

# DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT





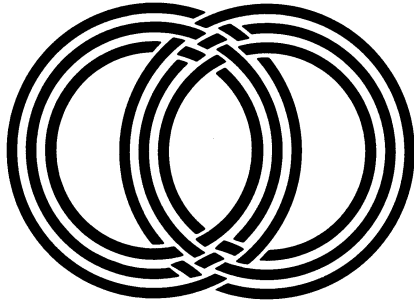
EDITORS: *Martha Sonntag Bradley and Allen Dale Roberts*  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: *Gary James Bergera*  
OFFICE MANAGER: *Jason Bradley*  
SCRIPTURAL STUDIES: *Mark D. Thomas*  
FICTION: *William Mulder*  
POETRY: *Susan Elizabeth Howe*  
BOOK REVIEWS: *Delmont R. Oswald*  
BUSINESS MANAGER: *Alan L. Smith*  
LEGAL COUNSEL: *Michael W. Homer*  
DESIGNER: *Warren Archer II*  
ELECTRONIC PRODUCTION: *Mark J. Malcolm*

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

*Paul M. Edwards*, Independence, Missouri  
*B. J. Fogg*, Stanford, California  
*Michael W. Homer*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*David C. Knowlton*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*Armand L. Mauss*, Pullman, Washington  
*Steven Peterson*, Ephraim, Utah  
*Lorie Winder Stromberg*, Los Angeles, California

EDITORIAL BOARD

*J. Michael Allen*, Orem, Utah  
*David Anderson*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*Curt A. Bench*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*Melodie Moench Charles*, San Antonio, Texas  
*Todd Compton*, Santa Monica, California  
*Gloria Cronin*, Provo, Utah  
*Steven Epperson*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*Vella Neil Evans*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*Kent Frogley*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*Harvard Heath*, Provo, Utah  
*George Henry, Jr.*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*Duane E. Jeffery*, Provo, Utah  
*Dale C. LeCheminant*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*Kathryn Lindquist*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*Rebecca Linford*, Chicago, Illinois  
*Ron Molen*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*Martha Pierce*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*Gregory A. Prince*, Gaithersburg, Maryland  
*D. Michael Quinn*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*Marybeth Raynes*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*Paul C. Richards*, Orem, Utah  
*Kent A. Robson*, Logan, Utah  
*John Sillito*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*Kathy Smith*, Layton, Utah  
*Margaret Merrill Toscano*, Salt Lake City, Utah  
*David P. Wright*, Chelmsford, Massachusetts  
*Lawrence A. Young*, Salt Lake City, Utah



# DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT

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

## CONTENTS

### LETTERS

v

### ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

|  |                           |     |
|--|---------------------------|-----|
| STERLING MOSS McMURRIN: A PHILOSOPHER IN ACTION                                | <i>L. Jackson Newell</i>  | 1   |
| THE EDUCATION OF A BYU PROFESSOR   | <i>Brigham D. Madsen</i>  | 21  |
| WALLACE STEGNER: THE UNWRITTEN LETTER  | <i>Karen Rosenbaum</i>    | 41  |
| THE LAW THAT BRINGS LIFE   | <i>Doug Ward</i>          | 49  |
| "COME YE DISCONSOLATE": IS THERE A MERCY SEAT IN MORMON THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE? | <i>Stanley B. Kimball</i> | 69  |
| THE NOON OF LIFE: MID-LIFE TRANSITION IN THE MARRIED LDS PRIESTHOOD HOLDER     | <i>Vincent C. Rampton</i> | 77  |
| A GRANDDAUGHTER REMEMBERS  | <i>Suzanne F. Bigelow</i> | 99  |
| "MY FATHER'S BUSINESS": THOMAS TAYLOR AND MORMON FRONTIER ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE  | <i>Brent D. Corcoran</i>  | 105 |

### SCRIPTURAL STUDIES

|                                    |                            |     |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----|
| EGYPTOLOGY AND THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM | <i>Stephen E. Thompson</i> | 143 |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----|

### NOTES AND COMMENTS

|   |                         |     |
|---|-------------------------|-----|
| ERNEST L. WILKINSON AND THE 1966 BYU SPY RING: A RESPONSE TO D. MICHAEL QUINN | <i>Jeff D. Blake</i>    | 163 |
| A REPLY   | <i>D. Michael Quinn</i> | 173 |

### FICTION

|                    |                      |     |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----|
| IN THE RIGHT HANDS | <i>Don McDermott</i> | 179 |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----|

### POETRY

|                   |                          |    |
|-------------------|--------------------------|----|
| RELEASE: A MOMENT | <i>Dixie Partridge</i>   | x  |
| SLEEPING ON WOOD  | <i>Nancy Hanks Baird</i> | 18 |
| HOSPITAL HEALING  | <i>Linda Sillitoe</i>    | 48 |



|  |                    |     |
|--|--------------------|-----|
| WEIGHT   | R. A. Christmas    | 76  |
| THE THREE BOATS  | Brian Evenson      | 103 |
| 1948   | Elaine Christensen | 161 |
| RAZOR SHARP  | Marden J. Clark    | 194 |
| NEGATIVE SPACE   | Paul Swenson       | 207 |
| MARCH CHILDREN   | Nancy Hanks Baird  | 211 |
| REVIEWS  |                    | 197 |
| WELFARE AS WARFARE   | Armand L. Mauss    |     |
| <i>The Mormons' War on Poverty:<br/>A History of LDS Welfare, 1830-1990</i><br>by Garth L. Mangum and Bruce D. Blumell |                    |     |
| THE DREAM OF MORMON SOVEREIGNTY ENDS   | Gary Lee Walker    |     |
| <i>Camp Floyd and the Mormons: The Utah War</i><br>by Donald R. Moorman, with Gene A. Sessions                         |                    |     |
| REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AND THE "NEW" AMERICAN FAMILY  | Janet Cannon       |     |
| <i>Reproduction and Succession:<br/>Studies in Anthropology, Law, and Society</i><br>by Robin Fox                      |                    |     |
| NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS  |                    | 209 |
| ABOUT THE ARTIST / ART CREDITS   | Inside back cover  |     |

*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* is published quarterly by the Dialogue Foundation, P.O. Box 658, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84110-0658, 801-363-9988. *Dialogue* has no official connection with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Third class postage paid at Salt Lake City, Utah. Contents copyright 1995 by the Dialogue Foundation. ISSN 002-2157. Regular domestic subscription rate is \$30 per year; students and senior citizens \$25 per year; single copies \$10. Regular foreign subscription rate is \$35 per year; students and senior citizens \$30 per year; air mail \$55 per year; single copies \$15. *Dialogue* is also available on microforms through University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1346, and 18 Bedford Row, London, WC1R 4EJ, England.

*Dialogue* welcomes articles, essays, poetry, fiction, notes and comments, letters to the editor, and art. Preference is given to submissions from subscribers. Manuscripts must be sent in triplicate, accompanied by return postage, and should be prepared according to the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* including double-spacing all block quotations and notes. For the reference citation style, please consult issues from volume 26 on. If the submission is accepted for publication, an electronic version on an IBM-PC compatible diskette, using WordPerfect or other ASCII format software, must be submitted with a hard copy of the final manuscript. Send submissions to *Dialogue*, P.O. Box 658, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84110-0658. Artists wishing consideration of their artwork should send inquiries to the Designer or Art Director at the same address. Allow three to six months for review of all submissions.

1994 DIALOGUE  
WRITING AWARD WINNERS

*Lowell L. Bennion Editor's Award—\$300*

MICHAEL W. HOMER

“‘A Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry’:  
The Relationship between Freemasonry and Mormonism”

*History and Biography—\$250*

GEORGE D. SMITH

“Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy, 1841-46:  
A Preliminary Demographic Report”

*Theology and Scripture—\$250*

JANICE ALLRED

“Toward a Mormon Theology of God the Mother”

*Issues and Essays—\$250*

ROGER D. LAUNIUS

“The ‘New Social History’ and the ‘New Mormon History’:  
Reflections on Recent Trends”

*Steven Molen Student Essay Award—\$250*

DAVID HALL

“Anxiously Engaged:  
Amy Brown Lyman and Relief Society Charity Work, 1917-45”

*Fiction—\$200*

ROBERT HODGSON VAN WAGONER

“Strong Like Water”

*Margaret Rampton Munk Poetry Award—\$100*

JOANNA BROOKS

“Pilgrimage”



FORTHCOMING IN  
*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*  
SUMMER 1995

"Satan's Foot in the Door:  
Democrats at Brigham Young University,"  
*by Paul C. Richards*

"Coming of Age?  
The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ  
of Latter Day Saints in the 1960s,"  
*by Roger D. Launius*

"Freedom and Grace: Rethinking Theocracy,"  
*by Janice Allred*

"The Church and the Community:  
Personal Reflections on Mormon Intellectual Life,"  
*by O. Kendall White, Jr.*

"Consecration, Stewardship, and Accountability:  
Remedy for a Dying Planet,"  
*by Larry L. St. Clair and Clayton C. Newberry*

"The Gospel of Thomas and Jesus,"  
*by Stephen J. Patterson*

"Why Do Some Perceive the Church to be a Cult?  
Inside and Outside Perceptions Versus Reality,"  
*by M. Lou Chandler*

"Pathological Cultism and Public Policy,"  
*by James E. Salisbury*

Introducing the inaugural volume of an exciting new series from the University of Utah Press, *Life Writings of Frontier Women*.

**The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow**  
Edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher



Publication of the edited diaries and journals of Eliza R. Snow places a spotlight on one of the best known of the early Mormon pioneer women. Contains three distinct works: Snow's trail diaries, her short autobiographical "Sketch of My Life," and her Nauvoo journal and notebook, as well as dozens of her emotionally revealing poems.

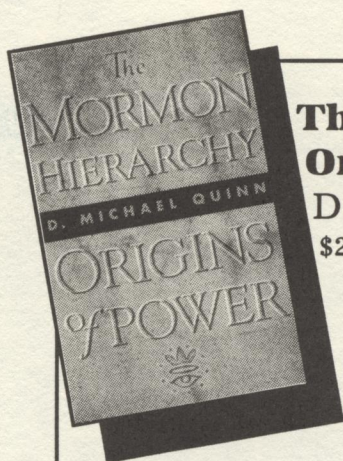
*Eliza R. Snow Smith*

June 1995. 6 x 9, 336 pages, 10 photos  
Cloth \$34.95 ISBN 0-87480-477-9  
*Life Writings of Frontier Women*, number 1

Available from your favorite bookstore, or direct from:

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH PRESS  
101 University Services Bldg.  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84112  
toll-free orders (800) 773-6672  
(801) 581-6771, fax (801) 581-3365





## **The Mormon Hierarchy Origins of Power**

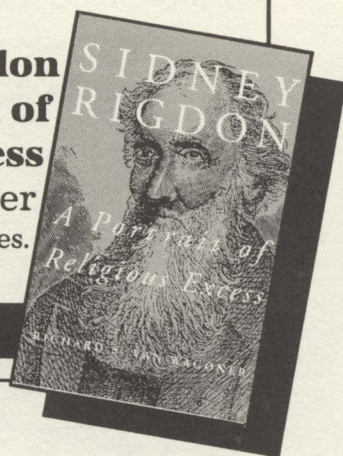
**D. Michael Quinn**

**\$29.95. 720 pages.**

## **Sidney Rigdon A Portrait of Religious Excess**

**Richard S. Van Wagoner**

**\$28.95. 640 pages.**



## **Signature Books**

## *Creating An American Religion*

### **The Refiner's Fire**

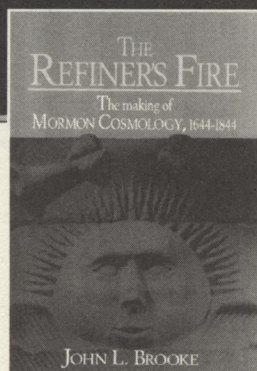
The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644-1844

**John L. Brooke**

"This is not just a revealing history of the background of the first Mormons and early Mormonism but a larger history of early American culture that will do almost as much for readers who are interested in the cultural context in which this new American religion developed as it will do for those who simply want to learn more about Mormon beginnings."

— *Jan Shipps, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis*

0-521-34545-6 Hardback \$34.95



*Available in bookstores or from*

**CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS**

40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211

Call toll-free 800-872-7423

MasterCard/VISA accepted. Prices subject to change.

## LETTERS

---

### *An Evolving God*

I found Janice Allred's essay in the summer 1994 issue, "Toward a Mormon Theology of God the Mother," to be insightful, intriguing, bravely honest, and obviously very heartfelt in its sentiments. It is with mixed feelings of empathy and sadness that I understand she has since found herself in trouble with the church for publicly expressing her views. Having also wrestled with the quagmire of scriptures and statements of church leaders regarding Mormon concepts of deity, I can easily see how she has arrived at her present situation, although I don't share her conclusions.

In searching the scriptures diligently for evidence of a feminine aspect and role of deity, she has recognized that the Book of Mormon and early revelations of Joseph Smith do indeed vividly portray a picture of the Father and Son as the same God. The evidence likewise forced me to this conclusion several years ago when I attempted to sort out many conflicting statements about the church's doctrine identifying Jesus as Jehovah and Brigham Young's Adam-God teachings (see my articles in *Sunstone* 9/2:36-44; *Dialogue* 19/1:77-93; and *Sunstone* 10/12:6-12; reprinted in *Line Upon Line* [Signature Books, 1989], 35-52, 171-81). Others have also noted and elaborated on the Book of Mormon's unorthodox doctrine of God (for an excellent discussion of this issue, see Melodie Charles, "Book of Mormon Christology," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* [Signature Books, 1993], 81-114; and Dan Vogel, "The Earliest Mormon Concept of God," *Line Upon Line*, 17-33). Incidentally, Allred's speculation that

our Mother in heaven "sacrificed her immortal body to be with us" (31) by becoming the Holy Ghost is reminiscent of Brigham Young's belief that our Father in heaven voluntarily sacrificed his immortal, celestial state to descend into mortality as Adam to provide mortal tabernacles for his spiritual offspring. He likewise taught that Eve, whom he considered to be our Mother in heaven, made the same sacrifice (see my letter in *Sunstone* 6/2:4-5).

Grappling with such extreme doctrinal diversity in the scriptures and authoritative statements of church leaders has led commentators to a variety of responses, usually very conditioned by their assumptions and agendas. Allred's search seemingly began with a desire to find a significant place and role for a heavenly mother in history and in her own life. She therefore excluded from her discussion the scriptures and Joseph Smith's later teachings which contradict her thesis. Many church leaders and apologists (as I have noted elsewhere) have likewise glossed over problems and inconsistencies regarding statements about deity. Rather than acknowledge the contradictions, they have redefined, ignored, excised, and harmonized in sometimes incredibly inventive ways to defend or promote "the orthodox religion." All of this juggling seems to stem from the perceived need to defend the inspiration and reliability of embraced authoritative sources.

Why is it that the Book of Mormon not only doesn't clear up questions about the godhead which have raged in Christianity for centuries, but on the contrary just adds to the confusion? This seems particularly ironic, since a major avowed purpose of the



book was to restore lost truths and end doctrinal controversies caused by the "great and abominable church's" corruption of the Bible. Why couldn't the Nephite prophets (or Joseph Smith, depending upon your point of view) have said just as plainly and clearly what James E. Talmage said in the 1916 "Doctrinal Exposition by the First Presidency and the Twelve On the Father and the Son"? If they (or Joseph) had, perhaps Allred wouldn't have been led to views which are considered heretical by today's standards.

For me, it simply makes more sense to recognize that there has clearly been an evolution of thought in regards to these things that fits better within the context of finite human cultures and development than as "eternal truths" that have appeared like bolts out of the blue. This is particularly apparent when the sources are viewed in chronological order according to the time of their production and interpreted in context with the environments from which they sprang. This has long been recognized in biblical scholarship (see my discussion and notes cited above in *Dialogue*, 78-79) and is becoming increasingly recognized by Mormon historians and scholars as well. In the Book of Mormon, we see a conscious attempt to reconcile trinitarian and unitarian controversies raging in Joseph's environment but which seem anachronistic as ancient musings when compared to biblical and early Judeo-Christian thought. Joseph was attempting, I submit, just as Janice, to sort things out. In later years he reversed his earlier efforts to completely "monotheise" the godhead and instead "tritheised" it. Although some may find this conclusion disconcerting, I find it instructive to realize that

even the prophets have had to struggle and falter like the rest of us in their attempts to discover truth. Although this view isn't as comfortable as a belief in infallible standard works and prophets, at least it doesn't require me to go through the questionable intellectual gymnastics I've seen coming from those defending more conservative views.

Thus, on a scholarly level I think that Allred is off the mark in her use and understanding of her sources. But I applaud her efforts and find that her portrayal of a nurturing, self-sacrificing Mother in heaven strikes an emotional chord. It's always nice to feel that Mom will always be there when you need her.

Boyd Kirkland  
Newhall, California

### *Eve's Tongue*

I was very pleased to read Helynne H. Hansen's essay on Virginia Sorensen's novel, *A Little Lower than the Angels*, in the summer 1994 issue. I tend to agree that women writers have a unique means of expression, and when I visited Virginia Sorensen in September 1990 I pointedly asked her to explain her previous statement that writing was "like working in the kitchen from an old recipe, very certainly a female thing." I hoped to use her explanation to clarify my own studies of *écriture féminine* in Mormon women's literature. But Sorensen, as Hansen suggests, quite frankly was ignorant of feminist theories of writing and admitted that her connection of cooking with writing came from her experience as a cook/writer while married.

Perhaps, however, if Sorensen had followed the women from *A Little Lower than the Angels* on to Winter Quarters she would have found there a source for women's discourse that vividly captures what Hansen calls "the tumultuous and often violent history . . . being made around them and the emotional upheaval that invade[d] the core of their personal lives." I am referring specifically to the women's practice of glossolalia (speaking in tongues) that many of the Winter Quarters sisters enjoyed for an extended period.

A number of the women at Winter Quarters had participated secretly in plural marriage in Nauvoo as Sorensen describes in *Angels*, and the dialogue between these women was indeed necessarily minimal. But after the prophet's death, when the women were miles away from Emma, who never accepted polygamy, and away from an accusing world, these women for the very first time broke the silence. They could openly discuss polygamy, their feelings about it, and their shared experiences. Zina Huntington said that at Sugar Creek the women first saw who were "the brave, the good, the self-sacrificing. Here we had now openly the first examples of noble-minded, virtuous women, bravely commencing to live the newly-revealed order of celestial marriage. Women; this is my husband's wife! Here at length, we could give this introduction, without fear of reproach or violation of man-made laws . . ." It would be an understatement to say that the women's discussions were intense. Eliza R. Snow claimed that to describe their meetings was beyond her power, even as a poet. And so the women relied upon, what I suggest is a worthy example of

*écriture féminine*, glossolalia.

Although the gift of tongues had been practiced previously in the church by men and women, Snow and the other "sister-wives" began to use this "hysterical" feminine discourse (Snow called it Eve's tongue) as a vehicle (1) to legitimate their assumption of leadership positions that they would retain throughout their lives, (2) to validate their spiritual worthiness and to articulate spiritual and divine truths in a manner that was recognized and sanctioned at that time by the church patriarchy, and (3) to vent suppressed desires and anxieties in a language that is both privileged and private and that transcends symbolic discourse. Or to explain and/or justify what Hansen suggests Mercy, Eliza, and the other women friends were unable to articulate in Nauvoo.

Music and glossolalia are frequently categorized by some feminist scholars as female tropes of expression, examples of "feminine" discourse that disrupt the symbolic order while liberating in a cathartic way anxieties from perceived oppression or constant stress. Julia Kristeva includes glossolalia as a form of the "poetic language" that serves to support the speaking subject when she is threatened by the collapse of the signifying function. Unfortunately for those who believe in this spiritual gift, Kristeva labels it a "psychotic" discourse that echoes the rhythms and intonations of infants.

On 26 January 1847, several weeks after Snow's "five-day visit with the girls" that renewed the practice of glossolalia among the Mormon women, Snow wrote "In Sacred Union," ostensibly a poem about the role of sacred music in the church. But



there are a number of indications that the poem can also be read as the women's reclamation of their promised spiritual gift, speaking and singing in tongues.

Snow occasionally sang in tongues to her sister-wives, with Patty Sessions offering interpretations. In this poem Snow's "songs of the righteous" could very well include the same spiritual gifts these righteous women had exercised when the Relief Society was first organized. In the first stanza Snow calls upon her sister-wives to unite in music's sweetest strains, and her image of the "fountain of delight" hints at the literal eruption of ecstatic love and spirituality (*jouissance*) the women shared at times throughout the year in Winter Quarters. The emphasis was upon using this spiritual gift to unify the sisters, which indeed was one of the effects of the glossolalia. It is the union of the women that is sacred and the sacredness is symbolized in the women's musical discourse whose origins lie not only with the holy fathers but also with "the ancient mothers." Snow's penultimate stanza distinguishes between "the minstrelsy of earth" and the "Bright patterns" of music that prove things of noble worth. This division of two types of music, one earthly and one celestial, intimates a division of discourse as well: one symbolic, authoritative, objective, linear, "masculine," what the apostle Paul calls singing with understanding; and one semiotic, ecstatic, mystical, healing, harmonic, "feminine," what Saint Paul labels singing with the spirit (1 Cor. 14:15).

I suppose a sad conclusion to this fascinating experiment with glossolalia is the evolution of the spiritual gift in the Mormon church. Sarah M.

Cleveland, a counselor to Emma Smith in the Relief Society, said that she "many times felt in her heart what she could not express in our own language." But because Joseph Smith had given women "the liberty to improve the gifts of the gospel," Cleveland took advantage of the opportunity extended to her and spoke "in a powerful manner" in the gift of tongues. (Patty Sessions interpreted.) Glossolalia was the early women's claim to direct experiential knowledge of the divine, and it provided them with an accepted channel of communication with God. However, Joseph Smith also warned the women of misusing the gift, and in 1900 Joseph F. Smith said the gift of tongues was easily imitated by the devil. Bruce R. McConkie further demoted Eve's tongue when he claimed that there was a host of gifts far more important. Today the gift is almost exclusively considered the ability of missionaries to learn a foreign language quickly! Hence, this most "feminine" of all *écriture féminine* has seemingly been appropriated by masculine discourse and effectively silenced.

Grant T. Smith  
La Crosse, Wisconsin

### *Insights and Assistance*

In my essay on Mormonism and Freemasonry (Fall 1994) I made specific acknowledgement in the notes to people who shared information which I found useful and relied upon. In addition, I would like to acknowledge my debt to Kent L. Waigren, with whom I have had numerous conversations over the years concerning Masonry and Mormonism and who

helped orient me and provided me with many of the sources cited in the notes; to Art deHoyos, an expert on Masonic ritual, who shared many invaluable insights into the historic development of the ritual; to Massimo Introvigne, a scholar of European Freemasonry, who helped me understand the significance of the European source material cited in the notes; and to Richard S. Van Wagoner, who provided me with his research material concerning the relationship between Freemasonry and Mormonism. I am also indebted to Rick Grunder, Jean-

François Mayer, and R. A. Gilbert (as well as others who asked not to be acknowledged by name), who supplied me with written material and the benefit of their insights. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the valuable suggestions provided by early reviewers of the essay, including Massimo Introvigne, Art deHoyos, Lavina Fielding Anderson, Kent Walgren, Allen Roberts, and Martha Sonntag Bradley.

Michael W. Homer  
Salt Lake City, Utah

# RELEASE: A Moment

*Dixie Partridge*

I did not plan survival or otherwise  
    craving absence for so long  
so when awakened that snowless night

the sky a slush of stars  
    as when I was a child  
the twisted tightness gone  
    from inside me

I could not quite recall the end  
    of the dream dropping from me  
like petals—grief falling away  
    seasonless

to stand me next to the birch tree  
    long glass between . . .  
its darkness paler  
    than my own

empty and open, pliantly rooted  
    my fingertips yearning  
the first bud of leaf  
    allowing the knowledge

that if I do not speak  
    even my voice  
will stay beautiful



# Sterling Moss McMurrin: A Philosopher in Action

*L. Jackson Newell*

STERLING M. McMURRIN, A MAN OF LETTERS, has spent most of his life in the world of affairs. A distinguished professor of philosophy at the University of Utah for four decades, he held key academic leadership positions at this university both before and after his service as United States Commissioner of Education under President John F. Kennedy. My task here is to explore the origin and nature of McMurrin's beliefs about religion, education, and government, and describe his perspective on the institutions that serve them.

McMurrin's paternal grandfather, Joseph W. McMurrin, was a noted Mormon orator and one of the presidents of the First Council of Seventy. He was at the height of his powers in the late 1920s when Sterling was growing up. It was something of a shock to Sterling as a child, then, when his father told him of his grandfather's 1885 gun battle with a federal marshal in Salt Lake City.

Polygamy was still officially sanctioned and practiced by the Mormons at that time, and federal officers were pursuing the church's leaders. McMurrin's grandfather was then a bodyguard for Mormon church president John Taylor, who was in hiding. President Taylor was meeting secretly with his top assistants in Salt Lake City's Social Hall when Marshal Clarence Collin appeared outside, prepared to make the arrest of his career. He encountered Joseph McMurrin, not for the first time, and their tempers flared. The two reached for their sidearms. McMurrin took three slugs and nearly died. Collin escaped unscathed, but, fearing mob retaliation, he took refuge at the Fort Douglas army post on the east side of Salt Lake City. This incident, which reverberated in Utah's consciousness for decades, became a matter of national concern. Fearing a Mormon uprising, the federal government strengthened its garrison at Fort Douglas.

Sterling McMurrin reflected recently on the impact this family revela-

tion had on him as a small child: "From a boy's perspective, it's a story about a federal marshal trying to kill your grandfather because of his religion." He continued with a chuckle, "This tends to give you certain impressions about both the government and your religion."<sup>1</sup> He encountered newspaper accounts of this story while researching a term paper as a college student and saw it then "as a more complicated affair, the way reality really is."

This story provides a key to understanding McMurrin's eventful career: he served institutions—religious, governmental, and educational—in many ways, but especially by keeping his eyes on, and giving voice to, their essential values. He has always placed his hope in liberal education and his trust in individual freedom.

Now eighty-one years of age, Utah's E. E. Ericksen Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and History, Emeritus, has retired from the university but not from his habits of thinking and writing . . . nor from practical effort.

#### ORIGINS AND IDEAS

The third of four sons, Sterling Moss McMurrin was born in Woods Cross, Utah, just north of Salt Lake City, in 1914. His McMurrin grandfather was in these years a man of great stature in the church hierarchy, a defender of the faith. The McMurrin clan was very much a part of Utah's cultural and religious elite. Sterling's father, Joseph Jr., was a school teacher and probation officer, but Sterling characterized him as "a misplaced university professor."<sup>2</sup> He loved good books, entertained diverse ideas, and had his son reading Plato, Darwin, and Dante as a youth. He, himself, pursued a lifelong passion to reconcile the claims of reason and religion.

McMurrin described his mother, Gertrude Moss, as "completely open-minded and approachable, a person whose company I always delighted in."<sup>3</sup> She hailed from ranch country, though hardly from humble circumstances. Her father, William Moss, was co-founder and general manager of the Deseret Live Stock Company, one of the largest and most successful ranching operations in the Great Basin.<sup>4</sup> The Mosses were educated, practical people seasoned in the rough-and-tumble of frontier agriculture and business. A cattle baron who was also

---

1. Transcript of conversation with McMurrin, #1, 2 May 1984, 16, in my possession.

2. *Ibid.*, 25.

3. *Ibid.*, 22.

4. To provide some sense of the scale of this ranch, a portion of it—221,000 acres—was recently reported in a story about the real estate holdings of the Mormon church. *Arizona Republic*, Chart, 30 Jan. 1991, 5.

president of a bank in northeastern Utah, "Bill Moss was in charge wherever he went," his grandson recalls, "people stood back as he walked along the street."<sup>5</sup>

McMurrin describes himself as growing up "half ranch kid, half city kid."<sup>6</sup> At age nine he began wrangling horses for his Grandfather Moss, and two summers later he was pulling his own weight among the ranch hands of the far-flung cattle and sheep operation. He returned home each autumn—not when school started but after the cattle and sheep were brought down from their summer ranges in the high country.

From his early teens, McMurrin was completely at home with ranch hands, physical labor, and practical challenges, just as he was with books, ideas, and Utah's privileged class. His boyhood experience was both physically and intellectually robust. "I think it is true," he reflects, "that I grew up with an essentially critical, but not cynical, approach to the world."<sup>7</sup>

Although McMurrin continued to work for the Deseret Live Stock Company each summer, his family moved to Los Angeles when he was fourteen and he attended and graduated from Manual Arts High School.<sup>8</sup> Asthma attacks threatened his health during his first year at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). He moved therefore to the drier climate of his native state where he enrolled at the University of Utah in the autumn of 1933. George Thomas, the veteran university president, befriended him and appointed him to work in the archives on the university's history.<sup>9</sup> Enlivened by Professor E. E. Ericksen, among others, McMurrin took his bachelor's degree in history in 1936 and his master's in philosophy in 1937.

Sterling met Natalie Cotterel in the University of Utah library when they were both undergraduates. He was immediately taken with her, and they courted one another for several years. She converted to Mormonism, and they were married by Apostle David O. McKay in the Salt Lake temple on 8 June 1938. They have five children. An independent thinker, Natalie has been central to Sterling's life and work for over half a century.

During the seven years following receipt of his master's degree, McMurrin taught in the Mormon church's seminary and institute system which provides religious education for high school and college students as an adjunct to their secular studies. Students flocked to him, astonished

---

5. Conversation # 1, 30.

6. Notes from Sterling M. McMurrin-L. Jackson Newell Conversation, 12 May 1985, in my possession.

7. Conversation #1, 27.

8. Conversation #2 transcript, 19 Dec. 1984, 117.

9. *Ibid.*, 117.



by his theological knowledge and intellectual daring. His former seminary supervisor, Lynn Bennion, remembers McMurrin's classroom atmosphere: "No theological claim was too sacred to be challenged, and no idea was too wild to merit consideration. At the same time, Sterling knew more about Mormon theology, and the whole history of Christianity, than anyone in our system, before or since."<sup>10</sup>

McMurrin's experience as a teacher in the Utah, Idaho, and Arizona seminaries led to his appointment as director of the LDS Institute of Religion across the street from the University of Arizona. But his intellectual courage brought him increasingly into conflict with his ecclesiastical superiors. Meanwhile, he began investing his summers in further graduate study in philosophy and religion at the University of Southern California. His escape from the tightening institutional church environment was in the making.

Approaching thirty, McMurrin resigned his educational position with the LDS church and devoted himself to full-time doctoral study at USC. He completed his Ph.D. in May 1946. The preface to his dissertation—which explored the relationship between positivism and normative value judgments—revealed more than such documents ordinarily do about a scholar's philosophy. He began:

The moral crisis that characterizes our time is . . . the wide disparity . . . between man's technical attainment in the control of his environment and the effectiveness of his moral and spiritual idealism. It is increasingly imperative that the conduct of men and nations be brought under the dominion of a moral ideal. As a practical issue, this is . . . a responsibility of religion, education, and politics. But the integration of fact and value, necessary to both personal and social character, demands a theoretical foundation which will give meaning and direction to practical effort.<sup>11</sup>

In over 250 articles, books, and essays on philosophy, education, and religion, McMurrin has continued to explore the themes found in this early study: Human institutions must advance human dignity and respect individuality. Ethics must keep pace with technology.

These ideas emerged and were nurtured by the circumstances of McMurrin's family, youth, and early career experiences, but the larger historical backdrop of his formative years should not be overlooked. During McMurrin's college and graduate school years he witnessed the global depression, Nazi holocaust, fascist and communist totalitarianism,

---

10. Conversation with Lynn Bennion, 22 Oct. 1987. J. Boyer Jarvis, a student of McMurrin at the University of Arizona, has remarked to the same effect.

11. Sterling M. McMurrin, "Positivism and the Logical Meaning of Normative Value Judgments," Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, May 1946.

World War II, and the birth of the atomic age.

While eschewing affiliation with any particular school of philosophy, McMurrin is an existentialist without the angst. He has a tragic sense of history, fears for the human prospect, and writes and speaks doggedly in pursuit of his ideal of social justice. He values individuality and treasures liberal education as the best hope for liberating humans from ignorance, bigotry, and violence. While he harbors no illusions about the future, McMurrin personally finds comedy in almost every situation—a gentle, ironic humor.

#### ACADEMIC CAREER

Even before receiving his doctorate, McMurrin was appointed to the philosophy faculty of the University of Southern California. After three years, however, his health again began to suffer from the California climate. The University of Utah beckoned once again, and he joined its faculty as Professor of Philosophy in the fall of 1948. There he taught, except for occasional short-term assignments, until 1988.

As a young philosophy professor at Utah, McMurrin enjoyed the same success—and controversy—that he had as a seminary teacher a decade earlier. He was an intellectual lightning rod from the start. Frequently invited to give public addresses and scholarly lectures, McMurrin addressed himself to a variety of social and philosophical issues. Always concerned with human dignity and freedom, he became a spirited defender of academic freedom on campus and an early activist in the field of civil rights in the community. He spent the 1952-53 academic year on the east coast as a Ford Foundation Faculty Fellow, lecturing and pursuing his scholarship at Columbia University, the Union Theological Seminary, and Princeton University.

In 1954 McMurrin co-edited a book of readings, *Contemporary Philosophy*, and the following year he and B. A. G. Fuller published *A History of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* and *A History of Modern Philosophy*.<sup>12</sup> The latter two works appeared subsequently in Polish translation. By now McMurrin was “deaning” and his energies were already being diverted from his scholarship. His internal struggle between ideas and action had been joined.

During the academic year 1957-58, however, another old theme resurfaced. McMurrin was invited to give a lecture on “The Philosophical Foundations of Mormon Theology” at Ohio State University. The paper attracted much attention, and McMurrin put on something of a road

---

12. B. A. G. Fuller and Sterling M. McMurrin, *A History of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, 3d ed. (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1955). *Contemporary Philosophy*, a book of readings, was published by Henry Holt and Company in 1954.

show when the University of Utah, Brigham Young University, and Utah State University asked for repeat performances. Published by the University of Utah Press in 1959, and still in print, this treatise remains the most penetrating explanation of Mormon philosophy available.<sup>13</sup> McMurrin extended this theme with a lecture series a half-dozen years later that resulted in the publication of a larger volume entitled *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion*.<sup>14</sup>

Understanding and explaining Mormon theology was by no means the same thing as accepting that theology or supporting the policies of the Mormon church. For his persistent criticism of specific church practices, especially for its denial of priesthood ordination to males of African descent, McMurrin was regarded by many leaders and members as a dangerous heretic.

In 1954 a Mormon church leader initiated excommunication proceedings against McMurrin.<sup>15</sup> When David O. McKay, then president of the Mormon church, heard the news he called McMurrin on the phone and arranged to meet him that same afternoon at the University of Utah Student Union. When the two men sat down, McKay exclaimed: "They can't do this to you. They can't *do* this to you! If they put you on trial, I will be there as the first witness in your behalf."<sup>16</sup> After a long and cordial discussion, McKay ended the conversation with heartfelt advice: "Sterling, you just think and believe as you please."<sup>17</sup> He did. And through five successive presidents, the Mormon church has continued to endure McMurrin's criticism—and benefit from his loyalty. He remains a fierce defender of the LDS church, its leaders and members, except on matters of doctrine and practice where he differs in principle.

I think I have told enough of Sterling McMurrin's story to provide a sense of his character and style. He has a remarkable capacity to disagree without being disagreeable, to form authentic friendships and comfortable relationships with people of vastly differing perspectives, and he has never eschewed controversy. These qualities continued to characterize him as he moved toward the center of American intellectual and political life. The crucible of his own culture and the American west had prepared him to move easily and effectively in wider and wider circles.

---

13. *The Philosophical Foundations of Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1959).

14. *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1965); also still in print.

15. See Blake Ostler, "An Interview with Sterling M. McMurrin," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17 (Spring 1984): 18-43.

16. Conversation #5 transcript, 7 Nov. 1986, 47; confirmed in personal conversation, 21 Feb. 1994.

17. *Ibid.*

## THE PATH TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

Sterling McMurrin's success as a teacher, author, and social critic led inevitably to responsibilities in academic administration—as well as to teaching at higher and higher levels. The two sides of the man—the thinker and the actor—continued to vie with one another, and it was the combination of the two that propelled him to Washington, D.C.

Just six years after joining the University of Utah faculty, he was appointed Dean of the College of Letters and Science, a position that he held until 1960 when he became Vice President for Academic Affairs. In these administrative posts McMurrin delegated generously and reserved his own energies for setting directions and recruiting internationally respected scholars to the faculty. He created a university environment rich in academic freedom and intellectual opportunity.

Walter Paepcke, a wealthy Chicago business executive, established the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies in that Colorado ski resort at about the same time that McMurrin was assuming his deanship at the University of Utah. Looking for a scholar-teacher who could help lead his executive seminar program for high public officials and prominent citizens, Paepcke had been advised by mutual friend Meredith Wilson that McMurrin was an ideal person. Wilson, then secretary of the Ford Foundation, had recruited McMurrin to the University of Utah faculty when he was dean there. Paepcke simply called McMurrin on the phone (interrupting a luncheon meeting), offered him the opportunity, and secured his agreement to affiliate with the Aspen Institute.<sup>18</sup>

From 1954 to 1962 Sterling, Natalie, and their children spent part of every summer at Aspen where he led one group of distinguished leaders after another in reading classic texts and considering the saliency of ideas contained in them to contemporary national and world affairs. Just as he had entranced undergraduates, he now stimulated and prodded Walter Paepcke's invited guests: Supreme Court justices, Cabinet officers, foundation presidents, foreign ambassadors, U.S. diplomats, labor leaders, and heads of international corporations. McMurrin made them think, and he made friends. Among many others, he formed lasting bonds with Walter Reuther, William Brennan, Byron White, Eric Severeid, Thurgood Marshall, and Russian physicist George Garnow. Attorney General Robert Kennedy proved a source of some irritation. His bare feet at a seminar session, McMurrin thought, took "Aspen's generally informal environment a step too far."<sup>19</sup>

More completely at ease with ideas and with people of stature than ever, but largely unconscious of his notoriety, McMurrin was now acting

---

18. Conversation #7 transcript, 14-15 May 1988, 2-21.

19. *Ibid.*, 3-4.



on a national stage. In 1958 the Department of State invited him to go as a special envoy to Iran where he spent five months as an advisor to the chancellor of the University of Tehran. His responsibilities were to work on stemming the tide of communism among students by improving relations between them and the faculty and administration.<sup>20</sup> Both before and after that sojourn, Columbia University had tried to lure him to New York with an endowed chair in philosophy in their Graduate School of Business.<sup>21</sup> McMurrin was now widely sought for advice in national policy circles concerning public education, higher education, and national human resource needs.

On the Wednesday night before John F. Kennedy's inauguration in January 1961, McMurrin received a telephone call from Alvin Eurich, Vice President for Educational Programs at the Ford Foundation. Eurich explained that he and several colleagues had been asked by the new administration to propose someone to be United States Commissioner of Education. "I want to put you forth for that position and would like to know, first, whether you will accept it?"<sup>22</sup> McMurrin had never been active in politics, nor had he ever publicly supported the election of any local or national candidate. Nonetheless, he told Eurich that if asked to serve he would do so. Because of his asthma condition he had not served in the military during World War II and, he explained later, felt this would help to dispatch an obligation he owed his country.

The day of Kennedy's inauguration McMurrin received a telephone call from the new Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, Abraham Ribicoff. He told McMurrin of his wish to have the president appoint him Commissioner of Education and asked how soon he could come to Washington to talk it over. "A day or two," was the reply.

Once in Washington, Ribicoff and McMurrin met briefly and quickly established a rapport. Before they finished their initial meeting, Ribicoff sent a message to Ralph A. Dungan, Kennedy's special assistant for administrative appointments, who shortly arrived from the White House. He joined the interview with McMurrin, then asked him to step outside the room while he called President Kennedy.

Moments later Dungan and Ribicoff congratulated McMurrin and said the president would announce his appointment as United States Commissioner of Education that evening.<sup>23</sup> McMurrin was not asked if he would accept, nor was he told what his salary would be. But Ribicoff

---

20. Conversation #4 transcript, 14 Jan. 1985, 17.

21. *Ibid.*, 21.

22. Conversation #8 transcript, 4 Oct. 1988, 1. John W. Gardner, then president of the Carnegie Corporation and the Carnegie Foundation, also nominated McMurrin.

23. *Ibid.*, 2-6. This story was also the subject of a personal conversation between McMurrin and me on 1 October 1992, notes in my possession.

made it clear from the outset that HEW was a huge department and that he would run the health and welfare ends of it if McMurrin would take care of education. Said the former governor and future U.S. senator from Connecticut: "Sterling, let's give them hell: and if it doesn't work out you can go back to teaching philosophy and I'll go back to selling neckties."<sup>24</sup> The commissioner-elect went to work immediately—commuting weekly to and from Salt Lake City. It was all informal at first, of course, until after Senate confirmation—which did not occur until April due to the flood of nominations from the new administration.

When the confirmation hearing finally commenced, Senator Joseph S. Clark of Pennsylvania asked McMurrin if, as a Mormon, he could support school desegregation. He responded: "I'd like the committee to know that I do not agree with the policies of the Mormon church with respect to Negroes, and I have made my position very clear to the leadership of the Mormon church. I'm 100 percent in favor of desegregated schools."<sup>25</sup> Clark and others were highly supportive of McMurrin, and his appointment won swift approval from the Senate. And, indeed, desegregation of education, the equalization of educational opportunity, and federal aid to public schools were priorities McMurrin pursued vigorously as commissioner.

The National Education Association was at odds with the new commissioner from the start but did not oppose his appointment. The conflicts were predictable, especially because of McMurrin's advocacy of merit pay for teachers. Further, he had come out of higher education, he had no previous relationship or membership in the National Education Association, and he did not intend to continue the cozy relationship that had long existed between the NEA and the U.S. commissioner's office. McMurrin did not know until later that one of Kennedy's criteria for selecting a new commissioner was that he or she *not* come from NEA's membership.

Setting the sights for New Frontier and Great Society education policy, and illustrative of McMurrin's relationship with the NEA, was an early incident involving Admiral Hyman G. Rickover. In the wake of the Soviet Union's launching of the Sputnik satellite in 1957, the father of America's nuclear navy had become concerned about the state of U.S. education and took a series of trips abroad to compare our system with those of other nations. He wrote extensively about what he regarded as the evils of progressive education and attracted much attention with *Education and Freedom* (1959), *Swiss Schools and Ours: Why Theirs Are Better* (1962), and *American Education: A National Failure* (1963).

---

24. Conversation #8, 21.

25. *Ibid.*, 23.

In the midst of all this, Congressman John E. Fogarty, who chaired the House Appropriations Subcommittee, invited Rickover to state his views for the benefit of Congress. The admiral did not think American education was competing with Soviet education, and he launched a volley of criticisms at our system. Later, Congressman Fogarty asked Commissioner McMurrin for his views on the condition of American education, pointing out that Congress already had such a statement from Admiral Rickover as well as McMurrin's predecessor, Lawrence Derthick.

Pleased to respond, McMurrin had begun preparing his thoughts for the assignment when his deputy commissioner approached him and said that the NEA and the Office of Education, as with past assignments of this type, would work together through a joint committee to compose the requested document. Shocked, McMurrin replied, "If it is my views Congressman Fogarty wants, then it will be my views, and no one else's, that he gets."<sup>26</sup> Reminding the commissioner that the deadline for submission was short, his aide pushed a bit further, suggesting that McMurrin could probably use some help. "I'll have it on time," McMurrin declared, and he did.

McMurrin wrote the essay longhand in one evening, had it typed by his secretary, and then spent a few days tinkering with it as his schedule permitted. He delivered the statement to the House Appropriations Committee, and Congressman Fogarty ordered the U.S. Government Printing Office to put out 100,000 copies of it. An abbreviated version appeared almost immediately in the *Saturday Review*.<sup>27</sup>

"A Crisis of Conscience" was pure McMurrin, and it set the tone and framed the agenda for federal education policy during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. "In education we are facing a crisis of conscience and collectively we are experiencing a sense of national guilt," he charged:

We cannot deny that today we would command far more knowledge and have far more creativity, civic character, and national strength if our schools had been more rigorous in their intellectual discipline and . . . more adequately structured to the needs of our society. We have with lavish prodigality wasted the talent and energy of countless persons.<sup>28</sup>

He said that the aims of education cannot be defined in narrow or nationalistic terms, nor does education serve national security primarily

---

26. *Ibid.*, 82-83.

27. Sterling M. McMurrin, "A Crisis of Conscience: A Report on the State of American Education," *Saturday Review*, 16 Sept. 1961, 58-78.

28. *Ibid.*, 58.

through technological and scientific training. Without a “world-minded” citizenry, McMurrin wrote, “We cannot hope to satisfy the obligation of world leadership that history has conferred upon us.” He called for better education across the board, urging that we

guard against the tendency to suppose that our national well-being is served primarily by advances in technology, however important and timely these may be . . . The study of politics, history, and philosophy is fundamental to our cultural life, and no nation can achieve a lasting strength unless its character is expressed in great literature, art, and music.<sup>29</sup>

McMurrin called on the federal government to provide sound leadership for American education “as well as material support,” while not interfering with the tradition of local and state control over curricula and teaching. He proposed a new policy of *general* federal financial support for education, but one that avoided national control of schooling or educational and economic planning—which might infringe upon individual choice of educational pursuits.

Specifically, McMurrin offered this agenda for improving American educational practice:

—Raise expectations for student performance, with more emphasis on solid material, less on “trivial studies and activities.”

—Set new standards of teacher preparation, including a bachelor’s degree in liberal education prior to specializing in teacher education.

—Select teachers according to higher intellectual standards, including stronger preparation in the subjects to be taught.

—Bring teacher education into the mainstream of university intellectual life, rather than keeping it apart.

—Base teacher education on a wide range of academic disciplines, and rely less heavily on psychology as the knowledge base for the profession.

Finally, he admonished the nation to “turn a deaf ear to those reactionaries among us who are forever insisting that we abandon our democratic ideal and model our education on the aristocratic patterns of some European nations.”<sup>30</sup>

---

29. *Ibid.*, 59.

30. *Ibid.*, 78.



This essay was the expression of one mind; it was anything but the product of a committee. The commissioner sought consciously to put the education of teachers and educational standards in the forefront and talked chiefly about ends. He left economic issues like teacher salaries to follow as means. It was not a statement the NEA would have made. It appears that the content of the essay, more than the rebuff of their offer to help write it, put McMurrin in increasing conflict with this union.

"A Crisis of Conscience," republished in several places, won laurels from policy makers across the country and inspired much debate and a fair amount of federal legislation. Like the president he served, McMurrin's ideas were bold and clear, his language graceful and compelling.

Telling the story of McMurrin's *actions* as U.S. Commissioner of Education, and assessing his influence on educational policy, will be my task in another publication. Here I am concerned chiefly with his *ideas*, where they came from, and how the philosopher and the actor in McMurrin competed for his energies. Suffice it to say, he did work diligently for higher standards in education and teacher preparation, general federal aid to education, desegregation of schools and colleges, and the simplification of the federal education establishment. The NEA objected to much of what he tried to do, with comparatively little effect.

#### RETURN TO UNIVERSITY LIFE

After less than two years as U.S. Commissioner, McMurrin submitted his resignation. Several factors seemed to have played into this decision. Still in his forties, McMurrin had children in school, and he and Natalie did not enjoy having their lives scattered across the country from the Potomac to the Great Salt Lake. He also missed teaching and writing, having been in one administrative post or another since assuming the deanship at the University of Utah in 1954. To go home to Salt Lake City would be to go home to his scholarship for the first time in many years.

The catalyst for McMurrin's decision was HEW secretary Ribicoff's announcement that he planned to resign as Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to run for the United States senate in Connecticut. McMurrin and Ribicoff had worked well together, and that relationship would clearly be missed. In late summer 1962 McMurrin announced that he would be leaving the administration. Secretary Ribicoff objected seriously to his decision.

Abraham Ribicoff had advocated splitting HEW apart and creating a new cabinet-level Department of Education. He intended to propose legislation to achieve this change and told McMurrin that he expected the president to appoint him United States Secretary of Education if the cabinet-level department was established. McMurrin strongly favored cabi-

net-level status for education, but he had no interest in moving to such a post himself.

Before leaving office, McMurrin was approached by Ralph Dungan, still President Kennedy's appointments chief. Dungan said the president wanted McMurrin to suggest the names of a few people who might be qualified to succeed him. The retiring commissioner gave Dungan three names in rank order: Francis Keppel, professor of art and dean of faculty of education at Harvard; James E. Allen, New York Commissioner of Education; and Harold Howe III, superintendent of a New York school district.

The degree to which McMurrin's judgment continued to affect federal education policy throughout the 1960s is illustrated by subsequent events. The three distinguished educators he nominated turned out to be his three successors as United States Commissioner of Education. President Kennedy appointed Frank Keppel (1962-65), President Johnson appointed Harold Howe (1965-69), and President Nixon appointed James Allen (1969-70).

Sterling and Natalie McMurrin left Washington, D.C., in September 1962, resuming their lives in Salt Lake City and his professorship at the University of Utah. It was not, however, to be a quiet period for them. He turned down a number of college and university presidencies, endowed professorships, and board memberships—including a high position with the Ford Foundation. But he accepted appointments to a number of national and international commissions for the improvement of education and human resource development. For fifteen years he was affiliated with the Committee for Economic Development as an advisor on research and director of the committee's projects on education. During this period he was also a trustee of the Carnegie Foundation.

In 1964 McMurrin was appointed E. E. Erickson Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of Utah, a chair that he held until he retired in 1988. But he was inveigled back into the administration in 1965, presiding over the institution's educational affairs as provost. Within a few months of McMurrin's accepting the position of provost, however, the dean of the Graduate School, Henry Eyring, announced his retirement, and McMurrin let the president know that he would prefer to serve in that capacity. He never liked budgets or personnel administration, and the move to the graduate dean's office in 1966 relieved him of those burdens, by and large. He served in that role for twelve years, teaching a course every academic term throughout this period.

I came to the University of Utah in the middle of McMurrin's years as graduate dean. I was a youthful newcomer as dean of Liberal Education, and my introduction to McMurrin and his thinking was two-fold. First, I remember receiving "Communique No. 4." to all faculty from the

graduate dean. I was taken aback by the imposing title of McMurrin's proclamation and remarked to that effect to a veteran faculty colleague. "Oh, that's just Sterling having fun," was the quick reply. "He *seldom* writes a memo, but when he does he makes the most of it."

My second encounter with McMurrin was over a piece I wrote about the aims and purposes of liberal education. He read it and sent me a critique.<sup>31</sup> I still call his letter my "Well now, young man" initiation. McMurrin pointed out that I had pitted liberal education and career education against one another—a most unfortunate mistake. The *reasons* for liberal education go far beyond economic considerations, my senior colleague pointed out, but critical thinking, broad understanding, and other values associated with liberal education do, in fact, have enormous economic benefits. And these benefits accrue both to the individual and to the society. McMurrin, of course, was right on all accounts.

As graduate dean, McMurrin pioneered a process for combining the use of internal committees and external scholars for evaluating the quality of graduate programs and academic departments. This method played a major role in raising the stature of the University of Utah, and it has been widely emulated by research universities throughout the nation.

#### RETROSPECTIVE THOUGHTS

As he looks back over his career, McMurrin has said on a number of occasions that he regrets having spent "so damn much time in administration." Then why did he spend over twenty years at high levels of leadership? I have no doubt that he always enjoyed being in the thick of university, state, or national issues. While it is true that he never enjoyed the routine acts of administration—directing the work of other people, building and presiding over budgets, and writing memoranda—he very much enjoys being in a position to formulate broad policies and cut through bureaucratic nonsense. And, unquestionably, he enjoyed the tangible benefits of administrative office: highly skilled assistants, discretionary funds, and a forum from which to affect university and community directions and values.

Sterling McMurrin is clearly a man of quick and independent intellect, a philosopher by nature and disposition. He lives in a world of ideas, he thinks in terms of principles and ideals, and, beyond the sheer force of his mind and personality, he has never been oriented toward, or particularly good at, practical politics. But he is a builder of institutional sagas, a steady and graceful voice who reminds members and leaders alike that

---

31. Sterling M. McMurrin to L. Jackson Newell, 5 May 1975, Box 6338 H265, University of Utah Archives, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

educational and religious organizations exist not to perpetuate themselves but to advance knowledge, support learning, and promote human dignity.

A prolific lecturer, writer, and teacher, McMurrin has never thought of himself as anything but a professor. A professor doing a stint in administration much of the time, but a professor still. As his administrative career wound down, his scholarship picked up significantly, lending further credence to the depth of his professorial identity. Since 1980 he has written or co-authored two books on philosophy and religion,<sup>32</sup> written and edited several other volumes, and published dozens of articles.

The nature of the influence and leadership that McMurrin exercised throughout his career, the scholar-in-action who forged institutions primarily through the strength of his ideas—and his courage in expressing and acting on them—continues to have enormous appeal. To whatever extent this kind of leadership ever flourished, however, it is clearly more difficult now than in the past. Bureaucracies are bigger, hierarchies are more complex, and external regulations are more confining than ever before—making leadership increasingly mechanical, reactive, and politically driven.

In universities this shift has made deans, vice-presidents, and presidents increasingly career administrators once they are appointed. They must still start as academics, but once in administration the die is often cast within two or three years, after which a return to teaching and writing is increasingly difficult and eventually unlikely. As a result, their orientation shifts inevitably away from education and knowledge. The university administration itself, and the advancement of their own careers, become the ends. The parallels with contemporary Mormon church leadership are compelling.

A careful analysis of McMurrin's leadership makes it clear not only that his career peaked in a different era, but, more importantly, that he was able to orchestrate his administrative appointments in such a way as to occupy those rare positions such as graduate dean where he could still keep the real ends of education—thinking, teaching, and writing—at the forefront. Leaders with McMurrin's orientation and temperament are clearly needed in all institutions today, religious, educational, and governmental. The question is whether the evolution of these institutions has significantly reduced the probability of the emergence of leaders who possess a moral vision . . . and retain the capacity to act on it.

---

32. Sterling M. McMurrin, *Religion, Reason and Truth: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1982); Obert C. Tanner, Lewis Max Rogers, and Sterling M. McMurrin, *Toward Understanding the New Testament* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990).



Contributing no doubt to Sterling McMurrin's success in keeping two kinds of lives going simultaneously, a reflective one and an action one, were his powerful childhood heroes and experiences. His grandfathers flourished in sharply contrasting walks of life; he revered them both, and as a teenager he fully tasted each way of embracing the world. Man of ideas, man of affairs: McMurrin refused to choose one over the other. At the age of eighty, he is writing books and essays in Salt Lake City and breeding horses in St. George.

#### CONCLUSION

From his earliest adult experiences and professional writing, McMurrin was drawn to the clash between authentic individuality and institutional loyalty. The moral and spiritual idealism about which he continues to speak and write is prompted by a deeply felt concern about a widening chasm between actual community, corporate, and organizational practices and those conditions that advance human dignity and individual liberty. In McMurrin's view, the unfortunate convergence of increasing organizational size and rising technological complexity has pushed our major social institutions further and further from ethical accountability for their actions and, consequently, diminished the realm within which individuals can make and execute moral judgments of their own.

The development of moral and ethical principles, therefore, and the critique of institutional behavior, have interested and concerned McMurrin throughout his life. Further, education and religion, the chief institutions that have conveyed moral ideals among past generations (and powerfully influenced McMurrin in his youth), have been noticeably weakened in their moral influence throughout the twentieth century.

This schism between technology and morality, between organizational conduct and organizational ideals, was the force that animated McMurrin's protest of the Mormon church's earlier proscription of priesthood ordination to males of African descent and drove his efforts to reform American education and religion. Neither religion nor education have been spared the awful dichotomies of displaced institutional values and bureaucratic abominations, but McMurrin has remained devoted consistently to the improvement of both of these institutions—to the end that they might make their badly needed offerings to a society he sees as being in serious decline.

Sterling M. McMurrin's lifelong intellectual leadership springs from strongly held and clearly stated ideas about human nature, formal education, and social organizations. Since his early adulthood, he has devoted himself to the refinement of religion, education, and government. Sorting out ends and means within his own cultural heritage as a youth, and as a

young scholar, put a distinctive stamp on his leadership that has served him, and his institutions, well. He has never seen himself as a servant of the institutions themselves. Rather, McMurrin has been, and continues to be, a trustee of the ideals they were created to advance.

# Sleeping on Wood

*Nancy Hanks Baird*

The blue ice is melting  
off the high ridge,  
draining down through the trees.  
The blade of rock darkens in the sun.  
Greening trees take what they can  
before the ice streams  
funnel down the long valleys.

There are trees in my house,  
planed, tongued, full of water.  
If you caress the wood  
in the curves of your foot,  
you can feel the water  
swelling in the wood, like blood.

A child will sleep on a wood floor,  
pressing its cheek in the  
warm grooves,  
two skins, smooth as oil.  
The child is rooted in the wood;  
blood and water,  
living things,  
mingling as their lives arc.

The great trees lift into the sky:  
redwood, eucalyptus, banyan, acacia.  
Their hearts know no evil,  
their hands fill with gifts.  
Like the banyan,  
the man in this house,  
with every breath  
sends more roots into the  
heart of God,  
fastening himself there  
with ropes of power.

He and the child cling to the  
trees of life.  
In the night, under the sheets,  
I caress his foot,  
smooth and warm as wood.



# The Education of a BYU Professor

*Brigham D. Madsen*

IN THE FALL OF 1948 I BEGAN MY CAREER as a teacher of history at Brigham Young University and continued there until I resigned in the spring of 1954. During those six years I was an active participant in the beginning of an amazing transformation of a small liberal arts college with 4,000 students into what has become a large institution with 27,000 students and a nationally-acclaimed football team. The chief mover and shaker in this tremendous change was Ernest L. Wilkinson, a diminutive human dynamo, who would allow nothing to stand in his way of making BYU a well-known university while at the same time adding luster to the Wilkinson name. The following autobiographical essay may offer some insight and interest into those early formative years at the Provo school.

I was born in Magna, Utah, but grew up in Pocatello, Idaho, where I had all my schooling, including two years of college at the Southern Branch of the University of Idaho, now Idaho State University. After serving an LDS mission to the Cumberland Mountains of east Tennessee and then along the eastern seaboard of North Carolina during the years 1934 to 1936, I finished my undergraduate program in history at the University of Utah, graduating in 1938. The next year I was employed as principal and teacher in a combined grade and high school at the small crossroads of Pingree, Idaho, seeking the experience of working in primary and secondary education before earning graduate degrees to prepare for university teaching.

Marriage to Betty McAllister of Salt Lake City followed in August 1939, after which we left at once for Berkeley, California, where I enrolled as a graduate student in history at the University of California. Awarded an M.A. degree in 1940, I started a Ph.D. program which was interrupted by the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. I then became a member of the AFL-CIO Carpenter's Union in Oakland, California, and worked for over a year as a carpenter foreman of a crew of twenty men doing finish work



on shipyard housing at Richmond, California.

Uncle Sam called me in July 1943 to train as an infantryman in a rifle company at Camp Roberts, California. The following summer I was sent to Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia, where I graduated first in my class of two hundred officer candidates. I was kept as a Training Officer at Fort Benning until the end of World War II when I was sent to Germany where I spent the last eight months of my three-year military career at the headquarters of the U.S. Third Army stationed at Bad Tolz and Heidelberg, the last four months as a first lieutenant and director of the Historical Division of the Third Army.

In August 1946 Betty and I, now with two children, returned to Berkeley where I was able to complete a Ph.D. by July 1948. During those two years I benefitted from the GI Bill, worked occasionally as a carpenter for a local contractor, and also was a teaching assistant for the Department of History at the university. Incidentally, when I accepted my first professorship at BYU I suffered a cut in pay. This brings the story of my life to the point when my autobiographical account can take over.

As my last semester at the University of California neared an end in the spring of 1948, I had to make a decision about a teaching job. Unlike the years before World War II, there were a number of positions available as GIs crowded the colleges and universities of the nation. The Department of History encouraged me to apply at Rutgers and Michigan State University, but eastern schools had little appeal for me. There was an opening at Humboldt State College in northern California which seemed attractive, but it was too far out of the beaten path. Another opportunity appeared at the new Sacramento State College which would have meant half-time teaching and half-time work in administration, but I wanted no part of academic management. As I look back, this last position would have been a great opportunity and I probably should have taken it. But my heart was in the Rocky Mountains where the University of Utah had just filled a position in my field with the selection of David E. Miller but where Brigham Young University was also advertising for two historians to teach in the field of U.S. history.

Richard D. Poll and I decided to apply for the BYU jobs and were interviewed by Apostle Albert E. Bowen while he was attending Oakland Stake conference. Because of my skepticism about religion, I was uncertain about whether to go through with the application and decided to postpone a decision until after I had seen how Elder Bowen conducted the interview. In other words, if he pressed me too closely and began asking personal questions about my beliefs, I was determined to look elsewhere for a job. To my surprise and relief, he turned out to be a temperate and common sense individual who merely pointed out to me that there were a lot of positions available and that if I felt I could not be comfort-

able at a church university, I should not consider BYU at all. With such general authorities in charge of the school, I could see nothing but a pleasant and profitable career at the Provo campus. Both Poll and I accepted when BYU president Howard S. McDonald offered us positions as assistant professors at a salary of \$3,500 a year. As an epilogue, we were both amused when we heard McDonald declare in a sermon before the Berkeley LDS Ward that although BYU had just lost the famous and accomplished composer LeRoy J. Robertson to the University of Utah, he had made up this loss by hiring professors Madsen and Poll.

Dick Poll and I were assigned an office to share in one of the World War II buildings on campus and looked forward to our first year of teaching. There were about 4,000 students at BYU in the fall of 1948, many of them ex-GIs whom I enjoyed teaching as members of a special fraternity of war veterans. Before becoming president of BYU in July 1954, Howard McDonald had worked in the public schools as deputy superintendent of schools in San Francisco and superintendent for the Salt Lake City District, which position he left to come to BYU. During his years as head of BYU, his most important contribution was to convince the Board of Trustees, made up of members of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, to continue the Y as a church university. Some trustees had considered selling the school to the State of Utah or withdrawing from it in some other way and allowing the church's Institute system to take care of the religious education of Mormon youth. McDonald added a number of new and young faculty members to take care of the burgeoning student population and continued the humane, enlightened, and academically-free spirit which had been representative of the school during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. But he never fully meshed with his trustees who expected to be involved in day-to-day decisions. His experience had been that a board set general policies while allowing the chief administrator to make the daily decisions and operate the institution within the established guidelines. McDonald and the board repeatedly clashed over this. It affected his administration because he was unable to get large enough appropriations to support faculty salaries properly and to run the school efficiently. Also, he seemed to be unable to shift gears from being a public school man to becoming the president of a university. His speeches to students and faculty were sometimes on such a level that all of us felt embarrassed both for him and ourselves. Nevertheless, he allowed his faculty great freedom to teach, and we liked this about him.

Poll and I moved into a combined Department of History and Political Science at the Y. The senior member, Christen Jensen, had been dean and for a few months acting president of the university. His field was political science, his teaching was dry but competent, and he had never published anything of consequence. Stewart Grow was a recent addition

in political science who had just started work on a Ph.D. at the University of Utah. He was a congenial colleague and a good teacher. The other political science man was William Carr, whom I had come to know at Berkeley where he was working on his Ph.D. Bill Carr was not an impressive teacher, too caught up in minutia to see the grand picture, but an amiable and friendly person. Russell Swenson, a Ph.D. in history from the University of Chicago, chaired the department and was a man of very liberal tendencies and consummate good humor. Poll and I were assigned to handle classes in U.S. history.

The teaching load for each of us was four classes per quarter, a stupendous assignment for a first-year instructor who had to make preparations for classes he had never taught before. I worked night and day during the first year preparing lectures which often would take up only thirty to forty minutes of a fifty-minute period. But the students were understanding and joined in a discussion at the end of the hour to use up the time. I was forced to get up at 3:00 a.m. each morning, repair to my office, and write feverishly until classes started. For my first three years at BYU, and until a few new faculty members were appointed, I taught a two-quarter survey course in English history as well as a third quarter of English constitutional history, a two-quarter survey course in Latin American history with a third quarter devoted to the history of Mexico, a two-quarter survey course in U.S. history plus courses in the history of the American West, American historians, and a graduate seminar. It was not until the fall quarter of 1949 that I could stop to take a breath. Poll and I were recognized as good teachers and soon attracted a following among the students. I enjoyed teaching then and always have; I looked forward to my classes every Monday morning and marvelled that the administration was willing to pay me for doing something which was so much fun and which I would have gladly done for nothing if the little matter of making a living for a family had not been a factor.

The older faculty members were pleased to see the eager young teachers being added to their roster in the years after World War II and welcomed us to their mostly liberal and enlightened ranks. P. A. Christensen of the Department of English was the recognized intellectual leader on campus, supported by other outstanding scholars like geologist George Hansen, biologist Thomas Martin, English scholar Karl Young, and the old gadfly John C. Swenson. They all became special friends as they seemed to recognize a kindred spirit in me. There was also a good cadre of graduate students in these first years who went on to some prominence in their respective fields after completing doctoral degrees elsewhere. I remember especially Kent Fielding who earned an M.A. with me, and others like Irene Briggs and Carolyn Stucki, and three men who later joined the BYU faculty—Paul Hyer in Far Eastern history, DeLaMar

Jensen in medieval history, and George Addy in the Latin American field.

The chief liability to what was otherwise pleasant circumstances at BYU was the low salaries which President McDonald was unable to rectify because of his declining influence among his conservative board of trustees. In the spring of 1949, when I discovered that Bill Carr was receiving a salary of \$4,000, or \$500 more than I while not having a Ph.D. or being a dynamic teacher, I headed for the president's office, confronted him with the disparity, and demanded at least equal pay with Carr. McDonald assented to my request. Throughout my six years at BYU I was constantly struggling to meet the financial needs of a growing family. This meant that I was forced to do carpentry work on the side to supplement our income instead of spending my time researching and writing. I was soon involved in evening and weekend work for other faculty members who learned of my carpenter trade and who were struggling to build homes for themselves in the most economical way possible.

An outstanding scholarly event for me in the fall of 1949 was the invitation to represent BYU at the "First Congress of Historians of Mexico and the United States" held in Monterey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, 4-9 September. The school paid my expenses and I was able to associate with 125 prominent historians from the two countries for an entire week. I roomed with John Higham, a young, able historian from UCLA who was on the program. The first three days went as peaceful as a wedding bell, but on Thursday and Friday the Mexican professors reading papers blasted the North Americans whose ancestors had stolen the great Southwest from Mexico in the war of 1846. We American historians listened in pained silence to the tongue lashing given us. As far as I know, there has never been a "Second Congress." The meeting was a memorable one for us and, I suspect, for all of the other North Americans present.

Although unorthodox in some respects and a rather free thinker, I was still a committed Mormon when I joined the BYU faculty as evidenced by a short treatise I wrote for myself in January 1948, before accepting a teaching position there:

#### WHAT MY RELIGION MEANS TO ME

Religion is fundamentally concerned with ethics, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints especially emphasizes the importance of maintaining a high moral tone among its members. In this day of quick marriage and quicker divorce, of increasing juvenile delinquency, and of a general lowering of long-established social standards, the Word of Wisdom and the Thirteenth Article of Faith gain new meaning. Mormonism provides a culture in which youth can be nurtured and trained towards a future of accomplishment and well-being.

But the gospel as taught by Joseph Smith is more than just a guide for

this life; it encompasses time and space. The questions of every intelligent being about the reason for life, the nature of the Creator, and the prospect of future existence after death—all become understandable as the searching light of the Priesthood traces the eternal plan of salvation through the pages of scripture.

Within the organization of the Church, moreover, there is unceasing opportunity for growth and development. The principles of service to others and of participation in the ordinances of the Gospel both stem from the basic philosophy of “eternal progression,” God’s glory is intelligence, and the boundless opportunity of new worlds to conquer presents a never-ending challenge to His children.

There were, however, disturbing incidents during my first years at BYU which challenged these noble concepts of my last year at Berkeley. In the spring of 1949 the student body officers asked permission of the administration to hire the black orchestra leader Dizzy Gillespie to play at the annual prom but were turned down because blacks were not allowed to hold the Mormon priesthood at the time and for other reasons I never learned.

Several younger faculty were outraged by what we discerned as a racist and discriminatory policy on the part of school officials, and two faculty members and I paid a visit to the office of the dean of students, Wesley P. Lloyd, to demand that the administration allow the Gillespie band to appear. Lloyd was sympathetic and understanding but convinced us there was nothing he could do to change the minds of members of the board of trustees. I became quite upset that a university would support such intolerance.

One other incident was even more dismaying. During the spring of 1950 the young son of a religion faculty member, whose family lived in one of the apartments in our Wymount Village building, wandered away from a baby-sitter and drowned in a nearby canal, finding access to it through a gate that had fallen into disrepair. The whole community was shocked by the tragedy, but at least a few of us were angered even more to hear another religion faculty member explain, in his sermon at the funeral, that the death of the little boy was probably a good thing because now he would not have to face the sinful temptations of life and would be forever in the arms of Jesus and destined for the highest degree of glory. To make matters worse, the following day as I was repairing the broken gate which had led to the accident, the deceased boy’s father happened along and instructed me that I was wasting my time. According to him, if the Lord had determined to “call someone home” any efforts on my part or that of anyone else to repair a gate or whatever else would be a waste of time and energy. I couldn’t believe it and, of course, convinced that the Lord helps those who help themselves, fixed the gate anyway.

This same member of the religion department later displayed his anti-intellectualism by assuring me that all that was necessary for a higher education was to study the four standard works of the church; one need not read any other literature. Attitudes and beliefs of people like this man were too common among some BYU faculty and seemed to belie that the school was a real university at all.

In June 1949 I first met the man who would take McDonald's place as president of BYU. The school planned to honor the long career of Christen Jensen by giving him a testimonial dinner, and Stewart Grow and I were appointed as co-chairs of the committee to make the arrangements. Grow and I decided to invite as speaker, Ernest L. Wilkinson, recently prominent for his successful \$32 million judgment in the land claims case of the Ute Indians against the U.S. government and the most prominent of Jensen's former students. Later some of our liberal friends and other more bitter Wilkinson-haters insisted that his later becoming president of BYU was all our fault. At the banquet J. Reuben Clark of the First Presidency was seated at the head table along with Christen Jensen, President McDonald, Stewart Grow, and me. In his hour-long speech, directed at Apostle Clark, Wilkinson spent about five minutes extolling the virtues of Jensen and then launched into a well-prepared exposition of what the future guidelines should be for BYU. He emphasized two objectives: the importance of theology and of history. He insisted that BYU would become the greatest educational institution in the world if it trained students to have the desire and knowledge to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations. Revealed religion should not be separate and apart from education. He emphasized that there was no point in continuing the school unless it added truth to the gospel message to benefit all humanity.

But it was his declaration of the importance of teaching history that caught J. Reuben Clark's attention. Wilkinson asserted that every student at BYU should be required to take a fundamental course in the history and government of the United States because of the Mormon belief in the U.S. Constitution, the LDS concept of government, and the Mormon explanation of the rise and fall of governments. It was obvious to all present that Clark was delighted with the speech. Grow and I were convinced that it made Wilkinson president of BYU.

In my conversation with Wilkinson that evening, I told him of my interest in his Indian case and explained that I had written a Ph.D. dissertation on the history of the Bannock of Idaho. He was immediately alerted because his firm was then negotiating with the Shoshoni and Bannock at Fort Hall to become their tribal attorneys to fight a land claims case against the federal government similar to the successful suit for the Utes. The following spring he invited me to spend the day with him and his



partner, John Boyden, at the Hotel Utah with about fifty Shoshoni chiefs and subchiefs from Fort Hall and the Great Basin. Wilkinson wanted me there as a consultant to aid in the process, and I was asked to answer questions about some supposed Bannock who lived in eastern Oregon. A few weeks later Wilkinson asked to borrow my copy of my dissertation. I complied but then had a difficult time getting it back after it had been in his Washington, D.C., office for two years. It came back to me well-thumbed and obviously well-used.

In a final note about this relationship Wilkinson made arrangements through me to hire Kent Fielding, one of my M.A. candidates, for a summer to research the question of the valuation of western tribal lands during the mid-nineteenth century. Fielding agreed to do so and subsequently earned his master's degree with a thesis only a few pages long but which contained some priceless tables of land values. It was the shortest thesis I ever approved but one of the best.

By October 1949 Howard McDonald decided to get out of his deteriorating relationship with the board of trustees by taking a position as the new president of Los Angeles State College. The board accepted his resignation with alacrity, asked Christen Jensen to become acting president while a search was made for a new leader, and started the process, although it soon became obvious that the choice had already been made and that Wilkinson was the man. He was named to the position on 27 July 1950, but the faculty did not receive formal notification until September 1950. Jensen continued to serve until February 1951, when Wilkinson arrived from the successful conclusion of his Ute case to take over as head of BYU. All of us waited to see how this human buzz saw would change affairs at our Provo school.

The takeover of Brigham Young University by Ernest L. Wilkinson in February 1951 introduced immediate and dramatic changes to what had been a somnolent campus. He insisted to his board of trustees that all school matters go through him—no more run-arounds by faculty members with their complaints to favorite apostles. He also expected that “correct” economic doctrines (i.e., free enterprise) would be taught and practiced at BYU; that the university would continue to function as a marriage broker for Mormon students; and that the new administrative arrangements which made the president of the church the president of the board of trustees would assure Wilkinson direct access to the top hierarchy in the church.

With these concepts set, the new president plunged into a vigorous campaign to get more money for faculty salaries, for student housing, and for classroom and office buildings to provide for what the board thought would be a university of about 10,000 students. They didn't realize that their vigorous administrator had even larger ideas of expanding

the school. Every Wilkinson conference with the board of trustees was like a day in court, complete with dozens of charts, volumes of statistical information, and an overwhelming demonstration of his command of the programs he was championing. He was ruthless and indefatigable in gathering information to support his cases. In one instance, upon learning that I was engaged in writing the annual article on "Utah" for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and that I had certain classified information about the population figures of another university, he asked to see the statistics and then without my permission incorporated the facts into a presentation. I never allowed myself to be used by him again in this fashion.

With such tactics and a disregard of the means as long as he achieved his ends, it is little wonder that he and the older, more liberal faculty members clashed from the beginning. The confrontation started when P. A. Christensen was asked to preside as master of ceremonies at the faculty banquet in Wilkinson's honor in February 1951. Christensen introduced Wilkinson by saying that the Washington, D.C., lawyer was really John C. Swenson's second choice for president and that when someone asked who Swenson's first choice was, Swenson had said, "Almost anyone." Wilkinson laughed at the sally but not too heartily. The place of the faculty in helping to establish policies at the university came to a head early when Wilkinson unilaterally announced that instead of one campuswide devotional assembly held traditionally at 11:00 a.m. each Monday, there would now be three such meetings—on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 11:00 a.m. The faculty protested that this arrangement would cut too much into class time, but their pleas were ignored. Therefore, someone started a petition to Wilkinson which was signed by over a hundred faculty, including me, formally protesting his action. A staff member discovered the petition and delivered it to Wilkinson, who called a special faculty meeting. He rushed into Maeser Hall, flushed with anger, and denounced the petition signers as cowards who signed papers behind his back. Hugh Nibley, a former paratrooper, and I were the first on our feet to challenge him, but Hugh beat me to it by exploding back at Wilkinson. Then when I had a turn, I asked what part the faculty would have in formulating policies for the school. Wilkinson answered bluntly, "None whatever." I said, "Thanks. Now we know where we stand." We had not known before that the board of trustees had already agreed with their new president that we would not be allowed to be involved in administrative matters in any manner. As a footnote to this meeting, the faculty now determined to stay away from all faculty meetings as long as our voice was not to be heard anyway. At once Wilkinson directed that henceforth he would take the roll at the meetings and absent faculty would be punished. At the next meeting, with a fairly full house, when the roll reached P. A. Christensen he crumpled it up and put it in his

pocket. Wilkinson lost that skirmish, but few others.

A basic part of Wilkinson's program to win churchwide support for BYU and to make it a great university was his plan to select about thirty faculty to visit western stake conferences with various apostles. Church president David O. McKay agreed that each faculty member would have fifteen minutes to extol the virtues of BYU and to urge church members to send their sons and daughters to the Provo school. In the first phase of this campaign, from April 1951 to May 1952, visits were made to well over one hundred stake conferences. Opposition developed at once, especially from members and Mormon faculty at the University of Utah, Utah State University, Weber State College, and various junior colleges in Utah, about church influence being used to steal students from their institutions. A modified program was implemented the next year during which visiting BYU faculty were admonished to talk only in general terms about the value of higher education. After two years, the campaign was terminated, having achieved Wilkinson's objective when the BYU student population reached more than 10,000 by 1956.

As one of thirty or so speakers, I had some interesting experiences with several apostles and seventies. I went on two stake visits with Joseph L. Wirthlin, presiding bishop of the church, one to Oakley, Idaho, and one to a stake in Los Angeles. At Oakley in the Saturday evening priesthood meeting one sun-tanned farmer told Wirthlin in no uncertain terms that he and the other members of the ward were not going to follow certain recent directives from church headquarters about their MIA, or young people's program, because the instructions were designed for an urban population and not a rural community. Wirthlin agreed with the man. If he had not, there would have been open rebellion in the small Mormon town. I saw this drama repeated several times in other plain-spoken Mormon stakes in outlying districts. The independent pioneer spirit was still alive and functioning in the 1950s. On the way to Los Angeles by train, as the conversation lagged, I innocently asked Wirthlin what he thought of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal whereupon the good bishop stood in front of his seat and got so purple in the face that I was afraid he was about to have a stroke. I hurriedly got him a cup of water; the crisis passed; and I never mentioned politics and Democrats again. Wirthlin was, one might acknowledge, a devoted right-wing Republican, a predilection which nearly all of the general authorities have even today.

I had a delightful time at the Boise, Idaho, stake conference with Oscar Kirkham of the Council of Seventy who turned out to be as generous and friendly as his older brother, my mission president, James E. Kirkham. I traveled to Rigby, Idaho, with a member of the church's General Welfare Committee who told amusing stories about various general

authorities he had come to know. Evidently, all of them enjoyed stories at the expense of each other. He explained in one incident concerning the gregarious and open Apostle LeGrand R. Richards and the more precise and formal Stephen L. Richards that LeGrand had gone to visit a stake in the Uintah Basin where he stayed at the home of the new stake president, whose wife wanted to ensure that everything was perfect for the comfort of her first apostolic visitor. Unfortunately, the bed in the upper bedroom occupied by the church dignitary fell down during the night and the stake president had to help put the springs back in place. As Apostle Richards came down the stairs the next morning, he said to the discomfited lady of the house, "What did you think last night when you heard the bed fall down?" She answered, "I got out of bed, fell to my knees, and thanked the Lord that it was LeGrand R. and not Stephen L." At Rigby, just a few miles from Ricks College at Rexburg, Apostle Joseph L. Merrill warned me to be careful in my speech by not mentioning BYU but to talk about the glories of higher education. I rather liked Joseph Merrill.

In a trip to one of the stakes in Idaho Falls, Idaho, I rode up and back from Salt Lake City with Apostle Henry D. Moyle, a man of much egotism who spent the entire journey telling me his life story accentuated by all of his successes. He told me of one incident during his mission to Germany when he was asked to translate into German a sermon delivered by Apostle Rudger Clawson to a large congregation of Saints. Clawson evidently said some things which would have created enormous political problems for the church if Moyle had translated them verbatim. Instead, as Moyle put it, "Apostle Clawson gave one speech, and I gave another." Moyle was particularly sensitive over the fact that the new church president, David O. McKay, had just demoted J. Reuben Clark from first counselor in the First Presidency to second counselor. As a strong supporter of Clark, Moyle told me with some satisfaction that at the last Thursday council meeting of all the apostles, McKay had asked Clark to take care of some important financial matter. As Moyle put it, "J. Reuben Clark is still in charge." At Idaho Falls, Moyle launched into a strong rebuke of the Saints there because they had not supported a Mormon candidate for mayor in the recent city election and had allowed a free-wheeling gentile to become the city leader. Afterwards, the stake president rebuked Moyle and indicated that his speech would cause the Mormon people all kinds of difficulty. In a final note about my trip with Moyle, he had driven up to Idaho Falls in his new Cadillac at speeds up to one hundred miles an hour, so when he asked me to drive back on the return trip, I immediately pushed the car to 80 miles an hour, being careful to keep it well below 100. He said rather gently, "Please don't go over 70."

On two trips with Marion G. Romney and his wife I enjoyed traveling with them and appreciated their down-to-earth approach to things.

We went to Malad, Idaho, and to Kanab, Utah. At the latter place Romney was so taken with my speech that he asked for my address and phone number, saying he intended to write a letter to Wilkinson commending me for my performance. I went with another apostle to Malta, Idaho, but didn't fare as well. Spencer W. Kimball and his wife were gracious, but Kimball was critical of my speech. The place was Malta, Idaho, in the desert of the Snake River plains. The day was hot, and Kimball put a lot of people to sleep in the morning session of conference. In the afternoon meeting, I told the well-known story about Karl G. Maeser, first president of BYU, who, because of his manifold administrative duties, was often late to the class he taught. When he showed up tardy one day, he discovered that the students had tied a donkey to his desk. He immediately said, "I see that you have chosen one of your number to take my place during my absence." The congregation thought it was mildly amusing and listened to my talk. In the meeting with stake and priesthood leaders after the afternoon session, Kimball looked sternly at me and said, "There is no room for levity in the chapels of the Lord." I recovered on the ride home when I told Kimball that we must be related in some way because my great-grandfather, Hosea Cushing, was an adopted son of his grandfather, Heber C. Kimball. He made note of that fact for his family record.

In a final stake meeting, President Joseph Fielding Smith rode with me to Richmond, Cache County, Utah. It was a delightful weekend for me; I found him to be a pleasant companion with a strong Puritan bent. At the morning session of stake conference, he angered the congregation by announcing that he wanted them to go home and read a certain passage in the Bible but then added, "You probably never read your Bibles." Then he referred to a section of the Book of Mormon with the observation, "A lot of you probably don't even own a copy of the book." Finally, he said, "I see you have a baseball diamond just across the street from this chapel, and if I weren't here, most of you would be over there watching a ball game instead of being in church." After the meeting, the crowd just turned their backs on him and walked out. Only the stake presidency congratulated him on his sermon. I had the impression that he felt it was his mission to call the Saints to repentance, but the fact that he sermonized like Cotton Mather did not endear him to many people. Nevertheless, he was most gracious to me and everyone when away from the pulpit.

At the dinner served in the home of the stake president, all at once Smith looked sternly at me and demanded, "What's the matter with BYU?" When I asked what he meant, he explained that the Friday before, his daughter and grand-daughter had gone to Provo to arrange for housing for the latter so she could attend BYU, but there was none available. I

rather startled the local people around the table by saying, "As I remember, you are a member of the board of trustees of BYU." After he acknowledged that obvious fact, I told him that we would be happy to build sufficient student housing to avoid such problems as he had encountered with his grand-daughter if his board would grant us money for that purpose. He smiled and said no more about the subject. I hope it helped Wilkinson in his search for building funds.

In one other incident, on the trip home as the conversation faltered I asked him what he thought of Juanita Brooks's book on the Mountain Meadows massacre, which had just been published. He exploded, "Very bad, very bad!" That ended that conversation. He was a real gentleman, a Puritan of strong conservative religious convictions, but rather uninformed about matters outside his own field.

Wilkinson's campaign to preach BYU to the western states of Zion was a success and demanded an increased faculty to meet the learning needs of a growing student body. Under the new regime, recruiting new teachers did not involve members of a department at all. The dean of the college concerned would offer a preliminary list of candidates, and Wilkinson would then make the final choice by himself. One April day in 1954 when I was acting chair of the Department of History and Political Science, a man walked into my office, told me his name was Dr. Albert Fisher, and announced that he was a new member of the department. Al reminded me sometime later that I had responded by saying, "The hell you say." None of us in history and political science had ever heard of him or that the administration was even contemplating adding a new person to our ranks. Fisher thought we knew about his appointment, and both he and I were embarrassed by the situation. There is nothing like the direct approach. Fisher turned out to be a very competent teacher and scholar in his field of geography.

The faculty sensed Wilkinson's contempt for most of them as non-doers who probably couldn't earn a living in the "real world" that he knew. His attitude was sharply revealed to me one day at the conclusion of a meeting I had with him in his office. He said to his secretary, "Show in . . . oh, I've forgotten his name. You know, that anthropologist." It was Wells Jakeman, waiting in the outer office. The contempt in Wilkinson's voice was picked up by everyone in the room.

My salary was so low that when I was offered an opportunity to spend a spring quarter working at much higher wages with my father and brothers in their construction business in Salt Lake City, I made arrangements for other faculty to take over my teaching assignments and asked Wilkinson for a quarter's leave of absence. He refused and did so in such peremptory fashion that I fumed all day. By that evening at the annual faculty dance the news was all over campus that I had been



turned down but was not going to accept it. At the dance William F. Edwards, the poor Rigby, Idaho, farm boy who had made his fortune as a stock broker in New York and was now financial vice president at BYU, took me aside and pleaded with me to accept Wilkinson's decision because my determination not to would worsen relations between the president and the faculty. My answer was no! The next morning I was in Wilkinson's office to tell him that if I didn't get the leave, I was going to resign. He granted me the leave, and I was able to make enough extra money to buy a few items of furniture and help pay some hospital bills. Standing up to him was the only way to gain his respect. He was hard-nosed and ruthless.

Throughout my three and a half years of service with him, Wilkinson continued to give me practical assignments as one of the few faculty members that, in his judgment, had a pragmatic sense at all. One spring he asked me to direct the campuswide Y day activities during which students and faculty cleaned up the campus. The same quarter when high water caused flooding along the Provo River, school was declared out for one day while I directed students and faculty in sand-bagging the river bank. But the most illuminating incident, both in revealing his perception of me and in emphasizing his combative nature, was when he asked me during my last year at BYU to chair the scholarships committees which not only made financial grants to scholars but also to all the athletes. He had already received approval from the board of trustees that athletes were not to receive preference over other students. In his conference with me, he indicated that while he had been a poor student at BYU he had watched with some dismay and anger while athletes had received such comfortable jobs as distributing pillows at games, at high pay, while he and other students had to scramble for a living and tuition. He was not going to allow similar sinecures in his administration and said rather bluntly that I was the only faculty member with the intestinal fortitude to deny athletes scholarships they didn't deserve. I took the responsibility with deep reservations, knowing that he was attempting to fly in the face of American sports tradition and could not win in his attempts to destroy inter-collegiate athletics at BYU. Although I have always done my best to be loyal to my boss, in this instance, I was not and, in fact, refused to follow his instructions in what I considered to be the best interests of the school. I met with athletic director Eddie Kimball, told him what was going on, and made arrangements to help the athletes all I could. After I left BYU the next spring, I learned that Apostle Stephen L. Richards heard that Wilkinson was trying to destroy the athletic program and put a stop to it. Wilkinson then decided that if you can't fight them you'd better join them and supported athletics from then on in his usual whirlwind fashion. The fact that BYU was selected as the number 1 football team of the

nation in the 1980s may be one of the results of this turnaround.

Not all of my attention focused on Ernest Wilkinson. I had a number of opportunities to represent BYU as a speaker at high school commencements and baccalaureates. Two which come to mind were at Park City, where the principal warned me that this was a mostly Catholic community, and at Parowan, where the principal apologized to me because three or four of the male graduates tottered down the aisle in an obvious drunken condition. He said that he could not stop the longtime macho practice which had held forth for some years at Parowan. A more memorable speech was one I gave at the San Juan County Annual Livestock Growers' Association banquet held in the Monticello High School gymnasium. Charley Redd, my neighbor and a good friend, was president of the organization that year and asked me to speak. When I inquired about a subject, he replied that he thought I was a man of good sense who would choose an appropriate topic. At the time Senator Joseph McCarthy was attacking "Communists" in the State Department and elsewhere, and I decided to attack him and his irresponsible character assassinations before the cattlemen and sheepgrowers of San Juan County. What I didn't realize was that this was perhaps the most politically conservative county in the state whose people admired McCarthy as a defender of the true Republican faith. As my speech progressed, the atmosphere in the gym became colder and colder. At the end, there was no applause at all as everyone glared at me. I have always thought it was one of the best speeches of my life but delivered to the wrong crowd (or perhaps it was to the right group after all). Charley joked that he had better get me out of the county before they lynched me.

During the banquet I listened to some enjoyable western stories as each stockman told a tale on the neighbor sitting next to him. Apparently, it was an established custom at these annual get-togethers as each rancher saved an especially interesting yarn to tell on one of his friends. I remember one. Bill had been out on the spring round-up, rubbing shoulders with other cowhands in the rough give-and-take of campfire conversation, and not yet prepared to settle down to civilized life when he rode into town on his way home. He stopped, astride his horse, at the fence of the leading society matron who was pruning and spraying her flowers. During the conversation in which Bill was having difficulty holding up his end, the lady suddenly turned to him and said, "Bill, have you ever had any aphids in your delphinium?" Taken aback, Bill answered, "I don't rightly believe so, but I once had a wood tick in my navel." This story gives the flavor of the other western stories of the evening. Charley Redd chose me as being the most likely conveyer of free enterprise doctrine in the Department of History at BYU and decreed that his eldest child, Katherine, should take her American history from me who would

be most likely to teach her correct economic principles. Kathy was very bright and easily earned an "A" in the class. One summer Betty and I were invited to spend a weekend at his ranch along with a few other faculty couples. Charley Redd was a man of substance, character, intelligence, and culture, and a real cowman. It was a privilege to know him.

Teaching remained my most enjoyable occupation at BYU. There were no awards at the time for outstanding teaching, but I believe I was recognized as one of the better instructors by both peers and students. Because of the heavy teaching load and my extracurricular building activities, there was little time for research and writing. Further, the academic climate at BYU was not conducive to publication. Faculty members spent most of their spare time gossiping about the latest outrage from Wilkinson or what the apostles were saying. At Betty's urging, in 1952 I sent a copy of my Ph.D. dissertation to Caxton Printers Ltd. of Caldwell, Idaho, and asked if they would be interested in publishing it. To my amazement they answered that with a few revisions they would consider printing it. Betty then undertook the task of retyping the whole manuscript for their consideration, and I hired a former BYU graduate student now living in Washington, D.C., to do some extra research for me at the National Archives. To make this long story short, the Caxton Press finally published the work as *The Bannock of Idaho* in 1952, when I was a full-time builder. The reviews were mostly favorable; the book is now out of print.

During my years at BYU I became a member of the "Swearing Elders," an informal organization founded by Sterling McMurrin and William Mulder, both on the faculty of the University of Utah. The purpose of the group of about forty men was to meet monthly to listen to speakers who had something of interest to say about Mormonism or the Mormon church. Several other BYU faculty were participants and traveled each month to the University of Utah where the meetings were held. One outstanding meeting featured historian Whitney Cross, author of *The Burned-Over District*, which discussed the religious revivals which swept upper New York State in the early 1800s when Joseph Smith was producing the Book of Mormon. While a few in the audience were attacking Joseph Smith as a doubtful prophet, Cross, although a non-Mormon, defended him as a man of ability. A second memorable get-together was to listen to Melvin Cook defend his concepts of the age of the earth with Bruce McConkie supporting him and Jennings Olsen, a philosopher from Weber State College, criticizing his ideas. The meeting degenerated into a heated argument. Church authorities seemed apprehensive about what was going on in the "Swearing Elders," but the group continued to meet.

There was an underground but small and discreet group of faculty at BYU who had for years been investigating historical aspects of the

church, especially the origin of the Book of Mormon. Foremost among them was Wilford Poulson who had spent a number of summers over a period of thirty years traveling through the areas of Vermont and upper New York where Joseph Smith had lived and collecting books which he might have owned or used and in other ways checking his history. As I began to question my own beliefs more and more, I decided to ask Poulson to share his discoveries with me, so that during part of my last year at BYU, 1953-54, I went to school with Poulson for an hour each week when both of us should have been attending a devotional assembly. He informed me of his belief that Joseph Smith had written the Book of Mormon himself using as a guide an 1825 book, *View of the Hebrews*, written by the Reverend Ethan Smith and published in Vermont near Joseph Smith's boyhood home. Poulson had a well-annotated copy of *View of the Hebrews* with numerous similarities to the Book of Mormon carefully marked. Ethan Smith's book had a theme similar to that of the Book of Mormon, that the American Indians were of Israelite descent, perhaps from the Ten Lost Tribes in Ethan Smith's opinion, and both attempted to prove that thesis by examining Indian beliefs, traditions, customs, and especially the ancient ruins of the Americas. Poulson seemed convinced that there were no visions, no angels, no gold plates, and that Joseph Smith had used his fertile imagination to write the Book of Mormon and had then organized his church. Poulson's arguments were persuasive to me as a professional historian who had been trained to examine evidence critically.

But the program which helped transform me into the agnostic I am today was Wilkinson's insistence in 1953-54 that starting that year members of the Department of History would be expected to teach a class in Mormon History in addition to their other classes. We were instructed to use Joseph Fielding Smith's *Essentials of Church History* as a text, perhaps the most juvenile and inappropriate survey of the history of the church ever written. I began to read B. H. Roberts's six-volume *Comprehensive History* as a basis for my lectures instead of Smith's book. I had never read Roberts before, and his approach and honest narration of facts were a revelation to me. As I progressed through the first volume in the office I shared with Dick Poll, I came to the "First Miracle of the Church," the story of the "levitation" of Newell Knight who found himself floating above his sick bed, hovering near the ceiling of his room. I slammed the book shut, turned to Dick Poll, told him what I had just read, and announced, "This whole thing is a lot of baloney."

From that time on I felt more and more uncomfortable and guilty that I was accepting tithing money for my salary while teaching Mormon students basic beliefs which were in opposition to traditional Mormon doctrine. I came to the conclusion that I could no longer continue to teach at

BYU. In addition, I became convinced then and still hold the conviction that Brigham Young University is not, has never been, and never can be a true university with proper academic freedom to teach students in the various disciplines and with all the room for free thought necessary in the educational process as long as the institution is controlled by the LDS church. There is subtle and sometimes not so subtle pressure to conform to the beliefs of the "True Gospel," whatever that is. If a faculty member steps over the line, doesn't attend church, or pay his tithing, or in any other way indicates that he is not completely orthodox and perhaps even engages in "bootleg" teaching of students in the privacy of his office, then he comes under close scrutiny, may not receive proper salary raises or promotions, and finally is given the word that he is no longer wanted. In my own field of history, perhaps the worst sin is omitting historical incidents which might embarrass the church or bring its doctrine into question and which then results in "faithful" or apologetic history. As a consequence, outsiders do not always know if they can trust histories written by some scholars who are on the church payroll.

My troubles with my conscience and with the absence of freedom to teach as I pleased with no fear of consequence came to a head in May 1954, about a week before the end of school. I sat down and wrote a brief letter of resignation to Wilkinson. My friends on the faculty were astonished at my decision to leave. I had no prospects of teaching at another school and knew I would have to work as a carpenter to support my family. When I talked to P. A. Christensen, he urged me to reconsider, saying that if I left it would start an exodus of other young liberal faculty away from the campus. He was right, because over the next two or three years a number of some of the most able left because of the tightened control exercised by Wilkinson and church authorities and the growing lack of academic freedom. Christensen finally said at the end of our conversation, "By damn, if I were as young as you, I'd leave too." My best friend, Dick Poll, was so upset that he accused me of "taking out intellectual bankruptcy" by giving up the degree I had worked so hard for to enter the materialistic world of business. He argued that I should remain with him and others to fight the creeping dictatorship from within. My answer was that it was a no-win situation, and I would not be on a faculty where I did not have the freedom to teach as I pleased. Further, I argued that he too would eventually be forced out, as he was some years later. It is interesting to contrast his convictions about "intellectual bankruptcy" with the point of view of an attorney that a builder friend and I had to consult about a legal problem just two years later. When the other builder introduced me as a former college professor now in the construction business, the lawyer ran around his desk, grabbed me by the hand, and exclaimed, "I'd like to shake hands with a man who has had the guts to leave teach-

ing and to venture out into the real world." Perhaps town and gown will never understand one another; I have learned to live in both worlds and have come to appreciate the values of each.

In my short note of resignation, I gave no reason for leaving. After school was out and I had already begun driving daily to Salt Lake City to make a living as a carpenter, President Wilkinson wrote me a letter demanding that I come to his office and explain my sudden decision to leave. I just threw the letter in the wastebasket. Two weeks later I received a second and more conciliatory note asking me to see him at my convenience. I threw it away, too. I only saw Wilkinson one other time, at dinner in a Washington, D.C., hotel on my first evening there just before I went to work for the Peace Corps in the summer of 1963. He spent the time during the meal denouncing the corps, while I defended the idea of voluntary service for America. He wrote me a couple of letters later in Salt Lake City disagreeing with ideas I had expressed in interviews with newspaper reporters. I could never hate him as some faculty at BYU did. In fact, I don't find it in my nature to hate anyone. Perhaps my experiences with a rough element in construction and the military gave me a better understanding of the man and his methods. I believe impartial thinkers must acknowledge his tremendous contribution to BYU in building a great physical plant, in raising student population to its present level, and in committing the church to make BYU into a great institution. If controls over the faculty and teaching have tightened, as they have, it is a natural consequence of the church wanting a firmer grip on an institution into which the general authorities are pouring a lot of money and attention.

When I visit the BYU campus occasionally these days, I come away feeling ill at ease at the precise order and strict controls which can be observed in the campus layout and student dress. I am much more comfortable with the democratic atmosphere of the University of Utah which tends to be a bit untidy but is much freer. If we make mistakes here, at least we faculty and students make them ourselves and are not under the domination of a rigid church hierarchy.

With my connections at BYU severed, I now turned my attention to a building business which was to occupy my time for the next seven years. Although I enjoyed the competition of work as a general contractor, I had not wanted to leave the academic world and did so only because, with my independent nature, I refused to stay any longer at an institution where academic freedom did not exist. During the following seven years of my self-imposed absence from university teaching, I continued to apply for positions in the academic field but without success. Finally in early 1961 an opening appeared on the history faculty at Utah State University. I applied for the job and was hired to teach U.S. history and the

history of the American West. I was once again teaching students and was pleased to be at a university where academic freedom was real and not an illusion.



# Wallace Stegner: The Unwritten Letter

*Karen Rosenbaum*

I REMEMBER WELL THE FIRST TIME I met Wallace Stegner because I wanted so much to prove him wrong.

The place was the University of Utah, a room in Orson Spencer Hall. The year was probably 1960 or 1961. Someone on the faculty had invited Stegner, one of the U's better-known alumni, to talk informally with English majors and student writers. I qualified on both counts.

Stegner appeared to me then the way he would always appear to me—handsome, erect, white-haired, modest, and gently cynical. In response to a question I asked, he said he wasn't optimistic about the possibility of a Mormon best-seller. He shook his head. "It takes too much explaining." He was an outsider who knew the lingo, but we couldn't expect *other* outsiders to understand. Like me, he had spent his adolescence and early adulthood in Salt Lake City, and he had great affection for the place, but I could tell he was glad that Mormonism wasn't a faith *he'd* been saddled with. Something inside me bristled. A Mormon *could* write Mormon fiction for *The New Yorker*. I just knew it was possible.

The spring of my senior year, I won a fellowship that would pay my way to any graduate school that would take me. In 1962 there were only two graduate schools of real interest to a young writer—and I didn't want to go to Iowa. I sent Stanford my application and some short stories, set in the places I knew best—southern Nevada and northern Utah. I waited nervously, impatiently. Finally I got word that Stanford and Stegner had accepted me in the writing seminar and the M.A. program. The U's creative writing teacher, Brewster Ghiselin, always skeptical of my abilities, bid me farewell with the advice to be a scholar, not a schoolgirl. I packed my typewriter, books, and clothes, rented a second-floor studio on Palo Alto's Cowper Street, and bought a three-speed bicycle with saddle baskets. I was ready.

Thirteen of us sat around the table in our room upstairs in the old

Stanford library. I was one of two women and the youngest and shyest person there. Only the man speaking wasn't making eye appraisals of his companions. Balding and bespectacled, he stuttered slightly, and his jaw jutted up and forward when he spoke. Stegner was in Vienna with a Stanford-abroad program. Richard Scowcroft would be our mentor for the fall quarter.

I knew something about Richard Scowcroft, something the others at that table didn't know. Scowcroft, too, was from Utah, but he had been a Mormon. That knowledge made me nervous, here, away from home. At heart a doubter, I was trying very hard to believe. At the U, I had had several jack-Mormon teachers, but if they were interested in my religious beliefs, they never let on. But here, at a party at the Scowcrofts' home, Scowcroft was squatting beside my patio chair. "You don't really *practice* Mormonism, do you?" he asked. I grunted. His jaw jutted forward and then dropped. "How can you *do* that?" I flushed, hunched over my knees, and made an unintelligible noise.

Sensing my vulnerability, Scowcroft was gentle in his criticisms of my stories. There had been a pause after he had read my first story to the group, and then someone breathed out and said, "Hey, that's *good*," and others chimed in. During the discussion, no one but Scowcroft knew it was mine, and I think Scowcroft was as surprised as I at the praise. That was one bright spot in a difficult quarter—I had no facility for Old English, and I worried a lot about Albert Guerard's Wordsworth seminar and the Cuban Missile Crisis and my new boyfriend, who seemed to me very old and very intense and who, though he was disguised in the fluffy white garments of a returned missionary, had turned out to be a wolfish unbeliever. I welcomed the end of the term.

Winter quarter Stegner appeared in our seminar room. Unlike Scowcroft, he announced who had written a piece *before* he read it aloud, so we concentrated on the story instead of asking ourselves, "Is this Michael's? Is this David's?" When he returned a story to me, there was often at least a full page of comments, typed, single-spaced. Only once was there a single paragraph. I had tried to write about my Seventh-day Adventist landlady and her wheelchair-bound and paralyzed husband. From my window, I often watched her scooting him about on the back porch. I was convinced that he was dead and that she had somehow preserved him like a stuffed parrot. The story didn't work. "It's a young person's view of age, it's cooked up, not felt," Stegner wrote. I went back to writing stories about young persons.

I had just turned twenty-two. That quarter I was troubled by Ivor Winters's Milton-bashing lyric poetry course and the rains that drenched me as I rode my bike down Palm Drive, but I had a new boyfriend (more intense and even older than the previous one—twenty-seven, but a genu-

ine convert to the gospel) and I was *almost* comfortable in the seminar room and at the parties at the married writers' homes, where an absence of furniture meant that we sat on the floor. The hosts would buy a six-pack of ginger ale for me, and I would dutifully drink a couple and then, full of sugar water which I wasn't accustomed to, would lean against the wall, listening in companionable silence. "Remember Captain Marvel?" someone would say, and everyone but me would shout, "Yeah!" "Did *you* send in two boxtops for his decoder ring?" "Yeah!"

"Do you think we can call Stegner 'Wally'?" someone asked. "How do you think he lost his finger?" asked someone else. We would read and wisely discuss *his* stories. "'Field Guide to Western Birds' is brilliant," said David Thorburn, the best critic among us. I preferred the "boy" stories, like "Goin' to Town."

The Stegners had a party too, to honor Saul Bellow, who had been on campus and who had met with our seminar during the week. I was enchanted by the Stegners' wild, green hill and their comfortable, woodsy home. There were ample chairs and sofas and big china dinner plates to pile food on and plenty of food. "Put a little coffee in that little girl's coke," Stegner said as I balanced my drink on my plate. I nodded shyly at Saul Bellow. I hadn't yet read *The Adventures of Augie March*, which David had assured me was one of the greatest of all American novels. The others gathered around Bellow. I found a couch seat and tried to listen. Later, when it became evident that I wasn't going to burrow into the circle, Stegner brought Bellow over to talk with me.

One day I set out for school as usual on my bicycle. Speeding down the side of a Palo Alto business street, I ran into a car door that suddenly opened. I straddled my bicycle, stunned, as the driver and a group of passersby gathered around. "I think I'm all right," I said and put my hand up to my face. It was covered with blood. Someone locked my bike to a lamp post, and two policemen put me in the back seat of their car and drove me to the campus infirmary. The resident taped the slit under my lip. I had missed my morning classes but headed over to the creative writing seminar. I met Stegner on the library stairs. "What happened to you?" he said. By now my jaw had begun to swell, and I looked as if I had had my wisdom teeth yanked out. I cheerily explained that I was fine. "You are not fine," he said. "Let's get you home." I protested but finally agreed to call my boyfriend to retrieve me.

By spring quarter the more confident writers—Mort Grosser, Ed McClanahan, Bob Stone—had nervously started to address Stegner as Wally. I had no desire to imitate them. To me he was and would always be Mr. Stegner. Besides the seminar, I took a regular lecture course from him that term, one in the American novel, and there I discovered Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. I discovered some things about myself

too—I had enjoyed all those reading list books set in England or Boston or the gothic South. But I, alone in my writing seminar, alone except for Wallace Stegner, was a westerner. I had to write about the West, the Mormon West. It was what I knew, what I was. And perhaps it was because Stegner was there that my little “western” stories were accepted, and I was accepted.

One of our last class meetings—it may have been at his home because we were outside—Stegner read us something he was working on. We listened carefully. I remember thinking it wasn’t ready yet, and I felt honored that he would share with us something that was that unfinished. I think it was the same afternoon that we heard part of Bob Stone’s novel, the one that would eventually be published as *Hall of Mirrors*, and Stegner wept a little at the power of the writing, and I wept a little at the power of the writing and at Stegner’s weeping.

Our last seminar began in our old seminar room in the library but ended with Stegner announcing he would buy us all drinks at a place on University Avenue. In his car he passed me and called out, “Want a ride?” Then he seemed to register that I was on my bicycle, and we both chuckled. I don’t remember much about the gathering other than it was rather dim in the bar and there was a lot of wistful laughing and I was drinking ginger ale. Stegner made us feel that we were one of the special groups he had worked with—not all had been so rewarding as we were. We wanted to believe it.

I would have some memorable correspondence with Wallace Stegner after I left Stanford and headed east. I was finishing up my master’s thesis under his direction, a collection of northern Utah stories, “a considerable dose,” he would say, of my child, adolescent, or young adult protagonists. He wrote pages of suggestions about “The Mustard Seed,” in which my young narrator almost drowned at a Mormon family reunion and *didn’t* have a near-death experience. “I have the sense,” he wrote, that the narrator’s “experience of life is deliberately thin, that she is so young and unformed that she hasn’t examined much yet; and that this thinness is supposed to have some relationship with the experience of death, which is also rather thin.” My experience with both life and death was rather thin. I had had some luck with elliptical writing—what I left out, I hoped, would somehow profoundly *suggest* to the reader all the maturity and wisdom I didn’t yet have. I fooled a few people. I could never fool Stegner. “I practically never say a thing like this to any student,” he wrote, “but I have the feeling that your story here is shorter than it ought to be.” And again, “Pull aside the sheet that screens your characters, so that I see *them*, not their shadows.” He added bits of gossip about our group and bewailed his lack of time. “I hope,” he closed one letter, “you save a few minutes a day for silent contemplation.”

In my Manhattan apartment, on my tinny portable, I typed and re-typed my western stories. Finally, both Stegner and I were satisfied. I re-typed the whole collection—my thesis—after work hours on the electric typewriter in my office at *Life* magazine and sent them to him in a shirt box. The letter I got back was a kind of screech. “Karen!” he wrote. “You didn’t apply for the degree!” Apply for the degree? You mean, I thought, Stanford didn’t just *know* I wanted an M.A.? Why did they think I was there? “But I’ve been cutting through the red tape,” he continued. I don’t know how he did it—but I got the degree only three months late.

Every two years Stegner published a book of short fiction culled from the seminars. He asked me if he could include my Logan cemetery story, my own favorite of my pieces, the one I *almost* got right the first time. I was, of course, delighted. When the book was published, however, the story that appeared was the always-troublesome near-drowning story, “The Mustard Seed.” I wouldn’t be able to mail copies to all my relatives. Too many of them were present at that family reunion, and I hadn’t even changed Great Uncle Moses’s name.

A few years later, I returned to the Bay Area and applied for a part-time position with the Oakland Adult School. To update my Stanford file, I wrote and asked Stegner to write a recommendation. I didn’t ask myself how he would know about my teaching skills. A couple of weeks later, I got a postcard from Scandinavia. He’d sent in the recommendation. “That ought to do it,” he said. A friend who worked at the Oakland Adult School told me that when the principal read my file, he said, “There’s a letter in here from God!” I got the job.

During the next years I taught community college students, wrote short stories during the summers, and read most of Stegner’s work—fiction and nonfiction. I heard his voice as I read *The Big Rock Candy Mountain* and *Angle of Repose*, my favorites of his novels. (When I went to the public library to check out *Angle of Repose*, I looked for *Angel of Repose*, because I’d misread the review, and the latter made more sense to me.) Of the nonfiction, I devoured *Mormon Country*, *The Gathering of Zion* (which I often used to enliven church lessons), *Wolf Willow*. The only book I couldn’t finish—and I wanted to, having just rafted down the Colorado River—was *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian*.

I thought of writing to him during those years, but I kept putting it off. I had accomplished so little. I wanted to report that I had written more, published more; that I had sold those Mormon stories back east, down south, everywhere; that writing about Mormons and Mormondom hadn’t confined me to the tiniest of critical audiences—those who understood the tradition and who, like me, saw the conflicts and ambiguities as universal. Like a child trying to please her father, I wanted Stegner to be proud of me. I guess I could have written him about my teaching because

I have tried to teach the way he taught, and I have felt good about that. But I could never write the letter that I longed to write.

In 1987 Stegner came to Berkeley to read from *Crossing to Safety* at the Black Oak bookstore. My husband and I arrived very early to assure ourselves of seats. I had seen pictures of Stegner, in reviews, on book jackets, and maybe I'd adjusted to any changes in his appearance, but he seemed to me to look just as he did in our library seminar room. During the question time I thrust up my hand to ask about the conflicts of writing and teaching, something he had just referred to. He looked at me oddly, then responded. Afterwards, I held my copy of his book for forty-five minutes while I waited my turn in the autograph line.

"Mr. Stegner," I stumbled, "you probably don't remember me. I was in the writing seminar twenty-five years ago."

"I remember you," he said. "You drowned!"

I laughed in surprise. I hadn't thought of "The Mustard Seed" for years. I cleared my throat. "Do you use a computer yet?" I asked.

"No!" he said. "I'm buying up all the used manual typewriter parts in the country!"

I saw him read a year or so later, and again he seemed unchanged to me. I knew, of course, that he must be aging and had heard that he'd had a hip replaced. I even told myself that one day I would pick up the paper and read that he had died, and I sensed how sad it would make me. But I still wasn't prepared when I saw his picture on the front page of the *San Francisco Examiner* that I picked up off the seat in a BART train. I was alone in the car, and I breathed, "Oh no," and I sat and read the article.

I read and I wept—but not because an extraordinary human being and teacher had died. Even though his death was perhaps untimely, the result of a car accident in New Mexico, he had had 84 years of life, and in his fiction, essays, and history, he had pushed the West beyond its frontier fences. He had guided many younger writers towards their own important work. He had never wavered in his values: the earth and the human beings on it deserve dignity, respect, love. He honored the family: his own family, the family of writers he'd "fathered," the bigger family of man and woman. In that hospital room in Santa Fe, his daughter-in-law told him, "You are the most moral man I know." And at least Death came for him in the West.

I am sad because I have been able to do so little as a Mormon and a western writer. I remember his initial prophecy that Mormon fiction would never have a general audience. Perhaps Scott Card has met Stegner's criteria of Mormon fiction with a broad American appeal; perhaps other writers, working out of and with the American West, will be able to make Mormon characters and Mormon concerns meaningful to great numbers of non-Mormons. But I felt, when I heard Wallace Stegner say

those words, more than thirty years ago, that they were a challenge to *me*, and I know he wished me well in proving him wrong.

# hospital healing

*Linda Sillitoe*

of course a two-inch badger  
carved from liver-colored stone  
with arrows bound to his back,  
could not make the difference.

the day i brought him, you couldn't  
talk. the next, weaker, yellow,  
you gasped your question. death held  
your other hand while i bluffed.

the badger, i said, travels the dark  
world below, then surfaces again;  
(later i learned he oversees healing.)  
you watched him, you tell me now,

like a reddish star in a poisoned sky.  
home now, in a bright pink sweater,  
you claim at last, dazzling me,  
not the badger, but your own life.



# The Law that Brings Life

*Doug Ward*

IN WRITING THESE THOUGHTS, I am documenting the abandonment of a theological philosophy that has been a central, if somewhat beleaguered, feature of my faith. The decision to abandon the traditions of my heritage was frightening, the transition painful. For most of my adult life I have dutifully followed a practice of a correlated church leadership with feelings of anxiety rather than promised joy of the gospel. The source of my anxiety was the Mormon philosophy that defines God as the expositor of eternal laws; the absolute role of law in our mortal life; and the concept of a tribunal judgement that determines our ultimate destiny in the Mormon eternity. I struggled most with the representation of this philosophy in the programs, policies, and teachings of the church. Though thousands of members continue to have difficulty with the corporate, legalistic theocracy of Mormonism, my own odyssey is somewhat unique in that I ultimately reached a sense of peace in my relationship to the church. However, reaching that peace required coming to a personal understanding of God—a God in many ways different from the divine being of contemporary correlated Mormon doctrine.

I recognize the risk of simplistic generalizations to define a concept as complicated as the nature of God, even the more rational God of Mormon theology. Nevertheless, I would offer that the God I came to recognize through two decades of correlated file leadership is, in addition to being the literal father of our spirits and the architect of our existence, the executor of laws based on eternal truths. Furthermore, it seemed clear in the official literature of the church that God could only be understood within the context of these laws. He alone lives in perfect subjection to and therefore the perfect expression of law. This Mormon doctrine, as represented by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, for example, also teaches that our eternal destiny will be determined in judicial tribunals presided over by God. Based on conditions of immutable justice associated with eternal laws, these tribunals will grant rewards of exaltation to those who have faithfully complied with eternal law, and gradients of punishment will be pronounced upon those who have violated the law without due recom-

pense. It was this concept, this absolute preeminence of law and of a God who exists only within the context of law, that I ultimately had to abandon. In quiet moments of meditation, I had felt the power of divinity settle over me. The peace of those moments belied a God bound by statute and wielding a sword of justice.

I don't actually remember when God became confusing to me. As a child I thought of God as the kindly, powerful father who could make wonderful things such as the wind, clouds, stars, or lightning and thunder. I was also sure God could give me feathers so I could fly like a pigeon. I often prayed for feathers until it occurred to me that attaining pigeonhood may be a one-way trip, but I never had any doubt that God could make me a pigeon—if he wanted to.

The first I can remember being confused came from hearing a primary lesson about a God who drowned thousands of people and animals. That did not sound like my God. God was supposed to be more like my Bishop Lee. (Actually, he was really Bishop Capener but everyone just called him by his first name.) I remember Bishop Lee as a thoughtful farmer with a degree from the University of Utah, and about the only college graduate in our little Mormon town of Riverside, Utah. I remember him conducting sacrament meetings on the steps of the church when summer evenings were too hot to be inside. He reminded long-winded speakers to keep their sacrament meeting talks short so the kids could get to the show at the Main Theater in Garland by 9:15. And folklore has it that he would stop the combines in the fields when the mayfly hatch came on the Madison River in Yellowstone, and the harvesting would wait until the hatch was gone.

I sat one night with Bishop Lee and my father at the old Riverside church and can still distinctly hear him say, "Cats, Ike, if we really knew 10 percent of what we think we know, I guess we'd know 100 percent of what really matters to God anyway." I was about eight years old at the time, but from then on I would sit in sacrament meetings wondering which 10 percent I should really worry about.

My parents gave me almost total latitude to make decisions and learn from my mistakes. They certainly never gave me even the slightest insinuation that God was keeping a tally so he could punish me for breaking some law, although I am sure there were times they wished he would have taken a more direct hand in my upbringing. Actually, I can really remember only two rules in my house: the cow had to be milked in the morning, and the cow had to be milked at night. Even those rules went away when Dad sold the cow because I went fishing and left him to do the chores. So after about age fourteen I don't think there were any hard and fast household laws, nor was there any implication that there needed to be laws because God had laws. As for Noah and the thousands of sin-

ners and animals drowned by God, I simply chose to ignore it.

However, being able to ignore what my church taught about God changed when I entered the ninth grade and started formal religious education in Old Testament seminary. There I heard every day about a frightening God. A God who not only drowned people because they did not keep his laws, but used fire to kill priests who disagreed with him. I learned that the Children of Israel were commanded to kill the Canaanites and their gentile neighbors and lived in condemnation for failing to get the job done. I discovered that God was keeping book on me and I was going to be punished for my mistakes, after which I was going to hate myself for eternity. I was taught that he had given the mark of Cain to people he despised because they were not valiant in the pre-existence, a notion that caused me to check my skin carefully every morning. One day I got enough courage to argue with Sister Johns about her portrayal of the nature of God. She got a forced smile, the kind that indicated I was testing her patience, then patiently corrected my misunderstanding. For the rest of the lesson she periodically glared at me just to make sure I did not repeat my indiscretion. In that moment I could sense the distance developing between me and the God I thought about as I lay out at night looking into the expanse of the universe, the God who was supposed to be like Bishop Lee.

This distance initiated a period of anxiety that would continue for the next three decades as I tried to comprehend this official God, my relationship to him, and how the church really fit into my life. During my high school years I could simply avoid the issues since I seldom thought about God more than the two minutes a day when I prayed, or when some interesting discussion would come up in seminary or Sunday school. No real personal crisis came until all my friends started to go on missions. I would attend their farewells and listen to Coach Simmons or some other distinguished speaker say wonderful things about the soon-to-depart elder. I would watch a tearful girlfriend hang on to her friends and see all the money being collected at the missionary table in the foyer. A part of me longed for my moment to be honored; however, I could not do it. I simply had too many unresolved questions—and no girlfriend to cry for me.

As for the young men who dutifully accepted mission calls, I'm not sure many of them had any particular reason for going other than it seemed like the thing to do. Furthermore, even though most of these departing elders were really decent guys, there were quite a few who headed into the mission field far less concerned about God's nature than they were about getting an "all's well" letter from their girlfriends sometime within the first twenty-eight days after their departure. In fact, at the time my friends were accepting their calls, I even had an older returned

missionary college friend tell me of an enterprising woman of distinguished sexual profession who reserved Sunday evenings after missionary farewells as special occasions for some of her younger valley clients before they headed into the mission field—though her usual fee was paid as a farewell gift by the friends who had not yet received their calls. One returning elder told me he was convinced the experience had made him a better missionary, though the details of his logic have escaped me. It was something like a final, consummate ritual passage from the passion of carnality to the passion of spirituality—which, in his mind, were closely related.

Fortunately, it seems this rather ribald ritual had passed by the time the guys my age were accepting their calls. However, there was at least one especially memorable farewell that almost didn't happen because of the joys of the flesh. As the time for prayer meeting arrived, the young elder was not present. A couple of buddies were dispatched to see if he had been in an accident. As the hour of worship arrived, they found him in coitus and completely oblivious to the time or day. In spite of the late start, the honored guest speaker and bishop pronounced him a righteous warrior after the tradition of the Sons of Helaman and bid him an emotional farewell. Friends and family, moved by the spirit, gave generously at the missionary table in the foyer while the young couple spirited away for a few more "never to be forgotten" days before his official departing.

In retrospect, those memories seem like humorous subplots in the moralistic façade that was small town Mormonism of the 1950s—or small town America, for that matter. And yet in spite of the irony surrounding these rather confusing missionary departures, I had a sincere respect for the sacrifice these young men were making—for whatever reasons. By and large, the experience changed their lives—and maybe that's the most important outcome.

At any rate, while virtually all my high school friends were heading off to spend two years developing a philosophy of institutional religious practice that would, in large measure, govern the rest of their lives, I stayed home. At that point I was really only sure of one thing as it related to my religious future: I could not go on a mission. Then late in my freshman year of college I met Karen. The following Christmas we were engaged and in the fall before our junior year we were married in the St. George temple. Our marriage has been a choice experience, and even though I did not decide to get married to avoid a mission our marriage did resolve publicly the question of whether I would serve. Karen and I first talked of marriage late one summer evening while sitting on the lawn of the Logan temple. Karen asked what I was going to do about a mission. I remember the feeling of relief I had when I could finally tell someone I had decided not go—it was the first time I had ever said the

words out loud. I think I rationalized that God (if he really worried about such things) would be pleased if Karen and I went to the temple, and I assumed he would take away any guilt about my mission decision. Of course, that was a terribly immature hope. God was not going to resolve our relationship just because I checked off another item in the exaltation criteria matrix.

Even though our temple marriage did nothing to fundamentally resolve my questions about God and the church, our early temple experiences turned out to a treasure. Of course, the temple took a little getting used to. Our endowment and sealing had been as bewildering as our first days together were mystifying and clumsy, but we returned to the temple often because of what we felt. At least once a month we went and did a session as soon as we got out of classes and then ate at A and T Hamburgers on the way home. Only years later did I realize that there was a key to the answers I sought in the feelings I was having in the temple.

As long as we were both in school, dutifully involved in our student ward and going to the temple regularly, I really didn't think about God's nature very much. My calling was to assist the elder's quorum president with the adult Aaronic families. I remember the bishop telling me that my job was to touch the hearts of these lost Saints and inspire them to return to activity. I have since thought of the incongruity of the statement: "Your job is to touch . . ." I had a tough time pulling off this soul-touching job without sounding like those synthesized church professionals who draw tears and laughter on demand. Anyway I went and told my families that God wanted them to be active, but I really wasn't sure. Maybe what God wanted was for them to be kind, charitable people, which many of them were. It even occurred to me that many of the people I was calling to repentance for the sin of inactivity were better people than I was. After a few months of performing my job, I softened my approach and began to feel a warm association with folks who were no longer just assigned families.

It was also during this year in our student ward that I first recognized the self-righteous arrogance that can emerge when church members believe they are acting on absolute divine injunction. A particularly faithful colleague in the elder's quorum had been "working" with a foreign graduate student to try to interest him and his family in the gospel. After some weeks of encouragement, the man agreed to come to sacrament meeting. On the way to the church with my colleague, there was an accident and the man was killed. He left his wife and small family to fend for themselves in the cultural isolation of Cache Valley. What was particularly saddening for me, however, was the reaction of one of our priesthood leaders. In a subsequent conversation about the accident, he said, "Many would consider this a tragedy, and in a sense it is. But isn't it a

blessing to have the truthfulness of the gospel to comfort us in times like this? To know for a surety that the hand of the Lord has reached out to give this man the opportunity for the blessings of the gospel he would have been denied when he returned to his native land." I could not imagine a God who would reach down from heaven and cause the pain this family was feeling, and I had difficulty relating to anyone who would callously represent such a God.

I would feel this same frustration many times as with a recent incident when I heard a faithful brother in priesthood meeting commending the hand of God in the AIDS epidemic. Or the high councilman speaking in sacrament meeting acknowledging his gratitude for the testimony he had of the divine plan for God's chosen people. His sure conviction that the famines and destructions spreading across Africa, the Middle East, and India were the prophesied fulfillment of the Lord's judgements to cleanse the earth of a wicked and perverse generation. As I returned his self-righteous stare, I could not help but think of the haunting look in the eyes of a beautiful African woman pictured squatting in the dust holding an emaciated child. Eyes that could well have been Mary's eyes pleading for a clean spot to lay her child, if only to die. This was the judgement of God? But I am getting ahead of myself.

After Karen and I graduated, we moved to Colorado where we started a family. In spite of my continuing misgivings, I got deeply involved in the church and began serving in positions of priesthood leadership culminating in my call as bishop ten years later. Still terribly immature and without a firm personal theology, I was now the spiritual father of a large, sophisticated ward. In the weeks following my call, I often wondered: if God was uncompromisingly bound to uphold the law, was I—as one of his "chosen servants"—to do the same? Though I faced the issue, I did not resolve it.

In my relationship with church members struggling with problems, I could at times be patient and understanding, though seldom, I suspect, very helpful. In these situations, I sought to emulate the model of men like Bishop Lee and the stake president who had extended my call as bishop. President Claridge was a thoughtful and gentle man who often slipped quietly into ward meetings and never felt obligated to "take the stand" and preside. His counsel was reflective and understanding. However, as a new bishop I was reading Elders Bruce R. McConkie, Boyd K. Packer, and Mark E. Peterson. From their writings I learned the role of the uncompromising file leader, and I felt impressed to follow their guidance in my ecclesiastical administration. In the first months after my call we got a new stake president who made sure I knew that the programs and policies of the church were the immutable will of God. We were frequently counselled about God's expectations regarding 100 percent home

teaching, the four-generation program, shadow leadership, correlation meeting, PEC, young men's presidency meeting, no beards and no long hair at the sacrament table, tithing, building fund, budget, fast offering, temple fund, missionary fund, every member a missionary, sending every son on a mission, temple marriage, monthly temple attendance, priesthood meeting, sacrament meeting, stake conference meeting . . . I supposed God really expected me to feel guilty when I sat in leadership meetings and listened to the less-than-perfect accounting of my performance. So while at times I could be patient and understanding, like the men whose leadership I deeply respected, at other times I could be dogmatic, demanding, and guilt-ridden.

However, the real crisis of my anxiety did not come because I was a bishop. The crisis came at home. Maybe because I felt guilty about not going on a mission; maybe because I was supposed to be the spiritual father of my ward but had no firm spiritual foundation; maybe because I could not resolve what I really believed about God and my relationship to him; or maybe just because of my immaturity, I decided I was going to have the perfect Mormon family. My children were going to be well-behaved and respectful. They were going to do what I thought they ought to do. And they did—with a price.

It seems almost incomprehensible now. In spite of what I had felt for kind, compassionate men, I could be dogmatic and distant—even with my own family. In spite of my suspicion that God was really a kindly father, I could be impatient like the Old Testament God I learned about in seminary—like the programmed, correlated God characterized by the file leaders of my church. In spite of the example of patient parents who, as my mother had said, “just planted the seeds in the best soil we could find and let them grow,” I worried about what others would think if I did not have the perfect model of a celestial family. Something had to break, and something did. In the spring of 1986—twenty-eight years from the turmoil of Old Testament seminary—I was forced to confront my duplicity. If my family was going to survive the problem I perpetuated, I had to find a personal philosophy to guide the conduct of my life.

My journey of self-discovery took me back through hundreds of memories. Some were distant, others were more recent and vivid. Not long after that difficult spring of 1986, my sons and I were backpacking in a beautiful wilderness area of Colorado. Late one afternoon I found a quiet spot in a grove of aspen trees warmed by the fading summer sun. In the next two hours of meditation, I had a profound affirmation that the precepts I had observed in the lives of men and women I truly respected were the keys to happiness both in mortality and beyond: precepts of honesty, morality, humility, charity, joy, and forgiveness. An undeniable peace filled me as I thought about a life predicated on these precepts. But

though I had sought to practice them at times, I was not happy nor was I sharing happiness with those I loved. Far from engaging these precepts on their own merits, I fear I had really become concerned about how others might judge me—of how God might judge me. But were these precepts really aspects of law? Were they valid just because God said they were, or was there something more? Was the purpose of life simply to learn a set of laws God would have us live, to prove ourselves by obedience for its own sake? Did God bless us with happiness just for obediently being humble, moral, charitable, or forgiving? Was God's ultimate role in our relationship to act as the final arbiter of our failed compliance, our successful recompense? Was the feeling of peace and joy I had felt that afternoon in the mountains an affirmation of law, or was it something that transcended law? The more I thought about these questions, the more convinced I became that there was more to life than laws, obedience, and justice. More importantly, I was becoming convinced that our eternal happiness really depended on understanding what it was that transcended law.

That afternoon in the mountains was a transitional point. In the weeks following those hours of contemplation, I began to accept without guilt that I would never understand God, or my relationship to him, on the course of correlated worship I was pursuing. I now undertook what would become an exciting search that included the study of sources as diverse as Bruce R. McConkie, Leonard Arrington, B. H. Roberts, E. E. Erickson, Lowell Bennion, and Dale Morgan. What had started as casual research at the time of my release as bishop now became an obsession. I had to know God and the purpose of my life in a very personal way.

From the thousands of pages of Elder McConkie's writings, I had come to appreciate a transcendent, though still contradictory, Messiah. Through the historical works of Leonard Arrington and B. H. Roberts, I found our history had a wonderful character and diversity. In their writings I became acquainted with sincere men and women in the early church who struggled as I was, and I learned they were not all wicked apostate enemies of the restoration. From the stimulating works of E. E. Erickson, I discovered a philosophy of ethics that transcended institutionalism and a fraternal theology. Through the eyes of Dale Morgan, I could see myself as an outwardly faithful Mormon might be seen by a thoughtful and informed critic.

Dale Morgan was arguably one of the finest historical researchers of our generation. I had seen references to his work for years, but until I read his biography, writings, and letters I did not know the depth of his passion. Morgan had in mind writing the definitive history of the Mormon church. Although he completed only a few chapters of his history, his research notes are an impressive and expansive personal work of re-



lentless dedication. When he died in 1971, most of his associates were disappointed because his definitive history would never be completed. However, as I read the letters he wrote and the notes he had jotted for himself, I found a piece of the answer I needed, an answer I might never have found in his history.

Dale Morgan was convinced that he could prove Joseph Smith had fabricated the myth that became Mormonism. Through his research, Morgan had found justification for his rejection of the church and its claim of authority. Seemingly more than anything else in his life he wanted to expose the myth so clearly and inarguably that no thinking person could doubt his conclusions—though I wonder if his reticence to actually get on with the task didn't reveal some lingering uncertainty. In any case, he did acknowledge that most Mormons were decent people who were striving, however misguidedly, to live decent lives.

While Morgan's questions brought me to the crossroads, it was E. E. Erickson's writings that provided the hope that I could find a meaningful, decent and whole philosophy for my life within my Mormon society. A society that did, in fact, mean much to me. I concluded that I could be true to the spirit of my faith while I sought a theological philosophy that made sense.

From this conclusion, I now approached my personal quest from a very different perspective than Dale Morgan. Whereas Morgan's search for historical and moral impropriety was a driven intellectual pursuit to understand the pathology of the church, out of the same milieu of history, culture, and theology I sought a philosophy to confirm my faith. I believed I could be successful because of what I had learned from Erickson's writings: that the philosophy which colors the tapestry of life may be as valuable as the fabric itself. In fact, very possibly the philosophy is the fabric. And if an accepted philosophy colors the fabric with the subtle tones of honesty, morality, and humility; then that philosophy, and its attendant theology—if there be one—is worthy of the bearer. The conduct of my life, which I had played out from a script that often seemed confusing and contradictory, needed a living theological philosophy—not a theology based solely on the eminence of law, the practice of ritual, and the repetition of doctrinal interpretation.

Another turning point in those transitional months came from a conversation with a friend who is not LDS. We were talking about a common frustration—the frustration of never finding truly satisfying answers to the seminal questions of a transcendent life—a life that spans eternity; how seemingly impossible it is to find those answers that resolve our relationship with the sum of existence and its creator.

In the hours of that discussion, it became clear that my programmed Mormon experience would never resolve the cosmological issues both of

us sought to know. This became obvious as I tried to fit the answers of Mormon flannel board theology to the challenging questions my friend was asking. I knew the philosophy I was searching for had to be larger than simply resolving the justification for the conduct of my mortal life within the context of Mormon institutional formalism or society. It had to be larger than just my relationship to my church and the ecclesiastical hierarchy that defined the bounds of my accepted faith. In fact, it became clear that the Mormon institutional theology I had been taught could never reconcile me to the personal God of my childhood. I simply did not want to be reconciled with a God who would kill his children—or command some of his children to kill their brothers and sisters, all in the name of law and justice.

So while my personal search was invigorating and exciting, there were still painful times. I would find myself sitting in testimony meetings listening to people bear witness, with emotion and sincerity, that they knew the church was “true.” I would find myself wondering how could something be known to be true when the people sharing that affirmation each had their own interpretation of what constituted the church, its origins, its teachings, and, more importantly, what constituted truth? Listening to those testimonies, it often sounded as if contemporary Mormon theology might only be an aggregation of personal interpretation couched in a system of communal affirmation. It also troubled me when I considered the many immutable doctrines of the early Restoration that had been rejected by the modern church. It was not enough for me to simply accept that once-true doctrines had been changed by revelation. And the prophet Joseph Smith, revered by faithful members as second only in importance for the salvation of humankind to the Savior himself, could not be called to be a general authority; could not be a bishop; would not be worthy to hold a temple recommend; and, in fact, would be excommunicated if he were to return in the 1980s advocating some of the doctrines and practices of the kingdom he had espoused as the prophet of the Restoration. Doctrines and practices that included plural marriage, good cigars and fine whiskey for special occasions—or not so special occasions—the Lectures on Faith teachings on the nature of the Godhead, the King Follet discourse concept of eternal, uncreated spirits.

At the same time I could not deny the respect I had for the depth of conviction manifested by many Mormon friends and leaders. Even in my moments of deepest doubt I recalled the hundreds of sincere people I had worked with in the church. I thought of the leaders who had trusted me, and I felt a bit of guilt for the violation of confidence my journey of personal discovery would imply. I was sure few of them would understand. And if I concluded, as it seemed obvious I would, that striving for perfection within the context of law was not the objective of our mortal experi-

ence and the basis of our eternal destiny, I worried about contradicting the general conference theology of my church and its leaders, leaders whom I had sustained as God's authorized spokesmen, leaders I respected.

But I could not ignore the feeling that I was experiencing something important. The insight from my years of personal research; the experiences in private meditation; the difficult recognition of problems in my family; and my growing resolve to understand my relationship to eternity—all these seemed to be coming together for some purpose. I was, for the first time in my life, finding answers. Answers which first denied the preeminence of law and our absolute subservience to it, and then, most importantly, answers for life. In the process, I was discovering a personal relationship to my Creator and a prospect for life I had not imagined. I discovered a philosophy that invites participation in the experience of living rather than a preoccupation with avoiding the consequences of mortality and fearing the harbinger of justice.

My search had led me, rather more quickly than I expected, to an important conclusion. It seemed to me there is no single reality (or set of realities) that defines the consequence of our existence. Rather, reality is transient. Transient not in terms of what occurred, but transient in terms of interpretation, understanding, and consequence. The reality of any of life's experiences derives not only from our feelings, our intellectual observations and emotions, but from the influence of that transcendent part of our being that has seen all that has been and all that will ever be. The part of us that Jung has called the God within, or what Mormon theology defines as intelligence—what might be the divinely shared sum of all light and knowledge. Given the endless interplay of each of the dimensions of our being, an ultimate reality cannot exist. The reality of all that has or will occur must change as we are able to see past events with an infinitely maturing insight. This journey, this experiencing of reality rather than finding it, this absolution from the embrace of laws and predetermined consequence, seems—in my new-found experience—to be the energy of an eternal life.

Those who accept an ultimate reality and final judgement, based on absolute laws, seem to accept that we must all come to a perceptual unity, a point at which there are universal conclusions about every circumstance of life, and every event that has occurred. They would believe that right and wrong are ultimately precisely definable, and for every right there is a fixed and absolute reward; as there is a punishment for every wrong. I find that prospect alien. Alien to the nature of God and the manifestation of God that exists in each one of us. If ultimate reality means that we lose, at some point in our existence, the capacity for intellectual, spiritual, and emotional interpretation of all we experience, then we lose the

essence of our being. Death would be an eternity of absolute answers; an eternity without continuing the search to understand who we are, how we relate to each other, and what our relationship is to all else comprehensible.

The fact that I had missed the instances where this broader view of an eternal quest is taught in Mormon scripture was probably a consequence of my own myopic scholarship. I have recently been particularly struck by Lehi's words to Jacob recorded in 2 Nephi 2:11-12.

For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, . . . righteousness could not be brought to pass, . . . neither holiness nor misery, . . . Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility. Wherefore, it must needs have been created for a thing of naught; wherefore there would have been not purpose in the ends of its creation.

Some people might justifiably quarrel with my interpretation of Lehi's philosophy, but I interpret him saying that if we become one body, all existing in absolute congruence without the prospect of diverse perceptions, we are dead. That being the case, then approaching infinite life exists in a state approaching infinite diversities rather than a moment of finite singularity.

As personally intriguing as this concept is, the implication is certainly foreign to our simplistic generalizations of law within the Mormon tradition. If there is no ultimate reality associated with our existence, there can be no absolute truths that define the consequences of our actions as agents/beings. If there are no absolute truths, how can God alone be the final arbiter of law and justice? Yet adherence to law, and the performance of ritual representing those laws, form a central theme in the history of Judeo-Christian theology and its Mormon adaptation.

In the biblical Exodus epoch, Moses ascends Mount Sinai a second time to be instructed by God in the law that is to apply to the Children of Israel. The foundation of that law was embodied in ten absolutes that God inscribed in stone with his finger. These ten commandments, and the almost incomprehensible proliferation of attendant ritual required to demonstrate adherence to them, became the basis of worship for God's people. In some cases, violation of the law required that a person be put to death. Regardless of the imposed consequence, all of these laws are considered to be the immutable expressions of God's will. All required absolute, total compliance. Yet even a causal examination of a few of these commandments points out the difficulty of conducting our lives under the premise that these are absolute laws with absolute conse-

quences. Every thinking Christian or child of Israel has struggled with the application of these laws to even the simplest ethical questions of life.

God says that we should not bear false witness, that we should not lie. Yet I can't remember how many times I have listened to clichéd arguments about whether we should be truthful when someone asks our opinion about a truly ugly dress, for example. In addition, there have been a number of interesting amendments to God's law of bearing false witness. From the time of the translation of the Book of Mormon through the Nauvoo period and into the time of the Reed Smoot senate hearings, the leadership of the church engaged in a practice that became known as "lying for the Lord." Our leaders used this tactic because they were fearful that if the truth were known about actual church practice or doctrines their adversaries would destroy the Lord's work. (This fear seems somewhat mystifying in light of the promise that "no unhallowed hand shall disrupt my work.") However, we have been assured that the leaders who sought to protect the work by lying will be blessed for their valor. Clearly, lying is not always lying, and justice will not always claim those who bear false witness. Under the rule of law, what constitutes lying must ultimately be determined by some interpretation beyond mortality.

God also says, "Thou shalt not kill." Yet no sooner had the dust settled on the tablets of the covenant than the Children of Israel were commanded to enter Canaan and kill all the inhabitants. Then for hundreds of years after their return to Israel they were condemned by the Lord for failure to destroy all of the heathens in the Promised Land. As an aside, I have often wondered why the Lord (if he really wanted all these people dead) did not personally destroy the Canaanites, or Laban, for that matter, as he had the pagan priests of the Old Testament. What purpose was filled in directing cousins to kill cousins, nephews to kill uncles, or brothers to kill brothers?

What, then, is the absolute command; the ultimate truth in the law: Thou shalt not kill? Perhaps killing is justified by law when freedom or righteousness is threatened. However, in a complicating modern twist, our church leaders have told us that soldiers who fight for their country, no matter what particular political or military objective a government might have, are absolved of responsibility for killing. During World War II, we had the tragic situation of Mormon soldiers from Germany and Mormon soldiers from England, France, and the United States trying to kill each other—and they were all blameless? Under the mandate of a destiny in law, every instance involving the taking of another human being's life must be interpreted outside the context of our mortal experience. In a world as complicated as ours, how could anyone possibly know how to act in every situation, even with the guidance of church leaders, or the spirit?

Though I have struggled with the complexities of dozens of clichéd ethical problems, no real value is served in reiterating them here.

However, I do have one additional example that has touched close to our family. Mormon doctrine holds that sexual sin is superseded in seriousness only by murder and the sin against the Holy Ghost. Contemporary Mormon teachings define sexual sin as any sexual relationship outside of monogamous marriage. However, even this rather simple generalization does not adequately define what behavior acceptably serves the law. A few years ago some friends had to put their adult daughter in a state institution for the mentally impaired. Prior to admission, the parents were asked to give permission for their daughter to be sterilized or given birth control drugs. Of course these actions would not prevent patients from becoming physically involved, but they would prevent unfortunate pregnancies. I watched the anguish of these faithful parents as they struggled to know the will of the Lord. If they gave their permission, would they be condoning their child in sin? It was not my position to interfere, but I could not help but wonder how anyone could possibly consider the innocent sexual experimentation of two Down Syndrome adults a sin. In consideration of this instance alone, I knew that something as seemingly obvious as the consequence of sexual conduct required interpretation—an interpretation drawn from the perceptions of intellect, emotion, and spirit. It could not be rendered absolutely right or wrong as a simple consideration of law, and—at times—it even seemed as if God was confused about how we should act sexually.

As I read the history of the dispensations from Adam to Joseph F. Smith, the Lord's intentions on sexual behavior were anything but clear. At various times multiple spousal and concubinal relationships have been ordained of God for his "elect." At other times this same God has required condemnation and even death for any non-monogamous relationship. Did the ultimate reality change? Did the law change? The longer I struggled to understand the scriptural and contemporary teachings defining God's expectations on the appropriate use of the gift of procreation, the more confusing the situation became. Of all of the instances of difficulty I dealt with as a judge in Israel, trying to help others work beyond the issues of sexual "misconduct" were the most vexing. For me personally, the issue I struggled with most was how God could command and expect the practice of polygamy as a condition of exaltation.

Having concluded that endless fretting over seemingly unresolvable situational perplexities was fruitless, the transition to a new philosophy turned out to be easier than I expected. I guess it had always been there, tucked away from the conscious corridor of my mind. The philosophy I found took away much of the anxiety of our existence in an unresolved reality and, at the same time, offered a meaningful context for the law

and the conduct of our mortal life. It is a philosophy that has redefined my intellectual and spiritual relationship to God, and, as I came to realize, it has brought a deeper, richer meaning to my life.

I have concluded that we are not created for nor do we live in consequence of laws. Rather, I have come to believe the objective of our existence is to achieve a state of being, in a state of intimacy—intimacy with Deity, with other human beings, and with the totality of creation. I acknowledge the risk in selecting the term intimacy to describe something as profound as the purpose of life. As my brother Michael has correctly observed, intimacy is one of those New Age terms that has every indication of becoming a pop cliché. However, I needed a term that implied more passion than the casualness we have attached to the designation of friendship. It had to be more concrete than the inexplicable inner expression we associate with love. And, though I like the term unconditional or Christ-like love, the connotation of perfection seems to put it out of the reach of mere mortals. I needed a term to imply the emotional and spiritual intensity one feels for someone or something deeply loved—loved more than self. In my conception, an intimate relationship occurs in those instances when we overcome our fears and insecurities, discard our selfishness and preoccupation with personal gratification, and achieve a singularity of spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical oneness—a state of consuming intimacy. To become, as the Savior taught, “one . . . as he is one with the father . . . to become, as one” (John 17:21-22).

In the few moments of my life when I have experienced this intimacy, I have sensed an inner peace and an affirmation that my life could be in congruence with my creator. I have felt that at no other time. I have learned that I needn't live alienated, fearful of the demands of law and the threat of justice. I have discovered that I feel this peace in those moments when I have forgotten myself, not simply those instances when I begrudgingly put aside something I wanted to do, but in those angstroms of time when I unconditionally gave of myself to another human being. When, for just an instant, I have forgotten I existed as anything but an extension of that person and their needs, their hopes, and their fears. I have also felt it when I acknowledged that I am an integral element of the sum of the cosmos, important only in the context of the whole. In those moments, I have understood the meaning of my life, I have touched eternal peace—I have denied submission to law.

Therefore, whereas I cannot comprehend an ultimate reality of ultimate laws and justice meted out against those laws, I am convinced there is an ultimate meaning. I see this meaning supremely manifested in the recorded mortal life of Jesus Christ. As Creator, he had the power to take anything in the world he wanted, but he chose to have nothing of material consequence. As the one person who lived having the power over his

own death, he chose instead to sacrifice all that he had in this world—his mortal life and his dignity—to provide a vicarious metaphor for reconciling the human family to an eternal Father. In this sacrifice, he achieved ultimate meaning.

Against this concept of the meaning of life, we can consider sin in a rather different light; a frame of reference that denies that sin is simply the violation of law. I would argue that sin is any action that offends the intimacy of our relationship to another human being, to God, or to the gifts of God's creation. Sin is also the abuse of the gift of self—physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. Thus, the consequence of sin is not some punishment defined by an ultimate reality in a tribunal of justice. The consequence of sin is isolation, isolation from those we have offended, including isolation from the ultimate source of our eternal joy and peace, from God Himself. Lehi must have understood this same sense of isolation when he tells his son Jacob that after Satan had fallen from heaven he became miserable forever (2 Ne. 2:18).

If we should leave mortality having never felt the anguish or attempted to make restitution for the pain we have caused or seen in others, then our destiny is to live in a self-made hell of isolation, or in companionship with others who have lived in thoughtless disdain and selfishness. In consideration of our own conduct, have we selflessly drawn others into our lives or have we been preoccupied with the imposition of our lives, our agenda, or theology on them for personal gratification or public acclamation? Ultimately, we will either find ourselves in companionship with those whom we have drawn into our circle of intimacy or we will be isolated by our unresolved offense. And if, by providence, our circle of our embrace should include an intimate companionship with our creator, we will—through that companionship—come to know the ultimate meaning of life. As our Savior himself has said, our worthiness to have this reward is—in finality—conditioned on how we have conducted our lives in relation to our fellow human beings. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40). Against this backdrop of inclusive selflessness, the conduct of our lives can take on an experiential richness that denies the sterility of the law.

With this much in context, it is left to address the event that forms the keystone of Christian theology: What of Gethsemane and Calvary? Did Christ suffer the pain designated to be inflicted by the divine sword of justice on every one of us sinful, decadent human beings, or was it something infinitely more personal? I am assured it was more. In the tortuous hours of his atonement and crucifixion, it was not in surrogate consequence of a divine tribunal that Christ suffered his pain. Rather, Christ became the vicarious memory and conscience of every soul who ever



lived. He felt the pain of rejection, loneliness, hunger, and abuse inflicted on every human being (and maybe every creature and sum of his creation) who ever did or will inhabit the earth. His suffering was an act of perfect, complete empathy—of supreme intimacy. He was one with us. In doing what he did, he alone is capable of comforting the victims of life's injustices. In doing what he did, he alone, having taken stewardship for that pain, can extend forgiveness to those who have caused pain. As for us, we can never take back the suffering we have caused. All we can do is recognize our offense and strive, however ineptly, to make restitution. Our sincere attempts will be acknowledged by his forgiveness as the vicarious steward of that anguish. I cannot envision a more touching, intimate scene in all of eternity: Christ embracing and comforting the abused, the offended, the tortured, the maimed, the hungry, and the forgotten or comforting the guilt-ridden hearts of those who have strived to make recompense for the pain they have caused. His was not an act of justice served, his was an act of embracing compassion.

However, this is only a part of the story of Gethsemane and Calvary. There is the consequence beyond the reach of his forgiveness and reconciliation, the pain of isolation that comes as a price for our unresolved offenses against humanity, the dignity of our God, and the gift of his creations. Assuredly this was the most difficult suffering Christ endured. This is the pain of unresolved consequence, the awful isolation that awaits all of us who fail to make restitution for the pain we have caused. For Christ himself, the conscious bearing of this pain must have been compounded by incomprehensible sadness, the sadness of knowing that those of us so resolved would live in an anguish of isolation, never having learned to live expansively in relationships of love and caring, of intimacy. And, in the final hours of his unfathomable despair, Christ was to suffer what, for him, was the ultimate, excruciating agony: the agony of isolation from his Father—the vicarious horror of perdition. “My God, my God—why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46)

The unresolved tragedies of our agency notwithstanding, the great injustice of the Christian experience, and its Mormon derivation, might well be in the denigration of gospel message into a fear-based tradition based upon the sterile doctrines of law, justice, and the threat of retribution. Unfortunately, the preoccupation with this philosophy can and has diverted our attention from the practice of an encompassing divine existence, an experience of divine intimacy. This preoccupation with laws and rules and programs has created a paranoid checklist theology. It has instilled unnecessary guilt in mere mortals trying to achieve perfection. I wonder if those of us who have distorted the beauty and simplicity of the divine principle of intimacy will not find ourselves in some of the darkest abysses of isolation, there to live in association with others who sought to

legislate salvation for their own advantage.

Conversely, exaltation in companionship with our Father is the destiny of those who find meaning in the experience of their lives, neither hostage to nor sanctified by the law, but glorified for having given life. And what of our journey through the infinite comprehensions of a transient reality? Might that not be the reward of an expansive intellect, an open heart, and an unadulterated spirit—an experience of exalting.

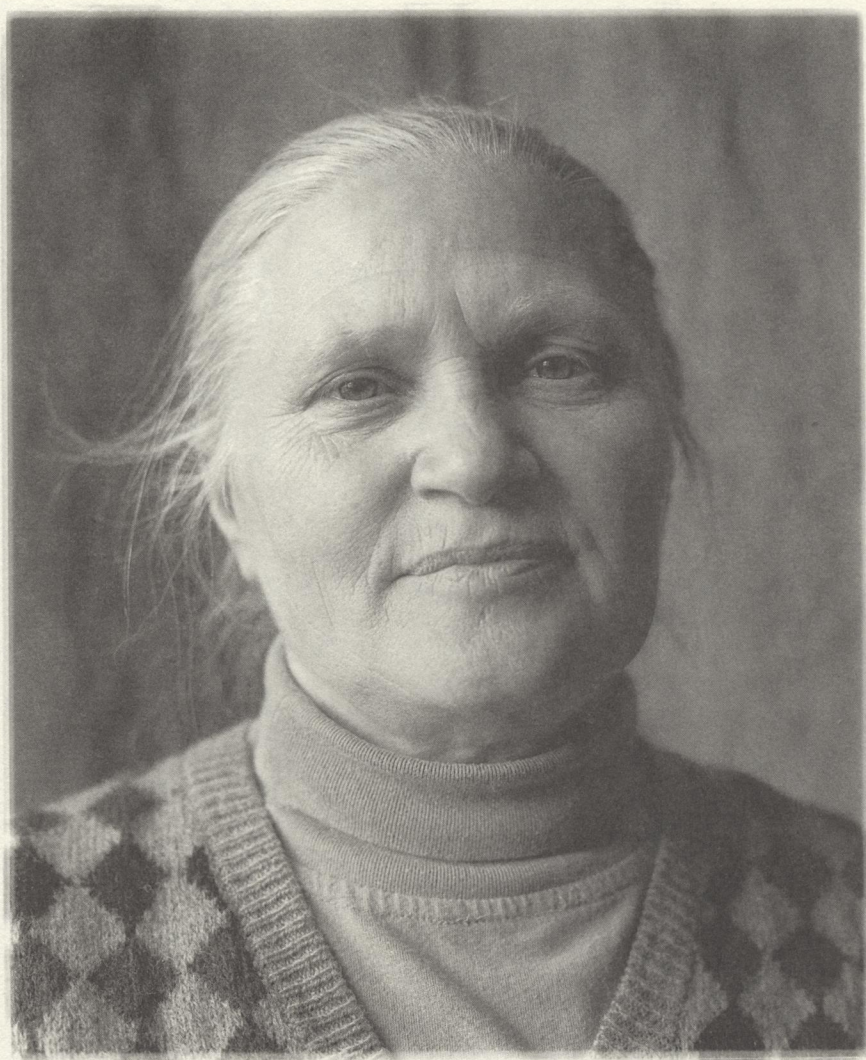
The process that lead me to this moment of consideration, and its attendant conclusions on the meaning of our existence, is not at all clear. Maybe it was an epiphany. Maybe it was a leap of faith drawn from the roots of a subconscious longing for a life based on more than fear and trembling. Maybe it came from an unresolved need. Maybe it was a voice from the bicameral past. Whatever its origins, I have left behind something that felt foreign and have embraced a philosophy that answers much more of who I am, and what I long to be. I have found a philosophy that resonates with the spirit of life.

Most all the pieces now fit—though I still had to resolve my relationship to an institutional theology that embraces the preeminence of law. From my perspective, Mormonism has followed a well-established pattern of religious institutional formalism. Our origin is found in the radical rejection of dogma in a pattern reminiscent of Christ's fledgling church in the meridian of time, or Martin Luther in his challenge to institutional Catholicism, or Saint Francis in rejecting the pious arrogance of the powerful Catholic monastic orders. Though early Mormonism seemed to promise a refreshing departure from established evangelical or institutional theological rigidity, the movement quickly grew in structure and organization; an organization that led to statutes; statutes that demanded absolute obedience; obedience that mandated conditions of conformance; conformance that required judgement; and the emergence of guilt for those incapable of meeting the demands of the law. Guilt and fear bred rigidity at the expense of intimacy. Sadly, Mormonism developed a preoccupation with maintaining the imperative of the institutional hierarchy and an institutional imperative that would glorify a God of justice and vengeance.

On the other hand, as I have reflected on the warm, thoughtful advice of Elders Sterling W. Sill and Marvin J. Ashton or the good-humored counsel of President Thomas Monson, I have found messages which resonate with a philosophy of life and the nature of a creator I recall as the God of my childhood. At the same time I recognize there are many people who seemingly cannot tolerate the absence of absolutes. Consider how the Children of Israel willingly submitted to the Pharisees, and how totalitarian states frequently arise with broad popular support. Maybe many of us are fearful that we will be unable to temper our actions with-

out laws and the specter of justice, or we simply want someone else to think for us and accept the responsibility for our conformance. For those thus bestowed, contemporary institutional Mormon theology will provide absolute answers. As for me, my own search continues. I have no assurance that the answers I have found are the final answers; in fact, my rejection of an ultimate reality would preclude such a conclusion. However, I can now pursue my search with peace of mind in the realization that I have only scratched the surface, and am excited in the prospect of what I am yet to know.

I have also accepted that my anxieties were my own. No one forced me to acknowledge any particular concept of God or his relationship to us. The anxiety I experienced came from my own insecurity and shallow scholarship. The duplicity I endured was my own. I allowed myself to get caught up in the emphasis on church programs that my file leaders advocated as the absolute, divine will of God—the pattern of true, eternal laws. Today, though I still have many unanswered questions, I could accept a mission call and teach of a law that “brings life,” a law of intimate oneness with the source of life. I could share a conviction of principles for living rewarding, fruitful lives: principles of morality, humility, charity, integrity, and joy. I could affirm that living those precepts in a spirit of intimacy will bring happiness. I could tell of the sanctity of temples and what I have felt in private meditation there, of a spiritual companionship associated with the temple experience. I could share concepts of provident living I have learned from King Benjamin and the lessons of Christ’s recorded visit to the Americas. I could tell of a young boy in upstate New York who found simplicity in the midst of a confusion of dogmas. I could share my conviction of someone who took thirty-five years to discover simplicity in the midst of the perplexities of a modern Mormonism.



# “Come Ye Disconsolate”: Is There a Mercy Seat in Mormon Theology and Practice?

*Stanley B. Kimball*

Angels above us are silent notes taking of every action.

I the Lord God cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.

Come to the Mercy Seat, fervently kneel.

AT AGE SIXTY-EIGHT I HAVE LIVED long enough to know some of the sorrows of this life. More than once I have cried out with the Psalmist: “Out of the depths I cry unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!”

And I have noted that there are varieties of sorrow:

There is sorrow for sin and ways of dealing with it. The Mormon church has a fully developed method for this.

There is sorrow which comes “for Christ’s sake” as Paul talks so much about, that is being persecuted for proclaiming the gospel. Mormons have experienced this and have learned how to cope with it.

Then there is a kind of sorrow when bad things happen to good people or when a good person simply “crashes” as slang might have it, and one does not know why or what to do, when one wonders whether one has built on sand, whether one’s prayers clear the ceiling, let alone ascend to heaven, when one’s roots and heritage weaken, when one feels the Spirit has withdrawn and one is left to kick against the pricks. In my experience the Mormon church has not fully and properly addressed this type of sorrow.

At the Mormon History Association conference at Pomona College,

California, in 1991 I was experiencing this latter form of sorrow. I was languishing, I had a wounded heart, I was disconsolate and not at all sure why. I needed a temporary place of refuge. Then something special happened to me.

At our traditionally inspiring MHA conference Sunday morning devotional, directed by RLDS Barbara Howard, we sang (what I took to be) an RLDS hymn, "Come ye Disconsolate," the first verse of which is:

Come ye disconsolate where ere ye languish  
Come to the *Mercy Seat*, fervently kneel  
Bring here your wounded hearts  
Tell of your anguish  
*There is no sorrow on earth which heaven cannot heal.*<sup>1</sup>

That one verse, especially the last line—"There is no sorrow on earth which heaven cannot heal"—was as Balm of Gilead to my wounded heart. I began to heal, I began to understand God as a God of love—not the scorekeeper I had turned him into, not a God as judgmental as I. For the first time in my life I listened, hearkened to the words, the assurance of a Mercy Seat. And even though I did not then know what the term Mercy Seat really meant, I sensed comfort.

The Mercy Seat is mentioned twenty-seven times in the Old Testament primarily in reference to the Arc of the Covenant in the Tabernacle as a resting place for God, but the term has come to have the secondary meanings of a place of expiation, condoning, cleansing, forgiveness, and pardoning. It is referred to only once in the New Testament (Heb. 8:5) with the meaning of an expiatory place or a place to make reconciliation and, by extension, perhaps a court of last resort or last appeal for those who, somehow, have fallen through the cracks and safety nets of traditional Mormonism, a place of compassion for sufferers.

To me it has become some kind of a place where at times in my anguish and with my wounded heart I longed to be able to throw myself on God's infinite mercy and unconditional love.

Since first hearing this hymn I have been searching the scriptures for further comfort and three times I found Paul's great promise of "Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Tim. 1:2, 2 Tim. 1:2, Titus 1:4) and Jude 2, "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied."

Since the Pomona conference I also found "Come Ye Disconsolate" in

---

1. Italics supplied. The words are by the well known Irish Catholic poet and musician Thomas Moore. Barbara later told me she selected this hymn because she thought it to be an LDS hymn, which it is, but I did not know it at the time. It did not appear in the RLDS hymnal until about 1980.

the LDS hymn book, it has been there since at least 1909!—I had just never heard it sung in church. We don't think along these lines. In my experience such sentiments are not typical of Mormonism.

We work out our salvation in fear and trembling. We have guardian angels silent notes taking of every action (do what is right). Our God cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance, mercy cannot rob justice. As Alma said, "What, do ye suppose that mercy can rob justice? I say unto you, Nay; not one whit. If so, God would cease to be God" (42:13-26). Good, faithful Mormons often believe they should not have serious problems, and when serious problems appear they too often don't know what to do about them.

I had never fully realized what the Mercy Seat was or fully known a God of love. I had never known of total, unqualified love. This kind of Godly love, to me, somehow in the past always caused me to reflect on the teaching "Can mercy rob justice?"

I had never known the deeper meaning of Matthew 11:28-30:

Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden,  
And I will give you rest.  
Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart,  
And ye shall find rest unto your souls.  
For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.<sup>2</sup>

Then I began to reflect on the famous passage of John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The entire chapter six of John was comforting. And John 10:10 helped: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

I found little of comfort, however, in Restoration scripture. Our third Article of Faith makes our theological position quite clear in this matter: "We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, *by obedience* to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel."

A few scattered verses helped a bit. Doctrine and Covenants 38:14 says, "But now I tell it unto you, and ye are blessed . . . I will be merciful unto your weakness," and 50:16, "I will be merciful unto you; he that is weak among you hereafter shall be made strong." And Alma 34:16: "And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety."

Now I have no great quarrel with the rather hard-nosed Mormon version of the Mercy Seat, our qualified and limited understanding of grace and salvation, except it does not take into account the good person

---

2. This always brings to mind the sublime aria in the *Messiah*—"Come unto me."

who occasionally falls through the cracks and temporarily “crashes.” This hard-nosedness derives from the well-known Mormon emphasis on James, “Faith without works is dead,” versus Paul, “For by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” I had heard God is love all my life, but it had never really registered.

Mormon theology is a manly, up-and-at-’em, dynamic working-out-our-salvation-in-fear-and-trembling, a we-are-surrounded-with-angels religion that teaches since birth that every unpleasant, un-Christian thought and action I have ever had has been recorded and will be revealed at the Bar of Judgment. The Mormon God is often more of the Old Testament than of the New.

Furthermore many of our hymns are also the up-and-at-’em, do-or-die types:

“I Have Work Enough to Do”  
 “We are Marching on to Glory”  
 “Improve the Shining Moments”  
 “Today, While the Sun Shines”  
 “Do What is Right”  
 “Choose the Right”  
 “Let Us All Press On”  
 “Up, Awake, Ye Defenders of Zion”  
 “Called to Serve”  
 “We Are All Enlisted”  
 “Behold! a Royal Army”  
 “Put Your Shoulder to the Wheel”  
 “Hope of Israel”  
 “Come, Come, Ye Saints”

There are, however, some comforting ones:

“Sweet is the Peace the Gospel Brings”  
 “The Lord is My Light”  
 “Dearest Children, God is Near You”  
 “Jesus, Lover of my Soul”  
 “Precious Saviour, Dear Redeemer”  
 “The Lord is My Shepherd”  
 “The Lord my Pasture Will Prepare”  
 “Cast Thy Burden upon the Lord”  
 “Rock of Ages”  
 “Come unto Jesus”  
 “Lean on My Ample Arm”  
 “How Gentle God’s Commands”



"Where Can I Turn for Peace"  
 "Did You Think to Pray?"  
 "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee"  
 "Prayer is the Soul's Sincere Desire"  
 "Come Ye Disconsolate"

One of our favorite hymns, "I Stand All Amazed," one which we sing often as against the almost never heard "Come Ye Disconsolate," has recently become most comforting and meaningful to me, but, as a people, I don't think we understand it. I don't think we ever reflect on this hymn's reference to the Mercy Seat for I have never heard the term used in more than sixty years of church attendance.

### I Stand All Amazed

I stand all amazed as the love Jesus offers me  
 Confused at the *grace* which so fully he offers me  
 I tremble to know that for me he was crucified  
 That for me a sinner he suffered, he bled, and died.

Oh, it is wonderful that he should care for me enough to die for me  
 Oh, it is wonderful to me.

I think of his hands pierced and bleeding to pay the debt  
 Such love and devotion can I forget  
 No, no I will pray and adore at the *Mercy Seat*  
 Until at the glorified throne I kneel at his feet.<sup>3</sup>

Where do good Mormons go when they crash, when wounded, not by sin, but by the cares of life, when they feel their prayers do not clear the ceiling, when they have doubts, when they are not seeking absolution, not searching for short cuts or loop holes, rather searching for just a little unconditional love, understanding, and support, enough to get back to a more abundant life, when they just want to throw themselves on the mercy of the court?

---

3. Words by Charles H. Gabriel (1856-1932), a nineteenth-twentieth-century prolific American composer, most likely Protestant, of gospel hymns. Although the words to this hymn were not written by a Mormon, one may assume that the philosophy, the doctrine of the words, is kosher. This is because all hymns are carefully screened before they enter the canon of the hymnal, and Mormons are not loath to alter some words in otherwise appropriate hymns if theologically necessary, as we have done at least seven times. Those altered include "How Great Thou Art," "God is Love," "Battle Hymn of the Republic," and "Joy to the World." We even add new verses and adapt music. A most interesting paper could be developed analyzing these changes in Mormon hymnody.

We can, of course, go to our bishop, but it is sometimes difficult for some Mormons to go to their bishops or stake presidents for they are extremely busy with the cares of the whole congregation. It is especially difficult for males holding the Melchizedek priesthood, for priesthood holders should be helping others, not taking up the limited time of the Father of the Ward who has the cares of all, especially of those who are not priesthood holders.

More significantly, Mormon bishops are "the common judges in Israel." They have great power to discipline. As one young, newly minted bishop once told me, "I can do it all—from baptism to excommunication"—and he was right. And as Paul Toscano recently wrote in *Sunstone*, "Directives require the [Mormon] bishop to act simultaneously in the conflicting role of police officer, accuser, prosecutor, and judge—all of which are at odds with his role as pastor."<sup>4</sup> A point to which I wish to return. I occasionally go to my various bishops and ask for a blessing to help me better cope. While this always helps, sometimes I need more, sometimes I want to talk to someone other than a judge.

Mormons may also talk to their home teachers, quorum leaders, and the sisters have visiting teachers. It has been my experience that many times these people, however well intentioned, have neither the time nor the skills to properly advise other than regarding the minor problems of life. Some of my quorum leaders have also been a bit uneasy when I tried to open up to them.

Home and visiting teachers, furthermore, are really representatives of the bishop and are expected to keep him advised regarding the welfare of church members, the major concern being the physical, not spiritual.

In Mormonism mercy is not "showered promiscuously" upon humankind, it is "granted" to those who comply with the law upon which its receipt is predicated<sup>5</sup>—"There is a law irrevocably decreed in the heavens upon which all blessings are predicated and when one receives such a blessing it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated" (D&C 130:20-21). It is earned by those who are God-fearing and righteous. And, as such, of little use, if available at all, to those who crash, to those who need it most, to those who do not feel righteous, but want to. To paraphrase Ann Landers, the Mormon church often appears to be more of a museum for saints than a hospital for sinners.

Grace, too, exists in Mormon theology, but it appears to be qualified: "Grace is granted to men proportionately as they conform to the standards of personal righteousness that are part of the gospel plan."<sup>6</sup> Mor-

---

4. "Dealing with Spiritual Abuse: The Role of the Mormon Alliance," *Sunstone*, July 1993, 32-39.

5. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1958), 438.

6. *Ibid.*, 310.

mons appear then to get grace when they really don't need it.

In LDS theology justice demands that for every broken law a penalty must be paid: "Mercy is thus for the repentant, faithful member of the church and no one else."<sup>7</sup> Good Mormons should not become disconsolate. If we do, we tend to think we, somehow, brought it upon ourselves.

Yet there is some hope. In 1993 general conference, for example, President Gordon B. Hinckley said, "Mercy is the essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the reality of our discipleship to Christ is directly measured by how merciful we are." I memorize hymns, I am learning to pray to a God of love, and I am gaining more sympathy and understanding for others like myself. We Mormons should balance our theology—we should stress the Mercy Seat concept as much as the mercy—cannot—rob—justice principle.

It is easy to criticize, to complain. Do I have anything positive to say, any suggestions? Well, one maybe. In addition to the bishop, in addition to home teachers, visiting teachers, and quorum leaders, perhaps we need a trained and officially called assistant bishop to function like a pastor or minister, not as a judge, one to whom members may speak quite freely knowing that what they say or reveal will never be repeated under any circumstances to anyone, knowing that the assistant bishop cannot discipline them. He can only listen, offer council, understanding, comfort, and make suggestions—one of which might be to go and talk to the bishop.

In conclusion and to answer the question I have raised: Yes, there is a Mercy Seat in Mormon theology, a rather restricted one, qualified and conditional, based on worthiness and a doctrine little talked of. We need to pay more attention to it and what it means.

This will be the text of my sermon the next time I am asked to speak in church—if I am asked again.

---

7. *Ibid.*, 440.

# Weight

*R. A. Christmas*

He was folding garments in the back bedroom  
when he heard one of his kids telling  
his wife that his ex had “lost a lot of weight”—

and his ears pricked up, and he felt the old  
mixture of lust and apprehension,  
which was relieved only by the fact

that he was embarrassed in front of his clothes.  
Because even if she lost 10,000 lbs.,  
she’d still be too heavy for him to carry.

That night, as they lay in bed, apropos  
of nothing, his wife said, “Would you love me  
more if I lost fifty pounds?”

And he said no, which was wrong, and then  
yes, which was also wrong, whereupon  
she pushed away his spindly arm, and turned

her back like a wall, and left him lying  
there with the feeling that weight was always  
something you wanted to lose, but couldn’t.

# The Noon of Life: Mid-Life Transition in the Married LDS Priesthood Holder

*Vincent C. Rampton*

*Now that my ladder's gone,  
I must lie down where all ladders start,  
in the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart.*

—from “The Circus Animals’ Desertion,” by William Butler Yeats

THE ANCIENT CHINESE CURSE has plainly caught up with the LDS church over the past decade—never have the Saints lived in more interesting times. The recent whirlwind of world political changes has opened up mission fields undreamed of only a few years ago, faster almost than we can respond. It has also made us the target of anti-American sentiment and violence. Yet, in spite of all, church membership has now reached nine million.

Nine million living souls, of all ages and types, drawn from nearly every nation on the face of the earth. Nine million, embracing the same gospel teachings—yet each bringing to them his or her own experiences and viewpoints, and applying them to a set of troubles, trials, and triumphs totally his or her own.

Unfortunately, too many priesthood leaders focus on the gospel’s universality, rather than the diversity and complexity of its adherents, in

attempting to counsel and instruct members. They tend to develop a pre-fabricated "tool box" of timely maxims, drawn from gospel teaching, into which they reach whenever a ward or quorum member faces a trial. Counselling becomes a process of probing and temporizing until an appropriate inspirational thought can be located, at which time the selected adage is delivered. Members often leave such counselling sessions confused, unfulfilled, unanswered. The priesthood leaders, when their sermonizing fails to solve the problem, shrug and conclude that the member is simply "not listening to counsel."

We are nine million strong, and growing. Too many, and each too unique, to be led by a scattering of wise sayings or sage quotations. The gospel's genius is not merely its underlying simplicity, but its ability to reach into the infinite complexity of the human heart. Its truths are clearly universal, yet as intimately diverse and individual, as is each soul who embraces it.

The business of priesthood counselling, reduced to its essence, is facilitating the interface between the individual and the gospel. And the time, place, and nature of that interface will never, never be exactly the same for any two people. It must be found "from scratch" for each Saint—leaders can ill afford to dispense off-the-shelf counsel, hoping it will fit the malady. It is in one-to-one counselling that the gospel message touches individual lives in the eternal scheme.

This essay was prompted by a particular problem which has been of personal concern to me (recently turned forty-two, by the way). Both the problem discussed and the suggested approach may serve as examples of problems which will face bishops, quorum presidents, group leaders, and home teachers—and Relief Society officers and visiting teachers as well—in these wonderful and troubled times, and may give Saints some guidance in their resolution. It is prayerfully hoped that it will be of some use, not just to the reader, but also to those few whose private pain gave rise to it.

Over the last few years, three women, all very special to me, have found themselves plunged suddenly and unexpectedly into divorce. The cases were all very similar. In each, the husband was of middle age, a bright, capable priesthood holder, the father of several children, seemingly a loving spouse and devoted head of a household. The announcement in all cases came like a thunderclap from a clear sky—he wanted no more of the family, no more of the marriage, no more of the church. Period. For reasons undisclosed, each man was making a precipitous, wholly-unexpected declaration of personal independence from the entire fabric of his life—a total about-face, and hang the consequences, to himself or anyone else.

My reaction to these tidings (in addition to anger) was total bewilder-

ment. Just what did these brethren think they were doing, tossing out everything that had structured and guided their lives to that point? What was this sudden, urgent call of personal freedom, that it justified the consequent toll on their children, their wives, their friends, and those who had looked to them as examples? How could they, possibly, see things so differently so quickly?

A little thought, discussion, and observation, though, quickly showed that my friends were not as unique as I assumed; they were examples (albeit extreme ones) of a problem remarkably widespread among adult priesthood holders. Bishops, quorum presidents, and stake presidents with whom I spoke each seemed to have his own story of mature men in their wards, stakes, and quorums who fell, or wandered, away. Strong, exemplary, and apparently happy, they suddenly faltered, and either broke away deliberately or just drifted, losing touch with the purpose and direction that church life had given them.

It was inconceivable, at first blush. These were men of an age at which the church depends most heavily on its priesthood holders. Mid-life is commonly regarded as a time when testimony has matured, when life generally has solidified into predictable patterns. The middle-aged man is the staid, no-nonsense foot soldier upon whose shoulders the church moves.

And it seemed odd to me, in talking with these leaders, that there was not more concern over the nature and extent of the problem. The church—rightly—devotes much energy and rhetoric to redeeming our young people. It is commonly recognized that adolescence is a crossroads, and we are at pains to furnish guidance and understanding to youth. After all, the balance of their lives is taking shape. But we assume that the end of adolescence finishes the “awkward period”; that once men reach adulthood, they settle comfortably into a life pattern and can assume responsibility for family, career, and church callings without much further attention.

In point of fact, we don’t know what to do with these odd cases. Strong, stable men whose spiritual circuitry suddenly misfires, baffle everyone. They are regarded, and often dismissed, as perplexing deviations, however numerous or true to pattern. Church leaders conclude that they have “given in to temptation.” Cynics outside the church conclude that they have finally “grown up.” And the families, quiet and bewildered, absorb the shock and try to pick up the fragments.

# I

Psychologists, no less than church leaders (or anyone else, for that matter), initially assumed that adulthood was a time of developmental

stasis, that "maturity" meant the end of transition and instability. Psychological and emotional development was studied at—and presumed limited to—the level of childhood and adolescence.

Carl G. Jung (1875-1961), founder of Analytical Psychology, is generally credited with the first theoretical work focusing on developmental changes during middle adulthood. Although devoted in his youth to the work of his mentor, Sigmund Freud, Jung (as part of a mid-life crisis of his own, he was later to claim<sup>1</sup>) broke from the Freudian focus on childhood development and its impact on adulthood and examined developmental phases during "the second half of life."<sup>2</sup> Jung's emphasis was on the life cycle as a whole, including (as Freud had not done) social and interactive influences. He concluded that development in the adult male was not (as commonly believed) complete, or even very well under way, by age twenty when demands of family and career struck. It was at around age forty, the "noon of life,"<sup>3</sup> when the next true opportunity for basic change occurred, a change which he termed "individuation," and which extended over the next half of a man's life.

Erik H. Erikson (1902-94), though by training a Freudian psychoanalyst, was likewise a great contributor to adult developmental theory.<sup>4</sup> Like Jung, Erikson examined adult change and development from a social/interactive, as well as a clinical and internal, perspective. The result was the identification of a series of "ego stages" which arise at fairly defined intervals during the life cycle. Particularly relevant to this discussion is the ego stage occurring at about age forty, which Erikson termed "generativity versus stagnation." At this time of life, he noted, men begin undertaking the initiation of a younger generation into responsible adulthood. They must learn to relate to the younger generation differently, treating those in their twenties and thirties as a generation removed, yet still adults rather than children. The resulting internal conflict forces re-examination of the role of self, and a triggering of Jung's "individuation" (of which more later).

Numerous later studies addressed, to varying degrees, the various facets of adult development and change.<sup>5</sup> In 1978, though, Daniel J. Levinson released the results of a ten-year study which offered the single most exhaustive examination of the adult male life cycle to date.<sup>6</sup>

---

1. See Carl G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Pantheon, 1963).

2. Carl G. Jung, *Man and His Symbols* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1964).

3. *Ibid.*

4. Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1950).

5. See, for example, Roger L. Gould, "The Phases of Adult Life: A Study in Developmental Psychology," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 129 (1972); George E. Vaillant, *Adaptation to Life* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977); and Robert Lifton, *The Life in the Self: Toward a New Psychology* (New York: Simon & Schuster 1976).

6. Daniel J. Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1978).



The Levinson study consisted of "biographical interviews" with forty men, ages 35-45, divided among four general occupational groups. Research concentrated on the isolation of developmental patterns along the whole life cycle, focusing most particularly on adult life (ages 25 and over).

The uniformity of result was striking. In each of their subjects, researchers were able to identify a series of distinctly characteristic life "eras": childhood and adolescence (up to age 22); early adulthood (17-45); middle adulthood (40-65); and late adulthood (over age 60). The age at which subjects moved from one era to the next varied by no more than five years one way or the other.

The transition from each era to the next lasted from three to six years and was characterized by some degree of change in the fundamental fabric of life. Most dramatic in this respect was the "mid-life transition," occurring in all subjects between the late thirties and mid-forties. During this period, men essentially complete the process of "becoming" adults—in career, parenting, marriage, and physical development, they reach the top of a development curve that has occupied their time and energies since they left adolescence. As Erikson suggested, they face the transition of generations as the next younger moves into young adulthood—they leave the generation of Initiation and move to that of Domination. They review their level of occupational success, determining whether they have realized the dreams of their youth (and if so, whether the dreams had the worth once assigned them). Finally, they revisit the fundamental values and relationships that structured their lives through young adulthood: marriage, family, beliefs, and faith.

Successful navigation of mid-life transition, according to Levinson (and Jung), entails a constructive approach to "individuation": the process of bringing the myriad elements, demands, and motivating forces of one's life into dynamic balance and becoming a more unique, integrated individual. Whereas youth is mostly characterized by external demands and expectations which shape and steer life, the transition to mid-life can (properly handled) tap internal seeds within the self, allowing a flowering of the individual in the middle years.

Transition typically entails some degree of re-evaluation and sacrifice. Each life period revolves around a stable "life structure" (consisting of the principal areas of focus in a man's life, the points at which he confronts the world around him, and those parts of the world central to his awareness and energy). At times of transition, essential components of the previous life structure are examined afresh; they may be reaffirmed, modified, or discarded altogether in the formulation of a new life structure which will characterize the next life period. The fundamental tasks facing a man in mid-life transition are the termination of the prior life pe-

riod, the modification of the life structure to one more appropriate to the middle years, and the cultivation of individuation.

This fundamental reappraisal and regrouping cannot be expected to come and go as a placid interlude. It will often engender some degree of crisis, some twisting and straining, as old beliefs and habits—not to mention jealousies, dependencies, recriminations, and fears—which have shaped early adulthood struggle to retain their grip. Yet the drive to reassess, to face the glass, and look into the self—thankfully—will not be repressed. As the season of life turns, the barnacles of youth and young adulthood need to be shaken off if a stronger, better integrated middle-aged adult is to emerge. The man must (willingly or not) return to the fundamental aspects of himself—perhaps to things cast off or stifled since childhood—in order to determine what clay his older self will be molded from. Levinson observed:

Every life structure necessarily gives high priority to certain aspects of the self and neglects or minimizes other aspects. . . . In the Mid-life Transition these neglected parts of the self urgently seek expression. A man experiences them as “other voices in the room” (in Truman Capote’s evocative phrase). Internal voices that have been muted for years now clamor to be heard. At times they are heard as a vague whispering, the content unclear but the tone indicating grief over lost opportunities, outrage over betrayal by others, or guilt over betrayal by oneself. At other times they come through as a thunderous roar, the content all too clear, stating names and times and places and demanding that something be done to right the balance. A man hears the voice of an identity prematurely rejected; of a love lost or not pursued; of a valued interest or relationship given up in acquiescence to parental or other authority; of an internal figure who wants to be an athlete or nomad or artist, to marry for love or remain a bachelor, to get rich or enter the clergy or live a sensual carefree life—possibilities set aside earlier to become what he is now. During the Mid-life Transition he must learn to listen more attentively to these voices and decide consciously what part he will give them in his life.<sup>7</sup>

Studies since Levinson’s treatise have confirmed that mid-life tends to be a watershed in the life of most men. The desire for “extended youth,” which has many middle-aged men going on crash diets, adopting frantic exercise programs, and even dallying with much younger women, is now thought less a desire to be young forever than a sense that there is no new, older self yet integrated, waiting in the wings to take over.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, with luck and courage, a man emerges from mid-life transition

---

7. Levinson, 200.

8. David Gelman, “A Kiss Is Still a Kiss,” *Newsweek*, 5 Mar. 1990, 53 (quoting Robert H. Binstock, professor of aging, health, and society at Case Western University).

more truly "himself" than he has ever been before. Fresh insights have been gained, lost visions and dreams recovered and seen in new and clearer light, clamorous non-essentials cast off, and the whole structure of life reconfigured, simplified, renewed.

## II

All this transitioning and reassessment, of course, may to some seem out of place in a Mormon priesthood holder. Doesn't accepting the gospel message and living its precepts obviate the need for such painful metamorphosis? Once *we* are in at the strait gate, isn't it merely a matter of "enduring to the end" (2 Ne. 31:18-20), staying on the path, and not deviating?

In principle, yes. But the facts are clear—neither church membership nor ordination to the priesthood immunizes men from mid-life crisis. Worse still, such crisis strikes at a deeper, more fundamental level in a man seeking to live priesthood covenants; underlying the psychological turmoil and social readjustment there is often a layer of spiritual turmoil. Mismanaged, mid-life transition can cut to the very marrow of personal spiritual witness.

For many priesthood holders, at least the lucky ones, there is a spiritual awakening during the years immediately preceding and surrounding mission age. Through the late teens and early twenties, as adolescence moves into young adulthood, a man emerges from the rules-and-regulations perception of the gospel which characterizes childhood and reaches that marvelous moment of realization that there is a shining spiritual reality behind the system. The commandments, he realizes, are not just a behavioral code, but a guide for bringing calm and harmony to his life, establishing a direct link with his creator, and seeing the world through the eyes of the Spirit. Best of all, far from forcing conformity and repressing individuality, gospel tenets enable him to be more truly himself—his highest, divine self—than ever before. He looks into the plan of salvation, and sees there his own spirit. Through prayer (his first real efforts at divine communication, not just rote invocation), he begins to see, with his new spiritual eyes, how living the commandments can be fused into a single, integrated, spiritually-centered life.

Levinson speaks of the formation of "the Dream" as one of the major formative tasks of young adulthood.<sup>9</sup> It consists of a generalized (often idealized) image of "self in the world," a vision of adult life in which all fledgling visions and desires are brought to fruition. By his early adult years, the young priesthood holder has perhaps crafted such a Dream, a

---

9. Levinson, 91-97, 245-51.

self-image and life plan, crystallized around his new-found vision of spiritual integrity. His adult years will be a steady, unbroken building on the vision. To be sure, time will add maturity and depth, to say nothing of endless opportunity for personal perfection through application. But the course is set. Whatever else the years may bring, he commits to the ongoing cultivation of his celestial self, keeping his eye single to God's glory (D&C 4:5).

If it were only that simple.

The years which follow bring pressure, confusion, chaos. Completion of education generally stretches into the mid-twenties or beyond. This usually overlaps the launching of a career. At the same time, the young man has probably chosen a wife and begun a family. His vision of celestial manhood, conceived in splendid isolation, must now accommodate the crowding press of other roles: husband, father, breadwinner, citizen, coworker, and so on. And *everything* clamors for compromise.

It can be a tricky business, this weaving of sublime vision into the fabric of such a multi-faceted existence. During those first ecstatic moments of revelation, everything seems to fall perfectly into place, each element dropping seamlessly into the grand, divine mosaic. But then comes the morning after, and all the mornings after that. There is endless adaptation to the demands of others, to the needs of the moment, to the bottom line and the end-of-quarter report. Paraphrasing the poetry of inspiration in the prose of daily habit and routine, focusing the vast and dazzling overview down into the specifics of work-a-day behavior, can be a task of great deception and confusion. As the man drifts into his middle years, much of his youthful idealism may be lost, not through sin or wickedness, but through the sheer difficulty of translation.

Perhaps the most severe point of erosion (though by no means the only one) is vocation and career. Mormon society, traditional in orientation, perceives a man's preeminent role as breadwinner. Friends, family, society, and the scriptures themselves (D&C 83:2-4) tell the head of the family that it is he who should provide for his family's physical wants (and in our possession-driven culture, even a modest family can want plenty). Such a role inevitably carries with it a certain mindset, a tendency to view life and reality with one eye on the balance sheet. Faced all too often with the unpalatable fact that outright devotion to gospel virtues may not be the most profitable alternative, the priesthood holder/wage earner is faced with a conflict of duties. On one hand, he knows that his principles demand that he "do what is right"; subliminally, he knows what this will cost him. This conflict pervades almost every vocation which a man can pursue, and can crop up on almost a daily basis. Inch by inch, his resolve to live an unsullied, spiritually pure existence gives ground to an imperious pragmatism.

Family pressures can frequently exact a similar toll. I know I tread on thin ice here and hope I will not be misconstrued. We have made a long-overdue and healthy departure from the society in which the husband, lord of his private domain, never sullied his hands with “woman’s work” such as domestic chores and child rearing. Today, a young wife expects, rightly, that her new husband should share in the goals and responsibilities of family life, and that his own goals should be flexible enough to accommodate this. But when life is reduced to a revolving door between the demands of the workplace during business hours, and the demands of domestic chores during other hours, the priesthood holder can begin to sense that his best self has fallen through the cracks somewhere. As any mother of small children can attest, a steady regimen of diapers and child disciplining makes a poor catalyst for spiritual awareness. It is no better for a young husband and father. The family can become a ravenous beast, consuming the prime years of his life with incessant demands for money, maintenance, and domestic service.

One recent study suggests a further complication. Research at Brigham Young University reveals that, whatever contemporary thought may suggest, young fathers really aren’t placing themselves more at the center of the family at all. Even in two-career families the wife remains at the heart of the household, making the decisions, managing the money, putting in the time, all devolve on the mother as much as ever.

If this is so, if the father/breadwinner is not fulfilling his perceived parenting role despite an awareness of his need—and obligation—to do so, it may drive yet another wedge between his ideal self and his actual self. The vision of himself as, among everything else, a loving and involved family man might be tarnished beyond recognition by a career that keeps him from participation in family matters, or a well-meaning spouse who wants to spare him the bother of managing domestic matters (or herself the trouble of including him in decisions she can more easily handle alone). Amid the sea of roles and functions he never intended for himself, one which might well have been central to his self-image is left dark and empty.

The church and the priesthood, of course, seek to counterbalance all of this by their organization and programs. The underlying purpose of the priesthood, after all, is to vouchsafe to men a portion of God’s authority in order to develop and train their spiritual nature. Yet ironically even in this process a young man’s spiritual vision can suffer subtle injury.

Even in the matter of church activities a man can often lose sight of his spiritual focus. Bishops, stake presidents, and quorum leaders who concentrate more on programs and actions than on inner development can push members directly into the hands of spiritual atrophy. As atten-

tion shifts from the individual testimonies or members to the more external mechanics of church life, the worth and purpose of our doings can be lost.

"Activity" in church affairs may survive on such a diet of spiritual hardscrabble, to be sure. But too often it is a very different activity from that springing out of the young man's early Dream. Cultivating the glow of gospel light, the once-intended core purpose of existence is now crowded into a small corner of a busy life. Indeed, the gospel ceases altogether to be a source of illumination for the whole of life and becomes a series of tasks and maneuvers, motions to be gone through; ritual without function.

It is this form-only "institutional activity" which all too often counterfeits real spirituality in the adult life of the priesthood holder. As he focuses on career development, his religious doings are placed on a path of least resistance, set to auto-pilot and largely forgotten. "Living the gospel," ironically, is reduced once more to the rules and regulations of childhood. But now they are habits, outward relics of the Christ-centered existence he once longed to cultivate.

It should surprise no one that, as part of the transition period of his middle years, a priesthood holder feels a fundamental drive to revisit the nature, quality, and depth of his gospel commitment. In an ideal world, this sort of self-examination would begin as a conscious recognition that the religious observances of his younger adult years had been bleached of some of their former richness and meaning, and a decision to retrace, constructively, the course which his life has taken (and which of us could not benefit from such a process?). But as always, we do our living in the real world, where things are more complicated.

As a people, we are not at ease with the idea of reviewing our past in any depth. We believe in progression; in repenting of past mistakes, and then leaving them. Make the right choices, we say, then get on with life. We thus either ignore or stifle the urge to turn back to ground already covered. (Granted, we pay lip service to the notion that "the unexamined life is not worth living." In reality, though, the sort of "examination" we have in mind is little more than a behavioral survey: how closely do our actions mirror the rules of gospel living; how well are we conforming to the commandments? Anything more probing than this, any foray into how fully we are realizing our own individuality and dreams of youth, begins to sound uncomfortably like self-doubt or even abandonment of our beliefs.)

Thus an elder or high priest who begins to sense the early rumblings of mid-life discontent is brought to the brink of a Rubicon which he is initially reluctant to cross. His first reflex is to turn a deaf ear to his inclinations. He may even fling himself into his church routine with renewed

energy (if not conviction), assuming that “whatever it is that’s bothering him” will pass, if he just buckles down and magnifies his callings.

But if something *is* wrong, if the course of his life *has* taken him away from his Dream of “self in the world” (and more critically, “self in the gospel”), the priesthood holder’s transitional drive will not be dismissed so simply. Instead, as is typical with repressed urges, it will most likely manifest itself in some disguised form. A common form (and that which, I believe, lay behind the three cases with which I began) is doctrinal questioning and murmuring.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, in his general conference address of 10 October 1989,<sup>10</sup> warned of the myriad evils which flow to ourselves and others from murmuring against the gospel. He addressed therein the murmurer’s desire to recast the whole of the gospel scheme in a format more to his liking:

Perhaps when we murmur we are unconsciously complaining over not being able to cut a special deal with the Lord. We want full blessings but without full obedience to the laws upon which those blessings are predicated. For instance, some murmurers seem to hope to reshape the Church to their liking by virtue of their murmuring. But why would one want to belong to a church that he could remake in his own image, when it is the Lord’s image that we should come to have in our countenances? (Alma 5:19)<sup>11</sup>

A priesthood holder, sensing that something of himself is smothering, but daunted by the seeming heresy of the personal surgery needed for genuine healing, may begin to suspect, subliminally, that the fault must lie in the system as a whole. After all, if he is living the gospel in its fullness (and who could say otherwise of a 100-percenter in meeting attendance, home teaching, and Family Home Evening?), yet still feels so joylessly adrift, the plan is failing him and must therefore be somehow flawed.

At the outset, the murmurer will not likely consider a wholesale divestment of his church-oriented existence. Instead, he begins to pick at it. Often, he finds a single point of doctrine, which he begins questioning (with, he insists, absolute intellectual honesty and integrity). Perhaps the authority of church leaders, those “inspired but imperfect” souls who make such grand targets because they must suffer in silence.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps an apparent point of contradiction in church teachings which grants him petty victory in gospel discussions. Perhaps (far more understandably) some personal loss, or even tragedy, which he cannot square with what

10. Neal A. Maxwell, “Murmur Not,” *Ensign* 19 (Nov. 1989): 83.

11. *Ibid.*, 84.

12. *Ibid.*, 85.

he has been taught of God's goodness. Whatever the issue, it acts as a focal point for his frustration at the fulfillment which "gospel living" has denied him, and soon looms so large that it casts a shadow on the church and everything in it.

For murmuring's prime evil is its poisoning of perspective. Like the "single-issue politician," who doubts the viability of an entire system of governance because it cannot come to grips with his patron problem, the murmuring priesthood holder becomes gradually obsessed with one intractable knot and grows more and more disillusioned with a gospel plan that apparently cannot undo it.

Yet even while all this is festering beneath the surface, everything may well appear outwardly normal. Still dogged in his determination to muddle through, or at least "keep up appearances," the priesthood holder maintains his outward shell of institutional activity. Even those in his own family may be only vaguely aware that something isn't quite right. For conviction dies from the center outward; we cling to form for form's sake, often long after the substance is lost to memory.

By this point, of course, the priesthood holder is deep in the midst of a crisis approaching an irretrievable flash point. His sense of transition, that force which should have been prompting him to healthy introspection and needed course adjustments, but bound by his all-or-nothing drive to endure unchanging to the end, demands immediate resolution. At a given point, triggered by some internal or external catalyst, the conflict explodes. The priesthood holder suddenly resolves that his life has become an empty ritual for which he can now recall no real meaning whatever, that his remaining years are limited, and that, if he wishes to salvage anything of himself, he must act quickly and precipitously. The once unimaginable, categorical rejection of the whole now presents itself as his last hope of redemption. The Christ-centered life he once dreamed of, which now includes wife, family, career, and callings, is sloughed off—not as a heartless or callous slap at his loved ones and lifelong values, but as one last desperate grab for personal integrity.

And what is left of his testimony cannot begin to hold him back.

### III

This is all very grim, certainly. The portrait above may be extreme, but the spiritual decay described there is plainly at work (even if to a lesser degree) in all too many of the church's relied-upon priesthood brethren.

Advisors, counsellors, and leaders need to begin by acknowledging the problem. They cannot indulge the blithe assumption that mid-life discontent is a mythical creation of post-Freudian theorists; that it does not



touch the lives of the truly faithful; or that it is nothing but a sign of laxity or petulance (one advisor dismissed the whole question with the observation that middle-aged brethren who stray “really know better” and need nothing so much as “a good spanking”).

The problem is not only real, in fact, but (like all problems) the dark side of opportunity—meant not only to be surmounted but *possibly used* to bless the life of the sufferer. For mid-life transition can and should be a time of personal spiritual renaissance. Occurring as it should—not as described above—it is a time of deep, profound course correction; commitments to the self, perhaps long forgotten, are reaffirmed; life is unburdened of unneeded clutter and clamor; and the essential is gleaned from the superfluous and used to fashion a proper framework for the balance of the Second Estate. It is the leader’s task—with love and compassion—to guide confused priesthood holders through the sorting process, carefully avoiding the sort of categorical rejection that casts out the priceless with the expendable.

First, a few hard, obvious realities. Prevention and advance preparation are going to be far more effective in dealing with mid-life transition than is treatment after the fact—and the earlier the better. Faith promoting accounts of long-disaffected brethren brought back by inspired and loving leadership are well and good; the fact remains, though, that the farther down the path of apostasy a man journeys, the longer (and harder) his return is. A simple extension of Levinson’s modelling shows why this is so.

Mid-life restructuring, conscious or otherwise, is a process of change and becoming, not just of rejection. A man to whose life-dream gospel ideals have been central is unlikely to jettison them in a vacuum, with nothing ready at hand to put in their place. On the contrary, by the time his testimony has corroded to ruin, something else will have congealed in its place. His new self will have formed around new ideals, which will in fact “crowd out” what is left of his gospel beliefs as “no longer relevant.” Whether he has turned to some other orthodoxy or to his own philosophy, it will be (or at least seem) complete in itself, having no room for any “Mormonisms.”

For such brothers, the ideas which follow will probably be as sound as any other counsel. But their implementation will be a process of undoing and rebuilding, not merely redirecting. Priesthood leaders will be confronting substantial barriers, and successes, frankly, will be rarer and less profound. Those most fully brought back are those not yet fully out.

As a preface, then, to all which follows: be alert to the problem early on and address it in its embryonic stages. By the time the signs and symptoms become obvious, leaders may be facing more catch-up ball than they want to play.

The first and central step has already been suggested. Without preaching, and certainly without condemnation, the man must be brought to focus on a single, absolute reality: his own personal witness of the Spirit. Somehow he must be helped to separate out, from the clamor of demands competing for his energies and attention, the central fact and reason for his existence, totally inseparable from who and what he is—a spirit son of a loving Father, with an absolute witness, borne of the Holy Ghost, bearing record of God.

It may be necessary to overcome a difficult hurdle here. A priesthood holder, even a lifelong faithful one, may claim in the midst of crisis that he has never really received a spiritual witness, never really had a testimony. How to answer such a declaration will vary with the individual, but the fact is that it is probably untrue. Men who are strong in the priesthood as they enter adulthood have usually gone through a spiritual emergence of the sort described above. The Lord spoke to Jeremiah of the powerful internalization his law would assume among the Saints in the last days:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people (Jer. 31:33).

It just becomes simpler, when the vision has faded through time and erosion, for a man to pretend that it was never there to begin with. He needs, somehow, to be jogged in his personal recollection, to have his spiritual vision cleared, to see that it is the intervening years, pressures, and confusion that have caused him to mislay his knowledge. His moment of realization needs to be revived and re-experienced. Perhaps it was long ago, buried now beneath years of neglect. Perhaps it was only a moment as he left childhood. But however brief, weak, or remote his first brush with the Holy Ghost may have been, it is here that he needs to return—to that moment (even if it was only a moment) when the Spirit bore witness of God's reality, and of who and what he really is.

Because spiritual witness is pure knowledge, once obtained (and until forgotten) it becomes the irrefutable first principle. Questions, doubts, even disillusionment and suffering can create questions and wondering but cannot disprove or displace the single, central certainty. Joseph Smith

taught that all facets of the gospel are appendages to the central fact of Christ and his atonement<sup>13</sup>; modern church teachings call us back to this fact again and again. It is because Christ's divinity and mission—and what they tell us of our own selves—are the reality to which each of us is entitled to personal, absolute knowledge through the Spirit. And until we know that, what else we do or do not know matters little.

So where is the gateway to such personal rediscovery? How does the leader break through denial and refusal to rekindle the Spirit's voice? Simplistic as the suggestion may appear, the place to begin is a carefully-focused return to the first principles: personal prayer, scripture study, and righteous living.

A little inquiry may find these rudiments of the faithful priesthood holder's life in disrepair. As noted, spiritual observance tends to be reduced to outward essentials by the press of other demands. In the life of even the most observant, the sense of God's reality—his presence—may have been decaying for years. A man must be brought to rediscover the substance behind the forms he has preserved. And such rediscovery can spring only from direct and *genuine* communion with the Father.

Scripture and prayer—simple, basic, yet indispensable, and irreplaceable by any amount of practical advice or secular guidance. But note the difficulty: it is something which the priesthood holder must ultimately do on his own. Leaders and advisors cannot do it for him. Indeed, this first step back is as intensely personal and individual a task as anyone can undertake. Advisors can motivate, urge, and hope, but re-establishing the primary contact must take place in private, between the man and his maker, while priesthood leaders sit back and worry. Small wonder the Lord listed persuasion among the cardinal priesthood virtues—followed immediately by longsuffering (D&C 121:41).

The next step flows naturally from the first. As the priesthood holder, communing with the Father, moves closer to the Spirit, his awareness turns away from himself to those he loves. The closer the Spirit's influence, the broader sweeps the circle of love and concern. The scriptures tell of Enos, hunting in the forest alone, being moved upon to kneel in prayer for the welfare of his own soul: "And there came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed. And I, Enos, knew that Cod could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away" (Enos 5-7). The Spirit having borne witness of his own redemption, Enos's awareness moved suddenly beyond himself: "Now, it came to pass that when I had heard these words I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren the Nephites; wherefore, I did pour out my whole

---

13. Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977), 121.

soul unto God for them" (v. 9).

Once again, the Spirit spoke assurance to him, promising blessings according to the Nephites' diligence in keeping the commandments. At this, Enos moved yet a step further beyond himself: "And after I, Enos, had heard these words, my faith began to be unshaken in the Lord; and I prayed unto him with many long strugglings for my brethren, the Lamanites" (Enos 11). Ultimately, Enos sought and obtained assurances that should the Nephites be destroyed through their own transgressions (a sobering bit of foresight) their records might be preserved for the Lamanites' redemption (vv. 12-18). What was begun as supplication for the redemption of a single soul ended as a covenant impacting the salvation of whole nations and of generations not born.

When the priesthood holder—steeped in the personal turmoil of transition at mid-life, unable to love or consider those around him, thinking only of saving what is left of himself—finally recovers enough of his spiritual sight to recognize himself as he really is, his consciousness will shift to those close to him: wife, children, family, and friends. His desires for their welfare will revive—not out of duty or obligation, but out of love. He will see, as an inseparable part of who he is, the stewardship which he (like all of us) bears for those who depend on him.

I know some of this seems implausibly Pollyanna-ish to those who have suffered, with men they loved, through the turbulence of middle age. Let me hasten to add that a man, by regaining his spiritual vision, has not *avoided* mid-life transition; neither has he necessarily lessened its intensity. Advisors, spouses, and friends hopeful that a "quick dose of religion" will put all matters back exactly the way they were are missing the point, and may yet drive the priesthood holder away.

Mid-life transition will not, and *should* not, be skirted so simply. Rather, once the foundations of his spiritual existence have been restored and stabilized, a man should be encouraged to evaluate, and redirect if necessary, the balance of his life. Because once the foundation has been saved, what remains is flexible. It may be that a change of occupation or career is warranted. It may be that new avocational interests should be cultivated; that some not-yet-tried avenue of community or humanitarian service should be explored; that family obligations and duties could be redistributed. It is in revisiting such incidentals (and in the long view they *are* only incidentals) that the process of transition, of individuation, can be carried to fruition.

#### IV

To recapitulate, then, this time with a few specifics:

1. *Refocus the priesthood holder on his personal witness of the spirit.*

Nothing is more important than this. The man's spiritual identity as offspring of divine parentage must be lifted from the fabric of the life he is questioning and shown to be inseparable from himself—something he can perhaps ignore but never walk away from. More even than the face in his mirror or the breath in his lungs, his personal witness must be part of him.

Where this personal rediscovery begins will vary with the individual. Leaders should be prepared to devote all necessary prayer, fasting, and meditation to bear upon an appropriate course of action. The focus, though, must be to persuade the troubled priesthood holder to seek his Father alone in personal, secret prayer.

The point of departure should probably *not* be a piecemeal inquiry into individual complaints; a casual survey of "what's bothering you." Where a priesthood holder is dealing with mid-life crisis, he will doubtless be able to produce a lengthy list of things that are bothering him, and certainly an advisor cannot hope to be of much use unless he is willing to listen, carefully and openly, to such complaints. But they must be seen in context, and for what they are—effects, not causes, of underlying discontent. Even well-meant suggestions aimed at solving isolated grievances miss what is wrong with the whole picture—the priesthood holder has ceased to see through spiritual eyes. Until his spiritual sight is restored, such spot touch-up work will only frustrate him.

Neither does the answer lie in listening to problems and gripes until they trigger some ready-made sermonette. Pearls of wisdom have their use. But without re-established contact with his divine origins and parentage, a man will ultimately gain nothing by them.

Finally, do not automatically assume that the answer lies in giving the priesthood holder more responsibility, to take his mind off of his problems. Too often, a well-intentioned bishop or quorum leader has assumed that discontent was simply a byproduct of idleness. But it may have been too much doing, with too little meaning, that has been the crisis's principal fuel all along. As the Spirit dictates, the leader may even be prompted to release the priesthood holder from current callings and give him a new and special one: re-establishing contact with his spiritual roots and identity.

The beginning step will almost always entail study of the scriptures. Focus on the Book of Mormon, which promises a knowledge of "the truth of all things" (Moro. 10:4-5). The leader may want to meet together with the priesthood holder regularly for the first while, although the scriptures speak most intensely to us when we read in solitude.

Actual extended time alone, away from work and other responsibil-

ity, may be indicated where practicable. Most of us have read of men spending a few days or weeks of solitude, closeted with the scriptures and their prayers, returning to their lives with a renewed outlook. If the priesthood holder is willing (and able) to go off alone, seeking the Lord through fasting and prayer, the experience may leave him altogether changed. (Such a sabbatical may take some promotion with employers and family members, who may at first be inclined to look upon the idea as an unwarranted "vacation" at their expense. If it can be done with the support of colleagues and loved ones, though, a personal retreat is unmatched in its ability to focus the soul on the things of the Spirit.)

Regardless of what leads him to do it, a man will come to know himself again when he presents his central question—who and what he is—as a prayerful petition to his Father. Not before. Humble, sincere, and pure inquiry is what the Lord asks of each of us.

## *2. Help to reestablish his awareness of his primary stewardships.*

I suggested earlier that once a man's spiritual perspective begins to clear, his awareness of his primary stewardships follows as a matter of course. That is not to say, though, that a counsellor ought to treat the reunion between man and maker in isolation, trusting that what follows will see to itself unattended. On the contrary, an advisor must begin at once, both extracting the priesthood holder's wife and family from the perceived "problem" and building them into the solution.

From the moment a man commits to reassess his faltering commitment to once-cherished spiritual values, his partner and children should be part of the process. His renewed resolve to regular personal prayer should be accompanied, from the first, by daily prayer with his wife, petitioning the Father together for rebirth as a couple, and as an eternal family. Regular family prayer should likewise be reinstated, with all children (who are old enough to understand) briefed thoroughly on the fact that the whole family has begun an all-out effort to rediscover the spiritual realities which hold them together. (Think, incidentally, of the powerful example in the lives of teenage children as their father steps aside from the accustomed paths of career, school, etc., and shares with them his drive for spiritual rejuvenation.)

Needless to add, there needs to be some careful counselling with the wife (and, if warranted, older children as well). If the family members are excluded from the process, they will at best be unable to support it; at worst some may feel resentful (as noted below) that the bishop, high priest group leader, etc., is meddling with the status quo and encouraging the head of their household to "rock the boat." Nothing could more effectively reinforce the priesthood holder's perception of his family as a

personal albatross to be jettisoned along with all the other barnacles of his stifling, outmoded existence. Wives, sons, and daughters need to work with the process of change, not against it. They need to be committed, just like their husband and father, to the need and desirability of regrouping the life of the family around its primary, transcendental values.

But there needs to be give and take on both sides, too. If a man sets out on his personal odyssey predisposed to view his loved ones as more burden than benefit, it will quickly foul his efforts at spiritual rediscovery. He needs to be urged from the start to be thinking of mid-life transition as a vehicle for salvaging his family, along with himself, from the meaningless, busy-work facets of their existence—not as an occasion to declare himself independent of them.

It may be that casting some fresh light on the whole notion of “freedom” will be in order—so few of us really grasp the full meaning of the concept. Freedom (as a wise personal friend once pointed out) is a basis for order, not a license for chaos. A man who, in the name of personal freedom, is willing to plunge his loved ones into the pain, confusion, and sorrow of a shattered family is showing nothing so clearly as that he has no idea what personal freedom is or how to begin to handle it. Sensitive, loving counsel, hand in hand with personal prayer, will hopefully shift a man’s perspective from such a selfish, world-oriented approach, to the gospel-oriented awareness which came upon Enos. The willingness to walk away from everything of value in freedom’s misused name will then be seen, with the eyes of the Spirit, to be an act of self-abandonment, not self-redemption.

If a priesthood holder has used the impetus of a man’s mid-life transition to resurrect his spiritual awareness; if, incident to that discovery, he has resolved to renew his commitment to his family; and if they are behind his efforts, the journey is nearly done.

### *3. Encourage and assist in reevaluating the other elements of his life and making necessary changes.*

It bears repeating that once a family’s spiritual foundations have been effectively shored up, the rest of its existence—job, school, routine—can be changed about as needed. A family can adjust to differing responsibilities in the house or less leisure time. They can even adjust to less money and fewer possessions.

I am of course aware that this aspect of the transition process (particularly the prospect of a possible career change) may generate some consternation in family members and close friends. After all, men are supposed to have settled down by mid-life—shouldn’t friends and loved ones (and particularly dependents) be entitled to some consistency and

continuity? Has their associate, husband, father, and breadwinner any business upsetting the apple cart this late in the game? Shouldn't a priesthood advisor be taking *their* well-being into account in sorting through all this?

Yes and no. Preserving—indeed, enhancing—the stability and well-being of the family unit must be a strong priority in any priesthood advisor's doings. But that does not necessarily mean locking the head of the household into an established life pattern purely in the interest of preserving his domestic tranquility or economic solvency. If his vision and understanding of himself, and his stewardships, have been reinforced as discussed above, his family's real needs from him—love, guidance, example, heritage, protection, and sustenance—will be foremost in his mind, perhaps for the first time in years. If family members are then asked to endure a few alterations to the remaining trappings of family life—job, activities, routines—count the cost small in comparison to the peace and spiritual renewal to be gained. Think for a moment: how many such aspects of your family system couldn't stand to be improved?

Be fearless and creative in this aspect of counselling. Now that you have established, together, the things worth saving, don't hesitate to plunge into the next question: what needs changing? Unless you are ready to tackle this issue head-on, your ward or quorum member may be inclined to turn from all the progress you have made, or to bury ongoing problems and resentments in the name of preserving his new-found personal and family harmony, only to have them go on festering until they foment a new crisis.

Don't be afraid, incidentally, to call on professional counselling to help a man explore his changing needs with a slant that priesthood advisors cannot offer. No one should hesitate to take advantage of modern learning and techniques in these areas, and priesthood advisors should be ready both to refer ward and quorum members to professional advisors, and to work with them on a continuing basis.

#### CONCLUSION

"Imitation," wrote Eric Hoffer, "is often a shortcut to a solution. We copy when we lack the inclination, the ability or the time to work out an independent solution."<sup>14</sup> Uniqueness and individuality are not anathema to gospel living. It is easy to see conformity—in all facets of life—as the safest, most predictable means of assuring ourselves of righteousness. Yet in this we show too little faith in the inherent worth of our individualness and diversity. The gospel was not given to make us all safely the same. It

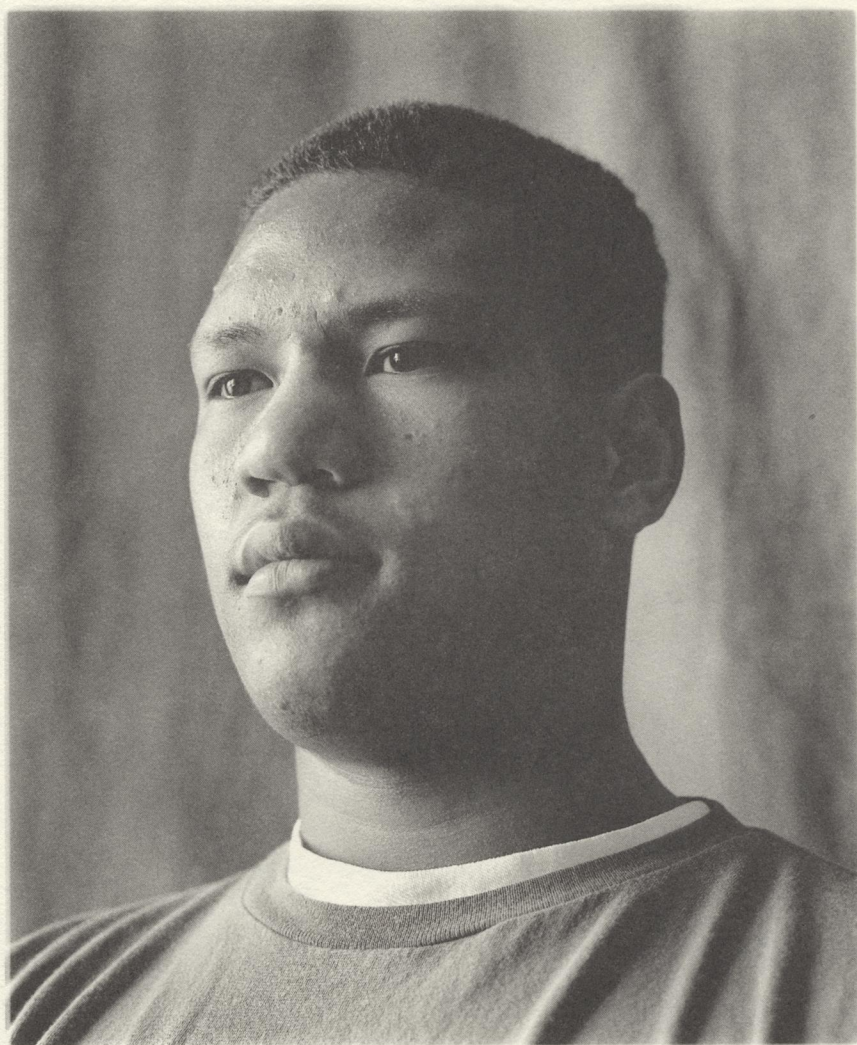
---

14. Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1951), 96.



was given to permit each of us the freedom to be the best of who and what we are. The Celestial Kingdom will not be a realm of faultless but indistinguishable clones. Each of us will shine forth there in all of our perfected, yet unique, glory. The prepackaged system of often-irrelevant norms which pass for personal righteousness, the accepted gridlock of behavioral conformism, is a shallow counterfeit of the divine maturation for which we were intended. Ultimately, it can be spiritual toxin.

The natural urge to pause and take stock at the “noon of life” can afford the ideal opportunity for retooling the bond between what we are and what the gospel can bring to us; for cultivation of “individuation” in its highest and best sense. The advisor or leader who retreats from this opportunity, seeking only to restore or preserve “normalcy” in the lives of troubled priesthood holders, has at best missed a priceless and perhaps unduplicable chance to bless the life of another; at worst, he may sacrifice a salvageable priesthood holder. But if he will seize the moment, using the unsettled time wisely, he may find himself opening a door to a time of new beginning for the second half of life.



# A Granddaughter Remembers

*Suzzanne F. Bigelow*

I WAS A BLESSED CHILD. I had a grandmother who loved me and who showed it. Her name was Ruth Alice Bird Harper Lewis, and as grandmothers go, she was a rare and wonderful human being. The words of Sherry Thomas come to mind when I think of that dear, resourceful, spiritual woman: "We didn't have much, but we sure had plenty."<sup>1</sup>

Circumstances were such that I usually spent summers with my grandparents, and those careless, unstructured months were what kept me going the rest of the year. I was an only child, so having aunts and uncles who were just a few years older than I to play with was a great part of the fun of those magical summers, for I was only two years younger than my youngest uncle. Through no one's fault, I grew up thinking my mother's siblings were my own, and that for some mysterious reason, fate cruelly separated us when school started every fall. I longed to stay with them and be part of my grandmother's relaxed household.

It was a miserable day when I turned eight and was told the unwellcome truth: my dearest playmates were, in fact, aunts and uncles, nothing more.

And so my childhood spun out, and always my grandmother was part of the best of it. Those lazy, disorganized summers came to an end. It was decided that continuity was needed during my high school years, or until I went away to college; I would live year-round with my grandparents. Happiness was to be my lot after all! I was overwhelmed with my good fortune. By this age, I knew my grandmother well, and familiarity had bred only love and admiration. Throughout my childhood she had treated me with the same loving attention she gave her own "young ones."

She called us "young ones," and as such, we were precious. She joined those words together so tenderly that I was almost an adult before I realized "young ones" was not one word, like "onions." She loved chil-

---

1. *The Last Word: A Treasury of Women's Quotes*, ed. Carolyn Warner (New York: Prentice Hall, 1992), 122.

dren more than anything else in the world except the gospel, and that was the simplicity of her life. She believed in family authority kindly administered and the need for the realistic socialization of her children, as well as the deliberate passing down of value systems from generation to generation. She gave us hers, and there was no doubt about what it was. Faith in God and in his son Jesus Christ, and an unquestioning testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel. Her belief was no abstraction. It guided everything she did, every decision she made.

My grandfather, twenty years older than his wife and already retired when I was born, was a good Christian man, a quiet presence in his own home, who kept mainly to himself. It was my grandmother who taught and inspired us, and who worked to take care of us, who somehow gave us the unquestioned knowledge within ourselves that we were worth something. Her faith in God and her unwavering testimony formed the beacon around which we rallied, and it gave us a footing during some very difficult times. She was the rock in our lives, and she taught us to believe in and love our Heavenly Father. He would be with us if we stayed close to him. His answers would not always be what we expected, but his spirit was with us, and he was there, listening to our prayers. We were never to doubt that he loved and cared for us. I believed her.

I well remember her wonderful mouse stories which would entertain us on the long walk home from church. It took an hour on foot to get from the old Sacramento Ward to our home, but many times, when we reached there, we would beg her to walk a few blocks farther because we couldn't wait until the next Sunday to hear what was going to happen to those mice.

We were entranced by her tales of the little country mouse who unwittingly went to England in a missionary's trunk, and who was so caught up in the fervor of the early days of proselyting that he went on to convert his city cousin who was an aristocratic mouse to the manor born. That city cousin had the best address in London, having been born in the linen closet of No. 1 Hyde Park, the town house of the Duke of Wellington.

According to my grandmother, there was an extensive network of stalwart mice inhabiting both the United States and the British Isles, and they had all kinds of adventures helping missionaries spread the gospel. Dedicated, humble mice had a role to play in the building up of the kingdom. Surely there was a lesson there for young minds. Are we not all part of God's creation?

She was one of those grand spirited ladies who couldn't care less about appearances, who felt, along with Emily Dickinson, that housework was a pestilence, and who had an eternal view of things, never bothering about details. Her mind was pre-occupied with helping others,

especially elderly people who were lonely and uncared for. This became her life's work, and she had a gift for making each one of the old people she took care of feel loved and nurtured. She would rub their backs and their swollen feet, and make them cushions to sit on in church so their bones wouldn't come up against the hard wooden benches. Being tall and thin herself, she knew first-hand the discomfort of a hard wooden bench.

To those who were bedridden, she was a friend and companion who would sit by a bedside by the hour, crocheting and visiting the long evenings away. Years later, when she enjoyed a comfortable income, she gave much of it away to people in need, as well as distant relatives who had fallen on hard times.

My grandmother was an indifferent cook, but she could whip up a fine custard which we dutifully distributed to elderly people in our neighborhood, and she made the best chicken fricassee any of us can remember. My own mother and my aunts, all first-rate cooks, and I have tried to reproduce that same dish through the years, and failed completely. In her slapdash manner, she worked magic on old stewing hens which somehow were always tender and succulent under her careless hand, the gravy creamy and smooth and flavorful. Our fricassee tasted exactly like what it was: boiled chicken.

Two characteristics define her. First, her grateful and generous heart. She acknowledged the Lord's hand in everything that happened to us, and we were miraculously saved from the brink of disaster more than once. Living with her was a dramatic adventure and one that I longed for when I was not lucky enough to be in her realm of influence.

Second, her joy, the fun she had in being alive. It was infectious. She played games with us, whipped up batches of taffy for us to pull, and told the best stories ever as she went about her work. She dressed up in outrageous costumes on Halloween and went out trick or treating with us, not as a protector, but for the fun of it. One Christmas when several of the children had chicken pox, she had my grandfather take down our beds and put them back up by the tree in the living room so we wouldn't miss any of the festivities. And when July came around, we would help Grandpa put those same beds up in the side yard so we could sleep under the stars on summer nights.

She would whisper so we had to strain to hear, making each word a pearl, about our pioneer forefathers and mothers, and about the coyotes that encircled their little cabin at night when she was a girl in a remote part of southern Idaho. And before she lulled us to sleep with her gentle voice and fascinating tales, we would reach over and pick warm tomatoes off the vine and down them with ice-cold buttermilk or homemade root beer, which seemed always to be ripening under the bed. When it

rained, as it sometimes did, my grandfather spread a big canvas over the beds, and we slept, gathered in a close, tight circle, listening to the rain-drops thunder above our dry and cozy ears.

But if I were given just one word to describe my grandmother, it would be her faith, built upon a testimony of the reality of the Savior, and her dedication to living a life of service and compassion so she could one day return to him. I believe that she lived such a life, and that she awaits us there, and will greet those of us who love her with open arms when the time comes. And what magnificent stories she will have to tell!

That she lived was a great blessing to begin with. That she lived so well gave birth to my own faith and my joy in living.

# The Three Boats

*Brian Evenson*

## I.

And God came to me and shewed me  
a boat on troubled waters.  
"Shall you stretch forth your hand  
to steady the vessel before it founders?"  
"I shall," I said, and took the boat  
in my hand and removed it from danger.

But it sailed forth again,  
and was destroyed.

## II.

I dived into the hurricane.  
God came beneath me as I struggled and said,  
"You must swim the breaststroke,"  
and pressed my breast to his, lifting me.  
His face cascaded over with water,  
and I was taught, and could swim it.

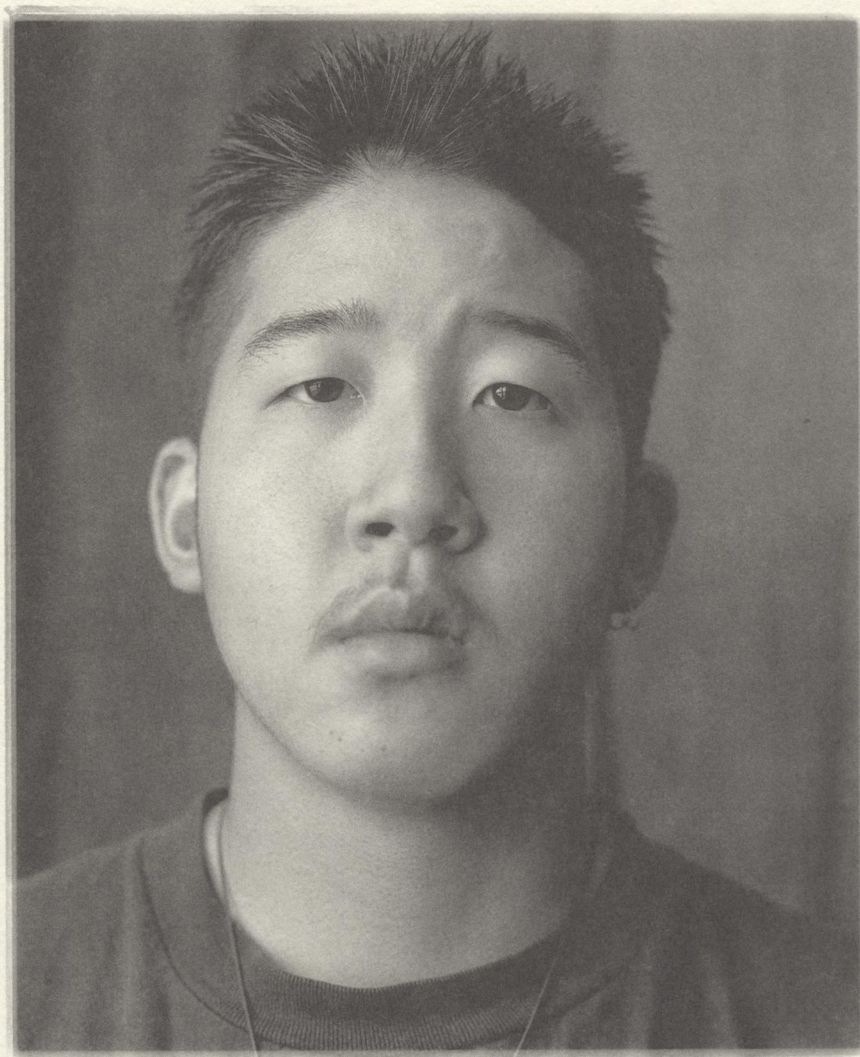
I was rising from the water.  
I was swimming athwart the waves.  
I was running and could not be drowned.

## III.

Porter shall be our boatman;  
he shall collect the bullets  
from our eyes and smelt coins  
of them to pay our fare.

We have crossed the river into life,  
but must cross back to die.  
The boat must not go down.  
Remove your boots. Bail.







# “My Father’s Business”: Thomas Taylor and Mormon Frontier Economic Enterprise

*Brent D. Corcoran*

SHORTLY AFTER MORMON PIONEERS ARRIVED IN UTAH in July 1847 Brigham Young planned for an anticipated population explosion by exploring the region and locating sites which could support new settlements and industries. Parley P. Pratt of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles lead one of the first such expeditions to southern Utah, charting Young’s “corridor” to the Pacific Ocean of prospective settlement sites. Near present-day Cedar City, Pratt’s party discovered a huge iron deposit, which they named Iron Mountain, containing some two million tons of iron ore. The deposit has been described by one authority as “the most remarkable deposit of iron ore discovered on [the American] continent.”<sup>1</sup>

Church leaders believed the providential discovery was the beginning of an inheritance: an industry to support the influx of new converts and a sure means of securing Mormon economic independence. Apostle Wilford Woodruff, on a mission in Great Britain in January 1850, received word to “gather up all the Saints in the Eastern Country and bring them to Zion to Esstablish Iron foundries.”<sup>2</sup> England was the world center for the iron trade at the time, and modern iron-making techniques and machinery were developed in Staffordshire. Mormon elders in England championed the cause of iron with special zeal, touting the industry at English mission conferences and in the columns of the mission paper *The*

---

1. J. S. Newberry, Columbia School of Mines, New York, in Robert W. Sloan, ed. and comp., *Gazetteer of Logan, Ogden, Provo, and Salt Lake City for 1894* (Salt Lake City: Herald Printing and Publishing Co., 1894), 59-61. Newberry is also cited as an authority in the 2 Aug. 1881 edition of *Deseret Evening News* on iron mines.

2. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 9 vols., ed. Scott G. Kenney (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 3:527 (7 Jan. 1850).

*Millennial Star*. The relationship of iron to the church in England was still evident decades later when historian Edward Tullidge observed:

Natively [the Mormons] are a manufacturing people rather than an agricultural, and our territory resembles Great Britain in its resources of iron and coal and the class of industries which properly belongs to her. The majority of the British Mormons are from the manufacturing and mining districts of England, Scotland, and Wales.<sup>3</sup>

Back in Utah, Apostle George A. Smith “felt that we [we]re free when I heard that Iron & Coal was found in abundance within 15 miles of each other in Iron County.” He believed that having to purchase necessary iron goods made the Mormons “slaves to Missouri and Illinois,”<sup>4</sup> two Mormon bywords for Babylon. In July 1850 Brigham Young sent a party of 167 Mormons to southern Utah, dubbed the iron mission, to establish the iron industry.

Thomas Taylor was one of the British converts for whose future success Mormon elders were planning and a man who would play a central role in nineteenth-century Utah’s traumatic experiment in iron. Born on 26 July 1826 at Oldham, Lancashire, England, he was raised a hundred miles north of Ironbridge, Staffordshire, “the cradle of the Industrial Revolution.” One of seven children born to dairy farmers James Taylor and Sarah Whitehead, Thomas was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by his brother James whose commitment to his new faith had made him the leader of Mormonism’s local missionary efforts. Younger brother William soon joined them in baptism.

By the 1850s the center of England’s iron industry was moving south from Staffordshire to Black Country. Many of Lancashire’s young men followed the foundries to Birmingham, but the Taylor brothers emigrated to Zion in 1848-49. Thomas originally settled with wife Elizabeth in Salt Lake City, where she bore him the first of eleven children.<sup>5</sup> In 1855 they moved to Lehi where the ambitious Thomas soon became a leading citizen. Taylor and his brothers began farming sugar beets on the Fotheringham farm. He established “T & W Taylor,” one of the town’s first mercantiles, was elected city recorder, founded the Lehi Dramatic Club,<sup>6</sup> served the church as branch clerk,<sup>7</sup> and was ordained a seventy by Jede-

3. Edward Tullidge, *The History of Salt Lake City* (Salt Lake City: Edward Tullidge, 1883).

4. Woodruff, 4:75 (6 Oct. 1851).

5. Thomas Taylor Family Group Sheet, LDS Church Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

6. Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Lehi: Portrait of a Utah Town* (Lehi, UT: Lehi City Corporation, 1988), 123-27.

7. *Deseret News*, 16 Aug. 1854. Taylor wrote that grasshoppers were doing considerable damage to crops, that the city wall was progressing, and that the tithing store was built.

diah Grant during one of his famous Reformation visits in 1857.<sup>8</sup> That February, thirty-one-year-old Taylor entered into his first polygamous marriage with Catherine Dallin, a woman of the same age.<sup>9</sup>

While Taylor worked to establish his inheritance in Zion, Mormon leaders continued to expand Mormon settlements for emigrants who followed on the Taylor brothers' heels in droves. But iron was not to be their occupation, as the brethren had hoped. Early iron-making efforts met limited success because pioneers were capital-poor, ignorant of iron-making techniques (despite English contacts), and the iron deposits while close by today's standards were too isolated for the limited transportation facilities of the 1850s.

Brigham Young also had his hands full with non-Mormon ("gentile") emigrants seeking another of the earth's treasures: gold. The 1849 California gold discovery brought them through the territory en masse. Some staked their claims in Utah as merchants to make their fortune off passers-through. Young viewed merchants as carpet-baggers and profiteers: only slightly higher than Satan's angels. He believed non-Mormon merchants' agitation and interference were at least in part responsible for the Utah War of 1857-58.

Despite Young's vocal criticisms, Thomas Taylor traded actively with the "enemy." His Lehi store was near (and succeeded because of) the U.S. army's detachment at Camp Floyd, twenty miles to the southwest. That Young knew about Taylor's actions is unknown. Young believed that if Mormons bought and sold that it should be Mormons who profited. He set up branches of Zion's Mercantile Cooperative Institution (ZCMI) in settlements throughout Utah. Young chose Lehi as one of the first sites for his cooperative store. The Lehi Cooperative soon drove several Lehi stores out of business and eventually bought out the last, T & W Taylor, in May 1869.

Thomas Taylor for his part had removed himself from active involvement in the business in 1862 and had left William to oversee daily operations. Taylor fathered four children in Lehi between 1855 and 1860. All other children were born in Salt Lake City.

Perhaps Mormon leaders forgave Taylor for his merchandising sins or were punishing him for them: they called him on a mission to his native land in 1862. His career of daily service to the church was to occupy, in various ways, the next several years.

In England, Taylor's enterprising spirit shined anew. He was made president of the Manchester proselytizing district; he also corresponded actively with the *Millennial Star*. His sermons were full of a missionary's

---

8. Andrew Jenson, *Church Chronology*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1914), 58 (Thursday, 21 May 1857).

9. Thomas Taylor Family Group Sheet.

zeal for the Mormon gospel and his reports and relationship to priesthood leader and English Mission president George Q. Cannon were appropriately obsequious.<sup>10</sup>

Rising star Elder Taylor sailed for Copenhagen on 19 March 1864 to aid Jesse N. Smith, president of the church's Scandinavian mission, with emigration business.<sup>11</sup> Brigham Young called and quickly rescinded a call appointing Taylor successor to Smith.<sup>12</sup> Taylor instead returned stateside to oversee the vital New York side of the emigration business.

The Mormon emigration was a mammoth undertaking. Mormon economic historian Leonard Arrington has estimated that 38,000 emigrants were brought to Utah by the church's Perpetual Emigration Fund. Some 10,000 of those were assisted between 1864 and 1866, the years Taylor was responsible for emigration.<sup>13</sup> Taylor's call revealed the high respect in which he was held by superiors. Still emigration agents were fellow-laborers in the harvest, and Brigham Young viewed them as volunteers who worked for tithing credit alone.

Taylor's work was performed as he admitted at "considerable sacrifice." Arrington noted that no church teams were sent from Utah in 1865. Yet Taylor was able to get 150 pioneers across the frontier despite the oversight. He personally outfitted forty-five ox teams, three to a wagon, and 2,000 pounds of freight. Total cost according to Taylor was over \$20,000. In accordance with Young's volunteer policy, Taylor was told that he had to defray the costs himself. Perhaps anticipating this development, he had placed some of his own cows with the wagon train. He hoped to sell them at a profit in Utah. Taylor later complained, "One of the authorities counselled me to put the cows into his care contrary to my judgment. They cost some \$13,000. There came on a terrible storm and within 30 days they were all dead."<sup>14</sup>

So impressed was Young with Taylor's capacity for sacrifice that he sent him down in 1866 to oversee emigration once more. Taylor remonstrated, but Young promised, "If you go you will make more money than if you stay at home." The prophet's assurances lead Taylor to believe that Young would assist him in the emigration and give him official license to

---

10. See Taylor's letters in the *Millennial Star*, 8 Aug., 27 Sept., 25 Oct., 29 Nov., 9 Dec. 1863, 3, 9 Jan., 13, 18 Mar. 1864.

11. *Journal History*, 19 Mar. 1864, archives, historical department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter LDS archives).

12. Andrew Jenson, *History of the Scandinavian Mission* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1927).

13. Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-Day Saints, 1830-1900* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958), 97.

14. Thomas Taylor, Lawsuit prospectus, Thomas Taylor Papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah (hereafter Lawsuit prospectus).

keep the profit.<sup>15</sup>

Unfortunately the previous year's troubles were not only replayed, they were redoubled. New York-based railroads attempted to cheat Mormons by jacking-up prices. Taylor negotiated a longer but cheaper route. The Saints travelled by steamer to Connecticut, by train to Montreal, by cattle car to Port Hope, by steamer to Port Huron, then on to Quincy, Illinois. Trains took them across Missouri, steamers to Nebraska, and finally wagons brought them to Utah. The *History of the Scandinavian Mission* recorded the insults and abuse suffered by the persecuted troop, as well as the illness and death. Slow travel forced Taylor on to Salt Lake City to bring forty-four additional mule teams to aid the beleaguered pioneers.<sup>16</sup>

The return trip for Taylor was no doubt more excruciating than the one down, when he stayed in some of the country's finest hotels in the company of Brigham Young, Jr.<sup>17</sup> But Taylor attempted to make the best of things. Like the previous year he packed freight along, hoping to cash in when he got home. Young refused to send any money to assist Taylor, but the church did send wagons and teams that year. Taylor estimated his cost to be \$12,000; he felt cheated again, and later recalled:

When I arrived in Salt Lake City after finishing with my arduous duties, I found the freight for which I had paid and was held responsible for locked up in the Tithing Office. I was informed by B. H. Schittle that prest. Young said it could not be taken away until the hauling over the plains was paid for on purpose that I could have the money to use for the emigration business, but it was all to no avail. He said most emphatically, well, you can't have that freight until you pay for it again. Then I paid for it again. When I asked him what I should have for my service, telling him that I had made besides that for the Church over twenty thousand dollars he replied that when we send men on missions we don't pay them neither do I allow them to pocket the money they make while gone on missions and I will charge up the expenses of the Emigration to your account, and he did so.<sup>18</sup>

Heavily in debt, Taylor returned to Salt Lake City. He also returned to business to make up his loss. He remained, despite his unhappy emigration experiences, a stalwart church member. He took an additional plural wife, Mary Boardman, in Salt Lake City on 1 December 1866.<sup>19</sup> Mary was born in Manchester, England, the area over which Taylor had presided as district president during 1863-64. She bore him four children between

---

15. Ibid.

16. Jenson, *History of the Scandinavian Mission*, entry for 1865.

17. Brigham Young to Brigham Young, Jr., 8 Feb. 1866, Brigham Young Papers, LDS archives.

18. Lawsuit prospectus.

19. Thomas Taylor Family Group Sheet.

1868 and 1876. In June 1867 Thomas received with his first wife Elizabeth the second anointing, the highest ritual available to Mormons which guaranteed their exaltation in heaven. Taylor was also drafted by general authorities to accompany them on speaking tours where he trumpeted the virtues of "cooperation."

T & W Taylor, the last of Lehi's remaining mercantiles, had been bought out by ZCMI in May 1869.<sup>20</sup> The business was transferred to Salt Lake City where it operated on East Temple (now Main Street) between First and Second South.<sup>21</sup> In the spring and summer of 1871 Taylor expanded his Salt Lake City home at 127 South 200 West into a hotel. The younger brother described the elder's house near the railroad depot as "like a little palace." Thomas invited William to serve as his *maitre d'* even though the brothers had argued over business in the intervening years. William felt that Thomas minimized his efforts to keep daily business operations going while Thomas was away, while Thomas viewed his brother as a burden. Sadly for both, the hotel failed and William returned to Lehi.<sup>22</sup>

Thomas's ecclesiastical career met greater success. He toured often with Mormon leaders to speak to Mormon congregations in Utah provinces, and was ordained bishop of the Salt Lake Fourteenth Ward on 4 March 1872.<sup>23</sup> On 8 April 1873 he was made an assistant trustee-in-trust for the entire church.<sup>24</sup>

In 1871, Taylor changed the name of his business to Taylor & Cutler.<sup>25</sup> His daughter married John C. Cutler, later governor of Utah, that April.<sup>26</sup> For a while Thomas was once again riding high, but William was not in such good spirits as the following report from his diary indicates:

During supper my brother Thomas entertained our company with a recital of his success in business when he made his start, how he was away for three years on a mission during the best time there was for making money, how he went into debt over \$20,000 to bring the emigration on his return, a debt which the church had to pay but which he had to carry. he named several persons who had failed while he through his industry, perseverance . . . had

---

20. *Deseret Evening News*, 26 May 1869.

21. See entry under "Taylor & Cutler" in *Salt Lake City Directory*, for 1867 and 1869, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

22. William Whitehead Taylor Diary, 1869-74, LDS archives. See also Hamilton Gardner, *History of Lehi* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1913), 434-35.

23. Woodruff, 7:62 (4 Mar. 1872).

24. *Ibid.*, 130 (8 Apr. 1873).

25. *Salt Lake City Directory*, 1873, Utah State Historical Society.

26. Taylor Family Group Sheet. John C. Cutler, Utah's second governor, served from 1905 to 1909 as a Republican. He was born in Sheffield, England (near Taylor's birthplace), and emigrated to Utah in 1864.

succeeded. he said he must give John [Cutler] credit for helping him. So much for making a fool of myself and family, for years of toiling early and late, turning in my stock and everything I could for years upon a mistaken idea of devotion to the interest of another. I believe this day that all I have done he fails to see . . . I was not remembered and I believe me and mine are not remembered for all we have done.<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps William experienced some private satisfaction when he soon saw his brother encounter problems in the iron business.

Thomas Taylor first became involved in the iron mines in May 1873. Thomas and three of his men were arrested during an altercation at the Richmond Mine in Iron County, one of Taylor's first iron claims. Judge McGean jailed Taylor for the incident whose specifics are unclear.<sup>28</sup> However it probably had something to do with a lawsuit over the mine which engaged Taylor and Cutler, on one hand, and the influential Utah businessmen the Walker brothers, on the other hand, the following year. Taylor won the suit and threatened a counter-suit in retaliation.

According to his own recollection, Taylor's business woes began to escalate during the next several years. He was still carrying the emigration debt (\$20,000, by William's account; \$30,000, by Thomas's later reckoning) at 2-3 percent per month. Taylor mortgaged his home but was ultimately "broken up in business." In the spring of 1876, Taylor went to Brigham Young for relief but was refused. Young died later that year.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the threat of impending bankruptcy, Taylor was able to continue adding to his iron holdings. The 26 February 1878 quit claim, which transferred foundries, machinery, and land from Leonard Hardy and George Romney to Taylor for consideration of \$1.00, was a bargain.<sup>30</sup> By adding the iron works to his existing iron claims, Taylor believed he had found the answer to his financial problems. Still he needed capital to develop and thus secure his claims.

Taylor turned to new church president John Taylor (no relation) to press the emigration claims which Brigham Young had refused. An arbitration committee which included L. John Nuttall, William Clayton, and James Jack reviewed Thomas's case. They declared settlement of \$12,784.50 in Taylor's favor. Despite this, John Taylor reneged. On 22 July 1878, Thomas wrote an angry letter to President Taylor and the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. Thomas laid out the details of his perceived abuse at the hands of Brigham Young and denied being in any way in debt to the

---

27. William Whitehead Taylor Diary, 25 Dec. 1873.

28. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1873.

29. Lawsuit prospectus.

30. "Quit Claim," Cedar City, Iron City, drawn from title search, in Utah State Historical Society. See n34.

church. Rather, he wrote, the church owed him.<sup>31</sup>

The brethren stalled. Thomas wrote the church presidency again on 25 September, complaining that word of the settlement had hit the streets and creditors were hounding him.<sup>32</sup> The brethren finally came up with \$500 assistance.

In October another important event occurred with profound implications for the future iron industry. John Taylor gathered his colleagues and established the Zion's Central Board of Trade. The board was to administer all Utah Mormon industries according to principles of mutual cooperation.<sup>33</sup> The board, to which Thomas was called, gave a great deal of consideration to the development of an iron industry. But Taylor, in light of the emigration fiasco, was not going to pin his hopes on Mormon cooperation. He secured nine more Iron County claims on 2 January 1879.<sup>34</sup>

With the arrival of 1879, Taylor, the church, and gentile interests led by the Walker brothers were jockeying for position to control southern Utah's potentially lucrative iron deposits. In January, Allen G. Campbell, another wealthy gentile industrialist, joined the fray by attempting to jump Thomas's claims.<sup>35</sup> Campbell's lawsuit argued that Taylor's claims measuring 600 feet were of illegal width and hence invalid. Campbell figured that financially unstable Taylor would be unable to engage costly and lengthy litigation. But Taylor was as irascible as ever. He undertook his own defense and requested Iron County records from Iron County recorder and stake president William Dame. But Dame was a careless record-keeper. Taylor travelled repeatedly from Salt Lake City to Iron County during the year to straighten out the mess.<sup>36</sup> John Taylor became aware of Thomas's problems and offered him \$300 assistance in exchange for 2/3 interest in his iron properties. Thomas, assessing his properties at \$15,000, declined the church president's offer.<sup>37</sup> The latter became angry because he reasoned that without church involvement the iron industry would be lost to the gentiles. Fortunately for Thomas, Judge Emerson of the Beaver District Court finally ruled in his favor on 8 December. Campbell appealed to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, keeping the claims in litigation and preventing Taylor from fully developing his properties.

Despite persistent legal problems, Thomas pressed on. He added Ebenezer Hanks's iron holdings to his own on 8 January 1881.<sup>38</sup> Hanks, a

---

31. Thomas Taylor to John Taylor and Quorum of Twelve Apostles, Thomas Taylor Papers.

32. Ibid.

33. Woodruff, 7:159-61 (8-9 Oct. 1878).

34. Iron County Mining Records, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

35. *Deseret Evening News*, 8-12 Dec. 1879.

36. William Dame Papers, Utah State Historical Society.

37. Thomas Taylor reminiscence, Thomas Taylor Papers.

38. Iron County Mining Records. See n34.



merchant who had made his money freighting between California and southern Utah, had been heavily involved in development of the Iron County mines in the 1860s and 1870s. He had failed because he was unable to capitalize the business. Brigham Young counselled against involving eastern gentile capitalists, which ended Hanks's involvement. The final blow came when an executive embezzled a special levy against stockholders raised in hopes of keeping the company afloat.

When Taylor and Cutler secured Hanks's iron properties they did not want to make the same mistake their predecessors did in seeking to capitalize the concern within Utah. They bonded the properties to gentile investor A. G. Hollister for \$100,000. As he did when trading with the army during the 1850s, Taylor was putting his personal business interests above the good of the Mormon kingdom and the cooperation doctrine.

But in order to finalize the deal Hollister needed other Iron County property owners to bond their land also. Taylor accused President John Taylor of exerting influence to prevent the other property holders from bonding. Wilford Woodruff recorded in his 15 October 1880 journal entry a meeting of the Twelve and First Presidency during which they discussed with Henry Lunt a plan to secure Iron County coal and iron mines. The brethren appropriated \$5,000 for the purpose and proposed to control 2/3 interest to Lunt's 1/3.<sup>39</sup>

Thomas also claimed that John Taylor interfered further by "getting up a company, thus hindering me from selling." The company was "got up" at the April 1881 meeting of the Zion's Central Board of Trade.<sup>40</sup> The board agenda's primary issue was iron. Board members appointed a committee of seven and instructed them to incorporate an iron manufacturing company. Oddly, for all of his unhappy dealings with the Mormon brethren, Thomas was included on the committee of seven.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps he reasoned, in light of President Taylor's interference, that the powerful church presidency was a better business ally than foe. The committee was to present a plan for an Iron Manufacturing Company to the Board of Trade at the latter's October meeting.

With the frenzy of activity during the late-1870s and not so much as a nail to show for it, the Utah media as advocates of the community's interest began to ask, "Why no exploitation of Iron County's iron potential?" The 12 January 1881 *Deseret Evening News* attempted to answer that question. The report covered problems which had hampered development since the 1850s: lack of adequate quality fuel for smelting, inexperience of the concerned parties, and transportation difficulties. It also detailed Tho-

---

39. Woodruff, 7:597 (15 Oct. 1880).

40. Lawsuit prospectus.

41. From the published circular of the Zion's Central Board of Trade, *Deseret Evening News*, 20 Apr. 1881.

mas's struggles with Allan Campbell. To follow up, the *News* printed an editorial three days later signed cryptically, "one who is interested." The "interested one" demanded that iron be developed at full haste, principally to provide jobs for Utahns.

The April Board of Trade meeting appeared to meet the challenge, and the meeting engendered a series of triumphant newspaper reports.<sup>42</sup> But wide publication of the board's plans also drew criticism. J. C. Cameron, mining engineer for a competing iron company, The Rose of Tintic Mining Co., raised concerns in a 2 August 1881 letter to the *Deseret Evening News*. Cameron argued that an iron industry should not be located at Iron City because the climate was unsuited to support a working population, water was scarce, and railroad transportation was not in place. He argued that a central site should be located at the town of Leamington because it was located on the Sevier River, enjoyed a more mild climate, and was central to iron deposits both in Iron County and in the Sanpete Valley.<sup>43</sup> Leamington was also center of The Rose of Tintic's operations. Cameron's objections were to be validated in the following years.

Thomas Taylor, who had invested considerable sums developing the Iron County site, contradicted Cameron in an 8 August rebuttal. The site was in fact suitable in climate with plenty of open land, water, and coal to make iron. Furthermore, Taylor's holdings had been offered to the committee appointed by the Board of Trade at "reasonable terms."<sup>44</sup> However, the only holdings Taylor was free to offer the company were the lands, buildings, and foundries. His iron claims which would have formed the backbone of the fledgling company's operations were still in litigation before the Secretary of the Interior.

The committee went ahead with its plans for an iron company in Iron County. Articles of Agreement for the Utah Iron Manufacturing Company of Utah were filed on 24 September 1881. Bishop Taylor was not listed among John Taylor, George Q. Cannon, and others as the company's principals. This omission suggests that Taylor had become suspicious of President Taylor's motives for forming the company in the first place. He later accused John Taylor of constructing an elaborate charade, a company "got up" purely with the purpose of stalling sale of the iron properties to keep them out of gentile hands. Newspaper reports detailing the following weeks' events seem to support this conclusion.

Thomas relinquished control of the Iron Springs properties to the Iron Manufacturing Company. He soon began looking elsewhere for facilities he alone would control. The 1 October 1881 *Southern Utonian*, a

---

42. Ibid. See also *Deseret Evening News*, 20 May, 12 Oct. 1881.

43. Ibid., 2 Aug. 1881.

44. Ibid., 8 Aug. 1881.

Cedar City newspaper, reported that Taylor had negotiated for the purchase of the main water ditches in Cedar City, "with the object . . . of erecting an extensive iron works in the immediate vicinity of the town, *entirely distinct from the Iron City project*" (emphasis added).<sup>45</sup> The 15 October edition reported that Taylor had succeeded "in bonding several individual interests in the water franchise at Cedar City as well as tracts of land. . . . In view of the Bishop's known connection with the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad this would indicate that he proposes to make Cedar a manufacturing point instead of Iron City." Railroad surveyors had descended on Iron City to acquire a piece of the action. Unnamed "railroad magnates" surveyed the region according to the *Southern Utonian* with the intent of "gobbling everything up."<sup>46</sup>

Cedar City's citizens were behind Bishop Taylor in the struggle over the iron industry's location. The *Southern Utonian* described them as "rather jubilant over the prospective of iron smelters and mills that are going to be erected there next year." The paper further reported, "Bishop Taylor of Salt Lake is over at the mines superintending a force of men whom he has engaged to prospect some of the claims."<sup>47</sup> The *Deseret Evening News* also detailed Taylor's progress: he had secured U.S. patents to several claims, was dealing with "hamperers" to secure the rest of the claims," had commenced work on a large foundry, and finally commented, "he is determined to make iron. . . . He would like to get help in the enterprise, but he is going to make it anyway."<sup>48</sup> Wilford Woodruff's journal places John Taylor in the Cedar City vicinity in November 1881 without specifying the reason for his visit. It is reasonable to assume, however, that iron had something to do with his visit.<sup>49</sup>

The 14 March 1882 *Deseret Evening News* carried another boosterish editorial with Thomas Taylor's signature. Utahns should "make our country the consumer of its own productions," he argued, voicing the official Mormon cooperative line, obviously for personal gain. Iron presented the key to the immediate employment of thousands of idle emigrants:

Our foundries and machine shops are growing institutions and no person who has the welfare of this country at heart will import machinery or other articles that can be as cheaply made at home.

For wagons, agricultural implements, stoves, castings of every description, malleable iron in its multitudinous uses, and other things. We have the

---

45. *Southern Utonian*, 1 Oct. 1881.

46. *Ibid.*, 5 Sept. 1881.

47. *Ibid.*, 19 Nov. 1881.

48. *Deseret Evening News*, 30 Nov. 1881.

49. Woodruff, 8:63-65 (1-8 Nov. 1881).

mechanics, experienced hands in the above branches, and these articles should be made here, and thus business for our young men would be introduced who have no taste for farming, teaming or common labor. But we should commence the manufacture of iron first and foremost. Every man of sense says so, and when we get to making our own iron, these other industries would spring up like magic, for iron could be so much cheaper than it could be brought here, and it would no longer be asked, what shall we do with our sons? There would be profitable employment for all.

By late 1882, Taylor's long-standing legal battle with Allen ("King") Campbell came to a successful conclusion and finally Taylor could proceed with his grandiose plans for a southern Utah iron industry. On 22 July the "celebrated" Campbell-Taylor cases that had been set for special hearing before the Beaver District Court on the 17th were postponed until September.<sup>50</sup> The same day in Washington, D.C., the Secretary of the Interior reversed the decision of the land commissioner's office which had canceled Taylor's claims at Campbell's request. According to the *Salt Lake Herald*:

The secret[a]ry holds that the commissioner had no right to go behind the court in Taylor's favor, and says that an account of what appeared from some of the papers then submitted, it should have been different. the point of objection to the confirmation of the title to Taylor lay in the fact that the lodes were six hundred feet in width, but the secretary calls attention to the law of 1872, and amendments prior to the location which allows that width in an entry.<sup>51</sup>

The *Territorial Enquirer*, a Provo paper, elaborated upon the *Herald's* report:

Not far distant from the city of Cedar in Iron County is situated what is known as Iron City. This is a mining town, and from the amount of iron ore taken out at this place the name has been given. It is in this mining district that the mines of Thomas Taylor of Salt Lake are situated and because of their richness both in mineral and situation one Allen G. Campbell by name, known as King Campbell, in the South, has caused Mr. Taylor no end of trouble and difficulty. This Campbell and the clique to which he belongs, seems to have, by chance of circumstances, fallen into a heap of riches and not knowing how to dispose of this wealth, entered in the courts a suit against Mr. Taylor, claiming ownership of the mines he was then working. The case was brought up before Judge Emerson of the Third District Court, who sustained Mr. Taylor in his rights. Campbell not being satisfied with a just decision, entered the case before the commissioner of the Land Office, and

---

50. *Southern Utonian*, 22 July 1882.

51. *Salt Lake Daily Herald*, 23 July 1882.

ordered the entries made by Thomas Taylor to be set aside and canceled. Upon this subject the following dispatch has been received: [quotes the above *Herald* report]

The above decision should, we take it, have the effect of stopping the illegal claiming propensities of Allen G., but it may not. . . . we can easily see how even the shadow of a chance makes a clear case for him, and he enters the arena of contests, but always on the winning side. Moderation is suggested as an antidote for the fiery disposition of the "King."<sup>52</sup>

Despite the Secretary of the Interior's ruling, plans to try the case in District Court proceeded as scheduled. The 26 August *Southern Utonian* reported that the Campbell-Taylor cases were definitely set for September. "As they involve the legal title to some very valuable iron mining claims in Iron County," it editorialized, "the suit will undoubtedly be looked upon with great interest by all who are interested in the material development of the southern part of our territory."

The case was finally tried on 23 September, five days late owing to the absence of Campbell's leading attorney. The judge's decision reiterated the Secretary of the Interior's conclusion. "The defendant has the best of the fight," observed the *Southern Utonian*. "The shrewd business-like tactics of Mr. Taylor's counsel being rather too much for the opposition."<sup>53</sup>

With the district court's reiteration of the Interior Department's decision, Taylor's claims were more secure than ever. But for Taylor, the district court's trial was evidently viewed as a mere formality. Back in July, once the federal department ruled in his favor, Taylor once again put the properties on the block and found a buyer in Charles Walker of Poncha Springs, Colorado. The asking price was \$100,000.<sup>54</sup> The problem once again was that Walker was a gentile.

Taylor later reported an "incidental" conversation with George Q. Cannon, first counselor in the LDS First Presidency and John Taylor's right-hand man. "I told him of my intention of selling [the iron properties] to Mr. Walker who represented a rich company who would establish Iron Works, etc."<sup>55</sup> In light of past experiences, it seems unreasonable to assume that Cannon would receive the news of the sale of the properties to a gentile as good news. Perhaps Taylor naively clung to the idea that any development of the iron industry after such long efforts was good news, that Mormons would relinquish their long-held opposition to the intrusion of gentile capital. Or possibly he gave the information to Can-

---

52. *Territorial Enquirer*, 29 July 1882.

53. *Southern Utonian*, 26 Aug., 23 Sept. 1882.

54. Lawsuit prospectus.

55. *Ibid.*

non “incidentally” to stir up the competition. If the latter were the case, it worked. Cannon offered Taylor \$50,000 for 1/2 interest in the properties, which Taylor accepted. Taylor’s only stipulation was that his old adversary, President John Taylor, would not be brought into the enterprise under any circumstance. Deed for 1/2 interest was passed to Cannon on 5 September.<sup>56</sup>

The Cannon-Taylor enterprise set immediately to work. On 21 October the Cedar City Council met to consider a petition stating the Cannon-Taylor intention

to establish iron works somewhere in Iron County, Utah territory, and commence with the erection of the same forthwith—that if said works should be built in Cedar City, it will be with certain inducement to construction of one or more railroads to your city, increasing value of property and bringing in a greater influx of population. Being informed that Cedar City owns suitable ground on the north side of the creek, we shall require about ten acres of land with right-of-way for water. If in your wisdom you can offer inducements to establish said iron works in your city, please let us know what the inducements are.<sup>57</sup>

On 23 October the council reacted quickly to accept the potential boon for their community by granting the petition. They offered Cannon and Taylor \$500 worth of land for 1/10 the price, but stipulated that the property would revert to the city if iron works were not established within two years.<sup>58</sup>

With all this activity, word of the new enterprise was bound to reach John Taylor. “Mr. [John] Taylor soon learned that Cannon had got an interest in my property,” Bishop Taylor recalled, “and determined that he would have an interest also, and that without paying me anything and forbid Mr. Cannon from going on with his arrangement with me, and thus held us several months.” By letting Cannon in, Taylor had made a deal with the devil. Cannon’s loyalties lay more clearly with John Taylor than with Thomas Taylor, and Cannon, according to Thomas, “was encouraging Mr. [John] Taylor by his silence at least to take this course.”<sup>59</sup>

Cannon acted from the outset, as subsequent developments indicate, in the interests of the church. According to Taylor, two investors came forward with offers that would have made Cannon a significant and quick return on his investment. “At this time,” Thomas stated, “Mr. [William] Jennings would have formed a company to pay Mr. Cannon and

56. Iron County Mining records, warranty deed, 5 Sept. 1882. See n34.

57. Excerpts from Cedar City Council minute books, 21 Oct. 1882, Utah State Historical Society.

58. *Ibid.*, 23 Oct. 1882.

59. Lawsuit prospectus.

myself my price and would have bought us out . . . and offered to bond it for 90 days at \$125,000 and pay a bonus of \$10,000. Mr. C[harles] C. Walker wrote me and came to Salt Lake again."<sup>60</sup> But once again John Taylor forbade Cannon from entering into any arrangement that would have transferred control of the iron properties to gentiles. Thomas was so frustrated with the church president that he offered him \$10,000 simply to cease interfering. But John Taylor did not want the properties to go outside the community.

Thomas next claimed that because John Taylor was so intent on having the properties under Mormon control, he offered to sell out his own share to the church president at the same terms and price at which he had originally sold them to Cannon. The offer was accepted and the deed made out. The arrangement was pleasing to everyone, except God.

On 28 April 1883, John Taylor received a revelation on the matter:

You have asked me why your mind was confused and dull within the last two days. Verily thus saith the Lord, by the whisperings of his Spirit and the still small voice, that the arrangement which you have contemplated with my servant Thomas, is not acceptable to me. He should have listened to your offer which would have been profitable to himself and acceptable to me. When you rejected his offer you did right and my spirit was with you: but when you, in your zeal to show that you had faith in my word, accepted propositions and assumed responsibilities which were not in accordance with the order that I showed you, you did wrong, and I withdrew my Spirit. For it is forbidden my Presidency to go into debt unless I, the Lord, command it; for these things lead to confusion and bondage. Besides have I not shown unto you, my servant John, a way to raise a fund which should be at your disposal for the accomplishment of my purp[oses] and by which the rights and properties of my people should be preserved in all of these matters [i.e., Zion's Central Board of Trade]? You must abide by this principle. My servant, Thomas, does not understand fully this matter. Confer with him on this subject, and if he can see these things and follow council he shall assist you in the developments contemplated. For you, nor my servant, George Q. Cannon, cannot attend to these details; but if he, Thomas, cannot enter freely into this matter without restraint then you shall arrange with him according to wisdom, and withdraw from the consummation of the contemplated arrangement. . . .

Later on, God revealed:

And you shall be one in spiritual things, and also in temporal things in due time. And I will show unto my people and unto the world, that this world is mine, and that I created it by my power, and these and the gold and silver

---

60. Ibid.

and copper and brass and *iron* [emphasis added] and riches and precious things thereof, and all that pertains thereunto are mine. . . . and that they are, and can only be stewards over that which I have given them to possess.<sup>61</sup>

Thomas Taylor understood the admonition to enter “freely” and “without constraint” to mean that God wanted him to turn over all of the properties to the church without consideration of payment. In Thomas’s words: “I could not see it.”<sup>62</sup>

Cannon was apparently “dumbfounded” at Thomas’s resistance: “[Cannon] plead with me to get up some kind of a company so as to let Mr. [John] Taylor in.”<sup>63</sup> The counselor finally convinced Bishop Taylor to enter into another company with the irrepressible president of the Mormon church, and articles of agreement were signed by President Taylor, Cannon, and Thomas Taylor on 30 June 1883. These articles proposed the formation of an iron company, the Iron Manufacturing Company of Utah, with 250,000 shares of stock valued at \$1.00 each. Thomas Taylor was to receive one quarter of the shares in return for his property, Cannon one-eighth for his, and President Taylor one-eighth if he would pay Thomas \$5,000 and use his influence to attract additional investors. The parties also agreed that Thomas would serve as salaried superintendent of the company with complete control of the business, that none of the shares were to be sold less than par, and that President Taylor would not sell his shares at all.<sup>64</sup>

George Cannon and John Taylor immediately sold shares of stock, in spite of the agreement, to their sons, George Taylor and Abraham Cannon, and secured for them directorships in the new company. Consequently, four out of the seven directorships were in Cannon’s and Taylor’s hands, as well as control of the company. Despite the several violations of their agreement, Thomas Taylor continued working with the company for another year.

During the summer and fall of 1883 the company made progress. Regular directors’ meetings were held.<sup>65</sup> Taylor and Cannon formally deeded properties to the company on 7 September 1883.<sup>66</sup> Taylor went to

---

61. Fred C. Collier, ed., *Unpublished Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Collier Publishing, 1979), Part 85; excerpt from a revelation received 28 Apr. 1883.

62. Lawsuit prospectus.

63. *Ibid.*

64. Articles of Agreement for the Iron Manufacturing Company of Utah, Thomas Taylor Papers.

65. Abraham H. Cannon diary, 26 July 1883, 8, 10 Aug. 1883, Utah State Historical Society. See also *Deseret Evening News*, 4 Aug. 1883, which carried announcement of the Iron Manufacturing Company of Utah’s formation, and *Southern Utonian*, which acknowledged receipt of the IMCU’s bylaws and reprints an explanation of its purposes and practices.

66. Iron County Mining Records, warranty deed, 7 Sept. 1883.



Iron County in September and October where he supervised the laying of a foundation for a new furnace and other necessary buildings.<sup>67</sup> At the Board of Trade meeting on 10 October members were encouraged to take stock in the new company.<sup>68</sup> The company placed advertisements in several Utah papers to encourage Utahns to purchase stock.<sup>69</sup>

On 4 December directors met at President Taylor's office and discussed a \$13,000 appropriation to purchase a railroad needed to transport coal between the coal mines and iron works.<sup>70</sup> President Taylor offered to purchase shares at a 50 percent discount on behalf of the church to finance the railroad. This again was in violation of the articles of agreement, a violation that Taylor was willing to overlook in order to advance the interests of the company. Two days later, after consulting Wilford Woodruff, president of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, John Taylor presented church funds to the company thereby enabling it to purchase the railroad.<sup>71</sup> John Taylor asked for ex post facto permission from the body of the church at its general conference the next April.

During the winter, construction of the furnace was suspended while employees of the company worked to take up and move the railroad.<sup>72</sup> The following spring a committee was appointed to go to Iron County and examine the progress of the iron works. Directors were not yet convinced that Iron Springs was the best location for the iron works.<sup>73</sup> Water, climate, and suitability for rail transport were all factors in the selection of the site. The principals of the iron company were, however, sufficiently optimistic to incorporate the Cedar and Iron Railroad Company on 14 April to manage the iron company's transportation needs.<sup>74</sup>

The most serious problem was locating quality coal for coking. The location of coal mines thirteen miles from a rich iron source seemed at

---

67. *Deseret Evening News*, 5 Oct. 1883.

68. *Ibid.*, 10, 30 Oct. 1883.

69. For example, see the 12 Oct. 1883 edition of the *Southern Utonian*.

70. Abraham H. Cannon diary, 4 Dec. 1883.

71. Woodruff, 8:210 (6 Dec. 1883).

72. *Deseret Evening News*, 16 Jan. 1884, reporting Taylor's return from a five-week visit to the iron works; and *Southern Utonian*, 1 Feb. 1884, detailing Taylor's return on 31 January. Taylor held a meeting at the LDS chapel in Cedar City to request one hundred teams to haul the railroad from Pioche, Nevada, and promised the teams additional work on the Utah Central Railroad.

The IMCU ran into another problem during the winter when its claims were compromised by legal suit, which was quickly resolved in the company's favor. For details, see *Southern Utonian*, 6 Feb. 1884, and Abraham H. Cannon diary, 25 Feb. 1884.

73. Abraham H. Cannon diary, 8 Apr. 1884. L. John Nuttall's diary for 18 April 1884 reported that the committee consisted of Abraham Cannon, L. John Nuttall, Robert T. Burton, John Irvine, Moses Thatcher, Francis M. Lyman, Elias Morris, William Jennings, John C. Sharp, and Charles Barrell. See also Woodruff, 8:242-43 (17 Apr. 1884).

74. Abraham H. Cannon diary, 14 Apr. 1884.

first to make Iron County an ideal place for the inexpensive manufacture of iron. Unfortunately, the coal was inadequate because of high sulfur content which prevented it from reaching sufficient temperatures for coking. On 22 April 1884, the committee of the Board of Trade and directors of the IMCU directed Thomas Taylor and Richard Robertson, who had been hired because of his experience in iron manufacturing soon after the formation of the company, to "proceed to the examination of all the coal mines which have been discovered, and have such tests of the coal made."<sup>75</sup>

The committee and directors met again on 1 May in Cedar City and decided to appoint a sub-committee consisting of Moses Thatcher and Erastus Snow to work with Taylor and Robertson in examining coal, and if the coal in Coal Canyon was useless, to report other possible coal sources and their relative distances from the iron mines. The Union mine at Kannarah was advanced at the meeting as such an alternative.<sup>76</sup>

On 20 May the committee issued a verdict. Erastus Snow reported the results of Thatcher's and his investigation: "they found the best coal at Kannarah and in the greatest quantities—they also examined the Quitchem Pa Springs which appears to be the most available place for works being handy to the coal and iron also good water and plenty of it."<sup>77</sup>

Directors also discussed the matter of firebrick for the iron works and directed Thomas to put his teams to work hauling the railroad from Bullionville, Nevada. They made no final decision concerning coal or the location of the iron works at this time, electing to delay a decision until they arrived back in Salt Lake City at which time they would send for Taylor with instructions on which site to locate the railroad.

These developments put Thomas Taylor's future in iron manufacturing in a precarious position. He still possessed coal mines in Cedar Canyon and land at Iron City with buildings, etc. If the suggestions of the

---

75. According to L. John Nuttall's diary for 21-22 April, the committee examined the church coal mine, IMCU mining properties, and the church's own iron claims. They "talked over the question of the proper place to locate the plant of the iron works where the iron could be made the cheapest. . . . Cedar City, Iron Springs, and Iron City were each spoken of—after which it was decided that the party start for Iron Springs tomorrow morning thence to Iron City and view the iron mines." The subsequent expedition visited the Blowout Mountain claim at Iron City and found the foundry adequate.

76. L. John Nuttall diary, 1 May 1884. Wilford Woodruff reported in his 5 May entry of his journal an interesting conversation with President John Taylor concerning the iron mines.

77. L. John Nuttall diary, 20 May 1884. See also William Whittaker Taylor journal, 20 May 1884, LDS archives. Whittaker, John Taylor's son, was not as active in the iron venture as were other directors. In July 1883 he recorded his election to the directorship with the comment, "I don't like the business but I [accepted] to accommodate father."

Thatcher-Snow report were carried out, Taylor's coal and land investments would be worthless. His reason for deeding over his iron claims to the IMCU was in part due to his hope that his coal and land holdings in Iron County would increase in worth. His only chance was to somehow abrogate the committee's findings concerning his coal and suggested site for the iron furnaces.

At the 29 May meeting directors listened to the details of a fierce quarrel between Taylor and his principal Robertson. Full details of the argument are not available, but it must have had something to do with the future location of the iron works and the suitability of Taylor's coal. Abraham Cannon confided to his journal that "matters which have developed of late with regard to Bishop Thomas Taylor have caused me to lose all confidence in his ability to successfully manage the Iron co. business, and I think it will be found necessary before very long to dispose of his services." This is the first indication of plans to "dispose" of the trouble-maker Taylor. Another meeting was held the same night where it was decided that the question of fuel was so serious that work at the mines would have to cease until the problem was resolved.<sup>78</sup>

Directors met again on 20 June when they found the business "in a very unsatisfactory condition due in some degree to Supt. Thomas Taylor's unwise movements," according to Abraham Cannon. On 7 July directors decided to send samples of coal to experts in the east to answer the question once and for all.<sup>79</sup> The *Deseret Evening News* reported on 16 August that Taylor had been around town proudly displaying a piece of coke made from Iron City coal, announcing that experts had found it to be "excellent," and that he anticipated eastern experts could not find it otherwise. The *News* concluded by asking, "What is the next objection to the iron works?"<sup>80</sup>

Despite Taylor's cheerleading, not everyone was convinced. Most importantly, directors of the IMCU met on 13 September to consider selling their share in the operation altogether. President John Taylor made no decision but to take the matter "under consideration for a short time." The company continued to meet during October 1884. John Winder and Abraham Cannon were, however, instructed to audit the company's

---

78. Details of these two meetings are found in Abraham H. Cannon's diary, 29 May 1884. The 13 June 1884 edition of the *Deseret Evening News* carried a notice of the iron works' temporary suspension.

79. Abraham H. Cannon diary, 20 June, 7 July 1884. The 4 July 1884 *Southern Utonian* confirmed the suspension of IMCU business and related "fault-finding" with the superintendent, observing that means were still required to lay railroad tracks to the coal mines and iron works.

80. The 23 August *Southern Utonian* echoed the *News* in describing Thomas's trip to Salt Lake City and calling for an accounting as to why iron production was not proceeding.

books, perhaps in anticipation of its inevitable demise.<sup>81</sup>

Thomas Taylor was undaunted. On 26 October he wrote to the *Salt Lake Herald* regarding the question: "How are we getting along with the manufacture of iron?" In response, Thomas explained that plenty of iron ore was located within fifteen miles of Cedar City where he argued the iron works should be located; that coal was available close by so it would not require costly transportation of coal to the site. He then launched into a lengthy defense of the coal there, detailing his own efforts to test its quality. Besides, if the coal contained too much sulphur, he argued, he knew of means developed by other iron manufacturers to process high-sulphur coal in a way to make it usable. Taylor was still thinking of salvaging his Iron City properties and coal mine investments by arguing against moving the works elsewhere.

Directors remained unmoved. The office of superintendent of the IMCU was declared vacant on 8 November. On 4 December 1884, the company met, presumably for the final time. Shortly after the meeting opened, "Thomas Taylor abruptly left the room without answering a question which President Taylor asked him in regard to the business. He said that he felt that his presence was not necessary." According to Thomas, President Taylor had asked him to sell his stock in the IMCU to help raise funds to run the company. Taylor emphatically refused and threatened to take the directors to court. John Taylor countered with a threat of excommunication. Abraham Cannon reported, "Steps were taken in our meeting today to take care of our company's claims and other property which is now in a very loose and scattered condition. Legal aid will be called to our assistance, and all will be done that is deemed necessary to secure the company."<sup>82</sup> When Bishop Taylor visited Iron County in February 1885 the local paper asked him why things lay at a standstill. He answered simply that "court matters in Salt Lake City have postponed the business."<sup>83</sup>

The matter never reached the courts. On 18 April 1885 the company formally dissolved. George Cannon and John Taylor agreed to buy up the small stockholders and to transfer the whole of the property back to Thomas Taylor. In turn John Taylor and George Cannon would hold a \$55,000 mortgage on the properties and drew up a repayment schedule. All of this was done according to Thomas Taylor, "with the understanding that I would try to sell the property." Although the company dissolved in April, the official deeds were not made up until December. Meanwhile, Taylor made arrangements to move the iron works from Iron City to his

---

81. Abraham H. Cannon diary, 13 Sept., 4, 23 Oct. 1884. Wilford Woodruff's journal entry for 8 October described the Board of Trade meeting but omits any reference to iron production.

82. Abraham H. Cannon diary, 4 Dec. 1884.

83. *Southern Utonian*, 20 Feb. 1885.

properties in Cedar City, a move that the *Southern Utonian* called, "a move in the right direction."<sup>84</sup>

When an interested party wrote to L. John Nuttall, John Taylor's secretary, in January 1886 enquiring about purchasing the railroad, he was told, "The iron company to which you refer has been disincorporated and the railroad and all the appurtenances are now in the hands of Thomas Taylor."<sup>85</sup> Cedar City fathers would have been pleased to see the railroad removed. The city council decided on 17 May 1886 to notify Taylor that his railroad was obstructing a city-owned right-of-way to Coal Creek. The next month the city marshall reported that Taylor responded to the news with "boisterous and threatening language and swore that he would shoot any man that undertook to clear said obstruction." Councilors ordered a survey of the right-of-way and commanded the marshall to proceed with the rail machinery's removal.<sup>86</sup> Thomas was at the end of his rope. He no doubt included the Mormon brethren in his cursing, believing that they were involved in the renewal of persecution aimed to counter his personal interests: a persecution which was shortly made apparent through more sensational means.

A little over a year after the iron company dissolved, Angus Cannon, president of the Salt Lake Stake and Bishop Thomas Taylor's ecclesiastical superior, received via church president John Taylor the report of a special investigation undertaken by President Thomas Jones of the Parowan Stake where Thomas's iron properties were located. The investigation reportedly uncovered evidence that Thomas "had been found guilty of lascivious conduct with certain young men." Without conducting their own hearing, the high council of the Salt Lake Stake suspended Taylor as bishop of the Fourteenth Ward and returned the matter to Jones for church trial under whose jurisdiction the alleged infractions had occurred.<sup>87</sup> The order of the church required that a person be tried by his or

---

84. Details for 1885 were drawn primarily from Thomas Taylor's reminiscence. These details are corroborated by *Southern Utonian* reports. A 20 February 1885 article reported that Taylor passed through Cedar City on his way to Salt Lake City. Taylor explained to the paper that "court matters" postponed further development of the iron properties. On 22 May 1885 the *Southern Utonian* reported that "a plan is on foot to move the works to Cedar City. This is a move in the right direction as the coal is near that place and five tons of coal are required for one ton of ore." Taylor's recollections are also corroborated by Iron City Mining Records (Utah State Historical Society). These records contain a deed recording the dissolution of the Iron Manufacturing Company on 18 April transferring company holdings to individual share-holders and another deed that transferred individual holdings back to Taylor. The records also contain a 24 December mortgage note made out by Taylor to William Preston outlining terms for repayment.

85. John Taylor papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library.

86. Details of 17 May 1886 and 30 June 1886 Cedar City Council minutes are in "Excerpts of Cedar City Council Minutes, 1879-1888," 81-82.

87. Angus M. Cannon diary, 26, 27 July 1886, LDS archives.

her *local* ecclesiastical superior(s) (in this case Angus Cannon). Salt Lake Stake leaders (and possibly John Taylor) probably wanted to avoid the publicity of a local church trial on such a sensational matter and concluded to relegate the business to Parowan. This was done "providing the president of the church approved." The action of the high council was relayed to President Taylor the next day.

Despite the decision to move the scandal away from Salt Lake City, the local rumor mill began to grind out details of the story in a matter of weeks. The antagonistic *Salt Lake Tribune* broke the news less than a month later on 22 August 1886 with the snide query, no doubt hoping to embarrass the church, "The [*Deseret*] *News* in its list of officials in the Mormon Church, gives the name of Thomas Taylor as Bishop of the Fourteenth Ward. Is it a fact that he is? Is the church organ sure that Taylor is even a member of the Mormon church at this date? And if not, why?"

Less than a week later the *Tribune* followed up the story by noting that Taylor's name had now been dropped from the list of authorities published weekly in the *Deseret News*. The next day, 28 August, the *News* carried an editorial notice—prematurely it would turn out—of the excommunication of Bishop Taylor for "unchristianlike and immoral conduct, and the contempt of the High Council," with the added observation that "the law of God, which demands the Saints shall preserve themselves in purity, must be enforced no matter who the guilty parties may be." The *Tribune* applauded the substantiation of the rumors, but went on to press the *News*:

The next part of the subject is, why was he cut off? Mere generalities are no answer. It is claimed before cutting off was done a careful examination of the charges was made and their truth conclusively established. If so he must be guilty of something. What is it? And should he be prosecuted in the courts? Or is there no law against sodomy, either, in this most unlawful of territories?

The *Tribune* report, characteristic in its enthusiasm to harass the Mormon brethren, by naming the crime revealed that the details of Taylor's disgrace had hit the streets. The *Tribune* twisted the knife deeper two days later:

We trust that the children of the Fourteenth Ward who have, once a week ever since they were born, heard Bishop Taylor bear testimony to the perfect truth of his religion, will reflect over what a liar and hypocrite he is and always has been, and from the present showing will learn the needed lesson, that no one should take another man's word concerning the human soul. What Saint knows whether there are not other human beasts bearing the same testimony?

On 15 September the *Tribune* carried more rumors, inconsistent with the last, about the case: that John Taylor and George Cannon had "swin-

dled" Taylor out of \$100,000 in mining properties and that President Taylor was himself responsible for spreading the "dirty stories," planning to replace Thomas Taylor with his son as bishop of the Fourteenth Ward. The report concluded sarcastically, "If anyone thinks we can't hire faithful young saints to swear to anything we wish, I would like to know what Deacons are good for anyhow."

The "deacons" in question were eighteen-year-old Simeon Simkins<sup>88</sup> who had been summoned to appear on 9 October 1886 before the Parowan Stake high council as a witness against Taylor. Simkins reported his relationship with Taylor thus: "Two years ago last Spring I worked for Thomas Taylor [in April 1884]. I went with Thomas Taylor to Iron City, that night we slept together he took my hand and put it on his Pienus [sic] he took a hold of my hand and rubed it up and down for about one minute. that was the only time I ever slept with him, (Ques) Did he accomplish his object (Ans) I do not know." Simkins, a Cedar City resident, would have been about sixteen years old when the alleged impropriety occurred.

The other witness was deacon Richard Williams. His testimony was as follows:

I started to Work for Thomas Taylor about two years ago last winter. I first went to Iron City from Cedar with him, when we went to bed he took my right hand and put it on his privates and rubed it with my hand, he let go of my hand and I took it off. Did not bother me any more that night, this took place about 24 Dec. 1883 [1884?], at this night when we went out to the place where we stoped Mrs. Roberts fixed him up a drink of wine which Taylor says he thinks made him act so, he bothered me a little for a night or two after for the same purpose but I refused. I told him I wanted him to quit it, he said yes that it is right Richard, he asked me to forgive him and I did so, he said he wouldn't do it anymore, (Question) did he accomplish his object for which he put your hand their, (Answer) I do not know. (Ques) about how long did he use it (Ans) about one minute.<sup>89</sup>

Williams, eighteen at the time of the incident, later married, raised four sons and daughters, engaged in livestock, and served as a Cedar City councilman.

The *Deseret News* did not take the *Tribune's* attacks lying down. It editorialized on the way "foundationless and cruel reports" about the scandal were blowing events out of proportion and accused the *Tribune* of scandal-mongery. On 8 September a *News* editorial about the "cleansing of the church" carried this admonition: "If the Lord holds in his hand a sore scourge for application upon the wicked of this world, Justice, upon which His throne is seated, requires that He shall not pass by with impu-

88. Simeon is listed as fourteen years old in the Cedar City Ward Census, 18, Utah State Historical Society.

89. Excerpts from testimony in the "Report of High Council of Parowan Stake in the Case of Thomas Taylor," in John Taylor Family Papers.

nity those who bear His name who perpetuate similar evils for which he will condemn the nations."

If church leaders hoped to avoid embarrassment by moving the trial to Parowan, they did not succeed. The editors of the *Tribune* were not going to let rumors of a scandal involving leaders of the Mormon church lie. But when the paper first printed the rumors, the matter was technically a non-story. Official disciplinary proceedings for Taylor resulting in his excommunication did not take place in Parowan until 9 October, and word was not received in Salt Lake until six days later. The only official action taken by the Salt Lake Stake high council was suspension of Taylor's bishopric, not excommunication. Church leaders clearly jumped the gun when they ordained Joseph E. Taylor to the 14th Ward bishopric on 11 October. Even the *News* was premature in its announcement that Taylor had been cut off from the church.<sup>90</sup>

On 22 September Thomas Taylor wrote President John Taylor and Angus Cannon a letter of repentance. He acknowledged that he had already cut himself off from the church, and begged the authorities not to cut him off forever:

I am ashamed to think that I have been so weak and I feel to cry God be merciful to me. I want to be humble and live so that I can purify my thoughts and words and actions, the very thought of the many testimonies God has given me makes me wonder how I could have departed from his precepts. Oh, help me to come back to his favor. I expect to have offended you greatly I humbly ask your forgiveness.<sup>91</sup>

The scandal of Bishop Taylor was soon supplanted by a larger one involving the affairs of John Q. Cannon, son of First Presidency counselor George Cannon.<sup>92</sup> Thomas Taylor was summoned before a grand jury at Beaver, Utah, on 21 December 1886, possibly in response to suggestions like the one printed in the *Tribune* that he answer to civil courts. The same

---

90. Angus Cannon recorded Joseph E. Taylor's ordination as Fourteenth Ward bishop in his diary on 11 October 1886.

91. Letter dated 22 Sept. 1886, John Taylor Family Papers. Angus Cannon also mentions receiving "a very humble letter from Thomas Taylor," in his 25 September diary entry.

92. The 8 September 1886 edition of the *Deseret News Semi-Weekly* reported the details. John Nicholson was delivering a fiery sermon at the Tabernacle stand, which included the observation, perhaps based on the recent Taylor scandal: "There are some offenses, however of a grosser character that demand that they shall be cast out under any circumstances whatever. . . . There is upon him who misdirects the use of the powers of life that have been implanted in the nature of man, there falls upon him, more or less, a withering blight." In the middle of these pronouncements, John Q. Cannon, second counselor in the Presiding Bishopric and son of George Q. Cannon, approached the stand accompanied by Angus M. Cannon, and declared: "I have violated my covenants; I have sinned against the Lord. I have committed a grievous sin, next in our belief to the shedding of blood." He then admitted to having committed adultery, resigned his priesthood, and Angus M. Cannon submitted that he be excommunicated.



paper reported after the hearing, "the evidence before the grand jury elicited some disgusting things of Taylor, but there was no evidence of the crimes he was accused of, and consequently, no indictment was found."<sup>93</sup> Apostle John Henry Smith was subpoenaed to appear but could add nothing "only hearsay."<sup>94</sup>

The question of Taylor's homosexual activity remains a mystery.<sup>95</sup> His repentance letter to President Taylor and Angus Cannon of 22 September 1886 is a clear acknowledgement of guilt, although Taylor does not specifically admit to homosexual activity. In fact a later statement accused church authorities of excommunicating him on a "trumped-up slander."<sup>96</sup> He cited the sloppy process by which the verdict of excommunication was finally rendered as evidence that presidents Taylor and George Q. Cannon manufactured the whole affair. Thomas also referred to false rumors circulated with intent to ruin him in a letter to the *Iron County News* four years later.<sup>97</sup>

The exact reasons for the demise of the Iron Manufacturing Company are also in some dispute. Leonard Arrington has suggested that in addition to technical problems preventing development of the southern Utah iron industry in the 1880s, "external pressures," specifically the hounding of Mormon brethren by federal officials for polygamy, contributed to the company's downfall.<sup>98</sup> This interpretation cannot be completely controverted. Persecution of polygamists began in earnest in March 1882 with passage of the Edmunds Bill and intensified with formation of the Utah Commission. It is interesting to note that John Taylor's last public appearance before going into hiding for the rest of his life to elude prosecution was his Salt Lake Tabernacle appearance on 1 February 1885: six weeks before the iron company officially disbanded. But it is clear from

---

93. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 Dec. 1886. The 17 December 1886 *Southern Utonian* observed, "The Grand Jury are having quite a lengthy stay with us this time. It was understood on the street that the case of Thomas Taylor of Cedar City fame was being investigated by this body."

94. Jean Bickmore White, ed., *Church, State, and Politics: The Diaries of John Henry Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1990), 9 (16 Dec. 1886).

95. From the primary sources available to me, I can draw no conclusion about Taylor's guilt or innocence. However, D. Michael Quinn has informed me that he has a copy of the full record of Taylor's excommunication trial in which Taylor admitted to a homosexual experience as an adolescent. I believe that Taylor was not "gay" in the modern sense, because "gay" and "homosexual" are largely twentieth-century conceptualizations with which Taylor would have been unfamiliar. Taylor was a polygamist with many children who probably engaged in sex with men on occasion. The documented homosexual encounters took place at isolated mining and railroading sites where his wives would have been unavailable to him.

96. Thomas Taylor reminiscence, Thomas Taylor Papers.

97. *Iron County News*, 26 Dec. 1890.

98. Leonard Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958), 346-49.

the details of the iron company's history that the company would have disintegrated regardless of whether John Taylor was free to publicly and actively pursue company administration. Perhaps Taylor's going underground was part of the reason he did not actively pursue litigation with Thomas Taylor over control of the iron company and decided to deal with the recalcitrant bishop in a more round-about way.

The *Salt Lake Herald* printed what amounted to the iron company's obituary on 26 October 1886. An "observer" complained about the continued neglect of the iron fields and thousands of dollars spent to no avail:

An effort was made four years ago by an enterprising citizen from the northern part of the Territory, who seemed to take up the business with a determination to put it through. Money and labor were subscribed by quite a number of citizens of southern and middle Utah; some eight to ten miles of railroad purchased, known in the flourishing days of Pioche as the Nevada Central; nearly \$1,000 dollars spent in grading up our rugged canyon in view of connecting the vast coalfields of the county by rail with this and Iron City, which lies about 22 miles west of us and in close proximity to the iron ore. But today as far as the iron industry is concerned we are quiet as a churchyard, and nothing left to remind us of our past hopes and anticipations, but the railbed above referred to, a few pair or railroad car wheels, a portion of a locomotive and tender and a few hundred feet of rails, all of which seems to be quietly laid away at least, until times brighten up and a little more enterprise is manifested for home industry among us.

But the case of Thomas Taylor did not die with his excommunication. He still dreamed of developing southern Utah's iron resources and added to it the pursuit of bringing the railroad from Los Angeles, through Iron County, to Salt Lake City. As expected, he locked horns again with his brethren, with the same unhappy consequences.

After John Taylor's death on 25 July 1887, the Quorum of Twelve locked in a power struggle over presidential succession. The struggle pitted a faction of apostles lead by Moses Thatcher and Heber J. Grant against George Q. Cannon. Thatcher and Grant could not see a way to fully fellowship their colleague because they believed he was guilty of conduct unbecoming a witness of Jesus Christ. Their accusations revolved principally around another mining venture, the Bullion-Beck Mining Company, and Cannon's meddling in the case of his son John Q.'s adultery. Mishandling of the iron mining venture was also mentioned in the Thatcher-Grant accusations: "his transactions . . . getting his stock at a discount and asking the people to pay par." Even quorum president and future church president Wilford Woodruff voiced doubts about Cannon's "mining schemes," believing at the time that "church funds should not go into mines."

Thatcher and Grant were concerned that Cannon had unlimited control of church business during the final exile and illness of ex-president John Taylor. To make matters worse, church auditing books mysteriously disappeared. Cannon defended himself by reading from his journal, citing John Taylor's 1882 iron revelation, and arguing that the auditing books were lost to remove them from the grasping hands of federal officials who were preparing legislation to confiscate church-held property. Eventually, Grant buried the hatchet and Thatcher removed his objections. The First Presidency was reorganized with Woodruff and his new counselors Cannon and Joseph F. Smith on 7 April 1889.<sup>99</sup>

As for Thomas Taylor, he moved his family to Parowan in 1887 and retained enough good reputation to be elected to the city council from 1888-90, where he proceeded with his ambitious plans. Evidently, Taylor's recent excommunication was not an obstacle. Perhaps many in southern Utah believed that Taylor had been "set up." After all, he was an industrial hero, even savior, in the Cedar City vicinity for his mining and railroading efforts on the city's behalf.<sup>100</sup>

The first of Taylor's notes for his mortgage debt to the church was to come due on 5 December 1888. In December 1887 he bonded the iron properties to a Californian capitalist. Expecting an imminent sale, he then wrote to George Cannon and William Preston, a secretary to the First Presidency, informing them of the deal and asking for a discount on the notes if he paid early, which was granted. The California deal fell through, but Taylor immediately interested a Kansan business syndicate to buy the lands for \$160,000. Taylor wrote again to Cannon and Preston for delivery of the mortgage notes. Receiving no word, he telegraphed LeGrande Young, Cannon's attorney, but still received no word. The Kansas men became impatient and left. A week later Taylor received a tele-

---

99. Details of the apostles' row are found in Heber J. Grant's journal, LDS archives. The 25 July 1887 entry reports voicing of doubts by Wilford Woodruff about John Taylor's "mining schemes," that the church's financial records should be audited, and an observation that Woodruff did not care for the way Angus Cannon had been running the Salt Lake Stake. On 5 October, Grant records similar reservations raised by Francis Lyman about Cannon's connection to the iron company, and Cannon's attempt to defend himself by reading John Taylor's iron revelation. On 11 August Grant discussed the mysterious disappearance—presumably at the hands of George Cannon—of the church's auditing books.

The apostles' dispute was of special importance to Wilford Woodruff who stood next in line for the church presidency. See 20, 23, 26 March 1888 entries in Woodruff's journal where Cannon is accused of "using church money for his son John Q., for embezzling church money. Then of paying large sums of church money on the iron mine." Woodruff felt that these accusations were "proved false" through Cannon's explanation. Woodruff, 8:488-91.

Further details of the dispute are found within entries for the same dates in John Henry Smith's diaries, in *White, Church, State, and Politics*.

100. Luella Adams Dalton, "History of the Iron County Mission, Parowan, Utah," Utah State Historical Society.

gram from Cannon authorizing Taylor to make the sale. Taylor angrily denounced this delaying tactic which he believed was designed to prevent his selling. One of the Kansas parties, however, took a bond for sixty days. The latter, after word from sources in Salt Lake City, believed that the title was somehow defective. Taylor once again accused the brethren of maliciously and deliberately stymieing him.

On 24 June 1888 Cannon telegraphed Taylor: "A reliable party want to bond the Iron and Coal Company property for six months. What will you bond it for? Please answer immediately." Taylor responded, "the property is bonded will write you," but later observed, "this was church scheming to make time until after the first note should become due which would be in six months and one day. Then if I should not meet the first payment, I should be in their power."

Taylor wrote an urgent letter to Cannon urging him to turn over the notes to his attorney. In reply, LeGrande Young telegraphed Taylor asking him to meet in Salt Lake City on 12 July. Taylor expected the Kansas buyer on the 19th, but the latter did not show because of, in Taylor's words, "meddlesome misinformation." When Young once again telegraphed Taylor urging more forcefully a meeting, Taylor replied that he would meet him on the 20th in Provo, en route to Topeka.

Young arrived with Hiram B. Clawson in tow. Young and Clawson offered to bond the properties from Taylor, but stated that they would need fifteen days in which to inspect the properties before they gave him their final word. Taylor informed them that the properties were already sold, that he had purchased his railroad ticket for Topeka, and was confident that a capitalist in hand was better than two in the bush. They offered to reimburse his Kansas ticket as well as his Cedar City to Provo expenses, pay him \$100 cash, and sign a written agreement on the spot. Inexplicably, Taylor once again accepted.

"I returned to Cedar City to await for the experts," Taylor later wrote. "On July 30th at the request of Prest. Wilford Woodruff Mr. John R. Murdock of Beaver brought two men to Cedar said to be experts but they did not act like men who were going to buy my property or recommend any other party to buy." After they left, Taylor received no word from Clawson or Young. Taylor wrote them that their time was up. Clawson then telegraphed the message that they were having the coal analyzed and would want more time. Taylor assented and again waited in vain for some word. Taylor reportedly heard through Eugene Schoppman (another southern Utah resident) that Murdock knew Cannon did not intend to let the property be sold. The Kansas parties threw up their hands in disgust over Taylor's "changing tactics." Taylor prepared his case for a lawsuit on 24 July 1889:

This preventing me from selling my property to non-Mormons extends over

six years. What is my redress?

John Taylor and George Q. Cannon were so angry that I had got the property into my hands again that they encouraged the authorities to excommunicate me from the church upon a trumped-up slander, no charge was preferred, no trial had, I did not even treat the Priesthood with contempt. The publication was made by Taylor and Cannon on purpose to damage and ostracise me and has damaged me how much it is impossible to find out.

What more should I want for a charge for heavy damages.<sup>101</sup>

The following spring Taylor attracted some attention from Los Angeles businessmen about the prospect of stocking a railroad from southern Utah. Taylor trumpeted these latest developments in a prominently displayed letter to the *Southern Utonian*. "Some time hence I was informed that a certain Railroad Company was going to build a road through to California but was going to leave Southern Utah out in the cold."<sup>102</sup> The railroad company was no doubt a precursor of the Saltair railroad company which incorporated in September 1891. Interests lead by Mormon apostles acquired salt processing plants by the Great Salt Lake and built a railroad from the city to the lake's shores to transport the product. Mormon brethren also invested in building the Saltair entertainment resort on the lake's shore. The Saltair railroad was the first link in an anticipated road to California which would have lead through Nevada rather than southern Utah.<sup>103</sup>

Taylor wrote to the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce advertising the potential importance of a railroad for southern California's economy. He travelled to Los Angeles where he "met with better success than he expected," according to the *Los Angeles Times*. Taylor proposed an exact route for the road that would have lead from Los Angeles through Pioche, Nevada, and on to Iron City, Utah. The road would then have travelled to Cedar City and Beaver, along the Sevier River, through the Sanpete Valley, and north to join the already completed Denver and Rio Grande road twenty-five miles north of Fairview. Each stop would lead close to potential mining and agricultural treasure-houses which only lacked transportation as the key to open them to Californian markets. Taylor displayed ore specimens to enthusiastic Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce members who introduced him to interested capitalists.

Elated, Taylor returned to Iron County to prepare the way for construction. He petitioned for a right-of-way through Coal Creek Canyon.

---

101. I rely primarily on Thomas Taylor's reminiscence for most of 1889's history, with all of Taylor's accusations of unfair business dealings against George Cannon and other brethren. Hiram Clawson makes no mention of his part in the dealings in his journals.

102. *Southern Utonian*, 11 Apr. 1889.

103. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 392; and Articles of Incorporation of Saltair Railway Co., in Utah State Archives, Salt Lake City.

But other members of Cedar City had different plans for the canyon. During 23 and 30 September 1889 mass meetings residents discussed damming the creek. Agricultural interests pressed for the dam to supply more water to farmers. Bishop Andrew Corry, who believed there was already enough water, felt that the money should be spent elsewhere. Taylor, of course, opposed the plan which would have filled the canyon with water and destroyed his plans in that country. He motioned that a committee be formed to investigate the matter further. The following spring, a mass meeting was again convened. Bishop Corry had revered himself in the interim and explained, "There were many who might wish to get some water—of course many had sufficient water, but many had not enough." Cedar City residents decided to incorporate the Canyon Creek water and move ahead with plans for a dam the following year.<sup>104</sup>

Taylor was not happy. Events of 1890 only added to his displeasure with certain parties who were impeding his progress. Andrew Corry, for example, intercepted businessmen whom Taylor had lured from Los Angeles to visit prospective railroad and mining sites in southern Utah. Corry drove them about for a fee, suggesting alternative sites to Taylor's, and giving advice on claim-jumping. He apparently even offered Iron City for sale and reported his dubious boosterism to the local press.<sup>105</sup> On 20 December an outraged Taylor responded to the same paper. He accused the interloper Corry of gross presumption in offering properties for sale which were not his to sell:

In 1890, I went to California to obtain the aid of capitalists to commence the building of a railroad from our coal land through Coal Creek Canyon to Cedar City.

The party asked me if the people were not opposed to progress and development. I answered that they were anxious to have capitalists invest here.

So I was to come home and get franchises and rights-of-way. I applied to the County Court, presented my application, quoted the law where County Courts have the right to grant rights-of-way for railroads. I urged an early answer which was promised. But instead of the court granting me right-of-way, they made an appropriation which was used to tear up my stake and obliterate my railroad survey; and a dam was put into the creek to turn it and wash out the best piece of canyon for building a railroad over, and when our representative of said county was remonstrated he chuckled and said that it was clear it would cost more to build the railroad. . . . Capitalists don't invest in properties with doubtful titles, nor buy into lawsuits, nor from jumpers of other people's possessions, nor property obtained under unfavourable conditions.

---

104. "Excerpts from Cedar City Mass Meetings, 1875-1891," 23, 30 Sept. 1889; *Southern Usonian*, 11 Apr. 1889.

105. *Iron County News*, 6 Dec. 1890.

. . . Now Mr. Corry I will give you timely notice to prepare your evidence that this thing must stop. others in their envy and greed for this property have prevented me from bringing capitalists to develop it, they have slandered me, and brought one of the purest and most virtuous families to shame and disgrace; and God being my helper, I submit no longer.<sup>106</sup>

The next month Taylor was embroiled in a Nevada lawsuit over ownership of the Pioche railroad machinery that he planned to employ in his Cedar City/Los Angeles railroad concern. A man by the name of Godbe received some of the rail bed by contract. He attempted to claim part of the machinery as well by arguing that the contract referred to railroad and not to railroad bed specifically.<sup>107</sup> After winning the latest lawsuit, Taylor organized a new iron company, the Utah Coal and Iron Company, in partnership with his wife Mary.<sup>108</sup>

As noted, Mormon apostles had their own plans for a California railroad which they were vigorously pursuing. The First Presidency had powerful and influential friends in James S. Clarkson and Isaac Trumbo. The brethren's plans threatened to derail Taylor's once again. On 27 August 1892, Taylor visited George Cannon's son Abraham, who now joined his father as a member of the Twelve. Abraham recorded the meeting in his diary:

In the afternoon ex-Bishop Taylor now of Cedar City, formerly of the 14th Ward in this city, came in to see me. He has been working for some years to get his iron mines in the hands of eastern or western capitalists so that he may receive financial aid therefrom. He says he has succeeded in doing so, and has got the Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles committed to the plan of building a railroad through from the coast. Now, however, he is liable to fail if it is decided that the railroad which was included as being interested, is to be built. He feels that the brethren are trying to thwart him in his labors, but I told him that this was not the case, as they were doubtless unacquainted with his plans. He felt quite badly and was inclined to find fault with nearly everybody. He acts and seems to feel as if everyone's working against him. He is now on his way to the coast. I told him his greatest safety was in getting his road started first, because if he is commenced on any line it will doubtless have the effect to prevent starting of others.<sup>109</sup>

Perhaps Taylor visited Cannon because Cannon had visited him a couple of months earlier on an apostle's tour through Cedar City. But

---

106. *Ibid.*, 26 Dec. 1890.

107. *Ibid.*, 31 Jan. 1891.

108. Iron County Mining records. A 7 May 1891 warranty deed transferred iron properties held jointly by Thomas and Mary Taylor to the newly-formed Utah Coal and Iron Company.

109. Abraham H. Cannon diary, 27 Aug. 1892.

Taylor was wrong if he thought that Cannon's visit grew out of personal sympathy. Cannon had reported of the earlier visit: "After meeting we paid a visit to ex-Bishop of the 14th ward in Salt Lake City, Thos. Taylor, who was cut off from the church some years since for lewdness with some boys, but has since been restored. He is, however, very dilatory in his duties."<sup>110</sup>

Despite Cannon's reassurances, he and his fellow apostles were in fact heavily involved in their own California railroad concern. On 1 June 1893 they decided to issue \$300,000 in bonds to capitalize railroad construction to Stockton, California. They also decided to buy coal mines so that they "would not be frozen out from lack of fuel." The brethren's motivation for the project was to provide work for their unemployed followers who were being seriously squeezed by the 1893 economic depression. Apostles also expressed a desire to preserve this last chance for industrial control in the hands of the church.<sup>111</sup>

George Cannon travelled to San Francisco in September to forge the railroad deal with Clarkson. Under terms of the arrangement, responsibility for construction and furnishment of railroad ties fell to Cannon, while Clarkson and associates would supply iron and sell bonds. Clarkson pressed to begin the sale immediately. The apostles hesitated, however, when it was learned that G. P. Huntington had gotten word of the church's railroad interests and threatened to exert his considerable influence in Washington, D.C., against Utah statehood if the church proceeded with its railroad construction. President Woodruff, nevertheless, was impressed to urge sale of the bonds without interruption.<sup>112</sup>

In early December, Woodruff met with Summit County bishop (and later stake president) William Cluff whom he had recruited to act as an agent for the church to acquire additional Iron County coal mines and lands.<sup>113</sup> At the 28 and 29 December apostles' meetings, the brethren decided to purchase the coal mine at the urging of Woodruff. George Cannon also presented the most recent developments in his negotiations with capitalists. Now Clarkson wanted the church to endorse the bonds so that they would receive 30 percent more on the bond market. The brethren also hoped to endorse this latter request.<sup>114</sup>

But apostles realized that Clarkson's and Trumbo's price for railroad negotiations was higher than they were willing to pay, and they enter-

---

110. *Ibid.*, 21 Mar. 1892.

111. *Ibid.*, 1 June 1893.

112. *Ibid.*, 27 Sept., 29 Nov. 1893.

113. Woodruff, 9:274 (6, 8 Dec. 1893).

114. Abraham H. Cannon's diary, 28 Dec. 1893. Arrington describes in *Great Basin Kingdom*, 402, a church railroad and gold survey to southwest Nevada in the winter of 1893-94. He observes that the church put \$180,000 into the venture between 1894-96 with little return.



tained serious reservations about Trumbo's character (in particular). George Cannon's son Abraham started to explore the railroad through another avenue. On 19 April 1894 he reported a visit from J. H. Burfeind who proposed a southern Utah railroad proposal, a total package that would include control of iron, coal, sulphur mines, and other real estate. Cannon was impressed.<sup>115</sup>

The next week (24 April) Cannon met with W. H. Rowe, J. H. Burfeind, and Theodore Meyers (who formed a St. Louis capitalist cooperative) to explore the proposed railroad-manufacturing combination. Two days later, Cannon introduced the men to the First Presidency and apostles who were "struck favorably" and requested further investigation. George Purbeck, the project's financial director, presented church authorities with a written proposal in May. Abraham's brother Frank Cannon protested the arrangement on 25 May, arguing that the proposal left too much control in Purbeck's hands, but George Cannon was upset with his son for interfering.

In August Trumbo pressed his demand for a senatorship and railroad interests in exchange for help in obtaining Utah statehood. Frank Cannon disliked the apparent influence Trumbo held over the First Presidency; he was joined by many others in the church's rank-and-file. Apostle Cannon himself disapproved of this "corrupt fellow," and Apostle Brigham Young, Jr., deplored Trumbo's influence.<sup>116</sup>

Throughout 1894 and into 1895 President Woodruff continued to meet with Cluff and pursue capitalists about the latest church interests in coal, iron, and railroads. The brethren formed the Utah Company on 8 August 1894 as an investment concern to oversee stocking the railroads.<sup>117</sup> George Cannon went to New York on 20 November 1894 to "see after railway finances" and again in late-January 1895, where he and son Frank made an alliance with the Union Pacific railroad in the Salt Lake-Los Angeles railroad plan. On 20 May 1895, George, Frank, and Abraham Cannon, Heber J. Grant, and a few others met with eastern capitalists in St. Louis to discuss the Los Angeles railroad. At the table were several "multi-millionaires." The Cannons tried to sell them \$500,000 in railroad bonds (as well as Saltair and Sugar Co. bonds), which efforts were taken under advisement. Abraham met with Meyers who advised him to trans-

---

115. Description of subsequent Cannon railroad dealings are from Abraham H. Cannon's diaries.

116. See Heber J. Grant's diary, 20 May, 22 Aug. 1895. See also Franklin D. Richards's diary, 14 Jan. 1896.

117. According to Woodruff's journal he met with various agents to discuss mining and railroads on 26 April; 18, 19, 22, 24-26, 29 May; 8, 10 August; 13, 18, 21, 24 September; 9, 11 October; 5 November; and 18 December, during 1894. In November Woodruff experienced anxiety over the "dark" state of affairs concerning Trumbo-related business matters in California.

act the railroad business independently of the Utah Company and also to accept the managership of the embryonic railroad company.<sup>118</sup>

In June, Meyers joined Abraham Cannon and J. H. Burfeind in Utah to tour the southern portion and drum up support for the mammoth project. During the visit, Cannon introduced Meyers to several of the area's ecclesiastical authorities and was able to secure their cooperation. He also received an unscheduled visit from Thomas Taylor "who gave vent to considerable abuse of the Authorities of the Church and Father [George Cannon] in particular." Furthermore:

he says that my visit to the city and to the South was calculated to defeat his plans for the construction of a road to San Diego, he having already secured the co-operation of influential and monied men to carry through his project. He says that the Authorities of the Church have persistently interfered with his arrangements, and they have followed him with a determination to ruin him, which he cannot understand.

Cannon concluded that Taylor was "insane" and assured him that the brethren's actions were beyond reproach:

The fact that he has said for twelve years past that he was just on the point of constructing a road, and he failed to do so up to the present time, is an evidence of his inability to accomplish what he has hoped would be done. The brethren living in Cedar City tell me that he has no association with the people, and is considered by them as a man unworthy of their respect and confidence.

The brethren ran into some trouble with Clarkson later that summer when they tried to cut him out of the Los Angeles Railroad enterprise.

Official Mormon interest in the LARR diminished with the ascendancy of Lorenzo Snow to the presidency. Snow was a fiscal conservative who did not agree with former practices of lending church resources to business ventures. At a 4 January 1898 apostles' meeting, the brethren discussed the imminent death of ailing President Woodruff. The record of the apostles' comments show them beginning to lean toward a policy opposing speculation with church money and a return of the resentment against George Q. Cannon. In the words of Franklin D. Richards, as reported by Heber J. Grant:

You will recall brethren, that the contract with Mr. Clarkson to build a railroad to the Coast was brought before us, and we did not approve of the church going into debt to such a large amount, and Prest Cannon was an-

---

118. Details about meetings with eastern capitalists, in addition to those found in Abraham Cannon's diary, are located in Heber J. Grant's diary, 20 May, 22 Aug. 1895.

noyed at our being unwilling to approve of his scheme, and this may be one reason he does not care to bring matters to our attention, as he fears we will not approve of them.<sup>119</sup>

The next day Lorenzo Snow commented that "there was the very best feeling existing between him and . . . Prest Cannon, but Prest Cannon knows that I do not approve of his methods of running into debt. Nearly all of his schemes where the church has run into debt has been a failure, and I have felt that the Lord did not approve of our running into debt personally or for the Church."<sup>120</sup>

Henry Altman, a "gentleman from the East," offered to bond the Saltair beach property and railroad in April 1899. The brethren turned him down despite the fact that the church was roughly \$2 million in debt. Snow confirmed the decision to retain the enterprises but counselled the brethren against entering new businesses.<sup>121</sup> The next year two other businessmen offered to lease the Saltair property and railroad; the brethren were willing only to offer them the management of the business.<sup>122</sup>

Snow's opportunity to divest finally came in the fall of 1900:

President Snow spoke of the movement now on foot to build a railroad from Salt Lake City to Los Angeles and said that it looked very much as if the enterprise would be carried through. He said that the promoters desired the church put into the enterprise the Salt Lake and Los Angeles Railroad and Saltair beach property and take stock in lieu thereof. The brethren in expressing themselves upon the subject said they thought it a matter worthy of consideration as it was conceded that a new road running from Salt Lake to California would not only pay well but would be of great benefit to Utah. President Snow expressed the view that, if the church went into the enterprise, it might be wisdom to offer them the two properties referred to at a good fair price and take in payment, one third stock and two thirds cash. This being a preliminary talk only and no definite action was taken.<sup>123</sup>

The San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad took formal possession of the Saltair Railroad on 7 July 1903.

Abraham Cannon had mentioned Thomas Taylor's concern over competition with Mormon brethren in the railroad business. But Taylor

---

119. Heber J. Grant diary, 4 Jan. 1898.

120. *Ibid.*, 5 Jan. 1898.

121. Stan Larson, ed., *A Ministry of Meetings: The Apostolic Diaries of Rudger Clawson* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1993), 49–51 (21 Apr. 1899). See also John Henry Smith's entry in his diary for the same date.

122. Larson, 128–30 (4 Jan. 1900); see also John Henry Smith's entry, same date.

123. Larson, 206–207 (13 Sept. 1900). See also Clawson's 22 November 1900 entry which states: "Apostle Reed Smoot reported that the articles of incorporation of the new railroad to Los Angeles had been signed and there was no question but that the road would go through."

did not ultimately let the prospect hinder his plans. He had formed the Utah Coal and Iron Company with his third wife Mary on 7 May 1891. (He had divorced his first wife soon after his excommunication.<sup>124</sup>)

On 15 January 1894, Taylor petitioned the Cedar City Council to grant him a right-of-way and depot grounds for railroad purposes.<sup>125</sup> A mass meeting of Cedar City's residents was called to address the issue. But no mass meeting is recorded to have taken place until 3 March 1896 when Robert W. Heybourne petitioned for the right-of-way. With the church out of the railroad and iron business, Taylor also managed to renegotiate his mortgage notes held by the church for another year in December 1899.<sup>126</sup>

Exactly one year later, Taylor visited Los Angeles to advance his railroad and iron interests. Taylor accompanied by wife Mary and daughter, Clara Nelson, traveled to Los Angeles to arrange the sale of his Iron County properties to the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake railroad company. He also hoped that the mild climate would help his ailing health.

Ironically, Taylor died in the street outside the railroad terminal. The cause of death was listed as Bright's Disease. As his obituary noted, he was on the verge of achieving his life-long ambition of building a mining/railroad empire. With the church under Lorenzo Snow clearing out of the business, and national pressure on the church to curtail its temporal affairs, Taylor might have finally gained the breathing space he needed to make his dream a reality.

In the end, John C. Cutler, Taylor's son-in-law and later governor of Utah, oversaw the transfer of Taylor's holdings to none other than a conglomerate made up of Taylor's old nemesis Allen Campbell and the Walker Brothers.<sup>127</sup> With this turn of events newspapers were once again editorializing on Utah's iron producing potential and begging for development.<sup>128</sup>

The 19 April 1902 *Deseret News* exulted that the iron holdings had thus been kept out of the hands of the out-of-state Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. But the company did eventually buy out the properties.<sup>129</sup> Now-church president Joseph F. Smith testified during the Reed Smoot congressional hearings in 1904 that he was president of the Salt Lake and

124. Thomas Taylor Family Group Sheet.

125. "Excerpts from Cedar City Council Minute Book, 1891-96," 15 Jan. 1894.

126. Iron County Mining Records, 8 Dec. 1899.

127. Iron County Mining Records, 1 May 1902, Degree of Distribution, made by the Fifth Judicial Court, Utah State Historical Society. A 25 July agreement between Cutler and LDS church president Joseph F. Smith cleared the church's mortgage on the iron properties.

128. *Deseret Evening News*, 19 Apr. 1902.

129. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 408-409.

Los Angeles Railroad, "a small concern."<sup>130</sup> This last remnant, the S.L. & L.A.R.R., was sold to a Salt Lake syndicate comprised of Nephi Clayton, Charles Nibley, and J. E. Langford in May 1906.<sup>131</sup>

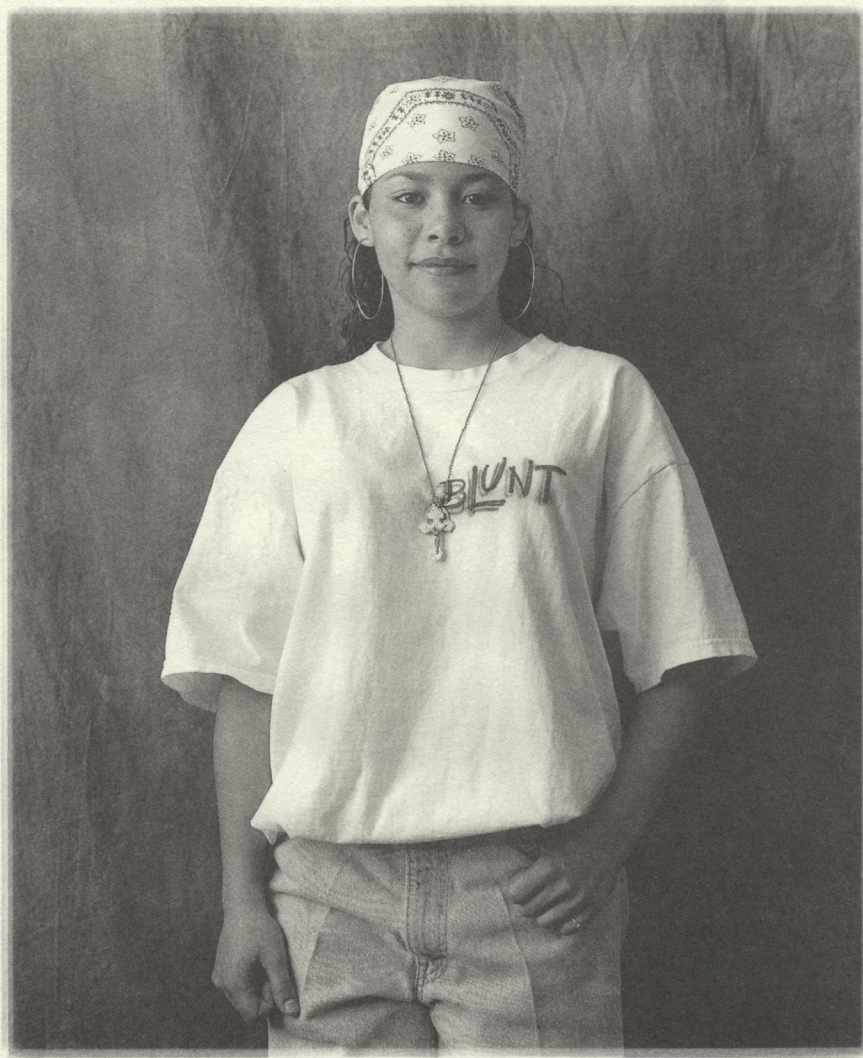
The story of Thomas Taylor reads like a modern prime-time television soap opera. Elements of big business, cloak-and-dagger scheming, and sexual titillation delighted tabloid scandal-mongers of the day, and provide an admittedly sensational slant on Utah's history for modern Utahns. But Taylor's biography raises serious questions about how we understand early economic development within the "Mormon Kingdom" and the West. Mining and railroading were the first "big businesses" requiring huge conglomerates of organized capital to succeed. Nineteenth-century Mormons, with their socialist orientation, were ill-adapted to take advantage of mining and railroading resources which fell within their reach. Mormons embraced capitalism too late.

Taylor's experiences highlight an era in which Mormonism moved from the socialist temporal kingdom to the uneasy embrace of American capitalist enterprise. The transition is as inconsistent and significant as the church's turn-of-the-century accommodation of other aspects of mainstream American culture. The fact that the tale of Thomas Taylor has only recently surfaced suggests that similar lives remain hidden. Utah's economic history, our understanding of how the twentieth-century Mormon kingdom came to be, remains only partially discovered.

---

130. *Reed Smoot Case*, 1:82.

131. *Ibid.*, 408.



# Egyptology and the Book of Abraham

*Stephen E. Thompson*

IN THE ENTRY ON THE FACSIMILES from the Book of Abraham in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* we are told that “the Prophet’s explanations of each of the facsimiles accord with present understanding of Egyptian religious practice.”<sup>1</sup> This is a remarkable statement in view of the fact that non-Mormon Egyptologists who have commented on Joseph Smith’s interpretation of the facsimiles uniformly agree that his interpretations are not correct from the perspective of the Egyptologist, who attempts to interpret Egyptian religious literature and iconography as he or she believes the ancient Egyptians would have. For example, in the famous pamphlet compiled by the Reverend Spalding in 1912, James H. Breasted, the first person to hold a chair devoted to Egyptology in America, stated, “Joseph Smith’s interpretation of [the facsimiles] . . . very clearly demonstrates that he was totally unacquainted with the significance of these documents and absolutely ignorant of the simplest facts of Egyptian writing and civilization.”<sup>2</sup> More recently, Klaus Baer, speaking of Joseph Smith’s interpretation of the original of Facsimile 1 and the accompanying text, noted that “the Egyptologist interprets it differently, relying on a considerable body of parallel data, research and knowledge.”<sup>3</sup>

The matter which I propose to examine is whether the “present understanding of Egyptian religious practice” supports Joseph Smith’s explanations of the facsimiles found in the Book of Abraham. In addition, I will discuss the contribution which a study of Egyptian history can make to our understanding of the nature of this book of scripture.

---

1. M. Rhodes, “Facsimiles from the Book of Abraham,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. D. H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1992), 1:136-37.

2. F. S. Spalding, *Joseph Smith, Jr., as a Translator* (Salt Lake City: The Arrow Press, 1912), 26-27.

3. K. Baer, “The Breathing Permit of Hor,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 2 (Summer 1968): 133.

Let us begin with Facsimiles 1 and 3 of the Book of Abraham. A correct understanding of the original context and purpose of these scenes has been made possible by the recovery of the Joseph Smith Papyri from the files of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 1967.<sup>4</sup> Within this group of papyri is the original from which Facsimile 1 was derived. A study of the papyri shows that PJS 1 was originally a vignette belonging to an Egyptian funerary text known as the First Book of Breathings, dating to the first century B.C., portions of which are also among the papyri recovered by the LDS church. A comparison of the material found in some of the Kirtland (Ohio) Egyptian papers with PJS 1 and 11 indicates that the scene was damaged when Joseph Smith received it and that the missing portions were restored when Facsimile 1 was created.<sup>5</sup> It is also very probable that Facsimile 3 served as the concluding vignette of this text. This conclusion is based on the fact that the name of the individual for whom this particular copy of the Book of Breathings was prepared occurs as Horus in both P. JS 1 and Facsimile 3, that Facsimiles 1 and 3 are similar in size,<sup>6</sup> and that scenes similar to Facsimile 3 also occur in other known copies of the First Book of Breathings.<sup>7</sup>

The First Book of Breathings is an Egyptian funerary text whose earliest attestation is the end of the 30th Egyptian Dynasty (ca. 380-343 B.C.). This text was buried with the deceased and was intended to serve as a sort of "passport and guide" to achieving a blessed state in the hereafter. This involved the continued existence of the deceased in the company of Osiris, king of the Netherworld, and with the sun-god Re in his celestial bark.<sup>8</sup> As a first step in achieving these goals, the deceased had to undergo the proper rituals of mummification. Papyrus Joseph Smith 1 (Facs. 1 in Abr.) depicts the god Anubis (Fig. 3 in Facs. 1)

4. See the interviews with A. Atiya and H. G. Fischer in "The Facsimile Found: The Recovery of Joseph Smith's Papyrus Manuscripts," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 2 (Winter 1967): 51-64.

5. Baer, "Breathing Permit," 129-33. See also E. Ashment, "The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham," *Sunstone* 4 (1979), 5-6:33-35. Ashment carried out an extensive study of the original of Facsimile 1 and restored it based on traces found on the papyrus and Egyptian parallels. See his "The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham," 33-38. I believe this restoration to be correct, other than the empty hand of Anubis. Based on parallel scenes, I would add a *mw-jar* in his hand. See, for example, N. de G. Davies, *The Temple of Hibis in el-Khargeh Oasis*, Part III: The Decoration (New York: MMA, 1953), pl.3, reg. 5, no.20.

6. According to Baer ("Breathing Permit," 127), a comparison of P. JS 1 with Facsimile 1 shows that this facsimile was reproduced life-size, indicating that Facsimile 3 probably reproduces accurately the size of the original.

7. Baer, "Breathing Permit," 127. For a parallel to Facsimile 3 found in a Book of Breathings, see P. Tübingen 2016, published in E. Brunner-Traut and H. Brunner, *Die ägyptische Sammlung der Universität Tübingen* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1981), pl. 12-13.

8. J.-C. Goyon, *Rituels funéraires de l'ancienne Égypte* (Paris: Les éditions du Cerf, 1972), 197.



officiating in the embalming rites for the deceased individual, Horus (Fig. 2 in Facs. 1), shown lying on the bier. This scene does not portray a sacrifice of any sort. To note just a few instances in which Joseph Smith's interpretations of these figures differ from the way they are to be understood in their original context, consider the fact that Figure 11 (in Facs. 1), which Joseph interprets as "designed to represent the pillars of heaven, as understood by the Egyptians," is actually a palace façade, called a *serekh*, which was a frequent decoration on funerary objects.<sup>9</sup> The *serekh* originally depicted "the front of a fortified palace . . . with its narrow gateway, floral tracery above the gates, clerestories, and recessed buttresses."<sup>10</sup> Furthermore Joseph interpreted Figure 12 (Facs. 1) as "raukeyang [a transliteration of the Hebrew word for firmament], signifying expanse or firmament over our heads; but in this case, in relation to this subject, the Egyptians meant it to signify Shaumau [another Hebrew word], to be high, or the heavens, answering to the Hebrew word Shaumahyeem [another Hebrew word]." In fact, these strokes represent water in which the crocodile, symbolizing the god Horus (Fig. 9 in Facs. 1), swims.<sup>11</sup> Although it appears that the water is supported by the palace façade, this is simply an illusion produced by the perspective adopted in Egyptian art. Actually, everything shown above the façade is to be understood as occurring behind it, i.e., Figure 11 represents the wall surrounding the place in which the activity depicted in the scene occurs.

Baer has described Facsimile 3 (in Abr.) as "a summary, in one illustration, of what the [text] promised: The deceased, after successfully undergoing judgement, is welcomed into the presence of Osiris."<sup>12</sup> Facsimile 3 shows the deceased, Horus (Fig. 5), being introduced before Osiris, the god of the dead (Fig. 1), by the goddess Maat (Fig. 4) and the god Anubis (Fig. 6). Osiris's wife, Isis (Fig. 2), stands behind him. That Figure 6 is to be identified as Anubis I consider a virtual certainty, owing

9. For examples of the *serekh* decoration on funerary objects, see A. J. Spencer, *Death in Ancient Egypt* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 172-73, fig. 69 (Spencer refers to the decoration as "palace-façade panelling"); M. Saleh and H. Sourouzian, *Official Catalogue: The Egyptian Museum Cairo* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1987), nos. 268, 178, 179; and S. D'Auria, P. Lacovara, and C. Roehrig, *Mummies & Magic: The Funerary Arts of Ancient Egypt* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1988), no. 143, pp. 196-97. For discussions of the meaning and origin of the design, see R. H. Wilkinson, *Reading Egyptian Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd, 1992), 148-49. Stephen Quirke notes that this motif "embodies defense," see his *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (London: British Museum Press, 1992), 146.

10. M. Rice, *Egypt's Making: The Origins of Ancient Egypt, 5000-2000 B.C.* (London: Routledge, 1991), 59.

11. See Baer, "Breathing Permit," 118n35. For Horus in the form of a crocodile in the Osiris-myth, see G. Möller, *Die beiden Totenpapyrus Rhind des Museums zu Edinburgh* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1913), 78-79n42.

12. Baer, "Breathing Permit," 126-27.

to the fact that he is black (which is the customary color of Anubis) and because of the spike found on his head, which is actually the remnant of a dog's ear. In my opinion, none of Joseph Smith's interpretations of the figures in these scenes accord with the way in which the ancient Egyptians probably understood them.

So if this is the way the ancient Egyptians would have interpreted these figures, how can the statement be made that the prophet's explanations of each of the facsimiles accords "with present understanding of Egyptian religious practice"? First, it is important to note that the originals of these facsimiles of the Book of Abraham were created for a specific purpose, to provide for the successful transition of an individual to the afterlife upon his death. Every figure in the facsimiles had as its purpose the accomplishing of that goal. While it is possible that some of these figures might appear in other contexts, and take on other meanings in those contexts, in the context of the funerary papyri their interpretation is related to funerary purposes. The approach taken in attempting to support Joseph's interpretations of these figures is to compare them with figures found in other historical and textual contexts. It is simply not valid, however, to search through 3,000 years of Egyptian religious iconography to find parallels which can be pushed, prodded, squeezed, or linked in an attempt to justify Joseph's interpretations.<sup>13</sup>

For example, there has been an effort made to associate Facsimile 1 with an Egyptian royal festival known as the Sed festival, whose purpose was "the symbolic renewing of the power of the kingship."<sup>14</sup> Nibley has claimed that "in [the Sed-festival] the king is ritually put to death and then restored to life. An important part of the Sed festival was the choosing of a substitute to die for the king, so that he would not have to undergo the painful process to achieve resurrection."<sup>15</sup>

There are serious obstacles which render this comparison invalid. First, there is the element of time. The last known depiction of the Sed

---

13. This is the approach taken in many of the apologetic treatments of the Book of Abraham. See, for example, H. Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt* (Salt Lake: Deseret Book Co., 1981), and "The Three Facsimiles from the Book of Abraham" (Provo, UT: FARMS, n.d.), as well as James Harris, "The Book of Abraham Facsimiles," in R. Millet and K. Jackson, eds., *Studies in Scripture*, vol. 2, *The Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: Randall Book Co., 1985), 247-86, and *The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham, A Study of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri* (Payson, UT: by the author, 1990), and M. Rhodes, "The Book of Abraham: Divinely Inspired Scripture," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* (henceforth RBBM) 4 (1992): 120-26. Recently, Daniel Peterson has summarized much of the information found in these works in his "Notes from Antiquity," *Ensign* 24 (Jan. 1994): 16-21.

14. J. Gohary, *Akhenaten's Sed-festival at Karnak* (New York: Kegan Paul International, 1992), 1. See also J. G. Griffiths, "Royal Renewal Rites in Ancient Egypt," in his *Atlantis and Egypt* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), 173-76.

15. Nibley, "Three Facsimiles," 4.

festival dates to 690-664 B.C.,<sup>16</sup> and there is no evidence that the Sed festival was celebrated during the Greco-Roman period,<sup>17</sup> the time during which P. JS 1 was created. Second, it is important to note the context in which these supposed parallels occur. Scenes of the Sed festival occurring in a private context, i.e., on an object belonging to a non-royal individual, are extremely rare, and I know of none which occur in funerary papyri. Third, the so-called "lion-furniture" scenes from the Sed festival bear no resemblance to the scene in P. JS 1.<sup>18</sup> Finally, it should be noted that, while early generations of Egyptologists thought that the Sed festival involved the ritual murder of the king or his representative, more recent analysis has shown this is not the case.<sup>19</sup> So even if the scene were derived from earlier depictions of the Sed festival, it would still have nothing to do with the sacrifice of anyone.

Nibley has compared Facsimile 3 (in Abr.) with scenes from Eighteenth Dynasty (1550-1295 B.C.) Egyptian tombs depicting the tomb owner in the presence of the King, since Joseph Smith claims that the scene shows Abraham "reasoning upon the principles of Astronomy, in the King's court." Comparison of these two types of scenes runs into many of the same obstacles as the attempt to equate Facsimile 1 with the Sed festival scenes. There is a gap of over 1,000 years between the two types of scenes being compared. Nibley attempts to get around this by stating that this is a "timeless scene recognizable from predynastic monuments on down to the latest times."<sup>20</sup> He cites no evidence which sub-

---

16. E. Hornung and E. Staehelin, *Studien zum Sedfest*, Aegyptiaca Helvetica 1 (Basel: Ägyptologisches Seminar der Universität Basel, 1974), 40-41.

17. K. Martin, "Sedfest," in W. Helck and E. Otto, eds., *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, 6 vols. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1975-86), 5, 784, and J. Gohary, *Akhenaten's Sed-festival at Karnak*, 8. This lexicon, hereafter referred to as *LÄ*, can be consulted for the Egyptological abbreviations used in this essay.

18. Compare the lion-furniture scenes from the reliefs of Niuserre at Gurob and the reliefs of Osorkon II at Bubastis. For the former, see W. Kaiser, "Die kleine Hebseddarstellung im Sonnenheiligtum des Neuserre," *BÄBA*, Heft 12, Falttafel 4, 2d row, and for the latter see E. Naville, *The Festival Hall of Osorkon II in the Great Temple of Bubastis* (London: EES, 1892), pl. 2, 4-9. Gohary notes that "due to its apparent position near the start of the festival and the choice of furniture used, it seems most likely that [the lion-furniture sequence] is some kind of purification ceremony." See Gohary, *Akhenaten's Sed-festival*, 11 and 19.

19. Note, for example, the following comment of J. G. Griffiths from *The Origins of Osiris and His Cult* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1980), 209: "But no longer can it be believed that the king took on the guise of Osiris in this festival, nor is the sacrifice of a royal deputy, or indeed of any human being, attested for it." See the entire discussion on pp. 208-11, and the comments in the following: D. Lorton, "Towards a Constitutional Approach to ancient Egyptian Kingship," *JAOS* 99 (1979): 461n3; V. A. Tobin, *Theological Principles of Egyptian Religion* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 97-98; R. Leprohon, review of Tobin, *Theological Principles*, in *JSSEA* 17 (1987): 201; and Gohary, *Akhenaten's Sed-festival*, 1-2.

20. Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt*, 118.

stantiates this claim. The work<sup>21</sup> which Nibley relies on in making his comparison does not discuss any examples of such scenes from the period from which the Joseph Smith papyri derive. In fact, the scenes with which Nibley wishes to compare Facsimile 3 are atypical when viewed from the perspective of the history of Egyptian tomb decoration.<sup>22</sup> It is also significant that the type of scene with which Nibley wishes to compare Facsimile 3 does not occur in funerary papyri. Comparison of Facsimile 3 to this type of scene is as spurious as that of Facsimile 1 with Sed festival scenes.

In addition to invalidating comparisons made between the facsimiles and other genres of Egyptian texts, attention to the original context of the facsimiles also serves to settle an on-going debate about whether Figure 3 in Facsimile 1 originally held a knife. Before the discovery of the papyri it was argued if this knife was original or if it was added by Joseph Smith.<sup>23</sup> With the discovery of the original of Facsimile 1, it became apparent that Joseph indeed was the source of the "restoration" of the knife, as demonstrated by Ashment.<sup>24</sup> There continue to be attempts, however, to argue that a knife was originally present based on accounts from individuals who saw the papyri in Kirtland or Nauvoo.<sup>25</sup> The question never asked in arguments for the original presence of a knife is what would the knife have meant in its original, funerary, context. As stated earlier, Facsimile 1 represents the deceased individual, Horus, lying on a bier undergoing the rites of mummification by the god Anubis. While part of the mummification process did involve evisceration, I am aware of no instance in which this procedure is de-

---

21. A. Radwan, *Die Darstellungen des regierenden Königs und seiner Familienangehörigen in den Privatgrübern der 18. Dynastie*, MÄS 21 (Berlin: Verlag Bruno Hessling, 1969).

22. Vandier has noted that, while the desire to attract the king's attention and praise had always existed among Egyptian officials, "this natural ambition was only exteriorized, one could almost say displayed, during the period of the reign of the Thutmoside and Amenophis kings." He further notes that, from the Ramesside period, "the repertoire of the tombs, with fortunate exceptions, became almost exclusively funerary." See J. Vandier, *Bas reliefs et peintures: scènes de la vie quotidienne*, Manuel d'archéologie Égyptienne, vol. 4 (Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard et cie, 1964), 536.

23. See S. A. B. Mercer, "Joseph Smith as an Interpreter and Translator of Egyptian," *The Utah Survey* 1 (1913), 1:19.

24. Ashment, "Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham," 36.

25. See J. Gee, review of Larson, *By His Own Hand upon Papyrus*, in *RBBM* 4:102-103, where Gee argues that a knife must have been original because if it had been otherwise the witness would have mentioned it. The quote, from Henry Caswall, reads in part: "pointing to the figure of a man lying on a table, he [the Mormon guide] said, 'That is the picture of Abraham on the point of being sacrificed. That man standing by him with a drawn knife is an idolatrous priest of the Egyptians.'" Caswall does not state what he saw or did not see, simply what the "Mormon guide" told him.

picted.<sup>26</sup> Given the Egyptians' reticence in depicting things which might be harmful to the deceased in his tomb,<sup>27</sup> it is unlikely that an Egyptian would ever wish himself depicted being approached by a god with a knife. Knives are usually found in the hands of demons, protective deities such as Bes and Thoreris (who were the Egyptian god and goddess responsible for protecting women during childbirth), the door-keepers in the afterworld, and the devourer in the scenes of the judgement of the dead.<sup>28</sup> I know of no instance in which Anubis is depicted with a knife.<sup>29</sup> The original context of Facsimile 1 would not seem to admit the possibility of a knife in Anubis's hand, and the restoration of a knife does not, in my opinion, represent the original state of the papyrus.

Facsimile 2 is a drawing of an Egyptian funerary amulet known as a hypocephalus, which was placed under the head of the mummy and was intended to protect the head of the deceased, provide him with the sun's life-giving warmth, and to make it possible for him to join the sun god Re in his celestial boat, and thereby insure his continued, pleasant existence in the next life. Hypocephali are attested in Egypt during the Late Period and the Ptolemaic period. The interpretation of Facsimile 2 poses more of a challenge to Egyptologists, and therefore is a more fruitful ground for those seeking to justify Joseph Smith's interpretations of the figures in this facsimile. The challenge arises from the fact that many of the figures in the hypocephalus are not labeled and can only be tentatively identified through citing parallel illustrations and allusions in other texts. In interpreting the figures in the hypocephalus, Egyptologists rely on the fact that "the image of the hypocephalus presents the rising from the Duat, the rebirth of the deceased with the sun, the scenes are rich illustrations of Ch. 162 of the Book of the Dead."<sup>30</sup> Concerning Joseph Smith's interpretations of the figures in this facsim-

---

26. Muhammed has noted that in New Kingdom tombs "the elaborate process of mummification was never represented" (M. A. Muhammed, *The Development of the Funerary Beliefs and Practices Displayed in the Private Tombs of the New Kingdom at Thebes* [Cairo: Antiquities Department of Egypt, 1966], 172), and Sandison has noted that there are no detailed depictions of mummification from ancient Egypt (A. T. Sandison, "Balsamierung," *LÄ* I, col. 611).

27. Consider the practice of the deliberate mutilation of hieroglyphs to prevent them from harming the deceased. Spencer has noted that "the Egyptian belief in the ability of any image or representation to possess magical powers" led to the practice of "mutilating" the hieroglyphs which depicted potentially harmful creatures (scorpions, snakes, birds). At times, even "objects placed in the tomb were . . . deliberately broken in order to 'kill' them before they went to accompany the deceased" (Spencer, *Death in Ancient Egypt*, 156-57).

28. W. Helck, "Messer," *LÄ* 4, col. 113.

29. See Baer, "Breathing Permit," 118n34.

30. E. Varga, "Le fragment d'un hypocéphale égyptien," *Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux-arts* 31 (1968): 12.

ile, it has been stated that "his explanations are, in general, reasonable in light of modern Egyptological knowledge."<sup>31</sup> A comparison of Smith's interpretations with current Egyptological scholarship shows that this statement is also incorrect.

For example, Figure 5 is identified by Joseph Smith as "Enish-go-on-dosh," which he claims "is said by the Egyptians to be the sun." This figure actually depicts the celestial cow-goddess known as *Ih.t-wrt*, or *Mh.t-wrt* (the great flood), or Hathor. Varga has identified this figure as "the most important in a hypocephalus."<sup>32</sup> These goddesses were thought of as the mother of Re, the sun-god, with *Mh.t-wrt* representing the flood from which he arises daily. It is important to note that, while this figure is associated with the sun, i.e., as the mother of the sun-god, it is never equated with the sun. The sun is always a masculine deity in Egyptian religion. Joseph Smith's interpretation might be adjudged close by some, but in my opinion it cannot be judged as "generally correct."

As another example of the attempt to justify Joseph's interpretations of the figures in this facsimile, note Facsimile 2, Figure 4, which has been claimed to be an instance in which the prophet "hits it right on the mark."<sup>33</sup> The explanation given in the Book of Abraham notes that this figure "answers to the Hebrew word Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament of the heavens, also a numerical figure, in Egyptian signifying one thousand."

Admittedly, certain identification of this figure is not possible with the information currently available to the Egyptologist. Varga originally identified the figure as the god Sokar,<sup>34</sup> but later resorted to the more vague description of "the mummy of a falcon with outspread wings."<sup>35</sup> The problem is that this figure does not match exactly the iconography of any known falcon god, i.e., mummiform with outspread wings.<sup>36</sup> One suggestion is that this figure is to be identified with the falcon who rises from the Duat in Book of the Dead spell 71.<sup>37</sup>

When attempting to evaluate the correctness of Joseph's explanation of the figure, it should be noted that there is no evidence that the ancient Egyptians ever depicted the sky (firmament of the heavens) as a ship of

31. Rhodes, "Facsimiles from the Book of Abraham," 136.

32. Varga, "Fragment d'un hypocéphale," 11.

33. M. Rhodes, "Divinely Inspired Scripture," 125-26. See also Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt*, 38-39, and Harris, *Facsimilies*, 70n36.

34. E. Varga, "Le travaux préliminaires de la monographie sur les hypocéphales," *Acta Orientalia Hungaricae* 12 (1961): 237.

35. Varga, "Fragment d'un hypocéphale," 10.

36. See H. Altenmüller, "Falke," *LÄ* 2, 94.

37. See R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, ed. C. Andrews (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1985), 71. The fact that this falcon is depicted in this vignette in the presence of *Mh.t-wrt*, who is also found in the hypocephalus, strengthens this possibility.

any sort.<sup>38</sup> In order to get around this, Mormon apologists dissect the wings of the bird in the ship and compare them with depictions of the sky as outspread wings. Rhodes identifies the bird in Figure 4 as Horus-Sokar and claims that "Horus was a personification of the sky."<sup>39</sup> It should be pointed out, however, that Joseph's interpretation of the figure apparently applies to the whole figure, not to only a part of it. I can see no justification for removing a part of the figure and then claiming to find interpretations which can be forced to agree with Joseph's explanation.

In order to support Joseph's identification of this figure as the number 1,000, reference is made to a supposed Egyptian "ship of 1000" found in a passage from a sarcophagus dating to the Egyptian 26th Dynasty. There we find the expression *wi3.f n h3 r tpwy.fy*, which Sander-Hansen renders as "seinem Schiffe der 1000 bis zu seinen beiden Köpfen"<sup>40</sup> (his ship of 1,000 up to its two heads). In Sander-Hansen's discussion of the passage, he notes that he understands this phrase to mean a ship 1,000 cubits in length. This text is a later version of *Book of the Dead* Spell 136a. Recent translators have recognized that *h3* in this phrase does not refer to the number 1,000, but to the word *h3* meaning flowers or buds.<sup>41</sup> T. G. Allen, in his translation of the *Book of the Dead*, renders the phrase as "the bark with blossom(s) at its ends,"<sup>42</sup> and Faulkner, in his translation, renders it as "the bark . . . which has lotus-flowers on its ends."<sup>43</sup> In connection with this spell, Milde notes that "lotus-shaped prows are very common in various vignettes."<sup>44</sup> In other words, there is no Egyptian

---

38. E. Hornung, "Himmelsvorstellungen," *LÄ* 2, 1215-17. Nibley claims that the Egyptian word *h3-b3.s*, "a thousand are her souls," which referred to the starry sky, could be written with a boat determinative, and cites *Wb.* 3, 230, noting that this word "is written with the ideogram of a ship." Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt*, 38. This is not true. *Wb.* 3, 230 does not give an example of *h3-b3.s* written with the determinative of a ship, and I can find no examples of such a writing.

39. Rhodes, "Divinely Inspired Scripture," 126.

40. C. E. Sander-Hansen, *Die religiösen Texte auf dem Sarg der Anchnesneferibre* (Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard, 1937), 37-38.

41. That some ancient Egyptian scribes understood the text this way is obvious from the fact that one added the determinative of flowers to the word *h3* in one copy of the text. See T. G. Allen, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead Documents in The Oriental Institute Museum at the University of Chicago*, OIP 83 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 221 n.f.

42. T. G. Allen, *The Book of the Dead or Going Forth by Day*, SAOC 37 (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1974), 111.

43. R. O. Faulkner, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, 124. Note also the translation of E. Hornung (*ein Barke mit Lotos-Bug*) in *Das Totenbuch der Ägypter* (Zürich: Artemis Verlag, 1979), 263. P. Barguet prefers the translation "*barque recourbée à son extrémité*." See his *Le livre des morts des anciens égyptiens* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967), 178. He calls this translation "*peu sûre*" (n5). For a discussion of this translation, see T. G. Allen, *Book of the Dead Manuscripts*, 221, n.f.

44. H. Milde, *The Vignettes in the Book of the Dead of Neferrenpet*, *Egyptologische Uitgaven*, 7 (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 1991), 112.

"ship of 1000," only a ship with lotus-shaped prows.<sup>45</sup> And all this is quite beside the point. Joseph in his explanation of the figure in the facsimile said that it was "also a numerical figure, in Egyptian signifying one thousand." It was not. There is no evidence that any ship was ever used as a numerical figure to represent 1,000 or any other number. It should also be noted that of those who wish to equate the figure from the facsimile with the so-called "ship of 1000," none has ever produced an image of this ship and then compared it to the facsimile. It is simply assumed that if a ship of 1,000 can be found in an Egyptian text, it must be the one Joseph Smith was talking about.

Finally, it has been repeatedly claimed that Figure 6 in Facsimile 2, which is a depiction of the four sons of Horus (also found as Figures 5-8 in Facsimile 1) "could indeed 'represent this earth in its four quarters' in the ancient world, as the explanation to the facsimile in the Book of Abraham says."<sup>46</sup> As far as ancient Egypt was concerned, there is no evidence currently available to support this claim. There is only one context in which the sons of Horus are associated with the cardinal directions, i.e., the "earth in its four quarters." They were sent out, in the form of birds, as heralds of the king's coronation. In this setting, Duamutef (Facs. 1, Fig. 6) went to the East, Qebehsenuef (Facs. 1, Fig. 5) to the West, Amset (Facs. 1, Fig. 8) to the South, and Hapi (Facs. 1, Fig. 7) to the North.<sup>47</sup> I must emphasize that it is *only* in this context, and in the form of birds, that these gods were associated with the cardinal points. In a funerary context no such relationship is evident. Furthermore, the fact that these gods were *sent* to the four quarters of the earth does not mean that the Egyptians *equated* them with these directions. There is no evidence that they did so.<sup>48</sup>

#### AUTHORSHIP

One area in which the field of Egyptology aids our understanding of the nature of the Book of Abraham is in its authorship. On one hand, it

---

45. This passage from the *Book of the Dead* has antecedents in the Egyptian *Coffin Texts*, which are funerary texts which were carved on the sides of wooden coffins from the Middle Kingdom (or First Intermediate Period). See *Coffin Text* spell 1030 (A. De Buck, *The Egyptian Coffin Texts*, vol. 7, OIP 87 [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961], 259,b), which L. Lesko (*The Ancient Egyptian Book of Two Ways* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972], 13), translates as "two lotuses at its ends." For a differing translation ("*une barque, dont une myriade est à sa tête (avant) et une myriade à sa tête (arrière)*"), see P. Barguet, *Les textes des sarcophages égyptiens du Moyen Empire* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1986), 622 and n5.

46. Peterson, "News from Antiquity," 18. See his references in n6 on p. 21.

47. M. Heerma van Voss, "Horuskinder," *LÄ* 3, 53.

48. In D. Kessler, "Himmelsrichtungen," *LÄ* 2, 1213-15, the gods who were equated with the cardinal directions are discussed. The sons of Horus are conspicuous by their absence.



has been claimed that the Book of Abraham is an actual Abraham holograph. Recently, Paul Hoskisson stated that “the content of the Book of Abraham did not pass through numerous revisions, the hands of countless scribes. . . . It purports to be a rendering of an ancient document originally composed by Abraham himself,” and as such he maintains that the Book of Abraham cannot contain anachronisms, i.e., things that could not have occurred during Abraham’s lifetime.<sup>49</sup> Others have argued that while the contents of the text might in some way go back to Abraham, Abraham himself was not the author of the text of the Book of Abraham as it now stands in the Pearl of Great Price.<sup>50</sup> In view of the fact that the heading of the Book of Abraham in the current edition of the Pearl of Great Price states that the text represents “the writings of Abraham . . . written by his own hand, upon papyrus,” I believe it is likely that many members of the church believe that the Book of Abraham is the result of a translation of a direct Abraham holograph.<sup>51</sup>

One way to judge whether the Book of Abraham was translated directly from an Abraham holograph is by whether the text of the book contains anachronisms. Of course, the first thing that has to be determined is when Abraham lived. The answer to this is by no means simple, and scholarly estimates for the age of the patriarchs range from 2200 to 1200 B.C.<sup>52</sup> Many scholars maintain that it is not possible to define a time-period as the most likely setting for the tales of the patriarchs.<sup>53</sup> Others would argue that while it is not possible to assign a date to the lifetime of Abraham, it is possible to situate chronologically the so-called “Patriarchal Age.” Many scholars would place this sometime during the first half of the second millennium, i.e., 2000-1500 B.C., while others would nar-

---

49. P. Hoskisson, “Where was Ur of the Chaldees?” in H. D. Peterson and C. D. Tate, Jr., eds. *The Pearl of Great Price: Revelations from God*, Religious Studies Center Monograph Series, vol. 14, (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1989), 130. See also H. D. Peterson, “The History and Significance of the Book of Abraham,” in Millet and Jackson, *Studies in Scripture*, 2:175-76. There is evidence that Joseph Smith believed that he was in possession of an Abraham holograph. Josiah Quincy reported that in 1844 Joseph pointed out to him the “handwriting of Abraham” on the Egyptian papyri (quoted in John A. Larson, “Joseph Smith and Egyptology: An Early Episode in the History of American Speculation about Ancient Egypt, 1835-1844,” in D. Silverman, ed., *For His Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer*, SAOC 55 [Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1994], 172).

50. Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt*, 3-7; B. Ostler, “Abraham: An Egyptian Connection,” Preliminary Report (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1983).

51. Whether this holograph was ever in Joseph Smith’s possession is another matter.

52. According to internal Bible chronology, Abraham departed for Canaan in 2091 B.C. See P. K. McCarter, “The Patriarchal Age,” in H. Shanks, ed., *Ancient Israel* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1988), 2. The LDS Bible Dictionary gives 1996 B.C. as the birth of Abraham. See “Chronology,” 636, of the Dictionary.

53. C. Westermann, *Genesis 12-36 A Commentary*, trans. J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), 74. McCarter would concur, noting that “it seems impossible to determine the time period in which [Abraham] lived” (McCarter, “Patriarchal Age,” 21).

row the time frame within this period.<sup>54</sup> In our search for anachronisms it would be safe to say that anything occurring after 1500 B.C. is definitely anachronistic to Abraham's lifetime, and since Abraham is portrayed as the first patriarch, anything occurring at the end of this period is probably anachronistic.

What then are the anachronisms which I believe can be identified in the Book of Abraham? First, the association of Facsimile 1 with the Book of Abraham cannot derive from Abraham, since Facsimile 1 dates to approximately 100 B.C.<sup>55</sup> There are passages in the text of the Book of Abraham which are attributed to Abraham and which refer to Facsimile 1 (Abr. 1:12, 14). The most straightforward reading of these passages indicates that Abraham himself was responsible for the association of Facsimile 1 with his own attempted sacrifice. The book opens with Abraham speaking in the first person (v. 1), and there is no reason to think that the "I" in verse 12, where we read "I will refer you to the representation at the commencement of this record," refers to anyone except Abraham.<sup>56</sup> These passages are unquestionably anachronistic to Abraham's day.

Second, there are several proper nouns in the text of the Book of Abraham which also postdate Abraham. I will consider them in the order of their occurrence in the text.

The first such term, Chaldea, occurs in Abraham 1:1, and subsequently verses 8, 13, 20, 23, 29-30, and 2:4. The Chaldeans (Hebrew *kaśdîm*) were a people who spoke a West-Semitic language similar to Aramaic and who appeared in the ninth century B.C. in the land south of Babylonia, and appear to have migrated from Syria. Westermann has noted that the city of Ur could be qualified as "of the Chaldees" only from the tenth to the sixth centuries, in any case, not before the first millennium.<sup>57</sup>

The second anachronistic word we encounter in the text is Pharaoh.<sup>58</sup> In Abraham 1:6 we find "Pharaoh, king of Egypt." In Abraham 1:20 we are told that Pharaoh "signifies king by royal blood." There is one passage in which the term is treated as a name, rather than as a title. In Abraham 1:25 we read "the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham."

The word Pharaoh derives from an Egyptian term for the king's palace, which in Egyptian could be called *pr-ꜥ3*, i.e., great house. This term is not attested as a title for the ruler of Egypt until 1504 B.C., during the

54. C. Westermann, *Genesis 12-50*, *Erträge der Forschung* 48 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1975), 73.

55. K. Baer, "Breathing Permit," 111.

56. The same is true of Abr. 1:14, where we read "that you may have an understanding of these gods, I have given you the fashion of them in the figures at the beginning."

57. Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 66. See also N. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), 98.

58. As suggested by E. Ashment, in "Making the Scriptures 'Indeed One in Our Hands,'" in D. Vogel, ed., *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 258n44.

reign of Thutmose III, but was probably used as such earlier in the Eighteenth Dynasty (which began in 1560 B.C.).<sup>59</sup> It has been suggested that Pharaoh was simply Joseph's method of translation for a word meaning king, and that the word never actually occurred in the text. I would reiterate that in Abraham 1:25 Pharaoh appears to be used as a proper noun. That Joseph considered Pharaoh to be an individual's name is apparent from his explanation of Facsimile 3, Figure 2, where we read "King Pharaoh, whose name is given in the characters above his head."<sup>60</sup>

The next anachronistic word encountered is the name of the place of the attempted sacrifice of Abraham, which is called "Potiphar's hill" (Abr. 1:10, 20). Potiphar is the Hebrew form of the Egyptian name, *P3-di-p3-r*, which means "the one whom Re (the sun god), has given." The name occurs in two forms in the Old Testament, as Potiphar, the name of the Egyptian who bought Joseph (Gen. 37:36), and as Potiphera, the priest of On, who was Joseph's father-in-law (Gen. 41:45). Names of the form *P3-di DN* are common in Egypt, but are first attested during the eleventh century B.C.<sup>61</sup> The only occurrence of the Egyptian equivalent of Potiphar is found on Cairo stele 65444, which dates to the Egyptian 21st dynasty (1069-945 B.C.).<sup>62</sup>

The final anachronistic name in the Book of Abraham is Egyptus. In Abraham 1:23 we read: "The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus, which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden." First, Egyptus is not a Chaldean word, but Greek, and does not mean "forbidden" in any language. The Greek "Egyptus" apparently derives from Egyptian *ḥwt-k3-ptḥ*, "the house of the ka of Ptah," which was the name of a temple of Ptah in Memphis. During the New Kingdom this term came to designate the town of Memphis, the capital of Egypt, in which the temple was located.<sup>63</sup> There is some evidence that forms of this name were being used by foreigners to refer to the country of Egypt. It is

59. D. Redford, "Pharaoh," *ABD* 5, 288-89, and J. Osing, "Pharao," *LÄ* 4, col. 1021.

60. Joseph's understanding of Pharaoh seems similar to that of Josephus, who states that "Pharaoh, in the Egyptian tongue, signifies a king, but I suppose they made use of other names from their childhood; but when they were made kings, they changed them into the name which, in their own tongue, denoted their authority" (*Antiquities*, 8, 6, 2, from the Whiston translation, which was available to Joseph Smith [see R. Paul, "Joseph Smith and the Manchester (New York) Library," *Brigham Young University Studies* 22 (1982): 349, and K. Sandberg, "Knowing Brother Joseph Again: The Book of Abraham, and Joseph Smith as a Translator," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 22 (Winter 1989): 32]). Joseph Smith's use of Pharaoh in the Book of Abraham seems to me to parallel the use of Nephi as a sort of throne name (Jacob 1:14). Pharaoh appears to have been the name of the first ruler of Egypt (Abr. 1:24), and then the name of subsequent kings (Abr. 1:20).

61. D. B. Redford, "Potiphar," *ABD* 5, 426-7.

62. Redford, in *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel*, 424, and *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph*, SVT 20 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), 228-29, and A. Schulman, "On the Egyptian Name of Joseph: A New Approach," *SAK* 2 (1975): 238, 243.

63. C.-M. Zivie, "Memphis," *LÄ* 4, col. 25.

attested in a Mycenaean Linear B tablet from Knossos, which is usually dated to around 1375 B.C., i.e., 125 years after Abraham, as a man's name, presupposing that it was already a name for Egypt.<sup>64</sup> Note also that the text (Abr. 1:22-25) implies that Egypt derived its name from an eponymous ancestor, Egyptus.<sup>65</sup> Given the facts concerning the origin of the word Egyptus, however, this cannot represent historical reality.

From the foregoing discussion it appears that if one accepts a date of sometime in the first half of the second millennium for Abraham, then there are four anachronistic names in the text, Chaldea, Potiphar, Egyptus, and probably Pharaoh. Since these are names, it is not likely that they are translation equivalents of other words in the original text. I believe that there is sufficient evidence of anachronisms in the text of the Book of Abraham to conclude that it cannot be an actual Abraham holograph, i.e., that it was not "written by his [Abraham's] own hand upon papyrus."

#### HISTORY

One of the primary events of the Book of Abraham is the attempted sacrifice of Abraham. We are told that in the land of the Chaldeans the "god of Pharaoh," which apparently should be taken to mean "the god Pharaoh," was worshipped (Abr. 1:7, 9-10, 13, 17).<sup>66</sup> There was even a priesthood dedicated to the worship of pharaoh, and this priesthood offered human sacrifices to him. We are told that a "thank-offering" was offered consisting of a child (v. 10), and that three "virgins" were killed on the sacrificial altar because they "would not bow down to worship gods of wood or of stone" (v. 11). Finally, the priest of Pharaoh attempted to sacrifice Abraham, at which point the Lord intervened, rescued Abraham, and destroyed the altar and the priest (vv. 15-20).

From this we can infer several things. Apparently Pharaoh and sev-

---

64. See M. Ventris and J. Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 136. The date of the Knossos tablets has been debated. The excavator, Evans, assigned these tablets to approximately 1400 B.C. Later, Palmer re-dated these texts to circa 1150 B.C., a date which was not widely accepted. More recently, Hood has argued that these texts should be dated around 1375 B.C., or perhaps a bit later. See R. F. Willetts, *The Civilization of Ancient Crete*, 2d ed. (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1991), 101, 140. This date of 1375 B.C. seems to be the one generally accepted by scholars (see J. T. Hooker, *Linear B: An Introduction* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1980), 20, par. 28). On the Mycenaean form of this name, see also R. Steiglitz, "The Eteocretan Inscription from Psychro," *Kadmos* 15 (1976): 85, and M. Astour, *Hellenosemitica* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), 340.

65. This idea also finds a parallel in Josephus. In *Against Apion*, book 1, sec. 15, we read: "The country also was called from his name Egypt: for Manetho says that Sethosis himself was called Egyptus, as was his brother Armais called Danaus" (Whiston's translation).

66. That "god of Pharaoh" should be taken to mean "the god, Pharaoh" is suggested by the fact that "god of Elkenah" apparently means "the god, Elkenah," since in Abraham 1:7 we find a "priest of the god of Elkenah," and not a "priest of the god of Elkenah," which we would expect if Elkenah were simply a personal name and represented an individual who worshipped a particular god.

eral other Egyptian deities were being worshipped in Chaldea. We are not told specifically that the other gods were Egyptian, but we are told that the worship practices were “after the manner of the Egyptians” (Abr. 1:9, 11), and the images which are said to represent these gods are Egyptian (v. 14). We can therefore plausibly infer that they were Egyptian deities.<sup>67</sup>

67. John Lundquist has attempted to equate the names which Joseph Smith gave to the deities represented in Figures 5-8 of Facsimile 1 with names for Sumerian deities found in a list of names of such gods published by A. Deimel. He suggests that Elkenah corresponds to Sumerian *Il-gi-na* (the raised *d*, for *dingir*, indicating a divinity, has been omitted from this and the following names), Libnah to *La-ban*, Mahmackrah to *Ma-mi-hi-rat*, and Korash to *Kur-ra-su-ur-ur* (“Was Abraham at Ebla?” 232-33).

There are problems with the methodology used to arrive at these equations. First, Deimel’s readings of these names cannot always be trusted. For example, the name which Deimel read as *Ma-mi-hi-rat* is actually to be read *ma-mi-šar-ra-at* (see A. Deimel, *Pantheon Babylonicum* [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1914], #2042, and E. Sollberger, *Ur Excavation Texts* 8, *Royal Inscriptions*, pt. 2 [London: British Museum, 1965], 19, #86). *Ma-mi-šar-ra-at* is actually not a god’s name, but the name of a canal which connected the Tigris and Euphrates rivers with the sea (see D. O. Edzard, “Mami-šarrat,” in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*, ed. D. O. Edzard et al. [New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988], 7:329, and Sollberger, 19). The divine element in this name is Mami, a Sumerian mother-goddess (see J. J. M. Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon: A Study of the Semitic Deities Attested in Mesopotamia before UR III* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972], 43-44). The name translates as “Mammi is queen.” There is no deity *Ma-mi-hi-rat*. This illustrates one of the problems which can arise when one randomly compares names in a list of deities with those found in the Book of Abraham. When attempting to correlate a particular Near Eastern god with one mentioned in the Book of Abraham, four conditions must be met: (1) the correspondences between the names have to be reasonably explained on phonological grounds (in my opinion, Lundquist’s *Ma-mi-hi-rat* and *Kur-ra-su-ur-ur* fail this test); (2) whether a cult of the god existed must be determined; (3) the date and location of the practice of this cult need to be determined and then compared with the likely dates and locations for Abraham; and (4) occurrences of the name in material available to Joseph Smith must be ruled out as a possible source before the name can be claimed to be derived from the ancient text Joseph was supposedly translating. Until these criteria are met, any equivalences proposed between ancient divine names and those found in the Book of Abraham are simply sloppy guesswork and carry no probative weight.

It should be noted that parallels to the divine names in the Book of Abraham can be found much closer to home. The name Libnah occurs several times as a place name in the Old Testament (see F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexikon of the Old Testament* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980], 526), Elkanah is a personal name borne by eight individuals in the Old Testament (see R. Youngblood, “Elkanah,” *ABD* II, 475-6), and Korash could be a variant of the Hebrew name for Cyrus, Koresh, which occurs, among other places, in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1. A skeptical attitude must also be taken to Lundquist’s postulated correlation between the Book of Abraham place-name Olisum and the Akkadian place-name Ulisum (Lundquist, “Abraham at Ebla,” 234-35). Ulisum occurs in a text from the reign of the Akkadian king Naram-Sin (ca. 2250 B.C.), and apparently refers to a place in northern Syria. According to the Book of Abraham, Olisum was located in Chaldea, which is to be located in southern Mesopotamia. For this equation to be valid, one has to accept the considerably weak argument that Chaldea could refer to a place in northern Syria and overlook the fact that Ulisum is attested far earlier than the most likely dates for Abraham. This equation cannot bear the weight of proving the antiquity or historicity of the Book of Abraham.

Part of the worship of these gods involved human sacrifice. The religion of that time and place was intolerant, anyone choosing not to engage in these worship practices ran the risk of losing his or her life. These practices seem to have been endorsed or promoted, or at least encouraged, by the Egyptian pharaoh. We are told that at the death of the priest who attempted to sacrifice Abraham there was "great mourning . . . in the court of Pharaoh" (v. 20).

The first thing we have to ask ourselves is to what extent were Egyptian worship practices introduced into Asia. If one accepts that Ur of the Chaldees refers to Tell Muqayyar, in southern Mesopotamia, then from the start the text must be judged historically erroneous, because the Egyptians never had a strong cultural influence on Mesopotamia. There have been attempts to locate Abraham's Ur near Haran.<sup>68</sup> This area is also outside of Egypt's sphere of influence, even at the height of its empire.<sup>69</sup> In order to evaluate the verisimilitude of the account found in the Book of Abraham, we have to examine Egypt's religious policy toward its Asiatic Empire, which first came into existence during the New Kingdom.

The results of such a study indicate that Egyptian gods were only rarely worshipped in Syria-Palestine, and then exceptionally.<sup>70</sup> Rather than introducing Egyptian gods into Asia, the most common occurrence was for Egyptians stationed at posts and garrisons in Palestine to adopt the worship of the local Asiatic gods.<sup>71</sup> Stefan Wimmer has recently written that the Egyptians "never thought about forcing the lo-

---

68. Cyrus Gordon, among others, has attempted to identify Abraham's Ur with a city Ura in Anatolia (Turkey), rather than with the Mesopotamian Ur. See C. Gordon, "Where is Abraham's Ur?" *BAR* 3 (1977), #2:20-21, 52, and references cited therein, as well as Sarna, *Genesis*, 107n5. Now while the identification of Abraham's Ur as anywhere except Mesopotamia has proven popular with LDS scholars (Lundquist, Hosskisson), scholarly consensus still holds that the Ur of the Chaldees was located in Mesopotamia. See the entry by J.-Cl. Margueron in the *ABD* 6, 766-76, and the refutation of Gordon's argument by H. Saggs in "Ur of the Chaldees: A Problem of Identification," *Iraq* 22 (1960): 1-19. Westermann has written that "it is beyond doubt that . . . Ur of the Chaldees means Ur in Mesopotamia" (*Genesis* 12-36, 67).

69. See N. Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt*, trans. I. Shaw (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 215, and map on p. 203. The most that can be said is that Egypt did have some contact with the area which included Haran during the New Kingdom. See D. O'Connor, "New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period," in *Ancient Egypt: A Social History*, B. G. Trigger et al. (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 210, fig. 3.5.

70. See R. Stadelman, "Götter, äg. G im Ausland," in *LÄ* 2, cols. 630-32. On the topic of the Egyptian religious policy toward their empire in Syria-Palestine, see E. Bleiberg, "Aspects of the Political, Religious and Economic Basis of Ancient Egyptian Imperialism during the New Kingdom," Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1984, 102-19.

71. S. Wimmer, "Egyptian Temples in Canaan and Sinai," in *Studies in Egyptology Presented to Miriam Lichtheim*, vol. 2, ed. S. Israelit-Groll (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990), 1080, 1097.

cal population [of Syria-Palestine] to forsake their gods in exchange for Egyptian ones."<sup>72</sup> Donald Redford states that the Egyptians "forced no one to accept Egyptian ways."<sup>73</sup> Concerning the Egyptians' religious tolerance, J. Černý has written:

Egyptians were tolerant to each other within Egypt itself and they were equally tolerant to the gods of a conquered country. . . . towards the native gods they behaved as they so often did in Egypt towards the god or goddess of another town: they simply considered them as different names and forms of their own Egyptian deities. It is clear that in these circumstances no heresy could arise, and with the exception of a short period under and immediately after Ekhнатon, nothing is known of religious persecution of any kind in Egypt.<sup>74</sup>

One could argue that it is the Chaldeans doing the persecuting, not the Egyptians. In response, it could be said that Chaldeans had nothing to gain from forcing Egyptian worship practices on their people, since Egyptians did not expect it. Further, there is no evidence that any Asiatic land ever became so thoroughly Egyptianized that they would have adopted such a zealous attitude toward the Egyptian pharaoh on their own. Again, Redford has noted that "we have no evidence that these 'official' Egyptian cults exerted a serious attraction on the local population [of Canaan]."<sup>75</sup> Bleiberg maintains that "in Palestine, traces of the state religion of Egypt can be found. These traces, however, are restricted to the Ramesside period [1295-1069 B.C.]. Their influence is superficial."<sup>76</sup> So it appears that in the area over which they had direct control, and at the height of their imperial power in Syria-Palestine, the Egyptians made no effort to introduce their religion to their subject peoples, and they in turn exhibited little interest in the gods of their conquerors. It is therefore extremely unlikely that any of the areas suggested for the location of Ur would ever have adopted Egyptian religious practices to the extent called for in the

---

72. Wimmer, "Egyptian Temples," 1097.

73. D. Redford, *Egypt and Canaan in the New Kingdom*, Beer-Sheeva, vol. 4, ed. S. Ahituv (Beer-Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 1990), 64. See also Redford, *Egypt, Canaan and Israel*, 214.

74. J. Černý, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1957), reprint of 1952 ed., 41.

75. Redford, *Egypt and Canaan*, 66.

76. Bleiberg, "Aspects," 111. He also notes that "Egyptian religion made very little lasting impression in Palestine" (102). This seems to preclude the fanatical attachment to Egyptian gods depicted in the Book of Abraham.

Book of Abraham.<sup>77</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

In the preceding I have argued that (1) Joseph Smith's interpretations of the facsimiles in the Book of Abraham are not in agreement with the meanings which these figures had in their original, funerary, context; (2) anachronisms in the text of the book make it impossible that it was translated from a text written by Abraham himself; and (3) what we know about the relationship between Egypt and Asia renders the account of the attempted sacrifice of Abraham extremely implausible. If one accepts that Joseph Smith was using the facsimiles in a fashion which was not consonant with their original purpose,<sup>78</sup> it does not make sense to then insist that "the Prophet's explanations of each of the facsimiles accord with present understanding of Egyptian religious practices." I see no evidence that Joseph Smith had a correct conception of "Egyptian religious practices" or that a knowledge of such was essential to the production of the Book of Abraham.

---

77. In fact, the religious persecution described in the Book of Abraham is unattested in the ancient world before the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. James Barr has written that "religious martyrdom, as it emerged in the Maccabean period, was something of a new thing in the history of the world. There had always been killings and massacres of people because they were enemies, foreigners, or otherwise disagreeable, but the Maccabean period was perhaps novel in that physical force and continual torture were used precisely in order to enforce conformity to a religious or ideological order. One could escape from this ghastly suffering simply by saying certain simple formulas or undertaking some simple acts. If one did not conform to these demands, the body would be gruesomely tortured and finally destroyed" (J. Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992], 53). The only instances of such persecution in the Hebrew Bible occur in the Book of Daniel, which dates to the second century B.C. (see J.J. Collins, "Daniel, Book of," *ABD* II, 29-30). A Jewish scholar, G. Vermes, has dated the emergence of the tradition of the attempted sacrifice of Abraham to between 150 B.C. and AD 50. See his *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983), 2d ed., 90.

78. As does Rhodes, in "Facsimiles from the Book of Abraham," 136.



# 1948

*Elaine Christensen*

*"The most important influence on any poet would be that  
poet's mother in whose body he or she first began to learn  
music . . . "*

*—Sharon Olds*

She was learning German that year,  
a war bride, living in Darmstadt,  
trying to say *ich* in the back of her throat,  
the guttural *r* of *Herr* and *Frau*, to introduce  
herself and her lieutenant husband,  
pursing her lips  
to form the strange vowel sounds  
of *umlaut u* and *o*,  
the difficult blends  
of *pf* in *Apfel* and *zw* in *zwei*.

Years later, when I studied German,  
these sounds surprised me, shaping  
themselves on my tongue as easily  
as a baby finds its fist and sucks.

That spring she sat long hours at the piano,  
exercising her fingers  
with Hanon first, then Mozart.  
When each finger knew its strength,  
she played Chopin. When her hands  
reached the octave with ease,  
Beethoven followed. Closing her music  
and her eyes, she'd finish  
with Rachmaninoff, her whole body  
hand-centered, each finger an emotion,  
each key its release.

The fortés, the pianissimos,  
each rallentando pulsed in me  
and I knew before I was born  
I would hunger, I would hate,  
I would fear, I would seek sorrow.

That summer as August approached  
and she grew awkward, swelling  
with the heat,  
my mother stood evenings at the window  
wishing some breath of the river  
might move in the heavy draperies,  
might ease her longing for blue mountains,  
for arched skies of home.  
Here the sky spread like a flat sheet  
from one corner of the horizon  
to the other.  
She wished for blue, anything blue.  
She said my eyes were her wish granted.

When I finally saw her mountains, the sky  
canopied like a domed cathedral,  
chips of blue glass in every window,  
I cried  
for her and for myself.  
I knew this was home,  
like an infant knows, still slick and bloody,  
to turn its head toward the sound  
of its mother's voice.

# Ernest L. Wilkinson and the 1966 BYU Spy Ring: A Response to D. Michael Quinn

*Jeff D. Blake*

THE SUMMER 1993 ISSUE OF *DIALOGUE: A Journal of Mormon Thought* featured D. Michael Quinn's near-definitive discussion of Ezra Taft Benson's political activities during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>1</sup> Despite Quinn's thorough documentation, in the section entitled "The 1966 BYU 'Spy Ring'" he claimed that Benson master-minded this episode of covert surveillance, labeling it "the best-known manifestation of Ezra Taft Benson's six-year-old encouragement of 'espionage' at Brigham Young University."<sup>2</sup> Aside from an anonymous informant, no contemporary, first-hand account supports Quinn's assertion. Instead, the documents clearly show that the student ringleader exaggerated his ties to Benson and that BYU president Ernest L. Wilkinson, not Ezra Taft Benson, instigated the spying.<sup>3</sup>

## THE 1966 BYU SPY CASE

In 1966 political controversy reached the quiet campus of Brigham Young University. Ernest Wilkinson, then president, was a conservative Republican and ardent anti-communist. To Wilkinson, anything that did not support the U.S. Constitution or free-market capitalism was commu-

---

1. D. Michael Quinn, "Ezra Taft Benson and Mormon Political Conflict," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (Summer 1993): 50-55.

2. *Ibid.*, 54-55.

3. The principal documents used in this research are in the Ray C. Hillam Papers, Brigham Young University Archives, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Other important documents are in private possession.

nistic<sup>4</sup> and ran counter to the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When members of the faculty supported or appeared sympathetic to ideas that challenged Wilkinson's ideology, he condemned them as "liberals."<sup>5</sup> These "liberal" professors were the focus of Wilkinson's attention in 1966 and the motivation for the administration-organized, student-run spy ring.

In April 1966 Wilkinson told his comptroller and aide, Joseph Bentley, that he was going to give a "powerful address" that would "rock the campus from one end to the other."<sup>6</sup> Wilkinson wanted the speech to be controversial and hoped that it would generate discussion on campus, especially among "liberal" professors. He believed that his speech was consistent with Mormon doctrine and that students and faculty needed to know how church leaders felt about these political issues.<sup>7</sup>

Hoping to catch professors criticizing his speech, Wilkinson asked Bentley if he knew any students who would report what their teachers said in class about the address. Wilkinson specifically wanted the reactions of certain "liberal" faculty.<sup>8</sup> Bentley said he knew of a student who could be trusted and shortly thereafter contacted Stephen Hays Russell, an economics major who had recently represented BYU at a conservative economics symposium in New York. Bentley asked Russell to keep his ears open to what certain professors said about Wilkinson's address.<sup>9</sup>

During his conversation with Bentley, Russell understood that "President Wilkinson did not want to get involved in obtaining such information . . . [and] if he [Russell] were caught official university reaction would be that . . . [he] was acting on . . . [his] own."<sup>10</sup> Bentley and Russell worked out a list of professors to be monitored and Russell copied their

4. Wilkinson also termed these ideas "liberal," and would later apply this label to certain professors to justify spying on them. For Wilkinson's ideas on capitalism, see Wilkinson, "The Changing Nature of American Government from a Constitutional Republic to a Welfare State," *BYU Speeches of the Year*, 21 April 1966 (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1966). Also see his "The Decline and Possible Fall of the American Republic," *BYU Commencement Address* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1965).

5. For the purposes of this paper, the term liberal applies to those who did not support Wilkinson or his political philosophy; a conservative is someone who supported Wilkinson's ideas.

6. Stephen Hays Russell Statement, 13 Mar. 1967, Hillam Papers. For the content of Wilkinson's address, see Wilkinson, "Changing Nature of American Government."

7. Wilkinson, "Report for the Board of Trustees on Surveillance of Teachers and the Hillam-Davies Case," 17 Apr. 1967, pp. 4-6, copy in private possession.

8. Ibid.

9. Stephen Hays Russell to Jeff Blake, 1 July 1994.

10. Russell Statement. It should be clear that this was Russell's own opinion. Bentley may or may not have actually used these words.

class schedules from office doors.<sup>11</sup>

Russell then acting on his own initiative contacted ten students he had met through BYU's conservative community.<sup>12</sup> These students were selected because of their known conservative views and because Russell felt they could be trusted. The small group met in room 370 of the Wilkinson Center, where Russell explained their purpose and mission.<sup>13</sup> Russell informed them that they were to attend the classes of the selected professors for two or three periods after Wilkinson's address and to write down any remarks the professors made about the speech.<sup>14</sup> After attending the classes, they were to turn in their notes to Russell, who would then prepare a report and submit it to Wilkinson.

Wilkinson presented his forum address as planned on 21 April 1966. Following the talk, the designated professors were monitored by Russell's group. Each student-spy took notes on what the professors said about the speech and gave the information to Russell, who typed a composite report for Wilkinson.<sup>15</sup> Bentley then arranged for Russell to deliver his report directly to Wilkinson. Russell said that when he went to Wilkinson's office he "read a few of the more explosive and derogatory remarks . . . and then handed him the report." The president thanked him and Russell left.<sup>16</sup>

Wilkinson gave the reports to Clyde Sandgren, BYU's general counsel, with instructions to verify them. Sandgren contacted Russell and asked for a list of all the students who had gathered information. Sandgren then met with the students individually to confirm Russell's report.

BYU political scientist Ray Hillam, one of the targeted professors, learned about the spy ring from one of his students who told him he had been called in to verify allegations made against Hillam by Russell.<sup>17</sup> Members of the spy ring also talked about their activities to people out-

---

11. The professors monitored were Ray Hillam, Jesse Reeder, J. Kenneth Davies, Richard Wirthlin, Stewart Grow, Louis Midgley, Briant Jacobs, and Melvin Mabey. "Chronology of Events," Hillam Papers; see also Russell to Blake.

12. Russell to Blake. Some accounts state that there were as many as twenty student spies, but only ten names are known. These include: Stephen Hays Russell, Ronald Hankin, Michael Call, Curt Conklin, Lyle Burnett, Everett Bryce, Lloyd Miller, Mark Skousen, Lisle Updike, and James Widenmann. See Russell Statement and Ronald Ira Hankin statement, Hillam Papers.

13. Hankin Statement and Russell Statement.

14. Each student was asked to monitor two specific teachers, so not every spy went to the same class at the same time. See "Chronology of Events."

15. Russell Statement.

16. *Ibid.*

17. The student who told Hillam about the spy ring was not a member of the spy ring himself. He was a member of one of Hillam's classes and was contacted at random by the administration to confirm the allegations against Hillam. Hillam Papers.

side BYU and this information found its way back to Provo. Upon learning about the spy ring, Hillam requested that a formal hearing be arranged.<sup>18</sup>

Relying on information gathered by the spies and others outside the spy ring, Wilkinson intended to use the hearing to formally charge Hillam.<sup>19</sup> In September 1966 Wilkinson appointed BYU vice presidents Earl Crockett, Ben Lewis, and Clyde Sandgren to preside over the hearings. They were to decide if the allegations were true and what, if any, punishment should be handed down against Hillam.<sup>20</sup>

At the first hearing on 15 September Hillam was charged with being pro-communist and disloyal to BYU. These charges came from information gathered by the student spies and by others.<sup>21</sup> Hillam denied the charges and protested the "motives and methods" of those involved in the spying.<sup>22</sup>

Prior to the second meeting, Hillam and his colleague, Louis Midgley, contacted one of the student spies, Ronald Hankin, who was willing to expose the "administration-organized spy ring."<sup>23</sup> Hankin appeared at the second hearing, and when Vice President Lewis asked him who the administration was, Hankin responded that "Brother Sandgren," one of the vice presidents presiding at the hearing, should know because Sandgren had personally received reports from him. Russell, who was also present at this hearing, said that with Hankin's testimony Sandgren became nervous and demanded that Russell answer the allegations.<sup>24</sup> Russell asked for, and was allowed, three days to prepare a statement and present it to the vice presidents.

Russell stated that immediately after the hearing he went to Wilkinson's office and "told him of Hankin's expose." Wilkinson responded, "You know of course this is the first I've heard of this group [the student-spies]." Russell understood this to be a reminder that Wilkinson was not to get involved. Wilkinson told Russell that he should talk to Joseph Bentley.<sup>25</sup>

After meeting with Russell, Wilkinson telephoned Bentley and suggested that Russell be the administration's "scapegoat so as not to be implicated." Bentley refused. Wilkinson and Bentley then arranged for an

---

18. Ernest L. Wilkinson to Clyde D. Sandgren, Earl Crockett, Ben Lewis, 21 July 1966 and 19 Sept. 1966, copy in private possession.

19. *Ibid.*

20. "Chronology of Events." Also see Gary James Bergera and Ronald Priddis, *Brigham Young University: A House of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 209.

21. Russell to Blake.

22. "Chronology of Events."

23. Hankin Statement.

24. Russell Statement. Also see Bergera and Priddis, 211.

25. Russell Statement.

attorney to help Russell formulate his reply.

Bentley later told Russell that he was concerned about Wilkinson because "he's [Wilkinson's] involved and he's scared."<sup>26</sup> Bentley, Russell, and attorney H. Verlan Andersen wrote a five-page statement for Russell to submit to the vice presidents. The statement avoided the main issues and tried to discredit Hankin as a witness by claiming that he was neurotic.<sup>27</sup> This was the beginning of the administration's cover-up.

After the second hearing, Hillam and his colleagues started their own investigation. For example, "Hillam and [Louis] Midgley tape recorded an interview with Hankin and gathered testimonies from other students."<sup>28</sup> Another of Hillam's colleagues, Richard Wirthlin, confronted Wilkinson with the information and accused him of using Russell and other students to "spy on teachers."<sup>29</sup> At this, Wilkinson "exploded" and demanded all of Wirthlin's evidence, telling him that Hillam, not Russell, was on trial.<sup>30</sup> Wilkinson also wrote a letter to Hillam in which he denied encouraging "any student or others to 'spy' on University employees." Wilkinson claimed that the complaints against Hillam were unsolicited and that the students must have misunderstood the president and sought the information on their own.<sup>31</sup>

On 17 October 1966 the vice presidents issued their findings. Their report did not address Hillam's charge, that he was the object of an administration-organized spy ring, but simply accused Hillam of minor indiscretions.<sup>32</sup> Wilkinson did not approve of the report, calling it a "white wash job," because it advocated no disciplinary action against Hillam.<sup>33</sup> Wilkinson also continued to claim no previous knowledge of the spying and that no members of the administration were involved either.<sup>34</sup>

The truth about the incident began to surface in February 1967, when Hankin went public. He told local television and radio stations about his and others' involvement in the administration-sponsored spy ring.<sup>35</sup>

Hankin's statement drove Russell to confess his involvement to his

---

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. The tape recording is the Ronald Hankin Statement. Also see Bergera and Priddis, 212.

29. Richard Wirthlin to Larry Wimmer, 22 Jan. 1968, Hillam Papers.

30. Ibid.

31. Wilkinson to Hillam, 4 Nov. 1966, Hillam Papers.

32. "Report, Findings of Fact, Conclusions and Recommendations," 17 Oct. 1966, Hillam Papers.

33. Wilkinson Diary, 20 Oct. 1966, photocopy in Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

34. Faculty Meeting Minutes, 20 Oct. 1966, quoted in Bergera and Priddis, 212.

35. "Free Forum Filled With Charges," *Daily Universe*, 1 Mar. 1967.

faculty advisor, Larry Wimmer, and to his local church leader. Wimmer asked Russell to repeat his statement to Elders N. Eldon Tanner and Harold B. Lee, both members of BYU's board of trustees. Tanner and Lee then requested that Wilkinson submit a statement to the board explaining the situation. In his statement Wilkinson explicitly admitted asking "Bentley to recruit Russell and other students" to report on faculty members.<sup>36</sup>

Later, the vice presidents' report was amended to include information on Russell's activities and eventually to admit Wilkinson's participation. The amended report stated that "Stephen Hays Russell, at the request of President Wilkinson, organized a group of students to obtain reactions to the president's speech of April 21, 1966."<sup>37</sup>

Even after Wilkinson left the university, conflict over this issue did not die. When Wilkinson edited the official history of BYU in the mid-1970s, he included the spy case but still maintained his innocence.<sup>38</sup> This omission elicited a swift reaction from Hiram, who in a letter to Wilkinson stated that Wilkinson had "given an untruthful account, blaming others rather than fixing responsibility with the person [Wilkinson] who initiated the spying."<sup>39</sup>

#### QUINN'S SPECULATIONS

In Quinn's essay, Ezra Taft Benson's support of the John Birch Society is a major theme. By labeling the BYU spy episode "a Birch crisis," Quinn attempts to portray the Birch Society as playing a significant role in the spying.<sup>40</sup> Because Benson supported the society, and some society members were involved in the spying, Quinn reasons that Benson was behind the spying.<sup>41</sup> In fact, Birch Society involvement was coincidental. True, some of the spies were members of the society, but this does not necessarily suggest that the Birch Society organized the spy ring.<sup>42</sup> The students were chosen because they were all "politically conservative," not because

36. Wilkinson to the Board of Trustees, 17 Apr. 1967, photocopy in private possession.

37. Vice Presidents to Hiram, 15 May 1969, Hiram Papers.

38. The history stated that "[p]eople often misunderstood President Wilkinson when they came to him with complaints. . . . His cross-examination efforts gave the impression that people should go out and gather evidence. This led to what came to be known as the 'spy scandal of 1967-68'" (Ernest L. Wilkinson and Leonard J. Arrington, eds., *Brigham Young University: The First One Hundred Years* [Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1976], 775).

39. Hiram to Ernest L. Wilkinson, W. Cleon Skousen, Leonard J. Arrington, and Bruce C. Hafen, 1 Nov. 1976, Hiram Papers. Also see Bergera and Priddis, 453.

40. Quinn, 50.

41. *Ibid.*, 50-52.

42. Russell states that he was the only Birch Society member among the spies. Russell to Blake.



they were society members.<sup>43</sup>

Quinn also states that Stephen Russell, the student organizer, had on at least one occasion prior to the spy episode met Benson. He points out that Russell told those present at the first meeting of the spy group "that 'the General Authorities' authorized this espionage" and specifically used Benson's name.<sup>44</sup> Ronald Hankin also said that Russell mentioned Benson's name and said "that he [Benson] was behind it [the spying], because he [Russell] was a friend of President Benson, he might find that he supported it if he was [sic] to speak with him."<sup>45</sup>

Russell left first-person statements in 1967, 1983, and 1987 regarding his involvement in the spy ring. None of these mentions any connection with Benson, except to point out that both shared similar political views. Russell did say he met Benson once, but this meeting was very informal.<sup>46</sup> Clearly, Russell was claiming in 1966 a much closer association with Benson than actually existed in an attempt to "legitimate" the spying.

Authorization by any other general authority cannot be supported either. N. Eldon Tanner and Harold B. Lee were brought in after the incident occurred only at the request of the professors involved. Quinn alleges that Tanner and Lee "declined to pursue the matter rigorously" in order to cover up Benson's involvement.<sup>47</sup> In fact, both apostles told the professors that they should keep duplicate records of what they discovered as they continued their own investigation.<sup>48</sup>

Quinn also uses a 1966 letter written by Louis Midgley, one of the targeted professors, in which he said that Benson was "the real home of the group."<sup>49</sup> More recently, however, Midgley has stated that when he wrote the letter he was speculating on a possible connection with Benson. This speculation was based on Benson's political stance and its possible similarities with those involved in the spying. Midgley now believes that no connection existed with Benson.<sup>50</sup>

---

43. Russell Statement. Hankin also stated that at their first meeting the students were told, by Russell, that they were chosen because they were "conservative, fundamentalists." Hankin Statement.

44. Quinn, 53. Also see Hankin Statement. Russell claims that those assertions "are all categorically false." Russell to Louis Midgley, 4 Feb. 1994, copy in my possession. Russell's letter to Midgley also reports: "If they were true, I suppose that after 27 years and in the context of Quinn's large 'exposé' on the supposed propensity of Elder Benson to orchestrate espionage against BYU faculty, I would admit to what Quinn calls my 'obvious . . . [intention] to shield others beyond the BYU administrators who were involved.' But these assertions of Quinn are not true."

45. Hankin Statement.

46. Russell to Gary J. Bergera, 5 Jan. 1987, letter in private possession.

47. Quinn, 54.

48. Hillam to Tanner, 22 Sept. 1966, Hillam Papers.

49. Quinn, 54. Also see Midgley to Hillam, 11 Nov. 1966, Hillam Papers.

50. Midgley, interview, 8 Nov. 1993.

Finally, Quinn mentions in a footnote an interview he had with "a highly placed official at LDS church headquarters in 1966" and who without solicitation offered the name of Stephen Russell "as the person who forwarded the spy ring's findings to Benson."<sup>51</sup> Since readers do not know who this person is, they must take Quinn's word that he/she is a reliable witness. But both the available documents and Russell himself deny this allegation.<sup>52</sup> Remember too that Ernest Wilkinson admitted to the Board of Trustees that he was responsible for the spying and that all reports were given to him or to Vice President Sandgren.<sup>53</sup> This clearly contradicts the statement made by Quinn's anonymous source.

#### ERNEST L. WILKINSON'S INVOLVEMENT

The mastermind of the spy ring was Ernest Wilkinson. Many of those directly involved with the incident have said that the "spy ring was a Wilkinson operation," and even Wilkinson himself admitted his own guilt.<sup>54</sup> Wilkinson's confession is well documented in his report to the Board of Trustees on 17 April 1967. In that report, Wilkinson wrote, "I wanted to know from regular students what their regular teachers were teaching, and I think information of that kind is proper for me as the President to know, and I think this method of finding out is a proper method."<sup>55</sup> Aside from Wilkinson's admission, other evidence exists which implicates him as the one responsible for the spy ring.

Wilkinson was an ultra-conservative Republican and ardent anti-communist who shared his political philosophy with BYU faculty and students.<sup>56</sup> George S. Ballif, a close friend of Wilkinson and BYU employee, said that "there had been some activity politically [on campus] . . . before Ernest Wilkinson became President, but not nearly as much as since his administration began."<sup>57</sup> Student criticism of Wilkinson's politi-

51. Quinn, fn 216. Also see Russell to Quinn, 4 Feb. 1994, copy in my possession.

52. Russell to Blake.

53. Wilkinson to Board of Trustees, 17 Apr. 1967.

54. Hillam, interview, 4 Nov. 1993.

55. Wilkinson to the Board of Trustees, 17 Apr. 1967, photocopy in private possession. For other testimonies of Wilkinson's guilt, see Richard Wirthlin to Larry Wimmer, 22 Jan. 1968; Russell to Wimmer, 19 May 1968; Hillam, conversations with Joseph T Bentley, Sept. 1967 and Sept. 1968; Hillam to Wilkinson, Skousen, Arrington, Hafen, 1 Nov. 1976; all in the Hillam Papers.

56. "There were a number of strong Republicans that grew up in the faculty as it expanded after Ernest came. Of course, he was the prime moving Republican" (George S. Ballif, interview by Kay Alta Haynes, 18 Feb.-8 Mar. 1974, 33, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; see also Edith Johnson, interview by Hollis Scott, 24 Apr. 1984, Brigham Young University Emeritus Club and University Archives, Brigham Young University).

57. Ballif, 32-33.

cal bias touched on this issue in the early 1960s.<sup>58</sup> Some also claimed that Wilkinson's political activism extended to using the university as a stepping stone to the United States Senate.<sup>59</sup>

After his unsuccessful bid for the Senate in 1964, Wilkinson "returned to campus with a vengeance."<sup>60</sup> He was especially upset with certain members of the faculty who had supported his Republican opponent in the primaries, Sherman Lloyd. Three of the eight targeted professors had signed an advertisement supporting Lloyd, an action Wilkinson saw as disloyal and others felt prompted the spying.<sup>61</sup> Also upon his return Wilkinson learned of "a group of 'liberal' teachers [who] had decided to attempt to change the political and social atmosphere of BYU." He said that these professors were moving BYU away from its "traditional conservative view" to bring it "into line with the prevailing political trend towards Socialism."<sup>62</sup> This prospect drove Wilkinson to use extreme measures to correct the unwanted trend.

Ray Hillam, who has been at BYU since 1960, believes that "Wilkinson politicized the campus with his perverted brand of conservatism, particularly after his bid for the U.S. Senate." At this time, Wilkinson also brought "Right Wing speakers . . . to campus, [and] gave highly politically charged speeches," such as the one on 21 April 1966, which were designed to elicit a reaction from the faculty, especially from those whom Wilkinson labeled "liberals."<sup>63</sup>

Besides feelings of faculty disloyalty, Wilkinson believed that he had the unqualified support of the general authorities. At Wilkinson's inauguration a BYU Board of Trustees member, Stephen L Richards, charged the new president "to implant in youth a deep love of country, and a reverential regard for the Constitution of the United States."<sup>64</sup> Wilkinson saw it as his duty to defend the Republic, and he felt justified in using his ties to BYU to further his own political and economic ideas, which he strongly believed were in complete harmony with the teachings of the LDS church.

Wilkinson once told Hillam, when explaining why he ordered the monitoring operations, that church president David O. McKay had urged

---

58. Jim Duggan, "Opinions Needed," editorial in *Daily Universe*, 19 Apr. 1962. See also, *Daily Universe*, 23 May 1961.

59. For a treatment of Wilkinson's Senate bid, see Gary James Bergera, "A Strange Phenomena: Ernest L. Wilkinson, the LDS Church, and Utah Politics," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Summer 1993): 89-115.

60. Hillam, interview.

61. David Whittaker and Chris McClellan, "The Collection Description," Hillam Papers. See also Priddis, 11; and Hillam and Midgley, interviews, 4, 8 Nov. 1993.

62. Wilkinson to the Board of Trustees, 17 Apr. 1967, photocopy in private possession.

63. Hillam interview.

64. Stephen L Richards, "The Charge," *The Messenger*, 1951, 16.

him to prevent the advocacy of the two “isms” (communism and socialism) on the campus. Wilkinson also stressed his “need to know” what the faculty was teaching.<sup>65</sup> These facts spurred Wilkinson in his desire to run the campus according to his own conservative ideology and to use the methods he deemed necessary to prevent the spread of ideas contrary to his own or to what he believed were the church’s.

#### CONCLUSION

D. Michael Quinn’s suggestion that Ezra Taft Benson organized, directed, or in any way was connected to the 1966 BYU spy ring is not supported by the available evidence. The primary documents, first-person testimonies, and interviews with those involved clearly point to Ernest Wilkinson as the one responsible.

---

65. Wilkinson to Hillam, 31 Mar. 1968, transcript of phone conversation, Hillam Papers.

# A Reply

*D. Michael Quinn*

THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES between historical investigation of controversial issues and the polemical use of history. Jeff D. Blake's essay is a textbook example of polemics impersonating as history.

First, he employs the classic "straw man" argument by inventing allegations I did not assert and then tries to impress readers by seeming to knock down assertions I did not make in the first place. His essay begins with the assertion that my article "claimed Benson master-minded this episode of covert surveillance" at BYU in 1966. Readers of my article know that it never made such a statement nor implied it. In fact, the article specified that Ernest L. Wilkinson asked his administrative assistant to arrange for students to do this monitoring of BYU professors in 1966. Blake's essay also concludes with a denial of "D. Michael Quinn's suggestion that Ezra Taft Benson organized, directed, or in any way was connected to the 1966 BYU spy ring . . ." The article made only the last assertion; the first two "suggestion[s]" are Blake's straw men.

Second, as an extension of his "straw man" fallacy, Blake commits the fallacy of irrelevant proof. Blake's two main arguments are that Elder Benson was not involved in the 1966 BYU spying and that "Birch Society involvement was coincidental." Blake's biography of Wilkinson and discussion of the BYU president's own involvement are irrelevant to the central claims of his essay.

Third, in the manner typical of polemics, Blake ignores significant evidence that is contrary to his two main assertions and combines that suppression of evidence with his straw man argument.

1. Blake claims: "Because Benson supported the [John Birch] society, and some society members were involved in the spying, Quinn reasons that Benson was behind the spying." To the contrary, those are not the reasons I presented. The article noted that nearly six years before the 1966 spy ring Ezra Taft Benson had encouraged Wilkinson to commit "espionage" on BYU professors and that years after the 1966 case Elder Benson was receiving student reports about BYU faculty members, for which church president Spencer W. Kimball delivered a stinging rebuke to

BYU's board of trustees. In regard to what the article did assert, Blake fails to acknowledge or comment on the following evidence:

a. Wilkinson's diary of 29 November 1960 showed that Ezra Taft Benson encouraged the BYU president to initiate spying on professors, which spying was to involve his son Reed Benson. My article emphasized this, but Blake ignored it. My article did not claim that Wilkinson sought Elder Benson's advance approval in 1966 for "espionage" on BYU's faculty. Wilkinson knew he already had a written record of that approval which he could use in self-defense if absolutely necessary.

b. Consistent with the above, the article referred to Byron Cannon Anderson's statement to me that Reed Benson commissioned him to monitor liberal students and professors at the University of Utah, and then Anderson stated: "I transferred to Brigham Young University, where I was involved in the same sorts of things," which phrase I wrote down exactly as he said it. Even in his letter-to-the-editor effort to backtrack, Anderson acknowledged that Reed Benson "had previously expressed a desire to be kept informed of same" (in *Dialogue*, Winter 1993, ix).

c. Also consistent with Anderson's statement to me and with Elder Benson's earlier proposal for Reed to be involved in BYU "espionage," my article referred to Wilkinson's diary for 7 April 1965. On that date Wilkinson concluded that Reed Benson had furnished his father with reports about BYU's professors of economics and political science. Byron Cannon Anderson had been a student at BYU since fall 1964 and was a student in April 1965, during which time he "was involved in the same sorts of [student and faculty monitoring]" he had done at the University of Utah by "desire" of Reed Benson. A year later BYU professors of economics and political science complained that Anderson had spied on them, which I cited in the notes of the article.

d. Blake questions the reliability of my article's unnamed source at LDS headquarters concerning Elder Benson receiving reports from BYU's student-spies in 1966, and Blake claims: "Aside from an anonymous informant, no contemporary, first-hand account supports Quinn's assertion." However, Blake does not acknowledge Wilkinson's written conclusion that the apostle was receiving such reports in 1965, nor does Blake refer to the statement by Dallin H. Oaks about "that Birch Mafia that surrounds ETB," when Oaks learned that Elder Benson was receiving written reports from student-spies on BYU faculty in 1977.

2. Blake claims that "Birch Society involvement was coincidental," and that only "some of the spies were members of the society" in the 1966 spying incident. This ignores the following evidence:

a. Ronald Ira Hankin's interview, 17 September 1966 (which Blake cites as a source without giving its date), states on page 5 that at the initial meeting of the BYU student-spies, non-student Ed Liechty, leader of

the Provo chapter of the John Birch Society, "was sitting right by the door." Hankin specified that he had seen every one of the student-spies of 1966 at meetings of the local Birch Society, "and I knew about five or six out of the dozen or more that were there were definitely as members, and three or four more as possible members."

b. Curt E. Conklin's letter to the editor (in *Dialogue*, Winter 1993, vii) described my article as an "uncannily accurate" narrative of the 1966 incident in which he was a student-spy member of the off-campus John Birch Society, and member of BYU's Young Americans for Freedom (the student-president of which was also a student-spy in 1966—my n211).

c. In fact, Conklin's letter to "Colleagues," on the computer-bulletin-board Mormon-L, 1 July 1993, shows that the student-spy affiliation with Young Americans for Freedom was no more coincidental than their association with the John Birch Society in 1966. All these student-spies were members of the BYU chapter of Young Americans for Freedom, and the organizing meeting for the BYU spy ring was defined as "a special YAF meeting, to be held in the regular place, 370 ELWC."

d. Blake acknowledges that H. Verlan Andersen became the attorney for Stephen Hays Russell in his dealings with BYU's administration after Russell was exposed as the spy ring's leader. However, Blake does not inform his audience that H. Verlan Andersen was the faculty sponsor of BYU's Young Americans for Freedom, of which all the student-spies were members as well as being Birchers (1966 [BYU] *Banyan*, 293).

Fourth, Blake emphasizes Russell's denials of Benson/Birch involvement even though Blake seems to regard him as unconvincing as I do from the first investigation of Russell twenty-eight years ago to the present:

1. Blake neither acknowledges nor challenges my article's n215 which shows Russell's initial denial in 1966 that there was an organized group of students monitoring BYU professors—clearly false; his initial denial that he was a member of the Birch Society—clearly false by his own later statements; and his fall-back claim that he had quit the Birch Society before the spy-ring incident—clearly false by statements of Hankin and David M. Sisson, and even by Russell's own later autobiography.

2. Blake refers in a note to Russell's letter to him on 1 July 1994 in which "Russell states that he was the only Birch Society member among the spies." That is also clearly false by the statement of Hankin in 1966 (which Blake examined and cited) and by Conklin's letter which *Dialogue* published six months before Russell's letter to Blake.

3. Blake obviously disbelieved the former spy-ring leader and instead affirmed in the text of his essay that "some of the spies were members of the society," a reversal of Russell's absolute denial that any of the other spies were Birchers.

4. And then Blake expects us to accept Russell's continued denials that he had informed Ezra Taft Benson of the spy ring's activities and findings before Hankin's public exposure.

Fifth, in keeping with his polemical approach, however, Blake asks readers to disbelieve Russell's initial statements to the student-spies (when Russell had no reason to fear the consequences of his statements) "that he [Ezra Taft Benson] was behind it [the spying]," according to Hankin's statement which Blake quoted. Blake did not acknowledge the corroborative statement by David M. Sisson on 17 September 1966 (in the same manuscript collection which Blake examined) concerning a Provo chapter meeting of the Birch Society where Russell "told of his close association with Elder Benson and how he rode back to Salt Lake City with Elder Benson after Elder Benson's devotional address [at BYU] which was given that same day or earlier." Hankin's statement added on page 7 that Russell said in this meeting which began in Provo and continued by car to Salt Lake City that Benson and Russell discussed BYU's "liberal professors." However, citing those statements by Sisson and Hankin would not have supported Blake's claim that Russell had only one "very informal" meeting with Benson, and thus they are absent from Blake's essay. Incidentally, that description in Russell's 1993 letter to Blake contradicts Russell's autobiographical account of his first meeting with Elder Benson: "the head of the John Birch Society in Utah County took me to the Church Office Building at Salt Lake City to meet Apostle Ezra Taft Benson," and "I was introduced to Brother Benson as a 'key conservative student at Brigham Young University.'"

Sixth, correspondingly, Blake asks us to believe all of Russell's retractions, denials, and contradictions from the collapse of the spy ring to the present (when Russell had every reason to fear the consequences of his statements and to shield Elder Benson from the embarrassment of the spy ring's bad reputation).

Seventh, Blake presents Louis Midgley's November 1993 reassessment of Ezra Taft Benson's role in the 1966 spy ring without noting that Midgley misstated the reasons for his original conclusion. According to Midgley in 1993, his 1966 letter was merely "speculating" that Elder Benson had "a possible connection" with the BYU spy ring, "based on Benson's political stance and its possible similarities with those involved in the spying." To the contrary, Louis Midgley's letter of 11 November 1966 was reporting what BYU's vice-president Earl C. Crockett had learned through conversations with Wilkinson, Apostle Harold B. Lee, and First Presidency counselor N. Eldon Tanner: "Then he [Crockett] added ELW [Ernest L. Wilkinson], Clyde Sandgren, and [Ezra Taft] Benson to the list of those 'involved,'" wrote Midgley in 1966, and added: "Finally he said he believed that the real home of the group was ETB . . ." Blake examined



and cited Midgley's original letter but did not provide this information to his readers.

It is not necessary for me to speculate about the motives for Jeff D. Blake's polemical essay, Stephen Hays Russell's twenty-eight years of after-the-fact denials, or Louis C. Midgley's belated reversal of his statements about Ezra Taft Benson's role in the 1966 spy ring, which reassessment came while Benson was church president and while Midgley was portraying himself to LDS headquarters as a crusader for orthodoxy. It is necessary to recognize that readily available documentary evidence contradicts Blake's essay, Russell's denials, and Midgley's second thoughts.



# In the Right Hands

*Don McDermott*

"LET'S SEE WHAT SORT OF SURPRISES await us in Jennifer's story," Jean-Paul said wearily and shuffled the story pages on his desk, as though by doing so he would impose order on narrative chaos. What he saw when he looked up was an evening class full of undergraduate literati—the more serious showing signs of neurosis, the less earnest having at least adopted the notion that eccentricity was a first cousin to genius. One student refused to turn in anything that wasn't written with a calligraphy pen; another wore a Panama hat and an apricot scarf. There was a third, a young woman whose hair was long and flowing on her left side and short, almost a butch cut, on the right—she could write with equal dexterity from either hand. What he wanted was to see her write with both at the same time.

Jean-Paul had long since surrendered the adage that everyone has "one good novel" in them. He was trying to hold on to the illusion that most have at least "one reasonable short story." But he was losing his grip.

"The story—and a very precious story it is—," he began, knowing that his students would misunderstand his choice of words, would think he meant to say valuable, when he intended something quite different, "—is about a child's death and her—what? Resuscitation?"

Jennifer looked up through her turtle shell glasses and smiled with glossy lips. "It's sort of a miracle story, actually."

The story—about four pages long—was quite simple and did not require much finesse to ferret out its theme. A child, about five, falls in a pond and drowns. Then the child undergoes a near-death experience. Every cliché in the sub-genre was there—a blinding light at the end of a tunnel, a personage in white gauze, a visit with departed loved-ones, the injunction that the child was to return to life, for she had not yet completed her "mission" in life. There was only one interesting twist—the gender reversal of having a tomboy for a boy. Jean-Paul's reservoir of patience was bone dry. Good God! he thought, what does one do with such people?

As was his custom, Jean-Paul tried to disengage himself from his sarcasm. He took sustenance from a coffee mug that he carried to almost every class of late and began asking his students what they thought of the story.

"I thought it was really interesting," said one girl. "You could almost see him going through all those experiences."

Someone noted that the main character was female.

Another said, "I kept wondering how old this girl is and if she could really have remembered her grandparents since they had been dead for some time, but I thought it was really great! It would make a super movie!"

This continued ad nauseam, and he wondered what Nabokov had done with his creative writing classes. He could see that if the class period was to be something other than an awards ceremony, he would have to be the heavy. From the first day he had seen the students currying favor with one another, hoping to bank sympathy for their stories yet to be dissected. What he would have given for a student with an "attitude."

Jean-Paul himself had had some success in the world of publishing. A book of short stories, *What Men Really Do When They Go Fishing*, and a novel in paperback about prostitutes in Hamburg who were really agents for the PLO. It was lurid and formula hack work; nevertheless, he awoke every morning with the conviction that were it not for affirmative action (whose main beneficiaries were women) he would be at a major state university, teaching five classes a year instead of eight, to students who had scored higher than 900 on their SATs. His best students wrote stories based on re-runs of "Star Trek" or checkout-counter romances. Their characters, if they emerged from sterile flat settings at all, never failed, never lost, never died (glorious martyrdoms excepted)—in fact, the students loved their characters so much, they were never even threatened with any of the above.

"No, your characters mustn't have a life that is better than yours in every respect—worry-free, happy, full of love, money. They must live lives that are worse. You don't like it, I know, but sometimes you have to hurt the ones you love, hurt your characters, make them suffer—kill their spouses, have them lose their jobs, amputate their arms. Something. Life is struggle and sacrifice and—sad to say—tragic." His students agreed, but did they really understand? They nodded the nod of dashboard dolls whose heads bobbed on a spring. He had said all this before, but just try convincing a Chi Omega looking forward to the Sigma Chi Winter Carnival that life is tragic.

"But what are we going to do with Jennifer's story? Have the child just die? What? No return from the City of Dreadful Night? Not much of a story there. Why did the child fall in the pond?"

"She was after a spotted salamander."

Jennifer sounded rather definite about that. "Maybe you need to tell us more about this girl. As it is, the story begins by throwing her in, and although we understand the action that follows, we don't understand the character. What sort of kid is she?"

"Well, she was sort of a tomboy. She really liked to play with bugs."

"What do you mean 'play'?" When Jean-Paul was a boy he "played" with bugs. He'd take bright red ladybugs and drop them into spider webs. Then he'd look on in horror and fascination at the *auto-da-fé*.

"She used to make ant farms out of empty coke bottles."

Jean-Paul pushed her to explain.

"She'd have a whole colony down there."

Some of the students thought the discussion was off the rails now, but Jean-Paul wanted to get to something peculiar. "Character isn't created out of ordinary interests—everybody does that—but peculiar details, habits, obsessions. Listen, when I was a boy my mother used to complain that all the soup spoons were flat on bottom. I used to use them to crush ants. If you looked carefully, you could see the crenelated ant parts imbedded in the underbelly of the spoon." Jean-Paul's students thought he was only being funny. In fact, Jean-Paul had been a sadist. Some thought he still was.

"Geez, actually," Jennifer said and began to blush slightly, "once I took some black ants and put them in the same bottle with the red ants, and then I'd just put my eye to the mouth of the bottle and watch them fight."

Now that was something. Jean-Paul thought the whole thing a wonderful analogy for God and man. He wanted to say, we're all like ants down here, some of us black, some red, yellow, some white, and God tosses us all into this little bottle so he can watch us go at one another.

"Did you ever pour water down into the bottle—did you ever just drown the little beggars?"

"Noooo," she said, amused but acting appalled by the implication that she could do such a thing.

"You might think about adding that to your story," he said, "and that might explain why at the end your character runs to her ant colony." Then another girl objected that she wasn't sure she wanted to read a story about saving ants.

"That's not exactly the way it happened, though," Jennifer replied.

"That's right, it's your story," Jean-Paul conceded. "So what did happen?"

"Well, the child died, and then she met this figure in a white robe, who . . ."

"Can I interrupt here? Okay, the figure in white is God or something,

right?" Jennifer nodded. "And although your story gives no details here, I'll bet he was a white guy."

"It was Jesus Christ."

"Okay—Jesus. That's what we all expect, right? Didn't everybody expect Jesus?" Jean-Paul asked, addressing himself to the class at large. "But let's suppose that the guy she meets is black—a black Jesus—or let's suppose the guy she meets is a woman—heck, let's say the guy turns out to be Perry Mason; what happens to the story then? Wouldn't the child have to wonder, 'Am I dreaming all this, or was Perry Mason God all this time and nobody knew it?' You're all looking at me like I'm nuts but consider this: wasn't Jesus sort of a public defender—always sticking up for the little guy accused of a sin, and isn't that exactly what Perry Mason did every week on TV?" Jean-Paul chuckled and continued, "Can you imagine Christians all over the world going into the great cathedrals, taking down crucifixes and putting up statues of Perry Mason? Imagine 'Ironsides,' from the television role which he had made so popular, sitting atop a gigantic lotus bulb in a Buddhist temple. Now we have a surprise worth pursuing—and I think we would have an audience for that sort of story!"

The student author looked down at her story without expression. The rest of the class looked on, some feeling desecration and blasphemy, others with annoyance at the leap of Jean-Paul's skewed imagination.

"What are you trying to do to my story?"

Jean-Paul couldn't see her face, but he was sure that tears were welling in her eyes. He intended no mockery.

"Sorry, I was just trying to make it mean something."

Jennifer cleared her throat, said something like, "It does mean something," and got to her feet. But there was something else, almost inaudible.

"What's that?"

"I said . . . screw you!" She hugged her notebook to her bosom and left the room. The class took courage at the incident and were fully prepared to dismiss themselves if he didn't do it right then. He let them go, but he wasn't upset; in fact, he was even mildly pleased that she had used language that surprised him, language that gave her own character, which had always appeared to him to be a bit flat, more range, more depth. He shoved his papers into his brief case and surveyed the empty classroom.

It had occurred to him that he had been a bit too arch in his criticism. But how, he asked himself, could he teach anyone to write without criticizing their jejune notions? He hadn't had a model to follow. His own teachers had been lazy-minded and patronizing. They had taught him

nothing. But was he really trying to help his students or just wreak a little vengeance on anyone who clung to fairy tales? Did these kids of his even have the capacity to benefit from his insight? They lived in a world of innocent titillation, big toys, and funny money from home. They had beliefs which they had not reasoned and convictions which they had not earned. He vacillated between wanting to warn them—though admittedly it might jeopardize their tourist status in the real world—and tossing up his hands and saying, “*Qué sera sera.*”

There was much to be said for the second course. He knew for a fact that some of the students were beginning to hate him for imagined insults. They didn’t say anything, of course. That would show too much integrity, but at the end of the term, they would sharpen their pencils and go to work on his student evaluations. Screw them. Screw teaching if need be. He thought for a moment of his own ideals and dreams. Though he had long since written them off as so much fantasy, he still derived pleasure from imagining himself a sort of Abelard to his students, his words thundering through medieval cathedrals, challenging the Pope if necessary to speak the truth. Or he saw himself relaxed, in a more genial setting, his students sitting before him on the marble steps of the Acropolis, under the shade of an olive tree, or perhaps within the shadow of the Parthenon and the Goddess of Wisdom. No grades, no rolls, no late policies for papers overdue. Simply the pursuit and love of wisdom. Philosophy. He looked out a classroom window at the green quadrangle and the trees in stately dignity. The streets and walks were fresh with a summer shower. He imagined a boy with his cap turned backwards practicing a pitch. A father catching, giving advice, not a word of which was lost on the boy. He had forgotten how painful memories could be.

Two weeks later she showed up at his office door. He was well aware of her better than average wardrobe, but today she had really turned herself into a work of art. He guessed that she had been to see the department head. It seemed that whenever girls—or women—went to complain to one’s department head, they always dressed to kill.

“Come in. Sit down.”

She started to push the door closed behind her.

“No, please,” he said, motioning about the door.

“The door? You don’t want me to . . .”

“No . . . People will say we’re in love.” As in the last time he had seen her in class, he thought she blushed slightly, and he wondered if that last phrase would come back to haunt him.

She situated herself in the chair before his desk and reached forward—perhaps as an instinctual response—to pick up a statue of Don

Quixote which had been lying broken on his desk almost as long as he had had it. His son had been careless. The keepsake from Madrid had been broken off at the knees. Jean-Paul actually liked it better this way.

"What happened to your statue?" she asked, laying him back down carefully.

"Blind sighted—no doubt by a colleague. I keep that as a reminder. That's what happens to romantics," he said, as though she should take special caution.

She was mute for a moment. She didn't get it. Meanwhile Jean-Paul sized her up from her appearance and the non-verbal cues. Upper-middle class. Has no idea what her father really goes through for a living or how much he makes. Her sorority necklace invited acquaintances to say hello and scared away the riff-raff. The fraternity pin suggested an upper-middle class merger in the making. What did she know of real life—of suffering? He had some acquaintance. Would she ever know? Perhaps, to be fair, but life wasn't even fair in its unfairness. "Do you know who Mother Teresa is?"

"Who?"

"Nothing—just wondering. So, what can I do to you," he said, another intentional gaffe. He realized that he really must get hold of that sort of thing.

"I'm sorry I walked out of class. I want to apologize."

"Forget it. Everybody's touchy. It's people who don't care who are easy going. I expect it. In fact, if I'm not upsetting students, I don't feel like I'm getting anywhere."

She was pleased to see he wasn't sore, wasn't going to dock her grade—didn't even take attendance for that matter. She cleared her voice. "Why did you ask me to take this class?"

Jean-Paul had completely forgotten. "What?"

"You told me to take this class last year, and I was wondering why?"

That's right. He remembered now their first meeting. He had served as a judge for the college poetry contest. She had come to thank him for awarding her a first place and to ask him about her submission. It wasn't enough, he thought at the time, for her to win first place, she wanted to have her poetry critiqued as though it were *The Waste Land* or *In Memoriam*. It was poetical, he had said, and it was. Her meter was actual, her rhymes had not relied on the you-too-blue formulas. "You know, this is pretty good Victorian stuff," he had said in complimenting her, though he did not, in fact, think much of the Victorians. Whenever he read Tennyson, or Swinburne, or the Rossettis—especially the Rossettis—he thought of cream-filled chocolates wrapped up in foil. He remembered a few lines in fact, not because he had wanted too, but he had had to read a passage at the awards ceremony, and like a jingle it



wouldn't go away.

We are but young trees in winter,  
Our shrouds are gray and white.  
We cannot warmth or shelter give  
Nor are our fruits yet ripe.

And so forth and so forth, and then a melodramatic concluding stanza.

And those who cannot sleep must die.  
We ask ourselves, "But why, but why?"  
And have but echoes for reply.  
And have but echoes for reply.

Nice use of a repeated line there, he had said, because her closing plea was itself an echo. He remembered little else, but he liked the poem's despondency. He wondered now how a student who wrote nihilistic verse then could write miraculous stories now. She had been flattered and had asked about creative writing classes—he had recommended his own.

"I thought you could benefit from the class, I suppose."

"Is that all?" she asked.

"Well, I'm always looking out for clever students—for my classes."

"I don't feel very clever." He didn't know what to say. "In fact, you haven't said one positive thing about my work all term, and every time I make a comment in class, you say the opposite. So, I was wondering why you wanted me in your class at all."

Why do kids put everything on a personal level? he wondered. He wasn't a Happy Haven camp counselor. Still, he realized that the personal touch was perhaps the quickest way to be rid of her, so he said, "If I didn't care . . ." (he searched for her name) "Jennifer . . . I wouldn't criticize you. I'd just simply patronize you at your own level. Don't you see, if I didn't think you were capable of much better, criticism wouldn't just be a waste of time, it'd be a cruel joke."

She smiled and apologized again for missing class.

A few days later, she returned, a manuscript under her arm.

"I've thought about what you've been saying this term, and I have really taken it to heart."

Yeah, I'll bet, he thought.

"I've rewritten my story. Would you look at it?"

"Right now?"

She nodded and handed him the revision.

*A Visit with Eternity*  
by  
Jennifer Harris

*The child studied ants. There was an ant colony on the edge of the asphalt drive and on many a summer afternoon she would sit beside them. They'd usually be out in force, like the campsite of a huge archaeological dig, and she would let them crawl on her hands, so as to get a better look at them. She loved the ants, even when one would get past and bite her on that sensitive exposed calf between her low socks and her jumper.*

*But her pride and joy was her ant farm which she had begun in an empty two-liter Coke bottle. She learned to gently pick up the ants and drop them into the mouth of the bottle neck. She would give them three inches of dirt, green grasshoppers—living and dead—scoops of sugar. Sometimes she would cause wars by dropping red ants into the middle of a black ant colony. Other times she would give them earthquakes by shaking the bottle—but never floods. Floods, she knew, were dangerous and would destroy the colony. But she truly loved them, and they were truly amazing.*

*Then one day as she was walking home, slashing the high weeds with a makeshift sword of tree branch, she noticed the green freckled salamander basking on a rock beside the irrigation ditch her brothers called Green Snake River. She rarely was allowed to observe them, noisy as she was even for a little girl. In the past she had rarely seen more than a colorful dart, a swishing pair of legs.*

*But this salamander seemed not oblivious, but indifferent to her approach. It was as though the creature were some imperious reptile, a dinosaur sunning itself on a cliff above a mighty river. Stepping carefully on the thick, damp weeds, like a figure in slow motion, she plodded nearer. She was within several feet of it. Cautiously she got even nearer; holding her breath, she now could see its marble-like, lidless red eyes, its thin skin expanding and deflating along its torso like a big vacuum, its spiky fingers. It blinked twice and cocked its head, but did it see her? It was as if it wanted her to reach out and touch it. It was an enchanted prince, she thought. She was now within a yard of it, and she placed her soggy wet sneaker on a slimy green rock. In the next moment she felt the earth slip and her weightless flesh swallowed in cold water. The amphibian, too, catapulted from the bank at the child's sudden fall. Water slapped both banks violently and a filmy cloud of mud floated up to the surface of the lapping water. Skipping diagonally between the banks just below the surface, the salamander eventually squatted atop the child's shoulder blades who now floated face down like a lily pad.*

Well, this was certainly better, Jean-Paul thought. A bit too much

modification for his taste but very visual. He still wasn't clear as to how this would tie in to the central experience. But he looked up at her and smiled. "This story's better. It makes me want to read more."

*She pulled her knees up to her chin. She was a pill bug, she imagined, and a golden string drew her along. But she didn't know where. It was dark. She was alone. Then she felt her grandfather's chubby cat Ptolemy rubbing his ribs and tail against her, purring with pleasure. And then her Grandma picked her up, and they were sitting all three of them in the house she had visited for every summer until this last. Grandma on the overstuffed couch with its hand-crocheted doilies, Grandpa in his reclining vinyl chair, his belly out in front of him like his mother's last pregnancy, one leg straddling the arm rest.*

Jean-Paul liked the cat best. Ptolemy was an inventive choice of names. But the family, he was sure, would be pure Norman Rockwell. But then again Jennifer might have posed for the immortalizer of New England blandness. He preferred his families ethnic. Old country Italian—though that too was a cliché.

*They had not seen her in so long, Grandmother said, and kissed and stroked her hair and then pulled from one of her many apron pockets a bar of black Switzer's licorice.*

*Grandfather, still pigeon-toed, seemed well pleased as he stood, shuffled off through an archway into the yellow kitchen. He returned in a moment with his board of Chinese Checkers and the tin cookie box in which he had always kept the marbles.*

*The child slipped off Grandma's lap onto the floor and pried the lid open. Rattling around inside were the marbles, just as she had remembered them. Some were clear with colored chevrons and eyeballs in the centers, others were swirled with many different colors; some, like pictures she had seen of distant planets, had Martian canals of color.*

*And she remembered the board—the black metal edge, the purple Chinese dragons in two corners, the fat yellow Buddhas in the other two, the five-pointed star in the center with the marble-holes. She loved to play Chinese Checkers with Grandpa and had missed these moments the most. They set up their marbles, and as always Grandpa let her go first and still counted the holes with his crooked index finger which he had broken as a young man but had never had set.*

*"My, but haven't you grown—hasn't she grown up, Grandpa?" Grandma said, and smiled with her dentures which the little girl had never really liked. They were too perfect, the teeth too big. Grandma hardly ever wore them, the child recalled, except when company was coming over because they hurt her gums so much. "I remember when you was just an itty-bitty thing and now look at you," she went on, and the child beamed with pride for having grown so big.*

*"Growing like a weed," Grandpa said, and he'd continue moving his marbles out across the board, setting up trails for his other marbles to jump, checking for the spaces—because his eyes were foggy with cataracts—with his crooked finger. They played three games, and she won twice and might have won a third game had Ptolemy not jumped up on the footstool between them and upset the board. They asked her about her mother and father and sisters and brothers. She also told them about her favorite bugs.*

*Then Grandpa relaxed back in his chair and looked stern. "You shouldn't play with bugs."*

*"But why, Grandpa?"*

*"They don't like it."*

*"Oh, yes they do," she said anxiously. She hated it when Grandpa disapproved of anything she did.*

*"No, they don't. They've got things to do, more important things to do than to let you put them in jars and such, and Grandma and I want you to stop. Darling, you're killing them."*

*She put the marbles away carefully and crawled back up on the couch and nudged her grandmother. To escape her grandfather's stare, she searched the pockets of Grandma's apron, finding the buttons and earrings and the letters she would respond to after her soaps were over. Grandma hugged her close and pulled on the back of her hair and told her they'd have to change her name to Georgie Porgie if her mother didn't let her hair grow. But she still could not meet her grandfather's gaze, and she thought of the ant colony in the garage and the fights she had witnessed, looking down with new shame and horror through the bottleneck like the eye of heaven, the bugs she had seen killing each other, the giant winged insect limping up and down in circles, trying to escape, but being eventually overcome by the red ants and how they curled up and stung it and tore it apart. Then Grandma asked her if she was crying, and she said she wanted to go home.*

*Grandpa and Grandma looked wistfully at one another. She was on a hospital stretcher. Her mother and father were hugging her, and the attending physician declared it was a miracle.*

*Drowned children simply do not resuscitate after an hour and certainly not without brain damage. The case was actually written up and found its way into journals of medicine and popular science.*

*Home again, she ran at once into the garage and emptied the ant farm. Her face inches from the soil, she spread the dirt out with her hands and searched for life among the transparent wings, twin bits, and pebbles.*

Jean-Paul put the story down. It was a nice little bit of work. "You worked very hard on this, didn't you?"

She nodded. "For two weeks—every night."

"It shows." Then he paused. He was surprised that she had talent.

Gratified even. He wanted to tell her so—and more, that it had moved him. But he also wanted to gut the story like a trout for what it was trying to do to the reader. He decided to approach bearing gifts. “I like what you’ve done with the characterization.”

“Yes, well, I cut some of the parts out that weren’t as important.”

“Like the Jesus in the white robe?”

“You didn’t like it, and I decided that it was sort of beside the point.”

“Yes, exactly. The business with the Chinese checkers is really creative. The Switzer’s licorice. The crooked index finger.”

Jennifer shook her head, “That’s just the way I remember my grandparents,” she said, dismissing her imaginative gifts.

Yes, imagination is memory, he wanted to tell her. Jean-Paul leaned back and wondered if the boy who fondled her breasts would realize the potential for delight from her brain. Then he thought of John Keats—for some reason—and the poet’s love for Fanny Braun, his coughing up blood and his suffocating in his own phlegm, his Greek urn, Jennifer’s ant farm, a Chinese checker board laid out like the universe with planets for marbles, things of beauty, and beauties that must die. He marvelled at the girl before him. She had survived childhood while others hadn’t, but what if she had died? What if she had died too? She cleared her throat, and he returned from his reverie and began a well rehearsed little speech.

“Jennifer, let me just say something though.” She sat upright as if to take dictation. “You can do anything in fiction . . . but be dishonest. Do you know what I mean? Does that sound like a paradox—not being dishonest in something called ‘fiction’?”

She agreed and moved a little closer to the desk.

“I write fiction. My stories are lies. Sometimes things in the stories resemble things that have really happened, sometimes not, but the given factualness doesn’t matter because they are true to life. Not true in fact, but true to life. Know what I mean? Maybe Mabel doesn’t exist and hence can’t really first detect her husband’s infidelities by smelling his clothes, but somewhere, some woman has done just that. Get it? Now let’s take this story you’ve written. Of course, it’s fiction—I expected that, but it isn’t true.” Jean-Paul looked into her eyes and saw nothing that he could interpret. “Let’s face it, children don’t drown and then come back to life. I wish it were true, but it isn’t.”

“But it does happen,” she asserted.

“No. Not really, and they don’t see Jesus and visit with Grandma and Gramps. Just look at me and listen. You’re an English major, how many times have you read about this or anything like this in your modern lit classes? How many? Even once? Why is that? The idea’s not that original. It’s because great literature is about being true to life. Life is rough, kid, it’s one animal eating another. It’s about pain, suffering—unhappy end-

ings. Sure, there's the other stuff, and we call them fairy tales, and we read them to children. But life is tragic, and until you're willing to accept that, you're writing will go nowhere. What are you thinking?"

She reached again for his *Don Quixote* and rubbed its legs between her fingers. "You don't seem to understand . . ."

"But I do understand. I used to be where you are, but you know what happened? Experience."

She tried to object to this, but he cut her off. What could she say, after all. "Yes, I know, Jennifer, but that's not literature; that's religion and religion isn't literature. Let me put it to you this way. Okay, in your story, God returns this one little child to life because, as you say, 'her mission wasn't yet accomplished.' What about all the little children who do die? Have you been to a children's hospital lately? Check out the burn treatment ward. It might surprise you. What about the thousands of children who went into the Nazi gas chambers? Haven't you heard of them? Did even one of them ever come back alive? Don't you see, beauty, love, truth, they come to nothing—yes, yes, they start out well enough, I too remember how they start out well enough, but I never saw a flower that didn't fade, a truth that wasn't twisted, a love—ah love—that wasn't betrayed and turned to woe and bitter poison for the heart."

"I don't know what you're talking about," she stammered.

"Right." He understood what she was saying. His scope was too grand. He was vague, historical, or literary. He had been reaching at the easiest allusions with which to communicate his belief that the world was firmly in the grip of sadistic and jealous powers. He swiveled sideways in his chair and faced his office window. Again he viewed the college quadrangle, though this time from another angle. "Okay, okay," he said and thought if she really wants to open that door, let's open it, let's get a little dirt under our spiritual toenails, let's take a trip to the basement. "Let me tell you about my own child—my son. He was asthmatic. On his eleventh birthday he went to a party and ate something to which he was allergic. I rushed him to a doctor—it was only two doors away and while the doctor prepared an antihistamine, my son collapsed—all he needed was a little oxygen, that's all. No miracle cures, no acts of heroism of my part, just a little oxygen. His throat had swollen closed. But he might still have been saved by the injection had it not been for his contractions. Even as the needle penetrated his forearm, his convulsions started. My son vomited birthday cake into his lungs. There was no saving him, no resuscitation. You think I'm angry about that? You think I'm bitter? I'm damned bitter!"

Although the anecdote had its desired effect, Jean-Paul felt some disgust for having to reach into his private life—and the most painful moment in his private life for illustration. Also, he was a bit ashamed, even

anxious.

Jean-Paul was afraid that she would ask if the story about his son was the "truth" or merely "literary truth." He had, in fact, embellished it: he had not been present when his son had died, though he had imagined it so often, pictured it so vividly, that for all intents and purposes, he was there. "I'm sorry about your child . . . but I feel like you're taking it out on me," she said finally.

"Every time I hear one of these miraculous stories, every time someone gives me an unnatural, incredible, ridiculously happy ending, I think of my son, Byron, and what a sham it is for some people to pretend that life is some sort of musical comedy. This world isn't a playground, it's a charnel house and sooner or later, someone, something—fate, God, or the devil—will put a meat hook through your heart. You'll see. I'm not a great believer in the concept of moral fiction, but I'll tell you what I think immoral fiction is: it's lying about how really sadistic life is!"

Jean-Paul paused to breathe and restore his composure. Then he picked up her story and extended it to her. "Like I said, it's a nice piece of work—but it isn't fiction, it's fantasy."

But the student didn't receive it from his hand. Rather she put down her books and leaning forward towards the desk, fumbled with the first two buttons on her blouse. "I want to show you something," she said, and Jean-Paul thought, "Oh God, she's taking off her blouse. It would be a strange moment for a solicitation, but he had come to expect the unexpected over the years. "Listen, please," Jean-Paul said, getting to his feet, his hands lifted as though to raise a barrier between them.

Her eyes were flooding, the skin of her pale neck was blotching red before his eyes. "Here, look at this. Do you see this?" and here she indicated a spot with her index finger.

Jean-Paul looked and saw a scar at the base of her neck. It was like a sliver of moon, the edge of an axe, one lip smiling, a worm burrowed below the skin. It sickened him to think of its incision, the blood, truer than paint, the most precious of liquids, pulsing up, wasting in the air, corroding almost immediately into rust. But he also saw in the scar the vitality of recovery, the momentary triumph of life.

And at that moment, even in her case, he realized that there is hardly a life that goes by uncontested and unblemished. He faced this every day now, though he knew not where his strength came from. He would have traded his life, his wife's too—though not hers alone—to see the same healing mark on Byron's throat.

"This is where they did the tracheotomy when I was six."

"What are you saying?" Jean-Paul asked, already realizing what she had said not just now but in her "story." He leaned forward, his palms on his paper-strewn desk, gazing at the scar, wanting to touch it, doubting

even this, but somehow wanting to believe. But did he dare believe it?

"What I'm saying is you're right; my story isn't fiction—it happened to me . . . Now are you telling me that I can't write about it—or that I can write about it—like a fairy tale—but that it'll never be great literature because it doesn't conform to your ideas about life?"

Jean-Paul leaned back in his chair and had to consider. Is that what he was saying?



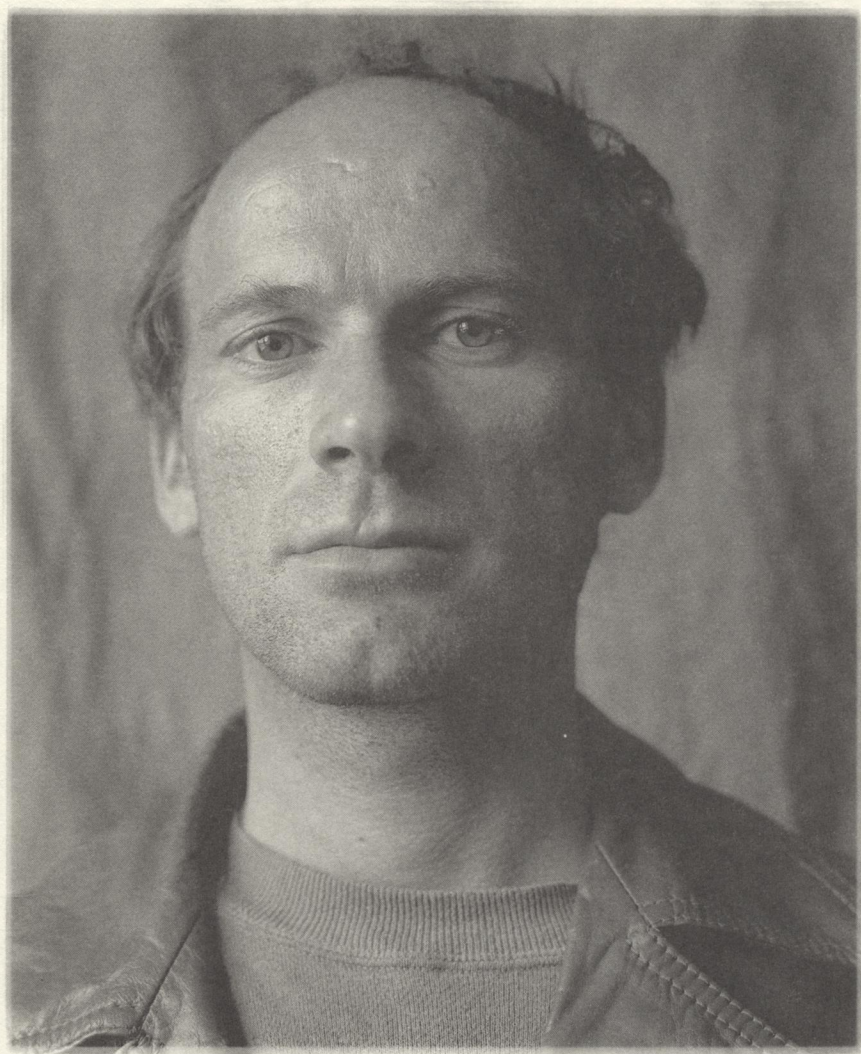
# Razor Sharp

*Marden J. Clark*

You, my father,  
Too damned independent at seventy-five  
To admit you could no longer handle  
A simple double-edge Gillette,  
But not too proud to ask for mine  
When you'd forgotten your four-headed  
Electric.

I'd forgotten how long  
Since I looked up in wonder at you  
Stroking that long shiny blade against  
The leather strop that hung like doom  
From the wooden frame of our medicine cabinet.  
Stroking back and forth back and forth  
In fluid rapid rhythm, first on the rough  
Then the smooth, almost no break  
To turn the strop. Then the furious stirring  
Of brush in broken-handled mug  
That frothed with lather you stroked and rubbed  
Into your face. Your delicate firm grasp  
Of the handle, your finger cocking the blade  
To jaunty angle, the sure fast strokes  
That removed the sandpaper scrape of your cheek  
Against mine in our play.

I never got to try that awful  
straight edge. Even if I'd dared  
You had graduated long before I had more  
Than faintest fuzz to a safety razor  
You kept honed on that Twist 'n Flip  
Mail-order marvel you held in your palm  
And cranked. The mechanism held the blade  
Against the turning stone but on the third  
Crank would rise and flip then settle  
The other side against the stone.  
Three more turns and up, over, and down—



In thirty seconds your blade would be  
Sharp to shave again. We used to spin  
That crank for fun, watching the infallible  
Rise and flip and fall.

I learned on a safety razor, but  
A double-edged blue-blade, inserted between  
The split halves of the head. It was hard  
To cut yourself with that, though more than once  
I did, even after the fancy adjustable  
Came along. That's what I handed you,  
Adjustable, with a new chrome-edged blade:  
Sharper than you'd ever honed. And left  
You alone for an operation I'd seen  
You perform a thousand times.  
Too long! I suddenly thought.  
You answered my knock with a mumble.  
I waited then heard the lock click.  
Two images etched themselves for life:  
The basin half full of pink water;  
And your face in the mirror, blood oozing  
From twenty cuts, reddening  
Faster than the rag could soak it away.  
Most of your beard still stood.  
You stood sheepish, grinning through gore,  
"I guess my skin just isn't used to it."  
Not used to it: bleeding from every  
Cut. I've beheaded chickens, just the way  
You taught, that bled less than you.

I took the razor, cursed myself  
For leaving you alone, and finished you  
As best I could, catching a few whiskers  
Between cuts. It didn't matter much:

By the time we'd finished bandaging  
Neither whiskers nor cuts nor skin  
Showed through. We bundled you up  
And took you, bandages and all, to church.

You lived all this. I don't suppose  
You remember any of it, lying on this bed  
In a room too dark for whiskers to show,  
Where you know so little. But this I know:  
I'll be damned if you ever borrow  
My bloody razor again.

### Welfare as Warfare

*The Mormons' War on Poverty: A History of LDS Welfare, 1830-1990.* By Garth L. Mangum and Bruce D. Blumell (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993).

Reviewed by Armand L. Mauss, Professor of Sociology and Religious Studies, Washington State University.

ALTHOUGH THIS BOOK HAS AN overly dramatic title, it is a magnificent and sensitive history of the efforts by church members and leaders to respond meaningfully to economic need, not only in LDS communities but around the world. Such efforts have hardly added up to an all-out "war," but there has certainly been a sustained campaign and, at times, some "pitched battles."

The brief foreword by Leonard Arrington indicates that this book project originated early in his career as Church Historian. It was one of several studies commissioned by the Twelve on specific LDS institutions. However, before this project could be brought to fruition, Arrington's extensive history-writing enterprise was greatly truncated and moved to BYU as the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute. At that point a number of his younger colleagues (including Bruce Blumell) were obliged to go into other occupational pursuits. Blumell's work on this project accordingly languished in the files for a number of years, but fortunately not until the Millennium. With some funding from the Mormon His-

tory Association, and with Arrington's personal sponsorship, Garth Mangum, long a consultant to the LDS Welfare Services Department, was persuaded to revise and expand the manuscript for publication as the present book. Mangum's enormous knowledge of church archival materials is apparent throughout, particularly in his handling of the political and economic contexts of the various countries within which the church has attempted to establish welfare programs. The various keepers of the church archives, however, would not permit him to cite certain key documents, so he has been forced to include some information without documentation.

From comments over the pulpit and in Sunday school classes, it would seem that most Mormons believe "welfare" began in the church during the 1930s, but the first five chapters of this book show an enormous amount of commitment and activity on behalf of the Saints' "temporal salvation" long before the Great Depression years. The book is organized chronologically in ten chapters, preceded by an introduction, and followed by a section of endnotes and an index. The Ohio, Missouri, and Nauvoo periods are covered in the first two chapters. The third chapter is a brief six pages on the exodus and trek to Utah. Chapter four, on Utah before statehood, deals mainly with the building of an

economic and logistical infrastructure, the rehabilitation of the Relief Society, and the efforts of Brigham Young to promote self-sufficiency both at the individual level and for Utah as a separate society. This chapter has little to say about the related topic of the various communitarian experiments during that period, presumably because they are already covered so well in works like Arrington's *Great Basin Kingdom* and in the more recent Arrington, Fox, and May book *Building the City of God*. Chapter five covers the first three decades of the twentieth century, or "welfare before welfare," as Blumell referred to this period in his derivative 1979 article in the *Journal of Mormon History*.

The crucial importance and formative impact of the Great Depression on the history of LDS welfare justifies the two chapters devoted to that topic alone: chapter six on the early 1930s and chapter seven on what I would call the "classical period" of church welfare from 1936 through about 1960. Chapter eight reveals in detail how the welfare program has evolved since 1960 to its present highly professionalized and more regionalized structure. Chapter nine is a long and extremely valuable chapter on how the welfare program has been applied in a number of other countries, particularly those in the Third World. Finally, chapter ten provides a brief prognosis about the future form and content of LDS welfare in the U.S. and abroad, with some indications of what the church can feasibly do in the world with limited resources.

Certain key themes run through the book: (1) the fundamentally *spiritual* motivation, from the very beginning, for the church's welfare policies and practices (e.g., self-reliance and

dignity over material subsistence *per se*); (2) the remarkable effectiveness of the church in responding to acute crises from the Missouri and Nauvoo expulsions to the near disasters of the first two Utah winters to the depression of the 1930s to the Teton Dam disaster; (3) the evolution of church welfare programs in pragmatic response to the changing economic and political circumstances in the U.S. and in other countries; (4) the internal political struggles within the church over different visions of welfare; and (5) the growing sense of responsibility in the church for contributing to the alleviation of misery worldwide.

Most Mormons now living have only the most superficial, even mythological, understanding of the history of welfare in the church. It is as though Utah simply abandoned its quaint "communitistic" experiments of the nineteenth century on entering the United States in the twentieth, and then everything was "normal" until the Great Depression, when divine revelation intervened and installed the modern LDS "welfare program." (How often I have heard church members cite the welfare program as evidence of continued revelation beyond the Doctrine and Covenants!) The actual fact (as chapter five makes clear) is that the first three decades of this century required a great deal of welfare activity by the Presiding Bishop's Office and the Relief Society in order to accommodate the growing numbers of rural migrants, displaced by the serious farm depression of the 1920s, who were streaming to Salt Lake City (and other western cities) in search of work.

This was a time when the "Social Gospel Movement" common in

American Protestantism was finding its way into Utah, where the Relief Society played a key role not only in charitable programs against unemployment and poverty but also in the building and staffing of hospitals, maternity homes, and medical clinics. Trained social work professionals in the Relief Society attracted the admiration of their counterparts in the rest of the country, and the church welfare structure was often used by both the Red Cross and various government agencies to administer social welfare services in Utah. The relationship between the church (including both Relief Society and Presiding Bishop's Office) and public relief agencies (local, state, and federal) grew even more extensive during the 1930s.

The emerging LDS welfare program of the Depression years was so highly touted by both government officials and the mass media that it soon became burdened with expectations that it could not possibly fulfill. As the Depression began, President J. Reuben Clark and others expressed the church policy as "taking care of our own," independent of the government "dole." This policy, however, was never more than a lofty ideal, for neither in Utah nor elsewhere did the church come even close to getting the membership free of government relief. Indeed, throughout the 1930s, Utah was near the top of the nation in the proportion of its citizens receiving various kinds of government assistance. This discrepancy between the policy ideal and the empirical reality created some minor public relations problems for the church, as well-meaning missionaries and other members went about bragging that no Mormons were on government welfare, now that the Lord had revealed the new welfare pro-

gram in 1936.

This myth, occasionally passed along (without verification) in friendly newspaper and magazine articles, attracted the wrath of Dean Brimhall, a disaffected Mormon who was federal relief administrator for the state of Utah and had chafed under the scorn that presidents Grant and Clark often expressed for the federal government's approach to welfare. Brimhall's personal papers in the Marriott Library at the University of Utah have thus been consulted more than once by authors seeking to debunk the church's welfare efforts. Yet the only fair way to judge those efforts, whether during the Depression or any other time, is to focus on the many thousands of Saints who *have* been meaningfully assisted by church welfare (but would *not* have been without at least the policy *ideal*), rather than focusing on those remaining dependent on government assistance. The comprehensive welfare program of today does not even try to compete with government programs. Yet its multifaceted approach to *acute* need, with food, medical care, cash, employment guidance, and budgetary training, means that the overwhelming majority of recipients stay on church welfare for only three or four months, relieving government agencies of short- and long-term entitlement obligations that could run well into the millions of dollars each year.

It was during the period from the Depression to 1960 that the welfare program developed into the "classical" form known to those who grew up in my generation. Although announced to the Saints in 1936 as an innovative departure from the past, it actually embraced and centralized practices that had been underway for

many years in local areas. The particularly successful local model in the Pioneer Stake had attracted the attention of the First Presidency, and the president of that stake, Harold B. Lee, was called to full-time church service, first as chief executive of the new program and eventually as an apostle. If the new program (coming, as it did, half way through the Depression) could not be considered an instance of prescient divine intervention, it was nevertheless to be understood as the will of the Lord from that point on; for President Grant announced that he had taken it to the Lord for approval in the manner prescribed in D&C 9:8-9. The creation of a new Church Welfare Committee signaled the intention for the program to be come a *permanent* part of the church structure, not just a temporary expedient to get through the Depression. The new committee also had two other consequences (probably unintended): circumventing the executive authority of the Presiding Bishop's Office and the independent operational responsibility of the Relief Society in welfare matters.

As the emergency needs of the Depression era began to subside, the welfare program was gradually transformed. The original preoccupation with immediate help for the unemployed was replaced with new emphases: (1) long-term preparedness, including family food storage; (2) training those difficult to employ; and (3) mobilizing volunteer labor (among those already employed) for staffing the many farms, canneries, storehouses, and other industries now permanent parts of the welfare program. At the same time, "The Welfare Program had become increasingly a means of teaching and reasserting tra-

ditional Mormon values . . . a tool for giving order and direction to the economic lives of Latter-day Saints . . . a means of teaching love, brotherly kindness, and charity; it was a program through which the Saints could gain a deeper understanding of their own collective identity—a greater sense of their uniqueness and special abilities as a people" (155).

The longest chapter covers the evolution of the welfare program from 1960 to the present. These recent decades have seen the redefinition of "preparedness" as a six-part program focused on the individual and the family, rather than on the community or on the program itself: literacy and education, career development, financial and resource management, home production and storage, physical health, and emotional or spiritual strength. "Correlation" has brought the program back under the priesthood, meaning the Presiding Bishopric and several apostles who comprise the General Welfare Services Committee. Operationally, however, the program is (like many others in the modern church) in the hands of the civil service bureaucrats in the Welfare Services *Department*. At the regional level, too, the various welfare enterprises are mostly in the hands of paid professionals, with volunteers only rarely called upon to work on farms or in canneries. Through its various regional offices, the welfare program stands ready to offer large-scale assistance only on an acute or emergency basis (as in floods, storms, and earthquakes). On a more routine basis, welfare services are now rendered primarily to those who are usually self-supporting but whose incomes have been temporarily interrupted by unemployment or other setbacks. An



employment preparedness and training (retraining) component is increasingly prominent today. There is no longer any expectation that Latter-day Saints should be independent of government support or services. The church now tries mainly to supplement these.

The penultimate chapter on the international church is worth the price of the book. Just as the welfare program has evolved through many incarnations with the changing circumstances in North America, it faces the necessity of adapting to a variety of economic, political, and cul-

tural predicaments elsewhere, particularly in the Third World. This chapter assesses LDS welfare needs, and the feasibility of dealing adequately with them, in Europe, the Pacific Rim, the Philippines, Mexico, Brazil, Peru, and several African countries. A variety of experimental approaches has been tried over the years in adapting the welfare program to these exotic locations, but it is apparent that more experimentation will be necessary. Like other LDS institutions, welfare will continue to mean different things in different times and places.

## The Dream of Mormon Sovereignty Ends

*Camp Floyd and the Mormons: The Utah War.* By Donald R. Moorman, with Gene A. Sessions (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992).

Reviewed by Gary Lee Walker, Department of History, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

DONALD R. MOORMAN'S LITERATE account of the Utah War is set within the larger panorama of events in mid-nineteenth century America and relates the process by which the isolated Mormon community in the Great Basin region became part of a United States touched by the spirit of Manifest Destiny.

The volume is the result of eighteen years of research and writing by Moorman, who passed away in 1980 before final revisions were completed on the manuscript. His associate, Gene A. Sessions, along with other colleagues, completed the task and

prepared the work for publication. In the preface, Sessions plainly states that the volume is Moorman's work, and that no attempt was made to update the manuscript. Even the title remained the author's, although Sessions contemplated changing it to "The Mormons, Camp Floyd, and the Overland, 1857-61," which would have more accurately reflected the scope of the book. The history of Camp Floyd comprises only part of the story of the Utah War saga. The author utilizes the old fort much like the hub of a wagon wheel, with its many spokes representing the related subject areas that make up the complete history of the Utah War period of the Great Basin.

Moorman convincingly argues that the brief presence of the U.S. army in the Utah territory "changed forever the Mormon dream of sovereignty over the Great Basin" (259) and

brought the region into the mainstream of United States development and advancement. He accomplishes his goal by describing the epic of Mormon settlement in the Great Basin, and then concentrates on the many events that surrounded the coming of the military, and the lasting consequences of the establishment of Camp Floyd, later Fort Crittenden, on the residents of the Great Basin region.

Moorman has achieved a unique balance between colorful, descriptive and scholarly writing. The reader is immediately caught up in the drama that resulted as the Mormons encountered army and government officials, but at the same time is impressed with the scholarly and well-documented material that is skillfully interwoven in the dialogue. The result is a highly readable work that is both enjoyable and informative. His sources are impressive, as he incorporates primary documents in his writing. Moorman was able to access the Brigham Young papers and the Mountain Meadows Massacre files, much of which is now unavailable for research, at the LDS church archives in Salt Lake City.

The material about Camp Floyd is mainly from diaries and other primary sources that serve to embellish the many interesting activities at the fort. The fort history is not military but leans toward a descriptive social history. Moorman did not choose to access all of the military records available at the National Archives, which would have allowed for a more detailed account of the establishment itself. What he does accomplish is a narrative that describes the interaction between the Mormons and the military, thus providing unusual and sometimes remarkable insight into the

emotions of the period.

One of the impressive characteristics of the author's account is his treatment of individuals and groups. When introducing a character into the narrative, he first gives a brief but colorful and scholarly introduction of the person. An excellent example is found in chapter six as he describes Chief Justice Eckles using a Dickens caricature (103). Incidents, such as the Drummond affair, are treated likewise. Moorman is fair and refreshingly sympathetic to all sides and persons but does not neglect factual material. This is particularly notable in his treatment of the Mormons as a religious group, along with the government and military.

A particularly informative, but sometimes graphically disturbing, account centers on Fairfield, or Frogtown, the "Sodom and Gomorrah of the Great Basin" (59). Moorman successfully recreates the atmosphere of this "malignant cancer," which he states "sapped the life from Camp Floyd" (59). Very similar to the later "Strip" in the Uinta Basin, Fairfield provided refuge for outlaws and criminals, and was a haven for vice and murder. The author provides insights into this infamous town which are illuminating and not found in other histories.

The entire Utah War episode in Utah territorial history is a combination of inept government officials, misinformation, intolerance between the Mormons and the military, and stubbornness on the part of local and national government leaders, the army, and LDS church leaders. These factors prevented a reasonable search for a path to peace and reconciliation. The author does not oversimplify any of these situations and concisely states

all sides of each issue. The acute dilemma that President Buchanan faced when finally forced to deal with the Utah problem is a notable example. After reviewing Buchanan's choices, any one of which would have ultimately made matters worse, Moorman candidly concludes that "just as it was to be on the eve of the Civil War, no decision was considered a good decision" (122), referring to Buchanan's inability to deal with the strong-willed central players and the politics of the time.

In the epilogue, Moorman brings his account full circle. Within the context of a broader United States history, he follows the army personnel from Camp Floyd into the Civil War, noting that officers and men of Camp Floyd "served in every major campaign on both sides of the battle line" (279). Many who felt that their mission in the Great Basin was never fulfilled would find their destiny and immortality on

the bloody battlefields of the Civil War by paying the ultimate sacrifice.

The University of Utah Press has produced a well-designed and attractive volume, including a center section of timely photographs. It would have been useful if the authors had included a bibliographic list by category and in alphabetical order of the scholarly sources. The notes for each chapter are extensive, but it is difficult to locate the full bibliographic data on a source that is quoted for a second time in later chapters.

Moorman and Session's book is a fresh and scholarly contribution to the history of the Great Basin. It provides rare insight into the interpersonal relationships that dictated the events of the Utah War. At the same time, the colorful narrative and skillful weaving of documents allow the reader, regardless of background or interest, to become thoroughly absorbed in the events. It represents historical writing at its best.

## Reproductive Rights and the "New" American Family

*Reproduction and Succession: Studies in Anthropology, Law, and Society.* By Robin Fox (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1993).

Reviewed by Janet Cannon, Department of Anthropology, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

OF GREAT IMPORTANCE IN THE study of Mormon interrelationships is how polygyny fits into the larger picture of the modern American family. In his witty, provocative volume on reproductive rights and law in American society, *Reproduction and Succession*,

social anthropologist Robin Fox writes about the breakdown of the nuclear, monogamous family as an obvious feature of American life. He suggests that polygynous relations, and other "alternative" family forms, such as surrogate motherhood, are a normal response to the change from an industrial to a post-industrial society where emphasis shifts from a situation requiring the monogamous nuclear family to one that could well accommodate a variety of extended-family patterns, including polygyny.

In the comparative study of the

American family, particularly, the Mormon family, this book provides a unique interpretation of the role of biologically-based rights and cultural behavior. Among the few others who have written on fertility, reproduction, and the family in Mormon culture are O'Dea, Faux, and Bean. In Lee Bean's *Fertility Change on the American Frontier*, for example, he hypothesizes that the norms relating to the mechanisms of childbearing or fertility limitation will be most effective when socio-cultural constraints on fertility are consistent, or devoid of contradictions. Thus there is a symbiotic relationship between the LDS church's consistently pronatalist position and the fact that the State of Utah has the highest birth-rate in the nation. Bean's statement relates to Fox's goal to prove the effect of an individualistic culture's values of kinship and religion on reproductive rights and privileges.

Fox looks at four case histories: Roy Potter's case against the State of Utah to marry plural wives, the "Baby M" trial pertaining to surrogate motherhood, the "Antigone" case of family burial rights, and inheritance rights between a nephew and his uncle. In each of these cases, he examines the issues of modern constitutional and case law and the changing nature of kinship and family norms that underlies these cases. Of particular interest to the Mormon intellectual community is Fox's unique perspective on the reproductive issues and the sociology of jurisprudence inherent in the "exotic case of Mormon polygyny" (ix), where the Mormon assertion of the right to plural marriage is viewed as a religious obligation.

The first dispute over reproductive and marriage rights and civic law, *Potter v. the State of Utah*, describes

Roy Potter, the Murray police officer who was fired from his job on 1 December 1982 for his admitted marital liaison with two women (and, eventually, a third wife). This case raises deep questions for Fox (as it does all scholars of Mormon culture) about morality, marriage, reproduction, and the laws and customs of an avowedly individualist culture. It raises vital questions about an individual's right to marry and reproduce in a manner he/she chooses without state interference. The Potter case, writes Fox, is the ultimate example of the conflict between reproduction and law, as it represents the strongest challenge to anti-polygamy legislation since such legislation had been declared constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in the landmark case of *Reynolds v. U.S.A.* in 1878.

Fox presents a compelling argument in favor of overturning the *Reynolds* judgment, not only for First Amendment considerations, but for historical reproduction and succession rights of individualistic groups like the Mormon Fundamentalists of Utah. Fox argues that polygyny is not "a subversion of social order," nor does it "fetter people in stationary despotism" as the *Reynolds* case so strongly implied (28-29), but rather polygyny is a practiced form of marriage in the majority of cultures around the world and is conducive both to stability in the social order and democracy.

In other words, polygyny cannot of necessity be held to cause unsavory political or social conditions no more so than can monogamy in itself be seen as "disruptive." Morally and socially disruptive activities—whatever they are—are brought on by the socio-religious and economic contingencies that are present in a particular society,

regardless of the number of wives, or husbands, in the family. Of course there are cases in which polygynous households are not successful, as I have found in my own studies of Mormon Fundamentalism (see *Women of Principle: An Analysis of Female Strategies in a Mormon Polygynous Community* [University of Utah Press, forthcoming]). Conflicts between individuals that are typical of monogamous relations, such as jealousy, competition, sex abuse, neglect, and economic inequality, often escalate when found in a polygynous household. But, again, polygyny is not the cause of these troubles.

Fox writes that the Supreme Court in *Reynolds*, and subsequently the Utah courts in *Potter*, made a poor case for preventing those who wish to practice plural marriage from doing so on this comparative basis. Which is more natural for reproductive success in contemporary industrialized cultures such as the United States, argues Fox, where single parent mothers and broken families outnumber the standard mommy-daddy-brother-sister nuclear family?

If one looks closely at the socio-cultural factors which affect the United States, writes Fox, one can see that the increase in female participation in the work force and the growth of commuter employment with modern transport seems to accommodate alterations in the traditional family. Dual-income families often must take their children to expensive, inadequate care centers, and then come home to a chaotic home environment that needs cleaning and management. Certainly the option of plural wives (or husbands, which Fox neglects to add), or for that matter "omnigamy" (everyone married to everyone) provides a

way for the modern family to survive.

Fox further suggests that in spite of the complexity of relationships and the relative "newness" of the Mormon polygynous experiment, there is no warrant for concluding that polygyny in and of itself is an undesirable form of marriage from the point of view of stability, satisfaction of the parties, responsibility to members, etc.:

Frequent divorce and remarriage, the separation of children from their parents, the multiplication of step relationships (responsible for many child abuse cases), the total breakdown of paternal responsibility (80 percent of divorced fathers at some time default on child support)—all suggest that our own institution of serial monogamy is in serious trouble, not its polygynous counterpart (36).

Further, any analysis of conflict, strain, and abuse in polygynous societies should also look at the same personality types associated with these conflicts and strains. Would certain types be any different in monogamous culture? Would some still be discontent, cruelly dominant, submissive, or abusive? What does the *Potter* case, and the others like it concerning reproductive rights and the law, tell us about the future state of the Mormon family? There is one study that I can think of which deals with high Mormon divorce rates (Christensen, "Stress Points in Mormon Family Culture," *Dialogue* 7/4), but few have dealt with the large number of single women, single mothers without husbands, and the extended family set-up where a newly-wed couple lives with either the wife's parents or the husband's parents. All of these are common forms of Mormon family units and

are not discussed in sacrament meeting or in Relief Society, at least in my ward. Most discussion of the eternal family unit is based on the "Leave It to Beaver" style family. Of particular importance is our understanding of the nature of divorce-and-remarriage type families. According to the statistics provided by Christensen, there are as many, if not more, cases of broken and subsequently patched-up marriage unions (a form of tandem polygyny or tandem polyandry, whichever may be the case) than there are cases of the Abrahamic model of family to which Mormons are taught to adhere.

In light of the fluxuated state of marriage and family in America, Fox argues, alternative forms of reproduction, marriage, and family are being selected for in order to better able to care for the basic needs of American individuals.

In short, Fox's analysis of the struggle between individual reproductive rights and legislation sheds light on the question of Mormon Fundamentalism and its place in "Zion." A question to which members of the Mormon culture should pay serious attention—especially in view of the serious flux of Fundamentalists in recent years. Already more than five families on average each month are baptized from the LDS church into one Fundamentalist sect alone. The number of practicing Mormon polygynists as a whole is estimated at 50,000 to 60,000 in the Intermountain States area. That is to say nothing of the large numbers of polygamists

(polyfidelity groups of all kinds) that live in California, Oregon, Canada, and various other parts of the West. Fox's discussion of reproductive rights implies a strong admonition: acknowledge polygyny as an accepted, practiced form of marriage in North America, and in doing so better serve the occupational, emotional, and health needs of individuals in such groups who are now considered "marginals." The law abolishing plural marriage is no longer relevant to the service of American justice, writes Fox. And, further, because so much of the legislation against polygyny originated from mainstream Mormon church prejudice of Fundamentalism, it may prove helpful for the Mormon culture to understand the exact nature of the far-reaching consequences of this law to the freedoms of others.

The only catch in Fox's absorbing discussion of reproductive rights and the law is that he fails to acknowledge the long-term legal and cultural ramifications of widespread polygyny, widespread surrogate motherhood, and lax rules on successive rights. He is a theorist, not a disciple of praxis. What is needed is a projection of the consequences of changes in the laws dealing with alternative family forms to better understand how these changes will affect individuals in small versus large communities, and in certain environments and not others. Can certain reproductive practices, such as polygyny, have a negative impact on the contemporary Mormon family over the space of several decades, for example? It merits careful thought.

# Negative Space

*Paul Swenson*

It's hard being Mormon  
and having nipples  
Having hard nipples, knowing  
that they're  
there under  
clothing  
Under  
garments  
One guy at  
ZCMI had the  
job—hard job  
—of sanding off  
every nipple of all  
the store's mannequins

Mormon mind regards nipples  
as purely negative space  
including male nipples  
Poor Tarzan's not-so-  
comic strip at the  
hands of an air-  
brush censor at  
the *DesNews*  
left the Jungle  
King nippleless,  
defenseless and yes  
strangely emasculated  
during the mixed-up '60s  
in the church newspaper's  
nervously neutered funnies





## CONTRIBUTORS

---

NANCY HANKS BAIRD lives and works in Salt Lake City.

SUZZANNE F. BIGELOW holds an M.A. from the University of Utah and has published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* and *This People*. She and her husband, a retired Salt Lake City physician, have seven children and eight grandchildren.

JEFF D. BLAKE is a first-year law student at the J. Reuben Clark Law School, Brigham Young University. He lives in Provo, Utah, with his wife Racquel and their daughter Alyssa.

MARDEN J. CLARK is Professor Emeritus of English at Brigham Young University.

ELAINE CHRISTENSEN holds degrees in German and English from Utah State University. She is recipient of the M. Olsen Book Award for *At the Edges* (Utah State Poetry Society, 1990). She teaches poetry at the Pioneer Craft House in Salt Lake City.

R. A. CHRISTMAS is president of Ecosys-Utah!, an environmental biotech company in Provo, Utah. His poems have appeared in *The Southern Review*, *Western Humanities Review*, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, *Sunstone*, and other periodicals.

BRENT D. CORCORAN is an undergraduate in anthropology at the University of Utah and editor of *Multiply and Replenish: Mormon Essays on Sex and Family*.

BRIAN EVENSON lives and teaches English in Provo, Utah. A collection of his stories, *Altmann's Tongue*, was published in 1994 by Alfred A. Knopf. "The Three Boats" is from the libretto for an opera about the martyrdom of Joseph Smith (music by Christian Asplund) which will be performed in Seattle, Washington, and in Utah in the spring of 1995.

STANLEY B. KIMBALL is author of *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer*. Earlier versions of his essay "'Come Ye Disconsolate': Is There a Mercy Seat in Mormon Theology and Practice?" were presented at the John Whitmer Historical Association, Independence, Missouri, September 1993, and at the Sunstone Symposium, Chicago, Illinois, October 1993.

DON McDERMOTT is a professor of English at National Cheng Kung University in Tainan, Taiwan.

BRIGHAM D. MADSEN is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Utah. He is the author of several books, including *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre*; *Goldrush Sojourners in Great Salt Lake City, 1849-50*; and *Exploring the Great Salt Lake: The Stansbury Expedition of 1849-50*.

L. JACKSON NEWELL is professor of higher education at the University of Utah. "Sterling Moss McMurrin: A Philosopher in Action" is part of a much larger book project with Sterling McMurrin.

DIXIE PARTRIDGE has published two compilations of poetry, *Deer in the Haystacks* (1984) and *Watermark* (1991). She is currently at work on her third and fourth books.

D. MICHAEL QUINN is author of *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*.

VINCENT C. RAMPTON is a practicing attorney in Salt Lake City, father of six children, and a counselor in the Parley's Fourth Ward bishopric.

KAREN ROSENBAUM has been a full-time English teacher for twenty-seven years and a part-time short story writer for thirty-nine years. She and her husband live in the San Francisco Bay Area.

LINDA SILLITOE's most recent book is a collection of poetry, *Crazy for Living*. Forthcoming are *Friendly Fire: The ACLU in Utah*, *Secrets Keep* (a novel), and a history of Salt Lake County.

PAUL SWENSON's poetry has appeared in *Weber Studies*, *Ellipsis*, *Wasatch Review International*, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, and *The Mormon Women's Forum Newsletter*.

STEPHEN E. THOMPSON is Research Assistant in the Department of Egyptology at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island. Versions of "Egyptology and the Book of Abraham" were presented at the Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City, August 1993, and in Boston, November 1993. He thanks William Hamblin, David Wright, Michael Rhodes, Brent Metcalfe, Edward Ashment, Stephen D. Ricks, David R. Seeley, Mark Thomas, and Richard Lambert.

DOUG WARD lives in Longmont, Colorado.

# March Children

*Nancy Hanks Baird*

Her head nestled in the palm of my hand  
not so long ago,  
little lips tugged my breast,  
fingers pink as birthday candles  
clutched my chin.

One night of her new life  
we left her an hour  
with her brother,  
just twelve.  
He crawled under her crib,  
telephone clutched in his little-boy hand,  
lay in the dark  
listening to her breathe,  
ready, just in case.

On this March day,  
she crouches in mud,  
fingers blue hyacinths, pinches bugs.  
He scatters snowballs like stars,  
his private, frozen  
Milky Way.

Children of light,  
sifting through clouds,  
leaping from the  
sapphire stones of heaven,  
your trusting eyes  
hold too much glory;  
watered jewels for wounding.  
With awe you hurtle down your corridors,  
impatient for pain.

This broken world needs your fire.  
Though I may soften all your grief,  
how dare I veil your faces?



## STATEMENT BY KENT MILES

The Salt Lake Community High School is a remarkable place. It is a school where students learn to succeed. That in itself is a wonderful thing, but many schools teach students to succeed. What is remarkable here is that the faculty and staff are committed to the success of a student body that many have consigned to failure. It is a school that is largely ignored by the public, an easy target for legislative budget cuts. It is easy to make decisions that affect the future of people we do not know. It is easy to ignore those who are not conventional high school students: adults returning to get their diplomas, immigrants new to this land and just learning English, teen mothers, gang members, kids who have dropped out of school and have the courage to come back, students who function better with more personal attention to their scholastic needs than is available in regular high schools, youth and adults who are homeless...

In the spring of 1994 I began to photograph some of the students at SLCHS. I wanted to show the general public the reality of these people who are fighting to own a piece of the American Dream. These are people who want the same things I want and are willing to work for it in spite of difficulties I cannot imagine. An exhibit was created combining the photographic portraits with personal handwritten statements from each student photographed for the show. Presenting the combination of internal and external realities caused me, at least, to change the way I look at people. I am less judgmental now when I meet others, and I have learned there is much more connecting us to each other than could ever possibly separate us. I hope it is a lesson I will never forget.

These few images are from "The Class of '94: Portraits from Salt Lake Community High School."

## PHOTOGRAPHS

*Front cover:* "Kristi Hill and her son Gentry," 1994

*Back cover:* "Sayed Sajjadi, refugee from Afghanistan," 1994

p. 20: "Badirah Alsarrieh, immigrant from Palestine," 1994

p. 68: "Valentina Magdalena, immigrant from Russia," 1994

p. 98: "John Eli Fonua," 1994

p. 104: "Todd Hashimoto," 1994

p. 142: "Amber Brown," 1994

p. 178: "Martha Zapata, immigrant from Mexico," 1994

p. 193: "Salko Kadmic, refugee from Bosnia," 1994

p. 208: "Lonial (Shorty) Millner," 1994



# DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT

P. O. BOX 658  
SALT LAKE CITY, UT, 84110-0658

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
SALT LAKE CITY, UT  
PERMIT No. 4559

