

# DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT





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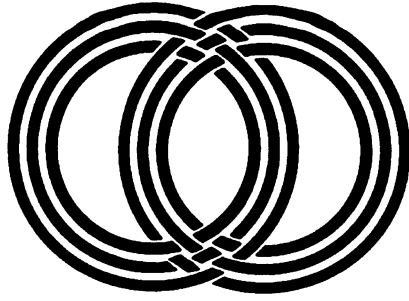
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# DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT

*is an independent quarterly  
established to express Mormon culture  
and to examine the relevance of religion  
to secular life. It is edited by  
Latter-day Saints who wish to bring  
their faith into dialogue with the  
larger stream of world religious thought  
and with human experience as a whole  
and to foster artistic and scholarly  
achievement based on their cultural  
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	1 time	2 times	3 or more
Full Page	\$500	\$400	\$320
Half Page	\$325	\$260	\$218
1/3 Page	\$250	\$200	\$160

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*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* is published quarterly by the Dialogue Foundation, P. O. Box 20210, Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120, 216-491-1830; [www.dialoguejournal.com](http://www.dialoguejournal.com). *Dialogue* has no official connection with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Third-class postage-paid at Shaker Heights, Ohio. Contents copyright 1999 by the Dialogue Foundation. ISSN 002-2157. Regular domestic subscription rate is \$30 per year; students and senior citizens, \$25 per year; single copies, \$10. Regular foreign subscription rate is \$35 per year; students and senior citizens, \$30 per year; air mail, \$55 per year; single copies, \$15. *Dialogue* is also available on microforms through University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1346, and 18 Bedford Row, London WC1R4EJ, England.

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## Elder Statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark

D. Michael Quinn 600 pp., \$49.95, 1-56085-155-4



Young "Reube," as he was called, repeated eighth grade three times because it was the highest education available in rural Grantsville, Utah. In 1890, at the age of nineteen, he was accepted at Latter-day Saints College in Salt Lake City, there future LDS church apostle James Talmage became his mentor and eventually officiated in Clark's marriage to Luacine Savage, daughter of pioneer photographer Charles Savage. Clark went on to become U.S. Under-secretary of State and later Ambassador to Mexico, then abandoned his promising secular career to become counselor to three LDS church prophets. Though friends, Clark and his co-counselor, David O. McKay, sometimes approached politics and religion differently. In fact, many church leaders came to view themselves as either "Clark men" (pragmatists) or "McKay men" (idealists). D. Michael Quinn's long-awaited revision of Clark's life will continue the dialogue on the role of the church in the twentieth century.

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## *The Trouble for Hypocrisy*

Again, you have published a great issue with your spring 2000 volume. I was particularly impressed with Wayne Booth's essay, "The Rhetoric of Hypocrisy: Virtuous and Vicious" and wanted to point out that Booth is in good company. The philosopher and Christian mystic Blaise Pascal insisted, "Human Society is founded on mutual deceit; few friendships would endure if each spoke in sincerity and without passion. . . . [I] set it down as a fact that if all men knew what each said of the other, there would not be four friends in the world." In Molières play *The Misanthrope* young Alceste is particularly critical of Philinte's polite effusiveness toward another.

PHILINTE: But in polite society, custom decrees  
That we show certain outward courtesies. . . .

ALCESTE: Ah, no! we should condemn with all our force  
Such false and artificial intercourse.  
Let men behave like men; let them display  
Their inmost hearts in everything they say;  
Let the heart speak, and let our sentiments  
Not mask themselves in silly compliments.

PHILINTE: In certain cases it would be uncouth  
And most absurd to speak the naked truth;  
With all respect for your exalted notions,  
It's often best to veil one's true emotions.  
Wouldn't the social fabric come undone

If we were wholly frank with everyone?

And a contemporary ethicist, Sisela Bok, sums up:

Nearly every kind of statement of action can be meant to deceive. Clearly intended lies—the most sharply etched forms of duplicity—have been in the foreground. . . . More marginal forms, such as evasion, euphemism, and exaggeration, have been close at hand, ready to prop up these lies or take their place. And all around have clustered the many kinds of deception intended to mislead without even marginally false statements: the changes of subject, the disguises, the gestures leading astray, all blending into the background of silence and inaction only sometimes intended to mislead.

Quoting these and other thinkers, I once published a commentary of my own,<sup>1</sup> whose point—even more pressing now than when I published—might add here to the discussion. As we are all aware, the age of technology has had a major impact on civilization. As certain members of society seek to promote integrity and to eliminate hypocrisy, the prospect arises that we might, indeed, be able to eliminate hypocrisy completely. Today, a bright high school science student can reflect a laser beam from the windows of a building and monitor conversations. Computer hackers can penetrate information data systems about our health and financial records. Travel routes can be followed with the aid of a small transmitter concealed within an automobile. Satellite telescopes have the capability of surveying action over a

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1. "Integrity Versus Hypocrisy—The Delicate Balance" *Western Journal of Medicine*, no. 159 (1993): 614-615.



large area. Video cameras and one-way mirrors are used to record very private activities. Miniature recorders, easily concealed, can be used to monitor conversations as can parabolic reflectors with microphones sensitive enough to record voices over 100 yards away. Because of technology, hypocrisy finds itself evermore seriously challenged (as some of our criminals and politicians are finding out), and this is only the beginning. When members of society have at their disposal the means to monitor the very thought processes of an individual, then we will truly have the power to eliminate deception. The possibility of attaining this Promethean power is starting to appear on the horizon.

Today the electroencephalogram is used to record the brain's electrical activity as it is influenced by many conditions. Scientists are now perfecting the magnetoencephalogram, which is used to monitor and record the electronic magnetic radiation of the brain at a distance. As a consequence, there may yet be a means of intercepting and monitoring the thought processes. This research is all still in the experimental stage, but given the exponential progress in computer science, cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and quantum physics, we should not discount such power as a possibility in the future. How tempting to get finally and unequivocally at the truth—and back to the inquisition.

We live in a perpetual tension. On the one hand we prize honesty and strive for integrity. On the other we court hypocrisy because without deception we would sacrifice sensitivity and discretion. The truth can hurt. Moreover to maintain our autonomy and privacy, we shrink from being completely transparent. We rely on hiddenness and secrets to protect the

locus of self, but secrets cannot be protected without duplicity, deception, even lying. As science and technology advance and the power to conduct external and, ultimately, internal surveillance grows, tension between these values will increase. The temptation to use such technology for personal or even societal advantage will bring an ever increasing challenge to the kind of trustfulness once embodied in the term "civility" and, even more disturbingly, to our protected sense of self. If the meaning of life lies in its moral struggle, the quest for complete personal honesty, authenticity, and justice will always be a noble but also a difficult and even threatening endeavor.

LaVal W. Spencer  
Ogden, Utah

### *At Long Last*

Finally. Someone finally came flat out and said what has needed to be said in *Dialogue* for over thirty years, and *Dialogue* girded up its loins and summoned the honesty. . .to print it [in Steve Oakey's letter dismissing the "Ostler/Sears quagmire," vol. 33, no. 1, xix [for the Sears and Ostler articles see, respectively, vols. 31, no. 4 and 32, no. 4]. In my opinion, it has been a long time since *Dialogue* has printed two more superfluously verbose and vexatious pieces of terminal irrelevance. It is not that these essays soar far above the intellectual "average" of a *Dialogue* readership, that they are (completely) philosophically incomprehensible; it is that by virtue of *Dialogue's* own original statement of purpose, wishing "to bring their faith into dialogue with the larger stream of religious thought and with human experi-

ence as a whole. . . " [that] these tracts simply sputter out beyond the pale. Since its inceptional issue, *Dialogue* has been a supportive, sometimes quite contradictory anchor in the gradual evolution of my personal cosmology. The most recent Ostler/Sears encounter regarding determinism provided much personal humor and fascination at the pretentiousness that pervaded the two pieces and responses, no more than a reprise of many other examples of theological esoterica presented over the years in both *Dialogue* and *Sunstone*, all comprising essentially tempests in forever mooted religious teapots.

R. Forrest Allred  
Clovis, California

### *Long Road Together*

I just finished reading "[A History of *Dialogue*, Part Two:] Struggle Toward Maturity" in the summer issue [vol. 33, no. 2]. I kept thinking, all that was going on; where was I. Do you really have a break down of what your long-time readers are like and how they have been affected by *Dialogue*? You might have another issue just on that theme. I am not an intellectual. I am only very average, but love to read, and I have been with *Dialogue* since about 1967 or 1968. . . . At that time I was going to Arizona State University on an experienced teacher's fellowship. . . I had taught school for three years in Snowflake, had four children . . . , was divorced, and the only other Mormon in the group enticed me to

subscribe. My name has changed. . . but my subscription has never lapsed. Thirty years of *Dialogue*, ten volumes of Durant<sup>2</sup> (I still have two to go), life and age have changed my naive original beliefs. Little doubts, bigger, and then a total wrenching of my whole belief system. It was so much more comfortable believing, but. . . intellectually I am no longer a Mormon. Although I haven't been to church in years, I miss the people, the music, and Relief Society. I would never try to change someone's beliefs or put stumbling blocks in the way. I even understand why the church would be concerned about your magazine. Truth is hardest to digest!

I have grown with *Dialogue*: [Richard] Poll's article on the "Iron Rod Mormons," [vol. 2, no. 4], the pink issue [vol. 6, no. 2] and [Lester] Bush's article [vol. 8, no. 1] have been my very favorites. Usually, at least one article in each issue has always grabbed me and made me rethink some ideas. A few of the articles I've xeroxed over the years and given to friends and the bishop although I doubt they read them.

A *very special thanks* to all those people over the long years who contributed time, money, effort, and articles. *I thank you for all the years together.* Some articles, though, have been deadly dull, and recently I have skimmed a few, something I would never have done in the past. I have never really cared for your covers, your fiction, or part of the poetry. I look forward to future issues!

Sharon Huff  
Phoenix, Arizona

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2. Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, 10 vols. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1954-1967).





Eugene England, a founding editor and constant friend and counselor to *Dialogue*, died Friday, August, 17, 2001, at his home in Provo, Utah. He is shown here with his wife Charlotte in a happy photo from the years when he was just beginning to bring his enthusiasm, energy, and galvanizing intellect to the enterprise of Mormon studies. In a forthcoming issue we will look back to his life and work, and we invite any with a meaningful memory or acknowledgment to help us remember Gene with a letter to *Dialogue*.

# Anhedonia

*Eugene England*

He said, "She said it means  
Unable to have pleasure,  
Unable to find it anywhere.  
She put me on Zolof to help."  
I thought of William Styron's  
Account of his own descent  
Into depression so profound  
He nearly took his life.  
His book, *Darkness Visible*,  
Speaks of "dank joylessness."

But "anhedonia" seems wrong.  
Such a gorgeous word-  
Anhedonia.  
Iambic trimeter,  
With one clipped syllable  
And two internal rimes.  
It should mean a flower  
Of Antarctica:  
Purple and cobalt blue,  
Growing deep in ice caves,  
Healing the hearts of the lost  
Or those who come late to the Pole:  
Scott and his doomed men.

It has a catch in its rhythm,  
An-hedonia,  
A pause then run to its close,  
Like the catch of my breath,  
When driving to our cabin  
On the upper Weber range,  
I see a bluebird lift  
From its hollowed fencepost nest,  
Flutter once, then dart  
Across the grey-green sage,  
Waiting for me to pass,  
Then flutter again and come back.

Anhedonia.  
How can it mean no joy  
When the word is such a joy,  
A pleasure in the mouth  
And on the pulse and heart.





# Prelude to the National “Defense of Marriage” Campaign: Civil Discrimination Against Feared or Despised Minorities

*D. Michael Quinn*<sup>1</sup>

AMERICA IS CURRENTLY IN THE MIDST of state-by-state political activism and judicial appeals to prevent the legalization of same-sex marriage. In 1996 the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated one example of the related effort to roll back laws protecting homosexuals from civil discrimination, but this campaign moves forward on various fronts in every state of the Union. Its organizers will certainly extend this political activism into all states currently lacking a “Defense of Marriage Act” (DOMA) which both prohibits same-sex marriage and refuses to recognize such unions legally performed in other states or countries. In view of the pace for this state-by-state political activism during the 1990s, the Defense of Marriage campaign will probably continue throughout the United States for at least another decade.<sup>2</sup>

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1. This essay was supported by a grant from the Institute for the Study of Human Resources and also involved research support at ONE Institute & Archives: The International Gay and Lesbian Heritage/Research Center, which is affiliated with the University of Southern California. The Internet was used to locate many of the periodical references cited herein. I assumed that page numbers listed on Internet web sites were the same as for print references. However, some Internet sites did not provide page numbers.

2. As I have previously observed: “Every state has its own laws, and each new session of a state legislature is a new opportunity for the losing side to renew the battle over a sexual minority’s civil rights or ‘special rights.’ This is equally true for every county, city, and town. . . . Even a U.S. Supreme Court decision will not end the conflict if the LDS church and its interfaith allies are on the losing side of legalizing same-sex marriage. . . . If pressed, the next step of the LDS interfaith coalition will be to mount a national campaign to ratify a

As I have written elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> there is a gulf of perception between those who have experienced erotic desire for a person of their same gender and those who have not. However, we can communicate with each other, even across the gulf of same-sex desire.

Since I am in the minority as a homosexual and as a Mexican-American, I want to correct in advance what might appear to be us-versus-them dimension in my remarks about the heterosexual "white" majority. Whether minority or majority, individuals in every group display a wide diversity of attitudes and actions. Moreover, each of us belongs simultaneously to both minority and majority groups. For example, I am in the non-black majority and throughout my life have been embarrassed to discover my own prejudices and insensitivities about race. Likewise, most blacks are in the vast majority of persons who lack serious physical handicaps and who (like most of us) can be prejudiced and insensitive toward disabled persons of every skin color. While I condemn prejudice and social discrimination, I also acknowledge my own lapses in these areas.

Shortly after the March 2000 vote for California's Defense of Marriage Act (Prop. 22), an editorial in the Los Angeles *Frontiers News-magazine* for gays and lesbians stated the situation very well:

It was difficult not to take the passage of Proposition 22 personally. . . . While one would like to think it wasn't personal, it's awfully difficult to really believe that anyone who put one of those signs in their yard truly thought they were protecting heterosexual marriage. The message they sent, whether intended or not, was: We don't like gay people. . . . Non-gay friends and acquaintances need to know that to us it wasn't just a vote, it was personal.<sup>4</sup>

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U.S. constitutional amendment against 'special rights' for the small minority of Americans who define themselves as homosexual" (D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books/Smith Research Associates, 1997], 405). For anti-gay claims about "special rights," see note 167.

3. D. Michael Quinn, *Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 7.

4. "Thanks A Lot: The Personal Sting of Proposition 22," *Frontiers Newsmagazine* 18 (31 March 2000): 12. For the role of the LDS church in the mass distribution of these "Yes on Prop. 22" signs in every city and town of California, see letter from the North America West Area Presidency (John B. Dickson, William R. Bradford, Richard H. Winkel) to "All Stake Presidents and Bishops in California, to be read in Sacrament Meeting Sunday, January 16," dated 11 Jan. 2000: "We would greatly appreciate it if all would continue contacting friends and neighbors as directed by the local coordinator about this issue *and distribute, as well as put on your own lawns, the provided yard signs* [emphasis added]" ("News: Proposition 22 Dominates California Wards' Attention, Divides Members," *Sunstone* 118 [April 2001]: 92). Official church positions of Dickson, Bradford, and Winkel listed in "General Authorities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," *Ensign* 29 (November 1999): [57]. See also David Bruce Combe, "Proposition 22, California, and the Mormon Church: A Chronology" in *Case Reports of the Mormon Alliance: Volume 5, 1999*, eds., Lavina Fielding Anderson and Janice Merrill Allred (Salt Lake City: Mormon Alliance, 2000).

In fact, the campaign against Prop. 22 was so personally painful for three Mormon gay males that they committed suicide in the spring of 2000, leaving letters of anguish about the LDS church's role in spearheading this activism against same-sex marriage.<sup>5</sup>

#### HOMOPHOBIA—A DEFINITION

Gays, lesbians, and increasing numbers of heterosexual scholars use the terms "heterosexism" and "homophobia" to describe the opposition against legal protections based on sexual orientation. Two authors explain: "Heterosexism is a reasoned system of bias regarding sexual orientation. It denotes prejudice in favor of heterosexual people and connotes prejudice against bisexual and, especially, homosexual people." Further, "Heterosexism is analogous to racism and sexism. Homophobia finds appropriate analogies in racial bigotry and misogyny [or antagonism toward females]."<sup>6</sup>

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5. The three were Henry Stuart Matis, D. J. Thompson, and Clay Whitmer. See "Gay Mormon Hoped Suicide Would Help Change Church," *San Francisco Examiner*, 2 March 2000; "Gay Mormon Kills Self on Church Steps: California Man Had Expressed Anguish over Anti-Gay-Marriage Proposition 22," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 3 March 2000, A-1; "Bloody Hands: Friends Blame Mormon Church's Support of Proposition 22 for Death of Two Gay Men," *Frontiers Newsmagazine* 18 (31 March 2000): 20; "To Be Gay—and Mormon," *Newsweek*, 8 May 2000, 38-39; Combe, "Proposition 22, California, and the Mormon Church" (with quotations from the pre-suicide letters of Matis and Thompson). See also Christopher J. Alexander, "Suicidal Behavior in Gay and Lesbian Mormons," in *Peculiar People: Mormons and Same-Sex Orientation*, eds., Ron Schow, Wayne Schow, and Marybeth Raynes (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 257-63; "No More Deaths, No More Silence: Gay Mormons Have Higher Suicide Rate Than the Entire Nation," *Las Vegas Bugle*, 12 May 2000, 18-19.

In my "Selected Chronology of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1848-1996" (Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, app. 5), I noted in the June 19, 1995, entry that Utah was attempting an analysis of its high suicide rates: "*Salt Lake Tribune* reports that Utah state task force is trying to understand why suicide is second leading cause of death for Utah's teenage males and young men, and why Utah's suicide rate is sixth highest in the nation. Article downplays alleged role of LDS church's 'too high expectations on young people,' by pointing out that five states (all surrounding Utah) with higher suicide rates have lower percentages of Mormons. However, this is a statistical error ('ecological fallacy') because states have not identified religious affiliation of suicides who might actually be disproportionately Mormon. *Tribune* refers to U.S. Health Department's 1989 estimate that homosexual orientation is a factor in 30 percent of teenage suicides. *Deseret News* excluded that estimate from its analysis of federal report on 21 Aug. 1989 and has said little about this current Utah task force" (894).

6. Patricia Beattie Jung and Ralph F. Smith, *Heterosexism: An Ethical Challenge* (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1993), 13, 14. See also Beverly Wildung Harrison, "Misogyny and Homophobia: The Unexplored Connections," in *Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics*, ed. Carol S. Robb (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985); James T. Sears and Walter L. Williams, eds., *Overcoming Heterosexism and Homophobia* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1997).



Since the root word *phobia* means fear, “homophobia” describes expressions of discomfort, anxiety, or fear about homosexuality and homosexuals.<sup>7</sup> Just as “Negrophobia” has often involved feelings of dislike or hatred toward African-Americans,<sup>8</sup> homophobia can also involve feelings of dislike or hatred toward gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender persons. However, many whites are Negrophobic without being hateful, and many Americans are homophobic without being hateful. Furthermore, just as there have been calmly reasoned arguments of misogyny, racism, Negrophobia, and anti-Semitism, so are there now calmly reasoned arguments of homophobia.<sup>9</sup> Such homophobia recently

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7. *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged*, 2nd ed., s.v. “homophobia. . . unreasoning fear of or antipathy toward homosexuals and homosexuality”; see also *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th ed., s.v. “homophobia. . . irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuality or homosexual—homophobic.” However, see following discussion and note 9 concerning these inaccurate assumptions of “unreasoning” and “irrational,” which dictionaries do not assume for Negrophobia (see note 8).

8. *Random House Dictionary*, s.v. “Negrophobia. . . strong fear or dislike of black people”; *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 3rd ed., s.v. “Negrophobe. . . one who fears or dislikes Black people and their culture—Negrophobic.”

9. Wayne R. Dynes says: “Care should be taken, therefore, to identify homophobia as a prejudice, comparable to racism and anti-semitism, rather than an irrational fear similar to claustrophobia or agoraphobia” (*Encyclopedia of Homosexuality*, 2 vols. [New York: Garland Publishing, 1990], 1:552). Likewise, without the unnecessary assumption of irrationality, *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines homophobia as an “aversion to gay or homosexual people or their lifestyle or culture” (contrast this with notes 7 and 8). Given these definitions, I disagree with John Charles Duffy, who equates homophobia with irrational fear:

“Homophobia is not synonymous with opposition to gay rights. There are plenty of gay rights activists who suffer from internalized homophobia. And one can be opposed to gay rights without suffering from an irrational fear of gay people. [emphasis added]

“Take [BYU law professor] Lynn Wardle, whom we all love to hate. Is Wardle homophobic?”

“Certainly he’s ‘heterosexist,’ meaning he believes that heterosexuality is better than homosexuality. . . .

\*\*\*

“If in calling Wardle a homophobe, you’re implying that he’s motivated by hysterical fear. . . I don’t see it. [emphasis added]

“He’s motivated by a set of beliefs about God’s will which I believe are gravely wrong. But that’s not homophobic. Heterosexist, yes. Homophobic, no.

“It’s precisely because Wardle is not irrational that he is so dangerous. . . . When he speaks, legislatures listen.” (“Homophobia: Calling It as It Is,” *Pillar of the Gay and Lesbian Community: Utah’s True Alternative Newspaper*, May 2000, 23. See also note 156.)

While Duffy’s argument encourages the Utah gay community to avoid inappropriate name-calling, his logic would invalidate the use of “Negrophobia” to describe white Southerners who used calmly rational arguments against the racial integration of transportation, housing, and schools. The “Jim Crow” South had its articulate defenders of segregation, and a person does not need to be irrational, hateful, or violent to be fearful concerning a minority and its perceived threats to the majority. Like any labels, those of racism, Negro-

caused a Mormon to proclaim in Provo, Utah's newspaper: "God is a bigot."<sup>10</sup>

#### SAME-SEX MARRIAGE—ITS PURPOSES

By contrast, the *Anglican Theological Review* has presented a different perspective on same-sex relationships: "In fact, homophobia and heterosexism elicit such strong emotional responses that lesbians and gay men are often estranged from their natal families, and thus deprived of what is, for most other marginalized groups, a primary source of care and nurture."<sup>11</sup> Parental rejection is also a frequent experience of Mormon gays and lesbians.<sup>12</sup> In a recent article about young gay males experiencing rejection, two of the eight examples were Utah-Mormon teenagers "thrown out of home" by their parents.<sup>13</sup>

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phobia, anti-Semitism, bigotry, and homophobia can be misapplied. However, contrary to Duffy's claim that "homophobia is not synonymous with opposition to gay rights," opposition to gay rights is based on homophobia and Lynn Wardle would thus be homophobic. For Wardle's recently published statements, see "Church Delegates Attend World Congress of Families," *Ensign* 27 (June 1997): 75; "Families, Law Are Victims of Vermont Justices' Marriage Ruling," *Deseret News*, 9 Jan. 2000; "LDS Have Right to Fight Gay Marriage, 2 Say: But ACLU Lawyer, BYU Professor Far Apart on Ideology," *Deseret News*, 17 Feb. 2000; "3 BYU Professors Sign paper Upholding Traditional Marriage," *Deseret News*, 14 July 2000.

10. Letter to the editor by Warren N. Hardy, "Even God May Be a Bigot," *Daily Herald* [Provo, UT], 24 August 1999. See also Letter to the editor, "God Hates Gays," *Daily Utah Chronicle*, 27 January 1976, 2.

11. Robert Williams, "Toward a Theology for Lesbian and Gay Marriage," *Anglican Theological Review* 72 (Spring 1990): 142.

12. Concerning an unnamed teenager who committed suicide after a confrontation with his father during the teenager's telephone call to the Gay Help Line, see Mark A. Taylor, "The Love That Dares Not Speak Its Name," *Utah Holiday* 15 (September 1986): 43. See also the narrative of Justen Michael Bennett-Maccubbin, who took the names of his adoptive gay fathers after his Mormon father tried to kill him when he told his parents he was gay, in Anderson Jones and David Fields, *Men Together: Portraits of Love, Commitment, and Life* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 1997), 38-39. See also Jolynn Moore, "Life As a Mormon," *Love Makes A Family: Creating a Family Voice for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered People* 9 (Fall/Winter 1997): 9.

13. Mike Glatze, ed., "Thrown Out," *XY Magazine* 22 (October-November 1999), 23, 31 (for the experiences of Jeremy, 17, and Justin, 19, both of Salt Lake City). This article also included the experience of Steve May: "Thrown out of the Army for being an out gay legislator: Steve May, Phoenix, Arizona." May's experience as a Mormon gay has been mentioned elsewhere, including: "GOP Shoots Self in Foot Over May," *Arizona Republic*, 17 November 1996; "Voters' Choices Break New Ground: Latina, Gay Republican Would Be Firsts," *Arizona Republic*, 9 September 1998; "Serving out Loud," *The Advocate*, 26 October 1999; "Gay Legislator Fighting Military: Refuses to Resign His Commission," *Arizona Republic*, 28 April 2000. For the favorable outcome of May's case, see the following articles which did not refer to his Mormon background: "Army Ends Effort to Boot May: Gay Reservist Celebrates Win," *Arizona Republic*, 16 January 2001 (local story); "Army Drops Efforts to Expel Gay Reservist," *Deseret News*, 16 January 2001, A-8 (wire-service story); "Army Ends Case against Gay Reservist," *New York Times*, 16 January 2001, A-16.

*The Anglican Theological Review* continues:

A theology of same-sex relationship images God saying to gay men and lesbians, as well as to their heterosexual counterparts, "It is not good for you to be alone," and providing through a profound relationship with a companion (most commonly called a "lover" in the gay community) for their "mutual comfort and joy." In a gay or lesbian relationship, as well as in a heterosexual relationship, "each may be to the other a strength in need, a counselor in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy." For a parish community to celebrate and bless such a relationship is simply to say to the [same-sex] couple, "We share your joy, and we see your love as a gift from a loving Creator."<sup>14</sup>

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14. Williams, "Toward a Theology for Lesbian and Gay Marriage," 142. See also "N.J. Episcopal diocese gives OK to gay couples," *San Francisco Examiner*, 31 January 1988, A-2; "Northern California Convention: Episcopalians Endorse Gay Marriages," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 26 October 1988, A-8; "New Bishop Tells of Many Blessings Uniting Gays: Lutherans," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 January 1995, B-4; "Barred once, gay couple receives blessing in Seattle cathedral," *Episcopal Life*, July/August 1996, 11; "95 Ministers Risk Jobs, Bless 'Holy Union' of Lesbian Couple—Religion: Action flouts United Methodist Church prohibition. 'We are on the right side of history and the right side of God,' pastor says," *Los Angeles Times*, 17 January 1999, A-11; "N.Y. Presbytery OKs Gay Holy Unions," *Los Angeles Times*, 13 February 1999, B-7; "Reform Rabbis OK Blessing Gay Unions," *Dallas Morning News*, 30 March 2000, A-5; and "Episcopalians Recognize Unmarried Couples: No Distinction Made on Sexual Orientation," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 July 2000. By contrast, Mormons believe that same-sex marriage would be catastrophic for society. After my presentation at Salt Lake City's 2000 Sunstone Symposium ("Prelude to the National 'Defense of Marriage' Campaign: Civil Discrimination Against Feared or Despised Minorities"), one member of the audience stated his belief that ratification of same-sex marriage would duplicate the sin of Sodom in the U.S., which God would then similarly destroy. Traditional Christianity, of course, holds that Sodom was destroyed because of its homoerotic behavior. (See Richard Davenport-Hines, *Sex, Death, and Punishment: Attitudes toward Sex and Sexuality in Britain since the Renaissance* [London: Collins, 1990], 101.)

However, Mormonism's founding prophet apparently rejected the traditional Christian view of Sodom's sin. In his only sermon about the matter, Joseph Smith said that God destroyed Sodom "for rejecting the prophets," and he did not mention sexual conduct at all. See the following: Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898 Typescript*, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-85), 2:213 (22 January 1843); Joseph Smith, Jr., et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1960), 5:237 (hereafter *History of the Church*); Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938), 271; Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young Univ., 1980), 156; Richard C. Galbraith, ed., *Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993), 6. See also the following reference to "sodomite" in the footnote to Deut. 23:17 in *The HOLY BIBLE. . . Authorized King James Version With Explanatory Notes and Cross References to the Standard Works* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989): "HEB a professional male or female prostitute, or cultist." Just as it rejected Joseph Smith's intentions for

Just as heterosexual marriage binds a couple emotionally and spiritually far beyond sex and child-raising, so also do most homosexuals want a same-sex relationship that combines sexual attraction with mutual respect, love, shared goals, and even spiritual fulfillment.<sup>15</sup> In addition, like members of every other group, gays and lesbians believe they

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African-Americans (see notes 81 and 90), so also did the Utah Mormon leadership reject the founding prophet's view of Sodom's destruction.

Ironically, the views of other Christians are now changing. Beginning in the early 1900s with a scholar who was neither homosexual nor Mormon, some Bible analysts began reinterpreting Sodom's destruction more along the lines indicated by the Mormon prophet. George A. Barton noted that "the wickedness which Lot is said to have anticipated that the men of Sodom contemplated may have been no more than to give the strangers a beating" ("Sodomy," in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 12 vols. plus index, ed. James Hastings [Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908-26] 11:672). At greater length, Derrick Sherwin Bailey argued in 1955 that the "inhospitality" of the Sodomites toward Lot's angel-guests was the actual cause of Sodom's destruction: "The story does not in the least demand the assumption that the sin of Sodom was sexual let alone homosexual—indeed, there is no evidence to show that vice of the latter kind was prevalent there." (*Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* [London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1955], 5; see also the extensive discussion in later pages concerning the historical development of the "Homosexual Interpretation of Sodom"). See also Victor Paul Furnish, "The Bible and Homosexuality: Reading the Texts in Context," in *Homosexuality in the Church: Both Sides of the Debate*, ed. Jeffrey S. Siker (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 18-35, with discussion of Sodom on 19-20.

15. "Recent polls of gays and lesbians have shown that over 80% of them would marry if legally able to do so" (Kevin H. Lewis, "Equal Protection after *Romer v. Evans*: Implications for the Defense of Marriage Act and Other Laws," *Hastings Law Journal* 49 [November 1997]: 22n224). For examples of recent publications about relationship-oriented gays and lesbians, see Tina Tessina, *Gay Relationships: How to Find Them, How to Improve Them, How to Make Them Last* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 1989); Betty Berzon, *Permanent Partners: Building Gay & Lesbian Relationships That Last* (New York: Plume Book/Penguin, 1990); Charlotte J. Patterson, "Children of Lesbian and Gay Parents," *Child Development* 63 (1992): 1025-42; Patterson, "Lesbian Mothers, Gay Fathers, and Their Children," in *Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Identities over the Lifespan: Psychological Perspectives*, eds., Anthony R. D'Augelli and Charlotte J. Patterson (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), 262-90; Richard A. Mackey, Bernard A. O'Brien, and Eileen F. Mackey, *Gay and Lesbian Couples: Voices from Lasting Relationships* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997); Anderson Jones and David Fields, *Men Together: Portraits of Love, Commitment, and Life* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 1997); Andrew K. T. Yip, *Gay Male Christian Couples: Life Stories* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997); Michael J. Sweet, "Together on the Path: Gay Relationships in a Buddhist Context" and Susan Talve, "'With This Ring You Are Made Holy unto Me According to the Laws of Moses': Celebrating and Sanctifying Lesbian and Gay Relationships and Families," both in *Our Families, Our Values: Snapshots of Queer Kinship*, eds., Robert E. Goss and Amy Adams Squire Strongheart (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1997), 115-27, 129-35; Jane Drucker, *Families of Value: Gay and Lesbian Parents and Their Children Speak Out* (New York: Insight Books/Plenum Publishing, 1998); Richard P. Hardy, *Loving Men: Gay Partners, Spirituality, and AIDS* (New York: Continuum, 1998); Ellen Lewin, *Recognizing Ourselves: Ceremonies of Lesbian and Gay Commitment* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press,

deserve access to legally protected relationships.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, the LDS father of a gay male has publicly declared that "affirming same-sex relationships" is "the logical next step" for both church and state.<sup>17</sup>

#### "MANY FINE FRIENDS"

In expressing satisfaction at the passage of California's law prohibiting marriage for gays and lesbians, LDS president Gordon B. Hinckley insisted: "We are not anti-gay. We are pro-family." But the two slogans are linked. In its article on "The Pro-Family Movement," the *Conservative Digest* proudly listed those who are "Anti-Homosexuals" and "Anti-Gay Rights."<sup>18</sup>

Others who support the Defense of Marriage laws likewise proclaim: "We are not anti-gay. We have friends who are gay and lesbian." For example, Douglas L. Callister (an official LDS coordinator of California's Prop. 22 campaign) told the *Los Angeles Times* in 1999: "We have many fine friends that are in the gay community and do not wish to be their adversaries."<sup>19</sup> Yet for gays and lesbians, this rings as hollow as the claim

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1998); Janet M. Wright, *Lesbian Step Families: An Ethnography of Love* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1998); *Hero Magazine* (1998-present.); Eric Marcus, *Together Forever: Gay and Lesbian Couples Share Their Secrets for Lasting Happiness* (New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1999); Gretchen A. Stiers, *From This Day Forward: Commitment, Marriage, and Family in Lesbian and Gay Relationships* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Merle James Yost, ed., *When Love Lasts Forever: Male Couples Celebrate Commitment* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 1999).

16. Brent Hartinger, "A Case for Gay Marriage," *Commonweal*, 22 November 1991; Kathryn Dean Kendell, "Principles and Prejudice: Lesbian and Gay Civil Marriage and the Realization of Equality," *Journal of Contemporary Law* 22, no. 1 (1996): 81-96; Mark Strasser, *The Challenge of Same-Sex Marriage: Federalist Principles and Constitutional Protections* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999); Andrew Sullivan, "Marriage: Why We Can't Wait" (keynote talk at annual meeting of Affirmation: Gay & Lesbian Mormons, Washington, D.C., 7 October 2000). See also pro and con arguments in Robert M. Baird and Stuart E. Rosenbaum, eds., *Same-Sex Marriage: The Moral and Legal Debate* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1997); Andrew Sullivan, ed., *Same-Sex Marriage, Pro and Con: A Reader* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997).

17. Gary M. Watts, "The Logical Next Step: Affirming Same-Sex Relationships," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 31 (Fall 1998): 49-57.

18. "Gay Marriage Ban Pleases Leader of Mormon Church," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 9 March 2000, A-6; "The Pro-Family Movement," *Conservative Digest*, May/June 1981, 23, 24.

19. Quoted in "No End to Dissent: Recent Events Suggest That At Least In the Nation's Churches, the Battle over Rights For Gays and Lesbians Is a Long Way From Being Resolved," *Los Angeles Times*, 3 July 1999, B-2. For Callister's role in this political campaign, see "News: Proposition 22 Dominates California Wards' Attention, Divides members," *Sunstone* 118 (April 2001): 88; Combe, "Proposition 22, California, and the Mormon Church." Callister was called as a general authority after successfully coordinating California's DOMA campaign as an Area Authority Seventy. (See "New General Authorities Called," *Ensign* 30 [May 2000]: 102.)



by white segregationists: "We're not anti-Negro. We have many fine friends who are Negro."<sup>20</sup> Polite feelings for individuals cannot compensate for denying basic rights to the minority of which those individuals are a part.

A month after the vote on Prop. 22, one of Southern California's Roman Catholic bishops publicly apologized for the role of the Catholic Church in promoting antagonism toward gays and lesbians. Presiding over a diocese of more than one million Catholics, Monsignor Gerald Barnes said: "I ask forgiveness for the members of the Church and for myself. . . . The rhetoric and propaganda of some proponents of Proposition 22 served to remind all of us of the fear and hatred of which we are all capable of [sic] in the name of Christian virtue."<sup>21</sup> Monsignor Barnes was following the example of Pope John Paul II who referred "to Racism, Sexism and Anti-Semitism" in the Vatican's recent "Landmark Apology for Church Sins."<sup>22</sup>

To date, Elder Callister has issued no such apology for statements made by LDS members during the DOMA activism in California. No similar acknowledgment has come from LDS church headquarters, which continues to promote its "pro-family" political campaign of fear against gays and lesbians throughout the nation. However, Robert Rees (a former LDS bishop and mission president) has observed: "Thus, in spite of President Hinckley's strong admonition not to let support of Proposition 22 lead to prejudicial treatment of homosexuals, there have been more homophobic sentiments expressed in our [LDS] meetings in the past year than I can remember over an entire lifetime. One only has to ask Latter-day Saint homosexuals living in California if they feel safer today than they did a year ago to determine how destructive these expressions have been."<sup>23</sup> A statistical report issued by the California Attorney General has verified that violence against gays and lesbians

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20. Brandon Brumsic, *Some of My Best Friends* (Westbury, N.Y.: By the author, 1963); *Some of My Best Friends: A Report on Race Relations Attitudes* (London: Reference Division, Community Relations Commission of Great Britain, 1976); Stokely Carmichael, "Black Power," in *The Negro in American History: Black Americans, 1928-1968*, eds., Morton J. Adler, Charles Van Doren, and George Ducas (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation, 1969), 111. Likewise, Americans accused of anti-Semitism have also claimed they had Jewish friends (Benjamin R. Epstein, *"Some of My Best Friends. . ."* [New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1962]).

21. "Apology: Local Catholics Hear Bishop's Letter on the Church's Shortcomings," *Daily Bulletin* (Ontario, Calif.), 3 April 2000, A-6; quote comes from a sidebar titled "Excerpts from Bishop Barnes' Apology."

22. "Pope Issues Landmark Apology for Church Sins: Homily Alludes to Racism, Sexism and Anti-Semitism," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 13 March 2000.

23. Robert Rees, *"In a Dark Time the Eye Begins to See": Personal Reflections on Homosexuality among the Mormons at the Beginning of a New Millennium* (forthcoming by Family Fellowship; see also this issue of *Dialogue*).

increased in 1999 during the interfaith campaign against same-sex marriage.<sup>24</sup>

For those who oppose marriage for homosexuals but insist they have no ill feeling toward gays and lesbians, a recent book by music composer Ned Rorem is useful. Openly gay himself, he interviewed theater critic John Simon who had published remarks which many regarded as homophobic. Rorem commented: "What you've said, apparently homophobically to some people, is powerful enough to disqualify what you may say compassionately in other contexts."<sup>25</sup> Obviously, this also applies to what people do homophobically.

#### OBEDIENCE VS. CONSCIENCE

In the state-by-state campaigns for Defense of Marriage laws from the 1990s to the present, LDS officials have repeatedly instructed Mormons to regard their vote as an act of obedience to leadership, rather than an act of individual conscience. This has occurred in Utah, Hawaii, Washington, Alaska, New Mexico, California, Nevada, Nebraska, and Texas.<sup>26</sup> This attitude separates Mormon voters and legislators from most

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24. "Hate Crimes in State Increase by 12%," *Los Angeles Times*, 28 July 2000, A-3, A-28 (with sidebar "Focus of Hate" showing that 22 percent of California's hate crimes were based on sexual orientation). See also "Rise in Hate Crimes in California: Number of Attacks Up—Level of Violence Appears to Be Increasing As Well," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 July 2000.

25. Ned Rorem, *Other Entertainment: Collected Pieces* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 151. See also p. 146 for John Simon's statement that "homosexuals are no longer a despised minority. . . in my world."

26. "LDS First Presidency Opposes Legalization of Gay Marriages," *Deseret News*, 14 February 1994, B-2; "First Presidency Opposes Efforts to Legalize Same-Gender Marriage," *Church News* 19 February 1994, 5; "Some States Trying to Stop Gay Marriages before They Start," *New York Times*, 15 March 1995, A-18; "Same-Sex Marriage: Are LDS Gearing Up for a Holy War?" *Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 March 1994, B-1, B-2; "LDS Church Opposing Gay Marriages," *Deseret News*, 30 March 1994, A-10; "First Presidency Statement Opposing Same-Gender Marriages," *Ensign* 24 (April 1994): 80; Carolyn Campbell, "I Now Pronounce You Wife and Wife: Same-Sex Marriages and the LDS Church," *Private Eye Weekly* (Salt Lake City) 15 June 1994, 7-10; "Church Joins Hawaii Fight over Same-Sex Marriages," *Deseret News*, 24 February 1995, A-2; "Lawmakers Pass Late Measure To Not Recognize Gay Marriages," *Deseret News*, 2 March 1995, A-19; "Church Opposes Same-Sex Marriages," *Church News*, 4 March 1995, 12; "Utah May Ignore Gay Unions: Group Threatens Lawsuits After Governor Signs Bill," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 March 1995, C-1; "Judge Bars LDS Church From Same-Sex Lawsuit," *Deseret News*, 29 March 1995, B-1; "Judge Won't Allow Mormon Church To Join Same-Sex Trial," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 30 March 1995, A-4; "Utah Right To Ban Same-Sex Marriages," *Deseret News*, 31 March 1995, A-15; "Don't Permit Gay 'Marriages,'" *Deseret News*, 3 April 1995, A-9; Jorge Morales, "Marriage Bans," *Advocate* 678 (4 April 1995): 20; "3 LDS Officials Seek To Join Hawaii Suit," *Deseret News*, 14 April 1995, A-10; "LDS Church Files Appeal in Same-Sex Case," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 April 1995, D-2; "Homosexual Union Isn't Marriage," *Deseret News*, 19 April 1995, A-9; "Hawaii Court Rejects

of the others in the political "coalition" against same-sex marriage, which President Hinckley publicly described: "We have worked with Jewish groups, Catholics, Muslims, Protestants, and those of no particular

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LDS Request," *Deseret News*, 25 January 1996, A-6; "LDS and Catholic Coalition Opposes Hawaii Legislation," *Deseret News*, 21 February 1996, B-1; "Officials Aim To Intervene in Same-Sex Case," *Deseret News*, 28 February 1996; "A Mormon Church Crusade In Hawaii," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 June 1996, B-1, B-2; "Graham Set to Fight Gay Marriage," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 May 1998, D-10 (in which Utah's attorney general specifies that her LDS church membership is a basis for using her public office to oppose the legalization of same-sex marriage); "Same-Sex Marriage Foes Given \$500,000," *Anchorage Daily News*, 3 October 1998; "Emotions Run High Over Prop. 2," *Anchorage Daily News*, 1 November 1998; "Mormons Send Cold Cash to Alaska for Anti-Gay Marriage Referendum," *Church and State* 51 (November 1998): 18-19; "Mormons Now Target California," *San Francisco Examiner*, 4 July 1999; "Gays Oppose LDS California Activism," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 July 1999, D-1, D-2; "Activists Quit LDS Church Over California Letter," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 July 1999, C-2; "Mormons 'Regret' Exodus Over Campaign Against Gay Marriage," *Anchorage Daily News*, 25 July 1999; "Mormons Raise Funds To Stop Gay Marriage," *San Francisco Examiner*, 8 August 1999; "Protesters Target Church Activism in California," *Deseret News*, 4 Oct. 1999, A-6; internet version of MSNBC's "Gay Marriage Laws [in] New Mexico," 1999, [www.msnbc.com/modules/gaymarriages/state-by-state/default.asp](http://www.msnbc.com/modules/gaymarriages/state-by-state/default.asp) ("In 1999, anti-gay marriage legislation was defeated for the fourth year in a row. The Mormon Church lobbied heavily for passage of the legislation, sending \$30,000 to supporters of the bill"); "Campaign Initiative Asks Nevadans to Protect Marriage," *Beehive* (Las Vegas), 15 December 1999-15 February 2000, 8 ("The First Presidency feels it's an urgent matter"); "LDS Urged to Back Prop. 22," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 21 January 2000; "For Some, Mormon Stance on Gay Issue Creates a Crisis of Conscience," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 5 March 2000, A-1; "Pushing Morals of Marriage Issue: Man Heads Effort to Prevent Gays From Legally Marrying in Nevada," *Las Vegas Sun*, 8 May 2000; "Anti-Gay Marriage Petition Nears Filing," *Las Vegas Sun*, 8 June 2000; "Petition to Ban Gay Marriage Hits Ballot," *Las Vegas Sun*, 8 July 2000; "Petitioners Submit Signatures," *Lincoln Journal-Star* (Lincoln, Neb.), 8 July 2000; "Strong Finances, Central Control Propel Church," *Omaha World-Herald*, 29 July 2000; "Nevada Delegate Focuses on Gay Rights," *Las Vegas Sun*, 14 August 2000; "Coalition Formed To Lobby For Marriage Amendment," *Lincoln Journal-Star*, 28 September 2000; "New Voice For 416: Original Backers Reject Funds From Out of State," *Lincoln Journal-Star*, 1 October 2000 (re: "an offer of \$600,000 from members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints"); Ben Fulton, "Nebraska Splits Over Mormon Money," *Salt Lake City Weekly*, 12 October 2000; "Catholics Told To Vote Their Conscience On Marriage Ban," *Las Vegas Sun*, 17 October 2000 (where, in contrast to Mormons, Catholic bishops declare: "As bishops we do not seek the formation of a religious voting bloc"). See also Combe, "Proposition 22, California, and the Mormon Church"; Richley H. Crapo, "Mormon/LDS Chronology of Involvement In Same-Sex Marriage Politics" (1997), available on the internet; Jay Bell, "A Chronology of the LDS (Mormon) Church's Views on Homosexuality and Gender Related Issues from 1950-2000," dated 10 September 2000 (typescript of 100 single-spaced pages, in my possession).

In Texas, area presidencies and/or stake presidencies have conducted meetings in every LDS chapel from December 2000 onward for all adult Mormons who receive the handout "Preservation of Traditional Marriage." This includes a "Guide/Script for Direct Contact with Texas Senators and Representatives," which specifies that Mormons are not to identify themselves as members of the LDS church or of its lobbying group, the Coalition for Traditional Marriage (CTM), during personal conversations with elected officials.

religious affiliation. . . .<sup>27</sup> For the current LDS leadership, lock-step obedience to the "living prophet" is more important than the church member's own sense of what is right and fair.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, LDS general authorities and regional leaders have tried to conceal their role in directing this political campaign and in soliciting monetary donations for its support. As instructed by church headquarters, regional leaders have told local members to conceal their Mormon affiliation when writing against same-sex marriage to newspapers or elected officials.<sup>29</sup> Rather than being a spontaneous expression of citizen-

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Specifying that all these instructions are given by authority of the First Presidency, LDS leaders in these meetings have encouraged all Texas Mormons to join the CTM and have distributed enough registration forms for every adult member of the LDS church in Texas to join this political lobbying organization. In addition to providing LDS members with a "sample letter" to send to newspaper editors, to state legislators, and to members of Congress, the handout "Preservation of Traditional Marriage" instructed these Mormons: "Mail, fax, or E-mail your letters to as many newspapers within your state as possible" (transcription of handout "Preservation of Traditional Marriage"; information supplied by a Texas resident who attended one of these meetings; Jay Bell, research file on Texas, dated 29 January 2001, copy in my possession).

27. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Why We Do Some of the Things We Do," *Ensign* 29 (November 1999): 54. For discussions of the Mormon political alliance with conservative and ultra-conservative Christians, see Richard A. Viguerie, *The New Right: We're Ready To Lead* (Falls Church, VA: Viguerie Company, 1981), 131; Gabriel Fackre, *The Religious Right and Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1982), 3; James T. Richardson, "The 'Old Right' in Action: Mormon and Catholic Involvement in an Equal Rights Amendment Referendum," in *New Christian Politics*, eds., David Bromley and Anson Shupe (Macon, Ga.: Mercer Univ. Press, 1984), 213-33; Anson Shupe and John Heinerman, "Mormonism and the New Christian Right: An Emerging Coalition?" *Review of Religious Research* 27 (December 1985): 146-57; O. Kendall White, Jr., "A Review and Commentary of the Prospects of a Mormon-New Christian Right Coalition," *Review of Religious Research* 28 (December 1986): 180-88; Matthew C. Moen, *The Transformation of the Christian Right* (Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1992), 157; George Marsden, "The Religious Right: A Historical Overview," in *No Longer Exiles: The Religious Right in America*, ed. Michael Cromartie (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1993), 10; Michael Lienesch, *Redeeming America: Piety and Politics in the New Christian Right* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1993), 9-10, 252; "LDS and Catholic Coalition Opposes Hawaii Legislation," *Deseret News*, 21 February 1996, B-1; John Gallagher and Chris Bull, *Perfect Enemies: The Religious Right, The Gay Movement, and the Politics of the 1990s* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1996), 206.

28. For example, see N. Eldon Tanner, "First Presidency Message: 'The Debate Is Over,'" *Ensign* 9 (August 1979): 2-3. M. Russell Ballard has also said, "In the Lord's Church there is no such thing as a 'loyal opposition'" ("Beware of False Prophets and False Teachers," *Ensign* 29 [November 1999]: 64). Tanner's statement was given in the context of the LDS church's campaign against ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Ballard's statement was given in the midst of the church's campaign for California's Prop. 22 against same-sex marriages.

29. Combe, "Proposition 22, California, and the Mormon Church." For the same concealment and deception in the LDS church's 1975-82 national campaign against the proposed Equal Rights Amendment, see Lisa Cronin Wohl, "A Mormon Connection?: The

ship, the thousands of letters flooding each state's legislature have merely reflected instructions from LDS headquarters, and sometimes even specific quotas given to local congregations by regional LDS leaders. In previous political campaigns, Mormons have written up to 85 percent of the letters received by legislatures in states where they comprised less than one percent of the population.<sup>30</sup>

As non-LDS scholar William Appleman Williams observed: "The Mormons display a very shrewd understanding of the kind of national power that can grow out of organizing a relatively small number of people in a specific region."<sup>31</sup> Americans generally do not realize that most Mormons act like army ants whenever LDS headquarters gives instructions about political matters.<sup>32</sup>

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Defeat of the ERA in Nevada," *Ms.* 6 (July 1977): 68-70, 80, 83-85; "Mormons Wage Letter-Writing Blitz Against ERA in Va. General Assembly," *Washington Star*, 10 January 1979, A-4; "State Official Probes Mormon Lobbying," *Reston (Virginia) Times*, 1 March 1979, 1; "Mormon Muscle: Members' Funds Fought ERA," *Sacramento Bee*, 19 April 1980, A-1, A-33; "Mormon Money Worked against Florida's ERA," *Miami Herald*, 20 April 1980, A-1, A-33; "Church Orchestrated Florida Anti-ERA Drive, Report Details," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 21 April 1980, D-1; "State to Probe Mormon Contributions," *Miami Herald*, 22 April 1980, sec. II, 1; "Mormon Church Plays Key Role in Anti-ERA Fight," *Sacramento Bee*, 4 May 1980, A-3, A-4; Joan S. Carver, "The Equal Rights Amendment and the Florida Legislature," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 60 (April 1982): 475n62; O. Kendall White, Jr., "Mormonism and the Equal Rights Amendment," *Journal of Church and State* 31 (Spring 1989): 252, 257; Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 384 (re: instructions by Gordon B. Hinckley, then a counselor in the First Presidency, to conceal the LDS role in establishing statewide organizations for national political lobbying), 386-88 (re: LDS origin of these political action committees in various states), 389-90 (re: concealment of the role of LDS headquarters and its regional officers in coordinating monetary donations for its political activism), 390 (re: letters to legislatures). For the same patterns of control and deception in the LDS campaign against same-sex marriage, see note 26.

30. Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 390. See also Andrew Kopkind, "America's New Right," *New Times*, 30 September 1977, 21; Ruth Ann Alexander, "South Dakota Women Stake a Claim: A Feminist Memoir, 1964-1989," *South Dakota History* 19 (Winter 1989): 552; previous note 26.

31. William Appleman Williams, "Regional Resistance: Backyard Autonomy," *The Nation* 233 (5 September 1981): 179. Williams was specifically commenting on the controversy about the MX missile system. See also "It's Do or Die for the ERA: Mormon Power Is the Key," *Boston Globe*, 30 June 1981, 2.

32. This lock-step obedience was characteristic of Mormon political behavior from the 1830s until the LDS church disbanded its political party in 1891 and officially abandoned theocracy. By contrast, from 1891 until the 1960s, Mormons often ignored political instructions from LDS headquarters. From the late 1960s onward, LDS headquarters re-established lock-step political obedience on the part of most Mormons in the United States. For these historical patterns and their explanation, see D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books/Smith Research Associates, 1994); Quinn, *Extensions of Power*; and F. Reed Johnson, "The Mormon Church as a Central Command System," *Review of Social Economy* 37 (April 1979): 79-94.

Furthermore, I disagree with Armand L. Mauss when he says, "Yet, as an institution,



The current pattern of political deception and emphasis on obedience-above-conscience dates from the LDS church's 1975-82 campaign against ratification of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, during which the presidency of Spencer W. Kimball made homosexuality a major reason for this political activism. As I wrote in 1997, Gordon B. Hinckley's direction of the national anti-ERA campaign provided the tactics and "blue-print for the Mormon effort to prohibit same-sex marriages and to oppose any legislation favoring homosexuals."<sup>33</sup>

#### MARRIAGE RESTRICTIONS AGAINST DESPISED GROUPS IN HISTORY

However, this essay does not emphasize the details of the campaign by various groups against same-sex marriage. Instead, I used the musical

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the Mormon church has only rarely injected itself in national political issues since Utah achieved statehood in 1896" (*The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* [Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994], 109). He makes an artificial distinction between the church acting rarely "as an institution" on the national level and the hierarchy acting politically "officially and unofficially" on local, state, and regional political matters since 1896. Even if "church" political appeals had been made only to Utah voters and elected officials, the distinction Mauss tries to make would require one to agree that the following were not "national political issues": support of the Spanish-American War and subsequent national conflicts since 1898; support of William H. Taft's presidential candidacy in 1912; support of the nationwide movement for the prohibition of alcohol from 1908 to 1917; support of the right of conscientious objection to war during U.S. conflicts from 1917 to 1955; support of the U.S. Senate's ratification of the Versailles Treaty (with its provision for the League of Nations) in 1919-20; opposition to immigration restrictions during the 1920s; opposition to ending Prohibition in 1932-33; opposition to U.S. president Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs and public "counsel" for voters to vote against Roosevelt in 1936; opposition to congressional adoption of universal military service in 1945-46; support of congressional adoption of anti-union legislation in 1954; support of Richard M. Nixon's presidential candidacy in 1960; support of racial segregation until the 1960s, support of national civil rights legislation in 1963; opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment from 1975 to 1982; opposition to congressional deregulation of the airline industry in 1977; opposition to the MX missile system and other "vast" systems of weaponry in 1981—to name only the well-known examples. Mauss (112-19) discusses several of these examples to support his view that "the history of Mormon political involvements in national politics up to about 1960 provides few, if any, exceptions to dominant national trends," which is a different matter than the one addressed in his statement on page 109.

33. Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 373-401 (re: anti-ERA campaign), 404 (for quote). Furthermore, Apostle Dallin H. Oaks acknowledges that early Mormon leaders engaged in "lying for the Lord" when they found themselves in difficult circumstances. Oaks also admits he could not predict what he would do in similar circumstances ("Gospel Teachings About Lying," *Clark Memorandum* [J. Reuben Clark School of Law, Brigham Young University], Spring 1994, 16-17). Compare with "Cartoonist Says Oaks Lied to Protect Fellow Apostle," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 12 Oct. 1993, B-1; story also covered in *Sunstone* 16 (Dec. 1993): 68-69.

term "prelude" as my title's first word because the Defense of Marriage Act in Congress and various states is simply a different verse of the same old song for denying civil rights to feared or despised minorities. The most direct correlation involves access to marriage. Ironically, many who have supported laws against same-sex marriage are themselves members of groups which were once denied the right to marry those of their choice. While some of this might be due to selective memory, persecuted minorities also sometimes demonstrate their assimilation by mimicking their former persecutors.

Jews have had the longest experience with legal restrictions against their choice of marriage partners. For a thousand years, medieval Europe prohibited Jews from marrying Christians.<sup>34</sup> In 1935, Nazi Germany passed laws against intermarriage between Jews and "Germans or kindred blood."<sup>35</sup>

In our nation's history, African-Americans suffered hundreds of years of legal restrictions on marriage. From the colonial era onward, there was either no legal option for slaves to marry or the laws actually prohibited their marriage.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, nearly all states had statutes against "free Negroes" marrying "white" persons. Some states even banned marriage with a person of one-sixteenth "Negro blood" (in other words, having one great-great-grandparent who was African-American).<sup>37</sup>

In 1850, California enacted its law against interracial marriage, which remained in force until 1948 when the state supreme court overturned it.<sup>38</sup> Before that year, the state courts were not friendly to the civil rights of minorities. In 1941, the California District Court of Appeals ruled that a person with "one-eighth part or more of Negro blood" could not legally testify against a white person, nor marry one.<sup>39</sup>

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34. "Disabilities" and "Intermarriage," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. Isidore Singer, 12 vols. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1925), 4:610-12, 6:611-12.

35. "Blood, Law to Protect," in *The Encyclopedia of the Third Reich*, eds., Christian Zentner and Friedemann Beduerftig, trans. Amy Hackett, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1991), 1:92.

36. Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family In Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York: Pantheon Books/Random House, 1976), 52, 556n4; Orville Burton, *In My Father's House Are Many Mansions: Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1985), 292-93.

37. Irving G. Tragen, "Statutory Prohibitions against Interracial Marriages," *California Law Review* 32 (1944): 274n26; Robert J. Sickels, *Race, Marriage, and the Law* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1972), 64, 71.

38. Tragen, "Statutory Prohibitions Against Interracial Marriages," 272, 272n16; W. M. McKinney, ed., *New California Digest*, 28+ vols. (San Francisco: Bancroft-Whitney, 1957-66), vol. 15-: 16-17; Sickels, *Race, Marriage, and the Law*, 72.

39. Tragen, "Statutory Prohibitions against Interracial Marriages," 273-74.

Sixteen states still prohibited interracial marriage in 1967 when the U.S. Supreme Court declared this unconstitutional in the landmark decision of *Loving v. Virginia*.<sup>40</sup> Ten states (including Delaware and Montana) also refused to recognize the legitimacy of interracial marriages legally performed elsewhere.<sup>41</sup> This is now the same tactic used by California, Utah, and other states toward same-sex marriages legally performed elsewhere.<sup>42</sup>

While the groups involved are certainly different, the opposition to gay rights has many similarities to the pattern of denying other minorities their civil rights. Regarding marriage, the majority has often said to the disapproved minority: "We will not allow you full access to marriage because you are not our kind of people."

James Madison, an author of the U.S. Constitution and the fourth U.S. president, gave this warning: "In republics, the great danger is that the majority may not sufficiently respect the rights of the minority." Another of America's Founding Fathers, John Adams (the second U.S. president), more bluntly wrote that "the desires of the majority of people are often for injustice and inhumanity against the minority." In the 1830s,

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40. Sickels, *Race, Marriage, and the Law*, 64; Charles D. Lowery and John F. Marszalek, eds., *Encyclopedia of African-American Civil Rights: From Emancipation to the Present* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 326.

41. Tragen, "Statutory Prohibitions Against Interracial Marriages," 277n39 (2nd para.).

42. Same-sex unions have recently gained legal recognition in several countries. For example, "Two Swedish Men Marry under New Gay Law," *San Jose Mercury News*, 3 January 1995, D-1. As of 1998, Denmark, Greenland, Hungary, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden were "Countries with National Same-Sex Partnership Legislation," while Australia, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Honduras, Netherlands, New Zealand, Slovenia, Spain, and Switzerland were "Countries Progressing toward Same-Sex Partnership Legislation." (See Leslie Goransson, "International Trends in Same-Sex Marriage," in *On the Road To Same-Sex Marriage*, eds. Robert P. Cabaj and David W. Purcell [San Francisco: Josey-Bass Publishers, 1998], 167-84.) BYU's library has a copy of this book, and in 1999 the LDS church began its Prop. 22 campaign to prevent California from accepting these legally performed marriages. Several more countries have now legalized same-sex unions. In September 2000, the Netherlands gave same-sex couples the full legal status of marriage within Holland, rather than the previous Dutch option of legally registering same-sex "partnerships." In this regard, Robert Williams has observed: "Expanding the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples as well as opposite sex couples is a far better solution than creating a separate entity for the blessing of gay/lesbian relationships. . . . When the issue is one of social justice—and given the Church's key role historically in promoting homophobia, any issue dealing with lesbian/gay issues in the Christian church is a social issue—we should be reminded of a lesson we hopefully learned in the black civil rights struggles of the sixties: the notion of 'separate but equal' inevitably creates *unequal* institutions" ("Toward a Theology for Lesbian and Gay Marriage," 137). See also statements in text quoted for note 167, as well as discussion within note 170.

Alexis de Tocqueville called this "the tyranny of the majority" in American democracy.<sup>43</sup>

In historical perspective, Jews and African-Americans were not the only groups denied free access to marriage. Such laws also targeted other minorities. In 1901, California prohibited intermarriage with Asians. In 1919, South Dakota specifically targeted Koreans, and in 1933, California added Malaysians to its list of prohibited marriages.<sup>44</sup> While America was defending freedom during World War II, there were laws against marrying Asians in fourteen states of the South, Midwest, and West, including Mormon-dominated Utah.<sup>45</sup>

Chieko N. Okazaki (a Japanese-American resident of Salt Lake City since 1951 and a recent counselor in the LDS church's Relief Society general presidency) has written: "A Japanese person could not be sealed to a Caucasian in the Salt Lake Temple at that time because of state law."<sup>46</sup> Utah also prohibited marriage between Chinese and African-Americans.<sup>47</sup> As a recent analysis observes: "State laws even interfered with the basic family relationships of Asian Americans."<sup>48</sup>

During this time, it was also illegal for American Indians to marry whites in Arizona, Nevada, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia.<sup>49</sup> As late as 1962, North Carolina prohibited a Cherokee woman from marrying a white man. Until 1966, Maryland actively prevented Polynesians and Filipinos from marrying whites.<sup>50</sup>

Whether targeting Jews, African-Americans, Asians, Native American tribes, or Pacific Islanders, the proponents of these marriage restrictions argued that such laws were necessary for racial "purity" or to protect society.<sup>51</sup> Only with regard to Mormons did the advocates of

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43. James Madison's speech to Virginia's constitutional convention (2 December 1829); John Adams, *Defence of the Constitution of the Government of the United States* (1787-88); Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835); all in *Political Quotations*, ed. Daniel B. Baker (Detroit, Mich.: Gale Research, 1990), 138 (nos. 2284, 2281), 139 (no. 2288).

44. Tragen, "Statutory Prohibitions Against Interracial Marriages," 271, 272n16.

45. Tragen, "Statutory Prohibitions Against Interracial Marriages," 271n9 (for Arizona, California, Georgia, Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, and Wyoming).

46. Chieko N. Okazaki, *Cat's Cradle* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993), 59. See also "Interviews with Japanese Americans in Utah: Tapes and Transcripts, 1984-1988," Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City; Ted Nagata, ed., *Japanese Americans in Utah* (Salt Lake City: JA Centennial Committee, 1996).

47. "Woman of Mixed Blood Desirous of Marrying a Chinaman—License Refused," *Deseret Evening News*, 16 Sept. 1898, 2.

48. Angelo N. Ancheta, *Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1998), 30.

49. Tragen, "Statutory Prohibitions Against Interracial Marriages," 271n10.

50. Sickels, *Race, Marriage, and the Law*, 71, 74.

51. Sickels, *Race, Marriage, and the Law*; "Miscegenation and Intermarriage," in *Encyclo-*

repressive legislation argue that restrictions were necessary to protect *marriage itself*.

#### MORMON POLYGAMY AS A THREAT TO TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE

In the nineteenth century, Mormon men married multiple wives with official endorsement by the LDS church. Besides passing laws specifically aimed at Mormon marriage and then arresting thousands of polygamists, the U.S. government also punished the LDS church by disincorporating it and confiscating its financial assets. Congress also disfranchised Utah's women and prepared to deprive all LDS church members of the right to vote, hold public office, serve on juries, immigrate to the U.S., or become naturalized citizens.<sup>52</sup> From the 1860s to the early 1900s, government leaders and Protestant ministers argued that they were protecting the family and "the institution of marriage" by legally preventing Mormons from marrying as they might choose. For example, a Massachusetts minister said that Mormon polygamy must be prevented because "the whole question of the family is wrapped up in it." Federal officials claimed that this non-traditional form of marriage was a direct attack on the family.<sup>53</sup> As the *San Francisco Chronicle* recently noted, "The most notorious sexual outlaws in American history are not today's gay rights crusaders, but the founding fathers of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or the Mormon church."<sup>54</sup>

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*pedia of African-American Culture and History*, eds., Jack Salzman, David Lionel Smith, and Cornel West, 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan Library Reference USA/Simon & Schuster, 1996), 4:1813-14.

52. Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958), 353-79; Joseph H. Groberg, "The Mormon Disfranchisements of 1882 to 1892," *BYU Studies* 16 (Spring 1976): 399-408; Robert G. Dyer, "The Evolution of Social and Judicial Attitudes Toward Polygamy," *Utah State Bar Journal* 5 (Spring 1977): 35-45; Rosa Mae McClellan Evans, "Judicial Prosecution of Prisoners for LDS Plural Marriage: Prison Sentences, 1884-1895," master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1986; Ken Driggs, "The Prosecutions Begin: Defining Cohabitation in 1885," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21 (Spring 1988): 109-21; Ray Jay Davis, "Antipolygamy Legislation," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism: The History, Scripture, Doctrine, and Procedure of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:52-53; Tracey E. Panek, "Search and Seizure in Utah: Recounting the Antipolygamy Raids," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 62 (Fall 1994): 316-34; Sarah Barringer Gordon, "The Twin Relic of Barbarism: A Legal History of Anti-Polygamy in Nineteenth-Century America," Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1994.

53. B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1992), 41, 60. See also Joan Smyth Iversen, "A Debate On the American Home: The Anti-Polygamy Controversy, 1880-1890," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1 (Apr. 1991): 585-602.

54. "Mormon Church: The Powerful Force Behind Proposition 22," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 February 2000.



Ironically, in the nineteenth century, Mormons argued that the traditional marriages of the majority were not threatened by allowing a small minority to marry differently.<sup>55</sup> This plea was as rational then as it is now.

#### SOCIAL HYSTERIA

Is "social hysteria" an appropriate term for the attitudes and actions of white Americans against blacks and interracial marriage? Historians have cited "full scale white hysteria about black male sexuality" to explain the lynching of thousands of African-American men for merely looking at a white woman.<sup>56</sup>

This was also evident in Salt Lake City, where a warning to "meddle not with white women" was pinned to the flesh of a murdered black man in 1866. LDS apostle Brigham Young, Jr., referred to the murdered man as "a nigger."<sup>57</sup> This occurred three years after his father had publicly informed the Mormons that if African-Americans had relations with white

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55. Gary James Bergera, ed., *The Autobiography of B. H. Roberts* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 215. See also Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*.

56. "Miscegenation and Inter-marriage," 4:1814. Lynchings of newly emancipated slaves began after the defeat of the South in 1865, but no statistics were kept until 1882. From 1882 to 1968, there were 4,742 recorded lynchings, up to 90 percent of whom were African-Americans ("Lynching," *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, 3:1670).

57. Brigham Young, Jr., diary, 11 Dec. 1866, Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter LDS archives); "Recent Murder," *Daily Union Vedette* (Salt Lake City), 13 December 1866, 3; both quotes found in Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 256, 539n202. See also John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans*, 7th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994), 296, on the "insulting" designations of "nigger," "coon," and "darkies." Compare with uses of "nigger" in the following: Brigham Young's statement of 29 May 1847, quoted by Newell G. Bringham, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks: The Changing Place of Black People within Mormonism* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), 98; *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: Latter-day Saints Book Depot, 1854-86), 4:39 (B. Young/1856), 5:121 (B. Young/1857), 5:119 (J. Taylor/1857), 5:157 (J. Taylor/1857); "How to Impress Niggers," *Deseret News* [weekly], 22 February 1860, 403; Salt Lake stake high council minutes, 9 October 1889 ("The man was about 1/6 [sic] Nigger from his appearance"), LDS archives; Abraham Owen Woodruff diary, 6 March 1902, LDS archives (photocopy of this apostle's diary also in Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah); "SOCIAL HALL THEATRE," *Deseret Evening News*, 22 March 1919, sec. 3, IV (laudatory review of the play, "The Nigger"). See also examples in Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 256, 755 (app. 5, entry for 9 August 1857), 759 (app. 5, entry for 22 February 1860), 764 (app. 5, entry for 11 December 1866), 782 (app. 5, entry for 26 August 1883), 790 (app. 5, entry for 9 October 1889), 804 (app. 5, entry for 6 March 1902), 816 (app. 5, entry for 22 March 1919). All sermons published in *Journal of Discourses* (1854-86) are also available in *New Mormon Studies CD-ROM: A Comprehensive Resource Library* ([San Francisco]: Smith Research Associates, 1998), which has phrase-search capability.

women, "the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot."<sup>58</sup> President Young's published sermon gave official encouragement for Mormons to kill black men, and I believe that he was morally responsible for this 1866 murder.

Likewise, in an 1881 sermon on Salt Lake's Temple Square, Southern States Mission President John Morgan spoke approvingly of hanging Negro males "to a lamp-post" for "impudence." This appeared in the officially published *Deseret News* and *Journal of Discourses*, and Morgan became an LDS general authority a year after a Salt Lake City mob lynched an African-American male on a lamp-post in 1883 for killing an LDS bishop.<sup>59</sup> Apostle Heber J. Grant wrote that "the citizens" hanged "the nigger."<sup>60</sup>

A similar kind of social hysteria propelled the popular campaign against Mormon polygamy. For example, claiming that they were defending the family, seven million Americans signed petitions for the U.S. House of Representatives to exclude Brigham H. Roberts from his elected office in 1900, solely because he was a Mormon polygamist.<sup>61</sup> Historians view the anti-polygamy campaign of the 1860s to the early 1900s as a hysteric reaction of Victorian America against a tiny minority who advocated non-traditional marriage.<sup>62</sup>

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58. "REMARKS by President BRIGHAM YOUNG, Tabernacle, March 8, 1863," *Deseret News* [weekly], 18 March 1863, 298; reprinted in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:110 (B. Young/1863). See also note 128.

59. *Journal of Discourses*, 23:43 (J. Morgan/1881), reprinted from the *Deseret News*. See also Larry R. Gerlach, "Vengeance vs. the Law: The Lynching of Sam Joe Harvey in Salt Lake City," in *Community Development in the American West: Past and Present, Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Frontiers*, eds., Jessie L. Embry and Howard A. Christy (Provo: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University, 1985), 204-14; Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 259 (for quotes and sources about the 1883 lynching of Harvey for killing a Mormon bishop, after which a crowd of at least 2,000 cheered those who dragged this African-American's corpse through the streets of Salt Lake City), 675 (for biographical sketch of general authority John Morgan). See also note 128.

60. Heber J. Grant journal, 26 August 1883, LDS archives.

61. Brigham H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1930), 6:636-68; Robert H. Malen, *B. H. Roberts: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 68-77; R. Davis Bitton, "The B. H. Roberts Case of 1898-1900," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 25 (January 1957): 27-46; Alan Elmo Haynes, "Brigham Henry Roberts and Reed Smoot: Significant Events in the Development of American Pluralism," master's thesis, Catholic University of America, 1966, iii-38; William Griffith White, Jr., "The Feminist Campaign for the Exclusion of Brigham Henry Roberts from the Fifty-Sixth Congress," *Journal of the West* 17 (January 1978): 45-52; Truman G. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith: The B.H. Roberts Story* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 241-68; Bergera, *Autobiography of B. H. Roberts*, 212-19; Davis Bitton, "The Exclusion of B. H. Roberts from Congress," in Bitton, *The Ritualization of Mormon History and Other Essays* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1994), 150-70.

62. Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 39-126; M. Paul Holsinger, "For God and the American

## TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE THREATENED?

Would "social hysteria" also be an appropriate term to describe current claims that the existence of heterosexual marriage is threatened by allowing same-sex marriages? I believe so, particularly since various non-western cultures (including more than one hundred Native American tribes) have sanctioned same-sex marriages for centuries, and perhaps even millennia. Anthropologists have observed that many of these cultures have given same-sex marriages the same status as heterosexual marriages.<sup>63</sup> Traditional marriage didn't decline in these cultures, but bigotry did.<sup>64</sup> Likewise, during early medieval times, the Catholic Church performed unions for same-sex friends who seemed to be given

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Home: The Attempt to Unseat Senator Reed Smoot, 1903-1907," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 60 (July 1969): 154-60; Charles A. Cannon, "The Awesome Power of Sex: The Polemical Campaign against Mormon Polygamy," *Pacific Historical Review* 43 (February 1974): 61-82; Terryl L. Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormon Myths and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), which adopted its title from the anti-Mormon and anti-polygamy article by Alfred H. Lewis, "The Viper on the Hearth," *Cosmopolitan Magazine* 50 (March 1911): 439-50

63. For samples from an extensive literature, see George H. Von Langsdorff, *Voyages and Travels in Various Parts of the World during the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806, and 1807*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1813-14), 2:47-48, 64; Waldemar Bogoras, "The Chukchee," *Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History* 11 (1904-09): 449-57; A. Bernard Deacon, *Malekula: A Vanishing People in the New Hebrides* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1934), 260-61, 267; George Devereaux, "Institutionalized Homosexuality of the Mohave Indians," *Human Biology* 9 (December 1937): 498-527; Niel Gunson, "Great Women and Friendship Contract Rites in Pre-Christian Tahiti," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 73 (March 1964): 66; E.E. Evans-Pritchard, "Sexual Inversion among the Azande," *American Anthropologist* 72 (December 1970): 1428-29; Eileen Jensen Krige, "Woman-Marriage, with Special Reference to the Lovendu: Its Significance for the Definition of Marriage," *Africa* 44 (January 1974): 11-37, esp. 25, 34; Denise O'Brien, "Female Husbands in Southern Bantu Societies," in *Sexual Stratification: A Cross Cultural View*, ed. Alice Schlegel (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1977), 109; Regina Smith Oboler, "Is the Female Husband a Man?: Woman/Woman Marriage among the Nandi of Kenya," *Ethnology* 9 (January 1980): 69-88, esp. 69; Harriet Whitehead, "The Bow and the Burden Strap: A New Look at Institutionalized Homosexuality in Native North America," in *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality*, eds. Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), 80-115; Charles Calender and Lee M. Kochems, "The North American Berdache," *Current Anthropology* 24 (August-October 1983): esp. 445 (list of 113 tribes); Andrea Sankar, "Sisters and Brothers, Lovers and Enemies: Marriage Resistance in Southern Kwangtung," *Journal of Homosexuality* 11 (Summer 1985): 69-81; Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society* (London: Zed Books, 1987); Bret Hinsch, *Passions of the Cut Sleeve: The Male Homosexual Tradition in China* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990), 127-33; Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe, eds., *Boy-Wives and Female-Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

64. While it is admittedly too early to comment about long-term effects on heterosexual marriage and on "traditional families" (allegedly the primary concern of Americans

the status of marriage. The Eastern Orthodox Church continued performing same-sex unions until the 1500s. Heterosexual marriages neither declined nor suffered by the co-existence of these same-sex unions in early Christianity.<sup>65</sup>

It does not make sense to blame the small number of homosexuals for the problems of heterosexual marriage. If there are declines in the rate and quality of heterosexual marriage, it is the fault of heterosexuals, who comprise at least 90 percent of the population.

Nearly twenty years ago, a Roman Catholic task force astutely observed: "In contemporary America, family has become a shibboleth of internal national security. . .with homosexuality as the scapegoat."<sup>66</sup> Likewise, the BYU Religious Studies Center in 1988 published a woman's essay which commented on the lack of "legalized marriage" for "those homosexual men and women who wish to maintain an on-going, monogamous same-sex relationship." She then asked: "Why should an expanded definition of family, which makes room for many more categories of persons who are longing for closeness, be considered threatening and harmful to family life?"<sup>67</sup> In 1999, BYU sociology professor Tim B. Heaton observed, "The legitimization of same-sex relationships has been viewed by some as a major threat to the family. I have yet to see compelling evidence for this claim."<sup>68</sup>

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who oppose legal unions for homosexuals), during recent years same-sex unions have gained legal recognition in several European countries. See note 42.

65. John Boswell, *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe* (New York: Villard/Random House, 1994), 291-336, for standardized texts of the church's ceremonies for same-sex unions from the tenth century to the sixteenth century.

66. *Homosexuality and Social Justice: Report of the Task Force on Gay/Lesbian Issues*, July 1982 (San Francisco: Commission of Social Justice, Archdiocese of San Francisco, 1982), 59. See also Don S. Browning, et al., *From Culture Wars to Common Ground: Religion and the American Family Debate* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997). As an example of the Armageddon-like sense of doom with which current Mormons regard "the family" and their belief that the LDS church is the world's best hope for saving "traditional marriage," see the official statement of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign* 25 (Nov. 1995). See also Ester Rasband and Richard Wilkins, *A Sacred Duty* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1999), subtitled on the dustjacket: "The true account of a BYU law professor's journey to defend the world's families." Gay rights and same-sex marriage are undercurrents in the LDS hierarchy's joint "proclamation" and throughout most of Wilkins's personal narrative. Compare with statements quoted for notes 67 and 68.

67. Letha Dawson Scanzoni, "Contemporary Challenges for Religion and the Family from a Protestant Woman's Point of View," in *The Religion and Family Connection: Social Science Perspectives*, ed. Darwin L. Thomas (Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1988), 129.

68. Tim B. Heaton, "Social Forces That Imperil the Family," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 32 (Winter 1999): 26.

## MARRIAGE AS A CIVIL RIGHT

Is full access to marriage a civil right for American minorities? Not according to the thirty-eight state legislatures which passed miscegenation laws against various races and ethnic minorities prior to 1967.<sup>69</sup> Likewise, is non-traditional marriage a civil right for a despised minority? Not according to Congress which passed several laws against Mormon polygamy from 1862 onward, nor according to the U.S. Supreme Court which validated these laws from 1879 to 1890.<sup>70</sup>

Yet African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Polynesians, and Mormons all clearly felt that these marriage exclusions denied them a civil right. For this reason, Georgia's African-American congressman John Lewis made the following observation about prohibiting same-sex marriage: "I have known racism. I have known bigotry. This bill stinks of the same fear, hatred and intolerance. It should not be called the Defense of Marriage Act. It should be called the defense of mean-spirited bigots act."<sup>71</sup>

Nevertheless, in the topsy-turvy mind-set of bigotry, racial segregationists accused African-Americans of "prejudice" and "bigotry" for condemning segregation as "racist,"<sup>72</sup> just as opponents of same-sex marriage now accuse gays and lesbians of "intolerance" and "bigotry" for condemning Defense of Marriage laws as "homophobic."<sup>73</sup> Regarding civil discrimination generally, one author has observed: "In cases of

69. Sickels, *Race, Marriage, and the Law*, 64.

70. Orma Linford, "The Mormons and the Law: The Polygamy Cases," *Utah Law Review* 9 (Winter 1964/Summer 1965): 308-70, 543-91; James L. Clayton, "The Supreme Court, Polygamy, and the Enforcement of Morals in Nineteenth Century America: An Analysis of Reynolds v. United States," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 12 (Winter 1979): 46-61; Edwin B. Firmage, "The Judicial Campaign Against Polygamy and the Enduring Legal Questions," *BYU Studies* 27 (Summer 1987): 91-117; Firmage and R. Collin Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts: A Legal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1988), 160-260; Davis, "Antipolygamy Legislation."

71. Statement made during the congressional debates about the national Defense of Marriage Act in the *Congressional Record*, as quoted in Kevin H. Lewis, "Equal Protection after *Romer v. Evans*," 175n2. See also biographical sketch of Congressman John Lewis in Salzman, Smith, and West, *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, 4:1608.

72. For example William D. Workman, Jr., *The Case for the South* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1960).

73. For example Timothy R. DeBeaumont, Sr., "Don't Be Intolerant: Vote Yes on Prop. 22," *Daily Bulletin* (Ontario, Calif.), 28 February 2000, and "Opposition to 22 Based on Bigotry," *Daily Bulletin*, 3 March 2000. The LDS church also gave all its high school seminary students in California a handout entitled, "Some Ideas to Help Explain Our Support of Proposition 22," which concluded: "When they attack us saying that we are intolerant or bigoted, ask yourself, 'Who is being mean-spirited?' 'Who is being intolerant?' They should also be tolerant of our values" (also referred to in Combe, "Proposition 22, California, and the Mormon Church"). As an example of this attitude among Utah's conservative

civilized oppression the victims may have to face not only the suppression of protest but also dangerous misdescriptions of the overall situation."<sup>74</sup>

For example, one argument used to incite fear against same-sex marriage is the warning that its legalization would result in ministers being "forced to perform same-sex marriages."<sup>75</sup> This statement appeared in a brochure issued in 1999 by LDS headquarters which said that "if DOMA fails in California" an "obvious" consequence will be "civil penalties for churches who refuse to perform gay marriages." However, in March 1995, the Circuit Court of Hawaii ruled that this was a false claim in the LDS church's petition to the Hawaii court.<sup>76</sup> State licensing law permits churches to perform civil marriages but does not *require* them to do so.

Both ministers and lawyers knew this for decades before the controversy about same-sex marriage. In the years since the Supreme Court legalized all interracial marriages in 1967, no minister has been "forced" to perform an interracial marriage, either in the South or elsewhere. Likewise, although interfaith marriages have always been legal in the United States, Roman Catholic priests and orthodox Jewish rabbis have traditionally refused to perform such marriages. LDS bishops have never

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academics, as well as among some of its "liberal" professors, see Bryce J. Christensen, who wrote: "Even 'the love that dare not speak its name' (Oscar Wilde's famous characterization of homosexuality) has come out of the closet, militantly accusing all its foes of 'homophobia'" ("Love in the Ruins?: The Future of Marriage in Modern America," in *Charting A New Millennium: The Latter-day Saints in the Coming Century*, eds. Maureen Proctor and Scot Proctor [Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1998], 208).

74. J. Harvey, *Civilized Oppression* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 79.

75. "As a minister, without support of Proposition 22, others and I could, in the future, be forced to perform same-sex marriages" (DeBeaumont, "Don't Be Intolerant: Vote Yes on Prop. 22").

76. For LDS brochure issued in California, see "Defense of Marriage Act: An Initiative," with answers to five questions, referred to in Combe, "Proposition 22, California, and the Mormon Church." Compare with the same argument in "Church Joins Hawaii Fight over Same-Sex Marriages," *Deseret News*, 24 February 1995, A-2, and with contrary decision in "Judge Bars LDS Church from Same-Sex Lawsuit," *Deseret News*, 29 March 1995, B-1. See also Crapo, "Mormon/LDS Chronology of Involvement In Same-Sex Marriage Politics," entries for February/March 1995 and March 1995.

Another example of the hysteric, misleading homophobia in publications aimed at the LDS rank-and-file is John L. Harmer, *A War We Must Win: A Frontline Account of the Battle Against the Pornography Conspiracy* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1999). In his argument against legalizing same-sex marriage on page 88, Harmer writes against the "right" of any parent "to bring the children from a previously heterosexual union into a homosexual one" because of "the *very probable* use of the child in pedophilia, or the sexual abuse of children of either sex" (emphasis added). This statement is not substantiated by any of Harmer's source-citations, nor by any statistical study of children who have been raised by lesbian couples or by gay male couples.

been legally required to perform a marriage for a non-Mormon. Although licensed by the state to perform civil marriage, ministers have always had the right to refuse any person for any reason.

#### THE MORALITY ARGUMENT AND SELECTIVE MEMORY

LDS president Hinckley proclaimed in October 1999: "Some portray legalization of so-called same-sex marriage as a civil right. This is not a matter of civil rights; it is a matter of morality."<sup>77</sup> Yet "morality" was also the principal argument of America's vast majority for legally prohibiting polygamy, or what BYU professor Brent A. Barlow once called Mormonism's "alternative family lifestyle."<sup>78</sup>

Public morality was also the Mormon argument in April 1836 against the marriage of whites with African-Americans. An editorial in the official LDS magazine at Kirtland, Ohio, proclaimed: ". . . and low indeed must be the mind, that would consent for a moment, to see his fair daughter, his sister, or perhaps, his bosom companion in the embrace of a NEGRO!"<sup>79</sup> This had nothing to do with Utah Mormonism's decades-later policy of denying priesthood ordination to African-Americans.<sup>80</sup> In fact, a month before this editorial, Mormon founder Joseph Smith had

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77. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Why We Do Some of the Things We Do," 54. Compare with his statement quoted for note 157. See also the University of Utah student editorial on President Hinckley's conference talk in "LDS Church Leaders Are Hypocrites," *Daily Utah Chronicle*, 13 October 1999: "Several of today's arguments against same-sex marriages and unions ('It's against God's will' or 'It's morally wrong') are startlingly similar to ones used against interracial marriage in the late '60s when the United States Supreme Court ruled several states' interracial marriage-ban laws unconstitutional."

78. For anti-polygamy citations, see note 62. "Alternative lifestyle" was the most common 1970s reference to homosexuality, but see Rosemary Jacobson and Brent A. Barlow, "Alternative Family Lifestyles: Mormon Polygamy," videocassette, Department of Human Development, Family Living and Community Educational Service, University of Wisconsin-Stout, 1976, cited in the computerized WorldCat of 40 million published titles and archived manuscripts on the internet.

As an example of the many double-think reversals in the LDS campaign against same-sex marriage, Barlow was one of the professors in "3 BYU Professors Sign Paper Upholding Traditional Marriage," *Deseret News*, 14 July 2000.

79. "The Abolitionists," *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2 (April 1836), 300.

80. Manuscript versions of discourse by Brigham Young, 5 February 1852, in Young papers, LDS archives, and in Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 4:97; published and quoted in Matthias F. Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff: His Life and Labors* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1909), 351; Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection* (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1931), 106; Daniel H. Ludlow, *Latter-day Prophets Speak* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft 1942), 204; Lester E. Bush, Jr., "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8 (Spring 1973): 26; Ronald K. Esplin, "Brigham Young and Priesthood Denial to the Blacks: An Alternative View," *BYU Studies* 19 (Spring 1979): 400-01; Brighurst, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks*, 124-25.



authorized the ordination of free black Elijah Abel as an elder in Kirtland, and to the priesthood office of Seventy eight months after it.<sup>81</sup> This LDS editorial (apparently written by Associate President Oliver Cowdery)<sup>82</sup> simply reflected the prevailing bigotry of America. George Santayana was only partly right when he said: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."<sup>83</sup> The African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Jews, Mormons, Native American Indians, and Polynesian-Americans who now oppose the legalization of same-sex unions are re-living their persecuted past in a different way—this time as the persecutors claiming to protect society while denying a despised minority the choice of marriage partners. However, of all those currently promoting laws against same-sex marriage, only the Mormons have adopted the same argument used by their former persecutors. The target has changed to gays and lesbians, but the pattern is the same.

#### THE ROLE OF CHURCHES IN RESTRICTING CIVIL RIGHTS

Because various churches have actively campaigned against the legalization of marriage for gays and lesbians, a related question is the historic role of churches in denying civil rights to minorities. For example, the Protestant and Catholic churches of the South led the pro-slavery rhetoric before the American Civil War. In fact, Protestant clergy, Catholic priests, Catholic bishops, and members of the Jesuit order even

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81. Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saints Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News/Andrew Jenson Historical, 1901-36), 3:577; Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1830-1972), 31 May 1879, 246 reels, microfilm, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah; Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine," 16-21; Newell G. Bringhurst, "Elijah Abel and the Changing Status of Blacks Within Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 12 (Summer 1979): 23-36; Bringhurst, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks*, 37-38; entry for "Mormons," in Salzman, Smith, and West, *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, 4:1854-55.

82. Although "Associate President" is a term unfamiliar to most current Mormons, it is the conventional way of describing the joint role of presiding over the LDS church (with founding prophet Joseph Smith) which Oliver Cowdery held from 1834 to 1837 and which Hyrum Smith held from 1841 to 1844. See Joseph Fielding Smith, "The Divine Law of Witnesses," *Deseret News Church Section*, 8 April 1939, 6, 8; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), 53; Joseph Fielding Smith, "Forward," in Pearson H. Corbett, *Hyrum Smith, Patriarch* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1963), xiii-xv; Robert Glen Mouritsen, "The Office of Associate President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1972, 33-112; Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Cowdery, Oliver," in Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 1:338; Quinn, *Origins of Power*, 44-45, 47, 52, 56, 189, 622 (app. 7, entry for 5 December 1834), 631 (app. 7, entry for 19 January 1841), 645 (app. 7, entry for 15 June 1844).

83. James B. Simpson, *Simpson's Contemporary Quotations: The Most Notable Quotes From 1950 to the Present* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), 387, no. 7306.

owned African-American slaves.<sup>84</sup> Southern white churches also supported racial segregation in the American South afterwards.<sup>85</sup> During the same time, the South African Dutch Reformed Church and the Rhodesian Anglican Church supported race-segregation by the white supremacist governments in their respective countries, either actively or by silence.<sup>86</sup> Likewise, the Roman Catholic Church was allied with repressive

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84. Robert A. Baker, *The Southern Baptist Convention and Its People, 1607-1972* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1974), 158-59, 227; John Francis Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church: The History of Catholic Teaching Concerning the Moral Legitimacy of the Institution of Slavery* (Chichester and London: Barry Rose Publishers, 1975), 110-15; Lester B. Scherer, *Slavery and the Churches in Early America, 1619-1819* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1975), 31-33; Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized In Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1980), 4-5, 10, 102-06 (for pro-slavery rhetoric after the Civil War); A. V. Huff, Jr., "Methodist Church," Randall M. Miller, "Roman Catholic Church (in the South)," and Thomas Virgil Peterson, "Slavery," in *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South*, ed. Samuel S. Hill (Macon, Ga.: Mercer Univ. Press, 1984), 468, 654, 694-95; David T. Bailey, *Shadow on the Church: Southwestern Evangelical Religion and the Issue of Slavery, 1783-1860* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985); John B. Boles, *Masters & Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870* (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1988), 9, 68, 100, 121-22, 128-31 (for pro-slavery rhetoric and actions), 12-13, 51, 81, 83, 85, 89, 95, 135, 144, 151 (for pre-1865 segregation within churches); Kenneth J. Zanca, comp. and ed., *American Catholics and Slavery, 1789-1866: An Anthology of Primary Documents* (Lanham, Md.: Univ. Press of America, 1994), 110-11, 127-29, 153-56, 159-62, 171, 191-99, 201-13, 217-20, 235-38.

85. Dwight W. Culver, *Negro Segregation in the Methodist Church* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1953); Kenneth K. Bailey, *Southern White Protestantism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 4-7; I. A. Newby, *Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1965), 84-109; Huff, "Methodist Church," Miller, "Roman Catholic Church (in the South)," and Gaines M. Foster, "Segregation," in Hill, *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South*, 469, 654-55, 681-84; Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984), 278-79, 281-82; Ralph McGill, *No Place to Hide: The South and Human Rights*, 2 vols. (Macon, Ga.: Mercer Univ. Press, 1984), 1:511-13.

86. Susan Rennie Ritner, "The Dutch Reformed Church and Apartheid," *Journal of Contemporary History* 2 (October 1967): 17-37; Alan Paton, "Church and State in South Africa," *Christianity and Crisis* 34 (30 September 1974): 205-07; Leonard T. Kapungu, *Rhodesia: The Struggle for Freedom* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1974), 90; Norman E. Thomas, ed., *Rise Up & Walk: The Autobiography of Bishop Abel Tendekai Muzorewa* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1978), 44, 57, 68; Enda McDonagh, *Church and Politics: From Theology to a Case History of Zimbabwe* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1980), 94-95; Marjorie Hope and James Young, *The South African Churches in a Revolutionary Situation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1981), 45-48; Chris Loff, "The History of a Heresy," and David Bosch, "Nothing But a Heresy," in *Apartheid Is a Heresy*, eds. John de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio (Capetown, South Africa: David Philip, 1983; Guildford, Eng.: Lutterworth Press, 1983), 10-23, 30-35; Brian M. DuToit, "Missionaries, Anthropologists, and the Policies of the Dutch Reformed Church," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 22 (December 1984): 617-20, 623-30; Zolile Mbali, *The Churches and Racism: A Black South African Perspective* (London: SCM Press, 1987), 41-43, 80-91; Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Trapped in Apartheid: A Socio-Theological History of the English-Speaking Churches* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988; Capetown, South Africa: David Philip, 1988), 22-24, 145-50.

regimes in Germany and Latin America.<sup>87</sup> In such instances, the religious leaders sincerely and devoutly regarded the suppression of minorities as part of a divinely approved *status quo*.

#### UTAH MORMON DISCRIMINATION AGAINST BLACKS

Even after federal emancipation of America's slaves in the 1860s, LDS church president Brigham Young referred to African-American slavery as a religious necessity.<sup>88</sup> Earlier, as both church president and governor, he had instructed the Utah legislature in 1852 to legalize the slavery of African-Americans.<sup>89</sup> This directly contradicted Joseph Smith's proposal in 1844 "to abolish slavery by the year 1850" by financially compensating Southern slave-owners through the sale of federal lands in the West.<sup>90</sup> Utah Mormonism's reversal of Joseph Smith's social policy toward Negroes was mirrored by the refusal of LDS presidents after 1844 to follow the founding prophet's example of giving the priesthood to blacks who were not slaves.<sup>91</sup>

For more than a century, Utah restricted African-Americans from patronizing white restaurants and hotels, prohibited them from public swimming pools, and required them to sit in the balconies of theaters.<sup>92</sup>

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87. Guenter Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 37-56, 94-112, 176-242, 309-13; Emilio F. Mignone, *Witness To the Truth: The Complicity of Church and Dictatorship in Argentina, 1976-1983*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988).

88. *Journal of Discourses*, 10:250 (B. Young/1863). See also Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 762, for context.

89. Jack Beller, "Negro Slaves in Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 3 (October 1929): 122-26; Roldo V. Dutson, "A Study of the Attitude of the Latter-day Saint Church in the Territory of Utah Toward Slavery As It Pertained to the Indian As Well As To the Negro From 1847 to 1865," master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1964; Dennis L. Lythgoe, "Negro Slavery in Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 39 (Winter 1971): 40-54; Ronald Gerald Coleman, "A History of Blacks in Utah, 1825-1910," Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1980; Bringhamurst, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks*; Ronald G. Coleman, "Blacks in Utah History: An Unknown Legacy," in *The Peoples of Utah*, ed. Helen Z. Papanikolas (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1976), 116-20; Ronald G. Coleman, "African Americans in Utah," in *Utah History Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan Kent Powell (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1994), 2.

90. *History of the Church*, 6:205.

91. See note 81. See also First Presidency statements in John J. Stewart, *Mormonism and the Negro: An Explanation and Defense of the Doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints In Regard to Negroes and Others of Negroid Blood* (Orem, Utah: Bookmark/Community Press Publishing, 1964).

92. Armand L. Mauss, "Mormonism and Secular Attitudes Toward Negroes," *Pacific Sociological Review* 9 (Fall 1966): 91-99; David Leslie Brewer, "Utah Elites and Utah Racial Norms," Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1966; Margaret Judy Maag, "Discrimination Against the Negro in Utah and Institutional Efforts to Eliminate It," master's thesis, University of Utah, 1971; Douglas Monty Trank, "A Rhetorical Analysis of the Rhetoric

During World War II, African-Americans wearing their nation's uniform had to sit in the balcony of Utah theaters, while German prisoners-of-war sat on the main floor with white servicemen and civilians.<sup>93</sup> Utah law also prohibited marriage between a white person and a black (including persons only one-eighth Negro).<sup>94</sup>

Utah's racial discrimination did not occur by happenstance nor did it continue into modern times by accident. It was promoted by the highest leaders of the state's dominant church. As late as 1941, Counselor J. Reuben Clark used the word "nigger" in his First Presidency office diary.<sup>95</sup> In 1944, the First Presidency authorized local LDS leaders to join "*as individuals* a civic organization whose purpose is to restrict and control negro settlement" in Salt Lake City.<sup>96</sup> A year later, LDS president George Albert Smith wrote: "Talked to Pres Clark & Nicholas [G. Smith, an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles] about the use of [LDS] meeting houses for meetings to prevent Negroes from becoming neighbors."<sup>97</sup> The church president's diary did not indicate whether he endorsed or opposed this activity, but his brother Nicholas G. Smith described it as "race hatred."<sup>98</sup>

President Smith's counselors soon extended their support of racial segregation to states beyond Utah. In 1947, when discussing the site of the future Los Angeles temple, Counselor Clark asked the LDS church's attorney in that area "to purchase as much of that property as we can in order to control the colored situation."<sup>99</sup> A month later, during the meet-

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Emerging from the Mormon-Black Controversy," Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1973; "Interviews with Blacks in Utah, 1982-88," Marriott Library, Special Collections, University of Utah.

93. "Stepping Back?: The Racial Situation in Utah's Homogenous Culture Today Is Threatening To Minorities," *Deseret News*, 23 February 1997, B-1.

94. Wallace R. Bennett, "The Negro in Utah," *Utah Law Review* 3 (Spring 1953): 340-41, 347; Utah, *Utah Code Annotated* (1953), Replacement Volume 3, Title 30-1-2.2.

95. J. Reuben Clark office diary, 5 November 1941, Clark papers, Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

96. J. Reuben Clark office diary, 30 August 1944, emphasis in original.

97. George Albert Smith diary, 16 June 1945, George A. Smith Family papers, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

98. Nicholas G. Smith diary, 16 June 1945, microfilm, LDS archives (non-restricted). Nicholas also did not indicate whether President George Albert Smith: a) approved of using LDS chapels for meetings to promote residential segregation; or b) approved of residential segregation, but disapproved of using LDS meeting houses to promote it; or c) disapproved of any efforts to segregate African-Americans residentially. The latter option is not likely, since (as indicated in following quote) two years later George Albert Smith's first counselor, J. Reuben Clark, was trying to prevent "colored" people from living near the site of the Los Angeles Temple.

99. J. Reuben Clark to Preston D. Richards at Los Angeles, 16 September 1947, folder 17, box 376, Clark papers.

ing of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the Salt Lake Temple, "President Clark called attention to the sentiment among many people in this country to the point that we should break down all racial lines, [and] as a result of which sentiment negro people have acquired an assertiveness that they never before possessed and in some cases have become impudent."<sup>100</sup> In 1949, while criticizing the legislative efforts in Arizona to "guarantee rights of Negroes," LDS presidency counselor David O. McKay said, "The South knows how to handle them and they do not have any trouble, and the colored people are better off down there—[but] in California they are becoming very progressive and insolent in many cases."<sup>101</sup> Likewise, in 1950 Counselor

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100. Minutes of Council Meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Salt Lake Temple, 9 October 1947, folder 7, box 78, George A. Smith Family papers, Marriott Library; also in folder 15, box 5, H. Michael Marquardt papers, Marriott Library. A similar document (with entries into the 1950s) was in the Adam S. Bennion papers donated by his family to BYU's library shortly after his death in 1958. This document remained available to researchers until shortly after Lester E. Bush quoted from these minutes in his 1973 publication (see note 80). Bush has recently written: "A few months later I heard from the special collections staffer at BYU that 'Some time after your statement that you used the Bennion papers at the University, the Library was contacted in behalf of the First Presidency stating that we should not have copies of the councils' minutes and requested [that the library] send them up. . .'" (Lester Bush, "Writing 'Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview' [1973]: Context and Reflections, 1998," *Journal of Mormon History* 25 [Spring 1999]: 260). However, a transcription of this document remains available at BYU in Bush's "Compilation on the Negro in Mormonism," photocopied typescript of 386 pages (catalog number: Americana BX 8643.622/C738/1970z), Special Collections, Lee Library.

101. David O. McKay office diary, 25 Feb. 1949, LDS archives; also quoted in Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 97, 835. As late as 1967, Fawn McKay Brodie wrote that "bigotry is endemic in the Church" and commented about her uncle David O. McKay: "I know. . . something of his private prejudices and would be astonished to see him abandon them at this late date" (Brodie to Stewart L. Udall, 4 Apr. 1967, folder 3, box 209, Udall papers, Archives, University of Arizona, Tucson, quoted in F. Ross Peterson, "'Do Not Lecture the Brethren': Stewart L. Udall's Pro-Civil Rights Stance, 1967," *Journal of Mormon History* 25 [Spring 1999]: 279).

Concerning African-Americans, David O. McKay apparently said whatever he thought his listener wanted to hear. In contrast with his 1949 statement to the Arizona segregationist, he wrote the following in a 1947 letter to a Mormon who was disturbed about the LDS church's denial of priesthood to those of black African ancestry: "This is a perplexing question, particularly in the light of the present trend of civilization to grant equality to all men irrespective of race, creed, or color. . . . George Washington Carver was one of the noblest souls that ever came to earth. He held a close kinship with his heavenly Father, and rendered a service to his fellowmen such as few have ever excelled. For every righteous endeavor, for every noble impulse, for every good deed performed in his useful life George Washington Carver will be rewarded, and so will every man be he red, white, black or yellow, for God is no respecter of persons." In the first sentence of this same letter, David O. McKay referred in a noncommittal way to the current "trend of civilization to grant equality" to blacks, thus allowing his reader to think McKay agreed with it. However, the 1949

Clark wrote: "*Race tolerance*: the trend is just terrible" (emphasis in original).<sup>102</sup>

There was no mystery about why Utah law continued to prohibit interracial marriage. In 1947, the First Presidency wrote that "the intermarriage of the Negro and White races, [is] a concept which has heretofore been most repugnant to most normal-minded people from the ancient patriarchs till now."<sup>103</sup> In other words, the First Presidency condemned interracial marriage as abnormal. In 1950, Counselor Clark added that "anything that breaks down the color line leads to marriage."<sup>104</sup> Five years later, on behalf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Joseph Fielding Smith wrote to the First Presidency about African-American members of the LDS church in Utah and referred to the "danger of intermarriage."<sup>105</sup>

In 1953, a First Presidency secretary also informed a white Mormon about the less-obvious extent of Utah's racial segregation: "The L.D.S. Hospital here in Salt Lake City has a blood bank which does not contain any colored blood."<sup>106</sup> According to presidency counselor J. Reuben Clark, this policy of segregating African-American blood from the blood donated by so-called "white people" was intended "to protect the purity of the blood streams of the people of this Church."<sup>107</sup>

During this era of Utah's racial segregation, the First Presidency also repeatedly affirmed that no African-American could stay at the LDS church-owned Hotel Utah (which had maintained this exclusion since its opening in 1911). The LDS president was president of the hotel, and his counselors were its senior vice-presidents. The First Presidency explained this racial exclusion as simply "the practice of the hotel."<sup>108</sup>

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entry from his office diary showed that he actually opposed such efforts to "guarantee rights of Negroes." The full text of the 1947 letter is found in Llewelyn R. McKay, *Home Memories of President David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1956), 226-31.

102. J. Reuben Clark office diary, 8 September 1950, emphasis in original.

103. First Presidency to Lowry Nelson, 17 July 1947, quoted in Stewart, *Mormonism and the Negro*, 47, with citation information on 55n20.

104. J. Reuben Clark office diary, 24 October 1950.

105. Joseph Fielding Smith (on behalf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles) to "President David O. McKay and Counselors," 30 March 1955, Joseph Fielding Smith folder, CR 1/46, LDS archives.

106. Rowena J. Miller (secretary to J. Reuben Clark in the First Presidency's Office) to O. Boyd Mathias, 3 March 1953, folder 2, box 389, Clark papers; also quoted in Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 839.

107. J. Reuben Clark to Dr. G. Albin Matson (director of Blood Grouping Laboratory, Department of Bacteriology, University of Utah), 12 April 1948, folder 1, box 378, Clark papers; also quoted in Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 839. For the background of this blood-segregation, see D. Michael Quinn, *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years* (Provo: Brigham Young Univ. Press, 1983), 229-32.

108. Harold B. Lee diary, 29 November 1949, private possession. For members of the

Internationally renown singer Marian Anderson endured this racial discrimination in Utah. When she gave her first recital at the University of Utah's Kingsbury Hall, this African-American was denied entry to any of Salt Lake City's hotels and had to stay with one of the concert's promoters. When she returned in March 1948 to participate in a concert at the LDS church's Salt Lake Tabernacle, the First Presidency relented. America's beloved contralto "was allowed to stay at the Hotel Utah on condition that she use the freight elevator." This world-famous black woman was not allowed to use the main entrance and lobby.<sup>109</sup> Likewise, invited to speak at the University of Utah, Nobel Peace Prize recipient Ralph Bunche was allowed to stay at the LDS church's hotel in 1951 only after this black man agreed to use the freight elevator, "have his meals in his room and not come to the dining room."<sup>110</sup>

Due to their international fame, Anderson and Bunche were exceptions to the Mormon rules of race. As Hotel Utah's senior vice-president, J. Reuben Clark explained: "Since they are not entitled to the Priesthood, the Church discourages social intercourse with the negro race. . . ."

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First Presidency as the hotel's senior officers, see Leonard J. Arrington and Heidi S. Swinton, *The Hotel: Salt Lake's Classy Lady: The Hotel Utah, 1911-1986* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press/Westin Hotel, 1986), 96-97.

109. For Marian Anderson's exclusion from all of Salt Lake City's hotels during her first concert at the University of Utah's Kingsbury Hall, see "Famous Contralto Had to Use Freight Lift in Hotel Utah," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 April 1993, A-3, as related by Elva Plummer, widow of Gail Plummer, manager of Kingsbury Hall. Mrs. Plummer remembered Anderson's initial visit as being in 1937, but the first concert was apparently in 1943, as described in the university's student newspaper, "Contralto Singer Impresses With Voice, Sincerity," *Daily Utah Chronicle*, 4 March 1943, 1. Mrs. Plummer accurately remembered that the second concert, involving the restricted stay at the LDS church's hotel, occurred in 1948 ("Ave Maria' Will Be an Encore," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 19 March 1948, 18, which referred to "the Hotel Utah suite housing Marian Anderson," but did not mention the freight elevator). See also Salzman, Smith, and West, *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, 1:133-34. Furthermore, when Mick Duncan, founder of Utah's chapter of the ACLU, learned that "the black diva was forced to take the freight elevator to her room in the Hotel Utah," he unsuccessfully lobbied the Utah legislature to outlaw racial discrimination by hotels. He claimed this occurred in 1955, which was actually seven years after Marian Anderson was required to use the freight elevator during her first stay at the Hotel Utah ("Mormon's Mission Led Him to Fight for Civil Rights," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 19 April 1993, B-1).

110. David H. Oliver, *A Negro on Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: By author, 1963), 23, in which this Salt Lake lawyer inaccurately dated this visit as "during World War II." Compare with "UN Mediator, Nobel Winner to View 'Peace Prospects,'" *Daily Utah Chronicle*, 25 April 1951, 1; also Salzman, Smith, and West, *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, 1:469-71.

When I researched the office diaries of J. Reuben Clark and David O. McKay, I did not realize the significance of the visits by Anderson and Bunche, so I overlooked the references in their First Presidency office diaries at the time. However, as the senior executive officers for the Hotel Utah, McKay and Clark must have approved these exceptions to the policy against allowing African-Americans to stay there.

Therefore, African-Americans were denied equal access to the LDS church's hotel in order "to preserve the purity of the race that is entitled to hold the Priesthood."<sup>111</sup>

With such beliefs, the LDS First Presidency did what it could to block national efforts for the civil rights of African-Americans. As previously noted, Counselor McKay in 1949 instructed an Arizona stake president against that state's proposed legislation to "guarantee rights of Negroes." Making specific reference to the desegregation controversy in Little Rock, Arkansas,<sup>112</sup> Counselor Clark in 1957 instructed Belle Smith Spafford "that she should do what she could to keep the National Council [of Women] from going on record in favor of what in the last analysis would be regarded as negro equality." At that time, Spafford was a vice-president of the National Council of Women.<sup>113</sup>

As American views began changing toward race relations from the 1940s onward, the Mormons of Utah continued to follow the example of LDS leaders against civil rights for African-Americans. There was widespread use in all-white neighborhoods of Utah's Uniform Real Estate Contract, Form 30, which prohibited the purchaser of real estate and his/her heirs from reselling the property "to any person not of the Caucasian race."<sup>114</sup> The Salt Lake City School District prohibited blacks from being teachers and from fulfilling student-teaching requirements of their university training.<sup>115</sup> In addition, 40 percent of Utah's employers refused to hire Negroes. Employers who did hire blacks also discriminated against them in job assignment, promotion, and salary.<sup>116</sup> Blacks were prohibited from eating at the lunch counter of Salt Lake's City-County Building. All of Utah's bowling alleys excluded African-Americans, and LDS hospitals segregated black patients, sometimes requiring them to pay for private rooms. This was also the policy at Utah's Catholic hospitals.<sup>117</sup>

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111. Rowena J. Miller (secretary to J. Reuben Clark in the First Presidency's Office) to Mrs. Guy B. Rose, 20 September 1949, folder 8, box 380, Clark papers. See also Clark office diary, 29 November 1949: "Pres. Clark read to him (Apostle Harold B. Lee) the letter he wrote to Mrs. Rose in New York about the negro question."

112. Tom Cowan and Jack Maguire, *Timelines of African-American History: 500 Years of Black Achievement* (New York: Roundtable/Perigee, 1994), 230; Charles M. Christian and Sari J. Bennett, *Black Saga: The African American Experience* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), 395; Roy Reed, *Faubus: The Life and Times of an American Prodigal* (Fayette: Univ. of Arkansas Press, 1997), 205-32.

113. J. Reuben Clark office diary, 2 Dec. 1957. For Spafford's election to the National Council of Women, see Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 834.

114. Elmer R. Smith, *The Status of the Negro in Utah* (Salt Lake City: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 1956), 12.

115. Bennett, "Negro in Utah," 341.

116. Utah Legislature, *Report of Senate Committee to Investigate Discrimination Against Minorities in Utah*, 27th Sess. (1947), *Senate Journal*, 66.

117. James Boyd Christensen, "A Social Survey of the Negro Population of Salt Lake



In these respects, Utah and the Mormons were representative of the rest of America's white society until the 1960s.<sup>118</sup> In 1961, a survey of Salt Lake City by the NAACP showed that 12 percent of cafes, restaurants, and taverns declined to serve blacks, while 80 percent of the city's beauty shops and barber shops refused to do so. Likewise, 72 percent of Salt Lake City's hotels and 49 percent of its motels refused accommodations to African-Americans that year.<sup>119</sup>

After Counselor Clark's death in 1961, Apostle Ezra Taft Benson became the Mormon hierarchy's strident voice against the national crusade for African-American civil rights. Benson's Negrophobic rhetoric intensified after the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 drastically changed Utah's patterns of racial discrimination.<sup>120</sup> In 1965 and 1967, he stated in televised meetings on Temple Square in Salt Lake City that "the so-called civil rights movement as it exists today is a Communist program for revolution in America."<sup>121</sup> In 1967, Apostle Benson also approved the use of

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City, Utah," master's thesis, University of Utah, 1948, 51, 53-55; Bennett, "Negro in Utah," 341-43; Smith, *Status of the Negro in Utah*, 6-7; Trank, "Rhetorical Analysis"; Bringham, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks*, 167-69; "Interviews with Blacks in Utah, 1982-88"; Coleman, "African Americans in Utah," in Powell, *Utah History Encyclopedia*, 2; "Utah," in Salzman, Smith, and West, *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, 5:2729.

118. See various entries and articles in Lester A. Sobel, ed., *Civil Rights, 1960-66*, 2 vols. (New York: Facts on File, 1967). See also photographs of "Jim Crow Signs," in Langston Hughes, Milton Meltzer, and C. Eric Lincoln, *A Pictorial History of African Americans*, 4th rev. ed. (New York: Crown, 1973), 298-99; C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, 3rd rev. ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974); Franklin and Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom*, 147-48, 238, 280, 296-97, 314-15, 379, 420-21. For comparison of LDS and non-LDS American attitudes, see Mauss, "Mormonism and Secular Attitudes Toward Negroes," 91-99; and Mauss, *Angel and the Beehive*, 52-53.

119. Maag, "Discrimination Against the Negro in Utah," 34.

120. However, it would be an overstatement to say Utah's racial discrimination "ended" at this time. For example, see "Mormon Decision to End Ban on Blacks in Priesthood to Have Wide Impact on Utah," *New York Times*, 18 June 1978, 49 (African-American "Marvin Davis, however, waits for a revelation about equal hiring for jobs. Look around [Utah]. No black firemen, no blacks in the Sheriff's department, no city, state, or county black division heads"); "Stepping Back?: The Racial Situation in Utah's Homogenous Culture Today Is Threatening to Minorities," *Deseret News*, 23 February 1997, B-1; "Utah Is Unwelcoming to Blacks, NAACP Says," *Deseret News*, 10 December 2000, B-4. For context of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, see *The Encyclopedia Americana: International Edition*, 30 vols. (Danbury, Conn.: Grolier, 2000), 6:778-79. For Civil Rights Act text and provisions, see Anthony J. Cooper, ed., *The Black Experience, 1865-1978: A Documentary Reader* (Dartford, Eng.: Greenwich Univ. Press, 1995), 254-55.

121. "Mormon Leaders Heard by 25,000," *New York Times*, 2 October 1967, 52. See also "Elder Benson Links Reds to [Civil] Rights Furor," *Deseret News*, 14 December 1963, B-5; "Benson Ties Rights Issue to Reds in Mormon Rift," *Washington Post*, 13 April 1965, A-5. These statements were softened in their official publication in *Improvement Era* 70 (December 1967): 35, and in Ezra Taft Benson, *Civil Rights: Tool of Communist Deception* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1968), 3.

one of his talks as the forward to the overtly racist book *Black Hammer*, which featured the decapitated (and profusely bleeding) head of an African-American male on its cover. Subtitled *White Alternatives*, this book warned about the "well-defined plans for the establishment of a Negro Soviet dictatorship in the South."<sup>122</sup> In 1968, Apostle Benson also instructed BYU students about "black Marxists" and "the Communists and their Black Power fanatics."<sup>123</sup>

At this time, LDS president David O. McKay had a Democrat (Hugh B. Brown) as a counselor, who was mystified that McKay allowed Benson to endorse the speeches and activities of nationally known segregationists. This politically liberal counselor was unaware of the LDS church president's private views about "insolent" African-Americans who wanted equal rights.<sup>124</sup>

In 1963, Utah ended its restrictions on interracial marriage, and Counselor Brown officially endorsed civil rights for persons of all races that year.<sup>125</sup> However, until that year, every living prophet of the LDS church since Brigham Young either actively opposed the civil rights of African-Americans or passively endorsed the existing civil discriminations against them in Utah.

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122. Wes Andrews and Clyde Dalton, *The Black Hammer: A Study of Black Power, Red Influence and White Alternatives* (Oakland, Calif.: Desco Press, 1967). See especially the front cover (for illustration of decapitated head of an African-American male), dedication page (to "all the Elders of the California North Mission for their interest and prayers"), 13 (for statement that Ezra Taft Benson "has generously offered this address as the basis for the introductory remarks to 'The Black Hammer'"), 35 ("well-defined plans for the establishment of a Negro Soviet dictatorship in the South"). For the political context of Apostle Benson's participation in this racist publication (e.g., the ultra-conservative John Birch Society's effort to put him on the U.S. presidential ticket with racial segregationist Strom Thurmond as vice-presidential candidate), and for Benson's own interest in becoming vice-presidential running mate of George C. Wallace, the segregationist governor of Alabama, see Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 98-99.

123. Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon Warns America," address at BYU devotional, 21 May 1968, transcript, 5, 6, Vertical File, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah. See also "Road to Anarchy: Benson Blisters Supreme Court," *Standard-Examiner* (Ogden, Utah), 22 May 1968, A-11; "Benson Warns on Commies in Talk at BYU Assembly," *Daily Herald* (Provo, Utah), 22 May 1968, 24.

124. David O. McKay office diary, 25 February 1949. For the Benson-McKay-Brown situation, see also Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 96-101.

125. Coleman, "History of Blacks in Utah," 197-98; "Stepping Back?: The Racial Situation in Utah's Homogenous Culture Today Is Threatening To Minorities," *Deseret News*, 23 February 1997, B-1; "Give Full Civil Equality to All, LDS Counselor Brown Asks," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 7 October 1963, 1; Hugh B. Brown, "The Fight Between Good and Evil," *Improvement Era* 66 (December 1963): 1058; Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine," 44-45; Eugene E. Campbell and Richard D. Poll, *Hugh B. Brown: His Life and Thought* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1975), 256; Sterling M. McMurrin, "A Note on the 1963 Civil Rights Statement," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 12 (Summer 1979): 60-63.

In that same year, Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith told *Look* magazine's editor: "'Darkies' are wonderful people, and they have their place in our Church."<sup>126</sup> At best, this revealed the racial paternalism that governed LDS headquarters. However, this platitude was also a smoke-screen for the worst of what Utah Mormon leaders had done against African-American rights for the previous 116 years.

#### FROM ANTI-BLACK TO ANTI-GAY

Just as President Gordon B. Hinckley has said that same-sex marriage has no legitimate claim as a "civil right" in Utah or anywhere else, previous First Presidencies also stated that African-Americans had no legitimate right to unrestricted access to marriage, nor to unrestricted blood transfusions, nor to rent a room in the LDS church's hotel, nor to reside in Utah's white neighborhoods, nor to live near the Los Angeles Temple, nor to be in a hospital bed next to a white patient. Just as the First Presidency previously condemned interracial marriages as abnormal, it has recently condemned same-sex marriages as abnormal. The LDS church's opposition to gay rights is consistent with its historical opposition to African-American rights.

Even when a general authority publicly apologized in September 2000 for "the actions and statements of individuals who have been insensitive to the pain suffered by the victims of racism," he claimed that the LDS leadership had an admirable history of race relations. Elder Alexander B. Morrison said: "How grateful I am that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has from its beginnings stood strongly against racism in any of its malignant manifestations."<sup>127</sup> This was a by now

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126. Joseph Fielding Smith statement to managing editor William B. Arthur during an interview at Smith's "office in the Mormon Church's office building in Salt Lake City," as quoted in "Editor's Note," *Look*, 22 October 1963, unnumbered page 78 or 80. Lester Bush quoted this statement differently (i.e., a paraphrase which maintained the original meaning) and called it "a notorious Joseph Fielding Smith quotation" ("Writing 'Mormonism's Negro Doctrine,'" 268). Like other white Americans raised in the nineteenth century, Apostle Smith in the 1960s still regarded "darkies" as an affectionate reference to Negroes. However, see Franklin and Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom*, for the fact that twentieth-century African-Americans regarded "darkies" as an "insulting" description which perpetuated the paternalism of slave-owners who regarded their slaves as childlike.

127. Alexander B. Morrison, "'No More Strangers': Racism is an offense against God and a tool in the devil's hands," *Ensign* 30 (September 2000): 16. Morrison's statement begins: "In common with other Christians, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regret the actions and statements of individuals who have been insensitive to the pain suffered by the victims of racism and ask forgiveness for those guilty of this grievous sin." This reflected his personal view and ministry as demonstrated in Alexander B. Morrison, *The Dawning of a Brighter Day: The Church in Black Africa* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990).

familiar smoke-screen for the previous behavior of Mormon prophets, seers, and revelators. LDS headquarters has never apologized for the legalization of Negro slavery by Brigham Young in pioneer Utah, nor for the official LDS encouragement to lynch Negro males,<sup>128</sup> nor for the racial segregation policies of the First Presidency until 1963, nor for Ezra Taft Benson's 1967 endorsement of a book which implied that decapitating black males was a "White Alternative."

Furthermore, although the Utah press reported hundreds of "hate" attacks annually against gays and lesbians,<sup>129</sup> the First Presidency in 1992 orchestrated the defeat of proposals to include "sexual orientation" as a

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128. Some may claim that LDS headquarters did not "officially" encourage Negro lynchings but merely published the sermons of those who did. However, LDS president Brigham Young did nothing to avoid the possibility of some fanatic carrying out his 1863 statement that the "law of God" required "death on the spot" for Negro males who associated with white women. By publishing his statement in the *Deseret News*, the church president officially encouraged its implementation. The same holds true for LDS president John Taylor, who allowed the *Deseret News* to publish John Morgan's 1881 endorsement of lynching. As a comparison, I doubt that today's Mormons would hold guiltless a Catholic cardinal who gave a sermon in Dublin, Ireland (where Catholics are the 90-percent majority) praising the assassination of Irish Protestants. Nor would they regard the publication of such a sermon in the official Catholic newspaper of Dublin as a matter of little consequence. They would also not accept the excuse that it was "mere coincidence" when Protestants were assassinated in Ireland after such a sermon and its official publication. Likewise, for the physical assaults and murders of homosexuals by Mormons after the repeated publication of an LDS apostle's praise for beating up a homosexual, see discussion in text.

129. "Utah Group Notes 377 Assaults on Gays," *Deseret News*, 22 January 1991, B-10; "377 Anti-Gay/Lesbian Acts of Violence in Utah," *The Signpost* (Ogden, Utah), 29 January 1992, 8-9; "5 Murders, 11 Attempted Murders, 18 Rapes, 31 Acts of Vandalism, 35 Chasings, 43 Death Threats by Mail or Telephone, 104 Beatings, 195 Acts of Verbal Harassment [during one year]," in Christian P. Brown, "Anti-Gay and Lesbian Violence," *Pillar of the Gay and Lesbian Community for Utah* (Salt Lake City), October 1993, 7; *Anti-Violence Project Newsletter* (Salt Lake City), 1994-present. For news coverage of violence by Utah's young men against those they suspected of being homosexual, see "Gays Claim Lack of Protection," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 December 1978, B-6; "Murder Suspect in Mental Ward: Alarms Gays," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 15 December 1978, B-4; "Violence Charges Mostly Paranoia," *Deseret News*, 15 January 1979, A-5; "'Gay Bashing?': Utahn Guilty of Assault," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 November 1988, B-3; "Two Men Get Zero-Five Years for Near Fatal Beating," *Deseret News*, 28 December 1988, D-5; "Death of Hitchhiker in Utah Is Linked to a Similar Slaying in Pennsylvania," *Deseret News*, 9 December 1989, B-5; "Hatch Criticized in Hate-Crimes Bill," *Deseret News*, 11 February 1990, B-12; "Jury Finds Wood Guilty of 1988 Torture-Slaying," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 11 March 1990, B-1; "Police Accused of Failing to Aid Gay Crimes Victims," *Deseret News*, 21 March 1990, B-1; "Hate Crimes Prompt Gays to Form Patrols," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 April 1990, B-1; "Jury Acquits Salt Lake Men in Slaying," *Deseret News*, 14 April 1990, G-5; "Three Face Assault Charges in 'Gay-Bashing' Incidents," *Deseret News*, 1 August 1990, B-3; "Gay, Lesbian Leaders at U. of U. Receiving Anonymous Threats," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 2 November 1990, B-1; "Three Supremacists Sentenced, Fined," *Deseret News*, 14 January 1991, D-6; "Democratic Leader Wants State to Keep Track of Hate Crimes," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 22 January 1991, A-4; "Inmate Gets Probation in '88 Beating,"

protected category in Utah's law against hate crimes.<sup>130</sup> While President Hinckley has recently condemned hatred and violence against "those who profess homosexual tendencies."<sup>131</sup> The First Presidency from 1976 onward has also repeatedly published Apostle Boyd K. Packer's talk praising a Mormon missionary for beating up his homosexual companion. This official church pamphlet, titled *To Young Men Only*, encourages teenage boys to assault any males "who entice young men to join them in

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*Deseret News*, 25 January 1991, B-10; "S.L. Policeman May Be Linked to Gay-Bashing," *Deseret News*, 14 March 1991, B-1, B-2; "Gay Bashing?: Lawman on Suspension: Police Chief, Officer Offer Apologies," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 29 March 1991, B-1; "Hate Crimes Do Occur on WSU's Campus," *The Signpost* (Ogden, Utah), 29 January 1992, 7, 9; "Was Slaying in Park City a Hate Crime?: Sources Close to Probe Say Killer May Have Believed Victim Was Gay," *Deseret News*, 27 August 1993, B-1, B-2; "Gang Rapes of 2 Men Spark S.L. Fears of Gay-Bashing Attacks," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 28 August 1993, B-1; "Incidents of Hate Crime Cast Shadow over Salt Lake," *Deseret News*, 28 August 1993, B-3; "Was August Shooting a Hate Crime?" *Deseret News*, 12 September 1993, B-6; "Violence Against Gays Hinders Effort For Civil Rights, Speaker Claims," *Daily Utah Chronicle*, 15 October 1993, 1, 3; "Boy, 16, Will Stand Trial for Capital Murder in Shooting," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 16 October 1993, D-3; Mark Jensen, "Gordon," *Sunstone* 17 (June 1994): 20; "Killer's Sentence Too Light, Says Family of Gay Victim," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 16 August 1994, C-1; "Judge Draws Protests After Cutting Sentence of Gay Man's Killer," *New York Times*, 17 August 1994, A-15; "Driver Gets Probation for Role in Park City Slaying," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 August 1994, C-1; "Utah Hate-Crimes Law Sees Its First Case: S.L. Man Who Admits Beating Women Says Lifestyle Wasn't Issue," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 October 1994, B-1; "Man Averts Hate-Crime Prosecution For Assault," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 13 December 1994, C-1; "Suspect May Face Charge of Hate Crime In Beating," *Deseret News*, 22 April 1995, B-1; "Questions Linger After Store Fire: St. George Police Say Arson Caused Blaze; Was It a Hate Crime?" *Salt Lake Tribune*, 25 September 1995, B-2; "Attackers on Skateboards Targeting Gays," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 4 October 1995, B-2.

130. "Hate-Crime Bill Opponents Lash Out at Homosexuality during Capitol Hill Debate," *Deseret News*, 29 January 1992, B-12; "Hate-Crimes Bill Now Excludes Gays," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 1 February 1992, B-11; "Reason Falls by Wayside in Fight over Hate Crimes," *Deseret News*, 2 February 1992, A-1; "Pass Utah 'Hate Crimes' Bills," editorial in *Deseret News*, 2 February 1992, A-14 (asking support for the downgraded protections of gays and lesbians); "Diluted Hate-Crimes Bill Will Condone Violence against Gays, Say Activists," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 3 February 1992, B-1. See also discussion preceding note 139 and citations in note 156.

For decades LDS headquarters has used editorials in the church-owned *Deseret News* to orchestrate votes by Mormons (Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 358, 362, 369, 377). The most dramatic example of this tactic's success occurred in 1975 when an editorial in the *Deseret News* gave the first indication that LDS headquarters opposed the proposed Equal Rights Amendment for women. In response, the sponsor of the bill for Utah to ratify the ERA reversed himself and voted (with the other Mormon legislators) to defeat his own bill. Referring to the editorial, this Utah legislator explained: "It is my church and as a bishop, I'm not going to vote against its wishes" (M. Byron Fisher statement in "ERA Effort Fails to Take Hold," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 22 January 1975, A-4, referring to editorial, "Equal Rights Amendment" *Deseret News* "Church News," 11 January 1975, 16).

131. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Why We Do Some of the Things We Do," 54.

these immoral acts."<sup>132</sup> Yet President Hinckley (who was a senior apostle in 1976) expresses bewilderment regarding the literally thousands of violent attacks against gay males in Utah during the decades since the First Presidency began publishing Apostle Packer's talk. This endorsement of gay bashing continues to be printed in pamphlet form and is currently distributed by LDS headquarters. From 1976 to the present, local LDS leaders have been encouraged to give this pamphlet to young males in their teens and twenties, those most likely to commit hate crimes against gays and lesbians.<sup>133</sup>

LDS headquarters has never promoted a similar distribution of statements opposing violence toward homosexuals.<sup>134</sup> Recent public statements by LDS leaders against gay bashing have the appearance of a smoke-screen to conceal the ongoing private endorsement of gay bashing in Apostle Packer's pamphlet. In fact, because it has officially pro-

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132. This pamphlet was reprinted from a talk given at the general priesthood meeting for all LDS males from age twelve and older, broadcast by close-circuit to the assembled Mormon males in every congregation of the United States and Canada. Since it discussed masturbation as an abuse of a young man's "little factory," the talk was not printed in the official conference report in the November 1976 *Ensign*, possibly due to concern at headquarters that LDS girls might read it (*Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1, 2, 3, 1976, with Report of Discourses* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976), 100-01). For the actual pamphlet, see Boyd K. Packer, *To Young Men Only* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1976), 9-10, reprinted by the LDS church in 1980 and thereafter into the 1990s (see following note). For his continued public emphasis on homosexuals as a danger, see "Apostle Packer Says 'So-Called' Scholars, Gays, Feminists Are Leading LDS Astray," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 July 1993, B-1; "Packer Keeps Tough Stance against Homosexuality," *Standard-Examiner* (Ogden, Utah), 9 October 2000.

133. "Mormon Pamphlets on Gays Criticized," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 August 2000, B-2; Mac Madsen presentation, "Homosexuality and the Church: Perspectives of an LDS Father," Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, 5 Aug. 2000, in which Madsen describes seeing this pamphlet on sale recently in the LDS church's central distribution center in Salt Lake City. See also "Parents of Gay Children Call LDS Pamphlets 'Insensitive,'" *Salt Lake Tribune*, 7 Oct. 2000, in which an LDS spokesman acknowledges that Apostle Packer's pamphlet is still available, implies that it is still being distributed to LDS young men, and denies that it encourages violence against homosexuals. For analysis and statistical profiles of those involved in such hate crimes, see Gary David Comstock, *Violence against Lesbians and Gay Men* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991).

134. In addition to the previously quoted statement of Gordon B. Hinckley in "Why We Do Some of the Things We Do," Dallin H. Oaks also made the following statement in "Same-Gender Attraction," *Ensign* 25 (October 1995): 8: "Our doctrines obviously condemn those who engage in so-called 'gay bashing'—physical or verbal attacks on persons thought to be involved in homosexual or lesbian behavior." Nevertheless, until LDS headquarters instructs local bishops to distribute such statements to all teenage boys, it will never overcome their indoctrination for violence against gay males which has occurred through the intensive distribution of *To Young Men Only* since 1976.

moted this endorsement of violence against homosexuals for twenty-five years, I believe the First Presidency has been morally responsible whenever LDS young men have attacked or killed homosexuals from 1976 to the present. This includes the brutal murder of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming in 1998.<sup>135</sup>

Moreover, by repeatedly issuing this pamphlet and other homophobic statements since the beginning of the anti-ERA campaign in 1975, the Mormon church has encouraged a climate of revulsion which fills most LDS families. Therefore, I believe the First Presidency has also been morally responsible whenever Mormon parents have rejected their children for being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. Even when the LDS church's *Ensign* magazine published a statement in 1997 advising parents not "to disown" their homosexual children, the general authority merely noted that such tactics "do not help."<sup>136</sup> Public-relations statements of such timidity have little hope of undoing the spiritual damage to families caused by decades of stridently homophobic indoctrination by LDS headquarters.<sup>137</sup>

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135. See note 129 for Utah attacks. See also "S.F. Killing of Gay: Suspect's Mother Talks," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10 August 1984 (in which the suspect's mother says: "Homosexuals are excommunicated according to Mormon religion"); "Mormon Hate," *Bay Area Reporter*, 23 August 1984; "Man Pleads Guilty to Killing Gay Student," *Dallas Morning News*, 6 April 1999, A-3 (describing the Mormon background of one of the young men who murdered Matthew Shepard in Wyoming in 1998); JoAnn Wypijewski, "A Boy's Life: For Matthew Shepard's Killers, What Does It Take to Pass As a Man?" *XY Magazine* 22 (October-November 1999), 67 (the murderer "was prayerful in the Mormon tradition").

136. John K. Carmack, "When Our Children Go Astray," *Ensign* 27 (February 1997): 10.

137. See for example, "Crime against Nature" in Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969), 77-89; "Mormon President Kimball Demands Homosexuals Avoid Their Obscene Past and Conform to Church," *Vanguard*, *Portland State University* 31 (28 October 1975): 3; "Hotel Utah Cancels Homosexual Parley," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 9 June 1977, A-13; "Relief Society Leader Hails Anita Bryant's Homosexuality Stand," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 11 June 1977, B-3; "Salt Lake: Sister Smith Praises Anti-Gay Effort," *Church News*, 18 June 1977, 5, 11; Editorial, "Unnatural, without Excuse," *Church News*, 9 July 1977, 16; "LDS Leader Hails Anti-Gay Stand [of Anita Bryant]," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 5 November 1977, D-3; Editorial, "Calling the Kettle Clean," *Church News*, 18 March 1978, 16; "Store for Gays Denied License," *Deseret News*, 22 July 1978, B-1; Editorial, "Is It a Menace?" *Church News*, 29 July 1978, 16; "Church Leaders Reaffirm ERA Stand," *Church News*, 26 August 1978, 2-3; "First Presidency Re-affirms Opposition to ERA," *Ensign* 8 (October 1978): 63; Editorial, "Sin Is No Excuse," *Church News*, 16 December 1978, 16; "Mormons Excommunicate Editor of ADVOCATE," *Advocate* 273 (9 August 1979): 10-11; "Brigham Young U. Admits Stakeouts on Homosexuals," *New York Times*, 27 September 1979, A-16; "Hunted Down by LDS Church, Gays Say," *San Francisco Examiner*, 22 October 1979; "Mormons rapped for purge of gays," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 26 October 1979, 36; *The Church and the Proposed Equal Rights Amendment: A Moral Issue* (Salt Lake City: ENSIGN Magazine, 1980), 9; "Mormon Church Elder Calls Homosexuality an Addiction," *New York Times*, 6 April 1981, A-12; "Mormons Call Homosexuality a Detestable Sin," *Daily Utah Chronicle*, 9 January 1985, 1, 5; "Mormons Excommunicate Repentant AIDS Victim: He Is Asked Not to Attend

For example, in its official editorial against allowing Utah's high schools to have clubs for gay and lesbian students, the *Deseret News* commented in 1996: "It is still appalling that more than half the identified hate crimes in Utah are aimed at homosexuals."<sup>138</sup> Again, this has the appearance of a smoke-screen to conceal the anti-gay agenda of LDS headquarters. Four years earlier, the same newspaper had successfully persuaded Utah's legislature *not* to include gays and lesbians in the state law against hate crimes.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, the 1996 editorial then adopted the very attitude which propels these hate crimes it professed to regret: "homosexual activities and practices are an abomination, not just some 'alternative lifestyle' no better or worse than others."<sup>140</sup> Echoing the role of LDS headquarters in preventing Utah from giving homosexuals legal protection from hate crimes, the *Deseret News* in June 2000 regretted that Utah Senator Orrin G. Hatch was "unable to stop hate-crime legislation" in Congress.<sup>141</sup>

There is yet another example of the LDS church's official homophobia, which subverts its public platitudes about loving those who regard themselves as gay or lesbian. Since 1998, church headquarters has

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Church," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 10 January 1986, B-1; "Apostle Reaffirms Church's Position on Homosexuality," *Church News*, 14 February 1987, 10, 12; Ronald C. Kershaw, "AIDS, Leprosy, and Disease: The Christian Response," *Sunstone* 12 (May 1988): 6-7 (for statement at LDS stake conference in Davis, California, by general authority John H. Groberg concerning a Mormon male who died of AIDS: "Of course, many of us would say he got what he deserved"); "Schools to See True Picture of Holocaust?: Officials Say Exhibit Can't Mention Gays," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 11 March 1990, B-1, B-4; "Exhibit Packet Won't Exclude Material on Nazis' Gay Victims," *Deseret News*, 13 March 1990, B-1, B-2; "Going Straight?: New Therapy May Help Gay Men and Women Alter Sexual Orientation but It Faces a Wave of Opposition," *Deseret News*, 3 May 1990, C-1; "Gay Community Speaks Out against 'Reorientation Therapy' [of] Evergreen Conference: Homosexuals Call the Approach Unscientific and Potentially Dangerous," *Deseret News*, 5 May 1990, B-1, B-2; "S.L. Club That Was Accused of Catering to Homosexuals Will Appeal Shutdown," *Deseret News*, 23 October 1990, B-3; "The LDS Church Is Committed to Changing Homosexuals," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 12 January 1992, A-8; "Apostle Packer Says 'So-Called' Scholars, Gays, Feminists Are Leading LDS Astray," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 July 1993, B-1; "Top Court Throws Out Efforts to Preserve U.S. Sexual Mores," *Deseret News*, 22 May 1996, A-10; "Packer Keeps Tough Stance against Homosexuality," *Standard-Examiner* (Ogden, Utah), 9 October 2000.

138. Editorial, "Clubs for Homosexuals Are No Clubs at All," *Deseret News*, 11 February 1996, AA-2.

139. See note 130.

140. Editorial, "Clubs for Homosexuals." See also "Editorial Blasts Proposed Gay Club," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 February 1996, B-2.

141. "Hatch Unable to Stop Hate-Crime Legislation," *Deseret News*, 21 June 2000. With such clear signals from LDS headquarters, the Utah legislature, which is usually more than 85 percent Mormon, has steamrolled over every effort to introduce such bills. See "Hate-Crime Bill Is Back Again," *Deseret News*, 18 January 2001, A-17; "A Blow to Hate Crimes Efforts: HB 50 Rejected; Suazo Delays Vote in Senate," *Deseret News*, 26 January 2001, B-1.



instructed all local LDS leaders to put notations on the membership record of every Mormon who receives church discipline for homosexual behavior. Applicable even to teenagers, this ecclesiastical stigma will follow young men and women into every LDS congregation for the rest of their lives.<sup>142</sup>

For persons who believe that these various actions of the LDS First Presidency were God's will for suppressing minorities, I suggest they rethink a passage in *The Book of Mormon*: "For none of these iniquities come of the Lord; for he doeth that which is good among the children of men; and he doeth nothing save it be plain unto the children of men; and he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile" (2 Nephi 26:33).

Furthermore, Counselor Clark told the general conference of April 1940 that the First Presidency "is not infallible in our judgment, and we err."<sup>143</sup> He also instructed LDS educators in 1954 that "even the President of the Church has not always spoken under the direction of the Holy Ghost."<sup>144</sup> I believe this applies to the statements and actions of several "living prophets" and First Presidencies in restricting the civil rights of African-Americans and other minorities. According to LDS doctrine, the statements and actions of the church's president can be wrong, even sinful,<sup>145</sup> and historically the LDS First Presidency has often been profoundly wrong with regard to the civil rights of American minorities.

In fact, when an end came to the various tyrannies of the majority against racial groups in America, LDS policies changed as well. What various "living prophets" had defined as God's doctrine turned out to be

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142. *Handbook of Instructions* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), 129.

143. *April 1940 Conference Report of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1940), 14. All sermons in *Conference Reports* (1897-1970) are available in *New Mormon Studies* CD-ROM, which has phrase-search capability.

144. "President Clark's Lecture: When Are Church Leader's Words Entitled to Claim of Scripture?" *Church News*, 31 July 1954, 11. This sermon was reprinted in all of the following: *When Are Church Leader's Words Entitled to Claim of Scripture?* (Provo: Department of Seminaries and Institutes, 1966); *Melchizedek Priesthood Course of Study, 1969-1970: Immortality and Eternal Life* (Salt Lake City: First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1969), 215-25; *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 12 (Summer 1979): 68-81; David H. Yarn, Jr., ed., *J. Reuben Clark: Selected Papers on Religion, Education, and Youth* (Provo: Brigham Young Univ. Press, 1984), 95-112.

145. In discussing the revelation published as D&C 43:3-4, the 1951 revision of *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary* by Apostles Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, and Marion G. Romney referred to the possibility that the LDS president, who is "the living

a Mormon social policy which reflected the majority's world view. I submit that the same applies to the LDS church's campaign against any law which benefits or protects gays and lesbians.

LDS president Gordon B. Hinckley has dismissed Mormonism's earlier race-based policies as "those little tricks of history" which are irrelevant now.<sup>146</sup> However, his twenty-five years of promoting political campaigns against the possibility of gay rights is one more example of the LDS hierarchy's discrimination against minorities who are not its "kind of people."<sup>147</sup>

#### THE SINCERITY OF PREJUDICE AND CIVIL DISCRIMINATION

LDS leaders have repeatedly opposed civil rights for blacks and gays while denying that such action is "anti-Negro" or "racist," "anti-gay" or "homophobic." The previous quotes show that First Presidency counselor J. Reuben Clark, for one, defended wholesale restrictions against

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prophet" in Mormon doctrine, could be in a "fallen condition" due to "apostasy." See Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1951), 241. Another revelation (D&C 107:82-84) provided for the trial and excommunication of the LDS president in such a circumstance. Of this, the church's official centennial history stated: "Therefore if the time should ever come that the church should be so unfortunate as to be presided over by a man who transgressed the laws of God and became unrighteous, a means in the church system of government is provided for deposing him without destroying the church, without revolution, or even disorder" (Roberts, *Comprehensive History*, 2:376). In other words, Joseph Smith's revelations maintain that there are no limits on the ability of the LDS president and prophet to be in error and to commit sin.

146. "Hinckley Takes LDS Case to the Nation," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 April 1996, D-1.

147. After he began directing the LDS church's anti-ERA campaign nationally in 1977 (see note 29), Gordon B. Hinckley was also on the executive committee of Seattle radio station KIRO when it supported anti-gay Initiative 13, which would have revoked Seattle's city ordinance protecting gays and lesbians from civil discrimination in housing and employment. The co-sponsor of this ballot initiative was a Mormon policeman, who said he and his John Birch Society partner-policeman had launched the anti-gay petition for it because a "homosexual applied for a job as a King County police officer." (See "The Cops Who Lead the Fight Against the Gays," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 6 August 1978.) *The Blade* (Washington, D.C.), October 1978, 9, also commented: "KIRO, the Mormon-owned station, continues to broadcast anti-Gay ads, and the local station manager has editorialized against Gays, even calling for Gays to be placed in 'concentration camps,' according to a source in the Seattle mayor's office." After voters defeated the anti-gay initiative by a two-to-one margin, "Initiative 13 loses big," *Seattle Times*, 8 November 1978, B-5, referred to "Pro-13 editorials broadcast by KIRO's president, Lloyd Cooney." For Hinckley's role as KIRO director and member of its executive committee, see also Sheri Dew, *Go forward With Faith: The Biography of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 304. For a similar effort in Colorado after Hinckley became counselor and subsequently LDS president, see discussion and sources in note 156.

the civil rights of African-Americans. Nevertheless, at the same time, he regarded himself as compassionate toward blacks.<sup>148</sup>

In this paper I have tried to acknowledge the sincere beliefs and fears of those who oppose same-sex marriage. However, an "Appeal to Sincerity" is legitimate only when attempting to understand the personal motivation for various behaviors. Sincerity cannot logically be invoked to assess the legitimacy or ethical value of those behaviors.<sup>149</sup>

The past and present are filled with actions which most of us condemn, despite the fact that their perpetrators claimed they acted out of their sincere beliefs in a religion, or race, or social class, or country. If we regard slavery as wrong, the sincerity of slave-owners is irrelevant to the issue, even when the slave-owners were our revered national leaders, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.<sup>150</sup> If denial of rights and protections for African-Americans was wrong, the sincerity of the oppressors is irrelevant to the issue, even if we otherwise admire the oppressors as religious leaders. Likewise, the sincerity of the heterosexual majority's anxieties and fears is not an ethical justification for denying rights and protections to the homosexual minority.

The recent success of the Defense of Marriage Act in California (America's most populous state) was yet another example of the tyranny of the majority, but there is a silver lining to this dark cloud: Thirty-nine percent of California's electorate voted against DOMA.<sup>151</sup> While most

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148. "He [J. Reuben Clark] repeated he did not think they should make fun of them. He said that he had a deep sympathy for the negroes, but that did not mean he would want one of his children to marry one, and he did not want them to dance with them, and he did not approve of the breaking down of the color line because anything that breaks down the color line leads to marriage" (J. Reuben Clark office diary, 24 October 1950, Clark papers). Also, "President Clark said that his heart bleeds for the negroes, that he had had them in his home and some of them were very fine people, that he felt we should give them every right and blessing to which they are entitled" (Minutes of Council Meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Salt Lake Temple, 9 October 1947, folder 7, box 78, Smith Family papers; also in folder 15, box 5, Marquardt papers, both collections in Marriott Library).

149. What I call "The Appeal to Sincerity" is a combination of the "fallacy of Emotional Appeals" and the "fallacy of *Argumentum ad Populum*," (or "the fact that so many people believe C isn't decisively relevant to the truth or falsity of C"). See Francis Watanabe Daur, *Critical Thinking: An Introduction to Reasoning* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989), 82, 80.

150. James Thomas Flexner, *Washington: The Indispensable Man* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), 54, 385-94; Richard Norton Smith, *Patriarch: George Washington and the New American Nation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 27, 148-49; Lucia C. Stanton, "'Those Who Labor for My Happiness': Thomas Jefferson and His Slaves," in *Jeffersonian Legacies*, ed. Peter S. Onuf (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1993), 147-80; Annette Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemmings: An American Controversy* (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1997).

151. "Those Opposed to 2 Initiatives Had Little Chance from Start," *New York Times*, 9 March 2000, A-27), for 38.6 percent voting against California's Prop. 22.

gays and lesbians believe we counted for 10 percent of the vote,<sup>152</sup> many homophobes claim that no more than one percent of humanity has homosexual feelings.<sup>153</sup> Therefore, LDS leaders and their religious allies in the political sphere must acknowledge that about a third of California's *heterosexual* electorate voted against their campaign of fear, social hysteria, prejudice, and minority exclusion. This is nearly three times higher than the percentage of white Southerners who opposed segregation in

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152. For example, surveys during a twenty-year period showed that 10 percent of BYU's male students admitted to homoerotic experiences. See Wilford E. Smith, "Mormon Sex Standards on College Campuses, Or Deal Us Out of the Sexual Revolution" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 10 (Autumn 1976): 77. This was the finding of questionnaires distributed by Professor Smith from the 1950s to 1970s to BYU sociology students whom he identified on page 77 as "Mormons in a large church university." While I was enrolled in a BYU sociology course during the 1962-63 school year, I took this survey (which was identified as Wilford E. Smith's questionnaire on the day my class received it). I was one of those homosexually inclined persons who had remained celibate when I took this survey, but I did not answer "Yes" when this survey asked if I had homosexual feelings without homoerotic experience. I also talked with other males who declined to report on such surveys the fact that they'd actually had homoerotic experiences. Therefore, Smith's article under-reported the percentage of those who privately regarded themselves as homosexual (even if celibate) and under-reported those BYU students who had had homoerotic experiences.

Compare this 10-percent finding with "Homosexual Sheep?" *Parade Magazine* (March 1992): 10, concerning a four-year study of the sexual behavior of male sheep by the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station at Dubois, Idaho: "The study showed that about 8.5% of the rams under observation were homosexuals—close to the estimate of 10% for homosexuals in the U.S. male population." However, because 10 percent of the population are "different" does not mean they should be considered "abnormal." The exceptional in nature is still "natural," such as the homosexual orientation of erotic desire in humans and other animals. It does not occur to blue-eyed people who label homosexuality as "abnormal" and "unnatural" to think of themselves as "unnatural," or "abnormal," or "mistakes of nature" merely because blue eyes occur in less than 10 percent of the world's population. Such selective use of "abnormal" and "unnatural" would also apply to left-handed people.

153. See for example Richard G. Howe, *Homosexuality in America: Exposing the Myths* (Tupelo, Miss.: American Family Association, 1994), 9-10. Even if homosexuals did constitute only one percent of the population, we would still deserve civil rights. Christians constitute less than one percent of the population in most countries of Asia, Africa, and the Near East, yet they condemn any limits on their civil rights in these countries. For 1500 years, this self-serving hypocrisy has characterized the Christian tradition of denying civil rights to various minorities living in Christian countries. In Europe, these legally repressed minorities included Jews, Muslims, and "Gypsies" (Roma), as well as minority Christians in the political domain of a dominant Christian church. Aside from my discussion of the Christian suppression of civil rights for African-Americans and Mormons in the United States, most states (even after the affirmation of freedom in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights) also had legal restrictions against Jews, Muslims, and atheists until the late nineteenth century. See Anson Phelps Stokes, *Church and State In the United States*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), esp. 1: 601, 621, 788, 874-77, 878, 3: 873; Daniel R. Ernst, "Church-State Issues and the Law, 1607-1870," in John F. Wilson, ed., *Church and State in America: A Bibliographical Guide, The Colonial and Early National Periods* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), esp. 338.

the decades before Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964,<sup>154</sup> yet minority rights eventually triumphed there.

In view of the fears, prejudices, and hatreds which existed both then and now, American society's sense of fairness is far greater today than it was fifty years ago. As the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1996 when *Romer v. Evans* invalidated the LDS church's behind-the-scenes victory against civil rights for gays and lesbians in Colorado, "a state cannot so deem a class of persons a stranger to its laws."<sup>155</sup>

This Colorado case had nothing to do with marriage. LDS leaders and their allies were attempting to invalidate those laws which protected gays and lesbians from hate crimes, as well as from civil discrimination in housing and employment.<sup>156</sup> Gays and lesbians are the glaring excep-

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154. See note 120. According to Gallup polls, from 1948 to 1949 only 12-14 percent of white Southerners said that Negroes "should not be required to occupy a separate part of a train or bus when traveling from one state to another"; in 1955 only 16 percent of white Southerners approved of laws that "all children, no matter what their race, must be allowed to go to the same school"; in 1955 only 19 percent of white Southerners approved of laws ending "racial segregation on trains, buses, and in public waiting rooms"; in 1963 only 12 percent of white Southerners approved of laws "which would give all persons—Negro as well as white—the right to be served in public places such as hotels, restaurants, theaters, and similar establishments" (George H. Gallup, ed., *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion, 1935-1971*, 3 vols. [New York: Random House, 1972], 1:748, 2:810, 2:1401, 2:1402, 3:1827).

155. Concluding sentence of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *A. Roy Romer, Governor of Colorado v. Richard G. Evans, et al*, 116 S. Ct. 1620 (1996), printed fully in Jay S. Sigler, *Civil Rights in America: 1500 to the Present* (Detroit, Mich.: Gale, 1998), 655-59; also "Gay Rights Get Major Legal Boost," *Deseret News*, 20 May 1996, A-1 (for same quote).

156. At issue was Colorado's Amendment 2, which invalidated municipal laws protecting gays and lesbians from various forms of civil discrimination. (See "The Christian Right versus Gay Rights in Colorado, 1992-1996," in Didi Herman, *The Antigay Agenda: Orthodox Vision and the Christian Right* [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1997], 137-69.) In an action that required specific approval from the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (and probably per their instructions), BYU president Rex E. Lee submitted an *amicus* brief to the U.S. Supreme Court in support of Colorado's anti-gay Amendment 2. See "Colorado Petitions Supreme Court to Let Amendment 2 Go Into Effect as Trial Proceeds in Denver," *Lesbian/Gay Law Notes* (November 1993): 80 ("former U.S. Solicitor General Rex E. Lee, who has apparently been retained by the state to argue this case in the U.S. Supreme Court"); "Gays and Lesbians Are Coming Out Into Controversy: Decision in Colorado Case Could Threaten Civil Rights of Utahns," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 12 October 1995, D-2; "Supreme Court to Rule on Anti-Gay Rights Law in Colorado," *New York Times*, 22 February 1995, A-17; "High Court Breaks Silence: Steps Into Gay-Rights Arena," *Denver Post*, 22 February 1995, A-14; "Amendment 2 Arguments Filed: U.S. High Court Sets Oct. Hearings," *Denver Post*, 22 April 1995, A-11; Vera Titunik, "Sidley Braces for Fallout from Colorado Case," *American Lawyer*, September 1995, 13; Lewis, "Equal Protection after *Romer v. Evans*," 175-224; Stephen M. Rich, "Ruling by Numbers: Political Restructuring and the Reconsideration of Democratic Commitments after *Romer v. Evans*," *Yale Law Review* 109 (December 1999): 587-626; Evan Gerstmann, *The Constitutional Underclass: Gays, Lesbians, and the Failure of Class-Based Equal Protection* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999), 91-139

tion to President Hinckley's public-relations statement to the LDS general conference in 1995: "We must be willing to defend the rights of others who may become the victims of bigotry."<sup>157</sup> With regard to homosexuals, this is a slogan which LDS headquarters tries to subvert in every possible way.

For example, after President Hinckley's statement, Mormon leadership successfully opposed adding sexual orientation to Salt Lake City's anti-discrimination ordinance.<sup>158</sup> This is understandable in light of reports that LDS headquarters actively discriminates against gays and lesbians in employment. With no claim of due process, this discrimination extends to completely secular jobs and requires no proof of "inappropriate" sexual behavior. For example, when the Joseph Smith Memorial Building opened in 1993 as added office-space for the LDS bureaucracy at headquarters, this multi-story building had two fine-dining restaurants for the general public. The human resources director instructed the manager of these church-owned restaurants not to hire as waiters any males who "seem gay."<sup>159</sup> Similar to visual profiling for racial discrimination,<sup>160</sup> LDS headquarters apparently denies employment on the basis of stereotypical views about masculine appearance and homosexual characteristics, or stereotypical views about feminine appearance and lesbian

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(discussion of Colorado's Amendment 2 and the resulting decision of the Supreme Court). Lewis, Rich, and Gerstmann did not cite Lee's *amicus* brief, but did cite the arguments of BYU law professor Lynn Wardle in support of Colorado's anti-gay Amendment 2, although they inaccurately assumed that Wardle is a woman. Internet websites are not as permanent as print publications, but Lee's opening brief was posted at [www.clam.rutgers.edu/remarks/romerpetitioner.html](http://www.clam.rutgers.edu/remarks/romerpetitioner.html) and his responding brief was posted at [www.clam.rutgers.edu/remarks/romerrepl.html](http://www.clam.rutgers.edu/remarks/romerrepl.html). For other comments on Wardle, see note 9. For the LDS church's opposition to including gays and lesbians in Utah's anti-discrimination laws, see the sources in note 130 and following discussion.

157. Gordon B. Hinckley, "This Is the Work of the Master," *Ensign* 25 (May 1995): 71.

158. Editorial, "S.L. Should Protect All Equally," *Deseret News*, 8 December 1997, A-10 (despite the title, this spoke out *against* Salt Lake City Council's proposal to protect gays and lesbians from civil discrimination); Editorial, "Don't Repeal Gay Ordinance," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 11 January 1998, AA-1; "LDS Leader Urges Attendance at Meeting," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 13 January 1998, B-6 (requesting local Mormons to express their opposition to including gays and lesbians in the city's anti-discrimination ordinance); "Anti-Gay Bias Ordinance Has A Short Life," *Deseret News*, 14 January 1998; John Harrington, "Morality Plays: Repealing Salt Lake City's Gay-Protection Ordinance Is an Outcome of Mormon Politics," *Salt Lake City Weekly*, 15 January 1998, 6-7; Editorial, "Bringing Sense Back to City Hall," *Deseret News*, 17 January 1998, A-8 (congratulating the Salt Lake City council for removing sexual orientation from the city's anti-discrimination law).

159. My telephone interview on 4 September 2000 with a person who has asked to remain anonymous, but who had direct knowledge of the hiring practices in the Joseph Smith Memorial Building's new Roof Restaurant and Garden Restaurant in 1993.

160. David Harris, *Driving While Black: Racial Profiling on Our Nation's Highways* (New York: American Civil Liberties Union, 1999).

characteristics.<sup>161</sup> As indicated in the above example, this has nothing to do with “morality” or the actual sexual behavior of persons who are subjected to this discrimination. In fact, completely heterosexual persons may also be misidentified as lesbian or gay on the basis of speech or appearance, and then suffer employment discrimination in Utah.<sup>162</sup> This contributes to the climate of fear, which is why anti-discrimination laws are necessary.

The climate of homophobic antagonism in Mormon-dominated Utah creates constant anxiety for many gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender persons. It is historically similar to being a Christian in pagan Rome, a Protestant Huguenot in Catholic-dominated France, a Quaker in Puritan Massachusetts, a black in Klan-dominated Mississippi, a Jew in Nazi Germany, a Catholic in Protestant-dominated Belfast, a Muslim in Hindu-dominated Kashmir, or a Hindu in Muslim-dominated Islamabad. Its familiarity makes this pattern even more tragic in cultures which claim divine approval for exerting social oppression against their minorities.

Just as Catholics, Protestants, and Mormons once claimed righteousness and God’s blessing in denying basic rights to African-Americans and Asian-Americans, they are now claiming righteousness and God’s blessing for denying basic rights to gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender persons. It takes a peculiar kind of blindness to currently affirm that the majority’s historical discrimination against despised racial minorities was ethically and civilly wrong, yet argue that it is now ethically and civilly right to discriminate against the despised minority of homosexuals and transgender persons.

#### “THE RIGHT OF EACH INDIVIDUAL TO BE FREE”

Ironically, through its general authorities, its lesson manuals, and its church-owned newspaper, LDS headquarters has condemned other churches and religious leaders for limiting freedom or civil rights.

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161. For example, as part of a proposed remedy for male homosexuality, an LDS physician recommended practicing “manly” behaviors. See Victor L. Brown, Jr., *Fred’s Story* (Sacramento, Calif.: H.R. Associates, 1985). This is reminiscent of the American psychiatrist’s approach toward homosexuality in E. M. Forster’s decades-earlier novel *Maurice*.

162. A recent example from Salt Lake City is “Trouble for the Towel Boy” (*Salt Lake City Weekly*, 14 May 1998, 8-9) concerning the University of Utah’s student newspaper which printed a hate-filled letter identifying a student as homosexual because he “spoke in a high voice, painted his fingernails purple, and wore an earring.” The letter-to-the-editor said this student should be fired from his job in the school’s gym: “I would argue that just the sight of a homosexual working in the locker room is suggestive to the point of making an offensive environment.” After the university’s newspaper published this, the *City Weekly* interviewed the towel-boy: “The irony of it all is that Clayton, in fact, is not gay. So much for appearances.”

During the entire twentieth century, the LDS church has criticized leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, of Iran's Shiite Islam, and of the Russian Orthodox Church for limiting the civil rights of various minorities.<sup>163</sup>

As David O. McKay instructed the general conference of April 1950:

This principle of free agency and the right of each individual to be free[,] not only to think but also to act within bounds that grant to every one else the same privilege, are sometimes violated even by churches that claim to teach the doctrine of Jesus Christ. The attitude of any organization toward this principle of freedom is a pretty good index to its nearness to the teachings of Christ or to those of the evil one.<sup>164</sup>

Should the LDS church and its leaders be exempt from McKay's standard to guarantee freedom and civil rights? As discussed earlier, McKay's public statement here actually contradicted both his private statements as well as his actions as an executive in the racially segregated Hotel Utah.

However, McKay's equivocation has a parallel that is faith-promoting. When slave-owner Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal," this also did not describe the reality of his own life and culture.<sup>165</sup> Yet later Americans and U.S. presidents

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163. James E. Talmage, *THE GREAT APOSTASY, Considered in the Light of Scriptural and Secular History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), 155-56; Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Progress of Man* (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah/Deseret News Press, 1936), 239-40, 246-48; James L. Barker, *The Divine Church Down through Change, Apostasy therefrom, and Restoration: Being a course of study for the Melchizedek Priesthood Quorums for the year 1952*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Council of the Twelve Apostles, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1951), 3:186-87; T. Edgar Lyon, *Apostasy to Restoration: Course of Study for the MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD QUORUMS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1960), 25-26, 89, 252; "Dark Ages," in Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 178. See also the following editorials in the church-owned *Deseret News* about religiously-motivated suppression of freedom: "How Not to Fight an Offensive Book" (16 February 1989); "Stop Human Rights Abuses" (31 March 1991); "In Iran Ruthlessness Still is Status Quo" (31 March 1992); "Russia Takes A Wrong Turn on the Road To Freedom" (16 July 1993); "Uphold Religious Freedom in Russia" (24 January 1997); "Iran and Desires For Freedom" (29 May 1997).

164. April 1950 Conference Report of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1950), 36; *Improvement Era* 53 (May 1950): 367; *Gospel Ideals: Selections From the Discourses of David O. McKay, Ninth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953), 303.

165. Paul Finkelman, "Jefferson and Slavery: 'Treason against the Hopes of the World,'" in Onuf, *Jeffersonian Legacies*, 181-211. See also discussion in note 153 regarding restrictions against religious minorities in the U.S.



found inspiration in Jefferson's idealized statement, and they struggled to change their culture in order to achieve the reality of full civil rights for all its minorities. That struggle continues today. Likewise, President McKay stated an ideal in 1950 that can continue to inspire LDS members and leaders to change their culture in order to grant full civil rights to all its minorities.

Some will claim that the historical parallel of legal discrimination against race and religion has nothing to do with today's legal restrictions against social protections and marriage options for gays and lesbians. Such denial seems intended to privilege the current campaign in two ways: First, by denying that homosexuals constitute a minority as legitimate as the minorities of race, ethnicity, nationality, or religion; and second, by denying that legal limitations on this embattled group's social opportunities involve "prejudice," or "discrimination," or "denial of rights." By contrast, various authors have regarded prejudiced discrimination as the unifying characteristic of America's negative responses toward minorities of race, of ethnic group, of physical disability, of religion, and even of Masonic affiliation.<sup>166</sup> To exclude sexual orientation from the category of embattled minorities is itself a sign of heterosexism and homophobia.

Thus, the African-American documentary *All God's Children* has stated: "African Americans were accused of seeking 'special rights' during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Now, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people are accused of seeking 'special rights.'"

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166. George Eaton Simpson and J. Milton Yinger, *Racial and Cultural Minorities: An Analysis of Prejudice and Discrimination* (New York: Harper, 1953); David Brion Davis, "Some Themes in Counter Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic and Anti-Mormon Literature," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 57 (September 1960): 205-24; Mark W. Cannon, "The Crusades Against the Masons, Catholics, and Mormons: Separate Waves of Common Current," *BYU Studies* 3 (Winter 1961): 23-40; F. James Davis, *Minority-Dominant Relations: A Sociological Analysis* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: AHM Publishing, 1978); Virginia R. Brooks, *Minority Stress and Lesbian Women* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1981); Leslie W. Dunbar, ed., *Minority Report: What Has Happened to Blacks, Hispanics, American Indians, and Other Minorities in the Eighties* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); Richard D. Mohr, "Invisible Minorities, Civil Rights, Democracy: Three Arguments For Gay Rights," *Philosophical Forum* 17 (Fall 1985) 1-24; Donald R. Atkinson and Gail Hackett, eds., *Counseling Non-Ethnic American Minorities* (Springfield, Ill.: Thomas, 1988); Ruth Colker, *Hybrid: Bisexuals, Multiracials, and Other Misfits Under American Law* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1996); Mary B. Harris, ed., *School Experiences of Gay and Lesbian Youth: The Invisible Minority* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1997); Anita Silvers, David Wasserman, and Mary B. Mahowald, *Disability, Difference, Discrimination: Perspectives on Justice in Bioethics and Public Policy* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998); Janet K. Swim and Charles Stangor, eds., *Prejudice: The Target's Perspective* (San Diego, Calif.: Academic Press, 1998); Eric Brandt, ed., *Dangerous Liaisons: Blacks, Gays, and the Struggle for Equality* (New York: New Press/Norton, 1999).

Both populations are simply seeking equal justice under the law." With supporting statements by African-American Reverend Jesse Jackson, Reverend Cecil L. Murray, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, and theologian Cornel West against discrimination based on sexual orientation, the documentary adds: "These systems of oppression are all cut from the same cloth of dominance and power over others."<sup>167</sup>

Even more significant, the political lobbying group Christian Coalition has demonstrated the linkage between opposing gay rights and limiting the rights of African-Americans. Formed by southern minister Pat Robertson, the Christian Coalition worked throughout the 1990s "at the Local Level to Oppose Homosexual Rights." During this same period, the Christian Coalition's headquarters required its African-American employees to enter through the back door and to use dining facilities separate from white employees.<sup>168</sup>

To deny any minority the full access to marriage is to deny the Declaration of Independence statement that the purpose of government is "to secure" the right of all its citizens to "the pursuit of Happiness." As with the pre-1967 limits on the marriage rights of racial minorities, it also violates the Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment provision for "equal protection of the laws" when Congress or any state has denied marriage rights to lesbians and gay males.<sup>169</sup>

Nevertheless, to me, the fact that 39 percent of Californians voted

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167. Sylvia Rhue and Linda Alband, 1996 *Best Documentary, National Black Arts Festival: All God's Children, A Discussion Guide* (San Francisco: Woman Vision, 1998), 3, 9. Besides ignoring their own religion's historical suppression of African-American civil rights, Mormons also overlook their own duplicity when they complain that gays and lesbians are seeking "special rights" in society. (For example, see Clayton Bret Pope, "Gays Gave up Their Right to Be Married," letter to the editor, *Daily Herald* [Provo, Utah], 23 July 1999, B-6: "I believe that by allowing gay people to marry would somehow be granting them a 'special' right.") By contrast, Mormons applaud professional LDS athletes who break their legal contracts by refusing to play sports on Sunday, clearly a "special right" for violating contract law. Mormons also expect the military to grant them the "special right" of wearing the LDS temple undergarment during basic training, while all other military recruits must wear military-issued undergarments. Although religious beliefs and practices are adopted (not inborn), Mormons routinely expect society to make special exceptions to accommodate religious orientation.

168. "Christian Right Maps Route to Power in Efforts At the Local Level to Oppose Homosexual Rights," *Wall Street Journal*, 25 November 1992, A-16 (for quote); "\$621 Million Racial Bias Suit Against Christian Coalition," *San Jose Mercury News*, 3 March 2001 (for story about lawsuit in 2001).

169. *Encyclopedia Americana*, 8:591 (Declaration of Independence); *Encyclopedia Americana*, 7:670 (Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution). See also Michael Nava and Robert Dawidoff, *Created Equal: Why Gay Rights Matter to America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

against the Defense of Marriage Act in March 2000 is FAITH-promoting. I can only HOPE that Congress and the Supreme Court will again guarantee a minority the rights which America's majority refuses to confer. In the meantime, I applaud the CHARITY which individual states (like Vermont) have begun to demonstrate in guaranteeing the civil rights of gays and lesbians.<sup>170</sup> As the Apostle Paul wrote, "The greatest of these is charity" (I Cor. 13:13).

This is a civil manifestation of the religious perspective expressed in the *Anglican Theological Review*: "When marriage is properly understood—as Martin Bucer argued over four centuries ago—as being primarily for companionship, not for procreation or parenting or 'the avoidance of fornication,' then its grace is operative equally for all couples who wish to enter into a covenanted relationship, whether they are a man and a woman, two women, or two men."<sup>171</sup>

The *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics* has also commented: "It is particularly disturbing to find churches which intensify the homosexual's sense of loneliness and isolation by their judgmental attitudes." While not endorsing ministerial ceremonies for same-sex couples, this ethical dictionary was emphatic about the denial of civil rights to homosexuals: "Whenever men and women are victimized because of their sexual orientation, whether formally in the law courts or less formally. . . the Christian duty is clearly to stand alongside the oppressed minority in their struggle for justice."<sup>172</sup>

As a gay male and Christian, I hope this kind of religious ethic will eventually triumph for America's minority of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender persons.

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170. "Gays Achieve Breakthrough In Vermont: Legislation Recognizes Same-Sex Civil Unions," *Washington Post*, 17 March 2000, A-1; "Once Conservative Vermont Now Leads in Giving Gays Equal Rights," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 2 April 2000, A-10; "Vermont Domestic Partnership Bill Stoking Anti-Gay-Union Fire," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 April 2000, E-1; "Gay-Rights Law Goes Into Effect in Vermont: Scores Are Expected to Make Unions Official," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 1 July 2000. Vermont's law provides for legal registration of same-sex partnerships, which still lack the technical status of marriage. This was also the status of same-sex unions in Holland until recently; in September 2000 the Netherlands authorized same-sex couples to apply for the full status of marriage (see note 42).

171. Williams, "Toward a Theology for Lesbian and Gay Marriage," 157. See also sources in note 14.

172. David J. Atkinson and David H. Field, eds., *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 453.

# On “Defense of Marriage”: A Reply to Quinn

*Armand L. Mauss*

D. MICHAEL QUINN, A SCHOLAR for whom I have immense respect, has written what he calls a “prelude” to the national campaign in “defense of marriage” with reference particularly to the efforts of the LDS church during the California phase of this campaign in the election of 2000. The campaign in question is, of course, actually a campaign against legitimating same-sex marriage, and it has been underway somewhat longer than just the California period. Mike indicates at the outset that for him this campaign is “personal,” especially the church’s involvement in it, and that is readily understandable. It is understandable too that he would thus find it difficult to maintain the emotional detachment and balance that have distinguished so much of his earlier work. I truly sympathize with him in this present predicament, or at least as much as one can who has not personally suffered as he has. Yet, precisely because so many of us, inside and outside the church, have given way to feelings, our discussions of the homosexual situation and of derivative public policy issues have too often taken the form of mutual demonizing and re-crimination across the gulf between sexual orientations.

## A PHILOSOPHICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

As citizens of the United States or other countries, we come to such issues under the influence not only of religion, but of our own respective political legacies, and these will not be uniform across the entire LDS membership, even in the same country. I should explain at the outset that my own thinking on the marriage issue has been influenced by contemporary American libertarianism. Put most simply, this philosophy calls for individuals (and thus couples) to enjoy as much personal liberty as is accompanied by personal responsibility for the consequences of their behavior. Intervention by the state should be limited to preventing force

and fraud, enforcing civil contracts made in good faith, and penalizing irresponsible behavior affecting others. So-called "life-style" matters, including conjugal relations of any kind, would be left in the private realm. Thus, no one form of "marriage" would be privileged by the state over any other forms except to hold people responsible for their offspring (if any), as well as for any other "consequences" of their conjugal behavior. Religious and other *private* organizations would be free to bestow any blessings, rewards, or penalties they might wish upon any such behavior, but these would be entirely apart from any kind of state sanction or privilege.

Coming from this perspective, I do not think that the laws of states should look with either favor *or* disfavor on "miscegenation," monogamy, polygamy, *or* sexual homogamy (i. e. "same-sex-gamy"). At the same time, I think the LDS church or any other private, voluntary organization, has the right to lay down whatever rules and sanctions it wishes in order to regulate conjugal relations, including marriage, *among its own members*. Those who accept such rules and sanctions will behave accordingly. Those who do not are free to leave the organization or to remain and accept such penalties or disadvantages as their non-compliance might bring. Some homosexual persons, indeed, opt to remain as active members of the church with a commitment to celibacy, which is doubtless difficult but no more so than the celibacy required for membership in the voluntary religious orders of some other denominations. Notice, though, that the issue here is *behavior*, not thoughts or feelings and certainly not physical traits like race or gender.

To be sure, however, church influence and involvement in external public policy is a different issue, and that is presumably the main concern of Quinn's essay. That issue, in turn, breaks down into several others. First, is the church entitled to intervene in the nation's politics (including state and local)? Of course it depends on what we mean by "intervene" or "intervention." The "separation of church and state" has never been understood in America to mean that churches cannot advocate public policies or even exert pressure upon public officials. If by "intervention" we mean the mobilizing of church resources and membership to bring pressure on the political process (i. e., more than just public preaching or occasional communication with politicians), then I would say that the LDS church historically has not intervened very often in *national* politics; but it has intervened regularly and overtly in the politics of Utah (or states where it was headquartered earlier).<sup>1</sup>

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1. In his footnote no. 32, Quinn takes issue with a similar statement appearing in my book *The Angel and the Beehive* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 109. He seems to overlook, however, my explanation and qualification there for what I

Many religious denominations have intervened overtly in the political process, and still do. In this respect, they have the same rights as labor unions or other special interest groups. Such organizations frequently mobilize their members to write or communicate with public officials as private individuals without reference to religious or other affiliations. Quinn apparently considers this a "deceptive" practice when organized by the church, but it has become a readily recognizable tactic in political advocacy, and large volumes of such duplicate mail no longer deceive anyone, least of all savvy politicians. As for tax law, as I understand it, a religious organization devoting more than a small fraction of its resources to political mobilization runs the risk of losing its tax exemption. Such, indeed, happened to the Christian Coalition, but I don't think the LDS church has ever faced such jeopardy, and the leaders are usually careful to see that it does not.

Second, even if it is legal for the LDS church to intervene overtly in the political process, should the church do so? If so, on what kinds of issues? This is essentially an organizational cost-benefit question for each and every issue separately. Posed differently: On which public issues does the church see so much at stake for the future success of its mission that it must pay the required price to defend or sustain that mission? Depending on the nature and quantity of the resources to be mobilized, the "price" paid might, of course, be steep, not only in material terms but also in internal member morale and in external public relations. What sorts of issues can justify a relatively high price? It is only in recent decades that the LDS church has acquired enough "capital," in both material and political terms, that it can afford to "weigh in" to the national political process as older and larger denominations have always done. Like them, the LDS church no longer has the innocence (if it ever did) that we associate with the other-worldly preoccupations of its pioneer days as a struggling sect. This "lost innocence" might be a disillusioning discovery for those still holding to idealistic expectations about the church and its leaders, but it ought not to shatter the faith of those with any sophistication or understanding about the nature of large, complex organizations.

Third, should the church be intervening in *this particular* political issue (the so-called "defense of marriage") in its various forms around the country? Here again there are several considerations. From a purely libertarian point of view, I would prefer to have the state stay totally out

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mean by national political "involvement" (or here, "intervention"), on page 111. Nearly all the examples Quinn gives in his long list of exceptions to my generalization were issues on which prominent General Authorities were in public disagreement, and very few would constitute examples of official and monolithic mobilization of church members and resources of the kind we have seen recently with ERA and DOMA.

of deciding which conjugal relations are to be privileged in public policy; then the church could and should do the same. In the real world, however, and not just in the United States, *every* government legitimates or otherwise privileges *some* form(s) of conjugal relations over others for purposes of inheritance, taxation, joint ownership, child support, even social status and prestige, and/or many other purposes. Similarly, every state privileges certain economic institutions ("capitalist" in the U. S. case) over others. Since these privileges originate in law and custom and not in nature, they are not "natural rights," strictly speaking, but are awarded by the state through political negotiation and struggle. Thus, voluntary conjugal relations can be considered a natural right, but access to state legitimation via marriage is politically "awarded" and is, thus, highly variable across time and cultures.

Obviously there are considerable differences among cultures in what kinds of conjugal relations are eligible for legitimation through marriage. As Quinn has reminded us, marriage across certain racial or ethnic boundaries (so-called "miscegenation") was only recently legitimated in most (if not all) of the United States and not just in Utah. That kind of state discrimination certainly seems unreasonable in retrospect though it is still practiced in some other societies. If we consider marriage within certain categories (like the same sex) as analogous to marriage across ethnic boundaries, then perhaps discrimination against same-sex marriage would also be considered unreasonable. On the other hand, to use a different analogy, denying state legitimacy to marriages within the same *sex* does not seem inherently any more unreasonable than denying legitimacy to marriages within the same family, a common if variable form of state discrimination.<sup>2</sup> Minimum age and certain kinds of disability are also criteria that have been used, with considerable variation across time and cultures, to determine eligibility for marriage, whether or not such criteria seem rational on their face.

To reiterate the main point here: In our society as in others, the extension and denial of legitimacy to relationships through marriage are always questions of political power, contention, and negotiation between or among interested parties. At least in democratic societies, these

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2. Presumably marriages between members of the same family or kinship group have been regulated in most societies because of fears about the genetic consequences of consanguinity or "incest" (even well before our modern understanding of genetics). However, couples in modern societies have ready access to contraception, so one wonders if we will see this long-standing bar to marriage also challenged. See "Incest" entry in the *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, Second Edition, Edgar Borgatta and Rhonda J. V. Montgomery, eds. (New York: Macmillan Co., 2000), 1270-78, for a review of the religious, cultural, and political determinants (as opposed to rational or scientific ones) of rules governing sex and marriage among close relatives.

arrangements are always subject to renegotiation or change and have, in fact, been changed periodically throughout history. Churches and social movements alike (including the movement for "gay rights") are entitled to contend for their interests in the political arena. New claimants are typically resisted by older ones, sometimes with considerable prejudice (though invective usually flies in both directions). Those individuals and groups which conclude that there is something crucially at stake for them can be expected either to promote or to resist change accordingly. Thus, the LDS church in the nineteenth century contested the privileged status of heterosexual monogamy in hopes of extending that status to polygyny.<sup>3</sup> Today the church's interests are different, and it is now defending the privileged status of heterosexual monogamy. Delicious irony though that might be, history is full of ironies, especially when a change of vital interests has occurred.

#### THE IMPLICIT CHURCH RATIONALE

So what are the apparent "vital interests" of the church today in its "defense of marriage?" I am in no position to speak for the church on this matter. However, from the public discourse on the subject in church settings, I would infer two different kinds of interests. The first is essentially *theological* in nature. From the accumulated doctrinal heritage condensed in the widely disseminated "Proclamation on the Family," we learn of a divine intention for human destiny based on eventual marriage and procreation, both in mortality and in eternity. Some church members may harbor doubts about some or all of the implications of this theological framework, but the Proclamation seems an accurate, if oversimplified, statement of the understanding shared by today's church leaders and most members.<sup>4</sup> It seems to me that those who are hoping the church will change its internal policies on same-sex marriage, however humane such a change might seem, are expecting too much. Marriage *between* the sexes, and the expectation of procreation here and hereafter, seem to lie at the very foundation of the doctrinal complex called the "Plan of Salvation," in church parlance.

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3. As we all know, the national and international attacks on Mormons during the 19th century, for polygamy and other things, involved some extraordinarily vicious and unfair propaganda. Quinn is right in pointing to parallels with some of today's attacks on same-sex marriage and on homosexuals more generally. Yet, just because some of the arguments against Mormon polygamy were phony doesn't mean that they were *all* phony. What we have learned about the actual practice of early Mormon polygamy through recent historical research would seem to vindicate many of the fears once expressed by the Protestant establishment, and by the government, about its impact on the very institution of marriage.

4. Elder Dallin Oaks offers a much more extensive development of this doctrinal framework in the first half of his "Same Gender Attraction," *Ensign* (October, 1995): 7-13.



A second (but probably related) vital interest seems to be more *normative* in nature. Since the "Age of Aquarius" in the 1960s, our nation, like much of the world, has passed through a period in which the traditional "Victorian" model of marriage and family has increasingly lost the normative dominance that it enjoyed while our church leaders were growing up. Rates of divorce, non-marital conjugal cohabitation, birth rates to teenagers and the unmarried, as well as serious venereal diseases, have all increased greatly during this same period of normative transition.<sup>5</sup> It is not unreasonable to believe that these developments are all related. While it is naive and foolish to romanticize the family of the 1950s (which had its own downside), we should be able to understand why church leaders might see the permissive trends in laws and norms since then as having undermined the stability, and even viability, of the family as an institution.

I do not see church discourse as "blaming" homosexuals for these developments, as Quinn seems to imply. Yet given this societal context of recent and drastic change already apparent in the nature of American family life, it should not be hard to understand why church leaders would be reluctant to see any further "experimentation" with family norms in our society. Even such marginal changes as same-sex marriage, which are likely to have only a minimal practical impact, might still be worrisome to them as *symbolic* indications of a continued permissive slide down a normative slippery slope.<sup>6</sup> One need not embrace all the phony arguments Quinn cites that have been advanced by bigots or "homophobes" and I do not. Yet I see nothing homophobic or irrational about the theological or normative reasoning that I have just summarized. One might well have disagreements with this reasoning, and these should certainly be introduced into our discussions.

Meanwhile, church leaders obviously believe that as God's spokesmen they cannot condone conjugal relations outside the framework of the divine marriage institution (as they understand it), either for the

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5. See the recent article by Tim B. Heaton, "Social Forces that Imperil the Family," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 32, no. 4 (Winter, 1999):19-41.

6. Although Heaton does not consider same-sex relationships as much of a threat to the family, he does note that "the costs and benefits to . . . legitimizing [them] have not been empirically demonstrated" (26-28). In contrast to the conventional estimate of Quinn and others (n152) that 10% of the population is homosexual, Heaton indicates about half that figure reports having had sexual relations with persons of the same sex since age 18. The 5% figure is about what appears in most scientific surveys and has stayed about the same for more than ten years. Heaton's data come from the General Social Surveys of the National Opinion Research Corporation. See also entries on "Alternative Life Styles" (106-14), "Sexual Behavior in Marriage and Close Relationships" (2537-49) and "Sexual Orientation" (2564-75) in the *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, cited above.

church or for society as a whole. I do not believe that most of them are oblivious to the pain of those living without fulfilling and legitimate conjugal relationships, whether homosexual or heterosexual. They simply find themselves in a very uncomfortable predicament: If they succumb to the pleas of those in pain (or their families), they are abdicating their responsibilities to maintain gospel standards of behavior (for to them the issue is *behavior*, not orientation). On the other hand, if they do not embrace the newer and seemingly progressive or humane resolution sought by same-sex marriage advocates, then they are open to the charge of insensitivity at best or bigotry at worst.

#### THE NATURE OF QUINN'S CRITIQUE

As I recognized at the outset, Mike Quinn has been hurt personally by the other side of this same predicament. The indignation that sometimes appears in his analysis is, thus, understandable. Yet he seems unwilling or unable to credit, or even to acknowledge, the conscientious theological and normative concerns which might motivate the political interventions of the church leaders in this campaign, even if he regards them as misguided. It would certainly be fair enough for him to engage and critique the church's theological and ecclesiastical rationale. He could either reject it altogether out of his own conscientious disbelief; or, if he is a believer in general, then he could explain how LDS doctrine might reasonably accommodate the proposed modification of the marriage institution.<sup>7</sup> Instead, he simply dismisses the church posture as a "political campaign of fear against gays and lesbians." Bypassing altogether whatever conscientious theological claims the church might have, he goes right to his assumptions about certain other reasons for its campaign against same-sex marriage.

These other reasons, we learn, boil down mainly to the "homophobia" and "social hysteria" which Quinn apparently believes constitute the principal sources of the Mormon motivation on this issue. Quinn

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7. Even the early critics of LDS policies on the race issue did not simply dismiss church policy as bigotry. They questioned the authentic doctrinal and historical bases for these policies, letting the relevant quotations from early leaders "speak for themselves," as it were. (See, e.g., the collection of *Dialogue* essays in Lester E. Bush and Armand L. Mauss, eds., *Neither White nor Black: Mormon Scholars Confront the Race Issue in a Universal Church* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1984). Quinn's own prize-winning *Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996) appropriately addresses the history in question, though it is not clear how many of the LDS relationships he cites were, in fact, homosexual in the physical or conjugal sense. Aside from the history, the doctrinal bases for restrictions on same-sex marriage remain to be adequately addressed in the way that the racial restrictions were.

recognizes that a similar kind of motivation underlies American public opinion generally, which he regards as "the tyranny of the majority."<sup>8</sup> Yet for Mormons in particular, somehow he blames their "obedience above conscience," dismissing them as "army ants." My readers will know that I am no champion of blind obedience, and I have seen my share of it. Yet that does not necessarily explain the motivation of all or even most of those who concur with church leaders on a given issue; and anyway such charge is no substitute for engaging their conscientious arguments, however misguided these might seem. In the California campaign especially, I saw at least as much genuine soul-searching as blind obedience in the California wards with which I associated.<sup>9</sup>

I know as well as Quinn does (though not from personal pain) that bigotry of all kinds, including "homophobia," is alive and well in LDS communities, as in our nation generally. I do not, however, think it is necessary or helpful to cite such malevolent feelings (even if conceding that they are sincere) as the primary explanation for a given preference in public policy, whether social, political, or economic. I can remember when those who contested the state requirement for loyalty oaths from teachers in California (1950s) were publicly suspected of Communist sympathies, as if there could be no *other* motivation for their objections. Much more recently, those who object to the more strenuous forms of "affirmative action," such as racial quotas and "set-asides," are regarded by some as race bigots by definition, as though there could be no other reasons for their opposition to such "progressive" policies. It is always hazardous to draw inferences about a person's general psychological or ideological outlook from his or her position on a specific public policy issue.

Of course, it is especially when we lack scientific consensus about a sensitive issue (such as when life begins and ends) that the issue gets relegated to the political arena for resolution. Contention and power struggles with the usual emotion and acrimony are, therefore, inevitable. There is no consensus in the medical establishment on the origin of differential sexual orientation.<sup>10</sup> Even the official diagnostic manual for

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8. Heaton's national data (28) indicate that since 1972 between 70% and 80% of American adults have continued to believe that homosexual relations are "always" or "almost always" wrong. For Mormons, of course, the range is even higher. A slight decline is evident for both populations during the final decade of the twentieth century. See also the entries cited above from the *Encyclopedia of Sociology*.

9. Certainly *some* Mormons besides me and Quinn take seriously the sentiments he quotes (nn143 and 144) from B. H. Roberts, J. Reuben Clark, and later authorities to the effect that church leaders are not infallible and can be seriously in error. Until church members come to believe that such error has occurred in a specific matter, however, they can hardly be criticized as mere "army ants" just because they follow their leaders.

10. The second half of Elder Oaks's "Same Gender Attraction" (1995) discusses several relevant scientific references to the current state of biological knowledge on the matter.

psychiatry and psychology has changed drastically on this issue in only 25 years, and the changes have been prompted as much by political considerations as by science.<sup>11</sup> We do know that in scientific research on the body, the brain, or anything else, causal inferences cannot be drawn when the suspected origin or "cause" is manifested only after the onset of the "effect" (as when special brain traits are found in homosexuals but only after their sexual behavior has already become habitual). Even half a century ago, Alfred Kinsey found sexual orientation to constitute a *range*, rather than a dichotomy, with environmental experiences potentially more salient in the middle of the range than at either end. So there is much that we have yet to learn.<sup>12</sup>

#### FRAMING THE ARGUMENTS

To a large extent, Quinn's essay adopts the line of argument used so successfully by the national gay rights movement, which of course does not necessarily represent all, or even most, homosexual persons. This argument portrays gay rights, including the right to legitimated same-sex marriage, as civil rights like those achieved by women and by certain racial or ethnic minorities. Derivatively, opposition to gay rights, as to these other civil rights, is attributed largely to prejudice or bigotry. Despite his own recognition, at the beginning of the essay, that different people might have different kinds of prejudice, Quinn seems to believe that bigotry is all of a piece for LDS church leaders. At least that is the implication of the parallel which he draws between the racial bigotry among earlier leaders and the "homophobia" of today's leaders. By my calculation, about a third of the essay is devoted to demonstrating, with numerous and redundant quotations, that even distinguished LDS leaders once harbored outrageous prejudices about black people.<sup>13</sup> This is, of

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11. The political processes lying behind the periodic revisions in this manual are detailed in Wilbur J. Scott, "PTSD in DSM-III: A Case in the Politics of Diagnosis and Disease," *Social Problems* 37, no. 3 (August, 1990): 294-310. A reference to the psychiatric redefinition of homosexuality in particular will be found on page 304. See also Ronald Bayer, *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry: The Politics of Diagnosis* (New York: Basic Books, 1981) and the references cited earlier from the *Encyclopedia of Sociology* on alternative life styles, sexual orientation, and sexual behavior.

12. I believe I first encountered this idea in Alfred C. Kinsey, W. B. Pomeroy, and C. E. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1948). The ongoing effort among scholars to find a satisfactory definition for the nature and characteristics of homosexuality will be apparent also from the *Encyclopedia of Sociology* essays cited above.

13. It has long been part of Quinn's scholarly style to compound gigantic lists of citations from various sources in support of essentially the same evidence. Multiplying such redundant citations does not necessarily add more evidence, but it does take up as much extra space as indulgent editors will permit. More important, for present purposes, these extensive quotations and citations about racial bigotry are relevant only to the extent that their connection to homophobia has been demonstrated and not just assumed.

course, not a new discovery. The leaders cited were all products of the nineteenth century,<sup>14</sup> and Quinn eventually concedes that their prejudices were well within the national consensus until the 1960s. Even Abraham Lincoln's public statements about black people, before and after emancipation, do not look very good by today's lights. So why does Quinn devote so much space to demonstrating the obvious? By implication, the argument seems to be that if church leaders were race bigots then, their successors are probably homophobes now, for prejudice is prejudice.

This facile parallel has become the conventional and "politically correct" way of framing the argument for gay rights. It might be the most useful way, in the current political culture, to understand the nature of the political controversy, but not necessarily so.<sup>15</sup> It is important to keep in mind that the way in which we frame an argument or a theory determines what we consider and what we ignore in our discussions. A parallel, or an analogy, is just such a frame. If we can agree on what a certain situation or condition is *like*, then we have gone a long way toward agreeing on what it *is*. Many of us are sincerely struggling to find an appropriate analogy for the homosexual orientation. If we knew that it was genetically determined, then the analogy to race or gender (sex) would be much clearer; but we don't know that. Other analogies might also make sense: for example, homosexuality could be analogous to some kind of dysfunction or disability, which would not necessarily entitle it to special "civil rights" protection.

Certainly when advocates like Quinn invoke the American tradition of equal protection under the law and call for the extension to homosexuals of all the rights and privileges accorded other officially recognized "minorities," they are using a perfectly reasonable analogy to frame their arguments—even if it is not the only feasible analogy. I find certain other rhetorical devices, however, less legitimate. Toward the end of his essay, Quinn claims that to question his analogy of gay rights to ethnic minority rights is to "privilege the current campaign" against same-sex marriage. Of course—just as to advocate such an analogy is to "privilege" the campaign *for* such same-sex marriage. That's what we do in debates. Quinn then goes on, however, to insist that failure to embrace *his* analogy "is itself a sign of heterosexism and homophobia." Thus, his oppo-

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14. See Quinn's n118 and his statement in the accompanying text: "In these respects, Utah and the Mormons were representative of the rest of America's white society until the 1960s."

15. As I write this during Labor Day weekend, 2001, a United Nations conference is underway in Durban, South Africa, at which most of the UN delegates seem determined to equate Zionism with racism. I doubt that most Americans, gay or straight, would accept *that* parallel.

nents are put into the position that if they question his framing device (his analogy), they are bigots by definition, whatever might be the intellectual foundation of their political position. Much earlier in his essay, Quinn also embraces a definition of "phobia" that relies more on recent advocacy literature than on traditional dictionary meanings. In his usage, that term would cover *any* "opposition against legal protections based on sexual orientation," even when "calmly reasoned arguments" are used.<sup>16</sup> Movements organized for such opposition, we are told, are best understood as expressions of "social hysteria," again without examining any other rationale they might claim.<sup>17</sup>

For its part, the LDS church is, of course, framing the argument differently and to its own advantage. The discourse of church leaders and literature, before and during the California campaign, places its concept of marriage within a theological framework. In this framework, the ultimate purpose of marriage, in the divine intention, is procreation. Sexual relations might well have certain wholesome secondary functions, but marriage as an institution is intended primarily for the production and nurturing of offspring. Differences between the two sexes, furthermore, are "eternal," we are told, and—perhaps by extension—so are the differences in sexual orientation that nature's God has intended should accompany the male and female sex, respectively. In this construction of nature, there is no provision for a divinely condoned same-sex marriage, and any sexual relations outside marriage, whether homosexual or heterosexual, are considered offensive to God. In the understanding of the church leaders, and of orthodox Mormons more generally, such is the only reasonable framework for understanding the institution of marriage.

As the LDS argument is framed, the analogy to the civil rights of "other minorities" is not applicable here because (1) gender and race are given at birth, while homosexual (or any sexual) preference has an obscure origin and might well be a product largely of one's social experiences; and (2) in any case, it is *behavior* which is at issue, not sexual orientation itself, any more than race or gender themselves. In making such distinctions for the present debate, church leaders have not

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16. Quinn (nn6-9) quotes two recent standard dictionaries that emphasize the *irrationality* implied by the term "phobia," but a third dictionary (*American Heritage*) dilutes the meaning simply to "fear" or "aversion" when applied to black or gay people. In my opinion, the diluted version largely destroys the original meaning and permits its advocates, as a rhetorical tactic, to put a scary-sounding epithet ("phobia") into circulation without having to justify the oblique imputation of irrationality to opponents.

17. The term "social hysteria" has been largely replaced in contemporary sociology by the less pejorative "moral crusade," intended as a non-judgmental reference to the specific content or motivation of a movement.

acknowledged, as candor would require, that earlier legal restrictions on the liberty of women and minorities, once fully condoned in the church and in most states, *were indeed* based on “race and gender themselves,” and not merely on certain kinds of behavior. To that extent, Quinn’s analogy to race relations has some relevance to the debate, even if one believes (as I do) that he has exaggerated the relevance. Church spokesmen also justify the LDS campaign by distinguishing the “moral issue” of same-sex marriage from “political issues” more generally. This is simply a rhetorical device, of course; any issues fought out in the political arena are by definition political, so the distinction makes no sense.

#### CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Much as I might prefer both church and state to leave marriage and conjugal relationships entirely in the private realm, it appears to me that the current model for marriage and family in American society, which is a somewhat eroded Victorian model, is likely to remain the subject of strenuous political contention for some years to come. The LDS church is one of probably many interest groups that can be expected to remain in contention, pursuant to certain theological and normative interests that its leaders regard as vital. For me, that is a sufficient explanation for the ongoing political participation of the church in the “defense of marriage” campaign. I might have some serious questions about the cost-benefit ratio, or about strategy and tactics, but I have no doubt about the legitimate right of the church in this contest, and I see no reason to impugn the motives of church leaders.

To their credit, church leaders, at least at the general level, have shown more restraint in recent years than earlier in the rhetoric with which they characterize homosexuals. Toward the end of his essay, Quinn has appropriately pointed to several reassuring or (in his words) “faith promoting” examples of such changes, even if these do not go far enough. In many of these instances, however, Quinn sees not genuine progress in official thinking but rather mere “smoke screens” covering the perpetuation of the earlier retrograde thinking. This puts even the more modern and well-intentioned church spokesmen in a “catch-22” situation: If they don’t explicitly renounce the language and stereotypes of the past, they remain open to charges of bigotry; if they do speak in more humane and presumably enlightened terms, then they are judged as insincere and charged with using “smoke screens” and mere “platitudes.” Mutual understanding is not facilitated in this process.

In no way do I intend that observation to minimize the extent of prejudice and ill will remaining among Mormons toward homosexuals and the cause of gay rights. Any of us active in LDS social circles continue to hear the same kinds of derogatory and stereotypic comments and “humor” about homosexuals that we encounter in the society at large;

and some of it is definitely hateful. All of it undermines the rhetorical claims of our leaders that LDS resistance to same-sex marriage is motivated only by devout religious belief and by a genuine civic concern for the integrity of "traditional" marriage. To the extent that we harbor prejudices in our hearts, and especially if we give expression to them, even privately, we not only harm our gay brothers and sisters, we also weaken the moral position of the church itself and its leaders in the current and ongoing political campaigns "in defense of marriage."

To look at the other side of the tragic gulf, I do not believe that the gay rights cause or the quest in the Mormon community for mutual understanding and acceptance between gay folks and others can be advanced by castigating orthodox Mormons for their beliefs about marriage, however retrograde those beliefs might seem in the contemporary social and political environment. Nor is anything but catharsis likely to be gained by recounting *ad naseum* the morally anachronistic and reprehensible statements and beliefs of past LDS leaders whether about race or sexual orientation or anything else. Furthermore, suggestions of their "moral responsibility" for recent suicides, past lynchings, or other "hate crimes" are not only unfair, but indicate an extraordinarily simplistic understanding of the complex causes for such tragedies.<sup>18</sup>

There is obviously still much to be deplored in the intellectual and emotional responses to the homosexual orientation among Mormon leaders and members as in the nation generally. Yet those responses are not monolithic; they range from hostile to sympathetic. There is a range also to the public policy preferences about how best to accommodate persons stigmatized by their sexual preferences or by stereotypes about the same. It is therefore unfair to suggest that church leaders and others who do not accept the particular platform and agenda of the gay rights movement are *ipso facto* bigots or homophobes, just as it is unfair and unnecessarily prejudicial to dismiss the heartfelt claims and aspirations of homosexuals with charges of mere licentiousness, perversion, or depravity. We can all do better.

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18. Quinn seems to see a correlation between a rise in hate crimes and the participation of religious groups in campaigns for "Defense of Marriage" (see his notes 24, 129-41). The subject of "hate crimes" requires another whole discussion. There is little consensus among scholars in either the law or the social sciences about the validity of that discrete category of crime nor about the costs and benefits of employing the category in actual practice. See, for example, Valerie Jenness and Ryken Grattet, *Making Hate a Crime: From Social Movement Concept to Law Enforcement Practice* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001); and James Jacobs and Kimberly Potter, *Hate Crimes: Criminal Law and Identity Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). For a contrasting view, see Frederick M. Lawrence, *Punishing Hate: Bias Crimes under American Law* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).



# In a Pueblo Indian Dwelling, Four-Corners

*Amy E. Jensen*

Beside  
shards of earthen jars and bowls,  
the Kachina-Child returns  
in the desert's smoldering gaze. He enters  
from the bent reeds, beyond nothing and earth.  
He wears his mask and his memory.

On the plain,  
his steps falter across  
the shadows combed into crooked cracks of the clay.  
In the kiva,  
he touches charred wood and ashes as  
the shadows flicker behind him.

Tonight he  
raises his arms above his head and wakes to visions.  
As they shatter, he takes each piece out of himself  
and plants it beside the cracked blue corn.

If you see him,  
lower your eyes. His gaze is a harsh smoke,  
the piercing of yucca, whose splintering fibers prick  
as he stares into you and walks inside. Closely he watches,  
but if you fear fire, he'll step back to the shadows,  
the shards cutting deep.

# Philosophical Christian Apology Meets “Rational” Mormon Theology<sup>1</sup>

*L. Rex Sears*

AS JOSEPH SMITH MATURED in his prophetic calling, he came to regard what he saw as the rational appeal of his developing theology as one of its chief virtues.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, this attitude continued to animate authoritative interpretations and defenses of Mormon doctrine offered by leading Mormon churchmen and intellectuals.<sup>3</sup> By way of example, early Mormon apostle Orson Pratt, perhaps better known as Professor Pratt than Elder Pratt to his Mormon contemporaries, employed Aquinean logic to guide and defend his theological innovations,<sup>4</sup> while unfavorably contrasting what he characterized as the logical absurdities of immaterialist Christian teachings about God and souls with the clear sensibility of the thoroughgoing materialism taught by Joseph Smith in the later years of

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1. This paper is adapted from chaps. 1 and 4 of my dissertation, “An Essay in Philosophical Mormon Theology” (Harvard University, 1996). I thank my advisors, Professors Christine Korsgaard and Warren Goldfarb of the Harvard philosophy department, and Professor David Paulsen, of Brigham Young University, who read and reported on the dissertation to my committee. While in common usage the connotation of “apology” has come to include sheepish admission of some sort of failing, the venerable use to which I put the term in this essay signifies nothing of the sort: According to this older usage, apology is just defense of faith, whether sheepish or not.

2. See, e.g., Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976), 192; Stan Larson, “The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text,” *Brigham Young University Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 204.

3. Throughout that time period, there was an appreciable intersection between intellectual and ecclesiastical leadership.

4. Orson Pratt, *Great First Cause, or the Self-Moving Forces of the Universe*, reprinted in *The Essential Orson Pratt*, foreword by David J. Whittaker (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 173-197.

his ministry.<sup>5</sup> In 1914, future Apostle John A. Widtsoe published his popular and enduring *A Rational Theology*,<sup>6</sup> which continued in service as an instructional manual for decades. In 1931, Apostle James E. Talmage went so far as to defend geology and evolution in a public lecture delivered at the Mormon Tabernacle, in what would prove a vain attempt to stem the irrationalist (or at least anti-scientific) forces then gaining strength in Mormon leadership circles.<sup>7</sup>

As described below, these thinkers also championed various forms of rational apology, some shared in common with more orthodox forms of Christianity and others unique to Mormonism. While I respect and admire the naturalist and rationalist<sup>8</sup> impulses evident in the theological speculations of these thinkers, for reasons explained below I think that the coordinate effort to find a rational basis for belief in that theology does not succeed. I defend that conclusion in part by developing and accentuating relevant contrasts between Mormon and mainstream Christian ideology, and in part by making arguments which have negative implications for rationalist apologetics in any Christian context.

This essay is critical rather than constructive. But I do think that the Mormon tradition offers resources from which can be extracted a more promising approach to faith and its foundations, an approach with obvious affinities to Immanuel Kant's and William James's proposals.<sup>9</sup>

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5. Orson Pratt, *Absurdities of Immaterialism, or, A Reply to T. W. P. Taylder's Pamphlet, Entitled, "The Materialism of the Mormons or Latter-day Saints, Examined and Exposed,"* reprinted in *The Essential Orson Pratt*, 61-108.

6. Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Co.

7. "The Earth and Man," reprinted in James P. Harris, ed., *The Essential James E. Talmage* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 241-55. However, Talmage's defense of evolution did not reach the claim that mankind had evolved. Further, it would be misleading to describe the first century of the church as a time of unbridled rationalism and free-thinking; e.g., Brigham Young instructed church members to destroy copies of certain Orson Pratt works in their possession (see Gary James Bergera, "The Orson Pratt-Brigham Young Controversies: Conflict Within the Quorums, 1853 to 1868," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 13 [Summer 1980]: 37). Yet even during Young's heavy-handed reign, Pratt was able to retain his position in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and Young was happy to exploit Pratt's obvious capabilities by giving him such vitally important assignments as the first public announcement and defense of Mormon polygamy in 1852 (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: F. D. Richards, 1854-86], 1:53-66, hereafter JD). In tandem with the church's manifest political and social alignment with the religious right since World War II, there has developed an irrationalist and anti-intellectual attitude, at least with regard to theological matters, which contrasts with the generally prevalent tenor of earlier years. These threads and their interrelations are explored in O. Kendall White, *Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy: A Crisis Theology* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987).

8. As the conjunction of this term with "naturalism" perhaps makes clear, my use of "rationalism" and related terms in this paper connotes not opposition to empiricism, but rather the amenability of reality to human understanding.

9. My positive proposals can be found in chap. 4 of my dissertation, "An Essay in Philosophical Mormon Theology."

Although I reject the rationalist arguments championed by central Mormon thinkers, my own views—theological as well as apologetic—are continuous with theirs on a still more fundamental level: mine are thoroughly informed by the central Mormon dogma of the essential likeness of man to God.

#### DOCTRINAL ESSENTIALS

The arguments advanced in this essay depend intimately on a doctrinal framework which seems increasingly open to challenge, so I think it worthwhile to preface my discussion of faith with a brief summary of relevant doctrinal presuppositions. In this essay I rely chiefly on two sources for doctrine. One is Joseph Smith's 1844 King Follett Discourse, the church founder's funeral oration for a prosperous Mormon stonemason named King Follett, in which are brought together a wide array of the Prophet's later teachings. The other is the corpus of B. H. Roberts (to whom informal surveys of living Mormon intellectuals conducted in 1969 and 1993 gave pride of place as the "most eminent intellectual. . . in Mormon history," the later survey by an even more convincing margin than the first).<sup>10</sup>

In recent decades the church has focused on what it has in common with more orthodox forms of Christianity and, correspondingly, on the Book of Mormon, which was completed in 1829 and is the most doctrinally orthodox of the documents unique to the Mormon canon. The brand of Mormonism to which I am most inclined, that which owes the most to the sources upon which I chiefly rely in this essay, retains its greatest influence in Mormon communities whose collective memory reaches to earlier times. Of course, even in newer areas the accepted doctrine overlaps considerably with the older notions, but there are some outright departures and, more noticeably, significant shifts in detail and emphasis.

For me the heart of Mormon heresy<sup>11</sup> resides in Lorenzo Snow's

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10. Stan Larson, "Intellectuals in Mormon History: An Update," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Fall 1993): 187-89. Roberts served as a general authority from 1888 until his death in 1933, during which time he produced a substantial body of work, including the five-volume *The Seventy's Course on Theology*, a priesthood instruction manual; *The Gospel*, a Sunday School instruction manual; the six-volume *Comprehensive History of the Church* (Roberts also compiled and edited the seven-volume *History of the Church*); *Mormon Doctrine of Deity*, arguably the most comprehensive and sophisticated defense of Mormon theology ever undertaken by a general authority; several other apologetic, historical, and biographical books; and numerous articles and pamphlets. For an overview of Roberts's life and accomplishments by the Mormon intellectual ranked fourth by the 1969 survey and third by the 1993 survey, see Sterling McMurrin's biographical essay prefacing Roberts's *Studies of the Book of Mormon* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

11. This "heresy" is much of what sets Mormonism apart, doctrinally speaking, from

couplet: "As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may be."<sup>12</sup> I understand this to mean that humanity and divinity are not only related as discrete points on a developmental line; rather, this kinship entails that God's current position in the universe resembles our own in fundamental ways. In the words of Joseph Smith, "God Himself who sits enthroned in yonder heavens is a Man like unto one of yourselves—that is the great secret!"<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, God inhabits a universe not of his own making: "God himself had materials to organize the world out of chaos—chaotic matter—which is element and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existence from the time he had."<sup>14</sup>

Smith's contemporaries and successors readily concluded that God is as powerless to subvert the laws governing eternally and independently existent element as he is to create or destroy it. In 1855 Apostle Parley Pratt (Orson Pratt's older brother) published *Key to the Science of Theology*, which like Widtsoe's *A Rational Theology* went through several editions and continued in use for decades after its first publication. In this book Pratt characterized the idea "that miracles are events which transpire contrary to the laws of nature" as a "popular error. . . of modern times," and insisted that "[i]f such is the fact, then, there never has been a miracle, and there never will be one."<sup>15</sup> Almost without exception, Mormon scholars who have considered the matter concur,<sup>16</sup> insisting upon naturalistic accounts of even the greatest miracles of the Christian tradition. Regarding the creation, Widtsoe said: "Latter-day Saints are inclined to hold that forces about us, known in part through common human experience, especially in the field of physical science, were employed in the formation of the earth."<sup>17</sup> President Spencer W. Kimball elaborated this point more recently, in a fashion refreshingly reminiscent

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other religions claiming Judeo-Christian ancestry. As a general matter, I find Mormonism at its best when at its most heretical.

12. Clyde J. Williams, ed., *The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1984), 1.

13. Larson, "King Follett Discourse," 200. Note that Larson and all of the original sources report Joseph Smith characterizing God as a man, *simpliciter*, not an *exalted* man, per the commonly used (Grimshaw) amalgamation of those sources (see Andrew Ehat and Lyndon Cook, compilers, *The Words of Joseph Smith* [Orem, Utah: Grandin Book Co., 1991], 341, 344, 349, 357).

14. Larson, "King Follett Discourse," 203.

15. Parley Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons Co., 1891), 104.

16. See, e.g., James E. Talmage's highly influential *Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1984), 200-2. Not surprisingly, Bruce R. McConkie appears to be an outlier on this issue; see his (also influential, though less so, I think, on this score) *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 506.

17. John Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991), 150.

of earlier Mormon figures, teaching that knowledge of every science, including physics, botany, biology and a host of others, will be required before we can organize worlds of our own.<sup>18</sup>

Parley Pratt characterized the Biblical account of the creation of Adam and Eve as an infantile myth that Moses, who knew better, foisted on his followers because they were unable to "receive [God's] heavenly laws or bide his presence":

Thus the holy man was forced again to veil the past in mystery, and in the beginning of his history assign to man an earthly origin.

Man, moulded from the earth as a brick.

Woman, manufactured from a rib.

Thus, parents still would fain conceal from budding manhood the mysteries of procreation, or the sources of life's ever-flowing river, by relating some childish tale of new-born life, engendered in the hollow trunk of some old tree, or springing with spontaneous growth like mushrooms from out the heaps of rubbish. O man! when wilt thou cease to be a child in knowledge?

Man, as we have said, is the offspring of Deity.<sup>19</sup>

Pratt intended his description of man as the offspring of deity to be taken quite literally. Similarly, in 1852 Brigham Young publicly offered a dismissive critique of the idea that Jesus was conceived through means other than procreative union:

Now remember from this time forth, and forever, that Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost. I will repeat a little anecdote. I was in conversation with a certain learned professor upon this subject, when I replied, to this idea—"if the Son was begotten by the Holy Ghost, it would be very dangerous to baptize and confirm females, and give the Holy Ghost to them, lest he should beget children to be palmed upon the Elders by the people, bringing the Elders into great difficulties."<sup>20</sup>

While maintaining that Jesus was begotten of a virgin, Talmage still insisted that Jesus "was begotten of Elohim, the Eternal Father, not in violation of natural law but in accordance with a higher manifestation thereof."<sup>21</sup> The apparent driving thought is that natural laws bind and limit God himself; why else insist on the conformity of miracles to law?

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18. Spencer Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 53, 499.

19. Pratt, *Key to Theology*, 50-51.

20. JD 1:51.

21. James Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982), 77. Talmage goes on to characterize Jesus as "the offspring from that association of supreme sanctity."

We are like the independently existing universe, operating according to its equally independent laws, in that we, too, self-exist:

We say that God Himself is a self-existent God. Who told you so? It's correct enough, but how did it get into your heads? Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principle? . . . the mind of man—the intelligent part—is as immortal as, and is coequal with, God Himself.<sup>22</sup>

Together with the scriptural teaching with which it is regularly paired, that “[i]ntelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be” (D&C 93:29), this passage has been variously interpreted, but the only exposition ever to have been published with church sanction was Roberts’s. According to Roberts, each of us has always [self-]existed as a discrete intelligence, now housed in a spirit body, which is in turn housed in our physical body.<sup>23</sup> At a minimum, as an intelligence each of us has always possessed self-consciousness, “the power to distinguish himself from other things—the ‘me’ from the ‘not me’”; the power to deliberately compare, “by which he sets over one thing against another”; and the “power of choosing one thing instead of another.”<sup>24</sup>

As might be guessed from the description of intelligences housed in spirits, which are in turn housed in physical bodies, spirits are corporeal entities (D&C 131:7-8) that are “in the likeness” of our physical bodies (D&C 77:2). Incidentally, the import of D&C 131:7-8 appears to be that there are no immaterial entities, which entails that intelligences must be corporeal, too.

God was once “like one of us.” God became a god, and we may become gods, “the same as all Gods have done—by going from a small capacity to a great capacity, from a small degree to another, from grace to grace, until the resurrection.” Our faithfulness before being born into this world earned us admission to this life, and if we are faithful in our present stewardship we, too, may become gods, rearing children of our own to mature divinity (Abraham 3:26-28). And when we are exalted and gain a kingdom, like Jesus we “will give it to the Father and it will . . . exalt His glory. . . so that He obtains kingdom rolling upon kingdom. . . He will take a higher exaltation,” as we take his present place.<sup>25</sup>

Religious faith appears to be the essential feature that distinguishes those exalted to divinity from the merely “honorable men [and women]

22. Larson, “King Follett Discourse,” 203.

23. B. H. Roberts, “Immortality of Man,” *Improvement Era* 10: 401-23, reprinted in *A Scrap Book* (Provo, Utah: Lynn Pulsipher, 1991), 2:26-28.

24. *Ibid.*, 26.

25. Larson, “King Follett Discourse,” 201.

of the earth" (D&C 76:75), who receive rewards that are pleasant enough, but do not become gods (D&C 76:50-80).

#### A BRIEF SURVEY OF MORMON APOLOGY

Over the centuries philosophers intent on proving the existence of God have generally offered arguments falling into three more or less standard categories: ontological, cosmological, and teleological or argument from design. For convenience I will often refer to each kind of argument in the definite singular. Of these, the ontological argument appears to have been entirely ignored in the Mormon tradition, and the cosmological argument paid little but noteworthy attention, while the teleological argument or argument from design has received noticeable patronage from both Mormon leaders and the membership at large.

Moral arguments, like Kant's, and voluntarist arguments, like Pascal's and James's, are virtually absent from the Mormon tradition. However, in addition to the argument from design, two distinctively Mormon patterns of argument figure prominently in the tradition. First is what I will call the argument from the Book of Mormon. This is basically a version of the argument from design that focuses on that book. In outline, the argument goes like this: One or more features of the Book of Mormon require(s) divine intervention to explain the existence of the book. The second distinctively Mormon argument, which I will call the argument from spiritual witness, characterizes some (generally pleasant) experience that occurs while being taught the Mormon gospel, or at some point after having prayed about it, as evidence of the truth of that gospel. Of the distinctively Mormon arguments, the argument from the Book of Mormon has received far more written attention, but I suspect that the other is the more influential of the two in the lives and thinking of the membership at large.

#### AGAINST RATIONAL MORMON APOLOGETICS

Notwithstanding the conspicuously minimal role of the ontological and cosmological arguments in the Mormon tradition, I will begin my attack on rational Mormon apologetics by considering each of the standard arguments. I think this course is required by the generality of my assertions regarding rational Mormon apology; further, my discussion of the standard arguments underscores and illuminates some of the distinctive aspects of Mormon doctrine, and I simply think that emphasizing and highlighting Mormon departures from orthodoxy is a good thing. During the course of discussing the cosmological argument, I will give brief consideration to the prospects for Kant's moral argument in a Mormon setting. After the standard arguments, I will turn to the two arguments on behalf of religious belief which are more specifically Mormon (those from the Book of Mormon and from spiritual witness).



*The Ontological Argument.* As a first approximation, the ontological argument begins with God defined as completely perfect; coupling that initial defining premise with the postulate that to exist is better than not to exist, the argument concludes that God must exist: after all, if God did not exist, God could improve by existing (better to exist than not), and so would not be completely perfect but improvable.

Descartes captures one version of the ontological argument in his claim that it is self-contradictory to “think of God (that is, a supremely perfect being) lacking existence (that is, lacking a perfection).” God being defined as supremely perfect, and existence being regarded as a perfection, God must have existence; that is, God exists necessarily, since existence is inseparable from him.<sup>26</sup> In his *Proslogium*, Anselm uses God as shorthand for “that being greater than which none can be conceived”; given the apparent intelligibility of the definition, Anselm concludes that we have an idea of such a being and, therefore, that being exists at least in our minds.<sup>27</sup> Anselm takes it as obvious that existence both in the mind and in reality is greater than existence in the mind alone. On this basis Anselm concludes that the existence of God in our minds guarantees the existence of God in reality, as well: If what we conceived existed only in our minds, then that of which we are conceiving would not be God after all, because it would not be that being greater than which none can be conceived. Conversely, if we are indeed conceiving of God, that being greater than which none can be conceived, then we must conceive that the object of our conception exists in reality, as well. Accordingly the intelligibility of the characterization “that being greater than which none can be conceived” compels us to admit the existence of God both in the mind and also in reality.

Descartes’s characterization of existence as a perfection and so, presumably, a predicate has been forcefully criticized by Kant (among others). Anselm’s argument does not run afoul of the same sort of difficulties, but the system of degrees and kinds of existence required for Anselm’s argument to work give rise to their own (substantial) problems. Suppose that these difficulties can be overcome; the argument still does nothing for Mormonism, any more than its failure, or even the outright falsity of its conclusion, would do anything to Mormonism.

Joseph Smith does ascribe self-existence to God,<sup>28</sup> and so we might properly describe the God of Mormonism as necessarily existent; but the

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26. Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, tr. by John Cottingham (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 46, 66.

27. The relevant portions of Anselm’s *Proslogium*, in many translations, are available in many collections, including William Rowe and William Wainwright, compilers, *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989).

28. Larson, “King Follet Discourse,” 203.

necessary existence ascribed by Smith to God does not seem to be the sort of necessary existence required for the ontological argument, at least as made by Descartes, to work. The meaning and significance of this contention can be illustrated by considering a distinction John Hick draws between what he characterizes as *logically* necessary being and *factually* necessary being. For a thing to be possessed of logically necessary being, it must exist in such a way that existence cannot be denied to the thing without contradiction; for a thing to have factually necessary being, it must exist indestructibly, without beginning and without end, etc.; but while a factually necessarily existent being cannot *in fact* fail to exist, its non-existence is *logically* possible.<sup>29</sup> The necessary existence Joseph Smith ascribes to God seems much more like Hick's factually necessary than logically necessary existence: Smith attributes the same sort of self-existence to both God and humanity, and in ascribing self-existence to human beings, it appears that Smith means only that they can neither be created nor destroyed<sup>30</sup>; presumably, then, God's self-existence amounts to nothing more, and is a form of factually, rather than logically, necessary existence. Yet the ontological argument, at least Descartes's version, rests on the logical impossibility of denying God's existence; that is, if the ontological argument shows the existence of anything, it is of something having logically necessary existence, and so not the God of Mormon theology.

The Mormon doctrine that God has progressed in the past further weakens any apparent relation between the Mormon God and that being whose existence the ontological argument seeks to prove; unlike the preceding consideration, this cuts against Anselm's argument as strongly as Descartes's. If the ontological argument were sound now, it would (presumably) have been sound during that time before God came to be God. Before God came to be God, he was not completely perfect, so whatever being the ontological argument would have proven the existence of (if successful) would not be the God of Mormon theology. Presumably, the ontological argument would now still prove the existence of whatever being it would have proven the existence of before the Mormon God came to be a god, viz., some being other than the Mormon God.

The ontological argument's Mormon prospects get only bleaker if we follow those thinkers with whom I most closely sympathize on theological matters and suppose that God continues to progress<sup>31</sup>: A progressing

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29. John Hick, "Necessary Being," reprinted in Rowe and Wainwright, *Philosophy of Religion*, 13-14.

30. Larson, "King Follett Discourse," 203-4.

31. See, e.g., B. H. Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 476-78; *The Essential James E. Talmage*, 153-54; LeGrand Richards, *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), 271.

God surely cannot be the greatest conceivable being of the ontological argument. The God of the ontological argument simply is not the God of Mormon theology; either deity could exist instead of or even in addition to the other.

*The Cosmological Argument.* The best known form of cosmological argument goes under the name "first cause argument," which well conveys the essence of the argument to a broader audience. In rough form, the argument goes something like this: The things or events with which we are familiar come from, or must be caused by, something else, some prior things or events; yet this chain of cause-and-effect cannot go on forever, but must begin somewhere: This beginning point is the first cause, which is God. From that of which we are immediately aware, we infer the existence of God as the first, ultimate cause of what is more immediately known. Further, regarding this first, ultimate cause, we infer that it is somehow different from all the rest; if God were not somehow unique, then we would need some prior cause to explain *him* as well, and he would not be the first cause. Somehow, God must either be self-explaining or must need no explanation. Philosophers characterize this self-explaining/not-needing-explaining characteristic as necessity, and say that God is (and is as he is) necessarily.

The argument allows for many variations. To name but three, St. Thomas Aquinas presents versions of the argument centered on motion, causation, and existence. In each case, Aquinas concludes that the first in the relevant series (first mover, first cause, or necessary being) itself needs no explanation because it is as it is (moving, causing, or existing) necessarily.<sup>32</sup> This unmoved mover, first and uncaused cause, or necessarily existent being, as Aquinas puts it, is understood by everyone to be God. For present purposes, I think it useful to divide Aquinas's five "ways" of proving God's existence into categories. Aquinas's third way postulates God to explain the ontological fact of the existence of the universe; the other ways introduce God to render intelligible either how that universe behaves (the fifth way), or the fact that it behaves in any way at all, as opposed to remaining inert (ways one, two, and four). I begin by considering the cosmological argument positing God to explain the fact of existence rather than the nature thereof.

At a minimum, Mormons believe "in God, the Eternal Father, and in his son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost,"<sup>33</sup> each, according to

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32. Like the relevant portions of Anselm's works, Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*, Article 3, is available in multiple translations and multiple sources, including Rowe and Wainwright, *Philosophy of Religion*.

33. See the First Article of Faith in the *Pearl of Great Price*.

Joseph Smith, a god.<sup>34</sup> Presumably the head of this triumvirate is the most plausible candidate for what those of Aquinas's acquaintance understand to be God. Yet Mormon cosmology describes the universe God inhabits as one filled with matter and other individuals with the same ontological status as God himself; God, accordingly, provides no better explanation for the rest of the universe than the universe can provide for itself. Indeed, Mormonism denies even more directly that the existence of its God *could* furnish the sort of explanation the cosmological argument introduces its God to provide, for the Mormon God is equally unable to create or destroy the matter or individuals with which he shares the universe.<sup>35</sup>

Of course, the preceding observations alone do not establish the irrelevance of cosmological arguments to the task of Mormon apology. Even though Mormon cosmology may neither require nor allow for an entity whose own *existence* is self-explanatory (or not in need of explanation) and which explains the *existence* of all else, it might still be proper to posit God to explain some other feature of the universe, e.g., the causal efficacy (the ability of things to cause other things) and Aristotelian motion (which is basically change of any sort) exhibited by the ontologically coeval entities of Mormon metaphysics (per Aquinas's first and second ways). So, assume for the moment that the intelligibility of the causal efficacy and motion of uncreated intelligences or matter requires appeal to something other than the intelligences or matter themselves. Consider, first, the case of matter. God came to be a god by working out his kingdom, earning his exaltation with fear and trembling under the tutelage of a god or gods of his own<sup>36</sup>; through this process, God *acquired* whatever control over matter that he has which we do not, and so his explanatory role is only intermediary—that is, the fact that his existence and capacities explain such attributes of matter is, in turn, explained by something else. Parallel reasoning underscores the derivative nature of whatever significance God may have in explaining the motive or causal capacities of other intelligent beings. Accordingly, the explanatory role of any of the recognized gods of Mormon theology for causal or motive attributes (or for *anything* else) is at most local, not ultimate.

No god of Mormon theology is the explanation that needs no (other) explanation of the cosmological argument, and so whether or not the argument succeeds in demonstrating the existence of such a being—indeed whether or not such a being exists at all—has nothing to do with whether

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34. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976), 370.

35. Larson, "King Follett Discourse," 203-4; D&C 93:29, 33; Abraham 3:18.

36. Larson, "King Follett Discourse," 201.

or not a Mormon god exists. While Aquinas might understand such a being to be God, Mormons do not.

Considerations parallel to those adduced with regard to the cosmological argument explain the inapplicability of Kant's moral argument to Mormon thought. Kant does not argue directly for the existence of God, but rather for our entitlement to believe there is a God. Kant argues that our obligation to pursue the highest good entitles us to believe it can be achieved, which in turn entitles us to believe in various religious dogmas, the truth of which would render the achievement of the highest good possible. One component of the highest good is happiness proportioned to morality. Blind natural law cannot, so the argument goes, be counted on to achieve this proportion, so we must believe there is a moral causality underlying nature and its laws which ensures that the system of nature does achieve this end.<sup>37</sup> However, Mormonism's God is part of nature, rather than a causality underlying it, so whatever the merits of Kant's moral argument in other contexts, it does nothing for Mormon apology. While Kant's specific argument may be of no use to the Mormon apologist, I find it a fruitful source of inspiration, and Kantian themes emerge in my own positive proposals.

Hume's writings on natural religion point the way to a more truly Mormon vision of the moral character of the universe and God's relation thereto.<sup>38</sup> Hume argues, through the character Philo in his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, that the most plausible conclusion to draw about the moral character of whatever forces ultimately control the universe is that our moral standards do not matter to them.<sup>39</sup> Since the God of Mormon theology is not the force having ultimate control over the universe, this conclusion, like the cosmological argument, has no bearing on Mormon theology, but I think it compatible with broader Mormon cosmology: The generations of gods described by Mormon doctrine could be individuals who, finding the universe morally ambiguous or indifferent, aspire to develop and spread their own moral order throughout it.

Orson Pratt believed that the unoriginated substances of Mormon metaphysics are very small, material, intelligent entities out of which the individual beings and things of everyday experience are organized.<sup>40</sup>

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37. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, tr. by Lewis White Beck (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1956), 129/124, 129-30/125, 137/133.

38. Aspects of this vision are further developed in the "Theodicy" and "Faith" chapters of my dissertation, "An Essay in Philosophical Mormon Theology," and surfaces in the conclusion to my "Determinist Mansions in the Mormon House?" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 31 (Winter 1998): 141.

39. David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1980), 75.

40. *The Essential Orson Pratt*, 32-36.

Pratt's substances seem to be minute material versions of Leibnizian monads. Instructively, in striking recognition of the comparatively limited explanatory role played by the God of Mormon theology, Pratt characterized these unoriginated intelligent substances as the "Great First Cause," and, out of deference to the notion that God must be the source of all else, Pratt even went so far as to characterize the collection of these substances as God, instead of reserving that title for the particular being (particular collection of intelligent, unoriginated substances) who directed the organization of this world.<sup>41</sup> Brigham Young publicly repudiated Pratt's teachings on this and other points,<sup>42</sup> and I think it safe to say that Mormons almost without exception take themselves to worship a person, rather than Pratt's collective, but I think Pratt was quite right to insist that if there is a great first cause to be had in Mormon metaphysics (of which I am skeptical), it is not to be had in what Mormons generally think of as God.

In an argument apparently incorporating elements both of Aquinas's fourth way and Kant's moral argument, as well as the third and fourth of the *Lectures on Faith*, Roberts at one point argued that a human being's consciousness of her own imperfections leads her to postulate the existence of a God. Roberts reasoned that we are each aware that to varying degrees of imperfection we possess knowledge, truth, justice, mercy, righteousness, and love. Our consciousness of the imperfection attending our possession of these "mind qualities and soul powers. . . suggests the possibility of perfect love," etc. We accordingly postulate a being possessing these traits in their perfection, "in whom man may trust, in whom he may have faith, and flee to as a refuge." Roberts further concluded that without such a being, "the universe would be incomplete, utterly lacking in cohesion, without purpose, meaningless."<sup>43</sup> So far as I am aware, Roberts only made this argument in an *Improvement Era* article and did not incorporate it into any of his other works. While provocative, this single brief presentation does not elaborate the argument in detail sufficient to permit meaningful analysis.<sup>44</sup>

In that same article, Roberts argued that since "man cannot create life" or otherwise control its ebb and flow, we must "refer. . . to God" the

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41. *Ibid.*, 197.

42. James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 2:222-23; see also Bergera, "The Pratt-Young Controversies," 36-37.

43. B. H. Roberts, "Man's Need of God," *Improvement Era* 24: 811-17, reprinted in *A Scrap Book*, 2:3-10. Roberts makes this argument on pp. 5-8.

44. Put another way, following through and critiquing all of the possible interpretations left open by Roberts's provocative presentation would make this essay longer than what I might reasonably expect even an indulgent editor to permit.

power of creating, preserving, and ending life.<sup>45</sup> Talmage made a similar argument in *The Articles of Faith*.<sup>46</sup> In response I note, as before, that the Mormon God might serve as a local explanation of these things, but cannot be the ultimate source of such power because, having once been like us, he must have derived his power from yet another source.

*The Argument from Design.* The argument from design, or teleological argument, is often made by way of analogy. William Paley, perhaps the philosopher with whom the argument from design is most closely associated, illustrates this argument by considering the thoughts a person would have upon encountering a watch lying in a field. Paley contends that even a person who had never seen a watch, who was totally unfamiliar with how a watch was made, would conclude that the watch must have come from some intelligent source and could not have been produced by chance or blind natural processes. The reason for this conclusion would be the complexity manifested in the working together of the various parts of the watch to produce the movement of the hands, or—in a phrase popular among discussants of the argument—the curious adaptation of means to ends.<sup>47</sup> The world in which we live, the argument continues, contains countless instances of adaptation of means to ends far more remarkable than any watch; therefore, with even more propriety than our imaginary watch-finder, we conclude that the world and its contents had an intelligent designer.

The body of religious propositions derivable from such reasoning is sometimes called natural religion. In the course of Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, the classic philosophical critique of the argument from design, Hume's character Cleanthes gives this argument a formulation as clear and concise as any:

Look round the world: Contemplate the whole and every part of it: You will find it to be nothing but one great machine, subdivided into an infinite number of lesser machines, which again allow for subdivisions, to a degree beyond what human senses and faculties can trace and explain. All these various machines, and even their most minute parts, are adjusted to each other with an accuracy, which ravishes into admiration all men who have ever contemplated them. The curious adapting of means to ends, throughout all nature, resembles exactly, though it much exceeds, the productions of human contrivance; of human designs, thought, wisdom, and intelligence. Since therefore the effects resemble each other, we are led to infer, by all the rules of analogy, that the causes also resemble; and that the Author of Nature is somewhat similar to the mind of man; though possessed of much larger

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45. Roberts, "Man's Need of God," 5.

46. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 31.

47. William Paley, *Natural Theology* (London: Gilbert and Rivington, L. D., 1890), 9, 10-16.

faculties, proportioned to the grandeur of the work, which he has executed.<sup>48</sup>

The wonders of nature exhibit engineering far beyond the capabilities of even the most skilled and clever human artisan, yet even the meager products of human design are too complex to have come into being without intelligent intervention; therefore, there must be some intelligent source (far more intelligent than any mere human) responsible for nature.

There are important variations on this general theme. At its most modest, the argument may be taken to posit intelligent design as a theory of the same order as organic evolution and natural selection. On this reading, the argument is simply that the generally accepted secular scientific account is less plausible than the hypothesis that some intelligent being orchestrated the wonders of nature. This version of the argument can fit much better with Mormon theology as laid out in this paper than either the ontological or cosmological arguments considered previously. This argument does not require an eternally (nor even presently) completely perfect being like the ontological argument, nor an explaining God that does not itself need explaining like the cosmological. A (possibly progressing) being who achieved his current position with help, and who utilizes his knowledge of natural laws and the services of children who respect and obey him to accomplish his designs, could fill the much more limited role of intelligent designer quite well.<sup>49</sup>

The argument from design may also be made as a cosmological argument, ill-suited to Mormon theology. To develop this version, I return first to Hume's *Dialogues*. Early in the *Dialogues*, Hume's skeptical character Philo suggests that matter might contain its own principle (or source) of order within itself, and so the order to be found in the universe does not need to be explained by postulating some intelligent agency.<sup>50</sup> We might paraphrase this as the view that matter operates according to its own laws, and that these laws, rather than an intelligent designer, are the sufficient explanation of the order to be found in the universe (a view that modern science apparently seeks to substantiate).

Paley considers such a view in two guises in his *Natural Theology*. Recall that to illustrate the argument from design, Paley considers the inferences a person would be entitled to draw about a watch found lying in a field. After arguing that the evidence of design contained within the

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48. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 15.

49. See David Paulsen, "The Comparative Coherency of Mormon (Finitistic) and Classical Theism" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1975) for a more elaborate consideration of the compatibility of the argument from design and Mormon theology.

50. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 31.



watch suffices to convey to any observer, even an otherwise uninformed observer, that the watch had an intelligent designer, Paley goes on to contend that were we to observe that the watch itself contained the means for producing other watches—that one ordered entity possessed the means to produce others—this should not lead us to reject the idea that the watch must have a designer. Instead this discovery should lead us to conclude that the skill of the designer of the first watch, or of the series taken as a whole if we suppose it to be infinite, is even more to be admired than we had previously thought.<sup>51</sup>

To apply Paley's diagnosis to our paraphrase of Philo's proposal, were we faced with a set of laws that explained how the universe could produce and continue to produce and reproduce the machines praised by natural theologians like Cleanthes, this would only show us that the designer of the universe was even more skilled and clever than we had previously supposed, for this designer has established a regularly and continually procreative order. However difficult it would be to engineer the wonders of nature with the laws of nature already in place, it is an even better trick to establish a law-governed system that produces those wonders without further direct intervention. The fact that the laws of nature could produce the wonders of nature just shows that the system of natural laws is itself an even more marvelous wonder which all the more requires an (even more) intelligent designer to explain its existence.

The more modest version of the argument from design considered earlier puts intelligent design on a par with other theories purporting to explain the origin of our complex world with its complex things. The version now under consideration, on the other hand, places design on a different level entirely: Even if those other theories *can* explain the wonders we see, intelligent design, the argument goes, is required to explain the fact that the universe operates according to the principles upon which those theories rely. (And if those principles are subsumed under yet higher principles, then intelligent design will be required to explain why the universe operates according to *those* principles, and so on.) The same explanatory regress can arise once a creative intelligence is introduced: The argument's own logic requires that if we postulate the existence of, say, a human super-scientist to explain either orderly nature or the set of order-producing natural laws, the existence of such a marvelous being would also need explaining.

This grander version of the argument from design, then, amounts to a cosmological argument: There is this feature about the universe, order, requiring some ultimate explanation/first cause. Paralleling the other variations of the cosmological argument discussed above, to satisfy the

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51. Paley, *Natural Theology*, 9, 10-16, 17-26.

demand for explanation there must be posited the existence of an intelligent designer whose existence and capacity for intelligent design do not themselves require further explanation. Further, as with the cosmological arguments already considered, the being whose existence the cosmological argument from design allegedly proves cannot be the Mormon God. Whatever (supra-human) ability the Mormon God has to impart order to the universe is derivative, having been acquired by him from some other source. Accordingly, even if this argument works, it does not show the existence of the Mormon God; the Mormon God could exist even if the argument's conclusion is false, even if there is no ultimate source of order, but instead only local explanations, particular beings within the system of nature who direct the organization of this, that, or the other corner of the universe.

As a Mormon apologetic, the cosmological argument from design faces other problems. First, there is within Mormon thought a strong tendency to conceive of God as bound by natural laws, contrary to the cosmological argument from design's implicit characterization of God as superior thereto. In addition to the naturalistic readings of major miracles described above, consider this striking passage from Brigham Young:

[W]hat do you love truth for? Is it because you can discover a beauty in it, because it is congenial to you; or because you think it will make you a ruler, or a Lord? If you conceive that you will attain to power upon such a motive, you are much mistaken. It is a trick of the unseen power, that is abroad amongst the inhabitants of the earth, that leads them astray, binds their minds, and subverts their understanding.

Suppose that our Father in heaven, our elder brother, the risen Redeemer, the Saviour of the world, or any of the Gods of eternity should act upon this principle, to love truth, knowledge, and wisdom, because they are all powerful, and by the aid of this power they could send devils to hell, torment the people of the earth, exercise sovereignty over them, and make them miserable at their pleasure; they would cease to be Gods; and as fast as they adopted and acted upon such principles, they would become devils, and be thrust down in the twinkling of an eye; the extension of their kingdom would cease, and their God-head come to an end. (JD 1:117)

Young's God is so far bound by laws governing his exercise of power that his continuing godhood depends on continuing conformity to those laws. Admittedly, the laws here at issue are apparently not those of nature; however, a God whose continuance in office depends on his motivations certainly has limits, and a God limited in these ways might as well be bound by (at least some) natural laws, as well.

The cosmological version of the argument from design raises yet other questions when offered in a Mormon context. The most striking

(and most along the lines of the preceding critique) of those questions might be: How can a being who once was within the natural order exit that order? Even if such exit were comprehensible, in what sense would the being remain a man, as Joseph Smith taught that God the Father does?

This still leaves us with the more humble version of the argument from design, which insists on intelligent design as a more plausible alternative to secular scientific alternatives of the same order, notably, of course, organic evolution and natural selection.

Critics of religious belief often explain its origins roughly as follows:

The earliest theoretical attempts to describe and explain the universe involved the idea that events and natural phenomena were controlled by spirits with human emotions. . . . These spirits inhabited natural objects, like rivers and mountains, including celestial bodies, like the sun and moon. They had to be placated and their favors sought in order to ensure the fertility of the soil and the rotation of the seasons.<sup>52</sup>

These accounts depict religious beliefs as the product of primitive, incipient scientific theorizing; more modern religious beliefs are but refinements of these earlier attempts, grown less specific to prevent their falsification (e.g., modern believers no longer maintain that deity resides in an earthly abode like the Greeks' Mount Olympus). While religious beliefs no longer play an important role in explaining most particular phenomena (most, but not all, because religious people commonly continue to believe that God causes particular events known as miracles), they are still employed as explanations of larger questions, such as why the universe exists: "In our society it is still customary for parents and teachers to answer most of these questions. . . with an appeal to vaguely recalled religious precepts."<sup>53</sup> Whatever their views as to the origins of religious belief, proponents of the argument from design share these critics' views of the nature and proper means of evaluating religious hypotheses, viz., that they are theories in competition with those of secular science, to be accepted on the grounds of their scientific utility.

Presumably, to the extent that science can provide plausible, secular alternatives to religious hypotheses, the latter (with their gratuitous ontological commitments) should be rejected in favor of the former. However, to follow apologists like William Paley in asserting that the magnificent artifices we observe in nature require postulation of an intelligent designer to explain their existence, is to rest religious belief on an unsta-

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52. Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988), 171-72.

53. Carl Sagan, "Introduction to Hawking," from Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, ix.

ble appeal to ignorance: The argument is that we have no knowledge of how these contrivances might have emerged from natural processes, so we must postulate a supernatural origin for them.<sup>54</sup> Accordingly, religious belief is threatened when a clever Darwin comes along offering an explanation which scientists tell us is plausible.

Of course, stalwart natural religionists insist that Darwin was not so clever, after all, and that his own theories and those of his disciples are much weaker than religious claims. Yet it is precisely in the existence of this dispute where I think the greatest difficulty with the argument from design can be seen, and this problem also arises for the argument from the Book of Mormon. The problem can be shown even more vividly against the larger backdrop of both arguments, so I will postpone a more complete explanation of what I see as the fundamental problem shared by the two arguments until I have described the argument from the Book of Mormon more fully. Before turning to the latter argument, however, I will consider some important Mormon treatments of the argument from design.

The argument from design finds apparent but undeveloped support in early Mormon sources. The Book of Mormon prophet Alma refutes Korihor, the atheistic anti-Christ, by observing that "the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator" (Alma 30:44). The *Lectures on Faith* endorse the argument, with an important caveat: Contrary to what Paley argues, the *Lectures* insist that evidence of design can serve only to validate an idea that must itself be acquired from another source; it is only "after a revelation of Jesus Christ" that "the works of creation, throughout their vast forms and varieties, clearly exhibit his eternal power and Godhead" (*Lectures* 2:4). According to the *Lectures*, the idea of a creator originates with God's revelation of himself to Adam; Adam shared the knowledge imparted through this revelation to his children, and they to theirs, so that every individual born after Adam first becomes acquainted with the idea of a creator through human testimony (*Lectures* 2:44).

B. H. Roberts's treatments of the argument from design self-consciously reflected the limitation recognized by the *Lectures*. In an instructional manual first published in 1888, Roberts directly adopted what the *Lectures* apparently taught about the argument from design: "The evidence of tradition, confirmed by the works of nature, created the assurance of faith in the minds of men that God existed." In this comparatively early work, Roberts also insisted upon a related limitation of the

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54. Cf. Philo's critique of Demea's cosmological argument in Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, pt. 9 (esp. p. 57).

argument. Roberts hypothesized that the faith in God's existence established by the argument from design led its possessors "to the performance of works of righteousness. . . for doubtless, side by side with the tradition of his existence, came also the idea that he loved righteousness."<sup>55</sup> For Roberts, natural religion tells us nothing about God's moral attributes, and so has no normative content<sup>56</sup>; our knowledge of God's character must be derived from revelation and the tradition that propagates it, not from the wonders of nature. This conviction remained central to Roberts's thinking about the argument from design.<sup>57</sup>

According to Roberts, the information allegedly derivable from the wonders of nature via the argument from design is limited in other important respects. Roberts freely conceded that "the works of creation. . . do indeed testify of the existence of intelligence higher than [sic] of man" who upholds the order evident therein.<sup>58</sup> Roberts argues that the orderly system of eternally existent force and matter which we witness around us owes its organization to a third eternally existent cause, intelligence. Yet Roberts insists that the intelligence thereby shown to exist is essentially generic.<sup>59</sup> He accordingly concludes that the argument from design is insufficient as a defense of belief in Mormonism, or in Christianity or any other form of theism. Thus, in addition to the shortcomings previously noted, Roberts observed that the argument he considered said nothing "as to the kind of being [God] is. Is He personal or impersonal? Merely 'a power outside ourselves'? . . . [D]oes He hold personal relations to man, and men definite and personal relations to Him? . . . And what is man that God is mindful of him?"<sup>60</sup> Roberts's argument admittedly yields no more definitive content than the recognition by Hume's character Philo of the likelihood that some intelligent but otherwise

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55. B. H. Roberts, *The Gospel: An Exposition of Its First Principles*, 5th ed. (Salt Lake City: *The Deseret News*, 1924), 95.

56. Philosophers from Plato to Kant and beyond have emphasized the logical problems arising from the effort to derive conclusions about how we should act from any knowledge about God, including knowledge of his character, but Roberts does not appear to have been impressed. For Roberts, religion properly shapes conduct by informing human beings of their duties to God. See, e.g., B. H. Roberts, *The Seventy's Course in Theology: Third Year: The Doctrine of Deity* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, 1910), 10.

57. Roberts, *Seventy's Course in Theology: Third Year*, 10. See also Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, 109, 129.

58. Roberts, *Seventy's Course in Theology: Third Year*, 10.

59. *Ibid.*, lesson IV. See also Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, chaps. 6-7. Roberts's argument is also liable to the criticism leveled by Hume's character Philo, that the birth and growth of human beings from infancy to (more or less) rational adulthood suggests that intelligence springs from natural processes, rather than the contrary view (underlying the argument from design) that those processes derive from intelligent sources.

60. Roberts, *Seventy's Course in Theology: Third Year*, 10.

inscrutable something has imparted order to the universe.<sup>61</sup> This sharply limits the utility of Roberts's argument as a Mormon apologetic.

In his *The Articles of Faith*, Talmage couched essentially similar arguments in unjustifiably more definitive rhetoric. Talmage first characterized the validity of the inference from the existence in nature of "means adapted to end" to the existence of an intelligent designer thereof as "self-evident."<sup>62</sup> Apparently building on this argument, Talmage offered a variant that incorporates some of the reasoning of Aquinas's third Way. Talmage reasoned that something cannot come from nothing, so if there had ever been a time when nothing existed, then nothing would exist now. Since something does exist now, there cannot have been a time when nothing existed; that is, something has always existed. To defend the further conclusion that some *intelligent* thing answering to the title of creator must always have existed, Talmage then argued from the premises that a) "the effects of intelligence are universally present," and b) intelligence cannot come from either energy or matter,<sup>63</sup> to the conclusion that there must always have been some intelligent thing in existence. This eternally existent intelligent thing, the effects of whose intelligence "are universally present," is God. In contrast to Roberts's more cautious appraisal, Talmage further insisted that the works of nature exhibit God's "will and purpose."<sup>64</sup>

Talmage persistently characterized the God whose existence he sought to prove in non-Mormon terms. Talmage described his God as a being "[b]eyond and above nature" and an "eternal Ruler," and argued that the entire "system of nature is the manifestation" of this being's intelligence. However, the teachings of the King Follett Discourse preclude viewing Mormonism's God as the eternal ruler whose intelligent governance is co-eternal "with existence itself," as Talmage would have it.<sup>65</sup> There was a time when the god of the King Follett Discourse was not God, and so the god Talmage described cannot be the God of Mormonism.

In a related vein, granting for the sake of argument that intelligence cannot come from matter or energy, and the inference from order to intelligent design, Talmage's conclusions still overreach his argument's premises. In particular, the conclusion that some one intelligent thing answering to Talmage's singular God must always have existed does not

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61. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, pt.12.

62. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 29-30.

63. But then, in the same paragraph, Talmage also insisted that energy cannot come from matter.

64. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 30-31.

65. *Ibid.*

follow. At best, Talmage's argument shows that the universe has never been devoid of intelligence, but his argument does not show that some one intelligent being has always existed. It would be more appropriate to draw Roberts's more modest conclusion, shared with Hume's character Philo,<sup>66</sup> that the orderliness of the universe suggests the existence of some intelligent creative force which is not further defined; and that conclusion does little for the cause of Mormon apology.

Elsewhere Talmage clearly and directly embraced the King Follett teaching that "the Father of Jesus Christ. . . was a Man, and has progressed. . . to His present position of priesthood and power, of Godship and Godliness, as the Supreme Being whom we all profess to worship," which conflicts with the idea of God as the singular intelligent being eternally responsible for the order in the universe. Talmage also described God as above and beyond nature in his much later "Earth and Man" address, where he characterized the natural processes studied by scientists as secondary causes, standing and operating behind, and above which stands, the "First Great Cause." This description of God as above and beyond nature apparently places God outside the natural order. Yet shortly before making this characterization in his "Earth and Man" address, Talmage said that all natural processes are "due to" God "as the administrator of law and order."<sup>67</sup> A God who merely administers natural laws would seem to be bound thereby, rather than superior thereto. I am inclined to regard the inconsistencies in Talmage's characterizations of God merely as unfortunately imprecise appropriations of more orthodox terminology, but I recognize that those characterizations may also evidence an enduring failure fully to appreciate the divergence of Mormon from orthodox theology. Whatever Talmage's considered views, insofar as his arguments purport to show the existence either of an eternally ruling creative intelligence standing above and beyond nature (as claimed by Talmage), or some undefined intelligent force or forces (as suggested by the parallels with Roberts), those arguments fail to answer the needs of Mormon apology. Roberts's arguments do not answer those needs either, but then Roberts never claimed they did.

*The Argument from the Book of Mormon.* The Book of Mormon purports to be a historical record of four New World peoples who owed their presence in the New World to the migration of three small groups from the Middle East (1 Nephi 2, 4, 7, 9, 16-19; Omni 1:13-16; Ether 1-3, 6). Joseph Smith claimed to have translated the record from golden plates hidden in the earth by a leader of one of those groups on the verge of its destruction, about 400 C.E. (Mormon 8), plates whose location had been re-

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66. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, pt. 12.

67. *The Essential James E. Talmage*, 139-40, 245, 244.

vealed to Joseph by an angel (Joseph Smith History, 1:30-75). Some within Mormonism argue that the only plausible explanation of the existence of this book is the explanation given by Joseph Smith. From this, two further conclusions might be drawn: that Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet who (re)established the Lord's church, and that one must suppose the existence of God to explain the original compilation of the record on the golden plates, as well as its subsequent preservation and its final retrieval and translation by Joseph Smith. This pattern of argument has a history dating back to Joseph Smith himself.<sup>68</sup> Perhaps the best known recent practitioner of this form of argument is Mormon linguist and historian Dr. Hugh Nibley,<sup>69</sup> and before him, Roberts.<sup>70</sup>

Among other things, such arguments have been made on the basis of: a) purported archaeological support for claims put forward in the Book of Mormon<sup>71</sup> and purported correspondence between Book of Mormon narratives and Native American legends;<sup>72</sup> b) the improbability that a person with Joseph Smith's resources could have produced a work of such length and complexity under the kinds of difficult circumstances faced during the production of the book;<sup>73</sup> c) historical documentation of the testimonies both of divinely appointed and incidental witnesses to the existence of the plates, testimonies which (historical research suggests) continued to be held and announced under circumstances wherein a reasonable person might expect to uncover any falsehoods;<sup>74</sup> and d) most recently such things as wordprint analysis and arguing for the presence of distinctively Hebraic literary forms in the book.<sup>75</sup>

The claims to archaeological support, in particular, have been rejected by non-Mormon authorities,<sup>76</sup> and this illustrates the crucial weakness which this pattern of argument shares with the argument from design. Believers and nonbelievers alike who expect fundamental religious

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68. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 266-67.

69. Hugh Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1989), 219-42.

70. B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, vols. 2-3 (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1909).

71. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, chaps. 24-27; vol. 3, chap. 32.

72. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, chaps. 27-29; vol. 3, chaps. 30-31, 34.

73. Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, 219-42.

74. Richard Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1981).

75. John Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 221-26, 230-32.

76. Smithsonian Institution, "Statement Regarding the Book of Mormon" (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution); Michael Coe, "Mormons and Archaeology: An Outside View," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8, no. 2 (Summer 1973): 40-48.



questions to be settled by consideration of the kinds of evidence appealed to by the arguments from the Book of Mormon and from design are guilty of failing to appreciate what the Bible itself has to say about faith. Paul characterizes faith as something without which we cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6), and through which we can receive "a good report" (Hebrews 11:39).<sup>77</sup> According to Matthew, Christ himself characterized faith as one of the weightier matters of divinely given law (Matthew 23:23). Unless we are willing to consider scientific or archaeological (or linguistic or . . . ) acumen and research as essential to currying divine favor, we should expect belief in God, if appropriate, to have some other basis.

Suppose that the best informed and least biased experts in the relevant fields were to come to the religious conclusion that there are phenomena most plausibly explained by postulating the existence of God, or that the available archaeological evidence tends, on balance, to support the Book of Mormon. Even were this true, most of us would continue to hear only the babble of disagreement proceeding from supposed experts on these issues. We would continue to find some arguing the religious side, others arguing the other, and most of us in no position to determine who is right.

This state of affairs seems especially irksome since those who refuse to have and exercise faith in God in the way Mormonism prescribes will be denied certain rewards that will be received by those who do.<sup>78</sup> I am at a loss to understand how proficiency or lack thereof in cosmogony or archaeology or textual analysis renders one worthy of rewards or punishments; I am aware of no evidence tending to support the notion that becoming expert in any of these areas makes a person better while there is plenty of anecdotal evidence to the contrary.

There may be something to be said for the idea that in order to be a god a person must possess a certain minimum of reasoning capability. Building on this, it could be argued that a person who is unable to follow this, that, or the other argument showing the existence of God is too stupid to be exalted. Descartes appears to have thought that the requisite stupidity was itself blameworthy: In the letter dedicating his *Meditations on First Philosophy* to the faculty of the Sorbonne, he insists that knowledge of the existence of God is so easily gained that those who fail to acquire it are at fault.<sup>79</sup> In a Mormon setting, we need not go so far for this explanation to work: It could be argued that gods, in addition to being

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77. I assume, here, that the relevant sort of faith includes belief although belief might not exhaust the relevant faith.

78. Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 119.

79. Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 3.

good people, must have at least a certain IQ. Talmage follows Descartes in blaming people who do not appreciate the force of the evidence for God's existence and goes on to characterize them as downright wicked: Every person starts with an "inherited instinct toward his Maker," and if he is not led to ever stronger belief by the reasoning Talmage offers, it must be because he "has forfeited his wisdom by wrongdoing, bringing darkness over his mind in place of light, and ignorance instead of knowledge. By such a course, the mind becomes depraved and incapable of appreciating the finer arguments in nature. A willful sinner grows deaf to the voice of both intuition and reason in holy things."<sup>80</sup> According to Talmage, to all but willful sinners the existence of God is plausible to begin with, and even more convincing upon reflection.

Descartes and Talmage's claim, that the proofs of God's existence are so obvious that those who fail to follow them deserve what they get, might have some merit when considered in relation to the comparatively uncomplicated ontological and cosmological arguments those writers offer (which, the reader will recall, even if successful prove the existence of the wrong God). However, those claims are quite weak with regard to the non-cosmological argument from design and the argument from the Book of Mormon. Here, the evidence and arguments are anything but simple and obvious, requiring not only intelligence but also academic sophistication, and that in specific disciplines. This latter point deserves especial notice: There is not, so far as I am aware, any commandment in the entire corpus of Mormon scripture that everybody must engage in the study of cosmogony or archaeology or textual analysis, nor is there any other clue that God desires such study (in particular).

Accordingly, I reject the basis for religious belief proffered by the ecumenical argument from design and its parochial cousin, the argument from the Book of Mormon. To consider a particular case, while there may be those who expect the historical veracity of the Book of Mormon to be borne out by future archaeological investigation, I think it quite proper to believe in the truth of that book without being one of those people. Had God intended to provide clear evidence for the book, he could have sent his angel, with the plates, to modern researchers for examination. Instead, if tradition speaks truly, God had them delivered to an obscure boy and provided a handful of witnesses, perhaps expecting us to believe on the basis of some combination of what the boy, the witnesses, and the book itself had to say.

A tribute to Bertrand Russell written shortly after his death reports a conversation between Russell and a friend at a celebration of Russell's

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80. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 32.

ninetieth birthday which has become a stock anecdote in philosophical circles. After observing to Russell that he was by that time not only the world's most famous atheist, but in all probability also the oldest, Russell's friend asked "What will you do, Bertie, if it turns out you've been wrong? I mean, what if, when the time comes, you should meet *Him*? What will you say?" Russell's eyes are reported to have brightened as he contemplated this prospect. After some reflection Russell pointed a finger upward and replied, "Why, I should say, 'God, you gave us insufficient evidence!'"<sup>81</sup>

Russell's imagined response implies that the proper grounds for believing that God does or does not exist are evidentiary: If there is sufficient evidence for believing that God exists, we should believe, and if not, we should not.<sup>82</sup> While the *New Yorker* did not report what Russell expected God's response would be, I assume Russell would have expected God to appreciate the significance of Russell's complaint and not trouble him further over the matter; but I would expect God to inform Russell that he had missed the point. I think Talmage and FARMS have missed it, too.

*The Argument from Spiritual Witness.* Perhaps the most likely response from a Mormon asked to explain why she believes would be that she had received some sort of personal revelation from God regarding the truth of what she was told; while this amounts to an appeal to evidence of sorts, the evidence to which this kind of appeal is made is not the kind requiring academic expertise to evaluate. However, this argument faces problems of its own.

Mormon missionaries teach investigators they must pray to know the truth of what they are being taught. Missionaries are advised to cite in relation to this teaching a scripture admonishing the investigator to pray in faith.<sup>83</sup> Engaging in the very act of prayer requires some faith, namely the placing of sufficient credence in what the missionaries teach to put it to some sort of test, and the scriptures teach that prayers must be offered in faith in order to be answered (Matthew 21:22). Further, and more to the present point, recognizing the answer to the prayer as an answer requires antecedent religious belief.

The answer to prayer which the investigator seeks might itself be characterized as a minor miracle. I believe that the claim "faith precedes the miracle" (frequently reiterated in Mormon discussions of both) also em-

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81. *The New Yorker*, 21 February 1970, 29.

82. Cf. Orson Pratt, "True Faith," included in N. B. Lundwall, ed., *Lectures on Faith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, n.d.).

83. "First Discussion," *Uniform System for Teaching the Gospel* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1986) 1, 18; Moroni 10:3-5.

bodies an important conceptual point and is not just an observation about God's methodology. Without religious belief a miracle would not, in general, be recognized as such; rather, it would be regarded perhaps as a delusion, or as an experience for which, it is true, we currently have no secular explanation, but which will, in time, be so explained. This likewise applies to the minor miracle now under consideration, viz., that religious belief is required to recognize an answer to prayer as an answer to prayer.

To see why, consider the nature of the answer missionaries advise investigators to expect: that spiritual witnesses of truth usually take the form of "a peaceful, good feeling rather than something dramatic."<sup>84</sup>

Answers to prayers may come as feelings of peace and confidence or as thoughts that enter our minds. Sometimes we may have special feelings, such as particularly warm feelings in our hearts. Or perhaps the events in our lives may occur in answer to our prayers. As our faith grows, we learn to know when and how our Heavenly Father is answering our prayers.<sup>85</sup>

A report given by David Whitmer, one of the witnesses who claimed that an angel showed them the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, graphically illustrates the difficulty of gauging the subtle promptings for which missionaries instruct investigators to look. Concerned about their ability to raise sufficient funds to have the Book of Mormon published, several of Joseph Smith's associates suggested a trip to Canada to sell the Canadian copyright to the book. Joseph claimed to have received a revelation that such a mission should be undertaken and would be successful, but the effort failed. Joseph, unable to account for the failure, inquired of the Lord as to its cause; the answer he received was that "[s]ome revelations are of God: some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the devil."<sup>86</sup>

In Alma's oft cited explanation of the genesis of faith, he counseled his listeners to begin with nothing more than a desire to believe, if necessary, and then to allow that desire to work on them (Alma 32:27). A psychologist might describe as nothing more than self-fulfilling prophecy the phenomena which missionaries instruct investigators to seek as evidence of the truth of what they are being taught: Beginning with a desire to believe something she finds pleasant, the investigator convinces herself that it is true and her subconscious, or some such entity, produces the pleasant phenomena she seeks.

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84. "First Discussion," 18.

85. *Ibid.*, 9.

86. David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ by a Witness to the Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon* (Concord, California: Pacific Publishing Company, 1959), 30-31; cf. D&C 46:7.

I am not here endorsing the psychological explanation; versions with which I am familiar suffer from vagueness. Yet so, too, does the religious explanation: There is no specification of exactly what will be experienced, or when. If someone reports failure in the experiment, she may expect to be counseled on the need to continue to pray, conforming to God's timetable rather than expecting him to conform to hers, and to pray with greater faith (!). Still, I am not denying that experiences of the sort which missionaries tell investigators to seek do indeed transpire, or that they have the divine origin the missionaries ascribe to them; and I am not denying that they have an important role to play in the development of faith. I dispute only the justifiability of regarding them as strong evidence for, or as a proper foundation for belief in, the truth of religious hypotheses.

In general, to appeal to this sort of evidence is circular, for it is the very explanatory scheme according to which the phenomenon in question *is* evidence that is to be justified by the purported evidence. Psychology stands at the ready to produce alternative explanations, and it appears that the only basis for rejecting psychological explanations in favor of the religious explanation of such phenomena is bias toward the religious explanation: The desire which investigators allow to work within them to produce belief is exactly what leads them to see the resultant phenomena as evidence for what they wish to believe.<sup>87</sup>

In his *Seventy's Course in Theology*, Roberts considered John Stuart Mill's variation on this critical theme. In passages quoted at length by Roberts, Mill critically considered the argument that God must exist because everybody has some sort of inner perception of God. Mill observed both that this perception does not in fact appear to be universal and that proponents of this argument commonly respond to the first observation by insisting that the perception is in fact universal although some may be unaware of (or unwilling to acknowledge) its presence in their minds. Mill then pointedly asked whether those who claim to have this perception "may fairly be asked to consider whether it is not more likely that they are mistaken as to the origin of an impression in their minds, than that others are ignorant of the very existence of an impression in theirs." To answer Mill's critique, Roberts referred the reader to his own earlier discussion of Joseph Smith's teaching that the spirit of man has a natural, intuitive attraction to the truth, which only wickedness can dissipate.<sup>88</sup>

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87. For like considerations adduced in support of much more practical conclusions, see Janice Allred, "Infallible Revelation?" *Sunstone* 20 (July 1997): 5, 7. I think the arguments from design and from the Book of Mormon are instructively comparable to the argument from spiritual experience in this respect. For further elaboration, see chap. 4 of my "Essay in Philosophical Mormon Theology."

88. Roberts, *Seventy's Course in Theology: Third Year*, 13-14.

Yet whatever the value of Smith's teachings as an explanation for believing Mormons of the fact that an awareness of God's existence does not appear to be universal, that teaching cannot revive the argument from spiritual experience because that teaching, again, is part and parcel of what is supposed to be justified by the experience.

#### CONCLUSION

And so I conclude that, whatever the status or fate of Mormonism's traditional aspirations toward rationality in its theology, there is no tenable rational Mormon apology. The ontological and cosmological arguments are unavailable to Mormonism, and the inherent complexity of (the humble version of) the argument from design renders that argument an inappropriate basis for faith in any form of Christianity. The distinctively Mormon variant of the argument from design, the argument from the Book of Mormon, fails for the same reasons as its more ecumenical cousin, and the argument from spiritual witness puts the interpretive cart before the horse.

So what is to be done? I suggest accepting and embracing the conclusion that no rational apology can be made, and asking why that should be so. In other words, instead of asking why I should believe, I might do better to ask why God would want me to believe without any rational justification. Then, if Alma is right about the legitimate role of desire in generating faith, the question becomes: Why would God expect me to desire the truth of this gospel and to allow my beliefs to be shaped thereby?

Of course, even if I find good answers to those questions, the answers could not consistently give me any justification for my belief. Thus, unless I discover good grounds for *not* believing, in matters religious I unavoidably remain in the position of having to decide, rather than discover, what to believe. And maybe that's right where God wants us.<sup>89</sup>

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89. For more details, see chap. 4 of my "An Essay in Philosophical Mormon Theology."

# In Riverdale

*Linda Sillitoe*

We returned to our beginnings  
in August, with its crayola green  
trees and grass, blue sky,  
and yellow light so certainly imposed  
that desert light and night and hues  
wavered within us.

We settled near the mountains,  
opening our windows  
to crickets wooing a canyon breeze.  
We tried to believe  
we can fit this time among our dearest  
and darkest demons. We unpacked and sorted  
our souvenirs and tales

of treading the back trails we tread still  
even as we merge into traffic.

People don't request those stories.  
They say, Welcome back  
(to this, the right place).  
Crickets translate:  
About time.

# The Truth, the Partial Truth, and Something Like the Truth, So Help Me God

*Clay Chandler*

*"Pretty much all the honest truth-telling there is in the world is done by children." Oliver Wendell Holmes*

IN OCTOBER OF 1993 DALLIN H. OAKS, an apostle for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and Steve Benson, editorial cartoonist for the *Arizona Republic* and eldest grandson of former LDS president Ezra Taft Benson, had an argument in a public place. Their dispute centered on the role played by Apostle Boyd K. Packer in the September excommunication of Paul James Toscano. According to both men, this had been a subject of discussion between them during two "confidential" meetings. Their disagreement was witnessed by hundreds of thousands of people across the nation as they opened their newspapers and saw headlines like: "Cartoonist Says Oaks Lied to Protect Fellow Apostle,"<sup>1</sup> "Oaks: 'I've Been Victim of Double-Decker Deceit',"<sup>2</sup> and "Benson Replies, Charges Oaks with Dissembling."<sup>3</sup>

These two men obviously had very different interpretations of their shared experiences. For outside observers, it is not possible to determine exactly what transpired between them. One or both of them may have lied. One or both of them may have been intentionally deceptive. One or both of them may have been deceptive while fully believing that they

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1. Vern Anderson, "Cartoonist Says Oaks Lied to Protect Fellow Apostle," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 12 October 1993, B-1.

2. Dallin H. Oaks, "Oaks: 'I've Been Victim of Double-Decker Deceit,'" *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 21 October 1993, Commentary page.

3. Steve Benson, "Benson Replies, Charges Oaks with Dissembling," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 25 October 1993, Commentary page.



were being completely truthful. The veracity of their statements, while important, is less intriguing than the fact that an apostle of the Church of Jesus Christ was accused of lying to protect another apostle.

Many, if not most, members of the Mormon church find it difficult to believe that one of their apostles would lie. It doesn't fit their image of a man called to be "a special witness for Christ."<sup>4</sup> Yet could there be times when a prophet or an apostle might be justified in lying? If so, under what circumstances? What effect does lying have on followers? The intent of this article is not to place blame, but to deal in a straightforward way with the touchy subject of truth and deception.

*Webster's Third New International Dictionary* defines truth as "relationship, conformity, or agreement with fact or reality," and defines a lie as: "1) to make an untrue statement with intent to deceive; and 2) to create a false or misleading impression." Lying is just one form of the much larger category known as deception. One can deceive without lying, but the intent of lying is always to deceive. For example, there is a difference between telling a story I know to be false, and telling a true story but selectively omitting details to alter the listener's perception of the truth. The first is lying, the second deception.

*"Yesterday we obeyed kings and bent our necks before emperors. But today we kneel only to truth, follow only beauty, and obey only love."—Kahlil Gibran*

The logical place to begin this examination is the scriptures, which invariably take an absolutist position with regard to lying. In Leviticus 19:11 we read, "Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another." In the New Testament, Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another" (Eph. 4:25). From the Book of Mormon: "Woe unto the liar for he shall be thrust down to hell" (2 Ne. 9:34). Later Christ speaks of the time when Israel shall be gathered and the lost tribes return: "And it shall come to pass that all lyings and deceivings, and envyings, and strifes, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, shall be done away" (3 Ne. 21:19). Finally, in the Doctrine and Covenants we are told who will inherit the Telestial Kingdom, the lowest of the three heavenly degrees of glory: "These are they who are liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers and whosoever loves and makes a lie" (D&C 76:103).

The absolute prohibition against lying found in the scriptures seems simple and clear until one begins asking questions such as: Is truthful-

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4. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. by Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1954-56), 146. See also D&C 27:12, 107:23.

ness a unique moral value? How does it compare with other moral values like compassion, charity, discretion, or friendship? Do we have a right to the truth from others? What would a world be like wherein everyone told all the truth all the time? In light of the scriptural pronouncements above, consider the following statement from Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*: "The pure and simple truth is rarely pure and never simple. Modern life would be very tedious if it were either and modern literature a complete impossibility!"<sup>5</sup>

David Nyberg, in his book, *The Varnished Truth*, examines the moral complexity of truth-telling and deception. He begins by dividing the predominant theories into two camps, which he calls "top down" and "bottom up," and he assigns absolutist theories to the former.<sup>6</sup> An example of an absolutist, or top-down, advocate would be Immanuel Kant, who said:

Truthfulness in statements which cannot be avoided is the formal duty of an individual to everyone, however great may be the disadvantage accruing to himself or to another. Thus the definition of a lie as merely an intentional untruthful declaration to another person does not require the additional condition that it must harm another. . . . For a lie always harms another; if not some other particular man, still it harms mankind generally, for it vitiates the source of law itself.<sup>7</sup>

Another absolutist, Socrates, wanted all poets and storytellers banned from Athens because he believed their fictions and myths would confuse children about the truth; if they were ever to learn to distinguish truth from fiction, they would have to first unlearn what they had learned.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, in her influential book, *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*, Sissela Bok outlines a top-down theory which is absolutist in nature yet recognizes there must be occasional exceptions to the rule. She, like Kant, believes that lies are intrinsically harmful not only to the deceived, but also to the liars themselves and to society in general. In the following passage, she explains how lies can harm society in the same way a virus can infect and destroy a body:

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5. Oscar Wilde, act 1 of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, in *The Columbia Dictionary of Quotations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

6. David Nyberg, *The Varnished Truth: Truth Telling and Deceiving in Ordinary Life* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 18.

7. Immanuel Kant, "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Altruistic Motives," in *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, ed. and trans. by Lewis White Beck, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), 346-47.

8. Nyberg, 64-65.

[E]ven if [liars] make the effort to estimate the consequences to *individuals*—themselves and others—of their lies, they often fail to consider the many ways in which deception can spread and give rise to practices very damaging to human communities. These practices clearly do not affect only isolated individuals. The veneer of social trust is often thin. As lies spread—by imitation, or in retaliation, or to forestall suspected deception—trust is damaged. Yet trust is a social good to be protected just as much as the air we breathe or the water we drink. When it is damaged, the community as a whole suffers: and when it is destroyed, societies falter and collapse.”<sup>9</sup>

Bok nevertheless acknowledges occasional exceptions to the absolutist prohibition:

I have to agree that there are at least some circumstances which warrant a lie. And foremost among them are those where innocent lives are at stake, and where only a lie can deflect the danger. But, in taking such a position, it would be wrong to lose the profound concern which the absolutist theologians and philosophers express—the concern for the harm to trust and to oneself from lying, quite apart from any immediate effects from any one lie.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to “avoiding harm,” other excuses for dissembling include the derivation of benefits, fairness, or veracity. However, Bok cautions, none of these excuses are acceptable “if the liar knew of a truthful alternative to secure the benefit, avoid the harm, or protect fairness. Even if a lie saves a life, it is unwarranted if the liar was aware that a truthful statement could have done the same.”<sup>11</sup>

Finally, Bok distinguishes between “excusable” lies and “justifiable” lies. Justifiable lies must not only avoid harm and produce benefits, fairness, or veracity, they must also be defensible as “just, right, or proper, by providing adequate reasons. It means to hold up to some standard, such as a religious or legal or moral standard. Such justification requires an audience: it may be directed to God, or a court of law, or one’s peers, or one’s own conscience; but in ethics it is most appropriately aimed, not all at one individual or audience, but rather at ‘reasonable persons’ in general.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, for a lie to be justifiable it must 1) have been used as a last resort where no truthful alternative was possible, 2) be morally excusable, and 3) be justifiable by some standard, whether in the eyes of God, in the eyes of a judge or jury, or in the eyes of a public of reasonable persons.

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9. Sissela Bok, *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 26-27.

10. *Ibid.*, 45.

11. *Ibid.*, 88.

12. *Ibid.*, 91

*"I was provided with additional input that was radically different from the truth. I assisted in furthering that version."*—Oliver North

Nyberg provides a simple framework for understanding the various types of deception. The first four types involve active participation on the part of the deceiver. (The examples are mine.) The lie must contribute toward the following:

- 1) Causing someone to acquire a false belief (straightforward lying is typically in this group): "That silver object you saw in the sky was an air force weather balloon" (and not a U2 spy plane on a spy mission).
- 2) Causing someone to continue in a false belief: "Of course it's a low-mileage car. You saw the speedometer didn't you?" (Our mechanic made a slight adjustment to the speedometer, however.)
- 3) Causing someone to stop believing something true: "Hop up on the seat of this bicycle and I'll teach you how to ride it. Don't worry, you can't get hurt."
- 4) Causing someone to be unable to believe something that is true (i.e., hiding the truth): "We're not at all disappointed with the domestic ticket sales. This movie was aimed at the foreign market."

The next four types of deception are passive, error-of-omission lies. The lie must:

- 5) Allow someone to acquire a false belief: "People would be shocked to find out that my ring is a cubic zirconia. When they ask me if it's real I just wink and smile."
- 6) Allow someone to continue in a false belief (continuing with the cubic zirconia example) "When they ask me how much it cost, I say 'you don't want to know.'"
- 7) Allow someone to stop believing something true: "I was a witness to the crime but I was afraid to testify and as a result the defendant was acquitted."
- 8) Allow someone to continue without a true belief: "When they come to look at the house, don't tell them that the basement floods unless they ask."<sup>13</sup>

There is one other form of deception which needs consideration: self-deception. This has been described as "skillful maneuvering to achieve ignorance when clear, conscious understanding threatens to break through."<sup>14</sup> When we do and say things incongruent with our values,

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13. Nyberg, 74-75.

14. Ibid., 91.

cognitive dissonance results, which sometimes leads to guilt but can also lead to the upholding of one value while repressing the other. Through self-deception it is possible to be deceptive and yet be completely convinced that one is totally honest.

After outlining the various forms of deception, a case study may prove helpful. Shortly after the news broke of President Clinton's possible sexual liaison with Monica Lewinsky, Clinton said during a PBS interview with Jim Lehrer that he did not have "a sexual relationship, an improper sexual relationship, or any other kind of improper relationship" with Monica Lewinsky.<sup>15</sup> The president's now famous words may or may not have been a lie when considered in the narrow and legalistic way that "improper relationship" was defined during the Paula Jones deposition, but there can be little doubt that the intent of his statement was to deceive. For those who had not yet formed an opinion as to whether the president had been involved in an extramarital sexual relationship, Clinton's intent was to make them unable to believe something that was true (deception type 4). For those who already had a false belief regarding the relationship, i.e. they believed there had not been a sexual relationship, Clinton's statement reinforced that belief (deception type 2). Likewise, for those who believed there had been an affair, Clinton's statement, to the extent that it was believed, helped them acquire a false belief (deception type 3).

*"It is hard to believe that a man is telling the truth when you know that you would lie if you were in his place."—H. L. Mencken*

*There are a few times when it is almost universally agreed that one should engage in deceit. One example would be war. The following is from Sun Tzu's "The Art of War:" All warfare is based on deception. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near.<sup>16</sup>*

During Desert Storm, General Norman Schwarzkopf used deception to trick the Iraqi army into believing the U.N. ground forces would make a frontal assault from the south. The actual ground assault came from the west. The Iraqi army, which was without air reconnaissance, was fooled by cardboard replicas of tanks with heat-emitting devices which mimicked an actual tank's heat signature on the Iraqi infrared scanners. Similar deception was used during World War II to disguise the actual landing location for D-Day. Such deception can save lives and ensure victory. The

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15. "Clinton: 'There Is No Improper Relationship,'" *Federal News Service*, 22 January 1998, A13.

16. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (New York: Delacorte, 1983).

object in war, to paraphrase General George Patton, is not to die for your country, but to get your enemies to die for their country.<sup>17</sup>

Another place where deception is generally considered acceptable is national security. Many governments have spies. The CIA is a government-run spy organization and many of its employees are Mormons who accept the necessity of spying to protect our national interests. Other examples of socially acceptable deceit include the police, who are allowed to lie to suspects when persuading them to confess their crimes, and doctors, who give placebos to patients with incurable or non-existent illnesses. Furthermore, the Fifth Amendment guarantees a defendant the right to withhold truth when self incrimination could result, and the Supreme Court's "Miranda" decision guarantees us the right to "remain silent," or to hide the truth under certain circumstances. In courtrooms, defense attorneys are under no moral obligation to help the prosecution with its case: If the prosecutor doesn't ask the right questions, the truth may remain hidden. Deception is also an essential part of most sports. In football, quarterbacks try to hide the ball, while coaches devise trick plays intended to give their team an advantage. On the other side, however, is an enormously long list of unjustifiable deceptions, which includes things like "consumer fraud, insider trading, the misuse of public office and public trust for personal self-interest, kids hiding their dope and alcohol and pregnancies from their parents, husbands and wives cheating on each other, used car dealers painting over rust and turning back odometers, the false and vicious reasoning of racism and sexism, televangelists preying on vulnerable, semiliterate audiences, cigarette advertising, and so on."<sup>18</sup>

Nyberg's bottom-up theory rejects much of the absolutist's truth-telling imperative as "deceptively simple":

It sounds not merely possible but positively easy: Give plain and frank expression to what is in your mind; don't misrepresent your thoughts or feelings. But should we really refrain from lying to a violent criminal simply because there may be a truthful alternative? Should we answer a child's every question about sex, divorce, death, and disease regardless of any probably disturbing, even destructive consequences of doing so? Should we give frank expression to every strong feeling of contempt, envy, lust, and self-pity? Should we tell our friends the truth when we believe it will shatter their self confidence? The list of exceptions is endless. . . .<sup>19</sup>

As an alternative, Nyberg suggests we "evaluate the inclination to

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17. "The World We Live in and Life in General," 21 May 2000, available at <http://members.aol.com/Jobacker/QuoteArchive.html>.

18. Nyberg, 10-11.

19. *Ibid.*, 25-26.

deceive in each instance and determine its moral status in the particular circumstances given."<sup>20</sup> Bottom-up theory says each of us carries within us a set of moral values which sometimes conflict with one another and demand exceptions. Truth-telling is a value, but so are kindness, compassion, self-regard, privacy, survival, etc. Which values become victims or victors depends on the circumstances.

This relativist system is often referred to as "situational ethics." *Webster's Dictionary* tells us that the term first appeared in 1955 and defines it as "a system of ethics by which acts are judged within their contexts instead of by categorical principles."<sup>21</sup> Moral and religious leaders including Mormon general authorities have often denounced situational ethics in favor of more absolute codes of conduct. In an October 1997 General Conference address, Elder Richard B. Wirthlin decried the "absence of moral clarity and purpose" which is the "biggest threat to our world's societies," providing as evidence the statistic "that a full 79 percent of Americans believe that 'there are few moral absolutes—what is right or wrong [they believe] usually varies from situation to situation'. . . . Societies structured by situational ethics—the belief that all truths are relative—created a moral environment defined by undistinguished shades of gray."<sup>22</sup> Apostle Neal A. Maxwell also addressed this topic, saying that such beliefs are held by people who "selfish[ly] believe that there is no divine law anyway, so there is no sin. Situational ethics are thus made to order for the selfish."<sup>23</sup> On another occasion he said, "[O]urs, too, is a day of every-man-for-himself situational ethics, as if the Ten Commandments came from a focus group!"<sup>24</sup>

Most of us would be shocked to find a modern religious leader publicly espousing situational ethics. Ours is, after all, a culture which teaches the overarching importance of honesty, where stories like "George Washington and the Cherry Tree" (a complete fabrication, ironically written by a parson) help children learn to tell the truth.<sup>25</sup> Yet

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20. *Ibid.*, 18.

21. *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* [on-line], *America Online*, 21 May 2000, keyword: Collegiate.

22. Richard B. Wirthlin, "Four Absolute Truths Provide an Unfailing Moral Compass," from the 167th *Semi-annual General Conference, October 1997*, 21 May 2000, available at <http://www.lds.org>. Elder Wirthlin lists the source of his statistics as: "1990 Wirthlin Worldwide Study."

23. Neal A. Maxwell, "Repent of [Our] Selfishness," from the 169th *Annual General Conference, April 1999*, 21 May 2000, available at <http://www.lds.org>.

24. Neal A. Maxwell, "Lessons from Laman and Lemuel," from the 169th *Semi-annual General Conference, October 1999*, 21 May 2000, available at <http://www.lds.org>.

25. Nyberg, 154-55. Parson Mason Locke Weems first recorded the story of George Washington and the cherry tree in his 1806 book, *The Life of George Washington*. The story was, according to Nyberg, plagiarized from a story by Dr. James Beattie called "The Minstrel," pub-

Joseph Smith's teachings on several occasions seem directly opposed to those of Elder Maxwell and Elder Wirthlin. For example, in the Doctrine and Covenants: "All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself" (D&C 93:30). More explicit is the following quote where Joseph Smith sounds very much like a bottom-up theory practitioner:

That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be and often is right under another. God said, 'Thou shalt not kill'; at another time He said, 'Thou shalt utterly destroy.' This is the principal on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is although we may not see the reason thereof 'til long after the events transpire. . . . But in obedience there is joy and peace unspotted.<sup>26</sup>

To this can be added the example of Nephi in the Book of Mormon who was commanded to kill Laban and take his brass plates in order to save future generations from disbelief. Given the right confluence of circumstances and revelation, even the Ten Commandments were not considered inviolable by the Book of Mormon prophets or, presumably, by Mormons who consider the Book of Mormon to be the "Word of God."

An example of relativistic ethics by a high-ranking Mormon leader comes from Matthias F. Cowley during his hearing before the Quorum of Twelve Apostles in 1911, where he was charged with performing post-Manifesto plural marriages. On that occasion he said, "I am not dishonest and not a liar and have always been true to the work and to the brethren. . . . We have always been taught that when the brethren were in a tight place that it would not be amiss to lie to help them out." Cowley further said he had heard a member of the First Presidency say "he would lie like hell to help the brethren."<sup>27</sup>

The prevarications surrounding the Dallin Oaks/Steve Benson affair provide dramatic proof that, in spite of their denunciations from the

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lished seven years prior. See also Curtis D. MacDougal, *Hoaxes* (New York: Dover, 1958), 106-7.

26. Joseph Smith, Jr., et. al., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. by B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City, Utah: *The Deseret News*, 1902-1912), 5:134-5; *New Mormon Studies CD-ROM* (Smith Research Associates, 1998). The statement was originally part of a letter written to Nancy Rigdon after she refused to become one of Joseph's plural wives. See Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 32-33.

27. "The Trials for the Membership of John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley," excerpts from the official minutes of meetings held by the Quorum of Twelve Apostles in February, March, and May 1911, found in B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 373.



pulpit, modern LDS general authorities may also weigh the consequences of their actions contextually, and that loyalty to their fellow apostles might still be considered a value higher than truth-telling. However, these are largely private realities not meant for the public.

*"A man who tells the truth should keep his horse saddled."*—Caucasus Proverb

Occasionally there is much to lose by telling the truth, and something to be gained by not telling the truth. As Nyberg says, "We all value the truth and yet we are all ordinary human deceivers; we neither want to know all the truth nor tell it all. Deception is not so much a plague as it is part of the atmosphere that sustains life."<sup>28</sup> While accusing us all of being deceivers, Nyberg also dismisses Bok's gloomy domino theory, asserting instead that most people will tell the truth most of the time as a sort of voluntary contribution to society.

Hollywood screenwriters were probably pondering the question of what it would be like to live in a world where everyone told the truth all the time when they wrote the script for the comedy hit, *Liar, Liar*. In this film, Jim Carey plays a sleazy attorney with questionable ethics who will do anything to make partner in his law firm, up to and including suborning perjury. When he misses his son's birthday party, he lies about the reason for his absence and—repeating something that must have happened numerous times in this young boy's life—causes his son a lot of pain. Before blowing out the candles of his birthday cake, the son wishes that his father will be unable to lie for a full twenty-four hours; the wish miraculously comes true. Not only can the father not lie, he also can't keep from telling the complete truth to everyone he meets. His sudden bout with truthfulness gets him slapped, humiliated, and almost fired from his job. When he realizes it's his son's wish which has caused the problem, he pleads for the curse to be lifted. He tells his son, "Adults can't live in a world where they can't lie," and "everyone lies." His son is a bit sympathetic, yet realizes his father's moral hierarchy is out of balance. "But it doesn't hurt when other people lie," the boy tells his father. "It just hurts when you do." The film's predictably happy ending has the father regaining his ability to lie, but within a new and improved moral framework.

*"I like to know what the truth is so I can decide whether to believe it or not."*—Queen Elizabeth I

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28. Nyberg, 24-25.

If Nyberg is correct that we are all ordinary deceivers, it becomes important for us to discern the truthfulness of others. Unfortunately, we aren't particularly good at it. Paul Ekman, a psychology professor at the University of California at San Francisco, has studied the human ability to detect lies since 1977. Secret Service agents do quite well in his clinical tests, but judges and cops—people whose occupation involves discerning truth from lies—are fooled one-third of the time. "You can't catch everybody," Ekman says. "Five to ten percent of people are what I call natural performers. Some become actors, others salespeople, politicians. They are people who can control their demeanor beautifully. They're inventive, charismatic. They become the role they're playing." A key factor, according to Ekman, is how motivated the listener is to believe what they are hearing. Occasionally, tacit collusion between the deceiver and listener helps a lie succeed.<sup>29</sup>

Nyberg also gives a particular warning to those who believe everything they are told. He calls it a "sort of brain bypass."<sup>30</sup> Trust, warmth, openness, and lack of cynicism are delightful and refreshing traits in people, but these exact traits lead many to fall victim to high-pressure sales pitches and con artists. Further, Nyberg establishes a checklist for evaluating whether a deception is justifiable, listing six categories of concern:

- 1) The situation or context, the time, and place: Public and private places are each governed by different rules; different situations may call for different levels of truthfulness.
- 2) The actors: There is a difference between people who helped hide Jewish refugees during World War II and lied about it to the Nazis, and a spouse who lies to his or her mate about an extra-marital affair. The relationship between the parties involved is important in determining how much truth should be divulged.
- 3) The purpose: Why is this happening? Does the deceiver have a clear and fully conscious purpose? Does he or she have a good reason for the deception?
- 4) The manner: How is the lying done? Is the deceiver doing things in the most appropriate manner? What is the cost of doing things this way?
- 5) The consequences: How interested should I be? Is the situation trivial or important, joking or serious?
- 6) There are a few limits to the obligation to tell the truth, including:

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29. Debi Howell, "Detecting the Dirty Lie," *This World*, 8 August 1993, 5.

30. Nyberg, 44.

People should avoid harming others, people should help others when they can, and when there is a choice, put people before material things.<sup>31</sup>

Whether you prefer the top-down or the bottom-up approach to the truth, it should be clear that in spite of the absolute denunciation of lying found in the scriptures, there are occasions where lying might not only be excusable but also justifiable. While on vacation in Japan a few years ago, I was confronted with a situation where I was required to decide between telling a lie and offending the hosts who had so graciously invited us into their home. Night after night, our hosts placed unrecognizable food in front of us which had been prepared with care and was mostly delicious. Wanting nothing more than to please us, they also offered things which for religious reasons we wouldn't drink. We politely turned down their offers of sake, beer, and tea, trying to convey through the language barrier that water was "just fine." However, they clearly wanted to do more, and asked us what we drank at home. We listed a few beverages, mostly sodas they had never heard of, and eventually I mentioned root beer. The husband's eyes brightened, thinking he had discovered something he could provide. The next night he proudly presented us with cans of non-alcoholic Japanese beer which he had obviously gone to great trouble to purchase. We smiled and drank what was, at least for me, as unpleasant a drink as I have ever encountered. When he asked me how I liked it, I lied and told him it was wonderful, thanking him ever so much. Hospitality to strangers is extremely important in Japanese culture, and I chose courtesy over truthfulness.

Was my lie justifiable? Using Bok's top-down method we can ask, Was there a truthful alternative? The answer is no, at least not without insulting our hosts. Was it excusable? Yes, given the circumstances, the miscommunication, the attempt by our host to be courteous, and our desire to be gracious guests. Would a group of reasonable people agree we acted properly in deceiving? I believe the answer would be yes. I also believe the lie would be justifiable using Nyberg's less stringent bottom-up analysis. Given the people involved, the situation, the consequences of being completely truthful, and the harm possibly caused by telling the truth, my small deception was warranted.

*"It is always the best policy to speak the truth, unless of course, you are an exceptionally good liar."—Jerome K. Jerome*

*"It is good to always tell the truth, but not always to tell the whole of what we know."*—Apostle Abraham H. Cannon<sup>32</sup>

Now that we have built a philosophical basis for justifiable deception, let us return to questions of religion and deception: Is it ever justifiable for a prophet or an apostle to lie? Are there special ramifications to be considered which are exclusive to religious leaders? Would God lie or would he ever sanction a lie? A case study from the scriptures as well as one from Mormon history should be helpful in answering these questions.

One story about a prophet and deception is told in the Book of Genesis, involving Abraham (Abram) and his wife Sarah (Sarai). In chapter 12, Jehovah promises Abraham that he and his wife will become a great nation.<sup>33</sup> This is the Abrahamic Covenant, wherein Abraham is blessed, and told that all families of the earth will be blessed through him. At the time of the promise, Abraham and Sarah have no children. Soon after the promise is made, a famine comes upon the land, forcing Abraham and his family to travel to Egypt in order to survive. Abraham fears the Egyptians will take Sarah and kill him because of her beauty, so he tells Sarah to say she is his sister.<sup>34</sup> The ruse works but has unintended consequences: Pharaoh's sons see Sarah and decide she would be a wonderful addition to their father's harem. They take Sarah and give gifts to Abraham as compensation. In order to protect the sanctity and fidelity of Sarah and Abraham's marriage, and in order to preserve his covenant with them, the Lord intervenes, cursing Pharaoh and his house with a great plague. Somehow Pharaoh realizes the plagues are due to Sarah and discovers the deception. He scolds Abraham with accusing questions which go unanswered when Abraham offers no defense. Finally, Pharaoh orders his men to escort Abraham and Sarah out of Egypt, the ancient equivalent of being deported by the I.N.S.<sup>35</sup>

The importance of this story is evidenced by the fact that it occurs no less than three times in Genesis.<sup>36</sup> In Gen. 20, Gerar replaces Egypt and

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32. Abraham H. Cannon Diary, 14 Dec. 1881, University of Utah. Quoted in D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18 (Spring 1985): 18-19.

33. Gen. 12:2-3.

34. Gen. 12:10-13.

35. Gen. 12:14-20.

36. The story in Gen. 12, a "classical example of an early folk narrative," is repeated in Gen. 20 and 26. Scholars have debated the relationship between the three accounts; while some scholars maintain that Gen. 26 is the oldest variant, the question has generally been settled in favor of Gen. 12. See Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), 161.

Abimelech replaces Pharaoh, but the other details remain basically the same. God's intervention this time comes in the form of a dream. Abimelech confronts Abraham, and this time Abraham defends his actions. He explains that Sarah is indeed his sister, actually his half sister. (This moves the deception from type 1, straightforward lying, to type 4, hiding of the truth through the telling of a half truth. After all, no one would have suspected she was both his sister and his wife.) Abraham also offers the defense that he thought "the fear of God was not in this place." This statement is ironic, considering it is Abimelech's respect for Abraham's God which eventually saves them.<sup>37</sup> The story is repeated yet a third time in Chapter 26, with Isaac and Rebecca replacing Abraham and Sarah, while the other story elements remain virtually untouched.<sup>38</sup>

In all three versions of the story, a foreign king unwittingly imperils the "blessed" lineage as a direct result of having been told a lie. Abraham is guilty not only of lying, but also of lacking the faith necessary to believe that God could preserve him and his wife and honor the covenant he had made with them. Was Abraham, a prophet of God, justified in lying to Pharaoh? One can argue he was, since his life and that of his wife were spared. He was in an impossible situation, facing death by starvation on the one side, and death at the hand of the Egyptians on the other. By applying Nyberg's checklist for evaluating a justifiable deception, we find that, given the situation (possible starvation), the actors (a prophet, his family, a rich and powerful king of a foreign land whom he feared), and their purpose (to survive long enough to see God's promise fulfilled), one can easily excuse the manner in which the deception was done. However, were it not for God's direct intervention, the consequences of their deceit would have been disastrous, and great harm would have been done not only to Sarah and Abraham, but also to God's plan for blessing all the nations of the Earth.<sup>39</sup>

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37. Gen. 20:1-17

38. Gen. 26:1-11

39. The story from Gen. 12 can also be found in Abr. 2 in the Pearl of Great Price. As "translated" by Joseph Smith, this version has the Lord specifically telling Abraham to lie to the Egyptians. Abraham is therefore justified in the deception since he is simply being obedient. This change to the story is problematic because it dramatically changes the nature of the story from one which teaches a moral lesson regarding the disastrous consequences of lack of faith to one of divinely directed "situational ethics." Dan Vogel has pointed out that this particular portion of the Book of Abraham is missing from all the existing manuscript copies and was probably added to the text shortly before it was published in the *Times and Seasons* on March 15, 1842. He references Susan Staker, who suggests that this change should be viewed in the context of Joseph Smith's involvement at the time with plural marriage and his possible desires to justify the deceptions which accompanied that practice. See Dan Vogel, "'The Prophet Puzzle' Revisited," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 31 (Fall 1998): 133; Susan Staker, "'The Lord Said, Thy Wife Is a Very Fair Woman to Look Upon': The Book of Abraham,

*"As scarce as truth is, the supply has always been in excess of the demand."*—Josh Billings

The second case study involves the practice of polygamy which was introduced into the Mormon church by Joseph Smith sometime during the 1830s, or possibly as late as 1841.<sup>40</sup> From then until 1852, polygamy was practiced in secret by a limited number of church members.<sup>41</sup> Only after the Saints were securely established in the remote Rocky Mountains did the leaders of the church publicly declare Joseph's doctrine of "plurality of wives." Orson Pratt was chosen to make the announcement during a church conference on August 29, 1852, and he was followed by Brigham Young, who discussed the preservation of Joseph Smith's revelation which was later included in the Doctrine and Covenants as Section 132.<sup>42</sup> For ten years, polygamy was practiced both openly and without government sanctions, but commencing in 1862 with the passage of the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act, and with ever-increasing attempts by the government to enforce its laws, the very existence of the church was threatened.<sup>43</sup> By 1890, Wilford Woodruff felt compelled to issue the "Manifesto," officially denying that plural marriages were still being performed and giving his "advice to the Latter-day Saints to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land."<sup>44</sup> Officially sanctioned plural marriages did not cease, however, and continued to be

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Secrets, and Lying for the Lord," Sunstone Theological Symposium, Salt Lake City, Utah, 17 August 1996.

40. According to the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, the first plural marriage was between Joseph Smith and Fanny Alger. A date is not given, but Todd Compton points to February or March 1833. See Danel Bachman and Ronald K. Esplin, "Plural Marriage," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. by Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992); also in *Infobases Collectors Library*, Infobases, Inc. 1998; Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 26, 33. Readers of the article will need to decide for themselves whether Bachman's and Esplin's insistence that a marriage took place was either deceptively simple or simply uninformed, since what scant evidence there is comes very late (1896). Oliver Cowdery, in an 1838 letter to Joseph Smith, referred to his [Smith's] relationship with Fanny as "a dirty, nasty, filthy affair," because there were no known witnesses and no known record of a marriage, and because Joseph Smith didn't publicly claim to have the "sealing" power that was necessary for "celestial marriages" until two years later in the fall of 1835. (See Compton, 26-42, and Van Wagoner, 5-6, 9-11, 46.) Joseph Smith's next plural wife was probably Lucinda Pendelton Morgan Harris, and while there is no exact date for a marriage, evidence points to 1838. His first marriage for which there is solid evidence in the form of third-party witnesses was to Louisa Beaman on April 5, 1841. (See Compton, 49, 59.)

41. The practice of polygamy was initially limited to some of the Mormon leadership in whom Joseph Smith confided. More members became involved in Utah, and estimates range from 10 percent to 25 percent of the membership at its peak. (See Bachman and Esplin, 16-17.)

42. Van Wagoner, 85-86.

43. *Ibid.*, 108, 128-29.

44. D&C, Official Declaration 1.

secretly performed until 1904, when President Joseph F. Smith issued his "second manifesto," which led to the eventual end of the practice.<sup>45</sup>

That polygamy was practiced in secret and that deceptive means were used to hide the practice have been well documented. An extended recounting of the evidence is beyond the scope of this discussion, but it has been detailed by authors and historians such as D. Michael Quinn, B. Carmon Hardy, and Richard Van Wagoner, to name a few.<sup>46</sup> The real question isn't whether lies were told but rather, were the lies and deception which accompanied polygamy justifiable? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to understand just how seriously the early Mormons considered their obligation to participate in and continue the practice.

Joseph Smith believed part of his mission as a prophet of God was to "restore all things," and when he introduced the Old Testament practice of plural marriage, he claimed it was a necessary part of that restoration. One witness to his claim was Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, the daughter of Apostle Heber C. Kimball, who became one of Joseph Smith's plural wives at the age of 15. Joseph gave a speech on the restoration of all things in 1841, prior to the return of the apostles from Europe, where he said "that as it was anciently with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, so it would be again," and he spoke "so plainly that his wife, Emma, as well as others were quite excited over it."<sup>47</sup> According to Joseph Lee Robinson, who also heard the address, a number of the leading women of Nauvoo gathered later that day at the home of Joseph and Emma to accuse the prophet of blasphemy and demand, "[T]ake back what you have said today it is outrageous it would ruin us as a people." In the afternoon session, Joseph stood and retracted his comments, according to Robinson.<sup>48</sup> It has been speculated that this speech was meant to test the readiness of the Mormon community to accept polygamy. Joseph's quick retraction may help us understand why he later chose to share the polygamy doctrine only with Mormonism's elite. Although many Mormons in Nauvoo, Utah, and elsewhere never accepted or practiced polygamy, it was for some time the norm among LDS leadership.<sup>49</sup>

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45. Bachman and Esplin, "Plural Marriage"; Hardy, 259-61; Van Wagoner, 167-68.

46. Quinn, Hardy, Van Wagoner. See also Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*, and Todd Compton, "A Trajectory of Plurality: An Overview of Joseph Smith's Thirty-Three Plural Wives," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29 (Summer 1996): 1-38.

47. Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, *Why We Practice Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1884), 11, quoted in Van Wagoner, 51.

48. Van Wagoner, 51. The concept of the "restoration of all things," as understood in Nauvoo, developed gradually and may have postdated Joseph's interest in restoring plural marriage. See Clay Chandler, "The Restoration of Some Things," Sunstone Symposium, Washington DC, (audio tape), 15 April 2000.

49. Hardy, 16, 17, 19.

While some contradictory evidence exists, early Mormon history is full of statements indicating that the practice of polygamy was considered a prerequisite to attaining salvation in the highest glory of the Celestial Kingdom. Brigham Young affirmed his belief regarding this on August 19, 1866, when he said, "The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy. Others attain unto a glory and may even be permitted to come into the presence of the Father and the Son; but they cannot reign as kings in glory, because they had blessings offered unto them, and they refused to accept them."<sup>50</sup>

The early Mormons were a millennial society which believed the second coming of Christ was imminent but could not occur until after all things, including plural marriage, had been restored. Consider, for example, the following passage from Orson Pratt in *The Seer*:

But "the times of the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" are at hand, preparatory to the coming of Jesus Christ, whom the heavens must receive until the restitution of all things is completed, when he will again be sent to take unto himself his great power and reign over all people. Among the "all things" which the prophets have predicted should be restored before the Messiah comes is Polygamy.<sup>51</sup>

Mormons at that time also believed the forces of the devil were at work to prevent the restoration from occurring. It is impossible to understand the deception surrounding polygamy unless one recognizes and accepts that the people involved believed they were simply obeying the commandments of God and fighting against the devil and his forces. As Brigham Young said:

We are told that if we would give up polygamy—which we know to be a doctrine revealed from heaven and it is God and the world for it—but suppose this church should give up this holy order of marriage, then would the

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50. Brigham Young, "Delegate Hooper—Beneficial Effects of Polygamy—Final Redemption of Cain," in *Journal of Discourses*, by Brigham Young et al., reported by G. D. Watt, *New Mormon Studies*, 26 vols. (Liverpool and London: F. D. and S. W. Richards and Latter-Day Saints Book Depot, 1854), 11:268. See also D&C 131, 132:15-21; Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 54; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 90; David John Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 58-59. Following the passage of the Edmunds Act in 1882, Mormon officials began equating "celestial marriage" with eternal marriage, one in which a man and a woman were "sealed" to a single partner for eternity. See Hardy, 54, 297-98; Buerger, 59n68; Heber J. Grant, *Millennial Star* 95:588, September 1933, in *Latter-day Prophets Speak: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Church Presidents*, Daniel H. Ludlow, ed. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1948) in Infobases [CD-ROM], 1998.

51. Orson Pratt, ed., "Christian Polygamy in the Sixteenth Century," *The Seer*, December 1853, 1:12, 182-83.



devil, and all who are in league with him against the cause of God, rejoice that they had prevailed upon the Saints to refuse to obey one of the revelations and commandments of God to them.<sup>52</sup>

*"A lie told often enough becomes truth."—Vladimir Ulyanov Lenin*

In 1890 Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto on polygamy. Although it is included in the Doctrine and Covenants as Official Declaration 1, the Manifesto was not originally written as a declaration to the members of the Church, but was rather a communication sent to Washington to convince the U.S. government that the practice of polygamy was finally and completely being abandoned. Only after the Secretary of the Interior refused to accept it unless it was presented to a conference of the church was it submitted to the body of the church.<sup>53</sup> On many levels, the document was intended to be deceptive. For example, it falsely claimed that plural marriages listed by the Utah Commission had not occurred, when in fact they had. Woodruff also claimed in the Manifesto that he was neither teaching nor advocating polygamy, and while this may have been technically true, he knew his counselors and several apostles were. Woodruff also claimed that the Endowment House had been torn down at his instructions after a plural marriage was performed there without authorization; while the building was indeed torn down, the real reasons were, as the *Salt Lake Tribune* correctly noted, because it had been raided by U.S. Marshals and was considered contaminated, because it was liable to be seized by the receiver in the escheat cases, because it was too public a place to carry on clandestine plural marriages, and because the Logan Temple had been completed by that time.<sup>54</sup> Woodruff further declared his intention in the Manifesto to submit to the laws of the land and use his influence with the members, but he remained silent on the issue of co-habitation, even though the practice was illegal according to the "laws of the land." He later expressly denied that the Manifesto was meant to cover co-habitation.<sup>55</sup> We can also argue that since new church-sanctioned plural marriages continued to be performed between 1890 and 1904, the Manifesto was deceptive in that Woodruff and other leaders of the church never intended to be bound by their own declaration.<sup>56</sup>

Given the overwhelming evidence that the Manifesto was deceptive, we can now ask, was the deception justifiable? The question can be answered using the five categories of bottom-up theory:

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52. Brigham Young, "Opposition Essential to Happiness," 3 June 1866, *Journal of Discourses* 11:239, in *New Mormon Studies*.

53. Hardy, 134.

54. Van Wagoner, 152.

55. *Ibid.*, 145.

56. Quinn, 9-105.

- 1) What was the situation? The church was under attack from its enemies, its properties were being escheated (and the temples would soon be confiscated as well), the United States Supreme Court had ruled against the church on all its appeals, Mormons—even non-polygamist Mormons—were facing the loss of their right to vote, and Mormons were starting to lose control of the local government for the first time. The church's treasury was nearly empty. Giving up polygamy wasn't possible without a commandment from God. Continuing the fight was now virtually impossible.
- 2) Who were the actors? First, the members of the church who were practicing polygamy and/or believed that the practice was a commandment of God; and, second, the United States government, which was considered an enemy and a servant of the devil by the Saints.
- 3) What was the purpose? To end the onslaught of anti-polygamy legislation, to protect and preserve the temples, and to keep the church from being destroyed. An official declaration encouraging church members to obey the laws of the land seemed the only possible way to stop the persecution. Most of the debilitating anti-polygamy laws passed by the government applied only to the territories, and Wilford Woodruff's intent was to pacify the government long enough for statehood to be granted. Some of the leadership hoped that when they took back control of the local government, they could quietly continue the practice through lax enforcement of the federal laws. George Q. Cannon, in particular, was a champion of this belief.<sup>57</sup>
- 4) What was the manner in which the deception occurred? There is a substantial amount of evidence that Wilford Woodruff was torn on this issue and that he approached it prayerfully and earnestly. While the Manifesto is considered by many to have been a revelation, Woodruff never claimed it as such until the following year. The idea that it was a revelation seems to have grown gradually.<sup>58</sup> There are even questions as to who wrote the document, with some claiming it was Woodruff and others saying it was written by a committee. George Reynolds, a secretary in the First Presidents' office, testified in 1904, "I assisted to write it. . . in collaboration with Charles W. Penrose and John R. Winder." Others claim George Q. Cannon wrote it.<sup>59</sup> The Manifesto was never presented

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57. Van Wagoner, 126-27;

58. Hardy, 149-50; Van Wagoner, 148, 152.

59. Quinn, 11, 44-45; Van Wagoner, 187n1.

to the entire Quorum of the Twelve until after it had been made public, and even then opinions were deeply divided.<sup>60</sup> The evidence suggests the Manifesto was written as a ploy to fool the government and then became a nightmare when Woodruff was forced to present it to the general membership of the church. The leaders, who had no intention of actually abandoning the practice of polygamy, were then forced to pursue an even more dangerous course of escalating deception.

- 5) What were the consequences? Similar statements had been made before, but the Manifesto was the first official repudiation of polygamy. It is difficult to say what those involved understood to be the consequences at the time. Officially and publicly ending the practice, while secretly continuing it by exploiting the Manifesto's loopholes, was as dangerous as Abraham's decision to pass off his wife as his sister. Apostle John Henry Smith said that the Manifesto was "but a trick to defeat the devil at his own game."<sup>61</sup> Although many were shocked and dismayed by the announcement, during the months that followed, more and more members of the church came to accept the Manifesto as a revelation and as the will of God. As President Woodruff and the apostles watched the government tighten its grip, and their own followers began to abandon the practice, they must have felt much like Abraham did when Sarah was in Pharaoh's harem and all he could do was pray for divine intervention.

Considering the existing situation, the participants, their purpose, the manner in which the Manifesto was issued, and the expected consequences, I would have to say that, at least in my opinion, the Woodruff Manifesto was a justifiable deception. In retrospect, however (and I recognize that I have a great time and distance from which to judge), the Manifesto was unjustifiable given the unexpected consequences. It's difficult to fault the Mormon leaders of the time for choosing such a difficult path in such a dire situation, but there are a few things they might have anticipated. Perhaps they should have guessed the government wouldn't accept the Manifesto as binding unless it was presented to a general conference and accepted by the members of the church. Perhaps they should have anticipated that most Mormons would believe the

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60. Van Wagoner, 144.

61. John Henry Smith in *Proceedings Before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate in the Matter of the Protests Against the Right of Hon. Reed Smoot a Senator from the State of Utah, to Hold his Seat*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1907), 4:13; cited in Van Wagoner, 177.

Manifesto to be a revelation from God to stop the practice of polygamy. Maybe they should have thought a little harder about how divisive it would be to secretly practice polygamy while publicly denouncing it, not only to the government, but also to their own members. Prior to the Manifesto, the Mormon community was united in its efforts to continue the practice, and while they were deceptive, they uniformly believed they had the backing and support of God and the church. That unity dissolved as the members of the church and even the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles split on the issue of continued plural marriage. If the primary test in deciding whether or not to deceive is to do no harm, then the Manifesto or, more precisely, the practice of post-Manifesto polygamy, failed miserably. All the children who were forced to lie to protect their polygamous parents were harmed. The members who moved to Mexico and Canada to enter into new plural marriages and who later, following the second Manifesto, became pariahs to the main body of the church, were certainly harmed. The Mormons, both leaders and rank-and-file members, who went to Washington, D.C., during the Reed Smoot hearings and lied to Congress, were harmed. Apostles John Taylor and Matthias Cowley, who were forced to resign from the Quorum of the Twelve, were harmed. Most importantly, the trust which the members had in each other and in their leaders was harmed.

*"It's a rare person who wants to hear what he doesn't want to hear."—Dick Cavett*

In a religious society such as Mormonism, the statements of religious leaders are given more weight than are those of an ordinary member. Almost all members strongly desire to believe what their leaders tell them. We expect a higher level of integrity from our leaders, integrity being a consistency between the actions, words, thoughts, and emotions of the public persona and the private persona. The current president of the LDS Church, Gordon B. Hinckley, recently said, "It all comes down to personal integrity. Integrity is the value we set on ourselves. Complete and constant integrity is a great law of human conduct. . . . Integrity is the light that shines from a disciplined conscience. It is the strength of duty within us."<sup>62</sup> When someone whom we trust lies to us, we are more likely to believe that lie. Even if it makes no sense to us, we may suspend our disbelief, engage in self-deception, and believe anyway. If we later discover that what we believed to be true is, in fact, a lie, then that trust

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62. President Gordon B. Hinckley as quoted by President James E. Faust, "Strive for Integrity," *News From the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Produced by Church Public Affairs Radio News an Feature Service for Radio Broadcast November 14, 1998 to November 20, 1998*, transcribed copy distributed by mormon-news@Mailing-List.net, November 15, 1998.

has been violated, and our faith in the integrity of that person is damaged, even when the lie was intended to do good.

For religious leaders, doing the right thing may not be enough. They must also *appear* to do the right thing. That's why we pay such close attention when Steve Benson accuses Dallin Oaks of lying. Elder Oaks may have been deceptive in order to protect his friend and colleague Boyd K. Packer, and given his situation, he may have been doing something he considered not only excusable but also justifiable. However, when the public discovers they have been deceived, the integrity of the deceiver is called into question. For example, when it was revealed in the press that former general authority and Seventy Paul Dunn had for years presented fictional tales as actual events and had deceptively inserted himself into other people's stories, many members felt betrayed. That Dunn was shortly thereafter made "emeritus," the ecclesiastical equivalent of retirement, was almost certainly the result of his image having been tarnished by his deceptions. We tend to forget that past and present prophets, apostles, general authorities, stake presidents, and bishops are not only men of God, but also very human and therefore subject to making mistakes.

One belief held in common by top-down theorists like Bok and by bottom-up theorists like Nyberg is that there are times when lying is morally justifiable. While they disagree on the details and on the method of determination, all recognize that given the right circumstances, deception may be necessary. For every Neal Maxwell denouncing situational ethics from the pulpit, there is also an Abraham, Joseph Smith, Wilford Woodruff, Abraham H. Cannon, Matthias F. Cowley, Joseph F. Smith, Paul H. Dunn, or Dallin Oaks engaging in or justifying the limited use of deception. If the absolutists are right, those who justify their lies by examining the situation are deceiving themselves and harming society. If, on the other hand, truth-telling must always be weighed against other moral values, then it is possible for our religious leaders to occasionally not tell the truth while still believing they are acting in our best interests.

In the final analysis, what we really should expect from our leaders is not that they will tell us the truth, but instead that they won't betray our trust. You trust a friend, for example, to look after your best interests. You trust a friend to tell you the truth when you need to hear it, even if the truth hurts. You also trust a friend to show discretion, to be tactful with regard to the truth. "Trust," says Bok, "is a social good to be protected just as much as the air we breathe or the water we drink. When it is damaged, the community as a whole suffers; and when it is destroyed,

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63. Bok, 26-27.

societies falter and collapse.”<sup>63</sup> To maintain that trust, we need to know that our leaders have our best interests in mind. We need to know that they value our individual needs, and not just the needs of the institution. We need to know that the people below them in the religious community are as important to them as those above them or to the side of them. When we know and believe that, we will place our trust in them the same way we place our trust in a loving and caring God.

# Parched

*Amy E. Jensen*

Measured teaspoons of salt.  
Sifted flour, dustbowl flour.  
It gulps and swallows water.  
I feel it splinter off my hands,  
flake and crack as I wonder  
why the thunderclouds  
why the parched silence  
    that knows how to divide  
        red now rust colored sand  
            blown to burning without fire  
I wonder

what it means to dissolve  
    from inside

    with pieces small enough to  
sift through me

    touching  
    traces of rain  
on  
the thirsting clay.





# Pah Tempe

*Paiute for water from the rock*

*Sally Stratford*

After another day hiking the desert,  
I lock the door of my car,  
and turn toward the hot springs  
in the cool night.  
On the gravel trail  
I'm wrapped by stars,  
rehearsing the legend of  
the woman kept from cancer  
by the water.  
Hard to believe  
that the Virgin River  
shaped this jagged canyon.

Terraced pools seep down  
to the river, I slide in  
and the sulfur water  
holds my body, hot, sandy.  
I see Pete, the naked regular  
through the rising stream.  
My first time  
he asked, "Why are you here?"  
He comes after a day of drinking  
then returns to his flickering trailer  
Healed.

I want to soak naked  
the whole time too,  
not just alone in the cold river,  
to wash sand out of my bathing suit,  
but I'm not a regular yet.  
Under the waterfall  
I rinse caked mud from my hair  
and off my white arms.

I return to the pool and find Pete  
leaning against the rock, asleep  
like a little boy exhausted  
from crying in the dark.

# Gay & Lesbian Mormons: Interviews with James Kent, Former Executive Director of Affirmation, and with Aaron Cloward, Founder and Coordinator of Gay LDS Youth

*Hugo Olaiz*

*IN 1977 A GROUP OF PEOPLE with LDS backgrounds founded Affirmation, a national organization for gay and lesbian Mormons. Affirmation holds that same-sex relationships can be consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many gay and lesbian Mormons find in Affirmation a safe place to discuss their homosexuality and to make friends.*

*Since its founding, Affirmation has become an increasingly visible presence. It has received the attention of the media in Utah and other states, and Affirmation leaders have expressed their views through letters to the editor and press releases. In 2000 the organization helped promote a petition to LDS leaders, urging them to reconsider the church's policies toward its gay and lesbian members. The petition was signed by a group of more than 300 people and published in The Salt Lake Tribune on December 23, 2000. In 2001 Affirmation organized vigils in memory of recent gay Mormon suicides.<sup>1</sup>*

*Affirmation's website receives a monthly average of 3,800 visits from interested Internet users. The organization has also produced several brochures, such*

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1. See *Sunstone* 118 (April 2001): 90-91 and 119 (July 2001): 3, 5.

as “Homosexuality & Scripture from a Latter-day Saint Perspective,” and publishes a monthly newsletter, *Affinity*.

*During the year 2000 James Kent served as Affirmation’s executive director, defining annual goals, promoting the formation of new chapters, and overseeing the general activities of the organization. James, who resides in Hawaii, is currently serving as senior assistant director. On June 11, 2000, I interviewed him in my home in Salt Lake City.*<sup>2</sup>

#### WHAT IS AFFIRMATION?

Affirmation, Gay & Lesbian Mormons, is a social support group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people. Its purpose is to provide them with a safe space to sort out their sexual, religious, and spiritual issues without judgment.

#### SO THE MAIN FOCUS OF THE ORGANIZATION WOULD BE MUTUAL SUPPORT OR SOCIAL INTERACTION?

There are various things that Affirmation does. For some people, it helps them “come out of the closet.” Affirmation also helps people who have simply walked away from their church but still feel some cultural or social connection with it. It’s very easy to turn your back on a religion, but it’s still inside of you, and sometimes there is a need to feel a sense of connection even though you are no longer actively involved with the church.

#### HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH AFFIRMATION?

In May 1988, I was living in the San Francisco Bay Area. I was 30 years old and still pretending to be straight. A heterosexual friend of mine, who also had an LDS background, called me one day and said, “I don’t want to insult you, but I think you would find it interesting that in San Francisco there is a gay Mormon organization.” My straight friend and I went to the Metropolitan Community Church in San Francisco where the San Francisco chapter of Affirmation met. I can still remember walking up those stairs, opening the door, and seeing 31 gay and lesbian people with LDS backgrounds. I discovered for the first time in my life that I was not alone—that there were other people like me. And although my friend did not come back, I went there week after week as I began my journey out of the closet.

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2. For more information on Affirmation and its mission, visit its website at [www.affirmation.org](http://www.affirmation.org).

YOU WERE ACTIVE IN THE CHURCH AT THAT TIME?

I was very active in the church at that time. I was living and going to church in Fremont; and I also attended a young adult ward in the south San Francisco Peninsula. When I came out, I immediately had my records transferred to the San Francisco Singles Ward where the bishop at the time was very gay-friendly. So there was a situation where I found a gay-friendly ward in addition to finding Affirmation.

ARE YOU A CONVERT? HOW HAS YOUR EXPERIENCE BEEN IN THE LDS CHURCH?

My grandparents where baptized off the coast of Maui in 1920, so I consider myself a third-generation Latter-day Saint. I have held many church callings, sometimes two or three church callings, attempting to be "the best boy in the world." I served an honorable two-year mission to Japan. I reasoned that if I did all these things, perhaps God would forgive me for having these "unnatural" desires for other men instead of for women. At the time I found Affirmation, I was very lucky because I was extremely depressed. I was going to church in an attempt to date a Relief Society woman, only to get a crush on a member of the elders quorum. It was becoming increasingly more difficult to make things fit because I felt more isolated and alone with each passing year.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR COMING-OUT PROCESS?

I probably could not have survived the coming-out process if it had not been for Affirmation. I was so involved with the church at the time, and I was so full of misinformation given to me by both the LDS church and the media. They both talked about effeminate men, men who wore dresses, men who molested children, men who wore only leather, promiscuous men who had sex in parks, restrooms, and bathhouses, men who hated God and had no moral values. I could very easily say, "Well, I cannot be homosexual because these traits are not me." I knew in my heart that I was still attracted to men, but used this line of reasoning as a form of denial.

Some might say that I am gay because my parents were divorced and I did not have a male role model to guide me. For many years, as another form of denial, I used the argument that my homosexual feelings were really an attempt to reconcile myself to my absent father. Finally, I realized this argument is ridiculous because it would suggest that my siblings are also lesbian or gay, which they are not. My life has always been full of male role models: uncles, teachers, scoutmasters, church leaders, and co-workers who mentored me.

### HOW BIG IS AFFIRMATION?

The average membership of Affirmation is about 300. The number has remained the same over the years because the primary purpose of the organization is to help people come out and to help people maintain a spiritual and cultural connection with the church. Once those needs are met, the vast majority of Affirmation's members move on to other things. But there's a small core of us who stay behind to help the next group of people coming through and coming out, and then the next group of people. For me, it's an opportunity to give back to the organization that saved my life, to help other people out of the closet, to help them make the decisions that are best for them. A few of them even wind up getting married to members of the opposite sex. It is their choice. But it gives me great satisfaction to help people on their journey.

### DOES THAT MEAN THAT AFFIRMATION ALSO HELPS PEOPLE WHO ARE JUST QUESTIONING THEIR ORIENTATION, OR WHO EVENTUALLY DECIDE TO "GO BACK INTO THE CLOSET"?

You ask a loaded question. I'm a firm believer that a person could be heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. Or a person could be confused about his or her sexuality. There is a whole range of possibilities. What I regret is the societal pressure and particularly the church pressure to get married and have children. It is easy to gain applause and respect from church members and co-workers by getting married, having children, and going back into the closet, but that comes at the cost of your self-esteem and self-respect.

### WHERE IS AFFIRMATION ESTABLISHED?

Currently Affirmation has about 10 chapters throughout the United States and then probably another twenty to thirty area contacts both in the United States and in other countries like Australia, Sweden, and Great Britain. We are organized both on a local and national level. The biggest event occurs when we gather once a year for a national conference. Affirmation chapters are largest, of course, where there are a lot of people with LDS backgrounds. So you'll find chapters in places like San Francisco, Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, Phoenix, and Las Vegas.

### WHAT'S THE INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE OF THE ORGANIZATION?

We are slowly but surely becoming known overseas by getting our publications translated into different languages, particularly into Spanish. We have a lot of inquiries from people who come from Spanish-speaking countries. For now the vast majority of the people on our mailing list lives within the continental United States.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT MANY GAY AND LESBIAN MORMONS FEEL  
THAT LDS TEACHINGS ON CHASTITY DON'T APPLY TO THEM.  
WOULD YOU AGREE WITH THAT STATEMENT?

Affirmation takes no moral stand on the law of chastity. That is a private matter. Some people within the organization have chosen celibacy. Some have chosen to become partnered and are monogamous. There are some people within the organization who are quite promiscuous. But as an organization we make no judgments on that. That's a matter between those persons, their sexual partners, and God, and we just leave it at that.

WHAT'S YOUR CURRENT LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT WITH THE INSTITUTIONAL  
CHURCH? HAVE YOU BEEN DISFELLOWSHIPED OR EXCOMMUNICATED?

For the last 12 years I have been pretty much inactive—I have very, very little contact with the LDS church although I support my mother by going to church with her sometimes. As I started to see gay friends whom I loved very much die of AIDS (some as a form of suicide) or be excommunicated for having same-sex relations, I felt the LDS church was playing the role of God. I finally came to the conclusion that if the LDS church was too good for them, it was also too good for me. So two years ago, I requested to have my name removed from the records. I still consider myself spiritually, culturally, and socially LDS, but I cannot support the current leaders of the church on administrative or political levels.

DO YOU ATTEND ANY OTHER CHURCH?

Sometimes I attend non-LDS church services, but I have not formally joined any church. The Mormon church has played such a major part in my life. I don't know that I will ever be able to embrace any other religion as fully as I once did the LDS church.

DOES AFFIRMATION SEE ITSELF AS ANTAGONISTIC TOWARD THE LDS CHURCH?

There are many members of Affirmation who have been publicly humiliated by the LDS church, who have been shunned by members of the LDS church, who have been treated unfairly, and who are very angry at what happened to them and feel betrayed. They feel they sacrificed a great deal for a church that promised answers to all of their questions and then failed them. So there is an element within Affirmation that needs to vent, and I feel that Affirmation provides a safe space for that.

But there are also people within Affirmation who are very active, who are trying to live the gospel to the best of their abilities, and who firmly believe in all the teachings—except that they have to reconcile their church's teachings on homosexuality with who and what they are.

Affirmation, I would guess, is about one-third active members of the church, one-third inactive, and about a third have been disfellowshipped, excommunicated, or have asked to have their names removed from the records.

MANY MORMONS WOULD ASSERT THAT YOU HAVE "APOSTATIZED"  
OR AT LEAST LOST THE SPIRIT. HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO SUCH ACCUSATIONS?

It is very easy to just brush people off and say that they are apostates. Each individual member of the church has his or her own brand of Mormonism. The question is—how much do we have to agree in order to be Mormon? How Mormon is Mormon? How far can you go away from the teachings of the church and still be considered a Mormon? And how far away do you have to go to be considered an apostate? Ultimately the term "apostate" would reflect the decision of a church court, and if such a court has decided that you have apostatized, then church leaders can take disciplinary actions if they want to. But such actions don't change the heart and soul of a person.

It is really sad that a lot of people who have been excommunicated buy into this apostasy rhetoric, and as a result they believe that God hates them or that God has abandoned them. I feel that my spiritual journey really began when I came out of the closet. I'm a firm believer that the relationship between an individual and God does not require a church. It should never require a church. A prophet can speak to 10 million members of the church, but the Lord can give anyone personal revelation in regard to his or her own life and how to live it. If people accuse me of having lost the Spirit or having apostatized—that's really their problem because I know that God loves me unconditionally. Everyone *should* know that God's love is unconditional.

DON'T YOU BELIEVE GAYS AND LESBIANS CAN CHANGE THEIR SAME-SEX BEHAVIOR?

I'm a firm believer that a gay man or a lesbian woman can live a heterosexual lifestyle, but that such a person is in self-denial. If you truly are gay or lesbian and you pretend to be heterosexual, then you are living a lie—a lie that you will have to deal with for the rest of your life. Now, I do know people who are bisexual enough to comfortably live a heterosexual lifestyle. And I know from personal experience of hundreds and hundreds of men from LDS backgrounds who did get married, did have children, and then five, ten, twenty, or thirty years later they found themselves coming out of the closet for the sake of their own sanity and survival. Finally they had to deal with who and what they are rather than continue pretending to be something they are not.

DO YOU FIND HIGH LEVELS OF HOMOPHOBIA IN THE LDS CHURCH?

The LDS church is among the most homophobic of Christian denominations today. The church membership is led to believe that everyone is born heterosexual and that homosexual activity is merely a confusion or perversion of one's sexuality. Given that premise, one can understand the condemnation. If you really were a heterosexual person and were engaging in homosexual sex, that would be as unnatural as a homosexual person engaging in heterosexual sex.

RECENTLY WE'VE HEARD OF SEVERAL GAY MORMONS WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE, AND ONE OF THE CASES RECEIVED ATTENTION FROM THE NATIONAL MEDIA.<sup>3</sup> DO YOU THINK IT IS FAIR TO BLAME THE MORMON CHURCH FOR SUCH DEATHS?

That is a complicated question. There could be many factors behind a suicide—depression, the home situation, a career. However, when gay people are raised in an environment where they are taught that they are evil, wicked, degenerate, and selfish, they grow up with all this information and learn to hate themselves. They learn to treat their bodies as the enemy. They have very low self-esteem. And under these pressures some take their lives. I don't hold the LDS church solely responsible, but I do hold the church partially responsible for the deaths of Stuart Matis, D. J. Thompson, and others. Given the circumstances, how could it be otherwise?

DO YOU THINK THE CHURCH WILL EVER CHANGE ITS VIEWS ON HOMOSEXUALITY?

I don't expect the church to change its views in my lifetime. Perhaps sometime down the road there may be a change, but I'm not going to hold my breath. I'm going to continue living my life the best way I can and helping people out of the closet so that they can live their lives the best way they can. Let the church do what it deems best. If the church leaders do something very homophobic, I firmly believe they should be held to account. If, on the other hand, they undertake something positive, that should be acknowledged.

WHAT KIND OF DIALOGUE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE BETWEEN AFFIRMATION AND THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH?

This is a very difficult question. I personally have no desire for dialogue because I feel that LDS leaders are so set in their attitude towards homosexuality—as well as a variety of others topics such as feminism

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3. See *Newsweek* 8 May 2000: 38-39.



and intellectualism—that discussion would be a waste of time. The church leaders routinely imply that they have the answers to everything and that they never make a mistake. I’m hoping that over the years enough parents, brothers, sisters, and friends will stand up and say to the church, “What you are telling me about homosexuality just does not add up to what my mother, my sister, my son is. This has to stop.” Eventually the leaders’ attitude toward homosexuality would change if enough church members stood up to general authorities to get them down on their knees, asking for additional revelation, rather than simply assuming they know the answer.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ADVICE FOR YOUNG MORMONS  
WHO MIGHT BE QUESTIONING THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Whether you are straight or gay, I believe in the church’s teaching that you are better off being celibate until you’re old enough to sort through these issues and make mature decisions. You should date and get to know the person, let the relationship take its time, allow time to test and enjoy being together before you go on to a committed relationship.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR MESSAGE TO FAMILIES  
WHO HAVE A GAY CHILD, SIBLING, OR PARENT?

You need to love your family member, unconditionally, as is: fat, warts, imperfections, everything! You don’t have to agree with, but you do have to love him or her, and to find ways to express that love. I realize this is very, very difficult for some people. It would be nice if we could just come out to Mom and Dad and have them hug us and say, “Don’t worry, we love you.” But the fact is they have to deal first with the loss of a child they had thought was heterosexual, a child they thought was going to get married and have kids. Just as we did, they have to go through a grieving process and then a kind of re-birthing. We had wanted the same things, only to realize that we were different, that our lives are going to be different. Sometimes this process is very short, but sometimes it takes an entire life.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

I think the most important thing about this entire process is that in spite of everything I have said in this interview, I admit to you that I could be wrong, and I think that’s O.K. And if I should change my mind, that’s O.K., too. This is so important to me. I fear the person who says, “I have all the answers. I don’t need to question anymore, and my answers regarding your life are better than your answers.” My life is full of ques-

tions. I'm not afraid to admit that I make mistakes. I'd rather live by my own light and admit my shortcomings than live out someone else's expectations and pretend to be perfect.

*A RECENT DEVELOPMENT among gay and lesbian Mormons is the emergence of groups exclusively for youth. These groups are formed by young Mormons who typically meet for social purposes and also interact with each other via the Internet. One such group has recently been launched in Salt Lake City, and another has just been announced in Seattle.*

*The Salt Lake City group, called Gay LDS Youth, aims to meet the social needs of gay Mormons ages 18 to 30. The group, which has a website and a mailing list reaching 270 subscribers, was created last March by Aaron Cloward, a returned missionary living and working in Salt Lake City. On August 21, 2001, I interviewed Aaron in Salt Lake City.<sup>4</sup>*

#### WHY DID YOU CREATE GAY LDS YOUTH?

We created the group because of a lack of activities for young adults age 18 to 30. There is a lack of things for gay youth to do—outside of chat-rooms, the bars, and the clubs—that have a more social atmosphere where people can meet each other.

#### HOW OFTEN DOES THE GROUP MEET?

We meet weekly, usually on Saturdays. We try to have meetings during the week, too, because there are a few people who can't meet on Saturdays, so every once in a while we hold an activity on Wednesday.

#### WHAT IS YOUR AVERAGE ATTENDANCE?

It varies a lot. Lately we've had between 15 and 25 people, but at our last activity we had 35. It's getting bigger every time.

#### DO YOU HAVE A MAILING LIST?

We do. People can go to the website and fill out a form to request e-mail updates every week. Right now we have over 270 subscribers on the email list.

#### DOES THE GROUP INCLUDE WOMEN?

It does. We welcome anybody who wants to attend—gay, lesbian, transgendered, everybody. We only had one young lesbian girl write in and

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4. For more information on Gay LDS Youth, visit its website at [www.gaylds youth.com](http://www.gaylds youth.com).

ask if she would be welcome, and we said, "Absolutely—and you can bring your girlfriend if you want." And over the last few months we had about four or five straight girls who have come with their friends to hang out with us. So everyone is welcome.

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE GROUP DO YOU  
ESTIMATE IS ACTIVE IN THE LDS CHURCH?

That's a very good question. I'd say probably around 30 to 40 percent still attend church occasionally.

DO YOU ATTEND CHURCH?

I don't—I'm not active in the church, though I would like to be. I just moved and I don't have any friends to go to church with. But it would be fun to go.

DO YOU THINK THE LDS CHURCH AND THE SEMINARY  
PROGRAM ARE SAFE PLACES FOR GAY LDS YOUTH?

I have several friends who are out and still go to church events. For the most part, they are treated well by their peers in ward meetings or church functions. But if they are not out, or if they're questioning, it's really difficult because they hear lessons about homosexuality and other issues and sometimes things are said that can be hurtful. The teachers and the people who run the meetings are always very careful. But sometimes people in the class bring up a point that can be hurtful.

HAVE YOU BEEN OUT TO YOUR PREVIOUS BISHOPS?

I was out to my bishop in St. George and he was absolutely wonderful. I had a calling as the president of the LDS fraternity down there. So it was somewhat similar to our gay youth group here—it was really fun. We would go out with all these young guys and have activities. I was out to my bishop and to the stake president, and they were very nice. They didn't say anything—mostly because I believe they didn't know what to say. Definitely they made it clear that I was supposed to keep LDS standards, but they didn't really say much. They said, "Keep doing what you're doing; you're doing good with the fraternity, so keep going."

WERE YOU OUT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE FRATERNITY?

No, I wasn't—just to the bishop and the stake president.

DOES THE GAY LDS YOUTH GROUP HAVE  
STANDARDS SUCH AS NO DRINKING OR NO SMOKING?

Yes, we do. If somebody drinks or smokes, they are welcome to attend, but not to do these things in our meetings. One of the main points of the Gay LDS Youth group is to be able to have a place where people can go and not get involved with alcohol, tobacco, and things like that. After we started this group, a lot of my friends were very happy about that. They said, "It's so nice to meet somebody and they are not drunk, or they are not high on drugs, and to be able to socialize in a setting like that." So yes—we do have those standards.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST PROBLEM THAT GAY LDS YOUTH FACES?

Right now, from what I've experienced with some of my friends and the people I've talked to, I would say acceptance. A lot of gay LDS youth I know want to find a same-sex partner, but have a difficult time finding somebody who fits the standards they've grown up with. They want to find somebody who still has spirituality, morals, and values. So many of my friends and people I have known tend to throw away all the morals and values that they've grown up with. They think, "I'm gay, I'm going to throw it all away. I may as well live the way everybody else is living." This is hard for me. I think it's sad because I think that gay LDS youth can find friends and potential partners who have the same spirituality and the same things that they want.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE CHURCH'S VIEWS ON CHASTITY?

My personal belief is that any kind of sexual relations with another person, whether male or female, are fine as long as they are in a committed relationship. That is my personal belief. As far as the youth group goes, we welcome anybody no matter what their goals in life are. If somebody wants to be chaste and stay active in the church and have gay friends, we welcome them. If somebody says "No, I don't want to be active in church and I want to sleep around," we welcome them, too. We want everyone to feel welcome in the group.

DO YOU NETWORK WITH OTHER GROUPS, SUCH AS THE  
YOUTH GROUP THAT MEETS AT THE UTAH GAY AND LESBIAN CENTER?

We're starting to. One thing we want to be really careful with, though, is being affiliated with them. Sometimes it's very easy to get affiliated with a political group, or a pro-gay rights group, or a group that supports gay marriage. And for an LDS person, it's really scary to be involved with those groups because if you're affiliated with a group that doesn't support LDS teachings, you can have church disciplinary action

taken against you. So one of the things we're really careful to do is to network with these other groups, but not to be officially affiliated with them so that youth can know that they won't get into trouble for attending our meetings.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITY YOU'VE HAD SO FAR?

We had a couple of very successful activities. At the very beginning we had a party in Heber City. One of the guys on our list has a hard time getting to Salt Lake City, so he volunteered his place to have a party. We went up there; we had about 25 guys. There was a pool, we went swimming, we watched movies, we stayed up all night long just talking, having fun, and eating. It was really great. Then the next morning we went to have breakfast. And then recently we had another pool party at a friend's house. We had about 35 people. It's turned out so well. People had a really good time.

DOES THE GROUP ENCOUNTER OPPOSITION FROM PARENTS OR CHURCH LEADERS?

So far, no. We did have opposition in the beginning—a parent wrote in and said she saw her son looking at our website. So she looked it up after he left, and she was disappointed because she had thought it was a group trying to change her son's orientation. That's one thing we're not about. If there are people in the group who want to change their orientation, that's fine. We welcome them and support them in whatever goals they have. We don't really promote any philosophy. We just provide a place where guys can relax and have fun with people who are going through the same things they are.

I RECENTLY READ AN ARTICLE IN A LOCAL GAY PUBLICATION ABOUT GAY AND LESBIAN YOUTH WHO ARE HOMELESS (*PILLAR*, AUGUST 2001, PP. 7-9). DO YOU KNOW OF ANY GAY LDS YOUTH BEING KICKED OUT OF THEIR HOMES?

Yes, I do. In fact, two of the people in that article are on our mailing list. One is about 16 years old, and he has a hard time getting a chance to get away and come to the activities. The other one is a returned missionary, about 22, and he was kicked out of his home in California.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ADVICE TO LDS YOUTH WHO FEEL LONELY?

To come hang out with us! That would be my best advice because we're here for everybody—whatever level they're on. If they want to stay active in church, that's fine. If they don't, that's fine, too. And we have quite a mix in the members of the group, people who have different ideas about what they want to do, and that's one thing that I think makes

the group so successful—its diversity. So my biggest advice for them would be to come hang out with us.

And if there's no way they can get to our meetings, or if they're not out, if they don't dare, or are scared, I would advise them to find somebody they can talk with. They can have a support system with people who can understand what they're going through. In our group we have a directory listing so that people can email each other.

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ADVICE TO PARENTS WHO  
FIND OUT THAT THEIR CHILD IS GAY OR LESBIAN?

That's a very tough question. My favorite answer is—listen to your children. I think a lot of times parents find out that their children are gay or lesbian and they react. Sometimes the reaction is very negative, and I don't think they take the time to listen to what their child is going through. If they took the time to listen, to try to understand what's going on in their child's heart and what their child is feeling, the parents would be a lot more sensitive to the issue, and we wouldn't have problems like people kicking their children out.

IF YOU HAD A CHANCE TO SAY SOMETHING TO AN  
LDS BISHOP OR SEMINARY TEACHER, WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

To be accepting. I understand that a church leader or a seminary teacher has the responsibility to support the teachings of the church. And I think that's important. It is fine that they do that and fulfill their role in representing the church and in saying what the church believes about homosexuality. But ultimately if the person decides that they want to have a same-sex partner, or whatever they decide, it is important that the leaders be accepting of what the person decides to do, instead of forcing something that the person doesn't want. My advice to church leaders, not only in the LDS faith, but in all faiths, would be to listen and then to accept what the person decides because we all have our freedom of choice. And once that person makes the decision, to still love them and still support them, no matter what they decide and how they decide to live.

SHOULD A GAY LDS YOUTH GO ON A MISSION?

I think it depends on the person. I served a mission and I loved it. If I had to do it all over again, I would. At that time I wasn't out and I was coming to terms with myself. I think for some people, going on a mission wouldn't be a good idea. Maybe they're not ready, or they're not willing to keep the things that are required of them. For other people—yes, I would say it's fine, as long as they understand that there are certain rules

they'll have to keep and abide by. But my mission helped me more than anything else I've done in my life. It's helped me to become more outgoing and to develop leadership skills. If I hadn't served a mission, I probably wouldn't even have enough guts to do what I'm doing with the youth group.

IS THERE ANYTHING THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD?

I'd like to invite people to come out and hang out with us. We have 270 people on our e-mail list, and we want it to be 2,700! We'll keep finding places that are big enough to hold everyone. The more people we have who can support each other, the better community we'll have.

# “In a Dark Time the Eye Begins to See”: Personal Reflections on Homosexuality among the Mormons at the Beginning of a New Millennium<sup>1</sup>

*Robert A. Rees*

THE TITLE OF MY REMARKS, “In a dark time the eye begins to see,” comes from one of Theodore Roethke’s poems.<sup>2</sup> I believe it is a dark time as far as our understanding of homosexuality is concerned, and yet I also believe that in some ways darkness has the power to enlighten us. Rabbi David Wolpe speaks of the importance of darkness: “God is intimately tied to the night. . . .In the greatest dark, the dark of Egypt, redemption occurs. In the ultimate night, that of the future, redemption is promised. God moves between the poles of night, danger and promise.”<sup>3</sup>

I speak to you as someone who has attempted to find light in what I consider the darkness of our understanding about homosexuality. I speak to you as one Latter-day Saint follower of Christ who has tried, through study, thought, and prayer, to comprehend what it would mean to be homosexual. Most of my comprehension of this human phenomenon comes from counseling Latter-day Saint homosexuals over the past fifteen years. As I have spent time with these people in the darkness of

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1. This paper was originally presented at Family Fellowship, Salt Lake City, 27 February 2000.

2. Theodore Roethke, *In A Dark Time* (San Francisco: Poetry Society, 1964).

3. David Wolpe, *The Healer of Shattered Hearts: A Jewish View of God* (New York: Henry Holt, 1990), 24.



their souls, I have tried to understand my spiritual responsibility to them.

Although I do not speak for the church on this subject, I do speak from the point of view of someone who is a faithful, committed Latter-day Saint, one who believes in the reality of the restoration, in the divinity of the Book of Mormon, and in the special destiny of Christ's church. I serve the church fervently and take seriously the covenants I make in the House of the Lord. I sustain the authorities of the church, and I support the doctrines of the church, including the church's teaching on sexual morality.

As part of my faith, I believe I have a responsibility to use the best thoughts of my mind and the best feelings of my heart to search for and live by whatever truth I am able to discern. I subscribe to B. H. Roberts' description of a true disciple: one who is not content with merely repeating the doctrines of Mormonism but who, "cooperat[ing] in works of the Spirit, . . . take[s] profounder and broader views of the great doctrines committed to the church; and, . . . cast[s] them in new formulas. . . until they help to give to the truths received a more forceful expression, and carry it [i.e., the church] beyond the earlier and cruder stages of its development."<sup>4</sup>

#### "A DOOR TO THE DARK"

I begin my discussion with a quote from one of Seamus Heaney's poems: "All I know is a door into the dark" ("The Forge"). In another poem ("Personal Helicon"), Heaney says he writes poetry "[t]o see myself, to set the darkness echoing."<sup>5</sup> Heaney's words seem apt for how I see myself in relation to the question of homosexuality. I am not a medical researcher, a genetic scientist, or a psychotherapist. In other words, I have no professional expertise when it comes to sexual orientation. The only door into the dark that I have is a compassion for homosexuals borne out of my experience in helping them and their families with a variety of issues relating to same-gender orientation.

As I have said, I believe this is a dark time as far as our understanding of homosexuality is concerned. There is a long, sad history of brutalization and persecution of homosexuals, not only over the centuries, but also over recent decades. In many places even today, homosexuals are considered evil, depraved, or worse. The FBI estimates that assaults

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4. B. H. Roberts, "The Book of Mormon Translated," *The Improvement Era* 9 (1905-06): 712-13; reprinted in *Defense of the Faith and the Saints*, Vol. 1 (Salt Lake City, *Deseret News*, 1907-1912), 310.

5. Seamus Heaney, *Poems: 1965-1975* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966), 40, 49.

against gays doubled between 1990 and 1998. Matthew Shepard was beaten and left to die on a desolate road in Wyoming, Billy Jack Gaither was beaten to death by two friends, and Barry Winchell was beaten to death by one of his fellow soldiers. These are not examples of abstract homophobia but cold-blooded murder of people simply because they are gay. Yet the darkness is not confined to these ultimate acts of violence; it is pervasive in societal attitudes and behavior. Here, in the midst of the world's greatest and most progressive democracy, at the beginning of this new millennium, most homosexuals do not feel safe.

I also believe that this is a dark time with regard to the church and homosexuality. I have made a careful review of official church statements about homosexuality over the past half century, as well as an assessment of the clinical approaches to homosexuality employed by Latter-day Saint therapists, and a survey of the mythology surrounding homosexuality within the Mormon community. All point to a slowly evolving, but not yet fully evolved, understanding of homosexuality. The current practices, beliefs, and attitudes of some Mormons suggest we are not yet out of the dark. For example, completely apart from the merits or demerits of the church's vigorous campaign in California to pass Proposition 22, the Knight Initiative or the Protection of Marriage Act, the church's involvement in this political issue elicited deplorable homophobic sentiments and behavior among some Latter-day Saints. In spite of President Hinckley's strong admonition not to let support of Proposition 22 lead to prejudicial treatment of homosexuals, I heard more homophobic sentiments expressed in our meetings during the campaign than I can remember over an entire lifetime.

I am familiar with such sentiments because they once characterized my own attitude toward homosexuals. I grew up in a homophobic family, a homophobic community, and a series of homophobic Mormon congregations. When I was in high school, I had friends who harassed and threatened homosexuals. I also had violent feelings toward gays and lesbians. I felt I was expected to hate them, and in some ways perhaps I did.

When I was fifteen, I was molested by my homosexual band teacher who happened to be a Latter-day Saint. Contrary to what some might believe, while that was a confusing experience, it did not cause me to have any homosexual feelings. Well into my mature years, I considered homosexuality a perversion and had a visceral reaction against homosexuals.

On my mission I joined with other missionaries in teasing or saying hurtful things about missionaries who were effeminate or whom we suspected of being gay. We sometimes cruelly called these missionaries "Sister." I am not proud of such behavior.

My attitude toward homosexuals began to change when I became aware that my beliefs were inconsistent with what I read in the New Testament. Further changes took place when I started teaching at UCLA

where two of my teaching assistants and not a few of my students and colleagues were gay or lesbian. While I didn't pretend to understand their homosexuality, I found these people were basically like everyone else. At this same time, I became acquainted with some gay Latter-day Saints, all of whom were in pain over the conflict between their sexual identities and their relationship with the church. I believed that homosexuality was something they could overcome if they were sincerely desirous of doing so.

When I was editing *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* during the late sixties and early seventies, we published what might have been the first article on homosexuality by a gay Latter-day Saint. I was haunted by one line from this anonymous author's essay: "In a lifetime of church activity," he said, "I have yet to hear a single word of compassion or understanding for homosexuals spoken from the pulpit."<sup>6</sup> During that same time, I interviewed a group of Latter-day Saint homosexuals for what was to be a published conversation about their experience. That dialogue was never printed, and when I listen to the tape now and read the typescript of what I said, I am embarrassed by my ignorance and prejudice, by my inability to listen to and understand these people's experiences.

#### A FAMILIAR PATTERN

I don't think I had any real depth of understanding about homosexuality until I became bishop of the Los Angeles single's ward in 1986. It was my privilege during the years I served as a bishop to counsel with a number of Latter-day Saints who were struggling with issues of faith and same-sex desire. It was during those intense spiritual and emotional encounters when my heart first began to open, when my mind first began to grasp the complexity and the tragedy of what it means to be a homosexual Latter-day Saint. I owe much to those dear brothers and sisters who challenged my axioms, who schooled me in faith and sacrifice, and who taught me much about love that I did not already know.

Many in my congregation had endured what for most homosexuals is a familiar pattern: becoming aware of their homosexual feelings, usually at an early age; denying and repressing those feelings, then facing them tentatively with great fear and loneliness; becoming absorbed with feelings of guilt, unworthiness, and self loathing; in some cases acting on their homosexual feelings; entering reorientation therapy; making a covenant with God that they would make any sacrifice if he would just change them; often serving missions, throwing themselves furiously into

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6. "Solus," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1976): 94-99.

church activity, fasting and praying for long periods, and going to the temple; and sometimes marrying and having children in a desperate attempt to transform themselves.

This pattern often includes an emotional breakdown, accompanied by self-destructive thoughts and action, and always there are feelings of profound alienation and isolation. Very often individuals involved in this pattern conclude that either God does not love them or they are unworthy of his love. They become estranged from their families and from the church. Many are excommunicated. In far too many cases, their lives end in suicide or death from AIDS.

#### A DIALOGUE

As I say, this pattern is familiar to almost every Latter-day Saint homosexual and his or her family. Recently I talked with a young returned missionary who is gay. Except for a counselor from whom he sought help while on his mission, I am the only person he has told about his sexual orientation. As we talked, I asked him about the strength of his homosexual feelings, whether he had any attraction to the opposite sex (he did not), whether he had ever had a sexually intimate homosexual experience (he had not), and what he intended to do about his situation. As he shared his feelings, I felt great sadness over what I saw ahead for this young man. The following is part of a subsequent e-mail exchange we had about reorientation therapy and other topics (I'll refer to him as "John"):

*John:* Thanks for talking the other day. It sounds like you are opposed to the idea of reorientation.

*Bob:* You didn't listen carefully to what I said, and it is important that you understand my position. Some people may be able to change, especially if they have weak as opposed to strong homosexual feelings. What I consider as the most recent and reliable research and therapeutic practice suggest that many can't change. If some can, that's wonderful, but they and others should not generalize their experience to all homosexuals. Among the homosexuals I know personally, were change possible for them, they would have changed because they were so highly motivated to change, worked so hard over long periods of time to change, and were so intensely spiritual in their efforts to change.

*John:* I have been giving that whole thing a lot of thought for some time. On the one hand, I was not incredibly impressed with some things that the counselor on my mission said, but, on the other hand, some of it made a lot of sense. He did not work for the church, but was a church member, so I would like to think that church policy was not dictating his thoughts.

*Bob:* I don't know this individual, but many LDS psychotherapists are

influenced by the policy, philosophy, and therapeutic practices of Church Social Services and the BYU clinical psychology program. The American Psychological Association has taken the position that homosexuality is not a perversion and that aversion and other types of re-orientation therapies are not ethical. The fact of the matter is we need more scientific studies.

*John:* I don't know. If, as some people claim, there is a 25 percent success rate in reorientation, that is 25 percent more of a chance than I have at the moment of being more normal. The way it is showing up for me is, "What have I got to lose?" Get depressed and discouraged? Already been there a whole lot. Get suicidal? Well, been there tons too.

*Bob:* I am concerned about your depression and self-destructive impulses. You must not let either go untreated by a professional psychotherapist. Your worth to your Heavenly Father is inestimable, and you must not forget that. I will be your friend, whatever you decide to do, and I will be happy to talk with you as you work things out.

*John:* It is a miracle that my mission president did not send me home. I don't know. I just need more information. If I were to get married, some day even as I am now, I would be able to consummate the marriage, and my therapist seemed to think that would be all I would need as a starting point for recovering within the marriage covenant.

*Bob:* This is contrary to what President Hinckley and Elder Oaks advise. I know homosexuals who entered into marriage with the hope that it would work, but then the marriage ended, often with tragic results for the homosexual, the spouse, and any children that resulted from the union. My psychotherapist friends at BYU tell me they know of successful marriages that have lasted twenty years, but again, they couldn't say whether these individuals were bi-sexual or homosexual. Certainly it is physically possible to consummate a marriage, but a marriage is much more than that, and the question you have to ask yourself is whether you could be intimate in a way that would be physically, emotionally, and spiritually satisfying for both you and your wife. You have to ask yourself if it would be ethical for you to enter such a marriage without disclosing to your partner your sexual feelings. I think it would be good for you to talk to people who represent a range of feelings and experiences—people on various sides of this issue.

I gave John the name of a friend, Stuart Matis, a gay Latter-day Saint who has struggled for years over issues relating to his homosexuality, but who has remained faithful to the church. A couple of days after they had spoken, John sent me an e-mail message:

*John:* I talked to Stuart for about two hours on Sunday night. He really echoed what you and others have been saying about reparative therapy. I am probably going to call up the therapist I saw on my mission and have a conversation with him about it, to see if he has any other angles

that I have not thought of yet, but I doubt he will have anything new to tell me.

*Bob:* I hope you understand that all I am encouraging you to do is gather information, explore various possibilities, consider other people's experiences, seek for guidance (both spiritual and psychological), and keep open the possibilities. I wanted you to talk to Stuart because I believe he is one of the finest Latter-day Saints I have ever met, a person of great integrity who has struggled with this issue for many years.

During the past four months, I have had several discussions with Stuart. The first time I met him, I observed to my wife that he seemed to be among the finest that Mormonism produces: a truly outstanding and upright man. He served an honorable mission, served as an elder's quorum president, and worked in the temple. He has never been sexually intimate.

I spoke to Stuart just a few days ago, and he had once more lapsed into depression and suicidal feelings. (His mother told me her son had made several attempts on his life and he had recently purchased a gun.) He revealed that he had developed a romantic relationship with a man. Nevertheless, he has remained celibate. What he would like, he said, was to try to find someone with whom he could have a life-long relationship. He said, "Bishop Rees, the reason I don't like the word 'homosexual' is that the sexuality part is not the most important part of what I want. I want an intimate, loving relationship like my mother and father have." When I testified to him of God's love, he replied, "If he loved me, why didn't he answer me all those years when I pleaded so earnestly for his help?" I said I couldn't account for unjustified or inexplicable suffering, I could only testify of what I knew: God loves us and wants us to be happy.

I worry about this man, and I pray for him, and for the countless others like him who suffer unspeakably because, for reasons none of us understands, they love those of their own gender.\*

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\*On returning home from delivering this paper on Sunday, February 27, 2000, I found a message on my answering machine from Stuart Matis's mother saying Stuart had taken his life the previous Friday. During the past several years, he had vacillated between periods when he felt liberated from depression and those in which he had strong suicidal impulses. His family and friends hoped he was reaching a more stable state, but he had been terribly disturbed by the church's involvement in Proposition 22 (the "Protect the Family" initiative on the California ballot) and had become increasingly depressed over the plight of homosexuals in the church. My tribute, "Requiem for a Gay Mormon: In Memory of Henry Stuart Matis," is published along with this essay by Family Fellowship. Copies can be obtained by writing to The Family Fellowship, 1763 North 1500 East, Provo, UT 84604; by calling (801) 374-1447; or by e-mail: [Wattsfam@aol.com](mailto:Wattsfam@aol.com). Family Fellowship's website is: [www.articmen.com/family/fellowship](http://www.articmen.com/family/fellowship).

## SHIFTING ATTITUDES TOWARD HOMOSEXUALITY

As I have reviewed church practice over the past century, I have observed that both historically and contemporaneously, the church has made certain accommodations for heterosexuals. For example:

- In the New Testament Christ taught that “whosoever shall put away [or divorce] his wife, except [it be] for fornication [or other sexual sin], and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Matthew 19:9). As far as I know, there has been no revelation rescinding this admonition, and yet we honor marriages of those who have been divorced for reasons much less serious than sexual transgression.
- Although condemned by society at large, the nineteenth-century Mormon practice of polygamy liberalized the traditional definition of marriage from that between one man and one woman to that between one man and several or even many women.
- It was the custom at one time for Latter-day Saints to confess sexual transgressions openly in meetings. I can remember when the results of church courts were announced openly in priesthood meetings with the transgressor identified by name. We knew that “behavior unbecoming a member of the church” generally was code for sexual transgression. At certain times and places in the past, fornication and, especially, adultery would have been considered automatic grounds for excommunication. Except under special circumstances, this is no longer the case.
- At one time Latter-day Saint couples were admonished not to practice birth control. However, in recent years the church has taken a more liberal attitude toward family planning. Current policy makes clear that matters of family planning are “extremely intimate and private and should be left between the couple and the Lord.” Church policy also makes clear that marital sexuality is a private matter between a husband and wife and that it is a gift not only for procreation “but also as a means of expressing love and strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife.”<sup>7</sup>
- Currently, in some countries where it is illegal for citizens to obtain a divorce, the church allows people to marry again without obtaining one, and in some states and countries the church recognizes common-law marriages

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7. *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 1* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), 158.

Thus, the church, without compromising its core position on what sexual misconduct is or weakening its vigilance against those forces which undermine sexual purity and fidelity, has liberalized some of its policies with regard to heterosexual behavior.

What about attitudes toward homosexuality? In 1946 when President George Albert Smith discovered that the then Patriarch of the Church had been involved in a homosexual affair with a young man, the Patriarch was quietly released.<sup>8</sup> The only restriction placed on his membership was that he not function in any church capacity. Sometime later, this restriction was lifted. About the same time, a music teacher was released from the faculty at Rick's College for homosexual behavior. A counselor in this man's stake presidency wrote to the First Presidency asking what action should be taken. President J. Reuben Clark recorded the following in his office diary: "I said thus far we had done nothing more than drop them from positions they had."<sup>9</sup> A change in emphasis and policy began in 1959 when President David O. McKay asked Apostles Spencer W. Kimball and Mark E. Peterson to address problems associated with homosexuality. Drawing upon current medical and therapeutic theories and practices, Apostle Kimball began to formulate a vocabulary and an attitude that would become the basis for official and unofficial statements about homosexuality for at least the next three decades.<sup>10</sup> This period was characterized by what I would term a decidedly Old Testament view of homosexuality—that it was an abomination in the sight of God, that it was against nature, that it was a plague on society. While such attitudes may have been well intentioned and even reflected to some degree the attitudes of the prevailing society, there is no question that they were destructive to a number of individual Latter-day Saints and their families.

Although, unfortunately, some vestiges of the older views continue—among some church leaders, among a few church-associated psychotherapists, among certain self-appointed spokespersons, and among the general membership—in recent years there seems to have been a gradual softening of church teachings and official statements about homosexuality, although not about illicit homosexual relations. This shift in discourse can be seen in Elder Dallin Oak's article, "Same-Gender

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8. For a full account, see the diaries of George Albert Smith and Joseph F. Smith, and office diary of J. Reuben Clark, as cited in Connell "Rocky" O'Donovan, "'The Abominable and Detestable Crime against Nature': A Brief History of Homosexuality and Mormonism, 1840-1980," in *Multiply and Replenish: Mormon Essays on Sex and Family*, ed. Brent Corcoran (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1994), 145-46; nn75-78.

9. J. Reuben Clark diary, as quoted in O'Donovan, "The Abominable and Detestable Crime against Nature," 146.

10. *Ibid.*, 147; nn81-85.



Attraction," in the October 1995 *Ensign*<sup>11</sup> and in President Gordon B. Hinckley's recent statements calling for more Christian treatment of homosexuals.<sup>12</sup>

Such changes in attitude and policy toward heterosexual and homosexual matters should leave us both humble about what we know and open to greater understanding. The history of every field, including religion, indicates that at least some of the axioms of previous generations are overturned by new discoveries, new revelations. For example, most of us no longer believe that blacks sat on the fence in the preexistence, that Native Americans are cursed by God, or that women are inferior to men. Perhaps it is reasonable, therefore, to suggest that some of our ideas about homosexuality will be revised in the future, that societal attitudes will become more enlightened, and that scientific discoveries will expand our understanding of this human phenomenon.

This possibility is reflected in a speech given at BYU in 1969 by President Hugh B. Brown, who stated, "We have been blessed with much knowledge by revelation from God which, in some part, the world lacks. But there is an incomprehensibly greater part of truth that we must yet discover. Our revealed truth should leave us stricken with the knowledge of how little we really know. It should never lead to an emotional arrogance based upon the false assumption that we somehow have all the answers—that we in fact have a corner on truth. For we do not."<sup>13</sup>

As Christians, we need not passively wait for further light and knowledge, but actively seek for it. I once wrote that since enlightenment about homosexuality "is a matter of great significance to the church and since it involves the suffering of so many of our brothers and sisters, perhaps as individuals and as a church we should make the solution of this issue a matter of urgent fasting and prayer. . . . Surely [this] deserves very high priority among those matters for which we knock upon the door of Heaven."<sup>14</sup>

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11. Dallin H. Oaks, "Same-Gender Attraction," *Ensign* 25 (Oct. 1995): 6-14.

12. For example: "Nevertheless, and I emphasize this, I wish to say that our opposition to attempts to legalize same-sex marriage should never be interpreted as justification for hatred, intolerance, or abuse of those who profess homosexual tendencies, either individually or as a group. As I said from this pulpit one year ago, our hearts reach out to those who refer to themselves as gays and lesbians. We love and honor them as sons and daughters of God. They are welcome in the Church. It is expected, however, that they follow the same God-given rules of conduct that apply to everyone else, whether single or married" (Gordon B. Hinckley, "Why We Do Some of the Things We Do," *Ensign* 29 (Nov. 1999): 54.

13. From a speech given at BYU in 1969, quoted in "An Exalted Quest: Freedom of the Mind," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17 (Spring 1984): 79.

14. Robert A. Rees, *No More Strangers and Foreigners: One Latter-day Saint Examines the Question of Homosexuality in the Church*, pamphlet (Idaho Falls, Idaho: Grand Teton Graphics, 1992).

As we seek for more understanding about the nature of same-gender attraction, we should make every effort to ensure that homosexuals feel welcome in our meetings and at our activities. In his teaching to the Saints at Bountiful, the resurrected Lord taught, "And behold, ye shall meet together oft; and ye shall not forbid any man from coming unto you when ye shall meet together, but suffer them that they may come unto you and forbid them not; But ye shall pray for them, and shall not cast them out; and if it so be that they come unto you oft ye shall pray for them unto the Father, in my name" (3 Nephi 18:22-23).

Sometimes as Latter-day Saints we act as if we have forgotten our unique and radical understanding of God's mercy and judgment. Sometimes we speak of homosexuals as if they had no hope of redemption. Some Mormons treat homosexuals as many fundamental Christians and Muslims do: like pariahs condemned to an eternal hell. Yet one of the great, enlightening, and ultimately consoling doctrines revealed in Mormonism is that we will all inherit kingdoms, even the least of which will be more glorious than what we experience here.

#### A PROPOSED PLAN OF ACTION

I would like to suggest some concrete steps we might take to help lead us toward a better understanding of homosexuality.

First, I think we need to gather as much information as possible about the nature of homosexuality in our unique Mormon culture. This will be difficult because of the fear and secrecy which attend this issue; nonetheless, I think we should try. Can we with some confidence estimate how many gay and lesbian Latter-day Saints there are in the church, how many have left of their own volition or been excommunicated, and how many have died of AIDS or committed suicide? I have been told by someone who has an enormous archive on homosexuality and the church that there is a higher incidence of homosexuality among certain well-established Latter-day Saint families than among others, implying a genetic link for this condition. It would be useful to have data that would confirm or counter this anecdotal information. We need to have better research, both historical and contemporary, and more of it, and we need to start a database that will serve as the basis for further research.

Second, we need to find more powerful ways of presenting to our communities the experience of Latter-day Saint homosexuals, so they can be seen in their human complexity rather than as stereotypes. I suggest that one of the best ways to do this is through art forms. These might include collections of poetry, fiction, and personal essays dealing with homosexuality among the Mormons. Perhaps some aspect of the Mormon homosexual experience could be dramatized in plays and films.

Such expressions would help us to see homosexuals within a human context, as real people with the same basic needs and desires as heterosexuals.

Third, we need to be vigilant about the kind of language we use and permit others to use in regard to homosexuals. Here I refer not only to words clearly pejorative or prejudicial, but also to terms such as "gay agenda," which suggest some kind of sinister homosexual program; "homosexual lifestyle" (or simply "the lifestyle"), which implies that the homosexual experience is characterized by unbridled lasciviousness; "so-called homosexuals," and "presumed homosexuals," which suggest that homosexuality is not a real condition. Such language is dehumanizing.

Fourth, we need to expand our strategies for informing the general church membership about the nature of homosexuality. In our church culture there is much mythology and misinformation that is destructive to homosexuals and their families. For example, some mistakenly believe that homosexuality is contagious and that by merely associating with homosexuals one may become homosexual. Responsible forums and informed dialogue can help people see both the complexity of same-sex orientation and our collective responsibility to ensure that homosexuals have all the human and civil rights to which citizens of a democracy are entitled.

Fifth, we must be willing to let our voices be heard in defense of our gay brothers and lesbian sisters. This means, among other things, countering prejudice, working to pass legislation which protects the rights of homosexuals, and helping to create a safe place within our schools and communities for those with same-sex attraction.

Sixth, we need to form chapters of Family Fellowship and similar organizations in other cities where families need help and support. At the same time, we need to begin building a network of people who can befriend, listen to, encourage, and bless homosexuals. This includes identifying counselors, therapists, church leaders, and ordinary saints to whom homosexual Latter-day Saints and their families can turn with confidence.

Seventh, and perhaps most importantly, we all must be willing to comfort, love, and help these individuals and their families. We can do this by opening our hearts to them, by letting them know that we are available to listen and—when necessary—bind up their wounds. We can become their nursing mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters.

#### OUR CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY

As a bishop, I once received a call from a woman with a brother dying of AIDS, who wondered if I would call on him. I did so, and in-

vited him to come back to church. During the course of his last year in mortality, I had the privilege of seeing this man return to full activity in the church and prepare to go to the temple. The members of my ward treated him with much love and acceptance. Not too long before this lovely man passed away, he was able to go to the temple with many members of his family. One of his brothers, who had been inactive in the church for some years, said to me, "What I saw through you, your family and the members of your congregation was a church that was compassionate, that reached out to my brother in love. It has changed my life."

I believe it is to such compassionate care of his homosexual children that Christ calls us. Wordsworth spoke of

That best portion of a good man's life,—  
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts  
Of kindness and of love.<sup>15</sup>

Surely these acts are to be performed as graciously and as generously for those who are different from us as they are for those who are like us.

Some have suggested there is an analogy between what has happened with blacks in our society and what is now happening with homosexuals. In the special issue of *Dialogue* on blacks and the Priesthood, which included Lester Bush's landmark research showing there was no scriptural or revelatory basis for denying priesthood ordination to blacks, Hugh Nibley suggests that the problem presented by this matter represents "the best possible test" for us. Nibley says, "The Lord has often pushed the Saints into the water to make them swim, and when our own indolence, which is nothing less than disobedience, gets us into a jam, He lets us stew in our own juice until we do something about it. The most impressive lesson of Bush's paper is how little we know about these things—and how little we have *tried* to know." Nibley says that from Adam on down, God's children have been "expected to seek for greater light and knowledge." He continues, "In searching for the answers we must consult our feelings as well as our reason, for the heart has its reasons, *and it is our noble feelings and impulses that will not let us rest until God has given us the feeling of what is right*. Charity does not split hairs or dogmatize, and charity comes first" (emphasis added).<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps homosexuality, as the issue of blacks and the priesthood once was, is the best possible test of our humanity and our Christianity today. For some, it may also be the best possible test of their devotion to

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15. William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey," lines 33-35.

16. Hugh Nibley, "The Best Possible Test," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8 (Spring 1973): 74.

the church. In this, as in all matters relating to our behavior toward others, we should remember what the Savior said about showing kindness unto all our brothers and sisters (Matthew 25: 35-45).

Part of what it means to be a Christian is that through the grace of Christ we have the capacity to imagine what it is like to suffer as another person suffers. Christ has the power both to sensitize and to magnify our imaginations. As Paul said of him, "Wherefore in all things it behooveth him to be made like unto his brethren [and sisters] that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God" (Heb. 2:17). An essential difference between Christ and Satan is that through his infinite love Christ has an infinite imagination, one that allows him to place himself totally and completely within our experience, no matter how dark or painful. On the other hand, Satan, totally devoid of love, is incapable of imagining anything outside his own experience, and therefore seeks to make all of us as miserable as he is.

Christ became like us, but he also has the power to help us become like him. Peter says Christ calls us to his glory and virtue, and one of the "great and precious promises" he gives is that we "might be partakers of [his] divine nature," and in so doing, imitate his virtues, including "brotherly kindness and charity" (2 Pet.1:4-7). It is impossible to do this if we have hatred or abhorrence for another. Compassionate, imaginative understanding is possible only within the context of love. Thus, those who revile and persecute homosexuals, who consider them perverted and evil, who feel they have some kind of sinister agenda, cannot possibly take on their suffering, cannot possibly hope to feel what they feel. However, those who, because of the example of Christ, cannot escape imagination, can feel, at least to some degree, what it must be like to be anathema to society, to be denied fellowship within the church community, and to want to blot out deep soul suffering through suicide.

With our Christ-inspired imaginations, not only can we not entertain any feelings of hatred or violence toward people who are homosexual, but we are able to imagine a world in which they do not suffer injustice and indignities. We are able to imagine a world in which the love and mercy of God and his people are more real to them than are the judgments of individuals and institutions.

God's business is God's business, and I don't pretend to know all his ways. I can answer questions out of the whirlwind about his mystery and majesty no better than Job could. I only know he sent his Son to teach me how *I* must act. As I read the life and teachings of Jesus, I cannot escape the reality that I am compelled to stand against injustice, to speak the truth as I know it, and especially to respond to those who suffer with whatever abundance my heart is capable of expressing. As Rumi so nicely put it:

Where Jesus lives, the great-hearted gather.  
We are a door that is never locked.

If you are suffering any kind of pain,  
Stay near this door. Open it.<sup>17</sup>

What this means for me, to paraphrase the words of Alma, is that I am willing to bear the burdens of my homosexual brothers and sisters that they may be light, to mourn with those of my homosexual brothers and sisters and their families and friends who mourn, and to comfort my homosexual brothers and sisters who stand in need of comfort—and in this way to stand as a witness to God that I am a true disciple of his Son.

I do not understand why God has created some of his children so that they love their own gender. Job, who wrestled with similar conundrums, said that God “discovereth deep things out of darkness.” Perhaps we can, too. All I know is a door into that darkness. I stand before that door with an impulse to keep it closed, but instead I open it, and with love I walk through. May we all so do.

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17. *The Essential Rumi*, trans. Coleman Barks (Edison, N.J.:Castle Books, 1995), 201.

# Indian Summer

*Holly Welker*

If, when September rolls over in the gutter,  
picks himself up and stumbles off  
in search of a restroom, coffee and eggs,  
you pull back the drapes and slide open the window,  
he will disregard the screen and make himself your guest.

You must remain calm when you find him  
poking your philodendrons, glancing through  
sheet music left at the piano; he's not dangerous,  
just hungry, and as you watch pancake syrup drip  
from his fork onto your clean table, he tells you  
of ways he spends the winter. After a while you  
notice how thick is his barely gray hair, how broad  
his shoulders. You don't notice that you're  
leaning forward, smiling often, and when  
he tells you he must leave so your children  
who will soon be home from school aren't frightened,  
you think only of how blue his eyes are.

Several weeks later you are silent as you  
look at a blue sky, then close the window  
and ask your husband to light the furnace.

# My Early College Years

*Levi S. Peterson*

MY MOTHER AND I MOVED TO MESA during my senior year of high school so that she could finish her teaching certificate at Arizona State University. I didn't like Mesa or the high school, and I was only too glad in May of 1951, on the morning after my graduation, to load our pickup and head for Snowflake.

I logged during the summer of 1951 for the Webb brothers on the Apache reservation south of Showlow. Spending nights in Snowflake, I rode to the sawmill and on into the woods every weekday with my brother-in-law Waldo. I trudged behind Waldo's bulldozer, attaching cables to logs and releasing them after he had dragged them to a landing. The contract was a year-old burn and the logs were charred and black, which meant that my sweaty body acquired, even under my clothes, a daily varnish of charcoal and dust.

One Sunday morning soon after I went to work in the woods, I awoke from a dream about a girl named Marilyn Cardon with whom I had often conversed during study hall at Mesa High School. She had short honey-brown hair with a fringe of tiny curls, alert brown eyes, and a pleasant face. It had never occurred to me to date her, and she was not on my mind when I left Mesa. On this Sunday morning, however, I awoke believing myself to be in love with her. Just like that. No warning, no premonition. Suddenly I felt incredibly lucky. Love was an elusive treasure. I didn't doubt its reality; its roots were deep and vital within me. The trick was to find its true object, that adorable person who would evoke and return it. I can't say why I was so sure Marilyn Cardon, having evoked love in me, would return it. I was, it must be remembered, only seventeen.

I exchanged perhaps a dozen letters with Marilyn over the summer, and I drove to Mesa and dated her on three or four weekends. With no other woman have I ever experienced romantic love with such intensity, yet I am startled even now at how little time I spent in her actual presence. It was in my daydreams that I knew her. My labor in the woods had become unbearably tedious, and I sought escape through fantasy. Fantasy was nothing new to me. I had been a daydreamer all my life.



My fantasies about Marilyn occurred in serial form, each requiring, while I trudged behind the dusty bulldozer, two or three days to complete. The substance of each episode was this: unmarried, Marilyn and I made love, and she became pregnant. Confused and uncertain, I fled, and her father and other male relatives pursued and finally captured me. I returned to Marilyn and, in a poignant scene, made amends for the loneliness and neglect she had suffered by my absence. With her pregnancy clearly visible, we were wed. There the episode ended and I began another, precisely like it in its general features. Each episode, as I say, was so detailed that it could take two or three days to complete.

On the last night that I dated Marilyn in Mesa, I parked beside her home and she slid close to me. I kissed her and told her about how I had dreamed of her and had awakened knowing I was in love with her. She said with deep emotion, "No one has ever said that to me before." Nor had I ever said it to anyone before. After that I could not generate my usual erotic fantasies about her. My feelings seemed too sacred, too intense, for the merely erotic.

For the sake of Marilyn's good name, I will emphasize that my actual relationship with her was always chaste and I said nothing about my erotic fantasies to her. I am at a loss to explain my own attraction to the idea of a shotgun wedding, which dates back to my freshman year in high school when, just as puberty broke upon me, I was stunned-and enchanted-to learn that a junior boy had gotten a senior girl pregnant and was required to marry her.

In September I went to BYU because Marilyn was going there. Luckily, my brothers Charles and Roald were also there. We stayed in one of the Wymount dorms converted from army barracks, Roald and I sharing a double room and Charles occupying a single. I found a part-time job peeling potatoes in the Wymount cafeteria. I enrolled in a typical freshman schedule, including composition, college algebra, the Book of Mormon, and ROTC, the last in order to avoid being drafted into the Korean War.

With a population of 30,000, Provo was too vast a city for me. Its lawns, sidewalks, and paved streets were oppressive. I got readily lost among its streets, not realizing for an entire year that a person could navigate the city by its quadrant system of signage. I was also repelled by city fashions for men. On campus I despised the young men from California and the Wasatch Front who wore pleated flannel slacks, wide-soled shoes, and duck-tailed, flat-topped haircuts. As for me, I wore Levi's and flannel shirts to school and a suit, white shirt, and tie to church.

For a couple of evenings during the first week, I borrowed Charles's car and took Marilyn driving. I was very happy and the entire world seemed right. On Sunday we agreed to meet at church. On my way to meeting that afternoon, I realized suddenly I didn't love Marilyn. Just

like that. Again, no warning, no premonition. I was devastated and frightened. I walked her to her dorm after church and went back to my room to assess the damage. I had no idea why I was so frightened and dejected. I did know I had been suddenly tumbled from happiness, and I wanted it restored. I prayed with unusual fervor that I would be in love with Marilyn again when I woke up in the morning. But I wasn't.

The next Friday evening we went to a dance. The orchestra played "September Song," that haunting elegy for the dwindling of love's allotted time. We left the dance early and walked to a spot on the edge of campus overlooking the twinkling lights of Provo. Marilyn hugged me and said she was sure now she was in love with me. The fact that her love had confirmed itself even as mine lapsed seemed a bitter discrepancy. It's strange how irony makes a loss harder to bear.

I told Marilyn about my uncertainty with such equivocation that she granted me time to regain my former feelings for her. But by the end of the quarter she broke off the relationship. I went on brooding and hoping all winter. When spring came, I looked her up and told her I thought I was in love with her again. She told me she was about to be married to a veteran and returned missionary who lived in my dorm. She wished me well and thanked me for, as she put it, making a part of her growing up memorable.

Somehow all this had cosmic implications for me. A world where such a thing could happen—where I could be happily in love at one instant and tumbled at the next into an indifference fraught with enigmatic anxiety and despair—was morally amiss. I couldn't quite admit at that moment how wrenching a realignment of ideas I had undergone. I didn't give up on trying to fall in love for a long time afterward. But I could no longer rely on romantic love. I puzzled about it a good deal. I still puzzle about it. Romantic love breaks up as many marriages as it engenders. The only thing certain about it is its uncertainty. It is here today and gone tomorrow.

My mother came to Utah for General Conference in early October, about three weeks after I had arrived at BYU. During an afternoon session, she and I sat outside the Tabernacle on Temple Square listening to the sermons over a loudspeaker. I told her about Marilyn. I began to cry, and we retreated to a secluded outside corner of the Assembly Hall. Sobbing bitterly, I said, "It's as if she is dead." Oddly, I did feel as if someone dear and close had died.

In retrospect, I can see that the person for whom I actually wept was standing beside me. I couldn't admit this at that moment. I could only recognize that I was homesick. Roald was homesick too, and we fed on one another's longing. Sometimes we walked in the sagebrush foothills between campus and Wye mountain. Roald would point to the pass leading south from Utah Valley and remind me that home lay in that

direction. Home meant our house and lot in Snowflake, and the farm on the creek, and, chiefly, our mother. I for one felt dispossessed. Having become, as I esteemed, an adult, I had no right to return to my mother. Years later I would recognize in my deep and subliminal emotions that this fact was equivalent to her death. So I say it was for my mother that I wept on Temple Square on that October afternoon in 1951. Having moved out of her home and having no home of my own, I felt as if she had died.

Although I studied with diligence, I made only average grades during my first college year. I was especially astonished to pass all my tests in college algebra at scores above 90, yet receive a final grade of C. When I protested to my math instructor, he introduced me to the concept of the bell curve. He pulled out his roll and there I was, in the big middle bulge of the class, entirely deserving, so he said, of a C.

I made two C's and a B in the three-quarter series of Freshman English taught by Olive Kimball Burmingham. I learned to distinguish between *there*, *their*, and *they're* and to use the subjunctive *I wish I were* in stating a wish or supposition contrary to fact. Though the assigned essays struck me as insufferably abstract, I was influenced by at least one of them, "A Free Man's Worship," by Bertrand Russell. Russell's cheerless description of a nihilistic universe where "all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noon-day brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction" would soon reappear in my thinking. As for poetry, it came alive for me only when, in her rich, resonant voice, Mrs. Burmingham read it aloud. Sometimes the dismissal bell would awaken me from one of her readings and I would realize that, for a precious quarter hour, I had been transported from the general gloom of my existence into a fine, high ecstasy.

On the first day of my Book of Mormon class, the instructor bore his testimony as to the truthfulness of Mormonism. A distinct sensation of doubt went through me. This was frightening and added to the fervor of my private prayers. Until then, I had believed on the strength of my parents' faith. Now I judged it was time to know for myself.

Assuming the Holy Ghost would not bear witness to a youth of my relaxed and indifferent standards, I repented with a rigor that made my life inconvenient in many ways. I attended all my church meetings and began to read the scriptures. On fast day I fasted from Saturday evening till Sunday evening. I gave up swearing and obscene language. I paid a precise tithe on the meager earnings of my part-time job. I strove to forego levity and mirth and to keep my mind fixed on sober thoughts. I was only partly successful in this endeavor, being easily seduced into banter and jest by my brothers and friends. I averted my eyes from the shapely hips or gaping blouse of a nearby girl. I even stopped masturbating, a monumental act of self control.

I must qualify this last achievement. I stopped masturbating while thoroughly awake, but began to awaken at night in the midst of the act, which I always completed. I esteemed that sleep had rendered my Christian will so inoperable that I need not count this as a sin. It, therefore, did not figure in my frequent reviews of the inadequacy of my repentance.

In mid-October Charles and I went deer hunting with our Peterson relatives from Lehi. We got up at two a.m. on opening day, drove to a canyon at the south end of the Oquirrh Mountains, and by four were toiling our way up a steep side canyon with flashlights. This was a new and happy experience for me, my first intimacy with a Utah canyon. Our feet shuffled in crisp, fallen leaves. Our breath steamed out in measured puffs. Soon an incredible parade of car lights appeared on the bottom of the main canyon below us

At dawn a vast cannonading of rifles broke out. This was Utah's first either-sex deer hunt, game managers having at last persuaded the public that the deer herds far exceeded the carrying capacity of the winter range. Deer ran everywhere, and I opened fire with thoughtless haste. Soon I had spent all my cartridges but one. I went in search of Charles, hoping to borrow his rifle. Suddenly a doe stepped from a thicket, and I fired my last cartridge. The doe dropped dead and my heart exulted. I know what blood lust is. It comes from the wild. I neither condemn nor defend it here. What I felt deeply guilty about was not the death of the doe, but rather my fraudulent purchase of a resident hunting license. I felt too poor to pay non-resident fees. But since I didn't have to go hunting, it seemed certain that God, being who He was, would make no extenuation for poverty when he measured my sins.

This was a winter of extraordinary snowfall. Storm after storm dropped a thigh-deep accumulation on campus and town, and temperatures often plunged below zero. Starving deer were everywhere—in the sagebrush of the foothills, in the orchards opposite the dorms, among the hedges and flower beds of city lots. With no galoshes and only a thin coat, I made my way to class along paths corrugated with ice. During the spring thaw, an immense avalanche swept off the east flank of Mt. Timpanogos, burying the highway in Provo Canyon under a rubble of snow, brush, and snapped tree trunks. I viewed this spectacle and for the first time had some inkling of the energy stored on snowy slopes.

As the thaw continued, water flooded over the banks of rivers and creeks everywhere. Returning from a weekend trip home to Snowflake for Mother's Day, Charles, Roald, and I drove at dawn through a half-mile sheet of flood water over the highway between Levan and Nephi. Something in the glint of early sun on that slowly flowing water touched my spirit, adding to the accretion of image and emotion that would eventually bond me to Utah.

I logged for the Webb brothers again during the summer of 1952.

They put me on an ancient International tractor and raised me a nickel, to \$1.10 an hour. I set and released chokers by myself, climbing off and on the tractor dozens of times each day. Again I rode to and from the woods with Waldo, listening to country music on the car radio and taking in the bright Arizona landscape. For a while the woods were haunted by memories of Marilyn, for it was here, in my fantasies, that I had known her most intimately.

I fell into a sparse and ascetic discipline that was not entirely unpleasant. In place of the daydreams that had formerly helped make the grueling labor bearable, I substituted serious thoughts about God and religion. I carried a small copy of the Book of Mormon in my lunch box, which I read while Waldo napped at noon. This was my first and only complete reading of the Book of Mormon, whose abstract, repetitious narrative and formulaic sayings did not fatigue me then as they do now. From time to time, I came upon profound or instructive utterances which seemed aimed at me. For a while I felt I had achieved a simplicity of act and thought pleasing to God, and if ever in my life I believed God would soon vouchsafe me a vivid, indisputable revelation of himself, it was now.

One Sunday I spoke in fast meeting in Snowflake ward, expressing my hope for a testimony of my own. A childhood friend, Gussie Schneider, sat on a back bench. I noted the rapt attention she paid to my words, and I began to date her. Blond, trim, and pretty, she was a congenial and flattering conversationalist. From the start I regarded our dating as more than casual, and I quickly found myself in a condition of paralysis, being uncertain whether I wanted to marry her, yet being so attracted to her that I couldn't break away. I brooded over the absence of that quixotic emotion, romantic love, which, had it descended upon me, would have resolved my internal debate in an instant. The conflict seemed to resolve itself when, at the end of the summer, we went different directions, she back to Arizona State, I back to BYU. At the end of the summer, I also abandoned an ambition to become a forest ranger. This had to do with the tedium of logging. I watched rangers marking trees for cutting and estimating the board feet of lumber in the downed trunks, and concluded that their job was as enslaving and witless as mine.

During the second week of fall quarter of 1952 at BYU, I became puzzled by seeming omissions in the chemistry professor's lectures. Another student informed me that this class met five days a week rather than the three days I had been attending. The next morning, while peeling potatoes in the cafeteria, I made a sudden, unpremeditated decision. I would become an English teacher like my father. Visiting an advisor, I discovered that my highest aptitude scores were in language and literature. I dropped the chemistry course and enrolled in two courses for English majors. One of the professors, Clinton Larson, expatiated on his own lit-

erary enthusiasms and often read us his own baffling free verse poems. The other, J. Golden Taylor, solemnly read aloud long passages from the journals, sermons, and letters of the American Puritans. I was a fervent acolyte, worshipping both these professors with little reservation, and I must acknowledge that their encouragement had much to do with my development as an English major.

To my astonishment all my grades for this quarter were A's. I found the taste of achievement addictive, and from then on I tried hard to make A's and usually did. Nonetheless, my initial enthusiasm for literature soon became intermittent, waxing and waning with shifts in my general mood. I had become sensitive to disbelief. Unconsciously attracted to it, as I now see, I sensed its presence in many works of literature and responded with gloom and anxiety. For example, in a later course from Golden Taylor, which featured the Age of Reason in American literature, I noted that Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson considered Jesus to be no more than a man, though a great one, whose basically deistic doctrines had been corrupted by his followers.

Near the end of fall quarter, I had begun to keep a sporadic journal. As winter quarter of 1953 opened, I asked in my journal, "Is there or is there not a God?" In early February I visited several professors in their offices, Taylor among them, for guidance in setting up my future course of study. "I wonder if some of these men," I wrote in my journal, "while gaining their knowledge of English. . . have not lost that which should be the most precious belief in their soul." Going on, I declared my determination not to become like them: "If I can study English literature and remain true to myself and God, fine; if not, I will not trade my soul for an education. I'll dig ditches all my life before I do that!"

During the summer of 1952, Roald had married Luana Field. When I returned to Provo that fall, I roomed in the dorm with my nephew Dwain, a high school comrade with whom I had been equally forward in rebellious talk and obscene humor. Now my sobriety made us incompatible. For a while he dated a California girl who let him into her bra and panties, a favor he exulted over in my presence. One Sunday evening he pulled up with the girl in Charles's car. Leaning into the car window, I exhorted them to chastity. After that, the girl denied him the expected liberties, and he seethed with anger at my interference.

At the beginning of winter quarter, Gussie transferred to BYU, and I began to date her. Instantly I was back in my former conflict, deeply attached to Gussie, yet lacking the resolve to marry her. Consequently, I put a good deal of energy into the attempt to persuade God to make up my mind for me. Once I undertook a three-day fast, stalwartly ignoring the food around me while I peeled potatoes in the cafeteria and praying with as much fervor as I could muster. At last, a few hours short of my allotted three days, with no word from God and afflicted by a thumping

headache, I gave in to the weakness of the flesh and ate an orange. I am happy if others find inspiration in fasting. For me, it is a quick route into a surly and ungodly mood.

Soon I decided that securing my endowment in the temple might induce God to say clearly yes or no on the issue of marriage. I arranged to have the president of Snowflake Stake ordain me an elder in his hotel room at the conclusion of general conference in April. In May Roald accompanied me to the Salt Lake temple, where I participated for the first time in the ceremony of the endowment. Rushing to make our session, we ignored a man with a flat tire who thumbed for a ride on the highway between Provo and Salt Lake. Roald likened us to the Pharisees in the parable of the Good Samaritan, concerned with the outward trappings of righteousness rather than with its compassionate core.

Soon after this, I felt for about a week that I was truly in love with Gussie. One Sunday evening I proposed we marry, and she agreed. She phoned the news to her mother, and her mother informed my mother, who resented my failure to be the first to tell her. The truth is that I returned to my dorm heartsick and frightened after proposing and had no spirit for telling anyone about it. So my search for a definitive sign from God went on even as I superficially played the role of a man engaged to be married.

During the summer of 1953, I logged for the unionized Southwest Lumber Industries at \$1.95 an hour, a considerable improvement over the wage I had earned from the Webbs. While waiting for the woods to open, I pulled green chain at their Overgaard mill for a couple of weeks. A fellow worker on the green chain lacked one of his thumbs. He said one day his wife had warned him that he might chop off a thumb while splitting wood. "And you know," he told me, "pretty soon I did." He was a brother to Rufus Crandall, whom I knew well as a music teacher, chorister, and general provider of musical entertainment in Snowflake. "Rufus made something of his life," his brother told me sadly. "I haven't done a thing with mine." This wistful self evaluation affected me. Regardless of how threatening higher education appeared, I knew I couldn't abandon it.

Once the woods had opened, I operated a tractor, which, unlike the antique International I had operated for the Webbs, was designed to skid logs. A Caterpillar D-7, it was equipped with a winch and a protective screen over the operator's seat. I even had the luxury of a choker setter, a rotund middle-aged immigrant from west Texas who spoke with an ineluctable southern drawl. One day at lunch, my choker setter entered a debate with other workers on the merits of condoms. He said using condoms was like washing your feet with your socks on. He granted they were useful, as he had learned when traveling by bus in the South one time. He had sat by a pretty redhead who accepted his offer to share a hotel room. "She gave me the clap," he said. "You wouldn't have thought it." In subtle ways I persecuted this man. One day at a landing,

while he knelt among some logs unlatching chokers, I revved the engine of the tractor with a slight tap on the throttle. It was a joke, of course. Not knowing that, he launched himself directly into the air in a frenzied attempt to get clear of the logs.

Roald, who spent that summer in Snowflake, also got a job logging for Southwest. Morning and night he and I drove the forty-five miles between Snowflake and Overgaard in our mother's pickup. This was a nostalgic road for Roald because it went by the ranch where his high school sweetheart had lived. My brother Leon returned from his mission to Sweden at the end of the summer, too late to earn a stake for his return to BYU. My earnings paid tuition for both of us, with \$300 left over for buying a car. On a hot Saturday in August, Roald, Leon, and I drove to Phoenix, and I bought my first automobile, a pale green 1941 Chrysler sedan with a sluggish early version of an automatic transmission.

I continued to agonize over Gussie throughout the summer. I was in a state of paralysis, unable to marry her yet equally unable to release her. I had long talks with Mother about my indecision and, on her advice, I sought a second patriarchal blessing. If the patriarch had instructed me with authority to marry Gussie, I would have. His blessing, however, consisted of instructions about like those in Chinese fortune cookies. I broke our engagement two or three times. With amazing patience, Gussie was willing to reinstate it. We had good times together—dances, parties, drives, earnest conversations. Finally, when the summer was over and we had returned to BYU, Gussie put a definitive end to our engagement. This was after church one Sunday morning. I returned to my dorm room and wept bitterly.

Leon and I roomed together in the dorm during the 1953-54 year. One night while going to sleep, we heard Debussy's "Claire de Lune" on the radio. Leon said, "I'd give anything to be able to create something that beautiful." I saw a new aspect of his personality and of my own, as well. Sometimes we went to the music library and listened to Verdi's "Meditation" by ear phones. Though I had little musical ability, I had identified certain classical pieces as the clearest examples of sheer beauty that I knew.

Charles had married Betty Hayes during the summer of 1953, and they now lived on Charlie Redd's ranch at LaSal, a tiny hamlet of a few houses, barns, and fields set against the timbered slopes of the LaSal Mountains in southeastern Utah. With a degree in animal husbandry, Charles managed Charlie Redd's dairy. He counted on some day having a farm or maybe even a ranch of his own. Leon and I visited Charles and Betty at Halloween and Thanksgiving. I envied Charles. With a good natured, competent wife and an outdoor job in a place of stunning beauty, he had everything a man could possibly want. For breakfast Betty fed us unforgettable venison steaks and fried potatoes. We helped Charles in



the dairy, went on happy excursions after hay and grain, and hunted cottontail rabbits on a nearby sagebrush plain and grouse in the firs and aspens of the mountains. Southwestward were the Abajo Mountains and the beginnings of the fanciful erosions of Canyonlands. Evenings we heard coyotes in the crisp, clairvoyant dusk. I realized that this place had firmly anchored itself among my emotions. In few other human habitations have I sensed so strongly the presence of the wild.

I took French that year from James L. Barker, a marvelously ugly man of great amiability and pedagogical skill. From Barker I learned the idiomatic nature of all language. There is no such thing as a precise translation from one language to another. I learned when speaking French I had to detach each syllable from the next. "You cannot speak French and remain handsome," Barker often said as he proceeded to distort his blubbery lips into an authentic French sound. However, not even he could teach me to pronounce the deep-throated Parisian R. When I say it, it sounds as if I am getting ready to spit.

By an equal stroke of good fortune, I took a year-long series in LDS moral values from B. F. Cummings, a French professor who taught religion on the side. What little hair Cummings had was chopped rather than cut by the unsteady hand of his wife. He had gold-capped teeth and spluttered when roused to zeal. He sometimes wore shoes and socks that were not mates. Once a bit of egg yolk remained on his jacket lapel for a week. He was often unprepared and was likely to stride into class late with an improvised pie chart apportioning moral value in an abstract and, for his students, meaningless way. Nonetheless, I was very attached to him because of his enthusiasm for Mormonism, which he said was the most enlightened, progressive religion the world had ever seen. The important thing was the eternal progression of the self as taught by Joseph Smith, a concept, as Cummings claimed, that motivated human beings to strive for ever nobler, ever more lofty and ideal behavior. Later I would realize that here was the essence of liberal Mormonism. I would also realize later that liberal Mormonism is not attractive to most Mormons, including the Brethren who direct the church. It is as alien to them as Methodism or the Episcopalian faith.

Toward the end of fall quarter, I suffered another crisis of faith. I visited the instructor of my class in neoclassical British literature, Leonard Rice, whose views, as far as I could make out, proceeded from the premises, not of a Christian, but of a secular humanist. I told Rice that I doubted God's existence. He said he had discarded certain Mormon beliefs and retained others. He believed in the reality of cosmic good and evil, and in the ability of human beings to participate in either. I wrote in my journal: "Dr. Rice also impressed upon me that if I am to lead the intellectual life, then I must develop patience. Patience, waiting for problems to resolve themselves, is the big quieting factor."

Leon and I drove home for Christmas vacation. The weather at Snowflake was almost balmy, and I enjoyed a respite from my internal conflicts. On a hike with a nephew, I watched a cottontail rabbit dupe a pursuing dog by performing an instantaneous U-turn in a bush, doubling back while the befuddled dog ran blindly on.

I talked with my mother about the possibility of going on a mission. She wanted me to go, and with the Korean War moving toward a conclusion, draft boards were beginning to issue deferments to missionaries. I was agreeable to the idea. It did not occur to me at that moment that I was an unlikely candidate for a mission. In most moods I was still a believer. On Christmas Eve I wrote in my journal: "This evening, gazing in a darkened room, with the warm crackling of the fire in the stove, at our Christmas tree, a feeling prompted me to pray, and so I did, merely asking that God give me a soul that could better appreciate the mission of Christ; as I see it, to hold the same love for Christ that he holds for me is one of the ultimate goods."

After Christmas vacation I began to date a seventeen-year-old named Jerry Brown. Jerry was tall and pretty, with short, curly, auburn hair, dark eyes, and a warm, inviting smile. Though she was still a senior in high school, she was already a flutist in the BYU orchestra. With characteristic speed—before we had gone out on our first date—I decided I would marry her when I returned from my mission. At no time in our year-long relationship did I think of myself as being in love with her, yet there was an affinity of spirit between us which seemed a more secure basis for a marriage than romantic love. Sometimes we took in a play or lecture on campus or went to a movie downtown. More often we took a drive or a walk, ending up in her living room engaged in a long, earnest conversation. One evening at a fireside in her home, she played "Claire de Lune" on her flute. I recognized that she had selected it because she knew I loved it. Even now, nearly fifty years later, the soulful tones of a flute, no matter where I hear them, remind me of her.

I think Jerry suffered as I did from depression, and we found a therapeutic sympathy in one another. She was sensitive to irony and humor, yet was generally of a serious bent of mind. She had a hortatory enthusiasm for ideals and principles. Sometimes she would fervently declare that the future of civilization depended upon adherence to principles, which, as she said, were more important than life itself. We talked endlessly, yet there was something prescient and wordless in our relationship, an intuition of mood and opinion in one another which, when it had become explicit, thrilled us, as if it were evidence of a spiritual force that had us in its care.

Jerry's serious mindedness strengthened my resolve to master my appetites. I entered now, in this, my last year of college before going on my mission, upon a particularly monkish regimen. I had, of course, at-

tempted to live by a rigorous standard of righteousness from the moment of my repentance, as I called it, at the outset of my first quarter at BYU. Although I was not certain of God's existence, I lived as if he not only existed but kept a meticulous account of my every thought and deed. Any sort of sexual interest in a woman seemed wrong, and I tried hard to contain the instinctive lust that rose daily when I saw the pretty legs of a girl in the seat next to mine in class or glanced at the bobbing breasts of a girl in the hall.

Yet, by the time I began to date Jerry, I had accumulated an astonishing sexual history. I had put a hand into a girl's bra many times. I had slipped a hand along a girl's inner thighs and inserted a finger into her vagina. I had unbuttoned my pants and allowed a girl to fondle my penis. On one memorable night, I had even tried to copulate in the front seat of a car. Luckily we didn't know how the deed was done in those circumstances. "Are we doing it?" the girl finally whispered. Obviously we weren't. Nonetheless, returned to my dorm, I found her pubic hairs on my penis. From that moment I regarded myself as a fornicator.

As I say, Jerry's fervor for principles inspired me to an even greater mastery of my appetites. I never held her hand, never hugged her, never kissed her. One evening she informed me she had allowed another boy whom she had dated to hold her hand. I said a girl who dated me had to live by my standards of no physical contact even when dating someone else. She accepted this policy. Where had I come by this Victorian ideal? My mother had long urged on me the ideal of kissing my wife for the first time over the altar in the temple. Understandably, then, I proudly narrated my activities with Jerry in my letters to my mother, making a particular point of the spiritual nature, as I termed it, of our relationship.

I can't say why my happiness with Jerry should have seemed an evidence for God's existence, but it did. In my best moods I believed without wavering. Many passages in my journal speak of our relationship as an extension into "the ideal" or into "true spirituality." At this far remove I cannot define precisely what I meant by the word "spirituality." In concrete terms, it simply meant that I was feeling a certain kind of happiness. Somehow that happiness seemed an evidence of realities beyond the material world.

As spring quarter of 1954 opened, I enrolled in my third course from Golden Taylor, a course in the literature of the American Romantics. I also enrolled in Shakespeare's tragedies from Parley A. Christensen. "P. A.," as he was called, was a grand old humanist who bore himself with a regal dignity. His grey crew-cut bristled, and his thick glasses magnified his eyes. Although he was a native of Idaho, he spoke in a husky voice with something akin to a British accent, which he had consciously adopted. I had taken Chaucer from him as well, and my esteem for him approached veneration, a fact that made his evident disbelief all

the more potent. I wrote in my journal: "He undoubtedly is a wise man, schooled by years of experience and intellectual pursuit. He frightens me however. I fear a similar fate for myself."

I am sure my classes from Taylor and Christiansen had much to do with the crisis that I now fell into. But also important was the ambient discussion of organic evolution which transpired everywhere on the BYU campus at that time. I learned a good deal about evolution from students attempting to refute it. The premises of my faith did not allow for a figurative interpretation of Genesis. It was an either/or situation: if organic evolution was a fact, then the Christian God did not exist. During my freshman year, my geology instructor took his class on a field trip into nearby Rock Canyon. At one point we observed the fossilized shells of marine creatures in a stratum of dark grey limestone common in the Wasatch Mountains. I tried to dismiss the implication of these fossils. The earth had obviously existed much, much longer than the defenders of Genesis asserted, and I could continue to believe in a six-thousand-year-old earth only by not thinking about the fossils. But as I say, evolution was in the air during the spring of 1954. The refutations I heard failed to impress me. I couldn't resist thinking about those fossils. They had been there a long, long time.

Near the end of April, I recorded in my journal: "Why cannot I see or is there indeed nothing to see? My whole life, as ordered up to now is vitally threatened—all desires, all hopes, all joys shall be shattered if the last wall remaining between me and utter disbelief goes." The next day I conceded that I no longer believed in the Christian deity. With this candor came a temporary relief. It did not seem so bad to be a disbeliever. My natural life would go on, made neither longer nor shorter by the fact that I did not possess an immortal soul.

That night I said my customary evening prayer, reasoning, like Franklin or Jefferson, that the impersonal creative force of the universe was worthy of my reverence. I paused at the end of my prayer, realizing there was no logic in finishing my prayer in the name of Jesus as I had always done before. At that instant I remembered a passage from the Gospel of John: "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already." With that, I was swept by waves of terror and a hysterical impulse to run. I had no idea to where or from what I wanted to run. I controlled the impulse to run only by what seemed a great exertion of energy. I got onto my bunk, hoping, as I fell into a merciful sleep, that by morning the terror would have dissipated. Unfortunately I awoke to the same desperate impulse to run. I was afflicted by grief and despair as well as terror. I had no appetite and could think of nothing to look forward to. This went on for ten or twelve days. I ground through each day, peeling potatoes, forcing myself to eat a little food, attending class, trying to study. As early as the second day of this episode, I concluded that I was to some degree insane.

At the end of this period, I bought Joseph Fielding Smith's new book, *Man: His Origin and Destiny*, which attempted to refute evolution by geological catastrophism, the doctrine that the earth's fossil record was laid down, not gradually over vast eons, but suddenly in a relatively recent series of floods and other natural catastrophes. Having read Elder Smith's book, I wrote in my journal: "Now I must investigate the veracity of our scientists." Science, it appeared, was not solidly against a literal interpretation of Genesis. Perhaps my Mormon faith was credible after all. With that, my intense anxiety dissipated, and I resumed what I might call more normal emotions. However, my swing back toward faith must be described as tentative. I was much sobered about my future and far more wary about what unexplored distress might lie within my unconscious mind.

Of the two world views between which I wavered, one postulated a fundamentally domesticated universe, the other a fundamentally wild one. Christianity assumes that the supernatural predominates over the natural, that divine personality reigns, that heaven and hell are realities. The naturalistic view assumes that nature is predominant, that creative force has no personality, that the human spirit does not subsist beyond death. Just before the crisis described above, I ended an entry in my journal with this: "I feel I must have the truth; and yet I am so completely ill equipped to find truth. I shall work—respond to my effort, God. Give me truth or kill me. Life is bitter as gall without you. I do not want to be an animal." Three days later, with the crisis fully upon me, I wrote: "No, I do not want to be an animal, but I suppose that I am one."

Although Jerry and I continued to date, our intimacy was marred by the unspoken recognition of my lapse from faith. On the last evening before I went home for the summer, I was ill at ease with Jerry yet loath to say goodbye. She gave me instruction on sketching and we created a song at the piano, I devising the lyrics, she the music. When I finally left, she followed me from the door and asked whether I would accept a mission if I were called. I said I didn't know because I didn't know whether I would be teaching the truth. She said something of a rebuking sort, unusual for her. As I started to drive away, she came from the house and stopped me. She apologized for hurting my feelings and said she was for me and not against me.

Before leaving for ROTC summer camp, I tended to a matter of confession in Snowflake. During the general conference of the previous April, I had attended Saturday night priesthood meeting in the BYU Fieldhouse, where the preachments of the Brethren from Temple Square were broadcast, and had heard Joseph Fielding Smith warn that serious sexual sins could not be absolved simply by abandoning them; they had to be confessed to a proper ecclesiastic authority. My heart fell with this injunction. I saw no alternative to confessing myself a fornicator. On a Sunday morning about two months later, soon after I had returned to

Snowflake, I called on my bishop. This was one of the most difficult things I ever did. I had no assurance I would not be excommunicated. In childhood I had listened with something close to horror while excommunicated adulterers, newly rebaptized, wept openly in testimony meeting over their sexual transgressions.

The bishop was a tall, robust, bald rancher named Barr Turley, descended on both sides from the pioneer settlers of Snowflake. He invited me into his living room and sat facing me, still chewing his breakfast. This good man listened with astonishment while I confessed myself guilty of fornication. He did not ask for details nor did he ask me to identify my partner.

"You haven't been doing it lately?" he said.

"No, sir."

"Good," he said. "I respect you for having the courage to tell me about it. Now consider the matter closed. You don't have to tell anybody else about it, not even another church authority."

I was deeply grateful for this succinct management of my confession. There were stories about this bishop in his younger days. Maybe he knew that the best way to deal with guilt, assuming one has stopped sinning, is to forget about it.

Early in July, Roald hitchhiked from Provo to Snowflake, and he and I drove to March Air Force Base near Riverside, California. We were assigned to a barracks floor with about thirty Texans, drawling, good-natured fellows who were prone to boast and exaggerate just as I had always understood Texans did. I did not find summer camp unpleasant. New sights and a demanding schedule had a salutary effect on my emotions. We rose at dawn, performed calisthenics, and marched to breakfast in a cafeteria, where we were served abundant food. Through the day we attended lectures or made field visits to hangers, repair stations, and radar units. Evenings we relaxed in the barracks, writing letters and reading. At ten, lights dimmed and we went to bed. For me the most trying aspect of barracks life was the fact that the toilets stood in a long line without stalls or other concealment. I did not mind using the urinals in the presence of others but tried to restrict my use of the toilets to evenings or other times when the restroom was empty.

By an incredible coincidence, Jerry's parents left Provo and invested in a small restaurant in Riverside, only ten miles from the air base. On weekends I rode a bus into Riverside and dated Jerry. I was in a more believing mood, and our times together were harmonious. One evening we went to a movie and then talked for a long time under the palms of a Riverside park, unconcerned that the only other persons in the park were men, single and in pairs.

Back in Arizona after summer camp had ended, I worked for Southwest on the Mogollon Rim for three or four weeks. It was during this pe-

riod that I saw the only mountain lion I have ever seen in the wild, a half grown cub. Between jobs I induced Jerry to come stay at my mother's house after her parents had abandoned the restaurant in Riverside and moved to Mesa. Jerry gamely adapted to the rigors of my mother's domicile. She helped my mother cook and do dishes, and studied her genealogical papers with interest. There is no question Jerry won my mother's heart. A harmony of spirit existed between the two women; both were compassionate, serious minded, work oriented, and fervent in their faith. One of my chief regrets over not marrying Jerry is that she pleased my mother so much.

One evening Jerry and I had a long talk at the farm, where we had gone to milk the cow my mother kept. We both wept, releasing pent-up tension. According to my journal, I wept for Judas Iscariot, who, as I said to Jerry, was "a poor wretch who wasn't responsible for what he had done and rather than deserving imprecation and perdition, he of all men needed to be taken into the arms of Christ and comforted." How had I come by this astonishing pity for the most egregious sinner in the entire lore of Christendom?

Guilt for my recurrent disbelief weighed on me. Inwardly, I protested the condemnation of disbelief because it did not seem a matter of choice or volition. I have had an empirical bent all my life. For me, belief derives from evidence. A person can't will himself to believe in the absence of evidence. That's why I prayed so earnestly for a sign that God existed. I had come to feel that most sin has its roots in the unconscious, where choice has no play. In priesthood meeting one day, I called sin "a psychological morbidity," a heresy for which I was instantly rebuked by a graduate student in chemistry. It was an experimental sally on my part rather than a deeply fixed conviction. Yet it helps explain my pity for Judas.

On the evening before Jerry left Snowflake, my bishop invited me to visit him in his home. As I expected, he called me on a mission, and I accepted. I returned home and asked Jerry to pray with me. We knelt at the sofa in the living room and, as I recorded, "prayed that the obstacles would be removed from before me." This prayer was the climax of my relationship with Jerry. We felt unified and affectionate, and very hopeful that God would touch my spirit and make me a believer.

A few days later my stake president interviewed me and asked whether I was morally clean. I said I was. He then asked expressly whether I masturbated. I said I didn't, interpreting my frequent masturbation upon awakening from sleep at night as involuntary and, therefore, beyond the imputation of sin. The following week Leon and I drove all night to Salt Lake City for my interview with an apostle, Elder LeGrand Richards. Within a few days of our return to Snowflake, Leon departed for service in the U.S. Army, and I did not see him again until he visited me in Belgium almost a year later.

For the final three or four weeks that I was in Snowflake, I had a job stacking green lumber with Dwain at a planing mill. Dwain had also been called on a mission. He went to Salt Lake for a week for the customary orientation at the mission home, then returned to Snowflake to continue stacking lumber while waiting for a visa to Brazil. Rarely has a missionary viewed his approaching service with a more ribald resentment. He denounced the mission home with obscene eloquence. He scoffed at the temple ceremony and said the missionary lesson plans were little better than arm twisting. When he returned from Brazil two and a half years later, he was so mild and passive that I wondered whether I had ever known him before. From this I learned, if I hadn't known it before, that spiritual transitions can efface whole blocks of a person's former personality.

I was pleased to be called to the French mission, writing in my journal: "I would feel greatly disappointed if something went awry and I was forced to remain here." Reviewing my doubts, I declared: "Now I go out in ardor to preach to other people that my Church is the truth—which very item I doubted myself—and in honesty I cannot say that I know my church is truth, or that Christ yet lives, or that God exists. Yet I feel at ease about preaching such things." In October I quit my job and drove to LaSal for a final visit with Charles, Betty, and the newborn Collette. I helped Charles milk his cows and move a stack of hay. He and I hunted on the mountain and brought home three or four pine hens for Betty's oven. I saw deer in the fields at evening. At night I heard the transcendent yelp of coyotes. The wild beauty of LaSal bore in on me with the deep poignancy of imminent loss.

I returned to Snowflake for a few days. On the day I left for good, I called by the schoolroom where Mother was teaching and said a final goodbye. There had been a sweet harmony between us during these past few weeks. With deep regret I left her standing in her classroom door, little comforted by the knowledge that I was fulfilling her fondest dream by going on a mission.

I stayed overnight with Roald and Luana in Provo before continuing to Salt Lake for a week of indoctrination at the mission home. Jerry was in Provo, beginning her freshman year at BYU. I went to see her. We stood on her back porch, which overlooked the winking lights of the campus and city. For the first time in the nearly eleven months since we had begun to date, we hugged and kissed. I felt the most tenuous of emotions. All along I had treated her as a disembodied soul and could not now make any shift. Separation loomed in my mind. Two and a half years seemed interminable. At last I released her and struck off for Roald's place through the dark orchard below her house.



## The Idea of a University

*Matters of Conscience: Conversations with Sterling M. McMurrin on Philosophy, Education, and Religion*, by Sterling M. McMurrin and L. Jackson Newell (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996). 389 pp., \$28.95 hardback.

*The Lord's University: Freedom and Authority at BYU*, by Bryan Waterman and Brian Kagel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998). 474pp., \$19.95 paper.

Reviewed by Stacy Burton, associate professor of English, University of Nevada, Reno.

Each of these books provides a thoughtful, intimate account of the uneasy co-existence of scholarly life and Mormon orthodoxies. Read together, the long journey of a prominent heretic and the recent conflicts over academic freedom at Brigham Young University suggest just how difficult—yet worthwhile—the intellectual life open to religious questions can be.

*Matters of Conscience* is an unusually engaging book. Sterling McMurrin (1914-1996) was a professor of philosophy and influential administrator at the University of Utah and the most prominent Mormon heretic of his generation, known for his *Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* and his filial attachment to the religion despite his public disbelief in its basic claims. L. Jackson Newell, professor of higher education, came to the University of Utah as dean of liberal studies

and has been co-editor of *Dialogue* and president of Deep Springs College. Over a period of eight years, they met regularly for conversations that became oral history interviews; eventually they had nearly one hundred hours on tape. From that deep store Newell edited a conversational autobiography. In an introductory essay, he outlines the major events of McMurrin's life and the prominent themes in his work. That said, he invites readers to pull up a chair and listen in.

The result is a remarkable account at once more personal than most biographies and more probing than all but the most serious of autobiographies. McMurrin, as Newell observes, is a born storyteller, Newell the astute interlocutor who peels away unanticipated layers. McMurrin describes his mother as "a very beautiful woman, a person of true nobility, and very talented as a teacher and leader. . . . She was deeply religious but not extreme. . . . a person of very, very good sense and very open. I could talk to her about anything. . . ." The portrait he offers is warm but not quite distinct. Newell's response—"Can you give me an example?"—elicits a startling detail: "She would say, 'Do you believe all that stuff about the Book of Mormon?' That would make us think, you see" (MC 13). McMurrin describes Natalie Cotterel McMurrin, his spouse of over fifty years, in equally loving terms, even saying they have "never had a serious disagreement" (MC 95).

Newell's good-humored disbelief and his further questions elicit much about Natalie's incalculable role in McMurrin's life.

As grandson of a powerful member of the church hierarchy and a prominent rancher, McMurrin had a culturally privileged upbringing. B. H. Roberts, the serious Mormon thinker of the day, was a family friend he called "Grandpa Roberts" (MC 19); Harold B. Lee, later church president, was a second cousin. His father discussed theology with church leaders, disagreeing with Joseph Fielding Smith and laughing with J. Golden Kimball. When asthma forced the young McMurrin to leave California where he had attended high school and UCLA, he entered the University of Utah more at home with professors than fellow students: his early lessons in academic and church politics came in long conversations with philosopher E. E. Erickson and sociologist Arthur Beeley.

The most startling strand in his story is his apparent ease in heresy. No dramatic crises of faith, no devastating family meltdowns here. For McMurrin "becoming a good, well-rounded heretic" was a process of philosophical maturity. His "rather strong religious disposition" stayed with him, undiminished by his view that theology, "an attempt to be reasonable about religion," tends toward "wishful speculation" and "nonsense" (MC 108, 367). After he finished a master's degree in philosophy, his heterodox ideas did not keep him from work in the LDS seminary and institute program or success as a teacher of religion. But his fundamental deviation from the unwritten norm became increasingly evident as McMurrin—determined "to be absolutely honest"—ran head first into the dictum of Apostle John A. Widtsoe:

"preach the gospel, sugar-coat it where necessary" (MC 116, 122). His recollection of leaving the LDS institute at the University of Arizona to join the philosophy faculty at USC and complete his dissertation is telling: "I must confess that leaving church employment and settling into a great university lifted a great burden from me. I felt like a free man for the first time in years" (MC 127).

In 1948, McMurrin accepted a faculty appointment in philosophy at the University of Utah, which would be his professional base for the next forty years. The chapters on his studies in philosophy capture well the lively critical engagement with ideas and personalities that is the stuff of academic life. William James, John Dewey, and other thinkers appear in anecdotes as McMurrin explains his interests, which range from pragmatism to positivism to relations between science and moral judgment: "I don't want to be catalogued in a philosophical school. I have studied the history of philosophy and religion, and the unfettered quest for understanding remains the important thing to me" (MC 155).

In 1954, he was named dean of what became the university's College of Letters and Science; in 1960 he became academic vice-president. This was a heady, exciting time. With the "definite advantage" of a full-time secretary, and insomnia to provide "time thinking up something good to worry about" (MC 220, 221), McMurrin was able to continue writing and lecturing in the midst of administrative duties and a growing national profile. The latter came chiefly through his summer lectures at the Aspen Institute in the Humanities. "I became friends," he recalls, "with an amazing group of people": Supreme Court justices, labor leaders, and presidents of major corpo-

rations (MC 244). By 1961, he had the reputation and connections to be appointed U.S. Commissioner of Education in the Kennedy administration. McMurrin's reminiscences from these years—guided by able questions—offer insight into the complex negotiations required when academic values, democratic ideals, and politics meet. Always wary of bureaucratic structures ("outrageous in the federal government and very bad in the Mormon church" [MC 294]), he nonetheless found ways to use them to advantage in the fight to desegregate schools.

Within a few years of his return to the University of Utah, McMurrin became provost and then dean of the Graduate School. These positions and his appointment to a distinguished chair allowed him influence and freedom. He established formal procedures for internal and outside review of graduate programs that were soon followed widely elsewhere, twice chaired the university's self-study for re-accreditation, and then stepped down from administration in 1978.

McMurrin's departure from church employment fostered, rather than ended, his intellectual engagement with Mormonism. Many of his most incisive observations deal with conflicts in the church over freedom of thought in matters of science, history, and theology. The Mormon church, he observes, "is always vulnerable to ultra-conservatives, biblical literalists, and scientific illiterates" (MC 185), and he offers much anecdotal evidence. Though unsparing in his judgment of religious truth claims and bureaucracies, McMurrin attempts to respect individual people involved; it is here that his sense of himself as the "loyal

opposition" is most evident (MC 114). "Heresies and Criticism," the chapter detailing his lengthy meetings in the 1950s with apostles Joseph Fielding Smith and Harold B. Lee—and, later, church president David O. McKay—documents an important period of theological turmoil and institutional change. To speak his mind frankly in the face of possible excommunication, McMurrin recalls, was so "liberating" he "felt a kind of physical buoyancy" (MC 195).

Such buoyancy is hard to find at Brigham Young University: so Bryan Waterman and Brian Kagel demonstrate in *The Lord's University: Freedom and Authority at BYU*. Waterman and Kagel, former student journalists now in academic and business careers, draw upon archival research, firsthand experience, and interviews to produce a significant and sobering chronicle of the academic freedom controversies of the last fifteen years, which eventually resulted in the 1998 censure of BYU by the American Association of University Professors.<sup>1</sup> To understand these events, they rightly argue, one must know something of what preceded them. Accordingly, they devote more than a third of the book to earlier debates and institutional changes that played a central role in defining the university environment in which the recent conflicts occurred.

The initial chapters introduce "the making of Mormon education" (LU 5) and review in some detail the history of women at BYU, the half century of censorship debates between student journalists and administrators, and the evolution of an Honor Code best known for its regulation of appearance

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1. For a detailed account, see *Academe*, September-October 1997, pp. 52-71.

and social behavior. The authors identify these chapters as contextual rather than comprehensive, but this is not to say that they simply summarize material already in print. Quite the opposite: while some pieces are familiar, the larger stories outlined here have yet to be fully told. The chapter on women and feminism centers on “three moments when discussions of gender roles seemed to dominate campus discussion” as national gender politics played out locally (LU 24). Drawing from primary materials as varied as student essays from the 1920s, 1950s promotional brochures, and faculty member Elouise Bell’s 1975 forum address, “The Implications of Feminism for BYU,” Waterman and Kagel show that feminism—and conservative backlash—have featured more prominently in the university’s history than some might suppose. So have debates over which topics may be discussed publicly on campus, as the chapter on the *Daily Universe* reports through accounts of disagreements between church apostles serving on the board of trustees, university presidents and deans, faculty advisors, and student newspaper editors over coverage of politics (for instance, “the Negro question” in the 1960s), contemporary culture (particularly rock concerts), and theology (such as the range of Mormon views on evolution [LU 78, 80, 96ff.]).

The last of these chapters traces the transformation of the Honor Code from a code of academic honesty to a system for enforcing appearance and behavioral standards and religious ac-

tivity. Much of this story is familiar: long-time president Ernest Wilkinson is known for his obsessive campaign to keep American student culture and left-wing politics of the late 1960s out of Provo. As he wrote to parents of entering students in 1968, he sought to stop “the emulation of undesirable contemporary characters” (qtd. in LU 139).<sup>2</sup> Waterman and Kagel emphasize the ideological thrust of the standards Wilkinson instituted: BYU was to be a university concerned above all with the production of model students who would become stalwart church members. Widely-reported incidents highlight the standards’ ludicrous effects: women taking exams in the university’s testing center wearing overcoats and underwear to get around the “no denim” rule, founding president Karl Maeser’s photo being airbrushed to remove his beard for a university publication (LU 154-155, 156, 175n153). But the authors argue persuasively that this evolution in the university’s sense of mission, which has continued to the present, has had serious effects as well: they cite two studies from the mid-1990s, one showing that BYU graduates were more likely than other Mormon university graduates to remain orthodox, the other that current students were “more accepting of authority, more perfectionistic, and less able to think critically” than their counterparts at other universities (LU 168).

With this background, Waterman and Kagel move into an extensive account of the conflicts over academic freedom in the late 1980s and 1990s. Their documentation of individual

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2. In 1971, Wilkinson announced to the student body that the university perceived a correlation between the flouting of dress and grooming standards, traffic violations, erratic church attendance, poor academic records, and failure to inform the university of one’s current address (LU 150).

cases involving faculty members Cecilia Konchar Farr, David Knowlton, Brian Evenson, Gail Turley Houston, and others is an important contribution. They narrate these events with compelling immediacy while working to balance the fine nuances of each case with larger themes of academic freedom at the university and intellectual freedom in the church. (One chapter discusses the excommunication of several Mormon intellectuals during 1993-1995, another the eventual censuring of the university.) Their accounts make clear how very painful, personally and intellectually, these conflicts were for individual professors deeply committed to their scholarship, their responsibilities as teachers, and their faith. They show as well how criticisms directed at a single professor had a ripple effect: to impugn Houston's scholarship on gender in Victorian literature, for example, was to question the work of sociologists and others on campus as well (LU 351).

I followed these stories as they unfolded—as a BYU alumna who took a faculty position at another university in 1990, I found them impossible to ignore. (I had been slightly acquainted with Houston as a student in the early 1980s; I met Farr at an academic conference the semester following her third-year review.) For me, as I suspect for most readers, the broad outlines of

these stories are not new. Nor, by now, are the irony of firing one of few anthropologists to write about Mormon missionary work, the absurdity of treating anonymous attacks on faculty with respect, or the rhetorical overkill of charging a feminist professor with having “enervated” the university’s “very fiber” (qtd. in LU 357). What struck me most in Waterman and Kagel’s account, then, were the crucial details shaping larger events: a College of Humanities where the committee reviewing rank and status cases is all male; an evaluation and tenure process in which central administrators and irate colleagues may add materials to review files; a university where faculty discussion about religion is circumscribed but the rules in question are ambiguous and unwritten (LU 186, 207-208, 211-212, 239-240, 251n100). Anyone with even modest experience in faculty governance elsewhere will find such practices compromised.

Timeliness and research are the strengths of *The Lord’s University*: the authors make the most of their close access to key participants and their own experiences as students during this period of turmoil. Like other journalistic histories written in the heat of things, with key figures often unavailable for frank interviews, this book does have limitations.<sup>3</sup> It necessarily draws from many documents not yet available in archives, so interested

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3. These include minor errors of fact: for instance, BYU has a college, not a department, of religion (the exact name has varied), and Thomas Mathews, formerly a faculty member in Spanish, spells his last name with one ‘t’ (LU 43, 162, 260). Other inexact details matter more. The authors often cite the university’s self-studies, for example, but do not specify who wrote them. Also, while they differentiate clearly between the third-year faculty review and the final, sixth-year review, at times they use shorthand terms—“tenure reviews” and “tenure decisions”—that elide customary differences in expectations and procedure (LU 2, 307). This unfortunately obscures a point worth making: apparently BYU is so hierarchical that third-year reviews go clear to the president and provost, while at many universities they do not go beyond the dean of the faculty member’s college (LU 217-218).

readers often cannot go to the primary sources themselves. While it reports the experiences of the faculty members most involved in poignant detail, it does not—and cannot—tell each participant's side of each event. Certainly one might argue that administrators' versions of these events were writ large and require no other telling; after all, their narratives about what happened and what was at stake won. The personal aspect of their experiences, though, remains largely untold due to the polarized circumstances the book reports. Waterman and Kagel give voice, powerfully, to the narratives that lost, and they trace out the larger implications of these events for a university—and church—increasingly given to orthodoxy. That story needed to be told, promptly. The longer historical view will take time, as it becomes clear to what degree they—and McMurrin—are right in their conclusion that a conservative course inhospitable to the ideals of liberal education has irrevocably been set.

The one limitation of the McMurrin and Newell volume also has to do with stories untold. McMurrin's candid recollections do make one curious what other participants had to say; after all not everyone (at least not Joseph Fielding Smith or the National Education Association) agreed with him. A bibliographic essay with fur-

ther information on his own publications and on the history of the University of Utah, the Aspen Institute, the U.S. Commissioner of Education's office, and Mormon intellectual life would have been a welcome addition.

Early in *Matters of Conscience*, McMurrin describes an incident in the 1930s in which the LDS church dissolved the general board overseeing the young men's organization in order to remove Erickson and Beeley, who were well respected in the community but deemed too heterodox by conservatives in the church hierarchy. George Thomas, president of the University of Utah, summed it up this way: "They burned down the whole barn to get rid of a couple of rats." After telling the story, McMurrin underlines his point: "Now I think that should be preserved; and if it isn't preserved here, I don't know where it will be" (MC 55). Such anecdotes do indeed need to be told. The greatest accomplishment of these two books is just that: they take readers inside the everyday, local, flawed, human exchanges of which institutions are made. If the diagnosis offered by Waterman and Kagel seems almost apocalyptic, it may be precisely because they, unlike McMurrin (over fifty years their senior), see little room or affection for unconventional, loyal thinkers in Mormonism.

## Textual Tradition, the Evolution of Mormon Doctrine, and the Doctrine & Covenants

*The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text & Commentary*, by H. Michael Marquardt (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999) xxvii + 411 pp., \$44.95 hardback.

Reviewed by Todd M. Compton, author of *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural*

*Wives of Joseph Smith*, winner of the 1997 best book award of the Mormon History Association.

H. Michael Marquardt published his early monographs with anti-Mormons Jerald and Sandra Tanner, but

these works exhibited higher scholarly standards than the Tanners' work. Marquardt co-authored *Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record*<sup>4</sup> with anti-Mormon pastor Wesley Walters, which had the distinction of being one of few books from Signature or Smith Research Associates to receive a positive review in the *FARMS Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, with Richard Bushman as the reviewer.<sup>5</sup> That Marquardt could receive a good review from a scholar of Bushman's stature and a specialist in the New York era of Mormonism shows the quality of his scholarship. Marquardt is a tenacious and wide-ranging researcher with a keen eye for details; moreover, he is not strident in his scholarly judgments. He has his own perspectives (as do all scholars), with which Mormons may agree or disagree, but they are expressed mildly and tied closely to carefully marshaled evidence.

Marquardt's strengths as a researcher are fully in evidence in *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text & Commentary*, which publishes the earliest extant text of each section of the Doctrine and Covenants. The author notes any revisions in subsequent printings (in the 1833 Book of Commandments and 1835 Doctrine and Covenants) and makes textual, historical, and doctrinal comments on the changes. While Mormon historians have long known that Joseph Smith made numerous revisions to his original revelations, never before have the original texts and sub-

sequent revisions been collected in a book available to the general public. The result is a fascinating, very important book that should come to be accepted as a basic reference work.

What is most surprising about this book is the fact that nothing like it has been done before. The author remarks in his preface: "Revelation is so central to Mormonism that one might assume the study of original texts is an exhausted field. The truth is that, with few exceptions, such a study has yet to begin" (p. xi). On first glance, this would seem very strange: Mormons are generally profoundly interested in Joseph Smith and his revelatory writings. A serious interest in these revelations would cause any trained scholar (and there are many such in contemporary Mormonism) to examine the original documents behind the familiar texts. Yet there has been no comprehensive book on the texts and revisions of the Doctrine and Covenants. "Conservative" Mormon books have generally turned a blind eye to the textual variations. Mormon scholar Robert Woodford examined the revisions in "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants," but this 1974 BYU Ph.D. thesis has never been published. Perhaps the best discussion of the revisions is in RLDS Church Historian Richard Howard's *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development*, but Howard considers the Doctrine and Covenants in only a few chapters of his book.<sup>6</sup>

The reason for this scholarly la-

4. (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994). This publisher is closely connected with Signature Books.

5. *FARMS Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6.2 (1994): 122-33. Bushman suggests that the mild tone of the book shows that Marquardt, not Walters, was the dominant shaper of the book.

6. Richard Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1969); I cite the revised edition of 1995.

cuna is undoubtedly the fact that textual variations in the Doctrine and Covenants have become one of the "taboo" subjects in Mormon studies, since a study of these revisions requires a complex view of revelation, and church leaders clearly are uncomfortable with the kind of theological exploration that will be necessary to face that complexity. Therefore, though the LDS church and BYU have enormous resources, it falls to an independent researcher and a regional press to write and publish such a book as this.

In *The Joseph Smith Revelations*, Marquardt has done a thorough and reliable job of reproducing the earliest text for each revelation. As a result, we experience the excitement of coming to terms with a heretofore unknown primary text. Communing with the revelations in their original format, without verse numbers, sometimes in the scribe's ungrammatical format, opens up new dimensions of their poetry and power. The revisions are fascinating, showing the development of Joseph Smith's vision and the growth of the nascent church organization. Many important revelations not canonized in the present Doctrine and Covenants are included, including one beautiful prophecy that was a "translation" of the speaking in tongues that was common in the nineteenth-century church (Document 107).

Nevertheless, *The Joseph Smith Revelations* is not a perfect book. My central criticism of it focuses on occasional shortcomings in Marquardt's analysis. Sometimes he gives extensive and valuable analysis of reasons for revisions, as in the sections on church organization (where earlier texts on church government were anachronistically revised to include recently developed church offices [LDS D&C 20, 42]);

on Joseph's expanding prophetic mission (LDS D&C 5); on the developing theology of the interpreters or Urim and Thummim (LDS D&C 17); on the substitution of Frederick Williams for Jesse Gause (LDS D&C 81). However, Marquardt is sometimes content merely to point out revisions, as in the case of Document 98 (LDS D&C 83), where he discusses the manuscripts for the revisions but not the content changes relating to widows and orphans. Another interesting change Marquardt leaves without comment occurs in Document 48 (part of LDS D&C 42), which was revised in 1835 to include women as well as men in church law.

Sometimes Marquardt belabors the obvious, ending a discussion with a conclusion that the 1833 or holograph text is more primary than the 1835 text (as in Document 2, LDS D&C 4). It would be safe to take such a conclusion for granted and simply discuss why the change was made. Occasionally, he overstates a position. For instance, in the case of Williams being substituted for Gause, Marquardt mentions that this is the single case in which the official LDS edition of the Doctrine and Covenants admits a textual change, but he takes issue with how it does so. However, the LDS church should be commended for, in at least one case, admitting an important textual change in a revelation. Hopefully future official editions will note all important revisions (as, from the standpoint of honesty, they should).

Sometimes Marquardt unaccountably overlooks important discussions of revisions in the secondary literature (which he certainly knows well—the book includes a full, valuable bibliography). For instance, in his discussion of the revisions in LDS D&C 8 which reinterpret Oliver Cowdery's folk-



magical divining rod in the biblical context of Aaron, one would expect a reference to D. Michael Quinn's *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*<sup>7</sup> to buttress the assertion that the original text referred to a divining rod. (Marquardt is correct, I believe, but this point may be controversial for some readers and so deserves scholarly support.) His discussion of the "ecclesiastical" textual revisions also would have benefitted by referring to the important work of Quinn and of Gregory Prince on the early development of offices in the LDS church.<sup>8</sup> One interesting progression in the 1835 revisions is to make language referring to non-Mormons less judgmental. In a passage added to the text of LDS D&C 5, apocalyptic language referring to non-Mormons becomes "less vindictive, more accommodating to the feelings of outsiders," in the words of Howard (p. 155). We see Joseph Smith growing in maturity and concern for the feelings of non-Mormons. Marquardt could have profitably cited Howard in this context.

I found the format of Marquardt's revision sections difficult in one respect. They are not placed by the passage from which they developed, and since the original text has no verse numbers, one has to search for their counterpart in the original text section. This is especially critical when text has dropped out of the original document because there are no italics or markers to guide us in the original text. While I enjoy reading the original text without verse numbers, the problem of identi-

fying the exact location of revisions and deletions might have been addressed in some way.

Two quibbles: first, to my taste, Marquardt has overused bracketed words in the original texts to identify persons mentioned and point out non-standard spellings. It is often obvious from introductory material and context who persons are, and non-standard spellings are part of the personality of the writer or scribe. I prefer the non-bracketed clarity of the holographic text whenever possible. In addition, Marquardt's discussions of the complexity of texts behind a revelation sometimes become convoluted and hard to follow.

Nevertheless, even if Marquardt's book is not perfect (and no book is), it is still extremely valuable, and his analyses often give important insights into why the texts were changed.

The Mormon reading the book as a whole—even without Marquardt's analyses—will be faced with many questions about how revelation was and is received. I believe that oversimplified views of revelation—the view that revelation is absolute and unmixed with any limited human component—will not square with Joseph Smith's method of revising his revelations. Certainly, this will come as a surprise to Mormons with no idea of the Doctrine and Covenants's textual history who have "absolutist" ideas of revelation. Such Mormons need not reject the idea of revelation, but they will need to explore models of revelation that are more complex and consistent

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7. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 37-38.

8. See D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1994) and Gregory Prince, *Power from on High: The Development of Mormon Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1995).

with the evidence. Certainly the idea that any revelation has both a human component and a divine component seems non-threatening. In fact, D&C 1 (Marquardt Document 73) supports such an idea: "these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding." The inspiration is from God, but the language is of man, and fallible. The difficulty is that many see revelation as 99.9% God and .1% man. The textual tradition of the Doctrine and Covenants shows that the human component in Joseph Smith's revelations is much higher than that and, thus, that even documents headed "Thus saith the Lord" have time-and-place-specific cultural and historical perspectives. Howard writes, "If the total meaning of revelation is beyond human comprehension, then it follows that any attempt to express this imperfect understanding also will be less than perfect. . . .Scrip-

tures reflect the growth of the prophets and of the faith communities to which they minister. Couched in human language, they reflect patterns of thinking and life of the places and times in which they were written" (p. 215). Such a view is not an attack on revelation; it is a defense of revelation, granted the complexity of the documentary and historical evidence.

Marquardt has produced an extremely interesting, valuable, and important book. Certainly, there is room for discussion and disagreement on specific details in interpretive sections of this book. But *The Joseph Smith Revelations* is easily the most important book on the Doctrine and Covenants now available. It is a key book for understanding Joseph Smith's revelatory process. It will be the essential reference book on that scripture for years, and no Mormon, or serious student of Mormonism, should be without a copy.

## The Dangers of Missionary Work

*Evil Among Us: The Texas Mormon Missionary Murders*, by Ken Driggs (Salt Lake City, Signature Books, 2000), 210 pp., \$19.95 paper.

Reviewed by Nancy Kader, Lecturer and Ph.D. candidate in philosophy, University of Maryland, College Park.

On a quiet Monday evening in 1974, two Mormon missionaries visited a Texas trailer house—oddly situated behind a taxidermy shop—at the invitation of the occupant, Bob Kleason, an inactive member of the church. Instead of a pleasant family home evening, perhaps consisting of dinner

and gospel conversation, Kleason shot the two young men at close range and dismembered their bodies with the taxidermist's bandsaw. His action was not motivated by personal animosity toward the missionaries, Gary Darley from California and Mark Fischer from Milwaukee; rather, he was angry in general at church members for their lack of support during a recent jail term he had received for felony theft.

The paranoid Kleason was 42 years old at the time of the murders, with a long history of unstable and violent behavior. In spite of earning a college degree in sociology, he had never maintained a job, a marriage, or

a stable lifestyle. He had been interested in the LDS church for many years, questioning missionaries near his New York home and even disrupting a Denmark congregation by his attempts to pass himself off as a member. In 1973, he was finally baptized, although he rarely attended meetings. Within weeks of the event, local leaders were warned by general authorities in Salt Lake City of the deceptive and violent behavior he had exhibited while living among other Mormon congregations. Nevertheless, members and missionaries continued to attempt to "love him into the church" in spite of witnessing his recurring displays of anger. To a former missionary he wrote: "few thought of me when I begged for help, now I listen to no one, I go for the kill. . . I am going after all my oppressors with vengeance. . . I have learned to hate. . . I want BLOOD" (pp. 86-87). Within days of this warning, the two missionaries were dead.

Ken Driggs, an attorney who specializes in the death penalty, has written a comprehensive account of these tragic murders, including an update on the current and worrisome activities of the murderer. His text is lawyerly, expressing his knowledge and fascination with the legal maneuverings of the case, though his style is plodding and somewhat lifeless. He never pulls the reader into the internal perspective of the perpetrator, or of the victims, as do great true-crime writers like Ann Rule, nor does he illuminate the story with gossipy, personal detail as is done so effectively by Dominick Dunne. Nevertheless, one cannot help but be jolted by the pointless and meaningless infliction of misery revealed in Driggs's chronicle.

The reader is provoked to wonder why church members and missionaries continued to visit such an obvi-

ously psychotic individual. At Kleason's trial, a witness was asked that very question: "If Kleason was such a scary guy, why did you keep visiting him?" The witness responded foolishly: "I'm a member of the Mormon church, he is a member, and I was trying to fellowship him along with the missionaries" (p. 148). This example of how readily members accepted the task of fellowshipping dangerous felons creates a picture of Mormons as credulous and easily duped, making the motto "every member a missionary" a bad joke.

The gullibility of young, unsophisticated and unschooled missionaries, fascinated by guns and romantic adventures, is more easily understood than the absence of responsible leadership in this tragedy. Kleason spun stories portraying himself as a wronged ex-CIA agent, former test pilot, big-game hunter and expert gun owner. His thrilling tales of defecting from the CIA due to his dissent about the Vietnam War and then becoming a target for assassination by his ex-employers are guaranteed to enthrall twenty-year-old boys, but they should have been seen as fiction by an older, more skeptical and experienced audience. It is a shame that the settled, adult church members and leaders fell for his act, providing no guidance to the youngsters.

Of course, Kleason is not the first Mormon to cook up such a dramatic new identity to aggrandize himself among his acquaintances. More than one character in the church has invented ties to the FBI or the CIA. It is an effective way to fool their LDS peers, since the CIA rarely provides hard evidence to prove or disprove the identities of their undercover operatives. One strange example occurred some years ago in a BYU ward where

my husband was presiding as bishop. A young man in the ward used this approach to try to intimidate a young woman out of ending their relationship. Luckily in this case the obvious contradictions in his stories, his noticeable lack of funds, and his inordinate amount of free time proved his undoing before anyone was hurt.

Often, it is the conversion experience that provides a perfect opportunity for the unstable or the devious to create a new and more interesting persona. Pretenders with new names and doctored backgrounds have not been rare in our church; they turn up as fascinating fireside speakers, writers of well-received church books and even as teachers at BYU. If nothing else, this book is a reminder that such self-invention ought not to be easily dismissed.

A more important moral of this story is that faithful members should not assume that their children are safe from harm simply because they are doing the Lord's work in serving a

mission. Mormons share a common folk belief that the special service of missionaries, accompanied by the many prayers from home on their behalf, provides a shield against danger or accident. Of course, if this were true then we wouldn't see so many troubled, sick, or injured missionaries return home. Taking this notion literally encourages missionaries to ignore their own common sense and discount the dangerous situations they might encounter, in spite of plenty of evidence that they are not immune from the evils of the world. Perhaps, instead of prayer, they would be better served by a special MTC training course describing how to recognize and avoid the psychopaths, con artists, and worst of all, potential murderers among us.

Ironically, after the disappearance of the murdered missionaries, the police found their abandoned car, easily identified by its bumper sticker, "Happiness is Family Home Evening."

## Restless Grace

*Leap*, by Terry Tempest Williams (New York: Pantheon Books, 2000), 338 pp., \$25.00 hardback.

Reviewed by Gail Turley Houston, Associate Professor of English, University of New Mexico.

I first met Terry Tempest Williams in January 1999 at a commemoration in Tucson, Arizona, for my uncle, United States Representative Morris Udall. The beautiful eulogies honoring his many accomplishments, particularly his record on the environment, were given by a host of family, friends, and

colleagues, including Richard Gephardt, John Rhodes, John McCain, and M. Scott Momaday. But it was Terry Tempest Williams who, in the most humble and gracious of statements, unified all the kudos to Morris. She did so by exquisitely and gently insisting on the spiritual bedrock (pun intended) of any effort to save the environment. It was astonishing to see how, in the midst of this cosmopolitan group, she envisioned—and, at that moment, she was a prophet—Morris's Mormon heritage (cherished by him but forsaken, nevertheless) as central to his love of nature. At the same time,

she articulated for me the breathtakingly liberal beauty of Mormon theology.

In *Leap*, her most recent book, Williams struggles to maintain the liberality of her religion. Finding herself "caught in the doorway of my religious past," Williams laments that "The place where I was born is now a prison," an explicit reference to the September Six Massacre, the banning of Rodin's "The Kiss" from BYU, and the prohibition of gay clubs at Utah high schools, among other events in the 1990s that illustrated Mormonism's "petrified inheritance of absolutes." Asking, "How do we purge all we have been asked to ingest?" and, "What happens when our institutions no longer serve us?" Williams describes the bizarre setting in which she consciously realizes "that there is no one true church" (pp. 105, 118, 180). At a July 24th extravaganza at Cougar Stadium, she watches as returned missionaries prance like synchronized Rockettes across the field, waving flags of the countries in which they proselyted, while President Hinckley and his two counselors make their dramatic entrances (klieg lights and all) like aging rock stars all in white. Meanwhile, their wives play prom queens as they circle the field in white limousines. At this point, surrounded by family members who weep in ecstatic belief, Williams sheds tears "in the midst of my people. . .because I recognize I no longer believe as I once did" (p. 180).

Williams is made whole again—"restored"—by "wandering through a painting" (p. 266) created during the Spanish Inquisition—Bosch's astonishingly complicated and breathtaking *Garden of Delights*. Identifying with Bosch's ability to create in the midst of religious violence and to retain joy in

the body when religious authorities demanded stern asceticism, Williams creates a richly architectonic work that, in its complex ability to see that all things really do connect, pays homage to the Flemish master who "created a community. . .in discovery" (p. 169). Affirming that art and nature teach us that "The world is holy. . .All life is holy" (p. 147), *Leap* is, then, an act of grace.

Acknowledging vulnerability in attempting a new style, Williams is often bracingly eloquent in capturing the unique this-ness of every discrete element of the heartbreakingly beautiful world: "A thistle is the place where bees rest at night" (p. 170). Fishing: "And when he saw the sweet risings of lips to water [fishing], he entered the current" (p. 171). Death: "My fingers wrap around bone [her grandfather's dying body] and I feel his life blowing through him" (p. 100).

But Williams cannot fully abandon the monolithic, homogenizing tendency of the Mormon church to erase difference. She too often resorts to the royal "we"—as in, "We are all explorers"; "We marry our obsessions"; "We are all complicit in the destruction of life" (pp. 86, 173, 174)—to signify her own individual reactions to phenomena. Williams also views Joseph Smith as a true visionary like Bosch and contrasts him with the one-dimensional corporate genius Brigham Young, the model for dry-as-dust current leaders of the church. Does Williams forget that Joseph Smith got us into the mess of polygamy, which only hardened binary views of gender, and that neither Brigham nor Joseph was ready to give up the perquisites of patriarchy?

When she is not, like Neal Maxwell, too self-conscious about her stylistic leap, it is a joy to follow Williams. For *Leap* glories in sharing

her personal, spiritual experience through her visions of the sacredness of the earth, art, the body, and the community of discovery. I have longed to hear such personal spiritual experience from General Authorities—the kind of spiritual witness that Steve Benson wanted to hear from Dallin Oaks and Neal Maxwell when they invited him to Salt Lake City to encourage him not to leave the church. He asked them if they had had any spiritual experiences they could share with him. Benson reported that there was a disappointing lack of response from these ostensible spiritual giants. Either they had no such experiences or, confoundingly, and perhaps worse, they would not share such experiences with others who were seeking God and whom they claimed to lead.

Williams graciously shares her

spiritual life, and, by doing so, creates a community of discovery with her reader and with the artist who defied the limited religious paradigm that could only see the world in black and white. Nevertheless, if, as Williams points out, individual restoration follows crisis and restlessness, she, like Bosch, is still framed by the Christian desire for assured endings. In the ending of *Leap*, Williams concludes, “We can obey our own authority through our own agency to choose. I choose to believe in the power of restoration, the restoration of our faith, even within my own Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (p. 264). Here there is not so much a restless leap to endless discovery and community as there is an almost solipsistic need to find a resting place sheltered from the violence of a religion gone astray.

## Making Miracles

*Parting the Veil: Stories from a Mormon Imagination*, by Phyllis Barber (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 129 pp., \$16.95 paper.

Reviewed by Mary Ellen Robertson, MA, Women’s Studies in Religion, The Claremont Graduate School.

When I was twelve, the youth in our ward did baptisms for the dead in the Los Angeles temple. To pique our interest, our leaders told tales of spirits appearing to the living and thanking them for performing ordinances on their behalf. I stayed awake half the night afterward waiting for my visitation; however, the veil did not part as I expected it would.

Phyllis Barber’s collection of short stories, *Parting the Veil: Stories from a*

*Mormon Imagination*, illustrates the form our longing for the divine can take. Barber describes a childhood wherein “it was as common to think of an angel appearing by my bed as it was to drink orange juice for breakfast” (p. ix). As a result of being steeped in Mormon culture, Barber says “I can’t help telling stories that wrestle with the suspicion of a thin veil fluttering nearby” (p. xi). Her twelve stories are inspired by the Mormon experience—testimony meetings, family history anecdotes, and collections of folklore.

In the stories, unborn spirit children appear in dreams and ask to be made flesh. A fiddler’s lullaby tames a hungry wolf pack. Three divine beings inspire a mother to send wild sage to cure her ailing missionary son. An

aristocratic stranger appears during a dust storm to ask a grieving widow for her last gold piece. A disembodied hand appears over the dinner table in time to remove a fishbone from a choking boy's throat. A prophet implores a harried follower to forget the demands of God long enough to help him build a sandcastle.

Barber's stories rework the human quest for the divine and prompt questions about the parting of the veil. How do we identify the hand of God working in our lives? How can we distinguish the miraculous from the circumstantial? Is our appreciation for miracles indivisible from our Mormonness? Barber's stories invite us to part the veil and explore the possibilities.

In "Bread for Gunnar," Anna Crandall watches Gunnar Swenson adorn his house and yard—painting his fence a vivid red, building a staircase to nowhere, covering his chimney with paper flowers. Watching Gunnar soothes Anna as the demands in her own life grow. After months of observation, Anna decides to take Gunnar a loaf of bread and introduce herself.

Mistaking her for his long-lost sweetheart—also named Anna—Gunnar invites her in. He asks why she left, then rejoices at her return. He lights a fire and accidentally sets the house ablaze. "Anna's bower—bouquets, valentines, bluebirds, poems hidden in drawers, lace hanging to protect the bridal chamber"—is devoured by flames (p. 87). Anna embraces Gunnar, tells him she loves him, and flees the burning house. She continues to feel Gunnar's presence and "the enormity of his devotion" (p. 88), and this gives her the strength to watch her husband take a second wife. Experiencing Gunnar's love allows Anna to submit her will to God's mysterious ways.

"Ida's Sabbath" tells the story of a woman "dependable as the seasons" (p. 40) who discovers her own unpredictable skin. One night, Ida Rossiter "decided it didn't matter if she kept [her garments] off for a few minutes beyond her nightly bath. Just once. Just for the one hour it would take to wash and dry the pile of soiled clothes accumulated in her hamper" (p. 41). Ida spends that hour awakening to her own sentience. "She loved the feel of her body, free of belts and zippers and buttons and nylons, the feel of nothing between her and the air" (p. 48). But her conscience kicks in; she kneels, prays, repents for enjoying her own skin.

That night, a storm knocks out the power and Ida wakes to discover the washing machine full of cold, wet garments. She puts on her clothes (sans garments) and goes to church, but she can't escape the events of the previous night—or their curious effect on her Sabbath. I find Ida's awakening miraculous, given a religious culture that cloaks sentience with a second skin, depriving sensation for righteousness's sake. To shed that skin—even for a moment—is a powerful act.

Another story explores the possibility of misinterpreting mundane events as a parting of the veil. In "The Whip," Karl and Hilma Gustavson's miracle happens at someone else's expense: they inherit a dead woman's wagon, team, and whip. Karl's involvement with the whip becomes obsessive. Hilma's embarrassment and her failure to redirect his energies cause her to turn to God for help.

One day, Hilma notices that Karl has left the whip at home and seizes the opportunity to dispose of it. She cuts the whip into pieces and adds it to the soup, convinced "she was doing God's will as she scraped the diced

whip into the boiling water" (p. 3). Karl misses the whip while they are eating dinner. Hilma reassures him that he knows the whip too intimately to really lose it. Karl tells her, "God knew what I needed when he sent you, Hilma. The wagon, too" (p. 4). Had Karl been aware of Hilma's part in the whip's disappearance, would he be so understanding? Would he think she was carrying out God's will—or her own? And does a loving God cause one person's demise so another can inherit a wagon?

Perhaps the miracle is in the eye of the beholder. Barber's stories invite the reader to muse about the miraculous, pose provocative questions, and explore the ways God's hand touches our lives. In a religious community that tends to distance itself from its ecstatic past, Barber's stories serve as a valuable reminder of our collective belief in miracles, the potency of our oral traditions, and our persistent efforts to part the veil that separates us from the divine.

## A Prophet, Seer, and Revelator

*The Prophet Puzzle: Interpretive Essays on Joseph Smith*, edited by Bryan Waterman (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 352 pp., \$18.95 paper.

Reviewed by Bradley D. Woodworth, Ph.D. candidate in History, Indiana University.

What does it mean that Joseph Smith was "a seer, a translator, a prophet" (D&C 21:1)? This is the question addressed by the fifteen essays in this book, the eighth in Signature Books's *Essays on Mormonism* series. Over a quarter of a century ago, non-Mormon historian Jan Shipps called upon her colleagues to work towards a solution of "the prophet puzzle": to reconcile the money-digging young Joseph Smith with the mature prophet and man of God. In the article containing her challenge (reprinted here) Shipps suggested that this gap could be bridged by a greater understanding of what, in Joseph's case, being a prophet, seer, and translator was all about. The essays printed here represent responses to this challenge.

Mormon readers curious to know whether secular, professional scholarship on Joseph Smith is at all congruent with contemporary LDS orthodox thought might be surprised at the complex range of belief they find in this volume. Most of the essays will be familiar to students of Mormon history as all but three have been published before, primarily in *Dialogue* and the *Journal of Mormon History*.

Appearing here for the first time are articles by Richard L. Bushman, Eugene England, and Susan Staker. Bushman, who is working on a new biography of Joseph Smith, points in his essay to the centrality of unconventional, unlearned translation in Joseph's understanding of his prophetic role. (This idea is central in the 1989 essay of Karl C. Sandberg, "Knowing Brother Joseph Again: The Book of Abraham and Joseph Smith as Translator," reprinted in this volume.) The work of translating the Book of Mormon, Bushman writes, "joined two traditions—the holy calling of seer and the magical practice of divining with a stone." Joseph Smith's earlier experi-



ence with seerstones "helped [him] move step by step into his calling" (pp. 78-79).

Eugene England's evocative, literary essay is the single openly devotional piece in the collection. England posits that Joseph Smith's work and life present a synthesis, and thus a resolution, of the tension between Romantic utopian optimism and Classical realism. Joseph's theology of salvation, England writes, "transcended the Classical rationalist extremes of both traditional high church Christianity and Enlightenment secularism and . . . also avoided the Romantic, emotionalistic, and voluntaristic extremes of Calvinism, Revivalism, and Transcendentalist pantheism" (p. 178).

In her finely-crafted article, Susan Staker presents a corrective for the view that Mormon women in Nauvoo were given wide-ranging spiritual authority. The tools of both conventional historical inquiry and textual criticism are combined here in an impressive and important piece of scholarship. Staker's point of departure is a passage from the story of Abraham and Sarai in the Book of Abraham, translated and published by Joseph Smith in 1842 (Abraham 2: 22-25), which she argues is a "narrative about lying for the Lord." Just as God tells Abraham to lie about his marriage to Sarai, so in Nauvoo marriage became the center of a "culture of secrecy." Staker concludes that ecclesiastic innovations introduced there did not empower women, but rather, through enforced secrecy, silenced and controlled them "within a hierarchy of male privilege and power" (p. 290).

The strongest essays in the book are made so because they acknowledge the complexity of Joseph Smith and his roles and view the Prophet within his own cultural and historical context. The several contributions which are attempts at psychobiography (and which are unsympathetic to the prophet) are the volume's weak spots. The argument that Joseph Smith suffered from mental illness or instability is unprovable and, in this context, reductive.

The introduction by editor Bryan Waterman fronting the collection addresses ambiguity in the life of Joseph Smith and draws attention to a number of recent book-length studies that have made significant contributions to the understanding of the prophet and his era, including works by D. Michael Quinn, Nathan O. Hatch, Harold Bloom, and John L. Brooke. While these works are not represented in this volume, their arguments are outlined and discussed by a number of contributors.

Waterman also provides a relevant reading of the portrait of Joseph Smith on the book's cover, a recent painting by New York artist Lane Twitchell. Here we see Joseph as on an old television screen; he appears familiar and yet obscured by static and bad reception. Waterman's conclusion is apropos of both Twitchell's portrait and research on the life of Joseph Smith: though our picture of the Prophet remains filtered by our greater or lesser ability to understand his world, this should not stop us from striving for greater clarity.



## CONTRIBUTORS

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## *ABOUT THE ARTIST*

Edward D. Maryon, one of the west's finest watercolorists, was a professor, chair of the Department of Art, and, subsequently, Dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Utah. His work appeared the first time in *Dialogue* in the spring issue of 1984 (Vol. 17, No. 1).

## *PAINTINGS*

*Cover: "Sunflowers Bouquet,"* watercolor on paper, 10" x 13"

*Back Cover: "Cottonwood Stream,"* watercolor on paper, 15" x 13"

## *DRAWINGS*

*P. x: "Wayside Nursery,"* screen printed drawing, 10" x 12"

*P. 121: "Curios,"* screen printed drawing, 10" x 12"

*P. 188: "Fence and Sheds,"* screen printed drawing, 10" x 12"

*Inside Back Cover: "L.A. Nursery,"* screen printed drawing, 10" x 12"





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