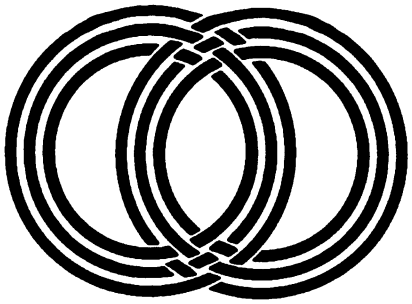
DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT



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.

DIALOGUE: A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT, VOL. 34, NO. 3 & 4, FALL-WINTER 2001

Contents

Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought is published quarterly by the Dialogue Foundation, subscriptions at P.O. Box 58423, Salt Lake City, Utah 58423, 801-274-8210; editorial at P.O. Box 20210, Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120, 216-491-1830. *Dialogue* has no official connection with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Third-class postage-paid at Shaker Heights, Ohio. Contents copyright 2001 by the Dialogue Foundation. ISSN 0012-2157. Regular domestic subscription rate is $30 per year; students and senior citizens, $25 per year; single copies, $10. Regular foreign subscription rate is $35 per year; students and senior citizens, $30 per year; air mail, $55 per year; single copies, $15. *Dialogue* is also available on microforms through University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1346, and 18 Bedford Row, London WC1R4EJ, England.

Dialogue welcomes articles, essays, poetry, fiction, notes and comments, letters to the editors, and art. Preference is given to submissions from subscribers. Manuscripts should be sent in triplicate, accompanied by return postage, and should be prepared according to the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, including double-spacing all block quotations and notes. For the reference citation style, please consult issues from volume 26 on. If the submission is accepted for publication, an electronic version on an IBM-PC compatible diskette or as an e-mail attachment, using WordPerfect, Word, or other compatible ASCII format software, must be submitted with a hard copy of the final manuscript. Send submissions to *Dialogue*, P.O. Box 20210, Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120 or inquire at dialogue@csuohio.edu. Artists wishing consideration of their artwork should send inquiries to the Art Director at the same address. Allow eight to twelve weeks for review of all submissions.

This periodical is indexed in the *ATLA Religion Database*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Wacker Dr., 16th Flr., Chicago, Il 60606, email: atla@atla.com; WWW: http://www.atla.com/.

2000 *DIALOGUE* WRITING AWARDS

The Lowell L. Bennion Editor's Award
ROBERT REES
"In a Dark Time the Eye Begins to See": Personal Reflections on Homosexuality Among the Mormons at the Beginning of the New Millennium
Vol. 33, No. 3 / Fall

History and Biography
GREG PRINCE
David O. McKay and the "Twin Sisters" Free Agency and Tolerance
Vol. 33, No 4 / Winter

Theology and Scripture
KEVIN L. BARNEY
Reflections on the documentary Hypothesis
Vol.33, No. 1 / Spring

Issues and Essays
WAYNE BOOTH
The Rhetoric of Hypocrisy: Virtuous and Vicious
Vol. 33, No. 1 / Spring

GARY C. LOBB
Mormon Membership Trends in Europe Among People of Color: Present and Future Assessment
Vol. 33, No. 4 / Winter

2000 *DIALOGUE* WRITING AWARDS

Steven Molen Student Essay Award
TANIA RANDS LYON
The Discovery of Native "Mormon" Communities in Russia
Vol. 33, No. 1 / Spring

Fiction
LEWIS HORNE
The Bypass
Vol. 33, No. 1 / Spring

DOUGLAS THAYER
Ice Fishing
Vol. 33, No. 2 / Summer

Margaret Rampton Munk Poetry Award
HOLLY WELKER
Indian Summer
Vol. 33, No. 3 / Fall

First Sporadical Rustin Kaufman Good Intentions Award
ROBERT PATTERSON
Hebraicism, Chiasmus and Other Internal Evidence for Ancient Authorship in Green Eggs and Ham
Vol. 33, No. 4 / Winter

Whole, Unhomogenized Religion.

I was drowning in a sea of religious mediocrity when the first issues of *Dialogue* rescued me and renewed my faith in my beloved religion, with its stimulating and challenging, deep, intellectual concepts undergirding a sustaining, productive, and thoroughly practical faith. The Lord had given us good minds and had explicitly instructed us to use them—to plow more than two inches deep and not just swallow what was preached from the pulpit by well meaning laity or by church "scriptorians."

When *Dialogue* became "elitist"—the province of the professional scholars in the church—I shifted my allegiance to *Sunstone* where, though also loaded with authors bearing M.A. and Ph.D. degrees, there was room for amateurs like myself. It has been my privilege to present half a dozen papers at the symposiums—three of which have dealt with the Pentateuch, the scriptural "heart" of the Old Testament, which has intrigued me since my course from Dr. Heber C. Snell at the Pocatello Institute in 1938.

I have tried hard to uncover what the various accounts actually said, stripping off the two millennia of exegesis that we have inherited from our Protestant converts and probing the implications which often modified, undermined, or even contradicted commonly accepted religious concepts. I find it a little strange that of the hundred or so papers on a Symposium program, mine were often the only ones dealing with the "holy" Bible, the first of our "four standard works."

I am having a rough time in my present Gospel Doctrine class, which seems to be neither a "school" nor a "study," nor even to deal accurately with the "Old Testament." My tolerant, well-educated teacher is doing his best, however, to blend my data in with the recycled religious catechism of the lesson. In my opinion, our lack of genuine Bible scholars is a serious defect in the church today. Religion teachers in our church universities are hopelessly deformed by the intellectual incest there and seem to have little actual scholarship to offer.

We need both *Dialogue* and *Sunstone*, along with the (copy-cat) *Religious Studies* and *Know Your Religion* indoctrination seminars. Homogenized Mormonism is my idea of Hell.

Lew W. Wallace, M.D.
San Gabriel, California

Surprised and Reassured

I am grateful to renew my subscription to *Dialogue*, to read the honest observations of so very many minds. I was totally shocked with the news of how blacks were treated by Mormon presidents in Salt Lake City. Before reading Michael Quinn's article (Vol. 33, No. 3) I had not known that Brigham Young directly contradicted Joseph

Smith's proposal in 1844 "to abolish slavery by the year 1850." Nor did I realize that Utah Mormonism's reversal of Joseph Smith's social policy toward Negroes was mirrored by the refusal of LDS presidents to follow the founding prophet's example of giving the priesthood to blacks who were not slaves.

In Greg Prince's essay, "David O. McKay and the 'Twin Sisters' Free Agency and Tolerance," (Vol. 33, No.4) we are introduced to the principles and also the need for members to adapt to the miscellaneous mistakes made in the church, "even by leaders."

In the same issue's "Letters to the Editor," I found Gerry L. Ensley's enthusiasm for Hugh Nibley's discovery of "Jesus Logia," and his parallelomania and his "conclusive" evidence in favor of Smith to be very informative. I agree that Nibley should be ranked "as the greatest Defender of Mormon Christianity in the 21st Century." I especially like this quote included in the letter: Jesus said, "If you could see your real image, which came into being before you, then you would be willing to endure anything." Thank you so very much!

Rhoda Thurtson
Hatch, New Mexico

Unfair and Misleading

Michael Quinn's "Prelude to the National Defense of Marriage Campaign: Civil Discrimination Against Feared or Despised Minorities," (Vol.33, No.3) is a misleading article that unfairly attacks the LDS church for its defense of traditional marriage. Quinn claims that the church is violating individual "civil rights" by opposing same-sex marriage and advocates a change in church policy. He seeks to show by his exhaustive study that the church's position regarding same-sex marriage is irrational and without historical justification. I suggest that Quinn broaden his essay to include an examination of the most important historical documents, the scriptures.

The opening pages of Genesis record the union of Adam and Eve and specifically endorse marriage between a man and a woman: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." (Genesis 2:24) This definition of marriage is also found in the *Doctrine and Covenants* 42:22, ("Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else.") and has been recently affirmed in the "Proclamation of the Family." Moreover, scriptures specifically condemn homosexuality. Leviticus 18:22 proclaims, "Thou shall not lie with mankind, as with womankind; it is abomination." (See also Deut. 23:17 and Jude 1:7.) The church has a moral and, in my opinion, a holy responsibility to support, encourage, and defend the definition of marriage as recorded in the scriptures.

Let me add that I was disgusted with the personal essay,

"My College Years: From the Autobiography of Levi Peterson." Where is the literary value in informing the public of Levi's youthful indiscretions and how many times he had placed his hands in a young lady's bra? I find much joy and meaning in my membership in the LDS church and would like to read some articles celebrating the Mormon faith.

G. Kevin Jones
Salt Lake City, Utah

Second Opinions

Thanks for all your hard work. I think the last issue of *Dialogue*, (Vol.33, No.3) was one of the best in the entire history of the journal. It is a gift to all of us.

Frances Lee Menlove
Depoe Bay, Oregon

Tonight my daughter called to discuss the newest issue of *Dialogue* and I realized I hadn't received mine. Either I have failed to renew, or you have lost my address. In case it is the first reason, I am enclosing my check. Please send me my *Dialogue* ASAP. My daughter refuses to lend me hers.

Ann Johnson
Sandy, Utah

My husband and I have read through the current issue of *Dialogue* (vol. 33, no.3) several times and have been through the whole gamut of emotions, from painful tears to wonder to gratitude. The entire collection is superb and needs to be read by every Mormon, including the church hierarchy. After reading Michael Quinn's superb essay, "Prelude to the National 'Defense of Marriage' Campaign: Civil Discrimination Against Feared or Despised Minorities," I was so deeply moved by the author's fairness and sincerity (and impressed by his impeccable scholarship) that I ordered a copy to be sent to a friend back east. I also wrote to friends in Salt Lake City, recommending that they purchase the fall issue of *Dialogue*. Each of these people wrote to me or phoned, saying how much they appreciated the essay. . .and the "wealth of resources in the author's footnotes." I have always believed that Quinn's footnotes are a generous gift to any historian; they authenticate the information in the text and facilitate further investigation.

In the face of all this, Armand L. Mauss makes a valiant effort to criticize the essay, suggesting among other things that it might be better if the author had avoided reiterating certain home-truths about Mormon history (our earlier policies regarding Blacks and other minorities, and the perceived threat we once posed to "traditional marriage" through the practice of polygamy). It seems to me, however, that in the church's own best interests, those are the very things we all need to acknowledge. As my friend commented, "If

things go they way they have gone before, we'll be eating our words in a few years."

Later I read Robert Rees' beautifully written, if painful, essay, "'In a Dark Time the Eye Begins to See': Personal Reflections on Homosexuality Among the Mormons at the Beginning of a New Millenium." And I found myself shedding tears when he is describing the costs in human suffering and loneliness resulting from the kind of homophobia chronicled in Quinn's essay.

Then Clay Chandler's "The Truth, the Partial Truth, and Something Like the Truth" gives us all food for thought. His conclusion is that we need to be able to trust our leaders to truly "value individual needs, and not just the needs of the institution." This might present a challenge for those leading a worldwide church, yet it is the church's very reason for being. It represents the substance of Christ's message and what he exemplified in his life.

It is amazing how each one of the essays in this issue brings to mind the words of Jesus, teachings that can serve as a yardstick by which we might measure our own relationships with our fellow human beings. Finally, though, Levi Peterson brought some comfort to my heart, as he so often does. His "My Early College Years," so typically honest and humorous, is strangely moving in its innocence.

This issue of *Dialogue* with so many strong contributions and its timely reminder of a sad history of discrimination qualifies as one of the best of many great issues of the *Journal of Mormon Thought*. My husband Bill joins me in expressing our appreciation to the authors and the editors.

Irene M. Bates
Pacific Palisades, California

Responding to the Response

In your fall 2000 issue (vol. 33, no. 3) Armand Mauss responds to Michael Quinn's essay on LDS church involvement in California's Proposition 22 battle. Mauss rightly recognizes Quinn's emotional involvement in the issue. It is clear that Quinn has a vested interest in the matter, and his tone does depart from a strictly scholarly one at times.

However, to dismiss Quinn's arguments on that basis, as Mauss does, is a leap we need not make. Consider Martin Luther King, Jr.: Despite his own minority status and clearly emotional arguments for Black Civil Rights, his position was sound and his cause was legitimate.

While Mauss eventually concedes that there exist deplorable attitudes among church leaders and members regarding homosexuality, he implies that since such thinking is not monolithic, Quinn is wrong to assail it as such. In this Mauss fails to recognize that when church leaders decided to organize a moral crusade (one in which the church directed member participation) against a gay and lesbian rights issue, the church leaders

and obedient members alike became monolithic, individual opinions notwithstanding.

To say that one should not attack the church on this issue because its members hold diverse opinions on the matter is akin to suggesting that the German army in World War II was not a legitimate target because its conscripts didn't all agree with Nazi policies. Perhaps Allied troops should have stopped and engaged each German soldier in a scholarly argument to determine his position before deciding whether to shoot him?

The fact of the matter is that when the church entered the political arena on this issue, it became a legitimate and, yes, monolithic target. Members who have enlisted in the church's cause, whether out of obedience or heartfelt support, can no longer expect noncombatant status simply because they may hold divergent opinions.

Furthermore, Mauss dismisses the church's unequivocal bigotry in decades past because it was well within the national consensus of the time as though this absolved it of any accountability. Does Mauss mean to suggest then that Mormons can easily ignore selected counsel of the General Authorities because they are simply parroting secular attitudes?

The church has set itself above the secular fray; it claims to speak for God. An error as grotesque as its earlier campaign against African-American equality taints all of its subsequent pronouncements and makes the morality of its moral crusades highly questionable.

Marty Beaudet
Boring, Oregon

We Can All Do Better

My experience, feelings, and thoughts resonate with Armand Mauss' conclusion to "On 'Defense of Marriage': a Reply to Quinn," (vol. 33 no. 3):

> It is. . .unfair to suggest that church leaders and others who do not accept the particular platform and agenda of the gay rights movement are ipso facto bigots or homophobes, just as it is unfair and unnecessarily prejudicial to dismiss the heartfelt claims and aspirations of homosexuals with charges of mere licentiousness, perversion, or depravity. We can all do better.

I believe, apparently with Mauss, that our church leaders' legitimate "issue is behavior, not orientation." My belief, however, and Mauss' statement that the issue is "behavior, not orientation" are not consonant with the language used by some of those church leaders.[1]

[1]If the newspapers are to be believed, this use by church leaders of "homosexuality" to mean "homoerotic behavior" is not limited to Mormons. It has been heard also from the Pope on his visit to Denver a few years back.

When those leaders have used language that explicitly condemns "homosexuality" rather than "homosexual behavior" as "gross sin," a number of my homosexual friends have felt condemned as inherently, grossly sinful—merely for having feelings they did not choose and would not have if they had a choice, and totally without regard to their behavior. Some of them have concluded that these church leaders cannot respond to their concerns with understanding, compassion, or charity. To these men, "homosexual" is the word for the orientation they recognize in themselves; it includes no necessary implication that they have ever acted on that orientation. To the extent these men value the teachings of those condemning "homosexuality," such condemnation can only teach them to devalue themselves as children of God. It is not surprising that some choose to reject the teachers rather than believe the teachers' message. It is not surprising that some of them seek love and acceptance where they believe they can find it. The words of our leaders condemning "homosexuality" give them no reason to believe they can find love or acceptance in our church. Perhaps the occasional repetition of condemning words could be more easily accepted if there were any significant effort to educate our people in the issues and approach of Dallin H. Oaks in "Same-Gender Attraction," *Ensign* 25 (October 1995). I have seen no effort to follow up with education on his more careful approach to the issue.

I cannot forget the friend who would not even let his Mormon friends know when he was dying of complications from AIDS. I cannot forget the friend who could no longer tolerate life as a homosexual Mormon and so ended it by his own hand. I cannot forget the pain and loneliness of friends who have maintained temple covenants, served faithfully in teaching and priesthood leadership callings and continue to feel misunderstood and rejected by the church. In teaching our youth, I cannot use church-produced materials that perpetuate the words and voice of a past prophet condemning the "gross sin" of "homosexuality" without providing any understanding of a distinction between orientation and behavior and without regard to the probability that some among our youth are experiencing feelings of homosexual orientation. The fact that some in our society cannot comprehend chastity and so use the word "homosexuality" to mean "homoerotic behavior" is not a sufficient excuse for the pain inflicted by words condemning orientation rather than behavior. We can all do better.

What understanding I have of the issue has been slow in coming. I am not a scholar or researcher in the area. I am not a trained counselor. I am not a homosexual. There is much I do not know. I do know from experience that it was possible in the 1950s and 60s for a bright but socially and psychologically isolated individual to grow up with no concept or knowledge

of homosexuality. I am not proud of my reaction to the first time I was propositioned by a man. I was sufficiently ignorant that he talked for a half-hour before I understood. I was sufficiently shocked, when I understood, that I reacted by hitting him hard enough to throw him across the BYU music practice room in which he had interrupted me. Even now, more than 30 years later, if I could remember that man's name and knew where to find him, I would ask his forgiveness. I would like to think that I can do better.

Eventually, certain college friends came to me for help in evaluating proposed cures for "homosexuality," including primal scream therapy. I had no expertise and no knowledge in the area. These people merely trusted my perceived intelligence, my willingness to read, my friendship, and my concern for them as individuals. Their trust and my concern were enough to get me past my earlier reaction so that I could begin to learn. In the end, I learned nothing that helped these friends accomplish their desired change of orientation. None of the therapies they attempted and no cumulative prayers succeeded in making the change.

At that time I was a teaching assistant in the BYU Philosophy Department. My first acquaintance with an institutional response by the church to the issue of homosexuality came from a conversation with one of the professors. He came to the office late one evening, obviously exhausted, and volunteered this explanation. He had just spent over two hours in a high council "court," considering the status of a young man who had "confessed" to a homosexual orientation and had never engaged in any unchaste activities with anyone. At the beginning of the proceedings, this high counselor was the only one of the stake presidency and high council who did not believe they were compelled to excommunicate the young man. At least for that day, this high counselor had persuaded them to take no action; the effort had been exhausting.

That early 1970s level of understanding by local church leaders has not entirely changed. As a high priests group leader I found myself participating more than a couple decades later in a group meeting discussion which wandered into the topic of homosexuality. Some believed that all persons of homosexual orientation should be immediately excommunicated whether or not they were chaste and held temple recommends. They could not accept the fact that there actually were such persons serving in bishoprics and on high councils. Others believed that orientation alone is nothing the church has any right to condemn. It quickly became clear that, had I tried to guess these men's beliefs, I would have guessed wrong. I had occasionally applied to these men in my thoughts categories such as "iron-rod" versus "liahona," conservative versus liberal, fundamentalist versus scientifically oriented. None

of those categories and none of my knowledge of these high priests' individual personalities and attitudes provided an accurate guide to guessing their beliefs on this subject. Instead, their beliefs seemed to be related to whether they had had any personal experience dealing with homosexual friends or loved ones and seeking to support them in their efforts to live the gospel while finding a way to live in this world. At least some of those without such experience had never been taught anything about the subject other than generalizations couched in language condemning "homosexuality" itself rather than inappropriate sexual behavior. It does not appear that our high priests group as a whole is prepared to do better, but I was pleased to learn unexpectedly that some already do well.

Years after my experience trying futilely to help my college friends accomplish the change they desired, I learned of Kinsey's finding that sexual orientation was a range rather than a dichotomy.[2] For some I know, this has been a liberating idea—at least for those few happily married husbands and fathers who have hinted to me of their being occasionally troubled by a homosexual thought or desire. For those who are somewhere in the middle of the range and have some sexual attraction to both the same and the opposite gender, environmental influence seems to have a greater effect on which attraction is experienced more often. Intuitively, those in the middle have a wider range of possible sexually fulfilling behaviors than do those near either end of the spectrum. Even Michael Quinn refers to "the small minority of Americans who *define* themselves as homosexual."[3] (Emphasis added.) I wonder how large a role self-definition plays in determining orientation. It appears, at least in other matters, that what we choose at any point to believe about ourselves can have an influence on the further development of personality. A young person with some homosexual feelings lacking the concept of sexual orientation as a range may be inclined to apply one of the alternative dichotomous labels to him or herself prematurely. If in fact such a person were in the middle of the range, such self-labeling might affect choices of environments and experiences in ways that presumably could reinforce the choice of a label rather than open up other possibilities. While such self-definition might play a significant role for some, for many it seems to be largely irrelevant. For those near either end of Kinsey's range, it seems rather that the process is more one of self-discovery.

---

[2]Mauss cites Alfred C. Kinsey, W.B. Pomeroy, and C. E. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1948) for this idea.

[3]"Prelude to the National 'Defense of Marriage' Campaign: Civil Discrimination Against Feared or Despised Minorities," D. Michael Quinn, *Dialogue*, vol. 33 no. 3, Fall 2000, footnote 2.

It may be that only a small group of those who define themselves as homosexual might have defined themselves as heterosexual (or vice versa) if they had had different educational and environmental influences in the formative years. Still, I wonder how one can responsibly teach any group of young men about sexuality, not knowing who among them may experience occasional homosexual feelings or may have never experienced heterosexual feelings. I have never heard of these issues being discussed with our young men. I have seen and heard of only one brief discussion in Sunday School of the requirement of Christianity that we respond to apparent homosexuals in a charitable way—that, regardless of their choices of behavior or lack of ability to choose orientation, our homosexual brothers are just as significantly our "neighbors" as are those who are heterosexual. That discussion was not planned, but was prompted by the homophobic remarks[4] of one of the young men in the class. How are young men struggling with issues of personal orientation to find understanding or learn to feel that the issues can be discussed with their church leaders if homophobic remarks are tolerated, misleading word choices by our leaders are repeated, and educational efforts are lacking? How can we justifiably leave all such education in Christian behavior to parents? Is there any reason to suppose that Mormon parents generally understand the issues? Perhaps they need to be taught. I believe we can all do better.

Quinn's considerable abilities in research, analysis, and documentation are obvious in his work. Less obvious is the degree to which his exercise of those abilities is marred by his agenda. In discussing the nature of Quinn's critique, Mauss has aptly and sympathetically pointed out some of those errors. Others have been less sympathetic. I recall one letter to an editor pointing out numerous errors and contextual problems with respect to Quinn's book *Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans*. There have been other challenges to Quinn's scholarship on the subject as well. I have not yet discovered Quinn or anyone responding to these challenges except by denigration, e.g. of the F.A.R.M.S. review (which, indeed, has problems of tone and analysis similar to Quinn's), or by bald assertions that his work is "impeccably researched. . . ."

Neither Quinn nor a copy writer remarking. . .hyperboli-

[4]It has seemed to me, though entirely without support in any research I know of, that much of the little homophobia I have had occasion to observe in male acquaintances finds its origin in fear—fear of the unknown, the different; fear of being perceived as a possible sexual object when they would rather be the perceiver of others as sexual objects; fear of the possibility of homosexual feelings in themselves and of the resulting personal and social issues.

cally on Quinn's "impeccable research" seems likely by such writings to have any positive effect on our church leaders or on our church's or society's learning to love or accept our homosexual brothers and sisters. Neither the remarks of church leaders (local or otherwise) condemning "homosexuality" rather than "homosexual behavior" nor the church educational materials perpetuating such miscommunication seem likely to increase the ability of church members generally to deal with our homosexual brothers or sisters with Christian charity. Nor do such remarks appear likely to help those struggling with the issue personally or with friends or loved ones to have trust in our leaders' understanding or compassion. I hope we will all do better.

Jim Rasmussen
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dismissing the Dismissive

I respectfully suggest Bro. R. Forrest Allred (vol 33, no. 3, vii) together with his named champion Steve Oakey (vol. 33, no.1: xix), both "dismissing the Ostler/Sears quagmire," read—or reread—my published letter in that same issue articulating the central importance of human free will to Jesus' Gospel, the classical problem of theodicy, as well as LDS theology's singular and incomparable ability—per Ostler and contrary to any other Christian theology on this Planet—to solve completely theodicy's otherwise insoluble problems.

I suppose it's proper for *Dialogue* to publish such "dismissive" letters as those by Allred and Oakey, but all such publication shows is that some people (even LDS) haven't the foggiest idea of what is truly at stake in the important so-called "Ostler/Sears quagmire," a very real quagmire stemming from orthodox Christianity's erroneous formulation of the "infinite" God and the mistaken "solution" in both Catholicism (St. Augustine) and Protestantism (Luther) that emphatically and disastrously characterizes mankind as being without free will.

Dialogue is above all, the product of human free will. It teaches us especially when we're mistaken.

Gerry L. Ensley
Los Alamitos, California

Reason beyond Logic

In his "Philosophical Christian Apology Meets 'Rational' Mormon Theology" (volume 33, number 3: 66-95), L. Rex Sears astutely points out the incompatibility of the traditional ontological and cosmological arguments for the existence of God with the Mormon understanding of God. He may have also noted the incompatibility of those arguments with the average Christian believer's un-

derstanding of God. The God derived from those arguments must exist outside of time. Feeling, planning, passing judgement, and answering petitionary prayer are all activities that can only take place in time. As physicist Paul Davies (1995 winner of the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion) notes, a timeless God "cannot be a personal God who thinks, converses, feels, plans, and so on for these are all temporal activities. . . .There is thus a grave and fundamental difficulty in reconciling all the traditional attributes of God." (*God and the New Physics*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983, 134.) The Mormon God is far closer than the philosophers' God to the divine father loved by the Christian faithful. If it is unfortunate that Mormon apologetic cannot avail itself of some of the traditional arguments of Christian academic philosophy, one can argue that it is also unfortunate for Christian academic philosophy that it cannot avail itself of Mormon apologetic.

Yet Sears uses Mormonism's incompatibility with Christian academic philosophy to argue that there can be no "rational" Mormon apologetic while he seems to accept uncritically traditional Christian philosophical arguments. I have not had the advantage of reading the full dissertation from which he derived his *Dialogue* article. However, on the basis of the article, I believe that he overstates his argument by using too narrow a standard in examining whether Mormon theology is "rational."

The substantial first part of the article reiterates traditional arguments for the existence of God from reason alone as most famously formulated by Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century. This form of argumentation seems to be Sears's standard for what constitutes "rationality" in a theology. However, there are other standards that could be reasonably (!) used in determining whether a philosophical system is "rational." One of these is the modern scientific worldview that measures arguments by their power to explain our experiences. Another modern approach is to ask whether a philosophical system is internally coherent and consistent in addressing significant questions.

This latter approach appears to be the standard that the Mormon theologians cited by Sears used in their endeavors. At least to John A. Widtsoe, a "rational" theology is "an exposition, it is not an argument." His purpose was to explicate the restored gospel "to show [its] coherence, reasonableness, and universality" not to "correlate the doctrines discussed with current philosophical opinions." (*Rational Theology*, Salt Lake City: Signature, 1997 [reprinting 1915 edition], iii.) As Sears notes, some of the language of the traditional arguments attempting to prove the existence of God by an appeal to reason alone seems to have drifted into the work of the early Mormon theologians. However, these refer-

ences are only incidental when compared with those theologians' far larger purpose, which was to organize the myriad, disconnected revelatory insights received from Joseph Smith into an exposition that is internally coherent and addresses the vital questions of the modern seeker. Can one not find their labors to be "rational" even if their project was different from that of Aquinas?

Further, the Thomist arguments for the existence of God are hardly the whole of the philosophy of religion. Is Sears suggesting that Mormon theology's incompatibility with some of those arguments means that Mormon theology then has nothing reasonable to say about a host of other important questions addressed by "philosophical Christian apology"? More even than the contradiction between the philosopher's timeless God and the believer's personal God, the problem of evil looms as a far more pressing issue in our modern age than proving the existence of a God from abstract syllogisms. Is Mormonism's powerful theodicy to be dismissed because its God cannot be proven from the arguments of medieval logicians?

Another standard of "rationality" informs the modern scientific worldview, for which explanatory power is the goal, not obtuse ratiocination disconnected from external experience. In attempting to prove the existence of God from reason alone, the Thomist arguments (whether offered in traditional Christian forms or in most Mormon variations) all in the end invoke a "god-of-the-gaps." "God" is defined crudely as that which causes phenomena for which there is no other explanation. As modern science produces non-theistic explanations for phenomena, the space for this God of the ontological, cosmological, and other philosophical arguments recedes. For example, most of Reverend Paley's examples in Natural Theology for the argument from design involve biology, and were considerably undermined, as Sears notes, when Darwin offered a good alternative materialist explanation.

However, Sears ignores a fascinating recent rebirth of the argument from design in the domain cited by Alma (and largely dismissed by Reverend Paley)—astrophysics. Briefly, modern cosmology recognizes that the big bang event could not have yielded a universe hospitable to complex life forms if numerous physical constants had not been "fine-tuned" to incredibly precise values which so far do not derive from any theoretical formulation. To cite one example from the most outspokenly atheistic of the prominent cosmologists, Steven Weinberg, a life-supporting universe would not have existed if the values of the primeval vacuum energies had differed by as much as one part in 10120. (*Scientific American*, October 1994: 49.)

Of course, this and many other cases of universal physical constants which are "just so" as to make complex life possible do not

logically "prove" that there is a divine designer. Nor, as Sears and apparently Roberts note, do they necessarily tell us anything about the characteristics of such a designer. However, they do give new force to the use of the argument from design which Sears attributes to the *Lectures on Faith* and to B. H. Roberts, which is—as a supplement to faith in God—initially derived from other sources. Moreover, I would argue that this modern version makes the argument from design more useful to Mormon apologetic than Sears admits, for it implies that the divine designer wanted a universe capable of supporting complex life forms. Alone among religious dogmas, Mormon cosmology explains why God(s) would form a life-sustaining universe (see Moses 1:39). This insight does not prove the existence of the Mormon God syllogistically, but it does give Mormon cosmology explanatory power, which is the standard for scientific rationality.

The deficiency of Sears's narrow standard for rationality is most telling in his discussion of what he calls the argument from spiritual witness. As Sears notes, this is the foundation of most Mormons' belief. In Mormon theology it is the primary source of knowledge about the most important truths. Widtsoe states that "those who can not feel and in part commune with the Holy Spirit are blind to the larger part of the universe" (*Rational Theology*, 72). Although Sears's argument is unclear, it seems to consist of two propositions.

The first proposition is that revelation must always be rejected as a basis for belief because it is not perceived clearly or uniformly. It is true that inspiration of the Holy Spirit is an internally perceived phenomenon, which limits its applicability to a general argument that seeks to require others to accept what the proponent has perceived. However, Sears's conclusion does not necessarily follow from that premise. Even if a personal inspiration is not argumentatively binding on others, it does not follow that inspirations are, therefore, invalid to the person who perceives his or her own as convincing. Also, as noted above, purely logical arguments from reason alone are not the only form of "reasonable" theology. Sears is right that ultimately the foundation of Mormon apologetic lies outside logical argumentation from reason alone. However, in this sense, so does all of modern thought. Just as the modern scientific worldview has rejected the Greek notion that natural phenomena could be understood by reasoning alone without experimentation, so Mormonism rejects the Thomist notion (derived from the Greeks) that theology can be understood on the basis of reason alone without the spiritual experimentation which leads to revelation.

Sears's second proposition questions the validity of spiritual witness as a basis for belief because such belief may be self-in-

duced. His principal point of attack appears to be the teaching in Alma 32:27 that the search for belief must begin with a desire for belief. Initially he appears to argue that any belief thus derived is invalid because it is "circular." The limits of the use of pure logic without regard to experience as a standard of rationality are well illustrated here. Circularity is a concept of logic. However, spiritual witness is an experiential, not a logical, proof. A billiard ball will go in the corner pocket if hit at a certain angle with a certain spin and velocity regardless of my desire that it do so. In modern scientific thought, the desire of the experimenter that an experiment produce a certain result does not effect the validity of the result. One can suspect in such a case that the experimenter's bias might have impacted the experiment. However, the correction in that situation is for others to repeat the experiment, not to reject the result out of hand as a matter of logic alone.

Indeed, Sears's argument against the validity of spiritual witness undermines not only Mormon apologetic, but any Christian apologetic that relies on biblical, mystical, or spiritual authority, for his arguments against Mormon spiritual witness are equally applicable to any form of religious belief based on communion with the divine. Although not necessarily framed in Mormon-style terminology, does any Christian believer have any other basis for faith in the Incarnation or the Resurrection? Does Sears reject all propositions of Christian faith for which he cannot make an argument from reason alone? If so, of what use is philosophical Christian apology if it eliminates all of Christianity except the reasonings of the scholastics?

Sears's only proper argument against spiritual witness is that psychology provides an alternative explanation. However, he appears to leap immediately to the assumption that we should accept this as some kind of given logical proposition that requires no further examination. I will grant that many in the secular world would accept this proposition as uncritically as Sears does. However, this proposition lies in the realm of science and evidentiary investigation, not abstract philosophical argumentation. Reverend Paley's examples of divine design in living things did not fall out of favor simply because Darwin suggested an alternative explanation. They fell out of favor because Darwin's explanation comported over time with an enormous amount of evidence.

Unfortunately, the psychological investigation of religious experience is highly undeveloped compared to Darwinian biology, and unlikely to receive much proper attention, given the secular bias of the modern social sciences. Further, as noted above, because it is internally perceived there is an inherent difficulty in subjecting spiritual witness to external experimentation. Nonetheless, the possibility of an explanation does not prove

that explanation, and spiritual witness remains inherently a matter of experience, and thus ultimately beyond Sears's abstract logic. Those of us who have gone through the exercise of seeking a spiritual witness know that beginning with the "desire to believe" in no way dictates the subsequent experience, which is so often full of unyielding doubts, unexpected turnings, and unsought enlightenments. Indeed, even more attenuated motivations for making the "experiment upon my words" have led to positive results—we all know converts to the LDS church who started out intending to prove it wrong. Personal observation indicates that a desire to know can be sufficient. Certainly sufficient to permit us to discover what to believe, which is where I believe God wants us.

And, please, no wisecracks about how Mormon it is to end with a testimony.

James W. Lucas
New York City

A Discourse on Method

I was a graduate student at Stanford in 1965 when Wesley Johnson, then on the faculty there, visited with me one day about a publication that would appeal to and possibly help the spiritual stability of some intellectual members of the church. By fall, Wes and Gene England were already well on their way to developing *Dialogue*. My major concern since then, voiced later also by Lowell Bennion, has been that some who write for *Dialogue*, *Sunstone* and other similar publications will fail to show that degree of wisdom and balance needed to approach truth, and won't handle their topics with the kind of humility and fairness required to come up with an accurate portrayal of the church, its history, and leaders.

To illustrate, I'm going to draw on an old discussion. In your Spring 1999 issue (vol. 32, no. 1, 91) Glenn Hettinger attempts to vindicate Fawn Brodie's disputed claim of a sexual relationship between Thomas Jefferson/Sally Hemmings, and thereby to discredit Louis Midgley's evaluation of Brodie's scholarship. Hettinger notes the apparent match between Jefferson's paternal uncle's DNA and that of the descendents of Sally Hemmings. This clearly frames the issue, but it would have been fairer had he also raised the possible explanations for this circumstance other than the one Brodie put forth.

It would be well for historians and others not to jump to conclusions until a sufficient body of evidence is in. If history is held to the same standard of integrity as science, then we will probably never know precisely the truth about the Jefferson-Hemmings relationship. In science, truth is only approached, never really established. Scientific discoveries well grounded in data through the correct use of the scientific method have

yielded much, but there is still a possibility that some other variables not yet known will move a given theory just a little closer to the truth—or perhaps even in another direction. Science gets closer to the truth by eliminating as invalid alternative possibilities, until the evidence seems almost overwhelming that when A is found, so is B or, more powerfully, A is a cause of B.

History, in its own way, faces the same burden of identifying and eliminating possibilities that are at variance with an author's thesis or interpretation. Brodie believed 1) that Thomas Jefferson had a long-term sexual relationship with Hemmings and 2) that there was no prior marriage covenant of any kind legitimizing this relationship. Let us look at these two "hypotheses" in relation to "truth."

First, to prove the existence of a long-term sexual relationship between the two, valid, incontrovertible primary-source evidence is needed. Seeing two people in one another's company, even knowing they are or have been alone together in a room, does not constitute such evidence. Perhaps legitimate primary witnesses saw them together and assumed they were having sexual relations. It is almost impossible, however, to verify that such activities actually took place, since nobody appears really to have witnessed what went on between them in private.

Assuming that having been alone with someone other than one's spouse constitutes valid evidence that illicit sexual relations have taken place would put millions of men and women, then and today, under a ridiculous burden of presumed guilt. Even if such action has a potential risk and precautions should be taken to avoid improper behavior, a presumption of such behavior would render private, transgender conversations or meetings virtually impossible in any setting.

To validate Brodie's thesis, Hettinger would have to demonstrate from the DNA testing that Thomas Jefferson himself, not just someone male from a pool of blood relatives, was the biological father of Sally Hemming's children. Does this assurance exist? Not yet, certainly. I am not necessarily saying that Brodie's assertion is false or that the child is not Thomas Jefferson's, but only that it is early to start making categorical pronouncements. Sufficient proof is lacking.

Second, for the sake of argument, let's concede the relationship. Are there alternative explanations that allow Jefferson's personal integrity to remain intact? Suppose that Jefferson was indeed drawn to Hemmings and would have preferred to legitimize this interest openly through formal marriage. At that time, such a move would have been legally impossible and politically suicidal. Suppose that Jefferson, however, had managed to make a private, binding, even religious contract with Hemmings, a marriage, and kept it secret and then carried on with her as best

they could as husband and wife. Of course, there is no first-hand evidence at all for this hypothesis, but also no less evidence than for his alleged affair. So why hasn't anyone jumped to this conclusion, which is far more consistent with what we know of Jefferson's character in regard to sexual morality?

This brings us to Joseph Smith, who was likely Hettinger's major interest in writing his article. If what Fawn Brodie says about Joseph Smith's sex life is accurate, then he acted in opposition or disobedience to the very principles of morality he outlined and preached as part of the restoration. There are clear guidelines in Doctrine & Covenants, 42, for example, that not only is adultery unacceptable but lust as well. Could Joseph Smith have espoused these principles as ardently as he did and at the same time done what Fawn Brodie accuses him of doing? Those "primary witnesses" who accused him of this, given their estrangement from the prophet and the church, are no more and no less credible than the Pharisees who inferred indirectly that Jesus was guilty of immorality because he spent time with sinners.

Joseph Smith was in a very difficult social position as leader of the church. He was young, vibrant, handsome, and charismatic. Women who were filled with happiness as a result of the Gospel must have been extremely grateful to the prophet, and it would seem strange indeed if many had not wanted to express verbally, perhaps even with hugs of appreciation, these feelings. How rewarding but awkward it must have been for Joseph Smith to be on the receiving end of such adulation.

Of course, men and women in the church need now, as they needed then, to be circumspect in their actions toward others to whom they are not married, and there is no evidence that Joseph did not follow this guideline. How many personal priesthood-type-interviews conducted by the Prophet Joseph Smith could be seen by some as sexual encounters, without any corroborating evidence? We take precautions today as they must have then. Since I, who am less worthy than Joseph Smith, have never had sexual relations with anyone other than my wife and have counseled in private with many students as a teacher and a bishop, I can assume with even greater assurance that neither did Joseph Smith act improperly with any woman. Those who believed then that plural marriage was not decreed of God showed ignorance of Old Testament prophets and their lives. Since Joseph Smith was commanded to institute the practice, he was perfectly justified by the Lord in taking other wives and having relations with them.

My own experience with *No Man Knows My History* leads me to believe that Fawn Brodie was often not discerning, wise, or fair in her use of primary sources and that, as historian friends have pointed out, she took statements out of context

to make her point, ignoring the larger significance of the historical text she used. After reading Bernard DeVoto's copy of the work, noting his affirming comments in the margins, but examining closely Brodie's references and footnotes, I came to the conclusion that she seemed either unable or unwilling to discriminate between valid and suspect primary sources. It is little wonder that her psychohistorical account was driven by her beliefs and not by the facts.

In reading other assertions about Joseph Smith's character, I thought to myself there are other explanations for the situations Brodie has laid out, explanations more in keeping with the character of the prophet and his teachings. It was in this exercise that I came to believe that accounts about Joseph Smith usually give us a much greater insight into the author than they do into their subject. Fawn Brodie's preoccupation with sex may tell us far more about her than about him.

We get down, of course, to whether one has a testimony of Joseph as a prophet. If he was one, his thoughts, feelings, words and actions did not need to be perfect, but they must have remained within the bounds the Lord has set for a prophet to retain the mantle of office. I believe Joseph Smith and all his successors down to Gordon B. Hinckley are prophets of God.

Phillip C. Smith, Ph.D
Laie, Hawaii

Mormon Studies in a European Setting

Douglas J. Davies

I AM PARTICULARLY GRATEFUL FOR THE INVITATION to edit this special edition of *Dialogue*, largely because it allows me to address readers in a relatively informal and conversational way on certain academic issues which often remain implicit or ignored. While these topics are important for what can be called "Mormon Studies," they apply equally as well to others. In this introductory paper, I mention first my own involvement in LDS studies, then consider the role of conferences, and finally, discuss the papers comprising this volume.

LDS Studies

My own engagement with LDS material was accidental, stemming from a postgraduate studentship from the British Social Science Research Council, held at the Institute of Social Anthropology at Oxford. This was in 1969, following my undergraduate studies in anthropology at Durham University. An insightful meeting with the anthropologist Godfrey Lienhardt resulted in the rapid conclusion that I should work more in the sociology of religion rather than become an Africanist. Accordingly, I was taken on by Dr. Bryan Wilson, whose research seminar at All Souls College was a creative center for the study of numerous religious movements. Here I engaged with Mormonism, a religion practically unstudied in the U.K., and of which I had no previous experience or knowledge. Through initial, friendly contacts with Latter-day Saints in Wales, I began a life-long interest, interspersed—as academic life demands—with work on many other topics, including Sikhism, Anglicanism, and the themes of death, cremation, and burial.

The mid 1980s provided opportunity for me to revisit much of my earlier research material, particularly the extensive work I had conducted on the Bodleian Library's holding of the *Millennial Star*, a gem of a find for a young postgraduate at a time when academic studies of Mormonism

were not particularly extensive. This resulted in the volume *Mormon Spirituality: Latter-day Saints in Wales and Zion.*[1] I then helped create a Center for Mormon Studies at Nottingham University, where we were able to develop a small library as well as host postgraduate students who came to work with me on a variety of their own projects. Numbers were small in terms of the U.K., but this was a significant move, with doctorates completed on a variety of topics: Craig Marshall on higher education and Mormon student identity, Tyler Moulton (from Brigham Young University) on the notion of salvation, and Warrick Kear—who appears in this edition—on music in Mormonism. These students were all active Latter-day Saints, mostly employed in the LDS Church Education System (CES), as was Julian Jones, whose M.A. considered members' attitudes to LDS bishops. Barry Fox, who was then head of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Britain, completed his doctoral work on the history of that movement in the U.K. Much of this research was conducted without the enormous archival reserve available in U.S. centers, and the survey aspects in particular generated their own databases. Even this small focus of LDS study resulted in numerous inquiries from and contacts with interested parties in the media, other churches, and various LDS members potentially interested in research.

One significant aspect of LDS research in the U.K., which we were able to foster, took the form of two academic conferences devoted to Mormon Studies, and I will return to a brief description of these after discussing the topic of academic conferences in general. I must add that I enjoyed general support from LDS church officials and members in the U.K., including Jeffrey R. Holland before his appointment as one of the Twelve Apostles.

After moving to the University of Durham, I had to leave behind whatever resources had been garnered at Nottingham and begin afresh. One valuable contribution was made by Prof. Armand Mauss, who was able to spend a short period as a visiting research fellow at Durham. His personal and scholarly support were invaluable, both in his advice associated with my book *The Mormon Culture of Salvation,*[2] and also with much help in preparing this particular edition of Dialogue for publication. Additionally, a variety of visits and lectures, including one in December 2001 by Prof. Roger Keller as holder of the Richard L. Evans Chair at Brigham Young University, have stimulated undergraduate interest in LDS religion at Durham. Prof. Keller's predecessor in that chair, Dr. David Paulsen, has also contributed much to my reflection upon LDS spirituality, not least through his friendship.

[1]Douglas J. Davies, *Mormon Spirituality: Latter-Day Saints in Wales and Zion* (Nottingham: Nottingham Series in Theology, 1987; distributed in the U.S. by Utah State University Press, 1987).

[2] Douglas J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation: Force, Grace and Glory* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

Such scholarly interaction, stimulus, and support are of particular importance for a subject like Mormonism when taught in an institutional and cultural context where it is certainly of minority interest. It is to the credit of both Nottingham and Durham University Departments of Theology that they were happy to host this academic venture. Similarly, I have gained a great deal from participating in a variety of LDS events in the U.K. and in Utah, including as a visiting professor at Brigham Young University. In the final analysis, much scholarly work is initiated and fostered through personal exchange, whether through our original mentors or through subsequent contacts, a point which appropriately brings me to the subject of conferences.

Conferences

Conferences are, in and of themselves, an interesting phenomenon. The academic profession would hardly be what it is without them, since they furnish a prime arena for people to meet and gain some personal sense of each other. Just how we judge scholars is a complex issue that has, as yet, remained beyond formal academic scrutiny. Usually we must make do with reading what others write, but there is a quality of criticism—or perhaps it would be better to say of appreciation—which comes only from listening to a scholar speak. Better still, our opinions take even greater form when we are able to talk with each other in truer reflection of the collegial nature of scholarship.

In practice, many conferences have become so large that, unless participants have long attended, they can easily be lost or find themselves marginalised amid crowds who all seem to know each other. However, conferences also provide a basis for academic politics in forging or enhancing individual or corporate status, not to mention their role in fostering networking, and the whole issue of job-searching. As with academic journals, conferences have both the privilege and responsibility of helping to forge and maintain aspects of the boundaries of disciplines, and here both privilege and responsibility need to be framed by an ethical attitude as far as freedom and constraint are concerned. Even in the broad world of mainstream academic theology, one sometimes hears colleagues speak negatively of the way "the academy" polices its discipline. Whether acting as a conference organizer, journal editor, or, for example, as an anonymous referee for major grant-awarding bodies, the issue of personal integrity must be explicit, at least to oneself. To what extent are personal prejudices allowed to color our judgement? What degree of freedom do we give to new ideas or interpretations?

Nottingham 1995

These are crucial questions, and with some of them in mind, I undertook in 1995 to organize an academic conference on Mormon Studies at the University of Nottingham, based at Derby Hall of which I was then warden. Some thirty or so individuals attended, many from the U.S. Over several days the delegates heard a great variety of papers, twenty-four of which were subsequently published.[3] This conference was particularly significant in bringing a wide variety of people together who otherwise might not have met.

Durham 1999

Subsequent communication with delegates encouraged me to organize a second conference in April 1999, by which time I had moved to Durham University. Although slightly fewer in number, the delegates said how much they appreciated the collegiality of this event. A major feature of this conference lay in the fact that three of the most senior of all British scholars in the study of religion agreed to give papers on the main topic of the conference, which was that of Mormonism as a potential world religion. Professor Ninian Smart, whose relatively recent death has removed a major figure in comparative religion from both the British and world scene, genially reflected on religious attitudes, and spent time talking with many of us there. Professor John Hinnells, a key scholar in Zoroastrian studies and, at the time of the conference, the chairman of the Association of University Departments of Theology and Religious Studies in the U.K., considered aspects of the definition of religion. Dr. Bryan Wilson, Emeritus Fellow of All Souls College at Oxford University and a Fellow of the British Academy, addressed the subject of "Toleration and Religious Pluralism." Numerous delegates appreciated meeting these colleagues in the informal atmosphere engendered by the conference.

Alongside challenging themes were also international elements furnished by, for example, Massimo Introvigne from Italy, with his timely theoretical discussion of "Mormonism and Postmodernity," Mark Grover on "Coming to Zion Brazilian Style: The Changing Mormon Concept of the Gathering," and Grant Underwood's typically engaging account of "Mormonism, the Maori, and Cultural Authenticity." It was also particularly good to welcome several younger scholars, whose contributions were notable for their scholarly rigour: Henri Gooren's anthropological method was well deployed in his account of Mormon membership in Guatemala, a paper offered in this issue of Dialogue. Another which is not here but was equally telling was that of Staffan Arner on

[3]Douglas J. Davies, ed., *Mormon Identities in Transition* (London: Cassell, 1996).

"Mormon-Jewish Relations Yesterday and Today." He brought to the conference that sense of the history of religions for which his University of Uppsala (Sweden) is renowned, and he fully did it credit through his knowledge of Swedish LDS history coupled with practical experience of the LDS presence in Jerusalem. His paper was much appreciated and promises a future publication of some considerable merit.

From the U.S., Eric Eliason in a polished presentation set about "Mapping the New World Religion" through "The Cultural Geography of Temples and Pioneer Day Celebrations." Notes of a more British kind were sounded by the steady historical craft of Malcolm Thorp on "Popular Millennialism in Britain 1837-1865" and David Whittaker's enviable competence in covering "Mormon Publishing in the British Empire 1836-1860."

Returning to the world-religion front, Michael Homer considered the "Historical Foundations of Mormonism as a World Religion," with Malise Ruthven reflecting on "Islam and Mormonism: Common Gnostic roots," and Roger Keller considering "Non-attachment in Buddhism and Mormonism." I took up the theme of "Death Transcendence and World-Religion Status." Other British contributions came from Roy Whitehead, who dwelt on some negative aspects of his Mormon experience in Scotland, while—in directly anthropological terms—Hildi Mitchell analyzed the idea of embodiment in relation to Mormon identity. Shortly afterwards she completed her doctoral work in the anthropology of Mormonism in Britain while based at Queens University Belfast. Other significant topics covered by papers included those of gender pursued by Lynn Matthews Anderson, LDS youth delinquency by Bruce Chadwick, and the philosophical aspects of LDS doctrinal cultural origins by David Paulsen.

Not everyone present was expert in LDS topics. For example, among the non-LDS attendees was the Revd. Lionel Atherton, an Anglican priest from Chorley in Lancashire, in whose parish the second British LDS temple had recently opened. Seeking some understanding of Mormonism as part of his ecclesiastical pastoral work, he had been in touch with me and appropriately, I felt, attended the conference. He subsequently did some postgraduate work with me, including a study period in New Zealand, where he worked on aspects of LDS life. His appreciation of meeting with academics, many of whom were also LDS, was positively voiced both at the close of the conference and thereafter. This was one example of the importance of maintaining open boundaries in academic ventures on religious topics, allowing for the fact that individuals always possess their personal agendas.

One final aspect of the Durham conference needs to be mentioned, which was not in any sense part of the academic program but reflected upon some LDS themes in the musical rather than the sentential mode. I had invited the two organizts of the College of St. Hild and St. Bede

(the venue of the conference)—Joseph Ramadan, an undergraduate, and Julian Cooper, a postgraduate—to present a short recital. Cooper's framework of Bach, Boyce, Vierne, and Dupré contained three composition-improvisations by Ramadan on "Come, Come Ye Saints," "The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning," and "How Great the Wisdom and the Love," three hymns which typify, at least to me as a non-LDS, something essential that suffuses Latter-day Saint spirituality. This was doubtless a first as far as the 1891 Harrison and Harrison organ of Bede Chapel was concerned. The music was, I think, much appreciated by the numerous delegates who sat in the shadowed stillness of that fine building.

Diversity of Interest

If the ability to share in music together was one minor aspect of this conference, a major feature lay in its interdisciplinarity, a characteristic also shared by the 1995 gathering. This factor is of considerable importance for any field wishing to designate itself by the term "studies." Mormon Studies, for example, cannot simply depend upon historical method any more than upon the sociological view of life. The established base of both Mormon historical and social scientific study groups already reflects those perspectives in highly developed ways, but much remains to be gained from interdisciplinary encounter, especially at conferences where numbers are small enough for people actually to engage with each other. One potential hazard of modern and large conferences emerges from the plethora of different topic areas attracting specialists in streamed presentation of topics. Given the small numbers present at both these British conferences, everyone could listen to everything.

In Mormon Studies, as in some fields related to other religious traditions, the issue of scholarship is for a significant number of people intimately bound with their own religious convictions, sometimes with consequences for their status and acceptance within their own church organization. This can cause problems regarding what people want to say and are prepared to hear. Certainly, the first of the two conferences I organized witnessed both more and less religiously conservative delegates together. Such circumstances necessitate a degree of learning on all sides, and raise the issue of judgement over the papers delivered. There is no easy resolution to the difficulties and sensitivities of both institutional and personal agendas involved in such decision making. Sometimes there are moments of discomfort. What is important is that as high a degree of intellectual integrity as possible is maintained within an overall academic dynamic of responsibility and a sense of humanity.

Papers

To return to the issue of interdisciplinarity, I would like now to focus on the papers included in this collection. I do not wish to gloss their contents, because they are perfectly competent to speak for themselves, but I must note that the variety of material they present is one example, albeit relatively brief, of how I conceive of the notion of "Mormon Studies."

The subject matter of Latter-day Saint life obviously provides the key focus, with a degree of historical contextualizing inevitable. Yet we can also see the distinctive influences of literary theory in Givens, whose wider publications are establishing him as a significant scholar in the literary-cultural appreciation of Mormonism within its American cultural setting. In Kunin, we also have a form of textual analysis, but one derived from structuralist anthropology, albeit a derivation involving much personal formation by the author. I was concerned to include this piece, precisely because structuralism of most sorts has become radically unfashionable. However, having been raised academically when structuralism was in its anthropological prime, and having worked in it a little myself decades ago, I still think it possesses the capacity to provoke thought and engender insight. Scholars who dislike the approach, or general readers who find it overly complex, should take the suggestions it offers and see how they relate to their own preferred ways of interpreting material. Whatever the result, I think it is wise to ponder the thought of someone with an expertise both in the literal and cultural interpretation of Hebrew texts and in an anthropological understanding of what groups do with their sacred writings.

On the more strictly anthropological analysis of social events, Henri Gooren offers results from his extensive fieldwork material from Guatemala. His wider comparative study of LDS and Pentecostal forms of religious organization have made a significant contribution to the detailed knowledge of social change and religious conversion in South America.

Warrick Kear brings to his paper not only a personal knowledge of LDS congregational and church organizational life in Britain, but also a deeply rooted academic background in music. His earlier doctoral studies responded to that need in Mormon Studies for a scholar to see how his own knowledge could be enhanced by the acquisition of new skills, both in social scientific and historical dimensions. His paper shows how significant insights may emerge, not least as an opportunity for others, whether historian, sociologist, or musicologist, to pursue them in even more detailed ways. Armand Mauss needs no introduction as a sociologist of Mormonism, but his paper in this collection also reflects the impact of a more historical and literary interest.

There are relatively few strict sociologists of religion in Britain, especially among the older and more senior colleagues, who have taken more

than a passing interest in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but Christie Davies is one of them. His support for the two conferences was very welcomed, especially since he has some experience of LDS institutions beyond the U.K. His paper is of the more general and speculative kind, rather than a detailed empirical or sociological enterprise, but I include it because it reflects the importance of comparative method within sociological study. If Mormon Studies is ever to flourish as an identifiable field, then the comparative aspect is vitally important.

My own paper on "Gethsemane and Calvary in LDS Soteriology" should not, perhaps, have been included in this collection, because it was given at the Mormon History Association Conference in Denmark in the summer of 2000, where my book, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*, also received its publication launch. I include it here, although numerous of its themes are treated in much greater detail in that book, because it was the outcome of a particular insight which dawned in a moment, but only on the back of several decades familiarity with Mormon ideas and prompted by the comparative perspective of wider Christian theology and iconography. The academic value given to art and iconography as their own distinctive forms of expression of faith and belief has had a fairly recent impact upon more established theological disciplines in mainstream Christianity, but it is an important one. As a comparative venture, it also shows how one tradition may foster responses in another. For example, I happened to be invited by Dr. Rowan Williams to write his Archbishop of Wales' Lent Book for 2001 at the very time the fact of Gethsemane, so differently valued by LDS and other Christians, was on my mind. (Lent Books are an Anglican tradition and are used either individually or by study groups throughout the period of Lent, leading up to Easter. They offer a means of considering the Christian life in relation to the sufferings and obedience—the passion—in the life of Christ, as told in the New Testament.) My Gethsemane reflections, published as *Private Passions* (Canterbury Press, 2001), were an extended analysis and meditation on what I came to see as an idiom of betrayal underlying early Christianity. *Private Passions* would never have taken the form it did had I never pondered the LDS commitment to Gethsemane; thus, comparative studies can have effects in numerous directions.

All such effects depend, of course, on the prior interests, commitments, and knowledge of individuals. Of the contributors to this edition, some are LDS, but the majority are not, and—as the contributors' list shows—numerous academic backgrounds are represented, all of which contribute to the diversity of this collection. These papers will illustrate the possibilities for Mormon Studies by scholars of various nationalities and religious backgrounds. One hopes this collection will beckon many others to join us in the same enterprise.

Place, Time, and Family in Mormonism

Christie Davies

CHRISTIANITY CLAIMS TO BE A UNIVERSAL RELIGION, but in its origins and development it is also a Mediterranean religion, a religion which began among the Jews of Israel at the joining point of the great civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Southern Europe. It then spread throughout Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, to Ethiopia, and in a minor way to the further reaches of South and Central Asia. After the rise of Islam, Christianity became largely confined to Europe, and only escaped the Islamic trap to reach other continents in the fifteenth and subsequent centuries, with the great sea voyages first of the Portuguese and the Spaniards, and later of the British and French, all of whom were in different ways missionary peoples.

Christianity remained in many respects Mediterranean, as can be seen from the Mediterranean foods, bread and wine, which are still at the heart of the communion service, its central ceremony. In one sense this is inevitable, for only bread—a coherent, created, well-shaped object—could represent the body of Christ. The symbolism would be destroyed if, say, a church in Inverness were to substitute the formless mess of the Scotsman's oatmeal porridge for bread in the eternal ceremony. Nonetheless, in Scotland as in Ghana, the use of bread in church—and by extension in the everyday lives of the genteel middle classes—is a mark of Christianity's Mediterranean imperialism, such that its universal truths are still clad in the particular forms of its originating peoples. The modern white, sliced wheaten loaf of the West is a tasteless, nutritionless, costive pap (there must be an irony in the phrase "the best thing since sliced bread") which paternalistic governments seek to rescue with additives,

but it is still the dignified descendant of the bread of the Passover, the bread of the Last Supper, the bread broken and eaten in memory of Christ, the bread of "Give us this day our daily bread," which has become a secular symbol in the slogans of both the liberal free trader and the Bolshevik agitator. Yet it is the original food of only one segment of the peoples of the earth and is alien to the rice of Korea or the potatoes of Peru. It must have seemed strange when it first came as a holy food to the Americas or the Far East, or even to Northern Europe, as the materialization or at least the symbol of God, the sacred in a foreign form.

The late arrival of the message of Christ in countries distant from the Mediterranean, whether Iceland or China, created a problem for new converts whose rebirth as Christians cuts them off from their ancestors. As Christians they were saved by the sacraments and (or) by their faith and the establishing of a personal relationship with Christ. However, their ancestors were excluded from this, and in a country where recent ancestors are loved and distant ones revered, this is a serious severance. Those ancestors who died between the harrowing of hell by Jesus and the time of their descendants' conversion have nowhere to go; no restoration of recent valued family ties is possible, and the converts' lineage is snapped into pre- and post-Christian.

Such an arrangement seems unjust. Why should the Christian message have been rushed to the Romans, Colossians, Corinthians, Ephesians, Hebrews, Thessalonians, and Galatians, but leave the native peoples of America benighted until the arrival nearly fifteen hundred years later of Columbus, and hence, Las Casas? Was the Gospel message so unimportant that it could be withheld for a millennium-and-a-half while many generations of Amerindians went to Hell or to share Limbo with squalling, unbaptised children? Most mainstream Christians see this as a peripheral issue, for Christianity is not a religion of family values or ancestor worship. However, this is not how it was seen by Joseph Smith, who founded his church in one of these formerly peripheral areas and solved the geographical problem with new mythologies and new and extra teachings to be added to those of the Bible.

The Book of Mormon as a Solution to the Geographical Problem

In doing so, Joseph Smith was merely extending a principle central to Protestantism since the time of the Reformation. As it had spread throughout Europe and Latin America, the Roman Catholic Church had incorporated many local shrines and wells and holy places, and turned local godlings into saints. However, papal policy was always to concentrate power at the centre in Rome, and thus the Mediterranean flavor of this Latin-speaking church remained. With the Reformation, each nation of Northern Europe broke away from the Roman Catholic Church to

form its own church—Lutheran, Reformed, or Anglican. The dominance of the Mediterranean was broken, and churches which matched the new nation-states' strengthening sense of collective identity were created. There were now new English, Dutch, Danish, Scottish churches, each with its own myth of faith and nation, and with confidence in its own particular mission and destiny. This was the essence of the first stage of the Reformation: new, purely national churches for the northern part of Europe, which later—with national and Protestant expansion by sea—created daughter churches all over the world, from Greenland's icy mountains to Kerala, from Tasmania to Curacao.

In each case, new and distinctively national Christian traditions were eventually created as with, say, the religious traditions of Grundvig or Whitefield, but there were no local prophets, no new messiahs, and no new and inspired scriptures. The emphasis of these waves of Protestantism was on the Bible and nothing but the Bible, on the early primitive—even apostolic—church, and on the inspiration provided by the struggles and suffering of the Jewish people of the Old Testament for those who sought to create a new Jerusalem and a new Zion, not something new altogether. In each case, what was created was a particular national idiom rooted in one aspect of the Bible, as with the largely Anglican national and militant Lord's Day Observance Society's legally enforced Sabbatarianism, which shocked foreigners but shaped British identity.

In America in the nineteenth century there was a second wave (or fourth, if we call Nonconformity and then Methodism the second and third waves) of Protestantism in which, appropriately in the self-styled first new nation, new kinds of denominations arose with new prophets such as Ellen White and Mary Baker Eddy, and with new post-Biblical inspired writings of their own. These religious movements—rooted in the American belief in innovation, progress, and destiny—were as radical and as important as anything that has been seen in the latter part of the twentieth century. The most important of them was Mormonism, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The great inspiration of Joseph Smith written down on gold plates resolved the paradox of the transatlantic isolation of the Americas and the consequent ignorance of the Christian message by its peoples. The Book of Mormon *solved the geographical problem.* It provided America with its very own scriptures, sense of Divine concern, presence of Christ, and sacred history in a language reminiscent of the authorized English translation of the Bible. Settlers and Indians alike now had an inspired new scripture which spoke to them in their distinctive New World setting, an entire ocean apart from the Christian heartland. The recent rapid growth of Mormonism has largely taken place in the Western Hemisphere where it offers a special status to those who live there. Mormonism has had a similar impact in what were once the equally remote and newly discovered islands of Polynesia, from Hawaii to the

Maoris of New Zealand, where the Mormons have made many converts. The New Testament departs from the Old Testament in telling us that God cares for each of us as an individual whether Jew or Gentile; Mormonism is the new inheritance of the unchosen peoples, so that all are included. But if all are included, what happens to those too remote to be reached? Do they remain neglected? The Book of Mormon, a book of special geographical provision, provided a solution.

The location of the Mormon scriptures in the New World is not a disadvantage for attempts to gain converts in the Old World; these peoples have some kind of link to the lands of the Bible anyway. The traditional Mormon doctrine that Mormons have a direct connection with biblical Israel through lineage has been criticized recently as a potential hindrance to the current attempts to export Mormonism outside the Western Hemisphere. Yet it is difficult to see why this should be more of a problem than that inherent in all forms of Christianity, which ask their members to identify with events that took place in, and peoples who inhabited, one small part of the world a very long time ago. Surely it is easier to identify with these if the people were your ancestors, or if the events involved your ancestors?

The Mormons had no sooner established themselves in the United States than they sought converts in Europe, beginning in Liverpool and London, because that was where the ships from the United States arrived. During the nineteenth century a steady stream of converts, especially female converts, left Europe for Utah to practise a new religion in a new country. Mormon converts were portrayed by the Mormons' enemies as naive and innocent young girls who had been brainwashed into a new foreign sect which destined them to become the polygamous wives of alien Americans.

Marriage, Family and Beliefs about the Afterlife in Historic Christianity

Family matters were then, from the start, one key source of tension between Mormons on the one hand and mainstream Christians on the other. In order to understand this, it is perhaps best to examine first the ways in which the original Christian ideas on marriage and the family differed from those of other religions. Historically, Christianity was odd in a way that does not directly reflect its geographical origins, namely, in its peculiar attitudes to marriage and the family.

First there was the exaltation of celibacy and sexual asceticism above marriage (Matt. 19:12), which today is especially found in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions. The exclusively male leaders of both churches, the order of bishops, have, in theory at least, long been expected to refrain from all contact with women, and in the Or-

thodox church are recruited exclusively from the monks. Orthodox priests are allowed to marry rather than to burn with lust (I Cor. 7:9), though only once. Since the thirteenth century, Roman Catholic priests (as well as bishops and monks) have been required to be chaste and celibate. It is the highest and most virtuous way of life for a majority of Christians, in marked contrast to the view of mainstream Muslims and Jews, all of whose adherents—including their religious teachers and scholars—are expected to marry. Judaism has long had a reverent attitude to (an admittedly highly controlled) sex within marriage, with intercourse on the eve of the Sabbath being especially meritorious. The sexless hermits and monastic orders so important in Christian history are peculiar, possibly derived from the traditions of the ascetic Essenes (an exceedingly odd Jewish sect) or from the Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu traditions of South Asia. Yet for many Buddhists a spell as a monk is but a stage in life before marriage and family, and for Hindus the core of the life-course is spent as a caste-bound householder, with only elderly male *sanyasis*— who have dropped out of society—and the members of unstable heterodox sects living an ascetic life, or one apart from their families. Outside Christianity there is nothing to compare with the powerful celibate bishops, priests, and members of highly organized religious orders so respected by the subservient faithful. Only among Christians do celibates rule and enjoy power as well as spiritual prestige. It is an outgrowth of an imperative first seen in the New Testament, which tells the believer to place religious duty above the demands of family and kinship (Matt. 19:10-12; I Cor. 7:32-40), not simply as a means of abandoning attachment to gain enlightenment, but also as a way of life in the community. This way of life later became the ideal and the duty for a bishop in his diocese, a priest in his parish, or a preaching friar. At times (for example, in Spain in the seventeenth century) as much as a tenth of the population must have led a committed celibate existence. Family and family values did not lie at the center of Christian life, however strong they might have been (and upheld by the local church) in many Christian countries.

The second peculiarity of Christianity, indeed something unique to that religion historically, was that it combined strict monogamy with a ban on divorce under any circumstances (I Cor. 7:10). All other world religions at the time allowed polygamy and/or divorce, particularly if the first marriage had not produced a child, and thus a new extension of an old lineage and perhaps a necessary heir. We can see other such limits to the multiplication of marriages in Christianity in the inability of an Orthodox priest to remarry if his wife dies (this is not to bind him to his deceased spouse, but rather as a mark of ascetic piety), and in the inability of an Orthodox lay person to marry more than three times

when thrice-widowed. It was an unwelcome ban to heirless Byzantine emperors with three deceased wives who needed a fourth wife to produce an heir and thus ensure dynastic continuity. For Christianity, marriage was traditionally a limited concession to human weakness for those who lacked the gift of continence and to prevent them burning with lust. It was a concession whose limits could not be extended in the interests either of personal fulfillment or of the needs of a dynasty or lineage; neither a desire for sex nor social pressures for procreation could, in theory at least, prevail over strict Christian monogamy and the Christian doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage. In regard to sex, marriage and the family, Christianity was the odd one out when compared to other religions.

There is a third oddity about Christianity in regard to marriage and the family that stems from the way it tried to resolve a paradox that must have been problematic for most religions. Christianity stresses the full survival of the individual personality after death, including the resurrection of the body, yet it denies there will be any marriage or sexuality in the afterlife. There will be no marrying nor giving in marriage in heaven (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25).

The Sadducees of the New Testament, who unlike the Pharisees did not believe in personal immortality, understood the problem with bodily resurrection, and it is difficult to see why they allowed themselves to be silenced by Jesus. The relevant text reads in full:

> The same day the Sadducees came to him, maintaining that there is no resurrection. Their question was this: "Master, Moses said, 'If a man should die childless, his brother shall marry the widow and carry on his brother's family.' Now we know of seven brothers. The first married and died, and as he was without issue his wife was left to his brother. The same thing happened with the second, and the third, and so on with all seven. Last of all the woman died. At the resurrection, then, whose wife will she be, for they had all married her?" Jesus answered: "You are mistaken, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. At the resurrection men and women do not marry; they are like angels in heaven" (Matt. 22:23-30).

It is fair enough to declare the impossibility of the connection of spiritual bodies in this way (see I Cor. 15: 42-54), but Christ does not fully answer the Sadducees' objection. Leaving sex aside, with which of the men would the wife have been associated?

The annihilation of the body and of the personality for those who believe in reincarnation or in nirvana circumvents this problem, while at the same time offering no kind of coherent continuity in the afterlife whatsoever. A female sweeper who dies and becomes a male Brahmin, or a deer or a black beetle or a Frenchwoman, in the next life is so transmo-

grified as to have suffered total extinction. The apparent revival of such dead souls by the fraudulent practitioners of regression therapy, along with never-happened sex abuse and abduction by little green Martians, only confirms that reincarnation means extinction: no resurrection of the body, no afterlife.

The problem Jesus did not discuss is that the annihilation of time combined with bodily resurrection creates incompatible minglings in the afterlife of relatives who either knew each other at different stages of their previous lives, as with sequential spouses, or those who belonged to very different generations. How can a person be reunited with his or her parents when they are reunited with theirs, and they with theirs, and they with theirs, unto the umpteenth generation, when the ancestors of all who are alive today blend together?

There is a further problem facing virtuous heaven-bound Christians who hope to be reunited after death with previously deceased and much loved relatives: Those relatives may be in Hell. From medieval times there have been tales told of those who abandoned their longing for the deceased once they had received a vision saying he or she was in Hell due to a lack of faith, or good works, or simply from being one of God's capriciously meant-to-be-broken pots, those without wedding clothes excluded from the elect to which their kin belonged. The official view seems to have been that one should not even sympathise with the plight of a dead and damned parent or spouse, for that would be to question the will of God. Indeed, part of the joy of being in Heaven was said to reside in one's duty to rejoice when the sufferings of those in Hell were displayed to those safely in paradise, presumably including the pain of their more sinful loved ones. Hell meant permanent separation from damned kin, and this knowledge must have been especially distressing for those converted to Christianity, but with unbaptised, unbelieving relatives.

The Christian view of salvation, then, is essentially personal and individualistic, and the pilgrim's progress toward it may involve the conscious abandoning of all ties with the closest of relatives. At the core of Christianity lie non-family values. This tension and opposition between the demands of religion and those of family have existed for Christianity since its early days as a New Religious Movement, whose members were told: "You must not think that I (Jesus) have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword. I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a son's wife against her mother-in-law; and a man will find his enemies under his own roof. No man is worthy of me who cares more for father or mother than for me; no man is worthy of me who cares more for son or daughter" (Matt. 10:34-38).

It is easy to see why a large portion of a people as devoted to family, kinship, and lineage as the Jews would find such a message upsetting in exactly the same sense as the family of St. Thomas Aquinas, who lost him to religion, or the families of modern "cult-victims," who have hired kidnappers and de-programrs to get their children back. Christian individualism must also be an obstacle to the spread of Christianity in countries with a strong tradition of ancestor worship. What is to become of the shrines and tablets of unbaptised ancestors if one converts? Are all ties to be severed?

Mormon Solutions to Historic Christian Problems

Mormonism is a derivation from Christianity which seeks to solve these problems by putting the family and family values back at the very center of religion. Mormons are expected to marry, and sex within marriage is exalted. Celibacy is deviant. Even the now-abandoned practice of polygamy could be seen as a way of making marriage universal. It was this practice which most horrified other nineteenth-century Christians about Mormonism, but their horror is significant not so much for what it tells us about the then-contemporary Mormon practice, but for what it tells us about other Christians for whom it was and is *the* great taboo. Jews living in Christian (though not Muslim) countries were in effect forced to abandon the polygamous tradition of the Old Testament lest it become one more excuse for the exercise of vicious anti-Semitism. Muslims settling in Britain can bring plural wives into the country and the marriages are legal, but Muslims already living in Britain cannot have more than one wife. American immigration laws at one time specifically excluded polygamists. Even those liberals who look benignly on homosexual marriages or female-headed households of illegitimate children can be violently prejudiced against polygamy. The proponents of Christian and of liberal ethical colonialism are still trying to export this particular fixed assumption to countries with differing religions and family traditions. It is this that explains the furious Christian persecution of Mormon polygamy in America, which in the end forced mainstream Mormons to abandon it so that there are now only a few breakaway fundamentalist Mormons who practise closet polygamy, and they are still liable to arrest and imprisonment. In an America characterised by very high divorce and illegitimacy rates, promiscuous slums and in some places perverse suburbs, only the strictly moral, code-bound breakaway Mormon schismatics are persecuted.

A belief in the moral validity of polygamy might have become a useful selling point in the nineteenth century, had the Mormons sent missionaries to societies in which polygamy was the norm. However, the practice of polygamy was such an affront to the moral sensibilities of

mainstream Christians that it created insuperable problems of social rejection and political and legal persecution for the Mormon church. It has been hypothesized that a denomination will flourish best if its practices are sufficiently distinctive to give it secure boundaries and a definite identity, but do not impose massive social and other costs on the membership. The cost of polygamy was simply too great.

The increased emphasis on strict adherence to the rules of the Word of Wisdom after the demise of polygamy provided a new means of establishing a distinct identity and boundaries through visible everyday behaviour which did not result in major conflicts. The abstention from alcohol and tobacco also reinforces family life and is an important selling point for those leading a precarious, newly-urban existence in, say, Latin America, who need to break away from the macho culture of the bar, a culture of drinking, smoking, high caffeine consumption, or gambling and whoring. The Mormon patriarchal family and the Word of Wisdom act together to rescue erring—and potentially erring—husbands from this environment, and to concentrate their attention, efforts, and economic resources on their families. Not least among Mormonism's future appeal as a potential world religion are the benefits it offers to women in urbanising and developing countries. Male respectability is of far more help to these women than an ERA.

Far less notice has been taken by outsiders of the Mormons' celestial monogamy. A Mormon sealed marriage is not "till death do us part," but rather for all eternity, with the couple reunited in Heaven after their death. The Mormons' explicit doctrine that the conjugal family survives death as a unit solves a problem Christians do not wish to face (it is better left as a mystery; trust and obey), but the problem has re-occurred in other ways. In the past at least, if a spouse died and the survivor remarried, the second marriage might not have been sealed or celestial, and this was at times a source of concern to both husband and wife in a second and happy marriage, who worried they might be forced to return to their old partners in Heaven. Once again the annihilation of time but not of the body created fears of arbitrary Divine separation. There are dangers as well as benefits in trying to discern God's design for the afterlife.

Lineages, though, are preserved, for Mormons not only baptise their progeny but also their ancestors, and for this purpose the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has collected and computerized the largest collection of genealogical records in the world. The efficacy of the baptism of the dead is a fundamental Mormon doctrine, and such baptisms have been carried out using a living proxy since the founder Joseph Smith first announced the doctrine in 1840. The living and the dead are linked in a sacred and organic covenant. Smith wrote:

> For we without them (those who have died) cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect. . . .[I]t is necessary. . .that a whole and complete and perfect union and welding together of dispensations and keys and powers and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam to the present time (D&C 128:17-18).

O death, where is thy sting, O time, thy victory? Baptism of the dead, which draws on an earlier ultra-Protestant sectarian tradition, is a doctrinal version of the heterodox but widespread nineteenth-century spiritualism which comforted familistic Victorian Protestants seeking reunion with lost relatives. Mormons thus center their religion on a cosmic web of family connections stretching backwards and forwards throughout all eternity. Salvation became a matter of kinship, ancestry, and descent. Elijah, the prophet who never died (he went directly to Heaven), had returned "to reconcile fathers to sons and sons to fathers" (Mal. 4:6).

Summary and Conclusions

These distinctive perceptions of the importance of marriage, family, kinship, and lineage give Mormonism the potential to be a new world religion. In much of the world, individuals live not as isolated selves but in close relationships with spouses, parents, and children, and indeed these relationships are extended more broadly to cover wider kin, as well as vertically to embrace ancestors. Mormonism provides a version of Christianity whose precepts concerning sacred and eternal families must be more congenial to such peoples than are traditional Christian ideals of priestly celibacy (a practice not honoured in Latin America or Africa), or a highly individualistic view of salvation which ensures those saved by faith, chosen for the elect, or buoyed up by good works, an entry to a lonely heaven where one's ancestors and one's unconverted relatives will be missing. Better to join the Mormons where the family center holds and things do not fall apart.

Mormonism is set to become a new world religion because it reaches parts other religions cannot reach. By transcending place, it has an appeal to those beyond the Mediterranean world, beyond Europe, and beyond the Old World, whether their ancestors were natives or settlers. The Book of Mormon is a sign that God has not left them and their homelands neglected on the earth's periphery. By emphasizing eternal sacred families, Mormonism offers both the preservation of existing strong patterns of family, kin, and lineage in the afterlife, as well as the healing in this life of disrupted families pulled apart by new patterns of urbanization. The New World's religion may well become a new world religion. It is hardly surprising to find it growing faster than its rivals.

Gethsemane and Calvary in LDS Soteriology

Douglas J. Davies

IN THIS PAPER I EXPLORE ONE of the key ways in which the idea of salvation as formulated within LDS thought differs from expressions of salvation in other religious groups. I will also raise the question of how this doctrinal configuration—centered on the idea of the Atonement—relates to the wider ethical and ritual dimensions of LDS life. Finally, as a distinctive feature of this all too brief exploration, I will highlight the potential significance of the artistic and aesthetic representation of salvation within religious culture as a whole.

I have already indicated that the major element of the idea of salvation of interest here is that which LDS tradition describes as the event of the Atonement and has come to closely associate with the Garden of Gethsemane. This is a distinctive emphasis, one that distinguishes LDS soteriology from that of most other Christian religious groups. They, for their part, tend to speak of Atonement much more in direct relation to the idea of salvation rooted in the death of Christ through crucifixion upon Calvary. With these emphases in mind, I will refer to Gethsemane and Calvary as symbolic expressions of two different and distinguishable modes of organizing ideas of salvation in relation to the lives of both Christ and the religious believer.

This emphasis on Gethsemane rather than Calvary, on the garden rather than the cross, provides a distinction which is not only related to the practical spirituality of the LDS, but also serves as an important theological boundary marker between LDS and non-LDS groups. I will not deal here with any historical development in this doctrinal scheme, whether in the early LDS movement or in the contemporary church, although I do appreciate that some contemporary trends involve a reconsideration of ideas

of salvation in relation to grace, a topic inextricably part of the logic of my own deliberations. This applies, in particular, to the notion of grace and its practical consequence for committed church members who feel the strain of demands for high levels of religious performance. These issues highlight the way in which ideas and actions are intimately associated with both the history of ideas and with the organization of an institution. They also demand a degree of eclecticism of method for their discussion.

Although I will simply sketch here the implications of the distinction between Gethsemane and Calvary, I have also pursued the distinction at much greater length in my study entitled *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*, and subtitled, "Force, Grace and Glory."[1] So it is that Gethsemane and Calvary, these two sites of salvation—as perhaps we might call them—occupy a significantly different position in LDS thought on the one hand, and in broad Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox traditions on the other.

The Artistic Key

My approach to this question of distinction begins with art because it was only recently that I became increasingly struck by the way art affords one a key to understanding LDS thought. Perhaps this was inevitable since, for nearly two decades, I had become increasingly interested in the relationship between art and theology, largely through the influence of my former colleague and friend, Dr. Mary Charles Murray, when we taught together at the University of Nottingham. My relatively limited experience of Mormon art began to impress me with the fact that depictions of "Calvary"—my shorthand for art of the Passion of Christ centered on the cross, crucifixion, death, and corpse of Jesus—are extremely infrequent in Mormon art, when compared with the presence of Calvary in most other major Christian traditions given to artistic endeavour. I then became equally astonished by the fact that "Gethsemane" was, in turn, relatively sparsely represented in those major traditions. This led me to ask why the LDS seem to focus on Gethsemane and traditional Christian denominations on Calvary? Since art expresses life, both reflecting and informing its own religious culture, it might be expected to disclose aspects of the dynamics of religious thought and action which would inform a study of LDS culture. Even if we do not wish to see art as being quite that descriptive and prescriptive, we might still find it of real use to illustrate central religious beliefs.[2]

---

[1]Douglas J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* (Aldershot, U.K., and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2000).

[2]John Dillenberger, *A Theology of Artistic Sensibilities* (London: SCM, 1986).

Atonement and Salvation

To begin my interpretation, let me draw a broad distinction between the terms atonement and salvation. In the full scheme of LDS theology and practice, including the rites and ordinances of the gospel, atonement is part of the total scheme of salvation. Atonement is achieved by Christ, removing the sin of Adam so that a moral life may be actively pursued, both in ethics and ritual. Family and social life on the one hand, and the temple on the other, partner each other as the ethical and ordinance foci of action with their mutual goal of exaltation. The Christ who is central to this process is that Christ who is a key agent within the Plan of Salvation, from eternity to eternity. Yet the human agent is also of fundamental importance, in that the foundation of atonement provides the framework for activity, for that family, social, and temple activity which conduces to exaltation. In this complete soteriological process, the work of Christ and the contemporary work of a Latter-day Saint are complementary. Agency is the medium of atonement in Christ just as it is the basis of the exaltation goal of the Saint. Let me relate this to the sites or locales of salvation in terms of what I will call the proactive Christ and the proactive Saint.

In Gethsemane, Christ is proactive in atonement, implementing the decision taken in the heavenly council long before his earthly life. True, he asks that, if possible, the cup be taken from him, but equally, he asks that God's will be done. God's will, as it turns out, is to be achieved through his suffering. So it is that Jesus now engages with the sin of the world. Through what I will call a form of mystical atonement—something which has become a distinctive feature of LDS theology distinguishing it from most other traditions—Christ enters into the sin of the world by a mental act, so much so that he is wracked in body and comes to "bleed at every pore" as D&C 19:18 puts it. This text powerfully echoes the descriptive text (included in only some versions of Luke's Gospel) covering the agony in which he prayed more earnestly, with his sweat becoming "like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:44). In more contemporary, non-theological terms, one might say that the embodied mind was pained with that pain issuing in physical expression. All this was, of course, foretold in the Book of Mosiah, which refers to the Messiah and to his blood that "cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abomination of his people" (Mosiah 3:7).

THEOLOGICAL COMPARISONS

Much work could be done on the comparative theology of atonement and salvation throughout the history of LDS thought, although it certainly lies beyond this paper. One could, for example, pursue the distinction between LDS and American Protestantism in the 1840s, a period when, as T. E. Jenkins described it, "American theologians across the doctrinal spectrum would have agreed with the Presbyterian Gardiner Spring when he declared in 1846: 'No where is the character of God so fully revealed as in the cross.'"[3] He has shown, for example, that the emphasis of later eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century theology confronted the apparent weakness of Jesus under suffering, with the implicit assumption that "only weak willed and shallow characters gave passionate vent to their troubles."[4] Here Gethsemane became a moot point. Edwards A. Park, more in sympathy with later LDS authors, though himself an Amherst theologian, identified the suffering of Christ as the outcome of some "secret visual exchange. . .between God and Jesus," as Christ is given "a vision of something that horrified him."[5] The LDS apparently circumvented this problem by elaborating the significance of Gethsemane, turning any notion of weakness into an absolute strength.

The LDS commitment to Gethsemane offers a significant stimulus to wider forms of Christian theology, which has tended to ignore this element of the Passion of Christ. Almost exceptionally, and in a brief passage—practically as an aside—Rudolph Otto brought his idea of the numinous, "with its mystery and awe" to "Christ's Agony in the night of Gethsemane" and did so, so that "we might comprehend in our own experience what the import of that agony was."[6] He wished to explain something, at least, of "this sweat that falls to the ground like great drops of blood." This, he said, was no simple fear of death, for Christ had long confronted that; rather it was "the awe of the creature before the mysterium tremendum" (i.e., before the great mystery). He suggests that this is analogous to Yahweh waylaying Moses by night, or Jacob wrestling with God.

From the Anglican tradition I am reminded of George Herbert's seventeenth century poetic treatment of this theme in *The Agony*:

---

[3]Thomas, E. Jenkins, *The Character of God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 26.

[4]Ibid., 38.

[5]Ibid., 46.

[6]Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, tr. John W. Harvey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924), 88.

Philosophers have measured mountains,
Fathomed the depths of seas, of states, of kings,
Walked with a staff to heav'n, and traced fountains:
But there are two vast, spacious things,
The which to measure it doth more behove:
Yet few there are that sound them; Sin and Love.

Who would know Sin, let him repair
Unto Mount Olivet; there shall he see
A man so wrung with pains, that all his hair,
His skin, his garments bloody be,
Sin is that press and vice, which forceth pain
To hunt his cruel food through ev'ry vein.

Who knows not Love, let him assay
And taste that juice, which on the cross a pike
Did set again abroach: then let him say
If ever he did taste the like.
Love is that liquor sweet and most divine,
Which my God feels as blood: but I, as wine. [7]

LDS AND GETHSEMANE

Certainly the LDS tradition tends to be very emphatic on this issue. Ezra Taft Benson is quoted by the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* as saying that "modern LDS leaders have emphasised that Jesus' most challenging experience came in Gethsemane. . . .It was in Gethsemane," he says, "that Jesus took on Himself the sins of the world."[8] Similarly in Jeffrey R. Holland's entry on Atonement (with its seven columns, as compared with just over a single column on salvation), he accounts for the voluntary death of Christ who offers his "life, innocent body, blood, and spiritual anguish," as a "redeeming ransom," dealing with the consequences of the Fall. Once more we find Gethsemane the focal site where Christ experienced the "spiritual anguish of plumbing the depths of human suffering," and where he "bled at every pore."[9] But tellingly, perhaps, Holland then adds it was from Gethsemane that Christ begins his "final march to Calvary" where the "majesty and triumph of the Atonement" lies in the appeal "from the cross, 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.'" This utterance is interpreted positively, and Holland

[7]George Herbert, *Oxford Poetry Library,* ed. Louis L. Martz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 28.

[8]S. Kent Brown, "Gethsemane", in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 542.

[9]Jeffrey R. Holland. "Atonement of Jesus Christ," in Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* 85.

cites John Taylor's words setting the Saviour as the "master of the situation." In terms of my argument, proactivity thus replaces passivity.

Against this background, the suffering of Christ holds considerable potential for LDS spirituality as witnessed, for example, in Stephen Robinson's description of atonement as "the Gethsemane experience." Robinson provides his own commentary on Jesus and his ability to assist the Saint:

> He knows the anguish of parents whose children go wrong. He knows the private hell of the abused child or spouse. He knows all these things personally and intimately because he lived them in the Gethsemane experience. Having personally lived a perfect life, he then chose to embrace our imperfect lives. In that infinite Gethsemane experience, the meridian of time, the center of destiny, he lived a billion billion lifetimes of sin, pain, disease and sorrow.[10]

Let me end this briefest of sketches and hint at the continuity of this belief with but a few stanzas of Eliza Snow's well known hymn, often used at sacrament services, which culminates in the phrase "strict obedience," a prime description of the proactive Christ:

> How great the wisdom and the love, That filled the courts on high,
> And brought the Saviour from above, To suffer, bleed, and die.
>
> His precious blood he freely spilt; His life he freely gave,
> A sinless sacrifice for guilt, A dying world to save.
>
> By strict obedience Jesus won, The prize with glory rife.
> Thy will, O God, not mine be done'
> Adorned his mortal life.

The expression "Thy will, O God, not mine be done" is, of course, the keynote element taken directly from gospel narratives of the garden of Gethsemane.

To speak, as I do here, of the *proactive* Christ of Gethsemane is to seek to do justice to this very emphatic idea of voluntary involvement with sin. It also contrasts that figure with the more passive Christ of Calvary, where the crucified Christ is a victim, very much the divine-human counterpart of the temple sacrifice of a lamb which underpins Old Testament ideas and, especially, the thinking of the gospels, most particularly that of St. John, who even changes the time of the crucifixion from that of the Synoptic Gospels, so that Jesus dies at the time when the Passover lambs are killed at the Jerusalem festival. It is this image of *passivity* which plays so little a part in LDS iconography or exegetical commentary.

---

[10]Stephen, E. Robinson, *Believing Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992), 123.

ARTISTIC EXAMPLES

When ideas, especially religious ideas, powerfully penetrate their native cultures, they come to expression in a great variety of ways, not least in art. Accordingly, some examples of Gethsemane paintings illustrate well these points of activity and passivity. The painting of Christ in Gethsemane by Harry Anderson, a Seventh Day Adventist, expresses something of this proactive Christ in an image with which the LDS show a strong elective affinity. It was used, for example, on the paper jacket of Mangum and Yorgason's popular volume *Amazing Grace* of 1996.[11] Jesus kneels against a background of a dark rock and is illuminated by light from above, with hands clasped and an upturned face set in an attitude of determined commitment.[12]

This garden scene is, of course, far removed from traditional Christian portrayals of the crucifixion. Let me refer again to *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, this time in relation to its entry on the "Crucifixion of Jesus Christ." In particular, I note a picture placed alongside that entry, described as "one of the few LDS paintings to treat the crucifixion theme."[13] The picture actually shows two dried palm branches suspended behind what is described as a sacrament table holding bread and water. Painted by Robert L. Marshall in 1983, it portrays no actual figure of Christ, no crucified body, no corpse, not even an empty cross. The textual interpretation accompanying the picture speaks of the "dead hanging palms" as representing the body from which life had already passed prior to the third day resurrection.

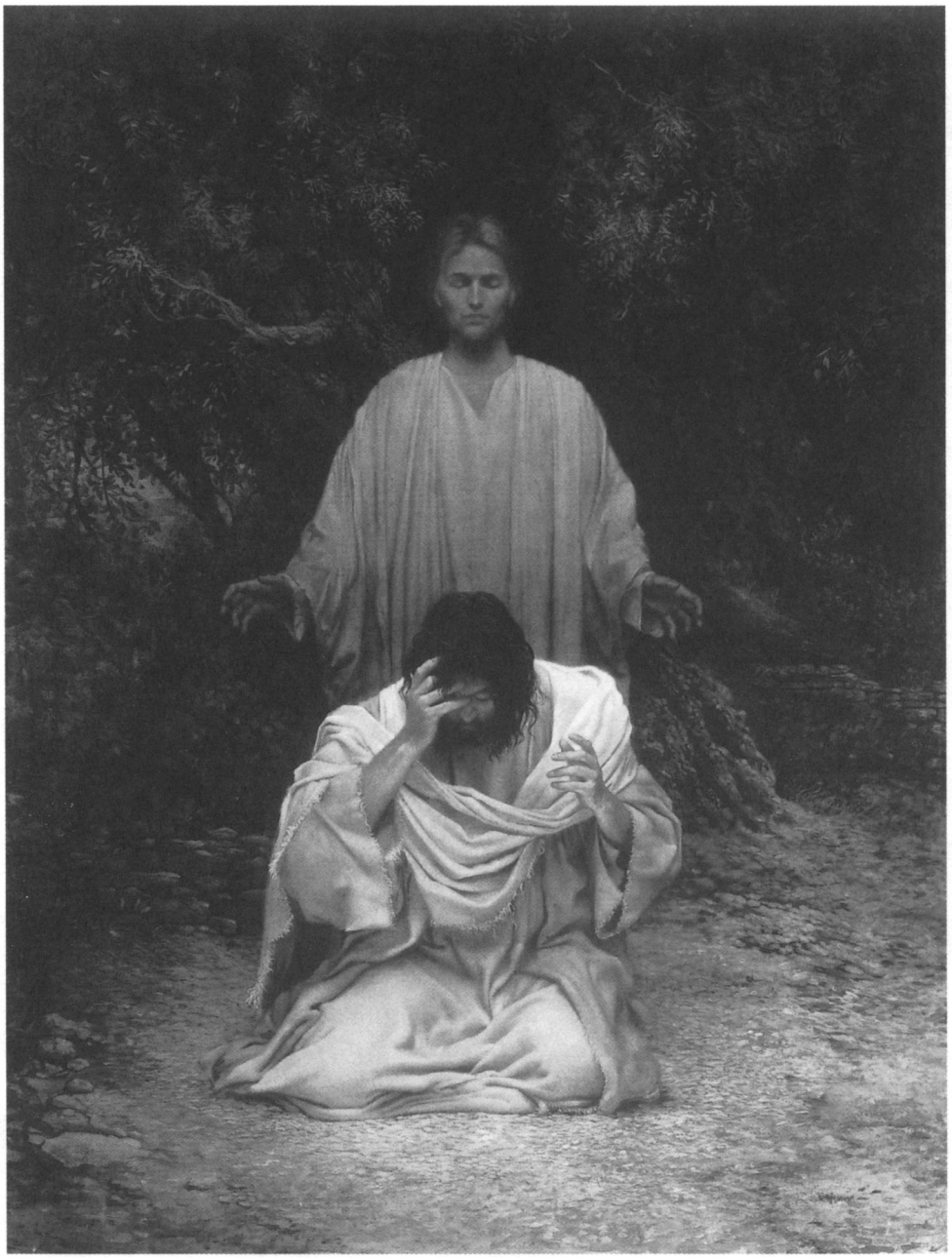
There seems to be little in this picture that resonates with LDS spirituality, unlike the visions of Christ's garden experience. One of the significant features of the proactivity of Christ is that it can come, most powerfully, to legitimate the ideal-type Latter-day Saint, an activist grounded in the LDS notion of agency and its significance for any life aimed at attaining exaltation. There is a logic to proactivity which is perfectly consonant with family and temple forms of LDS life, and with activity within the church organization. Yet it also poses a problem for people who may feel quite inadequate before the high levels of performance perceived to be required for this way of life. Some LDS authors have explored this concept using ideas of grace and of conversion, such as have, generally, been eschewed in LDS discourse, not least perhaps in order to affirm a difference between the Restoration and Protestant Evangelicalism.

---

[11]Donald P. Mangum and Brenton G. Yorgason, Amazing Grace (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966).

[12]The front cover of this journal reproduces a similar Harry Anderson painting of the same scene.

[12]Merrill, C. Oaks. "Crucifixion of Jesus Christ", in Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 733.



Stephen E. Robinson's *Believing Christ*[14] and Robert L.Millett's popular *Christ Centered Living* are both good examples of LDS explorations of grace. For Millett, grace is considered within what he calls a cultural dilemma of unlimited potential on the one hand, and a life of struggle on the other.[15] The extensive activism of early Mormons was conducive to their being "saviours in Zion" and yielding to what some have seen as a "'high demand' religion."[16] The more passive elements of religiosity or spirituality tended to take second-place to activity, though perhaps these are found, for example, in that spirituality related to patriarchal blessings within LDS life.

As a final LDS image, and perhaps the best for my purposes, I take James C. Christensen's *Christ in Gethsemane.* This depicts Jesus kneeling in a bent form with his right hand to his head, face downcast. Behind him stands the presence of an angelic being. However, in this picture, the symbolism speaks of Jesus as one who is not alone; he is not the only agent and actor in the drama. It is tempting to interpret this angelic figure as symbolizing divine grace upholding the strained individual, and to contrast the scene with the lone figure in Anderson's "Gethsemane," where Christ copes alone. Be that as it may, a reproduction of this picture is included in Robert Millet's *Christ Centered Living*, whose text addresses the issue of salvation by saying, "my good works are necessary, but they are not sufficient."[17] Then, in striking terms he adds, "I cannot work myself into celestial glory, and I cannot guarantee myself a place among the sanctified through my own unaided efforts. . . .It is not by my own merits that I will ever make it. Rather it is by and through the merits of Christ." One wonders to what extent the background angel is an angel of grace appearing in a changing discourse of atonement and exaltation. More speculatively and rhetorically, one also wonders whether the grammar of discourse of a supernatural presence attending to someone in spiritual crisis in a garden echoes the cultural image of Joseph Smith and his divine visitors in the woodland of his youth.

Certainly other images of Gethsemane, especially from the wider Catholic cultural background, would not so easily carry the import of the ones briefly mentioned so far. However, as intimated at the outset of this paper, there are relatively few such paintings when compared with crucifixion scenes.

From the later fifteenth century come two distinctive Garden scenes, one by Giovanni Bellini and one by his brother-in law Andrea Mantegna.

---

[14]Stephen, E. Robinson, *Believing Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992).

[15]Robert, R, Millet, *Christ Centered Living* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994), 112.

[16]Malise Ruthven, *The Divine Supermarket: Travels in Search of the Soul of America* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1985), 115.

[17]Millet, *Christ Centered Living*, 116.

In each, Christ faces away from the viewer and looks towards angelic beings who stand mid-air before him, though at a considerable distance away. These beings hold the symbolic cup in Bellini's picture and the cross in Mantegna's. Certainly the disciples lie around sleeping, and in the distance the arresting party, with Judas, draws near. In the early seventeenth century, El Greco painted Christ on the Mount of Olives. Christ is alert, the disciples fast asleep in a cocooned world all their own. The angel is before him holding the cup, and Christ faces the viewer. There is resignation, but no pain. From the mid-seventeenth century comes José Antolinez's "The Agony in the Garden" of 1665, in which the angel stands much closer and before Christ, holding that same chalice of destiny.[18] A modern Agony comes from Eric Gill of the early twentieth century. Gill depicts the angel behind a recumbent Christ; once more the chalice is held, once more the disciples sleep. James Christensen's Christ in Gethsemane is, in many respects, more immediate and personal than these others. There is no symbolic chalice; the choice is internal. And there are no sleeping disciples.

While more could be said, these brief observations suffice to alert us to the evolution of the Passion of Christ and the differing routes it has taken in various Christian traditions. Yet there remains a final point, almost a postscript, but a crucial one for this paper as well as for my volume on *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*. Flowing from an earlier volume entitled *Death, Ritual and Belief*,[19] it concerns the broad issue of death conquest, a vision which lay at the heart of Joseph Smith's venture in faith, and was integral to the ritual the church inherited from him and would go on to develop in the subsequent temples that would typify LDS culture. This death conquest, amongst Latter-day Saints, was already so achieved in Christ that death itself is hardly portrayed at all. Apparently, LDS culture is so given to death transcendence that death itself almost becomes invisible. This complex issue, involving as it does the cultural integration of much LDS thought and practice with wider U.S. life, may help "frame" the pictures of Gethsemane and explain the relative absence of crucifixion art in LDS iconography.

Conclusion

Much more could be said about the parallel relationships between Calvary and Gethsemane in relation to the sacrament service and the temple, but that belongs elsewhere. Enough has been said to show that theological preferences are deeply implicated, not only in the internal symbolic dynamics of a tradition, but also in its bounding distinctions from other traditions involved in similar themes of salvation.

---

[18]In The Bowes Museum, County Durham, England.

[19]Douglas J. Davies, *Death Ritual and Belief*, 2nd rev. ed. (1997, London: Cassell, 2002).

Legacy

Danielle Beazer Dubrasky

Her afghans and roses give her day a pattern
that will untighten her mouth pursed by a memory—
how her mother would fatten the favored son with milk,
claiming only boys needed calcium, not girls.

My grandmother's bones brittle, in pain,
her voice still bitter as she purls,
"She gave me weak bones."
She remains after eighty years

that girl thirsting for milk
in her quiet house scented with roses, talc,
as September light darkens over the Dresden shepherdess—
a gift from her brother while stationed in Germany—

the folds of her china skirt milk-white,
the rose canes turning brittle outside.

The Book of Mormon and Religious Epistemology[1]

Terryl L. Givens

IN HIS IMPORTANT STUDY OF *LANGUAGE, BELIEF, AND EXPERIENCE*, the ethnographer Rodney Needham tells of a dream which disturbed his sleep one night. He found himself among a people he had once studied, the Penan of Borneo, struggling to converse with them in their native tongue. He was distressed to realize he could not translate one particular phrase: "I believe in God." Needham uses this experience to launch an investigation into whether belief can be considered a universal human experience. Surveying the concept across cultures, he quickly discovers two things: 1) There is a "bewildering variety of sense attaching to words in foreign languages which are indifferently translated by the English 'believe' "; 2) "There are apparently languages in which. . .there is no verbal concept at all which can convey exactly what may be understood by the English word 'believe.' "[2] Or, as Evan-Pritchard generalized the problem in his famous study of the Nuer: "If I speak of 'spear' or 'cow' everybody will have pretty much the same idea of what I speak of, but this is not so when I speak of 'Spirit,' 'soul,' 'sin,' and so forth.[3]"

---

[1]Major portions of this essay have appeared in Terryl L. Givens, "The Book of Mormon and Dialogic Revelation," *The Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10, no. 2 (2001), and in Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2002). Used by permission of Oxford University Press, Inc.

[2]Rodney Needham, *Language, Belief, and Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 37.

[3]Evan-Pritchard, *Nuer Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), vi. Cited in ibid., 19.

In the comparative study of religions, this incommensurability is a perennial obstacle to accurate understanding. It is only in the context of a group's larger cosmology that religious terms acquire their precise meaning. In the case of cultures with scripture, the student of religion is helped a great deal by becoming conversant with a group's religious worldview, or as I wish to emphasize more particularly, with its religious epistemology.

In this paper, I want to make some tentative observations about the way in which the Book of Mormon has contributed to the fashioning of a particular religious vocabulary, or to be more specific, the disclosure of a particular religious epistemology. I am not arguing that this epistemology necessarily signaled a radical break from Protestantism, or that it conditions a religious vocabulary wholly lacking in Protestant equivalents. Rather, I hope to suggest that the role of the Book of Mormon in framing the concept of prayer and revelation in particular is connected to subtle shades of differences and distinctions which are worth examining.[4]

Models of Revelation

Avery Dulles, in his important survey of models of revelation, notes five versions, three of which have been significant in Christian history. In *revelation as doctrine*, revelation is "generally identified with the Bible, [which is] viewed as a collection of inspired and inerrant teachings." According to the view of *revelation as history*, the Bible bears witness to the primary revelation, wherein "God reveals himself. . .in his great deeds." Finally, by *revelation as inner experience*, the theologian means a "privileged interior experience of grace or communion with God," such as the mystics have known.[5]

The first two models have by and large been normative for Christians. Although the third model sounds closest to the Mormon conception of revelation, Protestant and Catholic thinkers alike have so encumbered

---

[4]Crucial differences have certainly been alleged in regard to Mormon theological terms, although—in light of Evan-Pritchard's observation—with less injury than was perhaps intended. Writes one critic, "More than a few well meaning Christians have been totally misled because of the lack of being aware of these [Mormon terminological] differences!" A Christian may "think he is in agreement with a Mormon," the same writer warns, when "in reality, they are worlds apart on what is meant by what is said" (Bob Witte, *Where Does it Say That?* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Gospel Truths, n.d.], 13-1).

[5]Avery Dulles, S. J., *Models of Revelation* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 27-28. Avery's two less historically significant models are *revelation as dialectical presence*, as developed by a group of post-WWI theologians, emphasizing the utter transcendence of God and the word of God, which "simultaneously reveals and conceals the divine presence"; and *revelation as new awareness*, which more recent theologians have postulated as "an expansion of consciousness or shift of perspective when people join in the movements of secular history."

it with qualifications and limitations that it seldom comes close to the type of revelatory experience depicted in the Book of Mormon, or what I call "dialogic revelation." Emerson may not be entirely representative of Protestantism when he pointedly calls prayer "the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul," and his formula causes one nineteenth-century preacher to object that "prayer. . .is not 'soliloquy,' but dialogue." Yet that same preacher goes on to define prayerful "dialogue" as anything but two-way communication:

> Now, in order to have a real energy of spiritual life, we must have actual intercourse with God himself. . . .And to commune with him, we must have something to say to him. . . .Therefore, God, in order that men may come into real communion with him and so receive real vital energy—faith, love, peace, joy—has ordered it so that we may speak to him of our real wants.[6]

Strange "intercourse" this, where only man must have something to say, and in consequence of which he receives not an answer, but "vital energy" (which may, in any case, be more a product of the act of petition itself than of any "response").

From a philosophical perspective, the premise that God is transcendent and that he has no "phenomenal existence" means the very characterization of any revelation as "interior experience" or "communion," to use Dulles's terms, or "dialogue," to use James Clarke's, is problematic. As Emmanuel Levinas asks, "How can we make sense of the 'exteriority' of the truths and signs of the Revelation which strike the human faculty known as reason? It is a faculty which, despite its 'interiority,' is equal to whatever the world confronts us with. But how can these truths and signs strike our reason if they are not even of this world?"[7] Similarly, particularized manifestations or communications are either redundant or illogical in a universe which is co-extensive with God Himself. Therefore, even within this model, as George Tyrrell writes, "there can be no revealed statements or doctrines." Similarly, Auguste Sabatier insists that "the object of the revelation of God can only be God," and Ernest William Hocking holds that even the mystic, "as he is a mystic pure and simple knows nothing else than God."[8]

---

[6]James Freeman Clarke, *The Christian Doctrine of Prayer* (1854; reprint, Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1890), 166, xi.

[7]In Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim that God Speaks* (Cambridge: 1995), 8-9.

[8]G. Tyrrell, *Through Scylla and Charybdis* (London: Longmans, Green, 1907), 326-27; A. Sabatier, *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion Based on Psychology and History* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), 35; W. E. Hocking, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 448. All cited in Dulles, Models of Revelation, 72-73.

Eventually, the game is up when Dulles says that for the theologians of this third model, "the experience of God. . .may be called grace, and grace, insofar as it brings about a new awareness of the divine, is revelation."[9] In other words, this model seems little more than recognition of the obvious fact that the reality of God and his great acts, however objective and universally valid (as the first two models emphasize), must be intersubjectively experienced to be operative in human life. However, when Tyrrell calls this experience "a passive impression," we seem to have in this model a distinction from the others without a clear difference.[10]

The equivocal and limiting definitions of "revelation as inner experience" are undoubtedly tied to the plethora of theological dragons lurking in the domain of experiential religion. Even William Abraham, while critiquing theological hostility to divine speaking, and pleading for greater "openness to divine intervention in the world," acknowledges personal misgivings about the ways fundamentalists "have used the emphasis on propositional revelation to underscore an account of inspiration that is both confused and dangerous." [11]

However, the threat and historical experience of heresy, schism, and sectarianism are not the only reasons for preferring historical or textual bases of revelation to subjective ones. Hostility to a model of experiential revelation has been grounded in a variety of other reasons, including fear of irrationalism,[12] the perceived sufficiency of the

---

[9]Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, 70.

[10]Ibid., 73. Dulles himself seems to agree, claiming weakly that since the two prior models are grounded in historically circumscribed events, this model, "in its acceptance of continuing revelation. . .contrasts with the two preceding models." Even for fundamentalists, this "propositional" model of revelation can be simply another name for Dulles's first model, revelation as doctrine. Clark Pinnock, for instance, defines propositional revelation as "the conceptual truth extractable from Holy Scripture" (*A Defense of Biblical Infallibility* [Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1967], 4, n.15, in William J. Abraham, *Divine Revelation and the Limits of Historical Criticism* [New York: Oxford, 1982], 22).

[11]Abraham, *Divine Revelation*, 189, 10.

[12]Baillie, for instance, traces the emphasis on objectivist definitions of revelation to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when Kant, Hegel, Ritschl, and other philosopher-theologians of the post-Enlightenment saw little role for divine communication, wishing instead to see theology develop as the elaboration of a religious sensibility (John Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1956], 3-15). To partisans of natural religion at that time, as with liberal theology today, any concession to the supernatural or the supersubjective was playing into the hands of Christianity's enemies. Compare this development with Kaufmann Kohler's account of revelation in Judaism, where "this supernatural element disappears gradually and passes over into sober, self-conscious thought, in which the writer no longer thinks of God as the Ego speaking through him" (*Jewish Theology* [New York: Macmillan, 1918], 39). Not surprisingly, Mormon scholars trace the disparagement of subjective revelation much farther back, to the first two Christian centuries, when "the primary targets of these heresy-hunters were the

canon,[13] the concern to preserve the integrity of individual agency,[14] and, perhaps most emphatically, theological resistance to anything tending toward anthropomorphism.[15] Abraham notes that in the midst of such gradual, deliberate dilution of the concept of divine speaking, (which would entail both intersubjectivity and communicated content), traces of a more literal definition stubbornly persist. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, for example, defines revelation as "the communication of some truth by God to a rational creature through means which are beyond the ordinary course of nature." Likewise, the Oxford English

---

so-called Gnostics, who claimed to receive their doctrine through revelation from heaven rather than by reasoning through the scriptures" (C. Wilfred Griggs, "Rediscovering Ancient Christianity," *BYU Studies* 38, no. 4 [1999]: 73-90). Griggs notes that one of the earliest Christian controversies, the "Valentinian Crisis," was precipitated when that popular Alexandrian "claimed to have received his doctrine through revelatory experience" (74).

[13]In Charles Thompson's 1841 defense of the Book of Mormon, five of the six objections he listed as directed at the new revelation were really variations on the same theme: "The Bible is full and complete" (Charles B. Thompson, *Evidences in Proof of the Book of Mormon Being a Divinely Inspired Record* [Batavia, N.Y.: D.D. Waite, 1841], 149-67).

[14]In the opinion of poet and sometimes theologian Samuel Coleridge, explicit directives from above would compromise individual agency. In support of his view, he cites Romans 8:26 ("*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*"): "'The Spirit aid[s] our infirmities;' that is, *act[s] on* the Will by a predisposing influence *from without*, as it were, though in a spiritual manner, and without suspending or destroying its freedom. . . .Nor is there any danger of Fanaticism or Enthusiasm as the consequence of such a belief, if only the attention be carefully and earnestly drawn to the concluding words of the sentence (Romans viii. v. 26); if only the due force and *full* import be given to the term *unutterable* or *incommunicable*, in St. Paul's use of it. In this, the strictest and most proper use of the term, it signifies, that the subject, of which it is predicated, is something which I *cannot*, which from the nature of the thing it is impossible that I should, communicate to any human mind (even of a person under the same conditions with myself) so as to make it *in itself* the object of his direct and immediate consciousness. It cannot be the object of *my own* direct and immediate Consciousness; but must be *inferred*" ("Aids to Reflection," in John Beer, ed., *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993], 9:78-79). So here we have again the retreat into linguistic inadequacy, except that for Coleridge, it is not the nature of God alone which is beyond human expressing, but any knowledge *revealed by God*.

[15]As Abraham reasons, "When the theist speaks of divine revelation the activity of human revealing serves as the model for conceiving that revelation." But here "we sense immediately a certain awkwardness" (Abraham, *Divine Revelation*, 11). That awkwardness is not without its theological solutions. As Wolterstorff argues, "Since God has no vocal cords with which to utter words, and no hands with which to write them down, God cannot literally speak, cannot literally be a participant in a linguistic communication. Accordingly, attributions of speech to God, if not judged bizarrely false, must be taken as metaphorical" (Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, 10). Also, as Sandra M. Schneider writes, outside of an anthropomorphic model it is "evident" that "divine discourse cannot be taken literally. . . . Language, in other words, is a human phenomenon rooted in our corporeality as well as in our discursive mode of intellection and as such cannot be literally predicated of pure spirit" (*The Revelatory Text* [San Francisco: Harper, 1991], 27-29).

Dictionary calls it "the disclosure or communication of knowledge to man by a divine or supernatural agency." However, the movement away from this "propositional" theory of revelation, or what Abraham calls theology's "vehement reaction" against it, has been pronounced since the nineteenth century,[16] so much so, that he seriously questions the very viability of the concept of revelation at the present time:

> To claim that God reveals Himself to man but to reject the [belief that] he reveals Himself by speaking to man is to so whittle away the analogy on which the concept of divine revelation is built that it must be seriously asked whether the concept of divine revelation has enough content to license its continued use. Revelation in the fully personal sense characteristic of personal agents has been abandoned.[17]

Retreating into metaphor, confusing "monologue" for "dialogue," reading heavenly silence or quotidian event as "answer"—all these strategies cannot belie the fact, as Rodney Stark reminds us in his quest for more terminological rigor, that "a revelation is not an insight or an inspiration. A revelation is a communication. . . .A revelation presupposes a divine being capable of wishes and intentions." [18] Obviously, it would be reductive and inaccurate to characterize all prayer in the Christian tradition as a kind of vague projection into the void, operating with such blithe openness to the outcome that it begs the very question of prayer's efficacy. The kind of prayer which is an asking, rather than an asking for, and which anticipates a personal response, a discernible moment of dialogue or communicated content, would be a distinctive kind of prayer, one falling outside the models of revelation we have seen, relegating as they do God's operations to historical events, canonized texts, or the infusion of "vital energy." The response envisioned by this latter type of prayer—the experience of "revelation" following from a literal conception of divine discourse—is one that William James, for example, characterizes as distinctive, and associates with Catholic Saints, George Fox, the Old Testament prophets, and Joseph Smith. Here he quotes W. Sanday: "There is something sharp and sudden about it. He can lay his finger so to speak, on the moment when it came."[19] However, in the case of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, even James's distinction is insufficient. Far beyond a forceful spiritual intimation, one finds in the Book

---

[16]Abraham, *Divine Revelation*, 8-9.

[17]Ibid., 24.

[18]Rodney Stark, "A Theory of Revelations," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 38, no. 2 (1999): 289.

[19]William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 373.

of Mormon that prayer frequently and dramatically evokes an answer impossible to mistake as anything other than an individualized, dialogic response to a highly particularized question.

The Book of Mormon and Dialogic Revelation

Regarding Augustine's belief that God spoke through the mouth of a child, Nicholas Wolterstorff has written: "What would Judaism, Christianity, and Islam look like if no one spoke of God commanding, no one, of God promising, no one, of God telling?"[20] Like the three major religions mentioned by Wolterstorff, Mormonism comes with its unique scriptural canon. One of the functions of a sacred text is to ground or establish a coherent cosmology. By so doing, it adumbrates the parameters of religious experience, at the same time providing for the meaningful interpretation of that religious experience.[21] Accordingly, the extent and shape and meaning of "revelation," as operative in the Book of Mormon, like "spirit" or "god" in Nuer religion, may provide the best basis for understanding the extent, shape, and meaning of such a term as "revelation." Thus, when in the Book of Mormon God commands, promises, tells, speaks, exhorts, chastises, and directs in myriad circumstances and settings, it may be understood in ways particular to Mormonism.

Nowhere is the concentration of heavenly utterances more intense than in the First Book of Nephi. In the first fifty pages alone, we read of eight visions, various angelic visitations, several occasions on which Nephi is "visited" by the Lord, "constrained by the Spirit," "led by the Spirit," "commanded" by the Lord, and so forth. More to the point, Nephi and his father also describe several occasions which cannot be interpreted as mere dreams, spiritual promptings, or heaven-sent impressions. In response to his pleadings on behalf of his wicked brothers, Nephi records, "The Lord spake unto me, saying,. . . ." Subsequently, he records that "the Lord spake unto" his father, telling him to procure wives for the journey to the Promised Land. Later, the "voice of the Lord

---

[20]Wolterstorff, *Divine Discourse*, 8.

[21]As Alan Grossman has written: "Scripture is privileged text. The nature of the textual privilege of scripture derives from the fact that the source of its language is identical with the source of reality. . . .Men conserve Scripture, first, as the final map of all reality and, then, as the possibility of any mapping of reality which time and the accidents of historicity—the general rage against meaning—threaten to snatch from the hand" ("Summa Lyrica: A Primer of the Commonplaces in Speculative Poetics," in Alan Grossman and Mark Halliday, *The Sighted Singer: Two Works on Poetry for Readers and Writers* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1992], 245). Similarly, Ian Barbour describes the function of religious language as providing models that "are used in the interpretation of experience" (*Myths, Models, and Paradigms; A Comparative Study In Science And Religion* [New York: Harper and Row, 1971], 57).

came unto my father" and "chastened" him for his murmuring, then "the voice of the Lord came and did speak many words" to the rebellious Laman. Preparatory to building a ship for their journey, "the voice of the Lord came unto" Nephi, the "Lord spake" unto him about the ship, "showed" him how to construct it, and "told him" where to find ore. When the time came to depart, "the voice of the Lord came unto my father, that we should arise and go down into the ship" (1 Nephi 2:19; 7:1; 16:25; 16:39; 17:7-10; 18:5).

In fact, we read Nephi's recount of how "the voice of the Lord came" to him, to his father, to Laman and Lemuel, so often that it becomes a refrain almost as pervasive as the numbingly common "and it came to pass."[22] No shadowy spiritual intimations these, no merely intuited guidance or inspiration, but direct divine discourse, which frequently rises to the level of genuine dialogic exchange. For example, upon returning to Jerusalem to obtain the plates of brass, Nephi encounters the record keeper Laban in a drunken stupor. He is then "constrained by the Spirit" to slay Laban. As he recounts, "I said in my heart: Never at any time have I shed the blood of man. And I shrunk and would that I might not slay him." The dialogue develops when "the Spirit said unto me again: Behold the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands." Nephi continues to hesitate, so the Spirit persists, articulating an entire rationale behind the original directive: "And it came to pass that the Spirit said unto me again: Slay him, for the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands; Behold the Lord slayeth the wicked to bring forth his righteous purposes. It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief" (1 Nephi 4:10-13).

A similar example of conversational revelation occurs during the conversion of Enos, Nephi's nephew. Hungering for "eternal life and the joy of the saints," Enos spends a night and a day in prayer, after which "there came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed." Marveling at the miracle of forgiveness, Enos asks, "Lord, how is it done? And he said unto me: Because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast never before heard nor seen. And many years pass away before he shall manifest himself in the flesh; wherefore, go to, thy faith hath made thee whole." But Enos does not "go to": "When I had heard these words," he writes, thus revealing the exchange's linguistic rather than impressionistic nature, he turns his thoughts to his brethren the Nephites, praying fervently on their behalf. Soon, "the voice of the Lord came into my mind again," promising them conditional blessings. Once more, after he "had heard these words," he struggles in spirit for

[22]This precise expression occurs more than two dozen times. Variations of it, including the voice of the spirit or of angels, appear dozens more.

his enemies the Lamanites. Once more, the Lord speaks his assurances to him. Yet a final time, Enos prays for the preservation of the records of which he is now guardian. The exchange ends when the Lord not only speaks to, but covenants with Enos to do according to his desire. "And I, Enos, knew it would be according to the covenant which he had made; wherefore my soul did rest" (Enos 1:3-17).

The Gift of God Unto All

At first glance, such experiences recall the pattern of Old Testament prophets, and, as we saw, William James for one likened Joseph Smith himself to such ancient patriarchs. Indeed, it is true that "the Lord spake" to Moses dozens of times, engaged in a protracted negotiation with Abraham over the fate of Sodom, and obviously revealed his mind and will to a host of major and minor prophets. To some extent, one could consider that Joseph's personal ministry, as well as the Book of Mormon record, reenacts an Old Testament paradigm. Yet on closer inspection, the Book of Mormon model of revelation diverges in at least one crucial way: In the Bible, outside of prophets acting in the role of national leadership, personal revelation is almost unknown.[23] Prophets and prophecy are not just linguistically but textually synonymous. To state the matter as principle: "Prophecy was preeminently the privilege of the prophets,"[24] and the concern of these prophets was with the fate of kings and nations and tribes, with the workings and purposes of God in history, with the spiritual destinies of covenant peoples and fledgling churches. Even more grandly, as the great Abraham Heschel writes, "Prophecy. . .may be described as exegesis of existence from a divine perspective."[25] John Baillie agrees that revelation is confined to what "we need to know about our ultimate concern."[26] The Book of Mormon here becomes a study in contrast. Through chiastic form, thematic structure, numerous textual examples, and a final, concluding instance of readerly invitation, the scripture hammers home the insistent message that revelation is the province of everyman. As a consequence, in the world of the Book of Mormon, concepts like revelation, prayer, inspiration, mystery, will find powerful and substantive redefinition. This may well be the Book of Mormon's most significant and revolutionary (as well as controversial) contribution to religious thinking. The particularity and specificity, the vividness, the concreteness, and the accessibility of revelatory

---

[23]Rebekah is one notable exception. Bewildered by the twins struggling in her womb, "she went to enquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her. . ." (Gen. 25:23).

[24]"Prophecy," in F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1336.

[25]Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), xviii.

[26]Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation*, 148.

experience—these realities both underlie and overshadow the narrated history and doctrine which constitute the record. The "knowability" of all truth, the openness of mystery, the reality of personal revelation, find vivid illustration within the record, and invite reenactment outside it.

Nephi, as chronicler of the record bearing his name, postpones until chapter 10 (chapter 3 in the 1830 edition) an account of his own "proceedings and reign and ministry," having spent the previous sections emphasizing those of his father, Lehi. However, this is more than a gesture of filial respect, because now when Nephi records his own spiritual epiphany, it is within a context which gives the principle of revelation its first radically new contours in the Book of Mormon. Following a number of briefly narrated revelations and dreams, Lehi receives an expansive vision of the "Tree of Life," which he relates to his family. After hearing his father's account, Nephi writes that he "was desirous also that I might see, and hear, and know of these things, by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him" (1 Nephi 10:17).

Believing that "the Lord was able to make [those things] known unto [him]," after much pondering in his heart, Nephi is "caught away in the Spirit of the Lord," to a place where he immediately engages that Spirit in conversation. When Nephi expresses his desire "to behold the things which [his] father saw," the Spirit responds, "Believest thou that thy father saw the tree of which he hath spoken?" At this critical juncture, two points are highly important: First, Lehi, not Nephi, is still functioning as the unquestioned prophetic figure in the story. Nephi has even gone out of his way to acknowledge the spiritual preeminence of his father, by pointedly asking him for guidance even in the midst of his father's recent murmurings.[27] In the divine economy of the Old Testament, Nephi's inquiry of the Spirit would thus seem to be faithless at worst, and redundant at best. The spirit's inquiry, worded as it is, might even have been construed as implicit criticism. Yet Nephi answers unhesitatingly, "Yea, thou knowest I believe all the words of my father."

Second, as John Welch has pointed out, this query occurs at the moment of the book's most extreme narrative tension, as the culmination of an expansive chiastic structure that organizes all of 1 Nephi.[28] Framed by symmetrical prophetic modes, quest elements, characters, and motifs, Nephi's interview is the fulcrum on which the entire complexly orga-

---

[27]Afflicted by hunger and the loss of weapons while in the Old World wilderness, Lehi "did murmur against the Lord." Nephi takes the initiative to fashion new arms, and asks his father, "Whither shall I go to obtain food?" after which Lehi humbles himself and successfully inquires of the Lord (1 Nephi 16).

[28]Welch details the chiastic elements in his "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981; Provo, Utah: Research Press, 1999), 199-200.

nized account of Nephi balances. The reply of the angel to Nephi's answer is therefore fraught with special significance, and that answer comes as heavenly exultation: "Hosanna to the Lord, the most high God; for he is God over all the earth, yea, even above all. And blessed art thou, Nephi, because thou believest in the Son of the most high God; wherefore, thou shalt behold the things which thou hast desired" (1 Nephi 11:1-6).

Nephi is commended, not reproved, for seeking access to the mysteries of heaven for personal rather than public edification. To forestall any misperception that his prerogative is related to some special spiritual status or to his eventual inheritance of the prophetic role, his brothers are explicitly associated with such a misguided perspective and harshly condemned as a result. Confused by Lehi's account of his vision, Laman and Lemuel complain to Nephi that "we cannot understand the words which our father hath spoken" (1 Nephi 15:7). The exchange that follows anticipates and frames, together with the closing chapters of Moroni, the entire 1000-year history of righteousness and apostasy constituting the body of the Book of Mormon record. The warning these verses carry will have been grimly fulfilled by the end of the book, and will be tragically echoed by the last guardian of the records, while looking hopefully to a different audience.

> And I said unto them: Have ye inquired of the Lord?
> And they said unto me: We have not; for the Lord maketh no such thing known unto us ["because we are not prophets," in other words].
>
> Behold, I said unto them: How is it that ye do not keep the commandments of the Lord? How is it that ye will perish, because of the hardness of your hearts?
>
> Do ye not remember the things which the Lord hath said?—If ye will not harden your hearts, and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely these things shall be made known unto you (1 Nephi 15:8-11).

The brothers do not heed the message, and as a result, they and their posterity are spiritually blighted. Nephi's belief in revelatory experience outside of official channels, and his brothers' disbelief in the same principle, seem clearly calculated to establish the pivotal importance of the principle that divides them.

The opening verse of the Book of Mormon actually portends just such a theme, when Nephi introduces himself as "having. . .had a great knowledge of the goodness and mysteries of God." New Testament uses of the word "mystery" (Musthrion) are quite unlike this epistemology. Occurring some 24 times, the word almost always refers to something

hidden from the world, revealed through a historical process connected to the providence of God. Romans 16:25-26 is typical: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."[29]

As Baillie writes,

> In the Bible the word is always used in its proper and exalted sense. Not only is revelation always "the revelation of a mystery which was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed," but the mystery thus disclosed is nothing less than God's own will and purpose[30]

For Nephi, as for others in the Book of Mormon, the cognates of "mystery" (which appear in numbers comparable to New Testament occurrences) appear always in the context of a valuable truth revealed through the spirit to the seeking individual. They are supposed to be studied and apprehended by the individual. As Mosiah teaches, "Were it not for these things, which have been kept and preserved by the hand of God, that we might read and understand of his mysteries. . .we should have been like unto our brethren, the Lamanites, who know nothing concerning these things, or even do not believe them when they are taught them" (Mosiah 1:5).[31] Later, he exhorts them to "open your ears that ye may hear,. . .and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view (Mosiah 2:9). Similarly, Alma promises "he that repenteth and exerciseth faith,. . .unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God (Alma 26:22).

Since the Book of Mormon is compiled largely by Nephite prophets, we get few portraits of religious life at the individual level. However, in addition to Nephi, we do have instances wherein other individuals (acting outside any prophetic role) are privy to revelations and the mysteries of God. For example, Mosiah fears for his sons' lives when they plan to preach in hostile territory. He "inquired of the Lord if he should let his sons go up among the Lamanites to preach the word. And the Lord said unto Mosiah: Let them go up" (Mosiah 28:6-7). Similarly, the missionary Ammon watches helplessly as thousands of his converts, now pacifists, suffer death rather than retaliate or defend themselves. He proposes a migration to the Nephite lands, but they are reluctant: "And Ammon

---

[29]While the term usually refers to the gospel in general, or its new inclusivity, it can also refer to particular truths of that gospel, as it does for Paul: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51).

[30]Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation*, 28.

[31]See also Alma 10:5, "I have seen much of his mysteries and his marvelous power."

said: I will go and inquire of the Lord, and if he say unto us, go down unto our brethren, will ye go?" They give their consent. "And it came to pass that Ammon went and inquired of the Lord, and he said unto him: Get this people out of this land" (Alma 27:7, 11-12).[32]

Who, then, has rightful access to revelations, epiphanies, visions and utterances? To the extent that the spirit of "prophecy" and the spirit of "revelation" are the same (the Book of Mormon uses the expressions in tandem and almost interchangeably), the Book of Mormon powerfully refutes the claim that "prophecy is preeminently the privilege of the prophets." Joseph Smith learned this lesson fully: "The Holy Ghost is a revelator," he taught in the years after the translation, holding that it is impossible to have the gift of the Holy Ghost and not enjoy the spirit of prophesy.[33] Consignment of revelatory prerogatives to prophets, priests, or popes alone, the implication seems to be, is but an invitation to priestcraft.

If the Book of Mormon was a template for early church organization because it pronounced doctrine on such matters as baptism and sacramental prayers, how much more its significance as a model for the how, who, and what of revelation. In laying out the doctrine of personal revelation, the Doctrine and Covenants merely elaborates what was implicit throughout the Book of Mormon: "Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart. Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation; behold, this is the spirit by which Moses brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea on dry ground" (D&C 8:2-3). For Mormons, as for Catholics, Christ's words to Peter specified the conditions of the church's very foundation. The rock on which the church was—and is—built up, is held by both religions to be the rock of personal revelation, the process whereby truth is "revealed" not by "flesh and blood. . .but my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17-18). The Book of Mormon reasserts this principle, while clarifying its democratic, rather than hierarchical, application.[34]

---

[32]Centuries earlier in the Book of Mormon, a similar migration had been prompted by direct communication from God: "And it came to pass that Jared spake again unto his brother, saying: Go and inquire of the Lord whether he will drive us out of the land. . . . And it came to pass that the Lord did hear the brother of Jared,. . . and said unto him: Go to and gather together thy flocks. . .and thy families" (Ether 1:38-41).

[33]Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, eds. James Mulholland, Robert B. Thompson, William W. Phelps, Willard Richards, George A. Smith and later, B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1902-12; 2d. ed., rev., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1951), 6:58.

[34]In the early LDS church, of course, personal revelation is circumscribed by principles of ecclesiastical stewardship or jurisdiction. Hiram Page claimed revelations through a seer stone, and was instructed (in a precedent-setting reproof) that only the president of the church is entitled to receive revelation for the church as a whole: "For, behold, these things have not been appointed unto him, neither shall anything be appointed unto any of this

Revelation and Proximate Concern

What then of the substance of revelation? The Book of Mormon may grapple with the "exegesis of existence" or matters of "ultimate concern," but that doesn't seem to be the point of most of the revelatory process we witness here. Questions prompting divine replies are in turn quotidian, pragmatic, and at times almost banal in their mundane specificity. While still in the wilderness on their way to the promised land, Nephi and his brothers lose their weapons and their people suffer hunger and discouragement. Nephi fashions a new bow and asks his father where to hunt: "And it came to pass that he did inquire of the Lord. . . ." The answer comes (this time by means of the Liahona) directing him to a successful hunt" (1 Nephi 16:24-31).

Much later in the record, on two occasions, military plans are informed by divine revelation. Alma is asked by Zoram, a chief captain, to inquire "whither the Lord would that they should go into the wilderness in search of their brethren, who had been taken captive by the Lamanites." Thus, "Alma inquired of the Lord concerning the matter. And Alma returned and said unto them: Behold, the Lamanites will cross the river Sidon in the south wilderness. . . .There shall ye meet them. . .and there the Lord will deliver unto thee they brethren." (Alma 16:5-6). A few years and campaigns later, Captain Moroni "sent certain men unto him, desiring him that he should inquire of the Lord whither the armies of the Nephites should go to defend themselves against the Lamanites" (Alma 43:23). Once again, the Lord reveals the enemy's plans.

Queries can also be of a strictly doctrinal nature. For example, Alma is curious about the space of time between physical death and resurrection. He "inquire[s] diligently of the Lord to know," and receives by angelic intermediary a detailed account which he then imparts to his son, Corianton (Alma 40:9). The prophet Jacob, Nephi's successor, prays for guidance in his ministry and records that "as I inquired of the Lord, thus came the word unto me, saying: Jacob, get thou up into the temple on the morrow, and declare the word which I shall give thee" (Jacob 2:11). He then transmits a discourse on humility and chastity. Likewise, Moroni, troubled by reports of infant baptism, but apparently unsure of its merits, appeals to the Lord for guidance: "And the word of the Lord came unto me by the power of the Holy Ghost, saying: Listen to the words of Christ. . . .Little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin;. . .wherefore. . .I know

---

church contrary to the church covenants. For all things must be done in order" (D&C 28:12-13). Likewise, sixth church President Joseph F. Smith officially declared that members' "visions, dreams, tongues, prophecy, impressions, or any extraordinary gift or inspiration" must be in "harmony with the accepted revelations of the church [and] the decisions of its constituted authorities," and pertain only to "themselves, their families, and. . .those over whom they are appointed and ordained to preside" (*Messages of the First Presidency* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965], 4:285).

that it is solemn mockery before God, that ye should baptize little children" (Moroni 8:7-9).

When Moroni inquires of the Lord in another context, it seems only slightly more than pious curiosity which prompts him. Pondering the fate of three Nephite disciples, he "inquired of the Lord, and he hath made it manifest unto me that there must needs be a change wrought upon their bodies, or else it needs be that they must taste of death" (3 Nephi 28:37).

In at least one instance, prayer about a difficult political problem elicits an answer. Unsuccessful in his effort to transfer jurisdiction over zealous apostates to the king, Alma takes his dilemma to the Lord in prayer: "And it came to pass that after he had poured out his whole soul to God, the voice of the Lord came to him," telling him that ecclesiastical dilemmas require ecclesiastical solutions (Mosiah 26:14).

We may contrast these examples with the assessment of Shlomo Biderman, that "Christianity is centered on revelation, which contains within it a message ('good news') meant for the believer. Given this message, what is important is the content of revelation."[35] In the Book of Mormon, what is important is rather the ever-present accessibility of revelation, an egalitarian access to truths ranging from the sublime to the mundane, from principles of salvation to the location of game.

The redemptive role of Jesus Christ is the central tenet of which the Book of Mormon testifies, but conditioned as that knowledge is on spiritual channels, the Book of Mormon gives at least as much attention to the mode as to the object of revelation. When Amaleki closes the record known as the Small Plates of Nephi, his final words, spoken by way of both summation of past experience and admonition to posterity, are an exhortation to "believe in prophesying, and in revelations," as well as other spiritual gifts (Omni 1:25).

Alma, a few years later, testifies to his sons of his own experience with revealed knowledge: "Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that these things are true." Yet again, "I would not that ye should think that I know these things of myself, but it is the Spirit of God which is in me which maketh these things known unto me"(Alma 5:46; 38:6). Helaman continues the theme, writing, "Behold now, I do not say that these things shall be, of myself, because it is not of myself that I know these things; but behold, I know that these things are true because the Lord God has made them known unto me" (Hel. 7:29).

In spite of the recurrent testimonies of the Nephite prophets who affirm the principle of personal revelation, the majority of Nephite history, like its Old Testament counterpart, is one of spiritual blindness and

---

[35]Shlomo Biderman, *Scripture and Knowledge: An Essay on Religious Epistemology* (New York: Brill, 1995), 11.

apostasy. However, in this case, the reader is invited to locate a different culprit than the idolatry of Baal. Moroni, final prophet and editor of the record, proclaims his intention of writing a moral history of particular relevance to futurity ("Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing" [Morm. 8:35]). Writing with particular poignancy in the aftermath of his entire people's destruction, Moroni predicts that the same truth lost on Laman and Lemuel may well be lost on generations yet to come, and he repeats the same condemnation: "And again I speak unto you who deny the revelations of God, and say that they are done away, that there are no revelations, nor prophecies, nor gifts. . . .Behold I say unto you, he that denieth these things knoweth not the gospel of Christ" (Morm. 9:7-8).

Yet, in concluding his record, Moroni turns from lament to hopefulness. In his apostrophe to futurity (the most oft-invoked verse in the Book of Mormon), Moroni renews Nephi's testimony, presumably with the intention of shaping a more successful history than the one he has just witnessed: "I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Moro. 10:4-5).

Judging from the near perfect symmetry of Nephi's testimony/rebuke directed at his brothers in the days preceding the first settlement, and Mormon's rebuke/testimony at the twilight of his people's history, and given the unrelenting affirmations of numerous writers throughout the record, we can conclude that the moral of this sprawling epic seems to be the indispensability of personal revelation as a key to spiritual survival of the individual, as well as the nation.[36] Moroni, however, as prophet as well as editor and spokesman to future generations, has done more than derive a moral from a millennium of record keeping. He actually serves to link the principle of personal revelation witnessed within the text to its enactment in regards to the text. His expression of this principle thus echoes this theme, but also transposes the text from a record providing a unified treatment of the principle of personal revelation, as

[36]This is clearly one of the morals the early brethren drew from the Book of Mormon. As a church editorial warned, "The Bible contains revelations given at different times to different people, under different circumstances, as will be seen by editorial articles in this paper. The old world was destroyed for rejecting the revelations of God, given to them through Noah. The Israelites were destroyed in the wilderness for despising the revelations given to them through Moses; and Christ said that the world, in the days of the apostles, should be condemned for not receiving the word of God through them: thus we see that the judgments of God in the past ages have come upon the people, not so much for neglecting the revelations given to their forefathers, as for rejecting those given immediately to themselves" (*The Evening and the Morning Star* 1, no. 2 [July 1832]: 13).

enacted by the various prophets (from Nephi onward, we do not hear sermons about revelation, we observe the transformation of their lives and the catalyst behind their ministries as tangible products of such revelation), into something else.

Moroni's editorial position outside the text allows him to objectify it as the proving matter for contemporary readers to have their own experience of spiritual validation. In other words, our knowing that the particulars of Moroni's history are true (like Laman and Lemuel understanding the allegory of Lehi's vision) is clearly not the point of his challenge. Knowing they are knowable is. In effect, Moroni has transformed the Book of Mormon's status from signified to signifier: Its ability to emphatically call into play the validating power of the spirit becomes more important than the particulars of its history or its doctrine.

Religious Egalitarianism in the Nineteenth Century

Against the context of the theology of revelation surveyed here, Joseph Smith's "Golden Bible" was radically distinctive. The Book of Mormon patterned a variety of revelation which emphatically affirmed revelation's dialogic nature, a paradigm mostly at odds with historical conceptions of revelation, although not without some parallels and antecedents in nineteenth-century American frontier religion. In addition, the Book of Mormon was itself a locus of special revelatory activity swirling around the prophet. Finally, the Book of Mormon also served to initiate susceptible readers into a new paradigm of personal revelation, appealing in a highly successful way to a spirit of religious individualism. The invitation extended by Moroni was echoed and generalized by Joseph Smith and the Mormon missionaries, combined with an appeal to uniquely American sensibilities: "TO THE HONORABLE MEN OF THE WORLD," began one of his open letters,

> We, in a spirit of candor and meekness, [and] bound by every tie that makes man the friend of man. . .say unto you, Search the Scriptures search the revelations which we publish, and ask your heavenly Father, in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, to manifest the truth unto you, and if you do it with an eye single to his glory, nothing doubting, he will answer you by the power of his Holy Spirit: You will then know for yourselves and not for another: You will not then be dependent on man for the knowledge of God; . . .Then again we say, Search the Scriptures; search the prophets, and learn what portion of them belongs to you, and the people of the nineteenth century. . . .[Y]ou stand then in these last days, as all have stood before you, agents unto yourselves, to be judged according to your works. Every man lives for himself.[37]

[37]*The Evening and the Morning Star* 1, no. 3 (August 1832): 22.

It could be pointed out that certain forms of personal, unmediated knowledge of God and his truths have persisted in spite of the evolution in the concept of revelation, an evolution which confines heavenly communication to divine enactment or historically delimited inspiration, rather than continuing utterance. In most general terms, we could treat mysticism as that tradition historically most resistant to such developments. Indeed, in his investigation of the nature of Mormon religious experience, Thomas Alexander found comparisons to mysticism useful, not to what he calls "the negative mysticism," the *via negativa* of the medievals who reveled in the ineffability of it all, but to "primitive Christian or affirmative mysticism," emphasizing "the open revelation of God to man."[38] In Joseph Smith's own day, his region so abounded in prophets and mystics that a contemporary wrote an account entitled *Humbugs of New York*,[39] and Walter Scott's Scottish heroine Jennie Dean provides a glimpse of a kindred religious tradition rich in revelatory epiphanies:

> She reminded her father that Butler had not "his experience of the auld and wrastling times," when folk were gifted wi' a far look into eternity, to make up for the oppressions whilk they suffered here below in time. She freely allowed that many devout ministers and professors in times past had enjoyed downright revelation, like the blessed Peden, and Lundie, and Cameron, and Renwick, and John Caird the tinkler, wha entered into the secrets, and Elizabeth Melvill, Lady Culross, wha prayed in her bed,. . .and Lady Robertland, whilk got sic rare outgates of grace, and mony other in times past; and of a specialty, Mr John Scrimgeour, minister of Kinghor. . . .She contended that those ministers who had not seen such vouchsafed and especial mercies, were to seek their rule in the records of the ancient times."[40]

Indeed, Joseph's own role in this regard seems aptly captured by Scott's praise for a final entrant in his catalogue, one "John Scrimgeour, that blew open the gates of heaven as an it had been wi' a sax-pund cannon-ball."[41]

Recent studies of Mormonism's beginnings have emphasized the movement's commonalities with contemporary religious contexts, growing out of democratizing tendencies which permeated the religious sphere. Harriet Martineau, writing in the church's first decade, captured the pervasiveness of this spirit of American democracy when she wrote, "It is common to say 'Wait; these are early days. The experiment will yet fail.' The experiment of the particular constitution of the United States may fail; but the

---

[38]Thomas G. Alexander, "Wilford Woodruff and the Changing Nature of Mormon Religious Experience," *Church History* (March 1976): 61.

[39]David Reese, *Humbugs of New York* (New York: Taylor, 1838).

[40]Walter Scott, *The Heart of Midlothian* (New York: Penguin, 1994), 471-72.

[41]Ibid., 472.

great principle, which, whether successful or not, it strives to embody, the capacity of mankind for self-government—is established forever."[42]

Ronald Walker, for instance, has written that "as we come to understand the New England folk culture more fully, we may find that it was not an inappropriate precursor to the Restoration. It is already apparent that this culture tended to be anti-traditional church in orientation. It strongly embraced the idea of personal revelation and the ministry of spirits."[43] Historian Timothy Smith has likewise emphasized that this "'witness of the Spirit,' as the Methodists called it, [was] a coveted goal in all evangelical witness."[44] Vogel writes that "seekers" and other religionists of the day were looking for just that paradigm held out by Mormonism: "Direct revelations from God—the desire of Seekers—especially in restoring the true church and true doctrine of Christ, was the promise of Mormonism. The Book of Mormon—echoing the gospel according to the Seekers—criticizes rational religion for denying the operations of spirit while at the same time criticizing revivalism for not embracing a radical enough concept of spiritual gifts."[45]

Gordon Wood finds evidence that during Joseph Smith's time growing spiritual individualism often meant greater personal access to the mysteries of heaven. Although, he writes, in America "church membership had long been a matter of an individual's conversion experience," still, in this period the emphasis was growing more emphatic: "Countless numbers of people were involved in a simultaneous search for individual autonomy," and "people were given personal responsibility for their salvation as never before."[46] As he elaborates:

> The disintegration of older structures of authority released torrents of popular religiosity into public life. Visions, dreams, prophesyings, and new emotion-soaked religious seekings acquired a validity they had not earlier possessed. The evangelical pietism of ordinary people, sanctioned by the democratic revolution of these years, had come to affect the character of American culture in ways it had not at the time of the Revolution.[47]

---

[42]Harriet Martineau, *Society in America* (London, 1837) 1: 2-3.

[43]Ronald W. Walker, "The Persisting Idea of American Treasure Hunting," *BYU Studies* 24, no. 4 (Fall 1984): 430.

[44]Timothy Smith, "The Book of Mormon in a Biblical Culture," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 6.

[45]Dan Vogel, *Religious Seekers and the Advent of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City, Signature Books, 1988), 90. Vogel has been criticized for reifying the generic "seekers," "spiritual nomads of [any age]" into a sect or movement of Joseph Smith's day (Grant Underwood, book review, *BYU Studies* 30, no. 1 [Winter 1990]: 120).

[46]Gordon S. Wood, "Evangelical America and Early Mormonism," *New York History* 61 (October 1980): 364, 367, 361. Wood's is a thorough treatment of the pervasive demand, echoed by the Baptist Elias Smith in 1809, to be "wholly free to examine for ourselves, what is truth" (374).

[47]Ibid., 368.

As one historian puts it, this search for a more democratic religion increasingly took the particular form of "insisting on direct, individual encounters with divinity. . . .Seekers longed for the reassurance of regular spiritual encounters in dreams, visions, inner voices, and uncanny coincidences." Many of these primitivists eventually became Methodists or Freewill Baptists.[48] Another writer notes the appeal of such "experiential religion" to at least two other contemporary movements: "Thus there was a confessed likeness between the spiritualists and the primitive Quakers, who 'also believed in manifestations through outward voices and appearances, through dreams, and through inward spiritual impressions.' "[49]

Finally, Hyrum Andrus has pointed out that one parallel between Mormonism and other primitivists could be a cause of great distress. While chronicling the history of Mormonism's disciples, he notes, A. S. Hayden described the dilemma of that group as one of susceptibility to Mormon preaching based on similar claims about prayer: "The misfortune governing the case was that many people, victims of excitement and credulity, and taught in nearly all pulpits to pray for faith, now found themselves met on their own grounds. . . .Finding an emotion or impulse answerable to an expected response from heaven, [they] dared not dispute the answer to their own prayers, and were hurried into the [Mormon] vortex."[50] It may be only a slight exaggeration, then, to compare the setting for early Mormonism to the words of a spiritual, in which everyone wanted to "see bright angels stand/ and waiting to see me."[51]

In the midst of such investigations into the historical context of Mormon origins, it is important to remember that the quest for cultural consistencies can undermine the very project of historical inquiry which attempts to assess the particularity of a given phenomenon. As religious historian John Gager has warned,

> If early Mormonism or early Christianity are merely warmed-over versions of mid-nineteenth or mid-third century culture, then we are at a loss to explain why these particular movements, and not their many contemporary competitors, not only survived but also flourished in such a remarkable fashion. In other words, the more we are able to demonstrate fundamental similarities between these movements and their surrounding cultures and the more we must dismiss their own self-understanding in relation to their cultural environment, the more we find ourselves unable to explain their success.[52]

---

[48]Alan Taylor, "Rediscovering the Context of Joseph Smith's Treasure Seeking," *Dialogue* 19, no. 4 (Winter 1986): 22.

[49]I. Woodbridge Riley, *The Founder of Mormonism: A Psychological Study of Joseph Smith, Jr.* (New York: Dodd, Meade and Company, 1903), 238.

[50]A. S. Hayden, *Early History of the Disciples in the Western Reserve, Ohio* (Cincinnati: Chase and Hall, 1876), 197, 209-18, cited in Hyrum L. Andrus, "The Second American Revolution: Era of Preparation," *BYU Studies* 1, no. 2 (Autumn 1959): 82.

[51]Wood, "Evangelical America," 371.

In response to such a warning, it may be useful to consider that, like many religions of its day and before, Mormonism relied upon "the voluntary acceptance of revealed truth and thus on personal mystical confirmation."[53] On the other hand, unlike other religions of its day, Mormonism had a book of scripture which provided an unprecedented model for such confirmatory experience. Nor should one be too quick to assume that Mormon emphasis on personal revelation alone made it indistinguishable in that regard from contemporary movements emphasizing spiritual manifestations. For example, it may be true, as Adolph Koch has suggested, that "the Great Awakening, the first movement to unite the American colonies from Maine to Georgia in a common experience, opened the doors of salvation to all classes on the same terms."[54] However, some versions of the democratic impulse in American religion worked more to impugn elitism than to promote spiritual populism. As the Theophilanthropist of 1810 ranted, "The teachers of religion of all denominations assume an arrogant, dictatorial style, in order to convince their followers that they are in possession of the secrets of Heaven." Another issue asks, "What can a Doctor of Divinity. . .know of his maker, which is not known to the illiterate ploughman?" Of course, such spiritual egalitarianism does not necessarily make of everyone a prophet. The spiritual equality popular with many of the enlightened may be an equality of limitations: "The ploughman knows that there is a God, that he is just and good. What more is necessary?"[55]

Even the prominent preacher Alexander Campbell, who accused Joseph Smith of plagiarizing most of his restoration principles, parted company sharply on the principle of revelation. Realizing the unmistakable centrality of dialogic revelation in the Book of Mormon, he saw it not as typical of the age or as primitive Christianity, but as ludicrous and downright unscriptural:

> I would ask [Book of Mormon witnesses Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris] how they knew that it was God's voice which they heard—but they would tell me to ask God in faith. *That is, I must believe it first, and then ask God if it be true!*. . .If there was anything plausible about Smith, I would say to those who believe him to be a prophet, hear the question which Moses put into the mouth of the Jews, and his answer to it—'And if thou say in thine heart, *How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?*'—Does he answer, '*Ask the Lord and he will tell you?*'. . . .Nay, indeed [emphases his].[56]

---

[52]John G. Gager, "Early Mormonism and Early Christianity: Some Parallels and their Consequences for the Study of New Religions," *Journal of Mormon History* 9 (1982): 58.

[53]Alexander, "Wilford Woodruff," 61.

[54]G. Adolph Koch, *Religion of the American Enlightenment* (New York: Crowell, 1968), 286.

[55]*Theophilanthropist*, in G. Adolph Koch, *Religion of the American Enlightenment* (New York: Crowell, 1968), 278, 338.

[56]Alexander Campbell, "Delusions: An Analysis of the Book of Mormon," *Millennial Harbinger* II (7 February 1831): 85-96. Reprinted in part in Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America* (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing, 1951), 2:101-09.

Similarly, Gilbert Wardlaw, an Edinburg minister admonished his American audience in 1830 using words uncannily pertinent to the Mormon example:

> I am aware that prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit has been, and may be recommended in terms which Scripture sobriety does not justify. Some have spoken of this divine gift as if they expected something actually miraculous, something altogether new to the church in the present day, conferred independently of the word, and in a manner almost perceptible to the senses.[57]

Enormous are the stakes when it comes to models of personal revelation. When religious ideas like these operate at the popular level, Rodney Stark reminds us, with their potential for social and theological disruption, "religious organizations take pains to filter, interpret and otherwise direct such activities."[58]

This effort to restrain revelatory anarchy is clear in the editor's introduction to Wardlaw's 1830 treatise. Believing the minister's message was especially apropos of the "Revivals of Religion" sweeping America, he betrays obvious alarm at a society in which prophets and revelators were popping up everywhere.[59] Wardlaw asks "whether we have not misunderstood, and interpreted too largely, the ample assurances which God has given with regard to the answering of prayer." True, he admits, both biblical testaments affirm that, "among the various operations of the Spirit of God. . .were those which communicated miraculous powers of different kinds." However, it is to the "more common, and still more precious influences in the souls of all whom he renews" that we should look for our own answers.[60]

Wardlaw's distinction here echoes that of John Wesley, who had distinguished between what he called "the 'extraordinary' gifts of the Spirit—languages and their interpretation, healing and other miracles—and the 'ordinary' one of hallowing, or sanctifying grace. . .available to all Christians." But who was susceptible to such outpourings, and to what degree and in what form, was clearly a subject of profound renegotiation during the religious ferment of the early nineteenth century. Caught in the center of these shifting theological winds, the Book of Mormon was alternately repellant and welcome, and both responsive to and a catalyst behind changing spiritual sensibilities. Historian Timothy Smith, for example, believes that after 1830, and reflecting the "constant appeal by Mormon apologists to the presence of the Holy Spirit in their

---

[57]Gilbert Wardlaw, *The Testimony of Scripture to the Obligations and Efficacy of Prayer* (Boston: Peirce and Williams, 1830), 8, 59, 97n.

[58]Stark, "A Theory of Revelations,"292.

[59]Wardlaw, *Testimony of Scripture*, v-vi.

[60]Ibid., 8, 59.

community," attempts like Wesley's to confine and limit the operations of the Spirit diminished among evangelicals.[61]

A modern evangelical, in articulating just where Mormonism pushes the envelope of orthodoxy too far, finds danger exactly where Campbell and Wardlaw did more than a century and a half earlier: "Without some external checks and balances, it is simply too easy to misinterpret God's answer when we try to apply a test like that of Moroni 10:4-5 and ask him to reveal through his Spirit the truth or falsity of the Book of Mormon."[62] Similarly, scholar of early Christianity W. D. Davies wonders if Mormonism's error is in taking "conventional modes of revelation found in the OT. . .so literally. . .as to give a facticity to what was intended as symbolic." After all, he writes, "the revelation to Moses as recorded in the OT can hardly be taken literally as an event in which the Divine handed over or dictated to Moses Ten Commandments."[63]

Of course, this tenacious embrace of revelatory literalism is neither an arbitrary biblical fundamentalism nor a Book of Mormon innovation. It is, in fact, rooted in Joseph Smith's own first hand experience with revelation, a dialogic encounter with deity which gave indelible redefinition to the promise of James by simply taking it at face value, thereby setting both Joseph and the church he would found on a collision course with orthodoxy. In his personal history, Joseph's concluding sentence about the glorious theophany in which he participated as a fourteen-year-old boy was an unadorned affirmation striking for its matter-of-fact simplicity: "I had found the testimony of James to be true—that a man who lacked wisdom might ask of God, and obtain, and not be upbraided."[64] Subsequent Mormons would find in that theophany the basis for a radical conception of God's corporeality, one that abruptly and decisively shattered the Trinity of traditional Christendom.[65] For millions, the event has become, in retrospect, the first scene in the unveiling of the great and final era in human history. Church President Gordon B. Hinckley called that event "the first, the Great Vision, the visit of the Father and the Son to the boy Joseph Smith, the opening of the heavens in this the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, the great bringing together of all of the work

---

[61]Timothy Smith, "The Book of Mormon in a Biblical Culture," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 16. Sermon by John Wesley, "Scripturalizing Christianity," *Works* 5:37-38, cited in Smith, 16.

[62]Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide: A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 40.

[63]W. D. Davies, ""Reflections on the Mormon 'Canon,'" *Harvard Theological Review* 79 (January 1986): 64n.

[64]Joseph Smith, *History* 1:26.

[65]The First Vision "undergirds the doctrine of an anthropomorphic God and theomorphic man, [and] of the relationships of the persons of the Godhead" (Milton V. Backman, "The First Vision," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* [New York: Macmillan, 1992], 2:516).

of God in all the past dispensations throughout the history of the world. The curtain was parted with that First Vision."[66] But Joseph's own summative comment was that when man puts a question to God in guileless faith and humility, God may choose to answer with articulate, discernible, unmistakably human words: "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."[67]

Whether or not Mormonism's model was the first to appeal to radically individualistic cravings for spiritual experience with a literalized understanding of divine discourse, the Book of Mormon was apparently the most effective vehicle of the age for eliciting, condoning, and affirming such personal encounters with divine powers. Whether those dialogic and egalitarian features of Book of Mormon revelation have antecedents in Levantine literature or are prophetic introductions are questions that until now, at least, have been eclipsed by the powerful and historically verifiable appeal such features have demonstrated. As Martin Marty has written, "Historians cannot prove that the Book of Mormon was translated from golden plates and have not proven that it was simply a fiction of Joseph Smith. Instead they seek to understand its revelatory appeal, the claims it makes, and why it discloses modes of being and of believing that millions of Saints would not otherwise entertain."[68] Plumbing not only Book of Mormon commonalities but also Book of Mormon distinctness with nineteenth-century American culture may lend critical understanding to the poetic observations of John Greenleaf Whittier. The Book of Mormon, he wrote, spoke "a language of hope and promise to weak, weary hearts, tossed and troubled, who have wandered from sect to sect, seeking in vain for the primal manifestations of the divine power."[69] This American scripture has been the vehicle through which millions of readers have found their own sacred grove, and have reenacted on a personal scale the dialogic epiphany that ushered in a new religion.

---

[66]Gordon B. Hinckley, Salt Lake Bonneville Stake conference address (23 November 1997), quoted in *LDS Church News, Deseret News*, 7 March 1998. As a standard source summarizes its significance, "The First Vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith is the beginning point, the fountainhead, of the restoration of the gospel in this dispensation" (Backman, *Encyclopedia*, 515).

[67]Joseph Smith, *History* 1:18-19.

[68]Martin Marty, "Two Integrities: An address to the crisis in Mormon historiography" in George D. Smith, ed., *Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History* (Salt Lake: Signature Books, 1992), 186-87.

[69]J. F. C. Harrison, *The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism, 1780-1850* (New Brunswick, N.J.: 1979), 184, 191. Cited in Gordon Wood, "Evangelical America," 380

The Dynamics of LDS Growth in Guatemala, 1948-1998

Henri Gooren

THE U.S.-BASED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS is rapidly becoming a worldwide church, particularly since the 1950s. One major reason for this is the church's ambitious evangelization program: In 2000 it had 60,000 volunteer missionaries between 19 and 23 years old, who proselytized for 1.5 or 2 years in 168 countries all over the world.[1] However, the LDS church is more typically a Western Hemisphere church. Although it claimed over ten million members by year-end 1997, one-half lived in the United States, and a full one-third were Latin Americans.[2] In Latin America, the Mormon church is considered neither a strange cult with a tiny membership (as in Europe), nor a major mainstream church (as in the United States). Latin America is increasingly the place where church leaders face the challenge of defining what a world church, or a world religion, actually stands for. Understanding the dynamics of LDS growth in Central and South America is thus an important task both for church leaders and for social scientists.

---

[1]*Salt Lake Tribune*, January 15, 2000. See also Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd, "Membership Growth, Church Activity, and Missionary Recruitment," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (1996): 39; and Joseph T. Hepworth, "A Causal Analysis of Missionary and Membership Growth in The Church of Jesus-Christ of Latter-day Saints (1830-1995)," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 38, no. 1 (1999): 59-71.

[2]*Church Almanac 1999-2000* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1998), 544, 547-549.

In Latin America the church is currently strongest in Chile, Uruguay, Guatemala (and Central America as a whole),[3] and in the Andean countries of Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia,[4] where between one and over three percent (in Chile) of the population has been baptized into the church. Between 1995 and 1997, the LDS church in Latin America had its highest average annual growth rates in Paraguay (24 percent), Nicaragua (18 percent), Honduras (12 percent), El Salvador (10 percent), and Panama (11 percent). On the other hand, the 1995-97 average annual growth rate for Uruguay and Mexico was only about 3.5 percent, and for Guatemala, 5 percent.[5] In the Central American countries, Guatemala has the highest proportion of Mormons: 1.3 percent of its population. In order to shed light on the dynamics of Mormon membership in Latin America, this paper will identify and analyze LDS growth periods specifically in Guatemala.

Patterns of LDS Growth in Guatemala

In an earlier article,[6] I have identified five periods of LDS growth in Guatemala, which can be distinguished by their drastic differences in growth rates. There are several factors, both internal and external, which, in general, help account for these variations in rates. In this essay, I offer a more detailed analysis of each of the five periods, and I will attempt to specify the differential factors most important in each period. There is one constant factor: LDS history in Guatemala has unfolded in a social and political context of anomie almost from the beginning, which has sometimes helped and sometimes hindered LDS growth.

The information presented here is based on two first-hand empirical studies. The first is my Ph.D. study of small-scale entrepreneurs of various churches (Roman-Catholic, Pentecostal, Neo-Pentecostal, and Mormon) in and around a low-income neighborhood of Guatemala City, called La Florida.[7] The central question in that study was: How does a

---

[3]See Henri Gooren ("Analyzing LDS Growth in Guatemala: Report from a Barrio," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 2 (2000): 97-115) for a shorter analysis of LDS growth in Latin America, based on slices of life from members in Guatemala.

[4]See Table 1. The numbers suggest that Rodney Stark is wrong, or at best only partly right, when claiming that "Mormons are strongest in the most, not the least, modernized nations of Latin America" ("Modernization, Secularization, and Mormon Success" in Thomas Robbins and Dick Anthony, eds., *In Gods we Trust*, 2nd ed. [New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1990], 212).

[5]*Church Almanac* (1998), 307, 309. The 1995-97 growth percentages are calculated by comparing the statistics from *Church Almanac* (1996, 1998). See also Table 1.

[6]Gooren, "Analyzing LDS Growth," 102-107.

[7]Henri Gooren, *Rich among the Poor: Church, Firm, and Household among Small-scale Entrepreneurs in Guatemala City* (Amsterdam: Thela, 1999).

person's membership in a particular household and church help or limit the operation of a small firm? The fieldwork was conducted from 1993 to 1995 and consisted of participant observation in churches and enterprises, open-ended interviews with church members, tape-recorded life history interviews with entrepreneurs from three churches (Roman Catholics, Neo-Pentecostals, and Mormons), and a review of the literature. The second source of information is my master's study of the growth dynamics and problems facing an LDS ward in San José, Costa Rica.[8] This fieldwork took place in 1990 in the residential area of Los Yoses, east of the center of San José. It consisted of participant-observation during various types of church meetings and many informal interviews with members, leaders, and missionaries.

Extensive Mormon membership statistics for Guatemala are presented here (see Table 2). Calculated over the entire 1949-98 period, the average annual growth rate (AAGR) of the LDS church in Guatemala is almost 20 percent. However, there have been heavy fluctuations. In general, five main LDS growth periods have occurred in Guatemala since 1949:[9]

1) 1949-56: High Growth (AAGR around 27 percent)
2) 1956-67: Boom Years (AAGR around 42 percent)
3) 1967-78: Stagnation (AAGR around 1 percent)
4) 1978-90: High Growth (AAGR around 20 percent)
5) 1990-98: Very Low Growth (AAGR around 3.5 percent)

The chronology of LDS growth in Guatemala will be analyzed here using a framework which I have presented before in this journal (see Figure 1).[10] This framework outlines the external and internal factors for church growth in Guatemala, taking into account both religious and non-religious elements.

---

[8]Henri Gooren, *De expanderende mormoonse kerk in Latijns Amerika: Schetsen uit een wijk in San José, Costa Rica* ["The Expanding Mormon Church in Latin America: Sketches from a Ward in San José, Costa Rica"] (master's thesis, Ultrecht University, 1991).

[9]I have left out the years 1948-49, when the LDS church went from 1 to 48 members, thus attaining an average annual growth rate of 1100 percent. See John Forres O'Donnal, *Pioneer in Guatemala: The Personal History of John Forres O'Donnal, including the History of the Church of Jesus-Christ of Latter-day Saints in Guatemala* (Yorba Linda, Calif.: Shumway Family History Services, 1997), 66-67.

[10]See Gooren, "Analyzing LDS Growth," 102, and Henri Gooren, "Reconsidering Protestant Growth in Guatemala, 1900-1995," *Holy Saints and Fiery Preachers: The Anthropology of Protestantism in Mexico and Central America*, James W. Dow and Alan R. Sandstrom, eds. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood/Praeger Press, 2001), 169-203.

	(I) Internal Factors	(II) External Factors
Religious	Appeal of the doctrine	Dissatisfaction w/Roman Catholic Church
	Missionary activities	Competition w/Protestants and RCC
Non-Religious	Appeal of organization	Economic and social anomie
	Natural growth/retention	Urbanization process

Figure 1. Analytical Framework for Understanding LDS Church Growth in Guatemala.

Period 1, 1949-56: High Growth

By year-end 1949, after the LDS church had been in Guatemala for over one year, there were 48 baptized members.[11] Seven years later, the number was more than five times greater: 250. The average annual growth rate for the entire 1949-56 period was about 27 percent, ranging from around 25 percent between 1952-56, to over 32 percent in 1950.

During this time, the LDS church in Guatemala shared with the beginning Protestant churches a distinctly foreign (North American) origin, and a Christian doctrine and ethic which was very different from that of Roman Catholicism. The mission program was still in its early stages: The LDS Central America Mission was not officially founded until 1952. In that year, there were only twelve full-time missionaries,[12] who were mainly working in Guatemala City and other major cities. Investigators who were interested in joining the church had discussions with the elders for several months before their baptism. The appeal of the church as a social organization was limited, since there were very few Guatemalan members. Those who joined the church were often dissatisfied Catholics, but there was little competition between the LDS church and the Roman Catholic Church (and probably even less with the emerging Protestant churches).

Politically and socially, Guatemala was in turmoil. After a unique decade of democratic reforms (President Arévalo, 1945-50), the Arbenz government (1950-54) was deposed by a CIA-sponsored military invasion and coup. As part of their struggle against "world communism," the military took over the government; they would remain in control for almost thirty years. During this time, trade unions and peasant movements were ruthlessly repressed by jailing or killing their leaders and rank-and-file members. However, the visa restrictions imposed by the former Arbenz

[11]O'Donnal, *Pioneer in Guatemala*, 66-67.

[12]Terrence L. Hansen, "The Church in Central America," *Ensign* (September 1972): 41.

government on all foreign missionaries were abolished, and both Mormons and Protestants benefited from the new rules. In short, small, initial LDS membership figures led to high average annual growth rates, based largely on dissatisfied urban Catholics who felt attracted to a North American church with young North American missionaries.

Period 2, 1956-1967: Early Boom

By 1956, the church had been present in Guatemala for nine years, and the total number of baptized members was only 250 (see Table 2). Then, something remarkable happened: By year-end 1966, there were almost 10,000 baptized members, meaning that the average annual growth rate for 1956-67 was an astonishing 42 percent.

In the Roman Catholic Church, the Catholic Action movement sponsored a return to orthodoxy which caused severe clashes with indigenous religious leaders, particularly those in the predominantly Indian western highlands. Religious competition in Guatemala was beginning, and both Protestants and Mormons benefited from dissatisfied Catholics who were increasingly open to experimenting with something new. Among Protestants, the Pentecostal churches began an early boom, especially the Assemblies of God and the local Prince of Peace Church. Jehovah's Witnesses (already present since 1920) and Latter-day Saints also saw high growth rates. The number of LDS missionaries steadily increased, and after 1955, they were much better prepared for their proselytising.[13] At that time, the LDS church thoroughly revised its worldwide mission program, requiring missionaries to use standardized "lessons" (now called discussions, six of them) to teach investigators all over the world the same basic principles of Mormonism. There was more emphasis on Mormon theology and on the rejection of the status quo in the mainstream Christian churches (i.e., both Catholic and Protestant). In short, the Mormons were working on improving their unique assets in the religious market.

The late 1950s saw a violent repression of left-wing political sectors and of open conflicts within the Guatemalan military. In 1960, the first guerrilla movements were formed by reform-oriented army officers and soldiers. High economic growth rates in the late 1950s and early 1960s only slowly reduced poverty, although inflation rates were also very low. Meanwhile, the urbanization process was in full swing: Guatemala City grew by an average annual rate of about 7 percent in 1950-64.[14] For the Mormons, these new city dwellers formed an easily accessible reservoir

---

[13]See e.g., Mark L. Grover, "Mormonism in Brazil" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1985), 129, for a similar process in Brazil.

[14]Gisela Gellert and J.C. Pinto S., *Ciudad de Guatemala: Dos estudios sobre su evolución urbana (1524-1950)*, (Guatemala City: Universidad de San Carlos, 1992), 32.

for recruitment,[15] and there were more and more well-prepared missionaries to contact them. The future for Mormonism in Guatemala looked bright in 1965-66.

Period 3, 1967-1978: Stagnation

On December 31, 1966, the LDS church claimed almost 10,000 baptized members in Guatemala; ten years later, that number had grown to only 14,260. Meanwhile, Guatemala City, which included six wards, became the first Central American stake in May 1967.[16] Yet the average annual growth rate for 1967-78 was only 1 percent, compared to 42 percent for 1956-67. The Mormons' AAGR, in fact, fluctuated wildly from 1.5 percent in 1967, to 8 percent in 1968, 17 percent in 1969, and only 4.5 percent in 1970-72. The trend is unmistakeable: Growth was low in the late 1960s and early 1970s, with an historical low reached in 1972: -12 percent. There was some improvement in 1973 (5 percent), but then another negative rate followed for 1974: -7 percent. Moderate positive and negative rates kept alternating in 1975 (6 percent), 1976 (-2.4 percent), and 1977 (2.2 percent), but essentially, church growth in Guatemala was stagnating between 1970 and 1978.

What were the causes of this stagnation? The church was still an alien element in the Guatemalan context. Competition with Protestant churches gradually became more intense. Some Pentecostal churches, like the Assemblies of God and Prince of Peace, were experiencing a membership boom (see Table 3), and were in the process of cutting the ties with their mother churches in the United States; Guatemalans were taking over important leadership positions. In the LDS church, however, all stake presidents were North Americans,[17] as were many bishops. Although the mission program was further professionalized in the 1960s, it took some time until the positive effects of this (in the form of faster membership growth) became visible. The same goes for the increase in the size of the missionary force. The appeal of LDS doctrine and organization to dissatisfied Catholics was low, possibly because Protestantism offered a more Guatemalan religious alternative to many at this time.[18] Protestant churches had local, Guatemalan leaders.

---

[15]The new Protestant churches also benefited from the urbanization process. See e.g., Bryan R. Roberts, "Protestant Groups and Coping with Urban Life in Guatemala," *American Journal of Sociology* 73, no. 6 (1968): 753-767.

[16]Hansen, "The Church in Central America," 42.

[17] The last U.S. stake president left Guatemala as late as 1990.

[18] Unfortunately, the first column in Table 3 gives only the average annual growth rate for 1960-80, which for all 21 non-Catholic churches together was 11 percent, and for the Mormon church 14 percent.

Meanwhile, the country was still in crisis. In 1966-67, ruthless counterinsurgency offensives in the east of the country destroyed entire villages and killed thousands. The infamous death squads also started their activities in the 1960s, indiscriminately killing people suspected of left-wing sympathies in both urban and rural settings. The urban growth rate decreased in the 1970s as the industrialization process stagnated, and land shortages were still manageable in most rural areas.[19]

The 1967-78 LDS membership stagnation was probably caused by a combination of factors: The economic boom might have lessened the need for a (deviant) religion; intensive competition with the surging Protestant churches led by Guatemalans could have affected the LDS "market share" in a negative way; the urban growth rate decreased somewhat, and the withdrawal of U.S. missionaries for security reasons at the height of the war between army and guerrillas also negatively affected growth.[20]

Period 4, 1978-90: High Growth

For analytical purposes, I have divided this period into two subperiods: 1978-82 and 1982-90.

1978-82: Pre-boom Interval. On December 31, 1977, there were almost 14,000 baptized Mormons in Guatemala; only five years later there were 22,234, creating an average annual growth rate of 12 percent, significantly below the 1949-98 AAGR of almost 20 percent, but the stagnation had clearly come to an end. The average annual growth rate for 1978 was an amazing 26.3 percent, and for 1979, almost 15 percent. It is true that the growth rate for 1980 was -1.3 percent, but 1981 was again at 9.2 percent. Compared to the previous decade, growth had picked up.

What allowed this modest growth? For one thing, competition with Protestants had become more, rather than less, intensive. The Protestant boom years were 1976-86, more specifically, 1978-82.[21] While the Protestant churches were experiencing AAGRs of between 7 percent (the older churches) and 30 percent (Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches), the Mormons still managed to maintain a modest but steady annual growth rate. In other words, LDS growth began a modest increase exactly when Protestant growth exploded (see Table 3). Perhaps the Mormons benefited from the Protestant explosion after the 1976 earthquake: People were in shock after the destruction and deaths. Poverty and re-

---

[19]Source of this paragraph: Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*, 31-33.

[20]Armand Mauss (personal communication) pointed out another factor: During the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war (1965-74), the LDS church was constrained to limit the number of young U.S. missionaries deferred from the military draft.

[21]See Gooren, "Reconsidering Protestant Growth."

construction activities caused many peasants and workers to organize themselves, which led to increased political repression. The brutal war between army and guerrillas flared up again, and it was the civilian population in the highlands which paid the price. The war and the economic crisis of the early 1980s caused an increase in urban growth.[22]

Meanwhile, internal growth factors had also changed shape. Mormon doctrine now appealed to many dissatisfied Protestants and Catholics, who liked a church which challenged them to study and work hard, where the priesthood was open to all men, where family and marriage bonds were for time and eternity, and where everyone could eventually hope to become a god. The professionalization of the mission program—better training of missionaries and mission presidents, better written and audiovisual materials, better language preparation—began to bear fruit. Another important factor was the sharp increase in the worldwide number of LDS missionaries, with a corresponding increase in the number of missionaries serving in Guatemala.

As church organization was consolidated and Mormonism became more established in Guatemala, its appeal increased. The extensive church infrastructure, with its countless voluntary tasks ("callings"), attracted many converts, who appreciated the opportunity to grow spiritually and develop leadership, teaching, and management skills in the process.[23] Like the closely-knit Protestant churches, the LDS church could also function as a social community, a protected environment where people experimented with new values and norms, new discipline, and a new mentality.[24] In summary, as Mormon membership grew in size, the appeal of its organization increased, too. Unfortunately, almost all missionaries and local leaders (bishops, stake and mission presidents) were still North Americans.

1982-1990: The Recent Boom Years. By 1982, it was clear that the LDS church in Guatemala was experiencing a genuine growth explosion. As can be seen in Table 2, the total baptized membership increased from a little over 22,000 on December 31, 1982, to over 103,000 only seven years later. From only 0.29 percent of the Guatemalan population in 1982, the Mormon proportion increased to no less than 1.32 percent by 1990. The

---

[22]The fact that the Mormon church in Guatemala is predominantly urban (Knowlton, Mormonism in Latin America, 169) would suggest that a large urban population is conducive to LDS growth.

[23]Wesley W. Craig, Jr., "The Church in Latin America: Progress and Challenge," *Dialogue : A Journal of Mormon Thought* 5 (Autumn 1970): 68; David C. Knowlton, "Thoughts on Mormonism in Latin America," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 25, no. 2 (1992): 47-48; and Knowlton, Mormonism in Latin America, 169-171.

[24]Or, what David Martin (*Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1990], 280) calls "free social space." See also Gooren, *De expanderende mormoonse kerk.*

average annual growth rate for 1982-90 was 24 percent, but the real boom years were 1984 (44.2 percent) and 1988 (35.7 percent).[25] The Mormon church was reaping the fruits of its long-term proselytizing program and the increasing number of post-adolescent missionaries.

It is hard to gauge whether LDS doctrine actually appealed to more people between 1982 and 1990, but there is no doubt that more Guatemalans than ever before came into contact with the church.[26] In early 1985, there were about 320 missionaries in Guatemala, more than half from the United States.[27] They were well-prepared, well-organized, and guided by equally prepared U.S. mission presidents, often with a corporate background. The 'discussions' held by missionaries with investigators were smoothly rehearsed and aided by six-color brochures in Spanish. A great many investigators were baptized within two to six weeks after their first meeting with the missionaries.[28] These new members were obviously not well-prepared and thus depended on established members to help them get settled as active Mormons. Many dropped out within a year after baptism, suggesting that the wards and stakes were not sufficiently prepared to deal with the high influx of new members. Still another important change was that local LDS leaders (except the mission presidents) were now almost all Guatemalans.

The impact of competition with the Roman Catholic Church and the myriad Protestant churches remains a factor that is hard to assess. The Catholic counteroffensive against Protestantism after 1983, led by the new archbishop Penados del Barrio, obviously did not affect the LDS growth rate negatively. Both the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant churches consistently called the Mormons a "sect."[29] Protestant hostility toward Mormons in Guatemala City increased, especially after 1985.[30] Beginning in 1986, the first Protestant churches begin to experience a stagnation in their annual growth rates (see Table 3). The LDS church had experienced its recent boom exactly in 1988-90, when Protestant growth was waning.

The 1980s were a pivotal decade in Guatemalan history. The united guerrillas were all but defeated in the ruthless counterinsurgency

---

[25]The 1985-88 AAGR was still an impressive 21 percent.

[26]The fact that the 1988-90 average annual LDS growth rates throughout Latin America were very high, ranging from 8 percent in Uruguay and Puerto Rico to 25 percent in Mexico (see Table 1), suggests that the church made a deliberate effort to boost its missionary activities in this region.

[27]Peter Wiley, "The LDS Missionary Program in Guatemala: A Case Study" (unpub. document, c. 1985), 14.

[28]Out of about thirty investigators I followed in San José, Costa Rica, no fewer than twenty were baptized (Gooren, *De expanderende mormoonse kerk*, 30).

[29]The rhetorical and emotional equivalent of this term in American English is probably "cult."

[30]Interviews with La Florida and Santa Marta LDS bishops, November 28, 1993.

campaigns of 1982-83, when the evangelical General Ríos Montt ruled the country. Thousands of people were killed or disappeared, and hundreds of villages were destroyed, especially in the predominantly Indian highlands. Poverty also increased dramatically in the 1980s, following a serious economic crisis. Military governments and human rights abuses made Guatemala an international pariah, struggling to earn economic aid from the United States or the United Nations. Hence, the military allowed a return to civilian rule in 1986. However, less repression and surveillance, mixed with out-of-control or even renegade police and guerrilla elements, caused a surge in crime.[31] War and poverty, exacerbated by growing land shortages, drove many people to Guatemala City, which grew by an annual average of 5 percent in 1981-89.[32]

I believe three main factors combined to produce Mormonism's 1982-90, and especially 1988-90, boom in Guatemala: First, the waning of Protestant growth after 1986 and the suspension of big Protestant evangelization campaigns;[33] second, strong anomie caused by political violence and the economic crisis of the early 1980s, and the return to civilian democracy in 1985-86; third, the effect of the huge, though predominantly U.S., missionary force in the country, combined with the gradual takeover of local (ward and stake) leadership positions by Guatemalans.

Period 5, 1990-1998: Low Growth or Stagnation?

On December 31, 1990, there were almost 125,000 baptized Mormons in Guatemala; eight years later there were almost 167,000. Thus, the AAGR for 1990-98 was only 3.5 percent, with 3.5 percent occurring in 1990-95, 5.5 percent in 1995-97, and a meagre 1.7 percent in 1997—all far less than the annual population growth of almost 3 percent. Since AAGRs do not usually decrease so drastically—from 20.6 percent (1989) to 3.5 percent (1990-95)—in one year, it is likely that the 1991-92 growth rate was still around 8 percent, but the turnabout is amazing: From an average annual growth rate of 20 percent in 1978-90 to a dismal 3.5 percent for 1990-98.

What happened? Obviously, neither LDS doctrine nor church organization had changed, but somehow Mormonism's appeal to Guatemalans had dramatically decreased. Nor had the Mormon missionary effort in Guatemala been reduced: In late 1993, there were about 590 missionaries in Guatemala,[34] with only 25 percent of them Latin Americans (usually Guatemalans or Central Americans), and the others all North Americans.

---

[31]This paragraph is based on Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*, 34-40.

[32]Gellert and Pinto, *Ciudad de Guatemala*, 32.

[33]This factor likewise contributed to the growth of Jehovah's Witnesses in Guatemala after 1983 (see Table 3).

[34]These 590 missionaries represented a little over 1 percent of the total worldwide missionary force, about the same proportion as in 1985.

If it is true that "the single best predictor of the annual Mormon conversion rate is the size of the LDS missionary force,"[35] Mormon growth rates should have continued above the 1982-90 levels, but they clearly did not. Many fewer converts entered the church in the 1990s than in the 1980s, but even worse, the high drop-out rates remained the same. In other words, many people were leaving the church, but few were entering. This was the main cause of membership stagnation after 1990.

The LDS membership stagnation mirrored similar developments in the Protestant churches and, for instance, among the Jehovah's Witnesses (see Table 3). One might speculate that most people who were willing to experiment with belonging to a Protestant church, to the Latter-day Saints, or to the Jehovah's Witnesses, had probably done so by 1990. The reservoir of dissatisfied Catholics who were willing to join other churches was running empty. Growth in the 1990s might have been due mostly to the "circulation of the saints,"[36] i.e., religious "shopping" between various churches to see which was more agreeable. However, there were only a handful of former Pentecostals, and one ex-Adventist, in the LDS wards I studied in Guatemala City.[37]

In 1995, most people were still pessimistic about Guatemala's future, but there were a few improvements to be seen: The war between armed forces and guerrillas continued at a lower intensity, and the political power of the military was waning. Also, after 1990, Guatemala's economy slowly began to recover from its 1980s economic crisis.[38] People seemed less in need of a church to help them through times of anomie and poverty. In conclusion, it is likely that saturation of the religious market, the waning of the armed conflict (with a new chance for peace accords), the slow consolidation of democracy, and the slow recovery of the economy once again brought the Mormon growth rate down.

Summary of LDS Growth Periods in Guatemala

Between 1949 and 1956, LDS growth was high, with an AAGR of 27 percent. The main factors here were the initial, tiny membership (250 in 1956) and the North American attraction of the church. In 1956-66, Mormon membership experienced a clear boom. LDS church growth exploded at a time of great political and social turmoil in Guatemala, concurrent

---

[35]Shepherd and Shepherd, "Membership Growth," 38-39. See also Hepworth, "A Causal Analysis."

[36]Merlin B. Brinkerhoff and Reginald W. Bibby, "Circulation of the Saints in South America: A Comparative Study," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 24, no. 1 (1985): 39-55.

[37]In a survey of fifty active members of the La Florida and Santa Marta wards on November 28, 1993, only three people reported they had been active Pentecostals, while over half had been active Catholics.

[38]Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*, 34-40.

with high urban growth rates, while its mission program was at the same time being improved. However, growth rates between 1967 and 1978 fell to only 1 percent, essentially stagnation. Perhaps the relative novelty of Mormonism had worn off; economically, Guatemala was also better-off in these years. Then, religious competition began in the 1970s, and became fierce in the mid-1980s. Protestant growth exploded, especially in 1978-82, starting with the 1976 earthquake. The waning of Protestant growth after 1986 and high levels of anomie, caused by the war and by poverty, were the main causes of the 1982-90 LDS growth rate of 24 percent. The restructuring of the Mormon missionary program of the 1960s and 1970s, the huge number of missionaries in the country, the Guatemalization of local leadership positions, and the increasing appeal of large volunteer networks, all laid the basis for this new growth.

Since the LDS church competed mostly with Protestant churches, it is likely that during the Protestant boom, the Mormon growth rate was conversely below average. As the Protestant boom faded after 1982, Mormon growth gradually started to explode: 44 percent in 1984, 23 percent in 1985, 19 percent in 1986, 21 percent in 1987, 36 percent in 1988, and 21 percent in 1989. The Jehovah's Witnesses experienced a similar growth. After 1990, however, the growth rates for both Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses were again much lower than their 1960-93 averages of 18 percent and 9 percent respectively. Since the Protestant churches suffered a similar phenomenon, it seems likely that most people who were willing to experiment with belonging to a Protestant church, to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or to the Jehovah's Witnesses, had probably done so by now. The new challenge would be to retain membership, to keep the flock already inside as active members.

Analyzing the Factors for LDS Growth in Guatemala

The reader will recall that the five main periods of church growth in Guatemala were:

1) 1949-56, high growth (AAGR around 27 percent)
2) 1956-67, boom years (AAGR around 42 percent)
3) 1967-78, stagnation (AAGR around 1 percent)
4) 1978-90, high growth (AAGR around 20 percent)
5) 1990-98, very low growth (AAGR around 3.5 percent)

In this section, I will first assess the relative importance of the growth factors which comprise the analytical framework for LDS growth in Guatemala (Fig. 1). Finally, I will analyze three major problems and consequences resulting from the Mormon growth explosion in Guatemala and connect these with the literature on Mormon growth in Latin America.

Missionary Activities

The evidence suggests that the main reasons for the Mormon success in Guatemala are all internal to Mormonism, and, of those, the most important factors are of a religious nature (see Figure 1). I concur with the literature that the huge and well-equipped LDS missionary force of dedicated post-adolescents has been a major factor in explaining Mormon growth. As the number of missionaries steadily increased throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, so did the Mormon growth rate. In Guatemala City, most members converted to the LDS church at turning points in their lives—in adolescence, after experiencing alcohol problems, or when they became parents.[39] Meeting the missionaries was a matter of good timing;[40] most people came into contact with the church through friends or family.[41] The new converts were generally young, between 17 and 25 years old, and joined the church around the same time they started their own small firms and their own families.[42]

Appeal of the Doctrine/Organization

The second most important factor is the appeal of both the LDS organization (especially callings) and its doctrine. The LDS church organization appealed to Guatemalans for many reasons, some religious, but many non-religious.[43] Religiously, people appreciated the opportunity for spiritual growth, by serving fellow-members in callings as leaders or teachers, but these callings also provided practical life experience, the opportunity to acquire leadership, teaching, organizing, and other skills. Economically, small entrepreneurs have said the church has a business ethic which makes their firms more successful. Finally, the closely-knit church organization provides members with excellent social networks. On the other hand, the main weakness of the LDS church in Guatemala is also an internal one, but not a religious one: namely, its very poor retention rates, which I will deal with later.

The Mormon church probably appeals to some Guatemalans because of its roots in the United States. This partly explains the success of the U.S. missionaries throughout Latin America. That appeal is further stimulated by some supposed U.S. cultural elements in Mormon doctrine and practice. If this is true, the Mormons should be more successful in countries

---

[39]Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*, 109-111.

[40]Ibid., 154-157.

[41]According to a November 1993 survey of fifty members in Guatemala City (La Florida and Santa Marta wards), 30 percent came into contact with the church through friends, 28 percent through relatives, and another 28 percent through missionaries (see note 38).

[42]Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*, 101-107; 201-202.

[43]See Craig, "The Church in Latin America," 68, and Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*, 214-218.

where people generally like the U.S. (for example, Costa Rica) than in countries with a strong anti-American tradition (Mexico comes to mind).[44]

Dissatisfaction with the Roman Catholic Church

Although Mormonism considers itself firmly Christian, it is certainly a different kind of Christianity, different from Catholicism, of course, but also very different from Protestantism, whether mainstream or Pentecostal. The majority of LDS converts in Guatemala had a Roman Catholic background; only a few were ex-Protestants. Some converts had been active Catholics who attended prayer groups and studied the Bible by themselves. They felt their priests could not satisfactorily answer their doctrinal questions. They appreciated the Mormon church, because it urged all its members to study (both at school or in Bible classes) and gain life experience in order to achieve spiritual progression. Another large group, probably the majority,[45] was composed of formerly nominal Catholics, who had never understood the Catholic religion and generally cared little for it. These converts knew nothing of Catholic doctrine and the sacraments, and keenly noted that nobody had ever bothered to explain anything about it to them. By contrast, the young LDS missionaries always took plenty of time to answer all their questions about God, Christ, and salvation, and explain the idiosyncrasies of Mormon doctrine and practice.

Competition with Protestants and the Roman Catholic Church

Since the 1970s, the LDS church has competed not only with the Roman Catholic Church in the religious market, but also with Protestant churches. LDS growth was low in 1976-82, the time of the Protestant boom. Mormon growth exploded in the second half of the 1980s, when the Protestant (more accurately, Pentecostal), boom in Guatemala was waning.[46] Protestants with a good knowledge of the Bible might have been less inclined to join a church which extended the Holy Scriptures with three new books and used the Old and New Testaments in a somewhat different way.[47]

---

[44]Table 1 does not support this connection (see the 1995-97 and 1988-90 average annual growth rates).

[45]I assume that the 38 percent who claimed in the 1993 survey no prior church membership before becoming a Mormon were mostly nominal Catholics.

[46]See Gooren, "Reconsidering Protestant Growth," for an analysis.

[47]The prohibition to smoke or drink alcohol would be considered normal by former Protestants, but not the taboo on coffee and tea.

This leaves only the external non-religious factors to consider: *anomie* in various forms (whether economic, social, or psychological), and the urbanization process. For each of the LDS growth periods mentioned here, I indicated that the population was suffering from anomie, whether from poverty, forced migration, the armed conflict, the 1976 earthquake, or from political repression. However, Guatemala was always in crisis after 1954. This fact alone limits the explanatory strength of the anomie factor. In 1976, the year of the devastating earthquake, Mormon growth was negative by 2.4 percent; one year later it was positive by only 2.2 percent. The evangelicals exploded after the quake, but the Mormons certainly did not. Similarly, when the armed conflict flared up in 1979-1983, LDS growth was not particularly high.[48] It was, by contrast, after 1983 when Mormon church growth exploded, when the armed forces and the guerrillas were locked in a stalemate, and especially after the return to civilian democracy in 1985-86.[49] Since then, Guatemala's five major problems have basically remained the same: armed conflict, widespread violent crime, a weak state, a weak civil society, and rampant poverty.[50] The conflict between the Guatemalan state (or more specifically its guardian, the armed forces) and the guerrillas formally ended with a peace treaty in 1996, but the implementation of that treaty has been problematic. Guatemala continues to be in crisis, but the churches (whether Protestant or Mormon) are no longer growing. Since 1990, growth in almost all churches has stagnated, although they prefer the word "consolidated."

---

[48] David C. Knowlton reports that in Chile, LDS growth was also low during massive and violent government repression in 1982-83 ("Mormonism in Chile," in Douglas J. Davies, ed., *Mormon Identities in Transition* [London: Cassell, 1996], 77).

[49] Guatemalan guerrillas apparently did not consider Mormons to be legitimate targets, representing U.S. political and economic power. Between 1984 and 1989, however, there were over 62 bombings of LDS Church buildings in Chile, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Colombia, Argentina, and Venezuela. Two U.S. missionaries were assassinated in Bolivia in 1989; one year later, two Peruvian missionaries were killed by Shining Path in Peru. Political violence against the Mormon church was concentrated in countries which were experiencing severe economic and political crises, where military governments received open U.S. support, and where the LDS church arrived relatively late. See R. Beekman, "The Mormon Mini-Empire," *NACLA's Latin America & Empire Report* 6, no. 5 (May-June 1972): 8-9; F. LaMond Tullis, "Three Myths About Mormons in Latin America," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 7 (Spring 1972): 79-87; F. LaMond Tullis, "Church Development Issues Among Latin Americans: Introduction" in F. LaMond Tullis, ed., *Mormonism: A Faith for All Cultures* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), 85-105; F. LaMond Tullis, "The Church Moves Outside the United States: Some Observations From Latin America," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 13 (Spring 1980): 63-73; Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, *America's Saints: The Rise of Mormon Power* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986 [1984]), 143-151; Gooren, *De expanderende mormoonse kerk*, 13-14; and especially David C. Knowlton, "Missionaries and Terror: The Assassination of Two Elders in Bolivia," *Sunstone* 13 (August 1989): 10-15.

[50] See Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*, 34-43, for an elaborate analysis.

Problems Resulting from LDS Growth in Guatemala

The Mormon membership boom in Guatemala has led to three main problems for the LDS church as an institution, which I think can be generalized for all of Latin America, and possibly for other developing countries as well. The first problem involves the church's organizational infrastructure. The same efficient structure which works perfectly in the United States is too weak and functions badly in Guatemala. There are simply not enough priesthood holders,[51] many callings go unfilled,[52] the local leaders are not functioning well (see below), and the organization is paralyzed because U.S. manuals are followed in a Latin American cultural setting.[53]

The second major problem is with leadership. In Guatemala, as in other parts of Latin America, the local leaders in the wards and stakes are often young and inexperienced.[54] Bishops and stake presidents in Guatemala find it hard to imitate the North American managerial leadership model.[55] Young people lack the necessary experience and maturity to perform as leaders. Those few leaders who do function well often stay in office too long (more than five years), because there is nobody to replace them. This sometimes makes good leaders complacent, thus destroying leadership dynamism. Likewise, good leaders are often authoritarian and find it hard to delegate responsibilities to church organizations like the quorum of elders or the stake high council.[56] This causes an increased burden and an increased importance of the bishop. When combined with a huge church bureaucracy which requires that all membership information be reported on standardized documents, the role of a bishopric becomes greatly inflated, especially since most bishopric decisions and rules are presented as divinely inspired, making it almost

---

[51]Knowlton, "Thoughts on Mormonism"; Knowlton, "Mormonism in Latin America."

[52]A hard life, marked by poverty, health problems, and low schooling, reduced performance in callings in the poorer wards, like La Florida. New members often found it hard to handle a calling and many shirked responsibility (see Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*).

[53]John Hawkins cites some excellent examples ("Behavioral Differences Are Like Language Differences; or, "Oh Say, What Is Truth?" vs. "Do As I'm Doing" in Mary E. Stovall and Carol Cornwall Madsen, eds., *A Heritage of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1988], 157-170). See also Tullis, "The Church Moves Outside."

[54]See Gooren, *De expanderende mormoonse kerk*, for a similar report on Costa Rica.

[55]Reynolds in Tullis, *Mormonism*, 16.

[56]Tullis sees hierarchical and *machista* elements in Latin American culture as important factors here: "Cultural inclinations. . .have led to some ecclesiastical and leadership atrocities in Latin America. . . .As it is the most prepared and qualified people who tend to speak up against abuses of the kind described above, they find their own membership status placed in question. They are either cowed or driven underground. The Church is therefore not able to enjoy the benefit of its most able people because they are afraid to become involved. Such behavior turns counselors and advisors into 'yes men' who refuse to voice a disagreement with their leader even in private council" ("The Church Moves Outside," 72).

impossible for members to question them.[57] Also, like ordinary members, these local leaders in low-income wards suffer from various social and individual problems.[58]

The third main problem for the LDS church in Guatemala was ironically caused by the very high growth rates of the 1980s: poor retention rates. Converts were often baptized too soon, with insufficient knowledge of Mormonism and its highly demanding nature, so their socialization into LDS life was problematic, their commitment low, and they also suffered from the consequences of social and individual problems.[59] For example, most members in La Florida could only be called active because they went to church regularly (usually weekly), but their participation in church activities was generally low. In fact, growth in the La Florida stake in Guatemala City was reported to be passive and stagnating: There were few church activities of either a purely social or even of a spiritual or missionary nature.[60] Some of the younger leaders openly criticized this situation.[61] The four ward missionaries managed to baptize a few new members each year, but these people attended only a couple of times. They felt too uncertain to handle a calling or answer questions during Sunday School. Moreover, most of the established members tended to ignore them. This made new members reach out to the leaders who could tell them what to do. If they had a problem, they usually skipped the elders' quorum and went directly to the bishop.[62] If the bishop was too busy, most of them simply dropped out, creating high inactivity rates.

Besides feeling excluded by old members, new members also felt excluded even by leaders. They never received the time, much less the support, of established members to build an LDS identity. A Mormon identity is not just an individual matter. While salvation and spiritual progress, culminating in eventual godhood, are concerns of the individual, they are firmly imbedded in the concepts of eternal marriage and eternal family bonds. To achieve spiritual progress, it is necessary to start a family and

---

[57]Gooren, *De expanderende mormoonse kerk*, 35-36.

[58]For example, poverty, low schooling, and alcohol problems (see Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*).

[59]See ibid., and Gooren, "Analyzing LDS Growth."

[60]Judging from two short visits to middle and upper-class parts of Guatemala and 1990 fieldwork in San José (Costa Rica), La Florida was quite badly organized by general Central American LDS standards. Middle-class Vista Hermosa ward had a great many social, spiritual, and missionary activities, as did lower to middle-class Los Yoses ward in San José.

[61]The new La Florida bishop, a 33 year-old computer programr who began his calling in June 1995, was one of these. He said that most members were in a deep "spiritual sleep," forgetting that their salvation ultimately depended upon their active *participation* in church. He traced the origins of the current state of malaise to the 1990 changes in the stake leadership.

[62]Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide: A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 40.

become a parent. Work also fulfils a part in this, but full participation in church is required for spiritual progress: This includes, Sunday meetings, Sunday School, Priesthood or Relief Society, classes, committees, and especially callings. Mormonism is a very demanding religion.

The main consequence of the three problems mentioned above is a declining growth rate for the church in Guatemala. This has been the case since the 1960s,[63] continuing in the 1980s when growth was very high, and into the 1990s. Again, it is a consequence evident all over Latin America, and possibly in Africa and Asia, too. Since the early 1990s, the failure of the LDS church to accommodate its new members has been very obvious. On paper, there might still be modest membership growth, but in practice there was stagnation.[64] Social problems among converts and problems in LDS organization and leadership caused at least half the new members in the 1980s to leave the church in Guatemala. It may be that LDS retention rates in Guatemala will increase again. Indeed, current LDS policy in Latin America seems to emphasize involvement of members in the organization, consolidation of church structures, and training of leaders. Numerical growth is no longer the main issue; the church must now focus on retaining the members it already has.

---

[63]The following quote by Craig suggests that 30 years ago the inactivity rates in Latin America were already high: "Little question remains as to the initial attractiveness of the LDS Church to many Latin Americans. Increasing numbers of baptisms attest to its centripetal force in drawing converts. More salient at this point is the question, 'Can converts become integrated and find satisfaction materially as well as spiritually?' No formal studies have been carried out on the subject of LDS inactivity in Latin America; however, indications are that in many areas there is a high loss of church membership after baptism" ("The Church in Latin America," 73-74). Grover reports that in Brazil in 1968-73 only 15-20 percent of converts remained active in the church, 30-35 percent became inactive Mormons, and 50 percent no longer considered themselves Mormons at all ("Mormonism in Brazil," 137-139).

[64]The Guatemalan case may help put the spectacular LDS growth in Latin America into perspective. See also Rodney Stark, "The Rise of a New World Faith," *Review of Religious Research* 26, no. 1 (1984): 18-27; Stark, "Modernization, Secularization, and Mormon Success"; Rodney Stark, "So Far, So Good: A Brief Assessment of Mormon Membership Projections," *Review of Religious Research* 38, no. 2 (1996):175-178; Lowell C. Bennion and Lawrence A. Young, "The Uncertain Dynamics of LDS Expansion, 1950-2020," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 1 (1996):8-32; Gooren, *Rich among the Poor*; and Gooren, "Analyzing LDS Growth"). The data from Guatemala also shed new light on Stark's high estimate of over 267 million Mormons (and a low estimate of almost 64 million) by the year 2080. Stark is projecting the high 1980s growth rates a century into the future, ignoring the equally high drop-out rate ("So Far So Good," 179).

Table 1

LDS Membership Statistics for Latin America on December 31, 1997; the LDS Population Proportion; and Average Annual Growth Rates for 1995-97 and 1988-90[65]

Country (year of arrival)	Membership	% pop.	AAGR 95-97	88-90
Chile (1956)	462,000	3.1%	8%	16.5%
Uruguay (1948)	64,000	2.1%	3.5%	8%
Guatemala (1947)	164,000	1.3%	5%	28%
Honduras (1952)	82,000	1.3%	12%	12.5%
El Salvador (1948)	77,000	1.3%	9.5%	15.5%
Bolivia (1964)	100,000	1.3%	6%	17%
Peru (1956)	312,000	1.2%	5.5%	n.a.
Ecuador (1965)	139,000	1.1%	4%	13%*
Panama (1941)	32,000	0.9%	11%	12%
Mexico (1876)	783,000	0.8%	3.5%	25%
Costa Rica (1946)	28,000	0.77%	6%	14%
Argentina (1925)	268,000	0.74%	6.5%	16%
Nicaragua (1953)	25,000	0.7%	18%	n.a.
Dominican Republic (1978)	62,000	0.7%	7%	14.5%*
Puerto Rico (1964)	21,000	0.5%	2.5%	8%**
Paraguay (1939)	37,000	0.4%	24%	n.a.
Venezuela (1966)	80,000	0.35%	4.5%	19.5%*
Colombia (1966)	122,000	0.3%	4%	16%*
Brazil (1928)	640,000	0.3%	8%	n.a.
Total Latin America	3,498,000	0.67%	8%	15.5%
Total Central America	408,000	1.15%	10%	16.5%

* = AAGR for 1986-90
** = AAGR for 1987-94
n.a. = not available

[65]Sources for Table 1: Inter-Hemispheric Resource Center, *Profiles of U.S. Private Organizations and Churches: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons)* (Albuquerque, N.M.: Resource Center, n.d. [c. 1988]); *Church Almanac*, 1999-2000; Knowlton, "Mormonism in Latin America," 161; www.lds.org (1997).

Table 2
Registered LDS Membership in Guatemala, 1948-98[66]

Year-end	Total membership	% Pop.	AAGR (%)
1948	4	0	1100%
1949	48	0	29%
1950	62	0	32%
1951	82	0	26%
1952	103	0	ca. 25% (est. average 1952-56)
1956	250	0.01%	ca. 64% (est. average 1956-60)
1960	1,807	0.05%	ca. 35% (est. average 1960-65)
1965	8,156	0.18%	23%
1966	9,996	0.22%	12%
1967	11,171	0.25%	1.5%
1968	11,339	0.23%	8%
1969	12,252	0.24%	17%
1970	14,361	0.27%	ca 4.5% (est. average 1970-72)
1971	n.a.	n.a.	ca 4.5% (est. average 1970-72)
1972	15,721	0.28%	- 12.5%
1973	13,777	0.24%	5.5%
1974	14,523	0.24%	- 7%
1975	13,459	0.22%	6%
1976	14,260	0.23%	- 2.5%
1977	13,924	0.22%	2%
1978	14,225	0.22%	26%
1979	17,973	0.27%	15%
1980	20,625	0.30%	- 1%
1981	20,352	0.29%	9%
1982	22,234	0.30%	16% (est. average 1982-84)
1983	n.a.	n.a.	16% (est. average 1982-84)
1984	30,177	0.39%	44%
1985	43,503	0.55%	22.5%
1986	53,311	0.65%	18.5%
1987	63,176	0.75%	21%
1988	76,329	0.88%	36%
1989	103,554	1.16%	20.5%
1990	124,916	1.32%	3.5% (est. average 1990-95)
1995	148,013	1.41%	5.5% (est. average 1995-97)
1996	n.a.	n.a.	5.5% (est. average 1995-97)
1997	164,000	1.30%	2%
1998	166,720	1.28%	n.a.
1949-98	49 year average		20%

[66]Sources for Table 2: Management Information Center, Membership and Statistical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, 1999; *Church Almanac 1997-98* (Salt Lake City 1996); *Church Almanac 1999-2000* (Salt Lake City 1998); O'Donnal, *Pioneer in Guatemala*.

Table 3
AAGR for 21 Non-Catholic Churches in Guatemala, 1960-1993[67]

Church	1960-80	1980-83	1983-86	1986-90	1986-93
1. Presbyterians	5	6.5	10	1.5	-5
2. Quakers	-0.5*	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
3. Baptists	3.5	7.5	7	n.a.	7
4. Central American	6.5	8.5	10.5	n.a.	0.2
5. Nazarenes	8.5	9	12	-0.5	2.5
6. Full Gospel	n.a.	15	11.5	n.a.	-1
7. Assemblies/God	16	9	9.5	6	-2
8. Príncipe de Paz	25	11	12.5	n.a.	-4
9. Espíritu Santo	n.a.	29.5	39	n.a.	10
10. Pentec./América	n.a.	7	15	n.a.	n.a.
11. La Voz de Dios	n.a.	28	27	n.a.	7
12. Profecía Univ.	n.a.	9	11	n.a.	n.a.
13. Cong. Pent.	n.a.	17	17.5	n.a.	n.a.
14. Elim	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	9.5**
15. Calvario	n.a.	19	10	n.a.	8
15. Bethania	n.a.	20	23	n.a.	n.a.
16. Word (Verbo)	n.a.	30	40	n.a.	n.a.
17. Frat. Cristiana	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3.5***
18. El Shaddai+	n.a.	n.a.	100	68	n.a.
19. 7th-Day Adv.	9.5	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	5.5++
20. Jehovah's Wit.	12.5+++	5	10	8.5	6.5
21. LDS	14	8	27.5	24	15
HPC (1-3)	2.5	7	8.5	n.a.	1
HC (4-5)	7.5	9	11	n.a.	1.5
PC (6-13)	20.5	14.5	18	n.a.	2
NPC (14-18)	n.a.	23	24.5	n.a.	7
IC (19-21)	12	6.5	18.5	16	10
All (N)	10 (10)	14 (17)	17 (17)	8 (5)	4.5 (14)

* = AAGR 1935-78
** = AAGR 1980-93
*** = AAGR 1989-93
\+ = The extreme Shaddai growth rates have been ignored for the last 'All' category.
++ = AAGR 1978-93
+++ = AAGR 1966-78
HPC = Historical Protestant churches
HC = Holiness churches
PC = Pentecostal churches
NPC = Neo-Pentecostal churches
IC = Independent Christian traditions

[67]Sources for Table 3: Clifton Holland, ed., *World Christianity: Central America and the Caribbean* (Monrovia, Calif.: MARC/World Vision, 1981); Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World* (Carlisle, U.K.: Overseas Ministries (OM) Publishing, 1995), 252-253; Virgilio A. Zapata, *Historia de la iglesia evangélica en Guatemala* (Guatemala City: Génesis Publicidad S.A, 1982); Vitalino Similox, ed., *Los protestantismos en Guatemala* (Guatemala City: CIEDEG, 1991); *Church Almanac 1997-98*, 333; *Church Almanac 1999-2000*, 329; Knowlton, "Mormonism in Latin America"; various Jehovah's Witnesses yearbooks.

Dig

Holly Welker

I began to dream I
was soil and you
were a plant that grew
in me, root hard
as a dandelion's, leaves
pungent as rosemary,
completely without flower.
I don't know if I
went to bed with dirt
under my nails,
but I know I woke up that way,
skin scratched smooth.

The LDS Sound World and Global Mormonism

Warrick N. Kear

THE EXPANSION OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS may be described from a broadly phenomenological perspective in terms of sound and silence. My observations here deal with the outer, open dimension of the LDS sound world, including theories about de-Protestantisation and feminisation. Also examined herein will be the institutional process of "reduce and simplify" and the historical exposition of a new musical genre. Other theories concern the private, inner or closed dimension of the Mormon sound world, such as the function of silence in LDS ritual and the principles of non-distraction and dysfunctionality with reference to Mormon ritual and the temple. I believe that the developments described in this paper have provided and continue to furnish gateways to a global Mormonism.

Outwardly, Latter-day Saints utilize music in their culture much like other modern Christian sects, including the singing of hymns and the use of the organ. There are practically no public meetings of Latter-day Saints where music is not present in some form or other. However, in 1980, the amount of institutional time Latter-day Saints spent in worship together was seriously curtailed. The reduction from the traditionally Protestant style of two blocks of meetings each Sunday to one three-hour block represented a watershed in the process of de-Protestantisation, or the moving away from previously adopted Protestant forms of worship. The twentieth century evinced a general momentum, which began in the late nineteenth century, towards a less Protestant and more distinctively LDS identity.

I. LDS Hymns and the Protestant Tradition

A. Early Protestant Influence

It is important to understand that while The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has always taken a cautious and conservative approach to its broad, cultural development, such as in art, dance, and architecture, it is largely in the specific realms of music and worship where the process of Protestantisation can be clearly distinguished.

Four practical examples illustrate the Protestantization of Mormonism:[1]

1. The religious landscape of early nineteenth-century New York was predominantly Protestant. Within this narrow yet varied tradition, religious differences were rife. Religious borrowing was common among the new sects. Indeed, much of the early LDS hymnody was borrowed from existing Protestant collections, mainly Presbyterian and Methodist, although, as Karen Lynn Davidson points out, "even though many hymns and hymn traditions were available to them, the early Saints did not choose to adopt in its entirety any other church's hymn tradition."[2] Just thirty-five of the ninety hymn texts in Emma Smith's little volume of hymns published in 1835 were written by Latter-day Saints, the remainder were Protestant hymns.[3]

2. Two basic styles of hymn singing were prevalent in the New York area in the early 1800s. The first type was the anti-authoritarian church style of gospel singing that was sung in a free manner, characteristic of the southern frontier church. It was highly emotional and punctuated by frequent spontaneous outbursts which were often led by the ecstatic song of the itinerant preacher. The other type of hymn singing, more common in northern New York state in the early nineteenth century, (where Mormonism had its roots, geographically speaking), was more in the spirit of New England. The music and verse were utilitarian. Here, hymn singing released a milder emotion and served the practical aim of religious persuasion. The relative restraint characteristic of the Latter-day Saint religious exercises and group singing followed the northern pattern and has continued to be a constant in LDS worship today. One can only speculate as to how different the style of LDS singing might now be had Mormonism evolved in the southern part of the state instead of Palmyra.

---

[1]For a detailed exposition, consult Warren Kear, "Music in Latter-day Saint Culture," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nottingham, U.K., 1997, 228f.

[2]Karen Lynn Davidson, *Our Latter-Day Hymns: The Stories and the Messages*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1988), 7.

[3] Michael Hicks, *Mormonism and Music: A History* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 18f.

3. Another musical feature of many, but not all, Protestant congregations was the use of an instrumental accompaniment to worship. The practice was not routinely desirable or even possible in Christian worship forms at that time and in that locale, the organ being the most popular instrument. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continued this tradition and emulated the European custom of building large organs. For example, the magnificent Tabernacle Organ in Salt Lake City was built in 1867 by the British-born Joseph Ridges. Many Mormon pioneers from Britain brought their musical instruments with them to Nauvoo in the 1840s, and then across to the Salt Lake Valley. As the LDS church became more prosperous, the organ established itself as the principal instrument for accompanying worship.

4. Early Mormonism utilized its own, unique and revealed liturgy and fitted it to pre-existing patterns of worship from the Protestant tradition. Thus morning and evening services, a family-based Sunday School, and a simple eucharistic celebration now called Sacrament Meeting and held only in the evening, were quickly established as the norms of LDS worship.

B. The De-Protestantization Process (including Internationalization)

The initial evidences of a general Protestantization described above, coincide broadly with Mauss's periods of "Refuge" and "Assimilation,"[4] covering the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the seeds of a musical de-Protestantisation were planted as early as 1870, under Brigham Young's leadership. The considerable influence and tutelage of British immigrant music professors such as John Tullidge, George Careless, and later, Evan Stephens prevailed among the Saints. The practice of borrowing hymn tunes and words from other denominations all but ceased. Latter-day Saint composers were encouraged to write original tunes for their hymnals, as reflected in the 1927 *Latter-day Saint Hymns*, which incorporated the earlier unofficial publication *Songs of Zion*. This bias against borrowed music and words was only temporarily arrested for about two decades following the deaths of Evan Stephens (1930) and George Careless (1932)—the "old guard" of LDS music—as shown by the insertion of some popular Protestant hymns in the church's 1948 publication, *Hymns*.[5]

In the twentieth century, the church leadership took certain deliberate actions aimed at their musical culture which further distanced themselves from Protestant trappings. In May 1946, the First Presidency[6] prohibited the

---

[4]Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

[5]*Hymns* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1948).

[6]See Michael Hicks, *Mormonism and Music: A History* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 139.

playing of music during the eucharistic ritual of the passing of the bread and water in church, known in Latter-day Saint terminology as "taking the sacrament." This gesture might possibly have been the first outward evidence of an institutional attempt to control the use of silence in LDS ritual.

Furthermore, quoting from the *Encyclopedia Of Mormonism* (hereafter EOM): "Wishing to avoid the loss of Mormonism's basically populistic spirit and lay-oriented worship, it [church leadership] repeatedly spoke and wrote against such Oxford-style innovations as wearing choir robes, giving choral benedictions, and meditating during musical postludes."[7] This comment points to the interesting, but not unexpected, observation that such pseudo-Protestant practices were more common in LDS Britain than they were among the Saints in Utah. Even the practice of standing to sing hymns, for which there was considerable tradition in the church, was discontinued. In fact, J. Reuben Clark argued that "if the Tabernacle Choir could sing to millions over the radio while sitting, congregations should be able to sing well enough without standing up."[8]

Further de-Protestantisation in LDS musical worship occurred in the second half of the twentieth century. The *General Church Handbook* in 1960 declared that "the practice, common in some churches of the world, of sitting quietly after the final prayer, presumably to meditate upon what has been said, while a few bars of music are played on the piano or organ is not approved. When the final prayer is over the meeting should end and those attending may arise and prepare to leave."[9]

Two decades later in 1980, the change to a single three-hour Sunday meeting block, mentioned above, signaled a watershed in the process of de-Protestantisation. The new program consolidated virtually all weekday and Sabbath meetings into a three-hour block on Sunday. The consolidated meeting schedule was intended to give more time for families to be together on that day and throughout the week; time which they were encouraged to use, among other things, in the pursuit of spirituality through music, as pointed out in the "Preface" to the current LDS hymn book.[10]

Indeed, the new *Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* published in 1985, was historically pivotal in encapsulating the trends toward de-Protestantisation and also in signaling the beginnings of a movement towards musical internationalization. The First Presidency of the day said the new hymnal should "meet the varied needs of

---

[7]Hicks, *Mormonism and Music,* 139.

[8]Ibid., 140.

[9]*General Church Handbook* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1960), 28.

[10]*Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), ix.

today's worldwide Church membership."[11] In practice, this meant fewer Protestant-type hymns, like the old Wesleyan tunes "Arise My Soul, Arise" and "Author of Faith, Eternal Word," as well as a significant number of new LDS hymn compositions and the internationalization of selected hymn texts. Furthermore, the inclusion of national folk tunes not in any previous hymnals, such as the Swedish Folk melody set to the text "How Great Thou Art" (no. 86), the English hymn "For All the Saints" (no. 82) by Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Sibelius's Finnish tune to "Be Still My Soul" (no. 124), are small but not insignificant steps toward an internationalized LDS hymnody.

Ironically the movement away from Protestant traditions and practices in the twentieth century was further highlighted by the Protestantisation of its sister organization, the Reorganized Church of the Latter-day Saints, or RLDS. In short, while the LDS church in the twentieth century retrenched traditional sectarian beliefs and sought to highlight its distinctive "Mormon-ness," the RLDS church became more and more Protestant in its image, theology and practice. Much has been written on this subject by Roger D. Launius, who described the position of the RLDS Church in this manner:

> By standing in opposition to plural marriage but still claiming the legacy of early Mormonism, the RLDS made a legitimate place for itself in the nether world between Mormonism and Protestantism.[12]

Furthermore, the RLDS church has gone so far as to shed the name Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints in favour of the "Community of Christ," which Launius suggests, "signals this continuing move toward Protestantism."[13] Richard P. Howard further speculates: "The RLDS Church seems intent on shedding many of the vestiges of its sectarian background of early Mormonism. To what extent it can discard these while retaining its identity as a recognisable part of latter-day Saintism remains to be seen."[14] Put simply, the Protestantization of the Reorganized church has brought further into relief the de-Protestantization of the LDS church.

---

[11]Ibid.

[12]Roger, D. Launius *Neither Mormon Nor Protestant? The Reorganised Church and the Challenge of Identity*, in Douglas, J. Davies, ed., *Mormon Identities in Transition*, (London: Cassell, 1996), 53.

[13]Ibid., 58.

[14]Richard P. Howard, "Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS Church)," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), 1211-16.

II. Feminization in Modern LDS Culture

Continuing my assessment of aspects of the *open* dimension of the LDS sound world, I now turn to the phenomenon I have called feminization, a very important and broad-ranging development which roughly coincides with Mauss's third period of "Retrenchment." Historically speaking, feminization is a relatively recent phenomenon dating from the 1960s. Perhaps it may best be viewed as the timely reaction to a social and musical earthquake, namely the Rock/Pop explosion and emergence of a youth music culture in the 1960s. I believe its emergence to be immensely important to the development of the LDS sound world.

A. Feminization and Musical Gender

Feminization is not a word usually associated with religious processes. Let me explain my usage of the term. While it is very difficult to express the essence of music in terms of femaleness or maleness, I feel such a course is necessary to accurately identify this phenomenon. Although a degree of subjectivity is involved in judging the gender of musical characteristics, my observations are nonetheless based on definite, physical attributes of musical style which will be described later.

We should also distinguish between the essence of music and its social application, in relation to feminine or masculine characterization. These aspects are two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, we may, at times, speak of the feel of a song or hymn as being either feminine, masculine, or even ambiguous; this refers to the essence or impression of the music. On the other hand we shall also refer to a piece of music as being favoured by or written for a particular gender.

I have interpreted the masculine characteristics of music to be generally energetic, with jaunty rhythms, fast tempi, strong pulse, wide ranging melodic lines, and powerful, up-beat lyrics. For example, the early LDS song by Newell Dayley, "Let Me Soar" (1976), and the LDS hymns, "Called To Serve" (no. 249) and "Let us All Press On" (no. 243) display these masculine musical characteristics. They have, at least to the writer, a masculine feel and would presumably be attractive to the male Latter-day Saint.

Feminine musical characteristics would include a gentler rhythm and pulse, slower tempi, less angular, more flowing melodic lines, with more introvertly personal or devotional lyrics. Examples of this type would include the song by Prudy F. Gneiting called "Morning of Your Life" (1980), or the hymns "Let the Holy Spirit Guide" (no. 143) and "We Have Partaken of Thy Love" (no. 155). There are, as you might expect, many examples of LDS songs and hymns whose musical gender is ambiguous.

A general, church-wide feminization, or a softening down, such as in the demands made on member's money and time, as with the "reduce and simplify" program described below, became evident institutionally during the 1980s, but the phenomenon most especially affected the church's youth and young adult programs. As a reactionary expression of style in LDS youth and music culture, feminization emerged in the 1960s and was well established within two decades.

Feminization will be examined from two perspectives: a) through developments in LDS hymnody, and b) in the generation of a distinctively new genre of LDS popular, religious ballads.

B. A New Musical Genre: The LDS Ballad

In the case of the latter genre, this style of musical composition grew out of and alongside another musical phenomenon which burst on to the stage in Britain and the U.S.: the instantly popular religious musicals of the late 60s and early 70s such as *Jesus Christ Superstar, Godspell,* and *Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.* LDS composers were quick to copy their success with shows such as *Open Any Door* and *Saturday's Warrior.* The new LDS ballads of the 1960s and 70s were essentially a less heavily syncopated, or perhaps we can now say feminized, version of the ballads from the new musicals. They were mostly, but not exclusively, written by female LDS composers, the most prolific of whom was Janice Kapp Perry. Known as sacred ballads, their compositional style fits our feminine criteria. Not surprisingly, the young women of the church were first to adopt these new songs as their own. The new religious ballads were basically sacred words set in a popular, contemporary musical style—if you will, the sacred set to the profane. The LDS leadership, though cautious at first, eventually endorsed and encouraged the growth of the new genre. The relatively gentle syncopation of these new songs was at least a palliative to the very aggressive, masculine sound of the contemporary rock music culture that was sweeping across the world and engulfing all young people in the West, LDS and non-LDS alike. One has only to play and sing through a few of the examples of LDS sacred ballads and songs to recognize the deeply feminine nature of the vast majority. The LDS sacred ballad became especially popular with the young women both in church and at home, while LDS boys in general were left with only the hymnbook as their sacred musical "standard" to which they could rally.

An examination of any LDS music publisher's catalogue will reveal a disproportionately large amount of vocal music written for young women. Music written especially for LDS young men in the late twentieth century is very scarce indeed. Since 1970 the young women of the church have been supplied with many additional, some specially written, song collections for their organization. One such collection, *A*

Song Of The Heart, published by the church in 1978, did much to establish and consolidate the style of the LDS popular and sacred song in the 1980s. That these songs became established as a valid and popular addition to the LDS sacrament meeting attests to the depth of their accreditation in LDS culture. To the author's knowledge, no similar collection of popular LDS songs was ever written for or used by the church's Young Men's program, though some combined Young Men and Young Women choruses have, on occasion, sung songs from *A Song of the Heart*.

Before feminization, LDS church music publications included selections for men and boys as well as a smaller number of songs for girls. They included scouting and campfire songbooks, *M.I.A. Let's Sing* for the "M-Men" (the church's single adult program for 18-26 year old men), and *Recreational Songs* for general purpose use. The musical style of most of these songs follow the masculine characteristics I have described previously, being geared for the outdoor, robust pursuits and aspirations of boys and men. These publications were all discontinued in the early 1970s. They were never replaced, leaving an immense vacuum in the male song genre in LDS culture. There are now no songs published by the LDS church for young men. Although a similar fate befell the church music of the Young Women, their particular vacuum was eagerly filled by the new genre of the LDS sacred ballad.

The trend toward a feminization of LDS musical style runs parallel with an internationally recognized decline in music and music-making generally for young men. The past three decades have seen a marked fall in the amount of singing done by boys in educational and religious organizations. Even England, with one of the world's oldest traditions for boy trebles and church choirs, has seen a large drop in male music-making in schools and churches. Since most proselytizing missionaries of the LDS church are male, the feminization of LDS popular music may well pose challenges in the future. If the young men of the church are singing the songs of Zion only on a Sunday, and that reluctantly in many cases, and humming the songs of the world the rest of the week, so to speak, it does not auger well for the perpetuity of the church's rich musical culture

C. Feminization in LDS Hymnody

To demonstrate the trend toward feminization in LDS hymnody, I will make a comparative examination of the two generally used hymn publications of 1948 and 1985.

Both hymnals contain over 300 hymns. The earlier, post-war publication was intended mainly for adult use with some sub-sections for youth and choir use. The later hymnal of 1985 is not obviously sectionalized. It is intended for general use and even includes hymns adapted from the old *Primary Song Book* for children.

When we compare the degree of feminization (using the gender criteria mentioned above) in the two hymnals, the numerical results are summarized as follows:

Hymns Dropped from the 1948 Hymnal (total = 70)		
Masculine	*Feminine*	*Ambiguous*
26 (41%)	18 (29%)	19 (30%)
Hymns New to the 1985 Hymnal (total = 92)		
Masculine	*Feminine*	*Ambiguous*
13 (14%)	59 (64%)	20 (22%)

Even allowing for the subjectivity of my evaluative processes, I believe we can observe a significant swing in favour of hymns with feminine characteristics. With the exception of new hymns like "Called to Serve" and "Press Forward Saints," generally speaking, the rousing, sometimes awkward and demanding tunes of Evan Stephens, the expansive and majestic sweep of George Careless's melodies, and the strikingly arresting imagery of the nineteenth-century poets like Parley P. Pratt, which once gave the church such a distinctive musical identity, are largely absent in the new LDS hymnody.

The combination of the very feminine style of the LDS sacred ballad and the trend toward feminization in LDS hymnody leads me to conclude that the feminization of the LDS sound world since 1970 is real. Other churches, notably from the Anglican and Pentecostal traditions, have made some accommodation with the jazz syncopations of modern "pop," producing alternative hymns in the modern style. I am of the opinion that the LDS church's unique response can best be defined in terms of a feminization.

D. Reduce and Simplify

Furthermore, feminization must also be seen in the light of a contemporary and wide-ranging church program called "reduce and simplify" which was also begun in the early 1970s. Some have viewed it as a necessary response to and preparation for the explosion in church membership throughout the Third World. In 1961, under the direction of the First Presidency and the Twelve, Elder Harold B. Lee announced the formation of the All-Church Coordinating Council, which eventually pulled every organization, auxiliary, and professional service under the priesthood umbrella. The eventual goal was to reduce and simplify church curricula, publications, meetings, and other aspects of the Lord's work. This was the beginning of the church's inspired correlation effort. Other changes during the 1960s included altered and refined auxiliary goals

and purposes, a uniform church curriculum year, meetinghouse libraries which served all organizations, as well as other changes to reduce, simplify, and consolidate church organization.[15]

The reduce and simplify program not only led to sweeping alterations in the system of tithing revenue and the church's building program, but also significantly reduced the amount of institutional music making both in LDS worship and in the church at large. Through it the baggage of the Wasatch Front church programs was to be greatly reduced to fit a much slimmer and poorer world. As a result, official church music publications were reduced to just two: *Hymns* and the *Children's Songbook*[16] used by the church's Primary (children's) organization. These very public reductions and simplifications mentioned above can now be placed alongside changes to the private dimension of LDS culture. Thus we move in our considerations, from the public to the private dimension, from outer to inner, from open to closed, if you will.

III. The Functions of Music and Silence in Collective and Ritual LDS Life

As mentioned previously, there lies at the heart of Mormonism an intriguing paradox focused in the relationship between music and LDS ritual practices. I must first explain that, to Latter-day Saints, the term "ritual" has a somewhat specialized connotation. It is used to describe only those activities where set patterns are acted out with symbolic meaning, including acts such as baptism, eucharistic feasts (or the taking of the sacrament), and temple rites. There is a clear distinction within the LDS culture between what are publicly accessible, religious services, and the ceremonies or rites that are private, exclusive, and redolent in symbolic meaning. LDS public activities use music overtly, but the musical imperative diminishes as we move inward toward the private and symbolic realm where silence and the spoken word are often the only media. Thus, as we move from the outer edges of LDS culture toward the more powerfully ritualistic core of the church, we can detect trends away from public openness and accessibility, and a lessening dependency upon music as such.

---

[15]Bruce A. Van Orden, "Preparing for a Worldwide Ministry," *Ensign* 29 (October 1999): 35-36.

[16]*Children's Songbook* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989).

A. Outer Music to Inner Silence

The movement from outer music to inner silence may be illustrated in the following examples. The weekly sacrament meeting is the basic meeting of the Mormon church. All members are expected to attend; worthy members, children, and non-members who are well advanced in their investigation of LDS beliefs, are permitted to partake of the sacramental emblems. In these meetings, music plays a crucially important role. Three or four hymns are sung, and other musical items may be part of the program. One of the hymns is sung to prepare the congregation for the eucharist, but the following ceremony of passing and sharing the eucharistic emblems, while the participants contemplate the meaning of the symbols in the ritual, is performed in silence.

Eucharistic rites do not take place at the semi-annual general conferences of the church. These general conferences are held in the tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, and are now simultaneously transmitted by satellite to most LDS centers in the world. Their main purpose is to proclaim the spoken word. Choral items punctuate the service and help establish and maintain the mood of reverence. Audience participation is limited to the singing of just one hymn in the middle of the program.

Solemn assemblies, too, provide an important example of the silence that attends symbolic ritual in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When a new prophet or president of the church is presented in a general conference to the membership, for their sustaining vote, that portion of the conference is called a "solemn assembly." The various quorums and groups of the church stand one-by-one to sustain their new leader. Members raise their right arms in a solemn, demonstration of support. This supremely important activity in the life of the church is conducted in impressive silence. A further use of solemn assemblies is for special instruction from the leading brethren of the church, usually given to invited priesthood leaders only, and held in temples or other large gathering places. In such meetings music is of little importance. Silence and the spoken word are paramount.

The LDS temple is a profoundly quiet place. Only the softly spoken word punctuates the reverent dignity of temple rites. In recent years, some music has been added merely as background to the first part of the temple endowment. Also, some temples play quiet, background, prelude music in the ante-chapel. In these instances, the music serves a purely incidental and decorative function, and is in no way integral to the temple rites. As Douglas Davies said recently, in describing the new Preston Temple: "[A]t the heart of Mormonism, we find silence."[17]

---

[17] *R&C Church Times*, May 1998.

B. Differential Values for Music

Thus, comparative trends may be observed as between what I call "organizational sanctity" and the use of music. By "organizational sanctity" I refer to the degree of sacredness afforded a particular function by the religious body. For instance, a church's sporting league will not be perceived as having the same degree of sacredness as, say, the Bible Study group meetings. We may here be speaking, in the language of Hans Mol, of a gradation of sacralisation.[18] The sanctity of an organization or meeting is measurable by the sacred value placed upon it by those involved. In this sense, it may be assumed that Latter-day Saints place less sacred value upon auxiliary and cultural activities than upon attendance at their sacrament meeting, and similarly, attendance at their stake conferences is less sacred, say, than temple attendance. So as organizational sanctity decreases, the use of music takes on greater significance, and more importantly germane to the arguments in this paper, as organizational or functional sanctity increases, the importance of music decreases.

The following diagram expresses the trend in organizational sanctity and the differential values over the use of music in terms of four key elements, *function, accessibility, use of music* and *sanctity*:

Differential Values for the Use of Music			
Function	Accessibility	Use of Music	Sanctity
Auxiliary Organization	Very open to visitors	Vitally important	Low
Sacrament Meeting	Open to investigators	Important	Reverential
Conference	Generally for the members	Desirable	Impressive
Solemn Assembly	Usually by invitation	Not important	Deeply solemn
Temple Ceremonies	Restricted access	Unnecessary	Supremely worshipful

[18]Hans Mol, *Identity and the Sacred* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976), 202f.

As LDS meetings/activities (see "Function" above) become more restrictive or private in terms of accessibility, the sanctity afforded the practice increases, but the importance of music decreases until, saturated in symbolic meaning, it becomes a sacred silence. This is the first time that academic attention has been drawn to this fact.

So it is that Latter-day Saints appear to place differential values on the use and non-use of music, depending upon the function, sanctity, and accessibility of the meeting. In summary, we may say that music's application or non-application in LDS worship and culture, taken as a whole, is determined by its usefulness.

C. Understanding the Dysfunctionality of Music in LDS Life

This phenomenological observation of the dysfunctionality of music has been described using the foregoing analysis of differential values. However, purely phenomenological approaches do not explain the paradox. Why does music appear to play such an increasingly lesser role as we move toward the heart of the LDS religion? I suggest the following as possible reasons, but these explanations are in no way intended to be definitive.

1. No need for musical assistance. It may simply be that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the temple do not need the assistance of music to connect with the saving power at the ritual heart of their religion. This power lies in the performance of the rituals and ceremonies themselves, thereby rendering music superfluous to achieving a connection with that power. Music may be useful in preparation for the ritual act, but not in the actual performance of it. Similarly, it might be assumed that the temple itself is already sufficiently sanctified through its ceremony of dedication and the sacred character of the activities performed within its walls to be spiritually self-sustaining and thereby without the need of music or any other uplifting medium.

2. The temple and ritual purity. The next explanation may better be grasped through the anthropological form of analysis of cultural classification and the notion of ritual purity. According to the work of Judith Okely,[19] whose study demonstrates the symbolic nature of the gypsy's cultural classification of inner and outer worlds, this distinctive ethnic group maintains a strict tradition of protective separation of the clean from the unclean in their society, and thereby assert their gypsy identity against the wider, non-gypsy world. Okely gives many examples of things gypsies are not allowed to bring into or do inside the sacred space of their wagons. Such things would tend to be polluting of their tradition. Other nutritional taboos are protective of their bodily health and hygiene as they see it.

[19]Judith Okely, *Traveller Gypsies* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 78-80.

Rather like the gypsy wagon and the gypsy's inner body, the LDS temple represents to Latter-day Saints all that is pure and undefiled in their religion. The temple enshrines their core belief and ritual tradition. It must be protected at all costs and from all potential pollutants, including music.

3. The ambiguity of musical meaning. The third reason for the absence of music and singing in the enactment of LDS ritual may lie in the ambiguity of musical meaning itself. A musical statement can be interpreted in a variety of ways by the listener/performer. Worshippers may indeed sing the same hymn together with the same tune and utter the same words yet understand its message slightly differently. The message implied in the words can also be modified and overshadowed by the attractiveness or otherwise of the tune to which it is set. Where clarity, comprehensibility of intent, and directness are of paramount importance, as is generally the case with religious ritual, the spoken word alone coupled with silent action is a more direct medium than music, or music combined with the spoken word. Silence and the spoken word are comparatively unambiguous modes of ritual expression. This is reflective of the wider Christian tradition of favouring the spoken word for moments of the highest ritual sacredness: for instance, in the Catholic Mass, where, with the temporary cessation of music, the ringing of a bell signals the commencement of the ritual of transubstantiation of the emblems of Christ's body and blood. The priest speaks the eucharistic text, "This is my body which is given for you." The rite is then punctuated by the second sounding of the bell, signalling the resumption of music. Thus at the apex of the Mass, the unambiguous spoken word, within an aura of sacred silence, is the supreme medium.

4. Music as a distraction. In connection with the above discussion of the idea of music as a source of impurity, we should be reminded of a statement of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in connection with music's use in their sacrament service: "[A]nything which detracts the partaker's thought from the covenants he or she is making is not in accordance with the ideal condition that should exist whenever this sacred, commemorative ordinance is administered to the members of the Church."[20] This is analogous to the principle of non-distraction propounded by Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in October 1998 in connection with the passing of the sacramental emblems among the congregation, which is done by the young Deacons in the LDS church:

---

[20]James R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1970) 6: 252-53.

> [T]hey should not do anything that would distract any member from his or her worship and renewal of covenants. . . .Deacons should pass the sacrament in a reverent and orderly manner, with no needless motions or expressions that call attention to themselves. . . .The principle of non-distraction applies to things unseen as well as seen. . . .[Y]ou should qualify yourself to participate in your priesthood duties worthily and appropriately.[21]

Thus any distractions, musical or visual, to the mental focusing necessary for gaining the full benefit from LDS rites are shunned. The need to concentrate and mentally focus in silence is obviously crucially important in the performance of LDS ritual, and this principle may equally apply, indeed perhaps even more so, in the performance of temple rites.

5. The universality of the sacred silence as a means of apprehending the divine. In Eastern religions like Hinduism and Jainism, silence is intrinsic to the achievement of salvation, a very positive part of Bhakti or devotion. Here again, as in Mormonism, music is frequently used to prepare the worshipper for those moments of supreme inner silence. The silence is clearly both meaningful and potent. For many religious people, silent meditation is an intrinsic part of devotion. Van der Leeuw calls it the "worshipful Silence."[22] He describes one possible manifestation as "the silence of profound emotional disturbance," or "the wordless decision of the eternal Word."

For a final insight let us consider the ideas of Rudolph Otto, who saw a connection between silence and the numinous.[23] Otto suggested that the arts held two direct means of expressing the numinous, namely darkness and silence. For Otto this was a real, aural silence, that is, in addition to the mere absence of music, "a spontaneous reaction to the feeling of the actual *numen praesens*." This perhaps comes closest to representing the Latter-day Saint notion of silence in connection with temple ritual: a real sense of awe and divine presence that is best apprehended in the silence within.

---

[21]Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign* (November 1998), 39.

[22]Geradus Van Der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, 2d ed. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), 433.

[23]Rudolph Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923), 69f.

IV. Conclusion

With the exception recently of Professor Jon D. Green's 1996 paper on silence in Mormonism,[24] Latter-day Saint academics have been silent on the meaning of silence. It may be that the full answer to the paradox of music and silence in the LDS sound world lies in a combination of all the explanations proffered. Perhaps it might be summarised in this manner: The sacred silence in Mormonism is fundamentally an unambiguous and un-pollutable aid to the acquisition of religious meaning in symbolic ritual. Not surprisingly, the most silent of all arts, namely pictorial art, continues to grow and flourish at all levels in Mormonism, and especially in temples.

Music in LDS culture may soon become a closed boundary to foreign cultures, especially as the church seeks to move into Far East Asia. Western tonality, on which the LDS church's musical language is based, is exactly that—Western. Most Eastern Asian tonalities are not based upon the tonic scale. The Chinese have a very specialized form of pentatonic music, and Indian culture enjoys ornamental quarter-tones and un-Western rhythms that are very complex, not to mention the strangely religious, percussive music of the Javanese Gamelang. Certain Indian subcultures sing their scriptures, considering it blasphemous and vulgar to speak them. How will these peoples sing "Come, Come Ye Saints," for instance, or adjust to hearing scripture spoken in conference? The scale and scope of such cultural assimilation can hardly be imagined. Commenting on the challenges to the church of musical assimilation in the Indian sub-continent, Roger Keller has stated: "If the door of music can be opened within the parameters of priesthood authority, a thoroughly vibrant and orthodox community of believers will emerge in India."[25] However, given its possible status as a new world religion, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may no longer have the critical need for music as the flagship of its institutional identity. The more recent processes in what Mauss has broadly labelled a period of "retrenchment" have tended to focus the attention of LDS leaders away from the outward forms of their religious culture, where music features strongly, and toward the inner reinforcement of socially relevant foundational and sectarian beliefs. Latter-day Saint identity may no longer be locked into its former stereotypes of plural marriage and dietary abstention. Issues such as family values, sexual purity, and gender roles are surfacing

---

[24]Jon D. Green, "The Paradox of Silence in the Arts and Religion," *BYU Studies* 35, no.3 (1995-96): 95-131.

[25]Roger Keller, *India: A Synopsis of Cultural Challenges*, in Douglas Davies, ed., *Mormon Identities in Transition* (London: Cassell, 1996), 89.

within Mormonism and taking on increasingly greater prominence. If secularisation and moral liberalisation in the world increase in this century, the LDS church's stand on these moral issues and other similar issues may indeed come to replace the older, outdated symbols such as polygamy, health codes, and the Tabernacle Choir as important boundary markers for LDS culture.

Not unlike the sweeping, late-nineteenth century changes which prepared the LDS church for survival and expansion into the twentieth century, the church's program of institutional down-sizing ("reduce and simplify") together with the processes of cultural accommodation (principally, de-Protestantization and feminization), have both protected and prepared it for whatever the Latter-day prophets see as lying ahead in the next century. The inner church too has been safeguarded: Latter-day Saint ritual clothed in its sacred silence maintains the purity of symbolic and theocratic tradition, while the temple continues to stand as the supreme shrine and protector of what is most sacred in Mormonism.

Forever Family

R. A. Christmas

Five of his and four of hers were
step-this-and-that to each other.

The Church said, "Families Are
'Forever'"—in their case it was more

of a question, after the disaffections,
the divorces, and the deaths of

two of the five grandkids—but heck,
when her twenty-six-year-old
freeloader finally moved out, and
before their lone missionary

returned, they had a few days to
fall in love—or at least fall

back on a friendship that for ten
years had kept things from flying

completely apart; and if the results
weren't likely to last forever,

that was a chance they'd have to take—
because if they didn't, who would?

Root and Branch: An Abstract of the Structuralist Analysis of the Allegory of the Olive Tree

Seth Kunin

THE ALLEGORY OF THE OLIVE TREE, as found in Jacob 5 in the Book of Mormon, is one of the most complicated and enigmatic of texts. These complications, however, can be resolved when the text is analyzed from the *structuralist* perspective. Such an analysis proceeds from the assumption that various cultural manifestations of (for instance) a single religion will incorporate a consistent underlying structure which, once discerned, will have both interpretive and predictive value. A structuralist analysis would suggest that the Allegory of the Olive Tree has a triadic structure of three interrelating terms: wild branches, tame branches, and root, which in turn represent: non-Mormon, Mormon by conversion or faith, and Mormon by birth. The element which causes the complexity in the text is the transformative quality of these categories. Each category, especially the first two, logically and almost automatically move toward the third category. Although this short paper will not present the details of the structuralist analysis, it will present an abstract of it to enable the reader to understand what is arguably a fundamental feature of the Book of Mormon as a whole, as well as other aspects of LDS practice.

THE TEXT

The Allegory of the Olive Tree is found in its most complete form in Jacob 5. It is a very long and complex text comprising 77 verses. Two shorter and closely interrelated texts are found in 1 Nephi 10:12-14 and 15:12-18. The second of these refers explicitly to the earlier version. All three versions include the same basic elements, though there is a slightly greater emphasis on the roots in the more elaborate version.

The narrative developed in the allegory focuses on the planting and growth of an olive tree, and the problems experienced by the owner in producing a crop of good fruit. Initially the olive tree produces good fruit, but as it grows older it starts to produce bad fruit. The narrative then follows a series of grafting wild branches into the root, removing the original branches, and planting them throughout the garden, some in good places and some in less-than-good places. In spite of these attempts, the original tree and the scattered branches do not consistently produce good fruit. At the conclusion of the narrative, some of the original branches are returned to be re-grafted into the root, while the wild branches that had been grafted in are selectively removed. Those which produce good fruit are retained, and those which continue to produce bad fruit are removed. Throughout the narrative there is a very strong emphasis on the need to preserve the root of the olive tree.

This allegory is explicitly stated in both versions of the 1 Nephi text. Likewise, the text in Jacob opens with the statement, "I will liken thee, O house of Israel, like a tame olive-tree, which a man took and nourished in his vineyard" (Jacob 5:3). The beginning of chapter 6 also specifically discusses some aspects of the allegory, particularly the last section in which the good branches (equivalent to those who have worked for God) are preserved, and the bad branches (equivalent to those who have rejected him) are cast into the fire.

The two versions found in 1 Nephi bring out further aspects of the allegory, and in a real sense, encapsulate some of the key elements. Both versions have a simple structure focusing on a single aspect of the narrative development. The version in 1 Nephi 10:12-14 focuses on the House of Israel, which is clearly associated with new world adherents rather than the Jews, who are usually specifically called "the Jews" in the Book of Mormon. (As we will see, by analogy this usage also implies the modern Mormon church or people.) The Book of Mormon uses the term "natural" to refer to this group of scattered branches, as indicated in verse 14: "The natural branches, or the remnants of the House of Israel, should be grafted in." In the remainder of this paper I will, for convenience sake, use the modern terms "Mormon" and "LDS" to refer both to supposed ancient and to contemporary adherents to this "other" House of Israel.

The second version, which purports to be an interpretation of these verses, focuses on the gentiles rather than the house of Israel. Although verse 12 reiterates that Nephi and his brothers (symbolically representing the LDS) are branches of the house of Israel, which has been broken off and scattered, verse 13 makes the gentiles its primary focus. Verse 13 seems to suggest that the natural branches do not represent the House of Israel, but rather the gentiles who are grafted into the tree. The gentiles receive the gospel, and through them the remnants of Israel are also returned to the tree. Thus, between these two variations,

the term "natural" is transformed from the "House of Israel" to those gentiles who become part of the "House of Israel."

Both these emphases and the apparent textual confusion are retained in the longer and elaborated version of the narrative. The Jacob version clearly divides the branches into two types: a) those branches that were originally part of the tree, and which are variously called natural or tame branches, and b) those branches that were not originally part of the tree, which are usually called wild branches. The natural or tame branches seem to refer to the House of Israel, while the wild branches refer to the gentiles.

Two main elements in the third (Jacob) version were not developed in the earlier (1 Nephi) versions: the nature of the fruit, and the emphasis on the root. The use of the fruit in Jacob 5 is related to a more complex view of history and religious anthropology. It allows the text to illustrate the reasons for the removal of the branches, as well as the processes of degeneration and ultimately of selection. The root is clearly also a part of the two earlier versions, but it becomes, to a great extent, the focus of the Jacob text. The problem of the role of the root is one of the key issues addressed here.

Abstract of the Structuralist Analysis

The first part of this discussion examines those elements which are developed in the narrative. The main focus here is on how these elements transform as the text develops. This discussion highlights the ambiguous usage of the term "natural," suggesting that this term is a key feature in the transformation of the wild branches into tame or "natural" branches.

The second half of this analysis examines the structural relations developed in the text at the more abstract level. I will argue that one of the interests of the text is the way in which the three elements—gentiles, Mormons by conversion, and Mormons by birth—can be related to one another. The relationship between the elements seems somewhat paradoxical: While the relationship between the first two elements emphasises their separation and distinctiveness, the relationship between the second two elements seeks to emphasise or create similarity.

The Jacob 5 text includes three main elements: the wild branches, the original branches from the olive tree, and the root itself. These elements are transformed as the narrative develops by various qualities expressed primarily in respect to the fruit, good and bad. Their quality is also expressed, and perhaps transformed, by the changes of the location of the branches after they have been removed from the olive tree.

The original branches of the olive go through a journey of transformation throughout the narrative. They start out attached to the root and producing good fruit, and thus have a positive quality. They become progressively more negative, which is expressed both in the quality of their

fruit and the distance from the root. Ultimately, they return to the positive by being returned to the root and producing good fruit. A similar, though opposite, journey occurs in regard to the wild branches. Initially their negative quality is emphasised by their distance from the root and the poor fruit that they produce. As the narrative develops, they become progressively more positive, initially by being grafted onto the root, and finally by the process of selection.

The two texts in 1 Nephi include a similar though simpler transformation; each of the texts focuses on a single element. 1 Nephi 10 focuses on the transformation of the tame natural branches, the House of Israel. There is a similar narrative development as found in Jacob, from positive to negative, and finally back to positive. As in the Jacob text, the root is untransformed and remains positive throughout the text. The text in 1 Nephi 15 focuses on the transformation of the gentiles, in this case exemplified by the natural branches. As in Jacob, they are initially negative and ultimately positive.

When we examine the process of transformation in all three versions of the allegory, the term "natural" becomes an important key to understanding the transformations in the Jacob text. The two texts from Nephi are helpful because they divide the issues into two, though in doing so they create some ambiguity about the meaning of the term "natural." Perhaps because it does not divide the issue so clearly, Jacob is able to be more consistent in its distinction between the different terms used in the text: In Jacob the original branches are called "natural" or "tame," while the other branches are always called "wild." Jacob, however, does introduce an ambiguity between "natural" and "wild" in verse 17. The verse states: "And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard looked and beheld the tree in which the wild olive branches had been grafted; and it had sprung forth and begun to bear fruit. And he beheld that it was good; and the fruit was like unto the natural fruit." This suggests that the transformation from wild to natural, which is divided by the two texts from Nephi, is at least hinted at in Jacob.

With the texts from Nephi in mind, we can divide the transformations described in Jacob into two: those processes which relate to the "tame" branches—which were originally part of the tree—and those processes which relate to the "wild" branches—which were not original to the tree. The "tame"[1] branches are not ultimately transformed in the text; they return to their original status, which is represented by location in the narrative. They begin by producing good fruit on the tree, and they end in the same place. Some of the "wild" branches, however, are

[1]I use "tame" here to indicate specifically those branches which were originally part of the tree, as opposed to the term "natural" which, as suggested, is somewhat ambiguous in the texts from Nephi.

significantly transformed. This is symbolized by both their location and the quality of their fruit. They start out distant from the root, but a select few end up as part of the root, producing fruit which is indistinguishable from that of the "tame" branches. The ambiguity in the term "natural" thus reflects the transformative quality emphasised by the text: The wild branches can be transformed into the natural.

When the allegory is examined in terms of its symbolic explanation, that is, the gentiles and the "House of Israel," the relationship between these elements becomes clearer. The "House of is Israel" is initially established as an opposing category in relation to the gentiles. The root, which is emphasized throughout the Jacob text, is metaphorically related to the genealogical definition of the "House of Israel." The scattering of the branches of the "House of Israel" is tied to the historic experience of the followers of Nephi and their descendants, and in the Jacob text is associated with sin. As suggested, however, the "House of Israel" is essentially untransformed in the text. They are ultimately returned to their genealogical roots.

The gentiles are the main focus of the text and undergo two levels of transformation. They are initially associated and brought into the "House of Israel" through grafting onto the genealogical tree. This initial transformation into the "House of Israel" is not complete. The fact that they are still somewhat wild is seen in their negative effect on the roots. The negative aspect can only be resolved when they are joined with the actual, genetically defined "House of Israel." This final stage is seen in the merging of terms: They are no longer wild "gentiles," they are now the tame "House of Israel."

A similar pattern can be discerned in a broad analysis of symbolic aspects of the conversion process within the LDS church. The conversion process can be seen as a two-stage process. Initially gentiles are in an opposite category from members born into (or converted into) the church. Through faith, they can make the first transformation and join the church. However, they still lack the genealogical element, which is then symbolically provided by the temple ritual of retrospective conversion. Through the conversion of all ancestors, the individual is effectively and symbolically "born" into the LDS church, since all his ancestors are now, retrospectively, members of that church. This genealogical element is also developed by a further notion regarding descent: All Mormons are regarded as descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel. This genealogical understanding is extended to individuals who join the church.[2]

---

[2]See for example, D. J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*, (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2000) 149-52.

The Broader Context: Other Narratives in the Book of Mormon

The theory behind my analysis suggests that structural patterns of the type illustrated herein should also be found in other contexts within LDS culture. As with the pattern found in the model of conversion, suggested above, similar patterns should be found within other texts in the Book of Mormon, as well as in other aspects of the LDS worldview. Thus, the triadic pattern, in which the first two elements are strongly distinguished and the second two elements are strongly identified, should be found to be characteristic. Although we do not have the space here to examine all aspects of LDS narrative and culture, a few examples will illustrate the argument. The narratives in the first chapters of the Book of Mormon, particularly 1 Nephi, are structured with the same underlying triadic pattern.[3] One of the clearest examples of this pattern is found in the names of the six sons of Lehi. The oldest sons, who are qualitatively negative in the text, are named Laman and Lemuel, neither of which is an actual biblical name. They are structurally similar to the wild branches: They represent the rejected gentiles, though they ultimately have a transformative possibility and can achieve salvation. The second two brothers, who are born before the journey and thus are similar to converts (again, location is important), are Nephi and Sam. Their names reflect their partially transformed status. The name Nephi is not biblical, while Sam is partially biblical, that is, related to Samuel. Like the convert, they reflect the intermediate, not fully transformed category. Finally, the last two brothers, born in positive space, are Jacob and Joseph, both with fully biblical names reflecting their intrinsic positive quality. They represent the born Mormon and those Mormons who are symbolically reborn through retrospective conversion. Although these individuals in one sense are a static instantiation of the triadic structure, ultimately they have the same inner transformative quality, moving toward the category represented by Jacob and Joseph. This example illustrates the fact that the Allegory of the Olive Tree and other narrative and non-narrative texts in the Book of Mormon are shaped by the same structural relations. It also creates a model of history which can be used to understand the fate and future of the descendants of Lehi as described in the remaining sections of the text. The underlying structural pattern is also consistent, as suggested above, with LDS models of conversion and, therefore, identity. Another area of similarity is found in respect to mythic and actual geography, both macro and micro.

In the Book of Mormon, space is divided into three spheres: the initial, negative space associated with the Jews; the intermediate space of Laman; and, finally the positive space across the sea. The association is even stronger in respect to modern use of space. First, we have the space

[3]See Seth Kunin, "The Death/Rebirth Mytheme in the Book of Mormon," in Douglas J. Davies, ed., *Mormon Identities in Transition* (London: Cassell, 1996), 192-203.

of the gentiles (outside Utah, or perhaps outside the United States). Second, there is the space of the United States, or more specifically, Utah. This can be associated with Mormon churches, which are the intermediate sacred spaces, into which both born and re-born (my term) members can enter. The final sacred space, perhaps focused on Salt Lake City, centers on the temple, into which only re-born members can enter. Although this is somewhat complicated by the existence of temples outside the original sacred space, the triadic structure is retained: 1) gentiles who are unchurched, 2) those who can only enter the churches, and 3) those who can enter the temple. This structural pattern is also found in LDS theology regarding the transformation of man into God.

Conclusions

In this brief discussion of the Allegory of the Olive Tree, I have presented an abstract of some of the conclusions which can be drawn from structuralist analysis. I have suggested that the pattern underlying the Olive Tree narratives is based on a triadic pattern. This pattern is distinct from many structures found in other cultural forms (for example, the Hebrew Bible), which are dyadic rather than triadic. One of the most interesting features of this triadic pattern is its inherent transformational quality: All the elements in the system can, and perhaps must, move from one category to the next.

This analysis has also highlighted the presence of this pattern in other narrative texts—for example, the early chapters of 1 Nephi, and more importantly, in the model of conversion. In these examples, as in the Allegory of the Olive Tree, elements were dynamic (at least in the long run, if not in the specific narrative.) Thus, in conversion, gentiles ultimately should move from that negative category to the opposite category of Mormon (by conversion). This transformation occurs on the basis of faith. They then are transformed into "born" Mormons, the third category, which overlaps the second category by the process of retrospective conversion. The dynamic movement of man to God is also indicative of an identical structural process of transformation.

This preliminary discussion raises some important questions. First, in what ways are the structures developed herein similar or different to those cultures which have interrelated with the LDS community? Were other religious traditions and cultural forms developed in the U.S. at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries similarly structured? Perhaps even more importantly, what is the relationship of the structures found in the Book of Mormon to those of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament? These questions require a much broader analysis of the Mormon cultural context, as well as a comparative structuralist analysis of the Book of Mormon, Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament.

About my Conversion: Directions to a Nonbeliever

Anne Elizabeth Berbert

Run your finger across the arc of my cheekbone.
Notice how it curves like the hull of Noah's ark
that propelled life through earth's watery death.

Hear the dove's wings whisk
as it flies along the rainbow's curve,
carrying a branch to regenerate life.

Observe Noah's cats' descendent,
its vibrating fur against my leg. Consider
that DNA separates the lamb from the lion.

If you can't give God faith, give me
your feet. Let me plant them alongside olive
roots that grew from the dove's branch.

Mormonism's Worldwide Aspirations and its Changing Conceptions of Race and Lineage

Armand L. Mauss

> *Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. . .And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* –Apostle Paul to the Galatians 3:7, 29.

MORMON HISTORY CONTAINS ITS FAIR SHARE of ironies and unintended consequences. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints began with a mission to restore the ancient church, but not for everyone at the same time. In its earliest days, the church was preoccupied with its mission to seek out the descendants of Abraham through Jacob or Israel; these Israelites, in turn, would prepare the world for the millennial reign of the Messiah. The first to be so identified were the Lamanites, known to other Americans as the aboriginal Indians, but believed by the Latter-day Saints to be descendants of the ancient Joseph, son of Jacob (Israel). Next came the Anglo-Israelites, otherwise called "Mormons," who were thought to be descendants of Joseph through his son Ephraim. The church thus appeared at first as an exclusive, particularistic sect, not only claiming to be the sole authentically Christian church, but also seeking its converts primarily from certain lineages. This is the story of how such a provincial–even tribal–movement was gradually transformed into a universal religion in which lineage of all kinds became essentially irrelevant.[1]

---

[1]This account is given with much greater detail and documentation in my forthcoming book tentatively entitled, *All Abraham's Children: Changing LDS Conceptions of Lineage and Race* (unpublished manuscript under editorial review by publishers).

This change was an outcome, somewhat ironically, of a massive missionary commitment which began as a quest for locating and converting the lost and scattered Israelites. Having discovered, through early missionary success in certain places, that the "blood of Israel" might be found in some rather unlikely populations, the church came increasingly to look beyond its earlier concerns with specific lineages to the world as a whole. The earlier theological and mythological constructions of lineage identity were gradually transformed into operational definitions based upon cost-benefit assessments of church growth. In other words, Israelite lineage would manifest itself wherever large numbers of converts were found and retained. The designation "Israelite" thus became more a symbolic and figurative identity than a literal one. This process, of course, brought the Latter-day Saints ultimately to the same understanding taught by the Apostle Paul to the Galatians (an understanding which many early Mormons already had before the church digressed into a preoccupation with lineage). This same ideological transformation has helped the church purge itself internally of controversial racist notions which had inevitably become attached to the lineage preoccupation.

Continuity and Change in Religious Doctrine

It is well known that religions which spread beyond their original homelands must cope with the issue of syncretism in the locales where they are imported. For Mormonism, as for most expanding religions, the ultimate pragmatic test is the conversion and retention of new members. At any given period of time and in any given locale (including the religion's homeland), some doctrines and ideologies will find greater acceptance and appeal than will others. One of the factors in the success of new religious movements is an engaging mixture of the familiar and the novel in its message and its practices.[2] As these new movements interact with their cultural environments, their growth largely depends on their ability to make local adaptations of doctrine, policy, and cultural traditions. This process can involve not only the intermixing of elements usually implied by the term "syncretism," but also the dropping or de-emphasizing of some elements and the accretions of others. Of course, as with all forms of syncretism, doctrinal and ecclesiastical integrity will place some limits on what kinds of elements can be taken on or phased out.

Certain explanations will usually be required when such changes are recognized, and these explanations might take the form of useful organizational myths. In Mormonism, one of those myths might be

---

[2]Rodney Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 12 (1996): 133-57.

called the "myth of continuity," wherein past doctrines and policies are rarely repudiated explicitly. Instead, either the older doctrines are seen as temporarily in abeyance (as with the imminence of the Millennium or the nineteenth-century practice of polygamy), or the changes are seen as logical developments deriving from prophecies or harbingers of the past (as with the change in race policy in 1978).[3] Furthermore, given its claims, from the very beginning, of continuous revelation through living prophets, Mormonism has always been in a sound doctrinal position to attribute any changes ultimately to deity.

Contrary to the obdurate, monolithic image often projected on Mormonism, from both the inside and the outside, this religion has shown an enormous capacity for flexibility and change. Its doctrine of deity was still evolving until the early twentieth century, when a formal pronouncement was constructed and issued by the First Presidency.[4] Even now one sees a continuing evolution toward a greater Christocentric focus. What is especially interesting for purposes of this paper is the apparent correlation across time between changes in doctrine (at least conventional, if not canon doctrine), and changes in the outcomes of the proselyting and public relations efforts of the church. That is to say, the waxing of some points of doctrine and the waning of others bears some apparent relationship to the results of church programs for proselyting and retention in various parts of the world. A direct causal connection cannot be assumed, but the correlation is suggestive.

The Construction of Traditional Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage

Traditional LDS conceptions of race and lineage were constructed within the social and intellectual environments of the nineteenth century, both in Europe and in America. To be sure, Mormonism added a few unique elements of its own, but the general racialist framework of that century is readily apparent. This framework enjoyed an affinity with a common Protestant interest of the time in identifying and locating the descendants of the various ancient Israelite tribes, whose gathering was believed to be either imminent or actually in progress as a harbinger of the millennium. Accordingly, the return of the Jews to

---

[3] In "Official Declaration No. 2" (bound with the Doctrine and Covenants since 1981), which announced the change in its race policy on the priesthood, the First Presidency of the church expressed its awareness "of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the church who have preceded us that at some time, in God's eternal plan," the priesthood would be extended to all from whom it "has been withheld."

[4] Thomas G. Alexander, "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology," *Sunstone* 5 (July/August 1980): 24-33 (reprinted 10, no. 5 [1985]: 8-18).

Palestine, which was already underway by mid-century, was widely seen as a major sign of the end times. But what about the other Israelites, the so-called "Lost Ten Tribes"?

Various theories were advanced about who and where these other Israelites might be, and how they would be gathered from the North, as per scriptural prophecy. Other races were also explained as descendants of one or another of the sons of Noah, although their destinies were not necessarily connected to the gathering in preparation for the millennial reign of Christ. For example, black Africans were widely understood as descendants of both Ham and Cain, and Asians of various kinds as descendants of Japheth. Of course, these were biblically derived religious conceptions, but secular scholars and intellectuals of the time had their own explanations for the origins and natures of the various races.[5]

The Appropriation of Israelite Identity for the Mormons

Although not given much attention in contemporary Mormonism, a conception of Mormons as literal Israelites developed soon after the organization of the church and endured as a central idea in official discourse for about a century after the settlement of Utah.[6] This doctrine, which had only a tenuous basis in Mormon scripture, was the product primarily of a powerful intellectual movement within church leadership, starting particularly with Brigham Young and his contemporaries. As this movement gained greater currency in official discourse, Mormons came to understand themselves as literal descendants of the tribe of Ephraim, although occasionally other Israelite ancestry was recognized as well. The special role and primacy of Ephraimite descent, based on certain Old Testament passages, apparently had its origin in the royal leadership Ephraim assumed over the Ten Tribes at the division of Solomon's kingdom.

For the early Mormons this meant that Ephraim would also be the vanguard tribe in the gathering process—that is, the descendants of Ephraim would be the first of the lost tribes to be gathered and would establish a new gathering place for those tribes in America, while the tribe of Judah, or the Jews, would gather to their prophesied gathering place in Palestine. Consistent with that understanding, most nineteenth-century converts to Mormonism were, by definition, literal descendants of Ephraim. Of course, many Protestants, especially of the Calvinist variety, had taken on a symbolic or figurative identity as Israelites, or at least as "Abraham's seed," in line with the Apostle Paul's redefinition of the

---

[5]These ideas from early American and European literature are described and documented in the first part of Armand L. Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim: Traditional Mormon Conceptions of Lineage and Race," *Journal of Mormon History* 25, no.1 (Spring 1999): 131-73.

[6]See ibid., 143-58, where considerable documentation is offered for this generalization.

Abrahamic covenant in terms of conversion to Christ. Mormons often did the same, from the beginning. However, I refer here to an additional step, the translation of that symbolic identity into a literal one.[7]

This understanding derived in part from a passage in the Book of Mormon which seemed to identify the Prophet Joseph Smith as a literal descendant of the ancient biblical Joseph, and a section in the Doctrine and Covenants, which identified the church with Ephraim.[8] Further confirmation of such an identity came from patriarchal blessings given by men with special callings to discern the divine will and destiny for individual members and to identify their respective lineages. At first, fewer than half these blessings mentioned lineage, but as time went on, and especially in the Utah period, these blessings increasingly attributed Israelite lineage generally, and/or Ephraimite lineage specifically, to the members who received them.[9]

During the second half of the century, the LDS appropriation of Ephraimite lineage came to be enriched and expanded by the accretion of doctrines and ideologies from the outside. One of these was British Israelism, the claim that the peoples of the British Isles, and indeed the monarchy itself, had originated in the immigration of descendants of various biblical figures, but especially descendants of the Lost Tribes. This idea had its origins at least in the eighteenth century, and by the middle of the nineteenth it was a significant (if minority) strain in popular religious thinking.[10] While never a dominant theme in the discourse of established religions, the doctrine was purveyed by a few prominent Anglican clergy, and it acquired several sectarian exponents from outside the establishment. The best known of these in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were Joanna Southcott, founder of the Christian Israelites in Aston, and Richard Brothers, a some time associate of this sect but known more for his independent writings on the subject. Best known in both Europe and America was John Wilson, who was in some demand on the lecture circuit in the 1830s, and whose 1840 book on the subject went through many printings on both sides of the Atlantic. In recent times, a rather pernicious version of this doctrine has been

---

[7]Symbolic and spiritualized connections of the Christian faith to God's covenant with Abraham have been common at least since Puritan times. See, e. g., Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), on what it means to be "spiritual Semites."

[8]2 Nephi 3: 6-15; D&C 133: 7, 12, 21, 26, 30-34.

[9]See Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim," 145-46; and Irene M. Bates, "Patriarchal Blessings and the Routinization of Charisma," *Dialogue* 26, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 1-29. During Joseph Smith's lifetime, patriarchal blessings seemed to specify lineage only about half the time.

[10]Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim," 134-43; see also early chapters in Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

adapted by the Christian Identity movement, an overtly racist, right-wing, quasi-religious movement in the U.S.[11]

A second, and more secular, intellectual current of the early nineteenth century was an explicitly racialist doctrine which might be called "Anglo-Saxon triumphalism." This idea derived from a scholarly preoccupation in various disciplines with trying to trace the origins of European peoples and languages. Apparently taking a cue from the work of Roman historian Tacitus on ancient Germans, scientists and intellectuals of all kinds began to trace the origins of the various Germanic peoples, including those who settled England and Scandinavia, back to the ancient Aryans of central Asia. As time went on, according to this theory, these ancients, and particularly their Anglo-Saxon descendants in the British Isles, came to be seen as the carriers not only of the Germanic languages but also of certain superior cultural and physical traits. This line of historical explanation was not limited to a few sectarian enthusiasts but was pervasive in the science, philosophy, history, and literature of the nineteenth century.[12] Of course, it provided powerful support for the British Imperialism and the American Manifest Destiny which were emerging on the world scene contemporaneously with this Anglo-Saxon triumphalism. Unfortunately, much of it was still available in the twentieth century to be integrated into the official ideology of the Third Reich in Germany; but it was by no means invented in Hitler's time.

It is difficult to establish just how and when early British Israelism and Anglo-Saxon triumphalism were discovered by influential Mormon thinkers; but those movements were not merely contemporaneous with the rise of Mormonism—they were clearly approaching the apex of their influence just as the first Mormon missionaries arrived in England. Borrowings from these movements in official Mormon discourse can be seen at least as early as the 1850s when the terminology, and even some of the authors in these movements, began to be cited in general church conferences. In the 1870s, if not earlier, the British Mormon publication Millennial Star began to carry references to the same, and in 1878 the pages of that publication carried a monthly series of articles by George Reynolds, citing by name several exponents of British Israelism and Anglo-Saxon

---

[11]On Wilson's synthesis and framing of this ideological legacy, see John F. Wilson, *Our Israelitish Origin: Lectures on Ancient Israel and the Israelitish Origins of the Modern Nations of Europe* (Liverpool and London: Nisbet Co., 1840 and many subsequent editions). On recent American adaptations of this legacy, see Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right*; and James A. Aho, *The Politics of Righteousness: Idaho Christian Patriotism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990).

[12]The evidence is reviewed in Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim," 139-43 and notes. Even such prominent American history scholars as Francis Parkman and George Bancroft were proponents of these ideas.

triumphalism in support of claims about both Israelite and Anglo-Saxon origins for most Mormons.[13]

Simultaneously with these outside imports being synthesized into Mormon discourse, the middle of the century also witnessed an important theological development within Mormonism, namely an expanded understanding of the doctrine of premortal existence. During the 1830s, Mormonism shared with Protestantism the understanding that biblical and doctrinal references to predestination or foreordination referred to plans and decisions in the mind of God, not to events actually experienced by individual souls before birth. However, after Joseph Smith's work on the Book of Abraham, he came to believe that all children of God had enjoyed a conscious existence as individual spirits in God's presence before mortality. Furthermore, during that premortal period certain decisions were made and key roles assigned to certain individuals, who would become prophets and major players in the religious history of the earth. This new understanding of premortal life did not achieve general circulation in Mormonism until 1842, when the Book of Abraham was first published, and that book did not enjoy canon status as Mormon scripture until 1880.[14]

Meanwhile, after the Saints' arrival in Utah, the doctrine of premortal existence underwent a certain amount of extra-canonical expansion at both the official and the grassroots levels. One important new element was the idea that not merely individuals were foreordained by God for key roles in mortality, but even entire categories of premortal spirits were identified and set apart to be born into certain mortal lineages. Both these lineages, and the specific times and places of individual mortal births, were decided partly on the basis of divine strategy and partly on the differential premortal merit achieved by individuals. Once this expansion had occurred in the doctrine of pre-existence, then it was available for combining with the imported racialist ideas mentioned above.

Beginning in the 1850s, and for nearly a century thereafter, a certain cosmic scenario recurred in Mormon discourse (official and unofficial), namely, that the most righteous and meritorious spirit children of God in the pre-existence were designated to come forth in the last days through the lineage of Israel, especially the tribe of Ephraim, as the vanguard of the gathering. In mortality, these souls have shown an inborn propensity, in their very blood, to recognize the teachings of Christ as delivered by

---

[13]Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim," 149-58. Reynolds's contribution in particular is reviewed in 156-58.

[14]Charles R. Harrell, "The Development of the Doctrine of Preexistence, 1830-1844," *BYU Studies* 28, no. 2 (1988): 75-96; Blake Ostler, "The Idea of Preexistence in the Development of Mormon Thought," *Dialogue* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 59-78; Gordon Irving, "The Mormons and the Bible in the 1830s," *BYU Studies* 13, no. 4 (1973): 473-88; and Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim," 153-56.

LDS missionaries, and to join the church in large numbers. By divine plan, these Israelites were clustered together especially in the countries of northwestern Europe, where they have been known in human history as Anglo-Saxons, Scandinavians, and other Germanic peoples. As such, they are an especially favored lineage, indeed a royal one, as amply demonstrated by their superiority over other peoples politically, militarily, scientifically, and culturally.[15]

Elsewhere I have explained that this racialist construction of Mormon ethnic identity functioned in large part as a defensive ideology to counter the pervasive nineteenth-century image of Mormons as a pariah people.[16] This ideology also developed in tandem with the massive numbers of conversions enjoyed by the church in England, Scandinavia, and Germany during the 1830s through the1870s. Given both the theological framework of Mormonism, and the increasingly popular racialist explanations circulating in Europe and America about the supposed superiority of the Germanic peoples, the Mormon synthesis provided a plausible explanation for missionary success, as well as a reassuring defense of Mormon ethnic claims against a hostile world.[17] Furthermore, this defensive function helps account for the persistence of Mormon racialist ideology well into the twentieth century; for by the turn of that century, conversions in Europe had largely dried up, and the church was starting to look elsewhere for the descendants of Ephraim and Israel. Even in the late 1960s, however, when I collected survey data from representative samples of Mormons in Salt Lake City and San Francisco, I found that most Mormons still believed themselves to be literal descendants of Ephraim or other Israelite tribes, and thus "God's chosen people."[18]

American Indians as Israelites

Joseph Smith was not the only religious thinker of his time with a theory about the Israelite origins of the American aborigines, but he was the

---

[15]This general line of thinking was exhibited by many prominent LDS spokesmen all the way through the first half of the twentieth century (see Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim," 159-64), but it was most fully and articulately codified by Joseph Fielding Smith in *The Way to Perfection* (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society, 1931), chs. 7 and 8, esp. pp. 42-51 and 129-30.

[16]Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim," 150-53. For supportive discussions on "identity construction" in social psychology, see Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (New York: Tavistock, 1985); Eugeen E. Roosens, *Creating Ethnicity: The Process of Ethnogenesis* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989); Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981): and Mary Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

[17]Thomas F. O'Dea is well known for having described the Mormons at mid-twentieth century as a virtual ethnic group. See his *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), and his "Mormonism and the Avoidance of Sectarian Stagnation: A Study of Church, Sect, and Incipient Nationality," *American Journal of Sociology* 60 (1955): 285-93.

only one to claim possession of their Israelite history. I will not recount here the general plot of the Book of Mormon story, since it is well known to most of my readers that the book identifies these aborigines, or American Indians, as "Lamanites." While the Lamanites are portrayed as a fallen and degraded people, having rejected their ancient American prophets of God, they are nevertheless literal descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim, sons of the ancient Biblical Joseph. As such, they are peoples of divine destiny, waiting to be gathered by the Lord's modern emissaries in these last days. Indeed, the Book of Mormon, as well as the earliest Mormon discourse, portrayed white Mormons as "Gentiles," commissioned by God to bring the Book of Mormon and the gospel of Christ to the Lamanites. The converted Lamanites would subsequently assume their divine commission to build the city and temple of Zion in America as the gathering place for the ten tribes. In this endeavor, according to the earliest understanding, the white Mormon Gentiles would have an auxiliary and supportive role; but later, as I have indicated, the Mormons came to understand themselves as literal Israelites and began to take the main responsibility for building Zion (with little objection, one might add, from the reluctant Lamanites).[19]

The earliest missionary expedition of the church was to Indian tribes in the Mississippi River region, nor have the Mormons since forsaken their divine commission to convert the Lamanites. Nevertheless, the nineteenth century ended with little to show for decades of missionary effort among the Indians: At several different junctures in early Utah history,

---

[18]For example, in 1967-68, 78 percent of Salt Lake City Mormons and 62 percent of San Francisco Mormons agreed that it was "definitely true" or "probably true" that "most Latter-day Saints are literal descendants of one or more of the ancient Israelite tribes." To the question, "Who do you think are God's chosen people today?" 39 percent of Salt Lake City Mormons and 25 percent of San Francisco Mormons answered "the Latter-day Saints"exclusively. Another 32 percent in Utah and 25 percent in California were willing to include as "chosen" a few other categories such as Jews, Christians, and Americans, *along with* Mormons. Only about 20 percent in Utah and 40 percent in California responded with "none," "other," or "don't know" who are today's "chosen people." The nature and quantity of the survey data on which these figures are based have been described at some length in Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Chicago and Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), ch. 3 and the appendix.

[19]In the common Mormon and Christian view of the time, the gentile dispensation of the gospel ("the times of the Gentiles"), obtaining since the Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah, would soon be fulfilled by a new dispensation in which the gospel would go again to the House of Israel. For Mormons, this meant Lamanites as well as Jews and other Israelites. In that context, Mormons had originally understood themselves to be the Gentiles mentioned in the Book of Mormon as "nursing fathers and mothers" to the Lamanites. See the Book of Mormon title page, as well as 1 Nephi 21:22-23 and various subsequent cognate passages. As late as 1855, Orson Pratt (*Journal of Discourses* 9:178-79) envisioned this gentile role as one of assisting the Lamanites in building the New Jerusalem. Somewhat ambiguously, this idea of Anglo-Mormons as mainly Gentiles who had been merely adopted into the Israelite lineage, continued to exist in authoritative Mormon discourse alongside the claim to literal Ephraimite lineage.

the church leaders declared new resolutions, and made renewed missionary assignments to the various Indian peoples of the mountain west and southwest, but few proselytes endured. Much of the explanation for the limited success lies with the opposition experienced by the church from U.S. government Indian agents and from the missionary enterprises of other denominations. Yet it must be conceded that with rare and brief exceptions, it was the Indians themselves who showed but little interest in becoming either Lamanites or Mormons.[20]

After about 1870, most of the Indian peoples were confined by the government to reservations, and Mormons, like other Americans, saw less and less of them. Then with the assimilation of Mormons into the American mainstream after the turn of the century, succeeding generations of Mormons acquired essentially the same distorted and condescending view of the aboriginal peoples which all Americans saw in the cowboy "westerns" during most of the twentieth century. It was as though the Lamanites had returned to the pages of the Book of Mormon, and only the degraded and savage Indians remained in the Mormon consciousness. Even in the traditional "Indian Country" of the mountain states and plains states, Mormon missionaries began proselyting mainly in white communities, and no new Lamanite missions were initiated until the Navaho-Zuni (later Southwest Indian) Mission was established in 1943.

If the North American Indians had proved reluctant to see themselves as Lamanites, Mormons had long realized there were other potential Lamanites farther south. As missionary work bogged down among the tribes in the U.S., the church began making forays into Mexico, and the first enduring mission was established there in 1901. It took another twenty-five years to establish missions beyond Mexico in South America, and even then the missionaries began working primarily with the German and Italian immigrants of Brazil and Argentina.[21] Yet increasingly since the middle of the twentieth century, the growth of the church has been strong and consistent throughout Latin America, especially since World War II; and now more than a third of all Mormons are to be found in that part of the world. As that growth began to occur, church discourse began to refer less often to the Lamanite identity of the American Indian

---

[20]This generalization seems justified from Charles S. Peterson's *Take Up Your Mission: Mormon Colonizing along the Little Colorado, 1870-1900* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1973), and from Lawrence G. Coates's, "A History of Indian Education by the Mormons, 1830-1900" (Ed. D. diss., Ball State University, 1969). Chapter 3 of my forthcoming *All Abraham's Children* describes and documents in great detail the process and generally disappointing results of nineteenth-century Mormon missionary work among American Indians.

[21]See the chronological outline of various LDS mission openings, closings, and rearrangements in (e.g.) the *Deseret News 1991-1992 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1990), pages 225-42; see also Mark L. Grover, "Religious Accommodation in the Land of Racial Democracy: Mormon Priesthood and Black Brazilians," *Dialogue* 17, no. 3 (Autumn 1984): 23-34.

tribes, or indeed to refer to American Indians at all. Instead, the Lamanite identity was increasingly emphasized and broadened in reference to other peoples in the world where missionary success was more apparent, namely in Mexico, Latin America, and Polynesia.[22]

With scattered and periodic exceptions, one sees a long hiatus in the relationship between the LDS church and the American Indians until the middle of the twentieth century. Then, beginning in the 1940s and 1950s, a renewal of formal church programs for the Indians began, which was to be sustained for at least three decades.[23] However, this renewal does not seem to have resulted from deliberate organizational policy review and change so much as the response of the leadership to the initiatives of local and individual Mormons. What followed was a particularly interesting and felicitous convergence of biographical and organizational developments. Especially important was the career of Spencer W. Kimball, a devout and conscientious local leader in Arizona, long a sympathetic and humanitarian promoter of Indian causes in his region.[24] Elder Kimball became an apostle in 1943 and president of the church thirty years later. Very early in his apostleship, he was placed in charge of a new church agency called by various names, including the Lamanite Committee and the Indian Committee. From then on, the growth and fate of the LDS posture toward the American Indians was tied intimately to his career.[25]

While Elder Kimball was a key individual in a powerful position, he was by no means the only one responsible for the renewal of church commitment to the Indians. One of the most noteworthy programs was started at mid-century through the initiative of a local Arizona family, which heeded the pleadings of a Navaho girl for their help and sponsorship in

---

[22]See Gordon and Gary Shepherd, *A Kingdom Transformed: Themes in the Development of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984), 241, for calculations of changing frequency and saliency of references to Indians in church discourse across time, especially the dearth until 1950.

[23]Chapter 4 of my forthcoming *All Abraham's Children* provides a lengthy overview, with extensive documentation, of the renewed LDS commitment and special programs for Indians during the second half of the twentieth century

[24]President Kimball grew up with a father devoted to the well being of Indians. Andrew Kimball spent a dozen years, between the mid-1880s and the mid-1890s, as President of the Indian Territory Mission. See brief reference in Andrew Jenson, *Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Publishing Co., 1941), 360-61.

[25]See David J. Whittaker, "Mormons and Native Americans: A Historical and Bibliographic Introduction," *Dialogue* 18, no. 4 (1985): 38-40, for an overview of sources on new LDS initiatives toward Indians starting in the mid-twentieth century. The official church magazine *Ensign* devoted its entire December 1975 issue to a description of these various programs at what, in retrospect, must be considered the apex of the church commitment. On Elder Kimball's career to this point, see the biography by his sons, Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball, Jr., *Spencer W. Kimball: Twelfth President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977).

seeking a modern education. The eventual result was the massive Placement Program, in which Indian children—some as young as eight—with the (sometimes reluctant) permission of their parents, were placed with white LDS foster families during each school year. At its height in about 1970, the program placed 5,000 Indian children a year, many of whom returned each fall to the same family until graduation from high school. The white foster families were personally and financially responsible for all aspects of the lives of these Indian children. As one might imagine, this project in cross-cultural relationships produced situations ranging from the sublime to the comical to the tragic.[26]

There were other programs for the Indians in which the church invested enormous resources during this same period. One was the Indian Seminary Program. In Mormon parlance, "seminary" does not refer to professional theological education, since the church has no professional clergy. Rather, the term refers to a system of daily religious instruction for school children at the high school level. The U.S. government had set up a number of off-reservation boarding schools for Indian children, some of them in the Mountain West. The church was permitted to establish seminary programs in or near these boarding schools for Indian youngsters who were members of the church, although many non-member children participated as well. The object was to ensure that students received formal instruction in LDS doctrines, scriptures, and normative standards.[27]

Probably the most conspicuous and expensive church programs for Indians, however, were based at Brigham Young University. These were basically of two kinds: First, full scholarships were given to several hundred Indian students each year, combined with a variety of academic, social, and cultural support services to help the students adapt to the norms and expectations of the university while still retaining pride and identity in their own respective cultures. The second kind of BYU program was more in the nature of an off-campus extension program, like the international A.I.D. programs or the U.S. Peace Corps, in which experts were

---

[26]On the Indian Placement Program, see the following general descriptions, which combine factual and experiential data: James B. Allen, "The Rise and Decline of the LDS Indian Placement Program, 1947-1996," in *Mormons, Scripture, and the Ancient World*, ed. Davis Bitton (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1998) ch. 4; J. Neil Birch, "Helen John: The Beginnings of Indian Placement," *Dialogue* 18, no. 4 (1985): 119-29; T. J. Hangen, "A Place to Call Home: Studying the Indian Placement Program," *Dialogue* 30, no. 1 (1997): 53-69; and George P. Lee, *Silent Courage: An Indian Story* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987), esp. ch. 10. A professional evaluation of the program was published by Bruce A. Chadwick, Stan L. Albrecht, and Howard M. Bahr, "Evaluation of an Indian Student Placement Program," *Social Casework* 67 (November 1986), 515-24.

[27]Overviews of the seminary program for Indian children, while it lasted, will be found in Chris L. Jones, "Seminary for Six-Year Olds," *Ensign* (December 1975): 21-22; and less conveniently in Boyd K. Packer, "Manual of Policies and Procedures for the Administration of Indian Seminaries . . . ," Ed. D. diss., BYU, 1962.

sent under university auspices to Indian reservations and settlements in order to provide technical guidance and training in agriculture, range management, construction, and even social services for families or individuals troubled with alcohol abuse, conflict, or neglected children.[28]

During the heyday of these programs in the 1960s and 1970s, they fit well with the social and political environment of the period, not only in the church, where Elder Kimball's career was reaching its apex, but also in the American nation, which was undergoing a powerful civil rights movement aimed at lifting various disadvantaged minorities out of their social and economic deprivation. What the LDS church undertook in its own backyard for the Indian peoples might be understood as a uniquely Mormon parallel to the various programs and initiatives undertaken during that same period for black Americans by other denominations in major U.S. urban areas. There were also parallels in the various ways in which the intended beneficiary peoples responded to the proferred programs. Some Indians, like some blacks, held assimilationist aspirations, welcoming and appreciating the assistance and support of both church and government as indeed overdue. They were often objects of scorn, however, from the more militant and separatist movements within their own populations, who saw both the churches and government bureaucrats as undermining their cultural heritage and coopting their political momentum.[29] For this reason, and others which I

---

[28]A comprehensive study of the extensive and enduring commitment of BYU to the academic and technical education of Indians has yet to be published. An initial overview will be found in Ernest L. Wilkinson and Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young University: The First One Hundred Years* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1976), ch. 40. Also important, and much more candid, is V. Con Osborne, "An Appraisal of the Education Program for Native Americans at Brigham Young University, 1966-1974" (Ph. D. diss., University of Utah, 1975), which was later updated by an unpublished report by Osborne, "Indian Education at Brigham Young University, 1965-1985," prepared for BYU's Dean of Student Life, 1993, and located in the BYU archives. See also various brief articles in the December 1975 *Ensign* cited earlier

[29]The nation as a whole experienced a rise in Indian militancy during the early and middle 1970s, especially around the time of the siege and bloodshed at Wounded Knee. See Vine Deloria, *God is Red* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1973). Mormon programs, including the Placement Program, came in for their share of criticism as vehicles for destroying Indian culture, (e.g., Martin D. Topper, "Mormon Placement: The Effects of Missionary Foster Families on Navajo Adolescents," *Ethos* 7, no. 2 [1979]: 142-60), and Temple Square was sometimes picketed during LDS general conferences by the American Indian Movement or other Indian militants. See coverage of one such incident in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 9, 1973, A-3. For examples of church response, see the press release of Sunday, 8 April 1973, from Wendell J. Ashton (head of LDS Public Affairs) emphasizing the church resources which had been allocated to Indian causes in recent years. Publicity of a more general kind about the church's benign intentions and efforts where the "Lamanites" were concerned are exemplified in other articles of the same period in the *Ensign* for January, November, and December 1975, and in the *Church News* for February 16, throughout early April, and on November 16, 1974; March 1 and July 19, 1975; January 31, February 28, March 6, March 20, May 1, May 22, and May 29, 1976.

shall mention shortly, the mid-century renewal of a special LDS focus on American Indians did not survive the demise of Elder Kimball.

As for white Mormons in general, they seem to have retained a considerable ambivalence in their attitudes toward native Indians, if we judge from the survey data I collected from LDS populations in Logan, Utah, and Cardston, Alberta. This ambivalence no doubt reflects the cross-cutting influences of the Book of Mormon and of western U.S. history. That is, white Mormons who tended to think of the native peoples primarily as "Lamanites" also tended to hold more sympathetic attitudes toward them than did those regarding them primarily as "Indians."[30]

Africans, African-Americans, and the Cursed Lineage

The traditional LDS outlook on people of black African lineage is much more widely recognized and remarked upon, and other scholars, as well as I, have written extensively on the subject.[31] Accordingly, I will give it short shrift here. It is generally conceded by scholars that the Mormon prohibition against bestowing the lay priesthood on blacks did not originate with the founding prophet, Joseph Smith. A probable trend toward this prohibition can be discerned during the first few years after Smith's assassination, but the policy itself did not become official and public until it was announced by Brigham Young in Utah in 1852.[32]

---

[30]This ambivalence is discussed more extensively near the beginning of chapter 5 of my forthcoming *All Abraham's Children*, where I present data from crude but suggestive surveys of white Mormons in Logan, Utah, and in Cardston, Alberta. During a serious political dispute between the Blood Indians and the Canadian government in 1980, the white Mormon citizens of Cardston were generally put off by the Indian militancy, but those who regarded the Bloods as "Lamanites," rather than merely as "Indians," expressed somewhat more sympathy for their claims and tactics.

[31]The most thorough treatments are those by Newell G. Bringhurst, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks: The Changing Place of Black People within Mormonism* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981); Lester E. Bush, Jr., "A Commentary on Stephen G. Taggart's *Mormonism's Negro Policy*," *Dialogue* 4, no. 4 (Winter 1969): 86-103; Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview," *Dialogue* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1973): 11-68, reprinted vol. 34, no. 1 & 2 (Spring/Summer 2001): 225-293; and Bush, "Writing 'Mormonism's Negro Doctrine, An Historical Overview,' (1973): Context and Reflections, 1998," *Journal of Mormon History* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 229-71. See also Armand L. Mauss, "Mormonism and Secular Attitudes toward Negroes," *Pacific Sociological Review* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1966): 91-99; Mauss, "Mormonism and the Negro: Faith, Folklore, and Civil Rights," *Dialogue* 4, no. 4 (Winter 1967): 19-39; and Mauss, "The Fading of the Pharoah's Curse: The Decline and Fall of the Priesthood Ban against Blacks in the Mormon Church," *Dialogue* 14, no. 3 (Fall 1981): 10-45. The Bush and Mauss essays from *Dialogue* were volumized (along with a special introduction and conclusion) 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), now out of print.

[32]The ambiguities in Mormon ecclesiastical policy toward blacks seem to have hardened gradually after1844 into the formal prohibition declared by Brigham Young in 1852, a process described in the concluding essay in Bush and Mauss, eds., *Neither White nor Black*, 200-08. See also Bringhurst, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks*, 64-73.

According to the detailed historical account of Lester Bush, a tendency to deny the priesthood to people of black ancestry finally hardened into an actual church policy only after 1880, when Joseph Smith's Book of Moses and Book of Abraham had been canonized and thus became available for scriptural support of the policy, particularly with the inference of lineage assignment in pre-mortal life.[33] This was also the period which saw the fullest and most rapid embrace of British Israelism and Anglo-Saxon triumphalism in the construction of LDS lineage, as explained earlier. Racialist explanations for differential human conditions, increasingly common in both Europe and America, must have seemed all the more plausible in Utah with its northern European homogeneity, which lasted until at least the First World War. Even as late as the 1960s, my surveys of Mormons in Salt Lake City and San Francisco revealed a widespread popular acceptance of the traditional folklore about biblical marks and curses on descendants of Cain or Ham.[34]

If the United States itself, including all its institutions of government, maintained discriminatory policies toward its black citizens until after the second World War, it is not surprising that the priesthood policy of the Utah-based church, relatively isolated from the racial ferment in the rest of the country, did not change for another whole generation. I will briefly recount the process of this change later.[35]

The Lineage of Judah as a Special Case

Both before Joseph Smith's time and since, the gathering and return of the scattered Jews to Palestine has been considered an important preliminary and harbinger to the second coming of Jesus Christ, at least in Protestant Christianity. In Mormonism, as in other nineteenth-century denominations, there was some difference of opinion, and thus ambiguity, as to whether or not the return of the Jews would entail their conversion

---

[33]See Bush and Mauss, eds., *Neither White nor Black*, 208-09, and Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim," 153-56.

[34]For example, in the late 1960s, 52 percent of Salt Lake City Mormons and 33 percent of San Francisco Mormons accepted as "definitely" or "probably" true that "because of the wickedness of Cain and other forefathers of the Negroes, these people carry the mark of a black skin and the curse of perpetual inferiority." Large majorities of Mormons in both cities also believed "it is the will of God at present that the priesthood be withheld from Negroes" (which was, of course, official church policy at the time). These surveys are described in chapter 3 and in the appendix to Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*.

[35]In matters of secular, civil policies on race, Mormons in surveys expressed attitudes toward black rights which were actually no more discriminatory than those of most other Americans of the time. However, after the church changed its policy on the priesthood in 1978, average Mormon attitudes toward "racial justice" moved clearly to the liberal side of the spectrum. For early comparisons, see the introduction to Bush and Mauss, *Neither White nor Black*; Mauss, "Mormonism and Secular Attitudes toward Negroes" (1966); Mauss, "Mormonism and the Negro" (1967); and Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*, 51-54. For later comparisons, see the latter book, 152-54.

to Christianity—and, if so, whether that conversion would come before, during, or after the return. These questions were not resolved within Mormon teaching or discourse during Joseph Smith's time, although one sees in Mormon discourse from the beginning a strong philo-Semitic strain and a general rejection of anti-Semitism.

As Steven Epperson and Arnold Green have explained, the successors to Joseph Smith in LDS leadership have tended to divide into two camps on the Jewish question. One camp, following Brigham Young's ideas, expected the conversion of the Jews to be delayed until after their gathering in Palestine, but it was not an enthusiastic expectation. (One senses in Young's comments, at least, a pessimism about Jewish receptivity to the gospel message, if not outright anti-Semitism). However, the other camp, following Parley and Orson Pratt, embraced a more optimistic and universalistic position, holding, with the Apostle Paul, that the ancient covenant with Abraham was fulfilled in the Christian gospel, to which the truly devout Jews must now turn, along with all of humankind.[36]

Since Young was the president of the church until his death in 1877, his views tended to obtain in church proselyting policy. Accordingly, although a handful of Jews as individuals joined the church during the nineteenth century, no missions among the Jews were attempted until the twentieth century, and then only to American Jews and only spasmodically. Apostle Orson Hyde had been sent by Joseph Smith in 1841 to dedicate Palestine for the gathering and return of the Jews; but Hyde's dedicatory prayers (and those of subsequent LDS emissaries to the Holy Land) did not refer to the proselyting or conversion of the Jews, as have dedicatory prayers in other locations.[37] Furthermore, according to

---

[36]The most thorough explorations of the differences among early Mormon leaders on what should be done (if anything) about the conversion of the Jews will be found in Steven Epperson, *Mormons and Jews: Early Mormon Theologies of Israel* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), and in two long essays by Arnold H. Green, "Jews in LDS Thought," *BYU Studies* 34, no. 4 (1994-95): 137-64, and "Gathering and Election: Israelite Descent and Universalism in Mormon Discourse," *Journal of Mormon History* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 195-228. Epperson and Green both identify two distinct strains in Mormon thought and describe them similarly but not identically. Of necessity, I have greatly simplified the matter here, but I have evaluated the conceptualizations of Epperson and Green more thoroughly in chapter 6 of my forthcoming *All Abraham's Children*.

[37]On the significance of the dedicatory visits of Hyde and subsequent LDS leaders to Palestine, see Epperson, *Jews and Mormons*, 209; Green, "Jews in LDS Thought," 144; and David B. Galbraith, "Orson Hyde's 1841 Mission to the Holy Land," *Ensign* (October1991): 16-20. Mormons have never had a proselyting mission for Jews in the Middle East. However, intermittently between 1889 and 1950, there was a mission in the area focused mainly on other peoples, especially Christian Armenians. This mission was called by various names (e.g., Turkish and Near East), but produced very few durable converts. See accounts in Rao H. Lindsay, "The Dream of a Mormon Colony in the Near East," *Dialogue* 1, no. 4 (Winter 1966): 49-67; and Daniel C. Peterson, *Abraham Divided: An LDS Perspective on the Middle East* (Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1992), ch. 8.

Epperson, some of the early Mormon leaders seem to have hypothesized that the Jews had, as it were, a "side-deal" with God obviating the need for their formal conversion to Christianity before the end-times.[38]
After World War I, the pogroms of eastern Europe, and the Balfour Declaration, the prophesied return of the Jews to Palestine en masse seemed once again imminent to both Mormons and other Christians. Along with others, Mormons deplored the traditional treatment of the Jews, even while seeing their displacement as fulfillment of prophecy. As early as 1920, the president of the church issued warnings in general conference against anti-Semitism, and hopes ran high that the latest Jewish gathering would be accompanied by a new receptivity to the Christian (specifically LDS) gospel.[39] When church authority B. H. Roberts was appointed mission president over the eastern states in 1922, he recognized early that millions of Jews lived in New York and elsewhere in his jurisdiction. He gave special attention to his Jewish prospects and established collaborative relationships with a Jewish Christian group. He also wrote a book and a number of proselyting tracts packaging the Mormon message especially for Jews. This effort persisted until 1932 without producing any Jewish converts.[40]

A similar renewal of enthusiasm for potential Jewish conversions occurred after the formation of the state of Israel in 1948. This time the main champion of Jewish conversion was Apostle LeGrand Richards, who was given permission in the early 1950s to establish a number of "experimental" Jewish missions in several U.S. cities, especially Los Angeles. His book, *Israel, Do You Know?*, was a clarion call for Judah to join with Mormon Ephraim in preparing for the return of the Messiah, and a number of special proselyting plans for Jews were designed by LDS mission leaders in various cities. Once again, the effort lasted a decade or

---

[38]Epperson was severely criticized for taking this position in a review essay by Grant Underwood, "The Jews and their Future in Early LDS Doctrine," *BYU Studies* 34, no. 4 (1994-95): 110-24. All things considered, I find myself somewhat in sympathy with Epperson's view, but I agree that he exaggerated the extent of Jewish exceptionalism in the thinking of early Mormon leaders. A more recent and cursory review of LDS thinking on this matter also comes to the conclusion that Mormons generally have been inclined to leave in God's hands the schedule and arrangements for the ultimate conversion of the Jews to Christ (Keith E. Norman, "The Use and Abuse of Anti-Semitism in the Scriptures," *Dialogue* 32, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 167-79.

[39]Discussion of this renewed optimism about Jewish gathering and conversion are discussed, for example, in Green, "Gathering and Election," 214-19. In a well known 1921 general conference address, President Heber J. Grant deplored the anti-Semitic propaganda then circulating in the world and reminded his listeners that they must not take part in any anti-Semitic causes; for "in no part of the world is there as good a feeling in the hearts of mankind toward the Jewish people as among the Latter-day Saints" (*Conference Report*, April 1921, 124).

[40]Arnold H. Green, "A Survey of LDS Proselyting Efforts to the Jewish People," *BYU Studies* 8, no. 3 (Summer 1968): 427-43.

less with a very poor cost/benefit ratio. By 1960 the First Presidency abolished the special missions and directed that henceforth Jews were not to be given any special attention in proselyting. Since then, with the exception of a local mission president here or there, the LDS church has deliberately refrained from proselyting among Jews as a people.[41] Yet popular LDS conceptions about Jews, as revealed in my surveys in the 1960s, have always been remarkably free of anti-Semitism, despite a belief that Jews will eventually have to be converted.[42]

The Ascendancy of Mormon Universalism and the Erosion of Ethnic Consciousness

The final decades of the twentieth century brought a virtual end to the LDS focus on lineage and ethnicity in interpreting the spiritual histories and destinies of the various peoples of the earth. This focus has been displaced increasingly by the Pauline universalism that was also present in Mormonism from the beginning, and, of course, in New Testament Christianity all along. In symbolic terms, one might say that the blood of Christ has finally replaced the blood of Israel as the more important theological idea for Mormons and for others. This trend has paralleled the

---

[41]Ibid. Elder Richards had been an enthusiastic advocate for Jewish proselyting even before entering the ranks of the general authorities. His views and basic approach to this enterprise were set forth in his *Israel, Do You Know?* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954). Also, on the Richards campaign in particular, see the oral history interviews conducted by William G. Hartley with Rose Marie Reid during July and August 1973, especially the fourth one (Moyle Oral History Program, LDS Church Archives). With Elder Richards's encouragement and sponsorship, Ms. Reid (a prominent California swimsuit designer with extensive Jewish contacts) designed a process and series of lessons to be used by LDS missionaries in teaching Jews. The program was used extensively in southern California during the 1950s, as well as in Utah and elsewhere for awhile.

[42]During the 1960s, in surveys comparing San Francisco Bay Area Mormons with Catholics and Protestants in the same area, Mormons consistently had relatively low figures on rates of anti-Semitic attitudes and beliefs, based on measures created by Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark in their *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism* (New York: Harper, 1966). See also Armand L. Mauss, "Mormon Semitism and Anti-Semitism," *Sociological Analysis* 29, no. 1 (Spring 1968): 11-27. A more elaborate presentation of such data from Salt Lake City Mormons and San Francisco Mormons will be found in chapter 7 of my forthcoming *All Abraham's Children*. See also the lengthy historical overview of Mormon-Jewish relationships by Rudolf Glanz, *Jew and Mormon: Historic Group Relations and Religious Outlooks* (New York: Waldon Press, 1963). Jews who have written of associations with Mormons also report little evidence of anti-Semitism in their personal experiences. See, e. g., Seymour Cain, "Mormons and Jews," *Midstream* 39 (October 1993): 31; Jack Goodman, "Jews in Zion," in *The Peoples of Utah*, ed. Helen Z. Papanikolas (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1976) ch. 5; Steve Siporin, "A Jew among the Mormons," *Dialogue* 24, no. 4 (Winter 1991): 113-22; and Louis C. Zucker, "A Jew in Zion: Memories of Half a Century in Utah," *Sunstone* 6, no. 5 (Sept./Oct. 1981): 35-44. For a less glowing view of life among the Mormons, see Hanna Bandes, "Gentile and Gentile: Mormon and Jew," *Midstream* 27 (February 1981): 7-12.

effort to eliminate racial discrimination in the U.S., the home base of Mormonism. Yet it would be a gross oversimplification to see this trend as merely a Mormon effort to achieve political correctness on the American political scene. At least as important as politics have been the practical experience and differential success of the church in its own proselyting programs.

Relationships with Jews

If we look, for example, at recent Mormon relationships with Jews, they have taken the form not of proselyting but of searching for common ground and common interests. Mormons have always favored Zionism in Palestine, although in recent years with a more balanced appreciation for Palestinian rights and aspirations. In the earliest years after the establishment of the new state of Israel in 1948, comments by Mormon leaders, whether in public or in private, revealed a strong pro-Israel sentiment, based primarily on their inherited religious eschatology about the significance of the return of the Jews to the Holy Land. Also, in common with other Americans, most Mormons tended to approve of the new state as an entitlement for Jews in the wake of the holocaust experience, and to see the resistance by Palestinians and certain Arab states as illegitimate in the face of both divine and U.N. mandates. Later in the century, however, as the power and prosperity of the state of Israel made it seem much less the underdog in the region, Mormons seemed increasingly to have separated opinions about the state of Israel from their favorable feelings toward Jews more generally. By the end of the century, Mormon leaders and members had adopted a more balanced perspective on Israeli conflicts with the Palestinians.[43]

---

[43] Evidence for a Mormon outreach toward the Arab world, and Palestine in particular, can be seen at both the scholarly and the political levels. See, for example, the collection in Spencer J. Palmer, ed., *Mormons and Muslims: Spiritual Foundations and Modern Manifestations* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, BYU, 1983); and Daniel C. Peterson, *Abraham Divided* (cited above). Important articles with more official church status would include Camille Fronk and Ray L. Huntington, "The Palestine Refugee Family Study," *Newsletter of the BYU Religious Studies Center* 12, no. 3 (May 1998): 1-4; Howard W. Hunter, "All Are Alike unto God," *Ensign* (June 1979): 72-74; James B. Mayfield, "Ishmael, Our Brother," *Ensign* (June 1979): 24-32; Herbert F. Murray, "Arab-Israeli Conflict," *Ensign* (January 1971): 21-23; and D. Kelly Ogden and David B. Galbraith, response in the "I Have a Question" section of the *Ensign* (September 1993): 52-53, to the query, "What are the reasons behind the long-standing conflicts in the Holy Land, and how should Latter-day Saints view such conflicts?" In all these articles, readers are admonished not to take sides in the Arab-Israeli conflicts, since both sides have legitimate aspirations and grievances. The same theme was emphasized in a 1986 lecture series by David B. Galbraith, then about to become director of the LDS Jerusalem Center (*Salt Lake Tribune*, Saturday, August 23, 1986, 2B). Indeed, some Jewish commentators have found the modern Mormon posture toward Israel a little *too* balanced. See Moshe Dann, "The Mormon Church, Israel, and the Arabs," *Midstream* 33 (May 1987): 10-11.

In their relationships with Israelis and with Jews throughout the world, Mormons seem to have come to the realization, however reluctantly, that prospects for the conversion of Jews in any appreciable numbers are extremely remote for the foreseeable future. Of course, theologically and theoretically, Mormon leaders still expect that sooner or later "every knee must bow and every tongue confess" that Jesus is the Christ, and that includes the Jews. However, it is doubtful that any Mormon leader today would expect such a spiritual consummation of the world's history to be imminent. Meanwhile, perhaps in preparation for that wondrous day, church leaders obviously consider it important for Mormons and Jews to build amicable relationships of the kind which (for example) have made possible the establishment of the Hyde Memorial Garden and the BYU Center in Jerusalem (on condition, incidentally, of no Mormon proselyting).[44] The same strategy can be seen at the scholarly level in the sympathetic commemoration at BYU of the Holocaust experience and in the collaboration between BYU and Israeli academics in preserving and promoting study of the Dead Sea Scrolls.[45]

However, perhaps no incident so well typifies the new Mormon sensitivity to the Jewish religious heritage as the rapid response of LDS leaders in 1995 to Jewish complaints about the vicarious temple baptisms

---

[44]On the establishment and purposes of the Hyde Memorial Garden (dedicated in October 1979) and the more controversial BYU Jerusalem Center (opened in 1987), see Daniel C. Peterson, *Abraham Divided*, 343-53; "BYU President Defends School's Jerusalem Center," *Ensign* (October 1985): 73-74 (news item, no author); Dan Fisher, "Mormon Issue Splits Israelis into Two Camps," *Los Angeles Times*, February 25, 1986, p.1; Thomas A. Indianopulos, "Mormon-Jewish Turmoil in Zion," *Christian Century* 102 (December 1985): 1123-26; and Teddy Kollek, "Reflections on Howard W. Hunter in Jerusalem," *BYU Studies* 34, no. 4 (1994-95): 6-15. The most knowledgeable figure on relations between Mormons and Israelis during the 1970s and 1980s is probably David B. Galbraith, who lived in Israel beginning in 1969 and, from 1979 on, served as district president over the three small LDS branches in that country. He was obviously a key participant in the negotiations which eventually permitted the church to establish the Garden and the Center in Jerusalem. A 1984 interview with Galbraith in Jerusalem by a visiting student from California will be found as part of the Moyle Oral History collection in the LDS Church Archives.

[45]For example, a fiftieth commemorative "Scholars Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches" was held at BYU in early March 1995, and featured as keynote speaker, Mr. Tom Lantos (D-California), a non-Mormon Hungarian Jew and Holocaust survivor, as well as a number of others being honored at the conference for their work in Holocaust research, museums, films, and other aspects. One of the organizers of the conference was Douglas F. Tobler, a BYU German Language professor and former LDS mission president in Germany. See Tobler's "The Jews, the Mormons, and the Holocaust," *Journal of Mormon History* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 59-92. The collaborative work on ancient documents, with scholars in Israel and Palestine, has taken place largely under the auspices of BYU's Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), which in 1997 established a special Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts. FARMS and this center have produced a number of publications and videos on their work with the Dead Sea Scrolls and other ancient documents. See any recent FARMS catalogue for more information.

of deceased Holocaust victims. In a gesture rich with both symbolic and political significance, the church halted all such Jewish baptisms, even though they would have had no spiritual or theological efficacy except to Mormons themselves. In light of this incident, one might be tempted to conclude that the Mormons have given up (at least temporarily) on efforts to convert even those Jews who have departed to the next world. [46]

The Changing Church Posture toward Blacks

The policy change toward Africans and African Americans in 1978 is at least as interesting a story as how the original policy was instituted in the first place. I have recounted these events in detail elsewhere, while others have also offered parts of the explanation.[47] Outside observers have tended to seek the explanation for change in external political pressure or in church sensitivity to public image; such influences cannot be discounted but should not be exaggerated. Again, the explanation for change is best understood in light of the church's own imperatives, particularly its growth-oriented pragmatism.[48] Two episodes, in particular, were influential in driving home to LDS leaders the potential of their traditional ideas about race and lineage to undermine their aspirations for a worldwide Mormon presence. The first of these episodes occurred in the early 1960s: A very promising opportunity for Mormon expansion into West Africa had to be aborted when the Nigerian government refused entry to Mormon missionaries because of the church's policies and teachings about people of black African ancestry. The church leadership came close to a consensus on policy change shortly thereafter, and again just six years later, but in both cases the consensus broke down at the last minute.[49]

It was the second episode which finally precipitated the change. This was the decision, again largely on the initiative of President Spencer W. Kimball, to build a Mormon temple in Brazil, a country with

---

[46]However, by agreement with the several Jewish organizations involved, LDS members are still permitted to do vicarious temple ordinances for Jews who happen to be their own direct ancestors. See the press coverage of this development in late April and early May 1995, e.g., Kristen Moulton (Associated Press), "Mormons to Stop Baptizing Dead Holocaust Victims," *Ogden (Utah) Standard-Examiner*, April 29, 1995, 1B-2B, and (same title, longer article) in the *Moscow (Idaho) Daily News*, Weekend, April 29-30, 1995, 5A.

[47]See Mauss, "Fading of the Pharoah's Curse" (1981) and Bush, "Writing 'Mormonism's Negro Doctrine.'"

[48]In this I have disagreed with others who tend to see such changes in church policy primarily as responses to external pressure from politics or the mass media. See O. Kendall White and Daryl White, "Abandoning an Unpopular Policy: An Analysis of the Decision Granting the Mormon Priesthood to Blacks," *Sociological Analysis* 41 (Fall 1980): 231-45, and our subsequent exchange in the pages of the same journal, 42 (Fall 1981): 277-83 and 283-88.

[49]Mauss, "Fading of the Pharoah's Curse," 14-19; Bush, "Writing 'Mormonism's Negro Doctrine,'" 233-44.

an especially large contingent of African ancestry. Despite a discriminatory policy toward people of that ancestry, the growth of the church in Brazil had been so rapid by 1974 that a temple was overdue by usual church criteria. The problem, of course, was that priesthood access is a condition for participation in Mormon temple rituals. Thus, on the one hand, Brazil was ready for a temple; on the other hand, however, the church faced the prospect of having to deny temple entry to a large proportion of its Brazilian converts, many of whom, indeed, would have contributed their time, energy, and treasure to its construction. Just weeks before the temple was completed in 1978, President Kimball, in an inspiring combination of spiritual and political astuteness, brought his colleagues in the leadership to an acceptance of his own understanding of God's will in the matter. The important contribution of the missionary effort in Brazil, and of the converts there, in bringing about the policy change is the subject of a paper by Mark Grover.[50]

Although the policy of priesthood restriction was changed a quarter century ago, there remains a strong residue, at least among North American Mormons, of the theological folklore traditionally used to justify that policy, and which I found especially strong in my surveys of the 1960s.[51] This racist folklore continues to appear in the latest editions of widely purchased books written by earlier Mormon leaders, and in the grassroots "explanations" sometimes offered by lifelong Mormons when they are asked about the erstwhile church policy toward blacks.[52] As long as that folklore lingers in the popular Mormon grapevine, it will continue to offend converts and potential converts of African ancestry. While the current president of the church has publicly indicated that he sees no necessity for formally repudiating doctrines which are obviously obsolete,

---

[50]Ibid., pp. 24-27 (Mauss) and pp. 265-70 (Bush). See also Bush's concluding essay in *Neither White nor Black*, 208-14; and Mark L. Grover, "Religious Accommodation in the Land of Racial Democracy."

[51]The surveys in question, and the racial folklore they revealed, are described in an earlier note. In addition, see comparisons of Mormons with others in tendencies to accept various racial myths of a more social kind (e.g. "Negro intelligence"), esp. 51-53 in my *Angel and Beehive*. See also the concluding chapters of my forthcoming *All Abraham's Children* for changes across time in survey results comparing Mormons with others on race attitudes and policies.

[52]Bruce R. McConkie's *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966) is a widely consulted "classic" in Mormon homes, despite never having received official endorsement. Even after a slightly revised 1979 paperback version, it continues to contain various references tying divine approval to ostensibly racial characteristics. See, for example, the entries on Negroes, Cain, Ham, Pre-existence, Priesthood, and Races of Men. Most of the material on these subjects comes from the earlier teachings of McConkie's father-in-law and late church president, Joseph Fielding Smith in *The Way to Perfection* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1931), especially chapters 7, 15, and 16, also still in print and easily available to church members. The problems created for the church by the perpetuation of such literature are discussed at some length by Richard N. and Joan K. Ostling in *Mormon America: The Power and the Promise* (New York: Harper Collins, 1999), ch. 6.

some of his younger colleagues in the leadership share the view that whether or not it is obsolete, racist folklore from the past can continue to undermine the prospects for church growth until it is formally and publicly repudiated.[53] Such folklore, of course, has always been primarily a European and Euro-American preoccupation, so it does not seem to have restrained Mormon growth among black populations in Africa, in the Caribbean, or in Latin America. However, Mormon growth among black Americans has been very slow, and retention has been relatively poor, a predicament likely attributable, at least in part, to the persistence of racist folklore at the Mormon grassroots in the U.S.[54]

The New Lamanites

An important line of argument in this paper has been that traditional Mormon teachings about lineage-as-destiny have proved operationally flexible in light of church experience with conversion and retention in various parts of the world. In the case of African lineage, the divine curse was removed as missionary prospects became increasingly important in Africa and in Latin America. In the case of the Jews, who have proved consistently impervious to Mormon (and other Christian) conversion efforts, the church has retained its belief in the divine destiny of the lineage of Judah but has left their conversion to God's own timetable and special arrangements, sensing the wisdom of maintaining good relationships between Judah and Ephraim. As for the Israelite lineage of the natives of the western hemisphere, we can see a gradual shift in the operational definition of that lineage from north to south as church growth has bogged down among the Indians of North America and (by contrast) mushroomed in Latin America.

By the time of President Kimball's death in 1985, the special LDS missions for North American Indians were already being reorganized and assimilated into the regular missions of the church for all citizens of the various states and provinces.[55] The same was true of the special

---

[53]One attempt in 1998 by a prominent general authority to get official, public repudiation of the LDS legacy of such racial folklore is recounted by Ostling and Ostling, *Mormon America*, 103-05.

[54]Ibid., 105-06. See also Jessie L. Embry, *Black Saints in a White Church: Contemporary African-American Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), and "Separate but Equal? Black Branches, Genesis Groups, or Integrated Wards?" *Dialogue* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 11-37; also Cardell K. Jacobson, "Black Mormons in the 1980s: Pioneers in a White Church," *Review of Religious Research* 33 (December 1991): 146-52; and O. Kendall White and Daryl White, "Integrating Religious and Racial Identities: An Analysis of LDS African-American Explanations of the Priesthood Ban," *Review of Religious Research* 36 (March 1995): 295-311.

[55]For example, in July, 1984, the Navajo-Zuni Mission was transferred to the Arizona Phoenix Mission; this was also the general pattern for the few other missions established mainly for Indians in the twentieth century.

seminaries for the religious instruction of Indian youth and the placement program for reservation school children with white families during each school year.[56] Perhaps most conspicuously, the special programs at BYU for Indian scholarships, Indian instructional support, and other forms of special focus on the needs of Lamanites were closed down or transferred to private agencies.[57] While a variety of reasons for this decline in Lamanite emphasis might be offered, it seems clear that the main explanation is to be found, once again, in a cost/benefit analysis of such a use of church resources.

While not obvious at the time, the death knell of these special programs was probably sounded by Elder Boyd K. Packer during a 1979 speech to an assembly of BYU Indian students. While couched in diplomatic language, Elder Packer's remarks were unmistakable in their purport. In effect, he made a number of comparisons between the Lamanites of North America and those of South America, chastising the former (represented in the assembly before him) for a general failure to live up to the hopes and expectations which the church had placed in them during an entire generation of special programs. He charged, in effect, that they had not used their special educational advantages to serve the church as missionaries and leaders among other Lamanites, and had not even remained very faithful to the LDS way of life. Some of what he criticized them for (including their seeming reluctance to accept organizational leadership and to conduct meetings) could be understood as tribal cultural traits, indicating simply an incomplete assimilation to white ways. In any case, as Elder Packer said, "If it sounds like I'm scolding you. . .it will be because I am."[58]

Probably more than anyone realized, Elder Packer's remarks on that occasion also signaled a redefinition of Lamanite lineage, operationally if not ideologically, such that the main stronghold of that lineage was to be found now in Latin America and in Polynesia, not on the Indian reservations of the U.S. or Canada. There is no question that Joseph Smith and the entire founding generation of Mormons believed that the Indians of North America were the Lamanites of the Book of Mormon. They certainly recognized that the aboriginal peoples of Latin America might also

---

[56]Beginning in 1980, seminary classes for Indian youngsters were integrated into the general high school seminary program of the church. The foster Placement Program was closed down more gradually, but it had died a natural death for all practical purposes before the end of the century (James Allen, "Rise and Decline," 107-10).

[57]See Osborne, "Indian Education at BYU,"and its appendices; and chapter 4 of my forthcoming *All Abraham's Children*.

[58]Elder Boyd K. Packer, "Indian Week Speaker, February, 1979" (unpublished draft in BYU Archives and copy in my files). The speech was published in the next issue of the Indian student newspaper, *Eagle's Eye*.

be Lamanites, and they saw an intimation from a brief passage in the Book of Mormon that at least some Polynesians might also be included (Alma 63:5-8). Yet nineteenth-century Mormons searched almost exclusively in North America for the Lamanites who, in prophecy, were to join with them in building a new Zion in America.[59]

Despite very hard going for more than a century, the LDS church periodically launched one special initiative or program after another to fulfill its God-given responsibility to these "benighted peoples of destiny." In terms of the sheer number of conversions on record, these efforts were certainly not negligible: By 1980, there were more than 60,000 American Indians on church membership records, constituting five percent of the total North American Indian population (more than twice the percentage for white Americans). Yet, among these thousands, relatively few have married within the faith and established Mormon families or embraced normative Mormonism in the conduct of their lives. Accordingly, relatively few can be brought into organizational leadership, where they can be bishops or stake presidents and thus promote the growth of the church from within their own cultures.[60]

The contrast with Mormon converts in Latin America is dramatic. More than a third of the entire population of the LDS church now lives in that part of the hemisphere. The local and regional leadership and much of the missionary work are in the hands of the native members, including many of aboriginal or mixed ancestry. The same has been true in most of Polynesia, where in some cases the LDS percentage of the

---

[59]LDS aspirations and missionary work among the Lamanites were focused mostly on North American Indians throughout the nineteenth century. The main exceptions were a brief missionary presence across the Arizona border into Mexico late in the century, a brief and abortive foray into Chile by Parley P. Pratt in 1852, and a durable mission in Hawaii after about 1860.

[60]Estimates of the LDS Indian population, and of the number and strength of Indian branches at their height, can vary greatly depending on how much of North America is included, and on whether the count includes branches in stakes, as well as in missions. Figures provided me in 1975 by Stewart Durrant, coordinator of Minority Affairs (as the "Lamanite Committee" head was then called) estimated the LDS Lamanite population in the U. S. and Canada at 61,000 (not counting Latin America or Polynesia), or about 4.5 percent of the total American Indian population. One 1981 estimate put the figure at 40,000 among the Navajos alone, or about 20 percent of that tribal population (Steve Pavlik, "Of Saints and Lamanites: An Analysis of Navajo Mormonism," *Wicazo Sa Review* 8, no. 1 [Spring 1992]: 21). Enormous cultural differences underlie the frustrations which white Mormon leaders and missionaries have always felt in trying to get Indian members to participate actively and permanently in LDS church life. Certainly this frustration is apparent in the "scolding" of Elder Packer (mentioned above) as well as in various accounts of experienced white Mormon leaders in the field. See, e. g., Michael Fillerup, "Hozhoogoo Nanina Doo," *Dialogue* 18, no. 4 (Winter 1985): 153-82, and the final pages of chapter 4 in my forthcoming *All Abraham's Children*.

population approaches half.[61] Accordingly, some in the church have begun in recent years to wonder if it is in these countries where the real Lamanites may be found. However, this issue has not been addressed in any formal way by the church leadership itself, whose concerns are far more pragmatic—namely the conversion and retention of members, in whatever manner their lineage might be constructed in spiritual or theological terms. Precisely locating the true Israelites (or Lamanites) of the Americas has always been of more interest to Mormon academics and intellectual apologists than to the ecclesiastical leaders.[62]

At the turn of the twentieth century, the first expedition in search of the ancient cities of the Book of Mormon was led to Mexico by Benjamin C. Cluff, president of BYU. The expedition was an expensive and embarrassing debacle, and no similar enterprise was undertaken for half a century.[63] Then, in the 1950s, a group of BYU-based Mormon archaeologists, some amateurs and some professionals, formed the New World Archaeological Foundation (NWAF), backed in large part by church funds, and began again to search in Latin America for archaeological evidence which might authenticate the Book of Mormon scientifically. This effort, which lasted a decade or so, was more sophisticated than the earlier one but scarcely more successful. It was unlikely, in any case, that the scientific world outside of Mormonism would have placed much credence in the discoveries of Mormon apologists, however careful and successful their work might have seemed to insiders.[64]

---

[61]By the end of the twentieth century, LDS church membership had reached one million in Mexico alone, and four million in Latin America altogether. See *Deseret News 1997-1998 Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1996), 355. The first durable missionary presence of Mormons in Polynesia dates from the 1860s in Hawaii (then called "Sandwich Islands"). Earlier missionary forays had been tried and abandoned after a few years in both the Sandwich Islands and in the Society Islands (Tahiti). Since about 1890, Mormon missionary success throughout Polynesia has been remarkable, with Mormons now comprising large percentages of the total populations of Hawaii, Tahiti, Tonga, Samoa, Maori New Zealand, and other Polynesian islands. By the end of the twentieth century, Mormon membership in Polynesia and Oceania exceeded 100,000 (See *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* [New York: Macmillan Co., 1992] especially "Oceania," 1022-26, and "Polynesians," 1110-12).

[62]LDS history scholar Kenneth W. Godfrey, as part of an article on quite a different topic, points out (with several examples) that church leaders, past and present, have had various ideas on where the Book of Mormon story took place, but they have not "discourage[d] students and scholars in their studies regarding Book of Mormon geography." See Godfrey's "What is the Significance of Zelph in the Study of Book of Mormon Geography?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8, no. 2 (1999): 70-79.

[63]For a lively account of the Cluff expedition, see Samuel W. Taylor's *Rocky Mountain Empire: The Latter-day Saints Today* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1978), ch. 11, and more briefly Gary James Bergera and Ronald Priddis, *Brigham Young University: A House of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 10-12.

[64]The decline, and then resurgence, of church interest in the study of the Book of Mormon is documented and explained by Noel B. Reynolds in "The Coming Forth of the Book

The most recent academic approach under church auspices to the study of the Book of Mormon and its ostensible Israelite protagonists can be found in the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), organized two decades ago as a private foundation but recently brought under BYU administration. FARMS sponsors and promotes all kinds of research on ancient scriptures and documents, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, but its main focus is on the Book of Mormon as an authentic ancient book of scripture. Its approach is much more cautious and realistic than the earlier efforts. For one thing, while FARMS reprints (with permission) relevant archaeological literature on pre-Columbian migrations to America as published by non-Mormon experts, it does not do any archaeological research of its own. Rather, its research on the Book of Mormon is primarily of a literary and philological kind, which is far less subject to debunking than was the earlier archaelogical research.[65]

For our purposes, the most important feature of the FARMS publications is their apparent consensus regarding the proposition that the Book of Mormon story all took place within a radius of about 500 miles in the Yucatan area of Mexico and Guatemala.[66] Therefore, if there are any survivors of that ancient Israelite or Lamanite people, they are probably located in that area rather than on the Indian reservations of

---

of Mormon in the Twentieth Century," *BYU Studies* 38, no. 2 (1999): 7-47. On pp. 17-18, Reynolds identifies the most important mid-century scholars in Book of Mormon studies, including Sidney Sperry, Hugh Nibley, Francis Kirkham, Wells Jakeman, Ross Christensen, and John Sorenson. In the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (172), H. Donl Peterson adds the names Milton R. Hunter and Thomas S. Ferguson. Hunter, like B. H. Roberts earlier, represents a rare case of direct involvement in such scholarly enterprises by a general authority of the church. The NWAF continued to function to some extent throughout the rest of the century. See W. K. Howell, D. Ranae, and E. Copeland, *Papers of the New World Archaeological Foundation* (Provo, Utah: NWAF, BYU, 1959-95). Ferguson's own career and eventual disillusionment with the work of the NWAF (and with Book of Mormon claims more generally) is recounted in Stan Larson, *Quest for the Gold Plates: Thomas Stuart Ferguson's Search for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Smith Research Associates, 1996).

[65]This is a very limited description of the work of FARMS, but for more information see Reynolds, "Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," 37-40, and his "Shedding New Light on Ancient Origins: Scholars Illuminate Book of Mormon Authorship," *Brigham Young University Magazine* (alumni publication), Spring 1998, 38-45. The various projects and publications of FARMS are listed in an annual catalogue and in its monthly newsletter *Insights*. In chapter 5 of my forthcoming *All Abraham's Children* I consider the work and significance of FARMS at much greater length as part of my discussion of the ongoing redefinition of "Lamanite" identity.

[66]This is the underlying thesis of an important book by BYU anthropologist John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient Setting for the Book of Mormon Story* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., and Provo: FARMS, 1985). The thesis is implicitly embraced in the quasi-official *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (208) in an article by Stephen D. Ricks, "Book of Mormon Studies." Like most of the authors commissioned to write on the Book of Mormon for the *Encyclopedia*, Ricks has been closely associated with FARMS.

North America. The success of Mormon missionary work in that area during the past generation has lent credence to that supposition. It is important to emphasize again that there has been no new determination or pronouncement from church leadership as to where today's Lamanites might or might not be located. Yet it seems reasonable to see FARMS, with its BYU auspices, as the source of a new quasi-official definition of Lamanite lineage, which definition would make more understandable both the rapid recent growth of Mormonism in Meso-America and the relative stagnation of such growth in North America.[67]

It is unlikely that church leadership will ever make any official statements on this matter, for one of the interesting side-stories in this process concerns the tendency of various native converts to become invested in their own definition as the true Israelites, in contradistinction to the merely "grafted" Israelites of Anglo-Mormonism. This tendency contributed to the recent falling out between church leadership and Elder George P. Lee, the only Native American Indian ever to serve in the ranks of the general authorities before his excommunication a decade ago.[68] The same tendency contributed to a major schism among Mexican Mormons in the 1930s, while even today there are leading Mormons in Mexico whose public discourse reveals a devout belief in their Israelite and Lamanite heritage. Thomas W. Murphy has discovered this same construction of Israelite identity among Mormons in Guatemala.[69] In any case, we see here again an interesting relationship (going both ways) between the identification of Israelite lineage and prospects for church growth.[70]

---

[67]FARMS and Sorenson have especially favored Mayan sites, lore, and surviving artifacts in their work on likely candidates for ancient Book of Mormon locations, as will be apparent from a perusal of back-issues of *Insights* and of the FARMS catalogue.

[68]Lee's fall from grace and eventual excommunication were described in many Utah newspapers during September 1989, and his grievances were laid out in an article and two long letters published in *Sunstone* 13 (August 1989), "The Lee Letters,"47-55. His autobiography, *Silent Courage: An Indian Story* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987), published only two years earlier, heavily muted the frustrations he was already feeling.

[69]On the Third Convention, and the role therein particularly of Elder Margarito Bautista, see F. LaMond Tullis, *Mormons in Mexico: The Dynamics of Faith and Culture* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1987), chs. 5 and 6. On the uses of Lamanite/Israelite identity by Mexican and other Mormons in recent years, see Thomas W. Murphy, "From Racist Stereotype to Ethnic Identity: Instrumental Uses of Mormon Racial Doctrine," *Ethnohistory* 46, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 451-80; and "Other Mormon Histories: Lamanite Subjectivity in Mexico," *Journal of Mormon History* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 179-214.

[70]Other examples could also be adduced. The integration of imported Mormonism with Maori lore has contributed to the strengthening of both kinds of identity in New Zealand. See Grant Underwood, "Mormonism, the Maori, and Cultural Authenticity," *Journal of Pacific History* 35, no. 2 (September 2000): 133-46.

The Universalization of Israelite Lineage

I return, finally, to the nineteenth-century Mormon "search for Ephraim" discussed earlier in this paper. I have argued that across time Mormons have attached changing differential spiritual significance to the African, Jewish, and AmerIndian lineages, depending largely on the missionary imperative and its prospects. What about the Anglo-Saxon and northern European Mormons, with their constructions of their own lineage as Israelite (and specifically Ephraimite)? Here again, we can see a definite tendency during the twentieth century in the discourse of church leaders to drop the earlier glorification of their own European lineage in favor of a universal appeal to the world's peoples. This process seems to have proceeded in stages.

The first stage was the decline in church growth and missionary prospects in northern Europe, which had been regarded as the homeland of the superior Germanic and Israelite breeds led there anciently by providence or destiny or both. Part of this decline was attributable, of course, to large-scale migration of Mormon converts from that part of the world to Utah. Yet, after about 1870, conversion rates in the northern European countries no longer replaced the departing converts, and some church leaders remarked publicly that perhaps the harvest of Israelite descendants had been completed there, with only gleaning left to do.[71]

Meanwhile, as the second stage in the process of universalization, the blood of Israel began to be discovered in various other parts of the world. I have already commented on the successes in Polynesia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Besides there and in Latin America, missions were opened in eastern Europe, white South Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. To all these regions, church leaders and mission presidents made visits and tours, returning to Utah to proclaim that the blood of Israel was to be found in all such climes.[72] Even after the Japan Mission closed in 1924 for lack of results, the mission president returned to testify in general conference that the blood of Israel had reached that country from ancient migrations out of the Middle East.[73] In effect, these traveling church leaders became advocates

---

[71]When missionary success tapered off in northwestern Europe, lineage theory again provided an explanation: The blood of Israel had already been successfully gathered there. (See, e. g., Franklin D. Richards, *Conference Report*, October 1898, 33.) On the downturn in Mormon missionary harvests in the British Isles after 1870, see Frederick S. Buchanan, "The Ebb and Flow of Mormonism in Scotland, 1840-1900," *BYU Studies* 27, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 27-52; and Bruce A. Van Orden, "The Decline in Convert Baptisms and Member Emigration from the British Mission after 1870," same journal issue, 97-105.

[72]See Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim," 166-67, for discussions in official LDS discourse about the "blood of Israel" in various parts of the world, especially in the period after the ebbing of baptismal rates in northwestern Europe.

[73]Lloyd O. Ivie, *Conference Report*, April 1926, 96.

for the presence of Israelite lineages in the countries in which they visited and labored.

As a third stage in this process, one might see a gradual evolution in the understanding of lineage assignment during patriarchal blessings. In this rather unique LDS institution, church members may apply for blessings at the hands of specially designated patriarchs in each stake. These blessings are understood by Mormons as divinely inspired statements of guidance and admonition to each individual, outlining his or her potential for spiritual and other growth and accomplishment, contingent upon faithfulness to the gospel. A regular feature of the patriarchal blessing since the 1840s, at least, has been the declaration of lineage, in which the patriarch designates the individual's genealogical descent, usually from one of the ancient tribes of Israel, and almost universally from the tribe of Ephraim. Until recent decades, this lineage assignment was understood in literal terms—that is, the patriarch, by divine insight, was revealing the individual's actual genealogy.[74]

However, in more recent years different patriarchs have come to different understandings of lineage assignment, not always literal. I have held informal conversations about this issue with dozens of stake patriarchs in recent years and have found many who take the reference to lineage literally in their blessings but many others who offer a more symbolic or even administrative understanding of the matter. The 1992 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* explains that it does not matter whether the lineage mentioned is literal, for it is essentially the "line and legacy through which one's blessings are transmitted."[75] Obviously, the recent ambiguity in the significance of this lineage declaration, intended or not, has had the effect of de-emphasizing the importance of literal lineage, thereby supporting the more general trend toward universalizing access to the Abrahamic covenant irrespective of literal lineage.

The final stage in this universalization process has been the disappearance from the discourse of church leaders of virtually all references to the significance of lineage, whether cursed or favored. With sixty thousand Mormon missionaries now in most countries of the earth, the opposite message is now declared from LDS pulpits, as it was by Paul of old. The emphasis is now upon the common blood and origin of all people as children of the same God. The late President Howard W. Hunter declared, for example, that "race makes no difference; color makes no difference; nationality makes no difference;. . .we are all of one blood and

---

[74]See the note above, early in this essay, on lineage indications in the patriarchal blessings of the 1830s and 1840s.

[75]See the discussion in Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim,"168-69, of the changing understandings about lineage assignment in patriarchal blessings. See also entries in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* on "Patriarchal Blessings" by William J. Mortimer (3:1066-67) and on "Stake Patriarch" by Ariel S. Ballif (3:1064-65).

the literal spirit offspring of our Heavenly Father"; and that the gospel stands "squarely against all stifling traditions based on race, language, and. . .cultural background."[76] More recently, James E. Faust, of the First Presidency, observed that in his experience "no race or class seems superior to any other in spirituality and faithfulness."[77]

Concluding Observation

Religious communities, like societies more generally, sometimes rise above the historic realities of a given time and place to promulgate ideals sublime in conception but which can be fulfilled only gradually. So it has been, for example, with the Anglo-American heritage of political liberty and human rights, which, we trust and hope, is closer to a description of real life today than it was at the time of either the English or the American Revolutions. Similarly, the Christian heritage, having begun on the philosophical premise of universal brotherhood, was somehow translated across European history into theological justifications for various forms of bigotry and barbarism, but now struggles in most places to return to its roots in the life and mission of the humble and loving Jesus of Nazareth. In a much shorter time frame, Mormonism also experienced a century or more of racialist attitudes and policies, partly as a participant in the general culture of its homeland, but seems in recent decades to be returning to its roots in the Christian gospel of Jesus and Paul.

In some ways, it is an inspiring irony that Mormons, like many others, have been brought to embrace this universalism directly as a concomitant of their proselyting program. That is, as they have gone forth to convert peoples in increasingly exotic locales to the particularistic LDS gospel, Latter-day Saints have come to recognize the general capacity in all peoples to respond to spiritual influences and to missionary service when it is sensitively rendered. As it continues in this mode, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is poised to become a world religion in the twenty-first century.

---

[76]Howard W. Hunter, "All are Alike unto God," *Ensign* (June 1979): 72-74, and "The Gospel—A Global Faith," November 1991, 18-19.

[77]James E. Faust, "Heirs to the Kingdom of God," *Ensign* (May 1995): 61-63. For numerous other universalistic interpretations of the significance of the lineage of Abraham and Israel, as found in recent official Mormon discourse, see examples in Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim," 165-67.

Being World

Joann Farías

I am invidious of mothers' rubber air
Connecting them to baby. How they walk
With young on hip, the way the baby turns and
Looks at world, then turns to Mother, asking what to
Feel about the spot of world that Mother
Has provided with a point. When baby leans
On Mother, sighs, and gives herself
To Mother, who is being world, and I am not.

LDS "Headquarters Culture" and the Rest of Mormonism: Past and Present

*D. Michael Quinn**

INTRODUCTION

IN DECEMBER 1830 THE FOUNDING Mormon prophet Joseph Smith Jr. announced a revelation which established the doctrine of "gathering" the new church's members at a headquarters area: "And again, a commandment I give unto the church, that it is expedient in me that they should assemble together at the Ohio. . . ." (D&C 37: 3). Prior to that date, believers in *The Book of Mormon* were concentrated in three locations of western New York State: at Manchester/Palmyra (where the Smith family had lived a dozen years), also at Colesville, and at Fayette. Then from February 1831 to the end of 1837, the church was headquartered in Kirtland, Ohio (near Cleveland).

However, in July 1831 Joseph Smith announced another revelation that Missouri "is the land which I have appointed and consecrated for the gathering of the saints. Wherefore, this is the land of promise, and the place for the city of Zion. . . .Behold, the place which is now called Independence is the center place. . . ." (D&C 57:1, 3). An 1832 revelation explained: "Verily this is the word of the Lord, that the city of New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this

*Full version of the paper presented in abbreviated form at the Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, 3 August 2000. As far as I am aware, I coined the term "headquarters culture," which appeared at various points in my 1994 *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* and my 1997 *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*. Those volumes lacked an interpretive overview of LDS headquarters culture, which this essay now provides.

place, even the place of the temple, which temple shall be reared in this generation" (D&C 84:4).

Nevertheless, church headquarters did not leave Kirtland. Joseph Smith and his followers regarded Independence, Jackson County, Missouri as a millennial gathering-place which did not require the immediate presence of all Mormons. Until Christ returned in glory to the earth, Independence did not need the residence of God's latter-day prophet, who remained with all members of his family in Kirtland.

Therefore, Mormons living at the Ohio gathering-place were experiencing the ecclesiastical and social life of church headquarters while Mormons living at the Missouri gathering-place a thousand miles away saw themselves as resident vanguards of the Millennium's New Jerusalem. Kirtland was Mormonism's current headquarters of the temporal church, while Independence was the future headquarters of a spiritual church that Christ would "soon" visit personally.

However, this changed in both practical and psychological terms after mobs drove the Mormons from Independence and Jackson County during 1833. While Mormons still spoke of the Second Coming of Christ as an event in the near future, anti-Mormons now controlled the place of his Advent. This left the Latter-day Saints in a position very similar to early medieval Christians, whose church headquarters also developed far distant from a Holy Land controlled by militant non-believers.

While the Christians launched numerous Crusades that ultimately failed to regain their Holy Land, LDS headquarters in Kirtland launched only one such crusade, Zion's Camp. It failed to "redeem" Zion in 1834, the year the church adopted the name "Latter Day Saints." The new name reemphasized the Mormons' role in the Second Coming, despite their loss of the City of Zion to which Jesus should one day descend in glory.
However, for both post-Jerusalem Christians and post-Independence Mormons, there was an advantage in having a "Holy City" which was not the church's headquarters. This relieved the actual headquarters of the church from the burden of being "holy," thus, allowing it to be mundane or even squalid without giving serious offense to believers.

For example, there was advantage to Mormons in the emphasis that their Holy City would exist only in an ethereal future. The more distant LDS headquarters was in time and space from the 1831-32 revelations about Jackson County, the more romanticized became the descriptions of the future New Jerusalem. Thus, the mud and dung of the unpaved streets at church headquarters in the nineteenth century were only temporary distractions from the gold-paved streets of New Jerusalem. And the faithful knew that the gilded multi-room mansions of this future City of Zion would make an obscure memory of the shanties in which even latter-day prophets and apostles sometimes lived with their families at church headquarters.

Defining "headquarters culture" during the life of Mormon founder Joseph Smith is complicated by the fact that the church itself was experiencing fundamental changes and evolution. He periodically expanded Mormonism's doctrines and ecclesiastical structures, both of which significantly impacted the social dynamics at the church's center. Mormons living at Independence from 1831 to 1833 clearly expected church headquarters to move there soon, which might have happened one day if mobs hadn't driven them out. Joseph Smith also found it necessary to move headquarters to Far West, Missouri, in 1838 and then to Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1839. During the thirteen years from the establishment of church headquarters in Kirtland to his death in June 1844, Mormons had limited opportunity to develop feelings of stability about the center of their church.

Nevertheless, before Joseph Smith's martyrdom in 1844, LDS headquarters manifested various characteristics. Some of these remained constant. First, living at church headquarters involved abundant opportunities to see God's "living prophet," both in church settings and in routine activities of daily life. Second, headquarters provided its residents with access to newly announced doctrines and with frequent opportunity of hearing church leaders discuss any doctrines as "deeply" as they wished. Third, the LDS church gave the rank-and-file at headquarters the option of membership in special organizations that were unavailable to Mormons living far distant. Fourth, headquarters provided its residents with access to sacred ceremonies that were unavailable to other Mormons. Fifth, Mormons at church headquarters experienced political power unavailable to Mormons living as a minority elsewhere. Sixth, because Mormons were usually the dominant population wherever LDS headquarters was located, they confronted the challenges faced by any majority which must coexist with minorities and with dissent. Seventh, certain aspects of the physical and material culture at headquarters were distinct.

In religious, social, cultural, and psychological terms, church members at LDS headquarters have experienced Mormonism very differently from Mormons living elsewhere. Over time, this made the Mormon majority in headquarters culture "a different breed" from Mormons who lived as minorities.

I see four stages in the continuities and changes of LDS headquarters culture: First, (beginning with Joseph Smith's leadership from 1830 to 1844 and continuing until the Mormons abandoned church headquarters at Nauvoo in 1846) is the Foundational Period; second, (from Brigham Young's re-establishment of a permanent headquarters at Salt Lake City in 1847 until 1890) is the Pioneer Utah Period of consolidating Mormonism in the American West and confronting U.S. national culture; third, (from 1890 to the 1950s) is the Period of Assimilating within U.S. culture while trying to maintain Utah Mormon distinctiveness;

fourth, is the late-twentieth-century Period of Responding to International Growth and to America's "Culture Wars" while trying to maintain Utah Mormon distinctiveness.

The Foundational Period

1. Concerning personal interaction with the LDS president and other leaders—Aside from audience participation at formal events, headquarters Mormons from 1830 onward had frequent opportunities to see their prophet in the ordinary activities of work, recreation, family, and local residency. By the mid-1830s this personal access also included all the other general authorities. By contrast, Mormons outside headquarters had few (if any) opportunities to encounter their leaders in such personally revealing ways. At best, Mormons outside headquarters saw their prophet and other general authorities as special visitors—usually in the formal setting as speakers at special meetings.

2. Concerning access to doctrine—There were two periods during Joseph Smith's life when this significantly excluded Mormons outside headquarters. Until publication of The *Doctrine and Covenants* in August 1835, Mormons generally had no access to the written documents their prophet was dictating to scribes as "thus, saith the Lord" revelations from God. Those at headquarters learned about these revelations soon after scribes recorded them and sometimes made copies for close associates. The more distant from headquarters in 1830-35, the less likely believers were to have access to the newly written words of God. This was not an intentional exclusion because in 1832 Mormon leaders began printing periodicals which informed Mormons generally of the church's doctrines and gave the written text for some of those revelations.

However, despite the existence of the official semi-monthly *Times and Seasons* from 1839 onward, Joseph Smith intentionally omitted from its pages any reference to some of his most significant revelations and private teachings to trusted men and women. During the 1840s this created a doctrinal elite at church headquarters—in other words, those with private knowledge of special revelations and sacred teachings unavailable to Mormons outside headquarters. This doctrinal church-within-a-church also excluded most Mormons at Nauvoo whose understanding depended on what was presented in public meetings and official publications.

The concealed doctrines of Joseph Smith's last years involved radically new meanings for the pre-1840s Mormon concepts of "sealing," "endowment," "Kingdom of God," "the New and Everlasting Covenant," "the Restoration of all things," "adoption," "exaltation," and "pre-existence." This involved what later became known as marriage for time and all eternity, as plural marriage, as highly confidential rituals of the temple endowment, as the temple ceremony of adopting men to men, as the

theocratic Council of Fifty, and as the doctrine that men and women can become gods. The latter had the theological corollaries that God was once mortal, that God has a divine wife, and that the pre-existence of all humans involved their being the literal offspring of God the Father and their heavenly mother-goddess. While some of these teachings were rumored among the non-elite at Nauvoo, they were unknown to Mormons outside church headquarters until after Smith's death. Even though he finally spoke for hours at the April 1844 general conference about his views of God and polytheism, the semi-monthly LDS newspaper did not publish a version of those remarks until months after his martyrdom in late June.

3. Concerning special organizations for Mormons at headquarters—This began at Kirtland in January 1833 with the organization of the School of the Prophets. Aside from the opportunity to hear private instructions on doctrine and secular topics from the prophet and other general authorities, members of the School of the Prophets had a form of initiation which stated that "I receive you to fellowship, in a determination that is fixed, immovable, and unchangeable, to be your friend and brother through the grace of God in the bonds of love. . . ." (D&C 88:133).

The next special organization for the rank-and-file at headquarters occurred in Far West, Missouri. After the LDS leadership was forced to abandon Kirtland as headquarters in December 1837 due to internal apostasy and lawsuits by non-Mormons, the Danite order began at Far West in June 1838 as a fraternal organization of self-protection for Mormon men who took blood-oaths of loyalty and nondisclosure. It was organized to be under the supervision of "the Head" of modern Israel's "war department" (a position Joseph Smith had held since 1835). Danite membership included First Presidency counselor Hyrum Smith and Assistant President John Smith. Its formal existence ended after Mormon defeat in the virtual civil war that raked Missouri in the closing months of 1838.

At Nauvoo, Illinois the church provided several special organizations for the rank-and-file. In January 1841 Joseph Smith organized a Lyceum where men could give presentations on theology. On March 15, 1842 he organized Nauvoo's Masonic Lodge, which provided fraternal initiations and social activities for most of the city's Mormon adult males. Two days later he organized the Female Relief Society, which provided Nauvoo's LDS women with theological instruction, social activities, and opportunities for charitable service. In March 1843 there was an organization for Nauvoo's young men and women. Although Iowa Mormons also joined Mormon lodges of Freemasonry, this was available to them only because they lived across the Mississippi from LDS headquarters. Otherwise, none of these Mormon organizations were available to church members who were distant from headquarters, such as the thousands living in the Eastern States and in the British Isles.

In fact, Nauvoo's organization with the most restricted membership was not available to 99 percent of the faithful at headquarters. Secretly organized in March 1844, Joseph Smith's theocratic Council of Fifty admitted only fifty men besides himself and two male secretaries.

4. Concerning access to sacred ceremonies—During Joseph Smith's life this access was increasingly limited. In 1836 attenders at the Kirtland Temple received the ordinance of washing of feet from church leaders, as well as the anointing of their heads with olive oil for the pronouncing of special blessings. Those who read about this in the LDS periodical from 1836-37 knew that these ordinances were available only at Kirtland. In August 1840 Nauvoo's Mormons began receiving baptism for the dead on behalf of their deceased relatives and friends. Though publicized in the *Times and Seasons* (which church members as far distant as Britain received as subscribers), this sacred ordinance was available only at headquarters and all Mormons knew it. However, even at Nauvoo very few knew that from May 1842 to May 1844 Joseph Smith privately initiated sixty-six living men and women into what they called the "Anointed Quorum"—those who had received the special ceremonies, instructions, and obligations of the redefined endowment. Likewise, beginning in September 1843, the married couples of this group began receiving the second anointing by which living persons were pronounced as heavenly kings and queens for the eternities. In other words, they were given an ordinance on earth which declared them as gods in heaven.

5. Concerning Mormon political power—This began in Ohio, increased in Missouri, and reached its nationally-known apex in Illinois. After three years of constant immigration into Kirtland, regular Mormons from 1834 to 1837 held such civil offices as township trustee, treasurer, constable, election judge, election clerk, highway supervisor, and school examiner. Two members of the First Presidency served as justices of the peace from 1836 to 1837. But this political power ended with the national depression of 1837, which contributed to the disintegration of the church in Kirtland by the end of the year. When LDS headquarters moved to Far West in 1838, the Missouri legislature had already created the surrounding Caldwell County as a Mormon county. However, at the end of the year, anti-Mormon Missourians were driving Mormons from the state by authority of Governor Boggs.

Because Illinois politicians were sympathetic to the plight of the Mormons in 1839 and eager to obtain their votes, the legislature passed laws which allowed the LDS headquarters of Nauvoo to become a nearly sovereign city-state. It was America's first example of ministerial theocracy (since the Puritans had specifically prohibited their ministers from holding civil office in Massachusetts).

A government is not theocratic merely because all (or nearly all) civil leaders are of the same religion. One example of theocracy occurs when a religion's scriptures literally serve as a society's civil and criminal laws.

Theocracy more commonly exists when the dominant religion's leaders hold the major civil offices or direct the civil officers behind-the-scenes.

As an example of the latter form of theocracy, LDS president Joseph Smith was Nauvoo's mayor, and the church's general authorities held on average two-thirds or more of the seats on the city council. In fact, Mormons filled nearly all of the city's civil offices and some of the county offices, as well. In Nauvoo's elections, successful candidates typically received at least 97 percent of the votes. While still mayor, Joseph Smith became candidate for U.S. president in 1843-44.

6. Concerning the relationship of LDS headquarters culture with its minorities—Contrary to American ideology and social practice, Mormonism's founding prophet had the highest regard for the abilities of African-Americans. "Change their situation with the whites, and they would be like them," he preached. Joseph Smith put this into religious practice by authorizing the ordination of Elijah Abel, the only "free Black" male at LDS headquarters, to the priesthood and office of elder in March 1836. The Prophet also instructed a general authority to anoint Abel during the Kirtland Temple's ceremonies a month later and then authorized Abel's ordination to a higher priesthood office (as one of "the 70 apostles") the following December. In 1844 Joseph Smith also publicly proposed "to abolish slavery by the year 1850" by financially compensating Southern slave-owners through the sale of federal lands in the West.

Likewise, non-Mormons had reason to admire the manner in which America's first ministerial theocracy responded to those of differing religious views. In March 1841 a Nauvoo ordinance stated that "the Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Latter-day Saints, Quakers, Episcopals, Universalists, Unitarians, Mohammedans and all other religious sects and denominations whatever, shall have free toleration, and equal privileges, in this city." Freedom of religion was so strict that this ordinance even limited free speech by imposing three hundred dollars fine and six-month's imprisonment to anyone convicted of ridiculing a person's religious beliefs. By contrast, during the 1840s several states of the Union prohibited Jews, Muslims, "infidels" and disbelieving Christians from voting or holding public office.

By April 1844 Joseph Smith had also admitted three non-Mormons to his secret Council of Fifty. With their oath-bound fellow "princes," these three Gentiles witnessed his installation as "king" of the earthly Kingdom of God. Although it was a profound secret for obvious reasons in the spring of 1844, he intended this organization to provide godly rule over all nations while guaranteeing freedom of expression to all religions and churches.

However, LDS headquarters was not tolerant regarding those perceived as enemies, especially Mormon apostates and dissenters. By his

own account and those of believers Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff, the founding prophet sometimes slapped, punched, or repeatedly kicked those who insulted him or his church. This included a Baptist minister in Kirtland, a tax collector in Nauvoo, his brother William Smith, Apostle David W. Patten, and Seventy's president Josiah Butterfield. In November 1836 twenty current general authorities (including the entire First Presidency) joined fifty-nine other Mormons in signing a warning to the non-Mormon justice of the peace to "depart forthwith out of Kirtland." In June 1838 Second Counselor Hyrum Smith and Assistant President John Smith joined eighty other Danites in writing a threatening letter to prominent Mormon dissenters at Far West, warning them to "depart or a more fatal calamity shall befall you." Among those who fled for their lives were Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, still-faithful witnesses to the *Book of Mormon*, who had been excommunicated for dissenting against the policies of Joseph Smith. In June 1844, by request of Mayor Joseph Smith, the city council destroyed as a "public nuisance" the dissenting Mormon newspaper, *Nauvoo Expositor*. This led to his imprisonment in Carthage Jail where a mob murdered him and his brother Hyrum Smith. Under siege from anti-Mormons for the next two years, Brigham Young and the apostles authorized the intimidation of apostates and dissenters at Nauvoo until Young led the Mormons across the Mississippi en route to a new headquarters in the Great Basin.

Therefore, in their interpretation of nineteenth-century American culture, Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen wrote: "Here, then, are two dominant threads in the intellectual garment of the early Saints: a coercive, sometimes even violent, antipluralism, along-side a ringing affirmation of the right of all people to freedom of conscience in matters of religion."

7. Concerning physical and material culture—There was limited ability to create a distinctive physical environment because Joseph Smith repeatedly established his headquarters within pre-existing settlements. However, the founding prophet clearly wanted to give church headquarters a distinctive look. This was evident, first, in his 1833 "plat" or streetmap for the City of Zion and, second, in his announcements with regard to constructing an imposing temple at each location he designated as headquarters.

From 1830 to 1846 congregational worship at headquarters occurred in private residences and commercial buildings or in the assembly room of the Kirtland Temple or in Nauvoo's open-air grove. During its few months of actual use, the Nauvoo Temple's assembly room was usually reserved for meetings of persons who had received the endowment ceremony. Outside headquarters, Mormons worshipped either in residences or in rented halls. Because there were no LDS chapels during the Foundational Period, only the two temples separated the physical culture of worship at headquarters from the rest of Mormonism.

The most important example of LDS material culture was the special "shirt" or "garment" worn by newly endowed persons under their regular clothing from 1842 onward. However, to avoid difficulties should this endowment garment accidentally be observed by the uninitiated, it was made by simply putting discreet markings on the two-piece underwear used in America since the eighteenth century: an undershirt worn with separate, tight-fitting underpants reaching to the knees. In 1977 Patriarch Eldred G. Smith showed me the endowment garment that Hyrum Smith received before joining his brother Joseph as martyrs in 1844. By February 1846 there were 5000 Mormons wearing these specially marked undergarments at headquarters, a fact virtually unknown to Mormons elsewhere.

The Pioneer Utah Period

By 1847 it was clear that the distinctions between headquarters culture and the rest of Mormonism had taken a terrible toll on the church since the death of Joseph Smith. Thousands of LDS members living distant from Nauvoo refused to believe that the Mormonism they had known up to June 1844 could be so different from what Brigham Young now claimed the founding prophet had said and done at church headquarters. This disaffection extended even to Nauvoo Mormons who had not been privy to the inner circle's knowledge prior to the martyrdom. Therefore, 40-50 percent of pre-1844 Mormons refused to follow Young and his fellow apostles to the Salt Lake Valley. This led to changes in the headquarters culture of pioneer Utah.

In the Great Basin of the American West, Brigham Young wanted to give the widest possible expression to everything the martyred prophet had hoped for and done in the secret councils of Nauvoo. However, he did not want to duplicate Joseph Smith's pattern of separating headquarters culture from the rest of Mormonism. Young extended headquarters culture from Salt Lake City to encompass as much of the church's membership as possible.

1. Concerning personal interaction with the LDS president and other leaders—Brigham Young and several of his successors never left headquarters in the West to visit with Mormons living in the Midwest, Eastern States, or South, in Britain, Europe, or the Pacific islands. Throughout the balance of the nineteenth century, these Mormons had no contact with the LDS president. However, in this "missionfield" there were Mormons who remembered seeing the LDS presidents years before—as missionary or mission president.

By contrast, in Brigham Young's expanded approach toward headquarters culture, the church president had frequent contact with pioneer Mormons living in a vast region of the American West. He visited settlements extending from southern Idaho to southern Utah, and by 1890 his

successors John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff had visited Mormon communities in Arizona and Nevada. In addition, Brigham Young established quarterly conferences in every stake (which corresponded to county boundaries at that time), and members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve routinely attended these two-day meetings throughout the Great Basin. General authorities sometimes also attended conferences of local wards, especially whenever a new bishop was chosen for these congregations. Even in towns hundreds of miles from Salt Lake City, pioneer Mormons had frequent visits from the church's general authorities, plus occasional visits from the LDS president himself.

Moreover, Brigham Young extended the opportunities for regular Mormons to see general authorities in the routine activities of daily life far distant from church headquarters. He assigned apostles to live for years at a time in the Bear Lake Valley of southern Idaho, in Cache Valley of northern Utah, in Box Elder County of northern Utah, in Weber Valley just north of Salt Lake City, in Iron County of central Utah, in Sanpete Valley of central Utah, in Washington County of southwestern Utah, in Carson County, Nevada, and as far distant as San Bernardino, California. In his later years, Young himself left Salt Lake City each winter to reside in St. George, Washington County. Like those at church headquarters, Mormons in various places of the Great Basin had daily opportunities to talk casually with general authorities, to see them at social events, or shopping, or with their children, or gardening at home.

Personal association with Brigham Young and his fellow apostles had been important for many of the American and British Mormons who endured the Succession Crisis after the founding prophet's death. They followed Young to Utah because they knew him personally. Apparently as a conscious decision, President Young extended that personal association far beyond the headquarters culture of Salt Lake City.

After Brigham Young's death, several newly-appointed general authorities voluntarily chose to live distant from Salt Lake City. For example, some of these general authorities visited for weeks at a time at the residences of their plural wives in Mormon settlements in southern Alberta (Canada), in Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and northern Mexico. Even in Utah, some of the hierarchy's post-1877 appointees kept their main residences in Cache Valley, Weber Valley, Davis County, Tooele County, Utah Valley, and Juab County.

In an area of millions of square miles, pioneer Mormons had the same kind of personal association with general authorities as was available in headquarters culture in Salt Lake City. This pattern continued into the twentieth century.

2. Concerning access to doctrine—Brigham Young also made sure that there was little or no disparity between headquarters and the rest of Mormonism. Again, this avoided one of the contributing factors to the

Succession Crisis that began in 1844. No matter how distant Mormon settlements were from Salt Lake City, Young expected their stake presidents and bishops to be at headquarters every April and October for general conference where they received instructions in doctrine and policy. Upon returning home, they reported this information to local Mormons.

Beginning in 1850 Salt Lake City's *Deseret News* printed the sermons by Brigham Young and the apostles (many of whom explored "deep" doctrines and used salty humor). All American Mormons were urged to subscribe. In November 1853 the *Journal of Discourses* began its thirty-three years of reprinting for British Mormons those same Utah sermons. While many of these sermons emphasized the "plain" teachings of the Bible and LDS scriptures, church headquarters expected that the newest converts throughout the English-speaking world would also read these eye-popping discussions of plural marriage, temple ordinances, Adam-God, the non-virgin birth of Jesus, humans-to-become-gods teachings, the political Kingdom of God on earth, and "blood atonement" as earthly punishment for various misdeeds. Brigham Young was determined that never again would church members apostatize because they had not known about the deep doctrines being taught at LDS headquarters.

3. Concerning special organizations at headquarters—It was inevitable that some were available only to those pioneers living in or near Salt Lake City. Examples in 1855 included the Polysophical Society and the Deseret Theological Institute, both of which invited Salt Lake City's women to attend with the male participants. The theocratic Council of Fifty was another organization not generally available, but Brigham Young and his successor John Taylor did initiate some men who resided hundreds of miles north or south of Salt Lake City. Since it had no meetings at all from October 1851 to 1867, nor from October 1868 to 1880, nor after October 1884, pioneer Mormons lost little more than secret prestige by lack of access to the primarily symbolic Council of Fifty.

In other instances, Brigham Young wanted the special organizations at Salt Lake City to be widely available to other Mormons. For example, since 1842 all scheduled prayer circle meetings outside the temple had been convened and directed by Joseph Smith or Brigham Young. In February 1851, Young authorized separate organizations of prayer circles in Salt Lake City, some presided over by apostles and others by the city's bishops. Eventually all stakes and many wards throughout the Great Basin had their own prayer circle organizations, which met weekly or monthly for the "true order of prayer." Also, when Brigham Young renewed the School of the Prophets from 1867 to 1874, more than 900 men joined the Salt Lake City school and approximately 5000 others joined Schools of the Prophets in towns throughout the Great Basin.

Likewise, in response to the 1869 arrival of the transcontinental railroad, which provided easy access to the region for non-Mormon settlers,

Brigham Young launched various LDS organizations for economic cooperation in Salt Lake City. Known successively as Cooperatives, then United Orders, then Boards of Trade, for the next two decades, these organizations spread to Mormon settlements from Idaho to Arizona. Mormons living east of the Rocky Mountains knew about them only by reading sermons in the *Deseret News* or *Journal of Discourses*.

However, the most enduring and widespread were those special organizations that earlier had been available only to Nauvoo's residents. No longer a counterpoint to Masonic lodges (which Brigham Young did not sponsor in Utah), the Relief Society extended itself from Salt Lake City in the 1850s to every ward of the pioneer West and, ultimately, to every congregation in the church. There was similar growth in the organizations for LDS young women and young men, which Brigham Young first re-established among his daughters in 1869.

Current Mormons do not realize how many sources of their weekly church activity were restricted during Joseph Smith's presidency to those living at LDS headquarters. Thanks to Brigham Young, many significant aspects of Mormon experience are no longer limited to headquarters culture. This might have also occurred had the founding prophet lived to age 85 as he expected, but things turned out differently.

4. Concerning access to sacred ceremonies—Brigham Young also expanded the access, first numerically and then geographically. Whereas Joseph Smith gave the endowment ceremony to sixty-six living persons during the last two years of his life, Young and his fellow apostles initiated more than 5000 people in two months—from December 1845 to February 1846. However, all of this occurred at Nauvoo, and for the next three decades Mormons had to travel to church headquarters to obtain the endowment. There were practical reasons for this, but Brigham Young wanted to make temple ordinances available far beyond Salt Lake City.

A few months after laying the cornerstone for the Salt Lake Temple in 1853, he said that there would one day be a temple in Scotland. He later spoke of temples dotting the entire earth. Thus, it was no accident that the first temple Brigham Young dedicated in the pioneer West was hundreds of miles distant from church headquarters. Moreover, in 1877 he closed Salt Lake City's Endowment House, thus requiring headquarters Mormons to travel for days to St. George in order to obtain their temple ordinances. His successor John Taylor reversed that policy, but Brigham Young had established a goal for the Mormon hierarchy to think globally about temples. The fulfillment would not begin until the twentieth century.

While the endowment ceremony and second anointing during this time period were available only in Salt Lake City, St. George, Logan, or Manti, Utah, there was greater geographic access to the marriage sealing ordinance and the performance of polygamous marriage. Beginning

with Brigham Young, LDS presidents before 1890 authorized the performance of marriage sealings (both monogamous and polygamous) throughout Utah as well as in Idaho, Arizona, Colorado, Mexico, and aboard ship. Brigham Young even authorized polygamous ceremonies for American mission presidents living in London and Copenhagen.

5. Concerning Mormon political power—Brigham Young exceeded the example of Nauvoo's theocracy by exerting direct control of political life from Salt Lake City throughout the Great Basin. Until 1850 he was governor of the theocratic State of Deseret and, from 1850 to 1857, was federally appointed governor of the Territory of Utah. From 1850 to the 1880s, the Utah legislature was usually 100 percent Mormon, and then-current general authorities comprised from 1/3 to 1/2 of the legislature. From 1872 until his death in 1877, Brigham Young was also a member of the Salt Lake City Council.

But this political power extended far beyond formal office. For two decades before he formally joined the Salt Lake City Council, he regularly attended its meetings and instructed its members how to vote. From 1848 until his death, Brigham Young arranged for the nomination of the church's candidates from southern Idaho to southern Utah, informing distant communities of his choices by mail or telegram. He decided who would be mayors of Salt Lake City and all other large towns of Utah and southern Idaho. A few token Gentiles were the church's candidates for some offices, and these compliant fellows willingly received Brigham Young's political instructions.

During these years, more than 99 percent of all votes cast went to the church-approved candidates. After the elections, Brigham Young privately met with Mormon legislators, informing them how to vote on various bills and, in like manner, communicated his wishes on various matters to mayors throughout the Great Basin. Even years after his death, 99 percent of southern Idaho's votes went to church-approved candidates while 82.6 percent of Utah's vote went to candidates of the LDS church's own political party as late as 1882. Such theocracy was not part of the experience of Mormons living west of Nevada or east of the Rocky Mountains.

Although the federal government's anti-polygamy campaign of the 1880s diminished the Mormon church's political power, LDS headquarters continued to give voting instructions to obedient Mormons from southern Idaho to northern Arizona. This succeeded in achieving the election of nearly all headquarters-approved candidates until 1890, when the church's political party lost control of both Ogden and Salt Lake City.

6. Concerning the relationship of LDS headquarters culture with its minorities—Aside from Utah's mining towns, females were never a statistical minority in the territory. However, America (like most cultures) had treated women as if they were a subjugated minority. By contrast, pioneer Mormon women had a social experience that was vastly different from the

civil subordination of women who lived nearly everywhere else. From the beginning of settlement in 1847, Utah women had equal rights with men in inheritance, property ownership, and business proprietorship.

Contrary to the practice throughout the United States, Utah women could sue for divorce on grounds of incompatibility. Brigham Young granted "church divorce" (or cancellation of sealing) as soon as a woman requested it, but often declined or delayed men's requests for divorce. He required the husband to pay a ten-dollar fee for the divorce, even if the wife requested it.

Despite LDS priesthood patriarchy, Mormon women in pioneer Utah had social power that was unavailable to other women throughout the United States and Europe. Polygamous wives often had sole responsibility for months or years to manage their households, farms, or family businesses. Monogamous wives did likewise whenever their husbands were called on two-year proselytizing missions (a very common practice until the 1900s). In 1870 Utah granted voting rights to women, who served on the local and territorial executive committees of the LDS Church's political party. Beyond traditionally domestic occupations, Brigham Young also encouraged Mormon women to work as accountants, physicians, and attorneys. Outside Utah, few women had these social and political options.

By contrast, during these years, ethnic minorities experienced subordination in Utah. Theologically Mormonism's attitude toward Native American Indians was similar to the "noble savage" theme in English and American literature. Nevertheless, the growth of Utah's Zion required the displacement of native tribes from their ancestral lands. Aside from being in constant fear of raids against isolated farms, Mormons occasionally waged "war" against the Indians during the 1850s and 1860s. This echoed the practice and experience of Mormons living east of the Rocky Mountains where native tribes had also been subordinated and displaced. However, aside from the parallel to British subjugation of Northern Ireland, the experience of headquarters culture with its native tribes was foreign to Mormons living in Europe.

From 1847 onward Mormons who converted in the Southern States brought African-American slaves to Utah. Brigham Young abandoned the founding prophet's egalitarian views of African-Americans and began preaching the ideology of Southern slave-owners that all Negroes were "natural slaves." Contrary to Joseph Smith's proposal for national abolition of slavery by 1850, the Utah legislature legalized Negro slavery in 1852 at Governor Young's request. As a result, Utah Mormons bought slaves, sold them, and even paid their tithing with humans. This was contrary to the experience of Mormons in the North and in Europe, but was consistent with the experience of Mormons living in the South until the end of the Civil War. Moreover, contrary to Joseph Smith's authorizing two separate ordinations of an African-American at LDS headquar-

ters, Brigham Young and other Utah Mormon presidents claimed that God prohibited all Negroes from receiving any priesthood ordination.

In addition, among the *Journal of Discourses* sermons read by Mormons throughout the English-speaking world, were Apostle John Taylor's two references to "niggers" in 1857. In 1863 the *Deseret News* published Brigham Young's sermon proclaiming that if an African-American man had relations with a white woman, "the penalty, under the law of God, is death on the spot." Three years later, Apostle Brigham Young Jr. recorded in his diary that a warning to "meddle not with white women" was pinned to the flesh of a murdered "nigger" in Salt Lake City.

In an 1881 sermon on Salt Lake Temple Square, Southern States Mission president John Morgan spoke approvingly of hanging Negro males "to a lamp-post" for "impudence." Like President Young's previous endorsement of Negro-killing, this statement appeared in both the *Deseret News* and *Journal of Discourses*. Morgan became a general authority a year after a Salt Lake City mob lynched an African-American male on a lamppost in 1883. Apostle Heber J. Grant wrote that "the citizens" hanged "the nigger" for killing an LDS bishop. Afterwards at least 2000 men, women, and children cheered those who dragged Sam Joe Harvey's corpse through the streets of LDS headquarters.

During these years of Great Basin theocracy, religious minorities experienced parallel subjugation by the Mormon power structure. Pioneer Utah's Catholics, Protestants, and Jews lived in a culture where their religious freedom was guaranteed but their political expression was irrelevant. After the California Gold Rush of 1849, Salt Lake City's non-Mormon population swelled into the hundreds—primarily males—and the next two decades were filled with violent incidents breaking out along religious lines of division. LDS leadership did not discourage this, but actually created a culture of violence with sermons, congregational hymns, newspaper editorials, and patriarchal blessings invoking the memories of past persecution, while urging vengeance against Mormonism's enemies and "blood atonement" against the wicked.

By the 1880s there were thousands of non-Mormons—now with a larger proportion of families—located mainly in Salt Lake City and Ogden. In the late 1880s the church's two official newspapers continued to praise those who physically attacked Mormon dissidents, government officials, or newspaper reporters regarded as anti-Mormon. (As during the period of Mormon theocracy, these confrontational attitudes extended from headquarters throughout the Great Basin.) As a result of this religious polarization, the Salt Lake Ministerial Association of Protestant clergy published attacks on the LDS church and urged Congress to pass legislation against Mormons as individuals and against the LDS church as an organization.

Then, as is well known, the LDS president's official abandonment of polygamy in September 1890 began tremendous changes in Mormon cul-

ture, which now sought political and social accommodation with non-Mormon society. It was as if Wilford Woodruff's "Manifesto" had flipped a switch, changing Mormon power from DC to AC.

7. Concerning physical and material culture—Because Mormons were the first white settlers throughout most of the Great Basin, Brigham Young was able to duplicate the physical culture of Salt Lake City in a way that had been impossible for the founding prophet. Using Joseph Smith's plan for the millennial City of Zion as a guide, Young extended Salt Lake City's system of wide streets on a north-south-east-west grid to nearly 340 western settlements founded by pioneers he sent with specific instructions for colonizing. This, of course, remained impossible for Mormons living outside what geographers call the "Mormon Culture Region" of Utah and adjacent areas.

In contrast with the street system, there was no uniformity in religious architecture. Of Utah's four pioneer temples, there was architectural similarity only between those of Logan and Manti (completed in the 1880s). Those two were completely different in appearance from the previously designed temples at St. George and Salt Lake City. Throughout the wards and stakes of the Far West, Mormons designed chapels in a variety of styles according to local preferences. By contrast, missionfield Mormons continued to hold congregational meetings in private residences or in rented rooms and buildings.

The most distinctive example of Mormon material culture was still the garment worn underneath the regular clothing of persons who had received the endowment. Now patterned after the mid-nineteenth-century American "Union Suit" of wrist-to-ankle one-piece underwear, by Brigham Young's death in 1877 the Utah garment was worn by tens of thousands in the American West. Missionfield Mormons generally had no experience with the temple garment unless they laundered it for missionaries or visiting authorities from headquarters.

The Period of Assimilating

1. Concerning personal interaction with the LDS president and other leaders—In the period from 1890 to the 1950s rank-and-file Mormons continued to have frequent access to the general authorities. Extending from Washington, D.C. to southern Alberta to northern Mexico to California to Hawaii—organized stakes had four conferences a year, each of which was attended by general authorities (usually at least one apostle and sometimes the LDS president).

Moreover, virtually anyone could walk into the Church Offices at 47 East South Temple Street (without prior arrangements) and meet with a member of the First Presidency or Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. In the 1920s President Heber J. Grant spent as long as two hours in conversa-

tion with Mormons who came to his office without an appointment. During the following decades it was still common for these walk-ins to chat with general authorities for more than half an hour. As LDS world membership reached one million, this traditional characteristic of LDS headquarters made its culture seem increasingly privileged.

2. Concerning access to doctrine—Beginning with President Woodruff's 1895 request for church members to "cease troubling yourselves about who God is," LDS headquarters began retreating from the free-wheeling theology of Brigham Young and other leaders. By the end of that decade, James E. Talmage (not yet a general authority) had produced the first systematic presentation of LDS theology, *The Articles of Faith*. This book had been revised by a committee of apostles and was soon translated into the languages of European Mormons. Nevertheless, for more than sixty years, editors of church magazines—both at headquarters and in the missions—published articles which referred to some of the speculative theology in the *Journal of Discourses*. In addition, because few general authorities spoke from prepared texts until the late 1950s, audiences at general conferences and stake conferences might hear impromptu echoes of "the old time religion" and frontier humor. This was most frequent for those living at headquarters or nearby.

Nevertheless, by the 1930s some were so disillusioned with the official retreat from pioneer Utah theology that they began a cottage industry of publishing excerpts or full reprints from *Journal of Discourses* talks about plural marriage, Adam-God, the United Order, and other topics discomforting to twentieth-century headquarters. In the 1840s Mormonism's church-within-a-church had been the radical creation of Joseph Smith; in the 1930s it was the reactionary creation of Mormon Fundamentalists. Their growing presence in headquarters culture has haunted LDS leaders ever since. This polygamous schism caused LDS headquarters to begin keeping files on suspected Fundamentalists and to maintain covert surveillance on Mormons living in Salt Lake City or nearby.

3. Concerning special organizations for Mormons at headquarters—In 1929 the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve decided to disband all private prayer circle organizations that had been meeting weekly or monthly in the temples at that time, four in Utah, one in Canada, one in Arizona, and one in Hawaii. Some of the private circles meeting in the Salt Lake Temple had existed continuously since 1851, more than forty years before its completion. They had first met in the Council House and private homes, later in the Salt Lake Endowment House, and finally in the granite temple. The 1929 decision cited the inequality of hundreds of thousands of faithful Mormons who could not have this privilege. This was the Utah leadership's first official acknowledgement of the disparity between headquarters culture and the rest of Mormonism.

Nevertheless, for nearly fifty more years the First Presidency allowed stakes to have prayer circle meetings in the temples or in special rooms of the stake meetinghouses. As far as I was able to determine, this occurred primarily in Canada, Idaho, Utah, and Arizona, while prayer circle rooms were unknown in the growing number of stake meetinghouses elsewhere in the United States and world.

Just as Brigham Young had provided Mormons everywhere with access to the deep doctrines being taught in pioneer Utah, beginning in the 1920s church leaders tried to provide Mormon youth everywhere with all the social activities available at headquarters. Originating in Salt Lake City, dance festivals and athletic tournaments extended throughout North America and (where possible) to Europe and the Pacific. However, outside western Canada, northern Mexico, and America's Far West, few LDS congregations could afford to send their young women and men to Salt Lake City's annual dance festivals and athletic tournaments. In practical terms, these "all-church" events at headquarters were available only to the organized stakes, not to the expanding missionfield. Nevertheless, the "all-church" title indicated the inclusive intent of LDS leadership.

4. Concerning access to sacred ceremonies—Until the early 1900s LDS presidents continued to authorize the performance of monogamous sealings outside the temple for rank-and-file Mormons living in Colorado, Mexico, Arizona, New Mexico, and Canada. From October 1890 to 1898 most of the secretly performed polygamous marriages occurred outside U.S. territory in order to technically comply with the Manifesto. This put headquarters Mormons at the same disadvantage as missionfield Mormons. However, from 1898 to 1907 (despite the Manifesto and so-called "Second Manifesto" of 1904) the LDS president or his counselors authorized dozens of polygamous ceremonies which occurred in Utah, Idaho, Oregon, Wyoming, Colorado, Illinois, and Hawaii—in addition to the scores of polygamous ceremonies occurring in Mexico and Canada. Nevertheless, by 1910 even the most polygamy-oriented Mormons knew they could not expect the LDS president or any other general authority to authorize and perform a polygamous ceremony. From 1910 onward it was Mormon Fundamentalists, not LDS leaders, who promoted a polygamous counterculture.

Whether or not they knew about the special prayer circle meetings in the American West's stakes, many of the faithful knew that LDS temples were beyond their reach. By 1910 there were more Mormons living within an easy train ride of London than lived in Manti, Utah, which had a large temple. Nevertheless, beginning in 1903 with Joseph F. Smith, LDS presidents declared an end to the doctrine of "The Gathering" and asked European Mormons in particular to remain where they were converted. This was a futile request for those who knew that it cost little more to emigrate to Utah than to visit there for temple ordinances. The dedication of a temple in Hawaii in 1919 and in Canada in 1923 accentuated the second-class

status of European Mormons, who had joined the church by the thousands since 1837.

By the 1950s this lack of temple access applied to hundreds of thousands of Mormons living west of Utah, east of the Rocky Mountains, south of Arizona, south and west of Hawaii. And so, beginning in 1955, David O. McKay—who had eagerly promoted international Mormonism since the 1920s—dedicated temples in Switzerland, Los Angeles, New Zealand, England, and Oakland, California. For headquarters Mormons it seemed a fast-paced expansion of temples, but (as the saying goes) they hadn't "seen nothing yet."

5. Concerning Mormon political power—For seventy years after 1890, Mormon political power reached its lowest level—before or since. Politically, Mormonism experienced a Babylonian Captivity as six LDS presidents struggled with the consequences of surrendering theocracy and accepting the divisive world of partisan politics. In 1891 the LDS church dissolved its political party, and general authorities began publicly combating each other as Democrats or Republicans. Increasingly the rank-and-file made their political decisions independently and ignored the First Presidency's political signals.

The lowest point began in 1933 when Mormon voters defied President Heber J. Grant, and Utah became the swing state to ratify the repeal of national Prohibition of alcoholic drinks. Three years later the *Deseret News* published a front-page editorial against the reelection of Democratic president Franklin D. Roosevelt, and every letter of complaint to the First Presidency correctly identified its author as First Counselor J. Reuben Clark, a Republican. Nevertheless, nearly 70 percent of Utah's voters helped reelect FDR in 1936, as they did again in 1940 and 1944, despite the clear opposition of LDS headquarters.

In 1953-54 LDS headquarters experienced two major political defeats. First, in January 1953 Mormon members of the Utah legislature ignored emphatic instructions by an editorial in the *Deseret News* to override the non-Mormon governor's veto of a bill requiring all businesses to close on Sundays. Several apostles had successfully lobbied the Mormon legislators to pass the bill. Nevertheless, after the governor vetoed it as religious discrimination against Jews and Seventh-Day Adventists, the Mormon-controlled legislature declined to override him.

To increase its political control, a few months later LDS headquarters began a new campaign to reapportion the Utah legislature. LDS apostles openly supported reapportionment with this explanation: "if this proposal is passed[,] the Church will control twenty-six of twenty-nine [state] senators." Church Welfare trucks dropped vote-yes pamphlets at LDS meetinghouses, and local bishops read vote-yes statements at sacrament meeting. Nevertheless, Utah's primarily Mormon voters defeated reapportionment in 1954 by a vote of 143,000 to 80,000.

In 1960 David O. McKay publicly expressed his hope that the Republican candidate would be elected U.S. president. A survey of active Mormons that year showed that 43 percent said that the LDS president "was not inspired" in making this announcement. In the twenty-five counties of Idaho, Utah, and Nevada with 90-100 percent LDS population, there were 98,451 votes for the Democratic candidate John F. Kennedy, a Roman Catholic. In sum, from the 1890s to the 1960s LDS headquarters culture experienced political pluralism as never before or since.

6. Concerning the relationship of LDS headquarters culture with its minorities—After 1890, the church newspaper no longer praised violence against anti-Mormons or critics, and there were no more incidents of this kind. However, because polygamous marriages continued to exist and because the LDS church still tried (often unsuccessfully) to exercise political influence, Salt Lake City's Protestant clergy continued its anti-Mormon propaganda and lobbying of Congress during the first two decades of the 1900s.

With regard to Mormon dissidents, beginning in 1910 church presidents encouraged the investigation and excommunication of those who continued to advocate plural marriage. Mormon Fundamentalists were regarded as apostates, and this campaign against them became most intense from the 1930s to 1950s.

However, with the exception of Apostle Mark E. Petersen, LDS leaders did not regard as apostates those Mormons who dissented from policies or pronouncements of the First Presidency. For example, from the 1930s to 1950s church members signed their names to letters denouncing official statements by the First Presidency and conference talks by its members, yet local leaders were not contacted with instructions to investigate and discipline these dissident believers. This toleration of loyal opposition and strident dissent even applied to those who spoke publicly against policies and activities of the LDS church. From the 1930s to the 1950s, the most notable examples were gadfly C. N. Lund, political scientist Frank H. Jonas, historian Juanita Brooks, sociologist Lowry Nelson, and philosopher Sterling M. McMurrin.

By the 1930s there was no longer any conflict with the Protestant churches at LDS headquarters, but tensions had begun with the Catholic diocese there. In 1936 Monsignor Duane G. Hunt published a book refuting articles about Catholicism in the *Relief Society Magazine*. Twelve years later, he and First Presidency counselor J. Reuben Clark sparred in radio lectures about Papal Infallibility and other Catholic doctrines. In 1958 Utah's Catholics were deeply offended when general authority Bruce R. McConkie's book *Mormon Doctrine* designated the Catholic Church as "the Mother of harlots" and used the following cross-reference: "*Catholicism*. See Church of the Devil."

With regard to ethnic minorities, the first half of the twentieth century showed well-intentioned ambivalence as the percentage of Mormons in Salt Lake City steadily declined. The First Presidency donated toward the construction of the city's first synagogue in 1903, praised Simon Bamberger after his 1916 election as Utah's first Jewish governor, and in the 1950s made substantial purchases of bonds issued by the State of Israel. However, during the 1930s the First Presidency rebuffed German Jews who asked its administrative help for them to escape the Nazis. In the 1950s the First Presidency also arranged for legislation requiring Utah's Jews to close their businesses on Sundays—in addition to their voluntary closure on the Jewish Sabbath.

Aside from excluding persons of black African descent from priesthood ordination, LDS headquarters continued to echo the prejudices of white Americans generally. In 1902 Apostle Abraham Owen Woodruff wrote: "Had trouble with an insolent 'Nigger' Conductor [on a train], told him what I thought of him and wished for a while that the 'Slave Days' might return." In 1919 the *Deseret News* gave a laudatory review of the play, *The Nigger*, being performed in the Social Hall Theatre. In its front-page 1925 headline for "Mob Lynches Negro Slayer of Castlegate Deputy Sheriff," the *Deseret News* approvingly emphasized that "1000 Citizens" participated in this lynching. Prominent local Mormons (including the deputy sheriff) were among these brave citizens, and the local grand jury refused to indict any of them.

As late as 1941 Counselor J. Reuben Clark used the word "nigger" in his First Presidency Office diary. During World War II, Utah theaters required African-American servicemen in uniform to sit in the balcony, while German prisoners-of-war sat on the main floor with white servicemen.

Down to the 1950s the First Presidency defended in official correspondence its policies for excluding African-Americans from church-owned hotels and for segregating Negro blood in LDS hospitals. At the same time, the First Presidency quietly supported the exclusion of African-Americans from white neighborhoods in Utah, Arizona, and California while privately opposing civil rights legislation. David O. McKay commented that the "South knows how to handle them," and he privately complained about "insolent" Negroes who wanted equal rights.

Consistent with the First Presidency's opposition to interracial marriage, Utah law prohibited whites from marrying Blacks or Asians. In addition, the *Deseret News* headlined one instance where an African-American woman was prohibited from "Marrying a Chinaman" in Salt Lake City.

This reflected Utah's anti-Asian attitudes. For example, months before the December 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, headlines of the *Deseret News* used the insulting designations of "Jap" and "Japs." In reporting on Utah's wartime prejudice in 1943, the LDS newspaper headlined "S. L. Jap Asks 'Chinaman's Chance.'" Even the *Church*

News used the insulting "Japs" in its headlines until the war's end in 1945. This was certainly not the Mormon experience in Hawaii where Americans of Japanese ancestry "were the largest racial group in the islands." With feelings ranging from grief to anger, Japanese-American Mormons read these headlines in their church's newspaper.

Chieko N. Okazaki (a Japanese-American resident of Salt Lake City) commented on this persistent racial discrimination in Utah from the 1950s to early 1960s. Decades later, as counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, she wrote: "A Japanese person could not be sealed to a Caucasian in the Salt Lake Temple at that time because of state law. We could not buy life insurance and could not insure our cars." She added: "We had difficulty buying a home. . . ."

Similar conditions of social and legal discrimination existed throughout the continental United States until the 1960s. This was also a familiar pattern for Mormons in Rhodesia and South Africa. However, the race-based legal and social limits of LDS headquarters culture were not characteristic of the Mormon experience in Hawaii or Europe.

7. Concerning physical and material culture—In September 1901 a headquarters decision made Salt Lake City unique even within the Great Basin. The First Presidency decided to implement a policy of "drawing as much [LDS] business as possible to the north end of Main Street as against the efforts made by the Gentiles to pull to the South." This resulted in a geographic polarization of Salt Lake City's business district on the basis of religion, which geographer D. W. Meinig described sixty-four years later.

By both necessity and choice, there was little similarity between the religious buildings at headquarters and the experience of Mormons elsewhere. Temples in Hawaii, Arizona, Canada, California, England, New Zealand, and Switzerland resembled nothing in Utah. Ward chapels and stake meetinghouses continued to be as diverse in appearance as local leaders wanted them to be.

However, there were increasing similarities in the material culture inside and outside headquarters. For example, because of the expanded access to temples, by the end of the1950s the endowment garment was part of the material culture of Mormons in the Pacific, Canada, and Europe.

In addition, extending from Salt Lake City to every state and country where the church was organized, there were unifying elements of material culture for Mormon children, youths, and women. By the 1950s this included plastic emblems of achievement on felt bandoleers for Primary children, plus "Treasures of Truth" scrapbooks for young women, merit badges and "Duty to God" medals in the church's Boy Scouts program, and a variety of handicrafts (including plastic grapes) crafted by Mormon women throughout the world according to uniform instructions from headquarters.

The Period of Responding to International Growth and to America's "Culture Wars"

1. Concerning personal interaction with the LDS president and other leaders—In the forty years since 1960, worldwide church membership has increased from less than 2 million to nearly 12 million, with more than half currently living outside the United States. Despite the magnitude and far-flung nature of this growth, LDS presidents have followed David O. McKay's example, traveling by jet throughout the world, speaking to large meetings of Mormons, and dedicating dozens of temples. Mormons outside the U.S. today have seen the LDS president and other general authorities to a degree unknown among non-U.S. Mormons before 1950.

Nevertheless, for decades the LDS presidents continued to have routine associations within their neighborhood of residence. For example, it was my privilege to be a guest in the home of Spencer and Camilla Kimball for several Saturdays in a row in February 1979, about nine hours daily. Several times each day, the Church Security guard in front of the house allowed neighbors to knock at the door—usually just to say hello to the Kimballs, but also sometimes to introduce a friend or relative who had asked "to meet the Prophet."

However, during the 1980s LDS headquarters isolated the living quarters of the LDS president from regular neighborhoods—initially because of his physical deterioration, but later because the Church Security Department wanted a controlled residence environment for protective surveillance. This moved the church presidents first to the Hotel Utah and later to a First Presidency floor of the re-built Eagle Gate Apartments. Also isolated from regular neighborhoods are the living quarters in the Eagle Gate of the Presidency counselors. I understand that members of the Quorum of the Twelve have also been encouraged to sell their homes and move to these isolated accommodations.

Now the vast majority of Mormons living at headquarters have no closer association with the LDS president than Mormons in Boston, London, Tokyo, or Mexico City. Not only has it become impossible for the rank-and-file to make unscheduled visits with general authorities, but even headquarters administrator L. Brent Goates commented in 1985: "Gone are the days when conversations with General Authorities could be held in your living room, or on the street at a chance meeting. The type of intimacy between Church leaders and the people known [down to] the early 1950s seems forever lost." The "people" he referred to were headquarters Mormons, who began to realize in the 1980s that they were no more privileged than missionfield Mormons.

2. Concerning access to doctrine—The single most important effect of the LDS "Correlation Program" from the 1960s onward was limiting the access of Mormons to independent doctrinal commentary and to

historical discussion with doctrinal implications. This required abolishing the traditional magazines at LDS headquarters and in the missions so that Mormons everywhere would read only articles that had been approved by the Correlation Committee at headquarters. In a process that would once have been inconceivable, non-general authorities review in advance and require changes in the world conference talks prepared by general authorities twice annually. Whereas Brigham Young wanted the newest converts anywhere in the world to have access to the "deep" doctrines being taught at headquarters in pioneer Utah, the Correlation Program since the 1960s has wanted headquarters Mormons to know nothing more doctrinally than what the newest converts are taught anywhere in the world.

Not surprisingly this caused some Mormons with traditional "headquarters culture" background to promote open forums for discussion of experience, doctrine, and policy in both past and present. Thus occurred the organization of the Mormon History Association in December 1965, followed by the inauguration of *Dialogue*, *Exponent II*, *Sunstone*, its symposiums, *Journal of Mormon History*, and *Mormon Women's Forum*. In response, *BYU Studies* became more historically focused. Despite its neoconservative self-definition, even BYU's Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) is an expression of headquarters Mormons wanting to explore more deeply than is allowed in the correlated publications of the LDS church. Confirming Brigham Young's view that international Mormons also wanted this kind of religious depth, since the 1980s there have been magazines of similar interest in German, Japanese, and Spanish.

3. Concerning special organizations for Mormons at headquarters—As a direct response to international growth, the "all-church" dance festivals and athletic tournaments ended in 1975 because they were inadvertently excluding millions of LDS youth whose stakes could not afford to send them to headquarters for these events. Likewise, the First Presidency announced in 1978 the end of the prayer circle meetings that had continued in the stakes of the American west since 1929. As a sign of discomfort with non-correlated discussion of doctrine and history, in the 1980s LDS leaders began discouraging study groups that traditionally had met monthly in private homes. In 1991, following the annual Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City, a joint statement of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve denounced such "symposia."

4. Concerning access to sacred ceremonies—Following the example of David O. McKay (and fulfilling the prophecy of Brigham Young), LDS presidents from Spencer W. Kimball to Gordon B. Hinckley have announced and dedicated scores of temples throughout the world. Mormons in Latin America or Asia may know that their mini-temples

are dwarfed by the six-towered temple in Salt Lake City, but they also know that they have access to its holy ordinances.

While President Kimball resumed the second anointing ceremony after decades of its not having been performed, he restricted it to the Salt Lake Temple, which was the only temple that still had a Holy of Holies room, necessary for the ordinance. This could change through the dedication of such rooms in all the other temples and the extension of this highest ordinance throughout the world; or it could change if the First Presidency decided to permanently discontinue the second anointing even at headquarters until the Millennium. Time (and those with special knowledge at headquarters) will tell.

5. Concerning Mormon political power—As is well known, LDS headquarters has managed to reverse the 1890s-1950s pattern of rank-and-file resistance against political instructions from headquarters. A major factor was that from the early 1960s onward LDS publications and general authorities encouraged an unprecedented adoration of the church president. Unlike the previous pattern in Mormon culture, church members since the 1960s routinely speak of the current LDS president as "the living Prophet" in hushed tones, and it is difficult for them to vote contrary to his wishes—even if their conscience says otherwise. For that reason, a simple editorial in the *Deseret News* can now cause Utah's legislators to reverse their votes. Since the Utah legislature is nearly 90 percent Mormon, legislative outcomes in matters of interest to the church are usually predictable. Moreover, an official statement by the First Presidency on a legislative measure or general election typically results in lock-step Mormon voting. And just as Brigham Young succeeded in turning the Great Basin into a theocracy, Mormon legislators and voters in every state of the Union have responded with the same devotion as Utah voters whenever LDS headquarters has signaled its views on political issues over the past twenty-five years.

Voting diversity in Salt Lake City itself reflects four dynamic factors. First, Mormons are now a statistical minority in the city, though LDS population overwhelmingly dominates the rest of Salt Lake County and the state as a whole. Second, just as a sizeable proportion of Rome's Catholic population feels disaffected from its dominant church, some of Salt Lake City's Mormon residents also feel disaffected from the church of their birth. Third, LDS headquarters can triumph over these statistical disadvantages by marshaling the nearly total participation of its municipal minority to outvote the often non-voting majority of non-Mormons and disaffected Mormons in Salt Lake City. Fourth, LDS leaders now enlist the political cooperation of other churches at headquarters and beyond.

Crucial to this last development are the "culture wars" that began in America during the 1960s. Originally focused on racial freedom, America's culture wars quickly extended to issues of social protest, civil dis-

obedience, police powers, conscientious objection to war, free speech, recreational drugs, women's rights, birth control, non-marital sex, abortion, homosexuality, educational experimentation, and the depiction of violence and sexuality in the arts and media.

While engaging in political activism along various fronts in recent decades, LDS headquarters has insisted that this activism is not "politics," but rather active concern about "moral issues." However, as an indication of the tremendous change in perspective, we note here that the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve in June 1933: "Decided at this meeting that the Church as an organization could not take part in the campaign for the repeal of the 18th Amendment since this was a partisan political question. It was hoped however that all L.D.S. would vote against repeal [of national Prohibition of alcoholic drinks]." In other words, LDS headquarters once recognized that voting about what it defined as a moral issue nonetheless meant participating in "a partisan political question," and the LDS hierarchy decided not to intervene in matters where individual conscience should govern. The pattern is different today.

6. Concerning the relationship of LDS headquarters culture with its minorities—At the general conference of 6 October 1963, Counselor Hugh B. Brown announced a First Presidency statement supporting civil rights for all races. However, the good will this generated among African-Americans at headquarters and elsewhere was dampened two weeks later, when *Look* magazine published its editor's recent interview with Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. During this interview "at his office in the Mormon Church's office building in Salt Lake City," Apostle Smith said: "'Darkies' are wonderful people, and they have their place in our Church."

Nevertheless, Salt Lake City's segregation practices were crumbling along with Utah's racial discrimination, and the First Presidency's 1963 statement ushered in a new era of race relations at headquarters culture. This reached a dramatic apex fifteen years later, when Spencer W. Kimball announced a revelation ending the priesthood ban against those of black African ancestry. The first ordination and temple marriage of African-Americans in Salt Lake City immediately rippled throughout Mormonism's world membership.

In September 2000 an article in the church's official *Ensign* magazine seemed to begin with an apology for the Utah leadership's 120 years of demeaning comments and social policies toward persons of black African ancestry. General authority Alexander B. Morrison began: "In common with other Christians, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regret the actions and statements of individuals who have been insensitive to the pain suffered by the victims of racism *and ask forgiveness for those guilty of this grievous sin.*" [emphasis added] This reflects his well-known emphasis on ministering among black Africans.

However, he next made a claim that was historically untrue of the LDS hierarchy's statements and actions from Brigham Young in 1847 to Ezra Taft Benson in 1968. Morrison continued his statement of September 2000: "How grateful I am that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has from its beginnings stood strongly against racism in any of its malignant manifestations." Nevertheless, if current LDS leaders (unlike the Pope and Roman Catholic bishops) cannot apologize for their church's institutional sins of the past, at least the Mormon hierarchy has abandoned racism during recent decades.

In the 1960s LDS headquarters also began patching up its long-standing conflicts with the Catholic diocese. In January 1960 President David O. McKay ordered that McConkie's book should not be reprinted because of its 1067 doctrinal errors, including statements offensive to Roman Catholics. After McConkie's father-in-law became McKay's counselor in 1965, the church president relented and allowed a revised edition of *Mormon Doctrine* the next year—without the offensive passages. Under the direction of Gordon B. Hinckley (first as an apostle and then as special counselor to the First Presidency), from the mid-1970s to 1982, LDS headquarters worked with the American Catholic hierarchy in more than twenty states to defeat ratification of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment for women. In March 1984 the First Presidency publicly stated: "[W]e are disturbed and saddened at the presence of anti-Catholic posters being placed in areas within Salt Lake City."

In 1985 LDS headquarters publicly gave 9.5 million dollars to the Catholic Relief Services for humanitarian aid in Africa. The public explanation was that the LDS church did not have a similarly effective relief program for the sub-Sahara, but this money could just as easily have gone to the African relief programs of secular agencies like CARE or the International Red Cross. However, Counselor Hinckley (at the time the only functioning member of the First Presidency) astutely gave this huge donation to the LDS Church's political ally in America's culture wars. Continuing its political alliance with the American Catholic hierarchy, LDS headquarters also contributed financially to the local diocese for its decade-long renovation of Salt Lake City's Catholic cathedral. In 1993 First Presidency counselor Thomas S. Monson spoke at the cathedral's rededication ceremony.

Because evangelical Protestants and fundamentalist Christians have also been allies with LDS headquarters in various political campaigns since the mid-1970s, LDS presidents have tried to mend fences there, as well. For example, Spencer W. Kimball publicly praised Jerry Falwell and his evangelical Moral Majority. The success of the Protestant accommodation by LDS headquarters was most evident in July 1995, when Utah's Presbytery successfully presented a resolution to the Presbyterian General Assembly of the United States declaring that the LDS church is

"a new and emerging religion that expresses allegiance to Jesus Christ in terms used within the Christian tradition." This ecumenical statement was at odds with Protestant denominations which define Mormonism as a non-Christian cult. Utah's Presbytery thus declared an official end to its leading the Salt Lake Ministerial Association in several anti-Mormon campaigns since the early 1900s.

Nevertheless, Shirley Rogers Radl's 1983 study of the "Religious New Right" made an important observation about the political coalition of Mormons, conservative Catholics, and fundamentalist Protestants who fought against ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in various states from the mid-1970s until its defeat in 1982. She observed that many Catholics and Protestant fundamentalists had to "compartmentalize" their beliefs and attitudes in order to avoid reminding their LDS political allies how much these Christians detest the LDS church for its doctrinal heterodoxy.

By 1997 LDS president Gordon B. Hinckley was responding to this political problem by publicly diminishing the perception of conflict between fundamental Protestant and LDS doctrines. By this time LDS headquarters was spearheading a national interfaith campaign against civil protections for homosexuals and against legalization of same-sex marriage. In widely publicized media interviews, President Hinckley backtracked from LDS doctrines about plurality of gods and the human potential of becoming "as God is." After his decades of dealing with the media, these statements in separate interviews were not accidental. However, he told general conference: "You need not worry that I do not understand some matters of doctrine. I think I understand them thoroughly," while significantly not identifying the controversial doctrines involved. Therefore, this public reassurance to the faithful did not undercut his repeated efforts to publicly diminish the objections of his political allies to nettlesome LDS theologies.

For those who had not read the media's verbatim questions and answers from his interviews, there was no reason to doubt his conference claim of being misquoted. For otherwise uninformed Mormons throughout the world, President Hinckley's explanation at October 1997 conference did not identify these controversial doctrines of Deity (lest some LDS members be as offended by Mormonism's "old time religion" as the church's new Protestant political allies have been). This was an ecumenical echo of Nauvoo's church-within-a-church.

There has been a less accommodating and less happy relationship of LDS headquarters with its minority of "self-proclaimed" intellectuals and inquiring Mormons. Although the First Presidency encouraged openness in research and publication of Mormon history during the early 1970s, this gradually declined under the influence of Apostles Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, and Boyd K. Packer. In a similar develop-

ment, the academic openness and rigor encouraged by Dallin H. Oaks at Brigham Young University in the 1970s withered under the same apostolic influences until (as mandated by church headquarters) BYU distinguished itself in the 1990s by firing or forcing to retire numerous professors whose scholarship seemed threatening (despite their protestations of faith). In 1992 the First Presidency acknowledged that there was a special "Strengthening the Members Committee" at headquarters whose sole purpose was to maintain investigative files on church members and notify their local leaders to "take appropriate action" for instances of public speaking or publication about controversial topics (including letters to newspapers). The excommunication or disfellowshipping of six Utah scholars and feminists in September 1993 for their publications and Sunstone talks in Salt Lake City sent a message of intimidation to independently-minded Mormons throughout the world: Think what you will, but speak and write at the peril of your church membership.

7. Concerning physical and material culture—From the late 1950s onward the explosive growth of church membership resulted in a huge increase of LDS meetinghouses throughout the world. This caused an end to local choice for the design of chapels. While standardized architecture brought financial savings, centralizing all architectural decisions at LDS headquarters also extended the physical culture of LDS headquarters throughout the world.

As uniformly-designed meetinghouses replaced the individualized religious architecture of Utah, they became the models for LDS chapels everywhere else. This provided concrete comfort to LDS leaders who worried about the centrifugal tendencies of massive growth in far-flung places. Standardized chapel design allows the general authorities to "feel at home" whenever they visit LDS congregations distant from headquarters. For international Mormons, the foreign style of their LDS meetinghouses also reinforces their sense of linkage to Utah headquarters. However, these benefits also involve cultural imperialism, which is the reason that anti-American radicals have attacked and destroyed LDS chapels in Latin America.

By the completion of the twenty-eight-story LDS Church Office Building in 1972, the First Presidency was no longer interested in perpetuating the geographic polarization of Salt Lake City's business district along religious lines. Towering above the business district which flowed southward on the adjacent State and Main streets, this monolithic structure was a sufficient symbol of the city's power structure. To that end, by a "gentlemen's agreement" of LDS headquarters with Salt Lake City's zoning board and the developers of downtown real estate, no subsequent skyscraper has been allowed to over-top the LDS office tower. The southward slope of the terrain has allowed non-LDS corporations to erect skyscrapers whose vertical measurements exceed that of the

Church Office Building while still preserving the appearance of its physical supremacy over the downtown skyline.

By the 1970s LDS headquarters and non-Mormon power-brokers jointly agreed to end the religious segregation of the city's business district. Years before moving into the Church Office Building in November 1972, the church's genealogical library was housed in the old Montgomery Ward building on Main Street. This had previously been within the Gentile section of Main Street's businesses. Likewise, Zion's Securities Corporation (the church's real-estate holding company) had allowed Kennecott Copper Company (controlled by non-Mormons and non-Utahns) to build its tall office building across from Brigham Young's Bee Hive House mansion. Soon LDS headquarters allowed an open-on-Sundays shopping mall to locate with one side facing the Salt Lake Temple and another side facing the closed-on-Sundays ZCMI mall.

An equally significant change for Salt Lake City's physical culture was the construction of the Federal Office Building on the corner of First South and State. Previously, in keeping with the First Presidency's 1901 commentary, U.S. government buildings had advanced no farther north on Main Street than Fourth South.

Due to changes at headquarters in the 1970s, most of the previous examples of mid-twentieth-century LDS material culture are no longer part of the experience of LDS children, youth, or women. However, since the 1980s CTR rings and jewelry have become the Mormon equivalent of crucifixes for LDS youth and young adults. However, as another example of Mormonism's late-twentieth-century cultural imperialism, non-English-speaking Mormons must mentally translate their CTR talisman into their own language's equivalent of "Choose the Right."

Conclusion

There are many ways of understanding the Mormon experience, which has been varied at headquarters and in far distant branches of the faithful. Despite this diversity, both non-Mormons and Mormons may find useful understanding through comparing the experience at LDS headquarters with the Mormon experience elsewhere. This essay is only introductory to such an approach, but current Mormons may find parts of their own experiences in such comparison. Especially those who feel that their church has changed in dramatic ways.

Love is a delicate chain of moments

–for Justin in France

Marilyn Bushman-Carlton

Here, the heavy brown ones from your father's coat,
there the ladybugs from Jari's first grade dress,
and from your birthday shirt, five urgent reds.
You, sorting the buttons while I sewed.

On a black magnetic board,
I move words into fragments, little poems:
travel the diamond road
recall together lusciously
incubate that vision
chocolate moon
worship delirious color

If I study words, rearrange, and link them,
they become personal,
as weirdly accurate
as a horoscope or class prediction,
mythical as kept buttons,
true as portions of scrambled dreams.

Last night you were not in France,
but in Brazil. The dream started with a sambaó
a stream of green and yellow, orange.
Your father and I were there
to bring you home.

Here it rains like a bird
Shadows crackle under light
Magic has smeared a thousand pictures

Three of us were driving a high road.
The moon was brown as a Hershey's Special Dark.
Not one white star.
We were holding to the rod of slick road,
and though the clouds were shooting rain,
your father, wearing that brown coat,
kept the headlights off, the wipers, too.
True to form, I was fevered by the height;
my brake foot clawed the floor.

Though you are twenty-one,
last night you were small in the bucket of my lap,
and accurate—
down to the heaped black hair
and the red buttons closing your shirt.

Coming Home

David K. Isom

I see you in the glass.
Welcome home!
Hard to believe
You are a man

Until now I have avoided
Even glancing at you,
Except in those few frightful
Moments when ecstasy
Or despair or disgust
Hobbled my inhibitions, and I
Dared look at you, coyly.

If I stare at you, am I narcissus?
Will jealous Echo curse me with
Inescapable solipsism?

They said the night might come
When with joy I would greet
You at the door and say, Come in
I have been waiting for you

I have prepared a place for you
And ginger tea, old cheese
New bread, old wine

This is your home
I built it for you
The altar of gold and white
The kitchen, the walnut pig,
The yellow pepper

I never dreamed that
When you returned you
Would smile winsomely
And we would tell jokes and
Laugh and I would lose all fear

Shall we dance?

Let me wash your feet with
My beard. I have kept the
Oil warm and saved the
Sandalwood incense that
I got for you from a god in Giza

I have loved you all your life.
Even while I ignored you for
Another I did not hate you

Here are the love letters
I wrote to you
Here is the poem I wrote
To call you home

Here is a note I scrawled
For you one night on a ferry
Near Crete when death
Came aboard and I feared
That I would be gone
When you came back

I am glad that you came
While I still have radiance
And energy to comfort you
To honor you and me, buddy

Tomorrow we will
Meet my children
They will love you
As they have loved me

Come. Let us feast together.

The Proper Order in Which You Found It: from a Brazilian Missionary Journal

Seth P. Clarke

SEPTEMBER 4, 1999

THE BUS TO SÃO BENTO WINDS AND CUTS up through a complex development of valleys and mountainous jungle. The canopy of trees changes periodically during the slow ascent from the typical street-lining palms to heavier blocked rows of pines; then a tangled, thick, jungle-like fabric of wider trees mixes with hanging moss, vines, and flowering branches. This is then patched with isolated acres of white, pencil-like eucalyptus trees and a darker more majestic body of Pinheiros. These are tall, nut-producing pines whose trunks rise up high from the earth and then burst at the top like fireworks with long branches that arch toward the sky and terminate in large green pompoms.

Above it all, the bus reaches a road that follows the crest of the mountain and looks out over the entire series of valleys and hills to reveal hundreds of acres covered in thick and lively banana trees. On steep slopes and irregular tracts, in every possible, imaginable corner there are banana trees in great leafy profusion. They consist of little more than their enormous pastel green foliage, because their stalky trunks are almost hollow, a composite of loosely wrapped fibrous sheaves that blend out into the wide, decorative leaves. New leaves shoot straight up from the center stalk, mature leaves curve downward and are shredded into ribbons by the wind, and dead leaves hang straight down, turn gray and fall off. From the center of the tree comes a sort of purple, tail-like branch, a ball and chain that arches up and gradually weighs the tree over to one side; here, the green ordered bunches of bananas open and

begin filling out, all the while hanging upside-down. I have never seen such bananas become what one might consider ripe, but I imagine it would be beautiful, especially with a crowd of Brazilian harvesters, working the long rows with wheel barrels and machetes, hauling enormous mountains of canary yellow bananas in trucks down the hill-side lane. My companion, Elder Thomas, looks out over the vast banana tracts, "Yeesh, I'd hate to be the son of THAT farmer come harvest time!"

Today is a division with Elders Luker and G. Santos from São Bento. Just one of the diverse ways we missionaries waste time and mission resources; a division generally requires that one set of companions travel to the area of another (in this case one hour away) to swap "comps" for the day and then come zipping right back to their own area to work, all this only to be repeated the very next morning , trading back. Eight bus tickets in total.

In this division I stay with Elder Luker in São Bento while my companion returns to our area in Jaraguá do Sul. There isn't very much planned for today in the way of "choice appointments" or "pure elects" to teach, a fact of which Elder Luker, as host, is surely hyperaware; I'm happy not to be in his shoes. Even though I'm not his "superior," so to speak, he no doubt wishes he had a few more dependable, secure ideas to try out or places to go in order to keep us occupied and provide opportunities to teach. Otherwise, willy-nilly, days like these tend to fill up with frivolous things.

Of the two appointments that had been firmly scheduled and confirmed, neither comes through, and we are left to search out new activities, new families to teach. Fortunately, Elder Luker does happen to remember one house we could visit and perform service. Finally, we take off on a good half-hour walk just to get there. It's the home of Emílio and Elizabeth, an old retired couple. We are going to give the man his weekly shave.

As we enter their small home through the mud-room, I see tall stacks of small, red firewood neatly ordered against the wall and a step up into Emílio's room. From what I can see, he is propped up on a couch, waiting eagerly for his two young friends to arrive, arranging his blanket around himself at the waist. He has a very excited grin on his face as if he'd been waiting the whole morning. Elizabeth, a short, sturdy woman, enters behind us, bringing a handful of chopped wood to put in the stove.

"How good you've come! Emílio was just starting to worry about you boys." She's a delightful, bustling old gal with long gray hair done up in a bun, wearing a long house-skirt with leggings on underneath and a big wool sweater, whose cuffs are rolled above the elbows. She lifts open the wood stove and wedges the firewood into the small fiery hole, closes it, and replaces a most beautiful, polished aluminum kettle with

an aged wooden handle. Elizabeth then works her hands clean on the front of her house skirt and turns her full attention to us, gives me her hand and shakes firmly. She has the most piercing blue eyes and a soft, sweet smile.

"Emílio so wants to have a shave, you don't even know how badly!" Her voice sounds warm and she is absolutely charming. I am so taken by my encounter with her that I hardly notice that Elder Luker has already sprung into action. He brings from the corner of the small room a wheel chair and wheels it around as if it were a go-cart, trying to get an even wider smile across Emílio's face; he announces in a radio-like voice that the shaving time has arrived, "Would all persons involved please take their places and get ready for lift-off in ten—nine—eight—seven. . ." Emílio begins to quiver with excitement and sets about getting himself situated for "lift-off." He roughly rubs his whiskery face up and down with his bony hands, stretches his arms to the sky, and begins to turn his back toward us and the approaching wheel chair. Elizabeth moves forward to assist him, removing the gathered blanket from his lap to reveal his naked, white lower quarters. She removes his withered genitalia from a catch basin and dabs him off with a wash rag, preparing him to be lifted into the wheelchair. Emílio has no legs.

We hoist this gentle, abbreviated man into his chair, and he shimmies back into his seat to assure excellent posture. Elizabeth immediately arranges a towel around Emílio's lap and explains to me that he's been seven years without legs, but she doesn't say how this happened. From the small basin on the side of the room, Luker retrieves a shaving bowl and brush and also a bar of soap and Gillette razor. With his pocketknife, he shaves off soap into the bowl and pours in a splash of the water that Elizabeth is warming on the stove. As he begins to lather the soap with the brush and daub it onto Emílio's face, Luker hums the Brazilian hymn of independence and waltzes about the back of the wheelchair. Elizabeth offers me a chair on her side to sit and watch the job. She talks ever so intently with me. Her big bushy eyebrows rise and fall as she graciously queries me about my home in the United States.

I get an even better look at the room and discover fine details that bring the room to life with the 40-years of history that have passed since they built their home. The floor has a perfect, waxed shine from years and years of wear and polishing, the enormous, cast-iron wood stove has been kept perfectly clean in spite of countless meals, the gleaming jars of pickles and baby onions done up in that very room in a large pressure cooker are stowed above the hutch, and on the cupboard sit aged frames, photos, and stopped clocks. What unusually calm, dulcet moments these are with our light conversation. I drift in and out, from reality to reverie, the sound of grandchildren wrestling and playing in the yard, Elder Luker's light humming, and the whisper-like chuckle of Emílio, re-

sponding to his tickling barber's touch. Beyond the quiet, splashing rinse of the razor in the wash basin, the cool afternoon breeze breathes in and through the open window, giving the white curtains body and life.

Elder Luker finishes the shave and playfully buffs off the last of the soap lather from Emílio's face. He then wraps his hand towel over the man's head and asks, "How long since you joined the convent, sister?" and Emílio just melts with joy. Elizabeth reminds me that missionaries from our church have been shaving Emílio weekly for more than five years.

As Elder Luker applies the finishing touch, a light dusting of fragrant talc, Elizabeth says, "They say the world is gonna end on Wednesday according to some 'Nostra-day-mus' fella. You think that's true?"

"No," I smile, "I think everything's going to stay right like it is."

FEBRUARY 9, 2000

"When using the toilet," says the sign posted just inside the privy door of the Prochnow house, "flush." Eunice Prochnow has her own eccentric approach to everything, and leaving long, over-detailed instruction notices around the house for her careless husband and two sons is apparently her favored means of self-expression—they're everywhere.

"Should you happen to dirty the bottom of the bowl or dribble on the rim," the sign continues, "scrub it clean with the small toilet brush, and wipe the rim with a bit of toilet paper." Reading this notice for the first time, I am startled to attention from what had been a moment of dizzy-eyed relaxation and relief of the sort that follows a hot lunch before an unbearably hot afternoon. I stop reading, evaluate my performance, assume a better stance, and correct my aim as if I were being watched, graded.

Beyond the door, I can hear Eunice begin to clear away the wreckage from one of her crash'n'burn lunches for us missionaries: over-fried, breaded steaks, black beans and rice (abnormally cooked in the same pan to give a uniform blackness to both), finely chopped cabbage sprinkled with vinegar and salt, shredded carrots, pineapple slices for dessert, and to wash it all down, a strange pineapple juice she makes by boiling the fruit's husk. It's the same meal every time because we eat here only on Mondays, and Eunice's menus are governed by her fixed rotation. Still, I doubt her food is any less quirky on the other days. I listen and hear her fill the sink to begin washing the dishes.

Leopoldo, her brusque and mischievous husband, has resumed his project of tearing down the rotten, termite-ridden ceiling in the kitchen, which, of course, is directly above Eunice's own work space. I can already hear them return to the murmurs and bickering in which we found

them engaged when we first arrived for lunch. They are an odd couple. They each carry on whole meaningless conversations with nothing but thin air. To be frank, I don't know how Eunice managed to put lunch on the table today because when we arrived, Leopoldo was just descending the ladder from a gaping hole in the attic floor clear down through the kitchen ceiling, and looking as though he'd just kicked his way through that very instant. Reaching the bottom of the ladder, he got out his broom and began to gather a lot of rubble and dust—termites fabricate dust—into the corner of the dining area. Miraculously there was no dirt to be found on the kitchen table; only plates, forks and overturned glasses with paper napkins tucked up inside each one, Eunice's signature touch. She busied herself over her boiling pineapple-husk punch and didn't see us come in, but finally recognized our presence and shook our hands in greeting. Her glasses were fogged by the steam of her stove-top creations. She has a very humble, motherly look and always seems pleased to receive our visit.

We deposited our book bags in the parlor and went to wash our hands in the bathroom—strangely separate from the privy, another Prochnow quirk—just off the kitchen area. On returning, I found Leopoldo walking around the perimeter of the kitchen tapping each tile near the top of the walls, no doubt to estimate how many he would need to replace in his project. Each time he crossed paths with Eunice, he'd raise a scuffle and say, "Woman, Let's eat! You're holding me up!" never taking his eyes off his own project overhead. Leopoldo wears thick, black-framed glasses; has a big, cartoonish nose with pronounced cheekbones; and speaks with a wily tone, harshened by his years of heavy smoking. Occasionally when Álvoro, their youngest, red-headed son of 17, passed by attending to his chores, Leopoldo piped up, "Son, don't you plan on leaving this house this afternoon! You're staying right here to work on this project I've started." Álvoro responded with a compliant silence, knowing only too well what a new project of his father's means. A strapping, sociable teen, he gave us a look that said, "might as well cancel my plans for the whole week."

Eunice's frying pan hissed sharply as she put the first of the breaded steaks down to fry. She'd laid out a cockeyed line-up of flour, beaten egg, and bread crumbs—all out of order—through which she transferred each tenderized piece of meat, soon to become tough shoe leather on a plate. She softened the atmosphere a bit with her melodious humming of Primary hymns. Eunice is the director of the Primary music and classes at church, a calling which she takes very seriously. Two times a week, she puts on her walking sandals and hikes all over town to visit the branch children, especially those of less-active families. She delivers a spiritual message and sings Primary songs with the children, like a grandma come to visit. She also puts great effort into preparing stenciled lyric

posters for each song, which she mounts on the easel in the Primary room each week, helping the kids learn the words faster. She invents and publicizes grand Primary social activities, which no child attends other than her own granddaughters.

Leopoldo, a non-member, is contemptuous of Eunice's participation in the church and has little tolerance for church talk at his lunch table. If the subject is mentioned at all, however, it's usually by him:

"You *Mormons* just like to party and spend money!" he'll say all of a sudden. "You don't see me hoppin' on a bus to São Paulo for a five day jaunt in the city," to which Eunice cries in defense, "It was to the temple, Leo, it's not a party!" having just returned herself from a temple caravan.

"Oh no," he says in reproof, waving his index finger in her face, "you won't see me getting baptized, not unless the church gives me $300,000!" Much of the time he's merely kidding around, but when it comes to money matters, there's always quite a bit of real sentiment behind Leopoldo's comments. He lives every day indignant over the fact that after "twenty-eight years, eleven months and twenty-seven days" of work (as he has so often rehearsed to us) at the local steel factory, he was short-changed on his retirement. Considering himself pensionable at three Brazilian salaries (equivalent to a monthly $R300 plus and appropriate for 29 years of work history), Leopoldo raves at the injustice in his receiving only one salary, a monthly $R136, give or take—in other words, minimum wage for the rest of his life. This is not what Leopoldo expected, and even if it means no more than playing the poor man's lottery every day or complaining to anybody who is willing to listen till he dies, Leopoldo refuses to accept the lot he's drawn. He will not be happy.

"The whole justice system in Brazil's a damn lie!" he'll finally say, bringing his fist down onto the lunch table. Today Eunice actually gets up the courage to respond, "All right, Leo, we've all heard how you feel, now just be quiet and let everybody enjoy their lunch in peace!"

We take our seats at the table and Eunice invites one of us missionaries to give the blessing on the food, for which Leopoldo grants a brief moment of reverence. Following the prayer, he begins by serving his own plate and mutters under his breath, "In the poor man's house you eat everything there is, and then you suck your thumb afterwards in hunger. You wanna help me out? Gimme $100,000 and see if that doesn't make me smile! I need to buy a new faucet for the sink, a new wardrobe and dresser, a helicopter and cruise liner," and his list goes on.

On the cabinets above the kitchen sink is written: "To all members of this household WITHOUT EXCEPTION: If you dirty a plate or any other kitchen utensil, wash it after use." As if communication problems with her husband weren't enough, Eunice has yet another considerable challenge living under this roof, to whom this particular notice is directed. Alexandre, her oldest son, is on almost all accounts "the exception" to

her rules. The way the family talks, one might think Alexandre were a story book character, like the Billy-goats' Gruff or Beauty's Beast. As we sit at lunch, we can see into the parlor where a door to one of the adjacent bedrooms is forever closed; it is a room toward which many gestures and vague, soft-spoken comments are directed. It is Alexandre's room.

In 1990, Alexandre returned from his mission in Porto Alegre Brazil on foot with nothing but the clothes on his back. Something on the mission had changed him—something drastic. He entered his room and shut the door for weeks at a time. He became a total recluse, hiding away from the world behind his closed bedroom door. He left, of course, to tend to certain necessities, even to run errands in the neighborhood, but he never mentioned even a word in passing as to what he was doing or where he would go. For many months he ate only pork and beans and other canned foods, setting the empty cans outside his window for disposal. With time he began accepting his mother's food, but only if it were leftover after everyone else had eaten and cleared out, and even then it had to be in a special Tupperware container, placed at his end of the table, before he'd touch it.

When the subject comes up today (as it inevitably does every time we visit), Eunice leans toward us at the table and in a concerned whisper says, "He's writing, Elders." Her look turns very serious. Leopoldo doesn't pay any attention and keeps on eating.

"He fills whole notebooks with. . .*writings*." She seems to experience some difficulty, is reluctant to release the words in her own mouth. Finally she manages one word, "Prophecies"—and then another few—"about the last days"—and then she tells me the craziest stuff I've ever heard.

Alexandre thinks he is God's chosen prophet. But not just any old prophet. He is one of the two witnesses mentioned in Revelations 11:3-14 who will be murdered in the streets of Jerusalem, whose body will lie three days before the temple to be seen by all, and who will resurrect on the third day as an apocalyptic sign to the entire world. He receives and records his prophetic visions in notebooks, which fill his desk drawers and shelves. What little she understands of this, Eunice has gathered from passing comments and from snooping around while Alexandre was out of the house.

"The door to his life has literally been shut for ten whole years, Elder," she explains to me, continuing the conversation after lunch. She digs out a pile of black binders in which she has gathered all of Alexandre's mission letters and clippings; she's saved everything, together with her own extensive journal entries that talk about the family and each of her sons. She's begun to trace the changes she observed during the last year of his mission, trying to discover what it was that has left him in his current condition. She shows us letters in which he wrote everything in senseless rhyme and riddles, letters in which he opened fire on her with

abusive language, and finally letters where he wrote nothing at all—blank pages only. She handles each page with equal love and gentle care. I can only imagine the fear and sadness she must have felt as the distance between her and Alexandre became greater with each correspondence and, worse, the horror she experienced when he came home, a lunatic.

"Little by little, though," says Eunice with a new look of hope, "he's opening the door again. He doesn't run to his room so quickly when I enter the kitchen, but sits with me, if only in silence. He talks a bit here and there, but says he can't tell me anything more about his calling or what he must do. But he's talking with me, Elder, for the first time in 10 years, Alexandre's talking again!"

Leopoldo shows no interest or sympathy during our conversation, but walks in and out of the parlor area, adding his brutally humorous comments and gestures, all of which carry an expression of lost *cause—nothing-to-be-done*. He is, in a sense, more apocalyptic than his son. But Eunice has a hope and faith that to me are remarkable. In practical fact, the more she learns about Alexandre, the more reason she has to worry. (He has even confessed to having felt inspired to kill the family and then himself, to which Eunice responded by hiding all the knives in the house.) Even so, the woman prays for her son as if he were still far from home, on his mission even, with perfect hope that one day he will return completely to his mother's love. Closing her binders and scrap collections, Eunice embraces them as if each represented her particular love for one of her distant children, and concludes, "My sons are all special."

Inside the privy door, the notice continues: "After cleaning toilet, throw the toilet paper away, and rinse the brush in the sink. Then return both the brush and the bathroom carpet to their proper places, lower the toilet lid, and turn off the light. Keep everything in the proper order in which you found it."

I'm happy to comply with these house rules and almost ritualistically check-off each task with a sort of reverence, feeling that Eunice's rules deserve to be respected (though in reality I haven't made the least bit of mess). It is, after all, the house of a family, if not of a prophet. It is, in either case, a sacred place.

Back in the kitchen I find Leopoldo unbuttoning his shirt to take it off and work. He's just finished bragging that, though he has a 60 year-old face, his body remains that of a 17 year-old boy in his prime. To look at him, his tight and sickly torso, you'd think he'd spent eight weeks in a smokehouse, strung up along side of some carp. He resumes scrutinizing his project overhead and Eunice continues to clean up. We make our way to the door, thanking them for the meal and hospitality. We are unaware of a new presence that has arrived at the back door of the kitchen. Only when I shake Eunice's hand once more in thanks and turn to exit the house am I startled to see him.

He's been patiently waiting outside the screen door since he arrived and saw me leaving the bathroom. He hasn't said a word, nor entered the kitchen. The two of us stare at each other for a second or two—long enough for me to focus on him and see he's not the strange specter I had imagined. He is very normal, if a little pale, and manages even a polite but conscientious smile. I can tell he's been jogging and is now returning, dressed in shorts and running shoes, a bit sweaty. He reaches to open the door, and I reach out to assist, holding it open for him. After a moment's pause, he enters the kitchen and says only, "Excuse me," in a normal, normal voice. He then crosses the kitchen, steps through the parlor and into his room, and closes the door.

MAY 3, 2000

Walking back from church on Sunday, we saw a red truck pull over about 75 yards ahead from whose passenger-side window was thrown a white plastic grocery sack before the truck sped off down the road. We were on a stretch of highway that's tended only by vultures, crabs, and other scavengers and is, thus, a safe and popular dumping ground for trash. Few people even pass through there on foot, so we missionaries were the first to arrive after the truck and came upon the abandoned grocery sack, whining and meowing in the grass.

Three kittens, not two days old with eyes still tightly locked shut, pawed at their prison's plastic walls, desperate for the warm, familiar presence of their mother. I opened the bag and took them out, all three in one hand, and their meows grew all the more shrill. Their delicate heads balanced on frail necks, and fine claws clung to each of my giant fingers. I set them back into the bag gently, stood again, and surveyed the dilemma. So far from the neighborhoods of compassionate children or sympathetic passers-by who might come to their rescue, I knew they'd surely die. I couldn't think of anyone who might take care of them and debated whether it was even a good idea for us, as missionaries, to be seen toting a sack of kittens into a residential neighborhood to drop off on some curb or street corner where they would stand a better chance of rescue.

A man approached us from behind. He looked as if he were returning from hard work, wearing scruffy clothes and missing all his front teeth. He too stopped to look over the scene. We explained the situation to him and our reasons for indecision, but he just kept shaking his head and murmuring, *que pecado*, "what sin."

Finally, in what seemed compassionate valiance, the man took action. He gathered the three up in the bag and tied it twice. It ballooned tight with trapped air, and I asked if he ought not poke a little hole in the bag to let the little ones breathe, which he did. Relieved to see that this

man was more willing than we were to handle the situation, my sense of injustice or danger subsided, and we walked along beside him, talking. I began to hope that perhaps our good Samaritan was a special contact whom we might end up teaching. But when we reached the small bridge that passes over our river-like ocean inlet, the stranger gave the sack of kittens a light toss and quipped, "We'll see if they can swim!"

I stopped and my stomach knotted again to watch the package splash down on the surface of the water and become caught in a circular current; it swept out a little ways, then back again, afloat but out of reach. The man had continued on, laughing at our silent dismay and proud of his cruelty, but we looked on. I could hear the kittens' cries become more frightened as their balloon-like plastic sack filled with cold water through the very hole I had suggested be made. Only a minute passed and their cries were gone. Though I could still see one kitten helplessly paw against the inside of the sack, I knew he would soon succumb like the others. At our urging, a nearby fisherman rowed over to fish them out, but found them already dead and tossed them back.

Kitten death. A thing that's absolutely common and everyday—unbearably worse crimes are committed in the name of supper—but all the same, it was sobering and pitiful to watch. It might have been better, I thought, not even to have stopped for the kittens in the first place.

MAY 5, 2000

Church was good Sunday—well, average. We're going through a stage of abnormal normality: no great jumps or falls in attendance but also never the same crowd. Members come one week but skip the next, and oddly there is always someone there back from a lengthy absence. The people we visit during the week and commit to come to church on Sunday never show up, yet other people whom we haven't visited for weeks just turn up like stray dogs. The surprises and disappointments combined are so maddening any more, I don't even know what to pray for.

Our backbone (and it's a weak one) is made up of one or two stock families whose children have also married, hung around and multiplied the family headcount in church. In the case of Eunice Prochnow's family, they have as many as four generations there on any given Sunday: 1) her deaf mother Judith doesn't miss a week, 2) Eunice, herself, attends (sometimes even managing to bring cantankerous old Leopoldo, her non-member husband), 3) her two sons Álvoro and Arnaldo are there, and Arnaldo brings his wife and 4) daughters, the great-grand-daughters of the bunch.

Then Lindomar Salvador provides not only his family (wife Ana and mentally retarded daughter Eliane), but also three more, the families of three children, whom he married off before they were really prepared.

They're all good people, individually, but as a family can't manage to keep one another active in church, and recently they are slipping through the cracks. Still, they make up a good 40 percent of our branch on any given Sunday.

The rest are stragglers. Espinheiros Branch separated from the Boa Vista Ward only three years ago and has since experienced a period of rapid cancerous growth. A succession of ambitious missionaries passed through and inflated our church rosters with scads of unmarried women, 8-year-old kids without their parents, and generally unconverted new members. Today those new members, together with the ambitious missionaries have all disappeared, with the exception of one shining family: that of our Branch President Sinval and his wife, Salete. The number of baptized members is more than high enough to justify a ward and the building of a chapel, but the number of active, tithe paying, worthy members hardly even justifies the expense for rent or light and water bills in our regular meetinghouse. In fact, the stake president has given us till June (when our rent contract expires) to grow or close.

This may seem like late notice, but only because I'm reporting on it one month away from our deadline. In reality, we've known about this possibility for over five months. At first we kept it a secret among the branch presidency, the quorum president and us missionaries. No one talked about it, either from disbelief that such regress could or would occur, or because some leaders, in fact, wanted Espinheiros to close; there are of course those who, in their heart of hearts, would prefer to re-unite with our mother-ward, Boa Vista, take a back seat in every meeting and never lift another finger. Many of the leaders seem soured by the weight of responsibility that has stranded them out here in the swamps.

So what do we do? We try to visit members as much as possible, to encourage them in their callings and at least to appear coordinated, united, and resolved. But, in fact, we do our work in our way, and the branch leaders tend separately to theirs—and everybody ends up doing pretty shoddy work. Sunday, we all show up at church to see how the cards will land.

We missionaries head off walking Sunday mornings at about eight a.m. to arrive at the meetinghouse by quarter to nine. If we're lucky, one of our member families will drive by midway and offer us a ride. This week, it was Lindomar. His car was already packed with his wife Ana, daughter Eliane and a gang of grandkids whose parents had all stayed at home in bed. I ended up sharing the front passenger seat with my companion, and we had to straddle the semi-transparent gas tank that Lindomar has rigged up inside the cab. His gas gauge is shot, so he monitors the fuel level by keeping the tank right where he can see it (at our feet), illegal though this may be.

Rounding the corner to the church's street, Lindomar pulled off at a bread store to buy a can of soda as a bribe to soothe the mischievous Junior, a five year old grandson, who's not been known to behave during a single sacrament meeting without it. It's a small, pragmatic indiscretion, Lindomar's buying things on Sunday, but nevertheless has been a source of complaint and disenchantment to newer members, who pass by that same bread store and see his red Chevy and him coming out with his hands full. Even so, Ana felt it necessary to emphasize to little Junior, as he sat on her lap waiting for his grandpa to return with the soda, that this was "a strictly one-time thing," and that "we do not buy things on Sunday because its the Lord's Day." No sooner had she said this, than Lindomar re-entered the car, delivered the purchase, and started the engine again. "What are you talking about, Grandma?" said Junior, "You and Grandpa stop here every week on the way to church!"

At church, Branch President Sinval usually arrives about fifteen minutes before anyone else and opens up all the doors and windows to air things out. He's a dedicated worker in all he does, but he becomes nervous and timid on Sunday. The sooner he manages to delegate his responsibilities to other people and escape the spotlight, the better he feels. The poor man has reason to feel this way. When Sinval had been a member for only four years, the previous branch president (a shifty fellow I'm glad I never knew in person) called on him at his house late one evening, the night before that man suspiciously and secretly moved out-of-town. He delivered all the leadership manuals together with the calling of President. Since then, Sinval has struggled to perform even the basic minimum that the job requires in the face of a congregation, whose members are mostly older and more experienced than he is. Whether it's conducting meetings, teaching classes, or even giving talks, his game-plan of pushing off Sunday tasks to others has become so strategic, I begin to worry that he just might be scheming an exodus like his predecessors. At the rate that necessity calls on him in this small branch, it would not be hard to understand why.

Classes are poorly improvised, most often by Lindomar or occasionally by his son Edson, should he decide to come to church. Edson sits in the back of the Priesthood quorum, studying the manual for his adult Sunday-school class because he hasn't opened the book since last week. He can do this because he's a returned if fallen missionary with a pull-it-off-at-the-last-minute attitude. He has enough knowledge to impress with just enough ambivalence to confuse, and our lessons always turn out lifeless and uninspiring. Besides, everyone knows that the moment church gets out, Edson will race home and get changed to go out and play soccer Sunday afternoon.

This week's lesson was proceeding sleepily until the subject of baptism came up and the discussion developed as to why certain church

denizens come out every week but never take the plunge. One of our finest families, that of Carlos and Lenira, sits right up front in every meeting but for some mysterious reason (that nobody knows and they won't reveal) has not been baptized into the church. Well, so much talk about the B-word made old Leopoldo's ears ring, surely thinking people were talking about him, a non-member. Finally, after about all he could stand, he piped up from the back, "It's because this is all a damn lie, that's why! Oh, I'll be baptized, all right—just gimme $300,000!" He accompanies his family to church every now and then to escape his own loneliness at home, but he doesn't want to accept anything that is taught there.

"Well Leopoldo, when are you planning to be baptized," asked someone on the other side of the room, "when you are old and dying?"

"Of course not," he responded, "only AFTER I die!"

A sister in front of me leaned in to her neighbor's ear and whispered, "In this church that's okay too, isn't it?"

Valdir always arrives late but in time for sacrament meeting. He was excommunicated and lost his priesthood when he paired off with young Cristiane and started making babies. Now they both come to church together like Bonnie and Clyde, and everybody's head turns when they come skipping in the door. Valdir comes dressed in a Sunday best that's altogether different from his greasy work duds; he even wears a dentured, Cheshire-cat-smile that's different from his grin on other days of the week and makes his lips bulge ever so slightly. Cristiane, not half his age, wears tight-fitting short skirts and shoulderless blouses and snaps at Valdir for not keeping his hands to himself on the family pew—a not-so-careless indiscretion which has also perturbed our newer, still innocent members. They certainly never expected to see sin practiced casually in church.

Mix in one good dollop of gossip and member rivalry and you pretty much have our little branch. Family-home teachers have ceased to exist, as well as the visiting teachers. The youth have no seminary teacher, and we Elders end up giving almost all the talks. The apathy in the group is enough to make one think they've all quit and gone home already.

And so, as the comedy draws to a close each Sunday and we've all had about as much as we can stand of each other, I drive the closing hymn home as branch music director, sometimes even making wanton leaps to the last verse to get things over with. Lindomar's retarded daughter Elaine keeps right with me; she can't read music but has perfected a convincing, mimicking sing-along technique. Some days it's just us two singing—me, trying to resuscitate the group, and Eliane, starving for attention. This week, when Lindomar snapped at her to pipe down from where he was seated up front, Eliane expertly gave him the middle-finger gesture and kept on singing our duet, only a little bit louder.

Then, leading the final chorus of "The Spirit of God" to ring down the curtain, I alone from my position in front saw a stray yellow dog come in off the street, pause for a moment in the entry way at the rear of the chapel, survey the situation, lift his leg in high ceremonial fashion, and mark his territory on the branch bulletin board before wandering off again out of sight.

Despite all our quirks and glitches—I've never worked in an area that didn't have such problems—I have come haltingly to love these people, even the craziest and most heretical. The mere thought of closing Espinheiros Branch tempts me to regret having come here in the first place. In reality, no one is completely certain what the Stake President will do; some say he wouldn't have the heart to close us down. But there definitely are signs to make one worry.

After the closing prayer, the branch members evacuate the chapel as if the place were going up in flames. They are in such a hurry to get on with the rest of their day. Outside the sun is glaring and directly overhead at noon, yet the air is becoming quite cool and crisp. The sky is always somehow perfectly clear of clouds on Sundays, and there is a light breeze mixing good autumn smells in the air.

Somehow we missionaries don't manage so many free rides going home as we do coming to church, but I don't mind, given the pleasant weather. We set out walking again on the main road, keeping company only with the buzzards and crows that perch one by one atop telephone poles or circle overhead in large funnel-like swarms. They congregate by the dozens and wait with patience for the coast to clear before descending on some roadside delicacy. Up ahead we see one such swarm circle lower and lower, there beyond the little bridge that passes over the dark, cool waters of our inlet.

Bring Them Unto Christ[1]

William D. Russell

IT WAS MIDNIGHT, AT A FAST-FOOD BARBECUE near Oxford, Mississippi. I was driving from New Orleans to Lamoni with two colleagues on the Lamoni School Board, returning from a national convention. We were driving straight through the night, a 20 hour drive, and we were hungry, so we got off Interstate 55 near Oxford, Mississippi, to get something to carry out.

My two colleagues and several other people were in line ahead of me. As I stood and watched the clerk wait on them, I was struck by her forlorn countenance. As I looked at her sad face, I speculated about what kind of life she might be living. She was about 35 years old. I suspected that she probably had children, but here she was at midnight on a weeknight. She was working, probably out of necessity, rather than being at home with her children. It was a low paying job. She was black. And this was Mississippi. While many fine people have grown up in Mississippi, the state has not been known as a good place for black people.

As I looked at her forlorn countenance, I thought about the long history of the enslavement of her people, and the Jim Crow segregation that followed the end of slavery, and the fact that being black and being a woman can mean two strikes against a person. I felt I could make a reasonable guess as to why she had such a sad face. I realized there was not much I could do to help her. I was just passing through the state on the way home to Iowa. But she was providing me with food when I was hungry, and I was grateful for that. I recalled the words of Jesus, "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink." (Matt. 25:25 NRSV) And I thought about how often we take persons like this for granted and don't show them the respect and appreciation that we should.

So when she handed me my carryout sack, I looked her in the eye, smiled appreciatively, and said something simple like "Thank you very much."

---

[1]A sermon given at the Lamoni, Iowa RLDS Congregation (now Community of Christ) on February 20, 2000, on the theme recommended for that Sunday by the general church.

I will never forget the instant transformation of her sad face into a bubbly smile and a friendly "thank you" in reply. I was stunned then and have since thought about that brief exchange many times. It makes me ask myself, how often, in my encounters with other people, whether it be a brief moment like this one or a longer interaction over time, I show respect, appreciation, and love for the other person?

Am I sensitive to others, to the life situations they find themselves in, or do I view most of my interactions simply in terms of what's in it for me? Do I leave that low-paid clerk on the midnight shift with the impression that I was hardly aware of her existence as a human being? Or do I make her feel appreciated and respected?

If the life of the carpenter from Nazareth was a revelation of the kind of lives God would have us live, then we extend the witness of that incarnation when we show respect, appreciation, and love for other people. We sometimes think that the essence of Christianity is believing the proper doctrines or the proper forms of worship or of church organization and priesthood, etc. And while I don't deny that these things can be useful, I believe that it is clear that love is the core of the gospel.

If we look at the writings of the Apostle Paul, I can think of two kinds of Christians that he had conflict with. On the one hand, there were those Christians who held that strict obedience to the scriptures was the essence of the gospel. Paul got so upset with them that he once declared that the law is a curse, meaning the Mosaic Law, the Torah, the first five books of the Bible—the heart of the scriptures as they existed in that day. He wrote to the Galatians, "All who rely on the works of the law are under a curse. . .Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law" (Gal. 3:10, 13 NRSV).

On the other hand, Paul also got upset with those Christians who seemed to think that their gifts of tongues and prophecies were the essence of the gospel. To them he declared in one of his four surviving letters to the Corinthian saints: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (I Cor. 13:1-2 NIV).

I sometimes wonder what Paul would have to say about religious fundamentalism, Christian or otherwise. I grew up thinking that the essence of the gospel was believing in the right doctrines and belonging to a church that had the right priesthood offices and ordinances. I was fascinated by numbers and always got my best grades in math. I recall thinking, as a lad of about ten, how lucky I was to have been born into the "one true church on the face of the earth." I calculated that a person born here in the United States had about a 1/1000 chance to be born into the RLDS church. How incredibly lucky I was! Then I would calculate

the chances worldwide and it was something like 1/20,000. It was staggering to my mind as I considered my good fortune. As an adult I began to doubt that idea. In the mid-1960s I was a young assistant editor of the RLDS missionary magazine *Restoration Witness*. I recall getting tired of editing articles that explained how the writer had once been a Methodist or Baptist or Catholic or whatever but had found the true church that had the proper church organization and sacraments and, therefore, had joined our church. I recall getting so tired of this kind of article that I wrote a letter to my bosses—the First Presidency—suggesting that we discontinue publishing the Restoration Witness.

When I read the letter F. Henry Edwards of the First Presidency sent in reply, it became clear that they were not going to take their young editor's advice! Meanwhile a 1970 article by Donald D. Landon helped me understand more clearly what our priorities should be. Landon wrote in the first issue of the little known and long forgotten journal called *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action* that scriptures and doctrines and ordinances are means to an end—and not the end itself. The end is discipleship. But too often we make the means the end itself, Landon said. Thus, we sometimes considered it more important to hold the right beliefs than to be disciples of the humble carpenter who taught that love is the essence of the gospel. We bring people to Christ most of all when we love them. We can never do that by preaching alone or expounding theology although these things might sometimes help.

Who is most in need of the love of Christ today? We can't really know that. The person who seems to be the happiest, most loved person, might feel miserable and unloved. But I would suggest that many of the people who most need the love of Christ are people we do not often encounter. They are not the middle class, white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant Americans with whom we spend most of our time. And we tend, in fact, to arrange our lives so as to have little contact with people whom society has marginalized.

I use the word "marginalized" because I think a word like "outcast" is too strong. While there are certainly many people who do feel like society's outcasts, and certainly Jesus focused a lot of attention on them, there are also many others who may not feel cast out, but who do feel they are not accepted by leaders or opinion-makers in the community. Society has marginalized them. We don't drive them out; we just don't pay much attention to them.

When, for instance, some people fall victim to alcohol or drugs, they tend to drop out of respectable society, including the church. Some people go through divorce and do not feel as welcome in church as they once did. Even widows or widowers may find they are no longer included in the very circles where socially they were once very much at home. Our society celebrates couples and family, the "family values" thing, and so being single can mean feeling doubly isolated. In every district and stake,

it seems we have single members who do not feel as accepted as when they were married or, if never married, as when they were young enough that to be single was not yet a stigma. They tend to drop below our social horizon even though they represent a very significant and growing percentage of our total membership. It is sad when they drop out of sight in the church, but it is sadder still when they feel that we no longer care about them, that they don't belong even in the body of Christ.

There is yet another important group of people whose members may indeed feel like outcasts when they reach adolescence or adulthood and discover—as a significant number of my friends have discovered—that they are gay or lesbian and, therefore, suddenly inappropriate. This often means they drop out of church, out of the society they have known, and too often it means rejection by their own families. Or, for many, it means silence—sometimes a lifetime of silence and secrets even from family and closest friends, compelled by fear that they will be rejected as, in fact, many are.

It is usually estimated that somewhere between five and ten percent of our population is gay or lesbian. These people are about as marginalized as anyone in our society today. And I am not going to pretend that I know the answers to all of the questions that we face in this area. But I think President Grant McMurray put it well in his sermon at the 1998 World Conference when he addressed this issue, saying:

> In a world that cannot come to common ground on any of the medical, psychological, cultural, and social issues that swirl around this topic, the church cannot be expected to have those ready answers.
>
> But here is what we can expect—that every person who walks through our doors will be received with open arms. We will listen to the life stories of each person who graces our fellowship and embrace them in love. On this there can be no compromise.

I applaud those congregations in our church—and in other churches—that have publicly made it clear that all persons are welcome and loved among them.

If conversion to the church is a goal—and while that is a worthy goal, it is not the ultimate goal—then the best prospects to bring people to Christ in that sense are not the respectable members of society with whom we tend to associate. Our friends and associates are, for the most part, either settled into mainstream Christian denominations or into the comfort of their secular, un-churched ways. I suggest that neither of these kinds of people, but rather the marginalized members of our society are the ones most in need of Christ's love whether that involves bringing them into the church or not.

I think of C. H. and Hazel McKee in Tulsa, who lead our church's Contemporary Christian Center there. The McKees and their associates

have reached out to alcoholics and drug addicts and other marginalized people of all races. My wife Lois and I attended their annual retreat recently. You see a lot of people there whom you don't see in our regular services. Some of them have kicked the habits that enslaved them. Some of those have remained drug free while others have gone back to their addictions. Some of them have converted to the church. And of those, some have stayed with the church while some have not. But whether they've stayed off drugs for good or not, and whether they've joined the church and stayed with it or not, the McKees and others in our church in Tulsa have brought the love of Christ into their lives. Love, as Jesse Jackson would say, keeps hope alive. If we are going to reach out to drug addicts, we are going to spend time visiting them in prison. Our society is incarcerating addicts at a frightening rate. As the author of Hebrews wrote: "Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them." (Heb. 13:3 NRSV) And in the Gospel of Matthew Jesus is quoted as saying, "I was in prison and you visited me" (Matt. 25:36 NRSV).

Finally, I would suggest that here in southern Iowa at the present time and certainly in the near future, Mexicans coming here to work are going to be people who need to feel the arms of brotherhood and sisterhood. I feel very sad when I hear harsh attitudes being expressed toward the Hispanics who have come to work in small Iowa towns. I have heard people react to their arrival in a very ugly way, using the tired, inaccurate stereotypes and derisive names that are the stock-in-trade of prejudice.

If we as a church are to be an ensign of peace (See our Doctrine and Covenants, section 156, adopted in 1984), maybe we should be trying to find ways to welcome these strangers in our midst, to share the love of Christ with them. It is interesting that Hispanics, who overwhelmingly have been Catholic, are recently converting in significant numbers to Protestantism. Whatever other reasons may be at work, I suspect that this is happening because Hispanics feel wanted and loved in the Protestant churches that are reaching out to them. Maybe we could be a people who make the stranger welcome in our midst—as they settle in our part of the country. Maybe we could make them feel the love of Christ through us. Let's hope Jane Goddall was not too optimistic when she said at the 1999 Peace Symposium at the RLDS Temple in Independence: "We are moving toward the destiny of our species—a state of compassion and love." The Apostle Paul said it so well in Ephesians: Referring to the walls that had been built separating Jews from Gentiles, Paul said that in the body of Christ, "You are no longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people." (Eph. 2:19 NIV) Let us make sure that no one is a stranger or alien in our midst.

Taking Up The Cross

Keith Norman

ABOUT THIS TIME LAST YEAR, my wife and I went on a brief cruise to celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary.[1] It was so brief that we had only one stop— Nassau. However, neither of us had been to the Caribbean before, so we stepped off the boat eager to experience the vibrant and exotic culture of the capitol of the Bahamas. To our surprise, all the shops were closed. The occasion, we realized after a moment's thought, was Good Friday. We wandered the nearly empty streets and soon found ourselves in a dilapidated area of town. The sounds of a hymn drew us to a stone bench on the steps of a church, where we could enjoy the shade and the vigorous singing. But we were soon invited in, and they would not take no for an answer. We were conspicuously out of our element—the only whites in a packed congregation of perhaps 250 people and the only ones not dressed in formal mourning attire—dark suits and long black dresses. No one would have mistaken this service for LDS. Nothing was held back—"Oh yes, Lord!" "Hallelujah!" "Praise him!" and "Thank you, Jesus!" punctuated sermon and song. They offered up their broken hearts and contrite spirits unabashed and loud. And yet we did not feel alien. We felt enfolded in their love and enthusiasm, and sobered by their sorrow for the crucified Lord.

Today is Palm Sunday. In many churches throughout the world, Christians will process into church carrying palm leaves to commemorate the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem during the last week of his life when the people of Israel spread a carpet of palm leaves across his path and proclaimed him the Son of David, indicating he was the Messiah, the anointed king of the Jews. Later in the week Christians will go back to church for a Maundy Thursday service, which commemorates the Last Supper during which Jesus gave "a new commandment" or mandate—

---

[1]Sacrament meeting talk given in the LDS Solon Ward in Solon, Ohio, on March 24, 2002.

that's where the word "Maundy" comes from—"that ye love one another, even as I have loved you." Good Friday marks the most solemn day of the Christian calendar—the day Jesus was crucified, and most churches hold a special service to memorialize this event, as they did in Nassau. Finally, on Easter Sunday Christians throughout the world will again go to church to joyfully celebrate his resurrection.

The crucifixion is considered by many to be the most profound and significant event in the history of the world—when God voluntarily descended to the lowest possible state to endure humiliation, excruciating pain, and shameful death to save mankind from sin and eternal death. Thus the cross, which has become the symbol of God's love and self-sacrifice, adorns most Christian churches and is worn around the necks of many Christians as an emblem of faith and thanksgiving.

As members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we join with Christians everywhere to observe Easter although some years it has to compete with Fast Sunday, or General or Stake Conference. But Easter is the only event of Holy Week that we, unlike the rest of Christendom, observe. Most of us have never even heard the term "Maundy Thursday," and if we take note of Good Friday, it is usually as a day off from work rather than to remember the crucifixion. In fact, we are rather proud of the fact that we don't use the cross as a symbol because we focus on Christ's resurrection, not his death. This seems a rather strange rationale to me, given that the Atonement of Christ is central to our doctrine and that we commemorate his broken body and blood shed for us every week when we partake of the Sacrament. I wonder if we are missing out on something by downplaying the significance of the cross. Perhaps it would be good to ask, "What does the cross mean to me as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ?"

Obviously, the cross is important historically for Christians as the focus of Jesus' death and atonement. Although we tend to put more emphasis on Christ's suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane, I don't believe anyone who reads the scriptures would claim the atonement was complete until Jesus had died on the cross. Nor was his suffering on the cross made any easier by the fact that he had already endured the agony in Gethsemane. Too weak even to carry his own cross after such an ordeal, it must have been all the more excruciating for him to be nailed and hung there.

But is the cross itself important? Couldn't Jesus have died and accomplished his mission through some other means? In fact, it is significant that Jesus suffered such an ignoble end. Condemned by the constituted legal authority, stripped, flogged, and publicly executed, displayed for the world to see with an inscription mocking him as king of the Jews, it would be hard to imagine a more degrading and humiliating, as well as painfully tortuous, way to die. And that is exactly what

his Roman executioners intended, thinking in this way to disprove his every claim to divine favor and earthly authority. The crowds who earlier in the week had hailed his royal entrance into the city now openly called for his death. His own disciples were powerless to stop it, ashamed even to acknowledge him, and no angels came down to save him. The Son of God had "descended below all things." (D&C 88:6) Many who read the scriptures remembered from Deuteronomy 21:23 that "he that is hanged is accursed of God" and concluded that Jesus could not have been who he said he was.

The form of the cross also takes on significance. The upright post points heavenward, but is anchored in earth, symbolizing the reconciliation of God and humanity through the atonement. The crossbeam stretches out the arms of the Savior as if to embrace all the world, which of course is precisely what the infinite atonement accomplishes. No wonder so many Christians find it such a meaningful symbol.

To those who wear the cross as a religious symbol, it is much more than just jewelry. Several times during his ministry, Jesus told his followers they must take up their own crosses to be true disciples. "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." (Matt. 10:38) But what does it mean to take up one's cross? "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23) So that's one aspect, to deny oneself. "One thing thou lackest," Jesus told the man who would be perfect, "go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me." (Mark 10:21). When Jesus attempted to carry his own cross on his back up to Golgotha, the place of crucifixion, he certainly had nothing else on his back. And yet he carried the weight of the world. Likewise, in order for us to take up the cross, we must unburden ourselves of earthly treasures and other impediments. When the man heard this saying from Jesus, he went away sorrowing for he had many possessions.

And yet, what could he have had that would be so important? Fancy togas and designer sandals? A champion racing camel? His very own fig tree? This is a very troubling story for us who have stuff really worth keeping—big screen TVs, digital cameras and Play Stations. Country club memberships and platinum credit cards. SUVs and vacations to. . .the Caribbean! Perhaps the Apostle Paul had something similar in mind when he said, "But God forbid that I should glory, sure in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). But, the "world" can symbolize a number of different things, not just material wealth. The prophet Jacob tells us (1:8) that all who believe in Christ need to "suffer his cross, and bear the shame of the world." In the world at large it is generally not cool to follow Jesus. We are likely to be seen as prudes, spoil-sports, do-

gooders. To crucify ourselves to the world is to give up worldly ambition, to forego the honors of men, to bear the shame the world may heap upon us.

Often in the scriptures, however, "the world" refers to sin and sinfulness. Many times we cling to our sins more strongly than to our worldly possessions. If we are to crucify the world to ourselves, we must sacrifice our sins. The Savior told the Nephites, warning them about sins of the flesh, "For it is better that ye should deny yourselves of these things, wherein ye will take up your cross, than that ye should be cast into hell." (3 Nephi 12:30) Further, the Lord in modern times has said, "And he that will not take up his cross and follow me, and keep my commandments, the same shall not be saved" (D&C 56:2). When Christ took up the cross, he took on himself the sins of the world. When we take up our cross, we must lay our sins aside.

Another way we might take up the cross of Jesus is to devote ourselves to the service of others. The Lord commanded his servants in modern times to "take up your cross, follow me, and feed my sheep." (D&C 112:14) Whenever we give up our selfish desires and comforts to lift up and bless others, we are following Jesus. It is not always easy for me to sacrifice a night in front of the TV to go home teaching, or a Saturday in my garden to go work on the welfare farm, or a Sunday morning in bed to go to early meetings. But the remarkable thing is that when I make the effort, the burden becomes light. I find I actually enjoy visiting those families, I feel in communion with nature climbing those apple trees, and I feel the spirit in the early morning deliberations of the bishopric.

Of course these are trivial examples. Joseph Smith said that "any religion that does not require of its followers the sacrifice of all things does not have the power to save." To take up the cross of Jesus is to sacrifice, and sacrifice is "the cost of discipleship." That is the name of a book written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Protestant minister who rapidly gained fame as a brilliant theologian in the early 1930's when the National Socialists—the Nazis—were coming to power. Recognizing early their brutal aims, he abandoned his academic career and his pacifism to openly denounce a political system which made the "Führer" its idol and God. He called on the Christian churches to unite in brotherly love and oppose the evil of Nazism.

In April of 1943 the Gestapo arrested Bonhoeffer. His courage, faith, and unselfish goodness greatly inspired all those who came in contact with him in prison and, later, in Büchenwald. Just before the Allies liberated the concentration camps in April of 1945, he was executed by the express order of Hitler. One of the books which got him arrested was The Cost of Discipleship. In this classic of Christian literature he showed that it is not enough for a Christian to attend church regularly

or even to live a "good life." He rejected the "cheap grace" which would allow a compromise of Christian principles to avoid persecution or legal risk. Anyone who would be a true disciple of Jesus must be actively engaged in the struggle against evil, even if this requires the ultimate sacrifice. "When Christ calls someone," he wrote, "he bids that person to come and die." There are different kinds of dying, which is another way to say there are different crosses to bear. But Jesus himself said no greater love exists than to be willing to give up one's life for a friend. (John 15:13) Dietrich Bonhoeffer took up this cross, as did Joseph Smith. They were disciples.

What do we as Latter-day Saints think of the cross? I am not advocating that we erect cross on LDS chapels or that we all start accessorizing with crucifixes to prove that we really are Christians. But perhaps on Good Friday we might pause to remember what the cross means to us who believe in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Perhaps we can reflect on the need we have to follow him, to take up our own cross, to be true disciples. We need not wear a cross around our necks, but surely in our hearts.

Inherit the Wind, Mormon Style

Can Science be Faith-Promoting? by Sterling B. Talmage, ed. Stan Larson. (Salt Lake City: Blue Ribbon Books, 2001). 253 pp.

Evolution and Mormonism, by Trent D. Stephens and D. Jeffrey Meldrum with Forrest B. Peterson (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001). 238 pp.

Reviewed by Richard F. Haglund, Jr., Professor of Physics, Vanderbilt University.

IN 1925, THE TOWN FATHERS of Dayton, Tennessee secured their place in history by trying John Scopes for teaching evolution in the public schools.[1] With William Jennings Bryan as prosecutor, Clarence Darrow for the defense, and reportage by H. L. Mencken, the trial was a unique American blend of materialistic science, fundamentalist religion and hyperbolic rhetoric that would later be captured imaginatively in the play *Inherit the Wind*. The title comes from the first scene, in which the fiery Reverend Brown calls down the wrath of God on Cates (Scopes) and his supporters, including Brown's own daughter. Horrified, Matthew Harrison Brady (Bryan) implores the preacher to remember that "it is possible to be overzealous, to destroy that which you hope to save—so that nothing is left but emptiness. Remember the wisdom of Solomon in the Book of Proverbs—'He that troubleth his own house. . .shall inherit the wind.'"[2]

In the play's final scene, the reporter Hornbeck (Mencken) exults that in these lines, Brady has written an epitaph for himself and for the fundamentalist faith he sought to erect as a bulwark against modern science. But no such simple end to the religion-evolution controversy was to be found. The two books reviewed here—one a period piece from the decade after the Scopes trial, the other a wide-ranging discussion about evolution for today's Latter-day Saint students—show that the winds from Tennessee still blow fiercely three quarters of a century later.

Sterling Talmage's essays were a contemporaneous response to a controversy that had been simmering for two decades before boiling over among Mormon authorities B. H. Roberts, Joseph Fielding Smith, and James E. Talmage (Sterling's father) in 1930.[3] In that year, Roberts, of the

[1]For details, see Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[2]*Inherit the Wind*, in *The Selected Plays of Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee*, ed. Alan Woods (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1995), Act 2, Scene 1, 42.

[3]The controversy began at Brigham Young University in 1911; see Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 171-173, 272-275. See also Richard Sherlock and Jeffrey E. Keller, "The B. H. Roberts/Joseph Fielding Smith/James E. Talmage Affair," reprinted in *The Search for Harmony*, ed. Gene A. Sessions and Craig J. Oberg (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1993), 93-116.

Seventy, asked the church's First Presidency to authorize publication of *The Truth, the Way, the Life,* in which he proposed an "old earth" creation scenario and the possibility of "pre-Adamic" human life. Shortly thereafter, apostle Joseph Fielding Smith denounced evolutionary biology and geology in a church magazine, an action Roberts viewed as a thinly veiled attack on his manuscript. Heated debate continued until the First Presidency asked the leaders of the church to "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."[4]

Talmage, a respected geologist in whom his apostle father confided frequently, addresses four critical questions at the core of these debates:

- What subject matter and ways of knowing are appropriate to science and religion, and what dangers (e.g., dogmatism, overreaching) confront the seeker after truth?
- If geological evidence points increasingly to an "old earth" creation scenario, should we still argue that a God of natural law and universal order did something else?
- What is the evidence that an evolutionary principle is at work in nature, particularly in the creation of man; further, is theistic evolution compatible with the Gospel?
- Fundamentalists claim that their interpretations of scripture prove conclusively that scientific theories of earthly origins cannot be true. Are there alternative readings?

His exploration of these questions reveals Talmage to be unstinting in his commitment to unfettered scientific inquiry but firmly anchored in his religious faith.

Talmage wrote the eighty-page title essay in 1935 as a text for the Mutual Improvement Association in the halcyon days when individuals rather than committees wrote such manuals. Each chapter within the essay covers a single discussion topic, for example "What Say Physics and Chemistry?" and "What is Dogmatism?" He argues that many controversial questions about the origin of life are nonscriptural, rather than unscriptural, and cannot be studied from the perspective of either science or religion alone: "[T]hose whose minds are attuned exclusively to spiritual things may miss altogether the foundation for great spiritual truths that exist in the truths of nature. And the mind attuned solely to measurable facts not only cannot see but may even deny the existence of the higher truths to which these facts bear witness. And neither can hear or understand the other; their shutters are too strongly made" (p. 71). What if "we carry some doubts until we die? Unless we know enough to resolve them we will. But would it be a calamity if we had to remain open-minded all of our lives?" Not to Talmage, for the ideal investigator "takes his free agency out and exercises it, instead of trying to embalm it permanently at every real or fancied opportunity" (p. 34).

Elsewhere, Talmage argues that when properly understood, evolution is a principle that promotes rather than destroys faith:

---

[4]First Presidency minutes of 7 April 1931, quoted in William E. Evenson, "Evolution," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:478.

> I asked a question of a dozen of my acquaintances. . . ."What is the first thing you think of when someone mentions evolution?" Ten out of the dozen answered: "Monkeys," "Ape ancestors," or some variant on the same idea. The eleventh said: "William Jennings Bryan." I did not ask him to explain. The twelfth was a physician. He answered: "The hatching of an egg." He was the only one of the twelve who had any idea of the principle; all of the others were thinking of a theory. (p. 114)

This principle is exemplified in the fact that "throughout all of the time covered by the paleontological record, there has been a general tendency toward progressive development, from the simple to the complex and from the generalized to the specialized" (p. 127). That the human embryo recapitulates the development of simpler living organisms during gestation shows that man's body is "simply one. . .of the many living organisms that have been created (p. 133).

The final section of Talmage's book contains previously unpublished correspondence from 1931 to 1935. His "Open Letter" to Joseph Fielding Smith conveys the deep feelings that fueled the controversy:

> In your boyhood and in mine, the statements of the general authorities of the Church were considered to be final; nobody in good standing in the Church presumed to question them. Today this is not so, and I believe for only one reason, namely, that some of the authorities have made statements that are not worthy of belief, and I cite your explanation of the miracle at Joshua's battle as a conspicuous but by no means an isolated example of what I mean. (p. 213)

The tone of this letter suggests why the First Presidency asked Church authorities to halt public discussion some time after James E. Talmage's Tabernacle address on "The Earth and Man."

During the half century after the Roberts-Smith-Talmage affair, a generally positive view of science in Mormon culture was gradually supplanted by one in which "science so-called" was associated with doctrinal heresy and social plagues. The controversy flared again when Smith, having outlived scientifically trained apostles Talmage, John A. Widtsoe, and Joseph F. Merrill, published *Man, His Origin and Destiny* in 1954,[5] voicing anti-evolutionary tirades that still reverberate. In characterizing the development of this "uncomfortable interface" dividing religious belief from scientific thought, Duane Jeffery observes that "the intense polemics of the theology-biology debate [have] polarized people into opposite camps. . .detrimental to the cause of both. . . .The concept that God works through universal law. . .is fundamental, [giving] Mormonism a basis for synthesis of the two camps that exist in few if any other Western religions."[6] *Mor-*

---

[5]In what Duane Jeffery has called the "first explicitly anti-scientific treatise of the Restoration," Smith condemns evolutionary theory as "a tool of Satan" and scientists as "miserable fools." See Jeffery, "Seers, Savants and Evolution: The Uncomfortable Interface," reprinted in *The Search for Harmony*, 176-177.

[6]Jeffery, "Seers, Savants and Evolution: The Uncomfortable Interface," *Dialogue* 8 no. 3-4 (1973): 41. The original differs here and in a few other instances from the version cited in note 5.

monism and Evolution is a noteworthy attempt by Latter-day Saint life scientists Trent D. Stephens and D. Jeffrey Meldrum to provide that synthesis.[7] To do so, they present the scientific evidence underlying contemporary evolutionary science and attempt to reconcile it to passages of scripture commonly cited as "proof" that evolutionary theory must be not only wrong, but false and indeed deceptive.

The book is addressed to the kind of student audience Sterling Talmage imagined for *Can Science be Faith-Promoting?* Where Talmage's focus was primarily geological, however, *Mormonism and Evolution* is aimed almost exclusively at the life sciences; the general "principle of evolution" Talmage espoused with little evidence except analogies is replaced by detailed documentation of evidence for the neo-Darwinian synthesis. Like the Talmage essays, *Evolution and Mormonism* reads more like a series of fireside talks than a comprehensive, systematic approach to the issues.

Over half of the book is devoted to preliminary chapters that establish the authors' commitment to LDS beliefs and the established order of the Church and assure us that the sense of wonder experienced by scientists increases religious faith. "The Evidence of Things" and "What about Darwin?" provide a rather oversimplified view of both science and Darwin's immense contribution to modern biology. Rhetorical bows to Galileo and Copernicus give the impression that Darwin is one more victim of religious intolerance—a caricature that belies the complex circumstances of all three cases. However, the outline of the plan and contents of *The Origin of Species* is useful, and the discussion of the inadequacy of the crucial concept of "species" for the weight that theologians often want to put on it is invaluable.

The most successful chapters focus on specific scientific questions about evolution and creation. In "DNA on the Witness Stand," Stephens and Meldrum describe the use of DNA sequences as molecular markers that quantify the degree of similarity between the human genetic endowment and that of other living creatures. Moreover, the memory of previous mutations found in the noncoding segments of DNA helps us to reconstruct the evolutionary history of today's living creatures and confirms the picture of descent with modification. The authors emphasize that faith in the orderliness of the universe precludes accepting scientific conspiracy theories alleging that similarities between animal and human DNA are part of a deceitful scheme to confuse inquiring students. "Our Place in Nature" explores the relationship between humankind and the great apes, and asks pointedly whether our aversion to being related even distantly to other creatures is more vanity than theology.

"Written in Stone" deals with two critical issues for which much more physical evidence is available now than was available to Talmage: first, transitional forms in the fossil record, indicating changes of species; and second, paleontological records of the evolution of human kind. In the early days of evolutionary theory, the lack of such transitional forms was frequently taken as a clear indication that Darwin's theory could not possibly be true. In recent years, however, the fossil record has yielded volumes of evidence that ani-

[7]Stephens is professor of anatomy and embryology, Meldrum associate professor of anatomy and anthropology, both at Idaho State University. Forrest B. Peterson, a contributor whose role is not elaborated, is a writer and producer.

mal species evolved to produce species that clearly made the transition from aquatic to land mammals, and the reverse. A survey of the family tree of humankind leads Stephens and Meldrum to a strong conclusion in favor of theistic evolution: "The fossil evidence of human evolution is one of the best examples of transitional evolution in the fossil record. Does this necessarily eliminate the need for a Creator? No. Instead, this implies a natural process by which God carried out his creative design and ultimately prepared suitable physical tabernacles for his spirit offspring" (p. 164). This sets the stage for the authors to explore interesting alternative interpretations of the Genesis creation account consistent with evolutionary theory.

Scientists often seize upon the neo-Darwinian idea of random, unpredictable variation as evidence that God is an unnecessary hypothesis. However, evolutionary pathways are constrained by developmental barriers—such as those imposed by the strength of materials out of which living beings are created—so, in fact, evolution cannot be truly random. The authors do a real service in calling attention to the work of D'Arcy Thompson, *On Growth and Form*, which first explored these limitations in detail.[8] They also briefly discuss other possibilities for ameliorating the role of randomness in evolutionary theory, including nonlinear dynamics and chaos theory. Surprisingly, however, they make little mention of self-assembly and self-organization, concepts that would fit nicely into their alternative interpretations of the creation scriptures.

The generally laudable presentation is not without evident, and in some cases crucial, flaws of omission. The concept of truth in scientific discovery is presented without reference to the way new paradigms lead to scientific revolutions.[9] There is nothing to suggest the complex, subtle interplay of scientific data and theory;[10] there is, however, an off-hand remark that Mendel's published data were probably too good to be true, which might leave a mathematically unsophisticated reader wondering if Mendelian genetics is valid at all. This seems an unkind recompense for Mendel, whose work answered a critical question about natural selection that drove Darwin almost to despair and laid the foundation for the modern synthesis. The well-documented influence of nineteenth-century ideas about probability and thermodynamics in physics, Darwin's self-confessed debt to Malthus's *On Population*, and the pervasive materialism and utilitarianism of the nineteenth century all go unremarked. We are not told that Darwin, like Newton, was standing on the shoulders of giants, including Cuvier, Lamarck, and his own grandfather Erasmus Darwin.[11] *Mor-*

[8]*On Growth and Form*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952).

[9]Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968); for a critical evaluation of Kuhn's model for evolution, see John C. Greene, "The Kuhnian Paradigm and the Darwinian Revolution in Natural History," in *Science, Ideology, and World View: Essays in the History of Evolutionary Ideas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

[10]For example, see Norwood Russell Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery: An Inquiry into the Conceptual Foundations of Science* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1958).

[11]See Jacques Barzun, *Darwin, Marx, Wagner* (New York: Doubleday, 1941); Loren Eiseley, *Darwin's Century* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958); and Robert J. Richards, *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

monism and Evolution thus conveys an incomplete and in some ways naïve picture not only of Darwin's properly honored place in the history of science, but also of the vast web of scientific observation and experiment that supports modern evolutionary theory.

Nevertheless, these irritations should not blind us to what Stephens and Meldrum have achieved. They present up-to-date evidence for evolution and, like Talmage, confront thorny questions about scriptures that seem to rule out death before the Fall (Genesis 2) and to limit the existence of the earth to seven thousand years (Doctrine and Covenants 77:6). They would probably agree with Talmage that believers too frequently substitute zealotry for knowledge when the knowledge is available for the taking: "The things that properly lie within the field of faith are not subject to evaluation by measurement, and those things that can be measured should not be taken on faith" (p. 162). This sensible division of intellectual and spiritual labor is not a design for compartmentalization, but an operational accommodation that can succeed because of the intrinsic complementarity of scientific and religious perspectives on truth.

In the end, however, these two books seem to show that Mormon dialogue about evolution has changed little in nearly a century. We are still arguing whether men are descended from apes, whether Darwin's theory (not the modern synthesis) is really supported by evidence, and whether evolutionary thinking causes contemporary social problems.[12] A catalog of wondrous discoveries—evidence for evolution at the molecular level,[13] tantalizing ideas about self-assembling and self-organizing systems,[14] recent studies on the role of design in evolution[15]—is largely unknown to Latter-day Saints. And we still seem reluctant to accept the fact that, while evolutionary science is certainly a work in progress, the remaining puzzles will be solved by following accepted norms of science, not religion.

Indeed, it may be that no discussion of facts will bring closure, because the real conflict is over whose rhetoric about "faith," "truth," and "reality" will be normative. Kary Smout argues that "both the creationists and evolutionists misconceive of language as a simple mirror for reality instead of as a tool to create and sustain various human communities."[16] If we Latter-

---

[12]For example, see Clark A. Peterson, *Using the Book of Mormon to Combat Falsehoods in Organic Evolution* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 1992), the avowed purpose of which is to "combat the falsehoods in socialism, organic evolution, rationalism, humanism, etc." (p. 1). Michael F. Whiting discusses the manifold problems of this work in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 5 (1993): 209.

[13]For a sampling, see Jonathan Weiner, "Evolution Made Visible," *Science* 267 (1995): 30; Richard A. Kerr, "Timing Evolution's Early Bursts," *Science* 267 (1995): 33; and M. W. Caldwell and M. S. Y. Lee, "A snake with legs from the marine Cretaceous of the Middle East," *Nature* 386 (1997): 705.

[14]See Stuart Kauffman, *At Home in the Universe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Charles Devillers and Jean Chaline, *Evolution: An Evolving Theory* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1993).

[15]See Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), and a critical response in Kenneth R. Miller, *Finding Darwin's God* (New York: Cliff Street, 2000).

[16]*The Creation/Evolution Controversy: A Battle for Cultural Power* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), p. xi. See especially the introduction and Chapter 2.

day Saints are not going to ignore what science tell us about human life, we must not only uncover and recover the facts, but also find ways to speak about and understand evolutionary science that are sustainable in our community of faith in the twenty-first century.

In the concluding scene of *Inherit the Wind*, Drummond (Darrow) upbraids Hornbeck for denigrating Brady's convictions while simultaneously being hopelessly uncritical of his own dogmatic unbelief. Hornbeck exits in disgust. In the empty courtroom, Drummond stands at the counsel's bench and picks up first the Bible, then Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and—with a quizzical glance—places them side by side in his briefcase as the curtain falls. Contemporary Latter-day Saints need to find a way to keep both the scriptures, with their keys to religious belief, and science's constantly revised book of Nature in mind. The two books reviewed here illustrate possibilities for doing this without breaking faith with either science or religion. But they also remind us that those who have troubled the house of the Latter-day Saints with fiery rhetoric—on both sides—have left us the legacy of a hot wind that blew through Dayton during the summer of 1925.

Ridiculously Sublime

Madame Ridiculous and Lady Sublime, by Elouise Bell (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 153 pp.

Reviewed by Kathryn Loosli Pritchett, Columnist, Knight Ridder newspapers, Piedmont, California.

MIDWAY THROUGH HER LATEST collection of humorous essays, former Brigham Young University professor Eloise Bell pleads for a calculated spontaneity in humorous writing. "I do in fact know that much humor is intentional and crafted. And in the Beauty division, my niece tells me it takes her an hour each morning to look "natural." My point is not that all humor, beauty, storytelling is unplanned, but that its charm lies in SEEMING so" (p. 56). With very few exceptions (a strained parody of photo-happy tourists in "Say 'Fromage'!" for example), Bell has crafted her essays with a sly, unforced charm that seems nearly effortless. This, as anyone who has ever tried to start a sacrament meeting talk with a crowd-pleasing quip knows, is tricky work.

The best contemporary humor writers meander through a folksy tale (Garrison Keillor) or a modern-day saga (Jonathan Franzen) only to surprise you with a well-timed punch line that induces a smile of recognition. Bell uses her anecdotes in much the same way to illuminate topics familiar to her readers. A Trivial Pursuit champ herself, she ponders the popularity of trivia contests: "Ultimately, maybe some of us collect answers to the little questions because we find so few answers to the big questions" (p. 127). She condemns those in the service trade who substitute a social demeanor for a professional one, including waiters who insist on being the highlight of a dinner party. "They seem to be saying, 'Don't think for a minute that I'm a servant: I'm your social equal and then some'" (p. 24).

But the commentaries that resonate most are those which tackle the frustrations of modern technology.

The ongoing "lifelag" experienced when change outstrips your normal "slow-motion pace" is particularly evident, says Bell, when returning from an extended vacation:

> If you're lucky, things seem pretty much the same at first. You find the same cobweb by the water heater that was there when you left, the same grease spot on the sport shirt you forgot to wash before storing, and the same curvature of the spine in the back fence. But the world has turned in your absence. You return to your office, slip in a computer disk—the very same disk you used twelve months ago—only to learn that the whole institution has "upgraded" its hardware, its software, AND its cadre of technicians. There is nary a familiar face to troubleshoot for you. You can't even manage to call up your files. Once more, life has made you a freshman. (p. 85)

Though Bell may feel like a neophyte when it comes to new technology, she doesn't hesitate to pass on sage advice regarding modern modes of communication, whether by phone, fax, or e-mail. Yet she champions the old-fashioned personal letter as the most satisfying form of correspondence—"like a magical canteen that always gives you a sip of sweet water each time you put it to your lips" (p. 60). She also feels no compunction about slipping back into the role of teacher. For example, in recalling the end of a day spent playing childhood games, she imparts a bit of language history: "And as darkness draped the alleyway [came] the final, safe incantation, 'Olly, olly, olly oxen free.' In the magic-loving minds of children, those strange words rang more potent and protective than their probable ancestors: 'All ye, all ye, all ye outs in free'" (p. 10).

Mormon readers will find Bell's musings on the significance of a single letter in a general authority's name, be it the O in David O. McKay or the B in Harold B. Lee, amusing, as well as her unofficial guide to Utah culture for those visiting during the Olympics: "Utah drivers honk to let you know they love their families. And the Jazz. And Franklin Covey. And Orrin, who keeps it all safe" (p. 106).

When Bell ventures into more personal territory like her mission in France, where converts were baptized in the rococo bathtub of a former embassy, or the tough but loving memories of her "pugnacious" father (the best essay in the collection), she mines a gentler vein of humor. With these essays Bell reveals her personal pleasures—grand opera, the farmlands of Eastern Idaho, and her beloved hats. Though Bell grieves the loss of her favorite corduroy cap, she isn't quite ready to replace it with the belled fool's cap that sits on her closet shelf. No doubt, when and if she finally does, like her prose it will be ridiculously sublime.

A Travelogue Nonpareil

Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years Among the Mormons, by Jan Shipps. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 400 pp.

Reviewed by Bradley D. Woodworth, Ph.D. candidate in History, Indiana University

"MORMONISM, UNLIKE OTHER modern religions, is a faith cast in the form of history," argues historian Jan Shipps in this outstanding collection of articles and essays (p. 165). Implicitly, the volume presents an argument for the central and vital role of the historian in reaching an understanding of the nature of the LDS experience in its entirety. Shipps's work is a model for historians: she asks interesting and important questions; she thinks through them clearly and carefully; she conducts research in all available and appropriate sources; and she presents her findings in language that is a pleasure to read.

This book is a major contribution to Mormon historiography; it will be of particular interest to those who seek not for "just the facts," but for large conceptual and interpretive frameworks. Shipps's writing is focused not only on events and trends within Mormon history, but also on how that history can best be explained and how it can be elucidated by perspectives developed in religious studies and sociology. The book is divided into five sections, each based on a different conceptual approach to writing religious history. Fourteen of the eighteen articles and essays in the book have been published previously, though they are here revised and expanded. As all but one of these appeared outside of the familiar circle of Mormon-related journals, the contents of this book will be new to many, if not most, non-specialists.

The good, big questions Shipps asks of Mormon history are the kind only those with both an awareness of broader contexts and close familiarity with the details are prepared to posit. These include: Why have the Mormons been neglected by historians of the American West? How have Mormons' and non-Mormons' views of each other changed over time? How has the notion of the "gathering of the Saints" changed and developed in the twentieth century? What is at the heart of recent tensions between church authorities and some within the LDS intellectual community?

Shipps is fascinated with the Mormon transition from "peoplehood to church membership" (p. 30). This process, which Shipps places in the half-century following World War II, includes a weakening of Mormon "ethnicity," an ascribed cultural identity that was a product of the Saints' rich nineteenth-century experience. Regardless of their geographic or national origin, Mormons gathered in the Great Basin kingdom as a communally-oriented people; they "had to 'choose to be chosen'" and work to build Zion in the tops of the mountains, separate from the rest of frontier America. "The end result," Shipps writes, "was the creation of a group that took on ethnic characteristics nearly as distinctive and important as the ethnic characteristics of Chicanos, Asians, and Native American groups" (p. 35).

By the end of the twentieth century, however, LDS Church members were spread throughout the world, and Mormon distinctiveness—its otherness—was in serious decline, Shipps explains. Performance of temple ceremonies and possession of the *Book of Mormon* still make them stand out, but in most other ways Mormons today appear little different from members of other Christian denominations. The vigorous, tribal nature of Mormon cultural life prior to the 1970s, with its busy ward chapels and independent auxiliaries, has been replaced by a correlated, strictly hierarchical church with a consolidated meeting schedule. Mormon ethnicity, though weakened,

is still extant today in Mormon areas of the American West, but elsewhere, "what was once Mormon ethnicity has turned into distinctive practice, which is a very different thing" (p. 37).

Shipps refuses to interpret religious activity as an epiphenomenon, that is, as a reflection of other social or political issues within a community. Such approaches "do not recount and explicate what happened in a manner that makes their histories meaningful for members of faith communities" (p. 171). This approach produces a particularly insightful essay on Brigham Young, whose primary achievement, Shipps argues, was the "making of Saints." The Mormon leader "created a cohesive, self-conscious body of Latter-day Saints whose primary identity was Mormon and whose understanding of Mormonism paralleled his own" (p. 249).

Shipps's years of immersion in the Mormon historical sources and decades of association with LDS church members has made her what she calls an "inside-outsider." Like serious, dedicated historians of a foreign people, she has learned the language of Mormons and has an understanding and empathy toward the Saints that is rare among non-Mormon scholars. LDS readers unfamiliar with Shipps's work will be surprised at how familiar Mormons and Mormonism seem in her analyses, even when she is writing for a non-Mormon audience. This is clearly evident in an essay on Joseph Smith and the development of Mormon theology in which Shipps describes an accumulation of layers of doctrine and practice: the initial restoration was followed by a "Hebraic overlay" (literal gathering, building of a temple at Kirtland, separate lesser and greater priesthoods, declarations of lineage, keys granted to Joseph and others), followed by the culminating "fulness of the Gospel" (patriarchal order of marriage, proxy baptism, doctrines of eternal progression and tiered heavens). This final layer of teachings "located human life between pre- and post-existence states and placed the ordinances of the temple. . . at the very core of Mormonism." These doctrines were combined with "the merged gospels of Jesus Christ and Abraham" to form the Mormon plan of salvation (pp. 294-96).

Many readers will also find fascinating the autobiographical material found in several of the chapters and section introductions. Shipps describes her first encounter with Mormons in Cache County, Utah, in 1960, the highlights of her graduate training in history, and her subsequent experiences as a professional sojourner in the realm of LDS history. (She is currently professor emerita of history and religious studies at Indiana University—Purdue University, Indianapolis.) Most of the autobiographical sections comprise intellectual, not spiritual or emotional autobiography. An exception is a moving description of how she came to understand the LDS concept of proxy ordinances while taking communion in her own Methodist church in Indiana shortly after the excommunication of personal friend Lavina Fielding Anderson and several others in September 1993.

Shipps does not dwell long on where Mormonism is headed—indeed, that is not the task of the historian—though she does think the LDS Church will continue in its programs the current intensification of emphasis on Christ over discussion of events in Mormon history. Her analysis of contemporary Mormonism is not free of missteps, however. She writes of a growing rhetorical shift toward the use of the terms "Mormon Christian" and Mormon Christianity" by Church mem-

bers. Shipps vastly overestimates the spread of this usage, which implies a theological ecumenism foreign to most members of the Church. Shipps is of course fully aware of the need within Mormonism to be separate from other forms of Christianity—a theme central to her 1985 path-breaking work, Mormonism: The Story of A New Religious Tradition. The difficulty is that it is unclear how the current emphasis on Christ within the LDS church will affect the relationship between Mormons and other Christians. Shipps is certainly correct that the expanding church is now in a transition phase. She may yet prove prescient that "unless the matter of LDS identity is somehow solved in the new multinational situation, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has little hope of maintaining itself apart from other forms of Christianity" (p. 272).

Many would ask: why would a non-Mormon historian spend her whole career studying the Mormons? This book is filled with such penetrating and unending curiosity that the only answer can be "She just finds them fascinating." May Shipps stay as a permanent resident in the land of Mormon history and keep writing about it for a long time to come.

A Variety of Women's Voices

Life Writings of Frontier Women Series, Utah State University Press Series Editor, Maureen Ursenbach Beecher

Volume One: *Winter Quarters: The 1846-1848 Life Writings of Mary Haskin Parker Richards*, edited by Maurine Carr Ward (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), 336 pp.

Volume Two: *Mormon Midwife: The 1846-1888 Diaries of Patty Bartlett Sessions* edited by Donna Toland Smart (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1997), 457 pp.

Volume Three: *The History of Louisa Barnes Pratt: Mormon Missionary Widow and Pioneer*, edited by S. George Ellsworth (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998), 420 pp.

Volume Four: *Out of the Black Patch: The Autobiography of Effie Marquess Carmack, Folk Musician, Artist, and Writer*, edited by Noel A. Carmack and Karen Lynn Davidson (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1999), 398 pp.

Volume Five: *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow*, edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2000), 316 pp.

Reviewed by Judy Nolte Temple, associate professor of Women's Studies and English, University of Arizona.

THIS LAUDABLE AND AMBITIOUS SERIES presents a variety of life writing by Mormon women, ranging from diaries and letters to memoirs and more formal autobiography. Series editor Maureen Ursenbach Beecher begins each volume by advocating the importance of women's writing for our fullest understanding of western history and culture. These life stories are particularly woman-centered, for the Mormon women's husbands were often absent on missionary journeys, which compelled their wives to be uncommonly strong and independent. Beecher also wants readers to feel an intimate link with these women of long ago, which is perhaps why the series uses first names, a practice that would have seemed im-

pertinent to Victorian women but seems consistent with this collection's goals: "The reader of this and the other texts in the series is invited to sit back, relax, and let the words flow. Consider the reading a conversation with a neighbor, an introduction to a new friend" (vol. 3, p. x). Each volume has its own "personality" that emerges from the voice of the original writer in collaboration with the perspective of the editor who shapes the introductory essay and documentation.

The series begins with Mary Richard's diary, kept during her sojourn at Winter Quarters, 1846-1848. While diaries are surely considered the nonliterary "stepchild" of autobiography, as Beecher terms them, she sees in their immediacy a good story: "Never quite complete, always concealing something, they are as gripping as a mystery story, as engaging as a play unfolding on an intimate stage" (p. xii). If one can tolerate Mary's idiosyncratic spelling and punctuation, one enters not only her daily routine of prodigious amounts of needlework in her in-laws' home, but the challenges facing this newlywed whose husband is away on a mission:

> we traviled along through wood a prarira and about 2 oclock arrived at the pony cr[eek] Indian Village were we stayed all night at a Bro [James] McLellens I think. with whom I had a confab about keeping council & following the Church. he thought 'twas best for every one to live where he could get the most to Eat and keep his family the most comfortable and I contended that it was better to saccrefice and suffer with the Saints for then we possessed a hope that e'er long we should enjoy the blessing with them. . .there was many other thing that we spoke about but I cannot write them (p. 111).

Mary's letters show great affection for her absent husband Samuel: "I am very glad to hear that you are going to send me your likeness though would mutch rather see the Boy that wears the curl" (p. 73). But when Samuel returned and decided in 1855 to enter plural marriage, Mary's spirit and health deteriorated. This period of her short life was not covered in her diaries, although editor Maurine Carr Ward addresses the complexities of this relationship in her introductory essay: "Mary's letters depict Samuel as insensitive and inconsiderate. . .His letters talk of feeling lonely away from the warmth of his home and wives and of his love and concern for them. . .He may have been so involved with his own affairs that he saw only what he wanted to see at home" (p. 40). Thus we are left with virtual silence regarding Mary's greatest personal challenge, in contrast to the daunting detail of her earlier diary, a frustrating characteristic of authentic life writing. The volume contains almost seventy pages of biographical information about Mormon families and is richly illustrated, as are all the books in this series.

Volume Two presents the diaries kept from 1846 to 1888 by famous Mormon midwife Patty Bartlett Sessions, who died shortly before turning 98. The decision by editor Donna Toland Smart to indicate in the text where Patty corrected her own diary lends a wonderful sense of dynamism; we see a woman re-reading and clarifying as she creates a book of her self. As Smart observes, "Patty told her tale while she was living it, shifting attention from one scenario to another with little or no elaboration. She was too busy to explain fully what she already knew, writing, as it were, only reminders for herself" (p. 24). The editor's footnotes (which save the reader from having constantly to flip back to endnotes in a

dizzying dance) provide information the sparse text cannot provide. Smart spent seven years editing these diaries, which are wonderfully depicted in the volume's photographs. Patty Sessions suffered the deaths of five of her young children, was sealed to Joseph Smith, endured stormy polygamous marriages with her two husbands (both of whom chose Patty's home for solace in their dying days), founded a school, and as a widow "laid up considerable"–$16,000 (p. 26). The diary's reticence (her first husband is called Mr. Sessions) is discarded when Rosilla becomes his first plural wife:

> Satturday 3 Mr. Sessions took all the Saliratus I had gave it to Rosilla told her to lock it up from me and keep it ^he also abused me very much^ for she had told him many things that were untrue and when he found out the truth he took ^the most of it^ back again and gave it to me Sunday 4 I feel bad I am in trouble (pp. 62-63).

It is an unfortunate loss to history that Patty's earlier diaries dating from 1812 are missing, for they covered the beginning of her marriage, her conversion, and important years in the birth of the Latter-day Saints. One is made all the more curious by Patty's observation as she starts her diary of her sixty-first year: "I have been reading my journal and feel to thank the Lord that I have passed through what I have" (p. 226).

Volume Three in the series contains the marvelous memoir drawn from the diaries of a remarkable woman, Louisa Barnes Pratt (1802-1872). The spirited Louisa traveled to Winter Quarters without assistance from her husband, experienced the pioneer days of Zion, joined her husband on a missionary trip to Tahiti, and ultimately chose to rejoin the community of saints in Utah rather than stay with her husband in California. As one daughter observed of this choice, "Mother has better courage to live in a hard place. She has had a deeper experience, and does not dread hardness so much" (p. xvii). While memoirs, especially those written for one's children as were Louisa's, can be filled with bland platitudes, this one has a distinct and genuine voice throughout. En route from Nauvoo, Louisa notes, "I found great pleasure in riding horseback. By that means I could render some assistance in driving the stock" (p. 81). She abhorred buffalo hunts, sympathizing with the panicked animals. She negotiated with church elders in order to venture to Tahiti, only to suffer enormously from sea sickness, which she describes: " it is continually dying, and yet you live! It is not to be told but only to be felt" (p. 123). In Tahiti she virtually adopted a little girl whose "color was not objectionable"; in a moment of candor, she writes, "Never does my mind revert to the scenes enacted on that 'isolated world' but I remember the patter of those little feet, and can see the golden child in the water. I have digressed. I will return to my journal" (pp. 164, 165). The Pratts did adopt a half-Tahitian boy, and during her California years, Louisa fretted about his "nature" and the influence of her nurture. Even in old age and increasing isolation, Louisa writes, "So I communed with myself, and resolved to set my heart lightly on every thing. . ." (p. 284). The overlap of genres—journal and memoir—provides a richly layered text that combines the journal's immediacy with the memoir's wisdom, although editor S. George Ellsworth's introduction is vague about the types of "abridgements and alternations" Louisa made during the twenty years she spent cre-

ating this text bequeathed to her children–and, thanks to this series—to us.

Volume Four is *Out of Black Patch*, the lively autobiography of folk musician, artist and writer Effie Marquess Carmack (1885-1973), written in a wonderful chatty tone. She begins, "I thought that maybe some of my children, or grandchildren, might just appreciate a story of my life. Not that there has been anything very extraordinary or wonderful in it, but one thing sure, it is different from that of any other" (p. 31). A large portion of the book recounts her childhood home of rural Kentucky so vividly that we can smell its heat and tobacco. Editor Karen Lynn Davidson suggests that this emphasis on happy childhood days might compensate for the marital disappointments Effie later faced. One simple line by Effie about her husband's role during her convalescence from illness speaks volumes to most women: "Edgar told the Doctor that he could do the washing easy, but after just one attempt, he hired a negro woman to come and do it, and she did a good job of it" (p. 267). The text is uneven, with some events like courtship glossed over and others—particularly her bringing son Cecil back from death—poignantly recounted. While Davidson embraces the silences and mysteries in this autobiography (which may in fact be a collaboration with Effie's daughter, who typed from the original which no longer exists), she provides wonderful answers in her footnotes about folk ways, medicines, and history. (This is the best-documented book of the series.) In later life, Effie became a renowned painter and won a prize at the New York World's Fair. She built a gallery teaching studio in her mid-fifties and completed its hand-laid fireplace after a beloved Kentucky model. In her mid-sixties, Effie took her collection of folk songs, her guitar and costumes to Knott's Berry Farm to audition, which led to a new career as a performer. While Effie was clearly not a "frontier" woman, whether building a loving family, a studio, or a folk music repertoire, she had a sense of humor that enlivens her anecdotes throughout.

Volume Five is actually a second edition of the 1995 book based on the personal writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow that was to have begun this series. Eliza is the most prominent Mormon woman in the series, which means she often overshadowed herself as an individual in favor of herself as a model. As editor Maureen Ursenbach Beecher notes, "One would hope to glimpse both the external 'Eliza' and the intimate 'I' in her diaries, in her verses, and in her autobiographical reflection ... The 'I,' the inner woman, remains in relative obscurity, hidden intentionally under the coverings of a propriety which protected Eliza from the curious, the antagonistic, even from her friends, and in large part, from us" (p. xviii). Eliza is particularly hidden in her "Sketch of My Life," which was written as a defense of Mormonism with the public in mind. Her trail diaries, in contrast, are more animated:

> Ate our bread up for supper & have not wood, expecting to find it lat night but thro' the kindness of Moth. Chase we are supplied with the addition of b. chips & we have a good breakfast. . .the Ind. that annoy'd us last night, pass us & strike their tents & travel with us til near night when they fall in our rear & we encamp near them. . . . (p. 187)

Beecher, who is the editor of the entire series, is knowledgeable about the strengths and deficiencies of each

type of life writing and shows this in her discussion of Eliza's journal describing the devouring crickets that ate the Saints' crops in Zion in contrast to the later story that included providential seagulls. Beecher's choice to begin the book with the more formal "Sketch," followed by the earlier diaries, is curious. This volume does not contain the helpful bibliography that the other books in the series do.

A good place for general readers to enter this garden of life writing would be with the memoirs by Louisa Barnes Pratt and Effie Marquess Carmack. The diaries require more patient reading, which will be rewarded by the incremental knowledge of independent women with an "itch to record." In general, the lesser-known the woman, the more candid is her life writing. Photographs of the fragile original diaries in these books remind us how ephemeral life writings are and how wise the families and LDS archivists were to preserve them.

Scholars of women's history and life writing will find the series weak on secondary materials. The intention of the editors, stated in each introduction, was not to overly interpret their subjects' writing, leaving the words to speak for themselves. According to series editor Beecher: "While some background material is provided in the endnotes to each chapter, there has been no attempt to summarize the entire history of the times in which the author wrote. There is purpose in such paucity of textual explanation: we present this series with the intent that, in this reading, the focus be upon the writer herself and her intimate circle" (vol. 5, p. x). However, books emanating from an academic press should provide enough scholarly content to place individual women's lives into context. These books have admirable documentation of Mormon scholarship, but (with the exception of the fourth volume) do not demonstrate knowledge of the wider field of life writing and Western women's history that would illuminate the context in which these Mormon women lived and wrote. The bibliographies and notes do not provide these trail markers to a huge body of literature.

At the same time that they eschew intrusive interpretation, the introductory essays in this series summarize the entirety of each woman's life story and highlight the dramatic points the reader is about to encounter. For this reader, this foretelling takes the very life out of life writing. The major mileposts in each woman's life could have been placed within the notes to her text rather than in front of it. This would have allowed her in essence to "speak" first. If we truly have confidence in pioneer women's voices, as the labor that went into this impressive series would indicate, perhaps instead of standing in front of Eliza, Effie, and their sisters to tell us why we will find them interesting, the editors could have stood back, gently guided us within their notes if the text's language was obscure, and let these women speak to us for themselves.

SETH P. CLARKE is a student studying Architecture at Rice University in Houston, Texas, and a recently returned missionary from the Florianópolis mission in Brazil. During his two years there, he sent his journal pages home as a weekly newsletter, and his parents began to circulate them to family and friends. At his readers' insistence, he has begun to collect and edit those journal observations into a book.

CHRISTIE DAVIES, a graduate of Cambridge University (M.A., Ph.D.), is an established Professor of Sociology at the University of Reading in England. He has published extensively on the sociology of religion, including articles on the Word of Wisdom, on Jewish identity and morality, and on perceptions of the afterlife. Dr. Davies is also known for his scholarly work on jokes and humor and has lectured on this subject at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, and at Brigham Young University, Hawaii.

DOUGLAS J. DAVIES, a graduate of Durham, Oxford, and Nottingham Universities, has also had the honorary degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology conferred upon him by the University of Uppsala in Sweden. He has published widely in religious studies with particular interest both in LDS culture (*Mormon Spirituality*, 1987, and *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*, 2000) and in death studies (*Death, Ritual and Belief*, second edition, 2002). His most recent work *Anthropology and Theology* (2002) reflects his long commitment to relating these two academic disciples. He currently holds a personal chair at the University of Durham as Professor in the Study of Religion.

TERRYL L. GIVENS is currently Professor of English at the University of Richmond, Virginia. After his first degree at Brigham Young University, both his M.A. and Ph.D. were taken at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He is well known both for his book *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy*, and for his most recent work *By the Hand of Mormon* (2002).

HENRI GOOREN is a social anthropologist and holds the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands. His research, *Rich Among the Poor: Church, Firm, and Household among Small Scale Entrepreneurs in Guatamala City*, was completed in 1998. He is currently engaged in academic administration in the Netherlands.

WARRICK N. KEAR was born in Yorkshire, England. He's a graduate in Music of Liverpool University where he studied Music Composition and Piano. He's also a Doctoral graduate of Nottingham University with a thesis on Music in Mormonism (1997). A third-generation member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he is married with four children. He has worked in the Church Education System in England for 25 years.

SETH KUNIN is currently Head of the School of Divinity and Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. He studied anthropology at Columbia University and subsequently received an MA in Jewish Philosophy from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and a Ph.D. from Cambridge. He has written several books and articles applying structuralist theory to many aspects of Israelite and Jewish culture, including *The Logic of Incest: A Structuralist Analysis of Biblical Myth and God's Place in the World*. His present research concerns the Crypto-Jews of New Mexico.

ARMAND L. MAUSS (Ph.D., University of California at Berkeley) is professor emeritus of sociology and religious studies at Washington State University, now living in Irvine, California. He is a recent former editor of the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* and author of two major books on Mormons.

KEITH NORMAN received a Master of Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School and a Ph.D. in Early Christian Studies from Duke University. He teaches CTR-8 in his Ohio ward and is an associate editor of *Dialogue*.

D. MICHAEL QUINN, an independent scholar, freelance writer, and former Brigham Young University History professor, is the prizewinning author of several books, including *Same-sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americans: A Mormon Example*, his *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, his *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, his *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, and his *Elder Statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark*. Beginning in Fall 2000, he has had a two-year appointment as Affiliated Scholar in the Center for Feminist Research at the University of Southern California.

WILLIAM D. RUSSELL is a professor of American History and Government at Graceland University in Lamoni, Iowa, and a frequent contributor to Mormon studies publications and symposia.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

HARRY ANDERSON (1906-1996) was born in Chicago to Swedish immigrant parents. He abandoned mathematics to become a very successful artist whose illustrations were popular in national magazines such as *Colliers, Good Housekeeping, Ladies Home Journal, Redbook Magazine,* and *The Saturday Evening Post.* In 1934 he underwent a religious conversion, became a Christian, and joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He thereafter divided his time and talent between lucrative commercial work and religious subjects, becoming one of the foremost religious illustrators. His works have been reproduced by the millions in books, magazines, and posters. They include several commissions from the LDS church.

CARL BLOCH (1834-1890), a merchant's son, prepared as a boy to be a midshipman. But in his early teens his artistic talents began to flower. So at age fifteen, he began attending Copenhagen's Academy of Art and soon thereafter went to Rome where he remained until 1865. There, he was influenced by the work of the Italian masters and turned his skills to painting scenes of great events, increasingly Danish historical events and stories of the Bible. By his life's end, he had served as head of the Royal Academy of Art and been internationally honored. While still in Italy he received an impressive commission: twenty-three new paintings for the rebuilt Frederiksborg Castle church in Denmark. Bloch worked on the paintings for fourteen years. He also did at least eight large altarpieces on Jesus' life for other churches in Denmark and in Sweden.

JAMES CHRISTENSEN was born in Culver City, California, and studied at the University of California at Los Angeles and at Brigham Young University where he earned an MFA. Since the 1970s, he has been on the faculty at BYU and has developed a national reputation not only for his naturalistic religious painting, but also for poignant and humorous caricatures of life in a world of fairies, hunchbacks, and dwarves. He has worked closely with Greenwich Workshop to produce several highly successful illustrated books.

ROBERT MARSHALL was born in Mesquite, Nevada, and once played football for Brigham Young University. He has been on the art faculty at BYU since 1969 and has chaired the department. He is known as an arts administrator, arts patron, and fine artist. Once recognized primarily as a watercolorist, he is now widely acknowledged for his large oils in series and is best known for his oil paintings of intimate views of Utah's wetlands.

PAINTINGS

Front Cover:	"Jesus Praying in the Garden"	Harry Anderson
Back Cover:	"The Crucifixion"	Carl Bloch
Page 26	"Hanging Palms"	Robert Marshall
Page 27	"Christ in Gethsemane"	James Christensen

WITH ALL THE FERVOR
OF MY SOUL,
I KNOW THAT GOD LIVES,
THAT HE IS A REALITY, THAT HE IS A
PERSONALITY;
THAT
JESUS OF NAZARETH
IS AND WAS AND WILL EVER BE
THE SON OF GOD,
THE REDEEMER
AND THE
SAVIOR OF THE WORLD.
I KNOW
THAT BETTER THAN I KNOW
ANYTHING ELSE,
AND I SAY WITH PETER OF OLD WHO
WAS ASKED,
"WHOM SAY YE THAT I AM?"
HE REPLIED, AS I REPLY.
HE REPLIED WITH
THE SAME AUTHORITY WITH WHICH I SPEAK
"THOU ART THE CHRIST,
THE SON OF THE
LIVING GOD."
AND HE WAS TOLD BY THE MASTER
WHAT I HAVE BEEN TOLD
BY HIM AS WELL,
"FLESH AND BLOOD DID NOT REVEAL
THIS UNTO YOU,
BUT MY FATHER WHICH IS
IN HEAVEN."

MATTHEW 16:15-7

HUGH B. BROWN
MAY 13, 1969

DIALOGUE
A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT
P.O. BOX 58423
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84158
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED