture — salvation, damnation, faith, miracles, revelations, gifts of the Spirit — are all concepts that are part of the Mormon experience, history, and current reality.

I would not want to suggest that Mormons invented faith or have a monopoly on revelation. However, Mormon manuscripts of the 1980s have broken ground into the realm of spiritual realism. As they have moved beyond the range of the short story to make the novel an accessible form, so they have moved beyond the fields of home literature and regional realism to make Mormon spiritual experience accessible to fiction.

Examples of spiritual realism are found in Marilyn M. Brown's new manuscript, alternately named "Shadow of Fire," "Stones of Blood," and "Rage and Mercy," which tells of the events immediately before the Mountain Meadows massacre and of its long aftermath. It focuses on a trio of characters: J.B., a violent, heavy man whose participation in the slaughter is part of the angry pattern of his life — a pattern which leads him to turn against John D. Lee and eventually become one of the federal marshals who hunts him down; his son Arben, a reluctant participant in the massacre, who marries Lee's daughter Anna Jane; and Elizabeth, J.B.'s second wife, who loves Lee and sees in him an image of purity and salvation. When Anna Jane is nearly drowned in an accident after Lee's excommunication, the stage is set for the intersection of personal righteousness and institutional authority.

> Lee, Arben, and John David Lee, had laid Anna Jane on the settee, and Lee was rubbing her cheeks.
>
> "Anna Jane, Anna Jane," he begged. He turned her face toward him, and then away, toward him and then away. "Dear one. Wake up. Cough. Breathe."
>
> Arben was leaning over her, listening to her heart. He was pumping her breast; water still poured out of her mouth.
>
> John Lee stood and placed his hands on her head. "Dear God, please." His voice was choked. "If it be thy will." . . . Arben poured the oil on Anna Jane's hair. Bishop Roundy came close to them.
>
> "Can I help you?" Bishop Roundy whispered.
>
> John Lee's eyes were filled with pain. "My priesthood . . ." he began. "My own daughter. Am I deprived of blessing my own daughter?" . . . For a brief moment he stared at Arben and the meaning for his life flooded into him like a salve. "Arben, your own wife." He said the words and they echoed in the room. He turned politely to Bishop Roundy. "You may participate, but I will bless my own child, . . . And he his own wife. If God is willing." (1982, 466–67)

This scene is emotion-charged as we relate to the anguished love of the father for his daughter, but it is complicated by the doctrinal overlay of our

understanding of priesthood. Can such a blessing be given without priesthood? Is the prayer of the excommunicate acceptable in the ears of the Lord? When Lee was cut off from the Church was he, in fact, also cut off from his God? The doctrinal and legalistic implications take their shape and form in the context of a crowded room and a man bent over his daughter. Part of that context is the concern we feel for the characters, having lived with them since they were first enmeshed in the guilty secret of hatred and horror.

Brown's depiction of the massacre itself is also highly charged with emotion. As Arben watches the unarmed Missourians begin to walk forward, we see images that will recur throughout the novel.

> As he looked at the man who would stand beside him, his heart twisted with pain. He recognized the large burly cattleman with dark curly hair as the one he had walked with outside of Scoville! . . .
>
> "Do I know you?" the Missourian asked Arben.
>
> . . . From that moment on Arben did not follow what happened very clearly. He heard the shots and the sudden terrifying screams. He saw in his dizziness the men falling about him. Some of the militia ducked as Lee said they should. And then all at once as if from nowhere the Indians were upon them, screaming and shooting everything that moved. . . .
>
> *You are walking now. You are walking through columns of air that hang like pillars on either side of an avenue of light. Voices seem distant, like wind moving through the trees. There is only the light ahead of you and the earth falling away from you, peeling back from you. You have fired. You have fired a shot which could have killed someone you knew. Though you were a coward all the same. . . .*
>
> He had never seen the earth before today. Not as it was, the teeming crust, peeling away from him with dust rising and falling as it was, the wind stirring, pouring among both the living and dying, the dying still stirring, the living walking, walking in and out with shovels, beginning along the trenches, pushing into them bodies not yet cold.
>
> *You are moving through a haze as though the air itself is the only substance that can be real. Nothing else is real. This carnage cannot be real. The reflexes are not real. All that is real is a perception that below you in the dust there is quiet. There is a black quiet re ling through a sudden consciousness that it is all over in the quiet. That a weight, sudden and powerful, settles from the quiet like stones, like stones stained with blood. Stones you will have to carry.*
>
> *You are not listening to all that is happening around you, to the commands, J.B., Lee's voice, you are not seeking what lies below you on the ground. Because tomorrow or the next day you will pull the bread out of your satchel and it will taste all right in the hot sun. Maybe the cheese will seem tart, but it will taste good going down. Or it will be dough boys or scones out of Suky's skillet rolled in sugar and J.B. will walk into the house carrying his shovel. That same shovel on his shoulder — shouting one thing and another about the canal or the ditches, while you watch Elizabeth's white hands pushing and pulling the needle through a sampler that says in the white cloth with threads like drops of blood "God is love."*
>
> *Now it is a miracle to find air. You reach for it, trying to breathe. To find your head above water from under the weight that forms like a cloud and begins to push down on you, press, push, all, floating and circling over you and you want the air and you don't want the weight and you wonder if you can carry it all the rest of your life, and your children and their children after and you pray that you may be able to do enough good in this world to tip back the balance on the scales. Enough that is right. To wrest something out of the soil that is alive and vital and will take away the death taste on your tongue. . . .*

> As though in a dream, Arben dug, hearing the sound of the shovels hitting the ground, hearing the clip of metal against stone. The bodies fell into the trenches which the Missourians had already dug. All seemed quiet. Even the Indians made little noise rummaging through the spoil. . . .
>
> "We must promise one another not to speak of what happened."
>
> What had happened?
>
> "Stand in a circle. Raise your right arm to the square."
>
> As in a dream, Arben followed the commands. J.B. stood with him, too. The commands did not always come from Lee. Arben did not always know who they came from. (1982, 152–56)

The Mountain Meadows Massacre will probably challenge the imaginations of this decade's writers in significant ways, for it has not been used successfully as a subject by Mormon fiction writers until our own time, notably in Harker's *Turn Again Home* and, if we broaden fiction to include drama, Tom Roger's play, *Fire in the Bones* (1983). Perhaps it was not accessible to literature until Juanita Brooks had made the episode usable through history. Even though Brown refers to her own work as a "romance," it represents a solid achievement, interpreting a hitherto inaccessible area of Mormon fiction to our people. We can confidently expect high-quality historical fiction to deal with other problematic areas of the Mormon past as well.

The Mormon present is equally full of challenges that are now finding their way into literature. Linda Sillitoe's prize-winning story, "Demons" (*Sunstone*, 6 [May–June 1981]: 40–43) translates the theological possibility of demonic possession into the psychological price paid by a culture that systematically represses its women. I recall several years ago listening to Franklin Fisher read a very funny and totally terrifying episode from his novel-in-progress "Bones" in which the protagonist recalls, as a missionary, helping cast out a devil from a large and obdurate woman. Béla Petsco's protagonist in *Nothing Very Important and Other Stories* uses the power of his priesthood to release unto death his elderly aunt, neglected in the coldly impersonal hospital where she is institutionalized. After she dies, he "prayed that he had done right. . . . Should he have done it? The priesthood is to bless. The priesthood is to bless. He should only have blessed her with life — with life. But he . . . had asked that she be released . . . and she had died." Before dawn, his aunt "walked in — and looking down at him, said, 'I want you to know that I am always going to watch over and protect you, just like I always have.' " The next day at breakfast, his mother reports having had the identical dream (1979, 200, 206–8).

Such experiences have long been part of the reported spiritual repertoire of Mormon life. Handled ineptly, a fictional spiritual experience is a rightly resented piece of sentimentality or a *deux ex machina* to retrieve a faltering plot. The reality is that in literature as in life a spiritual experience is neither wholly a problem nor wholly a solution, although it may be partially either. More often it is simply part of the complex and difficult texture of living when the mysteries of human nature sometimes seem limpid and explicable compared to the mysteries of God.

Such an experience appears in the manuscript of a novel, "The Ragged Circle," by Veda Tebbs Hale of Kamas, Utah. Her protagonist Malena dis-

covers on Mother's Day that she is pregnant with her ninth child. She and her husband Garret had been art students together at BYU, but Malena's dreams and talents had been postponed so that she could care for the children, their huge home — a former Mormon meetinghouse in Heber Valley, a moderate amount of livestock, Church responsibilities, and her husband's career as a western artist about to take off under the adrenalin of some high-powered hype and an elaborately lissome model. Furthermore, although she has obediently if not always cheerfully put her children first, she now discovers that her only apparent reward is the rebellion of their sexually precocious and musically gifted fifteen-year-old daughter. While feeling like a failure as a mother and as a person, Malena is confined to bed with a blood clot. There, she can only watch as Aimee moves through a series of rock-music-and-hard-drug episodes toward a forced marriage. Garret's career slumps again when he is called to be bishop of the ward, a calling that brings no immediate blessings.

Malena is within a few weeks of delivery when her baby's activity suddenly stops and the doctor induces labor.

> A contraction caught me midway between the two tables and suddenly a terrifying thing happened. I was up above the tables, up near the ceiling, watching the doctors grab at my slumping body . . . I came back, feeling the last of the contraction, so bewildered I couldn't say anything when Dr. Bradford scolded, "Don't scare us like that, young lady!"
>
> They had just enough time to position me on the delivery table before another contraction came. I braced myself and fought against it because of that strange thing that had happened. It happened again. This time I was someplace else, not up near the ceiling or any place I knew. It was a wonderful, glorious, vividly colored place. Later I would think and think and not be able to sift any appropriate description out of my vocabulary. I wasn't alone there, my mind exploded with knowledge. Whoever was there, and it seemed like more than one, was occupied with me — either responsible for the burst of knowledge, trying to slow something down, or change something that shouldn't have been. I can't be sure. That's the terrible frustration of it all. Now I can't remember. I could when I was first in my body again. . . . I remember thinking how marvelous it was I knew those wonderful things. . . . The magnificent knowledge I was going to tell the world was gone. I was left with a great, burned hole in my mind, a charred, misty place rimmed with dazzling white light but no way to retrieve the fantastic substance. (1982, 195–98)

It is perhaps significant that Malena cannot explain that experience of her spirit. Despite her confusion, however, she stubbornly refuses to let her husband explain it away as her imagination or her doctor explain it as a reaction to medication. And knowing that the experience was real, even if inexplicable, prepares her for other spiritual insights later in the story. I know of one comparable passage in autobiography but not in fiction. Spiritual realism, if successful, can communicate in art what has previously been reserved for nonfiction.

Even though a cultural shorthand about spiritual experience exists in Mormonism ("the Spirit whispered peace," for example), the fictional challenge is not to rely on these clichés, trite in spite of their truth and, ironically, trite because of their truth. The fictional challenge is to find new forms, adequate to the meaning.

Perhaps these new forms are even now in the making. It is possible to point to Mormon humor beyond Sam Taylor's recently and happily republished *Heaven Knows Why*. The delicious solemnities of Calvin Grondahl's books of cartoons for *Sunstone*, *Freeways to Perfection* (1978), *Faith-Promoting Rumors* (1980) and *Sunday's Foyer* (1983) come immediately to mind as do two works by Orson Scott Card. *Saintspeak* is a tongue-in-cheek dictionary of such specialized terms as "*Spaulding theory*: the theory that every boy who touches a basketball one thousand times in the cultural hall will eventually go on a mission" (1981, n.p.). His "Notes from a Guardian Angel" which ran sporadically in *Seventh East Press* gives us the following scene. Saint Watcher Virginia is depressed when the mortal she is guarding "died in 1949 in circumstances that made it pretty plain that I wouldn't be promoted to Master Watcher for quite a while yet." Her tough-talking colleague Hymie Goldblatt responds brusquely: "We're always short-handed, we're always outnumbered, and no matter how hard we try, we all have to live with the fact that even some of the seemingly elect will fail. If you're not tough enough to take it, then say so now and we'll assign you to Genealogy and you can spend the next thousand years guiding little old ladies to forgotten records. It's an important work, but I thought you were made for bigger challenges than that."

Ginny protests, "I never got *discouraged*. I always hoped she'd turn out to be another Alma."

"I know all about what you hoped. Two hundred separate petitions for EIs [exceptional interventions] in only thirty years, Ginny. Even Judas Iscariot's Watcher only filed a hundred and thirty times."

This in-group jargon and hint of bureaucratic procedure among the heavenly beings in the next life parodies some of our all-too-earthly proceedings at the same time that it raises a serious question: although Mormon doctrine does not disallow guardian angels, it hardly gives them a clear assignment or a firm place in a heavenly hierarchy. Is it just possible that Card's Saint Watchers, "the elite of the Celestial Guardian Service," may actually have a parallel in that real but unseen world?

Another author who has tackled a similar question but from a more serious perspective is Alice Morrey Bailey, whose manuscript, "The Stellarians," is a sophisticated generation beyond Nephi Anderson's romance, *Added Upon*. Given the doctrine that all spirits who have ever been or ever will be on earth were present in heaven before the first moral birth, Sister Bailey, an octagenarian whose publishing record stretches over six decades, hypothesizes a complex premortal organization: Paul and Kistin, soon to be born on earth, stop by the "signalling station" where messages are sent to mortals from the other side of the veil.

> The attendants of the signalling station were ego-workers, some of them of brighter lustre than others, because of the different degrees of their intelligence, putting in the required time as they waited for their spirit birth on some star. Their function was to relay messages, not to originate them, and they seemed very efficient. . . . "Look!" said Kistin, stopping beside a disc. "A little child, praying for help in finding a penny!" . . .

A message was being relayed from higher up. "Be calm," it went. "Do not move your feet. Now stand up and look carefully around."

The child acted as if he received the message, as he obeyed it perfectly, looked around and recovered his penny. He started to leave the disc at a run, stopped short and returned. He lifted his eyes to direct contact for an instant.

"Thank you, God," he said. . . .

Personal messages to adults did not meet with such success, however. These were chiefly advice concerning one manner or other of conduct, to kin and friends. Some were warnings against forthcoming misfortunes, loss of money, or accidents . . .

"They don't even listen to the storm-warnings issued by their own government radio stations," said a discouraged ego. (1982, 31–33)

Kistin and Paul also visit the timestrip archives where mortals who have "terminated enclayment" must review their lives. There, they observe a woman who had been seduced as a young girl. She reviews the timestrip of her life and must confront Mada, the spirit who had been assigned to the child she aborted. When she comes to the point in the timestrip where she induced the abortion

the woman turned to Mada, recognizing her for the first time.

"You would have been my daughter, wouldn't you?" she said. "Oh, what was I thinking of? . . . The woman broke down completely and sobbed without restraint. "I killed my baby! I killed my baby!" she kept repeating. Mada went to her and tried to soothe her.

Still another part of the heavenly city is given over to hospitals without doctors or nurses

. . . where those returning from enclayment were given a chance to cure themselves of the dreadful opaqueness caused by lying, stealing, false pride, deceit, and the like. This they did in six steps: first they had to find and obtain the forgiveness of every person they had wronged, second, restore treasures to these people, even if it means depleting their own stores totally, third to make a complete study of their maladies until they were able to analyze themselves dispassionately, fourth, to help others afflicted with the same maladies, curing at least one person at the expense of their own precious light. Finally each person had to present a thesis advancing at least one new idea concerning the treatment or understanding of the disease.

As part of the preparation for birth, Paul is immersed in "pools of black light." When he awakens he

. . . had a heavy feeling of depression and confusion as if an actual burden had descended upon his shoulders, draining his strength and muddling his intellect.

"A familiar feeling of earthmen," answered the ego-worker, reading his thoughts. "You have been tinted with the prayers of your parents, with the longings for greater music which have been accumulating in the hearts of music-lovers for many years, with their fears and despairings. If these confuse you it is because some conflict with each other and others overlap. . . .

"What if I don't want to carry out some of these aspirations of others?"

"You must realize that nothing takes precedence over your free choice. That is the first law of the universe. I might as well tell you that many of the ingredients of your commissions are not honorable. . . . Those of your class — artists — are notoriously jealous, for instance, and the jealous, hateful thoughts and intents of your predecessors are now part of your burdensome cargo. Yet you need not obey those impulses; nothing is truly fixed or predetermined and if you can prevail against them, they will be killed forever."

Although some of these works in progress have been cited in greater detail than others, there is an exciting diversity in subject, form, and technique that is very healthy. It is also, no doubt, puzzling to publishers who recognize that nothing like these works has yet appeared in Mormon fiction and consequently find themselves at sea when they try to evaluate them. That is certainly one problem. But more important is the one with which we began this paper — the painfully clear message authors sometimes receive that their experiments and even their best efforts are not wanted or needed, that they may even be considered improper or dangerous.

No doubt it is some comfort to realize that few remember Maurine Whipple's critics while the novel itself remains exactly what it was, a milestone in Mormon literature. However, it is difficult to await the judgment of readers one or two generations away. Possibly the fact that Whipple produced no second work to match her first was the cost exacted for that initial success. If so, it is a price that we cannot afford, even for another landmark.

There is, however, an alternative to the thankless and usually joyless task of attempting to educate society to the point that it approves of one's creative work. Validation is important, but our fellow beings need not be the only source. I would suggest that we clearly separate the voice of the people from the voice of God. Most active Latter-day Saints and all of those whom I have quoted today have at one time made vows of consecration that include committing their talents to the work of building the kingdom of God. Normally, I believe, most Mormons assume that the kingdom is built through Church programs, and they have interpreted their vow as a commitment to respond to requests from the Church. But there is another way to look at it.

In the summer of 1982 at a gathering of women in Nauvoo, I had an experience that has made me think about that particular vow in a new way. Catherine Stokes, a black convert who is now Relief Society president in the Hyde Park (Chicago) Ward, related the experience of going to the temple for the first time. "I took my blackness with me," she said, "and that was part of what I consecrated." She told of the woman who assisted her in the initiatory ordinances, barely able to articulate through her tears, and apologizing at the end because she had not wanted her personal emotions to interfere with Cathy's experience. "But I've never had the privilege of doing this for a black woman before," she explained, "and I'm so grateful." Cathy reassured her, "That's all right. That's one of the things I can do for *you* that no one else in the temple today could do." As she summed up the experience, she added, "My blackness is one of the things that the Lord can use if he wants to." Apparently it has been a most successful collaboration.

Another woman in the same gathering expressed thanks to Cathy for sharing her blackness and to another woman for sharing her shyness. I realized then that I had always assumed that the Lord wanted only my strengths, my abilities, and my competencies. It had not occurred to me that qualities I considered to be unique idiosyncracies or even weaknesses might also be useful to him, and that I, in wrongful humility, was withholding them from consecration.

Although my writing abilities are not in the creative vein, I would like to suggest to those who have apologized for their talent, or wondered if they were damaging the Church by it, that they begin to consider that talent as a major part of what they have to consecrate to the Lord, understanding that perhaps his view of building the kingdom may include but may also go beyond a Mother's Day poem for the ward newsletter or a roadshow script. The altar is his. If we willingly lay our gift upon it, our only concern need be whether he accepts it.

If we were to extrapolate from the creations of our Father, we would note the diversity of the rivers, valleys, mountains, deserts, and seas, the patience with which his works unfold, the seeming wastefulness where individual parts are concerned yet the unity and harmony that characterize the whole. And above all, the creations of our Father are characterized by their productivity, by their fecundity. Truly, they bring forth and, in that bringing forth, have joy and rejoicing.

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Crying "Change" in a Permanent World: Contemporary Mormon Women on Motherhood

Linda P. Wilcox

Though leadership of a living prophet offers possibilities for both ongoing and dramatic change, Mormon society values permanence, order, and stability in this life and the next. "We do not need innovation," a member of the First Presidency said at a recent general conference (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 3 April 1983).

Women in the Mormon Church are encouraged toward traditional roles and attitudes that discourage personal, familial, and societal change. The ideal female role is that of a non-wage-earning wife and mother in a nuclear family where the husband is the provider and the woman's energies are directed toward her family, the Church, and perhaps community service. Exchanging or sharing sex roles — or any other blurring of traditional distinctions between the sexes — is frowned upon. A fear is often expressed that declassification would produce chaos and confusion, upsetting the orderly pattern and structure of the family and society.

Mormonism divides duties between "priesthood" for men and "motherhood" for women. Although men of all races were granted the priesthood in 1978 and there are voices saying, "First blacks, next women," Church leaders have not allowed that possibility in public statements. Priesthood authority not only governs all administrative and decision-making affairs in the Mormon Church but officiates at all crucial life-cycle experiences such as birth (blessing and naming of babies), baptism, ordination to priesthood offices, callings to other positions, marriage, and death. Some Mormon women are feeling anger

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This essay was awarded DIALOGUE'S *third place prize for Religious Issues, 1984.*

at not being able to function actively in such experiences, as expressed in the poem by Lisa Bolin Hawkins:

LET MY SISTERS DO FOR ME

If we must preserve our differences,
Then let my sisters do for me.
Let my sister tear my last resistance
From my mother's womb, let her
Cradle me and give me my name,
Let her baptize me and call me forth
To receive the Spirit, let her
Teach me of the world, let her
Ordain me to womanhood, let her
(She does wash, anoint and clothe)
Be my god beyond the veil, let her
Heal my sickness, hold my baby, be my friend.
Let her dig my grave, let her robe me,
Let her bless my empty bones.
If you will not have me for your sister,
Then let my sisters do for me.
And let me greet my Mother on the far shore.
(In Sillitoe 1980, 57)

But while radical changes in the position of women in the Mormon Church are not likely, change in general is inevitable — changes in society arising from the women's movement, politics, education, the economy; changes in family structure and dynamics; and changes within individual women. This paper will examine change and confrontation as expressed by women in recent Mormon literature. It will focus on motherhood as a crucial life-cycle experience, considered the equivalent of the priesthood which men hold, and elevated in Mormonism as woman's highest role. It also appears to be the only life-cycle event that, while theoretically optional, is not theologically optional for faithful Mormon women. Birth and death, puberty and aging (if one lives long enough) are the only universals. Marriage, divorce, and widowhood are not experienced by all women. But motherhood in some form is unavoidable.

A painting displayed in the Jordan River Temple in Salt Lake shows "An Eternal Mother" — a serene white-haired woman in a long white dress sitting motionless. From a surrounding mist emerge children, both living and unborn. Mormon theology posits a Heavenly Mother as well as a Father. All human beings are her spirit daughters and sons, having been born and having lived with her and the Father in a pre-existence before earth life. Her children will not only return to the presence of their heavenly parents after death but may also become godlike and produce billions of spirit children with which to people their own created worlds. Family ties on this earth will continue in the hereafter so that one is always a mother to one's children and a daughter to one's

earthly mother. Mothers will have the opportunity in the next life to raise children who die at an early age on earth. Women who never produce children on earth will be able to "adopt" children to raise in heaven and, if worthy, to bear spirit children of their own. Implicit in the theology is the idea that women contract in the pre-existence to provide bodies for the waiting spirits — which partially explains the Mormon Church's opposition to birth control and abortion.

Motherhood is thus not an elective choice but a duty and a mission — the main reason for a woman's existence. Those who are unable to bear children on earth, either for physiological reasons or because they are unable to marry, will have the opportunity (duty) in the hereafter. Motherhood is continuous and never-ending. No one in Mormon literature as yet discusses childlessness as a legitimate permanent choice. It is always viewed as a misfortune, deprivation, or even tragedy.

An experience as central to a Mormon woman's identity as motherhood gets much attention in the fiction, poetry, and personal essays they write. Most of the literature emphasizes the positive aspects of the role, the joy of nurturing and physical closeness, the pleasure of watching growth and learning. One of the more straightforward and refreshing essays, written by Jaroldeen Asplund Edwards about fourteen years ago, expresses a thorough delight in the joys of motherhood: "The glories of a new baby are beyond description. Hardly mortal! I revel in this tactile, subtle, exquisite and complex experience. One unexpected bonus of motherhood is the visual beauty. I am enchanted by the sights of my children, the tones of skin, the clear eyes, the grace, the curve of hand and cheek — to see them racing across the back lawn in a certain slant of light" (1971, 11). Though undoubtedly sincere, most such descriptions of the mothering experience tend toward overgeneralization, sentimentality, and romantic idealization.

But there is another side to the experience of being a mother. One woman wrote with surprise that "nothing had prepared me for the darker side of motherhood, the one that saps the mental, emotional and physical energy of a woman" (Pederson 1982, 193). The "darker side" of motherhood was not much in evidence in Mormon literature fourteen years ago. But many Mormon women are now experiencing some of the feminist "clicks" of the early '70s — a time lag of a decade or more.

One fear is that becoming a mother can mean a loss of control over one's life. Myrna Marler writes that when she married and became pregnant, "glimmerings of apprehension warned me then that my life had swung out of control, that the course I had set for myself was irreversible. I wanted the baby — of course I did — but now the choice was gone" (Marler 1982, 70). When her baby was six months old and her husband suggested they have another one, she agreed — not knowing how difficult her older child would become as a toddler nor what a demanding temperament her second child would have. "Besides," she says, "I wanted to show the Lord that I was willing to give and to give unstintingly. That sacrifice, I reasoned, would be in lieu of other adversities I hoped not to experience, a sacrifice certain to purify me for the

Celestial Kingdom. In a way I suppose I was bargaining with God: 'I'll have many children, just as I'm supposed to, if You'll keep death and disaster away' (Marler 1982, 73).

Being a mother also can create doublebinds and feelings of being cheated and trapped. "I realized," Jerrie Hurd writes, "that I had half believed my success (in the professional world) could only be bought by failure in the home, and since I was unwilling to fail at home, I hadn't expected to succeed. And at the same time, I felt cheated, trapped and unfulfilled by my nurturing role because I knew I was capable of more" (Hurd 1982, 141). Sonia Johnson has pointed out that the Mormon Church both promotes and rewards infantilism in women. Having a baby and being a mother is often an easy excuse not to complete one's education or develop talents and abilities in a sphere beyond the home. The theory many women believed was,

> If they never proved to themselves that they were capable, talented people, then they would have less frustration performing in roles that required them to be, in many important ways, both incapable and untalented. If these women never raised their expectations of life, never expected to have the excitement and feel the power of developing and using their minds and skills, then they would never feel thwarted or miserable. Only, it didn't turn out that way for most of them. (1981, 42).

Mormon women writers are expressing their fear that motherhood may be infantilizing to a woman and keep her immature. Myrna Marler tells how, as a young girl, she watched on a city bus

> . . . while a man talked endlessly to a little girl about her new dress, her new purse, and how her daddy was going to take her to the park. The mother beside her beamed as each lisping syllable dropped from her prodigy's mouth. Is this motherhood then, I asked myself, long days spent in the company of immature minds? At that moment I was aware of fear, fear that a good Mormon girl isn't supposed to have, a fear so alarming that I shoved it to the back of my mind and didn't examine it again until it was too late. (Marler 1982, 70)

In a short story by Marla Zollinger Russell, Taira notices one effect of her constant association with her one-year-old daughter April. "Since April had begun to say 'bye-bye,' 'momma,' and 'daddy,' Taira had lost some of her own vocabulary by prompting her daughter, in simple words, over the months to speak. Recently, as Jim and she left for a few groceries during April's nap, she said, 'Bye-bye house, see you,' and waved. Jim looked at her with his eyebrows in a question, and she pretended it was a joke, and felt very strange" (1981, 55).

Linda Sillitoe has noted that the frequent theme of creation in recent Mormon women's poetry more often expresses the idea of the child forming or at least fulfilling the mother, rather than the mother creating the child. Sillitoe believes that this reflects the reality of the authors' lives. "The child makes the woman a mother. Since motherhood is the most valued status women attain in our society, the child who achieves that for the mother is intrinsically powerful and valuable. The woman's worth is drawn from the child and is dependent on the child's future. No wonder there is such adulation of already endearing, eternal children. Again and again I read words to the effect, 'You, child give life to me' " (1980, 52).

What do Mormon women find frustrating and unfulfilling about their experience as mothers? Some of them are beginning to tell us clearly and specifically. One admits that she never dreamed her sweet baby would in time be able to infuriate her to the point of physical violence. Her children, as they grew, became — as she calls them — "brats":

> They whined, declared my dinners were yucky, and refused to take baths. Where I had envisioned a gathering around the piano in the evenings, they fought at the dinner table and threw themselves down hypnotized in front of the television set. They teased each other, poked each other, hit each other, twisted each other's ears, tattled on each other, and when in public, acted as if they had never even met. . . . My children are not achievers in school; they fight and hit each other and the neighbors, turn family outings into free-for-alls, don't take care of their possessions. . . . And so I walk around from church meeting to church meeting oppressed first by guilt and inadequacy, finally by resentment. (Marler 1982, 83–85)

A mother's strong feelings of responsibility and guilt regarding her children is a frequent theme in contemporary literature by Mormon women. Mothers feel more responsible than do fathers for the children — and they resent their husbands' relative nonparticipation while flogging themselves because of their children's failings or problems. The "Prodigal's Mother" in Elouise Bell's poem of that title takes all the responsibility for her son's waywardness upon herself but never loses hope. She works with a frenzy to keep her mind busy and asks her dearest friend the familiar question: Where did I fail?

> Sariah, oldest friend, no mock honey ever oozed from
> your lips,
> So tell me: where was I amiss?
> If only someone would tell me!
> This endless chasing after "maybe's"
> Like some dull ox chained to his round —
> I fear I will end by wandering the hills,
> A madwoman in shreds and shards!
> Maybe I didn't teach him well enough
> In earliest days, when he tugged about my skirts
> (Always crying for dates and figs, he was.)
> But goodness knows, I did my best!
> . . . .
> Tell me Sariah, I implore you!
> What did I *do*? What did I *not*? (1979, 522–24)

Several thousand years later a Mormon mother worrying about the "family presentation" her family is readying for a church meeting feels the same sense of responsibility and sadness:

> As our preparation for the program progressed, [her daughter wrote], my mother's anxieties increased. We still had only sixteen minutes worth of material, and she felt humiliated that the entire family wasn't participating. My brothers' indifference and my sister's vacillation toward the Church were all the more painful by the realization

> that, for all intents and purposes, it would be broadcast publicly. Two days in a row she dissolved into tears saying, "I'm a failure as a mother. Where did I go wrong?" All I could reply was, "You didn't. They did." (Saderup 1980, 114)

In a short story, "Prayer for Tommy: A Chant of Imperfect Love," Myrna Marler shows us the pressures on Sharon, the mother of Tommy — a "different" child, and subject to violent rages. Somehow her efforts to teach him just didn't "take" as they did with her other children. She wonders, "Was she a neglectful mother? Was the one soap opera she allowed herself every day a sin? It came on just before the kids got home from school so every day they found her sitting there watching the tube. Was that the sin that had done it?" (1981, 33) The neighbors dislike Tommy, her friends at Church tell her to "love him more," but Sharon continues to feel inadequate. Once after Tommy has confronted the family in an angry rage, Sharon feels overwhelmed by all of the demands on her. "Tommy was locked tight in his room, and her husband was leaving for a meeting, and her responsibilities continued, the dishes still not done, the laundry to fold and her Mutual books lying open on the desk, and Ronnie, the youngest of her six children, tugged at her pant leg." She feels anger at her husband when he gives what she considers cheap advice from a comfortable distance:

> "You worry too much," Gene had told her.
>
> "Well, somebody has to," she had snapped. "It's not you who has to go to teacher conference, apologize to the neighbors, or put up with his mouth."
>
> "Sharon, that's not fair."
>
> "Why isn't it fair?" she had demanded, knowing as she said the words she was attacking the whole structure of their Mormon lives — and maybe in that sense it wasn't fair. (1981, 32, 35)

Sharon is experiencing internal changes and wants some changes in her relationship with her husband and son. But she draws back when she realizes that adequate changes in her settled Mormon family pattern cannot be achieved without radically undercutting the entire structure. In the end she hopes that telling Tommy she loves him even when he is misbehaving might change him — if she never gives up. But the responsibility for dealing with the situation remains hers and remains within the set structure of her home and surroundings. No change in family roles, no change in society (church, school, neighbors) is available or viable to her.

Nor was any possibility of change available to the woman who wrote a letter describing the destructive effect which her compliant support of her husband in his church callings — instead of insistence that he help her with family responsibilities — had had on her own health and her relationship with her husband. Pregnant with her fifth child, she broke into tears when the apostle who called her husband to a high church position asked how she felt about it. She was assured that all would be well, for they were doing the Lord's work, but she realized then and later that it meant the loss of her husband, emotionally and spiritually.

> Now as I look back, I should have said in that interview, "I think you are making a mistake in asking my husband to take this calling. He has a more important calling —

> his children and his wife." I should have told my husband, "Look, I can't support you in this. I need you, the children need you. I can't raise five children all by myself. It is physically impossible." But I didn't say any of these things. I just sat there blubbering. I could see how much it meant to my husband to receive this call. He loved the recognition, the adulation of the people, the feeling that he was loved and needed by God to do His work here. I couldn't fight that. And I thought it was wrong for me to have such thoughts and so I tried to do what was "right" and accept the calling.
>
> Now, years later, it isn't any easier to talk to my husband about my feelings toward church authorities and even the church itself. Our children are all married, my husband now holds an even higher church position. And I, though not a typical Mormon matron — fat and harried looking — am not-quite-thin, and have chronic back trouble. We (the Mormon wives, whose children are raised) are all suffering physical problems. We are battling boredom, fatigue, and depression, and trying to figure out why we are so unhappy. (In Johnson 1981, 383–84)

These women, and many others, are confronting their realization that change is needed, but they either do not see a workable way to make the changes — or they see it too late. Rubina Rivers Forester's poem, "Mother Doesn't Feel Well," not only captures the sense of isolation and sole responsibility which Tommy's mother experienced but confronts the depressing truth that "nobody really cares":

Lord, my head aches,
Throbs press to the
pit of my stomach
drum, drumming
a melody of pain
And nobody cares.

Children gather
in the kitchen —
they mess, break, dirty,
and touch, touch, touch.

Lord, my head swirls,
Dizziness jellifies
my legs, arms, will.
And nobody cares.

Phone rings —
husband is safe
at work.

Lord, I feel nausea.
Waves suffocate me.
They will not spill out.
And nobody cares.

Children play outside.
They cry, fight, whine,
keeping me awake
with complaints.

I need sleep, Lord.
I cry like a baby
because I hurt,
I really hurt.
And nobody really cares.
(1982, 14)

One of the most common themes in the writing of Mormon women in the past few years is depression. The fiction contest sponsored by *Sunstone* a few years ago brought floods of stories dealing with the topic. This outpouring has possibly been influenced by a powerful TV documentary aired in Salt Lake in 1979 which brought vividly to the public consciousness an awareness that even "good" Mormon women who were keeping all the commandments and doing all they should were vulnerable to depression and were, in fact, experiencing it in what appeared to be near-epidemic proportions. While depression affects both single and married women, both mothers and non-mothers, a significant number of Mormon women wrote about depression related to their role as wife and mother.

The protagonist of Marla Zollinger Russell's "What Wondering Brings" is Taira, a young mother of one-year-old April. Taira is experiencing many symptoms of depression — fatigue, listlessness, not feeling connected to her surroundings, lack of self-discipline, and a tendency to overeat. She gobbles pie early in the morning and is too tired to pick up her daughter's messes during the day or do the dishes after dinner. She envisions her daughter choking on the leaves of a dying plant — leaves which she has not remembered to pick off. Taira does not understand "how she ever got to be twenty-three years old, married, and now a mother; it seemed to have happened while she was looking the other way." Once, seeing her own features in April's face, she "spontaneously wanted to throw April away, to get into the crib herself and begin over again" (1981, 55).

Kathy, in "Separate Prayers," becomes depressed even before becoming a mother, as her husband prods her about the issue of children and even uses it to wound her:

"Why don't you want children, Kathy?"
"I do want children. I just don't want them right now."
"Why?"
"I don't know why. Leave me alone."
"You and your father — you're so much alike."
"What do you mean by that?"
"I mean that neither of you has a gift for intimacy."
(Edwards-Cannon 1981, 35)

The depressed mothers in Linda Sillitoe's story "Demons" are seen through the eyes of Paul, a young Church leader assigned to visit them and help them. He sees women either deserted or patronized by husbands who do not help care for their numerous small children. Paul ascribes the women's condition to the presence of "evil spirits" — as evidenced by the "dark evil feelings" of

one woman who "seemed angry, even at us." Paul believes that "maybe if these girls would get out and run every day it would be good for them." He thinks of his own wife who jogs with him each morning, who still looks trim, and who manages her own three closely-spaced children beautifully. Yet Paul feels a fear that the demons may invade even his home, that the "disease" may be contagious: "He somehow felt that he brought defeat home with him, that even in his own shining house a rustle would follow him. Or sometimes from the corner of his eye, he would catch a furtive motion. He would have to be on guard, armored against the shadows" (1981, 43).

As Mormon women confront their feelings of frustration, guilt, and resentment as well as the possibility of external changes, the solutions in the literature are almost invariably worked out within a Mormon framework. Most of the women handle their situations with some combination of hope, acceptance, rationalization, and a basic reconciliation to the way things are. Tommy's mother Sharon decides not to risk toppling the traditional Mormon structure on which her relationship to her husband is built but to continue trying, by herself, to help her son. The mother with the bratty children says it's all worthwhile when a son hands her a valentine to comfort her when she cries or when another thanks her for a cut-up orange (Marler 1980, 76). A woman who with the help of her family begins juggling a professional life and outside interests with her motherly duties deals with her discomfort about feeling "selfish" by finally saying, "It isn't selfish. Think about it. Anyone who develops his or her talents will not only have a better self but better skills to share" (Hurd, 1982, 146).

These women cope within the stability of the Mormon framework of roles and attitudes, somehow finding ways to make everything fit into the mold. The women who don't — who experience depression or alienation — have until recently usually not written about it (unless they had overcome the problems by faith or perseverance) or they have in some ways ceased to be "Mormon" as their life styles and attitudes diverge from the accepted Mormon pattern. Sonia Johnson was a thoroughly Mormon woman who, when confronted with personal changes, broke the Mormon mold rather than accept its prescriptions. Her autobiography is the most graphic, weighty literary example of change and confrontation in the life of a Mormon woman to appear in the literature. A young TV cameraman said to her in surprise, shortly after her excommunication, "But you're just a mom!" She was indeed. Although intelligent, talented, and well-educated, Sonia focused her life on her role as wife, mother, and homemaker before her feminist awakening. She describes motherhood for her in the same straightforward way she records all her life-cycle experiences — puberty, marriage, divorce:

> As I slogged about in a fog of fatigue and postpartum depression, I found myself wondering why I had to bear this burden so alone. . . .
>
> In those first few months of motherhood, before I succeeded in stifling such "unnatural' thoughts, I wondered guiltily whether it was possible that I'd been deceived about motherhood's being the totally fulfilling activity the church and society assured me it was. It didn't take long to learn that this was indeed a myth for a good many women, if not for most.

> That didn't mean I didn't love my baby and find aspects of being a mother delightful. Though I chafed at the fulltimeness of it and at Rick's nonparticipation, I found Eric endlessly entrancing. (1981, 44)

Some years later in Palo Alto, with her husband spending most of his time working on computer programs, Sonia found herself "stuck at home with three small children and only the church for an outlet." She awoke one morning with stiff burning hands and painful joints. The diagnosis was acute rheumatoid arthritis, and the prognosis was poor. Sonia writes,

> I believe that all the frustrations and inchoate longings and boredom of that time, and the guilt at not being perfectly happy doing what the men of the church taught should make a woman perfectly happy — being a full-time wife and mother — all this negative energy turned inward, combined into a potent weapon, and attacked me. . . .
>
> It took me years to figure out that I may very well have given myself arthritis to punish myself for not being happy doing God's will. That I'd turned my body into a battlefield for my emotions. (1981, 48–51)

While her holistic understanding of the connection between mind and body came later, Sonia's only wish and prayer at the time was to be able to have the use of her hands long enough to raise her children.

Sonia's disappointment and resentment at her husband's lack of involvement and even avoidance of parenting responsibilities led her to question, in a way that Tommy's mother Sharon backed away from, the traditional assumptions behind the structure of the Mormon family:

> Though I had been left the usual childhood and family residue, too, as we all have, the difference between us was that I knew I was responsible for those kids. The church and society had told me so often enough. I knew I couldn't fail, because if I did, no one would come in and pick up the pieces. He knew he could fail, because I'd be there, finally responsible, to take care of things. The patriarchal notion of the mother's doing the nurturing and the father's making the rules kept him an adolescent parent. . . .
>
> Before we can solve the ills of society, we must reorganize parenting. Let the patriarchs of the New Right, who are so concerned about the "family," start taking their share of the responsibility as parents, in keeping the family emotionally secure and united and educating other men to do the same instead of blaming women, who are seldom in positions to make policies that would lift pressures from families. (1981, 209)

Sonia recognized that personal change on the part of mothers alone will not solve the problems inherent in motherhood as Mormon (and Western) culture has institutionalized it. Changes in family patterns of parenting are imperative and certainly helpful. But she went further and pointed out the necessity of societal change on a sweeping scale as well:

> Men own and rule the world. They are the heads of government, the presidents of corporations, the presidents of universities. They are the ones who could, if they cared about families, reorganize society so families could flourish. If they really want someone home when children come home from school, for instance, or someone to take decent care of the little ones during the day, they have the power to institute scheduling flexible enough that at least one parent can be on hand, or see to it that there is good child care available.
>
> To insist that *women* — the powerless, the economically dispossessed of the world — bear total responsibility for child care, and therefore are to blame if families

> are in trouble, is cruel nonsense. How would men like to be faced with the dilemma of full-time work and full-time parenting and *full blame when things go wrong*? I lay the blame for the disintegration of family life squarely at the feet of *men*. They are the only ones who can do anything about it on any scale that would be helpful to families, *and they are not doing it*. (1981, 209–10)

These ideas are not particularly new, but to Mormon society they were radical and potentially revolutionary. Eventually Sonia's questioning of the Mormon church pattern extended to the familiar "motherhood-priesthood" division and even beyond. In noting the fear and avoidance her male leaders exhibited about anything concerning the doctrine of a Mother in Heaven and their slowness and reluctance to let women pray in meetings, she writes,

> If I was excommunicated for not respecting the priesthood enough (meaning the men), then why shouldn't bishops be excommunicated for not respecting "the motherhood" enough (meaning the women)? After all, the Mormons make much of motherhood. Motherhood is supposed to make up for not having anything else. . . .
>
> A question I often wanted to ask the leaders of the Mormon church but never got the chance is, "If motherhood is really so revered and so wonderful and is truly the equivalent of priesthood — why can men who not only do *not* hold the priesthood but are not even *members of the church* stand in the circle when their children or grandchildren or other relatives are blessed, whereas the mother, though she may have been a devout and worthy member of the church all her life, cannot?" This speaks eloquently of the divinity of maleness in and of itself, which is the basis of patriarchy. Priesthood is merely a smoke screen to hide this fact. (1981, 248)

Sonia Johnson, though now outside of the Mormon Church, went unwillingly at the time and still claims that it made her much of what she is. While Mormon women are beginning to write about motherhood with more realism, directness, and honesty, few of them move beyond a tentative examination of the "darker" side to question their society's structure, attitudes, and practices concerning motherhood. Most seem to feel that any problems women experience in their feelings or roles as mothers arise mainly from their own inadequacies and shortcomings, or they only hint at inadequacies elsewhere in the system. Sonia Johnson's careful detailing of her own radical internal changes shows us that there is still much change that is needed — within marital relationships, Church prescriptions, and societal structure — to support individual women's personal changes. Her book is valuable to Mormon literature for revealing the processes that shaped one devout Mormon woman, the agony of personal change, and the dissonance and upheaval that resulted when she made internal change jarringly visible in a conservative society that values permanence, order, harmony, and obedience.

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William B. Smith: The Persistent "Pretender"

Paul M. Edwards

William B. Smith was a difficult man. Like so many who feel denied power and recognition, he was probably best described as being his own worst enemy. Certainly he could not be stereotyped as the typical patriarch — rather a fire-eating, blistery sort of a character who reveled in his bad temper, often confused stubbornness with correctness, and found that life was best lived as a battle. Yet his life seemed to have been centered in the Church and identified with the role that was his only briefly. Called to the office of patriarch on the death of Hyrum, his older brother, he held that office with vigor, with dedication, and with considerable belief in the purpose and validity of the calling. He spoke of this belief in several of his blessings. Typical is this statement from his 1845 blessing to Irene U. Pomery:

> This blessing shall serve unto thee in all things as a father's blessing according to the flesh, and even more for it is given by him who is appointed a father to the fatherless and Patriarch over the whole church of Christ. This therefore will seal upon thee a greater blessing and power than any other could give as this office by the power of the priesthood legally holds the right of administering all blessings; and of the presidency over all the Patriarchs in the church of God at this present time . . . upon thy head I seal the blessing of eternal salvation with an irrevocable decree. (Blessing Book, 1845)

For William Smith his continual concern over the patriarchate was more than a case of William wanting to hold office. In a larger sense it dealt with William's desire to be someone of authority, a person on whom the responsibility of the movement could rest, at least in part. There were other questions, many of them related to his concern about the nature of the church — whatever variety he might be associated with at the moment — a view that was amazingly consistent through numerous trials and responses. In addition there was the question of recognition as a loyal "founding member" and the lesser, but significant, financial question.

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Born in Royalton, Vermont, on 13 March 1811, he was younger by six years than his brother the martyred prophet. Working with Joseph and Hyrum during the organization, he was ordained first a teacher, then an elder, and a high priest in 1833. In 1835 he was called to the Quorum of Twelve. His relationship with Joseph appears to have been good, though one could not call it excellent. William had the habit of saying what was on his mind, and as a very active and concerned man, he was often in the midst of controversy.

William was away from Nauvoo when Joseph and Hyrum were killed by the mob at Carthage. Shortly thereafter, in September 1844, Brigham wrote to William:

> . . . as it regards a patriarch for the whole church there has not been any appointed yet in the place of Brother Hyrum and I do not calculate to do anything but what is strictly according to the mind and will of God; the right rests upon your head there is no doubt that all will remain as it is until we have further connections from you . . . but [if you] feel to have it yourself we wish you to come to Nauvoo as soon as possible to receive your ordination as Patriarch. (*Prophet*, 9 Nov. 1844)

In his response to Brigham Young dated 16 October 1844, William indicated pleasure at the letter and willingness to accept (Young Collection). His calling would seem to have assured him a place in the hierarchy of the movement.

William, however, did not fit well with the authorities of the Church. Again, his outspokenness, his less than loyal expressions, were to cause serious unrest. William seriously questioned the legal rights of the emerging presidency; and at the October 1845 conference, Elder Parley P. Pratt suggested he should not be allowed to remain in the Twelve "until he thinks different from what he does now." Pratt called William "an aspiring man" (History 3:32); William would later suggest it was a matter of conviction. It was probably both.

William Clayton had also expressed concern about William's attitude in his journal, 23 May 1845: "William Smith is coming out in opposition to the Twelve and in favor of Adams. The latter has organized a church at Augusta, Iowa Territory with young Joseph Smith for President, William Smith for Patriarch. . . . There is more danger from William Smith than from any other source, and I fear his course will bring us much trouble." The feeling about William Smith must have been highly negative for William was not sustained as an apostle and, on the same day, was rejected in his role as Patriarch to the Church.

Following his excommunication from the Church in 1845 Wliliam made numerous attempts to regain recognition or associate with one of the other bodies emerging in the confusion. In March 1846 he sent letters which reaffirmed his position and petitioned both the Twelve and James Jesse Strang. To Strang he made lightly veiled promises and to the Twelve provided claims and demands. Failing to get a response from the Twelve, he launched a series of efforts to establish an organization among those who had disaffected from the group that later went to Utah, suffering in the process a number of setbacks that would have trampled the ego and ambition of a lesser man.

There is no doubt William felt strongly the need to preserve the Church as he understood it. But there certainly must be some cause for wonder about his determination, as it appeared, to seek leadership of whatever organization emerged. The reasons for his failure to accomplish these goals are many, and support for any one of them would depend on one's convictions about the eventual outcome of the various movements. But one reason seems to be fairly obvious. William had many of the dreams, much of the conviction,.and probably some of the understanding of Joseph or of Brigham Young. But he lacked the charisma necessary to capture the loyalty of those he sought to lead. He seemed to be able to attract their attention but not to sustain their commitment.

Just sixteen years to the day after Joseph had organized the Church, William accepted an apostolic position under the charismatic James Jesse Strang. He was acknowledged as the Patriarch as well. He demonstrated no real ability to survive under Strang's leadership, however, and was expelled from this fellowship in 1847. He joined with Isaac Sheen at Covington, Kentucky, for awhile but failed there as well. He preached for the Baptist church in New York but he resigned that post just ahead of a trial for heresy. In 1852, he was rebuked because of his "pretensions" for assuming his right to lead the Church in his own stead, or as guardian of his young nephew (Briggs 1893, 208). His efforts to start a church in Binghamton, Illinois, near Amboy in October 1851 was no more successful than the other had been.

William's point of view was well stated in Philadelphia on 10 January 1848 where he met with members of the original church. During that conference, the body passed a resolution stating that the Church had fallen into iniquities. Basic to a church free from such contentions, they proclaimed, was an organization which conformed to that created by Joseph, primarily a presidency being called by revelation. They contended that they had received such a revelation in 1847 calling William to lead the people, and the people to follow him. It commanded William to: "take the place of my servant Hyrum Smith, thy brother, as Patriarch unto the whole church, and to preside over my people, saith the Lord your God, and no power shall remove thee there from, and thou shalt be the prophet, seer, revelator, and translator unto my church during the minority of him whom I have appointed from the loins of Joseph" ("True Succession," 701).

The editors of the 28 July 1909 *Saints Herald*, in which this was reported, did not see fit to challenge this attempt but saw it as one more evidence that the church was called to wait for Joseph III. No comment was made about William's continued designation of himself as patriarch.

In the early 1850s William made another serious attempt to become reconciled with Brigham Young — or at least to assume his old position among the church leaders. On 8 August 1853, he wrote to Brigham: "You President Young are not ignorant of the matter as they now stand or exist between us. When Joseph was alive difficulties in the Church (if any there were) could be settled upon just and amicable terms to all parties concerned and I am not informed of the fact President Young that the same things cannot be done now altho changes have taken place and others have the rule stand at the head of the people."

This approachable statement was, however, coupled with a more assertive appraisal of his situation as he understood it:

> As it regards the Patriarchial office I submitted to your Council and that of the Twelve in respect to this ordination this however was not a matter of my own seeking consequently I do not feel that am so much to blame as to the [results]. It was upon your assurance President Young at the time of the ordination took place that no infringement should be considered upon my rights of office [as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ] that I consented to receive the ordination.

William recalls as a matter of deep concern that he was to receive a copy of the ordination but that he had not seen it. He observed that he could not see the wisdom or the rules involved in taking a man who already was an apostle and "ordaining him to an office in the church, that in conjunction with his brethren of Twelve he held jurisdiction over previous to his being ordained" and suggests that it was a "sly game and an imposition had been imposed upon me — under the laws of the Council to silence me from my office as one of the Twelve — for purposes best known to themselves." William takes the occasion to reaffirm his position in fairly strong terms:

> I shall never submit willingly to suffer the disgrace of a wrong. I have never [considered] nor am I willing to relinquish claims that justly belong to me in the Church and Kingdom of God. Such a sacrifice would be dearer to me than life itself. Nor do I believe that if Joseph were *alive* and occupying the Presidency of the Church that he would do me the *first* particle of *injustice* in relation to this affair. And now *President* Young, I appeal to you to look into this matter and if a reconciliation — or a settlement of our long standing difficulties can be had — upon *honorable* principles in regard *to all parties concerned I want that it should be done.*

Williams ends his appeal in the name of Christ and as the last member of the Smith family, recognizing that the salvation of thousands everywhere — "sheep without shepherds" — depends on Brigham's acceptance of the epistle. He then signs the letter "William Smith Apostle and Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints."

These attempts proved unsuccessful and two years later, on 7 May 1855, he wrote to Brigham Young again, this time sending it in the care of Elder James Colburn "one of the Old Pioneers of the Church." William acknowledged that previous attempts had been unable to close the gap between them and he reaffirmed his position in the same manner — almost in the same words — as previously. There is a soft acknowledgment as well of his own outspokenness:

> I was not to blame but the affect was all the same to me as it produced the excitement and created the fear and as a matter of course as many men would have done under the same circumstances I have published and said a great many things which can all be [settled] when I am within [a] place that will enable me to do it with honor [both] to yourself and the Church. (Young Collection)

As late as 1860 William was still making an effort to create a bond with Salt Lake City. Brigham Young's office journal of 14 May 1860 reports a conversation with Albert Carrington, later his counselor, in which Carrington read a letter from William Smith expressing a desire to come to the valley and be

restored in his former association. The letter suggested that William had been rebaptized. Young says this was confirmed by a second letter, from a J. J. Butler, who had performed the baptism.

Time was to work against William, however, and when young Joseph accepted his position as leader of the Reorganization it was increasingly apparent there would be no role for William if it was not in the Reorganization. He did not agree quickly but in 1868 shared some of his feelings about Mormonism with the young nephew: "And, least some of your adherents might think that I am swinging for a place in the New Organization, I would inform them that I am satisfied perfectly with my present position; and should I hereafter seek a change in my locality as to a connection with any religious class of professor, I think I could suit myself better than to unite with any class of Latter Day Saints or Mormons that I have knowledge of at the present" (Smith, Letterbooks, 16 Oct. 1868).

In a letter to Joseph III four years later, however, he seems to have softened a little and asserted his belief that young Joseph was the head of the Church:

> I feel it a duty that I owe to the old time Saints and for the good of the cause of Zion abroad, to say to you and to all whom it may concern, that I am not a leader of any class of Mormons whatsoever; and that I do most cordially endorse the Reorganization; and further stated now, as I always have done from the time of the great apostasy in 1844 and 1845, that the legal presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints belongs of right to the oldest son of the martyred prophet, Joseph Smith, who was the first prophet of the church, and the called of God. (History 3:719)

This letter was signed Patriarch and was published as such in the *Saints Herald* in December 1872.

Although no immediate response from Joseph III has been located, he wrote just after the new year, carefully acknowledging William's desire to be involved with the Reorganization — a desire William had not stated — and indicated he had no difficulty with the possibility of "recognition of your office as High Priest, the highest grade known to the Melchisedec priesthood, and carrying with it the right to officiate in every ministerial office in the church. Therefore I am ready to recognize you publicly in this office, at once; leaving the question of apostleship, and patriarchate, to be settled subsequently as the necessity of the case may demand, wisdom direct, or the spirit command." Feeling that William might well push for more, Joseph adds: "The temper of the church is well known to me, better than it has been possible for you to know it . . . and to attempt to urge anything further than this at the start will not meet with success" (Smith, Letterbooks, Jan. 1873).

William apparently took no immediate steps concerning this limited but firm offer. There must have been some continued correspondence during this time for Joseph III mentions in his *Memoirs*: "It is not my purpose to follow in detail these movements of my Uncle William before he finally turned to us, for the facts are recorded in current history, but I refer to them to show the liberal attitude of the Reorganization toward those who had once been members under Joseph and Hyrum . . . regardless of what bypaths may have attracted them in the interim" (1979, 184).

In 1878 Joseph III invited his uncle to attend the conference at Plano, Illinois. When he came, he was made welcome in the Smith home and they engaged in what must have been some long and very serious conversations. Their content has been lost, probably forever; but as Joseph III reported them they centered around these differences: William demanded that he be received into the Reorganization on the basis of his former membership — without rebaptism — and that he retain his standing as an active member of the Quorum of Twelve. In addition, he wanted the new church to recognize his several attempts to preserve the essence of the movement. Joseph's response reaffirmed his offer to receive William on his original baptism but withdrew his previous offer of High Priest standing. Priesthood would have to be determined by the conference. Joseph also stressed that whatever work William had done to bring the Church together would need to be examined carefully by the Church and would be evaluated in terms of its nature, its quality, and its value (1979, 184).

Writing in January 1878 Joseph offered an observation that may well be taken as a threat or a challenge: "Besides this, you are now well advanced in years, the time for you to have attempted an organized resistance to the Reorganization if ever contemplated by you, is past and now is your golden opportunity to throw the power of your mind and the influence of your name into the scale in favor of the work for which honorable place is rapidly being made." While assuring William that he has no enemies in the Church — perhaps a few personal ones may exist — Joseph goes on to complete his veiled threat:

> The prestige of my father's name belongs to me; hence could not be wrest from me by any one. My personal influence at home and abroad is good and any attempt to divide or antagonize would either prove altogether fruitless or at most would only result in distrust, bitterness, and ultimate failure; as, it would take longer time to complete the work of disproving the position I have assumed than you have to spare. But as there is no disposition upon our part to refuse you what we may legitimately grant, we shall look for an honorable acceptance and a complete affiliation at no distant day. (Letterbook, 12 Jan. 1878)

The two do not appear to have reconciled these differences by the time that the conference began, nor during the opening days. William kept pressure on Joseph to support his unqualified reception; but Joseph held his ground, determined not to "recognize, endorse, or approve any such work until a full knowledge of the facts concerning it, frankly presented and thoroughly canvassed, should warrant us in doing so" (J. Smith 1979, 185). At this point William had a change of mind if not of heart, or at least became aware that he was not going to change Joseph's position. On the third day, he authorized Joseph to recommend his baptism and a select committee was appointed by Joseph to investigate and to report back to the conference on its wisdom. Consideration was also given to his acceptance into the high priesthood based on his ordination to apostolic office. This, Joseph suggests, seemed to satisfy William.

The committee recommended that

> said Wm. B. Smith be so received as a member, and upon the rule long since obtained and acted upon by the Reorganization, namely, that 'it is a matter of conscience' upon

> the part of the individual as to his being rebaptized when once it is shown that he has received a legal baptism, of which we have satisfactory evidence namely, that said William B. Smith was baptized by Oliver Cowdery in the early days of the church. (History 3:212)

On the next day a resolution was adopted "that we recognize Wm. B. Smith, received into the fellowship yesterday, as a high priest, and request that his name be enrolled among the Quorum of High Priests" (History 3:212). This was done.

William was not totally satisfied, nor did it end the discussion. In less than a year, Joseph was to write to William: "So far as the Patriarchy of the church is concerned, there will probably be but one opinion concerning where it goes, when the question is brought up before the church — I believe that opinion to be in your favor. At a propitious time it will be presented and disposed of." But Joseph adds an interesting sort of "don't call me I'll call you" ending: "There is nothing likely to arise at the April conference necessitating your presence, that I know anything about . . . and suggest you spend neither time nor money to come but rather continue your work in Hamilton, Missouri" (Letterbook, 20 Feb. 1879).

William accepted his work as a missionary with vigor, but nothing about his demeanor suggested that he was giving up his desire to be recognized as the patriarch of the Reorganization. He would not forsake discussions of church structure and brought it up wherever he went. There was concern among Church leaders about William's determination to affirm the office itself. Apostle Jason Briggs voiced concern about this to his friend, fellow member of the Quorum, and bishop, William Kelly, in a letter dated 6 March 1881: "What do you think of the pipe laying to spring a patriarch upon us? And what a speciman." And he calls the office a "wart upon the ecclesiastical tree, unknown in the Bible, or Book of Mormon," while expressing a desire to eradicate it.

In March 1881 William wrote to the *Herald* in response to some questions raised about the role of the patriarch. From the revelation of 1841, he stated, we learned not only of Hyrum's call and the right of the Patriarch to preside over all other patriarchs, but

> that this office of Patriarch is an office that belongs in the Church of Christ; and that whosoever is appointed to fill the place left by the death of Hyrum Smith will hold the right to the same presiding authority. . . . Joseph, inherited the patriarchate by lineal descent from Jacob who was the father of the twelve patriarchs; and from father Joseph Smith, the patriarchal office was given, as the revelation of 1841 declares, by blessing and by right, for such is the order of this evangelical priesthood handed down from father to son. . . . It is the duty of the First Presidency to select and ordain the Patriarch, that is to fill the space left vacant by the death of Hyrum Smith. (1881, 82)

In the same article he admits to concerns and interest about this office, stating that he cannot rest until "this Church of Christ be clothed upon as a bride adorned for her husband. Not until she is organized in her perfection, with all the gifts and officers made complete in the church."

Joseph apparently held off a reply until March of the following year when the pressure not only of the *Herald* article, but of William's pending biography

of Church leaders, again caused the prophet/president unrest. Fearing, perhaps, that William would, in his usual manner, undermine the efforts that had been made to remain unassociated with polygamy, Joseph wrote:

> I have long been engaged in removing from father's memory and from the early church, the stigma and blame thrown upon him because of polygamy; and have at last lived to see the cloud rapidly lifting. And would not consent to see further blame attached, by blunder now. Therefore uncle, bear in mind our standing today before the world as defenders of Mormonism from Polygamy, and go ahead with your personal recollections of Joseph and Hyrum.

Pointedly, he also instructs his aging uncle to remember selectively: "If you are the wise man I think you to be, you will fail to remember anything, [but] referring lofty standard of character at which we esteem those good men. You can do the cause great good; you injure it by vicious sayings." He also suggests caution about the financial outcome: "Pecuniarily I have no confidence in you working anything out of it; though, if the right sort of enterprising men got hold of it, and would divide it with you there would be a degree of money in it" (Letterbook, 11 March 1882).

William continued in his dual concern both trying to restore the Patriarchy and to serve. But by 1888, he was seventy-seven years of age, was slowing down, and had to report to conference that his activities had been extremely limited for the past two years because of serious illness.

At this point the tone of his letters begins to change. He was living with his wife in Osterdock, Iowa, on a pension of $42 made available every six months by a government "grateful for his military service." But he had little else, and he frequently appeals for funds.

William found it increasingly difficult to repair his home which he felt he must maintain for "the work" in order to impress people and enhance the reputation for the Church. In early September 1891 he wrote to Bishop Kelly:

> The mention of a warming stove is greatly needed for a spare room and comfort for the labouring brethren while here at work as well as for myself. But if this mention of a warming stove is not in place you can judge from my condition of health what is wanted. . . . I hope I have not asked too much. I will submit the matter for your thoughts. I am making a bold stand here and am anxious to keep up in all appearances both be for the credit of my name and the cause I wish to sustain if then you think I have asked too much in my present needs please send in what in your judgment you think best whether much or little it cannot be a miss. You see the situation I am in and the needs.

By the 15th of the same month, he wrote again. "Now brother this letter is a letter of inquiry to know what province you may have under Church rule to consider my case and to know if its possible for you to aid me still further in supply of my wants . . . The $25.00 you did send was a god send and I cannot be too thankful for the help."

On 15 October he found opportunity to write a long and appealing letter on a brown paper sack. It is nearly covered with descriptions of hard work, long endurance, and need:

> In the mission field I notice of late that a certain amount of means is set apart for the support of the families of Elders who labor and expenses paid on the cars to the

> field assigned them. . . . Is it not lawful to ask are we not all brethren of the same faith and then again may we not ask who is it that stands next to the oldest claim in the church for either moral growth or for an amount of labor done in planting the standard of this latter day work . . .

William discussed these trials and asked: Who helped remove the tar from Joseph Smith? Who stood guard for long hours to protect Joseph Smith's life? Who was driven from his home and forced to move from place to place in the name of the church, sleeping on the ground and in tents, to do the work of the Lord in Iowa and Illinois? He closed the letter by telling Bishop Kelly that "I think it due me that you place a salary on my family of eight dollars per month."

Just what William expected the Church to do is not really clear in these early letters. It does seem obvious that he saw himself as one who should be taken care of. On 2 May 1892 he wrote again to Bishop Kelly: "I have already as you well know in the history of the church sacrificed hundreds of dollars that now in my old age ought to be in ready hand for my support and protection in life and in health."

Sick most of the time, unable to cut wood, low on supplies and with a sick wife as well, he wrote again 2 February 1893 to Bishop Kelly:

> Brother, I want the church to grant me some compensation for the woman's help — these three years of my sickness. I am fully aware that if the Church as a body knew my present condition of both finance and health during this terrible winter that I do not think that their gifts of charity would be simmered down to the small mention of a five or a ten dollar check . . . William Smith's name gets to be such small potatoes that his name in the church is only worth a small check of five or ten dollars check when almost on a dying or sick bed. I think Brother a check of a twenty five dollar bill would look more humanity-like towards a brother in my present condition.

There are a good many letters asking for money, usually a specific amount, which he apparently does not get. His pattern was to write two to three times begging, after justifying the funds by the work that he was doing in the field. He tried a wide variety of appeals — his sickness, his age, and how he needed the money for when church missionaries were staying with him. Then, after receiving no response he would get angry and write a letter like the one just quoted. On several occasions small sums were sent, but it is not clear if these came from the official coffers or from the private funds of Kelly or others.

In October 1892 he begins his last series of letters, all to Bishop Kelly, dealing with his views concerning the patriarch. These are both more pointed and more rambling, perhaps the product of an aged mind. He refers to these last letters as "the odds and ends and for the garbage." On 7 October 1892 he wrote:

> A three first presidency is in pattern of both the old and new church under Joseph the Seer of 1830 . . . but where is the pattern now in that form full and complete . . . The young prophet has not stepped up upon the high key note when there is one link gone in the chain. Then there is the patriarchal office the seed of which was sown in the church among all the prophets, a seed that was planted and in the church of 1830 this seed like topsey growed. My nephew is lame on some of these points, the Church under him is not yet perfect in organization fearfulness and jealousy keeps the organization imperfect.

Just ten days later on 17 October, he again affirmed his loyalty, asserting: "As to the Reorganized Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints I am fully in accord. This is not saying however, that so far as its present organization is concerned that their will not be any new amendments added in the course of time."

On the 23rd, he made another point:

> The Patriarch is not hereditary by lineage, it is an office gift like that of wisdom, or the gift of discerning of spirits, it is an office that can be bestowed at any time by revelation out of respect to the name of the patriarchal fathers not as a lineal claim.... Hyrum's children and sons have forfeited all claims to any legitimate office of priesthood ever held by their father from the fact of both apostasy and 2ndly from never having been ordained nor appointed to such office.

He takes several pages in this letter to expound about the Utah Mormons, suggesting that Joseph III might have been reluctant to add a patriarch because of the misuse of the office by the Mormons: "There is a time when charity ceases to be a virtue, and the time I think has passed long time ago and if the Reorganization Church will omit one office to drop from the Church because of the disease these Salt Lake Mormons [have] brought upon any one office of the Church . . . then why not the Reorganized Church drop all and everything named in the order of the ordaining offices." He concluded: "I am done with this subject . . . hoping that times may change and crack open some of these hard nuts, I am writing and hoping for the possibility I may live to see the change."

Just a month before William's death, Joseph wrote to him concerning polygamy. Aware of the potential of William's testimony, he asked again for "evidence" that his father was innocent of the charge of polygamy.

> Now, if you will make a statement in writing before a magistrate in respect to the fact that at no time in father's lifetime, or during your connection with the Twelve, either before, or after father's death was there a revelation presented or read to the quorum, instituting, or sanctioning spiritual wifery, plural marriage, or polygamy, by Joseph Smith, or any other officer of the Church, or other person, if such is the truth, I will greatly prize it, and use it only as occasion may demand. (Letterbook, 26 Oct. 1893)

William had provided such a statement before and was willing to do so again in an undated missive that ran to several pages: "Neither your father nor any member of the Quorum of the Twelve ever said anything to me about a plural marriage revelation either before or since your father's death up to the time of my separation from the Quorum which took place in September 1845." Yet he specified his belief that the doctrine was rampant in the Church:

> I became convinced that the plural marriage doctrine was taught and practiced in Nauvoo by the Brigham party, Taylor, Kimball, Richards, Brigham, E[rastus] Snow and others and so notorious did the doctrine become that the houses of these apostates was constantly thronged with the sealed wives of these men and such were the evidences of the fact that there was no disputing it and from the consistent affirmations of A. B. and C. that your father had taught and practiced the doctrine I had well nigh become a convert to the doctrine. (Mss. F 2311, p. 13)

In the next few months William grew weaker and the letters fewer, yet the convictions remained strong. Shortly before his death, he spoke with E. C. Briggs reaffirming his concern for, his belief in, and his love of his nephew as the president and prophet of the Reorganization (*Ensign*, 13 Jan. 1894). He died on 18 November 1893.

Richard Howard, in his study included in *The Patriarch*, makes the astute comment that Joseph III was "probably trying to manifest kindness toward his Uncle William in declining to comment on the patriarchate. He chose silence as the most effective way to convey the fact that this matter was really not open, as far as William's claims were concerned" (1978, 28). I agree, but there is more to the matter than this. Joseph was not unwilling to state his case fairly plainly and did so on several occasions. What he was not willing to do was to bring the issue to a conclusion. On numerous occasions, some mentioned here, Joseph gave the impression that perhaps something could be done in the future. Because he chose not to act, we can only conclude that he wished the issue to remain open. The available evidence indicates that Joseph began to give serious consideration to the idea of ordaining a patriarch just after the death of the "pretender." Within three years, Joseph called his brother Alexander to that position; but Alexander's own comment established that new information about the office or its calling did not prompt his action: "I knew so little about those duties, I did not know where to begin. . . . I consulted with President Joseph Smith and learned that he was nearly as much in the dark in the matter as I" (Minutes 1900, 166–67).

Perhaps too much is made of William's desire to be patriarch to the Reorganization. Certainly, too little is made of his concern for the nature of the office. Either way one must give some consideration to the paradoxical nature of William's stand, for he was apparently willing to drop the apostleship conferred upon him by his brother Joseph in favor of maintaining the role of patriarch brought to him through Brigham Young, a man William had continuously proclaimed as an illegal president. It may well be that it was necessary to develop a lineal justification for that which he had received without "authority."

It should be noted as well that William's view on the Church and on the office of the patriarch were primarily accepted, though he was argued with during most of his association with the Reorganization. Brigg's efforts to do away with the office failed. However, William's efforts to identify the office as one of lineage also failed. To what extent his views on the office were determined by his desire to be accepted as leader and father of the Church and to what degree his association was based on financial need will never really be known. What is known is that William felt that the Church and its people really owed him something for what he had done. He felt that they should acknowledge him, support him, and to an extent, follow him. In this endeavor, he had mixed success: he was never officially recognized for the years of effort put into the "dark days" but he was recognized, nearly revered, by the people as one of the "old timers" and as the brother of the Prophet.

Some assume he was power hungry, others that he was an opportunist; yet he always held himself as regent, not king, and saw his eventual contribution as

father-patriarch not president-prophet. His own needs and frustrations may have often overshadowed his contribution, but he did aid in the preservation not only of the organization, but the office.

Perhaps the best that can be said are words he penned himself back in 1845 when the trouble was just beginning: "God knows I wish to do right and to see the church prosper, to this end I have labored for years. My only desire now is that my friends be calm and devote their minds to the cultivation of the spirit of kindness; to do good to all, to deal justly, and to love mercy" (W. Smith, 1845).

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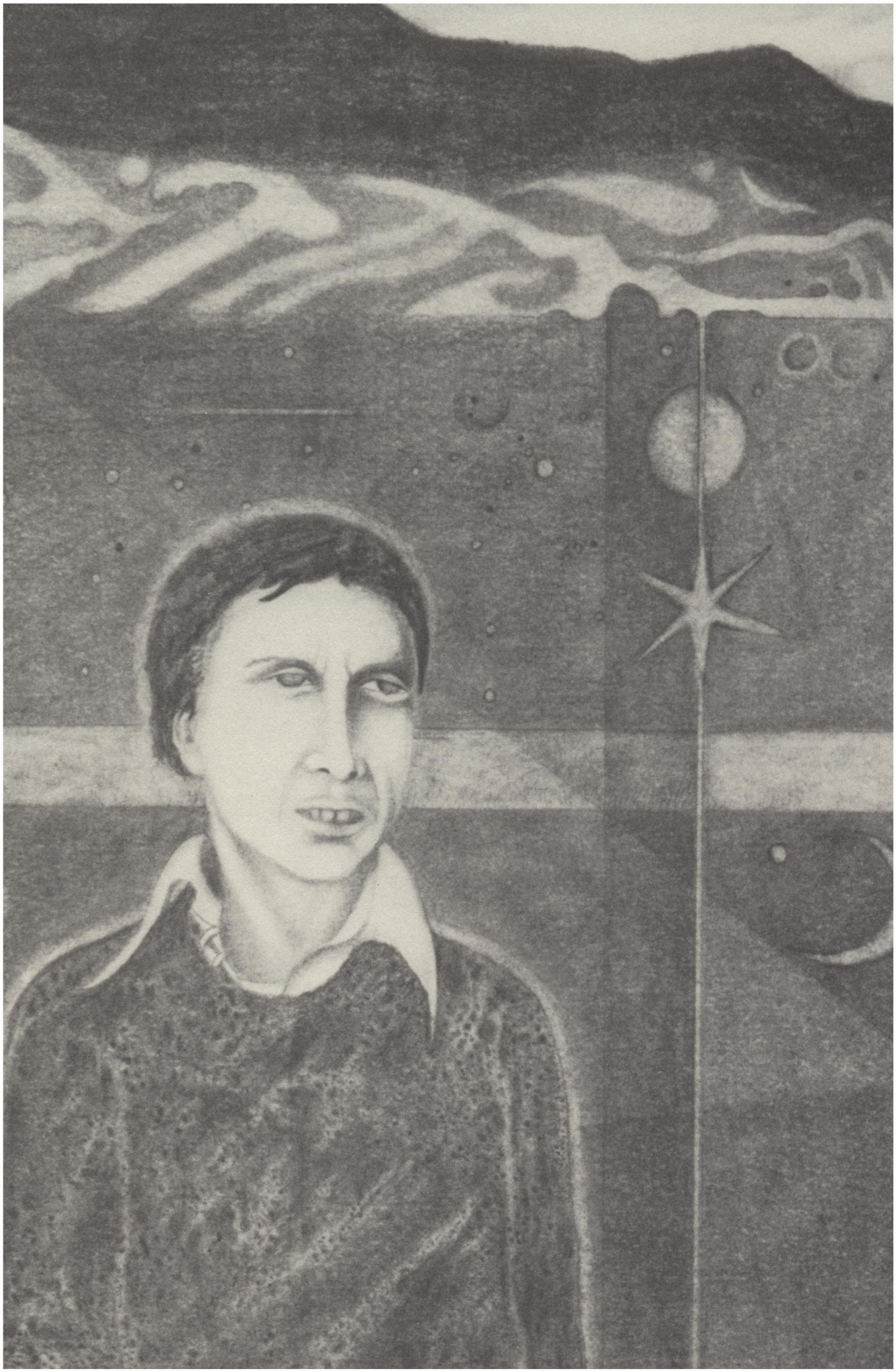

The Ward Teacher

Edward A. Geary

On the first Sunday after my fourteenth birthday, I was given the responsibility to watch over the Church and see that all the members did their duty, and also to prevent iniquity, hardness with each other, lying, backbiting, and evil speaking. It was a big assignment. Fortunately, I was not alone. All the other boys in town were also ordained teachers at fourteen. And even as deacons for the two preceding years we had had a duty to warn, expound, exhort, and teach, besides passing the sacrament each Sunday. These duties had been more theoretical than actual, though; and I would hardly have ventured to warn the patrons of Klecker's pool hall or to expound the gospel to Ed Brinkerhoff, who drove the school bus up from Lawrence on weekdays but delivered lengthy scriptural discourses on High Council Sundays. Most of the watching over the Church was done by Bishop Brasher and his counselors, so in practice the main duty of my new calling was to make a round of ward teaching visits once a month.

Even so, I didn't take my ordination lightly. When my father and the bishop and Brother McElprang and Brother McCandless laid their heavy hands on my head, it was as though the weight of manhood were settling on me. Afterwards they all shook my hand solemnly. Brother McElprang said I might be envied by a king, and the bishop pointed out that Joseph Smith had been just about my age when he received his first vision. I said little, only nodded my head to show that I was paying attention, but I had already been thinking of those things. I knew that I hadn't taken my religion seriously enough in the past. On several occasions I had gone to the picture show on Sunday nights, and I had often used language and entertained thoughts that were not right for a bearer of the priesthood. Now that I was a teacher, I was determined to do better, to live a more exemplary life.

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Shortly after my ordination, Bishop Brasher gave me my ward teaching assignment. I was to accompany Brother Rasmussen on his beat, which would be a great opportunity for me, the bishop said, because he really knew the scriptures. Brother Rasmussen was an elderly man, rather unsteady on his feet but with a firm glare in his eyes and a strong, high-pitched voice. He was one of those who stood up every Fast Sunday in testimony meeting; and in priesthood meeting when the bishop asked if there were any further business to discuss before we separated into quorums, he regularly volunteered advice on the operation of the welfare farm and other ward affairs. The bishop said that I must always respect Brother Rasmussen and follow his direction because he was a high priest and I was only a teacher. But even though I was the junior companion, he added, I had the responsibility to see that the ward teaching was faithfully done and that no offense was given to the people we visited.

I didn't have to worry about making our visits regularly. Brother Rasmussen was as dependable as the dry wind that blew through the valley. On the last Sunday of the month he was always waiting for me at the meetinghouse door, stiff and sour, ready to go. We covered our beat in the same order each month, beginning with the Meeker brothers, who lived on Main Street in the box-like brick house where they had grown up. They belonged to the fairly numerous class in our town known as old batches. Like old maids — another sizeable class — old batches were never referred to without the senescent adjective, as though the single state automatically made one old. But while most of the old maids lived respectable, almost invisible, church-going lives, the old batches tended to be somewhat disreputable. For example, there was Charlie Graham, the window-peeper, periodically captured by some irate husband or father and shipped off to the state hospital for six months, only to reappear and repeat the same cycle again. Or there was Jack Horrocks, who chased young girls when he was drunk. He used to hide behind a tree in the park or in the shadows by the school house and suddenly lurch out at passing girls with a throaty growl that struck terror into the adolescent female soul. He only engaged in this sport when he was too drunk to run very fast, so he never caught anybody, but he probably still peoples the nightmares of dozens of women. Kimball Bolden, on the other hand, who was always drunk, never chased anybody, but squinted at one and all through red-rimmed eyes while muttering indistinguishable imprecations under his breath.

Ralph and Homer Meeker were fairly respectable, as old batches went. They didn't attend church, but they were hard-working and self-sustaining with a farm and some livestock, and while they usually spent their evenings at Klecker's, they seemed to make their way back home again in a not too badly impaired condition. Their dooryard had once been planted with lawn and shrubs, but the grass had gone unmowed for many years and the lilacs and honeysuckle and yellow roses had grown wild, forming a thorny wilderness that almost hid the house. The front entrance was entirely overgrown, and to make our visit we had to go around to the kitchen door. The kitchen appeared to be the only room the Meeker brothers occupied; and if it had not been for the smoke coming out of the chimney, we might have thought the house was aban-

doned as we stood on the doorstep waiting for someone to answer Brother Rasmussen's knock.

It was always Ralph who opened the door and Homer who cleared off a couple of straight-backed chairs for us to sit on. The brothers looked the same age, but I knew that Ralph was the elder because he always drove the green pickup truck when they went out to the field and Homer had to get out to open and shut the gates. Except for their daily trips to work and the nightly excursions to Klecker's, the Meekers seemed to go nowhere, and I imagined them sitting from month to month in that kitchen, staring at the worn linoleum in a silence broken only by the visit of the ward teachers. Brother Rasmussen and I sat stiffly upright in our suits and white shirts, while Homer slumped at the table and Ralph tilted his chair back against the hot water tank, both wearing their daily uniform of blue denim overalls and work shoes with flakes of dried manure on the edges.

Brother Rasmussen always had me say the prayer. I got to my feet self-consciously, folded my arms, squinted my eyes shut, and mumbled a few phrases, then sat awkwardly down again. Brother Rasmussen said an emphatic Amen and raised his head. Ralph and Homer remained as they were. Then Brother Rasmussen opened his Book of Mormon and read several verses selected, apparently, at random, pausing often to clear his throat or blow his nose on a handkerchief that he fished out of the side pocket of his coat. When he had finished reading, he shut the book and looked sternly from one brother to the other.

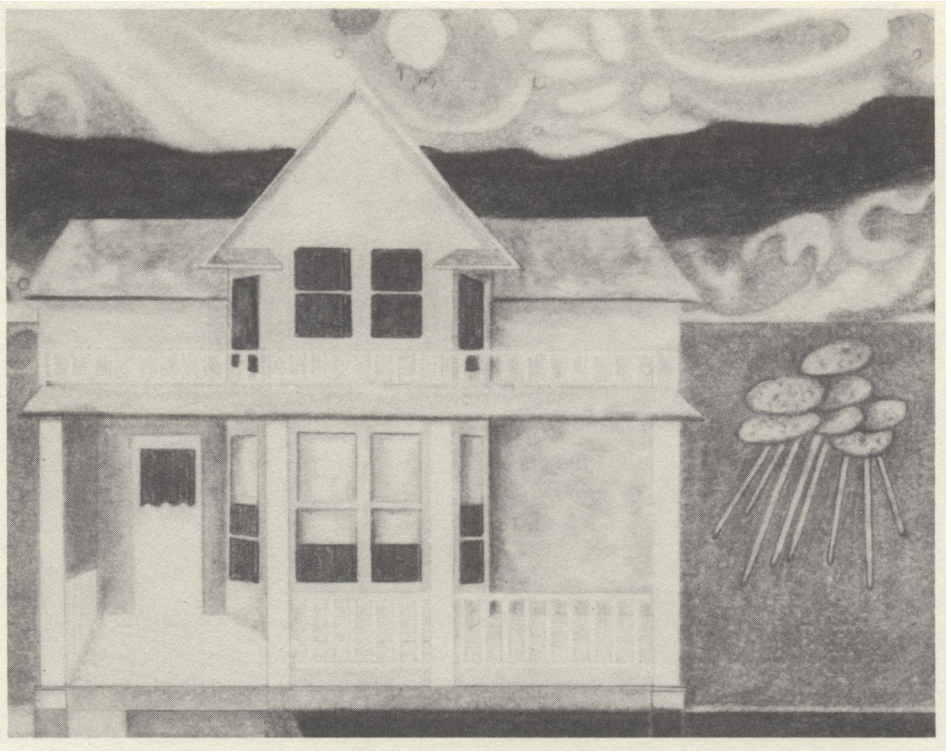
"Well, brethren," he would say, "I didn't see you at meeting today."

Each time there was a pause while Ralph Meeker shifted his weight on the tilted chair. "Well, no," he drawled. "We don't get out much."

Brother Rasmussen twisted his thin lips. "The Lord has instructed us," he said, "that it is expedient that the Church meet together often and partake of the sacrament."

Ralph Meeker leaned to one side and spat into the coal scuttle. "We don't get out much," he said.

From the Meeker place it was four blocks to Sister Woodruff's house along a route that was part of my daily walk to and from school. Every step of the way is so deeply impressed on my memory that I can still feel the gravel under my shoes, hear the humming of Oliver Roper's bees, smell the fragrance of the big crabapple at the corner of Dave Leonard's lot, and taste the wild plums that grew along Michael Truman's fence. But on ward teaching day I had no leisure for sensory indulgence. Brother Rasmussen drove an old Nash whose engine he raced savagely, whose steering wheel he gripped as though it might try to get away from him, and whose first gear he could never find. Though he threw the lever violently back and forth before giving it a decisive downward tug, he invariably started out in high, the car lurching and gasping until he rammed it into second. Once we got under way things went somewhat better, since there was little traffic on the streets, though we did run Angus Burnside into the ditch one Sunday. Stopping was easy. Brother Rasmussen simply stood on the brake until the engine died.



Sister Woodruff was an elderly widow of imposing frame who lived alone and kept up her house and yard by herself. Her impatience with dust on the sideboard or weeds amid the peonies extended also, I sensed, to the ward teachers who intruded upon her routine every month. There was always a long wait after we knocked and a shifting of curtains at the window before the door was finally opened. Then she stood blocking the entry for several moments before she spoke.

"It's you again, is it?" she would say. "Wipe your feet before you come in."

Brother Rasmussen always marched in without wiping, but I conscientiously scrubbed my shoes on the rug while Sister Woodruff waved her arms to keep the flies from coming through the open door. If one got past her, she sent me an accusing look before she withdrew to her rocking chair and took up her crocheting. We sat on a sofa whose real fabric I never saw, covered as it was by a huge throw.

"Go on, then," Mrs. Woodruff said. "Go on." But if Brother Rasmussen spent too much time in his reading from the Book of Mormon, she would break in impatiently. "Oh Lard, Ole, get to the point!"

At this, Brother Rasmussen would draw himself up very straight, shut the book emphatically, and speak in an aggrieved tone. "We have come as the representatives of the bishop, Sister Louisa, to bring a scriptural message into your home and to see that there is harmony within the ward and kingdom."

"Oh Lard, Ole," she would say.

The last stop on our ward teaching beat was several thinly settled blocks to the south, through a saltgrass swale. Billy Evans, a gnome-like little man with huge features, threw open his door before we were well out of the car and stood waiting for us, his head bobbing up and down as though it were suspended on a spring.

"The block teachers is here, Martha," he would say to his wife, who was blind and sat always in the same chair, her face turned expectantly toward the sound, her eyelids red and sunken, her toothless gums champing in inarticulate cries of greeting. The obvious pleasure that our visit gave the Evanses was a great relief after the indifference or hostility at the other houses, and this was the one part of our ward teaching assignment that I really enjoyed. Billy Evans listened to the scripture reading without interruption, his head bobbing all the while, but the moment Brother Rasmussen closed the book, Billy Evans sent forth a torrent of talk, story after story, all having to do with remarkable experiences. He told of visits by the Three Nephites, miraculous accounts of the temple garments' protecting those who wore them, tales of enemies of the Church being smitten. I found his stories fascinating, but Brother Rasmussen didn't like them at all. After two or three unsuccessful attempts to break into the stream, he would retreat to disapproving silence, his lips twisting tighter and tighter until at last he lurched to his feet and declared that a ward teaching visit should not be unduly prolonged.

Except for the good feeling I brought away from the Evans home each month, I couldn't see that ward teaching was contributing much to my program for spiritual improvement. I had cut out Sunday picture shows and started attending Mutual every Tuesday night, even when they didn't have activities, but these were only external things. I knew that the real growth had to happen inside, and I was finding that perfecting my life was a bigger job than I had anticipated. I had always prayed more or less regularly at bedtime, uttering thanks for my many blessings and asking for the things I wanted, or thought I ought to want, but I became aware that it was only speaking rote phrases into the darkness. When a visiting apostle said in stake conference that the spirit is most receptive during the early morning hours, I began setting my alarm for five A.M. so that I could study the scriptures and pray before breakfast, but I found that my spirit was most receptive to sleep at that hour. Almost every morning I would doze off in the middle of a sentence and wake up to find that I couldn't remember anything I had read. When Brother McElprang told us in priesthood meeting about Enos and how he had gone into the forest and prayed all day and night until he received an answer from the Lord, I made up my mind to follow his example. The next Saturday I arose early and went fasting to the willow thicket by the Big Canal, intending to pray all day. I found a secluded spot and knelt down, but after just a few minutes I ran out of things to say. I stayed there with my eyes shut, hoping that something more would come, but then my knees started to hurt. I became conscious of little rustlings in the weeds and the plop of a water rat into the canal, and I realized that I wasn't thinking about spiritual things at all. After another effort or two to get in tune, I gave it up and went home, arriving in time for

breakfast. I was beginning to suspect that I might not have been a valiant spirit in the preexistence.

Still, I didn't want to give up. Surely there must be some great spiritual experience in store for me if I would only prepare myself for it. After all, Joseph Smith must have seemed an unlikely candidate for the great manifestations that had come to him when he was just a boy. Sometimes, lying in my bed in the dark, I would try to imagine what it must have been like for him, how it would be to have some evil power assail you when you tried to pray. The thought of it sent a tremor of fear through me. Yet it was equally frightening to think of angelic visitations. What if, right at that moment, a light should appear in my bedroom and begin to grow until it was above the brightness of noonday? Sometimes I worked myself into such a fright that I buried my head under the covers, with just my nose sticking out for air, and slept that way all night.

On one ward teaching visit, Brother Rasmussen tried to persuade the Meeker brothers that they ought to get married, pointing out to them that every bearer of the priesthood had an obligation to raise up a righteous posterity. "Now you have the means to support a wife, a good house and all of that," he said, looking around the littered kitchen. "You could use a woman's touch here, curtains on the windows and the like of that." Then he proceeded to enumerate the widows and old maids in town.

Ralph Meeker showed his yellow teeth. "Naw," he said, "we ain't int'rested in none of your widahs."

The next month, when Brother Rasmussen mentioned Lula Brown as an eligible maiden lady, Ralph Meeker snorted contemptuously.

"Hell, there ain't enough juice in her to drownd a pissant."

Brother Rasmussen grew indignant at this and declared that any man who denied a woman her chance to be a mother in Zion would be held accountable at the last day. Ralph Meeker, silent again, grinned with his yellow teeth while Homer sat impassively, leaning his chin on his hand.

During the summer months we usually found Sister Woodruff working in her yard, wearing an everyday house dress and a wide-brimmed straw hat. Brother Rasmussen would twist his lips at this open violation of the Sabbath, and Sister Woodruff, in turn, showed irritation at being interrupted in her gardening.

"Sunday work will never prosper," he announced one sweltering afternoon. Sister Woodruff, who had been loosening the soil around her rose bushes, stood up with her face a fiery red.

"Maybe you should try working on Sunday, Ole," she said when she had caught her breath. "That would be *one* day, at least."

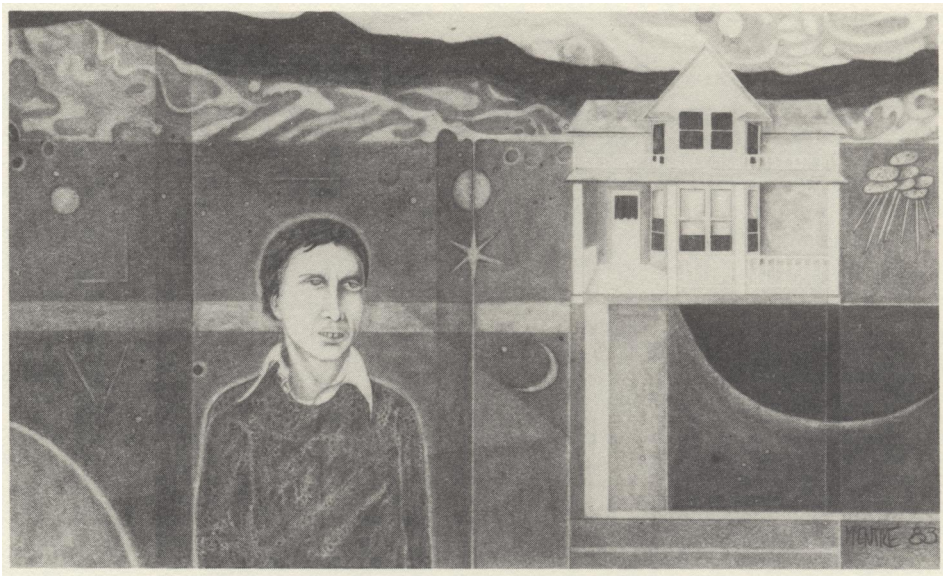
I sensed that these were the occasions the bishop had in mind when he had cautioned me to be sure no offense was given, but I didn't see what I could do. I felt that Brother Rasmussen was not as tactful and longsuffering as he might have been. On the other hand, though, Sister Woodruff seemed a little deficient in respect for the priesthood. I tried to think of some way to suggest to them that they were treating each other with some degree of hardness, but Brother Rasmussen always beat me to the punch.

"Sister Louisa," he said sternly, "the Lord is displeased with those who mock the priesthood."

This time Sister Woodruff didn't even look up from her work. "Priesthood indeed!" she said. "You were a fool long before you had the priesthood, Ole. All the priesthood has done is make you a pompous fool."

When school started in the fall, I began to take seminary from Brother Fowles, who had just arrived in town. He gave a new impetus to my determination to become a more spiritual person. Brother Fowles was a very spiritual man himself. He came from Salt Lake and knew many of the General Authorities personally and could tell numerous stories about the spiritual experiences in their lives. Of course the spirituality didn't come just from living in Salt Lake. Brother Fowles also had many stories that showed what a wicked city it was, stories which confirmed my impressions drawn from the odor of cigar smoke in the lobby of the Moxum Hotel and from Ferd Nichols's girl cousins, who had tried to teach us to do the dirty boogie.

We were supposed to be studying the Old Testament in seminary, but Brother Fowles didn't limit himself just to the text. When we read Genesis, he told us that Cain was still wandering the earth because of his sin in killing his brother and entering a secret combination with Satan. Cain was a great big black man, Brother Fowles said, bigger than any ordinary man because he came from before the flood. He told about people who had met Cain, and how he begged them to kill him because he couldn't die. I was nervous about going out at dusk after hearing these stories because it was always when people were alone at dusk that they met Cain.



Brother Fowles also told us about ouija boards, which I had never seen except in the Gumpy Ward Christmas catalog. Evidently they were very common in Salt Lake and very dangerous because if you played them you were tampering with spiritual powers and could easily fall into the hands of the devil. Brother Fowles told us about one group of kids who were members of the Church and went to seminary but nevertheless began to experiment with ouija boards. When they asked the ouija whether the Church was true, the pointer flew off the board and hit the wall, and later the girl whose house they played in saw a dark presence in a corner of the room and they couldn't get rid of it until the bishop came and blessed the house. Another time, some boys were working the ouija board in the cemetery, and one of them became possessed and tried to kill himself, and the others had to haul him forcibly to the bishop for a blessing.

I devoured Brother Fowles's teachings eagerly in seminary, but when I thought about them later, especially when I was alone at night, they made me uneasy. I would certainly not do the things those kids had done. I had no desire to approach the spirits through the ouija board or to get a testimony of the devil by praying to him, as a foolish missionary had done and a huge man on a black horse had ridden right into his room and carried him off before the eyes of his companion. But if it was dangerous to tamper with spiritual powers, it was equally destructive, Brother Fowles said, to live without the spirit. I didn't want to turn out like Ralph and Homer Meeker, totally insensitive to spiritual things. Nor did I want to be like some people Brother Fowles had known, who tried to intellectualize the gospel and who were consequently led astray by the philosophies of men. The worst thing of all was to have an intellectual testimony, to try to understand the things of God through human reason instead of by the pure witness of the Spirit.

In this frame of mind, I began to value our visits to the Evanses more and more. For Billy Evans there seemed to be no demarcating line between the physical and spiritual worlds. A man could be working in a coal mine, just going about his regular business, and have a sudden rockfall kill the fellow working next to him and yet leave him unharmed, except for crushing his foot, but that wasn't covered by his garments. In Billy Evans I felt that I had found a living example of that simple, spiritual faith which Brother Fowles recommended. To be sure, he rarely came out to church, and I couldn't remember him ever having a job in the ward, but that was probably because he needed to take care of his wife.

During one of our visits in the fall, Billy Evans got going on the Three Nephites and the trail of wonders they left behind them as they travelled through the world. On one occasion a man he knew had been stranded in the mountains by a snow storm, and because the wood was wet he couldn't get a fire started and was just about to freeze to death, when suddenly, as he was striking his last match, someone stepped up behind him and threw something like gasoline on the fire and it flared up instantly. But when the man looked around nobody was there.

"That was a Nephite, sure enough," Billy Evans said, his head bobbing up and down.

I asked him whether he had ever met one of the Three Nephites himself.

He bobbed and grinned mysteriously. "I know some things about them," he said. "I know some things I ain't allowed to tell."

I was tremendously impressed at this because Brother Fowles had told us that some people receive manifestations so special that they cannot be revealed to anyone else.

Brother Rasmussen terminated the visit abruptly, as usual, but when we were in the car he turned to me before starting the engine.

"Young man, the devil will deceive the very elect if he can," he said.

I nodded. I wasn't sure exactly what he meant, but I read in the remark some disapproval of Billy Evans, perhaps because he didn't come to church regularly. However, I was beginning to suspect that Brother Rasmussen had an intellectual testimony.

The next month Brother Rasmussen had the flu and couldn't do his ward teaching. I was going to go with my father, but something came up at the last minute, and I faced the prospect of covering the beat by myself. When I thought of those inhospitable dwellings, I considered not going out at all that month. I could tell the bishop that I had forgotten until it was too late. Or I could even report that I had made the visits. Nobody was likely to tell on me. But as soon as these thoughts entered my mind, my conscience stung me. Here I had been praying that I might become a more faithful servant, yet I was weakening at the first sign of adversity.

The visits turned out better than I expected. It almost seemed as if Ralph and Homer Meeker and Sister Woodruff were glad to see me, though they said no more than usual. At Sister Woodruff's, it occurred to me to offer to come back the next Saturday and fix the loose hinge on her gate. She looked up from her needlework with something like surprise. "That would be very nice," she said.

The late autumn dusk was falling by the time I walked out to Billy Evans's place, but I was rather enjoying my ward teaching now and was in no hurry to finish. I tried to get Billy Evans to tell me more about the Three Nephites, but his thoughts were running along different lines on this night.

"The Nephites isn't the only ones still walking the earth, you know," he said.

"I know. There's Cain too."

"Cain, yes," he said. "And the Gadianton robbers."

I had read about the Gadianton band in the Book of Mormon, but it had never occurred to me that any evidences of them might still remain.

"They was all through these mountains, up and down," Billy Evans said. "And they're still there." Then he told how in the early days the people had tried to settle a certain place down by St. George but nothing would grow there, and Brigham Young told them it was because it had been a habitation of the Gadianton robbers.

"And there's just such another spot right up here in the foothills," he said. "You seen it, ain't you, just past Rowleys', where there ain't nothing but little scrubby bushes?"

I tried to visualize the place but could not remember one spot that looked much different from the others. But of course I had not known what to look for. Billy Evans went on to tell of people travelling between towns at night who came upon a crowd of strange figures with pale faces and weird eyes who ran alongside them as they rode and kept pace no matter how fast they drove their horses, dropping back only when they neared a town.

"Matter of fact," he added, "I seen them myself, or as good as seen them." It was when he was working at a sheep camp, he said, when he was a young man. He had come into town for supplies and had hung around in the beer joint so long that he had to ride back to the camp in the dark.

"Well, when I got up to where the canyon narrows, I begun to hear the sounds," he said. "They was moving along in the trees at the side of the road, but of course I couldn't see nothing in the dark. When I stopped, they stopped, and it was as still as death. When I begun to move again, they begun too. They had me. There wasn't noplace I could go. Well, I begun to call on the Lord, you bet. Then, of a sudden, there come a sound like a bell ringing, way up high, something like a harness might sound but way high, like it come from the rocks. That scared me more than anything cause I thought it was a signal for them to get me, and I begun to call on the Lord more and more. I told him that if he would help me out this here one time, I'd stay clear of the beer joints and wouldn't do nothing to offend him. And lo and behold," he paused and bobbed his head emphatically, "lo and behold, the clouds parted and a great light broke through. A great light. It was something like the moon, but it wasn't no moon. It didn't shine nowhere else only just round about me and the pony, keeping the Gadiantons off. They followed me all the way to the camp, but they stayed back in the shadows. I was protected, you see, and they daresn't come any closer. Next morning, though, we found four sheep dead and not a mark on them."

When I finally left the house, night had fallen, and a cold wind was blowing from the canyon. I hadn't realized how dark it would be, and I found myself wishing I had made my visits earlier so I could have walked home in the daylight. The mountains rose black against the last rosy streaks of cloud in the western sky, and involuntarily I thought of the Gadianton robbers roaming there all through the ages, on the lookout for somebody who wasn't protected. Northward, toward home, the pale surface of the road descended into the saltgrass swale before it climbed the next rise, where there were houses. I stood still in the road and listened. Perfect silence. Not even the insect sounds of summer nights. And Billy Evans had said that the Gadianton robbers stayed out of towns. This was in town, but just barely; the swale drained the west fields, and beyond them there were only the open flats and the mountains.

I started to walk at a deliberately unhurried pace, in order to hold onto a sense of normality. The sound of my shoes on the gravel seemed to come from the dry weeds at the side of the road. If a car should come by, I thought, I could walk rapidly while its lights illuminated the road and maybe get through the swale to the houses on the other side before it was altogether dark again. But no car came. I realized that I was breathing a prayer as I walked. Of

course that was the answer. The Lord would surely protect me while I was doing his work, but I had to demonstrate faith. I had to pray properly, vocally, and kneeling. I dropped to my knees at the side of the road, bowed my head, and shut my eyes. But I couldn't keep them shut. They would pop open in the middle of a phrase to make sure nothing was approaching in the dark. When I tried to concentrate on keeping my eyes shut, I lost touch with the words I was speaking. Fear seemed to thicken in the night, and I was trembling in the piercing wind.

Brother Fowles had said that the closer you got to perfection, the harder Satan would try to hold you back. That was what had happened to Joseph Smith when he went to the Sacred Grove. But he had cried out for help, and the light had come, the light in the grove, the presences.

I scrambled to my feet. "It's okay," I said aloud. "I'm okay."

My footfalls came back from the dead growth at the sides of the road like an invisible horde keeping pace, breaking into a run when I did and staying precisely even with me. But except for the minute points of the stars against the cold vault, there was no light. Hugging the darkness to me like a cloak, I ran for home.

Benediction

Neal C. Chandler

Ardmoore told Carmen Stavely, who'd been away in Idaho visiting family, that what happened that Sunday morning was absolutely confidential. The bishop had instructed all who'd been present to keep the matter strictly to themselves; and he, Ardmoore, did not think (though as usual his optimism was naive) that more than a very few people outside the ward were acquainted with the details. As for himself, he had not been present, had not, therefore, been warned or instructed by the bishop, and was reporting only what he could not help learning from the entirely unsolicited accounts of others.

If what he told her was not in all respects consistent, Ardmoore would have been the first to confess confusion both at the contradictions and at the ardor with which each teller insisted upon the complete accuracy of his or her own version. Fortunately, there was general agreement on the basic sequence of events. The incident had occurred on the fourth of five Sundays in May and thus marked the fourth appearance of Brother Kevin Houston as the new Gospel Doctrine teacher.

The partitions in the multi-purpose room had been pushed back all the way and propped with metal folding chairs because, unfortunately (or providentially — here the opinions were as sharply as they were unevenly divided), Sister Reeva June Parish who teaches Gospel Principles had been home again with mono, and all her neophyte faithful and her missionary-surrounded investigators had come on over to hear Kevin.

The truth, as Ardmoore well knew, is that most of those people would have been there even if Reeva June, bursting with good health and sound principles, had put in her scheduled appearance. Reeva was sweet, but Kevin Houston

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This story won first prize for fiction in the 1984 DIALOGUE *writing contest.*

put on a truly spectacular show; and in four weeks, word-of-mouth had already made Gospel Doctrine a standing room sellout. With the exception of Ardmoore, who tended the flame in the clerk's office, and of the other bishopric members, whose reliable absence was a matter of form and tradition, almost everyone thinkable had been in that class, including, as is now well known, Damon Boulder himself who had not set foot in the class — nor in the church, for that matter — the entire four weeks since his own formal and unbidden release as Gospel Doctrine instructor.

Now Damon must have come early because he'd sat in the next to last row near the door. For the most part, people said, he was quiet and uncharacteristically reticent to speak or to take part unless called upon. But perhaps, as some now insist, he was only playing possum, biding his time, waiting. On this hotly contested question of premeditation, however, Ardmoore was, himself, unwilling to express an opinion, and it is perhaps important before we go any further, to point out that Ardmoore had always really rather liked Damon Boulder; that he had, in fact, defended Damon at the very ward council meeting in which Bennett Sarvus, practically as his first official act as newly installed Sunday School president, had recommended Damon's release.

Leaning back and pulling lint from the cuff of his blazer, Bennett had mentioned almost offhandedly that Boulder had now been teaching the adult class for over a year. Surely it was time to release him with many thanks and to offer him some new challenge in the ward. There followed several nodding, lip pushing, "well, why not" seconds from among those present, but practically no one was taken in by this careful show of nonchalance. Bennett and his seconds had just declared war.

Utterly predictable pockets of guerilla resistance quickly formed up and returned fire. In particular, the militant and military looking Marvin Chisolm led the counterattack. Marvin was the ward liberal, an unabashed Democrat rendered respectable by his brahman Utah roots and successful consulting business. He wore his expensive, Ivy League education openly with his mustache, his penny loafers, and his herringbone jackets. In church, his schooled reverence for the rigors of academe took the general form of irreverence for the popular accommodations of faith. In a tone of purest acid he declared himself: 1) entirely satisfied with the present teacher, and 2) categorically opposed to any change that might, in Marvin's own term, "further abet the already rampant and reprehensible 'Koolaidization' of Mormon theology." Even Ardmoore said, in a conciliatory tone, that it seemed to him a shame in a New Testament year to let go the only teacher in the stake who read Greek and who had some formal training in ancient scripture.

By this time, however, Bennett Sarvus had come to full attention atop the powder blue sofa on which he was sitting, and he began to speak with a hushed gravity quite beyond his twenty-five and a half years. Precisely this, he explained, was the problem. Brother Boulder had, it was true, a great deal of worldly learning — which was, no doubt, commendable in its place — but at the same time he openly spurned the authorized lesson plan; and, in fact, when President Sarvus had gone personally to inquire after the manual, Damon,

who couldn't even remember its title, had had no idea at all of its whereabouts, except to say that perhaps it might be "somewhere in the car." As everyone well knew, that meant somewhere awash in the ragged sea of books and papers spilling around the back of Damon's wheezing, barnacled, 1963 Plymouth stationwagon, a brontosaurial conveyance bizarrely adorned with seraph's wings that Carmen Stavely's own husband Walter and the boys in his Scout troop gleefully referred to as "The Fourth Nephite." It was also common knowledge that Damon's lessons were, in fact, taken largely from whatever obscure, uncorrelated, probably even foreign and idolatrous book he happened to be poring over at the time. More than a few people, especially established, full-blood Saints who were not afraid to speak out behind his back, complained that he talked over the heads of new members. He loved Latin words and questionable or extreme ideas; and though, yes, Damon Boulder had a great deal of worldly knowledge, Bennett whose own field was information management felt compelled to point out that raw, unmanaged, uncorrelated knowledge was not unlike raw weather, or raw language, or, for that matter, raw sewage. It posed a serious environmental hazard, in this case to the fragile spiritual ecology of the ward. Hadn't the scholars and intellectuals among the Jews managed with all their learning to befog the very light of Christ? Bennett, for his part, was not anxious to follow their example in the Sunday School for which he was now personally responsible.

He finished on a note of such sincere and impassioned concern that the room fell into a kind of rhetorical arrest. Even Boulder's angry supporters sat as if molded in aspic; and Ardmoore, embarrassed at his earlier comment and obvious shallowness, stared through the carpet at his feet. The bishop, however, shuffled restlessly and then coughed for attention.

"Look Bennett," he said, "I've been through all this before." And indeed, over the years and at the behest of many, he had tried to shift the reluctant Damon Boulder from teaching into nearly every other thinkable kind of position. As a temporary Scout leader Damon had, with the saturnalian hubris of innocence, taken the entire troop skinnydipping in the pond at the stake farm. In the clerk's office he had actually, knowingly subverted certain statistical reports with figures taken, as he later freely admitted, from a table of random numbers. When questioned, he explained guilelessly, but without repentance, that though doubtless inaccurate, his impossible numbers were certainly as useful and as significant as those called for in the reports. As ward In-Service leader he'd cancelled four consecutive monthly meetings, only to occupy the entire hour and a half of the fifth reading long exhortatory passages from the *Journal of Discourses* with a bright, theatrical enthusiasm comprehensible solely to himself. He refused categorically to deal with ward finances, insisting loudly that God and common sense forbade him to do so; and when called once, long ago, in a moment of sublimely naive inspiration to serve on the ward building committee, he had, while toiling faithfully and knowledgeably for a better than standard-plan building, also written a light-hearted, fun-poking letter of complaint and suggestion to the Church Building Committee in Salt Lake City. Unfortunately, in that higher, thinner, "intermoun-

tain" air, every vestige of fun and good nature must have evaporated utterly from the document, for, on its account, Damon's then brand-new bishop suddenly found himself skewered and roasting painfully over the fire-red carpet in the office of a very angry stake president. It was a lesson he hadn't forgotten.

"I could call Damon to the bishopric." He paused, absently fishing broken animal crackers from the watch pocket in his vest while looks of horror blossomed around him like crabgrass in time-lapse. "But if I did, he'd accept reluctantly and then celebrate by growing a full beard and what hair he has left to his shoulders." He looked up with a gesture of conclusion. "If the stake would let me do it, I'd retire and ordain him to teach mysteries to the high priests' quorum; but since they seem determined he's going to be the oldest active elder in the Church, I'm going to keep him right where he is. He likes it; and as long as he's not teaching some open heresy or other, I like it too. A little, hard-core education isn't going to hurt anyone. We're just not used to it, that's all. If you think someone is seriously troubled," he added as an afterthought, "well, we have other classes, don't we?"

But the trouble was that there were, in fact, no other classes. Reeva June Parish was, for reasons beyond her control, becoming seriously unreliable; and Family Relations was once again without a teacher, the last one having disappeared quite suddenly and, in fact, mercifully after the revelation of her imminent divorce. No one new had been called, and the bishopric's own wait-and-see footdragging was to blame. So it was not surprising or even unwarranted when, not many days later, a delegation of appropriately credentialed Saints went privately to the bishop's home.

In an old bathrobe, he led them to the cluttered family room where he sat, almost primly for a man of his comfortable dimensions, staring resignedly at the crackled leather of his slippers while Sunday School President Sarvus, after apologizing for the hour, polled his militant companions and then closed with another, even more impassioned appeal for retrenchment in Gospel Doctrine. When Bennett had finished, the bishop without raising his eyes from his slippers, took a deep breath and let it go. Then, placing his hands on his knees, he thanked all present for their concern, stood, and left the room.

According to Ardmoore, he must have gone straight off to bed without so much as nodding farewell to his guests. The house beyond the family room remained dark and eerily silent; and when, after much too long a time, the bishop had not returned, the abandoned and incredulous party of kingdom patriots found its own groping way out of doors, there to caucus one more time in troubled whispers on the moonlit drive before disbanding stealthily into the night.

The partisans were puzzled and pessimistically insecure about what their night ride had accomplished. Yet, the very next Sunday the bishop himself — ignoring channels — called Damon Boulder in and told him he would soon be released from his teaching job in prospect of a weightier assignment. Ardmoore who was in the outer office, swears that Damon Boulder laughed out loud. And this is not improbable, for Damon too had heard it all before. It may have seemed to him at first like a private joke between old friends until,

of course, the handwriting would not fade from the wall. Then he just sat in glum silence while the bishop performed his rehearsed enthusiasms across the desk.

There is no doubt Damon took it badly. He stayed away four full weeks, reappearing, as everyone now knows, on "that" fateful Sunday. The news of his return could not have spread any more quickly if it had been posted on a billboard in the parking lot; and round Rachel Holbein, one of the midnight riders, made a point of stopping Kevin Houston in the hallway, taking his sleeve, and whispering with all the theatrical subtlety of a silent movie conspirator that Boulder was back. And indeed, since Boulder was not known as a particularly forgiving or deferential man, Kevin might well have been apprehensive, except, of course, that he wasn't.

Kevin Houston had that particular kind of self-assurance which in a secular and sophisticated world is taken as evidence of old money. In Kevin, however, whose prosperity was, in fact, nearly as green as the bank notes in his wallet, it signalled instead a kind of foreordination to the high, blood bureaucracy of Zion. He spoke in the accumulated ecclesiastical jargon of four generations; and his voice, as the cynical Marvin Chisolm delighted in saying, had the "perfect grain and color of simulated walnut formica." Moreover, when he took the stage in Sunday School, he left no doubt at all in any mind, not even Marvin Chisolm's, as to who among those players present commanded top billing.

"So you gotta follow the Brethren?" The sentence sliced through the room at a whining pitch and decible level that stunned the still-conversing class members into silence. Having thus seized attention, Houston, who had not even reached the front of the class, whirled on his heel and backed the rest of the way up the center aisle. "Is that right, Brother Zimmer?" A young man in a short-sleeved white shirt and blue tie came to attention. "Ya gotta follow the Brethren?" Again Kevin whined the sentence out in a minor third so nasal and obnoxious that a newborn infant would have recognized it as a taunt.

"Well, I suppose." Zimmer, though reliable, was startled and embarrassed at an answer which, while clearly correct, somehow sounded ludicrous in the face of his interrogator's tone. Once having spoken, however, he immediately regretted his vacillation and, as quickly, repented. "I mean, yes! Of course!"

Kevin kept silent for a moment surveying the expectant class, then looked back to Elder Zimmer, now with a sardonic cast to his familiar smile. "Why?" he demanded. "You're an educated man, David." Zimmer shrugged. "Now don't be modest, a well-educated man, and you regularly study the scriptures? Does he read the scriptures, Ariel?"

David Zimmer's wife nodded vigorous confirmation. "He certainly does," she said.

"Well, I thought so. Now tell me this, Ariel. Is he a responsible man? Does he exercise good judgment in his work, for his family, in his Church assignments?" Again Ariel's affirmation was aggressive. "Then why on earth should David Zimmer, a man of education, preparation, and sound judgment feel compelled to follow anybody's 'Brethren?' Why don't those Church

leaders out there," he made a dismissive gesture in a vaguely westerly direction, "just leave him alone to follow his own gospel inspired, commonsense course to salvation?"

As Houston turned from Ariel to the rest of his audience, the predictable hands already fluttered aloft. There was round Rachel Holbein; there were the Cutters, Sylvia Potter, Arlon Crisp, who was elders' quorum president, and, finally, there were two of the six missionaries, all telegraphing urgent signals at the ceiling. But Kevin had something else in mind.

"Brother Chisolm, what do you think?" Marvin Chisolm had sat in class for four weeks now nursing a loud silence and an expression of weak nausea. It was time to call his bluff.

"I don't know, Kevin." Chisolm raised his eyebrows and lowered his voice so that the people behind him strained forward to hear. "I'm not even sure I know what 'following the Brethren' means. Perhaps you could explain."

"It's obedience!" Rachel Holbein had read the lesson and could no longer wait to be recognized. She dashed in headlong. "It means obeying the commandments and always doing whatever you're asked." She sat back resolutely and folded her hands on the manual in her lap.

"When I do what I am asked," Marvin looked at Kevin and not at Rachel as he spoke, "I am being polite or considerate or accommodating. I am obedient, on the other hand, when I do what I am told. Perhaps that is what is meant. Perhaps urging us to follow the Brethren is simply a euphemistic way of warning us to do what we are . . ."

"Now Marvin," Houston cut him off decisively at the offending verb, yet his tone remained as smooth and sweet as whipped topping, "do you suppose it is a simple thing to direct the affairs of a world-wide church of several million Saints?"

"Of course not." Marvin didn't see the point.

"We all know, Brother Chisolm, that you have had a good deal of administrative experience yourself. So let me ask you what sort of a system, what method you personally would suggest to the Brethren for governing the important spiritual and, yes, even temporal affairs of an organization of millions spread all over the world?"

Marvin, who had felt a little cornered by the relentless warmth of Houston's questioning, smiled an air-conditioned smile. "I'd teach them correct principles and then let them govern themselves."

"Well now, I think that's a marvelous answer. In fact, I think it's just exactly what the Lord would have each and every one of us do . . . ultimately. But in the meantime, Brother Chisolm, tell me. How do you teach people those correct principles? I mean, how do you *really* teach them? And how do you get people — and believe me I'm including myself here — how do you get them to really govern themselves?"

When Marvin didn't answer immediately, Kevin bored in like a trial lawyer on a scent. "If we just talk to everybody, tell them about it, will that do it? If we just preach at 'em a little on Sundays, will they learn those principles, and will they live by them?" A snicker went through the class. "No one seems

to want to say 'yes.' Well, why not then? What, when you get right down to it, is the only truly effective way to teach the gospel?" He turned to the blackboard and took a piece of chalk. "I think we all know that to teach effectively, we've got to teach by . . ."

"By the Spirit!" Rachel Holbein, the Cutters, and the missionaries, all bleated out in unison.

"Well, of course. Certainly, you've got to teach by the Spirit, now don't you?" And Kevin wrote SPIRIT in block letters on the board. "That's an excellent answer, and we're going to get right back to it too. But before you can teach by the Spirit, you've got to teach by something else first." He wrote again: EXAMPLE. "You've got to teach by example. Isn't that right, Brother Cutter?"

"Sure is," Cutter grinned. "Actions speak a whole lot louder than words."

"They certainly do; and if you've got to be an example in order to lead the people of God, then maybe it's about time we took a good hard look at just what kind of examples our leaders are." Kevin paused and paced slowly across the front of the room in apparent self-absorption, bouncing a piece of bright yellow chalk in the palm of his hand. When he reached the windows banked shoulder high across the mint-green cinderblock wall on the far side, he stared out into the sunlit spring morning for a moment and then whirled, as if with sudden inspiration.

"Now take Peter," he announced, "the very first chief executive officer of the Church, the George Washington of Christianity, so to speak. Now just what kind of a man was this Peter. Was he an all-American? Ask yourselves! Was he a genuine, all-conference, all-Church champion, or was he just some guy off the street looking for a job? I mean," he raised his open palm to a vertical plane in direct line with his nose, "what do we really know about Peter?"

The class was a little stunned; and when no one showed any sign of responding, Kevin called on the elders' quorum president. "Arlon?"

Arlon Crisp, who was in the habit of speaking before he thought, always divided his sentences into two distinct parts, a universal or boiler plate introduction and a more specific, though equally formulaic, conclusion joined by varying periods of awkwardly searching silence.

"Well, one thing we can say for certain," he began, and then foraged his crowded mind several seconds long for whatever it was that could be so certainly said, "is . . . is that . . . that . . . that he was chosen of the Lord." He smiled. But Kevin was not buying.

"Oh no, Arlon, that's too easy. What we have to figure out here today is why the Lord chose Peter in the first place. What did this man have that someone else didn't? Was it prestige? Was it education? What did the guy do for a living?"

"He was a fisherman, wasn't he?" A very pretty young girl, a convert of only a week or two, spoke with soft hesitancy from the third row.

"A what?" Kevin put his hand to his ear.

"A FISHERMAN," the missionary on her right confirmed boldly.

"FISHERMAN?" Kevin's obvious incredulity made both respondants wince as if some terrible and terribly obvious mistake had been made. "You mean he didn't have a Ph.D. in religion? He wasn't an expert on theology? Are you trying to tell me that the man chosen by the Lord to preside over the Church didn't have a doctor's degree, or a master's degree, or even a piddly little old bachelor's degree? Why, next you'll be trying to tell me, he wasn't even an intellectual, that he was some sort of simple, honest working man. Well, well. Well, well. Well, well." He spoke his "wells" in melodic pairs and crossed back to the other side of the room.

"Tell me," he readdressed the third row in slow, dramatic dismay, "was he just any old fisherman? Do we know anything else about Peter?"

By this point, most of the audience was beaming, though a few, predictably, smoldered. None, however, was foolhardy enough to take up Kevin's newest invitation to dance. His sure orthodoxy was too subtle, too deceptive, too unorthodox. And though they loved (or loathed) the tune, no one had any further illusions about being able to mind the step. Kevin would have to answer his own question.

"Well, brothers and sisters, we know this much. We know he owned his own boat. Owned it outright. And he hired other men to work for him. This man they called 'the big fisherman' wasn't looking for any handout when the Lord and the Church came along. He supported himself, supported his wife, his children — we don't know for sure how many he had, but you can bet your life he had more than two. Why, he even supported his mother-in-law. Now that should tell you something." Kevin paused for the accumulating appreciation to catch up with him.

"Now," he continued, "I'm going to tell you another thing, something not many people have figured out yet. Old Peter was a pretty darn good businessman. When the Lord called him in to head up the Church organization, he was already worth a considerable amount of money. He had a savings program. Made sound investments. He was a man who'd magnified his 'talents' (and some of you had better look up the real meaning of that old Jewish word in your Bible dictionaries).

"Now," he continued, "do you want me to tell you how I know about this, how I'm absolutely certain of it? Well then," he accepted the rapt silence as assent, "I will. If you'll take your Bibles and look up First Corinthians 9, verse 5, you'll find out that when Peter was called to go out and preside in the mission field, he took his good wife right along with him. Now, in my father's family, as some of you know, we've had considerable experience in this area, and let me admonish all those priesthood bearers here today. Brethren, believe you me, you do not take your wife into the mission field unless you've first put more than enough money aside to support her in the manner to which she is bound and determined to remain accustomed. And that is the gospel truth."

When the laughter finally paled, Kevin became serious again. "In those rough, ancient times when thieves and shiftless beggars, when high-paid parasite priests and crooked, Roman tax-collectors were the norm, in those dark

times, not unlike our own times today, here was a man who carried his own weight, who took care of his family, who got ahead in business, a man with the stature and with the financial means and know-how to truly serve his Church. Now that's something we know how to appreciate even today.

"That man was as solid and reliable as a rock. And, in fact, my brothers and sisters, did you know that 'rock' is the very meaning of the name Peter, a name, by the way, which was not given him by any earthly power. Why, his parents thought his name was Simon." Kevin shook his head in good-natured recognition of human folly. "The Lord himself gave Peter his proper name when he called him to the work. Now, don't you just suppose that the Lord knew exactly what kind of man he was hiring. Don't you just suppose that when he gave old Simon Bar-Jona, that successful, self-reliant, maritime businessman from Galilee, the name 'Peter,' he was sending you and me a message, telling us that here was the kind of man the Lord is looking for, an ensign to the nations, an example to each and everyone of us." A wry wrinkle gathered itself on one side of Kevin's forehead. "Or do you suppose he gave him that name just because he had nothing better to do on a Saturday afternoon?"

Kevin waited patiently until the familiar, if now more hesitant, hands began to collect in quantum spurts and flutters, and then once again looked beyond them to the back of the room.

"Dr. Boulder, what is your opinion?"

The class froze. Kevin was having it all his own way. Chisolm was long since vanquished, and Damon Boulder's uncharacteristic silence seemed to confirm once and for all the calling and election of the new order in Gospel Doctrine. So why this? Why taunt the dragon?

Boulder himself seemed surprised. He sat a while thinking before he answered. "The giving of a name in itself is not really very remarkable, Kevin. It was a common practice for Jewish rabbis to give titles to their disciples, usually some word that pointed to promise in a situation or placed an obligation on the bearer. Christ, of course, did this more than once, and there are various examples in the Old Testament."

He paused and looked around. "As to this particular title, well, I really don't think it was a product of financial analysis, Kevin, nor of character analysis for that matter. In fact, it has always seemed to me more like wishful thinking. I, at least, would be hard put to think of a title less descriptive of the man's actual behavior."

"What do you mean by that?" Sunday School President Sarvus was standing in the back of the room where he had been watchfully presiding since shortly after the beginning of the lesson. The clarion annoyance in his voice sent a shiver through the more timid in the room, and attention closed in around the discussion like a crowd around the scene of an accident.

"Well," Boulder continued unperturbed, "he didn't show himself to be much of a rock, now did he? The man was almost fatally impulsive. When, for instance, Jesus called to him on the Sea of Gennesaret, he was all hot to get out and walk on the water, but two or three steps and his self-assurance collapsed. He nearly drowned. More importantly, he was the first and the loudest

of the disciples to confess his loyalty to Christ, but we know he was also the first to deny him . . . and the most insistent. He had a temper. He was violent. Threatened people. Even cut off some poor fellow's ear. How often did he have to be slowed down, cooled off, rebuked? Oh, he mellowed as he got older, but he wasn't cured. Even after he'd been called to lead the Church, he couldn't stay out of trouble. In fact, he got into so much trouble with the law in Jerusalem, he had to be released from that highly visible, presidential position and sent out into the boondocks to preside over a mission (an expedient, by the way, which is not unknown to the Church in our own day). But in the mission-field I think Peter finally hit his stride. He was a great teacher, you know, a baptizer, and because doctrinal purity was far from chief among his passions, inside the Church he became a capable politician. Perhaps the best she's ever had."

"Politician?" Kevin Houston, who had been listening intently, arched his eyebrows into pointed interrogatories.

"Certainly. Somebody had to mediate between those pureblood Jewish hardliners up in Jerusalem and Paul and his liberal rabble in Rome. No easy task, you can be sure, and no one to set him apart for it, but he carried it off like a ward politician with consummate pragmatism.

"With what?" Rachel Holbein had been lost for ten minutes. None of this was in the manual.

"Pragmatism, Rachel, consummate political pragmatism. Paul complains in Galatians that his old friend and fellow missionary Peter knows all too well which side his bread is buttered on. Oh, he's an ally of sorts; but when the occasion and the realities of power require, he is not in the least above dissembling and backing down to those starched bureaucrats in Jerusalem, even when doing so violates his own inner convictions. And that, for good or for ill, is political pragmatism."

"I don't understand." Bennett Sarvus broke in again, but this time directed his metallic gaze and his question to Kevin Houston. "Is Brother Boulder insinuating that the Apostle Peter was some sort of cheap political hack?" His measured enunciation and crystal tone made it clear that he was very upset.

"Oh no," Boulder quickly responded before Kevin might intercede, "he was a very fine politician, a very successful one. He did more, perhaps, than any other to keep an early and sorely divided church together, to prevent schism. And I don't think political successes like that come cheaply either. They are almost always bought at great personal cost. In a way that's Paul's point, isn't it? — that too often we pay out again in personal integrity whatever it is we win for the integrity of the community? In any case, I was only wondering out loud — and at Brother Houston's invitation, of course — if perhaps, in retrospect, 'Simon Politikos,' (Simon the Politician) might not have been a more accurate title, and, consequently, higher praise."

Boulder leaned back in his seat with his face carefully blank and with an air of dreadful satisfaction. And indeed, the marvelous spell holding the class enthralled before Kevin had so rashly conjured this spirit was gone. The crowd was visibly restless, palpably unsure and disoriented. Yet Kevin stood among

the ruins of his Sunday School lesson as calm as a summer's morning. "You know," he said so quietly and with such intense reflectiveness that the class immediately forgot its agitated milling and whispering to listen, "You know, I think Brother Boulder is right."

Even Damon Boulder glanced up.

"I think he's reminding us that though Peter was a good man, a great man, a chosen man, he was not, in fact, a perfect man. Like you and like me, he was human. Isn't that right, Brother Boulder?"

Surprised at being invited back into the discussion, Damon nodded. "Peter shows us pretty clearly everything that the call to leadership involves in human privilege and weakness."

Pursing his lips Kevin nodded. "Yup, there is certainly something to what you say. But you are wrong on one point, Damon — the point about the name — because the Lord knew exactly what he was doing when he gave that imperfect fisherman the name Peter. You know," his voice took on a sudden air of confidentiality, "when I was preparing this lesson, I ran into a real puzzle. I looked up that name Peter in a fancy dictionary I have at home. It's an old Greek dictionary. Now, the New Testament was written in Greek. Isn't that right, Damon?" Damon nodded. "And in Greek the English name Peter is spelled P-e-t-r-o-s."

Kevin wrote it on the board, turned, and winked at his audience. "You see, there's a bit of the scholar in some of the rest of us as well. And do you know when I looked up P-e-t-r-o-s in that dictionary, it didn't mean *rock* at all. The real Greek word for *rock* is P-e-t-r-a." He spelled it out on the board and wrote the translation directly underneath. "So just what do you suppose P-e-t-r-o-s means?" He pointed to the still empty space under the first word on the board; and when everyone, including Boulder, remained silent, Kevin turned and wrote out the answer. "It means 'stone,' an ordinary stone.

"Now," he whirled and faced his audience with a bolt of new energy, "that might not seem like a very big difference to some of you, but think about it. What is a rock? I mean there's the Rock of Gibraltar and the Rock of Ages; there's the man who built his house upon a rock, and then, of course, there's the rock of revelation upon which the Lord has built this magnificent Church. Surely a rock is something pretty big, pretty darn substantial. But if that's a rock, what then is a stone?"

For a moment or more he scanned the ceiling while he dug in his trouser pocket, then pulled a smooth round chip of shale out into the sunlight and held it up between his thumb and forefinger for all to see. "Now there is a stone, and a stone, my brothers and sisters, is also a rock. It's a little rock, a rock you can put in your pocket or skip across a lake. And so I asked myself, why did the Lord want to go and call that big, strapping, six-foot fisherman and business tycoon 'Mr. Simon Little-Rock?' It puzzled me all morning long. And then . . . then suddenly, like a revelation, it came to me that it was nothing so very remarkable at all, that, you and that I, that all of us do the very same thing almost daily."

Kevin advanced to a still open expanse of the bright green blackboard. "Now, take a name, almost any name like Bill, or Tom, or Jim, or even 'Rock.' " He listed the names in a column. "What do we call Bill or Jim or Tom before he's grown up, before he reaches the full stature of a man? Why, we call him Billy or Jimmy or Tommy." He added the diminuitive ending to each name as he spoke it. "And we mean 'little Bill' or 'little Jim' or 'little Tom.' He's our 'little man' we say, just as those old Greeks could have told us that 'Petros' meant 'little Rock.' So you see, surely Peter was a rock. He was all rock, nothing but rock! Yet a rock, let's admit it, with a great deal of growing to do before he reached the full, magnificent stature of a perfected, celestial rock. Now doesn't that just make sense? I'll tell you it does. I'll tell you, the Lord knows just what he's doing, and just exactly what he's saying. Doesn't he?"

Flames of affirming attention that had dimmed and sputtered now burned brightly again all over the room.

"And do you know, brothers and sisters, I pondered that name." He turned to the board and filled in the final "y," then, placing the chalk on its side, drew a broad, yellow circle around the name. " 'Rocky' . . . there's something special about that name, isn't there, something out of the ordinary? We don't just give that name to children. In fact, we associate it with tough guys, with fighters, and with a special kind of indomitable spirit."

"Remember, back at the outset of class I said that we would get back to the Spirit. Well, I'm going to keep my promise, because recently I was taught something truly wonderful about spirit, something that has a tremendous bearing on the lesson the Lord wants us to learn here today. Recently, I had the privilege of attending, with my good wife, the final in a series of three remarkable films, all of which, amazingly enough, bear that same name given nearly twenty centuries ago to an enterprising Galilean fisherman with tremendous celestial potential."

While Kevin underlined the crucial name once more on the board, Marvin Chisolm, his nausea and piqued impotence at full mast, twisted around nearly 180° in place to fix Damon Boulder with fierce, "for heaven's sake, do something!" eyes. Damon, however, waved Marvin off with a gesture of hand-washing indifference.

"I'm sure," Kevin continued, "some of you saw those movies as well, but let me tell you about them. Let me tell you about a young man without education or wealth or worldly sophistication, without social position or powerful friends or political influence. Let me tell you how that young man, starting from the absolute bottommost rung of a corrupt and indifferent sport world, with only his vision, his pure heart . . . with hard work and an indomitable spirit to sustain him through setback and suffering, through temptation, trial, and travail, — when those nearest and dearest forsook him, when none believed in him or in his vision or in the transcending power of his spiritual resolve . . . let me tell you how that young man became a world champion . . . and how he endured to remain a champion, overcoming the fierce enticements of worldly success, overcoming even the brutal, crushing physical onslaught of a veritable angel of hell. Yes, let me tell you about a real man with real spirit."

And Kevin Houston told them. He told them the parable of "Rocky," the difficult core of an ancient story made plain and simple in the bright, allegorical shell of a new one. He showed them the Hebrew fisherman as secret, inspiring foreshadow of the tenacious Italian Stallion, the triumphant Philadelphian in vivid similitude of the intrepid Galilean. And when he had finished his story, when he was done, somehow . . . somehow it was as if Rocky himself were right there among them, bruised, pummeled, punished, exhausted, and, yes, victorious, as magically, improbably, and inevitably victorious as virtue and goodness and truth.

Then, after a moment, Kevin Houston stepped forward into the idolizing hush and, like Dan Rather at the last day, drew the sum.

"So you see, brothers and sisters," his full, round baritone contracted to a flesh- and soul-penetrating whisper, "you see, Damon Boulder is right. The Lord cannot supply perfection in those all-too-mortal men he calls to show us the way. But he loves us, and because he loves us he gives us, instead, the very best men there are."

Kevin paused and seemed to look every man, woman, and child directly and simultaneously in the eye. "He gives us champions, *world* champions of the spirit, heroes from his very own Righteousness Hall of Fame, to captain the team, to pace us on that straight and narrow course, to set the inspiring, endure-to-the-end example that God's loyal fans all over the world will follow to success, salvation, and celestial glory." He paused again with a fatherly and summarizing smile. "Peter may not have walked upon the water as the Lord did; but among mortals those two or three halting steps still make him the all-time, number-one, water-walking champion of the world. And that, Brother David Zimmer, my dear brothers and sisters, o ye nations of an unregenerate world, that is why we must all gladly, gratefully, humbly follow the brethren."

The ensuing silence was as tight and translucent as Jello, one of those sweet, shimmering moments that are a passionate teacher's only genuine wage. And Kevin Galinghouse Houston let it roll and glide and glitter voluptuously during the few brief seconds that remained before the final bell. When the bell rang, however, it found him alert and ready.

"Brother Boulder," there was honeyed olive branch in his radio voice, "would you please say a closing prayer for us?" The tactic was bold. Like a rabbit surprised in the brush, Damon Boulder seemed to shudder in his seat. Kevin, meanwhile, fixed him with gentle, "would you please" eyes. The day was won. It lacked only the formalities of concession. "Damon," he entreated, "we'd like your benediction."

Boulder made no move, though he stared back in what some have described as stunned disbelief. The many in the class who understood what was going on, began to fidget. Yet Kevin only smiled with the long-suffering beneficence of a Buddha and waited.

After an agonizing silence, Boulder finally arose and made his way to the front of the room. When he arrived, he seemed to have found his resolve and, to the relief of everyone, turned decisively and faced the class. With ritual

solemnity, he tilted his round face earthward and held it in commanding obeisance until all present fell into a cough-stifling, child-threatening silence. Kevin closed his eyes.

What happened next can be recounted. It cannot be conveyed.

"Give me an R." The words were spoken clearly enough, but even so remained wholly unintelligible to a class poised comfortably over a familiar prayer wheel. "Give me an R." This time Boulder said it louder, and several listeners glanced up as a check against their obviously errant hearing. After the third time, half the class was looking at him from under its still inclined eyebrows. "Give . . . me . . . an . . . R!" he intoned slowly, this time with pedagogical emphasis. Boulder was staring resolutely back at his timid onlookers with one fist raised to the height of his shoulder in punctuating encouragement.

At some point during the fourth incantation a light flickered, though, oh so ephemerally, in the communal confusion. It flickered just enough to catch the attention of Marvin Chisolm, and then, for Marvin alone, it flashed again brilliantly. His head came up. His eyes cleared, and he came very near to raising his hand. "R," he stammered with experimental insecurity; and when Boulder cocked his head in recognition, he took courage and repeated himself with conviction, "R!"

Damon Boulder smiled. "Give me an O," he inveighed, raising his other fist, and Marvin Chisolm responded in tempo.

"O!"

"Give me a C!"

"C!" came the answer, and this time a second voice chimed in. It was the pretty young girl in the third row, so wide-eyed and freshly baptized that her name was still known only to the missionaries who hovered around her in dense-pack.

"C!" she sang out in a fresh, green soprano that took even Damon Boulder's breath, while the missionary on her right, the carefully combed and old-spiced boy who had baptized her, recoiled helplessly. His much younger companion on the left, however, joined with equally helpless enthusiasm in the response to Brother Boulder's subsequent calls for a "K" and then for a "Y."

"Y!" they all sang out, a chorus of three voices now, or as some insist, four (though no one will name the fourth accomplice, and none has come forward to confess). But whether three or four, Boulder pushed them relentlessly on into the finale, raising his alternating fists in rhythmic emphasis, if also with the self-conscious awkwardness of a tubby and sedentary older man.

"Give me an "R . . . O . . .C-K-Y!"

The room reverberated with the answer, and Damon Boulder stooped as low as he dared to rise up again with his revelers and with the trombone glide of the triphthong to a dramatic, tiptoe climax.

"YYYEEEEAAAAAA ROCKEEEEEEEEY!"

When it was all over, a matter of seconds, the entire cheering section was on its feet, though at the first poisonous look from his companion, the young missionary dropped back into his seat like a cinderblock. Marvin Chisolm, mean-

while, trotted to the front of the room and grabbed Damon Boulder's hand.

"Now, that's spirit, Damon. That is definitely championship spirit!" He squeezed hard and then turned quickly to Kevin, who was off a little to the side in the strange, semi-crouched position he had assumed at the first words of Damon's benediction and had not abandoned. He looked strangely contracted. Marvin reached down a little and pumped his hand as well. "I think you've really taught us something here today, Kevin. Yes sir, and that is not an every Sunday occurrence." He pumped again and strode out of the room. The young lady, meanwhile, had disentangled herself from her gaggle of anxious missionaries and was pursuing Damon Boulder who had already escaped down the hall. No one else had moved. No one.

It was quiet again, but the quiet was no help. The strange silence seemed to demand filling; and Kevin, though Marvin Chisolm seemed to have pumped him upright again, could find no words. He struggled, but the hundred formulae churning up from his mental archives filed back as mutely as they had come, and it was a long overdue release when Rachel Holbein broke for the door and scuttled sideways down the hall toward the bishop's office.

The rest of the story, the official aftermath, is, of course, sealed up in the records, and the bishop has expressly forbidden everyone, including Ardmoore, to talk about it. But there was one other thing, not a matter of record, which he confided to Carmen Stavely.

When he had entered the bishop's office just moments after the distraught Rachel Holbein had left it, he had found the bishop swaying precariously on his loudly squeaking, vinyl swivel chair, great round tears streaming down his flushed and helpless face. To the alarmed clerk he seemed out of control, as if he were suffering some terrible seizure, some convulsive and almost wanton attack of hysteria.

"Oh my!" gasped Carmen Stavely involuntarily. And when that same afternoon she recounted the entire affair to her closest and most trusted friend, and then later, of course, to her family over dinner — in fact, at every subsequent retelling — she inaugurated her story with a heartfelt expression of concern for the bishop. "The poor man," she sighed with a grave, sympathetic shake of her head, "the poor, dear man." And then she paused for her listeners to look up expectantly.

The Interview

John Bennion

Tom looked at the sweat shining in the palms of his hands. Wiping them on his slacks, he opened the door into the stake president's office and sat in a chair against the wall. A man behind a desk placed a paper onto a stack, stretched his chin upward while he unbuttoned his top button, and pulled his shirt open at the collar. He glanced at Tom over his glasses. "You here to see President Williams?"

"Temple recommend," said Tom. He touched his pocket.

The man nodded toward the door marked "High Council." "They're still going strong." He stood and leaned across his desk, his hand extended. "I'm Brother Clark."

Tom rose to shake Brother Clark's hand. "Tom Mathews," he said and sat in his chair again.

Brother Clark glanced at the clock. "Not much longer." He leaned back in his chair. "Actually, they've been improving. Their meetings only go over a half-hour now." He lifted another paper from the stack on his left. "They've got too much work to do."

Tom rubbed the place above his right temple where the hair was thinning. Then he stood and walked to the bulletin board. There was a calendar with a picture of the Provo Temple at night. Next to it was a Happiness-Is-Family-Home-Evening sign.

"You're getting married, right?"

"Yes," said Tom. "How did you guess?"

"President Williams mentioned it when he got your call." He wrote something on a paper. "When's the happy day?"

"The first of next month." Tom walked back to his chair and sat down again, pulling at his pant legs where his garments were creeping up.

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Brother Clark took off his glasses and stretched back, his hands behind his head. "President Williams said something about this being the one he'd been waiting for. It's a joy for him to see good marriages happen. Used to be your bishop, didn't he?"

"Before my mission." Tom put his hand to his front shirt pocket and took out his recommend. "I was his priests' quorum assistant once." He looked at his new bishop's signature; underneath was the blank for the stake president's.

"They don't make them much better than him." Brother Clark pointed a thumb toward the meeting room.

Tom nodded, frowning. "Dad said he's aged quite a bit."

"Especially since he's been stake president," Brother Clark said. "I've watched a lot of people come in here. They talk to him, then they leave, and go on with their lives. They don't see him drag himself home after a night of interviews." Brother Clark stood to reach more papers from a file cabinet. "The worst on him are the young people, I mean, the ones just back from their missions. They come in looking like they've just walked out of a seminary filmstrip, but later I read in the paper, 'Marriage to be performed in the home of the parents of the bride.' I wish they could see how he looks after they leave."

Tom rose and walked to the door leading out. "I'm a little thirsty," he said, shutting the door behind him. Out in the hall he bent over the fountain, then turned to look into his old ward's trophy case. Some of the awards had his name engraved on them. "100% Attendance." Bishop Williams had given him that one. "Aspen Valley Woodlore Contest — 1st Place." "Stake Basketball Champions." These too, had been won under Bishop Williams's direction. Next to the trophies was a colored map of the world with pins stuck where missionaries were. None were in France, his old mission. He tried to find Fontainbleau and couldn't.

He walked down the hall to the priests' old classroom. The sun had shone through the east window, pleasantly warm on Sunday mornings. Bishop Williams had planned camping trips with the quorum in this room and told stories from his mission. Tom had anticipated his own.

Bishop Williams taught them about the gospel, waving his arms and laughing, scrawling words and pictures across the blackboard, making his quorum stand and repeat memorized verses. "The first principles and ordinances of the gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance. . . ."

Tom turned back toward the office, pushed into the restroom, and washed and dried his hands. He watched himself in the mirror, then flicked off the light. The fan died with a rattle and he returned to the hall.

He looked out through the front door at his car; he could leave now. Standing by the water fountain, he touched his stomach where it was tight and took a deep breath. Then he shook his head and turned back to the office.

He waited at the door, listening. Finally he heard voices and went in. George Peterson, a high councilman, turned when the door opened. "Tom!" He reached for the younger man's hand, drawing him close with his other hand on Tom's back. "It's been awhile; we were happy to hear the good

news." Tom nodded and returned the handshake quickly. He turned away to look through the door into the high council room, seeing the stake president still talking to several high councilors, smiling and gesturing. Tom looked at the lines in his face, at the shoulders, sloping more than Tom remembered. President Williams saw him through the doorway and beckoned Tom in.

"This is Tom Mathews, one of the best ever to come up through the Aaronic Priesthood. Brother Gilger, Brother Christensen," President Williams said, nodding to the other men. "Yes, Tom's finally decided to settle down and start building the kingdom." He beamed at the others. Tom smiled briefly, then moved back, waiting until the president was finished. They walked together past the clerk into President William's office.

The older man closed the door and they stood facing each other. He put his large hands on Tom's shoulders. "You're looking good. It was a joy to hear your news." Tom hesitated, then laid both hands nervously on the president's arms.

"Well now," President Williams sat behind his desk, "let's have the whole story. How did you meet —" he looked at a piece of paper on his desk — "Carolyn?"

"At institute. We had the same class and the teacher asked us to be on this committee together."

"Oh, a little match-making, eh?" Tom didn't smile. The president looked at him. "Well, you know this can't be final until I pass judgment. That's what we agreed, wasn't it?" He smiled across at Tom.

The young man nodded, holding his hands tight against his knees. He looked straight at President Williams, silently. The smile faded from President Williams's face. He leaned forward, picking up a pen from his desk and turning it in his fingers.

"We kind of lost touch with you clear out in Denver."

Tom nodded.

"You worked for your dad's old partner out there, didn't you? Ah . . . what was his name?"

"Monte Daniels."

"Oh, yes. Lived in our stake awhile." The president leaned back, talking easier now. "Cement contractor, isn't he?"

"I tied iron for him."

"Then when you came back you met your fiancée at school?"

"Yes."

The president folded his hands across his middle. There was silence. He stuck his finger into his collar and pulled on it, then leaned forward again. "Something wrong about the wedding?"

"Yes."

The clock whirred.

"You want to talk?"

"Yes."

Silence. The president rubbed his forehead. "You have cold feet, Tom?"

"No."

President Williams turned his chair to one side. "Did you get involved?"

Tom was quiet.

"You know you can be forgiven for that if you have." The president turned suddenly to Tom. "Did you get sexually involved?"

Tom shook his head. "No."

Brother Clark's chair squeaked in the outer room.

"I don't think I can do it." Tom looked at his hands.

"Get married?"

"Yes." Tom looked up. "You asked me if I'd slept with Carolyn. I wish I had."

"What? What did you say?"

"I wish I had. If I'd done that, I could repent and then go on. It'd be over then. But I can't repent of what I am."

"What you are? I don't —" The older man pushed his hand along the side of his face and up through his hair. "Maybe if you'll just tell me exactly what's happened." He put his hands together on the desk.

"It started on my mission," said Tom.

"What did?"

Tom opened his mouth, then shut it.

"Something happened on your mission?"

Tom let his breath go out. "I had a junior companion once who wasn't — ah —. He didn't get up on time, didn't study, didn't like to go out. Homesick." Tom looked up at President Williams then back at the corner of the desk. "I talked him out of going home every week for a month. Every night I prayed that he would stay. I don't even know why I did it." Tom felt his face and ears grow hot. "We fasted one Sunday. After church we went up on this hill outside of town. I prayed, then he prayed. He stayed on his knees a long time then started telling me how he was going to work harder and a lot of things like that." Tom looked up. "It made me feel glad," he said, his voice thick.

"I imagine it would," said President Williams frowning.

"That night after prayer, I lay in bed. I just kept looking at him. When I thought he was asleep, I got out of bed and prayed again. Then I went over and stood by his bed and —" Tom looked at his hands.

"Go on."

"It was creepy. I got this idea of blessing him. Of putting my hands on him and blessing him. So I knelt down and I did." Tom's voice was shaking but he didn't take his eyes off the president.

President Williams spoke slowly. "You loved your companion and had been through quite an experience with him. Be careful not to misinterpret what happened. I don't see —"

"What was wrong was how I felt. I was warm all over and I couldn't move my hands. I just kept —"

"Touching him," the president finally said.

"Yes." Silence. "I touched him."

"Where did you touch him?" the president asked, looking out the window.

"On the chest." Tom put both his hands on his own chest.

"He didn't wake up?"

"I almost hoped he would, but I thought he didn't. I was wrong. The next day while he was studying, I walked up behind him and put my hands on his shoulders. He jumped up and shouted, 'Don't ever do that again!' That week I was transferred to the mission home."

"Are you sure you were transferred because of what happened?"

"I think so. When I first got there, the mission president gave me a long interview. No questions. Just talked. About how nice it was to come home at night to a wife and children. He told me about seeing his wife pregnant with their first child. 'It was the greatest thrill of my life,' he said."

President Williams rubbed his eyes.

"At the end he was really serious. He said that some elders got weird ideas and were sent home. He said that it's a waste because if they'd just control themselves until they were home, even if they did have powerful tendencies, then they could get married to a good woman and that would settle them."

"Maybe he was jumping to a conclusion about you."

"No he wasn't," Tom said quickly.

"Maybe you're jumping to a conclusion about yourself."

"No." Tom moved forward on his seat. "After I was in the mission home, I started thinking, fitting some things together."

"Like what?"

"Once before my mission, a bunch of us were riding around after Mutual. We ended up parking at the reservoir. I was sitting next to Stacy Bingham and I knew she wanted me to kiss her, so I did." Tom frowned. "It wasn't anything like I thought it would be."

"You didn't like it?"

"I pushed her away. She said she wanted to go home."

The president smiled, then stopped. Tom hurried on. "Another time was when I was much younger, you remember, when we lived next to Sweeny Hansen." Tom's face was red and he watched the president as he talked. "One day I was playing out back and Sweeny was in his garden. He stopped to urinate and saw me watching through the fence. He came over laughing. He didn't do his pants up. He said something. I can't remember now, but I can still see him standing there. I could never stop thinking about it."

President Williams looked at Tom a moment, then spoke slowly. "I don't want to minimize what you've said, but you've confessed to me, and a lot of young men are confused about themselves as they grow up. It passes."

"Bishop, I'm thirty years old."

They both waited. "Have there been other times then?" President Williams asked.

"Yes."

Silence.

"Like what?"

Silence.

"You need to tell me." The president waited. He turned in his chair. "Does Carolyn know any of this?"

"No. I tried a few times but I never could figure out how to say it."

"Do you think she could handle it?"

"I don't know."

"If you think you have a problem, how come you got engaged?"

Tom was silent.

"Tell me how it happened, Tom."

"I told you we were in the same class. So we started studying together." Tom looked up. "I liked to talk to her. It's really hard to talk to most people, but we could go on for hours about anything. I just enjoyed knowing her. But then she started doing things like taking my hand, holding my arm against her while we walked somewhere. I hated it." Tom swallowed. "But what could I do? I couldn't say, 'Please get your hand off me.' Once I just said we should break things off. Then every time I went into the institute, she was there. She didn't understand. It was like slapping her face every time I passed her without saying anything. So I stopped going to institute. But then my bishop called me in. After that I went back. I saw her and we talked; we started doing our homework together again. She thought it meant something. Instead of being easy like before, it seemed like she expected something."

"It's called wanting to get married."

Tom didn't smile. "Later our institute teacher called me in. 'You know Carolyn loves you,' he told me. Then he started talking about all the missionaries who come home and wait for the perfect girl. They get too fussy and then they're thirty and not married. He thought I didn't want to marry her because of her looks." Tom hesitated. "It started me wondering. Maybe I was confused. Maybe if we went ahead and got married, things would work out, so I proposed."

"Do you think she's pretty?"

Tom looked at the floor. "I guess so," he said. "But I feel only friendship for her. When she tries to get close, I feel uncomfortable."

"It begins with friendship." The president frowned.

"I know that, but don't you see?" A bead of sweat ran down Tom's face. "I enjoyed her as a friend and I like her as well as anyone I've met, but I can't marry her."

"Just because you're not sure you like girls?" The president gripped the side of his desk then sat back down. "Tom, you're like a son to me, and I don't want to see you hurt. If she's the fine girl you seem to think she is, love could grow."

"Sexual love?" Tom asked. "Do you believe that would grow?" He slumped back in his chair. "I don't anymore."

"If all you've done is what you've told me, then —"

"Then it would be great." Tom stared at the wall.

"Something happened since your mission?"

Tom spoke slowly. "You remember how I was working for Dad right after my release?"

"Yes."

"Well, maybe three months after I came home I got this letter from an elder who had been in my mission. He said he was living in Salt Lake and couldn't we get together and talk about old times. It surprised me. I hardly knew him. Later I figured out why he wanted to talk to me. By 'old times' he meant my experience with my junior companion."

The president shifted his recommend book.

"Anyway, I'd go up to Salt Lake every week for doors or lumber or something. Well, the next time, I decided what the heck, I'd stop in. At the very least we'd talk a little French and then I'd head back."

Tom watched the president as he talked. "His place was just northeast of Temple Square. One of those old narrow, two-story houses made over into a bunch of apartments. When he answered the door, his hair was long. His shirt wasn't buttoned and he didn't have his garments on. Three other guys were sitting in chairs inside. They smiled and nodded, but he didn't invite me in. He just said we should go get something to eat. We went to a restaurant, and all the time talked about the job he'd had in Los Angeles and what was wrong with the Church.

"He'd forgotten his wallet, so I paid for the food. Then he thought we should go to this place for some music and dancing. It had been quite awhile since I'd just gone out and had fun, so I went along. It was downstairs under these old apartments and the only sign was a faded apple on a board outside. Some of the girls were dancing with girls and guys with guys." Tom stopped and waited.

The president looked at his hands, then he looked up at Tom. "You stayed?" he said finally.

"Yes. I stopped in the doorway but Rick — that was the elder's name — he pulled me on down." Tom was talking quickly now. "I wanted to get out of there at first; but I was curious, I guess. Rick, well, he moved around, talking and having a good time."

"How long did you stay?" The president's voice wavered.

"A couple of hours. Rick would touch my hand and then he'd lay his arm on my back." Tom looked up. "It seemed all right in that place for him to do that."

Tom could see President Williams trying to control his frown. Something burned in Tom's stomach.

"I went to see him every week for a while when I went in for Dad. Then I started getting uneasy about the whole deal. I usually paid when we went to eat. He was always trying to get me to come and stay with them. Rick said they were almost out of money and that they needed to know if I was staying or not, so they'd know what to do. I felt bad for them but I left anyway." Tom stopped. "They took turns with each other."

"Did you?"

"No."

"Why did you leave?"

"One day we went over to the community center to play tennis; when we were finished, one of the guys got hold of my garments while I was showering.

He was waving them like a flag, trying to make me feel foolish for wearing them." Tom felt disgust flood him. "I grabbed my things and left. I realized that I couldn't wear my garments and still mix with people like that."

"You've never told any of this to Carolyn?"

"Not to anyone."

"Think again about how she'd take it if you told her."

"It won't work, President." Tom slid forward on his seat. "Oh, I think she'd forgive me. Or she might think she could reform me. Maybe she could, but I can't handle the thought of any pressure that way. One time this girl came to Rick's apartment. She said that she knew she could change me if I'd just give her the chance."

President Williams rubbed a hand down across his face. He held his fist closed on the top of his desk.

"Carolyn just wouldn't get it," said Tom. "It was hard for me not to go back to Salt Lake. I had to keep away from bus stations too, because I'd see people waiting there and I'd want to talk to them because I knew what they were waiting for. What would life be like for her, married to me?"

"Have you ever gone for professional help?"

"In Denver. I was making a lot of money and I saw all kinds of counselors. Two years. Some told me that because Mom and Dad had only one child I had unnatural desires. Some said my mother was dominant in our house so I was weird. Then there were those who said that my urges were perfectly natural. They wanted to arrange contacts for me." Tom felt sweat dripping down his back. The president had put one hand to his forehead and was leaning forward, elbow down against his desk.

"I knew I could never be happy that way, knowing what I know about the Church, but like I said, I'd still walk to the bus station or through the park and talk to the people there. I didn't get involved with any of them though, I just talked and felt lonely. Other doctors gave me shocks while I looked at pictures. Then some gave me chemicals to make me vomit when I got excited."

The president cleared his throat again. "We have some professionals in the Church who have developed certain methods."

Tom started to say something, then he stopped and said quietly, "I'd be glad if you helped me with them. But I don't think they'll do any good." He thought. "Do you?" he asked.

The president was silent. "Ah, sometimes they help," he said, looking down at his hands. "They aren't always successful."

"I don't think there's a cure." Tom realized he was talking too loudly and he softened his voice. "I am the person I am. What I need to do is to learn to accept and live with it. I can learn to control it so that I don't bother anyone with my strangeness."

"Do you think you can hold your breath for the rest of your life?"

Tom said nothing. The president cleared his throat. Then he reached over and closed his recommend book.

"I had a chance with Carolyn until just being friends wasn't enough for her." Tom sat back and started again, trying to keep his voice level. "I've

tried to break it off, but I couldn't pass her without seeing pain in her face. What can I tell her? I like her. I've never talked with anyone like her. But I still look twice when I see certain people walking on the street." Tom felt his body tightening again.

"Have you made any contacts since you came back?"

"No! And I never will."

"You've given up on just going through with the marriage?"

"I can't. When I was seeing Rick, we went to this sauna place. It was really just a cover for men who wanted to get together. Rick went there to make contacts, but I just went along. Most of the men were forty or so. One time we were leaving. We'd walked about three blocks away when we saw this guy getting out of his car. He was in the sauna every week, really friendly. When he was about twenty yards from his car, he saw us. I raised my hand to him, but he ducked his head and hurried past us. Then he went scurrying down the street looking both ways to see if anyone saw me wave at him."

President Williams let his breath out.

"Then we passed his car. It was a station wagon with a briefcase in the front seat. There was a lady's hair brush and a baby bottle next to it. On the back bumper was a Happiness-Is-Family-Home-Evening sticker. Rick laughed, 'There's somebody who has his cake and eats it too,' he said." Tom sat looking at his hands. "I could never live like that. I couldn't be that kind of a hypocrite. But I'm never going back to them."

The president nodded; they were quiet. Tom took out his recommend and pushed it across the desk to President Williams, who folded it. Tom sat looking at the floor. Then he rose and walked to the door, stopping with his hand on the knob.

"What will you tell her?" The president moved wearily to the window, his back to Tom. Tom could see that his shoulders were bent.

"Just that we can't get married. We haven't sent any announcements yet, so we'll only have to tell our families."

"It's going to be hard on her."

"I know." Tom wiped his hand across his eyes.

"She'll want to know why. You can't break it off without giving her any reason at all." The president slumped into his chair.

Tom's throat and chest were tight; he felt a buzzing in his head.

The president started to say something.

"God, it scares me," Tom said. "Can't you see it scares me? How can I be wrong my whole life? You know sometimes when I'm out at my parents' place and I get up in the morning, I forget. It feels great, walking around without thinking about it. I've read nothing and heard nothing that says I'd have a good chance of changing by getting married. Isn't that right?"

The president nodded. "Probably," he said.

"I've thought about it and I don't want to be that way. I don't want to do that to her. After what I've told you, could you sign my recommend — want me to get married?"

The president didn't move.

"I think of being with her . . . after we're married. What if . . . what if I can't respond to her. Maybe I won't be able to love her physically." Tom's cheeks were wet.

The president's face was white. Tom, looking at him, knew that he saw the depth of Tom's fear. The president was blinking his eyes quickly.

"I could stand getting married except for that," said Tom.

"You can't give up," the president whispered.

"What am I going to do? You said a minute ago I was like your son. So I am your son. I'm a homosexual. Your son. When I touched Rick, I felt good about it. Sexually good. When Carolyn touches me that way, my skin crawls."

Tom sat down, his hands clenched. He felt his neck tightening again. Tears ran down his face. "I feel like an insect pinned to a card. I can't do. I can't move. I've prayed and prayed and I feel 'You're going to be all right.' And that is good, but it doesn't tell me what to do."

The president looked straight at Tom.

"What *am* I supposed to do?" said Tom.

The president didn't take his eyes from Tom.

"I can't do it. I can't do anything."

The president waited. Tom walked to the window and leaned his face against the cool glass. Neither spoke.

"It's better with it out." Tom said finally. "I waited too long to talk to someone." His shoulders started shaking. He looked back at the president, saw him blinking quickly, his face twisting.

"What are you going to do?" President Williams asked.

Tom walked to the door. "I'll tell her. I'll just tell her all of it."

"What then?"

Tom shook his head. "Then I'll probably be back." He started to open the door.

"Tom," President Williams said.

Tom looked back.

"Remember, you're still my son."

Missionary to the Mind

Dialogues With Myself: Personal Essays on Mormon Experience by Eugene England (Midvale, Utah: Orion Books, 1984), 217 pp.

Reviewed by Wm. Clayton Kimball, professor of government, Bentley College, Waltham, Massachusetts.

JOHN ROCHE PUBLISHED a very thick book of essays a number of years ago. He was, he lamented, an essayist in an age when the essay was not flourishing. Fortunately this did not prevent publication. Gene England has published a much slimmer book of "Personal Essays on Mormon Experience," an equally daunting task. Personal essays can only speak to people when there is some community of feeling, some commonality of background within which the writer can connect with the reader. Such communities are in short supply these days.

I don't know if the essays in this collection which spoke most powerfully to me would touch a person without a Mormon background. But I suspect that the more didactic of them would be accessible even to one who lacks "Mormon" experience. There are sixteen essays in the book, and in the foreword, England groups them into various categories. Some were delivered as formal addresses, and all have been published in some form in nearly every Mormon-oriented periodical now in existence. Over half of them were published in DIALOGUE, an appropriate circumstance since Gene was one of this journal's founders.

The essays range from theological explorations to descriptions of personal experiences. Some address traditional moral and ethical concerns, and others discuss particular challenges Mormons face. England seeks to ground his collection in Joseph Smith's statement that "by proving contraries, truth is made manifest." So, he seeks to test assertions and contradictions which arise out of Mormon experience.

For me, England's essays which dealt most directly with what it *feels* like to be a Mormon were the best. He has done something here which is far too rare. In most Mormon writing, we are told how we *should* feel. Our emotional and even our spiritual experience is prescribed. And we are given to understand that if our feelings do not match the prescription, they are not valid. However, in "Blessing the Chevrolet," "Going to Conference," "The Hosanna Shout in Washington, D.C.," and "Enduring," England simply describes how he and others actually felt in situations. His descriptions ignite memory and recast our experience in new ways, greatly enriching our emotional and spiritual lives in this telling. His example helps us realize that we need follow no one else's prescription to approach the Lord as long as we retain that crucial element: a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

England's essays span nearly two decades. When they are listed in chronological order (excluding the experiential ones) they reveal a constant concern with the problems of the time and demonstrate how the author has dealt with some of the most difficult issues facing Mormons — the denial of priesthood to blacks, the relationship of individuals to authority, and others. England must agree with C. S. Lewis, who reminds us that "progress is made only into a *resisting* material" (1970, 91). We hear, far too often, that discussion of such topics should be avoided for fear of destroying faith. England demonstrates an apprecia-

tion for the strengthening discipline of honest inquiry. Faith is far more vulnerable to atrophy than to challenge.

In listening to the concerns of a full generation of students, I've realized that while issues shift and new causes for concern arise, critics of Mormonism will beat the Church with any stick that comes to hand. It confirms one of G. K. Chesterton's most telling insights: "Men who begin to fight the Church for the sake of freedom and humanity end by flinging away freedom and humanity if only they may fight the Church" (1950, 258). But England gives examples of how one can explore questions *within* the walls of faith. His essays bespeak the blatant boredom of most church manuals.

During the years Gene worked at St. Olaf's College in Northfield, Minnesota, he also served as a branch president. I'm sure this gave him valuable experience in working with a Mormon congregation. But he put me in shock with his description of the tasks he took on as a new bishop: speaking each week, teaching a Sunday School class, counseling with all those young couples! At first I was reminded of the classic description of Teddy Roosevelt: he wanted to be the groom at every wedding and the corpse at every funeral. My own experience as a bishop has (thus far) permitted no such luxury as regular teaching or speaking. I'm aware of the psychic and physical demands his many roles would demand. It would be instructive for someone, perhaps Gene England, to put together a book of personal essays by bishops describing their feelings and experiences as they struggle to cope with this calling.

Gene England has spent most of his life around college students. He has been a catalyst for countless bright, young people, helping them confront and strengthen their own faith. I know of two young men whose first year of college he "mentored" and whose gospel and academic experience he helped deepen and greatly enriched. He has been a missionary to the mind for a whole generation.

Just how crucial such examples can be is illustrated by a passage from an essay written over forty years ago. C. S. Lewis spoke at Oxford University about "Learning in War-Time." "The intellectual life," he noted, "is not the only road to God, nor the safest, but we find it to be a road, and it may be the appointed road for us. Of course it will be so only so long as we keep the impulse pure and disinterested" (1949, 50).

England's positions in many of these essays may not be the conclusions others would reach, but the example he sets is worth everything. He shows us that one can question without arrogance and accept without compromise. This example should be instructive to those who think all questioning is arrogance as well as those who view the acceptance of any orthodox view as compromise.

A good example of this quality is found in a response written in 1973 to Lester Bush's study on the historical background of the "Negro Doctrine," published originally in DIALOGUE.

> The recent official statements of the Church concerning blacks and the priesthood . . . simply require Church members to accept, as part of their faith in a divinely directed Church, the revealed *policy* that those of black African descent are not now to receive the priesthood. I accept that, essentially at face value. I do not ordain blacks to the priesthood nor self-righteously (or in any other way) fulminate against the Church or its leaders, nor lobby for a revelation to change things. I trust our leaders are doing their job, seeking and awaiting a revelation, and I believe with all my heart that if such a revelation is received they will in no way hesitate to enforce it, no matter how or where unpopular. (p. 128)

Gene England's faith was amply justified, as we now can see.

I would not hesitate to recommend this book to any reader who seeks that rare combination — style and substance. If other writers are encouraged to publish similar collections, all the better. But with these essays England has set so high a

standard that few may safely risk, as he has, to open themselves so intimately to our gaze. He has enlarged and enriched the community with which his personal essays can "only connect."

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Sister Sense and Hard Facts

Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith by Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery (New York: Doubleday, 1984), xiii+394 pp., $19.95.

Reviewed by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, research historian with the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute and associate professor of English at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

SAMUEL JOHNSON coined the phrase, and Virginia Woolf gave it its place in the language: the "common reader." That person, Doctor Johnson wrote, by whose common sense, "uncorrupted by literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtilty and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honours" (Woolf 1953, 1). The last word on Linda Newell's and Val Avery's volume must indeed be spoken by the common readers among us, not by the academicians and scholars.

For the community of scholars and historians of Mormonism and those who read faithfully in the academic journals, *Mormon Enigma* holds much satisfaction and some surprises. They have followed its development over the past several years since its authors came among them, relative neophytes, ready to learn their ways and practice their art. They have applauded as Val and Linda worked out, piece by labored piece, the biographical puzzle, presenting their findings along the way in meetings of the Mormon History Association and in issues of the journals. Their papers, and the parallel writings of others, prepared the initiated ones for the final unfolding, which came not as a revelation so much as a canonization.

But the common readers, many of whom have remained to now innocent of the implications of newly researched material and newly interpreted old data, are finding much in the book to try the soul. Our more or less official histories of our foremothers, the sweetness and light "granddaughter biographies" we have had for decades, have not prepared us for the unstinting realities represented in this volume. Here, despite the softer touch with which the authors treated them, we must swallow some hard facts: Joseph Smith and Emma Hale eloped; their marriage was troubled by early jealousies, perhaps infidelity; over the issue of plural marriage Joseph deceived his wife and resorted to doubletalk with his enemies and with the Saints as well. Emma's trusted women friends, ancestors of many of us, betrayed their friend and benefactress; Brigham Young spread malicious lies about Emma after the martyrdom; young Joseph was ordained by his father to be his successor in church leadership. Not an easy dose for us who have been schooled in unquestioning reverence for our leaders and acceptance of the apostolic succession.

The relentless research that led Linda and Val to question these seeming foundations is phenomenal. One "common reader," at first glance, registered total confidence in the book because of the prodigious eighteen-page bibliography, the fifty-six pages of notes. Colleagues, en-

have complied. In our determination to avoid the unsubstantiated hagiography of the past we have required "warts and all" as though they somehow stamped truth on the depiction of goodness.

We are chronologically too close to Emma Smith, too near to our own roots. Time, and the expansion of our shared wisdom, will soften the focus, darken the background, fill in the too-sharp outline with overlapping textures until the portrait will emerge, deep and full. I pull from my shelf Jack Adamson and Hal Folland's *Shepherd of the Ocean*, a masterful renaissance life of Walter Ralegh, and see there the stars towards which Mormon biographers must aim. There is not a footnote in the book; instead there is a control of the material, the man and the milieu, such that one may read with full confidence.

With just such confidence have I listened to Val and Linda *talk* about Emma Smith. They know the woman as though she were their sister-mother-friend, whose faults they understand and forgive, whose strengths they recognize and praise. They do not tell the back-fence gossip when they speak of Emma. They admire her spunk in marrying the man she adored; they grieve with her in the deaths of her babies; they applaud her business acumen; and they feel enmity towards those who cause her pain. Forced into an academic corner, however, they must give us all they know, every line drawn with clarity often untempered by mercy.

Readers of Mormon biography, common readers and academicians alike, will learn someday to ask the right questions. Not relenting in our demand for truth, we will require character, not characteristics; spirit, not enthusiasms; thoughts, not just deeds; essence, not merely substance. And when we read *Mormon Enigma* with the right questions, the book can provide our answers.

In the meantime, while the historians pick their nits, yet grant the book their honors, the common readers continue to vote their choice. They will read the book, and in the reading, force themselves to gaged in similar sleuthing, are impressed with the variety of sources cited, far beyond what is readily available in the "usual" places. Those who know of their involvement with the Bidamon papers and the near-discovery of a collection of Emma Smith diaries respect the authors' diligence. It is my guess that there is extant nary a paper relating to Emma Smith which these two have not considered.

And their reading into the background materials, too, has been prodigious; they have set their Emma in the context, not of our time, but hers, as far as current understanding has clarified it. And despite the pruning required to suit the book to its publisher, the background is still very fully drawn.

And so they give us Emma Smith, meticulously documenting every assertion, as though their historian colleagues, with their demands for "proof," were scowling over their shoulders as they wrote. For all their care, the Newell-Avery book will not escape criticism from their colleagues — no book worth the printing ever does — for their interpretations of the sources, their almost indiscriminate trust in their informants, even (though historians must acknowledge the unavoidability of it) for their pro-Emma biases.

For many common readers, the book, however wonderful its revelations, is flawed for that very insistance on the trees to the obscuring of the forest. We tend to see the main characters too sharply, the details drawn according to the plentitude of materials available. Only in retrospect, in distancing ourselves from the immediacy of the scenes so completely drawn, do we find the woman Emma Smith. In the startling moment we tend to see only the difficulties and, in our minds, line Emma and Joseph up as pro- and antagonist, heroine and villain, rising saint and fallen angel. The book's, and our own, insistance on the minutiae of plural marriage forces that issue into the foreground to the near-exclusion of other equally significant facets of the woman. We readers have demanded every shred of evidence, and the authors

deal with the hard facts it presents, to the heightening of their own awareness of the mixture of human and divine in all of us — even prophets. As my favorite common reader wrote of her response to the book's Joseph, "I went on to put myself in his place, between Emma and a drawn sword. . . . But he loved the Lord and was committed to restoring a principle that was almost unbearably hard." This reader's sensitive reading justifies Samuel Johnson's faith in common readers of all ages: "Our authors, after nearly destroying our faith [in Joseph] let Emma restore it. [The] strong, quiet, intelligent, compassionate and loving woman [they show her to be] could not lay aside her moral training, yet she loved him so deeply that she couldn't surrrender him to his own God, but loved him to the end" (Ursenbach 1984). Without sacrificing Joseph we have an Emma Smith we can own, understand, and love.

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Genealogical Blockbuster

The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy, edited by Arlene H. Eakle and Johni Cerny (Salt Lake City: Ancestry Publishing Co., 1984), 748 pp., $39.95.

Reviewed by Gary Topping, Curator of Manuscripts, Utah State Historical Society.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE consumed with genealogical passion to profit from this new work of far-reaching and fundamental importance, though those who are will buy it as a matter of course and use it extensively. Furthermore, raw beginners and salty old pros alike will find it easy to use and inexhaustible in its benefits. Micheneresque in both title and scope, *The Source* is an indispensible adjunct to any genealogical project that values thoroughness and efficiency.

This is not a manual of research procedure; that function is to be filled by a companion volume, *Ancestry's Guide to Research*, scheduled for later publication (though referred to in *The Source* as already having appeared). An introductory section deals with basic research procedures and common pitfalls; but the book's main emphasis is on locating and using the various sources, published and unpublished, available to genealogists. A concluding section, "Special Resources," deals primarily with records on immigration and ethnic minorities, and seven appendices give current addresses of repositories and publishers useful to genealogists.

In spite of its formidable size, *The Source* is remarkably easy to use. The researcher can quickly locate a needed chapter by using an "information guide" at the beginning of each chapter, which gives, in graph form, the type of information contained in the records being considered, a table called "Could You Use This Chapter?" giving the chronological period in which such records were kept, and "Clues That You Should Consult These Records." Because some of the chapters are very lengthy and all are very detailed, these pages will save the researcher a great deal of time.

Copious illustrations appear, it seems, on almost every page. Facsimile examples of every significant record type are given. The researcher who has never seen a manuscript census schedule, for example, can practice using one, illustrated in this book, before entering a library. The techniques for using some sources, such as the handy Sanborn fire insurance maps, are even less well-known, and the illustrations in such cases are especially welcome. (Note that the Sanborn map illustrated on p. 524 is

transposed with the Chicago Archdiocesan record on p. 520.)

It is a further delight that, wherever possible, the illustrations have been selected for their human interest as well. Consider, for example, the Civil War pension application of L. H. Hathcock reproduced in full on pp. 285–91. Hathcock was wounded in the thigh during the battle of Murfreesboro and lost the use of his leg, which rendered him barely able to support his wife and three children. "I am trying to farm," he wrote. "With the help of my wife and children I can barely make a living. My neighbors are good to me and help me some."

Some of the illustrations go beyond the bare requirements of the text. In William Thorndale's chapter, "Land and Tax Records," there is a fascinating set of instructions (p. 221) on "Drawing Plat Maps." No doubt such instructions are not strictly necessary to Thorndale's purpose of teaching the use of land records, but they are most welcome nevertheless, and enrich the researcher's experience. Knowing how the sources are created helps us use them intelligently.

As nationally known and respected professional genealogists, the editors, Arlene Eakle and Johni Cerny, are understandably intolerant of typical genealogical frauds and failings such as bogus pedigrees and unauthenticated records. Likewise, they value the pursuit of genealogical truth wherever it may be found. Few of us would prefer to find an ancestor in a divorce court record, an indigent list, or a penitentiary roster, but Eakle and Cerny give detailed instructions for searching all of those sources. Genealogy as an ego-flattering enterprise will find no encouragement here, but seekers after unvarnished genealogical truth will be well armed.

Eakle and Cerny are prominent contributors as well as editors: Eakle's chapter on "American Court Records" is a real *tour de force* that could stand alone as a monograph, and Cerny's chapters on institutional records and ethnic minorities are, as far as I know, the first published descriptions of these records. The other authors are all impressively credentialed experts in specific research areas.

Ancestry Publishing Co. is a newcomer to the publishing scene. *The Source* is the firm's first book, and plans include publication of other books as well as expansion of its quarterly newsletter into a bi-monthly newsletter and a magazine.

The Federation of Genealogical Societies recently bestowed a special Award of Merit on *The Source*, the only volume ever so honored by that organization. If subsequent products continue the high standards established by *The Source*, we can look forward to their appearance with enthusiasm. Most new publishers begin with a modest product and try to work their way up; Ancestry has begun at the top and clearly intends to stay there.

Meet the Author of *The Prophet of Palmyra*

Thomas Gregg: Early Illinois Journalist and Author by John E. Hallwas (Macomb: Western Illinois University, 1983), 98 pp., $3.95.

Reviewed by Stanley B. Kimball, professor of history, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville.

I WAS ANXIOUS to review this biography of the founder of eight nineteenth-century newspapers in and near western Illinois (including the *Warsaw Message*), the author of *The History of Hancock County*, and, especially, the author of *The Prophet of Palmyra*. Just as I started, however, I found a caveat in the first paragraph of the preface: this monograph was written "from a perspective that does not center around the Mormons at Nauvoo."

That, of course, is a perfectly legitimate perspective from which to write but one

disappointing to me and, furthermore, one which again demonstrates that some, for better or worse, become known through what they oppose than what they propose. What I found was a short (98 pp.), good, well-written, useful, and modest account of a man of modest achievements in journalism, literature, politics, and horticulture in western Illinois for nearly half of the nineteenth century; he died in 1892. This monograph will be most useful to those involved in Illinois history, and in frontier journalism. Except where Gregg's career and activities connect with Mormon developments, however, it will be of little interest to readers of DIALOGUE.

This mini-monograph is well illustrated, extensively documented (175 notes), and presented in a straightforward, narrative style, rather than in an analytical or interpretive manner. There is no bibliography or index; and from the notes, it is apparent that Hallwas made no great effort to use Mormon sources. He cites *BYU Studies* twice, the Mormon Collection at the Chicago Historical Society six times, the Yale Mormon Papers once, and R. B. Flanders once. When the author goes into a second edition he might also use an 1844 Sarah (Mrs. Thomas) Gregg letter in the Illinois State Historical Library and an 1892 Thomas Gregg letter in the University of Kansas Library.

Now, before I conclude with a review of the book I wish Hallwas, professor of English and director of Regional Collections at Western Illinois University, *had* written, let me mention what will be of most use to readers of this journal.

Although Hallwas admits that Gregg despised "the whole system of Mormonism" (p. 47), his main line of argument vis-à-vis the Mormons is that Gregg tried to be fair, that he considered Mormons a political rather than a religious problem, and that, as an advocate of procedural democracy, Gregg never suggested violence as a solution. He wrote in 1843, "Let it suffice for the present to say *our* remedy must be a peaceful one—a remedy that will not interfere with the Majesty and Supremacy of the Law!" (p. 47) And, in spite of the fact that Gregg could and did write in 1844 that Joseph's "black heart would exult in carnage and bloodshed, rather than yield one iota of that power he had obtained by his hellish knavery" (*Warsaw Message*, 10 Jan. 1844), a quote Hallwas understandably does not use, I think he makes his point.

Many will be interested in the brief account of Gregg's (1837–39) residence in the abandoned Fort Des Moines at present-day Montrose, Iowa, where so many Mormons, including Brigham Young, lived for awhile after the Missouri expulsion. Curiously, there is no mention of the Mormons at this time. We do, however, learn a bit that is new about the land speculator, Isaac Galland, from whom Joseph Smith bought land in Illinois and Iowa.

During Gregg's subsequent Warsaw, Illinois, residence we are presented additional insights about the really great Mormon hater, Thomas Sharp, publisher of the rabid, Mormon-baiting *Warsaw Signal*, at that time the only non-Mormon paper in Hancock County. Gregg contributed a few items to Sharp, the beginning of their association. Later, in 1842, when the *Signal* temporarily ceased publication, Gregg acquired the press, launched his *Warsaw Message*, and continually urged a lawful solution to the problem until Sharp recommenced the *Signal* two years later.

As an editor and writer Gregg felt compelled for forty years to gather information on and try to explain the "Mormon Conflict." This collection formed the basis for his jaundiced *History of Hancock County* and the consistently negative *The Prophet of Palmyra*. It is Hallwas's account of Gregg's various efforts to explain the Mormon conflict which will probably be the most valuable part of this study for Mormon readers.

The small book has yet one more attraction for those who have pored (or may yet pore) over nineteenth-century local newspapers, often in vain, for illuminating facts about Mormon affairs — editors of Gregg's time and place were little con-

cerned with news and local events, but rather with poems, stories, travel items, editorials, speeches, and, of course, advertising.

I recommend this attractively priced book to all students of the Illinois period of Mormon history.

"The Same Organization"?

The First Urban Christians by Wayne A. Meeks (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 299 pp., $19.95.

Reviewed by Robert R. King, administrative assistant to a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

IN AN 1842 DESCRIPTION of Latter-day Saint beliefs written for John Wentworth of the *Chicago Democrat*, Joseph Smith said: "We believe in the same organization that existed in the primitive church, viz. apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc." Some have taken this to mean that Relief Society presidents were organizing the delivery of casseroles and homemade bread to homes with sick mothers and twelve-year-old deacons were passing bread and water in sacrament meetings during the first century.

In fact, there have been a number of efforts to clarify and explain what Joseph Smith meant by "the same organization that existed in the primitive church." James E. Talmage and others have argued the similarity of priesthood offices by citing a New Testament reference to match each of the current priesthood offices.[1] These equivalents, however, are tenuous in many cases. Luke (10:1, 17) reports that Christ sent out "seventy" to cities he planned to visit to prepare the way for him, and Hebrews (6:20–8:5) refers to Christ as the great high priest in the context of a discussion of Mosaic ritual. While there may have been priesthood offices of seventy and high priest then as now, these passages do not provide the evidence. In fact, careful study of the biblical texts and the few available historical records provides little evidence of a direct correlation in priesthood offices between ancient and modern churches.

The meaning of "the same organization" is made even more complicated by the pronounced evolution of Latter-day Saint organization between the early nineteenth and late twentieth centuries. Brigham Young's reorganization of stake and ward priesthood structure in 1877 was a significant departure from earlier practice, to name only one change. This raises the question of what "organization" Joseph Smith meant when he wrote to John Wentworth in 1842.

The list of offices enumerated in the sixth Article of Faith is somewhat troubling, although it is the same as that given in Ephesians 4:11. First, it includes names of offices that are no longer used (pastors, evangelists). The suggestion from Talmage that today's pastors are stake presidents and that evangelists are patriarchs is not really satisfactory since those offices existed in the Church in 1842 under the same names. Second, the list does not include some of the offices that are very common today which also existed both in 1842 and in the primitive church—e.g., bishops and deacons.

For Latter-day Saint students who want to probe deeper into the nature of the primitive church in an effort to come to grips with these questions, *The First Urban Christians* by Yale professor Wayne A. Meeks provides an excellent starting point. Meeks seeks to explain what it was like to be a Christian in the first century after

[1] James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1959), pp. 198–216; "Priesthood" and references for individual priesthood offices in the *Topical Guide* published in the Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible (1979), pp. 386–87; and John Tvedtnes, *The Church of the Old Testament* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1980), for an argument that "church organization" in ancient Israel was much the same as that of the contemporary church.

Christ. In the first part of the study, he describes the social milieu of the Roman city in the eastern Mediterranean where early Christianity began. Christianity, much like early Mormonism, flourished in urban areas rather than the conservative tradition-bound rural areas.

The second part of Meek's book focuses on the world of the Christian congregations. These assemblies of believers were organized around the household and existed both as separate bodies and as parts of the larger whole. Meeks analyzes how belief, ritual, language, organization, and government helped establish boundaries between these early Christian communities and their non-Christian neighbors.

The most significant contribution of Meeks's volume is its assistance in understanding the social and cultural world in which early Christians functioned, as a prerequisite to understanding what it was like to be a Christian. For example, the conception that candidates for baptism in all dispensations wore modest white robes (for example, as in Arnold Friberg's depiction of Alma baptizing at the Waters of Mormon), may be jarred by the information that

> Christian converts were baptized naked. Analogy with the Jewish rites might suggest that; it is explicit in the Roman practice described by Hippolytus and indicated in all the early portrayals of baptism in Christian art. What confirms the fact for the Pauline groups is the variety of metaphorical allusions to taking off and putting on clothing that we find in those parts of the letters that refer to baptism. Those allusions are of two sorts, as we shall see: the mythical notion of taking off the body, the 'old human,' and putting on instead Christ, the 'new human,' and the rather common ethical convergence of both types in the baptismal reminders of Pauline paraenesis is most easily accounted for on the assumption that the candidates from the beginning took off their clothes to be baptized and put them back on afterward, and that these natural actions were given metaphorical significance. (p. 151)

Meeks's discussion of first-century Christianity suggests some elements that are similar to modern Mormonism, but most are not what would generally be considered "organizational" matters. First, then as now, there was a sense of double identity. The church or *ekklesia* was both a local organization in which strong ties existed between local members of the group and a worldwide institution in which strong bonds linked members with believers in other cities and other lands (pp. 107–110). Mormonism, of course, shares this trait with some other religions.

Second, some similarities in offices exist, but they are limited. The only offices mentioned in the New Testament epistles are apostle (*apostolos*), bishop (*episkopos*), and deacon (*diakonos*). Evidence is quite strong that women held the office of deacon. Phebe (Rom. 16:1) is called a deaconess, and "wives and deacons" (1 Tim. 3:1, King James Version) could be more correctly translated "deaconesses" (Meeks, pp. 60, 79–80). The "general authorities"—a term not used in the epistles — are referred to as apostles and "fellow workers" or associates of Paul. The bishops and deacons were the local officers. Beyond these officers, however, the Pauline letters and other contemporary sources do not give much information about other church officers.

Third, and perhaps more important than the titles of offices, is the sense of cohesion and boundaries that bind believers and separate the believing community from the world. Meeks describes the "language of belonging" and the "language of separation" that served to emphasize the separateness of the early Christians from the Roman world that surrounded them (pp. 85–103). He also considers the role of ritual and belief in creating a separate world of believers (pp. 164–90). Particularly important, Meeks asserts, were beliefs about the nature of evil, repentance, and an imminent Second Coming (pp. 170–80, 183–90) — all of which are similar to contemporary Mormon beliefs.

For early Christians and Mormons, expelling those who violated group rules and maintaining group purity were important

elements in group solidarity and identity, although these elements are also present in many other cohesive religious groups. It is interesting that early Christian boundaries and those of contemporary Mormons involved elements of dress, diet, and such rituals as baptism. (See Robert R. King and Kay Atkinson King, "The Effect of Mormon Boundaries on Group Cohesion," DIALOGUE 17 [Spring 1984]: 61–75.)

The Meeks volume deserves to be read by Latter-day Saints. The effort to understand primitive Christianity will help us to understand what is truly universal in the gospel and what is simply cultural baggage. To the extent that we understand the real similarities of primitive Christianity and modern Mormonism, we will better understand the essential and eternal kernel of the gospel.

Emigrant Guides

The Latter-day Saints' Emigrants' Guide by W. Clayton, edited by Stanley B. Kimball with a biographical introduction by James B. Allen (Gerald, Missouri: The Patrice Press, 1983), 107 pp., $9.95.

Reviewed by Allan Kent Powell, Historic Preservation Research Coordinator, Utah State Historical Society and co-author of *Mormon Battalion Trail Guide.*

THE STORY OF THE WESTERN MOVEMENT runs deep in American and Mormon history. The rolling of wagons west toward Oregon, California, and Utah is as basic to our national experience as Plymouth Rock and Independence Hall. Sunbonneted women, sun-browned men, gallant leaders, hostile Indians, white-topped covered wagons, and sturdy oxen are familiar to the pioneer saga, but little known is the role of guidebooks. Few pioneers blazed new trails as they traveled west. Almost always they followed in the wagon tracks of an earlier group and usually with some kind of published emigrant guide to keep them on course.

Between 1842 and 1868 at least thirty-four emigrant guides were published dealing with the pioneer trail in Wyoming and Utah, and most were worthless as either emigrant or trail guides. One guide book, Lansford W. Hastings, *The Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California,* has been branded dangerous because of its association with the Donner-Reed tragedy of 1846.

The most valuable trail guides were those which took the traveler place by place and mile by mile from the eastern terminus to the western destination. The best is William Clayton's *The Latter-day Saints' Emigrants' Guide.* Published in 1848, the twenty-four-page guide is well known among students of Mormon history. It has been reprinted several times, notably as a facsimile appendix to Volume Three of B. H. Roberts's six-volume work, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*

The value of this 1983 edition is the biographical introduction to William Clayton penned by James B. Allen and the preface and notes provided by the long-time Mormon trail scholar, Stanley B. Kimball. It will find wide use by those interested in western trails, the Mormon pioneers' trek to Utah, and William Clayton.

In his biographical introduction, Allen outlines the life of this 1837 English convert to Mormonism and his career as a clerk, scribe, and recordkeeper. Clayton's contributions to Mormon and Western American heritage were significant and include the Mormon anthem, "Come, Come Ye Saints," and his journal, described as "one of the finest firsthand accounts available of the memorable crossing of the plains by the vanguard company of Mormon pioneers," (p. 1) and *The Latter-day Saints' Emigrants' Guide.*

Stanley Kimball's preface puts Clayton's immigrant guide in historical perspec-

tive, noting that it was the first and best guide to the Far West and was used by Mormon and non-Mormon travelers, especially California goldseekers. Kimball writes:

> Clayton provided, above all things, conciseness, accuracy, and practicality. He had furthermore, personally been over the route two times. He did not clutter up his pages with philosophical musings, fine writing, or any personal allusions. He clearly and briefly guided the emigrant from one identifiable feature (especially water sources) to another, giving the carefully measured distances between them and a cumulative list of miles traveled from Winter Quarters on the Missouri River as well as miles remaining to the City of the Great Salt Lake. His measurement of distances is his single most important contribution. (p. 31)

The well-known story is recounted of the concern for an accurate measurement of the Mormon trail, the disagreements by the 1847 pioneer company over mileage estimates, Clayton's discovery that 360 rotations of a wheel on Heber C. Kimball's wagon equalled one mile, his careful counting of the wagon wheel revolutions to compute an accurate distance, and the invention and production of a roadometer to measure the distance.

Kimball assesses the influences or possible influences on Clayton's work of earlier travel accounts, guides, maps, and contacts. He also reviews the shortcomings of the *Guide* — the lack of advice on preparing for the westward trek and how to protect emigrants from Indians — but finds it difficult to assess how much Clayton's guide was used by Mormon emigrants. The editor has located only three references to the guide in Mormon trail accounts and suggests that the guide was perhaps of little value after the first few years of Mormon immigration — because of the large number of non-English speaking converts, the fact that the trail was well known, and because most Mormon companies included individuals well acquainted with the trail. Nevertheless in 1848 the 5,000 published copies sold for $5 each with offers of $25 reported when the guidebook was unavailable.

Included in the edition is a section of contemporary maps of the Mormon Trail taken from the editors' 1979 volume *Discovering Mormon Trails*, and three historical maps: the 1823 map by Major Stephen H. Long of the country drained by the Mississippi River; the 1843 Fremont-Preuss map of the Platte River; and Mitchell's 1846 map of Texas, Oregon, and California. Seventeen black-and-white photographs of the trail are included, though most are of questionable quality. More and better-quality photographs would help to illustrate and document the trail more effectively, while more detailed maps of the trail would enhance the book's value as a present-day guide to the Mormon trail.

Paul: Early-Day Saint

Understanding Paul by Richard Lloyd Anderson (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1983), 448 pp. $8.95.

Reviewed by Horace M. McMullen, Westminster College and Pastor of Counseling Ministry, Wasatch Presbyterian Church, Salt Lake City, Utah.

AS A PROTESTANT minister who has taught a college course on the letters of Paul, I admittedly approached this book with some skepticism. Having read it, I found the book to be unquestionably thorough. Following presentations of the ancient world and the person and work of Paul, Anderson probes each of the letters in meticulous detail — as much as is possible in a single volume. Appendices deal with chronology, descriptions of Paul, baptism for the dead, and a glossary of ancient sources. But the author, a professor of religion at Brigham Young University, confirmed my skepti-

cism — his is a comprehensive study of Paul and the epistles from a strictly Mormon point of view, one which uncritically perceives Paul as the forerunner of Joseph Smith (p. 67).

In the preface the author states his thesis, noting that "modern revelation adds critical insight to Paul and . . . how well Paul supports modern revelation" (p. ix). Implementing this contention the author discerns in the letters of Paul and the Acts report of Paul's missionary activities, strong, if not always conclusive, evidence of distinctively LDS doctrines: testimony to a new revelation (p. 5); the truth of the restored church (p. 7); premortal life (p. 19); emphasis on marriage — that Paul was married (pp. 24, 25); salvation not by faith alone (p. 51); apostasy at the end of the early Christian period (p. 65); centralized church leadership and authority (p. 112f); family relationships sealed for eternity (pp. 124–25); and baptism for the dead (p. 126).

This contrasts sharply with what other scholars say about Paul and his message. For example, Gunther Bornkamm, professor of New Testament exegesis at Heidelberg University, points to Paul as a highly controversial figure in the primitive church — revered and loved, feared and hated. He considers the difference, the contradictions between reports in the Acts and the letters. Further, contends Bornkamm, "his theology is as little a system of universal timeless truths and religious experiences as his life was simply a series of favorable or adverse events" (1971, xxvii). In a similar vein, Leander E. Keck, professor of New Testament at Candler School of Theology speaks of "Paul the Problem": "To understand better Paul's place in early Christianity it is necessary to see that the NT itself incorporates alternative interpretations of the gospel. Paul does not speak for everyone" (1979, 5). So "understanding Paul" is neither a simple exercise nor does it lead to definitive answers. As Paul was a problem to the early church, highly controversial in both person and precept, so his thought has remained throughout subsequent centuries.

The diversity of interpretations need not lead, however, to complete skepticism. Though Paul was a complex figure and his writing betrays a strong occasionalistic factor, nonetheless certain motifs, like facets of a gem, do emerge. Scholars usually probe for the coherent theme in Paul's theology, but I failed to find the same search in Anderson. J. Christaan Beker, professor of biblical theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, discerns it in the apocalyptic setting for the ultimate triumph of God (1980, ix). Markus Barth, professor of New Testament, University of Basel, Switzerland, contends that "justification of the godless by Jesus Christ, by grace, by faith alone, is among the central topics" of the letters (1974, 34). William D. Davies, George Washington Ivey, professor of Christian Origins, Duke University, considers that "being in Christ" was the central concept (1980, 86–110). In an earlier day, Albert Schweitzer located the center of Paul's thought in his eschatological mysticism (1931, 205–26). So there are foci to Paul's thought; but unless Paul is straitjacketed, we cannot discern a clear, final comprehensive pattern for either the Christian community or the believer's life.

This brings us to the fundamental issue of hermeneutics, or the interpretation of scripture. Anderson assumes that because the letters are scriptural, then each verse — whether at the core of Paul's message or a contingent comment — has final authority. Again, and contrary to most contemporary scholarship, Anderson assumes the Pauline authorship of all the letters traditionally attributed to the apostle. This leads to confusion, for passages in the pastoral epistles and Hebrews contrast sharply with the messages of, say, Romans and the Corinthian correspondence. The authorship of Ephesians has been warmly debated but the notable commentator, Markus Barth, does come down on the side of Paul. With most of the corpus of New Testament letters attributed to Paul, Anderson has such

a variety of material at hand that by selecting isolated texts he can substantiate any desired tenet as authentically Pauline.

This methodology leads to the supporting of significant doctrinal statements or significant practices on slim evidence, several of which have already been noted above: the existence of premortal life, a new revelation, that Paul was married, that Paul was a member of the Twelve, and that Paul presents a final and authoritative pattern for the organization of the church. At one point, Anderson simply asserts that Arabia, to which Paul purportedly went (Gal. 1:17), need only mean the environs of Damascus (p. 29).

On the matter of sources, I missed references to most of the contemporary Pauline studies — works by Bornkamm, Beker, Deissman (one reference), Davies, Keck, Kasemann, Schweitzer, and Barth, among others. The commentaries of F. F. Bruce received some attention. The ancients, the Church Fathers of the second and third centuries, and the historians are frequently noted. A bibliography would have been a helpful addition.

The work is unquestionably the fruit of thorough study of the New Testament letters and the book of Acts, informed by an earnest and devout spirit. As such it will speak meaningfully to members of the LDS community. Paul was an early-day saint but he eludes co-option as the first Latter-day Saint. For that matter, no church can lay exclusive claim to him or his thoughts.

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Bleaker by the Dozen?

Life in Large Families: Views of Mormon Women, by H. M. Bahr, S. J. Condie, and K. Goodman (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), 254 pp.

Reviewed by Godfrey J. Ellis, Associate Professor of Family Relations and Child Development, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater and executive secretary, Stillwater Stake.

"TODAY," SAID THE TEACHER, "we have a special activity. We're going to have a survey and find out how many brothers and sisters we all have." One little girl from an LDS family of six children became the object of cutting questions and negative comments after class.

The incident provoked a family crisis, and the child became ill. Her mother said, "You know, they were asking her [questions] like she was some kind of really weird, awful person and she came home and vomited and was really, really upset. We spent a lot of time with her. I thought that we had resolved the problem but the next day she came home and said, 'Guess what? The teacher did that in all the classes and I wasn't the worst one. There was one that had eight'" (p. 35).

There is no question that *Life in Large Families* is fascinating and thought-provoking. Such memorable stories draw the reader into the book on both an emotional and intellectual plane. Bahr, Condie, and Goodman have done a masterful job of detailing life with a twenty-four-hour-a-day baseball team. Chapters on women's roles and the self-perceptions of the moth-

ers, stress and depression, the marital relationship with an ever-present audience, the financial considerations of feeding a small army three times a day, and the elusive search for purpose in life, recreate the social realities of living in large families in the 1980s.

The reader from a large family will likely find validation; the reader from a small family will be incredulous. Commented one mother: "I don't think there will ever come a time when I won't want a baby. I think there has got to come a time when I've got to face that fact that there won't be any more babies at our house, and I've shed a few tears over that" (p. 56).

The work not only has obvious scientific value, it presents a qualitative, interview-based alternative to the usual dry statistics of the quantitative approach. More than that, large families have typically received bad press in both scientific and lay literature. For example, most correlation-based conclusions identify such dysfunctional correlates of large families as low parent-to-child affect, low child self-esteem and IQ, lower family education, income difficulties, and so on. *Life in Large Families* presents quite a different picture.

The relevant variable which explains the extreme range of findings related to large families may well be the theological bases for the fertility decisions rather than the methodology employed to investigate them. Indeed, the chapter on the impact of religious beliefs is the heart of the book. But it is also in the book's treatment of these religious beliefs that some concerns arise. Two such concerns stand out in my mind.

First, the religious convictions of the mothers interviewed and the philosophical value of those positions are highly personal and intimate. The verbatim quotations often represent fragments of theological thought that are snatched from a vast and complex fabric of religious dogma. To examine these highly personal beliefs out of context — as if they were anthropological oddities — may do both the mothers and the beliefs a serious disservice. These brief and isolated scraps of dogma, expressed by sometimes inarticulate respondents, sound trite and silly when viewed from an outsider's perspective. I found myself, on the one hand, wanting to laugh at some of their statements, and at the same time, to come rushing to their defense.

Second, undergirding this and similar projects is the assumption that one can effectively study one's own beliefs — as long as the presentation wears the trappings of academic objectivity. Granted, it is not impossible for the social scientist to study his or her own personal system of thought. But it is difficult. A feminist who studies feminism, a homosexual studying the gay lifestyle, or a Latter-day Saint studying the LDS community should be doubly circumspect about his or her own value positions and not cover the issues with a detached "academic/objective" writing style. As Baumrind (1980, pp. 648–50) has pointed out: "The last decade has seen a crisis of confidence in the logical positivist research paradigm. . . . It is not that (the) values and notions of linear causation should be dismissed as useless or absolutely false, but rather that so-called objective, logical positivist values... should no longer be permitted to dominate social and developmental research endeavors."

I would have been more comfortable if the authors had acknowledged their own position in relation to the values discussed and had dealt squarely with the issue of investigator bias as it potentially affected the collection and presentation of the data.

But with these two concerns out of the way, I strongly applaud the authors for their frank and comprehensive treatment of a misunderstood lifestyle. *Life in Large Families* is well worth reading by LDS and non-LDS alike.

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A Shaded View

Sunbonnet Sisters: True Stories of Mormon Women and Frontier Life by Leonard J. Arrington and Susan Arrington Madsen (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1984), 161 pp.

Reviewed by Susan Sessions Rugh, administrative assistant, Enrico Fermi Institute, University of Chicago and graduate student in American history.

ANOTHER "SISTERS" book — enough for a quartet. Where *Mormon Sisters* is a topical approach to pioneer women's history, *Sister Saints* a compilation of biographical essays, and *Women's Voices* a selection of diary excerpts with historical commentary, *Sunbonnet Sisters* sets out to tell the story of the young pioneer girl. As such it takes a refreshing introductory look aimed at the popular Mormon market, thereby making a valuable contribution to the "sisters" genre.

The book is consciously written to include a younger audience in its readership, though this by no means excludes those past adolescence. The authors' major premise is that as "the child is the father of the man . . . we can learn much about pioneering by studying the lives of the girls who went through the experience" (p. ix). They further assert that "these lives are a splendid example and model for today's women" (p. 10). The stories of seventeen women are told, with a skillful interweaving of history and lessons from the past.

The book is organized in four sections:

— "In the Early Days of the Church" (Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, Elizabeth Haven Barlow, Drusilla Dorris Hendricks, Jane Snyder Richards, and Rachel Emma Woolley Simmons)

— "Four Who Crossed the Ocean" (Patience Loader Rozsa Archer, Anna Gaarden Widtsoe, Minnie Petersen Brown, and Susanna Goudin Cardon)

— "Pioneering in the West" (Mary Jane Mount Tanner, Sariah Louisa Chamberlain Redd, Sarah Endiaetta Young Vance, and Catherine Heggie Griffiths)

—"Second-Generation Achievers" (Lula Greene Richards, Ellis Reynolds Shipp, Annie Wells Cannon, and Mary Elizabeth Woolley Chamberlain).

Sunbonnet is more interpretive than the other "sisters" books in giving a detailed picture of the day-to-day existence of a pioneer woman. As we follow our heroines from Italy or Norway or New York, we cover much historical ground as well. I learned of relief work on the Saints' behalf by fellow citizens of Illinois, the realities of crossing the Atlantic in a ship's hold, the unpleasantness of collecting and cooking with buffalo chips, and the tragic details of the handcart catastrophe. A reader will obtain a basic introduction to the history of the Waldensians, Utah sericulture, the Sunday School newspapers of young people, and many more historical snippets.

We also get some amusing glimpses into the many-layered dress of these girls and the long and short of pioneer courtship. In fact, the book abounds with local color. We share in the "home evening" of Anna Gaarden Widtsoe in Norway, complete with singing, scripture reading, poetry recitation, and telling of Norse tales. We can almost smell the warm milk as we see twelve-year-old Mamie Woolley Chamberlain milk an average of twenty cows a day every summer with a group of boys and girls: "The young men wore blue overalls and heavy shirts while the girls wore big, sack aprons made of blue denim over their dresses and red bandannas to cover their hair. The milk was poured into a large vat in the cheese room" (p. 142). Painless history to be sure, and of "real women," not those saints who make it past Correlation to be deified in our Relief Society manuals.

Some surprising findings emerge from the authors' study of approximately 200 diaries and reminiscences. Half of the

women were foreign born, and a large number of them "suffered because of the early death of one or both parents" (p. 1). Deaths of siblings were also common — "of those who survived infancy, about one-fourth died before they reached sixteen" (p. 109). As compensation for these and other dangers of pioneer life, pioneer parents are portrayed as watchful creators of a warm and loving home environment. Most families moved every two or three years, interrupting the children's formal education.

As befits a book directed at a Mormon audience and more especially "the youth," there are lessons to be learned from these lives. Rachel Woolley Simmons pays for excessive bathing with a whipping and sore neck but is more pained by a guilty conscience. Patience Archer's escape to a county fair was marred by "the idea of my father and mother being angrey [sic] with me" (p. 52). Susanna Cardon's decision to abandon the beloved Englishman who did not share her faith and cross the plains to marry a kind cousin lingers painfully — closer to life's truths than the common "one and only" romantic notion.

In some ways women's lives remain much the same. Mary Jane Mount Tanner at age fourteen was left reeling from her parents' divorce. And the tightrope of career and family is illustrated by Sarah E. Young Vance's struggles to become a midwife. She locked her three "lively" young sons in the rooming house while attending classes, with generally harmless yet predictable results. "One day they came home chewing gum which they had picked up on the street" (p. 104). We can certainly understand Lula Greene Richards's reasoning as she gives up a five-year editorship of the *Woman's Exponent* to raise her children, choosing "the happy medium between being selfishly home bound, and foolishly public spirited" (p. 124).

The book is not without flaws. Polygamy is mentioned only once or twice — a glaring omission in the account of the life of Jane Snyder Richards. How can one understand her without knowing of her relationship to sister-wife Elizabeth McFate? Often the stories end lamely with a generalization like "she lived a life of rich satisfaction and accomplishment" (p. 25) and paragraphs from a eulogy. The prose is somewhat sentimental in places as are such story subtitles as "Undaunted Through Danger and Hardship" or "From Milkmaid to Mayor."

Sunbonnet Sisters appears to be the first "sisters" book directed at the wider church market. As such it veers toward the tradition of what Claudia Bushman has called "our glorious pioneers." As the market for "sisters" books widens, there is the urge to sanitize. Feminist ideas are soft-pedaled, polygamy shrouded, virtues paraded, and faults shaded. The tension is difficult to resolve: should we preach to the converted or reach more with less?

This book proclaims that it is for young women, and I would certainly recommend it to that audience. After all, isn't that what the "sisters" books are for — to fill out our Young Women lessons, prop up our morality, enliven our talks? This book fits the bill. It puts its best foot forward, but we must thoughtfully check the compass.