

1966

DIALOGUE
A Journal of Mormon Thought

2001



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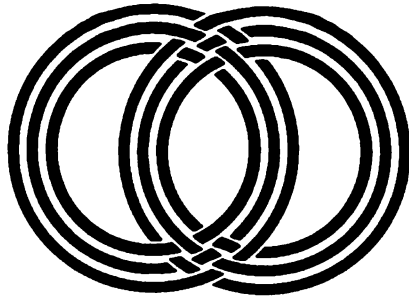
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DIALOGUE

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 heritage. The journal encourages a variety of viewpoints; although every effort is made to ensure accurate scholarship and responsible judgment, the views expressed are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or of the editors.

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Discovering Dialogue

Dear Editors: I ran across the Autumn-Winter 1971 issue of *Dialogue* and was unable to put it down until I had read it from cover to cover—and some articles three or four times. I hope that the journal is still in existence, so I can become a subscriber.

Joe J. Potect
El Paso, Texas
from Vol. 8, No. 2 (1973)

Riding Herd (Excerpt from a Letter)

My statement regarding my father's idea of "riding herd " is, like most analogies, subject to question because any analogy is bound to be faulty in some respects. But for whatever it is worth, here it is:

My father early recognized my tendency to question, to disagree, to refuse to take many of the Old Testament stories at face value. I could not admire Jacob's ethics in stealing his brother's birthright; I did not believe that the wind from tin horns would blow down the walls of Jericho, but insisted that they "fell" figuratively when the guards panicked and ran; if bears came out and devoured the children who called Elijah "old bald-pate," I didn't think God sent them, etc., etc.

One day Dad said to me, "My girl, if you follow this tendency to criticize, I'm afraid you will talk yourself out of the church. I'd hate to see you do that. I'm a cowboy who rides the edge of the herd, who sings and calls and makes himself heard, who helps direct the course. Happy sounds are generally better than cursing, but there are times when he must maybe swear a little and swing a whip or lariat to round in a stray or turn the leaders. So don't lose yourself, and don't ride away and desert the outfit. Ride the edge of the herd and be alert, but know your directions, and call out loud and clear. Chances are, you won't make any difference, but on the other hand, you just might."

Juanita Brooks
from Vol. 2, No. 2 (Summer 1966)

Being Both

I was carefully explaining to the children at dinner last night about Richard Poll's Iron Rod vs. Liahona Mormons. I had just gotten them to understand the distinction and was about to launch into a lengthy peroration on the subject, when Lisa (age six) said simply, "We're both."

That was of course exactly the point. The value of Poll's exercise lies not in labeling ourselves one or the other, but in pointing out both necessary aspects of our gospel life. If we *aren't* both, something is wrong.

Douglass F. Taber
Newark, Delaware
from Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring 1984)

Vielen Dank

Dialogue is a great source of information for me which shows me more about the American society the church mainly is involved with. It's good to get a magazine which is not one-sided like the four major church periodicals, which are actually good, but not enough for my widespread interest. (In Germany we nickname the *Church News* "Mormon Pravda"—we Europeans are pretty liberal.) Especially the volume 14, number 2 issue was interesting, because we don't get that information in Germany by official sources in such full details. I would like to encourage *Dialogue* to continue its efforts to clarify the complexities of Mormonism, and it has got my support already. *Mit Freudlichen Grüßen geduldig verbleibend.*

Peter C. Nadig
Duisburg, West Germany
from Vol. 15, No. 3 (Autumn 1982)

Those of us who comprise the body of Mormon readers for whom *Dialogue* (with surgical precision) probes, dilates, stimulates, and refreshes our intellectual/spiritual circulatory system (on occasion, even preventing a thrombosis) extend our thanks!

Bouquets also to your dedicated staff. As editor of the CSUF General Catalog for eleven years, I have had intimate experience with unreal deadlines, last-second administrative revisions, politically sensitive copy, format changes that looked stunning on the drawing board and ghastly in the print, etc., etc. We learn, don't we, to rely heavily on those precious few who come early and stay late.

Ruth B. Thornton
Fresno, California.
from Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring 1984)

I would like you to know that I am very impressed with *Dialogue*. I am now living and quietly going crazy in Laie, Hawaii, which, as you probably know, is a predominantly Mormon community. Your journal is very much appreciated here, not only by me but by many faculty members at the Church College of Hawaii where I am teaching. Yours is an intelligent voice many of us are eager to listen and respond to. Let nothing silence that voice.

Steven Goldsberry
Laie, Hawaii
from Vol 8, No. 3/4 (1973)

Seasons

The relentless flow of time has brought me to the point where I must terminate my long and pleasant association with *Dialogue*. At age 89, I suddenly find myself a widower. My reading is limited mainly to the headlines, and I am deaf. Of course, as friends are aware, reading, writing, research, and teaching have been my career. Well, as Jimmie Durante used to say, "That is the condition that prevails."

Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought has served and is serving a highly important and constructive purpose. There was an urgent need for a medium through which Mormon scholars and writers could find an outlet for penetrating study of Mormonism. The official organs of the Church are mainly concerned with indoctrination and organizational information. They are closed to articles of intellectual depth.

But *Dialogue* has opened many windows on the broader aspects and significance of Mormonism. May it continue.

Lowry Nelson
Provo, Utah
From Vol. 15, No.2 (Summer 1982)

As a new reader of *Dialogue*, I would like to thank you for the wonderful articles, poems, and art you publish. I have recently been reactivated into the church, and I struggled with giving up my intellectual endeavors (however young they may be) in my new life. *Dialogue* helped me reconcile this, and my life is more full.

Now serving a mission for the church, I always look forward to each issue as an alternative source of refreshment and relaxation. Some articles have helped me in preparing talks for district and zone meetings. My mission president has even borrowed a couple of issues for his own personal study. My knowledge has been deepened and my spirit fed. Thank you.

Dallas B. Robbins
Indiana Indianapolis Mission
from Vol. 24, No. 3 (Fall 1991)

The Trouble?

When I first subscribed to *Dialogue* nearly a year ago, I was enthralled by the content and the attitude; I eagerly ordered all the cut-rate back issues available and read them over the next several months. My enthusiasm has been dampened, however, by a gradual realization: the dichotomy between “iron rods” and “liahonas” is not simply a difference of stance—whom we rely on to discern truth.

A dialogue-oriented person believes that the purest source of truth is the Holy Spirit speaking peace and logic to the soul. Such individuals therefore give the highest credibility to those truths personally known through testimony; all else has yet to be proved and is fair game for inquiry.

Latter-day Saint doctrine, however, ultimately requires a belief that the highest source of truth is those in authority. The only proper objects of inquiry, then, are things produced outside their purview. From this perspective, all of our dialogue, unfortunately, is perceived as “counseling the Brethren” or “steading the ark.”

Of course, most of us believe this dichotomy is not fundamental, merely stylistic, and that in time we will all grow toward a unity of the faith. Our hope springs (nearly) eternal on that point, in fact. Of late, however, I have begun to fear that the difference will not be reconciled, only minimized. I may never feel true unity with the body of the Saints.

Craig B. Wilson
Coalinga, California
from Vol. 24, No.3 (Fall 1991)

Mormonism is not like other religions. Mormonism claims to have a direct link to God. Either you believe that it does and follow the prophet without question or you don't believe it, in which case you should leave. People who join the Mormon church do so not because of its commitment to free thinking and intellectual honesty but because it offers answers to questions about which humanity feels generally insecure. They do not wish to have “intellectuals” raising questions about these answers or about the men who have claimed to have received these answers from the Almighty himself.

The entire foundation of Mormonism rests on the credibility of its prophet. If the prophet is not right on matters of doctrine, social matters, etc., then Mormonism is in no way a unique religion but simply another conglomerate of mens' opinions. This is Mormonism. I'm not sure what people expect from this religion. They want divine authority and a man to speak to God. Then they want to be able to disagree with God's decrees and remain in good standing. Either he speaks for God or he doesn't. It really is that simple.

Don't get me wrong. I agree with [authors who point out that] they as well as others have been abused. But the abuse is not an aberration; it is simply the logical progression of doctrine. When people believe that they are God's mouthpieces, this is the way they behave. Mormonism is by definition authoritarian and to a large extent totalitarian. If you don't like it, leave! I did.

Brian K. Dalton
Downey, California
from Vol. 26, No. 3 (Fall 1993)

The Only True Note Form

Among the many delights of spring this year was the discovery that *Dialogue* had, as part of the “restorations of all things,” returned to the true *footnote* rather than the endnote format. Though its “apostate” interlude was understandably financial, it is inspiring to see that faith is once again found on the earth. May it be nurtured by our works, *i.e.* \$\$ donations.

Grant Underwood
Los Angeles, California
from Vol. 16, No. 4 (Winter 1983)

Mormonism's Negro Doctrine

I can't resist the latest flier on current subject matter (the Spring 1973 issue), so am saving grocery money and will enclose a money order for a subscription whenever I reach the \$10 mark. I can rationalize the Book of Mormon's rather 19th century Presbyterian language to my non-member friends and myself, but never have come to a way to even *discuss* the Negro issue. I'm off to another macaroni casserole.

Mrs. Douglas H. Fraser
Sierra Madre, California
from Vol. 8, No. 2 (1973)

What a sneaky way to push me into subscribing again to *Dialogue*! I am glad, though, for I have missed it, and have meant to subscribe again. Besides missing it, I would feel terrible if the magazine did not survive, and I had not done my small share in supporting it. . . .

Some time ago, while I was still working, a customer found out that I was a Mormon, and asked about the attitude of the Mormons on the Negro question. When I tried to explain, I found myself in tears. I was embarrassed at the time, but have decided, in retrospect, that evidence that a Mormon really cared about this problem to some extent changed this person's attitude about Mormons themselves.

Please send the most recent issue as soon as possible. I will look forward to having *Dialogue* again.

Rebecca J. Welker
Estacada, Oregon
From Vol. 8, No. 2 (1973)

Lester E. Bush's article, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview," is excellent. It seems to me that the Negro Doctrine is the most difficult problem facing the church today. Dr. Bush's article should help us understand how the problem has developed.

Members of the Reorganized Church like to point out that there are black men in its priesthood. However, we Reorganites tend to overlook that we deny a much larger segment of the human race the opportunity to hold the priesthood. I see no difference between denying the priesthood to women and denying it to blacks. Both practices seem absurd today.

William D. Russell
Lamoni, Iowa
from Vol. 8, No. 2 (1973)

Women's Issues

Thank you for another superb issue of *Dialogue* (Vol.14, No. 4). I laughed all the way through Furr's "Honor Thy Mother," only to have the end punctuated by a telephone call from one of the Sunday School presidency asking me to be the "Young Mother," sandwiched between "Love at Home" and "What My Mother Means to Me by a Teenager." Sitting through a Mother's Day program is one thing, but aiding and abetting? Then inspiration struck and, armed with the pink and red issues of *Dialogue*, I gave a talk that brought tears and laughter, knowing nods, and sighs of satisfaction. Once again, thank you for a job well done.

Linda J. Bailey
San Jose, California
from Vol. 15, No. 3 (Autumn 1982)

I have read many provocative articles in *Dialogue* but never felt so overwhelmed by anything as I did on reading "Matricidal Patriarchy: Some Thoughts toward Understanding the Devaluation of Women in the Church," by Erin R. Silva, in the summer 1994 issue. I was so moved by the obviously clear understanding of the very depth of a woman's soul. I felt every fiber of my being laid bare by Silva's work. It wasn't until I reached the end of the article that I understood the force of his words. Erin R. Silva is a man. I had been so certain this was written by a woman that I found myself discounting so many areas of his abilities. I now realize that even women discount other women. If Erin R. Silva, a male, can reach such profound depths of emotion to truly understand the devaluation of women in the church, there is hope for us all. I have never felt such a powerful explosion of truthfulness as he has exhibited with such eloquence. If I have jeopardized my position in the church by taking this position, I will ask my husband and children to understand and keep loving me. This time I can't help but speak.

Thank you so much for publishing these wonderful works.

Shari Taylor
Los Osos, CA
from Vol 28, No. 2 (Summer 1995)

I have been an avid reader of *Dialogue* for many long years now—practically a charter member, although I was myself only thirteen when *Dialogue* was born and made its sure way into the book rack in my parental home—and I am often renewed, educated, strengthened, incensed, and moved by its pages. I am even now discussing with my husband certain of the articles in the Winter 1990 issue with fervor, concern, and pleasure. And yet, my experience with the Fall 1990 issue was of such a transcendental nature that it somehow went beyond all of my previous experiences. Is it, I am moved to wonder, because of the sense of shared sisterhood that accompanied me on my journey through its pages? A sense of shared truth, grief, knowledge, power, and commitment? Whatever the reality of my experience may be, each moment of oneness with the worlds therein spoke to me with a directness and raw urgency that was at once sweet and almost too inexpressibly painful to bear. Thank you.

Kimberlee Staking
Bourron-Marlotte, France
from Vol. 29, No. 3 (Fall 1991)

Joseph Jeppson a.k.a. Rustin Kaufman a.k.a. Joseph Jeppson

For well over twenty years Rustin Kaufman, channeled by Joseph Jeppson (or Jeppson by Kaufman), provided Dialogue with heartfelt LDS commentary on things cultural to theological. We reprint a sampling:

The Graduate (early movie review)

This is a very disturbing film. Members of the church ought to be warned to avoid it and to keep their children away from it. Its philosophy is "loaded." It assumes that the immoral is acceptable and that proven American values are not worth observing. I cannot help but wonder what our Father in heaven must think of the people who produced this film, let alone the curious L.D.S. people who flock to see it.

The film is about what appears to be a Jewish family in Los Angeles whose son has just returned from four years of college. The son looks Jewish, anyway. No mention is made as to whether or not the family is orthodox in their Jewish faith. I consider this to be one of the major flaws of the film. Another incomprehensible thing to me is that singers Simon and Garfunkel (also Jewish) expanded their "Mrs. Robinson" song to include lines about Jesus, in whom Jewish people do not even believe. They have the gall to sing "Jesus loves you more than you will know. . . ."

Anyway, the story opens with a homecoming party for Benjamin, the "hero" of the film. Everyone there is perfectly nice to him, but he stalks off to his room and sulks. Nobody can figure out why, including the audience. I talked to at least fifty people in Rexburg who saw the film the same night I did, and none of us knows why he stalked off to his room.

While he's in his room, a woman old enough to be his mother-in-law lures him out into her car, over to her house, and up to her room where she disrobes and stands naked before him. "Jesus Christ!" he shouts as though he believes in Jesus. The lady's husband comes home and the boy runs downstairs to the bar. Supposedly the husband doesn't know what's been going on, but I think he did know because when the boy asks for bourbon, the husband pours him scotch. The husband is no dummy: he is a successful lawyer.

Then follows what is perhaps the most disgusting part of the film: the boy phones up the older woman and invites her over to a hotel room (because he is "bored," he explains later). The moviemakers actually show them in bed together! To try to make the scene palatable to the audience, the writers try to show that Benjamin is a respectful boy by having him call the older woman "Mrs. Robinson" even in the midst of their most intimate moments. But the writers could not pull it off, for the audience suspects that when Benjamin calls her "Mrs. Robinson," he is cynical about it, and therefore is not genuinely sincere about being respectful.

The boy's father and mother try to get him to take out Mrs. Robinson's daughter Elaine, but Mrs. Robinson is against it. However, he does take her out anyway because his parents insist. Cruelly, Benjamin makes Elaine cry by chal-

lenging her to try to duplicate the act of a bump and grind dancer who can twirl propellers positioned in vulgar places. Anyway, Benjamin kisses Elaine, and they begin to fall in love.

Elaine finds out that Benjamin has been having an affair with *somebody*. But she doesn't seem very concerned about it (probably because she has been going to school at the University of California at Berkeley). In other words, the message that comes across to the young people watching the film is that it is acceptable for young men to have affairs.

Of course, when Elaine finds out that the object of Benjamin's attentions has been her own mother, this turns out to be too much even for a Berkeley student. She returns to school, and Benjamin follows her north. He finds himself competing for her affection with a nice-looking, neat, blond-haired, blue-eyed medical student. By contrast, Benjamin is slovenly, footloose, and a college dropout. What she sees in Benjamin is almost beyond the comprehension of the audience. Perhaps the real secret is that Benjamin looks Jewish and the medical student looks Nordic, and the Hollywood producers (many of whom are also Jewish) want to show that a Jewish hippie is more attractive than the finest example of traditional American young manhood. Maybe this goes over big in New York City, but not in Zion where most people are of Ephraim not of Judah.

With all the cunning of the Adversary, Benjamin woos Elaine and nearly persuades her to marry him when, suddenly, her father arrives to talk some sense into her head. Elaine leaves Benjamin a note of regret, and her parents arrange a secret wedding for their daughter and the medical student in Santa Barbara. But by stealth and cunning, Benjamin discovers the location of the wedding by misrepresenting himself to the fraternity brothers of the medical student. Benjamin rushes down the coast in his sports car.

Now follows the most blasphemous part of the film. When Benjamin arrives, the essentials of the wedding ceremony are almost completed. Elaine is legally married to the medical student. Finding himself up above and to the rear in a glassed-in balcony, Benjamin commences to bang on the window, his arms extended outward, shouting, "Elaine! Elaine! Elaine!" almost as though he were Jesus crying "Eli, Eli, lama sabach-thani?" Rather than raising a sponge filled with vinegar to his lips, the wedding party lifts its curses to Benjamin. Yet Elaine calls out for him. This sets in motion the rescue tumult that rocks the church, as though "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent." Somehow Benjamin manages to find Elaine's hand and pull her out the front doors, jamming them with a large cross, which he has been swinging to ward off attackers. In other words, the cross of Jesus is used to prevent the decent and civilized and law-abiding wedding attenders from stopping the anarchistic Benjamin from running off with another man's wife.

Benjamin and Elaine board a bus and ride away. He has triumphed. There he sits with his dazed catch, lovely in her wedding dress. Benjamin, smiling and reminiscing, looks like a hippie. If the play were *Faust* rather than *The Graduate*, we would be at the point where Mephistopheles is belly laughing at seeing Marguerite surrender to the devilish whiles of Faust. In *Faust*, Marguerite leaves the

"hero" and repents and is saved. No such hope is offered for the heroine in *The Graduate*.

Rustin Kaufman
Rexburg, Idaho
from Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring 1969)

Letters from Jeppson/Kaufman's Later Period

Inspired by Marvin Hill's article (Summer 1982), I did a little reading in a book called *Varieties*. . . by someone named William James and found that in 1820, at the age of fourteen, one Stephen H. Bradley "saw the Saviour, by faith, in human shape: and another young man named David Brainerd said: One morning while I was walking in a solitary place. . . attempting to pray. . . I thought that the Spirit of God had quite left me. . . but as I was walking in a thick grove, unspeakable glory seemed to open to the apprehension of my soul. . . I had no particular apprehension of any one person in the Trinity, either Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost."

The point of all this is twofold: God apparently appeared to several young men in those days, which should give us Mormons confidence that he probably appeared to young Joseph as well. And secondly if David Brainerd couldn't tell if there were one, two, or three gods in *his* grove, why should anyone think it odd that Joseph couldn't remember either?

Rustin Kaufman
Rexburg, Idaho
from Vol 18, No.1 (Spring 1983)

In the winter 1987 issue, I have just read Eugene England's piece which says that there may not be plural marriage in the celestial kingdom after all. Monogamy is on a higher plane than polygamy, says Brother England.

I've been sitting here thinking about it for a whole two hours. What *is* the real nature of relationships in the heavens? Suddenly, like a bolt, I saw the truth of it. Think about visitors from God's realm. Have any *women* appeared to the prophets? No way. Only *men*! Why? '*Cause they're the only ones up there; that's why!*' Among the heavenly visitors have been God and Jesus and the Holy Ghost. There have been Moroni and Alvin and Michael the Archangel. Also the male angel who wrestled with Jacob, the three (male) Nephites, together with John and Elijah. *All men!*

When the General Authorities finally get it all worked out, I'll bet potatoes to chokecherries that polygamy will be goin' on in only the telectual kingdom, monogamy in the terrestrial, and the celestial will be reserved for priesthood holders only.

In celestial, are people single?
No. The thought makes reason stare.
Something tells me—
Something tells me

I've a loving brother there.

I realize that after what I wrote about homosexuals in the earlier letter, I'm now going to have to eat crow!

Don't you see? Just as the temple ceremony moves from kingdom to kingdom, so too does our liaison training in earth life: In the nineteenth century we were introduced to polygamy; in the twentieth century we were told to practice monogamy; and in the twenty-first century we will adopt "brotherly love" as a presentment to celestial inhabitation. (Church visitors' centers in the twenty-first century will have display windows showing medieval monasteries as forerunners of the new posture.) The reason the church presently asks members not to be polygamists or homosexuals is that we are still in the twentieth century, and those postures are not appropriate for our era.

With the help of this theological breakthrough, one can now discern a wisdom more than human in the *modus operandi* of the Gods: Patiently the Almighty brings the collective body of mankind along from one stage to the next, until the human race has experienced the lower realms on the way to higher ones, as symbolized in the temple ceremony.

"Just as we move from polygamy to monogamy to brotherly love in the area of personal relationships, we can see the same pattern in so many other facets of earth life. For example, there is the idea that "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny" (or vice versa), which means that the stages through which an embryo goes parallel the stages of evolutionary development of species. Evolution appears to be God's way of creating mankind.

"Anyway, to get a better perspective of the future—what we're all in for in the twenty-first century—I'm thinking of pulling up stakes and moving from Rexburg to San Francisco."

Joseph H. Jeppson
Woodside, California
from Vol 21, No.2 (Summer 1988)

I read Foster's article encouraging LDS members to stop trying to convert other Christians to Mormonism, and to be less authoritarian like the Quakers. If Foster would read the scriptures, he would discover that God encourages his followers to convert others to the truth. In fact, under the doctrine of "by their fruits ye shall know them," one may discern which *church* is the right one, by comparatively and scientifically analyzing their respective "fruits."

In the United States we have about 50 million Roman Catholics; their church has been going for about 1,950 years; this means they have 25,641 members to show for each year of their existence. The corresponding LDS number (5 million members divided by 153 years) is a whopping 32,680 members per year. But the Quaker number (140,000 divided by 331 years) is only 423.

Rustin Kaufman
Rexbug, Idaho
from Vol 17, No.1 (Spring 1984)

About this Commemorative Issue

Neal and Rebecca Chandler

IN A RECENT ARTICLE IN THE *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Scott McLemee fixes the onset of the abundantly energetic “field of Mormon Studies” with two debuts: the Mormon History Association was organized in 1965 and a year later “a small circle of graduate students at Stanford University” launched *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*.¹ For many of us old enough to have watched it, that launch was a world-turning event, more adventurous even than Apollo. The tumult and euphoria in the early letters is palpable, contagious. Then, however, the long work of an independent journal began: the staffing and organizing and re-staffing and re-organizing, the searching and soliciting and coaxing and cajoling of submissions, and reading and reading and reading and winnowing and mailing out and calling in, the difficult inexorable weighing, the getting to “yes,” having to say “no,” the dithering/debating over “maybe,” the art work and design, the editing and proofing and galleys and proofing and bluesines and proofing and printing and packing and mailing and paying of printers and postage and pipers and sometimes—sometimes a heavy price. And all this, of course, without neglecting subscribers, nor re-subscribers, nor donors, especially donors, with deadlines to keep and standards and promises and databases. The list is very incomplete but litany enough already to employ and explain the stout army of souls—listed as fully as we are able on the inside cover—who during these 35 years have lent passion, intelligence, agility, and homely doggedness to this good work. *Dialogue* endures as a tribute first to its attentive reader-subscribers, then to the thinkers and writers and visual artists, who submit—and submit to review—but also to generous friends, and not least of all to *Dialogue*’s line-workers whose courage and spit and wire and forfeit of sleep have kept the enterprise churning.

1. Scott McLemee, “Latter-day Studies: Scholars of Mormonism Confront the History of What Some Call ‘the Next World Religion,’” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 48, no. 28 (March 22, 2002): A14.

So how did we choose from over three decades of publishing just what best to reprint at the turn of a new millennium. We asked ourselves, our various boards, many friends of *Dialogue*, and our exceptional guest editor Gary Bergera. The short list would easily have yielded 800 pages and perhaps as many letters of protest. Every long time reader will question choices and most certainly object to omissions. You yourself would have made other selections. We know this, but you are not holding a volume of greatest hits even though Dick Poll's "What the Church Means to People Like Me," Lester Bush's "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine," and Duane Jeffrey's "Seers, Savants and Evolution" appeared on nearly every list we received. You will find here, nonetheless, a collection—sorely limited by space—of articles and essays that seem to the editors to have had watershed significance. By that we mean writing in whose wake our thinking about value or doctrine or factual circumstance has been substantially affected, even changed. Not surprisingly, we discovered that most such writing falls into areas of controversy. *Dialogue*, as dramatists understand, is only then dialogue, is only significant and engaging when parties differ, when they are not—as in some familiar settings—merely alternating voices, reading successive passages from a correlated and monological script. It is conflict that drives plot and moves discussion forward. This is a dramatic and rhetorical truism, but most of the articles chosen for this issue are historical in focus, and there is an historical circumstance at work here as well.

"We tend to assume," writes religious historian Karen Armstrong, "that people of the past were (more or less) like us, but in fact their spiritual lives were rather different. In particular, they evolved two ways of thinking, seeking, and acquiring knowledge, which scholars have called *mythos* and *logos*. Both were essential; they were regarded as complementary ways of arriving at truth, and each had its special area of competence."² *Mythos*, she explains, entailed the stories, histories, and images that address deep emotional and psychological needs. They give meaning even and, in fact, precisely to difficult lives. They help meaningfully to address deep fears and demons arising from within. The stories of Jonah and Noah and Ruth, the parted Red Sea, the boat-building Brother of Jared, even the story of the stone rolled away from the tomb are nowhere told as in contemporary histories to establish the time-and-place, cause-and-effect, fact-supported historicity of events, but rather to tell us something about the meaning of lives, their ultimate promise and obligation, the way they ought from an eternal perspective to be lived.

2. Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism* (New York: Ballentine Books, 2000), xv.

Mythos, however, is not meant as a practical guide to action or behavior in the mundane world. This was the domain of “*logos*” or reason, and, in pre-modern times, Armstrong says, it was held that to confuse one realm with the other was dangerous.³ Even believers of more devout eras did not send faithful adolescent boys with only a stone and a sling to face formidable military opponents. The late medieval children’s crusade was perhaps an exception, but it was also an horrific mistake. Apocalyptic accounts of the end of the world and of judgement sober us, but also reassure us that someone supremely powerful and just is finally in charge and “will bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Eccl. 12:14). However, attempts, both biblical and recent, to reframe those accounts as predictions have a long and absolute record of failure and consequences both comical and disastrous.

In the practical world *logos* or reason reigns supreme, so much so since the Enlightenment and the astounding successes of science and technology that virtually every enterprise in human knowledge has come to define itself as an extension of reason. *Mythos* as method has been shouldered aside and even difficult matters of emotion and interior psychological need have been re-assigned to psychotherapy, the rational science of the irrational. Yet, in most of the world, *mythos* stubbornly persists, sometimes obliquely as a turn to astrology or Tarot or the metaphysics of crystals, but also surely in the remarkable growth and energy of conservative religion—even though such religion is everywhere embattled, even, as it turns out, by itself. This is the crux and a particular contribution of Armstrong’s analysis. For it turns out that the most conservative churches, the ones we call “Fundamentalist” are, in fact, radically modern in their acceptance of reason over myth. It is they, more than almost anyone else, who insist that the literal historicity of scriptural accounts is the touchstone of their truthfulness.⁴ If the Bible says six days or (by extrapolation) six thousand years, then that’s exactly what it means. Jonah rode in that whale, Noah and animal legions in the ark. Job lost ten good children to an ugly bet but got ten even better ones back. Lazurus rose. Jared’s brother lit up the dark with stones. And Joseph Smith received golden plates from an angel. We call this scriptural literalism. It is, insists Armstrong, a modern, rationalist invention.

This analysis seems to us precisely to describe a central rift which traverses LDS intellectual culture and marches starkly through the pages of *Dialogue*. In his famous essay, Richard Poll, names this divide and cer-

3. *Ibid.*, xvii.

4. *Ibid.*, 366.

tain behaviors it occasions, but other articles in this volume help us perhaps to see even more precisely its nature. Again and again the rational question of factual historicity is central. What are the historical facts of Joseph Smith's first vision, of his translation of the Book of Abraham, of the origins of the longstanding church policy to deny priesthood to Black men. What was historical fact and what is "myth" about the 1844 transfiguration of Brigham Young, and then of course (and yet again), what is the factual history of human origins, given the biblical story on the one hand and mountains of scientific evidence on the other. These are relentlessly rational questions, and, as Armstrong predicts, just like the secular ones, religious answers have been relentlessly rational: Explaining first vision inconsistencies, for instance, as matters of interpretation, not reinvention. Correcting simplistic definitions of "source" and of "translation." There were attempts before the point became moot to establish both the scriptural and the genetic chains of cause and effect that explained the proscription of priesthood to Blacks. Right now in some parts of the United States there is a movement afoot to establish "Intelligent Design" in highschool curricula as a scientifically viable alternative to evolution. Not all such defenses have appeared in the pages of *Dialogue*. It is part of the difficulty of discussion that participants often choose or are forced to choose alternative, auditioned forums. But whatever the intellectual venue, the point here is the ascendancy of *logos* on all sides in the discussion.

When I first read the introduction to Karen Armstrong's *The Battle for God*, I was at a family gathering and half listening to a serious argument between family members—one, a professor, invoking testimony and insisting on the power of the gospel and church activity to change our lives while the other, a business professional, reported relentlessly from his research the betrayals of historical fact upon which certain truth claims of Mormonism depend. The worlds of *mythos* and *logos* on the page were coming to me live and in predictable collision from across the room. Nor was it lost on me that both perspectives lie concurrently potential in any single individual, not least of all because I had some years earlier heard almost the same argument between precisely the same litigants, except that each had then taken the other's currently so adamant position. Among the ancient Greeks, at least, irony was a serious religious principle, and though neither disagreement was pleasant, I see them now as important, even necessary. There are in our personal histories and in the pages of *Dialogue* moments when we cross—may be forced to cross—to the other perspective. When Margaret Wheatley and Nadine Hansen write about women and the priesthood, they write not just about origins (in Wheatley's case, not at all), but about consequences and what policies and practices *mean* in people's lives. When my wife and I first encountered "Solus" many years ago, we found ourselves asking not about

scriptural rules, nor about scientific evidence concerning sexual orientation, but about what it must mean to have been defined as evil by your honored religion, and not for anything you'd ever done, but for who you were. It was a transforming, epiphanal encounter in the space of a few pages.

We cannot go back to pre-modern times. We will, all of us, labor rationally in an age of reason. But neither can we obviate, not faithfully and certainly not dismissively, the human need for mythic kinds of knowledge. There are no investments nor websites nor scientific methodologies to make us meaningful or wise or decent. These needs, served by religion, will not go away or be denied, even though the rigors of professional history present stark rational challenges to a religion still so uncomfortably proximate to its "colorful" and amply documented past. "This," observes McLemee, "makes Mormon studies an exceptionally passionate field, in which faith wrestles with scholarship, sometimes as violently as Jacob did with the angel."⁵

The metaphor is apt. In the scripture, Jacob, migrating with his family and flocks, is approaching his brother Essau, whom, even after many years away, he has good reason to fear. There is a great deal at stake. The angel appears, as the text seems to suggest, the night before their encounter in one of those anxious dreams that seem to go on forever. It's a harrowing contest, and Jacob is badly wounded, but even though his talent has always been for subterfuge and flight, he does not shrink from this conflict. He wrestles the "angel" and will not quit—there is no talk of victory—until his opponent grants him an interesting prize: a blessing. In the morning Jacob carefully arranges his family and resources to finesse the confrontation with his powerful brother, only to discover that his tactical preparations are superfluous. Esau has long since resolved to forgive and is overjoyed just to embrace him. They are in an altogether new place and era (the one named in Jacob's blessing), Israel. Still, we must not think that difficulties and confrontations are over for the newly installed patriarch. In the very next chapter of Genesis, the terrible story of Dinah and Schechem, Jacob's own carefully brought up children bring him into terrible conflict with his neighbors (and—one would like to hope—with his own conscience). "Ye have troubled me," he wails, "to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land. . . they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed." (Gen. 34:30). Israel has had an embarrassing start. His history, the facts as we receive them, make for awkward, uncomfortable reading. And yet we think this story and also the closely preceding brawl with the angel are

⁵. "Latter-day Studies," A14.

enormously, *mythically* instructive about the inevitability of conflict and the rewards of facing our demons and wrestling them despite wounds and persisting *until they yield us a blessing*. It's the blessing of dialogue.

We expect that the journal will continue to engage and exercise readers, to supply reassurances, but also to rock even anchored boats, and sometimes to provide breakthrough moments when we are led over—by some terrible grace—into another's perspective. If you relish such moments as much as you fear them, then, whether seasoned or brand new to these pages, you are an anchor subscriber to *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, and we greet you and welcome you, once again, home.

The Challenge of Honesty*

Frances Lee Menlove

BOTH THE PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC communities are being swept by a passion for honesty. They are scrutinizing centuries-old suppositions and re-examining current attitudes and goals. In the Protestant world, the writings of Bultmann, Bonhoeffer, Tillich, and the Bishop of Woolwich are evidence of this quest. Peter Berger's indictment of the Protestant religious establishment attacks the problems of relevancy from the viewpoint of a student of social ethics.¹ Since Pope John first "opened the window to let in the fresh air," the work of self-examination and housecleaning in the Catholic church has also been proceeding at an amazing clip. The reader of Hans Kung's *The Council, Reform and Reunion*,² Daniel Callahan's *Honesty in the Church*,³ and the candid book *Objections to Roman Catholicism*⁴ is left with a feeling of both surprise and respect for the critical and sometimes agonizing self-examination taking place.

However, the problem of honesty is not peculiarly Catholic or Protestant, but a problem shared by all men. Psychologists and psychiatrists have become increasingly concerned with the lack of authenticity and the sham which seem at times to permeate the very core of Western man: "Modern man is alienated from himself, from his fellow men, and from nature."⁵ As Mormons, we not only live in a society whose pressures and criteria for success and happiness can foster dishonesty and inauthenticity, but we have, we believe, a peculiar and divine mandate to seek truth and exemplify honesty. For these reasons, it is crucial for Mormons to meet openly the challenge of honesty. It is the purpose of this paper to lay some groundwork for this self-examination.

*This essay was first published in Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 1966): 44-53.

1. Peter L. Berger, *The Noise of Solemn Assemblies* (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1961).

2. Hans Kung, *The Council, Reform and Reunion* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961).

3. Daniel Callahan, *Honesty in the Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965).

4. Michael de la Bedoyere, *Objections to Roman Catholicism* (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1965).

5. Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., Inc., 1956), 72.

HONESTY WITH THE SELF

To be honest with others and to be honest with one's self are different things. At the heart of the problem of personal honesty is the ability to confront one's own inner reality—one's convictions and feelings—openly. Personal honesty involves courageously recognizing the discrepancy between what one ought to be and what one actually is, between what one is supposed to believe and what one actually believes. The individual who does not accept this challenge, who turns away and does not face the discrepancy, consigns himself to a life of half-awareness, inauthenticity, and bad faith. He will not know what he thinks, but only what he ought to think.

How free is the Mormon to confront himself? How free is he to question and analyze, to admit his strengths and weaknesses, his beliefs and doubts and problems with the church? These questions are silently asked by many Mormon students today. The grim jokes about "theological schizophrenia," about mental compartments labeled "church" and "school" with impermeable walls to avoid confrontations and clashes, are evidence of friction. There seems to be a commonly held conviction that there are only two alternatives: to conform silently or to leave the church. This, I am convinced, explains the malaise among some Mormons today. This also explains the attraction of disbelief. Disbelief becomes

a promise of liberty. It is present as a call to unity, a call to whatever separates from life. It is present sometimes in the form of despair but more often in the form of exaltation. This strange attraction to disbelief proceeds not from what is most base but what is most elevated in man. Now all the more or less empty traditions, all the narrowness, all the useless moralisms, all of the infantile fears of those in authority from which a religious society rids itself only with great difficulty render disbelief even more attractive.⁶

One of the factors sometimes impeding private honesty is "the myth of the unruffled Mormon." This myth is simply the commonly held picture of the Mormon as a complete, integrated personality, untroubled by the doubts and uncertainties that plague the Protestant, and oblivious to the painful searching and probings of the non-believer. The Mormon is taught from Primary on that he, unlike his non-Mormon friends, knows with absolute certainty the answers to the knottiest problems of existence, that in fact his search has come to an end, and that his main task in life is to present these truths to others so that they too may end their quests.

6. Christian Duquoc, "The Mission of the Laity," *Perspectives* 9 (July-Aug. 1964): 116.

In reality, the Mormon is also subject to uncertainties and doubts. This fact derives inevitably from his understanding of free agency, his freedom to love or turn away, his freedom to choose this path or another one. "Lord, I believe. . . help thou my unbelief" expresses simply the profound experience of those who seek God. He who blots out internal awareness in order to maintain to himself and to others the appearance of absolute certainty, who refuses to examine his inner life, may all too often settle for the appearance of a Christian believer rather than for its actuality. No one should doubt that in some way, or for some reason, he is also a doubter.

Another more intangible and more insidious obstacle may also impede the quest for inner honesty. To the extent that the Mormon assumes the values and goals of secular society, to the extent that the radical and revolutionary gospel of Christ becomes indistinguishable from current social norms, Christianity becomes largely irrelevant and this irrelevance tends to dissipate the impetus for self-examination and to blur the issues relating to it. What I am pointing to is the fact that in some crucial areas, Mormons have ceased to remain in a state of tension with secular society. When living the gospel becomes synonymous with social progress or mental health, when the amassing of wealth or power becomes an acceptable goal, when the church as a group becomes irrelevant as a force for peace and human brotherhood, then the individual's need to examine his own commitments to God and the church and the society in which he lives loses much of its urgency. If there are no real discrepancies or conflicts in these commitments, then there is no real need for agonizing self-examination. As Mormons, we would do well to listen to Dan Wakefield's comment about Protestant Christianity:

[T]hey [the religious leaders] have dressed Jesus Christ in a grey flannel suit and smothered his spirit in the folds of conformity. The new slick-paper Christianity cheerily rises in the midst of a world seeking answers to survival, and offers an All-Methodist football team.⁷

The church and its members must never take for granted that they are serving God but must continually ask themselves if, in fact, God is not being made to serve them.

While the myth of the unruffled Mormon makes honest self-examination appear dangerous—and identification of God's way with our own makes it appear irrelevant—many of our educational practices make it practically impossible. Teachers and parents who explicitly or implicitly encourage the child who has doubts or problems or personal

7. Dan Wakefield, "Slick-Paper Christianity," in Maurice Stein et al., eds., *Identity and Anxiety* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960), 41.

anguish to turn away from those doubts is training the child in self-deceit. When a Sunday school teacher states or implies to a child that his question is bad, or threatening, or a manifestation of his own personal failure or immaturity, he is erecting a barrier between the child's public behavior and private world, between his need for love and acceptance and his personal integrity, just as the mother who tells her terrified son that "boys aren't afraid" or her screaming daughter with the scraped knee that "it doesn't hurt." In short, the individual may come to believe that any questions or inner discomforts he may experience are symptoms of defects in his own character. Personal doubts and uncertainties are seen as temptations rather than as challenges to be explored and worked through. The individual conscience and the weight of authority or public opinion are thus pitted against each other so that the individual either denies them to himself at the expense of personal honesty, or hides them from others and lives in two worlds.

There is another kind of inner deception: the danger to which the religious liberal is especially vulnerable. The religious liberal is generally thought of as one who examines his religious life and his church frankly and openly, recognizes the weaknesses and incongruities where they exist, and comments freely on his observations. He is often able to be candid in his criticism and zeal for change while at the same time remaining active in the church organizations and maintaining a respected place in the Mormon community. The potential for inner deception here lies in the possibility that he will use his candidness, his frank and often entirely justified criticisms and demands for change, as a smoke screen for his more basic religious problems. He may be using his dissatisfaction with particular organizational procedures, or manifestations of authority or theological interpretations, as scapegoats to help him avoid facing those issues of real concern to him: the very nature of church organization, perhaps, or the legitimacy of any expression of authority, or the validity of the basic theology. The individual is thus relieved from coming to terms with himself.

Similarly, the religious conservative has his particular pitfalls. In his desire to preserve and protect, he may become indiscriminate and fail to make important distinctions between historical accidents and timeless truths. He may defend with equal vigor anything that is blessed with age, effectively freezing the form in which the gospel may be expressed. Here, the particular type of personal dishonesty possible is that the conservative may be acting not from faith and love but from a basic lack of interest. He may simply not want to go to the trouble of questioning and sorting. Behind the mask of fanatical preservation may be the real fear that the truth of the church is too fragile to tamper with, that an honest and open examination may destroy his faith or his way of life. Thus, the religious conservative may also be hiding from himself a basic lack of faith.

Both the religious liberal and the religious conservative might profit from the words of Josef Ratzinger:

[W]e must take into consideration the brother weak in faith, the unbelieving world surrounding us, and, too, the infirmity of our own faith, so capable of withering once we retreat behind the barrier of criticism and of deteriorating into the self-pitying rancor of one misunderstood.

On the other hand, however, there exists in contrast to discretion, another factor which must be taken into consideration. Truth, as well as love, possesses a right of its own and over sheer utility takes precedence—truth from which stems that strict necessity for prophetic charisma, and which can demand of one the duty of bearing public witness. For were it necessary to wait for the day when the truth would no longer be misinterpreted and taken advantage of, we might well find it had lost all effect.⁸

Another factor mitigating against personal honesty is the failure of the church to separate the central truths of the gospel of Christ from historical accidents or customs. It is an historical truism to state that the history of any group or movement participates in the life and history of the culture in which it finds itself. Similarly, a church must employ the images, viewpoints, and language forms which are current in a given time and place for its message to be understood. Yet it must never be regulated to or bound by such expressions. The risk is always present that current expressions and concepts may become so fused with the gospel message that they are taken, *ipso facto*, to be the word of God. Any revelation must be filtered down through the mind and intellect of the receiver, pressed and squeezed into language inadequate to handle it, and altered and changed by the boundaries of human understanding and experience. Both the fact that the church exists and expresses itself in a particular cultural and historical context, and the realization that we have only finite and limited understanding about infinite matters must be made explicit. Failure to make these distinctions accounts for some of the most acute abuses of individual conscience.

HONESTY WITH OTHERS

The failure to realize that the Mormon church in all its manifestations, both historical and contemporary, is an intermingling of the human as well as the divine, also puts some obstacles in the way of honesty with others. In the first place, we have a proud and courageous history. Every Primary child knows the story of how our forefathers crossed the plains and made the desert bloom. Wallace Stegner calls the Mormon pioneers

8. Josef Ratzinger, "Free Expression and Obedience in the Church," in *The Church, Readings in Theology* (New York: P. J. Kennedy, Inc., 1963), 213.

"the most systematic, organized, disciplined, and successful pioneers in our history."⁹ Yet the story of Joseph Smith, the early church, the *hegira* across the plains, and the consequent establishment of Zion is more than just history; it is the story of God directing His People to a new Dispensation. Perhaps because the history is so fraught with theological significance, it has been smoothed and whittled down, a wrinkle removed here and a sharp edge there. In many ways, it has assumed the character of a myth. That these courageous and inspired men shared the shortcomings of all men cannot be seriously doubted. That the Saints were not perfect, nor their leaders without error, is evident to anyone who cares to read the original records of the church. Yet the myths and the myth-making persist. Striking evidence for this is found in the fact that currently one of the most successful anti-Mormon proselyting techniques is merely to bring to light obscure or suppressed historical documents. Reading these historical documents arouses a considerable amount of incredulity, concern, and disenchantment among Mormons under the spell of this mythological view of history. The fact that individuals find these bits and pieces of history so shocking and faith-shattering is at once the meat of fundamentalistic heresies and an indictment of the quasi-suppression of historical reality which propagates the one-sided view of Mormon history.

The relevance of this to honesty is obvious. The net result of mythologizing our history is that the hard truth is concealed. It is deception to select only congenial facts or to twist their meaning so that error becomes wisdom, or to pretend that the church exists now and has existed in a vacuum, uninfluenced by cultural values, passing fashions, and political ideologies.

There are other temptations to public dishonesty in the church, temptations to use pretense and distortion to forward the work of the church. This is the dishonesty of the missionary who presents *only* those facts or arguments which tend to support his purpose, or who takes a scripture out of context or distorts its meaning a little to add to the evidence marshaled for the point he is making. Invoking a higher law or greater truth can also be a form of dishonesty. This occurs when someone's views are suppressed or historical manuscripts censored, not because they are false, but because they might cause dissension or disturb the faithful or imperil unity.

MEETING THE DEMANDS OF HONESTY

The very nature of the church itself demands honesty. The demand of honesty is not imposed on the church from the outside. It is not a de-

9. Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964), 6.

mand made by secular society, by the scholarly or scientific community, or by some obstreperous apostates. The demands of honesty are inherent in the mission to seek truth. What then are the motives behind dishonesty? Perhaps the most common is the desire in everyone to protect that which they love. If one admits that the past had its disasters, its misdirections and failings, then it becomes possible to wonder if the church is not in some way faltering now, a notion which is devastating only to those who fail to realize that the church is made up of human beings who possess human frailties. Another motive behind some kinds of public dishonesty is the belief that the naked truth would be harmful to the simple believer. The assumption here is simply that the believer remains better off with his delusions intact, that faith suffers when it bumps into reality. The reasoning of those who distort or suppress reality, or alter historical manuscripts to protect the delusions of the simple believer, is similar to that of the man who murders a child to protect him from a violent world.

The very nature of the church demands both personal and public honesty, and the belief in the necessity of continuous revelation helps the Mormon in his quest. While truth can be considered absolute, our understanding and knowledge of this truth is always finite. From this position, we can see in those who have different ideas and beliefs a means for us to grow and learn. If we believe that truth and knowledge have limitations, however sacred we hold them or however pragmatically useful we deem them to be, then we must welcome those of diverse opinions as holding out the possibility for increasing our understanding. More importantly, criticisms which are honestly received and scrutinized and then rejected serve to strengthen our perception of the truth of our position. Conversely, a clash of ideas may force us to abandon the notions we find to be false when they come under attack. In either event, we profit by coming close to an understanding of the truth. Tolerance is based on the idea that a man has a right to be wrong, and, as Reinhold Niebuhr says somewhere, "Many a truth has ridden into history on the back of an error."

The responsibility of the church is to help the individual in his quest for personal honesty. The church's leaders must demonstrate for its members the quest for honesty, exemplifying its manner and method in as pure a form as is humanly possible. Because of the tremendous power the church has in molding and teaching its members, it has an especially sacred responsibility not to misuse this power. Each Mormon is taught the principles of the gospel, the history of the church, and the importance of religion in his life from the time he is a toddler. This continual and pervasive educational and social experience roots the Mormon way of life deeply in both his conscious and unconscious life. The expression "once a Mormon always a Mormon" testifies to this fact. Only the most perceptive adult, with strenuous effort, is able to look at his religion and

the way of life associated with it, with anything approaching psychological freedom. The church must, through both precept and example, teach what honesty is.

To do this, the individual Mormon must be open and direct in his motives and conduct. He must not say to investigators what he would not say to members. The appearance of the church should never be enhanced at the expense of reality. To distort the reality of the church as it is understood, to use tricks of manipulation or "salesmanship," to distort arguments by taking them out of context or by skillful omissions, no matter how good the intentions or how noble the aim, is to provide the participants with practice in deception and the observers with a blueprint for dishonesty.

Second, the church must avoid any discrepancy between appearance and reality. The human failings and occasional misdirections must not be suppressed or omitted from our books, but recognized as the manifestations of those who are less than perfect struggling within the limitations of their understanding. Failure to do this provides an example of dishonesty, and when individuals discover that the church they have been shown is not the church as it is in actuality, they may feel they have uncovered some dark, dangerous secret, a secret that had better be pushed to the back of the mind and forgotten—or a secret which provides evidence for abandoning their faith. There should be nothing based on fact which anyone can say about the church that the church has not already said about itself. Such a demand could not be made of a secular power, but then the church is not a secular organization.

To avoid misunderstanding, let me dispel a common misconception about honesty. Honesty is often equated with exposé. A movie or book advertised as honest is often one which merely exposes something previously held secret or private. The notion seems to be that the one who can say the most unpleasant things is the most honest. Honesty can become a billy club, an instrument of aggression capable of destruction. It is just as dishonest to suppress or play down the positive, the hopeful, the real achievements of the self and of the church as it is to speak only of these.

Finally, more should be said in the church about the rights and responsibilities of individual conscience. Although it is possible for an individual to give an important insight to the church, the individual is too often given little reason to think this might happen through him. When doubts and problems are seen as evidence of sin, of defects of character, then it becomes dangerous for the individual to confront himself honestly. "To lean upon the authority of the Church, by way of defaulting our own responsibility to think and choose, is to run from our human dignity. To let others, whatever their stature or office, form our inner life

is to abdicate our human freedom."¹⁰ The way is then open for us to fool ourselves into thinking we have a relationship with God simply because we conform outwardly to certain rituals and behavioral proscriptions:

The ultimate meaning of the Christian faith lies in the personal meeting of man and God. It is not commitment to a glorious idea or set of ideals, as is characteristic of an ideology. It is not the kind of commitment which demands a communal solidarity because power in the world requires loyal men willing to sacrifice themselves for the good of the cause. Above all, it is not the kind of commitment which excuses any sort of deception and evasion as long as their purpose is a good one. To deceive others for the good of the Church, to deceive oneself for the sake of loyalty to the authority of the Church: each is still a deception and cannot be covered by euphemisms.¹¹

It is impossible for the church to face the great problems and threats of our age without individual members being free to express to both themselves and others what they think and believe. With the almost unlimited possibility for new scientific discoveries, new sociological and anthropological insights, new ways of explaining human behavior, modern man cannot escape perplexity. "What the Church needs today, as always, are not adulators to extol the status quo, but men whose humility and obedience are no less than their passion for truth; men who brave every misunderstanding and attack as they bear witness; men who, in a word, love the Church more than ease and the unruffled course of their personal destiny."¹² The members of the church are responsible for the church.

The aim of both public and private honesty is to abolish dualism. There should not be two churches, one as it actually is and another offered to the public. There must not be two selves, one calm and unruffled, basking in the "knowledge" of the gospel, and the other private and unexplored, pushed to the outer limits of awareness. If the individual does not have an honest relationship with himself, he cannot have an honest relationship with others. If he cannot avoid dishonesty within the church, he will not be able to avoid it in the secular world. We must attempt to meet the challenge of honesty, realizing that our honesty is enmeshed within a whole framework of values, and that honesty, like truth, is always a partial achievement. There is only the latest word, never the last.

10. Callahan, *Honesty in the Church*, 161.

11. *Ibid.*, 121.

12. Ratzinger, "Free Expression," 212.

What the Church Means to People Like Me*

Richard D. Poll

A NATURAL REACTION TO MY TITLE—since this is not a testimony meeting in which each speaker is his own subject—might be, “Who cares?” For who in this congregation, with the possible exception of my brother, Carl, are “people like me”? I have a wife and daughter present who find me in some respects unique. And I am sure there are students at Brigham Young University who *hope* that I am unique. By the time I have finished, there may be some among you who will share that hope.

Yet I have chosen the topic because I believe that in some important respects I represent a type of Latter-day Saint which is found in almost every ward and branch in the church. By characterizing myself and explaining the nature of my commitment to the gospel, I hope to contribute a little something of value to each of you, whether it turns out that you are “people like me” or not.

My thesis is that there are two distinct types of active and dedicated Latter-day Saints. I am not talking about “good Mormons” and “Jack Mormons” or about Saints in white hats and pseudo-Saints in black. No, I am talking about two types of *involved* church members who are here tonight, each deeply committed to the gospel but also prone toward misgivings about the legitimacy, adequacy, or serviceability of the commitment of the other.

The purpose of my inquiry is not to support either set of misgivings, but to describe each type as dispassionately as I can, to identify myself with one of the types, and then to bear witness concerning some of the blessings which the church offers to the type I identify with. My prayer is that this effort will help us all to look beyond the things which obviously differentiate us toward that “unity of the faith” which Christ set as our common goal.

*This essay first appeared in Vol. 2, No. 4 (Winter 1967): 107-117.

For convenience of reference, let me propose symbols for my two types of Mormons. They have necessarily to be affirmative images because I am talking only about "good" members. I found them in the Book of Mormon, a natural place for a Latter-day Saint to find good symbols as well as good counsel.

The figure for the first type comes from Lehi's dream—the Iron Rod. The figure for the second comes also from Lehi's experience—the Liahona. So similar they are as manifestations of God's concern for his children, yet just different enough to suit my purposes tonight.

The Iron Rod, as the hymn reminds us, was the Word of God to the person with his hand on the rod, each step of the journey to the tree of life was plainly defined; he had only to hold on as he moved forward. In Lehi's dream the way was *not easy*, but it was *clear*.

The Liahona, in contrast, was a compass. It pointed to the destination but did not fully mark the path; indeed, the clarity of its directions varied with the circumstances of the user. For Lehi's family, the sacred instrument was a reminder of their temporal and eternal goals, but it was no infallible delineator of their course.

Even as the Iron Rod and the Liahona were both approaches to the word of God and to the kingdom of God, so our two types of members seek the word and the kingdom. The fundamental difference between them lies in their concept of the relation of man to the "word of God." Put another way, it is a difference in the meaning assigned to the concept "the fullness of the gospel." Do the revelations of our Heavenly Father give us a handrail to the kingdom, or a compass only?

The Iron Rod Saint does not look for questions, but for answers, and in the gospel—as he understands it—he finds or is confident that he can find the answer to every important question. The Liahona Saint, on the other hand, is preoccupied with questions and skeptical of answers; he finds in the gospel—as he understands it—answers to enough important questions so that he can function purposefully without answers to the rest. This last sentence holds the key to the question posed by my title, but before pursuing its implications, let us explore our scheme of classification more fully.

As I suggested at the outset, I find Iron Rods and Liahonas in almost every LDS congregation, discernible by the kinds of comments they make in Gospel Doctrine classes and the very language in which they phrase their testimonies. What gives them their original bent is difficult to identify. The Iron Rods may be somewhat more common among converts, but many nowadays are attracted to the church by those reasons more appropriate to Liahonas, which I will mention later on. Liahona testimonies may be more prevalent among born members who have not had an emotional conversion experience, but many such have developed Iron Rod commitments in the home, the Sunday school, the mission

field, or some other conditioning environment. Social and economic status appear to have nothing to do with type, and the rather widely held notion that education tends to produce Liahonas has so many exceptions that one may plausibly argue that education only makes Liahonas more articulate. Parenthetically, some of the most prominent Iron Rods in the church are on the BYU faculty.

Pre-existence may, I suppose, have something to do with placement in this classification, even as it may account for other life circumstances, but heredity obviously does not. The irritation of the Iron Rod father confronted by an iconoclastic son is about as commonplace as the embarrassment of the Liahona parent who discovers that his teenage daughter has found comfortable answers in seminary to some of the questions that have perplexed him all his life.

The picture is complicated by the fact that changes of type do occur, often in response to profoundly unsettling personal experiences. The Liahona member who, in a context of despair or repentance, makes the "leap of faith" to Iron Rod commitment is rather rare, I think, but the investigator of Liahona temperament who becomes an Iron Rod convert is almost typical. The Iron Rod member who responds to personal tragedy or intellectual shock by becoming a Liahona is known to us all: this transition may be, but is not necessarily, a stage in a migration toward inactivity or even apostasy.

My present opinion is that one's identification with the Iron Rods or the Liahonas is more a function of basic temperament and of accidents than of pre-mortal accomplishments or mortal choices, but that opinion—like many other views expressed in this sermon—has neither scriptural nor scientific validation.

A point to underscore in terms of our objective of "unity of the faith" is that Iron Rods and Liahonas have great difficulty understanding each other—not at the level of intellectual acceptance of the right to peaceful co-existence, but at the level of personal communion, of empathy. To the Iron Rod, a questioning attitude suggests an imperfect faith; to the Liahona, an unquestioning spirit betokens a closed mind. Neither frequent association nor even prior personal involvement with the other group guarantees empathy. Indeed, the person who has crossed the line is likely to be least sympathetic and tolerant toward his erstwhile kindred spirits.

I have suggested that the essential difference between the Liahonas and the Iron Rods is in their approach to the concept "the word of God." Let us investigate that now a little.

The Iron Rod is confident that, on any question, the mind and will of the Lord may be obtained. His sources are threefold: Scripture, Prophetic Authority, and the Holy Spirit.

In the Standard Works of the church, the Iron Rod member finds far

more answers than does his Liahona brother because he accepts them as God's word in a far more literal sense. In them he finds answers to questions as diverse as the age and origin of the earth, the justification for capital punishment, the proper diet, the proper role of government, the nature and functions of sex, and the nature of man. To the Liahona, he sometimes seems to be reading things into the printed words, but to himself the meaning is clear.

In the pronouncements of the general authorities, living and dead, the Iron Rod finds many answers because he accepts and gives comprehensive application to that language of the Doctrine and Covenants which declares: "And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation" (68:4). This reliance extends to every facet of life. On birth control and family planning, labor relations and race relations, the meaning of the Constitution and prospects for the United Nations, the laws of health and the signs of the times, the counsel of the "living oracles" suffices. Where answers are not found in the published record, they are sought in correspondence and interviews, and once received, they are accepted as definitive.

Third among the sources for the Iron Rod member is the Holy Spirit. As Joseph Smith found answers in the counsel of James, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. . .," so any Latter-day Saint may do so. Whether it be the choice of a vocation or the choice of a mate, help on a college examination or in finding "golden prospects" in the mission field, healing the sick or averting a divorce—prayer is the answer. The response may not be what was expected, but it will come, and it will be a manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

Implicit in all this is the confidence of the Iron Rod Latter-day Saint that our Heavenly Father is intimately involved in the day-to-day business of his children. As no sparrow falls without the Father, so nothing befalls man without his will. God knows the answers to all questions and has the solutions to all problems, and the only thing which denies man access to this reservoir is his own stubbornness. Truly, then, the person who opens his mind and heart to the channels of revelation, past and present, has the iron rod which leads unerringly to the kingdom.

The Liahona Latter-day Saint lacks this certain confidence. Not that he rejects the concepts upon which it rests—that God lives, that he loves his children, that his knowledge and power are efficacious for salvation, and that he does reveal his will as the Ninth Article of Faith affirms. Nor does he reserve the right of selective obedience to the will of God as he understands it. No, the problem for the Liahona involves the adequacy of the *sources* on which the Iron Rod testimony depends.

The problem is in perceiving the will of God when it is mediated—as

it is for almost all mortals—by “the arm of flesh.” The Liahona is convinced by logic and experience that no human instrument, even a prophet, is capable of transmitting the word of God so clearly and comprehensively that it can be universally understood and easily appropriated by man.

Because the Liahona finds it impossible to accept the literal verbal inspiration of the Standard Works, the sufficiency of scriptural answers to questions automatically comes into question. If Eve was not made from Adam’s rib, how much of the Bible is historic truth? If geology and anthropology have undermined Bishop Ussher’s chronology, which places creation at 4000 B.C., how much of the Bible is scientific truth? And if our latter-day scriptures have been significantly revised since their original publication, can it be assumed that they are now infallibly authoritative? To the Liahona, these volumes are sources of inspiration and moral truth, but they leave many specific questions unanswered, or uncertainly answered.

As for the authority of the latter-day prophets, the Liahona Saint finds consensus among them on gospel fundamentals but far-ranging diversity on many important issues. The record shows error, as in Brigham Young’s statements about the continuation of slavery, and it shows change of counsel, as in the matter of gathering to Zion. It shows differences of opinion—Heber J. Grant and Reed Smoot on the League of Nations, and David O. McKay and Joseph Fielding Smith on the process of creation. To the Liahonas, the “living oracles” are God’s special witnesses of the gospel of Christ and his agents in directing the affairs of the church, but like the scriptures, they leave many important questions unanswered, or uncertainly answered.

The Iron Rod proposition that the Spirit will supply what the prophets have not gives difficulty on both philosophical and experimental grounds. Claims that prayer is an infallible, almost contractual, link between God and man through the Holy Spirit find Liahona Mormons perplexed by the nature of the evidence. As a method of confirming truth, the witness of the Spirit demonstrably has not produced uniformity of gospel interpretation even among Iron Rod Saints, and it is allegedly by the witness of that same Spirit—by the burning within—that many apostates pronounce the whole church in error. As a method of influencing the course of events, it seems unpredictable and some of the miracles claimed for it seem almost whimsical. By the prayer of faith, one man recovers his lost eyeglasses; in spite of such prayer, another man goes blind.

All of which leaves the Liahona Mormon with a somewhat tenuous connection with the Holy Spirit. He may take comfort in his imperfect knowledge from that portion of the Article of Faith which says that “God will yet reveal many great and important things. . . .” And he may recon-

cile his conviction of God's love and his observation of the uncertain earthly outcomes of faith by emphasizing the divine commitment to the principle of free agency, as I shall presently do. In any case, it seems to the Liahona Mormon that God's involvement in day-to-day affairs must be less active and intimate than the Iron Rod Mormon believes because there are so many unsolved problems and unanswered prayers.

Is the Iron Rod member unaware of these considerations, which loom so large in the Liahona member's definition of his relationship to the word of God? In some instances, I believe, the answer is yes. For in our activity-centered church, it is quite possible to be deeply and satisfyingly involved without looking seriously at the philosophical implications of some gospel propositions which are professed.

In many instances, however, the Iron Rod Saint has found sufficient answers to the Liahona questions. He sees so much basic consistency in the scriptures and the teachings of the latter-day prophets that the apparent errors and incongruities can be handled by interpretation. He finds so much evidence of the immanence of God in human affairs that the apparently pointless evil and injustice in the world can be handled by the valid assertion that God's ways are not man's ways. He is likely to credit his Liahona contemporaries with becoming so preoccupied with certain problems that they cannot see the gospel forest for the trees, and he may even attribute that preoccupation to an insufficiency of faith.

As a Liahona, I must resist the attribution, though I cannot deny the preoccupation.

Both kinds of Mormons have problems. Not just the ordinary personal problems to which all flesh is heir, but problems growing out of the nature of their church commitment.

The Iron Rod has a natural tendency to develop answers where none may, in fact, have been revealed. He may find arguments against social security in the Book of Mormon; he may discover in esoteric prophetic utterances a timetable for that Second Coming of which "that day and hour knoweth no man. . . ." His dogmatism may become offensive to his peers in the church and a barrier to communication with his own family; his confidence in his own insights may make him impatient with those whom he publicly sustains. He may also cling to cherished answers in the face of new revelation or be so shaken by innovation that he forms new "fundamentalist" sects. The Iron Rod concept holds many firm in the church, but it leads some out.

The Liahona, on the other hand, has the temptation to broaden the scope of his questioning until even the most clearly defined church doctrines and policies are included. His resistance to statistics on principle may deteriorate into a carping criticism of programs and leaders. His ties to the church may become so nebulous that he cannot communicate them to his children. His testimony may become so selective as to ex-

clude him from some forms of church activity or to make him a hypocrite in his own eyes as he participates in them. His persistence in doubting may alienate his brethren and eventually destroy the substance of his gospel commitment. Then he, too, is out—without fireworks, but not without pain.

Both kinds of Latter-day Saints serve the church. They talk differently and apparently think and feel differently about the gospel, but as long as they avoid the extremes just mentioned, they share a love for and commitment to the church. They cannot therefore be distinguished on the basis of attendance at meetings, or participation on welfare projects, or contributions, or faithfulness in the performance of callings. They may or may not be hundred-percenters, but the degree of their activity is not a function of type insofar as I have been able to observe. (It may be that Iron Rods are a little more faithful in genealogical work, but even this is not certain.)

Both kinds of members are found at every level of church responsibility—in bishoprics and Relief Society presidencies, in stake presidencies and high councils, and even among the general authorities. But whatever their private orientation, the public deportment of the general authorities seems to me to represent a compromise, which would be natural in the circumstances. They satisfy the Iron Rods by emphasizing the solid core of revealed truth and discouraging speculative inquiry into matters of faith and morals, and they comfort the Liahonas by resisting the pressure to make pronouncements on all subjects and by reminding the Saints that God has not revealed the answer to every question or defined the response to every prayer.

As I have suggested, the Iron Rods and the Liahonas have some difficulty understanding each other. Lacking the patience, wisdom, breadth of experience, or depth of institutional commitment of the general authorities, we sometimes criticize and judge each other. But usually we live and let live—each finding in the church what meets his needs and all sharing the gospel blessings which do not depend on identity of testimony.

Which brings me to the second part of my remarks—the part which gives my talk its title: What the Church Means to People Like Me.

Although I have tried to characterize two types of Latter-day Saints with objectivity, I can speak with conviction only about one example from one group. In suggesting—briefly—what the church offers to a Liahona like me, I hope to provoke all of us to reexamine the nature of our own commitments and to grow in understanding and love for those whose testimonies are defined in different terms.

By my initial characterization of types, I am the kind of Mormon who is preoccupied with questions and skeptical of answers. I find in the gospel—as I understand it—answers to enough important questions so

that I can function purposefully, and I hope effectively, without present answers to the rest.

The primary question of this generation, it seems to me, is the question of meaning. Does life really add up to anything at all? At least at the popular level, the philosophy of existentialism asks, and tries to answer, the question of how to function significantly in a world which apparently has no meaning. When the philosophy is given a religious context, it becomes an effort to salvage some of the values of traditional religion for support in this meaningless world.

To the extent that existence is seen as meaningless—even absurd—human experiences have only immediate significance. A psychedelic trip stands on a par with a visit to the Sistine Chapel or a concert of the Tabernacle Choir. What the individual does with himself—or other “freely consenting adults”—is nobody’s business, whether it involves pot, perversion, or “making love, not war.”

For me, the gospel answers this question of meaning, and the answer is grandly challenging. It lies in three revealed propositions: (1) Man is eternal. (2) Man is free. (3) God’s work and glory is to exalt this eternal free agent—man.

The central conception is freedom. With a belief in the doctrine of free agency, I can cope with some of the riddles and tragedies which are cited in support of the philosophy of the absurd. In the nature of human freedom—as I understand it—is to be found the reconciliation of the concept of a loving God and the facts of an unlovely world.

The restored gospel teaches that the essential stuff of man is eternal, that man is a child of God, and that it is man’s destiny to become like his Father. But this destiny can only be achieved as man voluntarily gains the knowledge, the experience, and the discipline which godhood requires and represents. *This* was the crucial question resolved in the council in heaven—whether man should come into an environment of genuine risk where he would walk by faith.

To me, this prerequisite for exaltation explains the apparent remoteness of God from many aspects of the human predicament—my predicament. My range of freedom is left large, and arbitrary divine interference with that freedom is kept minimal in order that I may grow. Were God’s hand always upon my shoulder or his Iron Rod always in my grasp, my range of free choice would be constricted, and my growth as well.

This view does not rule out miraculous interventions by our Heavenly Father, but it does not permit their being commonplace. What is seen as miracle by the Iron Rod Saints, my type tends to interpret as coincidence or psychosomatic manifestation or inaccurately remembered or reported event. The same attitude is even more likely with regard to the satanic role in human affairs. The conflict between good and evil—with its happy and unhappy outcomes—is seen more often as a deriva-

tive of man's nature and environment than as a contest between titanic powers for the capture of human pawns. If God cannot, in the ultimate sense, coerce the eternal intelligences which are embodied in his children, then how much less is Lucifer able to do so. We may yield to the promptings of good or evil, but we are *not* puppets.

There is another aspect of the matter. If, with or without prayer, man is arbitrarily spared the consequences of his own fallibility and the natural consequences of the kind of hazardous world in which he lives, then freedom becomes meaningless and God capricious. If the law that fire burns, that bullets kill, that age deteriorates, and that the rain falls on the just and the unjust is sporadically suspended upon petition of faith, what happens to that reliable connection between cause and consequence which is a condition of knowledge. And what a peril to faith lies in the idea that God *can* break the causal chain, that he frequently *does* break it, but that in *my* individual case he may not *choose* to do so. This is the dilemma of theodicy, reconciling God's omnipotence with evil and suffering, which is so dramatically phrased: "If God is good, he is not God; if God is God, he is not good."

From what has been said, it must be apparent that Liahonas like me do not see prayer as a form of spiritual mechanics, in spite of such scriptural language as "Prove me herewith. . .," and "I, the Lord, am bound. . ." Prayer is rarely for miracles or even for new answers. It is—or ought to be—an intensely personal exercise in sorting out and weighing the relevant factors in our problems, and looking to God as we consider the alternative solutions. (Many of our problems would solve themselves if we would consider only options on which we could honestly ask God's benediction.) We might pray for a miracle, especially in time of deep personal frustration or tragedy, but we would think it presumptuous to command God and would not suspend the future on the outcome of the petition.

This is not to say that Liahonas cannot verbalize prayer as proficiently as their Iron Rod contemporaries. One cannot be significantly involved in the church without mastering the conventional prayer forms and learning to fit the petition to the proportions of the occasion. But even in the public prayers, it is possible, I believe, for the attentive ear to detect those differences which I have tried to describe. To oppose evil as we can, to bear adversity as we must, and to do our jobs well—these are the petitions in Liahona prayers. They invoke God's blessings, but they require man's answering.

To this Liahona Latter-day Saint, God is powerful to save. He is pledged to keep the way of salvation open to man and to do, through the example and sacrifice of his son and the ordinances and teachings of his church, what man cannot do for himself. But beyond this, he has left things pretty much up to me—a free agent, a god in embryo, who must

learn by experience as well as direction how to be like God.

In this circumstance, the Church of Jesus Christ performs three special functions for me. Without them, my freedom might well become unbearable:

In the first place, the church reminds me—almost incessantly—that what I do makes a difference. It matters to my fellow men because most of what I do or fail to do affects their progress toward salvation. And it matters to me, even if it has no discernible influence upon others. I reject the “hippie” stance, not because there is something intrinsically wrong with beards and sandals, but with estrangement and aimlessness. Even though life is eternal, time is short and I have none to waste.

In the second place, the church suggests and sometimes prescribes guidelines for the use of freedom. The deportment standards of the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, the rules for mental and physical well-being in the Doctrine and Covenants, the reminders and challenges in the temple ceremony—these are examples, and they harmonize with free agency because even those which are prescribed are not coerced.

There is a difference here, I think, between the way Iron Rods and Liahonas look at the guidelines. Answer-oriented, the Iron Rods tend to spell things out: Sabbath observance becomes no TV or movies, or TV but no movies, or uplifting TV and no other, or no studying, or studying for religion classes but no others. For Liahonas like me, the Sabbath commandment is a reminder of the kinship of free men and a concerned and loving Father. What is fitting, not what is conventional, becomes the question. On a lovely autumn evening, I may even, with quiet conscience, pass up an M.I.A. fireside for a drive in the canyon. But the thankfulness for guidelines is nonetheless strong.

In final place comes the contribution of the church in giving me something to relate to—to belong to—to feel a part of.

Contemporary psychology has much to say about the awful predicament of alienation. “The Lonely Crowd” is the way one expert describes it. Ex-Mormons often feel it; a good friend who somehow migrated out of the church put it this way the other day: “I don’t belong anywhere.”

For the active Latter-day Saint, such alienation is impossible. The church is an association of kindred spirits, a sub-culture, a “folk”—and this is the tie which binds Iron Rods and Liahonas together as strongly as the shared testimony of Joseph Smith. It is as fundamental to the solidarity of LDS families—almost—as the doctrine of eternal marriage itself. It makes brothers and sisters of the convert and the Daughter of the Utah Pioneers, of the Hong Kong branch president and the missionary from Cedar City. It unites this congregation—the genealogists and the procrastinators, the old-fashioned patriarchs and the family planners, the eggheads and the doubters of “the wisdom of men.”

This sense of belonging is what makes me feel at home in the Palo Alto Ward. Liahonas and Iron Rods together, we are products of a great historic experience, laborers in a great enterprise, and sharers of a commitment to the proposition that life is important because God is real and we are his children—free agents with the opportunity to become heirs of his kingdom.

This is the witness of the Spirit to this Liahona Latter-day Saint. When the returning missionary warms his homecoming with a narrative of a remarkable conversion, I may note the inconsistency or naiveté of some of his analysis, but I am moved nevertheless by the picture of lives transformed—made meaningful—by the gospel. When the Home Teachers call, I am sometimes self-conscious about the “role playing” in which we all seem to be engaged, yet I ask my wife often—in our times of deepest concern and warmest parental satisfaction—what might our daughters have become without the church. When a dear friend passes on, an accident victim, I may recoil from the well-meant suggestion that God’s need for him was greater than his family’s, but my lamentation is sweetened by the realization of what the temporal support of the Saints and the eternal promises of the Lord mean to those who mourn.

For this testimony, the church which inspires and feeds it, and fellowship in the church with the Iron Rods and Liahonas who share it, I express my thanks to my Heavenly Father in the name of his son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Search for Truth and Meaning in Mormon History*

Leonard J. Arrington

THE PHILOSOPHER PLATO, to whom dialogue was the highest expression of intellectuality, defined thought as "the dialogue of the soul with itself." It is thus altogether fitting that the editors of *Dialogue* should encourage Mormon scholars to conduct periodic soul-searchings regarding the relevance of their studies to the gospel. I am grateful for this opportunity of reappraising Mormon history and of relating historical studies to the church and its historic mission of building the Kingdom of God on Earth.

I

From its very inception, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sought to leave an accurate and complete record of its history. On April 6, 1830, the date of the organization of the church, a revelation was given to Joseph Smith which began, "Behold, there shall be a record kept among you. . . .(D&C 21:1)" To accomplish this purpose, the second elder of the church, Oliver Cowdery, was selected to serve as Church Recorder. When Elder Cowdery was transferred to other work a year later, John Whitmer was appointed, by revelation, to "write and keep a regular history" (D&C 47:1). Whitmer served in this capacity until 1835 and wrote a brief manuscript narrative, which is now in the possession of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.¹

Thus, from its earliest years, the church designated an official to record its story and preserve its records. Twenty-five men have been sus-

*This essay first appeared in Vol. 3, No. 2 (Summer 1968): 56.

1. *John Whitmer's History* (Salt Lake City, 1966). A similar history, overlapping the Whitmer account, is the "Far West Record" in the LDS Church Historian's Library and Archives, Salt Lake City. Parts have also been published in Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1902-1912).

tained during the years 1830 to 1968 as Church Historians and Recorders. In addition to the records kept by these men, each of the organizations of the church has kept minutes of its meetings and other documents, individuals have kept diaries and journals, and newspapers and magazines have published items of contemporary and earlier history. Thus, a surprisingly complete record of the church and its instrumentalities, from 1830 to the present, can be found in the Church Historian's Library and Archives in Salt Lake City. The records in the Church Archives appear to be "honest" in the sense of presenting the facts as nearly as the designated historians could determine them; no destruction of or tampering with the records or the evidence is apparent.

The second phase of official church historiography began in 1838 when Joseph Smith and his associates began the preparation of a documentary record entitled "History of Joseph Smith." This detailed chronology, written as an official diary of the prophet, appeared in serial form in the *Times and Seasons* (Nauvoo, Illinois), beginning in 1842. When that publication was discontinued in 1846, the remainder of the "History" was published in issues of the *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* (Liverpool), during the years 1853-63. A follow-up "History of Brigham Young" and other church officials covered the years to 1844 and was published in the *Deseret News* (Salt Lake City) and *Millennial Star*, 1863-65. In subsequent years church historians and assistant church historians worked through these manuscripts, corrected errors, added corroborative material, and "improved" the narrative. The result was the seven-volume *History of the Church*, edited and annotated by B. H. Roberts, which is still the standard "documentary history" of the church.²

A third stage in the recording of church history was initiated by Andrew Jenson at the turn of the twentieth century, when he commenced three important projects: (1) the preparation and accumulation of biographies of the founders and subsequent officers of the church, many of which eventually found an outlet in the *L.D.S. Biographical Encyclopedia*³—unfortunately, subsequent volumes have not been issued with information on church officials of the past thirty years; (2) the preparation of an encyclopedia of church history, subsequently published as *Encyclopedic History of the Church*;⁴ and (3) the preparation of a massive multi-volume scrapbook record of the day-to-day activities of the church, with excerpts from available sources, both published and

2. Ibid.

3. Andrew Jenson, *L.D.S. Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Co., 1901-36).

4. Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1941.

unpublished. This "Journal History of the Church" now comprises more than 1,300 legal-size scrapbooks from three to five inches thick; it is being extended daily by the addition of clippings from Salt Lake City and other newspapers. Happily, there is an index to this mammoth collection so that one is able to trace references to individuals and organizations with considerable ease.

A fourth stage in the setting down of Mormon history was the preparation of "synthesis histories." Overlooking the fragmentary histories of elders Cowdery, Whitmer, and Corrill,⁵ and the publication of various missionary tracts with historical sections, the first attempt of Mormon historians to set down a synthesis history was that of Edward Tullidge, who was granted access to materials in the Church Archives for the preparation of his *Life of Brigham Young; or Utah and Her Founders*,⁶ *The History of Salt Lake City and Its Founders*,⁷ and *History of Northern Utah and Southern Idaho*.⁸ Hubert Howe Bancroft also received extensive materials from the Historian's Office, and had the personal help of Orson Pratt, Franklin D. Richards, John Taylor, and Wilford Woodruff in the preparation of his *History of Utah*,⁹ which might be said to contain the first "professional" history of the Mormons. Bancroft's one-volume history was followed by Orson F. Whitney's four-volume *History of Utah*,¹⁰ which was written almost exclusively from Mormon sources. The next history was B. H. Roberts's "History of the 'Mormon' Church," which appeared in serialized form in *Americana*.¹¹ With some additions and changes, it reappeared in *A Comprehensive History of the Church: Century I*.¹² A one-volume synthesis history, originally prepared as a manual for priesthood classes and since reissued many times with additional material, is Joseph Fielding Smith's *Essentials in Church History*.¹³

With the exception of the Bancroft volume and some sections of Roberts's *Comprehensive History*, most of our Latter-day Saint histories, and the monographs which have been written from them, represent what might be called "documentary histories": They attempt to give an

5. A series of letters by Oliver Cowdery and W. W. Phelps in the *Latter-day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* (Kirtland, Ohio, 1834-37) contain much history. John Corrill published *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints (Commonly Called Mormons)* (St. Louis, Mo.: The author, 1839).

6. New York: Tullidge and Crandall, 1876.

7. Salt Lake City: Edward W. Tullidge, 1886.

8. Salt Lake City, 1889.

9. *History of Utah 1540-1886* (San Francisco: History Company, 1889).

10. Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons, 1898-1904.

11. *Americana Illustrated* 4-10 (July 1909-June 1915).

12. 6 vols., Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1930.

13. Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1922.

account of the important events of the past without critical analysis or interpretation, and they depend, essentially, on the statements of participants and observers whose testimonies have been excerpted and combined, with due regard for their trustworthiness, and "compiled" into a narrative. Some of the histories have been written to prove a theological thesis, such as that the Lord looked after the Saints, punished them when disobedient, and frustrated their enemies. They have dealt primarily with the externals of the events which transpired, and have not concerned themselves with the internals, i.e., the underlying motives or thoughts of those who made the actions happen. Above all, our historians were perhaps unduly respectful of certain authorities, placing credence in accounts which should have been subjected to critical analysis.

This tradition of unquestioning "compiled external history" presented not only an authoritative narration of the succession of events, but also set the tone for a large proportion of the subsequent studies in Mormon history. These have dealt primarily with changes in the institutional structure of the church—with the development of its doctrine, program, and organization. Particularly popular objects of study have been histories of the missions, wards and stakes, auxiliaries, educational and cultural institutions and programs, and economic enterprises. One reason for the popularity of such studies is the survival and availability of the records of the organizations and programs. Personal records were hardly available to anyone outside a given family, and these were widely scattered. There was always a problem with family records because every family organization had at least one person who did not want anyone to know that grandpa once shared a bottle of wine with his Mormon Battalion buddies, or that Aunt Jane once served tea to an officer of the Relief Society. Thus, using organizational records rather than family records, scholars tended to describe the "outside" of the events.

There is, of course, another kind of history: the type which the British historian and philosopher R. G. Collingwood has called the history of the "inside" of an event. This history seeks to determine and expose the thoughts in the minds of the persons "by whose agency the events came about."¹⁴ The historian does this by creatively re-thinking the thoughts of the participants in the context of his knowledge, analyzing them, and forming his own judgment regarding the validity of their explanations. He invests the narrative with meaning by consciously selecting from the sources that which he thinks important, by interpolating in the reports of the participants and observers things which they do not explicitly say, and by rejecting or amending what he believes is the result

14. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 215. The first English edition was 1946.

of misinformation or mendacity. Above all, he puts his sources in the witness-box, and by cross-examination extorts from them information which in their original statements was withheld, either because they did not wish to give it or because they did not realize they possessed it. In other words, the Mormon historian, like other historians, must read contemporary accounts with a question in his mind and seek to find out, by inference and otherwise, what he wants to find out from them. Every step in his research depends on asking a question—not so much whether the statement is true or false, but what the statement means. Obviously, since his informants, by and large, are dead, the historian must put the questions to himself.¹⁵ The historian, as with scholars in other disciplines, must engage in the continuous Socratic questioning described so well by Plato in the quotation at the beginning of this article as “a dialogue of the soul with itself.”

This kind of history, which we may call Socratic or interpretive history, must by its very nature be a private and not a church venture. Although this history is intended to imbue the written record with meaning and significance, the church cannot afford to place its official stamp of approval on any “private” interpretation of its past. Interpretations are influenced by styles and ideas of the times, not to say the personalities and experiences of historians, and the church itself ought not to be burdened with the responsibility of weighing the worth of one interpretation against another. Contrariwise, the historian ought to be free to suggest interpretations without placing his faith and loyalty on the line.

Fortunately, the Church Historian’s Library and Archives is now admirably arranged to permit responsible historians to get at the “inside” of the events in our history.¹⁶ Materials are filed in three separate sections, each of which has its own card catalogues and indexes:

1. *Library Section.* This includes a nearly complete library of books, pamphlets, tracts, and periodicals published by and about the church, including “anti-Mormon” works. There are also newspapers and maps, films and filmstrips.
2. *Manuscript Section.* In addition to the “Journal History of the Church” initiated by Andrew Jenson, there are similar journal or manuscript histories of each of the wards, stakes, and missions; “Name Files” of several thousand church officials and members (and some non-members as well); and the diaries and journals of several hundred persons.

15. Compare Collingwood, 255-37, 269, 273-75. This paragraph is very close to a paraphrase of Collingwood.

16. Certain materials are not in the Church Historian’s Library and Archives. For example, minutes of meetings of the First Presidency, certain diaries of members of the First Presidency, certain financial records, etc., are in the vault of the First Presidency.

3. *Written Records Section.* This section features tens of thousands of minute books and other records of wards, stakes, priesthood quorums, auxiliary organizations, and missions, as well as emigration records.

The alphabetically arranged Name Files in the Manuscript Section, which are now in the process of being indexed, are of particular value in the rewriting of our history. Typically, they include autobiographical sketches, newspaper clippings, letters to and from a given person, and other personal records and documents. Thus, these files permit us to look at the record from the standpoint of many individual participants. These records must be examined with care and, because of the intimate family information which they contain, can often be made available only to professional historians who are accustomed to handling confidential data.

After working through several hundred of these Name Files, I do not see any major revisions of our history, that is, revisions of conclusions to which sophisticated historians have come in years past. Indeed, on some of the conclusions reached long ago by our historians (but doubted by some recent historians), there is a wealth of material, heretofore unused, which corroborates the "official" point of view. For this reason, it is fortunate that this material is now more generally available. The records contain numerous accounts and evidences of individual greatness, heroism, and sacrifice. My own impression is that an intensive study of church history, while it will dispel certain myths or half-myths sometimes perpetuated in Sunday school (and other) classes, will build testimonies rather than weaken them.

II

The more one works with the materials of Mormon history, the more one becomes aware of certain built-in biases which have influenced our impressions of church history. Let me suggest five of these:

1. *The theological marionette bias.* One gets the impression from some of our literature and sermons that the prophets and their associates in the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve were pious personages who responded somewhat mechanically, as if by conditioned reflex, to explicit instructions from On High, and that God manipulated the leaders much as marionettes in a puppet show—that church leaders themselves were not significant as agents of history. While this may very well have been the case in some instances, all developments did not come about "naturally" or even "supernaturally," nor can we describe innovations naively as "expedients necessitated by the times." The introduction of theological and organizational changes is done by people, by learned scripturists, talented organizers, and energetic innovators. They may have operated individually or in groups; they may have been motivated

by ambition, prestige, or the good of the church. In any event, they introduced new programs and organizational instrumentalities, and assumed the responsibility for the adjustment to external circumstances without which the programs would not work. To study the mentality, personality, and character of our leaders is to study the activators of history. Biographical and psychological studies are an indispensable but little-used vehicle for the study and comprehension of our history.

2. *The male bias.* This is the notion that because men hold all the important policy-making positions, they are the ones who determine the course of events. The priesthood holds the key leadership offices, we reason, so the priesthood is responsible for everything that happens. We are inclined toward a male interpretation of Mormon history. A few years ago, Gospel Doctrine classes studied a manual prepared by Dr. Thomas C. Romney entitled *The Gospel in Action* (Salt Lake City, 1949). Each week we studied the life of one historic Latter-day Saint, and we discussed some truly interesting and inspiring lives. Forty-five biographies were given in the manual; and while half of the persons attending Gospel Doctrine classes were presumably women, forty-two of the biographies were of men, and only three were of women. We studied the life of Angus M. Cannon, who was a long-time president of Salt Lake Stake; but we did not study his fascinating wife, Martha Hughes Cannon, who was the first woman state senator in the United States. (As a matter of fact, when the Republican Party nominated her husband for the State Senate, the Democratic Party could find no one who thought it worthwhile to run against him until some party member conceived the idea of running Sister Cannon. She won against her husband, served two terms, and proved a brilliant and resourceful senator.) We also studied Orson Spencer, the president of the University of Nauvoo, but we did not study his equally intelligent and fascinating daughter, Aurelia Spencer Rogers, the founder of the Primary Association of the church. This pattern of assumed male dominance is characteristic of all our histories. Edward Tullidge gave biographies of thirty persons in his *Life of Brigham Young*, all men. The fourth volume of Orson F. Whitney's monumental *History of Utah* contains the biographies of 351 persons, only twenty-nine of whom were women. One section, entitled "First Immigrants," presents biographies of thirty persons, but in only two was any attempt made to recognize the fact that women also came to Utah. (As a matter of fact, eighty-three women had arrived in the Salt Lake Valley by the end of July 1847: three from the original "pioneer" company, sixty from the Mormon Battalion, and twenty with the "Mississippi Saints.")

Another category in the Whitney biographies is entitled "Farmers and Stockraisers." Sixty-two biographies are presented, but in only two instances does the biography make any attempt to identify and describe the history of the wife (or wives) along with that of the husband. This,

despite the fact that the men were away on missions so often that in many cases the women were the effective farmers of the family. This was even more true in the case of polygamous households where the husband could not possibly manage on a day-to-day basis the farms of his various families. It may well be true, as some historians have asserted, that the Mormons were the best farmers in the West, but very often Mormon farms were managed by women, not men.

In any event, anyone who spends a substantial amount of time going through the materials in the Church Archives must gain a new appreciation of the important and indispensable role of women in the history of the church, not to mention new insights into church history resulting from viewing it through the eyes of women.¹⁷

3. *The solid achievement bias*, with emphasis on the word "solid." We have tended to remember the tangible, the material, the visible, simply because these have had greater survival value. We have tended to measure the accomplishments of the pioneers by such durable achievements as the construction of canals and dams, temples and meetinghouses, houses and cooperative stores. We have forgotten that the pioneers also made contributions in thought, in human relations, in education. From the evidence of pioneer life still surviving, we are led to conclude that the Mormons were good farmers and engineers, but poor poets and philosophers. By thus giving emphasis to the achievements of the more active members of the community, we have overlooked the quiet and immeasurable achievements of the reflective and contemplative. An extended experience among the Name Files has convinced this historian that the role of the writer and the intellectual was greater than we have ever acknowledged. These contributions are more subtle—more difficult to discover and to trace—but they are nevertheless there.

4. *The centrifugal bias*—the notion that the important influences and forces in Mormon history originated in the center and moved outward from there. This bias, which results partly from the greater survival value of materials collected and protected by the central church, has had a discernible effect on our attitudes. Some Latter-day Saints apparently believe their primary task is to sit down and wait for instructions from 47 E. South Temple Street, Salt Lake City. This was clearly not the attitude of earlier generations, who were told by revelation that they were personally invested with the responsibility of contributing toward the building of the Kingdom and did not wait on anybody to tell them when to start:

17. A good example of the "new look" at the inside of church history by viewing it through the life of a woman is Katherine Kemp Thurston, *The Winds of Doctrine, The Story of Mary Lochwood Komp in Mormon Utah during the Last Half of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Exposition Press, 1952). An interesting recent essay emphasizing the role of women is Kenneth Godfrey, "Feminine-flavored Church History," *Improvement Era* (Jan. 1968): 52.

For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.

Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness;

For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men do good they shall in nowise lose their reward.

But he that doeth not anything until he is commanded. . .the same is damned (D&C 58: 26-29).

Clearly this revelation had an impact, for a large share of the creativity in thought and practice in the church came from what might be called the "private sector," or from the geographical and organizational periphery, and moved centripetally toward the center and universal adoption. To give some examples: The Relief Society originated as a voluntary ladies' aid society in Nauvoo and was quickly reconstituted by the prophet Joseph Smith as an official organization. *The Woman's Exponent*, first magazine for women west of the Mississippi (with one fly-by-night exception), originated as a semi-private venture in which the leading part was played by a twenty-two-year-old girl journalist from Smithfield, Utah. After many years of splendid service, it came to be recognized as the official organ of the Relief Societies. *The Contributor* and the *Young Woman's Journal*, the two periodicals which later formed *The Improvement Era*, were both initiated by the altruistic desire on the part of young men and young women writers to make a literary contribution to the church. The United Order, as established by the church in 1874, was modeled along the lines of cooperative general stores established in Brigham City, Utah, in 1864, and in Lehi, Utah, in 1868. The Welfare Plan, as introduced in 1936, was built on experiences in St. George Stake, in southern Utah, and Liberty Stake, in Salt Lake City. All missionaries know of "good ideas" which were tried in one mission and quickly spread to others. All of this is quite "natural" and, upon reflection, is what we would expect; an examination of the Church Archives helps demonstrate its validity. Brigham Young used to say that more testimonies were obtained on the feet than on the knees. What he obviously meant was that we must all be "about our Father's business."

5. *The unanimity bias*. This is the notion that Mormon society has, from the earliest years, been characterized by concert in thought and behavior, by cooperation, concord, and consensus. In this respect, our historians have been so charmed with the unity of the Saints after they have decided on a course of action, that they have neglected to inquire into the process by which they made up their minds what to do. As with other peoples, the Saints have had their controversies, conflicts, and questionings. The substantial disagreement on doctrine, practice, and collective policy becomes evident when one leaves the "official" sources to focus on

the minds and careers of individuals. While the records of the church emphasize the triumphs of union and accord, individual diaries often dwell on the difficulties of resolving differences. When one intensively studies certain controversies—whether doctrinal, economic, or political—one occasionally uncovers widely disparate positions, both among general authorities and among the “lay” members of the church. The Saints were not without opportunities for criticism and the free expression of opinion in general priesthood meetings, in quorum meetings, and in other encounters; and sometimes opinions were articulated with considerable vigor and determination. Then, just as the divisiveness threatened the unity of the Saints, the prophet spoke, conflicts were resolved, and the Saints closed ranks to get the job done. Such debate apparently occurred over proper policy preceding the exodus from Nauvoo, before the coming of the railroad to Utah, and during the anti-polygamy “Raid” of the 1880s and the Depression of the 1930s. In each instance, a few “die-hards” could not reconcile themselves to the “final” solution and left the church.

III

It is with respect to the last bias, perhaps, that the historian can make his greatest contribution to the church today. There is now, as in early epochs, a certain amount of dissent. Some of it has to do with the church’s role in politics, some with the church’s business operations, and some with the emphasis on certain doctrines and practices such as “the Negro question” and the Word of Wisdom. We cannot deny the uneasiness which these strains and conflicts produce, but anxiety seems so much easier to bear when we understand the magnitude of the tensions and challenges of earlier generations. Indeed, one might make a very good case for the fact that the church has grown and prospered precisely because of the dissent and discord, the obstacles and difficulties. Just as the Book of Mormon peoples seemed closest to God when they were meeting the greatest trials, the saints of the latter-day have also felt his presence most intimately when their individual and collective problems seemed so insurmountable that they were forced to call upon him for help. For our pioneer ancestors, worship was not a running away or withdrawal from the battles of the world; neither was it an ostrich-like refusal to look problems in the face. They could not, even if they had wished, gloss over their many obstacles, physical and human, external and internal.

In his autobiographical recollections and reflections, *Little Did I Know* (New York, 1963), the great Jewish novelist and Zionist, Maurice Samuel, asserts that the “authentic Jew” is “the one who understands and is faithful to his own personal and social identity. One who, in short, accepts his

history.”¹⁸ May we not make an analogous definition of the Latter-day Saint? Are we authentic Latter-day Saints (i.e., real Mormons) unless we receive messages from our collective past? And who but the historian is prepared to relay authentic messages from the past? Our individual and collective authenticity as Latter-day Saints depends on historians telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about our past. This includes the failures as well as the achievements, the weaknesses as well as the strengths, the individual derelictions as well as the heroism and self-sacrifice.

History can give meaning and purpose to life; it can help to formulate attitudes and policies for the future. As we prepare to celebrate the sesquicentennial anniversary of the church in 1980, we must intensify our historical inquiries. My hope is that the images conveyed by our historians help us to continue the restoration of the Gospel of the Master and assist us in building the Kingdom of God on Earth.

18. See the review by Daniel Stern in *Saturday Review*, 25 Jan. 1964, 35.

The First Vision Controversy: A Critique and Reconciliation*

Marvin S. Hill

EVER SINCE FAWN BRODIE WROTE *No Man Knows My History* in 1946, emphatically denying there was any valid evidence that Joseph Smith experienced a visitation from the Father and the Son in 1820, an enormous amount of energy has been expended by both scoffers and Latter-day Saints to disprove or prove the first vision story. Until recently, both sides have agreed that the truth or untruth of Mormonism was at stake, and neither side has conceded merit to the opposing point of view.¹ It is my purpose here to review the issues and arguments, and offer a critique and a tentative interpretation based on available evidence, hopefully reconciling some of the disagreements while also giving fair consideration to the various accounts written by Joseph Smith.

Brodie argues that Joseph Smith fabricated his vision in 1838 when he began dictating his history, in order to provide a starting point for his prophetic career and to counter the charge that he was a money digger and charlatan-turned-prophet. She quotes part of the vision, noting that after a revival, at the age of fourteen, Joseph Smith said he sought divine guidance in a wooded grove:

I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me. . . . Thick darkness gathered around me. . . . at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head. . . . It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two personages, whose

*This article was first published in Vol. 15, No. 2 (Summer 1982): 31-46.

1. See Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Case Against Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Company, 1968), 89-91, for quotations from Mormon leaders on the crucial nature of the vision, as well as the negative Tanner response.

brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said—pointing to the other—“This is my beloved Son, hear him.”

I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in His sight.

Brodie observed that similar visions were commonplace in western New York in this period; that the Palmyra newspapers made no mention of Joseph’s vision although he said he was persecuted for telling it; that his mother and close relatives ignored it, or confused it with the visit of Moroni as did Oliver Cowdery in the first published history of the church; and that Joseph himself did not publish his account until 1842.²

What started as an hypothesis in a scholarly biography soon became a dogma to many of the church’s enemies. Brodie, out of the church when she revised her volume in 1971, clung tenaciously to her thesis despite much new evidence, adding a supplement to her original work to defend her position.³ She insisted that the recent new discoveries “bear out my original speculation that the first vision, if not an invention, was an evolutionary fantasy beginning in a half-remembered dream stimulated by the early revival excitement and reinforced by the rich folklore of visions circulating in his neighborhood.”⁴

In the fall of 1967, the Reverend Wesley P. Walters, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Marissa, Illinois, and vigorous opponent of Mormon proselyting,⁵ published “New Light on Mormon Origins from Palmyra (N.Y.) Revival” in support of Brodie’s position in the *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society*. He questions whether a revival of the size which Joseph describes, where “great multitudes” joined various churches in Palmyra, could have occurred in 1820. Walters says “such a revival does not pass from the scene without leaving some traces in the records and publications of the period.”⁶

Walters points out that in the first published version of the vision in 1834,⁷ Oliver Cowdery said the revival occurred in 1823, when Joseph

2. Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), 21-25.

3. See the revised edition, 1979, 21-25 and 405-25.

4. *Ibid.*, 409.

5. Walters’s anti-Mormon attitudes are reflected in an article he wrote in *Eternity* (May 1980), a magazine for “committed Christians,” in which he argues erroneously that the Mormons give the Book of Mormon no credence. Significantly, the editor at the close of the article offers free tracts to be given to the Mormon missionaries when they knock.

6. Vol. 10:228.

7. *Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate* 1 (Dec. 1834): 42 and (Feb. 1834): 78.

was seventeen years old, and that the Reverend George Lane of the Methodists “preached up” the Palmyra revival.⁸ Walters insists that Cowdery in 1834 and Joseph in 1838 had the same revival in mind, since they both agree that the revival started with the Methodists, that Baptists and Presbyterians were also involved, and that large additions were made to these denominations. In both accounts, Walters says, Joseph was confused by sectarian controversy and refrained from joining any church. In both Joseph prayed and received a vision. Walters argues that Joseph Smith could not have been confused about which group was right in 1820, been enlightened by vision that all were wrong, and then have become confused on the same point again in 1823.⁹ There was but one revival, in 1824, so that Joseph Smith was quite wrong in dating it in 1820, and wrong in much of the rest of his first vision story.

Walters notes that the prophet’s younger brother, William, agreed with Cowdery that it was Reverend Lane who stirred the Palmyra revival and states that this minister suggested the James 1:5 text, “If any of you lack wisdom,” to which Joseph initially responded. Walters further cites William Smith as saying that Reverend Stockton, a Presbyterian, was also involved in the revival but that Joseph Smith, Sr., did not like him because he affirmed at Alvin Smith’s funeral that Alvin had gone to hell. As a result, Walters concludes the revival must have occurred after Alvin’s death in 1824,¹⁰ and scorns most Mormon writers who have made use of these details without acknowledging the inconsistencies.¹¹

Walters adds that Stockton first ministered to the Palmyra congregation in October 1823, but was not installed as pastor until 18 February 1824. George Lane labored in the Susquehanna district over 150 miles from Palmyra until July of 1824 when he was assigned to Palmyra. Thus Stockton and Lane could not have worked together in Palmyra before the summer of 1824.

Walters cites an account by George Lane in the *Palmyra Wayne Sentinel* for 15 September 1824, which says the great revival began at Palmyra and soon spread abroad. He also cites a Baptist periodical that by the end of the year, more than 300 souls had joined churches in Palmyra.¹² Yet Walters says “when we turn to the year 1820. . .the ‘great multitudes’ are conspicuously missing.” The Presbyterians had no awakening in 1820, as James Hotchkiss makes clear, and the Baptist records show no significant increase in membership. The Methodist figures for

8. Walters, “New Light,” 228.

9. *Ibid.*, 229.

10. *Ibid.*, 230.

11. *Ibid.*, 229-30.

12. *Ibid.*, 231, 233.

the entire circuit show net losses of twenty-three for 1819 and six for 1820. In addition, the religious press makes no mention of any revival in 1820, although it does so for 1817 and 1824.¹³ Thus Joseph's recollections of great multitudes joining the churches seem accurate only if the date is 1824, not 1820.

Walters maintains such evidence leaves the Mormon believer in a quandary. Some Mormons, he says, will try to imagine that a great revival did occur in 1820, but he doubts there is sufficient factual confirmation. A better line of argument, Walters says, would be to maintain that Joseph was wrong about the date. Such arguments, however, would force Mormon apologists to place the vision in the spring of 1825, at which time Smith would have been nineteen years old, not an innocent young boy, and his vision would have occurred after the supposed visit of Moroni in September 1823.¹⁴

Walters next compares the version of the first vision written by Joseph Smith in 1832 with that written in 1838, and notes that the former makes Joseph sixteen instead of fourteen years old, records the appearance of one divine personage, not two (the single personage being Jesus Christ), and has Joseph seeking the plates to "obtain riches." This version makes no mention of a revival.¹⁵

These discrepancies, Walters concludes, discredit the 1838 account and undermine Joseph's credibility. A more plausible interpretation, he argues, would be that suggested by Obediah Dogberry and E. D. Howe, in the earliest form of the story. In this account, Joseph discovered the plates by means of a seer stone, and a spirit came to inform him where they were located. Only later did the story take on a religious tone, with the coming of an angel, and then a visitation of Jesus Christ as the story became more elaborate.¹⁶ Thus Walters takes a position similar to Brodie's, seeing fraud and deception at the root of early Mormonism, as Joseph Smith moved from money digger to prophet.

Two additional heirs of Brodie are Jerald and Sandra Tanner, whose 1968 *Case Against Mormonism* has a chapter on the first vision. Like Brodie, the Tanners are renunciants of the church. Their disillusionment was considerably influenced by *No Man Knows My History*, which is maintained as the standard against which the church's position on Joseph Smith is measured. Less professional and less historically oriented than Brodie or Walters, the Tanners have been mostly concerned with discrediting church leaders who have written on the first vision,

13. *Ibid.*, 234-36.

14. *Ibid.*, 236-38.

15. *Ibid.*, 238.

16. *Ibid.*, 239-40.

often making use of the latest arguments by active Mormons published in scholarly works. In their 1968 treatment, the Tanners quote the 1838 version of the vision, and then cite various LDS leaders on the importance of the vision for the Mormon believer. James B. Allen is quoted as saying that the first vision is a fundamental belief to which all loyal Mormons must adhere, George Q. Cannon that there can be no true faith without a true knowledge of God as set forth in the vision, and Bruce R. McConkie that the visitation in the grove was the most important historical event since the end of Christ's ministry, for by this means the "creeds of Apostate Christendom were smashed." Apostle John A. Widtsoe is quoted that upon the reality of the vision "rests the truth and value" of Joseph Smith's subsequent work, and David O. McKay that the first vision is the "foundation of the faith."¹⁷

The Tanners have had a running debate with Mormon apologists, attempting to demonstrate factual discrepancies in the pro-Joseph interpretations. They dispute Hugh Nibley's contention that Joseph considered his vision sacred and thus did not mention it often, citing Joseph's own remark that his telling of the story in 1820 led to a relentless persecution by sectarian leaders.¹⁸ They argue that one of the most damaging evidences against Joseph's 1820 account is the fact that section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants indicates no man can see God and live without possessing priesthood authority and ordinances. Joseph, they say, violated his own principle by claiming a vision of the Lord before he received the priesthood.¹⁹

The Tanners picked up on Brodie's argument that the first vision story was not published until 1842. Also, they note that by James Allen's own account, if Joseph told the story in the 1820s, he had ceased to do so by the 1830s, since there is no evidence that the story was being circulated at that time. True, they admit, Alexander Neibaur retells the story in his journal, but this was not until 1844, after the vision had been reported in the *Times and Seasons*. Pomeroy Tucker referred to the vision in 1867, but had an angel coming to Joseph in 1823 to say all the churches were wrong.²⁰

Oliver Cowdery's version of the vision seems to the Tanners to confirm their interpretation. Cowdery stated he would provide a full and correct history of the rise of the church, then tells his readers that Joseph Smith had offered to assist him. However, Cowdery affirmed that the vision came in 1823 with but one personage, who delivered the message

17. Tanner and Tanner, *Case*, 89-91.

18. *Ibid.*, 92.

19. *Ibid.*, 93.

20. *Ibid.*, 93-95.

that Joseph's sins were forgiven and then told him a history had been deposited in a place nearby. The Tanners note the many contradictions between this and the 1838 story, declaring that "certainly this history refutes the story that the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith in 1820."²¹

The Tanners base much of their theorizing about the writing of Mormon history on a conspiratorial theme. When they learned of the existence of yet another version of the first vision in Joseph Smith's letter book, the main question they asked was, "Why wasn't this made known earlier?" They quote Levi Edgar Young, a Mormon general authority who said he had seen a "strange account of the first vision" in 1958 but was told to say nothing about what it contained. (They do not indicate who advised him to say nothing.) The Tanners assume this was probably the 1832 version, declaring that "a careful reading of this document reveals why the Church leaders have never published or referred to it." They point out that in this version Joseph had already decided the existing churches were untrue before he went into the woods to pray, which contradicted his statement in 1838 that "it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong." In 1832 Joseph's age is given as sixteen, not fourteen, and only Jesus Christ visited him, rather than appearing with the Father. The Tanners conclude that "the only reasonable explanation for the Father not being mentioned is that Joseph Smith did not see God the Father and that he made up this part of the story after he wrote the first manuscript."²²

In their tract, the Tanners also consider an 1835 version of the vision which again fails to mention any revival and has one personage appearing followed by another, contrary to the 1838 account which has them appearing simultaneously. Thus, the Tanners remark, "if this is not bad enough, Joseph also states that there were 'many angels.'" They conclude: "Now we have three different accounts of the First Vision, AND EVERY ONE OF THEM IS DIFFERENT. . . . We would, of course, expect some variations in any story, but we feel that there are so many variations. . . . that they make it impossible to believe."²³

The Tanners borrow from Brodie yet again to maintain that others had visions similar to Joseph's. They affirm somewhat credulously that Joseph Smith was influenced by Charles G. Finney, failing to notice that Finney's autobiography was not published until the 1870s and there is no evidence whatsoever that the story of Finney's vision ever reached Joseph Smith. They say Asa Wild and Stephen Bradley were two who had visions like Joseph's.²⁴

21. *Ibid.*, 96-98.

22. *Ibid.*, 98-106.

23. *Ibid.*, 106-7.

24. *Ibid.*, 108-9. Their conclusion that Finney influenced Joseph Smith comes from

Tenacious in their efforts to disembowel Mormonism, the Tanners give Walters's article full consideration.²⁵ They also strike back at Hugh Nibley, who in 1961 accused Mormon critics of garbling the first vision account. The Tanners argue that Joseph himself did not always get the story straight, nor did Orson Pratt in 1840, nor George A. Smith, Andrew Jensen, and others.²⁶

The Tanners charge that Joseph Smith changed his doctrine concerning the Godhead, and they see this as evidence of deceit. They cite Ether 3:14 and Mosiah 15:1, 5 as evidence that Joseph Smith was initially a trinitarian, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were physically one. They also cite the "Lectures on Faith" to show Joseph's teachings that the Father was a personage of spirit. They comment cynically, "Can anyone honestly look at these three different accounts of the First Vision and not admit that Mrs. Brodie was right" in claiming that Joseph Smith was a "mythmaker of prodigious talent."²⁷

When Mormon scholars responded to the challenges made to the first vision story, it was Walters's revival thesis which largely concerned them. In 1969 *BYU Studies* ran an entire issue on the first vision controversy, including a piece by Dean Jessee which contained authenticated accounts of the 1832, 1835, and 1838 versions of the vision taken from manuscript sources in the Church Archives.²⁸ Also in this issue, Milton Backman of the BYU Religion Department challenged Walters on the basis of 1820 church records, newspaper reports, and historical accounts to argue there was some revival activity in Joseph's immediate neighborhood that year, and a great deal more in the "region" and "district of country" where Joseph Smith said the "multitudes" joined the churches. Backman argues there were camp meetings held by the Methodists in 1819-20 at Phelps, a few miles from Palmyra, where five joined the Freewill Baptists, and that here Joseph himself caught a spark of Methodism and became temporarily converted. Backman stresses that while Joseph said the excitement began in his town, the vast numbers of converts came from outside it. He also says that within a radius of twenty-five miles, there were revivals at several towns, and that all of western New York ("the district of country" as Joseph called it) was

Gilbert Seldes, *The Stammering Century*, but seems absurd to me. A much more sensible approach is seen in Neal E. Lambert and Richard H. Cracroft, "Literary Form and Historical Understanding Joseph Smith's First Vision," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 31-42.

25. *Ibid.*, 110-15.

26. *Ibid.*, 116-19. They referred to Nibley's "Censoring the Joseph Smith Story," *Improvement Era* 64 (Oct., Nov. 1961): 490-92, 522, 524, 526, 528.

27. *Ibid.*, 128-29.

28. Dean C. Jessee, "The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision," *BYU Studies* 9 (Spring 1969): 275-94.

caught up in the revival. Backman claims there were 1,513 converts in the Presbyterian churches in the "burned-over district" in 1819, with comparable gains among the Baptists. He adds that the Smiths could have read in the *Palmyra Register* of the revivals sweeping through eastern New York and Joseph could have been thinking of these when he wrote his history.²⁹

In that same year, 1969, *Dialogue* ran a roundtable discussion on the first vision, printing an early version of Walters's article with a critique by Richard Bushman and a new response by Walters.³⁰ Walters takes exception to Backman's thesis that "district of country" meant a statewide revival, arguing that Joseph would not have considered statewide revivals significant for they were occurring regularly in New York; Joseph's point was that an unusual excitement was going on right in "the place where we lived." Walters also questions whether there was a large enough revival at Vienna (Phelps) to meet the requirements, since Methodist Abner Chase speaks of a spiritual decline at the time of the 1819 conference. Walters hypothesizes that the revival on the Vienna road took place not fifteen miles from Palmyra in the town of Vienna, but at the campground on the Vienna road just outside Palmyra. He questions whether those at this camp meeting or the converts to the Presbyterian and Baptist faith at Phelps added up to "great multitudes." He affirms that Joseph's error in dating and other details "is far deeper than a mere lapse of memory. . . . [I]t enters into the very fabric of the story itself."³¹

In his response Bushman repeats many of Backman's points and maintains it is folly to try to explain every change in the vision accounts as the result of Joseph's calculated efforts to fabricate a convincing story. Bushman questions Walters's point that Lane could only have been there in 1824, saying this depends on Cowdery's account, which may be wrong. Bushman notes that Cowdery placed the revival in 1823, two years sooner than Walters's explanation would allow. Thus, how can Mormon apologists or Walters accept Cowdery's narrative uncritically?³²

Borrowing from a point made by Larry Porter, Bushman affirms that George Lane could have been heard by Joseph in 1819 when he passed

29. Milton V. Backman, Jr., "Awakenings in the Burned-over District: New Light on the Historical Setting of the First Vision," *BYU Studies* 9 (Spring 1969): 301-302, but esp. 306-309, 311, 313, 317-18.

30. "The Question of the Palmyra Revival," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 4, No. 1 (Spring 1969): 59-100.

31. *Ibid.*, 68-70.

32. *Ibid.*, 83, 85-86.

near Palmyra, but warns again that the Lane story was told by Cowdery, not Joseph. Bushman says that Cowdery was in Missouri when he started his 1834 history and, after moving to Ohio, lived in Norton, too far from Kirtland to have worked very closely with Joseph Smith when he wrote his account.³³

Furthermore, Bushman says that when it comes down to it, Walters's argument is subjective: It rests on the judgment of how far is far and how big is big. How close do towns have to be to come within the "region of country" Joseph described? How many converts have to be made for a fourteen-year-old to call it "multitudes"? When Walters describes his 1824 revival, he includes towns like Williamson, Ontario, Manchester, Sulphur Springs, Vienna, Lyons, and Macedon as nearby, and Mendon, Geneva, Gorham, and Clys, another four, as somewhat farther away. For 1820 Backman and Walters agree that Farmington, Penfield, Rochester, Lima, West Bloomfield, Junius, and Oaks Corners were within a twenty-five-mile radius and thus within the "region of country."³⁴ Since the Lyons circuit of the Methodist church alone saw an increase of 280 in 1820, even by Walters's standards the 1819-20 season of revivals was not so dull as Walters said.³⁵

Bushman reemphasizes what for the Mormon position is a critical point: that Joseph only said of the "place where he lived" that there was "an unusual excitement on the subject of religion," while he said the "multitudes" who joined the churches came within the "whole region of the country." Bushman argues that seven revivals within a twenty-five-mile area are sufficient. Further, the Smiths probably covered considerable territory when they sold their cakes and beer at various social gatherings, and were thus familiar with a much larger area than Palmyra or Manchester.³⁶

Walters, reacting to Bushman, argues (correctly, I believe) that Cowdery's history cannot be so easily dismissed since Joseph's own history informs us that he and Oliver Cowdery were together on several occasions in the latter part of 1834, and thus it was quite possible for Joseph to fulfill his pledge to help Oliver with his 1834 narrative.³⁷ The 1832 account places Joseph's vision at age sixteen, which is closer to Cowdery's age of seventeen than the fourteenth year which appears in the 1838 ac-

33. *Ibid.*, 86.

34. *Ibid.*, 86-87.

35. *Ibid.*, 87, 89.

36. *Ibid.*, 87-88.

37. *Ibid.*, 86, 95; and see Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1971), 2:168-69, 174, 176.

count. Walters questions whether, in a day when canal boats carried passengers four miles a day, it is realistic to consider towns ten, fifteen, and in some cases twenty-five miles away as “the place where we lived,”³⁸ but misses the point made by Bushman, that Joseph said only that a religious excitement occurred in Palmyra and that large conversions came in the “region of country.” Yet Walters insists that Joseph was talking about his home town, and that the excitement was near enough to Joseph’s home that there was pressure on the family to join the local Presbyterian church. It was also close enough for Joseph to observe that “a scene of great confusion and bad feeling ensued” and that converts filed off, “some to one party and some to another.” Walters thinks these details show that Joseph was talking about a place he knew very intimately, which could only be Palmyra.³⁹

In 1972, in their enlarged edition of *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality*, the Tanners make use of a discovery by Wesley Walters that the Session Records of the Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra show Lucy Smith and some children as active members of the Presbyterian Church until 1828, eight years after Joseph was supposedly told that all the churches were wrong. The Tanners question whether Lucy and her children took Joseph’s claim of a vision seriously.⁴⁰

The Tanners also make use of another discovery by Walters, that the *Amboy Journal* for 30 April 1879 and 11 June 1879 presented the testimony of Joshua McKune, a minister, and Michael Morse, a brother-in-law to Joseph Smith, that Joseph himself sought membership in the Methodist church at Harmony, Pennsylvania, in 1828. The Tanners believe this destroys any credence one can give to Joseph’s statement that the Lord told him not to join any church.⁴¹

In 1980 Walters and the Tanners further elaborated on their arguments. Walters calls Backman’s study “a mere screen to confuse the average reader,” and states that, in citing Blakeslee regarding a “flaming spiritual advance” in 1820, Backman misread the date, for Blakeslee meant the denomination’s calendar year, or 1821. In writing of a “religious cyclone” in the Lyons Circuit, Blakeslee was three years too early, as Reverend Chase indicates there was no revival there until 1824.

To reinforce his view that when Joseph said the “place where I lived” he meant Palmyra, Walters cites Joseph’s statement in the *New York Spectator* that the reformation took place “among the different denominations

38. *Ibid.*, 95-96.

39. *Ibid.*, 97.

40. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality* (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Company, 1972), p. 161.

41. *Ibid.*, 162.

in the neighborhood where I lived," and Lucy Mack Smith that the "whole neighborhood. . .flocked to the meeting house" during the revival.⁴² Furthermore, Walters says that in the *History of the Church*, 5:356, Joseph speaks of the Mormon settlements at Nauvoo as in a "region of country," an area which did not have a radius of more than twenty miles.⁴³ Walters says that Joseph would not be taking hikes of thirty miles to learn what was happening in other villages. On this, Walters perhaps misunderstood Peter Crawley's point in a *Dialogue* article where he argued that David Marks in Junius did exactly this in 1821, walking twenty-five and thirty miles at a time to attend revivals without considering it unusual, implying that Joseph Smith could also have walked that far at times.⁴⁴

Walters finds confirmation of his view that the revival in question occurred in 1824 in the manuscript of Lucy Mack Smith's history. Her original narrative reported that the revival at which she became a Presbyterian was after Alvin's death, which occurred in November 1823. Walters then concludes that recent validation of Joseph's 1838 account is wishful thinking by Mormon historians, saying Dale Morgan was right when he said there is little reality in Joseph Smith's early history.⁴⁵

After weighing the arguments in this long and sustained controversy, where does one fall with respect to the Walters-Tanner, Backman-Bushman-Crawley debate? Three nationally known scholars who have mentioned the first vision recently do not wholly agree with either side. Jan Shippo, a non-Mormon, admits with Walters that the events described by Joseph better fit the 1824 revival, but she adds that the confused chronology in the official history is no reason to doubt that Joseph had an early vision which led him to stay away from organized religion. Lawrence Foster, also a non-Mormon, states flatly that "at least as early as 1823, young Joseph began experiencing a series of visions, or what

42. Wesley P. Walters, "Joseph Smith's First Vision Story Revisited," *Journal of Pastoral Practice* 4 (1980): 95, 99, 103, 105.

43. *Ibid.*, 96. In Doctrine and Covenants 58:52, the Lord tells the Saints to "purchase the whole region of country as soon as time will permit." While the Mormons probably bought no large amount of land in western Missouri in 1833, there is no reason to think they had a small area in mind ultimately. Max Parkin has prepared a map showing that at the end of the year the Saints had already bought land over on the western border, some ten miles out of Independence.

44. *Ibid.*, 96. See Peter Crawley, "A Comment on Joseph Smith's Account of His First Vision and the 1820 Revival," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 6 (Spring 1971): 106-107.

45. *Ibid.*, 98-99. Lucy Mack Smith's original manuscript, written by Howard Coray, is in the Church Archives in Salt Lake City. Its pages are unnumbered, but the crucial comments by Lucy come toward the middle of the lengthy manuscript.

might be described as waking dreams of unusual force and vigor, which totally reoriented his life." Klaus Hansen, a Mormon writing for a non-Mormon audience, says that "because of their fragmentary nature, these accounts do not support firm conclusions for either side," but holds that Mormon scholars "have raised valid objections" to the contention that there is conclusive evidence against such a revival.⁴⁶

I believe both sides have overlooked some important points. A plausible argument can be made for the basic church chronology despite contradictions between some sources, provided we recognize that some inaccuracies occur in the 1838 account. It seems to me that everybody has approached the issue from the wrong end, by starting with the 1838 official version, when the account which should be under consideration is that of 1832. Merely on the face of it, the 1832 version stands a better chance of being more accurate and unembellished than does the 1838 account, which was intended as a public statement, streamlined for publication. When Joseph dictated his 1838 version (if he did, in fact, actually dictate it), he was aware of what had been previously published by Oliver Cowdery, and aware of his stature as the prophet of a new and important religious movement. It would be natural for him to smooth out the story, making it more logical and compelling than perhaps it first seemed in 1820.

In the Walters-Backman "war of words," Walters has scored some important points, although not nearly so many as he professes. I am inclined to agree that the religious turmoil described by Joseph which led to some family members joining the Presbyterians and to much sectarian bitterness does not fit well into the 1820 context detailed by Backman. For one thing, it seems unlikely there could have been heavy sectarian strife in 1820 and then a joint revival where all was harmony in 1824. In addition, as Walters notes, Lucy Mack Smith said the revival where she became interested in a particular sect came after Alvin's death, thus almost certainly in early 1824.

Indicating the angel had told Joseph of the plates prior to the revival, Lucy added that for a long time after Alvin's death the family could not bear any talk about the golden plates, for the subject had been of great interest to him, and any reference to the plates stirred sorrowful memories. She said she attended the revival with hope of gaining solace for Alvin's loss. Such detail gives validity to Lucy's chronology. She would not have been likely to make up such a reaction for herself or the family,

46. Jan Shipp, "The Prophet Puzzle: Suggestions Leading toward a More Comprehensive Interpretation of Joseph Smith," *Journal of Mormon History* 1 (1974): 3-20; Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 129; Klaus Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 23.

nor mistake the time when it happened.⁴⁷ I am persuaded Lucy joined the Presbyterians in 1824.⁴⁸

Lucy's testimony is the most compelling part of Walters's argument, but Walters has not proved his point about the neighborhood revival beyond doubt since, as Bushman makes clear, Joseph never said that multitudes joined in Palmyra itself. However, Walters correctly counters Bushman on Oliver Cowdery. Joseph and Oliver were together frequently in the latter part of 1834, so that something of the 1834 narrative probably came from him, although we do not know how much.

Cowdery had a lot of things right: that the revival in question came no earlier than 1823, that Lane was there, and that Moroni came afterward.⁴⁹ Larry Porter's argument, that everything occurred when George Lane passed through in July 1819,⁵⁰ does not fit Joseph's account that he attended the revival meetings "as often as occasion would permit." The revival Joseph described was a protracted one covering several days, not a one-night stand.

Walters maintains that an 1824 revival destroys the credibility of Joseph Smith's whole story, since the revival occurred after Moroni's visit. Here Walters's scholarly objectivity gives way to anti-Mormon zeal. An 1824 revival creates problems for the 1838 account, not that of 1832. Walters overlooks the fact that Joseph said nothing in his 1832 account about a revival prompting his prayer. According to this version,

At about the age of twelve years my mind became seriously imprest with regard to the all important concerns for the welfare of my immortal Soul

47. She does confuse Joseph's first vision and Moroni's visit, but in light of Lambert and Cracroft's analysis of the 1832 version, the vision does not seem to have been as significant in starting the church as the 1838 account made it seem. In Lucy's mind, Moroni's telling of the plates seemed more important.

48. Although Lucy does not specifically name which church she considered joining after Alvin's death, there can be no doubt she refers to the Presbyterian church of Palmyra. She says Joseph told her she would not remain in the church for long, for she would learn of its wickedness. Joseph warned her that "deacon Jessup" was a man who "would not hesitate to take the last cow from the widow and orphans." Jessup was a deacon in the church at Palmyra. Since we know Lucy did join the Presbyterians and remained active in that church until 1828, and a member of record until 1830, her joining must have come after Alvin's death, as she records. She would not join in 1820 and then reconsider joining in 1824. Lucy and her family's withdrawal in 1828 from the Presbyterians is reproduced in Milton V. Backman, Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1981), 182-83. Some additional support for my general view comes from William Smith, who indicated in his notes on *Chambers* in the Church Archives that Lucy and family "belonged to the Presbyterian Church, of whom the Rev. M. Stockton was the presiding pastor." This would suggest Lucy first joined after Stockton had come to Palmyra in 1824.

49. *Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate* 1 (Dec. 1834) and (Feb. 1834): 42, 78-79.

50. Larry C. Porter, "Reverend George Lane—Good 'Gifts,' Much 'Grace,' and 'Marked Usefulness,'" *BYU Studies* 9 (Spring 1969): 135.

which led me to Search the Scriptures believing as I was taught, that they contained the word of God thus applying myself to them and my intimate acquaintance with those of different denominations led me to marvel exceedingly for I discovered that instead of adorning their profession by a holy walk and Godly conversation agreeable to what I found contained in that Sacred depository this was a grief to my Soul thus from the age of twelve years to fifteen I pondered many things in my heart concerning the situation of the world of mankind the contentions and divisions the wickedness and abominations. . . my mind became exceedingly distressed for I became convicted of my Sins and by Searching the Scriptures I found that mankind did not come unto the Lord but they had apostatised from the true and liveing faith and there was no society or denomination built upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ . . . and when I considered all these things. . . I cried unto the Lord for mercy for there was none else to whom I could go. . . the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness and while in the attitude of calling upon the Lord in the 16th year of my age a pillar of light above the brightness of the Sun at noon day came down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the Spirit of God and the Lord opened the heaven upon me and I saw the Lord and he Spake unto me Saying Joseph my Son thy Sins are forgiven thee, go thy way walk in my Statutes and keep my commandments behold I am the Lord of glory I was crucified for the world. . . the world lieth in sin at this time and none doeth good no not one they have turned asside from the Gospel and keep not my commandments they draw near to me with their lips while hearts are far from me.

Not only does this account ignore the revival, so too does the 1835 account, in which Joseph merely reports he was "wrought up in my mind respecting the subject of Religion and looking at the different systems taught the children of men, I knew not who was right or who was wrong. . . Being thus perplexed in mind I retired to the silent grove."⁵¹

Neither did Lucy Mack Smith mention a revival when she described Joseph's first vision, where an angel told him that the churches were "man made" and also told him about the plates.⁵² This vision occurred during the third year after their move to Manchester, Lucy said, which would have been 1820, since they left Palmyra for Manchester in 1818.⁵³ Not only has Walters conveniently ignored this statement by Lucy, he fails to perceive that the absence of a revival in these sources makes his entire argument based on the dating of the revival dubious.

To be sure, Joseph mentioned the revival in 1838, but Walters gives

51. Dean Jessee reproduces the 1835 account told by Joseph Smith to his scribe, Warren Parrish, in "How Lovely Was The Morning," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 6 (Spring 1971): 85-88.

52. Lucy Mack Smith Mss., Church Archives.

53. Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise and Progress of Mormonism* (New York, 1867), 12, says the Smiths moved to Manchester in 1818.

that account no credence. In Joseph's statement to the editor of the *Pittsburgh Gazette* in 1843, he merely said there was a "reformation" in the "neighborhood where I lived," but said nothing about large numbers being involved. In the 1844 Neibaur account, a revival is mentioned where Lucy "got religion," but this was written after the 1838 version had been published, and no mention is made of large multitudes being converted.⁵⁴ Oliver Cowdery stressed the magnitude of the revival, but was obviously thinking of 1824, Lucy's conversion, and the coming of Moroni. William Smith also talked about revivals, but he spoke of several between 1822 and 1823, and said Joseph's interest in religion came after the "excitement had subsided";⁵⁵ thus these revivals were not an integral part of Joseph's story. Orson Pratt, in his version published in 1840, said nothing at all about a revival.⁵⁶

The Walters-Tanner argument that Lucy's joining the Presbyterians and Joseph's joining the Methodists destroyed Joseph's credibility fails to consider that, unlike 1838, the 1832 version said nothing about Joseph's being forbidden to join a church. Joseph did indicate here that he himself had decided after studying the Bible "there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ" and the Lord told him that "none doeth good. . . they have turned aside from the Gospel," but he is not told by divine command to join no church. Thus, there is no great inconsistency, as Walters and the Tanners imagine, when Lucy Smith joined the Presbyterians or when Joseph sought to be a Methodist in 1828. He was fairly convinced that all were wrong, but perhaps he responded to the urgings of his wife, Emma, who had very close ties with the Methodists in Harmony, Pennsylvania.⁵⁷

I am not certain at what point Joseph began to see himself as the leader of a new religious movement, but it may have been later than most Mormons realize. As late as 1829, he received a revelation telling him to pretend to no other gift than that of translation⁵⁸ as though even this late he had not really assumed the mantle of prophet.

At any rate, if Joseph Smith in 1838 read back into 1820 some details

54. See the *Pittsburgh Spectator* account, and that by Neibaur in Backman, "Awakenings," 176-77.

55. "William Smith on Mormonism" (1883) is conveniently reproduced in Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America*, 2 vols. (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing Company, 1951), 2:414-17.

56. Orson Pratt's version may be found in Milton V. Backman, Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision*, 170-72.

57. See Dean Jessee, "Early Accounts of the First Vision," 278-80; and Larry C. Porter's "Reverend George Lane," 331-32, for Emma Smith's close connections to Methodist leaders at Harmony.

58. *Book of Commandments for the Government of the Church of Christ* (Zion, 1833), 10.

of a revival which occurred in 1824, there is no reason to conclude that he invented his religious experiences. Both 1820 and 1824 were traumatic times in his life; the former because, as a teenager responding to the great pressure that ministers and revivalists put on the youth of that day, he was very much concerned about his soul's salvation, and also because he found himself in 1824 in the middle between his father, who said he was angry at the Presbyterians and would join no church, and his mother, who made the decision to join the Presbyterians and took Hyrum, Samuel, and Sophronia with her. Thus, Joseph found himself in 1824 wanting to "feel and shout like the rest,"⁵⁹ but he could not make a commitment without displeasing his father.⁶⁰ If he had been stirred by some local revivals earlier, between the ages of twelve and fifteen, then it was not so hard to confuse some of the details. Revivals had been a key factor in his religious experience.

Giving priority to the 1832 account also clarifies why Oliver Cowdery got his story tangled. He began telling of Joseph's 1820 vision,⁶¹ perhaps along the lines of the 1832 version, with one personage involved. However, Joseph must have said something to him in December after he published the story of George Lane and the revival to the effect that the Lane revival was not until 1823. Rather than admitting that his details about the revival were wrong, Oliver decided to jump ahead and tell of Moroni's coming.⁶² I suspect it was this narrative by Cowdery which influenced William Smith and others to confuse the 1820 vision with the coming of Moroni. What is significant is that there was no such confusion in Joseph's 1832 account, for the visit of Christ and the coming of Moroni afterward are two distinct events.

Another point deserves comment here. If initially Joseph said one personage came to him in 1820, it became easier for Oliver Cowdery to confuse this visit with the coming of Moroni than it would have been a few years later when Joseph taught emphatically that there were three separate personages in the Godhead.

The Tanners make much of the argument that Joseph Smith changed his view of the Godhead. A good deal of evidence shows that his understanding grew on many points of theology, including his view of man and his potential, his view of salvation, of what it consists and how it is

59. As recalled by Joseph Smith in his retelling to Alexander Neibaur. See Backman, *Joseph Smith's First Vision*, 177.

60. I commented on this in "A Note on Joseph Smith's first Vision and Its Import in the Shaping of Early Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 12 (Spring 1979): 90-99.

61. *Latter Day Saint Messenger and Advocate* 1 (1834): 42.

62. *Ibid.*, 78-79.

obtained.⁶³ If, as the Tanners argue, Joseph grew in his understanding of the nature of the Godhead, this does not provide evidence of his disingenuousness. I do not agree with the Tanners that the 1835 narrative provides no evidence for Joseph's belief in two separate personages.⁶⁴ It is true, as they note, that the two persons are not named, yet it seems unlikely that Joseph would distinguish between them and the "many angels" he said he saw unless he thought the two were other than angels. The 1835 version with its two personages stands at odds with the statement in the "Lectures on Faith" that God is a spirit.⁶⁵ This problem requires explanation.

It seems to me that if Latter-day Saints can accept the idea that Joseph gained his full understanding of the nature of God only after a period of time, instead of its emerging fullblown in 1820, then most of the difficulties with chronology can be resolved. Some Latter-day Saints seem to have recently come to terms with their history on this point. Two excellent examples are the studies of James B. Allen, as well as that of Neal Lambert and Richard Cracroft.⁶⁶ These Mormons examined the evidence first, then drew their conclusions.

63. Best evidence for this is a contrast between certain passages in the Book of Mormon which bear on theology and some revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, as well as the King Follett discourse. In the Book of Mormon, man is a free agent but corrupt and inclined to sin and self-destruction. There is no suggestion of his potential godhood. Salvation in the Book of Mormon comes by cultivation of the seed of faith (grace) planted by the Lord, and by repentance and baptism, and the gifts of the spirit. There is nothing about a graded salvation, or the implication that punishment might not be eternal. There is nothing about man's potential exaltation coming through temple ordinances. Appropriate passages in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon are found on pp. 38, 63-65, 81, 85, 118-20, 188-89, 233, 315, 338. Compare D&C 19:6, where torment and punishment may not be without end, and section 76, where the degrees of glory are clarified. In section 132:4, the Saints are told they must accept the new and everlasting covenant of marriage or be damned, "for no one can reject this covenant of marriage to enter into my glory." In the King Follett discourse, Joseph Smith told the Saints that to become heirs of God and Christ meant they would "arrive at the station of a god, and ascend the throne of eternal power, the same as those who have gone before." See *History of the Church*, 4:306. For an excellent treatment of some aspects of this early evolution in doctrine, see Thomas G. Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology," *Sunstone* 5 (July-Aug. 1980): 24-46; see also James B. Allen, "The Emergence of a Fundamental; The Expanding Role of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Thought," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 47-48.

64. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism* (Chicago: The Moody Press, 1980), 156.

65. The statement that God is a spirit appears in the "Fifth Lecture on Faith," *Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate* 1 (May 1835): 122.

66. Allen, "The Significance of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Thought," 24-45, "Emergence of a Fundamental," 43-62, and Lambert and Cracroft, "Literary Form."

What is disturbing about the work of Reverend Walters and the Tanners is that they seem at times to reverse this process. They begin their look at Joseph Smith by accepting fully Fawn Brodie's basic arguments, and never alter their position regardless of the evidence. The rigid framework within which they perceive their subject, the invariably negative conclusions they reach, the frequent resort to dogmatic declarations, and the finality they assume for their work suggest they have something more at stake than do most historians.

To some extent, Reverend Walters, and, to a considerable extent, the Tanners, suffer from what Sidney E. Mead called an anti-historical bias. They allow for no development in Joseph Smith's thought, holding up a very absolutistic model to which he is supposed to conform. They always assume that the worst motives influenced the Mormon prophet. They begin with Brodie's absurd notion that unless Joseph Smith told about his vision sufficiently that the newspapers picked it up, and unless all the details are exactly alike, Joseph made the story up. It makes no difference to them that the story does appear in the first history which Joseph wrote in 1832, and that it appears in some form in all the accounts with which he had anything to do.

The sort of rationalistic demands they make of Joseph Smith would similarly play havoc with any belief in the resurrection of Christ. Nothing was written about this event for thirty years after, and then only by Jesus's most loyal followers. In telling the story of the resurrection, the gospel writers hardly agree on details as to who saw Jesus first, when and where, under what circumstance, and who else saw him, and in what sequence. To be sure, as Hans Kung says, this is a religious literature, early Christians were not scientists, and we cannot expect the kind of precision that would come in a scientific paper.⁶⁷

A tolerant viewpoint is required in handling any religious sources. Sectarians like Walters and the Tanners will allow for it in their own religious preference, but will not extend the same courtesy to the Mormons. Walters accepts the gold digging stories told by Obediah Dogberry in the *Palmyra Reflector* quite uncritically, as he does the testimonies of E. D. Howe.⁶⁸ These stories have been examined with care by Hugh Nibley and Richard Anderson,⁶⁹ who have demonstrated major inconsistencies and an extreme one-sidedness. Why should one give unqualified

67. Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian* (New York: Pocket Books, 1978), 346. Kung details many of the contradictions in the gospel accounts, 346-47.

68. Walters, "New Light on Mormon Origins," 239.

69. See "Digging in the Dark," in Nibley, *The Mythmakers* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1961), 91-190, and Richard L. Anderson, "Joseph Smith's New York Reputation Reappraised," *BYU Studies* 10 (Spring 1970): 238-314.

credence to Dogberry, who so often resorts to hyperbole and who had a run-in with Joseph Smith regarding his publishing part of the Book of Mormon without permission? Dogberry was obviously contemptuous, and this biased what he wrote. Why accept E. D. Howe when Hurlbut went to Palmyra deliberately to get something on the Mormons? Walters's scholarship is one of sectarian advantage, not objectivity.

The sources employed by Walters and the Tanners, the conclusions they reach, the places where they publish, and their strong anti-Mormon missionary activities suggest they have other than scholarly concerns.

All the sources I have considered agree that Joseph had an early vision between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. Even Oliver Cowdery said this at first. All agree that Joseph was troubled about religion and that he sought the Lord in prayer. As James Allen shows,⁷⁰ Joseph never cited his vision with respect to the nature of the Godhead; this use of the vision came long afterward. For Joseph, it meant something else. He was in quest of finding God in his life, to gain a forgiveness of sins, to know the Lord's will concerning him. All accounts agree that the vision started him on the road to becoming a prophet. The 1838 account of Joseph's negative reaction to a multitude of religious sects is critical for understanding Mormon authoritarian institutions. It seems to me that more can be explained historically by including rather than excluding the first vision. For those who begin with an historical inquiry in mind—what happened, why, what the consequences were—this seems to be the starting place. For those who have other objectives, this may not be sufficient.

70. Allen, "Emergence of a Fundamental," 51-52.

A Tentative Approach to the Book of Abraham*

Richard P. Howard

DURING THE 1830s, JOHN WHITMER WROTE, in connection with the ancient Egyptian records purchased by the church in July 1835 from Michael H. Chandler,

. . . Joseph the Seer saw these records and by the revelation of Jesus Christ could translate these records which gave an account of our forefathers. Much of which was written by Joseph of Egypt who was sold by his brethren. Which when all translated will be a pleasing history and of great value to the Saints.¹

Oliver Cowdery described the papyri as “the Egyptian records, or rather the writings of Abraham and Joseph. . . .” He further observed:

The evidence is apparent upon the face, that they were written by persons acquainted with the history of the creation, the fall of man, and more or less of the correct ideas of notions of the Deity. The representations of the god-head—three, yet in one, is curiously drawn to give simply, though impressively, the writers views of that exalted personage. . . . The inner end of the same roll, (Joseph’s record,) presents a representation of the judgment: At

*This article, together with several others reflecting on the then recent discovery of the missing “Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri” (“source of the Book of Abraham”), first appeared in Vol. 3, No. 2 (Summer 1968): 88. Two years later, Howard published a more definitive essay on the Book of Abraham, entitled “The Book of Abraham in the Light of History and Egyptology” in *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought, and Action* (April 1970). This article was revised and expanded twice: “Joseph Smith, The Book of Abraham, and the Reorganized Church of the 1970s” (in *Saints Herald* 117, no. 10 [October 1970]: 28-31, no. 11 [November 1970]: 20-21, no. 12 [December 1970]: 24-26); and “The Book of Abraham” (in Richard Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A study of Their Textual Development*, 2nd. ed. [Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1995], 192-205).

1. John Whitmer, “The Book of John Whitmer Kept by Commandment,” MS, 76, in The Archives, Department of History, The Auditorium, Independence, Missouri.

one view you behold the Savior seated upon his throne, crowned, and holding the sceptres of righteousness and power, before whom also, are assembled the twelve tribes of Israel, the nations, languages and tongues of the earth, the kingdoms of the world over which satan is represented as reigning, . . . Be there little or much it must be an inestimable acquisition to our present scriptures, fulfilling, in a small degree the word of the prophet: For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.²

Joseph Smith Jr. concurred in Cowdery's estimate of the great spiritual value of these ancient documents and of their direct relationship to both Abraham and Joseph.

I . . . commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc.,—a more full account of which will appear in their place, as I proceed to examine or unfold them. Truly we can say, the Lord is beginning to reveal the abundance of peace and truth.³

Nearly seven years later, in 1842, Joseph Smith Jr. published the result of his "translation" activity in these papyri, but in his introduction to the text he more conservatively cited the material as "*purporting to be the writings of Abraham*" (italics added).⁴

In July 1862, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints published the Book of Abraham in its monthly periodical with no editorial comment and without the introduction given it in 1842 by Joseph Smith.⁵ Twenty-one months later, that same issue of the *True Latter Day Saints' Herald* was reprinted, along with other back issues, and the publishers ran a small notice concerning the availability of the Book of Abraham by this means:

The Book of Abraham was published in the *Herald*, in No. I of Vol. 3. That number has been republished, and is now for sale. Price 10 cents.⁶

Thirty-two years later, two officials of the Reorganized Church published the following observation on the Book of Abraham:

2. Oliver Cowdery, Kirtland, Ohio, to William Frye, Gilead, Illinois, letter dated 22 Dec. 1835, published in *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 3 (Dec. 1835): 234-37.

3. "History of Joseph Smith," *Millennial Star* 15 (7 May 1853), 19:296.

4. *Times and Seasons* 3 (1 and 15 Mar., 16 May 1842), 9, 10, and 14:703-706; 719-22; 783-84.

5. *The True Latter Day Saints' Herald* 3 (July 1862), 1:1-10.

6. *The True Latter Day Saints' Herald* 5 (1 Apr. 1864), 7:112.

The church has never to our knowledge taken any action on this work, either to indorse or condemn, so it cannot be said to be a church publication; nor can the church be held to answer for the correctness of its teaching. Joseph Smith, as the translator, is committed of course to the correctness of the translation, but not necessarily to the indorsement of its historical or doctrinal contents.⁷

This conservative position stemmed from a knowledge of the doctrinal content and implications of same in the Book of Abraham, and has generally represented the sentiment of the Reorganized Church leaders and membership since that time.

However, several developments since 1896 indicate the need for a more definite, if tentative, statement on the part of the Reorganized Church. These developments seem to require forthright clarity in the direction of questioning the 1835-42 linguistic skill of Joseph Smith Jr. as a translator of ancient Egyptian symbols. This is true especially in the light of the fact that the contributions of the great pioneer Jean François Champollion (1790-1832), relating to the deciphering of the inscriptions on the Rosetta Stone and to ancient Egyptian philology generally, were not known in the western hemisphere sufficiently by 1842 so as to have helped Joseph Smith, or any other American, develop proficiency in this field. And while Joseph Smith's history mentions his 1836 classwork in Hebrew, he makes no mention of formal instruction in Egyptian, and alludes in this connection only to his preparation of an Egyptian alphabet and grammar. The basis for this work is not specified.

The first development was the publication of a pamphlet by the Episcopal Bishop of Utah in 1912,⁸ based on the work of eight prominent Egyptologists, scattered from Chicago to Munich. Franklin Spalding had sent them copies of the three well-known facsimiles published along with the Book of Abraham by Joseph Smith in *Times and Seasons* in 1842. Spalding had requested each to interpret the symbols and comment upon the accuracy of the interpretations of them offered by Joseph Smith. The Egyptologists complied with Spalding's request and submitted their interpretations and appraisals. While they did not agree in every minute detail with each other, they were nonetheless unanimously at sharp variance with each of the twenty-five interpretations of the facsimiles published by Joseph Smith Jr. Therefore, since 1912 serious students of this subject have had to consider the probability that Joseph Smith had erred at many significant points in his interpretations of the

7. Joseph Smith III and Herman C. Smith, *The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House, 1896), 2:569.

8. F. S. Spalding, *Joseph Smith as a Translator* (Salt Lake City: Arrow Press, 1912).

drawings on the papyri, from part of which the text of the Book of Abraham itself was apparently derived. The implication of this is that if Joseph Smith erred in assessing the meanings of the papyri drawings, there is a strong likelihood that his interpretations of the ancient Egyptian language symbols on the papyri were inaccurate also.

A second development underscores this possibility: the publication in 1966 of a reproduction of a document known as Joseph Smith's "Alphabet and Grammar of the Egyptian Language." Until recently, this document was available to only a few scholars at the archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. However, Jerald Tanner of Salt Lake City managed to obtain a microfilm of this document and published enlarged prints from this film.⁹ This reproduction, *if of an authentic original*, demonstrates significant connections between some words in it and identical words used by Joseph Smith in his interpretations accompanying the three facsimiles as published in 1842. It follows that if modern Egyptologists have or might yet clearly establish the inaccuracy of Joseph's interpretations of the three facsimiles, and if further research confirms the link already observed between Joseph's facsimile interpretations and his "Alphabet and Grammar of the Egyptian Language," then the reliability of the Book of Abraham as a translation of ancient records could no longer safely be maintained.

The third development has implications largely for the future. This is the widespread dissemination of splendid reproductions of the recently discovered eleven Egyptian papyri. At least two of these clearly relate to the Book of Abraham facsimiles first published by Joseph Smith. This relationship is all the more firmly established by the presence, among the papyri, of a certificate of sale of the papyri to Mr. A. Combs by L. C. Bidamon, Emma Smith Bidamon, and Joseph Smith III, dated May 26, 1856.¹⁰ This certificate, both in content and in signatures, appears to be authentic. The significance of the distribution of these documents is that now more information than ever is available for Egyptologists' translation and further comparison with Joseph Smith's facsimiles and his "Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar." Should this occur, and should their translations of these ancient papyri be published, evidence of great consequence would then bear upon a fuller assessment of the relative merits of the Book of Abraham as representative of either his (Abraham's) writings or of writings about him.

If the present-day Egyptologists' work on these ancient papyri tends

9. Modern Microfilm Company, *Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar* (Salt Lake City, 1966).

10. The full text of this certificate was published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1967): 52n.

to confirm the conclusions of their 1912 predecessors, proponents of the Book of Abraham will be drawn to a revision of their present estimate of the meaning and nature of Joseph Smith's work on this publication. Indeed, one real possibility in that case would be that the Book of Abraham is not a translation at all, in the sense of transferring ideas from the Egyptian to the English language.

In the light of the findings of the 1912 Egyptologists, and depending upon whether their present-day successors will substantiate their conclusions, one may be confronted with the evidence that the Book of Abraham was rather the product of a highly intuitive mind, stimulated at least in part by an earlier work of revising the creation accounts of the Authorized Version of the Bible, 1830-33. Textual comparisons between Joseph Smith's "New Translation of the Bible" (or, "Inspired Version," as published by the Reorganized Church) and the Book of Abraham (Genesis 1 and 2: Abraham 4 and 5) show a remarkable degree of parallelism of subject materials, language style, and content. The major difference is the monotheism of the former and the polytheism of the latter. It should be recalled also that in 1842, when Joseph Smith published the Book of Abraham, his work of biblical revision had not yet been published.

There will be a natural tendency for some who are dogmatically committed to the Book of Abraham and/or to an image of Joseph Smith as an infallible living oracle to minimize or even to rule out completely the possibility of any relationship existing between the recently discovered papyri and the Book of Abraham as published. However, the unmistakable connection between these recently discovered papyri and the facsimiles published by Joseph Smith in 1842 leaves little room for such maneuvering and leads the open-minded observer away from such an alternative.

It appears that in time the mystery of the Book of Abraham will be unveiled. Meanwhile, it is significant for the Reorganized Church that undue haste and overzealous faith did not move it in the nineteenth century to canonize this work of Joseph Smith Jr. primarily on the basis that it was accomplished by Joseph Smith Jr.

Bird Island*

Hugh Nibley

"Bird Island" is a transcription of a talk given many years ago which has become one of the most popular of the Nibley samizdat.

IT WILL COME AS NEWS to all Latter-day Saints that after many years of deep scholarly research, the Hill Cumorah has finally been located: at the north end of Bird Island in Utah Lake. Those familiar with the area may wonder why such a flat place should be called a hill. Ah! You forget, this was the hill Ramah before the great destruction: "And then the whole face of the land was changed" (3 Ne. 8:12), "and the high places became low." Moreover, as a scholar, whose name you all would recognize points out, since it would have to be a big hill many records were buried in there. He believed Popocataplt was big enough, but if *everything* was changed, a big hill would have to become a small island. More important, the very name of the island proves its identity.

The name Bird Island is indeed a modern name, as we have learned after exhaustive investigation, and probably refers to the presence on the island of birds or of creatures sufficiently like birds to suggest to the ingenuous observer's mind the actual presence on the island (and this assumes also the presence of an island—another control) of bird-like objects. But though this is the modern name of the island, to be sure, there is no good reason for doubting that birds were on the island for a long time, perhaps even before the island received its name. The Egyptian word for bird is *apid*. If we drop the vowel, which is expendable, and change the consonants only slightly—such as to be hardly perceptible to the Egyptian ear—we get the Hebrew word *zippur*, *zippor*, which by a remarkable coincidence means "bird." The feminine form is of course *Zipporah*, but the Hebrews wrote from right to left, as we learn in our third-year Hebrew class. Read *Zipporah* from right to left and what do you get? *Haroppist*. The "o" can be conveniently dropped since Hebrew doesn't write the vowels. This then is an unmistakable allusion to the psalms of

*This essay first appeared in Vol. 10, No. 4 (Autumn 1977): 120-123.

David. But since the Hebrews wrote from right to left, and David himself was a Hebrew, we must read his name too in the correct direction. The result is the word *Divad*, or *Divot*. This can only refer to the violent removal of the hill by the forces of nature.

If these internal evidences are not enough to clinch the case, we have numerous points of reference in surrounding geography. It was my great-grandfather Adoration Weevil, who, when he was living in Holden, had a dream that Zarahemla was situated at the southwest corner of our orchard. Even if one were to question the validity of revelation, the fact remains that the inscription in nearby Chalk Creek Canyon proves this point. This would mean that the narrow neck of land is northward somewhere. My companion and I first located it in Rock Canyon near Provo, which does have a sea on the east, the Atlantic Ocean, and a sea on the west, the Pacific, and does indeed lead to the land northward if one turns off at Rock Canyon Campground and follows the road north to Provo Canyon. In spite of this remarkable coincidence of details, we have lately come to favor the Jordan Narrows as a more likely location of the narrow neck of land, both because of its name "The Narrows" and of its greater accessibility.

An archaeological field survey of the island has already yielded valuable Nephite artifacts, the most significant of which is part of a pre-Columbian zipper. Since at the time of the discovery nothing whatever was known about the use of the zipper among the pre-Columbian Americans, it was necessary to offer a course in the subject at the Brigham Young University. It was not until one of our most promising students produced a master's thesis, *suma cum fraude*, on the subject, under the title *An evaluation of some aspects of the possible employment of metal alloy talon fasteners by the pre-Columbian ichthy-ophagous troglodytes of the southern lateral of Utah Lake extension of lacus monovalentis as based on the opinions of thirty-five selected male and female non-vegetarian students between the ages of thirteen years, eight months and fifteen years, two months, five days from three medially selected classes at the junior high school level of the Juab School District: A study in values and probabilities* that it became possible to give a definitive answer to the question of the provenance of the zipper. (We use the unscientific term "zipper" here in deference to any non-professional archaeologist who may wish to follow the steps of the investigation.)

It seems that the father of one of the students, who was also the uncle of another, had gone fishing and stopped at Bird Island to cool a bottle of 7-Up (see our appendix on the cooling qualities of Bird Island mud) and that he did indeed leave his jacket on the island. On close examination, it was determined that the zipper was in fact attached to a badly worn windbreaker with the label of J.C. Penney (probably referring to a line of retail stores bearing that name). But since the zipper was in much better

repair than the jacket, it was believed by our trained observers that the zipper and the jacket cannot have been contemporary or, as the layman would say, of the same age. Moreover, it is absolutely out of the question that a Nephite zipper could possibly have belonged originally to a hunting jacket from J.C. Penneys. This was pointed out in a three-day symposium at the Brigham Young University, in which it was concluded after long and careful consideration that the zipper and the jacket were brought together at a later date, as is plainly indicated by the fact that the two had been obviously joined together by modern techniques of machine sewing.

From that it follows that the incongruous conjunction of an ancient Nephite zipper and a modern garment is indeed the result of later manipulation, thus vindicating the prior antiquity of the zipper. The question of whether this could be a forgery or not sinks into insignificance when one considers the difficulty of forging a workable zipper and, even more important, the lack of apparent motive for hiding such an object produced at such pains, and with such an expenditure of patience and ingenuity, in the mud where the chances of it ever being found by an interested party are, to say the least, unlikely. A federal grant of \$250 was requested for continued work on the project, but since the administration felt that such aid would undermine the integrity and weaken the characters of the recipients, the money was supplied by the church instead.

I would now like to show you Dr. W. H. Sterling's reproduction of the so-called *Izopastella* number five, of which he was the discoverer. This reproduction is remarkable for its almost total lack of resemblance to the local reproduction familiar to students of the Book of Mormon. Apparently, Dr. Sterling does not have access to such refined technical aids as a magnifying glass. The remarkable thing about this document is that even in Dr. Sterling's reproduction we have the signature of Moroni clearly and unmistakably before our eyes. I call your attention to the two fishes in the upper right hand corner. Now, as G. B. Shaw has shown, a possible phonetic writing for "fish" in English is "gh" as in *enough, rough*; "o" as in *women*, "i" and "sh" (ti) as in *nation, ration* and so forth. So "ghoti" spells fish. Be that as it may, even a layman will recognize that a goatee is a beard; he may also recall that Aaron's beard reached the hem of his garment. Now "hem" in Egyptian also means warrior, and who will doubt that Moroni was a great warrior? Beyond the shadow of a doubt, Moroni has signed his name on this remarkable stella.

The three pyramids, at the bottom—plainly of Egyptian origin—indicate that the writing is Egyptian. We should notice here that the figure identified locally as Lemuel has a long tail and has been called a monkey, and this confirms the identification since this is the Egyptian scribe's way of indicating that Lemuel aped his brother Laman, behind whom he

is standing. Moreover, the resemblance between a small spider monkey and a femur is remarkable, as is also the obvious affinity between the names femur and Lemuel, the "r" and "l" being interchangeable in Semitic languages.

The object held by the figure in front of Laman has been identified as a flute. What the layman is liable to overlook is that there is no indication that the iron rod of Lehi's dream was not hollow. It survives in early American tradition as the flute of the spider lady (note the significant allusion to the spider monkey), which was ritually filled with sugar-coated pimentos, symbolic of the earth mother's power of turning herself into the sacred drum, the beating of which made a sound which to the primitive ear must have resembled that of the snapping of a crocodile's jaws, such a sound as "Lehi, Lehi, Lehi." It was this drum which caused the rain to fertilize the upper side of the hallucinogenic mushroom, *agaricus campestris whoopie*, which, when eaten by the natives with a mixture of creosote, buttermilk of the giant sloth, and the breastfeathers of the Walker's flightless hummingbird, gives the devotee the sensation of walking on imitation plover's eggs. The significance of all this for the Book of Mormon student needs no commentary.

Some laymen have had the audacity, which we might call the impertinence, to challenge some of our conclusions. The only fit reply to such is that they are hardly in a position to question the opinions of eminent, trained, seasoned, degree-holding professionals. On the other hand, there are those who ask why, since our conclusions are based on interpretations of Egyptian glyphs, we have not bothered to consult any Egyptologists. The answer is simple: We are but humble servants of the Lord who neither expect nor receive serious consideration from the haughty and arrogant representatives of worldly learning. We would no more think of asking their opinion than we would of publishing in their journals.

With the discovery of Bird Island's zipper, a new and fascinating phase of Oriental studies has been opened up at the BYU. And now, since there are no questions, I would like to invite you to our next lecture which will be on the subject of Jaredite eggbeaters and their designation in the Adamic language. I thank you.

A Nibley Post Script:

The Bird Island Fantasy was not meant to be read by anybody. It was recited many years ago at a social gathering of the entire Division of Religion at BYU, and was scrambled at the time by the most diabolically refined encoding process so far devised by the mind of man, being read in a rapid babble from a quickly scribbled script into a faulty tape recorder, picked up by a desperately typical typist, and then corrected by an editor

with just enough knowledge to overlook the most extravagant errors of the typist while patiently altering the few things the typist got right. Then it was widely circulated without the writer's knowledge and appears in this journal over his hysterical protest.

Actually, the story has a moral, but how easily may the casual reader, lacking the admonition of the composer's great reverberating voice, be carried away by the sheer beauty of the proposition to overlook its profounder implications. For those who may have missed it, the moral is that everything goes in a free discussion as long as the discussion is going on. Give it time and everything will come out in the wash.

The trouble with our Bird Island arguments is not that they are silly, but that they stop too soon.

Solus*

Anonymous

IT WAS OCTOBER GENERAL CONFERENCE, and I was sitting in the Tabernacle with several friends, attending the priesthood session. The meeting had been especially good, and I was where I most wanted to be, surrounded by close friends, sitting in that sacred building listening to a prophet's voice. President Harold B. Lee spoke as he always did, seemingly off-the-cuff and from the heart, a speech which would become famous throughout the church. The subject was marriage. Why are there those in the priesthood who are postponing this sacred obligation? Why do some, even among the active brethren, refuse to follow counsel? Such unmarried priesthood bearers are outside of God's house. My friends nudged me good-naturedly. It had become one of the rituals of our association. I wiped mock beads of sweat from my brow and said, "Ouch!"

Looking back on my childhood, I cannot remember how it felt not to be haunted by homosexuality. Not that I would ever have used the word! I was well into middle age before I would bring myself to say "homosexual" even in private prayers—which always concluded with a plea for help in "overcoming my problems."

When I was about six, a stranger had pulled his car up to where I was playing with some friends and asked for help. He was going to buy groceries and needed someone to help carry them to the car. When I hesitated, he said my parents had told him to find me, so I reluctantly climbed in. What followed was a terrifying experience, one that I have spent a lifetime trying to block out. I was taken up to one of the canyons east of the city and homosexually assaulted. It was both frightening and painful. My own guilt was so heavy that I could never relate the experience to my parents. It has been a heavy burden to bear alone.

Maleness and sexuality became so terrifying to me that I began a long—and successful—flight from my own manhood. As a child, I chose

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girls as playmates, but when adolescence arrived, I could no longer remain exclusively in their company, so I turned back to boys. I soon began "admiring from afar" the masculine qualities I couldn't find in myself.

My junior high school years were an unending nightmare. I was too much of a "sissy" to be accepted by the boys, and my own confusion about sex kept me an arm's length from girls. I took refuge in church activity. Once a girl in my class asked me to a "preference dance." I bought a corsage, shined my shoes, and reluctantly started off on my first real date. After the dance we went to an ancient apartment near the business district where all her friends were meeting for a party. After the lights went off, couples started groping and petting in the dark. After a few moments, I fled in panic.

My high school years were anxiety-filled but tolerable. I dated infrequently—only enough to avoid suspicion—and I developed my first "crush" on another young man. He was dating the girl who lived across the street. During one whole summer, I peered out of the window in a darkened room trying to see him across the street. My feelings of disgust and revulsion at my own actions were exceeded only by my compulsion to watch him. When he made the school basketball team, I went to every game, safely hiding in the anonymity of the crowd. I was always careful not to appear too interested in his scoring.

In college I usually dated only girls with whom I had established a platonic relationship, but once a friend in my priests' quorum invited me to double date with him. We drove to the canyon and parked. He and his date kissed and petted in the front seat for what seemed an eternity while my date and I sat in the back seat trying to make small talk. I was miserable. Obviously more was expected of me than I was producing. It was a hellish night.

College was interrupted by a draft notice which raised unimaginable anxieties. How would I survive in a totally male environment? Could I mask my "problem?" What if I talked in my sleep? To my great relief, I managed quite well. After basic training I was called on a part-time mission and went out proselyting three nights a week. It got me out of the bawdiness of the barracks, and bunkmates always assumed that the suit and tie meant I was going off on a date. I said nothing to correct their misinterpretation. After two years I was honorably discharged. I felt great: I had held my own in a male society; had not given myself away; had survived group showering even among those I was physically attracted to; and had survived two years without a date and without anyone asking why.

Returning to college was another matter. Parents and friends, whether knowingly or not, were escalating their subtle suggestions that I start dating more frequently. I didn't date often, but when I did, I got a lot of mileage out of it, making certain everyone knew I had gone out. It

was now impossible to avoid kissing without really being suspect, so I tried my best. The whole evening was often ruined by my anxiety about that good-night kiss. There were times when I was certain the girl was deliberately trying to arouse me. What if I failed? All the world would know the truth. Sometimes I pretended she was a boy.

I was rescued by a mission call. To my great relief, none of the interviews raised the question of masturbation, and aside from that I was worthy to go. When I was set apart for my mission, the general authority said, "Those things in your life which have been amiss have been forgiven." There it was. God knew after all, but was willing to let me serve as his emissary. Tears ran down my face as I promised not to disappoint him. My mission was a beautiful religious experience. I grew very close to the Gospel. My resolve to put homosexual thoughts behind me worked most of the time, and the garments eliminated much of the sensuality of sleeping with my companion.

The next several years are a blur of parents and bishops and friends and neighbors and former missionary companions and total strangers all asking me the same question: "Isn't it time you were getting married?" I always answered with good humor (part of the "cover"), but the question always cut me to the quick. I certainly had not written off the possibility of marriage, but I knew something would have to change. While completing my work at the university, I attended Institute regularly. One Sunday I heard Elder Joseph Fielding Smith say that homosexuality was so filthy and abhorrent that he would rather see his sons dead than homosexual. In growing confusion, I tried to analyze my problem. Was I forever lost? Did my eternal destiny hinge on my reaction to a chance encounter with a deviate when I was too young even to realize what was happening? Was it really a "chance encounter"? Was I given homosexuality as a test to mold or strengthen me? Was there any meaning in my suffering? Would my infirmity be corrected at the Resurrection? Was marriage an absolute requirement for everyone in life? If I married, should I tell my wife? Could I hide it from her? Would Joseph Fielding Smith want me in his family? Would anyone else? Was I better off dead?

For all my pondering, I found only more questions. I decided to ask my stake patriarch for a special blessing. He lived in our ward and knew our family well. While I could not tell him my problem, I could rely on his inspiration for whatever counsel God had for me. I fasted and prayed and went to his home for the blessing. The patriarch gave me a beautiful blessing concerned mainly with choosing a proper career, but he said nothing about marriage or dating.

I decided to try another fast and go to the temple, seeking an answer through prayer and "good works." After asking a temple worker where I might go for private prayer, I was directed to a tiny hall closet. There was no room to kneel, but I offered a lengthy prayer pleading for some direc-

tion. I went home and lay awake most of the night, anticipating some message. None came.

The pressure to marry increased almost to my breaking point. It seemed everyone wanted to line me up with "a friend." Even total strangers called and said they had heard of me and wanted to introduce me to somebody special. I started dating with more regularity, hoping that somehow the magic would strike. But a man can go out with the same woman only so many times before the relationship must either end in marriage or be broken off. Somehow we always broke off. The young woman would want to marry, and I could not do it.

About this time the bishop asked me to start teaching the priests' quorum each Sunday. The request brought a new crisis. I was physically attracted to every boy in the quorum. I knew I could do a good job—I had taught classes for years. I felt I could reach some boys who needed strengthening in the Gospel. But what if I slipped? The question was larger than just one teaching assignment for a group of priests. I had to know if there were any place in the church for people "with problems" like mine. Does a homosexual have the right to participate? Was I worthy of a temple recommend? Could I continue to attend all my meetings, teach classes, pay tithing, and accept leadership positions without being a hypocrite? I felt that only a general authority could tell me.

After tremendous soul-searching, I went to the Church Office Building, but it took over an hour to get up enough courage to enter the front door. There were so many imponderables. Whom should I ask to see? I certainly didn't want to be told I'd be better off dead. On the other hand, was I being honest if I avoided anyone who might criticize me? Should I use a phony name? My father was well-known enough that someone might connect my name to his. I finally walked into the lobby, scanned the roster of names, and decided on the one who had set me apart as a missionary; perhaps he could help me now.

The secretary said I could not get in without an appointment. Perhaps I could come back another time. My face must have shown my inner turmoil, for she invited me to stay. She took my name and asked the purpose of my visit. I replied "personal counsel" and nervously sat down and waited. Finally, just before 5:00, I was told I could see him. He said he was tired and anxious to spend some time with his family, but he graciously consented to hear me out. I briefly stated my problem, putting it in the best possible light. He seemed to understand and encouraged me to take the priests' quorum assignment and any other assignment I was asked to fill. He mentioned a prominent citizen with a similar problem who had recently died, and said much good could be done by those with such problems. As a final thought, he suggested that I might aim for more masculine activities in my life, such as playing basketball. The advice was given in good faith and was appreciated. But I

wondered if he saw the dilemma. Had I confessed to heterosexual problems, would he have prescribed more physical contact with girls, culminating in the showers?

He concluded by writing an address on a card and directing me to the top floor of the Union Pacific building across from Temple Square. There a kindly gentleman greeted me and asked me to hear his story about the beauty of physical love between a man and a woman. He went into explicit detail, in great humility and candor. He asked me to picture myself capable of such lovemaking. I really tried. He felt I should marry but counseled me definitely not to tell my wife I was a homosexual as it would strain the relationship too severely.

I left determined to take whatever church callings came my way. I would live all the commandments possible and live as normal an existence as possible. But I felt certain that a marriage built upon such a deception could never succeed.

Upon graduation from the university, I moved into my own apartment and began teaching high school. My teaching has brought tremendous satisfaction to me. I have developed a reputation for being able to communicate with students no one else could reach. I identify totally with them and am willing to work with them long after most adults have lost all patience.

Like many singles, I fled the marriage pressure in my resident ward and joined a singles ward at the university. Things got better. My parents were pleased just knowing that I was surrounded by all those eligible girls. I appreciated the freedom from interference by neighbors and family, but student wards also exact a price. Marriage is the name of the game, and few priesthood meetings went by without strong reminders of that fact. I was swept up in the new ward activities which weren't exactly dates, but served as good substitutes. I was also named president of the elders' quorum.

My new position forced me to look at the other quorum members more carefully, and I began to wonder if many of them were just like me. Were some dating so frenetically just to remove all doubt about their virility? One who I felt confident shared my problem managed to be seen with a copy of *Playboy* in his briefcase at priesthood meeting. Better to be thought a lecher than a homosexual.

Through this period, my parents, especially my mother, began a not-so-gentle chastising of me, urging me to find the right girl and settle down. My close friends, long since married, started inviting me to their homes where unescorted girls seemed always to be waiting. In my teaching job, I was always being named to the prom committee, along with eligible faculty members.

Before age thirty, I could reasonably carry off the charade of being eager to find "the right one." After thirty, it got much harder. Any inter-

est in a thirtyish female led inevitably to a tremendous push. I really couldn't blame the woman. However unsatisfactory I might be as a marriage partner, I was male and an active priesthood bearer. Marriage would end for my partners the same kind of nightmarish pressure I was experiencing.

By age thirty-five, I decided that dating was terribly unfair to my partners. I was using women only as a convenience, a smoke screen for conformity's sake. I had no right to raise someone's hopes about marriage when my intentions were otherwise, so I quit taking partners to proms, dinners, and social gatherings. If people didn't want me along, they soon learned not to invite me.

Outwardly, my new resolve was a tremendous relief. Inwardly, it was no answer at all. I learned for myself that it is not good for man to be alone. For the first time in my life, loneliness became a gnawing concern. During the winter I had my work, my students, and activities I was expected to attend with or without a partner, but during the summers I could literally go days at a time without speaking a word to anyone. Sometimes the loneliness was so unbearable that I drove up and down the streets hoping to find a hitchhiker with whom I could strike up a brief conversation. My actions were totally circumspect if my thoughts were not.

The worst time of the year was always New Year's Eve. There is simply nothing a single, active Latter-day Saint can do on a New Year's Eve without a partner. Every ward or stake in the church holds a dance. You either sit at home alone and brood about the passing of the years, or you get a date. On one such occasion, I joined the crowd in the traditional kiss at the stroke of midnight. On the way home, my date slid over in the seat and started kissing me again. At her apartment, I made a concerted effort at nominal petting. I tried everything, including the old ploy of thinking of boys. It was awful. I found myself growing physically ill. It was so shoddy I could no longer stand myself. Breaking things off, I left and started home. Soon I was crying so hard I had to pull myself off the road. What does an elder do who knows the Gospel is true, who believes fervently in marriage for time and all eternity, who sustains the president of the church as a prophet of God, and yet is so warped that even kissing a girl can be accomplished only by cheap and demeaning subterfuge?

I arrived at home, undressed for bed, and started to say my prayers. Soon I was sobbing uncontrollably, stifling the sounds in the covers. I knew I couldn't go on without some resolution. For the first time, some thirty years after the fact, I told God I was a homosexual, and begged for help. My initial "Thou knowest of my problem," gave way to "Please, God, you've got to help me deal with my homosexuality; you are the only one I can talk to." I prayed more intimately and familiarly than I

have ever done before or since. For about an hour, I poured out my soul, and then went to bed and stared at the ceiling until almost dawn. When I awoke, I felt a tremendous peace. God would not require marriage of me in this life. For all the dark corners of my heart, I was still a child of God. I would live as exemplary a life as possible and give all I had to the building up of the Kingdom, but I would never marry.

My friends at the Tabernacle continued poking me all through President Lee's talk. My mother later clipped it out of the Sunday paper and had it waiting for me when I arrived for a visit. Another copy arrived anonymously in the mail. Both my bishop and my stake president called me in to talk with me about it. Couldn't I see my mistake? Didn't I sustain the prophet? What was wrong with me?

During this time, I was having trouble with my eyes. I had consulted several physicians who were unable to find the cause. Finally one asked me bluntly, "Is there anything in your life that might be creating undue anxiety?" To my own surprise, I found myself answering, "Well, I'm forty and still a bachelor." Then I added, "The reason I'm still a bachelor is because males interest me more than females, and I can't very well marry a male."

I couldn't believe myself. There it was, the great secret of my life, the secret around which my whole life had been structured, blurted out to a near stranger. The doctor was as nonchalant as if I had commented about the weather. He asked if I wanted to leave things as they were or if I wanted to work on them. I replied that if my problems were creating enough turmoil inside to affect me physically, maybe I had better do something about them.

He recommended to me a psychiatrist, "very discreet" and new to the area, who would not be apt to have any ties with anyone I knew. The prospect scared me to death. It was finally arranged that the psychiatrist would come to my home every Sunday right after church. These sessions were extremely helpful and allowed me to understand myself better. But then the psychiatrist advised me that the only way I could end my male fixation was to experience male sex. He reasoned that I might discover that it was not all I had fantasized it to be. While that advice carried a certain logic and the intellectual side of my nature responded affirmatively, my spiritual side was horrified. Where would I draw the line? If male sex proved unsatisfactory, should I experiment with heterosexually?

To whom then should I turn for an answer to my excruciating dilemma? In a lifetime of church activity, I have yet to hear a single word of compassion or understanding for homosexuals spoken from the pulpit. We are more than a family oriented church. Our auxiliaries and priesthood quorums presuppose marriage. A single, much less a homosexual, simply does not fit in. Even the new Special Interest program,

which is excellent for those eager to marry, is just one more humiliation in a whole lifetime of humiliations for people like me. High council members now seek out partners for me, or tell me how to make myself more attractive to the opposite sex. The new program leaves no place to hide. The written temple interview has new questions specifically about masturbation and homosexuality. I must either lie and continue a life of "Let's Pretend," dating often enough to throw the Special Interest committee off my track, or come out of the closet, proclaim my homosexuality openly, and pay whatever price must be exacted. I doubt that my community is ready to accept a self-proclaimed homosexual teacher, and it is highly unlikely that the church will accept a declared homosexual into fellowship.

Still, I have a strong testimony of the Gospel. I know the church is true and I want to remain loyal and active. I can only hope that he who welcomed to his side sinners, publicans, and harlots will grant the same grace to me—and that his church will also.

The Development of the Mormon Temple Endowment Ceremony*

David John Buerger

Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell.—Brigham Young (JD 2:31)

FOR FAITHFUL LATTER-DAY SAINTS, the temple endowment ceremony is one of the most sacred and powerful ordinances received in mortality. One authoritative source called it the temporal stepping stone which all people must pass to achieve exaltation with God the Father and Jesus Christ.¹

Since those who enter the temple agree, as part of the endowment experience, not to reveal certain key words or symbols that are part of the ceremony and since any discussion of the endowment takes place upon sacred ground, this essay will not discuss the theological significance, spiritual meanings, or symbolic dimensions of the endowment, important though they are in the lives of Latter-day Saints.

Each Latter-day Saint who participates in the endowment has a

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1. *Gospel Essentials*, rev. ed., Sunday school manual (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), 247.

uniquely personal experience which, because of the sacred nature of the temple, is seldom discussed or shared with another in any detail. For some this experience is positive, peaceful, and healing. Others, from time to time, may experience the temple less positively. Such personal responses lie outside the limitations of this paper, although I acknowledge that each person's response to discussions of the temple is likely to be intense as a result. The temple also has a collective impact on the faithful members of the church, which again, is seldom shared or discussed although its power is acknowledged.

However, the temple has maintained its central role in the lives of Latter-day Saints by being able to create a point of intersection between human desires for righteousness and the divine willingness to be bound by covenant. This point has remained constant, even though emphases in the church have changed over time, also bringing change to the endowment ceremony itself. In this essay, I wish to enhance our understanding of the importance of the temple in the collective lives of the Saints by providing a history of the endowment, including its introduction by Joseph Smith, its origins, changes made since its inception in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the effect of modern technology on the ritual, and some possible directions for the future which seem to be indicated by current trends.

Some people may feel that any discussion whatsoever of the temple may be inappropriate. My understanding of the temple ceremony is that certain names, signs, tokens, and penalties are guarded by vows of secrecy. I respect these limitations. However, it is not my understanding that these prohibitions extend to other areas of the temple ceremony, even though such reticence has become the custom among Latter-day Saints in general. I do not wish to offend any who may have a more restricted view than I about what is appropriate to discuss in relationship to the temple and its ceremonies and have worked toward an effective balance of scholarly objectivity, reverence for this sacred institution, regard for the scruples of others, and adequate documentation and development of the points to be discussed.

In 1912, one year after the First Presidency assigned James E. Talmage to write a book on temples, the church published *The House of the Lord*.² In his chapter on temple ordinances, Talmage summarized the endowment's content as follows:

The Temple Endowment, as administered in modern temples, comprises instruction relating to the significance and sequence of past dispensations, and

2. Gary James Bergera, "'I'm Here for the Cash': Max Florence and the Great Mormon Temple" *Utah Historical Quarterly* 47 (Winter 1979): 60-61.

the importance of the present as the greatest and grandest era in human history. This course of instruction includes a recital of the most prominent events of the creative period, the condition of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, their disobedience and consequent expulsion from that blissful abode, their condition in the lone and dreary world when doomed to live by labor and sweat, the plan of redemption by which the great transgression may be atoned, the period of the great apostasy, the restoration of the Gospel with all its ancient powers and privileges, the absolute and indispensable condition of personal purity and devotion to the right in present life, and a strict compliance with Gospel requirements.

Following this general overview, Talmage stated more specifically:

The ordinances of the endowment embody certain obligations on the part of the individual, such as covenant and promise to observe the law of strict virtue and chastity, to be charitable, benevolent, tolerant and pure; to devote both talent and material means to the spread of truth and the uplifting of the race; to maintain devotion to the cause of truth; and to seek in every way to contribute to the great preparation that the earth may be made ready to receive her King,—the Lord Jesus Christ. With the taking of each covenant and the assuming of each obligation a promised blessing is pronounced, contingent upon the faithful observance of the conditions.³

I. THE FORMATIVE PERIOD: KIRTLAND, 1835-36

As early as October 1835, Joseph Smith told his apostles of an awaited “endowment” which would grant them “power from on high.”⁴ It has become customary for manuals, teachers, and speakers to equate this “endowment” with the temple endowment itself as we currently practice it; however, it seems apparent from contemporary Kirtland sources that the members then considered this endowment to have come by the spiritual blessings of God manifested through visions, prophesying, speaking in tongues, and feeling the Holy Ghost during the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.⁵ All these spiritual gifts were conferred *following* the special temple ordinances associated with the dedication—washing, anointing, blessings, partaking of the sacrament, “sealing” (a group ceremony involving the Hosanna Shout), washing of the feet, etc.—but these did not constitute an endowment as we would currently define the term.⁶

3. James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord* (1912, rpt. ed., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1962), 99-100.

4. Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (1973, 2d ed. rev., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co.) 2:287, hereafter referred to as HC. See also Dean C. Jessee, comp. and ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (1984, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co.), 61.

5. HC 2:380-83, 386-88, 392, 427-28, 430-33.

6. I am indebted to Lester Bush and Andrew F. Ehat for this insight.

This Kirtland pre-endowment ritual was a simple, staged ceremony clearly patterned after similar washings and anointings described in the Old and especially the New Testament (Lev. 8; Mark 6:13; Luke 4:18, 7:38, 44; John 13:1-16; 1 Tim. 5:10; James 5:14). According to the *History of the Church's* official account, the first part of this ritual was given on 21 January 1836 when the First Presidency "retired to the attic story of the printing office, where we attended the ordinance of washing our bodies in pure water. We also perfumed our bodies and our heads, in the name of the Lord." After blessing and consecrating oil for this ceremony, the presidency laid their hands on each other's heads, progressing from oldest to youngest, blessing and anointing each other to their offices. Following several days of performing anointings to other priesthood bearers, Joseph Smith, on 6 February 1836, assembled these people together to "receive the seal of all their blessings." This sealing was performed as a group ceremony by Sidney Rigdon, after which the participants "were to shout with one accord a solemn hosanna to God and the Lamb, with an Amen, Amen and Amen."⁷

A month and a half later at the temple dedication, Joseph gave instructions on the ordinance of washing of feet; two days later the presidency "proceeded to cleanse our faces and our feet, and then proceeded to wash one another's feet." Following this, all attendees "partook of the bread and wine." Finally, these recipients also received the ordinance of washing of feet. After administering these rites to about 300 male church members, Joseph Smith declared that he "had now completed the organization of the church, and we had passed through all the necessary ceremonies."⁸

II. INFLUENCES AND ORIGINS OF THE NAUVOO ENDOWMENT

Five years later in Nauvoo, on 19 January 1841, a new revelation (D&C 124:37-41) commanded the Saints to build "my most holy house. . . for the beginning of the revelations and foundation of Zion" wherein may be performed "your anointings, and your washings, and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies" (D&C 124:39). Thus, the Saints who had been previously anointed in Kirtland learned that those rituals were a precursor to new ceremonies.

As in Kirtland, Joseph elected to administer the revised ritual to selected church members prior to the completion of the temple. The first administration of the endowment as we know it came on 4 and 5 May 1842 in the upper story of Joseph Smith's store in Nauvoo. Nine men—

7. HC 2:379-82, 391-92; see also Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 145, 156).

8. Ibid., HC 2:410-28, 429-33; and Jessee, 145, 18-84.

James Adams, Heber C. Kimball, William Law, William Marks, George Miller, Willard Richards, Hyrum Smith, Newel K. Whitney, and Brigham Young—were included in this ceremony, which was soon known for the first time as the endowment.⁹ The endowed group was sometimes referred to as the “Holy Order,” the “Quorum,” the “Holy Order of the Holy Priesthood,” or the “Quorum of the Anointed.”¹⁰

The Nauvoo endowment ritual was a significant expansion from the simple washings and anointings received in Kirtland and included new theological instruction and ritual. According to the *History of the Church*, Joseph “instruct[ed] them in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days. . . . In this council was instituted the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days.” Joseph and Hyrum Smith received their endowment the next day (HC 5:1-3).

Where did these ceremonies originate? The language of the account in the *History of the Church* clearly implies a divine origin with its references to “the principles and order of the Priesthood, . . . and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, . . . [and] the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days” (HC 5:1-2). Saints who believed that the Aaronic Priesthood had been restored by John the Baptist and the Melchizedek Priesthood by Peter, James, and John readily believed that ancient knowledge, like ancient authority, had been lost from the earth and was being restored through their prophet. Contemporary Saints accept equally readily that the ceremony was restored by revelation to Joseph Smith.¹¹

Yet nowhere did Joseph leave a direct statement of how the endowment ceremony came to be. The *History of the Church* account of that first Nauvoo endowment quotes him as saying, “All these things referred to in this [Endowment] council are always governed by the principle of

9. Although historian B. H. Roberts referred to this event as “the introduction of the Endowment Ceremonies in this dispensation” (HC 5:2, n. 1), the *History of the Church’s* reconstructed text of this account (discussed below) did not use the term “endowment.” The phrase that was used, “the ancient order of things,” came from Joseph Smith on 6 January 1842 in speaking of the forthcoming temple rites (HC 4:492). The *History* did note, in its entry for 2 December 1843, that Orson Hyde, Parley P. Pratt, Wilford Woodruff, George A. Smith, and Orson Spencer “received their endowments” in the upper story of Joseph Smith’s red brick store (HC 6:98), so it can be assumed that the ceremony came to be known as the “endowment” within a year and a half of its introduction.

10. D. Michael Quinn, “Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles,” *BYU Studies* 19 (Fall 1978): 85.

11. E. Cecil McGavin, *Mormonism and Masonry* (1956, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft), 41. See also John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations* (1960, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft), 110-13.

revelation" (HC 5:2). This "quotation" actually was an anachronistic reconstruction¹² by Willard Richards composed between 14-18 April 1845, reportedly based on a very brief, incomplete entry from the Book of the Law of the Lord.¹³ (There is a gap in Joseph Smith's diary between October 1839 and December 1842.) On so important and central an ordinance, it is striking that there is no revelatory document extant, nor are there any known contemporary references to a revelation by either Joseph or his associates.

With respect to the issue of direct revelation, most of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants came about as a result of particular needs of the church or individuals. Important doctrines (for example, the Word of Wisdom and the United Order) developed when outside forces and movements focused Joseph's attention upon a problem in a particular way. Thus, it seems reasonable to inquire about such influences on the temple ceremony as well.

Our inquiry begins with the framework of the temple ceremony which, as Talmage indicates, retells the plan of salvation: the creation, fall, and atonement. As a culmination of Joseph Smith's developing theology that human beings were not only the offspring of God but also potential gods themselves, the temple provided a synthesis of Mormon beliefs in the origin and purpose of human beings and a sacred ritual which reunited them for a brief time with God, even as a life of righteousness and ordinances performed through proper authority would unite them forever in the afterlife. This instructional material is drawn directly from sacred scripture introduced by Joseph in his revision of the Bible, pertinent sections of which are now published in the book of Moses and the book of Abraham.

Latter-day Saints who are familiar with the holy books of other religions and with religions in the ancient Middle Eastern and classical

12. The story of this passage's reconstruction illustrates how much of the *History of the Church* was composed. According to Dean C. Jessee, Joseph Smith wrote very little of his diary and history. In fact, at the time of his death in 1844, his history was completed only through 1838. Eleven men composed the history by using over twenty different manuscript sources. Key participant George A. Smith recalled that this task "was an immense labor requiring the deepest thought and the closest application, as there were mostly only two or three words (about half written) to a sentence" (Smith to Wilford Woodruff, 21 April 1856, cited in Dean C. Jessee, "The Writing of Joseph Smith's History," *BYU Studies* 11 (Summer 1971): 472).

13. This is a comment from Andrew F. Ehat regarding an early draft of this paper presented at the Sunstone Theological Symposium, Salt Lake City, 21 August 1986. Ehat apparently has had access to the Book of the Law of the Lord, which presently is restricted from scholars by the LDS church's Historical Department Archives. See also Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982), 26-27.

worlds have pointed out many motifs which seem to find echoes in the temple ceremony. For example, apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic literature (books written between the closing of the Old Testament and the opening of the New Testament but usually attributed to such important prophets of the past as Moses, Noah, and Enoch) commonly dealt with the existence of multiple gods, the creation of order out of chaos, the pre-mortal existence of conscious beings, the creation of the earth, the creation of Adam and Eve, light versus darkness (as a symbol of the necessity of exercising free will to choose between opposites), opposites (free will, choices), Satan and his angels being cast out of heaven, the fall of Adam and Eve, the influence of good and evil angels in the world, the Savior's mission and atonement, his mission to the spirit prison, the resurrection, the millennial kingdom, the crucial role of prophets and patriarchs, and secret covenants and "mysteries" by which earnest seekers could reach the highest heaven.

Another example is the history of the mystery cults in the ancient world, particularly Nag Hammadi, Qumran, and Greece which again ring with such familiar motifs as preparatory purification through ritual bathing, special instruction in secret knowledge given only to initiates, use of sacred symbolic objects related to this secret knowledge, narration or dramatic enactment of a sacred story, and crowning initiates as full members of the secret brotherhood with a promise of immortality hereafter.

A number of Latter-day Saints have pointed out the similarities between these ancient rites and Mormon rituals and doctrines, usually suggesting that such ancient ceremonies are vestiges, reshaped and distorted by time and cultural change, of an original ceremony first explained to Adam and Eve.¹⁴

Although this long list of resemblances is most provocative, the details of the actual rites in which the themes are embedded are unsettling

14. See S. Kent Brown, and C. Wilfred Griggs, "The Messiah and the Manuscripts: What Do Recently Discovered Documents Tell Us about Jesus?" *Ensign* 14 (Sept. 1974): 68-73; Brown and Griggs, "The 40-Day Ministry," *Ensign* 15 (Aug. 1975): 6-11; Robert J. Matthews, "Were the Blessings of the Temple Available to the Saints in Jesus' Time or Did They Become Available after His Death?" *Ensign* 14 (Sept. 1974): 50-51; Hugh Nibley, "The Expanding Gospel," *BYU Studies* 7 (Fall 1965): 3-27; Nibley, "A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price," *Improvement Era* (Jan. 1968—May 1970); Nibley, *Since Cumorah: The Book of Mormon in the Modern World* (1970, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book); Nibley, "Treasures in the Heavens: Some Early Christian Insights into the Organizing of Worlds," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8 (Fall-Winter 1973): 76-98; Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (1975, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co.); Nibley, "A Strange Thing in the Land," *Ensign* (Oct. 1975—Aug. 1977); Nibley, "The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham: A Response to E. H. Ashment," *Sunstone* 4 (Dec. 1979): 49-51.

to those who wish to ascribe meanings significant to Mormons. For the most part, they are based on cosmological beliefs which had no anticipation of a Christian eschatology, much less a resurrection of the dead as now believed by Latter-day Saints. As such, these beliefs clearly seem to be at odds with the theological understandings of the temple.¹⁵ Even though we are accustomed to think of pagan "corruptions" of the truth, it would probably not be fruitful to try and reconstruct an ancient temple ceremony from these themes. Furthermore, at this date, it does not appear that Joseph had any working knowledge of mystery cultures and apocalyptic/mystery cults from which to have drawn temple ideas. In short, ancient sources probably could not be considered a direct influence on Joseph except as they were revealed to him from a time predating corruptions or except as they appear in the ancient scriptures he brought forth. The influence of the creation accounts in the books of Moses and Abraham on the temple narrative are clear; but the only other scriptural reference directly linking ancient writings with the Mormon temple ceremony is found in "Explanatory Note 8" to Facsimile 2 in the book of Abraham.

This facsimile shows a hypocephalus, an object placed by ancient Egyptians under the head of the deceased, the meaning of which is closely linked with chapter 162 of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, where instructions for its construction and use are given. Joseph Smith's explanation for this portion of Facsimile 2 was: "Contains writings that cannot be revealed unto the world; but is to be had in the Holy Temple of God." This illustration was engraved by Reuben Hedlock under Joseph Smith's direction for inclusion with the book of Abraham's publication in February-March 1842. (This period just preceded Joseph's initiation into Freemasonry and the subsequent introduction of the Nauvoo endowment ceremony.) A literal translation of this section of the hypocephalus is: "O God of the Sleeping Ones from the time of the Creation. O Mighty God, Lord of Heaven and Earth, the Netherworld and his Great Waters, grant that the soul of the Osiris Sheshonk, may live."¹⁶ It is difficult to see how this literal translation relates to the ceremony introduced by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo.

Although there is much to be said about ancient parallels, it seems more reasonable to explore a source much closer to Joseph Smith, namely, Freemasonry.

15. I am indebted to Edward H. Ashment for this insight. See also Keith E. Norman, "Zeal in Quest of Knowledge" (review of Hugh Nibley's *Old Testament and Related Studies* [1986, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co.]) *Sunstone* 11 (March 1987): 33-35.

16. Michael Dennis Rhodes, "A Translation and Commentary of the Joseph Smith Hypocephalus," *BYU Studies* 17 (Spring 1977): 265.

The complex interplay of Masonic tradition on Mormon temple rites probably had its roots during the mid-1820s, given that Joseph Smith's brother Hyrum had joined the fraternity between 1825 and 1827.¹⁷ By this time, Masonry's appeal, especially to young men in the northeastern United States, was at an all time high.¹⁸ One reason for this acceptance stemmed from Masonry's role as a surrogate religion for many initiates: Teaching morality (separate from an institutional church) was its most important ideal, a tack which set well with those disenchanted with traditional churches. Furthermore, in the context of the influence of the Enlightenment during this period and the limited access of most to the truly educated, Masons' purported link between science and their mysteries made the secret ceremonies "powerfully attractive."¹⁹ The lodge provided benefits of fraternal conviviality, Masonic charity, and associations with groups of people holding similar values when traveling. For many, Freemasonry also provided a form of recreation for its members.²⁰

Freemasonry, which claims to have been created at the time of the construction of Solomon's temple by its master mason, Hiram Abiff, actually seems to have been a development of the craft guilds during the construction of the great European cathedrals during the tenth to seventeenth centuries. After the Middle Ages, lodges in Scotland and Great Britain began to accept honorary members and worked out rudimentary ceremonies, established mainly to distinguish members of trade organi-

17. The definitive examination of Mormonism and Freemasonry has yet to be written. For an introduction to this subject, see Reed C. Durham, Jr., "'Is There No Help For the Widow's Son?'" (presidential address to the Mormon History Association, 20 April 1974). This document entered the public domain through unconventional means: The original typescript was made and has circulated widely for almost fifteen years and was published without Durham's permission by David C. Martin in *Mormon Miscellaneous* 1 (Oct. 1975): 11-16. Durham has not, to my knowledge, issued an authorized and/or corrected version. See also Kenneth W. Godfrey, "Joseph Smith and the Masons," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 64 (Spring 1971): 79-90; S. H. Goodwin, *Mormonism and Masonry: A Utah Point of View* (1925; reprint Salt Lake City: Grand Lodge, F. & A. M. of Utah, 1938); Goodwin, *Additional Studies in Mormonism and Masonry* (1927, Salt Lake City: Grand Lodge, F. & A. M. of Utah); Mervin B. Hogan, *The Origin and Growth of Utah Masonry and Its Conflict with Mormonism* (1978, Salt Lake City: Campus Graphics); Hogan, *Mormonism and Freemasonry: The Illinois Episode* (1980, Salt Lake City: Campus Graphics); Anthony W. Ivins, *The Relationship of "Mormonism" and Freemasonry* (1934, Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press); E. Cecil McGavin, *Mormonism and Masonry* (1956, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft); Allen D. Roberts, "Where Are the All-Seeing Eyes? The Origin, Use and Decline of Early Mormon Symbolism," *Sunstone* 4 (May-June 1979): 22-37.

18. Dorothy Ann Lipson, *Freemasonry in Federalist Connecticut* (1977, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press), 4, 143-44.

19. *Ibid.*, 117-21, 248-49.

20. *Ibid.*, 9, 75; see also, Wilson Care McWilliams, *The Idea of Fraternity in America* (1973, Berkeley: University of California Press).

zations. In 1717, four fraternal lodges, perhaps actual masons' lodges, united as the Grand Lodge of England, considered to be the commencement of organized Freemasonry (also known as "speculative Masonry"). The order spread quickly to other countries and included such adherents as Mozart, Voltaire, George Washington, and Benjamin Franklin. Some historians believe that a group of Masons staged the Boston Tea Party.

Some Latter-day Saints may feel that Masonry constitutes a biblical-times source of uncorrupted knowledge from which the temple ceremony could be drawn. Historians of Freemasonry, however, generally agree that the trigradal system of entered apprentice, fellow craft, and master Mason, as practiced in Nauvoo, cannot reliably be traced further back than the eighteenth century. According to Douglas Knoop and G. P. Jones, two twentieth-century historians,²¹ it is "highly probable" that the system of Masonry practiced at the organization of the Grand Lodge in London "did not consist of three distinct degrees" and warn, "It would probably not be safe to fix a date earlier than 1723 or 1725 for the origin" of the trigradal system. "Accepted Masonry underwent gradual changes throughout a period of years stretching from well before 1717 to well after that date. . . . The earliest speculative phase of Freemasonry may be regarded as beginning about 1730. . . . Though some symbolism had doubtless crept into Masonry by that date, it would not appear to have reached its full development for another forty or fifty years."²²

21. There is little question that Knoop and Jones have produced the most balanced scholarly historical studies of Freemasonry to date. Their publications by the Quatuor Coronati Lodge (the English Masonic research lodge) identify two schools of Masonic history dating from the 1870s: "verified" or institutional history, and "mythical" or philosophical speculations in Masonic symbols throughout its history. Their most valuable works include collections of early Masonic catechisms (Douglas Knoop and G. P. Jones, *The Early Masonic Catechisms* [1943, Manchester, England: Manchester University Press]); and pamphlets (Knoop and Jones, *Early Masonic Pamphlets* [1978, London: Quatuor Coronati Correspondence Circle, Ltd.]); as well as an institutional history through the early eighteenth century (Knoop and Jones, *A Short History of Freemasonry to 1730* [1940, Manchester, England: Manchester University Press] and *The Genesis of Freemasonry: An Account of the Rise and Development of Freemasonry in its Operative, Accepted, and Early Speculative Phases* [1949, Manchester, England: Manchester University Press]). Other important careful histories include: Robert Freke Gould, *A Concise History of Freemasonry* (1904, New York City: Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Co.); H. L. Haywood and James E. Craig, *A History of Freemasonry* (1927, New York: John Day Company, 1927); Charles William Heckethorn, *The Secret Societies of All Ages and Countries, etc.*, 2 vols. (1965, New Hyde Park, N.Y.: University Books); Alex Horne, *King Solomon's Temple in the Masonic Tradition* (1972, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, England: Aquarian Press); Norman MacKenzie, ed., *Secret Societies* (1967, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston); Arthur Edward Waite, *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry and of Cognate Instituted Mysteries: Their Rites, Literature and History*, 2 vols. (1923, Philadelphia: David McKay Co.).

22. Knoop and Jones, *Genesis of Freemasonry*, 274, 275, 321, 322.

After 1832, the Masons concentrated on social and fraternal activities and, by reaching beyond the limitations of any religious, political, or economic creed, have grown to more than 3.25 million in the United States alone by the early 1980s.

The fundamental ceremonies of modern York Rite and Scottish Rite Masonry occur on three distinct levels: (1) entered apprentice, (2) fellow craft, and (3) master Mason. Each level contains instruction in morals and Masonic symbolism, coupled with secret signs, passwords, handshakes, and "penalties" for revealing them to a non-Mason. Advanced degrees exist for both orders; nevertheless, the three initial degrees constitute the principal ceremonies experienced by active Masons.

The exact involvement of Hyrum Smith on these levels is not known. Presumably, it was a positive experience for him and he related it as such to his brother. Any early enthusiasm, however, may have been temporarily checked by widespread anti-Mason feelings which pervaded the Smith's locale in upstate New York during the late 1820s. This wave of public sentiment was precipitated by the announced publication of William Morgan's expose on Masonic ceremonies and by his related mysterious disappearance and presumed murder in September 1826. A public outcry against Masons as a group who put themselves above the law followed. For a few years, American Masonic lodges were, for all practical purposes, inactive. Many lodges closed, and renuncements of Masonic affiliation were widespread. A number of newspapers dedicated to exposing Masonry were established in New York and other states. The anti-Masonic movement led to the creation of an independent political party, where its energies were ultimately diffused; it was disbanded in 1832.²³

Some scholars feel that such anti-Masonry may be seen in the Book of Mormon and interpret some passages (e.g., Alma 37:21-32; Hell 6:21-22; Eth. 8:18-26) as apparently anti-Masonic.²⁴ These passages condemn secret combinations, secret signs, and secret words in a manner which may be interpreted as reminiscent of anti-Masonic rhetoric prevalent during this period.

23. Charles McCarthy, "The Antimasonic Party: A Study of Political Antimasonry in the United States, 1827-1840," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1902* 1: 365-574; William Preston Vaughn, *The Anti-Masonic Party in the United States, 1826-1843* (1983, Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky).

24. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith*, 2nd ed., (1973, New York: Alfred A. Knopf), 65-66; Goodwin, *Mormonism and Masonry*, 9; Goodwin, *Additional Studies*, 3-29; Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (1957, Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 23, 35; Blake Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source," *Dialogue: a Journal of Mormon Thought* 20 (Spring 1987): 73-76; Walter Franklin Prince, "Psychological Tests for the Authorship of the Book of Mormon," *American Journal of Psychology* 28 (July 1917): 373-95.

A few references from contemporary newspapers seem to confirm this idea. On 15 March 1831, the *Geauga Gazette* of Painesville, Ohio, stated that "the Mormon Bible is Anti-masonick," and that "every one of its followers. . .are anti-masons." Moreover, it quoted Martin Harris as saying the Book of Mormon was an "Anti-masonick Bible." A similar story appeared in *The Ohio Star* in Ravenna, Ohio, on 24 March 1831. Another Painesville paper, *The Telegraph*, ran an article on 22 March 1831 which challenged the 15 March story that the Book of Mormon was printed by a "Masonic press" in Palmyra, New York, and claimed there was "a very striking resemblance between masonry and mormonism. Both systems pretend to have a very ancient origin, and to possess some wonderful secrets which the world cannot have without submitting to the prescribed ceremonies" (see also 24 March 1831). Interestingly, Mormon converts in northeastern Ohio were, for a time, identified by the press as possessing the same type of fanaticism shown by that region's anti-Masons.²⁵ Notably, the first anti-Mormon book, *Mormonism Unveiled* also referred to ancient Nephites "as being Anti-masons."²⁶ Despite the Book of Mormon passages and the cited press coverage, however, no further evidence exists to convincingly prove that most early converts paid serious attention to anti-Masonry.²⁷

Furthermore, and perhaps more decisively, Freemasonry had little or no discernible influence on the rites practiced in the Kirtland Temple, 1835-36. Reed C. Durham, Jr., has noted, however, that some Masonic influence can be seen in the Kirtland Temple's architectural patterns.²⁸ The *History of the Church* claims that Joseph Smith condemned, in 1835, the "abominations" of some Protestants, praying "that it [i.e., his "well fitted" comments] may be like a nail in a sure place, driven by the master of assemblies."²⁹ Joseph's obvious familiarity with and positive use of Masonic imagery indicated by this statement is almost paradoxical in light of his anti-secret society rhetoric during the Missouri period.³⁰ Aside from this 1835 quotation, I am not familiar with any other documents

25. See *The Wayne Sentinel* (Palmyra, N.Y.), 23 August 1831; *The Churchman* (N.Y.), 4 February 1832. These newspaper citations were taken from typescripts prepared by Dale Morgan, photocopies in my possession.

26. E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled: or A Faithful Account of that Singular Imposition and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present Time, etc.* (1834, Painesville, Oh.: E. D. Howe), 81, 89.

27. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (1984, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press), 131; Grant Underwood, "The Earliest Reference Guides to the Book of Mormon: Windows into the Past," *Journal of Mormon History* 12 (1985): 81-82.

28. Durham, "'Is There No Help?'"

29. HC 2:347; Jessee, *Personal Writings*, 120.

30. HC 3:178-82, 303.

which provide clear insights into Joseph Smith's thoughts on Masonry before Nauvoo.

A full examination of the complex history of the church's transition to Nauvoo and its subsequent embrace of Freemasonry is beyond the scope of this essay. While Joseph Smith's involvement with Masonry is well documented, the events leading him to consider joining the fraternity and endorsing its practice in Nauvoo are not. His ever-present fear of enemies may have led him to believe that affiliation with an oath-bound fraternity dedicated to the teaching of morality would give some form of protection to church members. Perhaps he saw an additional level of protection from internal enemies resulting from the secrecy demanded of all initiates, especially if the secrecy of the Masonic oaths reinforced the secrecy of the endowment oaths in the minds of those familiar with both.³¹ It is also possible that amid the translation and publication activities of the book of Abraham in spring 1842, Joseph's preoccupation with ancient mysteries may have triggered an interest in tapping Masonic mysteries.

Furthermore, the influence of personal friends cannot be ignored. In 1838, for example, Joseph Smith stayed briefly in Far West, Missouri, with George and Lucinda Harris,³² eventually becoming close friends with Lucinda.³³ Lucinda had first been married to William Morgan in New York when he allegedly was abducted for threatening to publish Masonic secrets. She reportedly became one of Joseph Smith's first plural wives.³⁴ Other prominent Mormons—all of whom were Freemasons prior to joining the church—included Deputy Grand Master of Illinois James Adams, Heber C. Kimball,³⁵ Newel K. Whitney, George Miller, John C. Bennett, John Smith, and Brigham Young.³⁶

31. Compare Heber C. Kimball's observation on 2 August 1857: "You have received your endowments. What is it for? To learn you to hold your tongues" (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [1855-86, Liverpool and London: LDS Book Sellers Depot], 5:133; hereafter JD), with—especially regarding the discussion which follows on the endowment's relationship to Freemasonry—Brigham Young's comment in 1860: "The mane part of Masonry is to keep a secret" (Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898*, ed. by Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. [1984-85, Midvale, Utah: Signature Books], 5:418). For a classic discussion on the sociology of secrecy and secret societies, see Georg Simmel cited in Kurt H. Wolff, trans. and ed., *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (1950, Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press), 330-76.

32. HC 3:9.

33. Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* (1984, New York: Doubleday & Co.), 70.

34. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 459-60.

35. Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* (1981, Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 12. Kimball's daughter, Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, reminisced in 1882: "I remember once when but a young girl, of getting a glimpse of the outside of the Morgan's book, exposing Masonry, but which my father always kept locked up" (Helen Mar Whitney, *Woman's Exponent* 11 (15 July 1882): 26.

36. Godfrey, "Joseph Smith and the Masons," 81-82; Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham*

Of these associates, perhaps the most influential in accelerating Joseph Smith's interest and acceptance of Freemasonry was John C. Bennett.³⁷ Bennett has typically been characterized by Mormon apologists as an opportunistic scoundrel whose brief (eighteen-month) sojourn with the Saints at Nauvoo was, at best, unfortunate and embarrassing. Actually, however, Bennett was a powerful confidante to Joseph Smith and a key figure in Nauvoo. His accomplishments included: "assistant president" of the church, first mayor of Nauvoo, major general in Nauvoo Legion, and secretary of Nauvoo Masonic Lodge; he was also instrumental in gaining the Illinois legislature's approval of the Nauvoo Charter, Nauvoo Legion, and the University of Nauvoo.³⁸ Although his own status as a Mason in good standing prior to Nauvoo has been called into question,³⁹ Bennett may have been the person who initially advised Joseph Smith to adopt Freemasonry as a means to end persecutions against the church.⁴⁰ Ebenezer Robinson, who was editor of the church's paper, *Times and Seasons*, until February 1842, reminisced: "Heretofore the church had strenuously opposed secret societies such as Freemason. . . not considering the 'Order of Enoch' and 'Danites' of that class; but after Dr. Bennett came into the church a great change of sentiment seemed to take place."⁴¹

Joseph Smith's official experience in Freemasonry began five months before the first Nauvoo endowment when he petitioned for membership in the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge on 30 December 1841. The favorable results of the lodge's investigation of his petition were reported on 3 February 1842.⁴² Joseph was formally initiated as an entered apprentice Mason on 15 March 1842 and received the fellow craft and master degrees the next day. Since the customary waiting period before receiving a new degree is thirty days, Joseph's elevation to the "sublime degree" (master Mason) performed without any prior participation in Free-

Young: American Moses (1985, New York: Alfred A. Knopf), 99; James J. Tyler, "John Cook Bennett, Colorful Freemason of the Early Nineteenth Century" (reprinted from the *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Ohio*, 1947), 8.

37. Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (1965, Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press), 247.

38. Richard Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, *A Book of Mormons* (1982, Salt Lake City: Signature Books), 10-14.

39. Mervin B. Hogan, "John Cook Bennett and Pickaway Lodge No. 23," unpublished document, 1983.

40. "Joseph Smith and the Presidency," *The Saints' Herald* 68 (19 July 1921): 675.

41. *The Return* 2 (June 1890): 287, cited in Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (1965, Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 249.

42. Hogan, Mervin B., comp., *Founding Minutes of Nauvoo Lodge* (1971, U.D. Des Moines, Iowa: Research Lodge No. 2), 8, 10.

masonry was highly unusual.⁴³ During the organization of the Female Relief Society one day later in the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge room, his founding address was filled with Masonic allusions: "Let this Presidency serve as a *constitution*" (italics added);⁴⁴ Joseph "proposed that the Society go into a close *examination* of every *candidate*. . . .that the Society should grow up by *degrees*. . . .he was going to make of this Society a *kingdom of priests as in Enoch's day*" (italics added).⁴⁵ Kent L. Walgren concluded from reading other early Female Relief Society minutes that Joseph's aim in establishing the Society was to "institutionalize secrecy."⁴⁶ He cites an entry from the minutes where Emma Smith, probably during the organizational period, read an epistle signed by Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and four others stating that "there may be some among you who are not sufficiently skill'd in Masonry to keep a secret. . . .Let this Epistle be had as a private matter in your Society, and we shall learn whether you are good Masons."⁴⁷

Over the next several weeks, Joseph participated in other lodge meetings, witnessing the entered apprentice degree five times, the fellow craft degree three times, and the master Mason degree five times—all prior to his own introduction of the endowment.⁴⁸ An important sermon on 1 May 1842 contained many Masonic overtones:

The *keys* are certain *signs* and words. . . .which cannot be revealed. . . .till the Temple is completed—The rich can only get them in the Temple. . . .There are *signs* in heaven, earth, and hell, the Elders must *know them all* to be endowed with power. . . .The devil *knows many signs* but does not know the *sign of the Son of Man*, or Jesus. No one can truly say he knows God until he

43. Joseph's accelerated advancement came at the hand of Abraham Jonas, Grandmaster of the Illinois Lodge. Given that Jonas was running for political office, it is possible that he thought his action would secure him the Mormon vote.

44. Minutes of the Nauvoo Female Relief Society, 1842-44, 17 March 1842. Hereafter, RS.

45. RS, 30 March 1842. Freemasons are enjoined to study their Book of Constitutions which contain fundamental Masonic principles; every man considering becoming a Mason is called a "candidate" and must pass a character examination before being approved for his initiation; new initiates progress in Masonry through a system of ceremonial degrees; and several officers in a lodge have different titles employing the word "priest" (see R. W. Jeremy L. Cross, *The True Masonic Chart, or Hieroglyphic Monitor; Containing All the Emblems Explained in the Degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, Master Mason, etc.* (1824, New Haven, Conn.: Jeremy L. Cross), 7, 15-19, 63, 65, 157; William Morgan, *Freemasonry Exposed* (1827; reprint Chicago: Ezra Cook Publications, Inc., n.d.), 16-18.

46. Kent L. Walgren, "James Adams: Early Springfield Mormon and Freemason," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 75 (Summer 1982): 131.

47. Recorded after minutes for 28 Sept. 1842, in Walgren, "James Adams," 132, and n. 49.

48. Hogan, *Founding Minutes*, 12-18.

has handled something, and this can only be in the Holy of Holies (*italics added*).⁴⁹

Forty-nine days after his Masonic initiation, on 4 and 5 May as described, Joseph introduced the endowment ceremony to his trusted circle of friends in the upper story of his red brick store.⁵⁰

The clearest evidence of Masonic influence on the Mormon temple ceremony would be a passage-by-passage comparison of the texts. However, both ceremonies are open only to members in good standing who have made personal covenants not to divulge the proceedings. Thus, published accounts of either ceremony come from disaffected members. Although such disaffection does not necessarily make the accounts unreliable, quoting sources which reveal exact ceremonial language presents an ethical dilemma to those who have themselves promised not to reveal that wording. What use could or should be made of documents from individuals who have chosen to ignore those covenants? For those who have personal reasons to share those scruples related to promises of secrecy, public comparisons and contrasts become problematic. Let me simply summarize what such a comparison might suggest and indicate additional sources of investigation for the interested reader.

Three elements of the Nauvoo temple endowment and its contemporary Masonic ritual resemble each other to a very marked degree and are sometimes identical. These are the tokens, signs, and penalties. Although there seem to be sufficient reasons for not quoting the parallel portions of the two ceremonies here, the two accounts which may be most useful for the purposes of comparison are those of Catherine Lewis and William Morgan. William Morgan's account is the previously cited 1827 book of the York Rite's Masonic ritual (the same rite introduced in Nauvoo—see esp. pp. 23-24, 53-54, 76-77, 84-85) which led to his disappearance and presumed murder. Catherine Lewis joined the LDS church in 1841 in Boston. After Joseph Smith's death in 1844, she moved to Nauvoo and was among those who received their endowment in the new temple. Lewis received the ordinance at the urging of Heber C. Kimball and one of his wives. Apparently repulsed by his subsequent proposal of plural

49. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps. and eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (1980, Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center), 119. See also D&C 129:4-9. Joseph Smith's stress on acquiring esoteric knowledge by means of special signs and words also is seen in the Freemasonic charge to master their own system of signs and key words. Before passing each degree, every candidate is thoroughly tested by presenting them to the presiding lodge officer (see Cross, *The True Masonic Chart*, 97; and Morgan, *Freemasonry Exposed*, 18-27, 49-61, 70-89).

50. HC 4:550-53, 570, 589, 594, 608; 5:1-2, 446; and 6:287.

marriage, she left Nauvoo and published a book in 1848 which includes a description of the Nauvoo temple ceremony.⁵¹

Other similarities with Masonic rites may include the prayer circle which required Masonic initiates to assemble around an altar, place their left arms over the person next to them, join hands, repeat the words of the Most Excellent Master, and give all the signs from initial ceremonial degrees.⁵² Michael Quinn has pointed out that nineteenth-century American Protestant revivals also had prayer circles in which, "when the invitation was given, there was a general rush, the large 'prayer ring' was filled, and for at least two hours prayer ardent went up to God."⁵³ Two additional Masonic elements which may have temple echoes are the receiving by initiates of a "new name" and the donning of a white apron as part of the rite. The original apron used in the Mormon endowment had a white background with green fig leaves sewn to it; this apron now is constructed of green fabric. Also, an explanatory lecture always follows the conferral of each Masonic degree ceremony, a practice not unlike the temple endowment's lecture at the veil.

This pattern of resemblances provides strong indications that Joseph Smith drew on the Masonic rites in shaping the temple endowment, and specifically borrowed the tokens, signs, and penalties. The creation and fall narrative, the content of the major covenants, and the washing and anointings have no parallel in Masonry. Thus, the temple ceremony cannot be explained as wholesale borrowing from Masonry; neither can it be explained as completely unrelated to Masonry.

An interesting question is the response of Joseph's associates to the temple ceremony, since many were also familiar with Masonry. How did they understand the resemblances? Although many modern Latter-day Saints are completely unfamiliar with Masonry, this was not the case in Nauvoo. As noted earlier, a significant number of Joseph's closest associates were long-time Masons, deeply involved with the establishment of the Nauvoo Lodge, and active workers in instituting its York Rites during the spring of 1842. One of the few contemporary commentaries comes

51. Catherine Lewis, *Narrative of Some of the Proceedings of the Mormons, etc.* (1848, Lynn, Mass.: the author), 9-10. See also *Warsaw Signal*, 15 April 1846, p. 2; and Increase McGee Van Dusen and Maria Van Dusen, *The Mormon Endowment, A Secret Drama, or Conspiracy, in the Nauvoo-Temple, in 1846* (1847, Syracuse, N.Y.: N. M. D. Lathrop), 6, 9.

52. David Bernard, *Light on Masonry: A Collection of All the Most Important Documents on the Subject of Speculative Free Masonry, etc.* (1829, Utica, N.Y.: William Williams), 116-17; Jabez Richardson, *Richardson's Monitor of Free-Masonry; Being a Practical Guide to the Ceremonies in All the Degrees Conferred in Masonic Lodges, Chapters, Encampments, etc.* (1860; reprint ed., Chicago: Ezra Cook, 1975), 61, 66.

53. Rev. James Erwin, *Reminiscences of Early Circuit Life* (1884), cited in Quinn, "Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles," 81-82.

from Heber C. Kimball who wrote in June 1842: "Thare is a similarity of preast Hood in Masonry. Br. Joseph Ses Masonry was taken from preast-hood but has become degenerated. But menny things are perfect."⁵⁴ Later, as recorded in the Manuscript History of Brigham Young, Kimball said, "We have the true Masonry. The Masonry of today is received from the apostasy which took place in the days of Solomon, and David. They have now and then a thing that is correct, but we have the real thing."⁵⁵ Joseph Smith's close friend, Joseph Fielding, wrote in his journal in 1844: "Many have joined the Masonic Institution this seems to have been a Stepping Stone or Preparation for something else, the true Origin of Masonry."⁵⁶ Later, according to one of his wives, Brigham Young "delight[ed] to speak of it [the endowment] as 'Celestial Masonry.'"⁵⁷

These quotations suggest that Joseph Smith's contemporaries saw the temple ceremony as a purer form of ancient Israel's Masonic rites—something formerly lost but restored to its original pristine condition. Apostle Melvin J. Ballard⁵⁸ and E. Cecil McGavin⁵⁹ were among many Mormons who believed that Masonry's trigradal degree system of apprentice, fellow craft, and master Mason dates back to Solomon's Temple or even to the time of Adam. Nevertheless, as we have already seen, research by twentieth-century historians of Freemasonry locates the origins of trigradal Masonry much closer in time. In short, Masonry does not seem able to supply an ancient source for the endowment.

To summarize the Mormon participation in Freemasonry during the Nauvoo period, it is useful to note that in 1840, only 147 men in Illinois and 2,072 in the United States were Masons.⁶⁰ By the time of the exodus to Utah, approximately 1,366 Mormon males in Nauvoo had been initiated into the Masonic order.⁶¹ While it is uncertain exactly why Freemasonry was initially embraced, its activities undoubtedly provided fraternal benefits experienced by Masons in other parts of the country. Its ceremonies clearly provided part of the specific wording for the Nauvoo

54. Heber C. Kimball to Parley P. Pratt, 17 June 1842, Parley P. Pratt Papers, typescript in my possession, original in LDS Historical Department Archives; also Stanley B. Kimball, "Heber C. Kimball and Family, The Nauvoo Years," *BYU Studies* 15 (Summer 1975): 456-59.

55. Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 13 Nov. 1858, 1085.

56. In Andrew F. Ehat, "'They Might Have Known That He Was Not a Fallen Prophet': The Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding," *BYU Studies* 19 (Winter 1979): 145.

57. Ann Eliza Webb Young, *Wife No. 19: Or, The Story of a Life in Bondage* (1876, Hartford Conn.: Dustin, Gilman and Co.), 371.

58. See *Conference Report of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1913* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press), 126; also *Salt Lake Tribune*, 29 Dec. 1919, cited in Goodwin, *Mormonism and Masonry*, 49-50.

59. McGavin, *Mormonism and Masonry*, 192.

60. Godfrey, "Joseph Smith and the Masons," 83.

61. Durham, "Is There No Help?"

temple endowment, although most nineteenth-century Masonic rituals have no resemblance to those temple ceremonies. It is also significant that, following the conferral of endowment rites on most Nauvoo adults in the temple and their subsequent relocation to Utah, Masonry never regained the prominence among Mormons it once received in Nauvoo.

III. EXPANSION IN THE NAUVOO PERIOD

Two additional ceremonies were introduced about a year after the initial conferral of the endowment and later became associated with the sequence of temple ceremonies: celestial marriage for time and eternity, and the second anointing. "Celestial marriage" was applied to and equated with plural marriage in nineteenth-century Utah.⁶² However, since Joseph Smith apparently never taught plural marriage in the Quorum of the Anointed (where endowments were given during his life), it seems safe to assume that no plural wives were sealed in the endowment group before his death.⁶³ The practice of performing celestial marriages in the temple began in the Nauvoo Temple. Marriages for time and eternity, or "temple marriages," are still performed today, following the endowment of the individuals involved.

The second anointing was a special ceremony consisting of two parts. First, an officiator anointed the heads of a husband and wife with oil, then conferred upon them the "fulness of the priesthood." The couple thereby received the confirmation of a promise given earlier in the endowment (and indirectly in the celestial marriage ceremony) of being anointed to become a priest and king to God, or a priestess and queen to the husband. The second part was a private ceremony between the couple in which the wife washed the feet of the husband so that she would have claim upon him in the resurrection of the dead.⁶⁴

Although the *History of the Church* is rather general in referring to the "ancient order of things" which Joseph Smith established, the process apparently included a complex of ritualistic signs, tokens, and penalties, since Brigham Young, in reminiscence, identified them as part of that initial ceremony. According to the diary account of L. John Nuttall, Brigham Young's secretary, Young recalled the specifics of receiving his endowment from Joseph:

62. After the Woodruff Manifesto in 1890, the association of celestial marriage with polygyny was discouraged; modern Mormons now perceive celestial marriage and plural marriage as two separate concepts.

63. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction," 59-62.

64. David John Buerger, "'The Fulness of the Priesthood': The Second Anointing in Latter-day Saint Theology and Practice," *Dialogue: a Journal of Mormon Thought* 16 (Spring 1983): 26-27.

Prest Young was filled with the spirit of God & revelation & said when we got our washings and anointings under the hands of the Prophet Joseph at Nauvoo we had only one room to work in with the exception of a little side room or office were [sic] we were washed and anointed had our garments placed upon us and received our New Name. and after he had performed these ceremonies. he gave the Key Words signs, tokens [sic] and penalties. then after we went into the large room over the store in Nauvoo. Joseph divided up the room the best that he could hung up the veil, marked it gave us our instructions as we passed along from one department to another giving us signs. tokens. penalties with the Key words pertaining to those signs and after we had got through. Bro Joseph turned to me (Press B. Young) and said Bro Brigham this is not arranged right but we have done the best we could under the circumstances in which we are placed, and I . . . wish you to take this matter in hand and organize and systematize all these ceremonies with the signs. tokens penalties and Key words I did so and each time I got something more so that when we went through the Temple at Nauvoo I understood and Knew how to place them there. we had our ceremonies pretty correct.⁶⁵

Young's last comment suggests that the Nauvoo Temple endowment's structure and order of material expanded into a more elaborate and detailed ceremony as it moved from the constricted quarters over Joseph Smith's store to the larger stage of the temple. However, no text of the 1842 ritual is available. The first detailed description of the ceremony as carried out in the Nauvoo Temple occurs in 1845 and seems to suggest that the dramatic elements of the ceremony were added at that time. On 10 December 1845, when endowments were first administered in the temple, Heber C. Kimball's diary (which served as an official record of temple proceedings) also includes the roles of four personages: Elohim, Jehovah, Michael, and the Serpent (Satan). Two days later, the New Testament characters of Peter, James, and John were added and the narrative duties were assigned such that Elohim, Jehovah, and Michael created the world and planted the Garden of Eden. Eve was created and given to Adam. After the Fall, Peter, assisted by James and John, would conduct Adam and Eve to the veil where they would learn how to be readmitted into the Father's presence.⁶⁶

Kimball's diary reveals a wide difference in the amount of time a Nauvoo Temple endowment ceremony lasted. "Companies" or groups of participants typically averaged about a dozen members, with ceremonies lasting an hour to an hour and a half. Other recorded durations

65. L. John Nuttall Diary, 7 Feb. 1877, typescript, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

66. Heber C. Kimball Journal, no. 93 (21 Nov. 1845-7 Jan. 1846), typescript in my possession; original in LDS Historical Department Archives.

for such groups lasted up to four hours. One company of thirty-five had a ceremony of five hours and ten minutes. Kimball's diary does not comment on the reasons for this wide variation, but it is probably related to the size of the company, the experience of those officiating, the interjection of explanatory lectures, and the use of a single veil station.

As we reconstruct those 1845-46 sessions, it appears that initiates normally participated in a washing and anointing ceremony, had a brief recess, then participated in the main endowment. Sessions began with the ringing of a bell. A "lecture at the veil" was sometimes given (usually by Brigham Young or Heber C. Kimball) at the end of the endowment; but on at least two occasions, the lecture seems to have been postponed and delivered a few days later.⁶⁷

The earliest complete published account⁶⁸ of the Nauvoo Temple endowment ceremony indicates that initiatory washings may have followed a literal Old Testament model of actual bathing, for large tubs of water are specified in the separate men's and women's rooms. The anointing was performed by liberally pouring consecrated oil from a horn over the head and allowing it to run over the whole body. During this ritual, one participant said he was ordained to be a "King in time and eternity, and my wife to be Queen";⁶⁹ Catherine Lewis also noted that she was ordained "to be a Queen."⁷⁰

Originally, everyone participating in the endowment took the roles of Adam and Eve collectively.⁷¹ The practice of using temple workers to represent Adam, Eve, and the Christian minister began in the 1850s in Endowment House administrations in Utah, but in Nauvoo, several actors depicted ministers from different Christian churches. The first

67. *Ibid.*, entries for 10-14 Dec. 1845 and 7 Jan 1846.

68. In addition to specific citations in the text, see David John Buerger, "Chronological Annotated Bibliography of Publications Giving the Mormon Temple Ceremony in Full or in Part" (reprinted in David John Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship*, Appendix 2, 203-227; photocopies of original documents are in University of Utah Manuscripts Division, Special Collections, University of Utah Marriott Library, ms. 622, Box 24-26.), a collection of over one hundred "exposes" of the endowment ceremony by disaffected Mormons. While the integrity of some accounts clearly is questionable, many demonstrate consistency in reciting dialogues and ritualistic details. Given the lack of official accounts, these published recitals are essential components in attempting to historically trace the ceremony's development.

69. Van Dusen and Van Dusen, *The Mormon Endowment*, 4.

70. Lewis, *Narrative*, 8. It is likely that both these accounts omitted an additional detail: that of a woman being ordained to be a queen to her husband, as women now are ordained in their initiatory washing and anointing ceremony. When Vilate Kimball received her second anointing in the Nauvoo Temple on 8 January 1846, she was anointed "a Queen & Priestess unto her Husband" (*Book of Anointings*, c1845-46, p. 4, typescript in my possession; original in LDS Historical Department Archives).

71. Van Dusen and Van Dusen, *The Mormon Endowment*.

published indication of the ministers occurs in 1857.⁷² The first published account of a single minister appears in 1905.⁷³

Early endowment administrations were primarily restricted to a man and his wife or wives.⁷⁴ A few men were endowed without their spouse's participation. Initially all participants were admitted through the veil by the same officiator. The first published account of married men conducting their wives through the veil occurs in 1857.⁷⁵

According to accounts published by disaffected Latter-day Saints between 1846 and 1851, these Nauvoo years also saw literal representations of several parts of the ceremony which were later omitted. All participants ate raisins (depicting the eating of the "forbidden fruit" which precipitated the "fall" in the Garden of Eden) and crouched behind living shrubbery (to hide from the Father and Son as they revisited the garden). An actor wielding a sword represented the guarding of the Tree of Life. After they expelled Satan, the temple worker portraying Satan would crawl out of the room on his belly. All participants donned crowns after passing through the veil to symbolize their entrance into the celestial kingdom.⁷⁶ None of these accounts contain the detail found in the Utah publications. These later books describe a veil worn by women⁷⁷ used to cover their faces while taking ceremonial oaths.⁷⁸

Almost 100 persons are known to have received the endowment prior to the Nauvoo Temple's dedication, approximately half of whom also received the second anointing.⁷⁹ Available records indicate that about 5,200 members received the endowment in the Nauvoo Temple, of whom approximately 600 had received the second anointing.⁸⁰ Most of those receiving pre-Nauvoo Temple endowments and second anointings received these ordinances again after the temple was dedicated and

72. William Cook, *The Mormons* (1857, London: Joseph Masters), 37-42.

73. "The Mormon Temple Endowment Ceremony," *The World Today* (Feb. 1905): 165-70.

74. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction," 97-98.

75. John, Hyde, Jr., *Mormonism: Its Leaders and Designs* (1857, New York: W. P. Pettridge & Co.), 99.

76. *Warsaw Signal*, 18 Feb. 1846 and 15 April 1846; Van Dusen and Van Dusen, *The Mormon Endowment*; Lewis, *Narrative*; Thomas White, *The Mormon Mysteries; Being an Exposition of the Ceremonies of "The Endowment" and of the Seven Degrees of the Temple* (1851, New York: Edmund K. Knowlton).

77. Cook, *The Mormons*, 38; Nelson Winch Green, *Fifteen Years among the Mormons: Being the Narrative of Mrs. Mary Ettie V. Smith, Late of Great Salt Lake City; a Sister of One of the Mormon High Priests, She Having Been Personally Acquainted with Most of the Mormon Leaders, and Long in the Confidence of the "Prophet" Brigham Young* (1858, New York: C. Scribner), 47.

78. Fanny Stenhouse, *Tell It All* (1890, Hartford, Conn.: A. D. Worthington and Company), 365; Young, *Wife No. 19*, 368.

79. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction," 97-98.

80. Buerger, "The Fullness of the Priesthood," 25 n. 48; *Book of Anointings*.

opened for operation.⁸¹ These figures alone indicate the importance of the temple to the Saints before the exodus west.

IV. NINETEENTH-CENTURY UTAH PERIOD: 1847-99

Following the exodus of Mormons from Nauvoo in 1846, endowment administrations entered a period of dormancy. Aside from a few prayer circles held on the open prairie during the trek west⁸² and one known incident of an endowment administration performed on Ensign Peak in the Salt Lake Valley,⁸³ Mormons apparently did very little temple work immediately following their resettlement.

On 7 July 1852, the endowment ordinances were recommenced in the Old Council House, the first permanent public building erected in Salt Lake City, which also housed the territorial legislature and the territorial public library. On 5 May 1855, a new building called the Endowment House was constructed in the northwest corner of Temple Square and dedicated to the sole use of administering endowments. A total of 54,170 endowments and 694 second anointings for the living were conducted there until 16 October 1884, when church leaders—probably deciding to refocus attention and funds upon completion of the Salt Lake Temple where endowments would be more appropriately performed—ordered it razed. No endowments or second anointings for the dead were performed in the Endowment House.⁸⁴

Another interesting reference from the early Utah period is that Brigham Young, perhaps in an effort to renew interest in temple work, on 26 November 1857 approved a motion to publish “the Endowments or an outline of it telling the time when the twelve Received their 2d Anointing.”⁸⁵ This document apparently never appeared in print.

The church teaches that endowments for the living and by proxy for the dead are a theological prerequisite for entering the highest degree of celestial kingdom. According to Brigham Young, the endowment

81. Ehat, “Joseph Smith’s Introduction,” 97-98.

82. Widen Jay Watson, ed., *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1846-1847* (1971, Salt Lake City: Widen J. Watson), 556; William Clayton, *William Clayton’s Journal*, ed. by Clayton Family Association (1921, Salt Lake City: The Deseret News), 202-3; Quinn, “Latter-day Saint Prayer Circles, 79-105.

83. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (1965, Provo, Utah: BYU Press) 3:386-87.

84. Laureen R. Jaussi and Gloria D. Chaston, comps., *Register of LDS Church Records* (1968, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co.), 366-67, cited in James Dwight Tingen, “The Endowment House: 1855-1889” (BYU senior history paper for Professor Eugene E. Campbell, Dec. 1974; photocopy in my possession), 14-15, 19-21; Richard Cowan, *Temple Building—Ancient and Modern* (1971, Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press), 29; Buerger, “The Fullness of the Priesthood,” 28-29.

85. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 5:124.

consisted of "receiv[ing] all those ordinances. . . which are necessary. . . to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood."⁸⁶

The concept of endowments for the dead was first introduced by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo.⁸⁷ It received increased public discussion in Utah by Brigham Young.⁸⁸ According to St. George Temple president David H. Cannon, the first recorded endowments for the dead in the history of the church were performed 11 January 1877, eleven days after that temple's dedication.⁸⁹ Young taught that it was necessary to restrict the conferral of these ceremonies to Utah temples, believing that to do otherwise would "destroy the object of the gathering."⁹⁰ At that time, the only LDS temples were in Utah. The Nauvoo Temple had burned and Young had announced in 1858 that the Kirtland Temple had been "dis-owned by the Father and the Son."⁹¹

Apparently, no written version of the ceremony had ever been made. Following the dedication of the lower portion of the St. George Temple on 1 January 1877, Brigham Young decided it was necessary to commit the endowment ceremony to written form. On 14 January 1877 he "requested Brigham Jr. & W. Woodruff to write out the Ceremony of the Endowments from Beginning to End,"⁹² assisted by John D. T. McAllister and L. John Nuttall. Daily drafts were submitted to Young's review and approval. The project took approximately two months to complete. On 21 March 1877, Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal: "President Young has been laboring all winter to get up a perfect form of Endowments as far as possible. They having been perfected I read them to the Company today."⁹³

86. JD 2:31-32; see also 2:315; 5:133; 6:63, 154-55; 8:339; 9:25-26, 91; 10:172; 11:27; 18:132; 19:250.

87. William Clayton Report, 8 April 1844, and Thomas Bullock Report, 8 April 1844, cited in Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 362-65; Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:388-89.

88. JD 16:185-89.

89. Cannon to George F. Richards, 18 July 1922, in "Confidential Research Files," typescript collection of First Presidency letters, temple minutes, and other important documents related to temple work, originals in LDS Church Archives, copy in Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

90. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 6:307-8. During this same meeting on 26 December 1866, Young outlined accepted procedures for administering second anointings, then said, "when Persons Came to get their Endowments.[they] Should be Clean & pure. A man should not touch a woman for 10 days before getting their Endowments."

91. JD 2:32.

92. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:322.

93. *Ibid.*, 7:322-23, 32527, 337, 340-41; entries Jan.-March 1877.

The St. George Temple endowment included a revised thirty-minute "lecture at the veil" which summarized important theological concepts taught in the endowment and also contained references to the Adam-God doctrine. For example, Brigham Young taught in this lecture that Adam "had begotten all the spirit[s] that was to come to this earth, and Eve our common Mother who is the mother of all living bore those spirits in the celestial world. . . . [They] consequently came to this earth and commenced the great work of forming tabernacles for those spirits to dwell in."⁹⁴ This teaching may have been included in the veil lecture as late as the turn of the century. It is uncertain whether the St. George Temple veil ceremony's Adam-God teaching was included in all temples.⁹⁵

This probably was not the first time Adam-God had been mentioned in the endowment ceremony. Although official temple scripts do not exist prior to 1877, several unfriendly published accounts of the Endowment House ceremony contain cast listings and dialogues of different characters during the creation scene for Elohim, Jehovah, Jesus, and Michael.⁹⁶ Their recounting of the concomitant presence of Jehovah and Jesus provides further evidence of the use of the Adam-God doctrine in the temple ceremony.⁹⁷ Given that the origin of the Adam-God doctrine can most reliably be traced to Brigham Young in Utah, it seems highly unlikely that similar ideas were advanced in the Nauvoo Temple.⁹⁸

94. Nuttall Diary, 7 Feb. 1877; see also Nuttall "Memoranda," (prepared for Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith, 3 June 1892, L. John Nuttall Papers, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah), 3 June 1892; Nuttall Diary, entries for 5, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 22, 25, 27 Jan., 1, 3, 10, 12, 13, 19, 21, 24, 27 Feb., 16, 17, 18, 20, 22 March, and 3 April 1877; St. George Historical Record Minutes, 8 Nov., 13 Dec. 1890, 15, 22 May 1891, 11 June 1892 (typescript in my possession; original in Historical Department Archives); Charles Lowell Walker, *Diary of Charles Lowell Walker*, eds. A. Carl Larson and Katharine Miles, 2 vols. (1980, Logan: Utah State University Press), entry for 11 June 1892, in 2:740-41; David H. Cannon to Joseph F. Smith and Counselors, 21 Oct. 1916, in "Confidential Research Files"; Fred C. Collier, comp., *Unpublished Revelations of the Prophets and Presidents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (2d ed., 1981, Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing Co.), 113-16, 165-76; Buerger, "The Adam-God Doctrine," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 14-58; Boyd Kirkland, "Jehovah as the Father," *Sunstone* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1984): 36-44.

95. Buerger, "Adam-God Doctrine," 34, 53 n76; St. George Temple Minutes: K9368R, 5 March 1901, p. 129, and 19 Dec. 1902, p. 261; K9369, 15 Oct. 1906, p. 519; K9369R, 14 Dec. 1911, p. 93, in "Confidential Research Files."

96. Hyde, *Mormonism*, 92-93; Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, *A Journey to Great Salt Lake City*, 2 vols. (1861, London: W. Jeffs) 2:67-68; Catherine Waite, *The Mormon Prophet and His Harem* (1866, Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press), 246-49, 252; John Hanson Beadle, *Life in Utah: Or, the Mysteries and Crimes of Mormonism* (1870, Philadelphia: National Publishing Co.), 486, 489-91; Young, *Wife No. 19*, 357.

97. Kirkland, "Jehovah as the Father."

98. Buerger, "Adam-God Doctrine," 25-28.

Although this material was clearly an innovation, official documentation on the development of the endowment during the Utah period is sparse. John Hyde (a disaffected Mormon) wrote in 1857 that "the whole affair is being constantly amended and corrected, and [Heber C.] Kimball often says, 'We will get it perfect by-and-bye.'"⁹⁹ One of the few known discussions on restructuring the endowment ceremony in the late 1800s came during a meeting of the reconvened School of the Prophets on 2 August 1883 in Salt Lake City. Church president John Taylor expressed serious misgivings about giving newly initiated people an endowment consisting of both the lower (Aaronic Priesthood) and higher (Melchizedek Priesthood) ceremonies, feeling that members should first receive the Aaronic portion of the endowment and prove their faithfulness prior to receiving the Melchizedek portion. Concurring associates included Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, and Franklin D. Richards.¹⁰⁰ Despite such high-level consensus, this position, previously advocated in public by Brigham Young on 11 June 1864,¹⁰¹ and later by George Q. Cannon on 14 January 1894¹⁰² was apparently never implemented.

In sum, the endowment ceremony seems to have undergone only minimal structural change from its Nauvoo introduction through the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁰³ However, an important change in emphasis occurred, resulting from a revelation announced by Wilford Woodruff in the April 1894 general conference.¹⁰⁴ Woodruff's action stopped the practice of sealing people to general authorities and other church members outside their family lineage and instead directed that they be sealed to their own parents. This change successfully accommodated a growing discomfort among Latter-day Saints with the former practice; consequently, the number of living and dead sealings to parents surged in the following year.¹⁰⁵ In November 1894, the church established the Genealogical Society of Utah and ultimately awakened a heightened interest in systematic work for dead lineal ancestors.

99. Hyde, *Mormonism*, 100.

100. School of the Prophets, Salt Lake City, Minute Book, 1883, (typescript in my possession, original in LDS Historical Department Archives), 11-26; Jens Christian Anderson Weibye, Daybook No. 5, 9 July 1877, (typescript in my possession, original in LDS Historical Department Archives), 60; David H. Cannon to George F. Richards, 18 July 1922, in "Confidential Research Files."

101. JD 10:309.

102. In Jerreld L. Newquist, comp., *Gospel Truth: Discourses and Writings of President George Q. Cannon*, 2 vols. (1974, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co.) 1:227-28.

103. Bathsheba Smith, "A Notable Event—The Weber Stake Reunion," *Deseret Evening News*, 23 June 1903.

104. *Deseret Weekly* 48 (1894): 541-44.

105. Gordon Irving, "The Law of Adoption: One Phase of the Development of the Mormon Concept of Salvation, 1830-1900," *BYU Studies* 14 (Spring 1974): 313.

Shortly after the Salt Lake Temple's dedication, on 17 October 1893, President Woodruff met with the Council of the Twelve and the church's four temple presidents, spending "three hours in harmanizing the Different M[odes?] of Ceremonies in giving Endowments."¹⁰⁶ This effort may have been a precursor of an extensive review which began a decade later.

A numerical recapitulation of endowments performed during this period shows a total of 38,317 for the living, and 486,198 for the dead in the St. George, Logan, Manti, and Salt Lake temples between 1877 and 1898. Moreover, 5,213 second anointings for the living, and 3,411 for the dead were performed during the same period (Table 1).

V. THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD: 1900-30

One of the most painful but also most consequential events in modern LDS church history for the endowment was a series of hearings by a United States Senate subcommittee, 1904-06, to determine whether elected Utah senator and apostle Reed Smoot should be allowed to serve. Among many issues on which the committee heard testimony were the "secret oaths" of the temple endowment ceremony. The subcommittee's concern was whether the Mormon covenant of obedience would conflict with a senator's oath of loyalty to the Constitution. In the course of the Smoot hearings, the "oath of vengeance" also attracted the subcommittee's sustained interest.

One witness, disaffected Mormon and recently resigned Brigham Young Academy professor Walter M. Wolfe, testified that this oath was worded: "You and each of you do covenant and promise that you will pray, and never cease to pray, Almighty God to avenge the blood of the prophets upon this nation, and that you will teach the same to your children and your children's children unto the third and fourth generations."¹⁰⁷

On 14 December 1904, the *Washington Times* and the *New York Herald* featured front-page photographs of a man in purported endowment clothing, depicting signs and penalties. Testimony during this hearing as well as other previously published unfriendly discussions of this oath

106. Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9:267.

107. Smoot Hearing, *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. (1906, Washington: Government Printing Office) 4:6-7; see also 1:741-43, 791-92; 2:77-79, 148-49, 151-53, 160-62, 181-83, 189-90, 759, 762-764, 779; 4:68-69, and 495-97. Although a similar oath exists in the 30th degree of Scottish Rite Masonry ("Knight of Kadosh"), it is unlikely that this had any influence on the Mormon oath of vengeance (see Richardson, *Richardson's Monitor*, 188).

indicate that, commencing by 1845 in the Nauvoo Temple ceremony as administered by Brigham Young, the oath of vengeance was routinely given to all initiates.¹⁰⁸

Most Latter-day Saints today undoubtedly would be uncomfortable taking an oath of vengeance. Obviously, so was the general public's response to such testimony. In the context of early LDS church history, however, it is not difficult to see how and why such an oath developed. Following the bitter persecutions sanctioned by the governor of Missouri, the newly resettled saints in Nauvoo were deeply suspicious of more attempts to limit their freedom. Mistrust of government officials was heightened when Joseph Smith failed to obtain redress for the Missouri losses from U.S. president Martin Van Buren in February 1840.¹⁰⁹ Immediately following Joseph's and Hyrum Smith's murders in June 1844, hostile feelings by Mormons toward their persecutors was at a fever pitch. Encouraged, perhaps, by scriptural passages such as Revelation 6:9-11, many Latter-day Saints hoped for revenge of the deaths of their charismatic and beloved leaders. Allen Stout, a former Danite, recorded in his diary after he watched their bodies being returned to Nauvoo: "I stood there and then resolved in my mind that I would never let an opportunity slip unimproved of avenging their blood. . . . I knew not how to contain myself, and when I see one of the men who persuaded them to give up to be tried, I feel like cutting their throats yet."¹¹⁰

Such feelings were institutionalized in the Nauvoo Temple rites. On 21 December 1845, Heber C. Kimball recorded a passage in his diary regarding "seven to twelve persons who have met together every day to pray ever since Joseph's death. . . .and I have covenanted, and never will rest. . . .until those men who killed Joseph & Hyrum have been wiped out of the earth."¹¹¹ During an 1889 meeting of the First Presidency, George Q. Cannon reminisced about his experience there:

108. Van Dusen and Van Dusen, *The Mormon Endowment*, 9; Lewis, *Narrative*, 9-10; William Hall, *The Abominations of Mormonism Exposed* (1852, Sheffield, England: M. Thomas & Son), 49-50; Hyde, *Mormonism*, 97; Remy and Brenchley, *A Journey*, 72; Waite, *A Mormon Prophet*, 257-58; Beadle, *Life in Utah*, 496-97; Stenhouse, *Tell It All*, 365; Young, *Wife No. 19*, 368; John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled* (1877, St. Louis: Bryan, Brand & Company), 160; "Mrs. G. H. R." and James H. Wallis, Sr., "Mysteries of the Endowment House," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 28 Sept. 1879; Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day, *Temple Lot Case* (1893, Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Publishing House and Bindery), 453, 457-8; *The Inside of Mormonism* (1903, Salt Lake City: Utah Americans), 13, 17, 29, 33, 42, 44, 47-49, 52-53, 65-66; "The Mormon Temple Endowment Ceremony," 170.

109. HC 4:80.

110. 28 June 1844, cited in Newell and Avery, *Mormon Enigma*, 196.

111. H. C. Kimball journal.

He [Cannon] understood when he had his endowments in Nauvoo that he took an oath against the murderers of the Prophet Joseph as well as other prophets, and if he had ever met any of those who had taken a hand in that massacre he would undoubtedly have attempted to avenge the blood of the martyrs. The Prophet charged Stephen Markham to avenge his blood should he be slain: after the Prophet's death Bro. Markham attempted to tell this to an assembly of the Saints, but Willard Richards pulled him down from the stand, as he feared the effect on the enraged people.¹¹²

Negative publicity from these hearings probably led to a deemphasis of this oath in the endowment. For example, while many early published accounts of the endowment (see n. 108) echo George Q. Cannon's statement that those endowed were personally charged with avenging Joseph and Hyrum Smith's deaths, in a 1912 meeting in the St. George Temple, David H. Cannon described the "law of retribution" as follows:

To pray the Father to avenge the blood of the prophets and righteous men that has been shed, etc. In the endowment house this was given but as persons went there only once, it was not so strongly impressed upon their minds, but in the setting in order [of] the endowments for the dead it was given as it is written in 9 Chapter of Revelations and in that language we importune our Father, not that we may, but that He, our Father, will avenge the blood of martyrs shed for the testimony of Jesus.¹¹³

This change in emphasis on the law of retribution evolved further as part of many procedural revisions made to the endowment ritual and temple clothing spearheaded by an apostolic committee organized in 1919, at the beginning of Heber J. Grant's administration, under the direction of Grant's counselor and Salt Lake Temple president, Anthon H. Lund.¹¹⁴ Following Lund's death in 1921, leadership of this committee went to the new Salt Lake Temple president George F. Richards. From 1921 through 1927, Richards chaired the group which included David O. McKay, Joseph Fielding Smith, Stephen L Richards, John A. Widtsoe, and later James E. Talmage. Under Richards's direction, the committee codified and simplified the temple ceremonies originally drafted in St. George in 1877, committing to paper for the first time those ceremonies informally known as the "unwritten portion," i.e., "the covenants and

112. Abraham H. Cannon Journal, 1889, Archives & Manuscripts, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 205.

113. St. George Temple Minutes K9369R, 22 Feb. 1912, in "Confidential Research Files," 110.

114. Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* (1986, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press), 300.

the instructions given in forming the [prayer] circle and [the lecture] at the veil."¹¹⁵

A major reason for this effort was to ensure that the ceremony was presented the same way in all temples. Since part of the ceremony had remained unwritten, the manner in which it was given tended to vary somewhat. The St. George ceremony was taken as a model, because it was the oldest ceremony; there Brigham Young had committed most of the ritual to writing, trying to make the ceremony conform to the content introduced by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo. Since 1893, St. George Temple president David H. Cannon had maintained a certain degree of autonomy as the president of the oldest temple. In 1911, for example, he stated: "We are not controlled by the Salt Lake Temple. . . . This temple has the original of these endowments which was given by President Brigham Young and we have not nor will we change anything thereof unless dictated by the President of the church."¹¹⁶

In 1924, Cannon apparently refused to accept changes endorsed by the special committee and the First Presidency. In a meeting on 19 June 1924 in the St. George temple, Cannon recounted how George F. Richards had "criticized [him] very severely for not adhering to the unwritten part of the ceremonies as he had been instructed to do." He told the assembly of local church leaders that Richards had instructed him to either burn the old rulings and instructions or send them to Salt Lake: "If we want any information, not contained in the 'President's Book' we will refer to the authorities of the church for that information, but not refer to any of the old rulings." St. George Stake president Edward H. Snow (who became the temple president in 1926) then mentioned one of the recent changes, "in no longer praying that the blood of the prophets and righteous men, might be atoned for, because this prayer has been answered and [is] no longer necessary." As if to pass approval on this change, Cannon recalled comments by Anthony W. Ivins given at a conference in Enterprise, stating that Ivins "took exception to the way the Law of Retribution was worded, and said he [Ivins] thought the language was harsh and that the authorities [had] thought of changing that."¹¹⁷ Perhaps in response to occasional continued references to this oath, a final letter in 1927 from Apostle Richards to all temple presidents directed that they "omit from the prayer circles all reference to avenging the blood of

115. G. F. Richards Journal, 12 July 1924, see also entries for 7, 8, 12 April, 10, 27, 28 Dec. 1921; 3, 7 June, 30, 31 Aug. 1922; 14, 16, 17, 19, 20 April 1923; 9, 16 Dec. 1926; 25, 27 Jan. 1927.

116. St. George Temple Minutes K9369R, 14 Dec. 1911, in "Confidential Research Files," 93.

117. *Ibid.*, 19 June 1924.

the Prophets. Omit from the ordinance and lecture all reference to retribution."¹¹⁸

In addition to eliminating the oath of vengeance during this period, other changes included:

- Accommodating more patrons by streamlining the ceremony. The length of the temple endowment ceremony was reduced (high-end estimates range from six to nine hours in total length)¹¹⁹ to roughly three hours (including initiatory ordinances).
- A number of the endowment's graphic penalties, all of which closely followed Masonic penalties' wording, were moderated. For example, the penalties for revealing endowments included details of how they would be carried out (the tongue to be "torn out by its roots," etc.). Today's endowment only alludes to those earlier descriptions as various methods of taking life.¹²⁰
- After learning that garments and temple clothing were not originally designed solely by Joseph Smith, the committee dramatically altered the style of the temple garment. According to two accounts, the original temple garment was made of unbleached muslin with markings bound in turkey red, fashioned by Nauvoo seamstress Elizabeth Warren Allred under Joseph Smith's direction. Joseph's reported intention was to have a one-piece garment covering the arms, legs and torso, having "as few seams as possible."¹²¹ Ceremonial markings on the garment were originally

118. Richards to Pres. St. George Temple (Edward H. Snow), 15 Feb. 1927 (photocopy in my possession; original in LDS Historical Department Archives). Apparently this was a form letter sent to the presidents of all temples.

119. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 300.

120. J. D. Stead, *Doctrines and Dogmas of Brighamism Exposed* (1911, Independence, Mo.: Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints), 113, 116-17; Stuart Martin, *The Mystery of Mormonism* (1920, London: Odhams Press Limited), 256, 259-60; W. M. Paden, *Temple Mormonism* (1931, New York: A. J. Montgomery), 18, 20; Smoot Hearings; Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?* (1972, Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Co.), 468, 470-71. This last work (462-73) contains what purports to be a complete script of the modern endowment ceremony in 1969 when the Tanners first published it in *The Mormon Kingdom*, 2 vols. (1969, Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Co.): 1:123-34. More recent similar publications include Bob Witte and Gordon H. Fraser, *What's Going on in Here? An Exposing of the Secret Mormon Temple Rituals* (c1980, Eugene, Ore.: Gordon Fraser Publishing); Chuck Sackett, *What's Going on in There? The Verbatim Text of the Mormon Temple Rituals Annotated and Explained by a Former Temple Worker*, 2d ed. (1982, Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Ministry to Mormons and Ex-Mormons for Jesus); A. C. Lambert, notes of a conversation with John A. Widtsoe, 24 March 1950, A. C. Lambert Collection, Box 26, Book 3, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

121. Eliza Mariah A. Munson, "Early Pioneer History" n.d.; see also H. Kimball Diary,

snipped into the cloth in the temple during an initiate's first visit. The committee made some changes: Sleeves were raised from the wrist to the elbow, legs raised from the ankle to just below the knee, buttons used instead of strings, the collar eliminated, and the crotch closed.¹²²

The introduction of this new-style garment caused considerable unrest among some members.¹²³ Nevertheless, the pre-1923 style garment was required in the temple ceremony until 1975 when its use became optional.¹²⁴ Occasionally minor design changes have been implemented such as lowering the neckline and shortening the legs and sleeves. The most dramatic recent change was the two-piece garment in 1979. Garments are manufactured by the church's Beehive Clothing Mills, which reportedly consults East Coast fashion designers for pattern considerations.¹²⁵ While members are not now permitted to make their own garments, they may make their own temple clothing provided it follows the approved design, although this is not openly encouraged. Upon approval of the stake or mission president, a handbook may be lent to worthy members who must make the clothing under the supervision or direction of the stake Relief Society president or mission president.¹²⁶ One additional recent policy change allows guests at temple wedding ceremonies to attend in street clothes, provided they have donned white slippers.

- For the first time, adherence to the Word of Wisdom became an official requirement for admission to the temple. Apparently this had been encouraged prior to 1921, but exceptions had been made.¹²⁷
- In 1920, the first night sessions were instituted, beginning with

21 Dec. 1845; Rose Marie Reid, Oral History (interviewed by William G. Hartley, 1973, James H. Moyle Oral History Project), 169.

122. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 4 June 1923; Heber J. Grant, Charles W. Penrose, and Anthony W. Ivins to church leaders, 14 June 1923 (typescript in my possession; original in LDS Historical Department Archives); Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 301.

123. T. Edgar Lyon, Oral History (interviewed by Davis Bitton, 1975, James H. Moyle Oral History Project), 249-50.

124. Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner, and Marion G. Romney, letter to all temple presidents, 10 Nov. 1975 (photocopy in my possession).

125. Rose Marie Reid oral history; Ron Priddis, "The Development of the Garment," *Seventh East Press* 1 (11 Nov. 1981): 5.

126. *Instructions for Making Temple Clothing and Clothing for the Dead* (1972, Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), 1.

127. Thomas G. Alexander "The Word of Wisdom: From Principle to Requirement," *Dialogue: a Journal of Mormon Thought* 14 (Fall 1981): 82.

one evening session per week and later expanding to three evening sessions per week.¹²⁸

- Another element of literalism disappeared in 1927 when kissing over the altar during vicarious sealings for the dead was abolished.¹²⁹

One practice during the Depression years was to pay people to perform endowments for the dead. Usually these temple workers were members of the church with few funds, frequently elderly. Members who did not have time to perform ordinances for deceased ancestors customarily paid 75 cents for men and 50 cents for women per ordinance. Typically money was left on deposit with clerks at the temple, who would disburse it as each vicarious endowment was performed. It is not clear when this practice ended, but it was probably difficult for temples to administer the collection and distribution of cash.¹³⁰

Probably the greatest twentieth-century catalyst to increase the number of vicarious endowments was Heber J. Grant's emphasis on temple work.¹³¹ Endowments performed per member during Grant's administration increased substantially. From 1898 to 1912, vicarious endowments averaged .11 endowments per member per year. From 1912 to 1930, the average increased to .38. The decade of 1930-40 saw the annual average again jump to .62. Perhaps partially resulting from the combination of World War II and Grant's lessening influence, due to his advanced age and death in 1945, this average dropped to .34 by 1945 and remained there through the end of 1950. Second anointings decreased dramatically during President Grant's administration, becoming practically nonexistent by 1930.

VI. MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND THE ENDOWMENT CEREMONY: 1931-87

Since its introduction, the endowment ceremony's presentation has been within a dramatic setting. The earliest known comment by the First Presidency regarding the use of motion pictures in the endowment ceremony came in 1927, when they affirmed they had no intention then of

128. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 299.

129. Richards to Pres. St. George Temple.

130. George F. Richards, Jr., Oral History (interviewed by William G. Hartley, 1973, James H. Moyle Oral History Project), 58; L. Garrett Myers, Oral History (interviewed by Bruce D. Blumell, 1976, James H. Moyle Oral History Project), 21-22; Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose, "Temple Work for Church Members Abroad," *Improvement Era* 17 (March 1915): 451-52.

131. *Conference Report of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 1928 (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press) 8-9.

using them.¹³² The next known discussion of this policy came in late 1953, when David O. McKay, then president of the church, asked Gordon B. Hinckley to chair a committee to create a meaningful endowment presentation for the new one-room Swiss Temple.¹³³ Other committee members included Richard L. Evans, Edward O. Anderson, and Joseph Fielding Smith.¹³⁴ The outgrowth was a 16mm film directed by Harold I. Hansen in the upper room of the Salt Lake Temple, shot over a period of one year. Due to inclement Utah weather, outside photography was done in Southern states, while scenes of lava flowing accompanying the creation portion were taken from approximately 350 feet of film from *Fantasia*, used by permission of Walt Disney Studios.¹³⁵

Different sets of temple workers—primarily composed of returned missionaries, native converts, and local nationals—were used for versions in English, German, French, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and Finnish. A year later, additional casts produced Samoan, Tahitian, Tongan, and Maori versions for use in the New Zealand Temple. According to one source, this film was not a professional staging: There was no real acting, no scenery, and no attempt at sophistication. The temple workers simply enacted a live endowment. This extremely conservative use of the technology was clearly not an effort to produce an art form but a means of efficiently allowing endowment ceremony sessions to take place in a single room in the new temples, rather than moving from one room to another.¹³⁶

The wide-screen concept introduced in early-1960s American movies influenced church architect Harold Burton in designing the Oakland Temple's two endowment rooms. He planned huge projection areas that required the use of 35mm film, although curtains reduced the total

132. Heber J. Grant, Anthony W. Ivins, and Charles W. Nibley to Pearl W. Peterson, 7 Aug. 1927 (typescript in my possession; original in First Presidency Letterpress Copybooks, LDS Historical Department Archives).

133. Unless otherwise noted, information concerning the history of endowment movies is based on Frank S. Wise, Oral History (interviewed by Gordon Irving, 1980-81, James H. Moyle Oral History Project) and Wise, "A New Concept in Temple Building and Operation" (typescript report dated 18 Feb. 1983, written at the request of and for Gordon B. Hinckley of the First Presidency. Wise edited all endowment films).

134. David O. McKay Diary, 29 Oct. 1953, in Francis M. Gibbons, *David O. McKay: Apostle to the World, Prophet of God* (1986, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co.), 329.

135. Richard L. Evans, Collected Papers, selected typescripts in my possession. Collection includes letters from the First Presidency, Ernest L. Wilkinson, and Wetzel O. Whitaker related to the use of *Fantasia* in the temple film and to the construction of the new BYU motion pictures studio used to film the endowment.

136. Spencer Palmer, interviewed by David John Buerger, 1 Aug. 1979. Notes in my possession. See also Wise oral history, 1980-81, 53).

TABLE I
Temple Work for Living and Dead (and Other Vital Statistics), 1846-1985

Period Ending	Total Membership ¹	Net Increase	Operating Temples ²	Endowments for Living ³	Endowments for Dead	2nd Anointings Living	2nd Anointings Dead	Avg. Vic. End. per Mem. p/Yr.
1846	33,993	0	1.0	5,200 ⁴	0	591 ⁵	0	0.00
1884	158,242	124,249	1.1	54,170 ^{3,6}	0	694 ⁶	0	0.00
1898	267,251	109,009	3.2	38,317 ⁷	486,198 ⁷	5,213 ⁸	3,411 ⁸	0.17
1912	417,555	150,304	4.0	56,752	536,309	6,367 ⁸	2,216 ⁸	0.11
1930	670,017	252,462	5.3	90,071	3,785,634	2,048 ⁸	601 ⁸	0.38
1940	862,664	192,647	7.0	67,479	4,716,556	8 ⁸	3 ⁸	0.62
1945	979,454	116,790	7.2	36,429	1,592,856	NA	NA	0.34
1950	1,111,314	131,860	8.0	60,457	1,927,806	NA	NA	0.37
1955	1,357,274	245,960	8.2	69,953	2,802,938	NA	NA	0.45
1960	1,693,180	335,906	11.2	88,408	4,681,781	NA	NA	0.60
1965	2,395,932	702,752	12.4	134,054	5,132,669	NA	NA	0.49
1970	2,930,810	534,878	13.0	141,778	7,557,458	NA	NA	0.56
1975	3,572,202	641,392	15.0	188,226	12,018,105	NA	NA	0.72
1980	4,644,768	1,072,566	16.4	244,682	18,568,811	NA	NA	0.89
1985	5,910,496	1,265,728	26.2	259,268	22,136,404	NA	NA	0.82
Totals:				1,535,244	85,943,525	14,921	6,231	0.43

¹1987 Church Almanac, pp. 252-55.

²Ibid., 258-99, and Conference Reports; incl. Old Council House and Endowment House.

³Cowen 1971, 29; Conference Reports; and personal research.

⁴Buerger 1983, 25 n48.

⁵Book of Anointings, typescript, original in LDS Church Archives.

⁶Tingen 1974, 14-15. Excludes St. George Temple statistics.

⁷McAllister 1898. Includes St. George Temple statistics from 1877.

⁸Temple Ordinance Statistics, Books A, B, and C; Salt Lake Temple Ordinance Book - all in LDS Church Archives. Includes St. George Temple statistics from 1877.

TABLE 2
Annual Second Anointing Data for All Temples, 1846-1941

Year	Second Anointings for the Living:					Second Anointings for the Dead:						
	St. George	Logan	Manti	S.L.	Other	Total	St. George	Logan	Manti	S.L.	Other	Total
1846	—	—	—	—	591	591	—	—	—	—	—	—
1847-95	1,312	1,325	810	817	694	4,958	1,387	681	403	405	0	2,876
1896	9	76	152	190	0	427	15	30	75	104	0	224
1897	5	99	41	136	0	281	4	41	32	88	0	165
1898	16	30	16	179	0	241	19	15	16	96	0	146
1899	53	69	51	328	0	501	25	29	22	135	0	211
1900	104	274	141	632	0	1,151	28	51	63	181	0	323
1901	43	188	376	529	0	1,136	13	49	166	113	0	341
1902	24	58	161	309	0	552	19	29	64	114	0	226
1903	15	70	71	234	0	390	8	25	37	107	0	177
1904	15	62	29	209	0	315	6	30	23	90	0	149
1905	23	35	32	172	0	262	11	23	24	55	0	113
1906	16	26	25	172	0	239	5	22	14	48	0	89
1907	5	23	60	269	0	357	9	7	33	66	0	115
1908	14	96	41	258	0	409	5	25	22	70	0	122
1909	9	30	20	160	0	219	3	11	2	75	0	91
1910	6	73	56	162	0	297	7	17	12	35	0	71
1911	3	68	38	195	0	304	2	19	23	42	0	86
1912	12	49	30	144	0	235	1	18	26	57	0	102
1913	14	46	11	138	0	209	6	21	6	54	0	87
1914	1	27	35	157	0	220	8	14	15	58	0	95
1915	24	25	36	116	0	201	6	9	4	28	0	47
1916	20	48	58	115	0	241	2	21	10	32	0	65
1917	10	44	23	135	0	212	6	7	10	42	0	65
1918	5	13	20	117	0	155	2	13	7	21	0	43
1919	7	41	17	86	0	151	1	7	12	19	0	39

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Year	Second Anointings for the Living:					Second Anointings for the Dead:						
	St. George	Logan	Manti	S.L.	Other	Total	St. George	Logan	Manti	S.L.	Other	Total
1920	8	43	7	96	0	154	4	9	3	23	0	39
1921	17	24	28	106	0	175	5	10	9	24	0	48
1922	13	28	6	52	0	99	3	3	0	38	0	44
1923	2	10	5	47	13	77	1	1	0	5	1	8
1924	5	35	2	19	0	61	0	3	0	1	0	4
1925	2	3	2	34	0	41	0	1	0	2	0	3
1926	3	0	0	18	0	21	1	1	0	1	0	3
1927	0	2	0	13	0	15	0	0	0	8	0	8
1928	2	0	0	4	0	6	0	0	0	1	0	1
1929	0	0	2	8	0	10	0	0	1	1	0	2
1930	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1931	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1
1932	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1933	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1934	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1
1935	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1936	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1937	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1
1938	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
1939	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1940	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1941	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	1,817	3,040	2,402	6,364	1,298	14,921	1,612	1,243	1,134	2,241	1	6,231

screen size. After the temple was dedicated in 1964, 4"x5" slide projectors were used to produce photo murals depicting room changes found in live endowment presentations.

The second film of the endowment ceremony was produced in 1966.¹³⁷ Due to space limitations in the Salt Lake Temple, the First Presidency authorized this version (known as Project #100) to be filmed in the BYU motion pictures studio.¹³⁸ A new studio stage constructed for this purpose was formally opened 24 April 1966 with a prayer by Gordon B. Hinckley. This film was used for several years in Oakland; 16mm reduction prints were prepared for English-speaking patrons in foreign temples.

In a successful effort to condense the presentation to about ninety minutes, a third motion picture was filmed at the BYU studio during October and November 1969. Like the second film, this professional effort (known as Project #134) was directed by Wetzel O. Whitaker. The cast included both professional and amateur actors,¹³⁹ as well as elaborate scenery. Most of the outdoor scenes were filmed on the West Coast. Actors and production staff had to have temple recommends and received prior worthiness clearance through their bishops before being asked to participate. The film was shot in one studio, usually between 10 p.m. and midnight to ensure privacy. Participants memorized their lines in a room just off set and used prompt cards. They could not take the script home for study.¹⁴⁰ This film was completed by November 1971 when the Provo and Ogden temples opened. Due to its shorter playing time, it replaced the second film originally used in the Oakland Temple.

Primarily because of President Harold B. Lee's discomfort with the

137. The cast for this film included Adam: Max Mason Brown; Eve: Marielen Wadley Christensen; Lucifer: Lael Woodbury; Minister: Morris Clinger; Peter: Harold I. Hansen; James: Douglas Clawson; John: Max Golightly; Elohim: unknown; Elohim voice: Dan Keeler; Jehovah: unknown; Jehovah voice: Carl Pope; Narrator: Glen Shaw. The production crew included Camera: Robert Stum and Dalvin Williams; Lighting: Grant Williams and R. Steven Clawson; Casting: Keith Atkinson, David Jacobs and Judd Pierson; Sound: Kenneth Hansen and Sharrol Felt; Set Design: Douglas Johnson and Robert Stum; Research: Scott Whitaker and Douglas Johnson; Script Girl: Marilyn Finch; Editing: Frank S. Wise; Director: Wetzel O. Whitaker.

138. Richard L. Evans papers.

139. The cast for this film included Adam: Hank Kester; Eve: Lena Tuluanen Rogers; Lucifer: Ron Fredrickson; Minister: Spencer Palmer; Peter: Gordon Jump; James: Charles Metten; John: R. LeRoi Nelson; Elohim: Jesse Stay; Elohim voice: Lael Woodbury; Jehovah: Bryce Chamberlain; Jehovah voice: Robert Peterson; Narrator: Glen Shaw. The production crew included Camera: Robert Stum; Lighting: Grant Williams; Casting: Keith Atkinson; Sound: Don Fisk and Sharrol Felt, Set Design: Douglas Johnson; Production Manager: Dalvin Williams; Editing: Frank S. Wise; Director: Wetzel O. Whitaker.

140. Spencer Palmer interview.

long hair and beards worn by a few of Project #134's participants,¹⁴¹ a fourth endowment movie (Project #198) was produced at BYU during the early to middle 1970s. Again directed by Wetzel O. Whitaker, this film used largely new personnel.¹⁴² A major goal for this production was to create foreign sound tracks which did not look obviously dubbed. Since some languages such as Finnish and Japanese require substantially more time than do their English equivalents, this aspect was extremely challenging. Moreover, theological concerns required that translations be literal, not merely approximate. This synchronization was partially accomplished through techniques such as speeded-up soundtrack playback and step-printing every third frame twice to expand film length. Production crews recorded the audio sequences using European nationals in the London Temple in June 1972 and using Pacific nationals in a secured sound room at the BYU-Hawaii campus in June 1973.

In early 1976, the church's Temple Committee transferred all endowment film and sound operations from BYU to new facilities in the Salt Lake Temple basement. While film continues to be processed in a California lab, all sound tracks are now produced in this basement facility. Sound-track duplication facilities also exist in some other temples.

Probably because of recommendations made by Harold B. Lee, a member of the First Presidency after 1970, and a committee which included Apostle Howard W. Hunter (president of the Genealogical Society) working from 1968 to May 1972 to investigate endowment procedures in the temple, several phrases used in ceremony film scripts were subsequently dubbed out¹⁴³ in the mid-1970s.¹⁴⁴ According to one par-

141. Wise oral history, 57, and Wise, "A New Concept," 16.

142. The cast for this film included Adam: James Adamson; Eve: Laurel Pugmire; Lucifer: Sterling Van Wagenen; Minister: Keith Engar; Peter: Craig Costello; James: Ivan Crosland; John: Bruce Moffit; Elohim: Jesse Stay; Elohim voice: Lael Woodbury; Jehovah: Bryce Chamberlain; Jehovah voice: unknown; Narrator: Glen Shaw. The production crew included Camera: Robert Stum and Ted VanHorn; Lighting: Reed Smoot and Grant Williams; Casting: Peter Johnson; Sound: Don Fisk, Steve Aubrey and Kent Pendleton; Set Design: Douglas Johnson; Script Girl: Francine (last name unknown); Editing: Frank S. Wise; Director: Wetzel O. Whitaker; Assistant Director: Dave Jacobs.

143. For example, the preacher's reference to Satan having black skin was omitted in recent years; compare Witte and Fraser, *What's Going on in Here?*, 23, with Sackett, *What's Going on in There?*, 38. Another omission during the late 1960s is the preacher leading the audience in a Protestant hymn. Singing by a "temple choir" stopped in 1921 when the choir was disbanded (G. F. Richards Journal, 7-8 April 1921). Satan and the preacher no longer fix a specific salary to proselytize the audience for converts (Tanner and Tanner, *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality?*, 468-49; Witte and Fraser, *What's Going on in Here?*, 21). Some of these changes probably resulted from the Harold B. Lee committee's recommendations in 1972.

144. Henry E. Christiansen, Oral History (interviewed by Bruce D. Blumell, 1975-76, James H. Moyle Oral History Project) 68; George H. Fudge, Oral History (interviewed by

ticipant in the third filmed version, the person portraying Satan was originally to have been dark; but, due to protests by several LDS Polyne-sians, a Caucasian filled the role.¹⁴⁵ Although this film was intended to be an interim production, both the third and fourth films are still in use today. One person recalls that former Provo Temple president Harold G. Clark said the third film was not phased out because too many people preferred it over the fourth film.¹⁴⁶ Film two was subsequently cut down to the same length as that of films three and four for possible reintroduc-tion, mainly to provide more diversity for frequent temple-goers.¹⁴⁷

Perhaps one of the most significant effects of modern technology on temple work has stemmed from the church's widespread use of elec-tronic data processing. In 1961, a growing shortage of names provided by members for vicarious ordinance work forced church officials to de-cide between either closing temples, decreasing the number of sessions, or taking institutional responsibility for providing names. President David O. McKay opted to have the Genealogical Society take responsi-bility. Since the start of its name-extraction program, the society has pro-vided about 75 percent of all names for vicarious temple ordinances.¹⁴⁸

On a related note, members of the church's computer planning com-mittee realized during the late 1950s and early 1960s that, given the esti-mated 70 billion people who had been born on the earth, all LDS adults working in temples eight hours a day, seven days a week wouldn't be able to keep up with world population growth, much less complete ordi-nance work for deceased ancestors. This concern apparently has not dis-appeared.¹⁴⁹ Accordingly, a number of procedural changes were sug-gested. Some initial opposition came from Elder Harold B. Lee due to what he perceived as "doctrinal tampering." However, an important change in the early 1960s permitted vicarious ordinances to be per-formed out of their traditional order, with new data processing systems collating the results. Thus, deceased persons could be sealed or endowed before they had been baptized, washed, anointed, or confirmed.¹⁵⁰

Since the Genealogical Society initiated the computer-based name-extraction program in 1965, computers have been used to track the ad-

Bruce D. Blumell, 1976, James H. Moyle Oral History Project), 71; Harold B. Lee diary, 31 Jan. 1971 and 6 Feb. 1971, in L. Brent Goates, *Harold B. Lee: Prophet & Seer* (1985, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft), 427-28.

145. Spencer Palmer interview.

146. Ibid.

147. Wise, "A New Concept."

148. Fudge oral history, 15-19.

149. See *Church News*, 20 July 1986, 16.

150. Fudge oral history, 17-19; Gary Carlson, Oral History (interviewed by James B. Allen, 1980, James H. Moyle Oral History Project), 8-21.

ministration of both living and vicarious temple ordinances ranging from initiatory work to marriage sealings. Patrons now present their temple recommends—coated with magnetic identification strips—to receive and account for the name of a deceased person for proxy work. Computerization clearly has augmented efficiency in doing work for the dead.¹⁵¹

VII. TRENDS AND IMPLICATIONS

In 1980, President Spencer W. Kimball stated: "We feel an urgency for this great work to be accomplished and wish to encourage the Saints to accept their responsibility of performing temple ordinances."¹⁵² Many older temples have been renovated to accommodate the more efficient movie format. The number of operating temples has increased dramatically, from thirteen in 1970 to forty in 1986, with an additional six currently under planning or construction.¹⁵³ An analysis of ordinance data, however, suggests that rates of temple work have remained relatively constant over the last fifteen years. Based on figures from this period, an average of one out of every three converts receives his or her own endowment. Since 1971, the difference between total live endowments and the number of new converts has steadily increased. This trend clearly began after World War II. New missionaries' endowments have constituted almost one-third of all live endowments, on the average, since 1971; thus, the actual percentage of new members receiving their own endowment is much smaller. Since the church will not release geographic annual totals of new converts, it is not yet possible to determine sociological factors which may account for the widening gap between total new converts and total live endowments. Since 1971, vicarious endowments have been performed at an average rate of .81 per member per year. These per-member levels have declined slightly during the past ten years despite the impressive number of new temple dedications.

It is not possible to give full confidence to these figures or their interpretation since church administrators do not provide more detailed endowment data arranged by year.¹⁵⁴ Other unavailable data critical to a

151. James B. Allen, "Testimony and Technology: A Phase of the Modernization of Mormonism Since 1950," in Thomas G. Alexander and Jessie L. Embry, eds., *After 150 Years: The Latter-day Saints in Sesquicentennial Perspective* (1983, Provo, Utah: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies), 173-207.

152. Spencer W. Kimball, edited version of speech given 4 April 1980 to Regional Representatives, *The Ensign* 10 (Aug. 1980): 2.

153. As of March 2002 there are 108 operational temples and 17 announced or under construction. About 40% are in the U.S.; more than half are in North America.

154. A telling example of the increasing reticence to share operating statistics is that for the first time in thirty-one years, the official Conference Report (first appearing in *The*

TABLE 3
Annual Endowment Data From 1971-1985

Year	Total Membership	Convert Baptisms	Operating Temples	Endowments for Living	Endowments for Dead	Living End. %T Converts	Vicarious End. per Mem. p/Yr.	Missionaries Set Apart	%T Live Endowments
1971	3,090,953	83,514	13	31,685	1,701,907	0.38	0.55	8,344	0.26
1972	3,218,908	91,237	15	35,003	2,275,192	0.38	0.71	7,874	0.22
1973	3,306,658	79,603	15	36,964	2,477,532	0.46	0.75	9,471	0.26
1974	3,409,987	69,018	16	37,432	2,535,518	0.54	0.74	9,811	0.26
1975	3,572,202	95,412	16	47,142	3,027,956	0.49	0.85	14,446	0.31
1976	3,742,749	133,959	16	43,645	3,421,793	0.33	0.91	13,928	0.32
1977	3,969,220	167,939	14	47,037	3,555,118	0.28	0.90	14,561	0.31
1978	4,166,854	152,000	16	50,400	3,756,600	0.33	0.90	15,860	0.31
1979	4,404,121	193,000	17	51,600	3,873,300	0.27	0.88	16,590	0.32
1980	4,644,768	211,000	19	52,000	3,962,000	0.25	0.85	16,600	0.32
1981	4,920,449	224,000	19	49,800	4,101,000	0.22	0.83	17,800	0.36
1982	5,162,619	207,000	19	48,800	4,418,000	0.24	0.86	18,260	0.37
1983	5,351,724	189,419	25	52,116	4,364,928	0.28	0.82	19,450	0.37
1984	5,641,054	192,983	31	53,998	4,395,424	0.28	0.78	19,720	0.37
1985	5,910,496	197,640	37	54,554	4,857,052	0.28	0.82	19,890	0.36
						0.33	0.81		0.32

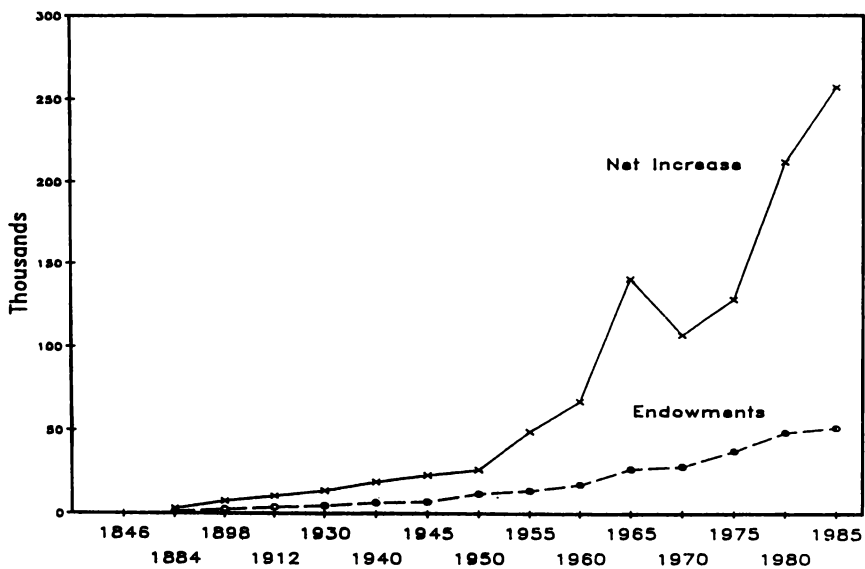


FIGURE 1
Avg. Net Member Increase vs. Avg. Live Endowments: 1846-1985

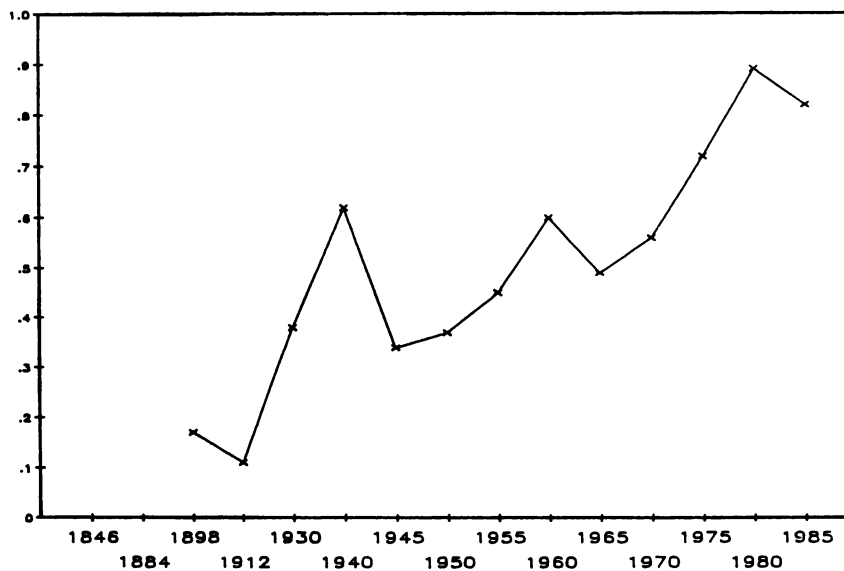


FIGURE 2
Avg. Vicarious Endowments per Member per Year: 1846-1985

reliable statistical analysis include annual totals of temple recommend holders and parallel information on temple work in regions outside the United States. The only international statistics I have seen indicate that in 1985 at least 75 percent of all live and vicarious endowments were performed within United States temples.¹⁵⁵ U.S. membership in 1985 constituted about 52 percent of total membership. The disproportionate amount of U.S. endowments may indicate that the temple—or vicarious work for the dead—has lower priority overseas, a condition that could change as a new generation abroad grows up with “our own” temple. It could also indicate that foreign converts may be so economically disadvantaged that they cannot often attend temples, even when they are relatively close. Only time will tell what effect the large number of new foreign temples will have on the amount of endowments performed.

There is no way to quantitatively evaluate the spiritual benefit of temple work for either the living or the dead. Certainly, no spiritual benefits can be realized without participation. The 1970s saw a renewed emphasis on temple work.¹⁵⁶ During the latter part of the decade, many stakes were issued endowment quotas by their temples. While less emphasis is now placed on quotas, expectations remain high. For example, active recommend holders living close to a temple usually are expected to average one endowment per month. Members of a San Jose stake made 2,671 visits to the Oakland Temple in 1985, versus 3,340 visits in 1984—a 20 percent drop in activity. Consequently, that stake presidency requested that all endowed temple recommend holders increase attendance by participating in events such as “stake temple days” and even take personal leave from work to “spend as much time in the Temple as possible.”¹⁵⁷ Without comparing the policies of stakes in other temple districts, it is impossible to say how characteristic that stake might be.

These declining rates suggest that many Latter-day Saints apparently do not participate extensively in either vicarious or living endowments. The need for reevaluation can at least be discussed. As the

Ensign) omitted all figures related to temple work, including number of operating temples, and number of live and vicarious endowments performed during the prior year (*Ensign*, May 1987, 21).

155. *Deseret News 1987 Church Almanac* (1987, Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press), 304.

156. This may be necessary for other reasons as well: An analysis of the ratio of general conference talk references to temple work versus paragraph units in those talks from 1830 to 1979 indicates resulting scores ranging from .023 to .027 through 1919; since 1920 the scores have ranged from .001 to .011, a dramatic drop in salience (Gordon and Gary Shepherd, *A Kingdom Transformed: Themes in the Development of Mormonism* (1984, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press), 255).

157. Santa Clara California Stake Presidency letter to stake members dated 15 April 1986. Photocopy in my possession.

history of the endowment shows, specific content and procedural alterations were made in 1845, 1877, 1883, 1893, 1919-27, the early 1960s, and 1968-72.

The church is already addressing the economic problem of attending the temple by constructing numerous scaled-down temples strategically placed in areas of high member densities. Although temples have traditionally been separate structures with the sole function of temple work, it is not impossible to consider the option of adapting or creating special rooms in selected stake centers as endowment and sealing rooms. Such an option would further reduce temple construction and operating expenses, even though the "temple" would lose something of its special character by being associated with a multi-use building. Such options would go far toward making temples more convenient for members to reach and less costly to construct and maintain. In other words, the temple could become more accessible to greater numbers of members.

Another aspect to be considered involves the appeal of the ceremony to members. If it is true that new converts and/or maturing youth are less likely to seek their own endowments, the ordinance may be seen as less meaningful, or perhaps have a different meaning. Allen Roberts, tracing the decline of architectural symbolism in the church, has suggested that today's Saints are no longer comfortable with symbolism of any sort.¹⁵⁸ An intensifying factor may be that the spheres of symbolism have progressively shrunk until symbolism is associated almost exclusively with the temple. As a result, discomfort with public displays of elements increasingly seen as uniquely sacred may have hastened the spiral of withdrawal. Perhaps all symbolism is now seen as somehow connected to the temple. A third reason may be that contemporary Saints understand much less about symbolism than they once did. They recognize, for instance, an all-seeing eye but have never seen it anywhere but the temple, unlike nineteenth-century Saints who saw it on doorknobs, carved on the lintels of doors, and printed on the letterheads of stationery and newspapers. Certainly Joseph Smith and his contemporaries would have understood certain symbols from the richness of at least two contexts: Masonry as well as Mormonism.

The feelings contemporary Saints have for the temple certainly merit a careful quantitative analysis by professional social scientists. I have heard a number of themes from people who feel discomfort in one degree or another with elements of the temple ceremony. Although such reports are anecdotal, I believe they represent areas to be explored in attempting to understand the place of the temple in the lives of modern Saints.

158. Allen D. Roberts, "Where Are the All-Seeing Eyes? The Origin, Use and Decline of Early Mormon Symbolism," *Sunstone* 4 (May-June 1979): 28-29.

In addition to the feelings about symbolism already expressed, a fourth element which may influence feelings about the temple comes from the increasing impact of technology and rationalism on our culture as a whole. The idea of a "lodge" may itself have an old-fashioned ring to it. Probably in no other settings except college organizations, with their attendant associations of youthfulness and possibly immaturity, do most Mormons encounter "secret" ceremonies with code handshakes, clothing that has particular significance, and, perhaps most disturbing to some, the implied violence of the penalties. Various individuals have commented on their difficulty in seeing these elements as "religious" or "inspirational," originating in the desires of a loving Father for his children.

Fifth, in a day when Latter-day Saints are increasingly focused on shared Christian values, some are also uncomfortable at the portrayal of a Christian minister as the hireling of Satan, a point that local citizens, clergy, fundamentalist Protestants, and professional anti-Mormons have not overlooked in the demonstrations against temple dedications in Dallas, Denver, and Chicago.¹⁵⁹

Sixth, the endowment ceremony still depicts women as subservient to men, not as equals in relating to God. For example, women: covenant to obey their husbands in righteousness, while he is the one who acts as intermediary to God; are promised ordination in future states as queens and priestesses to their husbands; and are required to veil their faces at one point in the ceremony; Eve does not speak in the narrative portion once they are expelled from the garden. Such inequitable elements seem at odds with other aspects of the gospel.

Seventh, some individuals find that the filmed presentations have a dulling effect on their response. The freshness of live-session interpretations brings new insights in even subtle details, according to some regular temple-goers. While some people enjoy the more rapid pace of the filmed versions, others worry about being "programmed" by repetition and find themselves unable to imagine other faces, other voices, and other interpretations than those being impressed upon them by repetition.

In short, at least some Saints perceive the temple as incongruent with other important elements of their religious life. Some find the temple irrelevant to the deeper currents of their Christian service and worship of God. Some admit to boredom. Others describe their motivations for continued and regular temple attendance as feelings of hope and patience—the faith that by continuing to participate they will develop more

159. "Dallas Baptists Arm for Mormon Onslaught," *Sunstone Review* 2, no. 5 (April 1982): 9-10; "Temple Open House Boycotted in Denver," *Sunstone* 10, no. 10 (1986): 40.

positive feelings and even the joy which others sometimes report. Often they feel unworthy or guilty because of these feelings, since the temple is so unanimously presented as the pinnacle of spiritual experience for sincere Latter-day Saints.

To suggest that all Latter-day Saints are deeply troubled by such elements would certainly be incorrect. For many, the temple experience is one of selfless service, peaceful communion with God, a refreshing retreat from the world, and a promise of future union with departed loved ones. Reports of spiritual enlightenment, personal revelation, and grateful contact from those for whom the work is being done are not infrequent.

Certainly the social values of the temple have expanded and become more far-reaching as more and more people have access to temples and as more Latter-day Saints retire with the economic means and health to spend many years of service in the temple. Anthropologist Mark P. Leone has suggested that temple worship is a key institution by which Mormons resolve the conflict of being "in the world but not of it" and spiritually and psychologically reinforce their unique purpose in life.¹⁶⁰ The value of the temple experience clearly manifests itself in a renewed individual commitment to Christian values, and to furthering the goals of the church. Given the strict requirements of worthiness to which one must adhere for permission to attend the temple, it follows that Latter-day Saints receive added satisfaction belonging to a select group of devout members qualified to perform this sacred work.

Reviewing the historical development of any important institution in a community's life raises questions about its future. The endowment has changed a great deal in response to community needs over time. Obviously it has the capability of changing still further if the need arises. If one were to set aside the questions of spiritual, emotional, and social significance and examine the endowment strictly from a functional perspective, some suggestive conclusions emerge.

For instance, it is interesting that vicarious endowments remain the only portion of the total temple sequence (baptism, confirmation, washing and anointing, ordination of males, endowment, and marriage sealing) which has not been "batch processed" to increase efficiency. Through 1985, a cumulative total of over 1.5 million endowments for the living and almost 86 million endowments for the dead have been performed. From a strictly functional perspective, the amount of time required to complete a vicarious endowment seems excessive. If patrons do not need to hear baptismal and confirmation speeches prior to

160. Mark P. Leone, "The Mormon Temple Experience," *Sunstone* 3, no. 6 (Sept.-Oct. 1978): 10-13.

performing these proxy ordinances, or talks on how to have a good marriage before vicarious sealings (as all living people traditionally receive before their own ceremonies), it seems inconsistent to hear about events in the Garden of Eden or the lone and dreary world before vicariously receiving the signs, tokens, and key words which form the apparent essence of the endowment ceremony, although the repetition of the narratives no doubt benefits the individual patron. If increasing the number of endowments were the primary objective, these elements could be performed in a few minutes instead of two hours. Baptisms for the dead and sealings already occur with accelerated routines.

If the vicarious elements were detached from the endowment or performed in another sequence, then the balance of temple activities devoted to instructing members in theological matters and allowing time for meditation, inspiration, and worship might be done under a different, less mechanical setting. Refocusing attention on the temple's function as a house of prayer and a house of revelation might draw more individuals who genuinely wish for a worshipful experience in community and then quietly, alone. At the present time, most temples do not have the facilities for solitary meditation, and actively discourage lingering in the celestial room after passing through the veil. A reversion to the live presentation might also augment attentiveness and rediscovery as participants review fundamental concepts.

Such strategies may suggest ways of meeting the church's need for effectively and efficiently carrying out its mission of salvation for the dead while providing a holy setting for the spiritual healing of modern members bearing their diverse burdens. The richness and centrality of the endowment ceremony in the twentieth century, as in the nineteenth, roots Latter-day Saints in a tradition of spiritual power that promises equal abundance in the future.¹⁶¹

161. A full bibliography of resources can be found in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 70-76.

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

George D. Smith

POLYGAMY, MARRIAGE TO MORE THAN ONE SPOUSE AT A TIME, cannot be seen in the fossil record of our primitive ancestor, *Homo erectus*, and no one knows if Lucy of the African Rift, reputed to be the mother of us all, was a plural mate. A recent study of the evolution of human sexuality concludes, however, that while modern man is often culturally obliged to be monogamous, he may be biologically predisposed to polygamy.¹ Therefore it should not surprise us that polygamy has been practiced in many parts of the world. Plural marriage has been found in India, Nepal, China, the Middle East, Africa, Indonesia, Australia, in early Germanic tribes, among certain native Indian societies of the Americas and Eskimos of the Arctic, and, notably, the Mormons of North America.²

There were multiple wives and concubines in ancient Mesopotamia and among Old Testament leaders of the early Hebrew peoples. Abraham, David, and Solomon had many wives, but Jewish law required

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1. Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan, *Mystery Dance: On the Evolution of Human Sexuality* (New York: Summit Books, 1991). An informative study of primate evolution is Kathy D. Schick and Nicholas Toth, *Making Silent Stones Speak: Human Evolution and the Dawn of Technology* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993).

2. Polygamy has been practiced to some extent in about 80 percent of the 853 cultures on record (Delta Willis, *The Hominid Gang* [New York: Viking, 1989], 259; G. P. Murdock and D. R. White, *Ethnology* 8 (1969): 329-69).

monogamy by the eleventh century C.E. Polygamy was also found in pre-Islamic Arabic cultures of the Middle East, Asia, and North Africa. Later the Koran limited Moslem husbands to a maximum of four wives. Ancient Roman law, which recognized marriage by solemn ceremony, by purchase, and by mutual consent or extended cohabitation, eventually excluded polygamy. The marriage law of most Western nations is the product of Roman Catholic canon law, which recognizes marriage as a lifelong monogamous union between a woman and a man by consent and consummation.³ Polygamy was prohibited by the Justinian Code in the sixth century C.E., is generally forbidden in Europe and the Americas, and was strictly against Illinois law when the Mormons secretly introduced the practice in 1841.⁴

POLYGAMY BEFORE JOSEPH SMITH

Mormons were not the first in America to think of plural marriage. In fact, for three centuries before Joseph Smith introduced Mormon "celestial marriage," polygamy was a popular subject of public debate in Europe and America. In 1531 Martin Luther advised England's Henry VIII to "take another queen in accordance with the examples of the patriarchs of old who had two wives at the same time"; eight years later Luther, arguing that polygamy was sanctioned by Mosaic Law and was not banned by the New Testament, gave Prince Philip of Hesse a dispensation to take a second wife.⁵ Since the Protestant Reformation had replaced the authority of the Pope with a "literally inspired" Bible, Old Testament polygamy became a persuasive argument for marital innovation in the sixteenth century.

In 1534 John Bockelson of Leyden, Holland, led the Anabaptists in Münster, Germany, in eleven months of polygamy as they awaited the end of the world. This town of 15,000 had been "purified" of all infidels—Catholics and Lutherans—and was expected to become the New Jerusalem. Revered as prophet of the Lord, Bockelson issued twelve

3. See James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 52, 128, 225, 256, 299, 304, 478-79, 577, 615; Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage, *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1982), 118-28.

4. Through the Nauvoo period, polygamy was a criminal act under the Illinois 1833 antibigamy laws, which remained unchanged during statute revision in 1845. Polygamy, thus defined, was punishable by fines of \$1,000 and two years imprisonment (previously married persons) or \$500 and one year imprisonment (previously single persons) (*Revised Laws of Illinois 1833 and Revised Statutes of the State of Illinois 1845*, secs. 121, 122, University of Chicago Law Library).

5. John Cairncross, *After Polygamy Was Made a Sin: The Social History of Christian Polygamy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), 36-51.

articles revealed to him by God, including sanction for a man to take as many women to wife as he wanted. Bockelson was proclaimed king and took sixteen wives who were considered "queens." Domestic arrangements were decided by a stick placed at the dinner table in front of the queen who had been chosen to spend the night with the king. All unmarried females who had reached the marriage age of twelve were pressured to take a husband of at least fourteen years of age, but most women strongly supported the prophet⁶:

Some of the women and girls stayed on after he had preached, danced about and cried in a loud voice, Father, Father, Father, give! give! give! then they leapt up, raised their hands to the sky and clapped. Their hair undone, hung round their neck or down their back. They stared at sun and imagined that God the Father was sitting up there in his glory. Then they danced like maenads in pairs through the streets and gazed at the sun till they were exhausted, white and deadly pale.

Anabaptist wives found other wives for their husbands, as Sarah had done for Abraham, and men often married their wives' sisters. The man with the most wives was considered the best Christian.

Theologians justified polygamy by appealing to its practice among Hebrew patriarchs, such as Abraham, Isaac, and David, noting that it was not forbidden in the New Testament nor by church fathers Augustine and Jerome. Social rationale linked the desirability of children to provide a worshipful population and a large labor force, the needs of men, expected displacement of prostitution, and fulfillment of man's natural patriarchal domination of women. Münster theologians also asserted that semen was precious and should not be wasted, as it would be if it did not provide offspring, for example, if a woman was menstruating, pregnant, or infertile. Assuming that "men cannot contain themselves," in order to avoid wasting semen, "hence they can marry several women."⁷

Anabaptist polygamy met with difficulty. Forced cohabitation gave rise to "constant dissension," and there was "fierce resentment" where two or three women shared a husband. Church authorities put "refractory wives" in prison and executed some who protested their husbands' taking other wives. One woman was summoned to a tribunal and sentenced to death after she was to complete her pregnancy. Another was

6. Herman von Kerssenbroick in Klemens Löffler, *Die Wiedertauffer zu Münster, 1534/35: Berichte, Aussagen und Aktenstücke von Augenzeugen und Zeitgenossen* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1923), 79; cited in Margrit Eichler, "Charismatic Prophets and Charismatic Saviors," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 55, no. 1 (January 1981): 54.

7. Löffler, 107, in Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 7-8.

pardoned when she begged her husband's forgiveness. In 1535 the town was attacked and John of Leyden was interrogated and killed; Münster has remained Catholic ever since.⁸

Writers such as Milton, Boswell, Newton, Rousseau, Spinoza, Napoleon, and the Lutheran scholar John Leyser all advocated polygamy. Schopenhauer, who considered woman to be "Nature's knockout blow," endorsed Mormon plural marriage since Nature's aim was to increase the species.⁹

In 1780 in England, Rev. Martin Madan, the disciple of John Wesley who co-wrote "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," advocated the restoration of biblical polygamy, which would "return discipline to the sexual informality of the age, correct a declining population, eliminate abortion, save innumerable women from ruin, and restore men to their rightful, patriarchal role."¹⁰ During the years following 1817, American utopian Jacob Cochran taught a "spiritual matrimony" to communities in Maine and New Hampshire; it was "sanctioned by a ceremony of his own, within which any man or woman, already married or unmarried, might enter into choosing at pleasure a spiritual wife or spiritual husband." Cochran reportedly had a "regular harem, consisting of several unmarried females."¹¹ Starting in the 1830s, John Humfrey Noyes and his Perfectionists practiced another form of group marriage. Settling in Oneida, New York, in 1847, more than 500 men and women shared land, clothes, sex partners, and children. The communal spirit waned when Noyes ruled that he had first claim on the women, and in 1879 the men revolted, accusing Noyes of taking young women against their will. By 1881 the Oneida community was disbanded.

In 1837, when Mormon headquarters was located in Kirtland, Ohio, a Cleveland newspaper fifteen miles away printed a letter which argued for polygamy as a remedy for the "distress" of "so many old maids." If a man first obtained "the consent of his wife, or wives," the writer asked, "what evil would arise" from allowing him "as many more wives as he may judge proper?" It would be "more desirable to be the second or even third wife of a generous man, than to remain an old maid, neglected and laughed at. . . and it would eminently lessen prostitution in one sex and ranging in the other." Furthermore, it would "not be more

8. Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 2-30.

9. *Ibid.*, 84-93, 112-40, 153.

10. Martin Madan, *Thelyphthora; or, a Treatise on Female Ruin. . .*, 3 vols. (London: J. Dodsley, 1780-81), cited in B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 2, and Cairncross, *After Polygamy*, 157-64.

11. "The Cochran Fantasy in York County [Maine]," 3 Aug. 1867, in *Maine Historical Quarterly* 20 (Summer 1980): 30.

expensive for a man to have two wives, than to have one wife, and hire a seamstress."¹²

That year the Mormon church responded to the idea of plural marriage with a resolution denying fellowship to any member guilty of polygamy and it even disciplined one Solomon Freeman for "living with another woman."¹³ Latter-day Saints publicly denied rumors of polygamy until 1852, a decade after the first plural marriages were officially recorded in Nauvoo.

IMPORTANCE OF NAUVOO POLYGAMY

Utah polygamy has received considerable attention, but any definitive study of Mormon plural marriage must begin with its Nauvoo roots. This essay explores the extent and character of Nauvoo polygamy, from the first documented plural marriage on April 5, 1841, to the ceremonies concluded in 1846, the year of westward migration.¹⁴

Although Joseph Smith met his death at the hands of outsiders, it was internal dissent, precipitated by polygamy, which brought him to the Carthage jail in June 1844. Rumors about Smith's extramarital relationships with women had circulated for a decade before his 1841 plural marriage and the revelation sanctioning polygamy, recorded in 1843. The

12. Letter signed "Enquirer" to the *Cleveland Liberalist* 1:164 (4 Feb. 1837), Oberlin College Library.

13. Resolution in *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, May 1837, 511; action against Freeman in "Elders Quorum Record," 23 Nov. 1837, archives, The Auditorium, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS), Independence, Missouri, in Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith*, 2d. ed. (New York: Knopf, 1971), 185.

14. The data on plural marriages cited throughout this essay were derived from various sources: official sealing (marriage) and temple endowment lists (the first men to receive their temple endowments were more likely to have plural families); the list of Mormon pioneers leaving Nauvoo; William Clayton's so-called "temple journals"; census data; family history group sheets; and a variety of letters, diaries, early newspapers, and oral histories. Research was conducted in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, the Marriott Library at the University of Utah, the Utah State Historical Society, Brigham Young University's Harold B. Lee Library, and archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Specifically, among the scholarly research that facilitated this study were Susan Ward Easton Black, *Membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1848*, vols. 1-50 (Provo, Utah: Research Study Center, Brigham Young University, 1984-88); Davis Bitton, *Guide to Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1977); Dale Morgan and George P. Hammond, eds., *A Guide to the Manuscript Collections of the Bancroft Library*, vol. 1 (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1963); Brodie, *No Man Knows*, app. C; Andrew Jenson, "Plural Marriage," *The Historical Record* 6 (May 1887): 219-40; and especially D. Michael Quinn, personal correspondence, 6 Dec. 1991. Further research will undoubtedly generate more accurate data for a few families, but these small differences will not change the following overall demographic portrait of the number and scope of plural marriages in Nauvoo.

story repeated most often involved Fanny Alger, a young woman whom Smith employed in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835 to help his wife Emma with housework. Several Mormon leaders claim that Fanny Alger was Smith's first plural wife.¹⁵ Some suggest that Smith advocated polygamy as early as 1831, when he presented a revelation directing several married elders to take Native American women as wives "that their posterity may become white, delightsome and just."¹⁶ Nevertheless, evidence from Smith and his secretary William Clayton suggests that the prophet claimed to receive a separate injunction to practice polygamy in 1843.¹⁷ Although Mormon plural marriage was intended to remain a closely guarded secret, word that Joseph Smith and possibly other Mormons were practicing polygamy began to spread across towns and villages of western Illinois in the early 1840s.

The secret became a scandal in May 1844 when William Law, a counselor to Joseph Smith who equated polygamy in the restored church with concubinage, filed suit against Smith in the circuit court of Hancock

15. According to Mormon apostle William McLellin, Emma witnessed her husband and Fanny in a "transaction" identified as the "first well authenticated case of polygamy" (McLellin to Joseph Smith III, 8 July 1872, RLDS archives; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 Oct. 1875; Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986], 5-12). The prophet's scribe, Warren Parrish, said that "he himself and Oliver Cowdery did know that Joseph had Fannie Alger as wife, for they were spied upon together." After Book of Mormon scribe Oliver Cowdery wrote a letter characterizing Joseph's relations with Fanny as a "dirty, nasty, filthy affair," he was excommunicated on charges that included "seeking to destroy the character of President Joseph Smith jr by falsely insinuating that he was guilty of adultery &c." (Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983], 162-63 [12 Apr. 1844]; Joseph Smith et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed., B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1963], 3:16, hereafter HC). In 1899 Alger was married by proxy to the deceased prophet, and assistant church historian Andrew Jenson described her as "one of the first plural wives sealed to the Prophet" (Jenson, "Plural Marriage," 223; Thomas M. Tinney, *The Royal Family of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr.* [Salt Lake City: Green Family Organization, 1973], 41). Heber C Kimball also referred to Fanny Alger as Smith's first plural wife (recounted by church patriarch Benjamin F. Johnson in a letter to George F. Gibbs, 1903, 10, LDS archives).

16. The Book of Mormon prophecies, "the scales of darkness shall begin to fall from their eyes; and many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a white [pure] and delightsome people" (2 Ne. 30:6). A 17 July 1831 revelation (uncanonized) on plural marriage was asserted in W. W. Phelps's 12 August 1861 letter to Brigham Young. LDS church president Joseph F. Smith also concluded that the principle of plural marriage must have been revealed to Joseph Smith in 1831 (*Deseret News*, 20 May 1886). In the 8 December 1831 *Ohio Star*, Ezra Booth wrote of a Mormon revelation to form a "matrimonial alliance with the natives" (Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1981], 299 n28).

17. Joseph Smith's own journal contains a contemporary account of a 12 July 1843 plural marriage revelation: "Received a Revelation in the office in presence of Hyrum and W[illiam]m Clayton" (Scott H. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and*

County, Illinois. Law charged that Smith was living “in an open state of adultery” with Maria Lawrence, a teenaged orphan who was living in the Smith household. In fact, Smith had secretly married both Maria and her sister Sarah by the fall of 1843 and was serving as executor of their \$8,000 estate. Law apparently hoped that disclosing Smith’s relationship with the young girls might lead him to abandon polygamy, but Smith immediately excommunicated Law, had himself appointed the girls’ legal guardian, and rejected the charge in front of a church congregation, denying that he had more than one wife:

Another indictment has been got up against me. . . I had not been married scarcely five minutes, and made one proclamation of the Gospel, before it was reported that I had seven wives. . . This new holy prophet [William Law] has gone to Carthage [county courthouse] and swore that I had told him that I was guilty of adultery. . . What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one.¹⁸

The following month Law and other Mormon dissidents published the inaugural issue of the *Nauvoo Expositor* to reveal Smith’s “mormon seraglio, or Nauvoo harem; and his unparalled and unheard of attempts at seduction.”¹⁹ Declaring the *Expositor* a public nuisance, the Nauvoo City Council, led by Mayor Joseph Smith, ordered all copies of the paper to be burned and its printing press destroyed. These actions created an uproar throughout the state, where Smith’s growing political power—as well as his alleged immorality—were both feared and resented. When Governor Thomas Ford ordered Smith arrested, Joseph and his brother Hyrum were jailed at Carthage. On June 27, a large mob overpowered the guards and shot the brothers to death.

INCEPTION OF PLURAL MARRIAGE

How did the Mormon community in Nauvoo arrive at this state of affairs? On July 12, 1843, Joseph Smith dictated a ten-page revelation to his private clerk, William Clayton, which indicated that he meant to

Journals of Joseph Smith [Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1987], 396). The entry for that date in the official church history confirms 1843 in the first person: “I received the following revelation in the presence of my brother Hyrum and Elder William Clayton,” and entitles the text, “Revelation on the Eternity of the Marriage Covenant, including the Plurality of Wives; Given through Joseph, the Seer, in Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois, July 12th, 1843” (HC 5:500-501). Clayton also confirms that the revelation occurred in 1843: “I testify again that the revelation on polygamy was given through the prophet Joseph Smith on the 12th of July 1843” (Clayton to Madison M. Scott, 11 Nov. 1871, LDS archives).

18. HC 6:403, 405, 410-11; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 64; Lyndon Cook, “William Law, Nauvoo Dissenter,” *BYU Studies* (Winter 1982): 47-72.

19. Frances Higbee to Mr. Gregg, May 1844, Nauvoo, Chicago Historical Society.

"restore" the ceremonies and cultural patterns of ancient Israel. The revelation on plural marriage, or "celestial marriage" as it was called, claimed to restore the practice of "Moses, Abraham, David and Solomon having many wives and concubines. . . a new and everlasting covenant" in which "if any man espouse a virgin. . . [or] ten virgins. . . he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him" (D&C 132:4, 61, 62).

A few months earlier, Clayton recalled, Smith "also informed me that he had other wives living besides his first wife Emma, and in particular gave me to understand that Eliza R. Snow, Louisa Beman, Desdemona W. Fullmer and others were his lawful wives in the sight of heaven."²⁰ In fact, by the time of the 1843 revelation, Smith had married at least twelve women besides his legal wife Emma, and a dozen of his most trusted followers had also taken plural wives.

About forty years later, assistant LDS church historian Andrew Jenson collected statements from Smith's former wives, who willingly confirmed that they had "consented to become the Prophet's wife" and that he "associated with them as wives within the meaning of all that word implies."²¹ On behalf of Jenson, and working with plural wife Eliza R. Snow, journalist Emmeline B. Wells wrote in 1886 to ask Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner,

to prepare a careful sketch of your life for publication in the Historical Record along with others of the wives of Joseph Smith, the prophet. Begin with your name and birthplace also date, the names of your parents and their origin whether American born etc. and from the North or the South then your conversion to the true Gospel etc. But positively your marriage ceremony to Joseph on what day and by whom performed, and who were the witnesses if any. This is the principal point such other matter in brief as may seem to you suitable. Perhaps you had better direct it to me, though it will all be submitted to someone in authority before being published.

Aunt Eliza asked me to write you and ask you to prepare this and sent her love to you. Helen who sends love, she has the same to do, also Lucy Walker Kimball. Do you know the particulars about Sister Marinda Hyde's being sealed to Joseph & on what day or in what year, or who officiated in the ceremony?²²

Jenson published these statements in 1887, primarily in an attempt to

20. "William Clayton's Testimony," 16 Feb. 1874 (in Jenson, "Plural Marriage," 224-26).

21. Lucy Walker affidavit in Jenson, "Plural Marriage," 230.

22. Emmeline B. Wells to Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, Salt Lake City, 12 Mar. 1889, LDS archives.

convince Smith's family, who remained in the Midwest after his death, that their progenitor had in fact practiced polygamy.²³

Just when Mormon polygamy began is conjectural, but it had clearly commenced by April 5, 1841, with Smith's first officially acknowledged plural marriage. In a ceremony beside the Mississippi River, he married twenty-six-year-old Louisa Beaman disguised in a man's hat and coat. The ceremony was performed by her brother-in-law, using words dictated by the prophet.²⁴ At that time Smith was thirty-five and had been married fourteen years to thirty-six-year-old Emma Hale Smith. They had five living children.

During the two-and-one-half years from his first official plural marriage in April 1841 to his last known marriage in November 1843, Smith took as many as forty-two wives, one or two at a time.²⁵ On average, this pace produced 1.5 new wives each month. By the end of 1843, Emma Smith's biographers observed, most close friends of Smith's legal wife had either married her husband or had given their daughters to him.²⁶ Reportedly, some of the younger women were discreetly instructed in polygamy by older women who had been inducted previously into the secret order.²⁷

Smith courted these plural wives with an offer of eternal marriage too wonderful to refuse. According to the doctrine of celestial marriage, a woman who was "sealed" (married) to a man in a special religious ceremony was united to him and their children, not only for "time"—until death—but for eternity where they eventually could become gods. Implicit in the revelation was the requirement that a man and woman must accept the "principle"—of taking plural wives, known as the law of Abraham—in order to gain the highest afterlife, the celestial kingdom. Just as Abraham, David, Solomon, and other Old Testament patriarchs took "many wives and concubines," the patriarchs and elders of the restored church could attain "crowns of eternal lives in the eternal worlds"

23. Jenson listed Fannie Alger, Louisa Beaman, Lucinda Harris, Zina Huntington, Pre-scindia Huntington, Eliza Roxcy Snow, Sarah Ann Whitney, Desdemona Fullmer, Helen Mar Whitney, Eliza Partridge, Emily Partridge, and Lucy Walker as Smith's plural marriages prior to the 1843 revelation ("Plural Marriage," 233-34).

24. Joseph B. Noble performed the marriage. See Linda K. Newell and Valeen T. Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 95-96. Noble married his first plural wife exactly two years later, on 5 April 1843.

25. Andrew Jenson ("Plural Marriage") identified twenty-seven of Smith's wives, while Fawn Brodie identified forty-nine (Brodie, *No Man Knows*, 335-36, 457-88).

26. Newell and Avery, *Mormon Enigma*, 147.

27. Elizabeth Durfee had the "duty to instruct the younger women in the mysteries of polygamy" (Joseph H. Jackson, *A Narrative of the Adventures and Experiences of Joseph H. Jackson* [Warsaw, Ill.: n.p., 1844], 14, in Brodie, *No Man Knows*, 305).

and have descendants as "innumerable as the stars." A woman's salvation thus depended on entering into a polygamous relationship with a man of high status in the church, because such men were thought to have made the greatest progress towards godhood on earth.

A charismatic, handsome man, Joseph Smith apparently had little trouble persuading young women that he was their way to eternal realms of glory. Sixteen-year-old Lucy Walker, for example, had been adopted by the Smiths and worked as a maid in the Smith home. The prophet told Walker that God had commanded him to take her as a wife. She was angry and insulted, but she feared Smith's warning that if she rejected the "principle" of plural marriage, "the gate will be closed forever against you." On May 1, 1843, while Emma was shopping for supplies in St. Louis, Lucy married Joseph Smith.²⁸

For young women living in the Smith home, the prophet's advances were hard to resist. After the death of their father, Emily and Eliza Partridge came to live with Joseph and Emma Smith to care for their son, Don Carlos. Each of the sisters married the prophet, at first without Emma's knowledge, and later in another ceremony to which Emma consented. Emily wrote in her diary: "From that very hour Emma was our bitter enemy."²⁹

Beginning in 1841, Joseph Smith took as plural wives several married women, as if exercising a variant of the feudal *droit du seigneur*: a king's right to the brides in his domain. This option was presented to the married woman as a favor to her. A woman who wanted higher status in the celestial kingdom could choose to leave a husband with lower status in the church, even if she had been sealed to him, and become sealed to a man higher in authority.

On October 27, 1841, Smith was married for eternity to Zina D. Huntington, Henry B. Jacobs's wife. Jacobs, a devout church member, consented to this "celestial marriage" even though Zina was six months pregnant with Jacobs's child. On December 11, 1841, the prophet married Zina's sister, Prescindia Huntington, who had been married to Norman Buell for fourteen years and remained married to Buell until 1846.³⁰ Prescindia then left Buell and married Heber C. Kimball "for time," that is, until the end of her life. In the afterlife, "for eternity," she would revert to Joseph Smith.

28. George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1991), 100; Newell and Avery, *Mormon Enigma*, 139.

29. "Autobiography of Emily Partridge," cited in Jenson, "Plural Marriage," 240; Newell and Avery, *Mormon Enigma*, 138-39.

30. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 41-43.

Smith married Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner in February 1842, when she was already married and eight months pregnant. "As for Sister [Elizabeth] Whitney," she wrote, "it was at her house that the Prophet Joseph first told me about his great vision concerning me." Mary was "sealed to Joseph Smith the Prophet by Brigham Young in a room over the old red brick store in Nauvoo."³¹ Apparently, Smith had planned to marry her long before her marriage to Adam Lightner: Mary was just thirteen years old when she first met the prophet in 1831 in Kirtland, Ohio. As she recalled, "the Savior appeared and commanded him to seal me up to everlasting life, gave me to Joseph to be with him in his kingdom. . . . Joseph said I was his before I came here and he said all the Devils in Hell should never get me from him."³² After her celestial marriage to Joseph, Mary lived with Adam Lightner until his death in Utah and had eight children by him. In April 1842, two months after the Lightner ceremony, Nancy Marinda Johnson married Joseph Smith while her husband, Orson Hyde, was on a mission to Jerusalem. After Hyde returned, his wife went back to live with him.³³

The question of how many children came from Smith's plural marriages has never been answered decisively. Josephine L. Fisher wrote that her mother, Sylvia Sessions, told her "that [Josephine] was the daughter of the Prophet Joseph Smith."³⁴ Prescindia Huntington Buell once said that "she did not know whether Mr. Buel or the Prophet was the father of her son [Oliver]."³⁵ Researchers have tentatively identified eight children that Joseph Smith may have had by his plural wives.³⁶ Emily Partridge

31. Mary E. Rollins Lightner to Emmeline B. Wells, Summer 1905, LDS archives.

32. "Autobiography of Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner," quoted in Brodie, *No Man Knows*, 443-44; statement in LDS archives.

33. Brodie, *No Man Knows*, 119; Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, 396.

34. Josephine L. Fisher to Andrew Jenson, 24 Feb. 1915. On 12 October 1905, Angus M. Cannon confirmed this account to Joseph Smith III, the prophet's son: "It was said by the girl's grandmother that your father has a daughter born of a plural wife. The girl's grandmother was Mother Sessions, who lived in Nauvoo." He added that Aunt Patty Sessions "asserts that the girl was born within the time after your father was said to have taken the mother" (cited in Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 48 n3).

35. Nelson W. Green, *Fifteen Years Among the Mormons, Being the Narrative of Mrs. Mary Ettie V. Smith*, 2d. ed., (New York: Charles Scribner, 1859), 34; see Brodie, *No Man Knows*, 301-302, 437-39, and photograph of Oliver Buell showing his likeness to Joseph Smith, 306ff.

36. Besides Josephine Fisher (b. 8 Feb. 1844) and Oliver Buell, named as possible children of Joseph Smith by his plural wives are John R. Hancock (b. 19 Apr. 1841), George A. Lightner (b. 12 Mar. 1842), Orson W. Hyde (b. 9 Nov. 1843), Frank H. Hyde (b. 23 Jan 1845), Moroni Pratt (b. 7 Dec. 1844), and Zebulon Jacobs (b. 2 Jan. 1842). See Brodie, *No Man Knows*, 345; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 44, 48-49 n3.

observed: "Spiritual wives, as we were then termed, were not very numerous in those days and a spiritual baby was a rarity indeed."³⁷

AN INVITATION FROM THE PROPHET TO MARRY PLURAL WIVES

Although he insisted that the practice of polygamy remain secret, Joseph Smith introduced his teaching regarding plural wives to thirty families of his close followers among the 15,000 Mormons living in and around Nauvoo.³⁸ When he denied from the pulpit having plural wives, at least 100 other polygamous adults sitting in the congregation knew about the secret doctrine.

How did Smith convert his followers to the practice of plural marriage? One of the clearest records of how Smith persuaded married men to take additional wives comes from the pen of William Clayton. An ardent believer in Smith and in the heavenly mandate for polygamy, Clayton had been baptized in Victorian England in 1837 during the first foreign Mormon mission; he himself served a mission to Manchester and migrated to Nauvoo in 1840. He seems to have been unaware of the earliest secret marriages; those dating from 1841 escaped mention in the meticulous diary he began in 1840.

By the time Clayton first mentions plural marriage in early 1843, he had been married to his legal wife Ruth for six years and had three children. Smith called at his home and invited Clayton for a walk, during which he said he had learned of a sister back in England to whom Clayton was "very much attached." Clayton acknowledged the friendship, but "nothing further than an attachment such as a brother and sister in the Church might rightfully entertain for each other." The prophet then suggested, "Why don't you send for her?" Clayton replied, "In the first place, I have no authority to send for her, and if I had, I have not the

37. Emily D. P. Young, "Autobiographical Sketch," quoted in Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 230. After Smith died, Emily became the wife of Brigham Young and by him bore a son whom she later carried across the Mississippi on her way to Winter Quarters. She later wrote: "While in Nauvoo I had kept my child secreted and but few knew I had one. But after I started on my journey it became publicly known and some have told me, years after that he was the handsomest child they ever saw. One woman told me she thought he was the smartest spiritual child she had ever seen. I said dont you think they are as smart as other children. She said no she did not think they were. There was a good deal of that spirit at that time and sometimes it was very oppressive" ("Incidents of the Early Life of Emily Dow Partridge," typescript, Western Americana, Marriott Library).

38. Jenson, "Plural Marriage," 219-40; Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 61, 77, 79, 85; Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 139-80. George A. Smith estimated that prior to Joseph Smith's 12 July 1843 revelation on plural marriage only "one or two hundred persons" in Nauvoo knew that LDS leaders privately taught and practiced polygamy (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saint's Book Depot, 1854-86], 14:213, hereafter JD).

means to pay expenses." Smith answered, "I give you authority to send for her, and I will furnish you with means," which, according to Clayton, he did. Noting that this day in early 1843 was the first time the prophet had talked with him "on the subject of plural marriage," Clayton recalled the prophet's further sanction: "It is your privilege to have all the wives you want."³⁹

Following Smith's admonition, Clayton fully embraced plural marriage. Later in Utah he wrote: "I support a family of near forty persons on a salary of \$3,600 per annum and we live well, are well clothed and very comfortably situated. . . . I have six wives whom I support in comfort and happiness and am not afraid of another one. I have three children born to me during the year, and I don't fear a dozen more."⁴⁰ Clayton eventually married a total of ten women who bore him forty-seven children.

There were other polygamous husbands in Nauvoo besides the prophet and his private clerk. Smith urged that plural marriage was essential for the church, warning that "the church could not go on until that principal [sic] was established."⁴¹ Between April 5, 1841, and January 17, 1842, he took his first four officially recorded plural wives: Louisa Beaman, Zina D. Huntington, Prescindia L. Huntington, and Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner. Theodore Turley, Brigham Young, Jonathan Holmes, Reynolds Cahoon, and Heber C. Kimball each took one plural wife in 1842. Smith married fourteen more women that year, making a total of twenty-three plural wives he and his associates married by the end of 1842. On January 18, 1843, Willard Richards took the twenty-fourth plural wife. Other new polygamous husbands in 1843 included Thomas Bullock, William D. Huntington, Lorenzo Dow Young, Orson Pratt, Joseph Bates Noble, William Clayton, Orson Hyde, James Bird, Parley P. Pratt, James Adams, William Felshaw, Amasa Lyman, Hyrum Smith, Benjamin Mitchell, John Bair, Henry Lyman Cook, Ebenezer Richardson, John Taylor, and Edwin D. Woolley. In addition, Joseph Smith contributed fifteen more women to the total of forty-two new plural wives in 1843. In 1844, up to June 27 when the prophet was killed, Erastus Snow, John D. Lee, Ezra T. Benson, and Dominicus Carter became polygamists, and nineteen more plural wives in that half-year made a grand total of eighty-four plural marriages in the Nauvoo community while Smith was still alive.

39. "William Clayton's Testimony" (in Jenson, "Plural Marriage," 224-26).

40. Clayton letterbooks, 7 Nov. 1869, Marriott Library.

41. Joseph Smith to John Taylor in Nauvoo, between Mar. 1842 and Feb. 1846, Mary Isabella Hales Horne, "Autobiography," 10-11, Utah State Historical Society, hereafter USHS.

TABLE 1
Sequence of Nauvoo Plural Marriages, April 5, 1841-June 2, 1844

Husband	Wife	Date of Marriage
1. Joseph Smith	Louisa Beaman	Apr 5, 1841
2. Joseph Smith	Zina Diantha Huntington	Oct 27, 1841
3. Joseph Smith	Prescendia Lathrop Huntington	Dec 11, 1841
4. Joseph Smith	Mary Elizabeth Rollins (Lightner)	Jan 17, 1842
5. Theodore Turley	Mary Clift	Jan 1842
6. Joseph Smith	Patty Bartlett (Sessions)	Mar 9, 1842
7. Joseph Smith	Nancy Marinda Johnson (Hyde)	Apr 1842
8. Joseph Smith	Delcena Johnson	Early 1842
9. Brigham Young	Lucy Ann Decker	Jun 14, 1842
10. Joseph Smith	Eliza Roxcy Snow	Jun 29, 1842
11. Joseph Smith	Sarah Ann Whitney	Jul 27, 1842
12. Joseph Smith	Martha McBride (Knight)	Aug [3] 1842
13. Joseph Smith	Elvira Annie Cowles (Holmes)	1842
14. Joseph Smith	Sarah Bapson	1842
15. Joseph Smith	Agnes M. Coolbrith	1842
16. Joseph Smith	Elizabeth Davis (Brackenbury Durfee)	1842
17. Joseph Smith	Sally A. Fuller	1842
18. Joseph Smith	Desdemona W. Fullmer	1842
19. Joseph Smith	Sarah Kingsley	1842
20. Joseph Smith	Lucinda P. (Morgan Harris)	1842
21. Jonathan Holmes	Elvira Annie Cowles	Dec 1, 1842
22. Reynolds Cahoon	Lucina Roberts	1842
23. Heber C. Kimball	Sarah Peak	1842
24. Willard Richards	Sarah Longstroth	Jan 18, 1843
25. Thomas Bullock	Lucy C. Clayton	Jan 23, 1843
26. Wm D. Huntington	Harriet Clark	Feb 5, 1843
27. Joseph Smith	Ruth D. Vose (Sayers)	Feb 1843
28. Joseph Smith	Eliza Partridge	Mar 8, 1843
29. Lorenzo Dow Young	Harriet Page Wheeler	Mar 9, 1843
30. Orson Pratt	Charlotte Bishop	Mar 10, 1843
31. Joseph Smith	Almera Woodard Johnson	Apr [3] 1843
32. Joseph Bates Noble	Sarah B. Alley	Apr 5, 1843
33. William Clayton	Margaret Moon	Apr 27, 1843
34. Orson Hyde	Mary Ann Price	April 1843
35. Joseph Smith	Lucy Walker	May 1, 1843
36. James Bird	Sophia A. Fuller	May 5, 1843
37. Joseph Smith	Emily Partridge	May 11, 1843
38. Joseph Smith	Sarah Lawrence	May 11, 1843
39. Joseph Smith	Maria Lawrence	Spring 1843
40. Joseph Smith	Helen Mar Kimball	May 1843
41. Joseph Smith	Rhoda Richards	Jun 12, 1843
42. Parley P. Pratt	Elizabeth Brotherton	Jun 24, 1843
43. Joseph Bates Noble	Mary Ann Washburn	Jun 28, 1843
44. Joseph Smith	Flora Woodworth	Spring 1843
45. James Adams	Roxena Repshire	Jul 11, 1843
46. Orson Hyde	Martha Rebecca Browett	Jul 20, 1843
47. William Felshaw	Charlotte Walters	Jul 28, 1843
48. Amasa M. Lyman	Diontha Walker	July 1843

TABLE 1 (*Continued*)

Sequence of Nauvoo Plural Marriages, April 5, 1841-June 2, 1844

Husband	Wife	Date of Marriage
49. Hyrum Smith	Mercy R. Fielding Thompson	Aug 11, 1843
50. Joseph Smith	Melissa Lott	Sep 20, 1843
51. Joseph Smith	Olive Grey Frost	Summer 1843
52. Joseph Smith	Hannah Ells	Summer 1843
53. Joseph Smith	Mary Ann Frost	Summer 1843
54. Benjamin Mitchell	Lovina Buckwater	Oct 10, 1843
55. John Bair	Lucinda T. Owen	Oct 19, 1843
56. Brigham Young	Augusta Adams	Nov 2, 1843
57. Brigham Young	Harriet Cook	Nov 2, 1843
58. Joseph Smith	Fanny Young (Murray)	Nov 2, 1843
59. Henry L. Cook	Lovina Thaves	Nov 5, 1843
60. Ebenezer Richardson	Polly Ann Child	Nov. 1843
61. John Taylor	Elizabeth Kaighan	Dec 12, 1843
62. Edwin D. Woolley	Louisa Gordon	1843
63. Edwin D. Woolley	Ellen Wilding	Dec 28, 1843
64. Hyrum Smith	Catherine Phillips	1843
65. Hyrum Smith	Lydia D. Granger	1843
66. John Taylor	Jane Ballentyne	Feb 25, 1844
67. Theodore Turley	Eliza Clift	Mar 6, 1844
68. Erastus Snow	Minerva White	Apr 2, 1844
69. John D. Lee	Rachel A. Woolsey	Apr 19, 1844
70. John D. Lee	Louisa Free	Apr 19, 1844
71. John D. Lee	Abigail S. Woolsey	Apr 19, 1844
72. Theodore Turley	Sarah Ellen Clift	Apr 26, 1844
73. Ezra T. Benson	Adeline B. Andrews	Apr 27, 1844
74. Brigham Young	Clarissa Decker	May 8, 1844
75. Dominicus Carter	Mary Durfee	Jun 2, 1844
76. Joseph Smith	Sylvia Porter Sessions	by 1844
77. Joseph Smith	Mary Houston	by 1844
78. Joseph Smith	Nancy Maria Winchester	by 1844
79. Joseph Smith	Sarah Scott	by 1844
80. Joseph Smith	Olive Andrews	by 1844
81. Joseph Smith	Jane Tippets	by 1844
82. Joseph Smith	Sophia Sanburn	by 1844
83. Joseph Smith	Phoebe Watrous (Woodworth)	by 1844
84. Joseph Smith	Vienna Jacques	by 1844

The thirty polygamous husbands from 1841 up to Joseph Smith's death on June 27, 1844, had married a total of 114 legal and plural wives, who had borne 132 children. These men averaged thirty-six years of age (range: 24-60) and had been married an average of ten years (1-32 years) before marrying a second wife of a mean twenty-five years of age (14-39 years). At that time, their legal wives averaged thirty-two years of age (22-56 years), four years younger than their husbands and seven years older than the first plural wife at the time of her marriage. At the time of

these first polygamous marriages, the nuclear family included an average of four pre-polygamous children (0-9). During the Nauvoo years, these families would grow to include an average of eight wives (2-43) and six children (1-17). In the post-Nauvoo years, these original thirty families would eventually accumulate an average of twelve wives (2-55) and twenty-seven children each (2-65). Without Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and Heber C. Kimball—the three most-married men—these families averaged four wives and six children during the Nauvoo years, and ultimately eight wives and twenty-five children each.

The thirty early Nauvoo polygamists are listed below as of the dates they first took plural wives.

TABLE 2
Nauvoo Polygamists, 1841-44 (to June 27)

Name	Entered Polygamy	Prior Years Married	Pre-Polygamy Children	Eventual Children	Wives
1. Joseph Smith	Apr 5, 1841	14	5	5est.	43
2. Theodore Turley	Jan 1842	20	9	22	5
3. Brigham Young	Jun 14, 1842	8	4	50	55
4. Jonathan Holmes	Dec 1, 1842	5	2	7	3
5. Reynolds Cahoon	1842	32	7	10	3
6. Heber C. Kimball	1842	20	6	65	45
7. Willard Richards	Jan 18, 1843	4	1	27	14
8. Thomas Bullock	Jan 23, 1843	4	3	23	3
9. William D. Huntington	Feb 5, 1843	3	0	7	3
10. Lorenzo Dow Young	Mar 9, 1843	16	7	26	8
11. Orson Pratt	Mar 10, 1843	6	3	45	10
12. Joseph Bates Noble	Apr 5, 1843	8	5	31	11
13. William Clayton	Apr 27, 1843	6	3	47	10
14. Orson Hyde	April 1843	8	3	26	7
15. James Bird	May 5, 1843	11	5	7	3
16. Parley P. Pratt	Jun 24, 1843	6	3	32	11
17. James Adams	Jul 11, 1843	NA	NA	NA	2
18. William Felshaw	Jul 28, 1843	16	9	17	3
19. Amasa M. Lyman	Jul 1843	8	2	37	9
20. Hyrum Smith	Aug 11, 1843	5	2	2	4
21. Benjamin Mitchell	Oct 10, 1843	NA	NA	17	6
22. John Bair	Oct 19, 1843	14	7	30	6
23. Henry L. Cook	Nov 5, 1843	1	0	4	3
24. Ebenezer Richardson	Nov 1843	10	4	35	4
25. John Taylor	Dec 12, 1843	10	4	35	16
26. Edwin D. Woolley	1843	12	5	26	6
27. Erastus Snow	Apr 2, 1844	5	3	37	16
28. John D. Lee	Apr 19, 1844	10	6	52	19
29. Ezra T. Benson	Apr 27, 1844	12	5	34	8
30. Dominicus Carter	Jun 2, 1844	5	1	40	8
Average		10	4	27	12

This brotherhood of Mormon polygamists was expanding at a rate which alarmed William Law, who had once been dedicated to Smith's ideals and remained a believer in Mormonism. Law had always been a sympathetic listener to Emma Smith's complaints about the practice. When he learned that secret plural marriages were being performed among Joseph Smith's inner circle of followers, Law tried to persuade Smith to stop. In a desperate attempt to convince the prophet, he reportedly threw his arms about Smith's neck and begged him to abandon his polygamous relationships.⁴² Smith responded by telling Law that God had commanded him to teach the doctrine of celestial marriage. God, he said, would condemn him if he did not obey.

We know what happened next. On June 7, 1844, the reformers published 1,000 copies of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, which claimed to be "rich with facts, such expositions, as make the guilty tremble and rage."⁴³ The newspaper asserted that Smith had "introduced false and damnable doctrines into the church" such as "the plurality of wives," which "are taught secretly, and denied openly" and amount to "abominations and whoredoms." It detailed how "many females in foreign climes" were attracted by promised "blessings" from Smith regarding "the will of the Lord concerning them," only to "meet brother Joseph, or some of the Twelve, at some insulated point. . . on the bank of the Mississippi" where they were requested to "never indulge what is [then] revealed to them, with a penalty of death attached. . . that she should be his (Joseph's) Spiritual wife."⁴⁴

The *Expositor* was intended to be a weekly reformist newspaper, but the first issue was its last. Following Smith's lead, according to William Clayton's journal, June 10, 1844, "The City Council passed a resolution declaring the Printing press on the hill 'a nuisance' and ordered it destroyed if not moved in 3 hours notice. About sundown the police gathered at the Temple and after organizing proceeded to the office and demolished the press and scattered the Type." So were events set into motion which resulted in charges of riot and treason, Smith's arrest by the governor of Illinois, and the prophet's death two weeks later.

In a letter to Smith's brother-in-law, William Law described Smith's death as an event in which "the wicked slay the wicked," and "the hand

42. "William Law," 66. Law was aware of the "doctrine. . . of Plurality and Community of wives" at least by 1 January 1844 (William Law diary, 1844, copy in private possession).

43. William Law diary, 7 June 1844.

44. The *Nauvoo Expositor* is available at some libraries, such as the New York Public Library, and at LDS archives. Similar penalty oaths were sworn to participants in Mormon temple ceremonies (see Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony: 1842-1990* [Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1990], 16-22).

of a blasphemed God. . .has taken sudden judgment."⁴⁵ Law recorded in his diary that the deaths of Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum represented "the judgment of an offended god," that Joseph Smith "set the laws of god and men at defiance. He was naturally base, brutal and corrupt and cruel. He was one of the false prophets spoken of by Christ who would come in sheep's clothing but inwardly be a reveling wolf. . .but god stopped him in his career and gave him to his destroyers."⁴⁶

With such opposition to polygamy in the church itself, how could the Nauvoo community fail to connect the death of their leader with his secret marriages? Half of the 1,000 printed copies of the *Expositor*, expressing the complaints reformist Mormons shared about polygamy, had been mailed prior to the press's destruction. Yet church members believed the denials from their leaders, that charges of polygamy were untrue. All Mormons loyal to Smith then—and many devout Mormons today—believe that Smith died a martyr, murdered because of hostility from godless outsiders, the "mob." Brigham Young avoided mention of polygamy when he concluded, "They killed Joseph, and what for? For the Gospels' sake. It was for no evil for I was well acquainted with him. He testified to the truth and sealed his fate with his blood."⁴⁷

The account of Smith's assassination in the official *History of the Church* mentions his indictment on charges of polygamy but says nothing of Smith's having plural wives. Thomas Ford, Illinois governor in 1844, did list Smith's marital practices as one of the issues causing internal dissent but did not mention other Nauvoo polygamists.⁴⁸ Although some scholarly writing has linked polygamy in Nauvoo to Smith's death, studies of polygamy typically overlook Nauvoo and begin counting plural husbands and wives in 1852 when the practice was announced in Utah.⁴⁹ The recently published semi-official *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* tells different parts of the story in different sections, but does not in any

45. William Law to Isaac Hale, Nauvoo, Illinois, 20 July 1844, LDS archives.

46. William Law diary, 27 June 1844. The memory of Law's estrangement to Smith is preserved today in the restoration of historic Nauvoo where the foundations of Law's un-restored house remain visible in the grass across the street from Smith's "Red Brick Store," in which some of the plural marriage ceremonies took place.

47. JD 18:361 (6 May 1877).

48. Thomas Ford, *History of Illinois*, 2 vols. (Chicago: S. C. Griggs, 1854), 2:166-76. Ford listed the following causes of antagonism toward the Mormons: Mormon violations of freedom of the press, their religious views, polygamy, their military strength, rumors of their intent to destroy the Warsaw Sentinel, Mormon alliance with Indians, Joseph Smith being crowned "king," revival of Danite vigilante bands, Mormon assertions that God had consecrated all their neighbors' property to the Saints, and their bloc voting (Mormon approval required for election).

49. Several studies rely on Danel Bachman's "Not Lawful to Utter—An Examination of Historical Evidence for the Mormon Practice of Polygamy Before June 27, 1844," Aug. 1971, privately circulated. Bachman refers to Fawn Brodie's landmark research of diaries,

one place draw together Smith, his wives, the spread of the practice to other men during his lifetime, and the internal dissent over the practice which led to his death.⁵⁰

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS OF NAUVOO POLYGAMY

The Nauvoo temple was the centerpiece of the physical and social arrangements of Nauvoo polygamy. Sarah Rich wrote of the temple

letters, and affidavits which demonstrate the extent of Smith's plural marriages in app. C of *No Man Knows My History*. Each of these studies in turn relies upon Jensen's "Plural Marriage."

Lawrence Foster's *Religion and Sexuality* is rich in anecdotal description of Smith's polygamy but only mentions that "most Mormon leaders had taken at most two to three additional wives," citing D. Michael Quinn's Yale University Ph.D. dissertation, "The Mormon Hierarchy, 1832-1932: An American Elite," 1976. James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), mention polygamy in the 1830s, Smith's first recorded plural marriage in 1841, his teachings to close associates, and their being "sealed" to additional wives. However, they do not say anyone actually practiced polygamy: It is "not clear whether Joseph Smith lived as husband with any of his plural wives" (171).

Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977), observes that Smith had taken several plural wives by 1842 and that he taught his most loyal friends. The Mormon dissent, which got Smith charged with adultery and polygamy, is described in detail. Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Knopf, 1979), mention polygamy in the 1830s and that Smith "had formed several plural relationships before the 1843 revelation," and recognized that he "may have sired in polygamy several children whose identities were obscured by their being raised under other surnames" (197). Polygamy is described as a "clandestine arrangement, limited to the prophet and two to three dozen of the leading men and the wives," but few are actually mentioned (199). The reformists are seen as a "small group of Mormon dissidents" who published "inflammatory allegations about the sex lives of Mormon leaders" (77-78).

Jessie L. Embry, *Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), does connect Smith's destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, a dissident, anti-polygamous press, with his arrest and martyrdom. Although "many of the other church leaders eventually married additional wives," (6) no Nauvoo marriages are included in her calculations, which begin in 1852.

Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, relates evidence that many of Joseph Smith's secret plural wives ignited internal opposition to polygamy, which led to the prophet's arrest and death. But the story then moves quickly to the public announcement of polygamy in 1852 and its practice in Utah. Although the author is aware that "church leaders were secretly practicing polygamy long before it was publicly admitted," he makes no suggestion that over 150 polygamous husbands and 550 plural wives were involved in the secret practice in Nauvoo that would later include 940 wives and 2,885 children as part of these original Nauvoo polygamous families.

50. *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1991). The "History of the Church" (612) and "Social and Cultural History" (1,378) entries omit mention of actual practice of polygamy; "Plural Marriage" (1,091) and "Joseph Smith" (1,337) entries make limited mention of polygamy but refrain from discussing the extent of the practice, especially in Nauvoo.

work she and her husband, Charles, did during the wave of marriages in January and February 1846: "We were to be there at seven in the morning and remain until the work was done at ten or twelve o'clock at night if necessary. So we got a good girl Mary Philips a wife of my husband to stay and take care of the children and we helped in the house of the Lord."⁵¹

The "pecking order" among plural wives often determined how much control they had over family life. As in a complex mating dance, first wives not only directed households but also frequently chose subsequent wives. George A. Smith's first wife, Bathsheba Bigler, recalled: "I had since the Prophet's martyrdom, like Sarah of old, given to my husband five wives."⁵² Jane Snyder Richards told western historian Matilda Bancroft of placing a young woman as a housekeeper in a home: "In the course of a few months she married the master of the house; and the two wives had two daughters with but twelve days difference in their ages."⁵³ In a slightly different way, Adelia Kimball assumed control of her marital choice: after obtaining Vilate's consent to marry Heber C. Kimball, she "concluded to become his wife."⁵⁴

Although later journals and memoirs kept by members of leading polygamous families in Utah include references to Brigham Young's Beehive House, Heber Kimball's "Big House" with its "Girls' Parlor" and separate rooms for each wife, William Clayton's "Big House," and the Richardses' spacious two-story dwelling, these more comfortable living arrangements differed from conditions in Nauvoo, where families lived in secrecy and, as they faced intensifying persecution, anticipated leaving town. Emily Partridge Smith wrote: "Times were not then as they are now in 1877." She recalled that at the time of Smith's death she was living at the Coolidge home, and later, though remarried to Amasa Lyman, she lived with her mother before moving in with Lyman and his first wife.⁵⁵ Plural wives sometimes worked as servants in the home of the first wife, often hiding the special relationship they had with the man of the house. They had to disguise their pregnancies from citizens who had not been let in on the secret doctrine, and accept their contempt for "loose women" when babies were born apparently out of wedlock. Plural wives were frowned on by some legal wives who knew about the doctrine and feared that Smith might ask their husbands to practice it.

51. Rich, "Autobiography," 66-67, LDS archives.

52. Bathsheba Smith, "Autobiography," 13, Special Collections, Marriott Library.

53. Jane Snyder Richards, "The Inner Facts of Social Life in Utah," 1880, 15, Bancroft Library.

54. Adelia Kimball, "Memoirs," 17, USHS.

55. Emily Dow Partridge Young, "Incidents."

CONVINCED BY FAITH, AUTHORITY, AND PERCEIVED ADVANTAGES

Plural wives entered polygamy with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Prescindia Huntington, third recorded plural wife of Joseph Smith, wrote late in life that

in 1841 I entered into the New Everlasting Covenant—was sealed to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Seer, and to the best of my ability I have honored plural marriage, never speaking one word against the principle. I have been the mother of nine children—seven sons and two daughters, two by my last husband—Heber Chase Kimball. Never in my life, in this kingdom, which is 44 years, have I doubted the truth of this great work.⁵⁶

However, some women had to struggle to accommodate their sensibilities to the radical new teaching they believed they must obey. Caroline Rogers Daniels, Nauvoo divorcee, married polygamist Abraham Owen Smoot because “[i]t was necessary for my salvation and exaltation.”⁵⁷ Adelia Almira Wilcox Hatton Woods chose church leader Heber C. Kimball because she desired to marry a man who could not only “save himself, but also me.”⁵⁸ Bathsheba Smith was convinced by “a revelation from God and having a fixed determination to attain to Celestial Glory, I felt to embrace every principle, and that it was for my husband’s exaltation that he should obey the revelation on plural marriage in order to attain to kingdoms, thrones, principalities and powers, firmly believing that I should participate with him in all his blessings, glory and honor.”⁵⁹

Plural wife Sarah Studevant Leavitt of Nauvoo recalled when “[i]t was whispered in my ear by a friend that the authorities were getting more wives than one,” she reasoned that “the Anointed of the Lord would not get more wives unless they were commanded to do so. . . . I have seen so much wrong connected with this ordinance that had I not had it revealed to me from Him that cannot lie I should sometimes have doubted the truth of it.”⁶⁰ Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson, widow of one of Joseph Smith’s secretaries, wrote, “On the 11 of August 1843 I was called by direct revelation from Heaven through Brother Joseph Smith the Patriarch” to join her sister and become the plural wife of his brother Hyrum. Persuaded by the authority and character of Joseph Smith, she explained that she was “convinced that it was appointed by him who is too wise to err and too good to be unkind.”⁶¹

56. Prescindia Lathrop Huntington Smith Kimball, “Autobiographical Sketch,” 1 Apr. 1881, LDS archives.

57. Caroline Rogers Daniels, “Autobiography,” in Bitton, *The Mormon Experience*, 328.

58. Adelia Kimball, “Memoirs,” 17.

59. Bathsheba Smith, “Autobiography,” 13.

60. Sarah S. Leavitt, “Autobiography,” 22-23, Special Collections, Marriott Library.

61. Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson Smith, “Autobiography,” n.d., LDS archives.

Eliza Maria Partridge Smith Lyman, who with her sister Emily "went to live in the family of the prophet Joseph Smith. . . about three years," wrote that "this was truly a great trial for me but I had the most implicit confidence in him as a Prophet of the Lord and [could] not but believe his word and as a matter of course accept of the privilege of being sealed to him as a wife."⁶² Sarah Dearmon Pea Rich said,

when my husband and myself had this doctrine explained and taught to us in its true light by those that had a right to teach it we both saw the propriety of the same and believed it to be true and [essential] to our future glory and exaltation hereafter we accepted the same and like old Sarah of old Joseph had in that temple given to my husband four other wives which were sealed to him in that temple by the holy order of god by one having authority to do the same.⁶³

Some plural wives told of advantages they found for themselves in polygamy. Jane Snyder Richards wrote of how faithfully Elizabeth McFate, her husband's new wife, took care of her while she was recovering from a miscarriage.⁶⁴ Although she expressed difficulties when her husband took another wife, Mary Horne found she could "work out her individual character separate from her husband." She felt "freer" and able to "do herself individually things she could never have attempted before."⁶⁵ Lucy Walker, who was on intimate terms with Smith's other wives, the Partridge and Lawrence sisters, experienced "less room for jealousy when wives live under the same roof." She said, "Instead of a feeling of jealousy [plural marriage] was a source of comfort to us."⁶⁶

DIFFICULTIES FOR PLURAL WIVES

At times women wrote frankly about their difficulties with polygamy. For Mary Horne, "Celestial marriage" was "one of the ordinances of the house of God," but she felt that "no one can ever feel the fullweight of the curse till she enters into polygamy." She accepted this "great trial" because "her religion demanded it."⁶⁷ Lucy Walker Kimball regarded polygamy as "a grand school" to "learn self control, self denial."⁶⁸ Mary Ellen Kimball recorded Heber C. Kimball's analogy that

62. Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, "Life and Journal of Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman," 1877, 13, Marriott Library.

63. Rich, "Autobiography," 68.

64. Jane Snyder Richards, "Reminiscences," 1880, 19, Bancroft Library.

65. Horne, "Autobiography," 22.

66. Lucy Walker Smith Kimball, "Autobiographical Statement," 6-7, Bancroft Library.

67. Horne, "Autobiography," 22.

68. Lucy Walker Smith Kimball, "Autobiographical Statement," 8.

plural marriage should be like a dish of water into which he puts a quart and his wives each put in a pint. She grasped the essence: "[S]o you see our will swallowed up in his will."⁶⁹

The dilution of a woman's will, an image which would offend twentieth-century feminist sensibilities, extended to the subjugation of wives by polygamous husbands. Eventually husband to forty-five wives, Heber C. Kimball wrote that wives should be "in subjection to their husbands." He preached, "I am subject to my God, my wife is in subjection to me and will reverence me in my place and I will make her happy."⁷⁰ Kimball justified this dominance of women with the view that man was primary in a creation which only secondarily came up with a woman for man to use:

The man was created, and God gave him dominions over the whole earth, but he saw that he never could multiply, and replenish the earth, without a woman. And he made one and gave her to him. He did not make the man for the woman; but the woman for the man, and it is just as unlawful for you to rise up and rebel against your husband, as it would be for man to rebel against God.⁷¹

Other polygamous Nauvoo husbands affirmed their authority over women. Amasa Lyman, who eventually married eight wives, lectured to the priesthood holders in the Nauvoo temple: "A man becomes responsible for his own conduct, and that of his wife. . . we want the man to remember that he has covenanted to keep the law of God, and the Woman to obey her husband."⁷² George A. Smith, then husband to six wives, agreed that "the woman ought to be in subjection to the man, be careful to guard against loud laughter, against whispering, levity, talebearing."⁷³ And Brigham Young, who married fifty-five women, wrote that "woman will never get back, unless she follows the man back. . . the man must love his God and the woman must love her husband."⁷⁴

Martha Spence Heywood expressed the stoic attitude that some Mormon women took toward the difficult role of plural wife: "I tried to recognize the hand of the Lord in all of this for the perfecting of my character."⁷⁵

People of both genders expressed anguish over polygamy. Nauvoo polygamist Joseph Fielding wrote in the 1840s and 1850s of dissent in the Mormon community: "This is my greatest trial, and I think there is more

69. Mary Ellen Kimball, Journal, n.d., LDS archives.

70. "Nauvoo Temple Record," 21 Dec. 1845, in Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 222.

71. William Clayton diary, 21 Dec. 1845, in Smith, *An Intimate Chronicle*, 227.

72. *Ibid.*, 225-26.

73. *Ibid.*, 225.

74. *Ibid.*, 28 Dec. 1845, 239.

75. Martha Spence Heywood diary, 74, USHS.

trouble on the Subject of Plurality of Wives than anything else. . . [it] appears in general to have given great Offence to the Wife. . . some of the best of our Sisters are tiranised [sic] over by some of the meanest." He bemoaned that "My Wives have not spoken to each other for many Months."⁷⁶ Patty Sessions, plural wife to Joseph Smith as well as the first wife of "Mr. Sessions," spoke of her husband's preference for another wife: "I feel very bad. . . he took [Harriet] to the farm with him [and] leaves me here alone."⁷⁷ Victoria Hancock Jackson, a granddaughter of Levi W. Hancock, resented that "[s]ome men neglected present wives with children and were captivated by a younger face."⁷⁸ Emeline B. Wells spoke of being "tortured" by her husband's inattention: "O if my husband could only love me even a little and not seem to be perfectly indifferent."⁷⁹ Adelia Almera Wilcox Hatton Wood Kimball left her first plural marriage because her husband's first wife considered a plural wife to be "nothing more than a concubine," and Adelia felt that she and her children were "looked upon as intruders."⁸⁰ Jane Richards spoke of feeling "like wringing the neck of any other child than hers that should call her husband papa."⁸¹

REJECTION

There were women who could not easily be persuaded to endorse the doctrine of plural marriage. Emily M. Austin, whose sister married polygamist Newell Knight, escaped to Ohio to avoid this "horrible" practice.⁸² Rachel Ridgway Ivins Grant, mother of future LDS president Heber J. Grant, refused even to meet with Joseph Smith, reportedly saying that she would "sooner go to hell as a virtuous woman than to heaven as a whore."⁸³

The prophet faced rejection more than once. In the spring of 1842, Smith told Sarah Pratt, wife of Apostle Orson Pratt, that the Lord wanted him to take her as his "spiritual wife." Sarah refused Smith's offer and

76. Joseph Fielding, *Journal* (1832-59), 178, LDS archives; see also Bitton, *The Mormon Experience*, 106-107.

77. Patty Sessions, *Journal*, 61, 63, USHS.

78. Victoria Hancock Jackson, *Journal*, in Bitton, *The Mormon Experience*, 172.

79. Judith R. Dushku and Patricia R. Gadsby, "'I Have Risen Triumphant': A Personal View of Emmeline B. Wells," ca. 1977, 12, USHS.

80. Adelia Kimball, "Memoirs," 15, 17.

81. Jane Snyder Richards, "Inner Facts," 2.

82. Emily M. Austin, "Autobiography," in Bitton, *The Mormon Experience*, 15.

83. Ronald W. Walker, "The Continuing Legacy of the Feminine Ideal," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 (Autumn 1982): 109. A decade later in Salt Lake City, Rachel married the deceased prophet Joseph Smith by proxy and became the seventh wife of Jedediah M. Grant "for time only" (111).

eventually exposed him to her husband. When he confronted Smith, Orson Pratt was excommunicated, but he was reinstated five months later. After Smith's death, Pratt himself took plural wives and he became the primary apologist for plural marriage when it was officially announced in Utah in 1852. Sarah ultimately left both Orson and the church; she labeled polygamy the "direst curse" which "completely demoralizes good men, and makes bad men correspondingly worse. As for the women," she wrote, "well, God help them."⁸⁴

When Smith proposed in April 1842 to Nancy Rigdon, daughter of his close friend and counselor, Sidney Rigdon, he reportedly took her into a room, "locked the door, and then stated to her that he had had an affection for her for several years, and wished that she should be his." Nancy refused him, saying she would only marry a single man. The following day Smith explained in a letter to her: "That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is, right under another." He added, "Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is, although we may not see the reason thereof." She remained unconvinced.⁸⁵

Any discussion of resistance to polygamy is incomplete if it does not mention Emma Smith's reluctance to accept co-wives. Joseph's plural marriage revelation went so far as to threaten her with destruction if she did not comply. She responded by reportedly throwing the written revelation into the fire. After Joseph Smith died, she consistently denied that her husband had ever practiced polygamy. According to Lucy Meserve Smith, Emma "bore testimony to me that Mormonism was true as it came forth from the servant of the Lord Joseph Smith but said she the Twelve had made bogus of it. She said they were living with their [plural] wives and raising children and Joseph never taught any such doctrine."⁸⁶ Eventually, Emma Smith allowed the majority of Mormons under the leadership of Brigham Young to migrate west without her. She later became a member of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, headed by her son, Joseph Smith III.

84. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy*, 29-36, 98-100.

85. Ebenezer Robinson, "Items of Personal History of the Editor," *The Return* (Davis City, Iowa, 1889-90); *Sangamo Journal*, 19 Aug. 1842; "The Letter of the Prophet, Joseph Smith to Miss Nancy Rigdon," Joseph Smith Collection, LDS archives; HC 5:134-36.

86. After hearing of this denial of plural marriage, Lucy's husband, Apostle George A. Smith, said "Emma knows better." He told of visiting the prophet as he had finished helping Emma deliver the child of one of his plural wives. Finding Joseph "out on the porch with a basin of water washing his hands," George A. "said to him what is up, said Joseph one of my wives has just been confined and Emma was midwife and I have been assisting her. He said she had granied [delivered] a number of women for him. This is word as I had it from brother G. A. Smith" (Lucy Meserve Smith statement, n.d., LDS archives).

SECRECY

Considering the explosive nature of what was taking place, Nauvoo polygamy was surprisingly well-concealed. The words of the early polygamists convey Joseph Smith's need for secrecy. Lucy Walker said that Joseph "lived in constant fear of being betrayed."⁸⁷ Jane Richards explained that when Joseph Smith had taken some more wives a few months previous to his death, he received a "revelation in regard to polygamy," which required that he "should do it without publicity this time" because "mob spirit was already quite excited."⁸⁸ Thus polygamy was made known only to "a few trusted ones," according to Mary Horne's account: "At first the brethren and sisters were so averse to it that it could scarcely be mentioned."⁸⁹ Joseph Lee Robinson tells the story of Smith saying in Nauvoo that if "I should reveal the things that God has revealed to me, there are some on this stand that would cut my throat or take my hearts blood."⁹⁰ Nancy Tracy recalled that Smith taught the "Celestial Order of Marriage" only to "a few that could bear it."⁹¹

Evidently, one such person was Ebenezer Robinson, who recalled that the "doctrine of spiritual wives" was "talked privately in the church in Nauvoo, in 1841" but he was not invited to participate until 1843. Hyrum Smith "instructed me in Nov or Dec 1843 to make a selection of some young woman and he would seal her to me, and I should take her home," he recalled, "and if she should have an offspring give out word that she had a husband, an Elder, who had gone on a foreign mission." Possibly referring to a secluded birthplace, or conceivably to abortion, Robinson spoke of "a place appointed in Iowa, 12 or 18 miles from Nauvoo to send female vic[t]ims to his polygamous births."⁹²

Motifs of caution and danger recur in the stories of early polygamy. When the pregnancy of William Clayton's first plural wife threatened to expose them, the prophet advised Clayton to "just keep her at home and brook it and if they raise trouble about it and bring you before me I will give you an awful scourging and probably cut you off from the church and then I will baptize you and set you ahead as good as ever."⁹³

87. Diary of Lucy Walker Kimball, 7.

88. Jane Snyder Richards, "Reminiscences," 18.

89. Horne, "Autobiography," 10.

90. Joseph Lee Robinson, "Autobiography and Journal," 24, LDS archives.

91. "A Sketch of the Life of Nancy Naomi Tracy," n.d., 20, USHS.

92. Ebenezer Robinson to Jason W. Briggs, 28 Jan. 1880, LDS archives. On 29 December 1873, Ebenezer and Angeline Robinson signed an affidavit saying that Hyrum Smith had come to their house in the fall of 1843 to teach them the doctrine of polygamy and that he had been wrong to oppose it.

93. William Clayton diary, 19 Oct. 1843.

According to church historian Andrew Jenson, Sarah Ann Whitney became the seventh plural wife of Joseph Smith, and the story of Smith's marriage to her illustrates another strategy. She disguised her relationship to the prophet by pretending to marry Joseph Corodon Kingsbury on April 29, 1843. In his autobiography, Kingsbury wrote: "I according to Pres. Joseph Smith & Council & others agreed to stand by Sarah Ann Whitney as though I was supposed to be her husband and [participated in] a pretended marriage for the purpose of. . . [b]ringing about the purposes of God in these last days." Three weeks later, while in hiding, Joseph Smith wrote a revealing letter addressed to her parents, Newel and Elizabeth Whitney, inviting them to bring their daughter to visit him "just back of Brother Hyrums farm." He advised Brother Whitney to "come a little a head and nock [sic] at the south East corner of the house at the window." He assured them, especially Sarah Ann, that "it is the will of God that you should comfort me now." He stressed the need for care "to find out when Emma comes," but "when she is not here, there is the most perfect safty [sic]." The prophet warned them to "burn this letter as soon as you read it" and "keep all locked up in your breasts." In closing he admonished, "I think Emma won't come to night if she dont[,] dont fail to come to night."⁹⁴ In 1845-46, after now-widowed Sarah Ann went to live with Heber C. Kimball, "her husband for time," Kingsbury, married his own plural wives.⁹⁵

Most of Smith's plural wives boarded with other families, whom he visited periodically. His secretary, William Clayton, recorded one such visit to young Almera Johnson on May 16, 1843: "Prest. Joseph and I went to B[enjamin] F. Johnsons to sleep." Johnson himself later noted that on this visit Smith stayed with Almera "as man and wife" and "occupied the same room and bed with my sister, that the previous month he had occupied with the daughter of the late Bishop Partridge as his wife." Almera Johnson also confirmed her secret marriage to Joseph Smith: "I lived with the prophet Joseph as his wife and he visited me at the home of my brother Benjamin F."⁹⁶

After the destruction of the *Expositor* and the death of their leader, most rank-and-file Mormons did not find out about the doctrine of polygamy until the winter of 1845-46. John D. Lee wrote that "in the Winter of 1845 meetings were held all over the city of Nauvoo" to teach "celes-

94. Joseph Smith to Newel K. Whitney family, 18 Aug. 1842, photocopy, George Albert Smith papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library. Joseph had recently married Sarah Ann Whitney on 27 July 1842.

95. "History of Joseph Kingsbury, Written by His Own Hand, 1846, 1849, 1850," Stanley Snow Ivins Collection, 15:74-76, USHS.

96. Jenson, "Plural Marriage," 222; Johnson to Gibbs; Joseph F. Smith Jr., *Blood Atonement and the Origin of Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1905), 70-71.

tial marriage." He tells a fascinating tale of who married whom, of partner exchanges and trades, and stresses that "plural marriages were not made public. They had to be kept still. A young man did not know when he was talking to a single woman."⁹⁷ Making the same point from a woman's perspective, Eliza Maria Partridge Smith Lyman wrote that "a woman living in polygamy dared not let it be known."⁹⁸ Jane Richards speaks of the winter of 1845-46 as the time when polygamy was first presented to the Mormon community at large: "During the winter and previous to the company starting [February 1846], Mr. Richards took his second wife, Elizabeth McFate [on January 31, 1846]. Polygamy was now made known to us for the first time, and while the majority of the church were made acquainted with the doctrine, it was only practically entered into by a few."⁹⁹

The memories of Jane Richards reveal a personal culture of privacy among women. Leonora Cannon Taylor, hearing that Jane Richards's life in polygamy was going "not very well," advised her, "you have too much pride and grit to let any of your domestic trials be known to the world." Mrs. Richards passed on this "code of silence" to a younger woman, telling her that "as long as she had lived in polygamy she had never spoken to any one of her troubles or allowed that she had any trials."¹⁰⁰

NAUVOO POLYGAMY AFTER JOSEPH SMITH'S DEATH

While the journals and personal writings tell a complex human story, numbers give depth to the picture. After Joseph Smith's death, the number of plural marriages in Nauvoo began to increase rapidly. In the fall of 1844, Brigham Young took ten wives, Heber C. Kimball, nine, Parley P. Pratt, three; William Clayton, Isaac Morley, and George A. Smith each took a pair of wives. Of the sixty plural marriages in 1844, forty-one (two-thirds) took place after Joseph Smith died, seven to former wives of the prophet. Many of Smith's wives were married "for time" to other men, such as Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, twenty-two during 1844-46 in Nauvoo. (They continued to be sealed "for eternity" to the dead prophet.)

Plural marriages accelerated even more in winter 1845-46, after the temple opened on December 10 and it became clear that the westward

97. As an example of dispersing plural wives to pretend monogamy, Lee noted that "as far as Brigham Young was concerned, he had no wives at his house, except his first wife, or the one that he said was his first wife. Many a night have I gone with him, arm in arm, and guarded him while he spent an hour or two with his young brides, then guarded him home" (John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled, or, The Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee*, ed. W. W. Bishop [St. Louis: Byron, Brand, 1877], chap. 14).

98. Eliza Maria Partridge Lyman, "Life and Journal," 13.

99. Jane Snyder Richards, "Reminiscences," 19.

100. Jane Snyder Richards, "Inner Facts," 17-18.

migration would actually take place. Brigham Young urged priesthood-holders to take plural wives during their brief use of the newly opened temple. Heber C. Kimball, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Samuel Bent, John Bernhisel, Alpheus Cutler, John Smith, Peter Hawes, Willard Richards, Amasa Lyman, Joseph Coolidge, Winslow Farr, George A. Smith, Newel K. Whitney, and Cornelius Lott led the way with a total of 117 wives. By this time, Smith's "inner circle" of thirty polygamous husbands had broadened to include over 150 men.

Forty of the 153 Nauvoo polygamous husbands married sisters, six before Joseph Smith's death, twenty after his death in Nauvoo, and the rest after the migration to Utah. Ultimately about one-third of Nauvoo's polygamous families included sister-wives. It was probably easier for a woman to share a husband with a sister than with a stranger. Mormons may also have seen a precedent in the Levirate marriages mandated in the Torah, where a brother had special rights and obligations to father a first-born son for his deceased brother's widow.¹⁰¹

In most sister-marriages, there were two sibling wives. William Clayton's first plural wife (April 27, 1843), like those of many polygamists, was his legal wife's sister, Margaret Moon. When he asked Joseph Smith in 1843 for permission to marry a third Moon sister, Lydia, Smith replied that he had just received a revelation that forbade a man from taking more than two sisters of a family. Smith then asked Clayton to petition Lydia in his favor to become one of his own plural wives.¹⁰² The marriage data indicates, however, that this proscription against more than two sister-wives was not always heeded.

For whatever reason—to provide for women during the difficult journey, to ensure a growing population in the West, or to fulfill Joseph Smith's new marital doctrine—there were fifty-five Nauvoo polygamous marriages in 1845, and 252 in 1846, primarily in January and February, up to the time when the pioneer camp began to cross the Mississippi River. During this winter of celestial marriages, Heber C. Kimball took twenty-four wives; Brigham Young, twenty-one; John Taylor and Samuel Bent, eight; Willard Richards and John Smith, seven; John Bernhisel, Alpheus Cutler, and Newel K. Whitney, six; Amasa Lyman, five; Joseph Coolidge, Winslow Farr, Peter Hawes, Cornelius Lott, and George A. Smith, four; Benjamin Covey, Eli Kelsey, John D. Lee, William Miller, John Pack, William Smith, Guy Wilson, Clark, Whitney, and Joseph Young, three each; John Bair, William Blackhurst, Rufus Beech, John Butler, Simeon Carter, Benjamin Clapp, Frederick Cox, Charles Dana,

101. James R. Baker, *Women's Rights in Old Testament Times* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 51, 142-43, 147, 151-53.

102. William Clayton diary, 15 Sept. 1843.

George Dykes, David Fullmer, Alfred Hadden, Edward Hunter, Joel Johnson, Asahel Lathrop, Isaac Morley, John Parker, W. W. Phelps, Orson Pratt, Parley Pratt, Charles C. Rich, Samuel Russell, William Sagers, David Sessions, Abraham Smoot, Erastus Snow, Lorenzo Snow, Allen Weeks, and Thomas Woolsey each took two; and some seventy other husbands added one more wife to their families. About 80 percent of Nauvoo plural marriages occurred after Smith's death. By the end of the Nauvoo period in 1846, the 153 polygamous husbands had married 587 women and produced 738 children.

TABLE 3
Polygamous Marriages by Nauvoo Husbands

Husbands	Total Nauvoo Wives*	Years						
		1841	1842	1843	To June 27, 1844	After June 27, 1844	1845	1846
Smith, Joseph	43	3	15	15	9est.	—	—	—
Young, Brigham	40	0	1	2	1	10	4	21
Kimball, Heber C.	37	0	1	0	0	9	5	21
Taylor, John	11	0	0	1	1	0	0	8
Bent, Samuel	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
Lee, John D.	10	0	0	0	3	1	2	3
Richards, Willard	9	0	0	1	0	0	2	5
Lyman, Amasa	8	0	0	1	0	1	0	5
Smith, George A.	8	0	0	0	0	2	3	2
Smith, John	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Whitney, Newell K.	8	0	0	0	0	1	0	6
Bernhisel, John	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Cutler, Alpheus	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Pratt, Parley P.	7	0	0	1	0	3	1	1
Snow, Lorenzo	6	0	0	0	0	0	3	2
Clayton, William	5	0	0	1	0	2	1	0
Coolidge, Joseph	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Farr, Winslow	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Hawes, Peter	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Lott, Cornelius	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Morley, Isaac	5	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Pratt, Orson	5	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
Rich, Charles C.	5	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Smith, William	5	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Turley, Theodore	5	0	1	0	2	1	0	0
Bair, John	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
Butler, John	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Covey, Benjamin	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Kelsey, Eli	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Miller, William	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Pack, John	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Smith, Hyrum	4	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Snow, Erastus	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Wilson, Guy C.	4	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Young, Joseph	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3

TABLE 3 (Continued)
Polygamous Marriages by Nauvoo Husbands

Husbands	Total Nauvoo Wives*	Years						
		1841	1842	1843	To June 27, 1844	After June 27, 1844	1845	1846
Beach, Rufus	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Benson, Ezra T.	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Blackhurst, William	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Brown, Benjamin	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Cahoon, Reynolds	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Carter, Dominicus	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Carter, Simeon	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Clapp, Benjamin	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cox, Frederick	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Dana, Charles	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Dykes, George P.	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Felshaw, William	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Fullmer, David	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Grover, Thomas	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Hadden, Alfred S.	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Hunter, Edward	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Huntington, Wm. D.	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Hyde, Orson	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Johnson, Aaron	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Johnson, Benj. F.	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Johnson, Joel	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Kingsbury, Jos. C.	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Lathrop, Asahel	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Markham, Stephen	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Miller, Reuben	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Nickerson, Freeman	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Noble, Joseph B.	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Parker, John D.	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Phelps, William W.	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Rockwood, A. P.	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Russell, Samuel	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Sagers, William H.	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Scott, John	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Sessions, David	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Smoot, Abraham	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Stout, Hosea	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Weeks, Allen	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Whiting, Edwin	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Whitney, Clark	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Woolley, Edwin	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Woolsey, Thomas	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Young, Lorenzo	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
[78 husbands w/two wives]	152							
Total Wives	587							
*(incl. legal marriages)								

Over the six years when polygamy was practiced in Nauvoo, 1841-46, Smith, Kimball, and Young were the most-married men in Nauvoo; they accounted, in fact, for 117 of the 432 Nauvoo polygamous marriages, over one-fourth of the marriages by the community of 153 polygamous husbands. After Nauvoo, Brigham Young married fifteen more wives and Heber C. Kimball married eight. At the funeral of his wife, Vilate, Kimball, pointing to the coffin, Heber C. Kimball said: "There lies a woman who has given me forty-four wives."¹⁰³

Joseph Smith's pattern of marriages differed from that of his followers. He married approximately forty-three women, but his plural wives usually lived apart in separate households or, in the case of working girls in the Smith home, were soon forced by Emma to leave. Emma's opposition to Joseph's plural wives, and perhaps his regard for them as one-time participants in a brief relationship (albeit followed by eternal marriage), may account for this unusual pattern. His followers, on the other hand, tended to marry fewer wives and formed more coherent families. Twenty-one of the thirty polygamous families during Joseph Smith's time contained just two wives, four men had three, John D. Lee, Hyrum Smith, and Theodore Turley had four, and Brigham Young had five wives. As the number of polygamous families increased from thirty to 153 in the later Nauvoo period following Smith's death, so did the number of wives per typical family, from an average of 2.5 (3.8 if Joseph Smith's forty-three wives are included) in the early period when Smith

TABLE 4
Incidence of Nauvoo Plural Marriage of the Most-Married Men

	Year							Cumulative
	1841	1842	1843	1844 (to 6/27)	1844 (after 6/27)	1845	1846	
Total Nauvoo	3	20	42	19	39	56	255	434
Smith	3	15	15	9	0	0	0	42
Kimball	0	1	0	0	9	5	21	36
Young	0	1	2	1	11	4	20	39
Total Marriages by S, K, and Y	3 (100%)	17 (85%)	17 (40%)	10 (53%)	20 (50%)	9 (16%)	41 (16%)	117 (27%)
Total Marriages less S, K, and Y	0	3	25	9	19	47	214	317

103. Orson F. Whitney, *The Life of Heber C. Kimball, an Apostle: The Father and Founder of the British Mission* (Salt Lake City: Kimball Family, 1888), 436n. Whitney affirms that Kimball was the husband of forty-five wives and father of sixty-five children.

was alive, to 3.1 for the whole Nauvoo period (3.7 including Smith's forty-three, Brigham Young's forty, and Heber C. Kimball's thirty-seven). There were seventy-eight Nauvoo families with two wives, forty families had three wives; ten families had four wives, ten families had five wives; twelve families had six to eleven wives; and one family each, the cumulative households of Kimball, Young, and Smith, had thirty-seven, forty, and forty-three wives.¹⁰⁴

TABLE 5
Incidence of Polygamous Families by Number of Wives.

A. During Joseph Smith's Lifetime

Number of Wives	Polygamous Families	Total Marriages	Average Wives per Family
43	1	43	
5	1	5	
4	3	12	
3	4	12	
2	21	42	
Total	30	114	3.8
Excl. Joseph Smith	29	71	2.5

B. During Entire Nauvoo Period

Number of Wives	Polygamous Families	Marriages	Average Wives per Family
43 (Smith)	1	43	
40 (Kimball)	1	40	
37 (Young)	1	37	
11	1	11	
10	2	20	
9	1	9	
8	4	32	
7	3	21	
6	1	6	
5	10	50	
4	10	40	
3	40	126	
2	78	152	
Total	153	587	3.8
Exc. S, K, Y	150	467	3.1

104. An interesting narrative of William Hickman's ten marriages in Nauvoo is contained in Hope A. Hilton, *"Wild Bill" Hickman and the Mormon Frontier* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988).

During the years after the westward migration—considering post-Nauvoo children of Nauvoo wives and later wives of these Nauvoo families, and their children—the 153 families who began practicing plural marriage in Nauvoo eventually accounted for a total of 974 wives and over 2,800 children, a mean incidence of 6.4 wives and 18.5 children per each family. Excluding the large families of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and Heber C. Kimball, the ultimate size of these Nauvoo families averaged 5.5 wives and 18.0 children per household. After the Nauvoo polygamists reached the Great Salt Lake, the total of Nauvoo families with two wives declined from seventy-eight to sixteen; thirty-three families each had three wives; 91 families had from four to ten wives; and one to four families each had eleven to nineteen wives.

LEGACY OF NAUVOO PLURAL MARRIAGE

These preliminary demographic observations indicate that the practice of plural marriage, which Joseph Smith initiated among thirty families, more than quintupled for these families in total number of participants—husbands, wives, and children—by the end of the Nauvoo period in 1846. Afterward, these polygamous Nauvoo families nearly tripled in size from the end of the Nauvoo period to the later Salt Lake period. It is clear from these data that Nauvoo provided the model and impetus for the later practice of polygamy in the west. These Nauvoo roots of Mormon polygamy eventually encompassed thousands of people, and the practice expanded in Utah territory to include tens of thousands of men, women, and children, involving over half the population of some Mormon communities.¹⁰⁶

TABLE 6
Nauvoo Polygamous Families¹⁰⁵

	During Joseph Smith's Life	Total Nauvoo Period	Eventual Nauvoo Families in West
Husbands	30	153	153
Wives	114	587	971
Children	131	734	2,790
Total Persons	275	1,474	3,914

105. A detailed, annotated table of these 153 Nauvoo polygamous families, listing husbands, wives, marriage ages, and family size over time, can be found in Vol. 27, No. 1 (Spring 1994): 37-72.

106. By 1880, at the end of the Brigham Young era and before federal raids on polygamous households, about 33 percent of Mormons in the St. George stake and 67 percent in Orderville, Utah, lived in polygamous families (Lowell "Ben" Bennion, "The Incidence of

The discovery and rejection of this relatively unknown doctrine by a vocal minority seems to have been one of the primary factors leading to Joseph Smith's death. One historian concludes: "Joseph Smith's belief in, preaching about and practice of plural marriage must be considered as one of the factors precipitating the martyrdom."¹⁰⁷

Rejection of plural marriage was also one of the elements dividing the church after Smith's death. Until recently, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS) never wholly accepted the idea that Smith practiced polygamy. Early RLDS leaders believed that Smith, in the last weeks before his death, told several people that his plural marriage revelation had been a mistake: "We are a ruined people. This doctrine of polygamy, or spiritual wife system, that has been taught and practiced among us, will prove our destruction and overthrow. I have been deceived. . . it is wrong; it is a curse to mankind, and we shall have to leave the United States soon, unless it can be put down."¹⁰⁸ After Smith was killed, Brigham Young pushed completion of the Nauvoo temple and accelerated plural marriages, and indeed, the Mormons were soon compelled to leave the United States for Mexico (the Great Salt Lake Valley). Later, when polygamy was outlawed as a condition for statehood, Mormons who wanted to maintain their polygamous families again had to flee to Mexico (now below the Rio Grande), where remnants of these expatriate colonies still exist. Many polygamists who persisted in their belief in the divine sanction of their practice remained in the

Mormon Polygamy in 1880: 'Dixie' Versus Davis Stake," *Journal of Mormon History* 11 [1984]: 27-42). Stanley S. Ivins found that a sample of 1,651 families in Utah produced an average of fifteen children per family. He also found that of 1,784 polygamists, 66 percent married one extra wife, 21 percent married three wives, nearly 7 percent four wives, and 6 percent five or more wives. Applying these ratios to an 1890 census of 2,451 plural families, we arrive at an estimate of 45,416 persons involved in polygamy.

2,451 families x 15 children = 36,765 children

2,451 families x 66% x 2 = 3,235 wives

x 21% x 3 = 1,544

x 7% x 4 = 686

x 6% x 5 = 735

Total = 6,200 wives

2,451 husbands + 6,200 wives + 36,765 children = 45,416 total

See Ivins's "Notes on Mormon Polygamy," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 35 (Fall 1967): 311, 313-14, 318. Current research into this subject may produce more definitive statistics which are beyond the scope of this essay.

107. Bachman, "Not Lawful to Utter," 45.

108. Recalled by William Marks in a letter to *Zion's Harbinger and Beneemy's Organ*, July 1853. Although the Council of the Twelve rejected it, Marks's account did fit the outcome of plural marriage in Nauvoo.

United States. Reported to number in the tens of thousands, these “Fundamentalist” Mormons have endured years of government prosecution and official LDS censure.

What do LDS people today think about polygamy in the early Nauvoo church? Since that period was enshrouded with secrecy and denials, and the practice was not announced until 1852 from a new home in the Great Salt Lake Valley, Nauvoo polygamy has remained a mystery. The prophet’s mother concluded that Joseph Smith taught plural marriage but that we have no knowledge that anyone practiced it until the later Salt Lake period under Brigham Young.¹⁰⁹ Not even the relationship between Nauvoo polygamy and the internal Mormon dissent which led to the prophet’s arrest and assassination is clearly recognized. Latter-day Saints tend to identify reports of Nauvoo polygamy with anti-Mormon propaganda, which is considered to be based on unfounded rumors of Joseph Smith’s illicit marriages. The community of 153 polygamous husbands, 585 plural wives, and 738 children has remained beneath the horizon of perception.

Yet these 153 families, which would themselves grow to include 4,000 people after the westward migration, provided the model for the approximately 50,000 who would eventually be associated with Mormon polygamous families in Utah. Many Latter-day Saints—especially those with polygamous ancestors—take pride in the faithful men and women who practiced plural marriage long ago. Even though LDS men take just one legal wife today, many devout Mormons still believe in the “principle” and may be sealed to more than one woman for eternity. The Mormon church’s present doctrine of celestial marriage—which includes the promise of plural marriage in the afterlife, and the current practice of plural marriage among Fundamentalist Mormons, are the legacies of Joseph Smith’s revelation sanctioning Nauvoo polygamy as a “new and everlasting covenant.”

109. Lucy Mack Smith, preliminary manuscript of biography of Joseph Smith, 1845.

The Making of a Mormon Myth: The 1844 Transfiguration of Brigham Young*

Richard S. Van Wagoner

The brethren testify that brother Brigham Young is brother Joseph's legal successor. You never heard me say so. I say that I am a good hand to keep the dogs and wolves out of the flock. —Brigham Young (1860)¹

MORMONISM, AMERICA'S UNIQUE RELIGIOUS MANIFESTATION, has a remarkable past. Nourished on the spectacular, the faith can count heroic martyrs, epic treks, and seemingly supernatural manifestations. Deep in the Mormon psyche is an attraction to prophetic posturing and swagger. In particular, Joseph Smith, Jr., and Brigham Young are icons who have come to dominate the Mormon world like mythical colossuses.

After Smith's untimely 1844 murder, Brigham Young and an ailing Sidney Rigdon, the only surviving member of the First Presidency, became entangled in an ecclesiastical dogfight for primacy. Young, a masterful strategist with a political adroitness and physical vitality lacking in Rigdon, easily won the mantle.² However, as time passed, the rather prosaic events surrounding this tussle for church leadership metamorphosed into a mythical marvel. The legend is now unsurpassed in Mormon lore, second only to Joseph Smith's own account of angelic ministrations and his "first vision."

*This article first appeared in Vol. 28, No. 4 (Winter 1995): 1-24.

1. *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: LDS Bookseller's Depot, 1855-86), 8:69 (3 June 1860); hereafter JD.

2. For five years Rigdon had been weakened by episodic bouts of malaria and depression. For a discussion of his health problems, see Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 266-70, 279, 281-85.

While the veracity of angelic visitations, apparitions, and miracles is typically difficult to authenticate due to a lack of corroborative evidence, the averred "Transfiguration of Brigham Young" can be scrutinized in detail in newspaper accounts, diaries, official proclamations, retrospective observations, and other exemplification.

The official account of post-martyrdom Mormonism was written after the fact by members of the Quorum of the Twelve or their advocates. These men, under Brigham Young's direction, zealously projected their role in history in the most favorable light. Overshadowed by editorial censorship, hundreds of deletions, additions, and alterations were made when the *History of Joseph Smith*, as it was originally called, was serialized in the *Deseret News* in the late 1850s. Not only does this history place polygamy and Brigham Young's ecclesiastical significance in the rosy glow of political acceptability, it also does a monumental disservice to Sidney Rigdon and others who challenged the Twelve's ascent to power.

The Twelve's nineteenth-century propaganda mill was so adroit that few outside Brigham Young's inner circle were aware of the behind-the-scenes alterations seamlessly stitched into church history. Charles Wesley Wandell, an assistant church historian who later left the church, was aghast at these emendations. Commenting on the many changes made in the historical work as it was being serialized, Wandell noted in his diary:

I notice the interpolations because having been employed in the Historian's office at Nauvoo by Doctor Richards, and employed, too, in 1845, in compiling this very autobiography, I know that after Joseph's death his memoir was "doctored" to suit the new order of things, and this, too, by the direct order of Brigham Young to Doctor Richards and systematically by Richards.³

More than a dozen references to Brigham Young's involvement in transposing the written history may be found in the post-martyrdom record first published in book form in 1902 as *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. For example, a 1 April 1845 citation records Young saying: "I commenced revising the History of Joseph Smith at Brother Richard's office: Elder Heber C. Kimball and George A. Smith were with me."⁴

That this revision, or censorship, of the official history came from

3. Inez Smith, "Biography of Charles Wesley Wandell," *Journal of History* 3 (Jan. 1910): 455-63.

4. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, B. H. Roberts, ed., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1902), 7:389; hereafter HC. For other references regarding revisions, see *ibid.*, 389-90, 408, 411, 414, 427-28, 514, 519, 520, 532, 533, 556.

Brigham Young is evidenced by an 11 July 1856 reference in Wilford Woodruff's diary. Apostle Woodruff, working in the church historian's office, questioned Young respecting a "p[ie]ce of History on Book E-1 page 1681-2 concerning Hyr[u]m leading this Church & tracing the [A]aronic Priesthood." Young advised: "[I]t was not essential to be inserted in the History & had better be omitted." Woodruff then queried him about "Joseph[s] words on South Carolina" (see D&C 87; 130:12-13) which had recently been published in the *Deseret News*. Young said he "wished it not published."⁵ Years later Charles W. Penrose, appointed to the First Presidency in 1911, admitted that after Joseph Smith's death some changes were made in the official record "for prudential reasons."⁶

Censorship has severely tarnished Sidney Rigdon's historical image. Contrary to the official Mormon view, for example, Rigdon did not travel to Pennsylvania prior to Joseph Smith's death in the summer of 1844 to escape the turmoil of Nauvoo or desert the church, as was retrospectively charged. He had not "apostatized and left Bro[ther] Joseph," as Brigham Young declared on 24 June 1868.⁷ Rather, Rigdon was dispatched to his home state by the prophet Joseph for at least three reasons. The first was political: U.S. presidential candidate Joseph Smith had declared Illinois residency and Rigdon, his vice presidential running mate, was required by law to establish residency elsewhere. Second, at an earlier time when Rigdon and Smith were living in Kirtland, Ohio, the prophet, as recorded by Book of Mormon witness David Whitmer, prophesied that "my servant Sydney must go sooner or later to Pittsburg."⁸ Thus the move to Pennsylvania was intended to fulfill revelation as well as political expediency. In addition, the prophet, fearing for Rigdon's life in the aftermath of the destruction of the *Nauvoo Expositor*, wanted his counselor to survive. Smith's personal diary entry for 22 June 1844 makes this clear: "I have sent Br. R[igdon] away," the prophet wrote, "[and] I want to send Hiram away to save him [too], to avenge my Blood."⁹

By official design, Rigdon was not in Illinois at the time of the infamous homicides at Carthage Jail. On 18 June, nine days before the martyrdom of the Smith brothers, the Rigdon family departed on the

5. Scott Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal—Typescript*, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983), 3:429.

6. Charles W. Penrose diary, 10 Jan. 1897, Utah Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

7. Young's false statement was made during Heber C. Kimball's funeral (see *Journal History*, 24 June 1868, archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter LDS archives).

8. David Whitmer to Joseph Smith III, 9 Dec. 1886, cited in *Saints' Herald*, 5 Feb. 1887.

9. Joseph Smith diary, loose sheet under date, microfilm copy in Special Collections, Brigham Young University, Harold B. Lee Library, Provo, Utah; hereafter BYU Library. I am indebted to D. Michael Quinn for drawing this unpublished reference to my attention.

steamer *Osprey* for Pittsburgh. According to Rigdon's son Wickliffe, Joseph Smith and "many of the prominent members of the church came to the boat to bid them goodby[e]." ¹⁰ Ebenezer Robinson, sent with Rigdon to establish a Mormon newspaper in Pittsburgh, recalled that prior to embarking, Smith took him aside and admonished him to stand by Rigdon "under all circumstances, and uphold his hands on all occasions, and never forsake him. . .for he is a good man and I love him better than I ever loved him in all my life, for my heart is entwined around his with chords [sic] that can never be broken." ¹¹

Arriving in Pittsburgh on 27 June, the Rigdons, unaware of Joseph's and Hyrum's deaths, visited family members the following day. Next they located a rental house on 1 July. Five days later Sidney received the first news of the tragic deaths from a *Nauvoo Neighbor* brought to town by Jedediah Grant on his way to Philadelphia. ¹² Rigdon told Grant he felt prepared to claim "the Prophetic mantle" and he would "now take his place, at the head of the church, in spite of men or devils, at the risk of his life." ¹³ Knowing Grant planned to leave the following day for Philadelphia, Rigdon requested him to relay word to any of the Twelve he might meet that it "was his wish and desire that they should come to Pittsburgh before going to Nauvoo, and hold a council." ¹⁴ Sidney also sent a letter to Brigham Young in care of *The Prophet*, a Mormon newspaper in the East, suggesting a date to conference in Pittsburgh.

Yet the Twelve, with succession aspirations of their own, disregarded Rigdon's wishes. Wilford Woodruff wrote from Boston to Brigham Young on 16 July, urging quorum members in the East to meet in Massachusetts, and suggesting they exclude Rigdon. ¹⁵ The Twelve then had

10. J. Wickliffe Rigdon, "Life of Sidney Rigdon," 178-79, LDS archives.

11. *Latter Day Saint's Messenger and Advocate* (Pittsburgh), 6 Dec. 1844. Richard Savary, Benjamin Stafford, and Ebenezer Robinson constituted a committee of Rigdon followers to counter Quorum of the Twelve accusations that Smith and Rigdon were estranged when he went to Pittsburgh. They published a late 1844 notice in Pittsburgh which claimed that Rigdon "enjoyed Joseph's confidence to the fullest extent until the time of his decease." They asserted that Smith wished Rigdon "to stand next to himself in political as well as religious matters," and that is why he was selected as his vice-presidential running mate (ibid.).

12. Although at the time Rigdon was shocked to learn of the prophet's death, in a 25 May 1873 letter to Charles F. Woodard (after Sidney's mind was addled by a series of strokes) he stated: "The Lord notified us that the church of Jesus Christ of Latter day saints were a going to be d[e]stroyed and for us to leave we did so and the Smiths were killed a few days after we started" (Rigdon Collection, LDS archives).

13. Jedediah M. Grant, *A Collection of Facts Relative to the Course Taken by Elder Sidney Rigdon in the States of Ohio, Missouri, Illinois and Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Brown, Bicking and Guilbert, 1844), 44-45.

14. Ibid., 17.

15. Woodruff to Young, 16 July 1844, in "Brigham Young Collection of Wilford Woodruff Correspondence, 1840-44," Brigham Young Collection, LDS archives.

Orson Hyde write to Rigdon, informing him that they "thought it safer for them to return" through Buffalo and Chicago, requesting him to "meet them in Nauvoo, where they would council together."¹⁶ Initially, Rigdon had not planned to return to Illinois. According to his account, however, he heard the spectral voice of Joseph Smith directing him, "You must not stay, you must go."¹⁷

Despite frequent kidnaping and assassination attempts, Joseph Smith established no firm policies regarding presidential succession in the event of his death. The resulting confusion threw the prophetic transition into turmoil. Smith simply had not expected to die at thirty-eight. Never given to full disclosure to any man or woman, the prophet's public and private statements between 1834-44 suggested at least eight different methods for succession, each pointing to different successors with some claims to validity.¹⁸

Consequently, Rigdon found the Saints in a leadership quandary when he arrived in Nauvoo on Saturday, 3 August. Apostles Parley P. Pratt, Willard Richards, and George A. Smith invited him to meet with them at 8:00 a.m. the following day at John Taylor's home. The men waited an hour. Pratt, sent to find Rigdon, found him engaged with a lawyer, and by then it was too late for him to meet with the apostles as he had a speaking engagement at worship services. Taking as his text the scriptural concept, "For my thoughts are not as your thoughts," President Rigdon related to the audience a vision he claimed to have received recently in Pittsburgh.

Declaring his manifestation a "continuation of the same vision that he and Joseph had in Kirtland. . . concerning the different glories or mansions in the 'Father's House,'" Rigdon testified that the prophet "had ascended to heaven, and that he stood on the right hand of the Son of God, and that he had seen him there, clothed with all the power, glory, might, majesty, and dominion of the celestial kingdoms." He added that Joseph still held "the keys of the kingdom. . . would continue to hold them to all eternity. . . and that no man could ever take his place, neither have power to build up the kingdom to any other creature or being but to Joseph Smith."¹⁹

16. Grant, *A Collection of Facts*, 17.

17. This quotation is from either the Willard Richards or William Clayton diary, both of which are presently unavailable to researchers. The citation was taken from Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question," master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982, 197.

18. D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844," *BYU Studies* 16 (Winter 1976): 187-233.

19. Orson Hyde, *Speech of Elder Orson Hyde, Delivered before the High Priest's Quorum, in Nauvoo, April 27th, 1845, upon the Course and Conduct of Mr. Sidney Rigdon, and upon the*

Emphasizing his longtime role as "Spokesman to the Lord," which had been pronounced by Smith in both revelation and a special blessing, Rigdon reported the Lord's wish that "there must be a guardian appointed to build the Church up to Joseph."²⁰ He then explained that "he was the identical man that the ancient prophets had sung about, wrote and rejoiced over; and that he was sent to do the identical work that had been the theme of all the prophets in every proceeding generation."²¹ Declaring that the Lord's ways are not our ways, he veered into his favorite topic, the prophecies of Armageddon. The time was near at hand, he warned, when the Saints "would see one hundred tons of metal per second thrown at the enemies of God," and blood would flow as deep as "horses' bridles." With his usual aplomb and extravagant phraseology, Sidney trumpeted:

I am going to fight a real bloody battle with sword and with gun. . . . I will fight the battles of the Lord. I will also cross the Atlantic, encounter the queen's forces, and overcome them—plant the American standard on English ground, and then march to the palace of her majesty, and demand a portion of her riches and dominions, which if she refuse, I will take the little madam by the nose and lead her out, and she shall have no power to help herself. If I do not do this, the Lord never spake by mortal.²²

During the afternoon meeting, while Charles C. Rich was speaking, Nauvoo Stake President William Marks, at Rigdon's request, interrupted and gave public notice of a Thursday, 8 August, special assembly to choose a guardian of the church. Some suggested waiting until the full Quorum of the Twelve returned, but Rigdon said he was "some distance from his family" and wanted to "know if this people had any thing for him to do." If not, then he wanted to be on his way "for there was a people 1000's & 10,000's who would receive him[,] that he wanted to visit other branches around [but Nauvoo] first."²³ Many thought Rigdon was pushing his claims too fast. On Monday morning, 5 August, Parley P. Pratt, Willard Richards, John Taylor, George A. Smith, Amasa Lyman, and Bishop Newel K. Whitney called on Sidney to ask what his hurry was. He denied that he expected the people to choose a guardian on

Merits of His Claims to the Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Liverpool: James and Woodburn, 1845), 12.

20. *Ibid.*, 12. In a special blessing given to Rigdon on 13 December 1833, Joseph Smith designated him as "spokesman unto the Lord. . . all the days of his life" (Patriarchal Blessing Book 1, 12, in Richard L. Anderson, "The Mature Joseph Smith and Treasure Searching," *BYU Studies* 24 [Fall 1984]: 529. See also D&C 100:9, 11).

21. *Journal History*, 4 Aug. 1844.

22. Hyde, *Speech*, 16.

23. *Journal History*, 4 Aug. 1844; Hyde, *Speech*, 40-41.

Thursday, saying he wished just a "prayer meeting, and interchange of thought and feeling [to] warm up each other's hearts."²⁴

Later that evening five more members of the Twelve arrived in Nauvoo, bringing the number to nine. The next day a combined meeting of the Twelve, the Nauvoo High Council, and the High Priest's Quorum was held in the second story of the new Seventies Hall. Brigham Young, who had scheduled the meeting, called on Rigdon to make a statement to the church concerning his Pittsburgh revelation. Rigdon explained that the manifestation, while not an open vision, was presented to his mind. He was shown that the prophet sustained the same relationship to the church in death that he had in life. No man could be Joseph's successor, Rigdon said. The Kingdom must be "built up to Christ" through the dead prophet. Revelation was still required, and since Rigdon had been ordained as Smith's spokesman, he was to continue to speak for him on this side of the veil "until Joseph Smith himself shall descend as a mighty angel, lay his hand on [my] head & ordain [me] & say, 'Come up & act for me.'" Concluding, he appended, "I have discharged my duty, & done what God commanded me. . . . The people could please themselves whether they accepted [me] or not."²⁵ Young then responded that he wished to hear the voice of the entire church in conference before a decision was made. He wryly commented that "he did not care who led the Church of God if God said so even if it was old 'Ann Lee' but he must know that God said so."²⁶ Young added that he had "the keys and the means of knowing the mind of God on this subject."²⁷

By rights of his 1841 ordination as "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator," Rigdon was entitled to visionary experiences. Yet Wilford Woodruff called Sidney's disclosure "a kind of second [c]lass vision."²⁸ Young, inclined to sarcastic ridicule, called Sidney a fool to his face.²⁹ The "Lion of the Lord" did not suffer fools easily. Rigdon underestimated Young, who soon would become one of the most powerful Americans of his generation. Rigdon, when in good health, was without question Brigham's

24. HC, 7:226.

25. The original minutes of this 7 August 1844 meeting, presently controlled by the Quorum of the Twelve, are "not available for public scrutiny" (F. Michael Watson, secretary to the First Presidency, to Richard S. Van Wagoner, 14 June 1993). The account of the meeting in William Clayton's diary (in possession of the First Presidency) is also unavailable. I therefore cite Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction," 197-98.

26. Ann Lee Stanley (1736-84) claimed to be the female incarnation of Jesus Christ and was leader of the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming, the "Shaking Quakers."

27. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction," 198.

28. Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:434.

29. Thomas Bullock's report of the special afternoon meeting of 8 August 1844, General Minutes Collection, LDS archives.

oratorical superior, but Young, never a passive observer, was more clever, ambitious, and politically astute. Not content to let the mantle of leadership pass him by, he simply wrestled it away from Rigdon.

Young, like Rigdon, stunned by the news of Joseph Smith's murder, seems not to have concluded immediately that the prophet's death placed the crown of leadership on the heads of the Twelve or on him. In fact, Young initially wondered if the prophet had taken the keys of authority with him. "I had no more idea of [the mantle] falling upon me than of the most unlikely thing in the world," he later told family members.³⁰

Equipped with a well-honed mind, however, Young became convinced en route to Nauvoo from Boston "by the visions of the Spirit," as he later told colleagues, that the Twelve constituted an interim church presidency from which a First Presidency eventually would arise.³¹ Yet Young told no one of his intuition on this matter for three years. "I knew then what I now know concerning the organization of the church," he retrospectively proclaimed, but "I revealed it to no living being, until the pioneers to this valley were returning to Winter Quarters. Br[other] Wilford Woodruff was the first man I ever spoke to about it."³²

By 8 August 1844, the stage was set for a Rigdon-versus-Young morality play, an ecclesiastical contest in which the winner could claim the primary position of Mormon power. Although these happenings

30. Manuscript minutes of Brigham Young sermon "on the occasion of a family meeting, held at his residence," 25 Dec. 1857, Brigham Young Collection.

31. Miscellaneous Minutes, 12 Feb. 1849, Brigham Young Collection.

32. Journal History, 7 Oct. 1860. Woodruff confirmed in his 12 Oct. 1847 diary: "I had A question put to me by President Young what my opinion was concerning one of the Twelve Apostles being appointed as the President of the Church with his two Counselors. I answered that A quorum like the Twelve who had been appointed by revelation & confirmed by revelation from time to time I thought it would require A revelation to change the order of that Quorum" (Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:283).

Woodruff also recorded another of Brigham Young's references to this matter in his 28 July 1860 diary entry:

When I met with the Saints in Nauvoo at the first meeting after Joseph[']s death in defending the true organization against Sidney Rigdon I had it in my mind all the time that there would have to be a Presidency of three Appointed but I knew the people could not bear it at the time and on our return as the pioneers from the valley I Broached the subject first to Brother Woodruff and afterwards to the rest of the Quorum. They received it & finally sustained it (Ibid., 5:478).

While the official reorganization of the First Presidency may not have taken place until 1847, the manuscript minutes of 7 April 1845 general conference show that Brigham Young was unanimously voted on and sustained as "the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to this Church and nation, and all nations, and also as the President of the whole Church of Latter Day Saints."

constitute one of Mormonism's most pivotal shifts of leadership, considerable confusion surrounds the day's events. Much of the retrospective disarray arises from the fact that two public gatherings were held that day. Many commentators have either assumed that the alleged "transfiguration of Brigham Young" occurred in the afternoon meeting, or have combined both meetings into a single narrative.

Several sets of minutes of the afternoon meeting, each in the hand of a different scribe, make it clear they saw no mystical occurrence during that gathering. Furthermore, virtually all retrospective accounts mention that Young was "transfigured" when he began to speak after Rigdon had spoken. Rigdon only addressed the congregation in the morning session, he did not speak in the afternoon. While minutes of the morning gathering do exist, in stenographer Thomas Bullock's shorthand, they have never been transcribed. By order of the current LDS Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, they remain unavailable "for public scrutiny."³³ Nevertheless, several other accounts of the morning's events survive.

By 10:00 a.m., more than 5,000 Saints had gathered at the grove east of the temple in response to William Marks's announcement. As Rigdon began speaking, a strong headwind muted his voice, so he relocated to the leeward side and climbed on top of a wagon box. From that spot he addressed the Saints until 11:30 a.m. While some have painted Rigdon's discourse as uninspired, others, including Orson Hyde, a longtime Rigdon critic, said he presented "his claims with all the eloquence and power that he was master of."³⁴

Despite assurances that the convocation was nothing more than a prayer meeting, Rigdon labored to gain a show of support from the throng of LDS faithful. Hyde reported that Rigdon was just "about to ask an expression of the people by vote; when lo! to his grief and mortification, [Brigham Young] stepped upon the stand. . . and with a word stayed all the proceedings of Mr. Rigdon."³⁵ Young, recalling the event in 1860, stated: "[W]hen I went to meet Sidney Rigdon on the meeting ground I went alone, and was ready alone to face and drive the dogs from the flock."³⁶

Jacob Hamblin's recollection of the morning of 8 August indicates that Young's booming voice and stunning display of brinkmanship caused the audience to turn in their seats and face his commanding presence on the stand. "I will manage this voting for Elder Rigdon," he belled. "He does not preside here. This child [meaning himself] will

33. Watson to Van Wagoner.

34. Hyde, *Speech*, 13.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Journal History*, 6 Oct. 1860.

manage this flock for a season."³⁷ Tactically, he then dismissed the meeting, allowing time for Rigdon's rhetoric to dissipate, and announced a special assembly for 2:00 p.m. Wilford Woodruff's diary records, under the same date, states: "The[re] was a meeting appointed at the grove for the Church to come together for Prayers. But in consequence of some excitement among the People and a dispositions by some spirits to try to divide the Church, it was thought best to attend to the business of the Church in the afternoon that was to be attended to on Tuesday."³⁸

The afternoon meeting was organized like a solemn assembly with various leaders appropriately ordering their quorums. After prayer, Brigham Young stood before the people. It was a momentous occasion. For the first and only time in Mormon history, church leadership was about to be determined by the will of the people. Brother Brigham, who possessed a mean-weather-eye for prevailing winds from the masses, catered to the majority who had grown accustomed to being told what to do. While Rigdon had been spouting wild Armageddon rhetoric during the previous week, Young perceived that the Saints "like children without a father, and sheep without a shepherd," mostly wanted comfort.³⁹ Lonely and bereaved, more than a third of the Mormon faithful were middle- and working-class British immigrants, converted by Young and his fellow apostles. These new arrivals, conditioned from their earliest years, were used to working under the direct guidance of a master's hand in their homeland. Young saw their dependency, their inability to provide for their own emotional and economic sustenance. They were accustomed to following directions from Joseph Smith and were scarcely familiar with Rigdon, who had been ill for years; being instructed what to do by Brigham Young was a relief.

Fully confident, tossing off platitudes and pronouncements, Young's afternoon address on 8 August was a remarkable assertion of the Twelve's right to govern as well as his personal claim to be shepherd of the Mormon flock. "For the first time since [I] became a member of the church," Young began, "the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, chosen by revelation, in this last dispensation of the gospel for the winding up scene, present themselves before the saints, to stand in their lot according to appointment."⁴⁰ After explaining "matters so satisfactorily that every saint

37. Cited in James A. Little, *Jacob Hamblin* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), 20-21.

38. Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:434-35.

39. *Journal History*, 8 Aug. 1844. This state of normlessness, of not knowing how to act in new or confusing situations, is called *anomie* by social scientists (see William Kornblum, *Sociology in a Changing World*, 3rd ed. [Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1994], 257).

40. *Times and Seasons* 5 (2 Sept. 1844): 637. While my narration generally follows the 8 August 1844 *Journal History* account, which for the most part fleshes out Thomas Bullock's 8 August p.m. minutes (General Minutes Collection), other important references are Wilford

could see that Elijah's mantle had truly fallen upon the "Twelve,'" wrote a reporter in the 2 September 1844 *Times and Seasons*, Young, ever the strategist, then asked, "I now want to ask each of you to tell me if you want to choose a guardian, a Prophet, evangelist or sumthing els[e] as your head to lead you. All that are in favor of it make it manifest by raising the right hand." No one did.⁴¹

Assuming the authoritarian Mormon father role he filled so well, Young then responded, "I know your feelings—do you want me to tell your feelings?" Responding to murmurs and assenting nods of the compliant flock he continued:

[H]ere [is] the 12 an independ[en]t body—who have the Keys of the K[ingdom] to all the whole world so help me God[, and] the[y] are, as the 1st pres[ide]nc[y] of the church. . . . [Y]ou can[']t call a Prophet you can[']t take El[der] Rig[don] or Amas[a] Lyman they must be ord[aine]d by the 12. . . . God will have nothing to do with you—you can['] put any one at the head of the 12.⁴²

Young went on: "Perhaps some think that our beloved brother Rigdon would not be honored, would not be looked to as a friend, but if he does right, and remains faithful, he will not act against our counsel, nor we against his, but act together, and we shall be as one."⁴³ "Do you want a spokesman?" Young then asked. "Do you want the church properly organized, or do you want a spokesman to be chief cook and bottle washer?"

Discussing Rigdon's calling as spokesman to the prophet, Young agreed, "Very well, he was," but he added, "If he wants now to be a spokesman to the Prophet he must go to the other side of the vail for the Prophet is there, but Elder Rigdon is here. Why will Elder Rigdon be a fool? Who knows anything of the [fullness of the] priesthood, or of the organization of the kingdom of God [i.e., the Council of Fifty]? I am plain."⁴⁴ As the meeting progressed, the sentiment which had so recently changed in favor of the Twelve became palpable. When Amasa Lyman took the stand to speak, he placed himself in Young's amen corner.

Shaken by the effect of Young's words upon the audience, the usually loquacious Rigdon declined to speak when afforded rebuttal oppor-

Woodruff's diary account (Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:434-40); Brigham Young diary entry for 8 August 1844; William Clayton diary entry for 8 August 1844, in George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in Association with Smith Research Associates, 1991), 142; and HC, 7:231-42.

41. 8 Aug. 1844 p.m. minutes in unknown scribe's hand (General Minutes Collection).

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Journal History*, 8 Aug. 1844.

44. *Ibid.*

tunities. Considering Rigdon's rhetorical proclivities, his decision seems tantamount to conceding defeat. His face buried in his hands, the infirm Rigdon requested an old Missouri nemesis, W. W. Phelps, to champion his cause. The cagey editor, realizing that Rigdon's cause was lost, delivered an ardent affirmation of the Twelve's position.

After Parley P. Pratt addressed the crowd, Young again took the stand. Attesting that if men "abide our Council they will go right into the K[ingdom]. . . we have all the signs [and] the tokens to give to the Porter [and] he will let us in the qu[ay]," Young proposed a vote. "Do you want Bro. Rig[don] to stand forward as you[r] leader[,] your guide[,] your spokesman[?]"⁴⁵ Rigdon interrupted then, saying he "wanted him to bring up the other question first." So Young asked,

people[?] [H]ere [are] the A[postles], the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the doc[trine] [and] cov[enants] is here [and] here (head & heart) it is written on the tablet of my heart. . . . [I]f the Ch[urch] want the 12 to walk in to their call[in]g[,] if this is your mind[,] signify it by the uplifted hand.

The vote, according to Young, was unanimous, which he announced "supersedes the other question."⁴⁶

Young then announced that "Rig[don] is. . . one with us—we want such men as Bro[ther] R[igdon] he has been sent away to build a K[ingdom] let him keep the instruct[i]o[n] [and] calling[,] let him raise up a k[ingdom] in Pittsburg [and] we will lift up his hand. I guess we[']ll have a printing office [and] gathering there." Wishing to support Rigdon in his calling as counselor, Young continued, "I feel to bring up Bro[ther] Rig[don] we are of one mind. . . will this con[gregation] uphold him in the place. . . [and] let him be one with us [and] we with him."⁴⁷ The voting was unanimous.

The leadership claim of the Twelve was beyond their February 1835 apostolic ordination, the March 1835 revelation giving them authority equal to the First Presidency, and the July 1837 revelation that the Twelve shared the keys of the kingdom with the First Presidency. Their assertion to "stand in their lot according to appointment," as Brigham had declared on 8 August, was based entirely on Joseph Smith's commission to them and others of the "keys of the kingdom" during a spring 1844 meeting of the Council of Fifty, the organization Young referred to on

45. 8 Aug. 1844 p.m. minutes in Thomas Bullock's handwriting.

46. Ibid. William C. Staines Journal, cited in HC, 7:236, reported there were "a few dissenting voices." "History of William Adams, Wrote by himself January 1894," 15, adds that "out of that vast multitude about twenty voted for Rigdon to be Gardian" (Special Collections, BYU Library).

47. 8 Aug. 1844 p.m. minutes in Thomas Bullock's handwriting.

8 August saying "if you let the 12 rem[ai]n the keys of the K[ingdom] are in them. . .we have an organ[izatio]n that you have not seen."⁴⁸

Orson Hyde commented on this 26 March 1844 empowerment, commonly called Joseph Smith's "last charge," in an 1869 address:

In one particular place, in the presence of about sixty men, [Joseph Smith] said, "My work is about done; I am going to step aside awhile. I am going to rest from my labors; for I have borne the [burden] and heat of the day, and now I am going to step aside and rest a little. And I roll the [burden] off my shoulders on the shoulders of the Twelve Apostles. 'Now,' said he, 'round up your shoulders and bear off this kingdom.' Has he ever said this to any one else? I do not know; I do not care. It is enough for me to know that he said it to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles."⁴⁹

Wilford Woodruff's account of this meeting quotes the prophet as saying: "I tell you the burden of this kingdom now rests upon your shoulders; you have got to bear it off in all the world, and if you don't do it you will be damned."⁵⁰ The most explicit statement on the charge, however, came from Benjamin F. Johnson, the youngest council member. He wrote that the prophet

Stood before that association of his Select Friends including all the Twelve and with great Feeling & Animation he graphically Reviewed his Life of Pers[e]cution Labor & Sacr[ifice] For the church & Kingdom of God—Both of Which—he d[e]clared were now organized upon the earth. The burden of which had become too great for him longer to carry. That he was weary & Tired with the weight he So long had bourn and he then Said with great Veh[e]mence "And in the name of. . .the Lord I now Shake from my Shoulders the Responsibilities of bearing off the Kingdom of God to all the world—and-here-& now I place that Responsibility with all the Keys Powrs & privilege pertaining there too upon the Shoulders of you the Twelve Apostles in Connection with this Council."⁵¹

The kingdom the prophet directed the Twelve to carry on their shoulders, however, was the political theocracy, the Kingdom of God, a shadow organization separate from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was this organization, best known as the Council of Fifty, not the Quorum of the Twelve, that the prophet intended to help relieve

48. Ibid.

49. JD 13 (6 Oct. 1869): 180.

50. "Wilford Woodruff's Testimony On Priesthood and Presidency," delivered on 23 Feb. 1892, in *Liahona: The Elders' Journal* 7 (16 Apr. 1910): 682.

51. Dean R. Zimmerman, *I Knew the Prophets, An Analysis of the Letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George F. Gibbs, Reporting Doctrinal Views of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon, 1976) 35.

the responsibilities of administering the temporal and secular affairs of the church.

While the Mormon vote on 8 August 1844 called for stability and ecclesiastical continuity, some have interpreted the assembly's actions as affirming Young's role as Joseph Smith's prophetic successor. That this was not intended is clarified in an epistle from the Twelve published in the 15 August 1844 *Times and Seasons*. The circular announced: "You are now without a prophet present with you in the flesh to guide you. . . . Let no man presume for a moment that [Joseph Smith's] place will be filled by another; for, remember he stands in his own place, and always will."⁵² The 2 September *Times and Seasons* also editorialized: "Great excitement prevails throughout the world to know 'who shall be the successor of Joseph Smith.'" The paper then admonished, "be patient, *be patient* a little, till the proper time comes, and we will tell you all. 'Great wheels move slow.' At present, we can say that a special conference of the church was held in Nauvoo on the 8th ult., and it was carried *without a dissenting voice*, that the 'Twelve' should preside over the whole church, and when any alteration in the presidency shall be required, seasonable notice will be given."⁵³

While no known contemporary record supports a supernatural occurrence on either the morning or afternoon of 8 August, over the years some have extemporized a surrealistic view of the day. In LDS phraseology, the alleged transcendental morning experience is known as the "Transfiguration of Brigham Young" or the "Mantle of the Prophet Incident."⁵⁴ "When Brigham Young arose and addressed the people," wrote future apostle George Q. Cannon two decades later:

If Joseph had risen from the dead and again spoken in their hearing, the effect could not have been more startling than it was to many present at that meeting, it was the voice of Joseph himself; and not only was it the voice of Joseph which was heard, but it seemed in the eyes of the people as if it were the very person of Joseph which stood before them. A more wonderful and miraculous event than was wrought that day in the presence of that congregation, we never heard of. The Lord gave His people a testimony that left no room for doubt as to who was the man chosen to lead them. They both saw and heard with their natural eyes and ears, and the words which were uttered came, accompanied by the convincing power of God, to their hearts,

52. *Times and Seasons* 5 (15 Aug. 1844): 618.

53. *Ibid.* 5 (2 Sept. 1844): 632.

54. This latter terminology likely evolved from a figurative or allegorical description such as the one in an anonymous letter published in the 15 October 1844 *Times and Seasons* (5:675). "Who can['t] see," began the communication, "that the mantle of the prophet has fallen on Pres. Young and the Twelve? The same spirit," continued the letter, "which inspired our beloved bro. Joseph Smith, now inspires Pres. Young."

and they were filled with the Spirit and with great joy. There had been gloom, and in some hearts, probably, doubt and uncertainty, but now it was plain to all that here was the man upon whom the Lord had bestowed the necessary authority to act in their midst in Joseph's stead. On that occasion Brigham Young seemed to be transformed, and a change such as that we read of in the scriptures as happening to the Prophet Elisha, when Elijah was translated in his presence, seemed to have taken place with him. The mantle of the Prophet Joseph had been left for Brigham. . . . The people said one to another: "The spirit of Joseph rests on Brigham": they knew that he was the man chosen to lead them and they honored him accordingly.⁵⁵

D. Michael Quinn, foremost authority on the Mormon succession crisis of 1844, has discovered several early references which he cites as supporting a transfiguration incident. A 15 November 1844 letter from Henry and Catharine Brooke wrote that Young "favours Br Joseph, both in person, & manner of speaking more than any person ever you saw, looks like another."⁵⁶ Five days later Arza Hinckley referred to "Brigham Young on [w]hom the mantle of the prophet Joseph has fal[l]en."⁵⁷ The May 1845 diary of William Burton (who died in 1851) noted that "[Joseph and Hyrum Smith's] places were filled by others much better than I once supposed they could have been." Burton wrote, "The spirit of Joseph appeared to rest upon Brigham."⁵⁸ Yet none of these references describe an explicit transfiguration, a physical metamorphosis of Brigham Young into the form and voice of Joseph Smith. The use of the phrase "spirit of Joseph" is merely elocutionary. Brigham Young, himself, used this same rhetorical form of expression during a 19 July 1857 address to the gathered Saints in Salt Lake City. Referring to the possibility of his own death, Young informed his listeners that "the spirit of Joseph which fell upon me is ready to fall upon somebody else when I am removed."⁵⁹

The earliest detailed accounts of a purported transfiguration did not begin to surface until long after the Saints were settled in the Great Basin. The fact that no account was included in "Joseph Smith's History," completed in August 1856, or in *The Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, completed before his 1857 death, suggests that the myth was not fully

55. Kate B. Carter, comp., *Heart Throbs of the West* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1943), 4:420; see also Andrew Jenson, *The Historical Record*, Book 1:789-91, and JD 23 (29 Oct. 1882): 358.

56. Henry and Catharine Brooke to Leonard and Mary Pickel, 15 Nov. 1844, Leonard Pickel papers, Beinecke Library, Yale University, cited in D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 167.

57. Azra Hinckley diary, 20 Nov. 1844, Special Collections, BYU Library.

58. William Burton diary, May 1845, LDS archives.

59. "Remarks by President Brigham Young, made in the Bowery, Great Salt Lake City, 19 July 1857," in JD 13 (19 July 1857): 57-58.

developed by this period. The first public reference to a "transfiguration" may have been a 19 July 1857 statement by Albert Carrington before a huge gathering of Saints that "he could not tell [Brigham Young] from Joseph Smith" when Young "was speaking in the stand in Nauvoo" during the 8 August 1844 convocation. "Somebody came along and passed a finger over his eyes," Brigham Young declared, "and he could not see any one but Joseph speaking, until I got through addressing the congregation."⁶⁰ Yet Young himself, while addressing the assembled Saints on the afternoon of 8 August 1844, confirmed that no chimerical experience had occurred that day. "For the first in the kingdom of God in the 19th century," he remarked, we are "without a Prophet at our head." Henceforth, he added, we are "called to walk by faith, *not by sight*."⁶¹

Retrospective retellings of a "transfiguration," in a variety of forms, can be found in dozens of sources, yet no two seem to agree on precise details.⁶² Elizabeth Haven Barlow, a cousin of Brigham Young, for example, wrote that her mother told her that "thousands in that assembly" saw Young "take on the form of Joseph Smith and heard his voice change to that of the Prophet's."⁶³ Eliza Ann Perry Benson reminisced that the

60. Ibid.

61. HC, 7:232; italics mine.

62. Anson Call, Salt Lake City School of the Prophets minutes, 26 Aug. 1871, LDS archives; Caroline Barnes Crosby, "Retrospective Memoirs Written in 1851," LDS archives; Homer Duncan Journal, LDS archives; Zadok Knapp Judd, "Reminiscence Written at Age Seventy-five," Utah Historical Society; Catharine Thomas Leishman Autobiography, LDS archives; George Morris Autobiography, Special Collections, BYU Library; John Riggs Murdock, in J. M. Tanner, *A Biographical Sketch of John Riggs Murdock* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), 71; Zera Pulsipher, in Terry and Nora Lund, comps., *The Pulsipher Family History Book* (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1953), 10-24; William Lampard Watkins Autobiography, LDS archives; Samuel Amos Woolley Autobiography, LDS archives; Eliza Westover, "2 July 1916 Letter to Her Son," LDS archives; Emily Smith Hoyt, "Reminiscences and Diaries (1851-1893)," LDS archives; Robert Taylor Burton, "Statement of 28 July 1905," LDS archives; Jacob Hamblin, in Pearson H. Corbett, *Jacob Hamblin—The Peacemaker* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1952), 22; "Wilford Woodruff's "Testimony on Priesthood And Presidency—Delivered on 23 February 1892," in *Liahona—The Elders' Journal* 7 (16 Apr. 1910): 683; "Wilford Woodruff Statement," in *Deseret News*, 15 Mar. 1892; *Journal History*, 9 Oct. 1867; Benjamin F. Johnson, in Zimmerman, 17; Robert T. Taylor, in Janet Burton Seegmiller, *The Life Story of Robert Taylor Burton* (Salt Lake City: Robert Taylor Burton Family Organization, 1988), 49; William C. Staines, in *The Contributor* 12 (1891): 315; William Van Orden Carbine, in Kate B. Carter, comp., *Our Pioneer Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1963), 6:203; Albert Clements, *ibid.*, 12:219; William L. Watkins, *ibid.*, 19:390-91; Talitha Cheney Autobiography, *ibid.*, 15:118-19; Ezra T. Benson, in John Henry Evans and Minnie Egan Anderson, *Ezra T. Benson—Pioneer, Statesman, Saint* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1947), 88-89; and "Typescript Account of Testimony of Bishop George Romney," by Mary R. Ross, LDS archives.

63. "Autobiography of Six Pioneer Women," in Kate B. Carter, ed., *Our Pioneer Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1976), 19:327.

Saints arose "from their seats enmass" exclaiming "Joseph has come! He is here!"⁶⁴ While Eliza Ann Haven Westover, writing in 1918, remembered that "hundreds witnessed the [transfiguration], but not all that were there had that privilege."⁶⁵

John D. Lee, writing of 8 August 1844 events in his autobiography, said:

Sidney Rigdon was the first who appeared upon the stand. He had been considered rather in the back-ground for sometime previous to the death of the Prophet. He made but a weak claim. . . . Just then Brigham Young arose and roared like a young lion, imitating the style and voice of the Joseph, the Prophet. Many of the brethren declared that they saw the mantle of Joseph fall upon him. I myself, at the time, imagined that I saw and heard a strong resemblance to the Prophet in him, and felt that he was the man to lead us until Joseph's legal successor should grow up to manhood, when he should surrender the Presidency to the man who held the birthright.⁶⁶

Claim to the contrary, Lee could not have witnessed this. His personal diary makes it clear that he did not return to Nauvoo until 20 August, nearly two weeks later.⁶⁷

Apostle Orson Hyde, prone to exaggerate, particularly when attempting to undermine the succession claims of his archenemy Sidney Rigdon,⁶⁸ did not arrive in Nauvoo until 13 August.⁶⁹ Yet he left two elaborate personal reminiscences of a "transfiguration" he could not possibly have witnessed either. When Young began to speak that morning, Quorum of the Twelve president Hyde recalled in 1869, "his words went through me like electricity." This is my testimony, Hyde added for special emphasis, "it was not only the voice of Joseph Smith but there were the features, the gestures and even the stature of Joseph before us in the person of Brigham."⁷⁰

64. Donald Benson Alder and Elsie L. Alder, comp., *The Benson Family—The Ancestry and Descendants of Ezra T. Benson* (Salt Lake City: Ezra T. Benson Genealogical Society, Inc., 1979), 151.

65. Eliza Westover to her son Lewis, July 2 1916, LDS Archives.

66. John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled; including the Remarkable Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee* (St. Louis: Scammell and Company, 1881), 155.

67. Cited in Juanita Brooks, *John Doyle Lee: Zealot—Pioneer Builder—Scapegoat* (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark, 1961), 62.

68. Although Rigdon was Hyde's mentor in both the Reformed Baptist Movement and Mormonism, he never forgave Rigdon for opposing his return to the church after his defection during the Missouri difficulties. Additional problems between the two also arose when Hyde's wife, Nancy, served as the go-between in Joseph Smith's attempted seduction of Rigdon's daughter Nancy. See Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon*, 266, 282, 294-95, 320, 324, 354.

69. See Wilford Woodruff diary under date in Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:441.

70. JD 13 (6 Oct. 1869): 181.

Eight years later Hyde declared in general conference that as soon as Young opened his mouth

I heard the voice of Joseph through him, and it was as familiar to me as the voice of my wife, the voice of my child, or the voice of my father. And not only the voice of Joseph did I distinctly and unmistakably hear, but I saw the very gestures of his person, the very features of his countenance, and if I mistake not, the very size of his person appeared on the stand. And it went through me with the thrill of conviction that Brigham was the man to lead this people. And from that day to the present there has not been a query or a doubt upon my mind with regard to the divinity of his appointment; I know that he was the man selected of God to fill the position he now holds.⁷¹

Wilford Woodruff, the foremost chronicler of early Mormon history, also left several first-hand accounts of a "transfiguration incident." His 8 August 1844 diary, however, makes it clear that he did not attend the morning meeting when both Young and Rigdon addressed the crowd. "The Twelve spent their time in the fore part of the day at the office," he wrote, and "in the afternoon met at the grove."⁷² Although Woodruff's recounting of the day consists of one of the longest, single-entry accounts in his voluminous diary, nearly 2,200 words, he makes no mention of anything miraculous.

One year later, in a letter to church members in Great Britain, Woodruff reported that during the 8 August 1844 special conference

we met in a special conference, all the quorums, authorities, and members of the Church, that could assemble in Nauvoo. They were addressed by elder Brigham Young, the president of the quorum of the twelve. It was evident to the Saints that the mantle of Joseph had fallen upon him, the road that he pointed out could be seen so plainly, that none need err therein; the spirit of wisdom and counsel attended all his teachings, he struck upon a chord, with which all hearts beat in unison.⁷³

Yet by 1872 Woodruff, like many other Nauvoo Mormons, had begun

71. Ibid. 19 (5 Apr. 1877): 58. In 1860 Hyde also embellished his recall of the 1847 organization of the First Presidency. He said that he heard the voice of God declare: "Let my servant Brigham step forth and receive the full power of the presiding Priesthood in my Church and kingdom" (JD 8 [7 Oct. 1860]: 234). Yet when President Wilford Woodruff was asked during an 1894 meeting of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve if he observed any of the special manifestations described by Hyde in connection with the 1847 organization, he said he did "not remember any particular manifestations at the time of the organization of the Presidency" (Abraham H. Cannon journal, 30 Aug. 1894, Special Collections, BYU Library).

72. HC, 2:435.

73. "To the [Church] Officers and Members," in *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, Feb. 1845.

to describe Brigham Young's 8 August 1844 manly defeat of Sidney Rigdon as something more arcane than a mere strategic conquest. "Every man and every woman in that assembly, which perhaps might number thousands," he declared, "could bear the same testimony. I was there, the Twelve were there, and a good many others, and all can bear the same testimony." Continuing with his expansive explanation of that long ago day, he asked the audience:

Why was the appearance of Joseph Smith given to Brigham Young? Because here was Sidney Rigdon and other men rising up and claiming to be the leaders of the Church, and men stood, as it were on a pivot, not knowing which way to turn. But just as quick as Brigham rose in that assembly, his face was that of Joseph Smith—the mantle of Joseph had fallen upon him, the power of God that was upon Joseph Smith was upon him, he had the voice of Joseph, and it was the voice of the shepherd. There was not a person in that assembly, Rigdon, himself, not excepted, but was satisfied in his own mind that Brigham was the proper leader of the people, for he [Rigdon] would not have his name presented, by his own consent, after that sermon was delivered. There was a reason for this in the mind of God; it convinced the people. They saw and heard for themselves, and it was by the power of God.⁷⁴

Twenty years later, while again discussing the 1844 war of words between Young and Rigdon, Woodruff was cited as saying:

I do not know if there was any one present here tonight but myself who was there at that [8 August 1844] conference. There are but few living who were present on that occasion. . . and when Brigham arose and commenced speaking, as has been said, if my eyes had not been so I could see, if I had not seen him with my own eyes, there is no one that could have convinced me that it was not Joseph Smith speaking. It was with the voice and face of Joseph Smith; and many can testify to this who was acquainted with the two men.⁷⁵

While all transfiguration anecdotes, like the Lee, Hyde, and Woodruff narratives, are belated recountings, a George Laub diary reference was thought by many, until recently, to have been written in 1846. "Now when President Young arose to address the congregation," Laub's account begins, "his voice was the voice of Bro. Joseph and his face appeared as Josephs face & Should I not have seen his face but herd his voice I should have declared that it was Joseph." This small tan-colored leather diary, which has misled many scholars, has now been determined

74. JD 15 (8 Apr. 1872): 81.

75. *Deseret News*, 12 Mar. 1892.

to be a copy of the original by Laub himself, with additions.⁷⁶ The original diary, which also exists, contains no reference to a transfiguration of Brigham Young.

When 8 August 1844 is stripped of emotional overlay, there is not a shred of irrefutable contemporary evidence to support the occurrence of a mystical event either in the morning or afternoon gatherings of that day. A more likely scenario was that the force of Young's commanding presence, his well-timed arrival at the morning meeting, and perhaps a

76. The tan-colored copy, incorrectly thought to be the original diary, was published in its entirety by Eugene England, ed., "George Laub's Nauvoo Journal," *BYU Studies* 18 (Winter 1977): 151-78. Whereas the original maroon-colored diary is written in a variety of inks, as one would expect in a multi-year diary, the copy is written in only two inks (copy, 1-43, a dark ink; 44-139, a lighter ink). Extensive family genealogy is also included on the inside covers of the original diary. Not so with the copy. The lighter ink used in the copy is also evident after p. 195 in the original. This reflects Laub's first entry in Deseret (Utah). Whereas he did not arrive in Utah territory until 25 August 1852 (original, 266), the copy was likely made after this date. The 25 August entry is a retrospective one, for he notes on 1 March 1857, "this day I commenced my daily Jurnel." Laub's insertion in the original (139, not 140 as England noted) "here ends the transfer of the first," is in the same light ink as the copy, leaving no doubt as to which is the original.

Laub's treatment of Rigdon is considerably more negative in the copied diary, as well as more positive regarding Brigham Young, reflecting a retrospective change of heart. For example, when Joseph Smith accused Rigdon of conspiring to turn him over to Missouri officials in October 1843, Laub's original diary reports Rigdon as saying:

If president Smith will have me no longer for his Spokesman I will give him the parting hand of friendship and he wept upon which President Smith arose up [im]mediatly and gave him the Parting hand. . . . But the People having mercy upon him after Hyrum Smith plead for mercy for him and the voice of the people was in his favour (original, 155).

Furthermore, the copy has been modified to read much like the similar revisions made by the Quorum of the Twelve historians to disparage Rigdon:

Joseph told us he did not want [Rigdon] for his counciler any further, that if the people put him there they might. But he said I will Shake him off. He Shook him Self and Shook hands on them words with Rigdon. . . . But the mercy pleading for Rigdon by Bro Hyrum Smith the patriarch Softened the hearts of the people, so they put him in again by their Voice. But Joseph never acknowledged him any further. Yet Rigdon was weeping & pleading. But Joseph Said he cursed god in the Misouri troubles (England, 159).

The most important alteration made by Laub in his copied diary was the addition of two paragraphs which do not appear in the original. This insertion led England and others to believe the entry was the "earliest account of the 1844 'transfiguration' of Brigham Young when he was given the Prophet's 'mantle' of authority" (England, 151).

Additional evidence supporting the authenticity of the original diary is that at the exact spot where the "transfiguration" insertion is made in the copy, a + mark is made in the light-colored ink of the copied diary. The original diary at this point reads:

Now after the Death of Jos & Hyrum[,] Rigdon came from Pittsburgh. (Because Jos. had sent him there to get him out of his way as Rigdon Desired to goe) to dame the presidency of the church

bit of theatrical mimicry swayed the crowd, rather than a metaphysical transfiguration of his physical body. Mormon bishop George Miller, present at the gathering, later recalled that nothing supernatural had occurred on that day. Young made a "long and loud harangue," Miller later wrote, for which I "could not see any point in the course of his remarks than to overturn Sidney Rigdon's pretensions."⁷⁸

Rigdon himself, in a 6 December 1870 letter to Brigham Young, accused his former sparring partner of duplicity in encouraging transfiguration anecdotes to propagate:

O vain man. . . Did you suppose that your hypocritical and lying preten[s]e that the spirit of Joseph Smith had [e]ntered into you, was going to prevail

to lead the church[.] But as the lord would have his servant Brigham Young the President of the Twelve to come just in time to tell the people who was the fals sheperd or who was the good shepard and Rigdon soon quaked and trembled and these things which he declared the day before to be revelations was then think [so's] and gess [so's] and hoap so and his words fell to the ground because they was Lies from the beginning to the End (original, 115).

The copied diary at this point has been profoundly altered by Laub to reflect the retrospective image of the "transfiguration" that began to evolve in Utah folklore in the late 1850s:

Now after the death of Br. Joseph & Hyrum[,] Rigdon having A mission appointed him by Joseph to Pittsburg before his death. Now after his death Sidney came in all the hast[e] in him to Nauvoo from Pittsburgh to claime the presidency of the church, him not knowing that Joseph Sent him out of the way to get r[i]d of him. Now when he returned to Nauvoo he called all the people to gether to choos them a guardian, as He Expressed himself. Now, Said he, the church is 14 yeas old and it was the duty of the church to choose a gardien & preached there for Two days on the subject of gardinism & the Lords ways was not as mans ways. But as the heavens are hier than the earth So are the Lords ways above mans ways, etc. Just about the time that the vote was to be taken for him to be president & gardien, But as the Lord would have the Twelve to come home & I felt to praise God to See Bro Brigham Young walk upon the stand then. Thes positive Revelations of Rigdon's ware only guess So & he thinks So & hoap so, while the lord had told him how to proseed before according to his [own] mouth & afterwards only Suposed them so.

Now when President Young arose to address the congregation his Voice was the Voice of Bro. Joseph and his face appeared as Joseph's face, & Should I not have seen his face but herd his Voice I Should have declared that it was Joseph. Now he arose and commenced Speaking, Saying I would rather have m[o]rned forty days then to come here, & if Rigdon was the Legal heir to lead the Church why did he not Stop to Pittsburg till we came and accompanied him as I had wrote to him. But he was afraid that he could not kerry out his designes & conspericy underhanded, etc., Emedately Rigdon's followers armed them with the wepons of death & with the Brandy Jug So that they might have their Spirits of their calling (England, 166).

77. Orson Hyde, in 1869 comments, raised the issue of Brigham Young sounding like Joseph Smith on 8 August 1844 by noting that "President Young is a complete mimic, and can mimic anybody," although he added, "I would like to see the man who can mimic another in stature who was about *four or five inches higher than himself*" (JD 13 [6 Oct. 1869]: 181), emphasis in original.

78. *Correspondence of Bishop George Miller with the Northern Islander from His Acquaintance with Mormonism up to Near the Close of His Life, 1855* (Burlington, Wisc.: W. Watson, 1916), 20-21.

with God and man. You knew you lied when you made that preten[s]e. Your ignorance was such that you did not know that there were those living who knew that there never was[,] is[,] nor will be[,] such a metamorphosis on this earth as you wickedly, heaven enduringly pretended had taken place with you.⁷⁹

Apostles Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, and Wilford Woodruff, all of whom made 8 August 1844 entries in their diaries, make no reference to an epiphany. Such an event, had it truly transpired, would have stood at the apogee of Mormon history, a physical metamorphosis unsurpassed except for the transfiguration and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yet neither the *Times and Seasons* nor the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, local newspapers owned by the church, mention such a wonder. Neither do the 1844 and 1845 accounts of Jedediah Grant and Orson Hyde, specifically written to refute Sidney Rigdon's robust challenge to the Quorum of Twelve's succession claims.

The most damning evidence to claims of a transfiguration is the fact that on 8 August 1844 the congregation sustained a committee rather than an individual to run the church. They confirmed the collective Quorum of the Twelve as their presiding authority. Furthermore, Young's ascent to the presidency was no ceremonial stroll, as could be expected if something as phenomenal as a transfiguration occurred. His emergence as the dominant, uncontested Mormon guiding force was not complete until late 1847, after the pioneer trek west. Even then there was substantial opposition to Brigham setting himself apart from his brethren. Orson Hyde, who would succeed Young as quorum president, later said: "Did it require argument to prove that brother Brigham Young held the position of Joseph, the martyred Prophet? Did it require proof that Joseph was there in the person of Brigham, speaking with an angel's voice? It required no argument; with those who feared God and loved truth, it required none."⁸⁰

This observation was not accurate, however. Considerable opposition to Brigham Young establishing a First Presidency is evident in original, unaltered accounts. Particularly outspoken were Wilford Woodruff, Orson Pratt, and to a lesser degree John Taylor, Parley P. Pratt, George A. Smith, and Amasa Lyman. The number of meetings on the topic is ample proof of contention. Woodruff told Young on 12 October 1847 that he felt it "would require [a] revelation to change the order of that Quorum."⁸¹ Six weeks later Woodruff, again objecting to Young's formation of a First

79. An undated copy is in the Stephen Post Collection, box 1, folder 1, LDS archives; and also is listed as Section 61 in Copying Book A. The mailed letter to Young is in the Brigham Young Collection (box 42, fd. 2, reel 73).

80. JD 13 (6 Oct. 1869): 181.

81. Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:283.

Presidency, said that if three were taken out of the Twelve it seemed like "severing the body in 2." Furthermore, if the Quorum of the Twelve surrendered its power "unto [three]," he added, "I sho[ul]d be totally opposed to it." Pratt's viewpoint was that the "head of the church consists of the Apostleship united together."⁸² The matter was not resolved until a lengthy, emotion-filled meeting of the quorum on 5 December 1847.⁸³

The paramount dilemma with retrospective transfiguration recountings is why so many otherwise honorable, pious people recalled experiencing something they probably did not. A rational and likely explanation for this faulty group memory is that a "contagious" thought can spread through the populace to create a "collective mind." This phenomenon is what social scientists call *contagion theory* or *scenario fulfillment*, whereby one sees what one expects, especially belatedly. Memory is more than direct recollection. It springs from tales harbored in the common fund which may then effect a re-shaping of a community's sense of itself. Joseph Smith had truly ushered in an age of miracles and wonder. Every streaking meteor in the heavens seemed to portend marvels for the Mormon masses.

Brigham Young, although not as charismatic as Joseph Smith, was certainly more pragmatic. However, Mormonism was founded on prophetic allure, and viewed in the vague afterlight of the Utah period, the fact that Brigham Young had simply bested Sidney Rigdon in Nauvoo, toe to toe, man to man, was not enchanting enough to nurture and sustain the cohesive post-martyrdom Mormon psyche. A mystical stamp of God's approval or faith-promoting myth was necessary. Young had to be set apart from the masses, even from the Twelve itself, by a wondrous miracle. Nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints in a rather classic example of spontaneous collective behavior⁸⁴ began to interpret as miraculous what in 1844 had simply been a turf battle and a changing of the guard.

82. 5 Dec. 1847, Miscellaneous Minutes, Brigham Young Collection, ms. 1234 box 47, fd. 4.

83. "Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles," under date, LDS archives. Although neither Wilford Woodruff's diary nor the official minutes mention anything unusual about the 5 December meeting, Brigham Young and Orson Hyde would later claim a supernatural occurrence on this day also. Young in April 1860 told the quorum: "At O. Hyde's the power came upon us, a shock that alarmed the neighborhood" ("Minutes of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, 4 April 1860," LDS archives). Hyde expanded on that at the October conference by affirming that the apostles organized the First Presidency because the voice of God declared: "Let my servant Brigham step forth and receive the full power of the presiding Priesthood in my Church and kingdom" (JD 8:223-24).

84. For a treatment of collective behavior and mass publics, see Kornblum, *Sociology*, 243-71. Another example of controversial Mormon collective behavior in the 1840s and early 1850s was the group denial of polygamy, which many were secretly practicing but adamantly denying until 1852.

What is clear is that this pious folklore, by the force of iteration and reiteration, thrives in present-day Mormondom.

Fables can be useful to a culture. Who can deny that Santa Claus makes Christmas more memorable to the child in us all? And what a wonderful tale of George Washington and the cherry tree did Mason Locke Weems weave out of whole cloth not "to give information about George Washington but to suggest virtuous conduct to young Americans."⁸⁵ In religious matters, however, folk tales equated with reality can ultimately destroy conviction when unmasked. Latter-day Saints who base their faith on such irresolute stories as Elder Paul H. Dunn's allegories⁸⁶ or the "Transfiguration of Brigham Young," when faced with evidence that their belief system seems to rest on sources that are dubious at best or duplicitous at worst, may conclude as Elder Brigham H. Roberts once warned "that since these things are myth and our Church has permitted them to be perpetuated. . . might not the other fundamentals to the actual story of the Church, the things in which it had its origin, might they not all be lies and nothing but lies." Answering his own compelling question Roberts responded, "I find my own heart strengthened in the truth by getting rid of the untruth, the spectacular, the bizarre, as soon as I learn that it is based upon worthless testimony."⁸⁷ That advice, like a spectral voice of reason from the past, remains as sound today as it did six decades ago.

85. A. B. Hart, *American Historical Review* 15 (1910): 242, cited in Robin W. Winks, ed., *The Historian as Detective* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 183.

86. Elder Dunn, who based his career on relating faith-promoting allegories about his own exaggerated personal accomplishments, is now a general authority emeritus. See Lynn Packer, "Paul H. Dunn: Fields of Dreams," *Sunstone* 15 (Sept. 1991): 35-44; "Elder Dunn Apologizes For Inaccuracies," *Sunstone* 15 (Nov. 1991): 60.

87. Truman G. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 363.

Seers, Savants and Evolution: The Uncomfortable Interface*

Duane E. Jeffery

Ever since his great synthesis, Darwin's name has been a source of discomfort to the religious world. Too sweeping to be fully fathomed, too revolutionary to be easily accepted, but too well documented to be ignored, his concepts of evolution¹ by natural selection have been hotly debated now for well over a century.² The facts of evolution as a current and

*In the years since its initial publication (Vol. 8, No. 3/4 [Autumn/Winter 1974]: 41-75), this paper has been immeasurably strengthened by a number of excellent studies of evolution, science, and Mormonism. Efforts by Richard Sherlock, Jeffrey Keller, Erich Paul, David Bailey, and William Evenson have been particularly useful. The year 1992 saw two major developments. First came the publication of the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* with an article on evolution initially generated by Evenson, which was reviewed and refined by the First Presidency. Second came the generation of a formal "BYU Packet," outlining the official position of the church and including the formally-signed statements by the First Presidency (1909, 1910, 1925, etc.). This was approved by the First Presidency and seven apostles as members of the BYU Board of Trustees. It is regrettable that this packet has not yet found its way into more broadly-distributed church literature.

Notable also is the recent publication of *Evolution and Mormonism*, authored by Trent Stephens, Jeffrey Meldrum, and Forrest Peterson and published by Signature Books. This book, like earlier ones by William Lee Stokes, attempts a beginning rapprochement of science and Mormonism. That, it would seem, is the challenge for the future.

1. "Evolution" in this article refers only to the general concept that living things as we know them today have over a long period of time been developed by differentiation from a single or several primordial entities, i.e., descent with modification. Other tighter or more specialized definitions do not generally apply here; we shall be content with just the very general concept portrayed by Darwin, in his closing sentence to *The Origin of Species* (2d and all subsequent editions): "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that. . . from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved."

2. Cf. I. M. Lerner, "The Concept of Natural Selection: A Centennial View," *Proc. Am. Philosophical Soc.* 103, no. 2 (1959): 173-82, reprinted in W. M. Laetsch, ed., *The Biological*

on-going process are there for the observation of any who will exercise the honesty and take the time to look. The question of whether species evolve is no longer open; it has long since been resolved affirmatively.

This is not to say, however, that we understand all the processes at work in evolving populations, or that we can answer unequivocally all the detailed questions concerning life forms in the distant past. Yet such shortcomings do not negate the fact that a great deal about evolutionary processes is known and is demonstrable; anyone who chooses to ignore the subject surely jeopardizes the development of an accurate view of the world around him.

Most Mormons, it would appear, have addressed the question only perfunctorily. The same weakness exists in the vast majority of our published literature on the subject; the level of discussion, unfortunately, is far from sophisticated. Available works are usually the product of individuals who labor under the apparent belief that the concept of evolution *per se* is a threat to the survival or vitality of Mormonism, and that by attacking evolution they become defenders of the faith. Not only do such authors perceive evolution as a deep and fundamental threat to their personal religious convictions, but by various devices they also try to convince us that their bias is also the official, or at least necessary, doctrine of the church. Statements to the effect that one cannot harbor any belief whatsoever in any version of evolution and still be a real Latter-day Saint, or that evolution is the deliberate doctrine of Satan and a counterfeit to the gospel, that it is atheistic, communistic, etc., are not at all rare in the Mormon culture and popular literature.

We do not propose here to consider the validity of the above positions, although readers should be fairly warned of the dangers inherent in a *prima facie* acceptance thereof. We direct ourselves instead to a more immediate concern: What is the doctrine of the church on the subject of evolution, if any? We assert immediately that, among mortals, only the president of the church can articulate a church position on anything. We have no desire to assume that role; the responsibility is awesome. How-

Perspective (Little, Brown & Co., 1969). An excellent statement of what natural selection is, and isn't, is Th. Dobzhansky, "Creative Evolution," *Diogenes* 60 (1967): 62-74. Materials pertinent to the current level of acceptance of the main body of evolutionary concepts are: H. J. Muller, "Biologists' Statement on Teaching Evolution," *Bull. Atom. Scientists* 23 (1967): 39-40, and S. Tax, ed., *Evolution After Darwin* (U. of Chicago Press, 1960), which encompasses in three volumes the proceedings of the Darwin Centennial Celebration (symposium) at the U. of Chicago in 1959. A rather critical but factually reliable appraisal of the current status of evolutionary knowledge, particularly as it applies to invertebrate animals, is G. A. Kerkut, *Implications of Evolution* (Pergamon Press, New York, 1960). Reviews of this work by J. T. Bonner, *Am. Sci.* 49 (1961): 240-44, and Th. Dobzhansky, *Science* 133 (1961): 752, will also prove valuable. The review by W. Bullock, *J. Am. Sci. Affil.* 16, no. 14 (1964): 125-26, will be of particular interest to those interested in religious correlations.

ever, there is a glaring lack, in all published Mormon literature, of analysis of what the response to evolution by "the church" really has been. To be sure, many publications bring together copious strings of quotes from general authorities, all carefully selected to fit the author's personal point of view. In a certain sense, the present development will suffer from the same weakness; we make no attempt to catalogue and analyze every statement by every general authority on the subject. We do claim, however, to try for the first time to document another, broader, point of view fundamentally different from those which have been most ardently presented in the past twenty years, and to examine in as complete a context as is currently sufficiently documented the statements of the prophets of the church on the matter.

Our account may be disturbing to some. It is not designed to be, but the nature and history of the subject make it virtually impossible to avoid affront to someone. We have gone to considerable lengths to circumvent unnecessary conflict. We hope that any who find the review offensive will extend themselves sufficiently to appreciate why this investigation is necessary in the first place. Since the footnotes supply additional discussion, we urge their consultation on critical points.

For statements on church doctrine, we are traditionally referred to the four standard works.³ However, the standard works are not of themselves always sufficient, and it is recognized that essentially authoritative statements can also be originated by the presiding prophet (the president) of the church.⁴ In addition, other priesthood holders may declare the mind of the Lord whenever they are "moved upon by the Holy Ghost."⁵ This latter criterion introduces a high degree of subjectivity into the matter: How does an audience know when a speaker or writer is so moved? President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., of the First Presidency, concluded that one knows only when he himself is so moved,⁶ a conclusion that is religiously sound enough, but still too open for scholarly analysis. For some degree of necessary control in the matter, we shall in this article confine ourselves primarily to statements by the presidents of the church. Recognizing, however, that counselors in the First Presidency of necessity share a very close relationship to the president, sharing with

3. *Improvement Era* (hereafter *Era*), 6 (1903): 233; H. B. Lee, *Ensign* 2, no. 12 (1972): 2-3.

4. First Presidency (Joseph F. Smith et al.), *Deseret News*, 2 Aug. 1913 (also in James R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 4 (1970): 284-86; H. B. Lee, *Era* 73, no. 6 (1970): 63-65; *Ensign* 3, no. 1 (1973): 104-108.

5. *Doctrine and Covenants* (D&C) 68:2-4.

6. J. Reuben Clark, Jr., "When Are Church Leader's Words Entitled to Claim of Scripture?" *Church News*, 31 July 1954, 2f, (text of a speech to LDS Seminary and Institute Teachers, BYU, 7 July 1954) is by far the most candid and valuable analysis of this problem by a general authority.

him the responsibility for governing the affairs and doctrines of the church,⁷ we shall also on occasion extend ourselves to their testimony and counsel. The First Presidency, then, as the highest quorum in the church, becomes our source of authoritative statements. The many statements by other authorities will be discussed only as needed for perspective, since they are not binding or fully authoritative.⁸

It should be recognized at the outset that the authorities have never been comfortable with the ideas surrounding evolution. Yet that point must be kept in perspective: Much of their discomfort is shared by many other religionists, laymen, and scientists. It would appear that the primary reasons for discomfort lie not so much in the question of whether living forms have evolved through time. Rather, the concern seems to lie with the mechanisms responsible for such projected changes. To believe that evolution is deity's mode of creation is one thing; to ascribe it all to the action of blind chance is another. Darwin, of course, postulated natural selection as the major mechanism of change. In the century since, it has become plain that he was generally correct: Natural selection is the major identified mechanism. Other mechanisms (e.g., genetic drift) have since been identified as well, and the picture is still far from complete. But the real question is not whether these mechanisms are functional; it is whether they are *sufficient*. Can they, as presently understood, explain the incredible complexity observable in the living world? Of more direct concern to those theologically-oriented is the question: Is there any need for, or evidence of, any processes that would be classed as *divinely* operated or controlled? Therein lies the crux: No one really has any good ideas as to how to look for such possible instances of divine intervention. How would one identify them? It has long been fashionable, in literature both within and without the church, to implicate God wherever we lack adequate "natural" explanations; that is, God is present wherever there is a gap in our knowledge. This "god of the gap" approach is demonstrably tantamount to theological suicide; the gaps have a way of being filled in by further research, and one must keep shifting to ever-new and more subtle gaps. Perception of the self-destructive properties of this approach

7. The best statement known to me on the intimacies of this relationship is in Joseph F. Smith's pledge to the church upon assuming its presidency, 10 November 1901, *Conference Reports*, 82; also in James R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 4 (1970):4-6.

8. To be very precise, it appears that no statement or revelation even from a president of the church is binding on the church as a body unless accepted by them by vote in conference (testimony of President Joseph F. Smith in *Proc. before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the U. S. Senate* (the Reed Smoot Case), 1 (1904): 95-97). This distinction seems quite unnecessary in the current discussion, however, since neither lay members nor general authorities take cognizance of it in general practice.

seems to travel slowly, however, and it still remains the foundation stone of virtually every anti-evolution argument currently in vogue.⁹

The basic question of underlying and fundamental causes remains. If everything proceeds in a stochastic manner governed by the basic laws of chemistry, physics, and genetics, from whence come those laws? They appear to many to be orderly; does this indicate a purposeful design and a Designer?¹⁰ At this point the decision becomes largely a leap of faith; there is no demonstrated answer. Darwin confessed himself unable to decide,¹¹ and his successors, whatever their persuasion, have been able to demonstrate no better solution. President David O. McKay summed up his views on the matter for teachers in the church as follows:

There is a perpetual design permeating all purposes of creation. On these thoughts, science again leads the student up to a certain point and sometimes leads him with his soul unanchored. Millikan is right when he says "Science without religion obviously may become a curse rather than a blessing to mankind." But, science dominated by the spirit of religion is the key [to] progress and the hope of the future. For example, evolution's beautiful theory of the creation of the world offers many perplexing problems to the inquiring mind. Inevitably, a teacher who denies divine agency in creation, who insists there is no intelligent purpose in it, will infest the student with the thought that all may be chance. I say, that no youth should be so led without a counterbalancing thought. Even the skeptic teacher should be fair enough to see that even Charles Darwin, when he faced this great question of annihilation, that the creation is dominated only by chance wrote: "It is an intolerable thought that man and all other sentient beings are doomed to complete annihilation after such long, continued slow progress." . . . The public school teacher will probably, even if he says that much. . . go no farther. In the Church school the teacher is unhampered. In the Brigham Young University and every other Church school the teacher can say God is at the helm.¹²

9. I. G. Barbour, *Issues in Science and Religion* (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1966), analyzes the "gaps" problem nicely. Cf. also Th. Dobzhansky, *The Biology of Ultimate Concern* (New York: World Publishing Co., 1967), 12-34.

10. We make no attempt here to analyze the validity of the argument. As with all other points to be discussed here, we are interested only in presenting positions. Those who wish to pursue the subject would do well to begin with D. R. Burrill, ed., *The Cosmological Arguments, A Spectrum of Opinion* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1967).

11. Cf. Sir Gavin deBeer, *Charles Darwin, A Scientific Biography* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1963), 266-75; also F. Darwin, ed., *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin* (New York: Appleton, 1887), 2:146, and *More Letters of Charles Darwin* (New York: Appleton, 1903), 1:395.

12. David O. McKay, "A Message for LDS College Youth," BYU Address, 10 Oct. 1952, *BYU Extension Publications*, 6-7. The published version is poorly edited and proofed. We have corrected here the spelling of Millikan's name and added for clarity the word "to" shown in brackets. The deleted material is all consistent with the sentiments of the quote as here rendered, but too garbled for precise reconstruction.

Considerations as to God's possible role in evolutionary processes have not been characteristic of Mormon literature, especially not during the past two decades or so. The shift has been to an attack on evolution itself, fighting not "Godless evolution," but evolution *per se*. The question of whether this latter approach is legitimate brings us squarely back to our original task: a search for a church position.

The researcher soon faces an interesting problem: The available utterances on the subject are widely scattered and remarkably few. Compared with the output of other religious groups, Mormonism has produced a rather tiny body of literature that really deals directly with the matter of evolution.¹³ At first, this is rather frustrating. Commentaries on marriage systems, political involvement, and matters of church and state are extensive, and there is a sizeable literature on other social issues of the day, but there are very few direct confrontations with the questions raised by evolution. Why? Is it solely that the other items were more pressing? There can be no doubt that involvement with these other problems was contributory, but it is clear also that this alone is not a sufficient answer. The most likely further explanation appears to be that LDS doctrines central to the evolution issue were not well developed; they were still in a sufficient state of flux that no direct confrontation was really possible or necessary. Simply put, the church had no defined basic doctrines directly under attack.

On some matters, Mormonism was clearly on the side of "science" in the first place. In no real way could the church be classed as party to the literalistic views of the more orthodox Christian groups of the day. Indeed, Mormonism was a theologic maverick to nineteenth-century Christian orthodoxy. The differences were deep and profound, and on several issues, Mormonism was much more closely aligned with the prevailing concepts of science.¹⁴ Why then should the Mormon theologians rush to an attack on science as other groups did? They should not, and they did not.

13. An introduction to the non-LDS literature can be gained from: A. D. White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, 2 vols. (1896; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1960), and B. J. Loewenberg, *Darwinism Comes to America, 1859-1900* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969). There is as yet no satisfactory review and introduction to LDS materials on the subject.

14. Cf. O. K. White, Jr., "Mormonism—A Nineteenth Century Heresy," *J. Religious Thought* 26 (1969): 44-55. That Brigham Young perceived these deep distinctions is evident: "...we differ from the Christian world in our religious faith and belief; and so we do very materially. I am not astonished that infidelity prevails to a great extent among the inhabitants of the earth, for the religious teachers of the people advance many ideas and notions for truth which are in opposition to and contradict facts demonstrated by science, and which are generally understood" (*Journal of Discourses* 14: 115 [1817]; hereafter JD).

Such a view will not be apparent to many. Let us, therefore, quickly proceed to its examination.

For all intents and purposes, the modern story of evolution began November 24, 1859, the date of the release of Darwin's classic, *On the Origin of Species*. The earlier announcement of the theory of evolution by natural selection, presented as joint papers by Darwin and A. R. Wallace on the evening of July 1, 1858, to the Linnaean Society, had caused little stir. Not so the 1859 publication. Public response was immediate and heated. A recounting of that story is not necessary here, however, since it is readily available elsewhere.¹⁵ Our major concern is to identify the central points of the issues that were of interest in Mormon theology. Mayr¹⁶ has recently postulated six specific issues which seem to lie at the heart of the revolution of thought precipitated by Darwin. These do not translate easily to the LDS world view, however, so we would propose the following five basic concepts as useful for comparing Mormonism to the doctrinal positions taken by science and prevailing Christian theology of the last century.¹⁷ The theological posits are:

1. Belief in an *ex nihilo* creation, that is, creation out of nothing.
2. Belief that the earth was created in six twenty-four hour days, and is only about 6,000 years old.
3. Fixity or immutability of species; that all species were created originally in Eden by the Creator and do not change in any significant way.
4. Contention that life is dependent on an activating vital force which is immaterial and divine, i.e., spirit or soul.
5. Special creation of man; that God literally molded man's body from the dust of the ground and blew into it the breath of life, the spirit.¹⁸

Let us now examine the alignment of Mormonism on these issues. Was the doctrine of the church as of 1859 (and for, say, twenty or so years thereafter, the period of the hottest debates) such as to align it with the orthodox theologies of the day, or with science, or with neither?

1. CREATION *EX NIHILLO*

A formal definition of this view is "God brings the entire substance of a thing into existence from a state of non-existence. . . . [W]hat is pecu-

15. Of the many books available, L. Eiseley's *Darwin's Century* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1958) is probably the best single general work. Also recommended are W. Irvine's *Apes, Angels, and Victorians* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1955), and Sir G. de Beer's *Charles Darwin, A Scientific Biography* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1963).

16. E. Mayr, "The Nature of the Darwinian Revolution," *Science* 176 (1972): 981-89.

17. It is a distortion to characterize the dispute as one between science and religion. The dispute was with specific theologies, not religion *per se*. This distinction is critical but usually overlooked.

liar to creation is the entire absence of any prior subject-matter."¹⁹ The doctrine is elsewhere explained as God's "speaking into being" everything except himself.²⁰ The doctrine in its contested form meant literally out of *nothing*; more recent attempts to cast it in the light of matter-energy conversions are distortions that betray the earlier meaning. The doctrine, of course, finds little place in contemporary science, which deals with conversions of matter and of energy, but is generally foreign to the idea of something coming from nothing.

It is difficult to find in Mormonism a philosophical doctrine that has been more consistently and fervently denounced, that is more incompatible with Mormon theology, than creation *ex nihilo*. The concept is usually derived straight from Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and it is right there that Joseph Smith chose to set the theologians straight:

Now I ask all the learned men who hear me, why the learned men who are preaching salvation say, that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing, and the reason is they are unlearned; they account it blasphemy to contradict the idea, they will call you a fool—I know more than all the world put together, and the Holy Ghost within me comprehends more than all the world, and I will associate with it. The word create came from the word *bau-rau*; it does not mean so; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize a ship. Hence we infer that God 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. The pure principles of element, are principles that can never be destroyed. They may be organized and re-organized; but not destroyed.²¹

This view of Joseph's has been affirmed ever since in Mormonism. Brigham Young continually preached it,²² as did his contemporaries among the general authorities.

18. The dispute over some of these issues, particularly the fourth, cannot be directly attributed to Darwin. There can be no doubt that his proposals intensified the concern over them, however, and they eventually became all part of one intermeshed debate. The inclusion here is thus not unjustified.

19. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1908), 4:470.

20. H. M. Morris, *Biblical Cosmology and Modern Science* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1970), 68. Cf. A. D. White, *History of the Warfare of Science*, 1:2-7, for variations on the theme.

21. *Times and Seasons* (hereafter T&S) 5 (1844): 615. An expanded and variant version of this statement appears in *History of the Church*, ed. B. H. Roberts, (2nd ed., 1962) 6:308-309; hereafter HC. In Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1958 printing), the same quote is given, 350-52. Although the latter compiler cites the *Times and Seasons* as his source, he actually gives the HC account.

22. See, for example, *Journal of Discourses* 11:120 (1865); 13:248 (1870); 14:116 (1871); 16:167 (1873), 18:231-32 (1876).

Creation *ex nihilo* has further meaning as well: that all things were created directly by God, and therefore have *contingent* being.²³ In this view, only God had *necessary* being; all else is dependent (contingent) on him for both its existence and continued maintenance. This concept leads to a morass of theological difficulties, not the least of which are responsibility for evil and denial of the free agency of man.²⁴ Mormonism, while it does not escape completely from some of these difficulties, begins from a completely different base. For one thing, God is not the creator of matter, as is indicated in the above statement from the founder of the faith. "Element had an existence from the time he had. . . it had no beginning, and can have no end." The statement (part of a funeral sermon) continues:

. . . so I must come to the resurrection of the dead, the soul, the mind of man, the immortal spirit. All men say God created it in the beginning. The very idea lessens man in my estimation; I do not believe the doctrine, I know better. Hear it all ye ends of the world, for God has told me so. I will make a man appear a fool before I get through, if you don't believe it. I am going to tell of things more noble—we say that God himself is a self existing God; who told you so? it is correct enough, but how did it get into your heads? Who told you that man did not exist in like manner upon the same principles? (refers to the old Bible,) how does it read in the Hebrew? It don't say so in the Hebrew, it says God made man out of the earth, and put into him Adam's spirit, and so became a living body.

The mind of man is as immortal as God himself. I know that my testimony is true, hence when I talk to these mourners; what have they lost, they are only seperated [sic.] from their bodies for a short season; their spirits existed co-equal with God, and they now exist in a place where they converse together, the same as we do on the earth. Is it logic to say that a spirit is immortal, and yet have a beginning? Because if a spirit have a beginning it will have an end; good logic. I want to reason more on the spirit of man, for

23. A good discussion of creation *ex nihilo* as it applies to Mormon thought is found in O. K. White, "The Social-Psychological Basis of Mormon New-Orthodoxy," master's thesis, Univ. of Utah 1967, 87ff; also: "The Transformation of Mormon Theology," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 5, no. 2 (1970): 9-24. White maintains, quite justifiably, that Mormon authors consistently miss the deeper or even essential meanings of the doctrine, that of *necessary* versus *contingent* being. We emphasize, however, that the pre-occupation on the simpler level, creation out of nothing, is not that of Mormon writers alone; it is so used and defended by non-Mormon Christian writers on a broad front. White correctly points out that either interpretation of the doctrine is contradicted by Mormon theology and pronouncements. Cf. also Truman Madsen, *Instructor* 99 (1964): 96-99; *Instructor* 99 (1964): 236f; and, for the most detailed treatment available in Mormon literature on the subject, S. M. McMurrin, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1965).

24. Cf. B. H. Roberts, *Comprehensive History of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 2:404-406; hereafter CHC.

I am dwelling on the body of man, on the subject of the dead. I take my ring from my finger and liken it unto the mind of man, the immortal spirit, because it has no beginning. Suppose you cut it in two; but as the Lord lives there would be an end.—All the fools, learned and wise men, from the beginning of creation, who say that man had a beginning, proves that he must have an end and then the doctrine of annihilation would be true. But, if I am right I might with boldness proclaim from the house tops, that God never did have power to create the spirit of man at all. God himself could not create himself: intelligence exists upon a self existent principle, it is a spirit from age to age, and there is no creation about it.²⁵

Thus both matter and the basic identity of man share necessary existence with God.²⁶ The doctrines have been taught continually and often by Joseph's successors.²⁷ As regards the first point of contention in the science-theology argument, Mormonism was unalterably opposed to the basic position of Christian theology.²⁸ In the dispute on this point between science and then- current theology, Mormonism was clearly allied much more closely with science.

2. AGE OF THE EARTH

The predominant doctrine of the nineteenth-century Christian theologians is too well known to need extensive documentation. While not all were as extreme as John Lightfoot, the vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge, who insisted that the creation of the earth took place "on the twenty-third of October, 4004 B.C., at nine o'clock in the morning," the range of views for the earth's age were generally from about 4,000 years to 6,000 years before Christ.²⁹ Science, of course, could not

25. Joseph Smith, T&S 5:615, 1844. As with n. 21, an expanded version is found in B. H. Roberts's HC 6:310-11. It is Roberts who equates the term "co-equal" with "co-eternal." Once again, Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings*, 352-54, follows the Roberts's version. Cf. also Joseph Smith, T&S 3:745, 1842. The errors in grammar, spelling, etc., are in the original.

26. Cf. D&C 93:21-23, 29, 33-35; Book of Abraham (in *The Pearl of Great Price*, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, 1968 printing), 3:18.

27. Cf. Brigham Young: JD 1:116 (1853); 3:356 (1856); 7:285 (1859); 8:27 (1860); and W. O. Rich, *Distinctive Teachings of the Restoration* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1962), ch. 3.

28. Considering just this point alone, one is mystified as to how some well-meaning Mormons have been able to align themselves with such ardent modern exponents of creation *ex nihilo* as the Creation Research Society, which exacts as part of its membership requirement a subscription to the following statement of belief: "All basic types of living things, including man, were made by direct creative acts of God during the Creation Week described in Genesis."

29. A. D. White, *History of the Warfare of Science*, 1:5-10 and later. Suggestions were also made occasionally, though not forcefully, that the "days" were periods of indefinite length;

agree. Darwin, in the first edition of *The Origin*, had opted for an age of several hundreds of millions of years. Even devoutly religious scientists who opposed him, such as the physicist Lord Kelvin, produced estimates for the earth's age in the neighborhood of 20 million years. Estimates this small were painful to Darwin, since they seemed far too short for natural selection to have played the role he postulated for it.³⁰ However, they were even more painful to the orthodox theologians, since they demonstrated in virtually final fashion that a 6,000-year age was beyond defensibility. Kelvin's arguments, and others similar, have since been generally laid to rest. The age of the earth has been pushed ever farther back, and current estimates range from 4.5 to 5.0 billion years. While no really precise age has been determined, the main issue, that of an old earth or a young one, has been essentially resolved.³¹ Our concern here, however, is not how old the earth really is. Rather, it is: Where did the church line up on the issue? The answer is: nowhere—it was wide open on the matter.

Mormon speakers ranged widely in their expressions. Statements from the presiding quorum kept the church non-committed, but open for the long age. There seems to have been no one who opted for twenty-four hour creation days, unless one wishes to so interpret Oliver Cowdery's statement, published while he was Assistant (Associate) President of the church, that he believed the scriptures "are meant to be understood according to their *literal* reading, as those passages which teach us of the creation of the world" (emphasis his).³² Joseph Smith left no clear-cut statement on the matter. On the Christmas day after Joseph's death, his close associate W. W. Phelps wrote a letter to Joseph's brother William, who was in the east. Therein he refers, among other things, to the contributions of Joseph, and to the eventual triumph of truth and Mormonism. One of Joseph's accomplishments, of course, was the Book of Abraham, an incomplete text produced in conjunction with some Egyptian papyri. Phelps exults:

Well, now, Brother William, when the house of Israel begin to come into the glorious mysteries of the kingdom, and find that Jesus Christ, whose goings forth, as the prophets said, have been from of old, from eternity: and that eternity, agreeably to the records found in the catacombs of Egypt, has been

cf. J. C. Greene, *Darwin and the Modern World View* (Mentor Books, 1963), 18-19. Such views were lost in the melee, however.

30. Eiseley, *Darwin's Century*, 233f.

31. Opponents of this view exist, of course, both within Mormonism and without. Indeed, such dissident literature has been quite popular in Mormonism in recent years. The arguments advanced, however, have not been convincing to those professionally engaged in the specific fields of dispute—and, despite certain contrary rumors, the arguments have been honestly considered.

32. *Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate* 1 (Feb. 1835): 78.

going on in this system, (not this world) almost *two thousand five hundred and fifty five millions* of years: and to know at the same time, that deists, geologists and others are trying to prove that matter must have existed hundreds of thousands of years;—it almost tempts the flesh to fly to God, or muster faith like Enoch to be translated.³³

This reference has been cited many times in Mormon literature. Some have used it to indicate that the planet earth is 2.55 billion years old; others, taking careful note of the phrase in parentheses, insist that it has no such meaning, that it refers to a much larger physical system and has no bearing on the age of the earth. The latter view argues that “not this world” specifically rules out the earth as the object of reference. A critical examination of terms in Joseph’s vocabulary, however, indicates that he made definite distinctions between the terms “earth” and “world”: “Earth” was the planet upon which we live, “world” referred to “the human family.”³⁴ One also finds that Joseph did not, in his sermons, utilize these definitions consistently. The disagreement over the interpretation of the above passage, however, centers on how *Phelps* meant the term “world”—in the way Joseph had defined it or in some other sense. The question is moot, since Phelps nowhere clarified the statement. The very evident context, however, of Phelps’s rejoicing over the developing agreement between this statement and the efforts of “geologists” to establish long time-spans gives strong support to those who interpret the statement as applying to the planet Earth. The one certain point that can be drawn from this statement is that Joseph’s world view was not bounded by the orthodox Christian theologies of the day. His mind ranged far more widely, a point that is plentifully evident from even a casual analysis.

During the nineteenth century subsequent to Joseph’s death, one can find many further statements by Mormon authorities pertaining to the age of the earth. A prominent one, taught by certain apostles, was that the seven days of creation were each 1,000 years in duration, and the earth was therefore approximately 13,000 years old, calculating approximately 6,000 years since the Adamic fall. This concept received limited support from members of the First Presidency, but their statements carried also a sentiment of very different flavor: The age of the earth was really not known and did not matter; the important thing to realize was

33. T&S 5:758, published 1 Jan. 1845. Emphasis and parentheses are in the original. Certain passages from the D&C will be discussed hereafter.

34. Statement attributed to Joseph Smith; F. D. Richards and J. A. Little, comps., *A Compendium of the Doctrines of the Gospel*, stereotype ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1882), 287. An examination of the prophet’s speeches indicates that he usually followed this distinction.

that God created it. As Brigham Young expressed it, in a comment fraught with implications:

It is said in this book (the Bible) that God made the earth in six days. This is a mere term, but it matters not whether it took six days, six months, six years, or six thousand years. The creation occupied certain periods of time. We are not authorized to say what the duration of these days was, whether Moses penned these words as we have them, or whether the translators of the Bible have given the words their intended meaning. However, God created the world. If I were a sectarian I would say, according to their philosophy, as I have heard many of them say hundreds of times, "God created all things out of nothing; in six days he created the world out of nothing." You may be assured the Latter-day Saints do not believe any such thing. They believe God brought forth material out of which he formed this little *terra firma* upon which we roam. How long had this material been in existence? Forever and forever, in some shape, in some condition.³⁵

A further lengthy but valuable passage from Brigham Young voices the same sentiments, amplifies them in regard to the scriptures, and emphasizes that revelations then in possession of the church were insufficient to settle the matter, and that the truth would be obtained only if God were to give specific revelation on the subject:

It was observed here just now that we differ from the Christian world in our religious faith and belief; and so we do very materially. I am not astonished that infidelity prevails to a great extent among the inhabitants of the earth, for the religious teachers of the people advance many ideas and notions for truth which are in opposition to and contradict facts demonstrated by science, and which are generally understood. Says the scientific man, "I do not see your religion to be true; I do not understand the law, light, rules, religion, or whatever you call it, which you say God has revealed; it is confusion to me, and if I submit to and embrace your views and theories I must reject the facts which science demonstrates to me." This is the position, and the line of demarcation has been plainly drawn, by those who profess Christianity, between the sciences and revealed religion. You take, for instance, our geologists, and they tell us that this earth has been in existence for thousands and millions of years. They think, and they have good reason for their faith, that their researches and investigations enable them to demonstrate that this earth has been in existence as long as they assert it has; and they say, "If the Lord, as religionists declare, made the earth out of nothing in six days, six thousands years ago, our studies are all in vain; but by what we can learn from nature and the immutable laws of the Creator as revealed therein, we know that your theories are incorrect and consequently we must reject your religions as false and vain, we must be what you call infidels, with the

35. JD 18:231-32 (1876).

demonstrated truths of science in our possession; or, rejecting those truths, become enthusiasts in, what you call, Christianity."

In these respects we differ from the Christian world, for our religion will not clash with or contradict the facts of science in any particular. You may take geology, for instance, and it is a true science, not that I would say for a moment that all the conclusions and deductions of its professors are true, but its leading principles are; they are facts—they are eternal; and to assert that the Lord made this earth out of nothing is preposterous and impossible. God never made something out of nothing; it is not in the economy or law by which the worlds were, are, or will exist. There is an eternity before us, and it is full of matter; and if we but understand enough of the Lord and his ways, we would say that he took of this matter and organized this earth from it. How long it has been organized it is not for me to say, and I do not care anything about it. As for the Bible account of the creation we may say that the Lord gave it to Moses, or rather Moses obtained the history and traditions of the fathers, and from these picked out what he considered necessary, and that account has been handed down from age to age, and we have got it, no matter whether it is correct or not, and whether the Lord found the earth empty and void, whether he made it out of nothing or out of the rude elements; or whether he made it in six days or in as many millions of years, is and will remain a matter of speculation in the minds of men unless he give revelation on the subject. If we understood the process of creation there would be no mystery about it, it would be all reasonable and plain, for there is no mystery except to the ignorant. This we know by what we have learned naturally. . . .³⁶

We need not belabor the issue. While Mormon speakers expressed a diversity of opinions, the First Presidency kept the door open, clearly opposed to orthodox Christian theology, clearly sympathetic to the position of science.

3. FIXITY OF SPECIES

If ever anyone bought a bad deal, it was when the theologians adopted the stance that species do not change, that they remain as "originally created." The irony of the matter is that the concept of species is not a religious one at all, but an idea prematurely bought from science. The Genesis scriptures speak only of "kind," which to this day no one has been able to define.³⁷ Indeed, no one worried much about it until

36. JD 14:115-16 (1871). Lest LDS geologists become overly smug from these statements, however, we point out that they too could share Brigham's disdain, cf. JD, 13:248-49 (1870); *Deseret News*, 18 June 1873, 308. The statements are still consistent with the above, however.

37. There is no legitimate discussion of the word "kind" (Hebrew = *min*) in biological terms known to me in Mormon literature. For a beginning discussion, not LDS, see A. J. Jones, "A General Analysis of the Biblical 'Kind' (*Min*)," *Creation Research Society Quarterly*

about the seventeenth century, when John Ray (1627-1705) and Carl Linné (Linnaeus) (1707-78) laid the foundations of modern taxonomy and systematics.

Linné's case is particularly instructive. Few men have ever so completely dominated the intellectual thought of the time in which they have lived; he was indeed "a phenomenon rather than a man." His gift and passion for cataloguing organisms was unmatched and contagious. Everyone wanted to get into the act, and plants and animals were brought to him from all over the world for proper naming and classification. His passion was to name everything, to pigeonhole all living things into the neat compartments he attributed to the Genesis creations. He thus declared a fixity of species, that they were unchangeable entities each descended from a specific Edenic stock, by whose analysis one caught a glimpse of the Creator at work. However, the concept was an illusion, one which tragically escaped from his control. For it caught the human fancy, and when in his maturity Linné realized that it was worthless, he was powerless to change its hold upon the human mind. By then it had been seized upon as a classic demonstration of the neatness of creation. "Kind" had been construed as meaning "species," and the trap for theologians was thus laid, innocently but nonetheless surely. It was Linné's own fame and prodigious work which sprung the set. Not only did it become painfully evident to anyone who wished to look that there were just too many species to be explained so simply—if Adam had named them all in the Garden, he'd likely be at it yet—but their distributions, their intermediate grades, their hybridizations, were irrefutably beyond so neat a conception. Yet the damage was done: Theologians would have their species, and they would have them fixed.

Science, self-correcting as it eventually is, finally grew openly beyond the strictures of Linné's early concepts. Species quite obviously could change, and did, both in time and in space. The battle with theology was joined after Darwin proposed a mechanism (natural selection) for such change.³⁸

A very real problem was the lack of an adequate concept of what a species really is. We need not discuss the attempts at definition here, only point out that the concept is problematical. That does not indicate that species do not exist; they most definitely do. As with many other things, however, precise definitions are virtually impossible, and before

9, no. 1 (1972): 53-57; and "Boundaries of the Min: An Analysis of the Mosaic Lists of Clean and Unclean Animals," *ibid.* 9, no. 2 (1972): 114-23; and references cited therein. Most current writers consider "kind" to represent a biological grouping at approximately the Family level in the taxonomic hierarchy; few indeed are those who still try to equate it with "species."

38. Cf. Eiseley, *Darwin's Century*, or any good text of the history of biology.

one can really understand anyone else on the matter, he must know what definitions are being used.³⁹ Such a common word to hide such complexity! But statements on the subject, without definitions, are virtually meaningless.

What position on species fixity was being articulated by the leaders of Mormonism up to and during this critical time? It is readily apparent that the subject hardly ever caught their attention. Casual statements that God and man are of the same species occur periodically, but beyond that the treatment is sketchy. The following lean sampling represents all the authoritative statements that have come to our attention.

Speaking on divine decrees, Joseph Smith comments:

The sea also has its bounds which it cannot pass. God has set many signs on the earth, as well as in the heavens; for instance, the oak of the forest, the fruit of the tree, the herb of the field—all bear a sign that seed hath been planted there; for it is a decree of the Lord that every tree, plant, and herb bearing seed should bring forth of its kind, and cannot come forth after any other law or principle.⁴⁰

No mention here of species at all, just the generic “kind,” and no definition of that. For all its looseness, however, a certain sentiment is evidenced which tends to favor some sort of fixity.

Eighteen years later, in 1860, Brigham Young touched on the subject. In a sermon launched upon the matter of death and the resurrection, he asserts:

The whole Scriptures plainly teach us that we are the children of that God who framed the world. Let us look round and see whether we can find a father and son in this congregation. Do we see one an elephant, and the other a hen? No. Does a father that looks like a human being have a son like an ape, going on all fours? No; the son looks like his father. There is an endless variety of distinction in the few features that compose the human face, yet children have in their countenances and general expression of figure and temperament a greater or less likeness of their parents. You do not see brutes spring from human beings. Every species is true to its kind. The children of men are featured alike and walk erect.⁴¹

39. Cf. M. Ruse, “Definitions of Species in Biology,” *British Journal for Philosophy of Science* 20 (1969): 97-119, or any good text in systematics or evolution. Also of interest is C. Zirkle, “Species Before Darwin,” *Proc. Amer. Philosoph. Soc.* 103 (1959): 636-44.

40. Joseph Smith, as taken from Wilford Woodruff’s notes, in HC 4:554, from a speech delivered 20 March 1842; cf. also B. H. Roberts’ qualifying comments on the notes, *ibid.*, 556 n, which must be kept in mind regarding all such speech texts. We have not been able to locate any earlier published accounts.

41. JD 8:29-30 (1860).

The hyperbole here is evident and, strictly speaking, completely disrupts the point its author is making. As it is, it certainly does not constitute a statement against the scientific version of changes in species. Modern evolution texts carry many statements concerning developmental canalization and genetic homeostasis which express these same concepts. Yet with all that, there is still, in President Young's words, a sentiment toward fixity of species—again subject to whatever is meant by "species."

These would seem to constitute virtually all the authoritative statements that were applicable during the early Darwinian period. The extreme paucity and ambiguity of such addressments is evident from the fact that the favorite citation on the subject by current Mormon anti-evolutionists is cited, usually, as one from "President Charles W. Penrose, of the First Presidency." While it is slightly more explicit than the ones we have here discussed, it simply is not admissible, since it was in actuality made by Elder Charles W. Penrose nearly twenty years before he was called to be a general authority, let alone a member of the First Presidency.⁴²

In summary, the doctrine of species fixity was virtually ignored by official Mormon spokesmen. When they did broach the subject, their statements were very general and in no real way proscriptive from a professional's point of view. The authors were not speaking to professionals, however, and the sentiment of their statements took on the flavor of the theology of their day. In the light of subsequent research and observation, such a sentiment is unfortunate; it mars a rather neat record. It is quite evident, however, that a doctrine of species fixity was not a matter of prime concern in the nineteenth-century church.

4. VITALISM: NECESSITY FOR AN OUTSIDE "SPIRIT" OR VITAL FORCE

While not strictly a product of the Darwinian revolution, and in many ways antedating it, the question of the existence of a vital force became an important part of the discussion surrounding Darwinism. This was particularly true in later years of the furor, when vitalism was offered in various forms as an alternative to the causalistic theories which were more in vogue.⁴³ As with previous topics, our purpose here is only to look at the range of authoritative Mormon expression. We must restrict ourselves to a fairly superficial treatment, although the subject as treated in Mormonism virtually screams for a thorough and searching

42. JD 26:20 (1884).

43. G. G. Simpson, *The Meaning of Evolution* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1949), 124-29, 263-79. Simpson, usually pictured as quite insensitive to religious viewpoints, develops some concepts of the limitations and implications of materialism which have considerable interest to Mormons.

analysis. Also, while it is highly unlikely that any reviewer can wrap it all up in one neat package, it becomes quickly evident to the inquiring student that Mormon spokesmen have glimpsed a view radically different from the usual Christian positions and their tenets are very poorly appreciated in the church today. This lack of appreciation seems to result more from neglect than from any shift in doctrine. The basic conceptions, tentative though they are, have become so covered with the cobwebs of time that to most Mormons today even their basic outlines are obscured; the general concept in the church today is essentially standard Christian.

A recent treatment outlines the basic positions of vitalism and mechanism thusly:

Life, the subject matter of biology, is a phenomenon intimately connected with matter. Biology, therefore, must be concerned with the relationship between matter and the phenomenon we call life. Animate and inanimate things have matter in common, and it is in their materiality that the two can best be compared. In this comparison, two theories, vitalism and mechanism, compete for the mastery. The vitalist sees in a living organism the convergence of two essentially different factors. For him matter is shaped and dominated by a life principle; unaided, matter could never give rise to life. The mechanist, on the other hand, denies any joint action of two essentially different factors. He holds that matter is capable of giving rise to life by its own intrinsic forces. The mechanist considers matter to be "alive." The vitalist considers that something immaterial lives in and through matter.⁴⁴

To Mormons, the divergence between the two approaches is best seen in two basic issues: 1) whether an outside force is necessary to make a body "alive," and 2) whether such an outside force is material. The popular nineteenth-century theological view, of course, was that life is due to a non-material force. Science, profiting from a long series of investigations on spontaneous generation dating primarily from Redi in the seventeenth century to Pasteur and Tyndall in the 1870s, became associated with mechanism (materialism). The reason for this latter association is not that either view has been rigorously proved. It is rather that the materialistic view allows experimentation whereas the vitalist view does not, since one is hard pressed to experiment with immaterial "things." As Hardin has so aptly put it: "The mechanistic position, whether it is ultimately proved right or wrong, has been and will continue to be productive of new discoveries. Indeed, if vitalism is ultimately proved to be true, it is the mechanist who will prove it so."⁴⁵

44. R. Schubert-Soldern, *Mechanism and Vitalism, Philosophical Aspects of Biology*, ed. P. G. Fothergill (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962), 10-11.

45. G. Hardin, *Biology, Its Principles and Implications*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1966), 11.

It is doubtful that anyone can meaningfully pinpoint a consistent Mormon "doctrine" on the matter of spirit, life, vital force, etc. Teachings of the church in the nineteenth century were in a high state of flux when it came to issues beyond the simple basics. Terms were confused and misused, concepts were loosely defined and highly fragmented, speculation was rife. B. H. Roberts points out quite correctly that Joseph Smith sometimes used the terms "intelligence," "mind," "spirit," and "soul" interchangeably; "life," and even "light," could be added to the list as well.⁴⁶ There is no satisfactory synthesis of the subject, and it is doubtful that one could be produced. Andrus's imaginative treatment⁴⁷ is as wide-ranging as any available and should be consulted carefully if for no other reason than its references. Roberts's brief discussion⁴⁸ is valuable.

That Mormonism accepts the view that living things possess spirits is well known as a general concept. Man's spirit, of course, is said to be the result of a spirit birth in a pre-mortal state. That "spirit," "spirits," ("life," etc.), are *material* is likewise clear: "There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes; . . . it is all matter."⁴⁹ This canonized statement has been the justification for a long series of missionary tracts and doctrinal assertions that have spelled out very clearly that Mormonism is a materialistic system. There can be no identification whatever with sentiments of immateriality. Immateriality, to the early Mormons, was virtually synonymous with atheism: In either case, one ended up with his hopes pinned on nothing.

Beyond this point, however, the thinking becomes more tortuous. The philosophically minded Pratt brothers, Orson and Parley, were by far the most expansive and explicit on the matter. Yet certain aspects of Orson's writings eventually drew public denouncement from the First Presidency under Brigham Young.⁵⁰ Parley's master work, decades after his death, was subjected to a rather unscrupulous editing and reworking, anonymously and without any warning to subsequent readers. Later editions passed off as Parley's some teachings quite foreign to those of the original text.⁵¹ These incidents, as perhaps no others in Mormonism,

46. CHC 2:392. A close friend of Joseph Smith's, Benjamin F. Johnson, makes the "light- life-spirit" equation in his 1903 letter to Elder George F. Gibbs, 5, typescript copy; copy available in Brigham Young University library.

47. H. L. Andrus, *God, Man and the Universe* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968), 144-92.

48. CHC 2:381-412, esp. 399-401.

49. D&C 131:7-8.

50. *Deseret News* 10(21):162-63, 25 July 1860, and 14(47):372-73, 23 Aug. 1865; also in J. R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 2 (1965):214-23, 229-40.

51. Compare the first edition, *Key to the Science of Theology*, printed by J. Sadler, Liverpool, 1855, with later editions.

emphasize the fact that only the First Presidency comprises an authoritative source for doctrinal analysis.

However, from all the heady teachings on spirit during these decades comes a perception germane to our present consideration. The Pratts worried about the spirit natures of animals and plants, becoming in many ways almost Aristotelean, and these writings were not among those censured. The sentiment went further, to include the earth itself as a living thing by virtue of its having spirit or a spirit; indeed, it was taught that all matter was possessed of spirit, that spirit pervades all matter. The material of the body of a man is thus possessed of spirit independent from his spirit. Spirit or life is thus a property of matter itself. From here, we can do no better than to let Brigham Young develop it directly, in an 1856 discourse. Speaking of "natural, true philosophy," and developing the idea that the processes associated with death are really a manifestation of inherent life in matter, he continues:

What is commonly called death does not destroy the body, it only causes a separation of spirit and body, but the principle of life, inherent in the native elements, of which the body is composed, still continues with the particles of that body and causes it to decay, to dissolve itself into the elements of which it was composed, and all of which continue to have life. When the spirit given to man leaves the body, the tabernacle begins to decompose, is that death? No, death only separates the spirit and body, and a principle of life still operates in the untenanted tabernacle, but in a different way, and producing different effects from those observed while it was tenanted by the spirit. There is not a particle of element which is not filled with life, and all space is filled with element; there is no such thing as empty space, though some philosophers contend that there is.

Life in various proportions, combinations, conditions, etc., fills all matter. Is there life in a tree when it ceases to put forth leaves? You see it standing upright, and when it ceases to bear leaves and fruit you say it is dead, but that is a mistake. It still has life, but that life operates upon the tree in another way, and continues to operate until it resolves it to the native elements. It is life in another condition that begins to operate upon man, upon animal, upon vegetation, and upon minerals when we see the change termed dissolution. There is life in the material of the fleshly tabernacle, independent of the spirit given of God to undergo this probation. There is life in all matter, throughout the vast extent of all the eternities; it is in the rock, the sand, the dust, in water, air, the gases, and, in short, in every description and organization of matter, whether it be solid, liquid, or gaseous, particle operating with particle.⁵²

52. JD 3:276-77 (1856). Benjamin F. Johnson, letter to Elder George F. Gibbs, 5-6, indicates that essentially this same doctrine was taught by Joseph Smith.

Elsewhere President Young repeatedly refers to "organization" as a key factor in determining differences in life quality.⁵³ Taken with the concepts above, such teachings bear a striking resemblance to those of the mechanists-materialists. To the mechanist, life is an expression of a unique combination or organization of matter. To President Young, all matter has life as an inherent property, and organization is the key to its different manifestations. To both, life is an expression of matter. At this most fundamental of levels, the differences between science and Mormonism, as taught by Brigham Young, are reduced to mere semantics. The points of agreement are profound. President Young's entire philosophy, to be sure, ranges far beyond matters that are in the realm of science either then or now, but at the fundamental level, at the point of contact, they are in essential agreement. Should Mormonism then have taken the field against the materialism of science? Scarcely.

5. SPECIAL CREATION OF MAN

Here we venture into the hottest point of discussion. In *The Origin*, Darwin marshaled one powerful argument after another for the evolution of plant and animal species from earlier forms. Only one sentence, on the penultimate page, was directed to man: "Much light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history." Although Darwin himself was not yet ready to tackle this problem of ultimate concern, others were not so retiring. The issue was quickly joined, with Huxley and others insisting that man's body was related to and derived from other life forms, and the theologians of the day insisting with equal vehemence that the body was the result of a special creative act, independently developed from the dust of the ground by the shaping hand of the Creator, and activated by "the breath of life." Mormons accept as part of their canon the same scripture-text on this matter as was utilized by the orthodox theologians, of course, that of the King James rendition, Genesis 2:7. The Book of Abraham, first published in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842 and canonized in 1880, expresses virtually the same thought as Genesis (cf. 5:7). The Book of Moses, proclaimed as a revealed restoration of the Genesis text, dating from 1830 and also canonized on 1880, is the most explicit of the three: "And I, the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul, the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also; . . ." (Moses 3:7). A literal reading of the passage lends itself to no other interpretation at all but that of the special creationists; it is clearly stated, and proscriptive of any other interpretation. The fascinating point, however, is that

53. E.g., JD 1:349 (1853); 3:354 (1856); 7:2-3, 285 (1859); 9:242 (1862).

with the possible exception of Apostle Orson Pratt, no major Mormon spokesman seems to have taken the full passage literally.⁵⁴ The intense scriptural literalism with which some current writers try to paint LDS presidents falls apart completely on this and related passages.

No president or member of the First Presidency, so far as we have been able to discover, has ever accepted the idea of special creation of man's body, or of anything else, for that matter. An examination of Joseph Smith's teachings reveals an idea, never expressed in detail, that man came via an act of natural procreation. That sentiment runs generally through the teachings of his successors,⁵⁵ but we shall find that it is not so clearly spelled out as some have assumed. If by a natural act of procreation, then from whom, and by what specific natural process? For "natural processes," as we shall see, encompass a wide variety of possibilities. To assist the focus of our inquiry, we shall refine the question to: Whence came man's body?

Joseph's clearest statement on the matter seems to be: "Where was there ever a son without a father? And where was there ever a father without first being a son? Whenever did a tree or anything spring into existence without a progenitor? And everything comes in this way."⁵⁶

Under Brigham Young's administration, however, more specific teachings were developed. Beginning in 1852, the same year that plural marriage was openly acknowledged to the world, President Young himself served notice of a new doctrine in Mormonism: that Adam and Eve were resurrected beings, exalted to Godhood from a mortality on another and older sphere. They had produced the spirits of all men, and had then come to this earth, degraded their "celestial" bodies so that they could produce the bodies of Abel, Cain, Seth, et al.⁵⁷ In short, Adam in

54. In H. B. Lee, "Find the Answers in the Scriptures," *Ensign* 2, no. 12 (Dec. 1972): 2-3, there does appear a passage which seems to imply an authoritative acceptance of the literal interpretation of Moses 3:7. Correspondence which we are not at liberty to release, however, indicates that this should not be construed as a pronouncement of any particular interpretation or doctrinal position.

55. E.g., from Brigham Young, JD 3:319 (1856); 4:216-18 (1857); 7:285 (1859); 15:137 (1872).

56. HC 6:476, a speech by Joseph Smith dated 16 June 1844, as taken from notes by Thomas Bullock. We have not been able to locate any earlier published sources. Cf. also n. 40.

57. We are well aware of the intense arguments and deeply held opinions revolving around this doctrine and the current propensity to deny that it was ever taught. There can be no justification for denying its historical reality; it is too well documented and was taught by Brigham Young from 1852 until his death in 1877 (cf. R. Turner, "The Position of Adam in Latter-day Saint Scripture and Theology," master's thesis, Division of Religion, Brigham Young University, 1953). A more recent and thorough account is O. Kraut, *Michael/Adam*, n.d., n.p., but published in 1972. Both sources discuss reactions of church members to the doctrine, which include problems with scriptural reconciliation. Those who

President Young's views occupied essentially the same place reserved by modern church members for Elohim; Elohim was regarded as the Grandfather in Heaven, rather than Father. We needn't concern ourselves here with the details of the doctrine, only that Adam was purported to have had a resurrected body, and to have begun the family of man by direct sexual union and procreation.

The response of church members to the doctrine, however, is of importance to us. With most, the concept does not seem to have been well received. Indeed, President Young's public sermons on the matter quickly began to skirt the issue, referring to it continually but obliquely. In private, he and his colleagues taught it affirmatively.⁵⁸ With rare

attempt to prove that Brigham Young taught only doctrine which is currently orthodox are driven to an inexcusable exercise of freedom in interpreting, and even a doctoring of, his sermons; e.g., J. A. Widtsoe, comp., *Discourses of Brigham Young*, 159, 1925 edition. These errors are resolutely compounded and further promulgated by Joseph Fielding Smith, e.g., *Answers to Gospel Questions* (1966), 5:121-28, excerpted in the 1972-73 Melchizedek priesthood manual, 20-22. Compare, for example, the quote from JD 9:148 in its original form and as printed by Widtsoe, by Smith (124), and in the priesthood manual (22).

We do not contend that President Young's concepts concerning Adam are an accurate representation of the concepts of other LDS presidents or that they are to be accepted as basic church doctrine. That to President Young, Adam was a resurrected being is clear:

The mystery in this, as with miracles, or anything else, is only to those who are ignorant. Father Adam came here, and then they brought his wife. "Well," says one, "Why was Adam called Adam?" He was the first man on the earth, and its framer and maker. He, with the help of his brethren, brought it into existence. Then he said, "I want my children who are in the spirit world to come and live here. I once dwelt upon an earth something like this, in a mortal state, I was faithful, I received my crown and exaltation. I have the privilege of extending my work, and to its increase there will be no end. I want my children that were born to me in the spirit world to come here and take tabernacles of flesh, that their spirits may have a house, a tabernacle or a dwelling place as mine has, and where is the mystery?" (*Deseret News*, 22:308, 18 June 1873, reporting a speech of 8 June 1873).

However, later presidents did not share this view. Nels Nelson, *What Truth Is* (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis, Inc., 1947), 60-61, reports that his request to President John Taylor for information on the subject elicited a reply which "told me without qualification that 'Adam and Eve while in the Garden of Eden were translated human beings.'" A similar request for more information on the subject from Bishop Joseph H. Eldredge of Myton, Utah, to President Heber J. Grant was answered, stating: "If what is meant is that Adam has passed on to celestial glory through a resurrection before he came here, and that afterwards he was appointed to this earth to die again, the second time becoming mortal, then it is not scriptural or according to the truth. . . . Adam had not passed through the resurrection." The letter, signed by President Grant and dated 26 February 1931, is published in James R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 5 (1971):289-90. Typescript copies, usually dated erroneously 1936, and carrying the signatures of both President Grant and David O. McKay (his counselor) have been widely circulated in church circles for many years. Such differences in viewpoint should not be upsetting to those who have studied their church history, but *should* serve as a caution to all who are tempted to teach any given doctrine about Adam as "the church view." Consider also the message of J. Reuben Clark, Jr., n. 6.

58. Cf. Turner, "The Position of Adam," and/or Kraut, *Michael/Adam* (n. 57), for appropriate references.

exceptions, the writings and sermons of Mormons in general just avoided the entire issue, or couched it in the vague terms characteristic of the scriptures, and offered no commentary. The matter of Adam and Adam's body was left essentially undeveloped.

There was one notable exception: Orson Pratt, the apostle. On this matter, at least, Orson seems to have accepted the scriptures quite literally, and could not reconcile them with the doctrine from President Young. Beginning in 1853, he published a periodical entitled *The Seer*, and in its pages promulgated a doctrine that sounded far too much like special creation. Articles from *The Seer* were republished in England in the pages of the *Millennial Star*, a situation not pleasing to the church presidency. As early as January 1855, Brigham Young requested the editor of the *Star* to refrain from any further publication of material from *The Seer*, citing "erroneous doctrine" as the reason.⁵⁹

Five years later, Orson Pratt himself brought the matter into the open, in a dramatic sermon during the regular Sunday morning worship service in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, January 29, 1860. Confessing the error of his ways, Orson sued for reconciliation to the church and to his brethren of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the First Presidency. A few months later a "carefully revised" version of his speech was published in the *Deseret News*, followed by a formal statement from the First Presidency, listing several explicit errors in Orson's writings.⁶⁰ The first item cited was the matter of Orson's teachings concerning Adam's having been formed "out of the ground." While the teachings were summarily dismissed with the statement that they were not true, President Young refrained from imposing his own doctrine on the church. The refutation simply states that, with regard to Adam,

it is deemed wisest to let that subject remain without further explanation at present, for it is written that we are to receive "line upon line," according to our faith and capacities, and the circumstances attending our progress.

The careful handling of this matter by President Young is significant. What was the church to believe? Orson's teachings had been refuted, but nothing had been specified in their place, and no further pronouncements of any official character to clarify the matter were forthcoming throughout the remainder of the century.

Where, then, in the early days of the debates between science and theology, did Mormonism find its closest affinities? On our first doctrine,

59. *Millennial Star* 17:297-98 (1855).

60. *Deseret News* 10921:162-63, 25 July 1860. The First Presidency's statement was reprinted as part of the 1865 refutation also, cf. n. 50. The "revised" version of Pratt's sermon may also be found in JD 7:371-76.

ex nihilo creation, Mormonism was clearly allied with science. The matter of the earth's age was an open one, that of fixity of species virtually ignored, that of materialism and vital forces in a state of flux but with certain definite fundamental agreement with science. Only on the subject of special creation could Mormonism be tied in any significant way to orthodox Christianity, and even that was tenuous. Darwin's book, as we have noted, was published November 24, 1859. Just sixty-six days later, on January 29, 1860, Orson Pratt began the severing of that one tie. The closeness of the dates is almost certainly coincidental, since (among other reasons) news traveled slowly to Utah in those days; Orson's action is not to be viewed as a response to Darwinism. Yet, in retrospect, his action (and the First Presidency's response) was significant nonetheless. The incident may well have put a damper on further doctrinal development. It is certain that, considering the duration and intensity of the debate in non-Mormon theological circles, nineteenth-century Mormonism produced relatively little in the way of relevant commentary. Let us shift now, in our inquiry, from the study of basic Mormon teachings applicable at the time of Darwin's book, to a documentation of subsequent pertinent commentary and response.

In 1882 President John Taylor published his *Mediation and Atonement*, in which he makes probably the strongest statement by any president favoring the fixity of species,⁶¹ thus inching the church toward the theologians' position. However, during the following year, his first counselor, George Q. Cannon, twice reaffirmed the sentiment of Brigham Young that the creation periods were "periods of time," and that Joseph Smith had anticipated science on the matter of the earth's age. Rejoicing that science was bolstering the prophet, Cannon summarizes: "Geologists have declared it, and religious people are adopting it; and so the world is progressing."⁶² But Cannon was eclectic in his beliefs; acceptance of an old earth was not to be taken as an acceptance of Darwinism, at least so far as it applied to man. In an editorial in 1883, he made it clear that he regarded belief in "Darwin's theories concerning the origin of man" as evidence of spiritual apostasy.⁶³ This sentiment is not surprising, since Cannon had often expressed himself in similar vein before being called

61. J. Taylor, *Mediation and Atonement* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Co., 1882, 163-165; repr. Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis, Inc., 1950), 159-60.

62. JD 24:61, cf. also 24:257 (1883).

63. *Juvenile Instructor* 18:191, 15 June 1883. President Cannon appears to have addressed essentially the same theme in his Founder's Day speech at the Brigham Young Academy (University) in 1896. The best account I have been able to locate of this speech quotes Cannon only "in substance," however, so it is impossible to determine his exact statements. The basic stance, however, is anti-evolutionary, at least with respect to human origins; cf. *Daily Enquirer* [Provo, Utah] 14 (116):1, 16 Oct. 1896.

to the First Presidency,⁶⁴ and was a firm believer in the Adamic doctrines taught by President Young.⁶⁵

The general feeling of the church in the latter 1800s, however, was that science would continue to demonstrate the validity of the Mormon positions. Indeed, a rather heady flirtation with science affixed itself on the church. The church hierarchy seems to have rejoiced at the goodwill generated by James E. Talmage's reception in scientific circles, his participation and membership in esteemed societies, and his trips to England and Russia. In 1896 Talmage became the holder of Mormonism's first real doctorate degree. In 1899 he was joined in this doctorate distinction by John A. Widtsoe and Joseph F. Merrill. All three of these physical scientists later became prominent apostles and articulate spokesmen in the church.

So closed the 1800s, and Mormonism, past the major hurdles in her long political feud over plural marriage, and newly sequestered under the government of statehood, plunged with high anticipations into the twentieth century.

Davis Bitton⁶⁶ has rightly pinpointed these years, the turn of the century, as a period critical in Mormonism, during which the prevailing optimism toward science and reason began to erode. Yet this cooling of ardor must not be over-rated; the antagonism which has seemed to pervade recent times is seen more correctly for science, at least, as a product of only the last couple of decades.

The *Improvement Era*, in the early years of the century, regularly ran articles by Talmage, Widtsoe, Frederick Pack, and others extolling areas of agreement between science and Mormon theology. These articles show a degree of caution and sensitivity toward evolution that is quite commendable. The distinction between evolution *per se* and Darwinism was periodically noted, a point which many later writers seem to have missed. The then recent re-discovery of Mendel's paper and the principles of genetics, and the question of their compatibility with Darwinism, were sensed, and watched with interest, but the concept that science and Mormonism were a basic unity is evident throughout; it forms the dominant theme.

The year 1909 marks a particularly significant occasion, the centennial of Darwin's birth as well as the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *The Origin of Species*. The scientific literature had been building

64. See, for example, *Millennial Star* 23:651-54, 12 Oct. 1861.

65. Cf. Turner, "The Position of Adam," and/or Kraut, *Michael/Adam* (n. 57), and "Journal of Abraham H. Cannon," entries of 10 March 1888 and 23 June 1889; originals in BYU Library.

66. D. Bitton, "Anti-Intellectualism in Mormon History," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1, no. 3 (1966): 111-34.

toward the event for several years. Debates on the "current status of Darwinism," its validity in areas of concern other than biology, its relation to religion, philosophy, etc., abounded in the lay literature as well. Centennial celebrations were held in both Europe and America; the Pontifical Biblical Commission, appointed in 1902 by Pope Leo XIII, finally issued its long-awaited report on the interpretation of Genesis. In Mormonism the atmosphere was quieter, but the discussion was not ignored. The YMMIA manual for the year (*Joseph Smith as Scientist*, by Widtsoe)⁶⁷ reaffirmed the ideas concerning the age of the earth that were taught earlier by Brigham Young and others, that the earth was very old, and that the creative days were indefinite periods. The manual evoked a series of questions on the matter to church headquarters, which were discussed in a special column of the *Improvement Era*. The managing editor, Edward H. Anderson, defended the manual, contending that the verses of D&C 77:12, cited by questioners in support of a young-Earth theory, did not apply to the subject in any meaningful way at all, and turned the column over to Widtsoe for further discussion. Widtsoe proceeded to dismiss the twenty-four-hour-day view, the 1,000-year-day concept, the D&C 77:6, 7, 12, argument, as well as the theory attributed to Joseph Smith that the earth had been formed of fragments of other worlds.⁶⁸ The following month's issue published as its lead article an essay by Apostle Charles W. Penrose entitled, "The Age and Destiny of the Earth," which also argued for an old earth of indefinite age.⁶⁹ Then in November 1909, the first formal statement on evolution from the First Presidency was published, signed by Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund.⁷⁰ Entitled "The Origin of Man," it is widely cited by some individuals in the church as "the official pronouncement against evolution." A more honest appraisal of the text, its background, and its meaning to later presidents, indicates that such a judgment is inaccurate. The document is carefully and sensitively worded. Its message is an affirmation that man is the spirit child of divine parentage, is in the image of God both in body and spirit, and that all men are descendants of a common ancestor, Adam. Lengthy scriptural passages are cited in affir-

67. J. A. Widtsoe, *Joseph Smith As Scientist, A Contribution to Mormon Philosophy* (Salt Lake City: The General Board [of the] Young Men's Mutual Improvement Associations, 1908).

68. "Editor's Table," *Era* 12:489-94, Apr. 1909.

69. *Era* 12:505-509, May 1909, a reprint from the 11 Feb. 1909 *Millennial Star*.

70. *Era* 13:75-81, Nov. 1909; also in J. R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 4 (1970):199-206. Actually, this statement is the work of a special committee appointed for its production. James E. Talmage, not yet one of the general authorities, was a member, and records meeting with the committee on the dates of 27 and 30 Sept. 1909 to consider the document (cf. "Personal Journal of James Edward Talmage," 12:91-92, under the above dates, originals in BYU library).

mation of man's divine spiritual pedigree. And the origin of man's physical body? Three paragraphs are relevant, and form the crux of the matter; we shall denote them paragraphs 12 to 14:⁷¹

Adam, our great progenitor, "the first man," was, like Christ, a pre-existent spirit, and like Christ he took upon him an appropriate body, the body of a man, and so became a "living soul." The doctrine of the pre-existence—revealed so plainly, particularly in latter days, pours a wonderful flood of light upon the otherwise mysterious problem of man's origin. It shows that man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father, prior to coming upon the earth in a temporal body to undergo an experience in mortality. It teaches that all men existed in the spirit before any man existed in the flesh, and that all who have inhabited the earth since Adam have taken bodies and become souls in like manner.

It is held by some that Adam was not the first man upon this earth, and that the original human being was a development from lower orders of the animal creation. These, however, are the theories of men. The word of the Lord declares that Adam was "the first man of all men" (Moses 1:34), and we are therefore in duty bound to regard him as the primal parent of our race. It was shown to the brother of Jared that all men were created in the beginning after the image of God; and whether we take this to mean the spirit or the body, or both, it commits us to the same conclusion: Man began life as a human being, in the likeness of our heavenly Father.

True it is that the body of man enters upon its career as a tiny germ or embryo, which becomes an infant, quickened at a certain stage by the spirit whose tabernacle it is, and the child after being born, develops into a man. There is nothing in this, however, to indicate that the original man, the first of our race, began life as anything less than a man, or less than the human germ or embryo that becomes a man.⁷²

The anti-evolutionary sentiment is evident, though guarded. Did the article really constitute an authoritative pronouncement against evolution as a possibility for the origin of man's body? The likelihood that it did was strengthened by a statement in the 1910 manual for the priests of the Aaronic priesthood, which indicated that man's "descent has not been from a lower form of life, but from the Highest Form of Life; in

71. This numbering counts only the paragraphs of the actual text; scriptural quotations are not counted. J. R. Clark, who does count them separately, would refer to these paragraphs as 30- 32 (cf. *Messages of the First Presidency*, 5 (1971):243).

72. When this statement was reprinted in Joseph Fielding Smith, *Man His Origin and Destiny* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954), the phrase "primal parent of our race" was changed to read "primal parent of the race," cf. 354; and it continues to be quoted thus incorrectly in other Mormon works. To some students, this represents an alteration in meaning. Whether it would have been so interpreted by the 1909 First Presidency, however, is moot.

other words, man is, in the most literal sense, a child of God. This is not only true of the spirit of man, but of his body also. There never was a time, probably, in all the eternities of the past, when there was not men or children of God. This world is only one of many worlds which have been created by the Father through His Only Begotten."⁷³

However, the statement continues in a markedly less definitive vein: "Adam, then, was probably not the first mortal man in the universe, but he was likely the first for this earth." Two pages later, the tone of indefiniteness is further continued as a matter of reasoning:

One of the important points about this topic is to learn, if possible, how Adam obtained his body of flesh and bones. There would seem to be but one natural and reasonable explanation, and that is, that Adam obtained his body in the same way Christ obtained his—and just as all men obtain theirs—namely, by being born of woman.

"The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also." (Doc. & Cov. 130:22). Then what is more natural than to conclude that the offspring of such Beings would have bodies of flesh and bones? Like begets like.⁷⁴

Such sentiments were certain to evoke questions from church members, and it was equally certain that they had to be handled at the highest level of the church, the president's office. Once again, the *Improvement Era* was the platform of response, in an editorial that has, so far as we can find, not been further commented on to this day. Joseph F. Smith, as president of the church, and Edward H. Anderson, were the editors. We quote it *in toto*, from the columns relegated to instructions to the priesthood:

Origin of Man—"In just what manner did the mortal bodies of Adam and Eve come into existence on this earth?" This question comes from several High Priests' quorums.

Of course all are familiar with the statements in Genesis 1:26,27; 2:7; also in the Book of Moses, Pearl of Great Price, 2:27; and in the Book of Abraham 5:7. The latter statement reads: "And the Gods formed man from the dust of

73. *Divine Mission of the Savior, Course of Study for the . . . Priests (2nd year)*, prepared and issued under the direction of the general authorities of the church (1910), 35. The statement to this point was reprinted in the *Church News*, 19 Sept. 1936, p. 8, and is often quoted as though complete in itself.

74. *Ibid.*, 17. The manual at this point cites three statements, one each from Brigham Young (JD 1:50); Parley P. Pratt (*Key to Theology*); and Orson Pratt (JD 21:201). No attempt is made in the manual to capture the complete thought of these statements; particularly the sermons of President Young and Orson Pratt reveal some fundamental differences in total content and concept. In fairness, it must also be admitted that major sentiments in both these sermons were severely compromised by statements of subsequent presidencies.

the ground, and took his spirit (that is, the man's spirit) and put it into him; and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul."

These are the authentic statements of the scriptures, ancient and modern, and it is best to rest with these, until the Lord shall see fit to give more light on the subject. Whether the mortal bodies of man evolved in natural processes to present perfection, through the direction and power of God; whether the first parents of our generations, Adam and Eve, were transplanted from another sphere, with immortal tabernacles, which became corrupted through sin and the partaking of natural foods, in the process of time; whether they were born here in mortality, as other mortals have been, are questions not fully answered in the revealed word of God. For helpful discussion of the subject, see *Improvement Era*, Vol. XI, August 1908, No. 10, page 778, article, "Creation and Growth of Adam"; also article by the First Presidency, "Origin of Man," Vol. XIII, No. 1, page 75, 1909.⁷⁵

For clarification, the August 1908 article referred to was a response to a question raised about an even earlier article. The author of the two pieces, William Halls, had contended that Adam could not have been created full-grown, but must have gone through a natural childhood and adolescence. When pushed for documentation by *Era* readers who felt that such a view was incompatible with scriptural literalism, he answered, in the article cited by the editorial, that he could not document it, but that "When a passage of scripture taken literally contradicts a fundamental, natural law, I take it as allegorical; and in the absence of divine authority, put a construction on it that seems to harmonize with my experience and reason."

So ended the matter, apparently, so far as Joseph F. Smith was concerned: The editorial listed three options, and it is evident that not one of them agrees with a literal interpretation of Moses 3:7 or other such creation passages.

The *Improvement Era* continued to publish articles on science and the gospel (mostly articles by Frederick Pack, a University of Utah geology professor) until April 1911. A few months before, the very touchy matter of academic freedom in the church school system had reared its head, regarding the propriety of teaching ". . .the theories of evolution as at present set forth in the text books, and also theories relating to the Bible known as 'higher criticism'. . ." President Smith, in a special editorial,⁷⁶ reported to the church on the matter. He indicated that "it is well known

75. *Era* 13:570, Apr. 1910.

76. *Era* 14:548-51, Apr. 1911. Further details of the case are found in R. V. Chamberlin, *Life and Philosophy of W. H. Chamberlin* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1925), 140f. In this rather trying incident, three BYU faculty members, Henry Peterson, Joseph Peterson, and Ralph V. Chamberlin, resigned under pressure.

that evolution and the 'higher criticism'—though perhaps containing many truths—are in conflict on some matters with the scriptures, including some modern revelation," and finally concluded:

. . . [I]t appears a waste of time and means, and detrimental to faith and religion to enter too extensively into the undemonstrated theories of men on philosophies relating to the origin of life, or the methods adopted by an All-wise Creator in peopling the earth with the bodies of men, birds and beasts. Let us rather turn our abilities to the practical analysis of the soil. . . .

A companion editorial from President Smith was aimed more directly at the youth of the church and appeared in *The Juvenile Instructor*. Although more general in its approach, it makes a finer distinction between the president's personal feelings and the church position. His private views seem to be embodied in the following passage:

They [students] are not old enough or learned enough to discriminate, or put proper limitations upon a theory which we believe is more or less a fallacy. In reaching the conclusion that evolution would be best left out of discussions in our Church schools we are deciding a question of propriety and are not undertaking to say how much of evolution is true, or how much is false. We think that while it is a hypothesis, on both sides of which the most eminent scientific men of the world are arrayed, that it is folly to take up its discussion in our institutions of learning, and we cannot see wherein such discussions are likely to promote the faith of our young people.

However, he clearly spelled out the church position on the matter:

The Church itself has no philosophy about the *modus operandi* employed by the Lord in His creation of the world, and much of the talk therefore about the philosophy of Mormonism is altogether misleading.⁷⁷

With these deliverances, President Smith let the matter rest. No further clarification of his sentiments regarding the mechanism of creation was given, though certainly this was a golden opportunity if ever one existed.

Two years later, in a conference address in Arizona, President Smith delivered himself of one further comment:

Man was born of woman; Christ, the Savior, was born of woman and God, the Father, was born of woman. Adam, our earthly parent, was also born of woman into this world, the same as Jesus and you and I.⁷⁸

77. *Juvenile Instructor* 46 (4):208-209, Apr. 1911.

78. *Deseret News*, 27 Dec. 1913, sec. III, p. 7; reprinted in the *Church News*, 19 Sept. 1936, 2, 8.

When? How? And of whom? The statement is consistent with all three of the 1910 options, and these and further questions about Joseph F. Smith's beliefs on the matter can be answered only by extensive and tenuous proof-texting, a well-known and notoriously unreliable method. Certain it is that he, one of the most scripturally committed of all LDS presidents, remained consistent with his predecessors and officially left the matter open and unresolved. Articles in the *Improvement Era* ranged widely over the issue, from condemnations of the whole idea of evolution to accounts of dinosaur digging, but no further authoritative statements were made until 1925, during the administration of President Heber J. Grant.

That was the year of the famous Scopes trial in Dayton, Tennessee. Young John Scopes, a high school science teacher, was charged with the teaching of evolution, forbidden by state law. At least, Scopes was the formal defendant; the trial really developed into a classic confrontation between fundamentalist theology and contemporary science. The event was a news highlight of the year, with correspondents from around the world converging on the tiny town for the great showdown. Religious spokesmen of many persuasions felt disposed to deliver themselves of commentary on the matter.⁷⁹ During the post-trial period came the document: "'Mormon' View of Evolution," published over the signatures of Heber J. Grant, Anthony W. Ivins, and Charles W. Nibley, the LDS First Presidency.⁸⁰ In essence, it consists of paragraphs 3, 6, 7, 12, 16, and 17 of the 1909 statement by Joseph F. Smith et al., with only a very few changes in text: deletion of a word or two, addition of several words for clarification, etc. Paragraphs 13 and 14, the "anti-evolution" ones (quoted above), are conspicuously absent. The entire message of the statement is to affirm the spiritual pedigree of man and the common descent of all men from an ancestor named Adam, who had taken upon himself "an appropriate body."

As in its 1909 predecessor, the word "evolution" or its derivatives occurs only once, to the effect that man, formed in the image of God, "is

79. The best single account is L. S. deCamp, *The Great Monkey Trial* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1968).

80. *Era* 28:1090-1091, Sept. 1925. The understandable sympathy of the LDS people for the general religious position in the 1925 Scopes episode is reflected in the remarks of various speakers, both general authorities and otherwise, during the October general conference (cf. *LDS General Conference Reports*, Oct. 1925). Of the First Presidency, however, counselor Charles W. Nibley made no reference to the matter; President Heber J. Grant went no further than to recall favorable impressions of William Jennings Bryan, the chief religious spokesman (and prosecutor) at the Scopes trial, who died shortly after the trial. Anthony W. Ivins, first counselor, addressed the topic of evolution directly and at some length, essentially articulating a middle-of-the-road position. The speech (*ibid.*, 19-28) is too loaded with hypothetical statements and qualifiers to be easily categorized.

capable, by experience through ages and aeons, of evolving into a God." Seen against the background of the theological ferment of the day, this is an amazingly temperate document; none of the sloganeering and over-drawn rhetoric characteristic of the day, just a calm focusing on the critical matter of man's spiritual affinity with God. The church was concerned for the well-being of religion in general, and thus sympathized with the plight of the religionists, but it could ill afford any extreme statements in the matter.

The subsequent years of calm were broken in 1930, although the resulting perturbation was kept quietly within the closed circle of the general authorities. The relatively young apostle, Joseph Fielding Smith, delivered a lecture to the Genealogical Conference on April 5. In his characteristic style, he enthusiastically delivered himself of his thoughts on the creation of man, acknowledging that "The Lord has not seen fit to tell us definitely just how Adam came for we are not ready to receive that truth." Yet he also spelled out very clearly a disbelief in "pre-Adamites," peoples of any sort upon the earth before Adam, declaring that "...the doctrine of 'pre-Adamites' is not a doctrine of the Church, and is not advocated nor countenanced in the Church." Furthermore,

There was no death in the earth before the fall of Adam. . . .All life in the sea, the air, on the earth, was without death. Animals were not dying. Things were not changing as we find them changing in this mortal existence, for mortality had not come.⁸¹

Shortly after the publication of the speech, these concepts became a bone of contention: Brigham H. Roberts, the long-standing apologist of the church, directly challenged the legitimacy of the remarks, in a letter to the First Presidency. Both Roberts and Smith were given opportunity to present their positions, both orally and in writing, to the Twelve and the presidency. Roberts developed his ideas primarily from scripture, from science, and from Apostle Orson Hyde and President Brigham Young. Smith also used scripture, but leaned heavily on the Adam teachings of Orson Pratt, and on paragraph 13 of the 1909 statement of the First Presidency. This last item comprised his major piece of evidence. At last, convinced that continuation of the discussion would be fruitless, the First Presidency issued a seven-page directive to the other general authorities, reviewing in detail the entire discussion as described and then stating:

The statement made by Elder Smith that the existence of pre-Adamites is not a doctrine of the Church is true. It is just as true that the statement: "There

81. Joseph Fielding Smith, "Faith Leads to a Fulness of Truth and Righteousness," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 21:145-58, Oct. 1930.

were not pre-Adamites upon the earth," is not a doctrine of the Church. Neither side of the controversy has been accepted as a doctrine at all.

Both parties make the scripture and the statements of men who have been prominent in the affairs of the Church the basis of their contention; neither has produced definite proof in support of his views.

... Upon the fundamental doctrines of the Church we are all agreed. Our mission is to bear the message of the restored gospel to the people of the world. Leave Geology, Biology, Archaeology and Anthropology, no one of which has to do with the salvation of the souls of mankind, to scientific research, while we magnify our calling in the realm of the Church.⁸²

In addition to this written directive, the First Presidency called a special meeting of all the general authorities, the day after general conference closed, to discuss the matter and deliver oral counsel. Apostle James E. Talmage records the following account of the meeting:

Involved in this question [Roberts's original query] is that of the beginning of life upon the earth, and as to whether there was death either of animal or plant before the fall of Adam, on which proposition Elder Smith was very pronounced in denial and Elder Roberts equally forceful in the affirmative. As to whether Preadamite races existed upon the earth there has been much discussion among some of our people of late. The decision reached by the First Presidency, and announced to this morning's assembly, was in answer to a specific question that obviously the doctrine of the existence of races of human beings upon the earth prior to the fall of Adam was not a doctrine of the Church; and, further, that the conception embodied in the belief of many to the effect that there were no such Preadamite races, and that there was no death upon the earth prior to Adam's fall is likewise declared to be no doctrine of the Church. I think the decision of the First Presidency is a wise one in the premises. This is one of the many things upon which we cannot preach with assurance and dogmatic assertions on either side are likely to do harm rather than good.⁸³

The two contestants, Roberts and Smith, were thus directed to drop the matter, and publication of a major manuscript previously written by Elder Roberts dealing with the subject (among others) was proscribed.

However, this proscription left the public record with only one side of the story, the speech of Elder Smith, which in many ways is an avowal of the position of the nineteenth-century theologians. Not everyone in

82. Typescript copy in author's possession, 7 pp. Cf. also n. 54, which relates to a 1972 commentary on the question of pre-Adamites.

83. "Personal Journal of James Edward Talmage," 29:42, under date of 7 Apr. 1930; cf. also relevant entries under dates of 2, 7, 14, and 21 Jan. 1931, all in vol. 29.

the governing quorums of the church was content with such a situation. Nor was the record long in being balanced. On Sunday, August 9, 1931, Apostle Talmage took the stand in the Salt Lake Tabernacle worship service, and there delivered an address: "The Earth and Man."⁸⁴ Talmage's position, in light of the above restriction from the First Presidency, was admittedly a bit presumptive, which likely accounts for some of the characteristics of the text. The speech as we now have it in printed form is a rather neat bit of nimble footwork, a careful avoidance of any explicit stance that would come into direct conflict with particular sensitivities on the issue. Affirming his deep belief in the ultimate synthesis of God's word in both the rocks and the scriptures, Talmage promulgated a clear message of sensitivity to, and reception of, science and the scientific method—a point which is amply recognized in the vigorous, even scathing, denunciations of his speech by certain later commentators. Careful though he was, at least the public record was now more balanced, and Talmage (as was customary) sent a copy of the manuscript to the printers for publication.

From certain quarters within the Twelve, however, opposition developed to the speech's publication. The subject was a matter of consideration in at least four subsequent meetings of the Twelve and/or the First Presidency, but eventually the First Presidency, after going over the manuscript very carefully with Elder Talmage, directed him to send it back to the publisher for inclusion in the next *Church News*. Furthermore, they instructed him to have it published also as a separate pamphlet, to be available upon request from the church offices. Both publications were released to the public November 21, 1931, and the speech has since enjoyed a long and favorable treatment from the Mormon publishing fraternity.⁸⁵

84. J. E. Talmage, "The Earth and Man," *Church News*, 21 Nov. 1931, 7-8. In pamphlet form, it was "Published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," 16 pp. The speech has been republished various times, including by BYU Extension Publications, and was most recently published in the *Instructor* 100 (12): 474-77, Dec. 1965, and 101 (1):9-11, 15, Jan. 1966.

85. Cf. n. 84. Elder Talmage discusses the matter thusly in his journal, after reviewing the Roberts-Smith episode:

Many of our students have inferred from Elder Smith's address that the Church refuses to recognize the findings of science if there be a word in scriptural record in our interpretation of which we find even a seeming conflict with scientific discoveries or deductions, and that therefore the "policy" of the Church is in effect opposed to scientific research.

In speaking at the Tabernacle on August 9 last I had not forgotten that in the pronouncement of the First Presidency mentioned under date of April 7 last it was advised and really required that the General Authorities of the Church refrain from discussing in public, that is preaching, the debatable subject of the existence of human kind upon the earth prior to the beginning of Adamic history as recorded in scripture; but, I had been present at a consultation in the course of which the First Presidency had commented somewhat favorably upon the suggestion that sometime,

The resulting stalemate continued for over two decades. Cognizant of the fact that writings and expressions of general authorities, no matter how intended, tend to become canonized by various elements of the church community, the First Presidency continued the proscription against publication of the Roberts manuscript. In 1933 both Roberts and Talmage died. The essence of their philosophical legacy was continued by Apostles Widtsoe and Merrill. Apostle Smith, in the immediately ensuing years, also completed a manuscript of book-length, which outlined his objections to evolutionary concepts, and once again drove home his commitment to many of the basic concepts of nineteenth-century theologians—not drawing such concepts from them, of course, but arriving at essentially the same position by a similar, strongly literalistic interpretation of the scriptures. The record indicates that his manuscript was subjected to the same publication injunction as that of Roberts.⁸⁶ Widtsoe and Merrill, not sharing the views of Elder Smith in these matters, also acted as damping forces on overly literalistic interpretation. Their deaths in 1952 marked the end of an era.

Apostle Smith began an open exposition of his views on April 22, 1953, in a speech at Brigham Young University entitled “The Origin of

somewhere, something should be said by one or more of us to make plain that the Church does not refuse to recognize the discoveries and demonstrations of science, especially in relation to the subject at issue. President Anthony W. Ivins, of the First Presidency, presided at the Tabernacle meeting, and three members of the Council of the Twelve were present—Elders George F. Richards, Joseph Fielding Smith and Richard R. Lyman. Of course, Elder Smith, and in fact all of us, recognize that my address was in some important respects opposed to his published remarks, but the other brethren named, including President Ivins, expressed their tentative approval of what I had said.

I am very grateful that my address has come under a very thorough consideration, and I may say investigation, by the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. The discussions throughout as relating to the matter have been forceful but in every respect friendly, and the majority of the Twelve have been in favor of the publication of the address from the time they first took it under consideration. I have hoped and fervently prayed that the brethren would be rightly guided in reaching a decision, and, as the Lord knows my heart, I have had no personal desire for triumph or victory in the matter, but have hoped that the address would be published or suppressed as would be for the best. The issue is now closed, the address is in print. (“Personal Journal of James Edward Talmage,” 29:68-69, under date of 21 Nov. 1931. Cf. also the comments under dates of 9 Aug., 5, 16, and 17 Nov. 1931, all in vol. 29.

86. While considerable evidence verifying this account is already available in the public record, the primary documentation lies in confidential interviews conducted by the author with persons closely associated with this matter.

The title of the Roberts manuscript, still unpublished, is “The Truth, The Way, The Life: An Elementary Treatise on Theology.” Consisting of nearly 600 manuscript pages, it was considered by Roberts to be “the most important work that I have yet contributed to the Church, the six-volumed Comprehensive History of the Church not omitted” (letter of 9 Feb. 1931 to the First Presidency). Though it is in many critical ways contrapositive to the theology championed by Elder Smith, the reader should not infer that it is an acceptance or affirmation of evolution *per se*.

Man."⁸⁷ His speech to the June 1953 MIA Conference⁸⁸ continued the same theme: scriptural literalism on scientific matters, coupled with a virtually complete disregard for scientific data. A rapid though minor updating of his book manuscript followed, and it was apparently again submitted for publication. Although it was not approved, he pushed ahead with its publication, and by mid-1954 it was made available to the public under the title, *Man His Origin and Destiny*.⁸⁹

The work marks a milestone. For the first time in Mormon history, and capping a full half-century of publication of Mormon books on science and religion, Mormonism had a book that was openly antagonistic to much of science.⁹⁰ The long-standing concern of past church presidents was quickly realized: The book was hailed by many as an authoritative church statement which immediately locked Mormonism into direct confrontation with science and sparked a wave of religious fundamentalism that shows little sign of abatement. Others, mindful of the embarrassment which other Christian churches had suffered on issues of science, and fearful of the consequences for their own church if the new stance was widely adopted, openly expressed their consternation. The president of the church, David O. McKay, was a giant of tolerance; the differences in philosophy (within the church framework) between the book's author and himself could hardly have been more disparate. Yet a president's actions are essentially authoritative; one tends to act cautiously in such a position, and a public settling of issues was apparently not acceptable to him. While there is no formal record available of the deliberations involved, the ensuing reactions indicate a low-key, indirect, and peace-making response, at least as far as public utterances are concerned.

Apostle Smith vigorously presented his basic thesis to the seminary and institute teachers of the church, assembled in their periodic summer

87. Joseph Fielding Smith, "The Origin of Man," 22 Apr. 1953, published by Brigham Young University Extension Division, 6 pp.

88. Joseph Fielding Smith, "Entangle Not Yourselves in Sin," speech of 12 June 1953, *Era* 56:646f, Sept. 1953.

89. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Man, His Origin and Destiny* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954).

90. So far as I am aware, the first book in Mormonism that can really be said to be directed to a discussion of science and religion is *Scientific Aspects of Mormonism*, by Nels L. Nelson (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904). Others followed sporadically over the years, by Widtsoe, Nelson, Pack, and Merrill. All of these, while not preaching a scientific humanism or anything of the sort, exhibit a deep recognition of the validity of scientific knowledge. *Man, His Origin and Destiny* is a clean break with that long tradition, opting as it does for schism rather than synthesis.

training session at Brigham Young University, on June 28, 1954.⁹¹ Exactly nine days later, President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., second counselor in the First Presidency and a veteran of over twenty years' service in the presidency, delivered (by invitation) his speech "When are the Writings or Sermons of Church Leaders Entitled to the Claim of Scripture?" His message was clear and hard-hitting, and has no peer in Mormon literature. Emphasizing that only the president of the church may declare doctrine, give interpretation of scripture, "or change in any way the existing doctrines of the Church," he proceeded to an examination of the scriptural affirmation that whatever the holders of the priesthood speak "when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture."⁹² He readily acknowledged that the scripture applied with special force upon the general authorities, but that:

They must act and teach subject to the over-all power and authority of the President of the Church. . . . Sometimes in the past they have spoken "out of turn," so to speak. . . .

There have been rare occasions when even the President of the Church in his preaching and teaching has not been "moved upon by the Holy Ghost." You will recall the Prophet Joseph declared that a prophet is not always a prophet. . . .

. . . even the President of the Church, himself, may not always be "moved upon by the Holy Ghost," when he addresses the people. This has happened about matters of doctrine (usually of a highly speculative character) where subsequent Presidents of the Church and the peoples themselves have felt that in declaring the doctrine, the announcer was not "moved upon by the Holy Ghost."

How shall the Church know. . . ? The Church will know by the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the body of the members; . . . and in due time that knowledge will be made manifest. . . .⁹³

President Clark continued to hammer this concept home, referring to accounts in the New Testament of doctrinal differences among the apostles, relating the concept to our own day, reiterating continually that

. . . even the President of the Church has not always spoken under the direction of the Holy Ghost, for a prophet is not always a prophet. . . in our own Church, leaders have differed in view from the first.

. . . not always may the words of a prophet be taken as a prophecy or revelation. . . .

91. Joseph Fielding Smith, speech of 28 June 1954, published in the *Church News*, 24 July 1954, under the caption "Discusses Organic Evolution Opposed to Divine Revelation."

92. Cf. ref. 5.

93. Cf. ref. 6. Words in parentheses, grammatical errors, etc. are in the original.

In his final paragraphs, he moved from the position of trying to define what is scripture to identifying what is *not* scripture, emphasizing that when any one other than the president of the church attempts to proclaim any new doctrine, etc., unless acting specifically under the president's direction, the church may know that the utterances are *not* scripture. His final expository paragraph reads:

When any man, except the President of the Church, undertakes to proclaim one unsettled doctrine, as among two or more doctrines in dispute, as the settled doctrine of the Church, we may know that he is not "moved upon by the Holy Ghost," unless he is acting under the authority of the President.

Such teachings, to say the least, were not characteristic of what was usually taught over the pulpit. There was no mention in the sermon of any specific contemporary teachings to which these principles were to be applied, but there also was left no doubt that they were to *be* applied.

President McKay himself avoided any direct public statement on the matter. His closest approach to public commentary came from his beginning-of-the-school-year speech to the BYU faculty, September 17, 1954.⁹⁴ He handled therein various categories of knowledge, and touched briefly upon the matter of science and religion. He averred that it is a "stern fact of life" that all living things obey fixed laws of nature and divine commands. He referred to the creation of man thusly: "When the Creator 'breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,' (and never mind when it was), 'and man became a living soul' God gave him the power of choice." In his closing sentence, he felt moved to

. . . bless you [the faculty] with wisdom to know the truth as it is given by revealed word in the authorized books of the Church, bless you with the power to discern between truth and error as given by individuals.

However, this public response by the First Presidency obviously would not satisfy the questions in the minds of many members. Over the years, there seems to have been an almost constant stream of inquiries, both written and oral, concerning the doctrinal soundness of Apostle Smith's book and similar teachings. The response from the First Presidency has been a consistent: an avowal that the church has taken no official position on the matter of evolution and related subjects, that it has made no official statement on the subject, that the book in question is neither "authorized" by the church nor "published by" the church, that it "is not approved by the Church," and that it contains only the author's

⁹⁴ David O. McKay, "Some Fundamental Objectives of a Church University," *Church News*, 25 Sept. 1954, 2f.

personal views. On occasion the inquirer was sent two documents: the 1909 statement by the First Presidency, and the 1931 speech by Talmage, with the admonition that the entire matter should be dealt with by "suspending judgment as long as may be necessary" until the complete truth should be perceived.⁹⁵ Throughout all such communications ran the sentiment of tolerance, open-mindedness, and a dedication to final truth. Even those who sought the First Presidency's evaluation of materials to be used in their teachings got no further response.

So here, it seems, the matter rests, as far as authoritative statements are concerned. There has been no further official response, and it would appear that none is forthcoming. Rather lengthy explanations by past First Presidencies (among the materials mentioned, ref. 95) indicate that since such authoritative statements must be applicable to future developments as well as to the current state of knowledge, it is deemed wisest to let the matter rest without further development.

Authoritative statements concerning scientific matters seem neither necessary nor desirable, even if the knowledge to make them did exist, and it seems clear that it does not. Effective arguments can be marshaled to support the point that such pronouncements, necessarily restrictive in their nature, would stifle the very experience that life is supposed to provide; they would be inimical to the very roots of the process of "evolving into a God." The 1931 First Presidency's observation that these matters do not directly relate to "salvation" is astute as well as practical. Those who argue against evolution, for instance, do so usually from the proclaimed motivation that the concept is inimical to religion, that it leads necessarily to atheism and associated evils. This position is tenuous at best. Cases where such a process is alleged to have occurred appear to be far more often the result of the intense conflict and polarization between popular expressions of theology and biology, rather than the result of the concept of evolution *per se*. Darwin perceived that his views bore no necessary antagonism to religion,⁹⁶ and a non-LDS commentator recognized that fact in the following expression:

Evolution, if rightly understood, has no theological or antitheological influ-

95. I have photostatic copies in my files of several of these inquiries and responses, and know of additional oral discussions of the matter. Before his death, Pres. McKay gave formal permission for the publication of at least one of the written responses. It is not deemed appropriate here to anticipate that publication in excessive detail.

96. As expressed in the Conclusion to *The Origin*: "I see no good reason why the views given in this volume should shock the religious feelings of any one." Although Darwin, once a candidate for the ministry, came to feel that the entire question of rational evidence for design and/or the existence of God was "insoluble," he was clear that religious commitment was a matter separate and distinct from belief or disbelief in either evolution or natural selection.

ence whatever. What is evolution? It is not an entity. It is a mode of creation. It leaves the whole field of Christian faith where and as it found it. Its believers and advocates may be theists, pantheists, or atheists. The causes of these radically different religious views cannot be sought in the one theory. They are to be found elsewhere.⁹⁷

There are too many devout religious evolutionists to argue defensively that a belief in evolution *per se*, stripped of the "either God or evolution" polemics, leads to religious deterioration. Indeed, there are many both within the church and without who will argue from personal experience that the concept of evolution can have precisely the opposite effect: a deepening of religious sentiment and spirituality due to the recognition that God is a God of law, of order, of rational behavior, rather than a deity of mystery, of transcendent and capricious whims. At the same time, there can be no denying the fact that the intense polemics of the theology-biology debate has polarized people into opposite camps detrimental to the cause of both. In our day and time, we do not need further schism; what the world is crying for is synthesis. People have been driven to opposite extremes in this matter because of respective truths that they found in whatever position they finally choose. Is it not time to recognize that each camp has truth, and try to take the best from both?

Mormonism is committed to the concept of a lawful, loving, orderly deity to whom capriciousness and deceit are anathema. The concept that God works through universal law, that he is God because of his obedience to and operation within the framework of such law, is fundamental. This gives Mormonism a basis for synthesis that exists in few if any other Western religions; it cannot be ignored with impunity. Mormonism's view that truth can be obtained empirically or pragmatically⁹⁸ must also be kept constantly in mind; God speaks in more ways than just scripture or open revelation.

It would appear that teachers in the church cannot be honest in their teachings if they present only one point of view as the position of the church. Whoso among them picks just one position from among the many articulated on these matters by church leaders becomes guilty of teaching a part-truth, and witnesses immediately that he "is not moved upon by the Holy Ghost." And will not students who permit such teaching without clarifying the matter be equally guilty of perpetuating part-truths? It would seem high time that we insist on a greater honesty and

97. W. R. Thompson, *Catholic World* 34 (1882): 692.

98. Cf. Wendell O. Rich, *Distinctive Teachings of the Restoration*, ch. 7, "The Nature of Truth" (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1962). The First Presidency's straightforward statement: "That which is demonstrated, we accept with joy" (*Deseret News*, 17 Dec. 1910, part 1, p. 3), can be coupled with dozens of further references.

scholarship in our gospel discussions; we owe future generations far better teaching than the current ones have been getting. In these respects, it is encouraging to note that the current Gospel Doctrine manual,⁹⁹ which deals directly with the creation scriptures from both the Bible and modern scripture, steers deliberately clear of any interpretational hang-ups. It propounds with Brigham Young that the critical message is not what method was used in Creation, but that God was responsible for Creation.

Above all, it would appear that teachers should grow beyond pushing their own views or those of their favorite general authority, to embark on a quest for truth rather than an indoctrination of one-sided dogma. Perhaps the sentiments of Apostle John Taylor are relevant:

I do not want to be frightened about hell-fire, pitchforks, and serpents, nor to be scared to death with hobgoblins and ghosts, nor anything of the kind that is got up to scare the ignorant; but I want truth, intelligence, and something that will bear investigation. I want to probe things to the bottom and to find out the truth if there is any way to find it out.¹⁰⁰

Furthermore:

...[O]ur religion. . .embraces every principle of truth and intelligence pertaining to us as moral, intellectual, mortal and immortal beings, pertaining to this world and the world that is to come. We are open to truth of every kind, no matter whence it comes, where it originates, or who believes in it. . . .

A man in search of truth has no peculiar system to sustain, no peculiar dogma to defend or theory to uphold; he embraces all truth, and that truth, like the sun in the firmament, shines forth and spreads its effulgent rays over all creation, and if men will divest themselves of bias and prejudice, and prayerfully and conscientiously search after truth, they will find it wherever they turn their attention.¹⁰¹

99. *In the Beginning, Gospel Doctrine Course Teacher's Supplement* (1972, Corporation of the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Deseret News Press).

100. JD 11:317 (1867).

101. JD 16:369-70 (1874).

Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview*

Lester E. Bush Jr.

I

So long as we have no special rule in the Church, as to people of color, let prudence guide, and while they, as well as we, are in the hands of a merciful God, we say: Shun every appearance of evil.—W. W. Phelps, 1833

THERE ONCE WAS A TIME, albeit brief, when a "Negro problem" did not exist for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. During those early months in New York and Ohio, no mention was even made of church attitudes towards blacks. The gospel was for "all nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples,"¹ and no exceptions were made. A Negro, "Black Pete," was among the first converts in Ohio, and his story was prominently reported in the local press.² W. W. Phelps opened a mission to Missouri in July 1831 and preached to "all the families of the earth,"

*This article first appeared in Vol. 8, No. 1 (Spring 1973): 11-68. A decade later the author published an update, "Whence the Negro Doctrine? A Review of Ten Years of Answers," which appeared with related articles 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). More recently, additional material was included in his "Writing 'Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview' (1973): Context and Reflections, 1998" in *Journal of Mormon History* 25 (Spring 1999): 229-271.

1. The injunction was found in many places in the recently published Book of Mormon (e.g., 1 Ne. 19:17; 1 Ne. 22:28; 2 Ne. 30:8; Mos. 27:25; Alma 29:8; 3 Ne. 28:29; similarly, 1 Ne. 17:35; 2 Ne. 26:26-28,33; Mos. 23:7; Alma 26:37), and was reaffirmed in a revelation to Joseph Smith, 9 Feb. 1831, published the following July: "And I give unto you a commandment that ye shall teach them unto all men, for they shall be taught unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples" (*Evening and Morning Star* [hereafter E&MS], July 1832; presently D&C 42:58).

2. *Ashtabula Journal*, 5 Feb. 1831, and *Albany Journal*, 16 Feb. 1831. These papers attribute the account to the *Painesville Gazette* and the *Geauga Gazette*, respectively.

specifically mentioning Negroes among his first audience.³ The following year another black, Elijah Abel, was baptized in Maryland.⁴

This initial period was ultimately brought to an end by the influx of Mormons into the Missouri mission in late 1831 and early 1832. Not long before the arrival of the Mormon vanguard, the "deformed and haggard visage" of abolitionism was manifest in Missouri; elsewhere Nat Turner graphically reinforced the southern phobia of slave insurrection.

At this time the Mormons were mostly emigrants from northern and eastern states, and were not slaveholders. In less than a year, a rumor was afoot that they were "tampering" with the slaves. Not insensitive to this charge, the Mormons agreed to investigate and "bring to justice any person who might. . . violate the law of the land by stirring up the blacks to an insurrection, or in any degree dissuade them from being perfectly obedient to their masters."⁵ Their investigations proved negative as only one specific accusation was uncovered, and the elder accused had returned to the East; however, the rumors continued unabated.⁶

One aspect of the slaveholders' paranoia not initially touched by the Mormon presence was the dictum that free Negroes promoted slave revolts. Ten years earlier Missouri had been delayed admission into the Union for barring free Negroes from the state. A modification in the state constitution was compelled which allowed entry to the few free blacks who were citizens of other states. Consequently, free Negroes were rare in Missouri; Jackson County had none.

In the summer of 1833, the older settlers perceived a new threat to this status embodied in the church's *Evening and Morning Star*. Due to special requirements in the Missouri law affecting the immigration of free Negroes into the state, Phelps had published the relevant material "to prevent any misunderstanding among the churches abroad, respecting free people of color, who may think of coming to the western boundaries of Missouri, as members of the Church."⁷ The Missourians interpreted the article as an invitation to "free negroes and mulattoes from other states to become 'Mormons,' and remove and settle among us."⁸

3. Manuscript History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, entry undated. Last preceding dated entry was from June 1831, but an intervening reprint from July suggests that the account originated in the latter month.

4. Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: A. Jenson History Co., 1901-36), 3:577.

5. "Outrage in Jackson County, Missouri," *E&MS* 2 (Jan. 1834): 122.

6. A discussion of this problem is to be found in Warren A. Jennings, "Factors in the Destruction of the Mormon Press in Missouri, 1833," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 35 (1967): 59-76.

7. "Free People of Color," *E&MS* 2 (July 1833): 109.

8. "The Manifesto of the Mob," as recorded in John Whitmer's History, 9; also found

This interpretation was probably unfair to Phelps as he had stated twice that the subject was especially delicate, and one on which great care should be taken to "shun every appearance of evil." However, he also included a remarkably injudicious comment: "In connection with the wonderful events of this age, much is doing towards abolishing slavery, and colonizing the blacks, in Africa."⁹

The local citizenry immediately drafted a list of accusations against the Saints, prominently featuring the anti-slavery issue and Phelps's article. In response, Phelps issued an "Extra" explaining that he had been "misunderstood." The intention, he wrote, "was not only to stop free people of color from emigrating to this state, but to prevent them from being admitted as members of the Church" and stated that, furthermore, "none will be admitted into the Church."¹⁰ Since Phelps had stated in his first article that there was "no special rule in the Church, as to people of color," this new restriction was obviously an expedient adopted in Missouri. Incredibly, Phelps also reprinted his previous reflection on the "wonderful events. . . towards abolishing slavery."

The reversal of position on Negro membership had no discernible impact on the settlers; a redraft of their charges, with additional demands, was incorporated into several "propositions" which flatly rejected Phelps's explanation.¹¹ The subsequent events are well known: mob violence, the destruction of the *Star* press, and ultimately the expulsion of the Saints from Jackson County.

The Missouri accusations had gone "considerably the rounds in the public prints," so, on reestablishing the *Star* in Ohio, an extensive rebuttal was published. No Mormon, it was asserted, had ever been implicated on a charge of tampering with the slaves. In a broader context, the *Star* added,

All who are acquainted with the situation of slave States, know that the life of every white is in constant danger, and to insinuate any thing which could possibly be interpreted by a slave, that it was not just to hold human beings in bondage, would be jeopardizing the life of every white inhabitant in the country. For the moment an insurrection should break out, no respect would be paid to age, sex, or religion by an enraged, jealous, and ignorant black

in Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (hereafter DHC), ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1902-12), 1:378.

9. E&MS 2 (July 1833): 111.

10. E&MS "Extra" reprinted in *Times & Seasons* (hereafter T&S) 6:818; also DHC 1:378.

11. "Contemporaneous with the appearance of this article, was the expectation among the brethren here, that a considerable number of this degraded caste were only awaiting this information before they should set out on their journey" (T&S 6:832-3, which cites the *Western Monitor* of 2 Aug. 1833; however, Jennings, op. cit., dates the *Monitor* article 9 Aug. 1833).

banditti. And the individual who would not immediately report any one who might be found influencing the minds of slaves with evil, would be beneath even the slave himself, and unworthy the privilege of a free Government.¹²

The Mormons had their own reasons for being alert to the possibility of slave insurrection (and their early publications reflect this preoccupation), for back in late 1832 Joseph Smith had prophesied that a war was imminent pitting the South against the North, and that "after many days, slaves shall rise up against their masters."¹³

The Jackson County experience demonstrated the need for a clear statement of church policy on slavery. In December 1833, immediately following the expulsion from Jackson County, Joseph Smith received a revelation that seems to bear directly on this question. In part, it declared that "it is not right that any man should be in bondage to another."¹⁴ While the most recent church pronouncement on the Negro (1969) tied this revelation to Negro slavery, it does not appear to have been used in early discourses on either side of the slavery question.¹⁵

The statement which did come to serve as the "official" church position on slavery was adopted in August 1835. This statement, worded so that it avoided comment on the morality of slavery per se, was part of a general endorsement of legal institutions. One section dealt with governments "allowing human beings to be held in servitude," and stated that under these circumstances the church felt it to be "unlawful and unjust, and dangerous to the peace" for anyone "to interfere with bond-servants, neither preach the gospel to, nor baptize them contrary to the will and wish of their masters, nor to meddle with or influence them in the

12. "Outrage in Jackson County, Missouri," E&MS 2 (Jan. 1834): 122.

13. D&C 87, received 25 Dec. 1832, as quoted in the 1851 ed. of the Pearl of Great Price. Although this prophecy was not published until 1851, Orson Pratt reported in 1870 that it was in circulation in 1833, and that when "a youth of nineteen. . . I carried forth the written revelation, foretelling this contest, some twenty-eight years before the war commenced" (*Journal of Discourses* [Liverpool, England: 1854-1886; 1966 reprint] [hereafter JD—publisher changed with each issue] 13:135; also 18:224). Wilford Woodruff also reported early familiarity with the prophecy (JD 14:2).

14. The present D&C 101:77-79, revealed 16 Dec. 1833, and included in the 1835 ed. of the Doctrine and Covenants.

15. "In revelations received by the first prophet of the church in this dispensation, Joseph Smith (1805-1844), the Lord made it clear that it is 'not right that any man should be in bondage one to another.' These words were spoken prior to the Civil War. From these and other revelations have sprung the church's deep and historic concern with man's free agency and our commitment to the sacred principles of the Constitution: 'It follows, therefore, that we believe the Negro, as well as those of other races, should have his full Constitutional privileges as a member of society' (First Presidency statement of 15 Dec. 1969, from the *Church News*, 10 Jan. 1970).

least to cause them to be dissatisfied with their situations in this life, thereby jeopardizing the lives of men."¹⁶

The restriction on proselyting was not felt to conflict with the universal calling of the church. Any possible question on this point was eliminated the following month in a letter from Joseph Smith to the "elders abroad." In this the prophet reaffirmed that the church believed "in preaching the doctrine of repentance in all the world, both to old and young, rich and poor, bond and free." While the elders were instructed to teach slaves only with their master's consent, if this permission were denied "the responsibility be upon the head of the master of that house, and the consequences thereof, and the guilt of that house is no longer upon thy skirts."¹⁷

During the 1830s the national debate over slavery increased sharply. Abolitionists shifted from a plea for gradual release of the slaves to a demand for immediate emancipation. Biblical arguments became more prominent as slaveholding was attacked as a sin or defended with scriptural precedents. Anti-slavery evangelists traveled circuits proselyting northern communities, and in the spring of 1836 an abolitionist visited Kirtland, Ohio, and established a small anti-slavery society. The Mormons, in spite of their repeated denials, continued to be charged with anti-slavery activity in Missouri. Now these accusations were spreading to fertile missionary areas elsewhere in the South. It was not the best time for an abolitionist to visit church headquarters.

Lest anyone gain "the impression that all he said was concurred in," the next issue of the *Messenger and Advocate* was devoted largely to a rebuttal of abolitionism.¹⁸ A lengthy article was contributed by Joseph Smith, and there were others from Warren Parrish and Oliver Cowdery. Together these essays constitute the most extensive discussion of slavery to appear during the first two decades of the Restoration, and they provide an invaluable insight into the thinking of church leaders at that time.

At least five major objections to the abolitionist cause can be identified in Joseph Smith's discussion:

—First, he believed the course of abolitionism was "calculated to . . . set loose, upon the world a community of people who might peradventure,

16. D&C 134:12, "adopted by unanimous vote at a general assembly" in Kirtland. While some claim this was the work of Oliver Cowdery, the statement was supposed to have been drafted by a committee composed of Joseph Smith, Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams. The statement was included in the 1835 ed. of the Doctrine and Covenants as section 102.

17. Published in the Sept. and Nov. 1835 issues of the *Messenger and Advocate* 1:180-81; 2:210-11.

18. M&A 2 (Apr. 1836): 289-301.

overrun our country and violate the most sacred principles of human society,—chastity and virtue. ”

—Second, any evil attending slavery should have been apparent to the “men of piety” of the South who had raised no objections to the institution.

—Third, the prophet did “not believe that the people of the North have any more right to say that the South *shall* not hold slaves, than the South have to say the North *shall*”; the signing of petitions in the North was nothing more than “an array of influence, and a declaration of hostilities against the people of the South.”

—Fourth, the sons of Canaan (or Ham), whom Joseph Smith identified with the Negro, were cursed with servitude by a “decree of Jehovah,” and that curse was “not yet taken off the sons of Canaan, neither will be until it is affected by as great power as caused it to come. . .and those who are determined to pursue a course which shows an opposition. . .against the designs of the Lord, will learn. . .that God can do his work without the aid of those who are not dictated by his counsel.”

—Fifth, there were several other biblical precedents for slavery (in the histories of Abraham, Leviticus, Ephesians, Timothy).

In concluding his article, the prophet partially withdrew his previous stand on proselyting slaves, “It would be much better and more prudent, not to preach at all to the slaves, until after their masters are converted.”

Parrish and Cowdery pursued similar arguments. Parrish’s main points were that the Constitution was divinely inspired and had sanctioned slavery, and that the people should comply with the laws of the land. He also cited the curse on Ham, and declared that it would continue in effect until the Lord removed it, at which time he would “announce to his servants the prophets that the time has arrived.” Until such time, all the “abolition societies that now are or ever will be, cannot cause one jot or tittle of the prophecy to fail.” Parrish concluded with a comment on the danger to society if rebellion were fomented among the blacks.

Oliver Cowdery’s article was more directly concerned with race. He touched on most of the points raised in the other two articles, but dwelt at much greater length on the problems of insurrection and the social implications of emancipation:

Let the blacks of the south be free, and our community is overrun with paupers, and a reckless mass of human beings, uncultivated, untaught and unaccustomed to provide for themselves the necessities of life—endangering the chastity of every female who might by chance be found in our streets—our prisons filled with convicts, and the hangman wearied with executing the functions of his office! This must unavoidably be the case, every rational

man must admit, who has ever travelled in the slave states, or we must open our houses, unfold our arms, and bid these degraded and degrading sons of Canaan, a hearty welcome and a free admittance to all we possess! A society of this nature, to us, is so intolerably degrading, that the bare reflection causes our feeling to recoil, and our hearts to revolt.

He also saw little alternative to slavery:

The idea of transportation is folly, the project of emancipation [sic] is destructive to our government, and the notion of amalgamation is devilish! . . . And insensible to feeling must be the heart, 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!¹⁹

At last an unequivocal position on Negro slavery had been taken. Should the question of Mormon attitudes arise, an unambiguous statement was now available that should satisfy the most ardent slaveholder. Questions did arise and the articles were put to use with mixed results.²⁰

A question immediately arises as to the basis for these statements. Originating with the prophet and other prominent spokesmen of the church, many Mormons have supposed that at least part of the information was doctrinal, or even revelatory. However, far from professing divine insight, the authors made it expressly clear that these were their *personal views*.²¹ Moreover, a comparative study will demonstrate that the ideas presented reflect a cross section of the popular arguments of the day in support of slavery.

The growth of the abolitionist movement in the mid-1830s had led to the wide circulation of anti-slavery literature. The proponents of slavery also became more active and were equally prolific pamphleteers. Many and varied defenses of slavery were to appear over the next quarter century, and several themes were evident from the start. The natural inferiority and alleged sexual depravity of the blacks alluded to in all the *Messenger and Advocate* articles were rarely missing from any general defense of Negro slavery. States' rights and the constitutional sanction of slavery

19. M&A 2:299-301.

20. In July 1836, Wilford Woodruff and Abraham Smoot, on being charged as "abolitionists" in Tennessee, "read the seventh number of the *Messenger and Advocate* to them, which silenced the false accusations" (L. C. Berrett, "History of the Southern States Mission" [master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1960], 117). Similar charges were made the same month in Missouri, and the First Presidency advised: "Without occupying time here, we refer you to the April (1836) No. of the 'Latter Day Saint's Messenger and Advocate'" (letter of 25 July 1836, published in the M&A 2:354).

21. Joseph Smith wrote in his article that these were the "views and sentiments I believe as an individual," and Oliver Cowdery said, "We speak as an individual and as a man in this matter."

provided the standard legal justifications; and *all* scriptural defenses of slavery cited Noah's curse on Canaan and applied it directly to Negroes. Other scriptural "precedents" were generally cited as well.

Although none of these arguments were truly unique to this period, or even to the nineteenth century, their prominence in national debate was greatest during the years from 1830 to 1860. With very little effort, one can duplicate the Mormon arguments to the most specific detail from these contemporary non-Mormon sources.²² To claim these ideas originated independently within the church would require considerable justification, none of which has ever been presented.

Because of its later prominence in Mormon history, one particular argument requires careful attention: the belief that Negroes were descended from Ham. While particularly common in the first half of the nineteenth century, this idea was actually very old. Recent studies have traced the association to at least 200 to 600 A.D. Jordan reports that early Jewish writings invoked Noah's curse to explain the black skin of the Africans. Among early Christian Fathers, both Jerome and Augustine accepted the Ham genealogy for Negroes, and this belief is said to have become "universal" in early Christendom. More recently the association is evident in the earliest English descriptions of Africans in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. By the eighteenth century, the connection had become common in the New World, where it was not infrequently cited in justification of black slavery.

However, there was always disagreement on the implications of Noah's curse. Those opposed to slavery contended that the Africans were related to Ham through Cush, rather than Canaan (or occasionally, through all four sons), and therefore a curse affecting Canaan could not be applied to the blacks as a group. Furthermore, it was argued, the curse *predicted* rather than *justified* enslavement. The fundamental association with Ham was not so frequently challenged. Even among nineteenth cen-

22. While the correlation is most startling in the primary sources, the following, more recent studies also demonstrate the extent to which the views were circulated: J. Oliver Buswell, *Slavery, Segregation, and Scripture* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Press, 1964); William S. Jenkins, *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1935); Eric L. McKittrick, ed., *Slavery Defended: The Views of the Old South* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963); Louis Ruchames, *Racial Thought in America, Vol. 1* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1969); H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . : Racism in Southern Religion, 1780-1910* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1972); Caroline Shanks, "The Biblical Anti-slavery Argument of the Decade 1830-1840," *Journal of Negro History* 15 (1931):132-57; Charles H. Wesley, "The Concept of Negro Inferiority in American Thought," *Journal of Negro History* 25 (1941):540-60. A more limited study that makes a direct comparison to Mormon views is Naomi F. Woodbury, "A Legacy of Intolerance: Nineteenth Century Pro-slavery Propaganda and the Mormon Church Today" (masters thesis, University of California at Los Angeles, 1966).

tury anti-slavery elements, the Ham genealogy was widely accepted, and among the pro-slavery forces the association was virtually axiomatic.²³

It is clear that Joseph Smith accepted this traditional genealogy. As early as 1831, he had noted parenthetically that Negroes were "descendants of Ham," and he again applied Noah's curse to Negro slavery in 1841.²⁴ There is no record of him "teaching" the Ham genealogy as church doctrine. This would have been unnecessary, of course, as the association of Ham and the Negro was already common knowledge.

The first pointed reference to the Ham genealogy had actually come not with the articles in 1836 but rather a year earlier in a letter published in the *Messenger and Advocate*. W. W. Phelps proposed at that time that a lineage of blacks could be traced from Cain, through a black "Canaanite" wife of Ham, to Canaan.²⁵ The Cain genealogy had a somewhat less extensive tradition than the more straightforward Ham thesis, although it also was widely reported and can be traced back several centuries, generally in connection with the enslavement of Africans.²⁶ It had the "advantage" of including all of Ham's sons within a cursed lineage. The

23. For the early history, see Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1968; reprint, Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), 18, 36, and part I in general; also David B. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966), 450-1. Most of the references cited in n. 22 deal with the eighteenth century as well as the nineteenth. Regarding the curse on Ham, the noted anti-slavery evangelist Theodore Weld wrote in 1838, "The prophecy of Noah is the vade mecum of slaveholders, and they never venture abroad without it" (as quoted in H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image*, 130).

It remains a disappointment to me that Hugh Nibley in his recent treatments of the Book of Abraham has not commented on the Ham genealogy or Negro doctrine believed by so many Mormons to be based on this scripture. See, however, his *The World of the Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952), 160-64.

24. The parenthetical reference, to "Negroes-descendants of Ham," is found in the Manuscript History following the date 19 June 1831. The remark made in 1841 was rather arresting: "I referred to the curse of Ham for laughing at Noah, while in his wine, but doing no harm. . . . [W]hen he was accused by Canaan, he cursed him by the priesthood which he held, and the Lord had respect to his word, and the priesthood which he held, notwithstanding he was drunk, and the curse remains upon the posterity of Canaan until the present day" (DHC 4 :445-6). The prophet also modified the account in Genesis to read that Canaan had "a veil of darkness. . . cover him, that he shall be known among all men" (Gen. 9:50, *Holy Scriptures*, 1944, Independence, Mo.); the implications of the "Inspired Version" of Genesis may not be as evident as some have suggested, for Joseph Smith characterized the non-Negro Lamanites in very similar terms (2 Ne. 5:21; Jac. 3:5, 8-9; Alma 3:6-9; 3 Ne. 2:14-15; Morm. 5:15).

25. The letter, written 6 February 1835, was published in M&A 1:82. As the Book of Abraham papyri were not in the possession of the church at this time, the idea that Ham had a black "Canaanite" wife must have been based on the extant Book of Moses (7:8) reference to an antediluvian people of Canaan who became black.

26. All the books cited in nn. 22 and 23 have references to this belief.

problem of transmitting Cain's lineage through the Flood was generally handled as Phelps did, through the wife of Ham; there have been some bizarre variants of his explanation.²⁷ Joseph Smith may also have believed that Negroes were descended from Cain, but the evidence for this claim is not very convincing. Certainly, there is presently no case at all for the idea that he "taught" this genealogy.²⁸

It is significant, I believe, that in spite of the many discussions of blacks and slavery that had been published by 1836, *no* reference had been made to the priesthood. Yet, while there was not a written policy on blacks and the priesthood, a precedent had been established. Shortly before publication of the articles on abolitionism, a Negro was ordained to the Melchizedek priesthood. It has been suggested, considerably after the fact, that this was a mistake which was quickly rectified. Such a claim

27. Charles B. Thompson, who left the church after the death of Joseph Smith and subsequently started his own group, claimed that the Negroes ("Nachash") were intelligent subhuman servants who had been taken onto the Ark among the other animals. Ham's "illicit union with the female" Nachash resulted in "three half-breed sons, Canaan, Mizraim, and Nimrod.." Interestingly, Thompson's linguistic pseudo-scholarship was accepted by the prominent southern slavery advocate, Samuel A. Cartwright, who characterized Thompson as "a star in the East," "a Hebrew scholar of the first-class," and incorporated his thesis into an article, "Unity of the Human Race Disproved by the Hebrew Bible," published in *De Bow's Review* (Aug. 1860). De Bow published a second article presenting the same claim in the Oct. 1860 issue of his review.

Another variant was presented by Joseph F. Smith, while president of the church. He recounted an idea which "he had been told. . .originated with the Prophet Joseph, but of course he could not vouch for it," to the effect that Ham's wife was illegitimately pregnant "by a man of her own race" when she went aboard the Ark, and that Cainan [sic] was the result of that illicit intercourse" (First Presidency meeting, 18 Aug. 1900, minutes in the Adam S. Bennion papers, Brigham Young University, or George Albert Smith papers, University of Utah). Smith was first counselor at this time but repeated the comment eight years later as president (see Council Meeting minutes of 26 Aug. 1908, in Bennion or Smith papers).

28. The sum total of the evidence presently available that the prophet accepted this connection is one parenthetical statement: "In the evening debated with John C. Bennett and others to show that the Indians have greater cause to complain of the treatment of the whites, than the negroes or sons of Cain" (Manuscript History, 25 Jan. 1842; also DHC 4:501). There is no known reference in which the prophet applied the Book of Moses comment that "the seed of Cain were black" (Moses 7:22) to the Negro.

In addition to Phelps's letter, there were other references to Cain in the mid-1830s. Apostle David Patten reportedly claimed to have "met with a very remarkable personage who had represented himself as being Cain" while on a mission in Tennessee in 1835. Patten, who described the "strange personage" as "very dark," "covered with hair," and wearing "no clothing," appears to have taken the claim seriously, and eventually "rebuked him" and "commanded him to go hence." The account was reported over fifty years later by Abraham Smoot (see Lycurgus Wilson, *Life of David Patten, the First Apostolic Martyr* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1904], 45-47). About 1836 a non-Mormon traveler reports being told by a Mormon "that the descendants of Cain were all now under the curse, and no one could possibly designate who they were" (see Edmund Flagg, *The Far West or A Tour Beyond the Mountains*. . . [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1838], 2:111).

is totally unfounded, and was actually refuted by Joseph F. Smith shortly after being put forth.²⁹ Elijah Abel was ordained an elder March 3, 1836, and shortly thereafter received his patriarchal blessing from Joseph Smith Sr.³⁰ In June he was listed among the recently licensed elders,³¹ and on December 20, 1836, was ordained a seventy.³² Three years later, in June 1839, he was still active in the Nauvoo Seventies Quorum,³³ and his seventy's certificate was renewed in 1841, and again after his arrival in Salt Lake City.³⁴ Moreover, Abel was known by Joseph Smith and reportedly lived for a time in the prophet's home.³⁵

29. From the Council Meeting minutes of 4 June 1879 (Bennion papers), five days after Coltrin related his account: "Brother Joseph F. Smith said he thought Brother Coltrin's memory was incorrect as to Brother Abel being dropped from the quorum of Seventies, to which he belonged, as Brother Abel has in his possession, (which also he had shown Brother J.F.S.) his certificate as a Seventy, given to him in 1841, and signed by Elder Joseph Young, Sen., and A. P. Rockwood, and a still later one given in this city. Brother Abel's account of the persons who washed and anointed him in the Kirtland Temple also disagreed with the statement of Brother Coltrin, whilst he stated that Brother Coltrin ordained him a Seventy. Brother Abel also states that the Prophet Joseph told him he was entitled to the priesthood."

30. Date of ordination from Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 3:577. The patriarchal blessing is found in Joseph Smith's Patriarchal Blessing Record, p. 88 (undated), and is headed, "A blessing under the hands of Joseph Smith, Sen., upon Elijah Abel, who was born in Frederick County, Maryland, July 25, 1808." No lineage was assigned. It is clear that the blessing was given after Abel's ordination, for the patriarch states, "Thou hast been ordained an Elder."

31. M&A 2:335.

32. "Minutes of the Seventies Journal," kept by Hazen Aldrich, 20 Dec. 1836. Abel was one of several ordained by Zebedee Coltrin to the 3rd Quorum of Seventy. Aldrich and John Young, who with Coltrin were presidents of the seventies, also ordained several seventies that evening. This journal is found in the Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

33. *Ibid.*, 1 June 1839, records: "Elder J. M. Grant communicated to the council a short history of the conduct of Elder Elijah Able [sic] and some of his teachings etc such as teaching that there would be stakes of Zion in all the world, that an elder was a High Priest and he had as much authority as any H.P., that he commanded some of the brethren from Canada to flee from there by such a time saying that if they did not cross the river St. Lawrence then they could not get into the States and that in addition to threatening to [knock] down Elder Christopher Merkley on their passage up Lake Ontario, he publicly declared that the elders in Kirtland make nothing of knocking down one another. This last charge was substantiated by the written testimony of Elder Zenos H. Gurley, most of the charges Elder Grant testified to the truth of and referred to Moses Smith, John and George Beckstead, Robert Burton and Zebedee Coltrin for testimony, for the substantiation of the remainder." No action was reported. "Pres. Joseph Smith Jr. S. Rigdon and Hyrum Smith were also present and most of the twelve."

34. Council Meeting minutes, 4 June 1879, see n. 29. Kate B. Carter (*The Negro Pioneer* [Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1965], 15) reports that Abel came to Utah in 1847. Jenson assumed incorrectly that the certification in 1841 was the date of Abel's initial ordination (*Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 3:577).

35. Jenson states that Abel "was intimately acquainted with the Prophet Joseph

The charge that Abel was dropped from the priesthood originated with Zebedee Coltrin. It is unfortunate that his memory proved unreliable on this point, as he should have been in a position to provide valuable information—for it was he who ordained Abel to the office of seventy (two years after purportedly being told that Negroes were not to receive the priesthood).³⁶ The circumstances of Coltrin's account may be of some relevance. He claimed to have questioned the right of Negroes to hold the priesthood after a visit to the South. Abraham Smoot, the only other person to claim firsthand counsel from Joseph Smith on this subject, also had asked about the situation in the South: "What should be done with the Negroes in the South as I was preaching to them? [The prophet] said I could baptize them by the consent of their masters, but not to confer the priesthood upon them." Additionally, a secondhand account related by Smoot in which Smith allegedly gave the same advice was also directed at Negroes "in the Southern States."³⁷ Most, if not all, of the Negroes involved in these accounts were slaves. It may be, notwithstanding the lack of contemporary documentation, that a policy was in effect denying the priesthood to slaves or isolated free southern Negroes. In any case, a *de facto* restriction is demonstrable in the South, and empirical justification for the policy is not difficult to imagine.

After 1836 the Mormons largely ignored the subject of slavery for nearly six years. During this time they periodically reaffirmed that they were not abolitionists, but the charge was no longer common in Missouri, nor elsewhere in the South.³⁸ In spite of the small number of Negro converts, the gospel was still proclaimed as universal. The first Mormon hymnal, printed in 1835, included a hymn exhorting the members to proclaim the message "throughout Europe, and Asia's dark regions, To China's far shores, and to Afric's black legions."³⁹ Another hymnal, in

Smith" (*Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 3:577); Carter claims, "In Nauvoo he lived in the home of Joseph Smith" (*The Negro Pioneer*, 15). See also DHC 4:365, for a passing reference to Abel by the prophet in June 1841.

36. See nn. 32 and 113; Coltrin claimed to have been instructed not to ordain Negroes in 1834.

37. Journal of L. John Nuttal, 31 May 1879, typewritten copy at Brigham Young University, 1 (1876-84): 290-93; a copy is also included in the Council Meeting minutes for 4 June 1879 (Bennion papers). Smoot attributed the second-hand accounts to W. W. Patten, Warren Parrish, and Thomas B. Marsh.

38. In July 1838, the *Elders' Journal*, Joseph Smith, ed., answered the question, "Are the Mormons abolitionists?" with "We do not believe in setting the Negroes free." In 1839 John Corrill published his *Brief History . . . of the Church* (St. Louis: "Printed for the author," 1839), with his reasons for leaving, and commented that "the abolition question is discarded by them, as being inconsistent with the decrees of Heaven, and detrimental to the peace and welfare of the community" (47-48).

39. "There's a feast of fat things for &c," hymn number 8, in *A Collection of Sacred*

1840, contained a new hymn by Parley P. Pratt, encouraging the Twelve to carry the gospel throughout the world:

India's and Afric's sultry plains
Must hear the tidings as they roll
Where darkness, death, and sorrow reign
And tyranny has held controll'd.⁴⁰

No discrimination was evident in the 1836 rules governing the temple in Kirtland, which provided for "old or young, rich or poor, male or female, bond or free, black or white, believer or unbeliever."⁴¹ Nor was a discriminatory policy projected for the Nauvoo temple when the First Presidency anticipated in 1840 that "we may soon expect to see flocking to this place, people from every land and from every nation, the polished European, the degraded Hottentot, and the shivering Laplander. Persons of all languages, and of every tongue, and of every color; who shall with us worship the Lord of Hosts in his holy temple, and offer up their orisons in his sanctuary."⁴²

Early in 1842 Charles V. Dyer, a prominent Chicago physician, wrote to the mayor of Nauvoo, John C. Bennett, in an effort to gain Mormon support for the anti-slavery cause. Three abolitionists had recently been imprisoned in Missouri, and Dyer expressed indignation at the treatment received by abolitionists *and* Mormons in that state: "Have we not a right to sympathize with each other?" Bennett, at the height of a brief but exalted career with the Mormons, replied that he had considered the question of slavery "years ago" and was uncompromisingly for "UNIVERSAL LIBERTY, to every soul of man—civil, religious, and political." This exchange came to the attention of Joseph Smith, who wrote Bennett a short letter in apparent agreement: the subject of American slavery and the treatment of the three abolitionists made his "blood boil within me to reflect upon the injustices, cruelty, and oppression, of the rulers of the people—when will these things cease to be, and the Constitution and the Laws bear rule?"

Hymns for the Church of the Latter Day Saints, selected by Emma Smith (Kirtland: F. G. Williams Co., 1835), 5.

40. "Ye Chosen Twelve," by Parley P. Pratt, in *A Collection of Sacred Hymns for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in Europe*, selected by Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, and John Taylor (Manchester, England: W. R. Thomas, 1840). This hymn remains in the LDS hymnal in a slightly modified form.

41. DHC 2:368-9.

42. "Report of the Presidency" at General Conference, 3-5 Oct. 1840, in T&S 1:188, or DHC 4:213. While "washing and anointing" was performed in Kirtland, the ordinances presently denied Negroes were not announced until 1841 (sealing) and 1842 (endowments), and were not performed in the Nauvoo temple until 1846 and 1845, respectively.

Perhaps more unexpected than the contents of these letters was their subsequent publication by Joseph Smith in the March *Times and Seasons*, with an introduction that endorsed "UNIVERSAL LIBERTY" and characterized Bennett and Dyer as men of "brave and philanthropic hearts."⁴³ The anti-slavery sentiment in the letters was unmistakable, and their publication marked a virtual reversal of the published Mormon stance on slavery.

When and why this change occurred is not clear. Except for the relative silence of the preceding years, there was no suggestion of an impending change. The circumstances were obviously much different in 1842 than they had been in 1836. The slavery issue was no longer threatening to the Mormons. Although the church had previously received rough treatment at the hands of pro-slavery elements, it had no real prospect of returning to a slaveholding state. Illinois was theoretically a free state, and had only a small residual of "indentured" slaves. Abolitionist organizations and activities had declined markedly after 1837, but anti-slavery sentiment was more widespread both nationally and in Illinois. This was in part through association with the issues of freedom of speech, press, and petition, all of which were important to the Mormons. Personalities had also changed in the Mormon hierarchy.⁴⁴ However, for all the conducive circumstances, we have no contemporary explanation for the dramatic change in attitude.

Some authors have attempted to minimize the importance of Joseph Smith's anti-slavery views, and to suggest that his opposition to slavery was superficial or politically motivated. He did, after all, continue to deny that he was an abolitionist, rather preferring to characterize himself as a "friend of equal rights and privileges to all men."⁴⁵ A careful review

43. T&S 3 (1 Mar. 1842): 722-25; Joseph Smith was then editor. By contrast, the Mormon *Northern Times*, published briefly in Kirtland, Ohio, announced in October 1835, that they had received "several communications. . .for insertion, in favor of anti-slavery" and "[t]o prevent any misunderstanding on the subject, we positively say, that we shall have nothing to do with the matter—we are opposed to abolition, and what ever is calculated to disturb the peace and harmony of our constitution and country. Abolition does hardly belong to law or religion, politics or gospel, according to our ideas on the subject" (9 Oct. 1835). A strongly anti-abolitionist letter had been published in the *Messenger and Advocate* (2:312-3) in May 1836.

44. Willard Richards and John C. Bennett expressed opinions that were significantly more "liberal" on this subject than had Oliver Cowdery. For a brief discussion of the new directions of anti-slavery, see C. Vann Woodward, *American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1971), 147.

45. T&S 3:808 (1 June 1842). This was in specific response to the charge that the letters published in March showed him to be an abolitionist. He referred to himself similarly in July 1843 (DHC 5:498); December 1843 (*General Joseph Smith's Appeal to the Green Mountain Boys—Times and Seasons Extra*); and in February 1844, he developed his position at much greater length in his "Views" on government (see n. 48 below).

of published sources, however, fails to reveal any evidence of duplicity. Rather, one finds consistent opposition to slavery from early 1842 until the prophet's death in mid-1844. Even in private conversation, the prophet advised that slaves owned by Mormons be brought "into a free country and set. . . free—Educate them and give them equal Rights."⁴⁶ He recorded a similar sentiment in his *History*, "Had I anything to do with the negro, I would. . . put them on a national equalization."⁴⁷ Many similar expressions are to be found in 1843 and 1844, although his greatest attention to slavery was evident during the 1844 presidential campaign. Joseph Smith's "Views on the Government and Policy of the U.S.," prepared in February as a campaign platform, included a plan for the elimination of slavery within six years through federal compensation of slaveholders.⁴⁸ He later added that this might be accomplished a few states at a time, or with a provision that slave children be freed after a "fixed period."⁴⁹

The sincerity of the prophet's anti-slavery statements was challenged for several reasons. While repeatedly expressing a desire to "abolish slavery," Joseph Smith condemned the abolitionists as self-seeking and destined for "ruin, infamy and shame." Actually, the prophet's paradoxical antipathy to both slavery and abolitionism was not atypical of churchmen of his day. In the preceding few years, the majority of both the Protestant and Catholic clergy had opposed the abolitionist movement, and at the same time many also condemned slavery.⁵⁰ They particularly feared the divisive effect which the movement was having within

46. 30 December 1842, in Joseph Smith's Journal, kept by Willard Richards; copy at Church Historical Department.

47. 2 January 1843 (DHC 5:217).

48. "Gen. Smith's Views on the Government and Policy of the U.S." (see T&S, 5:528-33). He subsequently spoke against slavery on 7 March 1844 (DHC 6:243); 14 April 1844 (T&S 5:508-10); and 13 May 1844 (letter published 4 June 1844 in T&S 5:545). Another indication of his interest in this subject were entries in his *History* in February 1843 on a John Quincy Adams petition against slavery (DHC 5:283), and in May 1843 on the abolition of slavery in the "British dominions in India" (DHC 5:379); in November of that year the *Times and Seasons* carried the full text of a Papal Bull "Relative to Refraining from Traffic in Blacks" (T&S 4:381-2).

49. This idea was expressed 7 March 1844 (see DHC 6:243, and Matthias Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1909], 203). There is some uncertainty as to what the prophet planned to do with the freed slaves. At times he spoke of national equalization or equal rights; on this occasion he stated, "As soon as Texas was annexed, I would liberate the slaves in two or three States, indemnifying their owners, and send the negroes to Texas, and from Texas to Mexico, where all colors are alike."

50. Woodward, *American Counterpoint*, 153. Just a few days before his death, Joseph Smith published one of his most outspoken comments on slavery, and included an almost sympathetic allusion to the abolitionists. From a letter to Henry Clay, written 13 May 1844 and published 4 June 1844 (T&S 5:545): "True greatness never wavers, but when the

their denominations. Those abolitionists who had advocated a compensated emancipation in the previous decade were now gone, and the current uncompromising polemics were clearly aggravating badly strained inter-sectional relations. The possibility of a Civil War was especially real to the prophet; reiterating his warning of ten years before, he prophesied in 1843, that "much bloodshed" would "probably arise over the slave question."⁵¹

It also has been claimed that the prophet planned to allow Mormon slaveholders to retain their chattel property. The growth of the church in the South had led to the conversion of several slaveholders, at least three of whom moved to Nauvoo prior to the prophet's death. Two of the three claimed to have freed their slaves before coming North, but also reported that eight "ex-slaves" had chosen to remain with their masters.⁵² Theoretically, a permanent move to Illinois should have brought freedom regardless. It appears that they were indeed freed, for in April 1844 the prophet stated with some pride that in Nauvoo there was not a slave "to raise his rusting fetters and chains, and exclaim, O liberty where are thy charms?"⁵³ Oddly, some of these blacks, and a number of others who later lived briefly in Nauvoo, again appear to be slaves several years later in Utah.⁵⁴

It occurred to several prominent Mormons, working at the time in the Wisconsin pineries of the church, that there ought to be some special provision for slaveholders in the church. This idea was presented in two letters from a "Select Committee" to the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve proposing that the gospel be carried to the "South-Western States, as also Texas, Mexico, Brazil, &c" ("from Green Bay to the Mexican Gulf"), and that Texas be established as a "place of gathering for all the South." Were this done, the committee believed, thousands of rich planters "would embrace the Gospel, and, if they had a place to plant

Missouri compromise was entered into by you, for the benefit of slavery, there was a mighty shrinkage of western honor; and from that day, Sir, the sterling Yankee, the struggling Abolitionist, and the staunch Democrat, with a large number of liberal minded Whigs, have marked you as a black-leg in politics."

51. D&C 130:12-13, dated 12 Apr. 1843.

52. James M. Flake and John H. Redd both report freeing their slaves. Henry Jolly, the third slave owner, also reported that his slaves wanted to stay with him; however, he sold all except one child whose parents had died (see Carter, *The Negro Pioneer*, 4-6, 25, 44-45).

53. T&S 5:508-10

54. Carter (*The Negro Pioneer*) and Jack Bellar ("Negro Slaves in Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 2 [October 1929]:122-26) provide considerable information on the early Negroes in Utah. The problem of identifying slaves, normally complicated by the use of the term "servant" regardless of a black's legal status, is even more complex during the initial few years in Utah—during which time "slaves" were theoretically at liberty to leave their masters if they chose.

their slaves, give all the proceeds of their yearly labour, if rightly taught, for building up the kingdom." Moreover, the committee was "well informed of the Cherokee and the Choctaw nations who live between the State of Arkansas and the Colorado of the Texans, owning plantations and thousands of slaves, and that they are also very desirous to have an interview with the Elders of this Church, upon the principles of the Book of Mormon."⁵⁵

Bishop George Miller, who delivered the letters, reported that the prophet's response was favorable ("I perceive that the Spirit of God is in the pineries"), and that some preliminary steps were taken towards obtaining land in Texas.⁵⁶ Andrew Jenson later claimed that Joseph Smith himself made the suggestion that a place be established in the Southwest for slaveholding members of the church.⁵⁷ As this was in March 1844, in the midst of the prophet's denunciations of slavery, a suggestion of duplicity is not unreasonable. The source of Jenson's statement was the *Journal History* copy of these letters. However, while the prophet included them in his *History*, there is no indication of endorsement, and he never related them to the slavery issue. Unquestionably, he favored the expansion of Mormon activities into the West, for within two weeks of receipt of the above letters he submitted a Memorial to Congress asking that he be authorized to organize a company of 100,000 men to police the West, specifically naming Oregon and Texas.⁵⁸

The rather lengthy treatment of slavery included in the prophet's "Views" presented a remarkable contrast to his extensive discussion of 1836. For instance, the "Views" contained no reference to the social depravity of blacks. The "men of piety" of the South became "hospitable and noble" people who will help eliminate slavery "whenever they are

55. *Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, entries dated 10 Mar. 1844 and 11 Mar. 1844. The letters were published in the *Millennial Star* [hereafter MS] some years later (23:103-4, 117-19), and most of the text is found in DHC 6:256ff, 259ff. Apostle Lyman Wight was among those who signed the letters.

The committee was at least partially correct. The slave holdings of the Cherokee and Choctaw nations together totaled several thousands. The Chickasaw, Creeks, and Seminoles also had Negro slaves (see Wyatt F. Jeltz, "The Relations of Negroes and Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians," *Journal of Negro History* 33 [1948]: 24ff; and Kenneth W. Porter, "Relations Between Negroes and Indians Within the Present Limits of the United States," *Journal of Negro History* 17 [1932]: 28ff).

56. Letter of 27 Jan. 1855, to *The Northern Islander*, included in Wingfield Watson, comp., *Correspondence of Bishop George Mille. . .* (Burlington, Wisc.: W. Watson, 1916), 20. See also Robert B. Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 290-95.

57. Andrew Jenson, *Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Company, 1941), 870.

58. *Millennial Star* 23:165-7, or DHC 6:275-7.

assured of an equivalent for their property." States' rights was much less evident as both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were interpreted broadly to provide liberty for all "without reference to color or condition: ad infinitum."⁵⁹ There was no hint of divine endorsement of slavery through a biblical curse; rather, the prophet lamented a situation in which "two or three millions of people are held as slaves for life, because the spirit in them is covered with a darker skin than ours." The only scripture invoked was in support of the idea that a "noble" nation should work to "ameliorate the condition of all: black or white, bond or free; for the best of books says, 'God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth.'" Moreover, the "Views" were promulgated much more actively than the earlier pro-slavery essays. Mormon missionaries were pressed into service to carry the prophet's campaign and program throughout the country, and for a short while the Mormon church could accurately be described as outspokenly against slavery.

In favoring "equal rights" for Negroes, Joseph Smith did not wish to remove all legal restrictions on that race. Nor should the impression be conveyed that he was completely free of nineteenth-century prejudices. The aversion to miscegenation apparent in the articles in 1836 was later incorporated into the laws of Nauvoo;⁶⁰ and in the same breath that the prophet advocated "national equalization" for Negroes, he expressed a desire for them to be confined "by strict law to their own species." Not unexpectedly, a wide range of racial attitudes was manifest within the church during this time. These ranged from the relatively progressive Willard Richards remark about a respected ex-slave, "A black skin may cover as white a heart as any other skin, and the black hand may be as neat and clean as the white one, and all the trouble arises from want of familiarity with the two,"⁶¹ to the anonymous Mormon simile published in the *Elders' Journal* (Joseph Smith, editor) regarding an especially ungrateful and "mean" man: "One thing we have learned, that there are negroes who [wear] white skins, as well as those who wear black ones."⁶² More subtle, but nonetheless revealing, was a remark on the

59. His change of opinion was especially marked on this point. In 1836, in addition to arguing that the North had no right to impose its will on the South, he had further characterized the interest of the free states as being based on "the mere principles of equal rights." By 1844 he had obviously reconsidered the importance of equal rights; regarding states' rights, he advised John C. Calhoun that "God. . . will raise your mind above the narrow notion that the General Government has no power, to the sublime idea that Congress, with the President as Executor, is as almighty in its sphere as Jehovah is in His" (see T&S 5:395, 1 Jan. 1844).

60. In January 1844, Mayor Joseph Smith fined two Negroes "for attempting to marry white women" (DHC 6:210).

61. Letter of 15 Feb. 1838, as quoted in Carter, *The Negro Pioneer*, 3-4.

62. *Elders' Journal* 1 (Aug. 1838): 59.

extensive actions taken by European nations to end the slave trade: "But what would those nations think, if they were told the fact that in America—Republican America, the boasted cradle of liberty and land of freedom—that those dealers in human flesh and blood, negro dealers and drivers, are allowed with impunity to steal white men."⁶³ There are very few statements on race directly attributable to Joseph Smith. While negative value judgments are occasionally suggested by his remarks, the most extensive comment reveals that he did not share the majority opinion of his day on the innate racial inferiority of Negroes.⁶⁴ The little that is recorded about his direct dealings with blacks is also more reflective of compassion than prejudice.⁶⁵

In fourteen years Joseph Smith led the church from seeming neutrality on the slavery issue through a period of anti-abolitionist, pro-slavery sentiment to a final position strongly opposed to slavery. In the process he demonstrated that he shared the common belief that Negroes were descendants of Ham, but ultimately his views reflected a rejection of the notion that this connection justified Negro slavery. There is no contemporary evidence that the prophet limited priesthood eligibility because of race or biblical lineage; on the contrary, the only definite information presently available reveals that he allowed a black to be ordained an elder, and later a seventy, in the Melchizedek priesthood. The possibility has been raised, through later testimony, that within the slave society of the South, blacks were not given the priesthood.

63. From a *Nauvoo Neighbor* editorial included in Joseph Smith's *History* (DHC 6:113). A similar parallel was drawn on other occasions (e.g., T&S 4:375-6).

64. "[T]hey came into the world slaves, mentally and physically. Change their situation with the whites, and they would be like them. . . . Go into Cincinnati or any city, and find an educated negro, who rides in his carriage, and you will see a man who has risen by the powers of his own mind to his exalted state of respectability. The slaves in Washington are more refined than the Presidents, and the black boys will take the shine off many of those they brush and wait on" (MS 20:278; DHC 5:217, presents a slightly different version). Joseph Smith's passing reference to "nigger drivers" or "niggers" (T&S 4:375-6; 5:395) are less readily evaluated. This epithet is said to have been less derogatory in the early nineteenth century, but even then it was without any connotation of racial respect.

65. Of the four Negro Mormons who claimed to have lived in the prophet's home (Elijah Abel, Jane James, Isaac James, and Green Flake), I have seen the reminiscences only of Jane James. She had arrived destitute in Nauvoo and was taken into the Smith home along with her eight-member family. She eventually became the housekeeper and lived in the Smith home until the prophet's death. Her account depicts Joseph Smith as benevolent and fatherly towards her, and conveys her great respect for the prophet (from "Joseph Smith, The Prophet" in *Young Woman's Journal* 16 [1905]:551-2; reprinted as "Aunt' Jane James" in *Dialogue* 5 [Summer 1970]: 128-30). On another occasion he is said to have given a Negro a horse to use to purchase the freedom of a relative (*Young Woman's Journal* 17 [December 1906]: 538). In still another case, Willard Richards, with Joseph Smith's knowledge, hid a Negro who had been beaten for an alleged robbery; subsequently, the prophet spoke out "fearlessly" against the way the case was handled (DHC 6:281, 284).

After the prophet's death, most of his philosophy and teachings were effectively canonized. There was one significant subject on which this does not appear to have been the case—the status of the Negro. A measure of the influence of Joseph Smith's personal presence in shaping early Mormon attitudes on this subject can be obtained by contrasting the church position prior to his death with the developments which followed.

II

[A]ny man having one drop of the seed of [Cain]. . . in him cannot hold the priesthood and if no other Prophet ever spake it before I will say it now in the name of Jesus Christ I know it is true and others know it.—Brigham Young, 1852

The uncertainty which followed the martyrdom of Joseph Smith was not fully resolved for many months, and most of the efforts of the church during this time were directed at self-preservation. Among the early changes to emerge, one of the most dramatic involved Mormon attitudes towards blacks and slavery. Joseph Smith's anti-slavery sentiment persisted for a short time, although this was partially due to delayed publications in the *Times and Seasons*. Several talks and letters advocating the prophet's presidency and program for the abolition of slavery were published during the summer months.⁶⁶ The talks actually delivered during that summer were more concerned with the dwindling freedom within the Mormons' own community. Brigham Young did recommend that the Saints remain aloof from the upcoming election until "a man is found, who, if elected, will carry out the enlarged principles, universal freedom, and equal rights and protection" advocated by Joseph Smith.⁶⁷

By the following spring, however, a shift had again become evident in the church position on slavery. A "Short Chapter" appeared in the *Times and Seasons* which reverted almost literally to the arguments of 1836:

History and common observation show [Noah's curse to] have been fulfilled to the letter. The descendants of Ham, besides a black skin which has ever been a curse that has followed an apostate of the holy priesthood, as well as a black heart, have been servants to both Shem and Japheth, and the aboli-

66. See the April 1844 conference talk of John Taylor, and a letter from "HOSPES" dated 8 June 1844, both published 15 July 1844 (T&S 5:577-79, 590); and the conference minutes of 27 May 1844, published 1 August 1844 (T&S 5:506).

67. "An Epistle of the Twelve to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, in Nauvoo and all the world," 15 Aug. 1844 (T&S 5:618-20). Another article in the same issue added, "as a people we will honor the opinions and wisdom of our martyred General; and, as a matter of propriety, we cannot vote for, or support a candidate for the presidency, till we find a man who will pledge himself to carry out Gen. Smith's view. . . as he published them" (T&S 5:617-8).

tionists are trying to make void the curse of God, but it will require more power than man possesses to counteract the decrees of eternal wisdom.⁶⁸

Why did this opinion re-emerge? The short interval since Joseph Smith's death and the acknowledged basis for the article ("history and common observation") suggest that the change may not have been one of opinion so much as one of personalities. One other development may also have been a factor. Several Protestant denominations had been divided by the slavery question; in particular, the division of the Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches was covered at great length in the Mormon press. Although the articles were reprints from non-Mormon sources, comments were frequently appended, as the following example illustrates:

The Inference we draw from such church jars among the sectarian world, is, that the glory which professing clergymen think to obtain for themselves by division on slavery, temperance, or any other matter of no consequence to pure religion, is "nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit."

Christ and his apostles taught men repentance, and baptism for remission of sins; faithfulness and integrity to masters and servants; bond and free, black and white. . . .

Like the fable of the dog and the meat, the christian community are preparing to lose what little religion they may have possessed, by jumping after the dark shade of abolitionism.—So passes falling greatness.⁶⁹

The Mormon exodus to the Salt Lake Valley did not free the Saints from the slavery controversy, for much of the national debate was focused on the West. Southern congressmen were pressing for an extension of slavery into the new territories, while Northerners wanted the institution confined to the South. In this difficult situation, the Saints organized the State of Deseret and applied for national recognition. The Mormon lobbyists were aware of their delicate position and attempted to maintain complete neutrality on the slavery question. The Constitution of Deseret was intentionally without reference to slavery, and Brigham Young made it clear that he desired "to leave that subject to the operations of time, circumstances and common law. You might safely say that as a people we are averse to slavery, but we wish not to meddle with this subject, but leave things to take their natural course."⁷⁰ Congressional compro-

68. "A Short Chapter on a Long Subject," T&S 6:857 (1 Apr. 1845).

69. "Trouble Among the Baptists," T&S 6:858 (1 Apr. 1845). Other articles were carried 1 October 1844 (T&S 5:667-8), 15 April 1845 (T&S 6:877-8), 1 May 1845 (T&S 6:889-90), and 1 June 1845 (T&S 6:916-7, 924). The theme remained evident in Mormon discourses for several decades (e.g., JD 9:5; 10:124; 14:169; 23:85, 296-7).

70. Letter from Brigham Young to Orson Hyde, *Journal History*, 19 July 1849; see also letter of Willard Richards to Thomas Kane, *Journal History*, 25 July 1849; and the *Journal*

mise eventually created the Territory of Utah in 1850, with no restriction on slavery. This was possible, according to lobbyist John Bernhisel, because northerners believed slavery was excluded from Utah "by the physical geography of the country and the laws of God."⁷¹ However, Bernhisel wrote, "If they had believed that there were even half a dozen slaves in Utah, or that slavery would ever be tolerated in it, they would not have granted us a Territorial organization."⁷²

Shortly thereafter, the Mormons belatedly defined their position on slavery. While no law authorized or prohibited slavery in Utah, there were slaves in the territory, and all appeared to be "perfectly contented and satisfied." They were fully at liberty to leave their masters if they chose. Slave owning converts were being instructed to bring their slaves west if the slaves were willing to come, but were otherwise advised to "sell them, or let them go free, as your conscience may direct you."⁷³ In fact, the first group of Mormons to enter the Salt Lake valley were accompanied by three Negro "servants." By 1850, nearly 100 blacks had arrived, approximately two-thirds of whom were slaves. Bernhisel had performed his task well.⁷⁴

The official acceptance of slavery in the Mormon community extended fully to slave owners as well. Bishops, high councilmen, and even an apostle were ordained from their small number. However, by chance or design, a number of the slaveholders were sent to San Bernardino in 1851 to establish a Mormon colony, and in the process their slaves became free.⁷⁵

History entry of 26 Nov. 1849, reporting an interview of Wilford Woodruff and John Bernhisel with Thomas Kane.

71. Letter from John Bernhisel to Brigham Young, *Journal History*, 7 Sept. 1850.

72. Letter from John Bernhisel to Brigham Young, *Journal History*, 9 Nov. 1850.

73. *Frontier Guardian*, 11 Dec. 1850; also reprinted in the *Millennial Star* 13:63 (15 Feb. 1851). J. W. Gunnison, who lived in Utah at this time, recorded that "involuntary labor by negroes is recognized by custom; those holding slaves, keep them as part of their family, as they would wives, without any law on the subject" (*The Mormons, or, Latter-Day Saints, in the Valley of The Great Salt Lake*. . . [Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1853], 143).

74. The figures are my own estimate, based largely on accounts included in Carter, *The Negro Pioneer*, 9, 13, 15-33, 38-9, 44; and Bellar, *Negro Slaves in Utah*, 125. The official census figures for Utah in 1850 report 50 Negroes, of which 24 were slaves. See *Negro Population 1790-1915* (Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C., 1918), 57.

75. Apostle Charles C. Rich was one of at least eight slaveholders to be sent on the mission to San Bernardino. Most of the "ex-slaves" continued to be "servants" for their masters, and several appear to have returned electively to Utah when the mission was recalled. At least one of the slaveowners, Robert M. Smith (of the San Bernardino bishopric), attempted to take his slaves to Texas, but was prevented from doing so by the sheriff of Los Angeles County. See W. Sherman Savage, "The Negro in the Westward Movement," *Journal of Negro History* 25 [1940]:537-8. Also, Bellar, *Negro Slaves in Utah*, 124-6; Andrew Jenson, "History of San Bernardino 1851-1938" (unpub. manuscript, Church

The "laissez-faire" approach to slavery in Utah was short-lived and came to an end early in 1852. As the Mormons quickly learned, Mexicans had carried out slaving expeditions into the region for decades, buying Indians from local tribes who staged raids for "captives of war." Periodically, children were offered for sale to the Mormons. The enslavement of Indians, a "chosen people" in Mormon theology, posed a much more serious problem than had Negro slavery. Governor Brigham Young took action to stop the raiding parties and in January 1852 requested legislation on the slavery question.⁷⁶

In his request, Brigham Young made a definite distinction between Indian and Negro. After condemning the Indian slave trade, he observed, "Human flesh to be dealt in as property, is not consistent or compatible with the true principles of government. My own feelings are, that no property can or should be recognized as existing in slaves, wither Indian or African." However, in view of the "present low and degraded situation of the Indian race" and their current practices of "gambling, selling, and otherwise disposing of their children," the governor would condone a "new feature in the traffic of human beings"—"essentially purchasing them into freedom, instead of slavery." This was not simply buying the children and setting them free, but also caring for them and elevating them to "an equal footing with the more favored portions of the human race." There were, of course, certain economic considerations, and "if in return for favors and expenses which may have been incurred on their account, service should be considered due, it would become necessary that some law should provide the suitable regulations under which all such indebtedness should be defrayed."

Historical Department), 10; and Joseph F. Wood, "The Mormon Settlement in San Bernardino 1851-1857" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1967), 150-52.

Apostle John Taylor and N. H. Felt were later cited as informing a "Chicago Paper" that "[s]ome slaves had been liberated. . .since they were taken to Utah; others remain slaves. But the most of those who take slaves there pass over with them in a little while to San Bernardino [sic]. . .How many slaves are now held there they could not say, but the number relatively was by no means small. A single person had taken between forty and fifty, and many had gone in with small numbers" (MS 17:62-63 [27 Jan. 1855]).

76. "Governor's Message, to the Legislative Assembly of Utah Territory, January 5, 1852," copy in the Church Historical Department. This was the organizational meeting of the legislature.

The Mormons turned down the first two children offered for sale in the winter of 1847-48; when the Indians threatened to kill them if they weren't purchased, one was bought, and the other was killed. Two others brought shortly thereafter were also purchased (H. H. Bancroft, *History of Utah* [1889, reprinted Salt Lake City, Bookcraft, 1964], 278). See also Orson Whitney, *History of Utah* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon & Sons Co., 1892), 1:508-11; Daniel W. Jones, *Forty Years Among the Indians* (1890, Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office [1960 reprint]), 48-51; several articles in the *Utah Historical Quarterly* 2 (July 1929): 67- 90; and Brigham Young's comments (e.g., JD 1:104, 170-1; 6:327-9).

Negro slavery was different:

It has long since ceased to become a query with me, who were the most amenable to the laws of righteousness; those who through the instrumentality of human power brought into servitude human beings, who naturally were their own equals, or those who, acting upon the principle of nature's law, brought into this position or situation, those who were naturally designed for that purpose, and whose capacities are more befitting that, than any other station in society. Thus, while servitude may and should exist, and that too upon those who are naturally designed to occupy the position of 'servant of servants' yet we should not fall into the other extreme, and make them as beasts of the field, regarding not the humanity which attaches to the colored race; nor yet elevate them, as some seem disposed, to an equality with those whom Nature and Nature's God has indicated to be their masters, their superiors.⁷⁷

The suitable regulations were shortly forthcoming, and within a few weeks Young signed into law acts legalizing both Negro and Indian slavery.⁷⁸ Although Negro slaves could no longer choose to leave their masters, some elements of consent were included. Slaves brought into the territory had to come "of their own free will and choice" and they could not be sold or taken from the territory against their will.⁷⁹ While a fixed period of servitude was not prescribed for Negroes, the law provided "that no contract shall bind the heirs of the servant. . . for a longer period than will satisfy the debt due his [master]." Several unique provisions were included which terminated the owner's contract in the event that the master had sexual intercourse with a servant "of the African race," neglected to feed, clothe, shelter, or otherwise abused the servant, or attempted to take him from the territory against his will. Some schooling was also required for slaves between the ages of six and twenty.

By contrast, the more liberal act on Indian servitude required persons with Indian servants to demonstrate that they were "properly qual-

77. Ibid.

78. "An Act in relation to Service," approved 4 February 1852; "A Preamble and An Act for the further relief of Indian slaves and prisoners," approved 7 March 1852.

79. "[T]he consent of the servant given to the probate judge in the absence of his master." The only exception was "in case of a fugitive from labor" (ibid.).

A number of slaves had escaped from their Mormon masters enroute to Utah, and Hosea Stout records an episode in which a slave attempted to run away while in Utah. In the latter case, his master was tried and acquitted on kidnapping charges after he recaptured the "fugitive" (Juanita Brooks, ed., *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844-1861*, [Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1965] 2:597). Stout adds, "There was a great excitement on on [sic] this occasion. The question naturally involving more or less the slavery question and I was surprised to see those latent feeling [sic] aroused in our midst which are making so much disturbance in the states."

ified to raise or retain said Indian," and limited the indenture to a maximum of twenty years. Masters were also required to clothe their "apprentices. . .in a comfortable and becoming manner, according to his, said master's, condition in life." Yearly schooling was mandatory between the ages of seven and sixteen, and the total education requirement was significantly greater than for Negroes.

No other territory legalized both Indian and Negro servitude. New Mexico eventually legalized slavery in 1859, but census figures the following year listed slaves only in Utah among the western territories. Actually, the Negro population throughout the West was negligible, and several territorial legislatures even banned Negro immigration. A recent study has argued convincingly that anti-slavery sentiment in frontier territories was in part reflective of racial prejudice, and was designed to exclude Negroes from the region.⁸⁰ Brigham Young interpreted Utah's anomalous pro-slavery legislation as accomplishing this same end. In a message commending the legislature late in 1852, he observed, "[T]he law of the last session so far proves a salutary measure, as it has nearly freed the territory, of the colored population; also enabling the people to control all who see proper to remain, and cast their lot among us."⁸¹

Other more obvious factors contributed to the legalization of Negro slavery in Utah. Without the influx of southern converts with their slaves, no legislation would have been required. Perhaps the most fundamental factor was the declaration by Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders that the Lord had willed that Negroes be servants to their "superiors." During his tenure as head of the church, Young showed none of the variability on this subject manifest under Joseph Smith. He fully accepted the traditional genealogy of the Africans through Canaan and Ham to Cain, and repeatedly taught that this connection gave divine sanction to the servile condition of the Negroes. Nonetheless, he did not claim new information on the subject. As early as "our first settlement in Missouri. . .we knew that the children of Ham were to be 'servant of servants,' and no power under heaven could hinder it, so long as the Lord should permit them to welter under the curse, and those were known to be our religious views concerning them."⁸²

While Brigham Young clearly rejected Joseph Smith's manifest belief that the curse on Ham did not justify Negro slavery, possibly an even greater difference of opinion is reflected in the importance Young ascribed to the alleged connection with Cain: "The seed of Ham, which is

80. Eugene H. Berwanger, *The Frontier Against Slavery: Western Anti-Negro Prejudice and the Slavery Extension Controversy* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1967).

81. "Message to the Legislature of Utah from Governor Brigham Young," MS 15:422 (13 December 1852).

82. JD 2:172 (18 Feb. 1855).

the seed of Cain descending through Ham, will, according to the curse put upon him, serve his brethren, and be a 'servant of servants' to his fellow creatures, until God removes the curse; and no power can hinder it;"⁸³ or,

[T]he Lord put a mark upon [Cain], which is the flat nose and the black skin. Trace mankind down to after the flood, and then another curse is pronounced upon the same race—that they should be the "servant of servants;" and they will, until that curse is removed; and the Abolitionists cannot help it, nor in the least alter that decree.⁸⁴

Brigham Young derived a second, far-reaching implication from the genealogy of the Negro. Asked what "chance of redemption there was for the Africans," Young answered that "the curse remained upon them because Cain cut off the lives of Abel. . . . [T]he Lord had cursed Cain's seed with blackness and prohibited them the Priesthood." The Journal History account of this conversation, dated February 13, 1849, is the earliest record of a church decision to deny the priesthood to Negroes.⁸⁵ At the time practical implications of the decision were limited. Though reliable information is very scanty, there appear to have been very few Negro

83. JD 2:184 (18 Feb. 1855); a separate discourse from n. 82.

84. JD 7:290-1 (9 Oct. 1859). Brigham Young cited the curse on Ham or Canaan on many occasions in addition to those cited in the text. For example, see his 1852 address to the legislature (n. 76): "The seed of Canaan will inevitably carry the curse which was placed upon them, until the same authority which placed it there, shall see proper to remove it"; his comments in early 1855 reported in the 4 May 1855, *New York Herald*, p. 8: "You must not think, from what I say, that I am opposed to slavery. No! the negro is damned, and is to serve his master till God chooses to remove the curse of Ham"; and an interview with Horace Greeley, 13 July 1859: "We consider [slavery] of divine institution, and not to be abolished until the curse pronounced on Ham shall have been removed from his descendants" (in Horace Greeley, *An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859* [New York: H. H. Bancroft and Co., 1860], 211-12); also see MS 21:608-11.

85. The possibility exists that a policy of priesthood restriction had been set forth shortly prior to this time. William Appleby made the following journal entry while traveling in New York, 19 May 1847: "In this Branch there is a coloured Brother, An Elder ordained by Elder Wm. Smith while he was a member of the Church, contrary, though[,] to the order of the Church on the Law of the Priesthood, as Descendants of Ham are not entitled to that privilege" (Journal of William I. Appleby, Church Historical Department). However, the question of priesthood entitlement does not appear to have been fully clear to Appleby, for he then wrote to Brigham Young asking "if this is the order of God or tolerated, to ordain negroes to the Priesthood and allow amalgamation. If it is, I desire to know it as I have yet got to learn it" (Journal History, 2 June 1847).

Although the priesthood restriction appears to have been open knowledge in the early 1850s, the first published record of which I am aware was not until April 1852 ("To the Saints," *Deseret News*, 3 Apr. 1852). Gunnison, who had resided in Utah in 1851, also referred to the policy in recounting his experiences the following year (*The Mormons, or Latter-day Saints*, 143).

Mormons in 1849. Only seven of the twenty thus far identified were men, and three of these were slaves; two of the four freemen had already been given the priesthood.⁸⁶

While Brigham Young reaffirmed his stand on priesthood denial to the Negro on many occasions, by far the most striking of the known statements of his position was included in an address to the territorial legislature on January 6, 1852, recorded in Wilford Woodruff's journal of that date. In this gubernatorial address, Young appears both to confirm himself as the instigator of the priesthood policy and to bear testimony to its inspired origin:

[A]ny man having one drop of the seed of [Cain]. . . in him cannot hold the priesthood and if no other Prophet ever spake it before I will say it now in the name of Jesus Christ I know it is true and others know it.

This clearly is one of the most important statements in the entire history of this subject.

Placed in a fuller context, these remarks are part of one of several discussions of slavery and Negro capability by Governor Young in conjunction with the enactment of Utah's slavery codes in February and March 1852. Other significant points in the address include Young's statement, "The Negro cannot hold one part of Government" (this immediately followed the above quotation); he would "not consent for the seed of [Cain] to vote for me or my Brethren"; "the Canaanite cannot have wisdom to do things as white man has"; miscegenation required blood atonement (offsprings included) for salvation; and the curse would some day be removed from the "seed of Cain."

While it will be seen that the church eventually abandoned a number of Young's contentions, and although one hesitates to attribute theologi-

86. Estimates based largely on Carter, *The Negro Pioneer*. The members included Elijah Abel, his wife and four children; Jane James and six children; Francis and Martha Grice; Walker Lewis; a slave, "Faithful John"; and three "servants," Green, Allen, and Liz Flake.

The two priesthood holders were Elijah Abel (who had been recertified a seventy at least as late as 1847), and "a colored brother by the name of Lewis" who was ordained by Apostle William Smith (Journal History, 2 June 1847; the date of the ordination is not given). Two other free Negroes had left the church by this time. Black Pete, the first known Negro convert, was among those who claimed to receive revelations in Kirtland prior to leaving the church. There was also a "big, burley, half Indian, half Negro, formerly a Mormon who has proclaimed himself Jesus Christ" and who had a following of about sixty "fanatics" in Cincinnati (*The Gazette* [St. Joseph, Mo.], 11 Dec. 1846). This may be the William McCahey, or McGarry, who visited the Mormon pioneer camps in the Spring of 1847, and "induced some to follow him" (see Brooks, *On the Mormon Frontier*, 2:244, and footnote 37). Black Pete was referred to in Mormon discussions on several occasions in later years (e.g., T&S 3:747; JD 11:3-4); see also Stanley S. Ivins's Notebooks 7:134-5 (Utah State Historical Society) for an additional excerpt on Pete.

cal significance to a legislative address, were this account to be unequivocally authenticated, it would present a substantial challenge to the faithful Mormon who does not accept an inspired origin for church priesthood policy. That such statements exist and have not appeared in previous discussions of this problem, either within the church or without, is an unfortunate commentary on the superficiality with which this subject traditionally has been approached.

While it is now popular among Mormons to argue that the basis for the priesthood denial to Negroes is unknown, no uncertainty was evident in the discourses of Brigham Young. From the initial remark in 1849 throughout his presidency, every known discussion of this subject by Young (or any other leading Mormon) invoked the connection with Cain as the justification for denying the priesthood to blacks. "Any man having one drop of the seed of Cain in him cannot receive the priesthood" (1852);⁸⁷ "[w]hen all the other children of Adam have had the privilege of receiving the Priesthood. . . it will be time enough to remove the curse from Cain and his posterity" (1854);⁸⁸ "[u]ntil the last ones of the residue of Adam's children are brought up to that favourable position, the children of Cain cannot receive the first ordinances of the Priesthood" (1859);⁸⁹ "[w]hen all the rest of the children have received their blessings in the Holy Priesthood, then that curse will be removed from the seed of Cain" (1866).⁹⁰

A more specific rationale is suggested by the foregoing extracts. Cain, in murdering Abel, had "deprived his brother of the privilege of pursuing his journey through life, and of extending his kingdom by multiplying upon the earth." Cain had reportedly hoped thereby to gain an advantage over Abel, the number of one's posterity somehow being important in the overall scheme of things. Brigham Young further explained that those who were to have been Abel's descendants had already been assigned to his lineage, and if they were ever to come "into the world in the regular way, they would have to come through him." In order that Cain's posterity not gain an advantage, the Lord denied them the priesthood until such time as "the class of spirits presided over by

87. Matthias Cowley, *Wilford Woodruff* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News Press, 1909), 351.

88. JD 2:142-3, 3 Dec. 1854.

89. JD 7:290-1, 9 Oct. 1859.

90. JD 11:272, 19 Aug. 1866. The belief that Ham's descendants through Canaan were to be servants would also seem to exclude them from the priesthood. This point was not emphasized under Brigham Young; the following observation was made several years later: "Now the priesthood is divine authority to preside, and to say of a race that they shall be servants forever is equivalent to saying that they shall not hold authority, especially divine authority. Hence the curse of Noah necessarily means that the race upon which it rests cannot hold the priesthood" (*Liahona, The Elders' Journal* 5 [1908]:1164-7).

Abel should have the privilege of coming into the world." Those spirits formerly under Cain's leadership were reportedly aware of the implications of this decision, yet "still looked up to him, and rather than forsake him they were willing to bear his burdens and share the penalty imposed upon him."⁹¹

Unfortunately, Brigham Young gave no indication as to when Abel's "strain" would receive their entitlement; certainly, it was not foreseen in the near future:

When all the other children of Adam have the privilege of receiving the Priesthood, and of coming into the kingdom of God, and of being redeemed from the four quarters of the earth, and have received their resurrection from the dead, then it will be time enough to remove the curse from Cain and his posterity.⁹²

While none in the church saw fit to question the connection of the Negroes to Cain or Ham, it did occur to several that if men were not responsible for Adam's transgressions, the restriction on the Negro could not consistently be attributed solely to his genealogy. As early as 1844, Orson Hyde had explained the status of the "accursed lineage of Canaan" in terms of the pre-existence:

At the time the devil was cast out of heaven, there were some spirits that did not know who had authority, whether God or the devil. They consequently did not take a very active part on either side, but rather thought the devil had been abused, and considered he had rather the best claim to government. These spirits were not considered worthy of an honorable body on this earth. . . . Now, it would seem cruel to force pure celestial spirits into the world through the lineage of Canaan that had been cursed. This would be ill appropriate, putting the precious and vile together. But those spirits in

91. The initial quotation is from 3 December 1854 (JD 2:142-3); a comparable statement accompanies virtually every discussion of the curse on Cain during this time. The elaboration which follows in the text is from an explanation attributed to Young by Lorenzo Snow in a Council Meeting, 11 March 1900. The minutes of this meeting are among both the Bennion papers and the George Albert Smith papers (the latter in the University of Utah library; hereafter GAS).

Another explanation has also been attributed to Brigham Young, although indirectly, "to the effect that [Negroes] did not possess sufficient innate spiritual strength and capacity to endure the responsibility that always goes with the priesthood, and to successfully resist the powers of darkness that always oppose men who hold it; and that, were they to be clothed with it, evil agencies would harrass [sic] and torment them, frighten them with spiritual manifestations from a wrong source, and so destroy their rest and peace that the priesthood instead of being a blessing to them would be the reverse" (*Liahona, The Elders' Journal* 5 [1908]:1164-7).

92. JD 2:142-3 (3 Dec. 1854). The prospects seemed equally remote in 1859 (JD 7:290-1), and 1866 (JD 11:272).

heaven that lent an influence to the devil, thinking he had a little the best right to govern, but did not take a very active part any way, were required to come into the world and take bodies in the accursed lineage of Canaan; and hence the Negro or African race.⁹³

Several years later Orson Pratt also attempted to explain why "if all the spirits were equally faithful in their first estate," they "are placed in such dissimilar circumstances in their second estate," and concluded, "Among the two-thirds who remained [after the Devil was cast out], it is highly probable, that, there were many who were not valient [sic] in the war, but whose sins were of such a nature that they could be forgiven."⁹⁴ Hyde and Pratt were primarily concerned with an explanation of the debased status of the Negro race in these early speculations, and not specifically with the priesthood.

The pre-existence "hypothesis" gained wide acceptance among the Mormons, and was even included in non-Mormon accounts of church teachings.⁹⁵ Brigham Young, however, did not feel it necessary to appeal beyond the curse on Cain to the pre-existence. When asked "if the spirits of negroes were neutral in Heaven," he answered, "No, they were not, there were no neutral [spirits] in Heaven at the time of the rebellion, all took sides. . . . All spirits are pure that came from the presence of God. The posterity of Cain are black because he committed murder. He killed Abel and God set a mark upon his posterity. But the spirits are pure that enter their tabernacles."⁹⁶

A second fundamental assumption supported Mormon beliefs. This was their unqualified acceptance of the innate inferiority of the Negro, the undeniable evidence of the curse on that race. In significant contrast to Joseph Smith's optimistic evaluation of Negro potential, the church under Brigham Young characterized the blacks as "uncouth, uncomely, disagreeable in their habits, wild, and seemingly deprived of nearly all the blessings of the intelligence that is bestowed upon mankind";⁹⁷ as

93. From a speech to the High Priests' Quorum in Nauvoo, September 1844 (see Joseph Smith Hyde, *Orson Hyde 1805-1878* [Salt Lake City: Joseph S. Hyde, 1933], 56).

94. *The Seer* 1 (Apr. 1853): 54-56.

95. John S. Lindsay, writing in the *Mormon Tribune*, 23 Apr. 1870, on "The Origin of Races," attributed to "orthodox Mormonism" the teaching that "the black race are such as, at the time of the great warfare in heaven when Lucifer and his hosts were cast out played an ignoble part, not evincing loyalty on the one hand, nor yet possessing sufficient courage to join with Satan and his band of rebels. To use a homely phrase, now current here, they were 'astraddle the fence.'"

T.B.H. Stenhouse reported essentially the same belief in 1873, attributing it to "the modern prophet" (*The Rocky Mountain Saints* [New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1873], 491-2).

96. *Journal History*, 25 Dec. 1869, citing "Wilford Woodruff's Journal."

97. JD 7:290-1 (9 Oct. 1859). A similar sentiment was implied in the 1852 address to the Utah legislature (see text and n. 77), and was repeated on a number of other occasions:

potentially "blood-thirsty," "pitiless" and a "stranger to mercy when fully aroused," and "now seemingly tame and almost imbecile."⁹⁸ In the fullest treatment of race to appear in a church publication in the nineteenth century, the Negro was characterized as

[T]he lowest in intelligence and the most barbarous of all the children of men. The race whose intellect is the least developed, whose advancement has been the slowest who appear to be the least capable of improvement of all people. The hand of the Lord appears to be heavy upon them, dwarfing them by the side of their fellow men in every thing good and great.⁹⁹

Moreover, they were black, and for Mormons "blackness" was no mere literary figure. Two church scriptures had recounted blackness befalling people in divine disfavor, and this was understood to extend beyond the metaphorical to a real physical change.¹⁰⁰ Nor was this

"[N]orthern fanaticism [should learn]. . . that there is but little merit in. . . substituting their own kindred spirit and flesh to perform the offices allotted by superior wisdom to the descendants of Cain." Whites, he went on, "should tread the theater of life and action, in a higher sphere" (in *Millennial Star* 15:442); or, "In the providences of God their ability is such that they cannot rise above the position of a servant, and they are willing to serve me and have me dictate their labor" (JD 10:190). These quotations are all from Brigham Young.

Not unexpectedly, Utah joined most of the nation in excluding free Negroes from the right to vote or hold office; blacks were also excluded from the Utah militia.

98. *Millennial Star* editorial, 28 Oct. 1865 (MS 27:682-3), Brigham Young Jr., ed.

99. "From Caucasian to Negro," *Juvenile Instructor* 3 (1868):142. The author continues: "The Negro is described as having a black skin, black, woolly hair, projecting jaws, thick lips, a flat nose and receding skull. He is generally well made and robust; but with very large hands and feet. In fact, he looks as though he had been put in an oven and burnt to a cinder before he was properly finished making. His hair baked crisp, his nose melted to his face, and the color of his eyes runs into the whites. Some men look as if they had only been burned brown, but he appears to have gone a stage further, and been cooked until he was quite black."

The excerpt is from a series of seven articles, "Man and his Varieties," by "G. R.," which presented an interesting combination of Mormon concepts and nineteenth-century science. Though the author rejects the chain of being, he is willing to rank the races of men—with the Caucasian at the top, and the Negro at the bottom. Racial differences are attributed to "climate, variety of food. . . modes of life. . . combined with the results of the varied religions existing among men," and ("the greatest of all") "the blessing or curse of God." These factors had led to such diversification since the days of Adam that a permanent race could no longer arise "from people so wide apart as the Anglo-Saxon and Negro . . . [a]nd further. . . it is proof of the mercy of God that no such race appears able to continue for many generations" (G.R., "Man and his Varieties: Mixed Races—The Effects of Climate," *Juvenile Instructor* 3 [1868]:165).

100. Reference has already been made to the Book of Mormon, and Book of Moses accounts (nn. 24, 25, 28). Two contemporary interpretations: ". . . a black skin. . . has ever been a curse that has followed an apostate of the holy priesthood, as well as a black heart" (T&S 6:857); "we must come to the conclusion that it is not climate alone that has made the Negro what he is [referring to skin color], but must ascribe it to the reason already given: that it is

phenomenon just an historical curiosity, for apostates from the Latter-day church were seen to darken noticeably, while more dramatic changes could still be viewed in the African and Indian races.¹⁰¹ What clearer sign that they were cursed?

Notwithstanding the repeated denunciations of racism by the modern church, the evidence for "racist" attitudes among nineteenth-century Mormon leaders is indisputable. Despite the implications of these attitudes for modern Mormonism, their significance in the nineteenth century was negligible. "Mormon" descriptions of Negro abilities and potential can as readily be obtained from the publications of their learned contemporaries. Such a book, not atypical of this era, could be found in Brigham Young's library: *Negro-Mania: Being an Examination of the Falsely Assumed Equality of the Various Races of Men*.¹⁰² While blatantly racist by any modern standard, this work cited men of acknowledged intellect from a variety of fields—Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Baron Cuvier, Champollion, Samuel G. Morton, Rosellini, George Gliddon, Samuel Stanhope Smith, Thomas Jefferson, to name but a few. Brigham Young could find ample support for his racial views in this collection alone, and it was by no means exhaustive. Many others could have been included. The American scientific community, while divided on the question of slavery, was virtually unanimous in ascribing racial inferiority to the Negroes. So also did Louis Agassiz, Count de Gobineau, statesmen of the North as well as the South, abolitionists (excepting Garrison and a few others), slaveholders, ministers, and university presidents. In short, the "laws of nature" were interpreted in essentially the same way by most nineteenth-century Americans, Mormons included.¹⁰³ Possibly, Brigham Young never read his copy

the result of the race suffering the displeasure of Heaven" (G. R., "Man and his Varieties," 166). Brigham Young was equally specific, "Why are so many of the inhabitants of the earth cursed with a [skin] of blackness? It comes in consequence of their fathers rejecting the power of the Holy Priesthood, and the law of God" (JD 11:272).

101. As late as 1891, "Editorial Thoughts" in the *Juvenile Instructor* (26:635-6) could observe, "It has been noticed in our day that men who have lost the spirit of the Lord, and from whom His blessings have been withdrawn, have turned dark to such an extent as to excite the comments of all who have known them." More recently, Hugh Nibley has concluded that the "blackness" of the Book of Mormon groups was symbolic, although again he has not referred to the Negro doctrine (*Since Cumorah* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1967], 246-51).

102. John Campbell, *Negro-Mania: Being an Examination of the Falsely Assumed Equality of the Various Races of Men* (Philadelphia: Campbell & Power, 1851). The copy from President Young's office is now in the DeGolyer Foundation Library, Southern Methodist University.

103. In addition to the references cited in nn. 22 and 23, see also, William Stanton, *The Leopard's Spots: Scientific Attitudes Toward Race in America, 1815-59* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); and George W. Stocking, Jr., *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York: The Free Press, 1968).

of *Negro-Mania*; even today the book reveals little evidence of usage. It is nonetheless important to realize that those few enlightened individuals who anticipated the mid-twentieth-century understanding of race were not generally termed "enlightened" for their racial insight a century ago.

This is not meant to minimize the prejudices of the period, nor of the leaders of the church during that time. The regrettably uniform racial attitudes of white America from colonial to modern times have been no source of pride to anyone who has studied the subject. Nor can one mistake the implicit racial judgments conveyed in many church statements. Consider, for example, the implications of the following simile from Brigham Young: "Here are the Elders of Israel who have got the Priesthood, who have to preach the Gospel. . . . They will stoop to dance like nigers. I don't mean this as debasing the nigers by any means."¹⁰⁴

During the 1850s, the Mormons were finally able to observe the national slavery controversy with some detachment, no longer as part or pawn of the struggle. Yet even as the prophesied war became more and more probable, there were remarkably few expressions of concern for the welfare of the Union. Jedediah M. Grant said, "They are threatening war in Kansas on the slavery question, and the General Government has already been called upon to send troops there. Well, all I have to say on that matter is, 'Success to both parties.'"¹⁰⁵ The long harassed Mormons had come to view the anticipated conflict not only as the fulfilment of prophecy, but also as divine retribution upon the heads of those who had persecuted the people of the Lord.¹⁰⁶

One thing was certain, no act of man was going to free the slaves. Late in 1859 Brigham Young again reiterated that those who have been cursed to be "servant of servants" would continue to be, "until that curse is removed; and the Abolitionists cannot help it, nor in the least alter the decree."¹⁰⁷ Two years of war and Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation failed to change his opinion:

104. Spelling as in original. See *Journal History*, 29 May 1847. The account originated with William Clayton, official recorder for the 1847 crossing, and is also to be found in Howard Egan's diary (*Pioneering the West, 1846 to 1878* [Richmond, Utah: Howard R. Egan Estate, 1917], 57), as well as in various editions of the Clayton journal.

105. 2 March 1856 (JD 3:235).

106. For expressions of this sentiment from Young, Kimball, Woodruff, Hyde, and others, see JD 8:322-4; 9:54-5; 10:15, 46; 12:119-120; and MS 23:60, 100, 401; 25:540, 805. As to the specific culprits, Young observed in 1864: "The Abolitionists—the same people who interfered with our institutions, and drove us out into the wilderness—interfered with the Southern institutions, till they broke up the Union. But it's all coming out right,—a great deal better than we could have arranged it for ourselves. The men who flee from Abolitionist oppression come out here to our ark of refuge, and people the asylum of God's chosen" (see Fitz-Hugh Ludlow, "Among the Mormons," *Atlantic Monthly* 13 [Apr. 1864]: 489).

107. JD 7:290-1 (9 Oct. 1859).

. . . Will the present struggle free the slave? No, but they are now wasting away the black race by thousands. . . .

Treat the slaves kindly and let them live, for Ham must be the servant of servants until the curse is removed. Can you destroy the decrees of the Almighty? You cannot. Yet our Christian brethren think they are going to overthrow the sentence of the Almighty upon the seed of Ham. They cannot do that, though they may kill them by thousands and tens of thousands.¹⁰⁸

President Young's confidence may have stemmed from more than his interpretation of the curse on Ham. Mormon discourses during the Civil War convey the impression that the Saints did not anticipate the United States surviving the war. Rather, the conflict was to spread until it had "poured out upon all nations." Moreover, the expectation was high that the Saints would shortly return to Jackson County and begin work on the New Jerusalem. In such a context, the entire slavery debate was somewhat academic.¹⁰⁹

Although war's end found the Mormons still in Utah and the slaves apparently freed, the belief persisted for some time that the peace was to be short-lived and that the Saints "would most certainly return and build a temple [in Jackson County] before all the generation who were living in 1832, have passed away."¹¹⁰ Brigham Young, in a slight shift of emphasis, acknowledged in 1866 that slavery may have been abolished:

One of the twin relics—slavery—they say, is abolished. I do not, however wish to speak about this, but if slavery and oppression and iron-handed cruelty are not more felt by the blacks to-day than before, I am glad of it. My heart is pained for that unfortunate race of men ¹¹¹

108. JD 10:250 (6 Oct. 1863). For a Mormon view of the Proclamation, see MS 25:97-101.

109. I am unaware of any published study of Mormon expectations in the Civil War; my understanding derives in part from the following references from Brigham Young, Kimball, Taylor, Hyde, Pratt, and others: JD 5:219; 8:322-4; 9:5, 7, 142-3; 11:26, 38, 106, 154; and MS 23:52, 300, 396; 24:158, 456; 25:540; 26:836; 27:204-5; as well as *Deseret News* of 10 July 1861, and 26 March 1862. Boyd L. Eddins deals with this question to some extent ("The Mormons and the Civil War," master's thesis, Utah State University, 1966). Fitz-Hugh Ludlow reported after a visit to Utah in early 1864: "I discovered, that, without a single exception, all the saints were inoculated with a prodigious craze, to the effect that the United States was to become a blighted chaos, and its inhabitants Mormon proselytes and citizens of Utah within the next two years—the more sanguine said, next summer" ("Among the Mormons," 489).

110. Orson Pratt, MS 28:518. Pratt held the same opinion five years later, in 1871 (JD 14:275).

111. JD 11:269 (19 Aug. 1866). The preceding year Heber Kimball reviewed the situation, and came to a similar conclusion: "'Thou shalt not interfere with thy neighbor's wife, nor his daughter, his house nor his man servant, nor his maid servant.' Christ said this; but our enemies don't believe it. That was the trouble between the North and the South. The

However, while the war had unexpectedly ended legalized slavery, President Young left no doubt of its impact on the Negro priesthood policy. In the same speech, he affirmed once again, "They will go down to death. And when all the rest of the children have received their blessings in the Holy Priesthood, then that curse will be removed from the seed of Cain, and they will come up and possess the priesthood."

As it became apparent that the war was indeed over, and Congress acted to extend constitutional rights to all, irrespective of race, the subject of Canaan's curse of servitude disappeared from Mormon discourses. Racial restrictions were eliminated from the constitution of Utah,¹¹² and for the last decade of Brigham Young's presidency the Negro was less frequently discussed in Mormon discourses. Although in retrospect the church leadership had misread the implications of the biblical curse, no explanation was put forth for the error. There were more pressing problems at hand, for as one of the "twin relics of barbarism" was eliminated, national attention was turned to the other.

Through three decades of discourses, Brigham Young never attributed the policy of priesthood denial to Joseph Smith, nor did he cite the prophet's translation of the Book of Abraham in support of this doctrine. Neither, of course, had he invoked Joseph Smith on the slavery issue. Nor had any other church leader cited the prophet in defense of slavery or priesthood denial. It is perhaps not surprising then that shortly after the departure of President Young's authoritative voice, questions arose as to what Joseph Smith had taught concerning the Negro.

III

With reference to the [Negro] question President [Joseph F.] Smith remarked he did not know that we could do anything more in such cases than refer to the rulings of

Abolitionists of the North stole the niggers and caused it all. The nigger was well off and happy. How do you know this, Brother Heber? Why, God bless your soul, I used to live in the South, and I know! Now they have set the nigger free; and a beautiful thing they have done for him, haven't they?" (from a talk 24 September 1865, reported in the *New York Daily Tribune*, 10 Nov. 1865, 8).

In fact, while Brigham Young had believed that Negroes were justifiably condemned to servitude, he had also spoken out repeatedly against the abuses of slavery, and encouraged slaveowners to treat the blacks "like servants, and not like brutes" (see JD 1:69, 2:184, 10:111, 190, 250). Even so, President Young's view of states' rights led him to conclude, "If we treated our slaves in an oppressive manner," it would still be "none of [the] business" of the President or Congress, and "they ought not to meddle with it" (JD 4:39-40).

112. Brigham Young wrote Thomas Kane in 1869 that the constitution of the State of Deseret had been amended, 4 February 1867, to eliminate the words "free, white, male" from voting requirements by a vote of "14,000 for, & 30 against" (letter of 26 Oct. 1869, in Brigham Young papers, Church Historical Department).

Presidents Young, Taylor, Woodruff and other Presidencies on this question. — Council Minutes, 1908

When John Taylor assumed the leadership of the church, there was no real question as to the basic Mormon policy toward Negroes. Brigham Young had made it quite clear that blacks, as descendants of Cain, were not entitled to the priesthood. It shortly became apparent, however, that all the related questions had not been resolved. In fact, decisions made during the next four decades were nearly as critical for modern church Negro policy as those made by Brigham Young.

By virtue of his role as first prophet of the Restoration, Joseph Smith has always been especially revered, and it is a rare church doctrine that has not been traced, however tenuously, to the prophet to demonstrate his endorsement. It was therefore no mere curiosity when just two years after Brigham Young's death, a story was circulated that Joseph Smith had taught that Negroes could receive the priesthood. As these instructions were allegedly given to Zebedee Coltrin, John Taylor went for a firsthand account.

When presented with the story, Coltrin replied that on the contrary Joseph Smith had told him in 1834 that "the Spirit of the Lord saith the Negro had no right nor cannot hold the Priesthood." While Coltrin acknowledged washing and anointing a Negro, Elijah Abel, in a ceremony in the Kirtland temple after receiving these instructions, he stated that in so doing he "never had such unpleasant feelings in my life—and I said I never would again Anoint another person who had Negro blood in him. [sic] unless I was commanded by the Prophet to do so." Coltrin did not mention ordaining Abel a seventy (at the direction of Joseph Smith?), but he did state that he was a president of the seventies when the prophet directed that Abel be dropped because of his "lineage." Abraham Smoot, at whose home the 1879 interview took place, added that he had received similar instructions in 1838.¹¹³

President Taylor reported the account to the quorum the following week, and Joseph F. Smith disagreed. Abel had not been dropped from the seventies, for Smith had seen his certification as a seventy issued in 1841 and again in Salt Lake City. Furthermore, Abel had denied that Coltrin "washed and anointed" him, but rather stated that Coltrin was the man who originally ordained him a seventy. Moreover, "Brother Abel also states that the Prophet Joseph told him he was entitled to the priesthood." Abel's patriarchal blessing was read, verifying among other

113. Journal of John Nuttal, 1 (1876-84): 290-93, from a typewritten copy at the Brigham Young University Library. The interview took place 31 May 1879. A corrected copy of the account is included in the minutes of the Council Meeting of 4 June 1879 in the Ben-ion papers.

things that he was an elder in 1836.¹¹⁴ The question under discussion was not whether the Negro should be given the priesthood, but rather what had been the policy under Joseph Smith. Significantly, John Taylor, an apostle under the prophet for over five years, added no corroboration to the claims of Coltrin or Smoot. Rather, he observed that mistakes had been made in the early days of the church which had been allowed to stand, and concluded that "probably it was so in Brother Abel's case; that he, having been ordained before the word of the Lord was fully understood, it was allowed to remain."¹¹⁵

Abel's case was further complicated by a corollary to the Negro policy. Brigham Young had not viewed the curse on Cain's lineage as limited solely to social and biological factors, and ineligibility to the priesthood; he further believed that blacks should not participate in Mormonism's most important ordinances, the temple ceremonies. To devout Negro Mormons, this restriction was even more serious than the policy of priesthood denial, for in Mormon theology these ordinances were necessary for ultimate exaltation in the life hereafter.¹¹⁶ This was not an unexpected restriction for the men, as only Mormon men holding the Melchizedek priesthood were eligible for the ordinances. However, Brigham Young had to appeal directly to the curse on Cain to extend the

114. Minutes of the Council of the Twelve, 4 June 1879, in the Bennion papers. An extensive excerpt from these minutes has been included in n. 29. This subject had been discussed the previous week, 28 May 1879, though the minutes of that meeting are not among the Bennion or the George Albert Smith (GAS) papers.

115. Ibid.

116. While not theoretically synonymous, temple marriages or sealings were generally equated with Mormon plural marriages, and thus the former received considerable attention in the years prior to the Manifesto. Angus M. Cannon, one-time Salt Lake temple president, in denouncing the candidacy of a man who "has not the courage" to live up to gospel principles, observed: "I had rather see a colored man, who is my friend here, sent to Washington, because he is not capable of receiving the priesthood, and can never reach the highest celestial glory of the kingdom of God. This colored man could go and stand upon the floor of Congress as the peer of every man there, and would be able to say conscientiously that he had not accepted the doctrine of plurality, because he could not" (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 5 Oct. 1884).

Several years later the church received national publicity when a patriarch speaking at a funeral remarked that as Elijah Abel was the only Negro to have received the Melchizedek priesthood, he was the only one of "his race who ever succeeded in gaining entrance within the pearly gates." The report, from the hostile *Tribune* (1 Nov. 1903), was probably inaccurate in some parts. Nonetheless, when the story was picked up by Eastern papers, the church felt it necessary to issue denials on two occasions through the *Deseret News*. In both cases, however, the editors avoided comment on the subtlety of Mormon theology, which allowed the belief that a Negro could go to heaven as part of his "salvation," but could not attain the highest degree of glory therein ("exaltation") because of the priesthood restriction (see *Deseret News*, "Salvation for the Negro," 28 Nov. 1903; and "Negroes and Heaven," 17 Dec. 1903, both included in the Journal History for those dates).

restriction to black women, for women normally needed only be in "good standing" to gain access to the temple.¹¹⁷ Elijah Abel, the anomalous black who had been ordained to the priesthood, was also excluded by President Young because of the curse.¹¹⁸

Abel was convinced of his right to the priesthood and felt that he should be eligible for the temple ordinances. Consequently, on the death of Brigham Young, he appealed his case to John Taylor. Not only had the prophet knowingly allowed him to hold the priesthood, Abel argued, but his patriarchal blessing also promised him that he would be "the welding link between the black and white races, and that he should hold the initiative authority by which his race should be redeemed."¹¹⁹ His patriarchal blessing had come close to this sentiment: "Thou shalt be made equal to thy brethren, and thy soul be white in eternity and thy robes glittering) thou shalt save thy thousands, do much good, and receive all the power that thou needest to accomplish thy mission."¹²⁰ Nonetheless, John Taylor upheld Brigham Young's ruling. Undaunted, Abel repeatedly renewed his application, until Taylor referred the case to the Quorum of the Twelve, who sustained the president's decision.¹²¹ In 1883 John Taylor finally called the seventy-three-year-old Abel on a mission (from the Third Quorum, to which he had been ordained some forty-six years prior). After a year on his mission, Abel became ill and returned to Utah, where he died on December 25, 1884.¹²² With Abel's death, the church lost the only tangible evidence of priesthood-Negro policy under Joseph Smith.

Even after his death, Abel continued to be a recurring problem for the church leadership, particularly when they reconsidered Joseph Smith's alleged teachings on the subject. Ten years later Wilford Woodruff was faced with repeated applications for temple ordinances from another black Mormon, Jane James. He eventually took the matter to the quorum and asked "the brethren if they had any ideas favorable to her race." Once again Joseph F. Smith pointed out that Elijah Abel had

117. In practice, Negro women would have been excluded from sealings regardless, as the husband would not have held the priesthood. However, many single women have received their endowments. Later the blacks were described as ineligible for the "blessings of the Priesthood," an expression encompassing the priesthood and temple restrictions, but somehow without reference to the other ordinances requiring the priesthood for which the Negroes were eligible.

118. See Council Meeting minutes, 6 Aug. 1908, Bennion papers (or GAS papers).

119. Ibid.

120. See Council Meeting minutes, 4 June 1879, Bennion papers.

121. Recounted in Council Minutes, 2 Jan. 1902, Bennion papers (or GAS papers).

122. Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 3:577. While on his mission, Abel reportedly "was not authorized to confer . . . the holy priesthood" (First Presidency letter to David McKay, 16 Mar. 1904).

been ordained a seventy "under the direction of the Prophet Smith."¹²³ However, on this occasion a new voice was heard. George Q. Cannon countered with the pronouncement that Joseph Smith had "taught" this doctrine:

That the seed of Cain could not receive the priesthood nor act in any offices of the priesthood until the seed of Abel should come forward and take precedence over Cain's offspring; and that any white man who mingled his seed with that of Cain should be killed, and thus prevent any of the seed of Cain coming in possession of the priesthood.¹²⁴

This is startling information. Even Wilford Woodruff, apostle under the prophet for five years, had said nothing about Joseph Smith's views. Actually, it was not firsthand information, for when Cannon repeated these sentiments in 1900 it had become, "he understood that the Prophet had said. . . ."¹²⁵ Nor did the latter version include the reference to miscegenation; in the interim, Cannon had attributed this idea to John Taylor ("he understood Prest. Taylor to say that if the law of the Lord were administered upon him he would be killed and his offspring").¹²⁶ A more likely origin for these "quotations" was Brigham Young, who expressed

123. Council Minutes, 22 Aug. 1895, Bennion (and GAS) papers. On this occasion, Joseph F. Smith stated that Abel "had been ordained a Seventy and afterwards a High Priest." I have found no evidence for the latter claim.

A previous appeal to Wilford Woodruff by "Aunt Jane" was reported in Matthias Cowley, 587. An appeal to John Taylor is recorded in the "Gardo House Office Journal" for 20 March 1883, included in the Bennion papers. Jane James's appeal to Wilford Woodruff in 1895 was denied, but she was later offered a remarkable alternative to her desires. George Q. Cannon, first counselor to Woodruff, suggested that while she was not eligible for the traditional ceremonies, a special temple ceremony might be prepared—to adopt her into the family of Joseph Smith "as a servant" (she having been the prophet's housekeeper). With the approval of President Woodruff, this was done, and Jane James thereby became the first black knowingly allowed into a Mormon temple since Elijah Abel had been anointed in Kirtland, Ohio, nearly fifty years before.

This special dispensation was not so major a concession as it may appear, as true "exaltation" was still impossible without the traditional ordinances. This fact was not lost on Sister James, and although she was apparently satisfied for a time, she shortly renewed her plea to participate in the regular temple ceremonies. See Council Minutes for 2 Jan. 1902, and 26 Aug. 1908, in Bennion (or GAS) papers.

124. Council Minutes, 22 Aug. 1895, Bennion (or GAS) papers.

125. Council Minutes, 11 Mar. 1900, Bennion (or GAS) papers. Cannon had joined the church in 1840, but was not ordained an apostle until sixteen years after the prophet's death, in 1860.

126. Council Minutes, dated 16 Dec. 1897 in Bennion papers (dated 15 Dec. 1897 in the GAS papers). During Taylor's presidency, Utah passed an anti-miscegenation law prohibiting marriages between a "negro" or "mongolian" and a "white person" (passed 8 March 1888).

similar sentiments on many occasions without reference to Joseph Smith.¹²⁷

Another problem was considered that year. Two Negroes were discovered who had been given the priesthood, and local leaders wanted to know what should be done. Once again George Q. Cannon spoke up: "President Young held to the doctrine that no man tainted with negro blood was eligible to the priesthood; that President Taylor held to the same doctrine, claiming to have been taught it by the Prophet Joseph Smith." President Snow expressed the thought that the subject needed further consideration, to which Cannon replied "that as he regarded it the subject was really beyond the pale of discussion, unless he, President Snow, had light to throw upon it beyond what had already been imparted."¹²⁸

Perhaps more than any other during this time, George Q. Cannon's confident pronouncements influenced church decisions on the Negro. At his instigation, a "white" woman *formerly* married to a Negro was denied the sealing rites to her second husband, because it would be "unfair" to admit the mother but not her daughters by the previous marriage and because "Press. Cannon thought, too, that to let down the bars in the least on this question would only tend to complications."¹²⁹ Similarly, Cannon on another occasion was instrumental in a decision which denied the priesthood to a white man who had married a Negro.¹³⁰

Notwithstanding George Q. Cannon's assertions, the council was never presented with a direct quotation from Joseph Smith, nor is there any record of Presidents Taylor or Wilford Woodruff (both apostles under Joseph Smith) citing the prophet as author of the priesthood policy. There are, however, records of several meetings where the prophet was discussed in relation to the priesthood-Negro matter, and in which the doctrine was not attributed to Joseph Smith. Lorenzo Snow, who asked Brigham Young about the "Africans" in 1849, and who received at some point a lengthy explanation of the subject from Young, also avoided attributing the doctrine to Joseph Smith.¹³¹

127. "Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God is death on the spot" (Brigham Young, 8 March 1863 [JD 10:110]; see also Young's address to the legislature, 16 January 1852, in the journal of Wilford Woodruff for a more graphic discussion). Most of Young's discussions of the curse on Cain emphasized it would not be lifted until all the "other children of Adam" had received their entitlement.

128. Council Minutes, 18 Aug. 1900, Bennion (or GAS) papers. Cannon was then first counselor to Snow.

129. Council Minutes, 22 Aug. 1895, Bennion (or GAS) papers. By 1908, this policy had been reversed, and a temple sealing was approved in a comparable case.

130. Council Minutes, 16 Dec. 1897, Bennion papers. See also n. 123.

131. Journal History, 13 Feb. 1849, for the original inquiry. Council Minutes of 11

Joseph F. Smith, on becoming president of the church in 1901, faced problems similar to those of his predecessors. In discussing eligibility for the priesthood in 1902, Smith reviewed the rulings of Brigham Young and John Taylor and once again remarked that Elijah Abel had been "ordained a seventy and received his patriarchal blessing in the days of the Prophet Joseph."¹³² In 1908 the council heard President Smith recount the story for at least the fourth time, but this time the story was different. Although Abel had been ordained a seventy, "this ordination was declared null and void by the Prophet himself."¹³³ With this statement, the "problem" of Elijah Abel was finally put to rest. Why Joseph F. Smith should come forth with this information after testifying to the contrary for nearly thirty years remains a mystery. Perhaps he was influenced by others who by then had invoked Joseph Smith on behalf of the priesthood policy for nearly twenty years,¹³⁴ and who were now citing the Book of Abraham as a major justification for the policy. Perhaps his memory lapsed, for he erred in other parts of the account as well: He contradicted his earlier (correct) report that Abel was ordained by Zebedee Coltrin, and he further said that Presidents "Young, Taylor, and Woodruff" had all denied Abel the temple ordinances, even though Woodruff did not become president until five years after Abel's death. Beyond the historical inconsistencies, President Smith also described a situation he defined that same year as a doctrinal impossibility. In

March 1900 reveal the question in Snow's mind as to the author of the policy. There are two versions of these minutes which should be compared. The Bennion and GAS papers have virtually identical accounts, but George F. Gibbs, secretary to the First Presidency, reported a slightly different version in a private letter to John M. Whitaker, 18 Jan. 1909 (Whitaker papers, University of Utah Library). The latter account suggests that Snow believed the explanation of the policy could have been based on the "personal views" of Brigham Young.

132. Council Minutes, 2 Jan. 1902, Bennion (or GAS) papers.

133. Council Minutes, 26 Aug. 1908, Bennion (or GAS) papers. A more extensive excerpt: "In this connection President Smith referred to Elijah Abel, who was ordained a Seventy by Joseph Young, in the days of the Prophet Joseph, to whom Brother Young issued a Seventies certificate; but this ordination was declared null and void by the Prophet himself. Later Brother Abel appealed to President Young for the privilege of receiving his endowments and to have his wife and children sealed to him, a privilege President Young could not grant. Brother Abel renewed his application to President Taylor with the same result; and still the same appeal was made to President Woodruff afterwards who of course upheld the position taken by Presidents Young and Taylor." Compare this with Smith's earliest account, quoted in n. 29.

134. In addition to George Q. Cannon, Apostle Franklin D. Richards had also attributed church policy ultimately to Joseph Smith (Journal History, 5 Oct. 1896). Richards, who joined the church in 1838, was ordained an apostle in 1849; there is no indication from his remarks that he was claiming first-hand information. Joseph Smith's *History* was also published about this time, and it contained the lone direct quote by the prophet relating the Negro to Cain (without reference to the priesthood) (DHC 4:501).

answering "whether a man's ordination to the priesthood can be made null and void, and he still be permitted to retain his membership in the Church," President Smith wrote that "once having received the priesthood it cannot be taken. . . except by transgression so serious that they must forfeit their standing in the Church."¹³⁵

With Abel out of the way, the prophet Joseph Smith increasingly became the precedent maker for priesthood denial. In 1912 George Q. Cannon's secondhand account of the prophet's views was cited in a First Presidency letter on church policy,¹³⁶ and slightly over a decade later Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith could write, simply but definitively, "It is true that the negro race is barred from holding the Priesthood, and this has always been the case. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught this doctrine, and it was made known to him."¹³⁷

A second emerging theme can be traced almost in parallel with the beliefs concerning Joseph Smith. Writing in the *Contributor* in 1885, B. H. Roberts had speculated on the background of the priesthood restriction on blacks, and drew heavily on the recently canonized Pearl of Great Price:

Others there were, who may not have rebelled against God [in the war in heaven] and yet were so indifferent in their support of the righteous cause of our Redeemer, that they forfeited certain privileges and powers granted to those who were more valiant for God and correct principle. We have, I think, a demonstration of this in the seed of Ham. The first Pharaoh-patriarch-king of Egypt—was a grandson of Ham: . . . "[Noah] cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood. . . ."

Now, why is it that the seed of Ham was cursed as pertaining to the Priesthood? Why is it that his seed "could not have right to the Priesthood?"

135. *Improvement Era* 11 (1908):465-66, as quoted in *Gospel Doctrine* 1:234-5, the Melchizedek priesthood quorum manual, 1970-71. President Smith allowed for an alternative which appears more applicable to the situation he described in the council meeting: "To prevent a person, for cause, from exercising the rights and privileges of acting in the offices of the priesthood may be and has been done, and the person so silenced still remains a member of the Church, but this does not take away from him any priesthood that he held." (G. R., "Man and his Varieties," 145-146)

136. First Presidency letter from Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose to Milton H. Knudson, 13 Jan. 1912, Bennion papers. The presidency wrote: "[T]he Prophet Joseph Smith is said to have explained it in this way. . . ."; Cannon was not referenced, and the statement on miscegenation was deleted.

A question remains as to the specific timing of these developments. Although Joseph F. Smith is not known to have "explained" the situation with Elijah Abel prior to 1908, he had accepted Joseph Smith as the original author of the priesthood policy at least as early as 1904. That year the First Presidency wrote, without reference, "the Prophet Joseph taught the doctrine in his day that the seed of Cain would not receive the priesthood" (letter to David McKay, 16 Mar. 1904, copy in my possession).

137. "The Negro and the Priesthood," *Improvement Era* 27 (Apr. 1924) :564-5.

Ham's wife was named "Egyptus, which in the Chaldaic signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden. . . and thus from Ham sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land." . . . Was the wife of Ham, as her name signifies, of a race which those who held the Priesthood were forbidden to intermarry? Was she a descendant of Cain, who was cursed for murdering his brother? And was it by Ham marrying her, and she being saved from the flood in the ark, that "the race which preserved the curse in the land" was perpetuated? If so, then I believe that race is the one through which it is ordained those spirits that were not valiant in the great rebellion in heaven should come; who through their indifference or lack of integrity to righteousness, rendered themselves unworthy of the Priesthood and its powers, and hence it is withheld from them to this day.¹³⁸

Several years later George Q. Cannon repeated the essentials of this explanation (excluding the references to the pre-existence) in the *Juvenile Instructor*,¹³⁹ and by 1900 Cannon was citing the Pearl of Great Price in First Presidency discussions.¹⁴⁰ This explanation appeared again in the *Millennial Star* in 1903¹⁴¹ and in *Liahona, the Elders' Journal* in 1908.¹⁴² Additional allusions were also evident in First Presidency and council discussions,¹⁴³ and by 1912 this relatively new argument had become a foundation of church policy. Responding to the inquiry, "Is it a fact that a Negro cannot receive the priesthood, and if so, what is the reason?" the First Presidency wrote, "You are referred to the Pearl of Great Price, Book of Abraham, Chapter 1, verses 26 and 27, going to show that the seed of Ham was cursed as pertaining to the priesthood; and that by reason of this curse they have no right to it."¹⁴⁴

138. B. H. Roberts, "To the Youth of Israel," *The Contributor* 6 (1885):296-7; Roberts's italics. Erastus Snow, in 1880, discussed the priesthood restriction on the descendants of Cain, and the passage of this curse through the Flood in a manner suggestive of the Pearl of Great Price account, but he did not present nearly so developed a case as Roberts. His explanation was attributed to revelation ("as revelation teaches"), which presumably referred to the Book of Abraham, as no other "revelation" has ever been cited on the subject (JD 21:370).

139. *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (15 Oct. 1891): 635-6.

140. Council Minutes for 11 Mar. 1900 and 18 Aug. 1900, both in Bennion (or GAS) papers. In the latter meeting, "President Cannon read from the Pearl of Great Price showing that negroes were debarred from the priesthood."

141. "Are Negroes Children of Adam?" 65 (3 Dec. 1903): 776-8.

142. "The Negro and the Priesthood," 5 (18 Apr. 1908): 1164-7.

143. E.g., Council Minutes, 26 Aug. 1908; letter from Joseph F. Smith and Anthon H. Lund to Rudger Clawson, 18 Nov. 1910, both in Bennion papers.

144. Letter of 13 Jan. 1912, from Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, and Charles W. Penrose, to Milton H. Knudson, in the Bennion papers. A similar sentiment was included in another letter, dated 1 May 1912, to Ben E. Rich (Bennion papers): "[T]he Pearl of Great Price gives particulars on this point that are very pertinent to the subject (See Book of Abraham 1:21,27). These texts show that while men of the negro race may be blessed of the Lord both temporally and spiritually. . . yet they are not eligible to the Priesthood."

When fully developed, the Pearl of Great Price argument went as follows: Cain became black after murdering his brother, Abel; among his descendants were a people of Canaan who warred on their neighbors and were also identified as black.¹⁴⁵ Ham, Noah's son, married Egyptus, a descendant of this Cain-Canaan lineage; Cain's descendants had been denied the priesthood, and thus Ham's descendants were also denied the priesthood; this was confirmed in the case of Pharaoh, a descendant of Ham and Egyptus, and of the Canaanites, and who was denied the priesthood; the modern Negro was of this Cain-Ham lineage and therefore was not eligible for the priesthood.¹⁴⁶

Actually, a careful reading of the Pearl of Great Price reveals that the books of Moses and Abraham fall far short of so explicit an account. Negroes, for instance, are never mentioned. Although Cain's descendants are identified as black at one point before the Flood, they are never again identified. The people of Canaan are not originally black and are thus unlikely candidates for Cain's "seed." There is no explicit statement that Ham's wife was "Egyptus"; rather, the account reads that there was a woman "who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus." In patriarchal accounts, this would not necessarily imply a literal daughter, as individuals are not infrequently referred to as sons or daughters of their grandparents, or even more remote ancestors. Within Abraham's

Orson Whitney also included the Pearl of Great Price explanation in his *Saturday Night Thoughts* on doctrine in 1921, and several years later Joseph Fielding Smith began his extensive discussions of the subject.

145. These first two statements were based on the Book of Moses, revealed to Joseph Smith in December 1830, and published in August 1832. The remainder of the argument derives from the Book of Abraham which was first published in 1842. The two books were combined into the Pearl of Great Price in 1851.

146. The specific verses most widely cited:

- "Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him" (Moses 5:32, Gen. 4:8).
- "And I the Lord set a mark upon Cain" (Moses 5:40, or Gen. 4:15).
- "the seed of Cain were black" (Moses 7:22).
- "the people of Canaan. . . shall go forth in battle array" (Moses 7:7).
- "a blackness came upon all the children of Canaan" (Moses 7:8).
- "Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus" (Abr. 1:23).
- "Pharaoh, the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham" (Abr. 1:25).
- "the king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham, and was a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth" (Abr. 1:25).
- "and thus the blood of the Canaanites was preserved in the land" (Abr. 1:22).
- "and. . . from Ham, sprang the race which preserved the curse in the land" (Abr. 1:24).
- "[Pharaoh was] cursed. . . as pertaining to the Priesthood" (Abr. 1:26).

The "complete" version of the Pearl of Great Price argument can be found in published sources after 1903 (e.g., MS 65:776-8); and can be pieced together from earlier discussions after 1884.

own account, an "Egyptus" is later referred to as the "daughter of Ham," and the Pharaoh who has been identified as "Egyptus' eldest son" is elsewhere seemingly the son of Noah. Moreover, the Book of Moses records that Ham was a man of God prior to the Flood, and that the daughters of the sons of Noah were "fair." The effort to relate Pharaoh to the antediluvian people of Canaan is especially strained, for in characterizing Pharaoh as a descendant of Egyptus and the "Canaanites" there is no suggestion that this latter group was any other than the people of Canaan descended from Ham's son, Canaan (who also had been cursed).¹⁴⁷

How then was the Pearl of Great Price put to such ready use in defense of the policy of priesthood denial to Negroes? Very simply, the basic belief that a lineage could be traced from Cain through the wife of Ham to the modern Negro had long been accepted by the church, independently of the Pearl of Great Price. It was a very easy matter to read

147. The term "Canaan" (or "Canaanite") appears six times in the Book of Abraham. The first two are well-known: "Now this king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham, and was a partaker of the blood of the *Canaanites* by birth. From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of the *Canaanites* was preserved in the land" (Abr. 1:21-22). In the third instance, Abraham records, "Therefore I left the land of Ur, of the Chaldees, to go into the land of *Canaan*" (Abr. 2:4). The remaining three references also speak of this land, "I . . . came forth in the way to the land of *Canaan*"; "as we journeyed. . . to come to the land of *Canaan*"; "and we had already come into the borders of the land of the *Canaanites*. . . the land of this idolatrous nation" (Abr. 2:15-16, 18; emphases added to all references). The last four of these references relate ultimately to the son of Ham, Canaan, and the people traditionally descended from him. Except for its convenient use in the priesthood argument, there is no apparent reason for relating the first two uses of "Canaanite" to a different group by the same name who lived before the Flood, and who were not otherwise mentioned by Abraham.

Another particularly weak point in the Pearl of Great Price argument is the importance which must be attributed to the spellings of "Cainan" and "Canaan." Not only is it essential that there be separate antediluvian and post-Flood "Canaans," but more importantly, a clear distinction must be maintained between the "good" people and land of "Cainan" whence came the prophet Enoch, and the "bad" people of "Canaan" incorporated into the cursed lineage. The spellings in the current Pearl of Great Price are consistent, and permit a distinction to be made. However, previously published versions and the original manuscripts on which these were based demonstrate that there is a significant question about the correctness of the present spellings. Variations were evident throughout the nineteenth century (which explains the frequent "incorrect" spellings found in the Council Minutes during that time), and the earliest manuscripts suggest that Enoch may well have come from the land of "Canaan." While it is not practical to include a full discussion of this problem at present, it should be clear that the history of these works seriously undermines any argument based on a particular spelling being correct. See Richard P. Howard, "Variants in the Spelling of Canaan (Cainan) in the Original Manuscripts of the 'Inspired Version' of the Bible, as found in Genesis, Chapters 6 and 7" (manuscript, Historians Office, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints), or my own unpublished "Compilation on the Negro in Mormonism," Appendix I, Harold B. Lee Library, Special Collections, Brigham Young University.

this belief into that scripture, for if one *assumes* that there was a unique continuous lineage extending from Cain and Ham to the present, and that this is the lineage of the contemporary Negro, then it must have been accomplished essentially as B. H. Roberts proposed.

A better question is, why wasn't the Pearl of Great Price invoked earlier on this matter?¹⁴⁸ Most probably, there was no need. The notion that the Negroes were descended from Cain and Ham was initially common enough knowledge that no "proof" or corroboration of this connection had been necessary. This belief remained in evidence throughout the nineteenth century, and as late as 1908 a Mormon author could write:

That the negroes are descended from Ham is generally admitted, not only by latterday Saint writers but by historians and students of the scriptures. That they are also descended from Cain is also a widely accepted theory, though the sacred history does not record how this lineage bridged the flood.¹⁴⁹

In reality, these ideas were not nearly so widespread at this time as they had been a half century before. Fewer and fewer scientists were subscribing to a literal Flood, and the evidence they presented was convincing an increasing number of laymen that there had not been a general destruction as recently as Genesis suggested. Evolutionary theories even challenged Adam's position as progenitor of the human family. This dwindling "external support" probably accounts in part for the increased attention to the Pearl of Great Price evident during this time, for the traditional beliefs regarding both Cain and the Flood were essential to the church's Negro doctrine.

The shift of the rationale ("doctrinal basis") for the Negro policy on to firmer or at least more tangible ground developed not only at a time when traditional beliefs concerning Cain and Ham were fading from the contemporary scene, but also as fundamental assumptions concerning the Negro's social and intellectual status were being challenged. Even within the church, this change can easily be identified. As early as 1879, Apostle Franklin D. Richards departed significantly from antebellum Mormon philosophy in a discussion of slavery and the Civil War: "without any argument as to whether slavery should be justified or con-

148. The correlation surely was apparent much earlier. Orson Pratt seems to have had reference to the Book of Abraham in 1853 when he wrote, "African negroes or [those] in the lineage of Canaan whose descendants were cursed, pertaining to the priesthood" (*The Seer* 1:56). Similarly, the *Juvenile Instructor* series on "Man and His Varieties" in 1868 included in the section on "The Negro Race" the comment, "We are told in the Book of Abraham. . . that Egypt was first discovered by a woman, who was a daughter of Ham, the son of Noah. This was probably the first portion of Africa inhabited after the flood." See also n. 138.

149. "The Negro and the Priesthood," *Liahona*, *The Elders' Journal* 5:1164-7.

demned. . . . [The Negro's] ancestor said they should be servant of servants among their brethren, making their servitude the fulfilment of prophecy, whether according to the will of God or not."¹⁵⁰ Twenty years later the church's *Deseret News* was not only questioning the old notions of racial inferiority, but had become somewhat of a champion of Negro political rights.¹⁵¹ An ironic extreme was achieved in 1914 when a Mormon writer for the *Millennial Star* concluded, "Even the mildest form of slavery can never be tolerated by the one true church. . . . [T]he slavery of Catholic Rome must be looked upon as one great proof of apostasy."¹⁵² There were reservations, and even in the midst of its "liberal" period, the *Deseret News* still felt the need for "some wise restrictions in society, that each race may occupy the position for which it was designed and is adapted."¹⁵³ Similarly, a seventy's course in theology could quote extensively from "perhaps the most convincing book in justification of the South in denying to the negro race social equality with the white

150. JD 20:310-13 (6 Oct. 1679). Three years later Erastus Snow carried this sentiment one step farther: "[T]he extreme excesses perpetrated under [the system of slavery in the Southern States], in many particulars, were very great wrongs to mankind, and very grievous in the sight of heaven and of right-thinking people. And changes were determined in the mind of Jehovah, and have been affected" (JD 23:294, 8 Oct. 1882).

Although Joseph Smith's "Views" in opposition to slavery had been dropped rather quickly after his death, they were resurrected during the Civil War at a time when the Union was considered "hopelessly and irremediably broken" with the suggestion that the rejection of the prophet's plan was in part responsible for the current state of affairs (MS 25:97-101, 14 Feb. 1863). After the death of Brigham Young, the "Views" were cited more frequently. Erastus Snow, for instance, referred to the proposals on slavery on two occasions in 1882, as "the voice of the Lord through the Prophet Joseph Smith" (JD 23:91), and as "the true policy and counsel of heaven to our nation" (JD 23:296-7).

151. "[D]isenfranchisement of a class, on the ground that it is not entitled to human rights because of the color of the skin, cannot be justified by any arguments from the Scriptures" (see "The Colored Races," *Deseret Evening News*, 14 Mar. 1908, in *Journal History* of this date; also, the earlier editorials, e.g., "Status of the Negro," 17 May 1900; "Political Rights of Negroes," 8 May 1903; "The Negro Problem," 9 Sept. 1903).

152. Frank H. Eastmond, "Slavery and Apostasy," MS 76:269-71 (23 Apr. 1914).

153. "The Negro Problem," editorial of 12 May 1903. The editor quoted at length the "pertinent remarks" from a Southerner who said, in part, "I cannot say that I believe in the doctrine 'that education ruins the negro,' for while it may unfit him in a sense for being a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, it should, if education means anything, force him to an intellectual condition wherein he should more firmly realize his position and recognize the inherent restrictions of his race in regard to the social conditions of mankind." Similarly, the *News*, some fifteen years earlier, had reported a projection of Negro population growth which would have reached 96,000,000 in 1960, and observed that it "is not cheering to Anglo-Saxons to contemplate subjugation to the African race"; two years later the projections had proved ill-founded, and the *News* reported that the Negro "forebodes no numerical danger to the country" (from the editions of 4 Jan. 1888 and 22 July 1891, both included in the *Journal History*).

race."¹⁵⁴ However, the very need for "evidence" reveals a significant change from the assumptions of an earlier time.

Notwithstanding the initial failure to cite Joseph Smith on church Negro policy, there had never been any question among the leadership as to the lineage of the blacks, nor of the implications of this genealogy. John Taylor had been editor of the *Times and Seasons* in 1845 when the "Short Chapter" marked the return of the church to the "hardline" on the curse of Ham.¹⁵⁵ He accepted the traditional genealogy for the blacks,¹⁵⁶ and as president of the church denied them access to the temple because of their lineage. Also while president, he made the unique observation that this lineage had been preserved through the Flood "because it was necessary that the devil should have a representation upon the earth as well as God."¹⁵⁷

Wilford Woodruff, an apostle to Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and John Taylor before becoming president, believed fully in the Cain genealogy. At one point he went so far as to cite the "mark of darkness" still visible on the "millions of the descendants of Cain" as evidence for the Bible.¹⁵⁸ As with his two predecessors, Woodruff denied blacks the temple ordinances as one of the "disadvantages. . . of the descendants of Cain."¹⁵⁹ Nonetheless, he authorized the compromise allowing Jane James into the temple for an unusual sealing ordinance.

Less information is available on Lorenzo Snow. His concern for the subject is reflected in his early inquiry into the "chance of redemption" for the Africans.¹⁶⁰ As a senior apostle, he proposed that a man ruled ineligible for the priesthood for marrying a black be allowed "to get a di-

154. The thesis of this author was that social equality would lead to intermarriage, and "that the comingling of inferior with superior must lower the higher is just as certain as that the half-sum of two and six is four" (William Benjamin Smith, *The Color Line*, cited in B. H. Roberts, *Seventy's Course in Theology, First Year, Outline History of the Seventy and A Survey of the Books of Holy Scripture* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1907; repr. 1931]).

155. T&S 6:857 (1 Apr. 1845). With other Mormon leaders, Taylor had denounced both "Southern fire-eaters" and "rabid abolitionists" in the days before the Civil War, but his less restrained remarks were more often directed at the latter, with whom he had greater familiarity. Horace Greeley, for instance, was "a great man to talk about higher law, which means, with him, stealing niggers. . . they need not be afraid of our stealing their niggers" (JD 5:157; see also JD 5:119).

156. E.g., JD 18:200; 22:304.

157. JD 22:302 (28 Aug. 1881); also JD 23:336 (29 Oct. 1882). There is some basis for this idea in remarks delivered by Brigham Young to the Utah Territorial Legislature, 16 January 1852, recorded in Wilford Woodruff's diary of that date.

158. Conference address, 7 Apr. 1887, reported in MS 51:339.

159. Matthias F. Cowley, 587, from Woodruff's journal.

160. The question, posed to Brigham Young, was made the day after Snow was ordained an apostle (Journal History, 13 Feb. 1849).

voice. . .and marry a white woman, and he would be entitled then to the priesthood."¹⁶¹ While president of the church, he upheld the decisions of his three predecessors, citing as they had the curse on Cain.¹⁶²

Greater attention was focused on the Negro doctrine while Joseph F. Smith was president than at any time since the presidency of Brigham Young. While several changes are evident in Mormon teachings during his administration, President Smith relied very heavily on the rulings of his predecessors in determining the fundamentals of church policy ("he did not know that we could do anything more in such cases than refer to the rulings of Presidents Young, Taylor, Woodruff and other Presidencies").¹⁶³

The most important of the new developments were the incorporation of Joseph Smith and the Pearl of Great Price into the immediate background of the Negro policy. There were also several important decisions. In 1902 the First Presidency received an inquiry concerning the priesthood restriction to a man who had one Negro great-grandparent. The basic question was what defined a "Negro" or "descendant of Cain." There were precedents for a decision, and Joseph F. Smith recounted that Brigham Young applied the restriction to those with any "Negro blood in their veins." Even so, Apostle John Henry Smith "remarked that it seemed to him that persons in whose veins the white blood predominated should not be barred from the temple." It is not clear exactly what Apostle Smith had in mind, but if he meant cases in which there were more Caucasian grandparents, for instance, than Negro, he would have been much more liberal in his definitions than the vast majority of his contemporaries.¹⁶⁴ It had long been the peculiar notion of American whites that a person whose appearance suggested any Negro ancestry was to be considered a Negro, notwithstanding the fact that perhaps fifteen of his sixteen great-great-grandparents were Caucasians. This was particularly so if it were known that there was a black ancestor. Theoretically, the presence of a "cursed lineage" should have been discernible to a church patriarch. However, a previous council had already been faced with a problem which arose when a patriarch

161. Council Minutes, 16 Dec. 1897, in Bennion papers.

162. E.g., Council Minutes, 11 Mar. 1900, in Bennion (or GAS) papers.

163. Council Minutes, 26 Aug. 1908, in Bennion (or GAS) papers.

164. For comparison, the state of Virginia extended its legal definition of "a colored person" in 1910 to include "every person having one-sixteenth or more of negro blood," and further in 1930 to include "every person in whom there is ascertainable any negro blood." Woodward reports that the 1930 federal census enumerators were instructed to count as Negroes any person of mixed blood, "no matter how small the percentage of Negro blood" (*American Counterpoint*, 86).

For another indication of Apostle John Henry Smith's different perspective on race, see Carter, *The Negro Pioneer*, 57.

assigned a man of "some Negro blood" to the lineage of Ephraim.¹⁶⁵ Joseph F. Smith's answer to the proposal by Apostle John Henry Smith was unusually revealing:

President Smith. . . referred to the doctrine taught by President Brigham Young which he (the speaker) said he believed in himself, to the effect that the children of Gentile parents, in whose veins may exist a single drop of the blood of Ephraim, might extract all the blood of Ephraim from his parents' veins, and be actually a full-blooded Ephraimite. He also referred to the case of a man named Billingsby, whose ancestors away back married an Indian woman, and whose descendants in every branch of his family were pure whites, with one exception, and that exception was one pure blooded Indian in every branch of the family. The speaker said he mentioned this case because it was in line with President Young's doctrine on the subject, and the same had been found to be the case by stockmen engaged in the improvement of breeds. Assuming, therefore, this doctrine to be sound, while the children of a man in whose veins may exist a single drop of negro blood, might be entirely white, yet one of his descendants might turn out to be a pronounced negro. And the question in President Smith's mind was, when shall we get light enough to determine each case on its merits? He gave it as his opinion that in all cases where the blood of Cain showed itself, however slight, the line should be drawn there; but where children of tainted people were found to be pure Ephraimites, they might be admitted to the temple. This was only an opinion, however; the subject would no doubt be considered later.¹⁶⁶

By 1907, the First Presidency and quorum had reconsidered and ruled that "no one known to have in his veins negro blood, (it matters not how remote a degree) can either have the priesthood in any degree or

165. Council Minutes, 11 Mar. 1900, in Bennion (or GAS) papers.

166. Council Minutes, 2 Jan. 1902, in Bennion (or GAS) papers. The "doctrine" described had actually provided a theoretical model which should have allowed people with Negro ancestry to be ordained to the priesthood. Brigham Young had taught that not only could an individual "extract all of the blood" of a particular lineage from his parents, but that it was also possible for such a lineage to be "purged" from the individual's blood: "Can you make a Christian of a Jew? I tell you, nay. If a Jew comes into this Church, and honestly professes to be a Saint, a follower of Christ, and if the blood of Judah is in his veins, he will apostatize. He may have been born and bred a Jew, speak the language of the Jews, and have attended to all the ceremonies of the Jewish religion, and have openly professed to be a Jew all his days; but I will tell you a secret—there is not a particle of the blood of Judaism in him, if he has become a true Christian, a Saint of God; for if there is, he will most assuredly leave the Church of Christ, or that blood will be purged out of his veins. We have men among us who were Jews, and became converted from Judaism. For instance, here is brother Neibaur; do I believe there is one particle of the blood of Judah in his veins? No, not so much as could be seen on the point of the finest cambric needle, through a microscope with a magnifying power of two millions" (JD 2:143; also JD 11:279). Presumably a Negro would have been susceptible to a similar purge of the blood of Cain.

the blessings of the Temple of God; no matter how otherwise worthy he may be."¹⁶⁷ The doctrinal concept related by Joseph F. Smith is virtually identical to the now outdated theory of "genetic throwback." While once a widely accepted phenomenon, modern geneticists doubt that such cases ever existed.¹⁶⁸

Another important decision made during this period involved missionary work. Under the prophet Joseph Smith, the church repeatedly claimed that its mission was to everyone, and in the year of the prophet's death over 500 missionaries were set apart to carry forth the gospel. The trials faced by the Saints after 1844 were such that it was nearly fifty years until that level was again attained. Nonetheless, under Brigham Young the church's universal call was a common theme, and this was particularly true in the days prior to the Civil War.¹⁶⁹

Notwithstanding Joseph Smith's early instructions and the concern

167. "Extract from George F. Richards' Record of Decisions by the Council of the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles," in the GAS papers. The entry is not dated, but the subsequent entry was from 8 February 1907. Compare n. 164.

In 1913 Dr. Booker T. Washington delivered an address at the University of Utah, attended by "practically every one of the General Authorities." Afterwards Bishop John Whitaker asked Washington, in a private conversation, "If perchance under discussion on some negro problem the question arose as to how a negro would vote if only one drop of negro blood run [sic] in his veins which way would that drop of blood vote on a question, white or black?" Whitaker writes, "Without hesitation he said, 'If there was one drop of blood in a person and such a question arose, it would always vote with the negro.' I was struck with his ready answer, showing he had thought out almost every conceivable connection [between] white and black. And I have been told that pure white blood through intermarriage with any other blood runs out in four generations. I am told that negro blood will persist up to eight generations. There seems to be something in that accursed blood that will not yield to white blood" ("Daily Journal of John M. Whitaker," 27 Mar. 1913, in the University of Utah Library).

168. It is surprising that this idea has not appeared in the explanations of how the "pure" Negro lineage was transmitted through the Flood. See n. 27.

169. The millennialist expectations at that time lent a certain urgency to the call of the Church to carry the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. As the Civil War approached, the universal obligation came to be viewed more symbolically. Wilford Woodruff, in 1855, observed that "we have preached. . .in France, Italy, Germany, and the States of the German Confederacy; and it has been preached in the British Isles, in North and South America, and the Society and Sandwich Islands, and to China, and we have even sent them to the dark regions of Asia and Africa. . .[T]wo of our brethren. . .have been to those countries. Chauncey West has been through that country. . .he has cleared his skirts of those people among whom he travelled, and he has cleared this people, for they have been commanded to preach this Gospel to all the nations of the earth" (JD 9:226). Three years later the missionaries were recalled from abroad as Johnston's army moved on Utah. At this time Orson Pratt wrote, "Now, the Lord moves upon the hearts of the First Presidency to say. . . 'It is enough: come home. Your testimony is sufficient'" (JD 6:201). By 1860, Brigham Young could say that "my brethren have said enough to warn the whole world. This frees our garments" (JD 8:147).

under Brigham Young that the gospel at least symbolically be carried to all nations, a new understanding was evident after 1900. A former South African Mission president reported an unusual problem: "An old native missionary" had been converted to Mormonism, and was anxious to begin missionary work among the natives, as was the recently converted son of a Zulu chief. Should the gospel be preached to native tribes? The quorum in response cited rulings of the First Presidency that "our elders should not take the initiative in proselyting among the negro people."¹⁷⁰ The rationale was set forth in response to an inquiry from another South African mission president who wrote in 1910 to ask if "a promiscuously bred white and Negro" could be "baptized for his dead," adding that "he did not wish it to be inferred that he and his fellow missionaries were directing their work among the blacks, as they were not, he having instructed the elders to labor among the white race."¹⁷¹ In reply, the First Presidency noted the policy of discrimination, and stated,

[T]his is as it should be, and we trust that this understanding will be clearly had by all of our missionaries laboring in South Africa, and who may be called there hereafter. In the Book of Moses (Pearl of Great Price) chapter 7, verse 12, we learn that Enoch in his day called upon all the people to repent save the people of Canaan, and it is for us to do likewise.¹⁷²

Once instituted, this policy remained in effect for over fifty years.

What of Negroes being baptized for the dead? President Smith could

170. Council Minutes, 26 Aug. 1908, in Bennion (or GAS) papers. Anthon H. Lund, writing "on behalf of First Presidency," had given the same advice the previous month (letter of 11 July 1908 to H. L. Steed, in my possession). A remarkably different philosophy had been developed at length in a *Deseret Evening News* editorial just five months before:

"And how do we know that the disciples of the Apostles did not go both to China and to the interior of Africa? To assert that they did not do so, should not be done without sufficient evidence. There is no reason to believe, against tradition that their labors were confined to the Mediterranean coast lands. . . .

"But, without going any further into this, it seems to us that the commission given by the Lord to His Apostles embraced every human being. For He commissioned them to preach the gospel to 'every creature.' If that means anything, It means that neither color, nor ignorance, nor degeneration is a bar to salvation. No one is so black that he is not one of God's creatures" ("The Colored Races," 14 Mar. 1908).

171. Letter from B. A. Hendricks reported in Council Minutes, 10 Nov. 1910, in Bennion (or GAS) papers. Hendricks described the blacks as "good honest people."

172. Letter from Joseph F. Smith and Anthon Lund, 18 Nov. 1910, in Bennion papers. They continued, "But at the same time where honest-hearted Negroes who perchance hear the gospel preached, become pricked in their hearts and ask for baptism, it would not be becoming in us to refuse to administer that ordinance in their behalf."

A decade prior, George Q. Cannon had made a point of the fact that "Enoch in his day called upon all people to repent save it were the descendants of Cainan [sic]" (Council Minutes, 18 Aug. 1900, in Bennion or GAS papers).

see "no reason why a negro should not be permitted to have access to the baptismal font in the temple to be baptized for his dead, inasmuch as negroes are entitled to become members of the Church by baptism." Consequently, the First Presidency informed the mission president that while it was not the current practice, they did not "hesitate to say that Negroes may be baptized and confirmed" for the dead.¹⁷³ With this, the temple was once again opened to Negro Mormons.

One additional area of doctrinal import was considered during this period. In spite of Brigham Young's statement to the contrary, the notion that the curse on Negroes was somehow related to their relative neutrality in the War in Heaven had gained in popularity. It was evident in B. H. Roberts's *Contributor* article in 1885, and by 1912 the idea was being advanced by many elders as church doctrine. In response to an inquiry as to the authority for this belief, the First Presidency wrote, "[T]here is no revelation, ancient or modern, neither is there any authoritative statement by any of the authorities of the Church. . . [in support of the idea] that the negroes are those who were neutral in heaven at the time of the great conflict or war, which resulted in the casting out of Lucifer and those who were led by him."¹⁷⁴ An explanation based solely on an ancestral connection still must have been unsatisfying, for the presidency later wrote, "Our preexistence, if its history were fully unfolded, would no doubt make the subject much plainer to our understanding than it is shown at present."¹⁷⁵

Though most studies of the church's Negro policy ignore the decades from 1880 to 1920, it is apparent that few periods have been as important for modern church teachings. During this time the church adjusted to the effective loss of two external rationales for the priesthood

173. President Smith's remark is found in the Council Minutes, 10 Nov. 1910. The mission president was informed via a letter from Joseph F. Smith and Anthon H. Lund, to Rudger Clawson, 18 Nov. 1910, both among the Bennion papers. The letter continued, "But in thus answering we do not wish President Hendricks [of the South African Mission] or his successors in office to encourage the Negro saints of South Africa to emigrate to Zion in order that they may be in a position to do temple work." Nor did they wish a gathering to be preached to the whites.

174. First Presidency letter from Joseph F. Smith, Lund, and Charles Penrose, to M. Knudson, 13 Jan. 1912, in Bennion papers. The letter also reported that "there is no written revelation going to show why the negroes are ineligible to hold the priesthood, the Prophet Joseph Smith is said to have explained." See nn. 124, 136, and text.

175. First Presidency letter from Smith, Lund, and Penrose, to Ben Rich, 1 May 1912, in Bennion papers. The suggestion that Negroes had been committed to Cain's lineage in the pre-existence, and were perhaps electively remaining in that line, attributed by Lorenzo Snow to Brigham Young (see n. 91 and text), had not necessarily implied a "neutral" performance on their part. See Matthias Cowley's account of Snow's belief to this effect, reported in a talk at the L.D.S. University Branch, Chicago, 4 Oct. 1925, copy at Church Historical Department.

policy—the general acceptance of the Negro’s biblical lineage and his inherent inferiority. In their place were introduced the much more substantial evidences of the Pearl of Great Price, and the increasing weight (or inertia) of church rulings that could now be traced through six presidents to the very earliest days of the Restoration. In addition, the policy had been elaborated and refined to such a point that no real modifications were felt necessary for nearly fifty years.

IV

The attitude of the Church with reference to Negroes remains as it has always stood.—The First Presidency, 1949

No major changes in church Negro policy were evident during the second quarter of the twentieth century. Both Heber J. Grant, and his successor, George Albert Smith, continued to base the priesthood restriction ultimately on the curse on Cain, and both cited the Pearl of Great Price as concrete evidence of the divine origin of this practice.¹⁷⁶ There were a few new developments of theoretical significance.

Joseph Fielding Smith’s *The Way to Perfection* was published in 1931, and it contained by far the most extensive treatment of the Negro policy to date (and remains even today the only comparable work by a general authority). Through the influence of this book, and other publications, Apostle Smith became very closely identified with the Negro policy, perhaps more so than any other figure of the twentieth century. In his writings, he effectively summarized church policies under his father, Joseph F. Smith, and at the same time provided a theoretical foundation for these policies based on his understanding of history and the Pearl of Great Price. In many ways his works constitute the fullest development of Mormon thought on the Negro, and they were considered by many to be the definitive background study.¹⁷⁷ Where the progress of science and popular sentiment had left the church almost totally without support for its assumed genealogy of the black (“There is no definite information on this question in the Bible, and profane history is not able to solve it”), Apostle Smith put forward “some definite instruction in regard to this

176. See, for example, letters of Heber J. Grant to H. L. Wilkin, 28 Jan. 1928; of Grant, Anthony W. Ivins, and Charles W. Nibley to Don Mack Dalton, 29 Nov. 1929; of Grant, J. Reuben Clark Jr., and David O. McKay to Graham Doxey, 9 Feb. 1945; and of George Albert Smith, Clark, and McKay to Francis W. Brown, 13 Jan. 1947; and of Smith, Clark, and McKay to Virgil H. Sponberg, 5 May 1947; all found among the Bennion papers.

177. In 1947 the First Presidency wrote, “The rule of the Church as heretofore followed has been set forth by the early Church leaders. You will find a discussion thereof in Brother Joseph Fielding Smith’s book, ‘The Way to Perfection,’ chapter 16” (letter of 13 Jan. 1947, to Francis Brown, in Bennion papers).

matter" from the "Pearl of Great Price and the teachings of Joseph Smith and the early elders of the church who were associated with him." In so doing, he moved confidently through the negligible evidence concerning the prophet's views and concluded, "But we all know it was due to his teachings that the negro today is barred from the Priesthood."¹⁷⁸

His most significant contribution to the Negro doctrine may well have involved the "pre-existence hypothesis." Apostle Smith was aware that both Brigham Young and Joseph F. Smith had denounced the idea that Negroes were "neutral" in the war in heaven, and that Young had particularly objected to the implication that the spirits of Negroes were tainted before entering their earthly bodies. On the other hand, Smith also knew that other prominent Mormons had felt it necessary to appeal beyond this life to some previous failing for ultimate justification of the present condition of the blacks.¹⁷⁹ *The Way to Perfection* seemingly reconciled these two positions. Treading a fine line, Apostle Smith distinguished between the neutrality condemned by Brigham Young and another condition comprised of those "who did not stand valiantly," who "were almost persuaded, were indifferent, and who sympathized with Lucifer, but did not follow him." The "sin" of this latter group "was not one that merited the extreme punishment which was inflicted on the devil and his angels. They were not denied the privilege of receiving the second estate, but were permitted to come to the earth-life with some restrictions placed upon them. That the negro race, for instance, have been placed under restrictions because of their attitude in the world of spirits,

178. Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1970, reprint of 1931 edition), 103, 111. Smith deals directly with the Negro doctrine in chapters 7, 15, and 16. He had previously published two short articles on the subject, "The Negro and the Priesthood," *Improvement Era* 27 (Apr. 1924): 564-65, and "Salvation for the Dead," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 17 (1926): 154.

179. Smith quoted Brigham Young's statement on neutrality, and would also have been aware of his father's opinion, as he was an apostle when Joseph F. Smith expressed himself on the subject. *The Way to Perfection* also included Roberts's *Contributor* article.

More recently, Orson Whitney had dealt with the related problem of a curse on Canaan, and "the unsolved problem of the punishment of a whole race for an offense committed by one of its ancestors." He concluded, "It seems reasonable to infer that there was a larger cause, that the sin in question was not the main issue. Tradition has handed down something to that effect, but nothing conclusive on the question is to be found in the standard works of the Church. Of one thing we may rest assured: Canaan was not unjustly cursed, nor were the spirits who came through his lineage wrongly assigned. 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' Or, putting it inversely: Whatsoever a man reaps, that hath he sown. This rule applies to spirit life, as well as to life in the flesh" (Forest Green, comp., *Cowley & Whitney on Doctrine* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1963—originally M. F. Cowley, *Cowley's Talks on Doctrine* {1902} and Orson F. Whitney, *Saturday Night Thoughts* {1921}], 313-14, from a series of articles by Whitney written in 1918-19).

few will doubt."¹⁸⁰ With regard to Brigham Young's comment that "all spirits are pure that came from the presence of God," Smith wrote, "They come innocent before God so far as mortal existence is concerned."¹⁸¹

As with those previously proposing this general explanation, Apostle Smith viewed the priesthood restriction as evidence for his thesis, rather than the reverse: "It cannot be looked upon as just that they should be deprived of the power of the Priesthood without it being a punishment for some act, or acts, performed before they were born."¹⁸² After 1931, the "pre-existence hypothesis" was presented with increasing frequency and confidence until 1949 when it formed a major portion of the first public statement of church policy towards blacks to be issued by the First Presidency.¹⁸³

The decision to deny the priesthood to anyone with Negro ancestry ("no matter how remote"), had resolved the theoretical problem of priesthood eligibility,¹⁸⁴ but did not help with the practical problem of identifying the "blood of Cain" in those not already known to have Negro ancestry. The need for a solution to this problem was emphasized by the periodic discovery that a priesthood holder had a black ancestor. One such case came to the attention of the quorum in 1936. Two Hawaiian members of the priesthood who had performed "some baptisms and other ordinances," were discovered to be "one-eighth negro" and the

180. *The Way to Perfection*, 43. For Smith, the restrictions extended beyond the priesthood policy—Cain "because of his wickedness. . . became the father of an inferior race" (101).

181. *Ibid.*, 43-44, 105-6. Since the argument was being advanced that blacks were coming from their "sin" in the pre-existence to a penalty in this life, it is not exactly clear how the term "innocent" is being applied. Smith references D&C 93:38.

182. *Ibid.*, 43-44

183. A representative progression: "[I]t is highly probable" (Orson Pratt, 1853); "It seems reasonable to infer" (Orson Hyde, 1918-19); "It is a reasonable thing to believe" (Joseph Fielding Smith, 1924); "few will doubt" (Joseph Fielding Smith, 1931); "it is very probable that in some way, unknown to us, the distinction" (John Widstoe, 1944); "Is it not just as reasonable to assume" (Harold B. Lee, 1945); "Your position seems to lose sight of the revelation of the Lord touching the pre-existence of our spirits, the rebellion in heaven, and the doctrine that our birth in this life and the advantages under which we may be born, have a relationship in the life heretofore" (First Presidency, 1947); "Accepting this theory of life, we have a reasonable explanation of existent conditions in the habitations of man" (David O. McKay, 1947); "Under this principle there is no injustice whatsoever involved in this deprivation as to the holding of the priesthood by the Negroes" (First Presidency statement, 1949).

184. An extreme of a sort was achieved on 28 August 1947, when the quorum upheld a decision by John Widstoe denying a temple recommend to a "sister having one thirty-second of negro blood in her veins" (one black great-great-grandparent). Widstoe did question "whether in such cases the individual. . . might be recommended to the temple for marriage," but previous policy prevailed (Council Minutes, 28 Aug. 1947, in Bennion papers). See n.164.

question arose, what should be done? A remarkably pragmatic decision was reached. The case was entrusted to senior apostle George Albert Smith who was shortly to visit the area, with instructions that if he found that their ordinances involved "a considerable number of people. . . that ratification of their acts be authorized. . . ;[but] should [he] discover that there are only one or two affected, and that the matter can be readily taken care of, it may be advisable to have re-baptism performed."¹⁸⁵ A decade later similar cases were reported from New Zealand, and it was "the sentiment of the Brethren" on this occasion that "if it is admitted or otherwise established" that the individuals in question had "Negro blood in his veins," "he should be instructed not to attempt to use the Priesthood in any other ordinations."¹⁸⁶

The growth of the international church was clearly bringing new problems. Brazil was particularly difficult. Later that year J. Reuben Clark, first counselor to George Albert Smith, reported that the church was entering "into a situation in doing missionary work. . . where it is very difficult if not impossible to tell who has negro blood and who has not. He said that if we are baptizing Brazilians, we are almost certainly baptizing people of negro blood, and that if the Priesthood is conferred upon them, which no doubt it is, we are facing a very serious problem."¹⁸⁷ No solution was proposed, although the quorum once again decided on a thorough review. Elsewhere the problem was not so complicated. South African "whites" had simply been required to "establish the purity of their lineage by tracing their family lines out of Africa through genealogical research" before being ordained to the priesthood.¹⁸⁸ Polynesians, though frequently darker than Negroes, were not generally considered to be of the lineage of Cain.¹⁸⁹ Within the United States, cases in which there was no acknowledged Negro ancestry were ultimately determined on the basis of appearance. Responding to an inquiry about a physical test for "colored blood," the First Presidency wrote that they assumed "there has been none yet discovered. People in the South have this problem to meet all the time in a practical way, and we assume that

185. Council Minutes, 29 Oct. 1936, Bennion papers. By 1950, at least sixteen such cases involving either the priesthood or admission to the temple had come to the attention of the quorum or First Presidency, exclusive of such groups as those found in Brazil; additional cases are also reported from other sources.

186. Council Minutes, 30 Jan. 1947, Bennion papers.

187. Council Minutes, 9 Oct. 1947, Bennion papers.

188. See the "South African Mission Plan," Dec. 1951, 45-46, copy in Church Historical Department.

189. Most Mormons associated the Polynesians with the Lamanites (e.g., *Juvenile Instructor* 3:145-46) rather than Cain or Ham; there were exceptions. See *Juvenile Instructor* 3:141-42, and *Dialogue* 2 (Autumn 1967): 8, letter from Gary Lobb.

as a practical matter the people there would be able to determine whether or not the sister in question has colored blood. Normally the dark skin and kinky hair would indicate but one thing."¹⁹⁰

In spite of the progressive editorials of a few decades before, Utah joined the nation in segregating blacks in hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, bowling alleys, etc., and in otherwise restricting their professional advancement in many fields.¹⁹¹ Following the Second World War, the general movement to guarantee more civil rights to blacks was also manifest in Utah. While church and civic leaders spoke in favor of "equal rights" during this time, this was in the context of the "separate equality" of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*,¹⁹² and between 1945 and 1951 the Utah legislature killed public accommodation and fair employment bills on at least four occasions.¹⁹³ As elsewhere, the ultimate argument advanced against a change in policy was that it would lead to miscegenation. While there was no published instruction from the First Presidency on this matter, their response to a personal inquiry is illuminating. A member had written from California to inquire whether "we as Latter-day Saints [are] required to associate with the Negroes or take the Gospel to them." Their answer, in part:

No special effort has ever been made to proselyte among the Negro race, and social intercourse between the Whites and the Negroes should certainly not be encouraged because of leading to intermarriage, which the Lord has forbidden.

This move which has now received some popular approval of trying to break down social barriers between the Whites and the Blacks is one that

190. First Presidency letter from George Albert Smith, Clark, and McKay, to Francis W. Brown, 13 Jan. 1947, Bennion papers.

191. See Wallace R. Bennett, "The Negro in Utah," *Utah Law Review* (Spring 1953); "Symposium on the Negro in Utah," held November 20, 1954, by the Utah Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters, at Weber College; or David H. Oliver, *A Negro on Mormonism* (USA [Salt Lake City]: D. H. Oliver, 1963).

192. E.g., J. Reuben Clark wrote in the *Improvement Era* (49:492) in August 1946, "It is sought today in certain quarters to break down all race prejudice, and at the end of the road, which they who urge this see, is intermarriage. That is what it finally comes to. Now, you should hate nobody; you should give to every man and every woman, no matter what the color of his or her skin may be, full civil rights. You should treat them as brothers and sisters, but do not ever let that wicked virus get into your systems that brotherhood either permits or entitles you to mix races which are inconsistent." The following year Clark is also cited on this matter in a council meeting, "President Clark called attention to the sentiment among many people in this country to the point that we should break down all racial lines, as a result of which sentiment negro people have acquired an assertiveness that they never before possessed and in some cases have become impudent" (Council Minutes, 9 Oct. 1947, Bennion papers).

193. See Wallace R. Bennett.

should not be encouraged because inevitably it means the mixing of the races if carried to its logical conclusion.¹⁹⁴

An aversion to miscegenation has been the single most consistent facet of Mormon attitudes towards the Negro. Although the attitudes towards the priesthood, slavery, or equal rights have fluctuated significantly, denunciations of interracial marriage can be identified in discourses in virtually every decade from the Restoration to the present day. While these sentiments can never be said to have dominated Mormon thought, they did become a major theme in the years following the Second World War and are to be found in both published and private remarks, generally in connection with the civil rights discussion.¹⁹⁵ The church viewed miscegenation from the unique perspective of the priesthood policy, but was, of course, by no means unique in its conclusions; in fact, the leadership generally invoked "biological and social" principles in support of their conclusions on the subject.¹⁹⁶

Within the church, segregation was not a major concern. Occasionally, the few Negro members did pose a problem, and, not unexpectedly, these difficulties were resolved after the manner of their contemporaries. Responding to a situation in Washington, D.C., in which some Relief Society sisters had objected to being seated with "two colored sisters who are apparently faithful members of the Church," the First Presidency advised:

It seems to us that it ought to be possible to work this situation out without causing any feelings on the part of anybody. If the white sisters feel that they may not sit with them or near them, we feel sure that if the colored sisters were discretely approached, they would be happy to sit at one side in the rear or somewhere where they would not wound the sensibilities of the complaining sisters.¹⁹⁷

194. Letter from the First Presidency (Smith, Clark, McKay) of 5 May 1947 to Virgil H. Sponberg, in Bennion papers.

195. See n. 192; also Harold B. Lee's address over KSL, 6 May 1945, "Youth of a Noble Birthright" (copy in Church Historical Department); and First Presidency letter of 17 July 1947, to Lowry Nelson, copy at the Brigham Young University Library.

196. Of the three instances cited in n. 195, Clark stated, "Biologically, it is wrong"; Lee invoked the "laws of heredity and the centuries of training"; and the First Presidency characterized intermarriage as "a concept which has heretofore been most repugnant to most normal-minded people." These arguments were, of course, secondary to the doctrinal objections.

In 1939 Utah extended its anti-miscegenation statute to prohibit a "white" from marrying a "Mongolian, a member of the malay race or a mulatto, quadroon, or octoroon."

197. First Presidency letter (from Presidents Smith, Clark, and McKay) to Ezra T. Benson, 23 June 1942, in Bennion papers. A similar problem was resolved in 1936 by a branch president in Cincinnati, Ohio, by ruling that a "faithful" Negro family "could not come to Church meetings." See Mark E. Petersen, "Race Problems—As They Affect the Church,"

It is, of course, no more justified to apply the social values of 1970 to this period than it was to impose them on the nineteenth century, and the point to be made is not that the church had "racist" ideas as recently as 1950. No one who has lived through the past two decades can doubt but that the racial mood of America has been transformed, as it has been on a grander scale in the past two centuries; these changes greatly complicate the assessment of the ethics of earlier times. On the other hand, from our present perspective it is impossible to mistake the role of values and concepts which have since been rejected in the formulation of many aspects of previous church policy. The extent to which such influences may have determined present policy is clearly an area for very careful assessment.

This was not the view twenty-five years ago. In spite of the numerous reviews of church policy towards the Negro that had taken place since 1879, the First Presidency could write as recently as 1947, "From the days of the Prophet Joseph until now, it has been the doctrine of the Church, *never questioned* by any of the Church leaders, that the Negroes are not entitled to the full blessings of the Gospel"¹⁹⁸ (emphasis mine). The reevaluations have always started with the assumption that the doctrine was sound.

In 1949 the church issued its first general statement of position on the Negro, and thereby provided an "official" indication of current thinking at the end of this phase of the history. Four basic points can be identified in the statement. First, there was no question as to the legitimacy of the doctrine, as it was asserted that the practice of priesthood denial dated "from the days of [the] organization" of the church and was based on a "direct commandment of the Lord." Second, while no rationale for the practice was given, there was a short quotation from Brigham Young on the "operation of the principle" which stated that a "skin of blackness" was the consequence of "rejecting the power of the holy priesthood, and the law of God," and that "the seed of Cain" would not receive the priesthood until the "rest of the children have received their blessings in the holy priesthood." Third, Wilford Woodruff was quoted as stating that eventually the Negro would "possess all the blessings which we now have." (Woodruff had actually been quoting Brigham Young.) The largest portion of the statement was devoted to a fourth point which presented the "doctrine of the Church" that "the conduct of spirits in the premortal existence has some determining effect upon the conditions and circumstances under which these spirits take on mortality." As the

address delivered at Brigham Young University, 27 Aug. 1954, copy at Church Historical Department.

198. First Presidency letter (from Presidents Smith, Clark, and McKay) to Lowry Nelson, 17 July 1947, copy at Brigham Young University Library.

priesthood restriction was such a handicap, there was "no injustice whatsoever involved in this deprivation as to holding the priesthood by the Negroes."¹⁹⁹

One cannot help but wonder why, in view of the hundreds of millions of men who have been denied the priesthood either because it had not been restored or because of their inaccessibility to the gospel, a relatively insignificant additional handful should be singled out for the same restriction based on the elaborate rationales that have accompanied the Negro policy. While church leaders have frequently spoken of the millions who have been denied the priesthood because of the curse on Cain, Negroes were really no less likely to receive the priesthood prior to the Restoration than anyone else, nor are they presently any less likely to receive the priesthood than the majority of mankind.²⁰⁰ Ironically, the few men who have been denied the priesthood only because they were Negroes are the rare blacks who have accepted the gospel; yet acceptance of the gospel is frequently cited as a sign of "good standing" in the pre-existence when the individual is not a Negro.

The "fourth period" in the history of the Negro in Mormonism has not been especially eventful. Changes were again evident in the stated rationale for the priesthood restriction, and though the curse on Cain and Pearl of Great Price arguments were still considered relevant, they were superceded to a significant degree by the new emphasis on the role of Negroes in the pre-existence. Basic church policy, however, remained essentially unchanged, and while the church confronted new social and anthropological problems, these problems were generally dealt with in the context of previously established policy.

V

Negroes [are] not yet to receive the priesthood, for reasons which we believe are known to God, but which He has not made fully known to man.—The First Presidency, 1969

The most widely publicized development of the past two decades

199. First Presidency statement, 17 Aug. 1949, copy at Church Historical Department; also in Bennion papers, and elsewhere. William E. Berrett, in "The Church and the Negroid People," 16-17, conveys the incorrect impression that this statement was issued in 1951; see Berrett's supplement to John J. Stewart, *Mormonism and the Negro* (Orem, Utah: Community Press, 1967).

200. Even with the genealogical advances having progressed to the point where several million men can be vicariously ordained in the temples each year, it will still require centuries to provide this opportunity for the billions of men who have been ineligible for the priesthood on other than racial grounds.

has been the transformation of the segregationist sentiments of the 1940s and early 1950s into an official endorsement of a civil rights movement associated with the elimination of a segregated society. As a result (or in spite) of the persistent and publicized pressure of the Utah NAACP, Hugh B. Brown read the following statement in 1963, on behalf of the church:

During recent months, both in Salt Lake City and across the nation, considerable interest has been expressed on the matter of civil rights. We would like it to be known that there is in this Church no doctrine, belief, or practice, that is intended to deny the enjoyment of full civil rights by any person regardless of race, color, or creed.

We say again, as we have said many times before, that we believe that all men are the children of the same God and that it is a moral evil for any person or group of persons to deny any human being the right to gainful employment, to full educational opportunity, and to every privilege of citizenship, just as it is a moral evil to deny him the right to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience.

. . . We call upon all men, everywhere, both within and outside the Church, to commit themselves to the establishment of full civil equality for all of God's children.²⁰¹

While dissenting voices were heard from within the church hierarchy, it has become evident that this was not a temporary change of position. In December 1969, the First Presidency issued a statement which said in part that "we believe the Negro, as well as those of other races, should have full Constitutional privileges as a member of society, and

201. Conference address reported in the *Deseret News*, 6 Oct. 1963; a slightly different version appeared in the December 1963, *Improvement Era*. In March 1965, pressure was again brought to bear on the church to issue a statement in conjunction with civil rights legislation then pending in Utah. After several hundred marchers demonstrated in front of church offices, the *Deseret News* carried an editorial, "A Clear Civil Rights Stand," which reprinted Brown's remarks as a "concise statement given officially" on the subject, which was both "clear and unequivocal" (*Deseret News*, 9 Mar. 1965).

Although Apostle Mark E. Petersen has been singled out for his extensive, unequivocally segregationist remarks in 1954 (see n. 197), he had not strayed significantly from the sentiments expressed by other church leaders in the preceding few years. Just three months before, the First Presidency had "directed" their secretary, Joseph Anderson, to respond to a correspondent: "That the Church is opposed on biological and other grounds, to intermarriage between whites and negroes, and that it discourages all social relationships and associations between the races, as among its members, that might lead to such marriages" (letter of 4 May 1954, from Anderson to Chauncey D. Harris, copy in my possession). The presidency also believed that "all men, without regard to race or color" were entitled to "full civil rights and liberties, social, economic, and political, as provided in the Constitution and laws."

we hope that members of the Church everywhere will do their part as citizens to see that these rights are held inviolate."²⁰²

Less well publicized, but of greater doctrinal significance, was the decision to open the first mission to blacks. In a virtual reversal of the policy laid down a half century before, David O. McKay announced in 1963 that missionaries were shortly to be sent to Nigeria, Africa, "in response to requests. . .to learn more about Church doctrine."²⁰³ This was not a decision made without lengthy deliberation. Requests for missionaries to Nigeria had been received for over seventeen years, and an in-depth assessment had been under way for several years prior to the 1963 announcement.²⁰⁴ Sadly, the Nigerian government became more fully aware of the scope of Mormon teachings on the blacks, and denied the church resident visas.²⁰⁵ This decision was appealed, and the church negotiated for over two years in an effort to establish the mission as planned. These efforts were finally terminated shortly before the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war. The initial plan envisioned the creation of a large number of independent Sunday schools to be visited periodically by the missionaries to teach and administer the sacrament and other ordinances. Estimates for the number of "Nigerian Mormons" who would have been involved ranged from 10,000 to 25,000, nearly all of whom were Biafrans.²⁰⁶

202. First Presidency statement, 15 Dec. 1969, "by Hugh B. Brown, N. Eldon Tanner" (*Church News*, 10 Jan. 1970, 12). President McKay, who was gravely ill at the time, died 18 January 1970.

203. "Church to Open Missionary Work in Nigeria," *Deseret News*, 11 Jan. 1963.

204. As early as 1946, Council Minutes report correspondence from Nigeria which "pleads for missionaries to be sent. . .and asks for literature regarding the Church" (see Council Minutes of 24 Oct. 1946 and 9 Oct. 1947, both in Bennion papers). *Time* magazine ("The Black Saints of Nigeria," 18 June 1965) reported that Lamar Williams was sent to Nigeria in 1959 to investigate the situation; Henry D. Moyle seems to date this as 1961 in a talk late that year ("What of the Negro?" 30 Oct. 1961, copy at Church Historical Department), although he apparently errs in identifying the country involved as South Africa.

205. A Nigerian student attending school in California learned of the planned mission, and sent a copy of John J. Stewart's *Mormonism and the Negro* to the *Nigerian Outlook*, along with his analysis of church beliefs on the Negro. The *Outlook* published the letter, excerpts from the book, and an editorial, "Evil Saints," which demanded that the Mormons not be allowed into the country. See *Nigerian Outlook*, 5 Mar. 1963, photocopy at Brigham Young University Library.

206. Information obtained largely in an interview with Lamar S. Williams, who had been set apart as the Presiding Elder over the Nigerian Mission. Two derivative groups of the original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, both of whom ordain Negroes to the priesthood, have also been involved with Nigerian "Mormons." The Church of Jesus Christ (Monongahela, Pennsylvania), who trace their origins to William Bickerton, and Sidney Rigdon, and accept the Book of Mormon, have had a mission to Nigeria for nearly twenty years. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints also opened a mission to Nigeria in the mid-1960s. Both groups have ordained Nigerian elders.

Receiving no publicity, though possibly of greater significance than the foregoing developments, were subtle indications of a new flexibility in the basic Negro doctrine itself. With the concurrence of President McKay, a young man of known Negro ancestry was ordained to the priesthood after receiving a patriarchal blessing which did not assign him to a "cursed" lineage.²⁰⁷ In another case, President McKay authorized two children with Negro ancestry to be sealed in the temple to the white couple who had adopted them.²⁰⁸ Additionally, the last vestige of discrimination based solely on skin color was eliminated, as priesthood restrictions were removed from all dark races in the South Pacific.²⁰⁹ Finally, it became evident that still another policy had been supplanted as the rare members of the priesthood who married blacks were not debarred from their offices.

President David O. McKay, the man who presided over these developments, was widely acclaimed at his death as a man of unusual compassion who had truly loved all his fellow men.²¹⁰ With regard to the priesthood policy, it was frequently said he had been greatly saddened that he never felt able to remove the racial restriction. Curiously, a somewhat different claim was made by Sterling McMurrin in 1968. He reported that President McKay told him in 1954 that the church had "no doctrine of any kind pertaining to the Negro," and that the priesthood restriction was "a practice, not a doctrine, and the practice will some day be changed."²¹¹ While there was never an official statement of McKay's

207. Information obtained from a principal in the case who had interceded on behalf of the person involved (the latter previously had been denied the priesthood because of his black ancestry).

208. Information obtained from a former temple president who possesses a copy of the authorization signed by President McKay.

209. This point was made public by President Harold B. Lee, in an interview published in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 Sept. 1972, which reported, "President Lee said skin color is not what keeps the Negro from the priesthood. It [is] strictly a matter of lineage and involves only African Negroes. In comparison, he noted, dark or black islanders, such as Fijians, Tongans, Samoans, or Maoris, are all permitted full rights to the priesthood."

Another policy change which had no contemporary impact, but which would have posed an interesting problem for nineteenth-century literalists, was the decision to stop segregating Negro and white blood in the church hospitals' blood banks. This decision, prompted by Public Health Service rulings and affecting many hospitals nationally, has no doubt resulted in many instances wherein members of the priesthood have had several drops of "Negro blood" in their veins, at least for a few weeks.

210. As early as 1924, McKay had published a short article, "Persons and Principles," criticizing the hypocrisy of "pseudo-Christians" who preached "universal Brotherhood" and then showed prejudice towards Negroes and others in their daily lives. See MS 86:72 (31 Jan. 1924).

211. Quoted in a letter from Sterling McMurrin to Llewelyn R. McKay, 26 Aug. 1968, copy in my possession. An excerpt has been published in Stephen G. Taggart, *Mormonism's Negro Policy: Social and Historical Origins* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1970), 79; see also *Salt Lake Tribune*, 15 Jan. 1970, "Educator Cites McKay Statement."

views as president of the church, many have doubted that he expressed the latter sentiment exactly in the form McMurrin presented it.²¹² Just a few years prior to his alleged comments to McMurrin, McKay had endorsed the First Presidency statement of 1949 to the effect that the priesthood restriction was "not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of a direct commandment from the Lord, on which is founded the doctrine of the Church. . .to the effect that Negroes. . .are not entitled to the Priesthood at the present time."²¹³

Some of the confusion over President McKay's opinion may be attributable to word choice. A clearcut distinction between "practice," "policy," "doctrine," and "belief" has not always been maintained in the history of this subject. Normally, a "doctrine" is a fundamental belief, tenet, or teaching, generally considered within the church to be inspired or revealed. A "policy" is a specific program or "practice" implemented within the framework of the doctrine. Some policies or practices are so loosely tied to their doctrinal base that they may be changed administratively; other policies or practices are so closely tied to a doctrine as to require a revision of the doctrine before they can be changed. The First Presidency statement in 1949 was emphasizing that there was more to giving the Negroes the priesthood than an administrative decision to change the practice or policy. The McMurrin quotation cited above may reflect a rejection by President McKay of the previous "doctrinal" bases for the priesthood restriction, without at the same time questioning the appropriateness of the practice.

If one reads "no known doctrinal basis" in place of McMurrin's reported "no doctrine," then the sentiment is very similar to the view previously expressed by McKay in 1947.²¹⁴ Responding to the question of "why the Negroid race cannot hold the priesthood," he had written that he could find no answer in "abstract reasoning," that he knew of "no scriptural basis. . .other than one verse in the Book of Abraham (1:26)," and "I believe. . .that the real reason dates back to our pre-existent life." There is no hint of a "Negro doctrine" here, but McKay had made it even

212. The remarks were not recorded for several hours after the interview, and the original notes have reportedly been lost. However, Llewelyn McKay has stated that he showed McMurrin's letter to President McKay, and that the prophet verified the account (see Taggart, 79, and *Salt Lake Tribune*, 15 Jan. 1970, "Educator Cites McKay Statement of No Negro Bias in LDS Tenets"). There has been no official response by the church to Llewelyn's claim; a senior apostle has said privately that the verification came only because of President McKay's debilitated condition.

213. First Presidency statement, 17 Aug. 1949; McKay was then second counselor. Henry D. Moyle reported that the statement was reaffirmed in 1961.

214. Letter of 3 Nov. 1947, published in Llewelyn R. McKay, *Home Memories of President David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1956), 226-31; or William E. Berrett, 18-23.

clearer when he explained that the "answer to your question (and it is the only one that has ever given me satisfaction) has its foundation in faith. . . in a God of Justice. . .[and] in the existence of an eternal plan of salvation." In so many words, he had expressed his dissatisfaction with an explanation limited to a curse on Cain or quotations from the Book of Abraham. Yet he did not reject a church policy extending back well over a hundred years, and which was believed to have originated with the first prophet of the Restoration. Rather, he chose to place his trust in God's justice, and (as he later elaborates) his belief that earthly limitations are somehow related to the pre-existence.

In dissociating the priesthood restriction from its historical associations, McKay anticipated the current belief that there is no known explanation for the priesthood policy. President McKay was too ill to sign his endorsement to the First Presidency statement of 1969; however, it is surely no mere coincidence that after eighteen years under his leadership the church would state that the Negro was not yet to receive the priesthood, "for reasons which we believe are known to God, but which He has not made fully known to man."²¹⁵ Unlike the First Presidency statement of twenty years before, there was now no reference to a "doctrine," but rather the practical observation that "Joseph Smith and all succeeding presidents of the Church have taught."

As relieved as the educated Mormon may be at not having to stand squarely behind the curse on Cain or a non sequitur from the Pearl of Great Price, nor ultimately to defend a specific role for blacks in the pre-existence (e.g., "indifferent," "not valiant"), there is little comfort to be taken in the realization that the entire history of this subject has been effectively declared irrelevant. For if the priesthood restriction now stands independently of the rationales which justified its original existence, the demonstration that these rationales may have been in error becomes an academic exercise.

There have been no official statements on the Negro since President McKay's death. Although Joseph Fielding Smith had previously left little doubt as to his views on the subject, he did not reiterate them as president of the church. He did continue the progressive policies of his predecessor and authorized still another innovation, the formation of the black "Genesis Group."²¹⁶

During the few months that Harold B. Lee has led the church, he has

215. First Presidency statement, 15 Dec. 1969.

216. The Genesis Group, organized in Salt Lake City, in October 1971, was designed to provide the church auxiliary programs, except Sunday school, for black members in the Salt Lake Valley. The group had a "group presidency" and officers and teachers drawn from the Negro membership in the area.

been quoted in the national press as explaining the priesthood restriction in terms of the pre-existence.²¹⁷ In spite of the precedent established while President McKay led the church for scrutinizing such remarks from all angles, it does not seem indicated to speculate on future possibilities based on this type of "evidence."

A few final remarks should be made regarding a relatively new variant on the pre-existence theme. For over a century, those who dealt with the pre-existence hypothesis derived the idea that Negroes had performed inadequately in the pre-existence from either the assumed inferiority of the race or the policy of priesthood denial. Recently, however, one finds that a critical transposition has been made which transforms the earlier belief, that Negroes were substandard performers in the pre-existence because they had been denied the priesthood, into the claim that Negroes are denied the priesthood because of their status in the pre-existence. Thus one who questions the priesthood policy must now, by extension, involve himself in the speculative maze of premortal life. This development has probably been encouraged by an error in context found in the last First Presidency statement, which reads:

Our living prophet, President David O. McKay, has said, "The seeming discrimination by the Church toward the Negro is not something which originated with man; but goes back into the beginning with God. . . .

"Revelation assures us that this plan antedates man's mortal existence extending back to man's pre-existent state."²¹⁸

Beyond the fact that McKay was a counselor when he made these observations, two false impressions are conveyed. The initial quotation was not a "pronouncement," but rather was the conclusion of his reasoning that if the Lord originated the priesthood restriction, and if the Lord is a "God of Justice," then there must be an explanation that "goes back into the beginning with God." The paragraph which preceded the second quotation is also relevant:

Now if we have faith in the justice of God, we are forced to the conclusion that this denial was not a deprivation of merited right. It may have been entirely in keeping with the eternal plan of salvation for all of the children of God.

Revelation assures us that this plan. . . .²¹⁹

217. See "Lee Says Complete Status for Negroes in LDS Priesthood Only Matter of Time," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 Sept. 1972. For an indication of President Lee's views in 1945, see his "Youth of a Noble Birthright," n. 195.

218. First Presidency statement, 15 Dec. 1969.

219. See n. 214.

President McKay had not said that a revelation assured us that the Negro was denied the priesthood as part of the plan of salvation. We have assured ourselves that this is the case.

VI

Mormon attitudes towards blacks have thus followed an unexpectedly complex evolutionary pattern. When first apparent, these beliefs were sustained by the widely accepted connection of the Negro with Ham and Cain, the acknowledged intellectual and social inferiority of the Negro, his black skin, and the strength of Brigham Young's testimony and/or opinion. With the unanticipated termination of the curse of slavery on Canaan, the death of Brigham Young, increased evidence of Negro capability, and the decline of general support for the traditional genealogy of the blacks, justification of church policy shifted to the Pearl of Great Price (and an interpretation derived from earlier beliefs) and the belief that the policy could be traced through all the presidents of the church to the prophet Joseph Smith. By the middle of the twentieth century, little evidence remained for the old concepts of racial inferiority; skin color had also lost its relevance, and the Pearl of Great Price alone was no longer considered a sufficient explanation. Supplementing and eventually surpassing these concepts was the idea that the blacks had somehow performed inadequately in the pre-existence. Most recently, all of these explanations have been superseded by the belief that, after all, there is no specific explanation for the priesthood policy. Significantly, this progression has not weakened the belief that the policy is justified, for there remains the not inconsiderable evidence of over a century of decisions which have consistently denied the priesthood to blacks.

No one, I believe, who has talked with leaders of the contemporary church can doubt that there is genuine concern over the "Negro doctrine." Nor can there be any question that they are completely committed to the belief that the policy of priesthood denial is divinely instituted and subject only to revelatory change. The not infrequent assumption of critics of church policy that the demonstration of a convincing historical explanation for modern church teachings would result in the abandonment of the Negro doctrine is both naive and reflective of a major misunderstanding of the claims of an inspired religion. Yet, among the parameters of revelation, careful study has been identified as a conducive, if not necessary, preliminary step (D&C 9:7, 8). A thorough study of the history of the Negro doctrine still has not been made. In particular, three fundamental questions have yet to be resolved:

First, do we really have any evidence that Joseph Smith initiated a policy of priesthood denial to Negroes?

Second, to what extent did nineteenth-century perspectives on race

influence Brigham Young's teachings on the Negro and, through him, the teachings of the modern church?

Third, is there any historical basis, from ancient texts, for interpreting the Pearl of Great Price as directly relevant to the Negro-priesthood question, or are these interpretations dependent upon more recent (e.g., nineteenth-century) assumptions?

For the faithful Mormon, a fourth question, less amenable to research, also poses itself: Have our modern prophets received an unequivocal verification of the divine origin of the priesthood policy, regardless of its history?

The lack of a tangible answer to the fourth question emphasizes even more the need for greater insight into the first three. We have the tools and would seem to have the historical resource material available to provide valid answers to these questions. Perhaps it's time we began.

Women and Priesthood*

Nadine Hansen

I SMILED WRYLY AT THE CARTOON on the stationery. The picture showed a woman standing before an all-male ecclesiastical board and asking, "Are you trying to tell me that God is not an equal opportunity employer?" I thought to myself, "Yes, that is precisely what women have been told for centuries." In fact, we have been assured of it for so long that until recently it was almost unthinkable to question the situation. I thought too of the times I had been asked by LDS women, in whispered tones, "How do you feel about women holding the priesthood?" It is a question which has hardly been raised except in whispers among Mormons, let alone treated with enough respect to warrant serious consideration. When a non-LDS reporter asked President Kimball about the possibility of ordaining women, the reply was "impossible."¹ Members of the church generally regard this response as adequate and definitive. I perceive, however, dissatisfaction among Mormon women over the rigidly defined "role" church authorities consistently articulate for women. This dissatisfaction has been noticeably manifested in such developments as the heightened interest in the less-traditional women role models in Mormon history, in the establishment of *Exponent II*, in "the dual platforms of Mormonism and feminism,"² and in the renewed interest in developing an understanding of the nature of our Heavenly Mother.³ As

*This essay first appeared in Vol. 14, No. 4 (Winter 1981): 48-57.

1. "Mormonism Enters a New Era," *Time*, 7 Aug. 1978, 56.

2. Claudia L. Bushman, "Exponent II Is Born," *Exponent II* 1 (July 1974): 2.

3. This interest is evidenced by the recent surge in writing about Mother in Heaven. Papers dealing with the subject have been presented at the last two Sunstone Theological Symposiums. Linda Wilcox, in her paper, "The Mormon Concept of a Mother in Heaven" (published in the Sept.-Oct. 1980 issue of *Sunstone*), observed there "is an increasing awareness of and attention to the idea [of Mother in Heaven] at the grass-roots level in the Church." She noted that one of the judges for the Eliza R. Snow Poetry Contest said that year (1980) was the first year in which several poems were submitted about Mother in Heaven. Linda Sillitoe has made a similar observation in an article about Mormon women's poetry: "I suspect that more poems to or about our Mother in Heaven have been

we rethink our traditional place in both church and society, we will almost inevitably kindle discussion of the ordination of women.

Although the question of ordaining women is a new one for Mormons, it is not so new to Christendom. It has been widely, and sometimes hotly, debated for more than a decade. Christian feminists are taking a new look at scripture, and have found support for women's ordination—support which has always been there, but which until recently was unnoticed. Books and articles on the subject have proliferated.

The early Christian church had its beginnings in a culture which was deeply biased against women. Rabbinic teachings, developed during the post-Exilic centuries when Judaism was fighting to maintain its cultural and religious identity, often emphasized the strictest interpretations of the Torah. Women were subordinate to their husbands, not allowed to be witnesses in court, denied education, and restricted in religious practices. One rabbi, Eliezer, (reportedly expressing a minority view) went so far as to teach, "Whosoever teaches his daughter the Torah teaches her lasciviousness."⁴ Eve, of course, was blamed for the fact that man was no longer in a state of immortality and happiness, and devout male Jews prayed daily: "Blessed be God, King of the universe, for not making me a woman."⁵ All in all, women at the time of Jesus were more restricted than were women in the Old Testament. Yet early Christianity saw a brief flowering of new opportunities for women as new religious patterns cut across the deepest class divisions of society: race, condition of servitude, and sex. Wrote Paul, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

Many scholars now believe that women in this new religious com-

written in the last year or so by Mormon women than in all the years since Eliza R. Snow penned 'Our Eternal Mother and Father,' later retitled 'Oh My Father'" (Linda Sillitoe, "New Voices, New Songs: Contemporary Poems by Mormon Women," *Dialogue* 13, no. 4 [Winter 1980]: 58.) In addition, I have noticed what seems to be an increase in references to Mother in Heaven by individuals speaking from the pulpit in church services.

4. *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971), 16:626. See also Elisabeth M. Tetlow, *Women and Ministry in the New Testament* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 20-24.

5. Judith Hauptman, "Images of Women in the Talmud," *Religion and Sexism*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974), 196. Hauptman argues that this prayer should not arouse the feminist ire it has provoked. She says it sounds worse out of its context than it actually is, and that it simply "expresses a man's gratitude for being created male, and therefore for having more opportunities to fulfill divine commandments than do women, who are exempted from a good many." For women seeking a broader range of participation within their religious communities, this argument would seem to confirm precisely the point they are attempting to make about the exclusiveness of those communities.

munity were permitted a broader participation than we generally acknowledge today. In fact, some New Testament passages refer to women in terms which indicate they were ecclesiastical leaders, although this meaning has been obscured by the way the passages are translated into English. Phoebe of Romans 16:1-2 was a woman of considerable responsibility within her religious community. Junia of Romans 16:7 is believed by many scholars to refer to a woman apostle. Indeed a Roman Catholic task force of prominent biblical scholars recently concluded,

An examination of the biblical evidence shows the following: that there is positive evidence in the NT that ministries were shared by various groups and that women did in fact exercise roles and functions later associated with priestly ministry; that the arguments against the admission of women to priestly ministry based on the praxis of Jesus and the apostles, disciplinary regulations, and the created order cannot be sustained. The conclusion we draw, then, is that the NT evidence, while not decisive by itself, points toward the admission of women to priestly ministry.⁶

It is not in the New Testament alone where we find precedents for a broader religious participation for women. The Old Testament also tells of women who rose to prominence despite the obstacles they faced in a culture which restricted them in many serious ways.⁷ Deborah and Huldah were prophetesses (Jdgs. 4, 2 Kgs. 22), but these women have rarely been held up as examples for LDS women to emulate. In fact, their existence as prophetesses is problematic to official Mormon commentators. The *Bible Dictionary* in the new church-published Bible lists Deborah simply as "a famous woman who judged Israel," with not a single word about her being a prophetess. Last year's Sunday school manual is even more judgmental. It expressly states, "Deborah is described as a 'prophetess' evidently because of her great righteousness and faith. However, she was not in any way a religious leader, for such is contrary to God's order and organization." The student is referred to Luke 2:36-38

6. The Task Force of the Executive Board of the Catholic Biblical Association of America, "Women and Priestly Ministry: The New Testament Evidence," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41 (1979): 612-13. The Task Force was formed by the Executive Board "to study and report on the Role of Women in Early Christianity."

7. Included in the restrictions placed upon women in the Old Testament were those imposed during and after menstruation and following childbirth. Women were "unclean" during menstruation and for a week following their menstrual periods. During this time, they defiled everyone they touched and everything they sat or lay on (Lev. 15:19-30). Following childbirth, they were unclean, and the uncleanness lasted twice as long following the birth of a female child as it did following the birth of a male child (Lev. 12:1-8). If a man suspected his wife of unfaithfulness, he could cause her to go through a trial by ordeal to determine her guilt or innocence (Num. 5:12-31). Moreover, women are listed among a man's other articles of property as objects which are not to be coveted (Ex. 20:17).

and Acts 21:8-9, both of which tell of prophetesses who fit more neatly into Mormon notions about how women can be prophetesses.⁸ Huldah, whose influential prophecies both proved correct *and* were twice accompanied by "Thus saith the Lord," was omitted completely in the new *LDS Bible Dictionary*.⁹

By the standards of today's Mormon writers, the concept that a woman could be a prophetess—not in the limited sense of receiving personal revelation for herself and children or church calling, but rather for all God's people—is apparently unimaginable. Even though the Bible tells us very plainly of these women's activities, they have still been overlooked and their prophetic ministries discounted. If this can occur at a time when it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore women's contributions to the Kingdom of God, it should come as no surprise to us that only the most remarkable of women would find their way into ancient scriptures. One might wonder how many other accomplished women were omitted.

Probably the most commonly cited justifications for assigning a subordinate role to women (and therefore excluding them from priesthood) are found in the writings of Paul. His ideas about women do not bear directly on women's ordination, since it would be possible for women to be priesthood bearers and to perform priesthood ordinances (such as administering the sacrament, baptizing, blessing the sick, etc.) while still occupying a subordinate position in the home and church. Nevertheless, it is important to discuss briefly a few of Paul's statements since they have had such a profound impact on Christian thinking and continue to be invoked to define what is and is not "proper" behavior for women.

It should be noted that some of the more restrictive passages about women appear in 1 Timothy and Ephesians, epistles whose Pauline authorship is in question among biblical scholars.¹⁰ Mormons have generally not made distinctions between Pauline and pseudo-Pauline writ-

8. *Old Testament Part I—Gospel Doctrine Teachers Supplement* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1980), 163. These prophetesses include Anna, an elderly woman at the time of Jesus' birth, whose prophecy was that of bearing her testimony about Jesus "to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:36-38). The Bible also identifies Miriam (the sister of Moses) as a prophetess. The *Dictionary* lists Miriam but does not indicate she was a prophetess.

9. The old *Cambridge Bible Dictionary*, on which the new one is based, did list Huldah, stating that she was "a prophetess in Jerusalem in the time of Josiah." Thus the omission is not accidental. Likewise, in the case of Deborah, the old *Dictionary* listed her as a prophetess.

10. Many biblical scholars have dealt with the issue of authorship. One good source for readers who wish to have a better understanding of this issue is *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Charles M. Laymon (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), 834-35, and 883.

ings. Indeed the new *Bible Dictionary* does not hint at the controversy over authorship, and in fact goes so far as to assign Hebrews to Paul, although Hebrews itself makes no such claim.

Mormons have been highly selective in accepting and rejecting the teachings of Paul. On the one hand, we have rejected his counsel on such matters as celibacy (1 Cor. 7:8-9), on women speaking and teaching in church (1 Cor. 14:34-35, 1 Tim. 2:11-12), and on women wearing head coverings while praying or prophesying (1 Cor. 11:5). On the other hand, we have uncompromisingly accepted the idea of women's subordinate place in marriage (Eph. 5:22-24, 1 Cor. 11:3), and have extended this subordination to the church as well. This inconsistency stems, I believe, from a far too literal application of the epistolary understanding of the stories of the Creation and Fall. That is, a few passages in the epistles attempt to justify women's subordination by explaining that Eve was created after Adam and for his benefit (1 Tim. 2:13, 1 Cor. 11:7, 9), and that she was the first to "fall" (1 Tim. 2:14), thereby requiring all women to be subordinate to their husbands. We have taken this reasoning literally but have applied it selectively, rejecting part of the resulting counsel as culturally motivated while accepting part of it as eternal truth. We therefore permit (in fact, encourage) women to speak and teach in church (culture now permits that), but in doing so, women must remain subordinate to men (eternal proper order).

When Paul relies on Creation order for his male-female hierarchy, he alludes to the Creation story in Genesis 2. In this story, Adam is created first, then Eve. In contrast, the Genesis 1 story¹¹ relates that there was simultaneous creation of male and female in the image of God. Many Mormons view the Genesis 1 Creation story as spiritual creation and the Genesis 2 account as temporal creation,¹² thus seeing the two stories as separate events, rather than as contradictory stories about the same event. Even so, the "temporal" account of Creation, as understood by Mormons, need not provide a pattern of dominance and submission, since it is understood to be allegorical, not literal. Just how

11. Most biblical scholars see the two creation stories as ones handed down through two separate sources, the priestly source in which Elohim is the Creator, and the Yahwist source in which Yahweh is the Creator. See Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 211-13 and 426-36. Note that in the KJV, Genesis 1 says "God" was the creator, while Genesis 2 refers to "the LORD God" (with Lord in small capital letters). "God" has been used in place of "Elohim" while LORD God is used in place of Yahweh.

12. B. H. Roberts, however, speculated that there had actually been two creations on Earth. This was tied to his theory of pre-Adamites who were destroyed before Adam and Eve were placed on the earth. See Richard Sherlock, "The Roberts/Smith/Talmage Affair," *Dialogue* 13, No. 3 (Fall 1980): 65-66.

much literalism should be applied to the scriptural account is a question which has not, as far as I know, been conclusively stated. President Kimball has said that the story of the rib is "of course, figurative"¹³ and has also suggested that husbands should "preside" rather than "rule."¹⁴ In addition, he has stated that "distress" for women at the time of child-birth would be more correct than "sorrow."¹⁵ Although these changes in wording are few, they significantly alter the meaning of the text. If the significance is not immediately apparent, it is probably because our frame of reference is such that this new preferred wording reflects the changes which have already occurred in our thinking and in our marriages. If we could look at these changes from a broader historical vantage point (from the vantage point of the first century A.D., perhaps), we would see them as a major step toward more egalitarian relationships. That this sort of re-evaluation of the meaning of the stories can occur is evidence that the stories are not prescriptions for what must always be. As the facts about the way we live and think change and progress, so will our understanding of these scriptures.

Another Pauline argument for the subordination of women to men—"Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression"—is more problematic to Mormon theology, since Mormons view the Fall as an event both necessary and desirable for the progress of Adam and Eve and the entire human family, while simultaneously viewing it as a transgression meriting punishment. The story contains a double message which is difficult to explain in any way consistent with other aspects of Mormon theology. If, as Paul claims, Eve was truly deceived and Adam was not, then why should Eve's punishment be greater than Adam's? Should not the punishment be greater for one who *knowingly* disobeys than for one who is "deceived"? If, on the other hand, Eve was not deceived, but rather fell intentionally as some Mormon leaders have claimed,¹⁶ in order to bring about the necessary condition of mortality and knowledge of good and evil, then why is she punished more severely than Adam, who enters mortality only after she urges him to do so? Mormon writings and sermons are replete with accolades to our first parents for their willingness to "fall,"¹⁷ yet Eve is

13. In *Woman* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 80.

14. *Ibid.*, 83.

15. *Ibid.*

16. John A. Widtsoe, *Rational Theology as Taught by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1965), 51. Widtsoe says, "The fall was a deliberate use of a law, by which Adam and Eve became mortal, and could beget mortal children. . . . The Bible account is, undoubtedly, only figurative."

17. For example, see Bruce R. McConkie, "Eve and the Fall," *Woman*, 57-68.

placed in a subordinate position to Adam for being the first to do that which she was sent to Earth to do. Moreover, Mormon belief holds that "men will be punished for their own sins and not for Adam's transgression,"¹⁸ yet *all* women are expected to give due submission to their husbands on account of Eve's transgression, an act over which no other woman has any control.

It would probably be more honest to admit that in Mormon theology Creation order and the Fall have little to do with women's position in marriage and in the church. Paul's statements on the subject serve as effective arguments for maintaining the status quo, but they are not at the root of the role designations of subordination for women and superordination for men. The real root of this hierarchical ordering, it seems to me, is the Mormon concept of man's, and woman's, ultimate destiny. Under this concept, woman is not subordinate to man because of Creation order and the Fall, but because God is male and because only men can become like God. Although it has become fashionable to give verbal affirmation to the equality of the sexes, and even to the *eternal* equality of the sexes,¹⁹ the fact is that our present-day concepts of heaven and eternal progression grew out of a theology which did not encompass any such egalitarian belief. For example, Orson Pratt said, "The Father of our spirit is the head of His household, and His wives and children are required to yield the most perfect obedience to their great Head."²⁰ Today's church leaders have said little about our Heavenly Mother's relationship to Heavenly Father and have not, to my knowledge, indicated whether they would agree with Orson Pratt. However, until we begin to see our ultimate destiny as a genuinely equal partnership, we will likely find it impossible to believe that women and men are inherently equal, and we will persist in using Pauline discourses about women to buttress our view that men are divinely designated to be eternal leaders, while women are divinely designated to be eternal followers. In a circular pattern of thinking, our concept of the heavens could continue to prevent us from allowing women to be leaders on earth, while the lack of women leaders on earth continues to cause us to project our earth-view into the heavens.

During the past several thousand years, the established pattern of who was authorized to act for God has varied significantly. It is possible to look at the circumstances of priesthood bearers from the time of Moses

18. 2nd Article of Faith.

19. For example, President Kimball has said, "We had full equality as God's spirit children. We have equality as recipients of God's perfected love for each of us" (Spencer W. Kimball, "The Role of Righteous Women," *Ensign* 9 [Nov. 1979]: 102).

20. Cited in Wilcox, "Mormon Concept," 14; from Orson Pratt, *The Seer* 1 (Oct. 1853): 159.

and see a pattern of expanding authorization. The time of Moses was a period of restrictiveness in which priesthood was limited to only one tribe of the House of Israel, the Levites. Christ widened the circle to include the Jews. Following Christ's death and resurrection, the circle expanded to include gentiles (including, seemingly, some women). Some ground was lost between then and the Restoration, but since the beginning of the church all men, except those of Negro ancestry, have been priesthood bearers. Then, in 1978, the circle expanded again to include all worthy males. Only women remain excluded. Perhaps the time is near when the circle can be widened again to include us all.

There are undoubtedly many women who prefer to remain excluded. They feel they enjoy all the blessings of the priesthood, while being free from its responsibilities. Yet the rising expectations of women today are causing many of us to re-examine our feelings about the strict role assignments which have circumscribed, compartmentalized, and divided us, male and female. I have often thought that those who feel women are not deprived by their exclusion from priesthood have not given much thought to how much women are denied by the exclusion. Filling important church offices is a great responsibility to be sure, but it is also a great opportunity for growth. Because women are denied priesthood, they are also denied this opportunity. In addition, they are denied the opportunity to be part of the ongoing decision-making process in our wards, our stakes, our church. In everything from deciding who will fill church callings to deciding where and when to purchase property, women are regularly asked to sustain decisions made by men, but they are given little opportunity to influence those decisions before they are made. Often these decisions have a great impact on women, as is the case when undertakings involving large time or financial commitments are openly discussed in priesthood meeting, without women being consulted about them.

Many women felt dismayed by the loss of autonomy they experienced when the Relief Society was "correlated," losing its magazine and the opportunity to raise and manage its own funds. While women were the ones most affected by these changes, they were not permitted to make the decision about how the Relief Society would be structured. The decision was made for them. By men.²¹ Hierarchical decision-making might well continue to cause dismay and dissent if women filled all church leadership positions on an equal basis with men, but the chances

21. Many women may have barely noticed the changes which occurred in the Relief Society in 1969-70, but others resented them. See Marilyn Warenski, *Patriarchs and Politics: The Plight of the Mormon Woman* (San Francisco: McGraw-Hill, 1980), 138-39.

of decisions being made which adversely affected women—such as the one a few years ago to deny women the opportunity to offer prayers in sacrament meeting—would be lessened, because women would be more likely than men, even well-meaning men, to be aware of how any given decision would affect other women. It is a simple matter of common experience.

Having an all-male priesthood affects our attitudes toward women and men more deeply than we realize. Many people sincerely believe that granting priesthood to men while denying it to women in no way influences their egalitarian ideals. But would we still feel the same if instead of an all-male priesthood, we had an all-female priesthood?

How would we feel if every leadership position (except those relating directly to men and children) were filled by a woman? If every significant problem had to be resolved by women? If every woman and every man who needed counseling from a spiritual leader had to be counseled by a woman? How would we feel if every member of the stake high council were a woman? If each month we received a message in sacrament meeting from a high councilwoman? If the presiding officer in all church meetings were a woman? If church courts were all held by women? How would we feel if we could ordain our twelve-year-old daughters, but not our sons? If each week our daughters blessed and passed the sacrament? If our young women were encouraged to go on missions, and our young men permitted to go only if they were older than our young women? If in the mission field all zone and district leaders were young women, to whom slightly older young men had to report? If our brother missionaries could teach investigators but were denied the privilege of baptizing and confirming them? How would we feel if only mothers could bless, baptize, and confirm their children? If men did most of the teaching of children, and women filled nearly all ward executive positions? If women addressed the annual men's general meeting of the church, to instruct them in how to best fill their role as men? Would men in this situation still be so sure that in the church men and women are equal, even though the men have a different role?

Before June 1978, we all readily understood that the denial of priesthood to black men was a serious deprivation. Singling out one race of men for priesthood exclusion was easily recognized as injustice, and most of us were deeply gratified to see that injustice removed by revelation. Yet somehow it is more difficult for many people to see denial of priesthood to women as a similar injustice. The revelation on behalf of black men apparently came in response to the heartfelt concern of church leaders for their brothers, a concern which moved them to "plead long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many

hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance."²² It was only after these "many hours" of prayer that the revelation came. I long for the day when similar empathy can be evoked on behalf of our faithful sisters.

There can be little question about women's abilities to fill priesthood assignments and perform priesthood ordinances. Women are functioning as ecclesiastical leaders in many faiths and are finding themselves equal to the challenges. Even in our own culture and faith, women have demonstrated their abilities to heal the sick and pronounce prophetic blessings, functions which have come to be strictly associated with priesthood.²³ Also, while there is no precedent within the church for general ordination of women, there is a limited authority conferred upon women temple workers, who perform temple ordinances for women. Donna Hill has noted:

Traditionally, the Mormon priesthood has been reserved for males, but there may be reason to speculate whether some form of it was intended for females. Heber C. Kimball, in his journal entry for February 1, 1844, said that he and Vilate were anointed priest and priestess "unto our God under the hands of B. Young and by the ways of the Holy Order." The significance of the ordination is not made known. Benjamin Winchester in his Personal Narrative wrote that Joseph promised his sister Lucy Smith that he would make her a priestess and the highest woman in the church if she would accept polygamy, but she refused.²⁴

The Kimball journal entry could be a reference to temple ordinances, but the Winchester statement sounds like Joseph Smith may have had something different in mind. Certain aspects of our belief system support the idea of ordination of women, such as the fact that we believe women "will become priestesses and queens in the kingdom of God, and that implies that they will be given authority."²⁵

It is my hope that we will not become entrenched in an absolutist position which precludes the possibility of dialogue and change on this issue. I am reminded of the absoluteness of terms with which the policy

22. D&C Official Declaration 2.

23. Carol Lynn Pearson, *Daughters of Light* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973), esp. chaps. 3, 5, and 6. See also *Mormon Sisters*, ed. Claudia L. Bushman (Salt Lake City: Olympus Publishing Co., 1976), esp. chap. 1.

24. Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 484. The statement continues: "See Winchester in the collection of Charles Woodward, *First Half Century of Mormonism*, NYPL. I do not know of any corroboration of Winchester's statement."

25. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, Bruce R. McConkie, comp. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956), 178.

of denial of priesthood to black men was defended,²⁶ and I wonder, if we had not been so adamantly certain that the Negro doctrine could never change, might it have changed sooner than it did? What part do we, the membership, play in change? Does our readiness to accept change influence its timing?

The subject of women having priesthood will almost certainly become a topic of discussion in the future. Already missionaries in the United States are being faced with questions about why women are not ordained. I have had several female, nonmember acquaintances express—unsolicited—what one woman put very succinctly: “Some of your missionaries knocked on my door the other day. I told them to come back when Mormon women could be priests.” For many of us, if not most of us, equality of the sexes has entered into our consciousness as a correct principle. We may not yet fully *believe* that women and men are equal, but at least we believe that we *should* believe it. As we come to accept this principle more fully, the inevitable question arises: why should maleness be the ultimate determiner of who shall be authorized to act in the name of God?

Men and women alike rightly consider the priesthood a great gift from God, and the right to bear the priesthood a special honor, an honor which is denied to women. If the day comes—and I believe it will—when women and men alike will be bearers of both the blessings and burdens of the priesthood, the artificial barriers of dominance and submission, power and manipulation, which sometimes strain our male-female relationships will lessen, and we will all be freer to choose our own paths and roles. In Christian unity, we will go forward together, with power to bless our own lives and the lives of others, and with opportunity for a fuller, richer spiritual life and participation for all the children of God.

26. Brigham Young taught, “When all the other children of Adam have had the privilege of receiving the Priesthood, and of coming into the kingdom of God, and of being redeemed from the four quarters of the earth, and have received their resurrection from the dead, then it will be time enough to remove the curse from Cain and his posterity” (JD 2:143). This and similar statements have been reiterated in such works as Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1958), 106, and in John L. Lund, *The Church and the Negro* (1967), 45-49.

An Expanded Definition of Priesthood? Some Present and Future Consequences*

Margaret Wheatley

ALTHOUGH AS MORMONS WE ARE FOND of saying that we are in the world but not of it, the boundaries we establish between ourselves and worldly influences become very thin when we consider our lives as members of the church organization. In its current form as a large, complex, hierarchical organization, the church exposes each of us to the same organizational dynamics that affect members of any similarly structured organization. These organizational dynamics exert powerful influences on our behaviors—influences which can be as compelling, and certainly less intended, than spiritual forces.

In seeking to predict what might occur in the church if priesthood were extended to women, it is helpful to focus attention on some of these organizational dynamics. Admittedly, there is a certain incongruity in analyzing such a quintessentially spiritual capacity as priesthood in the temporal terms of sociology and organizational behavior. But the fact that we must look at organizational dynamics before we can begin to understand the issues that would be raised by expanding priesthood to include women is an apt commentary on the complex and sometimes confused role that priesthood authority has come to play in the modern church. As access to the administrative ranks of the church—even to such ward callings as clerk and executive secretary—has become more and more contingent on holding the Melchizedek priesthood, priesthood has become both a spiritual power and a bureaucratic phenomenon.

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In thinking how an expanded definition of priesthood would affect members of the church, I have been intrigued by two questions:

1. What are some of the unintended consequences we experience presently because women do not hold priesthood?
2. If priesthood were extended to women, would the nature of priesthood change?

Although there are several ways of approaching these questions, one useful frame of analysis comes from the work of those in organizational studies who observe the impact of structure on behavior.¹ *Structure*, as I will use it here, describes not only the representation of the organization through its formal policies and organizational charts, but also other factors which informally control and influence members. These factors include norms like dress codes, values like "the customer is always right," and culture manifest as "the way we do things here." What is it in the design and day-to-day functioning of an organization or a task unit that affects people's attitudes about both the task and themselves? What kinds of behaviors are induced by what kinds of structures?

The central thesis underlying this type of analysis is that structure communicates, or, as Marshal McLuhan demonstrated several years ago, the medium is the message.² What people learn about themselves and their value to the organization is not what the organization says to them or about them, but what they *experience* while they are members of that organization. What they experience is structure:

- How are roles organized? (Are job descriptions rigid? Are people encouraged to take on activities beyond their roles?)
- Who gains access to what roles? (If you're black, don't count on anything above assistant manager?)
- What gets rewarded? (Strict interpretations of company policy? Creativity? Second-guessing the boss?)

1. Looking at the interrelationship between structure and work behavior is such a prevailing current in organizational studies that it is difficult to assign it to just a few specific theorists. Certainly the present focus on job redesign and worker productivity, and Japanese models of organizing work, are based on theories about the interrelation between job design and worker behavior. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, in *Men and Women of the Corporation* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), effectively synthesized the ideological roots of this approach and proposed her own seminal theory, which I use throughout this paper. For a condensed version of her work, see "The Job Makes the Person," *Psychology Today*, May 1976. Other major thinkers would include James Thompson, *Organizations in Action* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967), and J. Richard Hackman and J. Lloyd Suttle, eds., *Improving Life at Work: Behavioral Science Approaches to Organizational Change* (Santa Monica, California: Goodyear Publishing Co., Inc., 1977).

2. Marshal McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964).

- What does the organization chart look like? (How many layers of middle managers are there? Do many people report to the top?)
- How are decisions made? (Consensus? Fiat? In private deals?)
- How is the physical space laid out? (Which functions are near senior management? Who gets put in the annex?)

Messages communicated by structure are far more powerful than any statements issued by a corporate communications office or an employee relations function. People can't be told that participation is a value in their organization, and believe it, if it takes four layers of middle managers to approve and act on their decisions. People can hear that everyone's contribution is of equal value, but they won't believe it when only certain contributions are recognized in public forums or are rewarded with other, more desirable, assignments.

People are quick to sense when the espoused philosophy is out of synch with the structure—with what they are actually experiencing. In our own organizational lives, we all, at one time or another, have experienced this kind of schizophrenia. Certainly, it exists in many areas within the church with discrepancies between our theology and our church organizational experiences. Enough examples of this uncreative tension exist for several articles, but this tension can also lend understanding to the issues created by women's exclusion from priesthood. We need to ask what the present structure of priesthood communicates to both women and men about their abilities and potential.

Structure not only talks to people, it also helps shape them. People's behavior in organizations is a direct response to their experience in that organization. We constantly change, either for good or ill, as our organizational circumstances change. We are not static individuals, fixed in a repertoire of behaviors at age twenty-one, or thirty, or fifty. As adults, we continue to develop, respond, and change; and it is our *organizational* lives that are probably the most effective predictors of whether we will be energetic, ambitious, motivated individuals or lazy, recalcitrant benchwarmers.

Research support for the notion that jobs play a significant, even pivotal, role in shaping adult behaviors has been an important and evolving idea in the field of management theory in recent years. It has given support to the image of a fluid, dynamic relationship between the person and his/her organization. It has also helped clarify that when people's behavior becomes problematic, it is important to assess their organizational situation before ascribing their negative behaviors to such personal factors as socialization, gender, or race.³

3. Stephanie Riger and Pat Galligan, "Women in Management: An Exploration of Competing Paradigms," *American Psychologist* 35 (Oct. 1980): 909-10.

Using this structural perspective to analyze the current situation of women in the church leads us to some important insights. As the church is presently structured, it is only through priesthood that one can attain major administrative roles; it is only with priesthood that one is entitled to make any final decisions. Although theologically we feel secure in stating that God created men and women equal, structurally we communicate inequality. Women are often cited as the backbone of the church and extolled for the many hours of service they contribute. Yet the range of contributions open to them is quite limited compared to that of men, simply because of the priesthood requirement. No matter what role they serve in, women are further circumscribed by organizational rules which require that all decisions be approved by priesthood authority. They are even more constrained by organizational policies (or perhaps just norms) which limit their choices for lessons and group activities for Relief Society and Mutual. One need only compare the elder's quorum lesson manual with the Relief Society lesson manual to observe the far more structured and didactic approach taken towards women. This is evident both in the language of the manuals and the teachers' outlines provided for lessons. It would be interesting to assess differences in instructions given to men and women through lesson manuals as well as any differences in language and tone.

As an experienced observer of women in management in all types of organizations, both large and small, for the past twelve years, I have seldom seen women with more titular power and less real power than in the present women's auxiliaries.⁴ The higher a woman rises in the church organization, the less power she obtains, so that organizationally the presidents of the women's auxiliaries are among the most powerless women in the church. They oversee large organizations devoted to women's activities yet cannot make any decisions regarding those women. Women at the ward level hold them accountable for the programs and products issued by their organizations. But, in fact, they have little or no control over final content or budget, and limited autonomy in defining the scope of their leadership activities. The perceptions held by members that they are accountable can only add further burdens to already difficult leadership positions.

Since Correlation, women auxiliary presidents or committees they appoint provide only suggestions for lesson content. Working within strict guidelines prepared by the correlated curriculum plan, their sug-

4. For an excellent analysis of how this loss of power occurred, particularly the role played by the Correlation movement within the church in the 1960s, see Marie Cornwall, "Women and the Church: An Organizational Analysis," a paper presented at the Pacific Sociological Meetings, Apr. 1983.

gestions must be reviewed by both an editing department and by Correlation Review. Women sit on these committees, but men chair them. The lessons themselves are written by committees in the Curriculum Department composed of both men and women who have a church calling for that assignment. However, men chair the committees—even when the committee is preparing material for Relief Society and Young Women lessons—and they are supervised by employees of the Curriculum Department who are men. Finished lessons are submitted to the auxiliary presidents and their boards. Although the lessons may represent substantial changes from those originally suggested, the auxiliary presidents have little control over the final form of their major product.⁵ Although male auxiliaries experience the same loss of control over materials, the effect on them is mitigated somewhat because in other areas of church activity they still have opportunities to be decision makers. Women have no access to any decision-making positions, so their disfranchisement, even in an area where men suffer similarly, is more destructive. Perhaps the visible cooperation between the three women's presidents, begun during the summer of 1984 with regular meetings and the housing of all three in the Relief Society Building, signals a new cooperative relationship that can effect other administrative changes as well.

From a structural perspective, the messages that this structure communicates to women are, at best, problematic. Without authority to make independent decisions, even over matters of concern only to them, without access to the major decision-making forums of the church, with fewer role choices available, and with far fewer opportunities for contributing within the church hierarchy, women's experience in the church is substantially different from that of men.

There are, of course, many women in the church who do not explicitly experience the church in the terms of personal powerlessness that I have described. Undoubtedly, there are good numbers of women who feel they have more than enough opportunities already. But busyness is not the issue. What is key is the value publicly assigned to the task, the status and recognition it commands. Although we're told that all callings are of equal value, certainly this is true only in the sight of God. Among ourselves, we attribute greater value or personal worthiness to one calling over another. Again we need to ask, what messages are being communicated to women because of such differences in the opportunities available to them in the church? And we must wonder whether an organization which believes in the perfectibility of its members and teaches that we are all equal in the sight of God should feel content with a structure that communicates such disparate messages to men and women.

5. Ibid.

We need to be concerned about these disparities of opportunity. Research has shown that such inequalities can have dramatic consequences on the behaviors of individual members. Opportunity in organizations is defined as the chance to grow and develop, to be acknowledged for skills one possesses, to feel encouraged and rewarded to pursue new skills, to feel honored for one's contributions. Opportunity has been shown to influence many of the behaviors that are most central to the healthful operation of an organization, behaviors that provide energy to the system and that inspire people to contribute. At least five major categories of behavior are affected by opportunity.⁶

1. The first set of behaviors that opportunity influences centers around self-esteem. No matter how secure we might seem to be in valuing ourselves, each of us is susceptible to the reflected image of self we gain from others. Those who receive positive messages about their abilities through comments and rewards come to value themselves more highly. Those who feel locked into repetitious tasks or who feel invisible to others, gradually lose the self-esteem they once possessed. It is not uncommon to hear experienced and talented people voice genuine doubts about their abilities in the face of continual rejections. In the business world, men in their mid-forties who have been bypassed for promotion often become highly self-critical, losing confidence in skills they once felt proud to display. Frequently, what has changed for them is not their skillfulness, but the messages sent to them by their organization.

2. As a close corollary to self-esteem, opportunity also impacts on one's aspirations. If the organization seems to be reinforcing and rewarding, one develops aspirations to match those messages. Several years ago, Hannah Holborn Gray became provost of Yale University. At the time, a reporter asked her if she were interested in becoming a university president. She denied any such aspirations. When, a few years later, it was announced that she was to become the first woman president of a major private university—the University of Chicago—the reporter reappeared. "What made the difference?" he asked. "I don't know," she replied. "Being asked, I guess."

We saw the reverse of this positive phenomenon when affirmative action laws first came into being. Many managers, in their search for women to promote into managerial ranks, focused on talented secretaries. To their surprise, these women frequently met their offers of training and promotion with rebuffs. The situation was frustrating for the

6. Kanter, chap. 6; Margaret Wheatley, "The Impact of Organizational Structure on Issues of Sex Equity in Educational Policy and Management," in P. A. Schmuck and W. W. Charters Jr., eds., *The Sex Dimension in Educational Policy and Management* (San Francisco: Academic Press, 1981).

managers and uncomfortable for the secretaries, but it was also predictable. People who have been stuck in one organizational slot have, in response to that stuckness, curtailed any aspirations they might have held initially. In the absence of such aspirations, they fail to envision themselves in any other position. When a new position is offered to them, they respond negatively because there is no internal vision of themselves that matches this new opportunity. People who consistently experience little or no opportunity gradually suppress any larger vision of themselves and, in the end, present themselves to others as tentative, self-doubting, and content to stay where they are.

3. Opportunity also affects the extent to which members remain committed to their organization. Those who experience personal growth and recognition tend to feed their positive experiences back to the organization. They become motivated to do more, to spend extra hours working, to look for additional ways to contribute. But for those who have experienced negative feedback or no feedback, the response is the opposite. Gradually, they withdraw from a setting which cannot or does not provide them with positive experiences or with new occasions for growth. Their withdrawal may be complete; they simply drop out of the organization entirely. Or it may be less obvious; they continue to do what is asked but at minimally acceptable levels. Or they may transfer their energy to another arena, some other organization or activity, where the response is more positive. We all need positive reinforcement, and people seek it where they can find it—if not in one setting, then in another.

4. People low in opportunity often get labeled by others as gossipers. Such a phenomenon again results from blocked opportunity. If the task is not rewarding or if the organization is not supportive of our skills, we tend to turn to our peers for comfort and recognition. But the recognition to be obtained from friends may have less to do with how well we perform the task than with how skilled we are in some other area of particular interest to them. They may value us for our sports knowledge, our recipes, or our gardening tips. In the time we spend working together, more energy may go into this kind of information exchange than into the task itself. This diversion of energy from task to gossip or chatter is symptomatic of an opportunity problem. People who experience high opportunity respond to recognition of their importance and value by becoming exceedingly focused on the task; they waste little time in exchanges that are not related to completing their work.

5. The last major cluster of behaviors that opportunity affects has to do with problem-solving. People high in opportunity tend to be proactive in addressing needs and problems. If they perceive a potential problem, they act on their own initiative to solve it before it becomes a major issue. But for the stuck, organizational problems reflect their personal discontent. Instead of acting to resolve issues, they tend to sit passively

by and grumble. If someone suggests a solution, they are the first to criticize it. Since their own experience of the organization has been predominantly negative, they may derive some satisfaction from seeing the organization in trouble.

Even from this brief description of how opportunity affects behavior, a compelling case can be made for the need to examine opportunity issues in the church. Our current organizational structure, where the priesthood prerequisite prevents women from contributing in many arenas, creates the potential for many negative behaviors in women which do neither them nor the church any good. Where Mormon women have become hesitant and self-doubting, where they have withdrawn their enthusiasm and commitment, where they have become complaining or non-participative—any and all of these instances are indications that an opportunity problem exists. Such problems represent a loss of energy to the church. More importantly, for individual women, such problems represent lost chances for growth and spiritual development. There is a special irony that any Mormon would experience a sense of blocked opportunity, for, theologically, with the doctrine that human beings are potential gods and goddesses, we are the church of maximum opportunity. This doctrine of potential godhood illustrates the wonderful effects of high opportunity, for think what this concept does for our sense of self, our aspirations, and our commitment to pursue worthiness.

It is my hope that this analysis sheds some new light on the problems experienced within the church because of the present structure of priesthood. Looking into the future, what then might happen if priesthood were expanded to include women? Although it is interesting to speculate on how wards would function with a new array of priesthood holders, a more basic question worthy of speculation is how women's inclusion could affect the very nature of priesthood. My question is not how women would behave in exercising priestly responsibilities, but rather whether functions of priesthood would change once women were included. Again using an organizational lens, we can draw analogies from women in other settings to get some sense of what might occur within the church organization.

One of the clear lessons to be gleaned from observing the movement of large numbers of women into roles formerly restricted to men is that women do make a difference. As more and more women move into any particular job or profession, there is a discernible *decrease* in the status of that job. This "tilt phenomenon" can be noted in the history of several roles, but a few examples will illustrate the effect.

Up until the early 1950s, bank tellering was a male dominated profession. It was treated as an entry-level position, a precursor to upward mobility within the bank. Since that era, more and more women have taken on that work, so that now women comprise nearly 90 percent of all

bank tellers.⁷ The job no longer represents the beginning of a management career in banking; instead, it has become a dead-end position for most of its occupants. For those aspiring to bank management careers, other entry points have been created.

Women have dominated the field of education as teachers throughout most of our history. In the early 1960s, in response to the challenge to best the Russians in space and technology, emphasis was placed on upgrading our schools. A major strategy was to lure more men into the teaching profession as one means of improving the quality and status of public education.

Even in jobs that require long years of training, such as law and medicine, this same tilt is observable. During the late 1800s, women were represented in the field of medicine. As medicine became more specialized and more revered, women were relegated to the supportive role of nurse. However, in the past few years, both law and medicine have opened access for women, so much so that women's participation in schools of medicine and law varies from one- to two-thirds of any graduating class. This dramatic influx of women, however, is occurring at a time of increased public scrutiny and pressure on both professions. There are demands to demystify law, to make its language more accessible to lay persons and its costs more competitive; there are increasing pressures to cut medical costs and to return to a more personal and holistic approach to health care. Both professions are in the midst of profound changes that will ultimately effect both their practice and their status.⁸ I feel safe in predicting that, in the next several years, both professions will experience a loss in status and salary levels and that it is no coincidence that large numbers of women will be part of these professions as this downward trend continues. Although the pressures for change in these professions are numerous, no one influence will have as great an effect on diminishing their status as the fact that perhaps as many as 50 percent of their practitioners will be women.

This tilt phenomenon leads to some interesting speculations about the possible effects of opening priesthood to women. Women's inclusion into priesthood could result in at least two very different scenarios. In the first, a two-tiered system of priestly roles would develop, with a status ranking far more delineated than now exists between high priests and other Melchizedek priesthood offices. Discrimination between men and women priesthood holders would follow these status boundaries. At the first level, men and women would both function as elders, perform-

7. The Conference Board, Inc., *Improving Job Opportunities for Women*, Report No. 744 (New York: Conference Board, Inc., 1978), 14.

8. Derek Bok, "A Flawed System," *Harvard Magazine* 85 (May-June 1983): 38-45.

ing personal ordinances of family blessing, baptizing, confirming, anointing the sick, and sealing the anointing. The second level of priesthood, that of high priest, would be for men only and would still be the sole route to important administrative roles such as bishoprics and stake presidencies.

In a second scenario, priesthood and administrative functions would be separated from one another. Priesthood would be seen as a function of personal spirituality to be used to bless, anoint, baptize, confirm, heal, and administer other sacred ordinances. It would be separate from a leader's calling or administrative ability. Access to purely administrative roles would be based on other criteria; women might participate in these roles, although it is doubtful that they would occupy such positions in any significant numbers. If extending priesthood to women resulted in these effects, it might be the fastest means of sorting out true priestly functions from the administrative encumbrances that continue to grow and surround it. In other words, it might be the quickest and most effective means for eradicating unrighteous dominion.

This is not to suggest that women would exercise priesthood with more humility or virtue than men—only that church members would expect less of priesthood or imbue it with less secularly based symbols of status if women were priests. In fact, opening priesthood to include all worthy adult members of the church might provide us with a simple means of *restoring* priesthood to its rightful place, the administration of sacred rather than secular functions.

This analysis leads us, then, into something of a paradox. In the present church structure, where so much is contingent upon priesthood, women suffer from a lack of opportunity. This can result in negative or diverted energy, in a loss of commitment to the church, and in a loss of personal and even spiritual growth for large numbers of women. However, if priesthood were expanded to include women, priesthood might diminish in status, the criteria for admission to administrative office might simply change, and women might still be excluded from increased opportunities to contribute to the church. Obviously, even if granting women priesthood were to occur, other organizational dilemmas would not be solved.

Is it such a lose-lose game? For me, the dilemma does not create a sense of hopelessness for improving women's role in the church. Instead, it points to the importance of beginning now to separate priesthood functions from administrative activity. Before priesthood can be expanded—if it ever is—a tremendous amount can be done to improve women's position within the church and to clarify the priestly role. We need first to develop greater clarity about what priesthood is and where its power is appropriate, to sort out spirit-centered needs from bureau-

cratic exigencies. Having done this analysis, it would be easier to find ways to increase the range of contributions open to nonpriesthood holders. If we were clearer about what priesthood is, it might also feel less fearsome to think about including women.

What I am suggesting is a series of incremental steps focused on expanding opportunities for inclusion and decision-making to women. Such incremental changes would free up tremendous amounts of energy in those women who currently feel blocked or stuck. It is surprising to witness how quickly people's behavior becomes energetic and positive when their opportunities are increased even slightly. The process of creating opportunity has to be on-going, but effects are immediate and dramatic even with small positive changes.

But we cannot develop significantly different incremental changes without first reevaluating priesthood. All activities and roles need to be reviewed and criteria established for their performance. Where priesthood power is not essential to effective performance, we need to open those roles to women. Such a reevaluation will be difficult, given the primacy that priesthood has achieved in the church during the past several decades; but without it, we are locked into a situation that impedes the full use of women's contribution and gradually corrodes the visions they hold for themselves.

Opportunities for growth and recognition can be created if we:

- increase women's chances for meaningful participation;
- give more recognition for what is already being accomplished;
- increase women's control over their own activities.

Within the church, changes in four key areas would create increased opportunity for women and girls:

1. Improve women's access to decision-making forums.

- Examine meetings from which women presently are excluded. If women were to contribute, would it help the decision-making process? If so, open such meetings to women's auxiliary heads or other relevant women leaders at the ward, stake, and general levels of the church.
- Within the corporate offices of the church, employ more women in a greater variety of positions.
- Develop and emphasize leadership training skills for women so that they can more effectively participate in meetings.

2. Increase access to ward callings and duties. Several ward callings and offices have evolved into priesthood callings. Such callings should be reevaluated to determine if priesthood is a necessary prerequisite. Where it is not, women should serve in those offices equally with men.

3. Improve women's influence over their own organizations.

- Create more recognition and communication between women's auxiliary presidents and church women by having them travel more widely.
- Revise and streamline the decision-making process. Eliminate layers of decision-makers now required to approve curriculum, programs, etc.
- Support the newly instituted regular meetings among three women's auxiliary presidencies.
- Provide management training for women's auxiliary presidencies in such areas as communications, delegation, planning, running effective meetings, creative problem-solving.
- Institute salaries for all general board members.
- Improve Relief Society lessons by emphasizing teacher development, developing themes rather than lessons, and creating flexibility of choice for what lessons are appropriate for each ward.
- Expand or restore a definition of compassionate service that includes larger, more long-term projects such as hospices, home care for the elderly, etc.

4. Develop greater visibility for women's activities.

- Give equal space in ward newsletters to women-related activities.
- Give equal recognition to girl's youth activities.
- In sacrament meetings, have equal numbers of men and women speakers, and men and women prayer givers. End informal practice of men being the closing speaker. Have women speak on scriptural issues.
- In general conference, have more women visible and participating, and speaking on scriptural issues.
- Develop support for more women's conferences that include attention to a range of issues, including leadership training.

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We call upon you to exercise your God-given right to think through every proposition that is submitted to you and be unafraid to express your opinions, with proper respect for those to whom you talk and proper acknowledgment of your own shortcomings.

HUGH B. BROWN
May 13, 1969