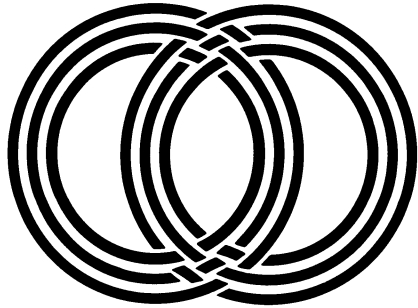


DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT





DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT

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to secular life. It is edited by
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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 Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-day Saints or of the editors.*

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Much to Applaud

In the Guggenheim or in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, I have been awed at Picasso and others. I can, with appreciation, imagine the works of Trevor Southey being acclaimed there. He is, indeed, an artist. I remember back thirty year ago, in New York's Lincoln Center when I was enthralled by the New York Ballet's rendition of "The Prodigal," as expressed in the choreography of George Balanchine. The grace and beauty of the seduction was an experience charged with emotion. I was grateful for the ballet as a vehicle of human sensitivity.

Now, I think of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* and ask: why do the editors choose twelve pages of nudes to dominate the spring 1993 issue? It seems as inappropriate to me as putting King Benjamin's speech to his people from the tower in *Playboy* magazine. This one person, the writer of this letter, has to ask if *Dialogue's* "accurate scholarship and responsible judgment" identity is being overruled by a motive of reform and crusade.

You have so much in *Dialogue* that I applaud. I have been happy to have it on our coffee table when the home teachers or others visit. Now, I shall probably put this issue "in the closet" when they are expected. In reading your excellent statement, "Editor's Introduction: The Times—They Are A'

Changin'," I turned the front cover flap over to hold my place on the page. But I had to turn it back; the "laid out" male nude was too distracting.

Paul W. Hodson
Salt Lake City, Utah

A Great Mitzvah

Just a brief note for the moment . . . I want to express my sincere thanks and gratitude for your efforts. I do this with full knowledge that in all probability with the spring and summer issues this year that you have received some negative comments, or am I wrong? Rest assured what you are doing is a great mitzvah (a good deed) and especially now is badly needed.

Just one question though—with articles like D. Michael Quinn's on Ezra Taft Benson in the summer issue (a superb, but nonetheless very disturbing piece)—do you have any suggestions on how best to introduce *Dialogue* to a population that is repeatedly told to be wary of dissent (and hence apostasy)?

P.S. How about this on a bumper sticker: "*Dialogue: The Antidote to Theological Correctness*"!

Orin L. Ryssman
Westminster, California

Courageous and Inspirational

Thank you for the outstanding spring 1993 issue. I have subscribed to *Dialogue* from issue number one and the spring 1993 was one the most courageous, thought-provoking, and inspirational issues to date.

Thank you for the beautiful art work on the cover and illustrations throughout. Trevor Southey is a great artist whose work I have always admired; I am delighted he was able to supply the issue with such splendid examples of his art.

I wish you well with further issues and hope you will continue to challenge us more with fine writing and art.

Michael Ensign
Toluca Lake, California

Matching Donations

A friend gave me a copy of your spring 1993 issue featuring the reproduction of Trevor Southey's figures. A courageous issue!

The same friend sent me a letter to you critical of the very art I admired. Please don't retreat because of such criticisms. Society has paid too high a price with too many lives, too many times for bigotry in general and homophobia in particular for these vices to be indirectly supported by overly cautious treatment in literature.

An artist myself, I scrape by, unable to afford a luxury like *Dialogue* very often. But this occasion, your vital issue, the visual art, the fear letter, calls for a personal response. Enclosed is \$30 for the DIALOGUE Foundation. I am matching that by sending a check for \$30 to Mr. Southey. I invite your readers to

rise to this occasion in support of both your works.

Helaman Ferguson
Laurel, Maryland

Radical Fringes

I am very happy with the summer issue. The articles are all first rate and really contribute to *Dialogue's* image as a pathbreaking scholarly journal. My only wish is that Michael Quinn would have discussed how the Ezra Taft Benson-J. Reuben Clark political ideology won in the Mormon United States. Even though the radical fringes were denounced in the fall of 1992, the ultra-conservatism prevailed. And I enjoyed the Ernest L. Wilkinson article by Gary Bergera. There are some ironic twists when it is put next to Quinn's article. The footnotes in both articles are fantastic because they document that twentieth-century material can be found.

I enjoyed the spring issue as well, except for the art. Keep up the good work.

F. Ross Peterson
Logan, Utah

Thinking and Open Minded

First of all I would like to thank you for your fine work in publishing *Dialogue*. The articles keep me thinking and help me to be open-minded. Some articles also motivate me to be a better Christian. So it's good to read how others have acted under special circumstances.

Though I don't agree always with everything (because of my own experi-

ences) it helps me to be tolerant. *Dialogue* keeps me also informed about problems, changes, and doings of members in much larger communities of Latter-day Saints.

Joachim M. Enger
Bad Vilbel, Germany

Love Lessens Fears

In the summer of 1966 while Bro. Reed Benson and his apostle father were fighting for freedom I was humbly yet gladly serving among rural Mississippi black folk in efforts to expand both freedom and brotherly love. Fighting for freedom does not lessen fears. Love does. If man is a divine "animal" it is wise and well to appeal to this divinity. The gospel of Jesus Christ enables freedom to the degree that each of us utilizes our light and love and shares that with our brothers and sisters.

I greatly appreciate the D. Michael Quinn *Dialogue* report in the summer 1993 issue. In my view Quinn's message is for *each* Saint to find ways to help Jesus, in love and freedom, build the Kingdom.

Howard W. Johnson
Lake George, Colorado

Two Questions

I enjoyed the spring 1993 issue of *Dialogue*. In particular I enjoyed the essays by Lavina Fielding Anderson and Paul Toscano. However, as I read these two essays I kept asking myself two questions: "Why do they stay?" and "Why did they join in the first place?" Sister Anderson and Brother Toscano,

indeed all Mormon "intellectuals," remind me of people whose spouses were abusive before they married them and continue to be abusive but (a) they still married them, knowing they were abusive, (b) wish to change the abusive spouse when they knew what they were getting into, and (c) continue to take the abuse rather than mustering the courage to leave.

Mormonism is not like other religions. Mormonism claims to have a direct link to God. Either you believe that it does and follow the prophet without question or you don't believe it, in which case you should leave. People who join the Mormon church do so not because of its commitment of free thinking and intellectual honesty but because it offers answers to questions about which humanity feels generally insecure. They do not wish to have "intellectuals" raising questions about these answers or about the men who have claimed to have received these answers from the Almighty himself.

The entire foundation of Mormonism rests on the credibility of its prophet. If the prophet is not right on matters of doctrine, social matters, etc., then Mormonism is in no way a unique religion but simply another conglomerate of men's opinions. This is Mormonism. I'm not sure what people expect from this religion. They want divine authority and a man to speak to God. Then they want to be able to disagree with God's degrees and remain in good standing. Either he speaks for God or he doesn't. It really is that simple.

Don't get me wrong. I agree with Sister Anderson and Brother Toscano. They as well as others have been abused. But the abuse is not an aberration, it is simply the logical progression of doctrine. When people believe that they are God's mouthpieces this is the way they

behave. Mormonism is by definition authoritarian and to a large extent totalitarian. If you don't like it, leave! I did.

Brian K. Dalton
Downey, California

A Little Confused

After reading D. Michael Quinn's excellent article on Mormon political conflicts in the summer 1993 issue, I'm still a little confused. Perhaps it's the labels "conservative" and "liberal" I don't understand. I had always thought of Spencer W. Kimball and David O. McKay as the two most liberal presidents of the LDS church since I joined in 1959. Joseph Fielding Smith and Harold B. Lee were, until Ezra Taft Benson, the most conservative presidents, I had thought. Maybe David O. McKay's liberalism was in allowing all voices, even untraconservatives, to freely express their thoughts. I am also surprised that Boyd K. Packer is a Democrat. He seems among the most conservative of the current twelve apostles.

I am also somewhat surprised that Mark E. Petersen was opposed to ultra-conservative views. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in geography, I was called to serve a mission in the area of my first choice: Tahiti (French Polynesia). Before leaving, I wrote to Mark E. Petersen to question statements he had made about the origin of the Polynesians. He wrote back telling me that this issue was of no relevance to my mission, and so I put it out of my mind for the next two and a half years. However, toward the end of my mission, an assistant to the mission president confided to me that they had received letter from

Elder Petersen warning them to keep an eye on me. When I asked why they didn't inform me of this, he said my missionary performance was satisfactory and there was no need to discuss it. Lavina Fielding Anderson's essay in the spring 1993 issue was thus of personal interest to me as well.

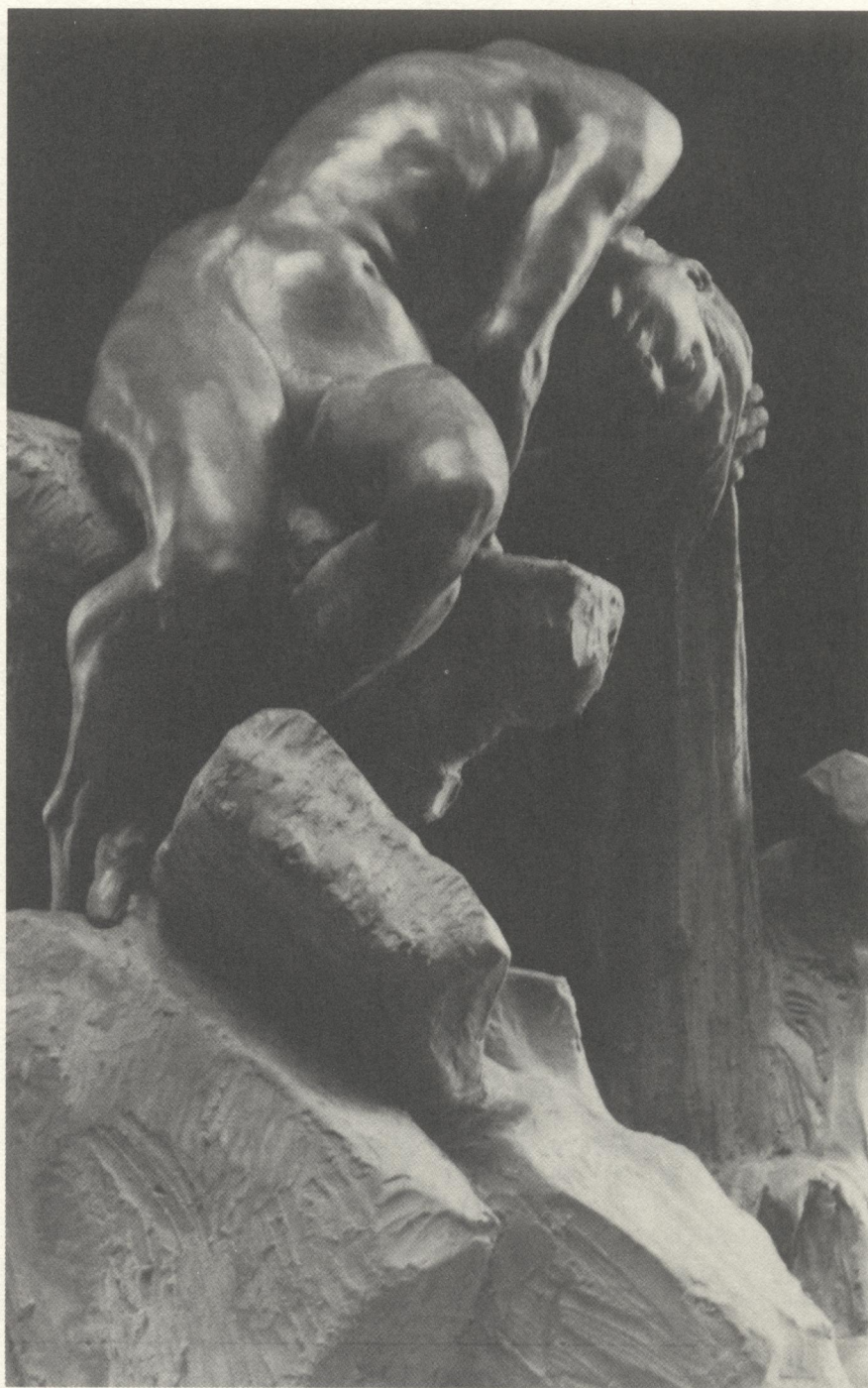
By the way, for your readers' information, the Social Credit Part of Canada, despite its name, is not a socialist party. My parents (non-LDS) were active in the Social Credit Party and personal acquaintances of N. Eldon Tanner, Solon Low, and other LDS church members who were leaders in the Social Credit movement. Most Canadians would consider the Social Credit Party right of center, and perhaps even right of the Progressive Conservative Party.

Robin R. Lyons
Mililani, Hawaii

This Great Endeavor

As one of the original and continuous subscribers to *Dialogue*, I have quite often felt the urge to write a note and to communicate with you. However, I have learned that if I postpone the matter long enough, my need to communicate with you subsides and I save the job of writing. However, I enjoyed your last edition (summer 1993) so very much that I thought that I should tell you about it. I surely respect you folks who spend so much time and energy in this great endeavor.

Carwin H. Linford
Afton, Wyoming



Patriarchal Blessings and the Routinization of Charisma

Irene M. Bates

Patriarchal blessings contemplate an inspired declaration of the lineage of the recipient, and also, where so moved upon by the Spirit, an inspired and prophetic statement of the life mission of the recipient, together with such blessings, cautions, and admonitions as the patriarch may be prompted to give for the accomplishment of such life's mission, it being always made clear that the realization of all promised blessings is conditioned upon faithfulness to the gospel of our Lord, whose servant the patriarch is.¹

THE POLICY OF RECORDING PATRIARCHAL BLESSINGS, copies of which are deposited in the office of the LDS Church Historian, affords a valuable picture of cultural change in the church, perhaps reflective of changes in American society in general.² In the interests of privacy, however, the church does not allow access to its copies of blessings, unless there is proof of blood relationship to the recipient. The researcher, therefore, must access blessings recorded in journals, those appearing in other manuscripts, and any blessings which individuals may choose to release for examination and publication. All of the 744 blessings upon which this study is based are drawn from these sources.³

1. First Presidency [David O. McKay, Stephen L Richards, and J. Reuben Clark, Jr.] to all stake presidencies, 28 June 1957, in Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), 504.

2. For a valuable exploration of nineteenth-century American culture, see Daniel Walker Howe's introductory essay in *Victorian America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976).

3. The idea that patriarchal blessings are too "sacred" to be shared is a relatively recent

Five hundred and sixty of these blessings were bestowed during the nineteenth century. Early Saints were faithful in keeping journals, and over time they have become accessible to researchers. Most of the nineteenth-century blessings used in this study are from these and other manuscripts, with less than 7 percent from published sources. It was more difficult to gain access to twentieth-century blessings. With the current official emphasis on the privacy of patriarchal blessings many members are reluctant to share them. Of those who responded to my request for copies, many donors wished to remain anonymous, and twenty-eight recipients simply filled in questionnaires relating to specific themes. While this sample of blessings is limited and cannot be regarded as representative in a statistical sense, it does appear to be a random sampling and to provide clear indications of significant cultural change. In examining this sample, I was able to distinguish twenty-three early recurring themes, eleven of which fell into disuse after the turn of the century.

I will compare the time periods 1833-99 and 1900-80, but the dates are not simply arbitrary. The 1890 Manifesto ending the practice of plural marriage had an obvious impact on the content of blessings, some of which had referred to promises of "many wives." A period of adjustment followed the Manifesto, and it was not until 1904 that plural marriage became grounds for disciplinary action by the church. Other intrusions by the larger society had already brought changes for the Saints; for example, the railroads and the discovery of gold had eroded some of Utah's isolation. But with the Manifesto and subsequent statehood for Utah, granted in 1896, there began a process of accommodation. By the turn of the century compromises allowed for more friendly relations with American society. These enabled the church to resume missionary work and renew efforts toward the "gathering of Israel." But converts would gather to a church much changed in terms of its social values and expectations. Patriarchal blessings reflect these changes.

Apostle John A. Widtsoe once cautioned the Saints, "Since patriarchs are but men, they are subject to human frailties. Their manner of speech and thinking is reflected in their blessings."⁴ In a social system as cohesive as Mormonism, it follows that blessings embrace the imagery, language,

one. In the early days of the church such blessings were bestowed at "blessing meetings" where all might hear and appreciate them. Most of the blessings included in this essay are available to researchers in journals and diaries, which suggests that the writers intended others to read them. Other blessings were shared personally for the express purpose of this study, the aim of which is to show yet another interesting and rich aspect of Mormon religious culture.

4. John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, comp. G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954), 234.

and content of the social climate of the church in any particular time period. And with the Mormon belief in continuous revelation on all levels of the community, patriarchs would be expected to address current concerns. General observations can be made, therefore, relative to change over time. To this end we shall look at several aspects of patriarchal blessings: first, declarations of lineage; second, changes in major prophetic themes; third, adjustments in the content of blessings given to women; and fourth, changes in policies or practices in the administration of blessings. Finally, some general observations will be made.

DECLARATIONS OF LINEAGE

Mormons take literally God's promise that Abraham "shall become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him." Patriarch Abraham was told, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 18:18, 22:18). Jacob passed on this heritage through the twelve tribes of Israel. And Ephraim, because of the faithfulness and integrity of his father, Joseph, inherited the birthright in Israel. Anciently, the birthright endowed the firstborn with certain special blessings, rights, powers, and privileges (see Gen. 25:24-34; 27; 43:33; 1 Chron. 5:1-2, for references to birthright). Modern Mormon revelation refers to the gathering of the Lost Tribes of Israel who will receive their blessings at the hands of the children of Ephraim (D&C 133).⁵ Latter-day Saints believe they will receive the promised blessings through a specific tribe. Declarations of tribal lineage in patriarchal blessings have been seen variously over time as designating: (1) literal blood relationships, (2) transformations of the blood, (3) adoptions into certain tribes, and (4) simply the tribe through which one may expect future blessings. The first mention of lineage in patriarchal blessings appears to have been made on 9 December 1834 when Joseph Smith, Sr., blessed his family. Among other things, he said to his eldest son, Hyrum, "I now ask my heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ, to bless thee with the same blessing with which Jacob blessed his son Joseph, for thou art his true descendant, and thy posterity shall be numbered with the house of Ephraim . . ."⁶

Subsequent blessings given by Father Smith referred to recipients as being "through the loins of Ephraim" or "of the lineage of Ephraim," or simply thou art "an Ephraimite."⁷ The inference that most recipients were

5. The gathering of Israel and the role to be played by Ephraim is foretold in Jeremiah 31:9-18.

6. Blessing of Hyrum by his father, Joseph Smith, Sr., 9 Dec. 1834, Smith family records, private possession.

7. Blessing of Abel Butterfield by Joseph Smith, Sr., 8 Dec. 1836, Research Library and

literal descendants of the House of Israel was repeated by subsequent patriarchs. William Smith referred to the priesthood power and authority being confined to "that Royal stock and noble blood that was not allowed to mingle among the nations in order to preserve the purity of the sanctuary of the Lord and the Holy Priesthood from adulteration."⁸ Harriet Knowlton was assured by Patriarch Isaac Morley, "Thy name is enrolled with the daughters of Abraham in the Lamb's Book of Life; for thy descent is from Jacob (notwithstanding thou hast much of the gentile blood running in thy veins)."⁹

Patriarchs continued to refer to a blood relationship with the tribes of Israel. In 1929, Patriarch Hyrum G. Smith stated,

At the present time in the Church the great majority of those receiving their blessings are declared to be of the house and lineage of Ephraim, while many others are designated as members of the house of Mannasseh; but up to the present time we have discovered that those who are leaders in Israel, no matter from where they come, no matter out of what nation they have come, are of Ephraim; while the blood of Mannasseh is found in the tribes and nations of the Indians of North and South America.¹⁰

In a letter addressed to eighth patriarch Eldred G. Smith, 20 February 1961, the writer noted that, according to the Church Historian's Office, patriarchal blessings had been given through ten of the twelve tribes of Israel, the two not mentioned being the tribes of Issachar and Asher. And fifteen other lineages had been named in blessings, including that of Cain.¹¹ The patriarch, replying to another inquiry in 1971, pointed out that "names of biblical characters [that are] not tribes of Israel" should not be used in patriarchal blessings.¹²

Archives, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, MO, hereinafter RLDS archives. Similar phrasing was used in the blessings of others. Joseph Smith, Sr., did not always declare the tribal lineage of those he blessed, however.

8. Blessing of Francis A. Brown by William Smith, 9 Sept. 1845, William Smith Patriarchal Blessing book, Theodore A. Schroeder Collection, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison. Brigham Young reportedly taught that Joseph Smith was a prophet because his Ephraim blood was pure: "Ephraimites are the Anglo-Saxon race" (Archibald F. Bennett, "The Children of Ephraim," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 21 [1930]: 67).

9. Blessing of Harriet Knowlton by Isaac R. Morley, 1 July 1840, Knecht family records, private possession.

10. Hyrum G. Smith, "The Day of Ephraim," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 20 (1929): 123; general conference address given 17 Apr. 1929.

11. Thomas G. Truitt to Eldred G. Smith, 20 Feb. 1961, Smith family records.

12. On 22 November 1971 the patriarch responded to a letter from Earl N. White. Smith explained that "Levi has no birthright blessing. He was the officiator for all the other tribes

While such declarations of lineage have long been routinely included in blessings, during the past fifty years there have been varying interpretations. An 1834 revelation to Joseph Smith had provided the divine assurance that "Ye are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham" (D&C 103:17). Brigham Young later commented, "Ephraim has become mixed with all the nations of the earth, and it is Ephraim that is gathering together. It is Ephraim that I have been searching for all the days of my preaching, and that is the blood which ran in my veins when I embraced the gospel."¹³ Apostle Bruce R. McConkie stated "Nearly every member of the Church is a literal descendant of Jacob who gave patriarchal blessings to his 12 sons."¹⁴ McConkie's father-in-law, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, held to the belief that the majority of those who have received the gospel and the priesthood in the latter-days were descendants of Ephraim. Of those who were not, he added, "No person who is not of Israel can become a member of the Church without becoming of the house of Israel by adoption."¹⁵

When questions were raised about the likelihood of pure lineage, Patriarch Eldred G. Smith declared,

We are all mixtures. There is no such thing, as far as I have been able to determine, as any one of us being just one lineage and no other mixture in our genealogy at all. . . . So it is the right of the Patriarch to declare which line through which the blessings will come. In other words, he's giving blessings, he's not declaring lineage by terms of just genealogy. He's declaring lineage in terms of blessing. You go to a Patriarch to get a blessing. If you can get that distinction it will help you to understand.¹⁶

This might suggest that the patriarch still subscribed to the idea of a literal blood relationship, however mixed the strain might be, between present-day Mormons and ancient Israelites. He did not believe that to be the case. At the time he was attempting to divert those receiving blessings from a preoccupation with tribal lineage toward an emphasis on the blessing itself.¹⁷

and received his blessing through the tribe for whom he officiated" (Smith family records).

13. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: F. D. Richards, 1854-86), 2:268-69 (hereafter JD). Young quoted Hosea 7:8 that "Ephraim 'hath mixed himself among the people."

14. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 504.

15. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation: Sermons and Writings of Joseph Fielding Smith*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956), 3:247-49.

16. Eldred G. Smith, "Patriarchal Blessings," speech given at the LDS Institute of Religion, Salt Lake City, 17 Jan. 1964, copy in my possession.

17. Discussions between Eldred G. Smith and his son, E. Gary Smith, later relayed to me.

That some church leaders concerned themselves with lineage, however, is evident in official rhetoric. In a 1980 address to the student body of Brigham Young University, Apostle James E. Faust offered comfort to those "coming into the Church in this day and time who are not of the blood lineage of a specific tribe of Jacob." He said, "Indeed, I am fully aware that there could be some within the sound of my voice who fall into this category. No one need assume that he or she will be denied any blessing by reason of not being of the blood lineage of Israel." Faust went on to suggest the possibility of being "spiritually begotten . . . through faith." He referred to the biblical writings of Paul, passages from the Book of Mormon, and modern-day scriptures. Joseph Smith, he said, taught that "as the Holy Ghost falls upon one of the literal seed of Abraham, it is calm and serene . . . while the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile, is to purge out the old blood, and make him actually of the seed of Abraham. That man that has none of the blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost."¹⁸ Whether most members of the church think in these terms today is debatable, even though a declaration of lineage is still expected in patriarchal blessings, and the literal fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham is still preached from the pulpit.¹⁹

One blessing given by Joseph Smith, Sr., in 1836, is of particular interest in connection with Mormon racial attitudes. Elijah Abel was a black convert, born in Maryland, 25 July 1808. He was ordained an elder in the Melchizedek priesthood in 1836 at Kirtland, Ohio, and shortly afterwards was given a patriarchal blessing by the prophet's father.²⁰ Abel was referred to as an "orphan," as were others whose fathers were either non-members of the church or were deceased. No lineage was declared.²¹ In Abel's blessing, which describes a scene that could well be understood as a prophetic vision of the Civil War, the patriarch made several predictions. He told Elijah:

18. Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972), 149-50, cited in James L. Faust, "Patriarchal Blessings," speech given at Brigham Young University, 30 Mar. 1980.

19. There is a discussion of the Abrahamic covenant in Mormonism in Rex Eugene Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers: Mormon Covenant Organization* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 113. Those members with whom I have discussed this aspect of their blessing seem less concerned with tribal lineage than with what they may be told about their personal lives, present and future.

20. For details of Abel's experiences in the church, see Newell G. Bringhurst, "Elijah Abel and the Changing Status of Blacks within Mormonism," in Lester E. Bush, Jr., and Armand L. Mauss, eds., *Neither Black Nor White: Mormon Scholars Confront the Race Issue in a Universal Church* (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1984), 130-48.

21. Only 50 percent of Joseph Sr.'s blessings included in this study declared lineage. Such declarations became routine later.

Thou hast been ordained an Elder and annointed to secure thee against the power of the destroyer. Thou shalt see His power in laying waste the nations, and the wicked slaying the wicked, while blood shall run down the streets like water, and thy heart shall weep over the calamities. Angels shall visit thee and thou shalt receive comfort. They shall call thee blessed, and deliver thee from thine enemies. They shall break thy bands and keep them from affliction. Thou shalt be made equal to thy brethren, and thy soul be white in eternity and thy robes glittering; thou shalt receive these blessings because of the covenants of thy fathers.²²

This blessing is particularly significant because earlier the church had been accused of having sympathy with the abolition movement and the Mormon newspaper, *Evening and Morning Star*, had published a rebuttal, January 1834. "No Mormon," the editorial asserted, "had ever been implicated on a charge of tampering with slaves."²³ And in August 1835 a "Declaration of Belief" was issued to members of the church, which became section 134 of the Doctrine and Covenants. After a long preamble, including the statement that "we believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that he holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the good and safety of society," the section ends with a caution to the Saints,

we do not believe it right to interfere with bond-servants, neither preach the gospel to, nor baptize them, contrary to the will and wish of their masters, nor to meddle with or influence them in the least to cause them to be dissatisfied with their situations in this life, thereby jeopardizing the lives of men; such interference we believe to be unlawful and unjust, and dangerous to the peace of every government allowing human beings to be held in servitude (D&C 134:12; sec. 102 in 1835 ed.).

Following the death of Joseph Smith the policy of the church was to exclude blacks from ordination to the priesthood and from Latter-day Saint temples. Although some black members of the church were given patriarchal blessings, declarations of lineage were omitted as a matter of policy. But guidelines were not consistent, and the question remained the subject

22. Blessing given to Elijah Abel by Joseph Smith, Sr., ca. 1836, at Kirtland, Ohio, in Minutes of the Council of the Twelve, 4 June 1879, Adam S. Bennion Papers, Archives and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, cited in Lester E. Bush, Jr., "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8 (Spring 1973): 11-68. The full text of the blessing is in Joseph Smith's Patriarchal Blessing Record, 88, archives, historical department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, UT (hereafter LDS archives), and is not available to researchers.

23. Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine," 13.

of debate.²⁴ In a 24 September 1972 interview, President Harold B. Lee said "skin color is not what keeps the Negro from the priesthood. It [is] strictly a matter of lineage and involves only African Negroes. In comparison, he noted, dark or black islanders, such as Fijians, Tongans, Samoans, or Maoris, are all permitted full rights to the priesthood."²⁵

That color did have a negative connotation, however, can be seen in several early blessings referring to native Americans. The Saints were told they should preach the gospel to the Lamanites (Mormon terminology for American Indians) to enable them to "become a white and delightsome people."²⁶ Because of unrighteousness the Lord had caused a dark skin to come upon the Lamanites (2 Ne. 5:21). The expression "white and delightsome" is included in all but the latest, 1981, edition of the Book of Mormon, where the phrase now reads, "a pure and delightsome people" (2 Ne. 30:6). On 8 June 1978, however, priesthood and temple blessings were extended to "every worthy man in the Church . . . without regard for race or color" (D&C OD 2).²⁷ The June revelation, submitted to the vote of members of the church at the 30 September 1978 general conference, was affirmed unanimously. It would be interesting to survey patriarchal blessings given to black members of the church both before and after the 1978 declaration.

Although declaration of lineage is still one of the salient features of all patriarchal blessings, more sophisticated knowledge may demand some adjustment of the earlier claims of pure blood relationship.²⁸

24. In 1934 Patriarch James H. Wallis wrote in his journal, "I have always known that one of negro blood cannot receive the Priesthood nor the blessings of the Temple, and are also disqualified from receiving a patriarchal blessing . . . But I am sure there is no objection to giving them a blessing of encouragement and comfort, leaving out all reference to lineage and sealing." Apostle John A. Widtsoe relayed President Heber J. Grant's reply to Wallis's request for a ruling. It stated, "It will be alright for Brother Wallis to bless them, but as to their status in the future, that is . . . in the hands of the Lord" (in Gloria W. Rytting, *James H. Wallis, Poet, Printer and Patriarch* [Salt Lake City: R. & R. Enterprises, 1989], 186).

25. Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine," 68n209. Patriarchs in the Brazilian mission did declare lineage and were often the final authority in ordaining mixed races to the priesthood. Mark Grover, "Religious Accommodation in the Land of Racial Democracy: Mormon Priesthood and Black Brazilians," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17 (Autumn 1984): 32-33. There is a valuable "Chronological Bibliography on the Negro Doctrine" in Bush and Mauss, *Neither Black Nor White*, 226-35.

26. For example, the blessing of Mary Ellen Owens Bradshaw, 8 May 1898, in her journal, Special Collections, Lee Library, and that of William McLaws, 10 Sept. 1900, in "Biographical Sketches of John W. McLaws," Special Collections, Lee Library. Both blessings were bestowed by Patriarch Lorenzo Hill Hatch.

27. For factors leading to this change, see Bush and Mauss, *Neither Black Nor White*, 213.

28. A few of the later blessings still refer to the recipient as being "of the blood" of Ephraim. For example, one blessing, given 17 May 1973, states "the blood that courses through your veins and gives you life is in very deed the blood of Israel . . . through the

One other change related to declarations of lineage is that natural fathers, encouraged to give a father's blessing to their families, were once told they should not designate the tribe through which blessings would come. In 1919 the *Relief Society Magazine* cautioned,

Women sometimes bless each other and their little children, which is eminently proper and fitting both in times of sickness, sorrow or distress; but neither they nor other lay members of the Church are justified in announcing the lineage of the person blessed, which is the prerogative of the patriarchs of the Church, upon which in no sense should any one trench.²⁹

More recently the advice is that fathers may declare lineage "if they feel so inspired," but that such blessings are not to be included in official church records, as are the formal blessings given by an ordained patriarch.³⁰

THEMATIC CHANGES IN BLESSINGS

The Manifesto ending plural marriage brought a few obvious changes in the content of blessings, but there were other significant adjustments in Mormonism's world view around the turn of the century that are also reflected in patriarchal blessings.

The nineteenth-century belief in an imminent millennium, which permeated the new nation after the Revolution, continued to be held by Mormons long after such immediacy had been tempered in the larger society.³¹ After Joseph Smith, Sr., was called as Church Patriarch in December 1833, his blessings, and those of subsequent nineteenth-century patriarchs, reflected the sense that the Saints were living in the last days. In 1837 Wilford Woodruff was told by Patriarch Joseph Smith, Sr., "I bless thee as Melchisedek [sic] blessed Abram when he returned from the Slaughter of the ten kings . . . thou shalt stand in the flesh & witness the winding up scene of this generation. Thou shalt remain on earth to behold thy Savior come in clouds of heaven."³² At least fifty-seven men and four women

loins of Ephraim." Such literalness is less common today, however. Copy of blessing in my possession.

29. *Relief Society Magazine* 6 (May 1919): 302. This general instruction was repeated many times in various church publications. See, for example, in Eldred G. Smith, "What is a Patriarchal Blessing?" *The Instructor*, Feb. 1962, 42-43.

30. *Melchizedek Priesthood Handbook* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975), 25.

31. See Grant R. Underwood, "Millenarianism and the Early Mormon Mind," *Journal of Mormon History* 9 (1982): 41-51.

32. Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898*, typescript, 9 vols.

received that same promise.³³ For example, Rhoda Ann Richards was promised by Patriarch Uncle John Smith that she “would stand on earth during the Millennial reign,” and her father Willard Richards was told he would “stand upon the Earth when the Savior makes his appearance.”³⁴ Even though millennialism is still a defining part of the Mormon belief system this type of specific promise no longer appears in blessings.

Some early patriarchal blessings referred to the terrible destruction of the last days and pointed to the part Latter-day Saints were expected to play in overcoming the wicked. Benjamin F. Knowlton’s blessing assured him that he “shall be a mighty man in Israel and when the remnant of Jacob shall go through among the Gentiles, or a lion amongst the flocks of sheep, you shall be captain over thousands, shall tread down and destroy, and none shall deliver them out of your hands.”³⁵ This sense of mission was an important influence in the lives of the early Saints. It was reflected in the conviction that the Saints would be included among the 144,000 high priests who would be a special missionary force in the last days (referred to in the New Testament book of Revelation 14:1), “who will stand up to crown the tribes of Israel when they come shouting to Zion.”³⁶ Joseph Smith, Sr., William Smith, and Uncle John each made similar predictions.

The phrase was often linked with another that appears in several early blessings. Joseph Sr. told Wilford Woodruff, among others, “Thou art numbered with the horns of Joseph, for thou shalt push people together.”³⁷ This imagery relating to the gathering of Israel is from

(Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983), 1:142-43.

33. Among these was a blessing given to Hyrum Smith by his father, Joseph Smith, Sr., 9 Dec. 1834, Smith family records. Others including Simeon A. Dunn, 22 June 1840, were promised they would witness the “winding-up scene” and remain on the earth until the Savior appeared (Knecht family records). For details of a similar blessing given to Charles H. Smith, 29 Jan. 1836, see Scott H. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet’s Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1989), 125.

34. Blessing of Rhoda Ann Richards and Willard Richards by Patriarch Uncle John Smith, 22 Jan. 1845, Knecht family records. Patriarch Isaac Morley also gave this promise to Leonard E. Harrington. See P. A. M. Taylor, *Expectations Westward: The Mormons and the Emigration of Their British Converts in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1965), 23.

35. Blessing given to Benjamin F. Knowlton by Patriarch Uncle John Smith, 30 May 1852, Knecht family records.

36. Blessing of Curtis Edwin Bolton by Patriarch Hyrum Smith, 10 May 1844, in Cleo H. Evans, ed., *Curtis Edwin Bolton: Pioneer Missionary* (Fairfax, VA, 1968), 3-4. Hyrum also promised Orson Pratt on 26 December 1843 that he would be one of the 144,000, in Elden Jay Watson, ed., *Orson Pratt Journal*, (Salt Lake City: E. J. Watson, 1975), page number unclear. Fifty others were similarly blessed, including seven women.

37. Blessing given to Wilford Woodruff, 15 Apr. 1837, in Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff*

Deuteronomy 33:17, where the glory of Joseph of Egypt is likened to “the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns; with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth; and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.” In biblical literature the term “horns” was used to symbolize both aggression and sanctuary (see Dan. 7:8, 8:20-22, 1 Kgs. 1:50-51). William Smith continued to use the term, as did Uncle John. Further research might provide evidence of some familiarity with the symbol in other religious circles of the time. Today it appears that such terms are no longer included in LDS blessings.

Other nineteenth-century prophecies were phased out in the more skeptical twentieth century. Oliver Huntington received the promise that he would “have power with God even to translate thyself to Heaven, and preach to the inhabitants of the moon or planets.”³⁸ And Benjamin Clopson was told by Joseph Smith, Sr., in 1837, “thou shalt stand on a great planet, the one nearest to the Celestial world of Colob and preach to its inhabitants.”³⁹ Many were the predictions that recipients of blessings would “have power to command the waters” or “cause the earth to tremble.” Or were told “at thy command the waters shall be divided,” and “at thy word the winds shall be stayed,” or similar promises.⁴⁰ Young John Smith was advised, “the mantle of the Lord shall fall upon thee. Wilt enable thee to do mighty miracles in the name of the Lord. To command the raging of the sea and it shall be still. Cause streams to break forth in dry places. Shall be able to feed thousands in times of famine by the prayer of faith.”⁴¹ Several recipients were told “if you desire it with your whole heart, [you] shall not taste of death, but shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye and caught up to meet the Lord.”⁴²

Journal, 1:142. Joseph Sr. had used the same term in blessing Hyrum Smith on 9 Dec. 1834, Smith family records.

38. D. Michael Quinn comments on this blessing in *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 129-30n6, noting that Brigham Young stated publicly there were moon men and that the sun was inhabited. Van Hale in “Mormons and Moonmen,” *Sunstone* 7 (Sept. 1982): 12-17, points out that the renowned astronomer William Herschel in 1780 regarded the existence of life on the moon as “an absolute certainty.”

39. Blessing of Benjamin Clopson by Joseph Smith, Sr., 1837, RLDS archives.

40. Blessing of Wilford Woodruff, 22 Feb. 1837, noted above. Willard Richards was told by Joseph Sr. on 22 February 1837 that “God will cause the earth to tremble for thy good. . . . The nations of the Earth shall greatly fear thee, for thou shalt be a terror unto them, for their wicked deeds shall be made manifest to them, through thy organ” (Knecht family records).

41. Blessing given by Uncle John Smith to his young nephew John Smith, 20 June 1852, Smith family records.

42. For example, the Lucy M. Smith blessing, 27 Nov. 1844, given by John Smith when

Rhoda Ann Richards, along with her brother Heber John, was promised that she would live until she was 120 years old.⁴³

Evidence of the acceptance of such promises and the great faith of early church members can be found in other early blessings. Lorenzo Snow, later to become fifth president of the church, was blessed that he should "have power when not able to visit the sick, to send his handkerchief to them, that the afflicted by touching it should be made whole." According to Michael Quinn, Joseph Smith, Jr., advocated this and practiced it himself during the 1840s.⁴⁴

Many of the promises of early patriarchs may seem extravagant today, but they were in tune with the climate of nineteenth-century evangelicalism. They were also reminiscent of ancient Israel. The vengeful God of the Old Testament co-existed with a loving God who was mindful of the suffering of his people. When the Saints were experiencing a great deal of violent persecution, the belief that the Lord would punish the aggressors, or give the victims the opportunity to retaliate, was a recurring theme in patriarchal blessings. After the assassination of Joseph and Hyrum Smith this became more focused as "avenging the blood of the Prophets."⁴⁵

Of particular significance is a blessing given by Patriarch Elisha H. Groves on 20 February 1854. In this blessing William H. Dame was told, "Thou shalt be called to act at the head of a portion of thy brethren and of the Lamanites [native Americans] in the redemption of Zion and the avenging of the blood of the Prophets . . . The Angel of Vengeance shall be with thee." Dame, who was described as "a mild-mannered, kindly man," was later involved in discussions which led to the Mountain Meadows Massacre in southern Utah in 1857.⁴⁶ The blessings of William Smith and

he was a local patriarch, George A. Smith Papers, Marriott Library, University of Utah. Lucy M. Smith was a plural wife of George A. Smith.

43. Blessing of Rhoda Ann Richards by Uncle John Smith, 22 Jan. 1845, at Nauvoo, Illinois, Knecht family records.

44. Lorenzo Snow's blessing, 15 Dec. 1836, by Patriarch Joseph Smith, Sr. Quinn also quotes Wilford Woodruff who told of an incident in 1839 when the prophet inaugurated the practice. The inspiration for this may have come from Acts 19:12, where Paul sends handkerchiefs or aprons to heal the people. Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 221-22.

45. Blessing of young John Smith by his great-uncle John, 20 June 1852, Smith family records. Also some of the blessings given by William Smith included these words.

46. Juanita Brooks, *John D. Lee: Zealot—Pioneer Builder—Scapegoat* (Glendale, CA: Arthur Clark Co., 1973), 209. See also Brooks, *Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1950). Earlier, in December 1838, Lee had been told by Patriarch Isaac Morley, "Thou shalt come forth in the morning of the first resurrection, and no power shall hinder, except the shedding of innocent blood, or consenting thereto" (courtesy Wilma Bozung).

of Uncle John Smith had frequently referred to vengeance, as did those of local patriarchs, but as the Saints became more settled in Utah such phrases began to disappear.

Another adjustment has been more subtle. Although almost all patriarchal blessings include the phrase "I seal you up unto eternal life" or "I seal you up to come forth on the morning of the first resurrection," today less is made of the sealing powers formerly assigned to presiding patriarchs. There appears to have been some confusion with other sealing ordinances, especially those concerned with plural marriage and with "second anointings."⁴⁷

The end of plural marriage did not affect the essential character of the patriarchal order, but it did bring change in the content of blessings. Before the Manifesto announcing the end of polygamy in 1890 a number of blessings assured men that the Lord would give them "many wives." Usually the promise included "a numerous posterity" and the prediction "of the increase of thy dominions there shall be no end."⁴⁸ Mercy Harman's 1877 blessing included the words, "You will be like Sarah of old. Through the enlightenment of your mind by the Spirit of the Lord, you will give unto your husband wives."⁴⁹ The latest of such blessings was one given to George F. Richards on 19 April 1891, six months after the Manifesto. He was told he would "be blessed with wives and numerous prosperity." Richards never did live the law of plural marriage, but he was sealed to six women "for eternity," two from consecutive monogamous marriages and four women after they were deceased.⁵⁰

Some predictions have been retained in blessings, although the language and content have been tempered. During the nineteenth century men were told they would become "a king and a mighty prince" who "would rule over many even ten kingdoms" and women were promised

47. See David John Buerger, "'The Fulness of the Priesthood': The Second Anointing in Latter-day Saint Theology and Practice," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16 (Spring 1983): 10-44. See also Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers*, 138-48.

48. These promises appeared in blessings when the Saints had settled in the Salt Lake Valley and after the practice of polygamy had been made public. It was believed that those entering into plural marriage would qualify for the highest degree of glory in the Celestial Kingdom but that plurality of wives was not a necessary condition for exaltation. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 522-23.

49. Blessing of Mercy Harman by Patriarch E. R. Billingsley, 3 Dec. 1877, from the diary of George Harman, 1825-91, typescript, 1942, Special Collections, Lee Library.

50. George F. Richards diaries, Book 3, 156-58, in Dale C. Mouritsen, "A Symbol of New Directions: George Franklin Richards and the Mormon Church, 1861-1950," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1982. Men can still be sealed "for eternity" to several wives (from consecutive monogamous marriages), but patriarchal blessings no longer refer to this. Judging from this practice, it seems that Mormonism still includes polygamy as part of its doctrine, if only for the hereafter.

they would become "a queen and a priestess" to rule with their husbands over dominions during the resurrection.⁵¹ Even though such descriptions of celestial empires have become more restrained, the idea that men and women will become kings and queens, priests and priestesses in the after-life remains a part of the Mormon belief system and as such is still commonly referred to in patriarchal blessings. This raises the question of hierarchical kingdoms in the hereafter, a concept which seems oddly out of touch both with Mormonism's early egalitarian social and economic experiments, and with Jesus Christ's teachings.⁵² Insofar as mortal life is concerned there has been a general shift in a more conservative direction.

After the turn of the century, despite the persistence of distinctive Mormon beliefs and practices, there was an increasing tendency in the church to identify with the economic and political values of the larger society. From being a persecuted minority the church has become a valued supporter of the U.S. government. Certainly the tone and direction of twentieth-century blessings is conciliatory. President Joseph Fielding Smith advised the patriarchs to be conservative and cautious in their blessings, unless they were especially inspired otherwise. Today there is more stress on living virtuous lives, obeying the commandments, supporting church programs by attending meetings, celebrating domestic life, and obeying the law of the land.

PATRIARCHAL BLESSINGS GIVEN TO WOMEN

A survey of blessings given to women during the early years of Mormonism illustrates the significance of the roles prescribed for women. During the nineteenth century these roles were both empowering and restrictive. In at least thirty-two nineteenth-century patriarchal blessings, for example, women were told they would have the power to heal the sick. On 27 October 1882, Charlotte Cornwall was told by Patriarch John Smith, "Thou shalt be enabled through prayer and faith to heal the sick of thy family and hold the adversary at bay that health and peace may reign in thy dwelling."⁵³ A similar promise was given to Sophina Alcesta Gee and

51. For example, the blessing of Joseph T. Ball by William Smith, 14 July 1845, Schroeder Collection. Such promises appear in most nineteenth-century blessings.

52. According to Rex E. Cooper, the concept of a hierarchical order first appeared in the Pearl of Great Price, in the Book of Abraham. Published in March 1842 in the *Times and Seasons* 3:704-706, 719-22, this revelation was interpreted by Joseph Smith to mean that "individuals within a species are hierarchically ordered by biological or spiritual connections; human beings and gods are thus linked in a continuous hierarchy" (*Promises Made to the Fathers*, 103).

53. In Marie Cornwall, "The Gender Question," *Sunstone* 13 (Dec. 1989): 47.

to Eda Rogers.⁵⁴ Patty Sessions was told she “would partake of the Blessings of the Priesthood in common with thy companion shall have Faith to heal the sick by the laying on of hands when there is no Elders present.”⁵⁵ Zina Y. Card was promised that “she would have power over the adversary, over evil spirits and wicked influences, as well as over diseases and all manner of sicknesses.” Patriarch Joseph Young told Zina that the blessings and the power were hers “according to the holy Melchizedek Priesthood, you received in your [temple] Endowments, and you shall have them.”⁵⁶ Helen Maria Fisher (who later married young John Smith) was advised she would be able to “do any miracle which shall be for the health and happiness of your family.”⁵⁷ Others were similarly advised.

In the days when men were often absent on missions for long periods of time, it may have been deemed necessary to spiritually empower women to deal with the crises of pioneer life. Today the ordinance of blessing the sick is regarded as exclusively the prerogative of male priesthood holders. But the change was gradual. In 1908 President Joseph F. Smith answered an inquiry about women washing and anointing the sisters prior to childbirth: “We desire you to impress upon the sisters of your Relief Society that this practice is in no sense an ordinance, and must not be regarded as such, unless it be attended to under the direction of the proper authority [meaning the priesthood] in connection with the ordinance of laying on of hands for the healing of the sick.”⁵⁸ As late as 1910, however, Lydia Clawson was promised by Patriarch John Smith, “Thou shalt, through prayer and faith, heal the sick of thy family, and health and peace shall reign in thy dwelling.”⁵⁹

54. Blessing given to Sophina Alcesta Gee by Patriarch John Smith, 21 May 1876, Smith family records. Eda Rogers’s blessing given in 1837 advised her, “In the absence of thy husband thou must pray with the family. When they are sick thou shalt lay hands on them and they shall recover. Sickness shall stand back,” quoted in Linda King Newell, “Gifts of the Spirit: Women’s Share,” in Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson, eds., *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 114.

55. Blessing given to Patty Sessions by Uncle John Smith, 18 Mar. 1848, in “Patty Bartlett Sessions: Mother of Mormon Midwifery, 1795-1893,” typescript, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. Photocopy of the original blessing is included as page 6a.

56. Carol Cornwall Madsen, “Mormon Women and the Temple,” in Beecher and Anderson, *Sisters in Spirit*, 101. Leonora Taylor was also blessed with “your portion of the Priesthood which belongeth unto you” (ibid.).

57. Blessing given to Helen Maria Fisher by Uncle John Smith, 10 or 20 Apr. 1853, Smith family records.

58. Newell, “Gifts of the Spirit,” 129.

59. Blessing of Lydia Clawson by Patriarch John Smith, 10 May 1910, Rudger Clawson papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library. Lydia was the wife of Apostle Rudger Clawson.

Linda King Newell has told of the "official death knell of this particular spiritual gift" as practiced by women. On 29 July 1946 Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith wrote to the Relief Society general president, saying, "While the authorities of the Church have ruled that it is permissible . . . they feel that it is far better for us to follow the plan the Lord has given us and send for the Elders of the Church." As Newell points out, "It would certainly be difficult for a woman to say that she did not wish to follow 'the plan the Lord has given us.'"⁶⁰ Other nineteenth-century precedents raise interesting questions about the changes in perceptions of women's spiritual powers.

During the nineteenth century several blessings endowed women with the priesthood. Emily Jacob's blessing in 1846 is explicit. In 1846 Patriarch Uncle John Smith said to her, "I place my hands upon your head in the name of Jesus of Nazareth; seal upon thee the priesthood with all the blessings of the new and everlasting covenant which was sealed upon the children of Joseph, for this thy lineage the same as thy companion, thou hast a right to all the blessings which are sealed upon his head."

But then the patriarch continued, "For a woman can have but little power in the priesthood without a man."⁶¹ Although most of these blessings refer to the woman being "a lawful heir to the Priesthood in common with thy companion" or similar phrases that tie the power to her husband, a few made no mention of such contingencies. Elizabeth Bean was told,

I seal upon you all the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and all the priesthood that was sealed upon the daughters of Joseph in the land of Egypt which is to abide with you and your posterity, giving you the power to heal the sick and to understand all the principles of the priesthood, and mysteries that have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world.⁶²

And Mary Ann Dowdle was told by Patriarch Charles W. Hyde on 22 November 1875 that she was "a daughter of Ephraim and [had] a right to the fullness of the Priesthood and thy children to the fourth generation."⁶³ Mehitable Duty was told "The Priesthood in its fullness shall be conferred upon thee in due time, thou shalt have power over thy relatives and friends and thy husband . . . to preserve them in the bonds of the new and everlasting covenant."⁶⁴

60. Newell, "Gifts of the Spirit," 138.

61. Blessing of Emily Jacob by Patriarch John Smith, 26 Jan. 1846, in "The Record of Norton Jacob," Special Collections, Lee Library.

62. Blessing of Elizabeth Bean by John Smith, 16 May 1853, George Washington Bean papers, Archives and Manuscripts, Lee Library.

63. Diary of John Clark Dowdle, 1836-94, Archives and Manuscripts, Lee Library.

64. Blessing of Mehitable Duty by Patriarch John Smith, 27 Dec. 1845, RLDS archives. A blessing given to Mary Webster informed her, "the Priesthood shall be conferred upon

Caution has been advised in concluding from this that women were being given equal priesthood rights with men.⁶⁵ Yet Nancy Howd was told in 1845 that despite an unbelieving husband, "thou hast a right to the Priesthood by inheritance from thy Fathers, and if thy companion refuses to take his place and receive the gospel and you abide faithful you shall not be deprived of the privilege of haveing it sealed upon you in fullness in due time."⁶⁶ She was also promised she would heal the sick. That women did feel empowered, can be seen in the great number of healings undertaken by women, especially in blessing women during childbirth.

But this is not to say that women in the nineteenth century were endowed with overall power. There were limits placed upon such possibilities. While it is true that Bathsheba Smith and others were told they would be made "equal to thy brethren," or "thou shalt be blest, and not come one single whit behind thy brethren in knowledge and understanding," Mary Ann Hubbard was told that although she would be blessed in common with her companion, "nevertheless thou wilt not receive as great blessings as him [thy husband], because of thy sex."⁶⁷ Many women were cautioned to obey their husbands or alternatively that he was to be their savior or deliverer.⁶⁸ Yet Bathsheba Bigler's blessing included the warning, "Thou must be faithful and not give way to the enticing of men or the power of Satan, for thou knowest not the subtlety that there is in man."⁶⁹

During the tenure of Patriarch William Smith when polygamy was practiced secretly in Nauvoo, Illinois, many of the women were troubled. In at least seven blessings there is mention of "strange questions" troubling the minds of the sisters. To Rachael Swanner Patriarch William Smith said, "The Devil has sought to ensnare thee and bind thy Soul fast and because of strange questions that have arisen thy Spirit has been troubled but the

you in due time with thy Companion, making known unto the[e] mysteries . . . giving power unto the[e] to heal the sick in thine house," cited in Ian G. Barber, "The Ecclesiastical Position of Women in Two Mormon Trajectories," *Journal of Mormon History* 14 (1988): 72.

65. Barber, "The Ecclesiastical Position of Women," suggests that these promises may be associated with temple ordinances, especially the "second anointing" (72).

66. Blessing of Nancy Howd by Uncle John Smith, 16 Dec. 1845, when he was a local patriarch, in Jesse Perse Harman papers, Archives and Manuscripts, Lee Library.

67. Blessing given by Joseph Smith, Sr., to Bathsheba Bigler, 8 Feb. 1839, Special Collections, Lee Library. Blessing given by Joseph Smith, Sr., to Mary Ann Hubbard, 27 Jan. 1839, copy in my possession.

68. For example, the blessing given by Joseph Smith, Sr., to Amanda Rogers, 11 Aug. 1837, Archives and Manuscripts, Lee Library.

69. Blessing given by Joseph Smith, Sr., to Bathsheba Bigler, 8 Feb. 1839, Special Collections, Lee Library.

purposes of God cannot fail and the time shall come when thou shalt see it and understand it and thy Soul shall be comforted."⁷⁰ To Lovinia Dame he said,

although thy fears have troubled thee and doubts have arisen because of strange questions that have troubled thee this has become a matter of talk and conversation between thee and thy husband, yet because of the integrity of his heart and because of thy desires to do right, thou hast made thyself content and desired to become reconciled to thy fate and to the will of God.⁷¹

William assured Sara Ann Willis and several other women that if they would abide by the law of the Lord their "glory shall be like the bright stars of the firmament or the sun in its meridian glory for none shall outshine thee in all the heavenly kingdom or be made more glorious in their place."⁷² Others received similar reassurance from Patriarch Hyrum Smith. Many women accepted plural marriage convinced that this was the only sure pathway to the celestial kingdom. Mary Alice Lambert was referred to "He whom God has appointed to rule over thee" and was promised, "if thou art faithful in keeping the law of thy husband while he is controlled and governed by the wisdom and power of heaven, none shall take thy crown."⁷³ The promise of glory in the world to come must have given hope and a welcome relief from the drudgery and privation that the women faced in frontier life. But there is also a sense of women's participation in the spiritual life of the community here on earth. Several women were told they would be "a mighty prophetess in the midst of the daughters of Zion," or were promised that "prophets and prophetesses [will] rise through your posterity."⁷⁴ And often they were given the laudatory title, "Mother in Israel."

The term "Mother in Israel" has long been a favorite in Mormon patriarchal blessings, and it continues to appear. Methodists and other nonconformist groups in England during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries referred to women preachers this way, and it seems possible that Mormon missionaries, who had much success among these groups in Britain, adopted it as a description for valiant women. It may well

70. Blessing of Rachael Swanner by William Smith, 29 July 1845, Schroeder Collection.

71. Blessing of Lovinia Dame by William Smith, ca. June 1845, Schroeder Collection.

72. Blessing of Sara Ann Willis by William Smith, 19 Aug. 1845, Schroeder Collection.

73. Blessing of Mary Alice Lambert by William Smith, 1845, Schroeder Collection.

74. For example, Lucy M. Smith's blessing by Patriarch Zebedee Colton, 15 Jan. 1884, Smith family records. Also the blessing of Ellen Elsie Bradshaw by Patriarch John Reidhead, 2 Apr. 1899, in journal of Ellen Elsie Bradshaw, 1840-1920, 10, Special Collections, Lee Library.

have been a transatlantic phenomenon, however; Joseph Smith, Sr., was familiar with the term, which derives from the Old Testament.⁷⁵ In 1834 he designated his wife Lucy a "Mother in Israel" in one of the first blessings he gave as patriarch. (It is interesting to note that while 83 blessings mention the term "Mother in Israel," I have found only fifteen that refer to a "Father in Israel.") Although the church today acknowledges that "this designation has a deep and significant meaning, one that is far more than marrying and bearing children in this life, great and important as that course is," an association with the responsibilities of earthly, biological motherhood still receives greater emphasis.⁷⁶

Another question raised by blessings given to women stems from the important concept of "Mother in Heaven." Lucy Emily Smith Woodruff's blessing included, "I place my hands upon thy head and seal the blessings of thy mother upon thee with also the blessings of an everlasting covenant for they are thine through right of lineage."⁷⁷ Another was told there is "a reward in Heaven laid up for you and the key is thy mother."⁷⁸ Were these blessings referring to an earthly mother or to a heavenly mother?⁷⁹

Some women were told that their male posterity would have a special mission. Bathsheba Bigler was promised by Joseph Smith, Sr., in 1839 that she would have "a son who shall be mighty, for he shall be a prophet and seer."⁸⁰ Bathsheba later married George A. Smith, nephew of Joseph Sr. He became an apostle, as did their son John Henry Smith. Their grandson George Albert Smith became eighth president of the church. In 1845 Jennetta Richards was promised by Uncle John Smith that her children would "grow up around thee like healthful plants; one shall chase a thousand and two put 10,000 to flight, for the enemy shall not prevail over the saints in the last days."⁸¹ And Abigail Abbott was told "one of thy posterity named

75. The title "Mother in Israel" was bestowed on the prophetess Deborah because of her valiant defence of Israel (Jdgs. 5:7).

76. See the *Relief Society Personal Study Guide* No.1, Lesson 4, "Mothers in Israel" (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989), 119-24.

77. Blessing given to Lucy Emily Smith Woodruff, 16 June 1901, Special Collections, Marriott Library. The patriarch was not named.

78. The blessing, given to Frances Crosby by Patriarch Hyrum Smith, 18 July 1943, courtesy Linda King Newell.

79. The idea of a mother in heaven has increasingly become a focus for Mormon feminists. See Linda Wilcox, "The Mormon Concept of a Mother in Heaven," in Beecher and Anderson, *Sisters in Spirit*, 64-77. Also John Heeren, Donald B. Lindsey, and Marylee Mason, "The Mormon Concept of Mother in Heaven: A Sociological Account of Its Origins and Development," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 23 (1984): 396-411.

80. Blessing of Bathsheba Bigler by Patriarch Joseph Smith, Sr., 7 Feb. 1839, in "Record of Bathsheba Smith," Special Collections, Lee Library.

81. Blessing given to Jennetta Richards by Uncle John Smith, 22 Jan. 1845, Knecht family records.

after the name of his father and after the name of his great-grandfather who was a descendant of the tribe of Judah and of the household of David, shall be a mighty warrior and be led on to avenge the blood of the Prophets and Patriarchs."⁸²

Such militancy, however, was replaced in the twentieth century by an emphasis on the nurturing influence of women. For most Mormon women in the twentieth century the role of wife and mother is elevated to that of being "a shining light of inspiration" to husband and children, reminiscent of the role of women in Victorian America.⁸³ In the past thirty years, however, a few concessions have appeared, such as encouraging women to seek an education. One in 1971 promised: "thou shall gain the education which will help thee, along with the inspiration and guidance of the Lord, to accomplish the great work which thou shall do upon this earth . . . thou shall do a work upon this earth that shall be like unto that which thou did in the pre-existence, one of counseling thy brothers and sisters." The recipient was told also that she should not be in a hurry to find a husband but should get an education first.⁸⁴ Most blessings of women today, however, dwell on the privileges and duties of domestic life and the responsibilities of church membership.

SUMMARY OF THEMATIC CHANGES

The following tables give some idea of the changes that have occurred in the themes covered in patriarchal blessings. The figures are based on: (1) blessings that I have seen (either holographs, photocopies, or reproduced in journals); (2) thirty-seven blessings and excerpts of blessings from published sources; and (3) twenty-eight responses to questionnaires specifying themes that appeared repeatedly in nineteenth-century blessings. (The questionnaires were directed to those receiving blessings during the past fifty years). Of the later blessings of which I have copies, although many recipients wished to remain anonymous, permission was granted to use them in this analysis. Even though the sample cannot be considered as

82. Blessing given to Abigail Abbott by William Smith, 23 June 1845, Schroeder Collection.

83. Blessing given 21 May 1973, copy in my possession. In a paper given at the 1990 Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City, D. Michael Quinn noted the church's adoption of Victorian social and economic values following the 1890 Manifesto. Quinn suggests that the church's surrender of plural marriage—which the Saints believed the Lord would never allow to happen—paved the way for the acceptance of other American values of the pre-1890s.

84. From the 1971 blessing of Lorie Erikson, courtesy of the recipient. It should be mentioned that of the seven questionnaires returned by women whose blessings mention education only three refer to secular learning, the others to religious education.

representative of the many thousands of blessings given, some tentative conclusions can be drawn.

<i>Themes</i>	1833-99 (N=560)	1900-79 (N=184)
1. Remain until Second Coming	57	4
2. See "last days"	51	2
3. Command elements	39	1
4. Perform miracles	30	0
5. Have gift of healing	60	9
6. Be one of "horns of Joseph"	29	1
7. Prophecy	18	2
8. Have visions	25	2
9. Not taste of death	6	0
10. Raise the dead	8	0
11. Avenge blood of prophets	12	0

Breaking down these figures in terms of gender, some interesting patterns emerge, but the limited nature of the sample can only suggest possibilities for comparison:

1833-99		
<i>Themes</i>	Men (N=297)	Women (N=263)
1. Remain until Second Coming	33	21
2. See "last days"	29	17
3. Command elements	39	0
4. Perform miracles	24	3
5. Have gift of healing	27	28
6. Be one of "horns of Joseph"	29	0
7. Prophecy	12	6
8. Have visions	14	11
9. Not taste of death	3	3
10. Raise the dead	8	0
11. Avenge blood of prophets	11	0

1900-82		
<i>Themes</i>	Men (N=91)	Women (N=93)
1. Remain until Second Coming	1	3
2. See "last days"	1	1

3. Command elements	1	0
4. Perform miracles	0	0
5. Have gift of healing	8	2
6. Be one of "horns of Joseph"	1	0
7. Prophecy	1	1
8. Have visions	0	2
9. Not taste of death	0	0
10. Raise the dead	0	0
11. Avenge blood of prophets	0	0

Gifts of healing and of visionary experiences appear to have been more evenly distributed between men and women during the nineteenth century, but women were seldom given power to control the elements, perform miracles, raise the dead, serve as one of the "horns of Joseph," or be given power to avenge the blood of the prophets. In the twentieth century most of the more extravagant promises appear to have disappeared in blessings given to both men and women.

While it is true that patriarchs have been cautioned to be more conservative in their blessings to avoid possible damage to faith, some of the changes can be seen as reflections of cultural change. Most of the twentieth-century blessings that I have seen focus on such things as service in the church, education (both religious and secular), gender roles, and directions for family life, plus the traditional statement of lineage and the promise that recipients will "come forth on the morning of the first resurrection clothed in glory, immortality, and eternal life." Blessings also include observations about the character, talents, and earthly callings of recipients.

Before discussing changes in administrative policies, some general observations might be made about patriarchal blessings. There can be no doubt that early blessings provided comfort and reassurance for the beleaguered Saints. Among grateful tributes paid to the patriarch was one expressed by Wilford Woodruff on 19 July 1868. He said, "now all men who were acquainted with Father Joseph Smith know that when he laid his hands upon a man's head it seemed as if the heavens and the hearts of men were open to him."⁸⁵ Several poems written in honor of Uncle John Smith reflect the comfort received. For example, in 1846 Eliza R. Snow wrote, "Thou art greatly belov'd by the saints that surround thee They have tasted thy blessings & greatly rejoice The pow'r of the Priesthood is felt thro' thy presence The weak become strong at the sound of thy voice. . . . I have oft

85. JD 12:277.

felt the pow'r of thy blessing upon me And my heart feels to bless thee, thou servant of God."⁸⁶

The comfort that recipients received led even non-members to seek a patriarchal blessing. Joseph Smith, Sr., gave blessings to several such people in 1836, some of whom joined the church later, including his cousin Israel Duty.⁸⁷ Colonel Thomas L. Kane, non-member friend of the Saints during the exodus from Nauvoo, requested a patriarchal blessing from Uncle John in 1846. His blessing promised,

Inasmuch as you have had in your heart the interests of the Children of God, the Lord is well pleased with your exertions. He has given his angels charge over you in times of danger to help you in time of trouble and defend you from your enemies. Not a hair of your head shall fall by the hand of an enemy. For you are called to do a great work on the earth . . . Your name shall be had in honorable remembrance among the Saints to all generations. You shall have the Comforter to comfort your heart, and sustain you in all your trials . . .⁸⁸

It is unlikely that a non-member could obtain a patriarchal blessing today, although some may have received other ministrations.

One of the purposes of patriarchal blessings today is "to give unto us the inspiration that will enable us to make good here in mortality, that we will be worthy of the great calling that came to us before the foundation of the world."⁸⁹ The Mormon belief in a "pre-existence" figures largely in patriarchal blessings to this day. One blessing assured the recipient, "You were chosen to come to earth through this royal lineage [Ephraim] and to be reserved to come forth in the greatest of all dispensations—the dispensation of the fulness of times when the Gospel and the Holy Priesthood have been restored."⁹⁰ Some were told they had been held in reserve to come forth in this day, and others that they were given the opportunity to choose the time and place in which they would come to earth.⁹¹ During the

86. Eliza R. Snow diary, 1846, Huntington Library. A copy of the complete poem was sent to me by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher.

87. John Smith journal, 1781-1854, Special Collections, Marriott Library.

88. Blessing given to Colonel Thomas L. Kane by Patriarch John Smith, 7 Sept. 1846, at Cutler's Park, Omaha Nation, in Leonard J. Arrington, *"In Honorable Remembrance": Thomas L. Kane's Services to the Mormons, Task Papers in History*, No. 22 (Salt Lake City: LDS Historical Department, 1978), n.p.

89. LeGrand Richards, "Patriarchal Blessings," address to BYU student body, 27 May 1953, in R. Clayton Brough and Thomas W. Grassley, *Understanding Patriarchal Blessings* (Bountiful, UT: Horizon Publisher, 1984), 37-38.

90. Blessing given 21 May 1973, copy in my possession.

91. Blessing of Watkin Rees by Patriarch George Mumford, 18 May 1914, that of Harvey Sessions by Patriarch Jos. R. Shepherd, 12 Oct. 1929, and a blessing given to Lorie

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries this led to the conviction that we chose our various stations in life, even to the point of selecting parents, husbands, or wives.⁹² In 1857 Apostle John Taylor wrote in answer to a woman's query, "Where did I come from?":

Knowest thou not that eternities ago thy spirit dwelt in thy Heavenly Father's bosom and in His presence, and with thy mother, one of the Queens of Heaven. [While there thou] made a covenant . . . with two others, male and female spirits, that thou wouldest come and take a tabernacle through their lineage, and become one of their offspring. You also chose a kindred spirit whom you loved in the spirit world . . . to be your head, stay, husband and protector on earth and to exalt you in eternal worlds.⁹³

Many young Mormon men and women were told in blessings that they would find and marry the "choice spirit" they had known in the pre-existence. According to Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton this idea received "some discouragement from church leaders who considered it too fatalistic . . . it served mainly to give religious overtones to the common conception of a 'one and only.'"⁹⁴

Patriarchal blessings still reflect the belief that we are born into a particular situation for some divine purpose or because of some circumstance in the pre-existence.⁹⁵ As recently as 1973 a woman was told,

Now there are choice spirits, a part of your posterity, now awaiting in the Spirit world for the proper time when they will be worthy and anxious to come to this earth, and you could play an important part in providing a clean channel through which these choice spirits can come to earth and obtain mortal bodies. So take good care of this body.⁹⁶

The doctrine of a pre-existence remains strong in Mormonism even

Erikson, 10 Mar. 1971, copies in my possession.

92. One woman was told in 1951 that she had been "permitted to be born in this generation under the new and everlasting covenant, to goodly parents, whom it was your privilege to choose." Another recipient was told by Patriarch W. Glenn Harmon in 1970 that "before you came into this life you chose a companion, and when the time comes that this blessing should be yours, you will know her and she will know you." Copies in my possession.

93. John Taylor, *The Mormon* (1855-57) 3:28, in Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers*, 104.

94. Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 187.

95. One of the traditional explanations given for the denial of priesthood to blacks was that they had been less valiant in the pre-existence.

96. Blessing given on 17 May 1973, copy in my possession.

though the more dramatic links with pre-mortal life contained in earlier patriarchal blessings have been tempered by an official caution to patriarchs. But as the church has expanded throughout the world the process governing the administration of blessings has been routinized, gradually, through the years.

CHANGES IN POLICIES AND PRACTICES RELATING TO BLESSINGS

In the early days of the church when there was an easy familiarity within Mormon communities, anyone could ask for a patriarchal blessing whenever there was felt a need for direction or comfort. Many Saints received multiple blessings. Heber J. Grant, for example, received six patriarchal blessings before becoming seventh president of the church in 1918. But on 21 October 1922 Patriarch Hyrum G. Smith counseled local patriarch Joseph A. Quibell about “cranks” and others who go about trying to get a blessing from every patriarch they meet:

I think every member of the Church should have at least one blessing . . . and for that purpose the Stake Patriarchs are placed in the church—for it is an utter impossibility for the Patriarch of the Church to bless all the people. I think all members of the Church may receive blessings in the stakes, and then those who are fortunate enough may receive one from the Presiding Patriarch—then they should be well blessed for this life.⁹⁷

The procedure for obtaining blessings has changed. During the earliest days members could ask for one during a blessing meeting. But beginning with Hyrum G. Smith the instruction to local patriarchs was to “bless the worthy members of your stake.” From the 1930s on, teenage girls in order to obtain their Golden Gleaner Award in the Young Women’s Mutual Improvement Association were required to get their patriarchal blessing. On 29 November 1944 a message was relayed through the YWMIA general board to the stakes and wards that this no longer was a requirement, although the girls should be encouraged to ask for a blessing. Apparently a stake patriarch had complained when eighteen girls had tried as a group to make an appointment to receive patriarchal blessings.

Today obtaining a patriarchal blessing follows a strict procedure—almost a rite of passage—a routinization of what was formerly a charismatic, spontaneous response to promptings of the spirit. Guidelines are laid down by the institutional church in terms of who can receive a blessing, by whom it can be given, and the necessary paperwork that has to be completed. The conditions outlined include: (1) a person must be a baptized member of the

97. Hyrum G. Smith to Joseph A. Quibell, 21 Oct. 1922, Smith family records.

church; (2) the bishop or branch president has the responsibility for determining when any member is ready to receive a patriarchal blessing, whether they are mature enough in an understanding of the gospel, and if they are worthy. Although no specific age is designated, Patriarch Eldred G. Smith strongly recommended that no one under twelve years of age should be given a blessing:

It should come at a time when the individual has a desire to be of service to others, when he has a desire to do the work which the Lord desires of him. He should be old enough to understand the history of Israel. He should be of an age when he begins to feel the "loosening of his mother's apron strings" and has a desire to make something of himself in serving the Lord in his life.⁹⁸

Members of the church are required to obtain written "Recommends," signed by their bishop, attesting to their faithfulness and worthiness to receive a patriarchal blessing. These "Recommends" are given after formal interviews similar to the ones experienced by members seeking permission to participate in temple ordinances.⁹⁹ The manner in which blessings are bestowed has changed also. In Joseph Smith Sr.'s day, within the relatively close-knit congregations, communal blessing meetings were celebrations which included feasts, and in one instance Lucy Mack Smith, wife of the first patriarch, added her own blessing to that given by her husband.¹⁰⁰ Today the patriarch conducts private pre-blessing interviews with recipients who may not be known to him personally in which he seeks to gain some understanding of their background and personality. And the communal meetings have been replaced with private sessions with only the patriarch and individual recipient present and, if desired, close family members. Even the scribe has been replaced by a tape recorder.

There have been other changes on the administrative level. For example, in the days of Joseph Smith, Sr., it was decreed that since "a laborer is worthy of his hire," the patriarch should be paid for his services. It was agreed that he should receive ten dollars each week plus expenses. Payment for services continued, with adjustments, through subsequent patriarchs. There are references to direct compensation from those receiving blessings.¹⁰¹ Uncle John Smith's journal records on 22 May 1846, "For the first

98. Smith, "What is a Patriarchal Blessing?" 42-43.

99. *Handbook of Instructions*, No. 16 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1940), 128-29.

100. Caroline Barnes Crosby, "Journal and Memoirs, 1807-1882," 21 Feb. 1836, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

101. Lyman A. Shurtliff, after receiving a blessing on 6 December 1837, noted in his journal, "I made the Patriarch a present of four or five dollars with which he was well

time since we left Nauvoo I blessed 3 persons & received one dollar. This same day I paid out my last half dollar." Four days later he noted, "Gave four blessings and one gratis."¹⁰² In 1848 Patty Sessions refers to taking dinner to Father Smith (Uncle John): "He blessed us with a Patriarchal Blessing. I gave him \$2.00 in money for Mr. Sessions and mine. He gave E. R. Snow's to her."¹⁰³ Benjamin Ferris, secretary for Utah territory, wrote in 1854: "Among other singular institutions they have a Patriarch, whose business it is to bestow blessings. The blessing is given in writing to the applicant who pays for the same one dollar and a half, of which one dollar belongs to the Patriarch and the balance is paid to the scribe for recording the document."¹⁰⁴ Later this practice began to reflect more general changes in the world view of members of the church. The values of private enterprise, instead of community service, began to show a troubling face. John Taylor, newly sustained president of the Quorum of the Twelve, wrote to fellow apostle George Q. Cannon on 7 November 1877:

The subject of the present condition of the patriarchs has lately been considered by us. It has appeared to several of the members of the Quorum that they have noticed a spirit amongst some of the brethren ordained to this office, to degrade it to a mere means of obtaining a livelihood, and to obtain more business they had been travelling from door to door and underbidding each other in the price of blessings. This, we all considered an evil that should be remedied as soon as practicable.¹⁰⁵

The solution, suggested Taylor, was to organize a quorum of patriarchs over which "by virtue of his calling" Patriarch John Smith would preside.¹⁰⁶ After the late nineteenth century the presiding patriarchs received a living allowance from church funds, but local patriarchs continued to support themselves by their secular occupations, as they do today. Service as a stake patriarch is similar to that of all local callings in the church, a purely voluntary activity. One difference is that patriarchs work alone, have no council (or quorum), and are relatively unattached within the hierarchical

pleased" ("Biographical Sketch of the Life of Luman Andros Shurtliff, 1807-1864," 27, typescript, Huntington Library).

102. John Smith journal, Special Collections, Marriott Library.

103. Patty Bartlett Sessions journal, typescript, Huntington Library.

104. Benjamin G. Ferris, *Utah and the Mormons* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1854), 314.

105. John Taylor to George Q. Cannon, 7 Nov. 1877, John Taylor papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library.

106. It is not known if this advice was acted upon immediately, but there are later references to a quorum of patriarchs in solemn assemblies when a new church president was sustained.

church structure, even though stake presidents have the responsibility for supervising patriarchs within their boundaries.

Although no record is available as to when a quorum of patriarchs was first formed, John Taylor's dream was certainly realized when Hyrum G. Smith became patriarch in 1912. Hyrum G. directed, supervised, and gave counsel to stake patriarchs. In fact he professionalized the whole operation. One of his directives was a circular letter of instructions to patriarchs throughout the church, dated 19 August 1914. Among other things the patriarch expressed some concern about any commercialization of the calling when he advised all stake patriarchs, "You may accept a gift if it is offered, but do not permit anyone you have blessed to leave your presence feeling that they have paid for a blessing; Patriarchal blessings cannot be purchased, they are the free gifts of God to his children under the hands of His Patriarchs."¹⁰⁷ This advice was repeated on the title page of each patriarch's Record of Patriarchal Blessings book, under the heading "Duties of Patriarch."¹⁰⁸ Finally, in 1943 the receipt of gratuities was condemned.

Other directives regarding the giving of blessings may provide more subtle indications of change and bureaucratization in the church. From the beginning there was some ambivalence in describing the function of patriarchs. Many times it was said they were to "bless the fatherless" or to bless those whose fathers were not members of the church, or blessings were given by permission or request of the fathers. Yet often recipients had worthy fathers who were not even mentioned. These phrases gradually disappeared as the practice of giving patriarchal blessings became integrated within the institutional procedures of the church.

In 1958 Elder Bruce R. McConkie referred to patriarchal blessings as "a necessary part of church administration."¹⁰⁹ Despite their charismatic nature they now serve as an accepted rite of passage within the institutional setting. And, even though today's stake patriarchs are instructed to rely on the spirit, and many have expressed their deep sense of humility and responsibility in seeking the Lord's guidance, twentieth-century blessings differ from the earlier, mystical and colorful, spontaneous outpourings. In this sense they tend to reflect change in the larger American culture as they have become less other-worldly and generally more practical or rational in their language and focus. Also in their content and in the administrative policies governing their bestowal, patriarchal blessings clearly reflect the cultural changes accompanying the evolution of the institutional church.

107. Circular letter to stake patriarchs, 19 Aug. 1914, signed by the presiding patriarch, Hyrum G. Smith, Smith family records.

108. Title page of Record of Patriarchal Blessings book of John M. Young, Liberty Stake, 20 Mar. 1920, Smith family records.

109. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 224.

The belief in continuous revelation embraces such adjustment. And despite the routinization accompanying institutional change, this does not take away from the patriarchs themselves any of the reverence arising from their sense of being in touch with the divine. Nor does it deprive recipients of any perceived value in the blessings themselves. Patriarchal blessings are still regarded with respect and appreciation, they are still seen as a sign of God's interest in the individual, and they are accepted as a direction-finder, an anchor, and a comfort in times of stress or insecurity. Perhaps the ability to institutionalize this ancient charismatic tradition, allowing it to embrace cultural change, is another indication of the genius of Mormonism.

In Passing to Her Fathers

Warren Hatch

In Saint George, Lena McCain had cancer.
She set her house in order.

In Las Vegas, the doctors went after the cancer with a knife,
got it, watched her closely.
They did not know if she would live.
She received rites of priesthood from her sons.
She would have another seven years.
With her husband, she returned to the temple of Saint George
and tended the cottages facing the south wall of the temple,
across an avenue of climbable maples.

Seven years later
my wife and I watched a pelican riding the stream
near shore, upriver.
Boys were up there too, in marshes splashing,
and the pelican moved out into the current,
gathered himself, and flew up from the water.
He flew low in front of us like a cloud.
We agreed that grandmother would die.

I went to Las Vegas with my daughter, my brother, my cousin.
It was August—the night of falling stars,
and six days before the eclipse of the moon.
Few stars trailed down the sky.
We waited as long as an hour
for the silence of their passing
as we floated south and west, into night,
under a certain weight of stars.
My daughter awoke and cried. The night was too vast,
and I held her, making her world possible again.
She clutched my shirt until her hands forgot.

Near morning, we floated in desert. The West burned low,
marking Las Vegas.
The sun rose behind us as we drove down into the city.
Daybreak is heavy there.

In Las Vegas we slept,
then visited aunts and uncles, sitting on couches,
without my wife, a thing that perplexed my daughter.
In evening we went to Grandmother.

Again an uncle anointed her.
His hands trembled—he pressed the vial against a finger,
leaving a bead of pure olive oil,
touching her temples where the bandages ended,
spreading his palms over her head,
bowing, praying, touching like dying wind.
Again the uncle of seven years before
sealed the anointing and blessed her:

You have been here before and been made well—
You have no task here now.
Your Father has a place for you.
He is mindful of you.
You shall not suffer.
Prepare your family for your passing.

At five-two, she could snap any bed sheet
into symmetrical folds
in an economy of grace without it touching the ground.
Try this jam, she says,
it's so good it'll make your tongue slap out your brains.
She is clever, an Odyssean.
She will sleep longer, then longer,
then not awaken, she knows,
and sleeps with a cat's astuteness
in little cheats against death,
in day, with her daughters near,
secure in their necessary touches,
her feet on a grandson's knee,
he massaging her calves.
No pain, she says.
I feel like I am floating out of my body.

There is a temple in Las Vegas,
on the slopes of Sunrise Mountain.
She desired to go up to this temple with her family
before her passing.

I sat, my back against a cool, white pillar.
In the east, the moon was red in eclipse.
My daughter reclined in my lap,
chin on her chest, appraising the moon.
Sleep, she said.
The moon crossed behind cloud.
Come back, she said.

Free Expression: The LDS Church and Brigham Young University

Omar M. Kader

THE DILEMMA

THE BOND BETWEEN BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints precludes the university from becoming an entirely secular institution. Because BYU's board of trustees, composed almost entirely of high-ranking church general authorities, is actively involved in the operation of the university, it forces administrators to manage the university in ways that accommodate the mission of the church as a primary focus. BYU's academic mission is secondary to the university's church mission. This explicit arrangement is fraught with conflicts concerning free expression among administrators, professors, and students. The free pursuit of knowledge will inevitably lead to stresses, strains, conflicts, and confrontations in church-sponsored institutions where the religious mission is paramount.

The LDS church established Brigham Young University to provide, "an environment enlightened by living prophets and sustained by those moral virtues which characterized the life and teachings of the Son of God."¹ The church never intended BYU to be a bastion of free expression, unlimited scholarly inquiry, or a leading institution of secular knowledge.

But the price BYU pays for maintaining a mission that, primarily, promotes religious knowledge and, secondarily, advances secular knowledge is to become a pariah among academic institutions. The price BYU professors pay from the inside is reduced free expression and living with the constant watchful eye of its sponsor. At the same time, they must

1. *Brigham Young University Mission Statement*, 4 Nov. 1981.

live with ridicule and exclusion from their colleagues in the academic community.

How long can the church and BYU professors live with these burdens and restrictions without significant conflict and public embarrassment? Is it possible for BYU to manage the tension of being a church-sponsored university and meet the conflicting demands of its sponsor and faculty? Is the trend toward becoming a secular university reversible? Is it possible for any church to sponsor a university without facing charges of insensitivity toward free expression?

THE CASE

While working at BYU, I discovered a class of concerned university community members whose self-appointed purpose was to save me from myself. Their warnings were never officially sanctioned edicts, but, rather, independently offered advice, cloaked in the guise of helpful hints to protect my own church standing.

As a non-Mormon growing up in Provo, Utah, and, later, a convert to the LDS church, I saw BYU as the culmination of my professional dreams. But my real experience at BYU was continual exclusion and suspicion due to my ethnic, religious, and political variance from the dominant culture. I was always viewed with caution since a Palestinian Arab with a Muslim background and membership in the Democratic party would not be expected to understand some of the unspoken limits and rules. Although I was safely ensconced in the administrative bureaucracy, my cultural background and liberal political leanings rendered me suspect.

During the eight years I taught in Brigham Young University's political science department and served as assistant to the dean of the College of Social Sciences, I was embroiled in the conflicting missions the university espouses. I was routinely bombarded by self-appointed "protectors" within the university who were "concerned" for my spiritual well-being and by self-appointed defenders of the faith from outside the university who challenged my right to be at BYU.

In 1976 I managed Gunn McKay's Utah County campaign for Congress. His democratic affiliations thrust my testimony as a faithful church member into question in a conservative church climate. One senior administrator invited me to teach at BYU-Hawaii until Ezra Taft Benson passed away and the political environment at BYU became more favorable for "my type." (If I had agreed to that option, I would be languishing in Hawaii today.)

My most difficult times were those spent negotiating with insidious, self-righteous sycophants at the university—those who worried about regulating the length of students' pantlegs and facial hair according to Honor Code stipulations. The religious "thought police" laid claim to supe-

rior spiritual knowledge and justified thinly veiled attacks with references to inspirational wisdom. Their actions were never officially endorsed or encouraged, despite their contrary assertions. Such self-righteous errand boys are anomalies in an academic environment, but all too common at BYU. And they undermined the school's mission as an institution of higher learning while assuming in their religious smugness that they were saving the university.

Reflecting on my years at BYU and noticing their current problems articulating their mission led me to study the meaning and intent of the university in general and BYU in particular.

THE MISSION OF A UNIVERSITY

In 1852 John Henry Cardinal Newman delivered nine discourses to the Catholics of Dublin on the *Idea of a University, Defined and Illustrated*. The occasion for the lectures grew out of the legitimate need Catholics had for a religious education that addressed their own theology.

In 1992 Jaroslav Pelikan reviewed Newman's lectures in his *The Idea of a University: A Reexamination*. Pelikan explores the contemporary university and its struggles. He examines the activities of a university as it conducts research, teaching, the conflict between scientific truth and revealed truth, free inquiry, scholarly honesty, civility in discourse, tolerance of diverse beliefs and values, and trust in rationality and public verifiability.

The challenge each university has in meeting its mission and vision of what a university should be is a daunting task. Newman simply states that the ideal university should seek to be "a place of teaching universal knowledge."² Newman refines his definition of the university as four legs of a stool: the advancement of knowledge through research, the transmission of knowledge through teaching, the preservation of knowledge in scholarly collections, and the diffusion of knowledge through publishing.

Pelikan examines Newman's approach to the role of the church and secular pursuits and suggests that we are no further ahead in dealing with the tension between church and university today than our colleagues of an earlier era were. He asserts that the two institutions are caught in a "crisis of confidence":

Each in its own way, both the university and the church (though the latter even more than the former), are often dismissed by those who claim to speak

2. Quoted in Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Idea of the University: A Reexamination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 41.

on behalf of the "the real world" as museum pieces from another, simpler era, still good places perhaps for the young to learn something about the past but definitely not the places to look for guidance about the real world and its future.³

The natural tension that emerges from the interaction between any church and the intellectual community generally takes on a certain hostility and smugness. To the faithful, secular scholars lack faith and are, therefore, unworthy models for the youth to emulate. To the secularist, the lack of reason and dependence on faith is a weakness that ill prepares the young for a tough and rugged "real world."

Every university seeks to fulfill its mission by providing a respectable balance like the four legs of a stool. Striving to meet the demands of each area in a climate of competing demands is a challenge many universities cannot meet.

BYU, for example, clearly seeks to be a strong teaching university. However, it cannot be an excellent teaching university without research, since good teaching is based on advanced knowledge, not redundant thinking. Pelikan explains Newman's ideas in the following way: "For I would propose that there is no better way to protect Newman's principle of 'knowledge its own end' in the teaching of undergraduates than to 'develop' it into the principle that in the university the teachers who 'extend' the knowledge to students should also be investigators who 'advance' the knowledge."⁴

Research is an expensive proposition and one that has great reward for those universities attracting professors who make national and international impacts. However, the contribution to research that is impressive to the secular world may not appeal to the church, which must underwrite such an expensive activity at the cost of programs that are more central to the mission of the church. Therefore, the church and BYU are confronted with a serious dilemma: should the Mormon church be the benefactor of research that contributes to the prestige of the university, but not to the church and its members, solely for the purpose of fulfilling the university's need to be a legitimate member of the academic community?

The question is further complicated by Newman's encompassing definition of the role of the university which legitimately includes both secular and religious missions:

The view taken of a University in these Discourses is the following: that it is a place of teaching universal knowledge. This implies that its object is, on

3. Ibid., 11-12.

4. Ibid., 79.

the one hand, intellectual, not moral; and, on the other, that it is the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than *the advancement [of knowledge]*. If its object were scientific and philosophical discovery, I do not see why a University should have students; if religious training, I do not see how it can be the seat of literature and science.

A university, according to Newman, is a place where professors must be left free to pursue their studies in an idyllic setting free from the encumbering distractions of everyday life and confusion over the mission and meaning of a university.

If any church intends to maintain its control of a university, its leaders must clearly define their commitment or indifference to research. While every discipline cannot be given equal resources, decisions must be made concerning the direction the university must take regarding scholarship. Additionally, the church will have to relinquish decisions regarding what types of scholarship it will tolerate and what types it will not in order to commit to research which will be acceptable to the academic world.

The primary mission of BYU, discussed below in more detail, is to establish an environment where promoting faith is an end in itself. That single-issue mission, unlike the mission of the secular university, sets BYU apart from the traditional definition of a university. It is also the source of much speculation about how committed a university is to the advancement of knowledge when the sponsor values religious faith more than secular knowledge.

CHURCH SPONSORED EDUCATION IN THE PAST

To emphasize faith over knowledge demands courage and the ability to withstand legitimate criticism from other institutions, especially those with missions which are purely secular. The historic trend of religiously sponsored universities is to evolve from their church sponsors, teaching less religion and becoming more secular. The evolution from strictly religious to strictly secular scholarship does not arbitrarily diminish faith. Many scholars maintain their faith while applying the scientific method.

Yet many LDS leaders apparently abhor a radical transformation if they allow pure free expression at the university. Elder Neal A. Maxwell posed the fear that "Knowledge, if possessed for its own sake and unapplied, leaves one's life unadorned."⁶ Elder Maxwell correctly espouses such a view for a uniquely religious institution. But American universities cannot espouse purely religious missions if free thought is to flourish at such

5. *Ibid.*, 78.

6. Quoted in *Deseret News*, 19 Aug. 1992, B2.

institutions. Pelikan highlights the consequences a university risks by allowing individuals to freely think:

By its very nature, of course, the knowledge and scholarly study of faith can be not only controversial but contagious: it can lead lifelong believers to surrender cherished tenets of faith, or it can engage students existentially in such a way that, having come to observe and criticize, they remain to pray. The university must not pretend that either of these outcomes cannot happen within its walls.⁷

While LDS leaders fear such heresy at BYU, they stridently defend and maintain BYU's primary religious focus. But the university will be diminished as an institution of higher learning if the church appears to be firmly in control of the academic mission of the university.

THE UNIQUE MISSION AND GOALS OF BYU

Whatever prestige BYU enjoys nationally and internationally it derives from its faculty and students, not its affiliation with the church. The legitimacy of BYU in the American academic community flows directly from the research and publications of its scholars and the accomplishments of the students who leave the university and achieve great success. In contrast, BYU's religion faculty, while fulfilling the faith-promoting goals of the church, is, with few exceptions, not a star-studded group of thinkers. To be fair, they were not hired to be scholars or thinkers.

BYU serves a variety of constituents, each with its own mission and notions of how the university should address specific interests. BYU's purpose is based on conflicting goals. A natural confrontation will emerge from the give and take of various interest groups who attempt to influence, control, or define the purpose of the university.

BYU has six primary constituent groups:

- First and foremost, the school serves to educate and indoctrinate students.
- Additionally, the university provides parents a safe place to send their children.
- Loyal alumni are served through athletic success and a competitive diploma.
- The university serves church members as a model of church values under the general authorities' direction and control.
- BYU, as an institution of higher education, makes clear contributions

7. Pelikan, 39-40.

to scholarly fields and provides Mormon scholars a medium for both secular and religious expansion.

- And the city of Provo, Utah, benefits economically from the university's existence.

BYU's unique relationship with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints simultaneously fulfills five secular and religious goals:

- The school provides a legitimate traditional education that is also unique to the Mormon community.

- The university fosters its reputation as a missionary symbol.

- In addition, the school serves as a church-leadership training ground.

- BYU legitimately claims to promote both academic and religious research and indoctrinates students, members of the church, and the community.

- At the bottom line, the school provides an environment for Mormon youth to meet and marry.

These purposes and goals vary in the amount of time, resources, and attention they receive from the various constituencies. It is safe to say that none of the goals receive more than 20 percent of the university's attention or resources. The constituents, on the other hand, influence the direction of the university. The church clearly dominates these categories, but church influence is directed in large measure from the involvement of others on the list. Whatever the demands, the meaning of a university in a classical sense must be the driving force that defines BYU. When that meaning comes into conflict with BYU's goals and constituents, the stresses and strains resulting from dispute over resources and goals affect the status of the university. Free expression is the one area that cannot be ignored, redefined, or unlimited at BYU.

The church is locked into an untenable position of pursuing a uniquely religious mission at BYU while at the same time attempting to build an American university. These are incompatible goals with no middle ground. Control of university research, teaching, admission, faculty recruitment and retention, and all issues associated with free expression militate against a prosperous and compatible relationship between a church and an academic institution. The church will curtail and therefore emasculate the university in order to ensure its activities conform to a mission defined by officials who owe their loyalties to the sponsor, the church.

The university mission, while not alien to religious goals, is defined by advocates whose primary success is measured in secular terms. A university must be allowed to pursue truth wherever it leads; some of it may be unpleasant for any board of directors, religious or secular, but the freedom to pursue truth in research, whether scientific or religious, is the fundamental principle which must guide any good university.

BYU is not travelling in uncharted territory. Some of the most prestig-

ious universities in America began as religious institutions and eventually evolved into secular institutions: Harvard, Notre Dame, Princeton, and the University of Southern California. What is unusual is that BYU officials are hoping to be different. Church-directed administrators believe they have the ability to walk the fine line between adherence to the church's interpretation of its mission and fidelity to academic excellence. By trying to be both a school devoted to religious principles and a respected institution of higher learning, BYU officials are courting the likelihood that they will be neither.

The Mormon church established Brigham Young University for the purpose of providing "an environment enlightened by living prophets and sustained by those moral virtues which characterized the life and teachings of the Son of God." Additionally, the university's mission statement says, "Any education is inadequate which does not emphasize that His is the only name given under heaven whereby mankind can be saved."⁸ These statements are important to the foundation of the church and its teaching. The church has the right to define its own mission and demand that all who attend and work there adhere to it. What they cannot expect is everyone to respect every method of implementing this mission.

The BYU mission statement also states that "Scholarly research and creative endeavor among both faculty and students, including those in selected graduate programs of real consequence, are essential and will be encouraged" and calls for a "broad university education."⁹

BYU's mission, which includes religious training, is not incompatible with the goals of providing a classical liberal education as defined by other universities. However, at BYU religion in the specific and not in the general is more important than a classical liberal education. When the two compete for resources or come into conflict, religion always comes first because the church is the sponsor and controls the university. The final two paragraphs of the mission statement actually spell out the priority of the university and the church:

In meeting these objectives, BYU's faculty, staff, students, and administrators should also be anxious to make their service and scholarship available to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in furthering its work worldwide. In an era of limited enrollments, BYU can continue to expand its influence both by encouraging programs that are central to the Church's purpose and by making its resources available to the Church when called upon to do so.¹⁰

8. *Brigham Young University Mission Statement*, 4 Nov. 1981.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*

The fact of the matter is this last point is far more important than any of the previous statements because "encouraging programs that are central to the church's purpose and by making its resources available to the church when called upon" clearly subordinates every aspect of the university's mission to that of the church's mission. It is not wrong for this to be the case, since the church owns the university. However, it does not make sense for a university to be pursuing a mission that is defined in terms of being a resource to a church.

The primary mission of BYU, as stated, is religious in nature. However, there is also significant content in the mission statement to allow for an interpretation that BYU wants to be a highly respected institution of higher education as a secondary goal. In fact, the practice at BYU is to move in the direction of becoming a university in the full sense, yet the language of the mission statement indicates a strong theological bent. There is room for confusion among those at the university who advocate more emphasis on scholarly, secular pursuits.

FREE EXPRESSION

Free expression is not anarchy, abuse, or disrespect. Every university has its uniqueness, but BYU's case is unique in its effort to minimize the conflict between pursuing the goals of a university while at the same time maintaining good standing with its board and sponsor, the LDS church.

The effort by BYU to walk the fine line between pursuing the goals of secular institutions of higher learning and maintaining and adhering to the direction and guidance of its sponsor without diminishing the stature of the institutions will be measured by the degree of interference of the church in the university's affairs. To meet the demands of the university and avoid interference by the church, BYU officials have written a policy on academic freedom aimed at assisting its faculty, staff, and students to conduct their affairs in such a manner as to avoid church interference in their academic activity. This is best understood by reviewing the draft document "Statement on Academic Freedom at Brigham Young University" which is currently under consideration as a means of redefining BYU's mission and clarifying its continued problems with free expression.

This document attempts to articulate how BYU's unique religious mission relates to principles of academic freedom. It should be noted, however, that BYU regards the so-called limitations described below not as *narrowing* the scope of freedom¹¹ but as enabling great (or at least different) and much prized freedoms.

11. *Brigham Young University Academic Freedom Statement*, Apr. 1992.

The draft attempts to distinguish between individual and institutional academic freedom. The individual must be free to pursue his or her research and teaching without interference. The institution must not be subject to outside control.

1. Individual Agency: The Church teaches that "moral agency" (which encompasses freedom and accountability) is basic to the nature and purpose of mortality (see 2 Ne. 2:26, D&C 93:30-31; D&C 101:77-78). In LDS theology, individual freedom is essential to intellectual and spiritual growth. Every Latter-day Saint is enjoined to know truth for himself or herself. We claim it as our privilege to seek wisdom, like the Prophet Joseph Smith, for ourselves. Teachers and institutions play a crucial role in making truth available and discoverable. But neither testimony, nor righteousness or genuine understanding is possible unless it is freely discovered and voluntarily embraced.

2. Individual Academic Freedom: Perhaps no condition is as important to creating a university as is the freedom of the individual scholar "to teach and research without interference," to ask hard questions and to subject answers to rigorous examination. The academy depends on untrammelled inquiry to discover, test and transmit knowledge. This principle is so well understood as to need no elaboration. Although all universities place some restraints on individual academic freedom, every institution that qualifies for the title of university allows ample room for genuine exploration of diverse ideas.

3. Integration of Individual Agency and Academic Freedom: Latter-day Saint scholars are thus doubly engaged to learn truth for themselves, for both the Church and the academy bid them [to] undertake a personal quest for knowledge. BYU aspires to be a host for this integrated search for truth by offering a unique enclave of inquiry, where teachers and students may seek learning "by study and by faith" (D&C 88:118; cf. "The Mission of Brigham Young University").

4. Scope of Integration: Because the Gospel encompasses all truth and affirms the full range of human modes of knowing, the scope of integration for LDS scholars is, in principle, as wide as truth itself. The current statement on academic freedom in the BYU University Handbook eloquently articulates this Gospel-based aspiration:

By virtue of its sponsorship by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Brigham Young University is committed to the pursuit of truth. Its doctrinal basis for this commitment proclaims, in the words of President Brigham Young . . . that "it is our duty and all the truths in the world pertaining to life and sciences, and to philosophy, wherever it may be found in every nation, kindred, tongue, and people."

At BYU, individual academic freedom means more than it does at secular universities. It is based not only on a belief (shared by all

universities) in the value of free inquiry, but also on the Gospel principle that humans are free agents who should seek knowledge in the sacred as well as the secular, by the heart and spirit as well as by the mind, and in continuing revelation as well as in the written word of God. BYU students and their parents are entitled to expect an educational experience that reflects this aspiration.¹²

The argument that the inclusion of specific religious teachings expands a university's legitimacy and promotes pluralism and free expression is a precarious notion. Carrying this argument to its logical extension, every medical school in the country could do well to include chiropractic, osteopathic, hypnotic, and faith-healing in medical school training in order to display a broad-minded commitment to a well-rounded medical education. The inclusion of religion as part of a university education is as legitimate as the inclusion of chemistry or physics. The problem arises when religion is elevated to a position of dominance and control over other departments in the university. The university must resist undue influence or control by any approach to the pursuit of knowledge including the scientific method. The issue again is freedom.

At Brigham Young University, faculty and students are enjoined to seek truth "by study and also by faith" (D&C 88:118). This integration of truth lies at the heart of BYU's institutional mission. As a religiously distinctive university, BYU opens up space in the academic world in which its faculty and students can pursue knowledge in light of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. For those who have embraced the Gospel, BYU offers an especially rich and full kind of academic freedom. To seek knowledge in the light of revealed truth is, for believers, to be free indeed.¹³

There is no need to justify the inclusion of the study of religion in the mission of a university when based on a legitimate application of an institution's mission and purpose as is the case with the LDS church. However, the university's effort to justify its pursuit of religious education by stating that the inclusion of such an education expands the definition of free expression is cynical. There is rich justification for including religion and its place in the human experience in the education of students without the university's disingenuous misapplication of free expression and academic freedom in this debate.

Those who support excluding theology from secular institutions betray the ideal liberal education.

12. *Ibid.*, 3.

13. *Ibid.*, 1.

Theology should play a role in liberal education and thereby in the public realm because theology asks the kinds of questions that all reflective human beings ask. Like all the other liberal arts, theology attempts to ask these questions in a disciplined way, faithful to the canons of inquiry of the modern university. . . . It concerns disclosure of those religious questions which human beings as human beings insist upon asking, and the critical, reflective interpretation of the kinds of responses that the religious classics represent.¹⁴

Michael McConnell notes the distinctive character of religious education in academia in his article "Academic Freedom in Religious Colleges and Universities." McConnell argues that secularly-defined academic freedom applied in religious institutions may, in fact, undermine the ideals intellectual freedom is founded on.

Religiously distinct colleges and universities make important contributions to the intellectual life of their faculty, their students, and the nation, and secular academic freedom in its unmodified form would lead quickly to the extinction of these institutions; . . . the insistence on a single model of truth-seeking is inconsistent with the antidogmatic principles on which the case for academic freedom rests; and . . . even if the extension of secular academic freedom to religious institutions were desirable on intellectual grounds, it would subvert the ability of religious communities to maintain and transmit their beliefs, and thus undermine religious freedom.¹⁵

Religious institutions not only contribute to knowledge; sectarian approaches provide a necessary variety of dialogue in American academia. McConnell goes so far as to predict doomsday results if academic freedom mongers have their way:

Given the antireligious character of modern academic culture, serious religious scholarship would be in danger of extinction if it were not for particular institutions in which it is valued and protected. It is no coincidence that the rise in religious particularism has occurred most prominently in institutions connected with perspectives . . . that consider themselves most ruthlessly suppressed in the secular academy.¹⁶

14. David Tracy, "Afterword: Theology, Public Discourse, and the American Tradition," in *Religion & Twentieth Century American Intellectual Life*, ed. Michael J. Lacey (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 194-95.

15. Michael W. McConnell, "Academic Freedom in Religious Colleges and Universities," in *Freedom and Tenure in the Academy*, ed. William W. Van Alstyne (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 312.

16. *Ibid.*, 315.

He concludes that the "secular academic world" must allow religious institutions to "determine for themselves what 'limitations' on secular academic freedom are necessary to maintain their own sense of mission, subject only to the requirement that these be stated clearly in advance."¹⁷

BYU's invoking free expression in its "advance," "Statement on Academic Freedom," as McConnell advises, is a narrow, anemic, and lame attempt to promote religion on campus. There is no reason to exclude religion from a university curriculum. The issue again is control of the university, not the content of the curriculum. When religious education debunks reason as inferior to faith instead of different from faith, it is not religion, it is indoctrination.

Judith Jarvis Thomson, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology philosophy professor, and Matthew Finkin, a University of Illinois law professor, assert that McConnell's protection of the "special" nature of religious instruction defeats both the reasonable and moral foundations he evokes to support his argument. They counter that religious institutions' coercive protection of their own doctrinal beliefs flies in the face of their espoused moral and intellectual ideals:

In the first place, we doubt whether the continued existence of variety requires condoning limitations on the academic freedom of the various faculties. Second, while we think variety on any view conduces to the common good, we doubt whether variety maintained by coercion does. Third, it remains questionable whether the academic profession should take a substantive stand on the differential contributions made by institutions with doctrinal commitments as opposed to institutions with other aims. For why is *doctrinal* commitment to be thought special?¹⁸

Doctrinal commitment is not "special" enough to justify intellectual coercion. Thomson and Finkin continue, "No one is entitled to freedom from intervention just on the ground that a moral code forbidding the action rests on faith. . . . No institution is entitled to freedom to coerce its faculty just on the ground that belief in the nonreligious model rests on faith."¹⁹

No educated person today would demand a rejection of faith as a criterion for scholarship. It is a struggle that has been overcome in secular universities by reducing the influence of religion in the mission of the

17. *Ibid.*, 324.

18. Judith Jarvis Thomson and Matthew W. Finkin, "Academic Freedom and Church-Related Higher Education: A Reply to Professor McConnell," in *Freedom and Tenure in the Academy*, 423.

19. *Ibid.*, 429.

institution. At BYU that struggle is being won by religion. But to defeat reason is to defeat the purpose of the institution.

HOW TO MANAGE FREE-THINKERS

History is filled with accounts of unique individuals who went against the grain of organizational structures and paid a price. Joseph Smith was such an individual, and in the end, he died defending his beliefs. Socrates was also condemned in his day. His crime was teaching Athenian youth to question their elders and challenge authority. His impiety included the belief that personal actions are a reflection of individual beliefs. Although Socrates could have persuaded his jurors to acquit him and had the opportunity to escape once convicted, he fulfilled his sentence, drinking the prescribed hemlock in a symbolic gesture of his support for the Athenian judicial system. His death made him perhaps the most celebrated martyr for free expression.

Galileo, Father Charles Curran, and Salman Rushdie are further examples of unique thinkers whose lives and livelihood were similarly imperiled as a result of their personal convictions.

The Catholic Church and Galileo Galilei

Galileo is considered the father of the modern scientific method. He was the first to use the telescope to establish facts about astronomy. He discovered the impact of gravity on the pendulum and falling bodies.

However, his scientific method led him into conflict with holy scripture as understood by Catholics of his time. Galileo, through the use of the telescope, proved the Copernican theory that the earth rotates around the sun. The Catholic church at the time promoted the belief that everything rotates around the earth. The church felt so strongly about the theory, they placed Copernican writings on the Index, the list of prohibited books in the Catholic church. (The Index was only abolished in 1966.) The case of Galileo is interesting because so much of what happened, in hindsight, seems clear-cut. The Catholic church was wrong and it has taken 350 years to admit its mistake.

Galileo clearly had no experience in dealing with scientific truth when it ran counter to popular or institutional tradition. He tried to convince Pope Urban VIII that the Copernican theory was right, but his appeal was viewed as religious dissidence rather than scientific knowledge.

Galileo had always held that the ultimate test of a theory must be found in nature. "I think that in discussion of physical problems we ought to begin not from the authority of scriptural passages, but from sense-experiences

and necessary demonstrations . . . Nor is God any less excellently revealed in Nature's actions than in the sacred statements of the Bible."²⁰

Galileo was banned from stating his views, which were treated as personal opinion, because the scientific method had not been applied before and had no track record of respectability. Because he had so much confidence in his newly discovered method, he pressed forward at his own peril. Pope Urban VIII was not pleased: "Your Galileo has ventured to meddle with things that he ought not to and with the most important and dangerous subjects which can be stirred up in these days."²¹

The Catholic church put Galileo on trial for violating a commitment to a profession of faith:

I most firmly accept and embrace the Apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions of the other observances and constitutions of the Church. I also accept Sacred Scripture in the sense in which it has been held, and is held, by Holy Mother Church, to whom it belongs to judge the true sense and interpretation of the Sacred Scripture, nor will I accept or interpret it in any way other than in accordance with the unanimous agreement of the Fathers.²²

Galileo was found guilty of heresy, required to recant publicly, and was imprisoned under house arrest. Ten judges, all Cardinals, sat at his trial. According to Bronowski, "The dissident scientist was to be humiliated; authority was to be shown large, not only in action, but in intention. Galileo was to retract; and he was to be shown the instruments of torture as if they were to be used."²³

Galileo was twice threatened with torture. The implication is that Galileo saw the intellectual war turning into a physical battle he could not possibly endure, even with the scientific method at his command. Having lost every avenue to convince the Pope and those in influence, he signed an infamous statement recanting his "false opinion that the sun is the center of the world."

I, Galileo Galilei, son of the late Vincenzo Galilei, Florentine, aged seventy years, arraigned personally before this tribunal, and kneeling before you, most Eminent and Reverend Lord Cardinals, Inquisitors general against heretical depravity through the whole Christian Republic, having

20. J. Bronowski, *The Ascent of Man* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 209.

21. Quoted in Richard J. Blackwell, *Galileo, Bellarmine, and the Bible* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 14.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Bronowski, 214.

before my eyes and touching with my hands, the holy gospels—swear that I have always believed, do now believe, and by God’s help will for the future believe, all that is held, preached, and taught by the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church. But whereas—after an injunction had been judicially intimated to me by this Holy Office, to the effect that I must altogether abandon the false opinion that the sun is the centre of the world and immovable, and that the earth is not the centre of the world, and moves, and that I must not hold, defend, or teach in any way whatsoever, verbally or in writing, the said doctrine, and after it had been notified to me that the said doctrine was contrary to Holy Scripture—I wrote and printed a book in which I discuss this doctrine already condemned, and adduced arguments of great cogency in its favor, without presenting any solution of these; and for this cause I have been pronounced by the Holy Office to be vehemently suspected of heresy, that is to say, of having held and believed that the sun is the centre of the world and immovable, and that the earth is not the centre and moves:

Therefore, desiring to remove from the minds of your Eminences, and of all faithful Christians, this strong suspicion, reasonably conceived against me, with sincere heart and unfeigned faith I abjure, curse and detest the aforesaid errors and heresies, and generally every other error and sect whatsoever contrary to the Holy church; and I swear that in future I will never again say or assert, verbally or in writing, anything that might furnish occasion for a similar suspicion regarding me; but that should I know any heretic, or person suspected of heresy, I will denounce him to the Holy Office, or to the Inquisitor and ordinary of the place where I may be. Further, I swear and promise, protestations, and oaths, I submit myself to all the pains and penalties imposed and promulgated in the sacred cannon and other constitutions, general and particular, against such delinquency. So help me God, and these His holy Gospels, which I touch with my hands.

I, the said Galileo Galilei, have abjured, warned, promised, and bound myself as above; and in witness of the truth thereof I have with my own hand subscribed the present document of my abjuration, and recited it word for word at Rome, in the Convent of Minerva, this twenty-second day of June, 1633.

I, Galileo Galilei, have abjured as above with my own hand.²⁴

Galileo had to lie to himself and the Lord and disavow scientific truth to maintain his church standing. He was silenced and forced into house arrest for the remainder of his life. Catholic scholars and scientists took note and toed the line.

There is more to the story concerning Galileo and the Catholic church. Galileo was not entirely a hero to all who review his case. There are many

24. *Ibid.*, 216-17.

within the Catholic church who remain faithful and apologetic. Frederick Copleston, S.J., author of the three-volume *A History of Philosophy*, attempts to rescue the Catholic church from fault by explaining both sides were at fault and no general conclusions regarding the church and science can be made.

. . . the fault was by no means along one side. In regard to the status of scientific theories, Bellarmine's [the cardinal who led the trial] judgment was better than Galileo's, even though the latter was a great scientist and the former was not. If Galileo had had a better understanding of the nature of scientific hypotheses, and if the theologians in general had not taken up the attitude which they did in regard to the interpretations of isolated Biblical texts [Job 9:6] the clash would not have occurred. It did occur, of course, and in regard to the superiority of the heliocentric over the geocentric hypothesis, Galileo was undoubtedly right. But no universal conclusion can legitimately be drawn from this case about the Church's attitude to science.²⁵

The case of Galileo has since been laid to rest. The Catholic church revisited the trial documents and concluded that it was in error in its treatment of a great scientist. In the *National Catholic Register*, on 18 March 1984, a Vatican daily was quoted saying that the case of Galileo was closed: "The so-called heresy of Galileo does not seem to have any foundation, neither theologically nor under canon law."

Father Charles Curran v. Catholic University

In a more contemporary case, Charles Curran, a theology professor at the Catholic University of America, was dismissed because

He disagreed with church condemnation of birth control by married couples. Curran was clearly in the progressive camp. He taught summer sessions at Catholic University in 1964 and 1965, the year in which he made his opposition to the ban on contraception quite public in a talk given to priests in Niagara, New York. He backed changes in priestly practice, endorsing general absolution at group penance and eschewing many private masses for a lesser number held with others.²⁶

Curran was outspoken in his views, writings, and teachings. He be-

25. Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1946), 286.

26. Larry Witham, *Curran v. Catholic University: A Study of Authority and Freedom in Conflict* (Riverdale, MD: Edington-Rand, Inc., 1991), 18.

came the center of the progressive movement among Catholics in America for his interpretation of ethics and moral theology:

On observances and penance, for example, he was unabashedly positive. Better than a gloomy and negative penance, he advised, a wife should bake her husband his favorite cake as an act of reparation. "It is much more beneficial than mumbling a few prayers because it serves to remind a wife that her entire day is the living vow she made on her wedding day."²⁷

Curran's views clashed with Catholic doctrine and Catholic University was eventually pressed by Rome to take action. The Vatican issued a declaration that Curran be barred "from teaching Catholic theology anywhere at the university." The position was clear: the Vatican controlled matters of doctrine (i.e., canon law) at the university. The university stated that it would adhere to the Vatican declaration, since rejecting an order from the Holy See would be "inconsistent with the university's special relationship with the Holy See, incompatible with the university's freely chosen Catholic character, and contrary to the obligation imposed on the university as a matter of canon law."²⁸

Curran was also banned from teaching in the school of religious studies. Although he was offered a position to teach ethics in other departments, he insisted that he was a Catholic theologian and would teach his topic no matter what department they assigned him. The ban stood, so he went public by condemning the university for its lack of free expression. The university withdrew Curran's "canonical mission", the legitimacy needed to teach Catholic theology under the umbrella of Vatican approval.

Curran sued the university for breach of contract and lost. In Curran's defense, his lawyer argued, "If you are a university, you have to have academic freedom and institutional autonomy. . . . If you don't, you may be something else. You may be a seminary. You may be a catechetical institute, but you are not a university."²⁹

Despite Curran's efforts the judge in the case, Frederick Weisberg, said Curran could complain that the university may not have the academic freedom he hoped for when he joined the faculty and, "He can speak about that and scream and yell all he wants, but he can also leave."³⁰

Catholic University, in this case, defined their method of resolving the problem of free expression at a church-run university. Church authority was established over the religion department only; full free expression was

27. *Ibid.*, 20.

28. *Ibid.*, 147.

29. *Ibid.*, 158.

30. *Ibid.*, 158.

offered in every other department and Curran would be allowed to teach whatever he wanted in any other secular department at the university. He chose not to do so.

Curran left Catholic University rather than be restricted from teaching theology. The Vatican would have allowed him to stay, but his career as a Catholic theologian was over. His case leaves a clear message to those who teach at universities controlled by a church. If you don't like it, you may have to leave.

Salman Rushdie and the Power of Fiction

When Salman Rushdie wrote the novel *The Satanic Verses*, he had no intention of drawing the death sentence for insulting the sensibilities of Iranian, Muslim fundamentalists. Not all Muslims agree with the Iranian decree calling for his death, the "Fatwah." But he was forced into hiding, remains under twenty-four-hour protection, and is rarely seen in public. The Ayatollah Khomeini pronounced the Fatwah on 14 February 1989.

In the name of God Almighty, there is only one God, to whom we shall all return. I would like to inform all the intrepid Muslims in the world that the author of the book entitled *The Satanic Verses*, which has been compiled, printed and published in opposition to Islam, the Prophet and the Koran, as well as those publishers who were aware of its contents, have been sentenced to death.

I call on all zealous Muslims to execute them quickly, wherever they find them, so that no one will dare to insult the Islamic sanctions. Whoever is killed on this path will be regarded as a martyr, God willing.

In addition, anyone who has access to the author of the book, but does not possess the power to execute him, should refer him to the people so that he may be punished for his actions. May God's blessings be on you all.

—Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini.³¹

After seeking safety in hiding, Rushdie attempted to make peace with those he offended by expressing regret four days after the declaration of the death threat: "Living as we do in a world of many faiths, this experience has served to remind us that we must all be conscious of the sensibilities of others."³²

But Rushdie's regret was not enough. Iran issued a statement that left little doubt about its wishes and intentions: "Even if Salman Rushdie repents and becomes the most pious man in time, it is incumbent on every

31. Lisa Appignanesi and Sara Maitland, eds., *The Rushdie File* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 68.

32. Ibid., 98.

Muslim to employ everything he has got, his life and his wealth, to send him to hell."³³

Issuing death threats to silence heretics seems excessive in the West. Methodically denigrating a scholar's church standing to repress secular research or different interpretations of religious knowledge is equally despicable.

FREE EXPRESSION IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Freedom to express one's mind is an essential ingredient in every free society. I. F. Stone, in his book, *The Trial of Socrates*, states, "No society is good, whatever its intentions, whatever its utopian and liberationist claims, if the men and women who live in it are not free to speak their minds."³⁴

The limits placed on any group of people must come from a consensus of socially acceptable customs and not from authoritarian efforts to curtail free and independent thinking. Brigham Young University's "Academic Freedom Statement" is such an authoritarian attempt to squelch vocal resistance in the form of controversial, secular knowledge and research.

American institutions are unique in their openness. By placing high value on freedom of expression, we express a commitment to pursue truth without fear of where it leads us. The "search for truth" has two very specific and important goals: maintaining the honesty of officials who have a monopoly on power and therefore control over the means of enforcement,³⁵ and protecting unpopular views.³⁶

As Ronald Dworkin, professor of jurisprudence at Oxford, asserts, free expression is not a golden calf in and of itself:

Not because people have any intrinsic moral right to say what they wish, but because allowing them to do so will produce good effects for the rest of us . . . government is less likely to become corrupt if it lacks the power to punish criticism. . . . America's special commitment to free speech is based on a national endorsement of a strategy, a collective bet that free speech will do us more good than harm over the long run.³⁷

33. Ibid., 99.

34. I.F. Stone, *The Trial of Socrates* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1988), ix.

35. Louis M. Seidman, Geoffrey R. Stone, Cass R. Sunstein, and Michael V. Tushnet, "Freedom of Expression," in *Constitutional Law*, 2d. ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1991), 1022.

36. Rodney A. Smolla, *Free Speech in an Open Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 151-69.

37. Ronald Dworkin, "The Coming Battles Over Free Speech," *New York Review of*

The U.S. Bill of Rights was written to ensure against the suppression of less popular ideas.

Free speech is valuable, not just in virtue of the consequences it has, but because it is an essential and "constitutive" feature of a just political society that government treat all its adult members, except those who are incompetent, as responsible moral agents. . . . We retain our dignity, as individuals, only by insisting that no one—no official and no majority—has the right to withhold opinion from us on the ground that we are not fit to hear and consider it.³⁸

FEAR OF FREE EXPRESSION

At BYU fear to speak out on issues that are thought to go against prevailing notions has created a lackey mentality among some students and faculty. Far too many fear to speak their minds publicly but express their views secretly to friendly authorities who tolerate subterranean, vicious character assassination. The disturbing fact is that BYU and the LDS church have nurtured a culture of informers among these sycophants skulking in various departments at the university. Church leaders and administrators have tolerated and even rewarded quislings, without regard to standard American ideals like free speech and the right to face accusers.

It makes for inferior citizens and diminishes our democratic ideals to resort to authority instead of practicing free expression. Students who lack maturity or good judgment regarding the fundamental constitutional right of free expression are denied an opportunity to learn how to become good Christians, informed and ethical citizens, when they are exposed to a culture that turns a blind eye to the shabby, sinister, and corrupt practice of informing on fellow students and professors.

An unspoken tradition of self-protection encourages students, who hear new ideas from their professors or fellow students, which run contrary to their experience in the church, to confront the problem by reporting them to authorities. Instead of thinking and expanding horizons when confronted with new and perplexing ideas, students too often resort to the disgusting practice of informing. It is easier for the weak to betray than to think.

Faculty gossip often escalates into reports to church officials and undermines university professors' teaching and scholarship. General authorities, BYU officials, and others who respond to quislings lend their good

Books, 11 June 1992, 56.

38. Ibid., 57.

names, authority, and power to undermine the church, BYU, and the fundamental values that enrich and enhance our community.

In "Cultural Violence," Johan Galtung states that it is common in many societies to define good and evil in subtle symbols that come from the top. When good and evil are presented to members of any given society, any means to eliminate evil is acceptable because it becomes a matter of working to save the "good" people of the church from the "bad" people who think differently. "The logic of the scheme is simple: identify the cultural element and show how it can, empirically or potentially, be used to legitimize direct or structural violence."³⁹

I believe there is an unseen and dangerous consequence that can easily evolve to violence where the criticism of members of the church who engage in symposia or publish "alternative voices" are labeled dissidents. All too often, self-appointed defenders of the faith take it upon themselves to implement actions deemed beneficial to the church. Leaders who leave the impression that certain types of members are undesirable pave the way for self-styled crusaders to defend the church in unique and unfortunate ways which can result in violence.

THE SOLUTION

There are three ways to tip BYU's tentative balance of its secular and religious missions:

- If the board of trustees hired capable and competent administrators who are sensitive to the mission of an American university and simultaneously sympathetic to the church's mission, church leaders can allow the university presidents to administer without interference. Allowing BYU presidents to exercise their judgment in the affairs of the university would restore the independence of the university, confidence of the faculty, and reputation of the institution.

- If church influence cannot be curtailed in BYU's management, the second solution would be to follow the Catholic University model and separate colleges, departments, and programs vital to church educational interests from the secular university. The department of religious education would come under the church's direct control. Hiring, firing, teaching, and research goals would all be defined within the mission of the church. The rest of the university would be managed as a secular institution of higher education without church involvement.

39. Johan Galtung, "Cultural Violence," *Journal of Peace Research* 27 (1990): 296.

- If the church cannot exercise either the first or the second option, it must sever its direct control of the university. Separation would establish BYU's reputation as an academic institution and the church's voiced commitment to free expression. The church would be free of the responsibility to control and administer every detail of an institution which by nature must pursue controversial ideas.

The basic issue is simple: It is not possible for the church to maintain control of BYU and not interfere on a regular basis with the free expression of its faculty and students. Free inquiry runs contrary to the dogmas of churches. The limitations placed on churches regarding the control of universities they sponsor and issues of free expression are understood and accepted by those who live in the environments of both. However, the costs of such control will always be a central issue characterized by contention and conflict. Ultimately, both the university and the church suffer from such conflicts with neither getting what they want.

BYU cannot be both a respected institution of higher learning and the primary seat of faith for Mormons unless the relationship is changed significantly. If BYU is to continue its progress toward national academic respectability, it must extricate its secular mission from any relationship with the church. By divesting its control of the university, the church will allow BYU to continue pursuing its academic mission and avoid destructive confrontations over academic freedom and church control of university activity.

The church must, sooner rather than later, relinquish control over BYU—in effect, allowing BYU to become a secular, private university—with an interesting tradition and memories of the old days when it was a “church school.” Otherwise, it will have to destroy the institution with smothering control.



Mama and Daddy Standin' By

Paul Swenson

Best thing that ever happened
In church was when Martha
Got Nancy to sing "Summertime"
On Mother's Day—
Not once
But twice.
First, in Relief Society
For all those cream-colored
Sisters, Martha at the
Piano, Kayjean arriving
Just in time to
Unzip her cello while
Martha made introductions

Said her own personal
Mother's Day version of that
Famous line in *Gone With the Wind* was:
"Frankly, my dear, I'd rather be an aunt"
But since she couldn't set that to music
Started thinking about her childhood in Florida
Hot, humid nights; no screens on the open windows
Whipporwills singing her to sleep; waking up to
Songbirds in the trees outside her bedroom
That's why George Gershwin's lullaby
Still sings to her inner child
And how Gershwin came to church on Mother's Day
With Martha, Nancy, and Kayjean

Summertime
And the livin' is easy
Nancy's voice is
Torching the words
Her dark hair cascading
Like a southern night
Catfish jumpin'
And the cotton is high
Across the aisle
A black child is crooning
To himself on his mother's lap—
The only dark faces
In a sea of beige.
Your daddy's rich
And your mama's good lookin'
Hush little baby
Don't you cry
I'm the only adult
Male in the room
And when the song is over
I'm the lone groupie to join
the entourage. Like a roadshow
But without the scenery,
We're moving from the Relief
Society to the Elders' Quorum
A small, dark room full of suits

When the song starts, the light
Comes on in the room
It seems to be coming from Nancy's face
One of these mornings
You're goin' to rise up singin'
You're goin' to spread your wings
And you're goin' to fly
The Elders sit impassively
Until that day
You hush up your cryin'
Mama and daddy standin' by
Best damn thing
Ever happened in church

Does Paying Tithing Make You a Voting Shareholder? Brigham Young University's Worldwide Board of Trustees

Paul C. Richards

THE IDEA FOR THIS ESSAY came from Lu Ann F. Snyder, a delightfully sardonic being who is secretary to the provost at Brigham Young University. When LDS church members call the provost's office wanting this or that, they sometimes remind Lu Ann that as tithe payers, they are paying her salary and she therefore had better hop to. Lu Ann says she would like to ask for a raise but is too politic for that.

Her comments brought to mind a glut of similar experiences I had during my thirteen years as director of Public Communications at BYU. I have seen church members flaunt their righteousness, their defender-of-the-faith vigilantism, their membership in the Republican party, their pioneer heritage, and their love of "the Brethren," among other things, to gain favor among or intimidate BYU administrators. Some act as if having a temple recommend makes them a member of a worldwide board of trustees. Often their exertions are textbook examples of Doctrine and Covenants 121:39: "as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, . . ."

While I did not always agree with their tactics, I understood their motives. BYU has become a large, impersonal, cumbersome, unresponsive bureaucracy that leaves even top administrators frustrated with the politics and red tape. It suffers from the same inwardly-focused, self-preservation intrigues that prevent virtually all large organizations from serving their constituents effectively. Add to this that BYU is expected to fill so many roles by so many people, and it becomes difficult for it to function as a university.

Consider the following:

—Tithe-paying parents pressure BYU to admit their children regardless of academic qualifications while other tithe payers want their money to fund a university that is ranked in the top ten of the *U.S. News & World Report* list of America's best colleges.

—Internally there are arguments over whether BYU should be teaching or research oriented.

—Some people want BYU to increase its graduation rate while others want it to be a happy hunting ground for marriage partners. Related to this, the education of women creates serious conflict in the minds of some church members, as will be illustrated later in this essay.

—Sports fans who learned Christian humility through decades of losses now want to expand the coliseum so they can better savor the blood of victory. They never could understand why the Word of Wisdom didn't kick in sooner. But BYU is winning now—never mind that some of the key victories are at the hands of athletes who are not Mormons. On the other hand, some members wonder why the church allows BYU to get caught up in the boob-tube sports obsession that has swept the nation.

—Some parents expect BYU to teach students how to cope with life's problems while others want it to be a safe haven where controversial topics are never discussed.

—Some constituents love BYU's dress and grooming standards because they make the student body look so wholesome while others argue that these have little to do with education and lead to hypocrisy and to a whited-sepulcher syndrome on campus.

—Politicians continually badger administrators for some type of public identification with BYU, be it through filming a campaign video on campus or speaking to a class and inviting the media, because such exposure implies endorsement by the church. Other politicians yell foul when this happens. Remaining politically neutral while trying to educate students about the realities of political give-and-take creates tensions.

—BYU is loved, hated, envied, scorned, defended, defamed, praised, and cursed by its various publics. To some it is a bastion of righteousness and perfection—"The Lord's University." To others it is a showcase sham, filled with holier-than-thou automatons. The former are not serious about its being a university. The latter do not take it seriously as a university. When forces tug and pull in every conceivable direction, when questioning is interpreted as doubt, when debate is seen as contention, and when inquisition-minded types are heeded, the business of educating suffers.

With all these forces from faculty, church leaders, sports fans, political groups, special interest factions, and students, life in leadership at BYU can become almost unbearable. Part of BYU's unresponsiveness is necessary because if an administrator tried to meet all the expectations and demands

made upon the university by its unofficial board of trustees, he or she would be destroyed in a fortnight.

I have great admiration for the late Martin B. Hickman who miraculously navigated BYU's political shoals for seventeen years as dean of the College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences. With such disciplines as history, sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, and psychology, the college is the largest and most diverse of any on campus and is pregnant with career-destroying hazards. But Martin survived and thrived. Even more miraculous, he did it as a University of Utah graduate and as a Democrat.

One of Martin's keys to success was this: "In this business, ten percent of 'em love you, ten percent of 'em hate you, and the other eighty percent reserve judgment to see what the record is. In administration you've got to learn to live with the fact that some people are not going to like what you do, and it won't be on just one issue. They are not going to like your style, period. If you can't learn to live with that, there is no place for you in leadership."¹

I quote Martin's philosophy because it applies so well when dealing with those who make squeaky noises—noises which have little or nothing to do with being a university.

So what chance do individuals have who object to tight uniforms on football players or want *Catcher in the Rye* banned from literature courses because these things distract from the spirit? Not much if those people use tithing, church attendance, or personal revelation as a hammer.

It is amusing to hear several applicants for the same job each claim to be God's choice based on personal revelation. This is a no-win situation because no matter who is hired (usually it is none of the above), the losers complain that the department chair or the personnel department or the whole university has apostatized and is obviously out of touch with God.

When someone threatens to stop paying tithing if BYU does not ban certain movies from its International Cinema program, it is about as effective as telling the president of the United States you will stop paying taxes if he doesn't come to your birthday party. That is not to say BYU never responds to legitimate concerns, but with all the other forces at play, anyone who uses the threat of withholding tithing to effect change is not going to be taken very seriously.

In the spirit of caring, it is tempting to discuss with these people how much they should reduce their tithing if they want to withdraw support from BYU and yet preserve their place in the kingdom. I estimate they could eliminate BYU's share if they reduce their tithing by anywhere from \$3.50

1. *BYU Today*, June 1985, 23.

to as much as \$10 on every \$100, depending on how the church's gross tithing income is figured.²

Some do not mention tithing but threaten to withhold direct donations to BYU. Here is an example³: "We were so upset and angered by the sick article in the last *BYU Today* by socialist Richard Johnson that we refuse to support BYU until you show us that you have your heads screwed on straight. The article suggested the same stupid ideas presented by Satan in the pre-existence."⁴

This type of threat is often accompanied by a BYU donation form filled out with zeros or a check for \$10 or \$20 that has been voided and torn in half. In most cases the writer has never before donated to BYU.

One exception comes to mind—a donor to the Women's Research Institute who wrote to tell us she was withdrawing her support because BYU had fired an employee in another area. I realize that she was probably venting her frustration with BYU using the only avenue available to her. But it seems ironic that a women's program should be made to suffer for the firing of a male employee who had no connection to the Institute. Then, again, I suppose she saw BYU as a monolithic whole. Not so.

Not all attempts at manipulation revolve around tithing and donations. One intriguing tactic is the "I'm tellin' on you" letter, which is either sent to the BYU president with copies to one or more church leaders or to a church leader with copies to the BYU president, deans, offending faculty member, and editor of *The Daily Universe*. Faculty tend to be a paranoid lot and not always without reason, but over the years I have been pleased to find that "Tellin' on you" letters generally do not endanger them. Such letters addressed to church leaders were usually forwarded with little or no

2. BYU receives approximately two-thirds of its operating budget from the church. That amounts to an estimated \$150 million a year. The rest comes from tuition and other sources. According to *Arizona Republic* figures published in 1991, the church receives about \$4.3 billion in member tithes each year. Theoretically BYU's share would be about 3.5 percent of the total. If as some say the *Arizona Republic* figures are several times too high (see *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 Aug. 1991, B-1), BYU's share could range up to 10 percent of the total.

3. Since this and most other citations in this essay were written as private correspondence, names of authors and recipients have been deleted. Other than editing to remove identifying or extraneous material, the citations are quoted verbatim including grammatical errors, misspellings, and misuse of words.

4. The writer is referring to "Socioeconomic Inequality: The Haves and the Have-Nots," *BYU Today*, Sept. 1990, 47-58. Johnson argues "that if we are serious about contemplating the moral state of contemporary American society, we might gain valuable insight by broadening the measure of morality beyond the traditional sins (crime, sex, drugs, and violence) to include such variables as poverty, homelessness, and socioeconomic inequality" (49). The article generated a large number of responses both positive and negative.

comment to BYU for a response. The following is an example of a letter to the LDS First Presidency that was forwarded to the BYU president, asking only that whatever response was made, a copy be sent to the church:

For the last three issues of *BYU Today*, it seems that the main thrust of the voice of the professionals of the church (ENGLISH, Librarians, Teachers, as well as Counselors) have been advocating to read explicit materials so as to acquaint the people with vice without having to engage in it.

Is this a change in church policy? Our voice has been and is advocating the policies (attached) given by the prophets, and exemplified by Utah law.

If there has been a change, would you kindly let me know? We certainly do not want our voice to be a different voice than the law nor that of the prophets. (This does not mean, however, that we intend to agree with BYU professors who profess allegiance to the church and their voice differs from the prophets.)

P. S. . . . I have reports from women who say that are being persecuted immeasurably (in the BYU provo area) when they ask for these protections for their children and they say it comes from BYU. Thought you'd like to know.

The writer referred to several *BYU Today* articles including, "Discovering the World Through Books," by associate professor of English Elizabeth Wahlquist, who wrote:

One of the most useful things adults and adolescents can do is to read books that reflect life honestly and accurately, but in many of our homes and schools parents and teachers are sheltering young people from the books written for them because they deal too much with real life rather than the ideal. These are often the very books young people need the most. When they are overprotected from the world around them, they are not prepared to handle it when they eventually have to face it.⁵

Wahlquist is still on the faculty. There are others like her. I wish there were more. What better place to deal with controversy than in a setting where a faculty member, grounded in the gospel, can help students sort through difficult questions. To blindly hype perfection while allowing no discussion of life's difficulties is naive, jingoistic, and a perversion of gospel principles.

Here is another example along the same vein. This one was sent to the BYU president with a copy to a general authority: "On page 8 . . . Dr. [Richard] Cracroft recommends the book *Breeding Leah and Other Stories* and suggests that if we liked *Nightsoil* we will also enjoy this book. I have not

5. Ibid., Apr. 1984, 28.

read either book but I do have a review of *Nightsoil* which is enclosed. My question is this: Does BYU really want its students, faculty, and alumni to read these books?"⁶ The president's response is refreshing and most likely different from what many expect from BYU:

. . . I have not read either of the books referred to, and in light of other demands on my time, I am not likely to do so. I will assure you, however, that Dr. Cracroft is not only a valued faculty member, but also a solid member of the Church (he served as both a stake president and also a mission president) who thoroughly understands and supports the values that we attempt to develop among our students. I would suggest that you raise directly with him any questions that you might have.

Richard Cracroft is still on the faculty.

Here is an example of someone playing off the anti-communism stance of some church leaders. It is one of a number of complaints received in response to a *BYU Today* article by Russian professor Gary L. Browning titled "The Nuclear Knot in Diplomatic Ties."⁷ Copies of the letter were sent to the president of the church and a counselor.

. . . Dr. Browning calls our attention to a need for greater understanding of the Russian people.

(I realize *BYU TODAY* is an Alumni Association publication, however, Dr. Browning is a member of your faculty and therefore I assume teaching in accordance with Church principles.)

Although I certainly agree that we should bear no animosity toward the people of Russia, I do feel Dr. Browning treats too lightly the form of government in the Soviet Union.

Communism is a cruel, inhumane, atheistic dictatorship which holds its people hostage. Six trips to the USSR to be shown what the leaders want him to see, talk to those they want him to talk to, does not, in my mind, qualify Dr. Browning to make the statement he did concerning the desires of the Russian people. . . .

I believe the church membership and your students at the Y should read and re-read the [1936] statement of the brethren concerning the evils of communism.

Gary Browning is not teaching at BYU now. He is serving as church mission president in the former Soviet Union. He will be back.

Publicity about the accomplishments of women faculty and alumnae sometimes generates complaints. People write wondering why BYU en-

6. The writer is referencing the *Alumni Today* section of *ibid.*, Sept. 1991, 8.

7. *Ibid.*, May 1983, 3-6.

courages women to get an education when they are supposedly taught by ecclesiastical leaders that their only calling in life is to stay home and have children. The following two doctrinaire letters are examples.

The first is in reference to an article about the success of a professional musician who is the mother of seven children.⁸ A father wrote stating that his daughter also is a gifted musician who always wanted to follow a professional career but instead followed the counsel of her parents and church leaders to be a mother:

... She has done that cheerfully because she needed to be obedient to the brethren. ...

She started to complain about her decision when the Church publications began to glorify the women who, some with families, had carved out great careers for themselves. One of these outstanding examples was when the Relief Society ... made a big thing out of the career women in the Church. Many of them were mothers but the articles failed to explain how the children made out as "career orphans".

... my concern here is that we all, including the Church publications, ought to be marching to the same drummer and that drummer is the prophet. When it is said in General Conference that a mother's place is in the home I believe it and my children believe it. With that conviction it is hard for any of us to read an article in one of the official publications of the Church which glorifies a woman with great family responsibilities for building a career.

... I wish that the various official voices of the Church would not advertise that disobedience is good, great and rewarding. It leaves the obedient with grief, disappointment in self and a good deal of bitterness toward the Church for speaking with a forked tongue.

The second letter is similar. It is typical of what I call the "I've been good" approach.

I have been an active member of the Church all of my life. I pay a full tithing, teach the High Priest Group, been on a mission, married in the temple and try to follow the direction of the Prophet. Ever since I can remember the prophets have emphatically stated the most important calling of a woman is to be a mother and a wife and only under the most stressful financial conditions should she leave the home and work. ...

During all these years I have repeatedly seen the Church News and the BYU Alumnus Magazine which I receive highlight in glowing terms the accomplishments of working mothers. Two stand out in my mind (I can't state the date) as being rather typical.

One was a major feature in the Church News about a mother who was a

8. Ibid., 25.

judge in Salt Lake and whose husband was a doctor.⁹ Now that seems to stretch the guidelines set up by the prophet in every way I can imagine. . . .

The other was a shorter article about a women in Rexburg, Idaho (her husband was a religion teacher at Ricks—I wonder what he taught his students about this) who was being honored for her accomplishments as a teacher and who was retraining to be a nurse.

. . . I have always taught them [his children] to follow the Prophet. What do I tell them when my oldest says in rebuttal that there are many, many professional women employed at BYU and that the Church publications are honoring working women who have young children and who are obviously not under financial stress and what's more many of these women have husbands who are employed by the Church, many who are teaching this religion I am talking about.

I hope you can help me because I am in a real bind. I really don't know how to explain what we see in relation to what we know to be the truth.

We had all better start reading that renegade *Church News* more carefully. It is truly a wonder how such articles got past correlation. In truth anyone who thinks that even an unwashed comma could get into the *Church News* hasn't a clue as to the workings of the church.

Let me shift now to the subject of organic evolution. Biblical literalists love to criticize BYU for any research that even hints at evolution—this in spite of statements by LDS church leaders to the effect that we do not have all the answers on this topic.¹⁰

Jack W. Sites, Jr., an associate professor of zoology, has documented chromosomal changes in the Mesquite lizard as it adapts to the environment of the high deserts in central Mexico. His research was featured in the June 1986 issue of *BYU Today*.¹¹ BYU received the following response to the article. Note the play on tithing.

My children graduated from BYU so I automatically receive BYU TODAY.

The June issue covers Research. At least two articles show that BYU as an institution supports the "theory" of evolution and millions of years for the earth's existence.

I am not only embarrassed but concerned almost to anger that our church university would support the activities and theories such as those

9. The writer is referring to an article by Justice Christine Durham in the *Church News*, 23 Dec. 1978.

10. See Duane Jeffery, "Seers, Savants, and Evolution: The Uncomfortable Interface," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8 (Autumn/Winter 1973): 41-75; Jeffrey E. Keller, "Discussion Continued: The Sequel to the Roberts/Smith/Talmage Affair," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 (Spring 1982): 79-98.

11. *BYU Today*, June 1986, 15-16.

of Dr. Jack W. Sites whose article appears on page 15. His work is funded in part by the church, meaning by the members' tithing.

How can an activity antagonistic to the gospel truth of reproduction *only* after its own kind, as well as the very clear teaching of our Latter Day Prophets including President Young who admonished Brother Maeser to teach nothing except by the spirit—be sanctioned by BYU.

... how are we church members supposed to resolve these problems?

After receiving this letter, the editor of *BYU Today* was told by the administration to be careful in responding because BYU pays a "terrific price" for such an article. He wrote:

As a university, we are committed to the pursuit of truth and understanding and believe that all truth that man may discover will ultimately be found to be compatible with the gospel. We do not support the traditional view of evolution (i.e., that man evolved from lower forms of life), although it does seem obvious that species of animals undergo changes and adaptations over periods of time. Furthermore, we do not presume to know exactly when each part of the earth was created from existing matter, which helps to explain various ambiguities relating to the age of the earth.

BYU wishes always to be found in support of the teachings of the Church, and I am sorry that you were offended by these articles.

This response from someone other than the president only fanned the flames, giving rise to another letter demanding a response from the president himself.

Subject: Teaching of Evolution at BYU

... what is BYU doing? If ... BYU is committed to the pursuit of truth, why is it trying to demonstrate as truth what revelation already states as false?

The earth was organized and formed the first day. In celestial or Kolob's time that is 1,000 years of our present reckoning. That puts it about 13,000 years ago. Not only that, mortality did not start on this earth until the transgression. So that brings us down to nearly 6,000 years ago. Where does that leave organic evolution of species? Doesn't it actually impress upon our belief the scriptural doctrine of reproduction after its own kind? ...

Truth is truth, whether simplistic and perhaps naive to "the world" or not. Why shouldn't Dr. Sites and BYU rather be using our church resources to *disprove* evolution?

In addition to this, the writer sent a letter to the president of the church:

Since I cannot understand, accept, nor resolve in my mind what BYU is

doing in this area, my Priesthood leader, not understanding it either, suggested I write to you. . . .

The articles most explicitly referred to are in *BYU TODAY*. . . . The First, at least, is funded in part by BYU's College of Biology and Agriculture and it's Monte L. Bean Life Science Museum. Members tithing may therefore be supporting this activity.

How can BYU conduct research to prove speciation through "evolution" when the scriptures and our Prophets and Apostles teach that these are erroneous philosophies of men?

President, I thoroughly support the inspired leadership of the Church by yourself and all general authorities.

Clearly, in some cases it is futile to respond.

About 200,000 copies of the June 1986 issue of *BYU Today* were distributed. There may have been other negative responses to the article on Sites's research, but the above complaints from one person are the only ones I remember. There was no public outcry against evolution, and Sites remained on the faculty along with archaeologists and paleontologists and others who to this day talk of things being millions of years old.

So why the caution about paying a "terrific price" for such an article? There are two reasons as I see it.

The first is that we as a people react negatively toward publicity about things that we think might create controversy. We are so defensive and so consumed with our own culture, so intent on preserving an image of perfection, that we do not realize the world as a whole, with all its consuming problems, cares little about our family squabbles.

The second pertains to politics at BYU and BYU's relationship to the LDS church. It may appear the university has it easier than public institutions of higher learning that answer to regents and legislators. BYU answers officially to a much smaller body—a thirteen-member board of trustees composed of top leaders of the church. But unofficially it answers to more. It is difficult for some administrators to turn down a request from a church leader even though that person is not a member of the board. It can get dicey when two different leaders expect something from BYU, and their views are diametrically opposed.

By extension some faculty members feel they possess ark-steadying authority over BYU by virtue of having contacts at church headquarters. Their obsequious, end-run whisperings in the ear of a general authority, even one not on the board of trustees, can make life miserable for a BYU president.

So if a president makes enemies because he allows "evolution" to be taught or an administrator is viewed as an anti-Christ because he advocates academic rigor, it is understandable there is concern if even one anti-evolution letter such as the above crosses an administrator's desk.

Most of the examples cited in this paper came from right-wing or orthodox types who seem intent on enforcing righteousness. The majority of influence peddling I experienced at the university came from these people, not from moderates who tend to live and let live.

I decided to go back to the files to see if I could find an example from moderates. The only one I discovered was from a group of Provo, Utah, residents whose homes border on BYU property. They protested by letter and in the media when BYU built an extension to a warehouse without considering the impact it had on traffic, parking, noise, lighting, and property values in their neighborhood. At first BYU defended this project, but after the residents banded together and placed a full-page advertisement in the *Daily Herald* (8 Apr. 1985), the university changed its stance and ultimately spent more than \$100,000 to address the residents' complaints. It also changed its policy to be more sensitive to community concerns. Notice the difference in the goals of the moderates versus the conservatives.

As mentioned at the outset of this essay, I have drawn on examples of influence peddling that I was personally acquainted with at BYU. This is hardly a scientific sampling, but my experience indicates that the self-righteous tend to be less secure and therefore more anxious to impose absolute standards on their fellow beings. In the case of BYU, they want it to be such an ideal example of perfection that if they had their way, thinking would be banned. It is safer that way. It also is the way Satan wanted it, that "One soul shall not be lost" (Moses 4:1).

On a personal note I confess that at one brief period in my life, I leaned toward a black-and-white philosophy. I have repented and hope I might be forgiven. It may seem strange to some that my experiences at BYU helped cure me of that malady, but seeing the workings of the system up close can do that to a person.

I hope the university can withstand the pressures of the pharisees and fanatics. But if it is to do so, the moderate voices on BYU's unofficial board of trustees need to become more vocal instead of leaving the debate to the reactionary fringe.

For My Father, 1934-1990

Marni Asplund Campbell

Have you noticed, then, that sound moves
differently in fall—such falling
of leaves, a fall
from warmth and
 pleasure
into slower life, and old patterns—
and the sound, too, falls
in clear waves, so much clarity in the sound of bells
from a school and the brush of dry leaves so
powerful that I step reverent,
through these battering bells
these dead leaves and
the distant pulse of the sun
falling, shrinking.

I walk through the square late and anxious
and you step beside me taking my arm
as you sometimes did
to tell me something;
that this fall is yours
with the pleasures of clear sound,
bells that call to old books and dialogue, small windows
circumspect with ivy.
But you chose this time of urgent sound
to leave,
hands upturned
in a final gesture of amusement
at the presence of geese and corn,
and the leaves that scream
hectic color into the non-light
of dead suns.
And when you come to me now, it is in
a clear plastic bag—soft leather shoes,
faded oatmeal sweater, cut up the back, your wallet—
this is just loose change

from a scattered life
engraved with a message but not speaking.

And if you came again, there is not much I could tell you,
except for this:

peace is not a soft cloud
that makes solitude from isolation or
reverence from fear
peace is a hot knife that
easily slides through skin and bones.
Peace is not in your white, still face
or in the cold hands that now lie folded
on your chest, hiding the long thin scar,
your embarrassment
but it is in the moan of the widow
who must now leave you there,
alone in your room
and find life in the autumn that is sweet,
find that there is sound from where you are.
It rolls through fall air,
maybe like a slow chant,
but more like soft, dead leaves.



Remembering B. H. Roberts

Sterling M. McMurrin

IN MY EARLY YEARS, I HAD OCCASIONAL personal contact with B. H. Roberts. He was a friend of both of my grandfathers, and one of his daughters was married to my mother's brother, with whose family I had a close relationship. I was several times in Roberts's home in Centerville, Utah, and, although they were older, I knew all of his children by his second wife, Cecilia Dibble. I remember Roberts visiting my grandparents during the First World War, dressed in his chaplain's uniform. I was probably four or five years old. And I was present with his family at his funeral in the Salt Lake Tabernacle and his burial in the Centerville cemetery. That was sixty years ago, in the fall of 1933.

I never missed an opportunity to attend a lecture or sermon by Roberts. I had several conversations with him and, of course, read most of his books. He was the church's most prolific writer. His eulogy at the funeral service of my grandfather, Joseph W. McMurrin, who was his colleague in the First Council of the Seventy, was a powerful sermon.

Roberts was a quite remarkable person. He was a success in his public life but something less than admirable in his family life. At times he severely neglected his families. His success as a church leader and as a theologian and historian was due especially to his independence of mind, his intellectual adventurousness, and his determination and courage. He loved to fight, and if a good fight wasn't handy he would create one. He was too old to enlist in the army in World War I, but managed to get commissioned as a chaplain by demonstrating his physical ability. He was so persistent that they finally accepted him, and he saw action in France.

As a general authority of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Roberts battled for a number of things. He wanted a theology that squared with the basic insights of Joseph Smith, and as the author of the church's official history he wanted an honest history—something not easy to achieve. He was not a major figure as a theologian, nor was he a first-rate historian. But he was the best theologian that the church has had, and although it has better historians today, who have the advantages of high-level training in their craft, these scholars are usually highly specialized,

while Roberts covered the whole historical scene. His *Comprehensive History* will be a standard source of historical information and interpretation for a long time to come.

One of Roberts's crucial battles within the church was over the authority of his quorum, the First Council of the Seventy, of which he was the senior member in his late years. In those days they were usually called the Seven Presidents of the Seventy. In earlier days, the Seven Presidents were described as having equal authority with the Quorum of the Twelve. Roberts took that too seriously to suit the Twelve and the First Presidency. After he died, the status of his council was downgraded.

Roberts was essentially a political animal who wanted to be personally involved in politics. This was one of the causes of disharmony between him and some of his less liberal associates in the leadership of the church. However, he was prominent in the early political life of Utah after it became a state. When I began my first year at U.C.L.A. in 1931, my first class was in American government, and the first sentence of the professor, a well-known scholar in that field, referred to Brigham H. Roberts being refused a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives because of his plural marriages. His is a classic case illustrating the tendency of the Congress to make itself an exclusive club.

Roberts faced the rough-and-tumble of the world head-on. Born in England in 1857, he reportedly walked across the plains with a wagon train, without shoes, sleeping on the ground with only his sister's petticoat to keep him warm, from the Platte River to Salt Lake. He learned the alphabet when he was eleven years old, and while working as a blacksmith he read widely in the history of religion, such classical authors as Eusebius, Ederheim, Gibbon, and Draper. Although he attended the University of Utah, in its infancy in his day, he was for the most part a self-educated man. But he became the most powerful orator in the Mormon church—in the days when authentic oratory counted for something, before television, before general conference speakers began to read their prepared sermons from prompters while appearing to be speaking extemporaneously. In those days, for a Mormon to read a sermon in church or even to use notes was a clear indication of a lack of the Spirit. When the Spirit left with the coming of radio and television, genuine oratory, with the congregation's tears and laughter, disappeared. So now we have these tame, canned sermons that often offer little substance beyond the admonition to obedience and virtue.

Those of us who can remember conferences in the tabernacle back in the old days know something of the inspirational power of those events and their profound impact on the people. The speakers were sometimes far too dogmatic and highly emotional, but they had something to say that moved their listeners. There was real life in the place. No one had a greater impact

on the congregation than B. H. Roberts. He was a remarkably effective orator of the old school.

I well remember one of Roberts's visits to the old Adams Ward in Los Angeles, where I lived during my early years. Microphones had just come into the churches, and although our ward didn't need one, we had to keep up with fashion. Roberts was using a cane, and he would wander away from the pulpit. After the bishop had brought him back to the mike three or four times, Roberts swung his cane at the mike with great force, shouting, "Damn that damn thing—we've even got one now in the tabernacle." He missed the microphone but left a deep dent in the pulpit. For years afterward members would point out the place where the great man had landed his cane.

I am pleased that the Roberts autobiography was published in 1990, even though it is incomplete and not well balanced. My aunt Hazel Moss, Roberts's daughter, loaned me a typed copy in 1950. Thereafter, I urged the Roberts family to have it published and also to publish some of his more important writings that were out of print. Fortunately, now, after many years, there is a kind of Roberts revival, and the B. H. Roberts Society is doing a very good thing in perpetuating the name and spirit of the man. The publication of Roberts's *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, edited by Brigham Madsen, is a major event in Mormon intellectual life.

Roberts was a forceful writer, but his diction was inelegant and lacking in any kind of poetic quality. His main virtue as a writer was his directness and honesty. When you read his stuff you know what he is driving at. It has genuine integrity. His *Mormon Doctrine of Deity* is probably the best-argued piece on Mormon theology, but a more systematic statement on Mormon thought is Chapter 63 of the second volume of his *Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, where he gives a quite full description of Mormon philosophy and theology.

Roberts apparently considered his treatise "The Truth, The Way, The Life" to be his best work, but he could not get church approval for its publication. I understand that it is now being prepared for publication. The trouble he had in his battle to get the thing published was his speculation on pre-Adamites, a theory which he advanced in his efforts to square Genesis with organic evolution. In my opinion, here he produced a lot of nonsense. He should have recognized the Genesis stories of the Beginning as cultural myth, but this was a blind spot in his thinking. Roberts was a strong supporter of science, and he argued for good biblical scholarship. But he seems to have been quite unaffected by the critical study of the Bible, which was well advanced in his time. He gave much attention to the problem of the relation of religion to science and constantly urged the Mormon people to accept the findings of the sciences, but beyond that he made no real contribution to the religion-science issue.

Roberts's most important lasting contribution to Mormonism is not his work as a historian but rather as a theologian. His philosophic temper and his historical approach to things contributed to his strength as a theologian. He sensed the importance, for instance, of the non-absolutistic conception of God that is fundamental to Mormonism, and he was not hesitant to break with traditional theology in his opposition to the doctrines associated with original sin and in his affirmation of freedom in an open universe. He was not a great theologian, but, as I have said, he was the best that the Mormon church has had.

Roberts was certainly a controversial figure. He was respected, but I cannot say that he was loved. He wasn't the lovable type. I think he was feared by some of his colleagues in the church leadership, even though they respected him for his intellectual stature and considerable learning. I have always felt that some of them heaved a sigh of relief when he died. He had been a thorn in their sides on theological, political, and ecclesiastical matters.

I think that some in the leadership of the church have wanted to pretend that Roberts never existed. When I came to the University of Utah in 1948, I had graduate students who were returned missionaries who told me that they had never heard of him. There seems to have been a serious effort to erase him from the picture. He is almost totally ignored in the recently published *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*. The articles on Mormon philosophy and Mormon theology make no mention of him.

B. H. Roberts and James E. Talmage, the leading intellectual figures in the church in their time, died within a few weeks of each other in 1933. In my opinion, the church has been in intellectual decline ever since in matters pertaining to philosophic and religious thought.

B. H. Roberts's Studies of the Book of Mormon

Brigham D. Madsen

WHEN I AGREED TO EDIT THE WORK *B. H. Roberts: Studies of the Book of Mormon*, it was my intention to follow as faithfully as possible the explicit duty of any editor—to prepare the literary work of another person for publication—by selecting and arranging the material, by placing it in perspective through an introduction, and by adding explanatory notes as necessary.

In addition, because of the sensitive nature of the subject, I promised myself not to inject any personal judgments or conclusions but to allow the reader to make his or her own assessment of what B. H. Roberts presents. I tended to lean over backwards to achieve that goal as my final statement in the introduction attests, “Whether or not Roberts retained his belief in the Book of Mormon may never be determined.” As an indication of the apparent impossibility of absolute certainty about his convictions, that conclusion still stands, but there is nevertheless room for strong opinion based on Roberts’s own decisive declarations.

I would now like to consider the subject of Roberts’s beliefs as contained in his *Studies*, not as an editor but as any other reader of the volume and will feel free to offer my personal evaluation of it, hopefully in English as plain and understandable as that employed by Roberts himself.

Since publication of *B. H. Roberts: Studies of the Book of Mormon* there seems to be mounting concern on the part of some people about the message imparted in these documents and about Roberts himself.¹

Let us first examine the Roberts record by going back to the circumstances surrounding the writing of the biography of Roberts, *Defender of the Faith*, by Brigham Young University religion professor Truman G.

1. *B. H. Roberts: Studies of the Book of Mormon*, edited by Brigham D. Madsen, with an introduction by Sterling M McMurrin, was first published in 1985 by the University of Illinois Press in Urbana. Seven years later it was issued in a second, revised and corrected, edition by Signature Books of Salt Lake City.

Madsen.² According to the authors of *Brigham Young University: A House of Faith*, publication of Roberts's life story was held up for fifteen years by school trustees and was finally authorized only "with the understanding that it would be cleared with the publications committee of the Church before actually being published."³ And when it was "cleared," the book contained not a whisper of Roberts's controversial "Study of the Book of Mormon," although Madsen was aware of the study as evidenced by his discussion of it in an article in the 1979 summer issue of *Brigham Young University Studies*, one year before his Roberts biography appeared.⁴

The next episode in the saga of apparent opposition to the Roberts work came when the FARMS organization (Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies), headquartered at BYU, began selling a criticism of my editing of the book. Entitled "Did B. H. Roberts Lose Faith in the Book of Mormon?" it attempted to discredit Sterling M. McMurrin, who wrote an introductory biographical essay, and me, as well as B. H. Roberts in the process. In addition, one could also purchase a fifty-nine-page monograph entitled "Finding Answers to B. H. Roberts' Questions and an 'Unparallel,'" and a document entitled "B. H. Roberts, His Final Decade: Statements about the Book of Mormon (1922-33)." One might well ask at this point, why the concern about Roberts and his last analysis of the origins of the Book of Mormon?

Finally the *Deseret News* of 15 December 1985 printed an article summarizing the FARMS arguments against Dr. McMurrin and myself under the title, "New B. H. Roberts book lacks insight of his testimony." It is noteworthy that this review appeared not in the "Book Review" section but in the "Church News" section where it rightly belonged. To ensure that all interested people would get the appropriate picture of Roberts's examination of the Book of Mormon, the *Ensign* magazine, the official periodical of the LDS church, also published a six-page article about the Roberts book under the title, "B. H. Roberts, Seeker After Truth."⁵

In the wake of all this publicity, we were left wondering if it was possible these reflections on the supposed defects in our scholarship were an attempt to divert attention from Roberts's conclusions about the origin of the Book of Mormon by censuring the messengers who seemed to be the bearers of bad news. As far as we were concerned, we were willing to

2. Truman G. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980).

3. Gary James Bergera and Ronald Priddis, *Brigham Young University: A House of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 73.

4. Truman G. Madsen, "B. H. Roberts and the Book of Mormon," *Brigham Young University Studies* 19 (Summer 1979): 427-45.

5. John W. Welch, "B. H. Roberts, Seeker After Truth," *Ensign* 16 (Mar. 1986): 56-62.

accept reviewer Richard Sherlock's evaluation that the *Studies* book was "finely edited."⁶

There seemed to be growing apprehension about that now dangerous historian, B. H. Roberts. This unexpected attention apparently only attracted more readers of the Roberts tome as indicated by the Salt Lake City Zion's Book Store ten best sellers list of LDS books in which the *Studies* was number one during late 1985. As reviewer Sherlock wrote, "This book will be the one that is read in a hundred years."⁷

Who was Brigham Henry Roberts that he should be arousing so much attention over a half century after his death? As *Defender of the Faith*, or more appropriately "Defender of the Book of Mormon," Roberts spent a lifetime in justifying his belief in the Nephite record. His first serious effort to defend the Mormon scripture came in 1881 when as a twenty-three-year-old missionary in Tennessee, he met and vanquished in public debate a Campbellite minister who had challenged the Book of Mormon as being a fraud.⁸

Roberts's many years of defending in public disputation and in written argument his steadfast belief in the authenticity of the Book of Mormon culminated in 1909 with the publication of his *New Witnesses for God*.⁹ In this work Roberts vigorously defended the Mormon scripture by examining the external evidence to support the book—the testimony of witnesses, ancient ruins, and the customs and traditions of the American native races. He acknowledged that he had not met all objections to the book but was satisfied that more time and research in American antiquities would vindicate his efforts. Such scholarly activity in behalf of his church and his outstanding proselytizing had already brought him early prominence in 1888 when he was sustained as a member of the First Council of Seventy at the age of thirty-one. His six-volume *Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* may still be the best detailed history of the church for the nineteenth century.

As explained in the introduction and in the correspondence included in *B. H. Roberts: Studies of the Book of Mormon*, Roberts became involved in a second major examination of the Nephite record in the 1920s as a result of the referral to him of five questions about the book proposed by an investigator named Couch from Washington, D.C. Prompted by these queries and no longer satisfied with his answers in *New Witnesses for God*, he engaged in a 141-page investigation of "Book of Mormon Difficulties."

Although the questions of Couch had been directed to Apostle James E. Talmage, they were immediately referred to Roberts as the general

6. Richard Sherlock, review in *The Western Historical Quarterly* 18 (Jan. 1987): 72.

7. *Ibid.*, 71.

8. *B. H. Roberts Studies*, 2.

9. B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909).

authority most capable of answering them. In a short letter Roberts was able to provide explanations to Couch in reply to most of the inquiries. But one question seemed unanswerable: why were there no horses in America upon the arrival of the Spaniards when the followers of Lehi had such animals?

Not satisfied with his brief replies to the Couch questions, he prepared the more detailed analysis of 141 typed pages which he submitted to President Heber J. Grant and counselors, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and his own Council of Seventy in January 1922. This document, "Book of Mormon Difficulties: A Study," is the first of the three documents presented in our book.

In three days of meetings with the general authorities of his church, 4, 5, and 26 January, Roberts was allowed to present his "Difficulties" paper to them with a full discussion of the problems he had encountered with the historicity of the Book of Mormon. He wrote to President Heber J. Grant that his hope was that "from the collective wisdom of all the brethren addressed, or from the inspiration of the Lord . . . we might find a solution of the problems presented. . . ." ¹⁰ After the first two days, he was so disappointed with the results of his meeting with church leaders that he wrote Grant again, "There was so much said that was utterly irrelevant, and so little said, if anything at all, that was helpful in the matters at issue that I came away from the conference quite disappointed." ¹¹ The third day of meetings granted Roberts by President Grant evidently was just as dissatisfying in providing answers.

We get a more detailed picture of what transpired in those three days of special meetings from an entry in the personal diary of Wesley P. Lloyd, who had a three and a half hour very frank interview with B. H. Roberts about six weeks before Roberts's death in 1933. Lloyd had been a missionary under Roberts and later in his life became dean of the graduate school at Brigham Young University. Lloyd recorded Roberts's remembrance of the reaction of the church leaders to his presentation, "In answer, they merely one by one stood up and bore testimony to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. George Albert Smith [later President of his church], in tears, testified that his faith in the Book had not been shaken by the question." ¹²

Quite frustrated by his unsatisfying meetings with his brethren in the church hierarchy, Roberts spent the winter and spring of 1922 researching and writing the more important "A Book of Mormon Study," which takes up 166 printed pages of our book. In it he examined the following subjects:

10. *B. H. Roberts Studies*, 46.

11. *Ibid.*, 47.

12. *Ibid.*, 23.

(1) a consideration that Ethan Smith's book, *View of the Hebrews*, published in 1823 seven years before the Book of Mormon appeared, could have served as the structural basis or ground plan for Joseph Smith which would have enabled him to write the Book of Mormon; (2) evidence that the imaginative mind of Joseph Smith gave him the ability to write such a book and without any gold plates being available; (3) internal evidence that the Book of Mormon was of human origin; and (4) the similarity of conversions of the period when and where the Book of Mormon was "translated" and published. A third Roberts document included in this book is a comparison in side-by-side columns on each page of eighteen "Parallels" between the Book of Mormon and *View of the Hebrews*.

The *Ensign* article argued that Joseph Smith could not have used Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* as the basis for writing the Book of Mormon because the parallels between the two books are not exact. For example, the reviewer pointed out that Ethan Smith had the Ten Tribes come to America across the Bering Strait, while Joseph Smith's Nephites crossed the Pacific Ocean. In another example, Ethan Smith maintained that the legendary Quetzalcoatl was Moses, while Joseph Smith held him to be Jesus. But a careful reading of "A Book of Mormon Study" shows that Roberts asserted only that Joseph Smith could have used *View of the Hebrews* as a general "ground plan" for establishing a plot for the Book of Mormon, recognizing that an exact duplication of the facts from one book to the other would have led to an instant declaration of plagiarism against Joseph Smith by his detractors. The Mormon leader would have had to disguise the close connection between the two books by changing some of the specific incidents and stories related.

Although the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints also bases its beliefs on the Joseph Smith story and the Book of Mormon, its response to the publication of *B. H. Roberts: Studies of the Book of Mormon* was much different from that of the Salt Lake City church. While the latter adopted a very defensive posture both in the *Deseret News* and *Ensign* magazine in criticism of *B. H. Roberts: Studies of the Book of Mormon*, RLDS church member William D. Russell of Graceland College expounded the different approach of his church to the Book of Mormon in his review of Roberts's *Studies* for the *Utah Historical Quarterly*. It is instructive to recite a portion of Russell's comments:

Faced with Roberts's collection of evidence that undermined the traditional Mormon claims about the Book of Mormon, church leaders could have decided to begin revising the church's position on the Book of Mormon or they could have left it to individual members to decide for themselves on what level the Book of Mormon is "true." There are, after all, alternatives other than the polar positions (either the book is precisely what Joseph Smith claimed it to be or it is a hoax). It might be a history of

ancient America that was also influenced by Joseph's religious and cultural heritage as he translated it. Or it might contain doctrinal "truth" set in the framework of a story about ancient Americans. It is not surprising, though, that the general authorities responded to Roberts's research by ignoring the issues he raised and reaffirming their testimonies of the Book of Mormon. Quite likely the general authorities of today would respond in the same way. Indeed, affirming the Book of Mormon as history seems to be given an important emphasis by them, perhaps because of an awareness that some Mormons no longer accept it as history.

Had RLDS leaders in Missouri been confronted with studies such as Roberts's in the 1920s they no doubt would have reacted similarly. They did confront the question in the 1960s, however, when certain intellectuals within the church raised the same kinds of issues that Roberts's three studies discuss. In 1962 RLDS church statistician James E. Lancaster published in the November 15 issue of the *Saints' Herald* a study of the method of translation of the Book of Mormon. In one of the most controversial articles ever published in the church's official periodical, Lancaster argued, similarly to Roberts, that Joseph translated the work by gazing into a peepstone buried in a hat, with the plates on a table under a cloth. Later in the 1960s Wayne Ham of the church's Religious Education Department wrote a summary of Book of Mormon problems, intended only for private discussion among church leaders, much like Roberts's studies. But copies were leaked, and when fundamentalists photocopied and widely distributed this essay and other similar papers written in the department, Ham published his essay in the September 1970 issue of *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action*. Other RLDS members also advocated revisionist views of the Book of Mormon, which were summarized by this author in the September 1982 *Sunstone*. As a result of public and private discussion, church leaders have followed Ham's advice and have soft-pedalled the Book of Mormon in church curricula and publications.¹³

After his 1922 January meeting with his colleagues in the church hierarchy, Roberts gave up trying to get any answers from them concerning the "problems" of the Book of Mormon, writing later that the church leaders were not in a "studious mood."¹⁴ Accepting an assignment as president of the Eastern States Mission, he spent the next five years in New York and New England. During this mission period and the six years after, from 1927 until his death in 1933, he could have at any time destroyed the studies which he had produced. That he did not do so and that his descendants did

13. William D. Russell, review, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 55 (Fall 1987): 376. The John Whitmer Historical Association, with connections to the RLDS church, awarded the editor of *B. H. Roberts: Studies of the Book of Mormon* a "Special Citation" as the author of the "Best Book" of that year in the field of Mormon studies.

14. *B. H. Roberts Studies*, 346.

not do so but eventually gave them to the University of Utah for publication is an indication that he at least considered the possibility that they might eventually be made public.

The important question about Roberts concerns whether he retained his belief in the authenticity of the Book of Mormon as a result of his investigations in the 1920s of the origins of the work. A compilation by FARMS of nearly all of Roberts's conference sermons and public statements from 1922 to his death in 1933 attempts to demonstrate that he kept his faith in the Mormon scripture. His conference address of April 1929 has been advanced as one of the most striking of Roberts's statements in behalf of the Book of Mormon. An interesting thing about the sermon is its emphasis on the Doctrine and Covenants with only incidental mention of the importance of the Book of Mormon and that it was a product of inspiration. In fact in reviewing all of the Roberts's sermons and public statements during the last decade before his death, one is struck by the preponderance of emphasis on the ethical teachings and aphorisms in the Book of Mormon as compared with statements concerned with historical events. The latter are there but not with the specificity with which Roberts discusses such incidents in his "A Book of Mormon Study."

Is it possible then that Roberts could leave the impression in his public statements that he still retained his belief in the Book of Mormon while privately harboring the conviction that it was a product of Joseph Smith's very retentive memory and fertile imagination? Other people seem to be able to thus carry water on both shoulders. If belief in the authenticity of the Book of Mormon is the litmus test of orthodoxy, there may be a few and perhaps more than a few active but unorthodox Mormons who are followers of B. H. Roberts at heart.

Finally let us examine Roberts's statements in his *Studies* to determine his true feelings about the Book of Mormon. Some critics of his work maintain that Roberts was playing the Devil's Advocate in raising questions about the book or that he only rarely came to any conclusions about it. A few examples can effectively destroy these contentions.

In item number 9 of his "A Parallel," Roberts first quoted from Ethan Smith's book, *View of the Hebrews*, concerning how the peoples of the Americas eventually divided into two groups, one barbarous and the other civilized:

It is highly probable that the more civilized part of the tribes of Israel after they settled in America *become wholly separated from the hunting and savage tribes of their brethren; that the latter lost the knowledge of their having descended from the same family with themselves; that the more civilized part continued for many centuries, that tremendous wars were frequent between them and their savage brethren until the former became extinct. . . . These partially*

*civilized people became extinct and what account can be given of this, but that the savages extirpated them after long and dismal wars?*¹⁵

After thus citing *View of the Hebrews*, Roberts then described how the Book of Mormon peoples finally divided into the Nephites, a group faithful to the Lord, and the Lamanites, savage tribes who “loved murder and did drink the blood of beasts.” Over many years these two forces engaged in a series of wars until finally, as Roberts wrote, “about 400 AD. the Lamanites entirely destroyed the Nephites at Cumorah, where dreadful battles were fought, where no quarter was asked or given between the parties.”¹⁶ Then Roberts quoted from the Book of Mormon (Mormon 8:2), “Now it came to pass that after the great tremendous battles of Cumorah behold the Nephites who had escaped into the country southward were hunted by the Lamanites *until they were all destroyed*.”¹⁷ In this specific parallel Roberts thus suggests how Ethan Smith’s *View of the Hebrews* could have been used by Joseph Smith as a “ground plan” for the narrative of the Nephite-Lamanite wars leading to the destruction of the Nephites.

In his “A Book of Mormon Study,” Roberts also offered his evaluation of the Nephite-Jaredite wars of extinction which occurred one thousand years before those recounted above. There was one difference between the two stories, according to Roberts, “In all this war of extinction, and destruction there is only one important variation, and that is that in the case of the Jaredites, the annihilation was complete for both sides down to the last man; in the case of the Nephites and Lamanites, only the Nephites were wholly annihilated; the Lamanites; their opponents, survived but only in a state of anarchy leading ultimately to the barbarism and semi-barbarism in which they were found by the Europeans a thousand years afterward.”¹⁸

In his summation of the Jaredite story, Roberts asked:

And now, I doubt not, at the conclusion of this review of the Nephites and Jaredite wars of extinction, some will be led to exclaim—and I will set it down for them—“Is all this sober history inspired written and true, representing things that actually happened? Or is it a wonder-tale of an immature mind, unconscious of what a test he is laying on human credulity when asking men to accept his narrative as solemn history?”¹⁹

15. *Ibid.*, 332.

16. *Ibid.*, 332, 334.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, 283.

19. *Ibid.*

In another searching look at the Jaredite colony, Roberts examined their sea voyage to America, accomplished in eight small barges each the length of a tree and with a small hole cut in the top and bottom of each vessel allowing either aperture to be opened to admit air. Roberts wrote that the "Jaredite barges had neither sails nor means of steering, but evidently were to wallow their way through the sea, sometimes submerged and sometimes atop of the sea." The small ships carried flocks "male and female of every kind," "fowls of the air," "fish of the waters," and "seeds of every kind" plus enough feed and water to sustain these animals and the complement of about 100 Jaredite colonists. The trip across the ocean took 344 days, just 21 days short of a whole year. Roberts concluded his account of this extraordinary passage by asking, "Do we have here a great historical document, or only a wonder tale, told by an undeveloped mind, living in a period and in an environment where the miraculous in 'history' is accepted without limitations and is supposed to account for all inconsistencies and lapses that challenge human credulity in the thought and in the easy philosophy *that all things are possible with God?*"²⁰

A final example—and in typical Roberts plain-spoken and straightforward English—is his description of the similarities in the stories of three anti-Christ: Sherem, Nehor, and Korihor.²¹ This time Roberts did not conclude by asking a searching question but declared forthrightly:

But in addition to the striking parallelism in these incidents of Anti-Christ of the Book of Mormon, with the strong implication that they have their origin in one mind, I call attention again to the fact of "rawness" in dealing with this question of unbelief, the evidence of "amateurishness" increasingly evident in this story of Korihor. Does it not carry with it proof that it is the work of a pious youth dealing with the very commonplace stock arguments clumsily put together for the belief in the existence of God . . . rather than an adult appeal and argument on the great questions involved? . . . And is not the vindication of God and his truth by a vindictive miracle on the person of the ranting blasphemer, rather the dream of a pious boy of what might very well have happened, rather than a matter of actual experience?

There were other Anti-Christ among the Nephites, . . . but I shall hold that what is presented illustrates . . . that they are all of one breed and brand; so nearly alike that one mind is the author of them, and that a young and undeveloped, but piously inclined mind. The evidence I sorrowfully submit, points to Joseph Smith as their creator. it is difficult to believe that they are the product of history, that they came upon the scene separated by long

20. Ibid., 355-58.

21. Ibid., 265-70.

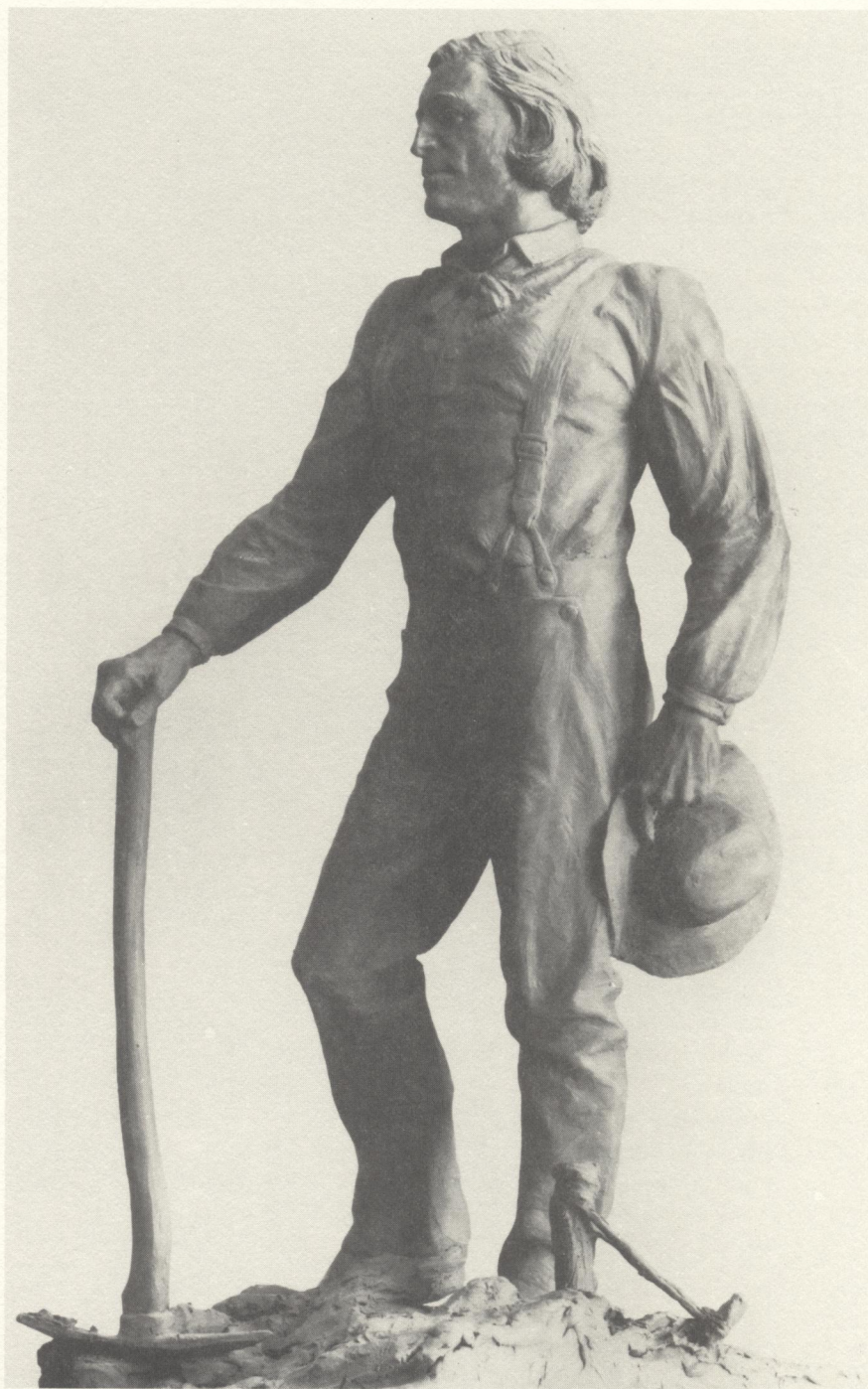
periods of time, and among a race which was the ancestral race of the red man of America.²²

In this statement, it is evident that Roberts meant exactly what he said and that his judgment concerning the authorship of the Book of Mormon was crystal clear.

Consider that Wesley P. Lloyd only six weeks before the death of Roberts reported him saying "that the plates were not objective but subjective with Joseph Smith, that his exceptional imagination qualified him psychologically for the experience which he had in presenting to the world the Book of Mormon and that the plates with the Urim and Thummim were not objective."²³ In other words, and in the plain kind of language that Roberts liked to employ, there were no gold plates, there was only Joseph Smith drawing upon his creative imagination to formulate and write a work of fiction called the Book of Mormon. This preeminent Mormon intellectual and church authority was a conscientious scholar who was willing to follow wherever the evidence led him.

22. *Ibid.*, 271.

23. *Ibid.*, 23.



Our Fecundity

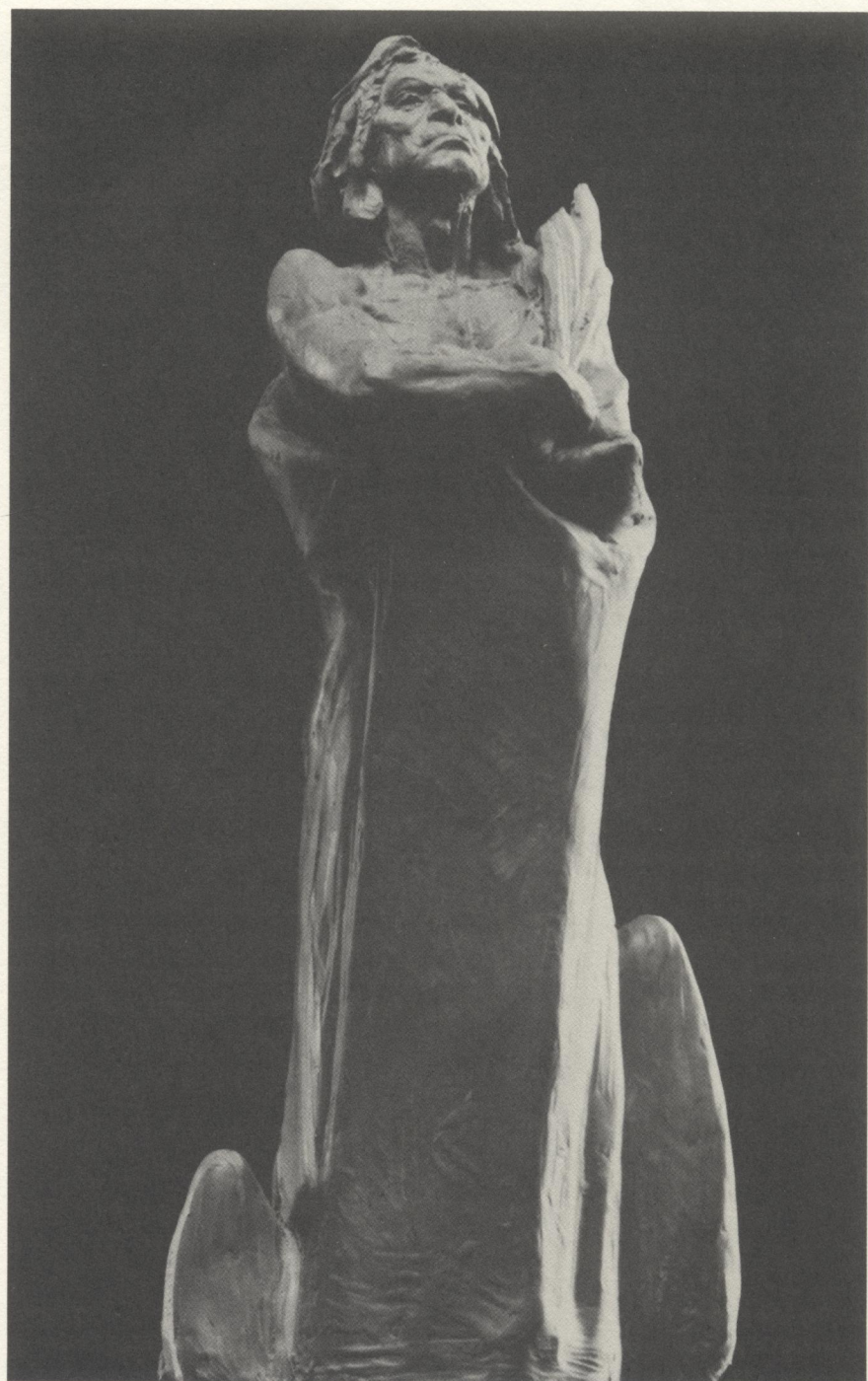
David Paxman

What have we done?
This wrinkled child
did not ask for entry;
it answered our call
for each other.
Did we not know
what our suit
of slow sighs
would entail?
Another, who will undergo
sighing for our sake,
and for its own sake.

Who are we to choose
life for a child
when we engage
in this infinitely
undemocratic act
of love?
The only due process,
our disappearing
into each other
in slow turnings,
moans,
and whispers
not even angels
could overhear.

What is this life force?
Unfair force, maybe:
having ached to meet
infinity
in our particular
embrace,
we made a spring
wherein our blood
mingled with something
not of our making
and leaped into being,
wrinkled and crying.

And who shall teach this child
the mystery?



The Ordeal of Lowry Nelson and the Mis-spoken Word

Samuel W. Taylor

ON 8 FEBRUARY 1979 LOWRY NELSON wrote to me about his operation. "At about one p.m. I experienced a seizure which racked my torso with terrible pain. I could think of no other thing but a heart attack." At Utah Valley Hospital in Provo, the diagnosis proved difficult, for at eighty-three the patient was deaf, blind in one eye, and with only 20/400 vision in the other. The doctor would write questions which a nurse would hold close to the functioning eye. After a series of tests, a note reported, "We do not think you had a heart attack."

This was comforting, "but did noting to allay the awesome pain." The search continued until the next day, when Lowry mentioned that he had prostate trouble. Then for ten hours a catheter drained a brownish fluid from his bladder. Following this, doctors removed the prostate, which was malignant, and to prevent metastasis, "My man-glands were removed."

It was typical of Lowry Nelson that his report of the operation was just a sidebar to the main thrust of his letter to me, which was a scathing critique of a talk given by Ezra Taft Benson of the Twelve Apostles advising LDS authors of the proper way to write about church matters (of which more later).

Lowry's male friends responded to news of his operation with ribald verse. Here are a couple of printable samples:

The bull deprived of his bullish glands,
Insists no more on his former demands.
Cows graze in peace on grasses tender,
For he now is of the neuter gender.

Another offered cold comfort:

A man who has reached his 80th year,
Doesn't need surgery to make him a steer.

So when you reach the age of four-score,
Go to bed to sleep and to dream—nothing more.

"Thanks for the medical report, and I'm glad you came out fighting," I wrote him. "At least you kept your gonads for 83 years, which is more than can be said for some Saints who never had any."

There had been an easy rapport between Lowry Nelson and me—two gadflies—for some fifty years, ever since we both belonged to a literary group of faculty members and students at Brigham Young University. Lowry was then dean of the College of Applied Science, while I was a brash, know-it-all student who had begun publishing in national magazines. Other faculty members of the group included M. Wilford Poulson, who was the entire psychology department. He was secretly accumulating his monumental library on early Mormonism. A. C. Lambert was also mining the same vein and secretly writing the untold story of LDS history and doctrine, a passion which lasted half a century. At this time we knew only that he was contributing to educational journals.

Both Lambert and Poulson got into serious trouble because of their research. When A. C.'s secret quest was discovered, I believe it cost him his position on the faculty. When Poulson published an article which established that the Word of Wisdom reflected popular public sentiment at the time Joseph Smith gave it as wise advice to the Saints, a local zealot tried to have him sacked at the university and tried for his membership for this heresy.

Other faculty members of the group included gentle Elsie C. Carroll, author and patron of the arts, who annually awarded a gold medal for the best Christmas story (and my search for the winner one year, Gay Dimick, ultimately resulted in marriage). Harrison R. Merrill, who later became editor of the *Improvement Era*, vied with Alfred Osmond for the title of "Poet Lariat," each contributing voluminous doggerel rhymes as commentary on the cultural scene to the *Provo Herald*. And I wonder whatever happened to doggerel verse anyhow? In my opinion this was the best writing of both Merrill and Osmond. And it was the only type of acceptable humor published in Provo at that time.

Alfred Osmond was the only member of that family whom I knew personally. He taught creative writing, and I will attest that his histrionics in reading a manuscript in class was a dramatic exhibition surpassing any subsequent performance by Donny and Marie. One morning in class I watched, fascinated, as a fly wandered close to the mobile mouth while Alf performed, the insect gleaning the remains of Professor Osmond's breakfast. And then—gulp—it vanished inside. "Swallowed a fly," he wheezed. He inserted his hand halfway to the wrist into his mouth, then triumphantly brought it forth. "And here it is!"

Professor Osmond had scant admiration for my literary output, nor did I for his. His criticism was always the same: "Come to the point at once." Atmosphere, characterization, dramatic progression, suspense, the narrative hook, the plants, the turnover at the climax—all this meant nothing to him. Of course I was writing for the national market, which he didn't understand, and he for the captive internal press, where the vital element was the faith-promoting factor.

He tried, however, to break into the big time. He wrote a novel, *Married Sweethearts*, and had it published by a local printer. "I know it would make a great movie," he said, "but I can't get anybody in Hollywood to read it." I admit that I tried to, and then I agreed with a student friend who said, "Nor anybody in Provo."

At this time I was working six hours a night, seven days a week, as night clerk at the Roberts Hotel in downtown Provo, also doubling as cashier for the cafe, switchboard operator, bellhop, and bookkeeper. In addition I typed the cafe menus, kept the furnace supplied with coal, and each night mopped the lobby. I also was precariously carrying a full class schedule, dating Gay Dimick, writing pulp fiction, and doing a column for the *Y News*. So admittedly I wasn't by any means a straight-A student. However, I flunked only two classes. One I walked out on. The other resulted from what I had considered a funny comment I made about a touchy professor.

Among students of the literary group was the beautiful Virginia Eggertson, who became the gifted author, Virginia Sorensen; Glenn Potter, an artist and writer, whose untimely death aborted a promising talent; Carleton Culmsee, who was to join the Utah State faculty and publish historical material; Max Taylor (no relation), who became an editor of a major New York publishing house (and who gave me the secret of writing a successful book: "Put 'How' in the title"); J. R. Paulson, editor of the *Y News*, on the threshold of a distinguished newspaper career. And there were several others in the group—all in all a lot of talent for a university of 1,500 students haunted by rumors that the church was going to close it down.

Lowry Nelson and I both left the Y because of conflicts with the establishment. In my case, after being suspended and readmitted six times because of my column in the *Y News*, I suspected that I wasn't really appreciated, so I never went back to complete my senior year. Lowry had been on the faculty twelve years when in 1934 a single word spoken in casual conversation caused him to narrowly escape being discharged in disgrace and excommunicated.

During that summer Dr. Oscar Russell, who had graduated from the Y and was professor of speech at Ohio State University, was visiting in Utah. He requested some materials from Lowry, who furnished four monographs on his studies of social economics. Then as Lowry went out to his car,

Russell followed, and they chatted for about ten minutes when Russell asked, "What is your attitude about immortality?"

Lowry hadn't really thought much about the subject. "I said I would have to consider myself an agnostic in the sense of not knowing," he reported. "I have never been taken up and shown the pearly gates."

He thought nothing about the incident. "That is not until I met a friend in Salt Lake who had seen Russell since his visit to Provo, and he reported that Russell had referred to me as a dangerous man, and he would never send his children to the BYU because I would undermine their faith."

Lowry wrote to Russell, "telling him that I was only saying, in effect, that immortality is a hypothesis and there was no way of testing it scientifically."

In reply Russell shot back a four-page letter. "Instead of the dialogue I expected," Lowry said, "here was a verbal diarrhetic tirade." Russell had also sent copies to President Franklin S. Harris of BYU, to Professor Guy C. Wilson, and to the LDS First Presidency, Heber J. Grant, David O. McKay, and J. Reuben Clark.

Lowry had shown his letter to Russell to Harris before mailing, asking if it should be sent, and Harris had replied, "Certainly." So when Lowry received notice to appear before the First Presidency, Harris went along. They found Heber J. Grant furious, while J. Reuben Clark said to Lowry, "You used a very unfortunate word in your letter." Lowry remained silent. "I wanted to say," he reported, "that I did not realize that I was writing to President Grant but was writing to a professional person who would understand the meaning of the word. President Grant said the matter would be turned over to the Commissioner of Education for further investigation. And that was it. We went home and waited."

The hearing was Friday. Lowry waited in suspense until Wednesday, when David O. McKay was the chapel speaker at BYU. After the ceremony McKay "put his arm around me and said, 'There will be no investigation.'"

Although this relieved the tension, Lowry realized how close the call had been because of a single word to a zealot. Subsequently he wrote in his memoirs, *Last Judgment* (1978), "I have often wondered since this episode in my life, how many persons of similar background when confronted with the question Russell put to me, would answer in the same way? . . . My attitude has not changed since 1934. I do not KNOW. . . . Nobody knows for certain about this matter, nor can they know, for nobody returns to bear witness to the fact of life beyond."

He added,

I often wonder why people should want to live forever. . . . What would it be like . . . [to] be resurrected and have bodies of 'flesh and bone'? That would mean that there would be no eating or drinking or sex. These are the

major pleasures we know in this life. Such bodies apparently would need no sleep, no rest, no recreation.

There would be no need for plumbing, no bathing, no sewage. . . . What about other occupations? What would you like to do FOREVER? . . . Would Shakespeare continue to write plays FOREVER? Could Beethoven continue to write symphonies FOREVER? What about those of us on earth who are engaged in occupations that can no longer exist in the hereafter? The farmers, the sheep men, the restaurant people, the laundrymen, the cooks, bakers, stock brokers, merchants, . . . and so on indefinitely.

If one tries to project oneself into this sort of picture, it looks as if it would be a magnificent bore."

Soon after Lowry left the Y several other faculty members, who had been criticized for "liberal" or unorthodox teaching, left for greener pastures. Geologist Murray Hales was employed by the government at Washington, D.C. Botanist Walter Cottom (who once complimented me for telling truth in my *Y News* column) went to the University of Utah. Hugh Woodward, who taught philosophy, joined the federal Works Progress Administration education program. Ott Romney (who also enjoyed my column) coached basketball, football, and track; he became athletic director at West Virginia University. Grant Ivins, who taught animal husbandry, became price administrator for Utah during World War II.

For a period of twenty-one years Lowry Nelson was professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota, meanwhile accepting assignments for government research and other studies—a list of accomplishments which fills five pages of the "Autobiographical Sketch" in *Deseret Ride* (1983). He wrote eight books and a long list of monographs, articles, and bulletins.

He never forgot his origins. "I believe I was the first Mormon to protest the church policy with regard to blacks in a letter to the First Presidency of the church in 1947," he recalled. "In May 1952, I published in the *Nation* magazine an article on 'Mormons and the Negro.' This was the first [time] the non-Mormon world knew of this policy, and it was widely publicized throughout the Negro press."

Lowry and I corresponded over the years, trading tidbits, opinions, curious and outlandish items. I sent a clipping about a woman who sued the hospital because after a throat operation she was no longer able to give her husband oral sex. "This whole thing is in bad taste," I commented, "and you can take that both ways."

Lowry replied that the case was "out of this world. I sent a copy to Don Martindale," who was a fellow faculty member at the University of Minnesota, professor of sociology, author of books on social science, and with hobby of writing satirical verse. I don't know if he wrote anything about that case, but he did when my former friend Sonia Johnson was excommu-

nicated for her activities in behalf of Mormons for ERA, the charge being that her "campaigning for the Equal Rights Amendment is harmful to the church," an AP story reported on 19 November 1979. Sonia appealed the verdict, but in rejecting her appeal stake president Earl J. Roueche of Sterling, Virginia, said, "We still find signs of apostasy and an unwillingness to arrest the criticism of church doctrine and leadership."

Don Martindale wrote:

"Signs of apostasy, Sonia, my dear,"
The head of the stake was quite grim.
"Are plain as the nose on your face, I fear;
You live in defiance and sin.

"You knew that you could disagree all you please
So long as you hid it away.
But you, like a mare with her nose to the breeze,
Would lead our good woman away.

"We met to discuss how to stop ERA
In the City of Saints—what a pity—
You hired a plane to our shock and dismay
And bannered it over the city.

"And then in the spirit of true Christian love
In gentleness we cut you off.
But you called in the press and, Heavens Above!
At hierarchy you did scoff.

"Repent now, Dear Sonia, lest you cause a riot,
And listen to what must be said.
Our girls should be home giving us peace and quiet,
In living room, kitchen, and bed."

I had written Lowry that

the charges against Sonia Johnson are political, not doctrinal—she is being told how to vote. However, this is nothing new. During Brigham Young's time there was the numbered ballot. Later, Apostle Moses Thatcher was disfellowshipped for insisting on personal political independence. And today the Church has taken a political stand on ERA.

As a member of the Relief Society, my wife was given a petition to circulate in the neighborhood to get signatures for a state anti-pornography bill; and again received a petition on an attempted repeal of the California law legalizing sex acts between consenting adults. When a California attor-

ney phoned Salt Lake with a warning that political activity could result in the taxation of church property, Salt Lake withdrew from such campaigns—but here it is again with ERA.

Lowry replied, “Re: Sonia, a lot of people were ‘hit hard.’ Your angle that the action of the church was based on her holding unauthorized church meetings had not occurred to me. Has she been opening and closing meetings with prayer? Well, they can cut her off, but they can’t cut her down.”

Lowry sent me *The Prayer of a Modern Pharisee* from *The Presbyterian Outlook* in 1974. It’s a paraphrase of Jesus’ parable by John A. Maclean.

I thank thee, Lord, that I am a North Carolinian and not from Virginia, . . . and I thank thee, Lord, that I am an *Eastern* North Carolina. . . . Especially, Lord, I thank thee that I am a Southerner and not a Yankee—for there are many things one might endure, but not that! Grateful I am, O Lord, that I am a North American and not a South American . . . and that I was born in these favored United States and not among the gringos of Mexico or the Canucks of Canada. Thankful, too, I am, to be an occidental and not an oriental. . . . I thank thee Lord, that I am a Gentile and not a Jew. Yes, of course, Jesus was a Jew and many others of that race were princes of Israel when my ancestors were Nordic barbarians, but that was a long time ago. . . . I thank thee that I am white, not yellow or red or brown or black. . . .

I thank thee, O Lord, that I am a Protestant and not a Catholic. . . . I thank thee that I am a Presbyterian, and not . . . “high hat” like the Episcopalians, nor yet . . . provincial or narrow as the Baptists or Methodists. . . . I thank thee, Lord, that I am a Southern Presbyterian, yes, an Eastern-North Carolina, North American, occidental, Scotch, Gentile, white, civilized, Protestant Southern Presbyterian! What a man!

At age eighty Lowry retired, returning to Provo to keep his hand in with his favorite hobby, needling church authorities and commenting on the culture behind the Zion Curtain. A section of *Last Judgment* deals with “My Dissidence,” which is quite a list. He objected to the church welfare system. “Large areas of good farm land have been acquired . . . and these farms are serviced mainly by volunteer labor.” As to “Financial Secrecy,” he said, “There may be no other indigenous American movement that refuses to make financial reports to its members.” He claimed that “Aggressive Proselyting” was “fueled by the expectation of the Second Coming of Christ and the Mormon conviction that they are the ‘reception committee.’”

The gadfly lived a charmed life as a persistent dissident, possibly because of his age, his eminence, and the fact that he’d known many of the Brethren personally for years.

He delighted in tearing apart the talk by Elder Ezra Taft Benson delivered to LDS teachers of religion on 17 September 1976 regarding the

correct way of writing about church subjects. Elder Benson recommended a study of the book *Wilford Woodruff* by Matthias F. Cowley and J. M. Tanner (published 1909, reprinted by Bookcraft 1964), which would "demonstrate how one teaches facts and draws great lessons of faith therefrom."

Lowry hooted, pointing out that on 10 February 1934 Anthony W. Ivins of the First Presidency had repudiated *Wilford Woodruff* and its authors in the strongest terms, yet thirty years later Bookcraft could reissue the book as a model for obedient LDS authors to emulate. Just goes to show that progress is eternal, I suppose.

Don Martindale took up the refrain:

Ezra Taft Benson, old son of the sod,
Is destined to sit on the right hand of God,
As soon as that seat, be it soon or belated,
By old Spencer Kimball is finally vacated.

An end will be put to all trouble and strife;
He will speak for the Lord for the rest of his life.
Whenever he wiggles or waggles his jaw
The words from his lips will have force of the law.

The Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price,
The great Book of Mormon are all very nice,
The Bible has points, but Brother, come off it,
Not one can compare with the fresh word from a prophet.

The final paragraph of Lowry's *Last Judgment* was, according to Martindale, "pure poetry of the highest type—a pure lyric of joy and love." He put Lowry's words in poetic form:

The Word of God
is in the stars;
constellations, galaxies, and suns.

It is in the earth's crust;
in myriad form of life
including mankind.

The Word
will continue to be revealed
by the crowning achievement of creation,
that miraculous instrument,
the human brain.

Two short poems reflect Lowry Nelson's philosophy at his ninetieth birthday, 16 April 1983:

Now in the amber years of lengthy life—
Labors arrested by infirmity—
He dwells in memories of the early strife,
And waits his exit to eternity.

What is Heaven, or where,
Nobody seems to care;
For it exists as part
Of every human heart.

Resurrection

Derk M. Koldewyn

One gunmetal day, late fall,
a fat shabby robin tired
of flying in her natural world,
desired to swoop across our couch,
bank and flap past the bookshelves,
perch on the TV. But she broke
her neck on the picture window,
and was dead already
on the concrete porch
when we found her.
Bobby was the priest,
Kristin the pallbearer;
I was the gravedigger, shouldering
Dad's new shovel
with eight-year-old arms.
We tramped up the street,
into the foothills, our robin's stapler-box
casket draped with a doll's blanket.
A loose group of neighbor kids followed,
laughing, dancing, grieving. I dug a hole,
Kristin lowered our robin, Bobby spoke
the eulogy. We filled the hole,
patted it firm with our open hands
and left for lunch.
Years later, on my way up the mountain
I stopped on the edge
of the gravel pit and kicked
the grave open with my bootheel.
There were bits of the stapler box, but
there were no bones.

Hannah Grover Hegsted and Post-Manifesto Plural Marriage

Julie Hemming Savage

WILFORD WOODRUFF'S MANIFESTO OF 1890 declared that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was "not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice."¹ After the issuance of the Manifesto, most church members aligned themselves with the law of the land by not entering new plural marriages. Beliefs about the importance of polygamy within the church began to change as new generations began to accept monogamy as the rule.²

There was, however, a minority of church members, most of whom were leaders, who continued after 1890 to enter polygamous relationships with the apparent approval of church officials. With at least 262 plural marriages performed in the church after the Manifesto, there is clearly a disparity between the claims of the document and what was secretly practiced in the church at that time.³ While thousands of Mormons believed the public statements of their leaders, hundreds of stalwarts kept the principle of plural marriage alive with encouragement from those same church leaders.⁴

Books and articles on post-Manifesto polygamy have typically focused on church leaders and contradictions between their official statements, which declared that the church had discontinued the practice of polygamy, and the actual continuation of the practice. D. Michael Quinn has chronicled in detail this dichotomy of words versus actions⁵; and B. Carmon Hardy

1. Official Declaration-1, in any LDS edition of the Doctrine and Covenants since 1981.

2. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 351.

3. *Ibid.*, 425.

4. *Ibid.*, 338.

5. D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18 (Spring 1985): 9-104.

has further studied church leaders' experiences with polygamy before and after the Manifesto.⁶ What is missing is knowledge of the women who became involved in post-Manifesto unions.⁷ While many women participated in new plural marriages, their experience has been neglected.

One woman who was directly affected by the church's ambiguous stand on polygamy was Hannah Grover Hegsted. She became the third wife of Bishop Victor C. Hegsted on 1 May 1904, fourteen years after the first Manifesto was issued, and a month after the so-called Second Manifesto. Hers is one of the many stories behind the institutional confusion; an understanding of her life helps to fill the silence about why women became involved in post-Manifesto plural marriages. Although she is only one among many who faced the challenges of post-Manifesto polygamy, through her we can discover what led one woman to make such a decision and how that decision affected the rest of her life.

Hannah left behind a substantial written record which includes an unpublished journal, letters from her husband, Victor Hegsted, and seven patriarchal blessings which were given to her over a forty-year period. In searching these documents, we discover a passionately righteous, intelligent, devoted woman who, with the encouragement of her church leaders (but contrary to the developing norms against polygamy), believed that marrying Victor Hegsted fit into God's plan for her life. Multiple factors contributed to this decision, beginning early in her life.

Hannah's parents, Elizabeth Heiner and Thomas Grover, Jr., originally settled in Morgan, Utah. In 1868 they were called by Brigham Young to help colonize the Muddy River, located in Lincoln County, Nevada.⁸ During their stay in Nevada Hannah was born on 26 November 1870. By going to Nevada at Young's call, her parents set an example of religious diligence. Hannah repeated this pattern of commitment throughout her life as she accepted callings and challenges which appeared to be above her capacity. When asked to preside over the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association of the Fremont Stake in Idaho, she wrote that "it seemed such a responsibility, the people strange, the conditions unknown. Yet it seemed that I must do it, for I had long ago

6. Hardy.

7. A preliminary look at women who entered new plural marriages shows what appears to be a diversified group. While Quinn and Hardy only mention these women in passing, it is clear that a number of them were related to the church's elite through family, by associations through high church callings, or the church-sponsored educational system. Most, however, are not easily categorized.

8. Louise Heiner Anderson, "Life History of Johan Martin Heiner (1818-1897)," 15, typescript in my possession.

learned not to refuse to perform any duty required at my hands by the Priesthood."⁹

Hannah's family was steeped in the Mormon polygamous tradition. Soon after her birth in Nevada, her parents moved their small family back to Morgan, Morgan County, Utah, where she was surrounded by this tradition. Hannah's paternal grandfather, Thomas Grover, had married polygamously in Nauvoo, Illinois, and eventually had six wives. Her father was also a polygamist, having two of his three wives alive at the same time.¹⁰

Hannah wrote often about visiting her aunts, many of whom were her grandfather's plural wives. On one such occasion, her Aunt Lucy told her that "had she her life to repeat she would again enter plural marriage."¹¹ Though the statement is in itself significant, it is still more significant that Hannah noted it in her journal two years prior to her own plural marriage. Evidently, she was talking to others about polygamy, weighing its possibilities in her mind. Who better to turn to for advice than women who had participated in polygamous marriages?

So polygamy was nothing new for Hannah. During the first twenty years of her life, the church defended the practice of polygamy through all manner of persecution. Members who would not deny the practice, who went to jail in defense of their belief, became heroes in their communities. They were prisoners for conscience's sake.¹² John Taylor, church president, died a fugitive because of his unwillingness to give up the principle.¹³ These realities and the church's commitment to polygamy could not have escaped Hannah's notice.

Hannah was eleven years old when her mother died in childbirth, leaving six small children. Aunt Louie, her father's second wife, came to live with them for awhile. When Aunt Louie left, Hannah, who was the oldest child, took care of the family. With her mother gone, Hannah's home was with her siblings. But as her brothers and sisters grew and married, they each left Morgan and since she was not married, this left her without a place to call home; Hannah felt this loss intensely. Once, upon returning to Morgan, she wrote that "Not one of the immediate family [was there] to welcome me back and no place to call home. The days wore by and Pa

9. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 26 Jan. 1901, 74, typescript in my possession.

10. Stephen Grover and Dean R. Grover, eds., *Thomas Grover: His Ancestors and Descendants* (Phoenix: WA Kruger Co, 1966), 5.

11. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 20 July 1902, 112.

12. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), 407.

13. Quinn, 30.

returned but still the vacancy was almost more than I could stand. I cried until crying seemed to be all that I could do."¹⁴

Similar to this experience was a visit she took to Heiner's Canyon, "the spot where the old house stood," where today only a few stones were left to mark the spot. On this visit, her feelings of displacement found themselves centered on an old deserted stove which was sitting out in the open air. This stove had "been a sort of wonder" to her during her childhood; now it looked "diminished and quite insignificant." Upon realizing this, she said that she "sat down on the rusty top while a few silent tears told me of other days when it held such an honored place in our home."¹⁵

Hannah did not, however, constantly mourn the past. She was an active participant in life. She devoted tremendous amounts of energy to learning and teaching. Education was an early priority. Even with the death of her mother and the responsibility of taking care of her younger brothers and sisters, she continued to attend school, finding great pleasure in learning and getting good grades. She wrote of the 1887 school year that it was "a wonderful one for me. How I loved it. My teachers were true friends to me as long as they lived."¹⁶ She gained self-esteem from her successes in school. And when she began teaching school (beginning with a part-time job in 1885),¹⁷ she often confessed of the need she felt for "recognition and expression of appreciation" for her "untiring labors."¹⁸

Hannah decided to further her education, and at the age of twenty-seven she entered the Brigham Young Academy in Provo, Utah, where she studied for two years. During this time, she became so involved in school and newly-formed friendships that she found little time to write in her journal. There is a break from September 1897 to May 1898, at which point she summarized her school year by recording that she had "studied very hard all winter and every effort has been crowned with all the success [she] could ask for."¹⁹ In her second year she assumed charge of the Domestic Sciences Department. When her studies were completed and it came time for her to leave, she expressed her feelings with the following: "Little journal, I could write a volume on those two happy years, the friends, the blessings and joys and the tears that made up their being."²⁰

She plainly enjoyed her profession, but she also struggled to accept her lot as a single career woman. On one such day of worry in 1897, she wrote:

14. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 31 May 1899, 59.

15. *Ibid.*, 30 June 1900, 67.

16. *Ibid.*, 1887, 3.

17. *Ibid.*, 1885, 3.

18. *Ibid.*, 30 May 1899, 58.

19. *Ibid.*, 26 May 1898, 48.

20. *Ibid.*, 28 May 1899, 57.

"I spent the noon intermission conversing with President W. H. Lewis of Lewistown, I was strengthened and encouraged by the conversation in regard to what in the past had been great trial so I could easier acknowledge the hand of God in my career."²¹

Part of this struggling probably stemmed from the many patriarchal blessings she had received which promised her marriage and family. She was given her first patriarchal blessing at the age of sixteen. At that time she was promised that she would "have the Privilege to make [her] own choice of a Husband for Time and all Eternity" and her children would "appear as gems in [her] crown." She was also cautioned, "Let thy heart be Contented for in due time thy husband shall seek thee out."²² In each of the six pre-marriage patriarchal blessings she was given, Hannah was promised similar blessings: a husband and posterity. Her 1895 blessing pointed out that not only would she become an "honored mother in Israel," but that this would be a "great portion" of her mission on earth.²³

Beginning in 1898, new wording began to appear in her blessings. Each patriarch referred to her "petitions" and reassured her that she should "be of good cheer for the Lord has heard [her] petitions [and] accepted [her] offerings,"²⁴ and that her "prayers shall be answered for the Lord will make of thee a great mother in Israel."²⁵ These blessings must have brought both hope and frustration as the years passed and Hannah found herself still unmarried.

Not only did Hannah receive these divine promises of marriage, she also received less formal blessings from church apostles which confirmed the truths in her patriarchal blessings. Here again, it is not only significant that she was given these blessings, but that she felt they were worthy of noting in her journals. On one occasion, she attended a Y.L.M.I.A. meeting where President Lorenzo Snow encouraged the women with this blessing: "Sisters, I say to you in the name of the Lord that all of you, each and every one under the sound of my voice, who honestly desires in your hearts to be blessed with husbands and children shall receive that blessing."²⁶

On another occasion, in 1901, when she was leaving a Y.L.M.I.A.

21. *Ibid.*, Apr. 1897, 25.

22. Patriarchal blessing given by Welez B. Corbet, Morgan, Morgan County, Utah, 5 Apr. 1886, typescript in my possession.

23. Patriarchal blessing given by Rd. Rawle, Morgan, Morgan County, Utah, 25 July 1895, typescript in my possession.

24. Patriarchal blessing given by John Smith, Salt Lake City, Utah, 12 Aug. 1900, typescript in my possession.

25. Patriarchal blessing given by Charles D. Evans, Provo, Utah, 2 Apr. 1898, typescript in my possession.

26. *Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted*, 29 May 1899, 57.

council meeting, Apostle John W. Taylor²⁷ asked her if she were a "married sister." When she said that she was not, he responded with the following words: "Sister, do your duty in this calling and I promise you in the name of the Lord Israel's God that you shall be blessed with a companion suited to your condition."²⁸ These blessings necessarily affected her opinions of God's will concerning her future.

It is also evident from Hannah's journals that she always enjoyed children, especially her nieces and nephews. She seemed so pleased on one visit to her sister's home when the children came running to her yelling, "Aunt Hannah has come."²⁹ She was involved with the Primary organization and in a moment of lighthearted celebration, she recorded:

I surprised the Primary children with a feast of strawberries. Preceding the temporal feast, we had a spiritual one about flowers; the house and children were adorned with earth's fairest flora. I returned home feeling the day was well spent and another seed of love planted and I thank my Heavenly Father for granting me the privilege of laboring among the sweet innocents [sic] of Zion and that I can be a missionary at home as others are abroad. Praise ye the Lord.³⁰

This passage reflects both Hannah's love of children and God. Clearly she would be glad for the blessings of motherhood as well.

But for Hannah to marry and have a posterity, she needed cooperation from possible suitors. Sadly, her attempts at love seemed always to end in disaster. Time and time again, she put her heart into relationships but was eventually left alone. This pattern began early in her life. On 13 December 1891 Hannah promised to be the wife of Marcus Taggart; however, nearly five years later, on 11 October 1896, she stated that "the ties between Marcus and me were severed because of another girl."³¹

Shortly after that relationship ended, Hannah began to spend more time with Tom R. Condie. On 9 June 1897 she wrote that "Bro. Condie . . . declared his love for me and the desire that I should be his wife. Received testimony in answer to my prayers."³² Eight days later, "Brother Condie," as she always called him, left to serve a mission in the Southern States

27. John W. Taylor was a particularly strong advocate of continued plural marriage. As a result of this support of new plural marriages and for "being out of harmony regarding post-Manifesto polygamy," he had to resign from the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in October 1905 (see Quinn, 102-103). In 1911 he was excommunicated (see Hardy, 266).

28. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 26 Jan. 1901, 74-75.

29. *Ibid.*, 28 July 1899, 61.

30. *Ibid.*, 2 July 1897, 40.

31. *Ibid.*, 11 Oct. 1896, 10.

32. *Ibid.*, 9 June 1897, 37.

Mission. During his mission, she wrote about him often, mentioning how the missionary work was going in Mississippi and worrying when he became ill. One evening, while she was attending B.Y.A., she wrote that her nerves were too unsettled to sleep and so she spent the remainder of the night writing to Condie, telling him of her "success, hopes, and fears and throwing a portion of [her] heart's joys and anxieties onto him."³³

When Condie returned from his mission in July 1899, the couple began to spend time together again. Hannah greatly enjoyed this reunion, but their relationship was brought to another standstill when he was called on an M.I.A. mission to Arizona. Before he left, Hannah made the following entry in her journal: "After many expressions of love, devotion and hopes Brother Condie and I again knelt before our Maker and asked his guidance and protection and dedicated ourselves to him and his cause with an earnest request that we would be preserved in purity for each other after our winter's mission was over."³⁴ But before their "winter's mission was over," Condie fell in love and married another woman. This, Hannah wrote, "blighted the hopes of a devoted heart."³⁵

She accepted a teaching position at Ricks Academy in Rexburg, Idaho. This new challenge kept her occupied; nonetheless, the "change in Bro. Condie's affections" brought on a period of loneliness and melancholy which did not end until Victor Hegsted entered her life. After 1899 she spoke again and again of being lonely. While change always appeared to be difficult for Hannah, any which occurred thereafter affected her more profoundly. She had consistently found great joy in her associations with people, reveling in the bonds of friendship. At this point, however, she began to feel the lack of constancy in her relationships more keenly. As her friends, students, and work associates moved on with their lives, she found it more difficult to let go. When a Brother Todd, a fellow teacher at Ricks Academy, accepted a teaching position elsewhere, Hannah wrote:

Foolish child, I cried but I could not help it; it seemed to me that I could not go to the Academy with him gone. He had been such a true friend and pillar to me in that work that I thought life in it without him would be impossible. Foolish heart have you not yet learned that you must part with all that you have learned to cling to and that you must lean . . . on God and not on man?³⁶

Battling this lack of permanence, she took out a loan, which interestingly was cosigned by Victor Hegsted, and bought a house in Rexburg. In

33. *Ibid.*, 5 May 1899, 56.

34. *Ibid.*, 8 Oct. 1899, 63

35. *Ibid.*, 9 Oct. 1899, 64.

36. *Ibid.*, 20 May 1901, 78.

September 1901 she was ready to move in. Still she struggled to overcome her feelings of loneliness. On her ride to Rexburg, she bemoaned going "alone to live in a lone house." She was struggling to suppress her feelings and "keep the tears back," when she ran into a friend. After talking for a few moments, he "was gone and gone also was the heavy cloud of despondency." She wrote: "Hope welled up in my bosom. My students loved me; they would be near and I would live for them."³⁷ She threw her whole soul into teaching and fulfilling her calling as president of the Y.L.M.I.A. in the Fremont, Idaho, Stake. She took students attending Ricks Academy in as boarders and filled her life with service to those around her.

Yet even while serving, she experienced moments of profound loneliness. On 29 September 1901, after spending two days watching over her dying cousin Adelgunda, Hannah went home and made this entry: "The strangeness of everything, that I thought I was alone coupled with the anxiety over my cousin were quite sufficient reasons for my night being very much disturbed and full of lonely wakeful hours."³⁸

Amid this loneliness, Hannah first recorded opportunities to enter plural marriage. Within six months of her break-up with Tom Condie, she had the following experience:

Brother E. W. Hunter invited me to spend the time at their home which I accepted. In connection with his wife, he told me of the high esteem in which they had always held me and asked for the privilege to become a wooer of my heart if ever the opportunity came again to the L.D.S. to live that Higher Law of Marriage providing that I form no other ties in the meantime. The three of us talked together on the subject, Sister Addie expressing herself as freely as did her husband.³⁹

Interestingly, this offer does not appear to have surprised Hannah. She reported it as a part of the regular news of her day and then proceeded to write about other things. However, while she might not have been taken aback, and never appeared to give this particular marriage proposition much thought, it played a role in preparing her for other such offers she received.

In fact, in 1902 Hannah was offered two other chances to enter into polygamous relationships. As with other important decisions, she was concerned foremost with making the right choice.

One of these offers came from Martin Randall. In 1894 Hannah had boarded at the Randalls' home while she was teaching at the primary school

37. *Ibid.*, 15 Sept. 1901, 89.

38. *Ibid.*, 29 Sept. 1901, 90.

39. *Ibid.*, 6 Oct. 1900, 72.

in Centerville. At that time she noted the “beautiful loving spirit” in their home and wrote that “Sister Randall was patient and kind and Bro. Randall so true and helpful. It did me a great deal of good and I shall ever prize the experience.”⁴⁰ For many years following, Hannah stayed in their home on trips to and from Salt Lake City.

The other offer came from Bishop Victor Hegsted of Salem, Idaho. Interestingly, Hannah never identified Victor by name. She wrote about this other suitor as Bro. —, and it is only by looking back that the reader knows who Bro. — is. This secrecy appears to have been a typical behavior among those who participated in new plural marriages. For example, when Rudger Clawson, a notable defender of polygamy, was preparing for his plural marriage to Pearl Udall, he never identified her by name.⁴¹ People who kept otherwise “remarkably complete” journals were sometimes conspicuously silent around periods when they were directly involved in making or aiding a plural union.⁴²

Victor Hegsted, or “Bro. —,” appeared on the scene on 17 May 1902. He asked her to take a ride with him one evening, and after they had returned to her front gate, he told her that he had a “proposition of interest” for her and asked her to consider it. She continued:

We talked for a moment or two and I promised to do so. When I went into the house it seemed as if a new world had suddenly rolled into sight and I went immediately to my bedroom and knelt down and asked God to guide my thoughts and my actions and show me the way I should go. I intended leaving the next day for Utah and expected while there to have to give another his answer for which he had been waiting for four years. My heart was humble and I did need the Spirit of the Lord and oh how I sought it.⁴³

This is the first time Hannah mentioned that another, Martin Randall, had been seeking her hand at all. With Victor’s “proposition” added to Randall’s, Hannah was forced into a period of deep introspection and heavenly invocation.

Hannah spent that summer taking classes at the University of Utah, away from both the Randalls and Victor Hegsted. Then, in the middle of her already confusing life, she had an emotionally devastating experience. On 15 June 1902 Hannah was not feeling well and missed the day’s stake conference. She mustered her energy to attend the evening’s conference,

40. *Ibid.*, 1894, 8.

41. Hardy, 210.

42. *Ibid.*, 224.

43. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 17 May 1902, 101.

however, and found a seat along the side of the room. Looking out over the congregation, she saw, directly in front of her, Tom Condie and his wife.

He was loving and fondling the baby and the sight pierced me to the quick. Just as I was trying to control myself I was called to the stand to speak. I went to the stand and asked to be excused saying that I was unable to do it but Sister Eddington and Apostle Taylor insisted. I tried a few sentences but finally broke down. Never shall I forget how I felt. My trip was spoiled and all resolutions to be brave and strong was [sic] gone to the four winds.⁴⁴

Thereafter she felt "quite unfit to do anything" with her summer school studies. Characteristically, however, she worked hard and did well in school. Then, around the middle of September 1902, when she was back in Rexburg, she received "a letter from Bro. Condie regarding the old relation" and one from Bro. Randall, telling her that he was coming to visit to get an answer, once again, to "his heart's question." Hannah was worried and did not know what to do, so she fasted and prayed. When she consulted with her father, he advised her to accept Victor. She felt "easier but not decisive" until the next day when she went to the train to meet Brother Randall. As soon as she saw him, she felt, "You are not for me." He was "earnest and anxious," but the more they talked, the more she felt confirmed in her decision. Closing the "Brother Randall" episode, she wrote:

One more drama enacted. He had been very kind and a true friend, was a man of honor whom I respected; all this I felt and as I watched him off on his journey disappointed, a telltale tear found its way down my cheek and I queried "Why is it so?" and at the same time answered, "but it will be for the best." How I longed for a confidential moment with that other one that my restless heart might be stilled. Life is so uncertain and these steps so grave.⁴⁵

She did not have an opportunity to talk to Victor privately until Christmas when they took a ride in his cutter. In January 1903 she wrote that the evening "was made sacred by the long quiet evening spent with _____. So many plans and hopes must be gone over and so many things to be learned." The night following, she told him, "I cannot let you go," and declared that "in those words my heart love went out never to be recalled. Then it seemed our destiny was sealed that we would only live in each other."⁴⁶

44. *Ibid.*, 15 June 1902, 109.

45. *Ibid.*, Sept. 1902, 117-18.

46. *Ibid.*, 25 Jan. 1903, 122.

With this manifestation of love, her language concerning Bro. — became adoring and intimate; she began to refer to him as “sweetheart,” something she had never done in any other relationship. Still, she never wrote that her sweetheart was Bishop Victor Hegsted. Curiously, she chose to hide only Victor’s name, not Randall’s or the Hunters’. A possible reason for this could have been Victor’s proximity. Both the Randalls and the Hunters lived in Utah, farther away from possible scandal. Another could have been Victor’s position as bishop of the Salem ward. This could also show that acceptance of new plural marriages by the general membership of the church was waning.

Hannah kept her love for Victor confidential for many months. On one occasion she wrote: “I introduced my sweetheart to [Sister Goddard] and later she asked who he was, adding: ‘I liked that face, he has such a good look.’ How my heart throbbed to tell her more.”⁴⁷ This was difficult, as she was terribly in love with him.

She spoke of their times together in glowing tones such as the following: “How my heart beat as — came, . . . the greeting was whole souled; the memory never will fade, I feel his hand clasp still.”⁴⁸ On another day, she recorded: “Thursday, sweetheart came and we spent a most delightful hour driving in Logan Canyon. Our hearts were overflowing and everything sang of love. The scent of the wild roses he gathered for me linger with me still, telling me anew the story of love. During the afternoon we loitered in the temple grounds and rested in the shade of that sacred edifice.”⁴⁹

That July she called on Sister Ada Hegsted, Victor’s second and only living wife, to talk over their future plans together. Hannah received a warm welcome which was noted in her journal. She said that she “received her consent to and approval of the same,” and upon Hannah’s departure, Sister Hegsted said, “Come again, as long as I have a home you will be welcome in it.” She also said, “If you want V. you can have him.”⁵⁰ At this point, it is important to note that as Hannah had been going to school, attending conferences, and assuming leadership positions, she had associated with many leaders of the church, including those who secretly sought to continue plural marriage. This involvement helped to make possible her relationship with Victor; without it, she might not have even considered plural marriage as an option, in keeping with her faith.

One of her earliest and dearest associations was with Professor George Brimhall of Brigham Young Academy. In 1893 she mentioned that he taught

47. *Ibid.*, 27 Jan. 1903, 123.

48. *Ibid.*, 15 Mar. 1903, 124.

49. *Ibid.*, 11 June 1903, 127.

50. *Ibid.*, 1 July 1903, 128.

the "Y.M. class," stating simply that "We all loved him."⁵¹ She encountered him often after that, always writing of him in warm, respectful tones. Brimhall entered into a post-Manifesto plural marriage with Alice Louise Reynolds, who was also a good friend and B.Y.A. classmate of Hannah's.⁵² The president of the academy, Benjamin Cluff, whom Hannah also mentioned in her journal, took a plural wife (Florence Reynolds) in 1900.⁵³ Clearly, Hannah was well acquainted with people who had entered post-Manifesto marriages while she was trying to make the same decision.

Another association worth noting was with Owen Woodruff, a general authority who had married his second wife, Eliza Avery Clark, in 1901.⁵⁴ In May 1902, following the officers' meetings of the Y.L.M.I.A., she had lunch with the Woodruff family. She enjoyed their "sweet home spirit" and noted that when one of their little sons became sleepy while eating, "Bro. Woodruff excused himself and undressed and put the little fellow to sleep."⁵⁵ With such a heavy decision weighing on her mind, the significance of such a small act of kindness and the spirit she felt in the Woodruffs' home cannot be underrated.

These encounters were also particularly meaningful to Hannah because from an early age she was taught to revere and follow the guidance of her leaders. At the close of a conference in 1901, Hannah told her journal, "I thought how humble and yet how great the spirit of the Lord makes men. How thankful I am for the association of such faithful ones and for the inspiration that I draw from their lives." Following that statement, she wrote that "a few brief moments were spent in talking to Bro. V. C. Hegsted and they too hold a hallowed place."⁵⁶

In keeping with her righteous desires, it appears that Victor and Hannah sought approval for their marriage from church leaders. When they attended April 1903 general conference she stated that the "sweetest part of the stay was my [erased but looks like "dear"] boy's return from the home [erased but looks like "apostle"] with instructions and information in regard to [erased but looks like "our"] life."⁵⁷ Most likely, she had approval from an unidentified church official. During a period when the apostles were divided about whether or not new plural marriages

51. *Ibid.*, 8 Jan. 1893, 6.

52. Hardy, 397.

53. Quinn, 87.

54. Woodruff firmly believed in the principle of plurality and made "strong comments . . . in behalf of post-Manifesto polygamy, as well as his own polygamous marriage" (see Hardy, 208-209).

55. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 30 May 1902, 105.

56. *Ibid.*, 2 Sept. 1901, 88.

57. *Ibid.*, 4 Apr. 1903, 125.

should be performed,⁵⁸ Hannah and Victor must have received endorsement from one of the apostles who continued to crusade quietly for polygamy's continuation.⁵⁹

Not only was their marriage approved by a church leader, but Hannah had also received encouragement to enter the marriage from her father. It appears, however, that the greatest factor in her decision to marry Victor was her belief that the marriage was sanctioned by God. As previously noted, Hannah sought divine instruction to guide her actions; evidently, she felt that she had received sanction. This belief is echoed in a letter which Victor sent to Hannah after their marriage. He wrote: "I know as you say our love is no accident a wiser mind than *ours* guided us in the right direction. we have accepted the situation with the firm determination to do right — and *we will*. God be with you sweetheart and comfort you always."⁶⁰

On 12 September 1903, Hannah wrote in her journal and simply chronicled her day and mentioned nothing of Victor or love or marriage. Following this entry, there are five blank pages. She did not continue until January 1905. Different from her earlier writings, most of these entries are retrospective. The "Salem Ward Record of Members" shows that Hannah and Victor were married in Salt Lake City on 1 May 1904.⁶¹

They married during a time when Mormon polygamy was once again a topic of heated debate in national politics. Rumors of continuing plural marriage and the election of Apostle Reed Smoot to the U.S. Senate led the Congress to investigate the church's polygamous activities. At that time, church president Joseph F. Smith issued the Second Manifesto of 7 April 1904, which stated that "no [plural] marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent, or knowledge" of the church since Woodruff's Manifesto. It further declared that: "If any officer or member of the church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage he will be deemed in transgression against the church and will be liable to be dealt with according to the rules and regulations thereof and excommunicated therefrom."⁶² Following much debate within the Quorum of the Twelve, the church began to "quietly remove men who had married after 1890 from positions of

58. "By this time at least a third of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles were new, younger men who, like [Reed] Smoot, had only one wife and were anxious to acquit the hectorated reputation of the church" (Hardy, 262).

59. Quinn, 95-96.

60. Undated and unsigned letter in Victor Hegsted's hand, typescript in my possession.

61. Hardy, 406.

62. Jessie L. Embry, *Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 15.

visibility in church organizations." They also began to excommunicate those who had entered plural marriages after 1904.⁶³ Most likely, Hannah and Victor avoided serious repercussions partially because they kept a low profile and partially because they were married within the year 1904, before the church began "excommunicating those involved in post-1904 plural marriages more vigorously than at anytime previously."⁶⁴

They did not entirely escape censure for their marriage, however. Hannah gave up her job at Ricks Academy and her house in Rexburg to live at her aunt Maria Butler's in Utah, and Victor was released as bishop of the Salem, Idaho, Ward on 29 January 1905, after serving only five years.⁶⁵ Apparently, the people of Rexburg were generally unwilling or unable to accept their union. Freeman Grover Hemming, Hannah's nephew, remembers that while everyone knew that Hannah and Victor had married polygamously, no one, particularly his mother (Hannah's younger sister Adelgunda), talked about it; the subject was completely taboo.⁶⁶

Until Ada, Victor's second wife, died in 1912, Hannah never lived with Victor on a continuous basis. She wrote of his coming to bless each of her babies. The entry about her first baby's blessing is representative of each of these blessing visits: "Rulon Grover was blessed by his papa. Aunt Ada was present."⁶⁷

While Hannah never complained to her journal about being lonely, she voiced her feelings of isolation in her letters to Victor. This is evidenced in a portion of a letter that Victor wrote to Hannah on 21 May 1905:

Pet I have read your letter several times and I can understand your heart-yearnings for me and all the freedom you used to enjoy, and dear I cannot tell you how I feel for you in this matter, or how I have planned for the future, for all our plans are likely to be changed on a moments notice that they are almost useless to us yet, HOW. Dear I can't tell as to that but it will come to us. and in the meantime let us enjoy [sic] what we have and thank God we have what we have.⁶⁸

During this lonely time, she was shown great kindness by many individuals. While Victor's visits were mentioned in Hannah's writings,

63. Hardy, 292.

64. Ibid.

65. The bishop who preceded Victor served for sixteen years. The bishop who followed him also served sixteen years. Zelda Mortensen et al., eds., *Salem Second Ward History* (Salem, ID: Privately printed, 1990), 41-75.

66. Freeman Grover Hemming, interview, Rexburg, Idaho, 15 July 1992.

67. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 27 Feb. 1905, 135.

68. Victor Hegsted to Hannah Grover Hegsted, 21 May 1905, typescript in my possession.

the substance of her commentary involved others who filled her life, administered to her children and brought her joy. After Rulon was born, Ada's father went to see Hannah and gave her "words of encouragement and blessings" and then invited her to stay with his family for the winter. She noted: "We did this and Grandpa and baby Rulon had some wonderful times together and how they romped and tumbled on the floor and laughed. We spent Thanksgiving at their home. They had been invited away to other kindred and Rulon and I stayed all alone and cheered each other."⁶⁹ Victor also expressed gratitude for the kindness shown to Hannah by some of their friends. Responding to one of Hannah's letters, Victor wrote back on 21 May 1905, with the following words: "Yes we are glad to think that we have some friends who will 'wish us well' and I certainly thank your dear friends who were thought full [sic] enough to express it."⁷⁰

By January 1907 Hannah was pregnant with her second child. In preparation for the birth, she received a washing and anointing from Maria Dongall, Ruth Fox, Sarah Eddington, and Rose Bennett. She carefully recorded the substance of a portion of that blessing. It was the first time that Hannah recorded anything in her journal that revealed an insecurity about her decision to marry.

It was such a glorious privilege and included every blessing that my heart could ask for. One especially beautiful feature was Sr. Eddington's prayer in which she said it was my gift from God not to doubt anymore in regard to my position and the important step I had taken in regard to God's law. That my faith should remain sure and that I never should be left in doubt.⁷¹

This blessing calmed Hannah's soul, and her baby was born. She wrote, "Dear Little Marion came to live with us. My what a joy to little lonely Rulon as well as to Mamma . . . In looks he was so much like his papa."⁷² Her children, as she had been promised in her patriarchal blessings, brought her a great deal of happiness; many of her writings focused on them.

Four years after Marion's birth, in October 1991, Hannah's journal tells another important story. She reported: "Moved to Forest Dale Ward in the Granite Stake [Salt Lake City] and once again became identified with the church in regular order. Victor and Adam came and worked in

69. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 27 Feb. 1905, 135.

70. Victor Hegsted to Hannah Grover Hegsted, 21 May 1905, typescript in my possession.

71. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 12 Jan. 1907, 137.

72. Ibid., 18 Jan. 1907, 138.

the temple that winter."⁷³ Aside from her silence about holding church callings, this is the only evidence that she was not accepted by the church after her marriage. It is unclear exactly what form this disapproval took, although it does not appear that official church action was taken against her.⁷⁴ In order to keep a low profile, she probably did not hold leadership positions. The church was avoiding more scandal by keeping most post-Manifesto polygamists out of the public eye.⁷⁵ This must have been a trial for a woman who had shown her devotion to her church by serving in numerous leadership positions.

It is worth noting the circumstances in which Hannah once again became an accepted member in the church. In the same year that she moved into the Granite Stake, it was determined that if the church released all of the leaders who had married polygamously after the first Manifesto, the entire stake presidency would have been affected.⁷⁶ Apparently, Hannah was living in an area where other people had formed plural unions after the Manifesto, and it seems that she found greater acceptance there.

While Hannah says little of her relationship with Ada, she made one entry before Ada's death which connotes a definite rapport between the two. On 4 April 1912 Hannah wrote about Victor's oldest daughter getting married in the Salt Lake Temple. Ada was unable to attend, so Hannah gave the couple a little reception at her home and then wrote to her mother to tell her "about this sacred marriage and other happenings of the day."⁷⁷ Ada died that same year.

Following Ada's death, Hannah and Victor were married civilly.⁷⁸ This procured a place for Hannah in mainstream Mormon society as she now appeared to be no different from others who were living in monogamous marriages. Finally in 1914 Hannah moved to Driggs, Idaho, to be with Victor. Victor was a dashing figure who knew how to make Hannah feel thoroughly loved. She wrote: "The little children and I returned to Driggs where Victor met us. He gave me such a big welcome and told me how much he needed me."⁷⁹ Once they were in Driggs, her fourth and last child,

73. *Ibid.*, 11 Jan. 1911, 141.

74. She mentions that "Bishop Moroni Marriott . . . came to us during conference and brought our recommends to us. Victor and I both appreciated this visit and this kindness" (*ibid.*, 5 Sept. 1906, 137).

75. Hardy, 295.

76. *Ibid.*, 292.

77. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 4 Apr. 1912, 141.

78. Certificate of Marriage, 1914, Salt Lake City, Utah, in possession of Val G. Hemming.

79. Journal of Hannah Grover Hegsted, 23 May 1914, 143.

Karl, was born. She recorded that "he was a very tiny little fellow but what an ocean of love he brought into the home."⁸⁰

Her life became distinctly more complicated following her civil marriage. Soon after her move to Driggs, she found herself running a huge household. She reported that "During these years our household duties were heavy for we numbered twelve in the family nearly all of the time."⁸¹ This household included not only Hannah's family of four children, but also Aunt Ada's four, and a few other relatives and friends.

In addition to this, with her acceptance back into the fold, she again held positions of responsibility in the church and in the community. In the church, she served in the Relief Society, in the Primary, and worked extensively in the temple. Characteristically, she loved the people she worked with and devoted herself to her callings. When members of the Relief Society General Board stayed in Hannah's home, she noted that, "We had a wonderful visit together, and received so much encouragement in our work."⁸² She also wrote that she worked "very zealously" in her Primary calling.

In the community Hannah was made the principal of school in Driggs for three years, and then in 1923 she accepted the position of county superintendent of schools. She also went back to Provo for summer school as the Relief Society delegate from the Teton Stake. She stated, "It was one of the most glorious privileges of my life."⁸³ She calls these her "busy years," adding that "I cared for my family and home also."⁸⁴ Compared with her early journal, Hannah treats this period summarily; so it is difficult to obtain a good understanding of her later years. In these writings, however, she continued to emanate a sense of joy about her life and relationships.

While Hannah may have had her lonely times, there is no evidence that she wished she had taken a different path. She made her decision to marry with integrity. Using her family life and church leaders as examples, and believing in blessings that promised her a husband and a posterity, she prayed to God and married Victor Hegsted. As with other experiences in her life, she met the challenges of being a post-Manifesto plural wife with strength and dedication to the church. Whether her experience with post-Manifesto plural marriage is typical is a question for future historians.

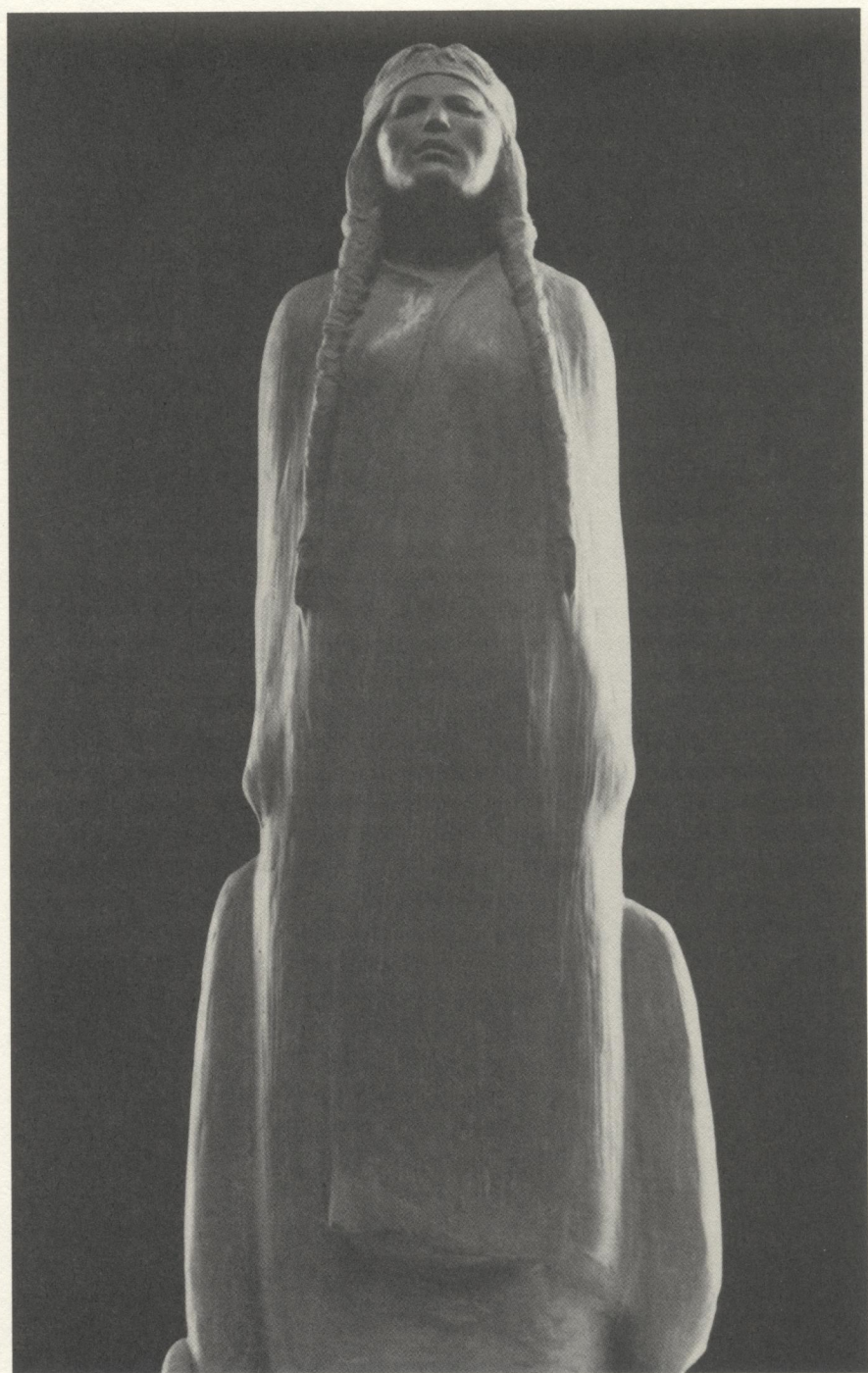
80. *Ibid.*, 9 Feb. 1915, 143.

81. *Ibid.*, 1 Oct. 1915, 144.

82. *Ibid.*, Nov. 1915, 144.

83. *Ibid.*, 1919-23, 144.

84. *Ibid.*, 145.



You Are Not Alone: A Plea for Understanding the Homosexual Condition

T. J. O'Brien

I WAS ON THE PHONE WITH A COUSIN and asked how his family was doing. "Fine, except," he added reluctantly, "one of my sons just informed us he's homosexual."

"What was your response?" I asked.

"Well, we're doing all the right things," he reassured me, "prayer, fasting, taking him to church, reading scriptures."

"That's fine," I countered, "but don't expect too much. If he is truly homosexual, that approach probably won't change his sexual orientation."

"What do you know about it?" he asked suspiciously.

"Many LDS parents share your dilemma," I replied. "You are not alone." Then although I knew that what I was going to say would be awkward, out of empathy for the young man in a hostile world, I admitted, "And like your son, many devoted church members, including myself, have had to deal with same-sex feelings."

After he recovered from surprise, my cousin asked, "So what do you suggest we do?"

I thought back on what would have helped me most when I was in his son's position. "Love him. Accept him. Listen to him."

Shortly thereafter I had a similar conversation with a former bishop who confided that one of his sons and perhaps a second was homosexual. Thus began an introspective dialogue with both families by phone and letter. The parents, if not fully understanding their sons' homosexuality, have been loving and supportive. The young men have since come to comfortable terms with their homosexual feelings. Two of them have served missions, one has married, and all three are doing well in college. When other LDS cousins learned of my sexual orientation, they too were

loving and supportive. Although well educated, they knew little about homosexuality in spite of all that has been written.

Dialogue has published several articles on homosexuality, including an admission by R. Jan Stout, associate clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of Utah, that his previous beliefs that homosexuality is a "learned behavior" and therefore an illness "to be treated and corrected" were "wrong and simplistic."¹ Carol Lynn Pearson poignantly revealed the trials of marriage to a homosexual man in *Goodbye, I Love You*.² The book caused many in the Mormon community to reconsider their positions and attitudes. A close friend of mine ten years earlier published a booklet describing his near-fatal bout with a bleeding ulcer resulting from his coping with same-sex feelings.³ Wayne Schow wrote a heart-rending essay about his own son's homosexuality and eventual demise from AIDS.⁴ I had hoped that these first-hand experiences would usher in a new era of empathy in the LDS church. My expectations were premature.

No doubt for some these and other articles and books have been enlightening and moving. But for too many others, pleas for understanding have either been ignored or unheard. Most Mormons rely heavily on the *Church News* and *Ensign* for answers, and these publications have never dealt with the homosexual condition. When first confronted with homosexuality, members are therefore unprepared and perplexed as they grasp for answers. The unfortunate result is that homophobia and the same shallow arguments against homosexuality—often with tragic results—persist in the church as some recent articles and letters demonstrate.

What I consider a clear example of homophobia appeared in *Sunstone* in which Orson Scott Card, noted science fiction writer, seems lost and threatened in the unfamiliar territory of homosexuality.⁵ With no references to his own qualifications or experiences in this complex area, Card claims to know best the laws by which the homosexual can find happiness. Making no distinction between homosexual orientation and homoerotic behavior, he indiscriminately refers to their "sin" but never defines it. Card is convinced that the main purpose of all homosexuals is sex and that they cannot resist temptation. Unable to get beyond mere sexual involvement, he

1. R. Jan Stout, "Sin and Sexuality: Psychobiology and the Development of Homosexuality," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (Summer 1987): 29-41; also in Ron Schow, Wayne Schow, and Marybeth Raynes, eds., *Peculiar People: Mormons and Same-Sex Orientation* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991).

2. Carol Lynn Pearson, *Goodbye, I Love You* (New York: Random House, 1986).

3. Cloy Jenkins, *Prologue* (Affirmation, 1977).

4. Wayne Schow, "Homosexuality, Mormon Doctrine, and Christianity: A Father's Perspective," *Sunstone* 14 (Feb. 1990): 9-12; also in Schow et al., 117.

5. Orson Scott Card, "A Changed Man, Hypocrites of Homosexuality," *Sunstone* 14 (Feb. 1990): 44-45.

ignores the wide range of non-erotic similarities between homosexual and heterosexual problems. "Unrepentant" homosexuals are hypocrites, he argues, because they are "unwilling" to change their behavior and should therefore "withdraw from membership." Their "lies" and "arguments" should be met with "complete intolerance." Card's uninformed attack on homosexuals is an attempt to enlighten the "Hypocrites of Homosexuality" but instead conjures up old and dreary clichés so readily used by the "Hypocrites of Heterosexuality."

Another example of uninformed advice comes from Samuel W. Taylor, a popular novelist and writer of Mormon history who is out of his field when writing about homosexuality.⁶ He borrows a dated argument from Desmond Morris, the anthropologist, who in *The Human Zoo* states that humans like captured animals are no longer living in conditions natural to our species (he does not explain what conditions are natural) and manifest sexual abnormalities from being "caged" in cities.⁷ Although Morris's conclusions have since been discredited, Taylor uses them unabashedly to suggest that homosexuals "got that way from the environment not through heredity." "They should," he states coldly, "take therapy for it."

In a letter to the editor of *Sunstone* Alan Seegmiller offers what on the surface appears to be positive hope for change.⁸ He claims to be one who "personally transcended same-sex attraction and is happily married." As a member of a Christian group called "Evergreen" which attempts to help homosexuals "recover," he professes to have witnessed "changes in sexual orientation daily." He does not mention how many *inabilities* to change or *failures to sustain* change he has also witnessed. From his own experience in changing his sexual "attraction," he encourages all members of the church so inclined to avail themselves of the "opportunity to repent of homosexuality."

A parallel situation comes from a friend of mine who writes of a man in Provo, Utah, who once led a "very, very gay life but was miraculously made heterosexual by prayer."⁹ The repentant man's recent marriage is "incontrovertible proof of change." My friend suggests that this "cured homosexual" along with others should go on missions as witnesses to gay Mormons that they can be "cured."

Suggestions offered in articles and letters such as these may at first sound logical and promising, but at the same time they paint a limited and distorted picture by ignoring complexities in the homosexual condition, discounting real-life experience, and rejecting responsible research. This

6. Samuel W. Taylor, "A Human Zoo," *Sunstone* 14 (Dec. 1990): 6.

7. Desmond Morris, *The Human Zoo* (New York, 1969), ii.

8. Alan Seegmiller, "Transcending Homosexuality," *Sunstone* 14 (May 1990): 4.

9. Personal correspondence, Mar. 1991.

marginal approach can mislead the sincere but naive into false expectations and disheartening failures. These seemingly obvious solutions, which no knowledgeable therapist would offer, originate, except for a few ambiguous scriptures, from common beliefs that homosexuality is unnatural and a matter of personal choice which therefore can and should be reversed. Although the homosexual condition has been clinically shown to be much more complex than just a matter of choice,¹⁰ this equivocal attitude has created much confusion and many painful problems and complications for the homosexual person as well as for those offering assistance.

No doubt more than one anxious parent, desperate for a cure, has grasped at such advice and thrown down the challenge to fight the good fight at the feet of his or her "unrepentant" homosexual son or daughter. And doubtless more than one tormented but obedient child has accepted the gauntlet, suppressing old fears and feelings, and marched forth in the armor of new resolve determined to face the raging war inside.

But more often than not this battle is lost, and the resolute warrior retreats ingloriously beaten. His or her initial failure to achieve what sounded like easy conquest often discourages further attempts. The problem is not that peaceful solutions to homosexual struggles are unattainable but that the untrained soldier has rushed into battle with the misconception that one skirmish will end the war. But most wars are fought over time with the successes and failures of many battles supported by wise and experienced counsel.

Admittedly one cannot totally dismiss the sincere witness of anyone who claims to have been "cured" of same-sex feelings. But too often it is assumed the story ends there. One must further question: How strong were the same-sex feelings? Did opposite-sex feelings already exist? How effective was the cure and for how long? Is the testimony a statement of accomplished fact or merely of faith in some hoped-for future achievement? Were the sexual feelings and responses really changed or merely the behavior? And because some people claim to have conquered the "demons" within, can one reasonably and responsibly predict a similar victory for others?

Until now I have been hesitant to enter the battle, for anonymity is comfortable. But sadly I continue to encounter many innocent, tormented, and uninformed victims. To deal with these complex issues intelligently and successfully, many aspects must be considered. Although I possess no academic degrees in the field of sexuality, my own experiences with same-sex feelings, years of personal therapy, my acquaintance through various support groups with hundreds of tormented people, and years of re-

10. See Stout.

searching the matter and discussing it with them, with scholars, and with practicing psychologists and psychiatrists have opened vistas which I now feel obligated to share. (To keep my comments manageable, I have focused mainly on male homosexuality which I know best.)

Like Alan Seegmiller, I too have met people from "ex-gay" ministries such as Evergreen, Love in Action, and Deseret Spring, organizations claiming to have successfully changed people's sexual orientations. I was unable to follow up to determine the permanence of such alleged changes. But I did gain some insights from two male presenters from one such group. Speaking to a large audience, their message was clear and firm: they were totally cured from same-sex feelings, and therefore others could be too. Later in private I learned that these two young men travel all over the country with their message—together (that they face such a temptation is supposed to dispel doubt that their cure is not permanent). One of the pair, however, hesitantly admitted to me that he still has some same-sex feelings but that "from abstinence they were gradually diminishing." (Heterosexuals sometimes have the same lament but with no resulting change in sexual status.) Another presenter swore to me his homosexual feelings were gone for good but that he did not trust himself near a men's locker room.

In *The Third Sex*¹¹ Ken Phipott presented six young men "cured" of homosexuality in Christian conversion. Soon after its publication, however, four of the six reverted to their previous lifestyle. The two male founders of another organization that claims to cure gays, Exodus International, reportedly left it, married each other, and denounced the organization as "a destructive fraud."¹²

The suggestion that animals indulge in unnatural sex only when found in an unnatural environment contradicts research. Animal behaviorists have discovered overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Evelyn Hooker, psychologist from Johns Hopkins, author, and researcher on male homosexuality, cites studies which show that chimpanzees practice homosexuality (although not exclusively) in the wild.¹³ So do California sea gulls on Catalina island, with female birds pairing up with other females for life. All animal breeders observe the occasional presence of homosexual behavior. In addition many animals are bisexual or ambisexual.¹⁴

Can we blame crowded city life for homosexuality? More than one cultural anthropologist has written about experimental homosexuality

11. Reported in Linda P. Cushman, ed., *Human Sexuality*, Vol. 1 (Greenhaven Press, 1985), 201-204.

12. Tony Collette, in *Affinity*, May 1992, 9.

13. Evelyn Hooker, Personal communication, May 1993.

14. John Money, *Gay, Straight, and In-Between* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 13.

among farm boys, sailors, and explorers in the wilds and among islanders—none of whom lived in cities. Most native American tribes in their natural environment not only accepted homosexuals (called “berdache”) but, according to Walter Williams, in many cases even honored homosexuals as special and contributing gifts from God as nurturers and healers to improve society.¹⁵ C. Ford and F. Beach stated in 1949 that they could discover very few societies modern or ancient in which there was no homosexuality.¹⁶

If homosexuality was caused by a crowded environment and not through genes or heredity, why don’t more people “catch it”? The majority of us are locked in “cages” of city environment, and yet less than 10 percent of the population is exclusively homosexual, although Alfred Kinsey reported that over 30 percent have engaged in some homosexual behavior.¹⁷ Research from Simon LeVay, formerly of the Salk Institute, demonstrated a physical, structural difference between the brains of homosexual and heterosexual men.¹⁸ His studies strongly suggest that brain physiology in males may play a significant part in their sexual orientation—they may have been born homosexual or heterosexual. Surveys also show that where one twin is gay, the other is likely to be also, thus indicating a biological component in one’s sexual orientation.¹⁹ Still unanswered is the question: If homosexuality is biological, why aren’t both twins gay in every case? Results are inconclusive, and more research is needed.

John Money, a professor of medical psychology at Johns Hopkins, is among those who believe the whole argument of nature versus nurture is obsolete. What happens in the womb (nature) is biological, and what happens shortly after birth in the brain from social communication (nurture) is also biological. Both, he concludes, influence sexual orientation.²⁰

Homosexuals so often hear the remark, “You chose to be that way, you can choose not to be that way: get therapy for it.” No homosexual or lesbian I ever spoke with recalls “choosing” to be that way, and if it turns out to be biological, what use is therapy anyway, except for adjusting? Do the challengers understand what causes homosexuality, or for that matter what

15. Walter Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), 18.

16. Evelyn Hooker, Personal correspondence, Apr. 1991.

17. Alfred C. Kinsey, *Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1948), 636-59. A more recent survey released by the Alan Guttmacher Institute suggests the number may be lower (*New York Times*, 15 Apr. 1993, A3).

18. Simon LeVay, “A Difference in Hypothalamic Structure Between Heterosexual and Homosexual Men,” *Science* 253 (30 Aug. 1991): 1034.

19. *New York Times*, 17 Dec. 1991, A21. Northwestern University psychologist Michael Bailey concurs. “I would—and have—bet my career,” he says, “on homosexuality being biologically determined” (in Chandler Burr, “Homosexuality and Biology,” *Atlantic Monthly*, Mar. 1993, 65).

20. Money, 50.

complex processes made them heterosexual and when if ever they chose to be that way? Would therapy or social pressures to change make any difference in their heterosexual orientation? If admonished or shamed into feeling romantic affection for the same sex, could they? Or have they even thought about it? Perhaps they should, for according to Money, what one understands about heterosexuality applies to homosexuality and bisexuality as well. To begin with, he insists that one does not become heterosexual by preference or plan, it is "something that happens."²¹

The superficial admonitions above are merely examples of the conflicting advice bombarding homosexuals. Elder Boyd K. Packer in a twelve-stake fireside at Brigham Young University offered another such explanation for homosexuality when he said that "selfishness" was at the root of it.²² What he was suggesting is not clear. Many homosexual Latter-day Saints I know are unselfishly devoted and committed to the church. They take leadership positions in their wards, preside over their quorums, direct and sing in the choirs, do home teaching, work on welfare farms, visit the old and sick, initiate service projects, and serve on missions. (The elder my mission president pointed out as the finest, hardest working, most spiritual missionary he had ever known—one we should all emulate—later revealed he was homosexual.)

Of course there are exceptions, but in many cases these homosexual members hide their sexual frustrations in church work that others may avoid because they are too busy pursuing normal heterosexual interests. Bishop Stan Roberts reported that although many heterosexuals were hard workers, the percentage of gays in his San Francisco ward doing their jobs "was higher than the straights."²³ Some of these homosexual people, eager to fit the accepted church mold, painfully ignore their strong personal inclinations, marry, and even rear children. How does this kind of devotion demonstrate selfishness? Elder Packer offered no illumination or concrete solutions, but in a later talk he candidly admitted that "perhaps the leaders of the church do not really understand these problems."²⁴ A friend and missionary companion of mine received a similar admission in a letter from a member of the First Presidency twenty-five years ago.²⁵

But what about these brothers and sisters who have been "cured" with prayer and fasting and are now happily married? I am personally

21. *Ibid.*, 4, 11.

22. Boyd K. Packer, *To the One* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978).

23. Stan Roberts, "Pastoring the Farside: Making a Place for Believing Homosexuals," *Sunstone* 14 (Feb. 1990): 13.

24. Boyd K. Packer, "Covenants," *Ensign* 20 (Nov. 1990): 85.

25. Personal correspondence, 1967.

aware of several dozen such individuals who were "cured" of same-sex desires and went on to marry and have children. Among them are personal friends and family members. Have they lived "happily ever after"? Perhaps in storybooks, but the "cure," many later admitted, was more of a "suppression" that they learned to live with for years. And in each case, despite sincere and honest efforts to make the marriages work, same-sex feelings eventually surface, leaving families torn apart and emotionally scarred. Most of the marriages ended in divorce. Among these individuals were a bishop with eight children, a bishop's wife with four, a member of a high council with seven, and a mission president with six. For many following the marriage dissolution, a same-sex lover soon came into the picture.

A few have hung on, and to the outside observer their marriages look stable. One of these husbands confessed to me he wished he had never married, and another, an elder's quorum president, confided that he enjoys his family but has had sexual intercourse with his wife about as often as he has had children. Even then, he candidly admitted, he has to "fantasize being with a man." Can this honestly be called a cure? There are no doubt other cases where lasting changes or adjustments do occur, and it would be beneficial to have these cases honestly documented with insightful details. Still it appears that marriage for most homosexuals is not the end of the story.

The issue of one's sexuality is far more complex than homosexual versus heterosexual. One of the reasons why some homosexuals are able to enter into heterosexual marriages is partly explained by Kinsey's seven-point continuum²⁶ and if accurate is the key of which so many would-be therapists are either ignorant or unaware. Recently I discussed this key with Evelyn Hooker.²⁷ She reemphasized the importance of the Kinsey continuum which places sexuality on a scale, with exclusive heterosexuality at 0 and exclusive homosexuality at 6. A person identified as a 1 or 2 on the heterosexual side or a 4 or 5 on the homosexual side will have strong feelings (including dreams, fantasies, and involvements) for one sex and varying degrees of these for the opposite (Hooker believes the scale should be expanded). A 3 will have equal or near-equal feelings for both (bi-sexual).

Mansell Pattison, chair of the psychiatry and health behavior department at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, believes that over time some people may shift positions somewhat on the scale (this shift, however slight, is the basis for most testimonials of cure). The 2 or better yet the 1

26. June M. Reinisch, *The Kinsey Institute New Report on Sex* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 140-41.

27. Evelyn Hooker, Personal correspondence and interviews, May 1992.

person might suppress homosexual feelings and in time emphasize the heterosexual.²⁸

But what of those who have little or no sexual desire for the opposite sex and strong feelings for their own? "Some 1s or 2s might have managed to reverse a temporary same-sex orientation, but is it possible," I asked Hooker, "for a 4, 5, or 6 homosexual to ever become a successful heterosexual?" "Not in my book," she insisted.²⁹ If she is right, then to offer hope for a complete transformation through prayer, fasting, and/or therapy without first analyzing a person's position on the scale is not just cruel and irresponsible; it is, according to Hooker, "immoral."

Hooker further explains that for a time, with intense therapy, such persons may temporarily believe they are on the way to "recovery."³⁰ Encouraged and highly motivated, they may even get caught up in the numbing demands of marriage, family, and church, but in time the struggle can wear them down, and old temptations can return in company with that ugly companion, guilt.

Pattison claims that of 300 homosexual clients, only a discouraging 30 were able to develop a satisfactory sexual attraction to women.³¹ Those who married reported that homosexual dreams, fantasies, and impulses did not vanish but merely diminished over time. From the 30 he reports on 11 who made shifts on the Kinsey scale from 4, 5, and 6 to 1 and 2. Only 4 (a little over 1 percent of the 300) went from 6 to 0. He does not say exactly how he used the complex scale nor how permanent the changes were, but he cautions against being too optimistic about change and worries about a later "boomerang effect." Donald Tweedie, a clinical psychologist in Los Angeles who counseled over 300 homosexuals, is more optimistic but does not believe that a "cure" implies a lifestyle free of homosexual temptation. He warns of "miracle cures," saying that when such witnesses fall back, they are too embarrassed to admit it.³² Doug Haldeman concludes from his low change rates that men who reported change were "bisexual to begin with."³³

Lying about or suppressing one's true nature can conjure up feelings of intense frustration, inadequacy, and disgust at being dishonest with oneself. To these Hooker adds "clinical depression, paranoia, or schizoid reactions."³⁴ Compounding this are the terrible dilemma and self-doubts of

28. In Tom Minnery, "Homosexuals Can Change," *Christianity Today* 6 Feb. 1981, reprinted in Cushman, 202.

29. Hooker, Mar. and Apr. 1991.

30. Ibid.

31. Cushman, 202.

32. Ibid., 203.

33. Schow et al., 217.

34. Hooker, Mar. and Apr. 1991.

the homosexual's wife or husband, who share the struggle or may not even know what is going on. The entire matter is obviously complex, and there are no guarantees of successful or permanent transference.

For many, believing they are the only ones with same-sex feelings and not knowing where to get qualified help and having no one to talk to, the struggle becomes painfully lonely. Far too many, unable to deal with the heavy guilt and despair of being unable to change or accept what is natural to them, pressured by well-meaning but uninformed family, friends, and vaguely-informed leaders, tragically choose to end their lives. Reinisch reports that 20 percent of homosexual men (others report 30 percent) had attempted suicide in contrast to only 4 percent of heterosexual men.³⁵ A recent television program reported that children as early as sixth grade, aware of their sexual difference, had attempted suicide, pushed over the edge by the rejection and/or buffeting of parents and peers.³⁶ Most heterosexuals have no idea how limiting and destructive their naive but aggressive approach to homosexual issues can be.

Some time ago I was at a dinner party of old school friends. As a group they were intelligent, somewhat liberal, probing thinkers, successful in their fields, and active Mormons. The subject of homosexuality came up. Many ideas were bantered about, and the conclusions they finally drew were that "We believe that most homosexuals did not choose to be that way, and we can accept them. But we cannot justify homosexual acts." They all agreed that young homosexuals in the ward have the same moral obligations as young heterosexuals. After all, missionaries in the field must wait and so must their girlfriends. Standards must be the same for both and adhered to equally. "That," they concluded, "is only fair."

Up to that time I had remained silent but felt I could not stay out of the discussion indefinitely. I agreed that standards should be the same for both but questioned that they are. Young heterosexuals are reared in an environment supportive of their sexual orientation. Society and the media continually reinforce it as normal, thus strengthening feelings of self-worth. The church brings young people together in heterosocial activities such as dances, parties, and outings—boy- or girl-watching and innocent crushes are kindly joked about. Although dating early is discouraged, lessons and talks focus on future pairing. A young couple can hold hands in church, and even an occasional hug is not frowned on. Role models are abundant, and although sex is taboo until marriage, the youth have both to look forward to. Of course there are temptations, but dating, hopes for the future, and plenty of moral support help strengthen their resistance. When they

35. Reinisch, 142.

36. In "ABC News 20/20," 8 May 1992, transcript in my possession.

finally choose a mate, and there is no limit to the over-eager assistance given in that process, they are offered a marriage that allows them physical intimacy, companionship, and the possibility of children to provide further love and fulfillment. And all of this is smiled on not only by an accepting, validating society but, it is believed, by God himself.

Where can one find a situation even closely similar for the homosexual? Young homosexuals, both male and female, belong to a society that is essentially ignorant about and opposed to same-sex feelings which are natural to homosexuals. As young homosexuals become aware of homoerotic feelings, they also learn that such feelings are considered unnatural and sinful—even evil. They therefore learn to suppress basic instincts and in so doing experience low self esteem and even self hatred. Acceptance is usually attained only by acting out a heterosexual role that to them is awkward, uncomfortable, and even repugnant. Unable to share early, exciting stirrings of romantic interest, they must instead keep these new and confusing feelings to themselves and in addition deal with impatient adults who wonder why they are so quiet and withdrawn. If their homosexual feelings are uncovered, family and friends may condemn or even reject them. Parents and others will forbid them to follow any natural inclinations and make them feel “abnormal” and guilty for having “chosen” such feelings in the first place.

Although heterosexuals may struggle over whom they should marry, few if any ever question their sexual orientation. When at last they do find someone—and granted not all do—the typical heterosexual Mormon couple, alive with anticipated desires, devotes a day or two to fasting and prayer about their decision to marry—usually resulting in an affirmative answer. On the other hand, homosexuals may spend years of isolated soul searching, fasting, and intense prayer solely about their sexual orientation—with the ultimate answer being silence. When they do seek counsel, they are told that if they hold out, live solitary lives, and practice abstinence from all physical and sexual involvements in this life, avoiding same-sex ties and close social relationships with people sharing similar challenges, they have the promise in the next life of more of the same or of a heterosexual marriage, which for them is unnatural. No wonder so many become disheartened and withdraw from church activity.

What about the need for companionship? We tell our people that “it is not good that man should be alone” and then tell the homosexuals that they *must* live alone. How ironic that for years homosexuality was believed to be caused by a lack of affectionate bonding in childhood, and now the prescribed remedy is more of the “cause”—isolation. Does it not seem hypocritical for happily married heterosexuals to insist that homosexuals spend their lives on this earth devoid of the deep love and companionship so rewarding and treasured by heterosexuals? True, like heterosexuals they

may also receive non-sexual love and support from family and friends, but a bishop who enjoyed such love and support once told me life would not be worth living if he did not have his sweetheart to go home to and love each night. Should he expect less of homosexuals?

Married heterosexuals in the church often conclude with Eugene England, a professor of English at Brigham Young University, that homosexuals should choose "life-long celibacy" and that a "heroic decision" to live a celibate life—devoted to Jesus Christ "freed from the distractions and difficulties of sexual relationship"—is a positive choice for obtaining the "blessings of the restored gospel."³⁷ But listen to the testimonies of these same people, and you will hear that the greatest blessings of the gospel for them come from having an eternal partner and children. If these people were to rush home from work on a Friday afternoon, as many single people do (both homosexual and heterosexual), and face the empty loneliness of three days and four walls with no one to share their emotional lives with year after year, how devoted to Christ would they feel? Families may be imperfect and distracting, but potential emotional fulfillments in marriage buffer heterosexuals against the despair of isolation. Single people are often debilitated by feelings of loneliness, unworthiness, and emotional hunger. Granted, isolation works for a few, but what about the rest?

Long-term homosexual relationships are seldom publicized and are believed to be non-existent, but I know many homosexuals who have lived in stable, committed, and caring relationships for ten or fifteen years. One LDS couple I know has been together fifty years. They met as young deacons, went to college together, and have a successful professional practice in common. Some gay couples have even adopted children who went on to live normal heterosexual lives. Should these gay couples give up their happy families and live celibate lives to satisfy fulfilled heterosexuals who feel uncomfortable with such arrangements? And to whose benefit? Monogamous pairing of homosexuals, as for heterosexuals, can give purpose, dignity, and stability to their lives and in a life-threatening world of AIDS, helps them avoid promiscuity.

Elder Dallin Oaks when questioned about homosexuality on a CBS television news show stated that it is not sex that is objectionable but sex without marriage. Asked if the church offers the homosexual marriage, he said, no. The conclusions of my friends at the dinner table resounded in my mind—"Standards must be the same for both; it is only fair."

Awareness of my own homosexuality has caused the greatest pain in my life, but it has also been a schoolmaster. Because I was such an absolutist and idealist Mormon, if I had not personally struggled with same-sex

37. In Schow et al., 278-82.

feelings, I would like others probably have pointed the uninformed finger of scorn and told the gay person to get help and straighten up. But life denied me the privilege of being smug. From age three I can recall a strong physical and emotional attraction for males, and for years I anticipated a similar attraction to females—but in vain. Like so many others in my situation, at no time do I recall making a conscious choice about my sexual orientation—where would I have even learned of such an option? If I had had a choice, it would have been, “No.” Why would I deliberately choose something that would isolate me and inflict so much pain, confusion, and feelings of rejection? For my life I only wanted to be an active Mormon with a wife and children. My brother had no use for the church and wanted no children. He had five. We grew up in the same family with the same parents and the same experiences. Why wasn’t *he* homosexual?

Believing my attraction for men was just a passing phase, I suppressed it for years and dated frequently in high school and at BYU. Serving in student government, I was able to date weekly many of the most popular girls on campus. Contrary to stereotypical advice that homosexuals lack positive experiences with women, I liked them very much, socially, and they liked me—I never sat home during a Preference Ball. But in spite of my apparent success with women, I seldom dated the same one often so as not to get too close and reveal that I could not respond romantically. No doubt they felt frustrated with me too, for one young woman said with sarcasm, “Dating you is like dating my big brother—I feel so safe.”

I served a successful LDS mission and afterwards in a branch presidency in the army and in a bishopric. I also taught seminary and Institute, dated often, and felt close to God—but was perplexed by my lack of romantic feelings for women. Spiritual leaders assured me that marriage would change all that. Following well-intentioned encouragement from friends and months of agonizing prayer, fasting, and soul-searching, I finally entered into a temple marriage to a wonderful woman. While marriage was thrilling, natural, and effortless for my newly wed friends, for me it was unfulfilling and frightening. I was terribly despondent over my inability to feel the role of a husband and to respond sexually, but I could not explain the reasons why. My wife and I prayed together, read scriptures, attended church, and sought advice from our bishop and from a general authority. My wife was courageously cheerful and supportive, but with no real insight into the situation, she felt somehow responsible. Although it was not her fault, the marriage was never consummated and out of fairness to both of us eventually ended. She has since remarried and has three children.

In despair I began to probe my feelings to discover why the marriage had failed. At first the problem was not a conscious desire for male companionship but a total lack of romantic or sexual feelings for women. I

assumed it was the result of years of strictly following church teachings to avoid sexual thoughts and involvements. But as I looked more deeply and honestly, I recognized in myself exclusive homosexual feelings. That was devastating. I in turn denied them, fought them, and examined them. Faithful to advice from church leaders, I fasted weekly, prayed, read scriptures, held church callings, dated again, and received therapy from LDS Social Services twice a week for years. I was still naive about the homosexual condition because the *Bishop's Handbook* at that time directed that I should not read about my "problem," not discuss it, and that I should separate myself "from anyone who shared it." In spite of abstinence, an intense desire to change my same-sex feelings, and unwavering faith that I could, the lonely and daily fight along with adverse therapy gradually devoided me not only of sexual feeling but of all feeling. I withdrew from most social contacts and was left with a deep, gnawing hurt that in spite of my years of devotion and service, I felt abandoned by God and the church. I could not understand why romantic interests so natural for others were impossible for me. I was deprived of the goal of the eternal family I had always desired and been schooled in—and had lived to be worthy of. Fortunately I was too fascinated by life to be suicidal.

At one point in despair from feeling rejected because of same-sex feelings and lack of progress to change them, in spite of overwhelming effort and sexual abstinence, I wrote an emotional plea to President Spencer W. Kimball, who wrote back that I should see my current bishop, "a wise and inspired man of God who will tell you what to do." I went to my bishop as advised and was counseled: "I really don't know what to tell you." In disbelief, I went to another bishop, who said, "If God knew how you felt, he would feel so bad." I replied, "If God doesn't know how I feel, we're all in trouble." I then went to a former bishop whose wisdom had often touched me, and he summarily dismissed my dilemma with, "I'm not your bishop anymore, I can't help you." I went away with a heavy heart, thinking, "I know you are not my bishop, but I had thought you were my friend." A similar disappointment waited with the stake president. There was no help where I had always believed there would be. Because of my deep faith and confidence in the church, I suppressed emerging feelings that in my time of greatest need there was no one to help.

Then I received a call from Salt Lake City asking if I would be willing to appear anonymously with several other returned missionaries of homosexual orientation before one of the general authorities who wished first-hand information about this "growing problem" in the church. I was thrilled at the prospect but unable to attend, so I suggested several missionary friends who could. I awaited impatiently for their report and was encouraged by the initial results.

The meeting had begun with prayer, at the request of the former

missionaries, and the general authority had listened for two hours while the eleven men and one woman expressed their feelings. The general authority said little, but following the closing prayer confessed that he had approached the meeting with some feelings of apprehension that the spirit would be negative. Instead, he confessed, he had never felt a more beautiful spirit in any meeting and assured the young people that there would be more meetings with other sympathetic general authorities. The group gave the general authority some questions for the prophet, requesting that in place of giving further opinions, would he petition God's will on this pressing matter.

The high hopes and anticipation of the next meeting and answers to their questions were soon shattered. The young people were told that the president of the church felt homosexuality was not an issue worthy of taking to the Lord. In addition he firmly instructed the general authority to hold no more meetings with the group. Although not surprised, these returned missionaries who had given so much of their lives to the church were deeply disappointed. To discover that church leaders were inadequately informed and hesitant even to investigate an issue that may directly involve nearly a million members of the church (10 percent) and millions more in family members was disturbing. Sadly, out of disillusionment, many of this group have since left church activity.

I too began to feel hopelessness, and although I attended meetings, I found it painful to sit alone and listen to sermons on the "beauty of marriage and eternal family life." I have always loved children, and testimonies on the "joys of raising a posterity" cut deeply. As years passed it also became uncomfortable to continually come up with clever answers to avoid explaining why I was not interested in dating someone's "lovely daughter," then mother, and finally grandmother. Home teachers often "kindly" reminded me that if I did not marry, I could not reach the highest degree. Singles' wards stressed marriage, and priesthood quorum leaders gave undiscerning lessons on "the evils of homosexuality." Eventually my church attendance decreased.

In retrospect I am not bitter. I know that these men did the best they knew how. The problem was simply too complex and beyond their preparation for it. Could anyone really understand the anxieties of being homosexual who has not experienced them? From ecclesiastical encouragement, I had spent years nursing false hopes to repent of that which I could not change and to become that which I never could become. I would not suggest that because I was unable to change, others cannot; each situation is individual. Still I have over the years met dozens of returned missionaries and others whose stories of frustration at sincerely trying to change their sexual nature are similar to my own. Is it any wonder that having struggled intensely for so many years without change, we are weary and unreceptive

to the insensitive and uninformed injunctions to “just repent”? Although I spent the better part of my life trying in vain to become heterosexual, perhaps this searching and zealous effort was a necessary part of self acceptance. I am now content to know that had change been possible for me, I would have. Perhaps God would not allow me to change that which he put within me for some wise purpose.

Unable to find the answers I needed from church leaders or in church literature, I began to study and interview non-Mormon authorities in the field. I also began the slow process of learning to accept who I am and to redirect the energy for change that for years had drained me into pursuits with more promise. I sought ways to create a meaningful, productive life as a person who happened to have homosexual feelings, and in time I came to feel more self sufficient and less dependent upon others. Eventually the heavy cloak of debilitating guilt dropped from me.

My Mormon heritage is still highly treasured, and I will always be grateful for the growth and love I have experienced in the church and for true friends and family who continue their support. I miss the weekly fellowship and “spiritual home” with people who once needed me, but it is difficult to see my role there under current conditions. Still I do what I can and what I feel comfortable with: I still study and pray. In addition to occasional meetings, I find consolation in fine music, literature, the arts, and in the company of up-beat and enlightened people who value my support.

To state simply that I am homosexual is too limiting: I am many things. I am honest, I am responsible, I am creative, I like people, I am a son of God, I have a fulfilling profession, I have same-sex feelings. These feelings are not the galvanizing force in my life, but they are a part, one that has to be understood and dealt with in order to make the rest work. For those who choose it, including myself, celibacy is a viable option. But for others who feel they need a partner, I see nothing morally or socially wrong with responsible and committed same-sex pairing. I do, however, feel, along with most homosexuals I know, that promiscuous, self-indulgent behavior is irresponsible, unfulfilling, and in a world of AIDS even deadly. Still I recognize that not all share this belief, and I choose not to judge the decisions another person has to make about his or her life.

There is little space in this essay to consider ecclesiastical issues raised by homosexuality, but research by John Boswell, a professor of history at Yale University,³⁸ concludes that although early Christians opposed homosexual temple prostitution and pagan idolatry identified with it, they showed little concern over one’s same-sex orientation. Curiously no writ-

38. John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), chap. 4.

ings indicate that either Jesus Christ or Joseph Smith ever rejected it. In fact on occasion, both expressed deep affection for men.³⁹

I see the message of Sodom and Gomorrah, so often used against homosexuals, as a denunciation of inhospitality, wanton behavior, and rape of either sex, not a condemnation of loving relationships. The apostle Paul without benefit of the Kinsey scale or research on possible biological origins discouraged indulgence in the "unnatural," which for homosexuals who are 4-6 on the scale would be intimacy with the opposite sex. If homosexuality turns out to be biological—both pre-natal and post-natal, as ABC News reports the "bulk of evidence now suggests"⁴⁰—then it would also be natural and to go against it would be unnatural for homosexuals.

We who are faced with homosexual feelings are not asking for a license to sin but rather for understanding and support while we work out a complex situation placed upon us for some unknown reason. Like families of heterosexual members, we too are working out our salvation, and without the role models given heterosexuals in church leaders, history, or precedent, we need and welcome responsible dialogue. And there are such dialogues. Many cities now have gay and lesbian centers with discussion groups and qualified psychologists to help homosexuals adjust in a world of heterosexual standards. A non-judgmental, non-militant organization called "Affirmation" exists in many large cities for gay and lesbian Mormons who need fellowship and support while they reconstruct their lives. A long overdue publication, *Peculiar People: Mormons and Same-Sex Orientation*, edited by Ron Schow, Wayne Schow, and Marybeth Raynes, presents Mormon lesbians and gays and their families, friends, and counselors speaking out on this issue. They address the complexity and sensitivity of the same-sex condition and offer first-hand experiences and information which can enlighten members and leaders of the church. How I would have welcomed such a volume in my early struggles.

Homosexual issues are not unique to the gay and lesbian communities. Heterosexuals often face a dilemma in trying to determine the proper attitude towards homosexuality. Many choose to ignore it, believing it has nothing to do with them. But when one discovers that one's sexual orientation or that of one's son or daughter—or spouse—is homosexual, one cannot ignore the issue. Although parents are not responsible for their child's homosexual orientation, a censoring or evasive attitude can keep the child in an emotional closet. Then when the child comes out of the closet,

39. See, for example, John 13:23; Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 295; Joseph Smith et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1972), 5:361.

40. In "ABC News 20/20," 24 Apr. 1992.

the parents often enter. Knowledge that a son or daughter is homosexual can sometimes be too painful and too threatening to share. Parents too need time and loving support, reliable information, and assistance to face these issues. Organizations such as HELP (Homosexual Education for Latter Day Parents), PLUS (People Like US), People Who Care (basically in Salt Lake City and Provo), and P-FLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) assist in mitigating initial reactions of fear and confusion. And what role is the LDS church taking today to help those of us with homosexual orientations find a more fulfilling life for ourselves?

Although sexual involvement outside of marriage is still held unacceptable and same-sex marriages are not offered, official church awareness of homosexuality and attitudes about dealing with it are changing. The frightening "inquisitional" approach of the 1960s and 1970s in which the church sanctioned entrapment, shock therapy, "cure" marriages, and/or excommunication appears to be over. (Unfortunately, this is not entirely the case yet, as the procedurally-irregular excommunication in early 1993 of a young American gay Mormon in Japan testifies.) Many contemporary church leaders are reportedly concerned about the homosexual issue and how it is to be handled.⁴¹ Increasingly local leaders are listening without judging, and some have taken it upon themselves to educate and enlighten members of their congregations. With this and perhaps increased media coverage, parents are also becoming better informed. The result is that more and more homosexual members are opening up and seeking assistance.

Although there is still no general agreement or official point of view on homosexuality (nor is there in the scientific world), the First Presidency recently issued a booklet⁴² encouraging church leaders to reach out with "love and understanding." Leaders are told to be "compassionate and encouraging," to "listen carefully," and "keep confidential the information given by the [homosexual] member." In addition leaders may encourage members to seek "professional help from qualified therapists who understand and honor gospel principles." Because of unique concerns of persons with homosexual "problems," those members may now go directly to the LDS Social Services for assistance.

LDS Social Services⁴³ has qualified people who, although heterosexual in orientation, seem aware of many of the difficulties homosexuals face. As members of the church themselves, they encourage conformity to church teachings but help troubled homosexual members determine where they are in their sexual orientation and what they want to do about it. Following

41. Bill Evans, LDS Church Media Affairs and Communications, Personal conversation, June 1992.

43. LDS Church booklet, #32250, 20 Apr. 1992.

43. Allen Gundry, LDS Social Services, Personal conversation, May 1992.

church advice,⁴⁴ they assist the member to "develop meaningful, appropriate relationships with members of both sexes." Their ultimate goal is to "help people find peace of mind and a sense of freedom."⁴⁵

Social Services staff reports that many homosexual members have successfully made important changes and now feel more positive about themselves.⁴⁶ The church booklet states that "In some cases, heterosexual feelings emerge, leading to happy, eternal marriage relationships."⁴⁷

This more positive approach is encouraging, and no doubt under the church's offer of love and assistance, many have found greater peace of mind and fulfillment. But still, in honesty and without becoming too naively optimistic, one must ask again: How deeply entrenched in homosexuality were those who changed? Did they already possess some heterosexual feelings and to what degree? What specifically did change? And most important, how lasting were the changes?

Unfortunately we cannot know the answer to many of these questions, for according to Social Services,⁴⁸ these cases are confidential and cannot be discussed. Although staff members are aware of the Kinsey continuum, they do not routinely use it or any other scale to determine where approximately their clients fit, and there is no structured research program of follow-through to discover long-term adjustments—all of which would be helpful.

The statement, "In some cases, heterosexual feelings emerge," whether intended or not, implies that in all other cases such feelings do not emerge, and of course one wonders why they do not. While in practice the church's approach may be that some homosexuals "won't change," the attitude unfortunately seems to be "but they should be able to." Thus many for whom change does not occur continue to feel guilty and unworthy.

Herein lies the main problem, as many of us who have been through the tortuous process of unsuccessfully trying to change sexual orientation view it. Church leaders seem to approach homosexuality in general as a moral issue rather than as in heterosexuality a biological condition with moral aspects sometimes needing behavioral adjustments. The church's recent booklet offers homosexual members an "invitation to come back" when many have never strayed. It treats homosexuality as an "affliction" that needs "healing" when most of us feel perfectly whole.⁴⁹

44. LDS Church booklet, #32250, 20 Apr. 1992, 2.

45. Gundry, Personal conversation.

46. Larry Washburn, LDS Social Services, Personal conversation, June 1992; see also LDS Church booklet, #32250, 20 Apr. 1992, 18.

47. LDS Church booklet, #32250, 20 Apr. 1992, 2.

48. Washburn, Personal conversation.

49. LDS Church booklet, #33250, 20 Apr. 1992, 2.

In 1974, influenced by Hooker's and others' studies on gay men,⁵⁰ the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. They had determined that homosexuality was not a sickness and therefore not in need of a cure. The standard textbook on psychiatry⁵¹ now states that many homosexuals "live emotionally stable, mature, and well-adjusted lives—indistinguishable from well-adjusted heterosexuals, except for their alternative sexual preference." Hooker says jokingly, "What other group of people have a valid affidavit affirming that they are mentally well?" (We might also add "spiritually well.")

Leaders understandably herald the success of those who have managed to shift their sexual status, but they still seem uncomfortable with those of us who have not, suggesting that such persons "choose not to change." Sidestepping recent research which might prove otherwise, they consider it a "mistaken notion" that any person is born "with a homosexual identity that cannot be changed" and insist, without discriminating, that not only for behavior but for sexual orientation "Change is possible."⁵²

Obviously bisexuals, oriented toward both sexes, have a choice of which direction they will go, but others may not. Unfortunately many bishops and other church leaders with little background in this complex area will confidently hold out a blanket offer of change in sexual orientation to all homosexual members who may have already spent years in abstinence, prayer, fasting, and reading scriptures long before they ever sought counsel. Encouragement to try even harder, if ending in renewed failure, will leave the naive and struggling member feeling unworthy. Listening to hundreds of such cases, as one does during years of meeting with support groups, has demonstrated to me that when obedient homosexual members are assured that change in sexual orientation can occur for those who sincerely try and then do everything possible and still feel no change, they lose faith in themselves, then in the promises, and ultimately in the person who promised. Many lose faith in God and in the system as a whole.

It seems that much of this sad situation could be avoided by openly recognizing the spectrum of diversity in sexual orientation at the outset and thus a similar spectrum of success and failure. It seems more honest and certainly more humane to let homosexual members know that while some are able to shift their orientation, others despite heroic efforts are not. Counsel, therapy, and personal efforts will help them discover where they fit in the spectrum, what shifts if any might be possible, and what behavioral adjustments are needed. Those who are then unable to change their

50. A. Freedman and H. Kaplan, eds., *Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry*, Vol. 2 (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1975), 1510.

51. *Ibid.*, 1517.

52. LDS Church booklet, #33250, 20 Apr. 1992, 4.

sexual status should feel welcome in the church as homosexual members—equal with those who are able to change. They should be helped to feel free from guilt, knowing they did all they could. It seems this whole issue could be summed up with, “You may not be responsible for your sexual orientation, but you are responsible for what you do with it.”

After assessing one’s sexual position, what are the options and what are the limitations? As we have seen a few homosexual (bisexual?) members reported developing sufficient heterosexual feelings to successfully marry and have children. Some, lacking heterosexual feelings, report that out of “sheer determination”—and even “fantasizing”—they are able to sustain a married life. A number have sincerely tried marriage without success. Some, unable to deal with heterosexual involvements, still remain active in church and create meaningful, productive lives for themselves. Many others, discouraged over their inability to change sexual orientation—not because they were unwilling or did not try—and out of fear or guilt, or weary of member rejection and misunderstanding, leave the flock.

Once outgoing personalities can become withdrawn and reclusive. Some find organizations that will accept them as they are. Others give up the fight and dive into a potentially destructive lifestyle. A few find stability in a same-sex partner. Some choose to end their lives. To get the remaining members to return, instead of sending “missionaries” to offer more ineffectual “cures,” as my friend suggests in his letter, why not send a message of acceptance and love?

Doors may be opening, for recently the Research Information Division of the LDS church solicited input about personal feelings and experiences from single members. If homosexuals respond, perhaps they will be heard. In southern California a group of returned missionaries with firm homosexual orientations attends various singles’ wards together. Where they once sat alone or stayed away, feeling different and isolated, they are now in company with others like themselves and feel a renewed spirit and fellowship. A fortunate few have found caring support from their bishops and church members.

A glowing example of such acceptance is ex-bishop Stan Roberts, who for years welcomed gays and lesbians into his singles’ ward in San Francisco. There they learned to accept themselves, “come out” to other ward members, and discuss their feelings without censure.⁵³ They have discovered, as many of us have, that being irreversibly homosexual is not, as some would have it, a cross to bear but a cross to wear. And we are learning to wear it with dignity and pride, knowing that in God’s plan is a place for us. As homosexual members we know that one day the church will see that

53. Roberts, “Pastoring the Farside.”

homosexuality, like heterosexuality, is innately neither evil nor righteous but depends on the individual. In an environment of love and understanding, it is possible to seek solutions together.

In physical development resistance creates strength. The painful struggle to reverse one's sexual orientation and the even more painful trial to accept it brings growth and new awareness. One comes to recognize and appreciate a God-given variety of human beings who share life's difficulties and beauties and who show concern without judgment.

The passage in Proverbs 23:7, "As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he," is often quoted to suggest that one should change what is in the heart. But does it not also mean that one should honestly search the heart and accept what one discovers there? To ignore what is basic or to try to change it for something false is to be untrue. Considering the potential of self-discovery and conversely the damage of self-denial reaffirms and expands the admonition of Shakespeare so often quoted by President David O. McKay, "To thine own self be true" and "What 'ere thou art, act well thy part."

I am not so naive as to believe my words will put a stop to prejudice or ignorance: these will continue to surface. It will take time for many people to see in homosexuality much more than mere sexual involvement. My hope is that these observations may somehow serve the small percentage of our people who are dealing with sexual feelings natural to them but different from those of their peers. Perhaps the remarks of one who has dealt with such issues will help them face trials and conflicts which the world will, out of concern but with limited understanding, put upon them.

Those of us who have been through similar struggles encourage emerging homosexuals and their families to seek informed guidance to ease them through these issues and challenging times. Perhaps they will learn more quickly than we that the journey though always perplexing does not have to be a long one. Nor does it have to be lonely. From experience many of us can affirm that there is life after the struggle and it is worthwhile. Once you discover and accept who you are, you can face others and get on with your life. Most of all we want you to know that you are not alone. Many people care, and many people understand. Life for all of its problems is good and awaits your unique contributions.

Leave of Absence

Dixie Partridge

walk out and arrive
near the lake—
any route taken
leads eventually
to this

surrounded by the body
we choose certain places
and learn to leap
without moving

cross over to pines—
blue people standing—

where at first unsure
you join them
hands limp at sides
until you know again
only emptiness
can be filled

dressed in the bodies of birds
move out in several directions
at once—mountain rock erupting

oak branches bowed down
beneath you
sunglint off water

alight with winged insects
and float in pools
until past the holographed leaves
you see the gradual black/green
of the bottom, the water's glacial weight

and you begin to translate
an early darkness

using memory
you have forgotten
you have

Watching

V. Stanley Benfell III

And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch (Mark 13:37).

I STEP OUTSIDE MY NEW YORK CITY apartment, and my eyes become observant, sharp, peeled to anything that moves. I am watching for signs of the Second Coming.

On the corner of 79th and 2d streets I see a man in a business suit. In his left hand he holds a half-empty pizza box. The two slices of pizza in the box are pepperoni. His right hand holds a third slice, half-eaten. His right leg is bent so that the sole of his shoe rests on the wall of the synagogue in back of him. The grease from the pizza drips onto his knee. His head is thrown back; he laughs uncontrollably. I can see chewed pieces of pizza in his mouth. He who has eyes to see let him see.

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold (Matt. 24:12).

I take the subway to the Village and walk down Broadway towards the NYU library, lost in thoughts about the paper I am in the midst of writing.

"I LEFT HER. I AIN'T GONNA TAKER HER SHIT! I AIN'T GONNA BE HER SLAVE ANYMORE. NOSSIR. I AIN'T GONNA BE THE SLAVE OF THAT BASTARD REAGAN AND I AIN'T GONNA BE HER SLAVE!" A man with a dirty face and ragged teddy bear yells this at me, suddenly accosting me, leaning toward my face with eyes that seem to rotate. I quickly lower my head and walk on. He confronts the person in back of me.

"I AIN'T GONNA BE HER SLAVE ANYMORE!"

I no longer hear his voice as I am already thinking of my paper again. I turn on Waverly and head toward the library.

And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give such in those days (Matt. 24:19).

One afternoon, my wife at work and I bored of my studies, I decided to call James, who along with his wife and three-year-old daughter Nancy

are friends of ours. After exchanging the usual pleasantries, I asked what he has been up to.

"Yesterday we had a wild time coming home from the restaurant."

"Why? What happened?"

"We were heading home. I was pushing Nancy in the stroller on the street side of Katie when we hear someone yell, 'Stop, thief!' I glanced in back of me just in time to be shoved against Katie by this guy carrying a woman's purse and swearing profusely. I bumped against Katie, lost my balance, and fell over, carrying the stroller with me. Nancy fell out, scraped her head, and started crying. Up ahead the cops had caught up with this guy, rammed his head onto the wall, and were swearing loudly at him, cuffing him and so on. Katie picked Nancy up, wiped the blood from her forehead, and tried to shield her from the scene. Once we got ourselves together, we retreated and took a different way home. We were worried about Nancy, but she seemed fine once the pain stopped. By the end of the day she was laughing and playing, but then at about three this morning she woke up screaming."

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God (Rev. 15:1).

My wife and I are running late for church, which starts at 8:30 a.m.—a beastly hour everyone admits, but with four wards and a branch meeting in the same building, what can you do? We have stepped off the bus and are hurrying towards the door when a thin black man with a vaguely puzzled yet knowing look stops us.

"Sir, ma'am. I'm sorry to stop you like this, really. It's just that I've had it. Sir, ma'am—you look great, very elegant. No one will give me any money, but you see I can't take it anymore. I've got to get the drugs out of my system. All I need is a dollar fifteen for a token so I can go to the detox center. I'm not bad. I don't steal. I just ask for a dollar fifteen. You look so nice. Can't you give me a dollar fifteen?"

I, fumbling in my pocket, come up with a token. "Well, I've got an actual token," I say and hand it to him.

He grabs it in his fist and raises it above his head. "My man!" he says to no one in particular, then turns quickly around and runs toward the Lincoln Center subway stop.

I involuntarily think, "I wonder what he really wants a dollar fifteen for."

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect (Matt. 24:24).

A few weeks ago, since I was spending the day in the public library, I met my wife for lunch. We went to a small diner on 51st Street and had ordered before I noticed a group of loud businessmen to our left. One, particularly handsome—blond hair, tanned, muscular, and well dressed—was talking loudly, and most of the others egged him on, laughing hard at what he said. Only one man did not seem part of the group; rather than laughing he slowly shook his head, his eyes splayed open in disbelief.

"Let me get this straight," he asked, "you want to find a cure for AIDS but then maintain control over it so that you can dispense it, or rather *not* dispense it to certain people?"

"Absolutely."

The other man looked at him distrustfully and then shook his head again. "You're not serious."

"Of course I am," the handsome man protested, his teeth flashing. "If I possessed the cure I would only give it to the innocent ones."

"And who—according to you—are the innocent ones?"

"Oh, you know—kids, those who acquire it through blood transfusions, those types."

"So the others would not receive the cure because they deserve the disease?"

"Naturally. Now in some instances, it may be difficult to decide; some heterosexuals may not deserve—hell, most probably don't. How to distinguish? That's something that remains to be worked out." Some of the men in the group laughed.

"You're unbelievable."

"What? I don't understand," the handsome man said. Was he serious? He kept protesting his earnestness, but there was a glint in his eye, his face showed the hint of a grin. It was hard to tell.

Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you (Matt. 21:31).

The next Sunday our elder's quorum president asked for a volunteer to go with Dave, a member of the bishopric, to take the sacrament to Bob, an AIDS patient in the ward. The ensuing silence was embarrassing, and even though I had to correct some exams, I raised my hand from pure shame.

On the subway Dave filled me in on how badly Bob had deteriorated over the last few weeks, but I was still unprepared for the sight of his pale, brittle body, his scratchy eye, and nervous hiccups that tore through the length of his body. Dave later told me that Bob had had the hiccups for two months.

Dave introduced me. "How are you?" I asked. (Stupid question—how does he look?) He murmured an "okay," but I looked at Dave awkwardly. Dave, who had known Bob for some time, was much more adept at this than I, probably because he thought of Bob, not of himself or his own horror. Dave told him about church, the people who wanted to say hello, the message the bishop delivered in sacrament meeting. Bob smiled, holding Dave's hand.

We blessed the sacrament, and when Bob took it, his eyes, which had earlier looked so hopeless, sprung to life. But that exertion seemed to tire him, and attempting to smile, he asked us to let him rest.

"Is there anything we can do for you?" I asked. (Another stupid question.)

"No—thank you," he replied, still with the slight smile. "I have sinned and now am paying for it." His eyes seemed moist when he said this, but were they moist when we came in? "All I hope for is to die and for God to be merciful."

And so we left, retreated into the unmerciful city, where we wait to pay for our own sins.

Take yea heed and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch (Mark 13:33-34).

Leslie and I are on our way out the door. We are meeting Steve and Graceanne for a movie and are running late. As we descend the stairs, Leslie says, "We need to stop by the bank before we go."

"Why? We have \$20 don't we? We can go after the movie."

"Well—don't be mad—but we only have \$10. I spent the other ten. I bought someone dinner and forgot to go get some more money later."

"You bought someone dinner? What do you mean?"

"Well, I was walking back from the cleaners and this homeless woman came up to me and asked if I would buy her dinner. I've always promised myself that if someone asked me for food rather than money I would comply. So I did. Don't be mad."

"I'm not mad you bought her dinner, but \$10?"

"Well, we were right next to that restaurant I like, and she wanted spaghetti and meatballs, and so I just went in and ordered it take out for her, paid, and then left. Don't be mad. I probably shouldn't have spent so much money, but it was something I wanted to do and it felt right so I did it."

"I'm not mad," I insisted again as, now on the street, we turned south towards the bank. But I felt the frustrated anger rise in my voice against my will, and at that moment I despised my helpless selfishness.

Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left (Matt. 24:40).

Later as we were in a cab stopped for a red light, two teenagers in a truck pulled up alongside us, lowered their windows, and proceeded to beat the top of the cab with a baseball bat, all the while swearing and threatening.

We had been to the movie in mid-town and had decided to head down to the Village to see Steve's new apartment and so had hailed a cab and shot down Second Avenue. Relegated to the front seat, I had turned back to carry on a conversation that Steve and I had begun concerning some obscure academic issue. The cab driver had seemed new to the city, asking the best way to Thompson Street in a bare, broken English.

Then, confused by the sudden violence, he had lowered his window to ask: "What I do? What I do?"

The light by this time has turned green. "Just drive. Don't ask questions. Drive."

"But what I do?"

"Drive. Please, please drive."

He pulls away and we see the truck of teenagers clumsily attempt to follow us. Both teenagers are leaning out of the truck windows, shouting obscenities, threats, ethnic slurs. They had seemed like two nice, middle-class, white jocks from New Jersey who had come into the city to beat up some gay people but had decided that immigrant cab drivers were also an acceptable target.

"What I do?" the driver questions me.

"You're evidently driving on *their* road," I replied.

"What? What I do?"

"Nothing. They're crazy."

"Yes. Crazy."

Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left (Matt. 24:41).

On the first day of spring, when Washington Square was alive with relaxed students basking in the sun, street performers, and budding flowers, an elderly driver went a little insane and drove her car at 60 miles per hour through the eastern end of the park. She could not maintain control and careened from side to side, killing students on the benches that lined the path she had invaded. Her car finally came to a forced stop when it smashed into the huge stone base of the statue of Garibaldi. The car was totaled, fourteen students killed, many more injured. The driver limped out of the wrecked car, unharmed.

Watch ye therefore: for ye know now when the master of the house cometh, at eleven, or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping (Mark 13:35-36).

One Sunday morning our elders quorum president Martin told us what had happened to him and his wife the preceding evening.

Lisa and Martin have been to the movies in the East Village and are walking home. As they turn a corner, a woman comes running toward them, topless and screaming. Martin's first reaction is to step back, but Lisa grabs his arm and, looking at the woman, says, "Martin, we have to help her."

"How?" Martin asks.

The topless woman is now in the street, standing still. Lisa approaches her. "Do you need help?" she asks.

"Yes," the woman answers emphatically but not looking at her. Lisa takes her arm and leads her toward the sidewalk, makes her sit down. A crowd of curious onlookers, most of them male, have gathered and try to get a look at the woman. Martin blocks their view, his back to Lisa and the woman.

"Where's your shirt?" Lisa asks. They find it, and the woman puts it on, even though it is soaked. It is a cool evening, and the woman begins to tremble. Lisa puts her arms around her, holding her to keep her warm. Martin has stepped into a nearby movie theater and asks that they call an ambulance. He returns and waits. Ambulances can take forever.

"What religion are you," the woman suddenly asks Lisa.

"Mormon."

"I'm Catholic. Would you say a prayer?"

"Yes, I would like to do that." Lisa prays, still embracing the woman, who by now has stopped trembling. Lisa bows her head and Martin sees her lips move.

"Where's the damn ambulance?" Martin asks himself, looking at his watch. Forty minutes have gone by.

Lisa begins to hum the tune of a hymn softly. The woman becomes drowsy. The crowd of onlookers has dispersed. Martin, Lisa, and the woman wait. Finally the ambulance rounds the corner, and Mark flags it down looking at his watch. One hour has passed.

The paramedics bring out a stretcher, ask the woman and Lisa questions, and load the woman into the back of the ambulance. Lisa is holding her hand. The woman, by now very tired, looks up into Lisa's face. "Thank you. Pray for me."

"I will," Lisa answers. The woman smiles as the doors close. The driver gets in, and the ambulance pulls away. Martin and Lisa watch as the ambulance turns uptown and becomes lost in the late-night traffic.

I once talked to a continental pastor who had seen Hitler, and had, by all human standards, good cause to hate him. "What did he look like?" I asked. "Like all men," he replied. "That is, like Christ" (C. S. Lewis, Letters to Malcolm).

It is about 11:00 on a Saturday night, and I am trying to put together my gospel doctrine lesson for the next morning on Matthew 24 and 25, two of my least favorite chapters in the New Testament. I am baffled, frustrated. I begin to talk to myself.

—I don't understand the emphasis on the Second Coming. Why should we watch? Why did you tell your disciples to watch when the coming was obviously far off? Or Joseph Smith? The Saints were convinced that you would come soon. For all we know your coming may be hundreds or thousands of years off.

—True. And yet, even if this is so, you should still watch.

—Why? And another thing: the signs of your coming—wars, rumors of wars, all the cryptic happenings in Revelation—they could apply to any time. When have there not been wars? Those poor Christians who first read John's vision thought it referred to their own times. As did medieval Christians, those during the Thirty Years War, and Saints ever since the Restoration. How can we watch when we don't know what we're watching for? when we see signs constantly, which is the same as not seeing any at all?

—I know. But you're missing the point. The value lies not in *my* coming but in *your* watching.

—I don't understand. How can my looking for the number of the beast have any value?

—You watch for the wrong things. The signs are always there, it is true. The world does not change in this; it is continually in need of its savior. You must watch for me in another way.

—What other way?

—Think about the end of my discourse that you're studying right now. I tell you how to watch.

—You do? You speak only of the last judgment; you strike fear into me which makes me want to watch but doesn't tell me *how*.

—Remember what I say to the blessed, those who will have watched:

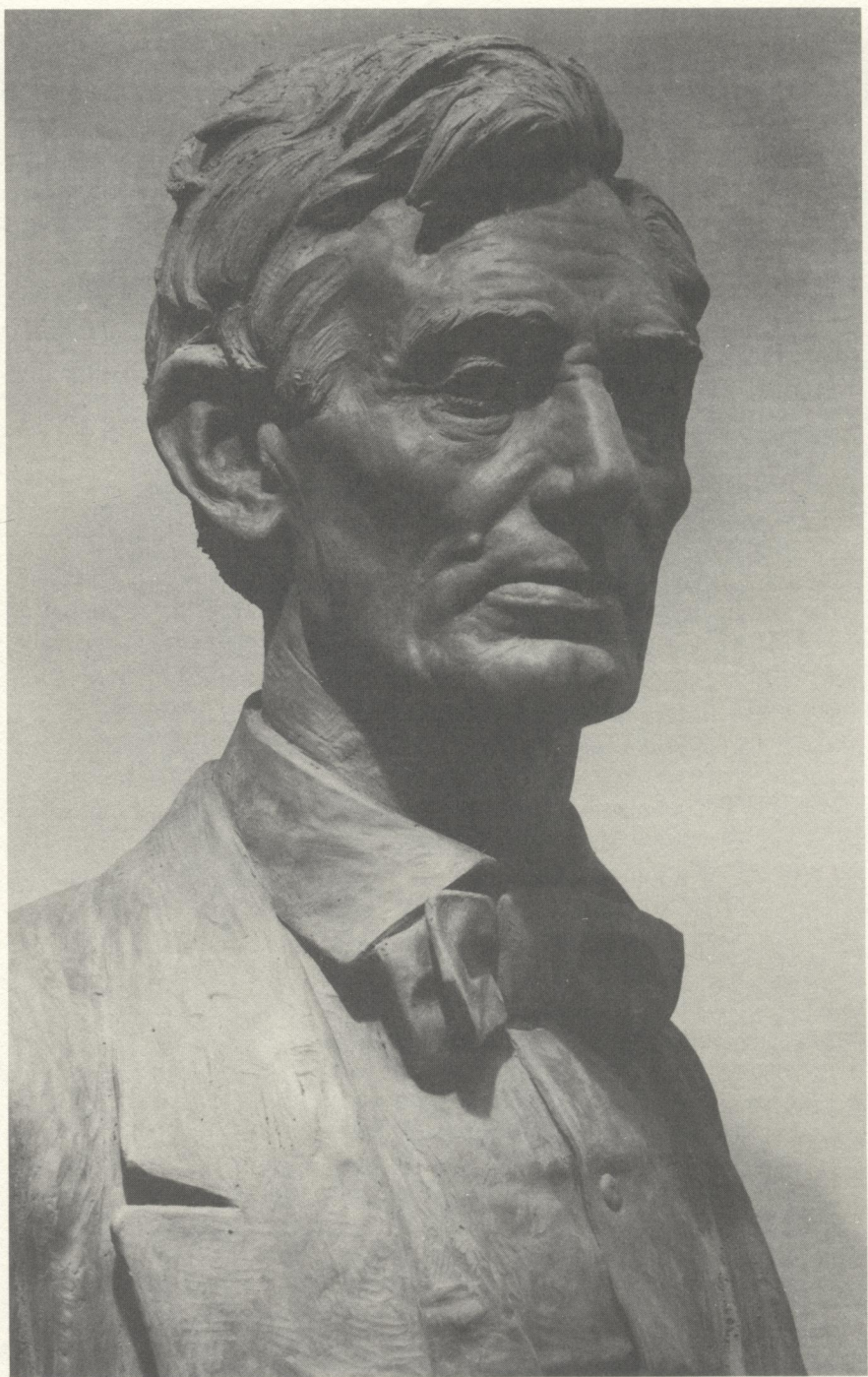
Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me.

And they become astonished, because of course they don't remember doing so.

—But what will be my response?

Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Don't you see? They watched for me, they saw me in those around them. I have come again every time a new child has come into the world. *My* light lights each one. They are the signs you should watch for. Watch for me and you will find me. My coming is this—when all of you see me in each other, I will already have come.



Lancashire Saint Dies

Rita Bowles

John Henry Butters, well known millionaire and philanthropist, died today at the age of 84. Born in Manchester, England, in 1908, an emigrant to the Salt Lake Valley in 1926 where he opened his first meatpacking plant in 1938.

He wanders the back alleys of his childhood
Mossed and decaying bricks
Tower skyward to imprison him
Cobbles rise to thwart his escape
Keep him forever in his place of poverty,
Of desperation, of anxiety
The dogs find more food than he does
He dodges the canine excrement
Picking up speed on his last spindly legs
He will die here
In this labyrinth of stone and damp
Hearing his mother call his name
In Salford dialect
Oblivious to the carpeted hospital room
Colostomy bag, catheter, I.V.
The tray of manna at his bedside
Baby peas in beef gravy, mash
His breath catches
He stumbles on an uneven flagstone
Sprawls sideways against a loose drainpipe
Urine, rust, and stale ale invade his nostrils
Water drips in metered cadence against his arm
He must reach home, he must reach home
There he will be safe
Hungry still, but safe
A dog comes to lick the drips
Salted by his sweating body
Mum's voice sounds closer now
Soon she will find him
In the Pendleton alley he never left

Apologetic and Critical Assumptions about Book of Mormon Historicity

Brent Lee Metcalfe

The thesis of inspiration may not be invoked to guarantee historicity, for a divinely inspired story is not necessarily history.

—Raymond E. Brown¹

[T]he laws of creative interpretation by which we analyze material from the first and second Christian centuries operate and are significantly elucidated by works like the Book of Mormon ...

—Krister Stendahl²

FOR TRADITION-MINDED MEMBERS of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints the Book of Mormon's historicity is a given: Book of Mormon events actually occurred and its ancient participants existed in ancient history. Apologetics for this stance, such as those espoused by the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), the Department of Religious Education at Brigham Young University, and the LDS Church Educational System, occasionally employ limited critical perspectives but only to promote traditionalist assumptions of historicity.³

1. *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1977), 33-34.

2. *Meanings: The Bible as Document and as Guide* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 99.

3. Former BYU dean of religious education Robert J. Matthews articulated this position

One non-LDS biblical scholar has noted that for such interpreters "truth and historicity are so much identified with each other that [they are] led to conclude: *if it is true* (according to my faith), *it is historical*."⁴ In fact, writes Robert L. Millet, BYU dean of religious education, "the authenticity of an event is inextricably tied to its historicity; one's subjective testimony of a religious phenomenon is directly related to an objective and discernible occasion."⁵ As such, "[t]he Book of Mormon is a guide to understanding persons and events in antiquity."⁶ What I term "traditionalism" is distinguished, in short, by belief that the Book of Mormon is only *true* if the personalities and events it describes were objectively *real*.⁷

in response to "[s]ome [who] have said that the Book of Mormon, the Bible, and the Pearl of Great Price are religious truths but not historical truths." According to Matthews, "That is actually a thinly veiled expression of unbelief. The reader of the Book of Mormon is forced to decide: either Joseph Smith was a fraud who has now been exposed through his citing of biblical passages that have been disproved by scientific investigation, or Joseph Smith was a prophet who translated an ancient historical, doctrinal, religious record—a new witness for Jesus Christ. There is no middle ground to this matter without compromise and a loss of truth" (Robert J. Matthews, "What the Book of Mormon Tells Us about the Bible," in *Doctrines of the Book of Mormon: The 1991 Sperry Symposium*, eds. Bruce A. Van Orden and Brent L. Top [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992], 107)."

As a contemporary LDS official passionately echoed: "I would rather lay down my life this instant than deny that Nephi, King Benjamin, Alma, Ammon, Moroni, Mormon, and the Brother of Jared were prophets of God" (Vaughn J. Featherstone, "The Last Drop of the Chalice," in *Brigham Young University 1985-86 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* [Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, University Publications, 1986], 20). For some apologists a great deal hinges on Book of Mormon historicity. Noel B. Reynolds, BYU political scientist, once argued that the ancient historicity of the Book of Mormon would be empirical proof for the existence of God ("Introduction," in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, ed. Noel B. Reynolds [Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1982], 3).

4. Daniel Patte, *What is Structural Exegesis?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 7.

5. "Biblical Criticism and the Four Gospels: A Critical Look," in *To be Learned is Good if . . .: A Response by Mormon Educators to Controversial Questions*, ed. Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 191.

6. Robert L. Millet, "Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and the Nature of God," in *To be Learned is Good if . . .*, 61; cf. Stephen D. Ricks, Review of *Lehi in the Desert, The World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites*, by Hugh W. Nibley, in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, ed. Daniel C. Peterson (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1990), 2:139-40.

7. New Mormon Historians have been reprimanded by some apologists for being objectivists (see D. Michael Quinn, "Editor's Introduction," in *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past*, ed. D. Michael Quinn [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992], vii-xx; and the essays in George D. Smith, ed., *Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992]). While I personally know of no New Mormon Historian who has ever suggested that Mormons must endorse his or her interpretation of history as true, I cannot say the same for some of their traditionalist critics. BYU political scientist Louis Midgley, arguing from the purview of philosophical hermeneutics, has asserted: "[t]o be a Latter-day Saint is to believe, among other things,

As one Mormon traditionalist has explained, "Without the historical component, the teachings and core message lose their divine warrant as God's revelation and they are also rendered doubtful"; as a result "the Restoration message is true if—and only if—the Book of Mormon is an authentic ancient history."⁸ Apologists⁹ adamantly defend these assumptions.

For critical approaches, historicity is not a barometer of religious merit. Judgments about historical matters can be separated from judgments about spiritual worth. The religious significance of scripture critically read may vary from a traditionalist reading, but it can nonetheless convey spiritual value as many devout religious critical scholars will attest. This is not to say that historicity is of no concern to critical approaches. On the contrary, the question of historicity is an intrinsic element of any historical-critical study. But the approach of scripture

that the Book of Mormon is true, that there once was a Lehi who made a covenant with God and was led out of Jerusalem" ("The Challenge of Historical Consciousness: Mormon History and the Encounter with Secular Modernity," in *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley*, eds. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990], 2:526; introductions to philosophical hermeneutics are available in David Couzens Hoy, *The Critical Circle: Literature, History, and Philosophical Hermeneutics* [Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978]; Paul Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics," "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation," "Philosophical Hermeneutics and Biblical Hermeneutics," in *Exegesis: Problems of Method and Exercises in Reading (Genesis 22 and Luke 15)*, trans. Donald G. Miller [Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1978], 265-339). Granted, these interpretations may be historically factual or objective, but with what assumptions and based on what criteria can such objectivist claims be proffered? Midgley does not clarify how he would reconcile his absolutist faith assumptions with a hermeneutic of testimony which acknowledges limitations (see Paul Ricoeur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Lewis S. Mudge [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980], 119-54). Many hermeneutical apologists such as Midgley adopt the positivism they so readily condemn. They repudiate the possibility of historical objectivity in an empirical sense but insist on the historical objectivity of early Mormonism's truth claims in a religious or confessional sense.

A frustration for critical scholars seeking a dialogue with hermeneutical apologists is the failure of the latter to offer alternative scriptural exegesis and historical studies. For discussions to progress, hermeneutists need to produce samples of their own history and exegesis for critique. In a BYU master's thesis, Alan Goff ("A Hermeneutic of Sacred Texts: Historicism, Positivism, and the Bible and Book of Mormon," 1989) offered an attempt at a Book of Mormon hermeneutical-apologetic but achieved mixed results. His "structuralist" analysis, for instance, redefined structuralism (122-33; cf. Patte, *What Is Structural Exegesis?; Structural Exegesis for New Testament Critics* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990]; Daniel Patte and Aline Patte, *Structural Exegesis: From Theory to Practice* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978]). Goff alerts readers that his interpretation is "a[t] best a half-hearted, and probably less than a quarter-hearted, attempt at a vulgarized structuralist criticism combined with a canonical approach" (186), but one is left wondering exactly what he meant by this.

8. Louis Midgley, "Faith and History," in *To be Learned is Good if . . .*, 220, 224.

9. I do not consider "apologists" and "scholars" mutually exclusive; while a scholar may be an apologist, all apologists are not scholars.

critics looks beyond claims of tradition to place historical authority in disclosures of literary and historical context. In this way the document itself becomes the source of authority for interpretation. Both apologetic and critical scholars are led by prior assumptions, but they differ fundamentally. Apologists assume that the Book of Mormon is historical and from this they develop methods to sustain authenticity. The critical scholar's interpretation depends not on a proposition made by a text or tradition but on a methodology for exploring the broader context which structures and authorizes such claims. Ideally, within the critical mode, methods lead to conclusions instead of conclusions leading to methods.

In what follows I explore some underlying apologetic and critical assumptions about Book of Mormon historicity, and their interpretive implications. My essay is thus thematically broad while purposely limited in the extent of its treatment of these complex issues.

METHODOLOGY AND APOLOGETIC ASSUMPTIONS

A key project for apologists is "show[ing] that features of the [Book of Mormon] . . . accurately reflect the world from which it claims to derive in ways that could not have been known to [Joseph Smith]." ¹⁰ This method rests on the logical fallacy of negative proof, ¹¹ setting up what amounts to an impossible horizon of evidence. For how can we prove what was not knowable or anticipated in Joseph Smith's environment? But if proving a thesis within such a framework is virtually impossible, undermining it is comparatively easy, requiring only one contemporary example of the phenomenon in question.

For example, Joseph Smith's claim that the Book of Mormon was engraved on gold plates illustrates the difficulties associated with this approach. Apologists have asserted that Smith and contemporaries could not have known that some ancient peoples engraved on metallic plates. ¹²

10. Ricks, Review of *Lehi in the Desert*, 135.

11. See David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 47-48; Brent Lee Metcalfe, "Exegetical and Revelatory Implications of 'Abrahamic' Geocentricity," response to "'And I Saw the Stars': the Book of Abraham and Ancient Astronomy," by William J. Hamblin, Daniel C. Peterson, and John Gee, delivered at the 1991 Sunstone Symposium.

12. See Paul R. Cheesman, "Ancient Writing in the Americas," *Brigham Young University Studies* 13 (Autumn 1972): 80ff; *The World of the Book of Mormon* (Bountiful, UT: Horizon Publishers, 1984), 143-44; *Ancient Writing on Metal Plates: Archaeological Findings Support Mormon Claims* (Bountiful, UT: Horizon Publishers, 1985), 11-12; C. Wilfred Griggs, "The Book of Mormon as an Ancient Book," in *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins*, 77, 81; Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert, the World of the Jaredites, There Were Jaredites*, eds. John W. Welch, Darrell L. Matthews, and Stephen R. Callister (*The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 5, the Book of Mormon*) (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and

But even a cursory survey of early nineteenth-century literature disproves such a claim.

Translated into English by Thomas C. Upham, *Jahn's Biblical Archaeology* was published in Andover, Massachusetts, in 1823, five years before Smith began dictating the Book of Mormon. According to Jahn, "[t]ables of brass" were preferred by ancient scribes "for those inscriptions, which were designed to last the longest."¹³ Similarly the brass plates procured from Book of Mormon villain Laban were intended to survive future generations (see 1 Ne. 3:3, 12; 5:10-19; Alma 37:3-5). Based on *Josephus* and *Pliny*, Jahn speculated that ancient "Hebrews went so far as to write their sacred books in gold."¹⁴ This echoes Nephi's injunction that religious rather than secular history should be recorded on plates presumably made of gold (see 1 Ne. 6:3; 9:2-4; 10:4; 19:3; 2 Ne. 4:14-15; 5:30-33; Jacob 1:1-2; W of M 1:4). The manner in which these ancient tablets were joined, Jahn continued, was "by rings at the back, through which a rod was passed to carry them by,"¹⁵ a description that compares to Smith's explanation that the Book of Mormon plates were "bound together in a volume, as the leaves of a book with three rings running through the whole."¹⁶ Whether Smith knew of Jahn's publication, the idea that ancients inscribed on metal plates was available in Smith's culture.¹⁷

FARMS, 1988; originally published 1948-57), 107; *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (*The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 6, the Book of Mormon*) (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988; originally published in 1957), 21-29; *Since Cumorah*, ed. John W. Welch (*The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 7, the Book of Mormon*) (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988; originally published 1964-67), 56-57, 220-21; *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (*The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 8, the Book of Mormon*) (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989; originally published 1953-88), 75-76, 245, 385; Mark E. Petersen, *Those Gold Plates!* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), 61; Kirk Holland Vestal and Arthur Wallace, *The Firm Foundation of Mormonism* (Los Angeles: LL Company, 1981), 106.

13. Johann Jahn, *Jahn's Biblical Archaeology—Translated from the Latin, with Additions and Corrections*, trans. and ed. Thomas C. Upham (Andover, MA: Flagg and Gould, 1823), 93-94.

14. *Ibid.*, 95.

15. *Ibid.*, 96.

16. *Times and Seasons* 3 (1 Mar. 1842): 707.

17. In considering nineteenth-century analogues to Book of Mormon warfare, FARMS founding president John W. Welch has acknowledged that Jahn's work preceded the Book of Mormon dictation but added: the "simple existence of [Jahn's] book . . . does not imply that Joseph Smith knew anything about it" ("Why Study Warfare in the Book of Mormon?" in *Warfare in the Book of Mormon*, eds. Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990], 22n3). Welch may be unaware that paraphrased excerpts from *Jahn's Biblical Archaeology* appeared in early Book of Mormon apologetics (*Evening and Morning Star* 1 [Jan. 1833]: 8), and while under Joseph Smith's editorial direction the *Times and Seasons* (3 [1 Sept. 1842]: 908-909) cited Jahn's volume to buttress

Another methodological problem follows from the assumption that the Book of Mormon is ancient: strategically-placed attention and inattention to evidence. For instance, Book of Mormon geographers currently argue that the Lehighite/Jaredite promised land was in Mesoamerica. A representative example comes from emeritus BYU anthropologist John L. Sorenson.¹⁸ He envisions the Book of Mormon landscape encompassing only a few hundred miles in Central America, including portions of present-day Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, and El Salvador with the Isthmus of Tehuantepec as the Book of Mormon "narrow neck of land." Sorenson and others must maintain a Mesoamerican geographical model in the face of evidence that Joseph Smith and contemporaries believed the Book of Mormon pertained to large stretches of North, Central, and South America and to all native American peoples.¹⁹

Attempting to accommodate Sorenson's model with the history of Book of Mormon interpretation, David A. Palmer has argued that the Nephite hill Cumorah/Jaredite hill Ramah is located in Mexico, contrary to prevalent Mormon belief that the drumlin in New York state is the Hill Cumorah. To mitigate this problem, Palmer alleges that "Oliver Cowdery . . . may have been the one to first name the New York hill 'Cumorah'" in

Smith's description of the Book of Mormon gold plates.

Similarly, BYU religion professor Keith H. Meservy's proposal that twentieth-century discoveries of ancient wooden writing boards filled with wax "confirm the correctness of Joseph Smith's interpretation [of Ezekiel 37:21-22] in a way impossible in 1830" (Meservy, "Ezekiel's 'Sticks,'" *Ensign* 7 [Sept. 1977]: 24; cf. 27) is also mitigated by Jahn. He opined that some biblical terms, including "sticks" in Ezekiel 37:16, alluded to wooden inscription tables occasionally coated in wax (*Jahn's Biblical Archaeology*, 93).

18. *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1985).

19. See Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Joseph Smith, the Hill Cumorah, and Book of Mormon Geography: A Historical Study, 1823-1844," delivered as the 1989 Mormon History Association Meeting; Brent Lee Metcalfe, "A Documentary Analysis of the Zelph Episode," delivered at the 1989 Sunstone Symposium; Dan Vogel, "The New Theory of Book of Mormon Geography: A Preliminary Examination," privately circulated, 1985. Paradoxically, Sorenson's theory presupposes that linguistics, ethnology, zoology, botany, etc., do not support the traditional notion that Book of Mormon lands comprised North, Central, and South America. Sorenson may aptly be identified as a neo-traditional apologist. He has insisted that "either the Book of Mormon promised land was in some portion of Mesoamerica or it was nowhere" (in Gary James Bergera and Ronald Priddis, *Brigham Young University: A House of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985], 85). Despite the popularity of their theories, Book of Mormon geographers have been unable to deliver a single archaeological dig that can be verified by reputable Mesoamericanists as ruins of an ancient Near Eastern culture, much less of Lehighites and Jaredites (see Deanne G. Matheny, "Does the Shoe Fit? A Critique of the Limited Tehuantepec Geography," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, ed. Brent Lee Metcalfe [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993], 269-328; Glenna Nielsen, "The Material Culture of the Book of Mormon," delivered as the May 1992 Sunstone Book of Mormon Lecture).

an 1835 letter.²⁰ BYU professor of history William J. Hamblin turns Pal-

20. In *Search of Cumorah: New Evidences for the Book of Mormon from Ancient Mexico* (Bountiful, UT: Horizon Publishers, 1981), 20, 26, emphasis added; *Messenger and Advocate* 1 [July 1835]: 158-59. This example is symptomatic of the penchant among some traditionalist and critical scholars of Mormon scripture to exaggerate evidentiary conclusions by claiming to have discovered the first appearance of some historical tidbit. For instance, one scholar has asserted that George Reynolds's identification of the brother of Jared as Mahonri Moriancumer in May 1892 constitutes "[o]ur earliest source for the name" (Kent P. Jackson, "'Never Have I Showed Myself unto Man': A Suggestion for Understanding Ether 3:15a," *Brigham Young University Studies* 30 [Summer 1990]: 75n2; see George Reynolds, "The Jaredites," *Juvenile Instructor* 27 [1 May 1892]: 282[-84]; cf. *Improvement Era* 8 [July 1905]: 704-705). Important as Reynolds's contribution may be, his remarks were preceded by a number of other references (*Juvenile Instructor* 13 [1 Dec. 1878]: 272-73; "History of Brigham Young," 3 Mar. 1874, 763, archives, historical department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah [hereafter LDS archives]). Besides Oliver Cowdery noted in 1835 that "[i]t is said, and I believe the account, that the Lord showed the brother of Jared (Moriancumer) all things which were to transpire from that day to the end of the earth, as well as those which had taken place" (*Messenger and Advocate* 1 [Apr. 1835]: 112, parentheses originally brackets; cf. *Times and Seasons* 2 [1 Apr. 1841]: 362). Thus "[o]ur earliest source for the name" of Jared's sibling occurs not in 1892 but in 1835, if not earlier.

Other scholars are not immune to such inaccuracies. Following RLDS historian Richard P. Howard (*Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development* [Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1969], 207-209; "Latter Day Saint Scripture and the Doctrine of Propositional Revelation," *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought, and Action* 1 [June 1971]: 216), several researchers have observed that the earliest use of the term "Urim and Thummim" as a synonym for divinatory spectacles like those used by Joseph Smith in producing the Book of Mormon appeared in a W. W. Phelps's editorial in January 1833 (*Evening and Morning Star* 1 [Jan. 1833]: 8; see Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984], 222n60; Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith: A Historical and Biographical Commentary of the Doctrine and Covenants* [Provo, UT: Seventy's Mission Bookstore, 1981], 122-23; James E. Lancaster, "The Method and Translation of the Book of Mormon," *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 3 [1983]: 59; Blake T. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as an Expansion of an Ancient Source," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20 [Spring 1987]: 70; Stephen D. Ricks, "Joseph Smith's Means and Methods of Translating the Book of Mormon," *Paper* [WRR-86], reproduction of *Preliminary Report* [RIC-84] [Provo, UT: FARMS, 1986], 2; Robert F. Smith, "Translation of Languages," privately circulated, June 1980, 5; Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality?* [Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1987], 28; Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steve Walker, "Joseph Smith: 'The Gift of Seeing,'" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 [Summer 1982]: 53). But at least as early as July 1832 Phelps had already remarked that the exiled Hebrews "were even to do without the Teraphim, (Urim and Thum[m]im, perhaps) or sacred spectacles or declarers" (*Evening and Morning Star* 1 [July 1832]: 2, parentheses originally brackets).

Some Book of Mormon students have also maintained that the first use of the term "Christ" in the Book of Mormon appears in the context of Jacob's vision of an angel in 2 Nephi 10:3 (see references in Brent Lee Metcalf, "The Priority of Mosiah: A Prelude to Book of Mormon Exegesis," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, 429.) However, the complete name-title "Jesus Christ" was initially dictated by Joseph Smith in 1 Nephi 12:18 according to the Original Manuscript, the Printer's Manuscript, and the 1830 edition of the Book of

mer's speculation into the emphatic declaration that "the *earliest explicit* correlation of the hill in New York . . . and the Hill Cumorah mentioned in the Book of Mormon comes not from Joseph Smith, but Oliver Cowdery" in 1835.²¹ The desired effect of such statements is to reduce traditional geographical identification to personal opinion instead of authoritative or inspired proclamation. Palmer's and Hamblin's contention, however, is negated by the fact that the recipient of Cowdery's letter, W. W. Phelps, had editorialized eighteen months earlier in 1833 as if it were common knowledge that "the [Book of Mormon] plates came forth from the hill Cumorah, which is in the county of Ontario, and State of New-York, by the power of God."²²

Sorenson's and Palmer's theories contradict Joseph Smith's own pronouncements on the Book of Mormon. Their theory of limited geography leaves only a smattering of contemporary native Americans who would qualify as Semitic stock. However, when W. W. Phelps declared in 1833 that the "wonderful conjecture, which left a blank as to the origin, or forefathers of the American Indians, was done away by the book of Mormon,"²³ he echoed Joseph Smith's sentiments. As Phelps was publishing, the Mormon prophet wrote to a Rochester, New York, newspaper describing the Book of Mormon as "a record of the forefathers of our western Tribes of Indians." The book instructs, Smith elaborated, "that our western tribes of Indians are des[c]endants from that Joseph that was sold into Egypt, and that the land of America is a promised land unto them, and unto it all the tribes of Israel will come."²⁴ Smith subsequently avowed that the letter had been

Mormon. The words "Jesus Christ" were later changed to "Mosiah" in the Printer's (emended) Manuscript and eventually to "the Messiah" in the 1837 edition of the Book of Mormon (see Metcalfe, "The Priority of Mosiah," 427-33).

To avoid questions of credibility such claims generate, researchers should resist assertions regarding the earliest occurrence of a given historical detail. This is not to say that we cannot speak meaningfully about anachronism; only that scholars should meticulously scan early Mormon literature before making too much of these early references.

21. "Basic Methodological Problems with the Anti-Mormon Approach to the Geography and Archaeology of the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2 (Spring 1993): 172, emphasis added. Hamblin's wording "earliest explicit" is an addition to a previous version of his essay published by FARMS under the same title (*Paper* [HAM-93] [Provo, UT: FARMS, 1993], 9). My indication to Hamblin (Metcalfe to Hamblin, 18 Apr. 1993) that in 1834 Wilford Woodruff attributed to Joseph Smith the phrase "known from the hill Camorah [sic] <or east sea> to the Rocky mountains" evidently persuaded him that Smith at least *implicitly* made the correlation before Cowdery. But Hamblin's revised remark is as problematic as his first (see W. W. Phelps's quote below).

22. *Evening and Morning Star* 1 (Jan. 1833): 8.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Smith to N. C. Saxton, 4 Jan. 1833, in Dean C. Jessee, comp. and ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 273.

written "by the commandment of God."²⁵ It is unclear how Book of Mormon geographers discriminate between Smith's inspired text and his inspired interpretations.

A Mesoamerican geography not only requires selective inattention to Joseph Smith but evasion of certain claims of the book itself. Sorenson urges rigid attention to what the book says about travel²⁶ but dismisses other assertions as problematic. For example, he sometimes discounts what the Book of Mormon says about native fauna. Aware that evidence for the existence of many of the book's animals in ancient Mesoamerica is absent, he renames problematic species, explaining, "In these cases we have to find another way to read the text in order to make sense of it."²⁷ He does not grant the same flexibility in interpreting geography even though such latitude seems warranted by the narrative.

A corollary of this interpretive rigidity is inconsistent attention to details about travel. On one hand Sorenson insists that "[t]he crucial information for determining [Book of Mormon geographical] dimensions is how long it took people to get from one place to another."²⁸ Yet in the sole Book of Mormon passage where specific points of departure (Jerusalem) and arrival (the Red Sea) are identifiable with any degree of certainty (1 Ne. 2:4-7), the length of the journey (three days) seems to depend on a literary motif from Exodus.²⁹ Given this dependence, one

25. Smith to N. C. Saxton, 12 Feb. 1833, in *ibid.*, 275.

26. Sorenson, 5ff.

27. Sorenson, 294. In Sorenson's opinion Book of Mormon "cows" were more likely deer, brockets, or bison; "goats" were either brockets or deer; and "horses" could have been deer, tapirs, or horses (*equus* sp.). As a result the Nephite "cow," "goat," and "horse" may all have been deer (299). William J. Hamblin and A. Brent Merrill similarly redefine problematic Book of Mormon elements. Accordingly, they propose that since there is no conclusive evidence in ancient Mesoamerica for conventional swords, the Book of Mormon "sword" is a wooden club with obsidian protruding from the sides, called in Náhuatl "*macuahuitl*" ("Swords in the Book of Mormon," in *Warfare in the Book of Mormon*, 329-51; cf. Hamblin, "Sharper than a Two-edged Sword," *Sunstone* 15 [Dec. 1991]: 54-55). Such flexible interpretations suggest a lack of methodological rigor on the part of those already certain of the Book of Mormon's ancient historicity (see Matheny, "Does the Shoe Fit?" in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*; Mark D. Thomas, "Swords into Pruning Hooks," *Sunstone* 15 [Dec. 1991]: 55).

28. Sorenson, 8.

29. Dependence of the Lehite exodus on the Bible can be illustrated this way:

1 Nephi 2:6-7	Exodus 3:18b	Exodus 5:3b	Exodus 8:27
he ... three days... wilder- ness ... offering ... Lord our God.	we ... three days' ... wilderness ... sacrifice ... LORD our God.	we ... three days' ... desert ... sacri- fice ... LORD our God ...	We ... three days' ... wilderness ... sacrifice ... LORD our God ...

wonders how Sorenson can confidently identify the lengths of other Book of Mormon migrations, which may also be motific or symbolic rather than literal, especially when points of departure and arrival are not known. In other words, the specific details of a history are at worst compromised by, and at best are always filtered through, literary forms and conventions as well as linguistic structures.

In this arena of literary analysis, chiasmus has been touted as one of the best, indeed "objective," indicators of the Book of Mormon's Hebraic roots.³⁰ The term "chiasmus" typically describes a literary phenomenon in which words or ideas repeat in converse order (e.g., A, B, C; c, b, a). Biblical scholars have pointed to chiasmic structure in ancient Hebrew texts like Isaiah 6:10: "Make the [A] *heart* of this people fat, and make their [B] *ears* heavy, and shut their [C] *eyes*; lest they see with their [c] *eyes*, and hear with their [b] *ears*, and understand with their [a] *heart* . . ." By identifying similar parallel structures in the Book of Mormon traditionalists conceived a new apologetic. Numerous essays have been written extolling the significance of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon. It is inconceivable for some apologists that chiasms are accidental or that Joseph Smith intentionally created these patterns since they presume he was ignorant of the phenomenon. Only ancient writers, they contend, conscious of an established literary device can be responsible. As a result concentric patterns demonstrate the Book of Mormon's ancient historicity.

However, relying on chiasmus as evidence of Hebraic influence in the Book of Mormon leads to new methodological difficulties. First, "chiasms" are discernible in other revelatory texts from Joseph Smith, including those documents with no claim to antiquity (see Figures 1 and 2).

Cf. Ex. 15:22; Num. 10:33; 33:8. Reliance on the motific "three days" is further suggested by the unlikelihood of Lehi's party traveling the approximately 180-mile stretch between Jerusalem and the Gulf of Aqaba so rapidly. Evidently, "a normal days' journey in the biblical world covered between 17 and 23 miles" (Barry J. Beitzel, "Bible Lands: How to Draw Ancient Highways on Biblical Maps," *Bible Review* 4 [Oct. 1988]: 37, *passim*). Suggesting that the "three days" refers to an interim phase (e.g., Lynn M. Hilton and Hope Hilton, *In Search of Lehi's Trail* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976], 18, 49) only accentuates difficulties in interpreting Book of Mormon travel durations.

30. See Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: By What Measure Shall We Mete?" in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, ed. Daniel C. Peterson (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1990), 2:xxiii; John W. Welch, "Criteria for Identifying the Presence of Chiasmus," *Working Paper* (WEL-89b) (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1989), 4; "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon: Insights You May Have Missed Before*, eds. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), 131.

Figure 1.
Doctrine and Covenants 19:16-17

For behold,
 A *I*, God, have suffered these things for all,
 B that *they might not suffer*
 C *if they would repent*;
 But
 c *if they would not repent*
 b *they must suffer*
 a even as *I*; . . .

Figure 2.
Doctrine and Covenants 93:16-18

A And *I, John*,
 B bear *record*
 C that *he received a fulness*
 D of *the glory of the Father*;
 And he received all power,
 E both *in heaven*
 e and *on earth*,
 d and *the glory of the Father* was with him,
 for he dwelt in him.
 c And it shall come to pass,
 that if you are faithful *you shall receive the fulness*
 b of the *record*
 a of *John*.³¹

Parallelisms described by apologists as chiasmus can also be found in the non-Hebraic portions of the Joseph Smith Revision of the Bible (JSR) and in the Book of Abraham, which Smith said derived from Egyptian papyri.³² In view of the apparent ubiquity of chiasmus in Mormon scripture, some students have theorized that chiasmus reflects the literal vernacular of deity.³³ However, given traditionalist assump-

31. D&C 93:16-18 is a hybrid example; note that the text A-d is ascribed to an ancient writer while c-a is an appended modern revelation to Joseph Smith and colleagues. See also D&C 29:30b-32; 76:26b-27; 88:36-38a; 88:118; 132:22-25.

32. E.g., Moses 7:48b; Abr. 3:21; see David O. Peterson, "Chiasmus, the Hebrews, and the Pearl of Great Price," *The New Era* 2 (Aug. 1972): 40-43; cf. James R. Clark, "Dear Editor: 'Chiasmus, the Hebrews, and the Pearl of Great Price,'" *The New Era* 2 (Oct. 1972): 3.

33. Charles G. Kroupa and Richard C. Shipp, *From the Mind of God* (Salt Lake City:

tions, chiasms in secular documents and in literature outside the Judeo-Christian tradition militate against this proposal.³⁴ Moreover selections from Joseph Smith's own secular writings also demonstrate parallel structuring (see Figure 3).

Figure 3.
Joseph Smith Diary, 1 April 1834

A the Lord shall destroy him
B who has lifted his heel against me
 even that wicked man Docter P. Hrlbut
Cx he <will> deliver him
Cy to the fowls of the heaven
 and
cX his bones shall be cast
cY to the blast of the wind
b <for> he lifted his <arm> against the Almyty
*a therefore the Lord shall destroy him[.]*³⁵

Nor was Smith unique among contemporaries in composing works that exhibit concentricity.³⁶ Consider the reflections of fourth LDS church president John Taylor (see Figure 4).

Shipp Bros. Printing, 1972); Richard C. Shipp, "Conceptual Patterns of Repetition in the Doctrine and Covenants and Their Implications," M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1975; cf. Wade Brown, *The God-Inspired Language of the Book of Mormon: Structuring and Commentary* (Clackmas, OR: Rainbow Press, 1988).

34. E.g., Bezalel Porten, "Structure and Chiasm in Aramaic Contracts and Letters," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structure, Analyses, Exegesis*, ed. John W. Welch (Hildersheim: Gerstenberg, 1981), 169-82; Robert F. Smith, "Chiasm in Sumero-Akkadian," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 17-35; John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in Ugaritic," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 36-49; "Chiasmus in Ancient Greek and Latin Literatures," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 198-210.

35. See Scott H. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1989), 25; Jesse, *Personal Writings*, 32, 57. Some may view Smith's curse as inspired—a theological dilemma since it failed. If one argues that Smith learned chiasmus by dictating the Book of Mormon it is just as easy to theorize that Smith acquired the pattern through his youthful exposure to the KJV Bible.

36. Modern enthusiasm for chiasmus is evident. LDS official John K. Carmack consciously structured a sampling of some of the favorite themes of a deceased Mormon apostle chiastically (Carmack, "The Testament of Bruce R. McConkie," in *Brigham Young University 1984-85 Devotional and Fireside Speeches* [Provo, UT: University Publications, 1985], 112-13), and contemporary Mormon poet, Carol Lynn Pearson, composed a psalm to the Mother God in chiasm (Pearson, "Chiasm to God the Mother," *Sunstone* 15 [Sept. 1991]: 19).

Figure 4.
John Taylor

A And He in *His own person*
 B bore the sins of all,
 C and *atoned* for them
 D by the *sacrifice* of Himself,
 E so there came upon Him the weight and *agony*
 F of *ages*
 f and *generations*,
 e the indescribable *agony* consequent upon
 d this great *sacrificial*
 c *atonement*
 b wherein He bore the sins of the world,
 a and suffered in *His own person* the consequences of an eternal
 law of God broken by man.³⁷

Such examples undermine chiasmus as evidence of antiquity or Hebraism in the Book of Mormon. Furthermore, they complicate the related claim that parallelism (or chiasmus) is a sign of conscious intentionality rather than accident. As evidence FARMS founder John W. Welch points to Mosiah 5:10-12. According to Welch, these three verses form a chiasm³⁸ within a chiasm (Mosiah 2:9-5:15)³⁹ within a chiasm (Mosiah 1:1-29:32).⁴⁰ Welch identifies this as the first Book of Mormon chiasm he discovered,⁴¹ deeming it and its oratory context "a masterpiece of religious literature"⁴² that "strains reason to imagine . . . occurred accidentally."⁴³

37. John Taylor, *An Examination into and an Elucidation of the Great Principle of the Mediation and the Atonement of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, Printers and Publishers, 1882), 149-50.

38. "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 205.

39. *Ibid.*, 202-203.

40. Welch, "A Study Relating Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon to Chiasmus in the Old Testament, Ugaritic Epics, Homer, and Selected Greek and Latin Authors," M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1970, 150-51, 170.

41. "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon—Annotated Transcript of CHI-V," *Study Aid* (CHI-VA) (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1988), 5-6.

42. "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon, or, the Book of Mormon Does it Again," *The New Era* 2 (Feb. 1972): 8.

43. "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, 205. Welch doubts this chiasm was an accident, finding the alternative more probable: Mosiah 5:10-12 reports the authentic words of an elderly Hebrew monarch who led a thriving community of Christian Jews in the Americas approximately 130 years prior to the advent of Jesus. By logical extension Welch's conclusion also presupposes the transmission of the Book of

More conservative analysis tempers these conclusions. Such claims, for instance, do not take into account the extent to which interpreter ingenuity may be implicated in what is “objectively” present in the text. Unnoticed in Mosiah 5:9-12 is a second concentric structure in verses 9-10 which asymmetrically overlaps the chiasm in verses 10-12 (see Figure 5).

Figure 5.
Mosiah 5:9-10

And it shall come to pass
 ‘A that whosoever doeth this shall be found at the *right hand of God*,
 ‘B for he shall know the *name* by which he is *called*;
 ‘C for he shall be *called by the name of Christ*.
 And now it shall come to pass,
 ‘c that whosoever shall not *take upon him the name of Christ*
 ‘b must be *called* by some other *name*;
 ‘a therefore, he findeth himself on the *left hand of God*.

Mosiah 5:10-12

A And now it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall not take
 upon him the *name of Christ*
 B must be *called* by some other name;
 C therefore, he findeth himself on the *left hand of God*.
 D And I would that ye should *remember* also, that this name
 E that I said I should give unto you that never should be
blotted out,
 F except it be through *transgression*;
 f therefore, take heed that ye do not *transgress*,
 e that the name be not *blotted out* of your hearts.
 d I say unto you, I would that ye should *remember* to
 retain the name written always in your hearts,
 c that ye are not found on the *left hand of God*,
 b but that ye hear and know the voice by which ye shall be *called*,
 a and also, the *name* by which he shall call you.

Clearly the chiasm in verses 9-10 is the tighter of the two. In any case,

Mormon through a lineage of ecclesiastical leaders, eventually delivered by an angel to a young prophet who with the aid of stone(s) placed in his hat was able to read the unknown language. Intentionality may be weakened for some interpreters when seen in terms of the additional historical assumptions Welch’s thesis presupposes.

it seems premature to conclude that verses 10-12 contain "six perfectly matched elements" in which "every word or phrase figures precisely into the pattern."⁴⁴

Other explanations besides Welch's, which depends on antiquity and intention, can account for the parallelisms in Book of Mormon passages—and in contemporary documents by Joseph Smith and his colleagues. Perhaps both Mosiah 5:9-10 and 5:10-12 illustrate lexical and ideational redundancy mingled with the author's intention merely to juxtapose those who are accepted of God with those who are not. Organizing these ideas into chiasms may be the result of subsequent interpreters rather than the intention of the original author. Appeal to chiasmus began as an innovative apologetic for Book of Mormon antiquity, but under critical scrutiny it is less persuasive.⁴⁵

Some proponents of chiasmus have asserted that entire books, includ-

44. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon—Annotated Transcript," 6. Abandoning symmetry by structuring both chiasms in an interweaving pattern (i.e., 'A, C, c; 'B, B, b; 'C, A, a; D, d; E, e; F, f) does not bolster Welch's speculation that the chiasm was premeditated when an alleged key word like "called" can mean *designated* ('B, 'C, 'b, B) or *summoned* (b, a), and when a clearly parallels 'B and B more than 'C and A. The key word "Christ" is also problematic if it is maintained that the passage derives from a Hebrew or Egyptian original (on the anachronism "Christ," see Edward H. Ashment "'A Record in the Language of My Father': Evidence of Ancient Egyptian and Hebrew in the Book of Mormon," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, 346; Melodie Moench Charles, "Book of Mormon Christology," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, 86; Metcalf, "The Priority of Mosiah," 427-33).

Indeed, the entire key phrase "take upon the name of Christ"—not found in the KJV and based on dubious translations of the Greek New Testament—was contested by early nineteenth-century religionists (Mark D. Thomas, "Scholarship and the Book of Mormon," in *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, ed. Dan Vogel [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990], 73). Christian Primitivists applied the expression polemically, insisting that true disciples of Christ must relinquish titles such as Baptist, Lutheran, and Methodist and assume the name "Christian" (e.g., "We took upon us the name of CHRISTIANS singly and alone in contradiction to all other sectarian names, because we thought it was removing one great bar to the union of all Christ's followers" [*Gospel Luminary* 1 (Oct. 1825): 220; see also 3 (May 1827): 115-16; Elias Smith, *The Life, Conversion, Preaching, Travels, and Sufferings of Elias Smith* [Portsmouth, NH: Beck and Foster, 1816], 298, 343, 355, 380, 386; for an early rebuttal to this argument, see *The Methodist Magazine* (Feb. 1800), 82-83]; cf. "true believers in Christ took upon them, gladly, the name of Christ, or Christians as they were called" [Alma 46:15; see also vv. 18, 21; 3 Ne. 27:2-8]). Unitarians concocted a variant translation of 1 Corinthians 1:2b, "take upon themselves the name of our Lord Jesus" as an anti-Trinitarian refutation (Andrews Norton, *A Statement of Reasons for not Believing the Doctrine of the Trinitarians Respecting the Nature of God, and the Person of Christ* [Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1819], 50[51]). See also Thomas, "A Rhetorical Approach to the Book of Mormon: Rediscovering Nephite Sacramental Language," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, 74.

45. See also Brent Lee Metcalf, "A Critique of Chiasmus as Evidence of Ancient Semitic Origins," delivered at the 1988 Sunstone Symposium.

ing 1 Nephi⁴⁶ and Mosiah,⁴⁷ can be structured chiasmically. These claims broach the relationship between the historicity of narrative history and the literary forms in which it is structured.⁴⁸ I have already touched on a version of this in arguments about geography which depend on literal readings of time spent on journeys. What if the author of 1 Nephi used a literary motif (a parallel with the journey of Moses in Exodus, for example) to determine the length spent journeying (three days) rather than a literal description of geographic terrain?

In the case of claims about chiasmic structuring of entire books, we must ask if the historical sequence of events produced the chiasm or if the chiasm arranged the historical episodes. Because Book of Mormon apologists say that chiasmus is an intentional literary device,⁴⁹ they must conclude that chiasmus can arrange historical episodes. At a minimum this means that some historical details of the Lehite story may not have occurred in the order presented in the narrative. Apologists must also allow for the possibility that some historical incidents never actually happened but were fictions imposed on the text to complete a chiasmic structure designed to convey a moralistic or theological teaching.⁵⁰ Within this apologetic, the

46. Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephi's Outline," in *Book of Mormon Authorship*.

47. Welch, "A Study Relating Chiasmus," 150-51, 170.

48. Recent literary theory focuses on the complex and attenuated relation between language and the "real" world. Useful introductions to the theoretical problems include: Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953); James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982); Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983); Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocinio P. Schweickart, *Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981); Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967); Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986); W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *On Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Elaine Showalter, ed., *The New Feminist Criticism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985); Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1973); *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1978); *The Content of Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1987). On the application of narrative theory in biblical exegesis, see Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); and Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

49. E.g., Reynolds, "Nephi's Outline," 57, 63, 65-67; Welch "Criteria for Identifying the Presence of Chiasmus," 8-12; "A Masterpiece," 130.

50. Similar problems of establishing historicity exist with other apologetics involving throne-theophany, treaty-covenant, and other hypothetical literary forms (Blake T. Ostler,

antiquity of Lehi and other Book of Mormon characters may be asserted but the historicity of their actions is open to question.

Attention to other literary forms and structures can be similarly problematic. One striking literary phenomenon in the Book of Mormon is the instance of narratives which mirror each other.⁵¹ As a case study we can distinguish twelve parallels between the stories of the Nephite king Noah and the Jaredite king Riplakish:

1. Zeniff and Shez were both righteous kings succeeded by their sons Noah and Riplakish (Mosiah 11:1; Ether 10:4).
2. Unlike their fathers, Noah "did not keep the commandments of God" and Riplakish "did not do that which was right in the sight of the Lord" (Mosiah 11:2a; Ether 10:5a).
3. Noah and Riplakish each had "many wives and concubines" (Mosiah 11:2b; Ether 10:5b).
4. Noah compelled his subjects to "do that which was abominable . . . and they did commit whoredoms," while Riplakish "did afflict the people with his whoredoms and abominations" (Mosiah 11:2c; Ether 10:7b).
5. By edict, Noah's and Riplakish's people were laden with oppressive taxes (Mosiah 11:3; Ether 10:5c).

"The Throne-Theophany and Prophetic Commission in 1 Nephi: A Form-Critical Analysis," *Brigham Young University Studies* 26 [Fall 1986]: 67-95; Stephen D. Ricks, "The Treaty/Covenant Pattern in King Benjamin's Address (Mosiah 1-6)," *Brigham Young University Studies* 24 [Spring 1984]: 151-62; "King, Coronation, and Covenant in Mosiah 1-6," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, 209-19).

51. B. H. Roberts's contention that storyline repetitions may simply be evidence of Joseph Smith's "amateurishness" (Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Brigham D. Madsen [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985; Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992], 271) is too simplistic. The Book of Mormon and other Mormon scriptures espouse a radically cyclical view of history in which clandestine brotherhoods, theology, heresy, conversion, apostasy, ritual, socio-economics, politics, and so on are repeating facets of human existence. From this perspective the Book of Mormon accommodates nineteenth-century theology *precisely* because antebellum thought is seen as a reverberation of former ideas revealed by God, the devil, or humankind (e.g., 2 Ne. 29:8-9; Hel. 6:21, 26-30; Alma 1:7-22). Character identities change but actions and beliefs reemerge throughout history (cf. Ammon's preaching and Lamoni's subsequent conversion in Alma 18-19 with the parallel narrative of Aaron's evangelism and conversion of Lamoni's father in Alma 21-22; Roberts [251-83] catalogued several parallel Book of Mormon stories).

Susan Taber's ("Mormon's Literary Technique," in *Mormon Letters Annual: 1983* [Salt Lake City: Association of Mormon Letters, 1984], 117-25) suggestion that parallel narratives indicate a single author's—Mormon's—"literary technique" is also insufficient given the fact that according to the Book of Mormon, the Noah and Riplakish stories (discussed below) were the products of father and son redactors Mormon and Moroni. On the other hand Taber's thesis may be viable if the single author is Joseph Smith.

6. Noah and Riplakish each erected "spacious buildings" with the money secured from taxation (Mosiah 11:[4-]8; Ether 10:5d).
7. Both kings built opulent thrones (Mosiah 11:9; Ether 10:6a).
8. Noah's workers crafted "all manner of fine work," while Riplakish's prison workers produced "all manner of fine workmanship" (Mosiah 11:10; Ether 10:7a).
9. Under both rulers dissidents were incarcerated or killed (Mosiah 12:17; 17:11-20; 18:35; Ether 10:6b).
10. Due to internal revolt, Noah and Riplakish were executed (Mosiah 19:20; Ether 10:8a).
11. Noah's priests and Riplakish's descendants were exiled (Mosiah 19:21, 23; Ether 10:8b).
12. Following the subsequent political discord, Limhi (a son of Noah) and Morianton (a descendant/son of Riplakish) reigned over the kingdoms (Mosiah 19:26; Ether 10:9).

Some of these parallels are unique to these kings. Although the Book of Mormon refers generally to taxation (Mosiah 2:14; 7:15) and polygamy (Jacob 1:15; 2:23-35; 3:5-10; Mosiah 11:4b), Noah and Riplakish are the only monarchs identified as polygamists and taxers, and they alone construct "spacious buildings." Ten of the twelve comparisons also follow the same sequence. The two narratives share common phrases such as "many wives and concubines," "spacious buildings," and "all manner of fine work{manship}." And while the details of Noah's life cover five chapters in Mosiah, Riplakish's biography comprises six verses in Ether. Everything we know about the Jaredite ruler bears an analogue to the corrupt Nephite king.⁵² These mirrorings suggest that one narrative may depend on the other, and that only one, or perhaps neither, represents a factual account of historical events.

Some Book of Mormon students have implied that we may be dealing with a wicked-king literary formula.⁵³ Yet other decadent kings in the book do not follow this pattern with any precision. One also wonders what is inherently evil about laborers producing "all manner of fine work{manship}" (Mosiah 11:10; Ether 10:7a). Still, allowing for a literary device, questions regarding historicity remain since it is possible that Noah and

52. Noah and Riplakish also share biblical motifs. Polygamists and tyrants who instigate religious dereliction is a familiar theme in the Hebrew scriptures (e.g., 1 Kgs. 11:4-6; 14:16; 15:25-26; 16:1-2). Like his diluvian namesake, Nephite king Noah was a wine-bibber (Mosiah 11:15; Gen. 9:20-21).

53. *Book of Mormon (Religion 121-122) Student Manual*, prepared by the Church Educational System (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), 496; *Book of Mormon Student Manual (Religion 121 and 122)*, prepared by the Church Educational System (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989), 141.

Riplakish were actually monogamists but were portrayed as polygamists to accentuate their debauchery. If Noah and Riplakish existed anciently, the historicity of every detail of their biographical sketches is nonetheless uncertain.

It is as risky for apologists to stake claims of Book of Mormon historicity on evidence from literary studies as it is on evidence from theories of geography. In fact, emphasis on literary phenomena may be even more precarious, since careful attention to literary features underscores the complicated relation between language and reality. Even if one could plausibly argue for the antiquity of the Book of Mormon within this context, the historicity of every Book of Mormon person and event would be suspect. Apologists must delineate why sacred fiction has greater religious merit when written by ancient prophets than a nineteenth-century prophet.

APOLOGETIC-CRITICAL RECONCILIATION

An innovative, traditionalist bid to solve such methodological problems has been tendered by Blake T. Ostler.⁵⁴ Attempting to reconcile apologetic and critical assumptions, Ostler argues that the Book of Mormon is an ancient Semitic document which has been "expanded" with nineteenth-century elements. The appeal of this theory is that it allows one to believe, for example, that Book of Mormon accounts of robbers resemble reports of early nineteenth-century political insurgencies because the scriptural narrative was imbued with the anti-Masonic rhetoric permeating Joseph Smith's culture.⁵⁵ Thus it is possible to account for nineteenth-century elements in the Book of Mormon while preserving the integrity of the book's core antiquity.⁵⁶ Despite its apologetic nuances, Ostler's so-called

54. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as an Expansion of an Ancient Source."

55. E.g., "craft" in Hel. 2:4; "secret combinations" in 3:23, etc.; see Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as an Expansion," 73-76.

56. Ostler's theory is a logical extension of Hugh Nibley's concept of "prophet's prerogative," the idea that "any prophet is free to contribute anything to the written record that will make that message clear and intelligible" (Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 132-33). On the composition of the JSR, Robert J. Matthews theorized in 1975 that "[p]ortions may consist of inspired commentary by the Prophet Joseph Smith, enlarged, elaborated, and even adapted to a latter-day situation" (Matthews, "A Plainer Translation": *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, A History and Commentary* [Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1975], 253). Victor L. Ludlow concurs ("The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible: A Panel," moderated by C. Wilfred Griggs, in *Scriptures for the Modern World*, eds. Paul R. Cheesman and C. Wilfred Griggs [Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1984], 79). Inexplicably, Robert L. Millet accepts Matthews's theory when applied to the JSR but rejects it when Ostler relates it to the Book of Mormon ("Joseph Smith's Translation," 43-44; cf. "Joseph Smith and Modern Mormonism: Orthodoxy, Neo-orthodoxy, Tension, and Tradition," *Brigham Young University Studies* 29 [Summer

expansionist theory has been criticized by both traditionalists⁵⁷ and antagonists,⁵⁸ who judge that it goes too far or not far enough in its deductions.⁵⁹

Expansionism does leave perplexing historical and theological questions unanswered. A central premise of the theory is that the Book of Mormon is a literary hybrid containing both nineteenth-century and ancient elements. The process of distinguishing ancient from modern can result in methodological inconsistency. Ostler acknowledges that themes such as anti-Masonry or the idea of an Infinite Atonement were popular notions among Joseph Smith's contemporaries and are modern interpolations in the Book of Mormon text.⁶⁰ But equally popular among Smith's contemporaries was the belief, which the Book of Mormon shares, that ancient Israelites civilized parts if not all of the Western Hemisphere⁶¹—a conjecture that enjoys no reliable archaeological support today.⁶² To be

1989]: 51ff).

An emerging neo-traditionalist rationalization for nineteenth-century theology in the Book of Mormon is the proposal that Nephites espoused similar or identical theology adhered to by Joseph Smith's Protestant contemporaries (Thomas G. Alexander, "Afterwords[*: A Reply to Robert L. Millet's 'Joseph Smith and Modern Mormonism'*]," *Brigham Young University Studies* 29 [Fall 1989]: 143-44). This does not explain, however, why God would reveal doctrines to Nephites and then again to Smith while translating (e.g., trinitarianism) only to have them supplanted by Smith's later Nauvoo doctrinal explications (e.g., tritheism; see Thomas G. Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine," in *Line Upon Line: Essays on Mormon Doctrine*, ed. Gary James Bergera [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989], 54ff).

57. Millet, "Joseph Smith and Modern Mormonism," 51ff; Stephen E. Robinson, "The 'Expanded' Book of Mormon?" in *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, the Doctrinal Structure*, eds. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1989), 391-414 (cf. Ostler, "Criticisms of the Expansion Theory of the Book of Mormon From the Scriptural Fundamentalist's Perspective," privately circulated, 1988).

58. Jerald Tanner and Sandra Tanner, "Mormonism and Plagiarism," *Salt Lake City Messenger* 63 (May 1987): 5-10.

59. More recently Ostler has aligned himself with apologists by condemning scholars who suggest Joseph Smith was the author of the Book of Mormon even though Ostler himself previously argued that pivotal concepts—such as the christological purpose of the book (Title Page)—originated with Smith (Ostler, "The Covenant Tradition in the Book of Mormon," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, 239-40; cf. "The Book of Mormon as an Expansion," 82ff, 112).

60. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as an Expansion," 73-76, 82.

61. See Lynn Glaser, *Indians or Jews?* (Gilroy, CA: Roy V. Boswell, 1973); Dan Vogel, *Indian Origins and the Book of Mormon: Religious Solutions from Columbus to Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986).

62. E.g., Michael Coe, Dean Snow, and Elizabeth Benson, *Atlas of Ancient America* (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1986), 24-25; Stuart J. Fiedel, *Prehistory of the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 2-4.

methodologically consistent, expansionists must conclude that the Book of Mormon's self-claimed Hebraic origin is as anachronistic as other nineteenth-century elements, such as anti-Masonry or an Infinite Atonement.

The problem is that this nineteenth-century belief of native American origins serves as the expansionist's justification for appealing to ancient Near Eastern sources in sustaining the claim that the Book of Mormon is an ancient Hebraic document. In fact, all of Ostler's subsequent arguments for antiquity depend on his conviction that Jews anciently resided in the Americas. If expansionists await archaeological verification,⁶³ their method argues as much from silence as does that espoused by traditionalists who anticipate vindication or accept on faith that Book of Mormon christology, soteriology, and theology were tenets of ancient Israelite religion.⁶⁴ With expansionism—as with traditional approaches—the Book of Mormon is evidence of its own antiquity in lieu of supporting empirical data that ancient Hebrews occupied pre-Columbian America—a circularity of reasoning at best.

Perhaps the most problematic aspect of the expansionist theory is its concept of revelation. On the one hand, it presumes that God propositionally revealed and that Joseph Smith received factual information about ancient ritual, legal, and visionary forms, including authentic Semitic names and word patterns.⁶⁵ Regarding the nature of God, however, expansionism infers that instead of communicating a Nephite concept or correcting pre-1830 theology, God permitted Joseph Smith to embellish the Book of Mormon text with Smith's own ideas about deity, ideas which would eventually be superseded or at least modified by later doctrinal developments.⁶⁶ Ultimately God is more concerned with accurately revealing literary and cultural traits than with disclosing a truthful representation of himself. This revelatory dynamic between God and Joseph Smith seems less than adequate to account for a book whose expressed goal is persuading "Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD" (Title Page), a concept Ostler dates to the nineteenth century and has since become antiquated in contemporary Mormon doctrine.⁶⁷

Jesuit theologian Avery Dulles, whom Ostler cites with approval,⁶⁸

63. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as an Expansion," 101-102.

64. Cf. Joseph Fielding McConkie, "Modern Revelation: A Window to the Past," in *"To be Learned is Good if . . ."*, 126, and *passim*.

65. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as an Expansion," 87-101; elsewhere Ostler repudiates the notion of propositional revelation despite its being an integral characteristic of expansionism, see p. 108.

66. *Ibid.*, 112, cf. 79-87.

67. *Ibid.*, 82ff, 112.

68. *Ibid.*, 108.

cautions that it “would be superficial and irresponsible” to postulate a theology of revelation that “use[s] one model [of revelation] in dealing with one problem, other models for other problems.”⁶⁹ Yet it is precisely this theological fallacy that expansionism presumes when it suggests that God revealed propositionally to Smith in some cases but differently in others. Because of these deficits, expansionism will likely serve as a theological way-station between traditionalist and critical schools rather than the final intellectual depot.

AUTHORITY AND CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

As I have noted, traditionalist approaches to the Book of Mormon focus on ancient historical claims. Much is made by advocates of the book’s antiquity about “what it claims to be.”⁷⁰ Their concern is that because the Book of Mormon claims to be an inspired ancient record, the book’s self-disclosures of antiquity should be given priority. This claim becomes the source of meaning and authority for the text and as a result is made the guiding investigative hypothesis. Scholarship becomes a matter of establishing historical plausibility for the claim.

Critical scholars shift the terms of investigation, finding ultimate authority not so much in claims made by and for scripture—despite the sincerity of these claims—but in the overall phenomena of the text in its broad historical and literary framework. This nontraditional view of authority requires that claims be assessed in the context of the narrative and in the historical setting within which readers first encountered the text.⁷¹

Sincerity is no reliable index of reality or truth.⁷² Early Mormon apostle

69. Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1983), 125.

70. Louis Midgley, “Revisionist Pride,” *Sunstone* 15 (Sept. 1991): 5; Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, 56; Peterson, “Editor’s Introduction,” xxv, cf. xx; Ricks, *Review of Lehi in the Desert*, 129, cf. 135, 138; Welch, “Why Study Warfare,” 19.

71. The concept of biblical authority has fostered considerable discussion among Bible scholars. See James Barr, *The Scope and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980); Dewey M. Beegle, *Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility* (Ann Arbor, MI: Pryor Penttengill, Publishers, 1979); D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986); Robert Gnuse, *The Authority of the Bible: Theories of Inspiration, Revelation, and the Canon of Scripture* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985).

72. Cf. Stephen D. Ricks, “Response to Edward Ashment, ‘Canon and the Historian,’” delivered at the 1991 Mormon History Association meeting. Ricks states his position thus: “I am, for instance, convinced that George Q. Cannon was an honest man. When he claims to have seen Christ, I see no reason to doubt him. When Lorenzo Snow, a similarly honest man, claims to have seen Christ, I see no reason to doubt him, either. And if they saw Christ,

Parley P. Pratt may have been sincere when he declared in 1838, "I will state as a prophesy, that there will not be an unbelieving Gentile upon this continent 50 years hence; and if they are not greatly scourged, and in a great measure overthrown, within five or ten years from this date, then the Book of Mormon will have proved itself false."⁷³ But his sincerity does not alter the fact that his prophecy was not fulfilled. Certainly the failure of prophecy does not annul a prophet's religious import, but it does caution us against assuming that a perception of prophetic experience is infallible just because a prophet is sincere.

Moving to the context of religious experience allows us to briefly consider claims about Book of Mormon gold plates made by the three witnesses Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. Because they experienced the plates in a religiously ecstatic context, the experience is best approached from within a visionary tradition.⁷⁴ Such a testimonial vision from God is not designed to address the empirical world of its human participants and cannot lend itself to historical-critical assessment. However, each witness had subsequent experiences which occasionally intruded on history or challenged theological assumptions and world views

then why not Joseph Smith?" (3). Aside from Ricks's circularity, this is question begging of the worst kind.

73. Parley P. Pratt, *Mormonism Unveiled: Zion's Watchman Unmasked, and its Editor Mr. L. R. Sunderland Exposed: Truth Vindicated: The Devil Mad, and Priestcraft in Danger!* (New York: O. Pratt and E. Fordham, 1838), 15.

74. Specific conditions had to be met, according to Smith's revelations, before anyone could see the gold plates:

1. The plates could only be revealed to witnesses God chose (D&C 5:3a, 11);
2. God's directive alone enabled a mortal agent to manifest the existence of the plates (v. 3b);
3. witnesses had to be accorded divine power to see the plates (v. 13; 17:5); and
4. viewing the plates depended on one's faith (17:2).

If these criteria were not met, the plates would not be visible. This is evident in Smith's remark that when praying with Martin Harris "the same vision [of the angel and gold plates] was opened to our view—at least it was, again to me," implying that Harris was present but may not have shared Smith's experience (Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith: Volume 1, Autobiographical and Historical Writings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 237, emphasis added; see also Joseph Smith, Jr., et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978], 1:55 [hereafter HC]). Unlike the secrecy cloaking the gold plates, Smith openly displayed the Book of Abraham papyri and the Kinderhook plates (e.g., Josiah Quincy on the Egyptian papyri, in William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, eds., *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958], 136-37; William Clayton on the plates from Kinderhook, Illinois, in George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1991], 100).

of later interpreters and as such are more amenable to historical-critical inquiry.

For instance, while transcribing early Mormon blessings in September 1835,⁷⁵ Oliver Cowdery was enraptured in a vision of the future life of Joseph Smith. Cowdery claimed he recorded the experience “while in the heavenly vision” and admonished readers, “let no one doubt of their correctness and truth, for they will verily be fulfilled.”⁷⁶ The vision, written in the form of a blessing, detailed Smith’s future achievements and renown. At the culmination of the vision, Cowdery witnessed that Smith “shall remain to a good old age, even till his head is like the pure wool,”⁷⁷ a prophecy that failed with Smith’s martyrdom at age thirty-eight.

David Whitmer consistently related that he had seen an angel holding the gold plates. But in an impassioned recollection, he also told how God instructed him to leave the Latter-day Saint movement. “If you believe my testimony to the Book of Mormon,” he implored, “if you believe that God spake to us three witnesses by his own voice, then I tell you that in June, 1838, God spake to me again by his own voice from the heavens and told me to ‘separate myself from among the Latter Day Saints, for as they sought to do unto me, so should it be done unto them.’”⁷⁸ In also denouncing the RLDS church, Whitmer was no less vehement: “God commanded me by his voice to stand apart from you.”⁷⁹ Contemporary Mormons are left to confront Whitmer’s challenge: believe that God confirmed the Book of

75. See Faulring, 33; Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 58.

76. Fred C. Collier, comp., *Unpublished Revelations of the Prophets and Presidents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Collier’s Publishing Company, 1979), 75. Cowdery initially recorded the vision on the evening of 22 September 1835, copying it into volume 1 of the blessings book on 3 October 1835. Although Cowdery clearly anticipated future readers (e.g., “The reader will remember” [ibid., 74]) and several blessings have been published with church sanction (e.g., Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 21-25, 62, 99-101, 152-54, 530-37), the original of this source for understanding early Mormonism remains closed to researchers in the LDS historical archives.

77. Collier, 77.

78. David Whitmer, *An Address to all Believers in Christ, by a Witness to the Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon* (Richmond, MO: David Whitmer, 1887), 27. BYU religion professor Richard L. Anderson (*Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981], 164) contends that this is the only occasion in which Whitmer describes renouncing Mormonism under an audible mandate from God. While Whitmer may have failed to explicitly mention a divine “voice” in other reports, he did echo his earlier statement that God had spoken to him when he told Zenas H. Gurley in 1885, “I left because <I> could not accept it, being led out by the outstretched arm of God—promised life and blessing, and that my opponents would suffer that which they had tried to bring upon me” (Gurley, “Questions asked of David Whitmer at his home in Richmond Ray County Mo - Jan 14 - 1885,” 1885, 1-1 verso, LDS archives; portions of this interview are cited in *Autumn Leaves* 5 [1892]: 453).

79. *An Address*, 28.

Mormon translation and later instructed him to repudiate Mormonism or reject his testimony *in toto*. For Whitmer there was no distinction between the two experiences.

In July 1875, shortly before his death in Clarkston, Utah, Martin Harris attested that he had indeed seen an angel turning the "golden leaves." Ninety-one-year-old Harris then added:

I will tell you a wonderful thing that happened after Joseph had found the plates. Three of us took some tools to go to the hills and hunt for some more boxes of gold or something, and indeed we found a stone box. We got quite excited about it and dug quite carefully around it, and we were ready to take it up, but behold by some unseen power it slipped back into the hill. We stood there and looked at it, and one of us took a crow bar and tried to drive it through the lid to hold it, but it glanced and broke one corner off the box. Some time that box will be found, and then you will know I have told the truth.⁸⁰

80. Ole A. Jensen, "Testimony of Martin Harris, a Witness of the Book of Mormon," 1875, LDS archives; cf. Lettie D. Campbell, "Testimony As to the Divinity of the Book of Mormon," 1918, LDS archives; Comfort Elizabeth Godfrey Flinders, "Testimony of Martin Harris a Witness of the Book of Mormon," 8 May 1939, in *Utah Pioneer Biographies* (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society, 1946), 10:63-66; George Godfrey, "Testimony given to Ole A. Jensen by Martin Harris, a Witness of the Book of Mormon. Given at Clarkston July 1875," n.d., LDS archives. At a stake conference on 17 June 1877, Brigham Young told the Saints a "story which will be marvelous to most of you." As related to him by Orrin Porter Rockwell, the narrative covers similar details to those mentioned by Harris: "Porter was with them one night where there were treasures, and they could find them easy enough, but they could not obtain them. . . . He said that on this night, when they were engaged hunting for this old treasure, they dug around the end of a chest. . . . One man who was determined to have the contents of the chest, took his pick and struck into the lid of it, and split through into the chest. The blow took off a piece of the lid, which a certain lady kept in her possession until she died. That chest went into the bank. Porter describes it so (making a rumbling sound); he says this is just as true as the heavens are" (*Journal of Discourses*, 19:37, parentheses originally brackets).

For Young the story was evidence of angels hurling treasures through the earth (see *ibid.*, 36-39). According to other sources the woman who retained possession of the broken piece of lid was Lucy Mack Smith (William Blood, "A Life Sketch of William Blood," n.d., 65, LDS archives; Ivy Hooper Blood Hill, *William Blood: His Posterity and Biographies of their Progenitors* [Logan, UT: J. P. Smith and Son, 1962], 48; cf. "Journal of President B. Young's Office Great Salt Lake City Book D," 1858-63, 21 Nov. 1861, LDS archives). Echoing Harris's and Young's stories, early Smith neighbor Joshua Stafford recalled that "Joseph [Smith] once showed [him] a piece of wood which he said he took from a box of money, and the reason he gave for not obtaining the box, was, that it moved" (Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled: Or, a Faithful Account of that Singular Imposition and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present Time* [Painesville, OH: Eber D. Howe, 1834], 258). It is difficult to resist inferring that Stafford, Young, and Harris are relating the same episode (D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987], 48-49), but there are differences. Harris's box was stone while Smith's was wood, and according to one source Rockwell's diggings were in Ohio not New York (Blood, 65; I. Hill, 48). Perhaps the

Harris testified of treasure that “slipped” from his grasp “by some unseen power” as having literally occurred.⁸¹ Arguably the most colorful Book of Mormon witness, Harris emerges from available documents as an impetuous New York farmer who found as much sanctity in money digging and enchanted treasures as in his encounter with an angel and gold plates.⁸²

Cowdery’s vision of Joseph Smith’s life, Whitmer’s testimonies of the Book of Mormon and his departure from Mormonism, and Harris’s belief in treasure digging cause us to wonder what objective reality meant for them and if this meaning has any application or relevance to readers today. We must do more than ask if these and other witnesses were convinced the gold plates were “real”; we must delve into additional otherworldly phenomena they said were “real.” We need to place their vision of an angel and gold plates in a broader framework.

If it is important to provide such a framework for traditional claims about the Book of Mormon, it is equally valuable to consider a broader framework for claims made by the book itself. One crucial context is provided by Joseph Smith’s emendations of the Bible. Some of Smith’s most sig-

accounts merely indicate the commonality of this type of experience among Mormonism’s founders. W. W. Phelps alluded to Harris’s participation in Smith’s excavations (Phelps to Eber D. Howe, 15 Jan. 1831, in Howe, 273). The notion of slippery treasures is not limited to Mormon money diggers. In the *Wayne Sentinel*, 16 Feb. 1825, treasure seekers reportedly “Put upon a chest of gold / And heard it chink with pleasure, / Then all prepared, just taking hold, / To raise the shinning treasure.” When a member of the expedition abruptly spoke up, “the chest move[d] off through the mud, and has not been seen or heard of since.”

81. Nephites were also impeded in their quest for treasure because the hidden wealth was “slippery” (Hel. 13:31-34, 36; Morm. 1:18) and had “slipped away” (Hel. 13:35) due to divine malediction. Non-Mormon novelist Daniel P. Thompson also employed the term “slippery” in describing elusive supernatural treasure (*May Martin: Or the Money Diggers* [Montpelier, VT: E. P. Walton and Son, 1835], 98).

82. See Anderson, 95-120; Rhett Stephen James, *The Man Who Knew: Dramatic Biography on Martin Harris* (Cache Valley, UT: Martin Harris Pageant Committee, 1983), passim; Quinn, “Early Mormonism,” 35, 38, 47-49, 115-16, 120-23, 193-95, 210; Ron Walker, “Martin Harris: Mormonism’s Early Convert,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 19 (Winter 1986): 29-43. For early non-Mormon depictions of Harris, see John A. Clark, *Gleanings by the Way* (Philadelphia: W. J. and J. K. Simon, 1842), 222ff; Joel Tiffany, “Mormonism,” *Tiffany’s Monthly* 5 (1859): 46-51, 119-121, 163-170. Manchester, New York, resident Wallace Miner recalled a boyhood incident with Harris echoing this magic world view. “Martin Harris stayed at this home when I was about 13 yrs of age,” Miner reminisced, “I used to go over to the diggings[—remains from Joseph Smith’s treasure seeking—]about 100 rods or a little less S. E. of this house. It is near a clump of bushes. Martin Harris regarded it as fully as sacred as the Mormon Hill diggings” (in M. Wilford Poulson, “Notebook Containing Statements Made by Residents of Palmyra, N.Y., Manchester, N.Y., and Other Areas, and Notes and Excerpts from Periodicals, Books, and Other Sources Pertaining to Joseph Smith, Other Mormon Church Leaders or Mormon Church History and Doctrine,” ca. 1932. M. Wilford Poulson Collection, Archives and Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah).

nificant emendations challenge the assumption that a text's antiquity is ensured simply because Smith ascribed certain concepts to ancient individuals.

Smith periodically incorporated revisions into the Bible he later discarded because the King James Version (KJV) better articulated his Nauvoo, Illinois, theology. For example, the KJV renders Hebrews 11:40, "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Smith altered this to read: "God having provided some better things *for them through their sufferings, for without sufferings they could not be made perfect.*" Later, however, when he enunciated a doctrine of vicarious baptism for the dead, he reverted to the KJV as a proof-text. Salvation of the dead, he insisted, "is necessary and essential to our salvation, as Paul says concerning the fathers—that they without us cannot be made perfect [KJV Heb. 11:40]—neither can we without our dead be made perfect" (D&C 128:15).⁸³ Smith here specifically ascribed authorship of the KJV rendition to Paul, yet the JSR had suggested otherwise. Smith abandoned his JSR emendation that the *living faithful* are purified by suffering in favor of the KJV as the redemption of the *unconverted deceased*.

In 2 Peter 1:19 the KJV reads, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." The JSR embellished this: "We have *therefore* a more sure *knowledge of the* word of prophecy, to which word of prophecy ye do well that ye take heed." Then in May 1843 Smith returned to the KJV to communicate his theology of calling and election (D&C 131:5).⁸⁴ Initially Smith had changed the KJV to suggest that Peter and his companions possessed an absolute witness of the prophesied Christ, of which believers were instructed to "take heed." Later when developing his doctrine of election, Smith returned to the KJV to stipulate that all believing males can know they are bound for exaltation.

Smith similarly vacillated on the wording of Revelation 1:6. Jesus in the KJV "hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father," but in the JSR he "hath made us kings and priests unto God [. . .], his Father." The awkward "and" is omitted. Just weeks prior to his martyrdom in June 1844, Smith not only appealed to the KJV to support a multiplicity of gods but pronounced KJV Revelation 1:6 "altogether correct in the translation."⁸⁵ Smith evidently reversed his JSR omission of "and" in order to secure scriptural proof-text for the idea that another father-god presides over the

83. See also Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 330, 333-34, 336, 342, 346, 353, 360.

84. See also *ibid.*, 201-202, 204, 206, 209.

85. HC 6:473, 476; see also Ehat and Cook, 378, 380, 383.

father of Jesus.⁸⁶

Apologists for Smith's equivocation point out that the resulting ideas may differ but do not contradict each other. The differences—whether the author of Hebrews wrote about the living or the dead, if the “more sure word of prophecy” referred to the Mount of Transfiguration or was a universal call for securing one's exaltation, or if the apocalyptic author intended Jesus' father or a divine grandparent—are inconsequential since each idea is theologically sound if not necessarily historical.⁸⁷ This recourse to harmonization acknowledges the impossibility of determining which words were originally recorded by which author based on Smith's emendations. These examples provide instances where the internal claim of Smith's scriptures vary with the phenomena of the texts themselves. In other words, the phenomena of the texts—Smith's Bible revisions versus his later assertions about what the ancient writers actually meant and recorded—render the authorial and historical claims of the texts ambiguous at best.

More problematic, however, are Smith's emendations which create a disparity of ideas. The two-stage development of Matthew 5:40-41 is especially useful here because it implicates the Book of Mormon. Unlike the

86. Although Robert J. Matthews conjectured that the omission of “and” may have been a scribal slip, contextual evidence favors Matthews's preferred alternative that “the Prophet did not possess as much knowledge about the plurality of Gods when he dictated this part of the Bible revision . . . as he did eleven years later in 1844 when he delivered a special discourse on the subject” (“*A Plainer Translation*,” 183). Matthews intimates that Joseph Smith's scriptural products in some instances reflect Smith's theological development instead of the ancient authors'. This is corroborated in Smith's emending the KJV either to eradicate plural god references (e.g., JSR Gen. 11:5; JSR Ex. 7:1; 22:28; JSR 1 Sam. 28:13) or to infuse popular nineteenth-century trinitarianism (e.g., Moses 2:26; 7:59-62; JSR Matt. 9:19; 11:28; JSR Luke 10:23; JSR 1 Tim. 2:4). It is telling that not one JSR emendation alludes to multiple gods. (On Smith's early conceptions of deity, see Charles, “Book of Mormon Christology”; Van Hale, “Defining the Contemporary Mormon Concept of God,” in *Line Upon Line*, 7-15; Boyd Kirkland, “The Development of the Mormon Doctrine of God,” in *Line Upon Line*, 35-52; Dan Vogel, “The Earliest Mormon Concept of God,” in *Line Upon Line*, 17-33.) Matthews dismisses a notation made in 1845 by John Bernhisel that JSR New Testament manuscript 2 (NTms.2) indicated that KJV Revelation 1:6 is “correct” because it is contradicted by the very document Bernhisel was copying (“*A Plainer Translation*,” 181-83).

87. See Robert J. Matthews, “I Have a Question: Some Passages Such as Matthew 6:13 and Hebrews 11:40 in Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible Read Quite Differently From the Comparable Passages in the Book of Mormon and/or Other Statements by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Why is this So, and How Could We Know Which of the Variants is Correct?” *Ensign* 11 (Sept. 1981): 16-17; Clyde J. Williams, “The JST and the New Testament Epistles,” in *The Joseph Smith Translation: The Restoration of Plain and Precious Things* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1985), 231-32; “The JST in Retrospect and Prospect—A Panel,” in *The Joseph Smith Translation*, 296-97; cf. Monte S. Nyman, “The Sublime Epistles of Peter,” in *Studies in Scripture: Volume 6, Acts to Revelation*, ed. Robert L. Millet (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 232-33.

above KJV and JSR passages, which propose arguably compatible theology, Smith's renderings of this Matthean passage ascribe varying standards for Christian behavior to Jesus (see Figure 6).

Figure 6.
Two-stage Development of Matthew 5:40-41

Stage One

KJV Matthew 5:40-41

And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

3 Nephi 12:40-41

And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

JSR Matthew 5:42-43, NTms.1

and if any man <will> sue thee at the law and take away thy coat let him have a cloak also and whosoever shall compel thee to go with him a mile go with him twain

Stage Two

JSR Matthew 5:42-43, NTms.1rev.

and if any man <will> sue thee at the law and take away thy coat let him have a cloak also <it and if he sue thee again let him have thy cloak also> and whosoever shall compel thee to go with him a mile go with him twain <a mile and whosoever shall compel thee to go with him twain thou shalt go with him> <twain>

JSR Matthew 5:42-43, NTms.2

And if any man will sue thee at the law, & take away thy coat, let him have it; and if he sue thee again, let him <have> thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compell thee to go a mile, go with him a mile; and whosoever shall compell thee to go with him twain, <thou shalt> go with him twain.

Stage One depicts Jesus imploring disciples to surrender more than the law requires and to journey a mile further than necessary. The concept is simple enough: in the face of adversity true Christians perform *more* than is required. In both 3 Nephi and JSR New Testament manuscript 1 (*NTms.1*), Smith incorporated the wording of the KJV verbatim. In revising JSR New Testament manuscript 1 (*NTms.1rev.*), however, he made emendations which were assimilated into JSR *NTms.2*, the final version.

Stage Two alters the meaning of Jesus' saying. Now Jesus enjoins

followers to surrender that which is seized and to travel as far as compelled.⁸⁸ The sense has shifted from doing more than required to performing what is required only.⁸⁹ If the Book of Mormon's "do more than required" tradition is reliable, questions arise about the source of Smith's JSR "do what is required" emendation. Conversely if the JSR rendition is authoritative, then the ancient historicity of the Book of Mormon admonition is open to question.

An instinctive apologetic response asserts that the final version of the JSR restores Jesus' homily in Palestine and that 3 Nephi preserves Christ's sentiments to ancient Mesoamericans. But such an assertion creates more problems than it settles.⁹⁰ Some students have suggested a social or literary

88. Smith emended the corresponding passage in Luke's Sermon on the Plain differently from Matthew's version to include a curse against the enemies Christians were being enjoined to love unconditionally:

JSR Luke 6:28-30

Bless them who curse you, and pray for them who despitefully use <you and persecute you> [New Testament manuscript 2, revision (NTms.2rev.); cf. Matt. 5:44]. And unto him who smiteth thee on the cheek, offer also the other; or, in other words, it is better to offer the other, than to revile again. And to him who taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also. For it is better that thou suffer thine enemy to take these things, than to contend with him. Verily I say unto you, Your heavenly Father who seeth in secret, shall bring that wicked one into judgment.

For an insightful glimpse into the historical setting of the Lucan narrative, see Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX (Anchor Bible)* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1981), 627-44.

89. See Edward H. Ashment, "Making the Scriptures 'Indeed One in Our Hands,'" in *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 253, 263n75; Geoffery F. Spencer, "A Reinterpretation of Inspiration, Revelation, and Scripture," in *The Word of God*, 21. It is surprising that in his study on the Sermon on the Mount in LDS scripture John W. Welch (*The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount: A Latter-day Saint Approach* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990) omits any treatment of this predicament (cf. *ibid.*, 190). Robert A. Cloward, director of the LDS Institute of Religion at the University of Tennessee, noted that the JSR emendation "averts the mistaken impression that we should make unnecessary concessions in the face of persecution" (Cloward, "The Sermon on the Mount in the JST and the Book of Mormon," in *The Joseph Smith Translation*, 182). Cloward declined, however, to remedy the contradiction between the JSR's correction and the Book of Mormon's retention of the "mistaken impression."

90. First, it requires that we conclude Jesus taught Nephites one moral code and Galileans another. If the moral systems of the two hemispheres were different, then modern readers do not know which ethic applies to them. Second, it does not acknowledge that 3 Nephi 12:40-41 is borrowed from KJV Matthew 5:40-41. Could one reasonably conclude that the revised JSR Matthew 5:42-43 ("do what is required") through textual corruption eventually resulted in KJV Matthew 5:40-41 ("do more than required") which in turn coincidentally parallels verbatim 3 Nephi 12:40-41? Literary indebtedness of 3 Nephi to KJV Matthew is also evident in view of the observation that Matthew's notion of being forced

stimulus for the revision of Jesus' saying.⁹¹ Whatever the motivation for the JSR emendation, a few observations seem inescapable: (1) Joseph Smith vacillated on the wording and meaning of Jesus' saying in Matthew 5:40-41; (2) KJV Matthew 5:40-41, 3 Nephi 12:40-41, and JSR Matthew 5:42-43 *NTms.1* agree against JSR Matthew 5:42-43 *NTms.1rev.* and JSR *NTms.2*; (3) 3 Nephi, JSR *NTms.1* including *NTms.1rev.*, and JSR *NTms.2* were the ostensible products of inspiration; and (4) the ethics of the Book of Mormon and the final JSR sayings differ. The phenomena within the documents reveal that merely because Smith attributed various concepts to Jesus does not ensure that Jesus ever expressed them in biblical or in Book of Mormon times. Thus an appeal to either saying to establish authoritatively what Jesus said anciently in Galilee or in the Americas is ill-advised.

to travel a mile echoes Palestinian legalities that presumably were foreign to Nephite culture (e.g., Georg Strecker, *The Sermon on the Mount: An Exegetical Commentary* [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988], 84; see in general commentaries on Matthew 5:41; cf. Matt. 27:32). Third, for convincing reasons virtually all biblical scholars view the Sermon on the Mount as a "collection of unrelated sayings of diverse origin" (W. D. Davies, *The Sermon on the Mount* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1966], 1), not a single "speech made by Jesus but the literary work of the Evangelist Matthew" (Strecker, 11). This alone argues against its having been delivered as a unified speech in the Americas as recorded in 3 Nephi. Fourth, it is improbable that two writers at opposite ends of the globe would understand and then record a sermon delivered on separate occasions so identically that subsequent translators would employ almost identical language to convey the sermon's content. Even a cursory perusal of Joseph Smith's Nauvoo discourses illustrates how the same speech comprehended and recorded by different scribes can differ so significantly as to appear as separate sermons (see Ehat and Cook; cf. Dean C. Jessee, "Priceless Words and Fallible Memories: Joseph Smith as Seen in the Effort to Preserve His Discourses," *Brigham Young University Studies* 31 [Spring 1991]: 19-40). Fifth, Smith's inspiration initially led him to retain the KJV/3 Nephi "do more than required" reading in JSR *NTms.1*. Smith incorporated the "do what is required" revision into *NTms.1rev.* only after further reflection. Compounding these difficulties are text-critical anomalies (see Stan Larson, "The Historicity of the Matthean Sermon on the Mount in 3 Nephi," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, 115-63). It seems questionable then that the variant sayings in 3 Nephi and the JSR are both authentic maxims of the risen Christ and the mortal Jesus.

91. Richard P. Howard has theorized that the realignment of Jesus' saying reflects Smith's attitude toward the persecution his church was enduring, and "consequently he sought to rephrase this text perhaps in the light of his own historical experience" (*Restoration Scriptures*, 99). This hypothesis corresponds to Robert J. Matthews's impression that portions of the JSR were "adapted to a latter-day situation" ("*A Plainer Translation*," 253). Another possibility is that Smith emended the JSR to harmonize a superficial discrepancy between Matthew's Sermon on the Mount in the KJV (5:40-41) and the coinciding passage in KJV Luke's Sermon on the Plain which states, "and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take away thy coat" (6:29). In the Matthean version Christians not only relinquish their cloaks but also freely offer their coats. But the Lucan narrative in the KJV could be construed in another way: Christians surrender both their cloaks and coats only when they are "take[n] away" not of their own volition—an ethic more compatible with the final rendition of JSR Matthew 5:42-43.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Apologists look for authority in the ancient historical claims made by and for the Nephite record; scripture critics evaluate these claims in terms of what the phenomena of the Book of Mormon disclose. Reconciling these assumptions is a problematic task.⁹² Answers to questions posed by these perspectives will not surface from *ex cathedra* pronouncements or scriptural prooftexting. Perhaps the least tenuous approach is found in precedence, rather than an appeal to a particular theory of how Joseph Smith produced or understood the Book of Mormon. A pattern emerges from Smith and his successors that fresh inspiration leads to change. Indeed, change is the hallmark of Latter-day Saint theology, not the exception. By virtue of this heritage believers should welcome and even expect that historical and theological perspectives on the Book of Mormon will be subject to continuing refinement.

In anticipation of these revisions, methodological integrity can only be maintained if we are willing to explore intricacies of the phenomena of Mormon scripture which can transform the most fundamental assumptions of antiquity and historicity. No matter where one falls on the interpretive spectrum, ultimately all students should commence at the same point—the texts of Mormonism’s founding prophet. These provide the pieces for solving the complex puzzle of the nature of Mormon scripture. When placing details together we would be irresponsible to alienate the Book of Mormon from other texts which Joseph Smith professed to have translated or said stemmed from the same inspired source. Only from this rudimentary historical framework can an honest quest for understanding the Book of Mormon begin. One can dismiss problems of historicity by harmonizing them in isolation with what are frequently contradictory rationalizations. It is now the task of interpreters to develop a synthesis of Joseph Smith’s models of antiquity.

92. See Anthony A. Hutchinson, “The Word of God is Enough: The Book of Mormon as Nineteenth-Century Scripture,” in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, 1-19; David P. Wright, “Historical Criticism: A Necessary Element in the Search for Religious Truth,” *Sunstone* 16 (Sept, 1992): 28-38.

The Man Without Sin

H. L. Miles

There's this house where
four retarded men live who
go to church on Sundays.

In the other ward, they come
at nine; sometimes I see the four
shaking hands like the ushers.

This year, the first Sunday,
meeting times change and it
is our turn to worship at nine.

One of the four—that man
alone there on the front bench—
comes to our meeting.

He turns the hymnal end for end,
flips pages singing uuuh oooh,
and solos past the rests.

The deacon watches the man's
hand fumble the white pieces
of bread in untidy reverence.

At testimony time a deacon
walks to the front
with a mike and coil of cord.

The man stands, grabs the mike,
and the deacon flinches
and looks to the bishop.

The bishop straightens
in his seat, bends forward,
as lines in his forehead deepen.

The man twists-up his mouth,
moves a gray eyebrow, an eyelash,
and squints out a liminal mumble.

Babies stop crying and we
look from man to bishop until
the man slurs out—Amen.

He hands the mike back to the deacon,
slumps down, tongues out his lip,
and sleeps, mouth open like a babe.



Intellectuals in Mormon History: An Update

Stan Larson

MORE THAN TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO, Leonard Arrington asked some fifty prominent Mormons to identify the most important intellectuals in Mormon history. He published his findings in the spring 1969 issue of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* as "The Intellectual Tradition of the Latter-day Saints." After consulting with Arrington, I have replicated that earlier survey as closely as possible to discover what differences if any nearly a quarter of a century has made.

In order to cover a wide range of people in the survey, the help of four associates was enlisted. Dean L. May suggested the names of various Mormon historians who had a Ph.D. degree or the equivalent; L. Max Rogers suggested Mormon philosophers; Dale C. LeCheminant, Mormon educators; and Jessie L. Embry, Mormon women. All of their proposed names were utilized. Each person receiving a questionnaire was LDS (RLDS and non-Mormons were excluded) and had a Ph.D. degree or equivalent. In the original survey Arrington had used the wording "five most eminent intellectuals in Mormon history." It was felt best not to explain in any more detail who one might include or exclude. Admittedly this statement is ambiguous since it could mean historians who are actively writing on various topics in Mormon history, or individuals who in Mormon history from 1830 to the present stand out as the most intellectually brilliant, or individuals who happen to be Mormon but are geniuses in their chosen fields. There was no need to place the choices in any order, since each individual was counted each time he or she was listed by a respondent and the total number of votes was added up for each individual. Each person to whom the survey form was sent was instructed not to vote for him- or herself or the writer.

The total number of questionnaires sent was 152 with 94 responses. Three persons only voted for four, and one respondent voted for Jan Shipps, despite instructions to exclude non-Mormons. The forty-nine individuals

who received only one or two votes have been ignored. The results are as follows, listing the individuals in descending order except that all those receiving the same number of votes are listed alphabetically:

B. H. Roberts	73
Orson Pratt	52
Sterling M. McMurrin	41
Leonard J. Arrington	31
Joseph Smith, Jr.	31
James E. Talmage	30
Hugh W. Nibley	25
John A. Widtsoe	19
Lowell L. Bennion	16
Parley P. Pratt	13
Henry Eyring	11
Eliza R. Snow	8
Richard Bushman	7
Juanita Brooks	6
E. E. Ericksen	5
Thomas G. Alexander	4
Fawn M. Brodie (excommunicated)	4
J. Reuben Clark, Jr.	4
Eugene England	4
Dallin H. Oaks	4
D. Michael Quinn	4
Brigham Young	4
Obert C. Tanner	3
Edward W. Tullidge (excommunicated)	3
Laurel Thatcher Ulrich	3

Since Arrington only named the top twelve, it is instructive to compare the twelve who received the most votes in the present survey.

Comparative Order of Ranking

1969	1993
1. B. H. Roberts	B. H. Roberts
2. Orson Pratt	Orson Pratt
3. Joseph Smith, Jr.	Sterling M. McMurrin
4. Sterling M. McMurrin	Leonard J. Arrington
5. James E. Talmage	Joseph Smith, Jr.
6. John A. Widtsoe	James E. Talmage

7. Lowell L. Bennion	Hugh W. Nibley
8. Hugh W. Nibley	John A. Widtsoe
9. Parley P. Pratt	Lowell L. Bennion
10. E. E. Ericksen	Parley P. Pratt
11. William H. Chamberlin	Henry Eyring
12. J. Reuben Clark, Jr.	Eliza R. Snow

As can be seen the bottom three in 1969 have been replaced by others; but the top nine are still in the current list. In 1969 only Sterling M. McMurrin, Lowell L. Bennion, and Hugh W. Nibley of the top twelve were alive. Those same three are still alive, but McMurrin has moved from fourth to third, Bennion from seventh to ninth, and Nibley from eighth to seventh; also Leonard Arrington himself has entered the ranking and moved to fourth position.

The only persons from among the top twelve to receive a separate article in the recently published *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* are Joseph Smith, Orson Pratt, and Parley P. Pratt, but the encyclopedia article, "Intellectual History," by Richard F. Haglund, Jr., and David J. Whittaker, mentions either in the text or the bibliography all of the top twelve.

Truman G. Madsen, referring to the 1969 Arrington survey, summarized the ranking of Mormon intellectuals by writing in his biography of B. H. Roberts, *Defender of the Faith*, that "far and away the . . . choice of the majority was a peerless blacksmith—B. H. Roberts." What the present survey demonstrates is that sixty years after his death, B. H. Roberts remains the foremost intellectual in Mormonism, and if anything his position is even stronger now: in 1969 Roberts was 17 percent ahead of the second position; today he is 42 percent ahead.

The B. H. Roberts Papers at the University of Utah

Everett Cooley

IN THE SPRING 1969 ISSUE OF *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* appeared Leonard Arrington's article, "The Intellectual Traditions of the Latter-day Saints," based partly on a questionnaire he had sent to "50 prominent LDS intellectuals." "I asked them to list the five most eminent intellectuals in Mormon history," Arrington wrote but told them not to include physical scientists and not to vote for themselves. Thirty-eight of the fifty "intellectuals" responded with their selections. Leading the list of those most frequently nominated were, in order: B. H. Roberts, Orson Pratt, Joseph Smith, Sterling McMurrin, and James E. Talmage.

Since this listing in 1969, the year I assumed the position of Curator of Western Americana and University of Utah Archivist, I determined to collect books, manuscripts, and ephemera associated with these "intellectuals." The Marriott Library Special Collections policy was to acquire everything possible on Utah, the Mormons, and the West. So when an opportunity arose to acquire the writings of these men, I worked to obtain everything and anything I could. Most of the publications of these men were already in the library's Special Collections. In addition we had significant manuscript items of some of them including holograph correspondence and an original manuscript page of the Book of Mormon, which was removed from the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House by Lewis Bidemon.

We collected all of B. H. Roberts's published works, including Mervin B. Hogan's "A Parallel: A Matter of Chance vs. Coincidence," published in the *Rocky Mountain Mason*, January 1956. This article was based on a speech showing a parallel between the Book of Mormon and Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* given to the Timpanogas Club by Ben E. Roberts, son of B. H. Roberts. I subsequently was informed that Ben Roberts's son, Brigham E. Roberts, had his father's speech and a manuscript study of the Book of Mormon by his grandfather, B. H. Roberts. Sterling McMurrin, an acquaintance of Brigham E. Roberts, had been shown B. H. Roberts's manuscript

on the "Studies of the Book of Mormon." Since Brigham E. Roberts wanted the manuscript made available to scholars, McMurrin suggested that the University of Utah library was the appropriate depository for such an important document.

Through McMurrin's influence, I was able to meet with Brigham E. Roberts, who was amenable to the transfer of his grandfather's manuscript to the University of Utah library. However, when I went to pick up the manuscript, we discovered that one section of the study was missing, so Brigham Roberts delayed the transfer until he could add the missing pages to the document. Unfortunately, this took longer than anticipated, and Mr. Roberts died before we obtained the much desired study.

Meanwhile another member of the Roberts family had been in contact with McMurrin who again recommended that the B. H. Roberts papers in her possession be placed in the university library. A meeting was arranged with Adele W. Parkinson, widow of Wood R. Worsley, grandson of B. H. Roberts.

Subsequently on 27 December 1979, Mrs. Parkinson gave the University of Utah library significant B. H. Roberts papers. This was an eleemosynary, inter vivos gift, which assigned to the University of Utah all rights (including rights of publication) to all items in the collection consisting of: correspondence of B. H. Roberts pertaining to the Book of Mormon and typescripts (original and carbon copies with hand-written emendations) of the "Book of Mormon Difficulties—A Study," the "A Book of Mormon Study," and the "A Parallel Book of Mormon (1830)—View of the Hebrews (1823-5)."

Shortly after this transaction the widow of Brigham E. Roberts, Virginia D. Roberts, gave the university library additional B. H. Roberts manuscripts consisting of correspondence, additional copies of Roberts's "Book of Mormon Studies," a photocopy of B. H. Roberts's copy of Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* containing marginal notes by Roberts, and the original ribbon copy of B. H. Roberts's autobiography. Subsequently, B. H. Roberts's copy of the Ethan Smith book was given to the Marriott Library by Virginia Roberts and her son Thom.

Once again the gift transferred literary rights to the university. Furthermore to carry out her husband's wishes to see that this material was made available to scholars, Mrs. Roberts gave a sizable amount of money to aid with processing the collection and making it available for research.

The availability of the Roberts correspondence and studies allowed many scholars to use the collection and some urged its publication. Foremost among these were George D. Smith, Allen D. Roberts, and Wallace Cooper. Mssrs. Roberts and Cooper hired a secretary to type the entire manuscript and collate the various revisions that were now in the possession of the Marriott Library. Mr. Smith not only urged publication but

encouraged several respected Mormon historians to undertake the editing of the Book of Mormon study.

Aware that the University of Illinois Press had published several Mormon monographs, I contacted the assistant director of the press, Elizabeth Dulaney, who showed an interest if we could obtain a recognized scholar to edit the manuscript. Sterling McMurrin had already agreed to write a brief biographical sketch for an edited volume of the Book of Mormon study. Our problem was finding a qualified editor. It was then that Brigham D. Madsen stepped forward to take on the monumental task of turning the B. H. Roberts study into a publishable manuscript. With his usual careful research and writing, Madsen went to work and a manuscript was finally presented to the University of Illinois Press, where it passed the scrutiny of two prominent scholars of Mormon literature. Scott G. Kenney compiled an index, and in 1985 despite the protest of two Brigham Young University professors to the University of Illinois Press, B. H. Roberts's *Studies of the Book of Mormon* appeared.

The initial printing was 1,500 copies. Soon after a negative review of the Roberts book appeared in the "Church News" section of the *Deseret News*, the edition sold out and a second printing was published. With steady sales over the next two years, the second printing was sold and a third printing appeared the following year. Royalties of more than \$4,000 have been paid to the Marriott Library and will be used to fund future publications or acquisitions of other significant manuscripts. (The editors chose not to accept any money for their work.) A trade paperback edition of the work, which allowed Madsen to correct some minor errors, was published by Signature Books of Salt Lake City in 1992.

For the success of this publishing venture, many persons are responsible and deserving of thanks. Foremost are the donors Virginia Roberts and her son Thom and Adele Worsley Parkinson. Others are biographer and editor Sterling M. McMurrin and Brigham D. Madsen, George D. Smith, Allen Roberts, Wallace Cooper, Margery Ward, Elizabeth Dulaney, and Scott Kenney.

B. H. Roberts's Autobiography

Gary James Bergera

LESS THAN ONE YEAR BEFORE HIS DEATH in 1933 at the age of seventy-six, Brigham H. Roberts began the bittersweet task of composing his autobiography (which was finally published nearly sixty years later by Signature Books). Known variously as "biographical notes" and "Life Story," Roberts's memoirs span the breadth of his life from the late 1850s as a neglected child in Dickensian England to post-World War I Utah as a respected, outspoken official of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They emphasize his adventures in pioneer Utah, his missions for the church, his career in partisan politics (including his opposition to women's suffrage and to prohibition), his bid for the U.S. House of Representatives (from which he was barred for polygamy), and his activities as one of seven presidents of the First Council of the Seventy.

Only briefly did Roberts broach his marriages and family life; the historical and theological writings for which he had become known such as his *Comprehensive History of the Church*; or the last fifteen or so years of his life. He did not mention his appointment as a chaplain in France during World War I; his controversial study of the origin of the Book of Mormon; his unpublished theological magnum opus, "The Truth, The Way, The Life"; his treatises on *Joseph Smith: Prophet, Teacher, The Mormon Doctrine of Deity, Defense of the Faith and the Saints*, or *Succession in the Presidency*; or his disagreements with ecclesiastical colleagues over politics and church doctrine. As he approached more contemporary events perhaps he was unwilling to be as revealing as he had been in recounting earlier experiences; or perhaps the job of dictating his life story was simply too much of a strain for a man already suffering the debilitating effects of diabetes, depression, and old age; or perhaps he simply was reluctant to open old wounds.

Of his autobiographical notes, Roberts once disingenuously commented, "I do not think much of them. The conviction grows upon me that they ought not to be published. First, because my life is not of sufficient importance for a biography; second that it could not be fully told without arraigning others, and if told it must be fully and of course truthfully told; if that were done all Israel [the LDS church] could be greatly shocked. The

only thing that would induce me to publish it would be to prevent someone else half and weakly doing it." Of course, had Roberts lived longer there is little doubt that he would have seen to the completion of his "notes." More than most, Roberts appreciated the lasting historical, social, literary, and political value of publication.

Although not completely reliable in every detail, nor as definitive and as thorough as might be hoped for, Roberts's autobiography reveals a man of complexity and contradiction. For example, he insisted that he loved his mother deeply, yet it is apparent that he was devastated as a child when she abandoned him and his sister to abusive strangers while she emigrated with two of her other children to America. Her subsequent less-than-enthusiastic greeting at their reunion in Salt Lake City only underscored her apparent ambivalence. Roberts's later relationships with women, especially his three wives and fifteen children, were probably colored by the conflicting emotions he felt toward his mother.

In addition, although Roberts pointed out that Mormon leaders hoped to double their political clout by granting women's suffrage, he nonetheless was much slower than his contemporaries to be converted to equal rights for women. It is difficult to imagine that the same person who would later argue against prohibition—saying that nothing is "so dear to me as the liberty of the individual"—would not be similarly supportive of women's suffrage. But such are the contradictions and inconsistencies that spot Roberts's life.

While he chronicled in his autobiography a few incidents in his life after the mid-1920s, such as his concern over the status of the Seventy, Roberts failed to mention the deaths of two of his wives and his arguments with church officials. His first wife, Sarah Louisa Smith, twenty-three years old when they married in 1878, gave birth to seven children before passing away in 1923. She was followed less than three years later by Roberts's third wife, Margaret Curtis (Shipp). Seven years Roberts's senior, she married Roberts in 1890 and died at the age of sixty-nine in 1926. Celia Dibble, Roberts's second wife, was twenty years old at the time of her marriage in 1884. She bore eight children and outlived her husband by two-and-one-half years, passing away in 1936. In his autobiography, Roberts noted in passing only his marriages to Sarah and Celia, and his children by Celia.

In late 1921, two years after returning home from France where he served as a chaplain during World War I, Roberts was asked to respond to a series of questions regarding the historicity of the Book of Mormon. In response, he produced two manuscripts, "Book of Mormon Difficulties" and "A Book of Mormon Study," detailing problems which could be used to question the validity of the church's founding scripture as an ancient document.

The first manuscript was presented to the Council of Twelve Apostles

for their consideration in late January the next year. Roberts had noted linguistic problems in the Book of Mormon, wondering, for example, how so many languages could have evolved from one language in only one thousand years. Also, he was concerned about the lack of archeological evidence for Book of Mormon mention of domestic animals, iron, steel, wheat, barley, and wheeled vehicles. The second manuscript, which he apparently completed in 1923 and did not present to church authorities, discussed possible Book of Mormon parallels with an early 1820s book on native Americans and ancient Israelites, entitled *View of the Hebrews*, and internal inconsistencies in the Book of Mormon.

In a cover letter to church president Heber J. Grant, which accompanied the first manuscript, Roberts explained his motives for undertaking such a project. "I am thoroughly convinced," he wrote, "of the necessity of all the brethren herein addressed becoming familiar with these Book of Mormon problems, and finding the answer for them, as it is a matter that will concern the faith of the youth of the Church now as also in the future, as well as such casual inquiries that may come to us from the outside world." Believing that "our faith is not only unshaken but unshakable," Roberts felt it was desirable to face these challenges directly. "Maintenance of the truth of the Book of Mormon is absolutely essential to the integrity of the whole Mormon movement," he wrote in another letter to Grant, "for it is inconceivable that the Book of Mormon should be untrue in its origin and character and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to be a true church."

Roberts's controversial studies were interrupted when he was called in early 1922 to serve as president of the church's eastern states mission, headquartered in New York City. Although never printed during his life, his two manuscripts were first made available in 1980 by Modern Microfilm Company of Salt Lake City and then published by the University of Illinois Press in 1985 as *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, edited and introduced by Brigham D. Madsen, with a biographical essay by Sterling M. McMurrin.

After five years in New York City, Roberts was released in 1927 and began work on a new theological project he hoped would be his "master-work." Late the next year, he submitted to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles a bulky, 747-page manuscript entitled, "The Truth, The Way, The Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology." Designed as a lesson manual for Melchizedek priesthood quorums throughout the church, Roberts's ambitious work contained, he explained, "a full harvest of all that I have thought, and felt and written through the nearly fifty years of my ministry, that is on the theme of the title." Within three weeks, the twelve apostles appointed a reading committee, composed of Elders George Albert Smith, David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, Stephen L. Richards, and Melvin J. Ballard,

"to examine the manuscript of Brother Roberts' work, and make a recommendation as to its suitability for the study of the High Priesthood."

One year later, committee chair George Albert Smith reported his group's findings to the rest of the twelve. The committee found that by and large the work was a "very worthy" treatment of church beliefs. They were, however, uncomfortable with "some objectionable doctrines advanced which are of a speculative nature and appear to be out of harmony with the revelations of the Lord and the fundamental teachings of the Church."

The committee voiced special concern with the following points: the existence of races of humans before Adam; the suggestion that Adam was a translated being subject to death who did not bring death to his posterity as a result of the Fall; Adam's placement on the earth before other life belonging to our present dispensation; the complete destruction of all life prior to Adam's advent; and God's continuing acquisition of knowledge. Other problems existed, and of the fifty-four chapters, twenty were found to contain questionable teachings.

The twelve formally reported to President Grant in mid-May 1930, one month after Roberts lost part of his right foot to diabetes, that "[we] do not regard said work in its present form as a suitable study for the Priesthood quorums of the Church." Throughout the next months, Roberts was told that his treatise would be published if he modified or changed altogether his more controversial concepts in keeping with the committee's suggestions. Roberts refused, adamant that his work appear in its present form or not at all. Consequently, though abbreviated excerpts have since appeared in articles and books, Roberts's magnum opus, "The Truth, The Way, The Life," has gone unpublished for more than sixty years. (In fact, only recently has work begun under the editorship of Stan Larson, a curator at the University of Utah library, on preparing the manuscript for publication.)

Joseph Fielding Smith, who had served on the committee of apostles to review Roberts's manuscript, subsequently criticized Roberts's views in public. Always ready to defend his position, the feisty Roberts immediately registered an official complaint with the First Presidency. "If Elder Smith is merely putting forth his own opinions I call in question his competency to utter such dogmatism either as a scholar or as an Apostle," he wrote to President Grant. But Grant recorded in his diary, "I think no good can be accomplished by dealing in mysteries, and that is what I feel in my heart of hearts these brethren are both doing." Roberts hoped that a formal airing of both sides would help pave the way for the publication of his own beliefs.

Hearings before the twelve at which Roberts and Smith presented arguments in support of their views—especially on the existence of pre-Adamic races—resulted in a stalemate, and the controversy was referred back to the First Presidency. Lacking an authoritative statement on the subject, Grant and counselors ruled that the topic was not to be raised again

by church officials, though one general authority, James E. Talmage, eventually countered Smith's denunciations in a 1931 address in the Salt Lake Tabernacle. Talmage argued for the existence of death before the fall of Adam and for a geologically old earth. His speech was later published and widely distributed.

The final three years of Roberts's life were marked by the publication of his six-volume *Comprehensive History of the Church* in commemoration of the centennial of the church's founding, completion of routine church assignments and administrative matters, public sermons (Roberts was a favorite speaker at funerals), attendance at the World Fellowship of Faiths in Chicago, and the preparation and dictation of his autobiography. Despite bouts of severe depression, including migraine headaches and spells of dizziness, Roberts also contemplated several new projects, including the establishment of a theological school, but poor health prevented him from accomplishing these goals.

Shortly before noon on Tuesday, 27 September 1933, Roberts passed away in Salt Lake City. He was buried four days later on 1 October. His last words, reportedly spoken to an attending nurse, were: "You had better give me my coat. I am not going to stay here in bed. I have stayed long enough."



Gifts of the Spirit

Michael Fillerup

BROTHER RICE, THE FIRST COUNSELOR, says the bishop thinks the young people might be more responsive to someone who, oh, speaks a little more their language. Then he smiles, hands me the Sunday school manual, Course 16, and extends his hand in fond thanks and congratulations. "Sister Mahan," he says, "the bishop feels you'll be perfect for this calling!"

I don't accept the manual or Brother Rice's liver-spotted hand. I'm still wondering what, exactly, the bishop means by that, "speaks a little more their language"? Does he categorically assume that anyone under forty "speaks their language" or at least a comprehensible dialect of it? Does he know something about me he should not?

But how could this be? Aside from what he has deduced from a few passing words on the Sabbath and a yea-nay temple recommend interview last month, I am a veritable stranger. On the Ward Talent Survey, Ryan ambitiously checked off such utilitarian skills as carpentry, cross-country skiing, auto mechanics, and hang-gliding, while I had to scan the hundred-odd items twice in vain before marking a modest "X" beside the nebulous "OTHER."

I suppose the bishop has his reasons, inspiration being among them. I suppose too that in his eyes I appear not much different from the other young mothers in our ward: a little self-righteously harried and hassled but doing my Sunday best to conceal it while struggling to stay within one size or ten pounds of my honeymoon figure (whichever proves easier). I attend my church meetings regularly, support Ryan in his calling as Scoutmaster (the reward, or penalty, for Talent Survey candor), and wear my dresses tea-length, or just below the knee. A good role model in other words.

The bishop has no reason to think otherwise. I passed my interview with flying colors, although I must confess an untimely twitch when he neared the end of the script: "Sister Mahan, is there anything in your past that is unresolved or any transgression that has not been reconciled with the proper church authorities?"

I bowed my head and said no.

"Is there any reason in your mind why you should not attend the House of the Lord?"

Again the twitch, the wince. And again: "No."

You see, I have this little problem, or perhaps not a problem but a gift. Can the two be synonymous? Gift and sin, sin and gift? I stand condemned, on the one hand, for committing the act, but equally on the other if I hide it under a bushel. Omission or commission. Damned if I do, damned if I don't. I have this problem with my problem. It's my license to fib a bit. Sparingly. Betimes. When moved upon by The Spirit.

I do have other sins, not of this fold—call them "resolved on paper." Is it wrong to use the one to fertilize the other? As long as the tree bears good fruit? God's gift? Or fertilizer for a very different farmer? The whole thing, as you can see, gets rather complicated.

There is desperation on Brother Rice's pallid face. If he does not find some willing teacher, the mantle for today's instruction will fall upon his scrawny shoulders. I do not want it to fall upon mine.

A year ago I taught the Star A class in Primary with a clear conscience. In fact I quite enjoyed it. There was something refreshing, even stimulating, about having a captive audience of little people with trusting faces full of simple faith and innocence. When I told them Jonah was swallowed by a giant fish, they did not refute my words with adolescent skepticism. No, their little eyes bulged and their mouths widened as if they themselves were being swallowed by the sea beast. "What kind of fish!" they gasped. "Wow!" And I could tell by the upward curve of their lips and the sparkle in their eyes they believed every word, nothing doubting, just as my two little girls believe. And the stories were all right there in the scriptures. And there was safety and security in that.

Course 16 is another matter. It has nothing to do with discipline. Brother Rice assures me this group has matured well beyond the obnoxious spitwad stage that is the trademark of the deacons. These young people, he says, are thirsty for knowledge. They are beginning to probe, to question, and, yes, to challenge! This intrigues me on the one hand and halts me on the other. It very obviously scares the daylights out of Brother Rice, who confesses meekly, "I just don't relate very well to that age . . . an old-timer like me."

Fortunately, I have an easy out. "Brother Rice, I would *love* to teach this very exciting and challenging class, but . . ." I smile apologetically. "Didn't you know? We're moving in two weeks."

Suddenly Brother Rice looks ill. "No, I didn't know that," he replies glumly. "Is—I mean, did Ryan get another job?"

"He's being transferred to Sacramento—we are."

Brother Rice nods with that solemn resignation of one who has received tragic but inevitable news. "Well, I'm sorry to hear that." Then

as an afterthought, "We'll really miss you." He smiles and I note the stress lines like a ring of thunderbolts around his eyes. Then I do something very stupid. I let pity get the best of me. When I could turn and walk away with a valid excuse and a clear conscience, instead I put my hand on Brother Rice's shoulder like a good sister: "Of course, I could teach the lesson today . . ."

In a flash youth and vigor have returned to his haggard countenance. The sad scales have fallen from his eyes; the creases have vanished from his cheeks. For a fleeting moment, I am the Master Healer who has commanded him to take up his bed and walk. I must confess a surge of pleasure and power as he grips my hand and gasps, breathlessly, "You will?"

I smile. "It's for the Kingdom, right?"

This time he offers me the drab gray manual as if it were a rare and precious gift. But there is something suspect in the way he winks at me. Twice. "Ten minutes," he says, tapping his watch.

Judging by Brother Boyack's meticulous yellow highlighting, next up is Lesson Eleven, "Hold to the Rod." Objective: To help students gain a better understanding of and appreciation for the scriptures. I skim the material and grimace: it's a yawner. The Sandman's going to be my guest speaker. I suffer visions of a gallery of high school heads nodding off one by one.

Then I panic! I must not allow this to happen. After all, I am the Chosen, the one who speaks a little more their language. I am supposed to be better, an improvement. These young people, who are they expecting? Mother Cool? Ms. Hip? A Sunday school messiah? No, but someone a little more scintillating than Brother Boyack, alias Mr. Computer, the pompadoured C.P.A. who put them to sleep every week droning on in his nasal monotone. I am not a teacher by profession or by any other means than parental default, yet for some reason it is essential that I succeed here. I sense this is a test, and not of my pedagogical prowess.

All right then. I'll start out with an informal "get-to-know-you" session, followed by an ad hoc version of Celestial Jeopardy. One thing is certain: I will turn to the manual only as a last resort. I'm bucking church policy, I know, but I have a special mission here: survival without egg on my face. And who knows? Just maybe, if I am very fortunate, I will be inspired to run some genuine AC/DC through the iron rod.

The hall buzzer rasps a rude warning: five minutes! I rush around the little classroom rearranging the chairs in an intimate semi-circle. Then I sit centerstage, the dreaded lesson manual on my lap, and wait.

Two minutes later the Barton boy trudges in—gloomy Paul with the Ben Franklin glasses, droopy brown bangs, and weary eyes of his father, the astronomy professor. *Weltschmerz* written all over him. I recognize him from his periodic cello solos in sacrament meeting.

"Hello, Paul! How's it going today?"

Is this speaking his language?

He plops down in a folding chair, chin in hand. "Fine," he mumbles to the linoleum floor.

Next enters one of the Collins boys. Six-two, six-three—they're all giants nowadays. A white bread face scatter-gunned with pimples and picked scabs. His head is oddly elevated in back, like a blue jay's.

"And you are . . ." Glancing at the roll. "Troy?"

A friendly smile. Shades of my little Star A's! "Yes."

"And how are you today, Troy?"

His pimpled forehead buckles. "Well . . ." A deep, ponderous sigh. "Well . . ." Another sigh, deeper. Troy, Troy, easy. A simple "fine, thank you" will do. "Well . . ." Mulling it over like Hamlet. "Not too good," he says. "I guess I went to bed late . . . And I didn't spend much time with other people . . . I don't play sports . . . and I don't belong to any clubs at school . . ."

"I see."

Then Becky Lynn strides in, the bishop's daughter. The bossy body of her mother and the mild-mannered lips of her dad. Strawberry blond hair cut straight across her freckled forehead like Heidi of the Alps. She drifts over to the window of frosted glass, shoves it halfway open, and pokes her head outside, sucking in the fragrance of the pines. It is our first sunny day in weeks. Tulips are blooming in every yard. Lilacs are frothing like a purple dessert. Becky pulls her head back inside and sighs, pleadingly, "Ohhh . . . Sister Mahan, can we have class outside today?"

My first test. Am I going to be a letter-of-the-law stick-in-the-mud like Mr. Computer? Is Sister Mahan going to be hip or square? Well, why not go outside? I, too, am a sun lover—was a beach bum in my day—but I also know the narcotic effect of sunshine. I'll lose them to the tulips. Troy and Paul are eyeing me curiously, waiting. I am momentarily reprieved when two more enter, Kim Felder and Susan Rogers, young debutantes in long satin dresses with puffy sleeves and ruffled hems. A pair of Scarlett O'Haras. Kim, the glamorous one with the water skier's tan, crosses her legs and stifles a yawn. Naturally swarthy, Susan appears even more so in wedding white. I nod to them. "Ladies . . ." I am sorely tempted to bow. I remember their type. "Prom night?"

They look at each other and titter.

Next comes a tall, blue-eyed blond with shoulders like a Valkyrie and a bored-to-tears look. She obviously did not attend last night's prom. She is wearing a blue velour blouse with a V-neck that plunges daringly down into her cleavage. Her navy blue skirt is as skimpy as a cheerleader's, but her bare legs, peppered with black nubs, are molded more for rugby than for pom-and-cheer. She withdraws a chair from our cozy semi-circle and

tilts back in the corner, arms crossed, head back, chomping on a wad of gum.

I scan the roll sheet. "Charlene?"

She looks up, her square head rolling to the side in a half-shake, half-nod. "Tate," she says in a husky voice. "Misty."

I know her type as well. Biding time.

At that instant my objective for Lesson Eleven takes an uncalculated twist. I am thinking, and I am not certain why, exactly, but: I just want to get through this thing without suffering or inflicting any damage.

Mark Norris slips in last, closing the door politely behind him. Bristly blond hair, military shoulders, Popeye forearms. Casually formal in a short-sleeved blue shirt, slacks, and striped tie. Nodding curtly, he sits down next to Troy.

"Can we, Sister Mahan?"

Becky Lynn. Staring out the window again, humming to herself.

"The suggestion has been made," I say, "that we hold class outside today. All in favor?"

Four hands immediately go up, then a fifth, Troy's, after he has had sufficient time to weigh the eternal pros and cons of his decision. Gloomy Paul looks at me and shrugs.

"Outside it is!" I exclaim. "B.Y.O.C.—bring your own chair!"

With the usual clatter and conversation, we migrate outside and set up the folding chairs on the grass in a replicate semi-circle: Becky, Mark, Kim, Susan, Troy, Paul. Misty, who has not brought a chair, stretches her long body sideways among the dandelions and props up her head like a drowsy Cleopatra.

It truly is a magnificent day! The sky is spotless save a tiny twist of cloud, like a stray handkerchief or a stitch of mischief clothing. The view too is impressive: snow-patched peaks to the north and forests of ponderosa pines to the south. Festive weather. Hardly conducive to teaching or receiving hard core gospel doctrine. And yet, a thought: on pastoral occasions like this, didn't the Savior deliver his most poignant sermons? And by what means? Ah! Parables. Stories. Fictions. A sower went forth to sow . . . And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites . . . A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me . . .

But here I stop and caution myself: watch it.

A red convertible cruises by, the bare-chested passengers waving beach towels as the driver gives his horn a teasing beep. Kim and Susan turn and wave. I remind myself that even the Master did not have to compete with sports cars and M-TV. Becky Lynn's eyes roll, cloud gazing, as Kim Felder inhales the scent of fresh-cut grass.

I say the opening prayer, then introduce myself. "Sister Mahan, in case

you don't know me . . ." Searching their indifferent faces, I abandon the "get acquainted" activity and try another tack.

"I assume—at least I hope—most of you have reached that inquisitive stage where you have serious questions about the gospel. That's good. That's healthy. I'd like to pursue an 'Everything You Always Wanted to Know But Were Afraid to Ask' format. So if you have any questions—any gospel-related questions—please, ask. If I don't know the answer, we'll find one. Together."

Kim and Susan are waving stealthily to another passing car. The bushy-headed driver guns his engine playfully. Kid's stuff. Grow up, will you? Kim looks at me, smooths her satin skirt, and smiles apologetically. Misty remains on her side, plucking blades of grass. They are sixteen and seventeen, going on infinity. High school juniors and seniors. What are their plans?

Kim Felder sighs. Incipient ennui. "I'm going to the Y." Of course. Foreordained from birth. An "MRS." major?

Susan is going to the local university, where her father teaches physics. Paul too. These professors' kids. Mark, Troy, and Becky are juniors. Misty? She shrugs, flicks a blade of grass. "I don't know." A Nowhere Woman. A drifter. I vaguely know her stodgy father, the county assessor who also serves on the stake high council.

They all seem young yet old. On the threshold. Kim, Susan, Paul, Misty. It occurs to me that in October I will be exactly twice their age, and suddenly I too feel young but old. In June of the year they were born, I was standing on the Pacific Coast Highway in bell-bottom jeans, sandals, and a Levi jacket over a Poor Boy tanktop, and nothing on under that. My hair, which had always seemed so straight and plain and boringly brown, was chopped short like a boy's and hidden underneath a Yosemite Sam hat. A little under six-feet tall, I was cursed with the mammoth breasts of my mother, and I was trying to hide that (or "those") as well. I carried a white duffel bag stuffed with an extra pair of bell-bottom jeans, another tanktop, some junk food snacks, and a few female necessities, which did not include makeup, mascara, or anything you would call "cosmetic."

You see I was not going to be a hypocrite like my father the stake president. I was going to practice what I had been preaching for the past year-and-a-half, masquerading as a hippie at Taft High School. At last I was calling my father's bluff and leaving home to do and be the real thing. I was fed up. In my teenage eyes, my mother was a house cow who mooed to the patriarchal whims of my father; she was a baby-making machine without a brain, and I frankly told her so. In her eyes I was poisoning my little brothers and sisters with the wicked likes of Mick Jagger, Jim Morrison, and the philosophies of Susan Taylor: seminary's a drag; church is worse. Marx was right: dope them with Jesus. A bunch of fat cats preaching peace but

sending boys to war so they can make a dirty dollar. The Great Mormon Dream: a swimming pool in every backyard and two station wagons in every garage.

My father didn't like it. I was tarnishing his sterling image. How dare I straggle into sacrament meeting with a daisy painted on one cheek and MAKE LOVE, NOT WAR on the other! Who did I think I was? We had rules in our home ("There is beauty all around, when there's love at . . ."). If I couldn't abide by those rules, then I'd just have to . . . Go ahead, say it! *Say it!* Cast out, like Satan's blackballed one-third. Bold words for a poor little rich girl. I won't last a day without my tape deck. Easy for me to damn the establishment I'm sponging off of. I'll come running home, begging home. I'm just a little girl, a spoiled rotten little rich girl.

Okay, Mr. Clean. Have it your way, Mr. Stronger-Than-Dirt.

So I stuck one thumb out, inserted the other in the pocket of my jeans, and, trying to appear as tough and manly as possible, waited for my first official ride while the rest of my senior class primped for graduation. The early bird surfers were out, the sun had barely burned through the morning fog, and I was heading north to nowhere.

"Some of you may have testimonies," I say.

A few nods. Susan Rogers surreptitiously touches a handkerchief to her boxer's nose.

"Some of you may think you have. And others . . . well, you're searching. And that's good too. Eventually you'll all have to find out for yourselves. You can only live on borrowed light for so long."

Stop-and-go rides up the California coast. The bearded driver lighting up a joint, passing it back to me: "Wanna hit?"

I shake my head. Not yet. Although I look the part, I'm new to this. Time. I need time.

But that is the real beginning. That is when I learn how, or discover that I even have it. You say no thanks but you feel funny, and phony, and you want to take his mind off it. So you begin talking. It starts with a little joke or anecdote, but once you get going, the words keep flowing with the road, and he keeps nodding, smiling, driving. That's the main thing. And soon you're an off-ramp, a town, a city past his destination. And you get better at it, better fast. Because the better you get, the longer you stay out of the rain, out of the cold, out of the night. And something else: if you're good enough, it will keep his eyes on the road and his hands out of your pants.

"Is there anything in particular you'd like to discuss today?"

The sun is a warm balm on the back of my neck; I can feel layers of history, my personal Ice Age, melting.

"Nothing?"

Crossing the Golden Gate Bridge in an old milk truck. The long-haired driver with the guru beard and the mellow voice, thick and honeyed,

uttering two words: "Here okay?" Oddments rattling in back. Sergeant Pepper on the eight-track: Picture yourself in a boat on a river/with tangerine trees and marmalade skies . . .

I already am.

Berkeley at 1 a.m. A skinny student in blue jeans and nothing else dashes out of a brick apartment building, bare feet pattering across the pavement, long hair flying like a banner. Slapping two slices of bologna in my hand: "Peace, brother! It's the same shit wherever you walk! We're all stuck in it together!" Dashing off. Quick patter. Then sirens. Night screams. The cold northern sky where the stars dissolve into powder. Upper windows opening, heads popping out: "The Pigs! The Blue Meanies!" I hunker behind a telephone booth and watch through warped glass the flurry of billy clubs windmilling through the mob of stringy-haired girls and bearded boys shielding their heads with their hands. Gimme shelter in a room of wall-to-wall people, stinking of sweat, jasmine, and hash. Mexican felt paintings and black light posters. Easy Rider, a headbanded Jimi Hendrix kissing the purple sky. Half-naked bodies covering the floor. A voice: "Find some floor."

"Nothing in particular you want to talk about?"

Troy's index finger goes up, down, then up again. His eyes pinch shut in earnest; his face is scabbed like a martyr's. "I'd like to learn how to get closer to God."

"Okay, I think the lesson ties right in with that." I flip through the manual to Lesson Eleven. "'Hold to the Rod.' What do they mean by that, Troy?"

Suddenly the yellow warmth has gone damp gray. I look up to see the solitary cloud has burgeoned and blotted out the sun, like a mote in the golden eye. Kim Felder crosses her bare arms with a shiver. Misty looks up, smirks, plucks another blade. The surviving threads of sunlight are snagged in the pines like blond hairs in a brush.

I feel the hairs on my arms stiffen but not from the sudden chill. One more Sunday and I will disappear into the easy oblivion of these young people's lives, and this bothers me. Instead of merely getting through the lesson without inflicting or suffering damage, what pearls of wisdom can I impart? What red flags should I wave? And at what cost? To me? To them? On the one hand, they ought not travel that rough and meandering road when they can take the streamlined route to celestial marriage, pure parenthood, et cetera. On the other hand, if I could turn the clock back seventeen years, would I play my part any differently? Some scenes, yes, definitely, but others . . . ? It's the gift: there's a price tag for the privilege. Then again, I ask myself: what would I have the good Course 16 instructor tell my daughters twelve and thirteen years from now? It is far safer, and

easier, to plod through the objectives and then smile, shake hands with them, and go on down the road.

"Okay, so we get the iron rod from Lehi's dream—those who cling to the rod will find their way through the mists of darkness. And what are they, the mists of darkness?"

"Temptations," Mark mumbles. "Isn't that what they are?"

"Exactly. But what's the iron rod to us? I mean, what *is* it?"

Midnight, fifteen minutes past, and I have been alternately standing and sitting on a freeway on-ramp outside of Roseville for three hours. It's chilly, cold for California, and the cars, when they come, screech tightly around the corner and roar mockingly by. I'm tempted to creep onto the freeway proper and stick out my thumb in violation of the on-ramp law. Do I dare? Think, Susan! Think! If the cops come. I'm traveling naked: no driver's license, no I.D. Clouds hang from the sky like cobwebs. Any second it's going to rain. I can feel a premonitory fizzle on my skin. The creepy crawlies. I'm famished. Have eaten nothing since the Hostess Twinkie I bought at the 7-Eleven this morning. I'm down to my last dollar and counting. I feel like crying—no, I am crying, crumbling at the thought of hot chocolate and donuts on a rainy Friday night watching the Tonight Show in the bean bag chair in the step-down family room. My father's voice suddenly not so terrible. My mother in the kitchen in her big flowered dress, the fat on her upper arms shaking as she magically converts little mounds of dough into cinnamon-frosted sweet rolls just for me. I close my eyes and can almost smell them baking. Mom? Momma?

And then my voice travels elsewhere, a notch higher. Father in Heaven? Father? I am on the verge when a car, a blue VW bug, comes to my rescue. There's a woman inside who reminds me of someone. She leans across the passenger seat, rolls down the window and smiles. "It's awfully late to be hitching. You want to come to my place and crash?" I know her face: black pageboy hair and dimples like little parenthetical smiles. She is thirty-five, maybe a little younger, and she is beckoning me in the voice of my mother: Come.

She smiles again. At that instant she is an angel. "Get in," she says.

But I balk. Why? Something, a hidden hand tugging at my denim flaps. Then I do the unbelievable. "No thanks," I say. "I think I'll keep on truckin'."

She smiles. Flashes her wonderful teeth. "Okay!" and as her VW puttters down the road, I'm thinking, wondering, chastising: Susan, what on earth have you done? Manna from heaven and you toss it to the dogs! The angel of deliverance and you wave her on!

And just about that time the rain starts. The clouds rip open and dump on me. Punishment, I'm thinking, God's wrath for rejecting his sweet messenger.

I take off my Levi jacket, put it over my head, and crouch down over

my duffel bag, praying for the end of the world or sunrise, whichever comes first.

Forty-five minutes later she is back: the angel in the blue VW.

"Looks like you still haven't gotten a ride."

I shake my head. I think I even smile, wishing my dimples were half as charming as hers.

"Wanna crash?"

I smile again, reach for my duffel bag.

We drive a mile or so to her apartment where she gives me dry clothing, a pair of soft flannel pajamas delicately spotted with little pink flowers, and tosses my wet things into her dryer.

"Hungry?"

I nod.

She warms up a bowl of chicken noodle soup, sets Saltine crackers on a plate, pours me a jumbo glass of orange juice. Then apologizes for her lack of victuals—her word—and winks. "Shopping day tomorrow."

The simple meal is like a post-fast feast. I indulge ravenously as she smiles, talks. She's a teacher at the community college. History. I note the posters on her living room wall: Tatanka Yotanka and other warrior chiefs. The warm soup and crackers swell in my belly like a beautiful birth. A hide-a-bed, the sheets turned down, awaits me. Does heaven come any closer than this?

She wants to know a little about me, so I tell her. "You're welcome to stay," she says. "For as long as you like." She smiles, looks at my cupped hands. "More soup?"

I shake my head. "No thanks. It was great!"

"I want to tell you something," she says, and the smile is still there but something has shifted in her voice. Her hand reaches across the table and gently, tenderly, clasps mine. It is the first touch of love I have acknowledged in a long, long time, and it frightens me. "I don't want you to be afraid," she says. "Are you afraid?"

I shake my head. Simply. Dumbly. She looks nervous which makes me nervous. What she says and what I think I hear her saying get all jumbled. It is something about who she is, what I am, what we all are, and why.

The next morning she drives me to the freeway on-ramp, northbound. She presses a five dollar bill into my hand and motions to the Bob's Big Boy across the street. "Good luck! I'd join you, but I've got to work." She smiles her lovely smile, but it is marred by a sadness: the dimples are little frowns.

"The iron rod?" Troy looks at me with beetled brows. "The scriptures?"

"Yes! Yes! The scriptures! And how do the scriptures help us? Mark?"

He lifts his chin from his doubled fists; color floods back into his knuckled cheeks. "It's the word of God," he says.

Typical. Cautious. I can barely hide my disappointment. "Kim?"

Uncrossing her legs, a half yawn. "They can help you solve problems."

"Okay. Like what kinds of problems?" I gaze across the street at the singled rooftops soaring into the mountain skies. Rim of the world view, an island jutting above the sea of evergreen. Kim's home, Susan's, Troy's, Paul's just down the street. Mormon Hill.

She replies, a bewildered beauty. "What kinds?"

"Yes. What kinds?"

"Well . . ." That voice, that Valley Girl smile, so many light years away.

Midnight again. Stuck again, stuck in Marysville at midnight. Again. I have just walked under the railroad crossing to the outskirts when I hear voices, loud voices singing dirty white girl songs. And then I'm running, running for my life. Poppa! Poppa! I'm a little girl being chased by the Gordons' German shepherd. It's jumping all over me, biting my pony tail, tugging, tearing. Poppa! Poppa, help me! My father is charging across the street with no shirt on and half his face lathered with shaving cream. He scoops me up in his arms and turns his back on the animal who keeps snarling and biting and chewing and tearing all the way back across the street and into the house, and when he puts me down, his back looks like hamburger and I'm crying, Oh Poppa, Poppa, Poppa! But his hand is stroking my head as he whispers in my ear, "It's all right, baby. It's okay now."

I hear their voices growing louder, filthier, and I'm running scared. There is nothing but a black sea in front of me, Outer Darkness. I stop. Turn. I count six of them, running. Dear God, Father . . .

Then headlights burst through the tunnel like a sunrise, the sun I pray for every night now. I leap up and wave my thumb pleadingly. Zoom! Quick draft. Brrrr! Shoot! Damn! Then brake lights, a double blood grin backing up to me.

It is another angel, except he's black this time. A big young black man and his beautiful girlfriend with a long Nefertiti neck and a multi-colored tunic and jewels like an African queen. Maybe they're just married because a ring is sparkling on her fingers and his hand is on her chocolate thigh and both of them are wearing that love-sick look that prompts acts of compassion.

"You are one lucky Josephina!" he says. "Where you headin' to?" His voice is deep and sweet like molasses.

"Paradise!" I answer. It is the spot on the road map where my finger landed this morning when I quite literally closed my eyes and took a blind stab.

"Say what? Hey, sister, we're *all* going to Paradise eventually, but where you headin' for the here and *now*?"

"Paradise."

I slam the lesson manual shut. "Okay, how many of you actually read the scriptures?"

Troy's hand goes right up, then, tentatively, Becky Lynn's. But I'm losing them. Kim and Susan are gazing off again, looking for red convertibles. Mark is picking a scab on his Popeye forearms.

"What about you, Misty?"

She looks up. Flicks grass, nods.

"Okay, let me tell you something. When I was your age . . ." I can tell by the weary revolutions of their eyes they have heard this cross-generational sermon a thousand times too often. I re-open the manual only to find a list of points for helping students read the scriptures: Attitude, Motivation, Fasting, Prayer.

All right then. To the quick. "Look," I say, tossing the manual on the grass. "Listen. I did some things when I was young, way back in the Stone Age. Things I'm not very proud of. I left home, you know. I wandered for a while." Misty looks up and shakes her head with a condescending smirk. "I've slept in graveyards, in the back of pickups." They're unimpressed. "I've cleaned outhouses and shoveled manure for a meal. I've been places and seen things you can't even begin to imagine."

Kim's and Susan's eyes have returned to my general orbit. Mark folds his muscular forearms. I need something now, something to knock that complacent smirk off of Misty's face. "I've been a beggar, a thief." Yawn. "I've kissed Death with a two-by-four!" My voice is growing louder, more strident. I hate them for making me do this. I love them for making me do this. "I've been to hell and back." Nothing. "I'm a murderer. A butcher. One day I went and killed the little life inside of me."

There is absolute silence. I think you can hear the gnats mating. Every pair of eyes, including Misty's, are upon me. Is this speaking more their language?

"I've been to hell," I say. "Believe me." My God, what have I done? They are waiting, all of them, and there is no turning back now. So I tell them a little about it. Not everything. Not yet. I do not tell them where the words come from or how you put them together: that is a gift you must find and refine on your own. Nor do I tell them how, if you are good at it, you can string out a ride as Scheherazade stretched out her life one thousand and one nights; nor how, if you are exceptionally blessed, one night the fat caliph will tell you to stay, and you will shrug and say, I'll think about it, but your first moment alone you will close your eyes, clasp your hands, and whisper to whatever version of God you happen to be addressing at the moment: "Home. Finally at last I'm home."

They listen, shifting uncomfortably in their chairs, except for Misty who continues to feign indifference amidst the dandelions. The wind through the pines sounds like pressing a seashell to your ear: oceanic sighs. More

chills. The clouds have darkened like a fire-blackened aftermath. Crematorium skies.

"You drift, you wander. You're a ship without a rudder. Walking in darkness at midday. And it's no fun. Just like the scripture says: wickedness was never happiness. Never."

It smells like rain, the pavement does. The acrid asphalt of a thousand summers, a thousand freeway on-ramps. I close my eyes and feel the old magic welling up again. "You drift, you wander. One, two, three years . . . and then one day you come back. You've been drifting from Mexico to Canada and back, and tonight you're in a cantina on a beach somewhere south of Ensenada. It's just a big shack, really, stinking of sweat and beer. The walls are covered with old black-and-white photographs of bullfighters in action—colorless effigies pressed onto paper. There are two or three natives at the bar, but mostly cocky young Americans with hair to their shoulders and cutoff jeans, rocking mockingly to the trumpets blaring from the juke box. Two pot-bellied fishermen sit at a table like *papier mâché* Hemingways emptying bottles of Tecate. They look like permanent fixtures, as permanent as the prickly pear dotting the Baja hillsides and the clump of red chilies on the wall. So does the woman with them. She's easily fifty but still wears her hair long and straight, like broom bristles. An old broom, dirty bristles. She pinches a cigarette in one hand and fondles her glass with the other, sipping socially. Her skin looks as stiff and cracked as the leather strips holding her chair together. Her shoulders are bare and blighted with freckles and moles, and when she smiles, there is a conspicuous space between her front teeth. You watch as she reaches across the table, grips the bigger man's hand, and appears to say, Please? You try not to stare. But when you look into your glass and see her face smiling up at you, it's a kind of revelation. You see your future in a one-inch well of amber fluid. Cheap Mexican beer.

"You get up. You would excuse yourself except there's no longer anyone to offer excuses to. You walk along the beach, past carousing crowds of half-strangers and psychedelic vans, until you're sitting alone on the rocky cliffs overlooking La Bufadora, 'The Blowhole.' You watch the black Pacific sliding in and sneaking up under the rocky lip and then exploding skyward through the little mouth like Old Faithful, throwing silver foam to the stars.

"You close your eyes and listen to the thunder of the sea. What you hear is the crash of bottles and the drunken laughter that started to die two months ago but ended totally yesterday when he led you by the hand into the little clinic as if you were a criminal or a spy, something to be hushed up and hidden away. The office was spotlessly sterile, yet it felt like you were underground, in a sewer, and the doctor, no matter how young, how tall, how clean and handsome in his pure white smock, is forever old and

gnarled in your mind. The drops of sweat cling like maggots to his black mustache as he whispers to you in a language you only half understand, as he reaches for the silver instrument with which he proceeds to pick the life out of you, except it feels more like a little vacuum sucking your insides out until there's nothing left up there but a big black void that no matter how much you fast how much you pray how much you eat how much you love how much true and false stuff you shove up there, it's always forever after empty. Void.

"And then you hear him laughing somewhere amidst the bonfires. So you stop a moment. You look up at the stars again and begin counting: a million trillion zillion, each one its own little heartbeat, an ancestral eye winking back at you. And in a flash it all comes back: the twinkling of an eye, the sands of the seashore, the myriad stars of Abraham. And you're thinking, wondering: Is this my fate, my destiny? To wander like the prodigal son, wallowing in pig slime for the next ten years until my pride finally breaks and I go hobbling home, tail between my legs? What tail? What legs? How else do you chart your way through all the roiling ocean broth? God and his guardian angels gazing down through binoculars, watching for fallen sparrows . . ."

I open my eyes and they are still with me, even Misty, listening in the manner of the Star A children and my own little girls, with perfect trust and understanding. I'm a little incredulous on all accounts, and I almost tell them so.

"I've never shared this with anyone before, not even my husband. It just never seemed right. I've been saving it, I guess, for just the right moment. Maybe I didn't want to throw my pearls to the swine. No. I don't mean that exactly. Sacred. It was too sacred to share with just anybody, anytime."

And there's silence again. The wind, peripheral traffic, the distant moan of the afternoon train passing through town. A few shafts of sunlight have pierced through the clouds like tiny spotlights.

"What . . ." Misty puts her fist to her mouth, clears her throat. "What happened? After that . . ."

I smile, cup my hands, and close my eyes again. "Two years later you're in a village in the highlands of Ecuador where the people wear rags and live in plank shacks on stilts over a sea of green sewage. Striding along in your clean white blouse and dark skirt, you are a giant, Gulliver in Lilliput. You carry your books and give candy to the children who wear almost nothing yet giggle as if they are being perpetually tickled, and you are humbled and amazed. Never amidst the swimming pools and split-level palaces of the San Fernando Valley have you witnessed such pure and spontaneous joy. Every home you enter reeks from underneath but you are

offered the last tortillas in the house and you must accept or it is a sin in their humble eyes: their sin.

"You are a personal favorite of the Hermana Consuela who is not much older than you but has already borne six children in as many years and is very close to her seventh. One day she says to you, 'Hermana, will you deliver my baby?' You try to explain that you are not a doctor. 'But,' she protests in her bewildered Spanish, 'you have been to school!' Again you try to explain. She laughs. 'So what? You still know more than the doctors here!' And then you both laugh: there are no doctors in the village.

"Your next trip to the city you buy a do-it-yourself medical manual and study for the big day which comes two weeks later. And six months after that Hermana is back with her baby boy in a bundle. You smile and tell her, 'No, no. No need to bless him twice. The Elders have already given him a name and a blessing . . .' But she shakes her head sadly and hands you the bundle and you can feel it already growing cold in your arms.

"There is no time for fasting or prayer or asterisks or excuses. The faith in the Hermana's caramel eyes forbids it. '*Por favor,*' she pleads. 'Heal my baby.'

"The Elders are gone and there is not time anyway so you put your hands on the baby's head and to the shock and amazement of your senior companion, Sister Wilder from Laramie, Wyoming, you state, boldly and without apology, 'Juan Ramon Consuela, in the name of Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Priesthood . . .' And by the time you are saying Amen you can feel the little bundle warming up like an electric blanket, and the Hermana's arms are around you, and Sister Wilder is shaking her head, maybe wondering what she will tell the mission president, if anything, but smiling as well as tears stream down her cheeks. And you . . . Well, then you know. You know and you can never ever deny it without . . . not without . . ."

I open my eyes to a now anticipated silence. I eye each of them individually, holding Misty's blue eyes a few moments longer. "Because sometimes," I say, "the end justifies the means. Just sometimes it does. I can't tell you when exactly. You have to listen . . . here." I press my fingertips to my chest. "But you can't do what I did. You've got to be better than that, better than your parents even. You've been sent to earth at a special time, for a special purpose. And you have to prepare now, you have to be ready. Because you just never know. You just never . . ."

And I had them. They were mine.

Sole makers

Russell Moorehead

I wonder if I can still heal myself?
I've done it once before,
back when I cut my palm open
trying to be your blood brother.

We slid a fresh blade into the utility knife
to keep things clean. The edge skated
deeper than my skin. You pulled it shut

with a fish hook and dental-floss,
wrapped our secret with a gauze bow
and doused it with Bactine. We never told
a soul as we watched the scar shrink away
into a thick wrinkle.

But we never got around to cutting you.

We slipped out of church to jump the cliffs.
The Potomac moved fast and brown
between the states and painted
the palisades wet just below
the high water mark.

The bishop was busy explaining how
Jesus Christ chickened out when the devil
was placing bets, while we folded
our chinos and sports coats.

Standing on the edge in nothing
but Weejuns we jumped—
you first. One hundred feet down,
arms slapped red, we swam back
to the soft bank. Hitting the water

ripped your leather soles straight off.
We pulled a junk tire from the trunk
of the Plymouth, cut tread
the shape of your feet with a coping saw,
tacked them to your loafers
with contact cement. Three years

of thirty thousand miles later we raced
across the states by motorcycle,
taking shifts. One drove
while the other slept, wrists locked
around the other's waist, making it
to the wedding with six hours to spare.
Your law was stop for every hitchhiker
and tip the musicians. Buy a flower
from the woman and let the shoe shine
boy give you a polish,
even if you've got suede boots on.

They say your car rolled
three times before it hit the tree,
and that you didn't die instantly.
In fact they say you were trying
to find a radio station when they found
you.



Beginning the Trek

Richard E. Turley. *Victims: The LDS Church and the Mark Hofmann Case*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992. 345 pp., appendix, notes, index.

Reviewed by F. Ross Peterson, Professor of History, Utah State University.

THERE IS MUCH TO PRAISE in the long-awaited "inside" explanation of both why and how officials of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints responded to the forgery phenomena of Mark Hofmann. Utilizing the theory that the church, as well as Kathy Sheets, Steve Christensen, their families, and all others deceived by Hofmann were victimized, Richard Turley has simply titled the book *Victims*. Obviously, Turley challenges many assumptions and interpretations of the three journalistic books that appeared in 1987 and 1988. Linda Sillitoe and Allen Roberts, *Salamander* (1982); Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith, *The Mormon Murders* (1988); and Robert Lindsey, *A Gathering of Saints* (1988) are all still in print so comparisons are inevitable.

This volume does not add significantly to an understanding of Mark Hofmann, the forgeries, motivation for murder, or the subsequent criminal investigation. Turley's sole purpose is to explain how LDS church leaders allowed this deceptive and questionable character into their inner circles and how they became part of one of the most despicable, pre-meditated crimes in Utah history. Turley's effort deserves both commendation and criticism. A

reader must carefully examine the sources the author used because the depth of primary research is very impressive, but it also reveals a source selectivity that hampers objectivity. As assistant managing director of the church historical department, Turley gained access to the diaries, journals, letters, notes, and minutes of general authorities and their meetings. This utilization of personal sources unavailable to previous authors and journalists who wrote about the case gives Turley an advantage over other scholars.

Turley successfully observes the series of events relating to Hofmann's initial document "discovery" in 1980 through Hofmann's conviction and plea-bargained confession six years later. Turley's thesis is that the LDS church and its officials were duped by the forger as were a variety of historians and document dealers. He chronicles church officials' knowledge of Hofmann, the documents, and the serendipitous movement of monies, documents, and people. The three other volumes published in the aftermath of the trial are more journalistic in nature in that they are based on oral interviews and newspaper stories as well as archival research. Consequently, none are footnoted and the indexing is less than adequate. Of course, their purposes differ in that Lindsey's *A Gathering of Saints* is written as a mystery story much like his *Falcon and the Snowman*. Naifeh and Smith want to expose a church-engineered cover-up in *The Mormon Murders*,

and their attempt is weakened by sensationalism and the inclusion of irrelevant material such as the wording of the temple endowment. *Salamander* is the best and most serious attempt to describe the forgeries, murders, and investigation. Sillitoe and Roberts published before Hofmann's confession was released and they received little cooperation from LDS authorities, yet their research is thorough and unbiased with no hidden agenda.

Turley responds to the other books through extensive annotated notes, not in the text. In chapters eight and nine, "In the Aftermath" and "Deep Concern," he answers printed allegations relative to the pre-bombing relationship of general authorities—specifically Gordon B. Hinckley, Dallin Oaks, and Hugh Pinnock—to the victims and the perpetrator. With his access to telephone log books, appointment books, and notes of meetings, Turley demonstrates that the church leaders were forthright in their dealings with the press and the police and that Steven Christensen, a bombing victim, and Mark Hofmann did not have as easy access as they led others to believe. Some of the church leaders' verbal inconsistencies are discussed, but others are ignored. An example is Gordon B. Hinckley, who publicly admitted that he did not keep a journal, yet he did allow Turley access to "notes" he kept for certain days or meetings.

The power of Turley's defense is weakened by the last two chapters of the book. Instead of maintaining the integrity of a historical approach, the author taps into his trained profession, the law, and reports the preliminary hearing, the plea bargain sentencing, the infamous prison interviews, and the hearing before the board of pardons. His analysis suffers as he summarizes the above events. There is no discussion of the

comparative injustice of such a plea bargain when compared to other pre-meditated crimes of violence. He does not analyze the failure of the prosecutors to obtain full disclosure in the prison interviews, and ignores the larger question of indirect, but perceived church influence on Utah's system of justice.

Turley does chronicle one aspect of the case that makes *Victims* even more tragic. While church authorities were arranging loans and trying to purchase historical documents that might be damaging, they failed to realize that they already possessed a substantial William McLellin collection in their vault. In their fear of history, compounded by a lack of faith relative to individual commitment, the church had dismantled its own office of church history. Consequently, they were vulnerable to a Hofmann who gained the confidence and support of high church officials. To be sure, LDS historians did not distinguish themselves professionally by accepting Hofmann's forgeries as authentic. Yet they too operate in an atmosphere of fear. If the general authorities (church leaders) had faith and confidence in the specific authorities (historians), they might have realized they already owned a collection Hofmann had not yet forged—the papers of early LDS apostle William E. McLellin—and that they have nothing to fear from their own organization's history. Furthermore, had they fully disclosed their holdings, including the McLellin papers, the legal process would very likely have been considerably shortened.

This volume is significant for a number of reasons. By allowing Turley access to primary sources never opened to historians, church leaders might be willing to allow other scholars access to similar historical materials. In all prob-

ability, however, there is not a chance of this happening. As an employee of the church's historical division, Turley wrote with eyes upon him. He claims total independence from editorial censorship and maintains a detachment, but the fact that he examined the journals, letters, notes, and numerous minutes, exhibits an amazing trust of one individual. *Victims* is important because it shows modern church leaders in a human capacity. They exhibit personalities, emotions, and they do make mistakes. What is most amazing is that Turley demonstrates their capacity to use and abuse power. Finally, it is significant to realize that fear of historical material becomes an overriding concern of numerous leaders. The greatest tragedy of these particular victims is that

they fail to understand the depth of commitment of their co-religionists. The LDS church has survived 160 years and grown to millions in spite of decades of detractors and internal paranoia concerning its history. As Sir Walter Scott wrote many years ago, "A lawyer without history or literature is a mechanic."

Richard Turley has begun his trek. However, all good historians know that sources only seen and interpreted by one scholar are always suspect. *Victims* is a contribution to the literature of Mormon thought, but until that same openness to documents is available to all scholars, the interpretation is suspect. Turley is not deferential to those who allowed him to view their records, but any perceptive reader feels numerous eyes upon the author.

Unwrapping an Obstinate Enigma

The Essential Brigham Young. Foreword by Eugene E. Campbell. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992. 249 pp., index.

Reviewed by Ronald W. Walker, Professor of History and Senior Research Historian, Joseph Fielding Smith Institute of Church History, Brigham Young University.

WHO WAS THIS MAN who so completely filled the Mormon and western stage for thirty years? President Brigham Young—or "Brother Brigham" to the familiar faithful—stirred the emotions of both saint and sinner, friend and foe.

His office journal suggests some of his interests. He showed an amateur's

interest in the microscope and telescope. Books on smelting and iron-making were read to him—and the next day he would hear his scribes read scripts for a proposed dramatic production. He briefly studied phonography (today we would say stenography), and for many years doggedly sought a revolution in English orthography. When time permitted, he walked a half block from his office to ensure sobriety at the Social Hall or another few paces south to regulate the Salt Lake Theatre. One prominent actress thought him better informed on stage management than many eastern professionals.

Then there were the moments when he mounted the podium. Richard Burton, the English traveler, recalled the

scene: "That old man held his cough; that old lady awoke with a start; that child ceased the squall. Mr. Brigham Young . . . [leaned] slightly forwards upon both hands propped on the green baize of the tribune [and] addressed his followers" (*City of the Saints* [New York, 1963], 265). It was a scene re-enacted thousands of times in the Great Basin.

The "essential" Brigham Young will not be understood until his pulpit oratory is weighed and measured. By any measure, it was successful in motivating the Mormon disciple. Wrote Wilford Woodruff in his diary: "Then President Brigham Young arose & delivered unto the saints one of the strongest addresses that was ever delivered to this Church & kingdom. . . . his voice & words were like the Thunderings of Mount Sina" (14 Sept. 1856). On the other hand, the uninitiated were often put off by his speaking. The bad press and negative image of nineteenth-century Mormonism owed a large measure to "Brother Brigham's" stern images, hardy humor, exaggerations, folksy talk, and fiery jeremiads.

Signature Books provides the modern reader with a sampling of President Young at the pulpit. It has collected twenty-five of his discourses from the hundreds available (over 400 alone were printed in the nineteenth-century series, the *Journal of Discourses*). These are introduced by a publisher's preface, sketching Young's public speaking themes and manner and giving the highlights of his life. The late western historian Eugene Campbell provides a foreword that considers the Mormon leader's strengths and weaknesses. Professor Campbell's essay was first delivered as a paper at the Mormon Historical Association several years before his death.

The book will serve to introduce Young's preaching and religious

thought. Some of his more often quoted sermons are included: Young's chastisement of the 1847 pioneer company; his preaching on blood atonement, the black curse of Cain, and Adam-God; his memories of Nauvoo, Emma Smith, and early Utah founding; and that improbable 1858 exhortation to the Saints to pick up their belongings and head South during the Johnston army invasion. (Perhaps no other man would have asked so much from his followers and perhaps no other large American nineteenth-century group would have responded so dutifully.)

The Essential Brigham Young is the third volume of Signature Books' "Classics in Mormon Thought Series," which attempts to distill and republish material that has molded the Mormon heritage. Perhaps this is why the publishers have chosen the sermons that they have. Many of those printed here have been the grist for showing Young at his most colorful or controversial—the kind of material, so common during the Mormon experience, that has served to create his unfavorable image. The publisher may be applauded for its forthrightness, not necessarily for its completeness. It acknowledges that it is primarily interested in Young's theological discourses; consequently, other sermons that might have illustrated the wider range of Young's ideas are not included. The selected discourses do not say much about the churchman's hopes for Zion—the gathering and theocracy—nor do they give his expanded views on culture, economics, education, plural marriage, recreation, and social grouping.

In a collection of this kind, there will always be a question about selection. Each compiler would likely choose differently. But in this case, the publisher's decision to rely on the familiar may have

been dictated by the hope of speeding publication. Certainly, the volume bears evidence of haste. Professor Campbell's essay on Brigham Young's life-long mission doesn't seem to fit the narrower topic of his speeches. Its apparent virtue to the editors may have been its availability, not suitability. Of greater disappointment, no textual explanations are given to help the reader navigate the sometimes difficult-to-follow nineteenth-century sayings of Young. Readers are left to wander among them at their own peril.

Nor does the publisher provide any kind of context for the speeches—places are rarely given and circumstances not at all. Did Young actually play a major role in the writing of the essay dated 1 January 1841, which lists Willard Richards as co-author, with all its heavily-larded scriptures, which were so untypical of Young? Wouldn't the reader like to know that the discourse of 18 June 1865 was formally presented for the benefit of visiting U.S. vice-president Schuyler Colfax and was regarded by

some Saints as a belabored flop—a comeuppance for Young's putting on airs for a "foreign" dignitary? And isn't it important to know that Young's sermon on the resurrection, 8 October 1875, wasn't delivered by the church leader at all, but was formally read by Counselor George Q. Cannon?

The publisher acknowledges that it was not its intent to provide this kind of editorial apparatus, but merely to make available to readers an accessible collection of Young's important sermons. For me, however, by the kind of the speeches selected and by providing no editorial assistance, the publisher limits its contribution. It provides important clues about the "essential" Brigham Young but unwraps only a layer or two of the obstinate enigma of his personality and thought. One suspects that the church leader would not be surprised. He seemed to cultivate the puzzle. "If any man inquires about Brigham," he once said during one of his sermons, "tell them he is Brigham, yet only a little more so" (13 Nov. 1858, LDS archives).

A Memorable Tribute

Phyllis Barber. *How I Got Cultured: A Nevada Memoir*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992. 189 pp.

Reviewed by Don J. McDermott, associate professor, English, National Cheng Kung University, Tainan, Taiwan.

HOW I GOT CULTURED, Phyllis Barber's memoir of her Mormon youth and adolescence in 1950s Nevada, has won accolades too numerous to mention. It

has been warmly received in publications as mainstream and established as *Publishers Weekly* and the *Kirkus Review*. Nor should one neglect the fact of its winning the Associated Writer's Program Award for Creative Nonfiction. One can safely say this is a good book.

Having been raised in the Mormon faith, I recognize in her reminiscence the church that time left behind. Hers are memoirs of Mutual Improvement Association dances, ward talent nights full of

shtick, "Rose Night" initiations for young ladies, and the insular attitudes which pitted the "Only True Church" against a hostile world. This particular conflict is well illustrated when, towards the end of her narrative, Barber relates how, as a member of a highstepping drill team, the Rhythmettes, she was asked to ride atop a founder's day float sponsored by one of the casinos in Las Vegas.

Many of her achievements to this point had been motivated by a desire to be noticed, and in adolescence this desire metastasized into something desperate (though still within the bounds of Mormon modesty). But upon learning that the parade is on Sunday, she winces over the consequences of breaking the Sabbath. She tries to rationalize that God surely will forgive her one trespass—to be a float queen for a day, after all. I wondered to myself then, as I had at many earlier points in her narrative, if a non-Mormon audience would find this as quaint as I did? Perhaps. Mormons are not the only people who try to keep the Sabbath day holy. But what are non-Mormon readers to envisage in reference to stake road shows or visiting Maori dancers (with their special kinship to the Nephites) or even, and especially, the dreams and solemnity to be found in a temple sealing?

This episode becomes less provincial and more poignant when Barber gets her gown fitted in the wardrobe room of one of the casinos and blurts out to a world-weary seamstress (and former Nazi concentration camp inmate), "I love God." The seamstress does not

reply to this non sequitur, though certainly the reader must infer from this silence that in the collision of the two worlds—the one containing Dachau and Las Vegas show girls, the other Boulder City and former MIA Maids—that "the love of God" is discourse which has lost its meaning.

Barber's memoirs are gently satirical at times. I suspect the ironies and nostalgia will best be appreciated by "insiders." Indeed, if the memoirs have any flaws at all, they are those passages where Mormon customs, rites, and beliefs are briefly summarized so as to bring the uninitiated reader up to speed. The didactic passages aside, there is still much that will be appreciated by all. But we are talking about a different sort of awareness and pleasure.

Many critics have found Barber's memoirs to be a fine coming-of-age journal—and in this role it will speak to women of both feminist and more traditional attitudes. Beyond this, they speak intimately of a sort of Janus-faced culture. For example, Barber's world at large is nestled ironically between the two great technological achievements of the century: the Hoover Dam and the atomic testing grounds. Her world made small, the Mormon world, is also polar. It is supercilious and silly in its narrow earnestness; it is also profoundly attached to values and affections not lost without a great sadness. Her book is endearing, and I believe, a lasting contribution. Church members who pass this title by will miss a memorable tribute, one which they alone will be best able to appreciate.

Day Dreams

Karen Marguerite Moloney

I.

*Man of her house, her rooms
Are haunted by dreams.*

Leavened by cool morning light,
Loft become sanctum, he lolls
Reading, bolstered by pillows
Wadding the headboard like lush moss,
Novel in his left hand, her
Mirror in his right.
Crosslegged on the floor beside
Him, she watches reflected fingers
Lift and section hair, pinning it
Back laced into tortoise-shell combs.

II.

*Man of her dreams, she stalks
Her dreams, looking for you.*

Hedged against the sliding glass,
Camellias, deflecting warm sun
Like his large metal shears:
The whole tangled garden faces
Her, writing at his desk.
Him in the roses, pruning.

III.

*Man of her dreams, her dreams
Are haunted by houses.*

Autumn sun finds the west bay
Window late in the afternoon,
A flushed grandstand play in last
Brightness: green lackluster carpet
Suddenly awash, colors
Pulsing in the prints she's
Grouping for the long front hall.
Behind her in the furthest shaft
Of sun—his rapid-fire clicking
Of computer keys, his smile
Across the room.

*Man of her house, her dreams
Wait haunted by houses, her rooms
Loom, haunted by dreams.*

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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DIALOGUE

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