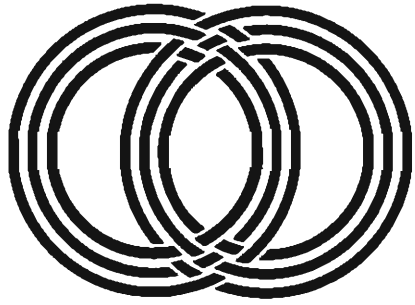


DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT





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*is an independent quarterly
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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
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Gnosticism Revisited

May I offer a contrasting view to Bertrand Barrois's engaging essay, "Gnosticism Reformed," which appeared in the spring 1994 issue. I believe it is misleading to call Mormonism reformed Gnosticism. It never was predominantly Gnostic, and on the pivotal issue of the nature and significance of matter, it ended up antithetical to dualism, which is at the heart of ancient Gnosis. Although modern forms of Gnosticism have tended to be monistic, this is not the basis for comparison in Barrois's treatment. Further, his vilification of early Gnostics is simplistic and ill-founded.

Mormonism, clearly, embodies traits and teachings of Gnosis—some of them major, including a few not mentioned directly: the generation of fresh scripture and new mythology, the doctrine that humans share in the divine nature, the accessibility of direct revelation to all believers, and, arguably, the conception that evil stems from a break within the godhead. Most salient among features noted by Barrois is the preoccupation with knowledge itself—in Mormonism the impossibility of being saved in ignorance and the revelation that intelligence, light, and truth are the very glory of God. This preoccupation in Mormonism is not limited to, nor even centered principally upon, "secret knowledge" as in the temple endowment, nor was this the main thrust of knowledge in Gnosis. "Acquaintance," as some now translate the word *gnosis*, bespeaks a mystical approach to Deity central to Gnosticism and powerfully suggested in Mormonism. In Gnosticism acquaintance is the growing intuition of one's own true and divine character. On this

point the two are close indeed.

The article begs some questions, such as whether there really can be a true Christian orthodoxy. Mormonism by virtue of its existence says no. Barrois, judging both Gnosticism and Mormonism by "orthodox" standards, says yes, backing himself from Pauline sources. St. Paul, however, long mustered by apologists of orthodoxy inveighing against heretics, held many more Gnostic positions than Barrois acknowledges. Orthodoxy defined itself partly by marginalizing and hereticating Gnosis, a process detrimental to both sides. The range of Christian beliefs was narrowed through exaggeration of differences. Addressing Mormons and Mormonism, as Barrois does, as though they were part of the Christian establishment, on the one hand, while elsewhere distinguishing them from Christians and making them at the same time reformist Gnostics is no tribute, incidentally, to the Gnostic revival in Mormonism, such as it is. Christian Gnostics thought themselves Christian, as do Mormons: yet another similarity.

Mormonism, however, despite the similarities, is a separate syncretic development, sharing with Gnosis, to be sure, the very disposition to syncretize, from which the Christian establishment, with notable exceptions, has shrunk. Leaving aside the issue of where the seeming Gnostic elements in Mormonism came from, what we can say is that they mostly belong to a later phase than the Book of Mormon and the initial evangelical impulse. It is perhaps more accurate to say that Mormonism as originally constituted was soon altered by Gnostic ideas; that it was gradually modified, enriched, and complicated by teachings

arguably Gnostic in content if not in origin; and is, therefore, really Mormonism Reformed. If Mormonism is Gnosticism reformed, the reform movement came first, the Gnosticism later. The Gnostic branch was grafted onto a trunk of evangelical Christianity, already much reformed.

In fairness, Barrois is talking about the net result, not the chronology. Even so, the notion of Mormonism and Gnosticism reformed would have to mean that Mormonism is an improvement upon Gnosis, a valid position only if we allow the sweeping denigration and dismissal of Gnosis based on Barrois's tacit criteria, i.e., his pro-orthodox, moralistic, pragmatic, and crypto-sectarian biases. Many students of Gnosis—such as Robert Haardt, G. R. S. Mead, Steven Runciman, or R. McL. Wilson—take a more favorable, or at least more objective, view of the Gnostic phenomenon, as do some of Barrois's own sources, Elaine Pagels and Kurt Rudolph. Works published by the Theosophical Society, including a lucid introduction by Kenneth Rexroth, take a still more sympathetic approach, as do commentaries by Karl G. Jung. Dismissing early Gnostics by means of patristic polemics and caricatures in the face of these reassessments and new primary sources provided by the Nag Hammadi *cache* leaves the Gnostic orientation undervalued as well as unrefuted. Gnosticism and Mormonism alike must be judged on their merits as well as on their defects. If Gnosticism was a body of thought worth keeping and reforming, it should be described as such and its adherents accorded due respect. Then it must be established that Mormonism is, in the key areas, an improvement over it. This, without the

aforesaid biases, cannot be done. Gnosticism was successful on its own terms, which Mormonism denies in crucial areas, thus nullifying major aspects of the Gnostic ethos. (See below.) This is subversion and revolution rather than reform. On some points Mormonism could as readily be termed Gnosticism Deformed. (See below.)

One of the great differences between Gnosticism and Mormonism is evident in the shared doctrine of continuing revelation, which provided the means of authentication for extra-biblical teachings. If divine inspiration did not cease with the Hebrew-generated "deposit of faith," it is easier to accept Gnostic or Mormon beliefs. However, it was an aim of Christian Gnostics, and of their original scriptures, to liberate the gospel from "the Jewish envelope in which they had received it . . ." (Wilson, 68). Mormonism, on the other hand, is partly an attempt to put it snugly back into that envelope. This difference is bigger than Barrois seems to think (p. 250, para. 3), and does it spell reform? The mock-biblical, authoritarian tone of much Mormon writing has been noted.

Still, the greatest, most irreconcilable difference between Gnosticism and Mormonism centers on the problem of matter—the vast gulf between Joseph Smith's monistic materialism and Gnostic dualism, according to which, matter is the makings of the counterfeit world in which, according to Gnostics, we all are stuck. Smith's late revision and denial of the matter-spirit duality through the materializing of spirit (for Barrois a positive moment—p. 250, top) flies in the face of even moderate Christian dualism, let alone the radical opposition of light

and darkness, good and evil, etc., with which ancient Gnosticism is always identified. Barrois is aware of this (p. 244, lines 1, 2) but fails to make the due inference. The problem is exacerbated in the doctrine, believed by many Mormons, that God is an exalted man, which may well be an oriental, Gnostic idea misapprehended by a Westerner, with resultant garbled teaching. This could be the Gnostic conception of the *anthropos* in disguise—the image of God in man. Smith's version, however, seems to qualify the Deity by reference to the animal species of man, rather than qualifying us as a nature emanated from God's presence and essence. Not everyone would agree on the importance of this strange role reversal; but if it was not a major errant blow in the forging of Mormon doctrine, it at least divorced Mormonism from one of the cardinal identifying characteristics of ancient Gnosticism; thus it becomes impossible to draw the most fundamental parallel between them. Mormonism in this respect is neither a reformed version of Gnosticism nor of Christian orthodoxy. It is radically different and original. The antipodal relationship of Gnosticism to Mormonism on this point is borne out in Mormon breeding tendencies, as well as in the eschatological, teleological, and soteriological valuation of the family, *versus* the Gnostic reluctance to get offspring at all. Awareness of the divine will to give us bodies justifies our sometimes unreflecting biological colonizing habits, as spirits wait to get clay tabernacles without which the rise to deification is interdicted. This is antithetical to the ancient Gnostic view of material existence as a limiting, demonically manipulated, yet temporary trap. Some Gnostic synonyms for

the human body are "dark enclosure," "portable grave," and "resident brigand" *versus* the Mormon commonplace that "the body is a temple." Inferring the nature of God from a mortal state, as in the King Follett Discourse, would, to a Gnostic, represent what fifth-century "pseudo-Dionysius" regarded as being "stuck in the fictional appearances." Surely it remains possible for Mormons as individuals to disavow radical materialism and anthropomorphism and to see Smith's late teachings as the exercises in mythologizing that they were. But the question remains: In what important sense can Mormon materialism be said to constitute reform *vis-à-vis* Gnostic dualism? It is its negation.

I disagree with the dismissal of Gnostic soteriology (p. 242, para. 2). Salvation theory stems from the sense of cosmic, ontological loss, which for Gnostics, believing themselves confined to "the realm of fate" and to "the confusion," must be as great as anyone's, if not worse. Salvation through enlightenment and wisdom is still a species of salvation whether or not the orthodox find it adequate, and is appropriate to the mythological and conceptual Gnostic orientation. Dualism demands a spiritual not a material redemption and is unreformable in this regard as well. Docetism is consistent with Gnostic principles, though not all Gnostics were docetists. The literal incarnation is less consistent, but some Gnostics, including Valentinus, still believed it. Barrois unaccountably links docetism to "nihilism," dismissing it out of hand (p. 245, para. 2). Bardesanes, probably author of the "lovely hymn" referred to by Barrois, was a docetist. In Mormonism, one reflects, we have the literal incarnation and resurrection, the physical basis

for godhood, but not the hymn, since, from Barrois's perspective, we have reformed away the basis for it—i.e., radical dualism—even though I am quite sure that, given the opportunity, the membership at large would be Gnostic enough to canonize it. It escapes me how Barrois can deny the relationship of salvation to moral effort in Gnosis (p. 242, para. 4). Righteousness for Gnosticism is wisdom rooted in reflection, which keeps one radically aware of the transitoriness and the dangers of this life, its material powers, and its pleasures. Gnosticism does question and deny the absolute linkage of spiritual enlightenment to ethics. It is true that the worst is "... to be called ignorant" (Meyer, 44), not committing fleshly misdeeds. This stress on reasoning power and divine light, including the innate spiritual spark in us, as seen in the *Dialogue of the Savior* (see Emmel) and elsewhere, yields a positive rather than a negative morality; and that is still morality. Barrois seems preoccupied with Gnostic "lifestyle" but can quote no impartial, trustworthy contemporary reports of the same, raising the old problem that for centuries Gnostics were known only through the writings of their enemies. If some Gnostics "wallowed" (242), as claimed in hostile sources dutifully relayed by agents of orthodoxy, that disqualifies Gnostic soteriology about as much as the Spanish Inquisition disqualifies Mormon zeal. The condemnation of Gnosticism based on the behavior of some adherents is nothing but *argumentum ad hominem* and does not discredit the ideology.

Finally, may I add some implications of the foregoing, with a few more words of support for poor, beleaguered Gnosticism. Following a

century of totalitarianism and of unprecedented environmental contamination related to over-empowerment of the human species as well as overpopulation of the globe, one could well lament the institutional demise of true Gnosis. This religious ideology might give pause to an age which glorifies financial success and material living standards fattened at the expense of spiritual fulfillment, in a world to which Mormons are ever more successfully adapted. We do well to heed the adage that "in religion nothing fails like success." Barrois's valuation of religions based on how positive, optimistic, or practical they may be is a worldly one. If the purpose of religion is to make people happy and well adjusted in this "vale of tears," religionists are of all persons most miserable. Then picking a church is like picking a new car, and the Buddhist metaphor, "vehicle," becomes doubly apposite. If it's nice, we like it; it's good. Gnosticism—Barrois seems to inform us—is not a nice religion. It gives people a bad attitude about major aspects of this life. Moreover, it petered out, leaving only the legacy of its thought. Fully reempowered, he might add, it would discourage exponential population growth. Moreover, exalting the noetic faculty above obedience and conformity, it would deprive governments of taxpayers and enforcers, corporations of consumers, and armies of cannon fodder—very noxious to the *status quo*, including Mormonism. Mormonism, however, is a nice, increasingly productive religion—productive of people with a shot at a better life here and beyond. Mormons are typically meliorists, but Gnostics found the world irremediably worldly. For the latter, God's kingdom is not of this world

nor will it ever be. From the Gnostic perspective, if the whole world were to convert, and the Presiding Bishop received a 110FP form for each and every inhabitant, that would only make us the world's largest aggregation of omnivorous bipeds, since the obsession with numerosity could never deliver a single soul from its carnal prison and might, in the Gnostic view, have the opposite effect.

Nevertheless, the position that early Gnosticism was "decaying on its own" is oversimplified. Did it not sway Augustine of Hippo? Is Gnostic staying power really discredited if Barrois admits that the sects collapsed in the fourth century "under pressure from the mainstream church, by then legally established"? (249) Had not the orthodoxy tailored itself for its new role as state religion, pre-destined to elbow aside and stamp out competing ideologies for a thousand years and more? Barrois ignores questions of this sort while imputing dysfunctionality to Gnostics and implicitly praising "enduring universal religions" (251). Manichaeism did thrive for 1,000 years from the Atlantic to the Pacific (see Klimkeit, Hans-Joachim, *Gnosis on the Silk Road* [New York: Harper, 1993]), presumably in "far-flung pockets" dismissed by Barrois on page 249; and was eradicated as a social movement in Western Europe, where it was still gaining momentum in the thirteenth century, only by the military power of the Papacy and the Capetian monarchy, and by the watchdog monastic orders of orthodoxy with their dreaded Inquisition (see Runciman, *The Mediaeval Manichee*); this despite the reluctance of the "elect," the "perfecti," and the earlier encratites to reproduce. The Manichee, like Joseph Smith, taught

the wisdom of seeking truth among other religions, which led to interfaith mergers, weakening the institutional but not necessarily the spiritual influence of Gnosticism: again, it was successful on its own terms, which often meant going to the grave without issue. Apparently it received a warmer welcome in the Buddhist East than in the Barbarian West.

It is, after all, hopeless to look for all truth in one place, let alone for a rectified Gnosticism in the cradle of pragmatism. Despite my objections, however, Mr. Barrois reveals, from a fresh angle, the value of Gnosis in the study of Mormonism and of its founder. In a remark that might apply to Joseph Smith as well as to the rest of us, Coleridge said, "Until you understand an author's ignorance, presume yourself ignorant of his understanding."

Benson Whittle
Fairview, Utah

The Sum of His Creation

Larry L. St. Clair and Clayton C. Newberry have given us a tightly written and thoughtful critique of environmental issues in a Mormon context in the summer 1995 issue. However, I am a bit mystified by their conclusion. In the second to the last paragraph they state, "But Zion will not, cannot, be established with our present lifestyles of consumption, . . ." Then in the last paragraph they assert, "On the other hand, Zion will not be moved and will be a place of spiritual and temporal splendor in perpetuity." What circumstance will bring about this Zion condition of temporal splendor?

When I have attempted to broach the topic of a righteous stewardship for all of God's creations, I often encounter apathy on the subject or maybe some concern about what pollution will do to property values. However, the most consistent theme I hear from church members is a fatalistic view. Many seem to feel that since we are in the end time, with the promised destructions imminent, we need not concern ourselves with preserving the environment. Environmental degradation is simply one sign of the coming millennium and God will recreate Eden when he has finished cleansing the earth of the wicked—which, I conclude, does not include tithe payers no matter what they may have done to the earth. St. Clair and Newberry seem to propose a similar position. They assert that Zion cannot be established with our current arrogant attitudes about our world, but then they conclude that somehow Zion will come into being as a place of spiritual and temporal splendor in perpetuity.

I don't believe that Christ will return to an earthly kingdom risen from the ashes of his cleansing—a kingdom he recreates in the image of Eden. I believe that Christ will return when his children have earned the right of his presence—including reverencing the sum of his creation. St. Clair and Newberry challenge Mormons to embrace environmental reverence and then let us off the hook by offering what sounds like a simple millennial solution to the consequences of the arrogance we have demonstrated about our environmental stewardship.

Doug Ward
Longmont, Colorado

Hope for Reconciliation

Marybeth Raynes, in her review of *Born that Way?* (Summer 1995), argues convincingly that the book's blind emphasis on the surety that sexual orientation can be changed is simplistic and damaging. As a gay man, I agree with her completely. Setting up expectations that have little or no possibility of being realized and then blaming an individual for his or her lack of faith is a cruel, guilt-producing, and unchristian process. I spent many confusing and frustrating years hoping and praying that God would make me "normal." It took me a long time to realize that God made me the way I am, and that my real lack of faith was in refusing to accept myself that way. In this respect I agree with Raynes's belief that the book is but a gentle propaganda for the church's official policy on homosexuality.

I am troubled by one conclusion that Raynes draws. She wrote: "I see nowhere in the church whereby an acceptable integration of the sexual and spiritual sides of [homosexuals] can occur. All the options are excruciatingly difficult and result in choosing one side or the other." I continue to hope that this is not the case. I am not yet ready to give up on the church. I am homosexual because, I believe, I was born that way. I am also a Mormon—and I was born that way. I am not yet willing to accept Raynes's claim that being gay is incompatible with being LDS. Even while many gay Mormons find fulfillment only after leaving the church, and while the church would have me continue to live a lonely and sterile life in celibacy, I must continue to search for a way to reconcile my sex-

ual orientation with my spiritual and moral heritage.

Tom Mathews
Orem, Utah

A Missing Reference

In the spring 1995 issue Stephen E. Thompson devoted a lengthy footnote (157n67) to an attempted refutation of ideas published by me. Unfortunately, nowhere in the article did Thompson give a full reference to my article in question. Therefore, it would be impossible for any interested reader to go to this article and examine it in the original form. I include herewith the full reference:

John M. Lundquist, "Was Abraham at Ebla? A Cultural Background of the Book of Abraham," in *Studies in Scripture: Volume Two: The Pearl of Great Price*, ed. Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Randall Book Co., 1985), 225-37.

John M. Lundquist
New York, New York

The Bible and Pro-Mormon Bias

I read with interest the review of Philip Barlow's book, *Mormons and the Bible*, on pages 164-66 of your summer 1995 issue. In that review Scott Kenney compares two views on Barlow's book. He quotes *BYU Studies* as saying that it was written from a non-Mormon bias and then quotes the *Southwestern Journal of Theology* of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary as saying that it has pro-Mormon bias and as such cannot be

taken as a serious look at the Bible because it "gives the Mormon church a sense of legitimacy and credibility it does not deserve."

I noted that the entry in Mr. Kenney's review gave no reference to the author of the review in the *Southwestern Journal*. Since I am that person, I want you to know that I stand behind what I wrote. The very idea that the Bible needed revision without any reference to the ancient manuscripts and texts and can be called a translation is a pro-Mormon bias. A rendering of the Bible without any regard to the ancient manuscripts is not the definition of a translation. In fact, it could only be called a translation in a Mormon context and thus a pro-Mormon bias.

On page 50 of Barlow's book he tells of 3,410 changes to the Bible which he ascribes to revelation. This is not a translation, and in fact in many places the Joseph Smith Translation actually changes the meaning of the most ancient and authoritative text of the Bible. If this is described as acceptable, it is a pro-Mormon bias.

Mr. Kenney concludes his review with the statement that Barlow's book "has all the markings of a Mormon classic." This indicates, at least to me, that he agrees.

Michael Reynolds
Atlanta, Georgia

Not a Scholarly Work

I have read with great interest the letter on "Mormons and Templars" by Mr. David B. Timmins of Bucharest, Romania, which appeared in the winter 1995 issue.

Unlike Mr. Timmins, I am not sur-

prised by Michael Homer's failure to cite *The Temple and the Lodge* in his fall 1994 *Dialogue* article on Freemasonry and Mormonism. *The Temple and the Lodge* (whose principal author is Michael Baigent not "Baignet") is an entertaining book but definitely not a scholarly work. The book is a collection of wild occult myths, and the alleged secret continuation of the Knights Templars into Freemasonry is not the wildest one. The connection between Knights Templars and Freemasonry was first argued in the eighteenth century in Germany and led to the great number of "Templar" degrees still found in modern Freemasonry. No academic scholar of the Templars of the Middle Ages (not to mention academic scholars of Freemasonry) has taken the legend seriously. Documents confirming it and often quoted by occult authors as found during the French Revolution have long since been proven to be early-nineteenth-century forgeries. To quote just one example, Regine Pernoud—perhaps the leading expert on Knights Templars in France—recently wrote that the theory of a secret continuation of the Order of the Temple into Freemasonry is "totally insane" and tied to "uniformly foolish" claims and legends (*Les Templiers* [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1988], 11).

Books like *The Temple and the Lodge* legitimately belong to a literature we all may find entertaining if we do not take it too seriously. Of course, Baigent's works on Dead Sea Scrolls belong to the same category and should not be confused with academic literature on the subject (for a debunking of popular and journalistic claims about the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Otto Betz and Rainer Riesner, *Jesus, Kumran and the Vatican: Clarifications* [New

York: Crossroad, 1994]; both authors are professors at the University of Tübingen). Discussing Baigent's theories within the frame of a scholarly study would have been, in my opinion, highly inappropriate and detrimental to the highly respected scholarly standards of *Dialogue*.

Massimo Introvigne
Torino, Italy

A. C. Lambert and Sam Taylor

I am writing to rebut the article "The Golden Dream and the Nightmare: The Closet Crusade of A. C. Lambert," which appeared in the fall 1995 issue. I am Carlyle Ballif Lambert, second child and second son of Asael Carlyle Lambert and Florence Smith Ballif Lambert. I was stunned when I read the article by Samuel Taylor about my father. Taylor's effort to make public A. C. Lambert's research and writing into Mormon history, doctrine, and dogma is a type of eulogy to a great scholar and his fifty-five years of work in his avocation. *But the central theme of Samuel Taylor's article is false. Asael C. Lambert never aspired to be the president of Brigham Young University.* Scholarship in such an article as this requires the writer to support his claims with other than his own memories and recollections from one estranged child, yet Taylor bases his claims on these alone and uses no references; as a result, the article does not qualify as scholarship and is erroneous on several points.

Sam invokes the quest for truth in the article yet makes false statements and embellishes or oversimplifies other stories from his memory about my father and mother. Supposedly

this was a revelation of my father's "secret dream." Sam uses this article as a forum for his memories about several stages of his life. His nostalgic remembrances, which occupy nearly a third of the copy, have no place in the article. His disheveled tale of experiences with my parents leaves the reader thinking that A. C. and Florence were of low moral stature and terribly ambitious, neither of which is true. In so doing, he actually trivializes both my father's and my mother's real life struggles and some of the disappointments of A. C.'s professional life which were heartbreaking. Taylor's judgement and memory seem impaired.

Despite a very complex relationship, I was my father's close confidant for forty-five years, and as much as it was possible to know a keen intellect's mind, I knew his. He did say on occasion that he was interested in becoming a college or university president. But he was very alarmed by and unhappy with the non-academic tenor set by the Board of Trustees and others at BYU in those days. *A. C., a force for academic excellence at BYU, never mentioned any desire to become president of BYU.*

Taylor's story about my father's "golden dream" of eventually wearing the mantle of the presidency at BYU is fabricated. A moment of reflection would lead one to conclude that a professor at BYU researching and writing about Mormonism from the perspective of a religious skeptic certainly had no "golden dream." In fact, it is a bit funny. There was no gold to be had at BYU. The only gold A. C. ever received was his salary at Los Angeles State College; after joining Los Angeles State College, A. C. told me that for the first time in his career

he finally had enough money to meet his current living expenses. Furthermore, a qualified academic employed by BYU who found academic research stifling at BYU, especially one who questioned the origins of Mormon doctrine, would be out of his mind to contemplate the presidency of BYU.

A. C.'s abilities were well-known to at least two of BYU presidents: Franklin S. Harris and Howard McDonald. They became mentors for A. C.; both recognized not only his potential as an academic scholar, but also as a superb administrator. A. C. was noted for having the ability to fulfill many varied responsibilities as a member of the faculty, academic dean, and other administrative roles over the years. He also was asked to participate on many LDS church committees because of his organizing, thinking, and writing skills.

It is true that A. C. was occasionally marginalized by some at BYU, primarily because his well-known abilities posed a threat to less educated and less accomplished colleagues. Today BYU has a large number of capable, widely-known and -published scholars. During my father's tenure at BYU, much of the faculty was "home grown" and few had a national presence. He also did not "rise" because he was outspoken and at times undiplomatic about the general "apologetic" climate at BYU about the LDS church and the institution's abuse of individuals. He disdained those who he thought made unthinking and insupportable "apologies" for inaccurate representations of LDS church history and for the incongruous behavior of some church officials. He considered this "institutional lying" dishonest.

As the 1950s began, A. C. could

have stayed on at BYU, but Florence was dead and he had determined he could not live with the anti-academic climate and resulting restraints at BYU. He needed to escape the dead-endedness, and he believed that staying at BYU would be harmful for himself, BYU, and the LDS church. A. C. Lambert resigned from BYU in 1952 of his own volition. (In a previous article by Sam Taylor published in the fall 1993 issue of *Dialogue* ["The Ordeal of Lowry Nelson and the Mis-Spoken Word"], Taylor asserted that there was a secret group of faculty who were becoming disenchanted with Mormonism. In this article he mentioned A. C. Lambert along with several other outstanding professors and wrote that my father had been forced to resign because of his secret work. Taylor was wrong about this as well. I wrote to Sam at that time and informed him of his factual error and requested that he check with me if he wanted to do further writing about my father.)

At the time of A. C.'s decision to leave BYU in 1952, I was the only one, other than his second wife and President Howard McDonald, who knew. (McDonald had been president of BYU but had recently resigned to accept the presidency of Los Angeles State College.) This decision to resign was one of the best decisions in A. C.'s life. McDonald asked A. C. to come to Los Angeles State College. A. C. accepted and there he became instantly free from what he believed to be a frustrating, non-academic attitude which existed in many departments except the exact sciences at BYU. He was appointed Executive Dean and Dean of College of that institution and was placed in charge of the \$27 million building and relocation effort. His

career at Los Angeles State was impressive. From there he went on to the last stage of his career as a highly sought after consultant to public higher education.

Taylor writes another piece of misinformation. He claims that A. C. was assigned by Ernest L. Wilkinson (president of BYU, 1951-71) to recruit returned LDS missionaries on the eastern coast to attend BYU. A. C. resigned from BYU as Wilkinson took the office of president. He never worked as a regular employee of BYU under Wilkinson, but he did return twice to Provo as a consultant to President Wilkinson. My files show considerable correspondence between them concerning administrative problems at BYU.

During his retirement my father was approached by both the University of Utah and the University of Chicago with a request to house all or part of his scholarly writings. A. C. *made his own arrangements for transfer of some of his published and unpublished scholarly works (on Mormonism) to those libraries in the early 1970s, long before his death.* All of his works have been in the Western Americana Division of the University of Utah Library since 1970, where he restricted the use of his unpublished books concerning Mormonism until after his death. I was responsible for removing them from restriction, which I did at the request of Dr. Everett Cooley shortly after my father's death in 1983 at the age of 91.

Where did Sam Taylor get the idea for his story about my father's "golden dream and the nightmare"? My sister Ruth's desire to become a novelist had prompted her to seek advice from Sam. Through her correspondence with Sam Taylor, she apparently asserted herself as being

knowledgeable about our father's professional career, which she was not. In fact, she left Provo and made the East and South her home and was essentially estranged from our father since about the age of twenty-three. Taylor's reliance on my sister Ruth's assertions does not reflect the collective memory or thinking of me and my living siblings, Barbara and Jim (John, Edith, and Ruth are deceased). Ruth isn't here for us to speak with, but I know she would be shocked and hurt to see the inaccurate picture Sam gives about our mother.

The story of the life of my mother, Florence Smith Ballif Lambert, is of poverty—then called genteel poverty—and sacrifice to ensure her husband's education and her children's well-being. Taylor could have used the word "crusade" if he had described Florence Lambert's courageous effort to help her husband achieve an outstanding academic record and a Ph.D. from Stanford University. This endeavor began in 1924 and included years of living alone in near poverty with the children; surviving the plague on her family of scarlet fever which killed her youngest son at the age of five; and enduring the heartbreak of the discrimination from Stanford University, which blackballed A. C., one of their most outstanding students, because he was a Mormon.

Because of his BYU professorship and because he was a Mormon, A. C. was not offered a faculty appointment at Stanford. My mother learned of this at the reception at Stanford for Ph.D. recipients. It was a gala affair. My sister Edith really dressed Mother up. She was most beautiful in a gorgeous new gown. At the reception, about half way through or near the end,

mother was talking to one of the top men in the educational administration faculty. Abruptly in the conversation he told her that Dad would not be offered a position on the Stanford faculty because he was a professor "at that Mormon school," or words to that effect. (This fact undoubtedly influenced other university administrations considering and interviewing A. C. for their presidencies.)

My mother staggered under the blow. It was unthinkable to all of us. She and her young family were shabbily dressed and often hungry while she and A. C. made continual sacrifices to get the Ph.D. degree. Mother was stunned and heartbroken as were all of us children. Dad was in shock and in disbelief at such an unprofessional act. He could not believe that the Stanford educational administration department could be so callous as to treat a man, teaching some of their most important classes, so unfairly.

Our mother, no cry baby, broke down and cried for a week. She, as well as all of us children, did not want to return to Provo and to BYU. We knew that our financial circumstances were unlikely to change much there and that other options and opportunities would be more limited as a result. In addition, we all loved living and working in the Palo Alto community—the people were so inclusive, accepting, and friendly.

An important fact that kept all of us going through those poverty-stricken years was the very real promise of some financial stability and a faculty appointment at Stanford. All the sacrifice and high academic achievement (which universities are all about) was made meaningless in terms of improving the family circumstances which had been an important

goal. Upon our return to Provo in the fall of 1934, Franklin S. Harris informed A. C. that he would receive a \$50 per year raise!

Throughout this extremely difficult life our mother was noted for her charity towards family, friends, neighbors, and strangers, and for her sense of humor. She had a beautiful singing voice and sang often with her brothers, Ariel Smith Ballif and George Smith Ballif. Her sense of humor, her charity, and her positive disposition saved us. Unfortunately it didn't save her. Her health and her heart were broken for many years up until her death at the young age of fifty-two. (The story in Sam's article about my parents stopping to visit at his home in Redwood City is untrue. Mother never returned to California after leaving Stanford to come back to Provo in 1934. My mother's death occurred in 1947 long before A. C. ever left BYU and moved to California. This is another example of Sam Taylor's mistaken memory.) At one time Taylor knew of all of this but elected to make a great woman look like a honky, pulp fiction writer!

My father had to leave the family in Rexburg, Idaho, in 1924, while he went to BYU in order to pursue his bachelor's and master's degrees. My mother, left with four little children, worked in a seed pea and pea canning establishment near Rexburg. She learned to do ladies' hair, and she performed other miscellaneous jobs which paid a few cents per hour. She also composed poetry for her own development and expression. This was the period of her life when she attempted, because of her writing skills and the need for income, to write a "sob story" for a pulp magazine, *True Confessions*, I believe it was. The infer-

ence by Taylor that she supplemented the family income by achieving success as a formula writer for pulp magazines is entirely untrue. She realized a negligible sum after several rewrites on the one story. This was in 1924 and she never attempted another. These efforts had no negative effect on A. C. and BYU. The family was reunited in Provo in 1926 where our mother gave birth to one of the largest set of twins ever recorded that we know of—Barbara and John weighed 10+ lbs. each!

A. C. accomplished academic levels rarely achieved in the Stanford education administration department. He also achieved highly in economics. He taught upper division and graduate courses at Stanford while struggling to finish his Ph.D. After only six months as a graduate student in the non-required logic seminar, he was asked by the chairman to take over as chairman. He cherished this recognition above all of his other academic achievements. His research for his Ph.D. dissertation was on school finance, taxation, and transportation and laid down the argument for how public school systems could finance consolidation of many schools and transport the students. His dissertation was condensed as a monograph, *School Transportation*, and was published by the Stanford University Press, a rare honor in those days. (A. C. was well-known over the intermountain states as a stimulating extemporaneous speaker. He was very successful as an extemporaneous debater at BYU from 1924-26.)

The truth about my father's professional life is that he was a consummate scholar and master teacher whose research and teaching impacted thousands in this country for

good. His classes were well received at Stanford and at BYU. His research and thesis writing courses impacted hundreds of graduate students seeking master's and Ph.D. degrees. None of his students ever forgot him. The most common comments over the years have been, "A. C. Lambert was the best teacher I ever had"; "He made me think!"; "I never worked so hard in my life as I did in his class (or having him as the chair of my master's or doctoral committee)"; "I will never forget him." A. C.'s insistence on scholarship in his classes caused him to be unpopular with some students, primarily those in education and other non-scientific disciplines, who discovered that their testimony-bearing would not be the path to good grades in his courses. A minor few disliked him intensely because he simply refused sloppy work and was unforgiving on the matters of plagiarism and other forms of cheating. A. C.'s reputation as a "hard" teacher caused some social suffering for his family, especially for his children who were enrolled at BYU.

A. C.'s unpublished manuscripts from his research into "Mormonism" are an enigma for the family. Why would such a confident, well-known, and widely-published scholar elect to leave these manuscripts unpublished? I, along with my wife and family, believe it was a combination of things. A. C. has many grandchildren, some of whom were being raised in the LDS church. He may have thought, in an act of concern for his posterity, that there would be negative consequences for them if he published these works. Ruth apparently claimed in one of her letters to Sam that A. C. admitted he did not have the "moral fortitude" to publish the

works. My wife, Carol Bement Lambert, remembers a possible explanation for Ruth's claim. She recollects that A. C. stated at one time his deep admiration for the Mormon pioneers and the forbearers who endured the great tribulations and transitions and, as he said, "gave their all for the gospel." He stated that he didn't want to do anything that would insult the memories of these forbearers; he seemed to have a genuine concern for them and did not want to upset their descendants. Had the LDS church known about A. C.'s writings, or if A. C. had published them, there is no doubt that he would have been forced to resign from BYU and excommunicated from the church. Our family has no record of an excommunication of A. C. Lambert by the LDS church.

The truth about A. C. Lambert's personal life is that it was a paradox in light of his professional achievements and it became a tragedy. The good part was that he demanded excellence in all we did and most of his children were very good students, winning scholarships and research awards, etc. We had to work extremely hard under an exacting standard, whether in school or at home. But our father never learned how to live in loving relationships with his wife, children, and the extended family circle. He was a difficult man. One by one he alienated his children, except for me. I had a complex relationship with him; yet I became my father's confidant and hunting and fishing partner. Despite his poor treatment of my wife, she rendered great service to my father over the years because of her charitable heart and in the early years because of her deep love for and devotion to my mother. We maintained our relationship with him because we

hoped to achieve some kind of family solidarity, but we were unsuccessful in drawing him or my siblings back together, although my wife and I maintained close ties with him and with them, though separately.

Despite a rather personal and friendly relationship with Samuel and Gay Taylor over many, many years, beginning in my adolescence, Sam did not contact me for verification of his assertions about my father's professional aspirations. He did not give me the opportunity for editorial review. Either of these courtesies would have been commensurate with the nature of the friendship, the level of my knowledge about my father's personal and professional life and feelings, and with the procedures of a biographical scholar.

Samuel Taylor professes friendship with A. C. Lambert, but this is compromised by Taylor's article. The breach is that he not only betrays confidences, I am certain, but also that in some cases he simply does not tell the truth or provide an accurate picture. The way he portrays our mother, a wonderful wife and mother, who sacrificed so much for her family and her husband's profession, is a most unfriendly act. Sam reduces her life to one dimension to suit his purpose (a common approach males of his era take with women, particularly patriarchal males, two of my daughters point out).

I am disappointed that *Dialogue* would publish an article so poorly written, unreferenced, and based on a false premise. *Dialogue* readers, I am certain, trust that anything *Dialogue* editors print must certainly meet the rigor they are famous for and to which they lay claim. I am also dismayed that the editors of *Dialogue* are not concerned by Taylor's invasion of the privacy of A. C. and Florence Lambert's surviving children.

If it is in the mind of someone, sometime, to do a biography of A. C. Lambert, my family would welcome a "warts and all" presentation . . . the good, the bad and the ugly, so long as it is the truth that evidence supports. The article by Samuel Taylor does not tell the truth and therefore harms scholarship and A. C. Lambert's family. That this article should be Taylor's parting thoughts to his longtime friend, my father A. C. Lambert, is sad to me.

Carlyle B. Lambert
Provo, Utah

Taylor Responds

I was a close friend of A. C. Lambert. I wrote the article with love for his memory. I stand by every single word of my article.

Samuel W. Taylor
Redwood City, California

Pieta

Nancy Hanks Baird

Lying on my mother's bed
listening to tropical rain skitter
across a mottled screen,
I hold my daughter, sprawled in sleep,
head pressed to my heart.
To the west
across a shifting silver sheet of water
the world falls endlessly away.
The child's leg twitches in a
white ginger dream,
my fingers round the curve of her
almond head.
According to some unspoken law of
hearts, the women in this house return love
only in the measure it is given
while you
continents, centuries away
hold your son like that
your cheek gray and smooth as stone
your eyes cracked as crystals.
He slides from your knees,
from the cradle of your grief.
Your right hand claims the broken body,
gathers him to your ribs,
your left hand gives him back,
offers with cupped grace
your two seamless souls
soundlessly, immutably
as marble.

A Trajectory of Plurality: An Overview of Joseph Smith's Thirty-three Plural Wives

Todd Compton

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS: COUNTING WIVES

SOME READERS MAY REGARD the accompanying chart of Joseph Smith's plural wives as overly conservative. Fawn Brodie counted forty-eight wives in her biography of Joseph Smith; more recently D. Michael Quinn listed forty-six, and George D. Smith forty-two.¹ Yet in problematic areas it seems advisable to err on the side of caution, and consequently I identify only thirty-three wives. In time, perhaps, some of the "possible" wives will move into the certain category. Until that happens, I believe we should regard them as subjects for further research rather than as women whose marriages to Joseph can be conclusively demonstrated.²

1. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 2d ed. (New York: Knopf, 1985), 457-88; D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 587; George D. Smith, "Nauvoo Roots of Mormon Polygamy, 1841-46: A Preliminary Demographic Report," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 27 (Spring 1994): Chart, #122.

2. Because of the complexity of Mormon marriage practice and experimentation, there is a great deal of ambiguity concerning what constituted marriage in early Mormonism, and Mormon theological terms for marriage and plural marriage can be confusing. I define as marriage any relationship solemnized by a marriage ceremony of some sort. "Sealing" as used in early Mormonism is a complex term that deserves extensive study, but as it developed in Nauvoo Mormonism, it often meant the linking of man and woman for eternity as well as for time, i.e., eternal marriage. If two males were "sealed," i.e., a father and a son, it obviously was not a marriage. But when a man and a woman (not siblings or parent-child) were "sealed," the sealing was always a marriage. There is at least one example in Mormon history of the male marriage partner performing the sealing ceremony himself. See Willard Richards diary, 23 Dec. 1845, cited in Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 228.

Joseph Smith's Plural Wives

Date of Marriage	Status	Age	Name at Time of Marriage	After Joseph
[early 1833]	SG	[16]	1. Fanny Alger	Separates from Joseph; marries Solomon Custer, non-LDS
[1838?]	MD	37?	2. Lucinda Pendleton (Morgan) (Harris) *George Harris, LDS, high councillor	Remains with polyandrous first husband, Harris; Nauvoo temple proxy marriage to Harris/Smith; later divorces Harris
5 Apr. 1841	SG	26	3. Louisa Beaman	Proxy marriage to Brigham Young/Smith
27 Oct. 1841	MD	20	4. Zina Diantha Huntington (Jacobs) *Henry B. Jacobs, LDS	Remains with polyandrous first husband, Jacobs; polyandrous proxy marriage to Brigham Young/Smith; remains with Jacobs; eventually leaves Jacobs and becomes Young's connubial wife
11 Dec. 1841	MD	31	5. Prescendia Lathrop Huntington (Buell) *Norman Buell, disaffected LDS	Remains with polyandrous first husband, Buell; polyandrous proxy marriage to Heber C. Kimball/Smith, but stays with Buell; eventually leaves Buell and becomes Kimball's connubial wife
6 Jan. 1842	WD	33	6. Agnes Moulton Coolbrith (Smith) (widow of Don Carlos Smith)	Proxy marriage, G. A. Smith (for Don Carlos); then Smith goes to Utah while Agnes stays in St. Louis; marries William Pickett, problematic Mormon, technically a polyandrous union; she and Pickett eventually separate
8 Feb. 1842	MD	23	7. Sylvia Sessions (Lyon) *Windsor Lyon, LDS	Remains with polyandrous first husband, Lyon; polyandrous proxy marriage to Heber C. Kimball/Smith; remains with Lyon till he dies; remarries Ezekiel Clark, non-LDS, then divorces; goes to Utah with Heber C. Kimball again?
end of Feb. 1842	MD	23	8. Mary Elizabeth Rollins (Lightner) *Adam Lightner, non-LDS	Remains with polyandrous first husband, Lightner; polyandrous proxy marriage to Brigham Young/Smith; stays with Lightner till his death
9 Mar. 1842	MD	47	9. Patty Bartlett (Sessions) *David Sessions, LDS	Remains with polyandrous first husband, Sessions, till his death; remarries, John Parry, for time
Apr. 1842	MD	27	10. Marinda Nancy Johnson (Hyde) *Orson Hyde, LDS apostle	Remains with polyandrous first husband, Hyde; eternal marriage to Hyde in Nauvoo temple; later, eternal proxy marriage to Joseph Smith; eventually divorces Hyde
before June 1842	MD	50-51?	11. Elizabeth Davis (Goldsmith) (Brackenbury) (Durfee) *Jabez Durfee, LDS	Remains with polyandrous first husband, Durfee; after Joseph's death, separates from Durfee; proxy marriage to Cornelius Lott/Smith, then separates from Lott
before 29 June 1842	MD	[53-54]	12. Sarah Kingsley (Howe) (Cleveland) *John Cleveland, non-LDS	Remains with polyandrous first husband, Cleveland; polyandrous proxy marriage to John Smith/Joseph Smith, but remains with Cleveland till her death
before July 1842	WD	[37-38]?	13. Delcena Johnson (Sherman)	Proxy marriage to Almon Babbitt (for Lyman Sherman)
29 June 1842	SG	38	14. Eliza Roxcy Snow	Proxy marriage to Brigham Young/Smith
27 July 1842	SG	17	15. Sarah Ann Whitney	With Joseph Smith alive, polyandrous "pretend" legal marriage to Joseph Kingsbury; after Joseph Smith's death, "separates" from Kingsbury, proxy marriage to Heber C. Kimball/Smith
Aug. 1842	WD	37	16. Martha McBride (Knight)	Proxy marriage to Heber C. Kimball/Smith; separates?
Feb. 1843	MD	33	17. Ruth Vose (Sayers) *Edward Sayers, non-LDS	Remains with polyandrous first husband, Sayers, till his death
spring 1843	SG	16	18. Flora Ann Woodworth	Remarries, Mr. Gove, non-LDS
4 Mar. 1843	SG	19	19. Emily Dow Partridge	Proxy marriage to Brigham Young/Smith
8 Mar. 1843	SG	22	20. Eliza Maria Partridge	Proxy marriage to Amasa Lyman/Smith; later divorces him
2-22 Apr. 1843	SG	30	21. Almira Woodard Johnson	Remarries, Reuben Barton (proxy marriage?)
1 May 1843	SG	17	22. Lucy Walker	Proxy marriage to Heber C. Kimball/Smith

May 1843	SG	17	23. Sarah Lawrence	Proxy marriage to Heber C. Kimball/Smith; divorce; remarries Joseph Mount
May 1843	SG	19	24. Maria Lawrence	Proxy marriage to Brigham Young/Smith?; separates?; proxy marriage to Almon Babbitt/Smith
May 1843	SG	14	25. Helen Mar Kimball	Proxy marriage to Horace Whitney/Smith
1843, before summer	SG	29-30	26. Hannah Ells	Never remarries; dies [1845]
1 June 1843	MD	29	27. Elvira Annie Cowles (Holmes) *Jonathan Holmes, LDS	Remains with polyandrous first husband, Holmes; proxy marriage to Holmes/Smith
12 June 1843	SG	58	28. Rhoda Richards	Proxy marriage to Brigham Young/Smith; separates, or never cohabits
July 1843	SG	32-33	29. Desdemona Fullmer	Proxy marriage to Ezra Taft Benson/Smith; separates; remarries, Harrison McLane; separates.
summer 1843	SG	27-28?	30. Olive G. Frost	Proxy marriage to Brigham Young/Smith
20 Sept. 1843	SG	19	31. Melissa Lott	Proxy marriage to John Bernhisel/Smith; separates; remarries, Ira Willis
[1842-43?]	SG	[14?]	32. Nancy M. Winchester	Proxy marriage to Heber C. Kimball/Smith; divorces; remarries, Amos Arnold
2 Nov. 1843	WD	56	33. Fanny Young (Carr) (Murray)	Never remarries
Possible Wives (Ambiguous Evidence or Very Limited Evidence)				
1832-33? 1841-43?	SG? MD?	43-44? 54-57?	1. Vienna Jacques	Marries Daniel Shearer, 1838; separates by 22 January 1846
before 11 Feb. 1841? 1841-43?	WD?	32-33?	2. Hannah Ann Dubois (Smith)	Marries Philo Dibble, 11 February 1841; marries Dibble for eternity in Nauvoo temple, 15 January 1846
pre-June 1842?	SG?	48-51?	3. Sarah Bapson	
pre-June 1842?	MD? WD?		4. Mrs. G*****	
1841-43?	WD	24-27?	5. Sarah Scott (Mulholland) (Mulholland dies November 1839)	Marries Heber C. Kimball, proxy marriage for Mulholland
1841-43?	SG	23-26?	6. Mary Houston	Proxy marriage, Heber C. Kimball, for Joseph Smith
1841-43?	MD? WD?	?	7. Mrs. Tallor	
1842/43?	MD	38-39?	8. Mary Heron (Snider)	Continues with polyandrous first husband

SG: Single at time of marriage to Joseph Smith.

WD: Widowed at time of marriage to Joseph Smith.

MD: Married to another man at time of marriage to Joseph Smith. This creates polyandry, as the woman always continued to cohabit with the "first husband" in Joseph Smith's polyandrous marriages.

Early posthumous marriages to Joseph Smith (marriages in which the woman was sealed to Joseph Smith after his death): 1. Mary Ann Frost (Steams) (Pratt); 2. Olive Andrews; 3. Jane Tibbetts; 4. Phebe Watrous (Woodworth); 5. Aphia Sanborn (Dow) (Yale); 6. Cordella Morley; 7. Sally Ann Fuller; and Lydia Kenyon (Carter). There is no evidence that they married Joseph Smith during his lifetime. Morley, in fact, said that she had not married Joseph during his lifetime.

Definitions

Proxy marriage: A marriage in which one partner is sealed for eternity to a deceased person, with a living partner standing "proxy" for the deceased person. In the case of a woman, she is married to a deceased man, usually in a temple, with a living man standing proxy for the dead man. In early Mormon history the woman was always sealed for time to the living man who acted as proxy. All children from the proxy marriage would be sealed eternally to the deceased husband, not the biological father. Note: In this list all proxy marriages link the woman to Joseph Smith for eternity, unless another man is specified.

Polygamy: A man or woman has two or more marriage partners simultaneously.

Polygyny: A man is married to two or more women simultaneously.

Polyandry: A woman is married to two or more men simultaneously.

What criteria can we use to substantiate a woman's marriage to Joseph during his lifetime? In 1869 Joseph F. Smith responded to his cousin Joseph Smith III's claim that his father did not practice polygamy and prepared affidavits for Joseph Smith Jr.'s living plural widows to sign regarding their marriages to him.³ A signed affidavit from a woman is very good evidence. A woman writing in a journal or autobiography that she married Joseph is also good evidence. If a third party witnessed a marriage, his or her testimony or affidavit or reminiscence is also valuable, especially if the person involved was a close family member and supplies convincing detail, anecdotal or documentary.

Multiple pieces of evidence increase the reliability of a claim of plural marriage. Even if we do not have an affidavit or a good holographic statement from a woman, if five pieces of evidence point to her as a wife, they add up convincingly.

The contours of a woman's life also support or weaken the likelihood that she married Joseph Smith. For instance, while two or three problematic pieces of evidence suggest that Vienna Jacques may have married Joseph, the rest of her life does not make her look like his plural wife. (Some writers think she married Joseph in Kirtland; but then she immediately left him for Missouri, where she married another man. Nor did she have a proxy marriage to him in the Nauvoo temple.) Documentation that a woman lived in Joseph's home is good supporting evidence for the possibility of a marriage (though obviously not conclusive by itself).

A woman's name appearing on certain reliable lists is also good evidence. Although John Bennett was unreliable in many ways, he was a Nauvoo insider, and his small 1842 list of Joseph's plural wives has been

A "spiritual wife" was not a woman married "in name only," for eternity only; a "spiritual wife" was a woman bound to a man by a strong spiritual/ritual link. A "spiritual" marriage often included sexuality, and offspring resulted. A "spiritual" marriage often included sexuality and sometimes offspring. See Emily Partridge, *Autobiography*, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, at the birth of her first child to Brigham Young in 1846, whom she refers to as a "spiritual child." Helen Mar Kimball Smith Whitney wrote, "At that time spiritual wife was the title by which every woman who entered into this order was called, for it was taught and practiced as a spiritual order" (*Plural Marriage as Taught By the Prophet Joseph* [Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882], 15). Nevertheless, many of these women testified that they had had sexual relations with Joseph Smith; see below.

3. See Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter LDS archives), MS 3423. Danel W. Bachman analyzed and listed these affidavits in his "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage before the Death of Joseph Smith," M.A. thesis, Purdue University, 1975, 346-54, cf. 107; cf. Bachman, "New Light on an Old Hypothesis: The Ohio Origins of the Revelation on Eternal Marriage," *Journal of Mormon History* 5 (1978): 19-32, 21n (which describes the four books of affidavits).

independently verified.⁴ In 1887 Andrew Jenson, using affidavits and relying on living widows of Joseph, produced a credible list of twenty-seven wives.⁵ Smaller lists, from both pro- and anti-Mormons, are also reliable.⁶

The eight "Possible Wives" listed in the chart are supported by limited and/or problematic evidence (sometimes only one attestation in a late source). In addition, there is often contradictory evidence. For instance, Hannah Dibble's marriage to Joseph Smith is supported by two pieces of evidence in late sources that refer to a "Mrs. Dibble" or a "Sister Dibble" as Joseph's wife. Yet it is not certain which Mrs. Dibble is referred to. Hannah lived in Joseph's home briefly, but then Joseph officiated at her marriage to Philo Dibble, who did not seem to act as a "front husband," as at least one other man did. Later she married Philo, not Joseph, for eternity in the Nauvoo temple.

For another example, Orson Whitney, the son and nephew of two of Joseph's wives, referred to Mary Houston as "[wife] of the Prophet." She married Smith (after his death, for eternity) and Heber C. Kimball (for time) in a Nauvoo temple proxy marriage. But Orson made some troubling mistakes in his listing of Heber's wives,⁷ and one wonders if he referred to her as Joseph's wife because of the proxy marriage. There is no supporting evidence for Houston marrying Joseph Smith while he lived.

This leads to my final category: "Early Posthumous Proxy Marriages," sealings to Joseph Smith after his death. Most women sealed to Joseph during his life recommemorated their marriage after his death in an early proxy marriage. Consequently, I believe they should be consid-

4. John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints, or, An Expose of Joe Smith and Mormonism* (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842; originally published in the *Sangamo Journal*), 256: Mrs. A**** S**** [Agnes Smith], Miss L**** B**** [Louisa Beaman], Mrs. B**** [Presendia Buell], Mrs. D**** [Elizabeth Durfee], Mrs. S**** [Patty Sessions], Mrs. G**** [Unidentified], and Miss B**** [Sarah Bapson?].

5. *Historical Record* 6 (May, 1887): 219-40, 233-34. See Keith Perkins, "Andrew Jenson: Zealous Chronologist," M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974, 40.

6. Joseph Jackson's short list includes three women; see Joseph Jackson, *A Narrative of the Adventures and Experiences of Joseph H. Jackson in Nauvoo: Disclosing the Depths of Mormon Villainy Practiced in Nauvoo* (Warsaw, IL: n.p., 1844); reprinted in Jackson, "Wonderful Disclosures Respecting Mormons," in *New York Herald*, 5 Sept. 1844, 1. A later list from a sympathetic source is in Benjamin Johnson's *My Life's Review* (Independence, MO: Zion's Printing and Publishing, 1947), on Hannah Dibble, see above.

7. For example, he doublelists three women; see Stanley Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball, Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 307; add to Stan Kimball's list Nancy Maria Winchester (Smith Kimball) and Nancy Maria Smith, who are probably the same person.

ered as possible wives of Joseph during his lifetime. But there is no reliable evidence that every one of these women married Joseph during his life. Only the posthumous marriage to Joseph is certain. In fact, Cordelia Morley, one of these women, stated in a memoir that she never married the living Joseph Smith. Thus the practice of marrying Joseph posthumously had begun by the time of her proxy sealing.⁸ Other early posthumous-only marriages to Joseph are Augusta Adams Cobb Young (1848) and Amanda Barnes Smith (1852).⁹ There is also evidence that Mary Ann Frost Stearns Pratt married Parley P. Pratt, not Joseph, for eternity during Joseph's lifetime, so she is probably another early posthumous-only marriage to Joseph.¹⁰

Thus I arrive at thirty-three well-documented wives of Joseph Smith.¹¹ I believe we can rely on this smaller number with a greater degree of confidence than previous estimates, and that a certain or nearly certain sample of the wives allows us to make an overview that will tell us a great deal about the women themselves, about Joseph, and about early Mormon polygamy.¹² (I should also note that Joseph Smith proposed to at least five additional women, all of whom turned him

8. Cordelia Morley Cox, Autobiography, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

9. Marriage record, Augusta Cobb and Joseph Smith, 14 Apr. 1848, Brigham Young papers, LDS archives; Amanda Barnes Smith, Memoirs, Lee Library; and in Hulda Cordelia Thurston Smith, "To My Children and Grandchildren," ed. Lyman Platt, *The Nauvoo Journal* 4 (Fall 1992): 3-7.

10. Family Record of Parley P. Pratt, in Belinda Marden Pratt's journal, 11 Mar. 1850, LDS archives; microfilm of holograph, Utah State Historical Society. Mary A. S. Winters, "Mothers in Israel," *Relief Society Magazine* 3 (1916): 580-81, 643. However, Mary Ann Frost's marriage history in Nauvoo has its complexities; see Wilford Woodruff journal, 21 Jan. 1844, in Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal 1833-1898* (Murray, UT: Signature Books, 1983-85), 2:340.

11. Other scholars, and family descendants, may have evidence that will move possible or posthumous wives into the category of certain wives. I welcome any information relating to the women on this list, especially documents of any sort by the women or their close relatives.

12. For general introductions and full-length studies of early Mormon polygamy, see Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," and Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981). Van Wagoner's *Mormon Polygamy* also provides a useful overview of Latter-day Saint polygamy. E. Carmon Hardy's *Solemn Covenant* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992) is indispensable for its evocation of the importance of polygamy to Mormons before their passage to monogamy. For an introduction to Joseph Smith, and his first wife, Emma Hale (Smith), see Donna Hill's *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977) and Linda Newell and Valeen Tippet Avery's *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984).

down.¹³ Antagonistic—and sometimes sensational—sources identify other women as wives of Joseph Smith.¹⁴ And there are more proposals in

13. These are:

SARAH MELISSA GRANGER (KIMBALL); see *Historical Record* 6:232, cf. Jill Mulvay Derr, "Sarah M. Kimball," in *Sister Saints*, ed. Vicky Burgess-Olson (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), 23-40;

RACHEL IVINS (GRANT); a plural wife of Jedediah Grant and the mother of Heber J. Grant, she was later sealed to Joseph Smith, not Grant, for eternity. See Ronald Walker, "Rachel R. Grant: The Continuing Legacy of the Feminine Ideal," in *Supporting Saints*, ed. Donald Q. Cannon and David Whittaker (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1985), 17-42, 23-24;

LYDIA MOON; see William Clayton journal, 15-17 Sept. 1843, in George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1991), 120;

CORDELIA C. MORLEY (COX); see her Autobiography, Lee Library; and

ESTHER JOHNSON; see Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 96.

14. These are:

MARY ANN ANGELL YOUNG; in John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled* (St. Louis: Bryan, Brand & Co., 1877), 147;

JANE SILVERTHORNE (LAW); see Bathsheba W. Smith, Deposition, 8th Circuit Court, 1892 Temple Lot Case, in *Complainant's Abstract of Pleading and Evidence...The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Complainant, vs. The Church of Christ at Independence, Missouri* (Lamoni, IA: Herald, 1893; this is an abbreviated publication of the complete transcript, a copy of which is available in LDS archives); and John Hawley, Autobiography (Jan. 1885), 97, archives, Auditorium, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Independence, Missouri (hereafter RLDS archives). Hawley also lists as wives of Joseph MRS. FRANCIS HIGBY, MRS. LYMAN WIGHT, AND MRS. ROBERT D. FOSTER: "When Brigham Young got the records of the Church in his hands, after the death of Joseph Smith, he found by examination that . . . Laws wife and Higbys wife and L Wights wife and Fosters wife had all been Sealed to Joseph, as their Husbands could not Save them." This source is problematic. Did Joseph marry these women without their knowledge, by proxy, while they were living? It is difficult to believe that they would marry Joseph while they were distancing themselves from Mormonism and polygamy. Furthermore, Jane Law elsewhere asserted that Joseph proposed to her and she refused. Cf. Lyndon W. Cook, "William Law, Nauvoo Dissenter," *Brigham Young University Studies* 22 (Winter 1982): 47-72 (65); and his *William Law: Biographical Essays, Nauvoo Diary, Correspondence, Interview* (Orem, UT: Grandin Books, 1994);

MRS. EDWARD (BLOSSOM), in Wilhelm Wyl, *Mormon Portraits, or the Truth About the Mormon Leaders, 1830-1886* (Salt Lake City: Tribune Press & Publishing, 1886), 65-66. Mr. Blossom was an apostle under Brigham Young, according to Wyl's source, an example of the occasional unreliability of unsympathetic sources, as there was no apostle named Blossom (this does not prevent Brodie from listing Mrs. Blossom as wife number 37);

MRS. (WHITE), in Wyl, 55;

MRS. (MILLER), a widow: Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 255;

WIDOW (FULLER) (WARREN), in Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 293; and

MISS MORRIS, in "Celebrated Career Closed. Exterminator of Mormons Dies at Louisiana, Mo.," newspaper obituary, ca. 15 Feb. 1895, of David Conkling, in Henry Stebbins papers, P24, f22, RLDS archives.

anti-Mormon sources,¹⁵ at least one of which—that made to Nancy Rigdon—has been convincingly documented.¹⁶)

THE TIMING OF JOSEPH SMITH'S MARRIAGES

As we trace the trajectory of Joseph's marriages, we find that he experimented with plural marriage in Ohio and Missouri in the 1830s. Detailed records of these marriages are not extant, but I believe that the evidence, when weighed carefully, suggests that they were authentic plural marriages.¹⁷ In 1841 Joseph cautiously took three wives. The next year

15. Some of the following are fairly well documented; others are sensationalist and badly documented:

JANE SILVERTHORNE (LAW), wife of William Law; see his diary, 13 May 1844: "[Joseph] ha[s] lately endeavored to seduce my wife, and ha[s] found her a virtuous woman," quoted in Cook, *William Law*, 65; Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 147; Jackson, *Narrative*, 21; Edward Bonney, *The Banditti of the Prairies: A Tale of the Mississippi Valley* (Chicago: Belford, Clarke & Co., 1881), 18, repr. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 16-17. Cf. Cook, *William Law*, 64-65. As was typical in cases where women accused Joseph of proposing to them, loyalist Mormon sources accused the woman of adultery with another man (see the Sarah Pratt case below, and the Nancy Rigdon case): Alexander Neibaur journal, 24 May 1844, LDS archives;

SARAH BATES (PRATT); see Breck England, *The Life and Thought of Orson Pratt* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985), 77-81; Richard S. Van Wagoner, "Sarah M. Pratt: The Shaping of an Apostate," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 19 (Summer 1986): 69-99, 71-72; Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 228-31;

LEONORA CANNON (TAYLOR); see John M. Whitaker journal, 1 Nov. 1890, Marriott Library; Wyl, 70-72;

ELIZA WINTERS; see Hiel Lewis, "The Mormon History," *Amboy Journal*, 6 Aug. 1879; E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, OH: E. D. Howe, 1834), 268; Stanley Ivins, Notebooks 1:337, Utah State Historical Society.

MELISSA SCHINDLE; see Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 253; *Sangamo Journal*, 15 July 1842; Charles A. Shook, *The True Origins of Mormon Polygamy* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1914), 71.

EMELINE (WHITE); see Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 234-35, 247, 249;

MRS. ROBERT D. FOSTER; affidavit of M. G. Eaton, 27 Mar. 1844, in *Nauvoo Neighbor*, 15 May 1844; cf. previous note and Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 312;

MRS. WILLIAM SMITH; see Jackson, *Narrative*, 29;

MRS. LUCY SMITH (MILLIGAN); see Jackson, *Narrative*, 29;

LAVINIA SMITH; see Jackson, *Narrative*, 29-32;

WILLIAM MARKS'S DAUGHTER; see Ann Eliza Webb Young, *Wife No. 19* (Hartford, CT: Dustin, Gilman, 1876), 70; and

ATHALIA RIGDON; see Clark Braden and E. L. Kelley, *Public Discussion of the Issues between the Reorganized Church . . . and the Church of Christ, Disciples* (St. Louis, 1884), 391.

16. J. Wickliffe Rigdon affidavit, reprinted in Joseph Fielding Smith, *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1905; repr. Deseret News Press, 1950), 97-101; cf. Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 241-50; F. Mark McKiernan, *Sidney Rigdon* (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1971), 115-19; and Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 290-310.

17. Some writers have argued that these early relationships were not marriages. For an opposing view, see my "Fanny Alger Smith Custer: Mormonism's First Plural Wife?" *Journal of Mormon History*, Spring 1996.

he married eleven women during the first six months. New marriages then stopped for five months, perhaps because of the John Bennett scandal, in which Joseph's former right-hand man published a series of sensational exposes of Joseph's alleged misdeeds, including a lurid discussion of his polygamy.¹⁸

However, during the first half of 1843 Joseph added fourteen more wives to his family, including five in May. After July his marriages stopped abruptly, with only two exceptions, in September and November. There are no well-documented marriages during the last eight months of Joseph's life, a striking fact, especially when contrasted with the number of wives he married in 1842 and early 1843.

This puzzle has a number of possible answers, though none is conclusive. Some have suggested that Joseph came to have doubts about polygamy before his death. Nauvoo Stake president William Marks wrote in 1853,

When the doctrine of polygamy was introduced into the church as a principle of exaltation, I took a decided stand against it; when stand rendered me quite unpopular with many of the leading ones of the church . . . *Joseph, however, became convinced before his death that he had done wrong*; for about three weeks before his death, I met him one morning in the street, and he said to me, "Brother Marks . . . We are a ruined people." I asked, how so? he said: "This doctrine of polygamy, or Spiritual-wife system, that has been taught and practiced among us, will prove our destruction and overthrow. I have been deceived," said he, "in reference to its practice; it is wrong; it is a curse to mankind, and we shall have to leave the United States soon, unless it can be put down and its practice stopped in the church" (emphasis added).¹⁹

According to Marks, Joseph told him that he (Marks) must excommunicate all who practiced polygamy and that he (Joseph) would support

18. Bennett, *History of the Saints*.

19. William Marks, "Epistle", *Zion's Harbinger and Baneemy's Organ* 3 (July 1853): 52-54 (published in St. Louis, by C. B. Thompson). Cf. Richard Howard, "The Changing RLDS Response to Mormon Polygamy: A Preliminary Analysis," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 3 (1983): 14-28. See also Joseph F. Smith journal, Aug. 28, 1870, LDS archives, in which Emma is reported by Joseph W. Coolidge to have said to him in 1846, "Joseph had abandoned plurality of wives before his death." Coolidge strongly disagreed with her. William McLellin writes, in a July 1872 letter to Joseph Smith III, RLDS archives, that Emma told him "one night after she and Joseph had retired for the night, he told her that the doctrine and practice of Polygamy was going to ruin the church. He wished her to get up and burn the revelation." When she declined, he burned it himself. This, of course, contradicts the more common tradition that Emma burned the revelation; see Clayton affidavit, in *Historical Record* 6:226, further references in Newell and Avery, *Mormon Enigma* 154. Quinn takes the less common tradition seriously; see *Origins of Power*, 147. Isaac Sheen, cited in Shook, *True Origins of Mormon Polygamy*, 152-55, also supports it. This is one of those perplexing points in Mormon history where good, seemingly reliable evidence can be found on both sides of a question.

him. This testimony seems to reflect an early RLDS perspective (though the RLDS church had not yet been organized); nevertheless, we should take it seriously.

One could argue that if Joseph believed this, we would have other documentation for it from his inner circle of friends. Marks was not in the inner polygamy circle. However, one could use the eight-month cessation of plural marriages before Joseph's death as support for Marks's story.²⁰

Another possibility is that the decrease and discontinuation of marriages was a result of tensions with Emma, Joseph's first wife, who threatened to leave him during this period.²¹ If Emma had left, the resulting scandal might have been disastrous for Joseph. He was also under pressure from internal opponents of polygamy such as his counselor in the First Presidency, William Law. Whether he had come to believe polygamy was wrong, or was merely pausing temporarily, as he had during the Bennett scandal, is uncertain. But the eight-month cessation of polygamous marriages before his death is one of the most remarkable phenomena in Joseph's life.

The twenty-five or so wives whom Joseph married in early 1842 and 1843 are testimony to the fact that plural marriage was not simply a footnote to his life or theology—particularly since he knew that exposure of his polygamy could be disastrous for the church. When he began to teach the principle of plural marriage (usually the prelude to a proposal) to Sa-

20. William Law's Nauvoo diary, 29 Mar. 1844, 48, in Cook, *William Law*, has Hyrum Smith saying that he and Joseph had abandoned the practice of polygamy: "Hyrum Smith was here a few days ago. He beg'd for peace; we told him of the corrupt operation which had been practised upon us; he could not deny it . . . he said they were not doing anything in the plurality of wife business now, and that he had published a piece against it." This statement is supported by *Times and Seasons* 5 (15 Mar. 1844): 474, which criticizes the proposition that "a man *having a certain priesthood*, may have as many wives as he pleases, and that doctrine is taught here [in Nauvoo]: I say unto you that that man teaches *false doctrine*, for there is no such doctrine taught here; neither is there any such thing practised here." However, we also find in Law's diary, in a 13 May entry (53), the allegation that Joseph had proposed marriage to Law's wife. Law demands that Joseph "acknowledge also that ~~he had lately endeavored to seduce my wife, and had found her a virtuous woman.~~" If this actually happened, then Joseph clearly had not abandoned his polygamy and polyandry, just a month before his death. However, like many events in Mormonism, it is flatly contradicted by another source, the Alexander Neibaur diary, 24 May 1844, LDS archives. Neibaur alleges that Jane Law tried unsuccessfully to seduce Joseph Smith, then told her husband that Joseph had proposed to her. In Jane Law's favor, it is well documented that Joseph had married at least eleven already married women (see below), one of whom (Marinda Hyde) was the wife of an apostle. If Joseph did propose marriage to the wife of a prominent opponent of polygamy, a member of the First Presidency, it can only be seen as an act of considerable recklessness. See above for the allegation that Jane Law actually did become Joseph's plural wife. It is impossible to sort out the crossfire of evidence on this question within the limits of this essay; a fuller study is needed.

21. Newell and Avery, 158, cf. 164, 179.

rah Kimball, at the time married to Hiram Kimball, "He said that in teaching this he realized that he jeopardized his life."²² Furthermore, some of Joseph's marriages were polyandrous—he was joined to women who were already married to other men²³; and such relationships could involve a jealous husband.

Thus the doctrine of plural marriage was of central importance to Joseph, for religious, doctrinal, ecclesiastical, and emotional reasons. William Clayton, Joseph's scribe and companion in Nauvoo, remembered that Joseph spoke of little else in private in the last year of his life.²⁴ As Joseph developed the principle of sealing ordinances that connected families for eternity, this doctrine was inextricably bound up with plural marriage. Later nineteenth-century Mormons taught that a monogamist could not gain complete salvation,²⁵ a belief clearly based on Joseph's teachings.²⁶

THE NUMBER OF JOSEPH SMITH'S WIVES

Though thirty-three is less than forty-eight, it is still a large polygamous family. One may wonder why Joseph did not marry five wives, or two or three, and then stop. This would have been safer and would have complied with the reportedly divine command to practice polygamy. However, he apparently believed that exaltation, including deification,²⁷

22. According to Sarah, *Historical Record* 6 (May 1887): 232: "Early in the year 1842, Joseph Smith taught me . . . the doctrine of plural marriage . . . I asked him to teach it to some one else."

23. See above, in the chart, and further discussion below.

24. Clayton, in *Historical Record* 6:226: "We were scarcely ever together, alone, but he was talking on the subject, and explaining that doctrine and principles connected with it."

25. For example, Orson Pratt, in a speech on 7 October 1874, said,

I did hope there was more intelligence among the Latter-day Saints, and a greater understanding of principle than to suppose that any one can be a member of this Church in good standing and yet reject polygamy. The Lord has said, that those who reject this principle reject their salvation, they shall be damned, saith the Lord; those to whom I reveal this law and they do not receive it, shall be damned. Now here comes in our consciences. We have either to renounce Mormonism, Joseph Smith, Book of Mormon, Book of Covenants, and the whole system of things as taught by the Latter-day Saints, and say that God has not raised up a Church, has not raised up a prophet, has not begun to restore all things as he promised, we are obliged to do this, or else to say, with all our hearts, "Yes, we are polygamists, and believe in the principle, and we are willing to practice it, because God has spoken from the heavens" (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool, Eng.: F. D. Richards, 1854-86), 17:225-26; cf. Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 14-19, 84-113).

26. Cf. William Clayton affidavit, in *Historical Record* 6:226: "From him [Joseph Smith] I learned that the doctrine of plural and celestial marriage is the most holy and important doctrine ever revealed to man on the earth, and that without obedience to that principle no man can ever attain to the fulness of exaltation in celestial glory." Cf. D&C 132:26.

27. For the Mormon doctrine of exaltation, see Joseph Smith's King Follett discourse in Andrew Ehat and Lyndon Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980), 340-62; also D&C 132, the revelation on plural marriage.

depended on the size of a man's family *sealed to him in this life*. Benjamin Johnson, a brother of Joseph's plural wife Almera Johnson and a close friend of Joseph, wrote: "The First Command was to 'Multiply' and the Prophet taught us that Dominion & powr in the great Future would be Comensurate with the no [number] of 'Wives Childin & Friends' that we inheret here and that our great mission to earth was to Organize a Neculi [nucleus] of Heaven to take with us. To the increace of which there would be no end."²⁸

By this doctrine, exaltation depended on having a numerous family sealed to one in this life. The emphasis on increase echoes the Abrahamic promise, in which God promised Abraham that his posterity would be as plentiful as the dust of the earth (Gen. 13:16; 16:10; 17:6; 18:18; 22:17). Early Mormons taught that Joseph had the doctrine of plural marriage "revealed to him while he was engaged in the work of translation of the Scriptures."²⁹ Daniel Bachman concludes that it was the translation of Genesis, specifically the Abraham passages, that prompted Joseph to ask about plural marriage in February 1831 and receive his first revelations on the topic.³⁰ The example of Abraham clearly had a powerful impact on Joseph; Abraham and the Abrahamic promise are prominently mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 132, the revelation on polygamy and exaltation.³¹

The idea that one had to be sealed to one's family nucleus *in this life* may depend on another biblical passage, Matthew 22:30, in which Jesus states that "in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage." Joseph apparently interpreted this to mean that this life, not the next, was the place where one had to create one's "extended family,"

28. In Benjamin Johnson to George Gibbs, 1903, LDS archives, published in Dean R. Zimmerman, ed., *I Knew the Prophets: An Analysis of the Letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George F. Gibbs, Reporting Doctrinal Views of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young* (Bountiful, UT: Horizon, 1976), 47. Cf. the Nauvoo journal of Joseph Fielding, edited by Andrew F. Ehat, in *Brigham Young University Studies* 19 (Winter 1979): 133-66, 154: "I understand that a Man's Dominion will be as God's is, over his own Creatures and the more numerous they greater his dominion."

29. Joseph Noble, who sealed Louisa Beaman to Joseph in 1841, "Plural Marriage," *Millennial Star* 16:454 (minutes of Davis Stake conference); cf. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," 61.

30. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," 67-68, n53; Robert J. Matthews, *A Plainer Translation: Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 64-67.

31. D&C 132:1, 29-37, the Abrahamic promise in v. 30; D&C 132:65; cf. Book of Abraham, in *The Pearl of Great Price*.

one's kingdom, by marriage.³² Orson Pratt, in a discourse given in 1859, taught this explicitly.³³

Thus Joseph's practice of polygamy, influenced strongly by these two scriptures, is another example of the early American Christian primitivism that shaped him and early Mormonism. The Old Testament, with its prophets and temples and polygamy, is a central thread running through Joseph's life and is clearly a primary source for his sense of prophetic mission and his doctrine.³⁴

The importance of the size of one's eternal family, and the necessity of building it up on this earth, is shown by the custom of adoption practiced in the late Nauvoo period by Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders, who would have grown men, with their families, sealed to them as "sons"; these sons would even sign their name with their "father's" last name. In the late Nauvoo period, among the elite Mormon leadership, there reportedly was competition to add new members, "sons," to their adoptive families. Young had a number of "children" in his adoptive family; one of his adoptive sons, John D. Lee, in turn, had his own sizeable adoptive family.³⁵ This is explainable in light of the principle of degree of one's salvation according to the size of one's earthly "kingdom." Marrying plural wives was a comparable method of extending

32. This passage is also quoted in D&C 132:16. Cf. "Letter from Gen. Bennett," in *Hawkeye*, New Series, No. 28 (Burlington, IA), 7 Dec. 1843: "[Joseph Smith teaches that] as they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in Heaven, in eternity, it has been revealed to him that there will be no harmony in heaven unless the *Saints* select their companions and marry IN TIME, FOR ETERNITY!!! They must marry in time so as to begin to form that sincere attachment and unsophisticated affection which it is so necessary to consummate in eternity in order to the peace of Heaven." Cf. Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 15-16.

33. *Journal of Discourses* 6:358-59.

34. For Mormon primitivism, see Marvin S. Hill, "The Shaping of the Mormon Mind in New England and New York," *Brigham Young University Studies* 9 (1969): 351-72; Marvin S. Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989). For non-Mormon religious primitivism in America, see Richard Hughes, ed., *The American Quest for the Primitive Church* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Richard Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence, Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630-1875* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); and Thomas Alexander, *Things In Heaven and Earth, the Life and Times of Wilford Woodruff, A Mormon Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 16-17, 91, 341; Gordon Irving, "The Mormons and the Bible in the 1830's," *Brigham Young University Studies* 13 (Summer 1973): 473-88.

35. Hosea Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier*, ed. Juanita Brooks (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1964), 1:178; speech by Brigham Young, Feb. 1847, in *The Journals of John D. Lee, 1846-1847*, ed. Charles Kelly (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984), 77-84, cf. 93-94; Gordon Irving, "The Law of Adoption: One Phase of the Mormon Concept of Salvation, 1830-1900," *Brigham Young University Studies* 14 (Spring 1974): 291-314; Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 195-99; Juanita Brooks, *John Doyle Lee: Zealot, Pioneer Builder, Scapegoat* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1992), 73-74; Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball*, 129; Hill, *Quest for Refuge*, 114.

one's family in this life so as to increase one's power, dominion, exaltation in the next. Marriage, sealing, and adoption, in fact, were nearly interchangeable concepts. When John D. Lee married two women in 1845, he wrote in his diary, "About this time my family began to increase by the Law of Adoption. Feb 5, 1844 [1845] Nancy Bean was adopted into my family April 19, 1845 Louisa Free was also admitted—taking upon her my name."³⁶

In Helen Mar Kimball's marriage to Joseph Smith, Joseph and Heber C. Kimball, Helen's father, desired the marriage so that Heber's family would be linked eternally to Joseph, thus assuring their salvation.³⁷ Michael Quinn, with his interest in prosopography, emphasizes the fact that Joseph's plural marriages linked him with important men in the church.³⁸ This would have given the two connected parties both earthly and eschatological advantages.

When Jedediah Grant preached on the subject of Joseph's plural marriages, he referred to them in terms of Joseph "adding to his family": "When the family organization was revealed from heaven—the patriarchal order of God, and Joseph began, on the right and the left, to add to his family, what a quaking there was in Israel."³⁹

Thus in Joseph's Nauvoo ideology, a fullness of salvation depended on the *quantity* of family members sealed to a man in this life; this puts the number of women Joseph married into an understandable context. This doctrine also makes it clear that, though Joseph's marriages undoubtedly had a sexual dimension (see the following sections), important theological concepts also drove his polygamy, as well as the related purpose of gaining the highest possible exaltation by linking elite families to

36. In Brooks, *John Doyle Lee*, 65. In his *Mormonism Unveiled*, 106, Lee mentions being sealed to these women.

37. Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, Autobiographical Sketch, 1881, LDS archives; also in Linda Newell papers, Marriott Library, and fully discussed in Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," 150-51, 337.

38. D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932: An American Elite," Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1976, 74: "Through polygamous marriages, a Mormon General Authority could marry the close relatives of his associates in the hierarchy, thus reinforcing preexisting kinship connections and also introducing into the hierarchical family other General Authorities who were otherwise unrelated. Apparently Joseph Smith began this process." Though Quinn emphasizes dynastic aspects of Joseph's marriages, he would probably agree that there were complex reasons for these marriages, in which spiritual attraction, sexual attraction, and desired dynastic links all combined. Joseph would have been attracted to the women he knew well, and he simply knew the Mormon elite better than other Mormons. In fact, the polyandrous marriages (see below) might reasonably pose a threat to the stability of Joseph's relationships with "first husbands," as the case of Orson Pratt shows. Even proposals to unmarried daughters could endanger Joseph's relationships with their fathers, as the case of Sidney Rigdon shows.

39. *Journal of Discourses* 2:13-14 (19 Feb. 1854).

him for both earthly and eternal reasons.⁴⁰

THE AGES OF JOSEPH SMITH'S WIVES

We next look at the ages of Joseph's wives at the time they were sealed to him. In the age group 14 to 20 are eleven wives—33 percent; in the group 21-30, nine wives—27 percent. In the group 31 to 40, eight wives—24 percent. In the group 41 to 50, there is a substantial drop off: two wives, or 6 percent. In the group 51-60, three wives, or 9 percent.

The teenage group of wives is the largest, though the twenty-year and thirty-year groups are comparable. This finding contradicts the folk-wisdom in Mormonism that sees polygamy as beginning in order to take care of older unattached women. In actual practice, this age summary suggests that sexual attraction was an important part of Joseph's plural marriages. However, the command to multiply and replenish was also part of his polygamy theology, so non-sexual marriage was not part of the polygamous program, as Joseph taught it.

We may ask why Joseph married a few older women. Two reasons can be offered. First, two of these women, Fanny Young Murray and Rhoda Richards, were wives of favored apostles, so the marriages may be considered dynastic. Interestingly, Joseph's youngest wife, Helen Mar Kimball, was the daughter of another loyal apostle, Heber C. Kimball, so that marriage may be considered dynastic also, not motivated solely by sexual interest.

Second, older women served as teachers and messengers to introduce and convert younger women to polygamy in Nauvoo. Elizabeth Durfee and Patty Sessions belong in this category.⁴¹ Eliza R. Snow acted in this capacity in Utah.⁴² For Mormon feminists unsympathetic to patriarchal polygamy, this is probably one of the most troubling aspects of Mormon plural marriage: women co-opting younger women into the order.⁴³

40. Brodie emphasized the sexual dimension of Joseph's marriages almost to the exclusion of other motivations; see Marvin Hill's critique, "Secular or Sectarian History? A Critique of *No Man Knows My History*," *Church History* 43 (1974): 78-96 (93-95), also Hill's "Brodie Revisited: A Reappraisal," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 7 (Winter 1972): 73-85. "With regard to plural marriage, where Brodie is so confident that the real Joseph Smith, the pleasure lover and sensualist, shows through, there is no evidence in his writings to suggest that he thought of it in other than religious terms" (76). This is not to deny a sexual/emotional dimension in Joseph's plural marriages; it simply was not the only motivation. See my article, "Fawn Brodie on Joseph Smith's Polygamy: A Critical View," forthcoming in a volume of essays on Brodie from Utah State University Press in 1996.

41. Emily Partridge, *Autobiography*, 4; Jackson, *A Narrative*, 14.

42. Fanny Stenhouse, *Tell It All* (Hartford, CT: A. D. Worthington, 1874), 430-32.

43. Cf. B. Carmon Hardy, "The Lords of Creation: Polygamy, the Abrahamic Household, and Mormon Patriarchy," *Journal of Mormon History* 20 (Spring 1994): 140-41.

SEX IN JOSEPH SMITH'S MARRIAGES

Emma Hale Smith, Joseph's first wife, told Lucy M. Smith, wife of Apostle George A. Smith, that Joseph's wives were "celestial" only, that he had no earthly marital relations with them. "They were only sealed for eternity they were not to live with him and have children." Lucy later wrote that when she told this to her husband,

He related to me the circumstance of his calling on Joseph late one evening and he was just taking a wash and Joseph told him that one of his wives had just been confined and Emma was the Midwife and he had been assisting her. He [George A. Smith] told me [Lucy Smith] this to prove to me that the women were married for time [as well as for eternity], as Emma had told me that Joseph never taught any such thing.⁴⁴

Because of claims by Reorganized Latter-day Saints that Joseph was not really married polygamously in the full (i.e., sexual) sense of the term, Utah Mormons (including Joseph's wives) affirmed repeatedly that Joseph had physical sexual relations with his plural wives—despite the Victorian conventions in nineteenth-century American religion which otherwise would have prevented mention of sexual relations in marriage.

For instance, Mary Elizabeth Rollins (Lightner Smith Young) stated that she knew of three children born to Joseph's plural wives. "I know he had six wives and I have known some of them from childhood up. I know he had three children. They told me. I think two are living today but they are not known as his children as they go by other names."⁴⁵ Melissa Lott (Smith Willes) testified that she had been Joseph's wife "in very deed."⁴⁶ Emily D. Partridge (Smith Young) said she "roomed" with Joseph the night following her marriage to him and said that she had "carnal intercourse" with him.⁴⁷

Other early witnesses also affirmed this. Benjamin Johnson wrote, "On the 15th of May . . . the Prophet again Came and at my hosue [house] occupied the Same Room & Bed with my Sister that the month previous he had occupied with the Daughter of the Later Bishop Partridge as his wife."⁴⁸ Joseph Noble wrote that Joseph told him he had spent the night

44. Statement, dated 18 May 1892, signed by Lucy M. Smith, wife of George A. Smith, George A. Smith papers, Marriott Library.

45. Mary Lightner, "Remarks" at Brigham Young University, 14 Apr. 1905, 5, Mary Lightner collection, Lee Library.

46. Affidavit of Melissa Willes, 3 Aug. 1893, quoted in Raymond Bailey, "Emma Hale: Wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith," M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1952, 98-100; cf. Temple Lot, 98, 105; Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 156.

47. Temple Lot Case (complete transcript), 364, 367, 384; see Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 15.

48. Zimmerman, *I Knew the Prophets*, 44.

with Louisa Beaman.⁴⁹

When Angus Cannon, a Salt Lake City stake president, visited Joseph Smith III in 1905, Joseph asked rhetorically, if these women were his father's wives, "how was it that there was no issue from them." Cannon replied,

All I knew was that which Lucy Walker herself contends. They were so nervous and lived in such constant fear that they could not conceive. He made light of my reply. He said, "I am informed that Eliza Snow was a virgin at the time of her death." I in turn said, "Brother Heber C. Kimball, I am informed, asked her the question if she was not a virgin although married to Joseph Smith and afterwards to Brigham Young, when she replied in a private gathering, "I thought you knew Joseph Smith better than that."⁵⁰

Cannon went on to mention the one case in which a plural wife of Joseph Smith claimed to have had a child by him: Sylvia Sessions (Lyon) and her child Josephine Lyon (Fisher).⁵¹ Josephine left an affidavit stating that her mother, Sylvia, on her deathbed told her (Josephine) that she (Josephine) was the daughter of Joseph Smith.⁵² This affidavit will be examined in more detail later.

Finally, posterity was an important theological element in Joseph's Abrahamic promise justification for polygamy.⁵³ It would be extremely odd if his actual polygamy did not include the possibility of offspring.

Thus there is a great deal of evidence that Joseph Smith had sexual relations with at least some of his wives. The explanation for the lack of

49. Temple Lot Case, 427.

50. Angus M. Cannon, statement of interview with Joseph III, 23, LDS archives.

51. *Ibid.*, 25-26: "I will now refer you to one case where it was said by the girl's grandmother that your father has a daughter born of a plural wife. The girl's grandmother was Mother Sessions . . . She was the grand-daughter of Mother Sessions. That girl, I believe, is living today, in Bountiful, north of this city. I heard prest. Young, a short time before his death, refer to the report . . . The woman is now said to have a family of children, and I think she is still living."

52. One might interpret the Fisher affidavit as referring to Josephine as a non-biological child of Joseph who would be sealed to him in the eternities, because Sylvia had married Joseph for eternity. However, the Cannon statement shows that Patty Sessions (Smith) (and nineteenth-century Mormons such as Cannon and Brigham Young) understood Josephine to be Joseph's biological child, so the Fisher affidavit should be interpreted as referring to a biological child.

53. See Johnson statement, above. Johnson also wrote that Joseph taught him "plainly" "that the whole object and end of matrimony was the procreation of our species and that the command to multiply and replenish the earth fell upon all the children of Adam both in obligation and privilege." "Open Letter to the President of the United States" [Grover Cleveland], 15 Jan. 1886, LDS archives, quoted in E. Dale LeBaron, "Benjamin Franklin Johnson: Colonizer, Public Servant, and Church Leader," M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1966, 80.

children may be that, because of secrecy in Nauvoo polygamous practice, some of Joseph's children grew up under other names, as Mary Lightner suggested.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Joseph's wives may not have had numerous posterity because he was not able to visit them regularly, both because of legal problems (he was often arrested or hiding from the law in Nauvoo) and because Emma watched him carefully and it was difficult to arrange meetings (however furtive) with his wives.⁵⁵ Finally, on top of these pressures, he soon had many wives and often added new wives to his family, so he would have been hard pressed to visit all of these wives frequently and regularly.⁵⁶ In addition, later polygamy has shown that many husbands usually had favorite wives, so Joseph probably neglected some of his. All of these factors would have combined to limit the number of children. However, it is clear that some of his plural wives did have children, if we can rely on the statements of George A. Smith, Josephine Fisher, and Elizabeth Lightner. Finally, some of Joseph's wives were married to other men in polyandrous relationships, so such wives would probably have children by their "first husbands," with whom they were cohabiting regularly, not by Joseph.

Despite all of this evidence, some have continued to argue that Joseph did not have marital relations with his plural wives, using the following arguments:

First, some have concluded that Helen Mar Kimball, who married Joseph when she was fourteen, did not have marital relations with him. This is possible; there are cases of Mormons marrying underage women

54. See also Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 310n111.

55. There is a letter from Joseph to a wife, Sarah Ann Whitney, in which he arranged a secret meeting with her and her parents. See Joseph Smith to Newel, Elizabeth, and Sarah Ann Whitney, 18 Aug. 1842, in Dean Jesse, ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984), 539-40; in this letter he instructed the family to come only if Emma was not there and to burn the letter after reading it.

56. A recent study has concluded that there are only six days in a woman's menstrual month when she can become pregnant. Since these six days are difficult to pinpoint precisely, a couple desiring pregnancy should have intercourse frequently. If a couple has intercourse once a week, there is a 10 percent chance of pregnancy in a typical month; with daily intercourse, there is still only a 25 percent chance of pregnancy in a typical month. In addition, a third of all pregnancies result in miscarriage. Allen J. Wilcox, Clarice R. Weinberg, and Donna D. Baird, "Timing of Sexual Intercourse in Relation to Ovulation," *New England Journal of Medicine* 333 (7 Dec. 1995): 1517-21, cf. 1563. Joseph Smith almost certainly was having daily sexual relations with none of his thirty to forty plural wives. In addition, miscarriages and infant mortality rates in malaria-ridden Nauvoo would have further limited what few children he had by plural wives. Furthermore, he married the majority of his wives in 1842 and especially 1843, less than a year before he died. However, as we have seen, Mary Elizabeth Lightner said she knew of three children of Joseph who were raised under other names. Of these three, one, Josephine Lyon Fisher, has been convincingly documented.

but not having relations with them until they were older.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, there is no definite evidence that Helen Mar Kimball did not have relations with Joseph.⁵⁸

We have seen that Emma Smith stated that Joseph's marriages were for eternity only, not for time ("time" marriages would include sexuality). But there is convincing evidence that many of Joseph's wives were married to him for eternity and time, with sexuality included. Eliza Snow, in her autobiography, wrote that "I was sealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, for time and eternity, in accordance with the *Celestial Law of Marriage* which God has revealed."⁵⁹

Some have pointed out that Mary Rollins (Lightner Smith Young), a polyandrous wife, said, in 1905, "I . . . was sealed to Joseph for Eternity." Thus, they argue, Joseph had no relations with her, a polyandrous wife, as he was married to her for eternity only. However, it is not clear that she meant that she was sealed to Joseph for eternity only, not for time. Apparently she was merely emphasizing eternity in this statement.⁶⁰ In fact, Lightner testified in three different places that she was also sealed to Joseph for time. For example, in a 1902 statement she said, "Brigham Young Sealed me to him [Joseph], for time & all eternity."⁶¹

Zina Huntington (Jacobs Smith Young) also had a polyandrous relationship with Joseph Smith and her first husband, Henry Jacobs. As in the case of Lightner, she gave an interview in which she referred to her marriage to Joseph as "eternal," not for "time." However, at another time in the interview she strongly emphasized that she was married to Joseph for time and eternity:

[Zina:] . . . he [Joseph Smith] married me . . . When Brigham Young returned from England, he repeated the ceremony

57. For instance, John D. Lee married a girl aged fourteen during the 1856 Utah Reformation with the understanding that he would not have a sexual relationship with her until she was older. She put off having sex with him and eventually fell in love with Lee's oldest son. Lee released her from the marriage to him and gave her to his son with his blessing. Brooks, *John Doyle Lee*, 233, 239-40. See also Juanita Brooks, *Emma Lee* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1975), 8, 11.

58. See n37. This evidence is ambiguous, not proving or disproving cohabitation.

59. Autobiography, in Bancroft Library, 13, film in LDS archives; published in Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995). Patty Sessions, a polyandrous wife, wrote, "I was sealed to Joseph Smith by Willard Richards March 9 1842 in Newel K Whitneys chamber Nauvoo, for time and all eternity." Patty Bartlett Sessions journal, page after 16 June 1860, LDS archives.

60. Lightner, "Statement."

61. "Statement, Febr. 8, 1902," Mary Lightner collection, Lee Library; Lightner, autobiography, Utah State Historical Society: "in the month of March 1841 [1842] Brigham Young Sealed us for time, and all Eternity"; Lightner, 23 Mar. 1877 affidavit (Scott Kenney collection, Marriott Library).

for time and eternity. . . . I was sealed to Joseph Smith for eternity.

[Question:] Mrs. Young, you claim, I believe, that you were not married to him for time?

[Zina:] For eternity. I was married to Mr. Jacobs, but the marriage was unhappy and we parted . . .

[Q:] Is it a fact then, Mrs. Young, that Joseph was not married to you only in the sense of being sealed for eternity?

[Zina:] As his wife for time and eternity.

[Q:] Mrs. Young, you have answered that question in two ways; for time, and for time and eternity.

[Zina:] I meant for eternity.⁶²

Some interpreters have placed great weight on these statements to show that Zina's marriage was "spiritual" only. But the interview is so contradictory on this issue (the elderly Zina was obviously flustered by the RLDS judge's harsh questions) that it cannot be used as solid evidence to prove anything about her marriage in this respect. One even wonders if there was a significant distinction between marriage for eternity and marriage for time and eternity among the early Mormons. Present-day Mormon temple marriages are called eternal marriages, though it is generally understood that they include time also.

Finally, Joseph married some women who were older; in later Mormon polygamy it was customary that there would be no sexual relations in such a case.⁶³ So it is possible that Joseph had no marital relations with these middle-aged or older women.

In conclusion, though it is possible that Joseph had some marriages in which there were no sexual relations, there is no explicit or convincing evidence for such a marriage (except, perhaps, in the cases of the older wives). And in a significant number of Joseph's marriages, there is evidence for sexual relations.

MARITAL STATUS AT TIME OF MARRIAGE: POLYANDRY

Eighteen of Joseph's wives were single when he married them and

62. Wight interview, "Evidence from Zina D. Huntington Young," *Saints Herald* 52 (11 Jan. 1905): 29.

63. Brigham Young told Horace Greeley, "I have some aged women sealed to me upon the principle of sealing which I no more think of making a wife of than I would my Grand Mother." Clerk's report of interview, 13 July 1859, Lee Library, cited in Jeffrey Johnson, "Determining and Defining 'Wife': the Brigham Young Households," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20 (Fall 1987): 57-70, 58. Cf. a similar statement by John D. Lee, quoted by Stanley Ivins, "Notes on Mormon Polygamy," in D. Michael Quinn, ed., *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 173.

had never been married previously. Another four were widows; one, Agnes Coolbrith Smith, was the widow of his younger brother, Don Carlos, making this a strict Levirate marriage. However, the remaining eleven were married and cohabiting with their husbands when Joseph married them. Another woman, Sarah Ann Whitney, married Joseph, then married a man concurrently in a civil, "pretend" marriage. Thus I use the term polyandry—which means one woman married to two men simultaneously—to describe these marriages.⁶⁴

Polyandry is one of the major problems found in Joseph Smith's polygamy, and many questions surround it. Why did Joseph at first choose primarily polyandrous marriages? Did the "first" husbands know about the marriages, and if so, how did they feel about them? Did they willingly or reluctantly allow the marriages to Joseph? Did such marriages with Joseph include sexuality, and what was the doctrinal rationale for them?

In the past Joseph Smith's polyandry has often been ignored or glossed over. But if these women merit our serious attention, we must document and discuss their marriages. Joseph F. Smith, seventh president of the LDS church, and Andrew Jenson, Assistant Church Historian, spearheaded documenting these women's plural, polyandrous marriages to Joseph Smith, including affidavits with dates of marriage. These women's other, civil marriages and dates of childbirths are also easily documented in early sources. These dates have forced the issue for the historian. The only option is to come to as complete and balanced an un-

64. For introductions to polyandry in world religions and anthropology, see Prince Peter, *A Study of Polyandry* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1963); S. D. Singh, *Polyandry in Ancient India* (Delhi: Vikas, 1978); Y. S. Parmar, *Polyandry in the Himalayas* (Delhi: Vikas, 1975); Manis Kumar Raha and Palash Chandra Coomar, eds., *Polyandry in India* (Delhi: Gian, 1987), with general bibliography at 20-22; W. H. Sangre and N. E. Levine, eds., *Women with Many Husbands: Polyandrous Alliance and Marital Flexibility in Africa and Asia*, a special issue of *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 11 (1980); G. D. Berreman, "Pahari Polyandry: A Comparison," *American Anthropologist* 64 (1962), 60-75. Polyandry is rare compared to polygyny and is virtually never found without polygyny. Often polyandry and polygyny are combined (multiple men taking multiple wives, with each wife being married to each man), and the result has been called polygynandry. Polyandry is often fraternal, i.e., two brothers marry a woman. Anthropologists have seen polyandry as serving to lessen tensions between brothers; it also increases the security of a wife and family in the prolonged absence of one brother. Some suggest that community of wives among brothers is an extension of community of possessions and wealth, in cultures where brothers inherit equally. Mormon polyandry was never systematized and was always secret, so none of these parallels applies fully. However, as there was a strong fraternal dimension to Mormon ecclesiastical fellowship, and as one's relationship with Joseph Smith was crucial for one's earthly and eternal welfare, some of these dynamics may have been in effect. See the quote by Jedediah Grant on consecrating one's wife (almost seen as a possession) to Joseph if required to do so.

derstanding as possible of their marriages.⁶⁵

One misconception concerning Joseph's polyandry is that it was a practice represented in only one or two unusual marriages; however, fully one-third of Joseph's plural wives, eleven of them, were polyandrous. If we superimpose a chronological perspective, we see that of Joseph's first twelve wives, nine were polyandrous. In Joseph's early marriages, polyandry was the norm, not the anomaly. (His later marriages were largely to single women, with two exceptions in 1843.)

This phenomenon might be easier to understand if one viewed these marriages to Joseph as a sort of *de facto* divorce from the first husband. However, the fact is that divorce from the first husband occurred in none of these cases, while Joseph was alive. After he married them, they continued to live with their "first husbands."

One explanation for Joseph's polyandry generally holds that the first husbands in these polyandrous marriages were disaffected from the church or were non-Mormon. In such a situation, Joseph would have married the woman to save her, and the woman would have wanted to be married to Joseph as a righteous husband who could bring her salvation. One might also expect the woman to leave the unworthy man.⁶⁶

Such an interpretation, however, is not supported by the totality of the evidence. Of the twelve certain polyandrous marriages (counting Sarah Ann Whitney), only three had non-member husbands: Mary Rollins (Lightner), Ruth Vose (Sayers), and Sarah Kingsley (Cleveland). And only one first husband was disaffected from the church when Joseph married the wife—Norman Buell, husband of Presendia Huntington.

All other husbands were active and in good standing in the church at the time Joseph married their wives. In fact, many were prominent church leaders and/or close friends of Joseph. George W. Harris, husband of Lucinda Pendleton, was a high councillor in Missouri and Nauvoo, a position somewhat equivalent to that of modern-day general authority. Henry Jacobs, husband of Zina Huntington, was a devoted friend of Joseph and a faithful missionary. Orson Hyde, husband of Marinda Johnson, was an apostle and was on a mission to Palestine when

65. Pioneering treatments are found in Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," 124-36; and Richard Van Wagoner, "Mormon Polyandry in Nauvoo," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18 (Fall 1985): 67-83.

66. Bachman emphasizes this interpretation of Joseph's polyandry in "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," 124-36: "Three of Smith's wives experienced marital difficulties in their first marriage, and it appears that he [Joseph] wed them out of concern for both their earthly and eternal welfare." He adds that Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner was married to a non-Mormon, so Joseph married her for the same reasons. Then he does mention, "two or three of them [Joseph's other polyandrous wives' marriages to their "first husbands"] do not appear to have been unsatisfactory unions." However, Bachman's emphasis here is on the problematic husbands; "two or three" satisfactory unions is an understatement.

Joseph married his wife. Though Orson had turned against Joseph in Missouri, he was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve in full fellowship during his mission. Jonathan Holmes, husband of Elvira Cowles, was a bodyguard of Joseph and was one of his pallbearers after his death. Windsor Lyon was a member in good standing at the time Joseph married his wife, Sylvia Sessions, and lent Joseph money after the marriage. David Sessions, husband of Patty Bartlett, was also a member in good standing.

These data lead to the conclusion that Joseph married these women not because they were married to non-members, but because they were married to faithful Mormons who were close, devoted friends of his. This again suggests that the men knew about the marriages and permitted them.

As we have seen, it has been suggested that Joseph married polyandrously when the marriage was unhappy, but this does not square with the evidence. If it were true, it would have been easy for the woman to divorce her husband, then marry Joseph. But none of these women left her "first husband" while Joseph lived; in fact, some stayed with their "first husbands" till death. In the case of Zina Huntington Jacobs and Henry Jacobs—often used as an example of Joseph marrying a woman whose marriage was unhappy—Joseph married her just seven months after she married Henry, and Zina stayed with Henry for years after Joseph's death. Their separation was forced, when Brigham Young (who had married Zina polyandrously in the Nauvoo temple) sent Henry on a mission to England and began living with Zina himself.

Having rejected the theory that Joseph married polyandrously when the marriages were already unsatisfactory or involved non-member husbands, we turn to statements in the historical record that supply a convincing rationale for Joseph Smith's polyandry. First, Joseph regarded marriages performed without Mormon priesthood authority as invalid, just as he regarded baptisms performed without Mormon priesthood authority as invalid. Thus all couples in Nauvoo who accepted Mormonism were suddenly unmarried, granted Joseph's absolutist, exclusivist claims to divine authority. John D. Lee wrote:

About the same time the doctrine of "sealing" for an eternal state was introduced, and the Saints were given to understand that their marriage relations with each other were not valid. That those who had solemnized the rites of matrimony had no authority of God to do so. That the true priesthood was taken from the earth with the death of the Apostles . . . They were married to each other only by their own covenants, and that if their marriage relations had not been productive of blessings and peace, and they felt it oppressive to remain together, they were at liberty to make their own choice, as much as if they had not been married. That it was a sin for people to live together, and

raise or beget children in alienation from each other. There should be an affinity between each other, not a lustful one, as that can never cement that love and affection that should exist between a man and his wife.⁶⁷

This is a radical, almost utopian rejection of civil, secular, sectarian, non-Mormon marriage. Such "lower" marriage was even a "sin" unless a higher "affinity" cemented the partners together.

Another relevant doctrinal statement comes from an 1861 speech by Brigham Young, which is preserved in two versions:

Also there was another way—in which a woman could leave [a] man—if the woman Preferred—another man higher in authority & he is willing to take her. & her husband gives her up—there is no Bill of divorce required in the case it is right in the sight of God.⁶⁸

The Second Way in which a wife can be seperated from her husband, while he continues to be faithful to his God and his priesthood, I have not revealed, except to a few persons in this Church; and a few have received it from Joseph the prophet as well as myself. If a woman can find a man holding the keys of the priesthood with higher power and authority than her husband, and he is disposed to take her he can do so, otherwise she has got to remain where she is . . . there is no need for a bill of divorcement . . . To recapitulate. First if a man forfeits his covenants with a wife, or wives, becoming unfaithful to his God, and his priesthood, that wife or wives are free from him without a bill of divorcement. Second. If a woman claims protection at the hands of a man, possessing more power in the priesthood and higher keys, if he is disposed to rescue her and has obtained the consent of her husband to make her his wife he can do so without a bill of divorcement.⁶⁹

This statement gives two options: (1) if a man apostatizes from the

67. John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 146. Jedediah Grant, in 1854, remembered Nauvoo members saying about marriage, "Joseph says all covenants are done away and none are binding but the new covenants" (*Journal of Discourses* 2:13-14). Orson Pratt said in 1846, "As all the ordinances of the gospel Administered by the world since the Aposticy of the Church was illegal, in like manner was the marriage Cerimony illegal" (Wilford Woodruff journal, 15 Aug. 1846 [Kenney, 3:260]). There are similar statements by others collected in Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," 126-28; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy* 45-47; cf. D&C 132:18; Zimmerman, *I Knew the Prophets*, 57. For early Mormon absolutist authoritarianism, see Mario S. De Pillis, "The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism," 13-36, in Quinn, *New Mormon History*; Hill *Quest for Refuge*, 28, 204.

68. James Beck Notebooks, 1859-65, Vol. 1, 8 Oct. 1861, LDS archives; as quoted in Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 162. Cf. Frederick Kessler diary, 8 Oct. 1861, Marriott Library.

69. "A Few Words on Doctrine," speech at Tabernacle by Brigham Young, 8 Oct. 1861, Brigham Young addresses, recorded by George Watts, LDS archives. Published in *For We Men Only*, ed. Dennis Short (Salt Lake City: Short, 1977). Cf. Campbell and Campbell, "Divorce Among Mormon Polygamists," in Quinn, *New Mormon History*, 195.

church, his wife can leave him without a formal divorce⁷⁰; (2) if a woman desires to be married to a man with greater priesthood authority than her current husband has, and if both men agree, she may be sealed to the second man without formal divorce. Brigham reports that he learned this from Joseph Smith.⁷¹ In some ways, this principle applies to Joseph's polyandrous marriages. He clearly was regarded as having more priesthood authority than any other living man, so he would be the most authoritative, spiritually desirable, second husband available.

The emphasis on the woman's desire is notable. In nineteenth-century Utah there are well-documented cases in which women asked to be married to a general authority.⁷² In Nauvoo, however, such cases would not be frequent, as polygamy was still secret. Also interesting is the emphasis on the volition of the first husband. This would be consistent with the suggestion made above, that the first husbands in Joseph's polyandrous marriages often knew about the marriages and permitted them.

The statement by Jedediah Grant referred to above will now be quoted more fully. My explanations are in brackets:

When the family organization was revealed from heaven—the patriarchal order of God, and Joseph began, on the right and the left, to add to his family, what a quaking there was in Israel. Says one brother to another, "Joseph says all covenants [previous marriages] are done away, and none are binding but the new covenants [marriage by priesthood sealing power]; now suppose Joseph should come and say he wanted your wife, what would you say to that?" "I would tell him to go to hell." This was the spirit of many in the early days of this Church [i.e., unwilling to consecrate everything to Joseph as mouthpiece of God] . . . What would a man of God say, who felt aright, when Joseph asked him for his money? [he would give it all willingly] Or if he came and said, "I want your wife?" "O yes," he would say, "here she is, there are plenty more" . . . Did the Prophet Joseph want every man's wife he asked for? He did not . . . the grand object in view was to try the people of God, to see what was in them. If such a man of God should come to me and say, "I want your gold and silver, or your wives," I should say, "Here they are, I wish I had more to give you, take all I have got." A man who has got the Spirit of God, and the light of eternity in him, has no trouble about such matters.⁷³

70. This happened to John Hyde in the mid-1850s; he left the Mormon church and his wife was immediately divorced from him. Heber Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses* 4:165, said: "the limb she was connected to was cut off, and she must again be grafted into the tree, if she wishes to be saved"; cf. Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 162.

71. A Utah example: Hannah Grover left her husband, Thomas Grover, because he was not prominent in the church, though a faithful member. Then she was sealed to Daniel Wells, a member of the First Presidency; see Campbell and Campbell, "Divorce Among Mormon Polygamists," 194.

72. E.g., Adelia Wilcox and Heber Kimball; see her Autobiography, LDS archives.

73. *Journal of Discourses* 2:13-14, 19 Feb. 1854.

This remarkable testimony to Joseph's polyandrous marriages from a sympathetic source touches on many areas of interest. First, Grant sees the practice in terms of extended family organization: "When the family organization was revealed." Polyandry would obviously link families to Joseph. "Joseph began, on the right and the left"—frequently—"to add to his family." Joseph is creating a large extended family through plural, sometimes polyandrous, marriages. "Joseph says all covenants are done away, and none are binding but the new covenants." Here we have the doctrine that previous marriages are of no effect, "illegal," in Orson Pratt's words. Grant expresses disapproval of those who were asked to give up their wives and refused.⁷⁴ He also shows what the proper attitude should have been when Joseph requested a wife: instant, unquestioning consecration of the wife and all other "possessions" to the prophet, if necessary. Then he states that Joseph did not want *every* wife he asked for, which implies that he wanted some of them (and Jedediah would have known about some of the polyandrous marriages). The emphasis here is on Joseph's testing his followers: "the grand object in view was to try the people of God." Jedediah was probably thinking of Vilate Kimball and, perhaps, Leonore Taylor. Yet the fact that at least eleven women were married to Joseph polyandrously, including the wife of prominent apostle Orson Hyde, shows that in many cases Joseph did not ask for the wife of a man only as a test; sometimes the test included giving up the wife.

Another doctrine that apparently influenced Joseph's polyandrous marriages was the Mormon belief in the pre-existence, which holds that our spirits lived with God before birth and were given special assignments there relating to what we would do here. According to Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner Smith, who was married to Adam Lightner when Joseph proposed to her, "Joseph Said I was his, before I came here. he said all the Devils in Hell should never get me from him."⁷⁵ Elsewhere she wrote that Joseph told her he had been commanded to marry her, "or Suffer condemnation—for I [Mary] was created for him before the foundation of the Earth was laid."⁷⁶ Apparently, if Joseph had a spiritual intu-

74. Heber C. Kimball was so asked and was extremely reluctant but finally complied (see Whitney, *Heber C. Kimball*, 333-35). John Taylor reportedly was also asked and was also extremely reluctant (John M. Whitaker journal, 1 Nov. 1890, Marriott Library). Joseph seems to have released these two from the request, stating that he had been testing them. Orson Hyde's wife, Marinda, on the other hand, was certainly married to Joseph. Jane Law also accused Joseph of approaching her, and her husband, William, believing her, was not willing to give her up; they subsequently left the church. Horace Cummings, *Contributor* 5 (Apr. 1884): 255; Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 147.

75. "Statement," 8 Feb. 1902, see above.

76. Autobiography; cf. Lightner's 1905 letter to Emmeline Wells, Lee Library, Mary Elizabeth Lightner collection.

ition that he was linked to a woman, he asserted that she had been sealed to him in the pre-existence, even though she was legally married to another man at the time. But, as we have seen, he taught that civil marriages performed without the priesthood sealing power were not valid, and were even sinful at times. Therefore, the link in the pre-existence would take priority over a marriage performed by invalid authority, secular or "sectarian," in this life. John D. Lee wrote that a spiritual "affinity" took precedence over secular ceremonies. Perhaps Joseph Smith also felt, as the Brigham Young statement suggests, that men with higher priesthood had a greater aptitude for spiritual affinity.

According to an antagonistic (but early and eyewitness) source, William Hall, the doctrine of "kindred spirits" was found in Nauvoo polyandry. According to this report, Joseph taught that "all real marriages were made in heaven before the birth of the parties."⁷⁷ This statement is supported by Lightner. There is at least one early "friendly" reference to the "kindred spirit" doctrine in marriage in the Nauvoo period. In an 1845 patriarchal blessing William Smith said, "But the fullness of her salvation cannot be made perfect until her companion is with her and those who are of his Kingdom, for the kindred spirits are gathered up and are united in the Celestial Kingdom of one."⁷⁸

Thus heavenly marriage in the pre-existence required earthly polyandry. Certain spirits were "kindred," matched in heaven before this life. They were born into this life, and because of unauthorized marriages performed without priesthood sealing power, the wrong spirits became linked "illegally." But when the kindred spirits recognized each other, the "illegal" marriage became of no effect and the "kindred" partners were free to marry each other—this time through the priesthood sealing power for eternity.

Apparently, however, Joseph would allow the wife to continue living with her first husband after such a marriage. As has been mentioned, there were no formal divorces as a result of his polyandrous marriages, and cohabitation with the first husband continued. But the first husband would recognize that he and the wife were not sealed for eternity—they

77. William Hall, *The Abominations of Mormonism Exposed* (Cincinnati: I. Hart, 1852), 12-13, cf. 41-43. Ann Eliza Young, writing in 1876, also reported that Joseph taught the doctrine of "kindred spirits" when he proposed marriage to women who were already married (*Wife No. 19*, 70-71).

78. Patriarchal Blessing by William Smith, 16 July 1845, at Nauvoo, on the head of Mary Ann Peterson, "sitting as proxy" for Ann B. Peterson, deceased. She was the dead wife of Charles Petersen. "Utah Pioneer Biographies," Federal Writers Project, 23:103-104, cf. Ivins Notebooks 5:276. A later reference from one of Joseph Smith's plural wives, Helen Mar Kimball Smith Whitney, told a woman friend, after kissing at parting, that "we were kindred spirits before we came on this planet." Helen Mar Whitney diary, May 28, 1886, Helen Mar Whitney collection, Merrill Library, Utah State University.

were married only till death. Joseph would be married to her for eternity. When eternal sealings were repeated in the Nauvoo temple in late 1845 and early 1846, two "first husbands," George Harris and Jonathan Holmes, stood as proxy for Joseph Smith as their wives were sealed to the prophet for eternity. Another "first husband," Henry Jacobs, stood as witness when his wife, Zina Huntington Jacobs Smith, was sealed eternally to Joseph in the Nauvoo temple, though Brigham Young, not Henry, stood proxy for Joseph in this case. Then Henry served as a witness as his wife was sealed to Brigham Young for time. After which, Henry and Zina with their son Zebulon began the pioneer trek to the west. Zina bore a second son to Jacobs, Henry Chariton, halfway across Iowa.

This kind of marriage was not viewed as eternal polyandry. A man could be sealed to many women for eternity, but a woman could be sealed to only one man for eternity. One might call it practical polyandry—i.e., on earth there were clearly two co-existent marriages—but they were of different types. According to Joseph Smith's "eternal," authoritarian perspective, only one marriage was "real," that performed by priesthood authority and eternal.

Neither of these concepts—the divine illegality of civil, sectarian marriage and the idea of higher, spiritual "affinity" between male and female spirits (even though they may happen to be married civilly to other people)—was original to Joseph Smith, though he developed them in his idiosyncratic way. An early study, *Spiritual Wives* by William Hepworth Dixon, published in 1868,⁷⁹ traces the roots of these concepts to Protestant Europe. He sees Emmuel Swedenborg as another important exponent of the tradition.⁸⁰ In Joseph Smith's era, we find the Rev. Erasmus Stone, who had a vision of men and women in the sky looking at each other with yearning and pain; he interpreted this to mean that "in the present stage of being, men and women are nearly always wrongly paired in marriage." The people in the vision were looking for their true mates with whom they had true affinity, a crucial word in this tradition. Stone then proceeded to find a married woman, Eliza Porter, with whom he developed a spiritual affinity.⁸¹ When true affinity is found, such love would not be limited to this life, but would be eternal, and so we have a comparison to the Mormon doctrine of eternal marriage. There is a parallel in Swedenborg to pre-existent matching of spirits, the doctrine Joseph taught Mary Elizabeth Lightner when he proposed to her: "Two souls which grew up together before life are bound to find each other again on

79. William Hepworth Dixon, *Spiritual Wives* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1868).

80. Ibid., 2:193: "Nearly all the contracts made on earth, says the Swede, are null and void from the beginning, because these unions are not made with natural pairs."

81. Ibid., 2:15-17.

earth."⁸²

Stone's story, like Joseph Smith's, was the product of the Burnt-over District in New York; much of this experimentation developed in a Protestant revival atmosphere. The "Spiritual Wives" polyandrous doctrine, a concept foreign to twentieth-century Mormons, was part of Joseph Smith's *zeitgeist*.⁸³ Though the system was clearly subject to the danger of abuse, it was developed by sincerely religious men: "the advocates of Spiritual wifehood are, and have been, for the most part ministers of the gospel, men of thought and learning," wrote Dixon.⁸⁴

We return now to the question of marital relations in polyandrous marriages. Some have thought that Joseph did not have physical relations with his "polyandrous" wives if the husband was faithful to the church or that the "first husband" did not have sex with the wife. Such a theoretical relationship has been called "pseudo-polyandry."⁸⁵ The evidence that is sometimes used to support this theory is the affidavit of Josephine Fisher, daughter of Sylvia Sessions (Lyons), one of Joseph's polyandrous wives. As previously noted, Josephine reported that Sylvia told her that she, Josephine, was the daughter of Joseph Smith. "She then told me that I was the daughter of the Prophet Joseph Smith, she having been sealed to the Prophet at the time that her husband Mr. Lyon was out of fellowship with the Church."⁸⁶

There are a number of problems with this statement. Sylvia was married to Windsor Lyon in 1838, then was married to Joseph Smith on 8 February 1842. Windsor was disfellowshipped from the church, but only after 7 November 1842. Thus Josephine's, or Sylvia's, statement is incorrect; Sylvia was sealed to Joseph while her husband was a church member in good standing. Possibly she was gliding over the polyandry, as has often happened in the Mormon historical record. Did Sylvia really mean

82. Quoted in John Cairncross, *After Polygamy Was Made a Sin* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul), 174-75.

83. See Whitney Cross, *The Burnt-Over District* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1950), 243-45.

84. Dixon, 1:89. The charlatan Robert Matthews ("Mathias the Prophet") also taught and practiced these principles. See Gilbert Seldes, *The Stammering Century* (New York: John Day Co., 1928), 126-27, "matched spirits." See also *Memoirs of Mathias the Prophet*, in Ivins Notebook 7:157-60; William Stone, *Matthias and His Impostures* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1835), 171, "all the marriages in the world were illegal," see also 169.

85. Andrew Ehat, "Pseudo-Polyandry: Explaining Mormon Polygyny's Paradoxical Companion—the Microscopic View," talk given at Sunstone Symposium, Washington, D.C., Aug. 1985.

86. Statement to Andrew Jenson, 24 Feb. 1915; cf. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 41. Disfellowshipment and excommunication were often equivalent in the early Mormon church. Cf. Nauvoo High Council minutes, 22 Sept. 1841, LDS archives, typescript in Marquardt collection, Marriott Library: "Seconded & caried that he should be disfellowshipped and his name erased from the church roll by the unanimous voice of the Branch."

that she had sexual relations with Joseph only when Windsor was dis-fellowshipped? Again, this is problematic. Would an antagonistic husband have tolerated a wife who withheld sexual privileges from him? It could easily produce an explosive situation; yet none of these husbands divorced their wives during Joseph's lifetime.

Another piece of evidence used to show that polyandrous wives were married only for eternity, not for time, is the interview with Zina Huntington (Jacobs) (Young). We have already seen that this interview is unsatisfactory evidence for taking either side of the argument. In the same way, Mary Elizabeth Lightner's statement that she was married to Joseph for eternity (as a polyandrous wife) has been used to show that she was not married to him for time; but she elsewhere specifically and repeatedly stated that she was married to Joseph for time and eternity. Patty Sessions, another polyandrous wife, also stated that she was married to Joseph for time and eternity.

Therefore, there is no good evidence that Joseph Smith did not have sexual relations with his wives, previously single or polyandrous. On the other hand, there is evidence that he had relations with at least some of his wives, including one polyandrous wife, Sylvia Sessions Lyon, who bore the only child of Joseph Smith for which we have affidavit evidence.

Finally, one wonders why these "first husbands" apparently acquiesced to their wives' marriages to Joseph. One possibility is that they were promised spiritual rewards in return. Such was the case with the fathers of three "single" plural wives. When Fanny Alger was married to Joseph, her family looked upon the sealing as an honor to them, according to Ann Eliza Webb. In the same way, when Sarah Whitney was sealed to Joseph, he rebaptized her parents and gave special blessings to her father, Newel Whitney. Heber C. Kimball wanted his daughter Helen to marry Joseph so that there would be an eternal connection between the two families, and Joseph himself told her that the marriage to him would ensure her family's salvation.⁸⁷

If we can apply these phenomena to the polyandrous families, including the husbands, it would explain some of the dynamics of polyandrous marriages: the husbands may have been promised that Joseph's marriage to their wives would contribute to their own exaltation after this life. "Buckeye's Lament," a piece of anti-Joseph doggerel published shortly before his death, supports this interpretation. "But if you yield

87. Fanny Alger: Ann Eliza Webb Young, *Wife No. 19*, 66-67. Sarah Ann Whitney: Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," 121-22; Kenneth Godfrey, "Causes of Mormon/Non-Mormon Conflict in Hancock County, Illinois, 1839-1846," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1967, 99n27. Helen Kimball Whitney: Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, *Autobiographical Sketch*, 1881, LDS archives, also in Linda Newell papers, Marriott Library.

willingly,/ Your daughters and your wives,/ In *spiritual marriage* to our POPE,/ He'll bless you all your lives;/ He'll seal you up, be damned you can't, No matter what you do—If that you only *stick* to him,/ He swears HE'LL *take you through*.”⁸⁸ The phrase “your daughters and your wives” clearly suggests that Joseph offered salvation to “first husbands,” as well as to the fathers of his brides.

It should also be borne in mind that the men and women involved in Nauvoo polygamy and polyandry did not understand it thoroughly; it was new doctrine; it was not preached openly; and though Joseph taught polygamy to his inner circle, practical experience often differed from didactic religious doctrine. So a husband giving his wife to Joseph may not have understood fully what the marriage meant. Helen Mar Kimball, a non-polyandrous wife, found her marriage to Joseph to mean more on an earthly plane than she had expected. Possibly the husbands and wives in polyandrous triangles had the same experience. In Nauvoo-period theological terminology, there was some ambiguity in the terms “sealing” and “marriage,” and it is possible that some men and women did not understand that “sealing” also meant “marriage” and included sexual relations. It is unfortunate that we do not have a full, frank memoir from even one of the polyandrous “first husbands”; we only have two autobiographies from two polyandrous wives, Mary Elizabeth Rollins and Zina Huntington.

CONCLUSION

Whatever the uncertainties in documentation for this polyandrous

88. *Warsaw Message*, 4 Feb. 1844, in Bachman, “A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage,” App. E, 338-40, cf. 264-65. A number of factors support the historical validity of this poem and a companion piece by the same author. For instance, the author knew of Joseph’s marriage to the Partridge sisters and to Martha McBride Knight and of his unsuccessful proposal to Nancy Rigdon, so he must have been an insider of some sort. In addition, the doctrine that one could be sealed up with little possibility of damnation is reflected in D&C 132, the revelation on polygamy, vv. 26-27. See also Joseph Smith to Sarah Ann Whitney, 23 Mar. 1843, LDS archives, as quoted in Hill, *Quest for Refuge*, 244. In the Clayton/Kimball journal, 1 Jan. 1846, in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 247, Brigham Young performed a marriage in the Nauvoo temple: “He then pronounced them Husband & Wife, and Sealed them together as such for time and for all eternity, and also sealed them up to eternal life, against all sins, except the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is the shedding of innocent blood . . .” So in Nauvoo Mormonism eternal marriage perhaps always sealed the participants up to eternal life, granting no sin against the Holy Ghost. Cf. Clayton journal, 16 May 1843, in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 102. This would supply strong motivation for entering into a plural marriage.

Joseph felt that Wilson Law was the author of “Buckeye’s Lament,” *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B.H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978), 6:210. The author characterizes himself as a devout follower of Joseph who has become disillusioned and has wept “burning tears” after pleading with Joseph to repent. See “The Buckeye’s First Epistle to Jo,” *Warsaw Signal*, 23 Apr. 1844, in Bachman, “A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage,” 341-44.

aspect of Latter-day Saint practice, there is a clearly discernible outline of ideology in the Mormon historical record that explains the development and rationale for the practice of Mormon polyandry. "Gentile" marriages were "illegal," of no eternal value or earthly validity; marriages authorized by Mormon priesthood and prophets took precedence. Sometimes these sacred marriages were thought to re-enact pre-mortal marriages or to fulfill pre-mortal linkings and so justified a sacred marriage superimposed over a secular one. Mormonism's intensely hierarchical nature allowed a man with the highest earthly authority—a Joseph Smith or a Brigham Young—to ask for the wives of men holding lesser priesthood authority. The authority of the prophet would allow him to promise higher exaltation to those involved in the triangle, both the wife and her first husband.

But with polyandry, as with the better-known polygyny, despite the elaborate doctrinal justifications, despite the reverence for a modern prophet and the unquestioning devotion to a restored biblical religion, the emotional challenges of this new marriage system must have been tremendous. In the cases of most of the polyandrous wives, the human dimensions are not recorded; the polyandry is not even openly acknowledged. However, the wives and husbands must have felt conflicted. Puritanical New England morality and attachment to the first husband or wife undoubtedly warred with devotion to Joseph Smith, viewed as an infallible oracle of God, and to a church and community that was believed to be a restoration of primitive Christianity. Only in the marriage of Zina Huntington and Henry Jacobs, enigmatic as their relationship was, do we even have hints of the human price that Joseph's polyandrous system demanded.

APPENDIX: WRITTEN SOURCES FOR JOSEPH SMITH'S PLURAL WIVES (REFER TO CHART)

I. Certain Wives

1. FANNY ALGER: Mosiah Hancock Autobiography, 63, LDS archives; Zimmerman, *I Knew the Prophets*, 38-39; *Historical Record* 6:233; Young, *Wife No. 19*, 66-67; Chauncey Webb, in Wyl, 57; Oliver Cowdery letterbook, 21 Jan. 1838, Huntington Library, San Marino, California; 4 Apr. 1899 sealing, Salt Lake Temple Sealing Records, Book D, 243, GS film 184,590, Family History Library; Thomas M. Tinney, "The Royal Family of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Junior: First President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," typescript, 1973, 41, 63, LDS archives and Marriott Library.

2. LUCINDA PENDLETON: *Historical Record* 6:33: "Lucinda Harris,

also one of the first women sealed to the Prophet Joseph"; Sarah Pratt, in Wyl, 60; 4 Apr. 1899 sealing, Salt Lake Temple Sealing Records, Book D, 243; Tinney, "Royal Family," 41, 63; Nauvoo temple proxy marriage, Sealing and Adoption Book A, 505, 323, Family History Library and Marriott Library; edited version available in Family History Library, film 193, 368.

3. LOUISA BEAMAN: Noble affidavit, in B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1930), 2:102; Erastus Snow affidavit, in *Historical Record* 6:232, 233; speech by Joseph Noble, 19 Dec. 1880, in Andrew Larson and Katherine Miles Larson, eds., *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker*, 2 vols. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1980), 2:515 (Noble), 610 (Erastus Snow); Noble, in Wilford Woodruff journal, 22 Jan. 1869, in Kenney, 6:452; Noble, in Temple Lot Case, transcript, 368, 424-27; Noble, in Franklin D. Richards journal, 22 Jan. 1869 (loose sheet, numbered 145), LDS archives; Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 256, "Miss L***** B****," 229; Joseph Noble address, 11 June 1883, at stake conference, Centerville, Utah, in Journal History, date; Orson Pratt, in "Report of Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith," *Millennial Star* 40 (16 Dec. 1878): 788; Young, *Wife No. 19*, 72.

4. ZINA DIANTHA HUNTINGTON: Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:5, 4:5, cf. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," 348; *Historical Record* 6:233; Autobiography, in Bradley and Woodward, "Plurality, Patriarchy, and the Priestess"; Oliver Huntington journal, 18 Feb. 1883, 27 Oct. 1887, Lee Library; Wight interview, "Evidence from Zina D. Huntington Young," *Saints Herald*, 11 Jan. 1905, 29; "Woman's Mass Meeting," *Woman's Exponent*, 1 Dec. 1878, 98. Select secondary sources: Emmeline Wells, "A Distinguished Woman: Zina D. H. Young," *Woman's Exponent*, 1 Dec. 1881, 99; Hall, *The Abominations of Mormonism Exposed*, 43-44; Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 132, 146.

5. PRESENDIA LATHROP HUNTINGTON: Letter (an autobiographical sketch), Presendia L. Kimball Smith to her eldest granddaughter living in 1880, 1 Apr. 1881, LDS archives; Presendia affidavit, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:7; *Historical Record* 6:233; Zina Huntington Young journal, 11 Dec. 1848, LDS archives; Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 256, lists as one of Joseph's wives "Mrs. B****," for whom the only likely candidate is Presendia; Oliver Huntington journal, 18 Feb. 1883; [Emmeline Wells,] "A Venerable Woman: Presendia Lathrop Kimball," *Woman's Exponent*, 1 Apr. 1883, 163.

6. AGNES MOULTON COOLBRITH: Brigham Young journal, 6 Jan. 1842, LDS archives and Marriott Library; Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 256, "Mrs. A**** S****"; Testimony of Mary Ann West in U.S. Circuit Court (8th Circuit) Testimony (1892), Manuscript Transcripts, 521, questions 676-79, LDS archives; Nauvoo Female Relief Society Minutes, 28

Sept. 1842, 89, LDS archives and Lee Library.

7. SYLVIA SESSIONS: Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, fd. 5, 1:60, 4:62, cf. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," affidavit #77 (unsigned, but supporting evidence makes this marriage close to certain); *Historical Record* 6:234; affidavit by Josephine Lyon Fisher, Sylvia's child, 24 Feb. 1915, LDS archives; Angus M. Cannon, statement of interview with Joseph Smith III, 25-26, LDS archives.

8. MARY ELIZABETH ROLLINS LIGHTNER: Autobiography, 18, Utah State Historical Society; 1905 letter to Emmeline Wells, Mary Lightner collection, Lee Library; Remarks given at BYU, 14 Apr. 1905, 2, Lee Library, in Tinney, "Royal Family," 255; Statement, 1902, Lee Library; affidavit, 1905; 23 Mar. 1877 affidavit (Scott Kenney collection, Marriott Library); letter to Wells, 21 Nov. 1880, in Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 39.

9. PATTY BARTLETT SESSIONS: Patty Sessions journal, p. after 16 June 1860, LDS archives; Jackson, *A Narrative*, 14, in Jackson, "Wonderful Disclosures Respecting Mormons," 1.

10. MARINDA NANCY JOHNSON HYDE: Joseph Smith journal, LDS archives, a list of marriages in the handwriting of Thomas Bullock, entered after 14 July 1843: "Apr 42 Marinda Johnson to Joseph Smith," in Scott Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1989), 396. For a second marriage to Joseph Smith, in May 1843, see Marinda Hyde affidavit, 1 May 1869, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:15, cf. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," #53, p. 348: "J. GIBSON DIVINE" [Sidney Rigdon], "To the Sisters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," *Latter Day Saint's Messenger and Advocate* 1 (15 Mar. 1845): 154-58, 156; "W.," in *Warsaw Signal*, 11 June 1845, cf. Hill, *Quest for Refuge*, 171; Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 147.

11. ELIZABETH DAVIS: Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 256, "Mrs. D*****"; Sarah Pratt, in Wyl, 54; Jackson, *A Narrative*, 14, links Elizabeth with Patty Sessions as a Mother in Israel who helped arrange polygamous marriages for Joseph. Patty Sessions was certainly married to Joseph. Emily Partridge, Autobiography, 4, LDS archives, shows Elizabeth relaying a marriage proposal to Emily, which confirms Jackson. Joseph often relied on previously married wives to educate and recruit new plural wives. A Nauvoo temple proxy marriage to Joseph is good supporting evidence, Sealing and Adoption Book A, 505; cf. p. 385: "Elizabeth Davis Smith."

12. SARAH KINGSLEY CLEVELAND: *Historical Record* 6:234. She witnessed Eliza Snow's marriage to Joseph, Eliza R. Snow affidavit, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:25, 4:24; Bachman, "A Study of the Mor-

mon Practice of Plural Marriage," 349. Standing as witness to a plural marriage was a duty often performed by a previously married wife.

13. DELCENA JOHNSON: Zimmerman, *I Knew the Prophets*, 45, cf. 39, 40; Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 95 (ms, 91, LDS archives).

14. ELIZA R. SNOW: Autobiography, 12-14, original in Bancroft Library, cf. published in Beecher, *Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow*; affidavit, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:25; *Historical Record* 6:233.

15. SARAH ANN WHITNEY: Sarah A. Kimball affidavit, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:36; 4:36; Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," #59; printed in Smith, *Blood Atonement*, 73; Elizabeth Whitney affidavit, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:72; 4:74, printed in Smith, *Blood Atonement*, 74; William Clayton, *Historical Record* 6:225; Joseph Kingsbury, *Historical Record* 6:226, 233-34.

16. MARTHA McBRIDE: affidavit, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 2:36; 3:36; Vault Folder, LDS archives, cited by Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," affidavit #69, printed in Smith, *Blood Atonement*, 72 (86, 1905 ed.).

17. RUTH VOSE: affidavit, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:9, 4:9, cf. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," 348; *Historical Record* 6:234.

18. FLORA ANN WOODWORTH: Clayton affidavit, in *Historical Record* 6:225.

19. and 20. EMILY and ELIZA PARTRIDGE: affidavits in *Historical Record* 6:223. See also their autobiographical writings, e.g., "Autobiography of Emily D. P. Young," in *Woman's Exponent*, 1 Aug. 1885, 38.

21. ALMERA WOODARD JOHNSON: affidavit by Almera, in Smith, *Blood Atonement*, 70-71. Her brother Benjamin told the story of her marriage to Joseph at least three times: Zimmerman, *I Knew the Prophets*, 41; Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 94 (ms, 90-91); and an affidavit, *Historical Record* 6:221, 234.

22. LUCY WALKER: Autobiography; Clayton journal, in Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 100; Eliza Partridge affidavit, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 2:30.

23. and 24. SARAH and MARIA LAWRENCE: *Historical Record* 6:223; Lucy Walker Smith Kimball, in the Temple Lot case (full transcript, 461, LDS archives); Helen Kimball Whitney, *Woman's Exponent*, 15 Feb. 1886, 138.

25. HELEN MAR KIMBALL: *Historical Record* 6:234; 1881 reminiscence, LDS archives.

26. HANNAH ELLS: John Benbow affidavit, see *Historical Record* 6:222-23, 234.

27. ELVIRA ANNIE COWLES: affidavit, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:78, 4:80; *Historical Record* 6:234.

28. RHODA RICHARDS: affidavit, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:17; Joseph Smith journal, 12 June 1843, Faulring, *American Prophet's Record*, 387.

29. DESDEMONA FULLMER: affidavit, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:32, 4:32; Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," #58; *Historical Record* 6:225.

30. OLIVE G. FROST: *Historical Record* 6:235, 234.

31. MELISSA LOTT: Lott family Bible, LDS archives; *Historical Record* 6:234, 5:119; affidavit: Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 1:23, 4:23, in Smith, *Blood Atonement*, 72, 55.

32. NANCY W. WINCHESTER: *Historical Record* 6:234; Whitney, *Life of Heber Kimball*, 431, 436.

33. FANNY YOUNG: Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 16:166-67; *Historical Record* 6:234; affidavit 1:52, by Augusta Young, Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," #73; Harriet Cook (Young) affidavit, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 2:14, in Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," #103.

II. Possible Wives

1. VIENNA JACQUES: Unsigned affidavit by Jacques, Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 4:56 (Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," 350); Mrs. Warner Alexander, 1886 statement, LDS archives; information from Polly Beswick; cf. Newell and Avery, 67. Clair Noall to Fawn Brodie, 16 Sept. 1943, Noall papers, Marriott Library: "'Yes,' said Aunt Louie with no uncertainty when I asked her about Vienna's being sealed to the Prophet, 'She was sealed to him.'" All of this evidence is problematic. The affidavit was prepared for Jacques, but she evidently refused to sign it, possibly because she had not married Joseph, possibly because she did not want the marriage publicized. The Alexander affidavit is antagonistic and second-hand. The Noall letter is third hand.

2. HANNAH ANN DUBOIS: Johnson, *My Life's Review*, 96: "At this time I knew that the Prophet had as his wives, Louisa Beeman, Eliza R. Snow, Maria and Sarah Lawrence, Sisters Lyon and Dibble, one or two of Bishop Partridge's daughters, and some of C. P. Lott's daughters, together with my own two sisters." John Hyde, *Mormonism: Its Leaders and Designs* (New York: W. P. Fetridge, 1857), 84: "There is a Mrs. Dibble living in Utah, who has a fine son. She was sealed, among others, to Joseph Smith, although living with her present husband before and since. On the head of her son, Smith predicted the most startling prophesies about wielding the sword of Laban, revealing the hidden Book of Mormon, and translating the sealed part of the records. There is not a person at Salt

Lake who doubts the fact of that boy being Smith's own child." The chief opposing evidence is Hannah's eternal marriage to Dibble in the Nauvoo temple (Sealing and Adoption Book A, 243). Joseph Smith performed the marriage to Dibble: "On the 11th of February, 1841, I married a second wife—a Widow Smith of Philadelphia, who was living in the family of the Prophet. He performed the ceremony at his house, and Sister Emma Smith insisted upon getting up a wedding supper for us. It was a splendid affair, and quite a large party of our friends were assembled." Philo Dibble, "Philo Dibble's Narrative," *Early Scenes in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 92-93. This does not sound like a "pretend" marriage, as was the case with the Sarah Ann Whitney-Joseph Kingsbury marriage.

3. SARAH BAPSON: Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 256: "Miss B****." The best candidate for this woman is Sarah Bapson, listed in a 4 April 1899 sealing: "The sealings of those named below were performed during the life of the Prophet Joseph but there is no record thereof. President Lorenzo Snow decided that they be repeated in order that a record might exist; and that this explanation be made." Fannie Alger, Lucinda Harris, Almera W. Johnson, Sarah Bapson, Flora Ann Woodworth, Fanny Young, Hannah Ells, Olive Frost, Sarah M. Cleveland, Sylvia Sessions (Lyon), Ruth Vose. Salt Lake Temple Sealing Records, Book D, 243, GS Film 184,590, Family History Library, as cited in Tinney, "Royal Family," 41, 63.

4. MRS. G****: Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 256. As the other names in Bennett's list have been reliable, there is no good reason to doubt this one. However, there are at least nine women whose married names start with G, have six letters, and who were in Nauvoo in 1842. Without further evidence, it is difficult to narrow that group down. A leading candidate is Phebe Palmer (Graves), who received her endowment with Sarah Kingsley (Cleveland) (Smith) on 19 October 1845.

5. SARAH SCOTT: Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 431. "The wives of the Prophet who wedded Heber C. Kimball were . . . Sarah Scott." Cf. Sealing and Adoption Book A, 411.

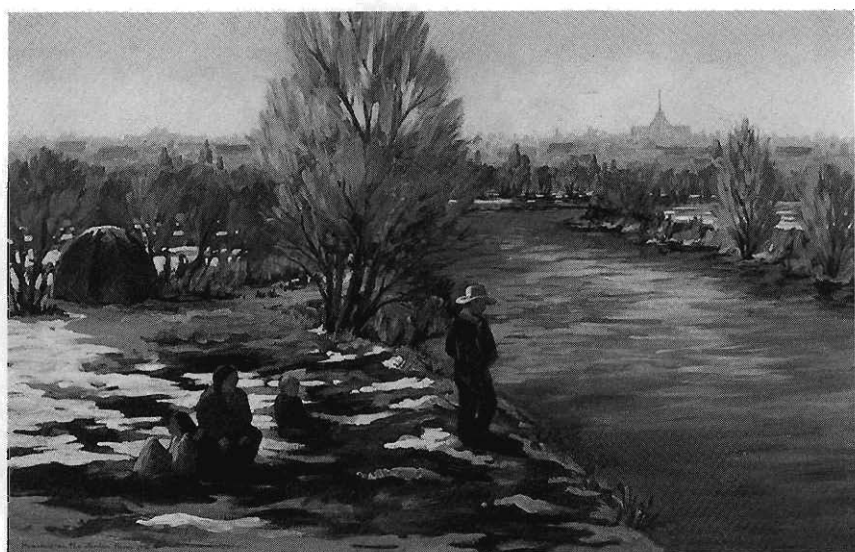
6. MARY HOUSTON: Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 431. "The wives of the Prophet who wedded Heber C. Kimball were . . . Mary Houston." Proxy marriage to Smith/Kimball, Book of Proxy Sealings, Nauvoo #159; Sealing and Adoption Book A, 513.

7. MRS. TAILOR: Jackson, *A Narrative*, 14, links her with Patty Sessions and Elizabeth Durfee. As Patty Sessions and Elizabeth Durfee have been substantiated as wives of Joseph, there is no good reason to suspect Mrs. Taylor. Which Mrs. Tai[y]lor is another problem; there are at least three older women in 1842 Nauvoo with the married name Taylor: Agnes Taylor (Taylor), the mother of John Taylor; Elizabeth Patrick (Taylor); and Surviah (Taylor).

8. MARY HERON (SNIDER): Quinn, *Origins of Power*, 587.

III. Early Posthumous Proxy Marriages

1. MARY ANN FROST: Sealing and Adoption Book A, 513, 449 (6 Feb. 1846).
2. OLIVE ANDREWS: Book of Proxy Sealings, Nauvoo, #13; Sealing and Adoption Book A, 503 (15 Jan. 1846).
3. JANE TIBBETTS: Sealing and Adoption Book A, 503 (17 Jan. 1846).
4. PHEBE WATROUS: Book of Proxy Sealings, Nauvoo, #34; Sealing and Adoption Book A, 503, 555 (19 Jan. 1846).
5. APHIA SANBORN: Sealing and Adoption Book A, 511, 581 (27 Jan. 1846).
6. CORDELIA MORLEY: Book of Proxy Sealings, Nauvoo, #98; Cordelia Morley Cox, *Autobiography*, Lee Library.
7. SALLY ANN FULLER: "Sally Ann Fuller Smith," in "Obituary" section, *Deseret News*, 29 Mar. 1897, 2; proxy marriage to Joseph Smith/Samuel Gully, Sealing and Adoption Book A, 721 (29 Jan. 1847).
8. LYDIA KENYON: Endowment House Sealing Record, #65: early proxy marriage to Joseph Smith/Kimball.



The Miró Exhibit at MoMA*: Dec. 21, 1993

Peter Richardson

These bodies
look like they were pancake mix
that, when poured on the skillet,
turned out to look sort of human.

*

A small boy tells his brother

"Y veo muchas chi-chis."

*

Two Philosophers
are two taffied men with genitals
stuck on a stark textured landscape
between night and day, heaven
and land.

*

A large canvas, painted green
with two straight black lines
and one curved.

The guy next to me says,
"I painted this one once."

*

Wind leaves things a-tilt.
Insects in a rip-tide;
that man is lucky his mustache
is well anchored. The crescent moon
in the upper corner leans back
and watches.

*

I can see myself in the reflection
of the glass that separates me from Blue;
I can see the art
from my T-shirt in the reflection.
I look at myself through my glasses,
superimposed on Blue.

*MoMA: Acronym for the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

3/4" Marine Ply

Kenneth O. Kemp

I ARRIVED IN SAN DIEGO the day before Christmas to visit my mother and to clean out her garage. I am the fourth of seven children, most of whom live much farther away than L.A. I got started early, and made the 100 miles from my porch in West Los Angeles to my mother's porch in La Mesa in less than two hours.

The garage itself was an amazing sight and by far the most interesting aspect of the home. Several years ago my sister Bonnie painted Dad's favorite landscape on the garage door. It was the Grand Tetons as seen from the east, across Teton Lake. Bonnie thought he'd like it there. He did; the neighbors didn't. But, notwithstanding the comments they made about the "appropriateness" of a garage door painting, Bonnie went ahead, with Dad's blessing.

There was a precedent. Dad's mother, Bea, painted a wildlife scene on her garage door over thirty years ago. I was about ten then, and it was my introduction to Art. A swift, crashing stream burst over rapids and exposed rock, slicing a quicksilver path between dense evergreens that hugged the banks. In the distance craggy peaks split a deep blue sky. On an exposed rock in mid-stream two giant brown bears swiped at each other, their teeth flashing. To one side a silver trout lay forgotten, the subject of the duel. That scene will always define how I look at Nature, not as a quiet pastoral scene but as a staging ground for deadly conflict.

I heard Grandma's neighbors disliked the scene at first but were won over by the utter brazenness of a painting eight feet tall by fifteen feet wide. Grandma was an amateur but her aspirations were grandiose—at least in terms of size. The painting became a popular tourist destination. I never considered whether it was acceptable to paint a garage door that way or not. It was her garage and she did with it what she liked.

Dad's garage was in the same tradition. With the Tetons painted on the door, you knew there was something going on inside. He was always in there, fixing or building something. And if you made the mistake of wandering by, he had a job waiting for you, either steadyding a socket

wrench or holding the drop light as he lay under the car, tightening a bolt. I used to go over the back fence and through the neighbor's yard to avoid passing the garage, because Dad always had a chore in there with my name on it.

We moved the day after Christmas in 1968—Dad never let holidays get in the way of our working schedule. He took apart the attic in the old garage, numbered the joists and planks, and reassembled it in the new one.

Our new house was poorly designed. It was shaped like a "U" with the front door so far down the throat of the "U" that you were only twenty feet from the back yard. I'm sure now the fact that the garages in both houses were identical in size was the real reason Dad bought this ungainly new home.

We kids helped Dad rebuild the attic in the new garage. Everything fit like a puzzle. The stenciled numbers my sister Gail painted on each piece of wood are still visible today.

As soon as it was completed, the attic filled up with boxes of Halloween costumes, camping equipment, school projects, and a two-year supply of cracked wheat. Once, in an attempt to prepare us for Armageddon, Mom and Dad made us eat the cracked wheat for breakfast. It had to be soaked overnight so it wouldn't break the enamel on our teeth. In the morning it was drained, doused with milk, and buried in sugar, but it still tasted like gravel. When we mutinied, even Dad had to admit that there were worse things than going hungry.

Along the south wall of the garage Dad built his work bench. As a pharmacist at a large community hospital, he had access to what was thrown out when they remodeled. Over the years he managed to bring home counter tops, chests of drawers, and electrical wiring.

In a non-stop burst of creativity one weekend, Dad built a chandelier from several cast-off patient-room lamps, each of which had a cone-shaped lamp shade pointing upward from a round base and another long, bendable arm that ended in a shade which could be pointed down for reading. A sheet of aluminum one foot wide by six feet long was painstakingly bent into the shape of a stop sign. One of the light fixtures was attached to each face of the hexagon, the long bendable arms pointing down like spindly black spider legs ending in cone-shaped feet. The other lamp shade cone of each fixture pointed heavenward, lighting the ceiling, far above. Inside the aluminum box, glass vials filled with colored water were suspended. A light shone down through them, glowing red, orange, and yellow, like some sort of fiery booster rocket. Opinions as to its beauty varied of course, but we all agreed on one thing: it would always be called the "Lunar Landing Module." Like a great black spider

hovering overhead, it was such a strange and marvelous invention that people always smiled when they saw it.

On my way home from high school during my freshman year, a neighbor kid drove by, saying my house was on fire. I laughed and waved him off, but when I looked to the sky, there was indeed a plume of black smoke boiling over my neighborhood. I ran home as fast as I could.

Our tax dollars were at work. Everybody was there: firemen had strung hoses from the end of the street and two red pumpers were parked cockeyed in front of the house, which was indeed on fire. Mom was running about, giving orders, and surprisingly enough, everyone—even the police and firemen—was taking them.

When the smoke cleared and the blackened water dried, we discovered a box of home-movie film had been placed too near the water heater in the garage—and had ignited. Fortunately, the garage was only connected to the house by a breezeway, and the structural damage was limited to the north wall of the garage and the roof. But the emotional damage was extensive. In the attic my mother had kept photo albums, letters, and keepsakes—much of it was reduced to soggy ashes.

I remember her crying, not over the damage to the garage or the simple embarrassment of setting your own house on fire, but over the burned and ruined photos and movies, which Dad had captured on his Super 8 movie camera. Every Christmas, at the crack of dawn, we'd line up in the hallway, from the youngest in the front to the oldest in the back, dressed in the new pajamas Mom had made. When Dad was ready, the door would open and in we'd march, braving the blinding bank of flood lights as Dad filmed us. In later years he transferred the surviving films to video, placing all the Christmas movies in order, starting with 1957. I have to laugh. Furnishings and gifts change from year to year, but the expressions on the kids' faces remain the same: tiny hands shield eyes blinded by floodlights, eyelids are stuck together with sleep, bed-head hair sticks straight up—Christmas at the Kemps. And once the presents were opened, Dad would film each of us sitting proudly amidst our holiday plunder.

When I was eight years old, go-carts were the rage. Dad became a revered figure when he built my brother Viri and me a go-cart that was more than just an apple box nailed to a skateboard. Instead of using the traditional feet-steering method, Dad held up a flywheel from an old dryer. "This gives me an idea!" he said, and set to work.

The cart itself was shaped like an "I," the main frame a sturdy 2x10 about six feet long, with 2x4s connected to each end. The 2x4s had hefty lawn mower wheels mounted on each end. The rear 2x4 was nailed sol-

idly to the frame, but the front 2x4 pivoted for steering. A padded seat amidships gave easy access to the hand brake, which dragged on the ground, slowing the vehicle to a stop (hopefully) before impact.

All this was pretty standard, except for the steering mechanism. Here's where Dad's ingenuity blossomed. Using a broomstick, a length of clothesline, and the flywheel, he guaranteed technical superiority over all other neighborhood go-carts. He nailed the clothesline to one end of the front 2x4 by the wheel, brought it up, and wound it around the broomstick (which was set at an angle to form a steering column), then back down to the other end of the 2x4, by the other front wheel. The flywheel was mounted on the raised broomstick end and became the steering wheel. We drove it like a real car—we turned the flywheel right and—lo and behold—the go-cart went right as well.

I was pleased but not amazed. After all, Dad rebuilt a Model A he found in a vacant lot near his house when he was only twelve. So when the neighborhood kids came by to see our state-of-the-art go-cart, Dad dismissed their oohs and aahs with a wave of the hand. "Just using what we had, is all," he said, and turned back to the workbench where he was rigging up a radio to an old car battery so he could listen to KNXT news radio while he worked.

Two weeks after getting my driver's license, I was in an automobile wreck. I was turning left at an intersection and didn't see the car roaring over the rise from the opposite direction. The Mustang was totaled, and its driver badly shaken up, but I was driving our two-tone green 1960 Dodge Sierra station wagon. I didn't get a scratch, but the front end of the Dodge was badly mangled.

That Saturday Dad took me to a wrecking yard and we found another Sierra with the front end intact. He supervised while I removed the grill, bumper, hood, fenders, and radiator. It was a very hot day, the dust was thick in the air, and I was soon covered with grease and sweat. I paid the man \$100 for the parts and we took them home.

As we looked over the replacement parts, I commented that this shouldn't take too long. Dad smiled and said I might be surprised. He said he'd be available for consultation but I was to perform the work myself. He turned and went inside. I stared after him, slack jawed. I'd never be able to repair the car by myself. I knew it and he knew it. But there I was anyway, alone in the garage, with this impossible task ahead of me.

After the shock wore off, I ventured inside and found Dad sitting in his lounge, reading. "Dad," I said meekly, "you're kidding, right? You're gonna help me, aren't you?" He never even looked up from his *National Geographic*. He just said, "Nope." After a long moment, I turned and went back outside. I stood before the mangled monstrosity I'd created and

cursed my father. I kicked the bumper, stomped around for awhile, and bored withering, hateful stares through the wall that separated the garage from the living room. Eventually defeat settled over me. After a while I picked up a wrench, found a bolt that needed loosening, and began working.

It took me more than two months to fix the car. Dad would come out occasionally and give advice, and a couple of times he even got underneath the car and helped. When he did I was so thankful, so filled with gratitude, that I wanted to hug him and cry. But then he'd crawl out, hand me the wrench, and say something like, "It's right there, you just gotta use your eyes," and my heart would turn to glass. I'd want to punch him in his big stomach and yell at him. But I never did, because I knew there would be a next time and I'd need his help again.

He treated everyone like that: he never did something for you just because you asked him to and he knew how. He seemed to know when you'd get more out of doing it yourself, even if it meant a poor job and the family car out of commission for two long months. I guess he knew the difference between giving a man a fish and teaching him how to bait a hook. As I fixed the front end of the Dodge, as on so many other occasions, he was showing me how to cast a line out into life's river.

Because my father had no hidden agendas, he was unprepared to defend against those who did. He was forced to retire early after a fifteen-year battle with a hospital administrator who, shortly after joining the hospital, called Dad into his office to discuss pharmacy policy. It was common knowledge around the hospital that Dad was a faithful Mormon. The administrator asked Dad if that was true. Dad, thinking this a good opportunity to share his faith, nodded. The administrator leaned forward and hissed, "My wife *used* to be a Mormon. I hate you people—you're a bunch of self-righteous prigs. And if it's the last thing I do, I'll have your job."

Dad sat back in disbelief, stunned. He hesitated a moment, then stood and left without a word. When I heard the story, I thought how different I was from my father. If it had been me, I would have been across that desk in about a half second, with that guy's tie wound around my fist and our eyes inches apart, saying, "Fine. If you want a fight, you got it. But if you come after me, you'd better be ready for nuclear war."

But Dad saw a man whose soul was miserable and small; a man who desperately needed the things Jesus taught. I saw a jerk who needed his ears cuffed.

Eventually, the administrator put Dad in working situations that, at his age, he couldn't cope with, and he was fired. But he never went to war against his aggressor. He just went about his business, doing the best

he could and not giving in to hate or anger. At the time I thought he was really just afraid to fight.

When Dad retired, he and Mom decided that they'd like to volunteer as missionaries for the church for a couple of years. They were assigned to go to Guatemala. The prospect of learning Spanish at their age was daunting, but they were excited to go to such an exotic place.

But life throws a mean curve ball, and the day after receiving their assignment, Dad was informed by his doctor that he had Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), commonly known as "Lou Gehrig's Disease," an incurable, fatal illness. ALS results in a slow, creeping paralysis in which the brain sends the muscles signals they do not hear. The victim is slowly paralyzed from the extremities inward, yet the mind remains clear. The body simply dies around you, yet you have total awareness of what is happening.

We couldn't believe it. No one in our family had ever faced anything like this. We thought it must be a mistake or at the very least a trial that our faith would overcome. So Mom and Dad accepted their assignment and left for Guatemala.

Dad instantly felt a deep compassion and warmth for the Latino people. He admired their openness and humility. He and Mom toured archeological sites he had read about for so many years. They visited marketplaces and tried to speak with people in their fractured Spanglish. But after a few months, Dad's condition deteriorated to the extent that he could not walk without assistance. He would not allow himself to become a burden on others and so they sadly returned to the States.

My father believed in a God who is interested in each of us. Once back home, however, he was perplexed that his prayers were apparently going unanswered. He couldn't understand why God wouldn't heal him, at least for the period of time he was trying to share God's word. He had manifested faith and had worked hard. But the diagnosis remained: he had eighteen months to live, at best.

Someone said, when we pray for strength, God sends us barbells. ALS seemed tailor-made to test Dad's notorious self-sufficiency. When it comes to building things, I've always said that if you gave Dad the raw materials, he could build you a nuclear bomb. Apparently, there wasn't anything he could not fix, reuse, or recycle. But ALS was a problem that no wrench or nail could solve—and Dad was deeply concerned at how he was going to beat it.

Dad studied his disease in earnest, hoping there was a little-known treatment that might help. He also studied the scriptures, trying to glean an understanding of why his life had taken this turn. But most of all he prayed fervently, asking for peace of mind and the ability to accept his

fate, if that was God's will.

When the doctors noticed his extremely high white-cell blood count, Dad agreed to chemotherapy. But although the white cell count was reduced, still the disease maintained its inexorable march forward, although it slowed. Now, instead of eighteen months, he had three years of slow paralysis to suffer through before the end.

Through his medical studies he became more of an ALS expert than his doctors, whose practices involve helping patients prepare for the end. Most of Dr. Kervorkian's "patients" are ALS sufferers. Dad said once that although he could empathize with their desire to end their lives, that road was not for him. I was amazed at his strength and courage and suddenly realized that my father was not afraid of a fight after all—he just didn't bother with the little ones.

At the same time, a prominent church leader's advanced lymphoma suddenly went into remission. At a family gathering, someone commented how wonderful it was that God had answered the prayers of so many in healing this man. We all looked at Dad to see his reaction. He said simply, "I guess I'm not as important as he is." Everyone protested, but later Dad asked me what I thought. I looked at him, sitting heavily in his lounge, his hands nearly useless at his sides, his hair thin from the chemo, but his eyes bright and expressive. "Maybe you're right," I said. "Maybe he *is* more important than you, or maybe he still has something important left to do on this earth. And maybe you've accomplished everything you were supposed to do here. Maybe your time is up."

Dad nodded. "Maybe you're right," he said, and looked away.

Dad was no talker. When he was a kid, he punctured an eardrum, which left him with an incessant ringing in his ears all his life. This, combined with the cacophony of family life, left him irritable and headachy. When we seven children would engage in heated debates around the dinner table, he would excuse himself and go out to the garage where it was quiet. Ironically, with ALS destroying his body, all that was left him now was speech, and even that was fading. He had always been a physical man, handling greasy car parts, hefting a ten-pound sledge, kicking my bed to wake me on Saturday mornings. Now, with his body closing down, he would look at me, his eyes full of emotion, his mouth working, but the words were slurred and hard to understand.

Months passed. One day I arrived for a visit. As I passed through the garage, I noticed that the workbench was dusty. It struck me that Dad hadn't been out here in over a year. I went inside and was shocked at his deterioration. He sat listlessly in his easy chair, unable to hold a book to read or even to concentrate on television. Strangely, he had lost little weight. He was still substantial, but the heaviness in his muscles was not

vibrant; it was becoming dead weight.

One eerie characteristic of the disease is the way the brain's messages are garbled. Individual muscle groups in Dad's legs and forearms continually jumped and twitched, as if they were reacting to continuous shocks. In the early stages of the disease we would watch this strange phenomenon and shake our heads in disbelief, trying to imagine how it must feel to watch your own body go out of control.

This time, as I entered, I noticed that the muscle twitches that had so long been a visual reminder of the disease had vanished. Dad was pale and his breathing was shallow. His arms and legs lay motionless. Mom sat nearby, feeding him something that didn't require much chewing. His eyes brightened when he saw me and he immediately burst into tears.

The effect was so alarming and disarming, that I cried as well. I knelt down by his side, squeezing his hand. His grip was weak and his hand was cool. His body was shutting down, and only the radiance in his tearful eyes indicated the fire in his heart.

On 16 August 1990 my sister Bonnie called to tell me that Dad's time was short. I hurried down Interstate 5 and arrived in La Mesa at 11 a.m. He had been placed in a hospital bed in the living room under the Lunar Landing Module chandelier. It was hard to look at him. His breathing was labored, his skin was cold, and his eyes had lost their lustre. He was close to the end, but true to form, he had planned for this moment months before. He knew he would have a hard time letting go when his time arrived. So, using his pharmaceutical knowledge, he had prepared himself a morphine mixture that would dull his senses enough to allow him to release the tether. Mom had already given him the medication, and it was taking effect. Unable to swallow, he hadn't eaten anything in several days. Bonnie rubbed ice over his parched lips.

I sat down on the bed and held one hand as Mom held the other. I spoke softly, trying to give him strength as he faced the dark doorway. His eyes began to glaze over and his breathing was short and intermittent. He was visibly receding from us. We cried and hugged him. We tried to be strong and hold back the tears. We knew we could not be with him where he was now. During the last fifteen minutes, he breathed just once a minute. He would look as if all life had passed from him, and we would exchange devastated looks, then he would gasp for another breath, startling us. This was worse than anything I could have imagined. After several of these episodes, we just wanted the misery to end, to see him released from the bondage of a body that so cruelly imprisoned his spirit.

Finally, he seemed to relax and the light went out of his hazy eyes. In that instant I was no longer holding my father's hand. I had an image of

him, suddenly a million light years away, in the arms of his own father. Mom, Bonnie, and I exchanged looks of sad relief. Then Mom said, brightening, "You know what? He can finally hear in *both* ears!" We laughed and cried at the same time.

At the mortuary the night before the funeral, the family gathered to dress and groom Dad's body for burial. We entered a darkened room where his body lay on a gurney under a drape of white linen. A sense of the sacred surrounded us. We spoke quietly. As we moved his body to dress him, I noticed the markings a lifetime of work had given him, familiar scars on freckled skin. I touched the white lines and was reminded of the times he'd cut himself or banged his thumb while repairing or building something. Buttoning the white shirt over his barrel chest, I recalled his intimidating presence as he stood over me, commanding me to perform a chore. As I glanced at my siblings and mother, I knew they were all feeling the same things. Someone said that it was strange—this looked like Dad, but it wasn't him, really. It was just a body, and he was far, far away. We all nodded, hoping it was true.

At the funeral I paid attention to the music and eulogies, but the profound weight of the moment seemed to glance off me, narrowly missing my heart. I expected to be overwhelmed with grief. I had been there when he died; I had experienced that tragic moment. With his body in the casket at the front of the chapel, I expected the loss and sadness to engulf me. It didn't. The emotions were there but I was strangely disconnected from them. Then I thought, *Maybe I have more faith than I thought. Perhaps not even the death of my father can put a dent in it.* But that wasn't true. I didn't feel faithful. And then an assassin idea came unbidden, the most criminal thought ever: *Maybe I don't feel anything because there is nothing to feel. Maybe I never really loved him at all.* This made things worse and I sunk into a miserable depression that took a long time to dissipate.

But it did dissipate, finally, and I began to watch Mom for signs of healing grief. She said she cried when she was alone, but she wasn't tearful around me. As she threw herself into a flurry of activity, I thought maybe she was still in denial. I figured that she really *was* feeling the loss, but didn't want to show a lack of faith. I imagined her telling herself, *What do you have to be sad about? Don't you believe you'll see him again?* I wondered how she'd answer that.

Once Dad was gone, Mom didn't change a thing beyond removing his sick bed from the living room. Everything else remained as before. His clothing remained in his closet, dresser drawers still held his belongings. I was afraid for her in that lonely, empty house, which was so full of Dad's industry. He was in every piece of paneling, furniture, and mold-

ing. I wondered if it might hurt her to see the one she had loved so much everywhere she looked.

It occurred to me that I might be able to help her past the denial stage by making small changes to her environment. Doing anything inside the house was out of the question—she'd never permit it. I figured the garage would be the perfect place—she rarely went out there anyway. Once we cleaned it out, she would discover that she had survived and would see that Dad was not really in the things he'd collected. I hoped she'd see that her surroundings didn't need to remain unchanged for him to still be safely kept in her heart. I didn't want Mom to forget Dad, but I saw her retreating into loneliness and despair. I called my older brother, Viri, and told him my plan. He agreed and said he'd be glad to help.

On the day before Christmas, we raised the garage door and surveyed the area. We knew it would take more than one trip to the dump to clean out a garage that Dad spent forty years filling up. Carpet that had been replaced in the house had never made it past the garage floor. I guess Dad thought his cars deserved deep plush underfoot too.

Workbench drawers groaned with their heavy burdens. A drawer for wrenches, a drawer for screwdrivers, one for sockets, one for wire, another for switches, another for all manner of electrical doodads and gizmos that had meaning only for Dad.

Overhead hung two dozen quart glass mayonnaise jars, their lids attached to the low attic ceiling, their insides full of every kind of screw, bolt and nail. I took one down. I was always amazed that in my entire life I saw only one of those jars fall. It was luck, I guess, but the long lag screws securing the lids to the ceiling must have helped, too.

I unscrewed a jar filled with 8d nails and recalled all the Saturdays I spent pounding bent nails straight again, only to go with Dad to the lumber yard where he would buy brand-new ones, while my refurbished nails languished, unused. In later years I came to understand why he made me straighten so many nails. And if you had a dad like mine, you'd know, too.

Viri backed the trailer into the driveway and we got to work. We hauled out armfuls of scrap wood, aluminum electrical conduit, old iron bars, and appliance motors of every description. Around our house the only part of an obsolete washing machine that ever made it to the curb was the metal shell. Everything else was kept for future use. When Dad built a living room addition and moved the front door to the true front of the house, he raised the entryway to the same level, which resulted in a three-foot high crawlspace underneath—a perfect place to store almost anything you would probably never need again. I reached behind the water heater, opened the access door, and switched on the light Dad had

rigged. The crawlspace was full. I shook my head wearily. "I'm not cleaning that out. No way," I said, closing the door. Viri nodded. "Let the next owners worry about it." (But if you ever need a motor for a 1964 Kenmore washing machine, it's in there. Help yourself.)

We hauled out broken screen doors, every shape and size of wood, aluminum metal flanges, and cans of thirty-year-old paint. The paint cans struck me oddly. Most of them were so old they didn't even slosh when I shook them. Dad hated painting so much he'd just panel over the wall instead. Of course every room in Mom's house is paneled.

Occasionally, we found objects that literally shouted Dad's name. We found a series of name plates from the grills of all the cars he had owned: the Oldsmobile sedan, the Dodge Sierra I wrecked; the maroon Ford LTD; the Chrysler Imperial with fins so large we called it the "Batmobile." We even found several painted ceramic mermaid figurines Grandpa had given to Dad. They were vaguely risqué and Viri and I laughed. Dad was so proper, he never hung them up in plain view but had stored them secretly in a deep drawer. We put them back. They must have had some sort of meaning for Dad. We would respect that sentiment.

I hauled a dusty ammo box out from under the workbench. It looked familiar. I opened it and air that had been trapped for years escaped, smelling of old rubber. Inside I found a yellowed rubber bag with Dad's childhood marble collection inside: bright green and yellow cat's eyes, silver steelies, large, pitted black shooters. Dad had played with these marbles when he was a kid, and I played with the same marbles when I was young. The smell of the bag transported me back thirty years to a hot summer sidewalk, squatting on my haunches, a marble in my hand, concentrating on the trajectory. I was five years old again.

Viri opened the tool drawers. Dad was like Noah: he'd collected two of every kind. He was happiest in two places in this world: behind the wheel of an airplane or in a hardware store. I have inherited his love for hardware stores and can wander the aisles, drinking in the intoxicating smells and marveling at the inventiveness of a new kind of wrench until my legs give out and I return home, drained yet strangely refreshed.

In the spaces between the ceiling joists, Dad had crammed lengths of wood, aluminum siding, electrical conduit, and anything else that wouldn't fit in a drawer. I reached up and began pulling things out, marveling at how every nook and cranny was filled. Then I pulled out a piece of 3/4" marine-quality plywood, four inches wide and eighteen inches long, painted a bright bluish green. I'd seen it before, but I couldn't remember where. I stared at the wood, turning it over in my hands, my ears buzzing. Suddenly I knew why I was there in that garage, the day before Christmas. *That* green piece of plywood was why—it was a talisman.

In 1962, when I was seven, Dad took the family to the Seattle World's Fair. Our Sierra station wagon was new then, a shiny two-tone green, with modest fins, Naugahyde bench seats, and seat belts Dad had installed (long before they were standard equipment). Because there were eight of us, we couldn't afford to stay in motels. But Dad had a plan. He built a plywood box nearly as large as the car roof, two feet deep, painted it to match the car, then secured it to the rooftop like an oversized luggage rack. The box had a lid that could be removed and slipped inside the car over the tops of the bench seats, upon which he and Mom slept. My brother and I slept on top of the car in the box itself, and my sisters slept snugly inside the car, on the seats beneath the lid. We camped out in style all the way to Seattle without ever spending a dime on a motel.

During our drive north I sat in the rear-facing back seat. In between reading my stack of science fiction novels, knitting a wallet (Yes, my mother taught me to knit, thank you very much), songs, and the occasional fight with my sisters, I would wave so persistently to people following us that they would pass just to avoid having to wave back at me for the hundredth time.

We toured the sequoia forests of northern California, drove through a tunnel cut through the base of a huge redwood tree, climbed on every statue we found, and gawked up at a giant cement Paul Bunyan and his blue ox, Babe, in the California redwood forest.

When we returned from our trip, Dad converted the box into a bunk bed for my brother and me. The box itself became the lower bunk where Viri slept. I slept in the upper bunk, which was made from the box lid.

When my brother went to college a few years later, Dad took the bed apart and made Viri's bunk into a large six-drawer dresser, which my sisters used for many years. The lid made its way to the garage and served as the foundation for my model railroad set. It was attached to the ceiling with ropes and pulleys and we could lower it, setting it on two sawhorses, when we wanted to play with the train set.

Five years later the train was long forgotten, but the dresser remained and stood in my room. It was the year before I left for college. I had ceased connecting the dresser with the travel box because by then it had been painted a dark brown. The dresser still stands in one of Mom's unused bedrooms. As I stood there in the garage, I remembered that piece of plywood through all its permutations, from the moment Dad picked it out at the lumber yard, until the moment I found myself holding the last slice of it, thirty years later.

Feeling its substance, it began to dawn on me: Dad really *was* gone, and with him his ability to see something new and useful inside something old and worn. To him, a piece of plywood wasn't just lumber: it was a travel box, a bunk bed, a train set base, or a dresser. I had shared

most of my life with this piece of plywood as shaped by my father's hand. It had joined me on an unforgettable family vacation, I had worn the paint off the ladder climbing up to sleep in a bed made from it, I had played trains on it, I had placed my clothing in its drawers, until at last I held a remnant of it—the craftsman's busy hand finally still and the wood at rest, no longer to be cut and nailed, sanded and painted.

A thunderous wave of loss came rushing forward, burying me. I staggered under its weight. I sobbed, unaware of anyone else, my grief finally loosened. My mind moved ahead to an empty future: my as yet unborn children would never know him, never see his squinty smile or watch him measure and plan, saw and nail. I would never hand him another wrench and wonder how he was going to fix *this* bit of mechanical trouble.

During the time we spent cleaning the garage, Mom came out only once, then quickly went back inside. I glanced over at the piece of green plywood and understood. I felt foolish about my pop psychology "stages of grief" notions. In her own way, Mom was grieving already, coping the best way she knew how, privately and silently. How could she not grieve? Dad's imprint, smell, and essence surrounded her wherever she went in that house and every day reminded her of his absence. In trying to help my mother begin her own grieving, I unwittingly chose the perfect place to begin mine. Perhaps her grieving began the day he died and she went into their bedroom to get something and opened his closet and saw his B-24 pilot's hat sitting on the shelf. Maybe it was the next day when she entered the den and saw dozens of his airplane photos on the wall. Or perhaps she even began to grieve two months before he passed away, as she crawled alone into the bed they'd shared for forty years after kissing him goodnight as he lay in a cold hospital bed in the living room.

But for me the grieving began the day before Christmas, in the garage where I had grown up under my father's watchful and stern eye, surrounded by the materials with which he had built his life and mine. I stood holding a simple piece of 3/4" marine plywood, reminded of the greatness of my father. On that day I knew I missed him only a little less than I would miss him every day for the rest of my life.



Reflecting on the Death Penalty

Ken Driggs

DURING THE WINTER OF 1994 a man I represented was taken to a small room in Huntsville, Texas, strapped to a gurney, and his life was taken from him by strangers in the name of the state.

For about five years I have been an attorney for death-sentenced men in Florida and Texas. I have often reflected on how I felt about this as a believing Mormon. However, it was always an abstraction until someone I had grown close to was killed in that way.¹

I will call him James Frederick—Jimmy. Everything I have to say about him is colored by the fact that he was a young man I liked instantly. I was especially impressed by his enthusiasm for, his obvious enjoyment of, life. Perhaps the shadow of your own death brings greater appreciation for each day and hour lived. If so, that was certainly evident in him.

Jimmy was an admitted armed robber—this in spite of his growing up in an apparently loving, religious home. What I knew of his childhood was very much an exception in my line of work, as I will explain below. He was convicted of shooting a man to death in the course of one of those robberies and sentenced to die. While the murder was a bad one, it did not stand out as especially heinous, atrocious, or cruel when compared with other Texas homicides.

In the eight years after his conviction, Jimmy was imprisoned on the Texas death row. It is a special section of the Ellis One Unit, a 2,500-bed maximum security prison in the pine forests outside Huntsville. It is a squat, flat, hot, inhospitable place built in the mid-1960s. There is no air conditioning and very poor ventilation. Sixty percent of death row inmates, those not in the work program, are kept twenty-three or more hours a day in 4x8 cells with few possessions. Some have radios and there is a black-and-white television mounted on the wall outside every

1. The other lawyers on the case were Dick Burr and Steve Losch.

few cells. Some have typewriters and busy themselves writing letters to pen pals and, when they have them, lawyers. Twice a week inmates get a little exercise in the "yard," a concrete slab with basketball and volleyball nets, and every few days they get a brief shower. It is literally warehousing in the most uncomfortable conditions, although there are other death rows more notorious than Ellis One.

In Jimmy's eight years on death row, he had become genuinely religious. I have had a lot of experience with the manipulative "faith" of many prison inmates—"riding the Jesus Train," it is called—and that which was a product of mental illness in others. Jimmy's belief was sincere. The pastor of the church where he grew up remained positively involved with him. His deeply loving mother never wavered in her support for her son, writing and making the several hours' drive to visit regularly with other family members. Only a few death row inmates enjoy regular visits and support from family. Jimmy also worked at developing a positive relationship with his child, born about the time he was taken into custody.

Texas has a unique work program making prison system garments where Jimmy, along with about 40 percent of the over 400 inmates sentenced to die, became a productive worker.² Death row guards, adept at learning which of their often disturbed and hostile inmates presented a security risk, regarded Jimmy as a no-problem-responsibility. They dropped many of the handcuffing and other requirements they normally imposed. Jimmy was one of the most popular inmates with his fellow prisoners. He was often a calming influence among them. Guards came to rely on him in that role and he was proud of the respect he had earned.

Everything I learned about Jimmy's life in prison defied the judgment that he was beyond redemption, that he had no worth as a human being, no contribution to make.

When Jimmy reached what death row lawyers call "successor status"—meaning he was entering federal habeas corpus for the second time—he knew he was not likely to survive. More than a third of all executions in the United States now take place in Texas. State and federal courts in Texas are so hostile to death row claims that very few inmates survive execution dates as successors. We talked often by telephone in the days and hours leading up to his execution. He was scared and wanted to live, but he was focused and prepared. Most important, he was at peace with God and ready to return to him.

Through this same period I spoke with his mother almost daily. We developed a bond that I believe we will carry for the rest of our lives. I

2. See Francis X. Clines, "Self-Esteem and Friendship in a Factory on Death Row," *New York Times*, 12 Jan. 1994, 1.

found in her a mother's heart—unquestioning love, indescribable anguish, fear, and tears. One morning a few days before the execution she called me at 6:30 and tearfully said the sound of my voice let her find a calm that otherwise escaped her. That call made me feel all the more inadequate and helpless as one of Jimmy's attorneys because I understood the reality of his situation.

At one point the newspapers quoted the mother of the victim saying that Jimmy was a monster who should have been killed years earlier, and that she was angry that Texas law did not allow her to attend the execution. (Victims' families now are allowed to witness executions, although not in the same room as the condemned man's family.) I remember Jimmy's mother being bitter about the press—the media significantly increased her pain—and the state's seeking the life of her son, but she refused to find any anger in her heart for the woman. "She is a mother, too," she told me, "I understand her pain."

On Jimmy's last day his mother, child, sister, and some other relatives were in Huntsville to be with him. Even with the remainder of his life measured in hours, Texas still does not allow contact visits with family for a final embrace or kiss. Everything happened on either side of a wall of thick glass and heavy wire in the death row visitor's area. At 4:00 in the afternoon his family was required to leave Ellis One Unit. Jimmy was moved to the Walls Unit, another old prison in the center of town where the death chamber is.

Death chamber is the correct term. It is a room where men assemble for the planned killing of a human being while a group of strangers watches from behind a glass wall in an adjoining room. Texas executions were then set for 12:01 a.m. By law and tradition they must be completed before dawn. More recently they have been shifted to an early evening time.

I could not be with Jimmy and his family in person because I was trapped in my Austin office waiting for the United States Supreme Court to call with a ruling on our final appeals, a Petition for Certiorari filed that afternoon. About 8:30 I got that call from their capital appeals clerk, Cynthia Rapp. It was a very formal and quiet exchange undertaken almost in whispers. After she told me our Petition for Certiorari had been denied 8-1, she asked me a question I had not been prepared for: "Will you be filing anything else tonight?" I remember how cold I felt as I told her, "No." We both knew "no" meant we had given up, that Jimmy was going to die in less than four hours.

Then I had to call Jimmy with the news we had expected but hoped we would not hear. Lawyers calling at this point must work their way through the prison system director's office, finally getting transferred to a phone at the far end of a long extension cord near the death chamber

holding cell. I remember Jimmy's mouth was very dry and I asked if he had been drugged. He said no. He sounded as though he was speaking to me from inside some big metal tank, his voice bouncing off steel.

We talked for maybe twenty minutes, with me seemingly more anguished than Jimmy. Then he wanted me to patch together a conference call to his family in a Huntsville motel to tell them good-bye. His mother first, his child, his sisters, the phone passed from hand to hand. He spoke to each with love, strength, and courage. That was the most painful, excruciating 90 minutes I think I have ever lived through. His mother cried out when she heard the news and the rest of his family knew that hope was at an end. Jimmy tried to explain to his bewildered child why he was about to die. I remember struggling to keep the others on the line from hearing me cry in my office 160 miles away along with his family in Huntsville. For months I could not tell people about it without fighting back tears.

Jimmy wanted his mother and one sister to be among the small group of witnesses to his execution. It was hard for him to ask his mother to do such a thing, but he finally did. His poor mother could not bare the prospect of watching her only son die and would not promise to be there, yet she summoned all her courage to do so. She later told me she realized how important it was to him by the obvious affection on his face as he lay on the executioner's gurney.

Minutes before the execution family members and press are brought into an adjoining witness room where a window facing the death chamber is covered by a closed curtain. When it is drawn, they see the condemned strapped onto a gurney, arms extended as if on a cross, with the poison tubes already inserted into his arms or thighs. They can converse between rooms by way of microphones hanging from the ceiling.

Jimmy made no final statement but died with tears on his cheek and a profession of love for family. He was pronounced dead about fifteen minutes after the poisons were fed into his body by the state executioner.

The next day his mother called me and asked that I speak at his funeral. I dreaded the prospect but could not say no to this beautiful woman. It was especially important to me to be able to do this as a Mormon. As it happened, that funeral service was one of the most positive, validating experiences I have ever enjoyed. I met all of his close-knit family at their home before the services. Later the church was packed with people who had known Jimmy as a boy growing up and as a man who had found positive directions for his life even while awaiting execution. I sat next to his young child until it was my turn to speak. It was a joyful celebration of the good in his life and his final release from mortal pain. No one there doubted that he would be found in heaven. I will always be thankful to his mother for asking me. I am certain I gained much more

from it than I was able to give.

I have had other clients executed, but this case drove home to me just what an evil thing the death penalty is. Executions do not bring real peace to the families of victims and only extend the ring of suffering to more lives. Absolutely nothing in that mother's life, or in any other member of Jimmy's family, made them deserving of that kind of suffering. If there was any way for that woman to have exchanged her life for the life of her son, she freely would have. Jimmy's eight years of life on death row defied any attempt to characterize him as a man beyond redemption, without value as a human being, a man society had to kill to protect itself from.

Most people do not know how a death penalty trial works. You may only receive a death sentence for the crime of murder.³ A capital trial has two parts. First, the jury arrives at a guilty verdict on the crime charged. If they acquit or convict on a lesser included offense, such as second-degree murder, the trial is over.

If they convict on the capital offense in most states,⁴ the same jury then sits in a second phase which usually begins the following day. At this Punishment Phase the jury hears testimony of aggravating and mitigating circumstances—if any are offered—and renders another verdict. They either recommend or impose a sentence, depending on state law. In Texas the jury's death verdict must be unanimous and is binding on the trial court. In Florida the vote is advisory to the judge who imposes sentence and need not be unanimous. The only sentencing choices are death or life in prison. For all practical purposes capital life now means you die in a prison cell.

In most states an appeal to the state's highest court is required, whether the condemned wants it or not. An initial Petition for Certiorari to the U.S. Supreme Court often, but not always, follows. A second round of appeals called habeas corpus follows in most instances.

My personal opposition to the death penalty comes from several reasons.

For starters, our court system is a very good one but it is not perfect. Innocent people are sentenced to death, in part, because the quality of the

3. The Supreme Court has ruled that death for the rape of an adult is excessive and violates the Eighth Amendment prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment. *Coker v. Georgia*, 433 U.S. 584, 53 L.Ed.2d 982, 97 S.Ct. 2861 (1977). Death as punishment for the rape of a child is still a constitutionally open question, but few legal scholars believe it would be approved by the Supreme Court today.

4. In a few states, such as heavily Mormon Nevada, a special three-judge panel determines the sentence after the jury convicts.

defense provided indigents is often pathetic.⁵ Fiscal pressures, poor compensation of appointed counsel, public outrage over the crime, and a shortage of competent death penalty trial lawyers all contribute to this. A 1993 congressional study of the problem counted forty-eight men released from death row from 1973 to 1993 as innocent and noted that Texas, Georgia, and Florida were the states most prone to such miscarriages of justice.⁶ But not all are found and released. On 4 January 1995 Texas executed Jesse Jacobs even though his prosecutor later obtained a conviction of his sister for the same murder, telling the second jury that he was mistaken in the first trial and that Jacobs had actually not killed the victim. The execution caused a national outcry, but Texas prosecutors were completely unrepentant and a majority of the Supreme Court refused to intervene.⁷

One of the most chilling rationalizations to me is that a certain number of executions of the innocent must be accepted in order to enjoy the supposed benefits of the death penalty.⁸ What are we to tell the mothers of those whom the state has killed by mistake? That we are sorry but hopefully society is safer for all, except possibly their dead child?

The death penalty is increasingly arbitrary, making less and less effort to distinguish the worst offenders from the majority who receive life sentences. That comes with the past decade of Supreme Court holdings seeking to eliminate restrictions on state imposition of the death penalty. The difference between those who get death sentences and those who get life is mostly found in the quality of the lawyering involved, chance fac-

5. After a six-month, six-state study, the *National Law Journal* found the capital defense system to be largely populated by the least skilled and poorest paid lawyers. Marcia Coyle, Fred Strasser, and Marianne Lavelle, "Trial and Error in the Nation's Death Belt: Fatal Defense," *National Law Journal*, 11 June 1990. Utah was not discussed in this article.

6. The 21 October 1993 congressional report, "Innocence and The Death Penalty: Assessing The Danger of Mistaken Executions," by the House Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights, said that "Judging from past experience, a substantial number of death row inmates are indeed innocent, and there is a high risk that some of them will be executed." On the problem generally, see Mike L. Radelet, Hugo Adam Bedau, and Constance E. Putnam, *In Spite of Innocence: The Ordeal of 400 Americans Wrongly Convicted of Crimes Punishable by Death* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992). On a specific incidence of such a mistake, see Randall Adams, *Adams v. Texas: The True Story Made Famous by the Highly Acclaimed Film The Thin Blue Line* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991).

7. See Sam Howe Verhovek, "When Justice Shows Its Darker Side," *New York Times*, 8 Jan. 1995. Three justices of the Supreme Court voted to stay the execution and two wrote a stinging dissent saying his death sentence was "fundamentally unfair" and that "The injustice . . . is self-evident." See *Jacobs v. Texas*, 130 L.Ed.2d 618 (1995).

8. See Ernest van den Haag, "Why Capital Punishment?" *Albany Law Review* 54 (1990): 501-14.

tors of geography and jurisdiction, the race of the victims and the perpetrators, elections, the composition of juries, and other factors which have nothing to do with the defendant as an individual.

One inevitable result of this arbitrariness is that today's death penalty is racist. Every study recognizes that the death penalty is disproportionately applied to racial minorities.⁹ This is, perhaps, an inevitable result of the fact that the death penalty is reserved almost exclusively for the poor. The current Supreme Court has, unbelievably to me, held that while this racism does exist it is an "inevitable" but not fatal blemish on the execution machine.¹⁰ By 31 August 1995 death rows in the United States were 48 percent whites and 52 percent racial minorities.¹¹ The race-based use of the death penalty is now on the rapid increase.

The death penalty is bad public policy in that it is terribly expensive—maximum security life imprisonment costs around \$.5-.75 million

9. See Robert M. Bohm, ed., *The Death Penalty in America: Current Research* (Cincinnati: Anderson Publishing Co., 1991). Florida, where I first began doing death row work, has never in its history executed a white for the murder of a black. The Florida Supreme Court's Racial and Ethical Bias Study Commission found in 1990 that killers of whites were 3.4 times more likely to receive a death sentence than killers of blacks. See Ken Driggs, "A Current of Electricity Sufficient in Intensity to Cause Immediate Death: A Pre-Furman History of Florida's Electric Chair," *Stetson Law Review* 22 (Summer 1993): 1169-1209; Michael L. Radelet and Glenn L. Pierce, "Choosing Those Who Will Die: Race and the Death Penalty in Florida," *Florida Law Review* 43 (Jan. 1991): 1-34; and Bob Levenson and Debbie Salamone, "Prosecutors see death penalty in black and white," *Orlando Sentinel*, 24 May 1992, 1, which studied 283 first-degree murder cases in central Florida in 1986-91 and concluded, "Justice, however, is not colorblind in Central Florida when it comes to the prosecution of first-degree murder cases."

10. In a 5-4 decision the U.S. Supreme Court dismissed statistical evidence of racial bias in Georgia capital cases as "an inevitable part of our criminal justice system." *McCleskey v. Kemp*, 481 U.S. 279, 312, 95 L.Ed.2d 262, 291, 107 S.Ct. 1756 (1987). The four dissenters saw clear evidence of racial bias in the Georgia experience:

The capital sentencing rate for all white victim cases was almost 11 times greater than the rate for black-victim cases. Furthermore, blacks who kill whites are sentenced to death at nearly 22 times the rate of blacks who kill blacks, and more than 7 times the rate of whites who kill blacks. In addition, prosecutors seek the death penalty for 70% of black defendants with white victims, but for only 15% of black defendants with black victims. Since our decision upholding the Georgia capital sentencing system in *Gregg*, the State has executed seven persons. All of the seven were convicted of killing whites, and six of the seven executed were black. Such execution figures are especially striking in light of the fact that, during the period encompassed by the Baldus study, only 9.2% of Georgia homicides involved black defendants and white victims, while 60.7% involved black victims (481 U.S. at 326-27, 95 L.Ed.2d at 301; emphasis in original; citations omitted).

11. *Death Row, U.S.A.*, a detailed quarterly report compiled by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund; see report dated summer 1995.

while executions run over \$3 million each¹²—and is not a deterrent.

We execute, I think, not out of any instinct but fear and revenge. We are afraid of what we think is increasingly random violence in our society. We are angry because of the often terrible crimes these defendants have committed. We select a few of them—in a process that is very close to random—and kill them. One legal scholar who follows the death penalty has said, "There are 22,000 homicides a year, 18,000 arrests and maybe 300 death sentences, leading to maybe 50 or 60 executions. How do you figure out why lightening strikes one defendant and not another? It's been studied for 20 years, and all I can say is, it's not a rational process."¹³ These are the scapegoats, the unlucky few we have drawn by judicial lot to sacrifice.

I do not believe that society should be blamed for individual human failings. Yet I do believe that a great many people who end up on death row lived lives that clearly signaled this was coming unless some positive force intervened. These men, and a handful of women, are largely "made."

Who among us doesn't understand that violence directed at children is destructive and has long-term consequences? In my files is a newspaper article reporting:

A study of young children finds that physical abuse at home is more strongly linked to later aggressive behavior than are such factors as poverty, divorce or marital violence. John E. Bates, an Indiana University psychology professor said Thursday that a study that followed 309 children from age 4 into kindergarten showed that those who were physically abused by an adult at home were more likely to be aggressive—or even violent—in difficult social situations. Abuse, he said, is more powerful by far than any other home influence on how a child learns to cope.¹⁴

12. One California newspaper estimated each execution there runs \$15 million. Michael Dorgan, "Taxpayers pay high price for death penalty," *San Jose Mercury News*, 12 Apr. 1992, 1A, crediting the *Sacramento Bee* with the cost estimate. A 1988 study published in the *Miami Herald* found each Florida execution had cost taxpayers \$3,178,623 and called its figures "conservative." Dace Von Drehle, "Capital punishment in paralysis," *Miami Herald*, 10 July 1988, 1. Another study set the cost of Texas executions at \$2.3 million each, while life, set as forty years in a maximum security prison, cost about \$750,000. Christy Hoppe, "Life in jail, or death? Life term is cheaper," *Charlotte Observer*, 22 Mar. 1992, 12A. See also Chris Lavin, "Is the death penalty worth it? It costs time, money, answers," *St. Petersburg Times*, 23 Aug. 1992, 1B. Florida spent \$9.5 million building a special 336-bed death row prison which was too small before it opened. The opening of the prison was delayed for several months because the state did not have the \$5.8 million a year required to run the prison and its required staff of 145. See "State lacks the money of open new death row," *St. Petersburg Times*, 14 Apr. 1992, 5B, and "New Walls, No Inmates," *Newsweek*, 18 May 1992, 63.

13. Quoted at "Death Penalty," *Miami Herald*, 5 Mar. 1995, Viewpoint Section, M-1.

14. "Abuse at home called basic reason children rely on violence to cope," *Atlanta Constitution*, 21 Dec. 1990, 4A.

In our society we also have the sexual molestation of children, the scourge of drunkenness and addiction among parents, drug abuse and the even more destructive use of chemical inhalants by children and young adults, lack of parenting skills, racism, grinding poverty, ignorance, and sometimes just an absence of Christian charity, all of which contribute to the making of these men. At some point nearly every one of them could have been diverted from this killing by something that worked better in our society. Often it was indifference to their plight which was the most damaging.

I do not argue that personal choices play no role because in many instances they do. But the sad truth in our society is that many people grow up with less ability to make good choices, much less what believing Mormons would consider righteous choices. One may only select from the options life has placed before them.

The death penalty and the bulk of the debate about it distract us from the need to address these causes. We could kill every one of the more than 3,000 men and women on death rows at the end of 1996 in one bloody week and our communities would be no safer because we have not addressed the next wave of violent children we are creating, and the next, and the next. If we could divert even 10 percent of offenders with something like more available drug treatment programs, we would all lead safer lives and save tax dollars dumped into prisons and executions.

This thought leads inevitably to the very Mormon conclusion that the answers do not lie in prison construction and increased executions, but in stable healthy families and loving parents.

I must acknowledge that a substantial majority of Mormons supports the death penalty. *Sunstone* once published an unattributed chart showing only 10 percent of Mormons opposed the death penalty, compared to over 25 percent of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews.¹⁵ Certainly the majority of members in my Florida and Texas wards does.

And there seems to be little doubt that the church is, at least, not opposed to it. Stuart W. Hinckley's section in the semi-official *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, which states that "capital punishment is viewed in the doctrines of the Church to be an appropriate penalty for murder, but that penalty is proper only after the offender has been found guilty in a lawful public trial by constitutionally authorized civil authorities," is surely ac-

15. "Opposition to Capital Punishment," *Sunstone*, Feb. 1994, 19.

curate.¹⁶ No doubt, at least some murders are what President Spencer W. Kimball described as "sins unto death" or the "unpardonable sin" for which there is no repentance.¹⁷ It isn't that I disagree. I just think only God can make such judgments. I certainly am not willing to.

So I recognize my own beliefs are probably outside the Mormon mainstream.

I grew up comfortably embracing the free will side in its debate with social and biological determinism. For me, the most unique doctrinal features of Mormonism are those which deal with individual responsibility. These include the rejection of original sin; the doctrine of individual free agency; the belief that baptism should not come until the individual has reached an age and state of moral accountability, which is why we do not baptize infants or many mentally-handicapped individuals. We each are judged according to the knowledge and talents we bring to the temptations of mortal life. We believe that members of the church are judged by a higher standard because we have a greater knowledge and more spiritual opportunities in life.

The prophet Joseph Smith stated these concepts simply in the Second Article of Faith: "We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression." Personally, I have always found the Mormon rejection of original sin, the idea that we are not born inherently evil, to be one of the most positive messages of the gospel.

But these doctrines presume rational, thinking people who enjoy some control over their lives. They depend on good, committed parents who teach their children solid values. They assume people who are "whole." The doctrines are not applied to all individuals without regard to mental, biological, cultural, and environmental handicaps. The church's present application of these doctrines in the day-to-day concerns of bishops, missionaries, and priesthood leaders makes this clear. There is a recognition that God did not bless us all equally in our families, our talents, our native intelligence, our worldly wealth, and our spiritual environments.

My religious opposition to the death penalty grew with my understanding of just who the people on death rows are. While there are always exceptions and you should be careful of stereotypes, there are some things which can be said of the majority of those condemned to die. Cer-

16. Stuart W. Hinkley, "Capital Punishment," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 1:255. See D&C 42:18-19, 79; also L. Kay Gillespie, *The Unforgiven: Utah's Executed Men* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 14-16; and Dallin H. Oaks, *The Lord's Way* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1991), 213.

17. Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1969), 118-20, 130-31.

tainly it can be said of the overwhelming majority of the forty-odd clients I've been involved with on death rows.

People who kill in the kind of brutal fashion that earns death sentences are largely made, not spontaneously generated. The clients I see were overwhelmingly from single-parent, dysfunctional families. Child neglect is the norm. I always thought the battering of children was a sin, but only in the last few years have I learned how many children are permanently brain damaged as a result of such childhood experiences. Sexual victimization is so common that if death row defense teams don't find it we think our investigation has been faulty.

I had never encountered fetal alcohol syndrome, much less learned to recognize it, until I encountered another death row inmate born with the condition and mild schizophrenia.

Many of those who were abused carry with them a rage that plays a significant role in their crimes.¹⁸

I did not appreciate how destructive a childhood in the hands of screaming, fighting, violent parents was until I had one of my first death row cases representing a fragile, explosive, alcoholic man who grew up that way. Children learn what is played out before them in their homes. No amount of outside influence can completely counteract that.

When I first began handling these cases, my Tallahassee Fourth Ward bishop, Dr. Charlie Madsen, made it a practice in every sacrament meeting to bring youth from the ward to the stand for praise on one or another accomplishment, often very small but still important to the child. I could not help but contrast this with clients who never once heard a word of approval or praise from an adult significant in their lives.

It took me a while to deal with tough, hard men sometimes crying in our conferences as I probed to learn what their childhoods and families were like. All swore me to secrecy as these were not things they cared to acknowledge. In particular, I remember one young black man from another severely dysfunctional family crying as he told the story of how he once hit a home run to win a youth league baseball game and no member of his family was there to see it because they never bothered to come. Youth baseball had brought the only accomplishments in an otherwise failed life, and he knew it.

My death row clients were almost entirely in the grasp of substance abuse—combinations of long-term alcoholism, drugs of all types, and, perhaps most dangerous of all, chemical inhalants like glue, gasoline, paint, and similar substances. Measurable brain damage closely associ-

18. I recommend the movie *A Perfect World* where the Kevin Costner character provides a better understanding of this even though it is greatly understated. For a more uncomfortable account of this rage and where it comes from in a Mormon setting, I recommend Mikal Gilmore, *Shot in the Heart* (New York: Doubleday, 1993).

ated with violence was a common result of this huffing. Most of the time such substance abuse was yet another symptom of much deeper problems.

By almost any measure these people live on the margins of our society. They are the underclass living out pathetic, inadequate lives. The typical death row inmate dropped out of school in the 8th to 10th grade, if they stayed that long. They rarely have a stable employment history, stable relationships with anyone, or anything you could call a success of any kind. It is always possible to hold up a Ted Bundy, the poster child of death penalty proponents, but men like Bundy are rare on our death rows. I've only had one client who ever enrolled in a college course and perhaps four who got through high school.

Mormons believe in quality families as a manifestation of the divine. While we are often short of the ideal, the believing Mormon strives for a home that teaches children solid values, especially in interpersonal relationships, by example. We stress this because we know much of this must be learned by children in our complex, difficult society. Church leaders constantly teach us we must counteract the unhealthy messages taught by our society. The world is always ready to teach children violence as a problem-solving skill, self-absorption and materialism, substance abuse as the way to be happy and popular, predatory sexuality, and that the person who feels a moral responsibility for the welfare of others is a chump.

I doubt that many of us would not feel that the parent who not only neglects to teach his or her children positive values but actually teaches them evil—to steal, to lie, to be violent, to be substance abusers—shares some responsibility for the bad acts of those children.

One thing that has always amazed me about our society is how quickly our sympathy for abused and molested children is used up. When we learn what happens to some children, we are indigent toward the abusers and eager to reach out and comfort the child. But when the child becomes a man, or even a teenager, and acts out in a way that is predictable of those who have endured such things, then we have no sympathy left, we simply don't want to acknowledge that they were in part "made" that way and we failed to do anything about it.

Support for the death penalty out of a desire for personal or societal revenge is clearly inconsistent with the gospel. Latter-day Saints must be mindful of President Kimball's admonition that revenge is contrary to LDS teachings. The prophet wrote that "[t]he spirit of revenge, of retaliation, of bearing a grudge, is entirely foreign to the gospel of the gentle, forgiving Jesus Christ."¹⁹ In a somewhat different context that I think ap-

19. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, 265.

plies as well, Apostle Dallin Oaks has written that "Revenge is never a proper motive for a Christian."²⁰

I am not opposed to imprisonment, even life with no possibility of parole. I'm not opposed to punishment and think it is obvious that society has a right to be protected from some individuals no matter what the root causes of their violence. But taking their lives, in my mind, is inhuman, unchristian, and serves no positive purpose.

Nor do I mean to suggest that there is not very real pain on the part of victims' families and friends. There is enormous pain that nothing will ever heal. My heart goes out especially to the parents of murder victims. I have talked with several, I know how real it is. I have been especially struck by that combination of faith, love, and spirituality in some parents who have publicly asked that the murderer be allowed to live, saying that an execution would not bring back the child they had lost. God surely knows the hearts of such people and is pleased by their testimonies.

There are other Mormon subtopics on the death penalty I am deliberately not taking up in the interest of space—blood atonement²¹ and the church's past teachings on blacks and the priesthood as they relate to black defendants in Mormon cultural areas among them.

I'd like to share the thoughts of two non-Mormons whom I respect. Retired Supreme Court justice Harry Blackmun wrote in February 1994 that he could no longer justify the death penalty in American law. In his initial dissent to that effect in a Texas case, he wrote:

From this day forward, I no longer shall tinker with the machinery of death. For more than 20 years I have endeavored—indeed, I have struggled—along with a majority of this Court, to develop procedural and substantive rules that would lend more than the mere appearance of fairness to the death penalty endeavor. Rather than continue to coddle the Court's delusion that the desired level of fairness has been achieved and the need for regulation eviscerated, I feel morally and intellectually obligated simply to concede that the death penalty experiment has failed.²²

And Sister Helen Prejean, a Louisiana Catholic nun whose book *Dead Man Walking* I recommend, wrote:

If someone I love should be killed, I know I would feel rage, loss, grief, helplessness, perhaps for the rest of my life. It would be arrogant to think I

20. Oaks, *The Lord's Way*, 181.

21. See an illuminating discussion of this issue in Gillespie, *The Unforgiven*, 14-16.

22. *Callins v. Collins*, 127 L.Ed.2d 435, 438 (1994) (footnote omitted).

can predict how I would respond to such a disaster. But Jesus Christ, whose way of life I try to follow, refused to meet hate with hate and violence with violence. I pray for the strength to be like him. I cannot believe in a God who metes out hurt for hurt, pain for pain, torture for torture. Nor do I believe that God invests human representatives with such power to torture and kill. The paths of history are stained with the blood of those who have fallen victim to "God's Avengers." Kings and Popes and military generals and heads of state have killed, claiming God's authority and God's blessing. I do not believe in such a God.²³

Finally, I'd like to quote one poor wretch who was executed in North Carolina in 1994. David Lawson had to be dragged into the gas chamber while screaming, "I am human! I am human!" right up until the poison gas took his life.²⁴ Lawson may have been wrong about everything else in his life, but he was still a human being and a child of God.

I must agree with Sister Prejean. The execution of any man or woman is inconsistent with my personal testimony and interpretation of the gospel. I simply cannot imagine Jesus Christ participating in an execution. Nor should we, as individuals or through our government.

23. Helen Prejean, *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States* (New York: Random House, 1993), 21.

24. "Last Words," *The Angolite*, July/Aug. 1995, 15.

Mormonism on the Big Mac Standard

J. Michael Cleverley

A FEW YEARS AGO a member of our Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2nd Ward bishopric and his wife made their first journey across the United States. Born and reared in Japan, they were anxious to see the interior as they drove to and from Salt Lake City. During their absence everyone missed their fresh, unladen spirits. When they returned, we were anxious to hear about their trip.

"It was wonderful to experience the church as we traveled from state to state," he said, during the first testimony meeting home. "It was just like McDonald's. Everywhere we went, every Sunday school class we attended was the same." We were amused, more by the innocent frankness of his testimony than by the idea.

As a member of the American diplomatic service, I and my family too have traveled a fair amount, living in five different countries and on both sides of the United States. This migrant-worker life has given us considerable perspectives on the church. Our Japanese brother was not far from the mark. The church's Correlation program, coupled with its extensive translation effort, puts the same message into virtually every Gospel Doctrine class worldwide each week. And that is just the beginning. Meeting schedules follow the same sequences. Ward and stake organizations are planned by template. The *Ensign* is translated into monthly publications internationally. Primary materials, temple ceremonies, accounting procedures, warehouse floorplans, even sacrament meeting formats are prescribed by the book. Measures of worthiness are standardized, whether you are in Finland or South Africa. That is a bit like McDonald's.

In fact, McDonald's is so standardized that some economists, only half-jokingly, use the term "Big Mac standard" to determine if international currencies are distorted in value through either overvalued or undervalued exchange rates. The theory goes like this: A Big Mac

worldwide is exactly the same. It has the same amount of meat; the buns are identical; the sauces and trimmings are prescribed in quantity and quality. Presumably, the same amount of labor goes into making a Big Mac through identical production processes on common machines in similar facilities. So when the price of a Big Mac in different countries is converted into American dollars, it should also be identical if exchange rates are adjusted for differences in price levels. Any deviation from the U.S. price represents a distortion in that particular exchange rate relative to the dollar. Thus the *universal sameness* of Big Macs offers an opportunity to observe *international differences*, which, according to theory, are not supposed to exist.

That notion, as applied to the church Correlation program, suggests some intriguing possibilities. Today's centralized church, situated in the American Intermountain West, works fastidiously to assure that the gospel message *plus* the church organization is the same everywhere. In the LDS environment diversity is not cherished; conformity is the norm; original thinking can be risky. The longer the church is established in a given place, the more this holds true. We all know people who would not even know *how* to deviate from the Mormon standard unless they moved into sin, big time (or thought they were moving into sin, big time).

But traveling from place to place, as my family has for the past twenty years, has led us to discover that, in fact, differences abound in divers corners of Mormondom. In this church of carefully orchestrated similarities and identities we see diversity. This leads us to the basic question of Big Mac analysis: What do we learn if London's Hyde Park Ward differs in various respects from the BYU 44th Ward in Provo, Utah?

My family lived in both wards for four years. My wife was Relief Society president in both; I was in the bishopric in both. We saw the church, inside-out, in both. The Hyde Park Ward had over fifty nationalities represented among its members, and the majority was nonwhite, mostly black. We had wealthy American businessmen and the poorest of the urban poor. In her church calling my wife became something of a social worker, dealing with virtually everything found in a big urban ward, from murder to marriage. During the summers about 80 percent of the congregation were visitors. Needless to say, none of this was true for the BYU 44th.

It was interesting to watch "Utah Mormons" walk into the Hyde Park Ward (directly from the BYU 44th, seemingly) wearing tell-tale signatures. They looked different, and—if they succeeded in seeing between the other visitors—were often surprised by how the local members, people of every color, speaking all sorts of languages, were also different from what they knew.

The bishop of the Hyde Park Ward was a loving English brother from

the Midlands; his lovely wife was black, originally from the West Indies. If some American visitors weren't surprised by this marriage, some South African members would have been. The appearance of bearded bishops in the Hyde Park Stake would have produced similar reactions. In Pretoria Stake men were not called as bishops without first shaving. And in the BYU 44th a bishop with a beard was (and is) a contradiction of terms. In Italy and Greece our branch presidents wore handsome mustaches. And in Finland I was counselor to an outstanding priesthood leader with an attractive beard.

Thus in our standardized church differences and similarities from country to country tell us something about the many different kinds of peoples who now claim membership. They also tell us about persisting Americanisms, and about limitations to the standardization process. Ultimately they tell us a lot about the gospel itself.

These differences caricature the peoples who generate them. Just as it is impossible to suppress a strong personality without destroying it, salient cultural traits inevitably surface among members in spite of the church's standardizing process. In Finland the church hymn book has some old Lutheran favorites which convey LDS-consistent messages. That is emphatically not the case in South Africa, where the stake music director would not let our ward choir sing "What Child Is This?" on the Christmas program because it was not in the LDS hymnal. One church auxiliary leader in Britain taught over the pulpit never to say thank-you to church workers. It would spoil them, she said. In fact, we heard precious few thank-yous in Britain. Finns say thank-you virtually every other word. One stake president in South Africa told bishops they needed to "kick butt" to keep their members in line. Like Brigham Young used to, he explained. In spite of Brigham Young, I suspect that most American Mormons, who may sometimes go to the other extreme, would be offended (as I was) by both his concept and terminology.

Similarly, a number of brethren, including local leaders, in our Pretoria Ward carried guns holstered inside their jackets to church. Our home teacher, an elderly brother, pulled out his weapon one evening to show to our son. He said he shot one kid, who had asked for his wallet, "in the bum" a few months back. My son was both amused and shocked when, at a stake youth conference, his advisor pulled out his pistol one night to scare off some pranksters from another ward. In Finland carrying a concealed firearm to church, or anywhere, would be unthinkable. Many members there feel it sinful even to buy a play gun for their children. In Italy carrying a gun to church would have completely different implications.

It is not that no British member says "thank you"; that all South African stake presidents kick butt; or that their brethren carry guns. But on

the Big Mac standard when everything is planned to be the same, small differences stand out. Like a good cartoonist—except unintentionally—the standardized church picks up distinguishing features, emphasizes them, and highlights them for everyone to see. Some social scientists reject cultural explanations because they side-step analytical exploration. Things cannot be what they are just because they are that way. Whatever the reason, however, distinguishing traits exist among cultures and among culturally-separated Mormons who live according to a standardized, prescribed lifestyle.

These types of differences highlight cultural distinctions which may never be eliminated from the church, even if this were desirable. Interestingly, members often fail to see such traits as “differences,” contending that far from the offspring of diversity, they are part and parcel of the church and gospel. The (American) choir director fumed over being told she could not sing “What Child Is This?” and marched into her South African bishop’s office to protest. The bishop, I understand, was deeply offended that she, or anyone else, would question church authority. On another occasion our bishop personally demonstrated martial arts techniques to Relief Society sisters. Though merely an assumption, I would bet money that a Finnish bishop would take an “unrepentant” priesthood leader who carried his pistol into church to a church disciplinary council. Our Cambridge 2nd Ward Relief Society discussions over whether the Holy Ghost was a woman would be grounds for apostasy in Pretoria, and totally laughable in Italy.

The tendency to assign ecclesiastical authority to cultural “peculiarities” is probably most prevalent among Americans, for the missionaries spreading the gospel worldwide are mainly young Americans. Members outside the United States have long ago been sensitized to this problem, and many tolerantly smile at what they consider Americanisms. They do not have to sing “For the Strength of the Hills” or “They, the Builders of our Nation,” even if such hymns could be found in their hymnals. In Italy everyone, especially the youth, hug and kiss friends, including the opposite sex, upon arriving for sacrament meeting. We never saw this in Springfield, Virginia. On the other hand, American Mormons have no problem with witches and ghosts in a Halloween party in the chapel. When the American branch president organized a Halloween party in Athens—in full costume—many Greeks and other nationalities were shocked until they caught on to the “American spirit” of the occasion. (Some investigators never did grasp the “spirit.”)

Americanisms are not necessarily negative. In fact, I believe that many cultures would do (and have done) well to adopt some of them. We see this every time we travel back to the U.S. to visit my family in Idaho. There, as in many American wards, we have found warm people whose

kindness to strangers stands as an example to everyone. A number of years ago my wife and I moved from Finland back to Orem, Utah, as poor students. Two months later, when my wife brought our newborn twins home from the hospital, ward members, some of whom we had never before met, flooded our house with new and used clothes. That was American, and my Finnish-born wife has never forgotten it.

There are even relatively "fundamental beliefs and practices" which fall out as Americanisms in our Big Mac analysis. For example, American members tend to equate nudity with immorality. Many Europeans do not. Finns, for example, frequent their saunas as a family, in the buff, until their children are old. Church groups have sauna activities which, while not mixed, are nonetheless naked. We once had an Elders' quorum sauna at our home in Finland, and there we were, priesthood brethren, standing around in only our God-givens, laughing, joking, and talking about gospel topics. I never suggested a sauna party in the BYU 44th Ward.

The American church attitude toward political systems is another practice/belief which is more American than not. In the 1960s and 1970s, when many Mormons (particularly in the West) questioned whether you could be both a Democrat and a Mormon, Mormons in parts of Europe were openly socialist (or communist). Elder Ezra Taft Benson's anti-communist sermons were not common fare among such European folk. In long discussions with members who said they were socialists, referring to the statements of church leaders was not an acceptable reference to authority. (Times have changed a lot in Europe since then, and not just for Mormons.)

But it was not just one's political affiliation. The American concept of active (or at least morally active) support for the political process was foreign to many Europeans. As a priesthood instructor in the Milan-West Branch, I once tried to teach a lesson on political responsibility. Five minutes into the manual, the lesson crashed in flames. Italians could not even begin to identify with the concept of political participation and responsibility. "I can't vote communist. The governing party is totally corrupt. So I vote socialist, but they command less than 10 percent of the vote. So where does that leave me?" one brother bellowed. A few years later, by coincidence, I was again visiting the by-now Milan-West *Ward* only to find that the lesson series had made a full rotation, and an Italian instructor was embarking on the same lesson. He made it no farther than I. The same lesson come up in Greece in our branch of a myriad of nationalities, where it fared little better there than in Italy.

INNOCENCE AND SPONTANEITY

Standardization has its obvious benefits: it preserves the integrity of

the program and assures compliance to gospel and church basics, as defined by the center. It makes governing a rapidly growing, international church easier. Conformity is enhanced. And it supposedly prevents having to make too many decisions like Solomon's.

But we found in the not yet fully standardized churches of mid-1970s Italy and early 1990s Greece a freshness and spontaneity we had never experienced before. Members, in their innocence, cared little, or knew little, about the details of Mormon constructs and procedures. Instead, they simply worked hard to employ basics such as love in the best way they understood. Perhaps the most inspiring testimony meeting I ever attended was in Milan. A home teacher stood to tell how he had worked with a young man, a drug user. Next, the boy rose and went to the front in tears. Then a friend, a young woman, joined him, and they both bore their testimonies. That was followed by two other young people who bore testimonies arm in arm, gathering strength from each other. The meeting continued in a totally unorthodox display of emotion and love that would rarely happen in more standardized settings (and might not even happen in Italy today).

In Athens the two counselors in the branch presidency, one from Sri Lanka and the other from Morocco, never wore jackets to church, and not always ties. No one seemed to notice, for their warm spirits said something more meaningful than their attire. I envision that these simple, unaffected traits, which we have seen in infant branches and missions, may be more in tune with what we might have found in the Colesville Branch or the Kirtland congregation in Joseph Smith's day. Bureaucracy has its price.

CULTURAL SIMILARITIES AND THE GOSPEL WE SHARE

Cross-cultural similarities also tell something of the gospel we share. For example, as a Mormon State Department/Foreign Service family—and there aren't many Mormons in the State Department—we found our transition pains eased, and our lives enriched, as we moved into completely new places to find a group of caring “family members” ready to adopt us into our new ward or branch. This assimilation process varied somewhat from place to place, but it happened. And it contrasted significantly with the experience of many of my embassy colleagues. For us, the church provided ready friends, support mechanisms, and deep, spiritually-based interpersonal relationships. If my professional colleagues ever found these structures, it was long after we did. I remember in Milan how the consul general asked me, as a new vice-consul, if I had ever been in a “working family's” home. One of our friends from the branch was a truck driver and former union activist. The consul general was amazed as

I described our experiences with these dear, refined, sophisticated friends. He had been only once to a "working class" home in Milan—his diver's.

This "family structure" we have found to be spontaneous and universal. No one successfully preaches it over the pulpit. It is a feature which, in my view, characterizes the way in which the gospel pulls people together in the church organization. This inward orientation is also something which may estrange outsiders, who sense being left out of the exclusiveness which permeates Mormon organization.

DIVERSITY ON THE EDGES OF STANDARDIZATION

There are other similarities which emanate naturally from the gospel as outgrowths of the teachings and the spirit the gospel promulgates. But the differences in a church of enforced standardization tell us whether our currency is over- or undervalued.

Whichever way that is, it requires from central church leadership tolerance, patience, and sensitivity, qualities which many central authorities have generally adopted in the internationalization process. While abroad, I have seen little inclination on the church's part to alter the standardization process to allow for cultural differences. However, when these differences surface on the edge, there has often been a full allowance for the manifestation of differences in the standardization process itself—sometimes even more than I personally would have allowed. In virtually every country in which we have lived, I have more often seen mission presidents or general authorities turn a blind eye to diversity than I have seen local leaders tolerate individuality among their own members. For whatever reason, it appears to be easier for church leaders to tolerate diversity among peoples than individuality among personalities.

Just as McDonald's cannot do anything about exchange rates, the church finds itself powerless to alter the arena in which cultural identities meet. Indeed, as we are seeing throughout Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and particularly the remnants of Yugoslavia, ethnic diversity runs deep in the souls of all people. Perhaps when the objective is to provide a standardized product to a multicultural audience, turning that blind eye is the only strategy that will succeed.

American Christians Visit Mt. Nebo

Lee Robison

We had only cameras
and yearning, but the wind rasped
stone like a hot tongue
and cameras and yearning
were not enough to savor the ripening
along the Jordan, the salt sea,
that bitter Wilderness wind
and the candescent wafer
of the sun. We entered
the chapel, hoping for respite, ease,

relief. There were nearly perfect
mosaics to photograph, and we marveled
how men, bending arthritic knees, thumbed
each chip against cement to fill
the hunger of silence and waiting
for visitation. We craved hard
with our minutes but heard
only the grazing air soughing
between the sun and these soothing
arrangements in stone.

Shades of Gray: Sonia Johnson's Life through Letters and Autobiography

Heather M. Kellogg

THE U.S. WOMEN'S MOVEMENT of the 1970s focused on several issues, with passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) at the forefront. In the middle of this battle stood Sonia Johnson, a Ph.D. in education, teacher, wife, mother of four, and up until the late 1970s a devoted member of the Mormon church. Hardly the markings of a rebel. In 1979, however, Sonia Johnson was excommunicated from the church because of her vocal condemnation of the church's opposition to the ERA. Less than three years later she published her autobiography, *From Housewife to Heretic*, which painted a picture of a woman who beginning almost as a child developed a growing disdain for the church. However, her personal letters before her excommunication recall a different story. An examination of her autobiography and letters—however contradictory—reflects Sonia Johnson's pressing concerns at the time of each writing.

In 1963 Betty Friedan released her best-seller, *The Feminine Mystique*. Friedan argued that American women, particularly suburban housewives, suffered from deep discontent in the 1950s. She asserted that in the post-World War II era journalists, educators, advertisers, and social scientists lured women into the home with unrealistic expectations for the future and promises of rewards that never materialized. Friedan labeled this ideology "the feminine mystique." This constrictive "image" held that women could fulfill their potential only by being sexually passive, being dominated by men, and being a mother. *The Feminine Mystique* affected many American women. Thousands testified that the book expressed exactly what they were feeling—it named their problems and altered their lives.¹ Sonia Ann Harris (later Johnson), one of the thou-

1. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963; reprint, New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), 16-19 (page references are to the 1974 edition).

sands of women afflicted with "the problem that has no name," spent the first forty-two years of her life coming to terms with her "problem" and finding a way to conquer it.

Sonia turned twenty-seven the year Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*. Born into a prominent Mormon family on 27 February 1936 in Malad City, Idaho, Sonia grew up reading the glossy American magazines and Mormon prescriptive literature targeted at young women like herself. She spent her childhood in southeastern Idaho until her family moved to Logan, Utah, in 1948. Raised a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Sonia grew up surrounded by people stressing the importance of marriage and family. The same year *The Feminine Mystique* was published, Mormon marriage manuals, such as *The Art of Homemaking*, called a clean and happy household a "cathedral to God."² Although Sonia eventually came to blows with her church and traditional conceptions of wife and mother, the first forty-two years of her life closely resembled the Mormon and American ideals of femininity. Many women of the 1950s, both Mormon and non-Mormon, lived as part of Friedan's *Mystique* and strived to become perfect homemakers, wives, and mothers.

By the close of the 1950s the average marrying age of women in America dropped to twenty years; 14 million girls married by age seventeen. The proportion of women attending college compared to men fell from 47 percent in 1920 to 35 percent in 1958. By the mid-1950s 60 percent of female college attendees dropped out to marry. At the end of the decade the American birthrate surpassed India's. Women's magazines urged women to enroll in courses on marriage; counselors provided advice to high school girls on how to find a man and make a marriage last. The suburban housewife image advertised in popular magazines became the ideal for young women.³

The teachings of the Mormon church encouraged marriage and discouraged divorce in the 1950s; research comparing Mormons to non-LDS Americans indicate that Mormons married younger and more frequently than other Americans. The Mormon birthrate paralleled the nation's from 1900 to 1970, remaining consistently higher but exhibiting the same rises and dips. For example, Utah's birthrate in 1970 climbed to twenty-seven births per 1,000 population, while the national birthrate was fourteen per 1,000. Chastity before marriage was higher for Mormons than other Americans: 78 percent. Mormons also married earlier than non-members; Mormon males married over a year earlier than other men, and Mormon females married slightly earlier than other women in America. Addition-

2. Daryl V. Hoole, *The Art of Homemaking* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1963), 11.

3. Friedan, *Feminine Mystique*, 16-19.

ally, LDS church members were less likely than other white Americans to remain unmarried.⁴

Magazines in the 1950s told women how to seek fulfillment as wives and mothers. Advice abounded on how to catch and keep a man, breast-feed children, and handle toilet training, sibling rivalry, and adolescent rebellion. Mormon literature correlated with other publications around the nation aimed at women. Mormon manuals, however, stressed the importance of religion as well as femininity. A chapter on personal appearance and grooming from one manual, for example, emphasized the significance of looking good while changing diapers, cooking, or cleaning. "There is nothing prettier than the daughter of God who looks well-groomed all the time."⁵ These sentiments were common in Mormon advice manuals of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

Sonia Johnson recounted her life in 1982 in *From Housewife to Heretic*. In these memoirs she provides brief glimpses of her childhood years, her parents and siblings, her schooling, her marriage, her children, and her travels around the world. The majority of the book, however, focuses on her support of the ERA and her subsequent excommunication from the Mormon church. In addition to her memoirs, Sonia left other records detailing her past. In these personal letters—now housed at the University of Utah's Marriott Library—she presents a more complete picture of her life before her excommunication.

Sonia's portrayal of events in her letters sometimes parallels her book's account. In her autobiography, however, she skips most of her early years in favor of retelling the history of her battle for the ERA and rejection from the church. Although the excommunication undoubtedly weighed heavily on her mind at the time of her writing—it had happened only two and one-half years before publication—more interesting are the years previous to her excommunication. The letters record the pressures of a wife and mother living in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, and the ways in which Sonia dealt with these pressures. At various points the letters contradict the book, and readers should bear in mind that Sonia retold these events after a public excommunication and painful divorce. To

4. Tim B. Heaton, Kristen L. Goodman, and Thomas B. Holman, "In Search of a Peculiar People: Are Mormon Families Really Different?" in *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives*, ed. Marie Cornwall, Tim B. Heaton, and Lawrence A. Young (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 94; and Marybeth Raynes, "Mormon Marriages in an American Context," in *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective*, ed. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 238, 240, 241.

5. Carol Clark, *A Singular Life: Perspectives for the Single Woman* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1974), 18. Although the title of this book may lead some readers to believe it is aimed at single women, it is actually intended as a guide for young women on how to find a man to marry.

regard either the book or letters as completely true or false undermines the complexity of Sonia's life. It is more useful to view her writings as neither black nor white, false nor true, but as a continuous spectrum of shades of gray.

In 1954 Sonia graduated from Logan High School. A year later she entered Utah State University as an English major and earned a B.A. degree in 1958. While at Utah State, she met her future husband, Richard Johnson ("Rick" in her letters and autobiography), in a psychology class. At the time of their meeting in mid-1958, Sonia found Rick to be "a wild gentle Easterner" and passed him over as a potential spouse because he was not Mormon. Rick joined the church that October and Sonia began to consider marriage. They did not marry immediately, however, since the church required a full year of membership before permitting a temple marriage, a sign of worthiness available only to faithful members.⁶ For this reason, she and Rick avoided discussing marriage as an immediate possibility.

By 1959 Sonia and Rick were still not engaged and their relationship had become rocky because of Rick's reluctance to commit; this hesitation led Sonia almost to abandon the relationship. According to her autobiography, Sonia felt a mounting desperation to marry. "So there I was, 23 years old, a college graduate with one year of graduate work, and no engagement ring." In tune with the times, Sonia "kept her courting cards tight against [her] chest" and never revealed her concern and embarrassment at being a twenty-three-year-old unmarried Mormon woman.⁷ After many tumultuous months, Sonia and Rick resolved their difficulties and pledged themselves to each other. On 21 August 1959 Sonia and Rick married in a non-temple ceremony in Logan.⁸

Sonia described the 1950s as a time when society placed "enormous and unnatural weight" on marriage and felt that 1950s marriages "were pressure cookers." The 1950s of Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* closely resemble the 1950s Sonia recalls in *From Housewife to Heretic*. As badly as Sonia wanted marriage, however, she waited to marry Rick because he was the only male "nonsexist enough not to bore me to death."⁹ This view of Rick expressed in Sonia's autobiography clashes with the Rick she presents in other parts of the book. On the next page, for example, So-

6. Sonia Johnson, *From Housewife to Heretic* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981; reprint, Albuquerque: Wildfire Books, 1989), 23, 28 (page references are to the 1989 edition); Heaton, Goodman, and Holman, "Peculiar People," 94.

7. Johnson, *Housewife*, 30-31.

8. *Ibid.*, 37-38. Due to Ida and Alvin Harris's "high connections in the church," Sonia received approval for a temple marriage despite Rick's short membership in the church. In *From Housewife to Heretic*, however, Sonia wrote that "The Holy Ghost" cautioned her not to marry Rick in the temple. Her parents, although unhappy, supported her decision.

9. *Ibid.*, 32, 34, 109.

nia recounts her divorce and tells of Rick's emotional mistreatment of her and his sexist behavior during their twenty-year marriage. Some may view this discrepancy as hypocritical, others as the natural reaction of a woman reeling from a bitter divorce.

After marrying, Rick went back to Utah State University to finish his M.A. in psychology. Sonia, instead of returning to school, took a job as a bookkeeper to "put him through." This decision did not stem from Rick's insistence on Sonia's being an ideal housewife, but was her own choice. In fact, Rick resented Sonia "wasting" her intellect on a bookkeeping job and encouraged her to continue her schooling.¹⁰

After Rick graduated, the couple left for Apia, Western Samoa, to teach for the LDS church. After a year and a half in Samoa, the couple moved to Minnesota so Rick could begin work on a Ph.D. in educational psychology. Sonia again planned to work in a menial job, but this time Rick insisted she return to school. During this period Sonia sent letters to her family depicting her happily grading freshmen essays, cooking soup, keeping house, letting Rick "bother with the finances," and doing church work. In her memoirs, however, she recalls a frightened woman worried about receiving a master's degree, having to prove herself in an adult world, and possibly failing. Because of her fear of failure, she became pregnant with her first child to avoid dealing with her dread.¹¹

During her pregnancy her letters focused mostly on sewing, eating, cooking, cleaning, washing, and ironing. Writing mainly to her mother, she discussed her hair, makeup, and clothing almost to the complete neglect of all else and only occasionally mentioned Rick. Sonia informed her mother over and over how well she dressed and how enjoyable she found pregnancy. Sonia closely resembled the "happy housewife heroine" of Friedan's *Feminine Mystique*.¹²

After nine months Sonia went into a painful thirty-six-hour labor which almost killed her; she recounted this experience in *From Housewife to Heretic*. Rick, teaching summer school in Utah, arrived in Minnesota and insisted that doctors inject an intravenous chemical into his wife to finally induce delivery. Sonia recalled her doctors' disregard of her pain. In her book she describes this experience as critical in the development of her feminist ideology. Interestingly, none of her subsequent letters regarding pre- and post-natal care mentions this criticism of the medical profession; in fact, Sonia has nothing but praise for American doctors in her letters. The doctors in foreign countries, however, receive harsh criti-

10. Ibid., 39.

11. Ibid., 41, 42; Sonia Johnson to Ida and Alvin Harris, undated, Sonia Johnson Papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

12. Sonia Johnson to Ida Harris, 22 Mar. 1963; Friedan, *Feminine Mystique*, 33-68.

cism.¹³

When Rick finished his Ph.D., the couple moved to New Jersey. Rick taught psychology and Sonia earned an M.A. in education at Rutgers University and then began work on a Ph.D. While at Rutgers, Sonia and Rick decided to have another baby. For the first few months of motherhood Sonia felt depressed. "I wondered guiltily . . . about motherhood's being the totally fulfilling activity the church and society assured me it was."¹⁴ In retrospect, Sonia confessed that she never wanted children, but external pressures from these two groups forced her to believe that she would remain only half a person without babies. Her letters, however, show a different interpretation of the importance of motherhood for her.

In *From Housewife to Heretic* Sonia vaguely remembers becoming pregnant with her daughter Kari "sometime during her doctoral coursework." She implies that neither she nor Rick planned for the baby. In her letters, on the other hand, she confesses her plans for a "big parenthood orgy" and the proposed date for the conception of their second child. A few weeks later, in another letter to her mother, Sonia complains about her lack of proper spring season attire; instead of buying a new spring wardrobe, "I guess I'll save money and have a baby." Sonia gave birth to Kari on 25 June 1965; that same day Sonia also "gave birth" to her dissertation.¹⁵ At age twenty-nine she had a Ph.D. and two children.

A few months after Kari's birth, Sonia and Rick moved to Lagos, Nigeria, to teach for two years. Sonia fails to mention this part of her life in her book. The letters from this time show a joyful Sonia with an insatiable desire to travel. One interesting question that emerged while the family was in Nigeria concerned birth control. Sonia began to question the church's stance against birth control and the necessity of bearing children in a world with so many starving ones already. Apparently, her exposure to the poverty and starvation around her left a lasting impression.¹⁶

In July 1967 the Johnsons moved to Palo Alto, California. Sonia gave birth to her third child, Marc, in May 1968. She recalls this time as one of the lowest points in her life. Her personal letters do not include these two years and start again in 1971 in Limbe, Malawai, where she taught English at the University of Malawai in South Central Africa. Nor does she mention these two years abroad in her autobiography. In a letter dated 5 July 1971 she expresses dissatisfaction with the Mormon church locally by calling it "too hypocritical and horrible for words." Sonia does not explain the reasons for her criticism. This condemnation, however, signified

13. Johnson, *Housewife*, 43; Sonia Johnson to Ida and Alvin Harris, 2 Jan. 1974.

14. Johnson, *Housewife*, 44.

15. *Ibid.*, 45, 46; Sonia Johnson to Ida Harris, 24 Jan. 1964; Sonia Johnson to family, 2 Mar. 1964.

16. Sonia Johnson to family, 20 Nov. 1965; and letter postmarked 12 Sept. 1966.

not a break with the LDS church, but a renewed interest in the Mormon religion; her displeasure with the local church provided the impetus for forming a family Sunday school group in her home with a small group of friends.¹⁷

In July 1972, after returning to California for a few months, the Johnsons relocated to Korea where Sonia taught English to servicemen as a visiting professor at Seoul University. She reflects on this experience in her memoirs as the happiest time of her married life because she "was freed from the bondage of housework" by two live-in Korean housekeepers. However, she does not mention Rick's depression, talk of suicide, and the possibility of admitting him to a mental institution. She tells her mother of these events in a July 1973 letter, adding notably that she "never felt so contented, so capable, so sure of the Lord's care in my whole life."¹⁸

Sonia remembers this time as important in her continuing conversion to feminism. Although the letters describe the cheap price of fashionable clothes and Sonia's concern with the length of her hair, she expresses a growing frustration with the anti-intellectual nature of church lessons for women. Sonia reveals to her mother that she is "pretty fed up with that kind of condescension." This, however, indicates a desire for the church to reflect some of her own interests, not a break with the doctrines of the church. In fact, in May 1973 Sonia wrote a letter to her parents in which she appears more religious than ever and talks of the "corruption" in American society. She prays for a "speedy millennium" to destroy "all evil" where nothing remains on earth except "righteousness."¹⁹

While in Korea, Sonia became pregnant again. Her memoirs reveal her and Rick's unhappiness at the prospect of a fourth child. In a letter to her mother, however, she divulges her secret that she is pregnant and her pleasure with the possibility of another baby. After a year and a half in Korea, the Johnsons moved to Western Malaysia to live on a beach and "escape the madding crowd" of the working world. While in Malaysia Sonia gave birth to her fourth and last child, Noel. In her memoirs she recollects the six months in Malaysia as a depressing time that left her despairing for the future.²⁰ Unfortunately, Sonia's personal papers contain no correspondence from this period.

After six months in Malaysia, the Johnsons moved back to California. The book remains sketchy on details for this year. The letters to her parents emphasize her involvement in church activities and her children's progress in learning the Mormon gospel. In July 1975 Sonia participated

17. Sonia Johnson to Ida, Alvin, and Mark Harris, 5 July 1971.

18. Johnson, *Housewife*, 53; Sonia Johnson to Ida Harris, 11 July 1973.

19. Sonia Johnson to Ida and Alvin Harris, 14 Nov. 1972, 2 May 1973.

20. Sonia Johnson to Ida Harris, 11 July 1973; Johnson, *Housewife*, 54.

in a panel meeting on women and the church. She commented on the remarks of church president Spencer W. Kimball, whose views regarding women represented her own at the time. He criticized "women liberationists" as encouraging streaking, pornography, homosexuality, abortion, birth control, "veneration of the orgasm," adultery, and divorce. He proposed that Mormons "should have large families" and that the purpose of sex "is to bear children. It isn't just for the fun of it."²¹

In 1976 Sonia, Rick, and their four children moved again, this time to Sterling Park, Virginia, where her trouble with the church began. In Virginia Sonia met several Mormon feminists and her complete and irreversible conversion to feminism started, as described in her memoirs. She felt the church ignored women's concerns and she vented her increasing rage on her husband. Although her letters convey her unhappiness in Virginia, she makes little mention of her dissatisfaction with the church or her husband. In fact, in a letter sent in August 1977 to her daughter Kari—while staying with her grandparents in Logan—Sonia expresses her increased love of and satisfaction with Rick.²²

The letters to her parents end for several months and pick up again early in 1978 with Sonia describing her participation in a pro-ERA march in Richmond, Virginia. By this time she vowed never to attend another Relief Society meeting of the Mormon church. At the same time Rick moved to Liberia to escape the pressures of work and church. Sonia conveys her feeling of loneliness and despair in both her letters to him and in her autobiography. The letters, in particular, express her feelings of abandonment and her mounting rejection of the church: "I feel almost all my feelings of loyalty and caring centered on women, pulled away from male gods and institutions."²³ (This statement foreshadowed her future decision to live a life free from men in a small lesbian commune in New Mexico.²⁴) In August 1978 Sonia testified before the Senate Constitutional Rights Subcommittee on the church's stance against the ERA. She did not leave any personal letters from this time in her collection; her increased participation in political rallies and organization of pro-ERA Mormons probably curtailed her casual letter-writing.

The majority of *From Housewife to Heretic* covers the events that followed her congressional testimony. Her letters to her family all but end after Rick returned from Liberia. Sonia continued to protest the church's

21. Sonia Johnson to Ida and Alvin Harris, 27 June 1975; Duston Harvey, "Mormon Leader Wages Attack on Current World Sexual Revolution," *Herald Journal*, 22 Dec. 1974.

22. Sonia Johnson to Ida and Alvin Harris, 20 Dec. 1976; Sonia Johnson to Kari Johnson, 22 Aug. 1977.

23. Sonia Johnson to Richard Johnson, 1, 8, 16 Apr., 17 May, 5, 9 July 1979.

24. For additional details, see Sonia Johnson and Jade DeForest, *Out of This World: A Fictionalized True-Life Adventure* (Estancia, NM: Wildfire Books, 1993).

action against the ERA and gave several speeches condemning the church in particular and men in general. In November 1979 the church summoned Sonia to a bishop's court in Virginia, and on 5 December she received notice of her excommunication. Sonia writes in her memoirs that her connection with the church ended at this time; her letters, however, include her appealing the excommunication, but to no avail. Unlike the picture she presents in her book, Sonia pleaded with President Kimball to vindicate her and stated her love for the church and its doctrines. In the months and years that followed, her personal papers centered on legal letters protesting her excommunication and many letters from supporters and critics alike.²⁵

After Rick returned from Liberia and before her excommunication, Sonia and he divorced. Sonia writes in her autobiography that Rick tricked her into signing the divorce papers.²⁶ Unfortunately, she left no letters from this time in her personal papers.

In the years after her excommunication, Sonia chained herself to the front gates of the LDS temple in Bellevue, Washington, and local authorities threw her in jail.²⁷ In 1982 she fasted for thirty-seven days for passage of the ERA; in 1984 she ran for U.S. president as the nominee of the Citizens Party, the Consumer Party, and the Peace and Freedom Party. Currently, Sonia lives and writes in the mountains of New Mexico.

Sonia's book and letters differ in many ways. In *From Housewife to Heretic*, she expresses unhappiness with the church and claims that her questioning of church doctrines on women started at an early age. The letters, however, do not reveal this dissatisfaction until close to her excommunication. In trying to make sense of this difference, it is important to know whom Sonia intended her writings to reach. She wrote the letters mainly to her mother and father. As active members of the Mormon church, they undoubtedly held strong beliefs in the importance of marriage, child-rearing, and religion. In 1982, however, Sonia was bitter toward the church and her words reflected these sentiments. For the most part, Sonia communicated her concerns to her book's readers, many of whom were also critical of Mormonism. She saw her past through the colored lenses of the present and reinterpreted her history in accordance with her new views.

25. Johnson, *Housewife*, 351; Jeffrey Willis to Sonia Johnson, 5 Dec. 1979; Earl J. Roueche to Sonia Johnson, 24 Mar. 1980; Sonia Johnson to Spencer W. Kimball, Apr. 1980.

26. Johnson, *Housewife*, 15-21. According to Sonia's autobiography, after Rick returned to Liberia, he presented her with a "fake" divorce agreement. For Rick, the institution of marriage placed "artificial restraints" on love between a man and a woman. Sonia signed the divorce papers and Rick then informed her that the documents were genuine and legally binding. Later in her memoirs Sonia mentioned Rick's affair with another woman and theorized that this led him to pursue the divorce.

27. Johnson, *Housewife*, 15-21, 389.

The farther away Sonia placed herself from Utah and Mormons, the more hostile her writings became. This was probably because she needed to distance herself from her Mormon past, and her writings merely reflected this physical and emotional separation.²⁸ The religious beliefs Sonia Johnson held as true disintegrated with her excommunication; the changing ways in which she viewed men and religion reflected her own feelings of abandonment by both the LDS church and her husband. Accepting both forms of writing—letters and memoirs—as Sonia's truth at various times in her life reveals the complexity of this one woman and the contradictory ways in which she viewed the world.

28. For a more complete analysis of interpreting historical reminiscences, see Clyde A. Milner, "A View from Wisdom: Four Layers of History and Regional Identity," in *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*, ed. William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), 203-22.



Gaining Darkness

Anita Tanner

Going down to the cellar
a child awakens to tendrils
of winter vegetables
that elongate like white worms.
Multiple hairs grizzle carrots.
Potatoes shrivel like aged faces.

Diseased by measles,
a child's eyes long for such a place
to burrow deep—
recovery in darkness.

Going down where things grow
revises the mind—
light, the dichotomy:

Half illumed,
the moon thins outside.
The glint of recognition
fades from Father's eyes,
down deep, being rooted
in the earth.

Youth, Sex, and Coercion: The Neglect of Sexual Abuse Factors in LDS Data and Policy on Premarital Sex

Dynette Ivie Reynolds

LDS CHURCH STANDARDS REQUIRE that sexual relations be confined to marriage. While the world in general seems to have grown more tolerant of premarital sex, church standards have remained stringent. Sermons, articles, and auxiliary lessons continue to emphasize the importance of premarital and non-marital abstinence from intercourse and even from intimacies like petting.

Sociological research has demonstrated that such religious admonitions do indeed restrain sexual indulgence, not only among Latter-day Saints but also in other denominations with similarly strict standards—at least for young people who are religiously active.¹ Nevertheless, rates of premarital sexual experience have greatly increased since the 1960s in nearly all religious groups. While Mormons continue to have noticeably lower rates than most other religions in the U.S., a recent national survey of women revealed that nearly 60 percent of Mormon females reported having lost their virginity before marriage.² Can it be true that more than

1. Scott H. Beck, Bettie S. Cole, and Judith A. Hammond, "Religious Heritage and Premarital Sex: Evidence from a National Sample of Young Adults," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30 (June 1991): 173-80; Larry Jensen, Rhea J. Newell, and Tom Holman, "Sexual Behavior, Church Attendance, and Permissive Beliefs among Unmarried Young Men and Women," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 29 (Mar. 1990): 113-17; J. Timothy Woodruff, "Premarital Sexual Behavior in Religious Adolescents," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 24 (Dec. 1985): 343-66; J. Timothy Woodruff, "Reference Groups, Religiosity, and Premarital Sexual Behavior," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 25 (Dec. 1986): 436-60.

2. Tim B. Heaton, "Demographics of the Contemporary Mormon Family," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 25 (Fall 1992): 23.

half of LDS girls and women in America have set aside the standards of the church?

The fact is that there is no way to be certain of religion's influence on premarital sex rates in either the LDS community or in our culture as a whole, given the research methods and measurements which social scientists have thus far employed. Questionnaires and interviews, however carefully constructed and confidentially administered, have typically ignored a distinction that has become increasingly important in recent years: the distinction between *voluntary* and *coercive* sexual initiation, especially for girls. Most studies on the relationship between religiosity and sexual activity have simply ascertained whether or not the respondent was a virgin prior to marriage; a few have attempted to determine the age at first intercourse; but *none* has yet inquired about the partner or circumstances involved in the respondent's sexual initiation.³ For example: Did initiation take place voluntarily or with some degree of coercion? Was the partner an older relative or authority figure?

With the recent revelations in the media and in the professional literature about child sexual abuse (CSA), in which girls are far more often victims than are boys, we must assume that for some proportion of sexually experienced survey respondents, their loss of virginity is attributable to CSA; indeed, for many, such may be the *only* form of sexual experience they have ever had, especially if they are quite young. Given the lack of virtually any published data on CSA among Mormons, it would be premature to assume that LDS youth are any less at risk than are other populations.⁴ For those young Mormons who have lost their virginity non-voluntarily, it hardly seems fair to connect sexual behavior with religious upbringing. Thus we really don't know what proportion of LDS youth have rejected church teachings as a matter of choice. This distinction becomes important as church leaders and teachers frame their responses to what they deem unacceptably high rates of premarital sexual activity in the Mormon community.

In this essay I will first review some survey findings about national rates of sex abuse, and then assess how those findings may impact current estimates of premarital sexual behavior among Mormon youth. (It

3. Dyanette I. Reynolds, "Religious Influence and Premarital Sexual Experience: Critical Observations on the Validity of a Relationship," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33 (Dec. 1994): 382-87.

4. Although there are no reliable, published data on CSA among Mormons, LDS statistics for other forms of abuse, such as spouse abuse and parent-to-child violence, follow national trends closely, although a temple marriage does seem to decrease the risk of some, but not all, kinds of violence. See Boyd K. Rollins and Yaw Oheneba-Sakyi, "Physical Violence in Utah Households," *Journal of Family Violence* 5 (1990): 301-309; and Boyd K. Rollins and Craig K. Manscill, "Family Violence in Utah," in *Utah in Demographic Perspective*, ed. Thomas K. Martin, Tim B. Heaton, and Stephen J. Bahr (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 157-64.

will be obvious that the numbers of young Mormons *voluntarily* disregarding church teachings on premarital sex are almost certainly lower than currently estimated.) Next I will present three case studies of Mormon women whose lives have been deeply affected by childhood sexual abuse and whose problems have been ignored or even confounded by church leaders, church members, and church policy. Finally, I will discuss the implications of this issue for the ways in which LDS youth are taught and counseled in sexual matters.

CHILD SEX ABUSE STUDIES

Estimates of the number of sexually abused children in the United States vary considerably, due largely to the fact that sex abuse has been defined and measured in many different ways. For example, the rate of sex abuse actually *reported* to government agencies was only 0.7 per 1,000 children in 1981.⁵ However, virtually all experts believe that a majority of abuse remains unreported, perhaps throughout a person's lifetime.⁶ Therefore, other methods of data collection have been judged more useful in determining child sex abuse rates.

To date the most respected and methodologically sound study of the prevalence of child sexual abuse was done by researcher Diana Russell in 1978.⁷ In a random sample of San Francisco women, who were questioned during lengthy face-to-face encounters by carefully trained interviewers, Russell found that 38 percent reported sexual abuse (either incestuous or extrafamilial) before the age of 18, with 20 percent before the age of 14, even when a *conservative* definition of abuse was applied.⁸ Unfortunately no comparable study has yet been done on men, but a more recent sample of male college students found that 7.3 percent re-

5. David A. Wolfe, Vicky V. Wolfe, and Connie L. Best, "Child Victims of Sexual Abuse," in *Handbook of Family Violence*, ed. V. B. Van Hasselt, R. L. Morrison, A. S. Bellack, and M. Hersen (New York: Plenum Press, 1988), 157-85.

6. Arthur H. Green, "Overview of the Literature on Child Sexual Abuse," in *Child Sexual Abuse: A Handbook for Health Care and Legal Professionals*, ed. Diane H. Schetsky and Arthur H. Green (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1988), 30-54; David Finkelhor, *Sexually Victimized Children* (New York: The Free Press, 1979); David Finkelhor, *Child Sexual Abuse: New Theory and Research* (New York: The Free Press, 1984); Wolfe et al.

7. Diana Russell, *Sexual Exploitation: Rape, Child Sexual Abuse, and Sexual Harassment* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1984).

8. Each incident mentioned by a respondent in the Russell study was judged as abusive or non-abusive by the *researchers*, rather than by the subject. Some scientists support this method; others have doubts about it. See C. L. Muehlenhard, I. G. Powch, J. L. Phelps, and I. M. Giusti, "Definitions of Rape: Scientific and Political Implications," *Journal of Social Issues* 48 (1992): 23-44.

ported an abusive experience before the age of 14.⁹ In addition, a nationwide random-sample telephone survey conducted by the *L.A. Times* in 1985 found that 27 percent of women and 16 percent of men had been molested as children, for a combined population estimate of 22 percent.¹⁰ These three studies, all carefully crafted for methodological reliability, have produced what may be the most accurate existing data on the prevalence of child sexual abuse in the United States.

Thus it appears likely that significant numbers of individuals in our society (Mormon or otherwise) have been victims of sexual abuse during childhood. The question then becomes: How may sexual abuse rates affect the relationship between premarital sexuality and religiosity, particularly LDS religiosity? Let us take a closer look at the existing LDS premarital sex data to see what may have resulted had researchers thought to include a question on sexual abuse.

LDS PREMARITAL SEX DATA

Two major studies published since 1980 have examined the rates of premarital intercourse specifically among Mormons: one in 1992 by BYU sociologist Tim Heaton, another in 1993 by Bruce Chadwick and Brent Top, BYU professors of sociology and history, respectively.¹¹ These two studies used different samples and different survey techniques, which led to widely different results. I will examine each in turn, then discuss the importance of their findings.

The Heaton Study

Heaton used two national databases to extract Mormon respondents for his sample.¹² While it is unclear exactly which questions were used to determine premarital sexuality in Heaton's source data, the circumstances of first intercourse were almost certainly *not* considered. As I have already mentioned, the issue of coercive sexual initiation has been

9. The largest percentage of those experiences was initiated by female babysitters. See Mary P. Koss, "Hidden Rape: Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Aggression and Victimization in a National Sample of College Students," in *Rape and Sexual Assault*, vol. 2, ed. Ann W. Burgess (New York: Garland, 1988), 4-25.

10. John Crewdson, *By Silence Betrayed: Sexual Abuse of Children in America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1988).

11. Bruce L. Chadwick and Brent L. Top, "Religiosity and Delinquency among LDS Adolescents," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 32 (Mar. 1993): 51-67. For a brief review of studies prior to 1980, see Tim B. Heaton, "Four Characteristics of the Mormon Family: Contemporary Research on Chastity, Conjugalilty, Children, and Chauvinism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20 (Spring 1987): 101-14.

12. Heaton, "Demographics of the Contemporary Mormon Family."

overlooked by virtually all social scientists of religion.¹³ Using these extracted data, Heaton found that 60 percent of women who indicated their religion as "Mormon" on the survey admitted to having engaged in premarital sex. These numbers were much greater than those found in previous studies, even with the potentially higher rates of inactive members considered.¹⁴

Church leaders who saw the Heaton study were surely alarmed at such an increase in premarital sex over a relatively short time. I have reason to believe that the Heaton rate of 60 percent has been taken seriously by the church, since various Church Educational System and lay church officials have quoted that rate to me in the past few years, though none could say on what data it was based. As we will shortly see, there are several reasons to conclude that this rate is too high, particularly for an active Mormon population.

The Chadwick-Top Study

In the second study, Chadwick and Top questioned Mormon teens living on the East Coast regarding a number of "delinquency" measures. Again, the nature of the premarital sex question was not specified; however, since no information was offered on sexual abuse rates, we can safely assume that the issue was not considered. Chadwick and Top found that only 7 percent of eastern LDS boys and 12 percent of eastern LDS girls had engaged in sexual intercourse. They were surprised to find that more girls than boys were sexually experienced, since previous studies had found boys to be more sexually active. Although the researchers did not propose an explanation for this finding, it may have been due to the fact that girls are more at risk for sexual abuse.

Differences in the Two Studies

The disparity in premarital sex rates between the Heaton study and the Chadwick/Top study is puzzling until one examines the data more closely. Several distinctions are evident: First, the Heaton study used a national database which certainly included inactive as well as active members, while the Chadwick/Top study sampled only LDS teens enrolled in seminary, who can reasonably be categorized as active members.

13. Reynolds.

14. For example, Miller et al. (unpublished, quoted in Heaton, "Four Characteristics of the Mormon Family") found that 17 percent of LDS male and female high school students were sexually active, while Smith found rates of 15 percent among males and 9 percent among females (Wilford E. Smith, *Social Disorganization and Deviant Behavior* [Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1974]).

Second, the Heaton study sampled adult women (making his results more comparable to a “lifetime risk” rate), while the Chadwick/Top study was limited to high school students.

Third, the Heaton study used data which did not distinguish between women who were LDS when the incidents occurred and those who joined the church later.

Fourth, it is unclear how premarital sex was defined in either study. The definition may have been explicitly limited to intercourse experiences, or—more likely—respondents may have been permitted to define “premarital sex” for themselves. (For example, some respondents may have defined certain forms of petting or oral sex as “premarital sex,” while others may not have.) The Heaton paper is vague regarding exact wording of the question. The Chadwick/Top paper mentions intercourse specifically, although again we don’t know what words were actually used on the questionnaire. This question is important because sexual abuse can involve a variety of experiences, only one of which may be intercourse, and all of which may influence a young person’s future sexual behavior. Thus if premarital sex were defined specifically as intercourse in either study, lower rates of overall premarital sexuality would probably result.

It can be seen from this brief examination that the findings on premarital sex among LDS populations are far from conclusive. Church leaders may wish to consider this fact before formulating official policy based on these studies or before citing statistics intended to alarm local leaders. More to the point, leaders should realize that of those young people who *are* sexually active, a certain number carry a heavy load of self-guilt for something that may not have been their fault. Let us now examine how sexual abuse rates may impact these data.

IMPACT ON CURRENT DATA: DOES IT REALLY MATTER?

Whether the percentage of premarital sex among LDS women is 60 percent or 12 percent, the question remains: How many were actually victims of sexual abuse? Is it really enough to make a difference?

Since it seems that at least some church leaders have accepted Heaton’s 60 percent figure as grounds for alarm, I will base the following calculations on his study. Let us determine how the existing data on sex abuse in the general population would impact Heaton’s data on Mormon women. Remember, the national surveys quoted in this essay found a high of 38 percent sex abuse¹⁵ and a low of 27 percent¹⁶ among women. If

15. Russell.

16. Crewdson.

we plug those numbers into Heaton's study results, we can get a more accurate picture of how many of his respondents willingly engaged in premarital sex. The mathematical formula we will use is: *Total Premarital Sex minus Involuntary Premarital Sex equals Voluntary Premarital Sex*.

Thus if 38 percent of Heaton's sample had been sexually abused (our high estimate), the formula would read: 60 percent minus 38 percent equals 22 percent, i.e., 22 percent of the women in Heaton's study would have engaged in voluntary premarital sex. This is considerably less than the original 60 percent figure.

However, we must also consider the possibility that some of Heaton's respondents who were victims of sex abuse answered "no" to the premarital sex question. These would have been automatically removed from the 60 percent figure, causing less inflation of the data. Let us assume, for example, that half of our hypothetical 38 percent for some reason or other declared on the survey that they had not engaged in premarital sex. (This is certainly a generous assumption.) The formula would thus read: 60 percent minus (38 percent multiplied by 0.5) equals 41 percent. We can see that even if half of our sexual abuse victims did not designate themselves as premaritally sexual in Heaton's study, the resulting 41 percent of voluntarily sexual is still a far cry from 60 percent.

Let us now consider the lower sex abuse estimate. If 27 percent of Heaton's respondents were sexually abused, and if they all inflated the data by answering "yes" on the survey, only 33 percent would have been truly voluntary: 60 percent minus 27 percent equals 33 percent.

Likewise, if only half of these sex abuse victims inflated Heaton's data, the percentage of voluntarily sexual would be 46.5 percent: 60 percent minus (27 percent multiplied by 0.5) equals 46.5 percent.

Let us be even more generous and suppose that only 15 percent of Heaton's respondents were sexually abused. (This would likely be an underestimate, since Heaton's study included inactive as well as active Mormons, and converts as well as life-long members. As discussed earlier, his sample would thus more closely approach the sex abuse rates of the general population.) The resulting percentages of voluntarily sexual would still be 45 percent and 52.5 percent: 60 percent minus 15 percent equals 45 percent; and 60 percent minus (15 percent multiplied by 0.5) equals 52.5 percent.

It is obvious that unless we assume a *very low sex abuse rate* as well as a *very low "inflation" rate*—both of which are optimistic assumptions, even for Mormon society—the adjusted figures for voluntary premarital sex will never approach the 60 percent found by Heaton. It is highly probable that young Mormons are engaging in *voluntary* premarital sex at significantly lower rates than Heaton's data would lead us to believe.

SEX ABUSE AND THE CHURCH

As I have indicated, church leaders should determine not only how much premarital sex is occurring among Mormon teens, but how much of it stems from a real disregard for church teachings and how much stems from abuse. Such knowledge should shape the nature of the official church response to premarital sex. If a punitive response is made when a loving and counseling response is required, the negative effects initiated by sexual abuse could well escalate. As will be seen below, there is good reason to believe that many church members have already suffered life-long consequences due to the church's hesitation to tackle the problem of childhood sexual abuse.

Three Women's Stories

To illustrate my point, I will turn to three individual cases. The names of the women whose stories are set forth here have been changed, but I will try to faithfully relate their experiences as told to me during personal encounters with them. In one case, I have received permission to print excerpts from a paper written by the member herself, telling her story in her own words. While only one of the women here links her childhood abuse directly to subsequent premarital sexuality, as well as to a rejection of the church and its teachings, the link is implicitly clear in all three cases. Furthermore, it is clear from all three stories that the church as an institution proved largely ineffective in helping these victims overcome the very real problems which followed their abuse. Indeed, in all three cases church teachings and church members inadvertently confounded the self-blame and guilt already felt by these women.

The ways in which these stories were collected should be discussed before turning to the actual stories. I began this line of research a few years ago when several inactive women—living separately and unknown to each other—to whom I was assigned as a “visiting teacher” began disclosing during my monthly visits that they had been sexually abused as children and that the experience(s) led them to make subsequent negative choices. Indeed, the abuse was still affecting their adult lives, particularly their church activity and feelings of spiritual worthiness. I never initiated these conversations; the disclosures were made freely over time and in the course of normal friendships, but my professional training as a journalist may have facilitated the process.

At the same time, I was working as the assistant editor of the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, an academic journal which publishes sociological and other scientific research on religion. During my time with the journal, I read several papers on the relationship between premarital sex and religion, none of which considered the issue of sexual abuse, an

issue which had begun to concern me as I continued in my religious role as a visiting teacher. Although I am sure these researchers (all of whom were men, incidentally) neglected this issue more out of oversight than from malice, I was nevertheless enraged at the implicit presumption that anyone who had engaged in premarital sex had done so voluntarily. My concerns eventually led to the publishing of a scholarly paper on the same topic in the *Journal* after I was no longer affiliated with it. I have since moved to a different state, been assigned new women to visit, and have heard more stories of sexual abuse. The need for a critique specifically aimed at the Mormon community seemed obvious.

These stories are meant to provide anecdotal evidence for my argument that the church must change its approach to premarital sexuality and chastity, particularly in relation to the issue of childhood sexual abuse. Because these women are my friends, I admit freely that the tone here is not entirely objective; on the other hand, the reader will gain an appreciation for these women which would have been impossible had the data stemmed from a dispassionate scientific survey.

Marla. Marla was in her late twenties when I met her, the mother of three, and the working wife of an inactive, returned missionary undergraduate college student. Later she became a nursing student herself. Marla told me during one of my visits, almost in an aside, that she had been sexually abused by a male relative sometime during her childhood. She did not reveal how often the abuse occurred or at what age it occurred. She did not specify what form the abuse took. She told me she had experienced periodic incidents of severe depression ever since the episode. She attempted suicide at the age of seventeen. She attempted it twice more during our acquaintance. After one of those later attempts, a sympathetic bishop placed her in the care of LDS social services and reactivated her to the point where she was able to receive her temple endowment, though her husband remained inactive.

She had moved out of town at this point, but we maintained our acquaintance. About a year later I met with her again, at which time she said she had stopped going to church because "those people expect too much of me." (This same sense of guilt and inferiority will be seen in the next two case studies as well.) She continues to have problems with depression, which affect both her marriage and her career. Her current bishop was unwilling (according to her) to allow her continuing access to the LDS therapists in her new location (her problems were "all in the past," as he understood it, although of course such problems can never be "all in the past") until I contacted him by phone and urged him to do so. I have since learned from her husband that she never revealed the sexual abuse to him and that he was at a loss to explain her behavior until I unwittingly let the information slip. They were in the process of a divorce

when I last heard from either of them.

Sarah. Sarah is an older, single sister whom I visited every month for five years. She joined the church as an adult. She had been married and divorced twice, both times to abusive, alcoholic men. She was abused as a child over a long period of time by a male relative (I believe it was her uncle) who visited her secretly at night. As a result, she is terrified of the dark, even as a middle-aged adult. She became an alcoholic herself but overcame that through Alcoholics Anonymous shortly before I began visiting her; she gave up smoking about the same time. She has three adult children, one of whom is an active member of the church, but the others are drug and alcohol addicts.

She is an intelligent, deeply spiritual woman. We had many deep gospel discussions during our visits, some of which lasted for hours. When I repeatedly urged her to come back to church, she always gave me the same answer: "They make me feel too guilty there" or "They're all so perfect." Yet she pays her tithing fully and refuses to consider her non-member children's urgings to leave the church. Everything positive which she has accomplished in her life was done without the help of church programs or resources.

Jill. Jill is thirty-ish, a lovely, articulate, intelligent woman, married to a non-member, with two children. She grew up in the church but attributes her later disaffection and poor life choices (including a teenage abortion) directly to her childhood abuse experience: At the age of thirteen she was molested by an uncle who had just been married in the temple.

"It happened in my grandparents' old dilapidated garage," she writes.

I remember the box elder bugs crawling all over the rotten wood, the feel of the Chevy Impala against my back. Later I wore an "Orchid" dress as a flower girl in the reception line (it was my grandfather's favorite color), but it never was the same after that—I lost the innocence of a flower girl. The next day we ate watermelon under the clothes line next to the garage. I made sure to stay away from my uncle.

You see, he led me to believe that because of what had happened, if I told anyone I couldn't have what he had received just the day before—a temple marriage. I didn't need the threats—I was too ashamed and scared to tell anyone. I even let myself forget for many years.

Shortly after this incident, Jill participated in baptisms for the dead at the local temple. A "kind little lady" pulled her aside and told her to keep herself clean and pure so that some day she could return to the temple. "[A]t the time it felt like she could see through me. . . . I knew that she knew—I wasn't clean and pure and I could never come back."

Jill then decided that her "chances were over." She began drinking and using drugs. Her grade point average dropped drastically. At age nineteen she became pregnant and felt she had no choice but to abort the child. "The visual image I had at the time was of taking the values I had been taught, putting it far, far away from where I didn't have to think about it anymore. It was a sad, empty feeling."

She developed hypertension and began to have migraine headaches. She had problems with intimacy, sexuality, and compulsive behaviors. Jill knew that something was missing from her life and continued searching for that something, in college, in literature, and particularly at the Catholic hospital where she eventually found work.

It took her fifteen years to develop the courage to return to the LDS church, where an understanding bishop allowed her to progress on her own timetable. She has since served in the Young Women's program, which has brought her both pleasure and pain. For example:

We decided to focus an entire month on temple marriage in the Young Women's Program. . . . It was a tough month. I cried through the lessons. We had the girls make ceramic temples and talked to them throughout the process of cleaning, glazing, etc., about the preparation required for a temple marriage. I couldn't bring myself to make one for me. You see, I still don't see myself as worthy. I did find a temple in the greenware state with a hole in it. I worked on preparing it for someone else—not for me.

Jill now serves in a community leadership role as an activist on childhood sexual abuse issues. Her poignant story leads us to this question: How different would her life have been if one, just *ONE* person in the church—perhaps her YW teacher or a bishop—had mentioned during Jill's youth that victims of sexual abuse are not at fault for their loss of virginity, that chastity is a state of mind, not a physical condition, and that unconditional love and confidential help were available to those who needed it?

In Marla's and Sarah's cases, a difference could also have been made by a show of compassion on the part of church members, who sometimes give the impression in their lessons and talks that we have to be "perfect" to be accepted by the Lord and by the church. Even in adult discussions of sexual virtue, the emphasis is almost always on choices made consciously or deliberately, with no provision for those who may not have had a choice in matters of sexuality.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The church is beginning to pay more attention to sex abuse concerns. For example, prior to the publication of this essay, the church announced

the establishment of a sex abuse "hotline" for bishops to call when dealing specifically with problems of sex abuse. They will be legally advised about when confessions must be reported to police and when they are protected by the confidentiality of the clergy. In addition, there is a booklet available to church leaders regarding how to counsel sex abuse victims and offenders. In October 1994 general conference President Gordon B. Hinckley publicly and eloquently deplored the sexual abuse of children, as well as other violence against children.¹⁷

While the church has come far in recent years in acknowledging the existence of sexual abuse among its members, there is obviously still progress to be made. One important step is recognizing that existing data on premarital sex among LDS youth are flawed. To attack the problem of premarital sex without acknowledging the associated (but different) problem of childhood sex abuse can only have disastrous consequences. Victims will be forced to turn away from the church for help, instead of toward it.

A change in attitude among church members is needed. Indeed, such a change is already in motion, driven by the outside culture which is becoming more open to discussing problems of a sexual nature. Yet—while I am far from an expert in this area—one can't help but feel that if leaders of the church fail to mount a sensitive, loving campaign on this issue, they will be quickly upstaged by more radical influences, and indeed their motivations may ultimately come into question (i.e., are they trying to help the abuser—who may be a priesthood holder—more than the victim?). I am not suggesting that huge amounts of church time and effort be spent on this issue. Rather, it seems possible that just a few well-placed words of advice in lesson manuals and at leadership training meetings could make all the difference.

For example, one common teaching method used in Young Women programs and firesides throughout the U.S. (but probably not with official church sanction, I hasten to add) is what I call the "Half-Eaten Doughnut Method." Here, young women are presented with both a fresh doughnut and a half-eaten doughnut (or alternatively a piece of chewed-up gum) then asked to choose which they would rather eat. The half-eaten doughnut is likened to a girl who is sexually experienced, while the untouched doughnut represents a virgin. The message is that young men only want to marry virgins. Ignored here is the fact that sexually abused girls who are subjected to this analogy will view themselves as a less desirable "doughnut" even though they were not responsible for their sexual experience. The damage to self-esteem could be considerable. A young victim may perceive that a once-damaged "doughnut" can never

17. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Save the Children," *Ensign* 24 (Nov. 1994): 52-54.

be made whole again; she may then abandon all efforts to avoid premarital sex in the future, eventually alienating herself from the church, the very institution which should be the most helpful in assisting her recovery from abusive experiences. If church leaders allow the "Half-Eaten Doughnut Method" to continue in YW programs, they at least need to emphasize that the analogy does not apply to victims of sexual abuse.

Furthermore, church leaders should be aware that its women members may be more likely to blame *themselves* for coercive sexual experiences, even when an objective party may judge otherwise. In a recent study, only 27 percent of raped women whose experiences met an objectively classified, *legal* definition of rape had actually labeled themselves as victims.¹⁸ The rest perceived the experience as their own fault. Thus when a young woman enters a bishop's office to "confess" a sexual sin, the bishop should be advised to examine the incident—and possibly preceding incidents—before requiring the girl to follow the prescribed steps of repentance which could confound any misplaced self-blame.

Most helpful would be the inclusion in YM/YW manuals, as well as in Relief Society and priesthood manuals, of an occasional mention of sexual abuse, with particular emphasis on the church's compassionate attitude toward those who have experienced such problems and the willingness of church leaders to help the victimized member find counseling resources or therapy groups which could speed the recovery process.

Church leaders who are made aware of specific instances of sex abuse are probably responsive to the best of their ability. But even this may be too little, too late. Unfortunately, a negative message may have been unwittingly conveyed by leaders long before a member is ready to disclose the problem. What happens when a victim of sex abuse, young or old, is subject to a continuous stream of chastity sermons from the pulpit with no mention of sexual abuse and the specific exemption from blame that results therefrom? As our three women's stories showed, the member all too often stops coming to church. She feels guiltier than she did before, if possible. She feels that it's no use trying to be "good" anymore. She may even attempt suicide. (Although I am using the feminine example here, let us not forget that boys can also be negatively affected by a sex abuse experience but may hide their abuse more carefully.¹⁹)

Our lack of knowledge about the nature of premarital sexuality in Mormon culture—and, specifically, to what extent it is initiated by sexual abuse—has already harmed us as individuals, as families, and as a church, and will continue to harm us in the future. Church leaders should

18. Koss.

19. Leslie I. Risin and Mary P. Koss, "The Sexual Abuse of Boys: Childhood Victimization Reported by a National Sample," in *Rape and Sexual Assault II*, ed. Ann W. Burgess (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), 91-103.

hesitate to accept premarital sex statistics at face value, and particularly should not base church policy on them until they are more accurately established. Leaders at every level in the church should be made aware that a certain percentage of young people who are sexually active have been victims of sexual abuse. Such awareness will bring a greater sensitivity to lessons that are taught and counsel that is given.

Dialogue

Ellen Pearson

THIRTY THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLDS STORMED into my room. They chattered and waved their arms, oblivious, as usual, to my between-class presence and observance of their passion. "Man, he's such a jerk," Jared hissed to his huddled friends before they broke for their seats. "I can't believe he said that."

Oh dear, I thought, Mr. Lovell's at it again. I turned and briskly applied cleanser to the glass table of my overhead. I blocked out their anger, smiled at two girls still wildly gesturing near the door, and ran over my notes on metaphor.

As the bell rang, I flipped the overhead switch. It hummed beautifully. I'd fought the budget director all year for this projector. *I must have a minimal level of technology if I'm going to teach well*, I argued. To prove its value once it arrived, I'd used it every day for three weeks.

We resumed where we'd left off yesterday. A simple word—Snow—scrawled on the transparency, with space for me to jot in useful metaphors as the class offered them. We were going to construct a poem.

"Snow—blanket!" yelled Elaine.

"Snow—,—ice!" Jared didn't quite have the picture.

"Snow—sea of ice!" Kyle.

"Sea—fish!" Derek completely missed the boat. But his fish served as the catalyst the others needed.

"Gosh. Did you know that Mr. Lovell said we used to be fish!" demanded Jared.

"Yeah, but that's not half so bad as what he said before. He said we used to be monkeys! Gross!"

I took the bait. "Oh, you must be learning about evolution, huh?"

"Yes," piped up Elaine. "He's so stupid. Does he really think we're going to believe we used to be monkeys? Gross!"

I couldn't resist. "Well, actually, I think that's a bit inaccurate. We're much more closely related to pigs."

"Pigs! Gross!"

Oh, what about my metaphors? I thought. *This is supposed to be English.*

"Listen, Jared, class. Why are you so upset? It seems to me that Mr. Lovell's teaching you something useful. Why not just learn it and see if it makes sense?"

"But Ms. Pearson," said Jared. His voice rose high in earnestness. "It doesn't make any sense. It's wrong."

I envisioned angry phone calls to the school. *What is the English teacher doing talking to my child about evolution?* Heavy footsteps echoed in the hall as I imagined the school board showing up to investigate complaints of heresy. My voice took on an unaccustomed coaxing. "Listen. We've gotta get finished with these metaphors today. We have to write that poem by Thursday."

I looked around at my eighth graders. Every student leaned forward on her desk, staring at me with attention I'd seldom encountered, wanting to know what to think, how to express her anger, how to fight the threat of education. I took a deep breath. "Okay. But just for a minute. Jared, why do you say it's wrong?"

"Because. God created the world. Out of dust. It wasn't an accident." Almost everyone nodded in agreement. A minuscule minority appeared less resolute. From habit they leaned back slightly, now, assuming the masques of nonchalant indifference required to combat their friends' constant and careless referrals to religious normality.

"I see," I said, picturing very clearly the subpoena from the ACLU to appear in court, defend my mixing of church and state in the classroom. But I'd got an idea. I snapped off the overhead and the bright snow images illuminating my classroom dissolved.

"I have to be careful here. I don't want to get into a big religious discussion, but . . . Now, don't raise your hands, just think. If you believe in God, you naturally believe he created the world, and people, right?" Most of the heads nodded, rapid jerks up and down, almost rote. "If you don't know if you believe in God, I suppose you can imagine how those who do would feel strongly about their beliefs?" A few slower, hesitant nods. "Well, can you imagine a situation where it would be possible to believe in God and believe in evolution too?"

Their faces contracted, writhed, and turned in upon themselves. After a moment Jared said, "How, Ms. Pearson? How would that work?"

"Let me tell you. See, I know a man . . ." I began describing my father, the best and most fascinatingly complex study of religious understanding, liberal tolerance, and rigorous intellectuality that I know.

"I've known him for a long time," I said. "He's very, very religious. I guess he knows more about the Bible and how all the stories and poetry and messages work than anyone I've ever met. He goes to church all the time and that kind of stuff. But he's also a scientist. Every day he uses ideas taken from evolution when he studies plants and things. He says he

believes in both."

"Really?"

"Sure. But smart as he is, sometimes people still get mad at him. They think those two ideas are totally opposite and won't work. But he thinks they support each other. He teaches school, just like Mr. Lovell, and—"

"But Mr. Lovell is an atheist!" Gasps from around the room.

"Well, I guess he is different in that respect. Of course, that's Mr. Lovell's right, isn't it?"

"But not to force it on us!"

"That's true. Maybe he feels it's his duty, though, to show you about an idea that works and helps people."

"What?"

"Well, that's how this scientist looks at it. When people get mad at him, he tries not to let it bother him. He just tells them, 'It doesn't really matter, does it, whether it's completely true? The tools it gives to science make it useful.'"

I'd finally connected, it seemed. "Oh, I know what you mean!" Amy, solemn during the dialogue, suddenly became animated. "Like, I think Mr. Lovell was saying they use evolution to make new plants, make them better and so there's more, more—like food for people."

"Um-hum. And from what I understand, it goes even further than that. Can you think of ways?"

"I don't know," said Mike, looking puzzled. "Would it work on animals?"

"You mean like making clones?" Jared looked very concerned.

"No, well," said Mike. "Just like . . . making the cows bigger, stuff like that?"

"Somewhere in the book it said it's used with medicine." Elaine hesitated. "But I don't see how that works."

We talked briefly about things like skin grafts and beta cell production. I wished I knew more, but they took my fragmented recollections as fact. Suddenly Kyle grinned. "So when you take insulin for your diabetes, Ms. Pearson, you become part pig!"

"Thanks, Kyle. I guess you're right."

"But they don't have any proof." Jared still struggled with threatening intangibles.

"Yeah, stupid. But they do too. Remember all those fossils and stuff?"

"Yeah, but no one knows how old they are."

"Ms. Pearson, what's that called when they test things to see how old they are?"

"Carbon dating!" Elaine blurted before I could think.

"Yeah, but my dad says that's just a hoax," argued Jared.

"Come off it, Jared." Kyle scowled. "Your dad calls everything he

doesn't agree with a hoax."

"Okay, okay . . . But I still don't believe I used to be a monkey."

I broke in. "Does—"

"Baboon! He said we were baboons, and that we used to have gills!" Amy remembered. Everyone was upset again.

"Well," I said. "Does it really matter?"

"What do you mean?" Jared was still with us.

"Think. When you stand in front of the mirror, Jared, just stare straight into it at yourself. What do you see?"

"Just me, but—"

"Okay, and when you look at your parents, or grandparents, when you talk to them, what do you see? Who do you hear?"

"This is stupid, Ms. Pearson."

"I know! See, I'm not really trying to take Mr. Lovell's side or anything. It just seems he's trying to teach you something that's interesting. Just because you learn it doesn't mean you have to believe all of it, but you could try being patient, see if anything he says makes sense. Even if you hate what he says, you can still say you learned it, right?"

"Yeah, I guess so . . ."

I walked over to Jared and patted him on the shoulder. "Don't worry, nobody thinks you're a baboon." Then I bent over to pick some imaginary lice from his head. Everyone laughed. The bell rang.

I received no angry phone calls that night. *Maybe I handled it okay*, I decided. It was kind of fun. More fun than the metaphors.

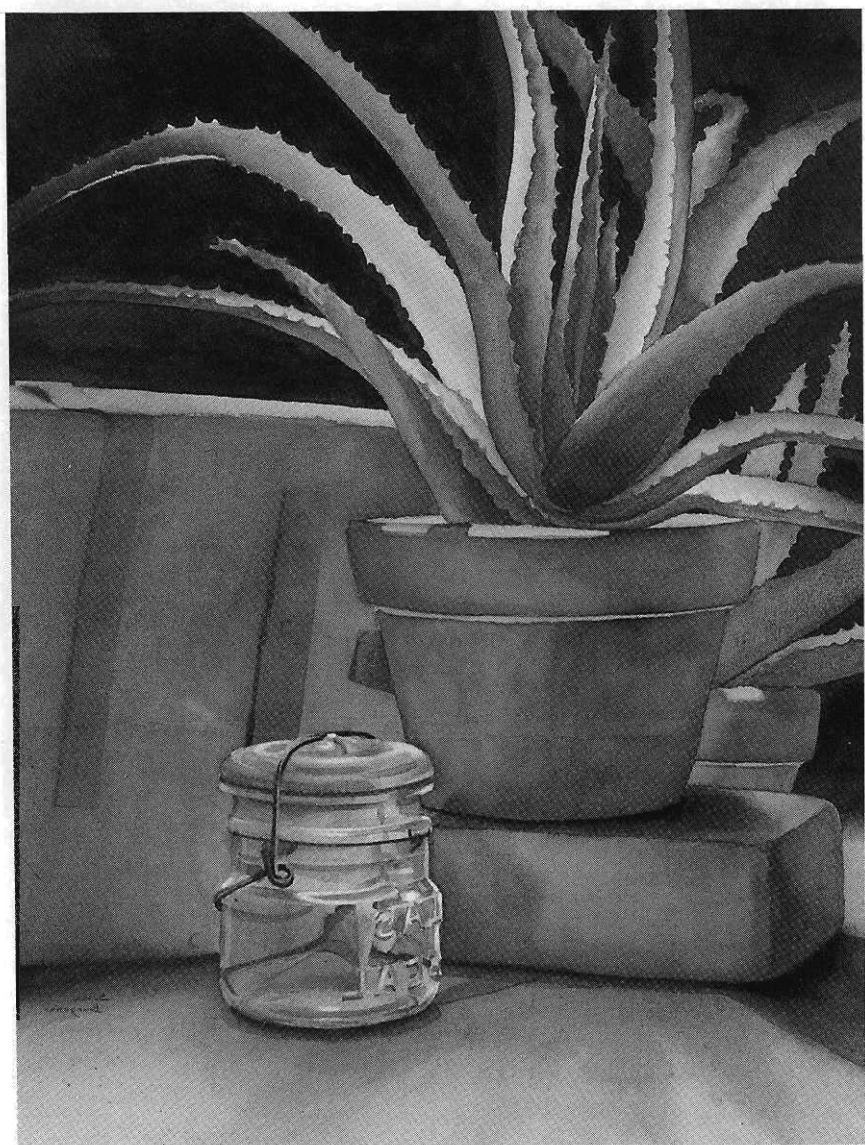
But the next day I was back to the serious work. "We've got to make up for lost time," I announced before the bell even rang. But they were still in the evolutionary mode.

"Ms. Pearson," said Jared, calmer than yesterday. "You never told us. Do you believe in evolution? I mean, all of it, like we used to be baboons an' stuff?"

Well, I thought. *I'll just keep this short*. But how to answer? They'd already discovered I'm a Democrat. Would the knowledge that I'm also a passive disciple of Darwin totally destroy their faith in me as a good person, someone they could trust?

"Yes," I said. "From what I understand, it makes a lot of sense."

They stared at me in silence, except for Jared. He set his jaw and picked at the metal binder of his notebook; he glared at his fluttering fingers as if too angry to look up. Elaine sat back in her chair. Her long, curly hair swept over her shoulder and she stroked it absent-mindedly, a little smile flickering around her eyes. Kyle looked impressed, like he had just heard something deliciously evil. I stood by my overhead, poised to help my students write a poem about snow. I waited, and finally Kyle said, "Ms. Pearson, what do you think about gays?"





The Structure of the Book of Mormon: A Theory of Evolutionary Development

Quinn Brewster

WHEN JOSEPH SMITH BEGAN TO DICTATE the Book of Mormon, he did not understand the structure the book would ultimately take. He did not know that the first part of the manuscript would be lost, resulting in a major structural change in the first quarter of the book. Even with his revelation explaining the solution to the lost manuscript problem (D&C 10), he apparently still did not completely understand the book's final structure nor the system of plates that served as its source records. As did most of his theological ideas and innovations, Joseph Smith's understanding of the Book of Mormon structure evolved incrementally over a period of time.

This essay discusses the development in Joseph Smith's understanding of the Book of Mormon structure and explores the evolutionary nature of that development. The focus is how Joseph's understanding of the structure was influenced by the lost manuscript crisis, particularly the issue of compatibility between the lost manuscript and its replacement. A theory of incremental development is proposed based on a series of four distinct configurations or plans for the book's structure, as Joseph understood it. The four-plan sequence is derived from textual analysis of the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants (D&C). The initial configuration (before the lost manuscript) was simple: Joseph Smith thought the Book of Mormon was to be primarily a translation of Mormon's plates, without any direct translation from Mormon's primary source, the plates of Nephi. In the next configuration (after the lost manuscript), the

lost portion was to be replaced by a direct translation from the plates of Nephi; these plates were still viewed as the source of Mormon's information (that which appeared on the lost manuscript). In the third configuration the plates of Lehi (separate and distinct from Nephi's plates) were understood to be an additional source for some of the material contained in the lost manuscript (such as Lehi's genealogy). And in the fourth and final configuration Nephi's plates were understood to consist of separate large and small versions, with the small plates taking the role of the replacement forepart and the large plates subsuming Lehi's plates and taking over the role of source record for all the lost manuscript material. Thus Joseph's understanding of the book's structure increased in complexity over the course of the book's dictation. The pivotal occurrence that precipitated this series of changes in structure and understanding and, some say, launched Joseph Smith on his prophetic career was the translation crisis associated with the unexpected loss of the original Book of Mormon manuscript.

TRANSLATION CRISIS AND STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

In June 1828 Joseph Smith allowed his scribe Martin Harris to take the only copy of the first 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript to show his wife and a few other close people. Harris's wife, who by then was hostile to Martin's involvement in Joseph's work, apparently succeeded in stealing the manuscript pages and they were never recovered. She must have believed that this would put an end to Joseph's book-writing activities and convince her husband of Joseph's imposture. To her, the book was a fabrication and Joseph wouldn't dare try to recreate it. Whether she destroyed the manuscript (as later rumored) is not known. What mattered more at the time was the possibility that if Joseph did produce a new translation, the original manuscript might reappear and inconsistencies between the two would raise questions about Joseph's claim that the book was a translation of an ancient record.

Joseph was distraught over this loss. Lucy Mack Smith¹ recalled his reaction upon first hearing from Martin that the pages had been lost.

"Oh, my God!" said Joseph, clinching his hands. "All is lost! All is lost! What shall I do? I have sinned—it is I who tempted the wrath of God. I

1. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853), 121-22.

should have been satisfied with the first answer which I received from the Lord; for he told me that it was not safe to let the writing go out of my possession." He wept and groaned, and walked the floor continually.

At length he told Martin to go back and search again.

"No," said Martin, "it is all in vain; for I have ripped open beds and pillows; and I know it is not there."

"Then must I," said Joseph, "return to my wife with such a tale as this? I dare not do it, lest I should kill her at once.² And how shall I appear before the Lord? Of what rebuke am I not worthy from the angel of the Most High?"

I besought him not to mourn so, for perhaps the Lord would forgive him, after a short season of humiliation and repentance. But what could I say to comfort him, when he saw all the family in the same situation of mind as himself; for sobs and groans, and the most bitter lamentations filled the house. However, Joseph was more distressed than the rest, as he better understood the consequences of disobedience. And he continued, pacing back and forth, meantime weeping and grieving, until about sunset, when, by persuasion, he took a little nourishment.

The next morning we set out for home. We parted with heavy hearts, for it now appeared that all which we had so fondly anticipated, and which had been the source of so much secret gratification, had in a moment fled, and fled for ever.

For unknown reasons the obvious expedient (tedious though it may have been) of repeating the original translation did not offer much comfort on this occasion.³ The loss became a crisis with which Joseph struggled for

2. Joseph had left Emma, as Lucy Smith writes, "in so low a state of health, that he feared he should not find her alive when he returned" (ibid.).

3. It bears considering what exactly Joseph's culpability was and why he felt so personally responsible for Martin's mistake that even the possibility of a retranslation offered no consolation. The revelation (D&C 10) explaining that wicked men had stolen the pages for the purpose of altering the text and discrediting Joseph, thus ruling out the option of retranslating, had not yet been received. Neither had his being informed by an angel (according to Lucy Smith) that he had indeed sinned and must forfeit the Urim and Thummim occurred yet. Lucy wrote that when she and Joseph Sr. visited their son two months after he had returned to Harmony, he "gave us the following relation of what had transpired since our separation:—'On leaving you,' said Joseph, 'I returned immediately home. Soon after my arrival, I commenced humbling myself in mighty prayer before the Lord, and, as I was pouring out my soul in supplication to God, that if possible, I might obtain mercy at his hands, and be forgiven of all that I had done contrary to his will, an angel stood before me, and answered me, saying, that I had sinned in delivering the manuscript into the hands of a wicked man, and, as I had ventured to become responsible for his faithfulness, I would of necessity have to suffer the consequences of his indiscretion, and I must now give up the Urim and Thummim into his (the angel's) hands.'" This account places the responsibility with Joseph for his giving the manuscript to Martin, as D&C 3 and 10 also seem to do. However, Joseph's 1832 diary account (in Scott H. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates,

some time. For at least two months no translation was accomplished. Eventually a solution evolved.

The ultimate solution to the translation crisis was the small plates of Nephi. This smaller record happened to cover the same period in history as the lost manuscript (Lehi to Benjamin). Furthermore, instead of secular historical details it contained prophecies and other religious writings that, according to a revelation to Joseph (D&C 10), actually made the small record preferable to the lost translation of Mormon's abridgment of Nephi's large plates. The whole episode, in fact, was part of a "wise purpose" known only to God and foreshadowed in the Book of Mormon (1 Ne. 9:5). The purpose was to provide a way for important religious writings to be included in the book as well as a training experience for Joseph. Thus the first quarter of the Book of Mormon, from Lehi to Benjamin, was taken directly from the small plates of Nephi with no abridgment by Mormon, and the bulk of the remainder was taken from Mormon's abridgment of the large plates of Nephi. This solution provided a plausible explanation for Martin Harris's being allowed to lose the first manuscript and for the structure of the Book of Mormon that eventually emerged. Joseph Smith, however, apparently did not understand the finer points of this solution or the final Book of Mormon structure, even after receiving the D&C 10 revelation. That this is so can be seen from D&C 10.

D&C 10: INITIAL DESCRIPTION OF THE TRANSLATION CRISIS AND SOLUTION

The initial description of the solution to the lost manuscript problem was given in the revelation (Book of Commandments [BoC] IX) that became D&C 10. This revelation, however, is not compatible with the Book of Mormon structure that eventually became known. Comparison of D&C 10 and the statements of the Book of Mormon reveals an inconsistency related to Mormon's knowledge of the small plates of Nephi. In explaining God's purpose for allowing the manuscript pages to be lost and how that problem was to be solved, Joseph recorded (possibly as early as the summer

1989], 8), which predates the D&C accounts (1833 BoC), has Joseph receiving permission to give Martin the manuscript: "I inquired again and also a third time and the Lord said unto me, 'Let him go with them . . .'" Thus, according to his own diary, Joseph had only done as he was commanded in giving the manuscript to Martin and his only culpability was in asking a third time. Nevertheless he apparently felt responsible for Martin's actions. The question of what exactly Joseph's mistake or sin was—asking the third time or giving the manuscript—seems unresolved and perhaps unresolvable. The related question also remains open—why was the simple solution of repeating the translation not seen as a viable option, particularly right after the loss. Perhaps early on Joseph anticipated that which was later to be revealed to him, that unfriendly individuals might try to steal the manuscript for the purpose of discrediting him, thus rendering inadvisable any retranslation attempt.

of 1828⁴) the following revelation (D&C 10:38-42):

38 An account of those things that you have written, which have gone out of your hands [lost pages], is engraven upon the plates of Nephi; 39 Yea and you remember it was said in those writings that a more particular account was given of these things upon the plates of Nephi. 40 And now, because the account which is engraven upon the plates of Nephi is more particular concerning the things which, in my wisdom, I would bring to the knowledge of the people in this account— 41 Therefore, you shall translate the engravings which are on the plates of Nephi, down even till you come to the reign of king Benjamin, or until you come to that which you have translated, which you have retained; 42 And behold, you shall publish it as the record of Nephi; . . .

Since there were two distinct sets of plates of Nephi, large and small, one may wonder which set was being indicated by the ambiguous phrase “plates of Nephi” used uniformly throughout this passage. In verses 40 and 41 “plates of Nephi” must mean small plates only since the first chapters of the Book of Mormon (the replacement chapters, 1 Ne.-Omni) were derived from the small plates. This interpretation, however, places the revelation at odds with the Book of Mormon itself. Verse 39 would imply that Mormon, in abridging the large plates, was referring to the small plates when he spoke of a “more particular account.” Yet the Book of Mormon stipulates that Mormon did not know about the small plates until after he had finished the abridgment of that portion of the large plates (Words of Mormon 1:3).⁵ Thus verse 39 of D&C 10 contradicts verses 40 and 41.

Are there reasonable explanations for this apparent discrepancy? Does it solve the problem to assume that, as the Book of Mormon account requires, Mormon was referring to what he understood to be the only (what were actually the large) plates of Nephi when he spoke of a “more particular account”? This explanation forces an illogical reading of verses

4. Joseph Smith et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 1:23, indicates D&C 10 was written in the summer of 1828, a short time after D&C 3, which was written in July 1828. This dating (summer 1828) could be an error attributable to James Mulholland's insertion of it on separate sheets between pp. 10 and 11 of the original manuscript (private communication, Dan Vogel, 7 July 1995). Both the 1833 BoC and 1835 D&C dated D&C 10 later in May 1829.

5. “And now I speak somewhat concerning that which I have written; for after I had made an abridgment from the [large] plates of Nephi, down to the reign of this king Benjamin . . . I searched among the records which had been delivered into my hands, and I found these plates, which contained this small account of the prophets, from Jacob down to the reign of this king Benjamin, and also many of the words of Nephi” (Words of Mormon 1:3).

38-41, with a sliding definition of "plates of Nephi."⁶

Does it solve the problem to assume that Mormon was referring to the inclusive set, large and small plates? This explanation again doesn't fit with the logic and wording of D&C 10:39-41. If the phrase "plates of Nephi" in verses 39-40 had been intended to mean the inclusive set, then verse 41 would not have used the same ambiguous phrase, but would have made clear that only part of that set (the small record) was to be translated as a replacement.

Is it possible that Mormon knew about the small plates earlier? It might be suggested that Mormon could have read about the small plates on the large plates during his abridgment of the forepart and even referred to them himself in his own abridgment without bothering to search among the records for the small plates until after finishing the forepart, Lehi-Benjamin. This is out of character with Mormon's role as abridger (although the Words of Mormon 1:3 version is itself out of character—that he would not have read the entire set of records before beginning an abridgment). More importantly the wording of Words of Mormon 1:3 (supported somewhat by Mormon 1:4) is fairly clear; the writer of the Book of Mormon intended to convey to the reader that Mormon did not know about the small plates until he reached Benjamin in his abridgment.

Apparently there is no reasonable way to reconcile this discrepancy in Mormon's knowledge of the small plates of Nephi with the assumption that Joseph Smith had a correct understanding of the final structure of the Book of Mormon at the time he recorded this portion of D&C 10. Joseph's understanding at this time must have been incomplete.

FOUR PLANS

In the remainder of this essay a theory is explored that more adequately accounts for the discrepancy noted above as well as others that follow. The theory postulates a series of four configurations or plans for the Book of Mormon structure. Each plan represents Joseph Smith's understanding of what the book's structure was at different points in time.

6. In order to be consistent with the Book of Mormon, D&C 10:38-41 must be read in the following manner: "An account of those things that you have written, which have gone out of your hands, is engraven upon the plates of Nephi [large and/or small]; Yea and you remember it was said in those writings that a more particular account was given of these things upon the plates of Nephi [which Mormon thought at the time were the only, but were actually the *large*, plates]. And now, because the account which is engraven upon the [*small*] plates of Nephi is more particular concerning the things which, in my wisdom, I would bring to the knowledge of the people in this account—Therefore, you shall translate the engravings which are on the [*small*] plates of Nephi, down even till you come to the reign of king Benjamin, or until you come to that which you have translated, which you have retained."

The plans are constructed on the basis of what the Book of Mormon would have revealed about its own structure to Joseph as he translated it (conversely this can be viewed as Joseph revealing what he envisioned for the book's structure by what he dictated regarding it). This method of construction results in what might be termed a minimum complexity description. That is, since Joseph could have learned about the Book of Mormon structure from sources other than the book itself, these plans represent the minimum level of configurational complexity. However, given the implication of D&C 10—that Joseph's understanding was still incomplete even after recording this revelation—the approach of assuming the minimum level of complexity compatible with what the Book of Mormon reveals about itself seems reasonable.

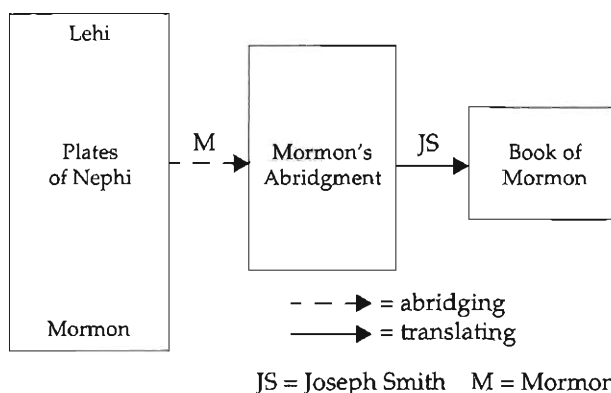
Plan 1

As Joseph Smith began dictating from the plates of Mormon in late 1827 or early 1828, the text made frequent references to a source record known as "the plates of Nephi." These references to "the plates of Nephi," where more details could be found,⁷ were probably much like those that appear in surviving chapters, such as 3 Nephi 26:6-8, "and now there cannot be written in this book even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did truly teach unto the people; but behold *the plates of Nephi* do contain the more part of the things which he taught the people. And these things have I [Mormon] written, which are a lesser part of the things which he taught the people" (see also Mos. 1:6; Alma 37:2; 3 Ne. 5:10; 3 Ne. 5:8-11; Mormon 2:18). That such references also appeared in the early (lost) part of Mormon's abridgment is corroborated by D&C 10:39, "Yea and you remember it was said in those writings that a more particular account was given of these things upon *the plates of Nephi*." In abridging the Nephite history prior to Benjamin, Mormon would not have used language that distinguished Nephi's large and small plates because he did not know about the small plates until he had completed the abridgment down to the time of Benjamin. Therefore as Joseph dictated the early manuscript, "the plates of Nephi" were probably understood to have been a single set of plates from which Mormon took most, if not all, of his abridgment. The structure of the Book of Mormon Joseph would have inferred is that shown in the accompanying schematic diagram, Plan 1. His understanding would have been that the book was to consist

7. This technique is also used in the forepart replacement chapters by Nephi (and others) who defers historical details to his "other plates," such as in 2 Nephi 4:14, "for I had spoken many things unto them, and also my father, before his death; many of which sayings are written upon mine other plates; for a more history part are written upon mine other plates." (See also 1 Ne. 19:4; 2 Ne. 5:33; Jacob 1:3, 7:26; Jarom 1:14; Words of Mormon 1:10.)

(excluding Ether, Moroni, etc.) primarily of a translation of Mormon's record, which was an abridgment of a set of plates called "the plates of Nephi." This was probably Joseph Smith's understanding of the Book of Mormon structure initially.

Plan 1



With an understanding of the Book of Mormon structure represented by Plan 1, Joseph dictated the Nephite history at least to the story of Benjamin, and possibly somewhat beyond. In the process, frequent references were made to "the plates of Nephi" (where greater detail was recorded). Then came the birth of Joseph and Emma's first child in June 1828. The translation stopped and Martin Harris succeeded in persuading Joseph to let him take the manuscript. The first 116 manuscript pages were lost.⁸

After the loss of the manuscript, the translation was at a standstill. Joseph apparently lost his gift, and, in any case, the idea of retranslating the same material was not a viable option. The lost manuscript had contained detailed historical accounts and long name-by-name genealogies.

8. If Joseph retained any of the manuscript, it was probably only a few pages. These retained pages could have been what was being referred to in D&C 10:41 (see also 1830 preface), "Therefore, you shall translate the engravings which are on the plates of Nephi, down even till you come to the reign of king Benjamin, or until you come to that which you have translated, *which you have retained*." This interpretation would be consistent with the assumption that these verses, outlining a solution to the translation crisis, were first recorded by Joseph within a few months of his losing the manuscript, before any further translation had been accomplished (probably in the summer of 1828). A later (May 1829) dating is also possible; according to the late dating, the phrase "which you have retained" would refer to material translated after the lost pages episode. See also Max Parkin, "A Preliminary Analysis of the Dating of Section 10," *7th Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 1979), 70-81.

If it existed, it was in the hands of unfriendly persons who would not hesitate to bring it forth (altered, according to Joseph) for comparison with any retranslation that might be produced—this, for the purpose of, as Joseph later put it, “stir[ring] up the hearts of this generation, that they might not receive this work.” For the work to continue, a solution was called for that did not require retranslation of the same material.

Plan 2

The solution to the lost manuscript problem was given in D&C 10 which Joseph recorded sometime between the summer of 1828 and May 1829.

1 Now, behold I say unto you, that because you delivered up *so many*⁹ writings, which you had power to translate, into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them, 2 and you also lost your gift at the same time, 3 nevertheless it *has been* restored unto you again: therefore, see that you are faithful and go on unto the finishing of the remainder of the work as you have begun.

This first portion of the revelation confirmed that the reason Joseph had been unable to resume translating was because his gift had been lost. The third verse seems to be notifying him that his gift had been restored and that he was to resume translating. The instruction to “go on unto the finishing of the remainder of the work as you have begun” could be interpreted as instructing him to resume translation of the plates of Mormon where he had left off.¹⁰ Whether Joseph actually recorded these verses before or after resuming translation is uncertain, but in either case most investigators of Mormon history agree that he did finish the dictation of Mormon’s plates (Mosiiah–4 Nephi and possibly through Mormon 7) before returning to the forepart of the book. Thus the first part of the revela-

9. The 1833 Book of Commandments version is given for the first three verses. They were changed in the 1835 D&C to read: “Now, behold I say unto you, that because you delivered up *those* writings, which you had power to translate, *by the means of the Urim and Thummim*, into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them; and you also lost your gift at the same time, *and your mind became darkened*; nevertheless it is *now* restored unto you again, therefore see that you are faithful and *continue* on unto the finishing of the remainder of the work of translation as you have begun.”

10. This assumes the revelation was recorded in the summer of 1828, before he resumed dictation. Assuming the revelation was recorded in May 1829, after he had resumed dictating, this verse would simply be recounting what had already happened. The instruction to “go on unto the finishing of the remainder of the work” could then be viewed as a general one to finish the work he’d begun. However, the phrase “the remainder of this work” was subsequently used in a context, verse 46, that clearly implied the post-Benjamin portion of Mormon’s abridgment, thus supporting the former interpretation, i.e., the earlier, summer 1828 recording of this portion of D&C 10.

tion confirmed that, for the remainder of the Book of Mormon at least, the plan was unchanged.

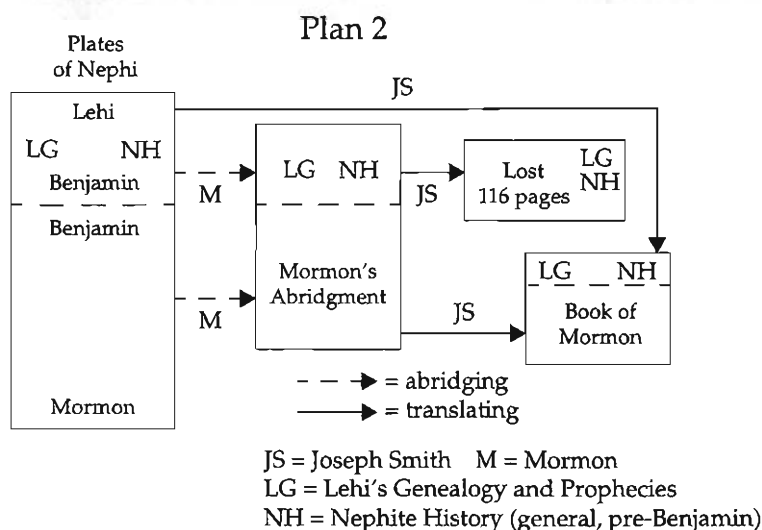
The latter part of the revelation dealt with an explanation for the loss of the Book of Mormon forepart (including involvement of the devil) and a solution for its replacement.

38 And now, verily I say unto you, that an account of those things that you have written, which have gone out of your hands, is engraven upon the plates of Nephi; 39 Yea, and you remember, it was said in those writings, that a more particular account was given of these things upon the plates of Nephi. 40 And now, because the account which is engraven upon the plates of Nephi, is more particular concerning the things, which in my wisdom I would bring to the knowledge of the people in this account—41 Therefore, you shall translate the engravings which are on the plates of Nephi, down even till you come to the reign of king Benjamin, or until you come to that which you have translated, which you have retained; 42 And behold, you shall publish it as the record of Nephi; and thus I will confound those who have altered my words. 43 I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil. 44 Behold they have only got a part, or an abridgment of the account of Nephi. 45 Behold there are many things engraven on the plates of Nephi, which do throw greater views upon my gospel; therefore, it is wisdom in me that you should translate this first part of the engravings of Nephi, and send forth in this work. 46 And behold, all the remainder of this work does contain all those parts of my gospel which my holy prophets, yea, and also my disciples desired in their prayers, should come forth unto this people.

As outlined in these verses, the solution was simple: bypass Mormon's abridgment. Instead of Mormon's plates, the plates of Nephi were to be translated for the pre-Benjamin portion of the Book of Mormon. In this context Joseph would have understood "plates of Nephi" to mean the original source from which Mormon took his abridgment. Since the plates of Nephi had been the original source, nothing would be lost. Not only would Joseph's enemies be foiled, there would be opportunity for additional "things" that would "throw greater views" upon the gospel to be included in the Book of Mormon.

Aside from the replacement of the first part of Mormon's abridgment with Nephi's record, this revelation apparently taught Joseph nothing new about the ultimate structure of the Book of Mormon and its source records. In particular, there was no indication of separate and distinct large and small plates of Nephi. As noted previously, the revelation (v. 39) was even slightly inconsistent with the final structure of the Book of Mormon that eventually became known. However, it was completely consistent with what Joseph's understanding of the structure would probably have been at the time, which was that Mormon made his

abridgment primarily from a single set of “plates of Nephi.” Even linguistic nuances suggest that the “plates of Nephi” of D&C 10 were not the small plates, which ended at the time of Benjamin, but rather a set of plates that continued beyond Benjamin. There is the wording of verse 45, that Joseph “should translate this *first part* of the engravings of Nephi, and send forth in this work.” There is also the wording of verse 41 implying that Joseph could have translated even more from the plates of Nephi (beyond Benjamin) but that he was to stop at Benjamin. Since translating Nephi’s plates was better for the first part of the book, Joseph (or later others) might have wondered why translating Nephi’s plates wasn’t also better for the remainder. If so, this question was answered with the assurance of verse 46 that the “remainder of this work,” meaning the post-Benjamin part of Mormon’s abridgment, contained all the parts of the gospel that were supposed to come forth. Although this statement provides a reason for not continuing the direct translation of Nephi’s plates beyond king Benjamin, it is somewhat difficult to reconcile with the nature and role of the small plates that eventually emerged (1 Ne. 19:3) and further suggests that Joseph probably wasn’t aware of the idea of the separate small plates of Nephi or the many “plain and precious parts” they would contain at the time of recording D&C 10. Thus it is likely that after the lost manuscript episode Joseph resumed dictation of the book of Mosiah with an understanding of the Book of Mormon structure similar to that shown in the diagram as Plan 2.



With the lost manuscript episode behind him, Joseph probably resumed translation of Mormon’s abridgment in September 1828 with

Emma, Martin, and possibly others acting as scribes.¹¹ This effort would have probably continued through at least March 1829, when Martin was either sent or went away. During this dictation of the remainder of Mormon's abridgment was there anything new revealed about the Book of Mormon structure by its own text? Apparently not. The Book of Mormon text contains nothing from Mosiah through Mormon 7 that elucidates the structure of the book or its plates with any greater complexity than that of Plan 2 (see later discussion of computer search results under "Transcription Sequence"). Specifically, there is no mention by Mormon of the separate small plates of Nephi. Thus it is likely that Joseph's understanding of the Book of Mormon structure was still that of a single record (or plates) of Nephi and Mormon's abridgment of that record.

11. After the lost pages incident, between September 1828 and March 1829, how much of the Book of Mormon was transcribed and by whom are uncertain. Joseph recorded in his 1832 diary that Emma and his brother Samuel had written "some" for him during this time. However, Isaac Hale, Joseph's father-in-law, gave the following affidavit in 1834 that suggests Martin Harris also transcribed during this period.

About this time Martin Harris made his appearance upon the stage, and Smith began to interpret the characters or hieroglyphics, which he said were engraven upon the plates, while Harris wrote down the interpretations. It was said that Harris wrote down one hundred sixteen pages, and lost them. Soon after this happened, Martin Harris informed me that he must have a greater witness, and said that he had talked with Joseph about it; Joseph informed him that he could not or durst not show him the plates, but that he (Joseph) would go into the woods where the book of plates was, and that after he came back, Harris should *follow his track in the snow*, and find the book, and examine it for himself. Harris informed me afterward that he followed Smith's directions, and could not find the plates, and was still dissatisfied. The next day after this happened, I went to the house where Joseph Smith, Jr., lived, and *where he and Harris were engaged in their translation of the book*. Each of them had a written piece of paper which they were comparing, and some of the words were: My servant seeketh a greater witness, but no greater witness can be given to him. There was also something said about Three that were to see the thing—meaning, I suppose, the book of plates; and that if the three did not go exactly according to orders, the thing would be taken from them. I inquired whose words they were, and was informed by Joseph or Emma (I rather think it was the former) that they were the words of Jesus Christ. I told them then that I considered the whole of it a delusion, and advised them to abandon it.

The manner in which he pretended to read and interpret, was the same as when he looked for the money-diggers, with the stone in his hat and his hat over his face, while the book of plates was at the same time hid in the woods! After this *Martin Harris went away, and Oliver Cowdery came and wrote* for Smith, while he interpreted, as above described (John A. Clark, *Gleanings by the Way* [Philadelphia: W. J. and J. K. Simon; New York: Robert Carter, 1842], 244-45).

This statement indicates that Martin was with Joseph in Harmony at least part of the time during the winter of 1828-29 acting as scribe for the Book of Mormon. The revelation referred to by Hale must have been the "witness" revelation, Book of Commandments IV (D&C 5), which had the effect of dismissing Harris as scribe.

Eventually Joseph completed Mormon's abridgment and returned to the forepart of the book. He had to do so without the benefit of the lost manuscript; despite his "utmost exertions to recover it," the manuscript had remained lost (see "1830 Preface"). His attention thus turned to what was to become the new forepart of the book, the plates of Nephi. This part of the work must have caused mixed feelings in Joseph. On one hand, a solution to the lost manuscript problem had been outlined in the revelation he had by now recorded (D&C 10)—a solution which involved translating directly from "the plates of Nephi." On the other hand, someone eager to discredit him (perhaps Mrs. Harris) might have the manuscript and be waiting for the retranslation or replacement to appear. If the manuscript had simply been misplaced, it would have been a different matter. But the revelation made clear that the manuscript had been stolen by persons with sinister motives. To know that such forces were at work must have been unsettling to Joseph. Until the replacement for the lost manuscript was published and had withstood any comparative challenges, he probably could not feel completely comfortable. As evidence that these concerns were real to Joseph at the time, there is the preface he included in the first (1830) edition of the Book of Mormon (see subsequent section, "1830 Preface") which explained the loss of the manuscript and the solution to translate different plates so that the devil's designs to thwart the work would be negated. (This preface was removed in the 1837 edition, apparently because such a threat no longer existed.)

Probably of more immediate concern to Joseph than the general public's acceptance of his work was that of Martin Harris. No one was in a better position to discredit Joseph with respect to the lost manuscript than Martin Harris. Martin had transcribed much of the manuscript. Martin's memory may not have been perfect but he might have recognized gross inconsistencies and conspicuous absences. Furthermore, if anyone had the manuscript, his wife was the most likely person. He was an easy target for her efforts to discredit Joseph, or so Joseph might have worried. Although he had exhibited a tendency to want to believe in Joseph, Martin also had a practical side to which appeal could be made, particularly in financial matters. His interest in the plates apparently had a pecuniary aspect as well as a religious one. A book that gave the history of the American Indians' ancestors, linked the Indians to the ancient Hebrews, and explained the mysterious burial mounds and fortresses that dotted the countryside would have appealed to the popular interest of the day. Such a book that also claimed to be true history had the potential of selling better than had Ethan Smith's recent, successful treatise, *View of*

the Hebrews.¹² Thus Martin was captivated not just by the religious implications of Joseph's book but also (perhaps more so at first) by financial profit. That Joseph was mindful of Martin's dual interests seems hardly questionable. Martin had the potential of becoming a benefactor, even the financier of the book's publication. But he was erratic and sometimes unpredictable. Until the plates of Nephi had been translated, published, and successfully defended against any attacks of a comparative nature, Joseph must have worried about the issue of compatibility between the replacement translation from the plates of Nephi and information in the lost manuscript.

With such concerns in the back of his mind, Joseph began translating the plates of Nephi. He would have expected that these plates were the original source of Mormon's abridgment. What he probably didn't know at the time was that the plates he was translating would turn out to be the small plates of Nephi, which had not been the source of Mormon's abridgment.¹³ He therefore must have been concerned when he began to translate the plates of Nephi and realized that the text he was dictating was not going to be consistent with the "plates of Nephi" that had been described in the lost manuscript. The lost manuscript contained implicit (at least, and probably explicit) evidence that the source of Mormon's abridgment had included detailed accounts of certain specific information such as Lehi's prophecies and Lehi's genealogy (designated LG in Plan 2 diagram). Since this information had been contained in the lost manuscript, it must have been in the original source (see flow of information designated LG in Plan 2 diagram). Whether he read ahead in the plates or came to the realization as he dictated the words, sooner or later Joseph would have comprehended that the record he was dictating was not going to supply this information. He would not have had to go any farther than 1 Nephi 6:1 to find out that Lehi's genealogy was not to be given anywhere in the present record of Nephi. Even as early in the text

12. B. H. Roberts's private *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, published in 1985 by University of Illinois Press and in 1992 by Signature Books, gives a lengthy discussion of similarities between the Book of Mormon and *View of the Hebrews*, which was published in 1823 and 1825 in Vermont, several years before the Book of Mormon. It also contains a comprehensive argument based on a thesis uncharacteristic of Roberts's public discourse: that the Book of Mormon could have been a product of the fertile imagination of Joseph Smith, based on *View of the Hebrews* and similar "common knowledge" of the time.

13. The assumption made here for the sake of discussion is that Joseph started his translation of the replacement forepart directly with the small plates of Nephi. However, the preceding discussion of D&C 10 and word pattern studies (see "Transcription Sequence") suggest the possibility that he attempted an early translation from the large—at that time in his mind, the *only*—plates of Nephi, perhaps with Emma as scribe (see also n24). Unfortunately it is difficult to determine which plates he thought or claimed he was translating; Joseph apparently left no clear record of when he conceived of the existence of the small plates.

as 1 Nephi 1:16-17 Nephi was hinting that Lehi's prophecies weren't going to be given in any great detail. Joseph must have realized the ammunition this could become for his enemies if they desired to thwart the work. He must have become concerned. Why were the plates he had been told to translate, the plates of Nephi, not forthcoming with specific information that had been in Mormon's abridgment? Perhaps, Joseph might have speculated, the plates of Nephi were not the source of Mormon's information about Lehi's prophecies and genealogy. Perhaps the system of plates was more complex than he had initially imagined.

Plan 3

With the realization that the record of Nephi he was translating would not include certain specific information relating to Lehi that had appeared in the lost manuscript, Joseph also apparently realized the reason why. In the same verses that notify the reader of the absence of this information (1 Ne. 1:16-17; 6:1), Nephi also explains that his father Lehi had kept a record which did contain this information.

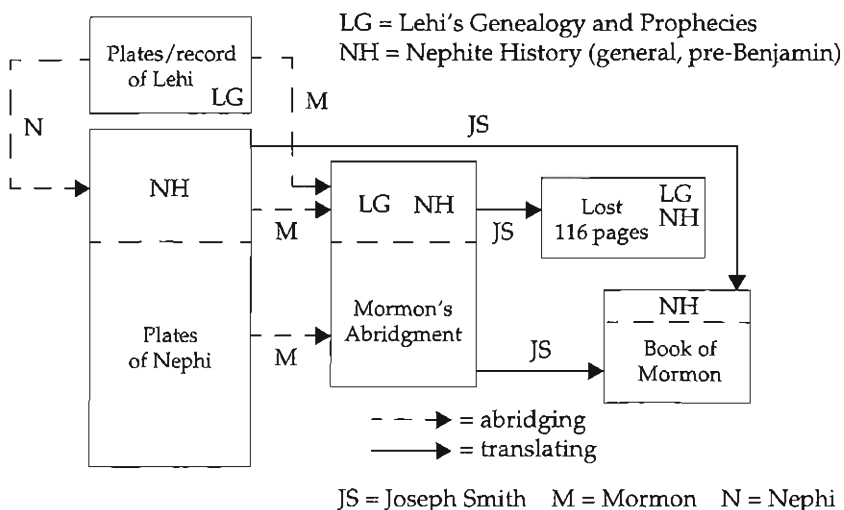
1:16 And now I, Nephi, do not make a full account of the things which my father hath written, for he hath written many things which he saw in visions and in dreams; and he also hath written many things which he prophesied and spake unto his children, of which I shall not make a full account. 17 But I shall make an account of my proceedings in my days. Behold I make an abridgment of the record of my father, upon plates which I have made with mine own hands; wherefore, after I have abridged the record of my father then will I make an account of mine own life.

6:1 And now I, Nephi, do not give the genealogy of my fathers in this part of my record; neither at any time shall I give it after upon these plates which I am writing; for it is given in the record which has been kept by my father; wherefore, I do not write it in this work.

This record of Lehi, therefore, could have been the source from which Mormon got Lehi's genealogy and prophecies, Joseph might have reasoned. As for the plates of Nephi (the ones Joseph was now translating), they only contained an abridgment or part of the information in Lehi's record but not Lehi's genealogy. Still, what about the solution revelation (D&C 10); it hadn't mentioned any record of Lehi as a source for Mormon's (lost) abridgment. Didn't this new information about Lehi's record contradict the revelation? Hadn't the revelation said that the plates of Nephi had been the source of the lost manuscript information? Apparently not. D&C 10 only intimates that the plates of Nephi had been the source of this information. It hadn't said (or at least does not now say) so explicitly. What it says is that an account of that which "had gone out of [Joseph's] hands" was contained on the plates of Nephi. This wording left open the possibility that Mormon could have gotten some of his informa-

tion about Lehi elsewhere. Where? The plates of Nephi which Joseph was now translating seemed to suggest the record of Lehi. Of course, this explanation would require that Lehi's "record," as referred to in 1 Nephi 1:17, 6:1, be interpreted as a non-perishable one (i.e., plates) in order that it might be preserved from Lehi's to Mormon's time. But this interpretation would have been reasonable to Joseph, since previously transcribed text had used the words "record" and "plates" interchangeably (e.g., in 1 Nephi 6:1 Nephi's "record" clearly means Nephi's "plates"). Thus Joseph's understanding of the Book of Mormon structure would have expanded to that shown in the diagram as Plan 3 with the record or plates of Lehi serving as the source of Lehi's genealogy and prophecies. At worst, Joseph had slightly misunderstood the D&C 10 revelation if he inferred that the original source of *all* the information lost by Martin Harris had been the plates of Nephi. There was also still the minor problem of Mormon's having recorded (and Joseph's having already dictated) that he (Mormon) was specifically instructed to take (i.e., use) only the plates of Nephi (Mormon 1:4, 2:17, 6:6), which might be taken to exclude anything but Nephi's plates as a source for Mormon's abridgment. But that language was perhaps not to be taken so literally as to exclude Lehi's record. Thus Joseph could have been at least partially satisfied with an understanding of the Book of Mormon structure patterned after Plan 3 during the early stage of his attempt to translate the plates of Nephi. The important feature of Plan 3 compared to Plan 2 was that Lehi's genealogy and prophecies (LG) would no longer have been expected to appear in the Book of Mormon replacement forepart.

Plan 3



With an expanded understanding of the Book of Mormon structure, which now included a knowledge of Lehi's record, Joseph would have again attempted the translation of Nephi's plates in order to fulfill the solution outlined by D&C 10. As he worked through the translation of Nephi's plates, however, sooner or later it would have become evident that there was still a problem: the plates of Nephi he was translating were *still* not the same plates to which reference had been made in the lost manuscript. Those plates of Nephi must have contained a *more* detailed description of general, pre-Benjamin Nephite history (NH) than the lost manuscript. These plates of Nephi apparently contained an even *less* detailed description of that history. As early in the text as 1 Nephi 6:3-6 Nephi gives indications that his record will not be the kind of detailed historical account which one might have expected as the source of Mormon's abridgment. In fact, Nephi's account was starting to sound more like a religious record than a historical one.

6:3 And it mattereth not to me that I am particular to give a full account of all the things of my father, for they cannot be written upon these plates, for I desire the room that I may write of the things of God. 4 For the fullness of mine intent is that I may persuade men to come unto the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and be saved. 5 Wherefore, the things which are pleasing unto the world I do not write, but the things which are pleasing unto God and unto those who are not of the world. 6 Wherefore, I shall give commandment unto my seed,¹⁴ that they shall not occupy these plates with things which are not of worth unto the children of men.

Knowing what he did about the lost manuscript, Joseph must have been not only puzzled but concerned. Surely the early Nephite history—which in the lost manuscript version included the names of generations of kings and descendants after Nephi—could not, like Lehi's genealogy and prophecies, be attributed to Lehi's record. The lost manuscript narrative had proceeded far beyond the time of Lehi's death. Even Martin Harris could have probably remembered that much. Why would the plates of Nephi not be forthcoming with even a general outline of the early Nephite history—at least as much as had been in the lost manuscript? Perhaps, Joseph might have speculated, these plates of Nephi were not the same plates of Nephi from which Mormon had taken his abridgment

14. Perhaps at this point Nephi anticipated that he would pass the small plates to his posterity. As it turned out, Nephi passed them to his brother Jacob for keeping (Jacob 1:1) and his own posterity remained nameless in the small plates.

(same name notwithstanding). Perhaps the Book of Mormon system of plates was yet more complex.

Plan 4

If Joseph puzzled over the scarcity of early Nephite history (NH) on the plates of Nephi, the answer was eventually forthcoming.¹⁵ In 1 Nephi 9 Nephi finally makes clear that the record he is writing is actually the second of two records, both of which are called "the plates of Nephi."

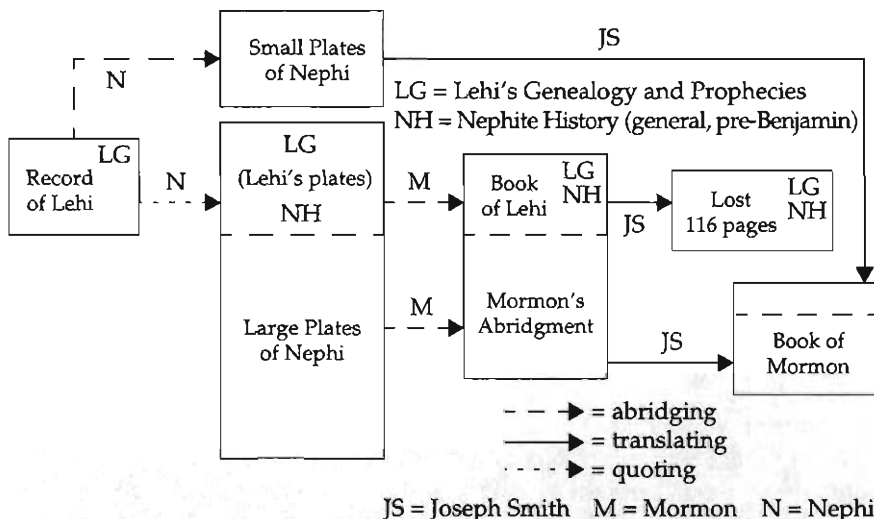
9:2 And now, as I have spoken concerning these plates, behold they are not the plates upon which I make a full account of the history of my people; for the plates upon which I make a full account of my people I have given the name of Nephi; wherefore, they are called the plates of Nephi, after mine own name; and these plates also are called the plates of Nephi. 3 Nevertheless, I have received a commandment of the Lord that I should make these plates, for the special purpose that there should be an account engraven of the ministry of my people. 4 Upon the other plates should be engraven an account of the reign of the kings, and the wars and contentions of my people, wherefore these plates are for the more part of the ministry; and the other plates are for the more part of the reign of the kings and the wars and contentions of my people. 5 Wherefore, the Lord hath commanded me to make these plates for a wise purpose in him, which purpose I know not. 6 But the Lord knoweth all things from the beginning; wherefore, he prepareth a way to accomplish all his works among the children of men; for behold, he hath all power unto the fulfilling of all his words. And thus it is. Amen.

For the first time Nephi's small plates are identified. For the first time Joseph might have understood that there was no reason to expect much Nephite history on the plates he was translating, because the plates he was translating were the small plates, the ones specifically designated for religious writings. Apparently the "plates of Nephi" from which Mormon had taken his abridgment were the large plates. Joseph's under-

15. It is possible that Joseph realized the lack of both specific information (e.g., Lehi's genealogy) and general Nephite history in the small plates at the same time. Similarly it is possible that he discovered both the plates of Lehi and the small plates of Nephi at about the same time, since they are described within a few chapters of each other. Thus it is possible that his understanding went directly from Plan 2 to Plan 4, skipping Plan 3. If so, however, the preface he included in the 1830 Book of Mormon is puzzling. If he had never considered the configuration of Plan 3 as a means for explaining missing or different information in the replacement forepart, it seems more likely that the 1830 preface would have explained the lost manuscript episode in terms more evocative of Plan 4 ("large plates of Nephi" versus "small plates of Nephi") than Plan 3 ("record/plates of Lehi" versus "plates of Nephi"). See also "1830 Preface."

standing of the system of plates expanded to that shown in the diagram as Plan 4.

Plan 4



Plan 4 represents the basic structure of the Book of Mormon that eventually came to be understood by Joseph. An unabridged version of Lehi's record, including his genealogy and prophecies (LG), was engraved on Nephi's large plates (1 Ne. 19:1-2). An abridged version (not including LG) was engraved on Nephi's small plates (1 Ne. 1:16-17, 6:1). Thus a structure was defined in which Lehi's genealogy and prophecies (LG) were transmitted to Mormon's abridgment (lost forepart) but not to Nephi's abridgment (replacement forepart). The same structure provided that early Nephite history (NH) would also appear in the lost manuscript but not the replacement. Since the small plates were kept separately from the large plates by prophets instead of kings (1 Ne. 19:4, Jarom 1:14), there was no reason to expect much correlation between the two records except for Nephi's part. When the brief narrative reached the time of Benjamin, the record ended because Amaleki had no more seed (Omni 1:25) and the plates were full (Omni 1:30).¹⁶ The reader is not entirely unpre-

16. It is notable that neither of these reasons was sufficient for ending the record on other occasions. When Nephi passed on the small record, he did so to his brother Jacob instead of his son. When more plates were needed to continue the record, they were simply made. Ore was plentiful (1 Ne. 18:25; 2 Ne. 5:15) and the practice appears to have been that if more plates were desired, more were made. Only Moroni was unable to make more plates because he was alone (Mormon 8:5).

pared for the small record to end, though. Jarom twice warns (Jarom 1:2, 14) that the plates are small and then offers this reason for not writing more, "wherefore it must needs be that I write a little; but I shall not write the things of my prophesying, nor of my revelations. For what could I write more than my fathers have written? For have they not revealed the plan of salvation? I say unto you, Yea; and this sufficeth me." This part of the story is somewhat incongruent; it seems to relegate Jarom's prophecy and revelation to a lesser importance relative to the burden of making a few additional plates which goes against a main theme of the Book of Mormon and the small plates in particular. Nevertheless, the reader's mind is prepared for the small record to end, which it does at the right time with all the connecting history quickly explained in the last book, *Omni*, so that a coherent transition back to Mormon's abridgment is possible.

Thus Joseph Smith's understanding reached the final stage of complexity with regard to the structure of the Book of Mormon. He had progressed from a Plan 2 description to a Plan 4 description, possibly by way of an intermediate Plan 3 description. He had learned that there were actually two sets of plates of Nephi which, although referred to by the same name, were very different in nature and served different purposes. This insight alone might seem worthy of special mention by Joseph, given that the ambiguous name "plates of Nephi" must have been either the cause or effect of his own misinterpretation of the D&C 10 revelation. Having gained this new insight about the dual plates of Nephi, what kind of final description did he give relative to the lost manuscript, the replacement solution, and the Book of Mormon structure, and to what degree did his final description clarify points left undefined, ambiguous, and even contradictory in the initial one (D&C 10)? Interestingly, Joseph's final description of these matters was still incomplete as far as what could have been said to clarify explicitly the structure of the Book of Mormon and its system of source plates.

1830 PREFACE: FINAL DESCRIPTION OF THE TRANSLATION CRISIS AND SOLUTION

The final description Joseph gave of the translation crisis and its solution is the preface of the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon.

To the reader—As many false reports have been circulated respecting the following work, and also many unlawful measures taken by evil designing persons to destroy me, and also the work, I would inform you that I translated, by the gift and power of God, and caused to be written, one hundred and sixteen pages, the which I took from the Book of Lehi, which was an account abridged from the plates of Lehi, by the hand of Mormon; which

said account some person or persons have stolen and kept from me, notwithstanding my utmost exertions to recover it again—and being commanded of the Lord that I should not translate the same over again, for Satan had put it into their hearts to tempt the Lord their God, by altering the words, that they did read contrary from that which I translated and caused to be written; and if I should bring forth the same words again, or, in other words, if I should translate the same over again, they would publish that which they had stolen, and Satan would stir up the hearts of this generation, that they might not receive this work: but behold, the Lord said unto me, I will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing: therefore thou shalt translate from the plates of Nephi, until ye come to that which ye have translated, which ye have retained; and behold ye shall publish it as the record of Nephi; and thus I will confound those who have altered my words. I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will shew unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the Devil. Wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, I have, through his grace and mercy, accomplished that which he hath commanded me respecting this thing. I would also inform you that the plates of which hath been spoken, were found in the township of Manchester, Ontario county, New York. The Author.

This final description of the manuscript problem is based largely on the initial description, D&C 10, and uses much of the same wording in its central portion. New material added at the beginning clarifies some of what had not been explicitly stated in D&C 10, that the plates of Lehi had been the source of the first part of Mormon's abridgment. However, like D&C 10, there is still no mention of separate and distinct large and small plates of Nephi in the 1830 preface. Thus this preface superficially sounds more like a description of Plan 3 than of Plan 4. Nevertheless, the wording is actually incompatible with Plan 3 in a subtle way such that it must be viewed as a Plan 4 description, albeit an incomplete one.

The wording Joseph used in the 1830 preface suggests a "sole source" status for the plates of Lehi with respect to the lost manuscript. Joseph wrote, "I translated . . . one hundred and sixteen pages . . . from the Book of Lehi, *which was an account abridged from the plates of Lehi . . .*" (emphasis added). This description is incompatible with Plan 3, under which Lehi's "record"¹⁷ was viewed as a source for Mormon but not *the* only source. Specifically, under Plan 3 Lehi's record could be viewed as the source for Lehi's genealogy and prophecies (and some limited history), while Ne-

17. Whether Lehi's original "record" (1 Ne. 1:16-17, 6:1) is viewed as a metallic plate record or a perishable one is irrelevant under Plan 4. If Lehi's record was not metallic, Joseph's reference to "plates of Lehi" (1830 preface) could still point to the part of Nephi's plates that contained Lehi's record. On the other hand, under Plan 3, Lehi's "record" must be considered a non-perishable metallic "plate" record (although it is not specifically designated so in 1 Nephi) in order for it to be preserved to Mormon's time for abridgment.

phi's (still separate) record had provided the general post-Lehi, pre-Benjamin Nephite history. (See flow of information designated by Lehi's genealogy [LG] and Nephite history [NH] in Plan 3 diagram.) Therefore, under Plan 3 Lehi's record cannot be viewed as the sole source of Mormon's early abridgment (lost manuscript). However, under Plan 4 the plates of Lehi can be viewed as *the* source which provided both Lehi's genealogy and whatever Nephite history was in the lost manuscript because Joseph's reference to "the plates of Lehi" in the 1830 preface could point to the part of Nephi's plates that contained both.¹⁸ Thus the 1830 preface is only compatible with the final structure of the Book of Mormon, Plan 4 (not Plan 3); however, it is notably incomplete in not delineating the separate large and small plates of Nephi. Instead Joseph chose to leave the 1830 preface in the same ambiguous terms as D&C 10: "the plates of Nephi."

Who was the intended audience of the 1830 preface? Since Joseph had the preface removed in the 1837 edition, it would seem that the intended audience in 1830 had been his enemies (who still might have held the lost manuscript), those who had heard of the lost manuscript episode, and those who might have been swayed by comparative attacks using the lost manuscript. The preface was apparently no longer deemed necessary or important in 1837 when the possibility of such a challenge had become remote and the many "false reports" had long since ceased circulating. To a reader already familiar in detail with the contents of the book and its structure, the wording of the 1830 preface might seem slightly odd—odd in the sense that Joseph chose to contrast between "plates of Lehi" and "plates of Nephi" to explain the missing and replacement information for the book's forepart, instead of contrasting between "large plates of Nephi" and "small plates of Nephi" as suggested by 1 Nephi 9, Jacob 1:1, and Words of Mormon 1:3.¹⁹ But the 1830 preface certainly would not have seemed odd in that sense to a new reader in 1830, even to one who had seen or heard of the lost manuscript. The preface offered a logical explanation for any discrepancies between the lost manuscript material and the published replacement. A potential enemy of the work who was contemplating trying to discredit Joseph by pointing out such discrepancies (whether they be genuine or the result of alterations) could read this preface and easily see that the basis for such an attack had been weakened.

18. Jacob 3:13-14 indicates that a portion of a set of plates could be referred to by a name other than that by which the larger set was known, such as plates of Jacob or plates of Lehi within the plates of Nephi.

19. In fact, the record Joseph designated as the "plates of Lehi" in the preface is usually referred to as the "plates of Nephi" in the book itself.

THE PLATES OF NEPHI:

"AND I KNEW NOT AT THE TIME WHEN I MADE THEM . . . "

A significant feature of Joseph Smith's progressive understanding of the Book of Mormon records is the delay between his knowledge of the (large) "plates of Nephi" (by late 1827 or early 1828) and his knowledge of the small plates (sometime after D&C 10). A similarly significant feature of the Book of Mormon system of plates as defined under Plan 4 is the delay between Nephi's knowledge of the large and small plates. According to Nephi, both sets of plates were begun by him, as commanded by God, at different times; the large plates were begun just after Lehi's group arrived in the New World (ten years after they left Jerusalem), and the small plates between twenty and thirty years later. Thus the more important (for our day) ministry-prophecy record was begun at least thirty years after the departure from Jerusalem. This delay apparently affected the nature of the material recorded in the large plates. Nephi explains that in the beginning, before he knew he would be commanded to keep the small plates, he recorded major religious matters (his own and his father's prophecies) on the large plates (1 Ne. 19:1-3).

1 And it came to pass that the Lord commanded me, wherefore I did make plates of ore [large plates of Nephi] that I might engraven upon them the record of my people. And upon the plates which I made I did engraven the record of my father, and also our journeyings in the wilderness, and the prophecies of my father; and also many of mine own prophecies have I engraven upon them. 2 And I knew not at the time when I made them [large plates] that I should be commanded of the Lord to make these [small] plates; wherefore, the record of my father, and the genealogy of his fathers, and the more part of all our proceedings in the wilderness are engraven upon those first [large] plates of which I have spoken; wherefore, the things which transpired before I made these [small] plates are, of a truth, more particularly made mention upon the first [large] plates. 3 And after I had made these [small] plates by way of commandment, I, Nephi, received a commandment that the ministry and the prophecies, the more plain and precious parts of them, should be written upon these plates; and that the things which were written should be kept for the instruction of my people, who should possess the land, and also for other wise purposes, which purposes are known unto the Lord.

Thus, according to the latter part of verse 1, the appearance of some amount of prophecy and religious writing in the first part of Mormon's abridgment (lost manuscript) would not have been inconsistent with the structure of Plan 4. To the degree he was sensitive to Martin Harris's vulnerability on the issue of compatibility of lost manuscript material, Joseph must have been gratified to see Nephi give such a clear explanation

for the appearance of religious writings in the first (lost) portion of Mormon's abridgment.

In addition to accounting for the possible presence of certain information in the lost manuscript (a certain amount of prophecy), the twenty-year delay between Nephi's plates also accounts for the possible absence of certain information. Given the frequency with which the first (large) plates are mentioned in Nephi's second (small) record (1 Ne. 1:17; 9:2; 10:15; 19:1-4; 2 Ne. 4:14; 5:29-33), it might be expected that Nephi would have also mentioned the existence of the small plates in the large record, at least after the point in time had been reached where he had been commanded to make them. If no mention of the second record was to be found in the lost manuscript, that could be accounted for by the fact that the commandment to make them had come to Nephi much later, perhaps after he had finished most of his first record. Thus it is logical that an extended record of history could have been written by Nephi that made no mention of the second set of plates he was commanded to make. And it is also therefore logical that Mormon could abridge at least a significant portion of Nephi's large plates and not become aware of the small plates (as apparently was the case; see Words of Mormon 1:3). But what about the approximately thirty years from the time Nephi was commanded to make the second record (570 B.C.) until his death (about 540 B.C.)? Didn't Nephi write about the small plates at all on the large plates? Or did Mormon not notice it as he was abridging? Given the frequency with which Nephi mentioned his "other" (large) plates in the small record, it seems inconsistent that the theologically more important small record would not have been mentioned prominently in the large plates by Nephi. Yet this is the logical inference we are led to by analysis of the contents of the Book of Mormon and the likely contents of the various plates according to the structure of Plan 4.

THE QUESTION OF CAUSALITY

Several questions related to the Book of Mormon structure and contents have arisen in the preceding discussion. For example, why did Mormon never mention the small plates of Nephi in his post-Benjamin abridgment, when he had by then acquired knowledge of them? Why would Nephi not mention his more important small plates in his large plates,²⁰ when he consistently did the reverse? Why were Nephi's, Mormon's, and Joseph Smith's knowledge of the small plates all significantly delayed relative to their knowledge of the large plates—in Joseph's case,

20. Here and in subsequent sections this inference is made for the sake of discussion. As explained at the end of the previous section, this is only an inference which seems logical but cannot be proved without examining the lost manuscript.

in spite of a revelation explaining the role of the plates of Nephi? Coincidence may be the answer in each case, or there may be specific reasons. One explanation that accounts for each of these "coincidences" is that the direction of causality between Joseph's understanding of the Book of Mormon structure and the information about that structure that appeared in the book could have been the reverse of that considered in the first part of this essay. That is, rather than thinking in terms of Joseph's understanding of the Book of Mormon being limited by and progressing according to what he learned from Mormon's and later Nephi's writings, it may be more correct to think in terms of Mormon's and Nephi's descriptions of the Book of Mormon records being limited by and progressing according to what Joseph understood or imagined. Perhaps the mind of Nephi, the mind of Mormon, and the mind of Joseph Smith were to some degree one and the same. As Joseph's understanding of the Book of Mormon structure progressed from Plan 2, to 3, and 4, so did Nephi's and Mormon's. If Nephi didn't refer to the small plates in his large plates, it could be because at the time Joseph dictated the lost manuscript in early 1828 he was thinking in terms of Plan 1. Perhaps the reason Mormon never mentioned the small plates in Mosiah through Mormon 7 is because at the time Joseph dictated this material in late 1828 and early 1829 he was still thinking in terms of a single set of plates of Nephi, i.e., Plan 2. Both Nephi's and Mormon's awareness of the small plates could have been delayed because Joseph's was. This interpretation need not be seen as attributing devious motives to Joseph. The state of his mind is unknown. But it does mean attributing to him more the role of author than of translator.

TRANSCRIPTION SEQUENCE

It has already been suggested that the four-plan series postulated herein fits with current understanding of the sequence in which the Book of Mormon transcription took place. Textual analysis of the Book of Mormon and Joseph's revelations has led most investigators of Mormon history to conclude that after the lost manuscript, transcription resumed with the book of Mosiah, and that the replacement chapters (1 Ne.-Omni) were probably the last to be transcribed. By using information criteria suggested by the four-plan theory to analyze the text of the Book of Mormon, it is possible to test the Book of Mormon for compatibility (in terms of transcription sequence) with the four-plan theory.

A computer search of the Book of Mormon text was conducted for passages related to the book's structure. A proximity search used the words "plates, book(s), record(s), account(s), Nephi, Lehi, and father" to

locate any references to plates, books, or records of Nephi or Lehi. These passages were then categorized according to the highest plan (2=lowest, 3=middle, 4=highest) that was explicitly identified by the text. The criteria for labeling passages according to a particular plan were:

- Plan 2: mention of a single record of Nephi or plates or a book of Nephi but no mention of plates or a record of Lehi and no mention of two records of Nephi.
- Plan 3: mention of a single record of Nephi or plates or a book of Nephi and mention of plates or a record of Lehi but no mention of two records of Nephi.
- Plan 4: mention of two records of Nephi.

The primary scriptures located by this search are:

- Plan 2: Mos. 1:6, 16; 28:11; Alma 37:2; 44:24; Hel. 2:13-14²¹; 3 Ne. 5:8-11, 14-18²²; 26:6-8, 11-12; 4 Ne. 1:19, 21; Mormon 1:3-4; 2:17-18; 6:6; 1 Ne. 1:1-3.²³
- Plan 3: 1 Ne. 1:16-17; 6:1-6.
- Plan 4: 1 Ne. 9:2-6; 10:15; 19:1-6; 2 Ne. 4:14; 5:29-33; Jacob 1:1-2; 3:13-14; 7:26; Jarom 1:14; Words of Mormon 1:3-9.

Visually scanning these passages shows the sequential progression of complexity of the descriptions used, from Plan 2 to 3 and from 3 to 4. A summary of the results of this search follows:

1. From Mosiah through Mormon, only Plan 2 passages are found, no Plan 3 or 4 passages.
2. Only one Plan 2 passage is in the forepart (1 Ne.-Omni), and this is 1 Nephi 1:1-3.

21. Mormon says that *all* his abridgment was taken from "the book of Nephi"; none of it is recognized as coming from the plates of Lehi from which the 1830 preface said Mormon abridged the lost book of Lehi.

22. This passage is easy to misinterpret as a Plan 4 passage because the phrase "and a shorter but true account was given by Nephi" (v. 9) taken in isolation might sound like a reference to the small plates of Nephi. The context in which this phrase appears, however, suggests that the "Nephi" referred to is the contemporary Nephi (son of Nephi) not the original Nephi (son of Lehi). The intended meaning was that there were many accounts written by many individuals; Mormon's abridgment came from only one of these, Nephi's, which was shorter than most. Either way, at this point in time (after king Benjamin), according to Plan 4, Mormon knew about both sets of Nephi's plates and yet is still not differentiating two distinct sets.

23. These first words of the Book of Mormon were, according to Plan 4, written by Nephi on his small plates many years after he had already written most of his large record and after being specifically commanded to make another record for a special purpose. However, the opening words of Nephi's second record make none of this background clear.

3. There are only two Plan 3 passages and these are near the beginning, 1 Nephi 1:16-17 and 1 Nephi 6:1.
4. The use of the word "therefore" is found to be generally predominant in Plan 2 passages and surrounding text, whereas the equivalent "wherefore" is predominant in Plan 3 and 4 passages and their surrounding text.²⁴

These findings are consistent with the conclusions that (a) after the lost manuscript crisis Joseph continued the translation from Mosiah through Mormon with an understanding of the book's structure represented by Plan 2; (b) Plan 3 was not realized until after Mosiah through Mormon had been transcribed; (c) only a little dictation in 1 Nephi was done while Joseph's understanding was that of Plan 3 or at least little survived; (d) the bulk of the replacement chapters (1 Ne. 9-Words of Mormon) was dictated last, after Joseph had a full understanding of Plan 4. In short, the four-plan theory is compatible with current understanding of the transcription sequence of the Book of Mormon. This analysis of course does not prove that Mosiah through Mormon was written under Plan 2, that 1 Nephi was attempted under Plan 3, and that 1 Nephi-Omni was finished under Plan 4. It merely shows the consistency of this interpretation with the Book of Mormon text. Clearly there are passages where the absence of, say, Plan 3 information in a Plan 2 passage would not be unusual. In many of the Plan 2 passages referring to the plates of Nephi, it would not necessarily be expected that the plates of Lehi would be mentioned, particularly if the plates of Lehi were viewed as a subset of the large plates of Nephi (which is possible under Plan 4).

However, there are several passages where additional information might be expected in order to make the passage conform better to the

24. This is significant because it has been shown from the Book of Commandments revelations (Brent L. Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993], 409-14) that Joseph preferred the word "therefore" during his early dictation which shifted later to "wherefore." The transition from "therefore" to "wherefore" in the Book of Commandments is distinct, occurring between May and June 1829. In the Book of Mormon Mosiah-Mormon are dominated by the use of "therefore." This is consistent with Joseph's having dictated this material prior to June. Ether exhibits a mixture of "therefore" and "wherefore," as do 1 and 2 Nephi. Jacob-Words of Mormon and Moroni is dominated by "wherefore." It is possible that the final versions of Ether, 1 Nephi, and 2 Nephi were dictated at the time Joseph was shifting from "therefore" to "wherefore" between May and June 1829. It is also possible that they were written after the transition to "wherefore" was complete and that the mixture in these books is a result of initial versions having been transcribed by Emma, Samuel Smith, or Martin Harris using "therefore" with later modifications having been made in the dictation to Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, or others using "wherefore." Jacob-Words of Mormon was probably written after the transition to "wherefore" was complete and did not incorporate much if any material that had been previously transcribed using "therefore."

"correct" final Plan 4 description. For example, it is notable that no mention of two separate sets of plates of Nephi (Plan 4) is made in 1 Nephi 1-8, even though doing so would have improved the clarity of meaning in these writings. In particular, 1 Nephi 1:16-17 and 6:1-3 contain no mention by Nephi that he is making two records even though, according to Plan 4, he must have been (recall that the large plates were started around 590 B.C. and the small plates around 570 to 560 B.C.). Instead Nephi refers here to his record consistently in the singular.

There is also a related noticeable absence as far as mentioning where Lehi's genealogy could be found. In 1 Nephi 1:16-17 and 6:1-3 Nephi writes that his father's record contains many details that his record does not, particularly his father's genealogy. However, when he makes a point of stating where that genealogy can be found (1 Ne. 6:1), he only mentions the record "kept by [his] father," not his own large plates, even though 1 Nephi 19:1-2 says that he had engraved his father's record, including Lehi's genealogy, on his large plates and this must have already been done prior to the time Nephi engraved 1 Nephi 6:1 on the small plates. Why didn't Nephi mention in 1 Nephi 6:1 that Lehi's genealogy could also be found in his large plates (and thus simultaneously clarify his separate large and small plates)? It is impossible to say for sure, but the fact that he did not is at least consistent with the interpretation that at the time of dictating 1 Nephi 1:16-17 and 6:1-3 Joseph was not yet aware of the separate large and small plates of Nephi; he was still thinking in terms of Plan 3.

A final example of clarifying information being absent where it might have been expected has already been noted in that Mormon did not refer to the separate religious and historical records of Nephi anywhere in his post-Benjamin abridgment,²⁵ even though by then he had found the small plates, read them, and would have probably noticed the way Nephi drew attention to his separate historical and religious records. Mormon also made no reference to the record of Lehi in his post-Benjamin abridgment, even though by then he had completed the abridgment of Lehi's record which (according to the 1830 preface) he had taken from the plates (or record) of Lehi. In one place Mormon even makes the statement that "*all* the account which [he has] written" has been taken from the "book" (i.e., record or plates) of Nephi, thus making no reference to a record of Lehi or any other source record (see Hel. 2:13-14). Since under Plan 4 Lehi's plates can be viewed as a subset of Nephi's large plates, the latter (record of Lehi) omission by Mormon may be viewed as minor relative to the former (small plates). Nevertheless, why

25. This excludes Words of Mormon which probably wasn't dictated by Joseph until after the small plates.

didn't Mormon delineate the separate large and small plates of Nephi (or the record of Lehi) in his post-Benjamin abridgment? Again, it is impossible to say for sure, but the fact that he did not is at least consistent with the idea that at the time of dictating Mosiah-Mormon 7 Joseph was not yet aware of either the small plates of Nephi or the record of Lehi; he was still thinking in terms of Plan 2.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The loss of the first 116 pages of the manuscript had a major impact on the transcription of the Book of Mormon and its ultimate structure. With the loss Joseph found it impossible to continue dictating. Yet his family, wife, and associates believed he was being guided miraculously by God in the endeavor. It was unthinkable that God's work could be obstructed by mortal men (or women) through such a simple scheme as stealing some pages. Joseph's best hope was to recover the manuscript, which he tried strenuously to do (see 1830 Book of Mormon preface), and in the meantime receive reassurance from God that the work was not being thwarted. Thus Joseph received his first revelation. Book of Commandments II (D&C 3) explained the reason Joseph had lost his gift to translate "for a season" and gave reassurance that God's work would continue (though no specific plan for solving the crisis at hand was given). The original version (BoC II) also promised that if Joseph repented God would "only cause [him] to be afflicted for a season" and he would "again be called to the work."²⁶ In effect this revelation provided a plausible explanation for there being no immediate resumption of translation activities, thus allowing time for continued efforts to recover the manuscript or confirm it had been destroyed. It also provided a period of time during which Joseph contemplated the lost manuscript, the possible reasons for its disappearance, the implications of such a loss, and possi-

26. Later when the revelation was revised for publication in the D&C, the phrase "and he [God] will only cause thee to be afflicted for a season" was changed to "which is contrary to the commandment which I gave you," and the future tense in "*will again be called to the work*" was changed to the present tense "*art again called to the work*" (D&C 3:10), indicating that Joseph was apprehensive about the original wording. Consideration of the possible implications of these changes requires a more lengthy treatment than is possible here; however, it should be noted that the phrase change to "which is contrary to the commandment which I gave you" is compatible with a shift from an early interpretation (Faulring, 8; 1833 BoC II), in which Joseph is not held responsible or does not acknowledge being held responsible for doing wrong in giving the manuscript to Harris, to a later one (1835 D&C XXX; 1971 D&C 3:10) in which such a conclusion can more easily be drawn. See also n3 discussion about whether Joseph's culpability was in giving the manuscript to Harris or just asking a third time.

ble explanations. Sometime between the summer of 1828 and May 1829 Joseph recorded D&C 10 which outlined the solution to the lost manuscript problem according to Plan 2. In that same time frame he resumed dictating from Mormon's plates, completing the bulk of the latter part of the Book of Mormon. After finishing with Mormon's plates, he returned to the book's forepart and began dictating from "the plates of Nephi." He probably did so still unaware of the small plates and the record of Lehi. It is possible that with this level of understanding (Plan 2) Joseph dictated a limited, early version of Nephi's record (surviving verses might include 1 Ne. 1:1-3). During this period the issue of compatibility of the material he was dictating with the lost manuscript must have been a significant concern. This inference follows from the fact that Joseph's revelation explained that an enemy acting under the devil's influence had taken the manuscript for the purpose of destroying him. It would have been unnatural for Joseph not to be concerned about the compatibility issue. Of particular concern would have been certain information missing from Nephi's record that had appeared in the lost manuscript, such as Lehi's genealogy and prophecies and general (post-Lehi, pre-Benjamin) Nephite history. At some point during his translation of Nephi's record, Joseph's understanding of the book's structure grew to include the record of Lehi. It seems possible that for a time he had an understanding of the Book of Mormon structure (Plan 3) which explained certain missing information (Lehi's genealogy and prophecies) through the record of Lehi which was separate and distinct from Nephi's (still one and only) plates. It is also possible that a portion of the replacement Book of Mormon chapters (or an early version thereof) was dictated while he had such an understanding (verses like 1 Ne. 1:16-17, 6:1). Eventually his understanding grew to include the separate small plates of Nephi (Plan 4) which explained not only Lehi's genealogy but additional missing information (general pre-Benjamin Nephite history) through a second record of Nephi, separate and distinct from the original one used by Mormon. The majority of the replacement chapters (1 Ne. 9-Words of Mormon) must have been dictated after Joseph reached this level of understanding.

The small plates of Nephi were the key to the eventual successful completion of the Book of Mormon. Not only that, but Nephi's and Mormon's delayed knowledge concerning them apparently contributed materially to the structure of the book and the way Joseph's knowledge of that structure progressed. The delay in Nephi's being commanded to make the small plates can be seen as a plausible reason for there being no mention of them in the first part of his large plates. This in turn can be seen as a plausible reason for Mormon's not mentioning the small plates in the lost manuscript. (This would not fully explain, however, the com-

plete absence of references to the small plates in the large plates; nor would it explain the absence of such references in Mormon's post-Benjamin abridgment.) Thus Joseph's not being aware of the small plates initially is not unrelated to nor unlike Mormon's not being aware of them initially as he began to abridge the plates of Nephi (Words of Mormon 1:3). Nor is it unlike Nephi's not being aware of them initially: "and I knew not at the time when I made them that I should be commanded of the Lord to make these plates" (1 Ne. 19:2).

To say the least, the structure of the Book of Mormon with its myriad of plates is complicated. Describing just its basic structure (Plan 4), once it is understood in hindsight, is a significant task. Keeping straight all the details must have been a challenge for those associated with Joseph Smith during the time of its coming forth, as well as for Joseph himself. It seems no surprise that on one occasion when pressed *impromptu* in public to explain the details of the Book of Mormon's origin Joseph demurred saying, "[I]t was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon;" and also, "that it was not expedient for him to relate these things."²⁷ It is also perhaps not so surprising that on the occasion of laying the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House Joseph brought forth the Book of Mormon manuscript to bury and was overheard to say, "I have had enough trouble with this thing."²⁸

Joseph Smith's understanding of the Book of Mormon structure evolved incrementally. In the beginning he had a simple, relatively monolithic view of the book. With the lost manuscript crisis and D&C 10, his understanding began to change toward a more complex structure. Eventually his understanding reached the final structure as given in the book itself. Based on the text of the Book of Mormon and its likely order of transcription, a series of four plans has been proposed that outlines a plausible progression in Joseph's understanding. That Joseph progressed in his understanding of the book's structure even after D&C 10 seems beyond doubt. Specifically, D&C 10 indicates that he did not understand the separate, unique existence of the small plates of Nephi. This may be viewed as somewhat unusual given that the small plates played a key role as the replacement for the lost manuscript. The wording of D&C 10 does demonstrate, however, an understanding of the book's structure which is consistent with Joseph's understanding at the time.

Was Joseph Smith influenced by the textual description of the Book of Mormon structure or did he influence it? Did his understanding

27. B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 1:218.

28. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946, 1971), 276.

progress because of what he learned from the plates as he dictated or did the structure of the plates he described increase in complexity because his understanding (or imagination) did? Existing evidence seems to allow either construction. It may have been that Joseph learned about the book's structure from the book itself as he dictated it. In that case the revelation he recorded (D&C 10) was slightly incorrect (although consistent with his current understanding). On the other hand, it may have been that the source of information for Nephi and Mormon was the mind of Joseph Smith. In that case Joseph's progression in understanding was reflected in that of Nephi and Mormon. In either case Martin Harris's "perfidy" of June 1828 in losing the Book of Mormon manuscript proved to be the cause of significant unexpected developments not only for the main characters in Joseph's book, but for Joseph himself. For in the beginning Joseph, like Mormon, did not know that there was going to be an additional set of Nephi's plates and, like Nephi, he did not foresee that he would be commanded to write a second record—one concerned more with prophecy than with history.

Mr. Couch and Elder Roberts

Richard F. Keeler

THE CONTROVERSIAL BOOK OF MORMON STUDIES Elder B. H. Roberts undertook in the early 1920s have been thoroughly treated in *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, edited by Brigham D. Madsen.¹ Roberts's work addressed, in part, questions about the Book of Mormon's historicity raised by a Mr. Couch of Washington, D.C.

Couch's questions were initially sent to Elder James E. Talmage with a cover letter dated 22 August 1921 from William E. Riter at the U.S. Experiment Station in Salina, Utah. That cover letter read: "During the past few years I have associated and had some religious discussions with some non-'Mormons.' Mr. Couch of Washington, D.C., has been studying the Book of Mormon and submits the enclosed questions concerning his studies. Would you kindly answer them and send them to me."² Talmage forwarded Couch's questions to Roberts shortly after they were received.

Specifically, Couch wanted to know the following:

1. The "Mormon" tradition states that the American Indians were the descendants of the Lamanites. The time allowed from the first landing of Lehi and his followers in America to the present is about 2,700 years. Philologic studies have divided the Indian languages into five distinct linguistic stocks which show very little relationship. It does not appear that this diversity in tongues could obtain if the Indians were the descendants of a people who possessed as highly developed a language as the ancient Hebrew, but indicates that the division of the Indians into separate stocks occurred long before their language was developed beyond the most primitive kind of articulations. Again the time allowed from the landing of Lehi is much too short to account for the observed diversity.

2. The Book of Mormon states that when the followers of Lehi reached

1. See Brigham H. Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, ed. Brigham D. Madsen, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992); the first edition was published in 1985 by the University of Illinois Press.

2. *Ibid.*, 32.

North America they found, among other animals, the horse here. Historical and paeleontological data shows that the horse was not in America at that time, nor did it arrive for 20 centuries afterward.

3. Nephi is stated to have had a bow of steel which he broke shortly after he had left Jerusalem, some 600 years B.C. There is no record that I know of which allows the Jews the knowledge of steel at such a period.

4. Reference is frequently made in the Book of Mormon to "swords and cimeters." The use of the word scimeter does not occur in other literature before the rise of the Mohammedan power and apparently that peculiar weapon was not developed until long after the Christian era. It does not, therefore appear likely that the Nephites or Lamanites possessed either the weapon or the term.

5. Reference is also made to the possession by the Nephites of an abundance of silk. As silk was not known in America at that time the question arises, where did they obtain the silk?³

Mormon attitudes on these issues were different in 1921 than they are today. For example, even though Couch's first question broached the diversity of languages, the implication concerning the origin of Native Americans was clear to Roberts,⁴ since he had previously thought that all Native Americans were descended from Book of Mormon peoples.⁵ In fact, at the time this view was almost universally accepted among Mormons.⁶ Joseph Smith had explained in 1842: "I was informed [by the Angel Moroni] concerning the aboriginal inhabitants of this country, who they were, and from whence they came; [was given] a brief sketch of their origin . . . [and told that] the remnants are the Indians that now inhabit this country."⁷

Today few Mormons hold such a view. Many now believe there were limited Book of Mormon locations or populations, or that contemporary Native Americans are of mixed blood from progenitors of various migra-

3. Ibid., 36.

4. See *ibid.*, 116-43, particularly 116, where Roberts acknowledges the implication.

5. See B. H. Roberts, "The Origins of the American Natives," *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 50 (1888): 376-80.

6. See, for example, Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool: Joseph F. Smith, 1877) 18:166-67; Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool: Albert Carrington, 1881) 21:129-30; Erastus Snow, *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool: John Henry Smith, 1883) 23:7; George Teasdale, *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool: John Henry Smith, 1884) 25:18-19; and James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1949), 55-56, and *Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1949), 290-91. For further discussion of this matter, see George D. Smith, "Is There Any Way to Escape These Difficulties?": The Book of Mormon Studies of B. H. Roberts," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17 (Summer 1984): 104.

7. See James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1965), 1:136-42.

tions,⁸ perhaps via the Bering Straits.⁹ Roberts, in his answers to Couch, acknowledged that some Mormons were beginning to consider these possibilities.¹⁰

Brigham Madsen has suggested that Roberts's examination of these questions altered his views on the historicity of the Book of Mormon.¹¹ Others dispute that conclusion.¹² One thing is certain. Couch had considerable impact on Roberts. In addition, his questions anticipated modern Book of Mormon study on Native American ancestry, philology, domesticated animals, metallurgy, and textiles.¹³

Who was this Mr. Couch whose questions so intrigued B. H. Roberts? Using the District of Columbia Directory for 1921, Brigham Madsen offered five possible candidates: Arthur O. Couch, a U.S. treasury depart-

8. See, for example, Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 14. See also George D. Smith, "Orthodoxy and Encyclopedia," *Sunstone* 16 (Nov. 1993): 50-51, for a discussion of entries in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*. Archaeologists and scholars of related disciplines with LDS sympathies are less rigid. See Dee F. Green, "Book of Mormon Archaeology: The Myths and The Alternatives," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 4 (Summer 1969): 78; John L. Sorenson, "Digging into the Book of Mormon: Our Changing Understanding of Ancient America and its Scripture," *Ensign* 14 (Sept. 1984): 29. Recent LDS general authorities have not discussed the matter. However, Elder John A. Widtsoe accepted the idea that American aborigines were not wholly of Hebrew blood. See Widtsoe and Franklin S. Harris, Jr., *Seven Claims of the Book of Mormon* (Independence, MO: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1937), 15, 85-115. See also Anthony W. Ivins, in *LDS Conference Reports* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Apr. 1929), 15-16; Milton R. Hunter and Thomas Stuart Ferguson, *Ancient America and the Book of Mormon* (Oakland, CA: Kolob Book Co., 1950): 14. See also Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 32-33.

9. That the Bering land bridge possibly served as a main route for immigration requires colonization sites in Beringia that predate lower latitude sites but that are related by artifact types. For a discussion of these matters, see, for example, John F. Hoffecker, W. Roger Powers, and Ted Goebel, "The Colonization of Beringia and the Peopling of the New World," *Science* 259 (1993): 46-53; Lisa Busch, "Alaska Sites Contend as Native Americans' First Stop," *Science* 264 (1994): 347. For a treatment of Bering migration that also mentions the Mormon point of view, see Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., *The Indian Heritage of America* (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), 36-46.

10. See *Studies*, 54.

11. See *ibid.*, 22-24, 142-43. See also Smith, "Is There Any Way to Escape These Difficulties?" 94-111; Brigham D. Madsen, "B. H. Roberts's *Studies of the Book of Mormon*," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Fall 1993): 77-86.

12. See Truman G. Madsen, "B. H. Roberts After Fifty Years," *Ensign* 13 (Dec. 1983): 13-15; John W. Welch, "B. H. Roberts Seeker After Truth," *Ensign* 16 (Mar. 1986): 58-60. See also Thomas G. Alexander, "B. H. Roberts and the Book of Mormon," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 19 (Winter 1986): 190-93, for an evenhanded review of the controversy.

13. A few examples include Sidney B. Sperry, *Answers to Book of Mormon Questions* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967), 147-65; John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992); Smith, "Orthodoxy and Encyclopedia," 51-52; Green, "Book of Mormon Archaeology," 71-80; and Sorenson, "Digging into the Book of Mormon," 27-37.

ment auditor; Frank B. Couch, a district inspector; James F. Couch, a Department of Agriculture chemist; John J. Couch, a laboratory technician; and Ralph F. Couch, a newspaper correspondent.¹⁴ Was Mr. Couch one of these five men?

Direct evidence on this point is speculative except for Riter's 22 August 1921 letter, which said simply, "Mr. Couch of Washington D.C. has been studying the Book of Mormon and submits the enclosed questions." Apparently Roberts knew nothing of Couch's identity not found in Couch's questions or in Riter's cover letter. Nothing identifies Couch further in subsequent correspondence between Riter and Roberts,¹⁵ nor in the famous Wesley P. Lloyd diary entry on the Couch/Roberts matter.¹⁶ Fortunately, the circumstances surrounding Riter's employment allow us to determine Couch's identity: the chemist James Fitton Couch.

Long before I read Couch's questions, I became acquainted with the professional work of James Fitton Couch in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). I filled the same position in the USDA which he had occupied several decades earlier. We both were chemists in USDA poisonous plant research investigations.

The USDA has conducted research on poisonous plants for about one hundred years.¹⁷ For over two decades beginning about 1915, much of the work during the summer months was conducted at the U.S. Experiment Station in Gooseberry Canyon near Salina, Utah, with fall, winter, and spring activities in Washington, D.C. James F. Couch was one of three principal USDA scientists from Washington, D.C., working summers at the Salina Station during that period. The others were C. D. Marsh and A. B. Clawson.¹⁸ Among Utahns employed to assist in the summer work was William Emerson Riter, at that time a student at Utah State Agricultural College (USAC) in Logan, from which he graduated with a B.S. degree in botany in 1922.¹⁹

Both James F. Couch and William E. Riter were at the Salina Station in

14. See *Studies*, 37n3.

15. See *ibid.*, 45-46, 51-56, 56-57.

16. See photocopy of Wesley P. Lloyd diary entry (exhibit 10) in Truman G. Madsen and John W. Welch, *Did B.H. Roberts Lose Faith in the Book of Mormon?* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1985).

17. John M. Kingsbury, *Poisonous Plants of United States and Canada* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), 11-12; Richard F. Keeler, "Toxins and Teratogens of Higher Plants," *Lloydia* 38 (1975): 57-60.

18. From the general correspondence, photographic, plant collection, and other records of the U.S. Experiment Station at Salina, Utah. Extant records are now housed at the USDA Poisonous Plant Research Laboratory, Logan, Utah.

19. For information on Riter's college activities, see the Utah State Agricultural College yearbooks, the *Buzzer*, for the years 1919-22. Riter was an A student much involved in botany and agricultural extracurricular activities.

August 1921, according to USDA poisonous plant research records. Records of August collections from that location's plant collection record book include some observations made by Riter about the time Couch's questions were sent to James E. Talmage at LDS headquarters. A group photograph taken 5 August 1921 at the Salina Station includes James F. Couch, then age thirty-three, and William E. Riter, twenty.

Phrases in two of Riter's letters point to James F. Couch. In his letter of 22 August 1921, transmitting Couch's questions to Salt Lake City, he refers to "Mr. Couch of Washington" (emphasis added). The Washingtonian James F. Couch was with Riter at that time at the Salina Station. By contrast, in his letter to Roberts the following 27 February, Riter says, "Mr. Couch at Washington" (emphasis added). James F. Couch had by that time returned to Washington headquarters for winter activities, as was the custom.

Consistent with the conclusion that the Mr. Couch who asked the questions was trained in science, as was James F. Couch, is the appearance in his questions of phrases typical of scientists. For example, Mr. Couch used the words "which show" for "which have" and "could obtain" for "could result." He used the phrases "data shows," as do people accustomed to dealing with data, and "no record which allows . . . the knowledge" meaning no evidence to support it. Scientists sometimes use his phrase "appears likely" to hedge in answering questions, and his use of "question arises" commonly means "Okay, let's see the evidence." Other professions use such phrases to some extent, but they are so common among chemists that for me Couch's questions smell like a chemistry laboratory.

James F. Couch was a scholarly man. His achievements show him to have possessed a keen intellect and an analytical mind—one who might be expected to ask thought-provoking questions about the Book of Mormon. He served for three decades as a chemist for the USDA in the Bureau of Animal Industries in Washington, D.C. He investigated poisonous plants in the 1920s and 1930s and worked later as a chemist in analytical and physical chemistry investigations at the USDA Eastern Regional Research Laboratory in Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania.²⁰

Born in 1888 in Somerville, Massachusetts, to J. D. Couch and Ellen M. Cary, James Fitton Couch attended Harvard, where he obtained an A.B. degree in 1913. He then served as an industrial chemist from 1913 to 1917, at which time he became employed by the USDA. During his long

20. *Miscellaneous Publications* series of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office). Numbers 5, 32, 63, 123, 176, 232, 304, 376, 431, and 640 covering the period up to 1947 show that Couch was a USDA employee with the Bureau of Animal Industry until 1939 at which time he is shown to be located at the Eastern Regional Research Laboratory of USDA.

career with USDA, he held joint appointments as an instructor in chemistry at George Washington University, 1919-20, and later as a professor of biology at National University. Meanwhile he found time to complete both an A.M. (1923) and a Ph.D. (1926) at American University.²¹

By the end of his career, James F. Couch was senior author of about 90 scientific papers and coauthor of many others, including some on critical analysis of certain chemical techniques and applications.²² He wrote a book on chemical terminology.²³ But most of his research centered on the chemistry of poisonous plants, identification of their toxins, structural elucidation of those toxins where necessary, and assessment of their toxicities. One might think of that study as a form of detective work. Couch had a critical frame of mind and certainly could critically review a book at age thirty-three.

Couch's papers were numerous and of high quality. Although his work was published mainly in the 1920s and 1930s, reviews and monographs still cite his research on poisonous plants in general as well as on several specific areas, notably lupin alkaloids.²⁴ In fact, a review of the relevant literature shows that from 1975 to 1992 his work was cited an average of five times per year.²⁵ That frequency demonstrates a remarkable record half a century later for a highly specific scientific niche. Couch served for a time as president of the Chemical Society of Washington, probably based in part on that enviable publication record.²⁶

The circumstantial evidence indicates that it was James Fitton Couch who drafted the questions that so interested B. H. Roberts. In a sense Couch's questions became the stimulus for perhaps the most friendly, in-depth, in-house, critical examination of Mormon scripture by an LDS general authority ever undertaken. If Roberts's studies are ever officially

21. Biographical information from L. H. Bailey and Ethel Zoe Bailey, comps., *RUS-A Biographical Register of Rural Leadership in the United States and Canada* (Ithaca, NY: the compilers, 1930), 157.

22. See *Chemical Abstract Indexes of the Abstract*, vols. 11-46, for Couch's senior authored citations. Most of his coauthored papers were in *Abstract Volumes* for subsequent years.

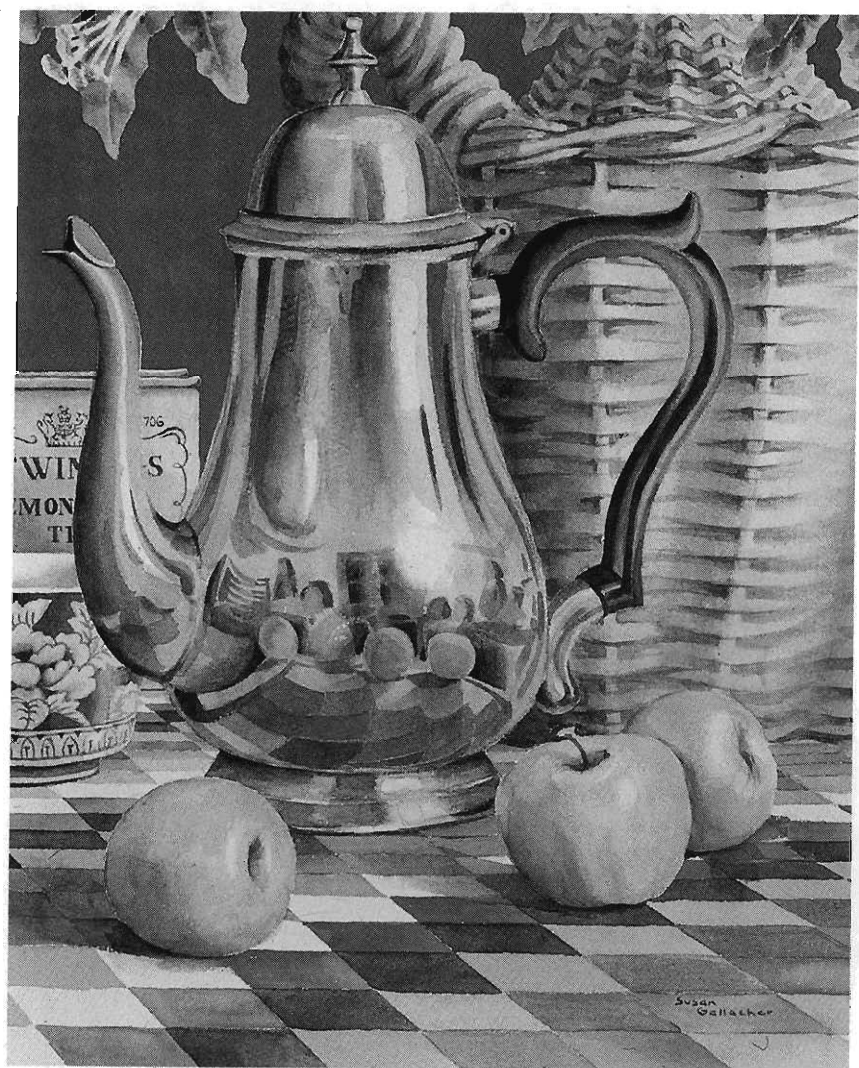
23. James Fitton Couch, *Dictionary of Chemical Terms* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1920).

24. Nelson J. Leonard, "Lupin Alkaloids," in *The Alkaloids*, Vol. 3, ed. R. H. F. Manske and H. L. Holmes (New York: Academic Press, 1953), 119-95; Kingsbury, *Poisonous Plants of United States and Canada*, 525-26; James A. Mears and Tom J. Mabry, "Alkaloids in the Leguminosae," in *Chemotaxonomy of the Leguminosae*, ed. J. B. Harborne, D. Boulter, and B. L. Turner (New York: Academic Press, 1971), 73-172; Stanislaus J. Smolenski, A. Douglas Kinghorn, and Manuel F. Balandrin, "Toxic Constituents of Legume Forage Plants," *Economic Botany* 35 (1981): 321-55; Richard F. Keeler, "Quinolizidine Alkaloids in Range and Grain Lupins," in *Toxicants of Plant Origin*, Vol. 1, ed. Peter R. Cheeke (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 1989), 133-67.

25. See *Science Citation Indexes* (1975-92) under citations for J. F. Couch.

26. See the following for Couch's Chemical Society of Washington outgoing presidential address: James Fitton Couch, "The Chemistry of Stock-Poisoning Plants," *Journal of Chemical Education* 14 (1937): 16-30.

used to help provide answers to such troublesome questions, the important role played by the chemist and scholarly reader of the Book of Mormon, James Fitton Couch, should be widely acknowledged.



Blessing the Dog

Brian Evenson

HE WAITED, but the dog didn't come.

He went back into the house. His wife was strapping on her brassiere, skin spilling over where the strap was tight.

"Seen the dog?" he said.

"Haen't my dog," she said, grunting, closing the hooks.

He drew open the curtains, stared down into the dirt yard. He did not see the dog. He turned. His wife had clapped a shirt over her chest, was asking him didn't he care if the whole world saw her bare.

No, he did not. But he didn't say.

He went out. He went into the yard, called the dog by name. He whistled. He went into the kitchen, moved through it touching the pans and out, into the living room. His wife sat at the foot of the stairs, wriggling on her socks.

He went out before she saw him.

He looked behind the house, looked in the shed. He looked inside the barn.

He found her in the shadow of the corner of the barn, crouched and sad-eyed. He went to stroke her. She whined, backed into the hay. He came closer. She scrabbled her feet in the dirt, tried to run past him. He lunged, had her by the scruff of the neck, lifting her forepaws off the ground to push air.

He forced the dog to look into his eyes. The dog's eyes, he saw, were dark, crusted, waxing over. Pulling back the flap of the ear, he looked in. He grabbed hold of the dog's bottom jaw, forced it down, looked down the dark throat. He let the dog loose. She slunk back into the corner, curling her back away from him.

He went to the end of the drive, saw Morrison coming down the road, limping and huffing, his heavy bag on his shoulder. He went out to meet him, his wife on the porch behind, arms crossed, watching him.

Morrison saw him come, dropped the bag off his shoulder, waited for him. The other man took up the bag, Morrison following him as he car-

ried it to the barn.

"Nice to see you, Karl," said Morrison.

"Where's the truck?" said Karl.

"Truck?" said Morrison. "Dead," he said.

Karl spat. "Mine too," he said.

"That a fact," said Morrison.

Karl dropped Morrison's bag and entered the barn. He pointed to the corner. Squinting, Morrison moved forward until he saw the glints of the dog's eyes.

"Had I known it was the dog I'd have brought the smaller bag," said Morrison.

Karl shrugged.

"Had I known it was a stinking dog I probably wouldn't have bothered to come at all."

"Should have asked," said Karl.

Morrison nodded. He rolled up his sleeves, moved into the corner. The dog snapped once at his legs. He darted in and when the dog opened his mouth and came at his leg, he hammered it atop the head with his fist. The dog stutterstepped, woozed.

He reached around and grabbed the dog by the scruff of the neck, lifting it off the ground, crushing it against his chest. Looking into the eyes, he shook his head. He looked into the ears. He pried apart the jaws, moved the dog until a shaft of light through the rooftrap struck down into the throat.

"Stay away from the mouth," he said.

"Why is that?" said Karl.

"Common sense. You don't want to come down with it, do you?" said Morrison.

He turned the dog over and pulled the hind legs wide, found the skinflap of the thigh thick with red blots and pussing over. He let the dog drop. It crawled back into the corner, tail between its legs.

"What she have?" said Karl.

"Hell, I don't know," said Morrison. "Probably something new."

"That good or bad?"

Morrison flattened his lips.

"Few days, he'll be okay. Or he'll be dead."

"She," said Karl.

Morrison went outside, picked up his bag. He took Karl's money. He heaved the bag onto his shoulder, made his way down the road.

Karl went back onto the porch, sat beside his wife.

"What Morrison want?" she said.

"Dog was sick," he said.

"You called Morrison over a sick dog?" she said.

"It's my money," he said.

"What Morrison do for her?" she said.

"Didn't do nothing," he said. "Not a damn thing."

She stiffened and glared, then stormed into the house without a word. He waited a minute, then followed her in.

"What is it?" he said to her back.

"You know how I feel about cursing," she said.

"I didn't mean nothing by it," he said.

She shook her head, hugged herself in her own broad arms, leaning her body backward toward him. He did not move forward to meet her. He went out onto the porch. He went into the barn, sat down as close to the dog as the dog would let him.

He heard his wife at the door, saw the light flicker as she crossed the opening and moved into the barn.

"What she have?" she said.

He shrugged. "Sick," he said.

"What are you going to do?" she said.

"Thought I'd bless her," he said.

"Bless it?" she said. "The dog? Lay hands?"

"She's sick, haen't she?" he said.

"It's a dog," she said.

"Don't make no different," he said. "God's creature, like us all."

"You never blessed me," she said.

"You never needed it," he said.

"I asked for it."

He shook his head. "You look okay to me now," he said. "You haen't dead. You didn't need it."

"I asked for it," she said. "The dog ask?"

He opened a cupboard. It was full of dishes, cracked plates. In the other room he heard his wife talking into the telephone. He closed the cupboard, opened another, found it packed with dried goods.

He heard his wife hang up the telephone.

"Where's the olive oil?" he called.

She came into the kitchen. "Don't have none," she said.

"What we got?" he said.

"Everything but oil," she said.

He shook his head, went out to the shed. He opened the cab of the truck, pulled the seat forward, groping behind it until he had hold of a can of thirty weight. He set the can on the floor, punctured it with a rusty nail.

He lay his hands on the can, prayed to consecrate it.

His wife opened the shed door.

"Telephone," she said.

He finished the prayer and carried the can of motor oil in, set it upon the table.

"Hello?" he said.

"Karl?" the voice said. "Bishop here."

"Bishop," he said. "Hello."

"Wife says you've taken it into your head to bless a dog," said the bishop.

"Could be," Karl said.

"Don't make light of the holy, Karl," said the bishop.

"I haen't," Karl said. "I am a believer."

"Exercise of your priesthood wrongly does more harm than good," said the bishop.

"Nothing's wrong with it," Karl said. "It's my priesthood."

"It is God's priesthood," said the bishop.

"It's my dog," said Karl.

"Now, Karl, that haen't true. It is God's dog. He just loaned it out for a while."

Karl didn't say anything.

"First thing, blessing dogs," said the bishop. "Next comes polygamy and blood sacrifice."

Karl hung up the phone. He went outside. His wife was on the porch.

"Where you going?" she said.

"To bless the damn dog."

"Haen't the bishop told you not to?" she said.

"Haen't his business," Karl said. "Haen't yours neither."

"Don't you support your spiritual leader?" she said.

"I support him," he said.

"You don't obey him," she said.

He shrugged. "I go to church," he said. "I'm a believer."

She shook her head, went inside. He saw her through the window, picking up the telephone.

He went into the barn. The dog had crawled in under the heaped straw and was buried but for her muzzle. He set the can of motor oil down beside her. He reached slowly out, clamped his hands around the muzzle. The dog shook her head and neck like a trapped snake. He dragged her out hairy with straw.

Speaking the consecration, he poured the motor oil over her crown, watching it glob thick on her fur, roll down. She started to whimper. He moved to straddle her body. Sitting upon her back, he pressed her down.

Very slowly, he let her muzzle go. He brought away his hands, brought them down upon her head. He started to bless her.

The dog was shaking its head, whimpering, wriggling out from un-

der him. He stated the dog's name, stated his priesthood, said to God he did what he did in the name of the Savior. The dog yelped, clawed the inside of his knee.

"Hell, hold still," he said, pushing her head to the ground with his palms.

She shook her head, roiled up dust. She wriggled out from under him until his hands were down between his legs, trying to hold onto her ears.

She turned her neck hard, bit his palm. He cursed, let her go.

She fled to the other side of the barn, stood there with her haunches shivering. He saw his palm begin to bleed. He wiped the palm against his pants, moved toward the dog.

The dog was skittish, keeping the distance it could between them. He lunged at it, caught its tail, was bit a second time, a third. He let go.

He cornered the dog, grabbed it by the back of the neck. He pulled the dog all the way off the ground, held it away from his body as it twisted and snapped. He lugged it out of the barn, across the dirt yard, to the porch.

His wife turned her eyes toward him. She had been crying, he knew.

"Hold her while I bless her," he said.

"I haen't gone to hold her," she said.

"Hell you wont," he said. "I'm the head of the house. What I say goes."

She stood, went into the house. He followed her in.

"Get that stinking dog out of here," she said.

"Hold her," he said.

She ran up the stairs, slipped into the bathroom, latched the door. He pounded on the bathroom door, called to her through it. The dog too was calling for something.

He looked, saw his palms slick with his blood. The dog twisted, bit him again.

He dropped the dog, saw her skitter across the floor, down the stairs.

He wiped his hands clean on the body of the door. He went into the bedroom. Opening the cabinet, he took out his shotgun. He broke open the barrels, loaded them. He closed the breech.

He went outside, the blood on his hands sticking to the stock of the gun. He squinted into the sunlight. He whistled.

He ducked his head, entered the barn. Cocking back the triggers, he called the dog by name.

They Eat Dogs in China

Timothy Liu

Or so my father said—
the clock on the mantle silenced,
that family Bible
in his hands a weight in the pans
of judgment. That evening
splintered, as if a cross were being nailed
to my body—the warped
light of the lamp casting halos
on the floor, the ivy
growing waxier. Thé weaker I
became, the more I loved
the antique Chinese urn that fell
from the shelf, his fingers
bleeding onto my Book of Mormon—
torn pages like damask
paper roses crumpled to the floor.
Nothing the Elders taught
prepared me for this, my father's throat
swelling with ghosts—a pack
of feral dogs outside the door.

The Seduction of H. Lyman Winger

Michael Fillerup

THERE WERE TIMES, ESPECIALLY LATELY, when he wondered if he were doing any real good—any human good—other than keeping the Mt. Taylor 2nd Ward safely afloat and on course.

Maybe it was the weather. Monsoon season in the mountains—that late-summer jungle smell and heat. Something. Take this morning for instance. He had arrived forty minutes early for a bishopric meeting he himself had earlier cancelled. Now he had two hours to kill before putting on his bishop's face for sacrament meeting. The All-American greeter.

Time to kill? Lyman ran his fingers through his slicked back hair, more gray than brown now, more silver than gray, and sighed wearily. Nine years and still no hint of release. President Jensen had made that clear at his last stake interview: "Bishop Winger, you're an inspiration to all of us!"

Inspiration? Lyman glanced at the glossy calendar photograph of President Spencer W. Kimball staring down at him with a reprimanding half-frown, half-smile. "The September pinup," Lyman used to quip to his counselors, in an earlier time, when levity was his refuge and relief.

Two hours. He tried scanning the ward list for inactives—*less* actives: political correctness had even infiltrated the House of Israel—to target for President Jensen's new COME UNTO CHRIST campaign. Adams . . . Agle . . . Aiken . . . In years past he would have prayerfully searched the list until a name jumped out at him and then followed up with an immediate and impromptu housecall. After the initial surprise (shock sometimes, offense less often), more often than not the ailing member would break down and emit a tearful confession, not of sins committed but of loneliness, depression, despair. "I was sitting here, waiting, praying for something . . . How did you know, Bishop?"

The Spirit. The Holy Ghost. A lucky hunch. Fate.

Afterwards Lyman had always felt a near mystical lightening of his burdens, like at the end of a long, arduous hike when you finally drop your backpack and feel buoyant, airborne.

But those moments were rare now. He blamed himself more than anyone or anything. Bishopric burnout. He had grown weary in the work. The stapled sheets of paper felt like lead in his hands.

He considered writing Jenny a letter, but just the thought of putting pen to paper, or print to screen, exhausted him. Instead, he opened the Book of Mormon on his burnished oak desk and searched for random inspiration: "And by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls . . ." But the words were empty, dead. He felt nothing.

He rose slowly from the padded swivel chair, cranked open the window of smoked glass, and greedily inhaled the scent of imminent rain: fresh, clean, evergreen. A shaft of sunlight broke through the gray cloud mass like a conduit from heaven. Like a spotlight. A vision. He thrust his hands outside, palms up, gathering gold dust.

Across the asphalt fire lane, on the ground floor of the new apartment complex with the fashionable but impractical Spanish-tile roof, he noticed a young woman stretching out in front of the sliding glass door. Tall and trim, she was wearing a skin-tight Spandex suit, aquablue, that showed off in frank detail her athletic contours. Legs locked, she bent forward slowly, her buttocks swelling like a pair of perfect blue melons. As her blond ponytail dropped to the floor, her face appeared upside down in the triangular frame of her legs, like a cabaret dancer, and she smiled at him—and winked?

Lyman ducked away from the window. Had she really seen him? Traded eyes? If so, what on earth could she be thinking? Caught with his eye in the keyhole? The bishop no less! His sagging jowls flushed with embarrassment and shame.

There was a loud knock, followed by two soft ones. "Bishop Winger?" A male voice. A young baritone. "Bishop, I'm sorry to bother you. I know I don't have an appointment, but . . ."

His name was Curtis Walker. Lyman would remember at that first interview a slender, narrow-shouldered young man with the dark, high-blown hair and pointed beard of a Shakespearean actor. A handsome face gone hollow. Sitting in the stiff-backed office chair, head bowed, lean legs extended, he looked thoroughly defeated. A tiny gold ring was pinned in his left ear. (Stylish: a sign of the times. Several high school boys in town wore earrings and even noserings now, although Lyman had warned his young priests that no one with face jewelry would administer the sacrament—not in his ward!) His baggy shirt drooped to mid-thigh, like a tunic. Midnight black, with shooting stars and crescent moons, it looked

more befitting Merlin the Magician. The plunging neckline revealed an abundance of chest hair and a glossy purple scar that curved around the base of his throat like a pukka shell necklace.

Mumbling morosely, he told a sordid tale of big dreams and great expectations run amuck in the fleshpots of L.A.—sex and drugs and money dripping through his fingers. “Like water,” he said, choking on his words. His lean, pianist’s fingers, the nails chewed to the cuticles, trembled as he spoke. He balled them into fists and began pounding, or rather tapping, softly but persistently, his thighs, as if he were too drained of life and energy to club himself any harder. He wept, begging for forgiveness. “I’m sorry, Bishop. I’m so sorry.”

They talked about repentance, a plan to get back on track. Fasting, prayer, scripture study. No, he wasn’t ready to partake of the sacrament yet—that would take some time. They scheduled another interview, two nights later. Lyman knew he had to stay on top of this one. Sister Killearn with her chronic corns and recalcitrant teenagers could wait. (“But they don’t *like* the scriptures, Bishop! They say they don’t like them at all! What am I doing wrong?”)

Curtis struggled awkwardly to his feet, like a cripple trying to walk, wincing as if he were in great pain. Lyman hustled around his desk of neatly stacked papers and embraced the young transgressor, noting the bony protrusions of his shoulder blades and the smell of garlic on his breath.

Tonight she was sitting in her beanbag chair in front of the TV intermittently licking an ice cream cone while folding laundry. Her knees were drawn up to her chest, her nightgown taut over her knees, like a little girl at a slumber party. She looked so perfect and unblemished from afar, like a senior portrait in which any pimples or moles are cunningly airbrushed away. She reminded him of Jenny—tall, limber, blond. The potted plants, the beanbag chair, the cinder block bookshelves. Student furniture, student stuff.

But when she held up a pair of frilly pink panties and gave them a crisp shake, Lyman looked back into his office and glanced guiltily at President Kimball’s photograph.

He who looketh upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery in his heart . . .

I’m looking, not lusting. Admiring. Paternally.

Paternally?

A knock. One hard, two soft.

Curtis.

They had been meeting three times a week. Progress checks. He was still praying vigorously, fasting weekly, poring through the scriptures. He

was eating better as well. His cheeks looked fleshier, tinged with a healthy blush. He still wore the pointed beard, the gold earring, the magician's smock, but—give him time. Rome wasn't built in a day. Besides, Lyman liked Curtis. The young man intrigued him. Each interview he uncovered more pieces to the puzzle. He had served a mission in Ecuador, assistant to the mission president. He was an Eagle Scout. Born and raised in Kanab, Utah, where his father served on the high council and his mother taught Gospel Essentials. Why had he come to Mt. Taylor? A fresh start, new faces. No job yet, but he was still looking. Ambitions?

Curtis stroked his dagger beard thoughtfully, like a chess champion contemplating his next move. "I think I'd like to teach."

Lyman raised his brow approvingly, although somewhat surprised. "Teach what?"

"Children," he replied. Sarcastically? It was hard to tell. He was like that, or becoming more like that. Less gushing, more cryptic. Every so often something would slip out. His smile was like a piece of white thread you twist and twist until it suddenly spasms.

Lyman gave him the benefit of the doubt. "I meant what subject?"

He answered deadpan: "Tolerance."

Lyman tossed his gray suit coat on the dresser, set a steaming mug of cocoa on the night table, and plunked down on the king bed with an everlasting sigh. He loosened the stranglehold of his necktie, then his belt, reminding himself to be more faithful to the gods of Nutrisystem. Outside the wind howled as the ponderosa pines swayed like brooding dancers. Mourning women. The house seemed so quiet by contrast, so empty. Jenny gone, Nikki at her stake meeting. It must have gone overtime again. That, or she and Kathy Simpson were solving some imminent world crisis. He felt an overwhelming loneliness challenged only by fatigue.

He switched on his answering machine and waited for the inevitable. The reviews were mixed.

"I think he showed a lot of courage, Bishop. I just hope we can help."

"How could you let that young man desecrate the House of the Lord like that! Good heavens!"

"As Bishop, it's your responsibility to control the spiritual climate of sacrament meeting. Today you failed us . . ."

"Ex that jerk before someone *really* gets hurt!"

Lyman leaned back against the headboard, closed his eyes, and groaned: "Oh Father, what am I going to do? What would *you* do?"

Sipping the hot cocoa as if it were a slow-acting anesthetic, he recalled in agonizing detail that morning's fast and testimony meeting: Curtis marching boldly towards the stand at five minutes past noon, sec-

onds after Lyman had risen to the podium to close the meeting; the awkward moment's hesitation as Lyman glanced conspicuously at the clock, deferring to Curtis with a cordial smile that cautioned, silently: Okay, but keep it short, please . . .

He had started out fine, proclaiming in a humble voice barely above a whisper that the Book of Mormon was true, God lives, Joseph Smith was a prophet. In the front pew Sister Marks had nodded her blue-haired head approvingly, along with Brother Marks and the rest of the Old Guard.

"Bishop Winger is a true servant of God," Curtis had stated. "He's a great man. A champion of the underdog."

There had been a noticeable pause during which Lyman, presiding on the stand, had scrutinized more carefully Curtis's backside. Instead of Merlin's gown, he was wearing a white Musketeer shirt with balloon sleeves and black toreador pants that hugged his tight, round buttocks like leotards. Lyman had reminded himself not to judge a book by its cover. It's what's inside that counts. The heart, not the clothes, make the man.

But as these thoughts had flashed through Lyman's mind, Curtis cleared his throat and raised his eyes to the ceiling, like a martyr burning at the stake. Like Joan of Arc or Abinadi. "I know God loves us," he had said. "I know God loves all his children, no exceptions. The Samaritans of Christ's time were considered the lowest of the low, the scum of the Earth. Yet Christ not only loved them, he sought them out. He spoke of the Good Samaritan. Likewise the lepers."

Curtis had looked down, up, heavenward. "Brothers and Sisters, the AIDS virus is our leprosy, and AIDS victims are the lepers of our time."

Sister Marks had looked angrily ill, as if Curtis had just scratched her BMW with pruning shears. Burly Steve Burgess, on deck to offer the benediction, had blocked a cough with his fist.

Curtis had swallowed hard, his Adam's apple moving up and down like a golf ball trapped in his throat. "God loves these modern-day lepers and Samaritans. Yes, they're a little different. But they need your love and fellowship too. Brothers and Sisters, I need your love and fellowship, and I say this as a gay Mormon man, a modern-day Samaritan."

For the next half-minute the silence was so intense Lyman had thought he could hear snowflakes tapping on the rooftop. His congregation was stunned. Under any other circumstances, it might have seemed comical, cartoonish, with eyeballs springing from their sockets and jaws dropping to the floor.

One of the Lewis twins, bug-eyed among the other deacons, had broken the silence: "He's a faggot?"

The Old Guard had eyed Lyman like a conspiring Sandhedrin. *Do*

something! *Say something!* Don't just sit there! You're the bishop!

Lyman had motioned to Steve Burgess to proceed to the microphone, but the muscle-bound mechanic was paralyzed in the soft theater chair. Lyman had risen, thanking all those who had shared their testimonies, and had closed the meeting himself, without a hymn.

Lyman heard a jolt, followed by the metallic reverberation of the automatic garage door opening. Nikki! He cracked open his scriptures and waited eagerly as her busy little body sashayed through the door, like a Wagnerian soprano in miniature. "I'm home!" she announced grandly.

Lyman looked up nonchalantly and smiled. "How'd it go?"

"Great!"

"That's nice," he said, returning to 2 Nephi. All these years and he still couldn't let her inside. "Any news?"

"Not really."

A bad sign. Usually she came home brimming with gossip. Silence meant she was protecting him.

"So what did you think about our little fast and testimony meeting?"

She smiled sympathetically. "Well, I'll tell you what Cindy Burgess said she'd do if one of her boys got up in sacrament meeting and said he was gay. She said she'd throw him out on his ear!"

Lyman looked outside where two pine trees leaned into one another like disconsolate lovers.

"And what would you do, if one of our kids . . ."

Nikki started to laugh but her smile twisted into a frown that he couldn't quite decipher. Turning her back to him, she reached behind her neck and began unzipping her floral Sunday dress. "You know, whenever I see a good-looking guy like Curtis who—well, who's the way he is—I can't help thinking, 'If he just met the right woman . . .' Now isn't that stupid?"

It was cold out. A galaxy of frozen stars sparkled on the smoked glass window, but he cracked it anyway, surprised to find a stranger sitting at her dinette table, a woman about her age, shorter, bustier, but athletic like her hostess. She was darker too, an Indian maybe, with a thick black braid trailing down her spine. She was wearing purple pajama-like sweats, and they were laughing over cups of something—coffee, tea? Lyman cranked the window shut, uncertain why the unexpected presence of this outsider so greatly saddened him.

"I hope that doesn't change things. Bishop?"

Lyman tried to control whatever it was he could feel happening to his face. "No," he replied, the word pushing past his lips like a breech birth. "Why should that change anything?" But mentally he tried to retract his

embrace their first meeting in his office. Of course it mattered! Of course it changed things! It changed everything! He wanted to read Curtis the riot act: homosexuality was a sin. A sexual sin. Second only to murder. Like fornication. Like adultery. Worse. Much. It was unnatural. Terrible.

But pardonable? Lyman looked at the uncompromising eyes of Harold B. Lee, the November pinup.

He who is without sin, let him cast the first . . .

He who looketh upon a woman to lust after her . . .

And he who panteth after a man . . . ?

He heard it everywhere—in the foyer, in the church parking lot, in Gospel Doctrine class.

"We're all born with the light of Christ. From birth we know right from wrong, and that kind of thing's just flat out wrong! Evil! Why do you think there's AIDS? It's the Lord's punishment against those people."

"They say that if the mother isn't modest and the son sees her naked when he's young, he'll become sexually aroused but he'll feel guilty because it's his mother. They say that's what causes homosexuals."

"We're all created in God's image. God wouldn't put a girl inside a boy or a boy inside a girl!"

Born or conditioned? Nature or nurture? The sins of the mothers! The fathers! Lyman longed for an earlier, simpler era when black and white were rigidly defined. Nowadays the lines were perpetually obscured. Hybridizing tares and wheats. Cross-breeding sheep with goats.

The whole world was going to Hell in a handbag! In the big cities down south high schools were installing metal detectors to keep guns out of the classroom. Grade school kids were peddling crack cocaine on the playground. He had witnessed the horror stories on the nightly news. Long hair? Earrings? Do you indulge in Coca Cola or other caffeine drinks? Get real, folks! Sometimes even he blushed during his youth interviews.

Mt. Taylor was different. The lead story on the local news wasn't some gruesome murder or driveby shooting but the winterfest or the annual book fair at Windhover School, which was precisely why he and Nikki had fled their southern California homeland twenty years ago, an ironic reversal of Curtis's bad fortunes. To Lyman, Mt. Taylor often seemed a storybook land the darker, meaner other-world was trying to infiltrate via newsprint and TV. Some said it was inevitable, but it didn't have to be. Not here. Let the rest of the world go to pot, but not their little village in the pines. They could put their foot down—feet!—feet down! Like two years ago when a radical group tried to sneak New Age hokum into the elementary school curriculum. President Jensen had mobilized

all three wards as well as several other Christian sects in town to counter the movement. Lyman had done his part; Nikki too. Testifying at school board meetings, circulating petitions, writing letters to the editor. "Brethren," President Jensen had admonished, "we must arm the Saints, especially our youth, to do spiritual battle with the adversary."

But it had always been like that. Growing up in the only Mormon family in his neighborhood, Lyman had sensed it at an early age, in every arcane ritual in and out of their home, whether Family Home Evening on Monday night or Mutual on Tuesday or Saturdays picking pears at the stake welfare farm. And every Sunday morning when Mr. Levy trudged across his driveway in his bathrobe to retrieve the morning paper, stopping, squinting, rubbing his booze-blasted eyes as if trying to erase this bizarre suburban mirage, a primly dressed tribe of nine squeezing into an old Plymouth station wagon. Like a ludicrous college prank. Like a scene from *Candid Camera*. Different. Crazy. Peculiar.

It was an attitude. Us versus Them. Mormons had the whole truth, the others didn't. God gave Mormons commandments, standards, the fullness, the higher law, and it was their duty to preserve them. If they failed, nations would dwindle in unbelief, the Constitution would hang by a thread, the moon would turn to blood, Alpha would devour Omega. Occasionally this was stated dogmatically from the pulpit by a local priesthood zealot, but for the most part it was unpronounced. Assumed knowledge. They were sacred keepers of the gate. Preservers of the word. Stewards of the kingdom. God's chosen.

Dear Bishop Winger,

We appreciate any help you can give our son.
God bless you.

Martin and Susan Walker

Scanning the congregation from the podium, Lyman at first was relieved by the absence of Curtis Walker. Earlier he had cautioned him over the phone: "If you bear your testimony today, I hope you don't say anything that will force me to ask you to sit down. I think that would be embarrassing for both of us."

Silence. Lyman had counted the seconds: one two three four. "Are you telling me you're going to censor my testimony?"

"No, I'm just saying . . ."

"Yes?"

"I'm just saying what I said: don't embarrass yourself."

"Or you?"

"Me, you, the ward . . . the Lord."

But when the opening hymn commenced ("As I have loved you, love

one another; this new commandment . . .") and still no sign of Curtis, Lyman was skewered by his own hypocrisy. How many times had he told his congregation church was a school for sinners, not a country club for saints? Maybe Curtis was right. Maybe they really were the modern day lepers. Christ said love the sinner, not the sin. He went amidst the liars, thieves, harlots; he shared the spotlight on Calvary with a murderer and a thief. "This day you will join me in Paradise."

Later, when the Hixon boy offered him the sacrament tray, Lyman pinched a tiny crust of the broken white bread and wiped it on his tongue, but it turned to mud in his mouth.

As snowflakes splattered on his windshield, Lyman thought of Jenny's last letter home. "BREED 'EM YOUNG UNIVERSITY," she had scrawled for the return address. Then: "The Winter Demons have come early, dumping more white graveyards."

Jenny and her melodramatics! She was lonely, depressed, but too proud to admit it. Her roommates had been keeping her up until 3:00 a.m. every morning talking about boy problems, engagement problems, how many missionaries they had on their string. "Stupid nonsense," she had scribbled furiously. So now she hid out in the downstairs lounge playing Rachmaninoff while watching the snow. Each white flake was an angel coming down, a free-falling suicide. "I guess they just couldn't stand it up there anymore. Or maybe they were kicked out for free-thinking, do you think? Nope. Sorry. I repent. That word. Not allowed here. They're just snowflakes. Or maybe the bad guys won after all and God's being cremated? Or how about the ashen remains of the Spirit prisoners? Residue from the fires of Hell? Maybe they're torching all the free-thinkers."

Jenny. She had always been a loner. Even the year she ran on the track team, between races, while the other girls were flirting with the boys or giggling in their little groups, she would be off by herself reading Kafka and Ibsen.

She had never showed much interest in boys, a relief to Lyman and Nikki during her high school years. "A late bloomer," Nikki had said. "When she leaves for college that'll change."

So far it hadn't. "Give her time. She's shy, that's all. It'll just take the right kind of guy to bring her out of her shell. Look at you!" Nikki still viewed herself as Lyman's social savior.

He worried, though. What if . . . Suppose . . . ? He didn't say this to Nikki but wondered if she shared his fear. What if what? What if she was? What if she wasn't? So what if she was or wasn't? That shouldn't matter. Shouldn't was the key. What? One of ours? Of course not! It's always the weirdo down the street.

Weirdo?

He kept thinking of incidents where he had failed her. Their other children, Derek and Stefanie, had marched uprightly to the church-sanctioned drummer. Missions, temple marriages, children, elders quorum president, Primary president.

Jenny was a different number—had been from day one. The other young women had snubbed her for being vocal and rocking the ark. He recalled Sister Sampson's lesson on "Individual Worth." Mid-way Jenny's hand had shot up: "How does that make us all special, if *everyone* is a child of God? By definition, everyone can't be unique." Moans, groans, eye-rolling and head-shaking. There she goes again! The bishop's kid!

They had damned her for thinking and so, to a degree, had he.

Braking at the intersection, Lyman switched off his wipers and watched the snowflakes crash softly on his windshield. The rapid accumulation of flakes created an impressionistic picture in white lace. It was an underground hostel, an ice cave, where Curtis and the other misfits of the world huddled in secluded corners, quietly holding hands, while Jenny pounded the keys of a baby grand piano.

"I noticed on the Ward Talent Survey you marked acting and directing. And you said you attended acting school in L.A."

Lyman gripped the plastic receiver and closed his eyes, reconsidering. He took a long, deep breath. "Curtis, I'd like you to direct the ward road show."

Lyman waited through the anticipated silence.

"You'd be working with the youth mostly. The actual production isn't until April, but I need a commitment now so the kids—"

"Have you prayed about this, Bishop?"

"Of course," Lyman said, but this was another half-lie.

"Do you think they really want me—I mean, after . . . you know?"

"I don't care if they want you. *I* want you—the *Lord* wants you."

"Thank you, Bishop. I won't let you down. I promise."

No scriptural references forbidding homosexual acts? And just where did he get *that* little piece of folklore?

Lyman ran his finger down the *Topical Guide to the Scriptures*, shaking his head: LEV 18:22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind . . . it is an abomination; DEUT 23:17 there shall be no sodomite of the sons of Israel; ISAIAH 3:9 (2 NEP 13:9) declare their sin as sodom; ROM 1:27 men burned in their lust one towards another; 1 COR 6:9 nor abusers of themselves with mankind; 1 TIM 1:10 them that defile themselves with mankind; JUDE 1:7 as Sodom and Gomorrah going after strange flesh; GEN 13:13, 18, 20

men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly . . .

His conversations had been getting more bizarre, leaning more and more dangerously over the edge. Women were the niggers of the church. Why couldn't they hold the priesthood? Joseph Smith ordained Emma and Eliza R. Snow—that was a fact. He also carried talismans and crystals. He blessed a handkerchief and gave it to Wilford Woodruff—"Put this on the heads of the afflicted and they'll be healed!" Back then miracles and visions were encouraged, not snuffed out. Not like now. If it's not in the *General Handbook*, it's evil, wicked, Satan speaking.

"I mean, you realize Joseph Smith was a manic depressive?"

"A *what?*"

"It's typical of men of religious genius."

"Religious gen—"

He was a kook, a nut, an encyclopedia of heresies. He was gay for pity's sake! Yet Lyman listened to him, mesmerized. Arriving for a nine o'clock appointment, he wouldn't close up his office until after midnight. He had learned to schedule Curtis early and block out the entire evening. One moment Curtis would speak with a stubborn defiance bordering on arrogance, his hands fluttering like spastic birds: "You and your inspired programs! Look what they've done for me! I really tried to put my shoulder to the wheel. Can I help how I was born? Am I a victim of my Maker? God's little accident? If so, there are lots of little accidents running around. Lots. Lesbians, mostly. And returned missionaries—like me. You may think I'm your first but don't kid yourself. You've got others. Plenty. I know for a fact."

A moment later he would be slouching in the office chair, his El Greco face drooping, the penitent prodigal: "Thanks for listening, Bishop. You're a true friend. I know you're in a difficult position. You want to do the right thing, but you also feel an obligation to uphold church tradition. It's a head-heart, justice-mercy tug-of-war, but you'll win. You're a great bishop—one of the few I've known who cares more about people than making money."

Lyman was touched, moved—flattered? He stiffened, cautioning himself. Flattery. The devil's hammer and sickle. But the instant the seed of doubt was planted, Curtis countered as if he had read Lyman's mind: "And I'm not just saying that to butter you up. I don't play that game, although you probably think I do."

During their interviews Lyman often sensed a powerful spirit burning inside his little office. He too had questioned the superstructure of the church and its obsession with prolific mandates and large and spacious buildings. Lately there seemed to be more and more church and less and less religion. He found himself, on certain issues, agreeing with Curtis.

"You're right. We don't teach, we indoctrinate. We smother these kids

with programs. My daughter Jenny . . . ”

But following such conversations, driving home, Lyman always felt guilty of betrayal, like chicken Peter denying the Christ.

Still, Lyman wanted to ask him questions. When did he first realize . . . Was it a sudden revelation or a gradual unfolding? Is it like you kiss a girl and nothing happens, you kiss a boy and it does? He didn't ask. He was afraid to, although he freely admitted that he couldn't think about the act—a man and a man. It was too repulsive.

Oh? And what was so un-repulsive, so superior, about a woman and a man? Coupled. Locked. Or two women?

A man and a woman—that's how God decreed it. It was natural.

Natural? What if you have a natural attraction to the same sex? Isn't *that* natural—for you? Who's to say what's natural?

Look at the animal world. A male deer mates with a female. That's natural. A buck trying to mate with another buck would be unnatural. An aberration. An anomaly.

Then why did God create me this way? Unnaturally?

Why did he create alcoholics? Lepers? Cripples? Schizoids? We all have our crosses to bear.

A cross? To bear?

They went around and around. Lyman was trying to be open-minded, understanding—he really was. He was trying to understand *him*.

“Doesn't God love all his children?”

“Of course he does. He loves us but not everything we do. Just as I love my children but not everything they do.”

“Jesus Christ is a woman. A man, yes, but a woman too. All of God's children are conceived female. One little chromosome changes us. It makes you male, female, Downs Syndrome. We're all women in embryo. It's only a matter of time, Bishop. Only a matter of time.”

Early Sunday morning he cracked the smoked glass window and found the ponytailed blonde sitting at the dinette table in pajama-sweats eating a bowl of cereal or something. Her swarthy friend, also in baggy sweats, swept into view and set a carton of milk on the table. She slid her bottom onto the blonde's lap, laced her arm around her neck, and gave her a long, tender kiss on the lips. They executed the maneuver as smoothly as two skilled lovers, or a seasoned married couple who move together as one.

Lyman looked away—sickened, he assured himself. It was gross, disgusting. Yet he edged back towards the window and watched until the blonde helped the brunette up off the floor and led her gently, by the hand, out of view.

Lyman stared at the legal pad covered with mindless scribble: ovals, X's, spirals, and, conspicuously, in the lower left corner, a big circle with a carefully darkened dot slightly off-center—like a target, he thought. Or a woman's breast. No, a target, he corrected. Get your mind out of the gutter. You're the bishop.

He gazed around his office for reminders: the framed calligraphy on the far wall, compliments of Sister Newton: "Wherefore, be faithful, stand in the office which I have appointed unto you; succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees. D&C 81:5."

It was Monday, Family Night, when good bishops, good Latter-day Saints, ought to be home communing with their wives and children. But he felt so alone in this, utterly alone. He knew it was largely his fault. The past few months he had gradually distanced himself from his two counselors, cancelling bishopric meetings or speeding through the agenda. He had no confidants—not Nikki, not President Jensen . . . He couldn't fathom taking his petition to the stake president, the iron rodder who snacked on bitter herbs.

Worse still, his prayers had left him confounded. Grand visions fired by passionate conviction and resolve one moment clouded into mists of darkness the next. What was happening to his mind, his soul, the world? Wasn't anything just plain yes or no, true or false anymore?

Hunting was true. Absolute. You went out, you shot a deer. You killed it, skinned and ate it. That simple.

And if you didn't eat it? Killed it for sport only?

He no longer trusted his judgement or his bishop's gift of discernment. Would the spirit abide in a tainted vessel? Physician, heal thyself!

He stared at the window and saw nothing but fog and ice frothing on the smoked glass, his eyes, his life. Diverting his eyes, he tried to think of sunnier times, family days and nights. Returning home from business trips, his children swarming him like locusts, searching his pockets for candy and souvenirs, finding nothing, frowning like sad clowns: "Dad?" And just when it appeared as if tragedy had struck—ta da! A handful of Mars Bars would magically materialize in his hand, and his three precious little ones would jump up and down, clapping, shouting, "Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!"

Rising slowly from his swivel chair, he exited his office, and wandered down the empty hallway into the foyer where he encountered the glass trophy case for the Mt. Taylor 2nd Ward. The lack of championship trophies and overabundance of sportsmanship and participation certificates seemed a sad metaphor for his ministry.

Pressing closer, Lyman studied his reflection on the glass, but the face staring back seemed foreign to him. The jowls were soft and pouchy, the

eyes tired and diluted, with little saddlebags drooping underneath. The delta of wrinkles fanning out from the corners of his eyes had deepened and widened, curving mournfully downward, like rows of sad, crooked mouths. The age spots on his cheeks had burgeoned and darkened, like splashes of mud. His hairline had retreated another quarter of an inch. The peninsula of salt and peppered hair that occupied the top of his skull was fast becoming an island surrounded by a moat of glossy pink flesh.

He placed his fingers on his lower left cheekbone and pulled slowly downward. The flesh grew flat and taut but the lines remained, like pencil marks. Like the irrefutable rings in the cross section of a tree trunk. By nature he was not vain, had never given his physical appearance much time, thought, or concern. But all of these, in concert, reminded him of one irrefutable fact: he was growing old.

He returned to his office and looked at the smoked glass. He wanted in the very worst way to break his private pledge. If he could crack it just a hair—one little peek into paradise might melt his winter malaise. He glared at the December photograph of President Joseph F. Smith, a sage-like face with wire-rim glasses and a long, stringy confucian beard.

It's not what you think. It's not *why* you think.

He listened for Curtis's saving knock. The rescue.

Silence.

"I know this is hard for a lot of you. It's been hard for me. But I think—I mean I really believe this is what we have to do. We each have to ask ourselves: if this were my child, how would I want him to be treated by his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?"

Steve Burgess, the elders quorum president, stared at his black binder while Nate Simpson, Lyman's first counselor, stroked his crabapple chin. The other members of the Ward Correlation Council, squeezed shoulder to shoulder in Lyman's office which suddenly seemed no bigger than a rabbit hutch, dropped their eyes on the pale blue carpeting.

Sister Frazier, the Relief Society president, was the first to look up. "I agree with you, Bishop."

Lyman removed the lid from the little green candy jar on his desk and offered it to Brother Zartman, the executive secretary with the pink-patched face. He dipped his scab-crustured paw into the jar and removed a handful of Reese's Pieces. Lyman motioned for him to pass the jar around.

All month Lyman had been mentally rehearsing for the debate.

"Do you believe Jesus Christ atoned for the sins of the world?"

"Do you believe God loves all his spirit children?"

"Do you consider yourself a follower of Christ?"

And all month he had listened to the voices of his pioneer forebears

howling through the night. Every time he had looked at the grim ancestral photographs on his bedroom wall, his great-great-grandfather's graybeard would catch fire as he raised what remained of the arm he had forfeited to frostbite at Winter Quarters, shaking his stump angrily: I didn't sacrifice *this* for *that*!

Of course, Curtis hadn't made things any easier. The ward members weren't ostracizing him half as much as he was ostracizing himself. Why couldn't he just come to church and participate like everyone else? No, he had to dress like Merlin the damn magician and preach his oddball doctrine—the philosophies of Curtis! He had to make a spectacle of himself. Everything was a statement, a crusade.

"Does this mean the rumor's true? Brother Walker'll be directing the road show?"

Lyman eyed Ken Sawyer, the sunbleached Young Men's president, keenly. "Is that a problem?"

"Well, no—it shouldn't be I guess. I mean—well, it shouldn't. But maybe for some of the youth . . ."

"You let me handle the youth."

"I think we need to do anything we can for him," Sister Frazier said.

Nate Simpson removed his bifocals and wiped them with a Kleenex. "Well, yeah, I suppose we ought to help—like if a bank robber were shot down trying to escape, you wouldn't just stand there and watch him bleed to death."

Bank robber? Lyman tugged at his collar. A drop of sweat escaped from his armpit and crawled down his rib cage. He smiled at Sister Frazier. "Is it hot in here, or is that just me?"

Brother Burgess passed him the candy jar: "Bishop?"

Nikki curled up behind him, running her foot up and down his hairy calf, pressing her milk cow breasts against his back, cooing in his ear. Nothing happened. He tried to give himself a little help, but it was hopeless. He closed his eyes and shook his head. No. Stop. It wasn't working. She was big, bawdy, gross—they were. Bossy tubs of fat that sloshed, sagged, wobbled.

He closed his eyes and tried to summon up passionate nights from his past but instead saw Curtis perched on their oak headboard like a grinning Cupid miming their would-be moans and groans and oohs and ohhs as they stroked and thrust and humped and grunted, whispering in his ear throughout: Normal? Godly? Superior? The only true and ordained way? Righteous? Once the erotic heat takes over, we're all fools, Bishop! The greatest of human comedies.

"Brother Walker, have you engaged in any homosexual activity?" Ly-

man tilted back in his swivel chair, distancing himself.

"Ninety percent of all males have engaged in some form of homosexual activity—if they're being honest."

"I'm not asking about 90 percent. I'm asking about you. As your bishop." He inserted a qualifier. "Since your confession."

Curtis bowed his head and stared at his cupped hands with the same forlorn look of abandonment Jenny had worn that hot, muggy day in Provo when Lyman had waved goodbye to her at the Heritage Halls dormitory.

"Curtis, I don't want to lose you," he said, quickly correcting himself. "We don't."

This time he had an appointment: Wednesday, 7:00 p.m. Every other time he had tried to catch Curtis at his eastside apartment the blinds had been drawn and the lights out. Once he had heard soft rock playing inside. He had pressed the doorbell, knocked loudly, called his name.

No answer.

Tonight the windows were darkened, but the porch light was on and an envelope was taped to the door with neat block letters in red ink:

Dear Bishop Winger,

I'm going back to Tinsel Town! For good this time. I met with Pres. Jensen Thurs. night. There's no hope—none. (Not in this life.) Thanks for your friendship. You are one of the very few.

Love, Curtis

P.S. See you in Paradise.

The quarterly youth fireside was at Sister Johnson's house, "Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Church Standards but Were Afraid to Ask." After the opening song and prayer Lyman, the guest speaker, randomly drew three-by-five cards from a Tupperware bowl and read the anonymously scribbled questions: "Why can't we date until we're sixteen?" "Is it true only Mormons can go to the Celestial Kingdom?" Although painfully predictable, he responded to each with an appropriate blend of gravity and humor.

However, the last card he drew didn't contain the question he posed: "Here's an interesting one. 'What is the church's stand on homosexuals?'"

The mohawk heads of the Lewis twins catapulted to attention. "You mean queers?" Larry grunted. Terry pinched his nose: "Fairies?"

Titters, giggles, a fake fart in back. This was going to be even harder than he had anticipated. "No," Lyman corrected calmly. "Homosexuals." He waited for the next wave of giggles to pass, then tried to explain the difference between having a same-sex preference and committing homo-

sexual acts. The former, maybe you can't help; maybe you were born that way or maybe it was conditioned, or maybe it's a combination. Anyway, that's irrelevant. We all have weaknesses, right? For some people it's alcohol, for others it's a bad temper. Whatever. But we can control our actions. It's not a sin unless we act—

J. D. Walters's beefy arm went up. "Didn't Christ say to think it is to do it in your heart?"

Lyman was prepared for this one. "Yes, that's true. And I suppose if we were all perfect, sinful thoughts would never even cross our minds. But for most of us—you may be the lone exception—"

Chuckles. Elbows. Nods.

"You may be the exception, J. D., but I think if we were judged by our thoughts, the rest of us would earn a one-way ticket to the Eternal Hot-house, if you know what I mean."

More chuckles. Elbows.

"So to get back to your comment, yes, we're accountable for our thoughts, but I think we're judged mainly by our actions. It's being able to control the urge, resist the temptation . . ."

Gangly David Christensen in the gray turtleneck sweater pushed his Ben Franklin glasses up on the bridge of his nose and asked, hopefully it seemed, "But can a gay person go to the temple?"

David? Lyman felt a little sick inside. His legs grew wobbly and the family portrait above Sister Johnson's fireplace clouded over. He momentarily gripped the velour sofa to steady himself. Poor David who had always been so solemn and compliant during his annual bishop's interview; who prayed morning, noon, and night, read the scriptures fervently, fanatically. Plagued, it seemed, by an obsessive conviction to be good. Solemn to the point of sadness. A loner like Jenny, except he lacked her intellectual acumen for self-defense. Lyman wanted to reach out and embrace him, to apologize—but for what? David's condition? Or his own ignorance? Or was the problem too comprehensive, too complex? God's law, or his handiwork? How do you apologize for God? Can you?

"Good question, Dave. Likewise, can they hold the priesthood?"

Heads were shaking; sour mouths set firm. David waited.

"Let's go back to the previous question. Is it a sin to prefer the same sex?"

"Depends on how good it is," wisecracked Larry Lewis.

"All right, let me re-phrase that: is it a sin to have a same-sex preference? I like guys but not girls? Instead of girls?" Unanimous nods. The McCarty girl tilted her auburn head and twisted an eye; her valley girl gape. "Hunh?"

Patience, Lyman reminded himself. Patience.

"Have I committed a sin?" he asked gently.

J. D. Walters piped up. "You bet! Burn, Bishop, burn!"

"What sin, J. D.?"

"Well . . ." His freckled face contorted, like a parody of the proverbial dumb jock. "Because you like . . . guys?"

Okay, here was the knockout punch. Do or die time. "J. D, suppose you look at a girl and think, 'Wow! I'd sure like to sleep with her!' Have you ever done that?"

J. D.'s face burned beet red. "So if you never have sex . . . ?"

Lyman smiled. They were getting it. Progress, slowly but surely. It would take another generation of wandering in the wilderness before the old traditions died out for good, but these young people—hope! Here was hope!

Lyman winked at Sister Johnson, gawking beside the potted fern in front of the plate-glass window. They'd have to hire a crane to lift her chin off the floor when this was over.

"Okay," Lyman said, "let's suppose you're a single man and you hold the priesthood. Is it okay to have sex?"

Silence. Dead dumb silence. They had turned into a forest of tree stumps. Heidi McCarty's mouth had opened wide enough to swallow a basketball. He would lose them if he didn't make his point quickly. "Of course you can't! You can only have sex if you're married, right? So what does a single person do?"

J. D., sensing Lyman's impatience, spoke hesitantly. "They don't have sex?"

"Yes! Exactly! They live a chaste life. Same deal with a homosexual."

There were vigorous nods, smiles, even a little back patting. Let's end it here, Lyman thought, on a high note. He threw in the modern day leper analogy, offered the benediction, and the young people attacked the Safeway fruit punch and Oreo cookies spiritedly.

Slipping into the bucket seat of his Pontiac Sunbird, Lyman looked up through the sun-roof at the stars and smiled. He'd done well—we had, he corrected, chatting aloud to God. I really think the light clicked on. And David—I've got to talk to David. Please help me help David . . .

Turning onto Aspen Drive, Lyman looked up at the residual moon, a silver crescent at the top of a blacked-out sphere: the mouth of tragedy. He wanted to spin the lunar wheel and reverse it, making top bottom and bottom top. Like the old Primary song: "If you chance to meet a frown, do not let it stay; Quickly turn it upside down, and smile that frown away." An answer? To whose question.

As his headlights swept across the tarnished black shell of an old Subaru wagon, a big metal beetle rotting at the end of the cul-de-sac, he felt his soaring spirit plummet from its heavenly height like a skydiver with a bum parachute. It was not the junky vehicle that brought him

down but the personage standing beside it. In a white tunic, beige slacks, and white deck shoes, he was standing with arms folded in the yellow cone of the streetlight like a celestial messenger patiently waiting to be beamed home.

Lyman pulled into his driveway but didn't press the remote to raise the roll-top door. It occurred to him that Curtis had never been inside his home—no reason in particular; they had always met at the church. But Lyman didn't want him in his home tonight, or on his property, for that matter. In light of tonight's meeting, Curtis's sudden appearance seemed an anticlimactic intrusion.

A what? No, that didn't make any sense? What was it then?

Lyman slid out of his bucket seat to intercept Curtis, who was sauntering across the pavement, his skinny, bearded, all-white image reminiscent of John Lennon on the cover of the *Abbey Road* album.

"Hello, Curtis!" Lyman tried to sound cheerful and upbeat although in truth his bowels had twisted like a garden hose with a bad kink.

"How did it go tonight?" Curtis asked. The streetlight picked the gold ring out of his ear. "The fireside?"

"Good," Lyman said. "Very good."

"That's what I heard." He flashed his know-it-all smile.

Heard? Lyman hadn't left the Johnson home five minutes ago. How could Curtis have heard? Did he have spies? Did his pierced ears stretch to China? Was he—ah, hell, of course. He was Joseph Smith, remember? Maybe he'd been God, too, in a prior life.

"It went fine," he repeated.

Curtis smiled again, but differently this time. The smart aleck smirk had given way to a tentative tremor. His wiry arm circled Lyman's bearish shoulders. "That took a lot of guts," he said. "Thanks." Curtis hugged him tightly, like a lover, like a friend.

Lyman was stunned. The stars overhead had all fallen and were swirling madly around his head like mosquitoes or runaway atoms. As he staggered towards his front door, the hidden sensors around the driveway reacted to his body heat, showering him with light and momentarily blinding him.

"That's a start!" Curtis hollered.

Lyman's hand froze on the brass doorknob. A what?

"A foot in the door," Curtis said. "One small step for a man, a giant leap for mankind."

Lyman looked back and saw Curtis nodding as if they were old allies. War vets. A light flashed on in the house across the street, like a big square eye opening. Lyman tried to smile back, but something—a hand, a claw, something fiercely tangible—gripped him by the shoulders. "No, it isn't," he muttered, fishing for his house key. Turning, hollering: "No, the

hell it isn't!"

Curtis called back coolly. "Otherwise it's not fair."

"What?" Lyman bellowed. "What's not fair? You're accepted. Full fellowship. Full brotherhood—if you play by the same rules."

"Not with my spouse."

"Your *what*?"

"My lover's coming up from L.A. I'm not going to give him up again. President Jensen's going to tell me to. Maybe even you will. But I won't. I can't. You wouldn't give up your wife, would you?"

Lyman cupped his hands over his ears. No. He wasn't hearing this, seeing this. He couldn't bear to look at Curtis, his pixie smile and pointed beard. He closed his eyes and in his mind two naked men materialized, one hairy, the other smooth, intertwined like two big alabaster snakes. He shook his head, trying to blur the image.

"No!" he roared. He was angry now. Past patience, past long-suffering, past gentleness, kindness, persuasion. He was hyperventilating. He could hardly talk. Brother Hancock was right, Sister Marks was right—all of them, 100 percent correct. Give them an inch and they'll take a yard. Give them a pew and they'll take the whole tabernacle.

"What does a single LDS man or woman do? They can't just go out and—and copulate at will. They contain it. They sublimate. No, it's not easy. Sure it's hard—darn hard. But it can be and must be controlled. If you want to be a member in good standing. If you want to bear the priesthood. If you want the blessings of the temple."

Curtis shook his head sadly. He looked disappointed, hurt. "You're comparing apples and oranges, Bishop."

Lyman charged, head down, fists clenched, reminiscent of his high school football days. Curtis stood his ground, unflinching, and Lyman pulled up short of plowing into him. They were nose to nose, Lyman inhaling Curtis's garlicky breath. "How? How is it different? How are you an apple, me an orange? You people don't want equality, you want preference! Asterisks! Special house rules."

"You've got a choice, we don't. You choose to be single."

"How do you know? Suppose I'm born a eunuch—where's my choice?"

"I'm part of God's creation. This is my sexuality, not my cross to bear."

"Okay—all right. Suppose someone likes doing it with three-year-olds or with horses or sheep or elephants. Does that make it okay?"

Curtis's expression remained neutral. A mug shot.

Lyman taunted him. "Hey, God made me that way! Can I help it? Where do you draw the line, Curtis? Where?"

"What right have you got to draw it?"

"I don't but God does."

"How do you know that's where he drew it?"

"By revelation! By the voice of God! And if you don't accept that—what's the point of being in the church? If you only accept what you think you feel you want to believe—whatever's easiest—"

"Don't you see? If so called revelation can change—blacks receiving the priesthood for instance—then God's commandments can change. They're relative to a particular time and place. It's only a matter of time, Bishop."

"A matter of—" Lyman was tired of arguing, defending, accusing, debating. He was tired. "No!" he hollered, waving off Curtis, waving off the world. "No!" all of the way back to his porch where he stopped and gazed into the little hemisphere of glass on the door. His reflection stared back at him like Jacob Marley's ghost, and he studied it as if for the first time, far more creased and pouchy and oppressed than he had remembered, like the worm-eaten portrait of Dorian Gray. "No," he groaned. "No no no no."



Mormon Static

Differing Visions: Dissenters in Mormon History. Edited by Roger D. Launius and Linda Thatcher (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

Reviewed by J. Boyer Jarvis, Professor of Communication Emeritus, University of Utah.

IN THEIR INTRODUCTORY ESSAY editors Roger Launius and Linda Thatcher provide an informative overview of the nature of religious dissent, particularly in the history of Mormonism. They note that Joseph Smith, Jr., was himself a dissenter who, soon after he had organized the Mormon church, was obliged to contend with challenges to his authority. As the editors remark, "The irony of the tormenter becoming the tormented, within Mormonism, is too rich to be ignored" (4).

The introductory essay is followed by seventeen separately written accounts of individuals who, in one way or another, disagreed with Joseph Smith or with subsequent authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City) or the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Independence, Missouri). All of the essays included were prepared for original publication in this book.

The first eight essays deal with individuals who were part of the early period of Mormon history, between 1830 and 1844. The names of some of those individuals are well known to most, if not all, present-day Mormons.

David Whitmer, a very important early supporter of Joseph Smith, Jr., and one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon, could not support Smith's inclinations to combine governmental and ecclesiastical power.

John Corrill became a prominent church leader in Missouri during the 1830s, but he "would never surrender his private judgment to the authority of prophetic rule" (48).

William E. McLellin was baptized a Mormon at Independence on 20 August 1831 and ordained an elder four days later. Before long he became an antagonist of Joseph Smith in Kirkland and was excommunicated on 3 December 1832. Soon thereafter he was reinstated. In the summer of 1835, after he had become an apostle, he was disfellowshipped but restored on 25 September 1835, "without a clear reconciliation" (79). Finally in 1838 he was excommunicated at Far West, Missouri.

Francis Gladden Bishop, greatly influenced by the religious revivals of the 1820s in western New York, was seventeen when he experienced the first of several important visions. Bishop's revelations soon resulted in doctrinal friction with the prophet Joseph and other church authorities. In the spring of 1842 he was excommunicated by the Nauvoo Stake High Council. In the summer of 1864 he arrived in Salt Lake City and returned to the Mormon church.

James Colin Brewster was a young boy when his parents joined the Mormon church in the early 1830s. He was only ten years old when he "received his inaugural spiritual manifestation" (121). Brewster's revelations were a threat to Joseph Smith's authority, and in November 1837 the high council in Kirkland disfellowshipped him "and any of his followers who would not denounce him" (122).

William B. Smith was an active participant in the founding of the Mormon church. At the age of twenty-three he was ordained an apostle. When his older brothers, Hyrum and Joseph, were killed, he believed he was entitled to assume the patriarchal authority that had been bestowed on his father, Joseph Smith, Sr., and then passed on to his brother Hyrum. On 24 May 1845 Brigham Young ordained William Smith as "Patriarch to the whole church" (144), but opposition from other apostles, especially John Taylor, soon developed, and William Smith stayed behind when the Brighamites migrated to Utah. Eventually William Smith joined the Reorganized church, with which he had an uneasy relationship until his death in 1893.

Alpheus Cutler was an early convert to Mormonism. He became a member of the prophet Joseph's elite inner circle, and after the prophet's death he agreed to follow the leadership of the Council of Twelve Apostles. However, in Iowa in the late 1840s he became engaged in a serious and prolonged dispute with council president Orson Hyde, and in 1851 Cutler was excommunicated.

Stephen Post, an 1835 convert to the Mormon faith, eventually accepted Sidney Rigdon as the rightful successor to Joseph Smith, Jr. As a committed champion of Rigdonite

Mormonism, Post, until his death in 1879, made repeated, obviously unsuccessful, efforts "to sway Joseph Smith III, leader of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, to Rigdon's side" (180).

The ninth essay is focused on the family of James and Alice Dove, who "were baptized by William Clayton on July 22, 1849, at Bulwell, Nottingham, England" (197). The Dove family arrived in Salt Lake City in late 1856. Before long they were disappointed with Mormon society, especially polygamy. They were attracted to the reform movement led by Joseph Morris. After Morris was killed in a confrontation with a territorial posse in June 1862, the Doves fled to Nevada and then to California. From their Church of the First Born in San Francisco, the Doves struggled to keep the Morrisite movement alive. By 1910 it had faded away.

The next three essays describe the dissent in Utah of three remarkable individuals who found themselves at odds with the highest Mormon authorities.

Henry W. Lawrence was a successful merchant in Salt Lake City by the early 1860s, and periodically during that decade he accompanied Brigham Young on visits to settlements throughout the territory. Lawrence was a generous supporter of various Mormon church enterprises and one of the founders of ZCMI. In 1869 he joined the Godbeites, and in December of that year he was excommunicated "on a charge of general apostasy" (224).

Frank J. Cannon, son of George Q. Cannon, was a successful journalist who early in 1905, at the age of forty-six, "publicly declared that he no longer believed in the divinity of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (241). Frank J. Cannon was

elected in 1896 as one of Utah's first United States senators, but when his initial two-year term expired in 1898, the Utah legislature refused to reelect him.

Joseph W. Musser, born into a Latter-day Saint home in 1872, at an early age proved to be a faithful, dedicated member of the church. It was his strong belief in plural marriage that resulted in his excommunication by the Granite Stake High Council in 1921.

The last five essays deal with people active in the last half of the twentieth century.

Fawn McKay Brodie's controversial book, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, was published in 1945. One year later, on a charge of apostasy, she was excommunicated.

Maurine Whipple is remembered for her 1941 novel, *The Giant Joshua*, which told the story of polygamy and the settlement of St. George in southern Utah. She was disappointed by what she perceived as the unenthusiastic reception of that work and her only other book, *This Is the Place: Utah*, which appeared in 1945.

Richard Price is noteworthy because of his vigorous opposition to recent liberal changes in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. An opponent of ordaining

women to the priesthood, Price now is regarded as "the leading strategist and publicist of Reorganization fundamentalism" (319).

Jerald and Sandra Tanner, both reared in Mormon families, have been dedicated for more than thirty years to exposing and trying to destroy Mormonism. They have reprinted and made generally available many basic Mormon documents that were out of print, thus helping to stimulate the professional historical examination of a variety of Mormon subjects.

Sonia Johnson, as a result of her leadership of Mormons for the Equal Rights Amendment and her criticism of official Mormon church opposition to the ERA, gained national notoriety when she was excommunicated by a bishop's court at Oakton, Virginia, on 5 December 1979. Today she lives in a small community of women near Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Each of the seventeen essays is scholarly and interesting. For some readers, some of the essays may be more informative than others.

A few proofreading errors may be noticed in this otherwise well-edited book. For example, on page 313 the word "immorality" appears in a context which seems to call for the word "immortality."

A Western with Gray Hats

A Ram in the Thicket: The Story of a Roaming Homesteader Family on the Mormon Frontier. By Frank C. Robertson (Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1994).

Reviewed by Ross Geddes, who works for the Department of Defense in Brisbane, Australia.

MY INTRODUCTION TO FRANK C. Robertson was at the age of eleven

when someone gave me a copy of one of his juvenile westerns called *The Young Nighthawk*. Years later I discovered that Robertson had a Mormon background, but it was not until I read this reprint of his 1950 family memoir that I learned the details of that background.

By the time he died in 1969, Robertson had written more than 150 books, most of them formula westerns, countless short stories, and a long-running column in the Provo *Daily Herald*. As a professional writer of genre fiction, Robertson knew his market and gave his readers what they wanted. He achieved popularity in his day, but his writing has not outlived him—with one exception. The new edition of *A Ram in the Thicket*, first published almost half a century ago, is one of a reprint series called *Idaho Yesterdays* developed by the Idaho State Historical Society under the general editorship of Judith Austin. It is enhanced by a perceptive introduction from regionalist historian Charles S. Peterson and a retrospective by Robertson's son Glen.

I would have to dispute Mari Sandoz's statement (quoted from the 1959 edition) that "Mr. Robertson is no stylist." I was lassoed right from the first sentence: "My father and mother considered themselves farmers, but they seldom owned a farm" (1). The vigorous, spare style of that opening is typical of the whole book. And it immediately identifies Robertson's major protagonists. Both parents obviously dominated his early life as they do the first two-thirds of his book. Will Robertson's "ungovernable temper" made life hell for his family, "chang[ing] him in an instant from a jovial, pleasant companion to a roaring incarnation of fury" (9). Nor were

his tantrums quickly spent: he could keep a quarrel going for days, picking up his tirade each morning where he had left off the night before. When the temper was on him, he gave his children some fearful whippings. On the other hand, he was the one who sat up nights with a sick child or went from house to house during a diphtheria epidemic doing whatever needed to be done.

Mary Robertson submitted to her husband's abuse, but she was no doormat. A former schoolteacher, she developed a reputation as a formidable debater and was not afraid to take on—and beat—the local Methodist and Baptist preachers. As a Campbellite, she had a strong faith "that in the last extremity the Lord would provide a ram in the thicket" (2), and despite her family's skepticism, "the ram in the thicket . . . was always there" (45).

Will Robertson's other notable characteristic was his restlessness. The family moved frequently—first, from Nebraska to Moscow, Idaho, then from one homestead to another in western Idaho and eastern Washington. Mormonism caught up with the Robertsons just before the end of the nineteenth century outside Moscow. It was probably inevitable that the newly-converted Will Robertson would catch the spirit of the gathering, but as his son wryly notes, "as usual, the Robertsons were swimming against the main current" (130), for while they headed for Zion, the physical gathering was ending and the era of expansion beginning.

Robertson draws a valuable picture of Mormonism in the early years of the twentieth century in several rural communities—particularly Chesterfield in southeastern Idaho. But it is not the sort of picture we are usually

shown of pioneer Mormons. Robertson sees more humanity than divinity in the church his parents—and later himself but not his two older brothers—joined. Some of his anecdotes would never appear in the faith-promoting brand of Mormon autobiography written to inspire descendants to live the gospel, but somehow they are more believable than many of the other sort. He writes of a bishop who tells a dirty joke and is promptly put in his place by Mary Robertson; of deacons' quorum meetings largely devoted to ribaldry and fighting; of a respected brother whose "speaking in tongues" sounds suspiciously like the Latin in which he tutors young Frank; and of a new convert who drops a clanger by testifying "that old Joe Smith was a true prophet" (158).

Robertson's parents reacted differently to life in Zion. His father felt right at home in this patriarchal society, but his mother was offended by much that she saw. Eventually she stood in fast and testimony meeting and castigated the Saints for their "back-biting, fault-finding, covetousness and vanity," neglect of the Word of Wisdom and tithing, dishonesty, pride, and cruelty to animals. The long, tense silence that followed was finally broken when the bishop stood

and said, "I endorse and say amen to every single thing Sister Robertson has said" (148).

To his credit, Robertson is not afraid to include stories that could even qualify as faith-promoting; for example, he tells how his father, through a priesthood blessing and two months of devoted caring, saved a boy's leg from amputation. But although Mormonism undoubtedly made Will Robertson a better man, it also gave him yet more opportunities to argue with his wife, whom he accused of not sustaining the priesthood (that is, him) as she should.

As a prolific writer of western fiction, Robertson was used to portraying goodies and baddies, white hats and black hats, but he has avoided any simplistic stereotyping here. The people who figured in his own life—whether his parents, fellow Saints, or gentile neighbors—wear hats of various shades of gray. That is, they are people much like ourselves or those we know. *A Ram in the Thicket* is Frank C. Robertson's best and truest work and deserves to live on. This new edition, for which all concerned should be congratulated, will introduce the book to a new generation and ensure that it survives a little longer.

In a Far Land

M. Shayne Bell

So many women on their knees
that if I knew how to tell them
they could find hope here,
or that there the men
would be kind and when the sun rose
their hopes could rise with it,
but especially if they would resolve
to walk away from all
who once hurt them, to some far land
where they could day by day
remake their lives
in the image of their hearts
I would tell them—
no, I would walk there with them,
so that in the stillness
of that hot noon, and later,
in the blush of dusk,
I could take their hands
and never need to whisper peace.

CONTRIBUTORS

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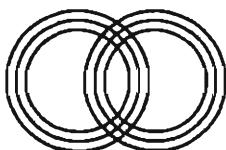
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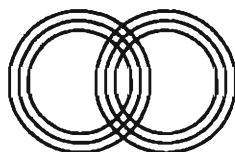
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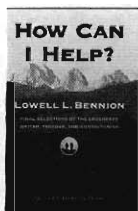
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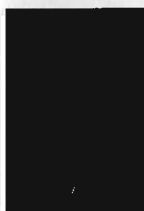
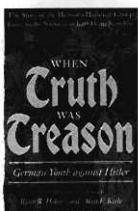
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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born and raised in Salt Lake City, Susan Gallacher developed an early interest in art, entering Vern Bullough's landscape painting class in seventh grade. Encouraged by Vern to pursue oil painting, she has made a lifelong study and occupation of painting in both oil and watercolor. As an art student at the University of Utah, Susan's skills expanded under professors Paul H. Davis and Ed Maryon. In the 1970s she began her career as an art teacher with positions in the Granite and Sandy school districts as well as private instruction. In 1984 she established King's Cottage Gallery and Art School where she continues to direct and teach. Other prominent Utah artists also teach at King's Cottage.

Susan has had many one-woman art exhibits and been accepted in more than seventy-five juried shows, receiving numerous awards. She has also served as an art juror for several exhibits. Many of her paintings are in private collections throughout the United States and England. Currently she is represented by Southam Gallery and King's Cottage.

Susan's painting philosophy is deeply influenced by the "plein air" attitude that artists should paint any subject, whether a landscape, still life, or figure, directly rather than from photographs. She observes, "When I paint, the weather, the light, the fragrance in the air, my mood, all add to the spirit of the day and the essence of the painting experience. These elements become part of the painting itself and one can only have that fullness when painting from life."

Recently Susan turned her attention to painting the camps of homeless people living along the Jordan River south of the LDS Jordan temple. Her paintings depict the ironic juxtaposition of the monumental, shining temple looming above groups of ramshackle huts and tents occupied by transients who prefer this environment to the unfriendly hardness of inner city. Just as eloquently, Susan's new paintings of Sanpete County capture the character of the Mormon pioneer rural landscape.

ART CREDITS

Front : "Succulents with Wildflowers," 12"x15", watercolor, 1995

Back : "Jade Plant," 15"x25", watercolor, 1995

p. 39: "Homeless on the Jordan," 24"x36", oil, 1996

p. 54: "Road to Spring City," 11"x14", oil, 1995

p. 87: "White Lily," 9½"x12½", watercolor, 1992

p. 107: "Aloe Vera Plant," 20"x 27", watercolor, 1991

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