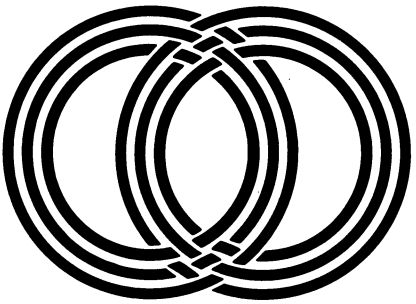
DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT



DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT

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DIALOGUE: A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT, VOL. 29, NO. 3, FALL 1996

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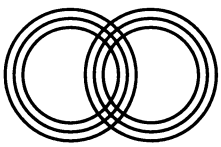

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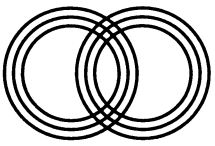

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Population Control

Donald Gibbon (in "Famine Relief, the Church, and the Environment," Summer 1995) notes that a "common condemnation of Mormons is that they ignore the ticking of the 'population bomb' by encouraging large families." He then states: "If we could show that if the world were well organized it could feed itself, we would do a great deal to enhance our acceptability among mainstream environmental thinkers . . . "

That "if the world were well organized it could feed itself" needs no showing—even to most mainstream environmental thinkers—so long as it is clear that population stabilization is part of a "well organized" world. With larger families the world may feed itself in the short run (thirty or sixty years?), but not longer. (Even if the impossible were granted, and the world could be "well organized" while population continued to increase rapidly, mainstream environmentalists would still be appalled by the reduction in habitat for plants and animals and the accompanying high rate of extinction.)

World population is increasing at 100 million per year *even though enormous efforts are being made to discourage large families.* Many billions of dollars each year are used to provide free family planning services, radio and television ads, etc.; in China there are strong economic incentives for those who stop at one child. And still, at the present rate of growth, world population will double in forty years. Without the ongoing massive efforts to reduce family size, population doubling times would be shorter. Although some demographers forecast eventual population stabilization, they assume even more funding for encouraging smaller families. If more land were brought into production, less grain were fed to animals, and food were produced more efficiently (and potential problems such as global warming, ozone depletion, and energy shortages did not materialize), there could be food for more people. But for how many more? For twice the population (forty years)? For four times the population (eighty years)? For eight times the population (120 years)?

Steven C. Hill
Las Cruces, New Mexico

Joseph Smith's Successor

I was surprised at the fundamentalist approach Richard Van Wagoner took towards the 1844 transfiguration of Brigham Young in the winter 1995 issue. He allowed only two options: either Brigham Young was a *Star Trek* shape shifter who morphed into Joseph Smith or there were no spiritual manifestations experienced by anyone. My great-great-grandfather William Adams who was there states that he heard Joseph Smith's voice from Brigham Young but makes no mention of a physical transformation. In a January 1894 letter he wrote,

> William Marks, president of the stake, called the meeting to order and took charge of the meeting. After the opening exercises [Sidney] Rigdon spoke of his claim as guardian to young Joseph [III], showing the necessity of the office, which took between one half to one hour.
>
> There was a great multitude attending the meeting; more than one half the crowd could not find seats,

> and stood on their feet. Never were so many at one meeting that I ever saw. I was sitting down and could not see the speakers on the stand. I was listening very attentively, so that I could hear every word.
>
> I heard a voice speaking; I was surprised, and jumped to my feet, expecting Joseph the Prophet was speaking, having heard him often in public and private, so that I was acquainted with his voice. This was a strong testimony that the Twelve Apostles were the rightful leaders of the church, and that the mantle of Joseph had fallen on Brigham Young. Out of that vast multitude about twenty voted for Rigdon to be guardian of young Joseph until he should come of age, he then being a boy of ten or eleven years of age.

While the spiritual manifestation could have become enlarged to mythological proportions over time, I believe that at least some people such as William Adams heard Joseph Smith's voice and were convinced that Brigham Young was Joseph Smith's successor. I don't believe that they were fooled by Brigham Young theatrics in which he did a Rich Little impression of Joseph Smith.

Neil J. Andersen
Ballwin, Missouri

More on the Church in Italy

Congratulations on another good issue of *Dialogue* (Spring 1996). Readers have probably already noted that there is at least one typographical error in my essay, "LDS Prospects in Italy for the Twenty-first Century" (where a portion of the sentence was deleted). On page 147 the last sentence of the first full paragraph should read:

> Introvigne identified La Civiltá Cattolica's most obvious inaccuracies and documented the anonymous author(s)' reliance on the 1995 anti-Mormon diatribe of Pier Angelo Gramaglia,[38] even though more responsible descriptions of Mormonism were available in Italian.

I was mistaken when in footnote 17 I wrote that "many nominal or disaffected Catholics prefer to designate one of these non-Catholic churches [Seventh-Day Adventists and Assemblies of God] or even the State Charity Fund." In fact, many nominal or disaffected Catholics prefer to designate the non-Catholic churches *rather than* the State Charity Fund. Italians are highly suspicious of the State Charity Funds, particularly in the context of the "mani pulite" scandal which resulted in the downfall of the Christian Democratic Party. As such, a very small percentage of taxpayers designates the State Charity Funds.

Finally, I hope it is clear that only a very small minority of disaffected Catholics align themselves with new religious movements (NRMs). This disaffection has more to do with the secular influences of society and very little to do with NRMs. Nevertheless, NRMs have benefitted because the secular-based society seems more willing to protect non-Catholic religious rights than was the case when Catholicism was the official state religion. I understand that in some other European countries (in particular France, Germany, and Spain) there has been legislation proposed which attempts to limit the activities of minority religions. This has not yet occurred in Italy.

Michael W. Homer
Salt Lake City, Utah

Science, God, and the Big Bang

I was fascinated by the content of the spring 1996 issue and the quality of the articles included. Armand Mauss, as guest editor, is to be recommended for what he brought together. As a long-time reader and subscriber of *Dialogue* (since Vol. 1, No. 1), I am happy that *Dialogue* still arrives in a reasonably timely manner each season of the year with many stimulating and informative articles. But the spring issue of this year was outstanding.

I was especially intrigued by David Bailey's article, "Science and Mormonism: Past, Present, Future," and noted his comment on the "big bang" cosmological theory on the origin and evolution of the universe. He asks, "How can the notion of a finite age universe be accommodated in LDS doctrine, which has historically taught that matter is eternal?" This is the same question raised by Keith Norman in his article, "Mormon Cosmology, Can It Survive the Big Bang?" in the January 1986 issue of *Sunstone.*

I would refer both to a comment by Mortimer J. Adler in his book *How to Think About God* (1980), where he writes:

"Unfortunately, they [the scientists who discuss the evidence for the "big bang" theory of the origin of the cosmos] are not equally precise in their handling of such words as 'beginning' and 'end.' When they speak of the world's having a beginning, do they mean (a) that the *observable* cosmos as we know it and as it has developed up to the present moment came into existence at a prior time which we can estimate as being so many billion years ago; or do they mean (b) that the cosmos came into existence out of nothing so many billion years ago, before which time nothing existed? An examination of the most carefully written scientific treatments . . . will discover that the big bang theory does not posit an absolute beginning of the cosmos—a coming into existence out of nothing—but only *an initial event in the development of the cosmos as we now know it,* . . .

"Our present techniques of observation and measurement, and the technical facilities they employ, do not permit us to penetrate the past beyond the time, some fifteen to twenty billion years ago, when the big bang occurred. What is being said here is not that past time is limited (finite rather than infinite), but that our knowledge of past time is limited—limited to a time beyond which our observations and measurements cannot go. *Time may extend back infinitely beyond that initial explosion of matter,* . . . but unless some radical alteration in our techniques and instruments of observation and measurement occurs, we will never be able to penetrate the veil that hides that infinite past from us.

"Similarly, . . . what is being said is *not* that nothing existed before the event, for otherwise there would have been nothing to explode and start the universe (as we know it) off on the course of its development. The fact that the cosmos, as we know it, began to develop then *does not mean that nothing existed before that development started.* Science may never be able to tell us about the state of the cosmos in the time before that event. We are hardly justified in interpreting the silence of science as a negative answer to the questions about the preexistence of the cosmos" (32-34; my emphasis).

Delmar J. Young
Walnut Creek, California

Inside the Salt Lake Temple: Gisbert Bossard's 1911 Photographs

Kent Walgren

THE BANNER HEADLINE ON SUNDAY'S 17 September 1911 edition of the *Salt Lake Tribune* greeted morning readers: "Gilbert [sic] L. Bossard, Convert, is Named as One Who Photographed Interior of Salt Lake Temple. Revenge Is Sought by Him after Trouble with the Church; Has Left the City." The sensational article began:

> No local news story published in recent years has caused so much comment as the exclusive story in yesterday's Tribune regarding the taking of photographic views in the Salt Lake Mormon temple by secret methods. . . . The most important development of the day was the identification, through efforts of a Tribune representative, of the man who took the views. This man is Gilbert L. Bossard, a German convert to Mormonism, who fell out with the church authorities and secretly took the pictures in a spirit of revenge.[1]

For faithful Mormons, the thought that someone had violated the sacred confines of the eighteen-year-old Salt Lake temple, which he desecrated by photographing, was "considered as impossible as profaning the sacred Kaaba at Mecca."[2]

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1. Unless otherwise stated, the sources for all quoted material are news stories in either the *Salt Lake Tribune*, 16-21 Sept. 1911, or in the *Deseret Evening News*, 16 Sept. 1911. Other major sources include James E. Talmage's personal journal, Talmage Papers, Archives and Manuscripts, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Talmage Journal); materials in Scott Kenney Papers, Ms. 589, Western Americana, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City (hereafter Kenney Papers); and photographs of certificates issued to Bossard by the LDS church described in the Inventory (numbers 9-15) following this essay. Basic genealogical information on Bossard, his parents, his wife, and their children was obtained from family group sheets in the LDS Family History Library, Salt Lake City.

2. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 18 Sept. 1911.

GISBERT L. BOSSARD

Gisbert Ludolf Gerhard Bossard was twenty-one years and one month old when Salt Lake City residents learned the identity of the photographer of "every nook and corner" of the Salt Lake temple. He was born in Coeln, Rheinland, Prussia, on 12 August 1890 to Gisbert Von Sudthausen and Maria Louise Franziska Pollock. By 1898 his natural father was gone, having either died or left his family, and his mother had remarried Theodor Bossard, who later adopted Gisbert. In 1905, when Gisbert was fourteen, his mother died. Within a year Theodor and his adopted son converted to Mormonism and emigrated to America. In a *Tribune* interview with Theodor the day after his stepson became famous, he explained: "When we first arrived [Gisbert] was a Latter-day Saint in good standing. However, he soon fell away from the church, and although he says he still believes that the gospel is true, he said he thinks the administration of the business affairs of the church is crooked."

Only the barest skeleton exists of Gisbert's church participation after immigrating to America. He was baptized in January 1907 at age sixteen in the Salt Lake Fifteenth Ward. Before the end of that year his father remarried in the temple. In October 1908 Gisbert paid tithing of $5.10 to Bishop Edwin F. Parry of Salt Lake's Sixteenth Ward, possibly in anticipation of his (non-temple) marriage the next month to Elsbeth Elfriede Elisabeth Luck, known familiarly as "Elsie."[3] Two weeks after exchanging wedding vows, he was ordained a priest in the Aaronic priesthood; five months later, on 26 April 1909, he was ordained an elder. Despite these outward appearances of religious commitment, according to his father, Gisbert was already fantasizing about photographing the inside of the temple. About the time of the birth of Gisbert and Elsie's first child in the fall of 1909, an undisclosed difficulty resulted in Gisbert's being tried for his church membership. At least from the church's point of view, the matter was amicably settled and Gisbert was soon restored to his original standing.[4] A year later Gisbert and Elsie welcomed their second child into the world. The "Certificates of Blessing" show that neither child was blessed by Gisbert.[5]

In June 1911, a few months after the second child was blessed, Gisbert announced to his father: "I know what's in there [the temple] and I

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3. She is so listed in the *1920 Amsterdam, New York, Directory.*

4. *New York Times,* 21 Sept. 1911.

5. Bossard is listed in *R. L. Polk & Co.'s Salt Lake Directory* for 1907 through 1911. Through 1910 he is described as a machinist, probably working for his father, Theodor. In 1911 he is listed as General Manager and Master Mechanic at The Specialty Co., 317 S. State. Bossard's address changes in each of the five years.

know what they do in there." When his father asked him how he knew, Gisbert winked and replied: "I had a vision." By mid-August 1911 he had explained in detail to his father how he had obtained the photographs and was boasting that he could sell the negatives for hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Some months earlier Gisbert, described as an expert photographer and film developer, had received permission from LDS church president Joseph F. Smith to photograph the interior of the Beehive House, ostensibly to share the views with relatives in Germany. When he did not return the plates, the church referred the matter to Salt Lake City's chief of police. During questioning in early August 1911 Bossard expressed to Chief Barlow his resentment of the church and threatened to take pictures of the interior of the temple "and expose the iniquities of the church to the world." Bossard, who had in fact already taken the pictures, bragged to Barlow that gaining entrance to the temple would be easy and coyly inquired what penalty could be imposed for such an act. Barlow answered that Bossard "stood an excellent chance of getting himself into serious difficulty."

It is unlikely, however, that the Beehive House was the real reason Barlow was interested in Bossard. Bossard, perhaps anonymously, had already contacted Joseph F. Smith about the church's purchasing negatives of the interior of the temple. In his 18 September *Tribune* interview, Bossard's stepfather stated that his son "had the pictures about two months without attempting to do anything with them, except sell them to the church," but those attempts came to nothing. In the same interview the elder Bossard also revealed how Gisbert had obtained access to the temple. The son, realizing that "he never could get in the right way," had cultivated a friendship with assistant temple gardener Gottlieb Wutherich.[6] Wutherich, who slept in a room next to the temple, not only had keys to the temple but was expected to enter the building many times a day to take care of the flowers inside.[7] After befriending Wutherich, and reportedly convincing him that "although the church was all right, the officials were not," Bossard enjoyed easy access. He confided to his father that upon entering the temple grounds, "he hid the cameras under his coat and that some of the pictures were taken during the daytime and others at night by flash light."

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6. Also spelled "Wuthrach" in some articles. The confusion may in part have been caused by an umlaut, the actual spelling being "Wütherich" or "Wuetherich." The LDS Family History library lists a Gottlieb Wuethrich, born in Bern, Switzerland, on 26 August 1875, died on 3 January 1936, who may be the assistant gardener.

7. The Garden Room annex to the temple was filled with flora; see caption for photograph number 45.

Once suspicion began to focus on Bossard and Wutherich,[8] matters escalated quickly. In his *Tribune* interview, the senior Bossard continued:

> One day, after he had told me that he had the pictures, we were standing on the corner of Third South and State Streets, when he said, "See, there's a detective following me and there's another," and he pointed two men out to me. Sure enough, they were following us.
>
> A few nights after this, while my son was away, his house was entered and ransacked. However, nothing was carried away and no clue was left behind by those who had accomplished this work. He did not keep the pictures in his house, however. On two occasions after this his house was entered and ransacked, and as on the previous occasion, nothing was taken away.[9]

Bossard remained in Salt Lake only a week or two longer. On 1 September, after incorporating a capital stock company with Wutherich and a local theater promoter named Max Florence to dispose of the pictures, Bossard and Elsie, six months pregnant, caught a train for Denver.[10]

Max Florence

From here on Max Florence, entrepreneur extraordinaire, handled matters.[11] Negatives in hand, he left immediately for New York City, arriving about 7 September.[12] After settling into a room at the Hotel Imperial, Florence placed eight photographs in a package, scrawled Joseph F. Smith's name on the front wrapper, and dropped his bomb in the mail-

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8. In early July 1911 W. F. Nauman, head landscape gardener and florist of the temple grounds, in whose department Wutherich was employed, somehow became aware that photographs of the temple interior had been taken and notified Benjamin Goddard, the temple's head custodian. A few days later, when Bossard and Wutherich arrived at the temple block, Chief Barlow was waiting for them. They were released after denying any connection with the affair. Nevertheless, in about mid-July Wutherich was fired. See *Salt Lake Tribune*, 18 Sept. 1911. This interview apparently preceded the one which focused on the Beehive House photographs.

9. The church denied that it had "shadowed" Bossard. *Deseret News*, 18 Sept. 1911.

10. Prior to taking the photographs, Bossard and Wutherich also apparently induced a man named William Seiler to invest $300 in the scheme. According to the 19 September 1911 *Salt Lake Tribune*, after Seiler had invested his money, Bossard and Wutherich told him it might become necessary to murder the guard to gain admission to the temple. Frightened, Seiler left for Portland, Oregon. This episode, the only detail of the affair which hints at violence, seems out of character for Bossard and unnecessary given Wutherich's access.

11. For a detailed account of Florence's role, see Gary James Bergera, "'I'm Here for the Cash': Max Florence and the Great Mormon Temple," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 47 (Winter 1979): 54-63. A more recent treatment is Nelson B. Wadsworth, *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), "Epilogue: The Max Florence Affair," 355-78.

12. After settling his wife and children temporarily in Denver, Bossard joined Florence in New York City.

box. On 16 September—the day before Bossard's part was made public—the pictures hit the front pages of the *Tribune* and the *Deseret Evening News.*[13] Florence's letter to Smith accompanying the photographs read:

> During the past several years, "certain" parties were admitted into the temple and while there managed to make and obtain a large number of photographs of the interior settings, scenery, surroundings, etc.—sixty-eight negatives. The pictures show almost every nook and corner from the basement to the steeples. I arranged to purchase an interest in these pictures while in Salt Lake City and have done so since arriving here, as a purely business proposition. . . . My associates and myself have canvassed, "in an off hand way," the market here for such pictures . . . and we have found out what we can do by selling these pictures to postal card makers, lecture bureaus, magazines and a great many other profitable purposes; but we have decided that if you are willing to make us a reasonable business offer . . . we will give the same due consideration. . . . We are sending you a few prints under separate cover. . . . If you do not want these pictures suppressed we know of many persons who are very anxious to begin giving them publicity at once.

President Smith replied testily: "I will make no bargain with thieves or traffickers in stolen goods. I prefer to let the law deal with them." He stated further that he did not believe the pictures had been taken by flashlight. "They look to me," he said, "as if they were taken within the time that the temple was given a thorough cleaning during the last few months. In fact, some of the pictures show that the furniture was covered with canvas as it was during the cleaning process."[14]

The headline in the *Deseret Evening News Extra* the same evening read: "Max Florence Fails to Scare Church." The *News* reproduced seven of the eight photographs,[15] reminded readers that over 600 non-Mormons had been invited to walk through the temple prior to its dedication in 1893, and reproduced a narrative description of much of the temple's interior from a booklet titled *The Great Temple.*[16] In addition, the *News* recited Florence's domestic failures and unsavory reputation as a local saloon keeper, informing readers that near the site of the newly constructed Boston and Newhouse buildings Florence had once run a saloon, in the rear of which "were several wine rooms where men and women congre-

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13. The 16 September 1911 *Tribune* article stated that as early as Wednesday, 13 September, Apostle John Henry Smith had admitted to a *Tribune* reporter that someone had taken pictures of the temple's interior. Florence may have dropped a note to the news media at the same time he mailed the photographs.

14. Close examination of the lighting indicates that a few of the photographs were probably taken at night.

15. The photograph not reproduced was probably Joseph F. Smith's private office and curtain leading to his bedroom in the Beehive House; see number 105 in the Inventory.

16. Duncan McNeil McAllister, *A Description of the Great Temple, Salt Lake City* (Salt Lake City: Bureau of Information, 1909).

gated nightly in drunken debauches." The *News* hinted that Florence may have intentionally set fire to some of his movie houses, presumably to collect the insurance.[17]

The next morning Sunday *Tribune* readers awoke to news of Bossard's identity as the photographer.

Isaac K. Russell

As the *Tribune* ran follow-ups the next several days, more details—some of them obvious figments of Florence's grandiose imagination—spilled out. When church attorneys advised that Florence had probably committed no crime, and that Bossard could only be charged with trespassing, the church was forced to change its course. On Monday, 18 September, James E. Talmage had written to the First Presidency suggesting that it steal Florence's thunder by publishing a booklet on the temple with photographs of the interior. Three days later Talmage wrote in his journal: "Had interview with the First Presidency, and was appointed by them to special work viz. The preparation of the manuscript for a booklet on temples and temple work. . . . The authorities have since announced that pictures of the interior will be made, and that copies of the same may be obtained by reputable publishers."[18]

News of the church's counterattack was widely disseminated, and church authorities promised to distribute the booklet of photographs without cost.[19] When Florence heard of the church's new plan, he responded by promising to copyright his photographs: "Then the Mormons can't take anymore [photographs] like them in their own holy of holies, at least not for sale. Say, how'll that be for putting one over on them?"[20] In a rush to obtain copyright Talmage and photographer Ralph Savage, son of pioneer photographer Charles R. Savage, were already in the Salt Lake temple taking photographs as early as 26 September. By the 30th Savage's views had been dispatched to the copyright office.[21]

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17. After losing his saloon license for selling liquor on Sunday, Florence went into the moving picture business, owning at least six Salt Lake theaters at one point. Apparently from expanding too quickly, however, he went broke.

18. Talmage Journal, 21 Sept. 1911. The First Presidency's official written commission to Talmage, dated 22 September 1911, accepted Talmage's offer and specified that his manuscript "be revised by a committee to be appointed by ourselves for that purpose."

19. *New York Tribune*, 22 Sept. 1911; *Salt Lake Telegram*, 21 Sept. 1911.

20. At one point Florence threatened to legally enjoin the church from publishing its own views. *Salt Lake Telegram*, 21 Sept. 1911.

21. Talmage notes in his journal that he also photographed the inside of the temple on 2 October 1911. In a 5 October article in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Florence states that Bossard's photographs, including the eight mailed to Joseph F. Smith, were copyrighted on 22 September 1911. In a communication from Ben E. Rich to Joseph F. Smith on 4 October 1911, Rich expresses his intention to go to Washington, D.C., and through J. Reuben Clark and Preston Richards find out if Florence had actually established copyright.

Florence and Bossard were unaware that the church's counterattack was two pronged. The second was Ben E. Rich, church representative in New York City, who, unknown to Florence and Bossard, had *New York Times* newspaperman Isaac K. ("Ike") Russell in his pocket. Russell, a native Utah Mormon and grandson of Parley P. Pratt, had gone east to make a living as a journalist.[22] Covering the story for the *Times*, he became acquainted with Florence and Bossard, and by 4 October Rich had written to Smith: "Of course, [Florence and Bossard] know nothing about Russell, only as a newspaperman. . . . Ike Russell has rendered me great service . . . and seems to be able to get almost anything he wants to out of these black guards."[23] A week later Rich reported that Florence and Bossard "do not seem to have the slightest idea who Russell is and they appear to be somewhat stuck on him. He no longer hunts them up but they seek him. Russell is to see them again tonight and if they have a picture of Bossard in Temple robes, as mentioned in the interview, we will try to get it and send the same to you."[24]

In the same letter Russell recounted for Rich a recent conversation in which Bossard explained one of the irritants which had driven him to apostasy. "Not only has President Smith got five wives," said Bossard,

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22. B. H. Roberts Papers, Marriott Library. In a 21 November 1911 letter, Russell addresses Rich as "Uncle Ben," suggesting that Russell was Rich's nephew. Kenney Papers, Box 4, Fd. 15. In 1913 Russell offered to provide Joseph F. Smith "a complete roster of all the anti-Mormons working east of Chicago with a fairly complete biography of each and a number of sample sermons and list of societies with which each is affiliated." Kenney Papers, Box 4, Fd. 17.

23. Kenney Papers, Box 5, Fd. 15. On 25 September 1911 Rich communicated to Smith: "Yesterday morning a wire came to the New York Times from the Salt Lake Tribune, saying they understood Florence had a photo of your bedroom, showing *4 beds* and asking the Times to interview him on the same. The matter is in Russell's hands who will see the DAMN cuss today and I will then report to you. The longer I live, the more firmly I believe some fellows should die. Yours faithfully."

24. Ibid. In early October Florence and Bossard had publicity photographs taken of themselves at Scherer Studios in New York City. In nine of the twelve photographs Bossard is dressed in temple clothing. See Inventory, numbers 8, 46-48, 63, and four unnumbered photographs. The poses he strikes and the arrangement of his clothing suggest that he was unfamiliar with the endowment ceremony. By 15 October Russell had obtained copies of six photographs of Bossard in temple robes, all of which lack the temple apron. On 20 October, after receiving the photographs, Joseph F. Smith wrote to Rich: "I note with some pleasure that the dress of young Bossard, in the photos just received, is by no means a pattern of the clothing that he means to represent as you yourself will perceive. It is evident to me that he has made his dress from his memory and that he has not evidently in his possession the true clothing." Kenney Papers, Box 5, Fd. 15. In three other photographs taken in the studio which were not provided to Smith, Bossard is wearing the apron over white pants and shirt but without the robes and cap. See Inventory, numbers 46-48. Three photographs of a man in full temple clothing had been published during the Reed Smoot Hearings seven years before (14 Dec. 1904) on the front page of the *Washington Times* and *New York Herald.*

> but Pres. [Anthon H.] Lund has two wives at least. I carried flowers to them, and so did the gardener who is now in cold storage with us. The gardener told us about it and told me to address the second lady as Mrs. Lund when I gave her the flowers. I did so and she would say "Yes, I am Mrs. Lund," and would take the flowers. I took flowers to one house on North Temple Street across the road from the Temple and another on West Temple near the home of John Henry Smith.

Bossard also told Russell how he had been able to gain access to the temple:

> I always came out through the annex but never went in that way. . . . The engineer of the temple hired me and my chum. We were to string some electric cables and I would chisel away into concrete right above my head with the chips falling into my eyes. . . . There is a tunnel runs to a new heating plant and to the Sharon Building and the Utah Hotel. I found that there was an old tunnel that ran west of the temple to the west side of West Temple just opposite the temple gate or a little south of it and that it had been extended with new concrete to the heating plant. . . . We found a spot on the temple grounds where we could lift up an iron cover, drop down into the tunnel, and there be perfectly safe. . . . While working for the gardener I could always slip down into this tunnel and then go prospecting with my chisel along the old concrete.[25]

By the end of the third week after the appearance of the sensational headlines, Florence and Bossard were getting nowhere. Bossard told Russell that Florence, who was now planning a public lantern show, had been unable to reserve an empty theater.[26] On Saturday, 7 October, during the church's semi-annual general conference weekend, the *Deseret News* reported: "Florence's Temple Pictures Still Unsold." Undaunted, the creative Florence offered the Mormon prophet a new proposition:

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25. Ike Russell to Ben E. Rich, 11 Oct. 1911, Kenney Papers, Box 5, Fd. 15. A 1911 map of Temple Square prepared by Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., Ltd., shows stone or concrete tunnels connecting the temple and annex, temple and boiler house on the north end of temple square, temple and tabernacle, tabernacle under West Temple to north side of steam plant, annex to boiler house, and along the west half of the north wall of the temple to the west wall of the temple. Neither the 1911 Sanborn map nor the 1950 map (the next in the series) shows tunnels between the temple and Sharon Building (57 West South Temple, just east of the Temple Square Hotel) or Hotel Utah, although the tunnel to the Hotel Utah is well-known.

In this same conversation Bossard denies that Wutherich, the gardener, let him in, claiming he had at least three ways to enter and had invented the story about the gardener to divert attention from his true point of access. Although Bossard probably discovered more than one means of entry, it seems unlikely that he would have taken the time to cultivate Wutherich's friendship and involve him in the scheme if it were unnecessary. It also seems unlikely that he would have lied to his father at a time when he had no incentive to mislead.

26. Kenney Papers, Box 5, Fd. 15.

> What is the chance of getting the Tabernacle, two nights to exhibit 68 views of the interior of the Salt Lake Temple, with an excellent lecture, given by Elder Gisbert L. Bossard. It's understood that seventy-five percent of the proceeds must go to the poor of every denomination in Salt Lake.
>
> Twenty-five percent to be divided equally between both parties. . . . As further consideration, Elder Bossard makes his statement, that you should put your best speaker, or yourself against him, before the public in the Tabernacle.
>
> Should your speaker, or yourself, succeed in convincing Elder Bossard, by argument, that Elder Bossard did wrong or committed a sin against the Holy Ghost, by taking photographs in the temple, he would surrender all pictures and everything pertaining to it to you.[27]

It is unlikely Smith favored Florence with a response.

The church also successfully interfered with Bossard and Florence's efforts to profit from magazine publication of the photographs. In late October 1911 *Leslie's Weekly* published, "courtesy of President Smith," seven of the Savage photographs with a brief introduction critical of Florence.[28] When Bossard tried to entice *Leslie's* to publish *his* photographs the following month, the church intervened with *Leslie's* editor John A. Sleicher.[29] In January 1912 four of the Savage photographs were also published with a short introduction in *Popular Mechanics.*[30]

The Show at the Bijou

Between mid-October and early November 1911 Florence and Bossard were preparing their upcoming show at New York City's Bijou Theatre. They hired a newspaper cartoonist named Toner to draw at least four cartoons which were made into slides[31] but kept running into obstacles in producing and promoting the photographs. On 25 October Ben E. Rich wrote to Joseph F. Smith that the same company Florence and Bossard had attempted to hire to produce their temple slides—Levi Company of 1560 Broadway—had dropped them and was now producing a

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27. Florence to Joseph F. Smith, 10 Oct. 1911, Kenney Papers, Box 6, Fd. 12.

28. *Leslie's Weekly,* 26 Oct. 1911, article titled: "Mysteries of the Mormon Temple Unveiled." This is the first publication of any of the Savage photographs.

29. Letter of rs (recording secretary?) to John A. Sleicher, 11 Nov. 1911. An 11 November 1911 entry in Joseph F. Smith's letterpress book states that "Sleicher has been a particular and valuable friend of mine." Kenney Papers, Box 5, Fd. 15.

30. *Popular Mechanics* 17 (Jan. 1912): 38-39. I am indebted to Nyal Anderson, Beehive Collector's Gallery, Salt Lake City, for this information.

31. See Inventory, numbers 23-25, and one unnumbered. Slide number 25, a cartoon which has Bossard in temple robes, was probably drawn from one of the photographs taken in the New York studio.

competing slide show to be sponsored by the church.[32] Upon hearing of the competing show, Florence and Bossard responded on 24 October with a sworn affidavit:

> We, Max Florence and Gisbert L. Bossard do hereby certify that the only and genuine contract for the making of the stereopticon slides of the Interior Views and Facts about the Mormon Temple Lecture, which consists of 105 slides, controlled and owned exclusively by us, is that one executed to A. J. Clapham, Fine Art Slide Maker, 130 West 37th St., New York. . . . The above mentioned lecture set is reproduced from the only genuine photographs ever taken of the Mormon Temple by Gisbert L. Bossard, and which were the cause of the controversy between President Joseph F. Smith of the Mormon Church and the undersigned.[33]

The show finally opened on Saturday, 11 November, at the Bijou Theater, 13th Street and Broadway. The 13 November *Deseret News* reviewed the performance:

> The show is advertised in a way that shocks even the least refined. The chief poster in front of the theater depicts a large bedstead filled with women, all engaged in fighting. . . . Florence and Bossard occupied the lobby of the theater before the performance trying to induce patrons to enter, much on the order of barkers before a tented show. . . .
>
> Reputable papers like The World, Herald, Times and American have refused to mention Florence's show and do not even carry his advertisements.
>
> At Saturday's show, when the time to begin arrived, there were only two persons in the audience, one of whom was The [Deseret] News correspondent. The unspeakable poster at the entrance had failed to attract the great crowds who had passed it all day long. During the progress of the lecture, six other persons entered the house, making an audience of eight, all told. . . .
>
> The photographs used to illustrate the show were the ones which had been published in The Deseret News and several others which were pronounced fakes, some being drawn by local newspaper cartoonists and others the infamous Jarman pictures.[34] In his lecture Bossard said that he crawled through underground tunnels to enter the building. The papers ignore the

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32. Rich to Smith, 25 Oct. 1911, Kenney Papers, Box 5, Fd. 15. Rich stated, "The firm has tried hard to please me." The church's show, which Rich arranged with "fp" (First Presidency?) to beat out Florence, had forty slides.

33. The affidavit was photographed and included in the show at the Bijou. See Inventory, number 7. At some point prior to this, Wutherich's interest must have been purchased by Bossard and Florence. Wutherich's withdrawal may have been behind Bossard's insistence at this time that he had other ways of entering the temple than with the gardener.

34. One of the unnumbered hand-colored slides is titled: "The Great Salt Lake Hell Exposed. By W. Jarman, Ex-Mormon Priest from Salt Lake City." William Jarman is best known for *U.S.A. Uncle Sam's Abscess, or, Hell upon Earth* (Exeter, Eng.: H. Leduc's Steam Printing Works, 1884).

show completely and no mention whatever, favorable or unfavorable, has been given it so far. . . .

Bossard's lecture, admittedly, was written by New York ministers who have taken part for a number of years in anything and everything that seemed to be anti-"Mormon" in its aspect, but Bossard's delivery was absolutely unintelligible and for Sunday's shows he was supplanted by a professional lecturer who could speak English. The whole affair was a dismal failure and it is expected that another day will see the close of the show.

The Long Road to Forgiveness

The failure at the Bijou broke not only the pocketbooks but also apparently the spirits of Bossard and Florence, portending an inevitable falling out. In October, after being made aware of his excommunication, and again in early November, Bossard had sent letters to his ward bishop in Salt Lake City justifying his course of action against the church.[35] But in early December Elsie gave birth to their third child in Denver, and by the end of the month the *Salt Lake Tribune* was reporting that Bossard, "friendless and alone, has taken a decidedly repentant attitude with regard to the picture deal."[36] In January 1912 the church published nine of the Savage photographs in a new edition of D. M. McAllister's *The Great Temple* and issued the same nine photographs as postcards, foreshadowing the publication nine months later of James Talmage's *House of the Lord*.[37] On 20 January Bossard wrote from New York to President Smith:

You will no doubt be surprised to receive a line from the undersigned; but I feel it my duty to apologize and ask your forgiveness for the unjust attacks I made upon you.

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35. The 4 October *New York Times* and 5 October *Salt Lake Tribune* ran notices of Bossard's excommunication. Bossard responded defiantly in a long letter dated 8 October 1911 to Bishop Edwin F. Parry in which he blames Joseph F. Smith for making the whole affair public, challenges Smith's status as a prophet, and demands reinstatement. Bossard copied the letter to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, where it was published in full on 9 October 1911.

36. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 29 Dec. 1911. In a 3 January 1912 article in the same paper Bossard denied being repentant. The *Tribune* added that "Florence telegraphed that he, too, was not repentant," concluding tongue-in-cheek: "No one suspects that Max has repented."

37. McAllister, *A Description of the Great Temple, Salt Lake City* (Salt Lake City: Bureau of Information, 1912). The postcards of the Savage views were published in 1912 by Souvenir Novelty Co. in Salt Lake City. The series is described by Neal West in "Mormon Postcards," *Postcard Collector*, Apr. 1986, 44-45. At some point at least eight of Bossard's views were also published as postcards. The official date of publication of *The House of the Lord* was 30 September 1912. Although the Savage photographs in McAllister appear at first glance to be the same as those printed in *The House of the Lord*, close inspection reveals that most of the photographs in McAllister are unique to it. Twenty-four of the Savage temple photographs were reproduced in C. Mark Hamilton and C. Nina Cutrubus, *The Salt Lake Temple: A Monument to a People* (Salt Lake City: University Services, Inc., 1983), 111-37.

> The latest developments have shown me that every member should thank God that leadership of the Church is in the hands of such men like you.
>
> I searched for truth, and I found it, which makes me a strong supporter of your policy and the gospel. It means that the case of Paul has itself repeated once more in history. My first act will consist in turning over the temple photos to you, without charge. Mr. Florence will leave Monday for Salt Lake, and turn everything over to the church. I sent Bishop Parry a letter, in which I explain everything in detail.[38]

Bossard was unsuccessful in getting forgiveness. He tried again in 1915 and 1916 to regain his church membership, but the wound was too deep, the scar too fresh. In a 29 April 1916 letter to Walter P. Monson, president of the church's Eastern States Mission in New York, Joseph F. Smith's First Presidency ordered that Bossard not be rebaptized, explaining: "[T]he treachery and greed which prompted this desecration of the House of the Lord is entirely another thing, something which cannot be so easily disposed of."[39]

Some time after 1911 Gisbert moved with his family to Amsterdam, New York. On 9 March 1917 two letters signed by him appeared in Amsterdam newspapers critical of Vernon J. Danielson and Lulu Shepard, two anti-Mormons who had recently held a meeting there.[40] In both letters Bossard vigorously defended the LDS church:

> The entire "expose" of Mr. Danielson is nothing but a hoax. . . . I find that at their very best they are nothing more or less than the old stale stories printed in the Cosmopolitan Magazine about 6 years ago. . . . Polygamy in Utah is a thing of the past and any man that ever lived in Utah for any length of time knows it. . . . The temple is not secret, and Dr. James E. Talmage's book "The House of the Lord," contains 34 actual photographs of the interior of the Salt Lake Temple, together with a full description.[41]

About 1920 Bossard and his wife moved from Amsterdam to Troy,

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38. Kenney Papers, Box 5, Fd. 15.

39. In a 13 January 1915 letter to Monson the First Presidency had written: "[W]hile we are glad to learn of his [Bossard's] repentance, we are not prepared to extend to him the hand of fellowship; neither do we think he ought to expect such leniency at this time in view of the gravity of his offense. It will therefore be in order for him to continue to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and be content to wait for the mercy of the Lord to come to him." Facsimile transmission from Scott Kenney to Kent Walgren, 17 Nov. 1995.

40. *Amsterdam Morning Sentinel*, 9 Mar. 1917, and *Amsterdam Evening Recorder*, 9 Mar. 1917. Danielson is the author of *Mormonism Exposed; or the Crimes and Treasons of the Mormon Kingdom* (Independence, MO, 1917); Lulu Shepard authored *Getting Their Eyes Open. A Program for Missionary Societies Showing Popular Fallacies of Latter Day Saints* (Pittsburgh, PA: National Reform Assn., n.d.).

41. *Amsterdam Morning Sentinel*, 9 Mar. 1917.

New York, where their sixth child was born in 1920.[42] Between 1920 and 1925 the *Troy Directory* lists Bossard as president of the Bossard Railway Signal Corp. In 1925 he moved his company to Albany.[43] Sometime during his residence there, probably in the late 1920s, and apparently tired of waiting to be forgiven, he retook to the anti-Mormon stump. An undated Albany newspaper headline reads: "Bossard Will Tell Secrets of Mormons. Correspondence School Manager Has Photos of Interior of Temple. To Be Shown in Albany."[44]

Bossard was not forgiven during his lifetime. About 1930 Elsie left him and returned to Utah, divorcing him in 1932. That same year she received her temple endowments and was sealed to her parents in Salt Lake City, remaining a member of the church until her death in 1978.[45]

Gisbert moved to Ohio and remarried. When he died on 1 February 1975, at age eighty-four, he was living in Orange City, Florida, and was still a non-Mormon. Finally, on 15 November 1985, a decade after he died, he was rebaptized into the LDS church by proxy, and on the following 10 December he finally received his temple endowments "the right way."

The Photographs

The photographs which follow are the earliest known taken of the interior of any Mormon temple.[46] For more than eighty years, from 1912 until late 1993, the whereabouts of all but a handful of Bossard's photographs was a mystery. In December 1993 I discovered some glass negatives and two sets of lantern slides in four wooden boxes in the library of the Grand Lodge of Freemasons of Utah in Salt Lake City. No one there knows how, when, or by whom the views were deposited. Max Florence died in 1932 in Farmington, Utah. In *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass* photojournalist Nelson Wadsworth describes how a few of the lantern slides were

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42. A fourth child had been born in 1917 in Amsterdam. A fifth, also born in Amsterdam, on 29 December 1918, died two days later. The sixth and last child, born in Troy, New York, on 15 June 1920, was the only one baptized into the Mormon church at age eight. Of the five surviving children, only one remained in the church.

43. The 1925 *Albany Directory* lists Bossard as president of the Bossard Railway Signal Corp. and Bossard Electric Home Service of New York. He does not appear in the 1926 and 1927 directories but is again listed in the 1928 *Albany Directory* as being involved in real estate. After 1929 he is not listed in the *Albany Directory.* According to family tradition, Bossard invented both the railway crossing signal and the doorbell but never substantially profited from either.

44. The brief article begins: "With a manuscript entitled 'The Mormon Temple and Its Secrets,' and a collection of 400 photographs of the interior of the costly temple . . . at Salt Lake City . . . Gisbert L. Bossard, manager of the International Correspondence schools, 51 State Street, this city, is planning an expose of what he claims is the truth about Mormonism."

45. She was living in Los Angeles when she died on 17 February 1978.

46. Except the Kirtland temple, in which no endowment rituals were performed.

uncovered in the floorboards of Florence's former Farmington home after it burned in 1944,[47] indicating that Florence kept the lantern slides after returning to Utah. Recalling the ransacking of Bossard's home, Florence may have hidden the five boxes in the floorboards of his new residence. Later, when he (or perhaps his wife, Celia, who survived him) removed the boxes, perhaps he failed to reach far enough for the fifth box. This fifth box of slides was subsequently deposited in Special Collections, Merrill Library, Utah State University, Logan. In addition, the LDS church has in its possession prints from forty-six of Bossard's negatives.[48]

The photograph numbers in the captions and in the Inventory are handwritten numbers on the black-and-white glass lantern slides.[49] The plans of the four floors of the Salt Lake temple are based on drawings by Joseph Don Carlos Young, which show the temple as it was completed in 1893.[50] All of the Bossard views are published courtesy of the Grand Lodge of Utah, which has deposited a complete set of the photographs described in the Inventory in the Manuscripts Division, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

References in the captions are to Talmage *(The House of the Lord)*, McAllister *(A Description of the Great Temple)* (1912 ed.), and Hamilton and Cutrubus *The Salt Lake Temple: A Monument to a People.*

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47. *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass*, 377-78n16. The Van Fleet lantern slides are now in Special Collections, Utah State University Library.

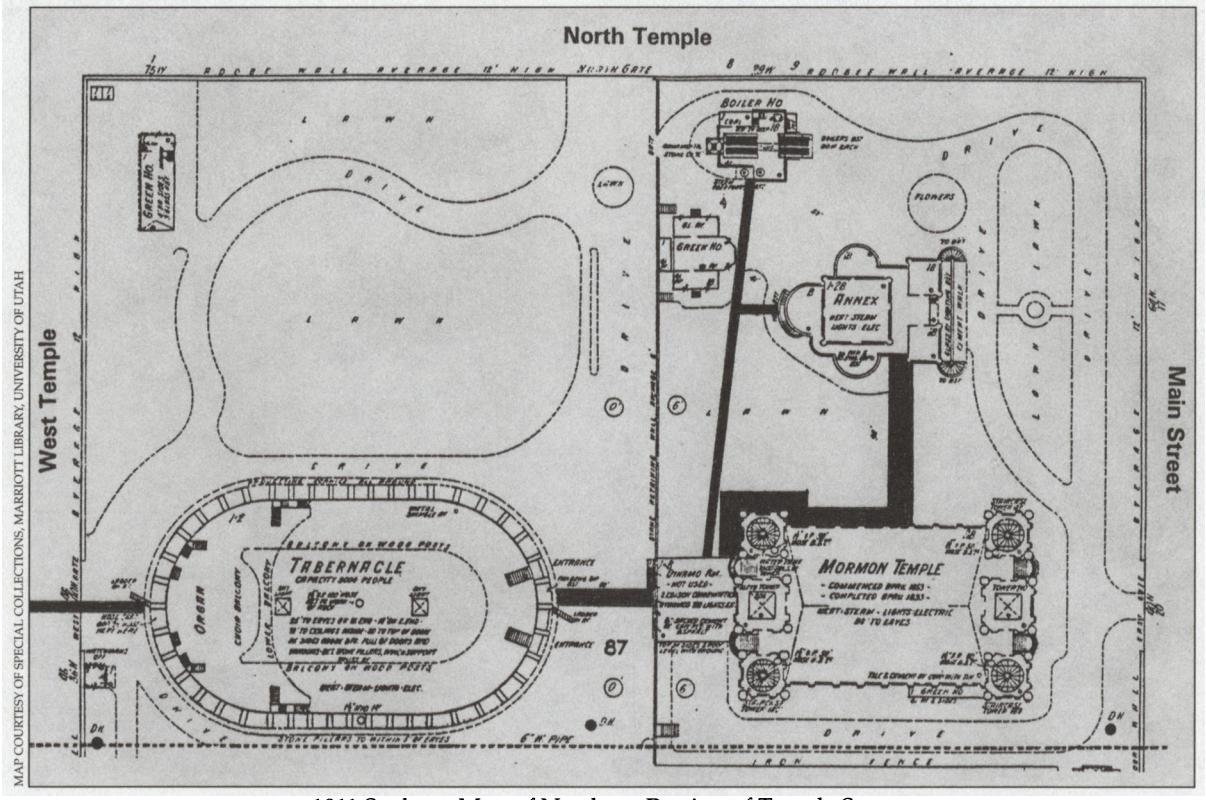
48. Access to these prints is currently restricted.

49. The numbering may generally represent the order in which Bossard took the photographs as he proceeded through the temple. Entry through the Garden Room annex supports such a conclusion.

50. See Hamilton and Cutrubus, 70, 75, 78 and 79, in which the captions are not always accurate. On page 22 of his 1912 edition of *Description of the Great Temple*, McAllister states that there had been no alterations in the temple since its completion in 1893.

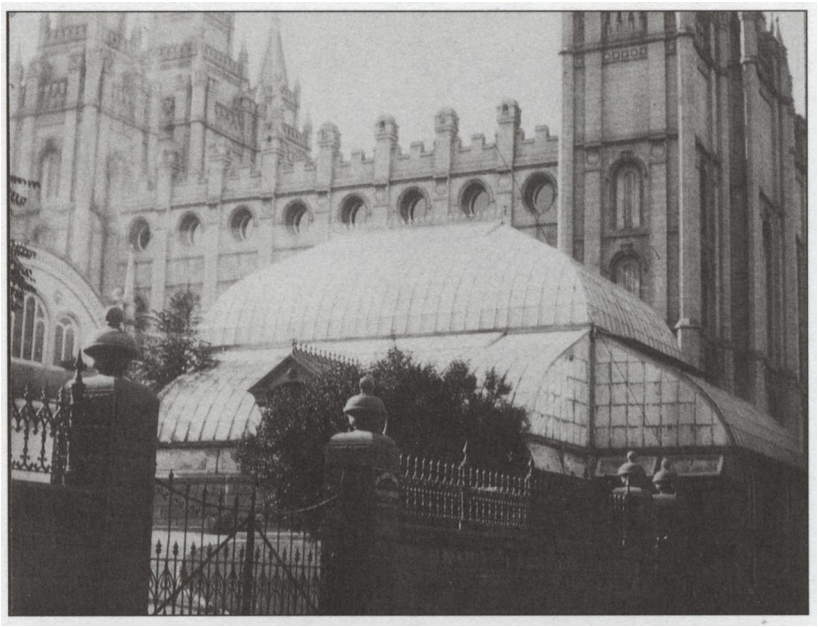
No. 1. Title lantern slide which began the show at the Bijou Theatre in New York City on 11 November 1911. On this view only, the edges have not been cropped.

Unnumbered. Bossard left; Florence right. Taken at Scherer Studios in New York City in early October 1911.



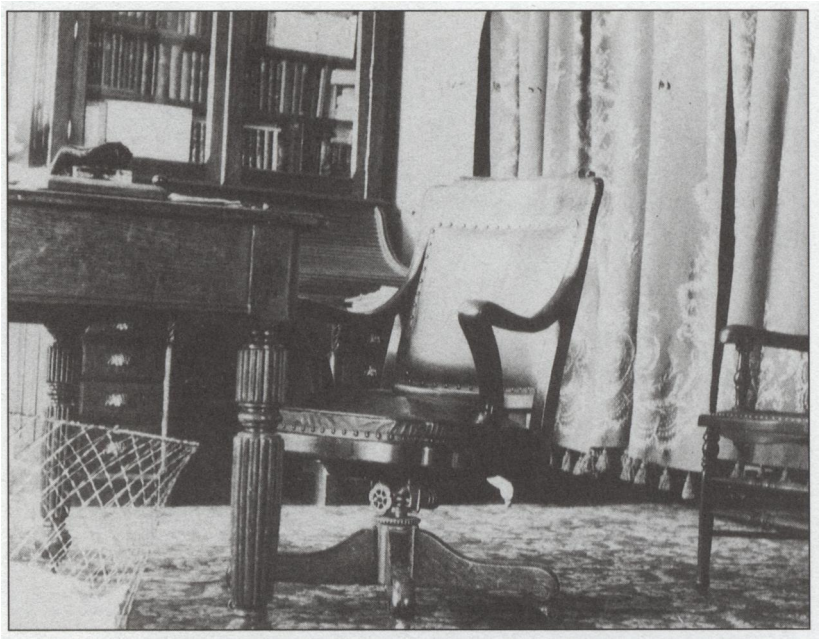
MAP COURTESY OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, MARRIOTT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

1911 Sanborn Map of Northern Portion of Temple Square
Showing Underground Tunnels from Temple to Annex, Boiler House and
Tabernacle, and from Tabernacle under West Temple to Steam Heating Plant.



No. 40. From just inside North Temple Street entrance (midway between Main and West Temple streets) looking southeast. Left, old Annex; right, William C. Staines Conservatory (greenhouse). The sign on the right gatepost reads: "No Admittance. Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted."

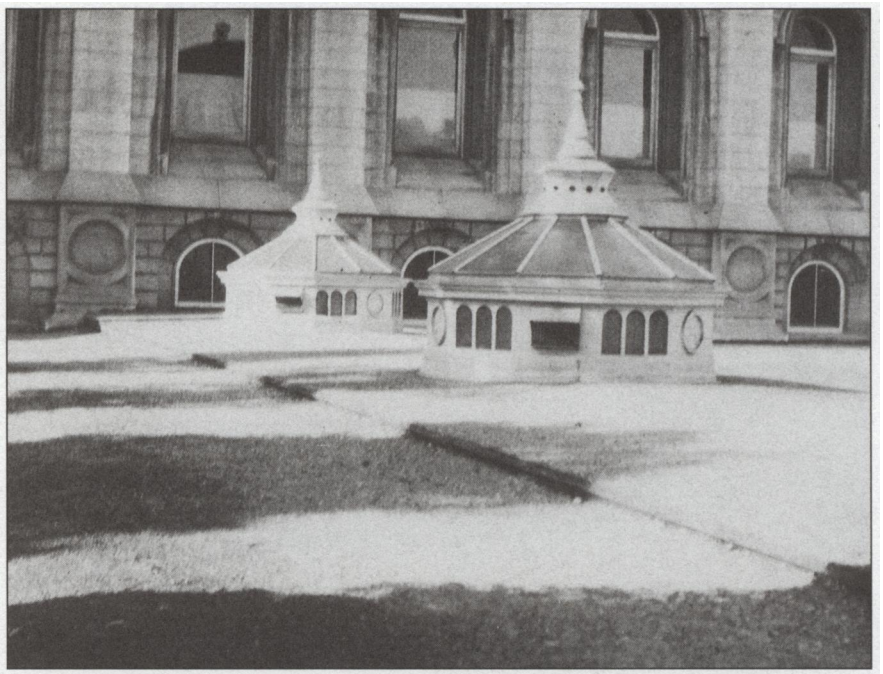
No. 27. Joseph F. Smith, left; John Henry Smith, right, in front of Tabernacle.



No. 105. Beehive House, main floor. Joseph F. Smith's (formerly Brigham Young's) bedroom, looking toward northwest corner. "[I]n showing the [photograph] of your private office at the Beehive House he [Florence] said to [Isaac] Russell: 'Well, this may not amount to very much, but you just ought to see what is on the other side of that curtain.'" Ben E. Rich to Joseph F. Smith, 4 Oct. 1911.

No. 104. Beehive House, main floor, southeast corner room.

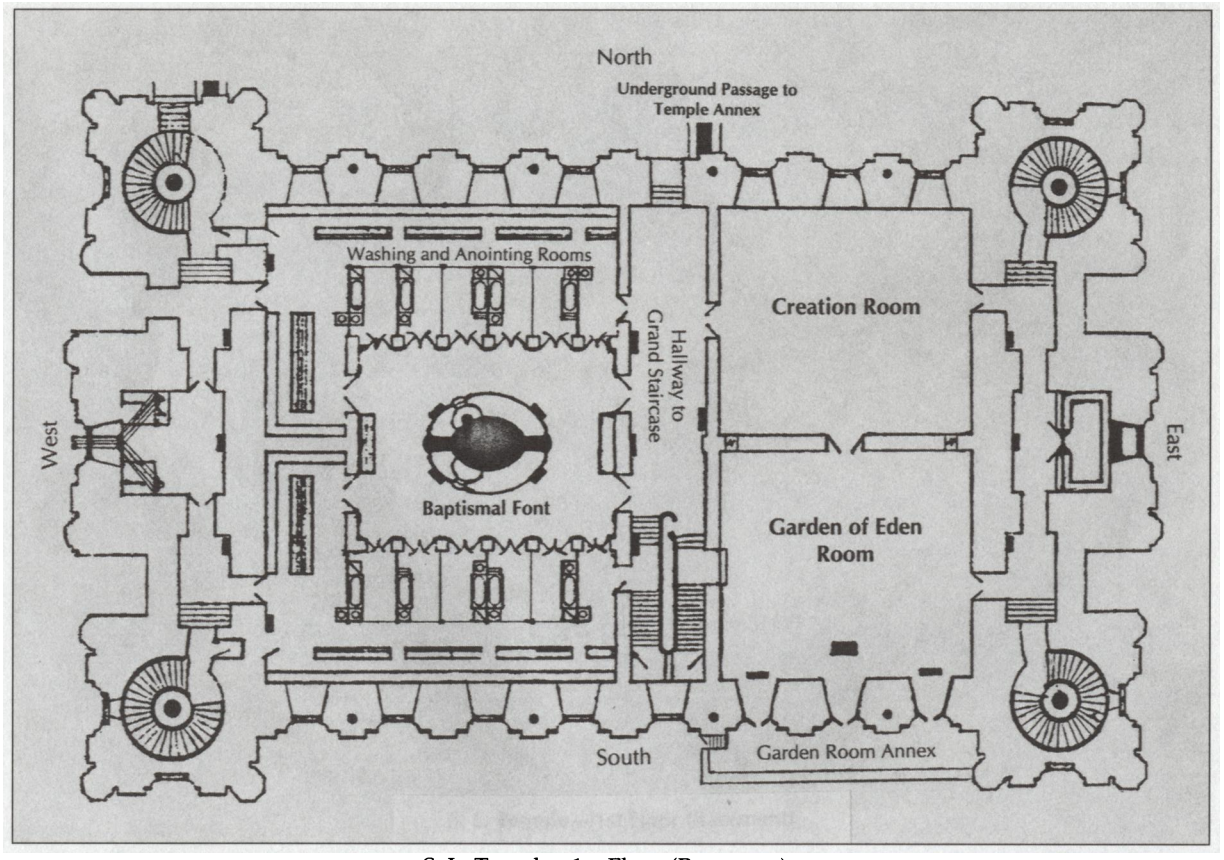
No. 38. Southeast corner of old Annex, ninety feet north of temple.



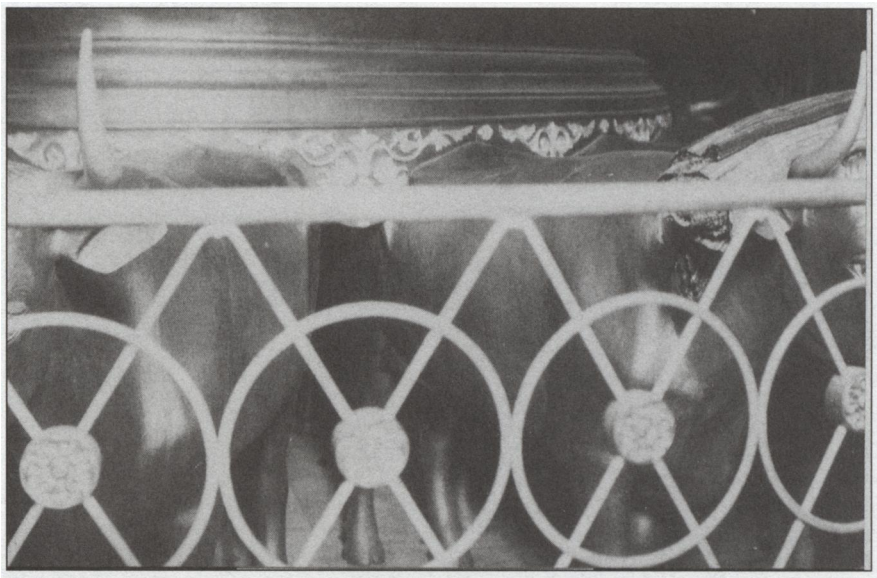
No. 39. Two of the three skylights above the ninety-foot long underground passage leading from the old Annex into the basement of the temple. See Talmage, Plate 9, for a photograph of the inside of the passageway.

No. 45. Entrance to Garden of Eden Room annex which once ran along the east half of the south wall of the temple. The sides and roof were glass to provide light for the plants and flowers. "On the sides of the altar are large doorways opening directly into a conservatory of living plants." Talmage, p. 186. Bossard, with Wutherich's help, probably entered the temple through this door. The Garden Room annex was removed sometime between 1940 and 1951.

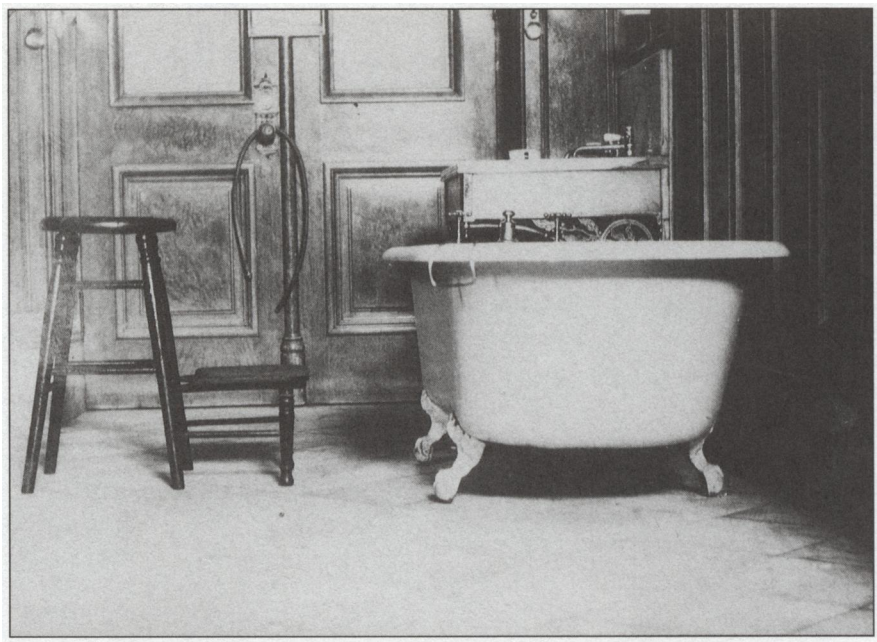
No. 49. Sword in sheath and folding chair at bottom of stairs just inside door to Garden Room annex. At a certain point in the ceremony, "a sword is waved through the curtain" in the Garden Room. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 Feb. 1906.



S. L. Temple - 1st Floor (Basement)



No. 59. Baptismal font in temple basement. Note rolled up rag rugs on ox horns.

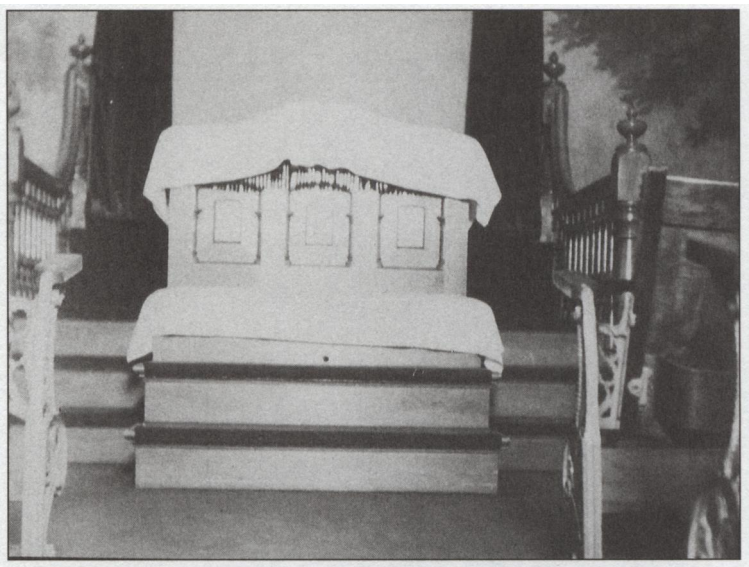


No. 57. First floor (basement). One of ten washing and anointing rooms. Behind the door is the baptismal font. For description of washings and anointings, see *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 Feb. 1906.

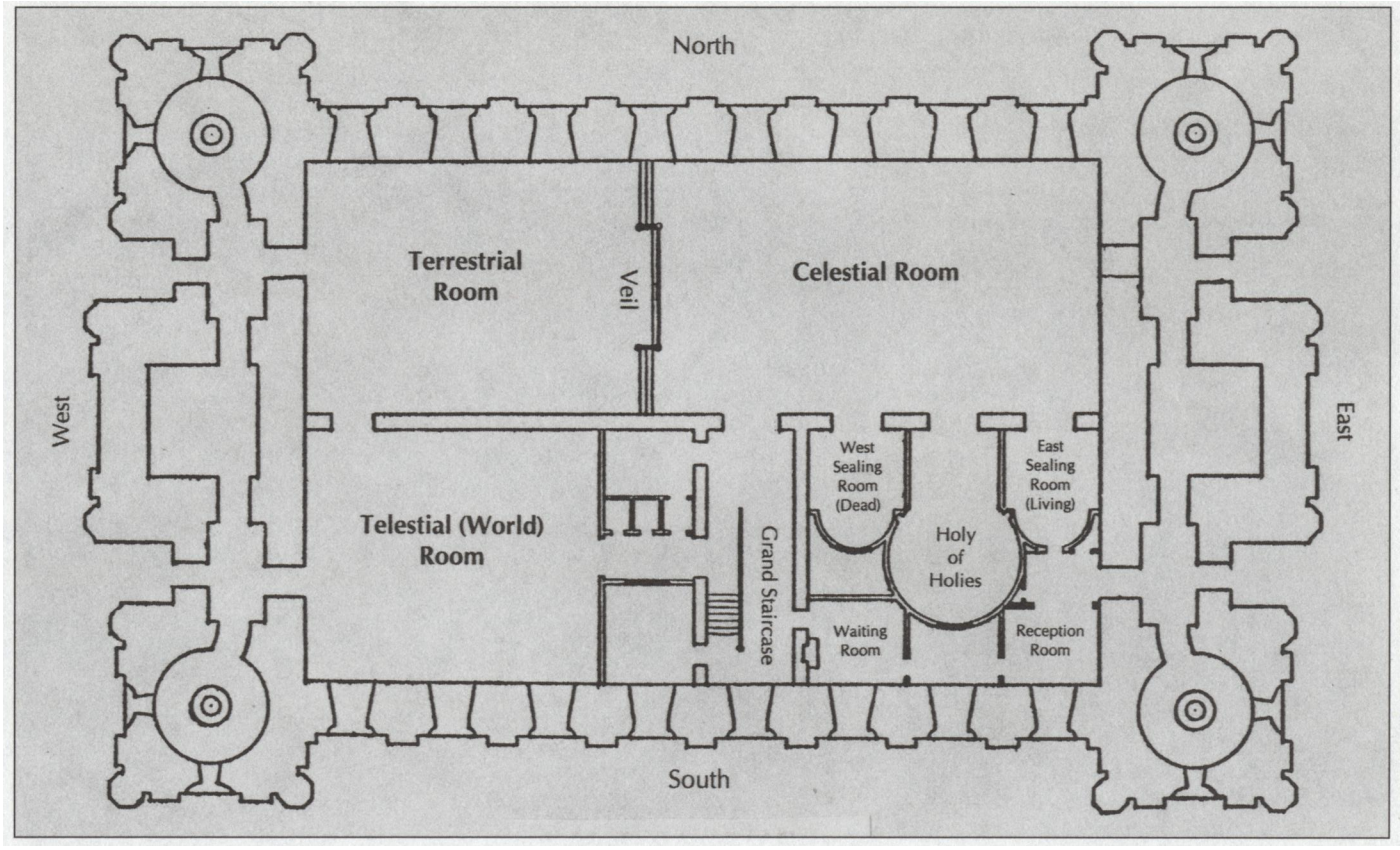
No. 55. First floor (basement). Creation Room (Lower Lecture Room) looking south before the walls were painted with murals. The door leads directly into the Garden of Eden Room.

No. 53. First floor (basement). Garden of Eden Room from the southeast corner looking north. The entrance from the Creation Room portal is to the left.

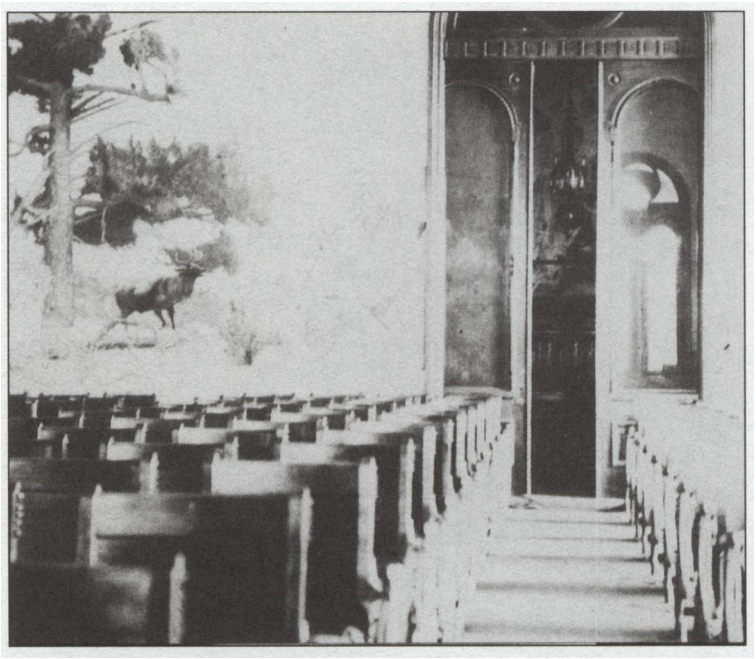
No. 52. First floor (basement). Garden of Eden Room from southwest corner looking northeast. The light on the back (north) wall is from the Garden Room annex, which is behind the altar to the right.



No. 51. First floor (basement). Altar at south end of Garden of Eden Room. To the right and left are portals leading to the conservatory (greenhouse) in the Garden Room annex. See McAllister, p. 15, and Hamilton and Cutrubus, p. 115.

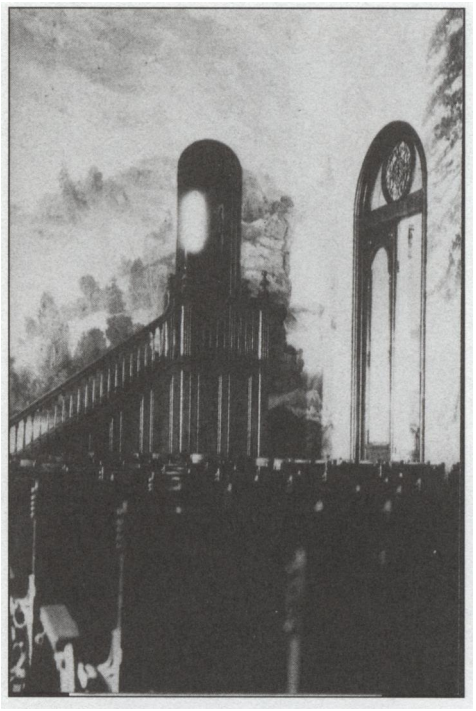


S. L. Temple - 2nd Floor

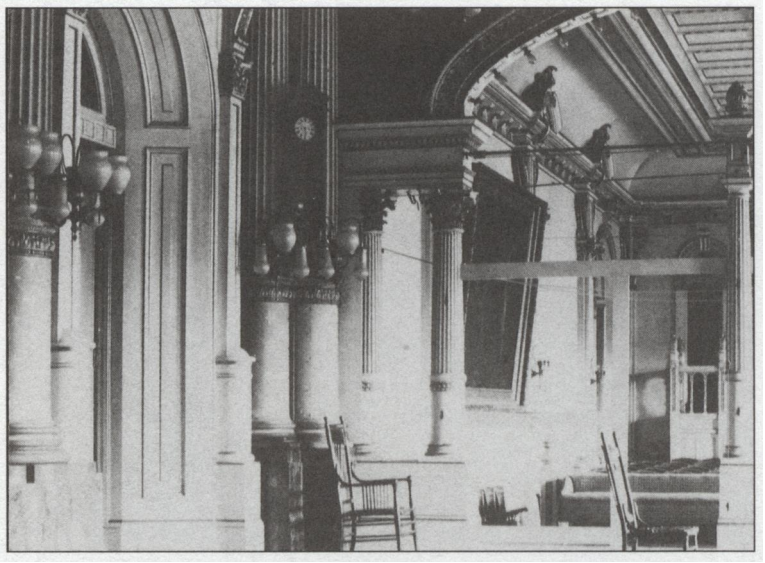


No. 65. Second floor. Telestial or World Room, from near altar looking east through partially opened sliding doors into upper level of grand staircase, from which this room is entered.

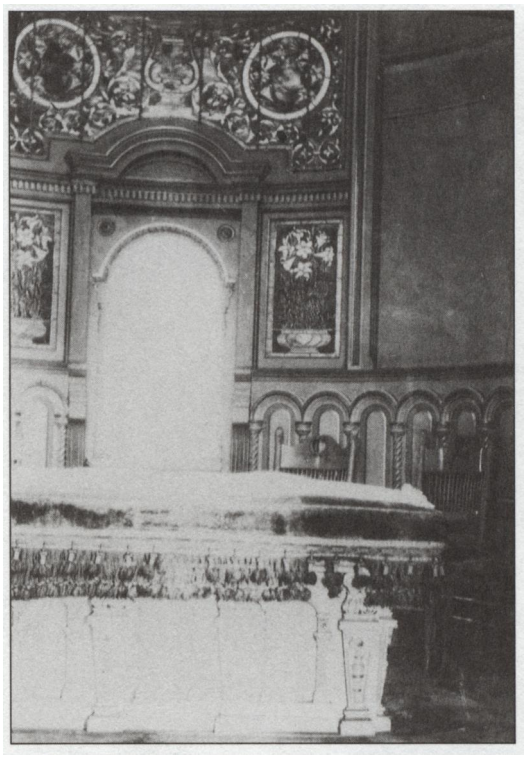
No. 68. Second floor. Telestial or World Room, from southwest corner looking at north wall.



No. 70. Second floor. Telestial or World Room from east entry (see No. 65) looking northwest. The door on the right enters the Terrestrial Room.



No. 74. Second floor. From east end of Celestial Room looking southwest into Terrestrial Room. The veil, which normally hangs from the partition, has been removed for cleaning.

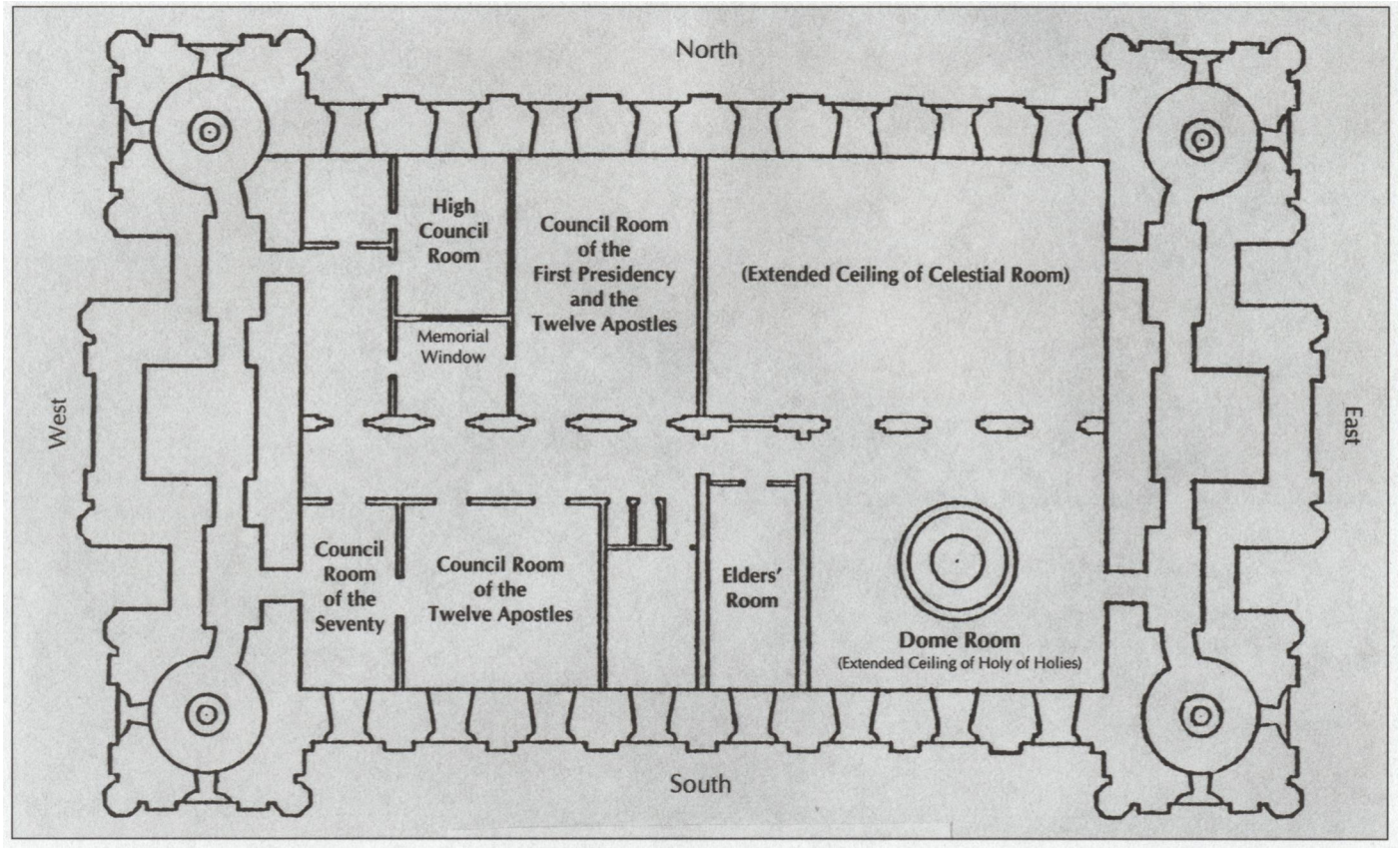


No. 79.
Second floor.
East Sealing
Room (for
the living)
from door
between it
and Celestial
Room.

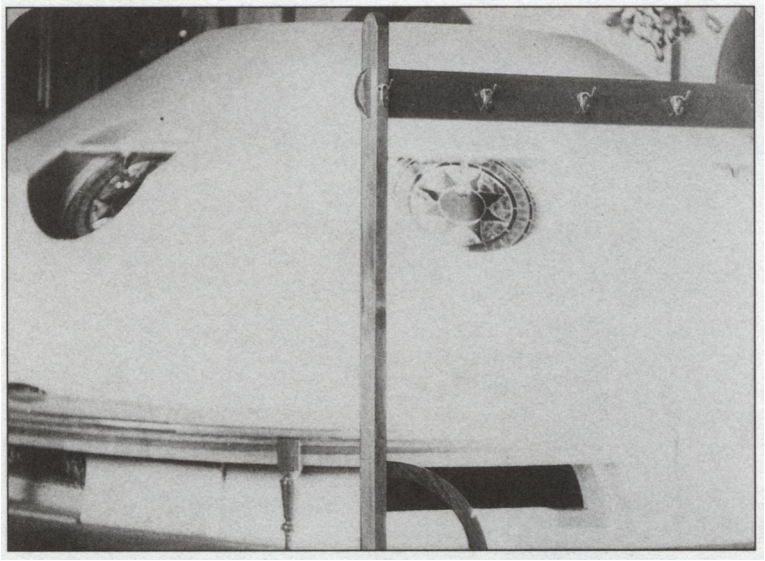
No. 61. Second floor. Reception room south of East
Sealing Room, looking south.

No. 80. Second floor. Statuary group in northeast corner of Celestial Room. From top: woman with torch; cherubs; Joseph Smith, right, and Hyrum Smith, left; Father and Son appearing to Joseph Smith (kneeling), flanked by women reading.

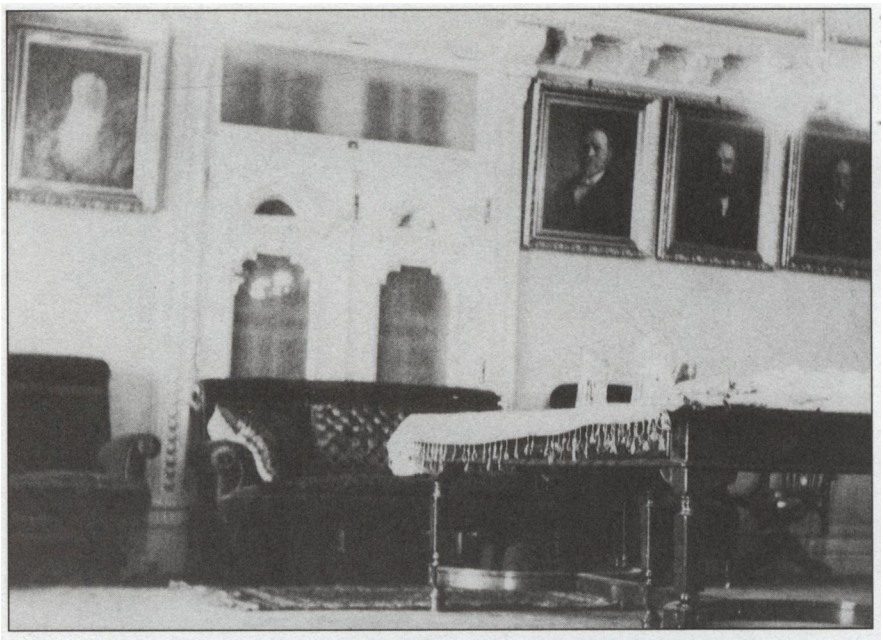
No. 76. Second floor. Furniture in Celestial Room. The door in the rear enters the Holy of Holies sealing room.



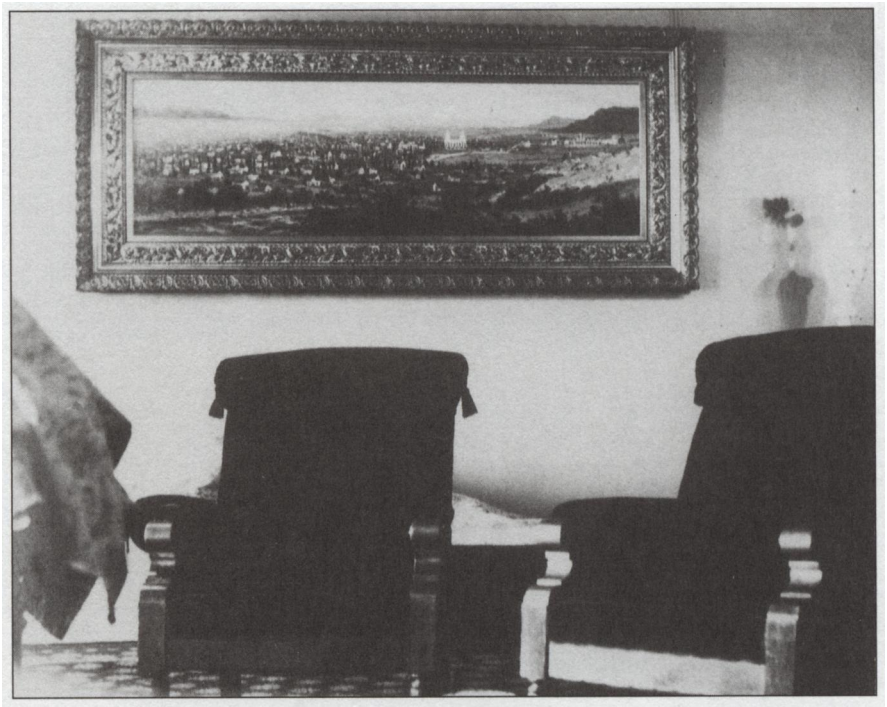
S. L. Temple - 3rd Floor (Administrative)



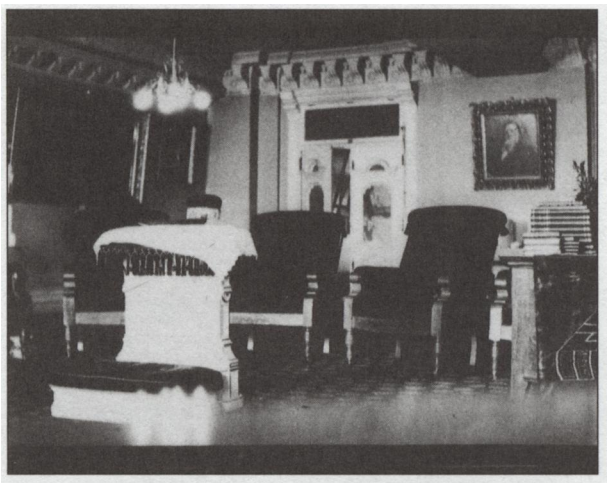
No. 78. Third (Administrative) floor. Dome Room in southeast corner of third floor. This is the extended ceiling of the Holy of Holies. "In the center appears a large dome, fifty-one feet in circumference at its base and seven feet high. This is set with seventeen jeweled windows." Talmage, p. 194.



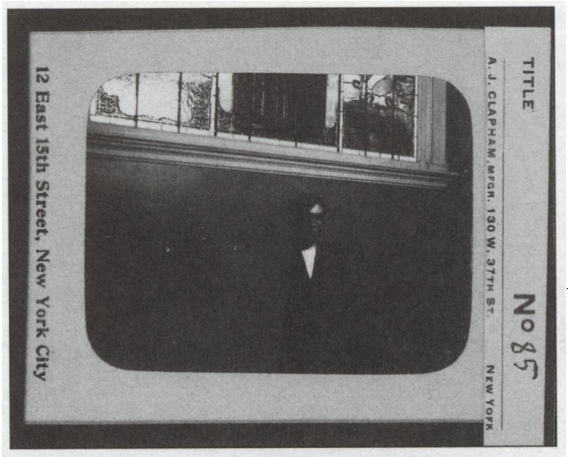
No. 88. Third (Administrative) floor. Council Room of the Twelve Apostles, from the east wall looking west toward the blocked door into the Council Room of the Seventy. See Talmage, Plate 32, McAllister, p. 17, and Hamilton and Cutrubus, pp. 132-33.



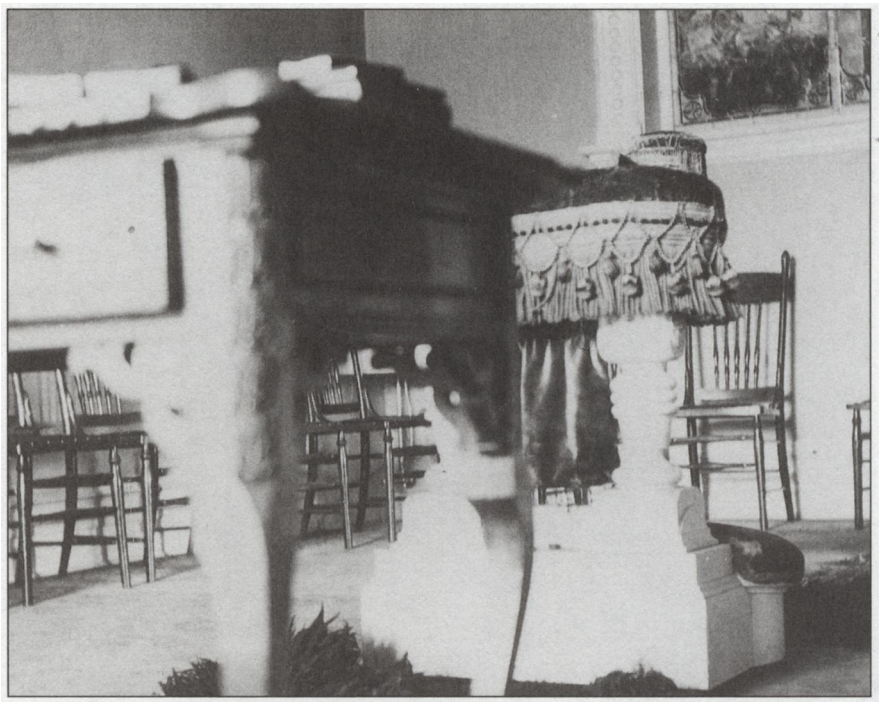
No. 87. Third (Administrative) floor. Council Room of the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles, looking toward east wall. Note top of a spittoon between the chairs.



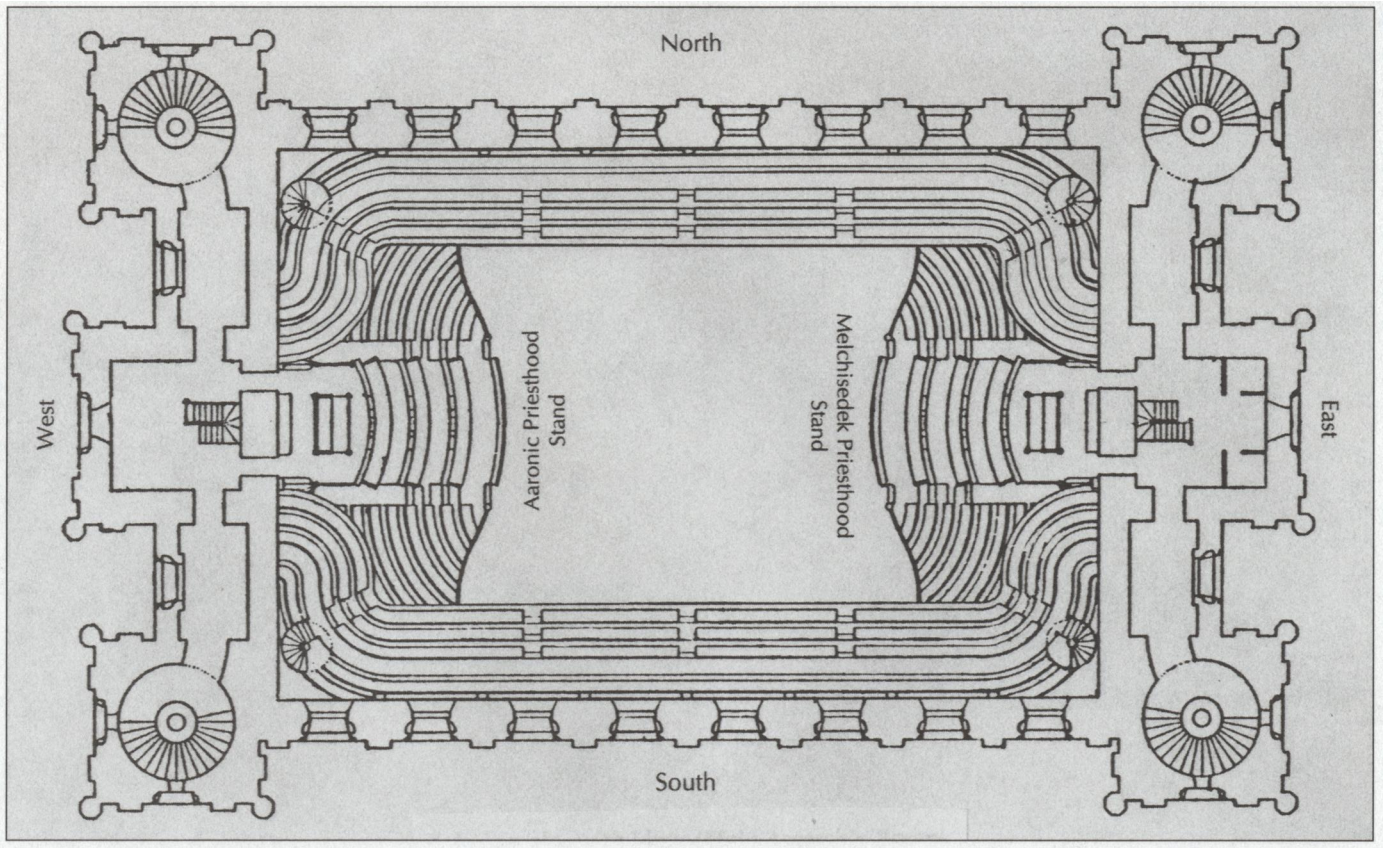
No. 89. Third (Administrative) floor. Council Room of the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles, from northwest corner looking southeast. Note spittoon at left. McAllister, p. 21, shows the spittoon on the left and another at the base of the right table leg at the far right. For Plate 33 in Talmage, Ralph Savage removed spittoons and retook the exposure.



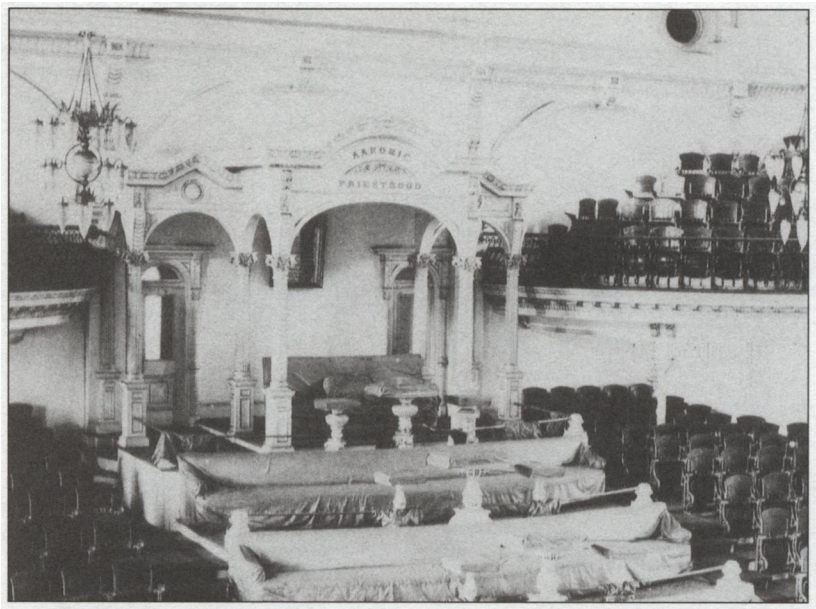
No. 85. Third (Administrative) floor. Bossard standing in front of Memorial Window in Memorial Window Room, looking north. See Talmage, Plate 34. Florence stated in the 18 September 1911 issue of the *Salt Lake Tribune*: "In one room he [Bossard] wanted a picture that was a good one and he stacked two chairs up, one on top of the other, and put his camera on top of them, and as the room was dark it was to be a slow exposure, why he walked around in front and had his own picture taken in the room."



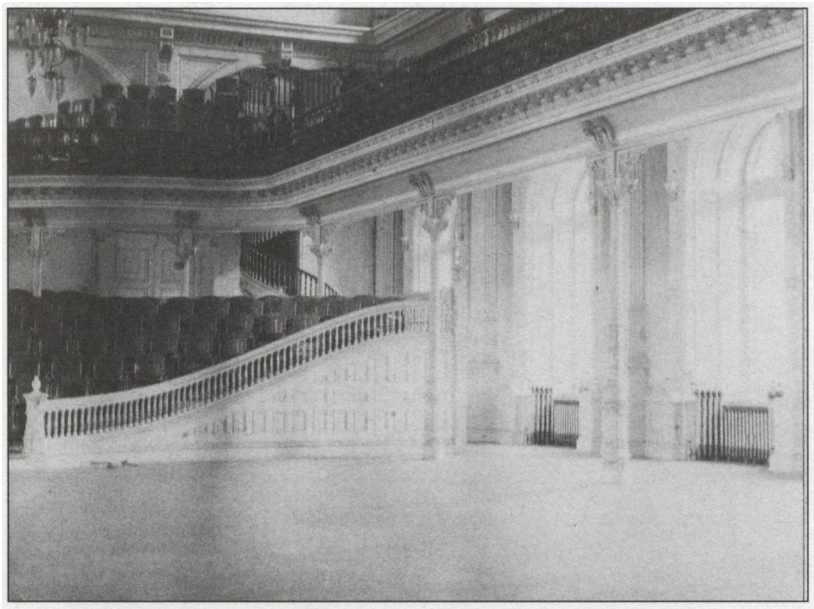
No. 86. High Council Room from north side looking south toward the back side of the Memorial Window.



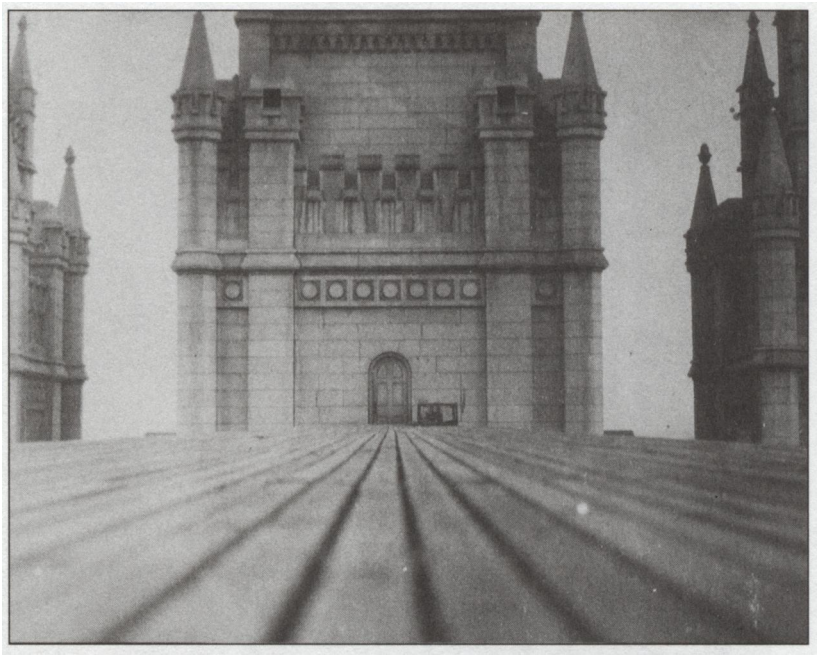
S. L. Temple - 4th Floor (Main Assembly Room)



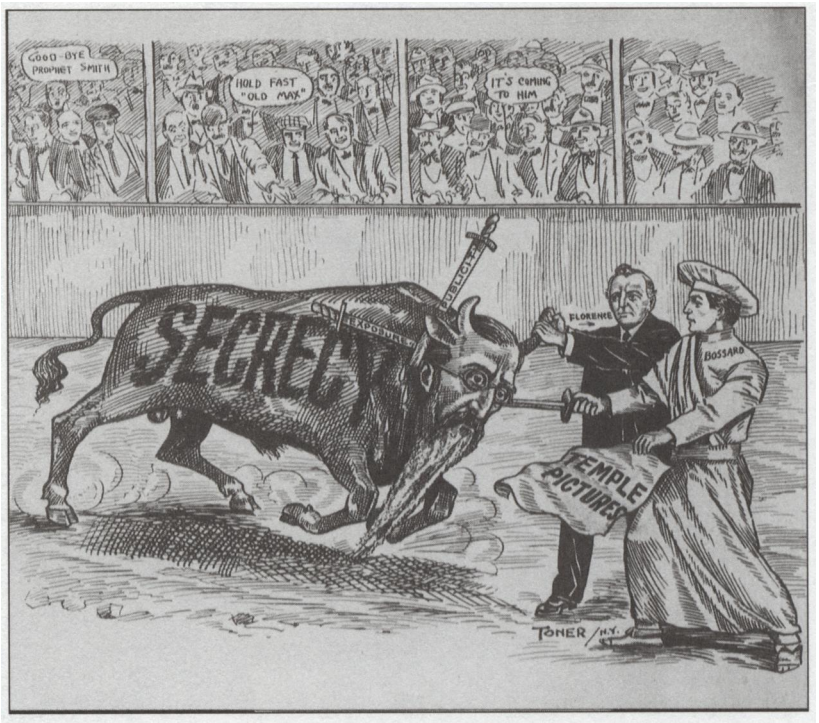
No. 92. Fourth floor. West end of Main Assembly Room. Aaronic priesthood stand and pulpits. Note that the upholstered terraced seats are covered with canvas for cleaning.



No. 90. Fourth floor. Northwest corner of Main Assembly Room, bathed in June sunlight.



No. 94. Roof of temple from east end looking west.



No. 25. Original cartoon drawn by Toner, New York City,
in late October or early November 1911.

Appendix: Description of Lantern Slides and Negatives

Unless otherwise stated, the photographs were taken by Gisbert Bossard. The interior photographs of the Salt Lake temple were taken in or about June 1911. Those outside the temple were probably taken about the same time. The publicity photographs of Bossard (in suit or temple clothing) and Max Florence were taken at Scherer Studios in New York City in early October 1911. Except as noted, the glass negatives and positive lantern slides at the Utah Masonic Grand Lodge Library in Salt Lake City, which are stored in four cloth-covered wooden boxes, include: (a) 134 3½"×4" second-generation glass negatives, probably made from the original Bossard negatives (location unknown); (b) 132 3½"×4" positive glass lantern slides, probably made from the glass negatives described above; (c) 130 3½"×4" positive glass lantern slides (duplicates) which have been hand-colored; (d) 6 7"×5" original glass negatives from Scherer Studios in New York City of Bossard (in suit or temple clothing) and Florence, including one of a small icon of three monkeys (see no. 17). Two of the original numbered black-and-white lantern slides (nos. 16 and 89) and three of the original numbered hand-colored slides (nos. 45, 110, and 116) are in Special Collections, Merrill Library, Utah State University, Logan.

The 24 October 1911 affidavit of Bossard and Florence states that their lecture consists of 105 slides. They were probably referring to the black-and-white slides, the 105th of which (of 109 which are numbered) is Joseph F. Smith's private office and curtain leading to his bedroom, which Florence considered sensational. At the Bijou Theatre, the hand-colored slides were undoubtedly shown. Their numbering varies somewhat from the black-and-white slides, continuing through No. 125. The extra hand-colored numbered slides are photographs of anti-Mormon cartoons from other publications.

The inventory which follows describes: (a) the hand-numbered black-and-white lantern slides; (b) one unnumbered black-and-white cartoon by Toner, which was probably not used because of marginal quality; (c) six unnumbered black-and-white lantern slides of Bossard (in suit or temple clothing) and Florence taken at Scherer Studios in New York City. For comprehensiveness, nos. 106-109, the remaining hand-numbered black-and-white slides, are also included. The remaining unnumbered slides, which were probably not numbered because of marginal subject matter or poor quality, are not included in the inventory. The views which are known to have been made into postcards by Florence and Bossard are noted.

BLACK-AND-WHITE LANTERN SLIDES

1. Title slide: "Inside Views and Facts about the Mormon Temple. By Gisbert L. Bossard. Copyright 1911. Max Florence, Mgr. Slides Mfd. by A.J. Clapham, 130 W. 37th St. N.Y." Mormon temple in background.
2. Front page of *Deseret Evening News Extra*, 16 Sept. 1911.
3. Subsequent page of *Deseret Evening News Extra*, 16 Sept. 1911.
4. Front page of *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 Sept. 1911.
5. Subsequent page of *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 Sept. 1911.
6. Bossard, left, in suit and hat holding camera, facing Florence, right, in suit and hat, with his right hand on Bossard's shoulder.
7. Affidavit, dated 24 October 1911, signed by Florence and Bossard, witnessed by Michael A. Testa and Frank Morris. Florence and Bossard "certify that the only and genuine contract for the making of the stereopticon slides of the Interior Views and Facts about the Mormon Temple Lecture, which consists of 105 slides, controlled and owned exclusively by us, is that one executed to A.J. Clapham, Fine Art Slide Maker, 130 West 37th St., New York. All slides distributed will bear the signature of Max Florence, Mgr. on each and every slide. . . ."
8. Florence, left, sitting, holding *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 Sept. 1911; Bossard, right, standing in temple robes, cap, and slippers, pointing Florence to a passage in a book (T. B. H. Stenhouse's *Rocky Mountain Saints*). *Deseret Evening News Extra* of 16 Sept. 1911 is displayed at the foot of Florence's chair.
9. Certificate of baptism of Gilbert [sic] Bossard, Fifteenth Ward; baptism 4 Jan. 1907; certificate dated 6 Jan. 1907.
10. Bishop's Store House tithing receipt for $5.10 issued to Gisbert Bossard, Sixteenth Ward, dated 12 Oct. 1908.
11. Aaronic priesthood certificate of ordination for the office of priest to Gisbert Bossard. 16th Ward, dated 14 Dec. 1908.
12. Elder's certificate for Gisbert Bossard being ordained an elder on 26 April 1909.
13. Certificate of quorum membership issued to Gisbert Bossard, 18 Oct. 1909.
14. Certificate of blessing for Virginia Elfriede Bossard, daughter of Gisbert and Elsie Luck, born 24 October 1909, blessed in Twenty-eighth Ward, 5 December 1909.
15. Certificate of blessing for Gisbert Erl Bossard, son of Gisbert L. and Elsie E. Luck, born 24 November 1910; blessed 2 April 1911.
16. Drawing of a woman behind bars, with caption: "The White Slave." (Original lantern slide at Merrill Library, Utah State University.)
17. Small icon of three monkeys: hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil.

Probably taken at Scherer Studios in New York City, early October 1911.

18. Copy of portrait of Joseph Smith, Jr.
19. Copy of illustration of Joseph Smith receiving gold plates and spectacles from Moroni.
20. Not used or missing.
21. Copy of photograph portrait of Brigham Young.
22. Copy of photograph portrait of Joseph F. Smith.
23. Copy of original cartoon drawing by Toner, New York City; see no. 23.
24. Copy of original cartoon drawing by Toner, New York City; see no. 24.
25. Copy of original cartoon drawing by Toner, New York City; see no. 25.
26. Copy of photograph of Tabernacle choir and organ.
27. Joseph F. Smith and John Henry Smith, in hats, walking near Tabernacle.
28. Probably Joseph F. Smith and John Henry Smith from the back as they leave Temple Square.
29. Back of John Henry Smith and another with streetcar in the background.
30. North Temple Street looking east from West Temple Street.
31. Bureau of Information inside south entrance to Temple Square, with three women on stairs.
32. People exiting Assembly Hall, Temple Square.
33. Inside of Assembly Hall with organ. Blurry.
34. Joseph and Hyrum statues on Temple Square.
35. Two men behind iron fence with sign: "No Admittance." Watchman's Office at east entrance to Temple Square.
36. Copy of photograph of Salt Lake temple.
37. Man in hat standing in front of east side of temple.
38. Old annex on north side of temple.
39. Two of the three skylights above underground tunnel between temple and annex.
40. William C. Staines Conservatory (greenhouse) northwest of temple, with old annex on left and temple in background.
41. Engine room at base of west side of temple.
42. Gisbert Bossard, in suit and white hat, standing near southwest corner of temple.
43. Three males (temple gardeners?) standing near flower bed in temple square.
44. William C. Staines Conservatory facade, Temple Square. Underexposed.

45. Garden Room Annex on eastern half of south side of temple.
46. Gisbert Bossard in white shirt, white pants, slippers, and apron holding what looks to be a fishing pole. Scherer Studios, New York City, early October 1911.
47. Gisbert Bossard in white shirt, white pants, slippers, and apron, kneeling on right knee with left arm to the square and left hand over his heart. Scherer Studios, New York City, early October 1911.
48. Gisbert Bossard in white shirt, white pants, slippers, and apron with hatchet in left hand poised to split a piece of wood. Scherer Studios, New York City, early October 1911.
49. Sword in sheath with closed folding chair, probably at bottom of stairs which enter Garden Room Annex on south side of temple.
50. Garden Room, probably west wall. Poor quality. See Hamilton and Cutrubus, p. 115.
51. Altar in front of south wall of Garden Room. See Hamilton and Cutrubus, p. 115.
52. Garden Room from southwest corner looking northeast. Issued as a postcard.
53. Garden Room from southeast corner looking north.
54. Garden Room, probably from altar looking northwest. Poor quality.
55. Creation Room looking south.
56. Temple basement. Probably benches and hangers north or south of washing and anointing rooms. Poor quality.
57. Bathtub and wooden stool for washing and anointing in basement of temple.
58. Baptismal font in basement of temple. Underexposed.
59. Baptismal font in basement of temple. Ox at right with rolled-up rag rug on horns.
60. Baptismal font in basement of temple. Rolled-up rug resting on horns of ox in center, chair at right.
61. Second floor reception room for sealings taken from doorway of east sealing room looking south. See Hamilton and Cutrubus, p. 127.
62. Wall painting, possibly second floor near grand staircase or waiting rooms for sealings. Poor quality.
63. Gisbert Bossard in temple robes, cap, and slippers (without apron), standing behind pedestal with two books and small icon of Salt Lake temple. The large book is T. B. H. Stenhouse's *Rocky Mountain Saints*.
64. Telestial Room from near altar looking east toward door which enters from grand staircase; doors at left closed. Postcard.
65. Telestial Room from near altar looking toward east wall and entrance. Sliding doors partially open. Issued as a postcard.

66. Telestial Room, from south side looking toward north wall and northwest corner. Underexposed.
67. Telestial Room, from south side looking toward north wall; bears at far left.
68. Telestial Room, from southwest corner looking toward north wall; bears just left of center.
69. Telestial Room, from south wall, looking toward northwest. At left, entrance to Terrestrial Room; bears near center.
70. Telestial Room, from east entry looking toward northwest. Door on right enters Terrestrial Room. Issued as a postcard.
71. Telestial Room, from east entry looking west. The door exits into west foyer.
72. Telestial Room, from east entry looking toward window in southwest corner. Issued as a postcard.
73. Terrestrial Room, from northeast corner near veil, looking southwest toward entrance from Telestial Room. Issued as a postcard.
74. From eastern part of Celestial Room looking southwest into Terrestrial Room. Veil has been removed for cleaning. Issued as a postcard.
75. Celestial Room ceiling.
76. Celestial Room furniture; entrance to Holy of Holies in rear.
77. Celestial Room, looking through opened door into west sealing room with portrait of Lorenzo Snow on left. Overexposed.
78. Dome Room in southeast corner of third (administrative) floor. This is the extended ceiling from the Holy of Holies.
79. East sealing room, looking south from Celestial Room. Issued as a postcard.
80. Statuary grouping in northeast corner of Celestial Room. From top to bottom: woman with torch; two cherubs; Joseph and Hyrum Smith; God and Jesus appearing to Joseph Smith, flanked by women reading on each side.
81. Statuary grouping in northeast corner of Celestial Room.
82. Painting, poor quality.
83. Painting, poor quality.
84. Small desk, probably in northwest corner room of third (administrative) floor.
85. Third (administrative) floor. Bossard standing in front of Memorial Window (Tiffany) in Memorial Window Room, looking north. Opposite side of Memorial Window shown in no. 86.
86. High Council Room from north side looking south toward back side of Memorial Window. Opposite side of Memorial Window shown in no. 85.
87. Council Room of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve

Apostles. *Deseret Evening News*, 16 Sept. 1911, incorrectly refers to this as the Assembly Room of the Council of the Twelve.

88. Council Room of the Twelve Apostles from the southeast corner looking west toward blocked door leading into Council Room of the Seventy.
89. Altar in Council Room of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles from northwest corner looking toward the southeast. (Original lantern slide in Merrill Library, Utah State University.)
90. Fourth floor. Northwest corner of Main Assembly Room.
91. Fourth floor Assembly Hall, from east looking west to Aaronic priesthood stand.
92. Fourth floor Assembly Hall, from south gallery looking down on Aaronic priesthood stand.
93. Fourth floor Assembly Hall, from west looking east toward Melchisedec priesthood stand.
94. Temple roof, from east end looking west.
95. Temple roof, west end looking northeast.
96. Not used or missing.
97. Brigham Young Monument, Main and South Temple streets, with Hotel Utah in background.
98. Hotel Utah.
99. Main and South Temple streets looking toward Hotel Utah, with pedestrians and horse-drawn carriage.
100. Not used or missing.
101. Two women seated on grass, one man stooping and one standing, at rear of Beehive and Lion houses.
102. Two men and two women standing outside rear of Beehive House.
103. Child sitting on couch, probably in Beehive House. Overexposed.
104. Beehive House, main floor, southeast room.
105. Beehive House, main floor. Joseph F. Smith's (formerly Brigham Young's) private office with curtain into bedroom.
106. Female child, about five years old, standing in garden.
107. Unknown room with secretary-bookcase and rocking chairs.
108. Room in unknown house.
109. Unknown room with bookcase and chair.

--- Bossard, left, in suit and hat facing camera; Florence in suit and hat with right hand on Bossard's shoulder. Scherer Studios, New York City, early October 1911.

--- Bossard, left, in temple robes, cap, and slippers (without apron), showing Florence, right, *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 Sept. 1911, and *Deseret Evening News*, 16 Sept. 1911, between. Scherer Studios, New York City, early October 1911.

--- Florence, left, back to camera, showing Bossard, right, in temple robes, slippers, and cap (without apron), newspaper. Foreground: pedestal topped with small Salt Lake temple icon and book. Scherer Studios, New York City, early October 1911.

--- Florence, left, seated in ornate rococo chair, holding *Salt Lake Tribune,* 17 Sept. 1911, in left hand; Bossard standing at right in suit and tie. Scherer Studios, New York City, early October 1911.

--- Bossard, left, in temple robes, slippers, and cap (without apron) facing Florence, seated, with *Salt Lake Tribune,* 17 Sept. 1911, and *Deseret Evening News,* 16 Sept. 1911, between. Bossard's right hand is raised nearly to the square and his left hand rests across his abdomen. Scherer Studios, New York City, early October 1911.

-- Florence left, with right hand on pedestal, facing Bossard in temple robes, cap, and slippers. Bossard's right hand is raised to the square; in his left he holds an open book. On a pedestal rest a large book and a small icon of the Salt Lake temple. Scherer Studios in New York City, early October 1911. (Original in Merrill Library, Utah State University.)

-- Photograph of original cartoon by Toner, New York City. Bull (with face of Joseph F. Smith) marked "Conspiracy." A man in a suit has bull by the tail, pulling him away from Bossard and Florence, each of whom has a rope tied to one of the horns. Uncle Sam stands between the bull and a number of innocent females who plead: "Protect us." Caption: "Uncle Sam. Here he is. Do your duty." Uncle Sam says to Bossard and Florence: "All right boys! I'll attend to him." Bossard holds a small flag marked "Facts." Florence holds one marked "Views."

Origami Birds

David Rock

I release my pretty doves
and they ascend like sparks
to disappear. And look
how restless I am,

rather like a child,
thinking how
small I feel.
But small is fine.

I also have a mountain
where I can go
to be alone.
And when I come down,

all beautiful and old,
having seen everything,
having talked to God, I will say
to the first person I meet:

Here, take this bird I made.
My left hand has no idea;
my right hand is totally
blind, feeling its way.

On God's Grace

Teresa Whiting

MY FIRST INKLINGS OF THE POSSIBILITIES of God's grace in my life came through two personal experiences. The first occurred during a family Christmas dinner. My youngest sister had brought her boyfriend. They were leaving right after dinner to drive to Seattle, where they were going to live together, unmarried. This was a devastating thing for my parents. No one in my immediate, and very Mormon, family had ever lived with someone they weren't married to. By doing this, my sister was, in my father's own personal theology, crossing a serious line between the savable and the damned. Through her repeated violation of the law of chastity, she would no longer be "godhood material." His personal devastation could be seen in the fact that on that Christmas Day he refused to speak to her, to look at her, or even to acknowledge her presence in the room.

Later at home, as I hashed over the day's events in my mind, I realized that my own wish for my sister was that in the end she would be whole and happy, right with herself and God. I didn't care what sins she might commit along the way. If she needed to try different paths to find her own way through life, that was okay. I just hoped and prayed that at the end of it all, through whatever life experiences she had, things would come out all right for her.

As I thought about my feelings for my sister, a possibility occurred to me that forever changed my life. After all my years spent growing up fully active and immersed in the church, after a full-time mission spent preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, for the first time in my life it occurred to me that God might feel the same way about me as I felt about my sister. In that moment I realized it was possible that what God cared most about was me, not about what mistakes I made along the way. Maybe he wasn't keeping a list of my every sin, making sure each was erased only after proper completion of the five Rs of repentance. Maybe he just hoped that through all of life's twists and turns and experiences, I would learn truth and find happiness, and eventually return to him. In that moment I realized for the first time in my life that *I* matter to God more than my sins do.

The second experience occurred during a particularly difficult time with a supervisor at work. I was having an almost impossible time working with this woman. Our problems were spoiling much of the enjoyment I usually get from my work. At one point I remember thinking that my greatest wish was that this person would disappear completely from my life. I didn't care how or why she left, just as long as she did. Whether she won the Publisher's Clearing House Sweepstakes and no longer needed to work, or was injured in a terrible accident, I didn't care. Just so long as I never had to deal with her again. I realized even as I thought this how awful such a wish was. In my mind I knew it was far from the Christian faith I believe in, but in my heart it was what I wanted, and I couldn't help it.

After one particularly difficult day with this supervisor, I drove up the canyon to find some relief from the stress I was feeling. Once again I wished this woman gone from my life, even if the cause was a personal tragedy in her life. And I remember telling God that the "born again" people who preach salvation by grace are certainly right about one thing: I am, at heart, a sinner. Despite active participation in the church throughout my entire life, and efforts to live every commandment I was taught, I was still a sinner, far from able to live the one thing Jesus taught was most important—that all people will know if we are truly his disciples by whether or not we love one another.

Then another realization came over me, one that again forever changed my spiritual life. In my heart I heard God's voice telling me, "You're right, you *are* a sinner, and *that* is what I have forgiven you for. In Christ I have forgiven you, not for every single sin you ever have or will commit and then repent of, but rather for *the very fact that you are a sinner.* And if you don't want to be a sinner, I'll help you. I'll give you my Spirit to be in your heart, to begin to change you, so that you can become less and less of a sinner, and more and more like Christ."

In the time since these two incidents occurred, my experiences of God's grace have continued, and I have tried to reconcile them with the spiritual experiences I had while growing up in the church. In the process I have begun to explore my own personal theology of grace. It is a reflection of my own experiences and understanding, which are continually evolving. I do not hold it up as the only way to view God or grace, and I realize that other people's experiences may be different from mine.

My personal journey to Christ had many small beginnings, in things like Family Home Evening lessons, Primary songs, Sunday school classes, bedside prayers, and family scripture study. Through these early experiences my faith in God was formed. In my teenage years I began to feel a conviction of my own sin and guilt before God, and a desire to be better. This was followed by a "change of heart" and a sincere attempt to

repent and sanctify myself by living all of the commandments and laws of the church. The spiritual experiences that accompanied my efforts during these early years were real. I believe they were from God and that God supported me in my efforts. Recognizing one's sinfulness and attempting to live the law are good things. They are a step forward from a previous state of being godless and unaware of, or unconvinced of, our sin.

Paul says in the New Testament that no one can be justified in the sight of God by keeping the law, but that the law serves only to bring us to a consciousness of our sin.[1] He says the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.[2] If this is so, then living under the law for a time can be a good thing. It can teach us and lead us towards a greater good than itself. Living under the law can prepare us to be born into the freedom and light of Christ's grace.

I believe the purpose of the atonement of Jesus Christ is to make us like him—to make us able to love as he loves. For me that is the whole point of religion and the gospel. This transformation within us isn't brought about by our just keeping all of the rules, all of the laws, for a long enough period of time. I think this may be what Jesus meant in his sermon in Matthew 5:27-48. In it he describes a righteousness that is greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees, who keep the law. He describes a condition of heart, one we are incapable of reaching by strict obedience to law. Who can prevent her heart from feeling anger? Who can prevent his heart from feeling sexual desire, or any of the other feelings Jesus describes in this sermon? Anyone who is fully alive and honest with herself experiences all of these feelings. Perhaps the point Jesus is making is that we are incapable of purifying our own hearts by our efforts to obey the law. Even if we could somehow manage to keep every outward observance of the law throughout our entire life, as the Pharisees attempted, inside of us our hearts would still condemn us.

So how are we to become like Christ? Only the gentle power of the Spirit[3] acting in our hearts can work this miracle, gradually making us

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1. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets" (Rom. 3:20-21, KJV); "For no human being can be justified in the sight of God by keeping the law: law brings only the consciousness of sin. But now, quite independently of law, though with the law and prophets bearing witness to it, the righteousness of God has been made known" (RSV).

2. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:24-25, KJV); "The law was thus put in charge of us until Christ should come, when we should be justified through faith; and now that faith has come, its charge is at an end" (RSV).

3. I personally believe the Holy Spirit is female. However, not everyone shares this belief, so I refer to the Spirit with the gender neutral "it" to avoid distracting readers.

more and more like Christ, more and more able to love as he loves. And this transforming presence is not controlled or commanded into our lives by our obedience to law. The Spirit is like the wind—it blows where it wills (John 3:8). Its presence is a free gift of God's grace—given not because *we're* good, but because *God* is good, not because we have somehow earned it or deserve it, but because we need it. Because we are not yet capable of being where God and perfect love are, God and perfect love come to us, and they alone have the power to take us to where they are.

The Spirit accepts us wherever it finds us, at whatever stage we are at in our lives, and it leads us forward in God's own way and time, to whatever next step we are ready and willing to take. And if we are ready and willing but unable, the Spirit can change our hearts and make us able. That is its miracle. It does not transform us overnight into perfect people—people who obey the law perfectly or who love perfectly. Our transformation in the Spirit takes place over time, throughout our entire lifetime. The longer the Spirit acts in us, the more our capacity to love grows and the greater our desire for goodness becomes, even if it takes the Spirit working in us over a period of years before we are willing or able to follow it in some things. I believe it is the Spirit acting in us as we experience life with all of its twists and turns that, over time, makes our hearts and souls more like Christ's.

No two people's journeys in the Spirit look exactly alike. The Spirit's workings in each of us will be specific to our own soul's journey. The law gives one universal set of "shoulds" and "shouldn'ts." But I don't think true goodness can be defined for every person, at every stage of her development, and in every situation, by one pre-set list of moral rules. Perhaps this is the point of that awful Book of Mormon story in which Nephi says the Spirit commanded him to kill Laban. Perhaps this is only a story, meant to be taken as an extreme and dramatic illustration of the fact that goodness or right actions are defined by the Spirit of God speaking to our individual souls at any given point in time, not by one pre-determined list of moral "shoulds."

If we aren't doing everything on the church's list of laws or commandments, I believe the Spirit can still be with us. It will take us as we are at any given point in time, and can be with us throughout each step of our journey, even in our sins. The Spirit does not condemn us in our sins, because those who have realized their sinfulness and sought redemption through Christ are no longer under condemnation.

> There is now no condemnation for those who are united with Christ Jesus. In Christ Jesus the lifegiving law of the Spirit has set you free from the law of sin and death. What the law could not do, because human weakness robbed it of all potency, God has done: by sending his own Son in the likeness of our sinful nature . . . (Rom. 8:1-3, RSV).

While we don't command the Spirit into our lives by our obedience to law, we do play a part in receiving the gift of its presence within us. Our part is that we must genuinely want and accept this gift that is freely offered to us. We must open our hearts to it and allow it to work in us. I now believe that the only "commandments" we must obey to be born into a state of grace are the ones Jesus gave in 3 Nephi 11:32, 33, 38-49:

> I bear record that the Father commandeth all people, everywhere, to repent and believe in me. And whoso repenteth and is baptized, the same shall be saved; . . . And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child. . . . this is my doctrine . . . And whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon my rock.

All that is required for us to be born into God's grace, into this individual journey in the Spirit, is to believe in and accept Christ, and then repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit.

Growing up I was taught that to truly "repent" meant to cease all sinning and do all righteousness. By this definition we must cease all sinning before we can be "worthy" to be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost. And our goal must then be to maintain that level of sinlessness for the rest of our lives, because we will lose the Spirit every time we violate the law after baptism. I no longer believe in this definition of repentance. It's like allowing us access to a physician only *after* we've cured *ourselves* of all disease. And it doesn't fit with the gifts of God I actually experience in my life. (It also made me neurotically obsessed with my own state of worthiness when I tried to live by it.) I now believe that true repentance is a state of heart, a desire for God and goodness, and a willingness to receive the Spirit's gifts in our hearts. I believe that to repent means to return to God in our hearts. The scriptures say:

> The Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind (D&C 64:34).

> Behold he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered (2 Ne. 2:7; see also 3 Ne. 9:20).

I don't think having "a broken heart and a contrite spirit" means to be continually sad or anguished over our sinful nature. For me, it means being honest and sincere in heart—realizing and acknowledging my true thoughts and feelings, including my many "sinful" ones—and wanting to be better or at least *wanting* to want to be better. I think it means being open and genuine the way a little child is—opening myself to both sorrow and joy, and allowing God's Spirit to act in my heart and change me.

Paul says repeatedly throughout the New Testament that we receive salvation and are born into the new life of the Spirit through faith alone, not through our own works in obeying the law.

> . . . Answer me one question: did you receive the Spirit by keeping the law or by believing the gospel message? . . . When God gives you the Spirit and works miracles among you, is it because you keep the law, or is it because you have faith in the gospel message? (Gal. 3:2, RSV; see all of Gal. 3 and 4)

> For it is by grace you are saved through faith; it is not your own doing. It is God's gift, not a reward for work done. There is nothing for anyone to boast of (Eph. 2:8-9, RSV).

> What room then is left for human pride? It is excluded. And on what principle? The keeping of the law would not exclude it, but faith does. For our argument is that people are justified by faith quite apart from any question of keeping the law (Rom. 3:27-28, RSV; see also Rom. 3:21-8:39).

> What, then, are we to say about Abraham, our ancestor by natural descent? If Abraham was justified by anything he did, then he has grounds for pride. But not in the eyes of God! For what does scripture say? Abraham put his faith in God, and that faith was counted to him as righteousness.
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> Now if someone does a piece of work, his wages are not "counted" to be a gift; they are paid as his due. But if someone without any work to his credit simply puts his faith in him who acquits the wrongdoer, then his faith is indeed "counted as righteousness" (Rom. 4:1-5, RSV).

I no longer believe that we have to demonstrate a sufficient number of good works, or obedience to all of the laws of the church, before the Spirit can dwell in us. I don't believe we have to qualify to receive the Spirit by somehow proving ourselves "worthy" of it. In fact, without its presence in our lives long *before* we are worthy, we could never become truly worthy. This is not to say that as we live our life in the Spirit, we will not do good works. It only means that the good works we do are the *result* of God's Spirit acting in us, not a pre-condition for receiving it. Good works are the *fruit* of the Spirit,[4] not the pre-requisite *roots*.

The moral virtues and standards taught by the church are desirable and no doubt inspired of God. These standards, such as honesty, fidelity, respect for life, service, forgiveness, the Word of Wisdom, prayer, etc.,

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4. "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. . . . But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:18, 22-23, KJV); "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to law. . . . But the harvest of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law" (RSV).

have inherent value. We will generally be happier if we live by them than if we don't. They can be a blessing to us as we try to navigate the difficulties of mortal life. The consequence of choosing not to live by any of these teachings is that we will not have the positive consequences and benefits that result from living by them. We may cause unhappiness in our own life and in the lives of others. But I reject the notion that one consequence of *not* living by them is that "God isn't speaking to us anymore" or that "the Spirit will no longer be with us." I think that idea is a human invention, based on human experience with imperfect, conditional love which has been projected onto God. I think it is also sometimes used as a scare tactic to coerce obedience. God's love for us and willingness to be with us do not depend on a certain performance level on our part.

I discovered for myself the unconditional nature of God's love and faithfulness during a period in my life after my mission, when I made the decision to cease activity in the church for awhile. I felt the need to find my own voice, to discover my own thoughts and desires, in the absence of the strong voice of the church telling me what they ought to be. When I first stopped attending church and keeping all of the rules of orthodoxy, I did not expect that God would continue to answer my prayers or be with me because I was deliberately walking away from the things I had been taught would entitle me to the companionship of the Spirit. For a long time I didn't even try to pray because I did not expect that God would listen to me. Spiritually I felt I had decided to walk blindfolded into the dark, and I believed I would be making the journey alone.

What followed were such scandalous acts as spending my tithing money at the bookstore, going to the movies on Sunday afternoons, and tasting alcohol for the first time. (Two and a half cans of beer to be exact, after which I threw up for what seemed like an eternity and wished for death to release me from my suffering. It's too bad I wasn't active in the church at the time. I could have given a firsthand testimonial of the Word of Wisdom.)

Wonderful discoveries came during this period of my life, the two most important being the discovery of my own voice and the discovery that God did not abandon me when I ceased activity in the church. In an especially dark moment when I cried out to God, partly out of habit and partly because I had nowhere else to turn, much to my surprise God was there for me, and the answer wasn't, "Meet me at church on Sunday and we'll talk." It was during my inactivity that I first began to understand God's unconditional love for and acceptance of me and his willingness to be with me wherever I was at in my life. This discovery has brought a tremendous amount of healing to my life.

I also learned that my spiritual well-being is tied to my emotional and psychological well-being, and that living the kind of moral lifestyle

taught by the church is often more the *result* of good psychological and emotional health than the *cause* of it. Failure to live by church standards can be as much a matter of being emotionally and psychologically wounded and in need of healing as it is a matter of being "evil" or "giving in to temptation." Years ago I remember reading an article by President Spencer W. Kimball in which he said that while Jesus condemned sin as wrong, he understood that sin usually springs from deep, unmet needs on the part of the sinner.

When we have unresolved needs or pain which leads us, either consciously or unconsciously, to make unwise choices, it is *then* that we most need God's love and help. It has been my experience that God's unconditional love and acceptance can help to heal our wounds and meet our needs, so that we can become free from the wounds that drive us to sin. Our lives become healthier, and we are better able to live the kind of virtues the church teaches.

My firsthand experiences of God's grace have altered my understanding and experience of the church. I love Mormonism and have chosen to remain a part of it, but I no longer view the church or its leaders as my spiritual parent. I've found a spiritual and psychological freedom I never experienced before. And I've found peace, a relief from the anxiety and self-doubt I used to feel along with all of the good experiences I had growing up in the church. It feels as though I've gained what Jesus promised in Matthew 11:28-30 when he said, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Perhaps the best way to express my own experience of God's grace is with an analogy from nature, in the form of a story about two different fields of sunflowers. In one field there exists an elaborate and efficient educational system whereby the oldest sunflowers teach all of the others how to bloom properly. They give daily instruction in important topics such as the correct sequence in which to unfold one's petals, the optimal angles at which to hold unfolded petals, and the best times of day to unfold.

In this field there are written guidelines on blooming which all flowers are encouraged to study regularly. There are daily practice exercises in unfolding, and regular meetings in which individual flowers can share their successes and failures, and warn others of the pitfalls and snares that can threaten one's unfolding.

Here flowers are taught the importance of following correct blooming procedures. They learn that without these techniques, no flower would be able to open itself to receive the life-giving warmth and light of the sun. "If you open your petals just so," they are told, "and hold them

this way every day, then the sun will begin to shine on you, and you will be filled with it's warmth and light." The oldest flowers sincerely believe this, based on what they were taught as young sunflowers and their own experiences with the sun.

Most of the flowers in this field endeavor with all diligence to bloom as they are told. They listen to every instruction and strive to implement all they are taught. They rise early each morning to begin their exercises, and many even keep daily logs of their successes and failures so that they can constantly improve their techniques. They develop strong muscles in each petal and give the utmost care and attention to holding them in the correct positions. Some do so well that they become instructors for other, less skilled, flowers.

All in all, this field seems to be a success. Flowers are constantly unfolding, or at least practicing and learning to unfold. Most flowers do receive sunlight and generate many seeds which in turn grow into new flowers. Attendance at blooming meetings is always on the rise, and everything seems to be following its proper course.

Except for one or two minor problems. All of that study and practice seems to wear some flowers out. There can be muscle strain from trying to hold the correct petal position hour after hour, and a great deal of frustration and discouragement when the wind blows one's carefully placed petals out of order. Some flowers weary of the effort and end up dropping their petals. While many others do manage to get it right and are able to receive the sun's warmth and light, it takes so much concentration to maintain their positions that they can't give their full attention to receiving everything the sun has to give. Sadly, some live their wholes lives without ever realizing that the sun was always shining on them. On the other hand, those who become especially skilled in the proper techniques sometimes begin to believe that it is their correct unfolding which *causes* the sun to shine. But, all in all, the field is confident that it is providing the most good possible for the most flowers possible.

In the second field, the educational system is different. Flowers here need learn only one skill: to turn towards the sun and surrender to it. It isn't a difficult skill to learn, or one that needs much teaching for that matter, as it is in the nature of sunflowers to face into the sun. They soon discover that when they turn their faces to the sun, its warmth and light reaches down and unfolds their petals, creating in each a perfect blossom.

As the sun's rays open each flower, the position of its petals corresponds perfectly with the sun's position in the sky, pulling optimal warmth and light into each flower. Interestingly, these flowers often end up in the same positions as some of the flowers in the first field, because that is the direction in which the sun pulls them, and a good position to be in.

This field includes some fortunate flowers from the first field, who, after spending years in a valiant and sincere attempt to unfold and hold their petals correctly, became exhausted and gave up, surrendering to the forces of nature around them. In doing so, they discovered the freely given gifts of the sun and its ability to reach down and hold them in its warm rays.

For the flowers in this field, every morning brings another day of blooming in the sun's warmth. The sun and the flowers are drawn to one another, and the flowers grow to love the sun fiercely for its daily gifts to them. The flowers here grow tall and strong and beautiful, reaching closer and closer each day to the sun that causes them to bloom.

New Paradigms for Understanding Mormonism and Mormon History

Lawrence Foster

WITHIN HISTORICALLY-ORIENTED RELIGIOUS FAITHS, such as those deriving from Judaism, Christianity, or Islam, any effort to develop new paradigms for understanding their historical development, especially in their formative stages, is inextricably intertwined with efforts to develop new ways of understanding the nature and significance of the faiths themselves. This is true because religious movements that base important elements of their *raison d'être* on claims that certain events actually happened—and happened in certain ways—open themselves up to criticism or to the necessity of changing their faith significantly if the historical assertions they make about those formative experiences prove either to have been false or to have occurred in substantially different ways than have been represented in the standard origin stories of their faith.

Thus it matters to committed Jews that the events described in the Exodus story really happened and were not just a powerful symbolic way of expressing the group's faith in its status as a chosen people of God. Likewise, for orthodox Christians it is important to believe that Jesus actually rose bodily from the dead and not that the story merely illustrates the profound truth that Christ symbolically lives in and animates the hearts of his followers today. And for Muslims, who so closely link what they view as God's ultimate and final revelation to humanity in the Quran with the role of what they see as God's last and greatest prophet Muhammad, any evidence that Muhammad might have been less than exemplary in his personal behavior or his teachings creates intense discomfort and anger, as can be witnessed by the Muslim reaction to Salmon Rusdie's brutally satirical (and viciously unfair) novel *The Satanic Verses* (1989). Latter-day Saints can have some sympathy with this Muslim anger by recalling their own intense reactions to Fawn Brodie's

pointed but far more balanced treatment of the prophet Joseph Smith in *No Man Knows My History* (1945).

This inextricable linkage between the nature of a religious faith and how its history is presented results in deep tension for historians like myself who, on the one hand, profoundly respect the religious movements they study, while, on the other hand, are primarily concerned with reconstructing, insofar as it is possible, what actually happened in the early development of those movements. In particular, what should historians do when, after close and thoughtful consideration, they conclude that certain events, felt by believers to be critically important to their faith, world view, and entire way of life, probably happened substantially differently than is represented in orthodox accounts? As a non-Mormon who has devoted nearly twenty-five years to the intensive study of early Mormon history, let me share briefly how my thinking in this area has developed and raise some of the difficult and unsettling questions with which I have not been able to come to closure in my own life and thinking.

The larger and perhaps ultimately intractable issue is one that is faced, I believe, by thoughtful individuals of all religious faiths who are committed to linking both the spiritual and historical aspects of their heritage into a coherent whole. Briefly stated, the question might be as follows: Is it more desirable to hold intense religious commitments which may be poorly founded historically but which motivate cooperative effort, self-sacrifice, and social unity or to hold to more historically well-grounded religious beliefs which tend to produce individualism and self-interest separate from the larger good? If coming to a historically realistic understanding of one's religious faith tends to produce socially undesirable results for a majority of individuals, would it be better to try to discourage such inquiry? Is it possible that only some sort of absolutistic religious commitment to a higher power whose influence is seen as fully pervading everyday life is sufficient to establish real community and overcome deeply ingrained human tendencies toward selfishness?

One individual who struggled with these issues without fully resolving them throughout his unusually active 97-year life was Arthur E. Morgan, the man who revitalized Antioch College with the work-study plan in the 1920s and went on to be the first head of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Morgan's ongoing tension over religion was related to the influence of his devout Baptist mother and his freethinking agnostic father. In later life he articulated the problem he had in determining whether to side with the highly committed, pious, warm-hearted fundamentalism of his mother or the intensely curious, free-thinking pursuit of truth wherever it might lead of his father. He noted his frustration that all too often people with intense, unquestioning religious commitment seemed more likely to show genuine, unselfish concern for others and a real sense of

community (which he deeply valued socially), while the freethinkers (with whom he most identified intellectually) often seemed deficient in the area of social responsibility and willingness to consider the needs of the larger community rather than just their personal self-interest.

Morgan never intellectually resolved this tension. In practice, he combined both elements by following the cooperative, self-sacrificing behavior of the religious true believer, while intellectually continuing to identify with the free-thinking pursuit of truth. As he put in a powerful diary entry in his late teens:

> I wish people had more sympathy and forbearance with other people's individuality. No two persons are alike, and we must either all get into a certain style of conventional living and suppress ourselves, or else we must have forbearance with one another. I get tired of having good orthodox people tell me I am going to perdition. The horror of having a doubt is so great to them that they do not see the horror of having a faith so small and shaky that they are afraid to doubt for fear it would make the whole structure tumble.[1]

One might counterpose to Morgan's reflections, however, the cautionary remarks of liberal religious leader Harry Emerson Fosdick, in his autobiography *The Living of These Days*, when he observed: "One can be so open-minded that he is like a summerhouse, through which all ideas are free to pass but where no ideas settle down and live. Gilbert Chesterton once remarked that the object of opening the mind, as of opening the mouth, is to shut it again on something solid."[2]

What, if anything, does all this have to do with the development of new paradigms for understanding Mormonism and Mormon history? Mormonism, like any vital religious faith, has always struggled to maintain a creative tension between opposing tendencies within the movement. Some of these "sources of strain and conflict" were ably delineated nearly forty years ago by Thomas F. O'Dea in his classic study *The Mormons* (1957). Most recently, Armand L. Mauss, in *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (1994), has compellingly argued that a great deal of Mormon success, especially in the twentieth century, has been due to its ability to maintain an optimum and fluctuating tension between distinctive religious claims (which also have been a focus of hostility and opprobrium), on the one hand, and a quest for acceptance and respectability (which can blur distinctiveness and assimilation with the larger society), on the other hand. Mauss argues that

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1. Quoted in Lucy Griscomb Morgan, *Finding His World: The Story of Arthur Morgan* (Yellow Springs, OH: Kahoe, 1928), 611.

2. Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Living of These Days* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1956), 260.

whereas Mormonism during the first half of the twentieth century moved substantially toward respectability and assimilation with the larger society, in the latter half of the twentieth century, in order to retain its distinctive character, it has, once again, increasingly asserted its opposition to, and distinctiveness from, the larger society.

It is striking to note that in this respect, as in many others, the development of Mormonism in the twentieth century is similar to, and even paradigmatic of, the development of other major religious traditions. Even before the horrors of World War I and World War II showed the depths of Western industrial civilization's capacity for evil, many of the most sensitive European cultural critics such as those described in Gerhard Masur's *Prophets of Yesterday* (1961) were acutely sensitive to the inadequacies of simplistic liberal optimism about prospects for the future. Most remarkably, during the past two decades since the mid-1970s, a profound shift has been taking place, as significant elements in all the major religious traditions of the world have recoiled sharply against the widespread secular assumption that humanity is the measure of all things and that God is essentially irrelevant or "dead." Brilliantly reconstructing a portion of this shift in his book *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World* (1994), Gilles Kepel notes how, in the three great monotheistic traditions, various forms of "fundamentalism" have arisen and achieved varying degrees of success in challenging the secular assumptions that have pervaded much of the twentieth century. Where such fundamentalisms are headed, in Mormonism and other traditions as well, and whether they will constructively engage or merely exacerbate the profound shortcomings of our current civilization by contributing to religious and ethnic holy wars or other disruptions remains to be seen.

In Mormonism, as in the other great exclusivistic religious traditions deriving from Jewish, Christian, or Muslim roots, the whole issue of new paradigms has always been problematic. In the first place, each of the great monotheistic traditions and its major offshoots represents, or attempts to represent, itself as a new and all-inclusive paradigm for understanding Truth. Judaism sharply separated itself as a monotheistic faith representing a specially chosen people of the one true God and rejecting what it saw as the barbarous polytheism all around it. Christianity, as it eventually developed, represented itself as a "new covenant," replacing and superseding the earlier Jewish covenant(s) through its understanding of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the sole means by which salvation could be achieved. Islam, claiming to include but also to supersede Judaism and Christianity, argued that the revelations of God presented in the Quran to Muhammad represented the final perfect manifestation of God's will for humanity. And Mormonism, beginning like

other Protestant groups with the argument that Roman Catholicism had corrupted true Christianity and that it was trying to return to and "restore" the purity of that initial faith, also argued that it was preparing the way for the dispensation of the fullness of time in which all previously valid human truth would be combined in a new synthesis for the Millennium.

Since each of these faiths claimed to have or be in the process of creating a paradigm for understanding ultimate truth, any effort to apply external models to understanding their faith is understandably viewed with suspicion by strongly committed members. They feel that their faith is the measure of all things and that use of other models for analyzing their faith—whether those models be religious or secular—is inherently subversive.

To some extent, this perception has validity. Take the case of mainstream Christianity over the past two centuries. Two major approaches developed from contact with the outside society have weakened the exclusivistic tendencies of traditional Christianity. On the one hand, increasing contact with other rich faith communities around the world has led many thoughtful individuals to question the possibility that Christianity is the *only* means human beings can effectively use to achieve salvation. On the other hand, academic historical and scriptural analysis has pointed out complexities and ambiguities in conventional faith claims, leading many individuals towards a more secular understanding of the development and significance of Christianity itself.

Mormonism has also been affected by such tendencies during the twentieth century, especially during the fifty years since World War II, as it has expanded its membership nine-fold and increasingly moved out of its Zion in the Intermountain West to engage the rest of the United States and the world. In this process, comparative perspectives from other disciplines and comparisons with other religious movements increasingly have been used in understanding Mormonism itself. At the same time, critical historical, sociological, and literary approaches have been used more and more frequently by Mormons trained in major centers of higher education as they try to better understand their Mormon heritage.

These developments have been viewed, even by their most enthusiastic supporters, with a certain caution. Can the distinctive boundaries and sense of mission of the faith be sustained in the face of such intellectual and social tendencies tending toward individualism and reassessment of the faith? Is there a danger that we may be throwing out the baby with the bath water and be left ultimately (in Archibald MacLeish's words in his poem "The End of the World") with "nothing, nothing, nothing—nothing at all"?

For Mormons, probably no issue in early Mormon history and reli-

gious belief has been more difficult and controversial in this regard than the nature and significance of the Book of Mormon, especially the question of whether it represents a literal history of the ancient inhabitants of the New World. Traditionally, there have been only two major approaches to this issue. One is, in essence, that the book is precisely what it purports to be—an ancient, divinely inspired record of the inhabitants of the New World, written on golden plates, recovered by the young Joseph Smith with the help of an angel, translated "by the gift and power of God," and representing another testimony to Jesus Christ in the New World. The other position, baldly stated, is that the book was a conscious, deliberate fraud, that it was either dictated by Joseph Smith out of his own mind or reworked from somebody else's manuscript, and reflects the concerns and preoccupations of nineteenth-century America rather than an ancient civilization. Until very recently, few efforts have been made to articulate any sort of alternative approach or paradigm for understanding the Book of Mormon. During the past decade—and to the surprise and consternation of observers both inside and outside the Mormon movement—some believing Mormons have attempted to articulate a new approach for understanding the Book of Mormon that uses elements from both of the two earlier approaches in new ways.

In the comments that follow, I will briefly give my own perspective on some of those developments and then discuss how this particular issue highlights the problem of developing and applying new paradigms for understanding major religious movements. It is only with considerable reluctance that I approach this issue directly here. Just as I have always had intense personal religious convictions but have been hesitant to discuss them, I have also felt that it was inappropriate for me, as a non-Mormon, to intrude my views directly about matters that could be seen as impinging on the "sacred space" of Latter-day Saints. Unlike many more secular historians, I genuinely care about the truth claims of the various religious groups I study professionally and I do not in my own mind simply sidestep such issues by using verbiage about the symbolic meaning that such claims have for individuals in the group. At the same time, my unshakable personal conviction both that absolute truth exists and that it can never fully be comprehended by humans because of our limitations in perception in this dimension of being has left me unafraid to go to the heart of questions that others might sidestep. My conviction has been that if I can be absolutely direct and honest in trying to understand the most difficult and intractable questions about a particular group, then all the less difficult issues will fall into place as well.

Let me also emphasize that what follows is only the briefest outline of a much larger possible argument and that I do not necessarily claim that my approach is "true" or "correct." I would stress that even if I may

feel, as I do, that the approach I shall be outlining so briefly here is more historically plausible than either the standard Mormon or anti-Mormon approaches, I do not think it is in any way likely or even desirable for Latter-day Saints to move toward such an approach, since it probably would be counter-productive for the health and expansion of the movement. In fact, during nearly twenty-five years of intensive study of the Latter-day Saint movement, the closest I have come to articulating in print the basis for such an alternative approach is a lengthy end note in my first book *Religion and Sexuality* (1981), pages 294-97, which I reluctantly inserted at the urging of my Oxford University Press editor. She was utterly baffled and frustrated because she could plainly see that I did not believe the Book of Mormon was either a literal history or a fraud, but she could not tell what I did think it was.

Within less than a year of beginning my intensive study of early Mormon history and family patterns in the early 1970s, I arrived at the basic conclusion that neither the Mormon nor anti-Mormon approaches to the Book of Mormon were adequate to understand it historically. Perhaps the turning point in my thinking came when I read the testimony of Joseph's wife Emma, recorded shortly before her death, about how the Book of Mormon was produced. She stated, in part:

> In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the [seer] stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us. . . . The plates lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him to fold them in. . . . My belief is that the Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity—I have not the slightest doubt about it. I am satisfied that no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscript unless he was inspired; for, when acting as his scribe, your father would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he would at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him.[3]

The first thing that struck me in reading this testimony is that if Joseph Smith was not even looking at the Book of Mormon plates during much of his dictation, the end product could not possibly be a "translation" in any normal sense in which the term is used. A translation presupposes something tangible that one is translating. Unless one hypothesizes clairvoyance on a staggering scale that even the most devout might have difficulty accepting, the process described by Emma would seem more plausibly characterized as a remarkable example of either human creativity or of divine revelatory inspiration, depending on one's point of view.

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3. "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," *Saints' Herald* 26 (1 Oct. 1879): 289-90.

At the same time, Emma's statement also convinced me that the counter argument that the Book of Mormon was a fraud was equally inadequate to explain such a compelling and uplifting creation. So how could the book properly be viewed? My own hypothesis, based on reading literally hundreds of ancient and modern transcriptions of trance communications and related examples of automatic writing, was that the Book of Mormon might best be viewed as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, examples of a trance-related document ever produced in the history of religion. Almost invariably, such documents, even some of the greatest such as the Quran, are almost purely filled with moral exhortation. But the Book of Mormon contained *both* a plausible story line and an unusually sophisticated moral message that even some of its harshest critics such as Alexander Campbell were astonished by. I thus argued that the most interesting questions raised by the Book of Mormon relate to its *content* not to its *origins,* whatever they may be. In my opinion, the book could best be viewed, like the Doctrine and Covenants, as a work of "inspiration" or "revelation" rather than as a literal translation or an actual history. From a sophisticated Mormon perspective, the book could still be described as "divinely inspired" and "a marvelous work and a wonder"; from a balanced non-Mormon perspective, it could be seen as an unusually sophisticated product of unconscious and little-known mental processes like those associated with automatic writing.

Some Mormon studies over the past decade have developed this line of argument, most notably Scott C. Dunn's article "Spirit Writing: Another Look at the Book of Mormon" in the June 1985 issue of *Sunstone,* and Anthony Hutchinson's extraordinary first chapter in the recent volume *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* (1993), edited by Brent Lee Metcalfe, in which he asserts: "Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints should confess in faith that the Book of Mormon is the word of God but also abandon claims that it is a historical record of the ancient peoples of the Americas" (1).

It is fairly clear that whatever the merits or demerits of this argument, it is a non-starter for both Mormons and non-Mormons in terms of its social appeal and usefulness. If non-Mormons were to begin to look seriously at the Book of Mormon as a significant religious document rather than maintaining their distance by dismissing those who revere the document as benighted people without full possession of their mental faculties, they could become vulnerable to a more profound appreciation of Mormonism as a compelling new religious movement. This they generally do not wish to do.

For Mormons, on the other hand, drawing a line in the sand and standing firm on arguments that the Book of Mormon is a literal history (whatever else it may also be) is similarly far more compelling as a

boundary maintenance mechanism and way to inspire the awesome commitment that continues to pulse through this powerful expanding religious movement. To jettison such a compelling argument in favor of the shifting sands of scholarly interpretation would not, I think, make sense organizationally.

In this respect, it may be useful to consider the argument put forward by Elaine Pagels in her fascinating study *The Gnostic Gospels* (1979). She argues that, irrespective of the merits or demerits of gnostic arguments in their own right, they were far less compelling organizationally than the orthodox Christian beliefs that eventually triumphed, with their strong stress on order and hierarchy. In the final analysis, the social implications of a specific set of beliefs are more important than abstract debate that may contribute to individualistic splintering in a movement.

To conclude, what does all this suggest for the use of new paradigms in Mormonism and Mormon history? Clearly the years since World War II have seen not only the remarkable numerical growth of the Mormon movement in the United States and worldwide but also a remarkable flowering of scholarship about Mormonism and Mormon history. In my opinion, that scholarship as a whole has contributed to the broadening and deepening of our understanding of the character and significance of this dynamic movement, both in the past and the present. Overall, the most acceptable use of new models has been in analyzing the profound social accomplishments of the Latter-day Saints. Attempting to apply external models to understanding the religious development of Mormonism, however, has been more controversial and is likely to remain so in the future.

Laying Our Stories Side by Side: Grandma, Janie, and Me

Cheryl L. White

> [Personal narrative] is the validation of women's experiences; it is the communication among women of different generations; it is the discovery of our own roots and the development of a continuity which has been denied us in traditional historical accounts.
>
> —Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

> The "text" [my grandmother] gave me was a map, a sketch abstracted from the multidimensional reality of her experience, her culture, her self. Critics applaud the novelist's careful development of a fictional character. How much more amazing was my Grandmother's gentle artistry that found a way to glimpse reality.
>
> —Sandra Dolby-Stahl

I TURNED FROM THE CALENDAR TO FIND the diary in my bookcase. It was hard to miss; the orange and red cover stood out like a sister at a priesthood meeting. I started to reach for it but stopped and just looked at it. A voice in my head rose above the confusion, "The prophets have said to keep a journal." Yet I could not pick up the journal and write. The memories were too painful. I had been through too much to start remembering the pain now. She was gone and I could not stand the feeling of loss that came with remembering. Yet somehow I knew I had to pick up that book and write once more. My life was recorded on its pages, my mission, my two engagements, my answer from God that he loved me, my successes, my sorrows.

Yet this sorrow was too big to handle. My mind drifted to what I had just read with my English 115 students. Neil Postman in "Learning by Story" argues that our lives must be surrounded by stories that help us to decide what is important in life and what is not: "ever since we can re-

member, all of us have been telling ourselves stories about ourselves, composing *life-giving autobiographies* of which we are the heroes and heroines. If our stories are coherent and plausible and have continuity, they will help us to understand why we are here . . ."[1] The personal reflects the community; the personal gives us detail through which we can better see the whole. As Postman says, "Without air, our cells die. Without a story, our selves die."[2] Perhaps if I wrote about Grandma it would help me accept her death and understand it. As I pondered picking up the journal, memories from the funeral came creeping into my mind.

The day wasn't dark and rainy like most funerals on television; it was a beautiful day in May. As I walked out of the chapel I could hear the birds in the distance and the rush of automobiles from the freeway. The sun warmed my black, floral dress, the most somber dress I owned, and I squinted my eyes to see the casket my cousins and brother were carrying. She was gone and had broken her promise. Only a month before she and I had sat in the dining room at Sizzler. It was my graduation day. The flower on my dress was from her; it smelled of spring and new life, yet we talked of death. She was tired; she looked older. The lines on her face were becoming bags of skin; her hands shook as she sat at my side and ate her salad. "Grandma," I said, "I'll make a deal with you." Everyone in my family was bugging me about when I would get married. I was a twenty-four-year-old returned missionary entering graduate school and I was happy. I did not care to get married right away. I enjoyed my life and had plans for a career and travel. But everyone else wanted me to "be happy" and get married. Why is it married people think they are the only happy ones? "Grandma, what if we make a deal about death and marriage?" I was scared she would die and I had been thinking of a way to keep her motivated to live longer. She was Chopin's "mother-woman" and my idol. "I want you there at my wedding, yet that will not happen for many years. You live long enough to be at my wedding, and I'll look for someone to marry." Grandma wiped the salad dressing from her lips and smiled, "I would love to be at your wedding. It's a deal." Reassured and praying to God that he would honor our commitment, I nodded, gave her a kiss, and returned to my salad. Yet there I stood on the walkway and watched the boys put her casket into the hearse. She broke her promise to me. How could she; she never had done that before.

I stood up from my bed and walked across the room, shaking my head to lose the image. I saw a pile of papers and moved them to cover the diary as if this would keep me from remembering. Once I opened the journal, the feelings would come back and I would be forced to bare my soul. I would cry and the ache of loss would begin again. I thought of the

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1. Neil Postman, "Learning by Story," *Dialogues and Conversations: A Reader for English 115*, ed. Grant Boswell and Gary Hatch (Needham Heights: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 184.
2. Ibid.

folklore class I was taking from William Wilson that semester. His article "Personal Narratives: The Family Novel" had said something that I found interesting. When we reveal and discuss personal narratives, we do so "at great risk of exposure."[3] Wilson "do[es] not believe we can understand the emotional force narratives might exert in the lives of others until we have dealt with that force as honestly as possible in our own lives."[4] Was I ready to risk exposure of my soul? Was I ready to share that pain with my posterity through my diary?

I sat back down on my bed and glanced around the room. In the bookshelf I saw the tattered copy of my favorite book, *Their Eyes Were Watching God,* by Zora Neale Hurston. Janie, the protagonist, is a strong woman who takes risks to make her dreams come true. Reading the book was a revelation; I had never found a book that spoke to my experience so strongly. While reading it in a college course, I thought of what Paul D. talks about in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* when he compares his story to Sethe's. I began placing my "story next to hers" (Janie's); placing them side by side to observe them, not to judge or totalize, but to enjoy and listen.[5] I know Janie is fiction, but her stories speak of life.

Hurston set up her first paragraphs in such a way that I felt the voice of a woman rising and crying out from the male stereotype that had held her silent.

> Ships at a distance have every man's wish on board. For some they come in with the tide. For others they sail forever on the horizon, never out of sight, never landing until the Watcher turns his eyes away in resignation, his dreams mocked to death by Time. That is the life of men.[6]

"True," I had thought, "Some dreams you just have to give up on." However, Hurston woke me with the next lines she wrote:

> Now, women forget all those things they don't want to remember, and remember everything they don't want to forget. The dream is the truth. Then they act and do accordingly.[7]

At this I came alert. Quickly rereading what I had just read, I could not imagine that someone would separate men's and women's dreams in such a manner. Yet Hurston did—women's "dream[s are] the truth. Then they act and do accordingly." I found a pen and wrote: "A woman's point of view. How refreshing." I wish at times that I could rewrite the impor-

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3. William Wilson, "Personal Narratives: The Family Novel," *Western Folklore* 50 (Apr. 1991): 130.
4. Ibid.
5. Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Plume Books, 1988), 273.
6. Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), 1.
7. Ibid.

tant texts in my life from a woman's point of view. How much different the Book of Mormon would be if Sariah had written on the plates. And Nephi's wife, think what she went through when bearing children in the wilderness. Why have so many woman's voices in the church been silent or marginalized? Eve has one great speech in the Pearl of Great Price, but then another strong woman's voice is not heard until Mary. And her voice is not her own but is transcribed by Matthew or someone else.

Leaning forward, I pulled out the copy of *Their Eyes Were Watching God.* In the book Janie is a young black girl being raised by her grandmother, Nanny. Janie's grandmother escaped slavery soon after her half-white daughter was born; likewise, Janie's mother was raped and ran away from home soon after Janie was born. Despite bad experiences with men, Nanny forces Janie into marriage with Logan Killicks, a land-owning, older, black man. For Nanny marriage is protection and a warm place to sleep; however, that is not what Janie is looking for. She discovers Logan does not want a wife; he wants someone to work beside him in the field. So Janie runs away with Jody Starks, a man with big dreams about building an all black community. However, he does not fulfill Janie's ideas of love either; he wants a wife to look beautiful and honor him. Again her dreams of romance fall. After Jody dies, Janie's last husband Tea Cake appears. He is a free spirit with no money and no steady job. However, he plays checkers and goes fishing with Janie, something no one else would do. They leave Eatonville and go to work in the swamps of Florida. During a flood Tea Cake is bitten by a rabid dog and becomes sick. In defending herself against the rabid Tea Cake, Janie shoots and kills him and soon after returns home to Eatonville.

I remember arguing with some in my class about the end of *Their Eyes Were Watching God.* They said it has a sad or negative ending, implying Janie could not survive without a man. Yet I saw her as discovering herself and her voice through her relationships. Not only does Janie survive, but Hurston through her use of language created a feminine text full of imagery, folklore, and emotions that helps us to understand the women's community better. It is often through the individual that we glimpse the community. I argued that through these stories "personal experience is transformed to cultural experience through the telling of personal narratives . . . they help the world witness an individual's most fundamental yet difficult task—the momentary 'breakthrough' from personal reality into cultural reality."[8]

As I thumbed through the pages of the book, I thought about my grandma's voice and identity. Her voice had always been heard when

8. Sandra Dolby-Stahl, *Literary Folkloristics and the Personal Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 120.

dealing with family issues and her identity came through being a homemaker and wife. However, I have no family of my own. How can I make my voice be heard in my culture and how can I find an identity? By Mormon standards I am hard to define because I do not have a husband or children. I have no one through whom I speak. I know I am not the only woman who has difficulty finding her voice in this community. Married women are also frustrated at times at their lack of personal identity or voice because they are defined by their relationships to husband and children.

My mother and I were driving to the store for forgotten dinner ingredients. Mom was upset and crying. I peeked her way occasionally to see if the anger was gone and eventually I worked up the courage to ask her what was wrong. Shaking her head she said she was tired of being the "Bishop's wife" or "Cheryl's mother." My heart beat quickly as I prepared for the worst. Was she getting a divorce; did she not love me anymore? She continued and said that she would like to be defined as a person not belonging to others. She wanted to be Karen, a woman with her own talents and identity.

I was too young at the time, only thirteen years old, to fully understand her meaning. However, as I now am without husband or children, and people have difficulty defining my identity, I understand what she was saying. Why is it I am often overlooked as an individual and people think I should belong to someone else? Dolan Hubbard, in "Recontextualizing the Sermon to Tell (Her)story," an article about *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, says Hurston raises many questions about the black female's experience. I find these questions are relevant to my experience:

> What does it mean to be black and female in America? What are the terms of definition for women outside the traditional hierarchies? Is female status negated without a male defining principle? And [Hurston] raises these questions to reveal to the black community the one face it can never see: its own.[9]

So what does it mean to be Mormon and female? How am I defined outside traditional hierarchies? Is my status negated with a husband?[10]

As I remembered those questions, Janie again came to mind. Janie's voice is silenced in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, just as mine has been silenced at times in the church. The position of power for the black man is on the front porch telling stories, yet women are not allowed on the front porch. Storytelling controls a person's place in the society and can bring a person into the society when one knows how to create and tell stories. Hurston defines black women's status by showing Janie's move from the

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9. Dolan Hubbard, "Recontextualizing the Sermon to Tell (Her)story," *The Sermon and the African American Literary Imagination* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994), 48.

10. Ibid.

kitchen to the porch. She is silenced repeatedly but eventually finds her voice and way onto the porch. She begins her move by praising Jody, her second husband, when he saves an old mule. She speaks her gratitude and the men praise her voice: "Yo' wife is uh born orator, Starks. Us never knowed dat befo'. She put jus' de right words tuh our thoughts."[11] Yet this is only the beginning of her move to the front porch.

I remember struggling to find my voice in Mormon society as a young girl. I was sitting in Primary during song practice and the chorister suggested we sing "I Hope They Call Me on a Mission." This happened to be one of my favorite songs and I squirmed in my seat in anticipation. The chorister asked for volunteers to help lead this song. I quickly raised my hand and waved it, hoping to catch her eye. Yet I shouldn't have even bothered. She had someone different in mind, a boy. She called Moroni up to the front of the room, "What a fine missionary Moroni will make someday, boys and girls. He is a wonderful example to all you young men." I remember thinking that Moroni was not all that good of an example. He chased me home from school every day and pulled my hair at recess. No, not a good example at all. Yet the message that really angered me was that the chorister said that only the young men would go on missions. What about me? Didn't the Lord want me to serve him too? I decided at that moment that I would serve a mission. I would be a better missionary then Moroni or any other man and would show all the world (at least the Mormon world) girls could be missionaries too.

Smiling at my young ideas of feminism, I let my mind wander further. That resolution stuck. I did serve a mission, and I eventually developed other reasons to serve. Although I had prayed and received an answer from God to go on a mission, people continued to discourage my desire to serve.

I stood in the hall of the seminary building. It was lunch time and the students were laughing and joking with the seminary teachers. Graduation was nearing and Brother Jones asked me what my plans were. I had been accepted to Brigham Young University with a scholarship and was quick to share this information: "I want to study English and get my Ph.D. so I can help others to love English as much as I do. And I also want to serve a mission." At the announcement of these plans Brother Jones laughed, "You will be married before you are twenty," he said, "and have your first child by the time you are twenty-one." I felt as though he had slapped my face or, worse, patted me on the head like a child who still had silly dreams about what life held. I did not reply, but his words have never left me.

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11. Hurston, 55.

I reached forward again this time touching the diary. My hand shifted to another diary beside it. I pulled it from the shelf, again turning away from the empty journal. This was the journal I wrote when I was younger. These memories were not as painful to share as those in the one I was struggling with now. Fortunately I had been raised in a loving LDS family who believed in working together. Life was pretty easy at times, at least my family life was fun and romantic to my little girl eyes.

I remember being a little girl and watching Grandma and Grandpa. They were so in love, even after thirty years of marriage. I did not know that marriage was otherwise. It seemed a happy, blissful state where romance and love abounded. I remember Grandma telling me stories of how they met and fell in love and kept the romance alive in later years. The last year Grandma was alive, she was in the hospital but still wanted a special anniversary. As I remember it, she was determined to celebrate with Grandpa and make it a romantic evening for him. So she talked to the nurses and they helped her prepare a small party. They talked to the cook who said she could prepare a special dinner. Grandma then made a poster and decorated the lounge. Then she called Grandpa and told him to bring a camera and come to the hospital. When Grandpa got there, they went down to the patient lounges; everything was all set up and the cook brought the food including an anniversary cake.

Leaning back on my bed, I thought of Grandma's marriage. For her marriage was service and love. She had married young and was raised by the old school of what marriage was. Yet it worked for them. They were happy and she always wanted me to be happy in marriage too. From this example I thought marriage and romance were easy. Yet this ideal was destroyed by my two broken engagements. Likewise, Janie had an ideal of romance and marriage which is destroyed by the first two men in her life:

> She was stretched on her back beneath the pear tree soaking in the alto chant of the visiting bees, the gold of the sun and the panting breath of the breeze when the inaudible voice of it all came to her. She saw a dust-bearing bee sink into the sanctum of a bloom; the thousand sister-calyxes arch to meet the love embrace and the ecstatic shiver of the tree from root to tiniest branch creaming in every blossom and frothing with delight. So this was a marriage! She had been summoned to behold a revelation. Then Janie felt a pain remorseless sweet that left her limp and languid.[12]

But life is full of unfulfilled expectations.

I rolled over on the bed and glanced out the window. It has been almost a year since Grandma's death; next month, 20 May, will be one year.

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12. Hurston, 10-11.

That is the day after my own wedding. If she had only waited one more year. But how could she; her body was tired. Yet I still needed her. Did God really need her more than I? Is her work on that side so much more important than the work she did on this side to leave before I got married? I leafed through the pages of the open journal, still warily glancing at the neglected diary on the bookcase.

As I jumped from page to page, I found a story Grandma had told me about duty in marriage. Grandma believed that it was the woman's job to stay home and take care of the home and the man's job to work and provide money. That is good if that fulfills a person, but I did not know if that would fulfill me.

I remember one disagreement about this in particular. Grandma was sick and in the hospital again. She had been there a month and I knew I needed to visit her. After church one winter morning, I drove up to Salt Lake City to see her. The sun was shining but was deceptive, as snow still covered the ground and cold air stung my throat and lungs. Later, sitting on the bed next to Grandma, I talked about my upcoming graduation and plans for the future. Soon the topic led to dating. "Was I dating anyone?" she wanted to know. A typical question for unmarried twenty-four-year-olds. "No," I replied. "I believe I scare men off. I have a mind of my own and like to use it. Too many men would like to mold a wife, not have a wife who can think for herself." Grandma nodded at this and said, "Perhaps you are just too intelligent. Maybe you shouldn't show these men you date how smart you are until they like you. That will make your intelligence easier to accept." I could not believe what Grandma was suggesting—put on an act just so I could catch a man? No way. My face reddened in protest but my words were soft, "Grandma, if a man does not love and accept me for who I really am, I could never marry him." She disagreed and we discussed the topic further. I felt as though I were an item for sale, a piece of merchandise to be bought by a man who would select me from a premade list of what he wanted in a wife.

While remembering this experience, I thought how Janie felt pushed into marriage. Nanny did not want Janie to be used the way she and her mother had been used and she thought marriage was the way to avoid this problem. Yet Janie did not want to marry for security, she wanted her pear blossom, her ideal romance. Instead "[Janie] had been set in the market-place to sell. Been set for still-bait."[13] Forced into the "kitchen" and into a marriage bondage, Janie lost the idea of "true romance": she knew now that marriage did not make love. "Janie's first dream was dead, so she became a woman."[14] If dreams have to die before I can become a woman, then I will remain a child. Years later Janie looked back

13. Hurston, 86.
14. Ibid., 24.

and viewed this forced marriage as a betrayal:

> She had hated her grandmother and had hidden it from herself all these years under a cloak of pity. She had been getting ready for her great journey to the horizons in search of people; it was important to all the world that she should find them and they find her. But she had been whipped like a cur dog, and run off down a back road after things. It was all according to the way you see things. Some people could look at a mud-puddle and see an ocean with ships. But Nanny belonged to that other kind that loved to deal in scraps. Here Nanny had taken the biggest thing God ever made, the horizon—for no matter how far a person can go the horizon is still way beyond you—and pinched it in to such a little bit of a thing that she could tie it about her granddaughter's neck tight enough to choke her.[15]

I certainly do not hate my grandma for her views on marriage. She was only trying to help me feel what she felt. Yet I am afraid that some will fall into the trap of being what someone else is looking for in a wife instead of being themselves. Finding an identity in Mormon culture can be hard. Society is set up for men and their voices. I still am struggling to find me and hear my voice in the din of men around me.

Flipping farther into the journal I found the story of how I began to use my voice and how I raised it in defense of woman. I was a Relief Society president shortly after my mission. I enjoyed teaching these women about God and the plan he has for women and men. The priesthood authority sat in on our lessons Sunday after Sunday, and at times it was uncomfortable to have the men in the room. Women enjoy talking as women to women, and some of the sisters mentioned that they wanted time without the brethren. When I brought my request to the bishop, he did not understand, but he knew that I was sincere in my request. So he and I compromised that the brethren would visit the Relief Society only twice a month. One month the bishopric had already visited Relief Society three times and it was the last Sunday of the month. One of the counselors walked toward our room to visit again. When I stopped him and asked him not to come in, he told me that I had no right to deny a priesthood holder access to a Relief Society meeting. When I reminded him of my agreement with the bishop, he told me that it did not matter and that he was going to visit Relief Society anyway. I again insisted that he not visit today but told him he was welcome next week. At this point he was quite angry with me and I was crying because of his anger and his use of what he called "priesthood authority" that allowed him to visit the meeting. He left upset and the bishop had to calm him down. My voice was heard, but it took effort for me to find a voice that could be heard. My

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15. Ibid., 85.

voice also could not stand alone but had to have the backing of the bishop before it was valid.

My experience recalled the story of Hurston's Janie finding her voice. She is able to emerge more fully on the front porch when she finally stands up for herself as well. Jody and the other men are laughing "at the expense of women," and Janie speaks back. She changes from not caring to enter the conversation at the beginning of the novel: "She had never thought of making a speech, and didn't know if she cared to make one at all,"[16] to "thrust[ing] herself into the conversation" when the men are making fun of women. She tells them: "It's so easy to make yo'self out God Almighty when you ain't got nothin' tuh strain against but women and chickens."[17] Later Jody makes fun of Janie's body and age, and she again replies angrily to him, accusing him: "When you pull down yo' britches, you look lak de change uh life." The other men in the store are shocked but laugh at Jody's expense. This ruins Jody's place in the community because he has been defeated in public by his wife; however, Janie has found her voice and learned to use it in her defense.

Again I flipped through the diary and the pages fell open to 15 March 1993. My heart felt the familiar ache it had a year ago. I closed the book and laid it on the bed next to *Their Eyes Were Watching God.* How similar were the experiences recorded in the books. March 15 was the day my second engagement was broken off. Neither engagement had been my dream of a marriage. I wanted a best friend, love, and equality, yet neither man could offer that. My first engagement began and ended quickly. I was twenty-two and feeling like an old maid after my mission. The day I stepped off the plane the whisper began in the back of my mind: "You need to get married. Fulfill your eternal plan . . . marriage . . . marriage. . . ." This voice was echoed by well meaning friends and relatives who asked me my plans for marriage. So I found a man, felt secure with him, and said, "Yes." But like Janie with Logan, I knew marriage would not make love. Nanny had tried to save Janie from being used as a mule, yet Logan only wanted a mule, not a wife. Likewise, my well meaning members had tried to help me find an identity with a husband; yet I probably would have lost my identity in this marriage.

My second engagement was not much better. Like Jody, Doug had big dreams and plans for the future. I have to laugh when I think about how naive I had been. He said he loved me, yet I often felt like an object. One weekend we had big plans; we were going ring shopping and then to a wedding reception. Doug mentally perused my closet for my "sexiest" outfit and told me what I should wear, hoping to impress his old

16. Ibid., 41.
17. Ibid., 70-71.

high school friends with his new girlfriend. I dressed and we left for the jeweler's. Once there we agreed on a setting but were undecided about the diamond. Finally Doug turned to me and said, "I want you to be proud to walk into Relief Society wearing this ring; so the diamond must be at least one caret." The look on his face was sincere so I shrugged and agreed. The comment was unusual but I said nothing. Looking back I realize he wanted a possession to show off and prove his manliness, similar to how Jody felt about Janie. Jody may have taken Janie away from being a mule, but he dressed her up like a doll and set her in his store to be a symbol of his *manhood.* She is a possession to be admired, nothing more. So Janie and I wait and "save up feelings for some man [we have] never seen."[18]

As I examine the two books in front of me, I realize how my stories are a part of my experience. My stories reflect the society in which I live. I was raised by a mother who worked and a grandmother who loved to stay home and was the "mother-woman." From Grandma I was taught that marriage is bliss and a woman's place is in the home. From my mother I learned that she worked mostly because she had to, but that it also brought her a sense of individuality. From these women and their stories I had to sort out my identity. I like who I am. I enjoy my studies; I like being single and I find my identity within my studies and my career. In a way I wish to be like my grandma, happy with raising a family and staying home. I also hope that I will have a love as fulfilling as hers. But I had a hard time believing that love and individuality could mix. That is until I found my Tea Cake.

Tea Cake is Janie's last love. Tea Cake teaches Janie to be herself and to love herself for who she is. However, in the end Tea Cake goes crazy and tries to kill Janie. To protect herself she shoots him. When Janie is on trial for Tea Cake's death, she is allowed to speak again. In the speech to the court Janie raises her strong feminine voice to proclaim her love for Tea Cake. So Janie

> had to go way back to let them know how she and Tea Cake had been with one another so they could see she could never shoot Tea Cake out of malice. She tried to make them see how terrible it was that things were fixed so that Tea Cake couldn't come back to himself until he had got rid of that mad dog that was in him and he couldn't get rid of the dog and live. He had to die to get rid of the dog. But she hadn't wanted to kill him. A man is up against a hard game when he must die to beat it. She made them see how she couldn't ever want to be rid of him. She didn't plead to anybody. She just sat there and told and when she was through she hushed. She had been through for some time before the judge and the lawyer and the rest seemed to know it.[19]

18. Ibid., 68.
19. Ibid., 178.

With her simple story of truth, Janie silences those voices against her. Her voice becomes the powerful one. Yet her voice is still the voice of a woman. She did not change; she learned how to get others to listen.

My mind returned to the books in front of me. Because I have not written in my journal since Grandma's death, I have not recorded my story of B. J. He is my mixture of love and individuality in a marriage. As I leaned back on the bed, my mind recalled the first time I knew I loved him. B. J. and I sat on the couch correcting my English 115 papers, yet my thoughts were filing through the possibilities of a relationship with him. I was scared, yet knew the man sitting beside me was my best friend. We talked about everything together. But I was afraid he might want me to be a possession, like Doug did or to be a dedicated full-time housewife/mother like my grandmother was. I could not do either. Yet did I want to live alone? My experiences from the past kept me from listening to the feelings I had for him. My mind wandered to Grandma and Grandpa and to the love they had between them. "Such love does not exist for me," I thought. "If I had such love I would have to be just like Grandma yet I couldn't and still be happy." Yet the thought would not disappear, so I spoke: "B. J. If this friendship were to grow and we fell in love, what would happen?" B. J., knowing my background, became serious. He had seen me become fidgety whenever we talked about a relationship and he knew this was difficult for me to discuss: "You are a strong person with specific dreams. If we got married, I would want you because of your strong identity, not in spite of it." It sounded too easy, so I asked again, "But what about my goal to get a Ph.D.? You have a job here." B. J. smiled and said, "I would relocate to any place you wanted to study." I was startled; no man had ever expressed such an opinion to me before. It was as if he had known my fears and answered them. I did not respond to him but returned to grading papers. My emotions and thoughts were so busy that I could not respond or concentrate. Was this my Tea Cake? I also thought of Grandma. I did want a love like hers, although I did not want her role as "mother-woman." I had different desires, but I never thought they could be combined.

So one year after she left me, I found what she wanted me to find, although not in the exact form she had found. I realize now that each person must find his or her own voice, love, or identity on their own. I cannot say what is important for others, nor can they say what is important for me. As Janie says to Pheoby after telling her story:

> It's uh known fact, Pheoby, you got tuh go there tuh know there. Yo' papa and yo' mama and nobody else can't tell yuh and show yuh. Two things everybody's got to do fuh theyselves. They got tuh go tuh God, and they got tuh find out about livin' fuh theyselves.[20]

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20. Ibid., 183.

Janie realized that no man or woman could show her how to find her identity.

Grandma and Janie's stories speak to places within me that have not often been touched. The stories of life are "passed around [as] the pictures of [our] thoughts for others to look at and see," and the stories, which are "crayon enlargements of life," are interesting to view and think about.[21] Laying my stories next to Janie's and Grandma's opened my mind to see how telling my stories would help me and others, just as their stories helped inspire me and give me hope. I have experienced life through Janie. I have been the "mother-women" through Grandma. I have seen the joy and sorrows love and marriage brought to them. Maybe my stories of sorrow and love could help someone do this too. I pondered this as I thought of the pain it would cause to write all these emotions down on paper. Janie, by telling her stories, "called in her soul to come and see,"[22] and maybe I could too. Sitting up again, I looked at the diary. As I reached for it, I thought of how my voice would be written down and perhaps speak to those to come.

21. Ibid., 48.
22. Ibid., 183-84.

Without Purse or Scrip[1]

Jessie L. Embry

MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST of Latter-day Saints see proclaiming the gospel to all people as an important part of the church's responsibility. Many elements of their missionary efforts have not changed over the years. Elders and sisters still knock on doors, meet people on the streets, and hold public meetings. The way in which they are supported has changed. They no longer travel without funds, nor do they depend on the hospitality of friends and strangers for room and board. For many Mormons the dependency on others for support, "traveling without purse or scrip" as it is called, is a nineteenth-century characteristic. They imagine the first missionary, Samuel Smith, Joseph Smith Jr.'s younger brother, going from house to house discussing the Book of Mormon and asking for room and board. They may also see Brigham Young, Wilford Woodruff, and other early church leaders depending on members and those friendly to the church in England. What many Mormons do not realize is that missionaries traveled without purse or scrip as late as 1950. This essay examines the church's practice of sending missionaries without purse or scrip and focuses particularly on those who went without funds immediately after World War II.

BACKGROUND

Following the example described in the New Testament, Joseph Smith received a revelation asking missionaries to travel without funds.[2]

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1. Most of the sources used for this essay explained that only elders were asked to travel without purse or scrip. The only possible reference to sister missionaries doing country work was in the East Central States Mission Historical Record. The report said the lady missionaries had been moved from Knoxville to Slate Springs and "thoroughly enjoyed their labors in the country." It is not clear if they were doing country tracting or if they had just moved to a more rural area. East Central States Mission Historical Record, 30 Sept. 1948, 5:13, archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter LDS archives).

2. Traveling without purse or scrip is described in Luke 10:1-5; Smith's revelation is in Doctrine and Covenants 84:77-90.

As a result, many early missionaries depended on their contacts for room and board.[3] With time church leaders recognized the problems of missionaries wandering without support. It was difficult to find people who would help, so elders often turned to members. Brigham Young counseled against this practice in the 1860s. He "tr[ied] to get [the brethren] to go and preach without purse or scrip . . . and not beg the poor Saints to death."[4] But that was not a consistent policy. In 1863 Apostle George A. Smith explained, "Circumstances have changed and in view of the poverty of other peoples and the wealth of the Saints that missionaries should not need to go without purse or scrip."[5]

Several conditions made this type of missionary work practical. Although the United States was becoming increasingly urban by the end of the nineteenth century (at least according to the census which defines a city over 2,500 as urban), there were still many Americans who lived on isolated farms. Missionaries had limited ways to contact these people. They did not have cars; there was no public transportation. If they wanted to stay in a small town, frequently there was no place to rent or even a hotel to stay in overnight. There might not be a place to find a meal. So the only way to contact everyone was to ask residents for assistance.

Eventually this policy changed. During the twentieth century, church leaders encouraged members to stay in their communities and build up the church there. In towns and cities where there were enough members, the church established congregations where the faithful could meet. The focus in some missions changed to organizing church programs instead of just finding new converts. When missionaries were in cities, it was more difficult to find people who would provide free room and board. As a result, missionaries started receiving support from their families, relatives, and friends. They used the money to rent apartments in cities. Periodically they would still travel into rural areas for "country tracting," often without purse or scrip.

The transfer from traveling in rural areas to working in cities happened gradually. Individual mission presidents decided where missionaries worked. Some favored urban centers; others focused on agricultural areas. The California Mission is a good example. Henry S. Tanner, who became mission president in 1894, sent the first missionaries to work in

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3. For additional information on Mormon missionary efforts, see the index listings in James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992).

4. John A. Widtsoe, ed., *Discourses of Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1978), 322-23.

5. George A. Smith, 6 Apr. 1863, *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool and London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-86), 10:142.

Los Angeles. He had them concentrate on meeting people, inviting them to become members and attend the local branch. Tanner organized a Los Angeles branch in October 1895, and within a year the local congregation had 120 members. General church leaders expressed concerns about Tanner's expenses as he found places for the new branches to meet, but they were impressed with the church's growth when they visited Los Angeles. However, Tanner's efforts did not last. He was released in 1896, and his replacement, Ephraim H. Nye, again encouraged missionaries to go without purse and scrip and to move out of their apartments. When there was a decline in baptisms, Nye had the elders move back into the cities, and the numbers of converts increased.[6]

Reactions

How did these early elders feel about traveling without purse or scrip? The responses varied. Spencer W. Kimball, who much later became president of the LDS church, went to the Central States Mission in 1914. In November the mission president assigned Kimball and his companion, an Elder Peterson, to do country tracting for several weeks. The first day they left Jefferson City, Missouri, with overcoats and "grips" (suitcases) weighing thirty-five pounds. After walking for twelve miles, they started asking for "entertainment. At house after house we were turned away. On, on, on we dragged our tired limbs. After walking 3 mi and having asked 12 times for a bed without success we were let in a house, not welcome tho. 15 miles. Very tired, sleepy and hungry. No dinner, no supper." For the next five weeks, Kimball recorded similar problems getting people to listen and finding a place to stay.[7]

S. Dilworth Young, who also became an LDS general authority, went to the Southern States Mission in January 1920. After arriving and buying supplies, he recalled that mission leaders "took all of our money and gave us back enough to get to our fields of labor and two dollars extra." He and his companion started country tracting. Once two families sharing a small home invited them in. At first the families said they could feed the elders but they could not stay over night. However, after a gospel conversation, the residents decided, "We can't let you out in a storm like that." So the elders and the two men slept in the back room and the women and all the children bedded down in the front room. In summarizing his experiences, Young wrote, "When you go out to the country without purse or scrip, you don't go out and beg from house to house.

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6. Chad M. Orton, *More Faith than Fear: The Los Angeles Stake Story* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 18-19, 22, 25, 26.

7. "The Mission Experience of Spencer W. Kimball," *Brigham Young University Studies* 25 (Fall 1985): 115-17.

That isn't the trick. You go out and preach from house to house. If you're humble enough and tell your message well enough, they'll invite you to stay."[8]

Rulon Killian also served in the Southern States Mission. He arrived in October 1922 and spent the first part of his mission doing country tracting.[9] After three negative experiences on the first day, Killian and his companion sat under a walnut tree and ate nuts. Killian later wrote that when he thought of "two years of cold reception, doors slammed in his face, and other rude mistreatment, his Spirit really hit bottom. He wondered if it was worth it all." He recalled experiences such as climbing a tree and ripping his pants, begging for leftover Thanksgiving dinner, and having his suitcases searched by a deputy sheriff for bootleg whiskey. On 28 December the mission leader told him to report to cities for the rest of the winter. Killian recorded, "Thrill! Thrill! Thrill!"[10]

Killian expressed more of his feelings about country tracting than either Kimball or Young. First, he explained, "Mormon missionaries had worked the wooded hills and mountains of Tennessee for half a century. Nine-tenths of their converts were out in the country, a little nest here, and a little nest there, twenty or thirty miles apart—not enough in any one place to form a branch." Since many had little contact with the church after their baptisms, he felt it was a "miracle" they remained Mormons.[11]

Killian did not think country tracting was effective missionary work. He felt "the Elders do too much walking and too little good missionary work. I feel we have been 'walking' away from opportunities." He told the elders in his district, "Let's change. . . . When you find interested people, stick with them and preach until they know something about our church and doctrine. Let us *MAKE* baptisms instead of *HUNT* them." He recalled teaching a Mrs. LeFever whom the missionaries had been visiting for thirty years. When he asked why, she said the missionaries had not gone beyond discussing faith and repentance. Killian and his companion developed lessons based on the Articles of Faith. As a result, the woman and her two children asked to be baptized.[12]

Killian's views were not typical though. Many mission leaders saw value in country tracting not only for the people but for the missionaries. In 1928 Elias S. Woodruff, president of the Western States Mission, ex-

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8. Benson Y. Parkinson, *S. Dilworth Young: General Authority, Scouter, Poet* (Salt Lake City: Covenant Communications, 1994), 59, 64-65, 70.

9. In the South elders worked in the country during the winter and in the cities in the summer to avoid malaria (ibid., 65).

10. Autobiography, in Rulon Killian Papers, 1:17, 24, 26, 27, 43, LDS archives.

11. Ibid., 3:5.

12. Ibid., 9:1, 5.

plained, "It would be wise if every elder in the mission could have at least two weeks every year, traveling without purse or scrip," because "it would bring them nearer to the Lord and nearer to the people." Although elders found the experience "perhaps not altogether a pleasant one," they told the president that "it was a good thing to do." He recalled two missionaries who "started out with great confidence; when they discovered that the Lord was blessing them and raising up friends for them they were over-confident, with the result that they had to spend one night in a corn field." Woodruff continued, though, "They were soon humbled and thereafter in response to their appeal they were never without friends."[13]

In 1937 William T. Tew, president of the East Central States Mission, continued to send his missionaries into the country during the summer. In a letter to the missionaries' parents, he explained that by doing the summer work, the missionaries had "done much to extend the frontier of Mormonism among non-members." Tew continued that the work was "strenuous and self denying" but the missionaries were blessed.[14] Tew also asked the missionaries to work in the cities for eight months where there were chapels and to come back to these centers after two or three weeks to relieve the stress of country work, check on the branches, and encourage the branch members.[15] He promised them that if they would travel the roads and meet people, "they will entertain you and give you a meal and bed." So that members were not left without the church organization, Tew told missionaries to organize home Sunday schools and to hold meetings even if only a few attended.[16]

Until World War II, missionaries in the United States continued to travel occasionally during the summer without purse or scrip. The practice varied from mission to mission; usually mission presidents decided if elders should do summer work and for how long. The focus of country tracting was to find people and to share the message of Joseph Smith and the Restoration. If those people joined, elders returned to visit the converts, present gospel messages, baptize children who had turned eight, and encourage families to stay true to the church. Sometimes mission presidents sent missionaries to conduct a census of members who had not been contacted for several years.

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13. Elias S. Woodruff, *Conference Reports*, Oct. 1928 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1928), 55.

14. William T. Tew to Parents, 20 Oct. 1937, East Central States Mission President Files, 1937-40, LDS archives.

15. William A. Tew, Suggestions to Missionaries in East Central States Mission, Aug. 1937, East Central States Mission President Files, LDS archives.

16. William T. Tew, 14 May, 12 July 1939, East Central States Mission President Files, LDS archives.

Without Purse or Scrip, 1940s-50s

Little mission work took place between 1941 and 1945 because of World War II. Following the war, church leaders started sending more missionaries throughout the U.S. and reopened the European missions. In September 1947 there were forty-two missions. Since many young Mormon men had had to delay missions because of military service, 70 percent of one mission class that month were former servicemen.[17]

Surprisingly, some new mission presidents asked elders to go into the country and travel without purse or scrip. The first to do so was S. Dilworth Young, already a member of the Quorum of Seventy, who presided over the New England Mission. He recalled when he arrived at the mission home in May 1947 that the former president, William H. Reeder, conducted a missionary conference and did not include Young. Once he was in charge, Young found the elders "low in morale with no spirit." So he decided to send them into the country the same way he had been initiated into missionary life.[18] Russell Leonard Davis, who served under Young, recalled, "When Dilworth Young arrived as mission president, the mission just wasn't doing well" because the "missionaries had false pride." Davis continued, "He instructed us by telling about his first week in the mission field in the Southern States. . . . He said it rained all the time and they didn't have a place to get dry. Then he said to us, 'Now remember, no matter how bad your first week is, it can't be as bad as mine.'"[19]

Young told the missionaries to buy grips similar to the one he had carried in the Southern States Mission. Each missionary carried enough money to meet the requirements of vagrancy laws, two dollars in Massachusetts, five in Maine, and ten in Canada. Young also gave them instructions to contact the police and tell them what they were doing. Elders were to say that they were "dependent for their physical needs upon the hospitality of those who want to hear our message" rather than say they were traveling without purse or scrip. The missionaries gave the mission home the address of where they would be each Saturday, and mission leaders would forward mail, literature, and money for clothes and haircuts there. Young explained, "It shouldn't cost more than $20 per month to live on this basis."[20]

With these instructions, the elders departed for the country. Truman

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17. "From Whence Come Missionaries," *Church News*, 27 Sept. 1947, 6-7.

18. Parkinson, 226.

19. Russell Leonard Davis Oral History, 6, interviewed by Lynn DeWitt, 20 Feb. 1995, LDS Missionary Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Manuscript Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter referred to as LDS Missionary).

20. Parkinson, 226-27.

Madsen recalled, "In the early stages we were so preoccupied with our stomachs and with the question of lodging that we, in fact, failed. . . . When we . . . decided we would put bearing witness and arranging meetings first and not worry about our stomachs, the work began to succeed."[21] That first summer elders sent back reports of their successes and difficulties. The mission office compiled these comments and mailed them out to the elders. Lloyd W. Brown and C. P. Hill found that people would not listen until they helped with a haying crew. The next day "we found that nearly every door was open to us and inviting us to eat and sleep and discuss the Gospel." Elders continued in the country into October. They spent ten weeks without funds, and during that time they averaged sleeping outside two nights. One set of elders in New Brunswick reported sleeping outside twenty-one nights; another set in Nova Scotia had a place to sleep every night and never had to ask for a meal.[22]

One missionary, Hale Gardner, said Young's announcement troubled some local members who considered the president's plans "laughable" and "doomed to failure" because "the New England people, it was said, were too cold and inhospitable." Parents were also concerned and wrote to the general authorities. In response, Young wrote to his fellow church leaders in October 1947, explaining that "there is only one way to do missionary work." First on his list was "go without money where possible," last was "learn to depend on the Lord completely." George F. Richards, president of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, responded to Young's report that he had given "careful thought . . . and courageous effort and the results seem to be very satisfactory."[23]

Truman Madsen recalled that when Elder Harold B. Lee came to visit the mission, some missionaries believed it was to ask Young to stop sending elders to the country without money. However, after Lee finished visiting the mission, he found that the elders were "rather bedraggled but all [were] full of dedication." Madsen concluded, "[Lee] returned to Salt Lake and encouraged the brethren to support the plan." After giving his report, Lee wrote back to Young, saying that the general authorities "were all very much interested in what I had to say because of the comments for and against, no doubt, that had been made." He continued that if he had a son going on a mission he would want him to work with Young in the New England Mission.[24]

One missionary serving in the New England Mission was Oscar McConkie, Jr. His father was the mission president in California, and McConkie Jr. wrote about his country experiences to his father. La Rue Sneff,

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21. Ibid., 228.
22. Ibid., 229-30.
23. Ibid., 237-39.
24. Ibid., 237-38.

who served as a secretary to Oscar McConkie, recalled that the mission president read his son's letters to the missionaries in the office. According to her, "The elders were sitting around the table saying, 'If we could only do that' [go without purse or scrip]." She explained that vagrancy laws in California prevented McConkie from considering it.[25]

Eventually, as in New England, McConkie worked around vagrancy laws by asking the missionaries to carry some cash. According to his son, he prayed and asked to have the faith of Enoch. Soon "he realized that he could have prayed until his tongue went dry, but . . . he had to have the works of Enoch and Elijah to develop that faith."[26] Spencer J. Palmer described McConkie as "a man of unflinching faith" who felt he was "entitled to constant revelation in the administration of the California Mission." The president's request surprised Palmer, but he continued that McConkie "believed that we had a shortage of faith among the missionaries. We were not baptizing as we should because we were not humble or loving enough."[27] Douglas F. Sonntag said he used to "kid the president." After getting a "letter from Oscar in New England that told how great this going without purse or scrip was," Sonntag said McConkie felt, "I'll get these missionaries out of their beds one way or another."[28] This became the mission story. Carl W. Bingham who arrived in the mission in December 1948 said, "I was told that the reason for us traveling without purse or scrip was because the missionaries were too comfortable in their apartments and were not doing much missionary work."[29]

In August and September 1948 the mission president visited all the elders and asked them to go without purse or scrip. The mission's quarterly report explained that they voted unanimously in favor of the plan.[30] James B. Allen, who had just arrived in the mission two months before McConkie's request, wrote his reaction in a journal. "Boy, what a surprise." While Allen felt, "It's rather strange to think that right now I have no idea whatever as to where I'll be sleeping tomorrow night," he concluded, "this experience is going to humble us and teach us to put our

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25. La Rue Sneff Oral History, 5, interviewed by Lynn DeWitt, 14 Oct. 1994, LDS Missionary.

26. Oscar McConkie, Jr., Oral History, 2, interviewed by Lynn DeWitt, 20 Sept. 1994, LDS Missionary.

27. Spencer John Palmer Oral History, 6, interviewed by Lynn DeWitt, 22 Mar. 1994, LDS Missionary.

28. Douglas F. Sonntag Oral History, 10, interviewed by Lynn DeWitt, 11 Apr. 1994, LDS Missionary.

29. Carl W. Bingham Letter, on file in Redd Center for Western Studies.

30. Entry dated 11 Sept. 1948, Manuscript Report, California Mission, Report ending 30 Sept. 1948, LDS archives.

faith and trust in the Lord."[31] Grant Carlisle, who had been on his mission for sixteen months, was Allen's companion. He also recalled his first reaction, "It was kind of scary because I didn't know what it would be like." He recalled their landlady was interested in the church. She gave them a refund on their rent, but, Carlisle added, "She felt bad that we had to give up everything and just head out with no place to stay and no place to eat unless we begged off the people. It was quite disappointing to her."[32]

As in the New England Mission, some members did not approve of McConkie's plan. Carl Bingham said, "The instructions for missionaries to travel without purse or scrip were accepted by different people in different ways. Usually the members who were humble, sincere and anxious for the work to proceed accepted it without reservations. Some of the more affluent and wealthy members felt it was degrading to the missionaries as well as to the elders."[33] Spencer Palmer said some local leaders in Los Angeles wrote to church president George Albert Smith protesting McConkie's decision. But Smith wrote back supporting McConkie's decision since he had "the keys of administration and revelation for all affairs affecting his mission."[34] This was probably not the majority though; James Allen said he only got positive feedback from members. They supported the missionaries because they were doing what the mission president wanted.[35]

Most missionaries accepted McConkie's challenge and learned to adjust. Carl Bingham said, "I soon fell into the routine of the work and learned to accept the method as the will of the Lord and the way we were intended to work." Bingham worked as supervising elder and felt, "The missionaries I was called to preside over accepted the program and to the best of my knowledge did what was necessary to make it."[36]

Ogden Kraut remembered that traveling without purse or scrip was difficult because "there was no cookbook to go by on how to do it. We just went out there and struggled along trying to figure out how to do it the most effective way." He continued that by the end of his mission "I felt that I could travel around the world that way. . . . It was easy for me to do." He said people asked him if he missed meals, and his common response was "no but I've postponed a lot of them." Kraut felt some mis-

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31. James B. Allen Oral History, 6, interviewed by Lynn DeWitt, 1 Mar. 1994, LDS Missionary.

32. Grant Carlisle Oral History, 5, interviewed by Lynn DeWitt, 23 Mar. 1994, LDS Missionary.

33. Bingham Letter.

34. Palmer Oral History, 6.

35. Allen Oral History, 20.

36. Bingham Letter.

sionaries were not as faithful. He claimed, "Some . . . packed up their bags when they got the announcement." Others, he said, took apartments without the mission president's knowledge or stayed with members.[37]

Other mission presidents also asked their elders to travel in the country. However, California was the only mission that did it full time. Francis W. Brown, for example, was president of the Central States Mission. That mission's historical report for 31 March 1948 explained, "It is also the desire of the Mission President to send each Elder into the country without purse or scrip to take the gospel to the many people in the Mission who have not had the opportunity of hearing the gospel for many years. We feel that much good will be accomplished through this, both for the people contacted and for the Elders."[38] Hyrum B. Ipson, who was in the Central States Mission, explained that Brown did not suggest that missionaries go without purse or scrip until after "Dil Young" had tried it in the New England Mission.[39]

When the elders returned from the first summer, the quarterly report noted, "Many have said that they feel it is one of the[ir] greatest blessings." One missionary explained why: "We were never tested above our capacity to endure, and I can think of nothing that would build a person's faith in a Living God than to be taken care of from day to day among the people who know nothing about us individually."[40] As a result, the next summer the elders returned to the country.[41]

Other mission presidents who sent elders out without purse or scrip included Thomas W. Richards in the East Central States Mission, Albert Choules, Sr., in the Southern States Mission, Edward Clissold in the Central Pacific Mission, Creed Haymond in the Northern States Mission, and Loren F. Jones in the Spanish American Mission.

Reasons

Mission presidents and elders and LDS publications suggested why missionaries went without purse or scrip during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Interestingly enough, although others might have had the same feelings, only one interviewee, Ogden Kraut, mentioned that it was a commandment. Kraut arrived in the California Mission in September 1948 just after McConkie had asked elders to go without purse or scrip. Kraut had been praying for the opportunity to travel as Christ's apostles

37. Ogden Kraut Oral History, 4-5, interviewed by Lynn DeWitt, 16 Feb. 1994, LDS Missionary.

38. Central Sates Mission Historical Record, 31 Mar. 1948, 6, LDS archives.

39. Hyrum B. Ipson Conversation, notes in my possession.

40. Central States Mission Historical Record, 30 June 1948, 18; 30 Sept. 1948, 32.

41. Ibid., 30 June 1949, 20.

had and planned to ask McConkie if he could work that way during his first interview. But Kraut never had to ask the question; an elder who had a layover in Los Angeles before going on to Hawaii came out of McConkie's office just before Kraut went in. The elder reportedly exclaimed he was glad he was not staying in California since the mission president had just informed him that elders were traveling without purse or scrip in that mission. Kraut saw McConkie's decision as an answer to prayer. Shortly after Kraut finished his mission, McConkie also left the mission, and the new mission president adopted a new approach.

Kraut felt the scriptural reasons for traveling without purse or scrip were very important. He believed that anyone going on a mission should travel that way because "it's a commandment." He felt that the missionary program began to deteriorate when elders "began to rely on the money from home instead of in the Lord. That's not the way it's supposed to be done. They changed the rules on the Lord. He didn't."[42]

Some elders said they referred to the scriptures occasionally when they asked people for a place to stay. They would say they were traveling as Christ's disciples had and were depending on people for food and lodging. Boyd Burbidge, who served in the Spanish American Mission from 1949 to 1952, said he would "read out of the Bible where Peter, James, and John and the apostles went among the people without purse or scrip and the people would take care of them and help them."[43] However, these interviewees did not express the view that this was the only way to do missionary work.

So what were the reasons for traveling without purse or scrip? The reason suggested most often was the benefits to the missionaries. According to Don Lind, who was in the New England Mission from 1950 to 1952, the summer he spent country tracting resulted in few baptisms but "for the missionaries it was a time of great spiritual growth."[44] Owen Leon Wait, who served in the Northern States Mission from 1947 to 1949, said his mission president Creed Haymond "wanted the Elders to learn humility and faith thru these experiences."[45] Haymond told the *Church News*, "If this work did nothing else it made good missionaries."[46]

Missionaries frequently referred to their experiences as "humbling" and added statements such as the experience had helped them in "depending upon Heavenly Father and putting my total trust in Him."[47] Ac-

42. Kraut Oral History, 11.

43. Boyd M. Burbidge Oral History, 10, interviewed by Marcie Goodman, 3 Nov. 1992, LDS Missionary.

44. Don Lind Survey Form, Redd Center for Western Studies.

45. Owen Leon Wait Survey Form, Redd Center for Western Studies.

46. "Pres Haymond reports work in Northern States," *Church News*, 2 Apr. 1950, 4.

47. Alden M. Higgs Survey Form, Redd Center for Western Studies.

cording to Russell Davis, missionaries "were blessed. Most important of all we became humble and changed our attitude." Davis continued that his experience "kept the gospel strong in my life and strong in the family. It changes you so that you do the Lord's work for His reasons and for the people that you serve and not for your own."[48]

Hiton Starley who served in the Central States Mission remembered that as missionaries returned to Independence, Missouri, after country tracting they were "stiff, sore and dirty but thankful that we had the Spirit of the Lord in greater abundance than we had had it before because we had to call upon the Lord and depend on him for our food and shelter all the time." That experience convinced Starley that the Mormon church was right. During the summer he had only had to sleep out twice and had never missed more than two meals in a row. "I truly believe the scriptures when they tell us that the laborer is worthy of his hire, because the Lord repaid me many times and in many ways for the little bit of work that I have done for him."[49]

Did traveling without purse or scrip increase baptisms? Irven L. Henrie, in the New England Mission from 1948 to 1950, believed that "direct baptisms from country tracting were few but spirituality increased such that the overall mission baptisms increased."[50] Several missionaries in the California Mission felt they had more baptisms. Spencer Palmer and his companion were working in a small town in Lone Pine, California, when McConkie asked them to go without purse or scrip. His companion Evan Stephenson was not "thrilled with the idea" of leaving their apartment, "expecting the hard nosed people of Lone Pine" to take care of them. But they had considerable success. Before they had had no baptisms, but after a year of asking for support they had enough members to establish a branch. Palmer continued, "It was not because we had changed in terms of our talent, but because we had humbled ourselves and had finally lived up to the spirit of our calling. The blessings of the Lord rested upon the minds and the hearts of those people."[51]

Mission president McConkie was also encouraged because missionaries could "reach male members of the families and bring converts rather than the predominantly female converts as has frequently been the case."[52] E. Franklin Heiser spent his first three weeks in New England traveling without purse or scrip before he went into the cities for the winter. He remembered, "President Young told us that the bigger cities had been tracted and tracted and tracted. He knew there were thousands out

48. Davis Oral History, 14.
49. Elder Hiton Starley, "My Experience in the Country," *Church News*, 29 Dec. 1948, 14.
50. Irven L. Henrie Survey Form, Redd Center for Western Studies.
51. Palmer Oral History, 11.
52. Mission President Progress Report, *Church News*, 10 Apr. 1949, 15.

in the country who were not receiving the gospel. . . . The most practical way was doing without purse or scrip." The mission only had two cars; the elders could not use bicycles. They could use public transportation, but it didn't go into the rural areas. [53]

Grant Carlisle felt that just by staying with people missionaries had a good influence even if they did not baptize. "I don't remember that we really did much gospel talking to them or not while we stayed the night. Maybe we socialized too much. We talked about Salt Lake. I guess that was good to talk about the temple and the Church." But he had also questioned his effectiveness in his mission work before going without purse or scrip. At least when they stayed with people he felt, "We were meeting with the people. It was our influence of being with them rather than preaching to them. We gave a good example of missionaries."[54]

Some missionaries did not question why they were asked to go without funds; they felt it was their responsibility to follow their leaders. Carl Cox, who served in the Northern States Mission from 1947 to 1949, said, "My mission president was a good man, and I looked up to him. . . . I did what needed to be done."[55] Don Lind said when he came to the New England Mission missionaries were already going without purse or scrip. He was not sure how he would have reacted if he been in the mission before, but since the policy was established, he felt it was the norm.[56]

Several missionaries thought that traveling without purse or scrip worked because of the period. Jesse N. Davis explained, "We were just in a transition period at that time. People before World War II kind of trusted each other. After the war there were so many things that went on with robberies and other bad things happening to people that they were afraid to take you in." Hitchhiking was a not problem; people would pick up the elders. But Davis explained, "I don't know whether you could do it in this day and age or not." He was sure that the hitchhiking would not work. Even after the war people in southern Ohio were "apprehensive of strangers."[57]

Problems

Several missionaries, however, questioned the effectiveness of going without purse or scrip. Owen Leon Wait took his inability to find people

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53. E. Franklin Heiser Oral History, 7, interviewed by Marcie Goodman, 22 Nov. 1992, LDS Missionary.

54. Carlisle Oral History, 15.

55. Carl Cox Survey Form, Redd Center for Western Studies.

56. Don Leslie Lind Oral History, 19, interviewed by Lynn DeWitt, 19 Feb. 1995, LDS Missionary.

57. Jesse N. Davis Oral History, 13, interviewed by Rebecca Vorimo, 15 June 1993, LDS Missionary.

to baptize personally. He wrote, "My lack of success pained me then and has grieved me ever since. . . . I had no complaints at the time. I accepted whatever came as the will of God."[58]

Why was Wait not able to find people to baptize? Some missionaries said they spent too much time asking for food and places to stay. That left little time to teach. Norman D. Smith in the California Mission said during the day missionaries did not get food because they were at homes between meal time. At night, though, the people who entertained them "were expected to feed us and provide a place to stay if they accepted us. It seemed like we were so busy involved with eating and then getting ready for bed that we just had to teach or try to get them to ask us questions about the gospel between mouthfuls. It's kind of like Elder Peterson would talk and I'd eat. Then I'd talk and he'd eat. We'd kick each other and trade off sort of. I don't think we really kicked each other, but it was kind of between bites."[59]

Douglas Sonntag agreed: "In my opinion there would have been a much more efficient way to do missionary work. . . . Some of the towns stopped the missionaries and charged them with vagrancy. . . . It seemed to me they spent most of their time trying to find a place to stay."[60]

Jesse Davis said it was always hard to talk to people with no appointment and no advance contact. "Just going in cold to visit people outside the cities made them suspect then, and I think they'd be even more so now." While he had some experiences where people seemed to be waiting for missionaries, he said that usually "Even if it's a neighbor introducing you, it's just a foot in the door."[61]

Orvil Ray Warner explained that his mission president, Thomas W. Richards, in the East Central States Mission had them go without purse or scrip because Richards felt "that everybody had to hear the gospel no matter where they lived." Yet Warner explained, "It was not an effective way to do it looking back on it." He continued that he baptized twenty-five people, mostly in the country. "They had no place to go to church. . . . They had no other members with which to associate. . . . There was no place to participate in church programs. Consequently, after awhile they would drift away and leave the Church and go with the neighboring community church." Warner continued that while traveling without purse or scrip built missionaries' testimonies, "leaving people alone in

58. Wait Survey.

59. Norman D. Smith Oral History, 5, interviewed by Rebecca Vorimo, 1 June 1993, LDS Missionary.

60. Sonntag Oral History, 6.

61. Davis Oral History, 13.

the mission field like that is probably not a wise idea."[62]

Ending the Practice

Like missionaries, mission presidents serve for a limited period. S. Dilworth Young was replaced by Howard Maughan in the New England Mission in 1951, and David Stoddard took over Oscar McConkie's California assignment in 1950. The other mission presidents also finished their service between 1950 and 1952. The new presidents did not continue having missionaries travel without purse or scrip. The missionaries and LDS church publications suggest several reasons.

Oscar McConkie, Jr., said one reason was the different nature of the mission presidents. Young asked the missionaries to go without purse or scrip because he had that experience as a young man. McConkie continued, "The man who replaced him no doubt was just as good a man as President Young, but he hadn't had that experience and didn't have that sort of drive to do it." He also said that missionaries did not continue to go without funds "because I think people don't have enough guts."[63]

One reason was the increased use of the automobile. Although cars had been popular since the 1920s, the U.S. government had rationed them during World War II. There was still a shortage just after the conflict ended. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, missionaries started purchasing cars to use in their missionary work. First Presidency circular letters in 1956 and 1958 discouraged purchasing cars unless they were necessary. But they did not outlaw the use of personal cars. As a result, some missionaries purchased their own vehicles. In 1963 the church started purchasing automobiles for the missionaries to use.[64] Cars made it possible for elders to establish headquarters and then travel throughout the area. Also, since they did not have to walk, ask for rides, or depend on public transportation and could travel faster, they could see more people. According to an article in the *Church News* in 1949, missionaries in North Carolina and Virginia who had cars were "able to conduct more cottage meetings than would otherwise be possible."[65]

During the late 1940s and early 1950s missionaries also started using standardized discussions to teach investigators. Before then, some missions had used LeGrand Richards's "Messages of Mormonism" which he

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62. Orvil Ray Warner Oral History, 14-15, interviewed by Lynn DeWitt, 27 Jan. 1995, LDS Missionary.

63. McConkie Oral History, 7-8.

64. First Presidency circular letters, 5 Dec. 1956, 27 Jan. 1958, and 2 Aug. 1963, LDS archives.

65. "Missionaries contact saints isolated from church center," *Church News*, 16 Mar. 1949, 16.

developed after his work as president of the Southern States Mission in 1937. His outline eventually became the book *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder.* Other missionaries and mission presidents wrote lesson presentations following gospel themes and using "well-known salesmanship techniques." Richard L. Anderson, a missionary in the Northwestern States Mission, wrote such a plan that his mission used in 1948. As a result, baptisms increased from 158 during the first six months of that year to 358 during the second six months. Other missions adopted the Anderson Plan, modified it, or developed their own plans.[66]

Mission leaders adopted these plans at the time that missionaries were going without purse or scrip. Because of that change, Don Lind, who worked under Young and Maughan in the New England Mission, said: "It's hard to compare the country tracting versus no country tracting because we were making a major change and improvements that were going to increase the relative number of converts."[67] The major change he referred to was using missionary discussions.

Mission presidents had varying reactions to the Anderson Plan. Some embraced it, others felt that it was unnecessary. James Allen recalled that Oscar McConkie did not like the plan; he felt that it took away from teaching by the spirit.[68] S. Dilworth Young, however, was constantly looking for new ways to do missionary work. He told the missionaries, "Try it. If it works, fine. We need something to wake these people up."[69]

Conclusion

When Oscar McConkie returned from California, he reported he had established the practice of traveling without purse or scrip "on a permanent basis."[70] Other mission presidents were not as convinced that there was only one way to do missionary work. After serving as a mission president, S. Dilworth Young told a grandson that going without purse or scrip was not necessary. "It is a case of which prophet is speaking. Joseph Smith was instructed to use the system. The present leadership instructs elders to receive their support from home." He explained that Jesus Christ had sent missionaries with and without funds. When Young was mission president, he even defended missionaries working in the cities, explaining, "If travel without P & S is the only way to get humility, the Church would have been dissolved long ago."[71]

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66. Allen and Leonard, 548-49.

67. Lind Oral History, 16.

68. Allen Oral History, 7.

69. William Berry Oral History, 7, interviewed by Lynn DeWitt, 31 Jan. 1995, LDS Missionary.

70. "Pres. McConkie Tells Joy of Mission Growth," *Church News,* 6 Sept. 1950, 1.

71. Parkinson, 239. In Luke 10:4 Christ told the seventy to "carry neither purse nor scrip." In Luke 22:35-36 he told the apostles, "But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it."

An important question only occasionally mentioned directly by missionaries was the underlying reason for doing missionary work. Is the purpose to convert non-Mormons or missionaries? Are missions only to warn people? If people accept the gospel, should they have a place to worship? The experiences of missionaries traveling without purse or scrip show that the message has not always been clear. Many traveled without money and their mission leaders said the experience was important to convert them. Yet what did it do for non-Mormons? Sometimes they did not hear enough of the gospel to be interested in what the missionaries were saying; other times it took years for them to convert because they did not see the missionaries often. And if they lived in outlying areas, it was often difficult for them to attend church meetings. Yet if missionaries only stayed in cities, they missed teaching people who might be interested.

Automobiles and highways have helped resolve most of these problems. People in rural areas can get to cities or towns to attend church meetings; missionaries can get to rural people to share the gospel. A new problem is inner city Saints getting to the suburbs to attend meetings. As a result, the church is establishing small, inner city branches so that members can worship close to home. A focus on providing a place for converts to worship, new teaching methods, and improved transportation along with a changing society that might not be as willing to entertain strangers might be some of the reasons why missionaries no longer travel without purse or scrip.

The Greening

Emma Lou Thayne

Pluck them out one by one
Melancholy, dearth, unableness
Squeeze out the poisons
Scratch away the sting
Let go the black balloon of wasness

Allow the shrapnel glass
In the ear of your ear
To melt away like the green
Of creme de menthe, its syrup
Tasty as spring to the eyes of your eyes

Taking in mountains, your mountains
For the cobalt blue of sky
And the languid arch of new cut grass
To the nostrils of your awakening
Sweet night has held your hand

And given it the gift of rising
Like your childhood game of leaning
Pressure point in backward wrist
Against the wall long enough
That when you stand and let it be

Uncommanded by any force you might implore
Your arm floats upward unsuspended
To salute a weightless reach
Where grasp is unknown as the elements of green
And the disappearance of blackened snow.

Learning from the Land

Anita Tanner

LONG AFTER MY FATHER'S KIDNEYS FAILED, I keep in a willow box under my bed the two letters he wrote to me in the thirty years since I left home. Mother did practically all the letter writing and she wrote fairly often, so these two yellowing pieces of paper are rare. I have thumbed and turned, read and re-read as though by handling them I could extract more meaning and memory. I unfold them sometimes at night and admire the small meticulous penmanship. He wrote slowly like he lived and like he worked on his cattle farm in Wyoming. I can't remember ever seeing him in a hurry. He never paid much heed to time except for the seasons rolling in and out. He seemed to resent rushing things, giving whatever he did its own due.

"I wish winter wouldn't be so anxious to come," he wrote. Near the end, when we knew he couldn't keep hanging on indefinitely, I felt the same way, September and October hinting he'd be gone by winter. As it turned out, he didn't last through October. His hope that "a long sunny spell will last and last," now becomes my hope for his memory and his teaching.

I learned attention to detail from him, mostly the detail in nature. He could recognize and name dozens of trees in Wyoming and could distinguish between all sorts of weeds and grasses. After going to college, marrying, and taking an interest in writing, wanting the right word for a poem, I questioned him once about the height of timothy. His answer is folded in the box under my bed, "Not as tall as a tree but taller than alfalfa depending upon the soil where it grows. For horse feed it's unsurpassed, makes horses hard and tough so they do little sweating while working." He commended me for my search for words and the right expression. My ongoing search, much like his for words to church songs he couldn't quite remember, becomes a perpetual reminder of lyrics he made up and laughed about. Reading now, I hear the stir of his breath and his laughter, remember all he was good at.

He was good at reading weather, good at waiting—for the right time to buy and sell, plant and harvest, for the weather to change, for his

handmade wooden horse trailer to be finished and painted deep green.

He was good with color. That subject seemed to be my father's favorite conversation. He loved discussing different hues and shades, and his favorites depended upon the object of the color, whether it be cars, houses, clothing, or horses. He had a particular leaning toward deep green, and he used to emphasize how color could change one's mood. He said warm colors were more inviting. I suppose, since he lived through eighty Wyoming winters, he favored rich, warm hues. Mother took particular pains in picking out his casket. The color must be right. I think he would approve of her choice, a rich deep mahogany. When I first laid eyes on his casket I thought of the color of horses, how he whispered color names I'd never heard of in describing them—raven, liver, onyx, blood. He would be pleased to ride a horse of mahogany for his final journey home.

He was good at loving animals, wild or tame. When mountain deer wandered down into his haystacks almost every winter and sleeked through his barbed wire and slab fences, he'd comment on the pain of their hunger, the beauty of their regal heads and deep eyes. He loved to stand at the kitchen window and count deer in the far fields as if he were a statistician.

I learned a love of horses from my father. He could work with saddle or work horses for hour upon hour while I stood in the harness room, watching him curry their manes and run his hands across their broad backs. All the while he spoke to them, patting their sides. After a day in the hayfield, they'd come in wet, white foam dripping from their bits, oozing from under the leather. When he lifted the harnesses, moisture marked their place like huge ink blots. In those configurations I learned to read the subtleties of Father's silence, watched for signs of his feeling the movement of his jawbone, in the bent slowly forming in his lower back. I still see him after his work team sniffs the earth for a place to lie and roll, bathing in barnyard dust. I know exactly how he looks heading toward home, his step small and slow, his head slightly down, under his hat in his sandy hair a dark, moist band circling.

He held no degrees, only an eighth-grade education. Experience, not books, became his teacher when he took over the family farm at age fourteen. Little wonder that after almost a century of farming he felt pain when the government condemned his land to put a new highway through, sliced it at a long angle, dividing it like a sandwich to be eaten by progress. But he kept farming, doing what he knew, loving what he did, learning from the land.

I remember Father visiting our new home in the southwest corner of Colorado more than ten years ago. He came over the Million Dollar Highway between Silverton and Ouray. I thought he'd never stop talking

about the beauty of that narrow, treacherous road and the vivid fall colors in the thick mountain aspen. I admitted maybe we had come too far west, at the edge of the desert where the vegetation was dwarfed and the climate milder, less spontaneous. His response, almost a correction, was firm in his voice, "You can put down deep roots here. Your heart is large enough for this arid land." I thought of Wallace Stegner, whose facial features always reminded me of my father, commenting about the desert being an acquired taste. It seemed as if my father knew how I would come to feel about this obscure corner in Colorado, how I would soon call it home ground. Living all his life on one farm, he knew about roots, how they twist, descend, and grab hold in almost any soil, like my fingers reaching under the bed for the willow box where I find him.

August

Philip White

A humming stillness. In the orchards up and down the valley
the pith of summer turns slowly to juices. Ripeness:
what my grandmother knows, hunched in her silence.
Hence, when we come, our jar of peaches, snapshots, hymns .

It is late. A curtain of old webs hangs at her window.
Evening trembles on her face.
We would bend to kiss her and take our leave,
but the light stays. We are swaddled in meshes.

Embraced by the Church? Betty Eadie, Near-Death Experiences, and Mormonism

Massimo Introvigne

IN 1975 PSYCHIATRIST RAYMOND A. MOODY introduced the expression "near-death experience" (NDE) in his bestselling book *Life After Life*. By 1988 more than 3 million copies of the book had been sold (not including foreign translations).[1] Following the early pioneer work by Swiss-born psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (who wrote the foreword to *Life After Life*) on terminally ill patients, Moody described hundreds of experiences he had collected from people who had been clinically "dead" for minutes or hours, had re-entered life, and were able to tell the stories of their NDEs.

According to Moody, NDEs include fifteen elements—although no single NDE Moody collected had all the elements, most had seven or more:

* "ineffability," or extreme difficulty to find words apt to convey the NDE;
* "hearing the news," hearing doctors pronouncing the experiencer "dead";
* initial "feelings of peace and quiet";
* then a strong "noise": sometimes (but not always) pleasant music;
* passing through a "dark tunnel";
* being "out of body" (and able to look at it from "outside");
* "meeting others," either unknown spirits or deceased loved ones;
* meeting, after the human spirits, "a great 'Being of Light'";

1. Raymond A. Moody, *Life After Life: The Investigation of a Phenomenon—Survival of Bodily Death* (St. Simonds Island, GA: Mockingbird Books, 1975). For the claim of 3 million copies in print, see the paperback edition published in New York by Bantam Books, 1988.

* passing through a "review" of the whole life of the experiencer;
* meeting a "border or limit" preventing one from advancing farther in the journey;
* "coming back" to life (usually regretting that the experience has not lasted);
* "telling others";
* experiencing deep "effects on life";
* developing "new views of death" (no longer regarding it as an object of fear); and
* obtaining "corroboration" from similar reports by other people and/or from professional NDE researchers.[2]

Moody's research had a phenomenal success and captured the attention of other psychologists and psychiatrists. In 1978 he and some colleagues established the Association for the Scientific Study of Near-Death Phenomena. In 1980-81 the organization evolved into the International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS). Thanks to research by IANDS activists—some of them with impressive academic credentials—an extensive NDE literature developed in the late 1970s and into the 1980s and 1990s. By 1990 there were more than 500 medical and psychological books and articles in print, not to mention journalistic accounts and hostile literature.[3]

Controversies surrounded NDE research from its very beginning. Particularly, two aspects of NDE research were criticized. First, NDE researchers—although initially introducing themselves as open to different solutions of the afterlife problem, and even skeptical—soon started claiming that NDE was indeed evidence (or at least strongly suggested) that there is life after death, and possibly that we could get in touch with our deceased loved ones now residing in the spirit world. Moody himself started mentioning contacts with the dead through the ancient technique of scrying in a mirror. For this purpose, he established what he called the Theatre of the Mind in Anniston, Alabama.[4] At the other end of the spectrum, secular humanists and professional skeptics dismissed the whole NDE literature, explaining away the experiences as hallucinations induced by chemical or pharmacological processes, or as mere frauds.[5] The

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2. Moody, *Life After Life*, 19-109.

3. Terry K. Basford, *Near-Death Experiences: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland, 1990).

4. See Raymond A. Moody, with Paul Perry, *Reunions: Visionary Encounters With Departed Loved Ones* (New York: Villard Books, 1993).

5. For a summary of the skeptic position, see Gerd H. Hövelmann, "Evidence for Survival from Near-Death Experiences: A Critical Appraisal," in Paul Kurtz, ed., *A Skeptic's Handbook of Parapsychology* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1985), 645-84.

participation in the controversy—on the side of NDE enthusiasts—of well-known New Age spokespeople like Stanislav and Christina Grof,[6] and the use of New Age jargon and concepts by leading NDE researchers such as IANDS co-founder Kenneth Ring (a professor of psychology at the University of Connecticut)[7] and NDE experiencer-turned-researcher P. M. H. Atwater,[8] has added fuel to the fire.

A second controversial claim by NDE researchers is that NDEs offer the final, definitive paradigm of all paranormal, spiritual, or visionary experiences and indeed clarify what in early mystical or religious literature was described with a vague and not yet "scientific" approach. Moody himself in *Life After Life* compared NDEs to Daniel's, Jesus', and Paul's experiences in the Bible, to the visions of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), and to the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*,[9] despite the fact that most of these experiences did not occur in situations similar to "clinical" death. A tendency has emerged in recent NDE literature to regard as an NDE virtually any paranormal or mystical experience. As spiritualists had seen Jesus himself as a great medium, and channelling enthusiasts, more recently, have regarded the apostolic Pentecost as a particularly successful channeling experiment, NDE researchers started claiming that many visions and miracles described in the Bible and other scriptures were, in fact, early (and perhaps unrecognized) NDEs. A clear document of this tendency is a scholarly book by Carol Zaleski, published in 1987, where many visionary experiences—from Catholic saints in the Middle Ages to stories of conversion in many religions—were re-interpreted as NDEs.[10] An equally scholarly bibliography on NDEs, published in 1990, has confirmed this trend.[11] Zaleski, on the other hand, recognized that NDE accounts are sacred narratives similar with, but not identical to, other narratives such as visions of heaven and hell, experiences of sudden conversion, sacred dreams, apparitions of heavenly beings. More recent NDE researchers have been less cautious and have admitted that NDEs may occur even when no illness or "death" is involved and that "transcendent

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6. Stanislav and Christina Grof, *Beyond Death* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980).

7. Kenneth Ring, *Life at Death: A Scientific Investigation of the Near-Death Experience* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1980); *Heading Toward Omega: In Search of the Meaning of the Near-Death Experience* (New York: Quill William Morrow, 1984); and *The Omega Project: Near Death-Experiences, UFO Encounters, and Mind at Large* (New York: Quill William Morrow, 1992).

8. See P. M. H. Atwater, *Coming Back to Life: The After-Effects of the Near-Death Experience* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1988); *Beyond the Light: What Isn't Being Said about Near-Death Experience* (New York: Birch Lane Press/Carol Publishing Group, 1994).

9. Moody, *Life After Life*, 109-28.

10. Carol Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys: Accounts of Near-Death Experiences in Medieval and Modern Times* (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

11. Basford, *Near-Death Experiences*.

experiences" like NDEs occur in any case of "exposure to otherworld dimensions and scenes beyond the individual's frame of reference."[12]

But what precisely is the *content* of NDE narratives? Despite Moody's early claims that similar patterns may be found in many, if not all, NDEs, in fact the evidence is growing that the religious (or non-religious) content of these narratives is of many different types. Moody had already admitted that the identification of the "Being of Light" in NDEs varies according to the religious background of the person interviewed.[13] It is more common for Roman Catholics to meet the Virgin Mary and the saints, while non-Christians may meet the Buddha or a non-personal "Ocean of Light." Variations are still greater in the more detailed NDEs, where the people involved receive actual teachings. These teachings are also invariably colored by the previous religious experience of those who experienced an NDE. One of the most moving NDE videos, by Reinee Pasarow, a follower of the Baha'i faith, included easily detectable concepts of her own religion.[14] Since for many years NDEs have been particularly popular in the New Age subculture,[15] it is not surprising that a number of famous NDE narratives convey vaguely pantheistic New Age teachings about the world, the sacred, and the afterlife.

The fact that many NDE narratives sound "New Age-y" explains why Evangelical Christians—particularly those involved in the counter-cult movement—exposed NDE literature as "cultic," unchristian, or heretical. Moody's mirror-gazing experiences, and the admitted interest in other occult "transcendent experiences" of many NDE researchers, did little to recommend them to Evangelical Christians.[16] More recently, however, "Christian" NDEs have become common, and counter-cult Evangelical ministries have been more careful in recommending that "if the message and experience of an NDE does not distort or conflict with biblical teachings, then we should be careful not to speak against that which resulted in salvation and may have been a genuine work of God." New Age-like NDEs, on the other hand, are dismissed with the argument that "the Devil apparently has been involved with some NDEs."[17]

Not all churches, however, exhibited an initial hostile reaction to NDEs. No lesser authority than Moody, in his 1988 book *The Light Beyond*,

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12. Atwater, *Beyond the Light*, 64.

13. Moody, *Life After Life*, 46.

14. Reinee Pasarow, *Life After Death* (video) (Monterey Park, CA: New Age Industries, n.d.).

15. See J. Gordon Melton, Jerome Clark, and Aidan A. Kelly, *New Age Almanac* (Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 1990).

16. See, for a typical criticism, J. Isamu Yamamoto, "The Near-Death Experience. Part One: The New Age Connection," *Christian Research Journal* 14 (Spring 1992): 20-23, 30-32; "Part Two: Alternative Explanations," *Christian Research Journal* 15 (Summer 1992): 14-19, 29.

17. Ibid., 29.

noted that there have been

> religions around the world that readily accept NDEs as the doorway to the spiritual world. The most prominent of the Western religions to do this is the Church of the Latter Day Saints [sic], more commonly known as the Mormon Church.
>
> The Mormon doctrine supports the NDE as a peek into the spirit world. They believe that the spirit world is a dimension that can't be perceived by the living, but one that is inhabited by those who have left their physical body.
>
> The Mormon *Journal of Discourses*, a commentary on Mormon beliefs written by church elders, says that the spirit body retains the five senses of the physical body (sight, hearing, feeling, taste and smell) while having "enhanced capacities" and the ability to consider many different ideas at the same time. It can also move with lightning speed, see in many different directions at the same time, and communicate in many ways other than speech. And it is free of disability and illness.
>
> Mormon doctrine says that the spirit enters the body at birth and leaves upon death. It defines death "merely a change from one status or sphere of existence to another."

Moody goes on to quote experiences of Jedediah Grant, Heber J. Grant, and other Mormons to conclude that "many of the traits of the NDE are described by Mormon leaders."[18]

While Moody has compared modern NDEs to experiences described in the *Journal of Discourses*, in Mormon circles it has been often taken for granted that contemporary NDE research confirms a number of Mormon views of the afterlife. Special, faith-promoting collections of NDEs with specific Mormon content have even been published.[19] In 1993 the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, a publication of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), printed an enthusiastic article on NDEs, arguing that "Mormons who have reported and collected NDEs take the accounts almost for granted in the context of the faith." The author, Kevin Christensen, also found early occurrences of NDEs in the books of Mosiah and Alma in the Book of Mormon, dismissed New Age elements such as references to reincarnation in the larger "world context" of NDEs as secondary, and concluded that "Mormon spiritual experiences tend to gain validity when considered against the [NDE] world context." Christensen was also interested in comparing "the NDE to various ancient temple mysteries in Greece and Egypt" and commented that

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18. Raymond A. Moody, with Paul Perry, *The Light Beyond*, 2d ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 1989), 88-89 (1st ed., 1988).

19. See, for example, Brent L. Top and Wendy C. Top, *Beyond Death's Door: Understanding Near-Death Experiences in Light of the Restored Gospel* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993).

both the Book of Mormon and early LDS spiritual experiences "anticipate current research in showing the kinship between the NDE and temple mysteries."[20] Christensen's article, on the other hand, made no reference to what was becoming the most phenomenal bestseller in the whole field of NDE accounts: *Embraced By The Light*, published in 1992 (one year before the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* article) by Betty J. Eadie. The omission was interesting because Eadie was—and still is—an active LDS.

Betty Eadie's Testimony

Betty Jean Eadie, then thirty-one, had her (second and most important, after one as a young girl) NDE on 20 November 1973 in a Seattle, Washington, hospital. According to a flyer inserted into the first several thousand copies of her book by the publisher, Eadie and her husband had been baptized in the Mormon church in San Antonio, Texas, before her Seattle NDE. "They did not remain active in the Church long, however, partly because of the transitory nature of the branch they were attending and partly because they were converted more to the missionaries, perhaps, than to the gospel." However—the flyer continues—"after her death experience, she and her family became active in the Church. She has served since in various auxiliaries, including in the Primary and as Ward Young Women's president." The flyer contradicts the information in an early review in the *Salt Lake Tribune* that Eadie's LDS conversion "apparently took place after the author experienced what the book describes as her death."[21] In 1993 Eadie confirmed in an interview with the Ogden, Utah, *Standard-Examiner* that "she was an inactive member of the LDS Church at the time [of her NDE] and since then has become active."[22] In subsequent controversies, Eadie's extent of "activity" in her ward has been questioned. Richard Abanes, an anti-Eadie (and anti-Mormon) Evangelical critic, claims that in a telephone interview with him, Dan Miller, LDS bishop of Metro Seattle's Ninth Ward, stated that "Betty is not a real *active* member . . . and this goes back before the book was published . . . Her activity has been sort of lukewarm."[23] According to a review in the Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, Eadie was "an inactive Mor-

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20. Kevin Christensen, "'Nigh unto Death': NDE Research and The Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2 (Spring 1993): 1-20.

21. Compare "Of Special Interest To Members Of The Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter-day Saints," flyer inserted in the first printings of *Embraced By The Light*, with Paul Swenson, review of *Embraced By The Light* in "Utah Under Cover: Area Books & Authors," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 20 Feb. 1992.

22. Valerie Phillips, "Author Shares Life After Death In An Embrace," Ogden *Standard-Examiner*, 6 Mar. 1993.

23. Richard Abanes, *"Embraced By The Light" and the Bible: Betty Eadie and Near-Death Experiences in the Light of Scriptures* (Camp Hill, PA: Horizon Books, 1994).

mon when her 'NDE' occurred" and "hesitatingly spoke of it to her visiting teachers." Interviewed by LDS church-owned *Deseret News*, Eadie explained that she also attended meetings of the Seattle chapter of the International Association of Near-Death Studies. "But I felt so dissatisfied. They talked about the power, the light, but none of them mentioned Jesus." Persuaded that her experience "was profoundly religious," Eadie rather "became active in the LDS faith, finding joy in speaking to many groups about her experience."[24]

Eventually, Eadie also became a licensed hypnotherapist (and later "grief counselor") with offices on Ambaum Boulevard in Seattle. She continued to tell her story to small groups in firesides and other meetings until she found a particularly careful listener in Jane Barfuss, who prepared "a 16-page synopsis and sent it to friends and family in Salt Lake City who, in turn, sent copies to more friends." Barfuss's paper, *Spirit World*, was read with a professional eye by Curtis Taylor, a Mormon and an editor with Aspen Books, an LDS-oriented press based in Murray, Utah. Taylor was prepared to buy the rights to Eadie's story but discovered they had already been sold to another Utah publisher, Cedar Fort, for $1,000 as advance payment.[25] Taylor and some friends bought the rights from Cedar Fort for $50,000 and "started Gold Leaf Press in California specifically to publish the book."[26] In an article published in February 1994, *The Wall Street Journal* hailed Gold Leaf as just another American success story. "*Embraced By The Light* [by then a national bestseller] defies virtually every premise of modern publishing—noted the *Journal*—Ms. Eadie had never written a book before and Gold Leaf Press had never published one."[27] In fact, Gold Leaf was—and is—controlled by Aspen Books,[28] which already had a reputation in Utah as a publisher of LDS devotional and missionary books.

Embraced By The Light—apparently so rearranged by Taylor that reporter Peggy Fletcher Stack called it in the *Salt Lake Tribune* "ghostwritten" and "actually written by Curtis Taylor"[29]—was launched in Utah with a first printing of 20,000 copies, accompanied by the flyer *Of Special Interest To Members Of The Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter-day Saints* and promoted by the Salt Lake advertising agency Stilson & Stilson. The first

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24. Karen Boren, "Is Death Merely The Precipice Of True Birth?" *Deseret News*, 17 Jan. 1993.

25. Jim Jerome, "Heaven Can Wait," *People*, 10 Nov. 1993, 83.

26. Vanessa Ho, "Brush With Death Puts Her In The Publishing Spotlight," *Seattle Times*, 27 June 1993.

27. Meg Cox, "Death Conquers Bestseller Lists As Boomers Age," *Wall Street Journal*, 2 Feb. 1994.

28. See Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Mormon's Book On Afterlife Gains National Response," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 Oct. 1993.

29. Ibid.

printings had on the cover what the *Tribune* review called "a denatured Jesus" (in contrast with the book's "simple description of a loving Christ"). The review criticized "the book's garish, kitschy cover."[30] In subsequent printings for the national market, the cover was changed. Minor changes were also included in the text of printings intended for the national, non-LDS market. For example, in the first printing humans were described—in familiar LDS terms—as "literally his [God's] spirit children"; the sentence was modified in successive printings to read simply "his very own children."[31] Jesus Christ is described in the first printing as "a separate personage from God"; "personage" becomes "being" in subsequent printings.[32] Perhaps the most important change concerns abortion, branded as "an act against that child" where "the spirit feels an immediate and devastating rejection" in the first printing, while in subsequent printings abortion is merely "contrary to that which is natural" and the spirit "feels a sense of rejection and sorrow." The more recent printings also mention that "the spirit also feels compassion for its mother, knowing that she made a decision based on the knowledge she had," a remark not included in the first printing.[33] In 1994, when *Embraced By The Light* became a favorite target of anti-Mormons, these changes were easily offered as evidence of deceit and conspiracy.[34]

These changes did not prevent the book from achieving a phenomenal success. By September 1994—according to the dust jacket of the Italian translation[35]—it had sold 5 million copies in the United States (including the paperback edition, whose rights had been sold for a reported $2 million[36] to Bantam) and had remained for more than seventy weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Eadie was, by that time, an international celebrity and had appeared in talk shows including *20/20* and (twice) *The Oprah Winfrey Show.* Apparently, the book was extremely successful in Christian (including Evangelical) small groups. There, it also became, almost immediately, controversial.

Anti-Mormons, Mormons, and Betty Eadie

Mormon readers in the Intermountain West were the first to vote in favor of Eadie with their feet, when the first printing of 20,000 copies of

30. Swenson, "Utah Under Cover."

31. Betty Eadie, with Curtis Taylor, *Embraced By The Light* (Placerville, CA: Gold Leaf Press, 1992). Compare p. 47, first printing, with p. 47, subsequent printings.

32. Ibid., 47.

33. Ibid., compare p. 95 in the first and subsequent printings.

34. See Abanes, *"Embraced By The Light" and the Bible*, 215-20.

35. Betty J. Eadie, con Curtis Taylor, *Abbracciata Dalla Luce* (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 1994).

36. Fletcher Stack, "Mormon's Book On Afterlife." Other sources indicated $1.5 million.

Embraced By The Light sold out in ten days,[37] largely in Utah. The figures, however, show that outside the Intermountain West the reaction was equally favorable. *Embraced By The Light* is, indeed, a moving book. It tells of Eadie's life since her difficult childhood as the seventh of ten children born to a Sioux Indian mother and a Scottish-Irish father. The parents were divorced when Eadie was four. She was placed in a Catholic boarding school, where—according to the book—she was despised by the sisters because of her Native American blood. She eventually developed pneumonia and experienced a first, short NDE. She later attended an Indian training school run by Methodists, who were kind with her but still taught a spirituality centered on the fear of eternal punishment. At age twelve she was already rather curious about religion and visited Lutheran, Baptist, and Salvation Army churches. At fifteen she dropped out of school to live with her mother and ended up marrying a neighbor. She divorced after six years, at age twenty-one, with three children, while a fourth had died at three months. Shortly thereafter she married Joe, her present husband (also divorced). After problems connected with her seventh pregnancy in 1968, she decided to have a hysterectomy in 1973 that eventually led to her famous NDE.

In the hospital—according to the book—Betty left her body and experienced a long visit to the spirit world, meeting a number of celestial beings, including Jesus Christ, and remembered her pre-existence. She was finally told that her time had not yet come and she should return to earth to spread her experience. She emerged transformed. Not only is Eadie's a message of hope, but—unlike other vague NDE accounts of the spirit world—it is full of details about every aspect of life after death. An enthusiastic Melvin Morse, a well-known NDE researcher, wrote in the foreword that he "learned more about near-death experiences from reading *Embraced By The Light* than from any other experience in my life, including ten years of studying near-death experiences and interviewing children and adults who had survived clinical death."[38]

There is, of course, a price to be paid for detailed descriptions of life after death. Sooner or later, they will be measured against the prevailing standards of organized religion. Although *Embraced By The Light* is not a theological treatise, some doctrines, including pre-existence, are clearly taught. "Spirits who had not yet come to earth" are surprisingly active in Eadie's spirit world. We see "one male spirit trying to get a mortal man and woman together on earth—his future parents. He was playing cupid and was having a very difficult time," until "other spirits became concerned as they saw his difficulty, and they took up the cause, several of

37. Boren, "Is Death Merely The Precipice Of True Birth?"
38. Melvin Morse, "Foreword," in Eadie, *Embraced By The Light*, vii.

them trying to 'corral' these two young people."[39] Spirits make "preparations to go to earth" and are capable of heroic choices such as "to enter this world mentally handicapped" for the sake "of the growth he [the spirit] and his parents would achieve."[40] While on earth spirits do not remember their pre-mortal existence, which is "purposely blocked by a 'veil' of forgetfulness at . . . birth."[41]

"All people as spirits in the pre-mortal world took part in the creation of the earth," and we all are the "very own children" of God. To Eadie's "surprise" she also learned that "Jesus was a separate being from God" and that the "Protestant" doctrine "that God the Father and Jesus Christ were one being" is not true, although Jesus "himself was also a God."[42] In the afterlife "there are many levels of development," but even the spirits "bonded to the world through great, bodily appetites, or other earthly commitments" are not without hope. "They remain close to the earth for a certain amount of time, but eventually they learn to move on to accept a greater warmth and security of God."[43] Ultimately, "God wants us to become as he is" and "we are capable of doing so."[44] Eadie does not claim to have learned everything about the divine mysteries, although she "saw galaxies and travelled to them . . . , visiting their worlds and meeting more children of our God, all of them our spiritual brothers and sisters," at the same time "remembering . . . that [she] had been to this place before" (i.e., in her pre-mortal life).[45] Eadie also meets in the spirit world with a governing "council" made of twelve males. She "had no reaction to the council being comprised solely of men. I accepted the fact that they had their role and I had mine." "I began to see the difference in the roles between men and women, and I understood the necessity and beauty of those roles."[46]

Eadie's theology of original sin is quite optimistic. She was shown that "Eve did not 'fall' to temptation as much as she made a conscious decision to bring about conditions necessary for her progression."[47] It is important not to direct negative thoughts towards reality. "Positive and negative energies work in opposition to each other. And when we internalize these energies, they become our servants. Positive attracts positive, and negative attracts negative."[48] Energies of humans are also stored in

39. Eadie, *Embraced By The Light*, 92.
40. Ibid., 94-95.
41. Ibid., 44.
42. Ibid., 47, 44.
43. Ibid., 83-85.
44. Ibid., 61.
45. Ibid., 88.
46. Ibid., 111.
47. Ibid., 109.
48. Ibid., 57.

the spirit world. Eadie visits a "larger room similar to a library," "a repository of knowledge" but without "any books." She realizes that "this was a library of the mind" (not unlike the "Akashic records" of recent esoteric tradition) including "all knowledge," "about anybody in history—or even in the spirit world—in full detail."[49] Animals and plants also have their energy fields and actually have their forms of existence in the spirit world.[50]

There are many other themes running throughout Eadie's description of the spirit world—dominated by a loving and understanding Jesus—and I have focused here on some of the more controversial. Although there have been other hostile reactions (feminists were not pleased to see that "if you scratch the surface of her [Eadie's] pluralistic heaven, underneath are 12 ruling males around a kidney-shaped table"[51]), objections came first from Evangelical anti-Mormons and later from conservative Mormons. Ironically, criticism from the two groups often runs parallel.

Richard Abanes, a full-time minister in "cult evangelism" associated with the anti-Mormon Christian Research Institute (CRI), was among the first sounding the alarm. In early 1994 he published "A Special Report: What Is Betty Eadie Hiding?" in CRI's *Christian Research Journal*,[52] and shortly thereafter alerted the larger Evangelical audience of *Christianity Today*.[53] Later in 1994 Abanes published a book-length criticism of Eadie,[54] and other anti-Mormon ministries followed. Church Ministry Resources of Gadsden, Alabama, published in the same year a book by William Probasco, *The Lie at the End of the Tunnel*; although quickly prepared as a sort of an instant book, it became the source of later anti-Eadie literature.[55] Although more deep in its theological criticism (and somewhat more interested in criticizing the New Age than Mormonism), *Deceived by The Light* published in 1995 by Doug Groothuis, an assistant professor of philosophy at Denver Seminary, relies largely on Abanes and Probasco.[56] The same is true for the section on Eadie of Phil Phillips's *Angels, Angels, Angels*, a book where the Devil is exposed as the primary

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49. Ibid., 76.

50. Ibid., 38 (animals), 78-79 (plants).

51. Swenson, "Utah Under Cover."

52. Richard Abanes and Paul Carden, "A Special Report: What Is Betty Eadie Hiding?" *Christian Research Journal* 16 (Winter 1994): 6, 40-41.

53. Richard Abanes, "Readers Embrace The Light," *Christianity Today* 38 (7 Mar. 1994): 53.

54. Abanes, *"Embraced By The Light" and the Bible.*

55. William L. Probasco, *The Lie at the End of the Tunnel: A Critique of "Embraced by The Light"* (Gadsden, AL: Church Ministry Resources, 1994).

56. Doug Groothuis, *Deceived by The Light* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1995).

source of most contemporary NDEs and experiences with "angels."[57] *The Watchman Expositor,* published by the anti-Mormon Watchman Fellowship of Arlington, Texas, placed Eadie on its cover with the disturbing question: "Embraced by an Angel of Light?"[58] Not unexpectedly Dick Baer, founder of the anti-Mormon organization Ex-Mormon and Christian Alliance of Orangevale, California, was quick to embrace conspiracy theories: "This book is a carefully crafted book of deception—he said of *Embraced By The Light*—crafted to denigrate Christianity and promote doctrines that are mainline Mormon doctrines."[59] More careful in concluding that Eadie's conspiracy was sponsored by the LDS church, Abanes devotes two hundred pages to show the Mormon roots of Eadie's theories on pre-existence, Jesus Christ as "*a* God," degrees or levels in heaven, and "worlds without ends." All Evangelical critics went into considerable detail into Eadie's and her publisher's activities to downplay her LDS affiliation, and considered the changes between the first "Utah" printings and the subsequent "national" printings as their smoking gun.[60]

CRI's *Christian Research Journal* commented that "few of the millions who have seen and heard Eadie know of her religious affiliation because apparently she, her publishing company, and her publicist are now trying to keep that information quiet." CRI recorded interviews with Eadie, her executive assistant, and LDS officials and evidently obtained conflicting information:

> When asked by the JOURNAL, which Church was the truest, she [Eadie] replied: "If I were to tell (people) . . . the Church that I find most rewarding, most fulfilling for *me, they* might not find that at all . . . I might be misguiding them from what they need to find for themselves . . . I have learned that many of the things that I have written about in the book match with many of these other religions. And I think that there are common threads that run through all churches."
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> Evading the fact of her LDS church affiliation, she also commented: "I think it's . . . pretty much of an assumption . . . I don't divulge my religious

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57. Phil Phillips, *Angels, Angels, Angels: Embraced by The Light . . . Or . . . Embraced by The Darkness?* (Lancaster, PA: Starburst Publishers, 1995). Notwithstanding the title, only pages 192-215 are devoted to a criticism of Eadie's book and her Mormon background.

58. Inside, the article had no question mark: Craig Branch, "Embraced By An Angel Of Light," *Watchman Expositor* 11 (1994): 4-6, 18-21. Ironically, the article mentioned that among "LDS scholastics" who "have . . . written on the origins and affinity of Eastern mysticism and spiritualism in LDS history" is one "Michael Homes" (sic), author of a 1988 article in *Dialogue* on Spiritualism and Mormonism. In fact, Michael Homer argued the opposite: differences between Spiritualism and Mormonism are more crucial than similarities.

59. Abanes, "Readers Embrace The Light."

60. Abanes, *"Embraced By The Light" and the Bible,* 217-20.

> beliefs . . . [or] the churches that I attend now at all. And there is a reason for that, some people have contacted me and said that they would join any church that I belong to. And that is not why I wrote the book."
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> Eadie repeatedly refused to admit she was a Mormon during the above conversation—even when confronted with a statement the JOURNAL obtained from Don LeFever, Manager of . . . Media Response for the LDS church, that Eadie is an active Mormon. Eadie feigned surprise, asking: "Who is this gentleman? . . . How does *he* know? Why does he think that?"
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> Two days later, however, the JOURNAL spoke with Tom Britton, Eadie's executive assistant. His story was somewhat different: "Betty doesn't *only* attend the LDS church. Her membership is in that church, but that's not the only church she attends." Hours later Eadie's Mormon bishop, Dan Miller, verified that she and her family have attended the Seattle, Washington 9th Ward for at least 15 years.[61]

Many anti-Mormon critics also had in their files an early interview with Eadie published in the Ogden *Standard-Examiner* where "she said she was told during her after-life experience that the LDS Church is 'the truest Church on the earth.' But her LDS background was not included in the book, she said, because 'the book was meant to go out to the world, not just to LDS members.'"[62]

The two main criticisms by Evangelical anti-Mormons are that Eadie downplays her Mormon affiliation and that her heaven is relativistic, since in her experience she learned that "we have no right to criticize any church or religion in any way" and "they are all precious and important in his [God's] sight."[63] She, however, adds: "There *is* a fullness of the gospel, but most people will not attain it here."[64] Ironically, these same two themes in *Embraced By The Light* have also invited trouble from the opposite end of the spectrum. There are not only book-length criticisms of Eadie by Evangelicals, including the one by the anti-Mormon Abanes; there is at least another by Douglas Beardall, an LDS author of faith-promoting books on missionaries, family matters, and the Three Nephites.[65] The irony of Eadie being attacked at the same time by Evangelical anti-Mormons as a Mormon missionary in disguise and by conservative Mormons as a New Age apostate was noted in an article by Peggy Fletcher Stack in the *Salt Lake Tribune* on 17 June 1995.[66] Beardall's book lacks the journalistic qualities of Abanes's *"Embraced By The Light" and the Bible,*

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61. Abanes and Carden, "A Special Report: What Is Betty Eadie Hiding?"
62. Phillips, "Author Shares Love Of Life After Death In An Embrace."
63. Eadie, *Embraced By The Light*, 46.
64. Ibid.
65. Douglas Beardall, *Embarrassed By The Light* (Provo, UT: LDS Book Publications, 1995).
66. Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Is Mormon Author Embraced or Embarrassed by the Light?" *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 June 1995.

nor does it make for entertaining reading—Eadie is branded a "heretic" by quoting passages from *Embraced By The Light* and contrasting them with the orthodox teachings of both early and modern LDS general authorities. Some skeptical comments on the lack of evidence for Eadie's NDE are also included. The word "conspiracy" is prominent on the cover of Beardall's book, and he is afraid that a cult of "Eadie-ites" is planning to take over the LDS church, if not Christianity as a whole.[67]

Criticism of *Embraced By The Light* by national Mormon science fiction and fantasy writer Orson Scott Card in the August 1994 issue of his conservative newsletter *Vigor* is shorter but more to the point than Beardall's tirade. Card starts with a general criticism of NDE accounts, noting that after the success of Moody's books "once the research became popularly known, the power of suggestion would begin to distort all future accounts." Card's main interest is, however, to compare the "specific doctrines" of *Embraced By The Light* with "LDS doctrine," since—while "not inherently opposed to private visions"—he also "believe[s] that the Lord's house is a house of order." Only "when the revelation leads people toward the gospel and Church of Jesus Christ," may one "feel bound to at least admit the possibility that God's hand was in it." Measured against these standards Eadie "seems . . . to fail on every count." Without disagreeing with Evangelical critics, Card recognizes that Eadie's "vision is overwhelming a collection of LDS doctrines and folk doctrines that have circulated widely in the church. All the important ideas have roots in the LDS community," although there are also points where Eadie "departs from genuine LDS traditions" and "follows pop psychology or trendy new-age religious ideas." It is, at any rate, serious, since she is a Mormon, that Eadie "felt no obligations whatsoever to tell her nonmember readers that this gospel can be found in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," and in fact "says the exact opposite," claiming that all religions upon the earth are necessary. This, Card notes, was not the teaching of Joseph Smith. "By choosing to hide the Mormon source" of her doctrine, Card remarks, Eadie "issued this book already poisoned with deceptiveness and dishonesty. She is not telling the full truth. One can only contrast her behavior with that of Boyd K. Packer, who has recently been excoriated for his very plainness of speech. True prophets do not hide their affiliation with their predecessors."

Eadie, according to Card, is wrong on at least two accounts. First, she teaches "for doctrine" popular Mormon folk beliefs (particularly on premortal life and angels). Second (and worse), at times she "does not merely amplify or speculate on existing Christian and specifically LDS doctrine, but instead directly contradicts it," going back to Protestantism

67. Beardall, *Embarrassed By The Light*, 41.

(where she suggests that "God had absolute power on evil") or taking her theology from pop culture and movies like *Back to the Future*. The latter is the likely source, according to Card, for the story of a male spirit struggling to persuade his future parents to get together. If the book were presented as fiction, this would perhaps not really matter. Since it is presented as a genuine spiritual experience, however, Card believes that "Latter-day Saints are not free to accept both the teachings of LDS prophets and those of Betty J. Eadie as having equal authority, for the simple reason that they can't both be true. If Eadie's vision is true in every detail, then Christ has clearly abandoned the Church he restored to Joseph Smith. But I do not believe that he has done so, which leads me inexorably to the conclusion that Betty J. Eadie has abandoned it."[68]

Although Card noted that Eadie's book "has spread like wildfire through the Church, being quoted from in Sacrament meetings and Relief Society," hostile reactions have apparently come from the upper echelon of the LDS hierarchy. Early in 1993 Peggy Fletcher Stack wrote that "in a meeting with male LDS state leaders in Sandy last spring [1993] Apostle Boyd K. Packer called the book 'bunk', a witness said." At that time (October 1993) Eadie told Fletcher that "she had not talked about the book with any LDS general authority" but "said her local leaders are 'behind me 100%.'"[69] When asked by Ogden's *Standard Examiner* about her relationship with "top LDS authorities," Eadie replied: "I guess I'm not the type that feels like I have to go to somebody about what's right for me. They have not contacted me and I have not contacted them because I don't want to put them in a position to respond." She added, however, that she "merely wants to share her story"; "she is not trying to start another church, espouse new doctrine, or 'become another prophetess.'"[70]

Ironically, before the Eadie controversy erupted, FARMS-published *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* had commented on the common report in (pre-Eadie) NDEs that "denominations don't matter," arguing that "surprisingly, this thought is a Book of Mormon leitmotif": "all the Mormon Scriptures emphasize that group membership has nothing to do with personal worthiness or righteousness." In the Book of Mormon "Alma insists that judgment occurs in relation to opportunities for improvement (including social and cultural conditioning), not against an absolute standard (see Alma 9:14-24). Those privileged with greater knowledge are reminded that where much is given, much is expected."[71] One may wonder if this openness to ecumenical religious attitudes in

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68. Orson Scott Card, "A New Age Testament: A Mormon Reader Looks at 'Embraced by the Light,'" *Vigor: Advice & Commentary on Mormon Life* 6 (Aug. 1994): 1, 4-12.

69. Stack, "Mormon's Book on Afterlife Gains National Response."

70. Phillips, "Author Shares Love of Life After Death in an Embrace."

71. Christensen, "'Nigh Unto Death,'" 13-14.

NDE literature will persist in Mormon conservative circles after the Eadie controversy.

The Social Construction of Near-Death Experiences

As mentioned earlier, NDE is not the only kind of extraordinary experience purporting to convey religious truth. Leading NDE researcher Kenneth Ring has devoted an entire book to a comparison of NDEs with the experiences of people claiming to have encountered UFOs and extraterrestrials.[72] A kind of narrative I have discussed elsewhere in a Mormon context—stories of "Satanic" ritual abuse[73]—is also similar to "negative" accounts of NDEs, often (unlike Eadie's) including a vision of hell. In fact, Eadie wrote in 1995 the foreword to the NDE account by Angie Fenimore, *Beyond The Darkness*. While, Eadie comments, "Hell was not a part of my experience," other near-death experiencers "were drawn into a place filled with fear and darkness": "this revealing book by Angie Fenimore is a great example of the struggle with Hell that I have heard others try to describe."[74] Accounts like Fenimore's contradict Evangelical objections that NDEs offer a New Age spirituality where hell and sin are never heard of. It is doubtful, however, that Fenimore's account will please Evangelical readers. Although she does not disclose her present religious affiliation, Fenimore mentions that she attended a Mormon church as a pre-teenager and claims that during her NDE "God the Father told me that He Himself had had a mortal existence on a world like ours and had progressed along a path by choosing good over evil."[75]

On the controversial issue of Satanic ritual abuse stories, I have proposed a middle ground between treating survivors as pathological liars and accepting their claims at face value. A similar middle ground has been proposed for NDEs by Carol Zaleski in her 1987 book comparing visions of the afterlife in medieval and modern times. Considering both differences and similarities between medieval and modern accounts, Zaleski concludes that "the visionaries of our own age are no more free of cultural influence than those of less pluralistic eras." NDE narratives—not unlike medieval visions of heaven and hell—are works "of the socially conditioned religious imagination"; each of these stories "is formed in conversation with society," even if each experience "takes place in the

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72. Ring, *The Omega Project*.

73. See my "A Rumor of Devils: Satanic Ritual Abuse and Mormonism," presented at the Mormon History Association conference, May 1995, and in a revised version at the American Academy of Religion annual conference in Chicago, November 1995.

74. Betty J. Eadie, "Foreword," to Angie Fenimore, *Beyond The Darkness: My Near-Death Journey To The Edge Of Hell* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), vii-viii.

75. Ibid., 126.

solitude of the deathbed and in the private chamber of inner experience." Once we recognize this, we can no longer claim that NDE accounts and other visionary experiences "paint a true picture" of the afterlife. Still, Zaleski wishes to avoid not only "naive affirmation" but also "shallow relativism." She is pessimistic about the skeptical literature on NDE that dissects NDE narratives into "component parts" and explains away each of them through medical, pharmacological, or psychological reductionism. NDEs—like other significant human experiences—are "meaning wholes," not entirely "reducible to their origin or cause." In the act of telling and retelling, "near-death experience takes shape as a unified and unifying whole. Once this narrative integrity is achieved, no amount of analytical dissection can destroy it." Zaleski, however, does not believe—contrary to what Moody and other NDE researchers may claim—that NDE narratives can be stripped of culturally conditioned "labels" and reduced to a hard core, supposedly common to all NDEs, that accurately describes what experiencers "really" saw. "We will not," Zaleski insists, "make the assumption that the visionary who sees Christ or Krishna is only 'labeling' an underlying experience which can be described more accurately and directly as encounter with a 'being of light' or the 'higher self.' . . . Such modern expressions may seem more palatable, but they are no less culturally determined or mythically cultivated."[76] The idea that a "pure," culture-free narrative of spiritual experience may be reconstructed by the interpreter (who, in turn, operates within a culture) does not make sense for the modern social scientist. But that does not necessarily mean that narratives of the afterlife do not make sense at all. According to Zaleski, "we can appropriate the messages of near-death literature only in an indirect fashion; and yet that may prove to be no insignificant thing."[77]

NDEs are, first of all, calls to conversion and offers of orientation in this life: "the maps of death and afterlife that these accounts contain are meant to help us get our bearings, right now, in relation to the cosmos in which we dwell, or wish to dwell." As socially constructed as they are, NDE narratives may make a "significant contribution" because they put "in experiential terms questions about life and death which are so urgent as to call not for answers but for vital response." NDE narratives may even carry "prophetic value" and "evidential weight," as far as they communicate "insights capable of being verified—not in medical charts, but in our own experiences." And this is precisely the "way in which the religious imagination mediates the search for ultimate truth."[78]

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76. Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys*, 190-95.

77. Ibid., 199.

78. Ibid., 202-205. In this context, Zaleski notes, it is not particularly important whether the experiencer really "died" or is simply using death as a spiritual metaphor.

Critics of Eadie—both Evangelicals and conservative Mormons—take for granted that NDE narratives convey factual, empirically verifiable information about the afterlife or the spirit world, not unlike a travel account. Their criticism is in fact reinforced by Eadie's and her supporters' own interpretation of her NDE. This is, of course, the interpretation most visionaries give of their visions. It is not, however, the only interpretation. Zaleski's exploration of medieval afterlife accounts makes clear that theologians in the Middle Ages were aware that visionary experiences of the afterlife were normally edited by scholars or religious authorities, and at any rate—even when not edited—reflected the personal theological preferences (and occasionally affiliation with a particular religious order) of the visionary. Medieval theologians did not wait for modern social science to recognize that narratives of visions and mystical experiences are culturally conditioned (even if they, of course, did not use this exact term). They maintained that visionary experiences could still be "true," but contrasted their rather subjective "truth" with the objective truth of the scriptures validated by tradition and the church.

Visionary experiences in the form of apparitions and visions of the Virgin Mary or Jesus Christ are, by the way, still common in the Roman Catholic church. The Catholic church reserves the right to "validate" these experiences as genuine but is careful to emphasize that validation means only that nothing in the experience is "unorthodox," that it does not engage the church's infallibility or is binding on church members. Out of more than one thousand incidents in this century, less than twenty have been "validated" by the church hierarchy. Additionally, the validated visions remain "private revelations," not to be confused with the "public revelation" of the scriptures. This distinction between "visions" and "revelations" may be applicable outside Catholic apparitions.[79]

Of course, NDE narratives differ from usual accounts of apparitions of the Virgin Mary by Catholics. The latter, after all, operate within a given denomination or church and take for granted its theology. NDEs—with the exception of some explicitly Evangelical (and some explicitly Mormon) narratives—are normally non-denominational, and experiencers do not emphasize their religious affiliation when they mention it at all. This circumstance gives NDE accounts a certain ambiguity. Eadie's narrative is, from this point of view, not exceptional. Her story has, first

79. On the current Catholic position on visions and private revelations, see Pietro Cantoni, "Rivelazione, rivelazioni private, nuove rivelazioni: criteri e problemi teologici cattolici per un discernimento," in Massimo Introvigne, ed., *Le nuove rivelazioni* (Leumann, Torino: Elle Di Ci, 1991), 251-73. See also, for a balanced treatment of what is today a heated subject of discussion in the Catholic church, Benedict J. Groeschel, *A Still, Small Voice: A Practical Guide On Reported Revelations* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993).

of all, evolved in nearly twenty years from a simple oral narrative to Jane Barfuss's 16-page synopsis—*Spirit World*—and finally to the book written in its final form by Curtis Taylor. This is not uncommon in visionary experiences, and most NDEs have been narrated to an NDE professional researcher who has heavily edited them before publication. In his criticism of *Embraced By The Light*, Orson Scott Card notes that Eadie's "is an oft-told tale, and it would be remarkable indeed if it had not grown in the retelling. . . . Innocence was gone by the time this book appeared."[80] Coming from an experienced storyteller like Card, the argument deserves attention but should not be carried too far. After all, religious experiences in all churches (including accounts of the first vision by Joseph Smith) have reached us through a whole story of different versions, editions, and publications.

Eadie and her editors seem to have been conditioned by two different traditions: LDS doctrine (both official and folk) and the rich, already existing NDE literature which should in turn be placed within the context of the spiritual beliefs (conveniently summarized by the expression "New Age") to which most authoritative NDE researchers subscribe. Suspicious Evangelical critics have noted that Eadie attended a Catholic school in her childhood and have included "a dab of Roman Catholicism" among the influences shaping Eadie's NDE,[81] but the Catholic influence is not particularly apparent except perhaps in the three monks who meet Eadie when she has just left her body. As we have seen, Evangelical critics suspect a Mormon conspiracy to infiltrate Evangelical Christianity behind *Embraced By The Light*, and some conservative Mormons suspect in turn a New Age conspiracy to take over Mormonism. The fact that Eadie (or her editors) decided to downplay her LDS religious affiliation has added fuel to the fire of the controversy. Ultimately, however, such criticism could only mean what is obvious even to the more enthusiastic NDE researchers: NDEs are culturally conditioned, and that among the conditioning elements there is now the literature itself resulting from twenty years of NDE research.

Zaleski makes a good case that there is little purpose in dissecting Eadie's book or other NDE narratives to distinguish between what has "really" been experienced and what should have been added at a later stage, and between the genuine "hard core" and the culturally conditioned LDS or "New Age" elements. In fact, these distinctions are impossible. Eadie's narrative could only be evaluated as a whole and as a socially constructed product of religious imagination (where "imagination" should not be confused with "fiction," much less with "fraud"). If

80. Card, "A New Age Testament," 11.
81. Branch, "Embraced By An Angel Of Light," 6.

we assume that Eadie has given us a definitive map of the afterlife or the spirit world, superseding all previous maps, we could only regard her as the potential founder of a new religious movement, since her map—when taken at face value—includes LDS, mainline Christian, and "New Age" elements but may not be entirely reduced to each one of these religious traditions. It is not entirely inconceivable that someone may start a religious movement taking *Embraced By The Light* as a binding revelation. Although Eadie has repeatedly claimed that this is not her intention, her authorization will not be needed to start a new religious movement based on her book. After all, small religious movements based on Tolkien's saga or Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* have been established, with no sponsorship or support by these two famous authors.

The attitude of the LDS church could become a factor in the development, if any, of a new religious movement among Eadie's followers. It may be tempting to compare Eadie to the late Annalee Skarin (1899-1988), a Mormon housewife who obtained significant success in the 1950s with books describing her revelatory experiences combining Mormonism and popular occult-metaphysical themes. Due to action taken by Apostle Mark Petersen, Skarin was excommunicated in 1952 and her followers eventually formed a still existing, loosely affiliated religious movement or network, best known for its claim that Skarin did not die but was "translated" into Heaven "such as Enoch in Biblical days."[82] Skarin's case suggests that action against Eadie by the LDS church could become a catalyst for the birth of a new religious movement. Ultimately, however, whether *Embraced By The Light* is or will be considered a public, objective, binding "revelation" rather than a subjective account of a private visionary experience does not depend on the LDS church's or even Eadie's attitude but on her readers'. To put it in Zaleski's words, "in the end, a revelation is binding only if it binds." Sociologically, "it must create or serve a community, something no NDE narrative—nor the whole of NDE literature—has ever attempted to do to this date."[83] For the faithful follower of a religious tradition, a "revelation" is binding because it has been validated or canonized by the divinely ordained and guaranteed authority of a church. For the social scientist, a vision becomes a binding "revelation" when it is accepted as mandatory by a relevant community.[84]

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82. See Samuel W. Taylor, "The Puzzle of Annalee Skarin: Was She Translated Correctly?" *Sunstone* 15 (Apr. 1991): 42-46. See also "Rumors of Author's Translation Put to Rest," *Sunstone* 18 (Apr. 1995): 87.

83. Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys*, 204. See, on the creation of new religious networks based on NDEs, Michael Grosso, *Millennium Myth: Love and Death at the End of Time* (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1995).

84. See Introvigne, *Le nuove rivelazioni.*

There is no evidence that the 5 million Americans who purchased a copy of *Embraced By The Light* are ready to start a new denomination. Nor have they left their churches to follow Betty Eadie as a new source of religious authority. *Embraced By The Light* seems, by all accounts, to have been widely accepted as a non-binding vision. Since visions are, by definition, subjective, it is not surprising that Eadie's have been received with mixed feelings by different audiences. Her experience is indeed moving, and well told. One could agree with Card that its success among Mormons "may be a symptom of how hungry the Saints are for vivid spiritual experiences"[85] in a time when visions and revelations are no longer as commonplace as they were in Kirtland or Nauvoo. As a revelation, it is true that *Embraced By The Light* could not be accepted by an orthodox LDS, or Roman Catholic, or Evangelical Protestant. If her vision, on the other hand, is regarded just as a vision, as a call expressed in symbols to conversion and re-orientation—as well as a social product of religious imagination—no one should feel threatened in his or her orthodoxy. That this may be the attitude of the average reader of *Embraced By The Light* is proved, perhaps, by the success itself of the book. Observers of contemporary LDS life may, in turn, conclude that Eadie's book is evidence that Mormon religious imagination is still capable of creating powerful visions at the end of the twentieth century.

85. Card, "A New Age Testament," 12.

The Precarious Walk Away from Mormonism, All the Time with a Stitch in My Side

Phyllis Barber

IN APRIL 1995, JUST BEFORE I LEFT for a month-long trip to Slovenia, I had a brief telephone conversation with Linda King Newell. I had been invited to speak at the annual Pilgrimage Retreat. She told me that the theme for the conference was "Our Stitch in Time" and asked if I had a title for my speech. I jokingly said, "What about A STITCH IN MY SIDE?"

"Why not?" she said in her inimitable and gracious way.

"I'll call you if I come up with something better," I said as I hung up but knew I'd be in Slovenia where it would be an ordeal to make a long distance call. This title would have to find a text.

Three days and much thought later, as I sat on the edge of Lake Bled in Slovenia watching white swans glide through the mist at 7:00 in the morning, I was struck with a title: "The Precarious Walk Away from Mormonism, All the Time with a Stitch in My Side." I laughed at the sound of the words, at the idea, at the audacity of speaking about a walk away from Mormonism to a group of Mormon women. But why not talk about my wanderings of the last twelve years, my exit from the ward doors to see what I could see in the big wide world? Why not talk about my encounters with other "isms"—Taoism, Buddhism, humanism, existentialism, fundamentalism, Sufism, Southern Black Baptistism where the gospel music made me "you go girl" happy as the choir rocked down the aisle in their yellow robes with gold thread and white satin hoods and my feet tapped out the time? Why not talk about my search for a religion that didn't insist upon being "the one and only true Church of God" and yet could still capture me as Mormonism once had? After all, Mormon-

ism was my first love. Why not talk about my subsequent doubts about fitting into a larger picture, about having no niche in which to curl and sleep and be cared for? Why not talk about the loneliness of such a decision and the fact that there's a stitch in my side?

But isn't it arrogant to think one's story is so important? In China they call a crazy person, "A person with only one story to tell." Could this be the case, that my struggle with Mormonism is the only story I truthfully have to tell?

Then I remembered my reasons for writing from the personal vantage point in the first place. I am a person who likes, who loves, who cherishes my safety. Though some may choose not to listen to or read my writing, no one can quarrel with my experience. They can't take it away. It's mine. People have a right to get angry with me, however, if I try to speak for them, if I try to witness for them. Julia Kristeva, a French critical theorist, says that writers must be aware of "the indignity of speaking for others. . . . We risk the indignation of excluding those others, whether we side with them or oppose them."[1] With that in mind, I decided to trust my intuition at the edge of Lake Bled and speak of the stitch in my side.

Just what did a stitch in the side mean anyway? A pain in the side from walking or running too fast? A pain in the side from laughing too hard? But whether it's caused from laughing or running, the stitch in the side hurt me in the same way—like a large needle pulling a thread through an unnameable place. Somewhere in my side.

Of course, my imagination took over as soon as I tried to find a definition. The first images I saw were the traditional ones: a needle and thread pulling at disparate pieces of old pajamas, old coats, old blouses, silk ties. Simple, unassuming, seemingly insignificant thread, so easily broken, attempting to hold so much together, trying to keep the pageant of humanity covered and comfortable as the play of life proceeds.

Then my imagination crossed over to the fantastic. I saw the large needle of God poking into people's sides and trying to connect them to the whole, trying to pull everyone together. I saw God for a moment as Janus, the Roman god identified with doors, gates, and all beginnings, the one usually represented as having two opposite faces. In this double-faced picture of God, the One, the female facing one direction, the male facing the other, neither beheld the other's face. Neither was able to leave the other's backside. Mother God was sewing on one side while Father God was digging in the fields on the other side, wearing out his overalls so they had to be mended. Mother God poked him with a needle every so often to remind him to take better care of his work clothes. She had enough mending to do.

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1. Quoted in Richard Jackson, "What Are Poets For," *Mala Revija: A Review of Slovene Art and Culture*, Spring 1995, 6.

And then there were the needles of responsibility sticking in my side. Do this. Do that. Don't be lazy. An idle mind is the devil's workshop. You can't sit still. You can't be a sloth. So much to do. So much time that mustn't go to waste. The needle in my side. God sewing.

Maybe this stitch in my side is God waking me from my walking slumber to assure me there's a God who'll be there when my seams come undone, who will sew me back together if necessary. God needling me. Mother/Father. One.

Am I a marionette of God, dangling from threads? Can I walk nowhere without the hand of God directing me? Threads. How they hold me. How I feel those stitches in my side.

The brief text of my own particular life, pertinent to this theme, is that, after thirty-eight years of dedication and every-meeting, ever-church-job devotion to Mormonism, I decided, through a strange, broken and knotted and broken and knotted again thread of events, that it was necessary and compulsory to find my way to God by myself, that I couldn't really know God unless I had a direct, unsecondhand, personal knowledge of the One, the Divine, the All, the Absolute. I needed to take this journey alone, even though I knew I might get lost. Other more hardy, sturdy individuals had died or gone insane before they were wakened by the Divine. I thought I should look for God everywhere—in nature, in the grace of a hawk's flight, in the rising and setting of the sun, in the faces of all the people who passed me, in the myriad expressions of the children of God, be they rich or poor, brown, black, yellow, or white, be they devout or rebellious, addicts, or homeless. All of these were manifestations of God, and I mustn't turn my face from any creation filled with life. I'd grown suspicious of my innocent, teenage, Las Vegas 5th Ward, Las Vegas Stake conception of God, the one that fit into a few pat testimonial phrases that I'd repeated over and over to distraction, as if I repeated them often enough, they'd be true. And I'd grown disillusioned, even broken-hearted about the loss of this innocence.

But still I wanted to try again—to really know God and God's love. I wanted to explore the Divine without the rhetoric of exclusivity. I would run away from home. I would brave the world myself, even as Don Quixote had done. I would find God.

And as I first walked from west to east, so to speak, from Mormonism to the exploration of the other, I thought it possible to walk away from the roots that held and succored me. But how long can one travel east before it becomes west again? is one of the more recent questions I've been asking. And is my struggle such an individual, such a particularly Mormon one?

I've chosen two stories from many I could tell from my running away from home.

Story Number 1. This past month I met Melena in a Slovenian University in Ljubljana. She is a professor in the pedagogical school, the university being separated into pedagogical and philosophical divisions. Melena is gracious in every way, but there was something automatic about her, as if she had been programmed to be nice, to say all the right words to guests from the United States. She was something like a marionette. It takes one to know one, maybe? She reminded me of the stereotypes of communism, the form of government that had ruled Slovenia (even if Tito had his individual stamp on it) until as late as 1990. Incidentally, even if the name communism is no longer in vogue, people in the know say that only the labels in Eastern Europe have changed, not the realities. It was evident to me that Melena was raised with certain concepts. With a certain language. That she'd been molded and shaped by the idealistic phrases not unlike the ones I'd known. "This is the ideal. This is the way life must be lived."

While many of the younger people in Slovenia didn't wear the mark of the past in the same way she did, she seemed trapped by the language and propaganda she must have listened to for the thirty-five plus years of her life. She was slightly stiff, eager to please, graciously abrupt, overly polite, and a product of a culture which has rigid ideas about how one must behave and think. I felt a déja vu in her presence. I knew this woman. I recognized something of myself in her.

Story Number 2. Ariel Atzil, a tour guide in Israel, was once an Israeli fighter pilot. Ariel is movie-star handsome, intelligent, and the most intense man I've ever met. Two of his brothers were killed in the six-day war, and Ariel and his family live in constant fear of sending their children off to school. No wonder. On some of my tour group's excursions, we had seen laughing school children on school outings, accompanied by parents carrying semi-automatic weapons. Someone might harm them. A Palestinian may attack. The whole atmosphere of Israel felt as if it could combust at any time. There was palpable hysteria everywhere. In the Old City, young Hasids walked through the Arab Quarter at breakneck speed, carrying a weapon, looking at no one, acting as if they could be contaminated or killed if they slowed their pace.

One afternoon when our tour bus took us to a place where there was a spectacular view of Jerusalem, a Palestinian tried to pull a money changing scam on one of the older men in our tour group. He was showing bills, counting them out, all the time double ending the bills so they seemed to be twice their value. Ariel started shouting at the man in Arabic. The voices got louder. Ariel had a gun in a holster at his side. The men were suddenly nose to nose. The Palestinian was pulling up his tunic as if to procure some assistance, a weapon maybe. Everyone ran for the bus. My husband, David, ran interference, grabbed Ariel by the

shoulders, pulled him back to the bus, even as he was still shouting and fingering the gun at his side.

That evening at a quiet social in Ariel's home, I asked him why he stayed on in Israel when the tension was so intolerable. He replied that he'd lived in Switzerland for two years, but that he hadn't really liked it there. The people were closed. Hard to know.

I read between the lines of the conversation, maybe overdoing it with my fiction writer tendencies, but Ariel had a cause in Israel. He had something greater than himself to fight for. Something to live and die for. Dying for a cause must have seemed greater to him than dying in a nice, safe, possibly boring life. And he was trembling, even consumed, but most of all alive with his cause. Thus, Ariel.

These stories make me wonder about two issues that keep me tied to Mormonism: (1) the power of language, i.e., how caught are we by the language and precepts we have learned, and (2) the necessity of cause, i.e., conflict in one's life, meaning to strive for.

As for the first issue, how much are we shaped by the concepts with which we've been raised? Is it possible to emerge into a different sensibility (the notion of a daisy becoming a different daisy or a daisy becoming a dahlia comes to mind), or are we forever shaped, as Melena in Slovenia seemed to be, by the rhetoric of our young lives and idealism? How flexible is the language we learned as children in Sunday school? How deeply entrenched? At our cores will we always speak a language that is internal to our culture alone, only truly understood by other Mormons? Are we governed by a language that is rigid and set in its ways? Is it possible to expand beyond the perimeters of this language to create new possibilities for ourselves, our brothers, our sisters?

And the number two issue: Is it necessary to have a cause in one's life, a conflict that engages you, that engages me? Do our lives matter more if we care deeply about something?

Many of you have chosen to stay and stand firm within the structure of Mormonism, to have integrity in defending those principles that seem to have warped into unrecognizable shapes. Some could be described as "Freedom Fighters," not unlike the Slovenian partisans during World War II, many of whom lost their lives defending their country, their ideals. The people in the front lines (excuse the war-like, male metaphors) are heroines, heroes, if you like.

But one pause for thought: If the people in the front lines accomplish their goal, they may be out of a job, as is the case in Eastern Europe. And what then? According to Aleš Debeljak, a Slovenian poet, who feels he now writes in the shadow of literary giants who have truly suffered for their cause as he has not:

> In a communist regime, constantly eroding under the radical criticism spearheaded by prominent members of the Slovene Writers' Union, young literati

> were left with little ideological taboos to debunk, almost no political blacklists to challenge, and virtually no censors peeking over their shoulders. They had to design their own responses to a predicament that currently haunts so many Eastern European writers: "How to address broader moral and social dilemmas of the time when they seem to be better dealt with by anti-totalitarian activists?"[2]

It seems that causes can change. How does one identify oneself once the war has been fought and won? Is there always need for a cause to give meaning to our lives? I think perhaps there is, in one shape or another.

Other people have taken different stances that bear their individual stamp, their own brand of faithfulness within and without the fold. Still others have tried to take a stance in a broader and less defined world, such as myself, but have found themselves still entangled with Mormon threads.

As a writer continually searching for new ideas, Mormon themes, in particular, and spiritual themes, in general, continue to present themselves to me. A children's book I wrote entitled *Legs: The Story of a Giraffe* was chosen as one of the ten best books in Macmillan's spring 1993 catalogue by the Seventh Day Adventists, but it didn't sell well to the larger public when critics claimed the book was too sad. If they had believed in an eternal life, the sadness of the book would not seem so sad. But there it was: my assumption of eternal life, not always shared. But how can I be concerned with much else after thirty-eight years of trying to live The Gospel? Spiritual themes, Mormon themes, are like lullabies I heard as a child. They float up out of nowhere and feel like music that whispers to me even as I try to sing other songs.

As I have tried to present stories from Mormonism to a wider audience, to be an every-member-a-missionary like my parents always hoped I would be, to help the culture at large see the beauty, complexity, profundity, and engagement of Mormonism, rather than the usual scandalous misperceptions, I wonder if maybe the prospects for carving out a niche in a larger cultural frame are unpromising. I have a book of stories based on Mormon lore with a literary agent, and numerous national publishers have turned it down, usually saying that they love the writing and the stories, but they just don't have a clue who would buy them.

As I stand with my arms stretched out toward both my old world of Mormonism and the other world of many-isms, I wonder if I have a home anymore. Have I lost something in my precarious walk away from Mormonism? Should I have stayed and engaged in the fight closer to the

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2. Aleš Debeljak, "Public Matters, Private Trials: Slovenian Poets of the 80s," *Mala Revija: A Review of Slovene Art and Culture,* Jan. 1994, 2.

ward house? Am I doing any good in my corner of the territory—I so want to do some good?

But I have to face the question of whether I can return to a nostalgic past. Is home only an illusion I've hung on to? Maybe I'm deluding myself to think I have a home in this world anyway. We're all travelers and students here, and I'm happiest when I consider myself a traveler without the worry of having to belong, to be popular, to be right, to be safe—most of all without the worry about safety. Maybe it's best to surrender and be still. To make peace with heaven and earth and be a Siddhartha, ferrying travelers and seekers across the river. To be content with not knowing all the answers. But regrettably I'm not quite ready to sit by the river, in bliss. I'm still engaged in the search for God, looking for ways to experience "The Unbearable Lightness of Being."

Milan Kundera, the exiled Czech novelist and author of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, characterizes the modern writer in the Don Quixote gesture. Is this writer noble or foolish as she ventures out into the world to test her own paradigms for it?

> What she finds, suddenly, is what the modern man and woman finds—a world that no longer fits her expectations, however learned, from religion, society, family, state, philosophy, science, etc. And worse, she finds a collective world actively or passively subverting her images and models for it. The contemporary writer must question a world that tries to force its dogmatic answers on her. That questioning of everything, from external modes of authority to the very motives of the self . . . must be continuous.[3]

But there is a thin line to consider as one establishes oneself as a questioner of authority: Czeslaw Milosz, the Nobel prize-winning poet, asks "What is poetry which does not save/ Nations or people?"[4] Many of us would hope we're involved in such a task. On the other hand, Richard Jackson, my colleague from Vermont College who took a group of students and writers like me to Slovenia, asks another question:

> What sort of poetry can save nations or people and *not* participate in its own self-made imperialism? What sort of poetry can do this and not attempt to establish itself from a falcon's perspective, from a distant and austere Parnassus, looking down upon the very people it should serve?[5]

So by taking a walk away from Mormonism, I have found I can't tout myself as a brave soul or as a more valid authority on the subject because

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3. Jackson.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

I've asked questions. So-called bravery may be a lot of puffery. I can't negate the place, the roots, the ground whence I sprang. It isn't my wish to establish an imperious throne on which I can sit and toss wisdom pearls to the masses (though I confess to notions of grandiosity from time to time). But I had some need to assert my will, a small thing perchance, and an impetuous, immature thing maybe, but I have wanted to know what the word freedom means, freedom of choice, free will. But freedom is a lonely place sometimes. When there are no walls around you to hold you in place, no walls to keep you in your niche, what do you have to tether you to the earth? What cause do you have? So the question I have asked myself is just how far can I walk away from Mormonism until I have walked into something I am not, until I lose myself, pull out the roots that have given me nurture? What is the other side of so-called freedom?

God plucks at me. Pricks my side. I walk into the Ufizzi Museum in Florence, Italy. I find a painting by Gabrielle Moroni. I think of the angel on the temple, blowing his horn. I see a baptismal font in the Baptistery at the Duomo in Florence. It is not like the fonts found in today's Catholic churches, those used for the purpose of baptism by sprinkling. It is obviously deep enough and large enough for immersion, and part of me thinks, "Aha, just as my teachers told me in Sunday school. Ah yes, Mormonism is the truth after all." But then my traveling companion tells me that baptism by immersion fell into disuse because of the plagues and the concern about spreading disease, not because of some corruption of the church, as I'd always been led to believe. And on the last day in Slovenia, when I'm very late trying to catch a train from Ljubljana to Vienna, I stand in line until I finally reach the woman at the counter and ask for a ticket to Vienna. She tells me something in Slovene I can't understand. I plead with her. "What are you saying?" She repeats her Slovenian, which can't penetrate my brain. "What? I don't understand." And who should show up like Superman and Superman, but two Mormon missionaries from Utah, of course. They take me to the right ticket counter, wait while I buy my ticket, and carry my over-heavy bags to the train. "Truly the Mormon church is true, I say. Young boys like this. Saviors in embryo. Earnest and good and honest and fine young men." Somehow, in the young girl part of my heart, I want all guardian angels to be Mormon, but then I've found them everywhere, I must admit.

Why do I keep wanting to prove that the Mormon church is the only true church when that stance has always bothered me? Why is that question always at my back? Always on my tongue? Always there like a stitch in my side? Because there is always and forever a part of me who fell in love with Mormonism before she fell in love with anyone or anything else. It's a story of true love. People were there to nurture me, to guide me, to encourage me. I learned to dance, to give speeches, to play the pi-

ano by accompanying almost everyone who ever sang or played an instrumental solo in our ward. I have been given much. I have been blessed by my country which I call Mormon. I am a Mormon in my blood and in my bones. One ancestor was baptized by Hyrum Smith in Nauvoo, Illinois. Another drove the wagon for Joseph Smith and then for the Heber C. Kimball Company. These men are in my blood. And yet, and yet, one of my great-grandmothers was one of the first suffragettes in Utah. A public speaker. A singer for Brigham City holidays and occasions who didn't spend enough time in the home. Another Danish grandmother, a convert straight from the Old Country, used to brew beer in her basement. Thank God for the variety of ancestors, not all of whose stories would qualify for a Daughters of Utah Pioneers anthology. What is this thing called Mormonism, so revered in certain places in my heart and mind?

I think again of Melena who is still committed to the principles of communism, even though the regime has changed to something other than it was. She's a good woman. She believes in good principles, things like all people being treated equally, like materialism being an insatiable monster of sorts. She is shaped by these things much as I've been shaped by the communal character of Mormonism. But in order for me to grow, in order for me not to be static, I must question. That is the way of my being. I don't do it for any other purpose than that I must question in order to discover new values, even to transcend old ways of comprehending on the unrelenting path to God. I am, after all, on the path to God, not Mormonism. I need to be prepared for the face, possibly many faces of God that I'm unable to see in this mortal state. What we see may surprise all of us. Dash our expectations.

According to my colleague, Richard Jackson, the poet and the poem must always be at the frontiers of the heart and the imagination. Wallace Stevens in his poem, "Of Modern Poetry," says the poem must question everything it confronts to discover new values, however tentative: "It has to construct a new stage." At the same time it must fight a simple nostalgia for a simpler past: "It has not always had/ To find: the scene was set: it repeated what/ Was in the script./ Then the theatre was changed/ To something else. Its past was souvenir."[6] Can this be true of the never-changing principles of Mormonism?

The language we speak, even now, has been created by the richness of "Sisters, Brothers, the priesthood, the laying on of hands, spirit, testimony, obedience to the Word of God, the building of the Kingdom." We are shaped by these words. We are who we are because of these words, and yet I ultimately believe we need to keep questioning them, if only to

6. Ibid.

find the far reaches of those words, the possibilities of those words. Words are not cement. They are fluid. They are alive with possibility. They can grow. They can transcend the old meaning. If "man is now as God once was," then all things are capable of growth, change, and transcendence, especially our habitual ways of seeing the world. Should we therefore not question the assumptions around us, the language we use, the traditions that may have outworn their usefulness? Should we also not pay tribute to that which is good, that which has blessed lives, in other words, the true gospel of Jesus Christ?

Maybe all of us are incapable of walking away from the truth. Maybe the truth surrounds us at this very moment. Maybe we are, indeed, in God's hands, or maybe we are a cell on the body of God as the Hindus say. The truth is in front of me, to the sides of me, as it is behind me in the nostalgic past.

So maybe I need to revise my thinking about the stitch in my side and consider if it's not from laughter after all. Maybe it's God poking me to say that no one can walk away from The One because we are all part of God. Maybe I've been in too much of a hurry, going somewhere I already am, maybe panting too much, caught on the horns of a dilemma I've created to keep my forehead scrunched, my brow knitted, myself occupied with a cause. Maybe God has a larger sense of humor than I'll ever comprehend. Maybe the stitch in my side is a gentle, though sometimes painful, reminder that we are on our way back to something that transcends this planet, this mortal life, these earthly and querulous ways, these confused times. Walking away. Walking toward. God is everywhere. We can't walk away because maybe we're inside of God. East is West and West is East.

As I write the final paragraph, my imagination now sees each of us as pictures on cardboard, the kind through which we used to thread yarn when we were young girls, a needle in hand, learning the feel of the needle, the yarn, the ancient art of sewing. The Mother Aspect of God is threading each card, still doing her mending, keeping us close together, keeping the pieces from falling apart. The yarn is filling in the outlines of these pictures of women holding smaller needles—mending, sewing, maintaining, caring, yes, but probing as well. Needle. Thread. A stitch in time.

"To Act and Be Acted Upon"

Heather Hardy

[Author's note: The following essay, except the footnotes and afterword, was originally given as a sacrament meeting talk in September 1995. Although some of the material may seem a bit homey, it was included as a vehicle for sharing faith and building community with a broad segment of my perhaps not atypical congregation. I offer the talk in its original form as a sincere attempt at inclusive yet thoughtful LDS discourse.]

LET ME BEGIN WITH TWO STATEMENTS from a man who 350 years ago struggled to live a life of faith. An eminent mathematician, Blaise Pascal was also a philosopher and religious thinker who knew both the value of rigorous analysis and the limitations of reason. The first quotation, from his *Pensées*, is his famous theistic wager:

> Let us then examine this point, and let us say: "Either God is or he is not." But to which view shall we be inclined? Reason cannot decide this question. Infinite chaos separates us. At the far end of this infinite distance a coin is being spun which will come down heads or tails. How will you wager? . . . Let us weigh up the gain and the loss involved in calling heads that God exists. Let us assess the two cases: if you win you win everything, if you lose you lose nothing.

Pascal, the "inventor" of probability, weighs the possibility of infinite gain against finite loss and concludes that a reasonable person would choose faith: "You want to find faith and you do not know the road. You want to be cured of unbelief and you ask for the remedy: learn from those who were once bound like you and who now wager all they have."[1]

The second quotation, referred to as Pascal's "Memorial," is from a very different, very private document—a piece of parchment which after Pascal's death was found sewn into the hem of his jacket, apparently to be carried with him at all times. It consists of shorthand notes (for per-

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1. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (Harmondsworth, Eng: Penguin, 1966), 150-52.

sonal use) of an overwhelming, almost inexpressible experience. It reads, in part:

> The year of grace 1654, Monday 23 November . . . from about half past ten in the evening until half past mid-night.
>
> Fire.
>
> "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob," not of philosophers and scholars.
> Certainty, certainty, heartfelt, joy, peace.
> God of Jesus Christ.
> *My God and your God.* . . .
> The world forgotten and everything except God.
> He can only be found by ways taught in the Gospels. . . .
> "O righteous Father, the world had not known thee, but I have known thee."
> Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy. . . .
> Let me not be cut off from him for ever!
> "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."
> Jesus Christ.
> Jesus Christ.
> Let me never be cut off from him!
> Sweet and total renunciation.
> Total submission to Jesus Christ and my director.
> Everlasting joy in return for one day's effort on earth.
> *I will not forget thy word.* Amen.[2]

Two very different callings to religious faith from one remarkable man. The first, the wager, is a public admonition recommending a life of faith purely as a matter of will, based on rational calculation. The second is a very moving, very private calling, all the more so because it was so clearly meant for Pascal alone. It is the memorial of a sacred and intimate two hours which—it would seem—profoundly changed Pascal's spiritual life.

Which account offers the better recommendation? Both, it seems, could result in a life of obedience, of Christian service, of self-discipline, and hope. And though the first does not preclude subsequent intervention by the Spirit, it certainly does not rely on it. It is motivated by human agency, by *our* reaching out to God; whereas the second is founded on grace, on God's extending himself earthward. What difference does this distinction make to Pascal and to us?

We are promised repeatedly in the scriptures that we are agents in spiritual matters—that we are to act and not be acted upon (2 Ne. 2:24-28); that if we seek, we shall find (Matt. 7:7); that if we ask with a sincere

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2. Ibid., 309-10.

heart, the truth will be manifest unto us (Moro. 10:4,5); that if we experiment upon the word, our understanding will be enlightened (Alma 32:28-33, 41, 42). These are some of our most beloved passages of scripture and there is little wonder why; they confirm our deepest hopes, attesting that heaven is not far away and that we can receive it within us if only we do our part.

Our membership in the church attests to the truthfulness of these promises. I would venture that each of us—at one time or another—has received personal revelation that has confirmed our commitment to a life of faith. Take a moment and recall to your mind such an experience.

It may be one of great clarity and persuasion, an experience like Pascal's "Memorial" when you felt the immediacy of God's presence, when you knew beyond the shadow of a doubt and were converted. Or you may recall one of the more common, less dramatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit—the intuitions, feelings, swellings of heart, or tingles. These are fleeting experiences: they come to us when we read scriptures, sing hymns, share testimonies. They teach us that Christ's gospel is good, and that we can be a part of it. They provide fertile soil for the more memorable experiences, allowing us "to recognize and appropriate the extraordinary when it comes our way."[3]

As you reflect on spiritual moments from your own past, I would like to differentiate such experiences into two categories: the ones we initiate and the ones we do not. The first are the revelations we seek—answers to prayers, inspiration for specific problems, priesthood blessings. We use our agency to connect with God, expecting direction and a palpable sense of his presence in return.

The second group includes those workings of the Spirit which just come to us, which take us by surprise. These are often the less dramatic experiences described above. They testify of Christ, tell us of the needs of others, remind us of our covenants, incline us to community. They invite us—not at our bidding—to reach beyond ourselves in compassion or wisdom, to experience more of the gospel's joy.

Indeed, it seems that while sometimes we act for ourselves in spiritual matters, many other times we are acted upon, not according to our own wills, but as Nephi tells us in the familiar passage, "according to the will of the Holy Spirit" (2 Ne. 2:28). And as much as I cleave to my agency, I will admit here that there is something about my self-initiated spiritual encounters that repeatedly leaves me frustrated. All too often the responses to these are harder for me to decipher and easier to doubt or second guess than those I do not seek.

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3. See Thomas V. Morris, "Suspicions of Something More," in *God and the Philosophers*, ed. Thomas V. Morris (Oxford, Eng.: Oxford University Press, 1994), 18.

We do not very often talk in sacrament meeting about our spiritual doubts, about prayers that seem unanswered or revelations that do not work. But let me give two examples.

(It is a frightening thing, but as I review my own spiritual autobiography, I come up with several of these. For some reason our minds—my mind, at least—is programmed to harbor doubts and remember them with clarity, building up a store of grudges to hold against God in the future. These apparently failed, agency-initiated experiences leave us feeling very, very vulnerable.)

The first experience. Due to a rare genetic condition (a balanced translocation of chromosomes 2q and 13, for those in the know), my husband, Grant, and I spent much of the first four years of our marriage seeking direction in our family planning decisions. We prayed daily, fasted, counselled with both medical and priesthood authorities, and attended the temple to seek guidance. The questions seemed to us to have eternal significance, to be those that God should care about. And yet no matter how hard we pleaded, the heavens remained closed. In the end we made our own decision, a decision we could live with, but also one that felt simply like the right thing to do; the burden was lifted. And yet it distinctly did *not* feel like a response to the Spirit. We used our agency, made a decision, and moved on.

The second story. Long ago when I was a freshman at BYU I was dating a boy (this was not Grant) who became very interested in our future prospects together. At his suggestion we found a quiet place to inquire of the Lord in vocal prayer about the eternal possibilities of our relationship—I remember it so clearly! A music practice room in the basement of the Franklin S. Harris Fine Arts Center. We knelt down, offered a prayer, and I was immediately swept with a vibrant, burning response, exactly what from seminary I had come to recognize as confirmation from the Holy Ghost. It was a powerful spiritual moment. But even an hour later I knew that I would never marry him.

(Let me add at this point, lest there be any doubts, that I know as clearly as I know anything—from reason, from experience, from the Spirit—that marrying Grant in the temple was not only the best thing I have ever done, but the most fundamentally "right" thing as well.)

But what is happening here? We use our agency to initiate an encounter with the Lord. We put God and his scriptures to the test and get no response, or worse yet we get a response we know is wrong. What then are our options?

(1) We can question ourselves, our worthiness, our desire, our faith (can we ever say that we've asked with "*nothing* wavering?" [James 1:6]). We even question our ability to discern the promptings we might receive. Although this self-questioning may sometimes be the appropriate diagnosis, it can also bring soul-wrenching despair: Am I *un*worthy? Do I *lack*

sufficient faith?

(2) We can question God. In its mild guise, this takes the familiar form of murmuring; in its more severe form, we abandon our Providence-filled view of the world. In any case we experience a crisis of faith; and all too often we have comforters who are more than willing to take our side and give bad counsel.

(3) We can resolve to stay the course and keep the faith. Though the spiritual nourishing of our testimony may fail, still we can cling to our agency. We can choose to accept Pascal's wager as an unfortunate alternative. We can resolve, in an act of will (but also, strangely enough, of faith), to continue to trust despite evidence to the contrary.[4]

There are several methods by which we can implement this last option: we use our creativity to consider ways in which the questioned answer may indeed be right, we wait for the benefit of hindsight (Sister Camilla Kimball used to talk about this as "putting things up on a shelf"[5]), we wait for further light, or we simply admit that we do not know. We concentrate on what we *do* know, realizing how much is at stake.[6]

Let me share with you here my favorite scripture, one that I have never heard quoted over the pulpit (and perhaps with good reason since it addresses this very issue of dealing with uncertainty). It is found in the sixth chapter of John, right after Jesus has told his disciples that they must eat his flesh and drink his blood to obtain eternal life—admittedly a difficult doctrine, especially without foreknowledge of the Last Supper and Crucifixion:

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4. The book of Job shows all three of these responses as Job stoutly defends his innocence against the insinuations of his would-be friends, questions the justice of God, and affirms that "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15).

5. See Caroline Eyring Miner and Edward L. Kimball, *Camilla: A Biography of Camilla Eyring Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1980), 126.

6. Choosing to believe, despite unresolved questions, can be defended as a rational response as well as an act of faith. See William James's famous essay, "The Will to Believe," and Arthur C. Danto's account of W. V. O. Quine in *Connections to the World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1989):

> In Quine's view, any proposition can be held constant if it is important enough to hold it constant. There is an element of choice, an inexpungible component of decision, at every point. We do not willingly, in science or religion, surrender certain propositions—but neither *must* we surrender them under the onslaught of experience. For we can always explain experience away if it is important enough for us to do so. . . . The property in effect is this: The system works. It enables us to go on. It is true in the way in which a ship is seaworthy. If the ship does not carry us across the waters, we abandon it for another or make repairs. And so with our beliefs. The system, as Quine puts it, faces the tribunal of experience collectively, and meaning itself is conferred on experience by what significance it is supposed to have for the total system (117; emphasis in original).

> From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God (John 6:66-69).

While this obstinate clinging to faith may sometimes seem the only acceptable option, it is always a two-edged sword, for though it keeps us in Christ's fold, we remain there as wounded followers, often with a disinclination to seek again. We use our agency to stay the course, but we too often use it, simultaneously, to cut ourselves off from further spiritual growth. The challenge is to remain vibrant and receptive, willing to be entreated (Alma 7:23) despite disappointment or confusion. The will can do its duty and endure to the end, but in the end, "the spirit [alone] giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6).

There are some curious things about using our agency to seek revelation. First, we often take this approach in matters of vital importance, when the stakes are high precisely because we are desperate for direction. These include such questions as whom to marry, when and how many children to have, what career to follow, where to live, what church to join, or how to respond to health concerns.

Second, we often bring to these experiences an expectation of remarkable, unpredictable, and specifically *not* reasonable answers. These irrational promptings somehow prove that since we would not have thought up a particular response ourselves, the Spirit must be acting. (Though, actually, as we mature in wisdom, in the gospel, and in the ability to put aside self-interest, our expectation should be just the opposite—that as our lives become more akin to the Savior's, our own best judgment and the Spirit's promptings should coincide more and more.)

Third, as we do grow in experience with the Spirit, in "getting answers," there is an urge to be proud of our spiritual success, to think that our agency to ask somehow dictates God's agency to respond. We have an urge to domesticate God and make him useful—we come to expect him to use his efforts to warn us of danger, or even to keep us comfortable. Perhaps one of the difficulties inherent in our initiating encounters with God is that too much of our complicated selves, our mixed motives, and our limited understandings are present for the clear light of God's wisdom to filter through.

Though we are to "act for ourselves," what does it mean to do this "according to the will of the Holy Spirit," as Nephi put it? As a vehicle for communicating God's will, the Spirit is a skittish thing; it is elusive, we cannot force it. (Which is probably why for long stretches of Christianity the Spirit's office was limited to attending scripture.) For all the injunctions to seek and find, we are always the Spirit's guests. As recorded

in John 3:8, the Spirit, like the wind, "bloweth where it listeth." We are as often strengthened by the unanticipated as we are frustrated by the unanswered. Though we "experiment upon the word," it is not exactly the scientific method we employ.

And generally when the Spirit does speak, it offers us plausibility rather than proof. There are very few revelations that given enough time or challenge we are not able to question. Our memories are short; our flesh is weak.

Lest I leave you only with accounts of my spiritual doubts, let me share with you one of my most vivid, treasured experiences with the Spirit, which nevertheless demonstrates this point all too well. Sometime after the freshman relationship mentioned above, I was dating another young man—this time a returned missionary in a position to be talking seriously about marriage. He proposed, and as I was praying, privately this time, about whether I should accept, I heard a voice—a male voice—clear and audible, which said, "You can't marry Steve Peterson [not his real name] if you're in love with Grant Hardy." This moment, as you might have guessed, was the first time that I realized I *was* in love with Grant, who—it turns out—was receiving similar promptings on his mission in Taiwan. In due time we married, and I have always been grateful for that particular instance of the clear, unmistakable voice of the Spirit.

Yet many years later when watching *The Sound of Music*, I was taken aback to hear the captain offer a nearly identical profession to Maria about his prior intention to marry the baroness. His simple and reasonable explanation: "You can't marry someone when you're in love with someone else." I was shocked by the familiarity of the words.

While I supposed that the Spirit could quote Hollywood screenplays if it so chose, a more plausible explanation danced in my head. (We always know when the "creativity option" is at work and struggle against it for honesty's sake.) I doubted the source of the voice I had heard. Surely things had turned out well—perhaps the most valid test of inspiration—but still I could not help but wonder whether the Spirit really had spoken those words, those many years before, inserting those names as a mere courtesy to prevent confusion. It was too easy in hindsight to reduce the experience to the romantic longings and sublimated script of one too many viewings of a favorite musical in my impressionable youth.

God, it seems, *could* choose to reveal himself in such a way that a person would find it psychologically impossible to doubt the reality of the experience at the time or many years later—and sometimes, some special times, it seems that he does.[7] Listen, for example, to the prophet Joseph Smith's testimony of his first vision:

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7. See Jerry L. Walls, "On Keeping the Faith," in Morris, 102-12.

> I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true . . . For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation (JS-H 1:25; see also v. 24).

Such certainty is enough to take one's breath away. I believe that it is a very real and special thing; but I am also afraid that my more ordinary experiences have not been possessed of this degree of invulnerability.

Let us return to Nephi's account for a moment (I will be abridging 2 Nephi 2:24-28). He says, by way of introducing the concept of agency, that "all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things," that "men are free according to the flesh," and "all things are given them which are expedient unto man." Finally we are admonished to "be faithful . . . and choose eternal life, according to the will of his Holy Spirit."

From my reading, this passage suggests that the doubting we so commonly experience, the very doubting that so often causes frustration and anxiety, is somehow part of God's wisdom, part of his plan for us in mortality. The process of receiving a witness of the Spirit, then forgetting or challenging it, and resolving again to be faithful and to yield to grace is a cycle that we should expect and embrace. "Faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things" (Alma 32:21). Our hesitancies, it seems, are a vital part of our maturing in agency; of our becoming "adults of God" and receiving his image in our countenances (Alma 5:14) and his law written on our hearts (Jer. 31:33).

Despite the difficulty of getting specific answers to self-initiated questions in my own life, I have felt God's presence as I have made many of those decisions on my own. And I have noticed a pattern: Grant and I think about an issue and discuss it to oblivion (actually I talk and talk and he offers a lot of "hmm's" and "maybe's"); we pray—usually now for guidance and perspective rather than for answers; and then, after a while, we move ahead, doing what seems to be the "right" thing (which, I might add, is often different enough from what we had reasonably decided to give us faith in God's involvement). Although at times this process has seemed like one of spiritually giving up, perhaps it is part of God's plan after all—he won't make our decisions for us, though he will "call, persuade, direct aright" (Hymn #240). And the fact that most of these decisions have worked out successfully has greatly strengthened our faith.

This leads us to yet another response when we do not seem to get answers, and that is to question not ourselves, and not God, but to question what it is we are asking for. From my experience, it is not very often

when I am trying to channel God's usefulness (i.e., "Tell me the future!") that I am blessed with direct answers. Ultimately the faithful profession may be "I do not ask to see the distant scene" (Hymn #97), while remembering that God does care, and that our "goings are of the Lord" (Prov. 20:24). He will be there, there is a plan; but we are to do the choosing.

The journey from one kind of faith to another and back again (and again) is the task of a lifetime. It is sustained alternately by will and by revelation in an ebb and flow that is part of the dynamism of Christianity.[8] This continual tension-state brings life; just as the church, as our living teacher, continually calls us into situations where we have to act beyond our comfort zone and rely on the Holy Ghost. This spiritual tension, for all the anxiety it causes, is our best hope for maturing as God's offspring until the time comes when our confidence waxes strong in his presence, when the Holy Ghost becomes our constant companion, and the doctrine of the priesthood distills upon our souls as the dew from heaven (D&C 121:45-46).

For all its frustrations, and all its actings upon us, the Spirit alone nourishes our strivings for eternal life and our suspicions of something more. Like Alma, I wonder if we can feel its promptings now in our life (Alma 5:26), if we can recall those times in the past when we have felt the Spirit. Make a list (even cryptic jottings will do). Keep it close to you, somewhere that you can review it often (though perhaps not in the lining of your clothes), and resolve to wait patiently for God's wisdom.

Resolve to walk in God's ways, to wilfully choose faithfulness, while joining with Pascal and John the Beloved in this testimony:

> "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."
> Jesus Christ.
> Jesus Christ. . . .
> Let [us] never be cut off from him!

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8. This dichotomy-driven vitality of Christianity was eloquently remarked upon by G. K. Chesterton in his religious classic *Orthodoxy* (New York: John Lane Co., 1911), particularly in chapter 6, entitled "The Paradoxes of Christianity": "Christianity declared [that virtue] was in a conflict: the collision of two passions apparently opposite. Of course they were not really inconsistent; but they were such that it was hard to hold simultaneously. . . I began to find this duplex passion was the Christian key to ethics everywhere" (170-71). And, after several pages of examples, he concludes: "Paganism had been like a pillar of marble, upright because proportioned with symmetry. Christianity was like a huge and ragged and romantic rock, which, though it sways on its pedestal at a touch, yet, because its exaggerated excrescences exactly balance each other, is enthroned there for a thousand years . . . the wild truth reeling but erect" (182, 187).

AFTERWORD

A final note (a critique?) from Nietzsche for those who might appreciate it:

> *As Interpreters of Our Experiences.* —One form of honesty has always been lacking among founders of religions and their kin: —they have never made their experiences a matter of the intellectual conscience. "What did I really experience? What then took place in me and around me? Was my understanding clear enough? Was my will directly opposed to all deception of the senses, and courageous in its defence against fantastic notions?" —None of them ever asked these questions, nor to this day do any of the good religious people ask them. They have rather a thirst for things which are *contrary to reason*, and they don't want to have too much difficulty in satisfying this thirst, —so they experience "miracles" and "regenerations" and hear the voices of angels! But we who are different, who are thirsty for reason, want to look as carefully into our experiences as in the case of a scientific experiment, hour by hour, day by day! We ourselves want to be our own experiments, and our own subjects of experiment.[9]

(And what of those of us with a foot in each camp? . . .)

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9. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Joyful Wisdom* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1960), 248; emphasis in original.

By Extension

Michael J. Noble

He blisters his hand on the iron she forgot to unplug,
investigates every outlet, detects exactly three more
potential fire hazards, bandages himself
in the prescribed method. She is not a cautious woman.
He knows when she bathes, she gambles with the extension.
As the stereo slides into the suds, the blue sparks char
her bones black. "They coat such wires to prevent
electrocution," she says. It makes him squeamish
and he smells the smoking nerves, the odor
of burning rubber. He grits his teeth,
lifts the left corner of his mouth, squints his right eye,
the customary wince she calls a tic.
He does this as he watches her cover the patches
of burst capillaries under her eyes, the blood
fraying, wiring across her cheeks in purple threads,
as though the skin were scratched from the inside.
She sees him twitch when she asks for the phone
and consciously stretches the cord so its doesn't rub
the wall, short his corroded nerves.
Beneath the bed, he stores the extra TV cable
and stereo wire, saves over fourteen feet,
winds it in loops like rope.
Scraping off the rubber,
he divides the strands by color.

"I Do Remember How It Smelled Heavenly": Mormon Aspects of May Swenson's Poetry

Susan Elizabeth Howe

ANY DISCUSSION OF MORMON CULTURE or doctrine in the work of nationally prominent American poet May Swenson must begin with the caveat that Swenson, for virtually all of her adult life, was not a believing Mormon. She rejected Mormonism when she was in college, moved to New York City a few years after graduating from Utah State University, and never looked back. Nevertheless, she was raised in a devout Mormon family, her parents having emigrated from Sweden to live with the Saints. She learned Mormon teachings at home and attended church meetings weekly throughout her childhood and youth. She maintained lifelong affection for her parents and eight brothers and sisters, and occasionally came to Utah to visit them. Mormonism shaped her attitudes and perceptions both consciously and unconsciously. And because her poetry rises directly from her life experience—her interests, her study, her thought, her travels—she could not help but respond to Mormon culture and beliefs in some of her poems.

In these clear-eyed observations—Swenson's poems are always clear-eyed observations—she responds favorably to some aspects of Mormon culture and doctrine, and she critiques and disapproves of other aspects. Her opinions are always strongly owned and expressed, which independence and firmness are not surprising when one considers Swenson's life. She had the courage to go to New York as a twenty-three-year-old woman in 1935, live there in great poverty during the height of the Depression so she could learn to write, and persevere in following her dream of becoming a poet although she did not publish a poem for the

next thirteen years. Such experiences developed in Swenson strong personal values and trust in her own judgment, which attitudes inform her poetry.

Swenson's Critique of Mormon Culture

In her poems about aspects of Mormon culture, Swenson handles the Mormon past with respect and affection and looks with a more critical eye at the contemporary Mormon world. Her memories of childhood, as they appear in her poems, are especially rich. In section 3 of the long poem "October," she recalls her father, whose thumb lacked a nail because it had been nicked by a saw:

> Dad would pare the fruit from our
> orchard in the fall, while Mother
> boiled the jars, prepared for
> "putting up." Dad used to darn
> our socks when we were small,
> and cut our hair and toenails.
> Sunday mornings, in pajamas, we'd
> take turns in his lap. He'd help
> bathe us sometimes.[1]

This passage expresses the genuine affection Swenson felt for her father and recalls the family life of her childhood with nostalgia and warmth. Though the poem does not specifically identify the Mormon aspects of that childhood, they are suggested by the details Swenson includes—the family's special preparations for Sunday and their attention to fruit preservation as part of a year's food supply. Furthermore, this poem in its entirety has a very religious feel to it. "I do not mean to pray," Swenson says in the poem's next section. "But I am glad for the luck/ of light. Surely it is godly,/ that it makes all things/ begin, and appear, and become/ actual to each other."[2] A Mormon reader is likely to associate Swenson's memories of her strong, loving Mormon family in the third section with the yearning for religious expression she voices in the fourth.

"Under the Baby Blanket" more directly considers Mormon life by examining a Mormon artifact. The poem is addressed to Swenson's companion Rozanne Knudson, and it is about a baby quilt Knudson's mother made as she awaited her daughter's birth. As the poem opens, forty-seven-year-old Knudson has just returned from a visit with her mother, who has given her the quilt. Swenson describes its "handstitched/ and

1. May Swenson, *Nature: Poems Old and New* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), 56.
2. Ibid., 57.

appliqued" panels with pictures of "12 identical sunbonneted/ little girls, one in each square, in different/ colors of dresses doing six different things."[3] Swenson admires the work and skill that went into making the quilt—"every tiny stitch put in with needle and/ thimble," and attributes the quilting to "Relief Society ladies."[4] The quilt is described as a work of art and more importantly, a mother's blessing to her daughter. In the center panel of the quilt, the sunbonneted little girl reads a book with Rozanne's initial on the cover. Because Rozanne is also a writer, Swenson sees this quilt as "A Matriarchal Blessing, predicting [Rozanne's] future!"[5] Swenson may intend that statement jokingly, but that she makes it indicates her familiarity with the tradition of Mormon patriarchal blessings and her freedom from the restraints of the contemporary Mormon culture that deny mothers the opportunity to give their children blessings. Swenson has said that many of her poems are "simultaneously serious and funny."[6] In a small way this poem offers a feminist cultural revision and celebrates the beauty and skill of Mormon women's quilt-making.

Affection for the Mormon past and reservations about the Mormon present also appear in the poem "Summerfall,"[7] which describes the demolition by explosion of the old Hotel Newhouse in downtown Salt Lake City. Swenson uses architecture to compare the dignity of purpose, the grace and graciousness of what she calls "an early, honest, work-proud era," with the proliferating Mormon materialism of the current generation. Of that earlier architecture and time, Swenson says, "All will be flattened. Graciousness, out of date,/ must go, in instantaneous shock." Her prediction of the future, appearing a few lines later, has proven to be most prophetic: "Prompt to come, ye Saints,/ your condominiums, high-rise business, boosted/ economy, new cash flow." Swenson's respect for her Mormon heritage did not keep her from examining and judging the Mormon world as she saw it.

Swenson particularly finds fault with the current Mormon practice of unquestioning obedience to authority. In her poem "The Elect"[8] she criticizes the effects of such a system on those who are empowered by it:

Under the splendid chandeliers
the august heads are almost all

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3. May Swenson, *In Other Words* (New York: Knopf, 1987), 12.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Karla Hammond, "An Interview With May Swenson: July 14, 1978," *Parnassus: Poetry in Review* 7 (Fall/Winter 1978): 71.
7. Swenson, *In Other Words*, 22.
8. Ibid., 62.

fragile, gray, white-haired or bald
against the backs of thronelike chairs.

They meet in formal membership
to pick successors to their seats,
having eaten the funeral meats,
toasted the names on the brass strips

affixed behind them, tier on tier,
on chairs like upright coffin tops.
When a withered old head drops,
up is boosted a younger's career.

The chamber is ancient and elite,
its lamps pour down a laureate gold.
Beyond the windows blue and cold
winter twilight stains the street,

as up from the river the wind blows
over slabs of a steep graveyard,
the names under snow. A last award:
to be elected one of those.

Most readers would identify this poem, with its skilled "In Memoriam" stanzas, as describing academia—an Ivy League school like Harvard, perhaps, which is located on the Charles River and is surrounded by very old churches and graveyards. But the poem's language and images suggest an alternative reading for a Mormon audience.

Swenson felt even more strongly about the way that unquestioned authority affects those who are subject to it. Several of her poems imply that, in the people on whom it is wielded, a tradition of strong authority, especially when combined with religious certainty, requires such conformity that it results in unthinking obedience and a mindless mediocrity. Swenson's 1982 Harvard Phi Beta Kappa poem "Some Quadrangles" seems harsh in its discussion of her fellow students at Utah State. This poem compares the kind of students developed at various universities with the kind of quad available to those students. This is what Swenson says about Utah State:

We competed—check this!—
we competed to be good. Most of us did. . . .
"Good student"
didn't mean brilliant scholar, original mind,
or even eagerness to learn. It meant programmed
to please—not so much our teachers, but mainly
our peers. Our goal was to fit the mold that

seemed assigned by those around us. We used
our quad of perfectly barbered grass only for
crossing from class to class. And we walked
on the crosswalks while walking and crossing.
Naturally, no foot should be set on the carpet.
Might wear it out! I do remember how it smelled
heavenly on dewy mornings after a mowing,
which sometimes left unlopped the subversive heads
of a dandelion or two. . . .[9]

The clipped lawn "smelled heavenly," but Swenson makes us wonder how heavenly it actually was. The image of the surviving dandelion heads is significant. I think Swenson must have considered herself one of those few dandelions whose head wasn't lopped off (in other words, who retained an independent mind despite strong pressure to conform). And the dandelions that didn't survive the mowing recall those whose authenticity is destroyed. The perfect quad, untouched by the feet of students who crossed it only at allowed crosswalks, is a metaphor for the Utah Mormon culture that requires such deference to authority and such conformity that it discourages excellence and originality. The advice to students with which Swenson ends this poem shows how strongly she reacted against that pressure to conform:

Listen, there's just one "Don't," one "Keep Off,"
one "Keep Away From"—and I don't mean "the Grass."
It is: *Don't be a clone.* Don't do what others
do. Because what they do, they do because others do. . . .[10]

Swenson is not leading students to wild-eyed irresponsible abandon; she advises them to resist both liberal and conservative conformity:

Not to be robotic, fix-focused on that straight
slit up the middle of some cat's eye. *Not* to be
either knee-jerked or Lotus-folded into the annealed
mob of spastic hot punk-rock clones, or else
upstairs among the pawky cornball Majority Morals. . . .
Get up, get out on the fresh edge
of things, away from the wow and flutter. Stand alone.
Take a breath of your own. Choose the wide-angle
view. That's something, maybe, you can begin to
learn to do . . .[11]

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9. Ibid., 73-74.
10. Ibid., 75.
11. Ibid., 76.

What Swenson advocates here is actually moral agency, a central principle of Mormon thought. It is one of life's ironies that her own exercise of that agency led her to examine Mormon culture, and while admiring some aspects of that culture (including the strong family life she herself benefitted from and the pioneer tradition of work and dignity), to criticize and reject aspects of the culture that she experienced as limiting.

Mormon Doctrine in Swenson's Poems

I began this essay with the assumption that because Swenson was not a practicing Mormon, she would resist Mormon doctrines and that such resistance would appear in her poems. In other words, I thought Swenson's engagement with Mormon teachings would be primarily to oppose them. Indeed, I have found several poems that disparage basic practices or question prohibited behaviors. But more often Swenson seems not to have rejected Mormon concepts but to have considered them carefully. While her interpretation of these concepts cannot be considered orthodox, she reinvents them in the philosophical questions she asks and answers in her poems.

To begin with what Swenson rejects, she seems to have been particularly annoyed with the Mormonism practiced by her mother, who, the poems indicate, was pious and rigorous in her observances. The poem "Nature" says of Margaret Swenson, "Mother, eighty-one, fasted five days/ and went to Temple. Mormon, her creed/ eternal life, she fell/ on the kitchen floor unconscious."[12] Swenson comments no more on her mother's actions, but the juxtaposition of her fasting, her temple attendance, and her belief in eternal life with her falling on the kitchen floor suggests some judgment against her piety, or at least implies that her excesses of piety are foolish. Another poem about Margaret Swenson's death, "That the Soul May Wax Plump,"[13] repeats the criticism:

> Mother's work before she died was self-purification,
> a regimen of near starvation, to be worthy to go
> to Our Father, Whom she confused (or, more aptly, fused)
> with our father, in Heaven long since. She believed
> in evacuation, an often and fierce purgation,
> meant to teach the body to be hollow, that the soul
> may wax plump.

The irony of the poem is that, because of such rigorous denial of self, the most ecstatic moment of her mother's life was the moment when she died, which Swenson describes as almost orgasmic:

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12. Swenson, *Nature*, 79.
13. May Swenson, *New and Selected Things Taking Place* (Boston: Little Brown, 1978), 51.

Throat and rectum
sang together, a galvanic spasm, hiss of ecstasy.
Then, a flat collapse. Legs and arms flung wide,
like that female Spanish saint slung by the ankles
to a cross, her mouth stayed open in a dark O. So,
her vigorous soul whizzed free. On the undertaker's slab, she
lay, youthful, cool, triumphant, with a long smile.

Such abandon Swenson's mother seems only to have experienced in death, never in life. At the poem's beginning, Swenson calls her "My dumpy little mother" and says that when she is in her casket "dressed/ in Eden's green apron, organdy bonnet on" (that is, when she is back in the church's control, wearing her temple robes), "she shrank, grew short again, and yellow." This poem may reflect a tension between Swenson and her mother as much as between Swenson and Mormon doctrine, but there are many other poems with evidence of Swenson's resisting the religious strictures of Mormonism.

Swenson particularly rejects the imposition of religious behavior on her. In "Sunday in the Country," for example, nature itself seems to require that Swenson worship. The poem is replete with religious imagery (though not specifically Mormon imagery) attached to objects in the natural world. Swenson suffers from "The sun's incessant blessing," and "Sky,/ deep and accusing in its blue" that "scrapes/ [Swenson's] conscience like a nail."[14] She says, "Corporeal self's too shapeful for this manger./ I'm mesmerized by trumpet sun/ funneling hallelujah to my veins."[15] In this poem, so far, Swenson is trapped, spellbound by the heaviness of religion, its weight and its guilt. That the "corporeal self" is unsuited to this worship service is telling; Swenson resents and resists the denial of appetite and body that religious life requires. She is relieved of the burdens of "worship" when

. . . at the tabernacle's back, a blurt
guffaw is heard. An atheistic stranger calls
a shocking word. That wakes the insurrection! . . .
A black and
impudent Voltairean crow has spoiled
the sacrament. And I can rise and go.[16]

It is interesting that Swenson is released from the guilt of the religious experience by the noise of an unbeliever, "an atheistic stranger," a "Voltairean crow" that comes into the "tabernacle." If the religion is not true,

14. Swenson, *Nature*, 24.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 24-25.

one need not abide by its strictures against the pleasures of "the corporeal self."

I cannot help but see this poem as Swenson's resistance to religious prohibitions against the expression of sexuality, and especially against homosexual sexuality. The poem "Her Early Work"[17] suggests some of the frustrations Swenson faced in her early life because of her homosexuality:

> Talked to cats and dogs,
> to trees, and to strangers.
> To one loved, talked through
> layers of masks.
> To this day we can't know
> who was addressed,
> or ever undressed.

The poem speaks of "Wild and heathen scents/ of shame or sin" that "hovered since childhood," which feelings account for Swenson's discomfort in the religious atmosphere of "Sunday in the Country."

Two other poems can be interpreted to strongly oppose religious prohibitions that deny human sexual satisfaction and fulfillment. The first is "Wild Water"[18]:

> Insidious cruelty is this
> that will allow the heart
> a scent of wild water
> in the arid land—
> that holds out the cup
> but to withdraw the hand.
>
> Then says to the heart: Be glad
> that you have beheld the font
> where lies requitement,
> and identified your thirst.
> Now, heart, take up your desert;
> this spring is cursed.

Granted, nothing in this poem directly connects it to the situation of a homosexual in the Mormon church. The "wild water" may be a metaphor for any unreturned love. But it is a particularly poignant metaphor for the absolute desert offered to a gay or lesbian Mormon, who, feeling love and sexual attraction, must repress such feelings for his or her entire life

17. Swenson, *In Other Words*, 58.
18. May Swenson, *The Love Poems of May Swenson* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991), 48.

in order to remain in the church, without hope of any human sexual expression ever.

The second poem that questions the wisdom of denying the body's needs for sexual fulfillment is "Stone or Flame."[19] Echoing Robert Frost's "Fire and Ice," this poem asks about the costs of both sexual denial and sexual expression:

> Shall we pray to be delivered
> from the crying of the flesh
> Shall we live like the lizard
> in the frost of denial
>
> Or shall we offer the nerve-buds
> of our bodies
> to be nourished (or consumed)
> in the sun of love
>
> Shall we wrap ourselves rigid
> against desire's contagion
> in sarcophagi of safety
> insulate ourselves
> from both fire and ice

To this point, the poem seems to favor sexual expression, as that alternative seems better than living like a lizard or wrapping oneself into a sarcophagus and may, the poem suggests, nourish rather than consume. But the rest of the poem seems quite even-handed in expressing the pain of either choice:

> And will the vessel of the heart
> stay warm
> if our veins be drained of passion
> Will the spirit rise virile
> from the crematory ash
>
> Shall we borrow
> from the stone
> relentless peace
> or from the flame
> exquisite suicide?

19. Ibid., 49.

That this poem doesn't offer a choice without life-threatening consequences also seems to connect it to the plight of a homosexual in the Mormon church. There can be sexual expression without destruction for married heterosexual Mormons, so long as they express their sexuality with their marriage partner. Indeed, Mormon doctrine celebrates the body as essential in helping us to develop the characteristics of the gods. But sexual expression for gay and lesbian Mormons (or, we are told, for any but those fortunate married heterosexual Mormons) will bring destruction. It is interesting that the poem seems to affirm that such sexual activity is sinful by asking about how it will affect the spirit. Burning is the poem's metaphor for sexual experience, and the poem asks: "Will the spirit rise virile/ from the crematory ash."

But then this poem emphasizes a truth generally omitted from Mormon sermons on proper sexual behavior: there is also a cost for denying the flesh, and that cost is, the poem tells us, a kind of dehumanization, to "live like the lizard/ in the frost of denial," and to lose the warmth from one's heart. Neither choice for a gay or lesbian is happy; the "relentless peace" of the stone and the "exquisite suicide" of the flame are both metaphors for death. And from the official Mormon perspective, these are, tragically, the only options.

Despite these examples of resistance, Swenson's poetry more often considers than rejects major concepts of Mormon doctrine. In a 1978 interview she said, "I'm on a search, although I didn't deliberately set out to make a search in poetry. I have a philosophical bent which harks back to a religious background that I abandoned. Other poets may not be on any search other than into their own selves. But I've been on a search into the universe and the human mind."[20] The philosophical questions of Swenson's poetry are, in general, the questions about the purpose and meaning of life at the heart of the Mormon plan of salvation. In general, Swenson either affirms or in some way reinterprets Mormon doctrine as she answers those questions.

Swenson describes her search to understand the meaning of life. In "You Are,"[21] she says:

> once I thought
> to seek the limits
> of all being
> I believed
> in my own eyes' seeing
> then
> to find pattern purpose aim
> thus forget death
> or forgive it

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20. Hammond, 75.
21. Swenson, *Love Poems*, 41-43.

If this poem is a true report, Swenson sets out to find the meaning of human existence, which certainly is the basic question of any philosophical quest. But notice that she begins with the assumption that there is "pattern purpose aim," that life is not just a series of random, uncaused phenomena, and that a search can lead to understanding that will make death an acceptable part of life. It is likely that those assumptions come from Swenson's schooling in Mormon tenets, which affirm a purpose in human existence and an eternal pattern of life that make death a natural transition rather than a horrible annihilation and final separation.

The long poem "Banyan" from Swenson's final book, *In Other Words* (95-128), enacts the quest she describes in "You Are." The voice and major character of that poem is Tonto, a "coarse-haired Woolly Monkey" (104) who leaves his home in human society and goes to live in the banyan tree. Passage through the tree becomes a metaphor for passage through life, and Tonto is always trying to understand it. He says:

> I had expected to turn a corner,
> to find ahead, within range, a view
> that would change the aspect of everything
> so far seen and experienced—that would explain
> everything, and show how it all combined as a Whole. . . .
> "What and where is the purpose?" I persisted.[22]

To believe or hope that life has "pattern purpose aim" almost presupposes a belief in God or some form of intelligence higher than the human, to which humans are trying to gain access in order to understand the meaning of their earthly experiences. Although Swenson rarely mentions God in them, she wrote many poems considering the limitations of human perception and suggesting that there may be greater systems humans don't have access to. "The Poplar's Shadow,"[23] for example, is about Swenson's childhood memory of a poplar tree, the shadow of which she saw as "the quill of a great pen/ dark upon the lawn." Now she sees the same shape in a pigeon's feather she finds in a city park, which discovery causes her to wonder:

> Starting at here,
> and superposing then,
> I wait for when.
> What shapes will appear?
> Will great birds swing
> over me like gongs?
> The poplar plume belongs
> to what enormous wing?

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22. Swenson, *In Other Words,* 115.
23. Swenson, *Nature,* 18.

The poem "Flying Home from Utah" expresses a similar theme. As Swenson's plane climbs, she sees fields as "fitted pieces of a floor,/ tan and green tiles that get smoother, smaller, the higher we fly,"[24] lakes as "Heel-shaped dents of water,"[25] and hills as "rubbed felt, crumpled bumps/ of antlers pricking from young bucks' heads."[26] The change in her perception as she climbs causes her to reflect, in "the room of [her] mind,"[27] on

> A sprawled leaf, many-fingered, its radial
> ridges limber, green—but curled,
> tattered, pocked, the brown palm
>
> nibbled by insects, nestled in by worms:
> One leaf of a tree that's one tree of a forest,
> that's the branch of the vein of a leaf
>
> of a tree.[28]

The transformation of the forest tree to a tiny capillary of a leaf again suggests to Swenson that humans are limited to comprehend only what is within our own system and that there may be greater systems beyond our knowledge or comprehension. The ending of the poem uses language that recalls Mormon scripture:

> . . . Perpetual worlds
> within, upon, above the world, the world
> a leaf within a wilderness of worlds.[29]

This passage of poetry sounds much like the passage of Mormon scripture in which God speaks to Moses in the Pearl of Great Price:

> And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; . . . . For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them (Moses 1:33, 35).

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24. Ibid., 175.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 176.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., 176-77.
29. Ibid., 177.

In both "The Poplar's Shadow" and "Flying Home from Utah," Swenson creates metaphors that suggest greater realms. Particularly when one considers the similar language, it seems reasonable to look for the source of Swenson's speculations in her Mormon religious background.

Swenson also calls for humans to try to achieve a change in perspective that will allow a different vision. In a poem whose title is also its first line, she says,

LET US PREPARE

to get beyond the organic
for surely there is something else
to which it is an impediment an opaque pod
What if it is sight that blinds
hearing that deafens
touch that makes us numb?[30]

This poem is indented on the left to create a white space that looks like some angled surface—a train or an arrow, perhaps—forcing its way through the words. The poem, which has an oracular tone, ends with the admonition: "Let us prepare to bare ourselves outside the gibbet-hood/ of the world/ without excuse of flesh or apology of blood." Again the assumptions on which this poem is based fit well with Mormon doctrine—that human reasoning and sensory observation are both inadequate to a transcendent understanding, and that greater knowledge may be available to us beyond this life. The poem suggests that if we could get beyond our mortal limitations, more knowledge would be available.

A very interesting poem that actually enacts the changes of perception called for in "Let Us Prepare" is the poem "The Surface"[31]:

First I saw the surface,
then I saw it flow,
then I saw the underneath.

In gradual light below
I saw a kind of room,
the ceiling was a veil,

a shape swam there
slow, opaque and pale.
I saw enter by a shifting corridor

30. Swenson, *New and Selected,* 221.
31. Swenson, *Nature,* 198.

other blunt bodies
that sank toward the floor.
I tried to follow deeper

with my avid eye.
Something changed the focus:
I saw the sky,

a glass between inverted trees.
Then I saw my face.
I looked until a cloud

flowed over that place.
Now I saw the surface
broad to its rim,

here gleaming, there opaque
far out, flat and dim.
Then I saw it was an Eye:

I saw the Wink that slid
from underneath the surface
before it closed its lid.

This poem, which is, of course, about a lake or pond with fish in it, registers several different "realms" that Swenson perceives as she observes. First, she sees the entire lake as a lake—the surface of things. Then, she realizes that the lake is flowing, moving, and that she can see beneath the surface. In describing what is below the surface, "a kind of room," it may be coincidence that Swenson uses terms that have particular meaning to Mormons, but perhaps not. The room's ceiling is a veil, an apt metaphor to describe the juncture of water and sky. But in Mormon terms, we speak of "the veil being thin" when we feel in communication with God or departed loved ones, and we speak of death as "passing through the veil." And although Swenson never received her temple endowments, she may have imagined it in her description of the "kind of room" with a veil for a ceiling, and in which she saw "a shape" swim, "slow, opaque and pale" and "other blunt bodies" that entered "by a shifting corridor."

The third realm the poem creates is the reflection of the sky and Swenson's own face on the surface. This has the effect of again changing and broadening the perspective by which Swenson sees and also including her in all the systems the poem has created. Then the poem concludes with a transcendent change in perception—that lake becomes an Eye

with a capital E. Could that Eye recall the All-Seeing Eye above the doors of the Salt Lake temple and present in so much early Mormon art and architecture? The All-Seeing Eye, like Swenson's "Eye," is a symbol of God. That Swenson's deity is playful enough to "Wink" seems a fitting touch. She would certainly perceive God as having a sense of humor as fine as her own.

To summarize, this poem shows how a change in perception allows one to enter a variety of different realms (or systems), and that by altering our perceptions to understand each system, we have a greater possibility of reaching the vision of God (that is, both an awareness of God and an ability to see as God sees). The poem compares rather convincingly with the Mormon doctrine of eternal progression—that humans are capable of growing and progressing to become like God, that there are "estates" to pass through in this process of growth, and that one's understanding will increase as one learns and learns to abide by the laws of each system.

Considering Swenson's re-invention of the doctrine of eternal progression, it is not surprising that her poems also show interest in the continuation of life and growth after death. In "Camping in Madera Canyon," she says, "Night hid this day. What sunrise may it be/ the dark to? What wider light ripens to dawn/ behind familiar light?"[32] Owls in this poem are given a sort of angelic identity; Swenson tells us that Apaches believed owls to be the ghosts of their ancestors. The poem ends:

> The whiskered owls are here, close by,
> in the tops of the pines, invisible and radiant,
> as we, blind and numb, awaken—our just-born
> eyes and ears, our feet that walk—
> as brightness bathes the road.[33]

The implication is that the humans of the poem, newly born, just coming into the "life" of the new day, don't yet have the capacity to see the owls, although the owls are nearby, but that this day might be night to a greater day in which they will learn to see the owls.

The same impetus drives the poem "Nature," which, as we have already considered, is about the death of Swenson's mother. The poem imagines death as "a large gut" swallowing us slowly "Until the last sink, where mouth says,/ 'Here's a Mouth!'"[34] But the poem goes on to review a film Swenson has recently seen of a birth. Swenson describes the birth as a "wet head, twisting free/ of a vomiting Mouth."[35] Thus the Mouth of birth and the Mouth of death may be the same mouth. Death may simply swallow us here and spew us out elsewhere in another birth.

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32. Swenson, *Nature,* 119-20.
33. Ibid., 120.
34. Ibid., 78.
35. Ibid., 79.

Both of these poems can be seen as metaphoric representations of the Mormon doctrine of eternal progression. The well-known Mormon epigram says, "As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may become." Such a close connection between humans and deity, such a spur always to seek knowledge and growth must have been important to May Swenson; I find these to be the Mormon doctrines that entered her being and became her own.

I conclude by returning to the poem "Banyan," the last poem in the last book Swenson published during her lifetime. Tonto the monkey travels through the banyan with a cockatoo named Blondi, whose talk is mostly to recite passages of literature she's learned in the library where she lives, and, in addition, to repeat what she's heard people say. Blondi ends the poem by reciting her answer to Tonto's question:

> The purpose of life is
> To find the purpose of life
> To find the purpose
> Of life is
> The purpose
> Life is
> To find.[36]

This seems to be Swenson's final message, the truth by which she lived her life. Though it may sound like circular reasoning, it is based on the assumption that one's search for the purpose of life will be rewarding. "Life is/ To find." Such hope, such faith, must have been instilled in Swenson by her Mormon training, where she learned that humans "are that they might have joy" (2 Ne. 2:25) and that "all . . . things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good" (D&C 122:7).

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36. Swenson, *In Other Words*, 128.

The Johannine Comma: Bad Translation, Bad Theology

Marc A. Schindler

> For there are three that bear record **in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth,** the Spirit and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.
>
> —1 John 5:7-8 (Authorized Version)

THE PORTION OF 1 JOHN 5:7-8 HIGHLIGHTED IN BOLD has long given biblical scholars pause for thought. Not just modern, "secular," or "liberal" scholars, either. A physics professor of mine once told his students that Sir Isaac Newton, whose formulation of the laws of gravity still form the fundamentals of physics, actually wrote four times as many books on theology as he did on science. As a young LDS undergraduate student taking institute of religion classes and struggling to integrate science and religion into my life, I found this comment especially memorable. Newton said about this fragment of John, "Let them make good sense of it who are able; for my part I can make none."[1] This "fragment" has been scrutinized so thoroughly that it has a special name: the Johannine Comma, a comma in this sense being a portion of a sentence or phrase, with the implication that something has been inserted.

The Johannine Comma is a scripture which is used by some Christians, especially those of evangelical or conservative persuasions, as biblical evidence of the doctrine of the Trinity: "The Father, the Word and the

1. Quoted in Raymond E. Brown, *The Anchor Bible: The Epistles of John. Vol. 30* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1982), 775.

Holy Ghost: and these three are one." What could be more straightforward an indication that the godhead is one, just as the Nicene Creed says? However, translations newer than the Authorized Version—the King James Version, the official Bible of the LDS church in English—omit the Comma, almost without exception.

For example, the official LDS translation of the Bible in German and French omits the Comma, presumably leaving missionaries in German- and French-speaking missions with one fewer barrier than in English-speaking missions:

> 1 Johannes 5, 7-8 *(Einheitsübersetzung):* Drei sind es, die Zeugnis ablegen: der Geist, das Wasser und das Blut; und diese drei sind eins.

> 1 John 5:7-8 *(Unified Translation):* Three there are, who bear witness: the Spirit, the water and the blood, and these three are one.[2]

In fact, the *Unified Translation* adds a footnote: "5,7f The so-called Johannine Comma is added in here in many textual witnesses, which does not belong to the original text: '("which bear witness) in Heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. 8. And three there are, which give witness on Earth: (the Spirit")'" [my translation].

> 1 Jean 5.7-8 *(Traduction Oecuménique):* Il y a trois témoins: l'Esprit Saint, l'eau et le sang, et tous les trois sont d'accord.

> 1 John 5:7-8 *(Ecumenical Translation):* There are three witnesses: The Holy Ghost, the water and the blood, and all three are of one accord.[3]

The *New American Bible,* which is the English counterpart to the German and French translations but which is not officially sanctioned by the LDS church, also concurs that the correct translation excludes the Johannine Comma:

> 1 John 5:7-8: So there are three that testify, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and the three are of one accord.[4]

The *New American Bible* also adds a footnote. It is not exegetical in nature but is doctrinally interpretive. However, the doctrine involves the sym-

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2. *Einheitsübersetzung der Heiligen Schrift: die Bibel* (Stuttgart: Katholischer Bibelanstalt et al., 1982), 1369.

3. *La Bible: Ancien et Nouveau Testament Traduite de l'hébreu et du grec en français courant avec les Livres Deutérocanoniques de la Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible* (Montréal: Société Biblique Canadienne, 1983), (NT) 356.

4. *The New American Bible* (Iowa Falls, IA: World Bible Publishers, 1991), 1363.

bolism of the three tokens of water, blood, and spirit and how they relate to the divine witness of Christ's mission—there is not a word about the Trinity.

Finally, the publication which forms the basis of every proper translation of the New Testament today, the current descendant of the Textus Receptus, or critical apparatus of compiled manuscripts, also omits the Comma:

> IOANNOU 1 5:7-8: hoti treis eisin hoi marturountes: to pneuma kai to hydor kai to haima; kai hoi treis eis to en eisin.
>
> 1 John 5:7-8 *(Greek New Testament; word-for-word translation):* Then three (there are) which witness, the spirit and the water and the blood, and these three are the of one.[5]

How did the Johannine Comma make it into the Authorized Version in the first place, and why have other, subsequent translations excised it? And, finally, should the fact that our official English Bible, the Authorized Version, still contains the Johannine Comma be cause for concern?

First, there are stylistic reasons for doubting the authenticity of the Johannine Comma. References to the Holy Spirit and the Word personified are not found anywhere else in the writings of John; neither in the epistles, nor in the Gospel. The closest reference to the Word is in the Prologue to the Gospel of John (John 1:1-5), where the Word was with "God" and "was God"—there is no conjoining of the Word with the Father specifically phrased that way. In other words, it is clear that the Word was Jesus Christ, or God the Son, but the word used in John 1:1 for God the Father is the non-specific "God," not "the Father." There was no need to be specific since the controversy of the Trinity had not yet arisen. The fact that the Johannine Comma does explicitly refer to the Father conjoined with the Word would not be necessary if it had been written in the first century C.E.

Likewise the Comma's doctrine of the Spirit bearing witness both in heaven and on earth sounds suspiciously like a neo-hellenistic concept which seems to represent the Holy Ghost as a member of a ruling troika, much like the leadership of the Roman Empire was a duality during the later days of early Christianity (post-third century)—this heaven and earth duality is a concept of which there was no need in the first century, so one has to question its place in a document which purports to be a first century writing. It is, put simply, an anachronism, like finding a Porsche in Camelot.

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5. Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, Kurt Aland, et al., eds., *Novum Testamentum Græce*, 26 ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1979), 825.

Other passages in the New Testament mention three divinities (for example, Matt. 28:19), but even that scripture does not claim they are one; only the Comma has the sophistication of fourth-century trinitarianism.

Even conservative Protestant scholars are acquainted with the sordid history of the Comma. The Scottish biblical critical scholar I. H. Marshall, in his article on the Epistles of John in a Bible dictionary published by the conservative Eerdmans press,[6] refers to the Comma indirectly but in a way that assumes it is spurious: "(v. 5-12; for the correct text of v. 7 f., see RV, RSV or NEB)." The Canadian conservative scholar Norman Geisler goes further. After relating briefly the story of how the Comma made it into the Authorized Version in the first place (about which more shortly), he criticizes the Comma, writing that "the acceptance of this verse as genuine breaks almost every major canon of textual criticism."[7]

It is often assumed that the Authorized Version is a translation from the original Greek and Hebrew texts, but in fact it is actually a version. It was first published in 1611 to solve a political problem. The Hampton Court Conference—convened in 1604 soon after the Protestant James I succeeded Elizabeth I—dealt with political pressure from Puritans for a modern translation that was not "Catholic" by commissioning the Authorized Version which was in fact based on previous versions and translations, including the Bishop's Bible, the Great Bible, and the versions of William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale. Tyndale's New Testament, the final version of which appeared in 1525, was based on Luther's German Bible with some "improvements" from the Greek text. The only direct, pure English translations of the Bible until modern times were translated from the Latin Vulgate.

Tyndale knew at least some Greek, and he was the first English translator to refer to Greek texts. The apparatus of manuscripts he used was one which had just been published in 1516 by that amazing Renaissance man Desiderius Erasmus. As related by a scholar whom we could call the twentieth-century counterpart to Erasmus (Kurt Aland):

> Then at the beginning of the sixteenth—the Novum Instrumentum Omne of Desiderius Erasmus, the great humanist of Rotterdam, was published and marketed by Johann Froben in Basel on March 1, 1516. It is famous as the first edition (editio princeps) of the Greek New Testament, fulfilling the goal of its editor and of its publisher.
>
> The sources used by Erasmus for his edition are known. He took manuscripts most readily available to him in Basel for each part of the New Testa-

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6. J. D. Douglas, ed., *The New Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), 643.

7. Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), 370.

ment (the Gospels, the Apostolos [Acts and the Catholic letters], the Pauline letters, and Revelation), entered corrections in them where he felt it necessary, and sent them directly to the printer. Work on the magnificent folio volume (with Erasmus' Latin version paralleling the Greek text) began in August 1515, and since it was completed in only a few months' time, the rate of its progress can be imagined (praecipitatum verius quam editum "thrown together rather than edited" was how Erasmus described it later). But it gained for Erasmus and Froben the fame (and financial profit) of publishing the first edition of the Greek New Testament.

The most serious defect of the first edition of the Greek New Testament was not so much its innumerable errors (many of these were pointed out to Erasmus by his contemporaries; a nineteenth-century critic in England called it the least carefully printed book ever published) as the type of text it represented. Erasmus relied on manuscripts of the twelfth/thirteenth century which represented the Byzantine Imperial text, the Koine text, or the Majority text—however it may be known—the most recent and the poorest of the various New Testament text types, and his successors [until the twentieth century] have done the same. This was the dominant form of the text in the fourteenth/fifteenth century. Textus Receptus is the name by which the text of Erasmus has been known ever since an enterprising publisher, Elzevir, characterized it in 1633 in the following words: "Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum: in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus [What you have here, then, is the text which is now universally recognized: we offer it free of alterations and corruptions]."[8]

Erasmus had basically five more-or-less complete manuscripts at his disposal to create this first Greek Textus Receptus. By 1869-72, Constantin von Tischendorf published his Textus Receptus, the first of the modern, more accurate and more comprehensive Greek New Testaments, using sixty-five manuscripts—including his spectacular find at the St. Catharine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai, Codex Sinaiticus, plus scores of minuscules. The Englishmen Hort and Westcott issued a Greek New Testament in 1881 which was generally inferior to Tischendorf's (although because of their situation at Cambridge, it became popular amongst English Protestants and was even the basis for the Jehovah's Witnesses *Interlinear Translation* which used to be popular with their missionaries until errors forced its discontinuance in the 1980s). In the latest edition of the Greek New Testament (which is no longer referred to as the Textus Receptus, since its scholarly underpinnings are based on much earlier and more comprehensive manuscripts unknown to late Renaissance workers), no fewer than 395 manuscripts and more than 2,800 minuscules were referred to. Some of these go back to the second century, predating what

8. Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1989), 3-4.

Tischendorf and Hort and Westcott had by two centuries.

Perhaps because of a combination of his haste to publish and the pressure he was subjected to from certain sources, Erasmus fell into a trap concerning the Comma. As Geisler relates,

> There is virtually no textual support for the Authorized Version reading [of the Comma] in any Greek manuscript, although there is ample support in the Vulgate. Therefore, when Erasmus was challenged as to why he did not include the reading in his Greek text edition of 1516 and 1519, he hastily replied that if anyone could produce even one Greek manuscript with the reading, he would include it in his next edition. One sixteenth century Greek minuscule (the 1520 manuscript of the Franciscan friar Froy, or Roy) was found, and Erasmus complied with his promise in his 1522 edition [third edition]. The King James Version followed Erasmus' Greek text, and on the basis of a single testimony from an insignificant and late manuscript all of the weight and authority of some 5,000 Greek manuscripts were disregarded in favor of this text.[9]

Although Geisler overstates the number of Greek manuscripts which Erasmus would have had access to, the point is that all the Greek textual evidence—as opposed to Latin textual evidence—points to the Comma being much later than the rest of the Epistle and therefore its inclusion is spurious. However, because he did end up including it in the Textus Receptus, it ended up eventually in the King James Bible we use today. Also, technically speaking, there are some Greek manuscripts which include the Comma, but none of them is very old, and several of them are clearly Greek copies of earlier Latin texts: *Codex Montfortianus* (m61), an early sixteenth-century manuscript at Trinity College, Dublin, copied from an earlier code (m326) which did not have the Comma; presumably the Comma was inserted from a Latin text, possibly to embarrass Erasmus (this is the manuscript produced by the infamous Friar Froy). *Codex Ottobonianus* (m629), a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century manuscript at the Vatican Library; two-column, with Greek on one side and Latin on the other; the Greek has been revised to accord with the Vulgate. And a group of insignificant, very late manuscripts in which the Comma appears as a variant reading added to the main text: m918 (Escorial, Spain, sixteenth century); m2318 (Bucharest, Romania, eighteenth century); 88vl (*Codex Regius,* Naples, Italy, sixteenth-century Greek Vulgate); 221vl (Oxford, England, tenth-century Greek Vulgate); 429vl (Wolfenb^{n}ttel, Germany, sixteenth-century Greek Vulgate); and 636vl (Naples, Italy, fifteenth-century Greek Vulgate).

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9. Ibid., 370.

If the Johannine Comma is spurious in the sense of being anachronistic with respect to the Epistle of John, where did it in fact come from? The key to its origin lies with the history of the Latin Vulgate in medieval Spain. Even in the Vulgate (not to mention the Old Latin version upon which Jerome based his Vulgate), the Comma does not appear until the seventh century, and even there it appears only in manuscripts of Spanish provenance. We know that the primary critic of Erasmus's omission of the Comma in his first two editions was D. Lopez de Zuñiga, editor of Cardinal Ximénes's *Complutensian Polyglot Bible* which was roughly contemporary with Erasmus's first edition. An Englishman named E. Lee also criticized Erasmus in 1520 for omitting the Comma, and it was to Lee that Erasmus made his famous response that if but one Greek manuscript could be found with the Comma, he would include it in his next edition. The *Codex Montefortianus* was promptly offered by one Friar Roy (or Froy), and although Erasmus and many others believed it was a deliberate forgery, Erasmus felt honor-bound to include it. Tyndale was one of those who suspected the provenance of *Montefortianus* as well, so in his English translation he put the Comma in brackets to indicate his doubt as to its authenticity. However, Erasmus's reputation as a scholar was so great that future scholars, not knowing the circumstances surrounding the inclusion of the Comma, assumed it was genuine. Thus it ended up more or less permanently in the *Textus Receptus* until modern days when the Nestle Greek New Testament (and its current incarnation, the Aland-Black Greek New Testament) finally corrected a centuries-old error.

Monteforianus was just a convenient arrow in the quiver of Catholic apologists served up to deal with Erasmus, however; the Comma predated the sixteenth century. The first known mention of the Comma was from the Latin Church Father Priscillian, who mentions it in his *Liber apologeticus* 1.4, written in the mid-fourth century, but there is no proof he originated the Comma. Its next mention is in tractates defending what came to be the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity in the century following Priscillian, but this was during a period when it was by no means clear that the "Catholic" (non-Arian) doctrine would eventually prevail. The Comma is referred to in a confession of faith by North African bishops in 484 C.E. (recorded in Victor of Vita's *Historia persecutionis Africanae Provinciae* 2.82) at Carthage. Less than a half century later another North African bishop, Fulgentius (bishop of Ruspe, d. 527 C.E.), referred to it in two tracts: *Responsio contra Arianos* and *De Trinitate.* Written as an apology of what became orthodox Catholic belief, these were attacks on Arianism, a version of Christianity professed by, among others, the Vandals, a Germanic tribe who had crossed the Pyrenees, conquered Spain, and crossed into North Africa.

As the Anchor Bible summarizes this development,

> Eventually, in the continued debates over the Trinity, the modalist Priscillian or some predecessor took the Johannine equivalents of Spirit, water and blood, namely, Father, Spirit, and Word, and shaped from them a matching statement about another threefold witness that was also one. If the phrase "on earth" had already appeared in the Old Latin reference to the Spirit, the water, and the blood, the counterpart "in heaven" was obvious for the added threefold witness of the divine figures. At first this added witness was introduced into biblical mss. as a marginal comment on I John 5:7-8, explaining it; later it was moved into the text itself. Some who knew the Comma may have resisted it as an innovation, but the possibility of invoking the authority of John the Apostle on behalf of trinitarian doctrine won the day in the fifth-century debates against the Arians and their Vandal allies. The close connection of Spain to North Africa explains that the Comma appeared first in Latin biblical texts of Spanish origin. In summary, Greeven phrases it well: "The Johannine Comma must be evaluated as a dogmatic expansion of the scriptural text stemming from the third century at the earliest in North Africa or Spain."[10]

What is the significance of such an error in the official Bible of the anglophone LDS church? If Mormonism were a traditional biblicist Protestant sect, but with the same beliefs of the Godhead (i.e., quasi-Arianist anti-trinitarian), the existence of the Johannine Comma would present a serious inconsistency. However, Mormonism's theology is notably not biblicist. We believe in the Bible on a conditional basis—only insofar as it is translated "correctly," or is in accordance with modern revelation. If anything, the existence of the Comma does not surprise anyone familiar with Nephi's prophecy that "plain and precious things" would be taken away (or, we might say with respect to the Comma, that the sense of those plain and precious things would be removed by spurious additions) from the Bible (see 1 Ne. 13:26-29). In a positive sense, then, the Johannine Comma is actually a small affirmation of Joseph Smith and LDS non-biblical scriptures.

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10. "Comma Johanneum," *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Vol. 1 (1854), quoted in Brown, 786.

Of Prophets and Pale Horses: Joseph Smith, Benjamin West, and the American Millenarian Tradition

Noel A. Carmack

ON 15 JUNE 1844 JOSEPH SMITH RECORDED in his journal that "[the steamboat] Maid of Iowa come [sic] down the river about 2 or 3 o'clock While I was examining Benj[amin] Wests painting of Death on the Pale Horse which has been exhibiting in my reading room for 3 days."[1] This brief, passing entry is one of many which record Smith's daily cultural interactions. The significance of this particular incident is that West's apocalyptic *Death on the Pale Horse* found an audience among one of America's eminent millenarian groups.

West's picture has long been discussed in the context of British apocalypticism, and, although it was met with some ambivalence at its American debut in 1836, it may have been viewed with some appreciation from American millenarian sects such as Mormonism. As historian J. F. C. Harrison has stated, "It is difficult to estimate the impact that such pictures made," but the art of romantic painters "echoed the warnings of millenarian writers" and were indeed an aspect of the "sub-culture" of millenarianism.[2] One author has maintained that the apocalyptic nature

1. Joseph Smith Journal [kept by Willard Richards], 15 June 1844, 157, Smith Collection, archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited LDS archives); see also Joseph Smith, *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*, ed. Scott H. Faulring (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1989), 492; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. Brigham H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1964), 6:471 (hereafter cited as *HC*).

2. J. F. C. Harrison, *The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism, 1780-1850* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1979), 131-32, 196.

Benjamin West, *Death on a Pale Horse*, 1817.
Oil on canvas, 14ft 8in x 25ft 1in (4.47 x 7.65m). Courtesy Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.

of nineteenth-century romantic art was principally a British phenomenon, saying "no such development occurred outside of England."[3] While it is true that British painters initiated apocalyptic art beginning from the late eighteenth century, it does not lessen the potential appeal of such work among American millennialists.

As Ernest R. Sandeen has written, "America in the early nineteenth century was drunk on the millennium."[4] Millennial discourse in America began with such colonial writers as Rev. John Cotton, *The Churches Resurrection, or the Opening of the Fifth and Sixth Verses of the 20th Chapter of the Revelation* (Boston, 1642); Thomas Parker, *The Visions and Prophecies of Daniel Expounded* (Newberry, 1646); and Jonathan Edwards, *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Vision Union of God's People . . .* (Boston, 1747). The common belief associated with all was the eminent consummation of the world, the Second Advent and millennial era—a period of one thousand years during which Satan will be bound and peace will prevail on the earth. Some differ as to whether Jesus Christ's return was to precede or follow the Millennium, dividing them into two groups—premillennialists and postmillennialists. Published literature usually involved the interpretation of prophetic biblical passages from the books Daniel and Revelation. Mid-nineteenth century millenarian writers included George Duffield's *Millenarianism Defended* (New York, 1843) and George Junkin's *The Little Stone and the Great Image: or Lectures on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse which Relate to These Latter Days until the Second Advent* (Philadelphia, 1844). Many evolved into sects such as American Shakerism or United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, Mormonism, and the Millerites. Mormonism and Millerism, both conceived during the Great Revival of New York's "burned-over district," have become prosperous religious organizations known today as respectively, the Latter-day Saints and the Seventh-Day Adventists.[5]

It should be brought to bear at this point, however, that whether or not West had any proclivity toward millennialism is inconclusive. Yet a reasonable connection can be inferred from West's associations with

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3. Morton D. Paley, *The Apocalyptic Sublime* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 1.

4. Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 42.

5. Ira V. Brown, "Watchers of the Second Coming: The Millenarian Tradition in America," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 39 (Dec. 1952): 441-58; James H. Moorhead, "Between Progress and Apocalypse: A Reassessment of Millennialism in American Religious Thought, 1800-1880," *Journal of American History* 71 (Dec. 1984): 524-42; Jon R. Stone, *A Guide to the End of the World: Popular Eschatology in America*, Religious Information Systems Series, vol. 12 (New York: Garland, 1993), esp. 19-29.

American millenarian figures. John Galt, West's official biographer, can now be discounted in his long-held myth that West was a practicing Quaker by birth.[6] While Quakerism may not have influenced his early work, other religious mentors played a part in the young painter's life. West's initial interest in art can be attributed to William Williams, but work completed between about 1754 and 1755 can claim influence from a German-born Moravian, John Valentine Haidt, who painted New Testament subjects described as "complex narratives filled with religious passion and intensity." American educator and statesman Rev. William Smith was said to have encouraged West toward spiritual pursuits and introduced him to a study of "the ancients."[7] Morton Paley, although he places West in the realm of British millenarian practitioners, has linked West with members of a millenarian circle headed by Rev. Jacob Duche from Pennsylvania.[8] Other members of this group included the painter P. J. de Loutherbourg, the sculptor John Flaxman, and the American engraver William Sharp.[9] That West did have some association with this group is evidenced by the fact that Thomas Spence Duche, Jacob's son, was one of West's American students,[10] as well as the fact that Duche's two-volume *Discourses on Various Subjects* (1799) contained frontispieces by Sharp after paintings by West. This association, Paley suggests, may account for West's "surge of activity on apocalyptic subjects" between 1796-1804. Paley then concludes that William Beckford, "England's wealthiest son," became West's patron "because of the artist's success

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6. John Galt, *The Life, Studies, and Works of Benjamin West, Esq. President of the Royal Academy of London, Compiled from Materials Furnished by Himself . . .*, pts. 1 & 2 (London, 1820). It has since been established that John West, father of Benjamin, came to Pennsylvania without a certificate of transfer, which shows that he was not in good standing with the Society of Friends and therefore his children were not members by birth. Charles Henry Hart, "Benjamin West's Family; The American President of the Royal Academy of Arts Not a Quaker," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 32 (1908): 1-33.

7. Ann Uhry Abrams, "A New Light on Benjamin West's Pennsylvania Instruction," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17 (1982): 252. See also David H. Dickason, "Benjamin West on William Williams: A Previously Unpublished Letter," *Winterthur Portfolio* 6 (1970): 127-33; William Sawitzky, "William Williams, First Instructor of Benjamin West," *Antiques* 31 (May 1937): 240-42; Thomas F. Jones, *A Pair of Lawn Sleeves: A Biography of William Smith, 1727-1803* (Philadelphia: Chilton, 1972); and Galt, *Life, Studies, and Works of Benjamin West*, 37-40, 44, 68-74.

8. Clarke Garrett, "The Spiritual Odyssey of Jacob Duche," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 119 (1975): 143-55.

9. See Harrison, *The Second Coming*, 72-76, and W. S. Baker, *William Sharp* (Philadelphia, 1875).

10. See William Dunlap, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*, ed. Alexander Wyckoff, 3 vols. (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965), 1:291-72; W. Roberts, "Thomas Spence Duche," *Art in America* 6 (1918): 273-75; Albert Frank Gegenheimer, "Artist in Exile: The Spiritual Odyssey of Thomas Spence Duche," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 79 (1955): 3-26.

with apocalyptic subject matter."[11]

Taken from the book of Revelation, West's subject *Death on the Pale Horse* is a dreadful depiction of St. John's vision of the opening of the five seals as described in the first eight verses of the sixth chapter. The central figure shown in all versions is the terrible figure of death, riding a pale horse, trampling all who stand in his path. Other riders appear to his right, mounted on red, white, and black horses. These riders appear to be assisting in the destruction, slaughtering their victims with a sword. In earlier versions, the central figure of death appears as a crowned skeleton, reminiscent of John Hamilton Mortimer's work of the same subject.[12] One contemporary reviewer described the figure as "the King of Terrors himself, on his pale horse. On his head is a crown, denoting his sovereignty over all things."[13] One cannot help but see the influence of Durer's *The Riders on the Four Horses from the Apocalypse* (c. 1496). Another comparison has been made with the similar equestrian stances in Ruben's *Lion Hunt* (c. 1615).[14]

Other commentaries have shed light on West's influences of the time. The entire subject of West's *Pale Horse* was discussed in a seven-page descriptive catalog by Galt and a 172-page booklet issued on the occasion of the exhibition in 1817 by William Carey.[15] Galt's work contains descriptions and commentary which seem to have been dictated by the artist, but Carey's text contains added insight not in Galt's. Carey repeatedly refers to a biblical commentary by Moses Lowman, entitled *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation of St. John* (London, 1737), suggesting that West was familiar with Lowman's work and was inspired by his interpretation. A recent scholar, Grose Evans, has discussed the influence of Ed-

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11. Paley, *Apocalyptic Sublime*, 46-50. Allen Staley disputes this claim, saying "on good historical grounds, amply documented by Paley, we associate slightly later treatments of such themes with millenarian thought, and with responses to the French Revolution, the Terror and the Napoleonic wars, but in 1779 West was working for a patron whose first goal was to encourage a British school of history painting, and who had no sympathy with the radical masses in these images." See Allen Staley, review of *The Apocalyptic Sublime*, by Morton D. Paley, in *Burlington Magazine* 129 (June 1987): 406.

12. For a fuller discussion of Mortimer's influence on West, see Norman D. Ziff, "Mortimer's 'Death on a Pale Horse,'" *Burlington Magazine* 112 (1970): 531-35.

13. "Mr. West's Celebrated Picture," *Monthly Anthology* 5 (Apr. 1808): 230.

14. For a complete description and historiography of the painted versions, see Allen Staley, "West's Death on the Pale Horse," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 58 (1980): 137-39, and Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), cat. nos. 401-403, 410, pp. 388-92, 397-98.

15. J. G. [John Galt], *A Description of Mr. West's Picture of Death on the Pale Horse; or the Opening of the First Five Seals; Exhibiting under the immediate patronage of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, at 125, Pall Mall, near Carlton House* (London, 1817); William Carey, *Critical Description and Analytical Review of "Death on the Pale Horse" Painted by Benjamin West, P.R.A.* . . . (London, 1817; reprinted in Philadelphia, 1836).

mund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime* . . . (1757) on West's work. Evans states that West employed the increasingly favorable "Dread Manner" whereby the terrible and magnificent could infuse astonishment and reverence within the viewer. With regard to West's *Pale Horse*, Evans states: "so detailed is the parallel between West's picture and Burke's theory that one may assume a deliberate effort by West to incorporate as much of Burke's 'terrible sublime' as possible in this one picture."[16]

Several versions of West's *Pale Horse* are extant. John Dillenberger has traced the history of seven versions attributed to West executed between 1783 and 1817.[17] An early sketch, housed in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York City, appears to depict Death in pursuit of two adult figures and an infant as in the traditional renderings of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden.[18] This conceptual drawing was probably followed by a more developed pen and brown ink composition dated 1783, now located in the Royal Academy of Arts, London. Two other preparatory oil sketches, dated 1787 and 1802, are in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.[19] Another, dated 1796, which had once been part of Lord Egremont's collection at the Petworth House, Sussex, England, and exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1802, is now at the Detroit Institute of Arts. The final 1817 version is at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.

A related piece is in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Completed in 1804, *The Destruction of the Beast and False Prophet* was possibly intended as a study for the *History of Revealed Religion* in the Royal Chapel at Windsor.[20] Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley have stated that "although it

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16. Grose Evans, *Benjamin West and the Taste of His Times* (Carbonale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1959), 63.

17. John Dillenberger, *Benjamin West: The Context of His Life's Work with Particular Attention to Paintings with Religious Subject Matter* . . . (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1977), 78-79, 89-93.

18. Ruth S. Kraemer writes that the drawing "most likely represents a first idea for one of Benjamin West's most famous and important paintings." Kraemer, *Drawings by Benjamin West and his son Raphael Lamar West* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1975), 27.

19. In 1931 Fiske Kimball proposed that the version dated 1802 was in fact the painting exhibited in Paris in 1802, rather than the 1796 version. Fiske Kimball, "Benjamin West Au Salon De 1802: La Mort Sur Le Cheval Pale," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 7 (1932): 403-10 (this is a lengthier version of his earlier article, "Death on the Pale Horse," *Pennsylvania Museum Bulletin* 26 [Jan. 1931]: 17-21). Staley has convincingly disputed this claim, however. Staley, "West's Death on the Pale Horse," 137n1; von Erffa and Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West*, 392.

20. See Dillenberger, *Benjamin West*, 44-82, 92-93; Jerry D. Meyer, "Benjamin West's Chapel of Revealed Religion: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Protestant Religious Art," *Art Bulletin* 57 (June 1975): 257-59; "West's Paintings for the Royal Chapel in Windsor Castle," in von Erffa and Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West*, App. I, 577-81.

shows a different subject based on a different passage in the book of Revelation than West's paintings of *Death on the Pale Horse*, there are nonetheless significant similarities in the imagery."[21]

When the Petworth House version was exhibited in the Picture Gallery at the Paris Salon of September 1802, Joseph Farington noted in his diary that "many French Artists were viewing Mr. West's picture and said, 'the attempt was hardy & the only one of such a subject of difficulty that had succeeded since the time of Rubens.'"[22] Though Jacques Louis David was reported to have dismissed the painting as "a caricature of Rubens," Napoleon, upon being introduced to West, spoke more favorably of his piece, saying that he "hoped he had found Paris agreeable and expressed his approbation of the merit of his picture."[23]

Americans as well as Europeans have counted West's *Pale Horse*, along with his *Death of General Wolfe*, 1770, and *Christ Rejected*, 1814, as one of his paintings most worthy of merit. In 1801 Washington Allston, who might be considered America's laureate millennialist painter and equal to Britain's apocalyptic visionary, John Martin,[24] wrote of West's *Pale Horse*:

> No fancy could have better conceived and no pencil more happily embodied the visions of sublimity, than he has in his inimitable picture from Revelation. Its subject is the opening of the seven seals; and a more sublime and awful picture I never beheld. It is impossible to conceive anything more terrible than death on the white horse; and I am certain no painter has exceeded Mr. West in <the expression of> fury horror and despair which he has represented in the surrounding figures.[25]

After West's death in 1820, the *Annual Register* commented that the version of 1817 could "justly be considered as one of the finest productions

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21. *The Paintings of Benjamin West*, 397-98.

22. Joseph Farington, *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, vols. 1-6, ed. Kenneth Garlick and Angus Macintyre (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), entry for 2 Sept. 1802, 5:1,823.

23. Ibid., 12 and 24 Sept. 1875 (5:1,851, 1,875).

24. See David Bjelajac, *Millennial Desire and the Apocalyptic Vision of Washington Allston* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988); William Gerdts and Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr., *"A Man of Genius": The Art of Washington Allston (1719-1843)* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1979); William Feaver, *The Art of John Martin* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).

25. Washington Allston to Charles Fraser, 25 Aug. 1801, in *The Correspondence of Washington Allston*, ed. Nathalia Wright (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993), 26. See also Jared B. Flagg, *The Life and Letters of Washington Allston* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892), 43-44.

of modern art," and that although West was approaching his eightieth year when the grand-scale piece was completed, he "had lost none of his powers either of hand or mind."[26] American art patron and historian Allan Cunningham said of the painting:

> In his "Death on the Pale Horse," he has more than approached the masters and princes of the calling. It is indeed, irresistibly fearful to see the triumphant march of the terrific phantom, and the dissolution of all that earth is proud of beneath his tread. War and peace, sorrow and joy, youth and age, all who love and all who hate, seem planet-struck.[27]

When the painting arrived in New York Harbor on 12 February 1836 on board the packet ship *Hannibal*, the *Weekly Register* took note, saying, "[T]his picture has long been regarded as the chef d'oeuvre of our distinguished countryman. As Americans we feel proud that this great work of art is permanently to remain in this country, and as Philadelphians we are gratified that such a treasure has been added to the already large and valuable collection of works of arts belonging to one of our public institutions."[28]

Its exhibition in America, however, was not without mixed reviews. In reference to this "truly sublime picture," one critic for the *New York Mirror* stated that he "would not compare the hard-earned fame of West with the smooth and easy road to popularity of Martin. In the works of West, I find as daring and comprehensive compositions as Martin's." He further added, "this is a picture that strikes at first sight; but it must be seen again and again to be duly appreciated."[29]

New York and Boston patrons did not view the painting with as much enthusiasm.[30] Art patronage in America was turning toward historical painting and pastoral images of an ordered landscape as icons of cultural refinement. Only two years previous, Allston's *Elijah in the Wilderness* was received with similar disinterest. West's *Pale Horse*, like Allston's *Elijah*, was probably seen by Boston and New York audiences as an example of terrifying disorder often seen in romantic biblical art and a

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26. "Memoir of Benjamin West, Esq. President of the Royal Academy," *The Annual Register, or A View of History, Politics, and Literature of the Year 1820* (London, 1822), vol. 62, pt. 2, p. 1,172.

27. Dunlap, *Rise and Progress*, 1:97.

28. "The Fine Arts," *Nile's Weekly Register*, 5 Mar. 1836, 4.

29. "West's Death on the Pale Horse," *New York Mirror*, 30 Apr. 1836, 364.

30. Charles Coleman Sellers, "The Pale Horse on the Road," *Antiques* 65 (1954): 384-87. See also Donald D. Keyes, "Benjamin West's Death on the Pale Horse: A Tradition's End," *Ohio State University College of the Arts: The Arts* 7 (Sept. 1973): 3-6.

passing theme of taste among the urban elite.[31] On 12 April 1836 New York entrepreneur and diarist Philip Hone made note of the exhibition in his journal:

> Mr. West's great picture, "Death on the Pale Horse," which was bought by the Philadelphia Academy for $8,000, has lately arrived in this city and is now exhibiting at the gallery of the academy of fine arts in Barclay Street. It is a great picture undoubtedly, and has some striking points, but I did not like it when I saw it in London nor do I like it any better now. . . . This was the last production, I believe, of the great American artist, painted after he was eighty years of age. It is a curious and interesting coincidence that in the room adjoining there is one by the venerable Col. Trumbull, a pupil of West, painted after he also was fourscore. The Colonel himself pointed out this circumstance to me with a natural degree of exhultation.[32]

Later, the *New York Mirror* reported that, "though seemingly controverted by the apathy of the citizens of New-York," West's *Pale Horse* was met with "the cordial concurrence" of Philadelphians who could appreciate good art when they saw it, adding,

> No work of art has excited so much attention in Philadelphia, or caused so profound a feeling of admiration for the sublime talents of West, as this great effort of his genius. The citizens of Philadelphia have shown that although they might be allured to visit the exhibition of an immodest picture, by the *ruse* of calling it moral or scriptural, they are not backward when an opportunity is afforded for contemplating a great work, from a native land, which conveys the most salutary lessons to every reflecting mind. We wish we could have said the same of our own citizens.[33]

This mixed feeling for apocalyptic subjects may not have been so evident for millennial expectants. J. F. C. Harrison has recognized that, for at least millenarian believers, apocalyptic art and poetry was an important

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31. David Bjelajac, "The Boston Elite's Resistance to Washington Allston's Elijah in the Desert," in *American Iconology: New Approaches to Nineteenth-Century Art and Literature*, ed. David C. Miller (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 39-57. See also Tamara Plakins Thornton, *Cultivating Gentlemen: The Meaning of Country Life Among the Boston Elite, 1785-1860* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989); E. Digby Baltzell, *Philadelphia Gentlemen: The Making of a National Upper Class* (New York: The Free Press, 1958). For West's status among the elite in revolutionary Philadelphia, see Carl and Jessica Bridenbaugh, *Rebels and Gentlemen: Philadelphia in the Age of Franklin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

32. Philip Hone, *The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851*, ed. Allan Nevins (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1936), 207.

33. *New York Mirror*, 3 Sept. 1836, 79.

vehicle of inspiration and instruction.[34]

In the same manner as earlier Christian eschatologists, William Miller, a New England farmer, tackled the interpretation of prophetic visions of Daniel and St. John. Taking up an increasingly popular theme in the "Burned-over District," Miller attracted a devout group of followers called "Millerites" or "adventists." In 1836 Miller published a calculated prediction of the Second Advent.[35] The advent year was to be "on or before 1843," but when the prophecy failed, Miller extended the calculation to the summer of 1844. The expectation for prophetic fulfillment urged Millerite believers to await in eager anticipation of the Lord's coming.[36]

As with the teachings of their millenarian contemporaries, the doctrines of the gathering of Israel, the sudden return of Christ, and the establishment of a New Jerusalem comprised increasingly important factors in the widening appeal of Mormonism. Many of the British proselytes may have found something desirable in Mormon seekerist qualities or possibly messages of the final consummation, recalling apocalyptic theologians Robert Aitken, John Wroe, Robert Owen, and Edward Irving.[37]

It was interest in Miller's prophecy, however, that elicited a flurry of Mormon polemics.[38] While Mormon rebuttals rarely addressed Miller's calculations directly prior to 1843, their dogmatic language clearly refuted his claims from the time of his *Lectures* in 1836. As early as 1841 Mormon writings were defining a premillennial doctrine. The Mormon millennial doctrine included the personal reign of Christ, preceded by the final gathering of Israel, the binding of Satan, and the destruction of the wicked. On occasion, written expositions carried a terrifying, destructive

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34. Harrison, *The Second Coming*, 131-33, 196-97, 217.

35. Miller, *Evidence from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ, About the Year 1843: Exhibited in a Course of Lectures* (Troy, NY: Kemble and Hooper, 1836). For a discussion on the opening of the fourth seal, see p. 45.

36. See Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry: A Defense of the Character and Conduct of William Miller and the Millerites* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1944); Michael Burkun, *Crucible of the Millennium: The Burned-over District in New York During the 1840s* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986).

37. See Grant Underwood, "The Religious Milieu of English Mormonism," in *Mormons in Early Victorian Britain*, Publications in Mormon Studies, Vol. 4 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1989), 40-44; W. H. Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists: The Uses of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790s to the 1840s* (New Haven: Oxford University Press, 1978), 218-38; Dan Vogel, *Religious Seekers and the Advent of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988).

38. Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1993), 112-18. See also Richard L. Anderson, "Joseph Smith and the Millenarian Time Table," *Brigham Young University Studies* 3 (1960-61): 55-66.

posture not unlike the Burkean theory of the sublime.[39] A number of published articles attacked the Millerite formulaic predictions with fervor.[40] Millerism was a subject of discourse during the spring of 1843, when Joseph Smith and other church leaders addressed the subjects of the book of Revelation and the coming of "the Son of Man." On 2 April 1843, in reference to John 1:1-3, Orson Hyde stated that "when he shall appear we shall be like him &c. he will appear on a white horse, as a warrior, & maybe we shall have some of the same spirit.—our god is a warrior."[41] It was also during this period of commentary on St. John's Revelation that Joseph Smith reportedly gave his disputed "White Horse Prophecy."

The prophecy, first retold by Edwin Rushton and Theodore Turley about a decade after Smith's death, alleges that Smith employed the apocalyptic language of John the Revelator, likening the church to the "White Horse of Peace and Safety" and the "Pale Horse" as the "people of the United States." The prophecy also foretells the Mormon removal from Nauvoo, Illinois, to the "Rocky Mountains" where the church would be subject continued oppression and "obnoxious laws" against it in Congress "to destroy the White Horse." In addition to foretelling other important world events, the prophecy states that the Constitution of the United States would almost be destroyed: "it will hang by a thread, as it were, as fine as the finest silk fiber."[42]

It is not surprising, then, that during the height of this increased millennial discourse, West's *Pale Horse* was seen by Mormon audiences in Nauvoo, Illinois. On 12 June 1844 the *Nauvoo Neighbor* announced that "A

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39. See, for example, Benjamin Winchester, "The Coming of Christ, and the Destruction of the Wicked," *Gospel Reflector* [Philadelphia] 1 (15 Apr. 1841): 220-24; 1 (1 May 1841): 225-43, esp. 232-33. For a discussion of the development of the Mormon premillennial doctrine, see Grant Underwood, "Seminal Versus Sesquicentennial Saints: A Look at Mormon Millennialism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14 (Spring 1981): 32-44; also, Underwood, *Millenarian World*, 25-29.

40. See, for example, "Millerism," *Times and Seasons* 4 (15 Feb. 1843): 103-106; "Millerism," idem, 4 (1 Mar. 1843): 114-16; idem, 4 (15 Apr. 1843): 168-71; idem, 5 (1 Feb. 1844): 427; "Millerism," idem, 5 (1 Mar. 1844): 454.

41. Joseph Smith Journal [kept by Willard Richards], 2 Apr. 1843, LDS archives; Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, 338-39; *HC*, 6:323.

42. "A Prophesy [sic] of Joseph Smith," MS [9 pp., undated, c. 1900-15], Special Collections and Archives, Merrill Library, Utah State University; Duane S. Crowther, "An Analysis of the Prophecy Recorded by Edwin Rushton and Theodore Turley which is Commonly Known as the 'White Horse Prophecy,'" in *Prophecy—Key to the Future* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1962), 301-22; Bruce R. McConkie, "White Horse Prophecy," in *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), 835-36; Ogden Kraut, *The White Horse Prophecy* (Salt Lake City: Pioneer Press, 1993). A discourse given in 1840 contained a similar reference to the U.S. Constitution on "the brink of ruin." See Dean C. Jessee, "Joseph Smith's 19 July 1840 Discourse," *Brigham Young University Studies* 19 (Spring 1979): 390-94.

Gentleman is now in our city who has for exhibition West's painting of *Death on the Pale Horse*. We have not seen the exhibition, but judging from the known celebrety of the artist, and from the number of testimonies we have seen, it must be worthy of attention. The exhibition opens today at Gen. Smith's Store and is to be continued for three days."[43]

The name of the "Gentleman" who was promoting the celebrated piece as West's is unknown. Unfortunately, any further newspaper coverage of the exhibition was preempted by news of the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor* press and the subsequent murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith at Carthage, Illinois, on 27 June. Allen Staley, a professor of art history at Columbia University and a West scholar, doubts that the piece shown at Nauvoo was authentic.[44] It is likely, however, that this painting was one of several which had been in exhibition and were purportedly by West's hand. Nevertheless, it is still worthy of note that this painting was at Nauvoo during the Millerite year of the advent, the very year in which many were searching the skies for the opening of the Seven Seals.[45]

By 1850 apocalyptic art was virtually unseen. Art patronage during the Victorian age was more concerned with reason and order. Art that grew out of religious worship was supplanted by a reverence for pastoral serenity. The apocalyptic sublime was replaced by reasoned visions of a peaceful landscape. Still, Romantic painters such as Benjamin West continued to garner respect from devoted admirers, American and British alike. Decades after the passing of millenarian artists, John Ruskin wrote, "I believe that the four painters who have had, and still have, the most influence, such as it is, on the ordinary Protestant Christian mind, are Carlo Dolci, Guercino, Benjamin West, and John Martin." Further he wrote, "[A] smooth Magdalen of Carlo Dolci with a tear on each cheek, or a Guercino Christ or St. John, or a Scripture illustration of West's or a black cloud with a flash of lightning in it of Martin's, rarely fails of being verily, often deeply, felt for the time."[46]

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43. "Death on the Pale Horse," *Nauvoo Neighbor*, 12 June 1844, 3.

44. Dr. Allen Staley (Columbia University), telephone conversation, 27 Apr. 1994.

45. I have not found further published reports of the exhibition in Mormon newspapers. However, when the Academy of Fine Arts was nearly destroyed by fire in 1845, the *LDS Millennial Star* reported the disaster and its losses. It also reported that "West's 'Death on the Pale Horse,' Haydon's 'Christ's, Entry into Jerusalem,' and Alston's 'Dead Man Restored to Life,' were preserved but with little injury" ("Destruction of the Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia," *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 6 [15 July 1845]: 46).

46. John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, Vol. 2, in *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols. (London: George Allen, 1904), 10:125.

FICTION

Sanctified, In the Flesh

Brian Evenson

HE DISENGAGED THE GEAR, GROUND THE KEY FORWARD. The motor clicked. The steerage went heavy in his hands. He pushed the signal bar upward with his palm, crossed lanes.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Nothing," he said.

He pulled onto the gravel, let the car stop. Reaching beneath the steering column, he connected the hazard lights. In the corner of the mirror he could see his wife craning her neck toward him, watching his hands.

Opening the door, he stepped from the car. He kicked the tire nearest him. The headlights, he saw, were thick with the crusts of insects. He leaned toward the windshield, shins against the bumper, and placed the flat of his hand on the hood, against the warm metal.

He could see through the glared glass his wife, attentive. He slid a hand through the gap in the grill, opened the hood.

He examined the engine block. He spat on it, watched the droplet sizzle down to a white streak. Removing the dipstick, he squinted at the oil-dark tip. He twisted the battery cables. He wiggled the caps off the spark plugs, squinted down at the burning blank porcelain, forced the caps back on.

He closed the hood. He climbed into the car.

"What's the problem?" she asked.

"Oh," he said. "This and that."

He turned the key. The motor clicked. He turned off radio, the fan, hazard lights. He turned the key, without result.

"Motor?" she asked.

He shrugged. He turned on the hazard lights again.

"Want to go to the Lard over it?" she said.

"The Lord?" he said. "Not yet."

He turned the key. Nothing happened. Getting out of the car, he opened the hood. The belts were tight and showed little sign of wear. He thumped the battery casing with his fist. He climbed back into the car,

turned the key. Nothing happened.

"You say it," he said, and crossed his arms for prayer.

They lifted their heads together and uncrossed their arms. He turned the key. Taking the key from the ignition socket, he pushed it back in, turned it again.

"He give you the answer?" she asked.

He held himself fixed, as if listening for God. He heard nothing. He shook his head.

"Get out to take a look," she said. "It might come to you. God meets you halfway."

He climbed out of the car and opened the hood, staring at all the wire and metalwork as if to find engraved thereon God's awful word. He could not interpret it. He stuck his hands near the engine, as if manipulating something. His wife leaned forward, bringing her forehead against the windshield, trying to see.

He closed the hood, clambered back into the car. He turned the key. Nothing happened.

"You should say a prayer yourself," she said. "You have to exercise your own faith."

He shrugged. "We already prayed," he said.

"What about the extra mile?" she asked.

"What about it?" he asked.

"Christ says go it, Biggs," she said. "Pray."

He shook his head.

She threw up her hands. "We're stranded forever," she said.

"I put all my faith into the first prayer," he said. "That's where I'll keep it."

"Lard says pray always," she said.

"Wasn't the Lord exactly," he said.

"Out of his mouth or the mouth of his prophets, is the same," she said.

He shrugged.

"Apply the scriptures to your own person and you shall be full," she said.

They sat in the car, staring forward. A car approached but took the turn onto the town road before reaching them. Another followed.

He got out of the car. He raised the antenna by hand, knotted a handkerchief around the top. He turned, leaned against the trunk, looking backward down the road. No cars were visible. He climbed back into the car.

"Think you can get out of it that easy?" she asked.

He didn't say anything.

The car went dim inside, its edges softening and fading away. He lost

sight of his wife's knees, her calm hands. Her face in the mirror dissolved, flattened into incompletion.

He examined her shadow in the glass, saw it burnt through by two headlights.

He unlatched the door, pushed it open.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Car," he said. He pulled his feet away from the pedals, dropping his ankles outside of the door. He stood, stepped the rest of the way out, closed the door.

He unbuttoned his shirt, beginning with the cuffs. The car drew closer, disappeared into a dip, its headlights rising again with the next swell. He undid the front buttons, pulled his shirttails out of his pants, worked the shirt off his arms.

He held the shirt in his hands, flapped it up and down.

The car hesitated at the turnoff, then jerked forward. He stood in his undershirt, watched the headlights swell larger. He waved the car toward him until it had him pinned in its lights. He squinted against the glare, brought the shirt up to cover his chest.

The car passed by them, dark and long. Pulling slowly to the edge of the road, it stopped.

He slipped his arms into the shirt. He buttoned the shirt up the front, left the cuffs hanging loose. The other car was ahead, headlights off, brakelights on, smoke chuffing from the tailpipe. He tucked in the tails of his shirt. The brakelights stuttered off, came back on.

He began to walk forward toward the car. There were vague shapes jostling within. He stopped, stared at the window, tried to make the shapes out. Turning, he walked back to his car, opened the door.

His wife looked up at him.

"They aren't getting out," he said. "I don't know what they're doing."

"Find out," she said.

"Let's wait for them to come to us," he said.

"You have to do your part," she said. "The Lard just points you down the path."

He slammed the door, walked toward the other car. He crossed behind it, felt the exhaust cross his shin warmly. Walking to the front window, he knocked on the dark glass.

The glass slid away, into the door. He saw behind a bearded face, tainted blue from the instrument panel, eyes swollen behind thick lenses. The man outside stooped, peered into the car, saw next to the driver two other men, large of body and in disarray, shoulders pressed against each other.

"Need he'p, do ye?" asked the driver.

The man nodded. "The name is Biggs. Know anything about cars?" he said.

The driver looked at the other two. "Ye boys know something of automobiles?" the driver asked. The other two laughed, ribbing one another.

"Maybe they do, Biggs, but maybe they don't," the driver said.

Biggs stood, looked back at his own car. He stooped back down.

"Shall we he'p him, boys?" asked the driver.

The other two did not speak.

"Yeah, we gone give ye something," said the driver, turning to Biggs. "Get to hell out of here while we think her through."

The window slid up. Biggs stayed staring at his reflection, listening to the laughter within. He walked back to his car, opened the door, got in.

"They going to help us?" his wife asked.

"Said they were going to give us something," said Biggs.

"See, you done your part and the Lard's given the blessing."

"He hasn't given anything yet," he said.

She shook her head. "Doubt not, fear not," she said.

"I have no good feeling," he said. "Rough types."

"Books are not known by covers," she said. "These people are heavensent, aren't they?"

"I don't know," he said.

"Don't know?" she asked. "Losing faith, are you?"

He shook his head.

The doors of the car ahead opened. The three figures clambered out. They stood leaning on the open doors, staring back at the other car. The driver walked to the back, opened the trunk. In the light of the trunk, Biggs saw him remove a tire iron.

"They are getting their tools out," his wife said. "Here they come to help."

"The tires don't need fixing," said Biggs.

The driver closed the trunk.

The couple sat silent, watching the shapes mill dimly about.

"Why, there's three of them," his wife said. "Why didn't you say there were three?"

"You didn't ask," he said.

"The scales fall from our eyes," she said. "Them's the three Nephites of yore," she said. "Couldn't be nobody else, the spirit tells me."

He laughed despite himself.

She frowned him down. "Fools mock," she said.

A lighter flared up outside and they saw in its glow the three faces huddled together, bringing cigarettes down to the flame. The faces came apart and the lighter went out. From the car, Biggs and his wife watched

the dull red mites of the cigarettes bob up and down.

"The three Nephites don't smoke," he said.

"The Word of Wisdom came after their time," she said. "You have to break past your prejudice, feel the spirit."

"I don't feel it," he said.

"I do," she said.

The trunk came open again. In the glow Biggs saw each of the three load things into their pockets.

"We should get out of here," he said.

"Good things come to those who wait," she said.

"What scripture tells that?" he asked.

"Go talk to them—so as to feel their spirit," she said.

"I already talked to them," he said.

"Go on," she said.

He got out of the car, approached the group.

"You can help us?" he said.

"We told ye we gone do something for ye," said the driver. "Get back in yer car."

He got back in the car.

"What I tell you?" said his wife. "God's anointed."

He didn't say anything.

The driver opened the door, shined the bore of a flashlight into Biggs's eyes.

"Get on out," the driver said.

Biggs's wife opened the door on the other side, climbed out. Biggs himself kept to his seat.

"I said out with ye," said the driver.

"You don't need me out to fix the car," said Biggs.

"First won't stay in yer car, then won't step out. Want a thing done for ye, don't it?" said the driver.

"Come out, honey," his wife said. "These are good men."

"Good men, are we?" asked one of the other two with the driver.

"Yessir, yessir," said the driver, taking hold of Biggs's arm, tugging slightly. "Good fore to aft."

Biggs shook the driver's arm off, slowly got out of the car.

"There now," said the driver, smiling, "that wan't nothing, were it?"

Biggs nodded, pretended to smile. His wife on the other side of the car in the dark was smiling, he could tell in her voice.

"I can't believe it!" she said. "Wait until the neighbors hear!"

The driver shined the light on her. "What's she saying?" he asked.

"She thinks God sent you," Biggs said.

"Do she?" asked the driver. "And mayhap he did," the driver said.

"Must be something, living all those years, never dying," she said.

"What?" asked the driver.

"Serving the Lard in all things," she said. "How does it feel to be sanctified in the flesh?"

"The Lard?" asked the driver.

"The Lord, she means," said Biggs. "God."

The driver just stared. He reached into his pocket, pulled out a pistol, pointed it at Biggs.

"This yer wife?" he asked.

Biggs raised his hands, nodded.

"Yer stupider than it look," he said.

"Guess you can't blab about it," the woman said. "Spiritual matters, as they are. Not secret but sacred."

"Yeah, we're on the religious through and through, lady," said the driver. "Now shut up."

"My lips are sealed," she said.

"Grant," said the driver. "Take these two over by the car and see to it they don't run off."

One of the larger men shuffled forward, took Biggs by the arm, led him over to the other car. He waved to Biggs's wife to follow.

"You two don't want to run off now, do ye?" asked Grant.

Biggs shook his head.

"Wouldn't want to have to give out something before ye made peace with yer Lord," he said, "but I will, you make me."

Biggs's wife said, "Bet you three've helped a lot of people."

Grant nodded cautiously. "We taken care of a few in our time."

"Bet you have some inspiring stories to tell."

Grant grunted, closed his eyes.

"Biggs, you see his metal band?" she whispered, pointing at Grant's armband. "Just like the pictures in the Book of Mormon. He's a Nephite, through and through."

"They're just pictures," said Biggs. "They don't mean anything."

"I thought you been told to shut up," Grant said.

The driver came over, carrying the woman's handbag.

"What we get?" asked Grant.

"Nothing much." He passed the handbag to Grant. "Throw it to the trunk," he said.

Grant opened the trunk. He opened the handbag, removed the wallet, opened it. He removed a locket, opened it, dangled it from his fist.

"These your kids?" he asked her.

"Yes," she said. "Three good boys, all. I made sure to raise them right."

"Kind of scrawny, aren't they?"

Grant turned to pack the handbag back up. Biggs leaned to his wife.

"Nephites, bullshit," he whispered.

"Shut yer trap," said Grant.

"My husband's losing his etiquette as well as his belief," the woman said.

"Yer a gabber, lady," Grant said.

The hood of Biggs's car popped open, and they saw the other big man bending over the engine, a flashlight in his jaws, the driver beside him.

The driver walked back to them.

"Hand across your billfold," he said to Biggs.

Biggs fumbled it out, handed it over. The driver opened it up, began counting.

"Do Nephites steal billfolds?" Biggs asked his wife.

"It's a test, Biggs," said his wife. "Stand firm alongside your faith and you will be blessed."

"Listen to the wife, Biggs," said the driver.

The hood closed and the other man came up out of the dark, flashlight swinging between his teeth.

"Ye got her fixed, Lamont?" asked the driver.

Lamont nodded. "Nothing much were wrong with her," he said.

The driver held out his hand to Biggs.

"Got to start it up," he said. "Fer sureties' sake."

Biggs reached into his pocket, pulled out the keys. He gave the keys to the driver, who handed them to Lamont.

"Drive back to town and wait fer us there, Lamont," said the driver. "Don't ye done nothing til we got there."

"I don't get my turn with them?" asked Lamont.

"Ye heard me?" said the driver.

Lamont stamped back to Biggs's car, climbed in, slammed the door. He started the engine, was gone.

The driver turned to face husband and wife.

"Ye gone to ride with me and Grant," he said. "We gone to give ye the baptism."

"We are already baptized," she said. "We are believers."

"We gone give ye a new baptism," the driver said. "The one that sticks. Get in the car."

Biggs and his wife sat in the back, Grant and the driver in front. They turned off the old road, onto a farm route. The road turned to dirt. They kept driving.

"You hear what they said?" his wife asked. "We're getting the second endowment."

"They are going to kill us," Biggs said.

She looked at him, surprised. "You're crazy," she said.

He tried to open the door, found the handle missing. He threw his body against the door.

"Somebody back there don't want to be in the car," said the driver.

"Look that way, don't it?" said Grant.

"Don't ye want the second baptism?" asked the driver.

"I want it," said the wife. "Lard knows, I have done everything I know to deserve it."

The driver looked at Grant, laughed. He slowed the car, pulled over.

"Hell," the driver said. "You want it bad enough, we ready to give it to you."

The driver opened one door, Grant the other. They held the their pistols pointed at the couple's chests. They dragged the pair out of the car and into the headlights.

"Thought you needed a temple or a mountaintop," she said.

"The whole earth is holy," the driver said.

"I want it first," said the woman, pushing her way past her husband, squinting into the headlights.

"Turn around, then," said the driver.

She turned around.

"Close your eyes," said the driver.

"They're closed," she said. "I'm ready. You can start."

"Turn toward us again," said Grant.

She turned slowly back to the killers, her eyes closed, her face mooned upward, and they both shot her through the face. She fell into the long grass, dead.

"You ready?" asked the driver, pointing a finger at Biggs.

Biggs raised his hands above his head, stumbled a step forward.

"Kneel on down," said the driver.

The man collapsed to his knees, stared at the crushed grass around him. Through the grass he could see the dark sprawl of his wife. He smelt black powder, felt the pistol push against his temple. He squinted his eyes, gritted his teeth.

Grant said, "These are Mormons, haen't it?"

"Shit, Grant, how in hell should I know?" asked the driver. "Ye Mormon, Biggs?"

Biggs nodded his head.

"Well, I be jiggered," said the driver. "Never killed a Mormon before."

"How many wives ye got?" asked Grant.

"One," Biggs said.

"Only one?" asked the driver.

"She were a handful," said Grant.

Biggs nodded.

The killers stood quiet to either side of him a moment. Biggs let his hands fall slowly, and nodded again as if in assent.

"Ye better take a deep breath," the driver said.

Biggs nodded, this time meaning it, and was shot dead.

Something to Show

Bradford Fillmore

THE CORRIDORS BUZZED WITH ALL THE CHATTER and anticipation of a courtroom before a major trial. At five after eleven, packs of people scurried to their seats looking greedily toward the stand. The chapel bulged. Extra deacons were called upon to carry the large number of sacrament trays. Ushers, normally an extravagance, were put to use trying to seat the overflow of family and friends here to listen to the words of Elder Johnson, returned missionary extraordinaire, recently home from the Eastern States. The man of the hour sat erect on the stand nestled uncomfortably between stake president and bishop, looking down on the spectacle that had been created in his honor, the crowd who didn't know.

In the last few months of his mission, Elder Johnson thought of little other than this occasion and wished more each day to crawl under the nearest rock at the thought of it. "Two years, and nothing to show for it," he mumbled to himself. He could still remember the time, almost two years ago to the day, when he had stood confidently at this same pulpit and read the words from the Doctrine and Covenants, "And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul to me . . . " The irony was almost laughable. The words felt so empty now. At the same meeting his father spoke on Alma's having converted thousands of Lamanites because of his "exceeding faith." Where had all the confidence gone, all the faith, in such a short period?

It wasn't as if he considered his mission a waste of time. In two years he saw and talked to more people than many do in a lifetime. He witnessed the darker side of human nature, but he also saw what the gospel could do for these people. He experienced the poverty of the ghetto and the snobbery of the affluent. He spoke with ex-convicts, homeless, students, doctors, lawyers, and just about every other type of character imaginable. It was the journeyman's education, something he'd never learn in school. And once in awhile, just when he thought he'd heard every excuse in the book, someone would glance at him searchingly, and he knew he had found a listener—at least, for a time. But, when it came

right down to it, he knew that most humans, slaves to nature that they are, are too afraid to change, to take on new lifestyles even if they're promised the pearly gates. This lesson, perhaps more than any other, repeatedly reenacted itself in the mission of Elder Johnson. Ironically, the one man courageous enough to commit his life to the gospel confessed that he was running from the law in his baptismal interview. They never saw him at church again.

The bishop rose to the pulpit, "We'd like to welcome all relatives and friends here to honor Elder Johnson . . . " The voice droned on. "What have I done?" he asked himself as the time for him to face this arena of hungry spectators drew nearer and nearer. The last several months had been dedicated to one thing: getting a baptism. A new missionary was sent to him by the mission president with one commandment: "Teach this new elder to baptize." Elder Rose did not need encouragement. He must have stepped out of one of those "power of positive thinking" seminars because there was nothing he didn't think he could accomplish. A disciple of the power of suggestion, the walls on his side of the bedroom soon became a display for baptism memorabilia, complete with baptismal clothes tacked to wall. The only thing missing was the pool of water. Elder Johnson had heard of such notions but was always driven by a more practical nature. With him, the philosophy came down to "What's going to happen, is going to happen. I just hope I'm there when the good stuff comes along." But even *he* loosened the hold on such attitudes as a dying effort and once again let Elder Rose bombard him with good old-fashioned MTC faith-promoting pep-talks. It was easy enough with all the letters from family telling him to "hang in there" and that "the baptisms will come."

There was a time when it didn't matter to him if people were baptized or not. He would go into discussions, give it his all, and leave the burden of decision in their own minds. However, everyone kept telling him, "It's *you* who have to make the difference." "Maybe they were right and I just don't have the faith," he thought. Of course, he always hoped they would be baptized, but only for the right reasons. He had seen so many "shaky" converts that he wondered how much missionary prodding was involved in the decisions. He thought of the day he let the pressures get to him. One afternoon, feeling as if he was coming down with something, he lay down on the couch. In tromped Elder Rose exclaiming, "No, Elder Johnson, we can't stop and rest now. How do you expect to get that baptism before you head home?" He hated to admit it, but he got so fed up that he said, "Elder, I don't care if I ever baptize anyone," and added, "And I hope that you never do either. It would teach you a lesson." He never forgave himself for that.

Elder Johnson watched the deacons make their way towards the back

of the hall with the sacrament trays, wondering what kind of effect the truth would have on them. The bishop always made it a point to thank him for the example he was setting for the youth in the ward. He would have loved to have something more substantial to show those young boys. After all, what was the point of a mission if you didn't bring anyone into the church? He sometimes felt he could answer that question for himself, knowing deep and quiet influences that had worked on him since leaving so many months before. In high school he had played on sports teams and joined the various clubs and there was a certain degree of fulfillment, of belonging, associated with it, yet most of the relationships he had developed were shallow at best. It was mostly, "I'll scratch your back a little, you scratch mine, and then let's go our separate ways." Now, finally, he was working with people in a real way, dealing with problems that really mattered. It hadn't been hard to say goodbye to his high school friends, but saying goodbye to these people who opened their lives to him—it was different. They had shared the pain, the joy, the grief of life in a way that he never before had felt it. The currents of feelings traveled deep beneath the surface.

He knew he had changed, but how would *they?* It was that concern that led him to such a low act. It started out innocently, making the ordinary sound extraordinary in his letters home, the great art of the resourceful missionary. The family responded so well to this that he started making up names and writing about spiritual experiences that he heard from other missionaries. It was justifiable in a way. He only gave them what they wanted to hear so badly. At least, someone in the mission experienced them. Eventually, some of these experiences led to baptisms; at least, that was the story. He regretted it as soon as the letter went off in the mail, but how could he take it back now that it was out in the open? Finally, he had lived up to everything everyone expected him to be. It felt nice for awhile, the attention, and he didn't have to hear anyone's sympathy for how pathetically unsuccessful his mission was. He felt as if he had joined the club. There was no longer anything to prove now that people could see that the initiation requirements were met and the dues had been paid. The pressure subsided, but those deacons . . . if they only knew. Even worse, the thought of his parents bragging to everyone they saw. The thought made him queasy.

"We'll turn over the remainder of the time to Elder Johnson. The show's yours, Elder." He stood up, edged forward, took a tight grip with both hands on the podium. Everyone waited. Even Elder Johnson. He watched himself, as if from a distance, waiting for what would come out of the mouth of this man whom he no longer recognized. He was defiling this pulpit which had been graced by hundreds of deeply spiritual men and women, revealing their souls before the congregation.

"Good morning," he began, "I know many of you here made a special effort to be here, for which I'm grateful." Why should he spoil it for everyone? He didn't want to lie. He wished there were some way to explain, some way to show how the pressure was too much to take, some way to tell why he did it. He looked down at Sister Davis sitting there on the front row just like she hadn't moved for the two years he was gone. She was a fragile creature who just kept breathing, one day at a time, although there hardly seemed enough of her to exist. She must be nearly eighty years old by now. Before his mission, every Sunday, as her home teachers, he and his father brought her to church and took her home. It seemed a burden to him, but she was always so gracious about it that he felt good afterwards. When they would visit her she always talked about the missionary that brought her into the church. "Thank God he came along," she would always say, then add, "Someday, someone will say the same of *you.*" A flood of faces rushed through his mind. He thought of the time spent volunteering at the senior citizens home, members to whom they gave blessings, companions with whom he went through rough times, especially Elder Petersen, who almost took the next flight out of town until he talked him out of it. But all of that seemed far away now. Somehow he knew it wasn't enough simply to "make a difference." It's the "fruits," the results, that matter when it comes right down to it. They'll never understand. "God, forgive me," he silently uttered, lowering his head to speak into the mike.

Familiar People

Bright Angels and Familiars: Contemporary Mormon Stories. Edited by Eugene England (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992).

Reviewed by Cindy Dahle, an English teacher at Alta High School, Salt Lake City, Utah.

IN LEWIS HORNE'S SHORT STORY, "The People Who Were Not There," the young Mormon protagonist looks at the notebook of Clifford Wellington, an Indian boy from a local reservation, and declares, "The pages gave off drumbeats" (65). The Mormon boy is "pulled . . . away, off into a world of wide skies and hot mesas" as he scans "the designs, the drawings, even the scribblings" (65) that Clifford has sketched. Likewise, the twenty-two short stories collected by Eugene England in *Bright Angels and Familiars: Contemporary Mormon Stories,* which includes "The People Who Were Not There," pull the reader into the world of Mormonism or at least its echoes as the characters disclose the meaning of their lives through their faith, revelations, and relationships.

In the book's preface, England says these stories, taken together, "are not only valuable because they are skillful, the product of natural gifts, careful training or apprenticeship, and good understanding of the traditions of classic short stories and contemporary innovations. They are also valuable because they are written by people with a recognizably Mormon background which leads them through their stories to express, reveal, develop, and challenge the shape of Mormon beliefs" (xvii). England has chosen most of the stories from previous collections and publications, and he has succeeded in representing the origins of Mormon fiction as well as tracing its evolution and giving a sense of the directions in which it is heading. The stories' settings encompass Utah pioneer towns to futuristic African settlements and comprise styles as disparate as Virginia Sorensen's "critical but nostalgic and loving" (viii) recreation of her childhood Utah town to Orson Scott Card's cold, careful, practical tone that reflects a community where individuals are ruthlessly sacrificed for communal goals.

While the authors' styles, settings, techniques, and purposes vary significantly, the stories together show how diverse individual Mormon experience may be, and yet how homogenizing it is, especially when clarified through characters who have no compelling interest in the belief system. In Sorensen's "Where Nothing Is Long Ago," where water is "the unmistakable sign of the Kingdom" (4), Brother Tolsen kills a neighbor by hitting him on the head with a shovel because the man, one who has "fallen away from the faith" (6), has stolen his water turn. The community forgives Brother Tolsen and justifies his actions by

asking, "Is it not true that he who steals water is stealing life itself?" (10)

Levi Peterson's hysterically eccentric Rendella Kranpitz appears in an East-bench Salt Lake City stake spouting the Articles of Faith verbatim, quoting Isaiah, and calling various church members to repentance. She also shoplifts candy bars from Albertson's, poses as a Deseret Industries agent, and scandalizes the neighbors with her poor hygiene. A trial of Rendella's magnitude has never before hit Coburn Heights Stake, and the members crumble under her assault. No one ever imagined that "the least of these" could be so repulsive or relentless.

In Sibyl Johnston's "Iris Holmes," baby Iris, born blind, deaf, mentally retarded, and cerebral palsied, forces those around her to face all of the unanswered questions she embodies (325). Iris's presence allows them no protection. Some respond in compassion and love, others in cliches, and some just turn away.

Another homogenizing element, and a theme from which the book takes its name, is the elusive touch of the divine on relentless, often exhausting lives. In several stories the touch is palpable and life-saving, such as in Maurine Whipple's sentimental story, "They Did Go Forth." In this story, Tildy Elizabeth sitting alone and "frantic" (15) with a desperately sick baby dares to pray for a Third Nephite to come and save her child. He appears, looking strikingly like Joseph Smith, blesses her child, and disappears, taking a freshly baked johnny cake, which, miraculously, Tildy's hungry missionary husband stumbles over as he walks down a snowy street in England.

The angels' look and modus operandus in Walter Kirn's "Whole Other Bodies" aren't so flashy but are equally miraculous. "Two young men in tight dark suits" (328) arrive on "beat-up bikes with baskets in front" (329) at the home of a floundering family. The missionaries ask questions from canned discussions, show a tired film, and talk sports with the sons. Through these lead-footed missionaries the family quits "looking straight ahead with pinched, busy faces . . . and look[s] up." In that moment, "God [takes them] in entirely" (331).

In Judith Freeman's "Family Attractions," the angel is sixty-three-year-old George with age spots on his hands and poor dental work who brings humor, calmness, and security to his new wife and her precocious nine-year-old daughters. They, in return, bring energy and a future to a life he thought was "going another way" (222). While no part of this story is overtly Mormon, the comfort and meaning that come from joining lives into families has unmistakable Mormon overtones.

Divine and worldly relationships and experiences form the core of these stories and define the characters' lives and faith. While distinct, for the most part these relationships and experiences are those encountered by people who have the time, education, security, and ability for articulate introspection. In addition to the characters depicted, I longed for characters, relationships, and incidences that articulated Mormon belief in a way that wasn't quite so familiar, so Western, white, middle-class. It was also a bit disconcerting that many of the most fully realized, interesting, and original characters were those who had no share in the community. It seems that the nuances and borders of Mormon

belief and the people they create are just beginning to be uncovered.

While limited in its depiction of Mormon faithful, even in its variety, this collection is an important contribution toward tracing the evolution of the art. The volume's stories are well chosen, and the bibliography at the end of the collection is an invaluable resource for those who want to continue to explore the mesas and wide skies of contemporary Mormon fiction.

She'iiná yázhí*

Kimberly Hamblin Hart

As earth began to shed the snowy clouds of
death and slumber,
as darkness ebbed within the solstice,
you slept in my dark womb,
radiating,
and emerged,
blind to light.
For in darkness you began,
you lived,
you died,
never to know the sun's sweet face.
But your short life gave
me new sight,
initiated my recreation,
made me more than singular,
more than the sum of our parts.
We were continents colliding—
moving mountains,
rerouting rivers,
drying deserts.
Quietly we rained together
and were brilliant rainbows of possibility.
You were my unknown
knowingly defining my being,
telling me I really was.
I whispered to you
secrets of me. But now
I am an empty womb
dark, dank;
for not knowing more of you,
for the brevity of time.
Sometimes I listen for your whisper
in the silent midnight stars,
in the tremble of poplar leaves,
in the loud brilliance of soft petals,

in the echo of a canyon wren;
telling me secrets
of who you are.

Your coming stilled my universe.
Your leaving rent my skies
and left
a thundering deep
in my soul.
I held your crescent body in my hand
like I was holding the moon,
awesome and luminescent,
piercing darkness,
with power over tides,
yet
neglected, breathless, still.
Your life
juxtaposed
by your death.
From my womb,
to my hand,
never to be in my arms.

From you
I emerge.
Reborn.

*She'iiná yázhí is Navajo for My Little Life.

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ABOUT THE COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

In June 1911 Gisbert Bossard, a disaffected convert to the LDS church from Prussia, gained access to the interior of the Salt Lake temple and took a series of unauthorized photographs. Together with local entrepreneur Max Florence, Bossard first tried to sell his pictures to church president Joseph F. Smith, who not only refused to bargain with "traffickers in stolen goods," but printed some of them in the *Deseret Evening News*. Bossard and Florence then tried to stage in New York City a theatrical exposé of the Mormons and their temple. Their sensational slide presentation failed to attract much interest.

In response to Bossard's and Florence's activities, the church commissioned James E. Talmage to write *The House of the Lord* and Ralph Savage to take professional quality photographs of the temple's interior to accompany Talmage's discussion of "temples ancient and modern." The story of Bossard's escapades, and the publication for the first time in more than eighty years of a broad sampling of his photographs, is featured in this issue of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*.

Front cover: Bossard photograph number 80; hand colored. Statuary group located in the northeast corner of the Celestial Room on the second floor of the Salt Lake temple. At the top of the grouping a woman holds a torch above her head; at her feet are cherubs. Joseph Smith, right, and Hyrum Smith, left, hold onto the support column. At the base of the sculpture God the Father and God the Son appear to Joseph Smith, who is kneeling; he is flanked by women who are reading. The identity of the sculptor and the present location of the piece are unknown.

Back cover: An exterior black-and-white photograph of the Salt Lake temple, circa 1911, probably by Ralph Savage about the same time he took interior photographs of the temple to accompany James Talmage's *House of the Lord*.

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