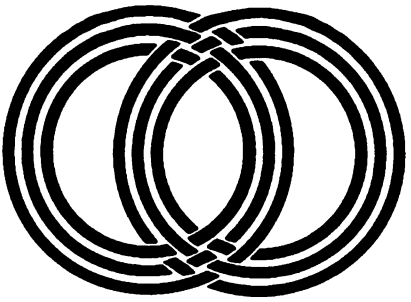
DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT



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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. 36, NO. 3, FALL 2003

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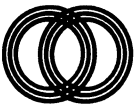

Our editors are quickly catching up with our publication schedule now. In the next few months, we anticipate three more journals arriving at your doorstep. This will affect your subscription term. As you know, we are a quarterly journal publishing four issues per year. You will note that we are roughly a season behind and plan to catch up by sending you the remaining journals for 2003 in fairly rapid succession. Please be advised that because of our adjusted schedule, your subscription may very likely fall due for renewal *much earlier* than you expected. If you renewed for only four issues sometime this year, you may even receive a renewal notice from us within a few months of your start date.

At our last board meeting, we concluded reluctantly that in order to remain viable, we must raise our subscription rates. We have not had any increases at all for 10 years. Our rates will be increasing January 1st, 2004. You may take advantage of our current low prices and renew for 12 issues at $75. This will be a substantial savings for you in the long run and help us keep our costs down in postage and the printing of renewal notices.

Thank you for your continued loyalty to *Dialogue* and your support for an open, reflective, and independent examination of Mormon belief and culture. Please call or e-mail me if you have any questions or confusion about your subscription. We fully anticipate getting back to a "normal" schedule by the first (Spring) issue of 2004.

Lori Levinson
Business Manager

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A Fictional Account

I recommend that *Dialogue* institute a new award for achievement in fiction. It might be called the Mark Twain Award. And I would like to nominate Dan Vogel as a worthy recipient. After reading Vogel's purported rebuttal (Letters, Vol. 36, No. 1) to my paper "Form Criticism of Joseph Smith 1823 Vision of the Angel Moroni" (Vol. 35, No. 3), I have a discovery to report. Vogel's criticisms have nothing to do with my article or its arguments. His letter is replying, instead, to an implied article that never existed. I am flattered to be named as fictional author of this fictive work, but it would be dishonest for me to take credit. No, the credit all belongs to Dan. Let me give you just two examples of his fertile imagination.

1. In my actual paper, I argue that there is strong evidence that the scriptural citations by Moroni in Joseph Smith's 1838 account of the 1823 vision are a product of an 1830's setting and are, therefore, unlikely to have been the words in the original story and vision. Vogel attacks my work (and me) because, he says, I both argue that Joseph Smith "consciously added words" distorting the account of the vision and, at the same time, claim that Joseph Smith inadvertently inserted new scriptural wording into an old story of Moroni. In fact, my consistent position throughout the article is the latter. Who could possibly remember precise quotations after fifteen years? I am not sure why Vogel asserts that I am claiming Joseph smith "consciously added words." This is stated nowhere in my paper nor in anything else I have written or said. I can only chalk it up to remarkable creativity.

2. Later Vogel states that in the article I claim that the 1823 vision takes the form of a "typical evangelical vision of. . .an angel." And he uses this statement as a platform from which to attack: "[B]y no stretch of the imagination," he scolds, is the Moroni visit recounted in the form a "typical evangelical vision." Ouch! But wait a minute. If you'll read the article—my article, the one I wrote—you will find me arguing that the literary form of the 1823 vision is, in fact, a mixed one, depending on the version. It could be a money-digging narrative, or a mix of religion and money digging, a lost ancient book narrative, and so forth. The story more often than not combined multiple literary forms. In that context, I argue that Joseph Smith's 1832 version is of mixed literary form containing, among other things, "elements" from typical evangelical visions. The principal evangelical element in the 1832 account is the prayer for forgiveness of those in a state of conviction of their sins. According to the prophet in 1832, this was the reason he prayed the night of the Moroni vision. This statement is surely non-controversial for any objective historian of any religious persuasion. I am not saying that this evangelical element was the vision. I am simply stating that Joseph Smith drew from a variety of literary forms, including evangelical, in the 1832 account.

Of course, Vogel's fictional reduction of my argument is easier to argue with. . .as is, for him, the shifty lot of visionaries in general. Faced with the evidence that there were hundreds of visionaries, prophets, and stone gazers in the early nineteenth century, indeed well beyond the nineteenth century, who had visions using techniques employed by Joseph Smith, Vogel—ever the logic master—warns that if these people cannot avoid anachronism (reinterpretation, rethinking, inconsistency), "historians have every right to suspect dishonesty." Look out Ann Lee, Teresa of Avila, Mohammed, John of the Cross, and especially poor Joseph Smith. However, the evidence is overwhelming that, for instance, Joseph Smith used traditional mystical techniques to inspire visions in the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon. Vogel himself takes that very position in his most recent book. Joseph was not faking through mimicry. His visionary techniques worked. So why in the world would he need to lie about having the 1823 vision? He, in fact, knew how to induce visions. And he did induce them. I'm afraid in these matters, I far prefer the less peevish, less clerkish views of the great scholars of mystical tradition, Pagels, Eliade, Remini, and others. I do however want to honor Dan Vogel's gift for improvisation. He still has my vote for the Mark Twain Fiction Award.

Mark Thomas
Salt Lake City, Utah

Before Adam All Die

I noted in the *Dialogue* articles on "Evil Evolution" (Vol. 35, No. 4) that the most often mentioned disparity between the evolutionist's and the religionist's view of creation is pre-Adamic death. Evolution could not have evolved these billions of years without the elimination of the unfit, and yet religion is reluctant to acknowledge death's handiwork before 4000 BC and the "fall" of Adam. (". . .in Adam all die" 1 Cor 15:12). May I offer a solution to the apparent dichotomy of the two views?

Paul's letters to the Romans and Corinthians are replete with statements establishing the parity of the acts of ". . .the first man Adam. . ." and ". . .the last Adam [Christ]" (1 Cor. 15:45). Paul instructs us that Adam is ". . .the figure [equivalent or type] of him [Christ] that was to come. . ." (Rom 5:14). Moreover, ". . .since by man [Adam] came death, by man [Christ] came also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15:21).

Our "latter-day" religion has revealed the doctrine that the effects of the atonement are retroactive; ". . . brethren be reconciled unto him [the Father] through the atonement of Christ. . .*before* he manifesteth himself in the flesh" (Jacob 4:11). Since the resurrection of nature is atemporal and Adam is Christ's prefigure, then what prevents the rational believer from supposing that resurrection's prerequisite "fall" is also retroactive? If not so, then how do we account for the presence of the "dreary" world of sweat and death that awaited Adam just outside the garden gate?

In my view, God-punctuated evolution produces each "world without number" and prepares on each one some fertile soil for the planting of a little garden "eastward in Eden." When all is in readiness, "the first man" is placed there to act out the timeless ordinance of "the fall" that justifies his necessary endowment

with the knowledge of good and evil. With this final endowment the gods themselves evolve.

Michael E. McDonald
Chester, Idaho

A Context for Change

I'll try to get serious.

I am so much in agreement with the Spring 2003 (Vol. 36, No. 1) confessions of David O. Tolman (see pp. 103-108), taking the side of science as opposed to religion.

Nevertheless, even though I side with him in his way of approaching truth, I would like to remind him that his teacher at Princeton, Thomas S. Kuhn, taught us all to observe the existence of paradigms (models or patterns of thought). My own mentor, David Potter (of Yale, then Stanford), told me that he wondered what context some future historian would clap over all of us—a context, no doubt, of which we were unaware. In the discipline of history, contexts are everything, and facts are merely illustrative.

A neighbor of mine, now dead, held a Ph.D. from Cal. Tech. He would sit in his study thinking about tools—basic tools. He sought to invent some new ones because he believed that our technology had evolved from people tacking on improvements to existing basic tools. He thought that if we could start out with different basic tools, it would give rise to a different technology.

Is our technology "true"? As Americans we have pragmatically come to believe that whatever works is also "true." What we should believe is that whatever works "works." Ptolomaic astronomy can predict eclipses. Newtonian physics can put a man on the moon. In conquering the American wilderness, we invented a lot of useful things because we were ignorant of solutions used by Europeans or Asians.

In a nut shell, I am saying that science usually operates within existing and accepted constructs, many of which will be with us only temporarily, and most of which are inferior to what lies ahead.

But the great thing about science is that it stands ready to CHANGE when proven wrong or inadequate. Not so with religion. As one who set in motion the event which reduced the Book of Abraham to an absurdity, 35 years ago, I marvel that it is still up and kicking.

Joseph Jeppson
Woodside, California

Nothing We Needed to Know

Marilyn Bushman-Carlton

And then, to show how it was done,
Mrs. Jackson, the Home Ec. teacher,
bent from the waist, the way you drink from a tap,
and demonstrated how to let the breasts
drop into a brassiere. How each
would fall into its cup—
right and left—
for a perfect fit,
no adjustment needed.
She reached behind her back,
hinging her elbows,
and locked the fastener shut,
slid each arm into its loop of strap,
and straightened: twin bulks
at the front of the room,
she with squat shoes, brown hose,
hair graying and tight,
the dress form, headless and bare.
Tomato aspic firmed in the fridge.
An institution of baked eggs, the finger bowl,
toughest teacher in school,
and mother of two girls we knew,
lit by odd shapes of afternoon light,
a white brassiere on the outside
of her mildew-dark dress,
and no one dared laugh, not then,
nor later, when we sat, our chairs half-circled,
as she read, cover to cover,
voice pasty, lids low,
a church book on chastity
that filled the eighth grade sex education requirement
but kept sex a gray woolly blur.

Does Justice Rob Mercy? Retribution, Punishment, and Loving Our Enemies

Janice Allred

I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED THE PARABLES and teachings of Jesus about forgiveness and mercy, and I have pondered their meaning for many years. We could say that in these parables, parables such as the Prodigal Son, the Lost Sheep, and the Laborers in the Vineyard, mercy and forgiveness are given pre-eminence over justice. One would think that we would simply rejoice in the message of God's love, mercy, and forgiveness that these parables present. But they trouble us. When the parable of the Prodigal Son is discussed in a Mormon Sunday School class, the Older Brother is invariably brought up as the better son, the preferred son. The Younger Brother is forgiven and loved, it is conceded, but the Older Brother has the higher place in the Kingdom of God, it is argued. For most Mormons, justice and obedience are more important than mercy and forgiveness. The Older Brother was obedient. Yes, he should have forgiven his brother, but didn't the Father tell him, "All that I have is thine?" Most Mormons I have heard on the subject interpret this to mean that the Older Brother will inherit the highest kingdom of heaven while the Younger Brother will take a lower place. So in this interpretation of the Prodigal Son, mercy is inferior to justice.

We are troubled by the words Jesus gives after telling the parable of the Lost Sheep. He says, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7). Does Jesus love a sinner more than a righteous person? This couldn't be right, we think. And the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, in which the laborers who work one hour receive the same wages as those who work all day, causes much consternation. If everyone receives the same wage, why should we work so hard to obey the commandments? Why not simply enjoy ourselves and repent later?

Jesus gives parables and sayings of judgment as well as mercy. The parable of the Talents, the cursing of the fig tree, and the parable of the Ten Virgins end with judgment. And some parables portray both justice and mercy—the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, the parable of the King's Son's Wedding, and the parable of the Wheat and the Tares. Does Jesus give a more prominent place to justice or to mercy? I believe that in his words, parables, teachings, and deeds Jesus taught and acted with both justice and mercy. Every parable, every teaching, every action is imbued with, proceeds from, exemplifies, both mercy and justice.

But there is a tension between justice and mercy. As I have studied the gospel of Jesus Christ and pondered the meaning of his life, teachings, and atonement, I have come to the understanding that God is a God of unconditional love and the gospel is a message of grace and forgiveness. Jesus Christ in his life, words, and atonement manifests the love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness of God. I think we human beings tend to understand justice better than mercy and to prefer justice. I believe that the gospel message needs to emphasize mercy because we tend to give prominence to justice.

Because I see the gospel as a message of grace, forgiveness, and mercy, I get taken aback when I hear the grace interpreted out of it. I do not agree with the Mormon Sunday School interpretation of the Prodigal Son. The feast, not the inheritance, represents the kingdom of God. The symbol of the feast with its joy, making merry, and abundance—the feast offered freely to all—is a motif in many parables and scriptures. It is the symbol of the sacrament, the Lord's Supper. The Older Brother refuses to enter heaven because his brother, a sinner, is there. He refuses to enter because of envy and self-righteousness. Yes, all that the Father has is his, but the Older Brother refuses to accept it and enjoy it. Concerned with justice, wanting to reap the rewards of his obedience, he cannot enter into the joy of the kingdom because the joy of the kingdom is accepting the love, forgiveness, grace, and mercy that is freely offered to all. If we do not love and forgive each other, we put ourselves outside the kingdom because love and mercy are the nature of the life that is in God.

Although I do not justify the Older Brother in his resentment and self-righteousness, I recognize something of myself in him. I am more like him than the Younger Brother, more interested in doing what's right than in having a good time. The point of the parable is that salvation is by grace, not works, and we can receive and participate in God's bounteous love whenever we come unto Christ. But the parable does not address the question of righteousness. The obedience of the Older Son was not true righteousness because it did not include mercy. How are justice and mercy related?

Many recent events and problems have given me and many others cause to reflect on the meaning of justice—the devastation of September

11th, the ensuing war on terrorism, the continuing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians with its escalating cycles of violence and retaliation, the United States' war on Iraq, justified as a pre-emptive defense against aggression from Iraq, and the willingness of many to give up freedom for security, a willingness based on the perceived need to identify, monitor, and punish "enemies." After the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, I was troubled by the talk about retribution and retaliation and the ready acceptance of many people of the war on terrorism. I was troubled by the rhetoric about evil enemies.

I picked up a book I had just bought called *What Is Justice?* and I was reminded that many people, including philosophers, see retribution and punishment as essential to justice. I quickly found many passages asserting this. John Stuart Mill writes:

> We have seen that the two essential ingredients in the sentiment of justice are the desire to punish a person who has done harm and the knowledge or belief that there is some individual or individuals to whom harm has been done.[1]

My title, "Does Justice Rob Mercy?," is a play on Alma's rhetorical question, "What, do you suppose that mercy can rob justice?" (Alma 42:25). My question is somewhat paradoxical. Mercy could rob, perhaps, but how could justice rob? Justice is just. But what claim does mercy have against justice? Would mercy have to rob justice to obtain a sphere of operation? Is there any aspect of life to which justice does not lay a claim?

A common idea about justice is that it is the infliction of punishment for breaking the law. Another idea is that it is receiving what one deserves—the eye for an eye concept of the Old Testament—retribution. These ideas are related, but not identical. According to these definitions, showing mercy is not demanding justice—not inflicting punishment or not seeking revenge or not demanding what one is owed. These definitions of justice and mercy make them contradictory concepts. They define justice as the primary concept; mercy is simply its contradiction. If retribution and punishment are essential to justice, is it a duty to punish wrongdoing? Is it a duty to seek retribution? Is it then wrong to be merciful?

What is justice? Justice is most commonly understood as a legal concept. The law, whether it be the law of a state, the rules or norms of a family, organization, or community, or the moral law, defines obligation and what is just. A positivistic interpretation of law simply equates law

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1. John Stuart Mill, "John Stuart Mill from *Utilitarianism*," in *What Is Justice?* eds. Robert C. Solomon and Mark C. Murphy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 259.

and justice; justice is whatever the law says it is. If this were true, however, it would never be possible to ask of a law or a set of laws, "Is it just?" But this question is always meaningful and always important. If it were not, it would not be possible to criticize a government as being tyrannical, authoritarian, or oppressive. It would not be possible to evaluate an ethical system or code of behavior. There must be a concept, an idea of justice, that, struggling to understand and articulate, we use as a standard to judge systems of law and particular laws and rules. Although it may not be possible to come to an agreement or a final conclusion about the exact nature of justice, the effort to understand, work out, and live according to principles of justice is an essential part of our personal and communal lives.

The concept of justice, then, is more fundamental than the concept of law. Justice is one of those concepts like love and truth which are at the root of reality. This ontological depth of justice can be seen in the wide-range of the questions that can be asked which are fundamentally questions of justice. They range from the abstract—"How should we relate to our fellow human beings?" "What makes a society good?" "What is the source of obligation?" "How is power legitimated?" "How should a society distribute its resources?" "What is the purpose of punishment and how do we justify it?" "How do we reconcile competing rights?" "How do we respond to violence?"—to the practical—"Should inequalities in wealth be adjusted by taxing the rich?" "Should minorities be given preference in hiring and in admission to educational programs?" "Should capital punishment be outlawed?"—to the personal—"What should I do about the malicious gossip that is being spread about me?" "How can I get out of or change an abusive relationship?" "Should I give money to the beggar on the street?"

A definition of justice that encompasses all of the uses of the word and all of the ideas and questions considered in the concept and that is not limited to a particular culture or society is hard to come by. Plato considered the idea of justice in the context of the just society. In Plato's *Republic* Socrates says "that justice is `doing one's own'—every person's performing his or her proper role in the community." For him, justice is both "harmony in the soul" and "harmony in the state." It is the "rule of reason."[2] For Aristotle justice is equality and proportion, every person receiving according to what he deserves.[3] Tillich defines justice as "the form in which the power of being actualizes itself,"[4] thus putting justice

2. Robert C. Solomon and Mark C. Murphy, "Introduction," *What Is Justice?*, 3.

3. Ibid., 4.

4. Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Application* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 56.

at the foundation of being, secondary only to being itself. I put truth in this place. I see justice as occupying the next level of reality. I define justice as right relationship. Truth is the form of being and justice is the right relationship of all forms of being. Justice is both the law that defines the nature of this right relationship and the dynamic state of being that exists when beings freely actualize their purposes in love and truth.

What is the nature of this right relationship? We seek to define it through law and actualize it through living. Paradoxically, we also need to define it through living and actualize it through understanding. If we reduce our pursuit of justice to law so that the law is supreme, we reap the consequences of legalism—the tyranny of rules, guilt, dishonesty, coercion, and violence. But if we seek to live without trying to understand the law, we lose an important defense against rationalization and self-centeredness which can take the form of competition and enmity, leading to either the tyranny of the self or the tyranny of the other. Sentimentality, dishonesty, coercion, and violence can result.

This paradox is another way of looking at the paradox of justice and mercy. We have seen that if retribution and punishment are regarded as essential to justice, then justice and mercy must be mutually exclusive. In a particular circumstance I could be either just or merciful but not both. I might be merciful on some occasions and just on other occasions, but I could never be both merciful and just at the same time. Most people would agree that mercy is a virtue, that sometimes it is good to be merciful. Justice is also good. How do I know when I should be merciful and when I should be just? Is there some principle or law to guide me or is mercy simply a matter of caprice or impulse? I am merciful when I feel like being merciful and just when I feel like being just. If we take, instead, the larger view of justice as right relationship, does mercy become, not contradictory to justice, but part of it? Can we write mercy into the law and, if we do, is mercy a superfluous concept? If mercy is part of justice, why do we need a concept of mercy at all?

Another way to understand this paradox is to consider the relationship of gifts and obligation. The purpose of the law is to define obligation. A just person fulfills his obligations. The law tells us what we ought to do. But shouldn't we give gifts? Surely a good person is one who gives gifts. Are gifts then obligatory? But a gift by its very nature is freely given. Can something given truly be a gift if it is given to fulfill a duty? Do we have a duty to give to the poor and is this a requirement of mercy or justice? Should the well-being of some depend on the mercy of others or does everyone have a right to the good and the goods? And do we all have an obligation to see that each person's rights are defended and each person has a fair share of the goods?

If justice defines right relationship, it must also include mercy, forgiveness, empathy, love, and giving, for all these are characteristic of

good relationships. But empathy, love, mercy, and forgiveness cannot be commanded either to others or to oneself. Even if I desire to forgive someone and feel it is my duty to do so, I may not be able to forgive him. Forgiveness comes as a gift not only to the one receiving it, but also to the one who offers it. Love in all its forms is always a gift. Paradoxically, although it comes from the will, it cannot be attained by an act of will. Should the law require us to do something it is not in our power to do?

But the two foundational commandments of Christian ethics are to love God and our neighbor. Christian teachings require us to forgive, to love our enemies, to give to those who ask of us even more than they ask, to serve others, to overcome anger, envy, lust, and hate, to refrain from judgment. Some see these teachings as a higher law than the law of justice—that mercy replaces justice. The common Mormon view is that the atonement of Christ fulfills the demand of justice (that we be punished for our sins) so that God can then be merciful to us. This view sees God's mercy being extended to us on the condition that we repent of our sins and fulfill the commandments of the higher law. But then we are back in the realm of justice and required to meet an infinite obligation, an obligation which can neither be defined by the law nor fulfilled by any person.

My view is that justice and mercy form a complementary duality, not a contradictory opposition. They are mutually dependent, not mutually exclusive. Mutually exclusive opposites contradict each other. Logically, they are "a" and "not a." Both cannot be true. Existential examples of mutually exclusive opposition are harder to find. Perhaps "on" and "off" are a mutually exclusive pair. "The light is on" and "the light is off" cannot be true at the same time. The mutually exclusive "on" and "off" are the basis of computer technology. However, the concept of "on" is dependent on the concept of "off," so in some sense "on" and "off" form a complementary opposition. The computer could not exist without the possibility of both "on" and "off." Mutually dependent opposites cannot be separated.

Lehi asserts that complementary duality is the essence of existence. He says:

> For it must needs be that there is an opposition in all things. If not so, my first-born in the wilderness, righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead, having no life neither death, nor corruption, neither incorruption, happiness, nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility. . .And if these things are not there is no God. And if there is no God we are not, neither the earth; for there could have been no creation of things, neither to act nor to be acted upon; wherefore, all things must have vanished away. (2 Nephi 2:11)

Notice that Lehi says that this necessary opposition is *in* all things, not *of* all things. It is the opposition of balance, harmony, life, flow, of giving and receiving, of activity and passivity—not the opposition of enmity and rivalry.

I call the principle that Lehi describes the principle of polarity. The magnet illustrates this principle. It possesses both a negative and a positive pole. Although joined together, each pole retains its identity. If the magnet is broken in half, each half will contain its own poles. It is impossible to have a magnet with just one pole. The properties of matter require the existence of complementary particles. Although these particles are attracted to each other and form a whole, they cannot merge completely or matter would cease to exist. The principle of polarity applies to all of reality; it is the ancient concept of yin and yang.

The principles of righteousness or goodness are polar pairs that must exist in balance. Each member of the pair is of equal value and importance. If they are separated or if one is ignored and the other privileged, they become false and sin results. Because justice and mercy are complementary opposites, they cannot exist apart from each other. Justice without mercy is not justice; if we reduce mercy to justice or subsume it within or exclude it from justice, justice becomes legalistic, retributive, punishing, and coercive. Mercy without justice becomes sentimental, dishonest, manipulative, and complicit in evil.

Because justice and mercy are primary aspects of reality, the relationship of justice and mercy can only be understood ontologically, that is, in order to understand this relationship we need to understand the structure of reality. I have some grasp of the problems of defining an ontology—no one has access to absolute truth. However, I do not think these problems are avoided by refusing to engage in the study of the nature of being. We all have a world-view, and it seems to me that it is good to be conscious that we have a world-view. It is better to try to understand what that view is and to attempt to create a world-view that contains more truth than to simply assume that our world-view is reality or to assume that all world-views are equally valid (which amounts to believing that there is no truth) or to believe that we have no world-view and thus avoid the dangers of belief.

The world-view that I will present is based on ideas from many sources. It is my synthesis and interpretation of these ideas, the product of my thinking about, studying, and experiencing the nature of reality. I am not able here to indicate the sources of the ideas or develop them fully or present a defense of them. I will simply present them and then use them to answer some of the questions I have raised, hoping that they will prove to be useful and enlightening. I will contrast this world-view, which I believe to be good and true, although not complete, with another world-view which I think is common, mistaken, and the source of many ills.

This second world-view is the competitive world-view. The belief at the foundation of this view is that the good of one is achieved at the expense of another. I can only win if you lose. My well-being depends on your ill-being. Pride, envy, greed, fear, exploitation, abuse, and coercion are all part of a competitive world-view. The belief behind pride is that my worth is dependent on my being better than someone else. In envy the good of the other threatens me. There is not enough good for both of us. In greed I believe that I am not safe unless I get more and more. In fear I allow others to coerce me or I attack them to prevent them from doing me harm. The competitive world-view holds that truth is whatever wins or whatever you want it to be or that there is no truth.

The competitive world-view is essentially disintegrative. The principle of complementary opposition is not understood or accepted. The oppositional pairs are separated and dichotomized. They are not mutually dependent but competitive. Each half seeks to destroy, dominate, or ignore the other. In this world-view, either there is no evil or evil is an essential aspect of reality. *Good and evil become a complementary oppositional pair.* If reality is fundamentally competitive, if the good of some must be achieved at the expense of others, then evil is built into the nature of reality and our choices amount to being either a victim or a perpetrator. Many people hold such beliefs, and consequently they live in and participate in creating a competitive reality.

A rejection of the competitive world-view entails a rejection of the idea that good and evil are a complementary oppositional pair. If good and evil were a complementary oppositional pair rather than a contradictory one, evil would be an essential part of reality, which would mean that good could not exist without evil. But if evil were an essential part of reality, if the existence of good were dependent on the existence of evil, would evil not be in some sense good? The words of Lehi that I quoted are often interpreted to mean that the fundamental opposition is between good and evil. Lehi does say that without the opposition in all things righteousness could not be brought to pass and wickedness could not be brought to pass, neither could good or bad be brought to pass. However, he does not say that righteousness requires wickedness nor that good cannot exist without bad. He says that both righteousness and wickedness, both good and bad arise out of this fundamental opposition in all things. He says that without this fundamental opposition there would be no existence and no creation and no God.

Although evil is not an essential part of reality, sin is part of the human condition. We are all sinners. That doesn't make us evil. There is a distinction between sin and evil. To sin is to cause or participate in causing harm to another person or any part of creation. Sin is not a matter of the will; we can sin without intending to. Evil is of the will; it puts itself above all creation and seeks to bring about its own good by ex-

ploiting, dominating, or destroying others. We need to repent of our sins even if they were not intentional. If we love others, we will feel sorrow for causing harm and want to do whatever we can to bring about right relationship. If we refuse to repent, we are in danger of becoming evil.

The assumption underlying the concept of complementary opposition is that difference arises from unity. The origin of all things is unity, oneness, or undifferentiated Being. As the Creator, God is this Oneness, Being itself, the Source, the Origin. God creates out of the fullness of Being, which is God. This view of creation differs from the traditional Christian view that God creates out of nothing and the Mormon view that God is more an organizer than a creator. The Mormon view is based on Joseph Smith's teaching that "the mind or the intelligence that man possesses is co-equal with God himself."[5] This has been interpreted by most Mormon thinkers to mean that individual identity is uncreated—that human beings began as uncreated intelligences existing independently from God. Many Mormon thinkers see this view as providing a solution to the problem of evil. If human beings exist independently of God, then evil does not have its origin in God but in humans. However, I think this view raises a more difficult problem of evil. If the universe were at its origin many rather than one, there would be no principle of unity and no possibility of transcending the many perspectives to come to a fullness of love and truth. Evil would exist as a fundamental part of reality; there would be an opposition *of* all things, not an opposition *in* all things. Eternal competition would be the nature of reality. But Joseph Smith's words could also be interpreted to mean that the intelligence which humans possess is part of the primal unity that is God, not a separate, individual entity.

Creation requires differentiation. The primary differentiation is the creation of the Other, the Logos, the Son. This differentiation is within God. If this were not so, God would not exist—as through creation, existence arises out of Being—and God would not be perfect—as perfection, or fullness or completion, comes about through differentiation within unity. Being itself is goodness and the primal duality of God's nature is love and truth, distinct but never separated.

This duality within God is reflected in all creation. It can be seen as the yin-yang duality. The yin is the passive, receptive, feminine half of the polarity, and the yang is the active, directive, masculine half. Each half contains the seed or image of its opposite, which symbolizes their unity. Yang is the principle of differentiation, but it seeks unity with its

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5. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1968), 352-353.

opposite. Yin is the principle of unity, but it releases and receives its opposite. The principle of life, of flow, is that yang is transformed into yin and yin into yang.

In creating, God distinguishes Godself from creation and thus creates self as God and creation as other. There is no self without the other, and for God (and humanity, created in the image of God) the self also contains an other, which makes it possible for the self to continually create itself. In creating, God created Godself as Creator. God the Son is the Creator because creation is active and directive—masculine. Section 93:29-30 of the Doctrine and Covenants reads:

> Man was also in the beginning with God. Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence.

These verses can be interpreted according to the model which I am presenting. God is Being itself. Existence arises with the differentiation of Being that creates beings or entities. Truth is the form of being, and it requires agency—"independ[ence] in that sphere." Agency is the primary attribute of every entity. It is what makes every entity a being different than God. God will never violate agency. To do so would uncreate the beings that God has created. Honoring agency is a primary good; willfully violating it is evil.

The Bible teaches that God created humanity in the image of God. Humanity is like God. The universe manifests God since God is the Source and Creator of the universe. Each part of creation manifests part of the Fullness of Being or God. Since humanity is created in the image of God, a human being is a microcosm of the universe. Each person has within his or her being every aspect of reality. The Bible also teaches that God gave humanity dominion over all other aspects of creation. Dominion is usually interpreted to mean some kind of authority or control over. I believe that God's gift of dominion over all of creation is not the right to control or exercise authority over any aspect of creation (this is unrighteous dominion), but rather this gift of containing within one's self all aspects of reality. One's domain is the sphere in which one lives and has the ability to act and influence. Dominion is the exercise of this power. Justice defines the righteous exercise of this power.

Reality is traditionally divided into the spiritual, the physical, the mental, and the emotional. The primary division in creation is the spiritual and the physical, yang and yin, spirit and body, that which acts and that which is acted upon. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. Heaven is the spiritual realm and earth is the physical. Spirit is the primordial substance or element. The terminology can become confusing because we don't have different words for each level of differenti-

ation. On the primal level, intelligence is yang and spirit is yin. Without form, the spirit is within Being itself. Given form, it is imbued with intelligence or the light of truth and becomes an independent being with some form of yin-yang organization. Human beings are like God because they are organized in the same way. At their center is intelligence or the light of truth, the creative, active part of God. As I said earlier, all entities have some degree of agency. Agency is connected to purpose. Entities other than human beings exercise their agency within the purpose of their creation. A tree grows and develops in the form of a tree and fulfills the purposes of a tree. Only human beings create and discover purpose and meaning, which gives us free agency.

On the level of the spiritual-physical duality, spirit is yang and the physical is yin. Again, this is somewhat confusing terminology because on the primordial level spirit is yin. However, it is the body, the external reality, of the other which we perceive and our spirit body consists of spirit element. Our spirit (spirit yin-element organized by yang-intelligence) is our core self, our interiority—the heart of our individual identity. It is characterized by purpose, agency, creativity, and choice. It is sometimes called the will. The spirit chooses and the body receives the form of that choice. The purpose of the body is to manifest the spirit. We perceive and communicate through the body.

Mind and emotion are more complex organizations of spirit and matter, yin and yang. They are created by further differentiation and synthesis. The rational and the emotional become paired as complementary opposites. The mind is associated with consciousness, truth, knowledge, and beliefs. The polarity of mind is yin-yang, yang moving toward yin, because mind itself is active, but ideas and images, that which mind creates, are passive. The purpose of the mind is to understand reality and create a world-view from which to act. Mind seeks objectivity and a view of the whole and how its parts are related. The mind gives us the ability to transcend the limitations placed on us by our bodies.

Consciousness is intentional; it is a subject that takes an object. From the perspective of consciousness, that which it views and creates is objective. From the perspective of another center of consciousness that perceives another subject viewing reality, the other's view of reality is subjective. And, of course, we can take ourselves as an object and become aware that our world-view and perceptions of the world are subjective. Ironically, that which seems most ourselves, our consciousness, is usually focused on the other. Although the mind is a subject, it seeks objectivity, a view of the whole and all its parts.

Emotions are subjective in that they reveal our perspective on what is close and how it relates to the self through feeling. While the mind seeks to see reality objectively, the emotions see reality as it relates to the self, to one's own values and purposes and the meaning of one's life in

the present moment. Our emotions are holistic, but they represent a complex reality. They are the result of a calculus that takes our present perceptions of what is happening around us and to us (seen through the framework of our beliefs about the nature of reality, our beliefs about good and evil, and our beliefs about ourselves and others) and evaluates these perceptions according to how what is happening affects our goals, values, and well-being and then presents us with a feeling that reflects and means all this. The polarity of emotion is yang-yin, yin moving toward yang. Emotions seek to bring out, to express what is within. We have all felt and can all name the primary emotions, but few of us devote our attention to understanding them. Yet they contain within them a wealth of information about our inner lives, information of vital importance for our pursuit of justice.

With this basic understanding of the nature of reality, we can explore the relationship between justice and mercy. I have defined justice as right relationship, both the law that defines the nature of this right relationship and the dynamic state of being that exists when beings freely actualize their purposes in love and truth. What is mercy? The fundamental duality within God (Goodness or Being itself) is love and truth, love (goodness giving itself in and to creation) being yang and truth (the form of goodness) being yin. All other dualities reflect this primary one. Justice, as the right relationship of beings (or Truth), corresponds with truth, and so mercy corresponds with love. Jesus taught that the first great commandment is to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. . .And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark 12:30-31). These commandments are not simply the most important commandments—they define the nature of right relationship.

We are told to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. These are the four parts of reality. Heart is spirit, the essence of one's self, the center of will. Soul is the subconscious part of ourselves or the emotions. Mind is our reason and understanding, and strength is our physical selves. The object of our love is the object of our desire, that which we value, the focus of our mind, that with which we seek to unite. To love something with all parts of ourselves means to put it at our center. That which we put in our center is that which gives meaning and purpose to our lives. We give our deepest loyalty and commitment to it; we serve it. It is our highest value, our God.

We all have an ultimate concern whether we call it God or something else, whether we are aware of it or not. Does it matter which God we serve? We all act to protect and serve our God. If our God is our nation or our family or our church or ourselves, we will act to protect the interests of our nation or our family or our church or ourselves. If our God encompasses only part of reality, we will necessarily create and participate in a competitive

world in which the good of some is sacrificed to promote the good of others. Only if our God is the God of truth, the God that understands and enters into all the forms of being, will we be able to overcome our prejudices and see through our rationalizations. If we are centered in ourselves or some limited group, we can never transcend our own perspective. Our mind gives us the ability to transcend our own perspective, but only if our spirit chooses to love will we be able to do so. Only if our God is the God of love who created all beings and loves them all, will we be able to love our neighbor as ourselves. The second commandment cannot be fulfilled unless we fulfill the first. Only when there is harmony and balance, right relationship within the self, can a person then relate with justice and mercy to others.

In his book, *The Hidden Gospel*, Neil Douglas-Klotz points out that the word translated as "love" in the English version of this passage is the word "rehem" in the Aramaic version. He says:

> This love was derived from the old Hebrew word for womb (rahm) and is related by root to "Hokhmah [divine wisdom]." It could also be translated as "compassion" or "mercy," points to an emotion that comes from the depths of one's being. Literally it is a shining (RA) from a dense or dark interiority (ChM).[6]

This is the unconditional love of God that shines forth from the Source and like the sun gives its light to the just and the unjust. God as the origin of all things is in and through all things. God's love is an ever-present being-with that knows each being in and from its center and in the fullness of its being. "Chesed," the Hebrew word often translated as "mercy," means "loving kindness," "charity," or "fidelity." It is also a synonym of "covenant." Mercy is "covenant love." This shows the relationship of mercy to justice. Mercy is the unconditional love that binds itself, that obligates itself, by covenant to faithfulness.

We are ready now to consider retribution and punishment in the light of the understanding of the nature of justice and mercy that I have given. Neither retribution nor punishment is essential to the nature of justice as I have defined it. If retribution and punishment are not the very essence of justice as the common view holds, they cannot be justified as being justice itself. But even if they do not define justice, they might be necessary or useful in bringing about justice. Some questions we need to ask are: "Are retribution and punishment consistent with justice?" "Do they help to bring about right relationship?" "Are they consistent with mercy (defined as love)?" To answer these questions I will consider the reasons usually given to justify punishment.

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6. Neil Douglas-Klotz, *The Hidden Gospel: Decoding the Spiritual Message of the Aramaic Jesus* (Wheaton, Illinois: Quest Books, 1999), 143.

A dictionary definition of punishment is "to cause to undergo pain, loss, or suffering for a crime or wrongdoing." But love desires the well-being of the other. Is not punishment, then, contrary to the nature of love? Defenses of punishment argue that although inflicting pain is generally wrong, punishment serves a higher purpose which justifies this infliction of pain. This argument is a form of the argument that the end justifies the means. Is it possible to do something good by doing evil? Do not the means determine the end? Can evil be overcome by evil? If defenders of punishment maintain that the good ends accomplished by punishment can be accomplished in no other way, they are defending a view of reality which holds that evil is necessary to bring about good.

A common reason given to justify punishment is that it deters wrongdoing. Punishment is an instrument of coercion. It seeks to get people to do what they might not choose to do themselves. It sets up rules with penalties that will be administered against those who do not comply with the rules. Coercion can be defined as any act in which a person or group of persons attempts to impose its will on others. Coercion can be accomplished by violence or the threat of violence or the infliction of pain, by punishment, by manipulation, and by lying.

Punishment distorts reality. In a rewards-punishment system we do something, not because we want to do it, but to avoid punishment or to gain a reward. The pursuit of truth, loving relationships, meaningful work, experiencing beauty are inherently good and lead to joy. Love, beauty, and truth are intrinsically rewarding. Sin is intrinsically alienating, isolating, depressing, and confusing. The goodness achieved in a rewards-punishment system is not true goodness. It is only outward, not of the heart or mind.

Coercion violates agency. I showed earlier that agency is a primary good, thus violating agency is always wrong. God never violates agency. Jean Hampton defines punishment as "the experience of defeat at the hands of the victim (either directly or indirectly through a legal authority). Punishment always involves the attempt to master another human being."[7] and "punishment [is] the experience of. . .being dominated."[8] Section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants unequivocally condemns coercion. It says, "when we undertake to. . . .exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved" (D&C 121:37). Sometimes the phrase "in any degree

7. Jeffrie G. Murphy and Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*, Cambridge Studies in Philosophy and Law, ed. Jules Coleman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 126.

8. Ibid., 127.

of unrighteousness" is interpreted as a qualifier—compulsion can sometimes be righteous. However, the text does not support this interpretation. It says that compulsion is always wrong in *any* degree, even though there are differing degrees of unrighteousness involved in exercising it. Even legitimate authority (priesthood) should not use compulsion. The verse says that righteous dominion is without compulsory means.

Most legal theorists acknowledge that there is no conclusive evidence that punishment deters crimes. Most people obey the law out of respect for law, from a belief that the laws are good and promote the general good, from a sense of duty, or for social reasons. Perhaps some people refrain from wrongdoing out of a fear of punishment, but many people commit crimes despite the fact that they risk being punished if caught. Coercion uses fear as its motivating force. When we are in freedom, love is the motivating force. When we are free, we do what we love.

A common defense of punishment is that it is reformative. It is argued that punishment educates people and helps them reform their lives. The idea is that if they understood that what they did was wrong through direct experience, then they would reform their behavior. Sometimes people do harm others without realizing it. But do we need to punish them to help them understand this? Couldn't we just explain it to them? Do we need to lose an eye in order to understand that losing an eye is bad? Most of us do not need experience in what it feels like to be hurt. We have more need to know how it feels to be truly loved, esteemed, valued, and cared for.

Another important argument made in favor of punishing wrongdoers is that it is necessary in order to establish and maintain respect for the law. This view sees punishment as establishing the seriousness of wrongdoing. If there is no punishment for breaking the law, then we are not serious about its importance. This view is deeply imbedded in our culture, so much so that the common interpretation of law is that it is commandments, rules, or orders backed by the threat of punishment for non-compliance. The common view is that governments are responsible to punish those who violate their laws and God is responsible to punish those who break the moral law or God's laws. In this view an offense is not simply an injury done to another person, but it is an offense to the authority of the state, an offense to morality itself, or an offense to God. In a famous passage Kant argues that even if a society were about to dissolve itself by common agreement, its members would be obliged to execute the last murderer. To fail to do so would be to condone the murder and be accomplices in the crime.

I agree with Kant and others that to fail to do something when an offense is committed is to condone the offense. But why does our response to wrongdoing need to be to punish the offender? How does punishing the perpetrator bring about right relationship?

An assumption underlying this view is that real power is coercive power. A person with real power imposes his or her will on others. A person with real power commands and others obey. A person with real power exercises authority over others. Section 121 tells us the purposes of coercive power: to "cover our sins" (to sin without accountability), to "gratify our pride" (make us feel superior to others), to "gratify our vain ambition" (force others to serve us and help us achieve our unrighteous purposes), and to "exercise control, dominion or compulsion upon the souls" of others. The idea that power is coercive is so embedded in our culture that we tend to see power as coercive by its very nature.

Section 121 defines the righteous use of power: (1) Persuasion. This includes speaking the truth, both the truth about principles of righteousness and the truth about offenses that have been committed and what needs to be done to bring about justice. If we want others to help us achieve our purposes, we persuade them that our purposes are good and of benefit to them and others. (2) Long-suffering. One meaning of suffering is to allow or tolerate. Part of love is letting be. This is the complement to being with. Letting be means respecting, allowing, and encouraging others' agency. (3) Gentleness, meekness, love unfeigned, kindness without hypocrisy and without guile. (4) Pure knowledge which greatly enlarges the soul.

Because we have agency, we have intrinsic power—the power to create, the power to carry out our purposes, the power to understand and communicate truth, the power to live and effect change. To seek power beyond our intrinsic power is to seek coercive power, to seek another's power. Is the power of truth and of love greater than the power of coercion? Coercion seeks to override another's agency by threats. The ultimate threat that coercion can make is death. Since agency is essential to our selfhood, all forms of coercion threaten a form of death. Sec. 121 tells us what power is greater than the power of coercion. We are told that after reproving someone for an offense, we should show him an increase of love so "that he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death." Reproving with sharpness (speaking the truth) and then showing forth an increase of love (the faithfulness of mercy) is shown as an alternative to punishment (the cords of death) for responding to wrongdoing.

Understanding the law without punishment affixed to it is difficult at first because the other view of law is so pervasive. But God's commandments are not orders backed by the threat of punishment. The Aramaic word for commandment comes from a root meaning to visit, inspect, inquire, or review regularly.[9] God's commandments are those principles of righteousness which we need to visit regularly. We need to

9. Neil Douglas-Klotz, *The Hidden Gospel*, 152.

inspect them and review them and ask questions about them in order to understand them. We need to inspect ourselves and review our lives to see if we are living in accordance with them. If we love God and truth and others and desire to live justly, then we will do this.

The law that defines the nature of right relationships does not tell us what to do. Its purpose is not to condemn us or judge us or punish us. Neither is it to justify us or excuse us. Its purpose is to help us understand the nature of righteousness, of right relations, of goodness. However, it cannot fully disclose the nature of justice because this can only be brought about by living in freedom, truth, and love.

There is another reason that righteous law does not tell us what to choose. This would violate our agency. There is a difference between what is right and what we should do or choose. We live in freedom. The spirit chooses and should not yield this responsibility, even to the law. We act from our desire. Our desire seems good to us. Sometimes a person needs to sin in order to manifest desire that is not good—in order to learn, to have the possibility of repentance. Only the agent can decide what he should do, which is not to say that whatever he chooses is good or right, but it may be necessary for his growth.

Another justification for punishment is that it is retribution, which is assumed to be an essential part of justice. The definition of justice that is operative here is justice as desert. It is just that a person receive what he has earned. If he has injured someone else, he should have a similar injury inflicted upon him. This is the principle of an eye for an eye. The roots of retribution mean "a paying back." On the positive side, it is the law of the harvest—we reap what we sow. I agree that this is an important principle of justice, of right relationship. If there were no relationship between cause and effect, it would be a chaotic, unjust world, a world in which we could not exercise freedom because we would have no way of knowing what our choices would bring about.

Does the law of the harvest require that we retaliate or seek revenge? If we fail to retaliate are we promoting injustice or condoning evil? If justice requires retribution, who is responsible to do the paying back? If legitimate authority carries it out according to the law, it is punishment. If the one offended seeks retribution or retaliates, it is revenge. There is no essential difference between punishment and retribution, so arguing that punishment is justified because it is retribution is to beg the question. I believe that revenge or retribution is wrong because it seeks to bring harm to another person. Those who defend retribution argue that it is harm done for a reason. But the original offender had a reason for what he did, no doubt. To this the retributionist responds that retaliation is justified and legitimate, whereas the original offense was not. But what justifies retribution? Institutionalizing it does not. Legalizing it does not. The only way to justify retribution is to show that it brings about right

relationship. But retribution does not increase love or show respect for the agency of the other; it does not arise from esteeming the other as myself. Instead of restoring or bringing about right relationship, it leads to hatred, resentment, and cycles of retaliation. I have not heard any argument that shows that retribution leads to right relationship or seen an example in history or in my life that shows it.

Jean Hampton argues for a retributionist theory of punishment. She says:

> To inflict on a wrongdoer something comparable to what he inflicted on a victim is to master him in the way that he mastered the victim. The score is even. Whatever mastery he can claim, she can also claim. If her victimization is taken as evidence of her inferiority relative to the wrongdoer, then his defeat at her hands negates that evidence. Hence the *lex talionis* calls for a wrongdoer to be subjugated in a way that symbolizes his being the victim's equal. The punishment is a second act of mastery that denies the lordship asserted in the first act of mastery.[10]

Hampton depicts a thoroughly competitive world in which one person demonstrates his superiority over another by harming her in some way. And the way Hampton wants to remedy this wrong is to let the victim or her representatives hurt the offender in some way to demonstrate that they are equal. But doesn't this simply affirm the values of a competitive system in which people demonstrate their superiority over each other by defeating them and mastering them? We affirm the intrinsic worth of people, not by assisting them in evening the score, but by respecting their agency and relating to them in love and truth, with justice and mercy.

In revenge we seek to harm the person who hurt us or someone close to us. We are "paying back" the harm done to us. We know that what was done to us was wrong, yet we choose to do this wrong to someone else. In choosing to do what we know is wrong, we call evil good, because that which we choose to do we affirm as good. If we return evil for evil, we affirm evil, we manifest it, we choose it, we bring it into reality.

The law of the harvest is a yin principle, not a yang principle, that is to say, it is not anyone's responsibility to see that the sinner gets what she deserves. The universe (the nature of reality) will restore to her what she has chosen. That which we do is that which we choose, that which we choose is that which we desire, and that which we desire and seek to bring about through our agency we will receive. We live in the world we create. If we do not repent of pride, envy, greed, and exploitation of others, we will live in a competitive world and be subject to the pride, envy, greed, and abuse of others. Alma says:

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10. Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*, 128.

> Therefore, O my son, whosoever will come may come and partake of the waters of life freely; and whosoever will not come the same is not compelled to come; but in the last day it shall be restored unto him according to his deeds.
>
> If he has desired to do evil, and has not repented in his days, behold, evil shall be done unto him, according to the restoration of God. (Alma 42:27-28)

Alma also says, as does Lehi, that there is a law given and a punishment affixed. Does this contradict what I have said about punishment and the nature of law? Perhaps, but not necessarily. Alma also says that "the law inflicteth the punishment." Law, as we usually think of it, cannot inflict punishment. It can prescribe it, but only another person can inflict it. Perhaps Alma is talking about the order in the universe that returns to us that which we give. We could extend the Golden Rule to say, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you, for that which you do unto others will surely be done unto you."

Of course, there are many scriptures that say or seem to say that God punishes the wicked. However, I do not think that God punishes anyone because punishment is coercive and contrary to love as I have tried to show. Here are a couple of scriptures that support my view of God's "punishment" as being the yin law of the harvest:

> But, behold, the judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished; for it is the wicked that stir up the hearts of the children of men unto bloodshed (Mormon 4:5).
>
> Also, because their hearts are corrupted, and the things which they are willing to bring upon others, and love to have others suffer, may come upon themselves to the very uttermost (D&C 121:13).

I realize that many scriptures could be found which would seem to contradict my view. The usual view of God's justice is a yang view: it is God's responsibility to bring all people to judgment and reward the righteous and punish the wicked. The metaphors governing our thinking are metaphors of coercive power—armies destroying the wicked; policemen capturing criminals, who are brought before a judge and tried and punished; fire, flood, or earthquake destroying the wicked. We have images of hell where the wicked are subjected to pain and torment.

My view of God's justice is based on the life, teachings, parables, and atonement of Jesus Christ. In his atonement, Jesus subjected himself to the forces of evil that hated, condemned, and killed him, seeking to defeat and even destroy him. He was victorious over the powers of evil because he did not return evil for evil. He returned hatred with love, lies with truth, violence with forgiveness, condemnation with acceptance, curses with blessings. The Jews expect a Messiah who will destroy their enemies and establish justice with coercive power; the Christians expect Jesus to return and destroy the wicked and establish justice with coercive power.

But Jesus' response to coercive power was to die. If we believe in Christ, we will also die to the world of coercive power—the world of competition and enmity where the good of one is won at the expense of the other. Jesus said:

> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
>
> For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.
>
> He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
>
> And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.
>
> For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. (John 3:16-19)

All who believe in Christ have eternal life. Those who do not are condemned, but not by God. Their condemnation is not punishment by God, but their failure to receive the light, the life that God brings to them. And the reason they love darkness and do not want light is because their deeds are evil. Do they reject light because they want to keep on doing evil or because they are afraid of punishment and rejection if their deeds are exposed?

But Christ offers life and light, not to those who have never sinned, but to those who believe in him. God's love, given to the world through Christ, is free to all on the basis of faith in Christ. Faith in Christ is not a work to earn salvation but an acceptance of the love that is eternally present. To believe in Christ, to accept Christ's love, is to give up—to place no faith in—the power of coercion, to renounce the cords of death.

We die in and with Christ to the powers of death and we are raised with him into life. Jesus let the powers of enmity, competition, coercion, and death do their worst to him. He did not return evil for evil; he died. He subjected himself fully to the conditions of mortality, but his love never failed. I do not accept the satisfaction or substitutionary interpretation of the atonement, which claims that Christ's sacrifice is a necessary condition of God's forgiveness of our sins, since the punishment of sin is necessary to satisfy divine justice. Forgiveness flows freely from God's love and mercy. Jesus died, not to satisfy a divine demand for justice, but to break the power of coercion and free us from the power of sin. He died because the powers of evil had become so great that they would kill God rather than repent. God raised Jesus from the dead, he rose again, because the power of love is greater than the power of evil.

I have argued that punishment and retribution are wrong because they are coercive and contrary to love and because they do not bring about justice but instead damage people and relationships. How do we bring about justice when an offense has been committed? Justice is restored or brought about through repentance, forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation. Who needs to repent? Everybody. Who needs to forgive? Everybody. Who needs healing? Everybody.

We need to distinguish between culpability, accountability, and responsibility. When we ask, "Who is responsible for this mess?" we usually mean, "Who did this?" or "Who caused this to happen?" The person who caused the problem is culpable, at fault, to blame. Sometimes it is not easy to determine who is at fault. There are not always a clear victim and a clear perpetrator, although sometimes there are. But usually there is some fault on both or various sides of a conflict. Why do we need to know who caused a problem? Often we want to know so we know whom to punish or disapprove of or revile against or heap guilt upon or be angry with. But if we renounce punishment in all its forms, do we need to know who is at fault and what the nature of the offense was? Yes, because knowing the truth is very important in repentance, forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation.

Renouncing punishment does not mean doing nothing about offenses. Offenders need to be made accountable for their offenses. This means the injured person (or his or her representative) goes to the offender and tells him (or her) that he has offended him and asks him to account for what he has done. Ideally, the one offended (perhaps with the help of a mediator) explains how he was hurt; he shows the nature of the offense, enabling the offender to empathize with him and understand why what he did was wrong. This gives the offender an opportunity to seek to understand and explain why he did what he did. Misunderstandings between the offender and the one offended can be addressed and cleared up. This process helps both people to empathize with the other and understand him or herself, which gives both of them the opportunity to repent, to see things differently, and to forgive, to desire the well-being of the other. Repentance and forgiveness, like justice and mercy, cannot be separated. The righteous way to deal with sin is to hold the sinner accountable, to tell her the truth about her sin, and show her an increase of love. If she fails to repent and continues to perpetrate abuse, then boundaries can be drawn in the way we associate with her.

Responsibility is about healing, repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. It is appropriate to require an offender to compensate his victim or make amends in some way. This is not punishment. Punishment inflicts harm on the offender. Requiring people to make amends for harm they have inflicted is not inflicting harm on them. Of course, they may not want to make amends. Although we might compel them to make

some kind of physical compensation to the injured person, we cannot compel them to restore or seek right relationship, although we hope that holding people accountable for their sins, telling them the truth in a spirit of love, will help them want to.

Justice requires repentance, forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation, but we cannot and should not compel another person to repent, forgive, heal, or be reconciled. My repentance, my forgiving, my healing are my own responsibility. Others can help me by loving me, forgiving me, and helping me understand the truth, but to take away the responsibility for my repentance, my healing, or my forgiving from me would be to violate my agency. Although these things are my responsibility, I cannot accomplish them by myself. Although I desire to repent, I cannot do it without Christ's atonement and unconditional love. I cannot forgive by an act of will. Although I seek healing, I cannot bring it about by myself. But if I desire and seek these things, they will come as gifts from God. Reconciliation with the one I have hurt or the one who has hurt me, reconciliation with my enemy, however, depends on her willingness to repent, forgive, and heal as well as my own.

Jesus tells us to love our enemy:

> Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy.
>
> But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;
>
> That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. (Matt.5:43-45)

We might ask, echoing the lawyer, "Who is my enemy?" According to Jesus' words, our enemy is one who curses us, one who hates us, one who uses us despitefully and persecutes us. Our neighbor is the one who is near us. He might also be our enemy. Our enemy might also be the one we hate, the one we blame for our misfortunes, the one we envy. Our enemy might also be parts of ourselves that we hate. We might project these parts onto someone else and hate him.

How do I love my enemy? I love him by forgiving him. This does not require me to condone his wrongdoing or excuse it. Indeed, if I condone what he did or excuse it, there is nothing to forgive. It requires me to repent of any desire for revenge against him. Love requires me to desire his well-being and treat him kindly. It requires me to respect his agency.

We hope that if we love our enemy, if we forgive him and do not seek retribution, he will respond to our love and cease to be our enemy. When the people of Ammon laid down their weapons and refused to fight with

or flee from those who were attacking them, some of the attackers experienced a change of heart and repented and threw down their weapons of war. However, many people were killed before this change of heart took place, and some of the attackers did not repent, but continued to kill people.

Does loving our enemies mean allowing them to destroy us? If retaliation is wrong, how can we defend ourselves against those who attack and seek to harm us? Defending ourselves is not the same as seeking revenge. Defending ourselves is not the same as administering punishment. We can defend ourselves and others by protesting wrongs and asking offenders to repent, by reproving with sharpness. Sometimes we can defend ourselves by retreating. But sometimes defending ourselves requires that we fight back. Is this ever justified?

In Section 98 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord gives the law for just self-defense. The first time our enemy smites us we should bear it patiently without reviling our enemy or seeking revenge. We should do the same the second and third times he smites us, then we should warn him not to smite us again. If he does, then we are justified in retaliating against him. But if our enemy repents of his wrongdoing against us, we should forgive him every time he repents and not count the offense he has repented of against him. The same law applies to nations as individuals.

Does the existence of this law mean that retaliation is a just principle under certain circumstances? If we can define the circumstances under which retaliation is justified, then isn't retaliation a just principle? I see this law more as an example of how to negotiate the difficulties of dealing with evil than as the definition of a just principle.

Bearing offenses patiently, forgiveness, is clearly the guiding principle. But if our enemy does not respond to our overtures of peace and continues to smite us, "if he has sought thy life, and thy life is endangered by him, thine enemy is in thy hands and thou art justified (D&C 98:31)." But if we choose to spare our enemy even when we are justified, according to this law, in retaliating, that is righteous. And the purpose of the retaliation is not revenge, but self-defense, and the purpose of self-defense is to prevent our attacker from hurting us, not to hurt our attacker. However, once we start fighting, this distinction is hard to maintain. In fighting, we have entered the realm of competition and enmity. Although we might succeed in defending ourselves from certain kinds of harm, we cannot succeed in establishing right relationship through retaliation.

We live in a world where evil exists and where we must at times respond to the challenges that evil puts before us. Can we relate to evil without participating in evil? We write excuses into the law because we understand that circumstances arise in which keeping the law is prob-

lematic. The law says, "Thou shalt not kill," but if someone is threatening to kill me, then I am "justified" in defending myself, perhaps even in killing him. But is my taking of this person's life a good thing? Does it cause me or others any harm?

One reason we write excuses into the law is because, recognizing that under certain circumstances there are good reasons for breaking the law, we do not think it is just to punish people who break the law for these reasons. This is certainly a just feature of codes of law for nations and organizations that punish those who disobey their laws. But do we need to write excuses into the moral law and into God's law for the same reason? As I have thought about this question, I have come to the realization that our deeply-rooted belief that punishment is an essential feature of justice distorts the purpose of law. If punishment itself is not good, not a part of right relationship and hence unjust, then writing it into the law makes the law unjust. This injustice is not remedied by writing excuses into the law. Excuses may free us from punishment, but they do not free us from the harmful effects of sin. Another reason for writing excuses into the law is so that we can sin with impunity. We believe that if there is no punishment, there is no sin. But sin carries its own harm. Pride, greed, envy, and other sins are intrinsically harmful to right relationship; they prevent loving relationship and the understanding of truth; they work against harmony, beauty, and peace. Sin can only be remedied by repentance and forgiveness, which can only be attained in and through mercy.

Punishment impedes true repentance. We may believe that in being punished we have paid for our sin and thus have no need to repent. We may believe that we were unjustly punished and be filled with resentment. Or we may internalize the condemnation that punishment represents and believe that we are unloved and unlovable. All of these results of punishment prevent right relationship. Punishment covers up, does not attend to, the need for right relationship. The sinner faces the pain of punishment, but an even greater threat to him is the withdrawal of love, being condemned as a person unworthy of love and respect. We may write excuses into the law and get caught up in self-justification in order to avoid punishment, but the fear of the withdrawal of love and respect is a deeper fear. Love, unconditional love, the faithfulness of mercy that loves in spite of sin, is the source and foundation of right relationship. Without God's love we cannot repent and forgive. We get caught up in rationalization and self-justification or in resentment and cycles of revenge, or we are weighed down with guilt and self-condemnation. But within the power of God's unconditional love, we can attend to understanding the truth and working for reconciliation. We can repent and forgive and seek relationships of love in truth, freedom, and harmony.

If we take punishment out of the law and if love is merciful and is

not withdrawn from the sinner, the law can be just; it can become neither an instrument of condemnation or coercion nor a means of rationalization, but a light to our understanding and an aid to living in right relationship.

Although forgiveness requires me to repent of any desire for revenge against my enemy, it does not require me to like him or approve of him or associate with him. But love is greater than forgiveness. It requires me to love him in spite of sin.

Although love is not equivalent to approval, approval is an aspect of love. Love sees truly and judges justly; it sees whatever is good and considers it good and sees whatever is not good and considers it not good. It is attracted to, it delights in, it desires to be with whatever is good. While love does not approve of what we do or are that is not good, love does know and approve of everything about us that is good. Everyone has good in them and has the capacity to choose good. Choosing evil unmakes us, and a person who no longer had the capacity to choose good would be totally unmade. It would be contradictory to say, "I love you, but I despise everything about you."

God's unconditional love, God's mercy, is the love of being-with, the love of compassion, the love that is ever-faithful, the love that heals sin and makes repentance possible. Yet there are scriptures that say that God withdraws his spirit because of some sins. I do not believe that God withdraws his spirit as a punishment. Some sins are a rejection of God's spirit. If we reject God's spirit, then it is withdrawn out of respect for our agency. It would be more correct, I think, to say that we reject God's spirit. But as soon as we are receptive to any degree of God's spirit, it is there to enlighten us and to comfort us and heal us.

The scriptures make it clear that part of God's plan for our world is a time of judgment when the righteous will be separated from the wicked. The popular imagination sees this as God finally revealing his Almighty power and whipping the wicked into shape or destroying them with a mighty hand. But is this not the kind of power that Christ came into the world to defeat?

In the parable of the Sheep and the Goats, Jesus gives us a way to think about this judgment. The criterion he uses for separating the sheep from the goats is not their doing good works, keeping the commandments, professing belief in Jesus, or having a knowledge of how they are saved. The sheep do not know why they are being given eternal life. They receive eternal life because they fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, took in the stranger, clothed the naked, and visited those who were sick and in prison. The hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and those in prison were the "least of these my brethren." They were the world's losers, those without worldly power. Jesus identifies himself with the least. They are his brethren. Those who give to those

without power simply because they are in need affirm the worth of the least, those who have nothing to offer in return. In accepting the worth of the least we accept Jesus, who made himself equal to the least and in doing so made the least equal to himself. Jesus saves with love, the love that is merciful and gives without condition. The goats did not regard those without worldly power and thus did not accept Jesus.

Although the goats are separated from the sheep, the goats still belong to the shepherd and he still cares for them. The power of the atonement is to bring everyone into the presence of God for the final judgment. And what will we feel in God's presence? Will we feel love or condemnation? Since God is perfect love, to be in God's presence is to be in the presence of perfect love. Surely God will be loving to each person who enters his presence.

The goats are those who reject this love. They do not feel it because they love darkness rather than light. They love the darkness that permits them to believe that their sins—pride, greed, envy, and coercion—are good. Because they reject God's love and choose darkness rather than truth, they are sent away, or rather, they go away to the place they have chosen. Hell is also a place of mercy as well as judgment, a place where those who have chosen pride, enmity, and coercion are given what they choose: a place of unbridled competition, a place to exploit and be exploited, to lie and be lied to, to punish and be punished, to exact revenge and to be afflicted with revenge. Hell is not the place for those whom God rejects but the place for those who reject God.

Those who have faith in Christ, who love the light, who see and give to the least of these, who are with Christ among the least, will feel God's love. To feel God's love is to be filled with goodness, to have one's essential goodness affirmed. To accept God's unconditional love is to be filled with that goodness—to be good. To know God's love is to know goodness. To know goodness is to choose goodness. To choose goodness is to be good. The eternal life that God gives to all who love him is a life in which justice and mercy are perfectly joined. Only through truth sought in love, can right relationship be understood or brought about.

Saints for All Seasons: Lavina Fielding Anderson and Bernard Shaw's *Joan of Arc*[1]

Karen Marguerite Moloney

In September of 1993 Lavina Fielding Anderson was excommunicated from the LDS church for documenting and publishing instances of the church's punishing treatment of Mormon intellectuals and feminists, as well as other instances of ecclesiastical abuse.[2] Shortly after her excommunication, Lavina was interviewed live by Rod Decker in Salt Lake City for the television program "Take Two." Her equanimity and witty rejoinders reminded me of the deft response to prosecutors made by the title character in Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan* (1924), his dramatization of the conflicting claims of institutional loyalty and individual conscience. The real-life Joan of Arc—convicted of heresy and burned at the stake in

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1. I would like to thank Lavina Fielding Anderson for access to unpublished materials, despite her inability to "put [herself] and Joan of Arc in the same sentence with a straight face." In this sentiment she actually echoes Shaw's Joan: "[F]ancy me a saint! What would St Catherine and St Margaret say if the farm girl was cocked up beside them!" (Bernard Shaw, *Saint Joan: A Chronicle Play in Six Scenes and an Epilogue* [London: Penguin, 1957], epilogue, 155; hereafter *SJ*.) Lavina declined my invitation to respond to this essay, stating, "I think that your piece will stand very well on its own. . . ." (Lavina Fielding Anderson to Karen Marguerite Moloney, 22 July 2003).

2. Lavina is part of a group of scholars who have been disciplined by the church for challenging its official history, authoritarian practices, and view of women's roles. As one of the "September Six" who were brought to trial during the same month in 1993 (the others were D. Michael Quinn, Paul Toscano, Avraham Gileadi, Maxine Hanks, and Lynne Kanavel Whitesides), Lavina's story has received widespread news coverage. Since that time, there has been an on-going purge: Janice Allred, David Wright, Brent Metcalfe, and Margaret Toscano have all been excommunicated for their writings. And others continue to be called before church leaders for disagreeing with mainstream church teachings through their scholarship.

1431, canonized in 1920—had long stimulated the fancy of historians and playwrights. Shaw, however, de-romanticized the figure by basing his play on T. D. Murray's *Jeanne D'Arc*,[3] the first English translation of the official Latin text of Joan's trial: his keen-witted, practical, vigorous character embodies Joan's genuine qualities of spirit. His character also mirrors the flesh-and-blood Lavina, deprived for the last decade of church membership for her willingness, like Joan, to set "up the private judgment of the single erring mortal against the considered wisdom and experience of the Church"(*SJ*, scene 6). However, a decade has passed since Lavina's excommunication, ten years in which she has unwaveringly opposed the abuse of ecclesiastic power and remained as active as permitted in the functions of her ward and stake. Lavina shares more instructive qualities with Shaw's Joan than a mere aptitude for fielding questions.

Jeanne d'Arc, Joan of Arc, was born about 1412 and reared together with three brothers in the village of Domrémy in France. She was a pious child, active and hardy, remembered favorably and with affection by those who knew her. From her thirteenth year, she later told her judges, she received messages from God; in particular, she was instructed by St. Michael the Archangel, St. Catherine of Alexandria, and St. Margaret of Antioch.[4] The voices of these saints guided her throughout the rest of her short life. Acting under their direction, she led decisive military victories over the English armies occupying France during the Hundred Years War and settled questions of the French dauphin's right to rule by crowning him King Charles VII in Rheims Cathedral. As Régine Pernoud attests, Joan "secured the survival of a France that was cut in two by both internal discords. . .and by methodical English invasion"—a France, before her intervention, that was "doomed to disintegrate."[5] For some Joan's campaign against the English provides "a model for modern movements of popular resistance to colonial imperialism."[6]

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3. T. D. Murray, ed., *Jeanne D'Arc: Maid of Orléans: Deliverer of France* (London: William Heinemann,1902).

4. For how the voices came to be identified with these saints, see Karen Sullivan, "'I do not name to you the voice of st. michael': The Identification of Joan of Arc's Voices," in Bonnie Wheeler and Charles T. Wood, eds., *Fresh Verdicts on Joan of Arc* (New York: Garland, 1996), 85-111. See particularly Sullivan's endnotes 39 and 42 on the significance for Joan of the three saints, described by Mary Gordon as "icons of resistance and might" in *Joan of Arc* (New York: Viking, 2000), 26.

5. Régine Pernoud, "Epilogue: Joan of Arc or the Survival of a People," in Wheeler and Wood, *Fresh Verdicts*, 289.

6. Jeremy duQuesnay Adams, "Prelude," in Régine Pernoud and Marie Véronique Clin, *Joan of Arc: Her Story*, trans. and revised by Jeremy duQuesnay Adams, ed. Bonnie Wheeler (New York: St. Martin's, 1998), 4.

Eventually captured in battle, Joan was tried by the English in 1431 and convicted of heresy. On the day of her sentencing, just before the statement was read aloud cutting her off from the church and abandoning her to secular justice, she implored her judges, "Let all my words and deeds be sent to Rome, to our Holy Father the Pope, to whom, after God, I will refer myself."[7] Despite strong precedent for the interruption of a trial by such a request,[8] Joan's own plea was brushed aside, and six days later, at the age of nineteen, she was burned at the stake. Nineteen years later, rehabilitation proceedings began with an examination of witnesses. Another six years elapsed before a new trial nullified the previous legal actions "on the basis of procedural flaws" and Pope Calixtus III revoked Joan's sentence.[9] Four hundred forty-eight years later, in 1904, Joan was declared Venerable by the Roman Catholic Church; in 1909 she was advanced to the rank of Blessed; and in 1920, nearly five hundred years after her trial, excommunication, and execution, Pope Benedict XV canonized her a saint. Today Joan, energetically venerated by many, remains a provocative figure among the French and a continuing magnet of controversy for scholars.[10]

Joan was also one of the heroes of my own Catholic childhood. I read all her juvenile biographies and named my guardian angel after her.[11] In 1978 when I saw Eileen Atkins bring her to life in Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan* at London's Old Vic Theater (from the last row, and for the equivalent of one dollar), I was very moved. On a subsequent visit to the Old Vic in the summer of 1995, I was gratified to see that a poster of the play had been selected, with a small number of others, to hang in the theater's lobby.

Not surprisingly then, I regularly choose *Saint Joan* to teach Shaw when crafting syllabi for courses in modern British and Irish literature.[12] After all, the selection committee who awarded Shaw the 1925 Nobel Prize for literature regarded *Saint Joan* as the "crowning achievement" of

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7. Vita Sackville-West, *Saint Joan of Arc* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), 310. Sackville-West translates from the French of Jules Quicherat, *Procès de condamnation et de réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc*, 5 vols. (Jules Renouard et Cie, 1861).

8. Pernoud and Clin, *Joan of Arc*, 130.

9. Ibid., 274; see also Sackville-West, *Saint Joan*, 367.

10. For some piquant examples, see the essays collected in Wheeler and Wood, *Fresh Verdicts*.

11. Because I first encountered biographies of St. Agnes and St. Rose of Lima, Joan's was the third name—lengthened to Jeannette, by which she was known in her village—of four I eventually gave my angel.

12. Despite his place in the English canon, Shaw is an Irishman who "read [Joan's] life in France as an allegory of his own youth in Ireland" (Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995], 428). Shaw

a career that included fifty-eight plays, five novels, short stories, and other writings,[13] while "few disagree that his Joan is one of the great classical roles for an actress."[14] (Eileen Atkins considered playing Joan an actress's "greatest challenge."[15]) Neither is it surprising, given the highly publicized church disciplinary procedures against the September Six ten years ago, that I should observe intriguing correspondences between those events and the themes of the play, most strikingly as manifested in the characters of Lavina Fielding Anderson and Shaw's Joan.

When Joan was canonized in 1920, as Niloufer Harben remarks in his book *Twentieth-Century English History Plays*, "Shaw must have been struck by this ironic reversal of judgement in history."[16] Three years later, "Sydney Cockerel, the curator of the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, . . .handed Shaw a copy of [T. D.] Murray's book," *Jeanne D'Arc*, the first translation into English of Joan's trial and rehabilitation proceedings.[17] In Harben's words, "Shaw had always felt drawn by the figure of Joan and now his imagination was fired by contemporary reports of one of the most enthralling trials in history. He wrote the play within six months."[18]

Marking "a turning point in modern historical drama because of its universal impact,"[19] Shaw's play draws copiously from the available historical records. "[F]ull of her personality. . .[,] many of [Joan's] actual statements [are in fact reproduced in the play] with hardly any alteration."[20] Moreover, Shaw "has strong historical backing for presenting Joan's refusal to defer to the judgement of the Church as the key issue upon which the case against her is built. The judges in their examination of Joan can be found returning to this question again and again."[21] Thus they persist in interrogation: Will Joan submit herself to the judgment of

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also wrote most of the play while summering in County Kerry, tested his trial scene on two priests, and surely noted connections between "[t]he strange alliance of noblemen and clergy against the Maid. . .[and] those Catholic bishops who defended Anglo-Irish privilege and who excommunicated members of the Irish Republican Army" (438). See Kiberd's chapter, "Saint Joan–Fabian Feminist, Protestant Mystic," 428-37, and "The Winding Stair," 438-39.

13. Brian Tyson, *The Story of Shaw's Saint Joan* (Kingston: McGill-Queens Univ. Press, 1982), 116.

14. Holly Hill, ed., *Playing Joan: Actresses on the Challenge of Shaw's Saint Joan* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1987), xiii.

15. Eileen Atkins, in Hill, *Playing Joan*, 200.

16. Niloufer Harbin, *Twentieth-century English History Plays: From Shaw to Bond* (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1988), 31.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., 48.

21. Ibid., 51.

the church on earth; will she obey the dictates of its representatives? Her answers vary little, as Sackville-West's abridgment of her replies at trial indicates:

> She will obey the Church, provided it does not command the impossible. She will never, for anything on earth, revoke the declarations she has made during the course of her trial about her visions and revelations. She will never, for anything on earth, obey the Church in the event of its commanding her to do anything contrary to the commandments which she says God has given her. She will refer always to God, were the Church to describe her revelations as illusory, diabolic, superstitious, or evil. She will submit herself to the Church Militant–that is to say to the Pope, the cardinals, archbishops, bishops and other clergy, but God must come first.[22]

Shaw had in mind this kind of determination to stand by private judgment, or inspiration, no matter how weighty the exterior pressures to abandon it, when he formulated the compelling themes of his play. Harben here speculates on the conflict at the play's heart:

> Shaw in *Saint Joan* demonstrates that the individual in his [or her] pursuit of truth will always be alone in society, the extraordinary individual, most often destroyed because of the threat he [or she] poses to the establishment. The individual committed to truth by nature is open to revelation, alive to the infinite possibilities of life. He [or she] therefore figures in stark contrast to society with its inherent tendency to overstructure and codify, so that bent on preservation rather than growth it tends to turn in on itself, leading to stagnation and decay, rather than movement and life. In *Saint Joan* we experience the private will against the public as Joan strives to live true to the voices within while the political forces at work in society marshall against her.[23]

In Shaw's view, Joan is a genius gifted with a high level of imagination. She is also, summarizes Harben, "a visionary, a light-bringer, an agent of the life force."[24] In fact, "[i]f one translates the voices of the saints. . .into the secular language of Shaw, they become. . ., in terms of creative evolution, the voice of. . .the Life Force,"[25] an unrelenting energy that advances humanity's spiritual evolution by "continually driving onward and upward, growing from within itself into ever higher forms of organization, a power which is driving at a larger, higher, more intelli-

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22. Sackville-West, *Saint Joan*, 292-93, abridging Quicherat, *Procès*, 1:324-26.

23. Harben, *English History Plays*, 52.

24. Ibid., 61. Such characteristics are typical of Shaw's vibrant, clever female characters, who often show up the men trying to keep them in their place.

25. Judith Evans, *The Politics and Plays of Bernard Shaw* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2003), 151.

gent, more comprehensive consciousness."[26] As the agent of this insistent evolutionary activity, Joan will clash inevitably with those, "not malevolent by nature [who nonetheless] contribute to the world's disasters through want of imagination and [the inability to calculate the true] social and political consequences of the way they think."[27]

Still—and this is a crucial point—for Shaw there are no villains in this play. The churchmen who convict Joan are good and fair-minded, men who, with substantial support from the historical record, take extra care to come across as impartial, if not well-disposed, toward Joan.[28] Far from corrupt, as Joan herself states in the epilogue of the play, "They were as honest a lot of poor fools as ever burned their betters" (*SJ*, epilogue). But, as "servants of the system [, these leaders are also] artificial, dehumanized, imprisoned in conformity," their conservatism utterly at odds with "Joan's natural vigour and spontaneity."[29] If these leaders typify the staid mentality of the institution while Joan represents the dynamic pull of individual inspiration, then for Shaw, the forces are "fundamentally opposed in character." The "divinely inspired" and "extraordinary" individual, "expected [by society] to fit into a conventional pattern," flies "in the face of social norms. . ." and "experiences the essential isolation of the individual in [a] pursuit of truth. . . ."[30] Even so, Shaw is adamant that the inspired individual conscience is the vehicle for positive evolutionary change within society. In the words of Brian Tyson, "People of Joan's genius could make contact with the Life Force for the sake of others: it was necessary for society to be renewed, even if the saint had to be sacrificed."[31]

Some view Lavina Fielding Anderson as a minor player on the world's stage, particularly when her achievements at age fifty-nine are set against those of a nineteen-year-old military commander who crowned a king. Those who do so have little comprehension of the magnitude of Lavina's role as witness—or archivist, to use her own term.[32] Even if the two women's accomplishments differ significantly in content, Joan, as revealed for my purpose in Shaw's character, exhibits pronounced similarities in motivation and temperament with Lavina.

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26. Gareth Griffith, *Socialism and Superior Brains: The Political Thought of Bernard Shaw* (London: Routledge, 1993), 126. For additional discussion of Shaw's "life force," see Leon Hugo, *Playwright and Preacher* (London: Methuen, 1971), 50-64.

27. Harben, *English History Plays*, 61.

28. See ibid., 38-46, for a discussion of Shaw's versions of the historical judges.

29. Ibid., 53.

30. Ibid.

31. Brian Tyson, *The Story*, 2.

32. Lavina Fielding Anderson, telephone conversation with author, 27 September 2003.

In her encyclopedia entry on Joan of Arc, the French national archivist Yvonne Marie Lanhers describes Joan as marked by the "stamp of the genuine prophets and saints, utterly subordinated to a particular task which they believe has been inexorably laid upon them by divine command."[33] Indeed, Joan led her armies and crowned her king—and even chose to wear men's clothing as her most practical career expedient—because the voices of her saints told her to.[34] While in Shaw's play these voices become audible manifestations of Joan's own inner guidance, and, in turn, instrument of the Life Force, they are just as surely voices to which she must remain true, even when they conflict with the will of those in authority, and at whatever cost, if she wishes to remain true to herself.

Similarly, Lavina was inspired to begin collecting and recording the stories of individuals who had suffered spiritual and ecclesiastical abuse in the LDS community, incidents which exhibited a "clash between obedience to ecclesiastical authority and the integrity of individual conscience. . . ."[35] She was also inspired to publish this information in an article entitled "The LDS Intellectual Community and Church Leadership: A Contemporary Chronology" in the spring 1993 issue of *Dialogue*.[36] Though no spiritual beings appeared or offered instruction in answer to her scripture reading, her temple worship, or her fasting and prayers "to know whether it was the right thing to do to go ahead," the Spirit spoke to her clearly, quietly, unmistakably, "[a]nd the answer was always 'Yes.'"[37] Lavina declared in her *Dialogue* article that she "received the calling of a witness in the household of faith,"[38] but she has also asserted that God did not assign her the task by pre-emptive, inflexible decree: "It was always very clear that I had a choice."[39] Yet to deny the sanctity of this calling to be a witness, to act in opposition to it—even to save her membership in the church which made Lavina who she is—would be to disregard her inner certainty that God approved her choice; it would violate her conscience; it would destroy her peace.

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33. Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th ed., s.v. "Joan, Saint."

34. For another perspective on Joan's choice of dress, see Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warrior: Making History from Joan of Arc to Rupaul* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 31-37.

35. Lavina Fielding Anderson, "The LDS Intellectual Community and Church Leadership: A Contemporary Chronology," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Spring 1993): 7.

36. Ibid., 7-64.

37. See the question-answer segment of "Lavina Fielding Anderson" (talks by Levi S. Peterson and Karen Marguerite Moloney), 1995 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium audiocassette.

38. Anderson, "The LDS Intellectual Community and Church Leadership," 8-9.

39. Anderson, "Lavina Fielding Anderson," audiocassette.

Additionally, both Shaw's Joan and Lavina share a healthy dose of naiveté, Joan's portion even larger than Lavina's. Until shortly before her execution, and against all odds, Joan believed that she would be rescued, that all would somehow "come right." When told about a woman who had been burned to death for simply saying that Joan's work was according to God, Shaw's Joan replies with disbelief: "They could not burn a woman for speaking the truth" (*SJ*, scene 5). Lavina had no such illusions. Burning may not be the twentieth-century censure of choice, but she knew, months before her trial, what the outcome would be; she also expected that the loving labor which produced her seventy-two-page appeal of her excommunication to the First Presidency would be discounted.[40] That may make Lavina less naive, but hardly a cynic.

Like Joan, Lavina sincerely believed the truth was her best defense, that—in her own words—"[d]efenders of the faith cannot righteously strike out against those who tell the truth."[41] In her appeal, she cites the essential injustice of being punished with the church's heaviest penalty, again to quote her, "for telling the truth about problems."[42] She points out with appropriate aplomb that no one has "attacked the truthfulness or historical accuracy of the article,"[43] though with characteristic exactness, she concedes in a footnote "four details" of contention. I mention them to give a taste for Lavina's conscientious research to those who don't know her: One name in her article included an incorrect initial; one individual had not given permission to use his stake president's name; Louis Midgley felt his position had been misrepresented; and one anonymous source "had wished to be named."[44] Would that the sins of all archivists might be so slight.

But just as Joan over-esteemed truth as a defense, so did Lavina. Typically, people have a hard time being told the truth about problems, particularly if they are part of the problem. Human beings have a tremen-

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40. The appeal included a 37-page letter and supporting documents. My sources here and for the comments that follow are photocopies of Lavina's appeal to the First Presidency, appendices to the appeal, related correspondence, and other unpublished material that she gave Peterson and me for talks delivered at the 1995 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium and the 1996 Sunstone West Symposium in Irvine, California, in joint sessions entitled "Saints for All Seasons: Lavina Fielding Anderson and Bernard Shaw's Joan of Arc." See Levi Peterson, "Lavina Fielding Anderson and the Power of a Church in Exile," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29 (Winter 1996): 169-78.

41. Lavina Fielding Anderson to Presidents Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson, 23 October 1993, 20-21.

42. Ibid., 1.

43. Ibid., 20.

44. Ibid.

dous instinct for self-preservation, an instinct which can metamorphose with staggering speed into an urgent need to maintain the status quo at all costs. Raised to an institutional level, this defensiveness can become a highly skilled, carefully practiced, often destructive art. Both Shaw's Joan and Lavina underestimated the terribly threatening, extremely divisive nature of the truth about problems.

Closely related to the scrupulosity in documenting cases of spiritual abuse that makes Lavina an overbearing priesthood-holder's nightmare is another trait Lavina shares with Shaw's Joan. Both real-life archivist and dramatized military leader are very, very smart, their brilliance a quality neither Lavina nor Shaw's Joan chooses to hide, tone down, or disown. The historical Joan was illiterate, but, as Shaw points out in his lengthy preface to the play, she kept abreast of current events, understood extremely well "the political and military situation in France. . .," dictated letters with confidence, and shrewdly "adapted her methods of [military] attack to the peculiarities of the defense. . . ." (*SJ*, preface). She was, therefore, in Shaw's estimate, "much more of. . .an intellectual, than most of the daughters of [modern England's] petty bourgeoisie" (*SJ*, preface).

Scene V of the play opens in Rheims Cathedral shortly after Charles's coronation. Joan is kneeling in prayer near the door of the vestry and is approached by Dunois, with whom previously she had raised the siege of Orléans, effectively securing French independence. The streets are full of people calling for "The Maid," but Joan is acutely aware that her popularity at court is slightly more limited. Dunois's reply, in turn, points directly to Shaw's own thoughts on the highly gifted individual surrounded by inferiors:

> JOAN: Why do all these courtiers and knights and churchmen hate me? What have I done to them?. . . .I have brought them luck and victory: I have set them right when they were doing all sorts of stupid things: I have crowned Charles and made him a real king; and all the honors he is handing out have gone to them. Then why do they not love me?
>
> DUNOIS [rallying her]: Sim-ple-ton! Do you expect stupid people to love you for shewing them up? Do blundering old military dug-outs love the successful young captains who supersede them? Do ambitious politicians love the climbers who take the front seats from them? Do archbishops enjoy being played off their own altars, even by saints? Why, I should be jealous of you myself if I were ambitious enough (*SJ*, scene 5).

Dunois's astuteness, however, is lost on Joan, as her reaction to the Dauphin's comment, only shortly later in the scene, confirms:

> CHARLES: Yes: she think she knows better than everyone else.
>
> JOAN [*distressed, but naively incapable of seeing the effect she is producing*]: But I

> do know better than any of you seem to. And I am not proud: I never speak unless I know I am right. (SJ, scene 5)

Not only does Joan show up her social betters, but she does so with the "unwomanly and insufferable presumption" Shaw cites in his preface as the primary reason for her burning (*SJ*, preface).

Lavina is a doctoral degree away from illiterate, her academic training only enhancing abundant natural intelligence.[45] She is, however, like Joan, perhaps "too smart" at times. At one point in her appeal when she labors the issue of confidentiality, a reader less lawyerly than she might feel "shown up," even deliberately intimidated. Later, in a long letter to her stake president Marlin S. Miller, she asks, "Surely it is to the benefit of all concerned—you, me, Elder Dunn, the abused members, and the leaders of the abused members—to find a way to reconcile these problems without resorting to more abuse, more intimidation, more threats?"[46] President Miller is adamant in reply: "Sister Anderson, it is *not* my intention to intimidate you." What I find revealing is his need to continue the sentence by adding "or, to be intimidated by you."[47]

Likely President Miller felt Lavina was trying to wear him down; he may also have felt ill-prepared to deal with her. In the same paragraph, he continues, "*I am not gifted in writing abilities as you are*, but I hope that you will know of my love and concern for you" [italics mine].[48] President Miller probably found it as wearying to correspond with the true-speaking bulldog Lavina as Shaw's courtiers, knights, and churchmen found it to endure the importunate Joan. There's nothing like a woman with unwomanly presumption for catalyzing defensive statements like this proclamation by Shaw's Bishop of Beauvais, Monseigneur Cauchon: "I am no mere political bishop: my faith is to me what your honor is to you. . . ." (*SJ*, scene 4); or President Miller's declaration to Lavina: "I fear God more than man, and have carefully sought to know His will in this matter."[49] Though both are good and decent men, as Shaw and Lavina point out over and over, these leaders are clearly not used to the challenge of women who are very, very smart.

So both Shaw's Joan and Lavina are intimidating presences, but both are also visionaries, light-bringers, agents of the life force that advances civilization. I've outlined Joan's history-making accomplishments, but what about Lavina's? Hers is an enterprise, frankly, not very well

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45. Lavina earned a B.A. (1968) and an M.A. (1970) in English from Brigham Young University and a Ph.D. in American Studies (1974) from the University of Washington.

46. Lavina Fielding Anderson to Marlin S. Miller, 18 June 1993.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

known. *Dialogue* circulates to a relatively small number of Mormon readers. Rod Decker's audience may be wider, as might the readership of the Utah newspaper that ran a full-page, color, cover photo of Lavina and Michael Quinn to promote a 2001 interview,[50] but the audiences for both are still local. Widespread awareness of an achievement, however, does not equate with its value. Lavina has collected case studies of people who have been hurt by spiritual and ecclesiastical abuse. While by her own admission these abuses constitute only a small one percent of otherwise "clear, rational, and efficient" incidents of priesthood functioning in the church,[51] for those whose pain she has acknowledged—and recorded—her service is invaluable. Lavina is a witness. In answer to her prayers, she has been directed "to defend the defenseless."[52] Thus, she explains to President Miller, her "motives were and still are 'to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those who [sic] stand in need of comfort. . . .'"[53]—and, moreover, to make a record of their suffering.

Pentecost (1995), an ambitious, powerful drama by David Edgar, takes place in a very old church somewhere in Eastern Europe. A compelling moment occurs during the first act in an exchange between Anna Jedlikova, a dissident under Russian rule and now the presiding magistrate for the region, and Father Petr Karolyi, a Catholic priest whose family escaped to London when Karolyi was about twelve years old. Jedlikova resents Karolyi; in fact, she resents all "[t]he people who got out." Karolyi replies to her briefly; Jedlikova counters with a lesson for us all:

> KAROLYI. It is a little harsh, perhaps. In a society which, as everyone accepts, offered the choice of being hangman, victim or accomplice. To say: you cannot choose to get out if you get the chance.
>
> JEDLIKOVA. Except of course there are some people who do not accept such choice. And pay the price. . . .
>
> KAROLYI *shrugs and turns to go. . . . But then* [JEDLIKOVA] *collars* KAROLYI.
>
> JEDLIKOVA. OK. I tell you what I think. You leave, you stop to be a witness. Worst story that I ever hear, in second world war, Serb children are transport to camp at Jasenovac, and they are so hungry that they eat cardboard tags around their neck. Which is their family, their age, their name. They eat their history. They die, and nobody remember them.
>
> *Slight pause.*

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50. Troy Williams, "Faith in Exile: Mormon Identity and the Excommunicated," *Event Newsweekly*, 16 August 2001, 10-11. See also the issue's cover.

51. Anderson to Benson, Hinckley, and Monson, 28.

52. Anderson to Marlin S. Miller, 18 June 1993.

53. Ibid.; Mosiah 18:9.

> And now, already here, our past is being erased. And exiles with new names come back, and restore old names of streets and squares and towns. But in fact you cannot wipe it all away, like a cosmetic. Because for 40 years it is not normal here. And so we must remember. We must not eat our names. Otherwise, like Trotsky, we might end up with our jailor's.[54]

Because of Lavina's case histories, we will remember. We will not eat our names. And because she remains an example of what her husband Paul calls "a voice of moderation amid sometimes strident expressions,. . . a voice of faith in gospel ideals amid negativeness and anger, and. . .an example of faithful activity while many others have become inactive and bitter";[55] because, primarily, she remains true to herself, Lavina "puts courage into us" (*SJ*, scene 1) every bit as powerfully as Shaw's Joan invigorated her comrades and troops.

With one difference. Shaw's Joan predicted that, should she "go through the fire [she would] go through it to [the hearts of the common people] for ever and ever" (*SJ*, scene 5). It was Shaw's way of commenting on five hundred years of continuing interest in the Maid of Orléans since her cruel execution, of explaining why a Catholic schoolgirl growing up in the later half of the twentieth century, in a country that didn't even exist when Joan was burned, might name her guardian angel after her. The common people have always loved Joan. Her excommunication and burning never altered that fact.

At least as it is used in the LDS church today, however, excommunication is a more efficacious popularity-damper than it was in Joan's day. The majority of rank-and-file church members accept church disciplinary decisions without question. Excommunication thus discredits Lavina, cuts off her influence, and limits her role as witness; it is the most powerful tool available in the church today to neutralize someone like Lavina. But remember, Lavina is a visionary, a light-bringer, an agent of the life force persistently shaping humankind's spiritual evolution. Lavina remains active; Lavina still goes to church. If she had chosen "to get out," if she had renounced the church in exchange for a probably more comfortable "life in exile," it would be easy for church members to ignore her and discount her message. Yet as she offers her "testimony of presence" each Sunday in her ward,[56] she reminds us all that she exists and that structural means of redress for spiritual abuse have yet to be

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54. David Edgar, *Pentecost* (London: Nick Hern Books, 1995), act 1, scene 4, pp. 37-38.

55. Paul Anderson to Marlin S. Miller, 2 September 1993.

56. Lavina Fielding Anderson, "A Testimony of Presence" (paper presented at Pilgrimage [women's retreat], Provo Canyon, Utah, 13 May 1994), 4. Lavina credits the concept of testifying with her presence to Sharon Conroy Turnbull (talk given at the Circle of Love service at the Utah State Capitol, 2 April 1994, Salt Lake City, Utah).

created in the church. She also reminds us, as Levi Peterson suggests, "that excommunication is not, after all, an effective weapon against a sincere and prayerful conscience."[57]

Serious procedural irregularities marred Joan's trial in 1431; they later played a role in the reversal of judgment pronounced in 1456. Serious irregularities also characterized Lavina's disciplinary proceedings and "may"—in the words of Shaw's Inquisitor—"be useful later on: one never knows" (*SJ*, scene 6).[58] Lavina herself has told us, "Nothing I have sensed in answer to my prayers suggests that the process [of her reinstatement in the church] will be anything but very long."[59] She has spoken of the passing of "ten, fifteen, even twenty years" before she sees any possibility of rebaptism.[60] For Joan, it was twenty-eight years before the sentence of excommunication was revoked. For Lavina, whose rebaptism waits inevitably on the horizon, may the years be shorter, swifter, and filled both with the joy she deserves and the changes in church procedures that she heralds.

The length of time until Lavina's "rehabilitation" is probably more up to us than we might realize. In the wonderfully imaginative epilogue to Shaw's play, a host of Joan's accusers and countrymen are brought back from the dead, as is she, to hear the proclamation of her canonization. One by one, they kneel and offer her praise—that is, until she offers to "rise from the dead, and come back to [them] a living woman." Quickly, they offer their excuses and take their leave. Joan is left alone on stage as "the last remaining rays of light gather into a white radiance descending on [her]." Hers are the last words of the play: "O God that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to receive Thy saints? How long, O Lord, how long?" (*SJ*, epilogue). The readier we are to honor unflinchingly the voices of inspiration which speak to us in the quiet of our own hearts, to be ourselves "saints for all seasons," the shorter that time will be.

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57. Peterson, "Lavina Fielding Anderson," 178.

58. See ibid., 175.

59. Lavina Fielding Anderson, "Covenants and Contracts: Renegotiating Membership in the Church" (paper presented at Sunstone West Symposium, Burbank, California, 12 March 1994), 2.

60. Anderson, "A Testimony of Presence," 3. For developments of the last ten years, see Lavina Fielding Anderson, "The Church and Its Scholars: Ten Years After," *Sunstone* (July 2003): 13-19.

Inheritance

Sally Stratford

I wear her name
and a two carat diamond
which, like a heavy rock of salt,
falls to the side between my fingers.
I'm sitting on a pink velvet chair
holding a tape recorder,
but she is asleep,
mouth open, skin loose
like pie crust draping over apples.

I want her to wake up and tell me stories
about how she slid down the banister
to meet the mayor in Bel Air,
or when Grandpa wouldn't let her eat,
so the green sequined dress
she wore to the country club would fit
like a waterfall of thin emeralds.
Still, she would eat chocolate
in the shadows of her closet.
"It always fit," she would say.

Soon this bed will be empty,
the electric blanket smooth
over her place,
reading glasses on the table
reflecting the afternoon sun.

"Kingdom of Priests": Priesthood, Temple, and Women in the Old Testament and in the Restoration

Todd Compton

IN THIS PAPER I WILL ATTEMPT to consider priesthood as portrayed in Old Testament texts. One of the common fallacies of historical interpretation is to base our understanding of an early phenomenon on later understandings and institutions, which generally reflect a changed, developed point of view and which may have gained wide currency for any number of reasons. The earliest documents, reflecting a somewhat unfamiliar state of things, are then treated with benign neglect, at best. In religion, an institution often achieves a successful doctrinal-historical synthesis (after years or decades or centuries of difficult work, development, and change), but then institutional historians project that synthesis back into early history. If one analyzes the early documents carefully, however, the pattern of development and change is clearly found. In my opinion, the institutional church could regard the process by which the church came to its synthesis as an inspiring story of man seeking guidance from God and getting it bit by bit, step by step, through a process of human striving (including possible mistakes) mixed with divine revelation. Looking at the earliest sources is first a matter of scholarly honesty (and of course, honesty is never antithetical to the gospel); second, it provides an authentically faith-promoting view of men and women's struggles as they receive guidance from God, step by step, line by line.

Mormonism started out as a "restorationist" church—intending to restore the realities of the Old and New Testaments to nineteenth-century America. It arrived at a powerful, successful synthesis throughout the nineteenth century, culminating in the doctrinal teachings of Joseph

F. Smith and James E. Talmage; but then, Mormons—in matters of Biblical interpretation—began projecting their twentieth-century synthesis of the gospel into the Old and New Testaments. This has prevented them from experiencing the full complexity and beauty of the scriptures so important to early Mormons, and it has led them to a less than perfect understanding of the Biblical backgrounds of many key Mormon doctrines.

In the case of priesthood, for instance, early Mormons, leaning more toward Catholicism than the Protestants who surrounded them in frontier America, developed a strong emphasis on ecclesiastical priesthood. Indeed, the concept of priesthood found in the Old Testament contains aspects of the Mormon doctrine and practice of priesthood, but not the totality. In this paper, I will attempt to look at the Old Testament view of priesthood in its own terms.[1] Then I will discuss the implications of the Old Testament view of priesthood for Joseph Smith's restoration of temple worship in Kirtland and Nauvoo, open to both males and females, with no limitation to the male.

We will see that priesthood in the Old Testament was overwhelmingly connected with sanctuary and temple, cult and ritual. The Old Testament priest, an especially holy and pure person serving as a mediator between God and man, was virtually always connected with a temple and performed ordinances connected with it—sacrifice, purification, prayer. As priesthood was introduced for the purpose of the temple, according to Exodus, only priests entered the temple. As priests were exclusively male, no females entered the temple. This was the priesthood which Joseph Smith had as Biblical paradigm when he restored the Old Testament concept of temples. How he dealt with the issues of temple, priesthood, and women is one of the most significant, interesting, and least understood stories in Mormon history.

I. Priest and Temple Service

The question of priesthood in the Old Testament is extremely complex.[2] I accept that different editors and strands of tradition contributed

1. I will quote from *Tanakh: A New Translation of The Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1985). I also use Michael Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, New Revised Standard Version (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

2. For general introductions to priests and priesthood in the Old Testament, see George Buchanan Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament: Its Theory and Practice* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1971, orig. 1925), 179-270; Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962, orig. 1957), 1:241-49; Han-Joachim Kraus, *Worship in Israel* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966, orig. 1962), 93-100; H. Ringgren, *Israelite Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966, orig. 1963), 204-19, 324-30; Aelred Cody, *A History of Old Testament Priesthood* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969) and

to the Pentateuch and the books of the Old Testament, and that later editors used early texts and sources, and put their own stamp on them. However, I do not accept the details of any particular scholar's interpretation as authoritative or final.[3] One of the basic textual strands scholars have posited in the Pentateuch is a "priestly" source, P, which emphasizes matters relating to the priests, temple, and ritual. Julius Wellhausen, in his classic of source criticism, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*,[4] argued that the institution of priesthood was entirely post-Exilic; however, later scholars have taken issue with this position and have concluded that pre-Exilic traditions in P have historical validity.[5] Scholars have emphasized that the priesthood changed from premonarchy, to monarchy, to post-exile. According to N. H. Snaith, "There are many passages in the Old Testament which show that the Aaronic priestly caste of later days was a development from a very different state of affairs. Once, all Levites were priests and not the sons of Aaron only. Earlier still, it was not even necessary to be a Levite in order to be a priest. Any man could be a priest, provided that he had been properly consecrated."[6] For the purposes of this paper, it is enough to note that even in the early history of the priesthood, there was always a close connection between priest and sanctuary. See for example, a text often cited

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"Priests and High Priest," in Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, eds., *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 608-11; Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. John McHugh (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961, orig. 1958, 1960), 345-405; Gary A. Anderson and Saul M. Olyan, eds., *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel* (Sheffield, U.K.: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1991); Richard A. Henshaw, *Female and Male, The Cultic Personnel: The Bible and the Rest of the Ancient Near East* (Allison Park, Penn.: Pickwick Publications, 1994), 24-28; Moses Buttenwieser, "Priest," in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 12 vols. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905-1916), 10:192-97; Menahem Harem, "Priests and Priesthood," in Cecil Roth, ed., *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 16 vols. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), 13:1070-86; Merlin D. Rehm, "Levites and Priests," in David Noel Freedman, et al., eds., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:297-310.

3. Once again, I accept this kind of textual analysis within a context of faith in God's inspiration behind the totality of scripture (and I accept that no scripture is infallible, but a combination of God's inspiration and human weakness and cultural limitation). See James Barr, "Modern Biblical Criticism," in Metzger and Coogan, *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, 318-24. I am interested in "canonical criticism," which is concerned with the "the final text, not in earlier stages that have led up to it," (324) but canonical criticism must still work with source, form, and redaction criticism.

4. Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh: Black, 1885), 121-52.

5. See R. Abba, "Priests and Levites," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962) 3:876-89.

6. "The Priesthood and the Temple," in Thomas Walter Manson, *A Companion to the Bible* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), 418-43, 418.

as evidence for early priesthood, Judges 17-18, the story of Micah's Levite. Micah had a shrine and had his own son serve in it, but when a Levite moved into the area, "Micah inducted the Levite, and the young man became his priest and remained in Micah's shrine" (Judg. 17:12). Here Levites, not just descendants of Aaron, serve as priests; and when a Levite is not available, non-Levites can serve. But the priest's connection with sanctuary is basic.

A place to start for gaining an understanding of priesthood in the Old Testament is the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. They give accounts of the "preliminary," movable temple in the wilderness, the "Tent" (in the King James version, "Tabernacle"), the description of which is revealed by God in Exodus 25-27. Inside the Tabernacle the holy of holies, containing the ark of the covenant, is behind a curtain; on the other side of the curtain is a larger room with altar of incense, table of acacia wood, and lamp. Pillars delimited an outer court, and in this court was a bronze basin and an altar on which sacrifices could be performed. This pattern was later followed when a stationary temple was built in Jerusalem.

Then in Exodus 28:1, the Lord instructs Moses, "You shall bring forward your brother Aaron, with his sons, from among the Israelites, to serve Me as priests." After the temple pattern is revealed, priests must be consecrated to serve in it. To begin the consecration, they must be washed at the door of the tabernacle (Exod. 40:12). A long description of the special vestments of the priests follows in Exodus 29, including a "fringed [checkered, NRSV] tunic of fine linen. . .the headdress [turban, NRSV] of fine linen. . .[and] the sash of embroidered work" (Exod. 28:39).[7] The priests are then anointed (Exod. 40:15; Lev. 8:10, 30). "This their anointing shall serve them for everlasting priesthood throughout the ages."[8] Sacrifices are also part of the ordination of Aaron and his sons. Blood was taken from a sacrificed ram and put on the "ridges" of the priests' right ears, on the thumbs of the right hand, and on the "big toes of their right feet"; the rest of the blood was dashed "against every side of the altar round about." This rite strikingly illustrates how the priest was tied to the sanctuary (Exod. 29:19-21).

In Exodus chapters 30 and 31, some of the rites and duties priests carried out in the temple are revealed. According to the Bible dictionary

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7. See Menahem Haran, "Priestly Vestments," in Roth, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 13:1063-69; Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), ad loc.

8. Lev. 8:12, 30; Exod. 29:41, 30:30, 40:15. See E. Kutsch, *Salbung als Rechtsakt* (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1963), 1-26; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, Anchor Bible series (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 553-56. Milgrom feels that the royal anointing took place after the pattern of the anointing of the high priest, thus making the king a priest of sorts.

included in the LDS Bible, "The priest exercised his office mainly at the altar [within the innermost temple court] by offering the sacrifices and above all the incense [at the altar within the temple building]."[9] In blessing the priestly Levite tribe, Moses says, "They shall offer You incense to savor / And whole-offerings on your altar" (Deut. 33:10). Sacrifices were often rituals of atonement for the sins of the people. According to the book of Numbers, when non-priests (though Levites) offered incense in the temple, they were destroyed (Num. 16-17). Aaron and his sons are priests and can enter into the tabernacle proper; Levites can perform lesser duties connected with the temple, but "they must not have any contact with the furnishings of the Shrine or with the altar, lest both they and you [Aaron and his sons] die" (Num. 18:3). "You and your sons shall be careful to perform your priestly duties in everything pertaining to the altar and to what is behind the curtain. I make your priesthood a service of dedication; any outsider who encroaches shall be put to death" (Num. 18:6-7). In the later temple in Jerusalem, only the high priest went behind the curtain, the "veil," to the Holy of Holies, and he did it only once a year (Lev. 16). Entrance into the temple is strictly only for those who hold priesthood.

The Hebrew word for priest is *kōhēn*. The etymology of this word is not completely certain, but the most commonly attested Hebrew cognate is *kûn*, which means "stand (before God)," "serve," or "lay down, set forth (a sacrifice)." Ritual service to God in the sanctuary is emphasized.[10]

While priests in the Old Testament had functions beyond temple and ritual service (which we will touch on briefly below), temple and temple-related ritual were central. Cody, author of the standard book on Old Testament priesthood, writes that "priestly duties and activities varied somewhat, but primary in the early period, and always basic, was the idea that a priest is a person attached to the service of God in a sanctuary, God's house."[11] Dommershausen, in his article on *kōhēn* in the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, lists as the priests' first function, "Guarding the sanctuary." The earliest priests "were thus charged with guardianship of the sacred precincts and what went on there. Sacrifices are offered by the worshippers themselves, but the priests are permitted to take a portion of the offerings for their sustenance."[12] "The priestly

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9. "Priests," in *The Holy Bible* (SLC: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), 753.

10. See W. Dommershausen, "*kōhēn*," II, in Joannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Joseph Febry, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 12 vols, trans. David Green (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans: 1995, orig. 1982-84), 7:60-75, 66.

11. Cody, "Priests and High Priest," 608.

12. Dommershausen, "*kōhēn*," 66-67. See also, de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 348: "Every priest was chosen and installed to serve in a sanctuary."

ministry is thus primarily an altar ministry," he writes.[13] Ringgren, describing the priests before Solomon's temple, writes, "In the pre-monarchic period, the priest appears as the attendant of a sanctuary and a giver of oracles."[14]

The priest's cultic duties—largely tied up with the sacred place and structure, the temple—included animal sacrifice, burnt offerings, cereal offerings, incense offerings, "wave" offerings, firstfruit offerings, atonement sacrifice, "replacing the bread of the presence on the Sabbath (Lev. 24:8), dressing lamps in the holy place (Ex. 30:7), maintaining all the temple appurtenances, sounding the festal trumpets (Num. 10:8, 10), and 'blessing in the name of Yahweh' (Deut. 10:8; 21:5; 1 Chron. 23:13)."[15]

Priests alone entered the temple and its innermost court to perform ordinances. Non-priests, carefully ranked in sacrality, were allowed only into the outer courts of the temple. Josephus gives descriptions of the Jerusalem temple which show this system of increasing sacrality with only priests officiating in the sacred center.[16] The outermost court has been designated by moderns as the "Court of the Gentiles" because both Jews and Gentiles were allowed to enter into it. Within this was the court which Gentiles were forbidden to enter on pain of death. In *Jewish War* 5:193, Josephus refers to this as the "second court" and the "holy place." There was one gateway to this court "through which those of us who were ritually clean used to pass with our wives" (*Antiq.* 15:419). In *Jewish War* 5:199-200, he describes a special court on the east called "the women's court." Then there was "the sacred (court) which women were forbidden to enter, and still farther within was a third court into which only priests were permitted to go. In this priests' court was the temple, and before it was an altar, on which we used to sacrifice whole burnt-offerings to God. Into none of these courts did King Herod enter since he was not a priest and therefore prevented from so doing. But with the construction of the porticos and the outer courts he did busy himself. . . the temple itself was built by the priests in a year and six months" (*Antiq.* 15:419-21). Only priests entered the temple building; only priests entered the court surrounding the temple building.[17]

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13. Dommershausen, "*kōhēn*," 69.

14. Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*, 205. See Judg. 17, 1 Sam. 1-4, 7:1; Josh. 3.

15. Dommershausen, "*kōhēn*," 69-70.

16. See *Antiq.* 15:419ff.; 8:95ff.; *Jewish War*, 5:184ff. Trans. Thackeray. Cf. C. T .R. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple: A Non-Biblical Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996), 142-43.

17. In the ancient world, the ground surrounding a temple was part of the sacred space it was associated with. Nevertheless, we can see by Josephus's description that there were degrees of sacrality: The innermost, highest sacrality was found within the building and was reserved for priests. Gentiles and women were allowed some limited contact with the temple's sacrality, but only at the outer fringes.

II. Other Functions of Priests

Cody explains that the Hebew priest was "server or minister of God in the sanctuary," just as there was a regal minister in a palace.[18] Growing out of this function were other duties of priests, including divination and teaching, both functions showing the priest's role as intermediary between God and the people. In a discussion of the Old Testament priest, de Vaux mentions "the priest and sanctuary," then moves on to "priests and divine oracles," "the priest as teacher," "the priest and sacrifice" (actually an aspect of temple work), and "the priest as mediator."[19] Priestly consultation of oracles was only found in the early history of the priesthood; although this was a prophetic function, it was very limited even in early days of the priesthood, usually involving casting lots for answers with the Ephod or Urim and Thummim.[20] When "prophetism" became dominant in Israel, prophets (usually not priests) ascertained the will of Jehovah through very different means, through visions and moral insight. Tensions sometimes arose between the prophets and priests, and prophets could accuse priests of not teaching the law, or teaching it insincerely for gain (Jer. 2:8, cf. Mic. 3:11).[21] Other prophets were priests themselves (such as Ezekiel) or closely connected to priests.

Teaching by priests is attested in Deuteronomy: "They [the priestly tribe of Levi] shall teach Your laws to Jacob and Your instructions to Israel" (Deut. 33:10). In Deuteronomy 31:9, Moses instructs the priests to recite the Law every seven years at the Feast of Booths. Yet even the priest's teaching relates to his temple, cultic functions: Ezekiel (Ezek. 44:23-24) writes that priests "shall declare to My people what is sacred and what is profane, and inform them what is clean and what is unclean. . .they shall preserve My teachings and My laws regarding all My fixed occasions." Teaching the people concerning pure and impure will allow the people to bring the correct sacrifices to be offered when they need to be cleansed of sin or impurity.

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18. Cody, "Priests and High Priest," 609.

19. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 348-58. Dommershausen lists the two other major functions of the Old Testament priest, beyond "guarding the sanctuary" and the closely related "cultic duties" (which are primarily performed at the temple), as "dispensing oracles" and "teaching."

20. For a discussion of these methods of oracular consultation, see Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*, 205-6; Kraus, *Worship in Israel*, 97; de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 352; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 507. According to Milgrom, the Urim and Thummim were only consulted in the Holy of Holies near the Ark, so this form of revelation is connected with the temple.

21. See S. H. Hooke, *Prophets and Priests* (London: Oxford, 1938). Adam C. Welch, *Prophet and Priest in Old Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1936); H.L. Ellison, *The Prophets of Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1969), 26-28, 112; Marvin A. Sweeney, *Ezekiel: Zadokite Priest and Visionary Prophet of the Exile* (Claremont, CA: Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, 2001).

III. Who Could Become a Priest?

Only a select few were allowed to become priests in ancient Israel. Many of the reasons for disqualifying a person from priesthood in the Old Testament, based on laws of ritual purity, were contradicted by Jesus's later teachings of compassion, "justice and mercy," inclusiveness, and sincere religious feeling.

First, as we have seen in Exodus, only Aaron and his descendants could hold priesthood. This reflects an understanding that Levites—descendants of the tribe of Levi—were confined to serving as lesser temple functionaries, and were ambiguously priests. The other eleven tribes could not hold priesthood of any sort. Since priests were by definition holier than other men, they were "holy" by heredity, rather than through ethical and spiritual qualities. Other passages in the Bible suggest that at one time, all Levites could be full priests. Still, even with Levites included, this is an exclusive, hereditary view of priesthood.

In addition, within the tribe of Levi and family of Aaron, ritual purity or standards of physical perfection were necessary. Disabled persons—the blind, lame, or a man "who has a limb too short or too long," or who is "a hunchback, or a dwarf, or who has a growth in his eye, or who has a boil-scar, or scurvy, or crushed testes"—could not serve as priests: "[H]e shall not enter behind the curtain or come near the altar, for he has a defect. He shall not profane these places sacred to Me, for I the Lord have sanctified them" (Lev. 21:16-23, Deut. 23:2-3). If a priest were physically imperfect, he would "profane" the sanctuary.

In the Old Testament, holiness was to a remarkable extent reckoned by laws of ritual purity. All Israelites were required to live by these laws and to seek atonement or purification through sacrifice if they participated in a ritual defilement, such as touching a dead person. Priests, who had to serve in the temple, were to live by even higher standards.[22] They were not allowed to marry a widow or a divorced woman (Lev. 21:7, 14)—perhaps a commentary on the perceived impurity of a woman who is not a virgin, or the assumption that a divorced woman had been put away because she had been sexually sinful; however, they might marry the widow of a fellow priest by Ezekiel's time (Ezek. 44:22). If a daughter of a priest "defiles herself through harlotry," she defiles her father (and by extension, the institution of priesthood), and she is to be "put to the fire" (Lev. 21:9).[23]

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22. For the Levitical "Holiness Code" (accepted by scholars as a separate stratum in the Pentateuch, "H"), see David P. Wright, "The Spectrum of Priestly Impurity," in Anderson and Olyan, *Priesthood and Cult*, 150-82.

23. The NRSV grimly translates this as "she shall be burned to death." For historical examples, see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, Anchor Bible series (New York: Doubleday,

As we examine such views of ritual purity, we can see how revolutionary were Jesus's teachings rejecting reliance on such conceptions and directing the religious person to moral, ethical principles and to greater inclusivity as having central religious importance.[24]

What is said about women and priesthood, if anything, in the Old Testament? It is striking how separated women are from priesthood in the standard Old Testament understanding of the role: "We. . .hear occasionally of female prophets" (2 Kings 22:14; Neh. 6:14) writes Dommershausen, "whereas there were never any female priests in Israel."[25] Thus, women never entered the temple (recall Josephus's description of the Court of Women outside the inner courts of the Jerusalem temple), which is another way of saying they were not priests.

What were the reasons for such a ban of women from the temple and from priesthood? One might simply accept that Hebrew culture at the time was openly, unselfconsciously patriarchal. Important roles in the community were given to men without question or reflection. However, we have also seen how women—divorced daughters of priests—could be seen as impure because of their sexuality. A woman in childbirth was also regarded as impure for seven days if she bore a male, for two weeks if she bore a female! (Lev. 12:1-5) Some scholars have suggested that because of menstruation and childbirth, a woman would always be disqualified from acting as a priest. Milgrom writes, "The woman's ineligibility for the priesthood is based on purely practical grounds: the impurity of her menses disqualifies her from serving for one week out of every four (and as much as three months during parturition)."[26] Vos mentions that women generally began having children soon after reach-

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2000), 1811. For similar punishments, see Deuteronomy 22. If a lay woman was found not to be a virgin when she married, she was stoned at her father's home, showing the father's perceived culpability.

24. Mark 7:1-23; Matt. 15:1-20. Joel Marcus, *Mark 1-8*, Anchor Bible series (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 454.

25. Dommershausen, "*kōhēn*," 74. See also see de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 384, "no woman ever held a place among the Isrealite clergy"; Clarence J. Vos, *Women in Old Testament Worship* (Delft:, Judels & Brinkman, 1968), 192-93. For further on female prophets in the Old Testament, see Vos, 174-97, and Grace I. Emmerson, "Women in Ancient Israel," in R. E. Clements, ed., *The World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 371-94, 374-76. These are Deborah (Judg. 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Noadiah (Neh. 6:14), and Isaiah's wife (Isa.. 8:3); see also Ezekiel 13:17 and Joel 3:1.

26. Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1811. See Lev. 15:19-24: Menstruation caused a woman to be unclean for seven days. De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 2:348; Vos, *Women in Old Testament Worship*, 193; Judith Romney Wegner, *Chattel or Person? The Status of Women in the Mishnah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 162-65; Ruth B. Edwards, *The Case for Women's Ministry*, in the Biblical Foundations in Theology Series (London: SPCK, 1989), 27; Donald G. Bloesch, *Is the Bible Sexist? Beyond Feminism and Patriarchalism* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1982), 41.

ing puberty, and thus would have found it difficult "to find time for the full-time profession of the priesthood."[27] This is a practical, rather than a theological, explanation.

Some scholars have argued that certain evidence suggests that women once had some connection with cultic (i.e., priestly) functions.[28] For instance, women performed cultic singing and dancing (Exod. 15:20; 1 Sam. 18:6, 21:11). Nevertheless, the Old Testament overwhelmingly portrays woman as separated from serving in the temple and from priesthood.

IV. Priesthood in the New Testament

Priesthood in the New Testament is not the focus of this paper, but I will look at it briefly.[29] First of all, priesthood during the ministry of Jesus was essentially a continuation of Old Testament priesthood: It focused on serving in the temple, it was hereditary (the favored family of Zadokite priests traced their lineage back to Aaron; Levites were subservient priests), and priests sometimes served as teachers in Israel. The Sadducees were a priestly party whose name derived from Zadok. There were tensions between Jesus and the priests of his day—for instance, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, the priest and the Levite are viewed in a negative way.[30] However, while Jesus might denounce individual priests or groups of priests as unworthy of their office (which reminds us of tensions between prophets and priests in the Old Testament), he did not reject the priestly system.[31] For instance, after he healed the leper in Mark 1:44, he instructed him to "go and show yourself to the priest" to offer Mosaic offerings for cleansing. John the Baptist was of priestly lineage and his parents were viewed sympathetically.

When the Temple was destroyed in 70 CE, the institutions of priesthood—Sadduccees, priests, Levites—came to an end. Pharisees, teachers not priests, gradually became dominant religious leaders, and they gave rise to the system of rabbis.

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27. Vos, *Women*, 207.

28. See Gray, *Sacrifice*, 184-93; 203-4; Henshaw, *Female and Male*, 27, who cites especially, Vos, *Women in Old Testament Worship*; Ismar J. Peritz, "Women in the Early Hebrew Cult," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 17 (1898): 111-48; Mayer I. Gruber, "Women in the Cult according to the Priestly Code," in Jacob Neusner et al., eds., *Judaic Perspectives in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 35-48; Johannes Pedersen, *Israel, Its Life and Culture*, 2 vols, trans. Mrs. Aslaug Muller (London: Oxford University Press, 1926-1940), III/IV:166ff.

29. See M. H. Shepherd, Jr., "Priests in the NT," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 3:889; Albert Vanhoye, *Old Testament Priests and the New Priest: According to the New Testament*, trans. J. B. Orchard (Petersham, Mass.: St. Bede's Publications, 1986, orig. 1980).

30. Luke 10:31-32; cf. Matt. 3:7.

31. Shepherd, "Priests in the NT," 890.

What of priests and priesthood in the early New Testament church? The initial surprise for LDS readers, whose doctrine and practice includes such an overwhelming emphasis on priesthood, will be how infrequently priests and priesthood are mentioned in the context of the early Christian church. Mormons may read priesthood into early church offices: For instance, they may assume that the offices of apostle, bishop, and pastor included priesthood. However, the New Testament text does not use the word "priest" or "priesthood" in this context.[32] Some scholars believe that the early Christian church was in a "process of separation" from "all association with the priestly and sacrificial institutions of Judaism."[33] They emphasized the prophetic over the priestly traditions in the Old Testament.

Nevertheless, the early Christians came to re-interpret priesthood in the light of Jesus's teachings and the destruction of the Temple. The one book in the New Testament that is largely concerned with priesthood, Hebrews, emphasizes Jesus's priesthood.[34] In other passages of the New Testament, priesthood seems to be applied to the whole church, a radical contrast to the hereditary priesthood of the Old Testament. Peter, for instance, writes, "Like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. . . .You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Peter 2:5, 9).[35]

V. Restoration: 1836-1845, Kirtland, Ohio and Nauvoo, Illinois

The Mormon religion is restorationist. Joseph Smith—and generations of Mormons after him—felt he was restoring and revalorizing institutions and experiences from Biblical times. Another term for this kind of religion was Biblical primitivism: restoration of the "primitive" church

32. Cf. Rev. 1:6, 5:10, 20:6; Exod. 19:6 ("a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"); Isa. 61:6. These last two scriptures show that even in the Old Testament there was a non-exclusive view of priesthood, as extended to all members of God's community. See also Ernest Best, "Spiritual Sacrifice: General Priesthood in the New Testament," *Interpretation* 14 (1960): 273-99.

33. Shepherd, "Priests in the NT," 890.

34. See John M. Scholer, *Proleptic Priests: Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Sheffield, U.K.: JSOT Press, 1991). While Scholer sees Hebrews as referring to Jesus explicitly as a priest, he argues that the cultic language of Hebrews, applied to the book's readers, also implies that members of the church have priestly aspects.

35. Cf. Rev. 1:6, 5:10, 20:6; Exod. 19:6 ("a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"); Isa. 61:6. These last two scriptures show that even in the Old Testament there was a non-exclusive view of priesthood, as extended to all members of God's community. See also Ernest Best, "Spiritual Sacrifice: General Priesthood in the New Testament," *Interpretation* 14 (1960): 273-99.

(i.e., in the Sixth Article of Faith, we read, "We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church").[36] Mormonism was not alone in nineteenth century America in striving to restore Biblical realities. Many Protestant groups, such as the Campbellite movement and even Methodism, were likewise striving to regain the Biblical ecclesiastical forms and purity of spirit. However, Mormonism was distinguished by its thoroughgoing and literal restorationism and by the fact that it paid attention to both Testaments rather than focusing mainly on the New Testament as did many Protestant groups.

Joseph Smith was especially influenced by the Old Testament, and many characteristic Mormon institutions have their primary pattern in the Old Testament: prophet, temple, priesthood, polygamy. In the case of Protestant restorationism, priesthood was not an emphasized institution, except in generalized, non-hierarchical form (Luther's "priesthood of all believers").[37] This was partially a reaction against Roman Catholicism where hierarchical and authoritarian priests were an important part of the ecclesiastical framework. As we have seen, the New Testament does not use priesthood terminology in referring to officers of the early Christian church. Only the book of Hebrews is largely concerned with priesthood, and then mainly with Jesus's priesthood. So this Protestant lack of interest in institutionalized priesthood is an interpretation of the New Testament that is entirely possible.

Joseph Smith, on the other hand, developed a theological understanding fairly close to that of the Roman Catholic Church, accepting authoritative priesthood as the structure of the church. This emphasis on priesthood is what one might expect from someone strongly influenced by the Old Testament. For a leader concerned with temple restoration, as was Smith, it would be logical that priesthood would have to be restored with temples. A temple would need people to enter it and carry out its rites and ordinances. As we have seen, in the Old Testament the priest is above everyone who performs ritual service at the temple.

The Kirtland temple is something of a proto-temple in Mormonism: It was referred to as the House of the Lord, not a temple, at the time of its building and early use.[38] Nevertheless, in later Mormonism it was

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36. See Jan Shipps, "The Reality of the Restoration in LDS Theology and the Restoration Ideal in the Mormon Tradition," in *The American Quest for the Primitive Church*, ed. Richard T. Hughes (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 181-95; a version of this was reprinted in Shipps's *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 229-43.

37. See Kathryn H. Shirts, "Priesthood and Salvation: Is D&C 84 a Revelation for Women Too?" *Sunstone* 15 (Sept. 1991): 20-27.

38. Gregory A. Prince, *Power from on High: the Development of Mormon Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 122, n. 24.

accepted as a temple, and certainly some of the rituals first performed in it, including a proto-endowment, later became part of Mormon temple ritual.

For our purposes, the most important aspect here was allowing women to enter the Kirtland temple; we will discuss this more thoroughly in relation to the Nauvoo endowment and temple experience. Women entered the temple and participated in the charismatic meetings inside the building. For example, Presendia Huntington Buell (later Kimball) wrote, "At another fast meeting I was in the temple with my sister Zina." As the congregation prayed, kneeling, they heard "from one corner of the room above our heads, a choir of angels singing most beautifully." Buell wrote, "We were also in the Temple at the pentecost."[39]

Another important event was the restoration of washing and anointing as a temple ordinance.[40] These ordinances first took place on January 21, 1836, when the First Presidency and a few other church leaders received their washing outside the temple, then moved into the temple, where they anointed their heads with oil.[41] Later, other male members of the church, including "priests, teachers, and deacons," received this same washing and anointing. That this was regarded as a restoration of events from Exodus is shown by a statement by Oliver Cowdery: "[they] were annointed [sic] with the same kind of oil and in the man[ner] that were Moses and Aaron."[42]

The church subsequently moved to Missouri (where plans for temples in Independence and Far West did not reach fruition), then to Nauvoo, Illinois. In Nauvoo, Joseph Smith directed the building of a major temple and began to introduce further temple ordinances. While he did not live to see the temple completed, he presided over the first performance of a number of ordinances that have since become the basis for modern Mormon temple practice.

Smith did not introduce these ordinances publicly, but—in keeping with the Mormon concept of an esoteric temple (and in keeping with the Old Testament idea of a temple where Gentiles were strictly excluded

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39. Interview with Presendia Kimball, quoted in Edward Tullidge, *The Women of Mormondom* (New York: Tullidge & Crandall, 1877), 207-8. The Kirtland temple was used for general church meetings and for schools, and was thus an "open" temple.

40. See Donald W. Parry, "Washings and Anointings," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1992), 4:1551.

41. See Dean Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith* (SLC: Deseret Book, 1993), 2:155-59; Prince, *Power from on High*, 125-26, 184.

42. Oliver Cowdery, "Oliver Cowdery's Kirtland, Ohio 'Sketch Book,'" Leonard Arrington, ed., *Brigham Young University Studies* 12 (1972): 410-26, 419, entry for Jan. 21, 1836; see also Prince, *Power from on High*, 184.

from entrance into even the inner courts of the temple, let alone the building)—he introduced them to a small, elite group of trusted followers, starting on May 4, 1842. This group was most commonly called the Holy Order or Anointed Quorum, but it had a number of other names, among them simply "Quorum" or "Priesthood."[43] And Holy Order, in fact, was a term closely associated with priesthood. The Book of Mormon refers to "the high priesthood of the holy order of God" (Alma 4:20, cf. 2 Nephi 6:2), and in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Melchizedek priesthood is referred to as the "holy order of God" (D&C 77:11, 84:18).[44] Likewise, D&C 84:18 mentions Aaron, so the Holy Order was again seen as a restoration of Aaron's priesthood—not, confusingly, the LDS Aaronic priesthood, but the "high priesthood" which Aaron received and which Mormons refer to as the Melchizedek priesthood. These naming references to Holy Order, "Priesthood," Quorum, and Anointed Quorum show clearly and explicitly that this quorum was a priesthood organization. Since the ordinances introduced in this group were temple ordinances, it was entirely fitting, given Old Testament practice, that this had to be a priesthood group. In the Old Testament, as we have seen, to enter the temple and perform rituals in it or just outside it, one had to be a priest.[45]

Once again, as in the Kirtland House of the Lord, members of the Anointed Quorum received a washing and anointing just before receiving the ordinance called the endowment.[46] In addition, during the endowment they were given ritual temple clothing associated with priesthood.[47] A conservative historian has described the rites of the Holy Order ("Joseph Smith's private prayer circle"):

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43. For the Holy Order/Anointed Quorum, see Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, *"A Season in Prayer": Meetings of Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, 1842-1845* (forthcoming), which attempts to supply all the primary sources; D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake: Signature Books, 1994), 399-402, 491-519, 634-54; Andrew Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Succession Question," master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982.

44. See discussion in Quinn, *Origins of Power*, 114.

45. Heber C. Kimball seems to summarize the whole endowment as an ordination to priesthood. He wrote that in June [May] 1842, "I was aniciated into the ancient order was washed and annointed and Sealled and ordained a Preast. . .in company with nine others, Viz. Josph Smith, Hiram Smith [and others]. . ." *On the Potter's Wheel*, 55-56.

46. Prince, *Power from on High*, 186, citing *History of the Church* 5:2; Brigham Young Manuscript History, May 4, 1842, LDS Church Archives; L. John Nuttall diary, Feb. 7, 1877, LDS Church Archives, with excerpts available on *New Mormon Studies CD-ROM* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), see "Temples" section. This is quoted in David John Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994), 39.

47. See Evelyn T. Marshall, "Garments," in Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 2:534-45, who properly refers to LDS temple clothing as "priestly robes"; Ebenezer Robinson,

> They were initiated into the [Anointed] Quorum through a "washing and anointing" that symbolized the spiritual cleanliness and progress they sought to attain. At the meetings [of the Holy Order], dressed in special priesthood robes, they went through the endowment ordinances that consisted of religious instruction, learning certain symbolic "signs and tokens," and taking upon themselves sacred covenants pertaining to their personal lives and conduct. All this was held to be a most sacred part of the restoration of the "ancient order of all things." They also participated in fervent prayer concerning the problems of the day.[48]

It was at this point that Joseph Smith was faced with one of the most momentous and least understood decisions of his prophetic mission. The Holy Order was a pre-temple group: They met in a space that was a sort of temporary temple, like the Tabernacle, and the ordinances they were given were meant to be performed in the temple. Thus, the group was explicitly a priesthood group, a quorum, with ordinances that were regarded as restorations of the priesthood ordination ceremonies of Aaron (as high priest) and his sons (as priests): washing, anointing, investing in priestly clothing. Thus, they became priests who were qualified to enter the sanctuary.

Now, with full temple ordinances available and a major temple nearing completion, how would Joseph Smith view women in this context? As we have seen, introducing women into the temple by Old Testament definition would have made them priests, and so no women were allowed to enter the temple anciently. Certainly, Joseph Smith had not included women in any of the offices of the Aaronic or Melchizedek priesthoods, as they had been understood up to this point. One might have expected Smith to follow the Old Testament pattern and let only men enter the temple.

What Smith in fact did, with little fanfare, is shown by an entry in his diary that recorded an Anointed Quorum meeting: "At 7 eve met at the Mansion's upper room front with W L[aw] W M[arks]. Beurach Ale [Joseph Smith] was by common consent and unanimous voice chosen President of the quorum and anointed [second anointing] and ord[ained] to the highest and holiest order of the priesthood (and companion [Emma Smith]) Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Geo Miller, N K. Whitney,

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"Endowment Robes in Nauvoo in 1833-44," *The Return* 2 (Apr. 1890): 252-54, see also Quinn, *Origins of Power*, 350. Carlos E. Asay, "The Temple Garment: 'An Outward Expression of an Inward Covenant,'" *Ensign* (Aug. 1997): 19-23; Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple* (SLC: Deseret Book, 1980), 75-79.

48. James B. Allen, *Trials of Discipleship: The Story of William Clayton, a Mormon* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 127, cf. Quinn, *Origins of Power*, 114; Alma P. Burton, "Endowment," and Allen Claire Rozsa, "Temple Ordinances," in Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 2:454-56; 4:1444-45.

Willard Richards, John Smith, John Taylor, Amasa Lyman, Lucien Woodworth, J M. Bernhisel, Wm Law, Wm Marks. President led in prayer that his days might be prolonged, have dominion over his enemies, all the households be blessed and all the church and world."[49] Thus, Emma Smith was introduced into the Anointed Quorum; she was also anointed and ordained "to the highest and holiest order of the priesthood."

More women were introduced into the Quorum in subsequent meetings. Heber C. Kimball, for instance, wrote on January 20, 1844, "[M]y wife Vilate and menny feemales was recieved in to the Holy Order, and was washed and inointed by Emma [Smith]."[50] Brigham Young wrote in his diary, on October 29, 1843, that Thirza Cahoon, Lois Cutler, and Phebe Woodworth were "taken into the order of the priesthood."[51]

Joseph Smith, thus, introduced women into temple ritiual—a revolutionary action, given the Old Testament's complete ban on women entering the temple. However, this action also has significant implications with regard to priesthood, for we have seen that entrance into the temple and service therein inescapably defines the central aspect of priesthood in the Old Testament.

For those who may have difficulty accepting that entrance into the temple has such a meaning, we should look at important aspects of the temple ordinances Joseph Smith shared in the Anointed Quorum meetings. Washing and anointings were always the beginning of the series of temple rites he introduced. We have seen that washing and anointing in Exodus was a rite of ordination to priesthood, and we have seen that the early Latter-day Saints understood these as restorations of the washings and anointings given to Aaron and his sons.

In addition, another crucial part of the rites revealed by Joseph Smith was clothing in special robes. I will not describe these in detail, but it has been accepted that these temple robes are based on the descriptions of priestly robes in the Old Testament (though not on the high priestly robes, which are more elaborate). Hugh Nibley, in his article "Leaders to Managers: the Fatal Shift," wrote: "There is another type of robe and headdress described in Exodus and Leviticus and the 3rd Book of Jose-

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49. Joseph Smith diary, Scott Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake: Signature, 1989), 416. I reproduce some but not all of Faulring's annotations.

50. "Strange Events," in Stanley B. Kimball, ed., *On the Potter's Wheel: The Diaries of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1987), 56, cf. Prince, *Power from on High*, 204.

51. Brigham Young, diary, LDS Church Archives, as quoted by D. Michael Quinn, "Mormon Women Have Had the Priesthood Since 1843," in Maxine Hanks, ed., *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism* (Salt Lake: Signature Books, 1992), 365-410, esp. 368.

phus' *Antiquities*, i.e. the white robe and linen cap of the Hebrew priesthood, which have close resemblance to some Egyptian vestments. They were given up entirely however, with the passing of the temple and were never even imitated after that by the Jews. Both their basic white and their peculiar design, especially as shown in the latest studies from Israel, are much like our own temple garments."[52] In Exodus, donning those priestly clothes was a part of the rite of ordination to priesthood. "Next you [Moses] shall instruct all. . .[those skilled in making clothing], to make Aaron's vestments, for consecrating him to serve Me as a priest . . . .They shall make those sacred vestments for your brother Aaron and his sons, for priestly service to Me" (Exod. 28:3-5). By the standards of the Old Testament, when women are clothed in such priestly clothing, they are being given a consecration to priesthood.

Furthermore, early church leaders clearly and unselfconsciously connected women with priesthood in their statements. Joseph Smith told the Relief Society that he was "going to make of this Society a kingdom of priests as Enoch's day."[53] Perhaps he was looking forward to their entrance into the temple and participation in ordinances within it.[54] On February 1, 1844, Kimball "My self and wife Vilate was announted Preast and Preastest [Priestess] unto our God under the Hands of B. Young and by the voys [voice] of the Holy Order."[55] Of course, in entering the Holy Order, women entered a group that was called "Priesthood" and "Quorum" and even "the Quorum of Priesthood."[56] It is hard to escape the logical inference that the group was a priesthood quorum. All of this makes perfect sense in the light of Joseph Smith restoring temple and

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52. Hugh Nibley, "Leaders to Managers: The Fatal Shift," *Dialogue* 16 (Winter 1983): 12-21, 13. See also Hugh Nibley, "Sacred Vestments," in Hugh Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*, ed. Don E. Norton (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/FARMS, 1992): 91-138. For these temple robes and priesthood, see pp. 97, 102.

53. Female Relief Society of Nauvoo, Minutes, LDS Church Archives, at March 30, 1842. I consulted this in a microfilm copy at Lee Library, BYU; Andrew Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 110. See discussions in Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: the Story of Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 42, 53; Quinn, "Mormon Women Have Had the Priesthood," 365.

54. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. James Mulholland et al., 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1902-1912; revised edition, 1956), 4:492-93. See also Derr, et al., *Women of Covenant*, 53, where Joseph Smith connected the "kingdom of priests" generalized concept of priesthood with the completion of the Nauvoo temple.

55. "Strange Events," in Kimball, *On the Potter's Wheel*, 56. This is probably a reference to the "fullness of priesthood" ordinance (see Prince, *Power from on High*, 187-92).

56. William Clayton diary, Feb. 3, 1844, LDS Church Archives, see George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991), 125.

priesthood, and introducing women into the temple, giving them the same consecration rites—washing, anointing, and clothing in ritual clothing, rites of ordination to priesthood in Exodus—as men.

This restoration of temple and related ordinances with women included is one of the most remarkable aspects of Smith's work of restoration in the modern dispensation. One might have expected only men to enter the temples, to receive washing, anointing, and ritual clothing, and to perform rites in the house of the Lord. With little fanfare, Smith introduced women into the temple, to equally receive washing, anointing, and ritual clothing, perform rites in the house of the Lord. Yet that introduction had enormous implications for how a Mormon might look at the connection of women and priesthood.

In addition, the inclusion of women in temple service shows that Joseph Smith often did not restore Biblical institutions completely and precisely. Though he restored many aspects of temple and temple rites (such as washing, anointing, and clothing) modeled on Biblical patterns, introducing women into the temple is absolutely contrary to Biblical practice because women were never accepted as priests in Jewish tradition and culture.

A significant divide between LDS conservatives and liberals exists on the issue of women and priesthood, with conservatives generally affirming that women and priesthood are concepts which are absolutely and strictly separated.[57] Liberals, on the other hand, tend to believe that women could have priesthood, have indeed had priesthood since 1843, or that priesthood could be defined in such a way as to include women.[58]

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57. See Rodney Turner, *Woman and the Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1972). See a review of this by historian Claudia L. Bushman, "Women: One Man's Opinion," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 7 (Winter 1972): 85-87. Bushman states that Turner writes "from a scarcity of information," then "distorts the sources he has."

58. Important contributions are Anthony Hutchinson, "Women and Ordination: An Introduction to the Biblical Context," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14, no. 4 (Winter 1981): 58-74; Margaret Merrill Toscano, "The Missing Rib: The Forgotten Place of Queens and Priestesses in the Establishment of Zion," *Sunstone* 10 (July 1985): 16-22; Linda King Newell, "The Historical Relationship of Mormon Women and Priesthood," *Dialogue* 18, no. 3 (Fall 1985): 21-32; Melodie Moench Charles, "LDS Women and Priesthood," *Dialogue* 18, no. 3 (Fall 1985): 15-20; Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson, eds., *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987); Linda King Newell, "Gifts of the Spirit: Women's Share," in Beecher and Anderson, *Sisters in Spirit*, 111-50; Paul and Margaret Toscano, *Strangers in Paradox: Explorations in Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake: Signature, 1990), 179-97; Margaret Toscano, "If Mormon Women Have Had the Priesthood Since 1843, Why Aren't They Using It?" *Dialogue* 27, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 219-26; Quinn, "Mormon Women Have Had the Priesthood"; Bushman, "Women: One Man's Opinion"; Hanks, *Women and Authority:*

The liberal-leaning Community of Christ (RLDS) church has openly recognized the priesthood of women and now has women at every level of priesthood, including apostle.

I believe the most important argument for the connection of women and priesthood is based on the absolute justice of God and on an ethical, non-legalistic view of priesthood (we remember that both in the Old and New Testaments, inspired writers hoped that God's people, all of them, would be a kingdom of priests).[59] However, it is striking how much evidence there is from Mormon history to suggest that Joseph Smith and early church men and women accepted a connection of women and priesthood.[60] Bringing women into the temple—into a priesthood quorum, into the performance of priestly ordinances—is one of the most remarkable aspects of Joseph Smith's restoration of the temple.

Re-Emerging Mormon Feminism, which includes important essays by Meg Wheatley, Ian Barber, Lavina Fielding Anderson, Carol Lynn Pearson, Sonja Farnsworth, Edwin Brown Firmage, Marian Yeates, and Margaret Toscano; Shirts, "Priesthood and Salvation: Is D&C 84 A Revelation for Women Too?"; Prince, *Power From On High*, 201-10.

59. Needless to say, Joseph Smith did not restore the hereditary aspects of Old Testament priesthood or the ban of lame or physically imperfect persons from priesthood or temple.

60. I accept Gregory Prince's cautions that many offices that Mormons connect with priesthood, such as apostle, stake president, or bishop, were not associated with women in early Mormonism. (*Power From On High*, 201-10.)

The Mothers' Antlers

Joann Farías

The mothers have antlers of their own, the eldest
Mother shall lead the rest, show them
How to do with food first of all, house is next,
And training young the last. The Mothers train
The baby girls to be like Mother if you want
To eat. The training lasts forever.
Always we fear to show Mother our food.
It better be good. Her pie crust is her crown.
And even when it's good, we all concede,
the best even, for a girl today,
It's not like Mother's Mother's pie crust,
Who made us all and was a queen.
Her mythic pie crust trumps a living Mother's everything.
That's how it is. You are taught to obey.

Ordaining Women and the Transformation from Sect to Denomination

William D. Russell

OVER THE PAST FORTY YEARS the top leadership of the Community of Christ church (until recently the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) has gone through significant changes in religious thought. I have contended elsewhere that the decisive changes occurred in the 1960s.[1] In the 1970s the rank-and-file members became increasingly aware of the fact that the church leadership was moving away from traditional sectarian positions. W. Wallace Smith's son Wallace B. Smith became President of the church in 1978[2] and soon it was clear that the new president and his top leaders were committed to this new worldview. In January, 1979, the First Presidency invited all of the church's fulltime appointee ministers and their wives to Independence where the new president and his counselors read theological papers which clearly showed the presidency to be in a liberal camp.[3] This change involved the transformation of the RLDS church from a fundamentalist sect—that is a religious body predominantly focused on "restoring" a lost "authentic" form of worship—to a contemporary Protestant denomination. As long as the church was a fundamentalist sect, the focus was on "correct" doctrines and organization that characterized the "true" church. As the

1. "The Decade of the Sixties: The Early Struggle in the RLDS Shift from Sect to Denomination," Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, August 4, 2000.

2. W. Wallace Smith was president of the church from 1958 until he retired in 1978, at which time his son Wallace B. Smith became president, serving until his retirement in 1996.

3. The First Presidency, Presidential Papers (January 1979). Photo-reproduction available through the Restoration Bookstore operated by Richard Price in Independence, Missouri.

church moved from sect to becoming a denomination, we naturally have focused more on themes which we have in common with other Christians whether we consciously intended this or not. As a sect we had focused on Joseph Smith; as a denomination the focus is much more on Jesus than on Joseph.

The first widely circulated publication against the new liberalism in the church was a newspaper begun in 1970 by an RLDS fundamentalist named Barney Fuller. It was appropriately entitled, *Zion's Warning*—warning the saints in Zion of trouble at the gates. At this point it should be noted that "fundamentalist" in the RLDS context has nothing to do with polygamy. RLDS fundamentalists are those who believe that their faith should be based entirely or almost entirely on the scriptures, which they view as fully trustworthy sources for formulating religious beliefs. They believe the RLDS church was the one true church until it turned its back on many of these scriptures. RLDS liberals, by contrast, are those who see the scriptures as important sources for the faith but nevertheless as conditioned by culture. Therefore the scriptures must be tempered by reason and human experience.

During Wallace B. Smith's presidency several major changes were instituted in the RLDS church that were manifestations of the transformation from sect to denomination. The first and most dramatic of these was one that caused a major split in the church. The debate over women's ordination had been simmering in the church since the early 1970's. The feminist movement in the United States and other parts of the world had made some RLDS people aware of how the strongly patriarchal culture that exists in most of the world has limited women's opportunities to use their talents in ways that would benefit themselves and the larger society. The issue first came to the attention of the church's biennial World Conference in April, 1970, when a resolution was offered which called for including women in more significant roles in the church. A substitute motion was offered by A. H. (Bud) Edwards, which clearly suggested that women be ordained. It was shocking to many delegates—a loud collective gasp was heard throughout the conference chamber as Edwards read his substitute motion—and the motion was quickly tabled.[4]

Over the next fourteen years people in the church debated the issue, often with great feeling, pro and con. In the 1970s, the initial strategy of those favoring ordination, which included many church leaders, was to use women more extensively in leadership roles that did not require ordination. It was decided that church committees at all levels should in-

4. 1970 World Conference Bulletin, 329 and "A Transcript of Business Sessions: The 1970 World Conference, 404-408," in Community of Christ Library-Archives; A. H. (Bud) Edwards email to Bill Russell, March 15, 2002.

clude more women. In local worship services, some congregations moved toward letting women perform ministries previously restricted to priesthood men, including preaching the sermon on Sunday morning. This writer recalls being one of the dozen priesthood men who served the bread and wine at the monthly communion service in the Lamoni, Iowa congregation in 1972, with the communion sermon delivered by Dr. Barbara Higdon, a professor of literature and speech at Graceland College. The un-ordained Higdon could not have served the communion, but she delivered the Word on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

In April, 1970, the same month that the World Conference tabled the substitute motion calling for women's ordination, a group of professors at Graceland College, along with some friends elsewhere, began publication of a quarterly journal entitled *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action.* Editorials in the journal were sometimes signed by one editor, and some were printed under the signature of the nine-member Editorial Committee. The Editorial Committee published an editorial in their December, 1970, issue that called for the ordination of women, nearly fourteen years before the church's policy would change.[5] The feminist theme was frequently articulated in the pages of *Courage* during its brief three year existence, 1970-1973.[6]

The issue of women's role in the church continued to surface at the remaining World Conferences during the 1970s[7] and was finally resolved at the April 1984 World Conference when President/Prophet Wallace B. Smith presented a revelation which called for the ordination of women. That revelation was accepted by the delegates at the conference as a revelation from God and became Section 156 of the RLDS Doctrine and Covenants, but with 20% of the delegates dissenting. It soon became clear that the largest schism in the history of the Reorganization was in the making. In the six years following the approval of Section 156, about one-fourth of the active RLDS members ceased their involvement in the church. Many of these people formed separate splinter groups in their local areas.[8] Others simply tired of the bickering and quit attending

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5. Editorial Committee, "Sex Roles in a Changing World," *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action.* 1, no. 2 (December 1970): 81-84.

6. William D. Russell, "The Rise and Fall of *Courage*, an Independent RLDS Journal," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 11, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 115-119.

7. See Richard P. Howard, *The Church Through the Years*, Volume 2, *The Reorganization Comes of Age*, 1860-1992 (Independence, Mo: Herald Publishing House, 1993), chapter 35, "Expanding the Arenas of Service for Women," 381-408.

8. William D. Russell, "Defenders of the Faith: Varieties of RLDS Dissent," *Sunstone* 14, no. 3 (June 1990): 14-19; and "The Fundamentalist Schism, 1958–Present," in Roger D. Launius and W.B. "Pat" Spillman, eds., *Let Contention Cease* (Independence, Mo: Graceland/Park Press, 1991), 125-151. See also the essays in *Let Contention Cease* by Larry Conrad, "Dissent Among Dissenters: Theological Dimensions of Dissent and Reorganization,"

church in any branch of the restoration. While old school saints were shocked and angered over the adoption of Section 156, many held out hope that a subsequent World Conference would rescind the decision and correct a serious error. But when in 1986 a motion to rescind Section 156 came to the floor of the Conference, President Smith ruled it out of order, and 88% of the delegates upheld his ruling. Meanwhile, this and other important changes have turned the church's attention to developing a more Christ-centered theology and toward matters of more significance than those issues which focused on our uniqueness or differences with the Utah Mormons.

199-239; Pat Spillman, "Dissent and the Future of the Church," 259-292; and Roger Launius, "Guarding Prerogative: Autonomy of the Nineteenth Century Reorganized Church," 17-58. See also Paul M. Edwards *Our Legacy Faith* (Independence, Mo: Herald Publishing House, 1991), 282; Richard P. Howard, *The Reorganization Comes of Age*, 409-432, and Launius, "The Reorganized Church, the Decade of Decision, and the Abilene Paradox," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 31, no. 1 (Spring, 1998), 47-65.

Present at the Beginning: One Woman's Journey

Barbara Higdon

ON NOVEMBER 17, 1985, MANY RLDS (now Community of Christ) congregations witnessed the sacrament of ordination to priesthood office. Identical in every way to the church's long tradition of priesthood selection and ordination, these events were, nevertheless, not only unique but revolutionary. The ordinands were women. The events of that day ended 155 years of exclusively male tenure in the priesthood offices put in place by Joseph Smith, Jr., in the early years of the church. The only exception to that exclusive male prerogative was the ordination of Emma Smith in July of 1830. That revelation directed her to act as her husband's scribe and to gather hymns for a new hymnal. She was apparently ordained and expounded scriptures and exhorted the church. She was instructed to study to fulfill this function. Her call did not specify a priesthood office as listed and defined in Section 17.

The authorization to include women as full participants in existing priesthood offices would wait 150 years until April of 1984. It would be initiated in a revelation to the church, Section 156 of the Doctrine and Covenants, presented to the World Conference by Dr. Wallace B. Smith, President and Prophet, and overwhelmingly approved by the delegates assembled in Independence, Missouri. No one present in that assembly during the introduction of the inspired document and the debate and vote that followed will ever forget those moments: President Smith's statement in the preamble that he had petitioned the Lord repeatedly for confirmation and had received such powerful assurance of the Lord's will that he had no choice but to bring it to the church; the additional instruction to the church to build a temple dedicated to the pursuit of peace; the heated debate that would be repeated again and again in the years that followed.

As I listened to the dialogue on the conference floor and during the months that followed, I would contemplate my own journey in relation

to the enormous cultural change that was taking place in our movement. I was born into a devout family whose heritage went back to the early church. My maternal great grandmother's family had been converted in Ohio and had gathered to Nauvoo. Her stories of those early days were part of our family tradition. Elias Benner, buried with the eight other victims of the Haun's Hill massacre, was our relative. My father's uncles, as young men, had joined the church much later in Nebraska against the wishes of their parents who informed them that they would rather see them dead. My husband came from an equally long tradition in the church, and on that historic day in 1984 was a member of the Council of Twelve Apostles. We had met while students at Graceland College, the church's only institution of higher education, and responding to the strong teaching of the church to pursue education, had both earned Ph.D.s. (I was probably the third woman in the church to hold that degree. In addition, I knew of one female physician and one female attorney. Two of us were married and had children.) Two months before the 1984 World Conference, I had been named president of Graceland, the first woman to hold that position and the first RLDS president not to hold priesthood office. During the next two years, I would be ordained first to the office of Elder and six months later to the office of High Priest.

From an early age I had an overpowering sense of the presence of God's spirit in my life. I looked forward to every opportunity to fellowship with the community; camps and reunions were spiritual high points for me. As a student at Graceland, I participated enthusiastically in the religious life of the campus and received encouragement from mentors who urged me to continue to study beyond Graceland's two years. I saw my role very clearly as a lay leader, making my own contribution and helping other women find ways to develop and express their spiritual gifts for the benefit of the church. Looking for a way to make that contribution through the academic study of rhetoric, I chose to write my dissertation on the preaching practices of the early church and years later would write a handbook for preachers. I also was invited to serve on a number of world church committees and was the volunteer editor of the University Bulletin. I wrote frequently for church publications and was invited to deliver a number of speeches at church gatherings. Occasionally I spoke from the pulpit on Sunday morning, although my part of the service was never called "sermon." These experiences strengthened a feeling which I would later recognize and name as a sense of ministerial "call." Never expecting that the church would change its practice in my lifetime, I tried to expand the ways in which women could offer ministry outside the specified functions of priesthood office. I thought carefully about the calling of "member," believing that our creator willed every disciple, ordained, unordained, male, female, to develop his or her giftedness for the benefit

of the church and the larger community. The inspired revelations of the early church spoke clearly to me of God's intention.

Believing that the absence of opportunities for the unordained in the church deprived the body of a rich ministry, for many years I encouraged all persons to develop their spiritual gifts. I respected the special functions of priesthood and did not try to encroach on them in any way. I did, however, accept as many invitations to work, to serve in positions, and to speak as possible, and my willingness to work wherever invited gave me a high profile in the church. I used that visibility to raise expectations in the minds and hearts of unordained persons. For example, in the spring of 1968 Dr. Velma Ruch and I, both professors at Graceland, organized a conference entitled "Womanhood and Manhood: A New Image." Papers addressed male and female roles and division of labor in the family, in the workplace, and in the church. One paper delivered by Maurice L. Draper, a member of the First Presidency of the church, discussed the necessary boundaries of priesthood authority and function. Affirming that the ideal concept of ministry is service rather than recognition or power, Draper acknowledged that practices at any time are heavily influenced by their cultural context. He stated that the administration of the ordinances was the only basic function necessarily reserved to priesthood office. This prerogative, of course, carried with it leadership responsibilities. The entire conference proceedings, published in the University Bulletin, Winter 1969, made these ideas available to the membership and stimulated much strong response, not all of it positive.

Along the way I became convinced that there was no scriptural prohibition for the ordination of women. I appreciated the efforts of some church leaders to articulate that position. Notably Apostle Charles Neff, president of the Council of Twelve Apostles, writing in the *Saints Herald* in February 1981, raised the issue of the ordination of women in an article entitled "Ministers All." The church was beginning to address its relationship to the changing roles of women within western culture.

The articulation of these new ideas clashed squarely with tradition. Although I had never directly or actively advocated the ordination of women, some people assumed that my high profile position within the church meant that I was "lobbying" for institutional change and for ordination for myself. I did not believe that women would be ordained in my lifetime. I also felt that the disruption such a change would cause would be too high an institutional price to pay. An educator to the core, I believed that a conscious objective on the part of the church leaders over a long period of time would eventually result in general acceptance of the idea without great institutional disruption. I also felt that the change should not be initiated by revelation because the power of that method would sweep the decision before it. It would be much better, I thought,

for a slow evolution accomplished through generational change in expectation, followed by a regular legislative procedure.

Thus, my reaction to the stunning development of the 1984 World Conference was mixed. I had viewed myself as a spokesperson for the unordained. If I were to receive a call, could I, in good conscience, accept? And yet, what about the feeling of call I had experienced for so long? A few months later, in accordance with established practice, my pastor informed me that he had "light" regarding my call to the office of Elder. He also indicated that he felt that a call to High Priest would soon follow. After much prayer I decided to accept. My ordinations carried a sense of assurance and power, which I cannot find adequate words to describe. Because my previous ministerial opportunities had not been typical of the unordained, I did not experience a great change in function. However, in participation in the ordinances I felt the power of God's spirit and love flowing through me. Serving the emblems of the Lord's Supper, administration to the sick, and marriages and funerals as well as ordinations especially carried strong feelings of ministry for me.

I also came to the realization that the office of High Priest matched the gifts that I had been aware of previously. Increasingly, I had realized that I was a natural leader. My "style" was enabling and my mantra was expressed in the observation, "At the end of the days of a great leader, the people will say 'We did it ourselves.'" I carried the concerns of institutions in my heart and in my mind, and my objective was to build communities in which individuals felt they were heard and in which they could find fulfillment. Those were the values I tried to express during my years as a college teacher, during the eight years I served as president of Graceland, and in my participation in various committees of the world church. Soon after my retirement from Graceland, the church invited me to become the first director of the Peace Center at the Temple. I tried to implement those same values as I initiated a new program that would support the mission of the Temple. Three years ago I was asked to return to Graceland in a temporary leadership position at a very difficult time in its history. Once again those values helped restore calm and build morale. I believe that, however imperfectly I carried them out, I was exercising the spiritual leadership called for in the ministry of the High Priest.

The spiritual journey of each woman who has accepted ordination since 1985 is unique. I am humbly grateful for the opportunities that I have had and am well aware of my failures to live up to the high calling that every person who would serve Christ's cause must aspire to. As for the institution as a whole, we still mourn the absence of friends and family who could not accept the change. However, the resulting enhancement of ministry within our movement has been unmistakable. A burst of energy and dedication is still occurring. Almost two decades later,

every priesthood office and quorum except the First Presidency have women members: three apostles in the Council of Twelve, one member of the Presiding Bishopric, and one member of the Council of Presidents of Seventy. Benefiting from important lessons learned, confirmation received, and enriched and empowered ministry offered, the Community of Christ is blessed immeasurably by the ministerial gifts of all of its members who are willing to participate. Members understand and accept the mission of the church "to proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love and peace" and know that it will take all of us as parts of the body of Christ to fulfill that mission.

Contralto

Marilyn Bushman-Carlton

—in memory of Nancy (Duffie) Furner (1946-1992)

In the interval after the mastectomy
before her head was a slick white egg,
she would color the gray roots of her dark
blanket-soft hair with drugstore dye.

The scar wrapped around her torso like
a hieroglyphic, and the damaged muscle
made it hard to reach above her head.
Heather, who inherited her mother's rich

multi-hued mane, would help. It became
a monthly ritual: the two shoehorned into
the peach flashcube bathroom, mother sitting
on the toilet lid, a towel hugging

her shoulders, peeling the thin disposable gloves
from off the printed guide, and then her girl
gingerly applying the dye, soothed of worry:
get the roots, the black will wash away

from face and ears, the measled walls. Though
she still sang with the Tabernacle Choir,
she didn't sing glop-headed in the bathroom,
but laughed her prosperous contralto laugh,

her abrupt rollicking resonant laugh,
every time the first shock of cold
splashed her neck. And the black foam puddle
in the sink, spilling what seemed like a rainbow.

"Not Invited, But Welcome": The History and Impact of Church Policy on Sister Missionaries

Tania Rands Lyon and Mary Ann Shumway McFarland

Introduction[1]

Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have engaged in missionary work since the year of the religion's founding. But sociological research on the experience of these missionaries is still young and stands as a field white and ready to harvest.[2] To lay the groundwork for broader research, we focus here specifically on church policy for sister missionaries. We argue that women's low numbers relative to men in the mission field are the results of an amazingly effective and self-regulating church policy which discourages women from choos-

1. The authors thank many who contributed to this article, most notably Julie Lauper-Cook for willingly sharing her sister missionary interview transcripts, Rebecca Chandler as shepherdess and cheerleader, Jessie Embry and Maxine Hanks as generous reviewers, and our German Professor husbands, Rob McFarland and John Lyon, for the article's title, thoughtful editing, and for frequently rescuing us from the clutches of our children to give us writing time.

2. Some notable exceptions include a handful of historical pieces about missionary wives in the Pacific islands, Calvin Kunz's Master's thesis on the history of sister missionaries in the 19th century (1976), Vella Neil Evans's dissertation on women in official church discourse (1985), Maxine Hanks's analysis of sister missionaries and authority (1992), Jessie Embry's work with oral histories (1997, 1998), and Shauna Sweet's gender analysis of the missionary experience (2003)—all cited below. We also thank Jessie Embry for noting that although official church discourse and personal histories about full-time missionary work focus overwhelmingly on men's experiences, there is little literature taking a social science

ing a mission while simultaneously welcoming those who do and allowing for no desiring missionary to be turned away.

The sister missionary experience is as varied as the number of missions, mission presidents, and missionaries who serve, making it a daunting subject for study. A thorough treatment of the subject would include the history and doctrine behind missionary work, messages to women about supporting male missionaries, the stereotypes surrounding sister missionaries, women's individual decisions to serve (or not to serve), the long-term consequences of their decisions, the perception of members and non-members toward sister missionaries, sisters' performance compared to elders, gendered issues in missionary work, gender-neutral issues in missionary work, sisters and leadership in the mission field, and sister missionaries in non-proselyting roles, to name a few facets of this rich subject matter.

This article will explore one small piece of this mosaic: the evolution of official church policy on single women missionaries and its impact on the mission field and on perceptions of sister missionaries. We believe this piece of the picture is a dominant motif that shapes all the other issues. To trace the evolution of policy, we rely heavily on Jessie Embry's work with letters from the First Presidency to mission and stake leaders about calling and managing missionaries. We add to this a content analysis of official church publications and addresses at general conferences and other official church gatherings, such as women's and youth conferences.[3] These statements, made to the church populace at large rather than circulated privately, help to track changes as well as tenacious continuities in the roles of sister missionaries and to probe how these public statements may have formed popular opinions about sister missionaries.

First, we trace the evolution of publicly known policy on sister mis-

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perspective on the subject. A few rare exceptions include Thomas Madison and Thomas Marion, "LDS Missionaries' Experience: Observations on Stress," *Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists (AMCAP) Journal* 15 (2 1990), Gordon and Gary Shepherd, *Mormon Passage: A Missionary Chronicle* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998) and Levi Peterson, "Resolving Problems for Missionaries Who Return Early," *Sunstone* 127 (May 2003).

3. Data was culled from electronic searches for the root phrases "sister missionaries," "lady missionaries" and "elders and sisters" in the past 30 years of church periodicals as available on the official church website <www.lds.org>, and on the CD-ROMs "New Mormon Studies" and "LDS Collectors' Library" released by Smith Research Associates in 1998. These CD-ROMs include church documents and publications as well as secondary sources dating from the 1820s to 1997. We also conducted a similar search of the church magazine *The Improvement Era* from 1897 to 1955 on the "Gospelink" CD-ROM released in 1998 by Deseret Books. Unfortunately the magazine is apparently not yet electronically available for the years 1956-1971 after which it was replaced by the *Ensign* and the *New Era*, which are both searchable on the official LDS website.

sionaries and discuss the explicit and implicit messages sent to men and women about women's role in missionary work. We then discuss the impact this church policy has on women themselves and on general perceptions of women missionaries. Finally, we explore some possible reasons for a church policy designed to keep numbers of women missionaries low. Our analysis of this policy yields insights into how the church manages and portrays gender roles.

Establishing Policy

From 1830, married women seem to have served missions in every possible way: they served with and without their husbands, official calls, having been ordained or set apart, and they served for a variety of reasons.[4] The first single, full-time, certified female missionaries were called in 1898 as the result of a confluence of requests from two Mission Presidents and a Stake President to the First Presidency asking for sisters.[5] This followed over half a century of proselyting by more than 200 married female predecessors.[6]

It is likely that church members were aware of "lady missionaries" in other Christian faiths. By 1882 Protestant societies had sent out 694 single women missionaries and hundreds of them served in Utah in the decades leading up to the turn of the century, mostly as schoolteachers opening schools to influence Mormon children.[7] Indeed, Joseph W. McMurrin, mission president of the European Mission in 1904, mentioned that LDS sister missionaries were not conspicuous because "all the churches have women engaged in a similar way."[8]

Polygamy was prominent at the time as a primary and distinguishing characteristic of the saints, and non-Mormons were understandably curious about the women of the LDS church. George Q. Cannon in an

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4. Maxine Hanks, "Sister Missionaries and Authority" in *Women and Authority* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 317-323.

5. Calvin S. Kunz, "A History of Female Missionary Activity in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1830-1898" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976): 35-36.

6. For a more complete history of women who served missions prior to 1898, refer to Kunz, "History of Female Missionary Activity"; Jessie Embry, "LDS Sister Missionaries: An Oral History Response, 1910-70," *Journal of Mormon History* 23 (Spring 1997): 100-139; and Hanks, "Sister Missionaries and Authority."

7. Vella Neil Evans, "Women's Image in Authoritative Mormon Discourse: A Rhetorical Analysis," (Dissertation, University of Utah, 1985) and Jana K. Riess, "'Heathen in Our Fair Land': Presbyterian Women Missionaries in Utah, 1870-1890," *Journal of Mormon History* (Spring 2000): 165-195.

8. Joseph W. McMurrin, "Lady Missionaries," *Young Woman's Journal* 15 (December 1904): 540.

1898 conference address related the story of a General Authority and his wife visiting a small branch in the East. They found that many non-members felt: "'Well, we have seen the Mormon Elders, but we have not seen the Mormon women; we would like to see. . .what kind of people they are.'" When the elder's wife sought out one of the more vocal complainers, "the lady was so pleased at meeting one of our sisters, an intelligent woman, and a woman that did not look as though she was a poor, downtrodden slave that she entered the Church."[9] The mere physical presence of Mormon women in the mission field spoke volumes about the church and its treatment of and relationship to women. As Joseph W. McMurrin said of sister missionaries: "I was always impressed with the feeling that those who heard them could never afterwards be made to believe the terrible stories that are so freely circulated in some places to the injury of the Lord's people."[10]

Despite this potential for improving the image of the church, the First Presidency seemed reticent to call sister missionaries until increasing pressure to do so finally persuaded them. President George Q. Cannon and Apostle John W. Taylor prepared the church for single women missionaries in the April 1898 general conference with very cautious and guarded language. After citing numerous requests for women to serve missions, President Cannon explained:

> We do not want unwise women sent any more than unwise men, because they could do more injury than they could do good. But if they can get a recommend from their Bishops as wise, suitable women, we will set them apart. . . .It seems as though the Lord is preparing the way for the women of this Church to do some good in this direction. To some lands and under some circumstances suitable women might go. . .[11]

This wary change in policy was influenced by increasing petitions for women to join their husbands on missions and a growing interest among mission presidents in tapping women to go "where the elders could scarcely gain a hearing."[12] Given that hundreds of LDS women had already willingly and successfully served as missionaries in varying capacities and circumstances, it seemed more and more illogical to restrict missionary work to men.

In spite of these cautious beginnings, only two years later a 1900 *Young Woman's Journal* (an early forerunner of *The New Era)* published a series of essays about women in the mission field, noting that the LDS

9. President George Q. Cannon, *Conference Report* (April 1898): 7.
10. McMurrin, 540.
11. George Q. Cannon, 7.
12. Diane Mangum, "The First Sister Missionaries," *Ensign* 10 (July1980): 62-65.

College offered a course for women to prepare for missions.[13] Other church leaders also expressed some enthusiasm. In 1901 Apostle Francis M. Lyman returned from the European Mission and was reported to proclaim "that the lady missionary is no longer an experiment, but an unqualified success."[14] This acclamation was documented in the Relief Society periodical *Woman's Exponent*, but was not shared from a general conference pulpit. Official messages in conferences about sister missionaries usually remained muted and included caveats qualifying the circumstances under which sisters should serve.

For church leaders, the success of women in the mission field seemed to depend on keeping their numbers small. President James G. Duffin of the Central States Mission was quoted in a 1904 issue of the *Young Woman's Journal*:

> In the selection of lady missionaries much discretion should be exercised. They will probably never be sent out in considerable numbers. The few who do go out into the world will be to the world an index of the character of our mothers, our wives and our daughters. Let the reflection be that of the noblest womanhood on earth.[15]

While President Duffin's statement appears prophetic (or prescriptive), he does not explain why women would never be sent out in comparable numbers to the men. Nor does he expand on the discretion necessary in choosing women for proselyting. Insinuated in his statement is that greater discretion is needed in selecting women than in selecting men for missions. Duffin's statement raises a question of causality: are women to be sent out in low numbers because only a select few can represent "noblest womanhood," or do women need to be exemplary because there are so few of them and many eyes will be watching them as representatives of their whole sex? We are reminded of the common observations that in male-dominated spheres, women must outperform men in order to find acceptance from their peers and supervisors.[16]

In 1907 the same Francis M. Lyman, who six years earlier had reportedly declared sister missionaries an "unqualified success," made a markedly more reserved and bounded statement in the formal setting of a general conference address.

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13. Evans 148-89.

14. Evans 149, quoting *Woman's Exponent* (Aug 1, 1901): 22. Unfortunately the setting in which this proclamation was made is not known.

15. McMurrin, 539.

16. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (New York: BasicBooks, 1977).

> The ministry in this Church is not confined to the male members; for our sisters are also teachers, and advocates, and expounders of the faith. They have a work in the ministry, besides taking care of their homes and families; but of course they are almost entirely home missionaries. A few of our sisters have gone into the world to preach the Gospel, and I suppose there is no sister in the Church but what would go as readily as the brethren if she were called. And that is the difference in Church membership between the brethren and the sisters. . . .The Elders are called and designated by the voice of the Lord . . .to hold the Priesthood, to officiate in the foreign ministry, and to preside in the affairs of the Church generally. The brethren are supposed to be in the work from the time they are ordained. [17]

Lyman did not question women's willingness to do full-time missionary work, but described missionary labors as an auxiliary to their domestic responsibilities. Men, however, by virtue of their priesthood ordination, were required to do mission work. The prevalence of this theme would remain consistent for the next century. The policy was simple: some women were certainly capable, willing and welcome, but on the whole their first responsibility lay with home and family while men's ordination to the priesthood was an automatic call to missionary work. It was powerful rhetoric that would keep the ratio of women to men low without ever turning away a woman's mission application. Church leaders emphasize the desirability of this ratio repeatedly, but the official record, as we discuss later, offers only a few hints about the reasons behind such a policy.

Accepting the Policy

Advocates of women missionaries clearly encountered resistance to this role change. A 1915 article in the church magazine *The Improvement Era* (a forerunner to *The Ensign*) titled "Do You Believe in Sister Missionaries?" began with the statement: "[Q]uite a division of opinion prevails among the people on this question." The essay, written by a sister missionary serving in Philadelphia, went on to argue passionately in favor of women, given their innate ability to do "those small things that only women can do."[18] That same year, however, there were also signs that sister missionaries were indeed gaining acceptance in the church: A report from the Eastern States Mission published in *The Improvement Era* stated:

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17. Francis M. Lyman, of the Quorum of the Twelve, *Conference Report* (April 1907).

18. Anonymous, "Do You Believe in Lady Missionaries?" *Improvement Era* 18 (October 1915).

> The idea of having lady missionaries is new in this mission, but is no longer an experiment. The faithful labors of these sisters have gone far in making the mission what it is today. Neither their devotion can be questioned, nor their industry criticized. . . .So splendid has this feature of the missionary work been, that the time is looked for when two or more lady missionaries will be placed in each of the twelve conferences of this mission.[19]

Adding credence to this sentiment, then Apostle David O. McKay published an article titled "Our Lady Missionaries" for a 1921 *Young Woman's Journal,* in which he related his own "conversion" to the value of women in the mission field. He had met two exceptional young women serving in the Scottish mission 22 years earlier but had wondered if they were not the exception to the norm and continued to doubt that the mission field was a seemly place for "young girls." He went on to say:

> Well the experience of the intervening years has changed me; for many an instance has driven home the fact of the sweetness, potency, and permanency of the work of our lady missionaries. But the full realization of the good they are accomplishing even more, did not come to me until. . .I entered upon this tour of the missions. Almost without exception, the women whom we have met in their "fields of labor" have proved to be not only equal but superior to the men in ability, keen insight and energetic service.[20]

It seems that through hard work and success early sister missionaries graduated from an unofficial probationary status to full-fledged legitimacy, if not pedestal-hood, in the mission field. A few other enthusiastic appraisals of women missionaries came in general conference addresses. In the first half of the 20th century, current and recently released mission presidents often reported on their missions in general conferences. Women who served with their missionary or mission president husbands were occasionally mentioned by name and praised for their contributions to the work. Presidents often reassured parents that their "missionary sons and daughters" were healthy and happily working together.[21] Another mission president extended a rare open-armed welcome to women in the October 1928 conference:

> I can't speak too highly for the young ladies of our mission, young ladies who have come into the world to preach the gospel. They can get into the

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19. Anonymous, "Messages from the Missions," *The Improvement Era* 18 (March 1915).

20. David O. McKay, "Our Lady Missionaries," *Young Woman's Journal* XXXII (1921): 503.

21. For examples, see Elder Elias S. Woodruff, President of the Western States Mission, *Conference Report* (October 1928): 56, and Elder Miles L. Jones, President of the East Central States Mission, *Conference Report* (April 1929): 39.

> homes of the people and find an opportunity for explaining the gospel where the elder cannot go. Send us more lady missionaries. We have had no trouble with a single lady missionary in our field. I was not wholly in favor of lady missionaries when I first went out, because I thought they would cause so much trouble; but now I am always glad to see them come, because my experience has taught me that they can do a great work.[22]

Yet in spite of these selected words of appreciation and welcome, as sisters became an established feature of many missions, missionary policy remained highly gendered. The rules for men and women entering the field held tenaciously to a two-track system based on sex.

Codifying Policy

In the forties, fifties and sixties, official church statements about sister missionaries reveal a settling of previously fluid policies such as age, length of service, and relationship to leadership. It remains unclear from available sources exactly when age guidelines and length of service became codified. The first two single sister missionaries were 22 and 23, and the initial minimum age of 23 for a woman seems to have settled in place at least by the 1930s.[23] There is very little mention of women missionaries in the 1910s and 1920s. A handful of appeals went out from the First Presidency for more elders, but not for sisters.[24] When requests for sisters did come, as in 1915 and 1922, they contained stipulations for women who were "not too young" with "a good education" or with specific office skills like stenography.[25] Church leaders were evidently concerned about age and maturity. Women were also requested to fill very specific niches—either to perform as office workers or as support for newly organized auxiliaries—rather than to directly boost proselyting work.

In spite of public praise for sister missionaries from church leaders in the 1910s and 1920s, calls for more women missionaries from the First Presidency were the exception, not the rule in church policy. Even during World War II, when far fewer men were available to serve missions, the church leadership under President Heber J. Grant made it clear that women were not to be sought after as substitutes for men called into military service. In a 1943 message from the first presidency to all church leaders, the policy "heretofore announced [in 1941] not to call sisters into

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22. Elder John G. Allred, President of the North-Central States Mission, *Conference Report* (October 1928): 59.

23. Embry, 112.

24. Ibid., 108-9.

25. Evans, 150 and Embry, 109.

the mission field during the emergency and in the absence from the missions of brethren of the Priesthood to take the lead in missionary service" was reinforced. The letter went on to allow three possible exceptions: skilled female stenographers would be called as needed to assist in mission offices; professional school teachers "being personally fitted and having acquired through experience and training in the Church the ability creditably to represent the Church in the proclamation of the Gospel" could volunteer to spend their vacation time on full-time mini-missions; and the wives of men beyond the draft age could be recommended to accompany their husbands into the field.[26] These exceptions again emphasized maturity and office skills rather than calling for a general influx of women to help replace the men going into military service.

Unlike secular wartime employment policies, which prioritized production over gender roles and brought significant numbers of women into traditionally male spheres, the church wartime policy prioritized gender roles over the imperative of preaching the gospel. It seems that *how and by whom* full-time missionary work is accomplished is at least as important as *that* it be performed. This war-time policy is powerful evidence that the church missionary program is profoundly gendered. It is not enough that the gospel be preached to all the world—the preaching must be led by priesthood authority. In spite of the injunction against relying or drawing on more women, it has been estimated that during World War II the number of women in the field relative to men rose to an all-time high of 40%.[27]

The Korean War produced another flurry of adjustments in male missionary policy with no significant changes for women. As in the previous world wars, the number of available men for missions dropped: the church was careful to support the government by not sending young men eligible for active duty on missions. The First Presidency also clarified that men should be 20 years old to receive a mission call.[28] As in the

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26. Circular Letter, 20 November 1943, Missionary Instructions to Presidents of Stakes and Bishops during World War II, 6:114, 204-5; as quoted in Embry, 112.

27. Hanks, 319. Because the church missionary department does not publicly release missionary data by gender, the true numbers and percentage of women in the mission field is very difficult to estimate. In an heroic act of investigative research, historian Jessie Embry searched through the microfilmed missionary lists of LDS Church archives from 1930-1961 and counted the number of female names for a given month (usually January). After 1961, the church published the missionary lists by year instead of by month, and the time involved in name-counting became prohibitive (Embry, 115). Vella Neil Evans estimated numbers of women missionaries by counting skirts in archived mission photos (Evans, 151-2).

28. This minimum age could be waived if a young man had completed two years of college or had served in the military (Embry, 112).

1940s, however, the church did not ask for more women to help replenish a diminished missionary force. Its concession to "requests from missions for more experienced help" was to temporarily lower the minimum age for women from 23 to 21 for less than a year starting in 1950 and again for six months in 1953.[29]

In 1960, missions again requested more missionaries. In reply, the First Presidency adjusted the minimum age for all men to 19, but the minimum age of 23 for women remained in place. In 1964 the First Presidency dropped the missionary service age for all women to 21 but reaffirmed the church's belief in appropriate gender roles: "It is hoped that normal social opportunities leading to proper marriage will not be interrupted nor disturbed by such recommendations. Those young women who do not have reasonable marriage prospects but who are personable, qualified and worthy may be recommended."[30] This admonishment reminded women that although a lower age limit would make serving a mission an easier prospect for many, they were to serve only as a secondary life choice.

We do not know why the church lowered the minimum age for women at this time and left it there. The draft for the Vietnam War did not start until six months later, and the number of total missionaries in the field was relatively stable in the early 1960s.[31] Perhaps the established success of other women missionaries and the lowering of the minimum age for men several years earlier paved the way.

Cementing Policy

In September of 1970, *The Improvement Era* quoted from a mission president training session. It included a strikingly positive statement about women missionaries: "The Brethren are encouraging the calling of more lady missionaries. Missions could not get along without them."[32] We don't know *how* the Brethren were encouraging more women to serve at this time, but nine months later, the First Presidency sent another signal when the church announced that women's (and couples') missionary service would be reduced from 24 months to 18 months.[33] Was this an effort to increase the numbers of women in the field by reducing the length of com-

29. Embry, 113.

30. Embry, 114-5.

31. The total number of full-time missionaries set apart during the five years leading up to this policy change are as follows: 1960, 4706; 1961, 5793; 1962, 5630; 1963, 5781; 1964, 5886 (*2001-2002 Church Almanac*).

32. This statement was attributed to Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve. See Jay M. Todd, "The Spirit of Missionary Work," *The Improvement Era* 73 (September 1970):14.

33. "Programs and Policies Newsletter," *Ensign* 1 (June 1971): 124.

mitment? Or was it a policy aimed at minimizing any time spent outside the marriage market for women—a way of reinforcing the message that marriage takes priority over all? Did it mean women were more effective and more wanted in the field, or the opposite? The church made an effort to explain the policy shift by publishing a steady cycle of articles on the subject in the newly established *New Era* (the church magazine for youth).

In July 1971, the *New Era* interviewed Paul H. Dunn the month he was released as President of the New England States Mission. In response to the question, "Should girls go on missions? Is this encouraged by the Church, and are they as effective as the elders?" he replied:

> I think lady missionaries make a great contribution. I'm particularly impressed after having supervised this mission for the past three years. The Church doesn't openly encourage girls to go on missions to the extent that it does young men. Their first and primary calling is marriage, and that's been stated by a number of presidents of the Church. But should a young lady desire to go on a mission, we do everything to see to it that she is sent. That philosophy is the reason that elders are called at nineteen and sisters at twenty-one.
>
> Lady missionaries are as effective as elders. I don't think I'd ever be able to say that the elders outdo the sisters or that the sisters outdo the elders. There are certain times when one is more effective than the other. For example, lady missionaries can often get into a home where elders never could; and in fact, they do get into homes far more often than an elder on door-to-door contacting. Perhaps people look on them a little differently.
>
> Lady missionaries have one or two disadvantages; since they do not hold the priesthood, they sometimes have to depend on elders to do some of their work.
>
> Lady missionaries seem to be more tolerant and understanding than the elders. A lady missionary also seems to have far less of a challenge in getting motivated and putting in hours that are dedicated to the Lord.

This is a masterful and diplomatic response: women are not openly encouraged to serve, but are welcomed and assisted if they choose to anyway. They are not better than the elders, but neither are they worse. They have certain advantages and can fill important gaps left by elders; their only stated disadvantage is that they must turn certain [ordinance] work over to priesthood holders. The difference in minimum ages for men and women is to promote young women's opportunities for marriage.

Eight months later, the *New Era* again broached the issue in its "Questions and Answers" section when it published the question: "Should girls go on missions?"[34] Arthur S. Anderson, a former mission president, responded.

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34. Arthur S. Anderson, "Q&A: Questions and Answers," *New Era* 2 (March 1972): 30.

> This involves two questions: Would the mission be good for the girl, and would the girl be good for the mission?
>
> The answer to the first question is almost universally yes. Nearly any girl with a positive attitude and a desire to serve will benefit greatly from mission service. She can build her testimony, firm up her direction in life, develop a spirit of tolerance and love, build self-confidence and a positive attitude, come to an appreciation of home, parents, and family, and see more clearly the importance of choosing a husband who will go with her not only to the temple but also to the celestial kingdom. She will feel the joy and satisfaction that comes from unselfish, full-time service to others.
>
> Would the girl be good for the mission? This question cannot be answered in a general way. It's an individual matter. Today's typical lady missionary is an energetic, young (usually just turned twenty-one), enthusiastic girl who will, traditionally, participate in about twice as many conversions as will the average elder. She is usually in the mission field because she has a desire to serve, not because she is compelled by social pressure. . . .A girl who enters the mission field to find a solution to her personal problems is likely to feel very out of place in such company. The vigorous schedule of the mission field affords little time or place for eccentric behavior or personal problem solving.

President Anderson states that a mission is almost "universally" good for girls. This is a particularly striking assertion since girls are not universally encouraged to serve. The laundry list of benefits girls can expect to derive from serving a mission (faith, self-confidence, joy, satisfaction, and a firmer conviction to marry for eternity) is tempered only by Anderson's assurance that it takes a certain kind of girl to be a missionary. His emphasis on the high expectations and rigors of mission life discourages some women from serving while at the same time glorifying and lionizing the women who do serve. The concluding statement, which warns against eccentric behavior and personal problems, suggests that girls may be vulnerable to these problems. Was this a reflection of personal experience or cultural stereotype? Future examination of concurrent messages to young men about missions would help put these admonishments into gendered perspective.

A year later in 1973, the *New Era* published a conversation with then Apostle Gordon B. Hinckley on missionary work. Again the question was posed "Do you think girls should plan on filling missions?" He replied:

> Those young ladies who go perform a tremendous service. They are effective missionaries. But I heard President David O. McKay say on several occasions, "Missionary work is primarily a priesthood responsibility, and as such it devolves primarily upon holders of the priesthood." "The finest mission a young woman can perform is to marry a good young man in the Lord's

> house and stand as the mother of a good family." But I repeat, we need some lady missionaries. They do a tremendous work.[35]

Women are needed in the field, but not too many. A mission is good, women do tremendous work, but temple marriage and motherhood are even better. This ambiguity leaves the decision to serve squarely in the hands of individual young women and stands in stark contrast to the clarity offered to young men by the oft-quoted pronouncement of President Spencer W. Kimball in 1974: "The question is frequently asked: Should every young man fill a mission? And the answer has been given by the Lord. It is 'Yes.' Every young man should fill a mission."[36] No such answer from the Lord was handed in blanket form to young women.

The apparent confusion of young women over these ambiguous messages was again reflected in 1975 in the "I have a Question" section of the *Ensign:* "I am a 21-year-old girl. The present call for missionaries interests me, but I am confused about the Church's desire for sister missionaries. What is the real position and desire of the Church concerning girls going on missions?" Once again Elder Paul H. Dunn, now a general authority, responded. After echoing Gordon B. Hinckley's earlier statement with the phrases "missionary work is primarily a priesthood responsibility," "the finest mission a young woman can perform is in the role of wife and mother," and "there is a need for a limited number of sisters," he went on to say:

> If a sister is (1) at least 21 years of age, (2) has good physical health, (3) is emotionally stable and secure, (4) has no immediate prospects for marriage, and (5) meets the other requirements for missionary service, she may be recommended for a mission. Bishops should be certain that each of these five prerequisites has been met before submitting recommendations for sisters to serve fulltime missions.
>
> We are happy to accept sisters who meet these qualifications and afford them the opportunity to serve in the marvelous missionary cause. However, this is not their prime calling, and we don't send out an appeal to young women generally to prepare for and serve fulltime missions.[37]

This reply is more formal and less enthusiastic than his response as a freshly returned mission president four years earlier. Once again the pol-

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35. Brian Kelly, "A Visit with Elder Gordon B. Hinckley about Missionary Work," *New Era* 3 (June 1973): 29.

36. Spencer W. Kimball, "When the World Will Be Converted," *Ensign* 4 (Oct. 1974): 3.

37. William O. Nelson, "I Have a Question," *Ensign* 5 (April 1975): 19.

icy is reinforced that women are welcome in small numbers under certain specified conditions, but a mission is implied to be a tangent to their true purpose in life ("this is not their prime calling") and therefore on some level deviant from the norm.

These repeated responses to the same basic questions in church magazines during the early 1970's suggest an ongoing effort from the church to send a message to young women. We do not know to what extent they were driven by letters from young women themselves or by editorial staff responding to some other incentive, but the fact that questions about women missionaries were addressed four times in five years implies that the responses could not adequately settle the issue in the minds of church members.

In 1978, the *New Era* published an essay by Franklin D. Richards that reiterated the gendered mission policy but also spoke more encouragingly than most:

> If a young lady is in love with a worthy man, we don't feel that their relationship should be interrupted by a mission call to her. However, many young women are not in that situation, and if they desire and are worthy to go on a mission, they could be called. My experience has indicated that sister missionaries are as effective as elders in leading people to baptism and that *a mission gives a woman as much benefit in her later life as it does to an elder. She becomes a better wife, a better mother, a better Relief Society president—just better in every way.* So a mission is a worthy goal for any young Latter-day Saint to aspire toward [emphasis added].[38]

This quote is even more positive than President Anderson's 1972 list of reasons a mission can benefit a woman. It also points most explicitly to the inherent paradox of church policy: a mission will make a woman a better wife and mother, but she should prioritize marriage over mission. The blessings are comparable for men and women, but only men are obligated to go. This paradox has profound implications with regard to what men purportedly need for character development and salvation versus what women need. If a mission is a spiritual boon, why is it not extended in equal measure to men and women? Why are missions and marriage mutually exclusive for women when set side by side, but not for men? We explore possible answers to these questions in our conclusions.

Ensuing messages in the early 1980s continued to sound more encouraging to women missionaries. In an address to the 1983 BYU Women's Conference, which was later excerpted in the *Ensign*,[39] Joe J.

38. Franklin D. Richards, "Have a Dream," *New Era* 8 (January 1978): 4.
39. JoAnn Jolley, "News of the Church," *Ensign* 13 (May 1983): 92.

Christensen, President of the Missionary Training Center, described sister missionaries as "sharp, attractive, mature, and very committed." He then added, "They know why they are serving. Many have planned for years to go on a mission. . . .To you who are younger and single, although missionary service is not an obligation in the same sense as with elders, don't forget the opportunity that is available to expand your world of service and experience by serving a mission."

An address to the General Women's Meeting in 1985 by then Apostle Gordon B. Hinckley listed full-time missionary work as one of ten gifts women receive from the Lord. The address also gave a slightly expanded version of the usual explanation for why women were not encouraged to serve in equal numbers with men:

> *Yours is the opportunity to proclaim the gospel.* Exclusive of missionary couples, we now have 5,872 sister missionaries serving in the field. For the most part, these are young women who are called as other missionaries are called. Many mission presidents give their sister missionaries credit for being more effective than the elders in opening doors and minds to the teaching of the gospel. One mission president told me, perhaps facetiously, that if he had four pairs of sister missionaries doing the finding and the teaching, he could keep a pair of elders busy doing the baptizing.
>
> You will immediately ask why, then, are lady missionaries not called until they are twenty-one, when young men are called at nineteen? While we recognize the vast good that sister missionaries do, and while we greatly appreciate their tremendous service, we are reluctant to have in the field the same or a larger number of sister missionaries than elders. I believe there is great wisdom in this.
>
> Furthermore, we regard a happy marriage as the greatest mission any young woman can enjoy, and we feel that the opportunities for such will be increased if there is some delay in young women going into the mission field.
>
> Nevertheless, you have the privilege. You have the right, conditioned upon worthiness. You have the opportunity, whether serving as full-time missionaries or on a local basis, to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ with power and conviction.[40]

Calling missionary service a "right," "opportunity," and gift from the Lord for women is strikingly positive and proactive. This is also one of the earliest statements to allow that the message from the church seems inconsistent at face value: if sisters are valuable and effective, why then are they discouraged from serving missions on the same terms as elders? However, Hinckley's answer to the inconsistency he acknowledged re-

40. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Ten Gifts from the Lord," *Ensign* 15 (November 1985): 86.

mains tantalizingly vague. The word "furthermore" indicates that the emphasis on marriage was *not* the only reason to maintain separate age minimums for men and women. But Hinckley did not elaborate on why the Brethren were "reluctant" to have equal numbers of men and women in the field. He only said it was wise, leaving us to speculate on this wisdom.

Perhaps these slightly more welcoming statements softened the ground for more women to choose missions: by the mid-1980s the ratio of women to men in the missionary force climbed from 15% to about 20%.[41] Most likely, changes in American culture and demographics were having a significant impact as well. From the 1950s to the 1990s, U.S. marriage rates declined while the median age at first marriage went up for both men and women. For example, in 1970 there were about 140 marriages for every 1,000 women and by 1985 there were only about 95. In 1970 the median age at first marriage was 23.2 for men and 20.8 for women. By 1985 the ages had climbed to 25.5 and 23.3 respectively (see table).[42]

YEAR	U. S. Marriage Rate for Women (per 1,000)	Median Age at Marriage	
		Men	Women
1970	140	23.2	20.8
1985	95	25.5	23.3

These shifts in marriage culture and a growing number of choices in education and the workforce for women reduced the stigma of marrying later in life. Women serving full-time missions at age 21 would re-enter the marriage market at age 22.5, well below the national median (although still well above the Utah median of about 21).

Messages in Youth Literature

This rise in the number of women serving missions certainly cannot be laid at the feet of the lesson manuals for the Young Women program. In 1982, Lavina Fielding Anderson published a review of the 1977-78 Young Women manuals.[43] In 1994 Janine Boyce published a similar re-

41. Hanks, 317.

42. See http://www.ed.gov/pubs/YouthIndicators/indtab03.html

43. Lavina Fielding Anderson, "Messages from the Manuals," *Exponent II* 8 (Winter 1982).

view of the revised manuals, which came out in 1983 and 1988.[44] Neither found any discussion of women serving full-time missions. Lessons focused on fellowshipping, member-missionary work and supporting elders on their missions while stories and pictures of full-time missionaries referred exclusively to men. Our own content analysis of the three young women lesson manuals currently in use (1992, 1993, and 1994) showed little change.

Of seven lessons in the three manuals on being involved in missionary work, only two are focused on full-time missionaries: "Understanding a Missionary's Responsibilities" and "Sustaining Missionaries through Letters."[45] Both lessons are carefully gender neutral in their references to missionaries, but significantly the only explicit mention of women serving missions comes not in the text of the lesson material but in the notes to teachers. The stated objective of the letter-writing lesson is: "Each young woman will learn ways to encourage and support young men *and young women* in the mission field" (emphasis added). The other lesson begins with the only statement of official church policy on women serving missions in all three manuals as a "Note to Teacher."[46] The only story in either lesson involving a female in the mission field is a quote from a mission president's wife.

By contrast, throughout the seventies, eighties, and nineties, the church youth magazine *New Era* is liberally sprinkled with stories about sister missionaries in the field, young women preparing to serve missions, and letters from sister missionaries. A 1973 article, for example, describes the then five-day missionary training experience largely from the perspective of sister missionaries, including snippets of bathroom chatter about everything from make-up and boyfriends to testimonies of Christ and spiritual reasons for serving a mission:

> ". . .because the Lord wants me here, that's why."
> "My goal is to go through every temple in the world."
> "Everyone told me I'd probably be called to some place close, and now just think, Southern Italy. Wow!"

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44. Janine Boyce, "Messages From the Manuals—Twelve Years Later" *Dialogue* 27 (Summer 1994, 2): 205.

45. See *Young Woman Manual 3* (1994): 72, and *Young Woman Manual 2* (1993): 78, respectively.

46. "Note to Teacher: This lesson discusses the responsibilities of full-time missionaries. All young men should serve missions. Unmarried women age twenty-one and older may also serve full-time missions. However, young sisters should not feel obligated and should not be urged unduly to serve full-time missions. A mission should not interfere with a young woman's opportunity for marriage." *Young Woman Manual 3*, 72.

"If someone could just take my make-up case, it would take care of my six excess pounds of luggage."
"My boyfriend said he'd wait for me, but. . ."[47]

The difference between the *New Era*, which reflects more of the reality of women serving missions, and the Young Woman manuals, which never suggest to young women that a mission is a possible choice, is palpable. This contrast illustrates the paradoxical policy of offering only backhanded invitations to women but acknowledging and supporting them once they come forward of their own accord.

Re-establishing Policy

By 1997 the median age of American women at first marriage had climbed to 25.0.[48] In October of that same year, Gordon B. Hinckley (now president of the church) gave a talk in the priesthood session of General Conference spurring considerable discussion in LDS circles about sister missionaries.

> There seems to be growing in the Church an idea that all young women as well as all young men should go on missions. We need some young women. They perform a remarkable work. They can get in homes where the elders cannot.
>
> I confess that I have two granddaughters on missions. They are bright and beautiful young women. They are working hard and accomplishing much good. Speaking with their bishops and their parents, they made their own decisions to go. They did not tell me until they turned their papers in. I had nothing to do with their decision to go.
>
> Now, having made that confession, I wish to say that the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve are united in saying to our young sisters that they are not under obligation to go on missions. I hope I can say what I have to say in a way that will not be offensive to anyone. Young women should not feel that they have a duty comparable to that of young men. Some of them will very much wish to go. If so, they should counsel with their bishop as well as their parents. If the idea persists, the bishop will know what to do.
>
> I say what has been said before, that missionary work is essentially a priesthood responsibility. As such, our young men must carry the major burden. This is their responsibility and their obligation.

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47. Susan Moultrie, "The Missionary Home: A Five-day Transition," *New Era* 3 (June 1973): 57.

48. See http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0005061.html. It should be noted, however, that the median age of Utah women at first marriage has held steady at about 21 since the 1960s (see http://www.utahmarriage.org/).

> We do not ask the young women to consider a mission as an essential part of their life's program. Over a period of many years, we have held the age level higher for them in an effort to keep the number going relatively small. Again to the sisters I say that you will be as highly respected, you will be considered as being as much in the line of duty, your efforts will be as acceptable to the Lord and to the Church whether you go on a mission or do not go on a mission.
>
> We constantly receive letters from young women asking why the age for sister missionaries is not the same as it is for elders. We simply give them the reasons. We know that they are disappointed. We know that many have set their hearts on missions. We know that many of them wish this experience before they marry and go forward with their adult lives. I certainly do not wish to say or imply that their services are not wanted. I simply say that a mission is not necessary as a part of their lives. [49]

This is one of the most revelatory statements on church sister missionary policy that we can document. President Hinckley's stated desire not to offend anyone indicates a full awareness of how charged the issue is in a climate sensitive to sex discrimination. It is one of the most sensitive and forthright explanations of the policy made from the pulpit and suggests that this issue had not been settled in the twelve years since Hinckley's 1985 apostolic address to the women of the church cited earlier.

Hinckley's description of a growing culture where women are pressured to serve missions is corroborated by anecdotal evidence. Many personal accounts suggest that this culture shift was real and that women who turned 21 without any obvious romantic attachments were assumed to be preparing for missions, especially at Brigham Young University.[50] Perhaps President Hinckley was responding to the phenomenon described in a 1995 *BYU News* article titled "Mission before Marriage Becoming Acceptable for Women" which cited that 60% of BYU students in "Sharing the Gospel" classes were women.[51]

Even as Hinckley once again emphasizes that women have a small but crucial role to play in the mission field, his "confession" that two of his own granddaughters were serving missions implies something out of line with church policy. He intimates with his choice of words, however playfully, that having sister missionaries in his own family was a secret to be confessed rather than an accomplishment to be proud of. This si-

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49. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Some Thoughts on Temples, Retention of Converts, and Missionary Service," *Ensign* 27 (Nov. 1997): 49.

50. See for example Mary Ellen Robertson's essay in this volume and Tonia Andrus, "Sister missionaries very valuable, still needed," *Newsnet* (Brigham Young University, April 29, 1998): http://newsnet.byu.edu/story.cfm/23479.

51. Rhonda Sluder, "Mission before marriage becoming more acceptable for women," *Daily Universe* (Brigham Young University, October 24, 1995).

multaneous use of both positive and negative imagery continues to reinforce the inherent contradictions of the church policy.

This conference address is the most explicit statement we have on the purpose of the age gap: "to keep the number [of women] going relatively small." This contrasts with the previously most-cited reason: to give women a longer opportunity to find a marriage partner. The comment that the church "constantly" receives queries from women wishing to serve earlier than 21 indicates that the minimum age is working exactly as intended. It also indicates that there have been a noticeable number of women who wish to serve, preferably at a time better suited to their life plans.

In an especially weighty statement, President Hinckley asserts that there is no social or spiritual penalty for women who do not serve full-time missions: "you will be as highly respected, you will be considered as being as much in the line of duty, your efforts will be as acceptable to the Lord and to the Church whether you go on a mission or do not go on a mission." Since Gordon B. Hinckley can hardly predict the feelings and behavior of individual church leaders and members, this is obviously a prescriptive statement. It is his desire regarding the manner in which non-missionary women should be perceived. It is a reassuring statement to those who choose not to serve or to those who do not desire a full-time mission, but its implied corollary raises a question: can sisters who serve derive *any* benefit from their missions that they could not receive by staying home? The phrase "being acceptable to the Lord and the Church" is important. President Hinckley did not say there was *no* benefit to be had for women serving missions, only that whichever path of spiritual growth women choose is acceptable. Men, however, clearly have something to lose (at least respect and acceptance) by forgoing a mission.[52]

Hinckley's final sentences again show the underlying tension in church policy toward women serving missions: it is not that women's services are not wanted (although the church has actively worked to keep numbers of women low); they simply aren't necessary for women. How can something be so essential for men but not for women when women (and church baptismal rates) admittedly benefit in many ways from serving missions? What functions then do church leaders believe missions should serve beyond the simple imperative to preach the gospel to all the world? Why should the numbers of women be kept low relative to the numbers of men in the mission field?

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52. For a more detailed discussion of the expectations of male missionaries and the cost of early returns from missions, see Levi Peterson, 42-45.

Why the Policy?

Without access to the behind-doors discussions that generated and maintain this gendered mission policy, we can only speculate on the possible reasons for perpetuating it. Some of the explanations we put forth here are explicit in the repetitive policy statements we have already cited. Some are pure conjecture—thought exercises to pursue with further research. And some may simply be unintended, although not undesired, consequences of such a policy.

Perhaps the most explicit justification for the gender gap is that from the very inception of the church, missionary work has been considered a priesthood calling.[53] As previously mentioned and attributed to David O. McKay, "Missionary work is primarily a priesthood responsibility, and as such it devolves primarily upon holders of the priesthood."[54] Women are guests in the work, but not hosts and should not overwhelm the priesthood character of preaching the gospel. A gender-balanced or predominantly female missionary force might overwhelm or threaten the all-male priesthood.

Closely related to this is that a mission is likely to be viewed as a training ground for future priesthood leaders. In a church that depends on a lay clergy, completing a volunteer mission is loosely akin to graduating from theological seminary. It is an efficient and effective tool to train young members in the organization and implementation of the church structure as well as in its scripture and doctrine. The lack of priesthood callings and the subsequent smaller number of leadership positions for women in the church give men logical precedence in serving missions as a form of leadership training.

The third reason also emerges frequently in official statements, most notably President Hinckley's 1997 reaffirmation of the policy: a mission is seen as a necessary rite of passage and a means to maturity for young men while it is not essential as such for women. In her recent research on LDS missionaries, Shauna Sweet notes the disparity in the ways elders and sisters perceive their missions:

> A mission is part of young men's prescribed life plan. The mission is a rite of passage: it marks the end of boyhood and the beginning of adulthood. Two years is a long time, and they anticipate that in those two years they are probably going to change significantly. Others expect them to change and plan accordingly.

This stands in striking contrast to the cultural expectations for sisters:

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53. Hanks, 316.
54. As quoted by Gordon B. Hinckley in Kelly, 29.

> Young women's experiences were markedly different: the mission didn't mark a collective rite of passage from one stage of life to another. They were adults before leaving on a mission, and they were adults upon returning home. . . . Unlike their male counterparts, the sisters were welcomed back from their missions and expected to be exactly the same as they were before they left.[55]

These observations are very much in line with repeated statements that missions are not a necessary part of a woman's life course. Women are often perceived to bring their talents and gifts to the mission field rather than discover and grow them there.

Intertwined with these emphases on a gendered priesthood and separate life paths for men and women, the powerful force of Mormon gender culture likely shapes mission policies. Missionary work, like helping people move or setting up and taking down chairs, is simply part of the male domain. Especially in the early days of preaching without purse or scrip, but still today, most would agree that a mission can be physically arduous (even dangerous) and emotionally demoralizing: hardly the appropriate setting for members of the gentler sex.

A fifth possible reason for the policy might be to reduce the number of mission romances. The rules for conduct between elders and sisters are strictly delineated. The missionary handbook or "white bible" cautions: "Never be alone with or associate inappropriately with anyone of the opposite sex. Flirting or dating is not tolerated. You are not to telephone, write to, or accept calls or letters from anyone of the opposite sex living within or near mission boundaries."[56] Keeping the number of sister missionaries low reduces the statistical odds of romantic pairing and increases the odds that district and zone meetings will have the atmosphere of a professional gathering rather than a group date.

Sixth is the possibility that sister missionaries take up more mission resources as compared to their male counterparts. As evidenced in a May 1982 letter from the First Presidency to Mission Presidents regarding sisters and mission safety, keeping the sister missionaries in safe areas and situations may command more attention (and occasionally money for lodging in safer areas) than is needed for elders. Our initial interviews with a handful of mission presidents also suggest a common belief that sister missionaries are generally higher maintenance: they require more of presidents' time per capita than elders. Although elders tend to have

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55. Shauna Sweet, "Personal Growth and Spiritual Progress: Gender and the LDS Missionary Experience," Paper presented at the Eastern Sociological Society Conference in Philadelphia, PA (February 28, 2003): 2,4.

56. *Missionary Handbook*, 1986: 25.

much higher rates of disciplinary problems, sisters seem on average to need longer interviews, more frequent counseling, and are more likely to have (or at least discuss) personal and health problems.

Finally, the full-time missionary program was designed by men, for men. It is permeated by a male culture (see Alison Stimmler's essay in this volume for an example of this). To welcome women in equal numbers and on equal footing to men would likely require or instigate some profound changes in mission administration and mission culture. There may well be a latent institutional and cultural resistance to change. There may also be a belief that a low percentage of sister missionaries is beneficial to the work in that it inspires the elders to work harder without tempting them away unduly from their spiritual duties. In a 1944 general conference address, Elder Thomas E. McKay paid tribute to the women of the Canadian Mission because they were "following the injunction of the Prophet Joseph, viz., 'to provoke the brethren to good works.'[57] Similarly, a 1987 *New Era* article quoted one sister missionary as saying: "They tell us over and over again how glad they are to have sisters in the MTC, because then the elders settle down a little bit more."[58] Consequently, having a few sister missionaries in the field may provide a certain tempering influence and encourage the elders to be more productive than having none at all.

Thus, another function of the policy's implicit discouragement of sister missionaries is to send a clear message that women who do choose to serve will be entering a male realm, designed for men but tolerant of women. Women offer a valuable leavening effect to the work, but they are not integral to the structure. This message effectively shapes women's expectations and perceptions of missionary work and in turn perpetuates the culture that supports a certain division of labor by sex.

It also suggests that sister missionaries are presumed to serve the patriarchal organization of the church. From Franklin D. Richards's 1978 quote that a mission will make women better wives, mothers, and Relief Society Presidents (not simply better individuals) to the widespread perception that women don't need a mission to mature, but bring their maturity to the mission, to the notion that women are involved to help settle the men and "provoke [them] to good works," to the repeated

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57. Elder Thomas E. McKay, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, *Conference Report* (October 1944): 68.

58. Richard M. Romney, "To Prepare," *New Era* 17 (June 1987): 12. In a similar vein outside of LDS culture, Wendy Shalit in her book *A Return To Modesty* contends that a modest woman's presence can "spiritualize men" by motivating men to achieve more and to be better than they otherwise would be. See Wendy Shalit, *A Return to Modesty*, (New York: Free Press, 1999): 148.

statement that women fill a certain niche in missionary work ("reaching out where elders cannot go"), women are expected to conform to a certain kind of role. Men are also expected to serve the patriarchal institution, but their role for accomplishing this is defined differently. Missionary work is an intensified version of the different tracks men and women are expected to hold to in the church.

Impact of Policy on Perceptions

The impact of this century-long policy toward full-time single women missionaries is multi-fold. In the decades when the median age of marriage in the U.S. was lower (20-21) and the minimum missionary age was set at 23 for a two-year mission, the repercussions for a young woman's marriageability were much more acute. The stereotype that only leftovers from the marriage market served missions proved to be tenacious in Mormon culture. When explaining the reaction she got from her decision to serve a mission in 1962, Mary Ellen Edmunds wrote: "I was aware of the stereotype of sister missionaries—some people thought going on a mission was, for women, an 'end-of-the-line' opportunity."[59] Another woman wrote a letter to the editor of *Dialogue* in 1972 setting forth some of the prevailing stereotypes used to describe "lady missionaries": husband-hunting, mentally unfit, over-emotional, aggressive and unfeminine, or useless and unfit for missionary work. She added "Several young women have said to me that they would have loved to go on a mission, but they could not see themselves as lady missionaries, or they were pressured into marriage and babies 'before it was too late' and they became old maids at twenty-two or three."[60]

It is not hard to make the link between a limited and ambiguous call for sister missionaries and a subtle sense of marginalization among sisters in the field. One woman missionary who served from 1989-1990 reported a question from a member as he drove her and her companion to an appointment: "Why aren't the missionaries teaching these people?"[61] The lingering assumption that sisters are peripheral extras, not the real thing, echoes through many interviews and memoirs. As Evans concluded in her early 1980s research on official church rhetoric about women:

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59. Mary Ellen Edmunds, "The People Have Given Me a New Heart," *Ensign* 12 (Sept. 1982): 14.

60. "Letters to the Editor," *Dialogue* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1972): 5.

61. Julie Lauper Cook, Interview transcript with a returned sister missionary who served in an Eastern state from 1989-1990 (Independent research, 1996). In possession of authors.

> Although the Sisters have served in numbers ranging from one to forty percent of the total missionary force, typically less than five percent of authoritative discourse has validated or rewarded that service. Currently, there is but slight concern with Sister missionaries in the Church; and woman's missionary image is correspondingly weak. Some discourse even suggests that while the woman missionary should be "indulged" in her desires to serve, her interests are "deviant." Certainly female missionaries are not as highly esteemed as are wives, mothers, or those Sisters who staff the women's organizations; and the proselyting Sister is not an exemplar for young girls.[62]

We believe that the estimation of sister missionaries improved in the twenty years that followed this assessment. One support for this belief is President Hinckley's 1997 conference talk which addressed a trend of increasing expectations that young women serve missions. The way in which many church members interpreted his message, however, provides evidence that women on missions continue to be met with disapproval.

In his 1997 address, President Hinckley restated the message of a very consistent policy: women who choose are welcome to serve missions, but should not feel any pressure or obligation to do so. However, many members heard this to mean that women should not aspire to serve at all. A sister missionary, working on Temple Square as men emerged from that particular priesthood session of General Conference, reported a member grasping her hand in a hearty shake and saying "I bet you're feeling real dumb about being on a mission right about now."[63] A BYU student reported that the first she heard about the priesthood session came from several men in her apartment complex who walked through her door that night and blurted out, "President Hinckley said no more sister missionaries."[64] This willingness to carry President Hinckley's statement to an unintended extreme (even in jest) intimates a latent hostility toward women missionaries in Mormon culture.

Anecdotal evidence hints that the number of women filing papers to serve missions did in fact drop for a time immediately following this address. However, a recent BYU news article reported that the number of sister missionaries has increased for the past three years in a row. In 2003, there were almost 9,000 sisters in the mission field—approximately 15% of the total missionary force.[65] If the missionary force was indeed

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62. Vella Neil Evans, "Women's Image in Authoritative Mormon Discourse: A Rhetorical Analysis," (University of Utah, Dissertation, 1985), 159.

63. Angela Michelle Bryner, Temple Square missionary from 1996-1998, personal correspondence with authors (February 7, 2003).

64. Andrus, 1998.

65. Britt Balkcom, "RMs wait for sister missionaries" *NewsNet* (Brigham Young University, February 18, 2003) http://newsnet.byu.edu/story.cfm/42371

20% women in the mid-1980s as described by Hanks (1992), then it would seem that there was a significant drop or fluctuation in the number of women relative to men at some point during the 1990s. As the church does not publicly release missionary statistics by gender, this question remains open to further research.

Discussion

One of the most surprising findings in our research is that this policy has been so consistent since its inception. From 1898 to the present, church leaders have not significantly varied their official statements on women missionaries. Small adjustments have been made over the years—codifying minimum age, length of service, dress standards—but the core message has been reinforced with every publication and conference address: women are not explicitly invited to the party, but they are welcome if they choose to crash it. It is an impressive policy that has effectively achieved its goal (bring women in but keep their numbers low) with no overt coercion. Women do the self-selecting based on the prevailing expectations this policy has nurtured, and the church never has to turn any desiring, qualified woman away.

It is, however, an extremely ambiguous policy with some confusing internal contradictions.[66] In expounding the policy, church leaders have consistently referred to the efficacy of women in the mission field: they work harder, they prepare more people for baptism, they are more mature, more compliant with mission rules. At the same time, leaders emphasize the importance of keeping women's participation rates low. Even in times of war when women logically could have carried on missionary work (at least domestically) in place of an absent generation of men, as they did with production in the workplace, the church explicitly discouraged this option. It seems that full-time missionary work is much more than a vehicle for sharing the gospel with the most people possible. It is also a role intended or designed for men, but not for women.

In juggling the message that some women are needed and fill important roles—roles that elders cannot always fill—many leaders have sent mixed messages about the perceived benefits of serving missions. Young men are told repeatedly that a mission will be a transforming turning point in their lives, that they will learn things on their missions they could not learn anywhere else. Women, on the other hand, are repeatedly

66. Although this contradiction is evident in our own analysis of official church discourse, Maxine Hanks also noted the paradoxical nature of the sister missionary role: "It grants women some ecclesiastical authority without priesthood authority; it confers the authorization to preach the saving 'principles and ordinances of the gospel' but not to perform or administer them" (Hanks, 315).

assured either that they will not receive any greater social or spiritual reward on a mission than they would receive as a wife and mother (i.e. Hinckley 1997), or that serving a mission will make them better wives and mothers (i.e. Richards 1978). Why should a mission accrue more benefits to men than to women? If a mission can improve women as wives and mothers, why not encourage more women to serve?

The policy is, thus, non-coercive but internally inconsistent and confusing. We have documented a starkly two-track approach to men and women in the mission field. This disparity is explained only vaguely and is rooted in a sex-segregated priesthood. However, we have also found resonance in our research with a growing argument in the wider sociological literature on gender: dominant gender discourse can be experienced as a constraint, but it can also be deployed tactically to survive and even thrive in varied situations. More and more gender scholars are finding evidence that "gender is manipulable"—by both institutions and individuals.[67] We suggest that church policy on sister missionaries is not a rigid framework holding women to an inferior status compared to men. It both constrains and enables individual women seeking a mission experience.

Yes, the policy leaves women with less clarity and direction on how to spend their young adult lives should they not marry by age 21. Yes, the policy has stigmatized women missionaries as deviant, unmarriageable, and usurpers of a male domain. However, this very ambiguity and minority status bequeaths its own freedoms and powers. Women missionaries may be seen as deviant in some way, but they can also feel special, unique, chosen. They are expected to have received a personal call from God and may serve with a greater sense of purpose as a result.

Men have no leeway in official discourse to wonder whether or not to serve a mission. They are urged to comply with a blanket revelation that supplies them with a clear mandate. Women who contemplate serving a mission are expected to rely on personal revelation and, "if the idea persists," counsel from their parents and bishop (Hinckley 1997). In many cases they would need to feel an individual call strong enough to override the implicit discouragement of women in mission policy as well as to undertake a significant time commitment at what is usually a crucial point in a woman's plans for education, career, and marriage (age 21 as opposed to age 19). Vella Neil Evans noted that:

> . . .the Church apparently restricts the talent it might otherwise employ in its proselyting program. On the other hand, such a non-supportive posture also

67. For a recent review of this literature see the introduction to Janet Johnson and Jean Robinson, eds., *Living Gender: Gender as Tactic in Postcommunism.* Forthcoming.

> yields women missionaries who are reported by their leaders to be both unusually dedicated and effective.[68]

This personal soul-searching changes both the premise and the experience of a mission for women. As one sister missionary wrote, "Because I wasn't forced to go and had absolutely no expectations placed on me to go, I knew that what became of my experience there was entirely up to me, and I wasn't going to waste my time."[69] A sense of personal responsibility for women's decision to serve naturally evolves into a personal responsibility for their mission experience.

This same two-edged sword of ambiguous minority-status means that mission presidents have considerable leeway in the way they relate to and make use of the sister missionaries under their jurisdictions. Our preliminary research suggests that women's mission experiences fall across a much wider spectrum than men's. Sisters can find themselves heavily marginalized and even degraded in some missions while other mission presidents experiment with creative leadership opportunities—everything from "sister trainers" to "sister APs" to all-female districts with sister district leaders and so on. The all-female Temple Square mission is a fascinating exception to a male-dominated mission experience. The very ambiguity of what it means to be a sister missionary can work both for and against women in the field.

One of the latest adjustments in mission policy came in 2002 from Apostle M. Russell Ballard and President Gordon B. Hinckley in a priesthood session of the October General Conference. The message was aimed at young men, and Elder Ballard minced no words:

> We don't need spiritually weak and semicommitted young men. We don't need you to just fill a position; we need your whole heart and soul. We need vibrant, thinking, passionate missionaries who know how to listen to and respond to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. This isn't a time for spiritual weaklings. We cannot send you on a mission to be reactivated, reformed, or to receive a testimony. We just don't have time for that.[70]

President Hinckley then endorsed Elder Ballard's words and added a few of his own, drawing women into the message: "I hope that our young men, and our young women, will rise to the challenge he has set forth. We must raise the bar on the worthiness and qualifications of those

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68. Evans, 160.

69. Angela Michelle Bryner, Temple Square missionary from 1996-1998, personal correspondence with authors (February 7, 2003).

70. M. Russell Ballard, "The Greatest Generation of Missionaries," *Ensign* 32 (November 2002).

who go into the world as ambassadors of the Lord Jesus Christ."[71] Although church leaders have emphasized the need for worthy and prepared missionaries since the beginning of missionary work, this was unusual in its strong wording. It rescinded the automatic and compulsory nature of serving missions for young men. We emphasize this recent change because on average women have already come to missions with greater commitment and a stronger sense of personal, spiritual purpose. It seems likely that such a "raising of the bar" for missionaries will cut off more men from serving than women. With possibly fewer men submitting mission papers, might we see a growing *percentage* of women serving missions as a result?

We found evidence that maintaining a predominantly male missionary force was at least as important as the work itself. This priority was especially visible during wartime when women were expressly *not* recruited to bolster the flagging numbers of missionaries and is prominent in an ongoing discourse which praises women for being more productive than men in the mission field yet discourages them from serving in larger numbers. The more recent shift toward "raising the bar" for all missionaries implies that a mission is now to be less a right of priesthood ordination or a rite of male passage and more a privilege for the righteous and committed. Although Gordon B. Hinckley included both men and women in his call to prepare for missions, M. Russell Ballard's more pointed message was aimed directly at young men, using the pronoun "you" and in the context of a General Priesthood Session. This shift is an important adjustment in male missionary policy, while no comparable shift in emphasis has emerged for women. The internally contradictory but institutionally beneficial sister missionary policy has continued to hold sway for over one hundred years. Although the culture defining women's roles in the mission field may have changed, official church rhetoric has not.

71. Gordon B. Hinckley, "To Men of the Priesthood," *Ensign* 32 (November 2002).

Sister Missionary Policy Timeline

1830 Lucy Mack Smith accompanies Hyrum and preaches to her family on a trip to Pontiac Michigan.

1850 Louisa Barns Pratt is "blessed, set apart, and ordained" by Brigham Young to serve with her husband Addison in the Society Islands.

1851 Christine Bentsen Anderson is called to accompany two Elders to her hometown of Bornholm, Denmark, to find them accommodations and open up teaching opportunities.

1865 Thirteen women are called and set apart to serve with their husbands and for the first time appear on official church records as missionaries.

1898 Jennie Brimhall and Inez Knight receive calls to England as the first single full-time proselyting sister missionaries. Jennie Brimhall serves from April to November and is issued an honorable release due to health concerns. Liza Chipman replaces her, and she and Inez Knight continue to serve until their release in May 1900.

1898 George Q. Cannon inaugurates the single sister missionary age; women missionaries are for the first time "certified" but no longer "ordained to serve."

1941 First Presidency discourages local leaders from calling women to fill missionary shortage caused by WWII due to the "exceptional hazards which will now be incident to missionary work."

1942 First Presidency announces it will call only older men ordained as high priests or seventies on full-time missions for the duration of the war.

1943 First Presidency continues to discourage local leaders from calling women on missions unless they are skilled stenographers, schoolteachers serving only in the summer, and wives accompanying husbands who exceed the draft age.

1950 Korean war and "special requests from mission presidents for more experienced help" prompt First Presidency to lower age limit from twenty-three to twenty-one for women. At the time, young men had to be twenty years old unless they had served in the military or completed two years of college.

1951 David O. McKay sets the age minimum back to 23 for women.

1953 (January) Minimum age lowered for "a few competent stenographers and bookkeepers" to 21.

1953 (July) Minimum age returned to 23.

1960 (June) Age limit for women is 23 generally but 21 for those with office skills "who were sufficiently mature and able"; age

	limit for men dropped to 19 if they had completed 2 years of college or one year of college and 6 months of military service.
1960	(July) All men may serve missions starting at age 19.[72]
1964	Minimum age lowered from 23 to 21 for women.
1971	Length of service lowered from 24 to 18 months for women.
1977	Inception of The Personal Development Program for Lady Missionaries at the Missionary Training Center (MTC) to assist sister missionaries with grooming, poise, makeup, and hair care.
1979	First Presidency issues letter to mission presidents, asking them to be sensitive to special health problems of couples and older single women.
1980	First Presidency clarifies age and length of service for women in good health and without dependent children at home: • ages 21-40 in good health: 18 months • ages 41-70: 12 months • age over 70: not recommended.
1982	(April) Length of service for full-time single elders lowered from 2 years to 18 months.
1982	(May) Mission presidents receive missionary safety letter, emphasizing the need to watch the environment and circumstances in which the sister missionaries work.
1985	(January) Length of service for full-time single elders restored to 2 years.
1994	New standardized clothing guidelines issued for sister missionaries.
1997	In the priesthood session of the October General Conference, President Hinckley reasserts that women should not feel pressured to serve missions.
2002	In the priesthood session of the October General Conference, President Hinckley calls for the church to "raise the bar on the worthiness and qualifications" for all missionaries.

Sources: Embry, Hanks, Kunz, and Alice Buehner, "The Communicational Functions of Wearing Apparel for Lady Missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," (Dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1982).

72. According to Embry, 113. However, the *Deseret News 2001-2002 Church Almanac* lists this event as occurring in March 1962 (see p. 535).

Antler People v. Womb People

Joann Farías

The antler people have ways of finding
The womb people's poles and knocking
Them to the ground, if only in the mind.
The womb people bare their breasts
To the antler people, if only in the mind,
To remind them that once they were suckled,
Once they were in need, helpless, at womb's mercy,
And still are, as womb is at theirs,
Who could more probably knock womb
Into darkness if they chose, and sometimes do,
Than womb could them, or would,
Womb more prone to poison than the blow.

Missions and the Rhetoric of Male Motivation

Allison G. Stimmler

I COULDN'T SLEEP. I sat at the open window and watched the occasional person walk by. The sidewalk glowed florescent orange from the street lamp above. It was quiet in Montréal's university district, and everyone else in the apartment was asleep. My companion and I were spending the night with another set of sisters far from our own area. We had traveled three hours by car from the Eastern Townships of Québec to attend a weekend sisters conference. My sleeplessness came not just because my bed was nothing but the hardwood floor and a blanket. It came because I felt alive for the first time since my mission had begun six months earlier.

I had always looked forward to my mission as a glorious time when I would meet wonderful people, teach and baptize them, and be revered by their posterity as the one who had brought them the gospel. For years, I looked forward to serving, loving, and filling my heart with the lives of other people. And although I anticipated rejection, trials, struggles, and difficulties with companions, I regarded my future mission as a time when I would fall into bed at night exhausted from the emotional but rewarding strain of helping so many people. However, I now served in the Canada Montréal Mission where, with an average of 250 missionaries—35 of us women—we were probably one of the largest missions in the world in 1977 and where baptisms among the Catholic French-speaking people were rare. For the majority of my mission, all I encountered day after day were doors opened for just a few seconds before being slammed to the sound of "Ca ne m'interesse pas!" or "On va laisser-faire!"

I considered myself successful if I could make it from zone conference to zone conference without a major breakdown due to the loneliness, isolation, rejection, and anxiety I felt on a daily basis. Teaching appointments were hard to come by. Most of the French-speaking suburban

areas where I served were sparsely populated by members, and hours of tracting door-to-door yielded one conversation that lasted more than a few minutes at best. Human interaction was scarce.

On top of all that, my mission was strict. We had rules for everything. To avoid inappropriate interaction between elders and sisters, we were strongly discouraged from having district activities on P-day. That meant that I rarely interacted with anyone other than my own companion because the next pair of sisters was in another district and too far away to spend time with. This was perhaps one of my greatest struggles—feeling completely alone and cut off from friendly human contact. Inevitably, this isolation fueled the depression and sense of failure that I fought every day to overcome .

I remember looking forward to the nightly calls from our district leader as if they were our lifeline to humanity—our only contact with a world of people who knew us, cared about us, and would speak to us. Every night he called just to make sure we were in our apartment and to perhaps collect some statistics for the day. They were brief calls, never very personal (that would have been against the rules), but every night it was a relief to know that we weren't *really* alone; we just felt alone.

Here is a typical journal entry from my mission, in which my feelings of discouragement and emptiness translate into a confused and critical examination of my faith and feelings:

> I feel like I have no faith—like I have no testimony of this gospel and what I'm doing here. Father, why do I feel this way? This near despair, and I'm not even sure why—there's nothing wrong or extremely difficult in the work. But I was frightened last night as we started working. And now I just feel sick inside—maybe I am sick.
>
> Am I supposed to pretend I feel differently than I do? Am I supposed to change how I feel? Or will God change it for me?
>
> I hope that I can find joy, peace, and meaning on my mission—I hope that I can feel the redeeming love of Christ in my life—June 17, 1997.

Given these circumstances, gender issues in general were not, at first, important to me. I had anticipated that they would be. I expected that I would have conflicts with immature nineteen-year-old elders assigned as "leaders" over me. I had expected to feel some loss at not being able to baptize my own converts or jealousy at not having even the potential to serve in leadership positions or assist the mission president. But thoughts of leading other missionaries in the daunting effort of breaking through the cold surface of Québecois culture to find, teach, and baptize the "Lord's elect" were irrelevant now as I spent my days trudging through snow from closed door to closed door.

In general, the sisters in my mission were respected. Most of the elders seemed to freely admit that we worked harder, accomplished more,

and were more effective missionaries than they were themselves. Granted, there were remnants of sexist attitudes towards women and sisters floating around the mission, like the drawing hanging on the refrigerator in my first apartment. It displayed a woman above the caption, "Remember, Elder, with every door she gets more beautiful." (I never asked my companion why she hadn't already taken that down.) The phrase, "sister pros" (short for *pros*elytizing) referred to staying home from regular missionary work to bake brownies or write cute notes to investigators. But everyone in the mission knew and admitted that elders actually did more "sister pros" than sisters did.

The time I felt the most alienated because I was a woman was in those rare but precious moments when I did have contact with other missionaries at mission conferences, zone conferences, or district meetings. These gatherings were meant to instruct and motivate us. They were meant to be oases of spirituality and nurturing in an otherwise discouraging existence, and I looked forward to them as such. But I rarely left them feeling motivated. It was six months into my mission when I attended our first sisters conference, one designed specifically for women, that I realized why our regular meetings were so unfulfilling. At standard zone conferences, the rhetoric we heard was male oriented and appealed to a masculine sense of competitiveness to encourage and inspire us.

I realize, looking back on how I felt as a missionary, that my understanding buys into stereotypes about men and women, their differing needs and styles of motivation. These generalizations may yield a distorted picture, and I feel a little embarrassed that I seem to fit so neatly into them. But that doesn't change the fact that this is how I experienced it; this is how I felt as a sister among hundreds of elders—a woman among hundreds of men.

In general, the male motivational tactics I experienced on my mission can be categorized in three rhetorical approaches: the rhetoric of numbers, the rhetoric of sports, and the rhetoric of war:

Numbers

Anyone who has served a mission knows the numbers rhetoric. Missions keep track of who's being taught, who's being baptized, who's coming to church, and even who's been contacted. In my mission, we reported how many people we had "GQed" (asked a "golden question") each week—"Have you heard of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?" "What do you know about the church. . .?" or "Would you like to know more about the church. . .?" We filled out charts that recorded how many discussions we had taught, how many people had came to church, and ideally how many people we had baptized. Then every week we called those numbers in to our district leader, who reported

them to the zone leaders, who reported them to the mission president and his assistants. It was a tedious process that reduced people to quantities and made the already impersonal process of enduring rejections almost mechanical and inhuman.

These numbers were then thrown back in our faces as a way of motivating us to achieve "better numbers." Almost every conference consisted of some elder standing up with a chart displaying our proselytizing record, urging us to meet a higher standard—that is, higher numbers. We were falling short; we weren't good enough; we weren't producing enough. The emphasis was always on the negative—*not* living up to expectations.

It seemed to me that this was a particularly male form of motivation. The elders seemed to get a charge out of it. We were told before one zone conference to prayerfully set a goal for the number of baptisms we would have in the upcoming month and to bring those goals to the conference. Of course, every set of companions said they would have at least one baptism during the month—saying anything less would have meant we had no faith. Some missionaries projected more if they were currently teaching investigators who seemed close to baptism. At the conference, we combined those goals to create district and zone goals. The results were outrageously high. Even three or four baptisms in a month in one district—in other words, in one ward—were unheard of. We averaged maybe one or two baptisms per zone in a month, and those were usually in the English- and Spanish-speaking zones. But the elders, nodded their heads, said, "Yeah, let's go for it!" and seemed encouraged by having this impossible-to-reach number as a goal to work towards.

These outrageous goals did nothing, however, but discourage me. I would look at those numbers, think over the reality of my past months of proselytizing, and get sick to my stomach. I wondered how I was supposed to change the fact that no one would open the door to us, that the only members in our area were an 80-year old woman and an inactive Spanish-speaking family, and that all creative efforts to "find" investigators (like setting up street displays or arranging service) had been beaten down by the district leader or any public official we'd approached. The conclusion I always came to was that I didn't have enough faith. If they wanted us to achieve those numbers—and I didn't feel we could do it—then the problem was within me, my faith, or my work patterns. I would leave zone conferences upset with myself for being so faithless rather than motivated or feeling capable of achieving the impossible.

Sports

The rhetoric of sports probably didn't discourage me as much as analyzing numbers, but neither did it do much to motivate me. This rhetorical approach relates all things to sports: life is like a football or basket-

ball game. Heavenly Father is like our coach. Investigators are the goals or touchdowns or baskets or whatever. The elders had a way of "pumping" each other up to work and progress by approaching missionary work like a game. District meetings felt like pep-talks in the locker room before going out onto the field or court. The elders would get riled up, punch their fists into their hands, and yell, "Yeah! We can do this! We're gonna go get 'em!" and then rush back out onto the "field" to "win."

This sports rhetoric was evident in the pseudo-"huddles" we held, which ended with all hands piled on top of each other in the middle of the circle and then released into the air with a shout of "1-2-3 Baptize!" or "1-2-3 Convert!" I would walk out of the chapel with my feet dragging. I didn't feel part of a team. When the meetings were over, it was back to just my companion and me. I didn't feel that my investigators were touchdowns or baskets; they were people who couldn't be quantified or "won."

War

And then there's the rhetoric of war. Missions are like great military conflicts; we're the army going out to fight a battle, and the people out there, if not the enemy themselves, at least are in the grasp of the enemy. This rhetoric isn't unique to missions and missionaries. It's found throughout the scriptures and in the titles of hymns such as, "Behold! A Royal Army," "Up, Awake, Ye Defenders of Zion," "Onward, Christian Soldiers," "Hope of Israel, Zion's Army," and "Like Ten Thousand Legions Marching." A hymn we sang frequently in my mission was "We Are All Enlisted," which is filled with overt references to war and armies:

> We are all *enlisted* till the *conflict* is o'er;
> Happy are we! Happy are we!
> *Soldiers* in the *army*, there's a bright crown in store;
> We shall *win* and wear it by and by.
> Haste to the *battle* quick to the *field*.
> Truth is our *helmet*, *buckler*, and *shield*.
> Stand by our colors; proudly they wave!
> We're joyfully, joyfully *marching* to our home.

This image of missionaries as soldiers in an army was recently publicized in the film *God's Army*. The poster for the movie displays elders and a sister standing in formation with serious looks of determined resolve as if they are ready to go off to battle.

The idea within this rhetoric that astonished me the most was the thought that we, as missionaries, were working to condemn people. We were giving them the opportunity to accept or reject the gospel so that

the Lord would be justified in condemning them if they didn't listen to us—as if our six-second presence on their doorstep were the determining factor between their salvation and damnation. Elders cited scriptures like D&C 84:94–95 to support this idea: "Search diligently and spare not; and wo unto that house, or that village or city that rejecteth you, or your words, or your testimony concerning me." I think the popularity of this rhetorical argument comes from our being rejected so much ourselves as missionaries. A few elders (and I'll grant that this wasn't the majority) seemed to feel vindicated by such rhetoric. Somehow their own rejection seemed more tolerable if they believed they had the power to condemn the people who treated them so badly.

This then was the motivational culture of my mission. These were the arguments and inspirational tools I encountered whenever I met with other missionaries to talk about missionary work. I don't think that I recognized at the time why I felt conflicted about these approaches. In fact, these paradigms were so prevalent that they permeated my own thinking and journal writing. Another of my journal entries shocks me now:

> I realized this morning that the people here are not our enemy—yes, I must admit I feel like they are the enemy often—most of the time. But they're not. They are our allies—our victimized allies. Satan is the enemy and he is their enemy too. We're here to rescue them from this common enemy. But they treat *us* like the enemy and I started reacting as such.—July 1, 1997

Despite being convinced by and taking meticulous notes on these ideas in our meetings, I always felt discouraged and let down when I left the other missionaries. And yet I consistently looked forward to being at all of our meetings. Actually, I *lived* for them and measured the passing days by them because I perceived them as one of my only sources of encouragement and motivation. Without district, zone, and mission conferences, I lived in relative isolation, without family or friends besides my companion, who was most likely struggling as I was. I *needed* the support I thought I could get from other missionaries. In addition, conferences were a break from the routine, a necessary disruption in the almost meaningless cycle of days.

I'm not sure where the pervasive male rhetoric came from exactly. I don't think it was or is unique to my mission. I heard the same motivational tactics in the MTC from branch presidents, instructors, and visiting general authorities. Perhaps it is established there and carried into the field with the elders. More likely, it has roots even further back, in Deacon's quorums and Young Men's programs. Perhaps it just comes from the elders themselves and the male culture they create as a group. A rhetoric that ignores the needs of sisters probably isn't a result of delib-

erate decisions on the part of mission presidents, assistants-to-the-president, zone leaders, and district leaders. Perhaps it is just the natural result of a system made up of hundreds of men working together at something difficult and striving to help each other succeed in a way that works for them.

And perhaps missions need to be that way. Unless the church includes women in its mandatory call to labor as missionaries, I suppose missions might as well be set up for men. The conclusion I came to while serving—which represents a complete reversal from my beliefs before my mission—is simply that not all women should serve missions. I think that serving a mission needs to be a personal and prayerful decision for a woman because she won't be "coddled"—or maybe even noticed—when she gets out into the field. There were many times during my eighteen months as a missionary when the only thing sustaining me was knowing that I had decided to be there, that I felt I was *supposed* to be there. I'm not sure I would have lasted without that personal sense of commitment.

Despite the prevalence of this male rhetoric, I don't think that it was a direct result of my mission president's approach to leadership. I had, and still have, great respect for him. When he addressed us in conferences, he focused on doctrine and principles. He started every talk with, "I want to discuss a principle with you," and proceeded to illuminate the basics of the gospel in a thoughtful, scriptural way. I loved listening to him. In interviews, he was caring, personable, and completely attuned to our individual needs. I remember hearing him ask, "How are you doing?" as I walked into one of my interviews with him.

"Not so well," I responded.

"I know. I've been reading your letters," he said and continued to assure me that my work was acceptable and I was doing all I could despite the failure I was feeling. It seemed that he was aware of the sisters and tried to provide for us as best he could. The most effective thing he did for us was to hold a sisters' conference each year, at which the approach to motivation stood in extreme contrast to what we heard in our regular missionary gatherings.

The main speaker at that first sisters conference six months into my mission was a professional psychologist, who was a member and worked for the church. I know that several of the sister missionaries had met or were meeting with her one-on-one at our mission president's recommendation. My companion at the time—a seasoned missionary who had struggled with depression her entire mission—was one of them. The more companions I served with, the more I realized that depression and serious feelings of discouragement were common among the sisters even though we rarely talked about them publicly. Nothing we heard in our regular conferences addressed these issues.

The sisters conference speaker talked to us honestly about how we

were feeling. She discussed the nature of depression and how mentally and emotionally to deal with it. She allowed us to admit that we were discouraged or that we didn't always feel love and charity for the rude people behind the slammed doors. Within the rhetoric we were used to hearing, discouragement indicated a lack of faith, and not loving the people who rejected us meant that we weren't being "Christ like." Instead of telling us to feel only "positive" emotions, this sister told us that there were no negative emotions, that what mattered was how we handled our emotions. Even love, she said, can be handled inappropriately.

And then she let us talk. She let us talk to her; she let us talk to each other. It was the first time I felt free to work through months of frustrations and anxieties. It was incredibly healing. I remember feeling guilty and almost unwilling to release what was inside of me at first because my real feelings would give me away; they would betray me as the frightened, insecure, lonely, and demoralized woman I was, rather than the confident, faithful, strong sister I felt I was supposed to be. But the comfort of honestly confiding in someone was worth far more to me at that point than maintaining a superhuman image. And what made this possible was the rhetorical space sisters conference gave us to be ourselves, space in which it was safe to be weak and safe to admit that we were weak.

When the conference was over, I felt motivated. I wanted to go out and convert the world. The conference had served to validate me and my efforts, no matter how pathetic my numbers were. I remember very little of what was said about missionary work directly. And yet, the impact of that conference on my effectiveness as a missionary was tremendous, especially compared to the impact of our regular conferences. I felt capable and empowered rather than discouraged and worthless.

The two sisters conferences I attended during my sixteen months in the field were among the few times I actually felt supported and strengthened as a missionary. Sitting in zone conferences every month, surrounded by seventy or eighty young men, and listening to them motivate and inspire each other never provided me with the sustenance that all missionaries need to keep going. I wonder if it really worked for the elders. It appeared to. But perhaps it also appeared to work for us. Perhaps the other sisters and I looked as if we were each just one of the guys, feeling just as motivated and inspired as the elders.

Perhaps we appeared that way because they never saw our reaction to the words that came from women instead of from men.

Here is my reaction to that first sisters' conference, written in my journal that sleepless night six months into my mission:

Sisters Conference: Inspiring, wonderful, beautiful, bonding—these trite and cheesy adjectives don't do it justice! The APs sitting on the side, looking on at the foreign, perhaps strange pattern of womanhood—the tears and laughter that mean the same thing, come from the same things—the truth about who we are and why we're here—as missionaries, as women, as human beings. The instruction was gently challenging—motivating and calm—I'm excited to do the work. "Begin to believe"—I can *choose* to start believing even though I haven't believed in the past. Freedom—freedom to really be myself in front of these women and friends.—July 29, 1997

You Owe Me

Joann Farías

There's a foul wind blowing in from ten o'clock
Saying, *You owe me*. I check my balance books,
And they don't look off, but the wind insists,
You owe me. What? I ask. *You abandoned me*.
That was twenty years ago. *You did not obey*.
He had warned me ahead of time that in the temple
They ask you to obey, and said, *If you marry me,*
I won't enforce it. So we made our crooked deal,
And he got everything his way without ever once
Having to bring his arm to the square, until I left.
You did not obey. But we had a deal, I reply.
I should have thought, but didn't, at the time,
If he wasn't square with God, he wouldn't be
Square with me. And vice versa,
He should have thought, but didn't.

Sisterhaters

Teresa P. Carr

I AM, AND PROBABLY ALWAYS WILL BE, a sisterhater. In fact, many church members are sisterhaters without even realizing it. A sisterhater is, simply put, someone who can't abide sister missionaries.

As a sister in Zion, being an active sisterhater has been my dirty little secret for as long as I can remember. In my younger years, I would sit through sacrament meeting and look at those frumpy sister missionaries on the stand, and I knew why they were sister missionaries. I mean, who would want to marry a girl with unkempt, out-of-style hair and long frumpy skirts that accentuated the twenty pounds she needed to lose? I felt that such eyesores *should* be sent away. Perhaps the year-and-a-half of spiritual growth would increase their appeal, so at least the ugly guys would have someone to marry. I was definitely relieved that my brothers were the ones required to go on missions and that, due to my gender, I wasn't. Nothing sounded worse than having to interact with those shapeless masses of womanhood on a daily basis.

With a small sense of loyalty toward my gender, I hoped that when I "grew up," I would suddenly realize the shallowness of my thoughts and begin to appreciate the role of sister missionaries in the work of the Lord. But this did not happen.

As I began dating, my sisterhating became more sophisticated and turned into a valuable tool. Missionary experiences were a common topic of conversation among male returned missionaries. With understanding in my eyes, I would listen to numerous anecdotes about the hard working elders and the slacking sisters. I would quickly reassure each of my dates that I would never stoop to the position of "sister missionary." Quick to build on common beliefs, we would then sister-bash together at any opportunity.

Just before my twenty-first birthday, I was dating an avid sisterhater. As I was still unmarried with no proposal evident on the horizon, I decided that a threat of going on a mission would nudge my "sister"-phobic boyfriend enough to make him pop the question. Before taking the gamble, however, I decided to say a little prayer to add weight to my

threat. The prayer went something like this, "I really, really, *really* want to marry Burt, and I think that it is the right thing to do, but since I'm almost twenty-one years old and he still hasn't asked the question. . .do you think I should go on a mission?" Well, I quickly learned not to ask the Lord a question if I didn't want to hear the answer. Throughout that entire day I felt like Jonah running from the Lord. "Yes!" he was telling me emphatically, "You need to serve a mission!"

Hhhmmmmpphhh! This was not what I was looking for, so I spent the next couple of days trying to understand why the Lord would wish something so horrible on his favorite little girl. Then with sudden inspiration—or desperation—I saw the Lord's plan. The only reason I was told to go on a mission was so that I could, with forthrightness and honesty, manipulate Burt into asking me to marry him. Of course! It was brilliant, flawless! No wonder the Lord is in charge! Burt was a fervent sisterhater; I knew my caring boyfriend would never let me commit such social suicide. That night I dressed with extreme care: I chose my cutest little short skirt—definitely not garment length—and got my hair trimmed and highlighted. I was ready for the proposal.

After a few kisses and appetizers, I mentioned to Burt that I was going to turn in my mission papers. But rather than looking stressed or worried, Burt actually looked relieved. And things quickly went downhill. Suddenly a big proponent of the value of a mission, he told me that he strongly supported my decision. He was also quick to let me know he couldn't promise to be around when I got back. My stomach sank. Things were definitely not going according to the Lord's plan. We finished the evening by picking up the mission papers and filling them out together. As I watched him do the writing for me and tell his roommates the "good" news, I knew I was in deep trouble. Suddenly I, the biggest, most willing sisterhater in the world, found myself trapped by my own guile into going on a mission.

In an effort to mask my sisterhating, I bravely went to my temple preparation classes and tried not to think about the cute tank tops and shorts I would have to leave behind. It may not surprise you that I didn't get a lot of support from my male friends. "OOOoooooo! Teresa's taking a step down," they said, or "Better practice making cookies for the elders," or, a personal favorite, "Don't go on a mission! If you're that desperate, I'll marry you!" Unfortunately, that last one wasn't uttered by the love of my life. Pride sent me on my mission. . .along with a small hope that I would receive a proposal by mail.

Now I have to confess that my sisterhating did not end with my entrance into the mission field. It was common practice for the elders to gather and mock the sister missionaries. And although I had folded, come on a mission, and become one of the mockees, I was always more than willing to sit with the elders and spend a ward picnic venting frus-

trations about the sisters. I could see and confirm that sisters were taking up valuable apartment space for the real servants of the Lord. The belief I had most in common with those boys in ill-fitting suits was a conviction about how horrible sister missionaries could be. I would often instigate such discussions by sharing the more intimate details of slacking among sisters. It was in those few glorious moments of gossip with the elders that I was able to find the person I had lost in all the extra folds and layers of garments and ankle-length skirts.

Such comfort was short-lived. Two elders soon made clear to me that I'd been making common cause with an enemy. Calmly they described for me the three types of sisters who serve missions and, to my horror, lumped me into the mix along with the rest. There are, they explained, the baking sister, the unmarriageable sister, and the priesthood-craving sister.

The baking sister is the least scorned because the elders benefit most from her talents. According to these elders, the one thing sisters are truly good for is baking brownies for the elders and their investigators. (Obviously, keeping a portion for themselves—thus, reaping the extra twenty pounds most "sisters" need to lose.) At least the bakers stayed out of the elders' way and let them do the real work.

The unmarriageable sister has failed to receive a proposal during her freshman or sophomore year at college, so she goes on a mission to meet the most eligible bachelors where there is little competition from other girls. This sister spends most of her time flirting with the elders, using the spirit to reel in an unsuspecting mark. Often a transfer follows any success, but steamy letters are secretly exchanged at zone conferences to keep the passion alive.

The priesthood-craving sister is the curse of the zone. This sister spends most of her time telling the elders how best to run a district, zone, or branch. Any mistakes made by the elders are immediately noted and shared in her weekly letters to the mission president. The threatened elders immediately detect that any such sister is lobbying for women to receive the priesthood.

Those were the categories. The definitive set. Not much of a baker myself, and certain of proposals in my future, I realized that those elders had dumped me into the category of priesthood-craver. Couldn't they see I had never wanted the administrative jobs and titles elders fight for? I just wanted to run circles around every missionary in the country. I wanted everyone to see what a "good" sister could do. I wanted to show them there were some of us who hadn't come on missions to get Betty Crocker Awards, that some of us would not let our companions even turn on the oven, and that we went out every day and knocked on doors to share the message of hope and love. There were a few of us who worked so hard we would come home exhausted to the point of tears. I

was depressed to think there could be so many bakers staying in their apartments making cookies, or so many unmarriageables dreaming up excuses to have elders over for a blessing and dinner.

I made a resolve and assigned myself the task of reforming the mob mindset against sister missionaries. To do that, I put myself in charge of whipping the sister missionaries into shape. I would call sisters who, I had heard, were making too many cookies and tell them to get *up* and *out* of the apartment and *on* with the work! Luckily, every companion I had was ready to work hard, and we "returned with honor" at the end of each day, knowing we had tracted until we couldn't lift our arms to knock another door. At some point during my condescending phone calls to other sisters in the mission, I recognized that, in fact, we were all working hard in our different ways. We were all on missions because we felt that, love it or not, we had been called to be servants of the Lord. I gave up reforming the sisters to get back to my own calling. And the truth is that such a calling has its price: My hairstylist was my companion, who used an old pair of scissors we found under the couch; my favorite outfit, one I wore about three times a week, consisted of a long brown skirt with an elastic waist, a white t-shirt, and brown Doc Martins worn with white socks. I ended my mission in those clothes. I keep them even now to remind me of my investment in a work of such importance that nothing else mattered.

Returning home at the end of my mission, I clung to the memory of working for a greater good as I stepped off the plane and saw an all too familiar look in my little sister's eyes. I knew I looked exactly like those sister missionaries who had disgusted me for so many years. My little sister had just graduated from high school, which put her directly at the hub of fashion, and before I had been home twenty-four hours, she had me in a new outfit (one of her cast-offs) and dragged me on a trip to overhaul my hair. When I looked in the mirror, I was once again the sassy cute thing I had once been. Before the end of my homecoming reception, I had a date for the next day with an elder from my mission. Oh, the sweet taste of vindication! For a year-and-a-half I had been a genderless cookie-cutter sister missionary, and now suddenly, with a change of clothes and hair, I was someone to flirt with, someone to ask out.

On that first date I realized my dating rhetoric had changed significantly. Rather than obliging and confirming how useless sister missionaries were, I argued for their effectiveness. My dates thereafter ended with a missionary handshake rather than a steamy embrace. This soon became a concern in the singles ward I attended, and in an effort to help me with my transition into "normal" life and reduce the number of eternal companions I seemed to be casting aside, roommates and friends would whisper in my ear which guys were manifest sisterhaters, advising me to keep the fact that I'd served a mission to myself. I'm afraid I

wasn't very amenable to advice. Most of my dates would consist of comparing missions, baptisms, and the roles of sister missionaries. It definitely kept conversation lively.

And still does. Eventually, I fell in love with—and married—a sisterhater. In my defense, Dave's tactics took me off guard. Missionary work never even came up in our conversations. We played roller hockey rather than attending ward prayer; we went for hikes rather than walks past the temple; we discussed current events rather than proselyting styles. When, after a couple of months, it did come up that I had served a mission, he told me he thought it was great. He conceded he'd hated the sisters in his mission, but had to admit, in the same tactical way perhaps that I had once accepted a mission call, that all sisters weren't bad and that they certainly couldn't all be lumped into just three categories.

So why am I still a sisterhater? Perhaps it's because my hair is a little too cute and my clothes a little too stylish. Or maybe it's because I am jealous that I am no longer the object of so much disdain. Or maybe I just loved being on my mission. To tell you the truth, I miss the antagonism just a little bit. And I am very, very proud to say that not once did I bake anything for anyone.

Night Work Near Escalante

Dixie Partridge

After dawn we hike through fine rain,
but the light is good, only slight
cellophane distortion as we look through
at trees and stream, box canyon walls
soft with shrubbery.
Except for footfall, water
is the only sound—the *shhh*
of droplets on leaves, Calf Creek
where it narrows over rock,
widens and silks out.

Stubs of tree trunks dot the shore,
dark and old, then we notice fresh ones—
still pale with the sap life of wood—
move closer to the creek
and find beaver stacks along the way:
three pools below their dams
before we reach the falls.
We see no animals,
but their lodges and tunnels underwater
are a presence
in a splendid privacy.

A fresh-stripped tree lies across
the trail, and the sound of its falling,
the hidden waiting of beaver for a sense
that all's clear, their gnawing,
seem only to have occurred
in slow-motion silence—
long before our coming and while we were
near, ongoing, veiled
beyond night. . .the utterance of the current
in some past/future tense
we try to render our own.

Junior Companion

Holly Welker

MORMON MISSIONARIES IN TAIWAN weren't hard to spot, not only because of those white shirts and name tags. First of all, they were usually of European descent, and those white faces became luridly conspicuous among a group of brown people. Secondly, two thirds of the missionaries in our mission were male, and American men often towered over Chinese men. My first area as a missionary was in Tainan, a small city in southern Taiwan, and I arrived there in August of 1985. When I got off the train that first day, my welcoming committee was the most obvious sight at the station: a group of young, clean-cut, white men surrounding the single solitary sister who was to be my first on-island companion and trainer, Sister Bingley.

At the end of a week occupied with adjusting to a foreign country and settling into life as a proselyting missionary, I got a visit from my mission president, who wanted to check on me. "I'm OK," I told President Gardiner. "I'm finally starting to believe that I *live* here, that I'm not just visiting, since I keep waking up in the same bed and sitting at the same desk. And I like being here so much better than the MTC. I feel like you trust us here. I never felt that way in the MTC."

"I trust people as long as they give me no reason not to," he said. "It's easier. I don't have time to be suspicious of people."

"That makes sense to me," I said. "I'm not very suspicious myself."

"What about the language?" he asked. "How are you getting along with Chinese?"

"Oh, Chinese," I said. "It's the bane of my existence. I don't know how I'm ever going to learn enough to teach in that language. It's *so* hard."

President Gardiner laughed. "Yes, it is. But you'll do fine. I have to say, if that's your biggest problem, then you're doing very well. To be honest, you're getting along better than I expected."

I wrinkled my nose. "I don't know whether to be flattered that I'm adjusting so well, or disappointed that you thought I wouldn't cope."

"It's not that," he said. "It's hard. It's a very different culture, and

culture shock can be tough, even for people who are glad to be here. And being a missionary isn't easy, either."

But many things facilitated my adjustment to missionary life and Taiwan. For one thing, Sister Bingley and her previous companion had built a solid investigator pool; the work was going well. Bingley and I were lucky because we had a family in our investigator pool—it was always better to teach families because they could be socialized into the church as a unit and encourage one another to stay active, so their retention rate was higher. There was also the fact that families provided potential priesthood holders, something the church desperately needed in Taiwan. Most of the people joining the church in Taiwan at that time were women, who couldn't hold the priesthood and often didn't earn much money and so didn't pay as much tithing as men, all of which made them less desirable as members. Sisters could not teach single men, and elders could not teach single women, but because women joined the church more readily than men, sisters usually had more work and more baptisms. There might have been a little resentment over that behind the fact that a young woman who joined the church was known, somewhat dismissively, as a "*syaujye* baptism." (*Syaujye* means Miss.) Still, it was at least a baptism, and sisters' higher success rate might have been why both of my mission presidents wanted Salt Lake to send a higher percentage of sister missionaries.

Another element helping my adjustment to missionary life was the fact that I liked not only Sister Bingley, but the elders in my district. They were good-natured, decent young men, even if they weren't the most enlightened guys I'd met. Sister Bingley felt fairly maternal towards them; she was always insisting we make cookies for them if they had a bad day. Occasionally the elders would reciprocate. One Sunday they served us dinner. Since we weren't allowed to go into their apartment, we sat outside their house and ate the teriyaki meatballs Elder George, our district leader, had made. It was a nice change of events when they cooked for us, we all thought, but in real life women cooked dinner for men—that was just how it worked. Furthermore, as the elders explained that day, marriage worked exactly the way that missionary companionships did, with a senior companion and a junior companion, and the junior companions were always the women.

"That's crap," I said. "It's not the same. With missionaries, you're not stuck with one companion your whole life, and you're not a senior or a junior companion your entire life, either; you start out as a junior companion, but eventually you get to be in charge and make some decisions. I don't think women need to be junior companions, once they get married, for the rest of their lives."

"Well, it's not exactly like that, but someone has to be in charge," said Elder Cole.

"No, someone doesn't have to be in charge," I said. "It seems to me that marriage could be a partnership, where people make decisions together, instead of one person deciding for both of them."

"I like that idea," Sister Bingley said.

"But that's not how God set it up," Elder George said. "Don't you see? Someone has to be in charge, and it has to be the priesthood holder. That's how God wants it to work."

"No. Look, with junior and senior companions you've got someone who's been here longer, and that's supposedly why they're in charge of making decisions and leading discussions: because they have more experience. But that's not always true in the world. Men and women have different levels of experience, about different things."

"Sister Welker, if God doesn't want someone to be in charge, why did he give men the priesthood?" one of the elders demanded.

"Hell if I know," I leaned back in my chair and looked at the sky. "If that's true. . .if that's true. . .This whole junior-senior companion business is such a gross analogy. The whole thing, the sexism and the 'male domination by god-given right' business just makes me so hopeless."

"Sister Welker does get pretty worked up about things, doesn't she," Sister Bingley said. "But I don't want to be a junior companion my whole life either."

"Well, Sister Welker," Elder George said, "at least we can tell you think about these things."

In order to introduce all his missionaries to the revised discussions implemented church-wide in 1985, President Gardiner planned a three-day mission conference, chartering buses to carry us all to a resort at the southern tip of the island. The two missions in Taiwan were among the last to switch to the new discussions because it took so long to translate them into Chinese. It was the first time since the MTC that I'd been in a large group of missionaries; it was jarring to be one out of 130, and although I enjoyed the conference, I was relieved when it ended.

On the bus ride back to our area, Sister Bingley and I sat in front of Elder George and one of his friends, Elder Lavender, who only had a few weeks left. Elder George was teasing him about dating and marriage, and said something, loudly enough that I could hear, about "finding a nice submissive wife." I turned to scowl at him; he raised his eyebrows and grinned.

"Are you trying to make me mad again?" I asked.

"Sister Welker's a *feminist*," Elder George said to Elder Lavender.

"So what if I am?"

Elder Lavender actually gasped. "A feminist? So you hate men?"

I sighed. "No, I don't hate men. That's not what feminism means, any more than a black person fighting for civil rights necessarily hates all

white people. It just means that I recognize that sexism has certain negative consequences in the world."

Elder Lavender was not reassured. "But we know that God made men and women different for a reason. . . ."

"How God set things up and how people implement what he set up are different things," I said. "I don't believe that God wants men to make all the decisions and women to acquiesce."

"What does *acquiesce* mean?" asked the elder across the aisle from Elder George.

"It means go along with."

"Well," Elder George said, "there are some things that I think men *should* be in charge of. For instance, I don't know if I'll let my wife have a checkbook."

I nearly fell off my seat. "You don't know if you'll *let* her?"

"My mom doesn't have a checkbook."

"How does she go shopping? Who buys the groceries in your family?"

"Well, she does. At the beginning of every month, my dad gives her two checks. But he doesn't give her more because she might bounce one."

"What if she needs to buy something else?"

"Oh, he'll give her another check if there's an emergency. And he lets her have a credit card."

"Wow, how magnanimous of him," I said.

"I don't think he's doing her a favor," Sister Bingley said. "What if he leaves her? Or dies? Then she doesn't know how to balance a checkbook, and there's no one to help her do it."

"She could find someone to help her," Elder George said.

"Maybe she could and maybe she couldn't," I said, "but wouldn't it be easier if she just knew how to do it herself in the first place?"

"Look, marriage is like companionships: there's a junior and a sen. . .," another elder began.

Sister Bingley and I exchanged a look. "Yeah, yeah, yeah," I said. "I've heard this. But the whole point of junior and senior companions is that there's one companion who's more competent, more experienced, and better equipped to make decisions and lead discussions simply by virtue of having been here longer. That's not true in real life. I mean, surely, at some point in your life, you've met a stupid *old* person? Have you ever met a couple where the wife is older than the husband? Who should be senior companion in that case?"

"But it's the man who. . .," the elder started.

"Look," I interrupted, "are you telling me that I'm less competent, less intelligent and less well equipped to make decisions than you are, just because I'm a woman? I mean, come on, I'm one of those smart

chicks. Always have been. Ultra competent, gets good grades, very organized, all that crap. Are you telling me I should become stupid, just so I can achieve a traditional Mormon marriage? Women have been taking care of themselves *and others* in all kinds of ways for centuries, and I think the church should acknowledge that."

"But it's actually good for women not to have to make decisions," said an elder who'd come up from the back of the bus. "They need to be relieved of those responsibilities because they need to devote their time to bearing and raising children."

"Oh, so because I have a uterus, I'm perfectly well-equipped to make decisions for someone who has virtually no autonomy—an infant—but even as an adult I can't be trusted to make decisions for *myself*? You have to see that that's ludicrous."

"What's *ludicrous* mean?" asked the elder who didn't know *acquiesce*.

"It means ridiculous."

"I don't think it's ridiculous," Elder Lavender said.

"Well, I do. And I don't intend to be a docile wife. . . ."

"What's *docile*?"

"It means submissive. Anyway. I want someone who has enough intelligence and backbone that he doesn't *need* a docile wife."

"Well, anyone who would marry you would have to be pretty brave," someone said.

"Thank God for that," I said.

"We have to deal with the practicalities of life," Sister Bingley said. "One of my friends is dealing with her parents' divorce, and it's ugly. They've been married for 30 years, and the wife has never worked outside the house or dealt with money at all. She can't balance a checkbook, and there *aren't* that many people around willing to help her. It's really sad."

"Why are they getting a divorce?" one of the elders asked.

"He fell in love with his secretary."

"Oh, so it's because he's being unrighteous," one of the elders said with satisfaction. "So if he was just righteous, everything would be okay and would work like it's supposed to."

"Maybe," Sister Bingley said. "But do you always know when you get married that your husband will stay righteous? I mean, you might as well be prepared to take care of yourself."

"Well," said an elder from the back, "you know, right, that women just are more righteous than men. And men have the priesthood and women don't because men have to learn to accept responsibility and how to be in charge and still be righteous. Women don't need it because they already understand responsibility and righteousness."

"Wow," I said. "I'll agree that a lot of men don't seem to handle responsibility or power all that well. But the situation you're talking about

is absurd, where you've got one developmentally advanced person taking orders from one developmentally delayed person. It's like some kindergartner telling his teacher, 'Okay, now we'll to go to the zoo, and then we'll eat chocolate, and then you'll take me to the store and buy me lots of toys, and there's no way I'm spending any time learning to count or say the alphabet.' The kid doesn't learn what he needs to know, and the teacher has to be bored and frustrated out of her mind."

"Well, at least that gives you guys an idea what it's like to deal with DL's sometimes," Sister Bingley said, laughing.

Elder George laughed too. "It doesn't matter. You'll both learn to deal with things when you get to the celestial kingdom and your husbands have 15 other wives."

"Oh great," I said. "Is that the best you can do? Cop to polygamy as a way to end an argument about gender?"

"I'm not convinced that we'll all have to practice polygamy," Sister Bingley said.

One of the elders from the back of the bus—a dozen elders (only elders; the few other sisters on the bus remained involved in their own conversations) had clustered around us, listening to me and Sister Bingley argue with Elder George—interjected, "Well, if you read Doctrine and Covenants Section 132, it says. . ."

"Yeah, I know," I sighed. "Why do elders always quote scriptures to us, as if we don't know them ourselves? 'If a man have 10 virgins given to him, he cannot commit adultery, for they are his.'[1] I have polygamists in nearly every branch of my family, so you don't have to tell me that people really did it and sometimes it worked well. But why did it work? Polygamy seems like it's all about men being in charge of a lot of women, but it actually gave women a lot of autonomy. Autonomy is, you know, being able to do stuff on your own," I said, noticing that the elder who'd asked me to define the other words looked perplexed. "For instance: the first woman elected to serve in a state senate was a plural wife in Utah.[2] Women often pooled their resources and shared labor. There's a story of wives stuck out in the middle of nowhere, without a doctor around, so they pooled their money and sent the smartest one off to medical school in Chicago, and the other wives took care of her kids while she was gone."

"I've never heard of that," Sister Bingley said.

"I'm not all that thrilled about the idea of polygamy," I said, "but it's interesting to know that women were able to make it work for them in

1. See D&C 132:61-62.

2. Martha Hughes Cannon, the Democratic candidate, elected in 1895. Her defeated opponents included her own husband.

certain ways. And you know, it's not like it did anything to create a lot of sympathy for fathers. I mean, Dad shows up, he spends a week sleeping with Mom, and then he disappears for a few months. There's always that story about some man who pats a kid on the head and says, 'Who's little boy are you?' and the little boy says, 'I'm yours, Daddy.' Is that the kind of father YOU want to be?"

Elder George and Elder Lavender looked at each other, grinned and shrugged. "If that's what the Lord wants me to do, I'll do it," Elder George said, with a mixture of coyness and conviction.

"Me too," said Elder Lavender, with more conviction than coyness.

"Gee, it's nice to know I'm surrounded by men so willing to exercise their priesthood in righteousness," I said dryly. "Anyway, you're still copping out. You know what I'm saying makes more sense than what you've said."

"That's not true. What we've said makes a lot of sense too," interjected one of the elders from the back. I only rolled my eyes.

Anxious to prove that they weren't mad at us for disagreeing with them, the elders invited us to stop for ice cream when we finally got back to Tainan. The fact that we had stronger arguments, a more logical and consistent position, didn't matter: doctrine was on their side. I was glad merely that Sister Bingley and I had managed to make some of them think about questions such as whether or not to *let* their wives have a checkbook. But I still felt sorry for the women who would eventually marry them.

The Right Place

Sally Stratford

"But believing that it might become a healthy place
by the blessing of heaven to the saints,
and no more eligible place presenting itself,
I considered it wisdom to make an attempt to build up a city."
—Joseph Smith

Not one has made it.
Trout launch out of Snake Creek,
flipping through the air,
vaulting up the waterfall,
falling back into the foam.
I've been watching them for an hour.
It's November and the leaves
are dissolving on the ground.

Late tonight, one will make it.
She'll burst out of the water,
the moonlight leaking through the trees
catching her in the air, a flash of silvery skin.
She'll struggle up to the right place.
To clear water, gravel, and oxygen.
Dig a pocket and drop her eggs,
a spill of beads.

Why I Didn't Serve a Mission

Mary Ellen Robertson

I TURNED 21 THE SUMMER OF 1989 before my junior year at BYU. The missionary I'd written to had come home, and we had gone our separate ways. I started fall semester with no boyfriend, no engagement ring, and no marital prospects. Naturally, everyone assumed I would go on a mission.

True, I appeared a likely candidate. I thought about going on a mission often. At BYU, if it didn't occur to *you*, it occurred to others who offered ceaseless advice on the subject. I had a reasonably strong testimony. I was a capable Sunday School teacher. I was familiar with gospel subjects and scripture—especially the Bible after having attended a Christian school for six years. I had a flair for the dramatic, which might have come in handy for street contacting, door approaches, and comic relief for beleaguered companions. I had two years of high school Spanish. I had survived the transition from dorms to apartment living, learning to cook, clean up after myself, and negotiate living with three other women. I liked to travel. Why not put in my papers?

I prayed and got my answer. No. Not a thunderous NO—more like a still, small no. It surprised me. Hadn't I been pointed in this direction since singing "I hope they call me on a mission" in Primary? Why would God *not* want me to serve a mission? Was this a vote of no confidence, or did the Almighty have something else in mind for me?

My answer made short work of my more pragmatic concerns about missionary service: I wouldn't have to get up early or live under a regimented time schedule. I wouldn't have to wear dresses, hose, and heels daily or figure out how to ride a bike wearing a skirt. I wouldn't have to suspend my education or figure out how to pay for a mission. I wouldn't have to pit my feminist sensibilities against mission politics or church policies. I wouldn't have to cut myself off from the world—an unrealistic notion, given my journalistic training. Still, my personal concerns didn't change the fact that God had weighed in against the idea of my being a missionary. Nor did I feel called to serve a mission the way some of my peers did.

Not everyone understood this. Thankfully, I didn't get much pressure from my family—my mom and her friends concurred that I'd probably be a good missionary, but didn't press the point. The hard sell came from some of the guys who had been in a freshman orientation group I'd led. Two years later, when they were freshly minted RMs, we had a reunion before school started. The guys encouraged me—some more vigorously than others—to put in my papers and go. It would be the best experience of my life, they assured me. I murmured something noncommittal in return, reluctant to own up to or to explain my answer.

The following year, I got a taste of missionary zeal thanks to my summer internship at *The New Era*. The magazine sent me on assignment to Mesa, Arizona, to do a story on the youth guide program at the temple. I spent the weekend attending meetings, observing the youth guides on the job, and interviewing the guides about their experiences in the program. Many were glad they were getting practice teaching principles of the gospel as a stepping-stone to becoming full-time missionaries.

One experience during my visit stood out: after dinner, I went back to the temple grounds to visit the guides who were on duty that night. A monsoon had blown in, so it seemed unlikely anyone would drop by the temple for an outdoor garden tour. One of the young women had "set a date" that night to get a referral from someone she'd taken on a tour of the grounds. In spite of the weather—which was significantly calmer at the temple than elsewhere in the city—a young man appeared at the Visitor's Center and asked to go on a tour. I joined the group at the last stop just as Emily was bearing her testimony and inviting the young man to talk to the missionaries. He agreed and filled out a referral card before he left. The rest of us exploded into hugging and weeping and congratulating—a moment I've never been able to find adequate words to describe. I felt privileged to witness Emily's heartfelt testimony and the young man's receptiveness and desire to know more. Was this the kind of burning bosom experience missionaries had all the time?

The answer is probably no; I acknowledge that I romanticize the missionary experience. Like people who read about other countries but don't travel there themselves, I have a distorted picture of what a mission is actually like. In my mission fantasy, teaching moments and epiphanies happen to potential converts regularly, golden contacts never tarnish, and good, honest, truth-seeking people find the missionaries and vice versa.

In between, there's a lot of hard work, early morning hours, study time, stats to keep up with, competition with other missionaries, mismatched companionships, hunger, hardship, financial difficulty, as well as mental and physical health problems.

I have heard about bike accidents, empty mailboxes, Dear Jane letters, broken appointments, transfers, primitive living conditions, the oc-

casional psycho companion from hell, tension, betrayals, unreasonable demands, overbearing and chauvinistic leaders, the irritation of being "supervised" by 19 year old boys, and the singular injustice of watching someone else (read: male) baptize the people you taught. One friend spoke at a zone conference and said she didn't like the application of sports metaphors to missionary work. Her mission president, who had earlier referred to the zone as "Team Sweden," got up and said she had single-handedly driven the Spirit from the meeting with her remarks. She was in therapy primarily to "undo" the effects of her mission. I have probably heard more horror stories than uplifting ones.

Last summer, I read a friend's book-length mission memoir. Holly had said on many occasions that her mission nearly killed her. As I read the details of her experiences, I finally understood what she meant. I was amazed at her resilience as she dealt with spiritual and physical pain, illness, insomnia, exhaustion, and, at times, the feeling of having been abandoned by God. She finished the course; I fear I would have been on the first plane home. Reading her story made me appreciate how difficult it is for people to talk openly about their experiences when their missions *were not*, in fact, the best two years of their lives. The Mormon community seems less inclined to acknowledge the unpleasantness that can come with the package. People like stories that reinforce their ideas about missions. I've seen people become dismissive, judgmental, defensive, and even hostile when they hear about experiences that *don't* align with their perceptions of what a mission should be like. No wonder there is still a strong taboo against speaking honestly about unhappy or traumatic mission experiences.

The more I have heard about women's missionary experiences, the more I have been convinced that God was right in not encouraging me to undertake a mission. My faith has withstood many storms, but I'm not sure what a mission might have done to my beliefs. For some people, unsuccessful or otherwise stressful missions mark their exit from church activity altogether. It's not unlike my experience of working for the church: when I told friends and relatives I had a summer job with a church magazine, many warned me not to lose my testimony. I didn't understand what they meant until later difficulties made clear to me that they had been right. My relationship with the church was fundamentally altered that summer. Once you've seen behind the curtain, your relationship to the wizard changes.

Although I feel that not serving a mission was the right path for me, there are things I feel I missed out on by not going. I would like to be fluent in a language other than English (again, my romanticism presumed I wouldn't go stateside or to an English speaking mission). My two months as an exchange student in Israel created an appetite for travel and absorbing other cultures. I would like to have put away worldly

things and focused on loving and serving others over an extended period of time. Personal study often takes a back seat to the demands of everyday life; I imagine the depth and breadth of personal spiritual growth that a mission can foster is difficult to achieve on your own time. I admit I envy the camaraderie I saw among women who had worked as missionaries together—they seemed to have a bond that just playing together or rooming together does not forge. At times, I feel selfish for not having gone on a mission; then again, I feel the decision wasn't entirely mine.

I was reminded of this ambivalence about missionary service last May on my way home from a vacation to Thailand. During our layover in Japan, I asked a woman next to me in line how it was that so many people on the flight seemed to know each other. She explained there was a group of 120 Christian evangelists on their way home from a week of handing out Bibles in Thailand, Viet Nam, and Cambodia. She said this was the last revival tour until fall; they don't hand out Bibles during the really hot months. *Oh,* I thought to myself, *you only do God's work when it's temperate?* I felt a sense of pride that Mormon missionaries work year round.

Then she wanted to know if I was Christian (which begat uncomfortable parochial school flashbacks for me). I should have said yes and hoped the line would start moving and cut the conversation short. Instead, I said I had a Master's degree in religious studies and considered myself Christian but knew other Christian groups don't believe Mormons are true Christians. I'd been bracing for an all-out sales pitch, but after I mentioned the M-word, she seemed to lose interest. I was relieved—but also a little disappointed. Was no one going to try to save me from my cultish Mormon upbringing? I wasn't prepared for the indifference that followed.

Before leaving Bangkok, I overheard a woman yelling at two Thai postal workers in the airport over an $8 phone card she couldn't get to work. She went on and on, and I considered giving her the $8 if she would shut the hell up. But I wasn't sure whether that would diffuse or just inflame the situation. Initially, I was embarrassed that she so completely embodied the ugly American stereotype. Later, I was incensed to discover she was part of the evangelist group. Is it okay to suspend Christian treatment of others when $8 is at stake? Do some people behave differently when they're not surrounded by other Christians or when they think no one is looking?

On the flight, many of the evangelists were noisy and rude. They didn't seem aware that some people might want to sleep or watch the movie to kill part of the 20-hour flight to Los Angeles. As the phone card incident had demonstrated, their God-driven errand did not necessarily translate into behavior appropriate to the countries they were visiting.

Of course, such hypocrisies are easy to point out in others. If I had served a mission, would my behavior toward others have been perpetually above reproach? Would there have been times when I transgressed cultural norms or offended the people I was ostensibly there to serve?

It was unsettling to share a flight with the evangelist group. I was painfully aware that I'd spent more money on holiday than most Thai people could earn in a year or more. I'd seen poverty, destitution, prostitution—but what I saw probably only scratched the surface. Passing out Bibles seemed like a nice, feel-good exercise engaged in by individuals who were blind to the more pressing needs of the people they were trying to Christianize. If you're struggling to survive or wondering when you'll eat your next meal, what on earth are you going to do with a Bible? It seemed presumptuous and paternalistic to insist one person's scripture, faith, or deity was the solution to everyone's problems.

There's also an inequality inherent in the exchange—one I've seen present at many a service project: one party assumes he or she knows what is best for someone else, often without asking what the other party really wants or needs. How much of that spiritual/cultural imperialism finds its way into the Mormon missionary experience? If you're sent somewhere with the agenda to teach, convert, and baptize, can this agenda get in the way? Is it possible to love and serve others more wholeheartedly when there's no goal—like baptism—in mind?

Clearly, I'm still wrestling with some of these issues. I sometimes feel I have no tangible way to measure my devotion or my faith. I didn't make sacrifices to serve a mission. I can't point to generations of converts who are church members because of me. I don't have stories that begin with "When I was on my mission. . ." The biggest reason I have now for not serving a mission—visible only in hindsight and as the result of many life experiences—is that I'm not sure I could honestly promote Mormonism as the one true cure-all religion. I don't think I could make my own doubts and questions about Mormonism invisible. As much as I love to study my religious community and discuss religion in general, it feels disingenuous to try to persuade someone else through the doors into *my* chapel.

During the years I've not been on a mission, I've learned, I've grown, I've prayed, cursed, felt joy, and pain, I've faced rejection, faced acceptance, and I've learned there are myriad ways I can serve and love others—whether that serving looks like a mission or not.

We Were Not Consulted

Anita Tanner

We couldn't say
    the yes that would loosen
        our grip, tutoring us
    in doing without.
Some things were simply snatched away.

We also don't recall being asked
    about our birth,
        what raw materials,
    which cells
would fashion our identity.

We certainly couldn't claim
    the timing of our death
        nor the means
    of our taking leave.
These things were not offered

for our choosing
    So we dig in,
        learning to unearth
    our own happening,
upturning the soil

until our fingers feel
    the under tendril-crawling
        and our eyes decide
    the leafy
turning toward.

How My Mission Saved My Membership

Tania Rands Lyon

IN 1991 I ALMOST JOINED THE PEACE CORPS. I graduated from college that year with the coveted Peace Corps job offer just as I had hoped for years. The glitch in my plan, however, was that at the same time I was blindsided by a dramatic re-conversion to Mormonism. It was an unexpected turn after having majored in a very leftist field (Peace and Conflict Studies) at an arguably leftist school (U.C. Berkeley), in which I was exposed to some very compelling criticisms of hierarchical and patriarchal systems. But I had Mormon roots, and they can run surprisingly deep.

I grew up in a liberal and devout Mormon family, but drifted away from the church during college for a host of reasons. After four years of sporadic activity, I was drawn back when I met the most Christ-like, thoughtful, and authentic Mormon I had ever known. I hadn't realized Mormons came in such a variety and had assumed that the smarter people were the farther they ran from organized religion—especially a rigidly hierarchical, sexist religion with a bent for literalism in scriptural exegesis. Over the next several months, my fascination with this fellow student led me, often reluctantly, to an inexorable re-examination of my own spirituality and my love-hate relationship with the church. I had several powerful spiritual manifestations along the way although I still struggled terribly to have faith. Faith is not one of my spiritual gifts. I gritted my teeth and *strained* to have faith.

By the summer, I was recommitted to life in the church and feeling like a fresh convert—profoundly humble and very spiritually shy. At that point, the idea of serving a mission began cropping up everywhere. Two people in my life wrote suddenly and separately to offer financial assistance should I choose to serve. Every church talk and lesson seemed to be about missionary work. I couldn't get the idea out of my head. It seemed I had a choice between two good causes: serving the world as a Peace Corps volunteer or serving the world as a Mormon missionary. I

couldn't lose, I reasoned, but I hoped that God might offer an opinion on the matter. Many weeks of prayer and fasting and one glorious connection-to-the-divine later, I made my choice and filed my mission papers. The hardest part was telling my professors that their letters of recommendation for the Peace Corps job had been for naught—I had not only found religion, I was prepared to fanatically foist it on others. The best part was receiving my mission call and learning that the beneficiaries of my fanaticism would be the people of Ukraine. I had minored in Russian for fun in college and was thrilled for a chance to use the language in earnest and in a country freshly opened to Mormon missionaries—a new religious frontier.

Perhaps the most important attribute to characterize my life when I entered the Missionary Training Center was humility. This was remarkable since I come by humility about as easily as I come by faith. But facing down my personal and intellectual pride was a central element in my conversion process, and I read Ezra Taft Benson's conference talk on pride over and over again. I had never been so open, trusting, and teachable. I remember the night I found out that women did not hold standard leadership positions on missions. I should have known better, but I was nonetheless shocked. I swallowed this bitter pill and moved on. Humility is not a list-topper in the pantheon of feminist virtues, and I struggled with the implications of humbly accepting my inequitable circumstances. But I had also just become re-acquainted with a profoundly intimate God who seemed to approve the choices I was making. Humility had opened some mind-blowing doors for me, so I was willing to stick with it for a while.

In the MTC I also began reading scripture more intensively than ever before in my life. I blazed through the Book of Mormon and much of the Doctrine and Covenants and came away frequently moved and inspired but also astonished and deeply hurt at the gaping lack of women characters and women's voices. The Book of Mormon was worse than the Bible! And the D&C was so exclusively male-oriented I wondered seriously where women belonged in this newly restored church and why a God of justice would allow their blatant exclusion. At the same time I was freshly endowed and attending the temple on a weekly basis. The temple was an intensely conflicted experience for me. I never once came out of a session without a sense of peace and eternal perspective, nor did I ever emerge without having earnestly struggled with the role of women as I saw it portrayed in the temple endowment.

Things came to a head one night, and I took my issues to God. In pain and confusion, I wondered how the God who seemed to know and love me so intimately could endorse or even allow the divisive hierarchical patterns I saw so clearly in scripture and the temple. I poured out all my frustration in an emotional wave until I realized that I was prepared

to truly trust God—for the first time I felt I was willing to accept things as they stood. I wasn't demanding change; I just wanted to understand why. If only I could understand a little of the why, then the place of women in the church would be easier to live with. Exhausted, I cried myself to sleep, stuffing my head in a pillow so as not to wake my companion across the room.

Beginning the very next day and lasting a whole week, I received some of the clearest answers I had ever had in response to prayer. They came as I read a Joseph Smith Translation passage of the Bible, in a conversation with my companion, and while lost in thought. They spoke to me in deeply personal ways that are hard to describe, but the essence of each answer I recorded in my journal:

(1) The scriptures and church teachings are incomplete; you do not have sufficient information or knowledge at this time to understand God's mind in this matter: have patience.

(2) Learn first to cultivate the humility and meekness of Christ before you worry about who seems to have more recognition and importance than you.

(3) To desire the priesthood for its status or power is to profoundly misunderstand the priesthood.

It was enough. The fact that God saw fit to answer that prayer in any way at all was even more comforting than the answers themselves. Again, I moved on. I met my mission president, Howard Biddulph, in Vienna and the next day landed in Kiev in a January snowstorm, four months after Ukraine had declared its independence from the USSR. Out of 33 missionaries in Ukraine upon my arrival, six of us were women.

I attribute the positive experience of my mission to several factors, including the unique time and place of my mission and a mission president who respected and trusted me. The mission was brand new—there were no mission traditions, no established protocols. The speed at which the mission was expanding also meant that we only had a few months before most of us would be senior companions or even training "greenie" missionaries fresh from the MTC. We were constantly being pushed and stretched to new limits: a formula for an intense reliance on divine assistance and on each other. Moreover, there was no church structure—for a while, *we* were the church structure. This gave both elders and sisters more responsibility and therefore more decision-making power. We had to work together constantly to solve the endless challenges and problems that arise in building a lay religious community from scratch. There was so much work to do, we had less time to worry about who should be doing what or how we should be acting along gender lines. However, those lines of demarcation were certainly there, often bobbing to the surface of my consciousness.

One elder in my mission, a recent convert and slightly older than the rest, had a learning disability and struggled with the Russian language. I had tutored him in the MTC, and so the day he was to perform his first baptism, he came to me for help in memorizing the baptismal prayer. We rehearsed and rehearsed until he had it right—or at least good enough—and I watched with pride as he performed the ordinance. A few weeks later he approached me at another baptismal service and said: "I was just going to ask if you were baptizing anyone when I realized for the first time that sisters can't baptize! You can never know what it feels like to stand in the water and raise your arm and say that prayer!" He looked at me maybe with pity and maybe with admiration that I could endure such an injustice. I was touched that he had noticed. It really wasn't that hard—mostly we just took this arrangement for granted like so many other things. And surely the work wasn't about the one who stood in for Christ—it was about the people who were accepting Christ. I truly believed that and trusted in it. But for a priesthood holder to notice and to guilelessly ask how it made me feel was deeply gratifying.

A few months after that, my companion and I taught a mother, Milada, and her two daughters, ages seven and eight. Milada had had a dream prompting her to come to our church, and so we met her and her daughters in the brand new branch we were busy nurturing with four elders. That Sunday I taught primary as usual. Leila, the vibrant eight-year-old daughter, promptly adopted me and followed me everywhere clinging to my hand. We taught the family a few discussions during that week, and they came again to church the following Sunday. We lived very close to them, and so we rode home together and got off at the same bus stop. As we walked, I turned to Milada and asked her how she'd liked the services that day. She smiled, looked at the ground and said, "All right. I'm ready to be baptized. You just tell me the day, and I will get baptized then." Happily surprised, I grinned back. "How about next Sunday?" Milada agreed and looked over to Leila still clinging to my hand. "What do you think? Shall we get baptized next week together?" Leila jumped in excitement, grabbed my arm with her other hand, looked up at me through her gorgeous thick black eyelashes and exclaimed, "I want *you* to baptize me!"

I laughed a little and explained what the priesthood was and why an elder would have to baptize her. "Do you remember Elder Stencil whom you met in primary? He could baptize you." Leila accepted this in stride. Not long afterward I had a dream. I dreamt that a little girl whom I loved and had taught was getting baptized and everyone was gathered at our usual spot on the banks of the Dniepr River. Three of us wore white—an elder, the girl and I, and we all walked out into the water together. I stood on one side of her with a hand on her back for reassurance as the elder on the other side raised his arm, pronounced the words of the ordi-

nance and then together we lowered her into the water. The dream was tinged with joy and bathed in peace and felt like the most natural thing in the world. I remembered it with wonder. After recording the dream in my journal, I wrote: "I do not feel bitter or persecuted because I can't baptize. In fact that seems trivial next to the power and authority I have often felt in my calling as missionary. It's just something I've wondered about. . . ." Why not have a world where priesthood authority isn't shielded by sharp divisions, where men and women could stand together in blessing circles and in baptismal waters for those whom they love even if only one man can act as voice? There was so much gentleness and love in my dream.

Six months into my mission, we had a sisters' conference in the mission home led by our mission president's wife, Colleen Biddulph (by then there were eleven of us as well as three older sisters serving with their husbands). We had lunch followed by a program with games and gospel messages packaged in cute stories. Then we began the all-female testimony meeting. Near the end our mission president quietly joined us from the kitchen, where he had been single-handedly washing our lunch dishes, and testified that he had seen light pouring from the room and felt that angels were in attendance. I did not doubt him. I remember power filling the room and feeling physically drained and exhausted at the end, but more spiritually nourished than at almost any other time of my life. It was the experience that sustained me through a difficult transfer away from the branch I loved and had nurtured from its birth out to Donetsk, the second city in Ukraine to be opened to missionary work.

My companion, Robin Holt, and I arrived as the first sisters in Donetsk. We were told that we had been anxiously requested by the elders, who had opened the city four months earlier, and who were ready to organize Relief Society and Primary. Our arrival had been well advertised and we were literally welcomed as queens by the handful of new members there, complete with hand-kissing and gushing, flowery, Soviet-style oratories about the essential nature of womanhood. We rolled up our sleeves and went to work, but that first assignment didn't last long. Soon I was transferred again to the eastern edges of the city to work with another fledgling two-month-old branch, and the great "Golden Era" of my mission began.

The newly formed East Branch at that point had nine baptized members and an average sacrament meeting attendance of 90-100. For the next two months, our missionary district consisted of only two companionships: one set of sisters and one set of elders. The senior elder was Travis Genta, who had left the MTC at the same time as I had, eight months earlier. This meant we had equal seniority as missionaries although I was older, better educated, and had more language and leadership experience than he did. At that transfer, he was made simultane-

ously and for the first time a trainer, a District Leader, and Branch President. I, too, was training a new companion again. Both of our companions were fresh from the MTC, lacking previous Russian language experience, and therefore, severely limited in the kinds of responsibilities they could take on. Elder Genta was understandably overwhelmed. But he was also astonishingly pure-hearted, humble, and quick to earn the trust of those around him. The partnership we forged over the next seven months is one of the great treasures in my life.

For weeks we would alternate giving talks in Sacrament Meeting. One of us would then teach the investigator Sunday School class while the other would teach the member class, then I would teach Relief Society, and he would teach Priesthood. The end of church would be swirling chaos as we tried to talk with all the visitors and cram teaching visits with them into our already crowded weekly planners. Then we would pile onto a tram to head for the weekly citywide baptismal services. It was an exhausting but heady time. Elder Genta and I developed a deep respect for each other. I came to him with many of my problems and questions, and he came to me with many of his. We worked out issues in the branch together on the phone almost every night. I started calling on him to administer blessings for investigators and members. The first few times he was nervous and the language came haltingly. But as months went by, he grew more and more confident and calm and (it seemed to me) inspired. One night Elder Genta and I worked together through prayer and priesthood to cast an evil spirit out of an investigator's apartment. Afterwards, my companion and I walked home talking about how satisfying it was to watch young elders grow into the power of their priesthood.

The hierarchical divisions of priesthood authority I usually felt melted away into irrelevance. Elder Genta was my priesthood leader—and there was value in having an established organization for handling many issues—but the priesthood itself became a tool we both used for a common goal: building up the Kingdom of God. I felt that we were equals yoked together in the work and pulling with all our might. Who *held* the priesthood didn't seem nearly as important as who *used* it. Our mix of mutual goals, mutual respect, and a healthy dose of humility suddenly gave patriarchy a very light touch indeed. What we achieved seemed marvelous: we brought an introduction to God to people with no history of religious freedom, and we built a sturdy community organization where there was no tradition of civil society. I found I had tapped into a love far beyond my personal capacity. For a time I would come to my knees at the end of the day and find I had no words to say because it seemed I had been in a constant conversation with God all day long, channels wide open to the Spirit. Member after member bore testimony about the role I had played in the miracle of their conversion. By the time I went home and Elder Genta was sent on to open a new city, many

members called us the mother and father of the branch and the praise and love that engulfed us was dizzying. I had certainly never felt so adored or immortalized. My spiritual side squirmed in this spotlight and fought to stay humble—to see myself only as a tool in God's hands. My political side was very much aware that no other setting, including those which explicitly embraced feminism, had ever granted me access to such power and influence.

Near the end of my mission, my mission president surprised me in an interview, saying that had I been male, he would have called me to be assistant to the president, the highest level of leadership for missionaries in the field. I knew he meant it as a profound compliment, and I felt grateful, but I had no idea what to say in reply. I spent days wondering if it made me feel proud or deeply sad. I couldn't tell. In the end it didn't seem to matter. I had poured my heart into a bottomless work and had found myself enlarged beyond my imagination.

It is harder for me to remember all this now as a sociologist of gender and a professional Mormon mother whose energies are torn in a dozen different directions. I respect the church and have seen the good its structure has wrought around the world. Its tribal community, cutting across so many social strata, has fed me and stretched me in a hundred different ways. I have served in satisfying callings of teaching and leadership. My greatest joys have been filtered through this organization, and I love the intellectual depth and bizarre idiosyncrasies of Mormon doctrine.

So why does being Mormon also hurt so much? Why do the structural inequalities between men and women grate on me as I support my husband in the bishopric and raise my daughter in the church? Why do I struggle every week with how much to accept and how much to try to change? My mission taught me that humility is key to my own happiness and to a painless patriarchy. I know from my own failures that humility is too often in short supply. The sticking point is that in a system that limits authority to men, a man lacking humility has more potential to damage others than a prideful woman with less decision-making power. Since Elder Genta and my mission president, I have encountered many more Christ-like priesthood leaders heroically softening the edges of patriarchy, but I have also seen countless moments when system-level inequality has damaged us as gendered beings. The tension in these contradictions is exhausting to live with.

Yet every time I wonder if Mormonism is selling us short as men and women, my mission experience comes back to stare me in the face. I cannot escape the fact that this patriarchal institution was the framework for the most empowering time of my life—when I channeled more influence over more lives than in any other time and place. And so I stay. I've seen what the church can be and what I can be within the church.

If thou know not, O thou fairest
among women, go thy way forth by
the footsteps of the flock, and feed
thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.
I have compared thee, O my love,
to a company of horses in Pharaoh's
chariots. Thy cheeks are comely with
rows of jewels, thy neck with chains
of gold. We will make three borders of
gold with studs of silver.

While the king sitteth at his
table, my spikenard sendeth forth
the smell thereof. A Bundle of myrrh
is my well-beloved unto me; he shall
lie all night betwixt my breasts.
My beloved is unto me as a cluster of
camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.
Behold, thou art fair, my beloved,
yea pleasant: also our bed is green.
The beams of our house are
cedar, and our rafters of fir.

Song of Solomon 1:8-17

Eternal Love

Carrie A. Miles

LIKE MANY BABY-BOOMERS, philosopher Roger Scruton as a young man accepted the sexual standards of his generation, eschewing marriage in favor of "experiments" with less binding relationships. Scruton finally did marry when he found that his "experiment had turned into a commitment instead," but the marriage lasted only a few years. Reflecting on his painful and all-too-common experience, Scruton wrote, "Our years of cohabitation had disenchanted our first love, while offering no second love in place of it."[1]

Members of conservative Christian churches rarely find themselves encouraged to cohabit before marriage. However, Scruton's distinction between "first" and "second" loves offers a vital insight for those—like the Latter-day Saints—who would presume to keep love and marriage enchanted forever. By "first" love, both Scruton and I refer not to one's first crush but to love in its beginning stages, love that is romantic, passionate, and sexual. First Love is big, Hollywood-movie kind of love. Should we die never having experienced it, we would feel bereft, cheated. But if we never grow beyond First Love, love itself dies. To survive the trials of mortality we need Second Love: a deeper love to capture First Love, to domesticate it, and strengthen it for everyday life and for eternity. It was for this full and robust love that God created humankind as sexual beings, pronouncing the first man and woman "one flesh." Jesus and Paul both echoed this declaration, but the richest, most delicious portrait of the endless love for which God intended us can be discovered in an odd, much maligned little book, the Song of Solomon.

THE SONG OF ENDLESS LOVE

On first reading, many wonder why a frankly erotic little poem like the Song of Solomon is part of the Bible. For centuries, embarrassed the-

1. Roger Scruton, "Becoming a Family," in *Modern Sex: Liberation and Its Discontents*, ed. Myron Magnet (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 198.

ologians recast its sensuality into an allegory of the love of God for Israel or of Christ for the church. In the past hundred years, scholars have come to accept and celebrate the Song as an endorsement of the glories of human love. My own reading of the Song, however, suggests that only its first half focuses on the erotic aspects of love. The second half of the poem depicts that sensuality blossoming, ripening into a rich, soul-melding sexuality, an ardor that can endure when passion fails. Reading the Song in this light reveals that the Song of Solomon is in the Bible because its beautiful portrait of fully-realized love and sexuality are holy indeed.

Although the King James translation of the Bible names this book the Song of Solomon, the first line of the piece gives its title as "The Song of Songs." This means something like "the greatest of songs." There are two characters in the story—the lovers, whom I call "the Woman" and "the Lover"—as well as a chorus of voices.[2]

The first half of the Song of Songs, which I will summarize only briefly here, follows the lovers through the exhilaration and longings of courtship. Interestingly, the Woman initiates the relationship. In fact, her first words are:

1:2 Oh, that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!

1:7 Tell me, you whom my soul loves,
where do you pasture?
Where do you lie down at noon?
For why should I be like one who is veiled
beside the flocks of your friends?

The Lover responds eagerly:

2:10 Arise, my darling,
my beautiful one, and come with me. . . .
2:12 Flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come
2:14 Let me see you from every side,
let me hear your voice;
For your voice is sweet,
And you are lovely to look at.

2. In Hebrew (the original language of the Song of Songs), the gender and number of the pronouns used indicates when it is the Lover, the Woman, or the friends who are speaking in any particular passage. Unfortunately, this is not obvious in English translations, so labels are needed. This paper follows the New International Version of the Bible in allocating the speeches. I created my version of the poem by comparing word-for-word several

Lavishing each other with praise, the two sing of their passion and longing:

2:5 Sustain me with raisins,
refresh me with apricots;
for I am faint with love.
O that his left arm were under my head,
And his right hand should caress me!

Despite her attraction, the Woman does not immediately accept the Lover's invitation to commitment. When she finally decides in his favor, the poem takes us on an adventure in which she leaves her bed at night to search the city for her beloved. Finding him and publicly proclaiming her love, she brings him home. When at last the lovers come together, the Lover proclaims:

5:1 I have come to my garden, my sister, my bride;
I have gathered my myrrh with my spice,
I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey,
I have drunk my wine with my milk.
Eat, friends, drink, and be drunk with love.

Phyllis Trible writes that this is the language of fulfillment, of longing consummated far beyond reasonable expectation.[3]

The Second Half of Love

Fairytales and romantic stories usually end with this love-drunk consummation. By and large, our culture urges us not to venture too far beyond the passion of new love, lest we find only a burned-out hulk. In the Song of Songs, by contrast, First Love takes us not quite halfway through the poem. The second half of the piece elaborates on the rest of love, a love that leads to enduring ardor.

The second half begins with a vignette that parallels the earlier ad-

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different translations of the Song (King James Version; New International Version; Revised Standard Version; the New Revised Standard Version; *The Jerusalem Bible* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1966]; *A New Translation of the Bible,* James Moffatt [New York and London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1935]; and *The Song of Songs: A New Translation,* Ariel Bloch and Chana Bloch [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995]) and then choosing those translations which had the best scholarship behind them and which made the most sense both to contemporary readers and in the context of the story.

3. Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 153-54.

venture in which the Woman goes out into the dark city streets to look for her lover. In the second vignette, she is dreaming of her beloved when he comes to the door:

THE WOMAN

5:2 I was asleep, but my heart was awake.
I heard my beloved knocking.

"Open to me, my sister, my love,
my dove, my perfect one;
for my head is wet with dew,
my locks with the drops of the night."
3 I had taken off my tunic;
am I to put it on again?
I had washed my feet;
am I to dirty them again?

The Woman was dreaming of her lover, but oddly enough, she greets his actual presence with annoyance and shame. This is the man who adores her, who has proclaimed that she captured his heart with "one bead of her necklace." Now she refuses to let him in because getting out of bed would dirty her feet. In light of what has gone before, the Woman's annoyance seems selfish and vain. But before condemning her, consider what she had to lose. Her lover had lavished her with adulation: praise for her beauty, praise for her grooming, and praise for her ornaments. He has just now called her his "perfect one." In the face of such expectations, who among us would thoughtlessly fling open the door? Sexual intimacy does not necessarily bring security. Sheltered only by First Love, a wise woman worries about, perhaps even resents, being caught rumpled and drowsy.

Moreover, this midnight lover is no dreamboat himself. Curiously, the Song of Songs is not an epic poem in which the Lover proves his worthiness by undertaking an ordeal for his beloved's favor, nor does she rescue him from some gratifying and thrilling danger. He comes to her in need, but his distress is hardly heroic. He has gotten his hair wet, and now he rattles the doorknob and pleads to come in out of the dew. The dew? His predicament isn't exciting; it's pathetic. Love's fantasy comes crashing down. No wonder she hesitates to open the door.

Here we meet First Love's crisis, one we all inevitably face. To survive it, lovers must admit to themselves, as well as to the other person, that they are not perfect. They must be willing to be seen without their public masks and defenses. The first step to Second Love requires lovers

to trust that they will be accepted in all their untidy little secrets. Equally difficult, they have to accept the other's untidiness as well.

Thus, we see the mechanism by which cohabitation, married or not, disenchants First Love. First Love blinds lovers to each other's flaws, allowing them to indulge in a fantasy of love perfectly groomed. Next comes consummation, overwhelming love in a garden. But we are only mortal, and inevitably everyday life makes itself known. Despite our romantic virgin dreams, marriage involves many adjustments, petty annoyances, and disappointments: the toothbrush left on the bathroom sink or the object of our erotic longings coming to bed in ratty underwear and an old T-shirt. The little disappointments may not amount to much objectively, but they do take that first eager, romantic edge off our ardor. In them we lose not only the dream image of our beloved, but also of ourselves. So the Song of Songs celebrates our passion and our triumphs and then asks, Now that you have seen the object of your longing from every side, now that you have *been* seen, do you still choose this love?

As the Woman struggles with this question, she reflects:

> 5:4 My beloved thrust his hand through the (the equivalent of
> latch opening, rattling the doorknob)
> and my womb trembled for him.
> I arose to open to my beloved

The text tells us that the Woman finally arrived at a judgment in her lover's favor because her inner parts or womb "trembled for him." Scholars who read the Song as merely an erotic poem interpret the Woman's trembling womb as an expression of her sexual feelings for her lover,[4] but from this point on, we can no longer understand the Song of Songs as "merely" an erotic poem. The Bible uses the image of a "trembling womb" many times, but nowhere else does anyone consider it to mean sexual desire—nor, I maintain, does it mean sexual here. Rather, the "trembling womb" is the Hebrew term expressing compassion or mercy:[5] "motherly womb love," the love of mother for child, of God for Creation, and now, the grace that lover grants beloved—self-giving, caring concern for the other person, for the other person's sake. While First

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4. For example, see Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 33, 45, and 80; or Bloch and Bloch, *The Song of Songs*.

5. Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 33, 45. Trible actually interprets this particular passage as indicating the Woman's sexual feelings for her Lover, but in another chapter of her same book points out that every other Biblical instance of this image indicates compassion. See my piece, "God as Mother," *Sunstone* 124 (October 2002): 42-46, for other biblical instances of the "trembling womb."

Love says, "I want you because you excite and gratify me," Second Love says, "I care about you even when you do not."

The Woman had always desired this appealing man, but had seen him with First Love's wild, blind acceptance. For love to grow, she must now desire him in his weakness, when he is less than appealing and in need of petty comfort. Only by loving compassionately, mercifully, can she let go of her own fears, defenses, and resentments, open the door and give herself fully. Compassion—the beginning and root of second love—asks of lovers the most terrifying thing possible: the complete honesty and acceptance of truly caring.

In fact, the Song of Song warns that compassion can be dangerous:

THE WOMAN

5:5 I arose to open to my beloved,
and my hands dripped with myrrh, (An image of yearning
my fingers with liquid myrrh, and yielding.)
upon the handles of the bolt.

6 I opened for my lover,
but my lover had left; he was gone.
My soul failed at his flight.
I sought him, but did not find him;
I called him, but he did not answer.

7 The watchmen came upon me as they made
their rounds in the city.
They beat me, they wounded me,
they took away my mantle,
those sentinels of the walls.

8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
if you find my beloved,
tell him this:
I am faint with love.

In the first version of the searching story, the Woman passes the city watchmen unscathed. In the second version of the story, the watchmen beat her and take away her mantle. What has changed? Only the nature of her love. Loving devotedly, she opened her heart. Compassionate love rendered her vulnerable in ways that *eros* never could, and she suffered for it.

Here then lies the dark secret of endless love. Only without our defenses can love grow, but in openness lurks a terrible danger. When we

care about the welfare of someone else, his or her weaknesses and needs open us to new sources of pain. When my first child was born, I felt more vulnerable than I ever had in my life, because I had never before loved someone so helpless. A beloved without defenses cannot protect either himself or us.

The weaknesses of our husbands or wives rarely expose us to physical harm, but they do endanger us in other ways. Maybe she makes foolish investments. Perhaps he craves a fame he can never have. They hurt; we suffer with them. When we truly love, we bear the burden of each other's imprudent choices, vain ambitions, anxieties, physical pain and ailments, character flaws, and even eventual death. How often have such weaknesses disenchanted love right out of existence? But the Song asks us to receive these dangers, to accept without defense the fact that our beloved's weakness exposes us to harm we cannot control. Like the Woman in the Song, we can only say, "If you find my beloved, tell him this: I am faint with love."

While caring love exposes the Woman to danger, we should recognize that the Lover himself did not harm his beloved, nor did he wish harm upon her. The Song warns us that we will suffer for our loved ones' sake, but it neither condones nor tolerates abuse, nor asks for its passive acceptance. Compassion, unlike *eros*, is purely voluntary. We cannot help whom we desire, but we choose whom and how we will love sacrificingly. Had the Lover a tendency to hurt purposefully, the Woman would have done well not to open the door.

The Woman has elicited the help of her friends in seeking her beloved after she had turned him away, but as it happens, she does not need them.

THE FRIENDS

6:1 Where has your lover gone,
most beautiful of women?
Which way did your beloved turn,
so we can help you look for him?

THE WOMAN

2 My beloved has gone down to his garden,
to the beds of spices,
to browse in the garden,
and to gather lilies.
3 I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine;
he browses among the lilies.

The Woman hesitated to open her heart fully, and indeed, when she did, she paid a price for her exposure. But her new weakness, her acceptance of the fears and concerns of truly loving, finally flings open the gates of the garden. When the daughters of Jerusalem ask which way they should look for the Lover, she tells them that he has gone down to his garden, to the bed of spices, to browse among the lilies. However, he went not away from, but to her: The poem told us earlier that she is herself the garden, the spices, and the lilies among which he grazes. The poem began with her request to know where this attractive man "pastured." At its crisis, she refused him that shelter. But now, at the core of the Song, she knows the answer to her question: He pastures in her. "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine," she sings. Now begins true union.

Our modern culture tells us that we cannot do this impossible thing—we cannot adore and trust, even depend on, a person whose weaknesses may hurt us. Our culture calls women who trust and depend on others fools; it calls trusting and dependent men even worse names, making them the butt of jokes or fearing them as potential stalkers. But the Song tells us that trust and dependence are the way of true love, and reordering our priorities makes the impossible possible:

THE WOMAN

10 I am my beloved's,
and his desire is for me.
11 Come, my beloved,
let us go forth to the fields,

We will spend the night in the villages
12 and in the morning we will go to the vineyards.
We will see if the vines are budding,
if their blossoms are opening
if the pomegranate trees are in flower.
There I will give you my love.

13 The mandrakes give forth fragrance,
and at our door is every delicacy,
new as well as old.
I have stored them for you, my beloved.

ALL YOUR BELOVED NEEDS

Lovers can abandon themselves to the vulnerability of compassion because their abundance transcends the limited blessings of First Love.

The lovers in the Song express no concern about any need aside from that for each other. The Song names the Woman lover, bride, and daughter of a nobleman, but never a housewife. Unlike the hard working "good wife" in Proverbs 31, she does no work. Similarly, the Woman calls the man beloved, bridegroom, and king, but he never acts the part of a husband, with all the attendant worries. He does not work and he provides nothing.[6] Despite their lack of industry, however, all fruit, spice, wine, and freedom is theirs.

It is this abundance which gives the Song its common name. The first verse of the Song of Songs calls it "Solomon's" (which is why it is often called the Song of Solomon). This ascription did not intend to imply, however, that Solomon wrote the poem. In fact, linguistic evidence suggests that the poem was written well after Solomon's lifetime.[7] Nor is Solomon the Lover. Rather, the poet alludes to the legend of Solomon in order to contrast the wealth of Israel's most glorious king with the even greater riches of love. Putting material wealth in context, the Song depicts Solomon—a ruler possessed of enormous wealth, power, and many wives—as one who requires men with swords to defend himself and his possessions from the terrors of the nights. But the lovers, having shed their defenses in compassion, have no need to arm themselves. Throughout the Song, they go where they please and sleep in beds of henna blossoms under cedar trees, the very air they breathe floating with exotic spices and intoxicating perfume.[8] The Lover lies all night between the breasts of a woman who knows he neither wants nor needs anyone, anything, but her. To him, she is all sweet and tasty things, a lily and the garden, a garden fountain and a well of living water. To her, he is pure gold, his name "oil poured out"—images of voluptuous wealth.[9] So, the Song of Songs asks us, which do you choose? To hold, in anxious terror, the world's most valuable material objects? Or to have the person you adore regard *you* as the most precious thing in the world?

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6. Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, 157.

7. Hebrew, like any living tongue, changed throughout the years as its speakers were exposed to other languages and cultures. The Hebrew usage in the Song of Songs indicates that the poem was written in roughly the third century B.C.E, perhaps 700 years after King Solomon lived (Bloch and Bloch, *The Song of Songs*, 25).

8. The lovers' out-of-the-way trysting places suggest to some interpreters that the couple's relationship is furtive and illicit. I propose instead that the Song's depiction of the lovers sleeping comfortably outdoors amid blossoms is another image of the wealth, safety, and honesty of true love.

9. Some scholars have proposed that the Song of Songs is not a single, integrated poem, but merely a collection of songs sung at weddings (see, for example, the introduction to the Song of Songs in *The Jerusalem Bible*, 991-92). The overall flow of images and development of themes like this one contrasting Solomon's wealth with the glories of love, however, argue for the Song's integrity as a single work of art.

The Song *is* a poem of love in a garden. Obviously, keeping love fresh is easy when life is one long vacation, as it seems to be for the lovers. We mortals have to be concerned about the mundane. Nonetheless, the poet assures us, even outside the garden we realize our true abundance and fulfillment in unity and mutual concern, not in the pursuit of other wealth. Placing a priority on love frees us from anxieties and stress about acquiring other things. Isn't the drive for achievement, possessions, consumption, power, and reputation, in the end, no more than a yearning for love and acceptance? If so, why not cast aside that which ultimately doesn't satisfy and strive for love in the first place? The Song of Songs—a lyrical love poem seemingly out of place in the Bible—offers a very biblical message in the end: Love and relationships, not material strivings, offer us greater wealth than we know how to crave. In fact, Jesus uses the imagery of the Song of Songs to make the same point in the Sermon on the Mount:

> Behold the lilies of the field: they toil not, neither do they spin. Yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the fire, how much more will he care for you? (Matthew 6: 28-30)

The Song of Songs steps out of the world in which it was written (the same world, albeit some 2,300 years later, in which we still live today) to portray woman as a provider and protector, her beloved's only one, all he needs. The protection she offers is not that of the sword, but of the comfort and abundance of her devotion. Second Love asks us to be not only passionate and adoring, committed and compassionate, but also fearless and trusting. Then, safe with each other, we can let go of our anxieties and find peace.[10]

With that safety, ardor gains a stirring power. Already we have seen how it provides for all the lovers' needs. The next passage goes deeper still:

THE WOMAN

8:6 Set me like a seal upon your heart,
like a seal upon your arm:
For love is strong as death,
jealousy fierce as the grave.

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10. Family therapist Marybeth Raynes, who reviewed this paper, cautions that reaching this ideal state requires work, skill, and time. According to her, couples rarely reach this level of devotion until their fifties or sixties.

It burns like a blazing fire,
a flame of God himself.
7 Love no flood can quench,
no torrents drown.
If one offered for love
all the wealth of one's house,
it would be utterly scorned.

Write My Name on Your Heart

In ancient times, people used seals—emblems carved of stone or clay—to mark personal property, just as today we put our name on things to mark them as ours. A seal also functioned like a signature to express one's assent or will. In ancient Hebrew thought, the heart conceived one's will or desire, while the arm carried it out. We can savor the beautiful ambiguity in the Woman's profession, "Write my name on your heart." Your heart is mine, but I am also your heart, your self. If I am your heart, does that make your will mine, or my will yours? As a seal on your arm, do I blindly carry out your bidding, or do you ask me to do only what I desire? Together, the lovers form an endless circle. There exists no object, no wealth, no authority, no acclaim that the lovers desire more than they yearn to be one with each other. Even jealousy burns not as a possessive paranoia, but as the elemental longing for complete and exclusive allegiance. Thus intertwined, joined together by God and by our own choice, our own yielding, we become one in flesh, mind, and heart.

Fearless love, which once exposed the lovers to harm, in its fullness renders them immune to all danger:

For love is strong as death,
jealousy fierce as the grave.
It burns like a blazing fire,
a flame of God himself.
7 Love no flood can quench,
no torrents drown.
If one offered for love
all the wealth of one's house,
it would be utterly scorned.

The trials of mortality pose serious threats to all relationships: Our children struggle, a loved one becomes ill, we lose a job, our parents grow old. Left unattended, the compelling passions of First Love fade softly away. The Song of Songs, however, promises us that fully developed love indemnifies us against any material danger. Love comes first.

God blesses us with Second Love to provide the safe pasture we need to face down the challenges to our peace. When we desire only unity, and defy the power of material deprivation and the lure of material wealth, fire from heaven itself melds us together.[11] When we are established in this love, no loss, not even the grave, can leave us bereft.

11. Thanks to Kim McCall for pointing out the divine origin of the flash of fire (as noted in *The American Standard Version* [Norwood, Mass.: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Norwood Press, 1901], 674.

Temporal Love: Singing the Song of Songs

Molly McLellan Bennion

I HAVE TAUGHT FROM THE GOSPEL DOCTRINE MANUALS for a total of sixteen years, over a period of about twenty-five years. Not one of those manuals mentioned the Song of Solomon. In defiance, I read through (rather than around) the text, but a wealth of recent research calls for a more thoughtful consideration of the worth and significance of this book which calls itself the "Song of Songs."

For two thousand years, the Song has been viewed predominantly as an allegory, not an erotic poem. That is a shame. For religious, God-fearing people it has also meant, I think, a debilitating loss. The *Targum* written between 700 and 900 A.D. is typical of Jewish writings about the Song from the time of its first inclusion in the canon during the first century A.D. According to this text, the woman in the poem is Israel, the man is God, and their story begins with the Exodus and ends with the coming of the Messiah. Other historical allegories have also been suggested. With that in mind, many Jews still read the Song on the eighth day of Passover. Maimonides's work in the twelfth century offered a competing interpretation, substituting an individual man for Israel. Levi ben Gershom, whose work has recently been reprinted and reviewed, followed with a labored Aristotelian explanation of the desired union between God, man, and knowledge.[1]

Hippolytus produced the earliest extant Christian discussion of the Song in about 200 A.D. Not surprisingly, pious Christian scholars saw the allegory as God's (sometimes as Christ's) relationship with the Christian church. Origen met with Hippolytus in 215 and studied under the great Jewish scholar Hillel. It was Origen, with his Neoplatonic and

1. Levi ben Gershom (Gersonides), *Commentary on Song of Songs*, trans. Menachem Kellner (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998).

Gnostic belief in the incompatibility of body and soul, and a lifestyle so ascetic he chose castration, who established benchmarks of interpretation for Christians for centuries to come. Jerome and Bernard of Clairvaux carried on the tradition that the language of the Song was so sexual it could only be interpreted as historical and spiritual allegory. They contended that the blatancy of the sexuality screamed of code. As for the Protestants, from whose ranks came the early Mormons, we note with interest that Luther and Wesley differed little from the Catholics in their allegorical interpretations. John Calvin, however, joined the historical minority to teach that the Song was about physical love but still appropriate for the Canon.[2]

In the last few decades the trend of scholarship, both Jewish and Christian, has been an exploration of the literal meaning of the text, a meaning which is both intensely sexual and material. The Song celebrates sensual love in all its flavors—sight, touch, smell, sound—and toward all its objects—flora and fauna of rich variety. Some have argued that popular translations such as the King James purposefully downplay the sensuality of the original. For example, in the King James, a Hebrew word which specifically means sexual love is translated simply as "love."[3]

My starting point in trying to understand any scripture is always as literal a reading of the text as I can find. I understand that the tasks of getting the Hebrew right, getting the translation into English right, and—through it all—maintaining the poetry can yield only an approximation. I have read numerous translations and commentaries and note with respect the very rational yet differing treatments. My personal favorite translation is that by Ariel and Chana Bloch,[4] although I would always recommend the comparison of multiple translations. The New International Translation is especially useful for its clear delineation of the speech of each character in the Song. Overall, there are few sure answers to be found and much to learn in the crossfire of ideas.

Some scholars have argued the poem is a unified whole, while others claim the Song of Songs is comprised of as many poems as one per line. To the great majority of scholars, the Song appears to have no pivotal crisis, no "first" or "second" half; in fact, most scholars find the poem to be an assemblage of one to three dozen poems. They do not always seem to

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2. For an excellent history of the various interpretations of the Song, see Tremper Longman, III, *Song of Songs, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich. and Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 2001), 20-47.

3. Ariel Bloch and Chana Bloch, *The Song of Songs, A New Translation* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of Calif. Press, 1995), 124.

4. Ibid.

be in the right order. The sexual language is strong throughout the poem. Even when, in the second half (7:13), the word for love relates to an emotional rather than a sexual relationship, it is followed immediately by the scent of mandrakes, an aphrodisiac. Both lovers describe each other sensually, pursue one another, and relish their trysts in her garden and his nut grove.

The incident at the bedroom door is an excellent example (5:2-7) of precisely this sensuality. It can be interpreted many ways, but I am most convinced by interpretations which stay as close to the text as possible. To that end, the Bloch and Bloch translation is most instructive: "Open to me, my sister, my love." The moistness of his body, his thrusting his hand into the "hole" of her door ("hand" arguably being a euphemism for penis, as in Isa. 57:8-10, and the door elsewhere being a likely statement of protection against sexual activity, if not of virginity), and her reluctance to dirty her feet ("feet" being a common scriptural euphemism for genitalia, e.g. male: Exod. 4:25, Judg. 3:24, 1 Sam. 24:4, Ruth 3:4,7; and female: Ezek. 16:25 and Deut. 28:57), all suggest that he is approaching her door expressly for sex, which she is reticent to engage in at the time. Robert Alter describes her behavior as coyness—reticence in a sexual context.[5]

Bloch and Bloch translate the woman's reaction to the lover's last move—thrusting his hand through the keyhole—as her "innards stirred for him." They conclude that the combination of the inner organs and the verb *hamah,* "to stir," expresses "emotions, intense excitement, love, desire, yearning, but also sorrow, regret, anxiety. . . ."[6] This translation alone is broad enough to encompass both the concepts of sexual longing and compassion.

Mixing the emotional and the physical seems natural, more common than not, and I believe the poem does so both explicitly and implicitly. Her love, perhaps both *eros* and *agape,* has overcome her hesitancy, and she moves to the door, but apparently too late. Perhaps he has arrived in unheroic "distress" so that his head is literally "filled with drops of dew" and he urgently wishes to dry himself from the dews common in Judah at some times of the year. Perhaps she has been selfishly and vainly annoyed at this and, therefore, has not opened the door. But such suppositions read a good deal into a text which more directly says, "I want you," and answers, "Not now." The word for the tunic she wears indicates a dressy and fine garment, or possibly an undergarment. It

5. Robert Alter, "The Song of Songs, An Ode to Intimacy," *Bible Review* 18 (August 2002): 24-32.

6. Bloch and Bloch, *The Song of Songs,* 181.

seems unlikely that she holds back because she thinks herself less than attractive.[7] She is certainly crestfallen and utters an expression elsewhere used for dying: "My soul failed at his flight," or "My soul went forth," or "I nearly died." We should also remember that in ancient Israel soul meant both body and spirit. The Greeks and the Gnostics, not the Jews, contributed the pernicious doctrine that the body and spirit could be only at war.

Her abuse at the hands of the watchmen who "smote" and "wounded" her exasperates but hardly daunts the young woman. The poem glosses over the incident quickly and finally. The only convincing difference between her first and second outing past the city watchmen is the fact that in this second version where she is attacked she wears a veil, the word for which is used only once elsewhere, in Isaiah 3:23, to describe fashionable apparel worn by wanton women. The tunic garment, noted above, may have been particularly seductive.[8] Her provocative dress might well explain the attack. Meanwhile, nothing in the text indicates she is made to suffer either for her reluctance to open the door to her lover or for a lack of a deeper more spiritual love. She is "faint with love" in 2:5 prior to her commitment to the lover, and she is "faint with love" in 5:8, seeking him after the rejection at the door.

Throughout the poem these two adore one another and the sensuous world in which they find themselves. Throughout the poem they take turns as pursuer; longing leads to pursuit, then to discovery, then to joy. There is little sense of time passing. The Song may take place over days or weeks. While it may take time and corresponding experience to develop all-encompassing love, here we see no evidence of time, experience, or maturity. The lovers have no earthly cares beyond a little extra sun-exposure while guarding the vineyard, the watchman incident, and perhaps the threat of discovery. They speak only of love, and the "love" of which they speak is almost exclusively that of sexual attraction and fulfillment. In fact, in the entire Song "love" is used in only two ways other than as physical pleasure: three times as warning, and once philosophically.

As a lesson to other young women, the woman warns them of the power of love: "Swear to me. . .that you will never awaken love before it is ripe" (2:7, 3:5, 8:4).[9] Lasting love, this appears to suggest, requires a readiness beyond hormones. Late in the poem—in what some think should have been the final stanza—we find "love" used philosophically:

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7. Bloch and Bloch, *The Song of Songs*, 182.
8. Ibid.
9. See ibid.

"For love is strong as death, jealousy fierce as the grave. It burns like a blazing fire, a flame of God himself. Love no flood can quench, no torrents drown. If one offered for love all the wealth of one's house, it would be utterly scorned" (8:6-7). Those caveats made, the Song relishes the physical.

Oscar Wilde once said, "Those who see any difference between body and soul have neither." I'm not sure what Wilde had in mind with his clever ditty, but it speaks to me of distinctive Mormon doctrine. All is material. Body and soul are material. Material is good. The earth is good. The body is good. The spirit is good. Sex is good. Marriage is good (though, to be fair, there is little scholarly support for any indication of marriage in the Song of Songs). The sheer newness, the intense curiosity of a beginning relationship must develop into a commitment capable of weathering storms large and small, and of weathering familiarity as well. Physical attraction alone cannot carry the weight of a full life. But there are only fleeting intimations of such commitment in the Song. Their love is faithful and exclusive, but from first kiss to last voice in the garden, the love and the poem remain intensely sensual. Praise be! For herein lies a truth the text speaks to me: The relationship which cannot sustain sexual passion as it takes on additional, essential qualities of love is not to be envied. I love the Song of Songs for its clear statement of God's blessing on earthly and sexual beauty.

It has been my experience that sexual pleasure softens the blows of life and binds husband and wife when the world would wrench them apart. The absence of sexual pleasure usually strains all other aspects of marriage. I don't want to de-sex this book in the Bible, the only scripture we have in the Canon to celebrate that truth. It's almost all we have. The subject is virtually absent elsewhere in scripture, and certainly taboo in Mormon religious discussion. Brigham Young liked to point out that the "virgin birth" was myth. The Savior had two physical parents. His parents were literal lovers.[10] But you'll find no chapter on that topic in your Gospel Doctrine manual. To celebrate physical love, we have only the canonical Song of Solomon. As the ancients recognized, the poem is blatantly sexual throughout, and as a result, it speaks not of or in code, but of and as delight in its subject.

We live in a culture most confused about love, sex, and marriage. Part of our confusion comes from the failure of religion to accept what this poem boldly and beautifully celebrates: the unity of body and soul,

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10. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool and London: various publishers, 1886), 4:218; 11:268.

the natural affinity of the material and spiritual, and the sheer and righteous joy in sensual and sexual pleasure. Redemption is not about denying the flesh or discarding it for the eternities. It is about using the body for good not evil so that we earn the capacity to use it forever. The Song of Songs sings what, so far in Mormon theology, has been only nervously whispered.

Bodies, Babies, and Birth Control

Melissa Proctor

When I grow up I want to be a mother and have a family,
One little, two little, three little babies of my own.
Of all the jobs for me I'll choose no other, I'll have family,
Four little, five little, six little babies of my own.
Janeen Brady[1]

FOR OVER A CENTURY little girls in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have grown up hearing messages like those taught in this song that was popular when I was in Primary: babies are wonderful, have as many babies as you can—at least six—and motherhood is the only work you should choose. Following the same theme, lessons with titles like "Motherhood, a Divine Calling," which stress childbearing as a woman's first duty, are taught to sixteen and seventeen year old girls in their Sunday classes.[2] Until the late nineties Relief Society manuals included regular lessons on women's sacred responsibilities as mothers, often with a reminder that women are accountable to God for how well they fulfill this important calling. Such messages are ubiquitous in the programs, lessons and talks for women in the LDS church.

In this paper I will explore official and unofficial messages that the LDS church has sent to girls and women about childbearing during the twentieth century and the effect those messages have had on women's reproductive choices. First, I will examine the theological framework of these messages, which appears in all commentary and which grounds the issue as a basic principle of LDS belief. Next, I will chronicle some of

1. Janeen Brady, "I Want to be a Mother," *Beloved Songs* (Salt Lake City: Brite Music Inc., 1987), 10-13.

2. Lesson 6, MIA Laurel Manual 2 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1984).

the most influential statements made by leaders of the church regarding family planning, noting the widely divergent pronouncements over time and the various interpretations of the principle those pronouncements represent. Third, I will investigate actual family planning practices among 200 active women in the church during the twentieth century. My analysis will be based on women's real decisions and lived experiences as expressed in their own voices. Finally, I will assess how closely these women's practices correspond to the pronouncements made by church leaders. It will be important, as part of this assessment, to discuss the ways in which these women have negotiated their relationship with the institutional church regarding their reproductive choices.

The Principle

On the most fundamental level any position taken by LDS church leaders on the issues of motherhood and childbearing has its source in LDS theology. Such theological warrants come from canonized scripture and LDS beliefs about pre-mortal and post-mortal life.[3] All theological justification behind statements on the family is rooted in the first chapter of Genesis. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."[4] Latter-day Saints see Adam and Eve not only as their literal historical ancestors, but also as prototypes of each man and woman on earth. What was commanded by God for the primal couple "is still in force"[5] for their descendants since "that commandment has never been altered, modified, or canceled."[6] In fact, as the commandment to multiply and replenish is understood to have been temporally first of all commandments to Adam and Eve, so it has taken on the meaning of being the first, or primary, commandment to all married couples.[7]

Beyond interpretations of Genesis, commentary about family planning is also based on uniquely LDS belief. According to LDS theology

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3. In the Temple endowment ceremony, there are also strong positive injunctions to have children, which indicate that multiplying and replenishing the earth enables one to have joy in this life. Since these statements are relevant to LDS interpretations of Genesis, I will limit my analysis to the scriptural text.

4. Genesis 1:28.

5. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 85.

6. Ezra Taft Benson, *Conference Report* (April 1969): 12.

7. It is interesting that only Genesis 1:28 is ever used in reference to family planning, especially since other Old Testament passages are stronger and more explicit. Take the example of Onan (Gen. 38:8-10), who provides a clear example of withdrawal with contraceptive intent. Not wanting to give offspring to his brother, he withdrew, showing his selfish unwillingness to honor his levirate duty. The text clearly indicates that what he did was evil in the sight of the Lord and that the Lord slew him for it.

there are myriads of Heavenly Father's spirit children still awaiting mortal bodies. In a famous and often quoted statement Brigham Young explained, "There are multitudes of pure and holy spirits waiting to take tabernacles, now what is our duty?—to prepare tabernacles for them: to take a course that will not tend to drive those spirits into the families of the wicked. . . .It is the duty of every righteous man and woman to prepare tabernacles for all the spirits they can."[8] According to Brigham Young then, we are to make as many mortal bodies as we can for the spirits who are waiting their turn on earth. Leaders of the church also remind us that "The family concept is one of the major and most important of our whole theological doctrine. Our concept of heaven itself is little more than a projection of the home and family life into eternity."[9] Thus, it is common to hear that "the ultimate treasures on earth and in heaven are our children and our posterity."[10]

These doctrinal precepts, which together have been called a "pronatalist theology," constitute the basic principle upon which all statements by church leaders regarding childbearing are founded.[11] The principle is that procreation is a good that should be pursued. But, what does the principle mean in practice? The principle of procreation says nothing about how soon, how often, or how many children one must have. Except for the implication to have more than one child, there is no quantifier inherent in the principle.[12] What then does the principle indicate about contraception? Although principles are basic, unchanging truths that have moral implications, principles must be interpreted to be applied. Interpretation of principle is no simple task. In fact, interpretations of the principle of procreation have been as varied as the people whose statements set church policy.

The Pronouncements

Most statements about fertility regulation from church leaders in the nineteenth century were vague and only euphemistically referred to contraception. Brigham Young warned against "attempts to destroy and dry up the fountains of life"; Erastus Snow likewise worried about the Saints "taking villainous compounds to induce barrenness and unfruitfulness" and told them not to use "devices of wicked men and women" that

8. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 4:56.

9. Hugh B. Brown, *Relief Society Magazine* (December 1965): 885.

10. Dallin H. Oaks, "The Great Plan of Happiness," *Ensign* (November 1993): 75.

11. Tim Heaton, "How Does Religion Influence Fertility?: The Case of Mormons," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 25, no. 2 (1986): 248-58.

12. Ironically, one multiplied by one is only one.

caused "apparent sterility."[13] During the nineteenth century, however, parenthood for the majority was assumed. As positive encouragement, various blessings of posterity, such as long life, were promised as rewards.

One of the earliest extended statements employing negative motivation explicitly to counsel against birth control was made by George Q. Cannon in 1894.

> There is one thing that I am told is practiced to some extent among us, and I say to you that where it is practiced and not thoroughly repented of the curse of God will follow it. I refer to the practice of preventing the birth of children. I say to you that the woman who practices such devilish arts. . .will be cursed in their bodies, cursed in their minds, cursed in their property, cursed in their offspring. God will wipe them out from the midst of this people and nation.[14]

Although the "most significant limitations on Mormon family size may well have been infant mortality and maternal morbidity,"[15] President Cannon's statement implies that members of the church had already begun using methods to avoid parenthood.

By the first two decades of the twentieth century, contraception had become a topic of much discussion. This interest may have been partly due to the 1901 church statistical report that indicated that the LDS birth rate had dropped significantly. Although the emphasis on population growth was not explicitly referred to as an objection to contraception, in an official statement Joseph F. Smith wrote, "I do not hesitate to say that prevention is wrong." President Smith linked contraception with negative results in the larger society. He wrote, "It brings in its train a host of social evils. It destroys the morals of a community and nation. It creates hatred and selfishness in the hearts of men and women. . .it causes death and decay and degeneration instead of life and growth, and advancement."[16]

As strong as these statements sound to contemporary ears, LDS attitudes during this time did not differ largely from mainstream America. Even Theodore Roosevelt worried about the decline in the American birth rate and popularized the then common expression "race suicide" to

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13. *Journal of Discourses*, 12:120-121, 20:375, 26:219.

14. George Q. Cannon, *Deseret Weekly*, 1 Oct. 1894, 49: 739; reprinted in *Gospel Truth* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 379.

15. Lester Bush, "Birth Control among the Mormons: Introduction to an Insistent Question," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 10, no. 2 (Autumn 1976): 18.

16. Joseph F. Smith, *Improvement Era* 11 (October 1908): 959-61.

condemn contraception.[17] Between 1910 and 1920 there was great furor and debate over this issue nationally. By 1913 feminist activist Margaret Sanger had organized a national movement to legalize birth control and free American wives from compulsory childbearing and enforced maternity.[18] Although Sanger was considered a radical, many women supported the movement in varying degrees.[19] According to Susa Young Gates, even within the Relief Society, the subject caused "animated and sometimes heated discussions."[20] Due to the sisters' interest in this debate, Gates, editor of the Relief Society Magazine, requested statements from the church. After publishing commentaries from six apostles in 1916, she asked the First Presidency if they approved of these statements. In response, the First Presidency gave their "unqualified endorsement and commended the sentiments to members and nonmembers. . .everywhere."[21]

These statements, all publicly endorsed by the First Presidency, include, among other things, a specific prescription for family size. Elder Rudger Clawson wrote, "woman is so constituted that, ordinarily, she is capable of bearing, during the years of her greatest strength and physical vigor, from eight to ten children, and in exceptional cases a larger number than that. She should exercise the sacred power of procreation to the utmost limit."[22] Joseph Fielding Smith stated, "[W]hen a man and woman are married and they agree to limit their offspring to two or three, and practice devices to accomplish this purpose, they are guilty of iniquity which eventually must be punished."[23] Elder George F. Richards likewise wrote unequivocally, "My wife has borne to me fifteen children. Anything short of this would have been less than her duty and privilege."[24]

Elder David O. Mckay issued warnings about the consequences of contraception for the marriage relationship. He wrote, "The desire not to have children has its birth in vanity, passion and selfishness. Such feel-

17. Lester Bush, "Birth Control among the Mormons," 20.

18. Margaret Sanger, *Woman and the New Race* (New York: Cornwall Press, 1920), 11.

19. In her autobiography, Sanger says, "Never was there a more interesting demonstration of mental attitudes of a people than I found east and west of the Rocky Mountains on that tour in the spring of 1916." (Margaret Sanger, *My Fight for Birth Control* [New York: Ferris Printing Co., 1931], 145.) Interestingly, that was the same year that Gates published official statements in the *Relief Society Magazine*.

20. Susa Young Gates, *Relief Society Magazine* 4 (1917): 68.

21. The First Presidency, *Relief Society Magazine* 4 (1917): 68.

22. Rudger Clawson, *Relief Society Magazine* 3, no. 7 (July 1916).

23. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Relief Society Magazine* 3, no. 7 (July 1916).

24. George F. Richards, *Relief Society Magazine* 3, no. 7 (July 1916).

ings are the seeds sown in early married life that produce a harvest of discord, suspicion, estrangement and divorce."[25] President Joseph Fielding Smith warned about the eternal consequences of contraception in the next life warning that "those who attempt to prevent their offspring from coming into the world in obedience to this great command, are guilty of one of the most heinous crimes in the category. There is no promise of eternal salvation and exaltation for such as they."[26] He later clarified, "Those who willfully and maliciously design to break this important commandment shall be damned. They cannot have the Spirit of the Lord."[27]

Should prevention of children be medically necessary to preserve the health or life of the mother, some counsel was given. Elder Orson F. Whitney wrote, "The only legitimate 'birth control' is that which springs naturally from the observance of divine laws, and the use of procreative powers, not for pleasure primarily, but for race perpetuation and improvement. If this involves some self-denial on the part of the husband and father, so much the better for all concerned."[28] In an earlier statement, Joseph Fielding Smith had stated that even in cases of sickness, "no prevention is legitimate except through absolute abstinence."[29] In its letter, the First Presidency makes an even stronger suggestion than abstinence within marriage. "It is so easy to avoid parenthood, if people wish to do so. . . .Men and women can remain unmarried. That is all there is to it."[30]

During the twenties and thirties the topic of birth control received little attention from the leaders of the church in official statements.[31] The relative silence may have been due to an initial increase in the birth rate in the 1920s. Nevertheless, both Mormon and non-Mormon birth rates declined steadily from 1933 to 1935,[32] which was most likely a result of economic necessity caused by the depression. Despite the dictates of the church regarding having a large family, the economic reality mitigated

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25. David O. McKay, *Relief Society Magazine* 3, no. 7 (July 1916).

26. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Relief Society Magazine* 3, no. 7 (July 1916).

27. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955), 2: 85-89.

28. Orson F. Whitney, *Relief Society Magazine* 3, no. 7 (July 1916). Notice that this quote assumes that women have no sexuality. If abstinence is necessary for birth control, then the husband must use self-control, implying that abstinence would not require self-control by the wife.

29. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Improvement Era* 11 (October 1908): 959-61.

30. Joseph F. Smith, Anthon H. Lund, Charles W. Penrose, *Relief Society Magazine* 4, no. 2 (February 1917): 68-69.

31. There were exceptions. B. H. Roberts wrote a lengthy essay on marriage in 1928.

32. Bush, "Birth Control among Mormons," 24.

such behavior.[33] Polls from the period show that the majority of American women believed in birth control.[34] LDS women were no different. A 1935 poll of 1,159 Brigham Young University students shows that 89% said that they believed in birth control of some form.[35]

During the 1940s the church again spoke out on the issue. In a December 1942 essay in the *Improvement Era,* John A. Widtsoe outlined the forbidding consequences of using contraceptives. He wrote, "Since birth control roots in a species of selfishness, the spiritual life of the user of contraceptives is also weakened. Women seem to become more masculine in thought and action; men more callous and reserved; both husband and wife become more careless of each other."[36] As in the earlier statements solicited by Gates, Widtsoe emphasized family size, writing that "[W]omen who have large families are healthy throughout life. . . . [L]arge families are the most genuinely happy," and reminded members that to "multiply and replenish the earth means more than one or two children."[37] For all of these pro-family directives and strong condemnation of birth control, Widtsoe explained that when ill health makes birth control necessary, "careful recognition of the fertile and sterile periods of woman would prove effective in the great majority of cases. Recent knowledge of woman's physiology reveals the natural method for controlling birth."[38] Widtsoe's comments indicate the beginning of a shift in attitudes toward sexuality since this is the first time anything other than marital abstinence is condoned to prevent conception.[39] Despite Widtsoe's progressive thinking, his article did not represent major changes in Mormon leaders' official stand.

The baby boom that followed World War II in the 1950s and 1960s influenced the size of Mormon and non-Mormon families alike. LDS families averaged four or more children even though it seems that birth

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33. Lee L. Bean, Geraldine P. Mineau, Douglas L. Anderton, *Fertility Change on the American Frontier* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 251.

34. Peter Smith, "The History and Future of the Legal Battle over Birth Control," *Cornell Law Quarterly* 49 (1963): 274-303.

35. Harold T. Christensen, "The Fundamentalist Emphasis at Brigham Young University: 1935-1973," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 17, no. 1 (1978): 53-57. 53% said they believed in birth control by artificial means.

36. John A. Widstoe, "Should Birth Control be Practiced?" *Improvement Era* (December 1942).

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. David O. McKay followed Widtsoe in saying, "When the health of the mother demands it, proper spacing of children may be determined by seeking medical counsel, by compliance with the processes of nature, or by continence." From "Statements of the General Authorities on Birth Control," Department of Religion, Brigham Young University.

control continued to be widely used among church members.[40] Although no significant shifts occurred during the fifties, subtle changes were taking place. In 1960 President Hugh B. Brown broadened the acceptable reasons for prevention by the use of just one word. He wrote, "The Latter-day Saints believe in large families wherever it is possible to provide for the necessities of life. . .and when the physical and *mental* health of the mother permits."[41] Although Brown explicitly advocated the pro-family principle and indicated that large families were more desirable, including mental health as a consideration in family size created more space for individual variation than any previous statement. There were competing views at this time from church leaders, however. In 1958 the un-official but standard reference work *Mormon Doctrine* was published, in which Bruce R. McConkie quoted Joseph Fielding Smith, saying, "Those who practice birth control. . .are running counter to the foreordained plan of the Almighty. They are in rebellion against God and are guilty of gross wickedness."[42] While acknowledging the liberal perspective of Brown, one must be clear that McConkie's views were more common among church leaders, who continued their general condemnation of contraception.

With these few exceptions, during the fifties and early sixties, church leaders made very few statements on this topic. This is remarkable when viewed against the larger American landscape. By the mid-1950s there was a growing concern regarding overpopulation, which contributed to a revival in Neo-Malthusian efforts at population control. At the same historical moment, the first oral contraceptive became easily available. In 1960 the birth control pill was approved by the Food and Drug Administration and quickly swept the nation. Over the next five years, federal funds were set aside for birth control and thirty-six states established family planning programs.[43] Birth control had won public support. By 1965 both the national and the LDS birth rates had dropped to record lows, rates lower even than in the depths of the depression.

Although various leaders denied the population explosion, there was no official response to the birth control pill from the church hierarchy until April 1969 when the First Presidency sent a formal letter to bishops and stake presidents. This statement, often called a "masterpiece of diplomacy," has been since used by people on all sides of the opinion spectrum to justify vastly differing family planning practices.[44] Never-

40. Bush, "Birth Control among Mormons," 26.

41. Hugh B. Brown, *You and Your Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 135-36.

42. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 1st ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), 81.

43. Ibid., 289.

44. This phrase is not original, but I have lost track of its source. If, by chance, you know its author, please contact me through *Dialogue*.

theless, phrases such as "it is contrary to the teachings of the Church artificially to curtail the birth of children," and "those who practice birth control will reap disappointment by and by" make the statement seem conclusive on the subject of birth control despite the controversy about what the ambiguous word "artificial" may or may not mean.[45] Although other phrases such as "the mother's health and strength should be conserved," and "married couples should seek inspiration and wisdom from the Lord" ostensibly mitigate the stronger statements, the explicit overall directive remains clear.

This letter precipitated a deluge of sermons on the same topic.[46] That same month, Elder Ezra Taft Benson gave explicit counsel, "The world teaches birth control. Tragically, many of our sisters subscribe to its pills and practices when they could easily provide earthly tabernacles for more of Father's children. There are couples who think they are getting along just fine with their limited families but who will someday suffer the pains of remorse when they meet the spirits that might have been part of their posterity."[47]

Spencer W. Kimball was one of the most vocal opponents of birth control at the time. In a 1971 General Conference address he said, "loud, blatant voices today shout 'fewer children' and offer the Pill, drugs, surgery, and even ugly abortion to accomplish that. Strange the proponents of depopulating the world seem never to have thought of continence!" Besides the continued theme of advocating abstinence as the only acceptable fertility regulation, President Kimball frequently associated the Pill with abortion. Speaking to the Relief Society in 1975, President Kimball said, "Much that comes to your consciousness is designed to lead you astray. It is to tempt you. . . .[T]here is the pill. There is abortion." Later in the same talk, President Kimball said, "Those things that endanger a happy marriage are infidelity, slothfulness, selfishness, abortion, unwarranted birth control. . .and sin in all of its many manifestations."[48] Along with his counsel "not to postpone parenthood" or "limit your family as the world does," President Kimball elsewhere taught that "sterilization and tying of tubes are sins."[49]

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45. The reference to "self-control" makes it clear that abstinence is the only approved method of contraception and even then, only when the mother's health and strength require it.

46. The letter, mostly a summary of past statements including material from Joseph F. Smith in 1917, did not represent anything new.

47. Spencer W. Kimball, *Conference Report* (April 1960).

48. Spencer W. Kimball, "The Blessings and Responsibilities of Womanhood," *Relief Society General Conference*, October 1 and 2, 1975; *Ensign* (March 1976): 70.

49. *Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 325.

Pronouncements on the principle of procreation were not limited to the 70's, however. Church leaders have continued to stress the command "to multiply and replenish the earth." As recently as 1993 Elder Dallin Oaks quoted President Kimball in General Conference, saying, "It is an act of extreme selfishness for a married couple to refuse to have children when they are able to do so. How many children should a couple have? All they can care for! Exercising faith in God's promises to bless them when they are keeping his commandments, many LDS parents have large families."[50] In 1995 the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve issued the Proclamation on the Family which states that, "God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force."[51] Likewise, there are still occasional reminders from the pulpit that postponing children for educational or economic reasons is not condoned.

Although an examination of the basic principle of procreation and the history of pronouncements from church leaders on contraception provides theological and historical context for contraception among Latter-day Saints, the personal dimension needs attention in order for us to fully understand the issue. What effect have the principle and pronouncements had on the women of the church in terms of their daily practices? In what ways have the pronouncements influenced their deliberations and decisions? How have the women of the church understood the principle?

The Practices

In order to begin to answer some of these questions, I conducted an Internet survey during July of 2003 in which approximately 200 women participated, ranging in age from 22 to 92. Although all consider themselves active and faithful members of the LDS church, they have made very different reproductive choices. As with any survey, there are limitations to mine. The sample number is not statistically significant and, therefore, cannot be used to draw broad conclusions about LDS women as a group. Furthermore, I did not control for education, income, or location of residence, all of which can play a role in birth rates and childbearing practices. Nevertheless, in these women's responses distinctive patterns do emerge regarding family planning attitudes. As a member of the church, each woman has inherited both the principle of procreation and a cultural con-

50. Dallin H. Oaks, "The Great Plan of Happiness," *Ensign* (November 1993): 75.

51. President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

text informed by a long history of strong pronouncements that necessarily affect the way she acts and interacts within her community.

Although I was predisposed to organize these narratives into the two most obvious groups: those who use birth control and those who don't, the complex interweaving of motives and purposes in the stories I received defied such simplistic categories. Therefore, I found it more true to the women's responses to divide the surveys into groups that reflect their priorities and the source they appealed to in determining practice. Thus, distinctive and sometimes contradictory practices exist regarding contraception within each group.

First Group: Prioritizing Pronouncements

The first group among the women is comprised of those who prioritize the pronouncements of the prophets. Responses that fall into this general category show deference toward church leaders and a desire to be obedient. Making their decisions accordingly, most of these women choose *not* to use birth control. Carolyn from Washington (age 51) writes, "I made the decision to leave how many children I had up to the Lord. I had seven. I have never regretted that decision. After listening to and reading what the prophets had to say, it seemed to me that the decision was not really up to me, based on my needs, but a decision to be made by consulting the Lord seriously and prayerfully, and that children should never be postponed or avoided for selfish (monetary) reasons." Such responses are not limited to older women who were bearing children during the years—70s and 80s—when church leaders were making their strongest statements against birth control. Rachel from Arizona (age 28) writes, "I am presently a few weeks from having my seventh baby. My oldest child is nine years old. We have chosen to leave our contraception, or lack thereof, in the hands of the Lord. We have read many times the quotes by many prophets and leaders of the church throughout the years. We feel they are very clear when they say that the commandment to multiply and replenish the earth is still in full force."

Some women emphasize perspective in their narratives. Louise from Arizona (age 56) narrates an experience that is similar to many responses I received. She writes, "38 years ago my husband and I were struggling college students. It was the days of The Pill and we were waiting until things were "better" to start our family. President Joseph Fielding Smith gave a talk in General Conference about not putting off having a family—I cried through most of it. The next day my pills disappeared. Less than a year later, the Lord blessed us with a beautiful daughter. Over the next twelve years, we added five more daughters and one son. We didn't always have the fanciest or finest, but one of the greatest things we ever gave them was one another." Joalene from Ari-

zona (age 57) likewise writes, "We were married by President Kimball, when he was an apostle. He counseled us not to put off having a family. We had nine children in the next fourteen years and still managed to get a professional degree. There were times when I thought I was going to go crazy. My perspective became even clearer when our youngest son got his patriarchal blessing and was told that our family was organized in the pre-existence."

Interestingly, even women who are now in their childbearing years quote statements made decades ago, but with important additions. Jennifer (34) from Washington writes, "We feel that having children is a sacred duty and to refuse is, as Joseph F. Smith said, a violation of our sealing covenants we have made. That being said, it is a matter of intense prayer and fasting and consultation." Despite the strong word "violation" she quotes from Joseph F. Smith, Jennifer's modification to the statement allows some room, at least, for "consultation." In contrast, Marta from Japan (age 33) writes, "My husband and I have six children. We have been married for ten years and have seen many ups and downs, but we have never used birth control. We strive to live by covenant, not convenience, and to follow the counsel of the prophets, who have said on many occasions not to put off your family for schooling and 'to live together naturally and let the children come.'"

Other women followed their leaders not out of deference but under duress, and sometimes with mixed feelings. Norma from Florida (age 50) writes, "We had two sons, starting immediately after we were sealed. At that time in our stake you didn't get a recommend unless you were using no birth control. I don't regret a moment. On the other hand, had we waited until my husband completed his education, we would have been able to better provide for our family." Norma doesn't regret her children, but she admits that she may have made different decisions had there not been adverse consequences for using birth control. Rochelle from Utah (age 40) writes, "From the time I can remember I have heard from the pulpit that it is our privilege and our duty to bear children and raise up families to the Lord. As a young woman there was part of me that resented one gender giving this counsel to the other gender while acknowledging that the mother would bear the greatest responsibility in nurturing these children. There seemed to be no forum for the gender being counseled to give feedback or to voice their concerns, to be heard. I still struggle with this. However, I am nothing if not obedient, and I love my children."

Beyond following the prophet, some women complied with their *local* leaders' counsel or even suggestions from other ward members. Stacey from California (age 52) writes, "When my husband and I were newlyweds in 1978, we decided to wait for a while to begin our family. However, a few months after our marriage. . .the elder's quorum presi-

dent chastised me for waiting to have children. He told me that I was being disobedient to Heavenly Father's commandments. I'm not usually timid about standing up for myself, but for some reason, perhaps out of respect for his "stewardship" over us, I decided to change our plans. I became pregnant soon after, and although I love my son with all my heart, I still regret listening to this man." Describing a similar situation, Melody (age 42) writes, "After our second child, a sister in the church told us that if we were to choose birth control, we would lose our temple recommends and good standing in the church. At the time it terrified me, and we went on to have seven more children. We have struggled financially all these years. I wonder if we would have been better off to have four or five children and be able to offer them more."

Interestingly, the follow-the-prophet method of family planning, in which pronouncements are highly valued, resulted in some women's choosing to use birth control. Judy from Utah (age 37) writes, "We were wisely advised by our stake president at the time of our marriage to be conscientious in our family planning. He told us that it is not healthy for a woman to have baby after baby, but rather to let the body heal and prepare properly and be healthy." Ann from North Carolina (age 62) writes, "President David O. McKay said that children are a blessing. So I decided that if a child would not be a blessing in my life, I should not have a child." Still other women want more specific guidance. Renee from Minnesota (age 34) writes, "Sometimes I wonder how many children the Lord wants us to have. I'm not sure how it all works, as far as. . .if I don't have more children, am I denying a spirit to be born into our family when it was pre-ordained to be mine? I wish the Prophet would give us clearer direction in that area. I know we are supposed to use our free agency and be prayerful about the issue, but it would be nice to have more concrete words from the Lord."

Second Group: Prioritizing Personal Revelation

The second group among the women's narratives includes those who identify their personal religious experience as playing the most important role in their reproductive decisions. These women value the principle of procreation itself. They show a deference to what is perceived to be God's commandment on the subject, and they often refer to "multiplying and replenishing" in their narratives. Women in this group may also point to LDS theology about the pre-mortal world as motivation. While some of them cite official counsel, they do not necessarily look to prophetic pronouncement as the only legitimate interpretation of the basic principle. These women feel enabled through their personal experience with the divine to interpret the principle for themselves.

Some of these women still decide *not* to use birth control. Desiree

from Florida (age 47) writes, "Deciding to have six children was Heavenly Father's idea, not ours. What gives me strength is knowing that Heavenly Father told us both at separate times that this was His desire and did so in a way that we could not deny or ignore it." Kila from California (age 46) writes, "I love my children, all eleven of them. They range from 28 to 23 months. I worry about the fact that if I didn't have my children, where would these spirits go? To a druggie, prostitute, or be in a child abuse situation? I always try to go to the temple and ask the Lord if there are any more up there waiting to join our family. Lately he has informed me that there is one more coming soon. I'm willing to follow his direction. I tried to talk the Lord into letting me adopt my last one, but that is not the answer for me at this time."

As we might expect, there are also women who feel endowed with power from God to interpret the principle themselves who *do* choose to use various forms of birth control. Angie from Arizona (age 47) writes, "I have always felt the decision to have or not to have children is a choice made by the couple with the help of the Holy Ghost. Birth control is a personal choice. Permanent solutions like tubal ligation and vasectomy are also personal choices. This, like other decisions, is a matter of faith and prayer." Although Angie emphasizes personal choice, individual decision is not removed from the Holy Ghost, faith, and prayer. Some women received specific spiritual impressions regarding their family planning. Tauna from Colorado writes, "When we started praying about starting a family, we both felt the same answer, 'start trying in January.' We used birth control when prompted; we stopped using it when prompted. No matter what method you use to prevent or promote pregnancy, as long as it is done with prayer and guidance from our Heavenly Father, you are doing it correctly."

Third Group: Prioritizing Reason

Other women do not report significant spiritual experiences surrounding their childbearing decisions, but instead emphasize the role of reason in their personal interpretation of the principle. Heather from Florida (age 50) writes, "Some things you simply know are true, and I believe that there are many reasons for couples to practice birth control." Becky from Canada (age 62) writes, "Contraception should be used. I believe that God gave us a brain and expects us to use it." Kathy from California (age 45) writes, "We stopped at four because we thought it was important to use common sense when it comes to having children." Sometimes other factors play a role in choosing contraception. Marilyn from Utah (age 69) writes, "We did discuss birth control and used it, of course. I still don't know what Joseph Fielding Smith was talking about, but we got over that. We didn't want a baby every year. We couldn't take

care of them! It wasn't good for my health. It just didn't fit." Other women mention the need for birth control in order to experience healthy intimacy in marriage. Nancy from Minnesota (age 46) writes, "Contraceptives can be a part of spacing a family if a couple is going to have an enjoyable sex life." Many sisters refer to their emotional or mental health as a reason for using birth control. Toni from Arizona (age 40) writes, "We used birth control to space our children so that I wouldn't be an emotional wreck." Besides these themes, low-income, poor health, and marital strife were also cited as legitimate reasons for birth control among women in this group.

Despite the abundant anti-contraception rhetoric of the late 1970s and 80s, many of these women who were bearing children then chose to use birth control.[52] Many felt their own interpretation of the principle of procreation was as valid as pronouncements from the hierarchy. In some instances personal revelation from God or individual circumstances even overruled general pronouncements made by church leaders. How do we make sense of the discrepancy between the leaders' pronouncements and the practices of the people?

One possible answer is that LDS women have taken prophetic pronouncements given to the body of the church as general guidelines that must be applied by individuals in different ways appropriate to their various situations. This can also become necessary when women are faced with dilemmas caused by the policies themselves. For example, several women pointed out that while church leaders have discouraged birth control, they have also discouraged debt. Many of these women chose smaller families in order to follow the precept of self-sufficiency.

Another possibility is that women are committed to the pronatalist principle, which they perceive as eternal doctrine, but not necessarily to the anti-contraception pronouncements, which may be viewed as temporary policies. Two consistent statistics seem to support this theory. First, although there has been a movement toward greater conservatism in attitudes, polls over time show that LDS women as a group have consistently believed in and used birth control of various kinds. Second, despite the widespread use of birth control, LDS women tend to have higher fertility rates than do other women. This is true even when socioeconomic factors like income and education are considered.[53] The

52. Although Tim Heaton and others have suggested that Mormon fertility and family planning practices are related to a particularist, pronatalist theology, this essay has shown that the clear and common anti-contraception rhetoric must be included in any analysis of past practices.

53. Tim Heaton, "How Does Religion Influence Fertility?" 248-58.

data indicate that LDS women may use birth control to space children but not to prevent children altogether. While many of the women in my survey used birth control, none of them advocated childlessness; those with three children or fewer felt the need to explain why they didn't have more. The theory that LDS women as a group are pro-birth control while at the same time being pronatalist is supported by an ongoing, unscholarly, yet still revealing, Internet poll. The poll indicates that 39% of members "think that we should follow the Proclamation on the Family by only using birth control rarely. Family size can have limits so long as we multiply before we reach them."[54]

Having children is an aspect of the Mormon experience that is very public. Unlike repentance, one's experience with God in prayer, or one's understanding of the Atonement, how many children one has is hard to hide. How soon, how often, and how many are questions that can be used as a gauge of one's religious commitment or lack thereof. For this reason it is not surprising that one pervasive thread which appeared in these narratives is the feeling of being judged by others. Although several women reported feeling judged by the *world* for having too many children, much more common among the respondents, whether they had small or large families, was the feeling of being judged by other LDS women for their choices. The narratives report feeling judged for having too few children, not having children quickly enough after marriage, not having children often enough, and also for having too many children. Although no women specifically attributed their reproductive decisions to feeling judged, it is difficult based on the surveys to wholly reject a causal relationship between social interaction and decisions regarding family size. It is also important to note that the immediate local social context in which one lives, worships, socializes, and serves plays a major role in LDS women's lives. While none of the women explicitly recognized this as a factor contributing to family size, the very preponderance of surveys that report feelings of pressure or judgment must be considered somewhat influential.

It may be partly in response to these kinds of judgments that church leaders have made fewer direct statements about family size in the last ten years. Certainly, they are more sensitive when they speak about family size. In her most recent talk, Carol B. Thomas of the General Young Women's Presidency manifests this new sensitivity. Quoting the song "When I grow up I want to be a Mother," with which I began this paper, Thomas recites the first and second line as written, including the prescription for, "*one little, two little, three little babies of my own.*" However,

54. www.lds-mormon.com/polls as of 10/23/03

she edits the third and fourth line, entirely omitting *"four little, five little, six little babies of my own."*[55] The omission implies a much smaller expectation for family size than was assumed by the song's author in the 1980s.

The most recent edition of the General Handbook of Instructions, issued in 1999, represents the most progressive guidelines on family planning that have ever been given to the church. Some noteworthy, new counsel in the statement includes cautioning members against judging each other on their family planning decisions and an implicit indication that the nurturing of children is a responsibility of both mother and father. Most interesting for this discussion perhaps is the last sentence in which sexual intimacy is given a legitimate role for more than procreation as a "divinely approved. . .means of expressing love and strengthening emotional and spiritual bonds between husband and wife." Besides the fact that this sentence represents a reversal from implications of previous statements, it also implies the use of birth control. For all the statement's innovation, however, one sister has interpreted the changes differently. Marta from Japan wrote, "It is true that little is said about this today, but it is our feeling that the actions of church members as a whole have nearly silenced the brethren on this matter, for if they speak out against birth control now, they will condemn nearly the entire church." While it is true that no public statement from any prophet has positively recommended the use of contraceptives, the General Handbook of Instruction indicates that the approach to this topic among church leaders have changed substantially since the early days of the church. As for church members, they have effectively voted on the subject of birth control.[56] Meanwhile, there are many other reproductive issues, such as surrogate motherhood and in-vitro fertilization, about which explicit pronouncements have not been made and for which church policy is still undetermined. As technology advances, these issues will only multiply. Perhaps these issues, like birth control, will be determined by the practices of the people and their understanding of the deeper principle as much as by official pronouncements.

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55. "Strengthen Home and Family," *Ensign* (May 2002): 94. She continues with the rest of the verse, however, which includes the ethno-centric idea that good mothers bake cookies, give yellow balloons to, and sing pretty songs for their children.

56. Bush, "Birth Control among Mormons," 33.

Sunday Morning—Eight Days Before Christmas, 2001

Suzanne Evertsen Lundquist

On death, I have thoughts
That bread and water
Can not satisfy:
Because they are gone
Jack, John, Eugene, and Ruth. . .

And soon my mother too
Will rest her gnarled body
Beneath the tree beside my father
And I will not see her again,
Nor try longer to break through

Her clouded mind and memory
To ask her how to clip roses
Or plant peas in the spring.
Gone the meals of corn, and yellow
Crook-necked squash

Creamed peas and new potatoes
Sliced tomatoes and peaches
From the vines and trees
Behind the home, now sold
Where she walked familiar and gathered in.

And dresses sewn and pressed
To make her daughters beautiful.
Hung memory-ready in her closets:
Wedding dresses and coats
Wool jackets and organdy skirts.

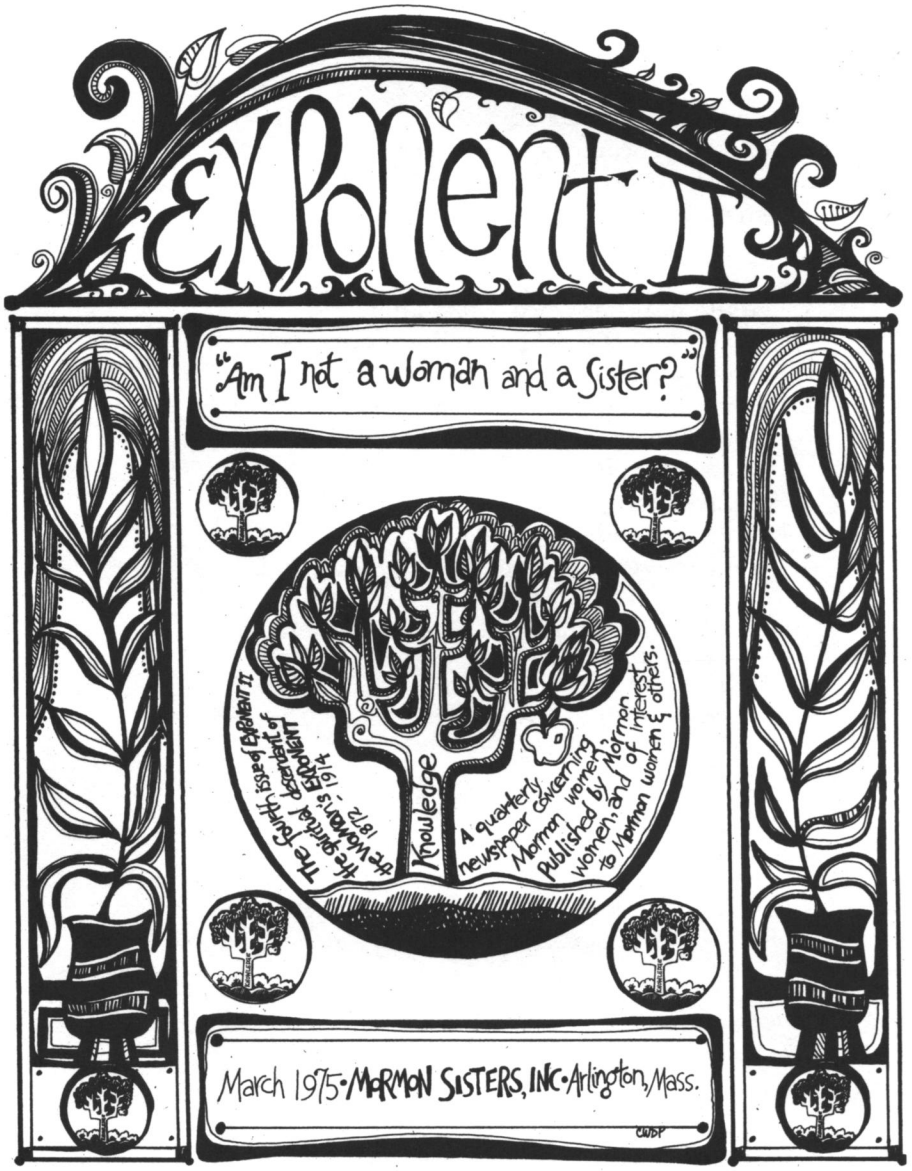
And all those lives she loved
And cared for:

Healing like few women can
The care-worn and unfortunate
Whose relief her society gave.

Grandma Sue and Dad
Both died encompassed by her
Ceaseless care; and now she
Can no longer walk or drive
The old Buick she won selling health.

I would hear her voice—long after
This morning's breakfast and tomorrow's lunch
Singing songs gathered in her voice
Forever tumbling from her eighty-seven years.
I would have her young, and here/hear, and never gone.

So speak to me of blood-red redemption
Male-ready and heavy talk.
I would have it simpler—the trimming of the tree
The oven-baked bread and fruit-room jam
And her, our mother, and him, our father: again.



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My Short Happy Life With *Exponent II*

Claudia L. Bushman with additions from Nancy Dredge, Carrel Sheldon, and Laurel Ulrich

SOMETIMES AN OCCURRENCE turns out to be more than all involved ever expected it to be. The stone drops into the water and the widening rings reach all the way to the lake's edge. A little thing that happens in someone's living room gets discussed at the far edge of the continent. The things done on the side of much more important things turn out to be the most important after all. Small creative enterprises grow and develop lives of their own.

Such were the results of the work of a few LDS wives and single students back in the 1970s. Under their own auspices, they gathered to do a few little Relief Society-type projects, the sort of thing they were quite experienced in doing, that they had been doing for years with little particular attention. They didn't think that that much was really happening, but they did work together as they had previously, and what is interesting, they began a run of activity which continues to this day, more than a quarter of a century later.

Exponent II was born in one of those times when the world turned upside down. Having been through a pretty significant civil rights revolution, the nation was ignited by other discontents. A serious anti-war movement was under way and along with it, a feminist revolution. The war in Viet Nam, and other social tensions, had aroused opposition from many student groups. Women, who had been the silent majority, the obedient secondary partners, the statues on pedestals who descended to rock the wailing infants and scrub the floors, began to test their ability to do more.

My husband and I experienced first hand several of these incidents. In 1968, Richard received the Bancroft Prize for writing a history book published the year before. This meant that we traveled from Utah to New York City to attend the awards ceremony at Columbia University.

The prize was awarded at a dinner for three or four hundred people, a black tie–long gown affair with a receiving line. My hair was done up. Men kissed my hand. Everyone seemed cultivated and charming. The winners gave erudite and witty speeches. The elite, Ivy League event was as close to Versailles as I have ever come, and was certainly a long way from Provo.

By the time we arrived back in Utah, Low Library, the elegant building in which the prize ceremony had been held, was occupied by insurgents. Students made demands. The administration fell. The police were called. Columbia entered a dark period from which it only emerged many years later. We arrived in Boston that fall of 1968, just in time for the occupations at Harvard. The world had turned upside down.

We were moving to Arlington, Massachusetts, for a fellowship and a year-long sabbatical. We had lived in Boston before. Richard had studied at Harvard College and also served a mission there. I'd gone to Wellesley College and met him on a visit to Cambridge while he was still on his mission. When he returned as a student again, we began to keep company and were married after his graduation and my junior year. We stayed on as he became a graduate student and I became a housewife and mother, leaving a few years later to live in Provo where he taught at BYU. Now in 1968, we had come back for yet another New England tour.

However, Richard's Bancroft Prize suddenly made him a hot commodity, and he was heavily recruited, particularly to accept an appointment at Boston University to establish the new American Studies graduate program. He wrestled with this decision, finally agreeing to take the job. As for me, I was in favor of the move from the beginning. I'd been happy enough in Provo, but I saw more opportunity in Boston. After marriage, I had completed my A.B. degree in English literature. Although my family would have been quite happy if I had dropped out of school, I liked to finish things up. I graduated in maternity clothes, and our first child was born that fall. I planned to be the Mormon mother I had been socialized to be. But by the time my daughter was just a few months old, I was hungry to get back to school. I took a few night school courses, and when we moved to Provo, I applied to a master's program to study American literature. I started the program with two small children and finished up with three. This MA later made it possible for me to teach freshman composition at Rhode Island College during one of our stays back east. While I taught there, our fourth child was born, and I continued to teach the course at BYU when we returned. But when I told the chairman of the department that I was expecting number five, he ruled that I could no longer teach freshman English.

What to do? I needed something to think about when I scrubbed floors, but there was no doctoral program in English. I explored working toward a teaching credential, but that entailed taking all my courses over

again with more attention to pedagogy, which I was unwilling to do. I was, as I have been many times in my life, just stymied. I began to take random courses again, but I wished I could be in some program where I could feel myself moving forward, no matter how slowly, toward a worthwhile goal.

But what could I have been thinking? What did school mean to me, a Californian who had always been more interested in fashion and the future than in the past filed in dusty old books in libraries. Why did I feel driven to do this? I cannot remember why I was so sure that I needed to work for a Ph.D. Part of it was doubtless the respect paid to the life of the mind in that New England neighborhood. Part of it was that I couldn't just get some job that would compete with caring for all my little children. Richard and I felt very strongly about leaving our children then. Baby sitters and day-care were unthinkable choices. But I did feel that I had to do something. I remember a beautiful autumn Saturday in Cambridge in Harvard's Memorial Hall. I had come to take the Graduate Record Exam, spending a full day at critical reading and multiple choice. It was the day of the Harvard-Yale game, and as I left the hall to walk to my bus stop, I encountered throngs of happy fans. For years I had attended home games, but here I was, choosing to take a miserable examination instead. What was wrong with me?

Richard's new connection to Boston University brought reduced tuition for me and also an easy admittance to the doctoral program in English, even though part-time students, of which I was one, were seriously discouraged, and the chairman was openly scornful. He was constantly disgusted with me, the little housewife. Doctoral work was to be difficult, conducted in the time-honored way in which the faculty themselves had suffered through their studies. He had a right to be tough with his students. An English doctorate required four languages. I had French and Old English from my MA studies, and I began to study Latin with plans to do German later on, amused by the idea that I moved from cooking meals and sewing buttons to learning tenses and vocabulary.

I should also say that one of my motivations was to escape the competitions that Mormon housewives engaged in. We were all locked into being the best mother and wife with the most impressive children, in the cleanest house, serving the most beautiful and nutritious meals, etc. etc. I was willing enough to do those things, but rebelled at the effort required to be the best. I rebelled against the miserable old belief that any job worth doing was worth doing well and that these exercises, which must be repeated constantly, must be accorded such dedication. I wanted to be so busy with other things that I could not make a life's work out of household chores, even though I enjoyed many of them.

Still, Latin! And putting up with the sanctimonious English chair. Was it worth it? One day Richard came home from a meeting of the

American Studies committee. He described the discussion of the language requirement. The group had decided that they could see no reason to require any more than a single foreign language. Lightbulb! His offhand conversation changed my life. I saw a little distance open ahead. I withdrew from the England department and enrolled in the American Studies program before it was even up and running—as the first student. Admittance was no problem under the circumstances.

All this is prelude to the important events that followed, as is another event in Cambridge which had preceded our arrival. Back in the old days, LDS congregations were expected to contribute and raise money to build and maintain their chapels. The church contributed forty and later eighty percent of the cost, but large amounts of money had to be raised locally, and this came on top of tithing, fast offerings, welfare, missionary fund, and a number of other obligations. The Cambridge Ward had a very nice building, erected through the sacrifice of many poor members and the contributions of many former members. But more money was always needed, and this was a congregation of promising but still cash-starved students and other members equally hard up, who were always looking for money-raising schemes. One evening at a dinner-party, the bishop, Bert van Uitert, suggested some possible money raising projects. One promising idea was a guidebook to Boston and its environs. He saw a market for this book and the possibility of significant income. The Harvard Business School students in the group considered the idea, but decided it would be just too much work. Bonnie Horne, speaking for the women, said that the Relief Society would take it on.

That is how *A Beginner's Boston* came to be written. "A friendly hub handbook containing information helpful to tourists, new settlers, students, bird watchers, bargain hunters, music lovers, walkers. . ." was a Relief Society project written in the sprightly prose of "chairman" Laurel Ulrich with the fabulous illustrations of Carolyn Peters (now Carolyn Person). The book relied on the experience and research of lots and lots of sisters—and a few husbands—to turn out what the Boston Globe called "A thorough, wonderfully readable & practical guide to just about everything in and around Boston." The book went through several editions from 1966 onward and made thousands of dollars for church activities. The sisters worked together toward commercial success, transcending the boundaries of the ward and church.

As I hope is clear, this was a time of turbulence, even for LDS student housewives generally considered a group caught in the time warp of conservative living. Even they were aware of the movement of the times. In 1970 Laurel suggested that we should get together and talk about our lives as Mormon women, and she invited a dozen or so women over to her house for a discussion. I don't remember whether she called it a consciousness raising group, which is what such regularly-meeting cells of

women were called in those days. As I recall, we gathered and talked for a couple of morning hours, had some refreshments, and quit before lunch. These were unstructured meetings, no officers, no minutes, no official plan. At the end of each meeting, we would schedule another. The meetings took place every few weeks, moving from one house to another. I can't remember how long this went on.

There were no real ground rules, and the discussion moved freely. As I recall, the major topics of conversation dealt with housework and its unending toll, with childbirth—was there a limit to how many children we should have? Should birth control—then somewhat forbidden–be used? And were we obligated to take on any and all church jobs we were requested to take? This sounds like a pretty tame feminist agenda, but these issues concerned us. Our two single students Judi Rasmussen (later Dushku) and Cheryll Lynn (later May) introduced some feminist books and ideas. And people were reading Kate Millett and other noted writers. We did not agree on many topics. No holds were barred in the discussions and considerable heat, light, rage, and pain emerged. I considered myself a voice of moderation and wisdom at the meetings, but I would go home and give my husband the strongest possible arguments for change. We were all exploring the ways in which we thought about women's roles, and we moved from one extreme of reaction to the other in our discussions. We came head to head on some issues. During the healthy give and take we confessed, discussed, and argued our views, and sometimes went home with headaches.

Out of this exchange emerged *Dialogue*'s "pink issue," published in the summer of 1971. I have heard people postulate why this group was called on to do a women's issue of the journal, that it was because of *A Beginner's Boston* or because we had some organization or so much underemployed brain power. But the truth is that we asked. Gene England, then *Dialogue*'s editor and a longtime friend, was visiting us. One evening as we walked through Harvard Yard, I suggested that there should be a women's issue and that we should edit it. I told him about our group, and he hesitated not at all. We were empowered to turn out an issue.

None of us had any experience in this kind of thing. We were totally in the dark. But we solicited manuscripts individually and with an ad in the journal and began to gather materials. We wanted to feature our local people, but did not want to dominate the issue. Our discussions at meetings moved to a discussion of the things to include in the issue and encouragement for some of our people to write them. There was a great deal of individual support and encouragement. We looked at a lot of stuff and agreed to take some very strange things. It was a tremendous amount of work, but we finally completed our issue. We referred to it from time to time as "Ladies' Home Dialogue."

By the time we submitted our materials, Gene England was no

longer the editor of *Dialogue*. Robert Rees was in charge. He was less than enchanted with this legacy issue; he did not approve of the contents. He really did not want to publish them, but he did. Eventually the "pink" issue of *Dialogue* came out and became something of a sensation. People seemed to be amazed that there was something to say about the female aspect of humanity and that we had done it.

The pink issue included contributions from twenty-five women and three men. Another eight women were credited for significant help. The introduction included this description of the group: "The original dozen or so are women in their thirties, college-educated with some graduate degrees, mostly city-bred, the wives of professional men and the mothers of several children." (A footnote lists the average number of children at three and two thirds each. "Of the four children born to group members this year, one increased the family's children to five, one to six and one to eight.") "While this group remains, we have added another dozen or so, including several young professional wives without children and some singles." The issue made an early appeal for the acceptance of diversity within our own ranks and asked, "Does it undercut the celestial dream to admit that there are occasional Japanese beetles in the roses covering our cottages?"

Rees, in his objections to the material, thought that we had not dealt with the real issues of Mormon women. I remember my husband saying that he thought Rees was presumptuous to tell us what the issues for Mormon women were. But if they weren't church service or birth control or housecleaning, what were they? Bob's answer was priesthood and polygamy, historical LDS issues. I was stung by this revelation. Those were not our issues; we occasionally discussed modern feminism, but we didn't have much to say about pioneer women. Could we have completely missed the point? Had we failed to comprehend our own lives as LDS women?

Rees's critique, however, soon bore fruit. About this time Susan Kohler discovered the *Woman's Exponent*, the Utah periodical published from 1872-1914, stored in bound volumes at the Widener Library. This was amazing to us. We were all life-long Mormons, but not a one of us had ever heard of this journal. Though not an official publication, the magazine included Relief Society news along with suffrage news, information about women the world over, and charming local stuff. Harvard University had a complete run of this fascinating periodical, and I remember spending an afternoon at Widener, copying out humorous news and poems to make up the program for one of our ward Relief Society birthday parties. The discovery of the *Woman's Exponent* opened a new life to us LDS women with college degrees. The journal, along with Robert Rees's comment, launched us into a study of our past. With the *Exponent* as our easy entree, our discussions became historical and comparative. We got books out of the library. We talked about our ancestors and discovered the strongly feminist past of LDS women.

While we were moving into the past, someone suggested that we should hold an annual dinner. Some of our women such as Bonnie Horne and Mimu Sloan were more than gifted at organizing food for large numbers of people. We could, we thought, show off this other aspect of women's work by inviting in people sympathetic to our interests and willing to pay for dinner. We would also feature an important female speaker, thus allowing us to honor her and to get to know her. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher was our first speaker. She was followed in subsequent years by Juanita Brooks, Lela Coons, Emma Lou Thane, and other women we considered to be role models in various ways. This Exponent Day dinner was another of the ways that the group made something out of nothing. Our unpaid labor created value.

At this first dinner, Jill Mulvay (Derr), then a public school teacher, approached Maureen, a researcher and writer in the church's Historical Department, and asked how a person could get a job like that. Maureen invited her to the office when she was next in Salt Lake, and Jill became part of what eventually became the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for LDS Church History now located at BYU. She has, in fact, been the director for some months now.

This kind of interaction shows how the church was operating back in those heady days. Maureen worked for Leonard Arrington, the first and only professional historian to run the church history operation. Leonard was a powerful bridge builder and motivator. Under his encouragement and direction, hundreds of people began and completed church history projects. He had organized the Mormon History Association, which brought about a rapprochement between historians of the LDS and RLDS churches, and he supervised a network of everything being done. When my husband returned home from an MHA meeting one time, he told me that he had had a long talk with Leonard about things I was doing at graduate school and with the women in Boston. I was amazed that someone of such importance could be interested in me or our small enterprises. But the next week I received a long letter from Leonard, following up the conversation, telling me what other people were doing, suggesting sources, and offering help of various kinds, from copying documents to providing modest funds to help with research. All too amazing. Thus, we were drawn into the great LDS history network.

Our historical discussions led to our next big project, a weekly class for the local LDS Institute. Judy Gilliland, one of our sisters, was married to Steve Gilliland, the institute leader. She suggested that we could probably do an institute class, and Steve did invite us to do one. The members of our stable but ever-shifting group signed up to research and prepare papers for presentation. Each chose a topic, some individual people, some historical events, some ideas, and then began to work. The women eagerly began trekking to Widener Library in Harvard Yard and the

Boston Public Library to research such subjects as Mormon women in politics, in medicine, in literature, in polygamous relationships, and so on. There were some serious topic-shifts along the way. I began to look for conversion stories, for instance, but not finding what I wanted there, I moved to miraculous cures. That topic seemed to include too much folklore, so I moved on to the way women administered healing powers over the years. Others made similar migrations. Still, we managed to come up with a varied and complementary list of topics which we advertised and presented as "Roots and Fruits of Mormon Women," a title I much prefer to the more sentimental and common designations of "roots and wings." The class was very successful, presenting new information to all of us and to an audience of fifty or so each week. We decided to get the presentations into shape as papers for publication.

I must say at this point—and could easily say at many points—how heady an experience this all was. We were just little housewives, but we became very arrogant little housewives. Although smart enough and able enough to do many things, we defined our husbands' work as of the truest family importance. Yet here we all were, working together, engaged in frontline enterprises, researching, thinking and writing for ourselves. We were publishing to an audience interested in reading what we had to say. We were making public presentations to people who came to hear us. This was more empowering than any successful women today will ever be able to imagine. We felt invincible.

I spent a lot of time working on the essays for the *Roots and Fruits* book, editing, checking footnotes, retyping, choosing pictures, working on a time-line and suggested reading lists. I had never done this work before, so I was surprised at how hard it was and how much of it there was to do. Some essays fell through, and to fill out the contents, Leonard suggested that we add essays from people working for the Historical Department: one from Maureen on Eliza R. Snow, one from Jill on school teachers, and one from Christine Rigby Arrington on early doctors. Working on this book along with my doctoral work, not to even mention keeping my household running and my family dressed and fed, was a fair amount of work. But a press had asked for the Mormon book, and I wanted to get that done and submitted. Meanwhile at the meetings, we were looking for new challenges. What else could we do?

At one meeting, in response to this concern, I said that my husband thought we might begin a newspaper, something like the *Woman's Exponent*, perhaps. This idea was greeted with enthusiasm. Yes, of course, it was what we were born to do. The notion had some practical promise, too, because we had a journalist in our group, Stephanie Smith Goodson. She had actually been paid to be a reporter in the past. None of the rest of us had even been on our high school or college newspaper or yearbook staffs. We would be total neophytes at such work. Stephanie was willing to do it, but she was overworked with a new baby and a calling as presi-

dent of the ward Relief Society. She decided to ask for a release from the latter heavy-duty assignment so that she could do the newspaper. However, despite tears and entreaties, the bishop refused such a release. She concluded she could not take the job.

So Carrel Sheldon, who despite having several small and demanding children to care for, was a major mover and shaker in all our operations, told me that I would just have to be editor. I was willing enough, but already more than a little busy with other jobs. Couldn't we just wait until the book manuscript was completed and submitted? No, said Carrel. We have to begin right now. And so we did.

To start a newspaper that, in its own way, picked up where the *Woman's Exponent* had left off seemed the thing to do. It also seemed appropriate to indicate that heritage in the new title. So the name *Exponent II* was chosen to symbolize the historical link, and the first issue, which came out in July of 1974, proclaimed the newspaper to be "the spiritual descendant of the *Woman's Exponent*."

We aimed for some diffidence, calling it a "modest but sincere newspaper." Maybe more notable, we set out to bridge the gap between the church's paradigms and our actual lives as women. "*Exponent II*, posed on the dual platforms of Mormonism and Feminism, has two aims: to strengthen the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and to encourage and develop the talents of Mormon women. That these aims are consistent we intend to show by our pages and our lives." That old editorial still has a ring.

Once we had managed to get the first issue's content somewhat complete, it went to Susan Kohler, our compositor. Of course this was prior to the days of computers. What Susan had was her husband's office IBM Selectric typewriter with its ball of type and its automatic return. This was state-of-the-art, and Susan could use it after the office was closed for the day. There was no neat way to correct errors, so when errors occurred, she would just begin the line over again and type it correctly. This meant that she brought in piles of text shredded like spaghetti which had to be arranged properly and pasted together.

Carrel Sheldon set up the financial accounting, helped create and mail out advertising flyers, and managed the subscription database, which at that time had to be typed on keypunch cards at MIT. Paste-up took place in Carrel's living room, Diane McKinney's kitchen, and Grethe Petersen's attic, among other places. On those long and busy evenings, the pages were composed on a light board that Carrel's husband Garret had constructed for that purpose. Almost everyone had children, and many of them were present, wandering around carrying blankets and bottles. Anyone who wanted to could paste up a page, which included some design work. Strips of typewritten paper were literally pasted onto large sheets of blue-lined graph paper.

A succession of art editors—Carolyn Person, Joyce Campbell, Sharon

Miller, Renee Tietjen, Linda Hoffman, to name a few of the early ones—would sketch an initial layout, letterpress titles, and then insert photographs or artwork that they had created themselves or solicited from other artists. After completing a page, a staff member signed off on it, and it was then hung on the wall to be proofread by editors Claudia Bushman, Nancy Dredge, and Susan Howe (later editors were Sue Booth-Forbes and Jenny Atkinson). I was usually around to proofread, but the pages looked so good I couldn't find mistakes even when they were there. I once let through a story of Bruce Jorgenson's in which the sections had been pasted up in the wrong order. The story line was wrong, but it was such a lyrical, lofty piece that it still sounded good. I didn't even see the problem until I received an anguished letter from Bruce.

When the paste-up was completed and the whole had been sort of proof-read, Carrel took it to the printer, and we had a few days reprieve before we had to get together again to mail it out. The first printing was managed with money Leonard Arrington had sent us for research purposes. I think it was $250. But because we were all so thrifty, we had just absorbed most of our own costs. Here was this nice little knot of seed money. We printed and sent out the first edition for free to everyone we could think of, soliciting subscriptions for future issues. We sent multiple copies to our best connections to give out to potential subscribers. By the end of the first year we had a subscription base of 4,000 readers.

I had worried that if we used everything we had for our first edition, we wouldn't have anything left for the next one. But happily I discovered the law that new material is generated by using up what you have. Since that early experience I now clear the decks for every project, knowing that there will always be plenty more ahead.

Seeing our labors come back in print, an actual, tangible product, was the most exciting moment of all. The group would then hold a huge mailing party where the papers were sorted by zip code, labels were attached, and bundles were bound according to the post office's regulations for third class mail. The mailing, which Susan Kohler supervised in the early days, was a huge job. Besides the work, unfriendly post office officials would say cross things.

By the fourth issue, which was fronted by Carolyn's provocative tree of knowledge, from which hung a large and luscious apple, things were settling down somewhat with people taking on specific jobs. While some did more work than others, everybody still did everything. Stephanie Goodson was doing some editorial work; Laurel Ulrich was doing book reviews; Heather Cannon was selecting features for "Cottage Industry"; Patricia Butler was writing the "Frugal Housewife"; Sue Booth-Forbes was doing sports; and Judi Dushku had begun her popular long-time feature, "The Sisters Speak," where women wrote in to answer the question of the issue. Business people also had editorial assignments. So it

was that Susan Kohler, assisted by Vicki Clarke, tended the mailbox, recorded subscriptions, and corresponded about business matters as well as scouring the old *Woman's Exponent* for choice bits to reprint. Carrel Sheldon, assisted by Saundy Buys, was typing the whole newspaper by then—generally with a baby on her lap—also writing articles and housing the operation in her big house. Joyce Campbell, then art chairman with the help of Carolyn Person, also made decisions about the poetry. Connie Cannon, historian and secretary, also commissioned and wrote profiles. Bonnie Horne supervised the layout after choosing the Letters to the Editor.

Somewhere along in here, we decided we needed to have a picture taken of the core group of women involved, which then included Joyce Campbell, Connie Cannon, Heather Cannon, Judi Dushku, Stephanie Goodson, Bonnie Horne, Susan Kohler, Maryann MacMurray, Grethe Peterson, Carrel Sheldon, Mimmu Sloan, and me. I think Heather Cannon's sister, a good photographer, was available to take the photograph. Once again we went to Harvard Yard, this time to the bronze John Harvard himself, all wearing long skirts—except Carrel who had not gotten the message. We disported ourselves around him, posing for several photos there and on the steps of Widener Library. Some student passing by wondered who we were. His friend responded that we "looked like a bunch of Mormons," no doubt meant as a slight. And I suppose that compared to other feminists of the time, we did seem to be a pretty bland, wholesome crew.

There was yet another significant innovation by the Boston sisters, the Retreat. I was against the name from the beginning. It was true that we would "retreat" from our responsibilities for a day or two, but the term was not part of our tradition. What I thought the event should be called was the Revival. That term was as true as the other and basic to our history. But I lost that argument. We organized and headed off for weekend Retreats from the very early days on, and *Exponent II* still Retreats annually to this day.

When the "Roots and Fruits of Mormon Women" manuscript was finally completed, I sent it off to the publisher. The book's name had by then been changed to "Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah." Lots of people thought the former name was too flip. The manuscript had scarcely gone out, when it was returned. The publisher did not like it. Many years later I discovered that he had sent it to another LDS female author for comment, and she had found it wanting. This was quite a blow, since we had grown quite used to success. We did not receive any suggestions or criticism, just a refusal. We offered it to other publishers, who also turned it down. One said that it "was too hot to handle." He wouldn't touch it "with a ten-foot pole." I put the manuscript away, a painful reminder of many wasted hours, and continued with other chores.

At this point, Carrel Sheldon rallied and decided that the book really had to be published. And that because no one else would publish it, we should publish it ourselves. This required that we set up our own publishing company, which we did and called Emmeline Press, as a tribute to longtime *Woman's Exponent* editor Emmeline B. Wells. We were once again moving into uncharted waters. Jim Cannon, the husband of Connie Cannon, one of our members, practiced law in Boston. He willingly undertook our legal work on a *pro bono* basis. Under his direction we got a waiver of any involvement in our manuscript by the first publisher. We set up a corporation as Mormon Sisters Inc., although later the church insisted that we change the name, and we became Exponent II, Inc.

All this meant that we needed money. Carrel found us a printer. We showed him the manuscript and set the specifications, opting for large type, lots of pictures, and a good looking product. When the printer gave us a bid, Carrel went to the bank and negotiated a loan. Twelve of us became limited partners for the loan, each responsible for just her own share. Carrel borrowed the cost of doing the book plus the interest on the loan. As we signed the papers, I was overcome with gloom. Would this mean disaster? Although the amounts look minuscule now, going into debt for my own selfish purposes seemed frivolous, against all my instincts. Maybe this time we really were biting off too much. But others seemed confident enough, so we moved forward.

Nancy Dredge went to work for the publisher, typing up the manuscript with all the codes that had to be entered for the typesetter. Carrel ordered 5,000 paperback books and 1,000 hardcover. But, again showing how well all of our enterprises worked together, we had the newspaper subscription list, a very choice mailing list of people likely to be interested in our book. The book went to press in the fall of 1976. The paperback book cost just $4.95, and we advertised it as a Christmas gift, selling multiple copies to our friends. Before the books were even delivered to us for transshipment, we had the money to repay the loan. We dedicated the book to our true friend Leonard J. Arrington, saying, "He takes us seriously." Another blazing success. As of 2003, the book is in print and available from its third publisher, Utah State University Press.

We felt we had discovered valuable information about the history of LDS women that all would welcome and benefit from. Who knew that Utah women had begun to vote in 1870, fifty years before U.S. women got the franchise? Who knew about the promising LDS female doctors who brought medicine to the West and taught Utah women to care for themselves? And yes, weren't those early Mormon women strong and impressive? We felt like missionaries sharing the good news. If our newspaper was a descendant of the *Woman's Exponent*, our book dealt with women from whom we were spiritually and sometimes physically descended. We felt in some ways that getting this book together, pol-

ished, edited, financed, and finally published had been a trial equivalent to crossing the plains. "The authors feel that they have made history by making history," said the introduction. Critics would discount this "self-congratulatory" statement.

The newspaper continued to move along well. One of the things we did was to address and send copies of an issue to the church office building, addressed to all the wives of general authorities in care of their husbands. This was done with the best will in the world. We were sure that they would want to know about the paper. We certainly did not expect our little periodical to offend anyone. Yet to our consternation, we were sternly informed by some that our paper was not welcome and that we were never to send it again. This was one of several negative reactions. Sometimes we were written up in other secular newspapers and came off sounding a little shrill. These articles were sent to Salt Lake City and got some negative attention. When we invited local women in greater Boston to join us, many did not wish to. And some of these women who did not want to join us were offended by the paper's very existence. Several anonymous letters complaining about our elitism and questionable activities made their way to Salt Lake City from our own wards and were then forwarded back to us. Alas, all very painful.

At this time my husband was serving as stake president in Boston, and we frequently had visitors from Salt Lake City, who came out to address our stake conferences. Many of these visitors had been our friends at one place or another, and they often stayed with us in our shabby old Victorian mansion. One such visitor warned me that *Exponent II* would come to no good end and that it must be discontinued. I remember responding in great surprise that the church had nothing to fear from me. He said specifically that being involved with the paper would "damage us in the eyes of the church." He was also concerned that the stake president's wife was involved in such an enterprise. His concerns about the paper were not about what it was, but about what it could and would become. He said he felt very bad about having to tell us these things. I thought about his counsel for the coming week and decided, finally, that I would have to go along with his advice.

The next weekend we had a retreat at Grethe Petersen's beach house. At the meeting in the evening when we were sitting around talking, I told everyone about my experience and how I feared that we were getting deep into trouble and had better quit. This news was greeted with disbelief and sorrow. I said I was unrepentant, but I was obedient. In the long discussion that followed, many alternatives were suggested. The conclusion was that all involved should write letters to that authority explaining the benefits of the paper and of all our other activities, telling how they had led to increased sisterhood, how our testimonies had grown, how broken-hearted we would be to part with the paper and so

on. I had already committed myself to withdrawing from the enterprise and so did not write a letter.

When the letters were delivered in Salt Lake City, the authority who had visited us talked to L. Tom Perry, who had been our stake president and knew us all. The first man said that he thought that the letters deserved a response and asked Perry if he would go to Boston and talk to us, which he did. He spent the flight from Salt Lake City reading all the issues published so far, and he admitted that he found nothing objectionable in them. But again, there was the fear of what the paper would become. He said that it was not suitable for the wife of the stake president to be involved in activity with this kind of negative potential.

However hypothetical his concern, this was something approaching a direct order. I was the wife of a stake president, committed to supporting him and his calling, and so my life with *Exponent II* ended. Nancy Dredge became the new editor and served for many years, as well as signing on for another tour of duty recently. The paper celebrates its thirty-year anniversary in 2004, continuing to provide a friendly place for publication for many women. Hundreds of them have worked on the paper over its long life, illustrating the diversity of roles we long ago called for. Editor Dredge notes that there is no agreement on any particular cause and no group point of view beyond recognizing the value of each woman's voice. *Exponent II* has taken on hard topics, publishing anguished, angry, and triumphant words. Laurel once said that it was like a long letter from a dear friend, and many readers see it in that light, reading it cover to cover as soon as it arrives.

As for me, I still had plenty to do. I took up yoga which preserved my sanity and brought me peace of mind. In the summer of 1977, we left Boston/Cambridge. My husband, having taken a job at the University of Delaware, was released as stake president, and we moved south, starting yet another life. I have occasionally since been involved in *Exponent II* activities, watching the continued dedication and excitement of the creators with admiration and pride. I am very glad that the paper is still alive, that women still write about their experiences for the benefit of their sisters, and that they gather at the Retreat.

So this is my *Exponent II* story. I hope that others will get down their remembrances. This was a magic time when women cooperated and accomplished things. And all this happened in less than twelve years. Do others remember that long ago time differently? I hope they will write their own stories.

Plymouth Rock on the Mississippi

Rebecca Chandler

"So you're considering a Pilgrimage," I wrote to someone I'd recently met and liked, "nothing would delight me more. You'd have some time away, you'd make new friends, get more deeply acquainted with familiar ones, and you'd discover a whole new source of strength and support for that rather extended pilgrimage we call being a Mormon. That is, I hope you would. . .I've noticed, however, that it doesn't always turn out quite that way. One year, a carload of ladies from a neighboring state joined us, expecting something along the lines of a BYU education week, as I understand, and left in something of a huff before the weekend was over. No one knows exactly what happened to them, but apparently they were distressed, and so, as a consequence, were many of us who stayed behind. I wouldn't want anything like that to happen to you. So let me undertake to explain what Pilgrimage is—or at least what it is and has been and what I certainly hope it will continue to be—for me.

"First, a little history: In the fall of 1981 with the 140th anniversary of the founding of Relief Society pending the following March, five women from Salt Lake City took it into their already over-committed brains to undertake a sort of national reunion of sisters the very weekend of March 17 right in Nauvoo, Illinois, for a sort of ultimate Relief Society Birthday Party. They found accommodations for 56 in the Nauvoo House *right* on the banks of the Mississippi River and invited a number of friends, colleagues, sisters-in-law, former roommates. . .former missionary companions. . .and a general board member or two who they thought would enjoy such an experience, and then basically waited to see what would happen when we all got together. Someone somewhere coined the term of 'pilgrims' to characterize all these women, and the guest list kept changing as some found they could or could not attend and others heard of the event and asked to be included. When the planners were advised of the vagaries of Midwestern winters, the date was changed to mid-

May, but it did occur. . .and those of us who finally did attend had one of the most memorable experiences of our lives.

"I've wondered if the format wasn't inspired—only because it worked so well that it has been pretty widely followed ever since. There was a large group meeting on the first evening for introductions. We agreed to simply offer trust as a gift, rather than acting like a group of strangers for the next 36 hours. The fact that we were in the upper room of the red brick store, on Water and Grange streets, sitting however uncomfortably on the floor of the very room where the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo had held its initial meetings, made this particular meeting of sisters seem all the more significant. A presentation of sorts had been prepared to re-enact that first meeting, and, I am sure, we sang together. The next day was a potpourri of presentations—mostly historical. There were also discussion groups, delicious meals and good snacks, strolls around Nauvoo, and, always and everywhere singing. The music, under the direction of Cathy Stokes, was worth the trip in itself. Her selections, which include early LDS hymns, spirituals, and Primary songs can leave you humming for weeks.

"Sunday morning, finding ourselves without the priesthood, we held a Quaker Meeting on the banks of the Mississippi River with sharing, testimony bearing, prayers and. . .more hymns. We also tried to figure out how we could do all this again—and also how we could ever find a way to share the experience with others. Clearly the two objectives were mutually exclusive, and it was eventually determined that we should break this vanguard group of ours up along regional lines both for proximity and practicality and so we could include others who lived near us in our wards and stakes in any subsequent comings together. Susan Rugh, who lived in Chicago at the time, took responsibility for the Midwest. Other Pilgrimage groups were quickly or have since been formed. There are Pilgrimages meeting in the Northeast, the South, across the Inter-mountain West, and on the Pacific coast. There is a Pilgrimage near you. . .or near enough.

"What are the virtues of Pilgrimage I particularly value? One is the virtual absence of pretension. Unlike any number of other 'reunions' I can think of, I always look forward to Pilgrimage without worrying about what I'm going to wear or fretting that I really ought to lose a few pounds before the weekend arrives. I can depend on finding friends who seem glad to see me no matter how I look—or feel—or what I think I've accomplished since we last met. Something else I value is the sense that, in this group, women somehow stand on their own. We identify ourselves not so much by our positions in the church, or by whether or not we are married, as simply by who we are. Nursing babies have always been welcome, but beyond that, this is not a group that focuses much on the presence or absence or relative wonderfulness of children. For two

and a half glorious days a year, it just feels good to think about ourselves, our concerns as individuals, and about each other. Despite our interest in Mormon history and our search for models among sisters who have gone before us, I also see a Pilgrimage as very forward-looking. This will not be a group that is afraid of change, clinging to a comfortable past. Someone at a Quaker Meeting put it very well when she observed, '. . .there is no stagnation here.' I find, in fact, that I derive tremendous energy in the free exchange of ideas; the challenging perspective that just talking with someone else, someone different can bring—which reminds me of something else: As stimulating, as entertaining or as touching as the planned program may be, the best parts of a particular Pilgrimage may be the ride there or a late-night conversation huddled in a sleeping bag, or meeting a new friend at lunch. . .or the ride home. You may find a kindred spirit three states away you would never have otherwise met, or get to know someone in your own area you barely knew, or deepen an already valued friendship just by sharing this experience.

"So why do I hesitate to extend an invitation to almost anyone? Why isn't there an announcement in my Ward bulletin and a stack of fliers in the foyer? Well. Because Pilgrimage has always been characterized as a 'safe place'—but safe in a scary way. It's a place you can take your doubts as well as your convictions, your discouraging failures as well as your triumphs—without fear of recrimination or social censure. And that's important. For someone to whom an LDS encounter with anything unauthorized or uncorrelated seems disturbing, Pilgrimage is likely to be. . .disturbing. I wasn't there, but I understand one legendary speaker in a nearby ward prefaced her Sacrament Meeting remarks by saying, 'Are there any investigators here? any brand-new members just getting into this? anyone with a fragile testimony? No? Okay then, I've got something to say.' At Pilgrimages we like to start with a similar set of assumptions—that we can speak, or maybe squeak without fear of giving offense. It is important to recognize that, overwhelmingly, this group of sisters is committed to church activity and to living the gospel. Participants typically include a goodly number of what Jan Shipps would call 'birthright Mormons' but also any number of converts of varying tenures. Mostly, these women are very involved in their home wards, often serving in Relief Society and Young Women's presidencies, teaching Sunday School and Relief Society, serving on stake boards. They are also, not infrequently, 'supporting and sustaining' husbands who are in ward and stake leadership positions. Others are inactive or not so active, perhaps because they've slipped under the institutional radar, or sometimes perhaps because they prefer it that way. But we're all sisters.

"I must acknowledge that we have discussed some pretty heavy issues over the years, but I can't remember an episode of serious male bashing. 'Are you still speaking to me?' Neal asked when I returned from

an early Pilgrimage. Far from having spent the weekend complaining about patriarchy, I returned grateful to him for manning the household, so I could get away. I did not tell him that the most spirited discussion I had heard or overhead or even heard about at that particular retreat—one that touched the very soul of orthodoxy, our very deepest commitments—was between two opposing camps of quilters: those who machine piece their quilt tops and who think it is okay to sit on a finished quilt, and those purists who do everything by hand and don't want anyone to go near the finished product. If you think an encounter of that confrontational intensity might challenge your testimony, you may want to think twice about attending. But, if after what I've told, you think this is a group of women you would enjoy and an experience you would relish, then go ahead: delegate the road show, re-schedule your son's baptism, make minimum payments on your bills, put off your breakdown, and join us.

"Despite all I've said to prepare you, I can't predict what will happen—but I can guarantee two things—you will return home overfed and underslept—and you will be welcome."

Midwest Pilgrims: We're Still Here

Ann Gardner Stone

MIDWEST PILGRIMS IS THE RESULT of a charge given the women at the Nauvoo women's retreat held in 1982. It was to go back to their various geographical locations and organize similar gatherings. It is also the product of the cultural and political climate of the time, in and out of the church. The women's movement, the advent of *Exponent II*, and the publication of books like *Mormon Sisters* and *Sister Saints* all provided rich soil to nourish the growing awareness of our rich heritage as Mormon women—women who were accomplished, spiritually gifted, and recognized equals in the early annals of the church. This also provoked questions about women's equality in the modern church—questions which reached a fever pitch in our Midwest area because of the ERA and the church's involvement with its defeat. There were wounds, some deep, and there were feelings of dis-ease for many women in the church community. Midwest Pilgrims seemed to arrive at just the right time to throw a lifeline to many of these women.

The first Midwest Pilgrims retreat held in St. Charles, Illinois, in the spring of 1983 was a miracle. The most repeated sentiment about that gathering was that it was the beginning of the discovery of a real sisterhood, something that had been lacking in many home wards. And it seemed a safe place to voice fears, frustrations, to both question and to build testimony. Doreen Taylor said this about that first retreat, "We followed the path with the light of the moon covered by clouds of a recent fresh shower and the dim glow of a flashlight. Kay Carpenter said that if the Celestial Kingdom is like this weekend, she wanted to go. Suddenly from out of the shadows jumped two figures yelling 'BOO!'" That kind of captures the essence of our retreats—celestial moments punctuated by a good goose.

Midwest Pilgrims is perhaps different from some of the other women's retreats in that we move from place to place. We meet every

other year at a beautiful Catholic retreat center in Rockford, Illinois, and the other years might find us in Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana or Wisconsin. This gives everyone opportunities to plan a retreat, makes traveling a bit more equitable, and brings in new blood from the host area. Some years we've held two retreats—one spring, one fall, but busy lives have generally moved us back to one per year.

We don't follow any set formula or schedule; that is left to the group in charge. Some years we invite a featured speaker, other times we fill the schedule with small discussion groups and presentations led from among our own ranks. Friday night is usually a time for introductions—we've seen many clever and revealing methods to break the ice—group song writing, sharing loaves of bread that symbolize something in our lives, questions we'd like answered, bumper stickers that summarize us, etc.

If there is any "given," it is the music—usually led by the inimitable Cathy Stokes, who tries to be patient with our mostly white-folks way of singing. Some pilgrims come every year just to sing with Cathy. We've also started a choir for anyone who wants to join. They practice on Saturday afternoon and perform on Sunday morning. It's often non-traditional and always beautiful. The other piece of the agenda that is sacrosanct is the Quaker Meeting, held on Sunday morning and outside, weather permitting. This is a time for summarizing, for healing, for sharing thoughts and hearts.

Sometimes, but not always, we've shared the sacrament (when men of the priesthood are in close proximity), sometimes we have skits, musical performances, writers' workshops. Sometimes women come who don't like the retreat and leave. Sometimes we have women who never come back. Sometimes we have women who move from the Midwest and always come back. Sometimes we leave filled; sometimes, not so much.

We just marked our 20th year. In this impermanent and transient society, this seems remarkable. Why and how have we managed such a long run? The "how" has to do with some very practical management principles. We have been able to be financially sustaining by charging $5 dues to remain on the mailing list. This is very loosely enforced; mostly we rely on an honor system of support, but it provides seed money for each year's retreat. There have also been generous "angels" who have donated money to cover unforeseen costs and to provide "scholarships" for those who might not have been able to attend for financial reasons. Even though we are geographically spread out, we've maintained a *de facto* "central office" in the Chicago area so that there has been a rooted Midwesterner to field questions and be sure that the wheels are turning toward the next year.

The "why" is a bit more complex and may have already been addressed. It could be as simple as the fact that women like to be together. And we need more than forty minutes on Sunday to get a good discussion going. Especially when those discussions have been led by the likes of Val Avery, Judy Dushku, Cheiko Okazaki, Louise Degn, Lavina Fielding Anderson, or Peggy Stack, to name but a few. And when those discussions can take place in the Kirtland Temple or the room above the Joseph Smith store in Nauvoo or along the banks of the Mississippi River, who wouldn't want to be a part of that?

The first groups were diverse—old and young, working and stay-at-homes, committed Mormons and not-so-committed. The demographics have fluctuated over the years, and there began to be some concern that the group was becoming decidedly "gray." Would there be a younger generation devoted enough to pick up the baton? Some of those fears were assuaged at our 20th gathering. Susan Rugh asked us some questions to help provide an historical perspective to those years. "What were your issues 20 years ago?" she asked. "What are your issues today?" One of the groups reported that 20 years ago some of them had been wrestling with the ERA while others were wondering where's Waldo? The issues had ranged very widely. Surely there would be a range of pressing issues to keep us going for another 20 years.

Have we made a difference? Are retreats little more than weekend getaways? As I read over post-retreat remembrances, I hear the hopeful voices of women who aren't necessarily trying to change the world or the world of the church, but are trying very hard to find ways to live lives that are thoughtful and meaningful and grace-full. Midwest Pilgrims has provided sanctuary for women at various crisis points in their lives, has given rest to the battle-fatigued, has stimulated our thinking and given us some really good laughs. That's certainly worth something. Claudia Bushman wrote that the purpose of *Exponent II* was to be faithful but frank. I believe the same has been true of our Pilgrimages. In the first issue of *MS* magazine, Gloria Steinem said in an article on sisterhood, "I have met brave women who are exploring the outer edge of human possibility, with no history to guide them, and with a courage to make themselves vulnerable that I find moving beyond words." I think Midwest Pilgrims are those women, and we now have twenty years of meaningful history. I too find that moving beyond words.

Pioneers

Carol Lynn Pearson

My people were Mormon pioneers.
Is the blood still good?
They stood in awe as truth
Flew by like a dove
And dropped a feather in the West.
Where truth flies you follow
If you are a pioneer.

I have searched the skies
And now and then
Another feather has fallen.
I have packed the handcart again
Packed it with the precious things
And thrown away the rest.

I will sing by the fires at night
Out there on uncharted ground
Where I am my own captain of tens
Where I blow the bugle
Bring myself to morning prayer
Map out the miles
And never know when or where
Or if at all
I will finally say,
"This is the place,"

I face the plains
On a good day for walking.
The sun rises
And the mist clears.
I will be all right:
My people were Mormon Pioneers.

"Dear Brethren"—Claiming a Voice in the Church

Carol Lynn Pearson

IN THE SEVERAL DECADES in which I have heard LDS women discuss "women's issues" as they pertain to the church, I have found it remarkable how much fear there is among so many to speak their minds about the things they find upsetting. Time after time, after hearing a story of personal hurt or of general distress about "the place of woman," I have said, "Write a letter. Raise your hand. Speak to your bishop."

"Oh, I couldn't do that!" There is fear in the voice.

I acknowledge that too many women and men have been punished in large ways or small ways for speaking their minds about issues in the church, but because I have not been punished and because I have reason to believe that many of my words have been well received and helpful, I would like to encourage my favorite form of critical response—writing a letter.

I do this by sharing a letter I wrote fifteen years ago to my bishopric, with copies to my stake president and to President Hinckley and to Dallin Oaks. Something had happened at church, so huge in all that it symbolized, that I knew I could either chew on it for weeks or just sit down and write a letter. I sat down and wrote.

May 9, 1988
Dear Bishop and Counselors,

Knowing, as I do, that the three of you are good and caring men, I believe that you have concern for the feelings of the members of the ward. Consequently I feel comfortable in sharing some feelings with you.

One of the roles that life has assigned me is that of defender of women, which role I am happy to take. I have for more than thirty years been a careful observer and documenter of the various ways in which our society and our church demean women and consistently value things male over things female, despite rhetoric to the contrary.

Of all the things I have observed, none has been more remarkable than what happened in our ward yesterday on Mother's Day. I love our ward. When people ask me why I don't move back to Utah, a major part of my response is that I love my ward in California. I have wonderful memories and great appreciation for this ward and for this ward's bishopric. But the memory of yesterday will remain with me as an enormous sorrow. I will start at the beginning.

A year ago, as I was sitting in sacrament meeting on Mother's Day, it suddenly dawned on me that all of the talks, *all* of the talks, were in commemoration of the priesthood. I could not believe my ears. I thought to myself, this is not happening. They would not do this to us. Here we have one day—*one* day out of the year—on which it is legitimate to focus on women, on the powers of the female, possibly on the eternal and theological implications of motherhood, and instead we devote that day to honoring the *priesthood*? Surely this is not happening. But every talk was on the priesthood. The printed program, of course, informed us that the "theme of the month" was priesthood restoration, but that was thin justification for what was happening. By the time the meeting was over, I was fairly shaking. I wished that the talks had been on food storage; we could have forgiven that as an oversight. But to have talks on the priesthood on Mother's Day conveys the unavoidable feeling of insult, rather like spending Martin Luther King day talking about how blessed we are to have been born white. After the closing prayer, carnations were handed out to the mothers. I had to wonder what the flower meant.

I was not the only woman in the ward who noticed the problem. Both of my visiting teachers, without my bringing it up, said, "How did you like the way they snubbed us on Mother's Day?" But women are good and forgiving and supportive and take what they're given and make the best of it. However, I did convey to the bishopric through a respected third party that I felt a real mistake had been made.

That was last year, and on the Sunday before Mother's Day of this year, one of the women in the ward said to me, "What do you think we're going to have on Mother's Day next week? Do you think they'll give us the same treatment?" I assured her I was certain they would not.

Can you imagine my surprise when, later that evening, my son John poked his head in my door and said, "Mom, would you remind me—I was just asked to give a talk next Sunday. On the restoration of the priesthood."

If I had not been sitting down, I might have fallen down. "You're kidding. You've got to be kidding. John, next Sunday is Mother's Day."

"Oh. Oh, yeah."

"John, would you please call Brother Manning back and tell him next Sunday is Mother's Day and ask if you can talk on that."

Brother Manning was highly apologetic for not having noticed the date himself and said that certainly John should speak to a theme of Mother's Day. When I got on the phone and recounted the past year's Mother's Day history to him, Brother Manning said, "Sister Pearson, you sound just like my mother. Those are things she says all the time."

I could not believe that we were going to have a repeat of previous year's performance. In fact, I made some phone calls to find out what the talks were going to be the next week. I was told I could expect the major addresses to be themed to Mother's Day. I then asked John if he would like to talk on the subject of the Heavenly Mother, something we have talked about frequently in our family, and he said yes. The talk that John subsequently gave was drawn from the huge research I have done on this subject over the last many years.

Much to my amazement, after the two youth speakers gave their talks themed to mothers, the two main speakers addressed themselves fully to the priesthood. I was embarrassed for Brother Curtis, who made a difficult attempt at the beginning of his talk to acknowledge that it was Mother's Day and tried somehow to tie that in with the subject he'd been asked to speak on. I could only shake my head, amazed that this was happening. When next the brother who was conducting gave particular thanks to those who had spoken to their assigned theme, I felt a shock from which I am still reeling. And then came the statement, "Isn't it wonderful that motherhood and priesthood work so well together?" I sat in disbelief. After the prayer I was asked to stand, so I could receive a pink carnation.

I may be the only one in the ward who is writing a letter to you, but be assured that I am not the only one who is feeling precisely what I have expressed. Many women and many men found it to be a sad day. Directly after Sacrament Meeting, a member of the Relief Society Presidency grabbed me and asked if I could please take ten minutes at the end of Relief Society and give some thoughts to the mothers, as they had noticed that nobody had prepared anything really to commemorate the day, and they were also grabbing some Primary children to come in and sing. I told her that of course I would.

Brethren, what a shame!

But, even as I write this, I know that the bishopric is not the enemy. Consciousness is the enemy. Each member of the bishopric is a good man, whose hard work and kindness have been appreciated by me and my family. The problem here is not just the simple one of a failure to plan ahead with a little sensitivity. And the result is not just somebody's hurt feelings. What happened yesterday is symbolic of something so vital and profound that it demands our very best attention. Why is our collective consciousness of what we do to our women so low? How can we, year after year, decade after decade, allow one half of the human family to be placed in a secondary position and consider this appropriate?

Today in the newspaper I read, under the heading, "Why Women Can Wear Pants but Men Can't Wear Skirts," something I have known for a long time: "This double standard exists because men have higher status than women in our society. . . .It is acceptable to take on the trappings of those who have higher status than we do. . . .But if men dress like women, it's not acceptable. After all, why would anyone want to look like or act like or live like someone who is less respected? We aspire to upward mobility, not downward mobility."

And we wonder why many women are opting against motherhood and in favor of traditionally male pursuits. Or why many women who do devote themselves primarily to traditionally female pursuits do so with the vague feeling that, much as they love it, they are viewed as holding second prize. The church should be actively engaged in promoting the status of women, the respect given women, not in continually diminishing these.

On page 92 of the current *Ensign*, Elder Hinckley is quoted as saying, "Woman is God's supreme creation. . . .Strong and able women today fill responsible posts in industry, government, education, and the professions. The whole world looks with respect to the Prime Minister of Britain, a woman of demonstrated ability and great capacity in carrying forward a program designed to strengthen her nation and its people. We were all impressed when Golda Meier served as Prime Minister of Israel. It is wonderful to witness this great renaissance. I think it will continue to grow for the blessing of people everywhere."

There is indeed a "great renaissance" going on in the world, in which women are being acknowledged and empowered, and it is and will be a blessing to everyone. But is there such a renaissance going on in the church? Many of my close women friends have left the church, despairing that such a renaissance is possible. I have chosen to stay in the church, determined to be a force in assisting that renaissance to happen.

And slowly it is, I think. Slowly more and more people are asking questions: Where are the women in our history? Why did all the prayers in the Bible go up for a boy child instead of a girl child? Why are women in the scriptures so invisible or so clearly second class when they are visible? Why do we so emphasize the eternal family, but not find it strange to worship God as a Single Parent? Why are we given the impression, through scripture and story, that everything really important on this earth has been done by a male God and his male children? Why does the historical suppression of the knowledge of God as Mother look like "a conspiracy" (to quote a fine review of a BYU symposium as reported in the *Church News*)? Why are Mormon women who go to work to send a son on a mission or perhaps to send a child to college or to insure music lessons for their children made to feel guilty when they deserve all the support they can get? Why are Mormon women so subject to depression?

Why did the husband of a friend of mine say, when she asked him what he would do had he been the one in the relationship born a woman, "I guess I'd just make the best of a bad deal"? Why do so many Mormon women go through the temple once and refuse to go back again or go back with great reservations? Why did I notice last year in a Relief Society lesson, given to women by a woman, that thirteen examples and statements cited were from men and not one was from a woman? Why did it take Sonia Johnson to point out that women were not allowed to pray in Sacrament Meeting? Why do other indefensible policies still exist, such as that requiring an inactive husband to give permission for his wife to go to the temple, but not for an inactive wife to give permission for her husband to go to the temple? Why can a non-member male serve as Sunday School president, but a faithful woman member cannot? (A woman can rule Great Britain or Israel, but not the Sunday School?) Why did the General Presidency of the Relief Society and the entire General Board have the distinct feeling, when organizational changes were made a few years ago, that they were being asked to step further to the back of the bus? Why has a recent church-sponsored survey shown that the more educated a man is, the more likely he is to stay in the church and the more educated a woman is, the more likely she is to leave?

The questions that are being asked go on and on. It may be possible to dismiss this letter because, as we know, Sister Pearson has this thing about women. Dear Brethren, this thing about women is one of the most profoundly important issues that exist today, affecting the family, the nation, the world, and surely the church at the very center. Maleness and femaleness, on every level, are out of balance, and the resultant ills are frightening. To say more would require a book, not a letter.

My goal is to raise awareness. My wish is that each of you would look at every program, every policy, every talk, every lesson and ask if it promotes or undercuts the self-esteem, the general status of women. I know that you love your wives and that you want the best for your daughters and that you feel concern for the well-being of all the women in the ward. The women in this ward are marvelous people. I love them. They deserve the very best.

The renaissance of women that Elder Hinckley spoke of is a reality and is not going to be reversed. With or without the church it is, with all its confusion and possibility for excess and error, going to move forward and sort itself out and bless the world. I sincerely hope that we can all be a part of it.

As to the immediate incident that prompted this letter. The obvious justice would be to take next Sunday, which is the official day to commemorate the restoration of the priesthood, and devote it to a belated celebration of womanhood and motherhood, not a "program" with little ditties about how perfect our mothers are, which sometimes makes them feel worse going out the door than they did coming in, but powerful,

dignified discourses on womanhood and motherhood in history, in our lives today, in our eternal tomorrow. If you could do something so magnificent as that, how proud of you I would be!

I thank you for reading this letter. I thank you for being the good men that I know you to be. If I have made you uncomfortable, I do not apologize. Discomfort, even pain, as all women know, is the only way a birth takes place. We are in the process of giving birth to a new and better vision of women, and we must go through our labor.

Again, I offer you my appreciation and pledge you my support. I want to continue to give service in the ward and in the church in whatever way I may be useful.

I send this letter with my very best wishes and hopes for increased understanding.

Very sincerely,
Carol Lynn Pearson

POSTSCRIPT

This letter bore good fruit. My bishop, a fine man, called me the night he received the letter and said, "Sister Pearson, my consciousness has been raised. I don't pay much attention to what people say about the way I run the ward, but I have a great deal of respect for you and I listen to what you say." The bishop and I spoke for some time, and the upshot was that he suggested that August's "theme of the month" should be "Women and Mothers." He asked me to help him plan it and also to be a major speaker. I gave a very strong talk on valuing femaleness as much as maleness, which I later expanded into an address I gave to the Mormon Women's Forum called "A Walk in the Pink Moccasins."

I am still asked to speak in my ward, frequently in fact, and my colorful comments are looked forward to in Relief Society and other meetings. And I still write letters to the Brethren, most recently about how it feels to be handed a Relief Society manual that is only a priesthood manual in disguise, making not the slightest effort to include me as a woman.

> This morning, as I read the first lesson and examined the entire text, I remembered the old English law of marriage that said when male and female join together, they become one, and the one is him. I felt I was holding in my hands an anachronism. How can we be at this level of consciousness in the year 2003?

Maybe someone gave a little thought to what I wrote. But more important to me, I went to sleep that night knowing that I am not a woman without a voice. That's a good feeling.

On Being a Mormon Woman

Vickie Stewart Eastman

LAST WEEKEND, I TRAVELED TO CALIFORNIA to attend the graduation of my youngest child and only daughter, Megan, from UC Berkeley. She graduated with honors in sociology, a true personal triumph for her. Also graduating was her sociology buddy and friend, Sara. As the girls and I were walking around San Francisco one day, Sara told me that Megan had described to her my struggles with feminism in the Mormon church. She asked me to tell her about it. I'm afraid I failed the missionary test right then and there, for I told her what I am about to tell you.

First let me say that in my personal journey through Mormon culture as a woman, I have reached a point where my sense of being a woman is now almost completely separate from my Mormonism. I see myself not so much as a Mormon woman, but rather as a woman who happens to be a Mormon. In fact, for many years now, my being a Mormon has conflicted with my being a woman. It has been a difficult road to walk, and I sometimes wonder why I continue to live in such tension.

My daughter Megan's life story makes a good framework for my experience. She is 22. When I was her age, I was still a Mormon princess, born of good bloodlines and dedicated to living a Mormon life. I went to college at Stanford, starting in 1966 and graduating as a married student in 1971. I came there fresh from a life in Utah—but everything changed for me after the first quarter at Stanford. Gene England, a member of the bishopric of the Stanford student ward, was just starting *Dialogue*. The country was ramping up the war in Viet Nam while it roiled in the midst of the civil rights movement at home. During that fall quarter, the church knocked down the Coalville, Utah Tabernacle, a beautiful old pioneer building, in the middle of the night to forestall anticipated protests by the citizens of that small town. I returned home to Utah at Christmas to tell friends and family that I wasn't so sure about this war in Viet Nam, that I was angry that the church would destroy rather than preserve its pioneer heritage—and why couldn't we give blacks the priesthood? My father became upset, and my Utah friends promptly labeled me a "California Mormon." That was the beginning of a path I have never turned from since, the path of asking uncomfortable questions.

It was the ERA ratification fight during the late 1970s and early 1980s that made me identify myself as a feminist. Along with my good friend Deedee (who, when we get that taken care of, should definitely be the first woman bishop), I watched in horror from California as the organized and covert machinations of the Relief Society worked to defeat the amendment in other states. We retreated to work in the Primary to get away from the anti-ERA rhetoric, calling ourselves "Relief Society Boat People." Deedee still has her button proclaiming, "Another Mormon for ERA."

It was at this time, in 1980, after three sons, that Megan made her entrance into my family. Her birth was one of the high points of my entire life—I hadn't wanted to believe that God would let me go through life without a daughter! He didn't let me down. When Megan was just a few months old, Deedee and I took her to hear Sonja Johnson speak—a true feminist infant baptism if ever there was one. Megan's birth changed all my feelings about baby blessings. I had been willing enough to see my sons blessed in the traditional fashion, but I resisted the idea of handing this precious woman child to a group of men to pronounce over her their ideas of what her woman's life would be. After delaying the blessing for months, arguing that if non-member fathers could stand in the circle, then temple-endowed mothers surely should be able to do so also, I lost the battle. In addition to my husband's giving her a father's blessing on Fast Sunday, I gave Megan a mother's blessing at home, surrounded by women.

In 1984, not long after Megan's birth, I had one of the shining epiphanies in my history as a Mormon woman. Margaret Toscano's first paper at Sunstone, entitled, "The Missing Rib—the Forgotten Place of Queens and Priestesses in Zion," detailed all the evidence from early church history that women were intended by Joseph Smith to function in a priesthood role. The paper was such a sensation that she presented it a second time during the lunch hour, so more people could hear it. That paper changed every paradigm for me. I have never been the same since I heard it presented. I came away aflame with hope for the future of Mormon women and with a clear vision for the future. Other churches were ordaining women to the priesthood out of a simple sense of fairness and equity while our church had *solid historical reason and evidence* to support such a policy! No other church had such a legacy! All we had to do was to make sure everyone understood, and a change would certainly be almost automatic! I threw myself into the effort, not as a writer, but as a doer. I asked uncomfortable questions, I joined in women's causes, I started a women's discussion group, I objected, I gained a reputation.

And now, 22 years later, after a divorce, nine years as a single mom, building a career, and happily re-marrying, I watch that little baby who was Megan, now grown to beautiful womanhood, graduate from Berkeley. And her friend Sara asks me how it is to be a Mormon woman.

I'm afraid I told Sara that the fight for women's equality in the Mormon church is over. Our efforts to change the institution have been almost fruitless. We haven't changed a thing; in fact, women's official status in the church is worse now than in the 60s and early 70s when we started. We have no hope left. Our leaders have given up and dropped out or been subjected to church discipline or otherwise driven away. There is no one to take our place in the struggle because our daughters have seen the situation for what it is and simply opted out. The patriarchy has won, and Mormon women are now pretty much defined by male Mormon leaders.

Sara asked me how I felt about Megan not taking the torch from me and carrying on in the church. I told her that I understood why Megan had left the church. How could a young woman with ambition, intelligence, and grit allow herself to be confined in the narrow little box that is now prescribed? In her shoes, I would do the same thing. The difference between Megan and me is that I was born into a different church before the battle lines were so completely drawn and the issues so hopelessly polarized. I told Sara that I could see why Megan would not want to be part of an organization that is far more conservative than she is and where everything irritates her. I wish for Megan a rich spiritual life and a sure connection with God, but she will likely have to find it from outside of Mormonism, even as I found it from within.

So there it is, a bleak sunset to Margaret Toscano's brilliant sunrise.

My anguish over these thoughts has been growing over the last couple of years, and I have talked with my good friends in an attempt to find any positive directions that can be pursued from such sad conclusions.

Lavina has said that even though the institutional battle is lost, there is value in individual women living the struggle and telling their stories as many of us have done.

Anne says that the best and brightest always learn that their spiritual connections with God are independent of institutional Mormonism. Therefore, we can pursue spirituality with faith and conviction on our own, which many of us have done.

Carol Lynn says that she has moved beyond the battles of women and the church and that there is clear sky beyond the clouds. She says that, although Mormon women seem to accept the boundaries laid down by "The Brethren," they nonetheless go about making choices outside those boundaries—choices about careers, education, and birth control—not out of a sense of rebellion, but just because these women are sensible and feminism has made it safer for them to choose.

Susan has given me permission to not have a formal church calling, but to design my own calling, one that suits my goals and needs.

Deedee says that the battle for women's rights may be lost in the church, but there is a whole wide world of political and social rights still

to be won for women. She has shifted her energy to a field where there is still some chance for victory.

Becky reminds me that our own sons, at least, approach the women in their lives very differently than they might have without our influence and take more responsibility for their children.

And Alan says there may be hope for the future because many men of our generation have adopted a stance of equality. Eventually, these men will fill high leadership positions if allowed to do so. But it will be too late for Megan and her generation.

I feel that most American women, including Mormon women, benefit from the feminist struggles for equality while neither recognizing nor acknowledging this. They do so every time one of their daughters goes to college on a sports scholarship or they divorce and receive state-mandated child support and a fair share of the assets. Feminist efforts have made headway in the larger society, even gradually affecting Mormon society, but sadly those women who led the way are seldom appreciated for their efforts.

As I wonder where to go now, I am reminded of Tennyson's poem "Ulysses," in which the aged Ulysses gathers his old crew and sails off on his last adventure. He says:

> Come, my friends,
> Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
> *Push off, and sitting well in order smite*
> The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
> To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
> Of all the western stars, until I die...
> Though much is taken, much abides; and though
> We are not now that strength which in old days
> Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are:
> On equal temper of heroic hearts,
> Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

"Though much is taken, much abides." We've lost a lot. We have lost our hope in institutional change, and we have lost our church membership, in some cases.

But what is it that abides?

Our faith and our spiritual link to God abide, in or out of the church.

The great cause of mothering abides, whether or not we have children.

And the connections, woman to woman, abide. We care for each other, listen to each other, talk honestly, and work through our cares with each other. This is how women have survived for ages.

Let me quote from Carol Lynn Pearson's poem, "Support Group":

You can fall here.
We are a quilt set to catch you
A quilt of women's hands
Threaded by pain made useful.

With generations of comfort-making
Behind us, we offer this gift
Warm as grandma's feather bed
Sweet as the Heavenly Mother's
Lullaby song.

You can fall here.
Woman's hands are strong.[1]

Yes, we have lost the battle. But it is very possible that we have won the only war that counts, in the long run. The sisterhood of women abides and will abide forever both within and outside of the constraints of Mormon culture. As the song says, they can't take that way from us.

1. Carol Lynn Pearson, *Women I have known and Been* (Salt Lake City: Aspen Book, 1992), 24.

The Middle Path, Colorized

Rita Grabowski

The usual iconography failed me.
My mother thumb-tacked
a cardboard print above my crib;
my age of reason came early.
In the print, older sister leads baby brother.
Behind them, the angel, blond and beatific,
wingless, through the pink of cotton candy.
I wanted to scream: "*Don't walk over that bridge*!"
Angel or not—the plank is rotten,
the support ropes frayed. I know
rickety construction when I see it.

To explain what is real, Buddha Shakyamuni gives
thirty-four negatives: "*. . . his body neither existing*
nor not existing,
neither blue nor yellow, neither red nor white,
neither crimson nor purple, . . ."
That just won't do.
I grew up with 64 Crayolas.

The Middle Path is not the Yellow Brick Road.
It winds, curved as meditation,
a worldview eschewing
the red of blood-torture and hell-fire,
the effrontery of Royal Purple,
simple as a sand mandala.

Above the path, indigo vast as mountain vistas,
hills roll plankton green as oceans,
sky shades bald-blue as infinity.
I can curl my toes into the golden buttered crumb
of it, release a held breath, and rest.

Being a Mormon Woman or "Am I Not a Woman and a Sister?". . .Isn't That Enough?

Linda Hoffman Kimball

I HAVE BEEN A CONSCIOUS CHRISTIAN all my life, although defining what "Christian" means is problematic. You could say I was "born again," but that comes on like too much evangelical bad breath. Let's just say I've been tight with Jesus for as long as I can recall.

In high school I was president of my United Methodist youth group. My best friend was an "inactive" Mormon, whose home teachers were trying to "reactivate" the family. I remember going to her church with her once and having the other teenagers press me about what religion I was. They weren't satisfied when I said I was Christian. "No, what *religion*. . .Lutheran? Methodist? Presbyterian?" They seemed to think the Christian world was still locked in the nineteenth century sectarian squabbles they'd read about. These kids—who called the last book in the Bible "Revelations" and who didn't know the Lord's Prayer—were all eager to teach me the truth.

I spent ten months hearing the missionary discussions, defending Mormons to my Protestant friends and trying to defend mainline Christianity to the Mormons. After recognizing that the Mormons had a complex history (and present) and after seeing saints and sinners in both churches, I didn't know what to do. During the fall of my freshman year at Wellesley College, while talking to some missionaries in my dorm room, I had a life changing experience with the Spirit. I don't even remember what we were talking about, but something nearly tangible confirmed to me that there is a unique, emphatic, and imperative power to the priesthood. I remember saying my prayers that night—2 October 1969—amazed that the God I'd known and loved all my life was alive in the Mormon church. Apparently he wanted me there, too.

That's not to say he explained why he wanted me there or clarified

any of my intellectual questions or eliminated the church's funky history or conflicted present. But that dorm room experience and a few other significant ones are the "truest" encounters I have had in my life. It's ramifications require—and develop—a muscular faith.

The task in this essay is to write about being a Mormon woman. Mormons emphasize gender a lot. Aren't we all children of God? Beyond a certain level, isn't there something essentially *human* that God is trying to redeem and save, regardless of our maleness or femaleness? To the extent that there are inequities and prejudice, isn't part of our task to create compassion and equity?

As a newly minted Mormon, I resonated with Judy Dushku's comment at an Institute class in Cambridge, Massachusetts, back in 1970. She said her colleagues were dumbfounded when she told them, "Of course I'm a feminist. I'm a Mormon, aren't I?" Judy's point of view made perfect sense to me.

Over the years the word "feminist" has become weighted with political, theological, and emotional baggage—another "f" word many Mormons won't use. Back then, in its uncluttered meaning, every enlightened person was surely feminist, I thought. And of course Mormons—recipients of further light and knowledge—were feminist, right? This, it seemed to me, was the "oh, say, what is truth" mind set I had joined, and I was thrilled.

During my first decade in the church, I recognized aspects of life as a Mormon that seemed distinctive. These included lay service without much whining, very little ecclesiastical jockeying for position, service offered generously in the ward and beyond, willingness to sacrifice for a greater good. Especially among the women I saw commitment, determination, and hope in God's promises eventually fulfilled. I was reared in the church with the beginnings of *Exponent II*, whose no-nonsense motto was "Am I not a woman and a sister?"

I also noticed that the pioneer experience affects the collective brain stem of the Mormon community. I noticed a mountain-centeredness and rivalries that apparently carry weight involving Salt Lake Valley and Utah Valley or "Zion" and "the mission field." These still show up when in our prairie state, Illinois ward, we are forced to sing "Firm as the Mountains Around Us."

I sat in a Relief Society class 20 years after my conversion. The teacher launched into a lesson on the patriarchal order and outlined a doctrine of "God speaks to Man, Man speaks to woman." Aware that there were new members and visitors that day, and prodded by my own discomfort, I raised my hand and kindly, gently (or so I thought) said, "When I hear that kind of stuff, I want to run away screaming." The teacher's response was quick and sharp: "Well, it's a good thing I'm teaching this lesson, and you're not."

That was an "Aha!" moment for me about what it means to me to be a Mormon woman in the church today. Not a happy "aha" moment. This sorry experience and other discouragements challenged my willingness to stay in this place. For me, being a Mormon Christian is sometimes not as comfortable or as spiritually nourishing as being a Methodist Christian. I occasionally feel like a stranger and a foreigner, an unwelcome visitor in the household of faith.

I have seen in recent years many of the church's best and brightest baling out—or being forced to bale. This is a cause of great heartbreak and loneliness. Here is my advice to those who are considering this route: To the extent that you have been affected and have a say in the matter, don't go. Don't go. If for no other reason than that I need you. Maybe you have seen those magic eye books where the surface details are essentially irrelevant to the deeper image available if you get your eyes lined up just so. As for me, I have seen the deep image—felt that pulse, that divine juice—beneath the sometimes majestic and sometimes morbid details on the surface of church experience. Because I have seen, I am tethered to this place whether I "like" it all the time or not. I remain here by choice, by commitment, and by covenant.

What drew me to the church in the first place was the brash claim that the gospel is composed of all truth. Brigham Young wrote, "We believe in all good. If you can find a truth in heaven, earth or hell, it belongs to our doctrine. We believe it; it is ours; we claim it."[1] What an expansive view! The world is drenched in truth. This is something to celebrate. We have so much to learn from so many quarters, and God is so gracious. Who could not love this? In the places where the church doesn't embrace truth, I am not obliged to go along. I am wed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am Christ's woman, living my life of faith among the Mormons.

In 1st Corinthians Paul says, "It hath been declared unto me. . .that there are contentions among you. . . .[E]very one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (I Cor. 1:11-13) This is an interesting list. "I am of Paul" could translate into "I am of Packer or Holland or Maxwell" or whomever your favorite apostle might be. "I am of Apollos" could mean, "I am of my liberal bishop in Boston or my conservative bishop in Tennessee," etc. "I am of Cephas" refers to Peter, the head of the church. That's an appealing one for many. "I am of President Hinckley" many might say, and feel confident they've picked the right answer. I'd rather just stick with "I am of Christ." It's his name I carry.

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1. Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, ed. John A. Widtsoe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1971).

My friend Cathy Stokes is an African-American woman of substantial presence and command. She was one of the first black Relief Society presidents and has been in many church public relations films and campaigns. Cathy sometimes describes her approach to involvement in the church with the words from a gospel song, "There's plenty good room, plenty good room, plenty good room in my father's kingdom. . .so choose your seat and sit down." If Cathy wants to sit somewhere, she sits. She has been a mentor and example to me for years. She visited us often when my children were little. When my son Chase was five, he saw pictures of my childhood and said, "I see Aunt Holly and Aunt Susan. But where's Cathy Stokes? Isn't she your sister, too?"

During the nail-biting stage of preparing this essay, I asked Chase—who is now seventeen—what he thought of when I said the phrase "Mormon woman." "I think of you and Ann Stone and Cathy Stokes," he said. I was amazed, amused, and delighted. He has around him all sorts of Mormon women, and he picked out three who are all committed misfits! I asked him what traits he thought we had in common that would qualify us for this title. "I guess it's something about being matter-of-fact and determined," he said.

Here is one last image to add to these musings on being a Mormon woman. May 6th was Enrichment Night for our ward. Ann Stone was the beleaguered but stalwart enrichment leader. That night featured a Mother-Daughter Jello-Rama, which had been advertised with a cheesy ad to convey the campy tone Ann was after. When I arrived, I walked through the foyer past the chapel doors. The other ward was having a baptismal service and their meeting was just beginning. I made my way to the kitchen counter where the Relief Society sisters huddled over an array of Jello concoctions. They were magnificent. There was not-quite-gelled green Jello. There was stained-glass Jello, jigglers, a yummy pretzel-strawberry-cream-cheese wonder, an elaborate jello version of the Candyland game board. And best of all—Ann's contribution—gray Jello in the detailed shape of a brain. Mothers and daughters bonded over craft projects. Quilters worked on a contribution to the Heifer Project auction to provide a cow for a family in a developing country. I laughed and visited with my sisters while the strains of "Jesus came to John the Baptist. . . ." echoed down the hall. I felt as at home as I ever do among Mormons. Sacred ordinances, service, quilting, Jello, and sisterhood. That night I felt like a Mormon woman.

First, Mothers and Children: A Postscript to "Moving Zion Southward, Parts I & II"

Bradley Walker

IN "MOVING ZION SOUTHWARD, Part II," I noted that from 1985-2000, average LDS church cash donations to humanitarian aid were $20 million annually.[1] An "alert reader," as Dave Barry would say, has pointed out that since 2000 humanitarian donations have actually jumped to the range of $100 million per year. This fact is not published on the church internet site and verification required a phone call to LDS Welfare Services to obtain a "fact sheet" documenting the growth in giving. The church has not drawn attention to this increase. Nevertheless, I wish to praise the increase here, as the additional donations could save the lives and/or prevent the disability of more than 10,000 children annually in less-developed countries (LDCs) as well as alleviate the malnutrition of hundreds of thousands, if spent efficiently. That having been said, the increased amount as a percentage of church budget is still only a quarter of what is donated annually to humanitarian causes by those Christian denominations that truly earn a grade of "A" for their efforts.[2] Still, had I known of this increase, I would have assigned a grade of "B" to the charity of Mormon members instead of a "C." I'm happy to be corrected.

One can only speculate as to the causes of the increase, but certainly publicity could have played an important role. Church authorities have, in fact, spoken out in recent years about the terrible plight of the poor and homeless in the world and of the power of the church's plan and programs to overcome such problems.[3]

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1. *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 36n13.
2. Ibid., 36n12, 37.
3. Examples: "I remember as I went through the streets of Calcutta, seeing the great

In "Moving Zion Southward, Part I" (*Dialogue* 35, no. 4), I took the position that, based on the pronouncements of church presidents and leaders, the presence of tens of thousands[4] of chronically malnourished

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numbers of starving people. . . .I remember being on the fifth floor of a big hotel in Calcutta and looking down on the back street where these people in their meager clothing were lying on the sidewalks. . .with no place to go and nothing to eat and no shelter. . . .I saw the rain come, and I saw these people move back a little farther under a little shelter. I saw [the people in Peru] suffer, and we were upbraided by one of the press one day for not taking care of all these poor people. 'Why did we travel the world and do all these things and did not take care of these people,' he asked. I said, 'That is something you don't understand. If these people would accept the gospel of Christ, the program is provided and they could be taken care of, and their sufferings could be alleviated. They could enjoy reasonable conditions in their homes and in their living.' And that is true, my brothers and sisters. In my feeling, the gospel is the answer to all the problems of the world, if we go deeply enough and are united in solving them. And that is why we work harder in missionary work, so that we can gradually bring the gospel to all people. . .the gospel of serving the poor, taking care of those less fortunate than ourselves." Spencer W. Kimball quoted by Edward L. Soper in "I have a question," *Ensign* (Sept 1982): 30.

"If every member of this Church observed the fast and contributed generously, the poor and the needy—not only of the Church, but many others as well—would be blessed and provided for. Every giver would be blessed in body and spirit, and the hungry would be blessed in body and spirit, and the hungry would be fed, the naked clothed according to need." *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997), 458.

"I hope [and believe] the Church is good at taking care of its own. . . .It has a responsibility sure and certain that we must take care of our own and assist them with their problems." "Messages of the First Presidency: Humanitarian Aid," *Church News*, week ending 6 Oct. 2001, 2.

"My plea—and I wish I were more eloquent in voicing it—is a plea to save the children. Too many of them walk with pain and fear, in loneliness and despair. God bless us to be mindful of them, to lift them and guide them as they walk in dangerous paths, to pray for them, to bless them, to love them, to keep them secure until they can run with strength of their own." Gordon B. Hinckley quoted in "No more tender and beautiful picture," *Church News*, week ending 23 Sept. 2000.

"At this very hour on this very day, some members even in our Church are praying for the miracle that would allow them to surmount the suffering that surrounds them. If, while we have the means to do so, we do not have compassion for them and spring to their aid, we are in danger of being among those the prophet Moroni spoke of when he said, 'Behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel. . .more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted." Joseph Wirthlin, "The Law of the Fast," *Ensign* (May 2001): 74.

"I believe that when we face our Maker, we will not be asked, 'How many positions did you hold?' But rather, 'How many people did you help?'. . .when we have eyes that see and ears that hear and hearts that know and feel, we will recognize current trends and current needs of our fellow beings among us who cry out for help. How do they eat—without food? How do they keep warm—without shelter? How do they live—without means? How do they get well—without doctors, medicines, and hospitals?" Thomas Monson quoted by Sarah Weaver in "We will be asked 'How many people did you help?'" *Church News*, week ending 28 Oct. 2000, 4.

4. The study estimated the presence currently of 50,000 faithful malnourished chil-

and starving and/or dying children attending LDS congregations in less developed countries was, in fact, accidental and due to a combination of factors, but not due to intentional church policy decisions related to allocation of the $400 million[5] in cash welfare donations available to the church. Only about $33 million of that $400 million, I estimated, would be required to relieve the malnourishment and disability or death of the LDS children in these countries.[6] I also, therefore, assumed that simple publicity, that is making both membership and leadership aware, first, of the nature and extent of the problem, and, second, of the potential for meaningful intervention, would likely lead to at least a partial resolution. However, a recent conference address, given in October 2003 by Elder Dallin Oaks, has given me pause and lead me to suspect that these assumptions were overly optimistic.[7]

I am happy to note that Elder Oak's address responds, if indirectly, to the existence of seriously malnourished LDS children in less developed countries:

> The doctrine and practice of personal responsibility and personal effort collide with individual traditions and local cultures in many lands. We live in a world where there are large differences in income and material possessions and where there are many public and private efforts to narrow these differences. The followers of the Savior are commanded to give to the poor, and many do.[8] But some gifts have promoted a culture of dependency, reducing their recipients' need for earthly food or shelter but impoverishing them in

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dren, or about 1% of the church's faithful membership. Had not missionary man-years been allocated in a way that limited the growth of LDC church membership over the last 35 years, malnourished children would probably make up 2-3% of the church's faithful population at present. But in spite of the limited allocation of missionaries to LDCs, malnourished children will continue to increase as a percentage of the total faithful church membership, and could well hit the 5% mark by the year 2030 (see "Moving Zion Southward II," 40n26.)

5. Per-capita welfare or "fast-offering" spending is $133 in the U.S. and usually $1 or less in the poor areas of LDCs, for reasons documented in "Moving Zion Southward Part I," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 91-109.

6. This proposal conservatively assumes an annual cost per person of $100+ per year, but some studies in Africa project a much lower per-person cost of $50 to $70 a year.

7. Elder Oak's office received a preliminary version of the "Moving Zion Southward" study, and he sent me a response through Fred Reilly, Commissioner of LDS Family Services, in 2002.

8. Of those blessed with significant affluence and, thus, commanded to make substantial contributions to the care of the poor, the large majority do not, but a significant minority complies. The LDS population in the United States, according to recent reports, is among the most dedicated in terms of charitable donations, but since the large majority of these donations are made to the LDS church itself, the percentage devoted to significant humanitarian relief depends on church policy decisions. This is another reason to be encouraged by the recent increases in humanitarian aid.

> their eternal need for individual growth. The growth required by the gospel plan only occurs in a culture of individual effort and responsibility. It cannot occur in a culture of dependency. Whatever causes us to be dependent on someone else for decisions or resources we could provide for ourselves weakens us spiritually and retards our growth toward what the gospel plan intends us to be.
>
> The gospel raises people out of poverty and dependency, but only when gospel culture, including the faithful payment of tithing[9] even by the very poor, prevails over the traditions and cultures of dependency. That is the lesson to be learned from the children of Israel, who came out of hundreds of years of slavery in Egypt and followed a prophet into their own land and became a mighty people. That lesson can also be learned from the Mormon pioneers, who never used their persecutions or poverty as an excuse but went forward in faith, knowing that God would bless them when they kept His commandments, which He did.

Elder Oaks's discourse raises some issues I would like to discuss. First, and by way of context, we live in a world with tragic suffering arising from disease burden, malnutrition, disability, and death among the poor. Two billion people, 33% of the world's population, suffer from micronutrient deficiency, and tens of millions of survivors are blinded and/or mentally retarded as a consequence. Eight hundred million have frank protein-energy malnutrition. Ten million of the world's 50 million annual deaths are children in less developed countries, at least half of whom die because they are unable to consume enough food. A minimum of another 40 million children annually are permanently disabled, and by far the most common disability is the decreased cognitive and work (or functional) capacity that results from chronic malnutrition in utero and in childhood.

At the same time, the global food supply far exceeds demand. Each year, the amount of food needed to feed the malnourished of the world is simply wasted. The cost of relieving this human suffering is estimated to be $150 billion annually (1.5% of U.S. GDP or 0.5% of the GDP of all wealthy-countries), yet total donations from all wealthy countries to relieve this disease burden amount to only $15 billion, or 10% of the amount needed. Given these circumstances, I can't help wondering if we as a people and church should not be more concerned in our public pronouncements over a situation of devastating and needless inequity as over a "dependency" risk in the cultures into which the poor and mal-

9. My preliminary study raised the concern that payment of tithing by the poorest members was, in fact, increasing the malnutrition and disability/death rates among their children. Would it not be easier to ask these people to tithe if at the same time they were able to receive nutritional assistance provided through the church welfare program?

nourished are born. Other Christian churches, Protestant and Catholic, have long asked those among their members blessed with affluence to do far more to relieve the suffering of the world's poor than has ours.

Second, and with regard to problems of dependency (which are considerable and deserve attention), "Moving Zion Southward" proposed employing the "minimal-intervention package" designed by the World Health Organization (WHO) specifically to avoid dependency problems. (As a proselyting church, we also want to avoid economic conversions.) No cash assistance is offered. No shelter assistance is included. No food staple aid is provided. There is no requirement of spousal separation in order to qualify for benefits. U.S. Welfare and the WHO "minimum-intervention package" are completely different. By far the largest nutritional problem among U.S. welfare recipients is obesity, and their rates of obesity exceed that of the general population. The WHO intervention package addresses an entirely different problem, and of the five proposed "Moving Zion Southward" interventions, three carry absolutely no risk of dependency of any type[10] (visits from home health care workers, vaccinations and de-worming, and health education). One carries minimal risk of dependency if combined with a requirement of regular church attendance (access to minimal health care for the unpredictable, and often rapidly fatal, common infectious diseases of childhood). And one intervention carries some risk of dependency and might need to be combined with a work program in addition to church attendance in some countries, but probably not in most poor countries with current significant LDS populations ("food supplements" not "food" or "food staples," for children and pregnant women).[11] The intervention package does not seek to "narrow differences in income or material possessions." It simply seeks to alleviate childhood malnutrition and the death and disability it causes. It is true, an improperly designed program could lead to dependency and economic conversions, but concern over this prospect appears to be ruling out all interventions, including those that would not encourage dependency. For me the troubling question is this: Do we as a church want to abandon malnourished LDS children over dependency concerns when as a church we have the ability to design an intervention program that would, in fact, avoid or minimize this problem?

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10. In my preliminary study three interventions were not recommended for selective application to church members due in part to concerns about dependency. They were: shelter aid, food staple aid, and microcredit of the kind currently being promoted worldwide by the business school at Brigham Young University (though not directed specifically toward church members).

11. Such supplements come in a form that is not particularly palatable, and children must generally be prodded and encouraged by parents to eat them "because this is good for you"—in other words, for moral reasons.

Moreover, is it possible to harmonize LDS scriptures[12] with a failure to help 50,000 faithful but malnourished and starving children while the church solicits and receives hundreds of millions of dollars precisely to help the poor and needy among us?

Third, with an eye to doing no harm, it is surely the case that, independent of our intentions, our hesitance to provide nutritional assistance to malnourished LDS children and pregnant women perpetuates the very dependency problem the church seeks to avoid. It is important to see the intervention package as an investment, not unlike the Perpetual Education Fund, but operating at a far more fundamental level. Any child is clearly more likely to learn the lessons of independence and to practice the virtue of self-sufficiency if he or she survives into adulthood, and survives with a functional body and a functioning mind. The most important measure to prevent long-term adult dependency of church members in less developed countries is nutrition assistance to malnourished children and pregnant women. Chronic malnutrition, on the other hand, will create a generation of LDS members who have suffered permanent long-term effects. These include decreased cognitive and functional work capacity. The research literature is replete with this finding:

> The problem of malnutrition in poor societies is best viewed as a "syndrome of developmental impairment", which includes growth failure; delayed motor, cognitive, and behavioral development; diminished immunocompetence; and increased morbidity and mortality. Growth retardation is often found in association with other problems, such as vitamin A deficiency and anaemia. These clusters of nutritional problems flourish during periods of vulnerability, namely in utero and during the first three years of life, and affect at least a third[13] of all young children in developing countries. Survivors of malnutrition in early childhood suffer functional disadvantages as adults, including diminished intellectual performance, low work capacity, and increased risk of delivery complications. The prevention of low birthweight and the promotion of adequate growth and development during early childhood will result in healthier, more productive adults. Such investments, because they build human capital, are best viewed as long-term economic strategies.[14]

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12. Perhaps the three most applicable would be Mosiah 4:17-27, D&C 38:11-24, 39, and Luke 16:19-31. Others: Matthew 19:21, 25:34-45; Luke 14:13; James 2:15-16; 1st John 3:17-18; Revelations 4:14-19; Mormon 9:36-39; D&C 42:30, 39-40, 52:40, 56:18, 70:14, 78:6, 104:18; and finally Moses 7:18.

13. In the Philippines and Latin America 1/8th instead of 1/3rd is a better estimate; including the Indian sub-continent and sub-Saharan Africa raises this figure dramatically.

14. Reynaldo Martorell, "The Nature of Child Malnutrition and its Long-term Implication," *Food and Nutrition Bulletin* 20, no. 3 (1999): 288.

> In South America it is estimated that 16 million children suffer from malnutrition, and of these 16 million many will die and still more will be left with severely diminished cognitive ability.[15]
>
> There is probably no more fundamental way to eliminate poverty than to raise the development potential of children. Nutrition is one of the keys to their proper physical and cognitive development.[16]
>
> Malnutrition is widespread among disadvantaged populations living in developing countries. The consequences of malnutrition are severe and long lasting. . .longer and more severe illnesses. . .higher risk of dying. . .delayed motor development and lower cognitive function and school performance. . . .[I]ndividuals who were malnourished as children have impaired work capacity and worse reproductive performance. . .[with] negative effects, not only on those afflicted, but on their offspring as well.[17]

Of course, I don't have a "vote" on international LDS church welfare policy, only an opinion and sincere hope. But for the foreseeable future, my concern remains that unless and until we change our approach, no matter how generous LDS members are in their fast-offering contributions, the church will have millions of members attending its Sunday services who possess the greatest material wealth ever witnessed in human history, simultaneously with tens of thousands of starving, malnourished children.

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15. Norman Kretchmer, John Beard, and Susan Carlson, "The role of nutrition in the development of normal cognition," *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 63 (1966): 997S-1001S.

16. Tadeo Chino and Namanga Ngongi, Foreword to *What Works? A review of the Efficacy and Effectiveness of Nutrition Interventions* (Manila, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2001), iii.

17. Dirk Schroeder, "Malnutrition", in *Nutrition and Health in Developing Countries* (Totowa, NJ: Humana Press, 2001), 393.

A Motherless House

Carol Lynn Pearson

I live in a Motherless house,
A broken home.
How it happened I cannot learn.

When I had words enough to ask
"Where is my Mother?"
No one seemed to know,
And no one thought it strange
That no one else knew either.

I live in a Motherless house.
They are good to me here,
But I find that no kindly
Patriarchal care eases the pain.

I yearn for the day
Someone will look at me and say,
"You certainly do look like your Mother."

I walk the rooms,
Search the closets,
Look for something that might
Have belonged to her—
A letter, a dress, a chair.
Would she not have left a note?

I close my eyes
And work to bring back her touch, her face.
Surely there must have been
A Motherly embrace
I can call back for comfort.
I live in a Motherless house,
Motherless and without a trace.

Who could have done this?
Who would tear an unweaned infant
From its Mother's arms
And clear the place of every souvenir?

I live in a Motherless house.
I lie awake and listen always for the word
That never comes, but might.
I bury my face
In something soft as a breast.

I am a child—
Crying for my Mother in the night.

Grandpa's Visit

Patti Hanks

MY HUSBAND'S PARENTS, Grandma and Grandpa Hanks, live in Utah and come to visit our family in Michigan every summer. We all look forward to their visits, especially our children. Grandpa is pleasant and takes a detached interest in the children. Sometimes he mixes them up with his other grandchildren, and he has a hard time remembering their ages and accomplishments, but he is always very kind. He usually spends most of his time talking with my husband about church and work—his own and his son's. He likes to get away for a golf game when he can and sometimes falls asleep in the evenings in his favorite chair.

The kids are okay with all that because Grandpa always brings Grandma, and Grandma is the one they really dig. She always arrives with a suitcase full of treats. Nestled in among her carefully folded clothes are Ziploc bags bulging with crunchy caramel corn, Cheerios-peanut-butter balls, wrapped in waxed paper and then in foil, and homemade chocolate suckers with accordion folded dollar bills tied to their sticks with ribbons. She knows the full name, age, and current passion of each child and shares any and all of their mother's concerns about behavior, schoolwork, and the general vicissitudes of growing up. In addition to treats for the whole family, each child usually gets something just for him or her, like baseball cards, just the book she's been wanting to read, a sheet of favorite music, or a Utah Jazz souvenir. Grandma spends her visits reading joke books with the kids, taking them for walks, rocking and singing to the little ones, letting them help in the kitchen while she makes even more treats, including her specialty—homemade ice cream.

Once it crossed my mind what it would be like if Grandpa were to show up alone. Say he had a consulting job near our home and arrived without her. How would that go over? He might tell the kids that because Grandma was delicate or getting along in years, he was afraid she'd get worn out on the long plane ride. Besides, he might add, the airport was a crowded and dirty place, and their grandmother, who was lovely and sensitive and very orderly, just needed to be home where she

could be protected from all that. He'd surely tell them about the important project she was working on for the people in their Utah ward and make the kids understand why that project was more important right now than spending time with her grandchildren. Of course, he would add, "I bring all Grandma's love just as if she were here. I've brought hugs and treats from her, and when I go home, I'll tell her all about my visit. If you have anything you want to say to her, well, just tell me, and I'll report to her what you've said." Grandpa might say all of that, but how would it sound if he added, "By the way, everyone, while I'm here, let's please just not talk about Grandma? Okay?"

It would be nice to have Grandpa at our house—even without Grandma, and I am sure that he would do his best to explain why Grandma had stayed at home. He would reassure the children that she would be out for a visit sometime very soon, and he would probably unpack some of those treats—might even play a little catch in the yard and take us all out for ice cream—but he would likely spend most of his time talking with my husband about work and church. It really wouldn't be the same at all, not for the kids—not for anyone.

Mind, Body, and the Boundary Waters

Susan Sessions Rugh

As I EASED MYSELF BEHIND THE WHEEL of my car in early spring 1994, I was exhausted. I had been on campus all day teaching and consulting with students and had just finished teaching a three-hour night class. I reached with my left arm to close the car door, but my arm would not move. Both my arm and shoulder were numb and rigid. I twisted in my seat, closed the door with my right arm, and set out on the hour-long drive home in a suburb of Minneapolis.

The neurologists' diagnosis was fibromyalgia, or myofascial pain syndrome, a rheumatic disorder involving inflammation of the sheath surrounding the muscles. My condition was brought on by stress; I was in my first year of a teaching career, my oldest son was unhappy with our move from Chicago, and I was a single parent because my husband was working weekdays in Chicago. My body's response was pain. Proper medication helped somewhat, but more important to my recovery were three months of twice-weekly deep muscle massage. As I lay face down on the table, the therapist worked to free my frozen muscles. After months of massage, I decided that it was time for me to try to move my own muscles. I enrolled in a low-impact aerobics class and slowly, with exercise, the pain decreased, and I began to feel more like myself. I had never been a true athlete, but had been a casual runner, having run 5K races in my thirties. I started to think about running again now that I was flexible enough to lift my arm over my head.

After aerobics one day, I noticed brochures advertising a canoeing camp for women in Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness region (BWCAW). This would give me a goal to work for, a reward for becoming fit. I called a friend in Chicago, and she and I signed up for a week in August. We joined a group of fifty women and were divided into groups by age and ability. After a day of orientation, including learning how to rescue a swamped canoe and how to pack light, we set off with our leader and a group of strangers on a four-day canoe trip.

It was unbelievably tough and incredibly satisfying at the same time. We traveled a circuit of lakes, paddling through each and then portaging our belongings to the next one. Portaging meant carrying my gear in a green canvas Duluth pack or balancing my aluminum canoe on my shoulders. I failed at my first attempt at carrying the 60-pound canoe, tossing it off to the side when I slipped on a wet boulder. Eventually I got the guts to try it again and managed to carry it a few short portages. The worst was what we called our "jungle portage," carrying our stuff on a swampy trail, jumping from rock to rock to avoid ending up knee-deep in mud. The mushrooms and ferns were bright orange and yellow in the green undergrowth, and the mosquitoes buzzed around my ears. When we stopped for lunch, we took a picture of our bruised legs and muddy boots. The scene was decidedly unfeminine, but I felt empowered by my body's newfound abilities to lift and carry and move packs and canoes from one place to another. I even discovered the pleasures of swimming naked, the water flowing over my whole body, albeit with boots on to protect my feet from rocky shores.

That first trip began my long love affair with canoeing in the Boundary Waters. The next year I found an outfitter and over the next three years I persuaded friends to go with me, each time on a different route. In 1997 I moved to Utah to take a faculty position at BYU, but was determined to get back to the Boundary Waters every summer. I've missed only one year since. Various friends and friends of friends have joined me, and last year I took the women in my book group. The year before I took two women in their seventies and had a ball. They could navigate, cook, and paddle as well as the rest of us, so we did not mind carrying the canoes for them. They were great conversationalists and tickled to be "wilderness women."

The prospect of four days in the wilderness carrying canoes has been an incentive to keep exercising all year. I took a swim class one spring, so I could feel more comfortable swimming in the lakes. As I child I was afraid of the water, and I felt most secure swimming within reach of the pool's edge. Now I worked hard in the class to overcome my sense of panic. Eventually I was able to control my fears and work up to a half-hour continuous swim.

That skill proved important in my 1999 summer trip, which remains a highlight in my memory. Joining me were my old friend from Chicago (who had gone on my first Boundary Waters trip) and her 21-year old daughter, a college student in Oregon. Anne, a Utah friend, brought her 17-year old daughter, Lydia. Anne's sister—Eileen, a high school teacher—also came, thinking the trip would give her time to decide between the two men who wanted to marry her. Rounding out the group were my older sister, Christine, an artist and excellent cook; her 20-year old daughter, Alice, also an artist and a strong swimmer; and Amy, my sister's niece, who turned out to have the best organizational skills of the

group. Nine people made it a large group, and because of the family ties, I really wanted it to be a fun trip.

Ten days before our arrival, the Boundary Waters were struck by a sudden violent storm, and great swaths of trees were blown down like matchsticks by the force of the wind. The day we arrived, they had finished clearing our access road, and electricity had just been restored to our outfitter. Our timing was good, or so we thought.

Late in our first afternoon out, Lydia began to run a high fever and became delirious. We contemplated turning back, but no one wanted to interrupt our long-planned trip, so we continued. Near sundown we came across a doctor and his son at a nearby camp. He looked her over and assured us it was probably flu and she would be fine. Against her protests, we dunked her in the cool lake waters and plied her with aspirin to lower her fever.

The next day we passed the doctor's camp again on our way north up the Granite River. Unbeknownst to me, he advised some of our group to run the next set of rapids, something our outfitter had expressly told us not to do. While I was carrying the first canoe down the portage trail, the twenty-something daughters at the top of the trail decided to try to run the rapids. From below I watched aghast as the canoe headed down the rapids, hit a large boulder, split its seam and crumpled like aluminum foil. Fortunately, the girls swam free. Unfortunately, the canoe was pinned against the rock by the force of the rushing river.

We trudged up the trail and climbed into the water to get a closer look. We had to grab onto a submerged tree trunk to steady ourselves. We wondered what to do. If we did not remove the canoe, our three remaining canoes would each have to hold three persons and three packs. So fully loaded, they would move very slowly in the water and it would mean harder and longer paddling. Our other choice was to free the canoe, a doubtful proposition given the force of the water and its damaged condition. Weighing in favor of freeing it was the prospect of its remaining there as a monument to our stupidity. Besides, we had been told by the Forest Service video to "Leave No Trace," and, as my sister wisely noted, it was a rather large trace.

We climbed over rocks into the river rapids, and positioned ourselves, feet on the lower gunwale and hands on the upper gunwale. It took us over an hour of concerted effort, wedging and bracing our weight against the canoe, before we dislodged it from the rock and it floated free. (We later learned that the outfitter usually had to send a block and tackle to extract canoes from that spot.) Anne turned the canoe upside down against a rock, jumped up and down on it until it assumed some semblance of its former shape, then patched the seam with duct tape. We sentenced the girls to paddle that canoe, armed with a cook pot for bailing, and it held together as we paddled north.

Rescuing the canoe had eaten up a large chunk of time, so we did not reach our destination until early evening. We rejected several campsites as too risky because of leaning and damaged trees, but we finally settled for one that had few such hazards. My sister began cooking dinner on the camp stove while others of us set up tents. I went down to the shore to swim and suddenly a microburst struck us. The winds caught the canoes on shore and tossed them into the water. My Chicago friend and I dived in to rescue them, all too aware that common sense dictates that we should avoid metal canoes in water in thunderstorms. As I was approaching shore, canoe in tow, I heard a loud crack and saw a 100-foot tree falling toward my sister. Time froze as I watched, horrified, from the water. I prepared for her death, wondering what I would tell my mother. Amazingly my sister ducked the tree, picked up the full pots, and jumped into a tent. I rushed up the shore, and we huddled together inside, laughing and crying, waiting to be killed by the next falling tree as the storm raged around us.

The storm quickly blew over and all was quiet as we emerged from the tents to a colorful sunset-streaked sky. A loon pirouetted across the lake, and all was peaceful. At dinner someone remarked that Heavenly Father must really love us to have saved us from all these disasters. I retorted that I had been thinking that God must be trying to kill us. The next day Lydia recovered from the flu, and we found a fantastic campsite where we swam, talked, and relaxed during our last evening together.

This year was my eighth trip, and at age fifty-one, I no longer felt as strong or as ambitious. Six of us set out, four of us history professors along with an English teacher and an artist. In five days we traversed over 30 miles of terrain, paddled through 22 lakes, and made 21 portages. On our first day, we tackled two brutally long and difficult portages with swamps, boulders, and steep hills. I was paired with Julie, a short and slight woman better suited to library work than hefting canoes. I helped her put the canoe on her shoulders, and she set out with a determined look. At the bottom of the first steep hill, she faltered, dropped the canoe to one side, and burst into tears. An accomplished scholar, she was unaccustomed to failure. I knew from experience that canoe-carrying is more a matter of balance than strength, but in her mind, it was just too hard.

At her moment of crisis, I sympathized. I remembered a recent trip mountain biking with Anne, the one who had repaired the damaged canoe with duct tape. She was a more experienced mountain biker, and that day we ended up on a trail beyond my ability. I tried to be game, but I was very discouraged. As we coasted downhill to an overlook, my pedal struck a rock and down I went. I was not badly hurt, but I burst into tears. It was not the pain, but my inability to measure up that frustrated me. I wanted to be able to mountain bike, but my fear of falling

was making me too cautious and thus accident-prone. I knew I had to make a choice: either bike more or give it up.

During my long hours of paddling on Minnesota's glassy lakes, I have wrestled with that and other questions: What should I ask of my body? What can I expect of myself? How do I deal with my fears? I had overcome my fears of falling to capably carry a canoe. I had overcome my fears of drowning to become a competent swimmer. In the end, I decided that was enough for me. Mountain-biking is not important enough to me to push myself beyond fear to mastery. Call it lack of guts, but I think my decision is the wisdom of age. No longer do I feel I have to carry the canoe the full portage. No longer do I have to be the first canoe to shore, nor do I have to be the one to navigate. Now I get pleasure from watching others discover what they can do.

My frozen shoulder in a deserted parking lot late one night ironically led me to an adventurous life I lead now. My visits to the Boundary Waters helped me develop my physical strength and discipline my mind to overcome my fears. As age imposes its limits, I savor what I still can do.

Almost Pentecostal

Rita Grabowski

Mrs. Robinson sang in the choir.
In the church, my face, my husband's,
and one other white couple on the stage.
I was clearly the minority,
but I swayed with the singing,
the cadence and crescendo, and The Oratory rolled.

Women in suits, dresses, heels and hose, many with queenly hats.
Children with tiny tambourines, rows of metal circles jangle
harvest-moon brassy. I liked the *Amens* and the *Hallelujahs*.
Chords progressed on grand piano, stops pulled out on the organ,
and, *Would You Come Down and Testify?* I thought, "Why not?"
my hand wrapped by a slender brown one, praying on my behalf,

Would you like to come to know and love the Lord?
I wanted to be matter-of-fact, while amplifiers
spun out organ swells, and I meant it when I whispered, *Yes*

Then, catacombs. Muffled organ chords replaced shouts and stomps.
Led to a small room, every item of clothing I wore replaced
with folds of cotton to clothe me from the skin out, soft and white.

I thought to myself, "So, this is swaddling," feeling new as baby Jesus,
women led me up some steps, narrow and wooden,
near the edge of the white and cerulean pool.
Two men in suits, wet to the waist each touched an elbow,
the way one guides a blind person.
They advised me to take a deep breath.

The water was cool, and chlorinated. I breathed out, and counted,
"one-thousand-one," layers of cotton from head-wrap to socks,
cool and wet, my elbow cradled.
I felt like an albino dolphin. Gently escorted to change back,
my own clothes felt warm, and dry,
and different.

Sister Gladys and Reverend Thomas invited me to stay and talk in tongues.
I demurred it was late; we had a distance to drive home.
But I felt a warmth and a calmness for days.

Belonging

Lisa Torcasso Downing

I AM PART OF THE USUAL Gospel Doctrine "crowd," and although I'm not one of those folks who can sleep upright in a metal chair, I have refrained from being an active participant in the class. I keep my hand down: I don't call out or volunteer for anything, not even a prayer. It isn't that I'm not paying attention (though God knows paying attention can be difficult). Rather it is because I am a new member of the ward and I'd like to make friends.

Today's discussion is towering over me with a mallet as though to say, "Speak once, and it's all over for you. You'll always be lonely in this ward."

The teacher has read Doctrine and Covenants 1:38: "What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same." He repeats the last two phrases for effect.

A hand shoots up, and the instructor calls on his wife. She says, "It's always struck me as funny that members think they can pick and choose from what the prophet says. When the prophet speaks, he is talking directly to us, to me and to you. We'd better do what he says." There is nervous laughter, but I don't laugh. I sense what is about to happen. This topic had gotten me in trouble in my previous ward, the one I can no longer bear to attend.

"But it's more than that," the woman beside her adds.

Keep your head down! I tell myself, sensing that the first dangerous extrapolation is about to fly about the room.

"It's our bishop, too."

Hey, I know that woman. She had been the stake Young Women's president in my former stake.

"The bishop's one of the Lord's servants," she says with eyes wide enough to indicate a thyroid problem. "Going against a bishop's counsel or turning down a calling is no different than saying no to Heavenly Father. Who would want to do that?"

I feel my hand start to rise, but I overpower it with sheer grit.

The instructor bobs his head, obviously relieved that the class is in the throes of a discussion instead of staring straight ahead like a herd of overfed cattle. I'm wondering if this good sister is visiting or has moved to this, my new stake.

"Don't forget the church magazines," someone else adds. I sink in my chair.

"That's right," the former Stake YW President inserts. "The magazines are filled with the word of God. What's printed in them is exactly what Salt Lake wants us to read that month."

(Since when has a lake cared what I read?)

"And not just the *Ensign*, but the *Friend* and *New Era*, too," tosses in the instructor's wife.

For a flickering moment, I wonder if this attitude about what appears in church magazines is prevalent in this ward. If it is, I'm in luck. After all, I've been published in them: they have to like me for that, don't they? Does that make my words prophetic too? Maybe they should listen to me for a change. I shudder and let this twisted thought slip from me as I exhale. Wasn't I listening? Didn't I hear that woman say that once a story appears in a bonafide LDS magazine the words cease to belong to the writer and become God's instead? I heighten my resolve to say nothing today, reminding myself that silence is my best chance, and keep staring blankly at the wall.

Of course just because I'm staring blankly doesn't mean the light isn't on in my attic. I'm thinking, "Everyone in this room considers him or herself to be one of God's servants. Every one of us can be moved upon by the Holy Ghost to speak the Lord's mind, and when we do, it is the same as if he were speaking. But (and here I go again) since when does this mean that everything a servant says in all situations is exactly what the Lord would say? That seems mighty presumptuous. Can't such a presumption slide us quickly into blasphemy? Why are we leaving the gift of the Holy Ghost out of the equation? What are we afraid of?"

What am I afraid of? My hand trembles. *No, no, no!* My lips part. *Keep your mouth shut, Lisa. You're intellectualizing again.*

That intellectualizing is taboo in a Sabbath meeting was literally the first thing I learned in Relief Society. I was a brand-spanking new high school graduate and still wet behind the ears from my baptism the year before. Unlike my fellow Laurels, who had been raised in the church, I had disliked the Young Women's program and looked forward to moving into the adult circle of the church. I loved the gospel with its ideas of perpetual learning and growth. But I felt stunted by YW lessons about covering my midriff and keeping my feet on the floor and my lips closed when I dated. I wanted the sort of gospel meat which the adult classes would surely provide. I've always been imaginative.

It was with this naiveté that I attended my first Relief Society meeting, enthusiastically anticipating a "deep" discussion. I don't remember the subject of the lesson, but I recall being profoundly disappointed and thinking that I was being fed the same fluff as before, but now from a parent's perspective. Finally a sister several chairs down from where I sat raised her hand and posed a rhetorical question that bespoke genuine reflection. My pulse quickened and I leaned forward, wanting to see the woman who had taken the lesson in a meaningful direction. Her single question told me that certainly she was the ideal LDS woman. In an instant she had become my hero.

The motherly sister sitting beside me misinterpreted my increased interest as concern. Putting a hand on my knee, she whispered (and I quote her precisely), "Don't pay any attention to her. She intellectualizes everything."

Just as quickly as my neighbor dismissed my hero's question, so did the teacher. I sat back in my chair. And I felt hollow for the first—but not the last—time at a church meeting. I thought Mormons were supposed to be intellectual. I thought they valued education. I knew that they taught that "the glory of God is intelligence." But I learned quickly that popular LDS people keep their minds tucked safely between the fold in their temple recommends.

But back to today's lesson. My former stake YW president adds, "We can't forget home teachers. They have the authority to receive revelation for us." She perks up with a new idea, "Even Sunday School teachers. You've been called to teach us, so. . ."

She leaves us hanging. I wonder why she doesn't mention husbands, the patriarchs of our homes. But then, I know something of her husband and why she divorced him. It was a good move.

Finally a male voice (belonging to a former bishop) chimes in, "Brother (Typical Instructor), where was that lesson manual printed?"

"Why, in Salt Lake."

"Sure," the former bishop continues, "so this lesson is exactly what the prophet wants us to hear today and you're called to teach it. It's as if God were speaking directly to us. It's no different."

And as today's Gospel Doctrine discussion rotates lazily around the concept of unquestioning obedience, I play a lonely game of tug o'war with my memories. If I were to share an experience from my personal file with these people, would it be received with some empathy or perceived as sin? You tell me:

I was twenty-four, and it was the night before my marriage in the Los Angeles Temple. The telephone rang. My mother, a non-Mormon, answered.

"It's your bishop," Mom said and walked from the room, the re-

ceiver left on the kitchen counter like a bone for a dog. My family life was filled with tension, thanks to my choice of a temple marriage, and I desperately needed to hear my bishop commend me for my decision. I wanted someone to tell me he was proud of me when my parents felt only shame and embarrassment at being willfully omitted from their only daughter's wedding ceremony.

I greeted him happily and he returned the tone, but the pleasantries broke apart almost immediately. He said, "I called to tell you that I've prayed and the Lord wants me to be at your sealing tomorrow."

My heart went numb. For years I had worried about how my parents would react to my choice of a temple marriage and pondered how I ought to handle the situation when it arose. Then one day I found myself outside the temple doors waiting for my best friend to emerge after her sealing. Standing beside me was the bride's father, an "unworthy" man of many years. As the guests at the sealing poured out, many of them shook his hand as though they knew him and said things like, "It was a beautiful ceremony. Tammie was radiant." As each of these people pressed on, small suitcase in hand, Tammie's father would lean toward me and ask, "Who was that?"

The bishop. The stake president. I don't know. Our former Laurel advisor. A returned missionary from the singles ward. The second counselor's wife.

I might as well have spoken a clearer truth: To you, they are strangers.

From this experience I knew through both common sense and the Holy Spirit that I was not to allow my parents to hear strangers tell them about their daughter's wedding. My sealing would be private: myself, my fiancé, and our witnesses. That was it. The reception would be public and would show no favoritism by including some family members and friends and excluding others. That was the scenario I discussed with the bishop of my singles ward the day he signed my recommend for the sealing. He commended me for my sensitivity to my parents' feelings and said that of course he understood why he was politely and respectfully not invited to my sealing ceremony.

But now on the phone, just hours before our sealing was to take place, he was singing a different tune. "I need to know what time to be there."

I felt confused. Didn't he remember our discussion? (How could he have forgotten?)

"I thought you understood why I'm not inviting anyone to the temple."

"But I'm your bishop."

I swallowed. Years of lessons about being subject to my bishop's counsel zig-zagged through my mind, but racing in my soul was the

knowledge that he was one of the "strangers" that should not be present on this occasion. I said, "And they are my parents. How can I allow you to see what they cannot?"

I wanted him to give me a logical or spiritually persuasive reason so that I could comfortably combine his request with what I knew the Spirit had both whispered and shouted to me as I wrestled with this decision.

Instead he said (and I am quoting to the best of my ability), "Lisa, your relationship with me is more important than with your parents." Dumbfounded by this statement, I listened mutely as he proceeded to explain that, since my parents were not members of the church, they would not be worthy to receive the highest degree of glory; our family would be separated in the hereafter. But he and I were living worthily and would go to the celestial kingdom. Therefore, my relationship with him was of an eternal nature, whereas my relationship with my parents was essentially damned.

It was unfathomable that he was saying things which were so ridiculous and had no doctrinal basis. He was supposed to be congratulating me. "I'm sorry," I said, "But I can't invite you." I sounded mousy and my voice shook, but still I said it. "I thought you understood."

His reply? "I already called the temple. Your sealing is at nine a.m. I'll see you there."

"I can't allow that, Bishop. Please."

"Lisa, it's becoming apparent to me that you don't understand the temple. If you did, you'd ask your bishop to attend." (Was he crying?) "I've never missed a sealing of any one of my kids." (By this I understood him to mean the members of the singles ward.) I genuinely felt sorry for the man, but I knew what I had to do. I knew what was right for my family. As difficult as it was and as unnatural as it felt, I had to go directly against my bishop's counsel in order to follow the Spirit because my own best interest and the best interest of my family were at stake.

"I can't invite you. You cannot come."

He took a deep, sad breath. "I'm sorry to hear you say that. You leave me no choice. I'll be at the temple in the morning," he said, "and if you try to keep me out of the sealing room, I'll tell the temple president that I'm your bishop and that it is my opinion you don't understand what you're doing, that you aren't spiritually prepared. Your recommend will be revoked and you will not be married."

"Bishop!"

Click.

"Lisa," he continued—*What was the click if he hadn't hung up*—"I just want to see you get married."

I felt sick. . . .

"I love you. It's Heavenly Father's will I attend. Be obedient. I'm your bishop."

That click had to have been my mother hanging up an extension! She had eavesdropped, heard every word of this rancid conversation. There would be hell to pay. Now she would think she had seen the true nature of the Mormons. She'd been far from enthusiastic about my conversion. Because I had been underage, she and my father had made me wait three years for baptism. Still, we had overcome many of our difficulties, and though she was miserable over my temple marriage before the phone call, she had accepted my decision, if not embraced it. She'd paid for the dress, the invitations, the band, the reception hall, the food, etc, etc. We had both come to see my temple marriage as a large bump in the road of our relationship, but not a wall. What would happen now?

"You," the bishop said, "you're like my own kids."

"I'm sorry, bishop. Good night."

I hear the Gospel Doctrine instructor as he continues with his lesson. "What an amazing blessing it is to know that if we just do what our leaders counsel us, we'll be okay."

Today my mind is like a top, and the instructor's words like the string that sends me spinning back through time. Suddenly I am in another long-ago Gospel Doctrine class in another ward. The same scripture has been read and the same extrapolations made. But I was braver then. I hear myself say, "Bishops are human. They can make mistakes. I think our emphasis should be on obedience to God the Father through the Holy Spirit, not on obedience to our priesthood leaders."

I would have added that obedience to the Holy Spirit and to the counsel of those in authority are usually the same thing; I would have continued by pointing out that the gift of the Holy Ghost is designed to help us recognize truth and we should trust it, but a voice from the front of the room had struck like lightening, saying, "But the Lord has said he'll bless us for obedience. If we do what our priesthood leaders tell us, even if they do make some sort of mistake (which I'm not saying they will), we'll be blessed because the Lord won't hold their mistakes against us."

I cringe as I recall this, partly because I find this sentiment blasphemous and partly because I ironically find myself somehow envying the simplistic world in which people who believe such things live. To think that God would bless us for doing what is wrong!

So I pose the question: Would I have been better off or received more blessings if I had disobeyed the prompting of the Spirit, gone against my love and concern for my parents, and obeyed my bishop? The answer lay in the subsequent events.

As it turned out (and I don't know what happened to make this so), my bishop did not show up at the temple or at my reception. Still the

memory of his phone call clung to my day like something that belongs in a compost heap. To say I was anxious would be an understatement. In the morning my parents hardly spoke a word to me as I prepared to go to the temple. My mother couldn't even look at me as she endured the pain of knowing that her daughter had chosen to marry in a church that not only considered her unworthy to so much as watch her own daughter's marriage ceremony, but that taught her that she and my father were less important in my life than the insensitive and manipulative man—(a bishop!)—who had called the night before.

Out of love for me, my parents waited outside the temple doors while I made the most significant commitment of my eternal existence. It is true that no one emerged from the temple with details about how beautiful the ceremony had been, and for this I am grateful. But it was damage control; in the eyes of my parents, nothing about this event could be beautiful: It was a betrayal. During the years prior to my engagement, I had tried to soften the pain with romantic explanations of the eternal nature of marriage and family, but in the end I failed. The bishop's telephone call had "confirmed" for them the "truth" that I, we the Mormons, believe non-Mormons to be "beneath" the saints of God. Nothing I could say to my parents could convince them otherwise, for they had heard the truth from one in authority.

It didn't help that I could not speak specifically about the phone call with my mother. If I broached the subject, she clammed up, shut down, turned hard as granite. I supposed she needed to pretend it hadn't happened: she isn't the kind of person who'd be comfortable admitting she had eavesdropped. I had always known there would be problems after my temple marriage, but what I was living was far beyond my worst fears, so deep was my parents' anger towards me, so whole-hearted their disgust with the church. Any speaking we did was perfunctory. When I did bring up the subject of the church or the wedding, I heard words like "mindless" and "cult." My mother began referring to the church as the KKK because of the white clothing worn in the temple. I had never had to deal with such harsh sentiments from her, not even during the earliest days of my conversion. To say I was angry with that particular bishop for countermanding the progress I had made in overcoming my parents' reservations about my involvement with and marriage to a Mormon would be a tremendous understatement. I felt terribly betrayed by him. My bishop had pledged support and understanding one day, then at the worst possible moment, yanked them away and replaced them with lies and false commands. Fortunately, my husband and I moved to another state immediately after our honeymoon, so I never had to face my former bishop again. I didn't trust myself not to tell him off.

I admit, though, many times during the months after my wedding I sat down, intending to write him a letter, to pour out my soul, to lay

plain for him the extreme difficulties I was having with my family as a direct consequence of the things he had said during that phone call. I felt he should know what he'd done, so he could sufficiently repent, but each time I sat to write to him, I found myself unable to do so. Eventually I decided the Holy Spirit was attempting to teach me humility and forgiveness, and eventually I stopped wanting him to hurt for having hurt me and my family.

Ironically it was another telephone call over a year later that explained why my hand had been stayed. My forgiveness of him, as I had supposed, was only a minor issue; my pain a surface wound in comparison.

The phone call came from the friend who had served as both my witness in the temple and my Maid of Honor, a fellow convert who understood my predicament all too well and a member of the same singles ward presided over by this particular bishop. She told me that the bishop had been released unceremoniously from his calling shortly after my wedding, that he had been diagnosed with what we then called manic depression. Apparently the phone conversation we had had that night was an early indicator of his struggle with mental unbalance.

My friend told me that, within weeks of my wedding, the bishop descended into deep depression. A successful businessman, he stopped working, stopped everything. Soon, as my friend reported, he needed to be watched twenty-four hours a day in order to protect him from himself. His grown children took turns sitting with him when his wife had to be out of the house. One night the bishop seemed particularly buoyant as he sat with one of his beloved children, reminiscing. When he begged her to drive to the local ice cream parlor and bring home a quart of the flavor they'd both loved during her childhood, she acquiesced, pleased that her father's jubilant old self seemed to be returning.

But when she returned home from her happy errand, she was greeted not with open arms, but with carnage. Her father, my bishop, had put a gun to his head and said his final amen. My letters, had I sent them, would likely have been received and opened by a devastated and grief-stricken wife.

Suddenly there was no longer anger in my heart, only an aching as I realized how confused and frustrated he must have felt as he spiraled into such an abyss of despair. Suddenly I understood how a man whom I had often heard expound the gospel with clarity could have preached the nonsense he did to me that night over the telephone. I remember voicing to my friend that maybe I should have allowed him to come to the ceremony, that maybe my refusal had somehow triggered it all.

No, she said. She had witnessed his struggle unfold from her bench in the chapel. No, there had been many things.

I hung up the phone and cried. I thought of my mother, but it was

several days before I summoned the courage to call her. We spoke about the weather and other trivial things, and then I said, "Remember that bishop who called the night before my wedding?"

Her reply was icy. "Vaguely."

"Kay called me last week. She said that he was diagnosed with manic depression not long after my wedding." I paused. "He killed himself, Mom."

She paused. "Oh, God."

I don't recall if I cried as we spoke, but I remember that I was shaking, wondering how she would react. Would she think: So you people let crazies be bishops? Would this strain our relationship even more? Fortunately, I underestimated my mother. The news of the bishop's suicide struck a deep chord of compassion in her. We had the first in-depth conversation we had had since that night before my wedding. She told me of her own youthful battle with thoughts of suicide and let me know that she understood that people who are depressed don't always say and do rational things. Although not during this phone conversation, shortly thereafter she said out of the blue, "Lisa, I'm proud of the way you think for yourself. Even when the pressure is on, you try to do what you think is right."

There. I had it. The words I had longed to hear from my mother for so long were finally spoken. In the seventeen years that have come and gone since my marriage, not once have my parents accused me of blind obedience or of being mindless, not once has the word "cult" been used to described my religion. Instead they have come to admire the good that has come through my living a gospel-oriented life. It was as though through my disobedience to the bishop, I had opened the door through which respect could later enter. I proved to them that, when I do follow, there is no leash about my neck.

I wish that this reconciliation had been achieved in a happier manner, but I am comforted to see evidence that my disobedience to an improper request made by a struggling bishop meant that I had been obedient to myself, my sense of justice, my love for my family, and the Spirit.

The bell rings and I come back through time to my Gospel Doctrine class. I hear the instructor once again repeating the closing line of D&C 1:38. "Whether by mine own voice, or by the voice of my servant, it is the same." He smiles over the simplicity of the statement, then asks for a volunteer for prayer.

I frown and keep my hand down. Part of me still wishes that things could seem simple to me, that I didn't intellectualize, but I can't help myself; it comes naturally. I do wish I could simply move into a new ward and say all the right things to connect myself instantly with the new lives around me. I would like to feel I belong.

After all, I believe the same things other Latter-day Saints believe. I believe that Jesus is my Savior and that the Book of Mormon is what Joseph Smith said it is. I believe in the power and authority of the priesthood. But I also believe in me, in my own ability to receive divine inspiration, and to think with the brain God gave me. I believe he even offers me a chance to become divine—but not by being indiscriminately obedient.

During the prayer I relive a brief moment from today's class when I looked beyond the instructor, his wife, the former bishop, and stake Young Women's president, into the faces of the room's other non-participants with expressions as blank as my own must surely be. I wonder about their lives. What prevents them from speaking up. They can't all be shy. Do any of them understand faith in the way I do? The prayer ends, and suddenly blank expressions become friendly. Perhaps there are many who feel isolated, shouted down and out by the presiding minority whose self-assurance seems designed to make the less certain feel inferior. As I rise from my seat, I deliberately extend my hand to my nearest neighbor. He smiles while I tell him my name and silently promise myself that next week I will raise this same hand in class. Maybe I'll get into trouble. Maybe no one will like what I say. But I have been in trouble for good causes before, and, at least, I will like myself.

Our Big Fat Temple Weddings: Who's In. Who's Out. And How We Get Together.

David G. Pace

THE POPULAR FILM *MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING* suggests that ethnic families will flood pell mell into any space provided by a family member who announces she or he is getting married. In the case of writer/actor Nia Vardalos's paean to Greek-American culture, the results are funny, raucous, even slightly grotesque. Her groom who falls in love with a spinster waitress is a sort of white-bread Protestant himself. Along with his stiff Anglo-parents, he becomes completely absorbed by the overwhelming insistence of well-meaning Greeks living in a sort of parallel universe. In this universe eccentric, big-haired women and loud-mouthed men assume that any comet within a light year is not only fair game, but needs and desires (even without knowing it) to be pulled in by gravity and stuffed with grape leaves and feta cheese. In other words, to be converted to a more rewarding way of life, however peculiar.

This, of course, brings me to Mormons, a self-identifying peculiar people and arguably their own ethnic group. The marketing for *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* revolves around that film's graphic title in which a number of other groups spontaneously appear in place of the word "Greek" and suggest that the show could go on marinated in Mexican, Jewish, or any number of American subcultures. So what might a movie entitled, *My Big Fat Mormon Wedding* look like? In my experience, it would not be a light comedy eventually optioned by television for a sitcom.

I have ten sisters, all of whom, as of last year, have married in the temple. I was able to witness the marriage of only three—two because they were first married civilly and another because, at the time, I was still considered "temple worthy." In an earlier marriage of my own, I left my brother, a brother-in-law, my best friend, the family of my convert

wife, and others outside while we trundled through the quiet rooms of the Manti Temple before settling into one dominated by a Persian carpet. There, the president of the temple performed the ceremony. This man first made the point that the exchange of rings was not a part of the actual LDS ordinance, but that if we wanted to step to the side of the altar, we could exchange rings there. I told him we were planning to do the ring exchange later at a luncheon so that everyone could participate in at least part of the celebration. The president, however, insisted that this was not going to happen on his watch. He said that the brethren were discouraging added ceremonies in rooms outside the House of the Lord. "Where are the rings?" he asked. And I looked to my new wife, who looked at her maid of honor, who stood as if in a tribunal and announced that they were in the dressing room downstairs. While we waited for her to return with the rings, it did not occur to me, nor presumably to anyone else in the room, to challenge this temple president who in essence had ordered us not to participate in a marriage custom (outside the temple) which he and the church claimed had no ritual meaning.

Over a decade later, I still replay this scene in my mind from time to time. I like to imagine myself—married for just minutes—grabbing the rings from the maid of honor, flinging off my temple garb, pulling my beloved by the hand to the window (which somehow opens. . .the heavy drapes crumpling dramatically to the floor), throwing a kiss to the wedding party, bursting through the window and, with my bride clinging to me fearfully, rappelling safely down the flanks of the temple, while white-clothed temple workers pad after us in not-so-hot, slippered pursuit.

Instead, my bride and I exchanged rings altar-side under the approving eyes of the temple president and family members deemed worthy of watching, and then shuffled downstairs shamefacedly to change into our street clothes and greet the uninvited who were waiting for us outside. That morning was filled with convoluted feelings. While I felt ashamed for excluding loved ones from the temple ordinance, I also remember feeling a little smug as well, like a child on the playground who holds a secret and makes sure everyone knows that there is a secret being kept from them. While I felt embarrassed by a certain injustice at the hands of the temple president, I also felt as if my new bride and I were descending from the Persian Room, in the phrase of William Wordsworth, "trailing clouds of glory." It felt good and bad. After all, privilege is an enervating salve, however temporary, to what the Mormon Alliance has termed "spiritual abuse."

Now that I am no longer LDS, having resigned my membership, other things seem more important to me than ring-exchanging protocol. I knew, as everyone presumably does who leaves the institutional church, that I would never be able to enter the temple again. Even so, the LDS church, followed by its members, seems to have become more and

more restrictive not only about temple admittance, but the mere accommodation of non-Mormon or "non-worthy" family members and friends. For example, bishops restrict the content of funeral services; young people with certain sexual histories are not allowed on missions; devout Latter-day Saints more and more often show condescension toward the religions of those who have married into the family by holding that, at minimum, any non-Mormon will always be fair game for conversion.

How are non-Mormons or non-card-carrying Mormons to make a connection to the faithful Latter-day Saint? It is my opinion that the church which promotes strong family bonds has had its own best intentions countermanded by an obligation to protect religious principles. In *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, the Anglo-Protestant outsiders give in to the more aggressive family in a sort of If-you-can't-beat-'em-join-'em sigh of resignation. What could they have done differently? I suppose they could have resisted the Greek overtures, insisted on some of their own traditions, engaged in debates over the insensitivity of the Greek way of life—maybe even resorted to sabotage. But that would have been a very different movie. As it would have been had the movie bothered to explore exactly how any of these responses from outsiders might be interpreted by a family that seemed to have an unflagging need to see itself in a certain, totalizing way.

In Mormon circles maybe there is, in fact, a place not only for resignation, but also resistance to an organization that sometimes feels like a juggernaut. Even though the gospel mission, embodied by the church, is to encourage, to enlighten, and even "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39), the institution can seem powerful and all-encompassing in a way that, however unintended, effectively squelches free agency. In my experience the authority of the church runs in a continuum from the upper quorums, through the church, into the family, and, finally, to the terminus of the individual. As free agents at the bottom of this pile, do Latter-day Saints have only two options, to acquiesce to the system, or to resist it?

Is there a third option?

The bi-polar choice that many Mormons feel of being either for or against the Lord's kingdom is, in my view, shaped by a fusion of church, family, and individual. Mormonism is a totalizing way of life, and little distinction seems to be made among church, culture, doctrine, history, family bonds, or various church programs. Nor, for that matter, among any other enterprises in a Mormon's life. Many of us were taught, for example, that it is our obligation to the non-Mormons we encounter to share the gospel with them. This was particularly true on our missions where a bus ride with even one potential convert on it was an important opportunity. Some of us held tightly to the most extreme injunction re-

lated to this idea which was the notion that if someone in our purview should never be introduced to the gospel and, thus, never saved, the eternal loss would be on our heads.

I think there is a difference between what I am calling fusion—the melting together of different things—and seeing things "Mormonly," a variation of Emily Dickinson's "seeing things New Englandly."[1] I am not talking about a lens through which we see, but rather a mass of experience that, when we find ourselves in it, gives us a powerful sense of belonging, but at the same time confuses us and arguably arrests our sense of self. Surely one reason church authorities warn us against criticizing the church or its leaders is that criticism can undermine a hierarchical system, and, following the fuzzy imperative of fusion, undermine culture, doctrine, history, family bonds, church programs, and ultimately the defined individual him or herself. Personally, it can reveal that the sense of self at the end of that very long train of authoritative determination is, nonetheless, fragile. That, in any case, has been my experience.

I don't know exactly what the alchemy is that has brought me and others like me to a place where we do not know where a religious system ends and our family begins or where our family ends and we as individuals begin, but I suspect it has to do with fear. A religious system, like any system, has the potential to move from lofty theory about serving individuals to perpetuating its own existence at any cost, including the cost of the individual—especially at the cost of the individual.

I am reminded of the Russian novelist Vassily Aksyonov who, writing in exile about the Soviet Union, introduces us through a series of novels to the fictional Gradov family, including Nikita Gradov. In one scene from the novel *War and Jail*, Nikita is being honored as a war hero at the Kremlin and feels enormous pride just being in the presence of the Soviet leaders. But almost simultaneously he has a fantasy about machine-gunning them down. These are the men, after all, who sent him and his wife and his brother to the camps where they suffered horribly. In an interview, Aksyonov talks about how common it was for Russians to feel "convoluted in their feelings" about their homeland and government.[2] When he was ten years old, he was nominated for Lenin's Young

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1. Another definition of "fusion" is instructive. From *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language* (unabridged), 1983: "in optics, the act of bringing the eyes in visual line so that the rays from a single point fall on corresponding localities in each eye and are conveyed to a single visual center, producing the impression of one."

The phrase "see Mormonly" and its borrowing from Dickinson's line, "because I see New Englandly" are Lavina Fielding Anderson's in an email to me dated May 28, 1998.

2. Sean Abbott, "Off with Stalin's Underpants: Vassily Aksyonov talks about his tragicomic Soviet epic," an interview in *At Random* (Spring 1996): 21-27. All of my information about Aksyonov's personal life and the connection of his work to Tolstoy is from this article.

Pioneers and was ceremoniously presented a red scarf as a symbol of his belonging. Even though five years earlier, both of Aksyonov's parents had been sent to separate camps, he reports of receiving the scarf, "I was dying of happiness. That was the utmost happiness to me, to be a Young Pioneer."[3]

Why did Aksyonov, like the fictional Nikita, sometimes experience the Soviet Union in this convoluted way: horrified by the state persecution while, at the same time, craving its approval? Perhaps it was because, as a Soviet citizen, he had been conditioned to think that the only alternative to utter fealty to the state was a kind of outer darkness. Perhaps it was because he feared for his own survival and for that of his family if he did not buy into the propaganda that Mother Russia could *only* be the Soviet Union—and vice versa—particularly when there was an outside enemy always bearing down on Moscow, as the Nazis were during Nikita's lifetime. There was no identity for either Nikita or Aksyonov outside of the one prescribed, ordered, and manipulated by the Soviet system. Belonging to the group became the most important thing in life.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not the Soviet Union even if I can sometimes understand Steve Benson's impulse to intone that, "Temple Square is Red Square."[4] But I believe it is instructive to compare systems. While I cannot speak for others, I can say that in my twelve year absence from church participation, I have met scores and scores of Mormons like me, who for years have felt a fierce need to defend the system that injured them and their families. In an effort to break out of the fusion that is our fix, some of us have imploded in self-loathing, and self-destructive behavior. We have behaved as though we believed that the only way to respond to our injuries is to *react*, and thus *re-enact* toward ourselves and others the injury and even the spiritual violence that was our experience. In short, some of us seem to have become the very thing we ran away from, which is to say we never got away. To me it is the bitterest of ironies that fellow Mormons, even church leaders, are fond of saying about these fringe sisters and brothers with whom I ally myself, "Yes, they can leave the church. . .but they can't leave it alone."

So I would like to return to the question of whether there is a third option besides acquiescence or opposition to a church that often seems to many of us more interested in social, even political control than in demonstrating (even Mormon) religious values. If there is, I suspect it

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3. Ibid., 27.

4. Walt Jayroe, "Drawing the Line On Religion" (1994), http://www.lds-mormon.com/benson1.shtml

will first require sorting out the fusion of our experience so that we are not just reacting impulsively to something experientially overwhelming. I am not an advocate of leaving the church, either through inactivity or through a formal exit. But I am saying that one must rigorously delineate church from doctrine, doctrine from culture, culture from family, and family from self, thereby providing—in the interstices—a space for the soul and subsequently character to develop. Then, instead of just living a reactionary life, a genuine and meaningful response to our experience can occur.

By soul I do not mean only the union of the physical body to the spirit body, but soul in the sense of meaning, passion, and voice. To me, soul is the engine that drives identity from adolescence to adulthood, from idolization to mature engagement. Soul is that transcendent intimation we sometimes feel limning the strict socialization of our children. It is the raw identity borne out of the intelligence that we see as co-eternal with God. Soul is a voice that is not hewn or shaped, but emerges in a space that opens up between struggle and intuition. I believe that the emergence of soul is a pre-condition to any option other than becoming either a blank cog in a machine's wheels or a Luddite, attempting to burn down the machine altogether. Soul, I'm convinced, is the pre-condition to character, to self-directed choice, to free-agency as it was intended to be.

Let me suggest what a third option is not. A third option does not involve our changing the LDS church whose job, as a system, is to do exactly what it's doing: survive until Christ's return. One could argue that any form of survival involves an ability to manipulate one's environment. One could also argue that manipulation of human thinking and motivation demands intense indoctrination. Indoctrination is where I believe the church impacts our lives most directly. That is, I believe the church's position on political agendas, policies, and procedures is the only way it can define what it is and, once again, following the imperative of fusion, who *we* are. That is the church's job. But *my* job as a Mormon—a term I use, of course, in the broadest sense—is to determine who *I* am.

A third option does not rely on an organization re-shaped in our own image. If the church is totalitarian, and I believe one could argue that it is,[5] then totalitarianism is its own enemy. No one need throw rocks from the wings. If we believe the cultural theorist, Mikhail Epstein—yet an-

5. Definition of *totalitarian* (*Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary* [Unabridged]): "designating, of, or characteristic of a government or state in which one political party or group maintains complete control and refuses to recognize, and as a consequence suppresses, all other political parties." Can refer to a regime or doctrine. *Authoritarian*: "believ-

other Russian—"[o]ur redemption from totalitarianism lies in totalitarianism itself." Specifically, Epstein writes about "The Totalitarianism of Ideas." He says that only when ideas are conversant with their limitations can their absolute content be revealed, a content that makes, according to him, "a humiliating farce of their claims to totality, and thereby restores the authentic meaning."[6]

The authentic meaning of Mormonism. What could that be? Without diverting too far from my subject, I would like to suggest that authentic meaning of any kind lies, not in what a system dictates meaning to be—an ideology—but in the conversation between an idea and an individual soul, much as Joseph Smith's First Vision could be seen as a conversation between a unique 14-year-old boy and the idea that God "giveth liberally" (James 1:5) to the one who asks.[7]

A third option need not entail burning down the house, so to speak. Mormons are not being sent to the gulag by church leaders, even if it sometimes feels that way. And even if they were, would it be a desirable outcome for the church somehow to be dismantled? I ask this even as I honor my own experience and the experience of others who feel they've been injured, even terribly wronged not just by actions of the institutional church, but through the character assassination that often occurs in a climate of fear when individuals find themselves outside the group.

Perhaps this is what Aksyonov illustrates best in his trilogy about

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ing in, relating to, or characterized by unquestioning obedience to authority rather than individual freedom of judgment and action." The LDS church is totalitarian in the way it uses its authority to suppress and manipulate information, the way it intimidates dissidents through church courts (sometimes secretly instigated by the hierarchy) and the way it, perhaps unwittingly, uses the persistent fear of exclusion and disapproval which individuals feel in highly conformist groups. This phenomenon is far from uncommon and has a very contemporary corollary in the way the current administration can rely on Americans' fear of being disloyal to keep criticism of the Iraqi war and, thus, public action against that war at bay.

6. Mikhail N. Epstein, "On the Totalitarianism of Ideas," translated by Eve Adler, *The New England Review* 23, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 11. A fuller quote from Epstein: "Our redemption from totalitarianism lies in totalitarianism itself, but only if it is carried through to the end. . . .[Eventually,] it attains the ultimate totalism—and splits its sides laughing at the realization of its own relativity. The comic utopia. The totalitarian grotesque." Epstein continues, saying that despite an idea's "descent to the abysses of ideology, every idea, however comically incongruous in its pretensions to total dominion, still contains a positive, life-enhancing moment."

7. Epstein makes a distinction between religion and ideology; the first is immune from becoming the second if "it admits its own imperfection in relation to [God]" or "the existence of an Absolute outside itself, beyond the limit of its own knowledge and mastery" (Epstein, 12). Such a concession is almost a religious given, and yet I believe that a church can sometimes operate less as a religion, as Epstein defines it, and more as an ideology. What I am exploring in this essay is the LDS church as it operates ideologically.

the Gradov family, beginning with *Generations of Winter*: he details brilliantly what he calls "the gigantic pandemonium of human arbitrariness."[8] He shows how the family home changes from a sort of fortress against outsiders to a trap; how suspicion of fellow comrades seems to build organically; how a mere glance can equal treason; how the system gets placed above even family because the very fact that someone, including one's own father, is arrested reveals that person's guilt; how leaders justify universal oppression by claiming that the fate of the system as a whole is currently being decided. . .along with the fate of the nation; how arrests begin to take on the veneer of "business as usual"; how the premiere value or commodity becomes party membership, even though membership does not finally protect one from arrests.

"Nothing special is happening," says the narrator, referring to the arrest and disappearance of a fellow Russian. "The only thing that's happening is a silent conspiracy of millions upon millions of people who have reached a tacit agreement that nothing is happening. Anything unusual that is going on is happening to the guilty, but *we're* all right, everything is normal."[9]

The system of which Aksyonov writes eventually came to an end as Epstein would have predicted. In that Soviet idea there was form, the limitations of which have now been painfully pointed out, and the "authentic meaning" of the Soviet/Marxist idea is arguably now available. Regardless of who is credited with bringing down the Soviet Union: Gorbachev, the Pope, or—as my Republican friends like to suggest—Reagan, I like to believe with Tolstoy that it is never in the hands of one man to alter history. It is not one individual or a singular event, but it is the "sum of human acts of will."[10]

I have described what I think a viable third option is not, does not do, and need not imply. So what is it, what does it do, and what *does* it imply? These were the questions I faced a few years ago when yet another announcement of a sister's impending temple marriage arrived in the mail, and the options I considered grew from standing outside the temple with the children, and later, asking at the reception how the ceremony had gone, to something decidedly else. What I did was send a gift, opting not to take part in a wedding I was not invited to. In so doing, I tried to show respect for a decision my sister had made to marry in the temple but also equal respect for my choice not to stand excluded outside. The consequence of my choice is subtle, but it may suggest a viable

8. Vassily Aksyonov, *Generations of Winter* (New York: Random House, 1995), 294.
9. Ibid., 194
10. Quoted in Abbot, 21.

option for that LDS population, eighty percent by some estimates, which is excluded from temple worship.[11] I did not mitigate the consequence of my sister's decision to be married in the temple and *ipso facto* exclude her own brother from her wedding. I think we do a disservice to Latter-day Saints by believing they have no choice other than the current, church-ordained one. At the Manti temple, I could have insisted on an exchange of rings outside the temple. No one around me acted as though I had a choice, and compliantly, I did not act as though I had a choice either. We often whitewash, for the excluded as well as the member obedient to church edict, the consequences of such choices and actions. And it is only the sum of Mormon "acts of will," to borrow from Tolstoy, that will eventually make a difference.

Having said that, let me give a short list of the kinds of things I believe a Mormon can choose:

- To marry in the temple and still insist that at the reception one's gay brother's partner be present and acknowledged.
- To provide morning coffee for the non-Mormon wife of a son visiting from out of town.
- To name and bless a newborn while the mother holds the child in the circle of priesthood-holding men.
- To drink alcoholic beverages in one's own home or at restaurants in the presence of devout family members.
- To hold the funeral service for a gay son in a funeral home rather than in the ward building so that the gay man's friends will feel comfortable and so that the proceedings can take the shape the family feels best fits the occasion without a presiding church authority insisting on church-approved specifications.
- To respectfully excuse oneself with one's non-Mormon spouse from Memorial Day proceedings when grave-side speeches, even by one's devout LDS father, become pointedly sectarian.
- To frame and hang pictures of children and the partners of those children, whether formally married or not, whether straight or gay.
- To refuse, as a stake president, to pull the temple recommend of a father who has been arrested but not convicted of shaking his infant child to death and who maintains he is innocent.
- To invite the son who lives with his girlfriend to stand in the circle of the anointing and blessing of a sister injured in a car accident.
- To escort a daughter who has decided to abort her unborn child,

11. D. Jeff Burton, "On Beyond the Borderlands," *Sunstone* 127 (May 2003): 67-69.

through picket lines at the clinic, even though the pregnant woman's parent is "pro-life."

- To overlook the fact that a father does not pay tithing and to renew the man's temple recommend so that he can see his only daughter marry in the temple.
- As a mission president to plead with the prophet to allow a man-to-woman transsexual to be admitted onto church rolls as a woman without going through an excommunication, as per policy.
- To walk to the stand, as the relief society president of a singles ward, and to sit on there in silent protest during an overtly sexist talk by a man in sacrament meeting.
- To flatly refuse to make the youth of a stake over which one presides participate in an inadequate MIA program, however church approved, and instead to shape a program which better meets the needs of teenagers in a difficult, urban environment.

The truth is, all these acts *did* happen in Mormondom. And many more, I am sure, continue to happen. But they are not advertised, considered, honored, or discussed. Moreover, I suspect that such acts often tend to be freighted with a certain dose of dread guilt. After all, Latter-day Saints are reminded constantly over the pulpit—and through manuals, official publications, and stated policies—that nothing is more important than unswerving observance of church standards. Love may be the first principle, but obedience is surely the first law of heaven. Acts like those above are therefore subject to the constantly correlating strategy of church headquarters to regulate them out of existence. In my own memory, the micro-managing of behaviors has a history from discouraging gum-chewing in the 70s to, most recently, condemning tattoos.

We must, I believe, be as clear as we can about what the consequences of our choices will be. Then we must accept those consequences. Whether we decide to put the institution ahead of the individual or the individual ahead of the institution, either action will carry consequences that are favorable *and* unfavorable. But either action will also tell us who we are, what kind of Mormons we are or are becoming, and what it will mean to be a Mormon in the long run.

To an ethnic Mormon like me, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* isn't a very satisfying film in the end. Nary a peep is made by the bridegroom or his family about the wedding, which simply becomes a stage for acting out Greek American culture to an audience of three. Not even a nod is given to the losses experienced by those three outsiders. One has to admire the ferocity with which the bride's extended family markets their prized way of life, but one also has to wonder what price they will pay for this controlling behavior, not even to mention the price the controlled must

pay. (At least we can say in a mitigating aside that these parents were able to attend the wedding of their own son.)

I have a fantasy that eventually great halls will be built all over the Mormon Corridor where it becomes the custom—as it was earlier and out of necessity for many of my ancestors who lived long distances from temples—to marry before, sometimes years before, obtaining a temple sealing. In these halls I imagine spirited and inclusive parties, marked with ritual ring exchanges in front of a smiling officiator with minted breath. My sister's daughter and her chosen stand somewhat shyly, somewhat excitedly at the back of the crowd of adoring friends and family while children spread sego lilies in the aisle prior to the couple's walk down the path to marriage. A recording of the Tabernacle Choir blares, "The morning breaks, the shadows flee. . ." A prayer from someone's bishop is offered—the occasion's nod to the priesthood—and then the ceremony, uniquely Mormon but not of the temple, which may or may not come later, begins. Family of every religious persuasion, non-persuasion, and lifestyle stand looking on, beaming at each other through good will and cologne in this big fat moment. There is plenty of punch and cookies afterwards, warm zucchini muffins from Aunt Kathleen's garden, and a cake the size and design of the original Nauvoo Sunstone. Afterwards there is dancing to two bands, "The Gold and Green Balls," which plays standards for the older crowd, and "The Danites," a new band from South Valley which plays alternative rock for the kids. At ten o'clock Uncle Brent and his partner Ralph escort a brother-in-law outside because he's had too much to drink and is being a little too loud. When the bride and groom leave, we throw salt crystals at them, instead of rice, to remind all of us that we are the salt of the earth and that we need to guard against losing our savor. Afterward, the elders' quorum stays behind to clean up and put away the chairs.

Hey, I can dream, can't I?

The Woman of Christlike Love

Emma Lou Thayne

Into her brownies she sifts sunshine
into a day she irons the clear scent of giving.

Her house is surrounded by the green of welcome,
the touch of her hand is yellow and shaped like
full dresses in the wind.

The room she has just moved out of rustles with laughter,
the one she enters smooths out like feathers on the back
of an unafraid bird.

Encouragement is the staff of her giving,
appreciation the candle of her night.

Her friends and her children are fed by wanting to be there,
her husband by bedding down in her warm designs,
her sunsets but promises of morning.

In all she is stubbornly sound, arrested by beauty,
incensed by injustice, aroused by need.

Untiringly faithful, she raises her following to the quiet
salute of right and the cordial reception of truth.

And by kindness she rallies a force independent of her
that says (yes quickly), Yea Lord, yea, yea.

Sally Didn't Sleep Here

Karen Rosenbaum

"SALLY SNORES," SAYS ED, and I sink into my shoulders and smile uncomfortably at Gemma and Frank on the couch.

"I don't snore," I say defensively. "I don't even sleep."

"Ho," answers Ed. He leans back into the recliner, so I can see the bottoms of his Birkenstocks.

Gemma emits a half-yawn, then smothers it with a giggle. "Frank could snore up a storm, and I wouldn't know," she says. "Once I'm out, I'm out. Cat walks across my face, kids shriek, throw refrigerators—nothing bothers me."

"There goes my theory," I say. "I thought maybe insomnia was a Mormon thing. Tied in with guilt. Duty. Pioneer legacy. You fall asleep, you fall off the covered wagon. But you don't have it, huh?"

Gemma shakes her head.

I sigh. "I'm jealous. Ed has to have the radio alarm up full blast, but I thought that was because he was a convert. Me—cat door creaks and I'm wide awake."

Ed points at me with his chin. "Before she hits the sack, she wants Rachel, Teddy, me all tucked in. She even lies awake waiting for Homer to come home from his nightly gopher prowl."

I look at Ed and sniff. "I don't think I've had a decent night's sleep since I was five years old," I say to Frank and Gemma. "If then."

"That's highly unusual," says Frank, who is a pediatrician.

"I can't remember before I was five." I slide onto the rug. "But when my folks would drive from L.A. to Salt Lake, they'd drive at night, to avoid the heat, you know, this was before most cars had air-conditioning, and they made my brother a bed on the back seat and me a bed on the back floor—"

"This was also before seat belt laws," Ed interrupts.

"Right. I know I never slept a wink. The whole night I'd keep track of the cars going the opposite direction. I'd hear the click when my dad went from brights to dims and then there would be this pattern on the car ceiling."

"Was this before interstates too?" asks Ed. "Maybe this was before the combustion engine."

"Ho," I say. "And remember naptime in kindergarten? I *never* napped."

"So you didn't sleep." Frank looks almost interested. "Even in more normal circumstances? At home?"

"My mother finally took me to the doctor," I say. "He said to buy me a radio and have me listen to soothing music."

"Did it work?"

"Naw." I stretch out my legs. "The radio gave off enough light for me to read comic books."

We all look at Gemma. She jerks awake and smiles sheepishly. "That was a great dinner," she says. "Can I get your recipe for the lemon pie?"

"Gees, are they boring!" Ed says as he pulls his sweatshirt over his head. "Are *we* that boring?"

"No." I flip on my control for the electric blanket. "We're scintillating. Did you check on Teddy?"

"Sound asleep. Maybe the sleep gene's on the Y chromosome."

"Rachel *is* more like me. But she'll at least stay at Cindy's till after breakfast. When *I* used to stay over at a friend's, I'd never even doze. I'd get up about five and come home."

Ed bounces onto the bed, opens his arms, and motions me towards him with a pucker. His kiss slides off my mouth. "What was really awful," I say, "was sharing a twin-size bed with someone. I'd lie stiff as a floor plank, so I wouldn't touch her."

"Who's her?"

"Whoever. My friends. My cousins. And the worst was once at camp when five of us wanted to stay in the same cabin and instead of cots there were only two double beds, and I was considered one of the *little* ones, so I ended up in the middle of a bed with a girl on each side of me." I shudder. "Sometimes they would both roll towards me." I flip over my pillow and mash it against the headboard. "And sometimes they would both roll away from me, and they'd tighten up the covers, and there would be this big gap of air between me and the blankets."

"Oooh awful," mumbles Ed, and he is asleep. I was just going to tell him about another year at camp when the youngest counselor sneaked into the cabin during the campfire sing and put on all of our pajamas and zipped herself up in her sleeping bag. I might have already told him that story. I have a big pile of books on my nightstand. I pull from the bottom and the stack collapses, but Ed doesn't stir. I admit it—I do snore. But he only hears me if he's up and on his way to the bathroom.

Middlemarch. In school I never had time to read *Middlemarch* even though I was an English major. Now I run herd on ESL kids from 9 to 4

and our own kids from 4 to 9, and if I weren't an insomniac, I wouldn't have time to read anything. This is a very old paperback—$1.50 is printed right on the cover. I'm only at the start of chapter 3, page 34, which isn't even one-twentieth of the way through the book. Someone has been here before me, Ed's first wife, Judy, who was also an English major. Since she got custody of the camping equipment, Ed got away with as many of her books as he could. Judy has underlined important passages with a ruler. It's very distracting to have to figure out why she thought these were the important parts. It shows how different we are. I scrawl little notes in the margin ("Don't do it, Dorothea!") and make stars and wiggly lines down the sides. I can't imagine taking time to underline with a ruler.

I don't think Judy snored either.

One of the perplexing things about not sleeping is that I don't get any more done than other people. Maybe less. Other women at church manage to keep their kids fed, bathed, laundered, and combed *and* go off to work every day and still come up with enough time left over to prepare and teach their Sunday School classes. I'm convinced my days are shorter than theirs, and though my nights are longer, there are only so many things you can do in the night. You can't weed the geraniums, and you can't make a really serious grocery expedition, and you can't visit the sick and afflicted, unless they have e-mail. Sometimes I get up and grade papers, but it's hard to be charitable when everyone in the whole world is asleep but me. I ought to attack the furnace room. The way we keep the rest of the house navigable is to stash stuff in the furnace room, and in our house, 75% of our stuff is paper. Rachel writes poems and has a penpal in Winnipeg and saves every paper she gets an A on, and that is every paper she writes. Teddy collects comics and baseball cards. Ed won't throw out any magazines except official church ones. We have seven years of *New Yorkers* that he's going to read some day, maybe when he trips over a stack and breaks both legs. They're virgin *New Yorkers* except for the cartoons which Teddy and I have examined, but not always understood. I've been campaigning for chest beds so we can each store the things we don't know what to do with underneath us, especially since nobody ever sweeps under the beds anyway, but maybe we'd sleep less well, rolling about on top of all the things that then would hang unfinished *under* our heads.

The furnace room makes me feel terrible. I grew up in the kind of house where my grandmother said, "What if the Savior came today? Would you want him to see your bedroom?" I was never very quick on the retort, like my kids who point out that eating all their Brussels sprouts will not help the little children in Bangladesh. Besides, my grandmother would not have been amused by my suggestion that the

Savior wouldn't be interested in looking in my closet, and I was a lot more scared of her than I was of the Savior.

I resemble her, my grandmother. I don't think she slept much. Her mind and her mouth were always moving, and they were rarely in sync. I was a teenager when she came to live with us in the winters because Vernal was nasty in the cold. Vernal was nasty in the summers too, but heat she could handle. She was a lean, beak-nosed woman, taller than my granddad, who took revenge for all her criticism and nagging in the only way he could take revenge. He died at 62.

How awful, I think, I am most like the relative I like least. My mind races all the time, usually a circuitous race. I know why I don't sleep. There's nothing I can leave alone. I worry about my parents. They drive up to see us, and I worry all the time they're on the road. Maybe my dad'll fall asleep at the wheel. Maybe a log will slip off one of those logging trucks on the freeway and ram their windshield. I worry about Ed and the diabetes in his family, and I worry about Teddy and his soccer team and his reading comprehension skills and his eczema. I mean it would make sense if he were a pariah or below average, but no, he's very normal and really quite happy, and still I worry. I'd worry more about Rachel, but she does a pretty good job of worrying about herself. I worry about God. Is he the Greatest Worrier of all, and does he mind if some Sundays I pour coffee for the homeless at the East Bay Street Project rather than twitch through lessons and talks in which I look around to see I'm the only adult in the whole row who is awake? Insomnia works against me even at church.

The phone jangles, and I'm out of bed before the first ring ends. "Hello," I whisper hoarsely into the receiver.

"Mom?" Rachel. "Can you come and get me? I've got a headache."

I sigh. "What's everyone doing over there?"

"Cindy's dad fell asleep during dessert. The rest of them zonked out during the slide show of their trip to Yosemite."

This is bad. "Torpid bodies lying all over the living room?"

"Naw. They woke up when I flipped the lights on. They all made it to their bedrooms. But Cindy didn't even brush her teeth."

"Oh," I say. "Well, I can see why you wouldn't want to stay. The possibilities of contamination are frightful."

"Mom!" She makes it two syllables. "You were awake anyway, right?"

She has me there.

"So it wouldn't be a big deal to throw on a coat and get into the car and drive on over. You wouldn't have to get dressed. I'll watch out the front window for you."

"Rachel, it isn't a very bad headache, is it? You're mostly bored, aren't you?"

"Well," she says.

"You have a book." She has a giant paperback, one of those dragon sagas. "You read your book there, and I'll read my book here, and we'll telepathically keep each other company." The dragons are telepaths. "You don't want Cindy to feel she failed as a hostess."

There is a moment of silence. "I'm hungry."

Mental note. Send graham crackers in her pajama bag. "Creep into the kitchen," I say, "and find the rest of Cindy's dad's dessert."

"Oh Mom. All right. I'll see you tomorrow."

"Love you," I say.

I put the phone receiver back in the cradle and look over at Ed. Not a twinge. I feel hungry too. When I'm the hostess, I'm too busy fussing to eat much. But *I* know where to find the left-over dessert. I grab a sweater and slip downstairs.

Homer wanders in from the garage, where he has probably been making tracks in the dust on the Datsun, and brushes against my legs. He looks mildly curious. I scrape some of the whipping cream off the lemon pie and put it in his bowl. I keep a pack of cards in a kitchen drawer. As I eat a few forkfuls of pie, I lay out a solitaire hand. I'll only play one game. My grandmother used to cheat at solitaire. She was not pleased when I intimated that the Savior wouldn't approve.

"Actually," I tell the Queen of Spades, who looks a lot like my grandmother, "according to Aunt Myrt, the Savior doesn't approve of cards at all." I slap her down on a red king. "You may tell the Savior I'm not ready for him." Now I'm addressing the front of the refrigerator door where my grandmother stands shaking her head at all the cartoons and highlighted articles and school memos and magazine diets. Her spirit has, no doubt, been pulled out of the grave by the hundred or so magnets. She wouldn't like the inside of the refrigerator any better than the outside. There are dozens of herring bottles filled with dabs of spaghetti sauce and wilted salad and the other halves of onions. When the bread ends turn green, when the lettuce turns black, when the contents of the herring bottles have produced a new white crop of fleece—then I scrape things into the garbage disposal, not before.

"We lack faith, you and I," I say to my grandmother. "We don't believe our families will survive if we take a good long nap. We can't even die with conviction. Look at you, hovering around, haunting us." I cover up her flat-faced surrogate with a red jack, but the game is soon lost. Three of the aces must be underneath that seven of clubs. "Sorry, grandma," I say. "Go back to bed. We lose."

Padding down the hall towards our bedroom, I look in on Teddy. His Masters of the Universe nightlight shows me he has kicked off all his covers and there are crumbs in the little canyons of his bottom sheet. I brush them onto the floor for the ants and draw the top sheet and a flan-

nel blanket over him. On his desk are the remains of more ants, last week's science project. The two of us spent most of the weekend trying to lure into a fishbowl the same insects that I labor to eradicate the rest of the year. When it came time for them to perform for his class, a few bewildered ants wandered about the sugar-specked sand and the herring jar lid of water, but we hadn't been able to find a queen, and most of the workers escaped. The teacher wrote "good" on Teddy's project paper, but I was not deceived. The same teacher wrote "excellent" on Rachel and Ed's lever project two years ago. Fortunately, neither Teddy nor Rachel remembers that.

I slide into my side of our bed. Ed has rolled over on his back, which he usually doesn't do, and he is breathing very loudly. One might even call it a snore. I consider getting Rachel's cassette recorder and garnering evidence to rebut any further accusations of my own nasal congestion. But my feet are cold, and anyway the sound is kind of comforting.

I settle down to chapter 3 of *Middlemarch*. I read the sentence that begins, "For he had been as instructive as Milton's 'affable archangel'" about five times, then count the words—69, too many words for a sentence one is reading at, according to the clock radio, 1:04. The archangel melts into Moroni atop the Salt Lake temple and then the White Dragon of Pern, and I send a few thoughts Rachel's way. The next sentence is shorter, and the next, and the next, and in a few paragraphs I escape into the ruminations of the heroine's ever alert, ever troubled mind.

A Bloody and Diabolical Deed

Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows, by Will Bagley (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002). 382 pp.

Reviewed by M. Guy Bishop, Woods Cross, Utah.

Will Bagley stands, metaphorically, on the shoulders of Juanita Brooks, peering into southwestern Utah's landscape to witness a ghastly sight: the murder of over one hundred men, women, and children at the hands of Mormon frontiersmen. Searching for an explanation of what could have possessed the Mormons to attack an emigrant train is an important part of Bagley's revisionist history of the incident. Joseph Fielding Smith, who served as LDS church historian and, briefly, as church president, denounced the butchery of the emigrants in his *Essentials in Church History* (1922) as a "bloody and diabolical deed."[1]

Bagley puts his skills as a researcher to the task of uncovering the causes of this massacre. In *Blood of the Prophets* he skillfully incorporates overlooked examples of mid-nineteenth-century Mormon "militancy" and extant recollections by children who survived the massacre into a compelling explanation of what happened at Mountain Meadows. The key figure in this tragedy was John D. Lee, whom Bagley quotes as saying, "It helps a man a great deal in a fight to know that God is on his side" (p. 11). At Mountain Meadows many of the perpetrators believed God to be on their side. Drawing upon the work of Eric Hoffer on "true believers" (p. 378), Bagley renders a plausible interpretation of the event. The true believer will do whatever it takes to forward his cause. John D. Lee and his Mormon cohorts at Mountain Meadows were prototypes of the true believer.

Bagley sets the stage for this tale of intrigue and deception by beginning with LDS apostle Parley P. Pratt's murder in May 1857 at the hands of Hector McLean in Arkansas. Eleanor McLean, Hector's estranged wife, was a recent convert to Mormonism and became a plural wife of Pratt's. Word of Pratt's assassination quickly spread throughout the Mormon settlements, shocking the Saints. Those who would die at Mountain Meadows were in an emigrant train from Arkansas.

Then there was the Mormon "Reformation" movement. Believing that the Latter-day Saints had "lost their commitment to righteousness," Brigham

1. *Essentials in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1922), 511. Quoted in Bagley, xiii.

Young had called for a reformation in 1856 (p. 49). Jedediah Grant, second counselor in the church's presiding First Presidency, became the spokesman for the Reformation. He spread the militant gospel of the Reformation across Utah Territory. As Bagley writes, "The desperate poverty and great faith of the Mormon people, coupled with Young's rousing exhortations, created an orgy of religious extremism" (p. 49). By the time the fated emigrant party arrived at southern Utah's Cedar City in September 1857, the "fires of the Reformation" were "burning brightly" (p. 116).

Quoting earlier Mountain Meadows historian Brooks, Bagley sees "blood atonement"—the paying for one's sins through the shedding of the sinner's own blood—as a "literal and terrible reality" in Brigham Young's world (p. 51). In order to fathom the horrors committed at Mountain Meadows, readers are asked to understand that blood atonement was a reality in the worldview held by the perpetrators. Into such an environment traveled the unlucky Arkansans. Bagley challenges long held myths about the massacre: What role did the Paiute Indians play? Who was really responsible for the tragedy? Discovering what it was that caused the massacre is the author's mission. For example, he counters the long-standing historical account blaming the Paiutes for much of the atrocious butchery. Instead, Bagley places the blame squarely upon the angry Mormons. As the siege wore on and the Arkansans killed some of the Paiutes, others began to doubt the Mormons' "magic" and left the scene prior to the carnage (p. 125).

Bagley seats responsibility for the Mountain Meadows massacre squarely with John D. Lee and the local religious leaders at Cedar City, especially William H. Dame and John S. Higbee. These men "organized a party of fifty or sixty Mormons to attack the train" (p. 127). Further, the author addresses the attempt to cover up the murders. Due to the depth of his research, this is likely the most telling part of his narrative.

Bagley points primarily to the religious leaders at Cedar City. This claim is strengthened by the fact that on 31 July 1859, Apostle George A. Smith "disorganized" the Cedar City, Utah, stake, "releasing Bishop Phillip K. Klingensmith; stake president, Isaac C. Haight; and counselor, John S. Higbee from their religious callings" (p. 242). This severe action speaks loudly as an indication of whom the church viewed as guilty of the crime. The murderers at Mountain Meadows were now seen as outlaws, yet they managed to retain their status within the community. John Higbee, for example, later served four years as mayor of Cedar City.

Brigham Young discussed the massacre with Apostles Amasa Lyman and George A. Smith "in a series of meetings" held at Salt Lake City in August 1859. Young "did nothing to further the prosecution of the crime" (p. 243). Instead, he made a concerted effort to make the massacre disappear. John D. Lee recorded a private conversation in which Brigham Young, visiting southern Utah in 1861, allegedly told him, "the company that was used up at the Mountain Meadows" was comprised of the fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and relatives of those who had murdered the prophets, and they "merited their fate" (p. 247). But is this evidence proof of Young's culpability?

Public attention focusing on Mountain Meadows in the years following the massacre "hounded the LDS church, from its general authorities to its rank-and-file missionaries"

(p. 269). Apostle Erastus Snow, the church's senior official in southern Utah in 1870, reported that the massacre had created "a new crisis," but the cause of this new crisis was not delineated (p. 271). Snow family tradition reports that when the apostle shared the news with Brigham Young, Young said, "Oh God! Now it will start again" (p. 271).

Realizing that he could no longer defend Lee, Young began to cut his ties with him. In February 1870, President Young met privately with Lee at Beaver, Utah, and "urged him to sell his Utah holdings and move south" (pp. 271-72). This John D. Lee refused to do. On 8 October 1870, John D. Lee, Isaac Haight, and George Wood were excommunicated for the murders. Lee was perplexed by this church action. In December 1870, he traveled to St. George and sought out Young to ask why now, thirteen years after the massacre, "all of a sudden [he] Must be cut off from this church [sic]. If it was wrong now, it certainly was wrong then" (p. 273).

Decades later, Brigham Young's successor as President of the LDS church, Heber J. Grant "worked hard to obliterate the memory of John D. Lee." Speaking privately to a group of Lee's descendents in about 1927, Grant frankly acknowledged that if he had been present at the time, "I would have been in it too, or I hope I would." He further advised, "This affair should never be mentioned" (p. 343). Thus continued a long institutional effort to rub out John D. Lee and the infamous massacre from the LDS collective memory. Bagley observes that over the years, Mormons "fought and won the battle to define the history of the event and vindicate Brigham Young of any connection with the crime" (p. 348).

Bagley demonstrates that Young seemed to approve of attacking the Arkansans. His role, however, seems to have been more that of having a passing interest than of being a leader in the murder plot. Bagley is convincing regarding the dastardly acts committed by the southern Utahans, less so about Brigham Young's complicity. Granted, Brigham Young cast a large shadow over the Utah Territory and the final word on his involvement might never be fully known. With *Blood of the Prophets*, Will Bagley has given us the most complete look thus far at the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

The Local Politics of Vice and Virtue

Prostitution, Polygamy and Power: Salt Lake City, 1847-1918, by Jeffrey Nichols (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 247 pp.

Reviewed by Helynne Hollstein Hansen, Associate Professor of Language, Western State College of Colorado, Gunnison, Colorado.

One of the most intriguing ironies of life in Salt Lake City during the nineteenth century was the clash of the Mormons who were morally outraged to see the advent of prostitution in their valley and the gentile residents who considered the practice of polygamy equally reprehensible. The struggle between these two groups to

smooth out their different ideologies and eventually to band together around the turn of the century to try to rid Salt Lake City of one of its most egregious and lucrative vices is the crux of Jeffery Nichols's intricately researched and meticulously documented historical study.

Prostitution, Polygamy and Power delves thoroughly and unapologetically into the seamier areas of Salt Lake history during the decades when conservative Mormon dominance gave way to the bawdier, earthier lifestyles of the gentile merchants, railroad workers, and miners who settled in the valley in the late 1860s and 1870s and the women who followed and pandered to their baser needs.

Nichols, an assistant professor of history at Westminster College in Salt Lake City, shows a competent acquaintance with Latter-day Saint history and values going back to the Nauvoo period, as well as an intimate knowledge of the characters and events of the first 70 years of the Utah experience for Mormons and non-Mormons alike. His narrative is rich with anecdotes about the most infamous prostitutes in Salt Lake City in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He notes with genuine regret the lack of journals and other personal documents to provide more details about the daily lives and emotions of the women who for one reason or another were driven to sell sex in the bastion of Mormonism.

Nichols discusses the harsh realities of women's situation in Salt Lake City. Those who were not safely ensconced in either a monogamous or polygamous marriage had frighteningly few options for earning their own living. "The evidence from Salt Lake City supports financial necessity, sometimes to the point of crisis, as the leading reason some women resorted to selling sex," the author states. "Women's stories depict their desperate circumstances as they struggled to keep themselves or their families afloat" (p. 50).

The Mormons' condemnation of prostitution had originated with Joseph Smith, who denounced and suppressed brothels in Nauvoo. LDS members maintained that such phenomena were among the "corruptions of Babylon that the Saints sought to escape by moving to the Salt Lake Valley" (p. 25). As gentiles settled in the valley and faced protest and condemnation from Mormons over the rise of prostitution, they countered by calling Mormon males with plural wives "lustful Turks" with harems (p. 24) and labeling polygamy as an un-American and un-Christian practice that merely "gratified male lust—the same deadly sin that fueled prostitution" (p. 14).

Mormons, who saw the anti-polygamy crusade as a continuation of persecution that the church had suffered for decades, shot back that polygamy was divinely sanctioned by God, and several prominent women who were involved in polygamous marriages—including Eliza R. Snow, Emmeline B. Wells, and Sarah Kimball—vehemently defended their situation. The gentile-owned *Salt Lake Tribune* persisted in citing the similarities between the two practices. And so it went for decades, from the 1860s through the end of the century.

Amid the controversy, Mormons turned their heads from the unspeakable fact that some of their own men were using the services of prostitutes. Nichols's narrative turns gossipy as he reveals how the monogamously married Frank J. Cannon, half-brother of LDS Apostle Abraham H. Cannon, frequented the brothel of well-known madam Kate Flint in the 1880s. Embar-

rassed church leaders protected him from scandal and even paid off his debt to the house of ill fame (p. 65).

The polygamy-prostitution tension began to fade into the background after the U.S. Congress passed the Edmunds Act, which dealt a blow to plural marriage, forcing male polygamists (including LDS president John Taylor) underground. Federal pressure eventually spurred President Wilford Woodruff to issue the Manifesto in 1890 and President Joseph F. Smith to reinforce the end to polygamy with the Second Manifesto of 1904.

Meanwhile, prostitution had gained such a toehold in Salt Lake City that numerous elegant brothels had sprung up in the downtown area, particularly Block 57 (running east-west from State Street to Main between 200 and 300 South [map, p. 53]). Their opulence testified to the lucrative profits they generated (p. 67). Nichols notes, however, that many of Salt Lake City's prostitutes were black or Asian, and most were poor. The savvy madams pocketed the bulk of the income.

The last third of the book describes the early twentieth-century cooperative efforts by Salt Lakers to eradicate prostitution from the city. Nichols calls the Manifesto the starting point of the "Americanization of Salt Lake City" (p. 214). With the polygamy issue quickly fading into the background, Mormons and gentiles at last felt a spirit of cooperation and united in this common cause. By this time, prostitution had been regulated and all but made legal by containment in Block 64, a large central district between 100 and 200 South and 400 and 500 West that had come to be known as the Stockade.

Nichols's text includes several pages of black and white photos of various madams in the city as well as the journalists, policemen, and politicians who were their protectors or nemeses. There are also photos and maps showing the locations of the most infamous houses of ill repute. The narrative is generously laced with vignettes about the lives of the madams and the largely unsuccessful efforts to prosecute and jail them for any length of time. One of the most intriguing characters was Dora Topham, who was sentenced to 18 years of hard labor when the notorious Stockade was finally shut down in 1909. Topham won her appeal in 1912 and left Salt Lake, only to reopen her business in Ogden, and later in San Francisco.

Protestant women in such organizations as the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the YWCA, who earlier had established "rescue homes" for polygamous wives, now banded with Mormon women (with the approval of President Joseph F. Smith) to create the Women's Home Association of Salt Lake City. Their goal was to reform prostitutes by attempting to instill domestic values in them, so they might yet marry respectable men. These homes had limited success, but the anti-prostitution alliance generated by the women's efforts did drive prostitution in Salt Lake City into a more illegal underground than it ever had existed in before. Unfortunately, improvements in genuine economic opportunities for women were very slow in coming, thus "guaranteeing that there would always be women desperate enough to sell sex" (p. 216).

Nichols concludes with the observation that although the rhetorical link between prostitution and polygamy eventually withered in Utah, neither practice has completely disappeared from the state. His epilogue chapter provides updates on more recent cases

of Utah polygamy (such as the 2002 jailing of Tom Green, husband of five wives) and facts about the ongoing prostitution problem in contemporary Salt Lake City.

In conclusion, Nichols has provided a fresh, revealing overview of two topics in Salt Lake City's history that often have been considered, if not taboo, then generally too delicate for close, honest inspection. His study treats polygamy and prostitution issues with honesty, sensitivity, and a professional historian's eye for detail and documentation. For anyone interested in either women's issues or the lesser-known realities of Salt Lake City's early growing pains, this book is a fascinating read.

Navigating the Difficult Terrain of the Mormon Experience

Studies in Mormon History, 1830-1897 by James B. Allen, Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 1152 pp.; and *Mormon History* by Ronald W. Walker, David J. Whittaker, and James B. Allen, (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 279 pp.

Reviewed by John Sillito, Professor of Libraries and Curator of Special Collections, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah.

For the last several years I have had the opportunity to serve on the Mormon History Association's book awards committee. That assignment—in addition to my day job as Curator of Special Collections at Weber State University—keeps me well aware of developments in the Mormon publishing world. Over the last few years, a number of important and well-written studies of the Mormon past have emerged. Some scholars are looking at issues which have long been of interest, others are turning their attention to new areas of study. All of this suggests to me that the future of Mormon historical study continues to be impressive.

Assessing the future, however, is always predicated on an understanding of the past. In this regard, two important and useful books are now available for scholars of the Mormon experience. They are *Studies in Mormon History: An Indexed Bibliography* and *Mormon History*. Both volumes are published by the University of Illinois Press, and both represent the work of three of Mormon history's finest, and most prolific, scholars—James B. Allen, Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker.

The origins of *Studies in Mormon History* date from the mid-1980s when the editors recognized the need for a comprehensive, indexed bibliography of Mormon historical materials. This is a daunting task, and the authors admit to being "older and wiser" after their "single-minded and dogged" task of compiling all "books, articles, master's theses, and Ph.D. dissertations" dealing with the history of the church (p. ix). The results are impressive. The editors (along with their colleagues Armand Mauss and Dynette Ivie Reynolds whose bibliographical contributions to both volumes on social science literature are impressive) have compiled annotations of some 15,000 books, articles, theses, dissertations and other sources.

The book itself is divided into two parts; an alphabetical listing, and an index to historical writings, which is organized by subject and author. Each section presented unique challenges. In the first section the editors struggled with what to include and what not to include, both in terms of author, subject and publisher, and how to differentiate between Mormon history and Utah history which, as they note "are often intertwined." They concluded their desire was to focus on "serious scholarship," those works which "might be best described as honest efforts at responsible, non-polemical writing" (p. x). In the second section, the editors faced a somewhat different challenge of devising a user friendly system of indexing while avoiding an index that was so minutely cross-referenced as to make it unwieldy. Their selection of more than 6500 subject terms seems to have reached that challenging balance. And it seems to have worked. I was in a Mormon specialty bookstore recently, and a question about what had been written on a particular topic led the staff to a survey of this compilation and a lively discussion of the pros and cons of the various articles and books on the subject.

As the authors admit, "the aim of a comprehensive listing of secondary historical literature on Mormon history. . .can only be proximate," and despite diligent searching some important titles have been missed. This, they assert, is one of the "major frustrations" facing any bibliographer (p. xi). At the same time, technological advances may well see future compilations of this nature online as opposed to between covers. Still, this volume, along with previous bibliographic works which they recognize and credit, is an indispensable reference source for any serious scholar of the Mormon story. Indeed, its size alone constitutes a graphic testament to the extent of Mormon scholarly study.

If *Studies in Mormon History* is an indispensable reference source, *Mormon History* is an indispensable narrative assessment of the state of Mormon historiography past, present, and future. When the editors began their work on this second volume they wanted it to be useful as a companion to *Studies*, and yet a descriptive and interpretative volume standing on its own. They envisioned a handbook that would aid readers "by describing what has gone on in the past, including the various methods, themes, and interpretations that historians have used; by sketching the background and work of leading LDS writers; and by suggesting the pitfalls and strengths of previous writing" (p. ix).

The book is divided into several parts. The first three chapters trace the growth and development of Mormon historiography. Chapter one deals with the nineteenth century, chapter two with the first fifty years of the twentieth century, and chapter three traces the post war era and the rise of a "New Mormon History." A fourth chapter skillfully examines the "Challenge of Mormon Biography." Chapter five, "Flowers, Weeds and Thistles," by Armand L. Mauss is an excellent overview of the growing body of social science literature on Mormon-related topics. In addition, two appendices examine a variety of topics including Mormon imprints, reference works and encyclopedias, bibliographies, and manuscript sources. These will have particular value for scholars but are useful to the general reader as well.

In chapter one, the editors trace the earliest days of Mormon historical

study. Much of the writing in this period was written by participants in contemporary events, and there was little room for neutrality. While this time period was dominated by two groups of historians, "LDS writers of providential history and their non-Mormon antagonists," the editors recognize that these historical accounts, not unlike Mormonism itself, "traveled a great distance" during this period (pp. 2, 21). The roots of Mormon study began in the millennial excitement and polemics of the early days, but over time matured in style, accuracy and use of sources. By the turn of the new century, while "historians typically remained in two opposing camps," Mormon historiography itself was in the "process of becoming" (p. 22).

As Walker, Whittaker, and Allen point out, the new century saw both Mormonism and Mormon historiography, while still enmeshed in this process of becoming, also entering into a period of rapid change. Even though old patterns persisted, these years saw the beginnings of a more responsible study of Mormonism. A number of historians from within the fold emerged—B. H. Roberts, particularly—who drew on some distance, as well as increasing primary and secondary sources, to produce better studies. At the same time, a number of academically trained scholars, both Mormon and non-Mormon, came to realize that "Mormonism could be studied for its own sake" (p. 39). Many of these Mormon scholars are known and read even today. These include E. E. Ericksen, Nels Anderson, Lowry Nelson, and others.

Ironically, while this was taking place, the "three leading historians of Mormonism at midcentury"—Fawn Brodie, Dale Morgan, and Juanita Brooks—were not professionally trained historians. Still these writers were very much part of a "new historical culture" which featured confronting difficult questions, indeed asking new questions, while seeking to avoid polemics in favor of balance. To what degree they succeeded is obviously debatable. But clearly these developments, encouraged in turn by "new publishing outlets, and. . .more educated. . .readers," set the stage for the most productive period in Mormon historiography (p. 51).

While better known to most of us, the historical writing of the last fifty years is in some ways harder to summarize. Clearly many of the patterns of the first fifty years of the twentieth century were replicated in the second half, though what emerged is clearly a "New Mormon History." The trend toward professionalism and professional training, the growing numbers of outlets for studies, and the desire to ask tough questions continued and expanded. Several individuals took a leading and mentoring role: S. George Ellsworth, Eugene Campbell, and Leonard Arrington would dominate the historiography of the 1950s and 60s. They would set a pattern for newer scholars to follow. While students of Mormon history are aware of the important role of Ellsworth and Campbell along with many others, Arrington clearly emerged as the leading figure of the era. Not only were his studies seminal—especially *Great Basin Kingdom*—but his leadership in the Mormon History Association and the Church Historical Division would bring new historians to the task, produce a wide range of in-house studies and published works, and set a pattern for a new generation of scholars to emulate. The last quarter of the past century saw these patterns intensify while

simultaneously a new challenge to objective scholarship would develop among the church hierarchy. Like the proverbial genie let out of the bottle, however, the published output of Mormon history in those years—written by Mormons and non-Mormons across a wide spectrum—would prove difficult to contain. It constitutes a major intellectual legacy. Indeed the very number of scholars of the Mormon experience is impressive, and it is difficult to make a list without leaving out important writers and their works. At the beginning of the third century of Mormon historiography, the editors realize that "the process of becoming" is still very much alive (p. 96). Clearly, Walker, Whittaker, and Allen have chronicled those developments, outlined the tensions, and summarized the important writers and writings of the last fifty years with skill and insight.

Having said all of this, I am not without some criticism of the editors' assessments. Perhaps not surprisingly, they revolve around issues related to the New Mormon History. I recognize that in many ways it is not easy to objectively chronicle a time period in which one was also a participant. Still, let me list a few of my concerns.

First, I found the discussion of the creation and eventual outcome of the sixteen volume sesquicentennial history somewhat understated. Perhaps that is understandable in light of the editors' involvement in this project, and/or their place of employment. Still, because of the ramifications of this event in Mormon historiography, one might have assumed a more prominent and detailed discussion. As an archivist at the Church Historical Department during this period, I well remember the sense of pride and anticipation surrounding this projected series. As the editors note, the project fell into disfavor and was "cancelled" (p. 68). But their summary is clearly a whimper not a bang. While the editors recognize and cite historical studies which deal with this period, since *Mormon History* is a study of Mormon historiography, one would have wished for a bit more commentary and analysis. Which of the sixteen volumes were eventually published? Which were not? Where were those books published? What is the long-range impact of the decision to abandon the project on the scope of Mormon historiography? How would our historical understanding of the Mormon past be different if those additional volumes were available? These are all questions worth asking.

Second, I disagree with the editors' characterization of Signature Books. The company is described as "owned by George D. Smith, an LDS liberal activist who published material largely in his ideological image" (p. 91). Really? I think they are wrong in their assessment not only of Smith personally and his role in the internal editorial process itself, but also of the nature of Signature Books' list generally, or even only its historical titles. Of course, truth in disclosure would have me admit that I am a member of Signature's editorial advisory committee. At the same time, the authors describe Deseret Book as being at the "other end of the spectrum": its "best historical works were documentary collections, a printing category that minimized controversy" (p. 91). True enough, but could one fairly accuse that press of publishing materials largely in the "ideological image" of Gordon B. Hinckley? I am not sure what each of these characterizations really adds to our understanding of Mormon publishing. Moreover, when you compare

the treatment of these publishers with their discussion of the University of Illinois Press, which features quotations from editors and internal documents, one cannot help finding their assessment almost parenthetical. (Perhaps a bit of true disclosure on their part might also be in order.) Every press has its mission and audience, every press has a broader list than one might imagine, and over-personalization is always problematic.

Finally, I find their discussion of D. Michael Quinn problematic as well. Quinn is listed as one of three representative "institutional outsiders" among Mormon historians (the others are Lawrence Foster and Richard L. Bushman), not employed by either the LDS or RLDS churches (p. 77). Of course such a categorization of Quinn is truer now than when he was employed by the Church Historical Department or by BYU. While arguing such individuals demonstrate diversity, the book has a particular edge in describing Quinn that seems at once unique and dismissive. Quinn is an "excommunicate," for example, while Foster combines "an outsider's critical judgment with an insider's sympathy," and Bushman is a "prize winning historian" who while "traditional and conservative" explores difficult questions (pp. 84-86). Quinn is said to be "drawn to controversy" and his scholarly work is described as reflecting his personal interests, lacking a unifying thesis or method, and featuring "conclusions [that] at times overreached his evidence." Moreover, while noting that Quinn suggested his works were not "influenced by any theoretical model," the editors assess his work as featuring "an unconscious sharing of his cultural environment" while seeking to create "a new view of the Mormon past" (p. 86). I am not particularly convinced by their argument that Quinn's scholarship is especially reflective of the influence of the postmodern critics they cite. In fairness, the editors do praise Quinn's *Same-Sex Dynamics*, as "an important book, probably Quinn's best to date," which examined "Mormonism's wider American context, had new information and views, and treated a topic that was once taboo" (p. 86). Finally, I find it somewhat ironic, considering the authors' discussion of publishers, that is was the University of Illinois Press that published Quinn's book. What influenced that decision: promoting a particular "ideological image" or simply a commitment to expanding the dialogue?

These criticisms aside, I have nothing but the highest admiration for the editors of these two volumes. They are among the best observers of the Mormon scene, and their body of work—including these two fine volumes—will stand the test of time. Both *Studies in Mormon History* and *Mormon History* are essential sources for anyone intent on navigating the difficult terrain of the Mormon experience.

CONTRIBUTORS

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CAROL LYNN PEARSON is a writer and performer living in Walnut Creek, California. She has become well known to *Dialogue* readers for addressing gender issues. Her book *Goodbye, I Love you* about her marriage to her homosexual husband was an important call to better address issues of gay members and their families. Her one-woman play *Mother Wove the Morning,* performed over 300 times, is an historical search for the female face of God. Carol Lynn's most recent book is *Consider the Butterfly: Transforming Your Life through Meaningful Coincidence.* At present she serves on the Public Affairs Council of the Oakland Stake.

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HOLLY WELKER has published poetry, fiction and nonfiction in a variety of magazines and journals. She has a Ph.D. in 20th century American literary nonfiction from the University of Iowa. She is an assistant professor of Creative Writing at Penn State Erie, The Behrend College. "Junior Companion" is adapted from her missionary memoir entitled *The Rib Cage*, portions of which have also been published in *Sunstone* and *Irreantum*.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Cassandra Christensen Barney was born and raised in Orem, Utah. Daughter of an artist and married to an artist, she received her master's degree in Fine Arts from Brigham Young University in 2000. Her fantastical and historical portraits are influenced by the art of the 16th century, by the princess postcards she collected as a child, and by the storytelling found in portraits. "I loved that the characters were not always pretty, but looked like regular people playing dress up." The women in her own work "are not vain, not beautiful, and maybe some are melancholy and even show some sadness." The fruit and birds and flowers often found in her portraits are symbols reflective of her own life. "Birds in nests, sitting quietly, communicate the contentment that I feel in my home." Cassandra Barney is the mother of three daughters. She has taught at the Waterford School and, part-time, at Brigham Young University.

Oil on Panel:

Front Cover:	*The Saint* 7″ × 5″
Back Cover:	*Ava* 17″ × 14″ (Of this Cassandra wrote in a note to *Dialogue*: "*Ava* means bird, and birds are a symbol for spiritual messengers from God.")
Inside Back Cover:	*Rachael* 7″ × 5″

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