

DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT



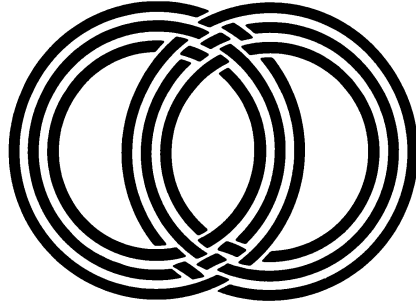
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A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT

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Latter-day Saints who wish to bring
their faith into dialogue with the
larger stream of Judeo-Christian thought
and with human experience as a whole
and to foster artistic and scholarly
achievement based on their cultural
heritage. The journal encourages a
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accurate scholarship and responsible
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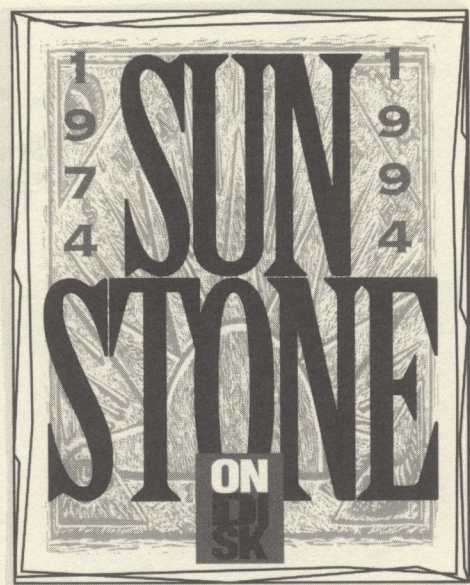
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LETTERS

Eve's Place

Janice Allred's excellent essay "Toward a Mormon Theology of God the Mother" in the summer 1994 issue is to be commended. It reflects considerable thought and much scriptural research. Reading it I was reminded of an equally scripture-laden private thesis done forty years ago by a respected LDS friend, concluding that the Holy Ghost is in fact Joseph Smith. Stimulating though it is, Allred's thesis will have to cope with several highly documented historical treatises and alternative interpretations of the very scriptures and statements from Joseph she employs, in my judgment: First, I trust it will not be received as male chauvinism to cite Heber C. Kimball's identification of the Holy Ghost. On Sunday, 23 August 1857, President Kimball declared: "... let me tell you, the Holy Ghost is a man; he is one of the sons of our Father and our God; and he is that man that stood next to Jesus Christ just as I stand by brother Brigham" (*Journal of Discourses* 5:179).

Second, Allred's thesis must reconcile with the doctrine which, along with plural marriage, took Joseph Smith to Carthage: the plurality of gods, with all that it implies regarding the Godhead scriptures she employs.

Third, it will have to deal with President Brigham Young's consistent fifty-two-year treatment of the Godhead. (See David John Buerger, "The Adam-God Doctrine," *Dialogue*, Spring 1982, for just one example.)

Fourth, it must not overlook the fact that the Christ-is-Jehovah doctrine was never taught in the church prior to Joseph F. Smith's presidency, which it can be suggested promoted it and commissioned James Talmage's subsequent Godhead treatment both

to dispel internal conflict and reduce the external heat the church would take were Brigham's thesis to have survived. (See Boyd Kirkland, "Elohim and Jehovah in Mormonism and the Bible," *Dialogue*, Spring 1986, for example.)

Finally, if one wants a deeply matriarchal explanation of the identity of God the Mother, they need look no further than the repeated treatments of Eliza Roxcy Snow (Smith), whose God-Mother thesis in her hymn "O My Father" was, she declared, taught by her first husband Joseph to the sisters in the Kirtland temple. (See Edward Tullidge, *Women of Mormondom*, 101-102, 175-200.) This "High Priestess of Mormondom" echoed her husband's and Brigham's treatment of our God-Mother, Eve, in numerous writings, including her "Ultimatum of Human Life" wherein she repeats her brother Lorenzo's *Destiny* thesis:

Life's ultimatum, unto those that live
as saints of God, and all my powers receive;

is still the onward upward course to tread—

To stand as Adam and as Eve, the head
Of an inheritance, a new-form'd earth,
And to their spirit-race, give mortal birth.

Give them experience in a world like this;

Then lead them forth to everlasting bliss,

Crowned with salvation and eternal joy

where full perfection dwells, without alloy

(*Poems Religious, Historical and Political*, by Eliza R. Snow, vol. 2 [1877]: 8-99).

Allred's thesis serves, if nothing else, to focus us on the much-ne-

glected corollary to President Brigham Young's controversial but declared revelations on the Godhead: our Mother in Heaven, Eve. (See *Journal of Discourses* 16:167; 13:145; 12:97; 8:208; *Millennial Star* 31:267; and L. John Nuttall *Journal*, 1:18-20.) Perhaps Tullidge did not misquote Eliza after all when he declared: "Joseph was gifted with wonderful memories of the 'eternities' past. He had not forgotten woman. He knew Eve, and he remembered Zion. He restored woman to her place among the Gods, where her primeval Genesis is written" (op. cit.).

Robert M. Frame
Lincoln, Nebraska

Looking in All the Wrong Places

I would like to commend Janice Allred on her article, "Toward a Mormon Theology of God the Mother" (Summer 1994). Her painstaking research and careful writing is deeply appreciated. I would like to offer some alternative perspectives to the discussion she has initiated.

Allred states that any "re-examination of our doctrine must be firmly grounded in the scriptures." I disagree. There is no Mormon mandate that our doctrines be grounded in the scriptures, despite insistence to the contrary. Indeed, Allred herself clearly demonstrates that our doctrine of the nature of the Godhead is contradictory to what is taught in the Book of Mormon and most of the Doctrine and Covenants. Although our leaders have stated that the Book of Mormon is the most perfect book in the world, and that men (sic? maybe not) would get closer to God by studying its pre-

cepts than by any other, and that it is the keystone of our religion, the doctrine contained therein is unquestionably superseded by the content of the Doctrine and Covenants. The temple endowment is not based in the scriptures. Our doctrine of baptism for the dead is "supported" by one obscure verse in 2 Corinthians. If we can base a unique belief and practice on one small verse, why do we not follow all the teachings of the New Testament? Paul directed that women should not cut their hair (1 Cor. 11:15) and should be silent in church (1 Cor. 15:34). Although I am sure there are men who would like women to be silent in church, it is not official church policy (yet). By a vote, the church made the Word of Wisdom compulsory behavior instead of just good advice, in obvious contradiction to what is directly stated by the Lord in the revelation itself (D&C 89:2). The examples could occupy a paper in themselves, but I hope I have made my point. What Allred is doing is "proof-texting," and there will be many who will argue the points she tries to make.

Allred also admits that there are no direct references to God the Mother in our scriptures. Of course there are not! Our scriptures were written by men, about men, for men. As both Lynn Matthews Anderson has documented in her article, "Toward a Feminist Interpretation of Latter-day Scripture" (in the same issue), and Carol Lynn Pearson has discussed in her paper, "Could Feminism Have Saved the Nephites?" presented at the Sunstone Symposium in August 1993, the scriptures are not gender-inclusive at all. All of our canonized scriptures are male scriptures. Allred's article demonstrates that the search for God the Mother within the bound-

aries and writings of patriarchy is an exercise in futility. We cannot expect to find an affirmation of the feminine divine in scriptures that contain much material that degrades and dehumanizes women.

I feel much as Joseph did in the spring of 1820. We cannot settle the question of this doctrine by an appeal to the scriptures. But we can base our seeking, questioning, and quest on two solid, undeniable Mormon doctrines:

1) By simple reasoning, we can claim an acknowledgement of the existence of the Goddess through our doctrine of eternal marriage. If we are required to be sealed in marriage in order to attain godhood (D&C 132:20), and if "as man is, god once was, and as god is, man may become" (notice again the gender-exclusive language I am forced to quote), then the gods must be a married couple. Allred covers this ground thoroughly. Also, the doctrine of the existence of God the Mother has been recently reconfirmed by Gordon B. Hinckley, counselor in the First Presidency.

2) We can honor the search for God the Mother through our doctrine of continuing revelation, as well as our acknowledgement of "missing" scripture. Revelation, however, does not imply passivity on our part. On the contrary, to paraphrase an old Carol Lynn Pearson poem, when we stop receiving revelation, we can be fairly sure that the bad connection is on our side of the veil. Although it is the responsibility of the current First Presidency to receive revelation for the church as a whole, we are (or, at least, were in the church I grew up in) admonished to seek personal revelation in and for our own lives. I am deeply touched by the experience of

David Allred that is related in the article.

As Mormons, we recognize that nothing can be truly settled by an appeal to a closed canon of scripture, and as feminists, we recognize that we cannot look to patriarchy for answers on this issue. Although I applaud Allred's intent to attempt justification for God the Mother within acceptable Mormon dogma, I suggest she may be, as the country song says, "Lookin' for love in all the wrong places."

Since our current canon of scriptures is thoroughly androcentric, I believe women ought to begin collecting their own sacred writings. I would like to nominate David Allred's experience, the deeply moving dream of Erin Silva as related in his excellent article, "Matricidal Patriarchy: Some Thoughts Toward Understanding the Devaluation of Women in the Church" (same issue of *Dialogue*), the text of Carol Lynn Pearson's "Mother Wove the Morning," some of Margaret Toscano's writings, some of Lavina Fielding Anderson's writings, and some of Maxine Hanks's anthology, *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism* for consideration as sacred writings, just for beginners. I consider these people, along with Janice Allred and others, to be my spiritual leaders.

Thank you for a dynamite, deeply moving issue of *Dialogue*. Please keep up the good work.

Cindy Le Fevre
Antelope, California

Checks and Balances

I am not a scholar, intellectual, or writer. I am, though, a member who

consumes the *Ensign*, *Church News*, *Dialogue*, *Sunstone*, *Exponent II*, the *Mormon Women's Forum Newsletter*, and many other publications, including those written to discredit the veracity of the Restoration. By doing so, I expose myself to all issues, thus developing a balanced and personal appraisal of the church and everything associated with it.

I have always been fascinated by the diversity of ideas within and about the church. What I wish would be "simple truth" for all becomes individual truth for some. But then, it wouldn't be natural if we all accepted things as they are. There will always be a diversity of opinion about God, the Restoration, and the church.

I have read with great interest the activity and comments of those involved with or affected by "the purge of September 1993" and find the process and results fascinating. With everything stated, I remained neutral toward the church and those involved.

But then I read Lavina Fielding Anderson's "Freedom of Conscience: A Personal Statement" (*Dialogue*, Winter 1993) and find myself changing my neutrality to one of pity for her and the others. In fact, I find myself having very little sympathy.

Life is a series of "checks & balances." Heaven + Hell. Do's + Don'ts. Good + Bad. Even the most primitive societies have "checks & balances." Lines are drawn by someone or something that, if crossed, result in a consequence.

We are tempted to cross the street when no one is around even though the pedestrian light says wait. We are tempted to ignore feeding a fifteen-minute parking meter hoping to return before the meter-maid shows up.

We expose ourselves to serious consequences when running a yellow light. Whether temporal or spiritual, every action has an opposite. By ignoring these laws, we run the risk of being caught and facing the consequences.

Lavina claims "to be a believing and orthodox Mormon" which is like suggesting she is for free enterprise but supports socialism. In fact, her belief and orthodoxy are in the culture and society of Mormonism, not the Restoration. She accepts the theory of the law but chooses the law(s) she will accept.

Her issue is not with the "Brethren." Her issue is with the Restoration and the means by which the Lord advances his gospel on earth. She cannot accept the Restoration of the gospel and ignore the "Lord's chosen" anymore than she can accept the laws of the road and ignore those who enforce it.

She references 200 cases of ecclesiastical abuse to support her cause when, in fact, those are pretty small numbers considering the size of the church. Her statement is analogous to an airline losing a piece of luggage. You always hear about the one bag being lost but never hear about the thousands that arrive.

Nowhere have I read that church leaders must be perfect in all things, including counseling, understanding, solutions, etc. The apostles of old were no different. They were prone to mistakes as they developed. Even Peter, having reached his "status" with the Lord, still ignored the Lord's statement when told he would "deny the Christ." And then, of course, there was Judas.

Her justification for referencing the Apostle Paul in Timothy and to the Saints in Corinth is weak because

she ignores the same counsel Paul gave to those Saints in his "wards." As they received counsel and had the choice, she received counsel and had the choice.

No, I think she and the others give themselves too much credit. They are not the martyrs they would like us to believe. If so, they will soon be forgotten as the majority of members will find comfort with the counsel received from those chosen to lead us, who do their best to understand the concerns we have while acknowledging their own imperfections.

She can't reject the statement "we are a crippled and a crippling body of Christ, not functioning very well some of the time bound in an insane way on functioning worse." Why! It is descriptive of the person who wants us to reject it.

The impact of her excommunication on others will have very little import. She has, in fact, cut the ties with the very church she claims to believe in and, while doing so, has lost her effectiveness and other more important possibilities.

Life isn't fair.

John H. Emmett
Portland, Oregon

Sounding Off

Having recently divorced myself from the church, I would like to take an opportunity to do something I have never done before. I want to sound off publicly and then I promise to be silent forever more.

To those in the church (some are now out) who call themselves intellectuals, and whom we tentatively acknowledge to be such, I support your

being because you do tend to keep things in healthy turmoil most of the time. Since it is natural that no person in authority (anointed or otherwise) likes having to explain his actions, I must surmise that neither would you if the tables were turned. However, when you begin to take yourselves too seriously and feel that the well-being of everyone depends on your insights, then you not only tend to become slightly boorish, but you must expect that your toes might eventually get stepped on. Consider just how foolish your opposites in power are appearing about now, and learn something regarding humility. Also, all too often your actions (writings) DO give the appearance of being sour grapes. *But don't stop . . .*

To my Sisters in their quest, I say "Go for it." But when you finally get the proverbial KEY TO THE MEN'S JOHN don't be too disappointed to discover that the toilets are no different than the ones you already use. In other words, when you do get the priesthood you are going to find that it is about as powerless in your hands as it is in the hands of the men who now enjoy its privileges (except as a tool to beat you over the heads). Until we start LIVING what Christ taught, the Mormon priesthood is no more spiritually powerful than the gifts given to Southern Baptists, Methodists, Buddhists, Shamans, Wiccans, or anyone else who can, and does, heal, see clearly, give blessings, etc., and make it work. It is unfortunate that you have fallen for this myth of Priesthood as being so extraordinary that for it you feel you need to beg, grovel, fight, dream, or look forward to in some mystical anticipation. In fact you already have this very power. Get off your buns, sisters, and begin to use

it in your lives, and quit falling for this piggist nonsense, hook, line, and sinker. Can't you see that it is both just a carrot and a stick that keep you on the straight and narrow, and is also used to discipline you when the brethren think it necessary.

To my gay brothers and sisters I put my arms around you and give you all my love. Of course we all want a place in which we feel loved, in which we feel wanted and needed and accepted, but first we have to learn the art of loving, and wanting, needing, and accepting ourselves, and then we will discover that the place we seek has always been there, waiting only for us to open the door and enter in. We are the door, and we are the chamber. We are the church, and we are the Temple of God. Do we need more? Once you *KNOW* this, you will also *KNOW* how unimportant it is that the church grudgingly offers you a seat in the back of the bus. Our spiritual journey is with God, not with the brethren in Salt Lake, not with the Orson Scott Cards of the world. These folk will always find an excuse, usually in the scriptures, to make them feel good, and as justification for their unchristlike actions. Try loving the Lord your God with all your heart and discover the truth that he loves you just as much as YOU LOVE YOU.

To my brethren in the Church Office Building, let me quote something:

Every church organization must vigilantly stand guard over the purity of its ranks. For where degenerates, slipshod priesthood, careerists, self-seekers, those without morals, and others, remain in the church, the intellectual trash, the perverted gays, and the demented feminists have a fertile

ground for their work, find friends, and organize groups of like minded individuals for their counterproductive, Satan inspired, work.

Does that not sound familiar? Did we not hear something almost like this recently from the lips of a church prophet? Please forgive me for having substituted a few buzz words into this fine piece of writing to make my point. Now read the original:

Every party organization must vigilantly stand guard over the purity of its ranks, for where degenerates, slipshod operators, careerists, self-seekers, those without morals, and others remain in the Party, the counter-revolutionary-espionage-trotskyite-sinovievite has the ground for his work, finds his friends, organizes cadres for his counterrevolutionary, terrorist work.

This from an article in *Pravda*, 19 August 1936, entitled "Razveiar' vprakh vrogov sotsializma," written by Lavrentii Beria, one of Russia's bloodiest upholders of organizational purity, an organization against which our church and, more importantly, a recently-deceased prophet so long made a career of ranting and raving and filling our hearts with fear. Yet both Beria and our present crop of PROPHETS seem to be preaching from the same pulpit, and I must wonder, is a physical prison any more acceptable than a spiritual prison? Is a velvet covered gauntlet kinder and more gentle than a naked gauntlet, ultimately? Should we be willing to accept one more quickly or passively than the other? If we grant unlimited power, and are, in addition, fools enough to finance that power, should we be surprised if it is eventually used

against us? The brethren know they have much to gain and little to lose, considering the way the game is now played. Look at their lack of concern regarding an accounting of the finances of the church, and see the handwriting on the wall.

If all of these things emanating from the religious halls of power were not potentially so dangerous, they might seem simply ludicrous, but they are dangerous to everyone concerned. My response, after recovering from the most recent church-induced culture shock, was to have my name removed from the church rolls, and

what a wonderful feeling of freedom I experienced for the first time in my life. It is now, as Annalee Skarin says, between me and my God to explore the dynamics of spiritual growth and love. I decided if I want to belong to a social club I can do so, but I don't have to play a head game and call it the True Church. I can call it what it is, a nice organization that is getting not so nice, and then, with or without it, function accordingly.

Richard S. Christiansen
Glorieta, New Mexico

WILLIAM G. AND WINIFRED F. REESE MEMORIAL AWARD

Entries are being accepted for the annual William G. and Winifred F. Reese Memorial Award. The \$500 recognition of achievement will be given to the person completing or publishing the best doctoral dissertation or master's thesis in the field of Mormon history. Manuscripts should be submitted by February 1, 1995, to the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History, 127 KMB, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602, USA. These will not be returned to the authors.

This year's award, based upon material completed or published in 1994, will be given at the Mormon History Association annual meeting to be held in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, in June 1995.

The Time Traveler Comes to Cana

M. Shayne Bell

So I went to Cana and spent Sabbath
in that house, their guest, before the wedding.
The daughter spoke with joy of her marriage;
the mother sat impatient—Sabbath's end
the time for her to cook what food they had;
the father counted too few flasks of wine
again and again, too few for his guests.
I would have given money: I had it,
Roman drachmas hidden in bags of wrapped
cups they thought I traded in Galilee.
"Take these cups," I told them. "Serve the wine you
have in them." And they marvelled at the cups'
craftsmanship, and I never explained they
were mass-produced in Mexico. Not one
cup survived to become a new relic:
I traced all twelve cups to the dumping grounds
outside Cana, all broken in three years,
fragments thrown out as if they meant nothing.

So the wedding day came slowly for us.
Then He came, and His mother. She and He
sat at a table like all the others.
I thought: He *did* miracles. I'd proven that
when I'd wandered through Judea two years
after His undoubted crucifixion,
hearing secondhand accounts of His work:
so many thousands had seen Him, had heard
His words. Some few had seen Him heal lepers
or the blind. I talked to a once blind girl
who wept to tell me how He spit on dirt
to make mud with which He anointed her
eyes; she wiped it off and saw His face first.
I could never find the lepers. Not one,

once cured, ever admitted to that cure,
ever said, "but for Him I'd be unclean."

So we ate and drank that day, at that wedding,
and I thought: He *did* miracles. I thought:
I have come so far to see one. I thought:
Will He know? Will He know how far I've come,
or how quickly after I got permission,
or how many years I tried for permission?
And I thought: would He do it with me here?
Or would He wait till some other wedding
in Cana? I knew the sequence of events,
if I could trust the one evangelist,
but when the wine ran out, I, impatient,
called for more, as if I were drunk, as if
there were more wine, and when the father brought
what he thought would be water and poured it
apologetically in empty cups
I heard the growing murmurs of surprise.
I held my cup a long time, watching Him,
before I tasted what was in the cup.

Ethnicity, Diversity, and Conflict

Helen Papanikolas

WHEN I WAS A CHILD GROWING UP in a Carbon County, Utah, mining town in the 1920s, I would pass the Greek coffeehouses on Main Street after attending Greek school. Sitting inside were off-shift miners and sheepmen home for a time between lambing and shearing. They would be reading Greek newspapers, drinking demitasses of Turkish coffee, and quarreling over politics in Greece and Greek Orthodox church crises in America.

Farther north on Main Street, a Japanese woman would arrange fish in a display case. If it were Friday, she had more fish than usual to supply the needs of the American, Irish, Slovenian, and Croatian Catholics and the Serbian and Greek Orthodox. One of her steady customers was a Japanese woman who ran a boardinghouse. In her backyard stood large wooden tubs where her Japanese boarders washed themselves after their mine shift: they were not allowed to use the showers at the mines.

I often heard music coming from the Denver and Rio Grande Western depot where the uniformed Italian marching band met incoming passenger trains. They were hired to serenade immigrant picture brides, sent by their families to marry men they had never seen. The bands also played funeral dirges as they escorted the dead to the graveyard, mainly young men killed in falls of coal and explosions. (Immigrants were almost all young then.) Behind the hearse their compatriots marched, wearing the sashes or emblems of their Yugoslav, Italian, or Greek lodges.

Although America was ostensibly a melting pot, the immigrants were unaware they were expected to melt into it. In their neighborhoods they continued their age-old customs: they married and baptized or otherwise acknowledged their children's place on earth in joyous communal affairs; they played their folk songs on ancient instruments; they sang of their nations' tragic history under waves of foreign invaders or hereditary rulers; they called midwives and folk healers to attend them; and they keened for their dead at the side of open coffins or buried them ac-

cordova to their ancestral customs.

Still none of these immigrant groups was entirely united in traits and beliefs. The northern Italians and the southern Italians were hostile to each other. The Cretan Greeks were adamant that there would not be intermarriages between them and mainland Greeks; the Croats, Slovenes, and Serbs, later to be called Yugoslavs, brought ancient political and religious differences with them. The Japanese did not want social relations with the *etas*, the lowest in their hierarchy. Facing all of them were the Americans who had been in this country several or more generations than they and who made the laws and rules of the new land.

This was my first experience in diversity, living among many nationalities and races—the Depression-born Works Progress Administration (WPA) would count twenty-eight. It was a world of anxiety for a child of immigrant parents. Stepping out of the home each day meant facing taunts for being different, for being “foreign.” Yet being different colored my life and enriched it deeply. Other cultures were not strange to me. I did not think them unworthy because they were unlike mine. They were instead interesting. All my life I had an understanding of other peoples that I did not have to learn; it was almost instinctive because I had been born into that multi-ethnic milieu.

Later there would be other experiences in diversity: the pull of two cultures on us immigrant children; the conflict between workers attempting to unionize and employers who were determined that they would not; questions about religion and politics. Diversity is a condition of life. There is diversity in all nature, in the animal and plant world, in every facet of life on this earth. It often brings conflict and that conflict is not necessarily bad; the results, often immediate, most usually seen only after the passage of years, are often good.

When I hear people speak of the generations their ancestors have been in this country, I no longer feel, as I did as a child, that I had only tenuous ties to this land. No, their forefathers, as James Baldwin tells us, “left Europe because they couldn’t stay there any longer . . . they were hungry, they were poor. . . . Those who were making it in England did not get on the *Mayflower*.”¹ This is why my parents also came to this unknown land and it is how we, their children, became Americans. I use the word *we* Americans although my family’s history in this country began in 1907 when my father arrived in New York without an overcoat. Not until two months later in freezing cold was he able to buy a heavy jacket. He had to spend his first wages on a gun to protect himself. I include myself in the *we* of America because I was born in America, in that Carbon

1. James Baldwin, “A Talk to Teachers,” in *Multi-Cultural Literacy: Opening the American Mind*, eds. Rick Simonsen and Scott Walker (St. Paul, MI: Graywolf Press, 1988), 9.

County mining camp, and America's history is also my history. I am as American as those whose forefathers came on the *Mayflower*.

From my vantage point as an ethnic historian, I still hear the peculiar description of America as a "melting pot." This was a flawed presumption one hundred years ago and time has proved its fallacy. Some cultures remain closer to their ethnicity than others; even when language is lost, customs and religion survive. Many people of multi-ethnic background continue to consider themselves ethnic Americans, not simply Americans. And this diversity is good for America.

They came, the immigrants, to this new land, so vast that great spaces of wilderness and alluvial earth even the Native Americans, the Indians, knew only in the oral tradition of their people. Then over this wide country the immigrant poor and African Americans laid down millions of rails, crisscrossing a terrain of prairies, deserts, mountains, and valleys; under innumerable factory smokestacks armies of American and immigrant workers labored for a few cents an hour. Great forests were felled; rivers were dammed; roads built over mountains so high that oxygen was thin and laborers fell ill.

The immigrants exchanged their brawn for wages. This symbiotic relationship gave America its might. It made us so prideful we became egotistical. Only now have scholars begun to see flaws in Ralph Waldo Emerson's and Walt Whitman's American individualism. These American giants promulgated the "illusion of omnipotence over the clear perception of reality."² With the ever-increasing immigrant influx from the Balkans, the Mediterranean, and Asia, this individualism reared into fanaticism. Only industrialists wanted these millions of poorly paid immigrants to work the mines, mills, smelters, build railroads and roads, and keep factories running. The illusion of America's omnipotence ignored their necessary labor without which America could not have become a great nation.

The history of immigrants in this country is stark with discrimination, hostility, and anti-immigrant movements, the resurgent Ku Klux Klan in 1923-25 in the nation and in Utah the most flagrant example. Yet the immigrants persevered and gave new blood to this country, transformed it with their labor and with the accomplishments of their progeny. They gave America the vitality that characterizes it. We must also acknowledge that not all young immigrant men were hard working and virtuous. Some saw in America opportunities to make easy money as labor agents, procurers, gamblers and thereby stigmatized their entire people.

2. Peter Kivisto and Dag Blank, eds., *American Immigrants and Their Generations: Studies and Commentaries on the Hansen Thesis after Fifty Years* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 183.

Throughout the years in the new land the immigrants spoke of their native countries with nostalgia; even the water was better there, colder, more pure. Yet few returned to their homelands to live as they had planned. On visits most were disillusioned; they found fault; the water was not so good as they had thought. They came back earlier than they had intended to their American-born children and grandchildren, some of whom had married people of other cultures. They came back gratefully to this country that was now irrevocably theirs.

We have benefitted by the immigrants' relinquishing their aim of return to their native countries. Whenever I see an exceptional television program, I watch the credits with pleasure. I see among the Anglo-Saxon, north European, and Scandinavian names, others such as Bonelli, Saccamano, Frigidakis, Manopoulos, Konga, Draculich, Yamasaki, Wong, Touroulia, Moustafa, Droubisky, Lowenstein. I feel a deep pride for these third- and fourth-generation progeny of those millions of immigrants who looked to America as to a guiding North Star. Among those moving names I know there are African Americans who still carry the names of white masters. I know there are also Anglicized names arbitrarily given to frightened immigrants by harried Ellis Island clerks who would not take the time to write the difficult names. Other immigrants changed and modified the names of their clans for convenience and sometimes for survival in a new land. During the Panic of 1907 my father went by the name George Nelson to keep from starving.

How did this happen that in such a short time the bearers of immigrant names are prominent in science, business, literature, and the visual arts? Education was the magic. Yes, their forebears had to take freight cars all over the country to look for work. They had to work under factory owners, mine and railroad managers in collusion with unscrupulous labor agents, early immigrants among them, who extracted bribes in return for jobs. And yes, they lived and worked in abysmal conditions before unions cut their work down from six and seven days a week and ten hours a day with wages as low as fifty cents to a dollar a day. They were, though, frugal, left labor to open shops, and spurred their children to get an education that would have been denied them in the Old World.

We can view other peoples who do not fare so well as industrialized nations perceive the third world. Most immigrants and their generations have done well in America, but blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans are struggling still. When someone tells me, "Your people pulled themselves up by their bootstraps, let others do the same," I know I am looking at a person who knows nothing about the historic forces that preclude our comparing these groups with European and Asian immigration. Such remarks are made not only by people who trace their genealogy back to Puritan days, but also by children of immigrants

themselves. African Americans were brought in chains, purposely separated from their own tribal people and placed with others with whom they had no common language and history. Their culture was almost destroyed. Kept from schooling, subject to sale, they endured the humiliation of slavery long after the Emancipation. Why blacks fare poorly in American life is complex; for our purposes, I quote from the former dean of Columbia Teachers College who said of an African American child, "On the day he enters kindergarten, he carries a burden no white child can ever know."³

The Hispanics too have a tragic history. The indigenous culture of Mexico was nearly annihilated under Spanish conquest. The Treaty of 1848 ceded huge Mexican territories to the United States. While Hispanics continue to enter the American middle class, the never-ceasing arrival of Mexicans into this land can give the false impression that Hispanics have not progressed.

Indian pride and freedom also were practically obliterated when white settlers plowed the land that had sustained them with seeds, nuts, berries, and small animals. Shunted onto reservations, the Native Americans were unable to live many of their ancient ways and some honored rites languished.

Yet the question keeps insisting: Why have the European and Asian immigrants done so well even though they had to face hostility and were subjected to severe restrictions at work and in housing? When reading microfilms of old newspapers, I often found items such as: American Indians were fired when Italians arrived on a railroad construction site and replaced them; or again, a labor gang of Greeks was brought in and blacks were let go. Was it because the Native Americans or the African Americans were not good workers? No, the reason is obvious: the darker the skin, the greater the discrimination.

Yet we marvel at Asian students and their superior academic achievement. We are quick to compare blacks, Native Americans, and Hispanics with whites in educational status, but would rather not compare Asian and Asian American students with Americans. The high number of Asians who meet admission standards in schools such as the University of California in Berkeley but are rejected is disturbing. The Office of Education is investigating charges that school administrations' "fear of a preponderance of Asian Americans is a replay of attitudes colleges once had about Jews."⁴

To know why African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans have comparatively few of their number graduating from colleges and

3. Andrew Hacker, "Affirmative Action: The New Look," *New York Review of Books*, 12 Oct. 1989, 63.

4. *Ibid.*, 64.

Asians have a great number requires a concerted knowledge about family stability, social patterns, environment, attitudes toward education, and the nation's economic climate. Why is it impossible for some critics to see that unemployment and low income affect people? For American Indians unemployment is as high as 96 percent on certain reservations. In 1986, 31.1 percent of African Americans and 27.3 percent of Hispanics had incomes below the poverty level, three times the rate for whites.⁵ Disturbing statistics show an ever-widening gap between living standards of minorities and whites. We have to know the cultural traits and the economic realities of these groups before we make quick assumptions that can only further speed the decline of minority education and participation in American life.

Great strides were made during the twenty years' war on poverty and the civil rights movement between 1960-80. Stagnation and even reversal began taking place fourteen years ago when the burgeoning budget deficit and the defense program slashed entitlements that were helping minorities. Because education is the key to progress, educators were alarmed. In 1988, the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life (chaired by the president of Cornell University, Frank H. T. Rhodes, and including state governors, former presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford, university presidents, and leaders in various fields) reported:

Minority Americans are burdened not by a sudden, universal, yet temporary economic calamity, but by a long history of oppression and discrimination. . . . America is moving backward—not forward—in its efforts to achieve full participation of minority citizens in the life and prosperity of the nation . . . They are tomorrow's one-third of a nation.⁶

The report concludes:

The plain and simple fact is that full participation of minority citizens is vital to our survival as a free and prosperous nation. . . . their numbers will increase. The United States will suffer a compromised quality of life and a lower standard of living. Social conflict will intensify. Our ability to compete in world markets will decline, our domestic economy will falter, our national security will be endangered. In brief we will find ourselves unable to fulfill the promise of the American dream.⁷

Helping minorities is not merely altruistic and "doing them favors,"

5. American Council of Education, *One-Third of a Nation: A Report on Minority Participation in Education and American Life* (N.p.: n.p.), 4.

6. *Ibid.*, vii, 6.

7. *Ibid.*, vii, 30.

as some look at it, but the entire well-being of our nation depends on facing and eradicating the evils that put young people in ghettos of place and ghettos of the mind. Education brought the American dream to the progeny of immigrants. Education must bring it to our racial minorities.

The drop in minority college graduates is tragic. Young people have fewer role models to give them the promise of education's being the key to stepping out of the ghetto's mean streets, the barrios, or being able to survive away from the reservation. How greatly improved, for example, a black child's life would be, Ira Glasser tells us, if more African American police officers walked the streets of the ghettos. If he could see more black physicians, attorneys, judges, and college professors, corporate executives, and foreign service officers, he could know that once he finished his education, he too would find employment.⁸

The Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life gave six strategies toward progress in minority education: challenges to institutions of higher learning to recruit, retain, and graduate minority students; to national leaders to restore national solvency; to the presidency and elected officials to lead efforts to assure minority advancement; to private and voluntary organizations to initiate new and expand existing programs to increase minority participation; to each major sector of our society to contribute a new vision of affirmative action; and finally to minority public officials, institutions, and voluntary organizations to expand their leadership roles.

This last strategy is of special importance. Too often minority graduates forget their people's needs. Yet when we read that the Utah Jazz basketball star, Karl Malone, has given a great amount of scholarship money to black colleges and University of Utah professor Ronald Coleman is a nationwide authority on African American history; when we read of the increasing number of Hispanic teachers and attorneys; when we see Native American leaders, like the late Fred Conetah, leading an awakening of Indian self-realization, one's pride knows no bounds.

There are too few of these exceptional people. One of the most severe blows to minority children is that few of their culture are preparing for teaching careers. This is a particular problem for minority students, the commission reports, "but it also is a loss for majority students who otherwise only rarely may be exposed directly to minority citizens in professional roles."⁹

A leading Mexican writer, a diplomat, and son of a diplomat, Carlos Fuentes, said, "[C]ultures perish when deprived of contact with what is different and challenging."¹⁰ Diversity in the schoolroom gives enrich-

8. Hacker, 63.

9. American Council of Education, 13.

10. Carlos Fuentes, "How I Started to Write," in *Multi-Cultural Literacy*, 93.

ment, shows students that others are like them except for the color of their skin, teaches them that others have ways, customs, ideas that are not only as important as theirs, but often more interesting. I remember in childhood being teased because we ate lamb, a symbol of Christ, on Easter; one of my ethnic Italian friends was ridiculed because he ate spaghetti. Time and World War II (when our soldiers, the GIs, returned from foreign countries with expanded fields of vision and some with brides) changed that: ethnic food has become American food. Missionaries of all denominations, and in Utah mainly Mormon, also return with changed views on ethnic peoples. The Brigham Young University *Culturegrams* are of inestimable value for government officials and our armed forces particularly.

We can look back now on that celebrated American individualism of which we could be justly proud if it were pure, if it were not tainted with the unwitting arrogance that American culture, views, standards, perceptions are the right and proper ones to hold. Americans looked upon immigrants and racial minorities as inferior peoples, even primitive. Americans had, the pioneer anthropologist Ruth Benedict tells us, the notion that people rose from simple, primitive stages and arrived at a civilized state. Yet even so-called primitive societies are highly complex and they possess all the traits of good and bad that supposedly civilized peoples do. How can we possibly say that the Native American, the Indian, view of the land is inferior to ours? To the Indians the land was given for people's use, not to own, not to desecrate; it was holy.

Other nations realize the importance of knowing foreign languages to facilitate discourse between nations, to understand the mores and cultures of these countries. We in the United States have hardly been concerned with learning the languages and cultures of others. Americans see other nations through American eyes. It has served us badly in diplomacy and in wars. Diplomats are appointed for political repayment, given crash courses in the countries to which they are assigned, and are often a source of embarrassment to our government.

Books on Vietnam continue to be published; the tragedy is minutely, tenaciously examined. Daniel Ellsberg said of his days as a prowar government official: "there has never been an official of Deputy Assistant Secretary rank or higher (including myself) who could have passed a freshman exam in modern Vietnamese history, if such a course existed in this country."¹¹ In his book *Flashbacks: On Returning to Vietnam*, Morley Safer says, "Had the people in civilian and military command even the most rudimentary understanding of the history and language [of the

11. Jonathan Mirsky, "The War That Will Not End," *New York Review of Books*, 16 Aug. 1990, 29.

Vietnamese], this awful business would likely not have happened.”¹² How can we forget the high-ranking American army officer who told us that death had not the same meaning for the Vietnamese as for us Americans? Life, he said, is cheap to the Vietnamese.

Our government still has not learned much about the Middle Easterners. The roots of their religious fanaticism, their ancient cultures, are measured by American standards. The historic struggles of the Middle East from Turkey’s domination to protectorates under the British and French continue to be blank to Americans. Government officials show their ignorance when they speak of humiliating a Middle Eastern people. The Middle Easterners know considerably more about our culture because their young people are sent here in great numbers for higher education.

We do not know what the United States would be like if blacks were not brought from Africa in chains, if the Spanish had not traveled north from Mexico into Indian land and built settlements throughout the West, and if all immigration had ceased at the end of the last century. The nation would have been one of peoples from Britain, Holland, Scandinavia, and a lesser number from Germany and Switzerland. I believe such a nation would be uninteresting. Fortunately, immigration prevented it and continues to prevent it. Neo-Nazis and other white supremacists would be happy with such a country, but how do they know what ethnic strains they carry in their genes? None of us, no matter how far back we trace our genealogy, can know this for certain. Invaders and the invaded intermarried; for economic gain or for survival people changed their religions, took on new names, and often posterity forgot its origins. In their history of exile the Jews, for example, took on the physical characteristics of the countries in which they settled. In my own history, I found it hard to believe my father’s description of his mother as having had blonde hair and blue eyes. Yet when I visited my father’s ancestral village, I was struck by the number of relatives and other villagers who were light complexioned. The closer we traveled to northern Balkan countries, the more prevalent these characteristics became.

In the history of immigration we see that the raw determination, the strong beliefs of the immigrant generation begin to water down in the second generation and become pale by the third generation. The progeny of those pioneer Mormon journal keepers are shadows compared to their ancestors. The stark words, phrases, sentences are riveting there on the darkened pages; their progeny’s comments on television and in newspapers are not. I think of the immigrant Greeks, Yugoslavs, and Italians I knew in Carbon County. They were giants of individualism compared to

12. *Ibid.*

their children and grandchildren. Neither church nor civil authorities could make them change their stand when they believed they were right and most of them spoke out even when they knew it was not in their best interests. I recall when I was researching the Carbon County Strike of 1933 that a Catholic bishop came to Carbon County to warn the Yugoslav and Italian Catholics to stop their strike activities and go back to work. Hardly a striker heeded the bishop's warning. The passing of generations diffuses individualism, but America's vitality continues because fresh blood renews it.

These new immigrants, many from Asia, face the same discrimination and rejection as earlier arrivals. We hear people speak with dismay over their numbers, over their customs, over their taking jobs away from Americans. These complainers have not paid attention to history; further, they have not really looked about them. Historians who peruse microfilms of old newspapers read dire warnings of what immigrants will do to this country. Mongrelize was a favorite word. Greek coffeehouses and ethnic lodges were spoken of as sinister places where intrigues took place. Foreign-language newspapers were certainly, they editorialized, filled with subversive propaganda from the immigrants' native countries. Greek schools showed Greeks could never be Americanized. Italian, Greek, and Serbian priests could hardly speak English and should go back to their own countries. The American-born envisioned immigrant children as clones of their parents.

None of the dire predictions came to pass. Although ethnicity is not entirely lost, nor should it be, the progeny of immigrants are fully American. In my experience, and in that of others of immigrant background, we never felt more American than when visiting our parents's native countries and to our surprise were referred to as Americans, not Italian Americans, Greek Americans, Lebanese Americans as we are called in the United States, but Americans. We return homesick to this nation that is also ours. If people will let time pass, immigrants will accommodate, then adapt, then assimilate by the third generation.

We do not have to go into ethnic history for examples of assimilation. One in the recent past involves Americans. During the 1930s Depression when drought dried the topsoil of the Midwest, from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, crops died without water, winds carried the dust a thousand miles away. At noon, Arthur Rothstein, the noted photographer of those years, said, "the skies of New York were darkened." Farmers and storekeepers who depended on crop sales piled children and the most necessary of belongings into old cars and drove to California hoping for work. Sheriffs stood with guns at county boundaries to turn them back. There was no unemployment relief. People died of starvation. Newspapers harangued over what the lowly Okies, as they were called, would do to Cal-

ifornia society. They would lower the standard of living; they would be a blight on the economy; they were inferior people. Within two generations the Okies entered the California middle-class.

Diversity in labor history gives us several excellent examples of conflict that looked at the time pernicious, but decades later proved to be salutary. One is the maligned Industrial Workers of the World, the I.W.W., the Wobblies, the I-Won't-Works, as cynical observers called them. A radical union for the times, the I.W.W. was seen as syndicalist, anarchist; but it also welcomed nonwhites, women, the unskilled, and the foreign born into its ranks, all of whom most locals of the staid American Federation of Labor excluded from membership. The I.W.W. fought employers of lumberjacks, migrants, dock workers, and miners for a living wage, decent housing, and an eight-hour day. These were radical demands at a time when foremen hired, decided wages, kept men at work for ten and twelve hours, provided lice-infected housing if any, and charged the men for every necessity of life leaving them at times with nothing to show for their labor. By 1932, the I.W.W. was almost finished, yet the precepts it upheld throughout confrontations with authorities, battles with management thugs, horrible beatings, and long prison terms under inhumane conditions, are today taken for granted.

Diversity in religion also brings conflict, but without it there would be no change to fit the times. All religions must change to survive. Generations may pass before alterations are effected. I recall, for example, that the wedding ceremony in my Greek Orthodox church reached its final form in the year 1200. Often necessary changes are painful. I was dismayed the first time I saw the ancient St. John Chrysostom liturgy translated into English. I knew it was necessary, but it was also jarring to hear the words so natural in their original Greek chanted rather clumsily in English. Recent Greek immigrants in the East rail at the translation of the liturgy, even in the face of the high percentage of marriages outside their culture and the loss of language among third and fourth generations. Many Roman Catholics yearn for the old Latin rite which is celebrated once a month in St. Ann's church in Salt Lake City. Cults have arisen when long-held Mormon church tenets have been disallowed.

In all kinds of diversity, we have serious problems to face and primarily in education because it is the basis of our doing well in life. Again we must place the needs of minority students prominently on the nation's agenda—not only for their sake but for the sake of the nation.

A thoughtful person wonders how he or she can be of service. In answer I think of the great doctor, Albert Schweitzer, whom not many remember now, but who spent his life in Africa building clinics for black Africans. He was deluged with visitors who were attracted to his remarkable work. One woman asked how people like her could also help. He

answered that everyone could not come to Africa to work as he had, but that each person could do his or her best for those nearby. When we see acts of discrimination; when we hear racial disparagements of others; when we hear superficial comments that condemn an entire culture; when we are silent while someone harangues against the African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans and argues that Asians should be barred from the country; when neighbors comment derisively about the customs of those who are different, we should defend them. They are part of the diversity and conflict of our nation and, just as the immigrants of the first twenty-five years of this century did, they too will enrich it with their blood; infuse it with the vitality that America has not yet lost. Always we must remember that these minorities are one-third of our nation. Their numbers cannot be ignored and how they fare the United States will fare.



Snows

Marden J. Clark

That snow falling out there, not in flakes
But in clusters of flake, little snow balls
Loosened by November's sun still barely struggling
Through the harvest haze, snow falling
From all the trees we planted and nurtured,
The moraine locust, bare now of leaves,
Its dark branches almost writhing, twisting
Like a maiden's arms in distress, stretching out
And up and down, unsure of where
They want to end. The crab, flowering
In pure white, not the purple-pink of spring.
The aspens we dug almost as twigs
From their mountain grove and thrilled
To watch them put out buds then leaves.

From all these, our private forest, the snow drops,
Or peels in long graceful curves from taut wires,
Sometimes large loose balls trailing fine crystals.
Now a light breeze stirs still-clinging
Apple leaves and looses a shower, the crystals drifting
Toward our patio.

A robin lights on a branch,
A dozen robins, then a score of cedar waxwings:
A blizzard of snow, a blizzard of birds.
A second storm lovelier than the first,
Grace after grace.

Uprooting and Rerooting: An Immigrant's Escapades in Mormon Utah

Neila C. Seshachari

NO IMMIGRANTS TO THE UNITED STATES are given a crash course to ease them into the wonders of the New World. Wave after wave of dreamers are drawn to the shores of "America" and deposited into the throbbing heart of this cuckoo land which they have visited over and over again in their imaginations. But the land and its people defy dreams. There are surprises and embarrassments lurking everywhere—and, oh yes, traumas and tears too. All immigrants know that they need resourcefulness; the ones who cultivate humor and fortitude and perhaps patience and perseverance become the true inheritors of the American Dream.

I have come to believe that settling down in the New World is like having your first baby in the old country. Nobody has ever hinted how difficult or life-threatening labor can be. In fact, you have no real idea of birthing at all. There are no Lamaze classes to aid nature's processes and no epidurals to mitigate the physical trauma of reincarnating part of yourself in a new little body. You have only your dreams of motherhood, as you have visions of the land of milk and honey on your onward march into a new continent.

In retrospect, I am surprised we made our big move into this continent so casually. "How would you like to spend a year or two in the United States?" asked my husband Sesh in a lighthearted post-prandial banter as we sat in the veranda of our home in Hyderabad, India. "It would be a good learning experience for the children," he added.

A number of our friends were trying to immigrate to the United States of America. Somehow, the thought of giving up my own culture and moving into an alien one had not appealed to me, but one or two years seemed attractive. Of such casual and unwary moments are human destinies made and American Dreams born.

Mormons talk of personal or prophetic “revelations.” Hindus often believe in karma and fate. As I ruminate on those inspired decisions and special circumstances which brought us to Utah, all those concepts of karma, revelation, and fate begin to weave into an intricate design, shaping my destiny in the New World. In no other way can I explain how or why Sesh was offered a Weber State College job that he had not applied for, and our family was given the much coveted immigration visas that we had not sought. For better or worse, we were headed for the land of the Mormons.

There was an exclusive group in Hyderabad composed of Americans and “America-returned” Indians. I don’t recall its name. Perhaps it had none. It was a group of friends who shared, among other things, the common experience of having been educated or trained in the United States. At a gathering of that august group, Sesh announced with mock pompous seriousness: “Friends, Neila and I invite you to a party at our home in the United States next Christmas.”

The announcement had the predictable response of a contemporary T.V. sitcom. Raising their many heads as one, they asked in a chant, “Where, O where, in the USA?”

“Utah,” said Sesh with a flourish and a big smile.

“Ooooh!” they sighed, as their heads started falling on their chests.

There was general despondency for a few moments and then, suddenly, commotion. Everyone asked questions or made comments at the same time. Everyone was agitated. My friend on my right, the wife of a high American Consular official, looked at me in consternation and said, “Isn’t that the place where there are Mormons with . . . ?” Her voice trailed off involuntarily and her hands went up from her forehead in circular sweeps tracing the shape of horns, and her eyes went round and wild. I was flabbergasted. When I shook myself out of my momentary consternation, I found Sesh gallantly fielding questions hurled at him from all around. More strangely he, a citizen of India, was defending Americans from other Americans.

“The Mormons are a very nice people, actually,” he was saying. He was telling them too about this Mormon family—Walter and Phyllis Whitchurch and their children—he got close to during his Fulbright years in Salt Lake City. Accepting him as one of several paying dinner guests one year when Phyllis started a “small boarding business,” they had retained him—perhaps I should say “sustained” him—for the next three years as a member of their own family even after Phyllis shut down her boarding house when she got hired as a teacher in the school district. Sesh and the family had kept in touch during all these years and exchanged gifts and cards. After we were married, even I had been a recipient of their warmth and affection. They were our “family” in Utah, and

they were Mormon. On the way home, Sesh must have told me more about Mormons, but I don't remember. Subsequently I read some brochures about Mormons and their prophet Joseph Smith before I came to Utah in December 1969, three months after Sesh did. I am certain Weber State College did not send them to me. It must have been Sesh. Upon arrival in September 1969, he must have visited his favorite haunts of old, which included the LDS temple grounds. It turned out to be the first in a new series of interminable tours, for every time we have guests from India, we schedule one visit to the Salt Lake Temple Square.

Once a guest of mine responded, "I am not interested in any church or temple. We have plenty in India. I want to see the canyons."

I looked at her sternly and said, "You wouldn't visit Rome and refuse to see the Vatican; would you?"

We visited the temple on our way to the Kennecott Copper Mines!

Immigrants come to the USA with outlandish ideas and expectations about the country—even the educated ones. I am a classic example. I was an assistant professor of English at Osmania University, but I had little real knowledge about the country we were immigrating to. My idea of the USA, Utah included, was that it was a very "advanced," and therefore a totally democratic country where everyone—women, minorities, every citizen—had equal rights. Little did I know that I had landed among the Mormons, one of the most patriarchal of religious communities.

Within a week after I arrived in Ogden, Dr. LaVon Carroll, a colleague at Weber State, told me that she made at least \$2,000 less in salary than her male colleagues of equal training and experience. I had hoped that Sesh, in private, would refute her charges, but he had not. He had confirmed that American women did not have equal rights legally or professionally. "That is one of the reasons salaries are confidential," he had said.

I was despondent about my fallen state as a woman. That was my first "culture shock" as we tried to settle down in the first few weeks after my arrival. Most women I met seemed to be either unaware of their "secondary status" or did not mind it. So when friends asked me solicitously, "What were your first 'culture shocks'?" I would respond politely, "Not any. I already knew a lot about America through my study of American literature." I would cite the comparative "affluence" of even the poorest people in the USA as a "pleasant culture shock," which pleased my friends. But this major shock about my deprived status as a woman I kept hidden from others.

My second major culture shock has to do with my recognition of the hegemony of Mormon beliefs in Utah's public life. That one came to me slowly and in spurts; it sometimes drove me to the edge of despair.

In December 1969, when I boarded the Boeing 747 bound for New York on my way to Utah, I had not the faintest idea that religious bickering of any kind would engage my attention more than fleetingly. Joseph Campbell in an essay titled "The Confrontation of East and West in Religion" written in 1970 says that in the early 1920s of his youth, "We were all perfectly sure . . . that the world was through with religion. Science and reason were now in command. The [First] World War had been won . . . and the earth made safe for the rational reign of democracy."¹ What I understood from Campbell's statement was that the world was through with public display and assertion of religion, which is essentially a private pursuit of individuals seeking spiritual guidance and salvation. There would be no more public skirmishes or wars about religion. No Crusades, no jihads, no holy wars of any kind. How wrong I was.

Take the case of proselyting by Mormons. Coming as I did from India, I had thought that missionaries had gone the way of dinosaurs. When one of my students told me in early 1970 that he had just come back from an LDS mission, I thought to myself, "Oh no, the poor kid was banished to Latin America as convicts were banished in the nineteenth century from England to Australia. What a barbarous custom!" Very slowly did it dawn on me that serving a mission was supposed to be an honor. Even more slowly did I realize that all missionaries are expected to extol their own religion by putting down others' ways of worship. I am still intrigued at the evangelical zeal of institutionalized religions, and I am sometimes sad that in the very act of enforcing righteousness our way, we negate the spirituality and truth of all religions including our own—spirituality that is everywhere around us if only we cared to see.

That the enthusiastic practicing Mormon does not miss a single opportunity to proselyte can be seen from my experience on my very first day in the USA, even before I reached my home in Ogden. On the United Airlines flight from New York to Salt Lake City on a very snowy and cold day in December 1969, I happened to sit next to a dignified gentleman from southern Utah. Exhausted from my continuous intercontinental flight, I had fallen soundly asleep even as the domestic flight began, to be woken up for dinner. This gentleman and I fell to talking after dinner was served. At the earliest opportunity he asked me whether I was a Hindu. I was wearing a gorgeous Kanchipuram silk sari of navy blue and gold color, and a dot or bindi on my forehead. I must have looked like a spectacle in my foreign clothes, a goodly target to spread the true word. My travel companion began tracting right away. He wanted to know what the dot on my forehead meant. He told me he was a Mormon; he was ac-

1. Joseph Campbell, "The Confrontation of East and West in Religion," in *Myths to Live By* (New York: Bantam, 1988), 83.

tually a bishop, he said with some pride. Did I know about Mormons? Yes, indeed, I said. I had heard about prophets Joseph Smith and Brigham Young and how the latter had helped turn a desert into a lush green bounteous valley in Utah.

"LDS is the fastest growing religion in the world," he said pointedly. "You might want to read more about it and visit the Temple Square in Salt Lake City."

Even as I was talking to him, there sprang from the depths of my memory a talk I had had six or seven years earlier in India with Professor William Mulder, himself a Mormon, who had just become the first Director of the American Studies Research Center in Hyderabad and who had previously been at Osmania University in Hyderabad as a Fulbright Visiting Professor from Utah. At a dinner hosted by the American Cultural Center, he was telling me about Mormon polygamy and how, in spite of its being banned legally, it was still practiced in some places.

"What about women?" I asked innocently. "How many women practice polyandry?"

He was nonplussed. "Women were not allowed to marry more than one man at a time," he said.

"Women did not have the same choices?" I exclaimed perplexed.

I had touched a raw nerve in him; he had been taken aback by my simple assumption that women in Utah had the same rights as men. We both laughed nervously and started talking about other things.

Now on my flight bound for Utah, that conversation suddenly fell in place. Disparate and stray bits of conversation about Mormons, outlandish comments about them made by our American friends in Hyderabad, and a couple of Salt Lake temple brochures about prophets Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, read in haste as I was in the throes of packing and vanishing away an entire household, began to take interesting tones.

Sometimes I wonder how other non-white immigrants like us have fared in Utah. Did they suffer any pressures because they were people of color? How did they respond to the Book of Mormon (1981 edition) dictum: "And he had caused the cursing to come upon them [Lamanites], yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity; . . . wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them." I often realize how naive I was when I immigrated, and how many of my traumas and surprises, some of which are not relevant in this essay, would have been mitigated had I taken the trouble to be better informed. But my topic here is my "escapades" with the Mormons. My escapades are not physical; they are emotional, they are spiritual, they are at a level where they hurt and linger the longest.

As a liberal, practicing Hindu, I have no difficulty accepting the di-

vinity of Jesus, Mohammed, the Buddha, or Zoroaster. A verse in one of the Upanishads, loosely translated, says: Call your God by any name you want; Worship your God in any manner you want. As long as your worship is sincere, all worship flows unto Me. And this "Me" is nameless. A total belief in the wisdom of this verse has helped me to be genuinely ecumenical. A concept that I do find difficult to accept is that Jesus is the ONLY son of God. Even harder is the Mormon practice of offering prayers only in the name of Jesus—not even God. I am not sure even Jesus would have approved of the practice even though he did say "I and My Father are one."

As the controversy on public prayer has increased in recent years, and it seems that the Utah legislature is close to allowing school prayers, I find myself asking many questions. In all my twenty-four years in Utah, I have heard public prayers offered generically "to God" or "the Great Spirit" only three times—the first was by Robert Arway, then the Director of the Honors Program at Weber State, followed by Levi Peterson, my colleague and now chair of the English Department at WSU, and finally myself. Every other prayer, frequent in the days before prayers became suspect, was offered in the name of Jesus Christ. Sitting in my black academic robes at commencement time at Weber State, with over 2,000 students of all religions—Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Native Americans, Taoists, and others—I would wince at the insensitivity of offering prayers always "in the name of Jesus Christ."

In grade schools, prayers offered only from the point of one denomination or religion can be truly damaging to the spiritual growth of children of other religions. We have stopped referring to physicians and lawyers as "he"—even the generic he—and nurses and secretaries as "she" because we have now recognized beyond doubt that such language restricts the social and professional horizons of little girls (and little boys) and truly devastates their self-esteem. Similarly, hearing prayers offered only in the name of Jesus Christ over and over again daily is bound to devalue other religions in the minds of those who hear them. What responsibility does the state have not to marginalize other religions under the guise of promoting freedom of religion? The practice of offering Christian prayers in classrooms is not fair to children of other religions. The psychological damage of such actions cannot be measured accurately. I doubt an average Mormon school teacher would willingly offer a prayer directed simply to "God"—a term many religious people could relate to. Then again, proselyting is too deeply ingrained in Mormon culture. As an educator I worry about the prayer issue a great deal.

Every new immigrant needs a mentor who helps the novice ease into the "alien society" in which one has chosen to make one's home. These mentors are not available in a supermarket, unfortunately; perhaps they

can be found in a church. But I had no church or temple of my own. In fact, I have the dubious distinction of being the first Hindu woman in a sari to make Ogden her home. But I had the good fortune to be assigned a Welcome Wagon Hostess named Mary Rowse who soon took the place of mentor and surrogate mother. She eased me into all the rituals one has to observe to be accepted into a new society.

Linguist Paul James Gee points out that practices involving immigrant literacy involve special ways of interacting, thinking, valuing, and believing; these ways have to be integrated with, interwoven into, and constituted as part of the very texture of a nation's receptiveness and beliefs. Gee calls these social practices "Discourses" with capital "Ds." The Primary Discourse is one that a person is born to. Every individual family, native or immigrant, for instance, has its very own special Primary Discourse. There are two Secondary Discourses—a Dominant Discourse which the native or immigrant needs to master for professional advancement, and a Non-Dominant Discourse which helps the immigrant (as well as native) socialize and earn social acceptance in his or her process of acculturation.²

Mary Rowse was my link to understanding both the non-Mormon and Mormon communities. Mary was the daughter of an Englishman who converted to Mormonism and emigrated to Utah in the 1890s. Disenchanted with the LDS faith within two or three years, he had asked to be excommunicated. Thereafter, said Mary, he was threatened with life and mistreated by his once-fellow Mormons, who resorted to the meanest tricks to scare him out of Utah or make him join their fold again. But he had succeeded in eluding them, she said.

I said to her half-jokingly (but half-seriously too), "It appears nobody can really elude them. Your late dad and you and I are all likely to be posthumously baptized."

"Not my dad," she said. "He gave them all a piece of his mind."

But Mary was wrong. In the LDS church genealogical library in Salt Lake City with her daughter-in-law one summer, she discovered to her horror that her dad had indeed been posthumously rebaptized. She flew into a rage; I think she even wrote to the church authorities about this violation of a person's wishes.

I must confess I have been bothered by this possibility. With all respect for the LDS people, I do not condone their zeal for baptism of the dead. Having declined opportunities to convert to Mormonism in my full consciousness in this life, I would feel truly violated if baptized posthumously. "Are you going to let someone else's futile actions dislodge your

2. Paul James Gee, "Literacies, Discourses, and Identities," a paper prepared for the Pre-conference Seminar on "Multi-cultural Perspectives on Literacy and Practice" of the National Reading Conference, 28 Nov.-2 Dec. 1989, copy in my possession.

spiritual equilibrium?" asked Sesh once. For me, it is not just a question of spiritual equilibrium; it is a question of the church's civic integrity and my civil rights accruing from the Bill of Rights to the Constitution. I shall not be converted against the wishes of my living body.

Civil and legal rights aside, I also believe that all humans will be treated fairly and similarly by a just God. You might say I believe implicitly in equal rights of all people in the spiritual realm and in the eyes of God. Insisting that a specific subgroup has a franchise on something special in the hereafter is like insisting that the blood of some humans is differently constituted than that of others, especially minorities.

About twenty years ago, one of my students enrolled in a college writing course followed me out of class one day and said, "Mrs. Seshachari, you believe in reincarnation; don't you?"

I was momentarily nonplussed, since her question had nothing to do with anything we had discussed in class.

Seeing my confusion, she asked, "Aren't you a Hindu?"

I said yes, but I didn't have to believe in reincarnation to be one. Now it was her turn to be confused. Didn't Hindus believe in reincarnation? So I explained how Hinduism had no articles of faith like the Thirty-nine Articles in Anglicanism or the Thirteen Articles in Mormonism. Even though most Hindus did believe in reincarnation, every Hindu was free to choose one's own specific beliefs including agnosticism or even atheism as one's own path to salvation or combine various paths as one felt inclined.

She asked, "Wouldn't you like to be with your family when you go up there [meaning after death]?"

She explained how she was born a Catholic, but had converted to Mormonism just before she married a Mormon. Her first son had died in childbirth. She said she was mighty glad she was Mormon because now she would be able to see him in the hereafter. Had she remained a Catholic, her son would have been in Purgatory for time and all eternity, she said with conviction, and she would have had to pray for him eternally. I told her I didn't think God would make an innocent baby suffer in Purgatory for an eternity just because his parents belonged to this or that religion. I was sure God had the same treatment for all virtuous mortals in the hereafter. If there was only one path leading to salvation, I said, God in infinite goodness would have revealed that path to every one of us. Since God had not done so, I chose to spend my daily life morally, spiritually, and intellectually as best I could and leave the questions of the afterlife to God's goodness and justness.

"I'll take care of my pennies," I said, "and God will take care of my dollars in the hereafter."

She was spellbound. "What you say makes sense," she said, "but if I

tell my husband what you said, he will not let me come to college."

"Everyone's religion is true for each one," I added hastily. "Your faith gives you courage to face life's vicissitudes and that's what one's religion should do. Be a good Mormon," I said as we parted.

Only two times in my twenty-four years in Utah have I been visited by missionaries. The first time, it was a pastor who stopped his car abruptly on seeing me, dressed in a sari, standing in the large bay window of our duplex apartment on 22nd Street and Harrison Boulevard and walked to our doorstep. Once he was seated in our living room, he waved his Bible at us and said, "Do you know what this book is?" I assured him I did. "I don't know anything about your religion, but this here Bible says it is the only true word of God." I told him politely that if he had cared to read about other religions, he might have heard similar claims. In fact many people in the world—religious leaders, kings, and some others—claim to be direct sons of God. We were about to go out when he invaded our privacy, and he seemed reluctant to leave until he had lassoed us into the faith. I had to tell him finally that if he gave me equal time to hear about my religion, he might find himself giving up his own, but that was not my intent nor the teaching of my religion. He is the only one in my memory I wished good-bye before he got up from the sofa. And no, he was not Mormon.

A Mormon pair rang our doorbell in the late 1980s. I was genuinely pleased to see them. You must be LDS missionaries, I said, when I saw them so well-groomed and polite. I asked them where they were from. One was from Arizona and the other from right here in southern Utah.

"Too bad" I said, "you didn't get to visit an exotic country in Europe or Latin America."

When asked, I assured them I owned not one but two copies of the Book of Mormon—one was at home and the other in my office. I assured them too that we had genuine respect for Mormons and their prophets. On his earlier visit to Utah, Sesh had been especially impressed with President McKay, who exerted and continues to exert a moral and spiritual influence on him. And we had many Mormon friends. Did we have any questions about the Book of Mormon? one of them ventured.

"No," I said, "none whatsoever." They left graciously, asking me to contact them if I had any questions.

Only last week, I saw a couple of young missionaries walking past our home when Sesh was out working in the yard. Did you talk to those two missionaries? I asked.

"Yes," he said. "They were about to ring our doorbell and I saw them and talked to them for about ten or fifteen minutes. They are good kids, just a couple of years out of MIA."

When we moved into our present neighborhood, one of the reasons

we were attracted to the area was an abundance of children of school-going age and the excellent reputation of the schools. We moved into the neighborhood in late summer just before school began. And indeed our nine-year-old daughter Ruthi did make a number of friends. Within months after our move, however, she asked if she could go with her friends to the Primary. "My friends are all coaxing me to go with them," she added.

We were naturally alarmed. I remembered my friend Jeannie telling me how she had been baptized against the wishes of her parents when she was very young. She had hurt her parents grievously and had been traumatized by that experience in her adult years. It had all started with a simple invitation to her to attend the Primary.

It took us two days of arduous self-questioning and reflection to come to the conclusion that if we prevented our child from going, she would probably be attracted to it all the more. We argued with ourselves in karmic fashion that if she were destined to become a Mormon, we probably would not be able to prevent her baptism. In any case, she needed some spiritual instruction and plenty of discipline. Reluctantly, we told her she could go, and she did for five or six weeks. Then one Wednesday, she came home at a time which was late from school but not late enough from Primary. She told me she had dodged her friends because she didn't feel like going to the Primary. The following week, she asked me to tell her friends that she was not home.

"I won't tell a lie," I said. "If you don't want to go, you should tell them so. Why don't you want to go anyway?" I added.

"Mummy," said my nine-year-old, "they tell me there is only one way to worship God. Even I know there are many ways. Even my Primary teacher doesn't know as much as I do!"

So she stayed home Wednesdays and her friends increasingly stayed away from her. Not until church authorities admonished mothers in a semi-annual LDS conference did I know that indeed Mormon children were discouraged from playing with non-Mormon friends. Perhaps they still are; how is one to know? My child made other friends—curiously, the girls were all non-Mormon, while the boys were both Mormon and gentile.

We had been afraid that our child might be drawn into the LDS faith before she was old enough to choose. She had declined to go to Primary, but ideas about baptism must have fascinated her. There is something in rituals that a Hindu is naturally attracted to. One Wednesday, around 4 p.m., I called home anxiously to find out what my nine-year-old girl was doing; I had been delayed on campus because of a meeting.

"O Mummy," she said, "I baptized Peppi!"

Peppi was our black and white AKC Springer spaniel. I had visions

of the bathtub overflowing, and water dripping all over in our carpeted bathroom, with Peppi running around everywhere in the house vigorously frisking away water dripping from his body.

"You baptized Peppi?" I asked, my voice rising as in a crescendo.

"O Mummy," she giggled, "I baptized him a Hindu. That's okay, isn't it?"

"But how did you baptize him?" I said weakly.

"I put him in the broom closet and sprinkled water on him with my fingers as you do in your puja," she beamed. "He loved it. He was wagging his tail and jumping all over and barking away, and his eyes were big and shining."

I relaxed, and mother and daughter both laughed in merriment.

Mary and her husband Lowell were most amused at Peppi's baptism into the Hindu faith. They were both devout Presbyterians, but as Mary told me, she was increasingly beginning to realize that there was more to religion than what was being taught in churches. She was beginning to see for herself that the Bible contained contradictions and that churches exploited one or another dictum for their own advancement. She was fond of telling me that Brigham Young loved wine and that the LDS church owned shares in the Coca Cola Company, even though its leaders did not want the faithful to drink Coke. "Do you find that ethical or moral?" she would ask.

Mary and Lowell loved to come to our home occasionally when I had a puja, the formal Hindu worship ritual. And they were there not just to observe our Hindu ways as anthropologists study objects, but because they felt that they were part of our family as well and wanted to partake of our holy sacraments. I went with Mary to the Presbyterian Church on 28th Street on special occasions and our daughter Roopa got married in their church, with the Rev. Richard Henry of the Unitarian Church officiating and the Rev. Steiner of the Presbyterian Church offering the final benediction. Roopa and her groom Eddie had written their own wedding vows.

With them we felt a sense of community—which I define as a special psychological haven where everyone is cared for and accepted "as is." Truly spiritual people, irrespective of their religious affiliations, should be able to get along without impinging on or devaluing one another's beliefs. We have a number of Mormon friends too with whom we feel this sense of community; they too have attended pujas at our home. Many of them, though not all, are the *Sunstone-Dialogue-Exponent II* variety of Mormons, if I may use such a term.

Do we feel a sense of community with all Mormons? Probably not. But I feel safe in Mormon surroundings. Mormons are the most helpful and gracious people.

I remember one summer in the early 1980s when the water mains close to a new construction area near our home broke and the gushing waters cascaded into the basement of our neighbor's home on the other side of the street. Within minutes, there were about fifty or sixty people from the ward helping drain the water and pull furniture out of the flooded areas. Women were asked to volunteer to bring lunch for the workers. I volunteered to take a couple of dozen sandwiches.

"This is the real social benefit of belonging to a ward," I told Sesh. "They are like a big family."

Every little thing from the basement of that large house had to be brought out and set on the grass in the front yard to dry. Soon bottles of scotch whiskey, rum, gin, and beer began to appear. I was embarrassed for the family. How awful that their bishop was right there to see! My sympathies went out to the family, and I felt sorry for them doubly all day long.

Later that evening, Sesh said, "I want to give you some good news. The Carlises, it turns out, are NOT Mormon. Stop worrying for them."

One winter, a few years later, snow fell in Utah in such abundance that a couple of roofs in Ogden collapsed and television and radio messages urged people to have their roofs shoveled. Sesh was away in New York and was not due home for four days, but I didn't panic. I knew what to do. I contacted our ward and within hours, our roof was shoveled. The family who came to help said the snow had given them an opportunity to help their daughter who had been called to serve a mission in Peru. I added \$25 to the check I was writing for the work and told them it was for their daughter's mission.

Living with Mormons hasn't always been easy, but it has often been fun. The first decade was the hardest for me in terms of personal and professional adjustments, but now my community knows me and I know it. Two and a half decades of community involvement have encouraged a healthy intimacy between me and my friends, who can even share a joke or banter about our different gods! I am not sure I can say that I am always comfortable with the Mormon cultural milieu—that changing, shifting, intangible reality often dictated by authorities above and enforced first at Brigham Young University. In some years I have felt upbeat about the Mormon church beginning to open up to the needs of women, other minorities, and cultural pluralism, while in other years I have dreaded its conservative trends. Just this past year, I have become uneasy again. When I hear of Pulitzer Prize-winning scholar Laurel Thatcher Ulrich not being allowed to speak on BYU campus, or of faculty who are most up-to-date on contemporary scholarship somehow seen as not scholarly enough to merit tenure, I become pensive. Did we do right in sinking roots here? But, I tell myself, in which other state would we find

such clean-living, gracious, and loving people with whom we genuinely share so many values? I look forward to seeing a more tolerant, more pluralistic/multicultural/ecumenical Utah with as much faith as the Latter-day Saints look forward to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

1844

Philip White

Signs in the heavens. Great arcs of light
at midday. Drew it. Intend
to ask Joseph what it means . . .

Walked thirty for the Lord . . .

Walked fourteen . . .

Took rest in shadbush under a roadbank.
Prayed in hawthorn blossom.
Heavy oak root. Hooves
ringing out along the wood.
Woke to bees and dew. No food . . .

Carried Elder Gill five miles past
twelve houses before one Miss Leggett
give us hardtack, dressed his foot
God save her. Closed the door muttering
Don't tell no one you stopped here . . .

Preached at street corners in seven cities
full of filth and abomination.
Saw evil on the waters, riding
with his terrible crest.
Gross wickedness. Blindness.
Not one soul, one, would hear . . .

Reached Halls Creek at sundown expecting
refreshment. Word
of murder at Carthage . . .

Gathered at Hawleys.
Candlelighting. The eve of time.
Blessed bread. Broke it.
Prayed for strength against the darkness
that was in our minds.

Relief Society and Church Welfare: The Brazilian Experience

Mark L. Grover

THERE WAS AN AIR OF EXCITEMENT as she explained her plans and described the efforts that had gone into the project. It didn't amount to much more than a small shop (bazaar) with a limited quantity of clothing and other items, but it was important to Ivête. Members of the ward Relief Society had responded by donating a large quantity of clothing to be sold to needy members at a minimal price. This was the first step for what she hoped would ultimately be a permanent shop designed to distribute used items to church members. Part of the reason for the excitement was that the project was patterned after the idea of Deseret Industries in the United States which she had heard about but never seen. For Ivête it was both the satisfaction of providing help to those in need combined with fulfilling religious responsibilities that made the project worthwhile.

When the idea was presented to her stake president he was supportive. But after contacting the regional representative a short time later, the stake president was informed that the project was to be discontinued. The church was not yet ready to provide long-term support for this type of welfare project in Brazil and could not provide financial assistance or allow its buildings to be used for this project. It could be done as a private enterprise but without affiliation to the church. Unable to personally accumulate the necessary capital, the idea of establishing a Brazilian Deseret Industries was abandoned.¹

Ivête's experience is not unique in the over sixty-year history of the Mormon church in Brazil. Since the time the institutional welfare program of the church began in the United States, Brazilian members have

1. Ivête Sodre da Mota Soares, Oral History, interviewed by Mark L. Grover, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1991. The project was begun in the 1980s.

been aware of its existence. The concepts of welfare, the institutional concern for the poor, and the program of storehouses, church farms, etc., have been used by missionaries to attract converts to the church. Picture books about the church have had prominent sections with photos of Welfare Square, church farms, Relief Society presidents filling out food orders, and other components of the system in the United States. It has been with some hesitation that missionaries and members inform investigators that the program has yet to be fully established in Brazil. The over 400,000 members in Brazil are still waiting for a program they have been taught is an integral part of the church.

This essay examines the question of institutional church welfare in Brazil from two approaches. The first considers church welfare and its relationship to the Brazilian female member. It shows that historically the function of religion and the role of women in Brazilian society and the church's concept of welfare are somewhat comparable. One of the primary functions of religious organizations in Brazil is to provide assistance to the poor, and it is the Brazilian woman who has traditionally been responsible for this. Second, this essay looks at an attempt to establish an institutional church welfare system in the early 1950s and why it was discontinued. This historical experience provides insight as to why the LDS welfare system has not been transferred to Brazil.

It should be understood that I am not criticizing the church. I do not have the experience, knowledge, or spiritual gifts to second-guess church authorities. Nor have I attempted to contact or interview church leaders or general authorities to determine semiofficial policy. This essay is an outgrowth of my experience watching the phenomenal activity of Brazilian female members in caring for and helping members and non-members alike. It is also the result of observing the frustration of Brazilian women who have cultural dispositions that are not being satisfied.

BRAZIL

Christ's statement that "For ye have the poor with you always" (Mark 14:7) has been the case with Brazil. Since Brazil was colonized there has existed a large gap between a few wealthy elite and a majority whose basic nutritional, medical, and material needs have not been adequately met. Under a traditional patrimonial system centered on large plantations, the majority of the population depended on land owners (*fazendeiros*) who owned the land they worked and controlled all aspects of their lives. Most remained in a subservient relationship with the plantation owner because of slavery, servitude, and debt peonage. Low wages, poor education, and a lack of opportunity remained important factors of

control through the mid-twentieth century.²

One of the consequences of recent industrialization and modernization has been the growth of metropolitan areas which have attracted large numbers of migrants trying to escape the poverty, domination, boredom, and lack of opportunities of rural Brazil. The rapid growth of urban areas has taxed the ability of cities to provide jobs, housing, medical facilities, and sanitary services which has resulted in the formation of shanty towns (*favelas*), jobs with low pay, and a scarcity of the basic necessities for certain segments of the population. A struggling national economy combined with political fragility has made it impossible for the government to provide social programs of critical emergency assistance to serve as governmental security blankets. The consequence is that in cities as well as rural areas many Brazilians are without the basic necessities of life including food and medicine. These circumstances are not abnormal in a country undergoing the phenomenal social and economic changes brought about by rapid modernization. I doubt the U.S. government welfare system would be able to cope with the problems now faced in Brazil.³

Consequently the poverty that exists in Brazil is difficult for Americans to comprehend. As a Brazilian friend recently commented during a visit to Provo, "Here in the United States you have *pobreza* [poverty]. In Brazil we have *miséria* [misery]."

The absence of effective government social programs means that individuals and private organizations have the primary burden for helping the poor. The individual's responsibility for assisting the poor has its roots in the plantation system itself. Because of the dependent relationship between the plantation owner and the people, it was the family of the *fazendeiro* or "coronel" who provided emergency assistance in the form of food and medicine when a crisis occurred. Society functioned within a pattern based on patronage, linkage, and connections. It was essential that a family or person be connected or linked to someone of means who could provide help and assistance when needed. In return the patron expected allegiance, fidelity, and political support.⁴

2. Riordan Roett has defined the Brazilian political patrimonial system as "the creation and maintenance of a highly flexible and paternalistic public order, dedicated to its own preservation and the preservation of the unity of the nation-state." An important element of the patrimonial system is "clientelismo" which is a system based on an exchange of substantive favors, legal privilege, and protection for support (Riordan Roett, *Brazil: Politics in a Patrimonial Society* [New York: Praeger, 1984], 26-27).

3. For recent studies of Brazil's problem of poverty, see Nancy Scheper-Hughes, *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); and José Pastore, *Inequality and Social Mobility in Brazil* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

4. For a study of the Brazilian plantation system, see Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970).

The fundamental concepts of the patrimonial system presently operate to assist the poor of Brazil. The following is an example. I lived with a family in the city of Niterói, state of Rio de Janeiro, for two months and watched with amazement, awe, and a complete lack of understanding as the lady (*Dona*) of the house traveled several times to a rural area surrounding the city and delivered food, medicine, clothes, shoes, school books, furniture, etc., to a few poor families. These poor people became acquainted with the family through various methods but primarily because the woman or one of her daughters had worked for the family as a maid. My friends had accepted responsibility to provide help when needed. I have no idea how much this woman gave to the families, but she did something on almost a weekly basis during the two months I was there. This type of individual activity is an unwritten social code that most Brazilians accept on all social levels.⁵

A second example is that of a young woman without family support who had emotional and mental problems. When she became pregnant and destitute she was brought into the home of a prominent member of the church for several months until she had the baby and was able to get an apartment. This family helped her find a job and continued to provide assistance when needed, which was often due to the mental state of the woman. Recently, the young woman's daughter, who was ten years old, got sick and this member spent much of the day helping. The member had a full-time job, was active in the church, took care of her own family, and still made time to care for this woman and her daughter along with other acts of charity.

In addition to the tradition of the individual helping the poor, private organizations and societies are important components of welfare assistance in Brazil. Though some of these organizations are political and provide questionable help, most are active in their support of the poor. Religious organizations are perceived in Brazil to have the primary responsibility for aiding the poor. Most believe that beyond the spiritual role of the church, its function in society is to respond to social problems. The most important of these religious groups are the charitable organizations of the Catholic church. The activities of Catholic groups have gone largely unheralded and have provided considerable help to Brazil's poor.⁶

5. She continued to pay her maids the accepted traditional low salary while providing material goods to the family. She didn't want to upset the conventional social structures by paying more than an allowable salary. For an example of this type of patrimonial social responsibility even among the poor of the slums (*favelas*), see Carolina Maria de Jesus, *Child of the Dark* (New York: New American Library, 1962).

6. Fernando de Azevedo, *Brazilian Culture: An Introduction to the Study of Culture in Brazil* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1950), 139-64, and Thomas C. Bruneau, *The Church in Brazil: The Politics of Religion* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982).

Non-Catholics churches have also become involved. Almost all Christian churches have programs to respond to the material needs of their members and the poor. That institutional responsibility extends to non-Christian Afro-Brazilian religions which have extensive programs of social help for their members.⁷

Women, in most cases, manage the welfare activities of these organizations. This concept again comes from Brazil's past, where it has been considered a social responsibility of elite Brazilian women to be involved in helping the poor. This notion is an important tradition that permeates all class levels of Brazilian society.⁸

This concept can be seen in the activities of the wife of the Brazilian president. Though during the years of the military dictatorship their activities were not well known, many presidential wives either began or took over institutions whose purpose was to provide basic necessities (food and medicine) to the poor. The most recent example was that of Rosane Malta Collor, wife of the former president, who headed the Legião Brasileira de Assistência (LBA), an organization that distributed food and assistance to the poor. Though her role was controversial since the organization was used to funnel money into the pockets of friends and family, the image was important. Her obligation was to provide basic help and assistance to the poor. A contrast can be made with that of the activities and projects of recent wives of U.S. presidents: Barbara Bush—illiteracy, Nancy Reagan—drug prevention, Lady Bird Johnson—highway beautification, etc. There is an important difference in the focus of their activities.⁹

THE MORMON CHURCH WELFARE PROGRAM

The Mormon church's welfare program theoretically harmonizes with the Brazilian concept of private institutional involvement in provid-

7. Boanerges Ribeiro, *Protestantismo e cultura brasileira: aspectos culturais da implantação do protestantismo no Brasil* (São Paulo: Casa Editora Presbiteriana, 1981); David Hess, *Spirits and Scientists: Ideology, Spiritism, and Brazilian Culture* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991); and Paul V. A. Williams, *Primitive Religion and Healing: A Study of Folk Medicine in N.E. Brazil* (Cambridge, Engl.: D. S. Brewer, 1979).

8. Edward L. Cleary, *Crisis and Change: The Church in Latin America Today* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1985). This is not unlike many female societies in the United States, primarily in the South, in which wealthy women actively work in thrift shops and food kitchens in direct assistance to the poor. For studies of the female in Brazil, see Mary del Priore, *A mulher na história do Brasil* (São Paulo: Contexto, 1988); June E. Hahner, *Emancipating the Female Sex: The Struggle for Women's Rights in Brazil, 1850-1940* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990); and Heleieth E. B. Saffioti, *Women in Class Society* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978).

9. The most notable Latin American example of this concept is that of Eva Perón in Argentina and her involvement in the Eva Peron Foundation. See Nicholas Fraser and Marysa Navarro, *Eva Perón* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 114-33.

ing for the needs of the poor. Though there are some fundamental differences—How do you require the poor to work for their assistance when the father and mother already work ten to twelve hours a day?—the general ideas are similar. The church should be involved institutionally in providing basic assistance to the poor along with the private activities of individual members. It is also an area which the members, primarily females, become involved in helping the poor. The role of the Relief Society in determining needs and dispersing food and clothing fits within the Brazilian concept of female and religious responsibility.

Few would disagree that the LDS church welfare system would be valuable to the members of the church. The question is why has it not yet been fully extended to Brazil. I propose to examine an experiment in church welfare in the early 1950s that provides some insight into this question.

Rulon S. Howells's Welfare Program

Between 1949 and 1953 the Brazilian Mission president was Rulon S. Howells. The church was small, missionaries having gone to Brazil in 1928 to proselyte among the German population of the south. Branches were established and functioning in the major areas of the south, but the number of members remained modest. Proselyting activity among the majority Portuguese-speaking population began in 1939 but was cut short in 1943 by World War II when American missionaries went home. Returning four years later, missionaries helped reestablished the church in most areas but growth in the number of converts was slow. The church Howells found upon his arrival was small but dedicated.

Howells was a compassionate man with strong beliefs. He believed that the church could provide more than ecclesiastical and social activities and should be involved in all facets of members' lives. His experience with several welfare projects in Utah during the latter part of World War II convinced him of the necessity of helping members with "temporal" as well as spiritual needs. He decided that one of his goals would be to establish, as much as possible, the complete welfare program of the church. His initial approach was to emphasize some lesser-known aspects of Mormonism's health code in order to encourage small plot gardening, food preservation, and home industry among members. Once aware of this part of the gospel members would be ready for the complete welfare program of the church.¹⁰

10. Rulon S. Howells, Oral History, 77-80, interviewed by Gordon Irving, 1973, James Moyle Oral History Program, archives, historical department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter LDS archives); Rulon S. Howells, "Editorial," *A Liahona* 3 (Sept. 1950): 172-73.

Shortly after arriving, he published in the mission magazine, *A Liahona*, a series of articles on the church's health code beginning with the first Portuguese translation of Joseph Smith's "Word of Wisdom" revelation. Succeeding articles contained little on the prohibitions of tobacco, alcohol, tea, or coffee, but emphasized the lesser-known positive aspects of the revelation. The first part of Howells's program was to encourage members to strive for a complete observance of the Word of Wisdom, emphasizing the (1) consumption of less meat, (2) eating of vegetables and fruits, (3) use of unrefined sugar, and (4) avoidance of white flour. Howells felt members needed to be introduced to and be living what he considered to be the "complete" gospel. He stated, "The gospel is a plan of progression. If we don't show progress made by members in personal cleanliness, better living conditions, home improvements, proper food and eating habits as we know them, and the general improvement of our members, how can we expect to have an investigator judge the 'fruits of Mormonism.'"¹¹

Missionaries were assigned to teach women in Relief Society those selected principles of the health code. Missionaries spent a significant amount of time helping the Relief Society, since these changes resulted in notable dietary changes, especially with regards to the use of white flour and refined sugar. Missionaries became so involved that some even began to use the program in their proselyting. They would tract by giving out samples of home-baked whole wheat bread and talking about the church.

One of the results of the program was that the Relief Society began to grow and preserve food. "We are endeavoring to get our members to be more conscious of conserving what foods are appropriate so that they will not be completely dependent upon going to the store for every day's provision." Branch members purchased plots of ground where large communal gardens were planted. Women learned canning procedures developed in the United States, and branchwide projects of preserving food were held. Storage units were set up in the mission home and local branch buildings for wheat, molasses, sugar, and canned fruits. Food exchanges among branches occurred in order to save money on the cost of basic food staples. The Relief Society also sold to members certain types of foodstuffs which could not easily be obtained, such as a coffee substitute made from barley called *cevada*.¹²

11. "Uma Palavra Sobre Sua Saúde," *A Liahona* 3 (Jan. 1950): 12-13. See also Rulson S. Howells, "Digest of Brown Book," LDS archives.

12. "Annual Statistical and Financial Report of the Brazilian Mission, 1950," 12, Church Library, Brazil Church Office Building, São Paulo, Brazil; Weldon B. Jolley, "O Plano de Bem Estar Tem Início no Brasil," *A Liahona* 2 (June 1949): 131; "Haverá Quando Precisar," *A Liahona* 3 (Feb. 1950): 25; and Howells, Oral History, 35-36, 59.

A second aspect of the program was the encouragement of home industries. One of the missionaries had worked with hand looms, so Howells arranged for the purchase of several which were placed in homes throughout the mission. After receiving instructions from missionaries, the Relief Society began making cloth, from which they sewed their own clothing. Some branches were so proficient that surplus articles were produced and sold to local stores. Though most of the projects were church supported, some individual families also began home industries.¹³

Howells's programs were well accepted by members, especially women. Some activities required total participation, resulting in improved relationships among members. Members were able to work together on projects that benefitted less fortunate members. In some ways it reached Howells's objective "to become a source of security and independence for the members to learn to work together toward the accomplishment of the collective objective. It is strengthening their testimonies." The project did, however, demand so much time that other more ecclesiastical aspects of the church received decreased emphasis.¹⁴

When Howells was replaced by President Asael Sorensen in 1953, most of the projects the Relief Society was sponsoring were eliminated in favor of more traditional activities. Many members protested, feeling that the unity and closeness that had resulted would be lost, but to no avail. Sorensen was chastised by Howells for doing away with his programs because he felt that without it the Brazilians were not being given "the fullness of the gospel." Sorensen did not see the purpose of the church during this period being fulfilled with the establishment of the welfare program. He also did not agree with storing and selling food in chapels. Much of the wheat was being destroyed by weevils, and the canned food was rotting due to heat and humidity.¹⁵

This brief incident and Sorensen's reaction provide possible reasons why the church is reluctant to establish the welfare program in Brazil.

(1) Welfare is expensive and time-consuming. One of Sorensen's concerns was that energy, time, and money were being diverted from what he considered to be critical activities, such as missionary work and organizational development. This is still a concern as the church struggles to expand and establish itself in all parts of the world.

(2) The welfare program cannot function properly within the church

13. "Manuscript History of the Church in Brazil, Mission Home," Curitiba, 29 May 1950, and Porto Alegre, 18 July 1950, LDS archives.

14. Ross Vienweg, "Trabalhos Missionários no Brasil," *A Liahona* 3 (May 1950): 193; and Aline Siegrist, Oral History, interviewed by F. LaMond Tullis, Joinville, Santa Catarina, Brazil, 1976, copy in my possession.

15. Asael T. Sorensen, Oral History, 29-32, interviewed by Gordon Irving, 1973, James Moyle Oral History Program, LDS archives.

unless there is a strong structural and organizational base, or priesthood foundation. During Howells's presidency the priesthood was weak, and though the present church is much stronger there is still a deficiency in terms of the priesthood. This is due partly to the tradition of dividing wards and stakes earlier than might happen in the United States.

(3) The spiritual aspects of the gospel are more critical in the development of the church. Consequently money is funneled into temples, education, missions, and chapel construction before welfare.

(4) The environmental and cultural challenges involved in transferring a system developed in the cool, dry climate of Utah to the hot and humid tropical climate of Brazil would mean that the system would have to be modified. Just as it is more complicated to store food in a tropical climate, some aspects of food and relief distribution, for example, would have to be altered.

An important concern is how the church deals with poverty at the level found in Brazil. Historically when the possibility of establishing the welfare program has been examined, leaders have feared what would happen if assistance were available in a society in which *miséria* is so prominent. One concern is that there would be a rush to join the church to obtain welfare aid and that the amount of assistance required could be so great that the system would not be able to adequately respond. Some, probably falsely, claim that presently many join the church in hopes of obtaining assistance and then leave when their expectations are not met.¹⁶

One of the interesting misperceptions and miscommunications between Brazilians and American that results over the issue of welfare is the question of attitudes towards the poor. There are doubts in the mind of many Brazilian members that Americans are truly concerned for the poor. The misperceptions may be the consequence of different opinions as to how poverty occurs and how best to react to it. The American Protestant view of poverty as a symbol of a lack of salvation is not understood by Brazilians whose traditional Catholic Aristotelian view of the world posits that a person is born into a social level or economic station for a reason and cannot be changed.

In fact many Americans who have had little experience with *miséria* do not know how to react. I offer two examples that occurred in the 1950s to emphasize my point. These incidents were described by a Brazilian female member who was serving as a missionary at the time. One day a woman came to the door of the mission home explaining that she had found two men on her door step who needed immediate medical help.

16. This view is common throughout the history of missionary work in Brazil as well as the rest of Latin America. Whenever baptisms increase significantly, this claim is often made.

The woman was asking for money to pay for a taxi to take them to the hospital. This missionary went to the president and explained what was happening. The president said the church does not give money or charity to non-members. The missionary then took money from her own pocket to give to the woman.

Another incident occurred when this sister was in Relief Society in the southern city of Curitiba. A woman came to the door of the church requesting money to feed herself and her young children. The American president of the Relief Society indicated that the church did not give charity to non-members. This native-born sister and the rest of the Brazilian members were so upset that they pooled what money they had and gave it to the lady, while the American Relief Society president protested. Whether this Brazilian sister's perception was correct, she believed that Americans are not charitable to the poor, especially non-Mormons. My own perception is that Brazilians tend to believe the poor are telling them the truth, whereas most Americans do not.¹⁷

It should be pointed out that many church-sponsored welfare activities do occur in Brazil. The 22 August 1992 *Church News* reported that two stakes in the Santo Amaro region of São Paulo donated 1,800 hours to a local hospital. The project involved collecting used clothing, making sheets and blankets, and repairing the building. Projects such as this are important elements of the church's commitment to helping the poor. These projects are primarily local activities and do not include the same elements of church welfare as exists in the United States.¹⁸

CONCLUSION

It is ironic that within a country such as the United States which has wealth, luxury, and limited poverty, the LDS church has an institutional system of welfare that has succeeded in eliminating basic need emergencies among members. Whereas in areas of the world in which the level of poverty is often at crisis stages, the institutional reaction of the church for various reasons has been limited. Brazilians have asked for the program often and have been frustrated by the lack of response. The consequence has been heroic efforts by local Brazilian members, primarily women, to respond as best as possible to emergencies in the lives of the poor.

17. This woman has requested that she not be identified.

18. "1,800 Hours Donated," *Church News*, 22 Aug. 1992, 12.

Cap Meets the Prophet Brigham

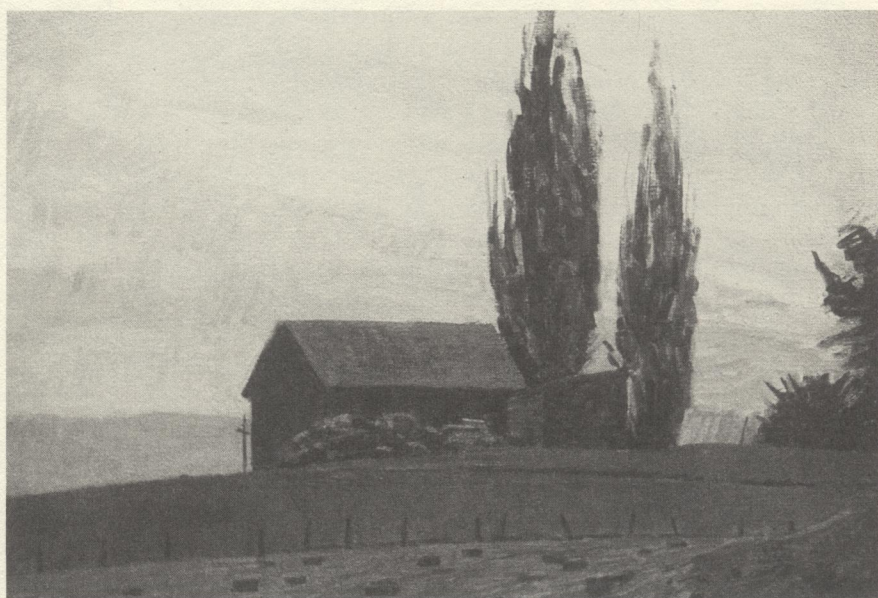
Derk M. Koldewyn

On the third day he stopped for a deserved rest,
though not intentionally. The bishop, she explained,
was hunting pheasants and wouldn't be back
for hours. So he collapsed into a straw bed
and slept, fitfully, until the bishop, a red-faced
Welshman, woke him and sent him on his way,
tithing him a horse and a meal. The next rest he got
was on a hard pine bench outside the Office,
a dour clerk frowning at his sweat-stains,
the shit and straw on his boots. Then he was inside,
a slick leather chair under his saddlesores,
his hat twisted in his hands. He looked earnestly
into the eyes of God's own voice, and stammered—
but Cap spoke it, and the smile left, and then
the prophet went pale, and stood.

*I'll never forget it, how he looked, how he spoke—
like Joseph in Liberty Jail, I expect, royal, majestic.
And me sitting there squirming, blisters all over
my behind. He stood me up, turned me around,
and sent me back the way I came.*

He went faster back, sharing the message along
the way. The Welshman was home this time,
and tithed his best horse.
And when Cap finally reined in his latest
rented horse, and stood before
President Haight, he knew it from the man's
eyes before he even heard the words—

Too late! Ah, God, Cap—too late!



The Fading Curse of Cain: Mormonism in South Africa

Andrew Clark

[Author's note: The following essay was written in May 1991, fifteen months after Nelson Mandela walked free after nearly twenty-eight years' imprisonment. His departure from jail accelerated a largely peaceful political revolution that culminated in his election as president in May 1994. It was the first South African election in which all races could participate. But the revolution has not always been painless. Shedding apartheid has been a difficult process, requiring modification of repressive laws and cultivation of new attitudes between brothers and sisters. This essay explores that process of conversion.]

IT TAKES ABOUT AN HOUR TO TRAVEL from the Mormon church in Johannesburg to the one in Soweto. And those sixty minutes present an open window on the world of difference between "black" South Africa and "white" South Africa.

I was in Soweto that Sunday morning attending fast and testimony meeting at the Soweto Branch of the church. I had driven to the place where the meetings are held, in the Dikou Elementary school in Orlando West, one of the many sections or "suburbs" of South Africa's biggest black township. Soweto has a population of somewhere between one and three million Africans, depending on whether you believe the government numbers or the more reliable statistics of market researchers and housing companies.

In fact, Soweto is not so much a township as a giant conglomeration of Black Local Authorities (its name is actually an acronym for South Western Townships, referring to its geographic relationship to the Johan-

nesburg metropolis), each gradually repositioned there after decades of social engineering meant to assure that no white would have to live within walking distance of a black he or she did not employ. Nowadays, each major "white" city in South Africa has an adjoining "black" township, generally separated by several kilometers of industrial "buffer zone."

Soweto is violent even in the best of times: what kind of normal social life can exist in a "city" which began as a "temporary" reserve for migrant laborers who had no right to own property, conduct commerce, organize freely, or petition for redress of community grievances?

But this weekend in May was a time of particular "unrest." The previous Sunday I had been in the township on foot, asking the people I encountered, in the best Zulu-English I could muster, for directions to the local elementary school. At that hour, unknown to me, ten people were killed following the funeral procession for the "mayor" of Diepmeadow (a Soweto township) who had been assassinated a couple of days earlier in an AK-47 ambush. But the only sign of tension or violence possibly caused by this event came when the driver of the minibus "combi" taxi I was taking from Dube to Diepkloof swerved out of his normal route—chattering with passengers in Zulu, several of whom wanted to get out—to avoid coming close to a procession of slogan-chanting and red-bandanna-wearing Inkatha Freedom Party members.

For the last decade, being a town councilor or official employed by the government had not been a safe occupation for black South Africans. Rightly or wrongly, they have been seen as agents of the apartheid state—and all the more contemptible because they were putting a black face on repression initiated and orchestrated by the white state. Along with black policemen and soldiers, they had been among the first victims of violent township protest. Their homes had been burned with Molotov cocktails. They had been subjected to the grisly "necklace"—a brutal punishment in which, in a frenzy of anger and accusations, a tire is placed over the victim's neck, his arms are hacked off, and he is doused with petroleum and burned alive.

The murder of Diepmeadow's "mayor" was significant because of his membership in the Inkatha Freedom Party of Zulu Chief Mangosutho Buthelezi—one of the signs marking the transmutation of the violence in South Africa's black townships from mobs against military police to battles between political factions. Buthelezi's prominence came from his position as chief minister in Kwa-Zulu, a black "homeland" for Zulus in Natal, the southeastern province of the country. Widely regarded as more moderate in his demands on the government of F. W. De Klerk's National Party than Nelson Mandela's African National Congress has been, Buthelezi was pushing to get a larger chair at the negotiating table, and

many said that Inkatha's recruitment drives in traditionally ANC-supporting areas like Soweto were the spark that let the fire fly in the carnage that engulfed most of the townships of the Transvaal Province after August and September 1990.

Despite the gruesome quality and depressing frequency of this violence, it was not so pervasive that it was unavoidable. I had been to Soweto dozens of times: normally I traveled with everyday Sowetans in one of the fleet of mini-bus combi taxis, a newly emerging and frequently used form of black-owned and black-controlled transportation. The only violence I had ever witnessed had been on the part of the South African Defence Force—tear-gassing, chasing after, and then whipping Soweto Day (16 June) protestors with their rhino-hide *sjaamboks*. Moreover, although a white person always attracts attention in the townships, the attention is almost always friendly and solicitous. I have always enjoyed the experience of going there.

So on this fast Sunday I was also the only white in this congregation of my church, a church in which we whites, in the last decade, have counted ourselves lucky if we had at least one black among us. But just as the negative of a photograph contains the same image as the print, so too was this worship service conducted in the same manner, and in exactly the same spirit, as meetings held in my own white-bred ward in suburban Washington, D.C.

In fact, I had something of a feeling of *déjà vu*, cutting out of church after sacrament meeting and Sunday school in the Johannesburg Ward in order to hop over to the Soweto Branch. For a time when I lived in the Virginia suburbs, I would leave my home ward after sacrament meeting so that I could also attend the more diverse Washington II Ward meetings held in the top floor of the National Press Club. (Whereas Washington, D.C., a traditionally "black" city, has "white suburbs, Johannesburg, a traditionally "white" city, has "black" suburbs.)

In fast meeting in Soweto, I was sitting next to Sister Julia Mavimbela, former president of the Relief Society for the branch. When she stood up and bore her testimony in English (I would say that offerings were equally balanced between English, Sotho, Tswana, and Zulu, although the branch presidency presided and conducted in English) I thought of scriptures speaking of love driving out fear: "Be not afraid of sudden fear. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken" (Prov. 3:25-26); "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7); "Wherefore, fear not even unto death, for in this world your joy is not full, but in me your joy is full" (D&C 101:36).

* * *

Sister Mavimbela was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ on 28 November 1981, when she was sixty-three years old. Ten years later, she was a bundle of energy, constantly involved in numerous projects to better her family, her community, her people, and her church. Although she didn't know it when she agreed to be baptized by the two white missionaries whom she had met when they were all helping to clean up a boys' club in Soweto, 28 November was the same day her father passed away when she was only four years old.

To Sister Julia (which is what she asked me to call her soon after we met on my first Sunday in Soweto), this "coincidence" is significant because it was a connection with her dead ancestors that sparked her initial interest in the church during one of the visits the missionaries made to her house. In an interview with Brigham Young University Professor of Church History and Doctrine Dale LeBaron, Sister Mavimbela recounted that she reluctantly agreed to let the two white missionaries at the boys' club come visit her at her house.¹ "They came, took seats, said a prayer with me, and explained who they were. Then they started the first lesson—which carried no weight with me. 'I can't be moving from one church corner to another,' I told them.

"They made another appointment and left. What was strange to me is that I just felt they should come, so I let them continue to come.

"On the second visit, they saw a wonderful picture of my wedding, and they asked, 'Who is he?'

"'Oh, he has passed on.'

"'Do you know that you can be baptized for him?'

"Something opened in my mind. 'Take baptism for him? In what way?'

"They explained how.

"I said to them, 'Look here, Elders'—I had started addressing them as Elders—you have startled me. I am a black, and in other churches when you speak about the dead, you get excommunicated. Now you come and tell me about my dead. You've got a different message. Come again.'"

The wonderful picture on the mantle of her small but cramped living room is a black-and-white photograph of a much younger Julia and her husband. He was the founder of the Black-African Chamber of Commerce in Johannesburg and was killed in a car crash in 1955. "It was quite clear that the other man involved in the accident was on my husband's side of the road. He was white. Most of the policemen were white," recounts Sister Mavimbela. But "the police said, 'The careless drivers are the blacks.'"

1. See Dale F. LeBaron, *All Are Alike Unto God: Fascinating Conversion Stories of African Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990), 146.

It was soon after she joined the church—at a time when the church had very few black members—that the Johannesburg Stake president asked her to give a talk at a special regional conference. “The Lord told me just to tell my people how I had felt when my husband tragically died, and how the laws of my country wouldn’t satisfy me with the truth, because of my color, but how I had since found myself moving to a very happy state of life,” Mavimbela said.

For white South Africans, that turned out to be a pretty bold message, most of whom are not accustomed to letting black South Africans tell them—even with love—how the laws of their country don’t satisfy blacks with the truth, nor with justice. But, in fact, Sister Julia had long been involved in constructive projects to overcome the bitterness and hatred of each other that are very much alive among both white and black South Africans.

Soon after the 1976 riots in Soweto (which began on 16 June after police opened fire on a group of students protesting against their schools’ use of Afrikaans rather than English), Sister Julia founded an organization called Women for Peace, a community service group that worked on local development projects. This led to her involvement in the National Council of Women in South Africa, a multi-racial group that works on gardening, planting trees, improving streets, and upgrading the quality of services in their townships.

The first Sunday that I attended church in Soweto, I took an immediate liking to Sister Mavimbela, formerly president of the branch’s Relief Society. I had read a short article about her in the April 1990 *Ensign* magazine, and in the back of my mind I was keen to meet her and find out more about the kinds of activities in which she has been involved. But I hardly needed to introduce myself before we eagerly took down each other’s phone numbers and contacted each other at least a half-dozen times over the next several days, exchanging ideas and bustling with persons to contact in our respective lines of work. She had worked with numerous national women’s and religious organizations, and invited me to attend a gathering with her in which she addressed a white suburban women’s group about the advantages of herbal gardening, and how various plants can be used both medicinally and in food storage.

The next Sunday I was back in Soweto visiting Sister Mavimbela in her lovely furnished house in Dube on a small but well-tended plot of land (and a huge garden out back) in this older section of Soweto. I saw the wedding photograph hanging in the living room of her cramped living room—I imagine it was in the same place where those Elders first saw it ten years ago. Near it I saw a framed photograph of the Salt Lake temple and a color photograph of Spencer W. Kimball. (Sister Mavimbela says that this photograph occasionally gets confused with the image of

former South African state president P. W. Botha—a man disliked among both blacks and whites—who ruled the country with an iron fist throughout the 1980s.)

I had just signed her visitor's log (which reads like a Who's Who of international Mormondom), and she had just started to show me her scrapbook from the trip she took to America to address a BYU International Women's Conference, when we suddenly heard the music of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. The South African Broadcast Corporation, the near-complete television monopoly held under tight government control, had religious broadcasting every Sunday afternoon, and every other week the Mormons were allowed a sliver of time. I must admit that it was emotional to be so far from home and yet so near to Zion. I shed a tear in Julia's "matchbox house" where I, Julia, and four of the children she cared for hummed along to the choir's rendition of "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."

In fact, Zion is growing quite rapidly in South Africa. On that same day of death in South Africa's townships, I witnessed the symbolic death—and rebirth—of six people entering the waters of baptism. Three were in Soweto and three in Johannesburg.

I hadn't anticipated the ones in Soweto. At sacrament meeting, in addition to enjoying the warmth and friendship of the congregation—who kept greeting me, insistently asking if I were a missionary—I learned that there would be a baptismal service at 12:30 p.m.

So I travelled with half the congregation in an over-crowded minibus taxi to the luxurious (by Soweto standards) house of Dolley Henrietta Ndhlovu. Three teen-age boys had committed to be baptized, and when we arrived we went to the garage, where a large cylindrical wire frame held a blue vinyl liner filled with water. The only other white people there (or in the sacrament meeting held previously) were the two assistants to the president of the Johannesburg South Africa Mission. The American baptized the boys and the South African confirmed them members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

I was upset that no one from the branch presidency was there, that only a handful of white people came, but it was so powerful to know that the simple things about to take place in this garage were so important—to these boys and to all of us. The new members had heard of the church through a woman named Gladys, a Latter-day Saint who, as I understood her through the translation Sister Julia provided, had been helping out in the choir of one of the Zionist Christian churches and had told them about the Mormon church and its meetings at Dikou Elementary.

Zionist churches are an interesting phenomenon in southern Africa. They combine indigenous beliefs with Christian ones. Whether ancestors are worshiped or not, they do play an important role in the Zionists' reli-

gious identity. Zionists are very visible in South Africa, if for no other reason than the fact that every Saturday and Sunday they walk about the streets and parks of the cities with distinctive blue, white, or green garments, bearing a five-pointed star set against the colored background (different colors represent different churches within the movement) that they wear during the rest of the week.

Zionists tend to be found among the more impoverished and less educated blacks. All of them that I tried to talk to on the streets or in taxis struggled with English, if they spoke it at all. Often they had no church building, so they found an open space in the Sunday afternoon sunshine to serve as their place of worship. Zionists also tend to be very conservative, socially (they don't drink or smoke) as well as politically. They generally stay out of politics completely (certainly they stay out of activist, ANC-oriented politics) but nevertheless gave a standing ovation to then-state president Botha when they invited him to speak at one of their annual Easter conventions. Botha relished the opportunity—and strengthened his opinion that “peace-loving” blacks of South Africa were on his side, no matter how deceptive that conclusion would have been at the time.

Better educated black African Christians often belong to the mainstream religious denominations, the largest of which are the Anglicans, Methodists, and Catholics, each of which makes up about 10 percent of the total population in South Africa. The leadership of these and other well-recognized Christian denominations come together in the South African Council of Churches, an important group that played a major political role during the time in which the state of emergency was in effect (1985-90) because so many *bona fide* political leaders were detained or imprisoned. The mantle of religious authority allowed people like Anglican archbishop Desmond Tutu, Methodist minister Frank Chikane, and Dutch Reformed Church presbyter Beyers Naude (an Afrikaner who had broken ranks with the majority of his people in the 1960s) to speak freely without much fear of political persecution. Even so, prior to his elevation to head the SACC, Chikane had been brutally detained, and Naude had been a “banned person”—unable to speak in public, write for publication, or even meet with more than one person at a time in his own home—until 1984. By virtue of winning the Nobel Peace Prize in that same year, Tutu became almost totally immune to government pressure. His lionization by the international media made it possible for him, almost single-handedly, to lead the campaign for economic sanctions against South Africa—which left many white *and* black Anglicans severely disgruntled—while the government could do nothing to silence him.

Although these mainstream religious denominations—whether led

by blacks or whites—may have strong political and social commitments against apartheid, they shun all talk about incorporating indigenous beliefs into their worship. Sister Julia—who had been both Baptist and Methodist prior to joining the church—knew that talk about one's genealogy was forbidden in these churches lest it be taken as ancestor-worship. In an article written more ten years ago on "Mormonism in Black Africa,"² Newell G. Bringham described some of the beliefs and practices in Mormonism that appeal to residents of Africa: belief in a plurality of Gods, pre-existence, eternal progression, apocalyptic millennialism, the idea of a church led by a living prophet, the ability to perform sacred ordinances for one's dead ancestors, and an emphasis on the virtues of a strong family. "Since many of these Mormon concepts are similar to those found in traditional indigenous African cults and in independent Christian denominations, there is a tendency for isolated African Mormons to deviate from accepted Mormon doctrines and modes of worship and lapse into African ones," Bringham wrote, speaking particularly about isolated areas in Nigeria and Ghana.

In South Africa, however, black Latter-day Saints are likely to have come from a thoroughly westernized background, no matter what form of Christianity they practiced before they joined the church. And they are overwhelmingly likely to have been Christians of another sort before becoming Mormon. In his interviews with 400 African Latter-day Saints, Dale LeBaron found that over 390 had adopted some form of Christianity before accepting Mormonism. Moreover, even if African members were inclined to "lapse into African modes of worship," they currently exist in an integrated church structure in which they are the minority—and in which they are happy to be equal fellow-citizens in the household of God.

In spite of apartheid, South Africa in the past fifteen years has become one of the world's premier multi-ethnic societies. Urbanization of the workforce has brought integration to the economy and is currently bringing it to other areas of society: housing, education, and recreation. Blacks and whites work side by side. Although most blacks are at the bottom of the ladder and most whites at the top, that too is changing as more blacks matriculate from high schools and go on to enter universities and the work force. Representative of this type of well-educated South African is another young man I met at that baptismal service in Soweto.

Between the baptism and confirmation of the three boys, the missionaries asked Ambrose Nkeske to bear his testimony. Brother Ambrose is a well-dressed eighteen-year-old who could easily fit in at any suburban American high school or college. In fact, he attends Pace College, the only

2. See Newell G. Bringham, "Mormonism in Black Africa," *Sunstone*, May/June 1981.

private school inside Soweto. I had visited Pace before and was acquainted with Ambrose's English teacher. Ambrose has been adopted by Sister Dolley Ndhlovu, a good friend of Sister Julia who accompanied her on her trip to Salt Lake City. It was through Dolley that Ambrose heard about the church and became a member almost two years ago. He is finishing Standard Eight (equivalent to the tenth grade in the U.S.). His goals are to go on a mission after his "matric" year and then attend college at BYU. In this respect, he's like many young white Mormons I met that May evening at another baptismal service in Johannesburg.

* * *

Among both whites and blacks, South Africans have a deep and abiding love-hate relationship with the United States. "Europeans" (a euphemism for whites) look at the wide open spaces in their country and see the mythic American frontier. "Africans" look to black culture in America and see jazz, the civil rights movement, the legal and political equality of a people who suffered under a legacy of slavery and exploitation.

This love affair turns sour, however, when the United States starts to intervene in South African affairs. When Republican administrations under U.S. presidents Nixon and Ford provided assistance and advice to the South African government in some of the darkest days of apartheid, America's credibility rating dropped in the eyes of anti-apartheid leaders, who increasingly started attacking American "imperialism." On the other hand, when the Democratic-controlled U.S. Congress passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986—a blunt instrument that severely curtailed trade between the two countries—white business leaders thought that America had lost any standing it had to arbitrate the South African quagmire.

Naturally, there are differences between the history and culture of the two countries, but the analogy between America and South Africa can shed light on very diverse subjects—from race relations to religion.

Perhaps the most notable aspect of Mormonism to the outside world is the Book of Mormon. Brigham Young or polygamy or the Word of Wisdom may be more widely present in folk knowledge, but an acquaintance with the Book of Mormon confronts the reader with two compelling facts about the American continent: it is another place where Christ visited and lingered for a season—the place where Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built. Second, the Book of Mormon explains that native Americans are of the House of Israel—a Hebraic lineage to whom the word of God must be brought through missionary work.

When I told this story to James Dryja, a friend active in the

anti-apartheid movement, he was impressed by the book's apparently enlightened view toward native Americans. I added that for many years this positive view about the origins of one group of non-Europeans was demeaned by a different view about the origins of another group of non-Europeans, the Africans.

Just as this favorable view towards American Indians had some bearing on the strong presence of missionaries and the rapid growth of the church in South America, so too had the pre-1978 prohibition preventing blacks from receiving the priesthood forced church leaders to urge patience upon those in black African countries who had heard about the Book of Mormon and pleaded with the church to send missionaries. For many years, to baptize an African was to mark him as a second-class citizen in the Kingdom of God, unworthy, for whatever reason, to receive all of the Father's blessings. But as hard to bear as this condition must have been for African Mormons in countries like Ghana and Nigeria who had come into contact with the restored Church of Jesus Christ, at least it did not coincide with—and give implicit support to—a system of social and political organization based upon complete separation of the races.

Moreover, while American or European blacks were at least allowed the opportunity of baptism during this time period, in South Africa blacks had to wait. Moses Mahlangu, the Elder's quorum president when I visited Soweto, learned about the Book of Mormon in 1966, fourteen years before he was allowed to be baptized.³ He told me that during much of this time he showed up at the church building in Johannesburg every Sunday—rain or shine—and would have to wait outside. After meeting with the mission president, he was told that attending the same church as whites would be a violation of civil law. After the church applied to the government in Pretoria and received special permission to baptize blacks, Brother Mahlangu and three others came into Houghton, one of the wealthiest white sections of Johannesburg, for special gospel lessons on Sundays and Thursdays. The day before he was going to be baptized in the late 1960s, word came from Salt Lake City that the gospel was to be preached first to whites in South Africa, then to blacks. He waited longer, until Spencer W. Kimball finally rescinded the church's prohibition of blacks receiving the priesthood.

South Africa, like America, was settled by God-fearing Puritans—Calvinists who believed, as did the inhabitants of John Winthrop's "City on a Hill," that they were an elect generation, chosen of God to build new Jerusalems on their respective continents. But something happened when these people—Dutch, German, French Huguenot—ventured into the heart of Africa, cutting themselves off from their own written traditions

3. See LeBaron, 159.

and continuing to live a seventeenth-century agrarian life in an eighteenth-, nineteenth-, even twentieth-century world. These people—the Afrikaners—became the “white tribe of Africa.” They created their own language and brooked no compromise with black tribes against whom they declared that they would accept equality “in neither church nor state.” Rian Malan’s autobiography, *My Traitor’s Heart*,⁴ speculates about the journey across the Rubicon taken by his ancestors from British-ruled Cape Town civilization—fault-ridden and worldly—into the illiterate frontier country where blood and revenge were the only law.

Can one continent be blessed and another cursed? Protruding from the steppe a couple of miles outside of Pretoria rises a monument to a ghastly victory, the Battle of Blood River in 1838. December 16, perhaps the biggest holiday of the year for white South Africans, commemorates the “Day of the Covenant” when Johann Pretorius swore that if God protected him from the Zulus (who had attacked a company of pioneers whom they thought were invading their land in northern Natal), the *Boers* (“farmers” in Afrikaans) would forever honor that day. Circling their wagons, the Afrikaners fired shots at the approaching Zulu tribe. Not one *Boer* was lost, but on that day Tugela River became Blood River after it was stained by the bodies of Zulu King Dingaan’s warriors.

The Mormons’ trek across the American Great Plains followed the Afrikaner *Vortrekker* by only a decade. Like the Afrikaners, the Mormons sought an independent country far removed from “imperial” rule. Like the Afrikaners, the Mormons sought accommodation—through negotiation and gunpowder—with native tribes. Like the Afrikaners, the Mormons had a strict moral code and disdained the ungodly world. Paul Kruger, president of the Transvaal Republic at the time gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand (named after the “White water reef” of pure gold below ground), was reputed to have read no book in his entire life except the Bible. Maybe the Mormons were lucky that the gold-diggers only passed through Utah, and didn’t stop then to bring Babylon with them.

Given all this, perhaps it is surprising that the majority of Mormon families in South Africa are not Afrikaners, but English-speaking descendants of Scotch, Irish, and British emigrants. At dinner one night with Brother Samuels, patriarch of the Johannesburg Stake (the son of a Scotch emigrant), and his family, I learned just how much the Afrikaner is tied to the family-oriented Dutch Reformed Church. The DRC remains one of the strongest faiths in South Africa—not just among Afrikaners, but also among “coloreds” and Africans as well. Although it has come in the past several years to see the errors of apartheid, its members still look with

4. Rian Malan, *My Traitor’s Heart* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1990).

great suspicion upon a religion so foreign as Mormonism.

Almost all of South Africa's history, in fact, has been dominated by this conflict between the loyalty of the South African English to the mother country and a quest for independence on the part of the Afrikaner. Hence the Boer (or South African) War, which the British won militarily but lost morally. The images of disease and death inflicted on Afrikaner women and children in British "concentration camps" (that term's origin) still have emotive power. Afrikaner prime ministers have ruled the country ever since, after the Union of South Africa was formed in 1910, although their desire for national sovereignty was sublimated through the mainly English-speaking "United Party" that governed until 1948.

Apartheid (literally, "separate-ness" in Afrikaans) was also justified on theological grounds. Theologians in the Dutch Reformed Church used the term to capture the Afrikaners' aspirations for control of "their" country in the National Party's 1948 political platform. After a stunning surprise victory over the United Party, they also captured the world's attention with their goal of separating the races and ethnic groups of South Africa into their own separate enclaves. Like too many amateur Mormon "theologians," the architects of apartheid also used biblical arguments about the "curse of Cain," the "lineage of Ham," or the "seed of Canaan" to justify the inferior position into which they put the Africans of their country. (One can only speculate what these theologians would have come up with had they had access to the concept of pre-existence.)

This racialistic streak may be the most embarrassing similarity between the Mormons and the Afrikaners. Mormons struggled long and hard before finally relinquishing their political ambition to constitute their beloved state of Deseret as a theocracy, finally yielding to secular rule with the consolation that nonetheless the rule they accepted flows from a "divinely inspired" Constitution. Whatever its faults in implementation, this is a constitution that mandates the vital principles of individual liberty and equal justice under law—noble principles, the blessings of which no Afrikaners (nor any other South Africans)—ever enjoyed.

At times we Mormons seem to rival the Afrikaners in our finely-tuned loyalty, which can sometimes become blind obedience to authority—both political and religious. While the Mormons of Joseph's and Brigham's day saw gaps between obedience to God's law and obedience to man's law, the contemporary Mormon desire for respectability seems to have swung so far on this pendulum that any challenge (either individually or as a group) to the political status quo in whatever country we inhabit (including Latin America and the former East Germany as well as South Africa) is looked upon with great suspicion.

At least in the United States—where there is no crisis of governmental legitimacy, where the difference between Republicans and Democrats is slight indeed—the contemporary Mormon tilt toward the former hardly stifles anyone's political expression. In South Africa, however, where most members, if pressed, would tend to support the National Party (perhaps with a minority of wealthier members voting for the more liberal pro-business, anti-apartheid Progressive Federal Party and its successor, the Democratic Party), politics is seen as a dirty game to be avoided if possible. As did the Christians in Paul's day, I can understand why a minority religion would take this position to protect itself and its members from persecution. But, after living for several weeks in 1988 at a Mormon-run boarding house on the fringes of Johannesburg, I was most frustrated by the almost total indifference and lack of involvement on the part of white South African Mormons in the affairs of their country.

If black branches like the one in Soweto are forced constantly to be aware of troubles in their country and the difficulties that those troubles make for them, one could yet attend a ward in Johannesburg and not know that this country was riddled with difficulties. One of the blessings of the church is its existence "outside of the world" and its ability to provide solace and refuge from the world's concerns. But this strength must then be used in the world as we become "anxiously engaged in a good cause . . . to bring to pass much righteousness" (D&C 58:27).

Certainly many of the whites in South Africa know and understand how blacks are wronged in their country. Sometimes the problems of South Africa seem too big to be tackled politically, but the Mormons I encountered were making too few attempts to reach out across that great abyss between white and black. In fact, for an organized group of 17,000 people, Mormons have lain remarkably low in South Africa. Perhaps we could learn a lesson from another persecuted minority. The Jews in South Africa have had a disproportionate impact, not just upon business and commerce—and in established political parties such as the PFP—but in extra-parliamentary organizations that are working to build bridges which can reassure whites that they have a future in Africa, even as they contribute, bit by bit, to meet black aspirations.

Mormons in South Africa speak of "the blacks," using the same propagandistic terms that the Afrikaner nationalist government has been feeding to its population for the last forty years. Like other whites in this country, Mormons often see blacks—as a group—as an omnipresent threat. Individual black members, including those who lived in the "white area" of Johannesburg, were openly fellowshiped into the church in all cases that I saw, but there was almost always an effort, in the whites' minds, to set this person or that person apart from "the blacks" as a collective entity. Though prejudiced by their past, South African Mor-

mons are *not* more racialistic than most whites.

Whatever else the gospel does, I believe that our knowledge of Christ's life and mission makes us reach beyond the iniquity of seeing people as "groups." Yet because Mormons know that justice will prevail in the end, they sometimes become indifferent about working to make sure that it prevails right now. I have grown to accept Fourth of July fast and testimony meeting presentations on the "inspired" nature of the Constitution of the United States, but I cannot accept the notion that the historic South African Constitution is either ordained of God or worthy of respect.

* * *

I first came to South Africa in August 1988 at a time when, though officially banned the previous February, the United Democratic Front was celebrating its fifth anniversary on college campuses. Since its inception in 1983, the UDF has been closely aligned (both by virtue of its political goals and personalities) with the African National Congress. Throughout the 1980s, however, it had to be circumspect about that subject. The UDF was in fact originally organized to fight against ratification of the new constitution that then-Prime Minister Botha had tried to sell to white voters in a "reformist" referendum in 1983. After years of increasing economic integration in the 1970s and early 1980s, even the National Party had been forced to admit that the goal of "grand apartheid"—separate "homelands" for each of the country's numerous racial groups—was untenable. In Botha's words, the Afrikaner must "adapt or die." The question was *how* to adapt.

Botha decided to co-opt the "coloreds"—the mixed-race descendants of Afrikaners and Africans—and the "Indians"—the South African-born descendants of peasant sugar farmers who were shipped in from India. Both "groups" are less numerous than whites, and Botha calculated that if he could create a tri-cameral parliament, each house having seats proportional to the "ethnic group's" population, each having responsibility over its "own affairs," that would grant more legitimacy to the entire parliament's rule over "general affairs" (i.e., the political affairs of the nation). Of course, the constitution also vested highly centralized—almost dictatorial—powers in the newly created executive post of State President, to which Botha, leader of the National Party, was naturally the heir. The result of this constitutional tinkering was a disaster. By raising the expectations for self-government among some of the non-whites while completely ignoring the African majority, Botha unleashed a firestorm of protest and unrest, and then reacted militaristically with a repressive wave of detentions and police violence. The years 1984, 1985, and 1986

were among the worst years that South Africa had seen.

Things were a little bit quieter by 1988. Although the state of emergency would still be in effect for another year and a half, it was surprising how free was the political discussion that could take place (at least in the major cities of Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pretoria, and Durban) as the future of the country settled down into a kind of negotiational hold.

But other forces of a far more peaceful and hopeful nature were at work in helping to build the new, non-racial South Africa.

When I first came down to South Africa, I was surprised by how much racial integration there was in all of the major and even minor cities. I was also impressed by the continued feelings of love and goodwill that exist across the color line, particularly in the many non-racial organizations established in all fields of interest and walks of life. Most of all, I was impressed by the indomitable spirit of perseverance that motivated so many people to continue in the face of such tiresome challenges in their lives.

In my own life, I needed some of the perseverance and charity that I saw in them. I had attended an international political conference in Swaziland, the peaceable kingdom next door. Eventually my American friends left—they, unlike I, had jobs back in America—and I bade farewell to one of them on top of Table Mountain in Cape Town, the flat beauty frequently covered by billowing clouds that makes that city my candidate for the most beautiful city in the world.

Sometimes when our eyes behold a new world before us, our minds can't comprehend how much it has to offer. The week I spent hitchhiking up the coast until I made it back to Johannesburg remains one of the most vivid weeks in my life—not so much for the sights or the people who opened their doors to me—but because of my personal struggle to know what I should be doing.

I finally found my niche in Hillbrow, Johannesburg's only late-night area, a place and a name that has come to symbolize the rapid racial integration taking place in South Africa. I landed a job writing for the *Weekly Mail*, one of the major "alternative" or anti-apartheid newspapers in the country. I wrote about the de facto demise of the Group Areas Act, how the government had been forced to tinker with it and ultimately, in 1991, to abolish it. This law, which effectively had been unenforced during the previous five years in neighborhoods like Hillbrow, was on its way out purely as a result of quiet yet determined action by thousands of individuals who decided that they could no longer live by a law that determined where they must live according to the color of their skin.

It was in this line of work that I met James Dryja, the (white) owner of an old movie house and a citizen who had long worked for the recognition and acceptance of Hillbrow as a multi-racial area. On my first trip

to South Africa he was active in the Progressive Federal Party and ran as their candidate from Hillbrow in the municipal (all-white) elections, campaigning to make Hillbrow an open area. When I had the opportunity to visit South Africa for a month in April/May 1991, the biggest change I encountered was that instead of finding PFP and National Party election booths outside the local supermarket on Saturday, it was the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party that were soliciting financial and moral support from the black *and* white residents of Hillbrow. And now James, who was one of the first persons legally married to a non-white since the Mixed Marriages Act was abolished, was as active in local affairs as ever, helping the African National Congress to establish support and form the basis for growth among all races in Hillbrow.

It was through James that I met Peter Mbotembeni, a (black) resident of Hillbrow who had attracted some attention when he joined the Hillbrow Residents Association in 1989. When he decided to study ceramics there several years ago, Peter was one of the first black students at the Witwatersrand Technikon (or technical college). He lived in a student house in the neighborhood (where I would frequently go for dinner).

But this story really begins when Peter heard about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and decided to investigate it. During my return visit in 1991, he had almost committed to be baptized. We had several long conversations about the church, about the gospel, about Jesus Christ and what he means to each of us. Peter was baptized in the Johannesburg Chapel on 30 April, the same day as was an Afrikaner named Louie and a young Zulu girl who didn't speak much English, whose mother was a member of the Johannesburg Ward.

God writes straight with curved lines, runs a Portuguese proverb. I could have had no better blessing in South Africa than to introduce this rock of a soul to the members of *my* church at *his* baptism, to participate in confirming him a member of the Church of Jesus Christ, and to fellowship that evening with the white and black Latter-day Saints (sharing my own straight, curved line testimony of God) on the grounds of the Johannesburg temple. It is in this temple that we are welcomed back home—into a home blessed with the presence of a father who loves all of his children.

Taiwan Trilogy

Richard Eliot Allen

BEAUTIFUL MEINUNG

THERE ARE HARDLY WORDS TO DESCRIBE the rice farmer I rode past on my way to Meinung, my pedal squeaking with every half turn. I decided to rest for a moment, Elder Tsai far ahead of me, and to observe this curious figure. Deeper brown than most Chinese, his skin matched the dark pat-ties in which he toiled. He walked the narrow paths between rice stalks, inspecting his work in preparation for the upcoming harvest. He was a lone figure in an Oriental painting, his gait heavy and bent. The tool he carried stretched both arms out from his shoulders like a cross. He was another of those with whom we would probably never speak—one of the many, Tsai said, who would pass away in the darkness of traditional spiritualism. I saw my companion waiting for me on the road ahead, and started pedalling again toward Meinung.

Our morning had begun with study of the Old Testament. My native companion read to me verses in Chinese, and I followed the ancient characters trying to memorize as I listened. We then picked a hymn to sing and chanted it as best we could. Our prayers were sincere that we might somehow inspire the small community of Saints in our area. Another prayer before we left asked for guidance in finding those searching for the truth we had to offer.

The lamp of the sun goddess was already high when we emerged from our door. Her rays were bright, but never warm enough to take away the chill from our snowless winter mornings. We dressed in dark sweaters and patched woolen gloves which made the wind bearable when riding our bicycles. I strapped my Bible to the rear rack with an old rubber tire, and we started for Meinung.

Meinung, which means “beautiful farm,” is a village known for its surrounding scenes and inner temples. Here the worship of the earth god was most active. Sounds from the Madzu temple could be heard for miles: cymbals and loud drums echoed with wailing music and heavy chants. Nuns came from the mountains to worship and to take fruit and other gifts offered to the gods. Their heads were completely shaved, their

robes made of dark plain material, and their slippers plain and unattractive. They spent their days in the mountain convents, followers of Buddha. The oldest nuns wore black and had three round burn marks on their shaved foreheads. The others in dark gray followed in groups of twos and threes. They walked solemnly, and drew respect from the common people. I once saw a gray nun wearing eye glasses, and realized for the first time that she was once a woman, a daughter of good parents, a schoolgirl who played and laughed with friends and family.

Meinung was smaller than Chishan where we lived, but even from our distance we could hear the sounds of the morning market. We locked our bikes near the town's only stoplight, then walked through the back alleys to where we could buy food and talk with some local people. The poorer sellers squatted in front of the market, their vegetables laid out on the street in front of them. Others owned shops and displayed their goods in large baskets and metal tins. The stench of rotting pork vented from behind the shops. Dangling light bulbs gathered flies to huge slabs of fat and meat. Intestines and whole heads, the delicacies of pork, were suspended from hooks above us. I waited for my companion to banter with sellers while watching a man clean live eels. I felt weak in these moist caves and breathed little until we went outside. My companion did not buy anything, and we decided to pick up our vegetables when we returned to Chishan.

We spoke to no one else as we left the market. I could see the frustration on Tsai's face and in his walk as we headed for our bicycles. He had been in Chishan for several months and already lost any desire to spread Christianity among the poorer classes. I think he was reminded of his own father, a fish salesman, and felt the pain of being cut off from his family for not participating in the worship of his ancestors. He refused to share the message with any like his father who had already rejected it. He walked quickly past the older farm women in front and avoided any calls to buy fresh cabbage or dried squid. We passed a man crawling up the grimy alleyway selling incense. He had no legs. Tsai grimaced in frustration, visibly battling sympathy, then continued walking.

I did not speak much when I was with Tsai. My words were often incorrect, my sentences slow, and anything said to anyone could be better phrased by this Chinese native. If ever he spoke to me it was in broken English, and then only to clarify an English word or phrase. He was learning English, and if nothing else in these two years he would return home with that. I walked and rode behind him, and had time to think, to watch, to enjoy the beauty of the surrounding landscape. We reached our bicycles at the end of the alley, and I again strapped my scriptures to the back. Tsai paused for a moment without words, then rode off and I quickly followed.

I was surprised to see my companion stop his bicycle across from a temple. At this close distance the noise from the front courtyard was almost unbearable, and the sights and smells were strange to my American eye. He got off and started to lock his bike to a post. All eyes were upon us, and even the music seemed to slow a bit as my companion's intentions became clear. Everyone in Meinung had seen us before, almost all had met us, and an even smaller number wanted anything to do with us. I was as shocked as they to see that we were going to enter the temple. "Stay with me," he said.

The temple was, of course, a public place. Yet it was hardly common for two young men in white shirts and tags bearing the name of Jesus Christ to enter. I felt my companion's determination to find one of these dark worshippers whom he could speak to, to quarrel with even. It was not my style to argue, but I had stood by as Tsai had done it many times before. We took our Bibles and crossed the crowded street, both of us fearless, one innocent and the other brave.

The temples are large halls elaborately designed and covered in black and red. Gold and other colors are less common, but they stand out in the darkness. Red pillars and tiles surround the main entrance, and black carved wood adorns the outside walls—dragons and mythical animals, and the faces of ancient gods and heroes. For a Westerner, especially a Christian, temples can seem eerie places: public houses of burning and idol worship. The floors are covered in ashes, and pots of incense smoke in every room. We entered this scene slowly, and watched as people knelt at the altars.

Fresh fruits, meats, and breads of every kind were laid out on a table just above the kneeling people. Tsai passed through this main area and headed for the smaller rooms in the back, probably where he could find someone alone. I stopped and backed up against a pillar to watch the sight before me. The smallest woman I had ever seen came before the table and set down a shiny grapefruit among the other foods. She then took a stick of incense and placed it in the charcoaled brass urn. Slowly she knelt down, then completely prostrated her feeble body before the gods. I stood aside in the darkness and could hardly move.

Hundreds of wooden icons covered the altar shelves above the sacrificial offerings. Some were of calm Oriental figures holding leaves and other symbols of peace. Most of the statues were dark, sinister-looking faces which evoked fear in the worshippers. On the outer edges were again the mythical animals and gargoyles who screamed out in protection of the gods. I heard firecrackers in the street, and shivered as I backed around into a smaller room.

There, in one of the side rooms, was a nun in peaceful supplication on her knees. What she looked up to was a painting of a war scene, and a

single stick of incense burning in front. She did not turn toward me, nor did she seem to notice that I had entered. I watched her, staring down at her bare head and the wooden beads in her hands. She rolled each bead carefully as she gazed up into the painting, lamenting, it seemed, the earthly wars represented by this work of art. I too lamented at the scene. Both of us hoped for peace, each working toward it in different ways. Why it was that she would be forever without the joys of life, and the fruits of her labors, I do not know. Her hands were worn dry and calloused, her body thin through the robes.

This was the rice farmer's religion. His daughter was before me, and much too far away to reach. I was touched by her lack of evil. She was peaceful and repentant and surpassed the idol worship all about her. I wanted to kneel beside her and share her prayer, then to share with her whom I prayed to. If only she could know the light of Christ. *If only I could reach her*, I thought. The smell of incense was strong in the small room, and I turned to leave the solitary nun.

As I turned, I met a child in the doorway who had been watching me. She wore a bright yellow coat and stood motionless, looking up at me. Her mother was beyond her, kneeling at the outside altars. The girl looked scared as I stood above her. She dropped the orange that she was holding at the same time the nun arose from her bow. The gray saint paused, her eyes to the floor as she waited to exit. I turned to the girl again, "*Lai, lai*," I said, motioning her forward. I bent to pick up the orange at my feet, then placed it in her hands and stood back. Her bright coat was a stark contrast to the nun as the girl handed the orange up from her hands. The nun did not move, apparently unable to directly accept the offering. Again fearful, the girl dropped her extended arm, then turned and offered the orange up to me. I paused uneasily and considered the impact of my acceptance. This too was the daughter of a rice farmer, or a half-bodied incense seller. She was a bright new beginning. She might still be reached, if only she grew to respect me as much as she did this gray nun.

I took the fruit and approached the painting. I placed it on the ashen floor: an offering to God. God who would bring peace, and who made this little girl. The girl's mother suddenly came into the doorway and called her child away.

The nun and I had not spoken, and she would not look up at me. She kept her head low as she left the room. I followed, and met Tsai again in the main hallway. "Where you go?" he said.

"Just looking around," I responded.

"Looooking around," he said. It was common for him to repeat my words and exaggerate the sounds. He was glancing around as he spoke, still looking for someone to speak with. He had evidently spoken to no

one.

"Should we go?" I said.

"We go." Tsai started marching out toward the shrill music. As we made our way out of the temple I turned and saw the bright yellow girl with her mother. The nun was gone, but I knew that I would see both of them again. I would see them everywhere. Perhaps their children, or their children's children, would see me.

No eyes seemed to watch us now as we left the temple. They all knew that we had failed, and they would go on with their worship as we went on with ours. I followed Tsai down the busy street, then out on to the highway where the noises and people were distant. My companion rode slowly now. He had nowhere left to go, and did not want to make it back to Chishan too soon.

I rode my usual distance behind him. He was humming to himself, the hymn that we had sung that morning. My pedal had stopped squeaking, perhaps due to the moist morning air. I passed the even rows of tobacco plants, miles and miles of them with spaces that chopped like frames of an old movie. There were banana fields at the foot of terraced hills. I looked up to the terraces, just visible in the mist, and thought I saw a cross standing tall, then walking heavy and bent.

MOUNT ZION

"We're going to Zion mountain today," Tsai said in Chinese to Mr. Wang. He had mentioned nothing about the trip in our morning planning together, and I wasn't aware of it until he informed Mr. Wang in the market.

"You won't do any converting up there," Wang responded. He and Tsai joked for a few minutes about the "Born Agains" who had established Zion's mountain in southern Taiwan. I understood little of what they said. Tsai had told me once something about a leader who claimed to have seen a vision and had gathered a community of believers to the mountain location of his revelation. It sounded familiar, but it was even more unusual because it had originated in a predominantly Taoist country.

Wang was a stout young man who sold pork in the market. I never saw him much except in his coverall apron with a knife in his hand surrounded by meat and fish. He never came to church, even though he had been a Mormon longer than anyone in Chishan. Mrs. Wang was usually with him, pregnant now and so overgrown that I felt we would miss the birth if we left them only a day. Even at nine months, Mrs. Wang lifted and cut the heavy slabs of flesh and stayed long days amid the grease and odor.

We left the Wangs and returned to our bicycles just outside the market. "So we're going to the mountains today?" I asked my companion.

"Yes," Tsai said. He wasn't one to give me any information that didn't seem necessary.

"Can we go home first, to get a sweater or something?" I asked. Our apartment was on the way to the train station.

"Yes. I need to get my Bible," he said. Tsai knew English well, but spoke it like a robot. He reminded me of all of those "made-in-Taiwan" computer toys.

He mounted his bike and started down the only major street in town. I followed and wondered to myself, as I did every day, how long I would be stuck in the smallest town in the mission. It had already been over one month, which meant at least a second month with this native companion. The official move day came only once a month, and unless there were extenuating circumstances missionaries never moved in between. I wondered if I had "extenuating circumstances." I hoped that at the Christmas conference I would have a chance to ask for a transfer.

I arrived home just behind Tsai and waited as he lifted the heavy front gate. All Taiwanese homes have heavy metal gates over their front entrances, and bars over the front windows. It didn't make missionaries feel welcome as we went tracting. Tsai grabbed an umbrella just inside the door, and I went up the stairs to get an extra sweater. I put my English Bible in my book bag, thinking that Tsai would need to look up scriptures in the index. Chinese Bibles didn't have an index, and using mine was the only thing that made me feel useful when we taught lessons. I took my camera out of the bottom drawer and stuffed it in my bag. It was against the mission rules to carry a camera except on Preparation Day, but I thought about the beautiful mountain scenes which before I had only seen in paintings. I thought I could get a few shots when Tsai wasn't looking.

Back at our front gate we did rock-paper-scissors to see who would pray. He won, but prayed anyway. He knew that I had no idea what to pray for. We then shut up our apartment and headed for the train station.

"I haven't been to Zion's mountain for a few years," Tsai said as we rode through town.

"Do you know anyone there?" I asked, happy to converse with my companion. He thought for a minute or so, probably about his last trip to Zion. I could see a sense of pride in Tsai, like a patriotic soldier going off to battle. There was nothing he wanted more than to convert a few of his own people, and those who were already Christians were a perfect target. Tsai had an incredible knowledge of the Bible and could challenge anyone who had a different interpretation and belonged to another faith.

"They would not know me now," he said, "it was a long time ago—

before anyone on the island knew the Christians." I had the impression that he had looked into the "Born Agains" before converting to Mormonism. He had told me once before about his family's strong objections to his Christian conversion. Conversion for him was like a long research project during his teenage years, and came about as more of a conversion to Western culture than a spiritual belief. Christianity was simply part of Western society.

The train station was on the north side of town, half way to Shen Li and serving all the surrounding villages. Twice a day the blue student train came in and out, and the track was left silent the rest of the day. Tsai loved to proselytize in the train station. He knew that young people, mostly students, would be the only ones to consider accepting Christianity and to accept the teachings of the Western world. It wasn't unusual for us to stand around train platforms twice a day so that Tsai could talk to students. I would attract them by speaking English, and Tsai would tell them who we were and turn it to a religious discussion. We walked in that morning as usual, then surprised the train master by buying tickets for a change.

We didn't wait long for the train, and Tsai was in a serious discussion with a young student as we boarded. Several kids from surrounding farms dressed in school uniforms boarded with us. I sat across from a group of girls just old enough to be in middle school. I could hear them saying "hello" and other English words then giggling. Finally one of them was brave enough to ask, "Are you American?" The other girls laughed, but were obviously jealous that this girl could speak with me.

"Yes," I said, "I am an American, are you?" They looked at each other, repeating the word "American" over and over as if in English class. The one girl repeated "are you" to herself, then realized what I had asked. She laughed and explained in Chinese to her friends.

"No, no!" she said, unsure whether I was serious or not. "We are . . ." she tried to phrase something else, but stuttered and asked her friends in Chinese how to say "Chinese."

"*Nimen shr Junggwo ren?*" I said. I knew my Chinese would go farther than their English. Young people were the only ones I could communicate with, and little did the girls know that I understood everything they said to each other. None of them responded to my question, but instead expressed surprise that I could speak Chinese.

The blue trains move slowly through the farmlands. I always thought that if a student missed the train, he could just run and jump on at a road intersection. Trains fascinated me: the windows were like television screens which slowly showed the world moving from one side to the other. The rhythm of the banging wheels made me sleepy, and I dozed off even as the girls were talking.

A change in the rhythm woke me, and I felt the train braking as it came into the station. Lyouli was not much bigger than any of the other local villages, but for some reason had both the middle and high schools. The students stood up and held on to the overhead bars. I looked over and noticed that Tsai had also dozed off, but then quickly woke himself. The train came to a complete stop and let us all off on the platform.

The students went one way, Tsai and I the other. I noticed that he didn't get a referral from the student he had been talking to, but he didn't say anything about it. We needed to take a bus up into the mountains, he told me.

We crossed the street to the bus station. A man stood out in front selling black eggs boiled in tea and gelatin bars made from rice and pig's blood. A woman next to him sat on the ground and placed in front of her the small plastic toys and gadgets she sold. The inside of the station had one row of light-blue chairs, a ticket counter, and a magazine stand. The men's magazines were displayed most prominently and served as a distraction to even the best missionary.

It was still early in the morning, and the only bus which passed by Zion Mountain wouldn't leave for over an hour. We each bought a ticket, then left the station to walk the streets.

The streets in Lyouli were the same as those everywhere else: the same places to eat, the same barbershops, the same post office. I had no idea where we were, but Tsai seemed to know where he was going. He didn't stop to talk to people outside the post office as he usually did, but instead walked on with some other destination in mind. We passed by a hair dresser's shop, then turned back and looked in the window. Tsai seemed to recognize something or someone, and turned the door handle to go in.

A single hair dresser was in the shop working on an older woman's hair. The older woman was embarrassed to be seen with rollers in her hair, but the shop owner was nice and said hello. Tsai started talking with her, and occasionally I heard the word "*Syian*" which meant "Zion." He must have known the woman, perhaps from several years ago. On her wall was a large photo of a group of people, about a hundred of them, assembled in front of a chapel. The insignia above them was a cross printed over a mountain, and I figured that she was one of them, whoever they were. Tsai saw me looking at the poster and turned to me to explain in English that her husband was "one of the leaders." I didn't want to offend the woman by speaking only in English, so I didn't respond to my companion. He continued talking to her.

I decided that she must have left her husband in the community on the mountain, perhaps coming down to the city to run her shop. The true "Born Agains" lived on the mountain itself, running a sort of commune

away from society. They had been in the news lately, Tsai had told me. A few months ago they had held a protest in Taiwan's capital city, ending in a clash with the police which left many of their leaders in the hospital. He didn't tell me what the protest was for.

We left the shop after a while. My companion had been very friendly with the woman, and left looking as if he had accomplished something—as if we were really getting somewhere. We walked back toward the bus station, stopping to eat at a morning shop. I had been on island for a few months, and was just learning to like the warm soy milk. I dipped my boiled bread in the milk, then brought the warm bowl to my mouth and felt the steam on my chilled face.

It was mid-morning when the bus came. We boarded with several others and left for the mountains. I looked at the passengers with us on the bus and thought it was obvious that we were headed away from the city. They were mountain people with dark skin and rough hair. An older man sat in the back holding two live roosters, their feet wired together, their wings tied. A woman in front of him wore a dirty coat with holes in it and looked as if she'd never bathed in her life. There was a man in front who spoke to himself in old Taiwanese, and a couple to the side of us who spoke a language I had never heard before. They were undoubtedly simple people, and I knew that my companion would not try to talk with any of them. Tsai said that converting someone of that background was next to impossible.

The bus was old and rickety, the mountain road getting more and more bumpy as we went along. At one point a bridge had been washed out by a recent flood, and we had to take a muddy detour another way. The forest on the sides of the bus became more and more dense as we ascended into the cloud-covered mountains. I could feel the mist and see the moisture on the surrounding vines and palms.

Our first stop was atop a steep hill where a little village stood. The man with the roosters got off, and the couple next to us. I could see that some farming had been done on the terraced hills, just like the pictures I had seen of areas on the mainland. The bus started up again, now winding around the sides of a steeper mountain climb.

After about an hour Tsai and I were the only passengers left. We continued winding around the mountains, and I feared that at any minute we might fall off the edge. Finally we stopped near a long bridge at the base of a mountain. The bus driver turned back to Tsai and said, "*Syian Shan*," then opened the door. We got out on to the road and watched the bus continue up the mountainside, on to another set of mountains in the distance. The mountain in front of us, partially covered by clouds, must have been "Zion mountain."

The bridge we had just crossed had the characters "fifty-nine" in-

scribed in its post. "Wait," I said, before we turned on the dirt road leading up the mountain. "I want to take a picture." I pulled the camera out of my bag.

"Oh—you not supposed to bring your camera," Tsai said.

"I know, but just let me get a picture here." I asked him to stand with his umbrella in front of the post, with the misty hills in the background—just like I had seen in all of those paintings. "It's very American," I finally said, trying to coerce him, "there's a song by Simon and Garfunkel with the name of this bridge." He didn't understand who I was talking about, but posed anyway upon hearing that it was "very American." I took the photo of him, and didn't ask for one of myself.

"Okay," he said, "we go to *Zion mountain!*" Tsai had been in the army for two years and now marched with his umbrella, making fun of those Born Agains who "come to Zion mountain." He too had come here once, but I didn't remind him of that.

A muddy road led up the mountain and into the clouds. A gatekeeper was friendly to us and let us through the main gates. I saw only a few rooftops while we were climbing, but at the top the trees opened up to reveal an entire camp of huts and wooden buildings. There were children playing in a large grassy area, and a few men talking in front of one of the homes. One of the men saw us and approached us. I was expecting the worst.

He said "hello" to us, first in Chinese then in English. He smiled after saying it in English, as if he had said it incorrectly. Chinese people always did this, even if their words were as clear as mine. He seemed to know who we were, as though he were expecting us. Tsai later told me the man was the husband of the woman in the hairdresser's shop. He invited us up to the chapel, speaking with Tsai as we began walking.

The two of them told me about the camp's inception, and how and why it was founded in Taiwan. I understood just a little of what they said, but mainly watched the clouds lowering down all around us. We approached a large boulder with a plaque on it on a grassy hillside. This, I inferred, was the site of the vision which the leader had received. The man then pointed up the hillside where a chapel could faintly be seen through the mist. We walked up and entered this shrine.

The Chapel of Zion had just recently been completed, a beautiful wooden chapel built just a few years after the "vision." It blended into the surrounding forest like a log cabin would, and it had seats inside for about a hundred people. A large pipe organ stood in front, and to the sides there were only glass walls and doors so that one could look out into the mist. *This was the top of the camp*, I thought to myself, *the pinnacle of Zion mountain*. The man sat down with Tsai and began comparing interpretations of scriptures in the Bible. I could tell that things were going

to get heated, and Tsai was so involved I had no trouble slipping away and walking to the front of the chapel.

At one point Tsai turned around and called for me, but simply asked for my English Bible. I went back and gave it to him so that he could look up scriptures in the index, then I returned to the front of the chapel. The organ was fascinating, the workmanship must have taken several years. I was reminded of the sacrifices which early Mormons made to build our temples and chapels. I could see nothing through the mist outside the glass walls, but imagined just below us a large camp of religious people working and living day to day. I could envision all of them in a line making the trek up the grassy hill to worship in this beautiful chapel. I thought of the rock below, a sacred shrine where a sleepy hiker once saw a "vision."

Tsai finally got up and called for me again. We were going to miss our bus if we didn't get back down the mountain. The scriptorians had quarrelled, but both were willing to part in peace. It had been completely unfruitful. I think that Tsai needed to run into a person like that every few weeks, just to brush up on his scriptures and to be sure that they knew the Mormons were still around.

The man took us down the hill, past the rock again and back into the camp. He insisted on showing us some of the things posted on a wall outside the school before we left. There were pictures of the protest which had occurred just earlier, and scenes of policeman beating on men in white robes. He pointed to one picture. "This was our leader," he said with a smile, in English. The photo showed an older man with a large bloody wound on his head. In the next picture he stood in front of a crowd, still bleeding, and held his hands toward heaven.

"Is he dead?" I asked.

"No no," replied the man. "Just not here today." There was something suspicious in the quick way in which he replied, but I thought it just sounded funny because he was trying to speak in English.

The man walked us to the gate and said goodbye. I think that he invited us to return again. The gatekeeper must have been surprised to see us all so friendly, and then to see Tsai and me begin running down the mountain.

About half way down the muddy road we saw the silver bus below us through the mist. It didn't stop. Tsai shook his head as we watched it disappear down the mountain road. He began to get angry in Chinese, unsure of whether to yell at me, or the man, or himself for coming on this crazy adventure.

"What now?" he exclaimed. "This is not like America." I wasn't sure what he meant. Chinese people seemed to have this impression that everything was wonderful in America, and if you were stuck in the moun-

tains it would be easy to find a ride down, or call the local police. "We can't go back," he said. He had obviously considered this option, weighing in his mind images of the evening with the Born Agains. We continued down in the mud, much cooler now in the late afternoon and the mist rising.

We leaned against the Fifty-ninth Street bridge. A car drove by—the first I had seen on that road. "You see—not like America," Tsai said. It might have helped if he had put his thumb out, or waved his hands. A few minutes passed on the bridge. It was going to be a long walk down in the dark. I started reconsidering my allegiance to my companion, knowing that one of the Zionists would have a car, or at least a warm hut for the night.

Finally the sound of a loud motor came from up the road. Coming around the bend was one of the three-wheeled farm trucks which I had seen down in the villages. The big blue trucks are no more than motorcycles which someone has added huge iron truck beds to, and surrounded the front with metal caging like an assault vehicle. Tsai shot out in the road, completely blocking the bridge and waving his hands for the farmer to stop. The man stopped, the sound of the machine almost unbearable so close to us. Tsai approached him and yelled something in the native language, a tongue which I could not speak nor understand. The man nodded, and Tsai called me over to ride on a make-shift iron seat next to the farmer. Tsai must have seen this as the better option than riding in the back, and he gave it up to me in a fatherly way. He gave me a look of assurance that we would get down safely, then jumped in the back of the truck. I knew that I was in for the ride of my life: down the muddy mountain rode and looking over the ledge into the steep canyon, sitting next to a man who didn't speak Chinese.

It was almost dark when we passed the first mountain village. The natives looked out of their open front doors at an American in dress clothes riding beside a farmer in his roaring machine. The glowing indoor lights made silhouettes of the village families in their doorways. These were simple people, probably the same people who rode up on the bus with us. It seemed that for years to come they might talk about what they saw coming down the mountain that night, and yet none of them would ever know anything about missionaries, or the church, or Christianity. I suddenly felt futile, and at the same time safe in the hands of one of them as we continued down the mountain.

In Lyouli the only lights came from the bus station. The farmer dropped us off just across the street, then raced off into the night. Fortunately there was a bus which would take us back to Chishan, and we would avoid waiting for the train which didn't come until the next morning. The late-night bus was empty except for us and another man who

looked as if he were from the mainland. He and the bus driver talked in loud Mandarin accents about the Japanese and the war and Christianity in China. Tsai and I sat in the back, and shared a package of vanilla cookies he had bought at the station.

At midnight we were dropped off in Chishan, a few blocks from the station where we had locked our bikes. We walked for a few minutes in silence and in a light rain, then Tsai spoke: "The trip to Mt. Zion," he repeated in a whisper to himself. He was proud to have brought me back safely. I knew that he was afraid of what I might report to the mission president, and I'm sure he didn't want the president to know about the trip to Zion Mountain at all, but he could meet that next battle as it came. I had no intention of saying anything. We walked through the empty streets and I thought of the adventure of our day. The next day we would be walking these streets again, talking to the shop owners, handing out pamphlets, and doing what missionaries did every day.

THE LONG SUMMER

At 5:00 a.m. the sun blazed into our white-tiled bedroom. My eyes opened just enough to see my companion in the other bed with his sheets pulled over his eyes. I rolled over and faced the wall, then brought my sheets up to cover my eyes until 6:30.

Promptly at 6:29 my alarm went off, giving me just a minute to stretch and yawn and consider staying in bed before getting up. It was time again to be a missionary: just one of two full years of early mornings away from home. Trussel was in the same position as I had seen him earlier. His sheets were still pulled up over his eyes to block the bright sun. I left him in the bedroom asleep and went out into the kitchen, closing the bedroom door behind me.

In the fridge was a leftover bottle of peach soda pop which had gone flat. I took a drink from the bottle to get some sugar in my system before going outside to exercise. I could hear Cox and Robinson moving the chairs around in their bedroom, beginning their morning companion study. I didn't want to face Cox or to talk to him, so I shut the fridge quietly and crept out our front door.

Our apartment in Tainan was an addition above the top floor of a five-story building, built and rented to us illegally by the landlord. It was very clean and in a good location, so we pretended to be naive about the laws and decided to stay as long as we could. The front door led out directly on to the cement roof where I exercised every morning. Trussel would never go out jogging with me, so I was forced to do aerobics on the roof or play tennis down in the garage—anything which kept me within reasonable proximity of my companion. Such were the rules.

It was a glorious day and well into sunlight by 6:30 in the morning. I was instantly reminded of "soccer days" back in high school: the clear spring afternoons when I would head to the park to play soccer with the team. All the greens and the yellows were like an impressionist painting on those days, and to run freely out in the moist air was a feeling I had not forgotten. Even two years later and half way across the world I remembered it. I walked out and leaned over the side of our building, feeling the intense heat and the full humidity from the recent rains.

Tainan is a low-built city. I could look and see thousands of five-story apartment buildings stretching out in all directions. Each was topped with a small spherical water tower and several television antennas. There were clothes strung up on lines every now and then, including my own just to the side of where I stood. The city was quiet, and bright. The array of buildings ended about three or four miles out, then the blue ocean filled the picture to the horizon. I leaned up against the wall and began stretching out for my exercises.

Trussel was up by the time I went back inside. He was in the kitchen making pancakes. My peach soda pop was on the table.

"Would you like some pancakes, Elder Allen?" Trussel asked. "I'm making some for everybody. How was your exercising?" He knew that he had slept in, and tried to keep me from mentioning it.

"Good," I said. I took another drink.

"Why don't you shower and come back and have pancakes," Trussel said. He took the can of powdered milk from a cupboard.

"You'll make somebody a great housewife some day, Trussel," I said. He knew that I wanted him to study in the morning and not to spend his time making pancakes.

"I promise I'll go and study," he said, "just as soon as we're done with pancakes."

"I'll just have to remember to tell the mission president what a great cook you are when he asks me why I've failed you as a trainer." I found it difficult to nag him for not studying. He found so much pleasure in cooking and writing letters and making cards for people that he had no desire to study. I wondered why someone who could do so much good and service in an English-speaking mission was sent to Taiwan. I left him to his work and headed for the shower, just missing Cox and Robinson as they emerged from their study room.

Elder Cox and I did not hit things off well from the first day he moved in. He was the first roommate I didn't get along with in over a year in Taiwan, and I had started avoiding him to keep from getting angry. He and Robinson came home late every night and talked about how well their work was going and how many people they were teaching. Cox would stay up late calling people on the phone, working "overtime"

as it were, then getting up promptly at 6:30 a.m. to start companion study. He knew that I hated companion study, and for him it was just one more thing that he did right and I did wrong. At a time when my teaching pool and other missionary work were at an absolute low, there was nothing worse than meeting up with Elder Cox and his companion. I avoided being home as much as possible, and stayed secluded in my room when I was there.

At exactly 9:30 I heard the front door open and close, my roommates leaving, then I came out of my study room to get dressed and prepare to go out. Trussel was still on his knees in prayer, as he was for almost an hour every morning, and I rushed him along to get out the door. It was Tuesday morning, the day after our only weekly "day off" as missionaries. Tuesday mornings always became a time to recover from our Preparation Day activities, and we usually got little work done. We delivered letters to the post office, visited the morning market, and had some photocopies made for the afternoon district meeting. We rode our bikes slowly from one place to another, hoping perhaps to see someone we knew and be able to stop and talk. If we talked with someone, we could count the time as "friendshipping," or better yet "first contacting," rather than writing to the president in our weekly inventory that we had done some busy work. Trussel quietly followed behind me, still fascinated with the Chinese scenes around him. He had only been in Taiwan a month.

We picked up some egg-fried rice for lunch and took it to the chapel to eat before our meeting. Inside it was air-conditioned and empty. We ate our lunch in the chapel kitchen, then went into separate rooms to study: Trussel his oral lessons, and I vocabulary cards. At 1:00 I heard Elders Cox and Robinson come in the main door. I hadn't heard Trussel reciting his lessons, and knew he was asleep. I hoped they wouldn't walk in on him. The door opened across the hall. A minute later they came into my room, Trussel sleepily behind.

"Hello, Elder Allen," Cox said. He didn't have to say a word about what had happened. He pulled up two chairs for the sister missionaries, who always came late, and two for himself and Robinson. I passed out the agenda for our meeting, then waited for the sisters.

It was my turn to teach the lesson at our weekly training meeting. I was hoping to skip it. Sister Wolsey and her companion came in at 1:30 with fresh cookies in their hands. Elder Cox was out in the hallway making phone calls.

"Sorry we're late," Sister Wolsey said.

"It's okay," I said, "I don't think we had much to learn in a lesson today anyway." There were strict rules in the mission against any Elder/Sister interaction, so we were careful not to speak too friendly or sit too

close. I think she saw that I liked her, though.

Cox came in the room, and I spoke before he could sit. "We'll just have a planning meeting today, Elder Cox," I said, "and I'll save the lesson for next week."

"That's fine," he said. "Robinson and I have an appointment to go to anyway." He was always telling us how much work he was doing.

By 2:00 everyone had left the chapel but Trussel and me. We walked out and locked the doors, then sat on our bikes for a moment while deciding where to go. Trussel could sense my frustration. He knew that we didn't have a 2:00 appointment. We didn't have any appointments that day. He wanted to help in some way, but knew that he was useless in doing any kind of missionary work. All he could do was to stay quiet and act supportive while I thought.

"Elder Trussel," I said, "we do basically the same thing every day." I sat for a moment longer. "I think we're both getting pretty tired of the mall, and the park, and the Cultural Center." He was still. "Let's do something really different today," I said. "Come on." I started off on my bike and headed out through the front gates.

After a few minutes Trussel pulled up to the side of me. "Elder Allen," he said, "I just want you to know that I'm okay with the malls and the parks, and everything we do, and I really think you're doing the best you can here in this city, and even though things aren't going well I don't want you to get frustrated because of me."

"I'm okay," I said. We rode on another minute or so.

"Where are we going?" he asked.

"We're going home, Trussel," I said. He seemed not to know what I meant. "We're going to get our mail and a bottle of water and head out to the beach in our missionary clothes. There just may be some people out there who are interested in listening to us." Trussel slowed down and rode behind me again. He didn't respond, but I knew he was happy with my decision.

There were several letters in our mailbox—one for me from my mom and two for Trussel, and one each for Cox and Robinson. I put it all in my book bag as Trussel came down the stairs with a bottle of cold water. The beach was about a thirty-minute ride from our apartment.

It was a quiet neighborhood with another wide street when Trussel again rode up beside me. "What'd I get?" he asked. I hadn't shown him what was in the mailbox.

"You got something," I said, "you'll see what it is." We made one stop on the way to visit a member who lived in the area. I wanted to feel that we had *some* purpose in going out that direction. The man wasn't home, and we continued on toward the beach.

The beaches outside of Tainan were of gray sand and nearly covered in litter. There were long pontoon fishing boats which looked wrecked up on the shore, awaiting an evening tide to take them out again. Driftwood and seaweed surrounded the boats and dotted the shoreline along with the bottles and cans and old clothes. The waves crashed at a distance from the shore, then washed up foamy ripples in the shallows. Every few hundred feet stood a small fishing house or tourist stop, many of them closed up and vandalized. Business must have failed. It was a sad sight to see so much potentially beautiful beachland completely unused. We rode on to the edge of an army base which I remembered was a bit cleaner than the rest of the beach. We had played volleyball there once before on a P-day.

The sun was hot and intense. The sky seemed immense over the blue ocean water. I could see miles of open water and an occasional barge or fishing vessel on the horizon. They said that even on a clear day it was impossible to see the mainland, but I looked out anyway and imagined there was land in the distance. Elder Trussel and I parked our bikes near the gates of the army post while a guard with a machine gun eyed us closely. We walked out on the sand without locking the bikes.

I sat down on a log near the water before realizing there were smudges of tar on it. I stood up and threw sand over the tar, then sat back down and started taking my shoes and socks off. Trussel sat in the sand and followed, and both of us revealed wrinkled white toes which hadn't seen the sun in months. I stood and walked out into the cold water, relieving my feet of the "dark-sock disease."

"What did I get?" Trussel asked.

"It's in my bag," I said, "go ahead and open it." He rummaged through my bag on the sand until he found his letters. He looked at them for several minutes, then decided to open the largest one first. He set the other aside very carefully. I turned and closed my eyes, putting my face up to the sun and scratching my feet in the cool sand.

About halfway through the first letter Trussel starting talking again. He told me about the Thompsons and how there was a big family scandal about their ice cream business. He used to work for them. His mom also told him about a girl they knew who was coming to Taiwan on a mission, but she thought it was the other mission and not ours.

"Do you know, Elder Allen, that we have a Fourth of July breakfast in our yard every year for the *whole* neighborhood?" He had finished his first letter, and was still recalling the details. "Mom said that the yard is getting too small to hold all the people. We should have a celebration here for the Fourth—we could invite all the church members over and . . . "

"It's an American holiday, Trussel," I said.

"Well," he thought for a moment. "Maybe they wouldn't mind—when's the Taiwan day or whatever they call it?"

"October tenth," I said.

He was quiet and solemn, then turned to the smaller letter. It was a letter from a missionary friend in South America. He told him about the success they were having—something like a hundred baptisms per week. I had friends in South America too, in Chile and Peru. "You've got to be glad we're not living in South America," I said. "They live in shacks and bathe in infested water." Trussel was quiet and sad. "All of my friends there have gotten sick," I said.

I stopped talking and decided to let him be sad. We were from the same area back home and knew some of the same friends, but I had been away from it all well over a year. I didn't take letters as hard as he did. His sadness must have continued for the forty minutes or so when I was asleep.

When I awoke my face felt as if it was burning red, even though the sun was no longer so bright. Clouds had moved in quickly from nowhere. Clouds meant rain in Taiwan, even on sunny days. I knew that we would never make it home before the rains started, and by dark a full storm might come.

"Are you ready to go?" I said. Trussel was still sitting right behind me and had not fallen asleep. We both knew we had been there too long and it was time to get back to work. "Come on," I said, "let's ride along the water." The letters would make Trussel sad for a day or so.

We strapped our bookbags on to our bikes and started out toward the water line. Our bikes wouldn't move through the dry sand, so we got off and pushed them out. After a few trials, I figured out that if we rode just along the edge of the water the sand was dense enough to keep us up. One move either way, however, would throw us off our bikes and into the sand or the water. I jumped on and started riding, Trussel struggled behind me.

Riding through water was exhilarating, and we must have looked like a Pepsi commercial to some of the fishermen coming down to the shore to go out for the evening. I was half-covered in mud and salt water when we reached an impassable dike. "They don't do that in South America," I said when Trussel pumped up to the dike. He was still sad, but tried to smile a bit to show me he was getting better. I looked down and noticed that it was almost 5:00 as we were leaving the beach.

It rained a warm summer rain as we rode back toward town. Elder Trussel rode behind me, elated to be soaking wet because it ruined the chance of doing any more work that day. I could hear him behind me going through the deepest part of the puddles and laughing. Every part of us was wet, and we felt as if we had taken a swim for the first time in

years. Gutters flooded with muddy water and cars splashed us as we got into the city streets and rode back to our apartment. There we stopped for dinner and to dry our clothes so we could go back out in the evening.

It was late in the evening when the rain stopped. We had been walking through the mall most of the evening and emerged with umbrellas in hand, only to see mist rising from the streets and a clearing sky above. It was quiet again; shop owners swept rocks off their porches and prepared to close up their shops.

Our apartment was about a twenty-minute ride along Jyankang Road, through the center of town. Half way there we were held up by traffic, and proceeded to wind our bicycles through cars and buses until we hit the roadblock. In front of us was an amazing sight. The entire neighborhood was lit up by huge construction lights which had just been turned on. Backing into place was an orange crane probably 100 feet long. People everywhere began to gather around in an immense circle, making way for construction vehicles as policemen ordered. Trussel and I squeezed our bikes over to the side of the road and locked them to a tree, not knowing what was happening but wanting to be part of it.

We joined the people in the circle and finally got to a point where we could look up. There in front of us and entirely illuminated by the lights was a four-story building leaning to one side and apparently ready to fall any minute. The hole of a construction site next to the building had filled with water, and the ground around it was so muddy that the foundations had slid out from under it. Policemen held us back from the center space—children, mothers, businessmen, old farmers. Each movement of the rising crane brought a loud sigh from the surrounding crowd—a sigh of both fear and excitement as if any wrong jolt would bring the entire neighborhood crashing down. Still the building hung there, unmoved. The small dark-brown bodies of construction men worked below in setting up pumps and supports and the enormous orange crane which rose above us.

More police arrived and worked to evacuate neighboring buildings and to clear people from surrounding sidewalks. Soon the power was shut off and the huge mass of people was left in the dark staring up at the bright falling building. Trussel and I stayed next to each other but quickly became pressed up against the others. Within minutes it seemed that the entire community was there, gathered in a circle and gazing up in awe at the disaster about to occur.

We stayed there for several minutes as the crane moved into place and the pumps began working. Minutes stretched into an hour, and people were no longer staring in silence but instead talking with each other and making bets on whether it would fall.

"Too bad Cox and Robinson aren't here," I said to Trussel. He looked over at me and smiled as if we both knew a secret.

"Look! There are the sisters," he said. I looked over and saw Sister Wolsey waving to us from behind the crowd. They had just gotten on their bikes and were leaving. Trussel was waving his arm back and forth at them.

The crane moved in large, sweeping movements as it took iron beams off a nearby truck. The huge circle spread far out into the neighborhood now, but became less and less dense as people walked around and talked with each other. Old men smiled and nodded as they walked by the two Americans, proud somehow of the awesome spectacle which their country could produce. We nodded back and began talking to some of the high-spirited people around us. The children ran around us and shouted "hello" in their Chinese accents. Up the street I could see people going in and out of a bakery which had apparently stayed open late. The entire scene was like an outdoor carnival, and the excitement below contrasted greatly with the ominous hanging building above us.

At about 11:00 p.m. we decided to ride home. The building appeared stable now and the people around us had dispersed as they saw the relief in the construction workers' faces. It was late, and the area was quiet again. We rode down side streets and moist alleyways.

As we walked in the front door I could see the outline of Cox standing in his doorway. He shut the door to his bedroom without saying a word.

"I'm so tired," Trussel said. "We had quite an adventure today." He went into the bathroom to brush his teeth. I wasn't sleepy, so I went into our study room to read for a while.

Trussel poked his head in the doorway a few minutes later. "Elder Allen," he said. He had bright bermuda shorts on and an American flag T-shirt. "Thanks."

"Sure," I said. He turned and went in the dark bedroom and left me by myself.

Naked

Lance Larsen

I was expecting ripened avocados, Michael,
or half-used spices—the usual throwaways before
a move. Not a grocery bag of garments, unopened,
each slippery package a skin you never tied on.
I found myself saying *Thank you* instead of *Why*?
Did it help that we shared surfaces—the same
middle name, a love of golf and cajun fajitas?
That I home taught alone? Standing in that chaos
of half-packed boxes, you parcelled out your plans
obliquely. And I asked no pinching questions.

Your philodendrons, I remember, were dying
leaf by leaf. In the corner, a bouquet
of smiling mylar balloons. A clean break, finally?
Maybe truest gifts are the ones we give ourselves:
in another week, you and your roommate waking
beside a deeper, warmer ocean. If hugs
are a ritual, Michael, then ours was a dry promise.
You never sent your new address. And I opened
your garments, though I told myself I wouldn't.
Was I giving up on you? The plastic tore easily.

I think of your Radisson nightshift story sometimes—
Christmas Eve, a pair of 15-year-olds
in an unpaid-for honeymoon suite. How they
dove for the covers when you cracked the door.
She, rouged up, hair teased back in a fin
of spray. He, indignant, or maybe just scared,
staring straight at your navy blue lapel.
And you—just checking the lock, as you'd been asked.
What was it he said, *Okay, so you've got us*.
Could you kindly hand me my pants?

We laughed, both of us, as if some punch line
smeared the air. Only later did I see

the story was about nakedness, not morality—
how all of us hate to be probed. Isn't laughter
our way of turning the stare outward instead
of in? And the garments you gave me, Michael?
Sorting laundry, I knew them right off—
full and unbleached, mesh fine as bed sheets.
Then graying, jumbled with the others,
folded away: I slip them on, yours and mine.

“No Respector of Persons”: A Mormon Ethics of Diversity

Eugene England

“THERE WAS A CERTAIN MAN IN CAESAREA called Cornelius, a centurion of the . . . Italian band.” Luke tells us, in Acts chapter 10, that this Roman was “a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway” (v. 2). An angel of God appeared to him, saying, “Cornelius, . . . thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter.”

God knew this man’s heart, that he was prepared to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ, but because Cornelius was a gentile, Peter, though an apostle of Christ, had to be prepared to accept Cornelius. So God sent Peter a vision in the form of an allegory. Peter saw a great vessel let down from heaven containing “all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat” (vv. 12-13).

But Peter, still an orthodox Jew, recoiled at this great diversity of meats, which included some forbidden by Jewish law: “Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again . . . , What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common” (vv. 14-15). This vision was repeated three times, and while Peter wondered about its meaning a messenger arrived from Cornelius, inviting Peter to come to his home in Caesarea—and the vision became clear. Peter went and found many of Cornelius’s friends and family gathered to hear him, and he said, “Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean” (v. 28). Cornelius then told him of the angel who had appeared with the instruction that he listen to Peter, and “Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respector of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted

with him" (vv. 34-35). He then preached the crucified Christ to these gentiles, and they were baptized, the first non-Jews in the universal church.

What Peter perceived, for the first time, is that "God is no respecter of persons," a strange expression, too easily misunderstood. It means, of course, not that God doesn't respect persons, but that he does not have respect of some over others, that his respect is *equal*, not conditional or partial, and does not vary, as human respect does, according to irrelevant matters: race, gender, creed, intelligence, politics, wealth, sexual orientation. The apostle James, Peter's counselor, makes this clear when he implores early Christians not to forget what Peter has learned—and at the same time implies that some faithful Christians had already forgotten it:

My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves? (James 2:1-4)

To have respect of persons is to be partial—in both senses, I believe: to show partiality to others (respecting a part of humanity, not all) and to be only part of one's true self, split apart, less than whole, to lack integrity.

James teaches how serious this is: "If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin. . . . For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (2:8-9). The scriptures use this expression, "respect" or "regard" of persons, to teach us what God is like and also what he expects of us when we understand who he is and try to be like him. In Deuteronomy we are assured that "the Lord your God . . . regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger. . . . Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (10:17-19). In the Book of Mormon, we are given a picture of a Zion society: "In their prosperous circumstances, they did not send away any who were naked, or that were hungry, or that were athirst, or that were sick, or that had not been nourished; and they did not set their hearts upon riches; therefore they were liberal to all, both young and old, both bond and free, both male and female, whether out of the church or in the church, having no respect to persons as to those who stood in need" (Alma 1:30). In other words, when converted fully to Christ, these Nephites responded to others liberally, generously, freely—and only in terms of what was relevant, their need, not what was irrelevant, their

class or sex or church membership.

The language here echoes the other great New Testament affirmation of this principle, by the brash young apostle Paul, who even after Peter's vision had to convince some of the church leaders that the gospel should go even to the uncircumcised beyond Israel (see Acts 15). Paul writes to the Colossian Saints, who apparently also needed to be taught that the gospel was for everyone, though some were once excluded gentiles themselves: "[You] have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created [you]; Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (3:10-11).

Paul used the same language when writing to the Corinthians: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). And Nephi uses similar language in what, for Mormons, is the most straightforward, challenging, and perhaps still not fully understood expression of God's nature and expectation concerning "respect of persons"—what is, in fact, the fundamental Mormon source for a theology of human diversity: "The Lord . . . doeth that which is good among the children of men; . . . and he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile" (2 Ne. 26:33).

This idea, consistent throughout scripture and eminently sensible, seems clear enough: God loves us all equally, treats us all equally and liberally, expects and hopes the same for all of us—and asks, *expects*, us to do the same for each other. But of course we have not done so. Human history, including religious history, is perhaps most notable for "respect of persons," for fear and abuse and even terrible violence centered in our rejection of those who are in any way different—our willingness to hurt, exclude, and kill those who are *other*, those not of our color, gender, stratum, beliefs, even those with different culture or customs. Rather than rejoicing in diversity, as God seems to, on the evidence of the marvelous diversity of his creation, the absolute and stunning plenitude of human form and behavior that has flowered from the agency he has given and fostered in us—rather than praising God and reaching out to that ever-renewing richness, we have recoiled in fear and set up walls of protection.

God constantly calls his children to accept, even love, diversity. Luke records Paul's sermon before the Court of Areopagus on Mars Hill, about the God they were worshipping without understanding at their altar "To an Unknown God" (I use the New English Bible version for great clarity):

He created every race of men of one stock, to inhabit the whole earth's sur-

face. He fixed the ordered seasons of their history and the limits of their territory. They were to seek God, and, it might be, touch and find him; though indeed he is not far from each one of us, for in him we live and move, in him we exist; as some of your own poets have said, "We are also his offspring." As God's offspring, then, we ought not to suppose that the deity is like an image in gold or silver or stone. . . . As for the times of ignorance, God has overlooked them; but now he commands mankind, all men everywhere, to repent (17:26-31).

We Mormons are among those God has been patient with in the time of our ignorance but who are now called to repent and join in God's delight in the diversity of his creation. We are his offspring, part of the plenitude of his creation, and ought not to suppose he is like an idol, partial, loving only those who have made and worshipped him. He created and loves all races—and now commands us to repent. Why? Claiming to be specially chosen children of God, inheritors of his true kingdom, we have denied our parenthood and the universal atonement of our brother, Jesus Christ, by having respect of persons. We have not only been partial in our response to difference, asking some, by virtue only of their class or color or gender, to "sit thou here in a good place" but others to "sit here under my footstool." We have also set limits to spiritual opportunities and taught spiritual inferiority, based only on race or gender.

The most obvious example so far, of course, is our denial, from about 1852 to 1978, of priesthood rights and temple blessings to blacks of African descent. Despite the announcement giving blacks the priesthood and the new understanding that action supposedly brought to the church, I find that many Mormons at BYU and in Provo still believe that the *reason* blacks did not receive the priesthood before 1978 was that they were unfaithful in the pre-existence—in other words, that people come color-coded into the world, exhibiting in their very flesh that God has differing opportunities and expectations for them, that he is a "respector of persons."

A worldwide revolution is taking place—not primarily a religious one, though many religious people are involved, but an essentially political and moral one, uniting in common cause people of many different beliefs and backgrounds. The revolution is away from the violent fear of diversity that has plagued all human history and toward a guarantee of equal rights for all and, even more, a rejoicing in the rich diversity of human life. We as Mormons have unparalleled opportunity to be part of, to benefit from, and to contribute to that revolution, given our theology, our remarkable record of openness in the early church, and the divinely directed and energized reach of our worldwide mission. But we mainly missed participation in the first part of that revolution, the quest for civil rights for American blacks in the 1950s and 1960s, and our fears and un-

certainities are thus far keeping many of us from contributing much to the second major phase of that revolution, the quest for equal rights and opportunities for women worldwide.

Why does it matter? After all, the restored church has its own agenda—to take the gospel to the world and save all the dead. We don't need to be involved in faddish and divisive revolutions for minority rights, do we? Certainly, any quest for rights tends to be self-centered and vindictive, and excesses have occurred and will. Minorities have struggled for redress of past grievances and in the process have sometimes taken vengeance, or have gained power only to use it unrighteously. Increased pride in ethnic or religious identity has sometimes brought, not mutual respect and tolerance that builds community but tribalization, re-opening of centuries-old wounds and violent conflict that has destroyed community in the former Yugoslavia and Soviet Union, in Sri Lanka and Rwanda—and increasingly even in our own country. The revolution is not without its failures and setbacks—about which we should not be surprised.

Abraham Lincoln recognized, in his *Second Inaugural Address* in 1865, "If God wills that [this terrible Civil War] continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid," we could not question God's justice. We Americans are still paying those costs in the seemingly unbreakable cycles of discrimination, poverty, alienation, and violence in our ghettos which increasingly affect us all. We are paying similar costs for our wholesale exploitation and destruction of Native Americans and the dehumanization through forced assimilation of their descendants. And we have not even begun to recognize the costs we are paying and yet must pay for thousands of years of suppression of women.

Despite the costs and setbacks, we must work our way through, I believe, towards a world where there is no respect of persons—even if for a while we who have benefitted most from past exploitation, whites and especially males, are treated unfairly. Thoreau wrote in *Civil Disobedience*, "If I have unjustly wrested a plank from a drowning man, I must restore it to him though I drown myself," and we must bear the costs of returning those planks we and our ancestors have unjustly taken from minorities and women. We must do so not because we are *responsible* for others' sins or because some abstract justice must be served, but simply because some of the inequities still remain and many of the effects from past sins have been passed on in families and attitudes and laws and customs and continue to cause damage for which we are *response-able*, about which we *can* do something. Mormons must do something about such past and continuing damages precisely in order to achieve our worldwide mis-

sion. We cannot succeed fully in taking the healing and unifying gospel to a world that remains divided by race and sex, by any form of fear of the other—we can't especially if we as Mormons remain divided. I do not believe Christ can come again until, like him, we have no respect of persons, until for *us*, as well as for our God, all are alike, black and white, male and female.

But my main reason for thinking so is not social, but personal. I believe our individual salvation, at the very deepest level, is tied to this principle. Perhaps the greatest paradigm shift of the Old Testament, one very much related to that which came to Peter in his vision of the diversity of meats God had cleansed, was the understanding, recorded most clearly by the literary prophets like Isaiah and Amos, of what has been called "ethical monotheism." This is the new idea that the God of Israel, unlike pagan gods, cannot be known directly, through personal piety and sacrifice. We can only know God as part of a triangular relationship that includes all other humans, his other children whom he loves as much as he does us. He speaks clearly through the prophets: "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings . . . I will not accept them. . . . Take thou away the noise of thy songs. . . . But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream" (Amos 5:21-24). "When ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. . . . put away the evil of your doings . . . Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isa. 1:15-17). In other words, it is *only* through accepting human diversity in unconditional love, as God does, he who is no respecter of persons—only through seeking justice and mercy for all his children and taking delight in them all—that we can know and love and please God our eternal Father.

Emmanuel Levinas, the great post-modern Jewish philosopher from Lithuania, who has become an important focus of study and influence for many faculty members at BYU, has developed an extremely persuasive ethical philosophy centered in exploring our encounter with what he calls the "other." He claims that our experience with otherness, with the beings outside ourselves whose very presence makes ethical demands on us, beginning at least in the womb, is the pre-rational basis of all ethical meaning, in fact, the basis of our ability to experience individuality, to have language, and to think. I believe he is right that the most fundamental of our life experiences, the confrontations with the others as persons, whether human or divine, make infinite claims on us: We must respond—or try not to respond—to the demand, posed by their very existence, that they be treated as ends in themselves, that we do them good according to their needs and our ability to respond, that we never dehumanize them, never define them ("totalize" them in Levinas's word) or

limit them to a category or a static judgment and thus limit our infinite responsibility to them.

This line of thought is, of course, a useful way to recognize we cannot be partial, cannot have respect of persons, without denying our fundamental nature as children of God or trying to deny the most fundamental claim that others, including God, have upon us. If we have respect of persons we injure them, ourselves, and God.

How great is that injury? The following passage is from the *Lectures on Faith*, which were partially written and fully approved by Joseph Smith and included in the Doctrine and Covenants as scripture until 1921:

It is also necessary that men should have an idea that [God] is no respector of persons ["but in every nation he that fears God and works righteousness is accepted of him"], for with the idea of all the other excellencies in his character, and this one wanting, men could not exercise faith in him; because if he were a respector of persons, they could not tell what their privileges were, nor how far they were authorized to exercise faith in him, or whether they were authorized to do it at all, but all must be confusion; but no sooner are the minds of men made acquainted with the truth on this point, that he is no respector of persons, than they see they have authority by faith to lay hold on eternal life, the richest boon of heaven, because God is no respector of persons, and that every man in every nation has an equal privilege.¹

This is a marvelous argument, though we seem to have missed it in popular Mormon thought: All human beings *must* be alike unto God, with no respect of persons, for him to *be* God, and we *must* understand that that is *true* for the plan of salvation even to be able to *work* for us—for faith unto repentance, the experience of Atonement, and exaltation to be possible. The passage describes precisely how it feels to be a rejected person or woman in a racist or sexist culture, supposedly being punished or limited in some way, purely on the evidence of the bodies they inhabit, for something done by an ancestor or in the pre-existence or inherent in their nature, with no way to repent of that "something" and no certainty about its effects on their future. Joseph Smith provides us here with the most powerful practical reason why we must immediately stop believing or teaching racist and sexist notions in popular Mormon thought and develop an affirmative theology of diversity: We are denying others—and ourselves—full access to Christ and his plan of redemption. In a culture that believes God is a respector of persons—or simply acts as if he were—

1. *Lectures on Faith*, Lecture 3, in any edition of the Doctrine and Covenants published before 1921; also in *The Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective*, eds. Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1990).

neither the victims nor the victimizers can have sufficient faith in God unto salvation.

The root reason for this, I believe, is that the Atonement, as we understand from the Book of Mormon, is only efficacious when we can *accept* the unconditional love Christ gives us, even in our sins. The chief barrier to that acceptance, according to Alma, is “the demands of justice”—the felt need to pay debts fully and condemn ourselves when we haven’t, even when that’s impossible. Those demands can only be appeased by Christ’s “plan of mercy,” which offers infinite and unconditional love, not as a *payment* for repentance but as a means to *empower* our repentance; it provides “means unto men that they might have faith unto repentance” (Alma 34:15). But, as King Benjamin makes clear, we tend to remain caught up in justice, in deciding what others “deserve,” and therefore withhold unconditional love and service to them, *not*, as God requires, “administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their *wants*” (Mosiah 4:26; my emphasis). And King Benjamin declares that anyone who has such respect of persons cannot retain “a remission of. . . sins from day to day” (v. 26)—that is, cannot enjoy the continuing blessings of the Atonement, and “except he repenteth of that which he hath done he perisheth forever, and hath no interest in the kingdom of God” (v. 18).

With so much at stake—our personal salvation as well as the salvation of the world in preparation for Christ’s coming—it seems to me useful to review the history of diversity as a value and challenge in the restored gospel and church. God revealed to Joseph Smith a remarkable theology of diversity, which seems to have been followed by a sometimes swift, sometimes gradual, decline from that theology in popular Mormon thought and custom, but there are some hopeful signs of recovery in recent years. The Restoration was a stunning rejection of the racism, sexism, and general fear of diversity that had plagued even the great world religions for thousands of years. God revealed to Joseph that most explicit, foundational claim in the Book of Mormon, that “all are alike unto God”; then, through continuing revelation and Joseph’s own developing character and insights, came many remarkable specific advances directly contrary to the views and customs of early nineteenth-century America: Joseph ordained blacks to the priesthood and contemplated their participation in the Nauvoo temple; he opposed slavery in his U.S. presidential campaign of 1844; at a time when wholesale genocide of American Indians was preached and practiced, he declared them to be of the chosen House of Israel and destined to rise to great power in preparation for the Second Coming; he included women as essential to the building of God’s kingdom, organized them and gave them keys of authority after the pattern of the priesthood, included them as equal participants with men in

temple ordinances that bestowed upon them saving gifts and healing authority from God, and taught a doctrine of eternal marriage that exalted the equality of men and women to the very highest level, guaranteed in divinity itself. For Joseph Smith Godhood, the ultimate goal of eternal marriage, required a divine union of the two genders in the future, and thus by implication—and according to Eliza R. Smith, Joseph taught it directly—our present God is actually Heavenly Parents.

In the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants the prophet Joseph struck directly at the chief theological error that has led to the suppression of women in Judeo-Christian cultures, the idea that Eve was the first to fall and that all women are subsequently cursed with child-bearing and subservience to their husbands. In 2 Nephi, chapter 2, Nephi makes clear that the fall was necessary and positive, and in Doctrine and Covenants 29:40 God declares it was "Adam," clearly in context meaning what President Spencer W. Kimball called "Mr. and Mrs. Adam," the model first couple *together*, who made that difficult and courageously intelligent choice that cost them dearly but blessed us all.

Later in the Doctrine and Covenants God condemns the false traditions and "creeds of the fathers" in Western thought. Christian creeds all include that false idea about Eve, and we are told in section 123 that it is our "wives and children, who have been made to bow down with grief, sorrow, and care" as a result of such creeds. In the King Follett Discourse, given just before his death, Joseph Smith declares the fundamental truth that explains why God is no respector of persons and we must not be—the infinite God-like potential of *every* mortal: "[God] once was a man like one of us and . . . dwelled on an earth . . . like us. All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement and improvement."²

With such a clear and dramatically challenging theology of diversity, if we had held true to it, the restored church should by now have radically changed the world—or been destroyed in the attempt. But God has always adjusted his demands to some extent to his people's ability and circumstances, given us lower laws to live, such as the Old Testament laws of performance and our present law of tithing, schoolmasters to bring us gradually to Christ. By 1852, for inspired cultural and survival reasons, I believe, but not because of metaphysical realities or eternal doctrinal principles, we were denying blacks the priesthood and practicing polygamy openly. By the late nineteenth century, the person still honored as our most liberal high church leader and outstanding intellectual, B. H. Roberts, felt comfortable opposing women's suffrage and support-

2. "The King Follett Sermon: A Newly Amalgamated Version," ed. Stan Larson, *Brigham Young University Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 204.

ing the theories of the time about Negro inferiority.³ In accommodating to American government power in the 1890s in order to survive, we also increasingly accommodated to American culture, including its military violence, its racism, and its sexism. By the early twentieth century polygamy had ended, but by the 1940s women's roles in healing and blessing ordinances were gradually diminishing, and paradoxically the very autonomy and forceful roles in publishing, politics, and professional life that polygamy had provided some Mormon women were declining and continued to do so almost to the present.

In 1931 Elder Joseph Fielding Smith published, in *The Way to Perfection*, his speculation that the proscription on blacks was reasonably explained by some fault in their pre-existence.⁴ That idea gradually achieved doctrinal force in popular Mormon thought and, combined with unexamined notions from the Book of Mormon and false Christian traditions about God cursing whole races, was generalized to all colored races, including Native Americans and Jews. Skin color was nearly universally seen as an indication of spiritual inheritance—the darker the worse.

By the 1950s, when I was a college student, Utah culture was thoroughly racist and sexist and characterized by popular Mormon notions that uncritically assumed a divine mandate for the culturally assigned roles and limitations for women and colored races. In other words, much Mormon thinking and teaching was founded on the implicit assumption that God is a respecter of persons and all are *not* alike unto him. The almost totally Mormon Utah legislature passed stringent laws against inter-racial marriage and persistently killed fair housing and employment bills. Good Mormons cheerfully canvassed our neighborhood in eastside Salt Lake City with a petition to keep out a Jewish family. And most Mormons began to accept as the natural order the unusual gender role differentiation (perhaps only widespread before in upper-class Victorian society) that the prosperity after World War II made available to middle-class America—the father as boss but at a job in an office all day and the mother totally absorbed in nurturing her children in isolation in a suburban home.

It is easy to see why, despite our radically liberal theology and early history, we have responded very conservatively to the revolution toward racial equality that began in the late 1950s and the revolution toward gender equality that began a decade later. Very few Mormons got involved in

3. See his inclusion, on page 160 of his *Seventy's Course in Theology, First Year* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1907), of a paragraph from William Benjamin Smith's *The Color Line: A Brief in Behalf of the Unborn*.

4. *The Way to Perfection* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1931), see chaps. 7, 15, and 16, esp. pp. 43-44 and 105-106.

the early stages, and the church for a time opposed equal rights laws that might lead to integration and made only luke-warm statements affirming civil rights in 1963 and again in 1969 in its last official statement about blacks not being allowed the priesthood. That policy, of course, tended to make even liberal Mormons defensive and reluctant participants in civil rights efforts, partly, as I learned at Stanford, because our credentials were automatically tarnished and our motives suspect.

All that seemed to change with the announcement in 1978. There was instantaneous churchwide rejoicing (we all remember what we were doing when we heard), quick expansion into areas missionaries had not been allowed to go before, and, with very few exceptions, loving acceptance of the new black converts and of their participation in the temple and in leadership. But we have never officially renounced the false theology that blacks—and by extension other races—are color-coded as to pre-existent righteousness, and some blacks feel their full acceptance as persons and as leaders is still limited.

One black BYU student told me, in 1990, of sitting in a Pearl of Great Price class where someone asked why blacks had once been denied the priesthood and the instructor and class speculated for fifteen minutes on the various sins they might have committed there, with no apparent awareness that he was present—truly "the invisible man." Those two embarrassing books published in the 1960s, John J. Stewart's *Mormonism and the Negro* and John Lewis Lund's *The Church and the Negro*,⁵ have not been repudiated, though both try to explain why blacks are denied the priesthood and in so doing use a temporary church practice to support a thoroughly racist theology and concept of a partial God, a respector of persons. Such teachings directly contradict the central scriptural teaching that all are alike unto God, that he is no respector of persons, and those teachings must be kindly but firmly rebutted in whatever form they appear, with knowledge and authoritative resources. Elder John K. Carmack, in his recent book *Tolerance*,⁶ provides the most explicit renunciation yet by a church leader of the false ideas about the inferiority of non-white races—because of supposed "degeneration" from the "pure" white race of Adam or "choices in the pre-existence"—that developed in the church prior to 1978 and are still published, taught, and believed by some Latter-day Saints: "We do not believe that any nation, race, or culture is a lesser breed or inferior in God's eyes. Those who believe or teach such doctrine have no authority from either the Lord or his

5. Stewart's book was published by Community Press of Orem, Utah, in 1960, 1964, and 1967, and reprinted by Horizon Publishers of Salt Lake City in 1970. Lund's book was privately printed in 1968.

6. John K. Carmack, *Tolerance: Principles, Practices, Obstacles, Limits* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993).

authorized servants."⁷

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, in a remarkable address given shortly after the 1978 revelation, quoted the passage from 2 Nephi 26:33 about all being alike unto God and said, "Many of us never imagined or supposed that these passages had the extensive and broad meaning that they do have,"⁸ apparently because we had assumed, until that revelation, that there were essential differences, distinctions "unto God," between the races. Of course, we may still not understand the "extensive and broad meaning" of that scripture as it applies to gender—how all are alike unto God "male and female."

The most challenging—and meaningful—human diversity is, of course, gender diversity. It directly affects us all, touches our deepest joys and insecurities, determines the very survival of human life, and for Mormons is intimately connected to the meaning of exaltation and the very possibility of Godhood. For most of us, in our highest concept of earthly felicity, in our sweetest imagining of heavenly glory, and in our excited anticipations of what makes Godhood possible and desirable and defines the nature of Godly power and creativity, "Neither is the man without the woman or the woman without the man" (1 Cor. 11:11). The gradual retrenchment from the remarkably liberated gender theology and practices of the early church continued into the 1970s, with the disempowering, under Correlation, of the Relief Society, the ending of its own publications and independent budget, even control over its lesson manuals. The Equal Rights Amendment was defeated, in good part through Mormon opposition. Through determined right-wing influence, Mormon women were marshalled against even the clearly beneficial proposals during the International Women's Year convention in Utah in 1977, beginning a process of dividing Mormon women and aligning a majority with fundamentalist religions which dogmatically oppose all efforts to improve women's rights and opportunities that can be labeled feminist. For a while Mormon women were even denied the right to pray in sacrament meeting and then for a while restricted to opening prayers.

Perhaps most indicative of the depth of our present anxieties is the process of fearful escalation at local levels that has followed the admonition by President Gordon B. Hinckley in 1991 not to pray publicly to Mother in Heaven.⁹ I understand that some local leaders are now telling their people they can't even *talk* about Mother in Heaven, and some students at BYU seem to have accepted that view as orthodox. What is most

7. Ibid., 64.

8. Bruce R. McConkie, "All Are Alike unto God," speech delivered 18 Aug. 1978, published in *Charge to Religious Educators* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982), 152.

9. *Ensign* 21 (Nov. 1991): 100.

disturbing about such an unauthorized "improvement" on counsel and the fear it reveals is that the concept of Mother in Heaven is one of the great gifts of the Restoration, a keystone concept in the crucial theology of diversity I have described because it establishes genuine diversity as intrinsic to the very nature of Godhead. It gives the highest possible guarantee for the perfect equality of men and women, showing that there cannot be respect of persons in God because *two* persons dwell there, in perpetual otherness to each other. If we cannot solve our intrinsic aversion to the other, which places those infinite and inescapable demands on us, it isn't simply that we thus cannot be more *like* God, we cannot *be* Gods—which requires a perfect union of male and female.

What are we to do then about what seem increasing divisions in the church centered around the efforts of some Mormons to join in the multicultural and feminist revolution? One frequent response is to quote Christ's command, "I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27), as a way of condemning those whose otherness and interest in diversity seems to bring division. I don't believe, however, that Christ means "Be all alike in the Church or I won't accept you," but rather "Be like me by accepting each other in the Church, even if you're not all alike." He is asking us to be one in our *acceptance* of diversity, not as a *denial* of diversity.

As evidence for this crucial interpretation, I offer the following: Just before making that command, Christ pleads, "Let every man esteem his brother as himself." He then retells a story of a man who has twelve sons and who claims to be no respector of persons, a just man, but nevertheless "saith unto the one son: Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other: Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there" (D&C 38:25-26)—a clear parallel to the example I cited earlier that the apostle James uses to teach what "respect of persons" looks like (James 2:1-4). Finally, Christ concludes, "This I have given unto you as a parable, and it is even as I am. I say unto you be one." Clearly, to be like Christ rather than the man in the parable, we need to learn to love unconditionally and treat equally all the members of our church and human families, no matter how different they are.

I believe this is our greatest single challenge as Mormons—and as Americans and human beings—right now. We Mormons are experiencing the growing pains inevitable as we become a genuine world religion, soon to be preaching in every nation and with a membership approaching ten million. As a nation we are trying to cope with our increasing racial diversity and the struggle for women's rights. As a human family we are trying to cope with increasingly deadly prejudices, of which neo-Nazism in Germany, the "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia, lethal religious intolerance in Northern Ireland and the Middle East, and racial violence in

American cities are only the most prominent examples.

There is no room for smugness in this matter. *All* of us are sinners in this regard and need help so that we can be one, even be gratefully accepting of each other, despite our differences, in the Mormon and in the human family. In just the past year I have seen Mormons of all political and intellectual and spiritual varieties guilty of judging and rejecting others on partial and irrelevant grounds. Feminists have been called Nazis—and conservatives have been called Nazis. Conservatives have been stereotyped as stupid, not fit participants in the university community; liberals have been stereotyped as evil, not fit participants in the church community. The very terms “intellectual” and “feminist,” which are traditionally neutral words describing certain people’s commitment to rational discourse or gender equality—and thus ought to be terms of honor or at least respect for all Mormons—have been perverted into something like swear words.

At the same time, general authorities have been stereotyped as senile, unresponsive, dishonest, sexist, even diabolically conspiratorial. Letters to the *Deseret News* and *BYU Daily Universe* are a constantly embarrassing revelation of the aggressive prejudice of some Mormons, their frank willingness to be respecters of persons and hunker down in fear of diversity. The challenge to Utah high school graduation prayers a few years ago provoked a huge outpouring of letters condemning the American Civil Liberties Union and asserting the right of the Mormon majority in Utah to control public religious life; one letter frankly stated, unaware of the irony, “We were once a persecuted minority who were denied religious freedom and driven out of the United States. Now we’re in control, and if minorities don’t like what we do they can leave.” How easily we chosen people forget, when we get political control, that plea of God to us in Deuteronomy, “Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt” (10:19).

A letter last year in the *Deseret News* asking for understanding of those who have same-sex preference and challenging people to find any biblical evidence that God condemns the preference brought a huge number of homophobic letters that confirmed my sense that most Mormons do not make any separation between same-sex *preference* and homosexual *acts*, condemning both as sinful—even though the church position *does* make a clear distinction. A speech given by a visiting educator, Dawn Person, in 1993 at BYU during Black Awareness week, titled “Diversity: The Critical Need to Nurture Pluralism in Higher Education,” was reprinted in May in the *Brigham Young Magazine* for BYU alumni; the author discussed difficulties posed by the increasing diversity in our colleges and the great opportunities this could bring us all if we would learn to solve the resulting problems: “I challenge you to dream a world

of higher education that is caring, just, open and honest, disciplined, civil, and supportive of diversity, multicultural issues, and pluralism." The next issue carried a host of negative letters attacking the article for "advocating a message so opposite to the standards of BYU and its alumni" and attacking the editors for publishing it. A recent letter in the *BYU Daily Universe* defended discrimination as merely part of God-given agency and as having scriptural precedent: "With god's help, Abraham discriminated by race, religion, sex, and national origin to choose a wife for his son. [The Book of Mormon] describes God creating race to segregate people."

Such use of authority to justify attitudes and practices that directly contradict our affirmative theology of diversity must be clearly repudiated and thoughtfully rebutted. For instance, we can use recent Book of Mormon scholarship to help us understand the origin of darker-colored Lamanites in intermarriage with pre-Lehite peoples of probably Asiatic origin rather than as a genetic curse by God. We can also look sensibly at the evidence in the scriptures themselves that the racism and sexism in scriptural societies was culturally constructed not divinely directed: The Doctrine and Covenants warns us that God speaks to humans "in their weakness, after the manner of their language" (1:24), and the Book of Mormon preface warns us that any faults in the book "are the mistakes of men; wherefore condemn not the things of God." An obvious mistake, resulting from the cultural attitudes of the people who wrote the record, is the claim that God punishes sinful people and their descendants by cursing them with darker skins; the Book of Mormon itself directly contradicts that idea by stating not only that all are alike unto God, black and white, but that "every man that is cursed [doth] bring upon himself his own condemnation" (Alma 3:19). Yet I have seen Mormons so resistant to the idea that even prophets can be at times affected by their cultural conditioning that, rather than consider that the writers of sexist or racist passages in the scriptures are reflecting a limited perspective, they would rather attribute racism and sexism in the scriptures to God himself—making *him* a respector of persons!

We need to look more carefully at what prophets are saying to us in our own time about the need for change in our cultural limitations. Elder Boyd K. Packer, concerning our entry into third-world nations, has exclaimed, "We can't move *there* with all the baggage we produce and carry *here*! We can't move with a 1947 Utah Church!"¹⁰ President Howard W. Hunter has said:

10. Boyd K. Packer, "Address to the Church Coordinating Committee Meeting," 8 Sept. 1987, copy in library, historical department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, cited in Lee Copeland, "From Calcutta to Kaysville: Is Righteousness Color-coded?" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21 (Fall 1988): 97.

The gospel of Jesus Christ transcends nationality and color, crosses cultural lines, and blends distinctiveness into a common brotherhood. . . . *All* men are invited to come unto him and *all* are alike unto him. Race makes no difference; color makes no difference; nationality makes no difference. . . . As members of the Lord's church, we need to lift our vision beyond personal prejudices. We need to discover the supreme truth that indeed our Father is no respecter of persons.¹¹

Contemporary philosophy and literary criticism has thoroughly demonstrated, I believe, the truth of the Lord's statement in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 1, about how all language, even scriptural, is *affected by*, though certainly not *determined by*, the cultural constructs of the speaker. This idea does not undermine prophetic authority but rather establishes clearly the need for continuous revelation and continuous individual spiritual confirmation and renewal in our understanding of prophetic discourse. As part of this we must constantly listen and respond as the prophets change. The "supreme truth" President Hunter evokes, that God "is no respecter of persons," must constantly take precedence over earlier statements by seminary teachers, authors of popular books, even by general authorities and the scriptures, that may seem to contradict it.

We need to accept wholeheartedly the enormous, prophesied success of the church worldwide, and change ourselves so we can rejoice in it rather than impede it. Fine models for us are becoming available in both the increasing diversity of the church itself and also in the diverse spokespersons who are telling us their stories and challenging us to move forward with them. Catherine Stokes, whom most Mormons in the Chicago area know well, expressed to a gathering of Mormon women at Nauvoo shortly after the 1978 announcement an insight gained by her own sometimes painful diversity that could help us all: "[When I went to the temple for the first time], I took my blackness with me, and that was part of what I consecrated. . . . My blackness is one of the things that the Lord can use if he wants to."¹²

On 26 January 1993, Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi, our first native Japanese general authority, spoke at BYU's International Week and challenged us:

We now see great turmoil and anger, pain, hunger, suffering, hate, jealousy, and dishonesty in our society, [which] cause us to lose human dignity and values. . . . We must continue to break down barricades. We must bring down

11. Howard W. Hunter, "All Are Alike Unto God," *Ensign* 9 (June 1979): 72, 74.

12. Lavina Fielding Anderson, "Making the 'Good' Good for Something: A Direction for Mormon Literature," *Mormon Letters Annual, 1984* (Salt Lake City: Association for Mormon Letters, 1985), 163.

the barriers of cultural misunderstanding and misconception. We must break down the spiritual Berlin walls in us. [To do so] we must understand [that] (1) God made all these nations and is now gathering them under His Wings. (2) The best prescription is to implement the Savior's teachings. (3) The love of God is already in the souls of the human family.¹³

The best teacher of these truths I know is Chieko Okazaki, the first non-Caucasian member of a church general board and now the first in a general presidency. As you may have noticed in any of her recent Women's Conference and general conference addresses, she makes diversity a central theme: In her first book, *Lighten Up!*, she begins by announcing,

Diversity is a strength. I attend a lot of meetings where I'm the only woman. And I attend many, many meetings where I'm the only Oriental woman. . . . Have you ever had the feeling that you're the odd one, the different one? Maybe even too odd or different for this church? The truth is that you're not odd—you're special. When white light falls on a wall, it makes a white wall. But when it passes through a prism, that same light makes a rainbow on the wall. . . . [Like God during creation, I say] "Let there be light!" All kinds of light! Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet light. We need our differences.

Sister Okazaki claims her favorite saying is

In principles, great clarity. In practices, great charity. . . . When it comes to practices, I want kaleidoscopic vision. . . . I want the whole world of options to be at our fingertips so that we can consult our needs and wants when we decide how to apply those principles. I want us to make up our own minds, experiment with one form and abandon it without feeling guilty if we find it doesn't work, listen to what works for other people, find something else.¹⁴

She summarizes, in personal and practical terms, the heart of any theology of diversity:

In Hawaii, I was surrounded from babyhood by differences—in language, in physical appearance, in dress, in economic level, in religion, in traditional men's and women's roles, in education, in race, in life-styles, and in customs. I observed differences, but I did not learn to label them as "good" or "bad." . . . Being different, I internalized, is all right. Heavenly Father wants differences. He does not make two identical blossoms or two snowflakes that are the same.¹⁵

13. Yoshihiko Kikuchi, "Breaking Barriers," 1-2, speech delivered at Brigham Young University, 26 Jan. 1993, copy in my possession.

14. *Lighten Up!* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 17.

I thought of these words in March 1993, at the Sunstone Symposium in Washington, D.C., as I listened to a panel of recent converts talk about the difficult new challenges as well as benefits of difference that are coming to the universal church. A young woman told how offensive to the Japanese is our standard Mormon phrase, “I *know* the gospel is true”—too assertive, too prideful; she pled that translation must increasingly recognize such extremely different cultural inheritances. A young Israeli talked of continuing to wear his Jewish skullcap, his yarmulke, for a year after he converted and of attending his family’s prayer ritual for the dead—done for *him* as dead to them while standing fifty feet away, because he was still a Jew in culture and family. One friend tells me how difficult it is for the Finns to understand or live by our concept of “authority,” and another tells me the French have such different ideas about visiting others, about the pace of life and family vacations, etc., that our Utah Mormon ways of doing home teaching and burdening bishoprics simply must be reconsidered.

I recently heard that one new Mormon branch in India, before sacrament service on Sunday, gathers to chant for half an hour the name of the church in Hindi—as a mantra. As Sister Okazaki points out in her new book, *Cat’s Cradle*,

If you’re a convert in the LDS church, you’re aware of two separate religious cultures, but the gospel culture is the one that will ultimately infuse, replace, and transform every human culture on the earth. Are we trying to move into that gospel culture already, or are we putting our energy into preserving one of these old cultural forms like hierarchy and gender and youth and wealth that will be swept away when the Savior comes again?¹⁶

We are seeing new challenges and new delights—and gradual change, often encouraged by our leaders. In 1979 Elder Carmack, in an article in the *Ensign* entitled “Unity in Diversity,” pled with the Saints not to encourage in any way jokes that demean and belittle others “because of religious, cultural, racial, national, or gender differences. All are alike unto God.” He warned about stereotyping and judging: “Labeling a fellow Church member an intellectual, a less-active member, a feminist, a South African, an Armenain, a Utah Mormon, or a Mexican, for example, seemingly provides an excuse to mistreat or ignore that person.”¹⁷

In October 1993 general conference, Elder Russell M. Ballard announced that in a recent meeting with the presidencies of the women’s auxiliaries he’d been told that “very few women in the church express

15. *Ibid.*, 122-23.

16. *Cat’s Cradle* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993), 65.

17. Quoted in *ibid.*, 85.

any interest in wanting to hold the priesthood. But they do want to be heard and valued and want to make meaningful contributions." He then went on to give specific suggestions about how the councils of the church could improve their work through focussing on people, through free and open discussion, and through wide and responsible participation.

We live in difficult times. Many of us who value diversity, who believe the cause of truth is served by dialogue and the quality of our social and political and ethical life by healthy encounters with the other, have ourselves been excluded—labeled intellectuals, feminists, dissidents, heretics. We must not let these exclusions lead us to lose faith that God is no respector of persons, that he has restored the gospel in part to provide a base and a people to "gather in one" all the lovely diversity—of race and culture and gender and perspective—that he has created and encouraged. We must be part of the gathering—to help it succeed and to save our own souls through the atonement of Christ.

We must not let our resentments about being excluded—or seeing those we love and admire excluded—move us to exclude anyone or to put up walls that will further shut us out. Chieko Okazaki is a great model. She has been excluded often and painfully and bears her witness to us: "Having been excluded ourselves, we've learned to take extraordinary measures to include others. . . . What can you do? If you're waiting to be included, think about some steps you can take to put yourself at the center of a circle, a circle of inclusion."¹⁸ We must keep ourselves included, by staying active, serving gently and creatively, seeking out those we offend to apologize and repent if need be, seeking out those who offend us to seek understanding and reconciliation rather than harboring resentments that easily turn into revenge.

We must act to create circles of inclusion, in our wards, across ward boundaries, throughout the church. Keep this community of independent Mormon thought alive and Christ-centered; lend our voice for peace-making and humility, for gentleness and meekness and love unfeigned. Write directly to church leaders with our concerns—never criticizing them to others. And also write directly with our love and support and specific thanks: write Bishop Robert Hales and thank him for his acceptance for the church of the thousand white roses sent at general conference in October 1993 as a gesture of reconciliation; write Elder Ballard with thanks for his talk at that same conference on including women's voices in our church councils; write Sister Okazaki and thank her for her courageous faith in Christ and in God's love of diversity.

The widespread and thorough discussion, during last year's "quincentenary," of the nature and consequences of Columbus's voyages to

18. *Ibid.*, 68.

America, raised important questions that we must face as Mormons who are now confronting very similar challenges to those Columbus brought the Catholic church: What is the spiritual status of people, especially of other races, who have long “dwelt in darkness,” and what is our responsibility to them and ourselves as we intrude upon them with the version of the gospel of Christ developed in our culture? The Catholic answer was, of course, mixed and in many ways a failure, but Catholic theologians have analyzed that process in ways we can learn from, as they have, as we all now try to do better.

Mormons, of course, agree with Columbus’s own conviction that he was inspired and blessed by God in his voyages; because of him and the colonization that followed the gospel was brought back to Book of Mormon peoples and a way was prepared for the development of the United States, a country sufficiently formed by and respectful of diversity and freedom that the gospel could be restored there and go forth to bless all the world.

But as the revisionist historians of recent years have graphically reminded us, Columbus himself participated in the exploitation and racist violence of the Spanish Conquest he made possible—which was followed by the Portuguese and French and English conquests and participated in by some of our own ancestors. Some Catholics, including Columbus’s editor and biographer and champion Bartolome de Las Casas, as well as many heroic and sometimes martyred priests down to the present, strenuously opposed the violence and racism of the Conquest and tried to develop and promote their understanding that the impact of European civilization on others was justified *only* in bringing a non-intrusive and non-judgmental extension of the gospel of Christ to them. And Catholic theologians like Karl Rahner have tried to describe the gains in possible understanding for all of us—the new paradigms made possible—from the mistakes and new perspectives of this crucial historical experience of proselyting Christian cultures colliding with others.

For instance, Rahner has articulated a way of understanding, given God’s universal love and power, how Christ’s grace must have been operating in non-Christian peoples all along: Christianity cannot “simply confront the member of an extra-Christian religion as a mere non-Christian but as someone who can and must already be regarded in this or that respect as an anonymous Christian. It would be wrong to regard the pagan as someone who has not yet been touched in any way by God’s grace and truth.”¹⁹ Rahner also asks us to consider what did and what should happen to Christianity itself as it enters into a genuinely loving encounter with others in another culture. He points out that Catholicism was al-

19. Karl Rahner, *Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions*, 131.

ways a world church "in potency," but in the encounter with the New World brought on by Columbus it came for the first time to act, on a huge scale, like an export firm: it exported an essentially "European religion as a commodity it did not really want to change but sent throughout the world together with the rest of the culture and civilization it considered superior."²⁰ And as a result it has had to face the mistakes and evil that resulted and try to admit that, in a genuine world church, such cultural imperialism must give way to interaction and reciprocal influences in all the non-essentials.

The restored gospel has given us a crucial additional concept to help us improve on the Catholic experience, as we face our own transition into a world church. Alone among Christians, we understand that God did not first reveal Christ's identity and saving gospel at the meridian of time but has done so again and again from the very beginning, in dispensation after dispensation in all parts of the world. Indeed in the Book of Mormon the Lord declares, "Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth" (2 Ne. 29:7).

I can only understand that passage as giving even more concrete meaning to Karl Rahner's sense that Christ's grace has come to all, that *every* people has the word of God, much of it in written form, from the Hindu *Baghavad Gita* to the Ogalalla Sioux *Black Elk Speaks*. Part of our mission is to learn from them and delight in the diversity of revelation God has given.

I do delight in that diversity—even while struggling with its challenges and often failing. I confess I experience the greatest challenge to my faith when I consider the enormous variety of races and cultures and people and, caught up in the popular Mormon notion that only those who have known Christ through our particular Western Christian and now American Mormon tradition have been "saved" or even experienced life properly, realize that perhaps less than one in ten of those who have lived have even heard of Christ and only one in a thousand have heard the restored gospel. Then I must consider, bleakly, that God is terribly inefficient and powerless, wasteful of those billions of suffering lives—and that we must expend even more concentrated, even desperate, effort to save a few more before Armageddon.

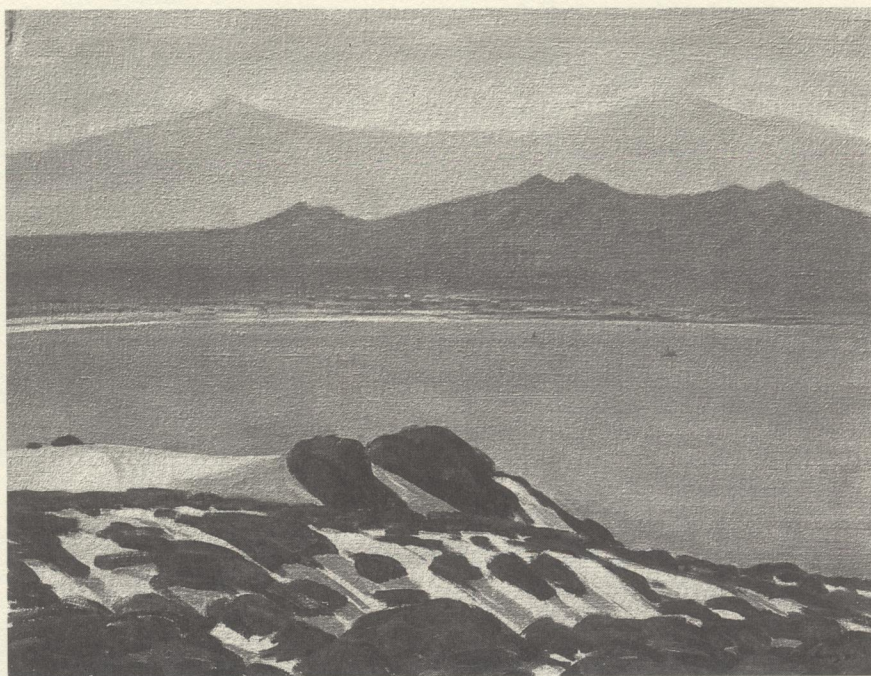
In saner moments I remember God's universal love, and I open my imagination to the billions of diverse lives which have experienced that

20. Ibid., 717.

love in many diverse ways and enjoy being part of a missionary effort that will share what God has given them with what God has given us, with the genuine and joyful anticipation that we can *all* be changed and healed by each other and brought back to him.

Finally, as I face the most difficult and delightful form of diversity, that between men and women, I rejoice in what I believe is the greatest challenge facing our church at present—how to translate the assurance that all are alike unto God, male and female, into a theology of gender and church practices that fully reflect that equality and thus release the enormous spiritual energy and moral impetus that true gender equality and family relationships unfettered by the sinful traditions of the fathers would bring. The most challenging diversity is of course that provided by the partner in marriage, what Michael Novak describes as “seeing myself through the unblinking eyes of an intimate, intelligent other, an honest spouse.”²¹ And that I believe is what each of us must work through into genuine equality and delight before we can become as the Gods in the highest degree of celestial joy and creativity. We have not yet developed sufficiently the theology and practices concerning gender that will make that possible, and “all the blessings of the gospel” are therefore not yet equally shared. How that will come about I do not know, and it has apparently become a potentially actionable offense to speculate about it. I value my membership in what I believe is Christ’s authorized church, led by his apostles, more than I do my speculations, so I will only voice my abiding faith that genuine equality will come in some form and before too long. God is no respecter of persons.

21. Michael Novak, “The Family Out of Favor,” *Harper’s*, Apr. 1976, 42.



The Violent Woman

Joseph Fisher

Sarah your clarinet
body squeaks at the valves, moans
off key, and lying still
and flat as a paper doll
in the cool of night
something hard as wire
scrapes through your belly.

I tell you now—
it is that violent woman
who guts out the girl,
strips her clean away
like pumpkin innards, rinses
her out monthly in blood.

Sometimes your body
will break you like kindling.
There is no apology
for this. But other days,
every limb, every cell,
every burning atom,
will hum like sunlight.

Lucifer's Legacy

Jerald R. Izatt

TWICE NOW I'VE BEEN TOLD STRAIGHT OUT and in so many words, "Don't be too honest!" Both times this earnest counsel came from men whose friendship I cherish and whose priesthood callings command my respect. Neither of them would countenance the slightest chicanery in a business deal or tolerate any disregard for the law. I believe that either might, in compelling circumstances, condone a little stretching of the truth to defuse a dangerous situation or to spare undue injury to someone's feelings, but even then only with some misgiving.

In spite of their generally scrupulous attitude there is, however, one brand of dishonesty my friends felt they must in good conscience promote. The purpose of their admonitions not to be too honest was to discourage careful, even if sympathetic, scrutiny of such things as church policies, rhetorical styles, or management techniques. They were even more wary of any probing examination of basic gospel concepts and ideas. They warned me against posing questions whose contemplation might expand an unwary companion's horizons into unknown and therefore possibly dangerous territory, and indeed to eschew such excursions even in my silent personal musings. Their ideal, as it unfolded in subsequent conversations, was a theocratic world made safe and sure not only by the absence of dissenting voices, but also by the existence of some foolproof mechanism which could obliterate each potentially troubling question at the very moment circumstances might bring it to mind.

Coming as they did after several decades of church activity, my friends' admonitions to curtail what I viewed as my intellectual integrity were not unusual in their intent. However, the forthright way in which they were expressed reminded me of a similar experience from long ago. As is the case with many childhood experiences, my own memories of it are uncertain, but I've been assured by others that I was there. Perhaps you'll find that this same experience skitters along the edges of your memory as well. Here's how it has been described by two of the more prominent participants after their own memories had been appropriately refreshed.

Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; . . . And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said . . . We will go down, . . . and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell: And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever their God shall command them . . . (Abr. 3:22-25).

Satan . . . came before me, saying, "Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost . . . ; wherefore give me thine honor." But, behold, my Beloved Son . . . said unto me, "Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever." Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man . . . , and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; . . . I caused that he should be cast down; And he became Satan, yea even the devil, the father of all lies . . . (Moses 4:1-4).

Although eloquent on the tactics currently employed by the deposed Satan, the scriptures are silent about the means he proposed to use to assure the eventual return of all of God's children, had his plan actually been adopted. My poor memory can add nothing concerning the details of Lucifer's plan, but the issue being so fundamental to my eternal welfare I think it appropriate to speculate a bit. Just how might Satan have planned to destroy the free agency of humanity?

At the end of the twentieth century it seems very unlikely that the techniques of withholding, falsifying, or otherwise controlling information would not have been prominent among Lucifer's bag of tricks for assuring conformity. We've seen so many examples of the efficacy of these procedures, ranging from the oft criticized wiles of the advertising community to the nightmare of a modern, sophisticated nation whose citizens were kept largely unaware and thus led to tacit complicity in the massacre of millions of their fellows at the urging of a crazed Hitler. What better way has history taught us to control the actions of men and women than to limit the information available to them so that the need to choose never enters their minds, or in the event that it does, so as to obscure all but the desired option? Fortunately, we mortals have not yet been able to accomplish the next step. We have no universally applicable technique for obliterating each unorthodox thought at its inception. Perhaps a son of the morning could have brought that off as well.

Attempts to exercise some degree of control over our thoughts are so pervasive in today's world that some of us have become insensitive to their use, even in the most unlikely places. How many see it as an affront to a basic principle of the plan of salvation when they are told that historians need not be scrupulous in establishing veracity because the primary purpose of church history is to promote faith, not to establish a true record of the past? How many are similarly chagrined by the powerful

coercion to avoid the study of certain topics that is exercised when an authoritative writer asserts that one cannot simultaneously believe in organic evolution and have a testimony of the gospel? How many feel that their vote in the council in heaven is in danger of being nullified when they are told that historical, cultural, and political context is not pertinent to the correct interpretation of scripture? Assuredly, finding enough elements of the truth to illuminate a given situation is not the end, but only the beginning of the moral task, the testing for which we are here. But without enough of it to stir our awareness and clarify the options, how can the test proceed? Since our knowledge is always fragmentary, the role of faith and obedience in our quest for eternal life is fundamentally important, but ultimately the burden for making a stand based on one's own convictions cannot be shifted to others.

Nuggets of the truth are rare and elusive. Not only does it often take great effort to unearth them, just knowing where to look can require exquisite insight. Some will argue that our perspective is so limited that the search is foolhardy. They are, of course, nearly right. Restricted as we are by circumstances of time and place, heritage and paradigm, finite neural apparatus and pervasive psychological imperatives, our scope is indeed minute. It is, however, a fundamental tenet of Mormon belief that God's creation and the laws which govern it, both physically and spiritually, are reflections of the intelligence that is his glory, and a spark of which dwells eternally within each of us. It follows that brief glimpses into the broader landscape are not excluded by the essential nature of our selves. Our very kinship with God and our consequent possession of a modicum of the sentient stuff of the universe assure us that the quest is meaningful.

In an uncharacteristically pensive mood, a noted archaeologist who has often inspired me with his optimistic view of the life of the mind once wrote:

The unexpected event, if it ever comes, leaves one unprepared and fumbling. . . a blink at the right moment may do it, an eye applied to a crevice, or the world seen through a tear. Then, to most of us, the lines reassert themselves, reality steadies out. Every now and then, however, there comes an experience so troubling that the kaleidoscope never quite shifts back to where it was. One must simply deny the episode or adjust one's vision. Most follow the first prescription; the others never talk.¹

How fatally tragic for humankind, if this were universally true! There is surely at least one group among us who must do all they can to keep it from becoming so. For those whose primary goal in life is to know the creator and in some measure to emulate his life, the burden cannot be

1. Loren Eiseley, *All the Strange Hours* (New York: Scribners, 1975).

shirked. Such flashes of insight cannot be surrendered. They must be seized, tenaciously held onto, and carefully passed on to fellow seekers.

The source of a new insight is often of little importance. It can come through prophetic vision as did Joseph Smith's revolutionary understanding of the nature of the Godhead. It can come from a lifetime of study and contemplation as did the mind-expanding suggestion offered by biologist N. J. Berrill in his popular book, *Man's Emerging Mind* (New York: Fawcett, 1957), when he opined that our pre-homo sapien progenitors might well include heroes as worthy of our adulation as, say, Leonardo or Columbus. It may even come from someone whose personal moral code we might find repugnant. Whatever the source, our attention should be tightly focused on expanding our own understanding of the truth. Integration into a cohesive world view of the vast expanse of human experience and thought that falls within the ken of each of us is challenge enough. We can leave the moral judgements to those appointed to that task. In order to illuminate our personal moral choices we need the truth, "and truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to become; and whatsoever is more or less than this is the spirit of that wicked one who was a liar from the beginning" (D&C 93:24-25).

What of the scriptures? Isn't the overview of reality which they provide sufficient to our needs? Unfortunately, as with all other tools of communication, their success depends not only on the originator of the message, but on the efficacy of the receiver as well. Joseph Smith once put it thus:

I do not believe that there is a single revelation, among the many God has given to the Church, that is perfect in its fullness. The revelations of God contain correct principles, so far as they go; but it is impossible for the poor, weak, low, groveling, sinful inhabitants of the earth to receive a revelation from the Almighty in all its perfection. He has to speak to us in a manner to meet the extent of our capacities.²

It is precisely the expansion of an essential category of those capacities that is at issue.

Through the centuries incalculable time and energy have been devoted to the search for truth by saints and sinners alike. The varied approaches range from the exploring hands and questioning voices of small children to the ponderings of academicians. They include spontaneous reading for fun, as well as the ritualized confrontation of highly trained proponents of different points of view in modern courts of law. Among

2. *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool, Eng.: Latter-day Saints' Bookseller's Depot, 1855-86), 2:314.

the searchers we find scientists carrying out experiments designed to minimize the ambiguity in the questions they pose of nature and striving for objectivity in interpreting the answers it provides. There are artists honing their skills, stretching their imaginations, and following their individual muses to discover and illuminate new vistas of experience and feeling. Others do not think of themselves as truth seekers, but must inescapably acquire appropriate knowledge of things as they are to carry out whatever work, family-rearing, or other activities engage their attention. In fact, each of us takes part in the search in one way or another, and of course, many in all walks of life seek guidance and succor for their search through prayer.

By eternal measures, our progress is slight, and the path we trod is not without pitfalls and dangers. In passing newfound insights on to others, it is obviously good practice to establish a proper groundwork and then to ladle thoughts out in appropriate doses. Still, "milk before meat" need not mean that the meatier parts of human intellectual experience be postponed forever. An honest attempt to clarify both the immediate and the eternal circumstances of our lives requires full use of all of our observational and critical faculties, together with our capacities to hope and dream and believe. It can be an exciting adventure, and surely most will agree that the very ability to conceive of the quest for truth, seen in this light, lies at the heart of our humanity. Its pursuit can give expression to much that is noble in our nature. How ironic then that many of us in both high and low stations, who have been blessed with the teachings of the restored gospel, sometimes place ourselves in the camp of those who would obfuscate.

The admonition to rein in our God-given perceptiveness and curiosity is not usually stated as bluntly as my friends put it to me, but who has not encountered it frequently in other guises? Who among us has not, in his or her role as a parent or in carrying out a church assignment, been sorely tempted to follow this path because of the simplicity and tranquility it seems to promise? How often have we succumbed and thus declared ourselves willing heirs to Lucifer's legacy?



The More We Get Together

B. J. Fogg

I WAS TIRED OF STUDYING. My eyes red and blurry, I strolled the fifth floor of the BYU library looking for someone fun to meet. (Yes, I was scamming.) One woman in the southwest wing caught my eye: a cute brunette with a bob. No ring. Studious. I grabbed a few books off a nearby shelf and sat in the carrel next to her. She was drinking a Big Gulp. I wrote a note and slid it into her carrel without looking up: "Don't you know it's against the rules to have food in the library! You'll attract bugs (like me)."

A few minutes later she passed a note back. "So sorry. I'll give you a swig of caffeine if you don't fink on me."

I wrote again: "No thanks. Instead, rendezvous with me tomorrow, 11 a.m., Cougar Eat. Bring gummy bears." I placed it in her carrel as I left to go get my real books. When I got back she was gone. A note on my desk said: "Can't make it. Got class then. Another time, okay? —Holly"

I'd struck out.

A few days later I was going down the library steps when this same brunette passed me going up. Hmmm. Always in the library, I thought. That's a good sign.

"Hey, Holly!" I called up after her. "I never did get those gummy bears."

She came down to the landing and we chatted, exchanging the usual information: first name, major, hometown. When I told her I was from Fresno, she started on the next game BYU strangers play: "Do You Know?"

"You're from Fresno?" Holly said. "I've got relatives there. Do you know the Fogs?"

The Fogs? Baffling. In a flash the mystery unraveled. "Holly!" I said. "So you're Holly Armstrong?"

She nodded, amazed I knew her last name.

"No way!" I laughed. "You'll never guess who's been scamming on you: It's me, your very own cousin. I'm Brian Fogg."

She laughed. We hugged. Of all people in the library that night, I somehow ended up scamming on my own second cousin, Holly Arm-

strong, a relative I hadn't seen since we were in diapers; she never came to the big Armstrong family reunions.

After the initial rush of recognition, Holly and I started talking again, asking questions about each other but in an entirely different way: quickly, without guard, without posturing to impress. We didn't care what the other thought—we had to like each other; we were family; we were flesh and blood.

The Armstrong clan Holly and I belong to has maintained extraordinary bonds. Each year about 300 relatives from my mother's family gather for a reunion that lasts a whole weekend. All these relatives and more—perhaps a total of 500—descended from the prolific loins of my great grandparents, Jode and Susie Armstrong. It was their parents who'd sailed to America and walked the plains for the gospel's sake. Jode and Susie were among the first generation born in the West. They grew up in something like a cowboy movie, living on the range, worrying about Indians, taming the frontier.

Last August, as usual, I gathered with my Armstrong relatives, now in the all-too-tame West: Rexburg, Idaho. As we were eating our Saturday picnic in the groomed city park, I saw my cousin Holly—now married, but still very cute—walking down the sloping grass. Since that night in the library two years ago, I could never see her on campus without smiling. But to find Holly at our reunion in Rexburg surprised me. Leaving my lunch, I went over to greet her.

"What brings you here?" I said.

"I've come to see the action. My mother says this is the last reunion," Holly said.

"The last one?"

"Yeah, they're going to disband after this year," she said. "And I'd like to say that I've come to at least one of these things."

End the reunions? I'd heard nothing about this.

The Armstrong reunions started over sixty years ago. After my great grandfather died, his wife, Susie, started gathering her nine children (and an ever-growing herd of grandchildren) each year on his August birthday. Even after Susie died, the family kept gathering. I knew my great grandparents, Susie and Jode, only from a portrait taken in their later years. Susie looked like a typical grandmother, plump, matronly, her hair pulled up in a bun. The photo showed Jode smiling beside her; he was shiny bald with bushy tufts of hair over each ear and a thick moustache.

Family folklore says my great-grandparents met as children. One day when eleven-year-old Susie was walking to church, Jode began pelting her with snowballs—a bit more dramatic than scamming in the library. Susie later agreed to be his girl, but their paths parted over the years.

Jode had other sweethearts, while rumors at the time claimed that Susie married a polygamist in Salt Lake. Finally, in 1888, they met at a party and began courting again. That summer found them both working as ranch hands on opposite sides of southern Utah's Summit Valley. Susie writes in her history:

I did my courting on the mountains. My sweetheart would come up for the weekend with an extra horse for me. . . . Nothing pleased me more than riding through the forests of quaking aspen and pine while breathing the pure mountain air.

Jode loved riding his horse close to mine and taking the pins from my heavy dark hair, letting it fall down my back, over the saddle and onto the horse's back. He loved to see it floating out behind me in the breeze.

We would ride to the top of a high ridge, where the wind always blew a gale, and look over the valley, a patchwork quilt of green, yellow, and brown. Streams glistened in the sun, looking like silver threads running through the pattern.

We rested and drank from a cold spring, while our horses drank in noisy gulps and cropped the long timber grass. We gathered violets that dipped their faces in the brook.

That summer we fell in love and made our plans. We carved our initials on the smooth surface of a quaking aspen—J. A. and S. D.—encircled by a heart (*History of Susannah Dalley*).

In the years that followed, the heart Jode and Susie carved together soon included nine children. Although the family never really had a place they could call home—they dryfarmed in the summer and moved some place new each winter to find work—they were bound together by love, laughter, music, and the teachings of Jesus Christ. They were Mormon gypsies.

Eventually, Jode and Susie's children—including my grandfather—married and left home. Their families scattered over the entire West, but each August they gathered. First, the reunions were at Susie's home on Butler Island, a strip of land surrounded by the Snake River. When Susie moved, the reunions moved with her, first to Birch Creek and then to Johnson's Fort.

The earliest reunions I remember were at the Alpine 4-H Camp on the border of Wyoming and Idaho. On Saturday we'd play baseball, climb to the mountain top, or search the woods for huckleberries. I remember sleeping in log cabins filled with bunk beds and cousins, ringing the dinner bell that echoed through the valley, eating camp food from metal trays, performing skits for what seemed innumerable clansmen, and learning the songs my grandpa had sung as a child. On Sunday we'd worship together. A great-uncle would preside; an aunt would lead the music. My cousins would bless and pass the sacrament. So many of the Armstrong clan would want to sing in the choir that people had to be en-

couraged to stay in the audience.

The original family members kept coming to Alpine as long as they could. My sick grandfather would make the trip each year, even when he was just a faint heartbeat away from death. He and his siblings sat in overstuffed burgundy chairs that lined the log walls of the lodge. This was the weekend they lived for all year. Sitting in their places of honor, the original family members watched their posterity sing and dance and bear testimony of Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, the reunions at Alpine usually overlapped with my August birthday, and my own celebration often got overlooked. However, one year I was glad I'd been born near my great-grandfather's birthday—that was the year I turned twelve and received the priesthood in a log cabin at Alpine 4-H Camp, not in some cinderblock stake center. That Sunday morning my father and my uncles gathered around me. The hands of a surgeon, two lawyers, a businessman, a farmer, and a chemist overlapped on my head. The weight was solid, reassuring, but most notable was something else: the warmth of their hands. It wasn't a spiritual burning, just a comforting glow, like the way I feel snug in bed under a goose-down blanket. Their bodies encircling me, welcoming me into the brotherhood—I wanted their power and protection to never leave. Soon, they said amen and lifted their hands; I was ordained. I stood and hugged my father. I then shook my uncles' hands in turn, all the way around the circle. My mother broke through to pull me close to her, wiping her cheeks with her palm. "I'm so proud of you," she said. Just a few hours later I passed the sacrament for the first time, sharing the emblems of Jesus with my cousins and aunts and uncles.

Because my ancestors built log cabins in frontier Utah, reuniting their descendants each year in the rustic Alpine 4-H Camp seemed right. However, as I entered college the reunions changed. We stopped going to Alpine. Too many mosquitos. Too far away. Too primitive. Too hard on the remaining original family members. We moved to Ricks College, a convenient place—maybe too convenient. The dorms all had clean sheets. We ate cafeteria food that was actually pretty good. The auditorium had a real stage. The sacrament trays were provided, along with cups and hymnbooks. Slick. Polished. Tidy. Sterile.

I found out that Holly was right about ending the Armstrong reunion forever. After we settled back into the Rexburg park tables with our desert, Cousin Dee, who had planned the reunion this year, said Uncle Cliff had an important announcement. Uncle Cliff was my grandfather's youngest brother, now the oldest living patriarch. He took the mike, shuffled in place, and examined the concrete for a long time. He then looked over the audience and began to speak: "Seeing that this will be the last

year for this reunion, I'd just like to take the opportunity to thank all of you for supporting the family gatherings up until now. Yes, as some of you have heard, from now on we will dispense with this reunion. We've had wonderful times together, all these years at Alpine and now at Ricks College."

The pavilion started buzzing: "End the reunions?" "But this is a tradition!" "What will happen to the family?"

Uncle Cliff continued: "Dee got such a poor response this year. Only seventy-two people signed up in advance. We figure about 300 could show, but there won't be enough food for everyone. The arrangements were impossible to make with the Ricks College folks. Judging by this year and the past few years—the slow response and all the family members missing—we just don't think there is enough interest to continue."

One aunt with big hair stood up. "Can't we vote on this?"

Uncle Cliff ignored her: "Even though we won't meet, all of us, like this again, I want to encourage each of the families to continue with their own reunions. Keep your families close. That's how Mom and Dad would have wanted it."

As Uncle Cliff talked on and on about the problems in arranging the reunions and the waning support, I watched my mom and her sisters circulating throughout the pavilion, lobbying family members, talking to Clare and Annette, to Kara and Larry, all her cousins. No one was listening to Uncle Cliff anymore; everyone was talking among themselves.

Although I couldn't imagine a summer without the big Armstrong reunion, I knew Uncle Cliff was right: the reunions were on a steady decline, becoming less interesting, more mechanical. Uncle Cliff's decision seemed a natural result of the last decade. Many who still attended each year came only out of obligation, often wondering on the long drive home if the hassles were worth the rewards.

Besides, there was something ominously scriptural in the reunions dissolving after the fourth generation. The Lord's promise to early Saints, including Jode and Susie, seemed fulfilled: "Thou shalt be rewarded for thy righteousness; and also thy children and thy children's children unto the third and fourth generation" (D&C 98:30). I'd read this often and wondered about its implications. It seemed a blessing given to those early Saints, like Jode and Susie, for their endurance and faithfulness. My ancestors scrimped to send Jode's father on a mission; then Jode himself left the family to preach; finally, each son served as long as family finances would allow. I couldn't deny it: the promise was fulfilled; we had been rewarded with a large family firmly rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Even though a few Armstrongs have strayed from the church, the overwhelming majority have been faithful members—though not Mor-

mon aristocracy; not Smiths, Kimballs, or Pratts; our ancestors' names are never mentioned in the Doctrine and Covenants. Since the early days of the church, the Armstrongs had been simple members who paid tithing, attended church, and sent fathers, brothers, and sons on missions. That's the Armstrong tradition.

At each reunion the family missionary map, something like those found in wardhouses, shows our heritage of missionary service. At last count we had eighty-five pins in the map, representing eighty-five missionaries since Great-grandpa Jode. His descendents have now preached the gospel in twenty-nine countries. Of course, it would be hard for any Armstrong boy not to serve a mission after seeing that map every summer. My decision not to go was easy. I saw all my cousins go. It posed no financial hardship on my family; in fact, because my mission cost just one hundred dollars a month, my parents once wrote me (joking, I hope): "Can't you arrange to stay in Peru a little longer? We've saved so much money with you gone."

However, membership in such a faithful family is not without price. At times I wished I could divorce myself from Armstrong expectations. One summer when I lived in France, I watched my friends drink wine until sunrise and then share bedrooms with their girlfriends; I stayed sober and slept alone. At other times in my life, especially when my intellectual arrogance overshadowed my faith, I could find no logical reason for attending church, but I still knotted up my tie and gathered with the Saints. Even when church leaders wielded what I thought were severe scepters of unrighteous dominion, I swallowed hard and bowed my head.

Through all of this, the Armstrong tradition has helped me to endure—and even to repent—until I regained my spiritual sea legs. Family pressure to keep the commandments, to stay faithful, to follow the Brethren—all that fits me like a bulky lifejacket: often an inconvenience, but in critical moments my only hope. When my soul is running as wild as the wind, I've often thought it unfair that breaking from the church would also mean breaking from my family, my heritage, my roots. However, in calmer moments I believe the connection between family and gospel is more than a tradition passed down by pioneer ancestors: living family standards in this life will allow me to live with family members in the next.

In the past, family support systems have helped keep me faithful—that much is sure—but after Uncle Cliff's announcement to end the reunions, I worried what this would mean for my children and my children's children. Had we really reached the limits of the scriptural promise? Was the entropy of a fifth-generation family too strong to hold a center? Should our large family tree break itself into nine branches, each

branch planting itself in new fields?

Our smaller branch of the Armstrong family had already started gathering ten years earlier. The tradition of my first cousins is to camp for a whole week together: we hike the trails of Wyoming, set up tents in the Tetons, watch young cousins splash on the shores of Bear Lake; we water-ski and sing. For a few days of the week, we men fill our backpacks and head for the mountains, leaving the women at camp. Male bonding, without help from Iron John. My father, my brothers, and I bring high-tech tents and freeze-dried food. My farm cousins usually sleep under the stars and carry backpacks I can't budge, although my mouth waters when they eat fresh peaches and canned spaghetti.

In the evenings we sing cowboy songs and tell jokes around the campfire. The last night on the trail is always a testimony meeting. A few years ago as we gathered around the fire, one cousin—a returned missionary—explained his suffering from straying off the gospel path. He'd been excommunicated. His light was gone, he said. He felt so lost. He longed for the day when his priesthood blessings would be restored. To me his words taught more than a chapel full of priest advisors ever could. Turn back, he said, as soon as possible. Even now, each time before I stray too far, I recall my cousin's face flashing, the wet streaks shining on his cheeks, his eyes staring into the fire, his voice warning. And I turn back.

Those week-long camping trips and fire-in-the-belly hikes bonded our smaller branch of the family together, but it was the bigger Armstrong reunions that gave me a sense of belonging to the Restoration, of gospel heritage. Even though the smaller reunions helped chart my course, they never seemed to anchor me in the enduring tradition of my pioneer ancestors. If the bigger Armstrong reunion died, I felt a part of me would die too.

In response to her brother Cliff's announcement, Aunt Mary made her slow shuffle-walk to the front of the pavilion. Mary, eighty-five years old and the youngest of the original family, jokingly wrested the microphone from Cliff's hand. She held the mike close to her lips: "I'm not going to stop coming to these reunions. You'll have to hope I die before next summer. I remember my parents telling us never to stop gathering the family. Never. Never. If we did, they promised to haunt us."

Everyone laughed.

My mother stood up, saying we'd come to the reunion for fun, not to complain about who didn't register on time or who didn't come this year. "So let's sing!" she said.

"Yes, that's right. Let's all sing," Aunt Mary echoed with a smile.

Typical Armstrongs, I thought. When all else failed the Armstrongs

would sing. Indians got you down? Sing. Lose the crop on the dry farm? Sing. Have to move the family for the tenth year running? Sing—then sing some more. My mother started us off with a tune that seemed all too appropriate: “The More We Get Together, the Happier We’ll Be.” Other traditional songs followed: “Springtime in the Rockies,” “Barnacle Bill the Sailor,” “I’ll Take You Home Again, Kathleen.” For me these songs rang with bright memories of Alpine 4-H Camp; older relatives probably thought of Butler Island, Birch Creek, or Johnson’s Fort.

The young Armstrong cousins had long since left the pavilion, bored by what seemed a tedious family council. Throughout the discussion I watched them play crack-the-whip in the park. When we started to sing, the kids returned to join us. My cheerleading sister and her cousins stepped forward to add a new song to the tradition. During their rap tune, they chose family members to come up and dance. Because there’re only two kinds of Armstrongs—clowns and hams—no one declined. Even old Uncle Cliff got into the act:

Hey, Uncle Cliff, you’re a real cool cat.
 Ya got a lot of this and a lot of that.
 So stand right here and shake your rear,
 And show us how to do the chiga cheer.
 Bam boom!
 Chiga chiga, chiga chiga.
 Bam boom!
 Chiga chiga, chiga chiga.

Uncle Cliff stood up and shook his rear, pointing his finger up and down in rhythm like a creaky John Travolta. I enjoyed the show, yes, but I also saw the significance of our playing together; I saw how the young Armstrong generation was overriding authority to help rescue the family reunion. The dynamics of the moment reminded me of another story, one a BYU botany professor told me: Years ago BYU officials decided to get rid of some cottonwoods on Maeser Hill. Grounds crew workers cut a strip of bark off each tree, six inches wide, around the circumference. This girdling would eventually starve the trees to death. When the neighborhood kids saw that the trees were girdled, they set out to save them. They cut fresh branches from the trees and built bridges over the bare spots; these branches would keep the tree alive until the bark grew back. The trees lived.

As we Armstrongs sang and laughed together under the pavilion, I knew our family reunion would also live—at least one more year. Uncle Cliff, the family patriarch, was so outnumbered he finally changed his mind. Stopping the reunions was no longer the issue; our job now was to make the extended family stronger through better reunions—more fun,

more economical, more heritage-based.

I paid careful attention to how we grew our bark back; I might need to know for future reference. Throughout the picnic, the evening entertainment, and the dance, we Armstrongs talked. We identified what was important to us: Did we want to keep the traditional variety show? How should we exchange family histories? What can we do for the younger kids? We eventually formed a reunion committee with a president, past-president, and incoming-president. Also on that committee were representatives from each of the nine families, as well as two spokespeople for each generation. They made plans well into the night.

The next morning at church the committee presented tentative reunion plans for family approval. No firm conclusions, just a start. After the family business was finished, each surviving original family member took part on the sacrament meeting program, as usual, every one in turn. They all wanted to continue reunions—even Uncle Cliff. Finally, Aunt Mary stood behind the podium cradling her treasured journal. She recounted the summer when she and her aged mother, Susie, returned to Summit, nearly sixty years after Jode and Susie courted on the mountains. She read parts of her 1951 journal entry:

We found our old cabin had tumbled in, but the names of my brothers and sisters carved on the logs inside were discernible. The spring behind the house still bubbled with water as clear and cold as ever. We scooped it up in our hands to quench our thirsts.

As we wandered down the mountain trail, we were delighted to find a huge quaking aspen, just off the path, and sure enough, high on the trunk encircled by a heart, were the initials J.A. and S.D., rather grown together and gnarled but readable. So many years had passed and it was still standing, as a witness perhaps (*Mary Johnson Journal*).

“Even though I wrote that forty years ago,” Aunt Mary said, “I’m sure I could still find that quaking aspen tree; I could tell you the stories of our life in Summit—that is, if I’m still alive next summer—and I plan to be! But we old folks won’t be around forever, you know.”

It was five weeks after the reunion, a Monday night in September, when I heard the wind rage outside my Provo home, slamming our porch chairs into the screen door. I was able to get into the front yard just in time to enjoy a few seconds of nature’s powerful display, a gale strong enough to lift me like a kite—just tie a string to my belly button. The breeze quickly returned to normal, and I went back inside to finish my fettucini.

The next morning I found out the windburst wasn’t all fun and games. The newspaper said the sudden gust, which lasted just fifteen sec-

onds, damaged forty trees on Maeser Hill, some trees one hundred years old. One toppled cottonwood had stood ninety-one feet tall.

I laced up my Reeboks and jogged to Maeser Hill. I found the lawn scattered with leaves and broken branches. Then I saw something that made me stop in midstride: a huge tree on its side, roots in the air. I walked closer. I ducked under the yellow tape that marked off the area: "Caution: Police Line. Do Not Cross!"

I crossed anyway. I didn't care. This had been my tree. Sort of. When I lived near this edge of campus, I spent my summer afternoons reading in the tree's shade. I'd slept there too. There wasn't another spot quite like it on campus.

I walked along the length of the tree, touching the weathered bark, stepping over hefty branches that once held leaves for my shade. I looked into the hole the uprooted tree had left in the ground. The sinewy roots, some as thick as my wrist, some as thin as my hair—all of them, big and small, had snapped. The bottom of the trunk, now exposed, still clung to clumps of earth.

The size of the hole surprised me. So small. About the size of a jacuzzi. How could such a small bit of earth, such a shallow root system, support such a large tree? Apparently it couldn't. Not under the freakish 90 mph winds that blasted along the edge of campus and tunneled through town.

I climbed onto the trunk, about six feet above the ground, and walked on top. The diameter got smaller and smaller. When I was near the thin branches and closer to the ground, I hopped off and jogged home.

The hole on Maeser hill is now gone, covered with grass. I know that a 91-foot tree once stood there, but I see no evidence, except that the hill looks awfully bare. Sparse. Recently landscaped. In my mind I can picture the cottonwood still standing, a watery sort of image, like ghosts on TV. It almost seems that if I imagine the tree there long enough, it will somehow reappear. It never does.

That empty spot always reminds me: I need to call home, to send my cousin a birthday card, to edit a chapter from my grandfather's history, to stay faithful. I need to gather often with my relatives who live nearby, to strengthen them—yes—but mainly so I can grow from their strength. And, of course, I need to attend the annual Armstrong reunions, maybe even convince cousins like Holly to come.

They say the upcoming Armstrong reunion will be different. The committee voted to forget about going to Ricks College this next summer. Instead, we'll go to southern Utah, to the mountains where Jode and Susie courted, to the dry farm where they raised their family a century ago. We hope to find the old cabin with our grandparents' names etched in the

logs. We hope to find their spring still bubbling clean and cold. Most of all, we hope to find an old quaking aspen still standing, the initials J. A. and S. D. carved into the bark, and a heart still binding their descendants together.



The Continuing Quest for the Historical Jesus

Mark D. Thomas

Whoever can give his people better stories than the ones they live in is like the priest in whose hands common bread and wine become capable of feeding the very soul, and he may think of forging in some invisible smithy the un-created conscience of his race.

—Hugh Kenner

IN 1975 I ENROLLED IN THE DIVINITY SCHOOL at the University of Chicago, where I hoped to earn a Ph.D. under Norman Perrin, a distinguished British New Testament scholar. But a call I made at the same time to the head of the LDS Church Education System in Salt Lake City stopped me cold in my tracks. He told me that if I wanted to teach New Testament for the church I could do so with a Ph.D. in physics or family counseling—anything but a degree in New Testament studies. That attitude has created a vacuum in serious New Testament studies among Latter-day Saints. One way to fill this void is to become a member of the Westar Institute of Sonoma, California, whose goal, among others, is to expose the public to serious biblical scholarship.

At the October 1993 meeting of the Jesus Seminar a spirited debate among New Testament scholars and other participants arose over a proposal to convene a canon council to determine if books should be added to or deleted from the Bible. Several participants referred to Mormonism as an example of the need for a flexible canon. Others expressed concerns that those trained in scholarly disciplines should not enter what they saw as the realm of the churches. Others felt that scholars have a duty to determine that the canon reflects the best research available. For a variety of

reasons, the issue was tabled for future consideration.

One of the purposes of the Jesus Seminar is for scholars to present and discuss material on the historical Jesus. The particular focus of the October 1993 meeting was to determine the historical core of the narratives that portray Jesus as a healer. Once the discussion on each paper was completed, votes were taken by both fellows (scholars) and associates (non-scholars). Participants chose a color that represents the probability that a particular saying or narrative actually came from the historical Jesus. This voting presumes that the biblical text contains creative changes and additions that are not part of the historical core. Mormonism from its beginning has also held that biblical texts were edited and modified.

The discipline that studies how each gospel modifies and molds its sources for its own purposes is called "redaction criticism." "Tradition criticism" treats the history of a text from its original setting through various stages of redaction or editing. "Form criticism" is the discipline that examines the literary form of a particular passage and the historical setting from which it arose. These terms should be kept in mind while reading the following two essays from the October 1993 Jesus Seminar. These two papers summarize the conclusions reached by these disciplines in examining a particular healing narrative.

The first article, by Daryl D. Schmidt of the religion department at Texas Christian University, examines the narratives of healing on the sabbath. The second article, by W. Barnes Tatum of Greensboro College, analyzes the story of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law. Each scholar uses the disciplines cited above in his analysis. Their primary concern is to determine if there is a historical core to the story. Schmidt's essay introduces the problem faced by the Jesus Seminar. Jesus as healer is attested in more than one early source. On historical grounds alone one must accept the idea that Jesus healed, or at least was believed to perform healings. Yet when we examine particular healing narratives, we find evidence that leads us to conclude that the narratives themselves were either redacted or fabricated. So our dilemma is accepting Jesus as a healer with no specific instance of healing to point to. Schmidt's article details this dilemma in the instance of the healings on the sabbath. He also presents important material on the first-century setting of the Jewish religious debate regarding healing on the Sabbath. Tatum's essay suggests why the particular healing narrative he examines probably has a historical core.

Each author presented his paper with recommendations for voting on the historical core of the passage he examined. Votes were taken, both on the narratives as a whole and on elements within the narratives. The following color codes were used in voting:

RED	The passage is a fairly reliable account of a historical event.
PINK	The passage reflects the historical Jesus in its core or is based on a historical event.
GRAY	The passage contains minimal historical traces.
BLACK	The passage is largely or entirely fictive.

This same colored system of voting is used to determine the probability of a particular statement regarding the passage; black means the statement is probably fictive and unreliable; red indicates that the statement is virtually certain; pink means that the statement is probably reliable; and gray means that the statement is possibly reliable but may be unreliable.

Below are Schmidt's and Tatum's separate essays, their recommendations for voting, and some of the resulting votes by participants.

The Sabbath Day: To Heal or Not to Heal

Daryl D. Schmidt

CONTROVERSY OVER SABBATH DAY HEALINGS is but one of several kinds of sabbath day controversies that the New Testament gospels depict in Jesus' relationship with the religious authorities of his day.¹ I will examine the sabbath day healing stories in light of what we can reconstruct about Jewish sabbath day concerns of the first century. On this basis I will attempt to identify the likelihood of a historical core to these narratives.

The sabbath day controversies assume that Jesus was known in his day as a healer. The historicity of this reputation is affirmed by historical scholarship.² What is at issue for the historian are details of the narratives that report about various healings. Aspects of these stories that fit the historical setting of first-century Palestine can claim greater probability of historicity than those that reflect later theological concerns. Since the traditions about Jesus in the gospels were first transmitted orally before being written, such material must be examined for evidence of how the process of transmission affected the shape of the stories. Scholars use tradition criticism and form criticism for this purpose. Form criticism seeks to identify the shape of individual stories during the formative period of oral tradition, and tradition criticism attempts to trace their development into connected narratives. Before I examine these stories and their Jewish context, I will first catalogue the sabbath healing narratives in the gospels and note the absence of sabbath controversies in other early Christian literature.

SABBATH HEALING STORIES IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

The number of sabbath healing stories in the gospels is actually

1. See Arland J. Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries: The Form and Function of the Conflict Stories in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1979).

2. For a description of Jesus as healer, see John Dominic Crossan, "Jesus the Peasant," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Spring 1993): 156-68, esp. 164-66.

quite few:

1. Mark 3:1-6//Matt. 12:9-14//Luke 6:6-11: Man with a Crippled Hand
2. Luke 13:10-17: Afflicted Woman
3. Luke 14:1-6: Man with Dropsy
4. John 5:1-18: Crippled Man
5. John 9:1-41: Man Born Blind

Only the story of the Man with a Crippled Hand appears in more than one source; it is found in the first three gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Because they share the same general view of Jesus and are often looked at together, they are called the “synoptic” gospels. For most scholars the best explanation for their similarities is that Mark was the earliest of the narrative gospels, probably written during or right after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple by the Romans in 70 C.E.,³ and the primary source of Matthew and Luke.⁴ The arrangement of the material as found in these gospels is thus derived from Mark, where this story becomes the climax of a larger set of controversy stories, immediately preceded by the other primary story of a sabbath controversy, Picking Grain (Mark 2:23-28).⁵

The healing of Simon Peter’s mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31) is sometimes included in lists of sabbath day healings. The Markan framework does give it that setting, placing it right after “they left the synagogue,” which implies it is still the sabbath day (v. 21). However, the story itself contains no temporal reference, nor any suggestion of controversy, which accompanies all other sabbath day healings. The only other explicit sabbath day healing stories have but a single version. There are two such stories in Luke and two in John.

Sabbath day controversies in general, including healing on the sabbath, are noticeably absent from the rest of early Christian tradition. No mention is even made of the sabbath day in the sayings of Jesus quoted in both Matthew and Luke that are not in Mark. Scholars designate this material “Q” (from *Quelle*, German for “source”), and refer to it as *The Say-*

3. In current biblical scholarship, C.E. = Common Era (= A.D.) and B.C.E. = Before the Common Era (= B.C.).

4. For a description of the methodologies used in historical critical assessment of the synoptic gospels, see E. P. Sanders and Margaret Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989).

5. See Joanna Dewey, *Markan Public Debate: Literary Technique, Concentric Structure, and Theology in Mark 2:1-3:6* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1973); J. D. G. Dunn, “Mark 2.1-3.6: A Bridge between Jesus and Paul on the Question of the Law,” *New Testament Studies* 30 (1984): 395-415; reprinted in *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 10-36.

ings Gospel Q, even though no actual document has been found that directly corresponds to it.⁶ Q represents the primary source of Jesus' sayings, which were most likely collected in this form at least a decade or more before Mark was written. This would make Q the earliest source for historical Jesus research. The total absence of any mention of the sabbath day in Q thus suggests that the early sayings tradition did not preserve any remembrance of Jesus teaching anything about the sabbath day.

The other primary source of sayings of Jesus is the recently discovered Gospel of Thomas, part of an ancient Christian library found in Egypt in 1945. Thomas, as we now have it, is from the fourth century and written in Coptic, but there are three fragments in Greek that represent an earlier second-century text. Many scholars are now convinced that Thomas contains some traditions as early as those found in Q.⁷ Because Thomas is entirely a collection of sayings of Jesus, its discovery has added credence to the significance of the Q hypothesis, that the earliest traditions about Jesus were sayings collections. Together, Thomas and Q would thus be the earliest sources available for understanding the historical Jesus. Thomas does contain one saying, unattested elsewhere, that mentions the sabbath day: "If you do not keep the sabbath as a sabbath, you will not see the Father" (27:2). It is not clear what this saying means; it appears to be some kind of endorsement, although Thomas more typically criticizes shallow piety.⁸ Whatever its original significance, this saying does not shed any light on the controversy surrounding sabbath day healings.

Outside of the gospels, neither Paul nor Acts rehearses any sabbath day issues. Acts asserts that Paul's custom was to go to the synagogue on the sabbath day (17:2; cf. 13:14; 18:4), which probably reflects Luke's stereotype of early Jewish-Christian practice. In contrast, Paul never mentions the sabbath day in particular, but rather declares the whole matter of observing special days a non-issue: "Let all be fully convinced in their own minds" whether they should "judge one day to be better than another" (Rom. 14:5). In fact, elsewhere Paul responds to gentile converts who take up Jewish observance of "special days" by fretting that his work "may have been wasted" (Gal. 4:10-11). Later in the Pauline tradition, the letter to the Colossians reaffirms Christian freedom regarding

6. For a comprehensive description, see Arland D. Jacobson, *The First Gospel: An Introduction to Q* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1992).

7. For a careful analysis of the relationship of Thomas to the synoptic gospels, see Stephen J. Patterson, *The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1993). For an introduction and translation of both Q and Thomas, see John Kloppenborg et. al., *Q-Thomas Reader* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1990).

8. Patterson, *Gospel of Thomas*, 86, 148. The phrase could also be translated, "keep the whole week as a sabbath" (Marvin Meyer, *The Gospel of Thomas: The Hidden Sayings of Jesus* [San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1992], 82).

Jewish practices, including "sabbaths" (2:16).⁹

In other early Christian writings contemporary with the New Testament, the so-called "Apostolic Fathers" from the second century often preserve earlier traditions. The anonymous letter attributed to Barnabas, probably written during the first third of the second century, devotes a chapter to reinterpreting the scriptural (Old Testament) traditions about the sabbath day. It endorses "the eighth day" celebration for Christians (Barn. 15:9). Another anonymous letter, formally addressed to someone named Diognetus, probably around the end of the second century, sets out the contrasts between Christian and Jewish religious practices. It talks about "sabbath superstition" and calls it "impious falsely to accuse God of forbidding that a good deed should be done on the sabbath day" (Diog. 4:3).

The New Testament gospels alone preserve any tradition about Jesus associated with sabbath day controversies. The earliest material in the sayings gospels of Q and Thomas does not preserve any controversial teaching of Jesus on the sabbath day, and the Christian writings of the second century attributed to the "Apostolic Fathers" present little reason to attach special significance to the sabbath day. Only the narrative gospels in the New Testament describe controversy over sabbath day healings. These stories must be examined in the context of their own social world, which included the formation of rabbinic Judaism after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E.

THE RABBINIC DEBATE: "WHAT IS PERMITTED ON THE SABBATH DAY?"

Sabbath day legal regulations are a well-known feature of rabbinic Judaism. Strict observance of sabbath day prohibitions against "work" became a significant part of prescribed religious practices. These traditions have their roots in Jewish oral Torah as it developed during Second Temple Judaism.¹⁰

Evidence for this can be seen in the editing process that shaped the Hebrew scriptures. "The Law" and "The Prophets," the first two sections of the Bible, received their final form during the period of the Second Temple. The Creation story placed at the beginning of the scriptures made sabbath day rest the culminating goal of creation itself (Gen. 2:2-3)

9. Although Colossians is attributed to Paul, many scholars think its rhetorical style is not that of Paul himself, but reflects a later co-worker, writing after Paul's death.

10. See I. Abrahams, "The Sabbath," *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917), 129-35; Lawrence H. Schiffman, *From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1991), 251-52; E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief: 63 BCE-55 CE* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992), 208-11.

and the most elaborate of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15). Its violation was punishable by death (Ex. 31:15-16; Num. 15:32-36).

In the last section of Hebrew scripture, "The Writings," which were not edited until after the destruction of the Second Temple, Nehemiah is credited with instigating enforcement of sabbath day restrictions back during the restoration of the Temple in the fifth century (13:15-22). In a second-century B.C.E. retelling of Genesis, the book of Jubilees elaborates on the laws for keeping the sabbath day, declaring that "anyone who will do any work therein . . . will surely die forever" (2:27).¹¹

The extent of sabbath day practice is evident in sanctions against even military activity. Enemy military commanders adopted the practice of attacking on the sabbath day, knowing the Israelites or Judeans would not fight back. Historians have reconstructed that major defeats in Israel's history occurred on sabbath days.¹²

A reinterpretation of sabbath day rest emerged from the experiences of the Maccabees in the second century B.C.E., during their struggle to recapture control of the Temple from the Syrians. As told in the Old Testament Apocrypha, after suffering many casualties on a sabbath day attack, they resolved not to be destroyed for refusing to defend themselves: "Let us fight against anyone who comes to attack us on the sabbath day; let us not all die as our kindred died in their hiding places" (1 Macc. 2:41). The Jewish historian Josephus, writing toward the end of the first century C.E., emphasizes that this meant "only in self-defense will Jews fight on the Sabbath" (*Jewish War* 1.145). This interpretation became normative among prominent groups of Jews, without any weakening of the claim that the sabbath day was being fully observed. Josephus can still insist: "It was known even to the Romans that [the Jews] did no work of any kind when the seventh day came round" (4.98).¹³

In addition to the new interpretation permitting self-defense on the sabbath day, most interpretations had already allowed for "life saving" activity on the sabbath day. The traditions of the early rabbis are preserved in the Mishnah, a collection of legal opinions edited at the end of the second century C.E., including this teaching from an early second-century rabbi: "If a man has a pain in his throat they may drop medicine into his

11. See James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1985), 58.

12. Gerhard F. Hasel, "Sabbath," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:849-56. Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 260, relates this wartime concern over the sabbath to the gospel of Mark as a wartime gospel.

13. For discussion of the evidence, see Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974, 1980, 1984), citations in index: "Sabbath—defence forbidden on."

mouth on the Sabbath, since there is doubt whether life is in danger, and whenever there is doubt whether life is in danger this overrides the Sabbath."¹⁴ To more fully appreciate this kind of logic, we must consider the rabbinic arguments over sabbath day cures. Alongside other traditions regarding apparent exemptions for sabbath day activities, there are those that focus explicitly on matters related to health and healing.

The Mishnah includes these sabbath day regulations regarding healing:

Greek hyssop [a cure for worms] may not be eaten on the Sabbath, because it is not a food for healthy people. . . . One may eat any foodstuffs that serve for healing or drink any liquids except purgative water or a cup of root-water, since these serve to cure jaundice; but one may drink purgative water to quench one's thirst, and one may anoint oneself with root-oil if it is not used for healing. If [on the sabbath day] someone's teeth pain him he may not suck vinegar through them but he may take vinegar after his usual fashion [at a meal], and if he is healed he is healed.¹⁵

From this E. P. Sanders formulates the implied rule, "no minor cures," since life-threatening conditions were exempt.¹⁶

A tradition preserved in the Tosefta, material supplementary to the Mishnah, attempts to clarify the matter:

They do not chew balsam-resin on the Sabbath.
Under what circumstances?
When it is intended for a remedy.
But if it is on account of bad breath, this is permitted.¹⁷

Neusner deduces this generalization: "One may not do something solely for the purpose of healing, but if healing results from doing what is permissible, there is no objection."¹⁸

In Tosefta *Sabbath* 15:15 even this restriction was given a very generous interpretation:

They heat water for a sick person on the Sabbath, whether to give it to him to drink or to heal him with it. And they do not say, "Wait on him, perhaps he'll

14. Tractate ("section") Yoma 8.6b, *The Mishnah*, trans. H. Danby (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 172.

15. Tractate *Sabbath* 14:3, 4, trs. Danby, 113.

16. E. P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 13.

17. Jacob Neusner, *The Tosefta. Second Division. Moed: The Order of Appointed Times* (New York: Ktav, 1977), *Sabbath* 12:8.

18. Jacob Neusner, *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Appointed Times. Part One: Shabbat. Translation and Explanation* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 141.

live [without it].” But a matter of doubt concerning him overrides [the prohibitions of] the Sabbath. And the doubt need not be about this Sabbath, but it may be about another Sabbath.

Such an open-ended definition suggests that the principle, “when in doubt,” was subject to widely varying interpretations.

This logic is further supported in the next section, *Sabbath* 15:16, by arguments derived from the examples of circumcision and Temple service as bases for overriding the Sabbath:

Now if the Temple service overrides the prohibitions of the Sabbath, and a matter of doubt concerning the safety of life overrides it, the Sabbath, which the Temple service overrides—all the more so should matters of doubt concerning the saving of life override it. Thus you have learned that a matter of doubt concerning the saving of life overrides the Sabbath.

The rabbinic material we have just considered was written after the destruction of the Temple, as were the New Testament gospels. Both traditions are thus presented from the perspective of hindsight, which assumes a future without the Temple. As we analyze what the gospels can tell us about the historical Jesus, we must be very cautious in how we use these later written traditions in evaluating the likelihood of Jesus’ sabbath day activity in the first third of the first century in Galilee.

We can now make an initial assessment of the historical probability of certain general features of Jewish sabbath day practice in first-century Palestine.

1. *There was an ongoing debate over sabbath day issues.* Sanders “can well believe that there were in Galilee radicals who questioned any unusual activity on the sabbath,” but actual incidents “were extremely minor in the context of the period.”¹⁹ There is no scholarly consensus on the extent to which such individuals would have been “Pharisees,” who were mostly bureaucrats and educators.²⁰ Their likely presence in Galilee at the time of Jesus cannot easily be disputed, but the amount of influence they had on synagogue life certainly can.²¹ Learned Pharisees, “the scholars” (called scribes in the KJV), are less likely to have been in the villages of rural Galilee than in more urban settings. Therefore, one could argue that it was more likely outside of Palestine in the Hellenistic cities of the Jewish diaspora, such as Antioch, that Jesus’ followers first encountered strong opposition from synagogue Judaism—not controlled by Pharisees,

19. Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 22.

20. Anthony J. Saldarini, “Pharisees,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 5:289-303, see 302.

21. Sean Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels: Literary Approaches and Historical Investigations* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 257; Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 398.

as well as the challenge from Paul (Gal. 2).²²

2. *Pharisees would not have actively hassled "faith healers" over sabbath violations, especially in synagogues or at dinner parties.* Sanders finds "no indication that the Pharisees tried to impose their own rules on others."²³ They were likely admired, respected, and popular,²⁴ but not powerful enough to impose themselves on those outside their sphere of influence.

3. *There already existed in the early first century a body of precedent-setting Jewish oral tradition about sabbath day cures.* Sanders asserts: "So many particulars are debated in rabbinic literature that we may assume that the understanding 'no minor cures' is early, probably pharisaic," and the rule "doubt whether life is in danger overrides the sabbath" "would have been the common understanding" since the first century B.C.E.²⁵

4. *The death penalty was never applied, or even tried to be, to sabbath violations.* The normative interpretation of the law that emerged by the time of the Mishnah (200 C.E.) contrasted acting "wantonly" with acting "in error" (*Sanhedrin* 7.8). A general rule was formulated: "Whosoever, forgetful of the principle of the Sabbath, committed many acts of work on many Sabbaths, is liable to one Sin-offering" (*Sabbath* 7.1). Even when someone knew that it was the Sabbath, a lenient interpretation excused them for acting inadvertently. Sanders thus concludes that the Mishnah "makes the death penalty virtually impossible" to apply, and its strict features were probably "never enforced anywhere." Since the Mishnah is the legacy of the Pharisees, it is most unlikely "that Pharisees sought the death penalty for minor transgressions of the sabbath."²⁶

These results can now be applied to the sabbath healing stories in the New Testament. Our analysis will seek to trace especially the editorial developments in the gospels that reflect the contemporary practices of rabbinic Judaism.

SABBATH DAY HEALING CONTROVERSIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Mark. Mark's narrative structure gives early importance to sabbath day controversies. Jesus begins his public activity in Capernaum, where "on the sabbath day he went right to the synagogue and started teaching" (1:21).²⁷ The summary statement that follows already contrasts Jesus

22. Dunn finds here, "A Bridge between Jesus and Paul on the Question of the Law" (*Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 10-36).

23. Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 12.

24. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief*, 402.

25. Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 13.

26. *Ibid.*, 18-19.

27. The translations from the gospels are taken, with some modification by the author, from Robert Miller, *The Complete Gospels* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1992).

with “the scholars” (v. 22), who emerge as opponents in the return trip to Capernaum (2:1-12), and in the scene at Levi’s house, where they are identified as “the Pharisees’ scholars” (v. 16).²⁸

When the sabbath day becomes an explicit issue, the challengers are identified as “the Pharisees.” In response to the disciples picking grain on the sabbath day, they put the question: “Why are they doing what’s not permitted on the sabbath day?” (2:24). This concern becomes one of the caricatures of the Pharisees. Jesus responds both with a defense from scripture (vv. 25-26), the story of David from 1 Samuel 21:1-6, and with a pronouncement (vv. 27-28):

The sabbath day was created for Adam and Eve,
not Adam and Eve for the sabbath day.
So, the son of Adam lords it even over the sabbath day.²⁹

This sets up the first major showdown in Mark’s narrative, a controversy based on Jesus’ first reported sabbath day healing:

1. Then he went back to the synagogue, and a fellow with a crippled hand was there. 2. So they kept an eye on him, to see whether he would heal the fellow on the sabbath day, so they could denounce him. 3. And he says to the fellow with the cripple hand, “Get up here in front of everybody.” 4. Then he asks them, “On the sabbath day is it permitted to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?”

But they maintained their silence. 5. And looking right at them with anger, exasperated at their obstinacy, he says to the fellow, “Hold out your hand!”

He held it out and his hand was restored. 6. Then the Pharisees went right out with the Herodians and hatched a plot against him, to get rid of him (3:1-6).

The setting, back in the synagogue (v. 1), creates the expectation that a new level of tension is at hand. The challengers are not actually identified, but the repeat of “the Pharisees” at the end of the story (v. 6) implies they are also the opponents here.

They are pictured as intentionally trying to catch Jesus on the explicit basis of healing someone “on the sabbath day” (v. 2). Jesus silences them by putting the question: “On the sabbath day is it permitted to do good

28. The translation “scholars” is used for the traditional “scribes” to convey better the significance of their role in the gospels as interpreters of scripture.

29. The translations “Adam and Eve” and “son of Adam” (= “man” and “son of man”) are meant to make explicit that this is a claim on behalf of all humankind. Compare the rabbinic tradition in Jacob Neusner, *Mekhilta according to Rabbi Ishmael: An Analytical Translation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 81.3, 8, *Shabbata on Exod 31:13*, Rabbi Simeon says, “The Sabbath is handed over to you, and you are not handed over to the Sabbath.”

or to do evil, to save life or do destroy it?" (v. 4). Jesus' qualification to doing good, "to save life," is presented by Mark as a recognizable exemption to sabbath restrictions. In terms of the later rabbinic debates, Jesus' defiant healing of the crippled hand (v. 5) would seem to be "blatantly intentional." However, because he accomplishes the healing merely by speaking to the fellow, "no work was performed."³⁰ The Pharisees are nonetheless portrayed as plotting against Jesus' life merely on the basis of the healing (v. 6).

An earlier healing had begun this controversy section with the charge, "He's blaspheming!" (2:7). In Mark's perspective, blasphemy was the basis on which the religious authorities would later decide on the death penalty for Jesus (14:64). Mark thus begins the first controversy section with a story charging Jesus with a capital offense, and then concludes the controversy section with another apparent capital offense, healing on the sabbath day. The narrative moves on and sabbath day activity is never again a controversy. Has Mark blown this issue totally out of proportion or is it possible to locate a plausible first-century setting for such tension over sabbath day healing?

Our earlier assessment of the rabbinic tradition suggests that Mark's picture is more caricature than it is historical. Although Mark's narrative setting couples sabbath healing with blasphemy as offenses equally liable to the death penalty, the historical likelihood of Pharisees responding with a death threat to a faith healer's words claiming "to save life" seems virtually impossible. It is also most unlikely that Jesus ever "staged" a public healing on a sabbath day, or directly questioned Pharisees about sabbath day regulations just before healing someone. It is more plausible that Jesus would have consented to heal someone's condition, even though it was not literally life-threatening, on what was inadvertently a sabbath day. It is also plausible that some "scholars" might have challenged Jesus about it afterward. That all of this would have happened in a synagogue, however, is unlikely. Thus the story as Mark tells it has some plausible features, but it cannot be taken as a reliable report of an actual incident.

Matthew. The version of this same story in Matthew (12:9-14) appears to be edited from Mark 3. Matthew keeps it in the same general sequence immediately after the sabbath day controversy over picking grain (vv. 1-8). Matthew's editorial changes in that story already indicate how much Matthew pictures Jesus as a master of rabbinic argumentation. In Mark Jesus refers to the story of David eating bread normally reserved for priests (Mark 2:25-26). Matthew adds significant rabbinic-like material to Jesus' defense:

30. Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 21.

5. Haven't you read in the Law that during the sabbath day the priests violate the sabbath in the temple and are held blameless? 6. Yet I say to you, someone greater than the temple is here. 7. And if you had known what this means, "It's mercy I desire instead of sacrifice," you would not have condemned those who are blameless (Matt. 12:5-7).

This material is all unique to Matthew. The proof-text quoted in v. 7 (Hosea 6:6) is also used in 9:13. Here it extends the rabbinic principle, "temple service takes precedence over the sabbath day."³¹ Jesus "one ups" the Pharisees by employing a formal rabbinic argument, from "the lesser" to "the greater," which became normative rabbinic interpretation after the destruction of the Temple.³² Here Jesus makes the claim for something even "greater than the temple" (v. 6). In this context in Matthew Jesus is thus made to vouch for the future authority claimed by the Matthean community.

Matthew now pictures Jesus moving into "their synagogue" (v. 9), apparently referring back to the "the Pharisees" in verse 2, whom he had just outwitted.³³ Suddenly there is an opportunity for them to try again:

10. Just then a fellow with a crippled hand appeared, and they asked him, "Is it permitted to heal on the sabbath day?" so they could discredit him.

11. He asked them, "If you had only a single sheep, and it fell into a ditch on the sabbath day, wouldn't you grab on to it and pull it out? 12. A person is worth considerably more than a sheep. So, it is permitted to do good on the sabbath day!" (Matt. 12:10-12)

Unlike in Mark, where Jesus takes the initiative, here the Pharisees again lead, posing the challenging question (v. 10).

Jesus' response in Matthew (v. 11) assumes a consensus between Jesus and the Pharisees for the later dominant rabbinic interpretation.³⁴ This more "liberal" position contrasts the more "literal" interpretation

31. The Babylonian Talmud (Shabbat 132b) derives this from the Mishnah (Shabbat 19), which establishes the precedence of circumcision over the sabbath day. The Jerusalem Talmud (Shabbat 19:1 VII.C.) declares that public sacrifice overrides the prohibitions of the sabbath day; see Jacob Neusner, *Talmud of the Land of Israel: A Preliminary Translation and Explanation*, Vol. 11. *Shabbat* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 455.

32. Louis Jacobs, "Hermeneutics," *Encyclopedia Judaica* (1971), 8:cols. 366-72.

33. Scholars infer that Matthew is contrasting "their synagogue" and rabbinic Judaism as derived from the Pharisees, with "our synagogue" and the Jewish-Christian community of Matthew's "church" as derived from Jesus. See Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 173.

34. For rabbinic citations, see Samuel T. Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1987), 200; Paul Billerbeck and Hermann L. Strack, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, 6 vols. (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1922-26), 1:629-30.

practiced, for example, by the ancient Jewish community that produced the "Damascus Rule," first discovered in Cairo a century ago (and designated "CD"). Several fragmented copies were found among the first-century C.E. Dead Sea Scrolls, attributed to the Jewish sect called the Essenes. Here a stricter interpretation is given: "No one shall assist an animal to give birth on the sabbath day. And if it should fall into a cistern or pit, it should not be lifted out on the sabbath day" (CD 11:13-14). This seems to reject the allowance made in what became the normative rabbinic position in the Mishnah: "They may not deliver the young of cattle on a Festival day, but they may give [indirect] help" (*Sabbath* 18:3).³⁵

Jesus then uses the classic rabbinic argument from lesser to greater, "a person is worth more," to arrive at a definitive decree: "So, it is permitted to do good on the sabbath day" (v. 12). This answer to the question put to Jesus probably reflects the rule of behavior Matthew's church formulated to claim it was keeping the sabbath day.³⁶ Jesus then acts in accord with the principle he has just articulated—he does something good on the sabbath day to accommodate a crippled fellow, who responds and is restored. Nonetheless, the Pharisees do not concede Jesus' stance, but rather hatch a plot to destroy him (Matt. 12:13-14). Matthew's Jesus has "out-phariseed the Pharisees" and they are not about to take it.

How should the historian assess Matthew's distinctive features in this story? In a word: anachronistic. Not only does Jesus "out-pharisee the Pharisees," he does so with argumentation techniques that rabbis perfected only after the time of Jesus. Furthermore, this is historically suspect because Jesus' reputation elsewhere suggests that he had little concern for the very issues that mattered to the Pharisees, such as purity and sabbath day regulations. It is thus much easier for the historian to find editorial bias than it is to find corroborating evidence. In fact, the editorial bias elsewhere in Matthew (e.g., chap. 23) is often highly polemical against the very form of Judaism that became dominant only toward the end of the first century. Many scholars are thus convinced that this is the most likely time frame for Matthew, and also accounts for many of Matthew's distinctive features.³⁷

35. Later rabbis clarified the acceptable kinds of help: If an animal falls into a ditch, one brings bedding to place under it, and if it climbs out it climbs out. Someone may object: If an animal falls into a ditch, one brings food to it, so that it should not perish. Well and good, if such food is available; if not, one brings bedding to place under it (*Sabbath* 128b). See Isidore Epstein, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud. Seder Mo'ed* (London: Soncino Press, 1938), 639-40.

36. Gerhard Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law," 79, 91-92; Heinz Joachim Held, "Matthew as Interpreter of the Miracle Stories," 244; both in Günther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz Joachim Held, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (London: SCM, 1963); Harrington, *Matthew*, 177.

37. See, for example, J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

Luke. Luke's account of this sabbath day healing (6:6-11) is close to Mark, except that Luke explicitly identifies the challengers as "the scholars and the Pharisees" (v. 7). This is how Luke had already characterized the opponents in the earlier controversy stories (5:21, 30), the former time replacing Mark's "scholars" and the latter time adjusting Mark's unusual "the Pharisees' scholars" (2:16). Luke's Jesus again takes the initiative, now because "he knew their motives" (v. 8), not with the anger ascribed to him in Mark (3:5). Rather, it is the Pharisees who are "filled with rage," (v. 11), as was everyone after Jesus' first synagogue visit in Luke (4: 28). Their rage provokes them only to discuss "what to do with Jesus" (v. 11). The plot to destroy Jesus in Luke is attributed much later to the religious authorities in Jerusalem (19:47).

These distinctive features in Luke's version of the Man with the Withered Hand fit with Luke's general tendency to avoid having Pharisees participate in the death of Jesus. Instead, Luke pictures some Pharisees as sympathizers, who on three different occasions invite Jesus to dinner (7:36; 11:37; 14:1). Later in the book of Acts a leading Pharisee, Gamaliel, cautions against those who become enraged and want to kill the apostles (5:33-34). It is Gamaliel's student Saul/Paul (22:3) whose conversion changes the course of early Christian history, as Luke tells it. Luke's picture of the Pharisees' role in controversies with Jesus thus seems too self-serving to be of much help to the historian searching for clues about the historical Jesus.

Luke does add two unique sabbath day healing stories, both without any known parallels: 13:10-17: Afflicted Woman, and 14:1-6: Man with Dropsy, both with typical Lukan features. Although they are not directly back-to-back, these two healings form another set of male and female pairings distinctive of Luke (also 7:1-10 + 7:11-17; 15:1-7 + 15:8-10).³⁸

10. Now [Jesus] was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath day. 11. A woman showed up who for eighteen years had been afflicted by a spirit; she was bent over and unable to straighten up even a little. 12. When Jesus noticed her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are freed from your affliction." 13. He laid hands on her, and immediately she stood up straight and began to praise God.

14. The leader of the synagogue was indignant, however, because Jesus had healed on the sabbath. He lectured the crowd: "There are six days which we devote to work; so come on one of those days and be healed, but not on the sabbath."

15. But the Lord answered him, "You phonies! Every last one of you unties your ox or your donkey from the feeding trough on the sabbath day and

38. See, for example, Eugene Maly, "Women and the Gospel of Luke," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 10 (1980): 99-104.

leads it off to water, don't you? 16. This woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has kept in bondage for eighteen long years—should she not be released from these bonds just because it is the sabbath?" 17. As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame, but most folks rejoiced at all the wonderful things he was doing (Luke 13:10-17).

The Man with Dropsy story (14:1-6) is the third time Luke sets a story in a Pharisee's house at a dinner party (7:36; 11:37):

1. And so one sabbath, when Jesus happened to have dinner at the house of a prominent Pharisee, they were keeping an eye on him. 2. This man who had dropsy suddenly showed up.

3. Jesus addressed the legal experts and Pharisees: "Is it permitted to heal on the sabbath, or not?"

4. But they were silent.

So he took the man, healed him, and sent him on his way.

5. Then he said to them, "Suppose your son or your ox falls down a well, would any of you hesitate for a second to pull him out on the sabbath day?"

6. And they had no response to this (Luke 14:1-6).

Both stories contain sayings concerning the care of animals (13:15; 14:5), as we also saw in the Matthean version of the Withered Hand:

Every last one of you unties your ox or your donkey from the feeding trough on the sabbath day and leads it off to water, don't you? (Luke 13:15)

Suppose your son or your ox falls down a well, would any of you hesitate for a second to pull him out on the sabbath day? (Luke 14:5)

If you had only a single sheep, and it fell into a ditch on the sabbath day, wouldn't you grab on to it and pull it out? (Matt 12:11)

Luke 14:5 is so similar to the saying found in Matthew 12:11 that some scholars have suggested they are versions of a saying derived from the common sayings source ("Q") used by Matthew and Luke. John Kloppenborg rejects the suggestion that Luke 14:5 can be removed from its context "without destroying the story completely."³⁹ That may only suggest that the whole anecdote was formed in order to give the saying a context. In fact, Bultmann considered both of Luke's extra stories to be variants of the story in Mark 3:1-6, each composed around an isolated saying, 13:15 and 14:5.⁴⁰

39. John S. Kloppenborg, *Q Parallels: Synopsis, Critical Notes, and Concordance* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1988), 160.

40. Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 12.

Since it appears that Matthew added the saying in 12:11 to a story that did not originally contain such a saying, it is likely that none of these sayings originally belonged in the narrative context in which they are now found. If so, their origin can be traced to the oral tradition of the time, in one of two ways. (1) Each one could have circulated as an isolated saying without a specific narrative setting, until someone either put it into such a story or created a story for it. (2) They did not exist as separate sayings transmitted orally, but are rather variations, even caricatures, of what became popular rabbinic tradition.

The Jesus Seminar did consider the likely historicity of these sayings in its earlier work on all the sayings attributed to Jesus.⁴¹ The saying in Luke 13:15 (with v. 16) came out black—no basis for linking it to the historical Jesus. But it was borderline on gray, since 25 percent of the votes were red or pink—a strong minority opinion that it contains a historical core. Matthew 12:11-12 and Luke 14:5 were considered together as two versions of the same saying. The vote came out a solid gray—some traces from the historical Jesus, with 42 percent of the votes red or pink—a historical core lies behind these sayings. Both votes indicate a wide range of scholarly conclusions reached by Fellows of the Jesus Seminar on the likelihood that these three sayings preserve some historical core that can be traced back to Jesus. Especially in the case of Luke's two unique stories, it seems more likely the stories were created around the sayings, than that they preserve independent reports about actual events.

John. The gospel of John contains its own two sabbath healing stories: 5:1-18: Crippled Man, and 9:1-41: Man Born Blind. These two healings are among the "miracles" of Jesus in this gospel, traditionally translated "signs" (2:11; 4:54). Scholars have concluded that these miracles were found in an early collection of such stories, which they have labelled the "Signs Gospel." In the scholarly reconstruction of the Signs Gospel, these two stories appear back to back, in reverse order, greatly reduced (9:1, 6-7[8] + 5:2-3a, 5a-9), with no mention of the sabbath day.⁴² In each story it is introduced after the healing has been narrated:

9. At once the man recovered; he picked up his mat and started walking.

Now that was a sabbath day. 10. So the Judeans said to the man who had been cured, "It's the sabbath day; you're not permitted to carry your mat around" (5:9-10).

13. They take the man who had been blind to the Pharisees. (14. It was

41. The votes are reported in issues of the Polebridge Press journal, *Foundations and Facets Forum*. The listing by chapter and verse is in vol. 6 (Mar. 1990): 3-55.

42. For the text, see the "Signs Gospel" in Miller, *Complete Gospels*, 185-86.

the sabbath day when Jesus made mud and opened his eyes.) 15. So the Pharisees asked him again how he could see (9:13-15).

Both times the editor of the gospel of John seems to have appended a sabbath controversy to a healing story that does not contain any previous mention of the sabbath day.⁴³

Raymond Brown, however, judges the sabbath motif to be integral to the healing story. His assessment is based, at least in part, on his full acceptance of the authenticity of accounts in the first three gospels:

That Jesus violated the rules of the scribes for the observance of the Sabbath is one of the most certain of all the historical facts about his ministry. From the Synoptic evidence [Matthew, Mark, and Luke] it would seem that he deliberately worked miracles on the Sabbath as test cases providing an opportunity for him to proclaim his relationship to the Law.⁴⁴

Few scholars today would voice such confidence in the accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke as historical records. Our analysis above has indicated the kinds of serious reservations most scholars have about treating any narrative report as "historical fact."

Unlike the other gospels, in John the sabbath debate resumes after the healing stories. In the midst of Jesus' festival discourse in 7:15-24,⁴⁵ he defends himself based on the law:

19. "Moses gave you the Law, didn't he? (Not that any of you observes the Law!) Why are you bent on killing me?"

20. The crowd answered, "You're out of your mind! Who's trying to kill you?"

21. "I do one miracle," Jesus replied, "and you're stunned! 22. That's why Moses gave you circumcision . . . and you can circumcise someone on the sabbath day. 23. If someone can be circumcised on the sabbath without breaking Moses' Law, can you really be angry with me for making someone completely well on the sabbath day? 24. Don't judge by appearances; judge by what is right" (John 7:19-24).

Jesus argues here in the same terms as the debate reflected in the later rabbinic literature, using the rabbinic style of argumentation noted above in Matthew's editing of Mark 3.

43. Robert T. Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 115-17.

44. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John I-XII* (Anchor Bible 29; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 210.

45. In Bultmann's reconstruction, 7:15-24 immediately follows the end of John 5 (Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971], 273).

The sabbath day controversy added to the healing in John 5 concludes with the narrator's explanation:

15. The man went and told the Judeans it was Jesus who had cured him.
16. And this is the reason the Judeans continued to hound Jesus: he would do things like this on the sabbath day.

17. Jesus would respond to them: "My Father never stops laboring, and I labor as well."

18. So this is the reason the Judeans then tried even harder to kill him: Not only did he violate the sabbath, worse still, he would call God his Father and make himself out to be God's equal (John 5:15-18).

The viewpoint expressed here probably best reflects a perspective from the end of the first century.⁴⁶ This puts in matter-of-fact terms the same two capital offenses of blasphemy and sabbath violation that frame the debate in Mark's controversy section: 2:1-12 and 3:1-6. The editorial hand of Mark is often seen in both of those texts.⁴⁷ The relationship between Mark and John on this issue may be no more than a common tradition derived from the Old Testament: Exodus 31:14 demands death for profaning the Sabbath and Leviticus 24:16 demands death for blaspheming the name of God. In the Mishnah, both are included on the list of those who are to be stoned to death (*Sanhedrin* 7:4).

We must conclude that, as with many other historical issues, the stories in the gospel of John about sabbath day healing seem improbable. The attachment of sabbath day controversy to healing stories in the gospel of John is even more obviously secondary than in the first three gospels. Both Jesus' use of rabbinic argumentation and the editorial comments on the reasons for killing Jesus reflect a setting at the end of the first century.

TRADITION HISTORY AND FORM CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Biblical scholars arrive at the historical likelihood of individual gospel stories about Jesus by locating them within the tradition that developed between the time of Jesus and the written gospels (30-70 C.E.). Any story with its historical core preserved in the oral tradition must be in a form that could have been transmitted "authentically," that is, its very shape preserved its historical core. Therefore, a saying of Jesus located in a controversy story is more likely to be authentic if it is still in a highly

46. Eduard Lohse, "Jesu Worte über den Sabbat," 79-89, in *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche: Festschrift für Joachim Jeremias*, ed. Walther Eltester (Berlin: Alfred Töpelmann, 1960), 80.

47. Dewey, *Markan Public Debate*, 111, 121; Guelich, *Mark*, 132-33.

oral form—short, pithy, and memorable—such as Jesus would have used.⁴⁸ However, each controversy story itself is more likely reshaped to reflect an actual controversy at the time the story is retold. Scholars who analyze the tradition must then reconstruct the stages in which the pieces of the tradition were transmitted, and locate likely settings in the life of early Christian communities that would have preserved authentic pieces of tradition.

Rudolf Bultmann was the first scholar to attempt a full analysis of the tradition that developed into the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. He began his study with healing stories in the form of “Controversy Dialogues.” Mark 3:1-6 is the first text discussed. In Bultmann’s judgment it cannot be reduced to an isolated traditional saying, such as Luke 14:5 and 13:15. He concluded that both the language and content of Mark 3:1-5 suggested that “its formulation took place in the early Palestinian Church.”⁴⁹

When Bultmann analyzed legal sayings in the tradition, he was more willing to see Mark 3:4 as an example of “the brief conflict sayings which express in a parable-like form the attitude of Jesus to Jewish piety.” This is the among “the oldest material” preserved, so that “this is the first time that we have the right to talk of sayings of Jesus, both as to form and content.” These conflict sayings are prime examples of normative “sayings of the Lord [Jesus],” which the early church gathered, reformulated, enlarged, and developed.⁵⁰

The assessment of the authenticity of controversy stories involves a form critical judgment about the likely setting of such stories. They are most likely “imaginary scenes” designed to provide a starting point to address some typical issue, such as the sabbath day. They do not make “a particular report of a particular historical happening,” even though it is “very probable” that Jesus actually healed on the sabbath day. The “typically Rabbinic” shape of the debates reflects a setting in later discussions in the church about its relationship to Judaism.⁵¹

Various scholars have refined this description of the tradition history of these stories.⁵² Most are convinced that the gospel writers found such stories in the traditions they inherited. However, not many would concur with Joseph Fitzmyer’s judgment that any particular one of these stories

48. The most explicit description of the “rules of evidence” scholars use in making historical judgments is in Robert W. Funk, with Mahlon H. Smith, *The Gospel of Mark: Red Letter Edition* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1991), 29-52.

49. Bultmann, *History of Synoptic Tradition*, 12.

50. *Ibid.*, 145, 147.

51. *Ibid.*, 39-41.

52. See, for example, Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, and Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990).

"probably reflects one of the real-life situations of Jesus' own ministry: a cure and debate over the Sabbath" during an early stage in the tradition.⁵³ E. P. Sanders's sentiments seem more to the point: Any assessment of gospel conflict stories regarding the sabbath "ideally requires us to know things which we cannot know, such as precisely what happened and precisely what the circumstances were."⁵⁴ Indeed, all historical reconstruction, "what happened" and under "what circumstances," is based on degrees of probability, not on certainty. But then we must remind ourselves: reconstruction is the historian's most important task.

In reconstructing the tradition history of Mark 3:1-6, the earliest sabbath healing story, and its relation to the controversy section 2:1-3:6, scholars have tended to choose sides between two opposing views of its likely setting. (1) It reflects an internal matter directed against Jewish Christians, such as in Syria in the 60s, who wanted to maintain their Jewish attachment to sabbath day observances; or (2) it is Christian polemic against Pharisaism, such as in Galilee in the 40s, which represented Jewish competition to the young Christian movement.⁵⁵

Dunn rejects that choice in favor of another scenario. He argues that the whole section is prior to the view Paul expresses in Romans 14:5 that "all days are alike." The entire unit found in Mark 2:1-3:6 "was put together for the benefit of communities for whom the obligation of the sabbath was still assumed and the only issue was how it should be observed." Their Jewish Christian self-understanding was at stake as they wrestled to interpret their traditional views of the law, and "to defend themselves from Pharisaic criticism."⁵⁶ Matthew then represents "a more consistently Jewish audience of Christian believers" since he "takes such care to stifle or diminish some of the more radical implications which follow from the Markan form of the tradition."⁵⁷

ASSESSING SABBATH DAY HEALINGS AS "DEEDS" OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS

The sayings contained in these controversy stories were considered earlier by the Jesus Seminar. The sayings in the stories in Matthew and Luke have already been discussed above; only Matthew 12:11-12/ Luke 14:5 received an average vote any higher than black, the color of all the other sayings in these stories.

Occasionally the Jesus Seminar has voted on general statements

53. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke X-XXIV* (Anchor Bible 28A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 1011, regarding Luke 13:10-17.

54. Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 20.

55. For example, Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, 162, 165.

56. Dunn, "Mark 2:1-3:6," 22-25, 28.

57. *Ibid.*, 35.

about Jesus' activity. Several of the statements are related to issues of the law and sabbath observance. Two were decidedly black:

1. Jesus did engage in debates on fine points of the Jewish Law.
2. Jesus did initiate discussion or debates about sabbath observance.

Two were decidedly red:

3. Jesus did engage in activity suggesting little concern for sabbath observance.
4. Jesus' actions involved him in debates about sabbath observance.

These votes suggest a strong sense among the Fellows that on matters regarding the Jewish Law, especially sabbath observance, Jesus' "actions speak louder than words." That is, the gospel stories involving sabbath day matters much more likely reflect the effect of Jesus' "deeds" than of his actual words. A careful consideration of these stories in this phase of the Jesus Seminar would likely support our earlier analysis based on the sayings. Nonetheless, we are considering very different issues now, so the vote on any specific story may not show much confidence in what the story claims to report.

One of the arguments for sabbath day healing as an authentic historical reminiscence is the claim that there are several independent witnesses attesting to sabbath day healings:

1. Mark 3:1-6//Matthew 12:9-14//Luke 6:6-11.
2. A possible saying in Q: Matthew 12:11-12//Luke 14:5.
3. A special source in Luke: Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-4.
4. The Signs Gospel in John: 5:1-16; 9:1-17.

These appear to be four (sets of) stories not directly borrowed from one another, nor derived from the same common source. However, the form and tradition analysis given above suggests it is simplistic to claim these as four "independent" witnesses.

In the stories in John, the sabbath day is obviously secondary, so that it is not even mentioned in the reconstructed Signs Gospel. The two special stories in Luke seem to be variations of the story Luke borrowed from Mark. They are actually told with greater verisimilitude than the story in Mark, that is, they are more "believable" historically, but that does not necessarily make them more "authentic."⁵⁸ The possible "Q" saying is not actually in Q and the saying itself implies only an accusa-

58. Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 20.

tion about sabbath day healing, not a report of such an actual healing.

We are thus left with Mark 3:1-5(6) as the earliest sabbath healing story preserved. Many scholars are willing to acknowledge a core of some sort that preceded Mark. Hultgren proposed a kernel story:

And a man was [in the synagogue] who had a withered hand. And they watched [Jesus] to see whether he would heal him on the sabbath, in order that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come here." And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to harm, to save life or to kill?" [He] said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.⁵⁹

To picture this as a self-contained unit in the tradition raises several questions: If "whether to heal on the sabbath" is at the core, why does the story end without returning to this issue? Does not the motivation attributed to the opponents, "to accuse him," make more sense in the larger context of a narrative gospel, where the "passion story" features opponents who "accuse" Jesus (Mark 15:3, 4)?

At the same time, there is virtual scholarly consensus that this story is the culmination of a collection of controversy stories with a strong interest in sabbath day issues. Such a collection would have had its life setting in a community of Jesus' followers defending certain religious practices as they shaped their self-identity. The primary disagreement among scholars is in identifying the most likely geographical and temporal setting of such a community, somewhere between the early 40s and the early 70s, either in Galilee or elsewhere in the Greco-Roman world.

Finally, any scholarly assessment must compare this material with previous results judged to be historically "authentic" to see how well it coheres ("fits") with the emerging picture of Jesus. Various scholars have noted the theme of newness in the stories collected in 2:1-3:6 and readily find their origin in Jesus.⁶⁰ This would be consistent with our consensus that Jesus had an understanding of living in this world that was distinct from John the Baptist's more apocalyptic view that the end of the world was at hand. Does coherence then require that we find in favor of those very deeds that would be the natural expression of such an understanding? Would not Jesus' critical stance toward his social world include sabbath day activity that was outside the parameters endorsed by the religious authorities of his day? The solid red vote noted above suggests a virtual consensus that Jesus engaged in activity reflecting general disregard, or at least "benign neglect," for sabbath day observance, which got him involved in debates over such issues.

59. Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, 82-83.

60. For example, Dunn, "Mark 2.1-3:6," 21.

At the spring 1993 session of the Jesus Seminar votes were taken on a set of general statements regarding Jesus and healing. The votes were strongly in favor of Jesus' role as healer. The red (1-2) and pink votes included:

1. During his lifetime Jesus was considered a healer.
2. From a modern perspective, some people who came to Jesus were actually cured.
3. Jesus was able to effect cures instantaneously.
4. In modern terms, Jesus was actually a "faith healer."
5. Jesus cured people by his words alone.

This consensus results, in part, from the diverse ways in which references to "healing" form an integral part of the early traditions about Jesus.

The stories themselves, however, when considered as reports of actual events, have a similarity to stories already well known in the culture. As a result, strong red and pink votes were recorded for these two statements about the sources ("generative models") of the actual stories:

6. The Old Testament provided generative models for constructing miracle stories involving Jesus.
7. Greco-Roman stories provided generative models for constructing miracle stories involving Jesus.

One set of popular stories, from the Jewish side, was the cycle of "miracles" attributed to the prophets Elijah and Elisha in the Old Testament book of Kings (1 Kgs. 17-2 Kgs. 13). Numerous distinctive stories in the gospels have clearly been influenced by these Old Testament stories. Luke has Jesus himself refer to these stories in his opening sermon (4:25-27) and later tells a healing story (7:11-17) in which Jesus revives a widow's son in imitation of Elijah (1 Kgs. 17:17-24) and Elisha (2 Kgs. 4:32-37). Some scholars suggest that the entire narrative structure of the gospel traditions about Jesus as "miracle worker" is derived from the Elijah-Elisha tradition.⁶¹

Greco-Roman culture of course had many famous stories of healers and miracle workers. But more importantly, it developed a popular literature around telling the "lives" of such people. Prior to the gospels, the Jewish author Philo wrote a popular "Life of Moses," and a century after the gospels, "The Life of Pythagoras" was written, with emphasis on his

61. See, for example, Wolfgang Roth, *Hebrew Gospel: Cracking the Code of Mark* (Oak Park, IL: Meyer-Stone Books, 1988), and the bibliography of such works.

miracles and sayings.⁶² The cultural context was thus “ripe” for stories about popular healers and miracle workers.

The strength and consistency of these votes raises one primary final question: To what extent can any of the surviving healing stories be assessed as preserving any historical reminiscence? The consensus on “generative models” (not a single black vote on statements 6-7) suggests that most Fellows hold in “creative tension” two simultaneous understandings: (1) Jesus most likely was involved in activities and incidents such as described in these healing stories, and (2) any given story, by definition, was shaped by earlier models of such stories and thus cannot be treated as a report of a specific incident. Therefore, how we shape the statements we vote on is likely to directly affect how we then vote.

Our purpose here is to vote on the historicity of these various stories as reports of actual incidents. The analysis in this paper can be summarized by the following recommendations.

1. On the historicity of the healing stories in John 5 and 9 as actual sabbath day events: BLACK.
2. On the historicity of the sabbath healing stories in Luke 13 and 14 as actual occasions when Jesus defended his healing activity: BLACK.
3. On the historicity of Mark 3:1-6 as an actual occasion when Jesus healed someone’s crippled hand, on what happened to be a sabbath day, and some conflict resulted: GRAY.

Even though no particular story in the gospels seems to warrant more than a gray vote regarding its historicity as a reliable report of an actual event, that is not a vote against all sabbath day healings.

On either of the following general statements I would recommend: PINK.

4. On at least one occasion that happened to be a sabbath day Jesus healed someone’s non-life-threatening condition.
5. On at least one occasion that happened to be a sabbath day Jesus faced a confrontation after healing someone’s non-life-threatening condition.

62. For summaries of these “lives,” see Moses Hadas and Morton Smith, *Heroes and Gods: Spiritual Biographies in Antiquity* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 101-258.

However, to add “in a synagogue” to either statement would reduce it to no more than gray.

If Jesus was indeed a “faith healer,” and was not himself an active Pharisee, then it is plausible that one or more healings took place on a sabbath day, or possibly even in a synagogue. But “double jeopardy” healings, both on a sabbath day and in a synagogue, would certainly have been rare. The fondness for telling those stories as conflict stories later in the tradition makes the historian all the more skeptical about their veracity as reports of actual incidents. The historian may well have to conclude: I know Jesus probably healed some non-life-threatening conditions on the sabbath day, but none of these stories is a reliable report of such an occasion.

* * *

[Editor’s note: Following this paper, several scholars suggested that the votes on each of these healing narratives should be gray; given what we know about Jesus, they argued, the particular healing could have happened, but probably did not. Two of several votes regarding healing on the sabbath resulted in the following tabulations:

1. On the historicity of Mark 3:1-6:

	Scholars	Associates
Red	0	0
Pink	3	2
Gray	16	5
Black	6	6

2. “On at least one occasion that happened to be a sabbath day Jesus faced a confrontation after healing someone’s non-life-threatening condition.”

	Scholars	Associates
Red	2	2
Pink	18	3
Gray	4	6
Black	1	2

The issue of the historicity of the narratives on the healings of Jesus is continued in the following paper by M. Barnes Tatum.]

Did Jesus Heal Simon's Mother-in-law of a Fever?

W. Barnes Tatum

Mark 1:29/They left the synagogue right away and entered the house of Simon and Andrew along with James and John. 30/Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her right away. 31/He went up to her, took hold of her hand, raised her up, and the fever disappeared. Then she started looking after them.

Matthew 8:14/ And when Jesus came to Peter's house, he noticed his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. 15/He touched her hand and the fever disappeared. Then she got up and started looking after him.

Luke 4:38/He got up from the synagogue and entered the house of Simon. Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they made an appeal to him on her behalf. 39/He stood over her, rebuked the fever, and it disappeared. She immediately got up and started looking after them.¹

FORTY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE APPEARANCE in English of Oscar Cullmann's historical assessment of the life and career of a Simon called Peter.² Twenty years have passed since the publication of the historical conclusions of the Catholic-Lutheran task force, chaired by Raymond E. Brown and John Reumann, relative to the life and career of this Simon called Peter.³ Both Cullmann and the members of the task force approached this story with an interest specifically in Peter, not Jesus. But neither Cullmann nor the task force explicitly affirmed the historicity of the event presupposed by this synoptic story narrated initially in Mark,

1. The English translation of these gospel texts is that translation known as the Scholars Version (SV). See Robert J. Miller, ed., *The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1992).

2. Oscar Cullman, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953).

3. Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, and John Reumann, eds., *Peter in the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1973).

and subsequently adapted from Mark by the authors of Matthew and Luke.

Based on the "gist" of the Marcan version of the report, the historical question can be narrowly couched in these terms: *Did Jesus heal Simon's mother-in-law of a fever?* Based on the details of the Marcan report, at least three related historical questions can be raised: *Did Simon actually have a mother-in-law? Did the healing occur in Simon's house in Capernaum? Did the healing occur on the sabbath?*

Early church tradition about the origin of the gospel of Mark (Papias of Hierapolis, Irenaeus of Lyon, Clement of Alexandria) identifies the author as that Mark who, as a follower and interpreter of Peter, wrote down information about Jesus received directly from Peter. If the author of the gospel was this Mark, then one can speak with some confidence about a "Petrine reminiscence" underlying this story, as scholars occasionally still do.⁴ If I followed this lead, my recommendation for a vote on the narrowly formulated question would be RED, that Jesus really did heal Simon's mother-in-law of a fever.

More recent critical tradition—with the advent of form-critical and redactional-critical analysis—has seen in Mark evidence of oral transmission of tradition and has emphasized the theological and ecclesiological issues which led to, and are reflected in, the written gospel narrative.⁵ Therefore, this story about Simon's mother-in-law, along with the other miracle stories in Mark 1:21-3:6, can be characterized as "Mark's own fictions."⁶ Following this lead, my recommendation for a vote on the narrowly formulated question would be BLACK, that Jesus did *not* really heal Simon's mother-in-law of a fever.

However, my voting recommendations will both embrace and fall between the extremes: RED; PINK; GRAY; and BLACK. This essay anticipates these recommendations by proceeding in three steps: first, I briefly review the possible transmission history of the gospel of Mark; second, I examine the Marcan version of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law in its written Marcan context; and, third, I consider the Marcan story and its adaptation by Matthew and Luke within the literary and social setting of the ancient world.

4. See, for example, C. E. B. Cranfield, *St. Mark* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 81-86; Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According to Mark* (New York: St. Martin's, 1966), 178-80; and C. S. Mann, *Mark* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1986), 214-16.

5. See, for example, Howard Clark Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977); Theodore J. Weeden, *Mark—Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971); Werner H. Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979).

6. Burton Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 239.

THE TRANSMISSION HISTORY OF MARK

In recent years historical interrogation of the canonical gospel of Mark has been complicated by the possibility that the transmission history of Mark itself is much more complicated than once thought. Since the discovery and initial advocacy of "secret Mark" by Morton Smith,⁷ several scholars have adopted the view that canonical Mark represents a later version of the gospel from which passages in the earlier "secret Mark" have been excised.⁸ Therefore, the version of Mark in the New Testament—canonical Mark—can be dated as late as the middle of the second century.

It has even been suggested that the transmission history of Mark involves five distinct stages⁹:

Stage 1: a version without Mark 6:45-8:26 used by Luke but not Matthew, since—as has long been recognized—Luke does not contain material from Mark 6:45-8:26;

Stage 2: a version amplified with material now in Mark 6:45-8:26 which was used by Matthew;

Stage 3: a still later revision, characterized by redactional material not paralleled in Matthew and Luke, which approximated "secret Mark";

Stage 4: an abbreviated edition of "secret Mark" which became canonical Mark; and

Stage 5: an expansion with the addition of endings, such as Mark 16:9-20, now preserved in the manuscript tradition.

7. Morton Smith, *The Secret Gospel: The Discovery and Interpretation of the Secret Gospel According to Mark* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973). What has become known as "secret Mark" is a version of the gospel of Mark used in Alexandria in the second century. Apparently this version of Mark contained certain passages intended only for those who had attained a level of "knowledge" beyond that of common church folk. The existence of "secret Mark" was unknown to the modern world until its discovery by American scholar Morton Smith. In 1958, while working in the manuscript collection of the Mar Saba monastery near Jerusalem, Smith found a portion of a previously unknown letter by Clement of Alexandria which mentioned different versions of the gospel of Mark and preserved two brief passages from "secret Mark." To see these two excerpts, consult Helmut Koester and Stephen J. Patterson, "Secret Mark," *The Fourth R* (May 1991): 14-16; or Miller, *The Complete Gospels*, 402-405.

8. John Dominic Crossan, *Four Other Gospels: Shadows on the Contours of Canon* (Sonoma, CA: Polebridge, 1991), 59-83; and Helmut Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels* (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1990), 293-303.

9. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels*, 285-86.

There is nothing in these reconstructions of the transmission history of Mark, however, to suggest that the brief story of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law would not have been integral to the text of Mark at stage 1. Therefore, this written story of Simon's mother-in-law dates literarily from ca. 70 C.E.—a generation after the event it reports, and less than a decade after the death of Peter.¹⁰

THE NARRATIVE CONTEXT AND LITERARY FORM OF THE MARCAN STORY

The Marcan story of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law represents an integral part of that opening portion of Mark's gospel in which Jesus begins his public activity in the territory of Galilee, specifically in the village of Capernaum. The eight literary units which comprise this section of the gospel can be arranged as follows with the three units marked + identifying the passages related to Jesus' activity in Capernaum:

- baptism in the Jordan River by John (Mark 1:9-11)
- testing in the wilderness by Satan (vv. 12-13)
- return to Galilee and summary of preaching (vv. 14-15)
- call of Simon and Andrew, James and John, at Sea of Galilee (vv. 16-20)
- +exorcism of man with unclean spirit in Capernaum synagogue (vv. 21-28)
- +healing of Simon's mother-in-law in his Capernaum house (vv. 29-31)
- +summary of exorcisms and healings (vv. 32-34)
- withdrawal for prayer and expanded ministry through Galilee (vv. 35-39)

Redaction-critically,¹¹ the author—whatever his motives—has arranged the three passages marked + to represent the first day in the public ministry of Jesus. Set by the author in Capernaum on the sabbath, the story of *exorcism* in the synagogue (Mark 1:21-28) and the story of *healing* in the house (vv. 29-31) complement each other and give concrete expression to the subsequent summary statement about Jesus' ministry of *exorcism* and *healing* (vv. 32-34). The summary statement concludes with the characteristically Marcan motif of the "messianic secret" (v. 34b).

10. In scholarly biblical publications, the temporal abbreviations B.C. and A.D. have increasingly been replaced by B.C.E. and C.E., "before the common era" and "the common era," as a way of recognizing the commonality between Judaism and Christianity.

11. Redaction-criticism—or editorial criticism—studies the ways in which the individual gospel writer has edited the tradition, whether oral sayings and stories or written sources, in order to identify the theology peculiar to each writer.

The reference to Simon in the story of the healing of his mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31) presupposes his call beside the sea to follow Jesus (vv. 16-20) and anticipates his first rebuke by Jesus when he seemingly asks Jesus to return home to Capernaum because the crowds are seeking some benefit (vv. 35-39).

Form-critically,¹² the Marcan story of Simon's mother-in-law has been classified as a *healing story*.¹³ But in style and vocabulary, the story as written appears to be thoroughly Marcan; and in length and detail, it seems to be hardly a story at all. It has the appearance of a simple report with little literary and theological elaboration.

The brief narrative twice contains the characteristically Marcan expression "right away" (twenty-five or more times in Mark) and concludes with a reference to "looking after," or "serving" (as does the earlier story of Jesus' testing in the wilderness [Mark 1:12-13]). The brief account of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law also lacks the formal features of many other gospel miracle stories: *no* comment on the duration of the malady, *no* word spoken by Jesus, *no* emphasis on the faith of the recipient, *no* response of amazement by those present.

Also this story of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law is *not* included in those collections of miracle stories which some scholars claim were used by Mark in the composition of his gospel.¹⁴ Therefore, any tradition underlying the story *must* be represented by the "gist" of the account: *a report that Simon's mother-in-law had once been healed of a fever by Jesus*. There is evidence in Mark that the author knows certain biographical details of interest to him and his original readers but apparently of little interest to Matthew or Luke. Only Mark mentions the "naked boy" present in Gethsemane at the arrest of Jesus (14:51-52). Only Mark identifies Simon of Cyrene, who carried the cross for Jesus, as "the father of Alexander and Rufus" (15:21).

Historically, it is possible that Jesus healed the mother-in-law of Simon since there is reliable independent evidence—by Paul—that Simon had a mother-in-law because he was married (1 Cor. 9:5). Later tradition also refers to the wife of Simon, including her martyrdom, and even claims that she and Simon had children (Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, the Pseudo-Clementines). It is also possible that this healing oc-

12. Form-criticism studies the literary forms characteristic of the sayings and stories of Jesus in order to identify the ways the gospel tradition was passed down, first orally, and then in writing.

13. Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963, German original, 1921), 212; Reginald H. Fuller, *Interpreting the Miracles* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 34, 126.

14. Paul J. Achtemeier, "Toward the Isolation of Pre-Markan Miracle Catenae," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 89 (1970): 265-91; and "Origin and Function of the Pre-Markan Miracle Catenae," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972): 198-221.

curred in the house of Simon in Capernaum, although elsewhere Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother are said to be from Bethsaida (John 1:44). The divergent claims about the residence of Peter have often been reconciled by viewing Bethsaida as the hometown of the brothers and Capernaum as the place where Peter later dwelt. Franciscans excavating at Capernaum have even claimed to have uncovered the actual house of Peter. Although these claims have been treated sympathetically by some,¹⁵ they have been rejected by others.¹⁶ Furthermore, the very existence of Capernaum as a first-century village in Galilee has been called into question.¹⁷ However, that Capernaum was both a village in the first century and constituted a locale for Jesus' activity can hardly be doubted. Also in recent years excavations have been undertaken at the site of ancient Bethsaida.¹⁸

THE ADAPTATIONS AND ANALOGS OF THE MARCAN STORY

This Marcan story of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31) represents one of the *few* gospel miracle stories in which the recipient of the miracle is associated with a personal name (also Jairus' daughter, Bartimaeus, and Lazarus) and the *only* story in which the historical existence of the recipient receives support from literary evidence independent of the miracle story itself. This Marcan story, however, is adapted by Matthew and Luke and has analogs in other ancient healing stories.

Matthew appropriates the Marcan story and places it (Matt. 8:14-15) among the ten miracle stories arranged by him between his first (chaps. 5-7) and second (chap. 10) discourses. Although Matthew refers to Simon by his nickname "Peter," he does not alter the "gist" of the story: *Jesus heals his disciple's mother-in-law of a fever*. And her healed status is again publicly demonstrated by her serving. But whereas in Mark Jesus raises her up by taking her hand, in Matthew he simply touches her hand. Also whereas in Mark disciples are present in the house, inform Jesus of her illness, and are served by her, in Matthew only Jesus is present and served. Although within the broader Matthean narrative setting the healing is presented as occurring in Capernaum, there is no mention of its

15. Edward J. McMahon, "The Healing of the Lame Man [Mark 2:1-12 and John 5:1-14]," Mar. 1993, paper prepared for the Jesus Seminar, Sonoma, California.

16. James F. Strange and Hershel Shanks, "Has the House Where Jesus Stayed in Capernaum Been Found?" *Biblical Archaeological Review* 8 (1982): 26-37.

17. Frank R. Zindler, "Capernaum—A Literary Invention," Mar. 1993, paper prepared for the Jesus Seminar, Sonoma, California.

18. Rami Arav and John J. Rousseau, "Elusive Bethsaida Recovered," *The Fourth R* 4 (Jan. 1991): 1-4.

happening on the sabbath.

Luke appropriates the Marcan story of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law and places it before that story reported only by him of Simon's call by Jesus through the the miraculous catch of fish (Luke 5:1-11). Consequently, in Luke the Marcan story thereby functions as an introduction of Simon to the reader (4:38-39). But Luke retains the "gist" of the story: *Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law of a fever*, although the condition is now described as a "high fever." Furthermore, Luke omits any reference to touch and substitutes Jesus' verbal "rebuke" of the fever in language reminiscent of an exorcism. Elsewhere in Luke, Satan is explicitly identified as the source of a physical infirmity (13:10-17). As in Mark so in Luke, Simon's mother-in-law demonstrates her healed status by waiting on those said to be present. Also as in Mark so in Luke, the broader narrative setting places the healing in Capernaum on a sabbath.

As evident from the preceding analyses, there is no evidence that Matthew and Luke possessed independent tradition about the healing of Simon's mother-in-law. Therefore, the event itself is *singly* attested. There are preserved in the canonical writings, however, other miracle stories in which the physical ailment is described as a "fever," one in the gospel of John, and the other in the book of Acts. Therefore, healings of a fever are *multiply* attested in early Christian literature.

The gospel of John preserves the story of Jesus' healing an official's son of a fever (4:46-54). Herein Jesus performs the healing from a distance when the official "believed" Jesus' declaration, "... your son is alive and well." The story has apparently been adapted from the so-called Signs Gospel, which some scholars believe was a written document used by the author of John. Indeed, the gospel of John itself describes the healing in the story of the official's son as the "second sign" or "second miracle" which Jesus did when he had come from Judea into Galilee. Interestingly, the specific locale for this healing of a fever is none other than the village of Capernaum. The claim has sometimes been made that the Johannine story presupposes the same event narrated in the Q miracle story of the Centurion's servant, which also has Capernaum as its setting, although the latter makes no reference to "fever" (Matt 8:5-13/Luke 7:1-10).¹⁹

The book of Acts tells the story of how Paul, after his shipwreck on Malta, healed the father of a man named Publius of "fever and dysentery" (28:7-10). Herein Paul performs the healing through touch and prayer.

At least since the writings of David Friedrich Strauss in the last cen-

19. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966, 1970), 1:193.

ture,²⁰ Hebrew scripture—the Old Testament—has rightly been perceived to exert a creative influence on the gospel tradition of Jesus' miracles. The stories about Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, and the prophetic catalogs of eschatological healings (such as Isa. 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 42:18) provide models for depicting Jesus and his "mighty works" or "signs." But within Hebrew scripture prominence is given—for various reasons—to such dramatic healings as the cure of blindness, deafness, dumbness, and leprosy. "Fever" does *not* appear among these stories and lists of physical ailments. Therefore, early Christian miracle stories of *fever* healing, including the Marcan story of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law, do not appear to have been shaped by passages of Hebrew scripture.

However, "fever" as a malady to be cured does appear in at least one ancient miracle story of Jewish provenance that has obvious similarities to the early Christian accounts reviewed above. One of Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa's (first century C.E.) often cited miracles involves the healing of Rabbi Gamaliel's son (bBerakoth 34b). Herein Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa cures the lad of a fever. The cure is effected at a distance through prayer. The cure is publicly attested by the boy's request for a drink of water.²¹

At least since the writings of W. K. Hobart in the last century,²² similarities have been noted between the vocabulary of Greek physicians from Hippocrates (fifth century B.C.E.) to Galen (second century C.E.) and the author of Luke-Acts. Among the terms claimed to be technical jargon were the phrase "high fever" or "great fever" (in contradistinction to "small fever") in the Lucan version of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38) and the expression "fever and dysentery" in the story of Paul (Acts 28:8).

However, the attempt to use this kind of evidence in support of the authorship of Luke-Acts by the physician Luke has generally been found wanting.²³ Such language was commonplace in the ancient Greek world and well attested in general literature as well as in medical writings. Therefore, although the early Christian miracle stories of *fever* healing, including the story of Jesus' healing of Simon's mother-in-law, may not have been created out of the ancient recognition of "fever" as a physical ailment they would have been intelligible in their claim that this kind of healing had occurred.

20. *Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson and trans. George Eliot (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972; German original, 1835-36).

21. Cited by Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (London: William Collins Sons, 1973), 72-78.

22. *The Medical Language of St. Luke* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., 1882).

23. Henry J. Cadbury, "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts: II. Recent Arguments for Medical Language," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 45 (1926): 190-209.

CONCLUSION WITH VOTING RECOMMENDATIONS

That Jesus historically was a healer and exorcist has been affirmed by the Jesus Seminar in votes on various propositions at the fall 1992 and spring 1993 meetings. In his paper on sabbath healing Daryl D. Schmidt reported on some of these votes.²⁴

Based on the preceding analysis of the story of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law, I conclude that the story—or report—probably preserves the memory of a specific occasion when Jesus actually healed his disciple's mother-in-law of a fever. It is even possible that the healing occurred in Capernaum in Simon's house. It is less likely that the healing occurred on a sabbath. Therefore, I have formulated the following statements, recommended votes relative to the statements, and offered brief rationales for the recommendations.

Statement: Simon called Peter had a mother-in-law.

Recommended vote: RED

At least *two independent written sources* attest to the existence of Simon's mother-in-law: Paul's letter known as 1 Corinthians and the gospel of Mark.

Statement: Jesus healed Simon's mother-in-law of a fever.

Recommended vote: PINK

This story appears in the earliest version of Mark, stage 1, written circa 70 C.E. It is one of the *few* gospel miracle stories in which the recipient of a healing is identified by a personal name and the *only* such story in which the historical existence of the recipient is supported by independent evidence. The story has more of the character of a *report* than a story and has not been shaped by its transmission in the early church, or amplified by the gospel writer, under the influence of Jewish tradition and Hebrew scripture.

Statement: This healing occurred in Capernaum in Simon's house.

Recommended vote: GRAY

The story, or report, itself does not refer to Capernaum as the locale

24. "The Sabbath Day: To Heal or Not to Heal," Mar. 1993, paper prepared for the Jesus Seminar, Sonoma, California. For recent monographs by members of the seminar who acknowledge the importance of Jesus' activity as healer, see Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 60-67; and John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 303-53.

of the house where Jesus performed the healing. But the village of Capernaum was apparently a *center* for Jesus' activity in Galilee; and there are also archaeological claims that the remains of the very house of Simon have been found in Capernaum—although these claims have been disputed.

Statement: This healing occurred on the sabbath.

Recommended vote: BLACK

Neither does the the report of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law refer to the sabbath. The gospel writer himself has joined this account of a healing in a house to the preceding account of an exorcism in the synagogue in order to depict the first day in Jesus' ministry as a characteristic day in his ministry. At the outset as well as later in Mark, Jesus exorcises and heals specifically on the sabbath. The reference to the sabbath within the broader narrative setting is *redactional* and not historical.

* * *

[Editor's note: In the discussion that followed, Tatum elaborated his position. He stated that there is general agreement that the historical Jesus was a healer and exorcist. Yet there is disagreement among scholars about which details of which healing stories reflect the historical Jesus. Multiple attestation of an event is one way of corroborating the historical authenticity of any event. The story of the healing of Simon's mother-in-law only has a single source in Mark, which is the source for the accounts in Matthew and Luke. Since there is only one source, we are initially skeptical about the story. Yet the story has none of the contrived and formal literary elements of other healing stories in the New Testament. Nor does it follow Old Testament models as other healing stories do. The story, Tatum argues, is borderline between gray and pink. He favors pink because it seems to serve no theological purpose in Mark nor does it contain a contrived literary pattern. The simplicity of the story seems to argue in favor of authenticity.

To these remarks, Bruce Chilton added that the story ends with the mother-in-law serving a meal, which increases its likelihood of authenticity—Jesus was known to share a table of fellowship in his ministry and a Jewish woman would have been particularly attentive about serving a sabbath meal. Other participants argued against this being primarily a healing story; they saw it as a story of calling to serve or calling into fellowship. Tatum responded that the call or inclusion was important, but so was the healing element. Voting was taken on several issues relating to

the passage. The voting by participants on the main proposition was as follows:

Did Jesus cure Simon’s mother-in-law?

	Scholars	Associates
Red	3	3
Pink	20	10
Gray	1	8
Black	0	2]

Chaotic Matter: Eugene England's "The Dawning of a Brighter Day"

Brian Evenson

MORE THAN TEN YEARS AFTER THE ORIGINAL appearance of an essay might be too long to wait to respond to it, but the republication of Eugene England's "Dawning of a Brighter Day: Mormon Literature after 150 years" as the inaugural essay of *Wasatch Review International* (vol. 1 [1992], no. 1) calls for a response. England's words originally referred to a particular historical moment in Mormon literary development and to draw attention to an emerging literature. If they can now be used again ten years later to describe the current state of Mormon letters, then I believe Mormon letters have made less progress than one would have hoped.

Says England, "A truly Mormon literature would stand firm against secular man's increasing anxiety about the ability of language to get at the irreducible otherness of things outside the mind—to make sense, and beauty, of that 'chaotic matter—which is element'" (9). I doubt that a fallen, mortal language can ensure our ability to interpret the world. We are mortal and fallible, as is our language, and any sense we make of the "otherness of things" through literature must be tentative, subject to revision, ambiguous, and incomplete.

England defines literature which uses language to make sense and beauty of the external world to be "A truly Mormon literature." However, Mormon literature is not—nor should it be—homogeneous in its goals. Sense and beauty are fine and good, but there are other ways of writing and reasons for writing which are just as valid. Like Jewish literature, Mormon literature as a category should have room not only for an I. B. Singer but also a Harold Bloom, not only a pious Moses Maimonides, but also a raucous Philip Roth. Potentially, there are as many Mormon literatures as there are types of Mormons, as there are levels of belief and activity in the church. In any level of belief, there will always remain a

degree of senselessness—a handful of objects (usually the majority of objects) which remain stubborn, cannot be made sense of, and which rightly refuse to be made beautiful. To limit ourselves to the beautiful and the comprehensible is to cripple ourselves. Certainly neither the Bible nor the Book of Mormon limit themselves in the same way—at least not in our mortal understanding of them. To talk about a “true” Mormon literature standing “firm” against anything is to work from a principle not of description but of proscription. It is to translate the imagined dichotomy of “Mormon church/secular world” into literature, constructing a principle for separating the literary wheat from the tares which does not have the support of revelation to affirm it (nor for that matter the support of contemporary ways of understanding literature).

While we know there exists William James’s Truth with a capital “T” in religion—so we who are Mormons profess to believe—there is nothing of the kind *innately within* autonomous fictional worlds springing from a mortal writer’s imagination, no matter what their religion. There are in fiction only individual truths—a multiplicity of them. Literature which tries to express, unmixed and clearly, a universal and institutional truth verges on propaganda, as England himself points out. Truth exists not within literature but potentially both in front of it and behind it, in the mind of the author and in the mind of the reader. The work itself serves as a template on which codes for truth can be inscribed, but only as codes, and only in a landscape which hides them from the reader. The truth the reader draws from the work will not be identical to the truth of the author. When an author does attempt to construct the truth on the page in a way that it cannot be mistaken, literature becomes propaganda. Thought is stopped.

Literary work thus itself exists as “chaotic matter” which the reader must organize through his own internal beliefs. A truly Mormon literature of any value does not stand firm against anything or teach anything in and of itself—it rather provides the tools for the individual to teach herself. Or potentially to misteach herself.

England perhaps should not dismiss deconstruction so hastily, for it is a critical school which is widely misunderstood. Deconstruction intends to undermine false assumption and false stability, to reveal assumptions lying behind positions and to reveal that no matter how hard language tries to say a particular thing, paradox and ambiguity remain. It is not so much a destruction as a refiner’s fire (though in American criticism it has wrongly become a synonym for nihilistic destruction). As such, it means to reveal the underlying ideological structures for what they are, to open works whose meanings have become culturally fixed, to alternate formulations. It is not, as England suggests, a “flight from form,” but a revealing of the flaws in form and content—a revealing of

the fact that our language is mortal, fallible, imperfect, rather than a covering up of that fact.¹

The best Mormon literature—and the only type of Mormon literature which has a possibility of being read outside of its specific culture in the same way that great Jewish or great Catholic literature is—is precisely a deconstruction, a revelation of assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses of structures of Mormon life, flaws that remain unresolved and which if they are to be resolved must be resolved outside of the confines of the text, in the mind of the reader. Literature is a trial which can either improve faith or destroy it—a test for the reader, if you will. Truly great literature, both Mormon and gentile, must possess the profound ambiguity present in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Jonathan Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and Samuel Beckett's *The Unnamable*. Readers of Mormon literature do, as England suggests, navigate a course between "various forms of Scylla and Charybdis," but it is not a course as "straight and narrow" as he suggests: the reading of Mormon literature itself is that which tests the strength of the ship, of the spirit, to withstand the seductions of a text.² Literature does not need to steer its ship straight so much as to test the reader's ability (and desire) to steer his own ship straight.

A fine example is Flannery O'Connor. England quotes O'Connor throughout his article—her letters, not her fiction—discussing her Catholicism and its importance to her writing. O'Connor's fiction, however, makes quite clear that it means something different to O'Connor to be a Catholic writer than it does to most Mormons to be "Mormon" writers.³

1. Since this time, England's views on theory and the gospel have become much more astute. In a recent article, "Mormon Literature: Progress and Prospects," in *Mormon Americans: A Guide to Sources and Collections in the United States* (Provo: BYU Studies, forthcoming), England acknowledges the validity of poststructuralism for understanding certain types of Mormon literature and presents an image of deconstruction that is much more scholarly and aware.

2. This is also the point of a Mormon university: not to cover up or set aside works that might potentially disagree with our beliefs, but to give us a community to read these works in which we can help one another navigate through the rocks. The reason such a large number of former BYU students who pursue advanced degrees at other universities lose their faith is that we have not adequately prepared them to navigate on their own the difficult texts which they will be confronted with in graduate school. We do a great disservice when we dismiss an author or a theorist with pat or superficial responses because we are not certain he or she fits into the immediate context of our beliefs. Rather we should let upper division students know what they will be confronting and provide them with the tools and support they need to confront the challenges productively and dialogically without losing their faith.

3. There are of course exceptions, Mormon writers who have views of the relationship of religion and literature as productive as that of O'Connor. Several, but by no means all, of the authors in England's recent anthology of Mormon literature, *Bright Angels and Familiars* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), and in *Wasatch Review International, Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, and similar magazines, might be productively considered in this regard.

Religion in general and her specific religious position are often ironized in her work, and certainly are never preached. Her novel *The Violent Bear It Away*, for instance, suggests how religious belief can justify murder for a young boy. Her Catholicism is rarely apparent on a surface level. Her beliefs do not limit her works to a certain acceptable, "safe" standard or to a certain group of relevant objects, as so much of Mormon literature limits itself; rather, they provide challenges for her beliefs, create a world in which beliefs of all kinds can make an appearance and can be treated with objectivity. As O'Connor says, "I have heard it said that belief in Christian dogma is a hindrance to the writer, but I myself have found nothing further from the truth. Actually, it frees the storyteller to observe."⁴ O'Connor creates her world, but lets the world live on its own terms. It is an observed world. We need to stop worrying about conveying meaning and belief in literature—about establishing a political stance, about supporting or criticizing the LDS church and our culture—and begin observing. When we observe accurately, meaning and belief will let themselves be communicated in their own varied terms much more effectively, eccentrically, and widely than any forcing we try to do.

As Mormon literature becomes willing to convey the collision of differences, it becomes worth reading. When it no longer serves as a missionary tool for a lifestyle or for a religion (in however abstracted a sense) but participates in the dialogical interaction of individuals with the world around them, then it takes on more than a limited value. An aesthetics of Mormon literature cannot be an unmixed expression of orthodox Mormon values and still remain a viable aesthetic. At most it might be the transformation of Mormon values into artistic organizing principles which dictate the initial conditions of the artistic world but do not impede the development of that world along organic lines. An artistic creation must provide the reader room to define and/or redefine her own values, through collision with different and similar value systems. We see suggestions of this tolerance in *Wasatch Review International*, and more than suggestions in work by Mormons publishing for national markets. But there is doubtless still a long way to go if we are to coalesce a Mormon literature having value on more than just a local level.

4. Flannery O'Connor, "The Fiction Writer and His Country," in *The Living Novel: A Symposium*, ed. Granville Hicks (New York: Macmillan, 1957).

A Look at Ephesians 2:8-9

Allen W. Leigh

EPHESIANS 2:8-9 (KJV) SPEAKS OF SALVATION coming through the grace of God: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it* is the gift of God:/ Not of works, lest any man should boast." The interpretation of these verses is controversial. Non-LDS Christians interpret them to mean that salvation comes as a free gift from God because of our faith in him. Latter-day Saints have difficulty with them because they seem to conflict with the church's strong emphasis on the necessity of good works.

I propose an interpretation based on the Greek meaning of the word "gift." Through this interpretation I have come to appreciate those verses as a beautiful expression of the Atonement, and I believe the verses are consistent with LDS doctrine.

In verse 8, Paul states that we are saved by grace: "*For by grace are ye saved.*" The scriptures teach that salvation comes by the grace of God (Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24; 5:15-17; Eph. 1:6-7; 2:5-9; Titus 2:11; 3:4-7; Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. 1:9-10; 2 Ne. 2:6-8; 10:24-25; 25:23; Moro. 10:32-33; D&C 20:30-31; 76:94; 84:99; 138:14). Even though we must keep the commandments of God and repent of our sins, removal of sin comes through the suffering of Jesus Christ, and that suffering resulted from his grace or love. Repentance and acts of service are necessary before Christ allows his atonement to cleanse us, but works have nothing to do with the actual removal of sin.

Paul continues that verse by stating that "*it*" is the gift of God without clarifying what "*it*" is. The common interpretation of that phrase is that after we have faith in God, he gives salvation to us as a gift—"it" is salvation. The Greek meaning of the word "gift," however, indicates that Paul is not speaking of the gift of salvation but is referring to a different gift. The word "gift" in verse 8 comes from the Greek word *doron* and refers to a present in the form of a *sacrifice* or *offering*.¹ Paul was, I believe,

1. James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1890), 385.

saying that salvation is the sacrifice of God for our sins. That is, "it" is the atonement of Jesus Christ, and Jesus performed the Atonement by giving himself as a gift in the final and ultimate sacrifice.

In verse 9, Paul states that the gift referred to in verse 8 did not come by way of the works of man: *Not of works, lest any man should boast*. Obedience and repentance have nothing to do with the atonement of Jesus Christ. Jesus performed that unselfish mission completely by himself.

For me, Ephesians 2:8-9 are clear if we refer to the Greek meaning and substitute the word *sacrifice* for the word *gift*: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the *sacrifice* of God:/ Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Bathing a Child

Marilyn Bushman-Carlton

Elbow-deep in shallow water
with porcelain pressed against my breast
I dragged the sudsy washcloth
over your squirming body
your soft flesh
lost in the groan of my folded knees
hard upon the bathroom floor.

Always you emerged
powder-fresh and dry
and finally learned to do the task alone.

Now soaking
in effervescent solitude
as soap glides over my seasoned skin
scrubbing my memory
I feel the supple pink you were
like December recollection of roses.



Nei Wei

Daniel A. Austin

KEITH LARSON SPENT THE FIRST YEAR of his mission in the southern Taiwan port city of Kaoshiung. After a four-month stint in Tainan, central Taiwan, he was glad to be transferred south again to the Nei Wei district, located in a Kaoshiung suburb. The only drawback was that he was now the district leader, which to Elder Larson mostly meant having to fill out an extra report each week.

Nei Wei was far enough from the city to have rice paddies and vegetable gardens along the roads. Larson liked to contemplate the cycles of rice crops in the fields. Sturdy farm wives in bamboo hats would hand-plant each delicate seedling in the flooded paddies. Within a month, the paddy was a field of lush green. When the heavy grains of rice made the stalks bend over, it was time for harvest: the rice was threshed out by machine, chaff fed to animals, and the dry stalks burned in the fields. Then the cycle would begin again. Larson marked the seasons of his mission in Taiwan by the rice crops. With three crops a year, he had seen four harvests and his Chinese language was reasonably fluent. The strict manners taught to Larson at home served him well in Taiwan. He observed the respectful demeanor which Chinese culture demands of younger persons towards elders and, unlike many American missionaries, avoided embarrassing people by demanding they be straightforward and frank like people in western society. Larson saw much to admire in the subtle, face-saving conventions of oriental society. Tall and blond, Larson towered over most Taiwanese, but his sensitivity to their ways put people at ease.

After a month as district leader in Nei Wei, Larson got a new junior companion, Elder Dennis Mason, a convert of four years from Chicago. Mason had been in Taiwan only two months and was still humble and pliant like a new stalk of rice. Larson, who had grown up in Salt Lake City from pioneer Mormon stock, found Mason to be an interesting change from the western, born-in-the-church, always-planned-to-go-on-a-mission elders that made up the majority of the mission. Mason identified himself as a democrat and had no doctrinal aversion to cola. He had seen the Broadway version of "Jesus Christ, Superstar" and while tract-

ing one morning described it in edifying detail to Larson. Since joining the church early in high school, Mason had been obedient to the Word of Wisdom, no alcohol, coffee, tobacco, or drugs. He told Larson that, being raised a Methodist, his mother had taught her children to be close to God, and he never felt comfortable with the idea of smoking and getting drunk.

One stifling summer morning, around ten minutes to nine, Elder Larson and Elder Mason swung their bicycles out of the tiny walled courtyard of their apartment and headed south on Nei Wei Road towards the tracting area for that day, a lower-class working neighborhood near the market square, which previous elders had dubbed the "Nei Wei triangle." The nickname referred to its geographic configuration (situated between the town market and two roads) and to its reputation as a grimy, lower-class neighborhood of tiny sweatshop factories. The zone leaders laughingly referred to the people who lived there as "traditional," meaning that they were mostly less educated and staunchly Buddhist—not a likely place to find people interested in hearing about the restored gospel.

By the time they reached the Nei Wei triangle, the sun had burnt the mist off the bamboo-covered hillsides and the air was hot and humid. They parked their bikes next to a neighborhood drugstore. Mason took a fresh copy of the Book of Mormon from his briefcase, a few pamphlets, and the "C" discussion flipchart. He strapped the briefcase back on the rack behind the seat, and the elders headed down the street to begin tracting.

Most homes in the Nei Wei triangle were tiled, two-story row houses with the front floor open to the street. Many were covered inside and out with soot and grease from the open work shops and tiny home factories that dotted the narrow lanes. The neighborhood was alive with the sounds of machinery and children, and the Mormon elders frequently paused for some playful sparring with masses of curious kids shouting "*me-go-ga*" or "*ado-ga*," slang terms for "American" and "big nose."

"How old are you?" Larson would ask in Chinese, pointing to a little boy. "Excuse me, but are you thirty?" The children would break out in peals of laughter. "Say, are you married?" he would ask a little girl, younger than the first. Still more laughter.

"Where are you from?" one child asked.

"I'm from the moon," Larson responded, pointing to the sky. The children laughed all the more, and then peppered Larson with questions, hoping for more silly answers. Mason was glad when he could understand what was said, and noted Larson's gentle mannerisms and easy command of the language.

As Larson expected, most people waved the missionaries off with apologies of "very busy" or "come back later." Some invited them to

come in and sit, only to turn back to work right away, while others would point to the ancestral spirit tablet on the wall and with apologetic smiles and innumerable bows repeat "thank you, thank you, we are Buddhist." Despite the lack of interest, Larson kept at it. Mason was thinking more about a plate of cool watermelon and papaya for lunch than he was about tracting. On other days when they would actually get into a door and talk with people, the words all seemed to blur into one long incomprehensible speech. Sometimes Larson would turn to Mason for his part of the discussion, but then Larson would always have to repeat the basic points because people could not understand what Mason said. After two hours and dozens of doors with no one interested, Larson decided to it was time to finish the row of houses they were on and then go elsewhere, or even take an early lunch.

Larson knocked on the last door, wondering where to find more productive tracting. In the middle of his thoughts, the door opened slowly and there stood a smiling, gray, old woman. She was about five feet tall, bent with age, and half bald with crinkled white hair drawn back tightly in a bun. The skin on her face was like finely wrinkled brown paper. She was almost toothless and what teeth she did have glistened with gold fillings. Despite her age, there was a vibrancy to her countenance. Larson bowed his head respectfully and said in Mandarin, "Grandmother, good morning. Have you eaten yet?" (A traditional greeting.) There was no response except a wide grin and shining eyes, so Larson summoned his best Taiwanese: "*Ahbwo*," he said, using the local word for granny. "Is the boss home?" Again, her only reply was to smile.

"She probably can't hear," Mason said.

Larson paused. "I think you're right," he said. "Let's go." They waived to the old woman and the elders turned to leave.

As Larson and Mason started to walk away, the old woman suddenly reached out and grasped each missionary firmly by the arm. The elders were surprised at the strength of her gnarled hands, which were cool to the touch. They raised their eyes to meet her gaze. She smiled her broad, nearly toothless smile, and gently pulled their arms, motioning the missionaries into her house.

The darkness of her home contrasted with the brightness of the outdoors. The room was poor, with a few decrepit pieces of worn wicker furniture, an ancient wooden table in the squat Chinese style, and a rusty metal bookshelf, covered with jars, papers, and assorted biblets collected over many years and apparently forgotten. Taped to the wall was an assortment of scenes of the Chinese countryside, cut from calendars, now in muted colors faded with age. Above the doorway to the kitchen peered a dusty portrait of Chiang Kai-shek.

The *ahbwo* walked at half-speed, in a careful and deliberate manner,

as if she was in a slow-motion movie and wanted to consider every movement. The elders couldn't help but stride past her into the room. Larson stood politely by the rickety basket-weave couch until she motioned them to sit, with Mason taking his cue from his senior companion. The *ahbwo* turned, shuffled to the bookshelf, and carefully picked up a thick black book. She returned to where the missionaries were sitting and, grinning triumphantly, handed the book to Elder Larson. He slowly made out the Chinese characters.

"It's the Bible," he said to Elder Mason.

With a radiant smile, the *ahbwo* slowly pointed to her heart. Larson realized that this old woman was a Christian, probably the only one in the neighborhood. She put her finger on the Bible and again pointed to her heart. Larson nodded with a friendly smile.

"Very good," he said in Chinese, then remembered she could not hear.

The *ahbwo* took back the Bible and placed it on the shelf. Larson decided they should stay for a moment to commune with a fellow-believer, even if spoken communication was impossible. But instead of turning back to the missionaries, the old woman headed slowly out the kitchen door in her ponderous, meticulous gait. Now they were trapped, Larson told his junior companion. They could not leave because she had invited them in her home, and to depart without proper ceremony would be highly offensive in Taiwanese society. So the missionaries waited, with little else to do but stare at the walls and wonder when the *ahbwo* would return.

Some fifteen minutes passed before the old woman slowly ambled back into the room. As she entered, Elder Larson started to rise, hoping to leave. Mason did likewise, but then the elders saw that in each hand the woman carried a beverage can, which were already opened. The *ahbwo* smiled happily and extended the drinks to the elders. Larson and Mason politely accepted the offerings, unsure of what to do next. The cans were ice-cold and dripping with condensation, and felt refreshing against the stifling heat of the late morning. Larson held up his can for closer inspection. On it was a bright red label with writing in some foreign script, Malay perhaps, but nothing which gave any indication as to what was inside. The old woman stared at them expectantly, then made drinking motions with her hands. The missionaries glanced at each other, then raised their drinks and took a swallow.

The beverage tasted slightly sour, like moldy bread but without the musty essence. There was a sharpness in the mouth when it went down which reminded Larson of vinegar. At first Mason thought it tasted vaguely familiar, then the realization hit him and he turned towards Larson.

"This is beer."

The humble *ahbwo* still wore her grin, but was gazing at the missionaries with an anxious look, as if something might be wrong. Larson looked at her. Drink, drink, she motioned again, nodding her head. Elder Larson paused, uncertain of what to do, while Mason watched his companion for guidance. The woman must have gone out the back door to a cold drink stand, Larson thought. The government import duty on alcohol is very steep; she must have spent two week's worth of food money on these drinks, if not more. Usually, when the missionaries were offered tea or cigarettes, they explained in Chinese about the Word of Wisdom, and younger people especially would understand. But communication with the old *ahbwo* was impossible. Finally Larson spoke.

"Mason, we've got to drink this," he said firmly, and raising the can to his lips, swallowed half the contents. Mason did likewise.

"Very good, thank you so much," Larson said to the woman, and put the can on the table.

"Thank you, thank you, very good," echoed Mason, also putting his can down.

The *ahbwo* smiled a radiant smile and nodded and bowed, motioning them to finish their drinks.

"Oh, thank you, thank you," Larson repeated and politely returned the smile. He clasped his hands together in front of him and bowed his head in the reverential Oriental manner of acknowledging a great kindness.

Mason stood up too. Holding the Book of Mormon with both hands in the traditional manner, he offered it to the *ahbwo* as a gift. She smiled her toothy grin, and accepted the book from Mason with both hands in return, a sign of respect for the giver and the gift.

"Grandmother, we must leave now," Larson said, "thank you, thank you." She smiled happily and nodded her head again and again as the missionaries left the home. Larson and Mason turned back and waived.

"Goodbye, goodbye," they said with a final bow, and walked back to their bikes. For a while, neither missionary spoke a word. The street was quiet. The children seemed to have disappeared for lunchtime, which was just as well; Mason felt a little nauseous.

"Mason, do you have your Bible in that briefcase?" said Elder Larson when they reached the bicycles.

Elder Mason opened his briefcase and handed a miniaturized "missionary" edition of the King James Bible to Elder Larson. Larson thumbed the pages until he found a certain scripture. He handed the open book back to Mason, pointing to a passage with his finger.

"Matthew twelve," began Mason. "At that time, Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungred, and be-

gan to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

"But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

"But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;

"How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?

"Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?"

"You can stop there," Larson broke in. "I think that applies to our situation. Do you know how much she must have spent on that imported beer?"

Mason shook his head.

"Forty or fifty kwai (Taiwan dollars)," Larson said. "She probably spent her month's food on us." Mason was silent for a moment.

"But why would she do that?" he asked, putting the Bible and flip-chart back and closing up his briefcase.

"I figure she's the only Christian in this neighborhood," Larson said. "And that she probably learned about Christianity from some other religious missionaries a long time ago, when she could still hear. Maybe even on the mainland before the revolution in 1949. Here come two young men from a foreign land, obviously missionaries of the gospel, and we remind her of the ones she knew before. I doubt she gets many visitors these days anyway. What greater gift can she bestow but to refresh the tired gospel messengers with the most expensive, most desirable thing she thinks we want: the best foreign beer that money can buy. Remember the scripture about 'when saw we thee an hungred and athirst?' After all, most other church missionaries probably do drink beer. I really can't think of any better way for her to honor the gospel and express her gratitude to the Lord for the service of the missionaries who introduced her to the gospel."

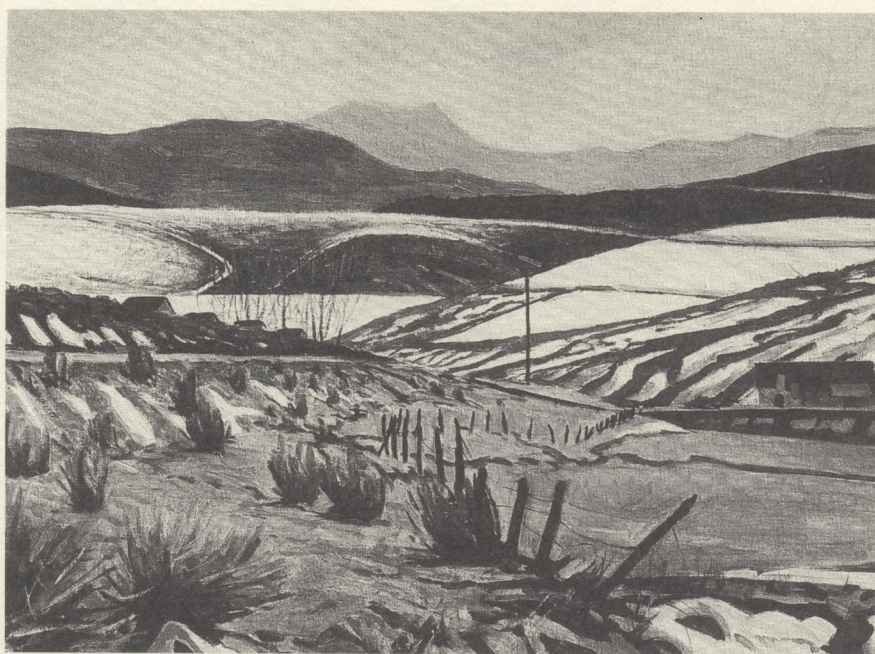
"But did we have to drink it?" Mason asked, as he kicked up the stand on his bike. "I mean, shouldn't we have been obedient to the Word of Wisdom?"

"I guess that's a matter of personal judgment," Larson responded, swinging himself onto his bike. He straddled the bicycle and looked at Mason. "You will have to decide for yourself. The *ahbwo* is old, so she is entitled to a great deal of respect from us. We couldn't explain to her about the Word of Wisdom, so there was no way she could have understood if we refused the beer. She would have felt terribly shamed. Remember that in this society, to reject a present means that you reject the person who gives it. That causes the person to lose face—and face is the

most important thing a person has in this country, especially when they have so little else. Figure that she gave the widow's mite as best she knew how, to messengers of the gospel. I just couldn't turn her down."

As he listened, a scripture occurred to Elder Mason, about how "the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life." Then another: "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

"I'll have to think about it," Mason said. He got on his bike and the elders pedalled away.



Dust to Dust: A Mormon Folktale

Phyllis Barber

THE MORNING PROMISED NO BRIGHT SUN. No blue sky. Only dust from the desert's chalky red soil. "Lord in heaven," Rosalinda said to herself. She stared out the window, worried about her garden. She couldn't see what little was left of it, its struggling vines obscured by the blowing dust.

"How can I feed my children if this keeps up?" She folded her arms, slumped her shoulders, and for a brief second filled an imaginary cornucopia with squash, tomatoes, onions, and grapes from the fertile earth of her mind. Then the picture disintegrated into a dusty blur.

Everything around her was filling with dust—the cracks and seams of her adobe house, the braided rug, the plates on the cupboard. Touching her face, she felt sand in the crevice of her nose. If this kept up, dust would soon fill her mouth, her eyes, her ears, and Rosalinda and her children would be buried just like Kenneth.

She closed her eyes and pressed her fingers to her lips. *Dust to dust, the Bible says. God made Adam out of dust. He breathed life into his nostrils.*

Impulsively, she rushed to the only door of her house and cracked it slightly. "Kenneth, is that you blowing around out there?" she whispered. The storm was too fierce for her to wait for an answer, so she quickly pushed the door closed, unlaced, stepped out of her heavy shoes, and tiptoed back to the window where she felt the rush of air through the chinks. It lifted the hair on her arms.

Suddenly, she sensed movement. The storm's chaos was cloaking something out there. She bit the tip of her finger. "No harm, please Lord."

Rosalinda hurried to the bedroom to see if Chad and Peter were safe. Her boys were still tucked in their small bed and protected by sleep. She tiptoed back to Jessica curled around a crocheted pillow on the settee, one leg dangling over the cushion's edge. Tracing the upper curve of her daughter's lip, velvet as the roses she'd have grown if the hard clay outside could have nourished them. Rosalinda wished once again she hadn't

left England. Why had she rushed to the State of Deseret for the Second Coming? Then she hurried back to the window, just in time to witness a sudden break in the storm. "White horses!" she said too loudly, then covered her mouth with her hand. She mustn't wake the children. She strained to see through the mottled glass. Behind white horses bowing their heads against the wind, there was a golden carriage. But then dust blocked her line of sight again.

"There's no such thing as a coach and four in this part of the world," she muttered, nevertheless leaning against the sill and waiting for another lull in the storm.

So much dust filled the air that it truly *did* seem as if the decomposed dead were blowing about, waiting for God to breathe life back into their nostrils. *Dust to dust, the Bible said.* Maybe, Rosalinda thought, some of it might be her Kenneth, her dear, God-loving husband who'd spurred his horse into a thunderstorm when he should have been singing songs and eating popped corn with her and the children at the fireplace. But Kenneth, the good shepherd, rode after two lambs. When the lightning hit, it pierced his shoulder, his saddle, his horse Midnight, and exploded a nearby juniper into flames. When Rosalinda saw the fire through the drizzling rain, she somehow knew that Kenneth and Midnight's spirits had already flown to heaven. She found their empty bodies next to the saddle. It was burned clean through with the shape of a jagged star.

The storm outside was thickening to an angry yellow. "What's out there?" She hugged her shoulders tightly and leaned one way, then another, hoping for something besides dust. "What misfortune now, God? Isn't my trial sufficient for you?"

Immediately, she cupped her hand over her mouth, trying to catch her words before they ascended to heaven to offend God, but before she could retract anything she felt the power already in the room. It burned through her like the shape of a burning star in her heart, like God's finger parting clouds so abruptly. She shivered, pulled her shawl from the back of her rocking chair and wrapped it around her goose flesh-covered arms.

"But Kenneth was a good man, God," she said, as if to apologize. "He loved to quote scripture, especially 'A merry heart doeth good like unto medicine.' Heaven isn't a lonely place, God. You're there. If you are love, like the scriptures say, then you don't need Kenneth, do you? In fact, you could breathe life back into his nostrils if you wanted."

The dust darkened to a deep orange and blew more wildly than she'd ever seen. But what if this storm *was* Kenneth tiring of the Celestial Kingdom and impatient for her love? Maybe he was being sieved through the window in particles, a little bit at a time. Back to say, "Hello, Rosalinda. I miss you. I love you." Back to take her in his arms and whirl

her in a fancy waltz as he used to do after a hard day of work.

"Daddy," Jessica said from the depths of her sleep.

"Oh, don't wake yet, child."

Jessica stretched her arms as if she were ready to wake, then tucked them back into her chest. Rosalinda sighed relief. She wanted to know what was outside before she answered anyone's questions. She wanted one clean look at the road.

And suddenly, there it was—a large gap of blue sky. In it she saw a coachman with gold braid on his sleeves, two golden post lamps, gold-leaf carving on the high sides of the carriage, and gold ornaments on the horses' reins. As the returning dust obliterated her brief glimpse of the impossible, she thought of something she hadn't remembered in a long time. She rushed to her desk, pushed its roll top back, and pulled out her sewing basket. Lifting the lid, she pressed her fingers against the place in the lining where her own gold was hidden. When she touched the fabric, its coldness and unearthly smoothness made her tremble. It was a piece of the same satin that lined Kenneth's coffin. Rosalinda had coaxed a yard of it from the undertaker's assistant.

The night before Kenneth was buried, she stroked this same cloth, trying to feel something for that strange man in that box who was so unlike the man she'd known, so immaculately still and immovable. Rubbing the fabric between her fingers, she'd kissed his forehead and closed the lid.

After the funeral, when her friends left for home, she used the satin to line her sewing basket. She'd sewn a gold coin inside, the one her father pressed into her hand when she set sail for America. This piece of precious metal meant she had something between herself and nothing.

She pushed the basket back to the dark corner of the desk and hurried back to the window where she gathered folds of muslin curtains between her fingers. The door of the carriage seemed to be opening, unsteady against the force of the wind. She thought she could see the shape of one long black boot hesitating at the foot rest, another touching the ground, a tall man standing in the road.

At first, he seemed in no hurry. Then he walked directly toward her door. Rosalinda held her breath and waited for his knock, though she wasn't sure she wanted to hear one. Was this a ghost? A messenger from God? What else could it be? Then she heard knuckles against wood. Five raps. Slowly, as if the air were lead and resistant to her curiosity, she opened the door a half inch and peeked at the man on the other side.

He was tall with a sensitive, elongated nose. His face seemed made of ageless skin supported by the finest bones. Rosalinda could only stare through the narrow crack, her lips slightly parted. He wore white breeches, a blue velvet long coat, satin ruffles under his chin, a barrister's

wig—all coated with a thin red powder from the storm. He held a white lily, his right hand protecting its petals. "I come as your servant," the man said, bowing slightly.

Rosalinda shuddered, remembering the last time she'd seen a lily—at Kenneth's funeral. She scrutinized the man's slightly gray fingers wrapped around the lily's stem, and his face, which seemed neither young nor old.

"Don't be afraid!" The man put out his hand to stay the door. "Savor the things of God, not of men, Rosalinda. It's time for you to trust." Rosalinda blanched at the sound of her name.

The man withdrew a lace handkerchief from his sleeve and covered his nose. Although his eyes watered from the irritating dust, he maintained an elegant posture and continued to protect the lily against his concave chest.

"People have told me," he said confidentially to the thin slice of Rosalinda's face, "a camel can go through the eye of a needle more easily than a rich man can enter God's kingdom. Few understand poverty as the condition of being without faith. Do you believe only the poor know poverty?"

The storm blew crazily at his back, anxious to invade the house. "May I come in?" His words were muffled by the handkerchief.

"Well," she slid her fingers down the side of the door, "I don't think it's a good idea." She felt the bite of the sand on her cheeks and eyelids. "But then," she opened the door, "it would be unkind to leave you in this storm."

As he crossed the threshold, she became acutely aware of his majesty—the way he carried his chest and head as if they were full of air. She wished one of her children were clinging to her leg so she'd have something to hold. When Rosalinda shut out the storm, his presence seemed to grow larger and wider and fill the entire room—up to the ceiling and out to the walls.

"Would you like a drink of water?" she whispered as they stood awkwardly by the door. Without thinking, she fingered the collar of her dress where she'd embroidered her name, *R-o-s-a-l-i-n-d-a*, in white thread. The night after Kenneth died, she sewed the letters to remember who she was, to keep herself from losing herself. No England. No husband. "I'm whispering because my children are sleeping."

"Water would please me greatly," he whispered back.

"I'd offer you a soft place to sit, but my daughter Jessica's occupying the settee. Have my rocking chair."

"That won't be necessary, but water would soothe my parched throat. And please, take this." He handed her the sand-pitted flower.

"A lily," Rosalinda said. Her cheeks blossomed the rare red of an

apricot. "This is for a funeral. Is someone else going to die?"

"What about the lilies of the field, Rosalinda?"

"Fine words for you to say." She felt a hard place growing in her throat past which she couldn't swallow. He'd spoken her name which he couldn't have known. "Excuse me," she said, pressing her lips tightly against each other to hide her emotion. She rummaged in the cupboard for her only vase and a tin cup.

Tipping the water bucket, she sank a long-handled dipper into the last few inches of water. She filled the vase and the cup, careful not to spill. She slid the lily into the fluted neck, turned the flower to an angle that would suit her English gardener's eye, and set it on the wood table. Then she handed the cup to the stranger. "How do you know my name?" she asked timidly.

"I know many things." He drank to the bottom of the cup, handed it back to Rosalinda, and looked down at her with mournful eyes. Under his gaze, she became aware of her simple black and white checked dress, something she'd made herself, and her hurriedly plaited hair. She set the cup down, then leaned against the table's edge and folded her arms resolutely.

"How do you know my name?" A wisp of hair fell over her eyebrow. She pushed it away. "Did someone in town tell you?"

"No one told me anything."

"What are you doing in a remote place like this?"

"I've come to see you."

Rosalinda shifted her weight from one hip to the other. He smiled. "One shouldn't take oneself too seriously, even if you're all alone at the edge of the world. You're angry at God, aren't you?"

Rosalinda turned her head to the side. "What makes you think so?"

"As I said, I know many things."

"So what do you know if you know so much?"

"At this moment, I know there is music on the wind. Can you hear it? God is all around us." Rosalinda squinted her eyes and tried to hear something besides the storm.

"When all else fails, I listen for music," he said. "It's God's gentle breath, you know. Today, it's a Viennese waltz." His eyes changed from mournful to shining, as if a thousand candles reflected their light in them.

"A Viennese waltz?" She and Kenneth used to pretend they lived in a castle on windy nights when even the stars seemed as though they'd blow away. She smiled faintly, thinking of how she once fantasized Kenneth's mud-caked boots were shiny black, that Kenneth was a captain in the Queen's cavalry. Her visions of brass buttons and shining black boots were interrupted, however, by the persistent thought of her gold coin hidden in the sewing box. It burned oddly, like fire in her mind.

"Who are you?" Rosalinda asked, almost harsh in her insistence.

"Why do you insist on knowing who I am?"

"But where are you from?" Her tone was suddenly demanding.

"That, too, is not important." He smiled again, such a disarming smile that Rosalinda blushed. She'd only seen the likes of this man in the water-colored pictures in her mother's handed-down story book. Her mother wrapped it carefully and tucked it in Rosalinda's valise just before her daughter climbed the gangplank of the steamer in Bristol.

After the long days at sea and harsh days of bouncing on a buckboard wagon across the endless plains of America, Rosalinda would find a place to herself—a porthole or a stream or a tree. She'd unwrap the book carefully and open its pages as if they were made of silken spider threads. In the fading light of day, she turned to each delicate painting and listened for her mother's voice: "This is for your dreams, Rosey Linda."

But the storybook character standing in her house was flesh and blood. His manners were alien, especially the way he swept his fingers through the air as if they were a fan in the act of closing. He was different from her humble Kenneth, who was so close to the earth. He seemed a bit pinched in his chest and cheeks, an odd bird who, if he flew, would fly at a graceful tilt. And yet there was something about him that did remind her of her dreams.

"Surely you can hear the waltz?" he said as he put his kerchief in his vest pocket. "May I?" Before she could protest, the gentleman's arm clasped her waist, his other arm reached for her hand, and he led her into dance. One-two-three, glide-two-three. Her cotton dress billowed as they whirled around the room to windblown strains of a waltz she couldn't hear.

Her better sense warned her to gather her wits. She was dancing in the morning when there were practical things to be done; she was only Rosalinda with an adobe house and a withering garden; she was in a stranger's arms. Suddenly, she was unable to lift her eyes any higher than the gathers of satin at his throat. She wished he would let her go, but his grip was firm.

One-two-three, he spun Rosalinda until she felt she would never stop spinning. She felt his closeness and smelled the traces of powder near his throat. For one small second, she relaxed and let herself spin with the assurance of his hand against her back. For a brief moment she felt her feet turn to wings and fly over the plank floor. One-two-three. She ventured a glimpse of his strong, straight nose, then the entirety of his face. She found his eyes looking back at her, staring long and hard into her soul. She felt them tunneling through her, back to the beginning of herself, back to the pre-existent Rosalinda. But then, he stopped.

"Trust not in the arm of flesh," he said, taking both her hands and pressing them to his lips. "You must have faith that God will guide and protect you."

Embarrassed by the sudden beginning and end of the dance, Rosalinda tried to find a place for her hands. One brushed her throat, then slid between her breasts to clasp the other hand. Shaking her head in confusion, she sat in the rocking chair and listened to the wind. Only the wind was real, her shriveling garden, her children who would wake any minute. She touched the dust on her cheeks again, fine as talcum. "Why are you here?"

"You must embark on a journey of faith with me," the stranger said, dropping his head forward in what seemed like humility, Rosalinda wasn't sure. "I've come upon hard times, I could say." Then he looked up. His gaze was direct.

She swallowed, the image of the gold coin penetrating her thoughts again.

"Do this unto the least of these, your servants," she heard him say. She struggled to hide her astonishment and to keep back the words ready to rush off her tongue: *You're in no way the least of anything! You're a man with a fine carriage and satin breeches.*

"Anything you have will help me." His eyes had no lack of dignity. "I come as a supplicant. I have nothing but my faith, which I've brought to you."

"But what about the horses and the . . ."

"I own nothing," he said so firmly Rosalinda suddenly believed him. His eyes changed weather, now like a deep lake with the wind whipping its surface.

"I have nothing to give," she said, seeing the gold coin even more clearly in her mind. Its image throbbed as if it were part of her heartbeat.

"Nothing?" the man said, a slight look of curiosity in his eyes, as if he could read her mind and see the coin living inside her.

"Nothing I can spare," she said as she surveyed the room to see if her children were waking. If a child would only say, "I'm hungry, Mama," she could be strong and push the gold coin deep inside her thoughts instead of so close to the surface where the man could see.

"Humans possess nothing," he said. "Everything is a gift. Where is your faith in this bounty?"

"But what about my children?"

"Whosoever shall lose his life for me, the same shall save it." His eyes shifted character again. He looked to her like Moses staring into the burning bush.

"But I'm alone."

"What shall you give to find your soul again?" He seemed taller than

before, as if he spoke to her from a raised platform.

The gold coin seared the inside of her head. She put the flat of her hand to her forehead to see if she had a fever, but felt only the insistence of something wanting out. She knew she couldn't hide the coin from the man any longer.

As she walked across the braided rug, she thought of her safety. The food for hard times. But this was what the coin was for. This moment. She knew.

She lifted the lid on the desk and slowly pulled the sewing box into the dingy morning light. She felt for the hard coin in its secret place underneath the lining and carefully pulled a thread until it snapped, unravelled, and the gold was in her hand. "Here," she said.

"You will be blessed," he said, the pinched quality leaving his cheeks, his breathing more relaxed. He slipped the coin into his handkerchief. "All of us want from time to time, and because you have given from your want, God's face will shine on you." Smiling broadly, the man bowed to Rosalinda, bending one knee deeply, his hat brushing the floor. "A queen among women," he said and turned to open the door to the dust that swirled around his head, his ankles, his velvet coat.

As she watched, Rosalinda could barely see the man climb into the carriage, the coachman whip the horses, the post lamps shine in the dense storm. The sand stung her face and whipped her hair.

As she closed the door, she stepped into her work boots, laced them securely, and leaned against the wall. She rearranged her turbulent head of hair and pinned it away from her eyes. Her hand fell from her hair to her neck and rested on the collar of her black and white checked dress.

Very slowly, she became aware of the raised stitching on her collar, the embroidered letters. The white thread on the black and white checked collar. Of course. That's how the man knew her name. He was no ghost or heavenly messenger.

Rosalinda, she cried inwardly. She slapped both hands on her cheeks to waken herself from this bad dream. With one of her heavy boots, she stamped the floor twice.

"What a fool!" Tears careened through the dust on her cheeks. "So easily taken by skewed chapter and verse and a silver tongue." The dust in the room rose as Rosalinda's angry foot struck the floor, slowly settled back on her shoulders, her hair, her clothes. Everything was only dust. Nothing more. Nothing less. Why was she subject to her foolish hopes when she should just accept that dust was dust?

"Mama," Jessica sat up and stretched like a cat after a long sleep. "What's wrong with you?"

"Your mother's a fool." Rosalinda paced back and forth, the boards sounding with her heavy step. "When we're close to starving, I give ev-

everything to the rich who get richer while the poor get poorer."

Jessica spread her arms like wings over the back of the settee as Rosalinda blotted the tears in her eyes with the heels of her hands. "Why has he forsaken me, Jessica? Why don't I hear answers to my prayers?" She grabbed her daughter's hands too tightly, then sank to her knees and fell against the settee's cushion.

"I dreamt about Daddy," Jessica said, tucking her mother's hair over her ears and caressing her cheek. "He was walking in a field of white flowers. A bird sat on his shoulder. He was quoting scripture."

"What flowers are you talking about?"

"My dream," Jessica said.

"White flowers?" Rosalinda said, looking up sharply at Jessica's face. "What kind of flowers?"

"Just white ones."

"Like that?" Rosalinda pointed to the lily in the vase. Her voice was unsteady.

"Don't look at me that way. You're scaring me."

"Remember," Rosalinda begged. "Please try to remember." She rolled onto her hip and pushed herself to her feet. She rushed to the vase. The flower was scarred, barely a lily. "Like this, Jessica?"

Jessica shrugged her shoulders as Rosalinda returned with the flower in her hands.

But suddenly, Rosalinda didn't need an answer. She looked into the lily's face, at the scars on the surface, its long throat scattered with bits of dried stamen, the curling of the petals, the brittleness just before the crumbling into dust. But dust could be breathed back to life. Made into something new.

Rosalinda started as if someone had called her. She jumped to her feet and rushed to the window, her chin raised in hope.

"Listen to the wind," she said.

Jessica's face was a puzzle of disbelief.

"Can't you hear him? He's in the dust." Rosalinda wrapped herself in her arms and rocked her shoulders. She rolled the stem of the lily back and forth across her upper arm with the flat of her hand. There was a strange play of light in the room.

"What, Mama?" Jessica said.

Rosalinda held the lily as if it were a prayer. "'They toil not, neither do they spin. Take no thought for the morrow.'" She ran to the door, opened it, and shouted into the wind. "I hear you, Kenneth. I hear you. I'll try not to be angry or afraid, I promise you, Kenneth. I promise you, God."

As Rosalinda's last words died in the frame of the open doorway, the wind ceased. The storm that had been raging for hours stopped as

though it never happened. For the first time all day, she saw the sun and the red hills against the bold blue sky.

She ran out on the road to check for signs of the carriage. There were none. Dust covered any track ever made in front of her house—coyote, fox, horse, even carriage wheel.

As she gazed across the trackless sand, she clasped her hands and the flower tightly in front of her, so tight that the seed of faith trapped inside would never, ever escape. The dust-covered vines of the garden rattled like gourds in a final gasp of wind, making music for this moment.

Basilica

Jerry Johnston

Frank's photos —
are like his fiction —
show clean, hard lines.

Perspective and distance
form his creed.

Where others see lovers
he sees only shapes.
He once sacrificed a son
for the sake of composition.

"If a man did this right,"
says Frank,
"he wouldn't need God."

Frank's photos line the wall
like smoking candles.
They form a shrine
to the dying light.



The Divine Transmutation

The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844. By John L. Brooke (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Reviewed by Lance S. Owens, M.D., who practices emergency medicine in Salt Lake City, Utah.

JOSEPH SMITH'S PLACE IN WESTERN religious history is on the verge of creative reevaluation. Two years ago American literary critic Harold Bloom's casting of Smith as a Gnostic prophet linked by vision to the occult tradition of Jewish Kabbalah gave wide notice that Mormon history was ripe for a rereading. *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844*, by Tufts University historian John L. Brooke, offers just that, opening another startling perspective on Joseph Smith and his restoration.

Exploring historical data untouched by Bloom, Brooke argues from intricately marshaled evidence that Mormon doctrine and cosmology took origin not in Puritan New England, nor in the social stresses fostering the Second Great Awakening, but in the much less studied and understood intersection of the Radical Reformation with the hermetic occult. Hermeticism, the intimate companion of Kabbalah in the evolution of alternative Western religious aspirations from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, was the precursor of Mormon theology and a central refining force in Joseph Smith's prophetic

vision.

Joseph Smith's and his disciples' associations with magic and the occult traditions were well catalogued by D. Michael Quinn in his pioneering study, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Signature Books, 1988). In this present work, Brooke augments and amplifies material introduced by Quinn and adds an intricate contextual framework missing in the former study. By so doing, he attempts to move Mormonism's intellectual origins backwards two centuries. Departing from the strictly functionalist analysis of Mormon origins popular in recent decades, Brooke contends that to comprehend Mormon theology in historical context, we need shift attention from "milieu to memory, to the diffuse and divergent trails of cultural continuity that prepared certain peoples—and a particular young man—for the building of a religious tradition that drew deeply from the most radical doctrines of early modern Europe's religious crucible."

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there developed within that crucible a complex alloy of hermeticism and alchemical mysticism with radical aspirations for Christian reformation. *The Refiner's Fire* opens with a well constructed summary of this little understood intersection. From that basic review of history—history which the author understands may be largely unfamiliar

to readers—Brooke moves towards even less charted territory, tracing vectors of this evolving hermetic tradition into early American culture and religion: among the Quakers, Pietists, and Perfectionists coming to Pennsylvania and New Jersey between about 1650 and 1730, a movement which reached its hermetic pinnacle in the Ephrata cloister; through the “culture of print” conveyed by alchemical and hermetic texts brought from Europe; and in the development of late-eighteenth-century esoteric Masonry with its rich foundations in Kabbalistic, hermetic, and alchemical mythology.

Brooke’s summary of hermeticism’s cultural geography in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century America stands on its own as a valuable contribution. In the last three decades historians—Francis A. Yates ranking principal among them—have pioneered a broad new understanding of hermeticism’s profound importance in Renaissance and Reformation culture. There are yet relatively few studies, however, that attempt to track the interplay of this hermetic heritage in currents molding succeeding periods. This is the dauntingly difficult historical topography into which Brooke ventures. Working not as a Mormon historian but as an historian of early American religious ideas, he stalks the faint trails hermeticism traveled across two centuries of American history, following them tenaciously into the environs of the young Mormon prophet. In the sum of his evidence, Brooke documents well that Joseph Smith and other early Mormons were touched in many particulars by legacies of hermeticism.

The religion revealed by Joseph Smith clearly shared with hermeticism—or, better stated, a seventeenth-

century alchemical amalgamation of the hermetic tradition—important central themes. Brooke emphasizes both “celebrated the mutuality of spiritual and material worlds, precreated intelligences, free will, a divine Adam, a fortunate, sinless Fall, and the symbolism and religious efficacy of marriage and sexuality.” Each too affirmed a process of human transformation and divinization. One must object that this particular recension of hermeticism is somewhat pre-focused in emphasis, entirely ignoring the less world-affirmative elements of both classical and Renaissance hermeticism, while accenting themes embellished in the tradition’s later Paracelsian, Rosicrucian, and alchemical interpretations—particularly in regard to the *increated*, the concept of co-eternal matter. But with that qualification the tradition’s parallels in Mormonism are many and striking.

Of course the crux of Brooke’s study is to show how hermeticism re-emerged in Joseph Smith’s Mormonism. While allowing their possible relevance, Brooke is not inclined to attribute Smith’s religious vision entirely to revelation, reinvention, or (using the Jungian term which surfaces several times in this work) re-emergent archetypal patterns. There are too many lines of hermetic culture leading to Smith; an historical method must evaluate these as the first impetus behind his ideas. Nonetheless, Brooke frankly confronts the unavoidable “prophet puzzle”—the conundrum of Joseph Smith unifying many weak currents of an old tradition into the strong force of a vibrant, new religion—and ponders whether finally much of Smith’s doctrine “must be ascribed to a personal predisposition toward hermetic interpretations of the

'mysteries.'"

This issue stirs deep waters. The precise role historical transmissions of hermeticism played in Joseph Smith's creativity will probably elude any consensus judgment. But a creative exploration of this issue has the potential of opening important new contexts for understanding the Mormon restoration. One cannot avoid juxtaposing Harold Bloom's broadly poetic vision of Smith—a creative genius who "reinvented Kabbalah" in his attempt to restore "the true religion"—with Brooke's detailed historical enumeration of the hermetic-Kabbalistic and alchemical currents flowing out of seventeenth-century Europe, and thence into the milieu and teachings of the prophet. While opposing viewpoints may favor one of these versions of Smith's history over the other, both have a place in the telling of his story. Indeed, the paradoxical interplay of historical tradition with independent visionary creativity penetrates to the core of hermeticism and introduces yet another layer of complexity in understanding Smith's interaction with the tradition.

Brooke, writing as a professional historian, understandably skirts entanglement with the more complex psychological issues raised by any evaluation of Smith's "prophetic experience." It must, however, be suggested that Smith's attempt to reclaim the prophetic experience—granting there was some experiential core to his claims—provides another unique tie to hermeticism, albeit one perhaps beyond the proper limits of historical analysis. Touching at these limits, Brooke cautiously points to the psychological methodology developed by C. G. Jung (itself amplified by a detailed exploration of alchemy and her-

meticism) as offering further perspectives for interpreting Smith's apparent hermetic inclinations and religious development.

The Refiner's Fire explores several fascinating ramifications to an evaluation of Mormonism within the contextual scope of hermeticism. I find most intriguing Brooke's examination of the dual forces he has coined "hermetic purity" and "hermetic danger"—dialectic tendencies in the hermetic tradition that influenced early Mormonism, and are manifest in its subsequent development. Brooke's hermeticism is, again, more specifically the alchemical philosophy of the seventeenth century, and at the core of that tradition there resided a transmutational mystery. Above and below, matter and spirit were in intimate relationship. Through the force of a creative conjunction of these opposites, earth itself could be changed. By reaching to the celestial realm of Divine knowing, seeking the intelligence conveyed by God's angels, invoking Elijah's return, the tradition claimed that both matter's baseness and humankind's imperfection would undergo a transmutation. Regenerated through this divine intercourse, a new Enochian Zion might emerge from earth's refining fires and ascend as the perfected work, the great and final alchemical opus.

This dream, however, walked hand in hand with the danger of its perversion. Human greed, hermetic danger, turned towards baser aspirations: not the transformation of Man into God but the turning of lead into gold. With the secret priestly powers of transmutation guarded in hermetic mystery, hermeticism's charlatans—the puffers and conning men—claimed they too could forge from

dark earth a golden lucre. In these and many less obvious ways, the hermetic dream perpetually dealt with the danger of the great work's failure, debase-ment, and falsification.

Among the treasure seekers and conning men he met in his early years, Brooke suggests, Joseph Smith encountered both hermetic danger and purity. The mining and metallurgical cultures, and the counterfeiting culture of early America, were deeply infused by the legacy of alchemical transmutation. Brooke documents how thrusts of these specific hermetic cultures might have influenced Smith's and many other early Mormon converts' families. Brooke builds his most unusual, and perhaps weakest, argument pursuing the trail of counterfeiting in early Mormonism—an hermetic danger manifest at Kirtland, Nauvoo, and again in the 1849-50 minting of gold coin at Salt Lake City. But certainly in Masonry, as he emphasizes, Joseph Smith and Mormonism struck old and important veins of hermetic purity.

In Nauvoo dangers and purities coalesced. "In effect," notes Brooke, "the greater Mormon emergence can be visualized as meta-alchemical experience running from opposition to union, an experience shaped and driven by the personality of Joseph Smith." Did the prophet Joseph—as Enoch come anew—realize in Nauvoo the two centuries-old dream of building an hermetic Zion on the American continent? And in the temple raised at the center of this new Zion did Smith consummate the opus by revealing rituals embodying the most ancient and sacred hermetic mystery: the *mysterium coniunctionis*, a divine transformation of humankind mirrored in the eternal union of woman and man? If

so, in the realization of that aspiration history witnesses that deep hermetic dangers were inextricably present.

From a psychological perspective, Jung emphasized that within the hermetic-alchemical tradition (and perhaps by extension in Mormonism as well) neither the profane nor divine was ever entirely free from the shadow of its brother: heaven and earth, purity and danger, were linked. Hermes, the mythological messenger of the gods, paradoxically became also the reputed patron of merchants and thieves. It was the great hubris of a late alchemical tradition that proclaimed earth could finally be transmuted and raised to heaven. Yet in this hubris there resided a strong caution: despite pious, long-suffering devotion and pure intention, the great work of transmuting earth's darkness usually failed. The Philosophers' Stone—that final product of the alchemical opus—was a most elusive treasure. And if a man fell into the great danger of proclaiming the work's failure to be a success, the heavenly gold he proffered became just another counterfeit coin, debased.

John Brooke's *The Refiner's Fire* is a seminal work, a study that will be considered by every scholar who henceforth attempts to retell the story of Joseph Smith or understand his place in religious history. Brooke's arguments linking hermeticism and Mormonism will attract considerable acceptance, though perhaps chiefly outside orthodox Mormon circles. Working from a vastly divergent perspective, Brooke nonetheless joins Harold Bloom in introducing themes that seemingly link Mormon religious thought to its precursors in Western culture—whether one finally judges such "antecedents" to be "sources."

As Brooke notes in his study's conclusion, this forgotten intellectual heritage may arrive quite unwelcomed in modern Mormonism. But welcomed or not, it is loudly knocking at the door.

On broader fronts and of more general importance, Brooke's work should initiate a much needed examination—perhaps the first major consideration—of hermeticism's little understood role in the transmutation of early America's religious con-

sciousness. If that trend evolves—as I believe it will—Mormon studies need take note: Within its new perspectives Joseph Smith clearly risks being classed (as he is by Brooke) a hermetic prophet, and his religion the culmination of an ancient hermetic, even Gnostic, longing for the ultimate transmutation of man into God. From the dialogue sure to ensue around this thesis neither Mormon historiography nor the wider realm of religious studies will emerge unchanged.

Mormon Angels in America

Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes. Part 1: Millennium Approaches; Part 2: Perestroika. By Tony Kushner (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1993, 1994).

Reviewed by David Pace, theater critic for the *Event* newspaper, Salt Lake City, and regional correspondent for *Backstage*, a national performing arts weekly.

THIS YEAR, THE SESQUICENTENNIAL of Joseph Smith's martyrdom, the founder of the Mormon church found himself holding steady in an unlimited run of his 1993 Broadway debut. One hundred and fifty years after his death at the hands of an Illinois mob, the "obscure" boy-prophet from upstate New York has comfortably settled into Manhattan where, at the Walter Kerr Theater, an angel, sporting "magnificent pale grey wings" and accompanied by a blast of trumpets, crashed through the ceiling of his Greenwich Village bedroom, scattering plaster and wiring below. "Very

Steven Spielberg," says the terrified but impressed man, who, this time around, is dying of AIDS. "Greetings Prophet," says the female personage, hovering above the bed, now shattered in brilliant white light. "The Great Work begins/ The Messenger has arrived."

Thus ends what one New York critic admiringly called the biggest cliffhanger in Broadway history: the first part of Tony Kushner's two-part, seven-hour epic, *Angels in America*. Somewhat ostentatiously subtitled *A Gay Fantasia on National Themes*, *Angels* is the most talked-about show in memory and is the winner of the Pulitzer and Tony Awards for Best Play. It has been heralded as single-handedly re-inventing American political drama. Both epic and idiosyncratic, the fantastical and savagely comical *Angels* covers an incredibly broad social, political, and mystical terrain from Judy Garland to Ethel Rosenberg, from New Deal Socialism to the Supreme Court, and from the Jewish

Kaddish to a postmodern vision of the Angel Moroni. While its story focuses on the disenfranchised gay man of the 1980s and the politics of AIDS, the show's animating metaphor is undeniably Mormonism—more specifically, the story of Joseph Smith.

But the play also features three Mormon characters, two of whom, with another couple, form the parallel domestic dramas that make up *Angels*. Joe Pitt and his valium-addicted wife Harper are Utah transplants to New York where Joe, an attorney, works as the chief clerk for Justice Theodore Wilson of the Federal Court of Appeals, Second Circuit. In the same office is Louis, a word processor whose lover, Prior Walter, is dying of AIDS and is eventually visited by the Angel. Both couples are in crisis, the latter because of the ravages of disease and the former because Joe is himself a closeted homosexual, though he has never acted on his desires.

Brooding above both couples is a foreboding sense that the world is on "the threshold of revelation." "[E]verywhere," says the distraught Harper to her confused husband, "things are collapsing, lies surfacing, systems of defense giving way . . ." Worried about the depleting ozone layer she ponders that "[m]aybe Christ will come again." In her valium and grief-induced hallucinations she is spirited away by a sax-playing travel agent, Mr. Lies, to meet up with Prior in his own dream.

Harper [to Prior, who is dressed in drag]: I'm not *addicted*. I don't believe in addiction, and I *never* drink. And I *never* take drugs.

Prior: Well, smell *you*, Nancy Drew.

Harper: Except valium.

Prior: Except valium, in wee fistfuls.

Harper: It's terrible. Mormons are not supposed to be addicted to anything. I'm a Mormon.

Prior: I'm a homosexual.

Harper: Oh! In my church we don't believe in homosexuals.

Prior: In my church we don't believe in Mormons.

Harper wanders through her dreams, eventually ending up for some time in Antarctica where the climate seems to represent the deep freeze of her mind. Her husband Joe has immersed himself in the hope of a comeback for conservative America and a return to "[i]ts sacred position among nations." Ronald Reagan, for him, represents "truth restored." It is the historical lawyer, Roy Cohn, henchman of Joe McCarthy and a closeted gay who has contracted AIDS, who ends up mentoring the young, strict Mormon. Scripted as a vociferous, profaning bully reminiscent of Shakespeare's Iago but more shrill, Cohn, who is threatened with disbarment for illegal acts, tries to muscle Joe into going to the Justice Department in Washington to "[c]ast a deep shadow on my behalf."

Offended by the bald immorality of his adopted father, Joe refuses, and Cohn flies into a rage.

Roy: Boy, you are really something, what the fuck do you think this is, Sunday School?

Joe: No, but Roy this is . . .

Roy: This is . . . this is gastric juices churning, this is enzymes and acids, this is intestinal is what this is, bowel movement and blood-red meat—this stinks, this is *politics*, Joe, the game of being alive. And you think you're . . . What? Above that? Above

alive is what? Dead! In the clouds!
You're on earth, goddamit! Plant a
foot, stay a while.

The antithesis of Cohn and the idealistic but naive Joe is Louis, a Jewish liberal intellectual who, nevertheless, balks at that pro-active moment when theory hedges (or rather fails to hedge) real life. Terrified and nauseated at the advancing AIDS of his lover, Louis admits Prior to the hospital and then abandons him, leaving in a whirlwind of guilt that eventually drives him to self-punishing behaviors.

That Louis, the Marxist social theorist and Joe, the Republican Mormon lawyer become lovers near the end of part one, titled *Millennium Approaches*, represents just one confluence of the many disparate narrative lines that Kushner pens. Other surprises in this fast-paced, highly imaginative, at times dramatically jolting play soon follow, not the least of which is the appearance of Joe's stern but plucky mother, Hannah Pitt, who, after a troubling phone call from her son, sells her home in Salt Lake City and moves to New York unannounced.

"Know why I decided to like you?" says a friend to Hannah as they look out over the Salt Lake Valley. "I decided to like you 'cause you're the only unfriendly Mormon I ever met." Hannah steals a puff from her friend's cigarette. Her friend continues,

Sister Ella Chapter: This is the home of saints, the godliest place on earth, they say, and I think they're right. That means there's no evil here? No. Evil's everywhere. Sin's everywhere. But this . . . is the spring of sweet water in the desert, the desert flower. Every step a Believer takes

away from here is a step fraught with peril. I feel for you, Hannah Pitt, because you are my friend. Stay put. This is the right home of saints.

Hannah: Latter-day saints.

Sister Ella Chapter: Only kind left.

Hannah: But still. Late in the day . . . for saints and everyone.

In New York Hannah will eventually meet up with Prior, who in the second half, titled *Perestroika*, travels from the Circuit Court to Central Park and from the LDS Visitor's Center near Lincoln Center to Heaven, alternately attempting to escape his calling as "prophet" and nervously embracing it. "I wish you would be more true to your demographic profile," says Prior to Hannah who has scolded him for assuming that he knows what she thinks about homosexuals, "[l]ife is confusing enough."

Confusion, spawned by the end of a millennium, is the topic of the "world's oldest Bolshevik" who opens "Perestroika" with a lament that, since the collapse of the USSR, there is no unifying theory to guide the next century. But in the following scene the angel, still hovering above Prior's bed, turns out to be neither angel of death nor eleventh-hour savior of the dying man, not a messenger of unification, but of stasis. It seems that God, tired of humanity's relentless impulse for change, left heaven on the day of the San Francisco earthquake in 1906. The Angel has called the new prophet in hopes that he can undo the damage on earth, and convince the world to turn back, to stop moving so that God will return to Heaven and all will be well . . . or at least as before. "HOB-BLE YOURSELVES!" demands the Angel, condemning the migration of

people across the land. "There is no Zion Save Where You Are!"

In one of the lengthier scenes Prior is badgered by the Angel whose bell-like voice is punctuated by an unearthly cough and whose somersaults and spins in mid-air cause her attenuated wings to lift and fall. "Remove from their hiding place the Sacred Prophetic Implements," she says amidst a flurry of pseudo-biblical, apocalyptic rhetoric. "The *what?*" says Prior. She directs him to bronze spectacles with rocks instead of lenses and a large book with bright steel pages. The angel calls the glasses "peep-stones."

During the course of the scene Prior and the Angel are both overcome by sexual feeling, apparently prompted, by "the great work" which has ostensibly begun. "The Body is the Garden of the Soul," intones the breathless Angel, "... Plasma Orgasmata."

That Prior gets sexually aroused whenever the Angel is near (in the first half) or when he dons the glasses and reads the book (in the second half) suggests, as the Angel says, that what makes the "Engine of Creation Run" is "Not Physics But Ecstatics."

Within the play's hard-driven revisionist view of Reagan-era values are themes of migration. At the beginning of Part One, for example, a rabbi sings the Kaddish over the body of Louis's grandmother, a woman who crossed the ocean and, says the rabbi, "brought with us to America the villages of Russia and Lithuania" to "grow up *here* . . . in the melting pot where nothing melted." And in the diorama room at the LDS Visitor's Center where Hannah, accompanied by the nearly deranged Harper, now works as a volunteer, a pioneer family

of mannequins converses in a hokey, story-book style about their exodus West.

Spurred on by his impending death and his anxiety over what his nurse and friend, Belize, is convinced are hallucinations, Prior turns up at the Visitor's Center and introduces himself to Harper as an "angelologist."

"Imagination is a dangerous thing," says Prior to Harper. "In certain circumstances, fatal," says Harper. "It can blow up in your face. If it turns out to be true." They are waiting for the diorama to begin and wondering where they've seen each other before.

During the recorded presentation, and to the surprise of both, Louis suddenly appears in the diorama while the pioneer father turns out to be Joe. "I don't like cults," says Louis as if caught in the middle of a conversation. Joe responds, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not a cult." "Any religion that's not at least two thousand years old is a cult . . .," he says. "And I know people who would call *that* generous."

"I never imagined losing my mind was going to be such hard work," says Prior before leaving the visitor's center. But the visions aren't over yet. The Mormon Mother, perched on the seat of a covered wagon, then comes to life. She and Harper trudge through the dark, rainy night. "In your experience of the world, how do people change?" asks Harper as the two overlook the island of Manhattan.

Mormon Mother: Well it has something to do with God so it's not very nice. God splits the skin with a jagged thumbnail from throat to belly and then plunges a huge filthy hand

in, he grabs hold of your bloody tubes and they slip to evade his grasp but he squeezes hard, he *insists*, he pulls and pulls till all your innards are yanked out and the pain! We can't even talk about that. And then he stuffs them back, dirty, tangled and torn. It's up to you to do the stitching.

Sequestered away from Harper and his mother, Joe is staying with Louis and consummating his sexual desires. Even sudden apparitions/visitations (the text is, typically, never clear) of Harper in the bedroom does not keep him from going back to Louis whom he finds not only sexually compelling but intellectually challenging. "Who if not the Right is putting the prude back in Jurisprudence?" complains Louis as they lie in bed together. "Do you want to be pure, or do you want to be effective?" bandies Joe. "Choose. Even if our methods seem . . . extreme, even. We've worked hard to build a movement."

Later at the dunes on nearby Jones beach, a famous hang-out for gays, Louis alludes to the "Exploration" of gay male sexuality "[a]cross an unmapped terrain." When the subject turns to Joe's religion Louis says, "So the fruity underwear you wear, that's . . ."

Joe: A temple garment.

Louis: Oh my god. What's it for?

Joe: Protection. A second skin. I can stop wearing it if you . . .

Louis: How can you stop wearing it if it's a skin? Your past, your beliefs, your . . .

Joe: I'm not your enemy.

Louis: . . . I am in love with you. You and I, fundamentally, we're the same. We both want the same things.

But, after a month's absence, Louis is determined to visit Prior. "You don't want to see me anymore," worries Joe. "Anything. Whatever you want. I can give up anything. My skin." At this point he pulls the upper part of the garment off. The weather is freezing. "What are you doing, someone will see us," says Louis. "I'm flayed," says Joe. "No past now. I could give up anything. . . . Sometimes self-interested is the most generous thing you can be," he continues as Louis hastily re-dresses him. "You ought to think about it." "I will," promises Louis.

Perestroika is left with what seems the impossible task of tying up the loose ends that *Millennium Approaches* almost recklessly scatters. Most of the loose ends are in fact resolved in an "Epilogue" as serene and hopeful as the first half is volatile and entropic. Before that, however, Roy Cohn is escorted into the hereafter by Ethel Rosenberg (whom in the 1950s he maliciously propelled toward execution) but surfaces later, in hell, hawking his legal expertise at a guilty and absent God. Ultimately rejected by Prior, Louis jettisons his Mormon lover who, Louis learns, was responsible for Judge Wilson's most offensive anti-gay and anti-human judgments. Prior goes to heaven to return his prophetic mantle and demands a blessing for more life from a quorum of heavenly beings. And after a brief attempt at reconciliation, Harper gives Joe her stash of valium, takes the credit card, and escapes on an airplane to San Francisco.

It was at the Eureka Theatre in San Francisco that *Angels in America* premiered in 1991. Its circuitous route to Broadway and the Walter Kerr Theatre included a workshop production

at both the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles and the Sundance Institute in Provo, Utah, and a hit engagement at the National Theatre in London where the show re-opened after its January 1992 British premiere and is still running. In October 1992 the premiere of *Perestroika* was paired with *Millennium Approaches* in a marathon Los Angeles production. Since then the show has played in such far-flung places as Tel Aviv. This fall the show opened in Chicago, and producer/director Robert Altman has optioned *Angels* for a feature film.

With its odd but affecting mix of American culture and politics, religion and law, gay aesthetics and dramatic theory, *Angels* might at first appear to be theatrically "over-the-top." Almost without exception, however, critics have hailed the genius of Kushner's deft handling of such a wide swath of material which has proven to be provocative as well as breathlessly entertaining.

For Mormons, the co-option of our most sacred story for the purposes of theater might at first seem blasphemous. In fact, Eugene England in his regular *This People* round-up of recent LDS-related books and plays tagged part one of *Angels*, which he saw in London, as "offensive" and disrespectful.

What I saw was three of the most resonant, non-historical Mormon characters ever to appear on the professional stage, and my identification with them was absolutely revelatory. Prompted by a New York theater critic to see the London show, I found myself seated in the tiny Cottesloe at the National Theatre and entranced by what was the most compelling cultural representation of my religion I had ever seen. There,

on the stage were in-your-face Mormons, ambivalent and human, devoted yet vulnerable, caught up in a world much larger than the Wasatch Front's greenhouse of religious form and its fusion of individual and organizational faith.

That a golden book of life and an Angel might appear to a mere farm boy—perhaps the least likely earthling of all—in upstate New York is as fantastically appealing today as it was during the romanticism of the early nineteenth century. That the contemporary counterpart of the boy prophet is a New York City homosexual dying of AIDS suggests the personal daring of Kushner. Prior speculates at one point, "[m]aybe I am a prophet. Not just me, all of us who are dying now. Maybe we've caught the virus of prophecy."

Not everything about Kushner's American epic is entirely satisfying, especially the fact that, at show's end, Joe Pitt is entirely dismissed from the core of enlightened individuals who in the "Epilogue" gather around the Central Park fountain, featuring the Angel Bethesda. It's as if Joe has been abandoned by not only Louis and Harper, but his mother as well, who, we are told in this last scene, "is noticeably different—she looks like a New Yorker, and she is reading the *New York Times*."

In Louisville, Kentucky, where Kushner's latest play premiered last April, the playwright indirectly suggested why Joe Pitt is out of favor by play's end. Kushner is opposed to the relativist stance of a playwright, indulging both sides of a social or political issue for purposes of "fairness." Evil, he insists, is there, and it is the job of the artist to expose it. "I chose the Mormon church for 'Angels' be-

cause it is one of the most homophobic religions," said Kushner, who claims that his play was deeply influenced by Fawn Brodie's *No Man Knows My History* as well as works by Harold Bloom.

Mormon dramatists whose impulse is to write about their religion and culture have clearly been upstaged by a self-proclaimed agnostic gay Jew from Brooklyn. His imagination has, among many other things, and despite some unfair demonizing of Joe near the play's end, aptly captured much of the essence of contemporary Mormon character and the

thrilling iconography of America's most successful indigenous religion. Regardless of what one considers to be the quality and endurance of a play like *Angels in America* the lesson may be that playwrights and others interested in developing a Mormon theatrical literature had best get cracking. That such a play has issued from a non-Mormon playwright might say as much about the failure of Mormon dramatists to transcend the self-consciousness of their own social and cultural boundaries—to position themselves *in* the world—as it does about Kushner's ample talent.

"Critical" Book of Mormon Scholarship

New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology. Edited by Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993).

Review of Books on the Book of Mormon, Volume 6. Edited by Daniel C. Peterson (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994).

Reviewed by Stephen E. Thompson, Ph.D., Research Assistant, Department of Egyptology, Brown University.

NEW APPROACHES TO THE BOOK OF MORMON will undoubtedly be perceived as another salvo in the war of words between those who believe the Book of Mormon is best understood as a nineteenth-century product of Joseph Smith and those who adopt the more traditional understanding of the book as a translation of an ancient

text. It should, however, be approached as a piece of generally solid scholarship which contributes to a better understanding of the nature and origin of this book of scripture. While many of the conclusions reached are not new, the methodological rigor brought to bear in the study of the Book of Mormon certainly justifies the title of the volume.

An impressive array of topics are dealt within the book, and those interested in textual criticism, Book of Mormon geography, demography, language, and ideational context will find material of interest. Given the number of contributions to the volume (ten), and the limited space allotted for this review, it is not possible to summarize all of the articles and then offer critical remarks. I will offer only a few remarks on particular essays.

In "The Word of God Is Enough: The Book of Mormon as Nineteenth-

century Scripture," Anthony Hutchinson states that "my thesis is simple, . . . we should accept that [the Book of Mormon] is a work of scripture inspired by God in the same way that the Bible is inspired, but one that has as its human author Joseph Smith, Jr." (1). He then fails, however, to discuss the extremely complex nature of biblical inspiration.

I find the author's discussion of how one can hold that the Book of Mormon is scripture, but not historical, unsatisfying. He states that he accepts the Book of Mormon as the "word of God" because he is moved by the stories it contains, as well as by "the story of Joseph Smith . . . and [of the] people brought together by its coming forth" (7). He seems to be saying that he accepts the Book of Mormon as scripture because of his emotional reaction to the text, but is such a reaction sufficient reason to consider a book "scripture"? Hutchinson tells us that "understanding the Book of Mormon as a fictional work of nineteenth-century scripture has real advantages. The book opens up for interpretation when read this way. The stories take on an added dimension far beyond, I find, any that were lost when I stopped believing in historical Nephites" (17). Unfortunately for the reader, Hutchinson fails to provide examples of the "advantages" of his suggested method of interpretation. I would have liked to have seen how the stories take on an "added dimension." Hutchinson places great emphasis on the stories of the Book of Mormon but seems to neglect the expository discourse of the book. In what ways, if any, should this material be reinterpreted in light of the nineteenth-century context of the book?

In her article on "Book of Mor-

mon Christology," Melodie Charles states that in order "to give the Book of Mormon's idea a context this essay will show some of what the Book of Mormon says about Jesus Christ and will compare that with what the Jews at the time of Jesus' birth were expecting the Messiah to be, with what Christians after his death believed he was, and with current Mormon beliefs." Her treatment of these four topics is very uneven, however. Her discussions of what the Book of Mormon says about Christ, and of current Mormon beliefs, are adequate. She argues that the Book of Mormon is "largely modalistic" and makes "no explicit distinction between the identities of the Father and the Son" (103). This contrasts with the tritheistic view of the Trinity found in Mormonism after the 1840s. Her discussion of who Christians believed Jesus to be after his death focuses almost exclusively on post-325 C.E. theology, and generally omits a discussion of who first generation Christians thought Jesus to be. Charles's treatment of messianic expectations at the time of Jesus' birth is simply inadequate and ignores recent scholarship on the subject, in which it is argued that in the Palestine of Lehi's day there was no messianic expectation (the term "Messiah," denoting an eschatological figure, is first attested during the first century B.C.E.), and that one cannot state that there was ever *a* messianic expectation, but messianic expectations. See, for example, J. Neusner, W. Green, and E. Frerichs, eds., *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge University Press, 1987), and J. Charlesworth, ed., *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (Fortress Press, 1992). The latter appeared too late to

have been used by Charles, but the former should have been.

In his article "A Record in the Language of My Father," Edward Ashment discusses the question of the original language of the Book of Mormon and the statistical methods which have been employed to find evidence for multiple authorship in the book. I find myself in general agreement with Ashment's conclusions—i.e., that there is insufficient evidence available from the English "translation" to support claims that the Book of Mormon was written in Egyptian, Hebrew, "reformed" Egyptian, or in Hebrew using Egyptian characters. Ashment's article provides the needed methodological corrective to studies which try to point out "Hebraisms" in the text of the Book of Mormon. Any construction which has a parallel in the King James Version of the Bible cannot serve as evidence of Hebrew as the language underlying the Book of Mormon.

While I am largely in agreement with Ashment's conclusions, I cannot concur in all the particulars of his argument. In arguing against a suggestion by Brian Stubbs that "long strings of subordinate clauses and verbal expressions [found in the Book of Mormon] . . . are acceptable in Hebrew, though unorthodox and discouraged in English," and therefore provide evidence of Hebrew influence on the text of the Book of Mormon, Ashment uses methods of argumentation which border on the nonsensical. He maintains that if such constructions were "acceptable" Hebrew syntax, the 1981 text from the modern selections from the Book of Mormon in Hebrew "should readily reflect the literally-translated Book of Mormon text. In fact, it does not" (364). The fact that a modern transla-

tion of the Book of Mormon into Hebrew (what form of Hebrew?) does not reflect such constructions does not *prove* anything about the nature of the language of the Hebrew Bible. Similarly, Ashment's "biblical" text which he creates from Genesis 1:1 to "help make clear" that the "unusual syntax of the Book of Mormon is not characteristic of Hebrew" (365-66) also proves nothing about the Hebrew Bible, since the text is purely a creation of Ashment. His demonstration that such constructions are not limited to the Book of Mormon but can be found in other writings of Joseph Smith for which there is no postulated Hebrew *Vorlage* is sufficient to establish the point that these constructions cannot serve as evidence of an underlying Hebrew text of the Book of Mormon. In a footnote (365n42), Ashment notes that the unusual syntactic construction under discussion is not "representative of Egyptian" and quotes from Gardiner's grammar of Middle Egyptian, which notes that "involved constructions and lengthy periods are rare." This statement does not represent the current understanding of the Egyptian language; lengthy, involved constructions are not at all rare in Egyptian. See the remarks of F. Junge, "How to Study Egyptian grammar and to what purpose. A Summary of sorts," *Lingua Aegyptia* 1 (1991): 398, and M. Collier, "Predication and the Circumstantial *sdm(=f)/sdm.n(=f)*," *Lingua Aegyptia* 2 (1992): 18n5.

To conclude on a technical note, due to limitations imposed by the publisher, the authors were unable to make use of any of the standard systems used to transliterate the Hebrew, Egyptian, and Greek alphabets. In order to make use of transliterations, David Wright had to devise a new

method involving an unsightly mix of upper and lower case letters to render characters not found in the English alphabet. To make matters worse, this transliteration system was not used consistently throughout the book, and at times the same letter is transliterated in different ways. If Signature Books plans to continue publishing the type of scholarship represented in this book, I hope that it will develop the capability to reproduce any of the accepted transliteration systems currently in use. Such *ad hoc* creations as found in this volume are not acceptable.

Since its first appearance in 1989, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* (RBBM), published by the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies headquartered at Brigham Young University, has evolved from simply providing reviews of books dealing with the Book of Mormon to being a vehicle for publishing responses to what are perceived as attacks on traditional Mormon attitudes to scripture. According to the title, the journal is dedicated to dealing with books about the Book of Mormon, but when the need arises, its scope can be extended to books dealing with the Book of Abraham and to books dealing with Mormonism in general. For example, volume 3 included reviews of Rodger Anderson's *Joseph Smith's New York Reputation Reexamined* (Signature Books, 1990) and Dan Vogel's *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture* (Signature Books, 1990), and volume 4 reviewed C. M. Larson's *By His Own Hand Upon Papyrus: A New Look at the Joseph Smith Papyri* (Institute for Religious Research, 1992). (Apparently RBBM will review whatever its editor feels inclined to include.) Thus

it was only a matter of time until FARMS trained its guns on what they perceived to be the latest attack on the Book of Mormon.

In the current issue, RBBM editor Daniel Peterson has assembled a team of thirteen reviewers to aid him in evaluating *New Approaches*. They are Davis Bitton, John Tvedtnes, John Gee, Royal Skousen, John Welch, Robert Millet, Louis Midgley, James Smith, John Sorenson, Matthew Roper, Richard Anderson, Martin Tanner, and William Hamblin. Two reviewers (Bitton and Tvedtnes) provide considerations of the book as a whole, while others respond to one or several of its essays. Some reviewers (Welch, Midgley, Sorenson, Anderson) respond to criticism of their earlier work by authors in *New Approaches*, while Hamblin responds to an article by Brent Metcalfe which appeared in *Dialogue* (Fall 1993). While Metcalfe's essay was not part of *New Approaches*, nor a book about the Book of Mormon, apparently the editor felt that the contents of this article justified a response in RBBM (xi).

One of the first things that I noticed about this book was the tone in which the articles are written. This is not merely an attempt to evaluate the essays presented in *New Approaches*, but an effort to discredit totally the articles and authors. This is attempted by the frequent use of a sarcastic (e.g., 483) and condescending tone, and by comments about the authors in *New Approaches*. Peterson tells us that he does not "advocate the use" of "insulting or abusive language," but then he allows such bald, unsupported statements as Midgley's referring to Mark Thomas as "inept" (217n42) to stand. We are repeatedly reminded that Brent Metcalfe is only a high

school graduate, that he is an agnostic, and was a close associate of Mark Hofmann (78n92, 211n36, 520, 522, 545, 556). We are informed that Mark Thomas is a banker, and that Edward Ashment is an insurance salesman (54, 79, 526n9). While all of this information may be true, I wonder what its relevance is to the strength of the arguments put forward by the respective authors. Apparently, some contributors to *RBBM* feel that the fact that some contributors to *New Approaches* lack advanced degrees is significant in evaluating their work.

Credentials are interesting things. When one lacks them but one's opponent does not, then they are of little value. (As Hugh Nibley noted, "What on earth have a man's name, degree, academic position, and of all things, opinions, to do with whether a thing is true or not" ["A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price," *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1968].) When one has them however, and one feels that an opponent does not, then they are of great importance. Hamblin presents a lengthy list of associations at whose meetings some FARMS writers have presented papers, publishers who have published their books, and journals in which they have published articles (445). But, as Hamblin well knows, giving a paper is one thing, giving a *good* paper (or publishing a good book or article) is quite another. The relevance of this impressive list of scholarly output is also questionable. How does having an article in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* qualify one to write on the Book of Mormon? I suspect that the contributors to *RBBM* are hoping to discredit *New Approaches* to such an extent that others will not take their arguments seriously.

Daniel Peterson is correct (525)

when he notes that the real point of dispute "between defenders of the Book of Mormon . . . and those who would revise or redefine those truth claims . . . is . . . a clash of opposing world views." This is particularly apparent in the differing approaches to the Bible evident in the two publications. The approach to the Bible adopted by several contributors to *RBBM* has much in common with that of Protestant fundamentalists who see the Bible as largely inerrant and historical. For example, in his response to Mark Thomas's discussion of the account of Jesus' institution of the sacrament among the Nephites, Richard Anderson relies heavily on discourses which the gospel of John attributes to Jesus. He also tells us that he uses "all four Gospels as responsibly quoting the Savior, whether or not word-perfect" (396). When one adopts this approach, Anderson claims, then "each phrase in the Nephite prayers correlates with New Testament teachings of Christ on the sacrament" (*ibid.*), and that "the Book of Mormon sacrament teachings . . . fit our Bible as written" (384). Anderson never really defends this approach, or the substantial reliability of the gospels, but simply asserts it. The closest he comes is when he argues that because Irenaeus, who knew Polycarp, who supposedly knew John, states that John was an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry, then the book can be taken as historical (403). On the other hand, when he refers to Mark Thomas's more critical approach to the gospel record, he refers to it as scrambling the integrity of the gospels, or as witness tampering (387), or as the work of "individualistic scholars" (384).

If Anderson is going to accept John as historical, then he has to ex-

plain how his eyewitness saw things vastly differently from the other gospel authors, one of whom was also supposedly an "eyewitness." The Jesus of John's gospel displays a vastly different teaching style and content from the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels. In the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus teaches by means of short proverbial sayings and parables. In John, however, we find Jesus delivering long, involved discourses. The subject matter of these discourses also differs. In the Synoptics, Jesus teaches about the kingdom of God and rarely says anything about himself. In John, Jesus speaks primarily about himself and almost never about the kingdom of God. Differences such as these have led scholars to view the discourses of Jesus in John as later creations and not speeches given by the historical Jesus (see J. D. G. Dunn, *The Evidence for Jesus* [Westminster Press, 1985], 32-43; E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* [Penguin Press, 1993], 66-73). Anderson makes no attempt to support his assumption that the apostle John supposedly known by Polycarp is the author of the fourth gospel. Raymond Brown points out that Irenaeus is not an entirely trustworthy witness and can be shown to have been wrong in certain instances, as when he said that Papias heard John, which contradicts Papias himself (*The Gospel of John I-XII* [Doubleday, 1966], lxxxix-xc). E. P. Sanders has noted that from the present available evidence, the gospels circulated without titles (or authors) until the second half of the second century and that authors were assigned to them beginning about 180, not based on long-standing tradition, but on clues found within the gospels themselves (*Jesus*, 64-65).

Once one accepts that the dis-

courses in John were not delivered by Jesus, then Anderson's argument actually works against Book of Mormon historicity. If Joseph Smith was working with the King James Version of the Bible (KJV) as his basic source of information, then one would expect exactly what Anderson finds in 3 Nephi, i.e., that the material on the sacrament in 3 Nephi is found scattered throughout all four gospels and includes material that does not come from the historical Jesus. Melodie Charles (*New Approaches*, 89) notes a similar phenomenon concerning the information about Jesus' life in the Book of Mormon. She points out that all the details provided by the Book of Mormon concerning the life of Jesus are contained in the New Testament, which could also indicate Joseph Smith's use of the New Testament as his source of information.

The results of the critical study of the Synoptic Gospels is not the only field whose results and methods are rejected by contributors to *RBBM*. John Gee (69) and Royal Skousen (122-24) maintain that the whole field of New Testament textual criticism is filled with practitioners who employ faulty methodology and whose results are unreliable. John Sorenson's argument is not so much with Deanne Matheny's article in *New Approaches* as with established scholars in the field of Mesoamerican archaeology (300), whom he derisively refers to as BS (for Big Scholars, 303). The reviewers in *RBBM* ask one to reject the work of many more scholars than just those contributing to *New Approaches*.

The contributors to *RBBM* could have benefited greatly from reading Matthew 7:3 (NRSV): "Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own

eye?" All of the errors and faults which reviewers in *RBBM* point out in *New Approaches* are also to be found in *RBBM* itself. Note the following example. On page 52 John Gee tells us that *New Approaches* is filled with "deceptive and specious claims." But so is Gee's article. As an example, I call attention to Gee's statement (68) that "any attempt to reconstruct the original text of Matthew which fails to take [the text of Hebrew Matthew] into account may justly be said to be defective." This is hardly the case. In fact, one reviewer of the publication of Hebrew Matthew has stated just the opposite, that the "interesting readings" in Hebrew Matthew may be considered "primitive when and only when corroborated by ancient witnesses" (W. L. Petersen, book review in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108:725; see also S. Cohen, book review in *Bible Review*, June 1988, 9). Rather than being an independent witness to Matthew, Hebrew Matthew is derivative from late versions of canonical Matthew. (In fact, the author of the book being reviewed by Petersen and Cohen, George Howard, has informed me that a second edition of his book on Hebrew Matthew, *The Gospel of Matthew according to a Primitive Hebrew Text* [Mercer University Press], will appear shortly and that in it he argues only that the text is "pre-fourteenth century." Gee's confidence in Hebrew Matthew as a "primitive" text which is to be equated with the text referred to by Papias is misplaced.)

Another charge Gee levels against *New Approaches* is that it contains "shoddy methodology" (52). As an example of such in *RBBM*, note the following. John Tvedtnes and John Sorenson both operate on the assumption that the KJV forms a link between

the Book of Mormon and its original Hebrew text, and that the use of a particular English word in the Book of Mormon indicates that the original record contained the Hebrew word for which the English word served as a translation equivalent in the KJV. Tvedtnes argues that because the KJV mistranslates the Hebrew word for copper or bronze as brass, then when brass appears in the Book of Mormon, it should also be understood to mean copper or bronze (31). In attempting to determine what is meant in the Book of Mormon by the word "sword," Sorenson maintains that one should take into consideration "the Hebrew language meanings of the word translated 'sword'" (325). I fail to see the justification for this methodology, and I am not sure how Tvedtnes and Sorenson understand the idea of translation. We do not have the "original language" of the plates, but only Joseph Smith's translation of them. The key to the meaning of the words in the Book of Mormon is not some hypothetical Hebrew substratum, but how Joseph Smith understood the words in his day. Sorenson uses a methodology which allows him to convert the English text of the Book of Mormon into whatever he pleases. For him, east means north, horse means deer (unless, of course, he can find evidence of horses in Mesoamerica contemporaneous with Book of Mormon civilizations), and ox means tapir (344-47). Apparently God and Joseph Smith were poor translators. At the very least we could have hoped to have, in these instances, a few of the words which Welch finds elsewhere in the Book of Mormon were added during the translation "for clarity" (158).

(In fact, Sorenson's comment [346-47] that Aztecs referred to the

Spanish horses as "deer-which-carried-men-upon-their-backs" actually works against his suggestion that deer were ridden in Mesoamerica. If this is the way Aztecs referred to horses, then obviously the major difference between deer and horses was that horses carried men, while deer did not. The statement quoted by Sorenson in no way provides evidence that "there is nothing inherently implausible in the idea [of men riding deer in Mesoamerica].")

Daniel Peterson seems to consider it a weakness of *New Approaches* that the contributors are not in total agreement with one another (553; see also Gee, 74, Welch, 183), yet he refers to disagreements among contributors to *RBBM* as "relatively minor" (vii). This is quite an understatement. What William Hamblin calls (451n36) the presentist fallacy, Robert Millet tells us must be the preferred method used to interpret the Book of Mormon and all scripture, and if it is not then "we [LDS] have little or nothing to offer the world in regard to religious understanding" (189). If this is a minor disagreement, I would like to see what Peterson considers major.

Errors of fact are not infrequent in *RBBM*. Contrary to John Sorenson's claim, there is no Egyptian word *ss* meaning horse (345, the word is *ssmt*), *shs* is not the Egyptian word for antelope (which is *ss3w*), and there is no etymological relationship between the two Egyptian words. Martin Tanner completely misunderstands the Egyptian text he quotes (432) as evidence of the concept of "universal salvation" among Egyptians. The text refers to the fact that everyone will eventually end up in the cemetery, i.e., dead, and not that all will achieve "salvation." That Egyptians believed

in a postmortal punishment for certain individuals would have been plain to Tanner if he had read the passage by Eric Hornung which Gee quotes on page 108 of *RBBM*.

Other errors include John Tvedt's reference to an Aramaic text written in "Coptic" (read Demotic) script, and John Welch's claim that the prefix *apo* in Greek *apodidomi* is sufficient to indicate that "the openness of the reward is implicit in the verb itself" (161). Actually, *apodidomi* means "to make a payment, with the implication of such a payment being in response to an incurred obligation" (J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, et al., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains* [UBS, 1989], 1:575). Welch cites no examples in support of his contention that in *apodidomi* "the openness of the reward is implicit in the verb itself," and until he can do so, his argument against Stan Larson's examples 5-7 showing that Joseph Smith relied on the KJV for the text of the Sermon on the Mount in Nephi 3 has no merit.

(In an earlier work, *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount: A Latter-day Saint Perspective* [Deseret Book Co. and FARMS, 1990], Welch stated only that *apodidomi* "may convey . . . the idea of being rewarded . . . openly." Apparently Welch has now become more sure of this point, to judge by the tone of his statement in *RBBM*.)

The most bitter irony of *RBBM* is that its contributors frequently accuse contributors to *New Approaches*, and its publisher Signature Books, of trying to "impose their world view and understanding of the past on the Church as a whole" (461, cf. 210). From what position of power do these individuals seek to impose their views

on the rest of the church? Their only "power" comes from the force of persuasion. It is rather the LDS church that attempts to impose its view of these issues on its members. Two contributors to *New Approaches* were called in by their church leaders and questioned about their contributions, and one was told never to publish with Signature Books again. David Wright was excommunicated in large measure because of his contribution to *New Approaches*. The only "force" being applied in this debate is by the institutional church, and its activities have a bearing on the extent to which much of FARMS scholarship can be considered "critical."

William Hamblin includes a lengthy discussion of the "critical" method and asks, "In what element of the critical method have I failed?" (438, see 438-44) There is one important ingredient which Hamblin lacks, which makes one consider that his work on the Book of Mormon is not critical, and that is freedom. James Barr has noted that freedom is an essential element in any scholarly endeavor which hopes to be truly critical. He states that "criticism implies freedom, and there is much scholarship which feels itself bound to reach the results required by this or that religious tradition and which in this sense is not critical" (Barr, *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism* [Westminster Press, 1983], 107-108).

Eight of the contributors to *RBBM* are employed by BYU, as are many of the frequent contributors to FARMS's other publications. Beginning with David Wright's dismissal from BYU in 1988 for holding attitudes about scripture which "differ so significantly from those generally accepted" by the

church (Jae Ballif to David Wright, 13 June 1988) to last year's failure to renew the contracts of some scholars because of their controversial views on issues deemed sensitive by the church (see "BYU Fires Two Controversial Faculty Members," *Sunstone* 16/5:74-77) and the "purge" of September 1993 (see "Six Intellectuals Disciplined for Apostasy," *Sunstone* 16/6:65-73), the church has shown that the intellectual freedom of its employees is considerably circumscribed. Now it may be true that Hamblin is a virtuous, courageous individual, who could come to conclusions unacceptable to his employer and then resign his position. But without knowing Hamblin, a reader cannot judge the extent to which he, or any church employee, is truly "free" when it comes to matters of LDS scholarship. Perhaps through no fault of their own, the work of many FARMS researchers does not qualify as "critical" because they lack the essential ingredient of freedom.

While *RBBM* is seriously flawed, it is not wholly without merit. *New Approaches* does have its faults, and *RBBM* points these out. Unfortunately one has to wade through far too much dross and bile to find the worthwhile portions of *RBBM*. Hamblin (506-20) is correct when he points out that those who consider the Book of Mormon nineteenth century in origin should make some attempt at explaining the numerous accounts of "witnesses" to the plates. Brent Metcalfe, in his *Dialogue* article, made a beginning by discussing the testimony of the three witnesses, but there are other testimonies, some of which are pointed out by Hamblin, which also need to be considered. Scholars who view Mormon scripture as non-histor-

ical need to go beyond arguing the case against the traditional understanding of Mormon scripture and begin to develop an interpretation of Mormon scripture and events from early Mormon history from such a perspective. One can only hope that all scholars will heed John Welch's call for those who write on the Book of Mormon to "become more explicit about their methods, their assump-

tions, their purposes, and the degree to which their conclusions are based on various forms of evidence or dependence on various theoretical predilections" (146). It is especially hoped that FARMS authors will take to heart Welch's plea for scholars to maintain "a posture of good will and openness toward each other and to the subject matter" (186). Unfortunately, the contributions to *RBBM* fail to do so.



Toldot/Generations

Seymour Cain

Toldot is a biblical Hebrew term usually referring to human generations and genealogies. See, for example, Genesis 5:1, 6:5, 10:22, and Numbers 1:20.

now that I'm old
and know it
I begin to glimpse
the endless line
of generations
the wide-eyed babes
opening up to the whole
incoming new world
and the little kids
so angelic and so loud
God what a clamor
and their older brothers
and sisters
with the sap coming in
and the sap asking out
the first faint gleam
of a new generation
and their mothers and fathers
walking about their business
some satisfied and some sad
and then the old
and the old-old
like me
seeking to make the best
of their remaining time
and a good death
one eye still on the banana peel
and the other on eternity
while the babes and the kids
and the youths and the parents
keep coming on
endlessly

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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

"I prefer artists who stir my energies," explains Earl Jones, "by showing me what a careful and honest examination of people and nature can yield—who can operate among the commonplace and rejoice in the wonder of down-to-earth things, like flesh and rocks."

Born, raised, and educated in Utah, except for a year at the Art Students League, Jones began teaching at the University of Utah in 1962 and left in 1970 amid controversy over his anti-war involvement. He describes himself as being "two generations off the farm," and many of his paintings portray what he calls "the edges," those border places his Mormon ancestors settled where the cultivated or inhabited landscape of humans meets the places where they are not found.

He has exhibited widely in galleries and museums throughout the western states, is a member of the Plein-Air Painters of America, and is currently preparing for a one-man exhibition at the University of Utah Museum of Fine Arts in January 1995 and an accompanying catalogue. He paints primarily on location or in his Salt Lake City studio, an old service station which he has converted into a studio and school.

ART

- Cover: "Grafton, Utah," 1983, oil on canvas, 22" x 22"
p. 13: "Central Utah," 1985, oil on canvas, 30" x 40"
p. 40: "Barn and Bales at St. Charles," 1985, oil on canvas, 22" x 28"
p. 101: "The Sea of Cortez," 1984, oil on canvas, 8" x 10"
p. 108: "Cows at Grantsville," 1986, oil on canvas, 22" x 28"
p. 120: "The Gros Ventre River," 1991, oil on canvas, 18" x 24"
p. 166: "Pine at Los Brazos," 1984, oil on canvas, 28" x 40"
p. 174: "Keetley, Utah," 1976, oil on canvas, 22" x 28"
p. 186: "Weber Canyon," 1989, oil on canvas, 18" x 24"
p. 207: "Canyonlands," 1993, oil on canvas, 18" x 24"

DIALOGUE

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