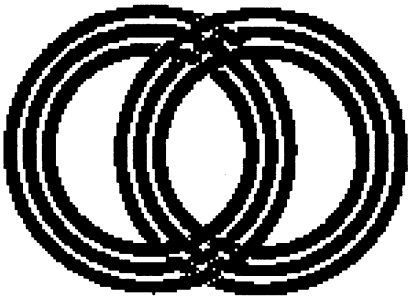
DIALOGUE

A JOURNAL OF MORMON THOUGHT



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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. 4, WINTER 2003

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	1 time	2 times	3 or more
Full Page	$500	$400	$320
Half Page	$325	$260	$218
1/3 Page	$250	$200	$160

Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought is published quarterly by the Dialogue Foundation, Business Office & Subscriptions: P.O. Box 5423, Salt Lake City, Utah 84158-0423, 801-274-8210; Editorial Office 425-898-9562; www.dialogue journal.com. *Dialogue* has no official connection with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Third-class postage-paid at Salt Lake City, Utah. ISSN 0012-2157. Regular domestic subscription rate is $37 per year or $100 for three years, students and senior citizens $30 per year; single copies $15. Regular foreign subscription rate is $45 per year. *Dialogue* is also available on microforms through University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1346, and 18 Bedford Row, London WC1R4EJ, England.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Feast of Friends

My compliments to the cooks! The latest issue is a feast! (Vol. 36, No 2, Summer 2003) The cover art by my beloved friend, Frank McEntire, is stunning. As you point out, he was art editor during *Dialogue's* DC years, tirelessly working behind the scenes. Whenever I am in Utah, I take in his latest installations and visit his studio where his deep, abiding creativity never ceases to move me.

Karl Sandburg's poetry lances my heart. He knew "Mr. Death" was breathing on his neck, and he faced his final passage with courage and humor.

At almost every meeting of MHA and Sunstone, he was the first to greet me with the words, "Come into my arms!" I was lucky enough to be snowed in with him and a few other intrepid Sunstoners at my home in Virginia one spring when a freak storm closed all the airports on the East Coast. In long meaningful conversations, I realized that he and I shared a passion for French food and the works of Robertson Davies and Lowell Bennion. He prepared his delicious *coq au vin* and regaled us with his own Davies-like stories. When he and I shared our writing ambitions, I saw what a great mentor and motivator he was. How I wish I could tell him that I am finally working on the novel he urged me to write!

Karl's wife, Dawn, was not with us that time, but she and I have often commiserated. She is a Bennion, and it was she who showed me the site of the pioneer Bennion homes in Taylorsville, Utah. Like Karl, she is a poet and a healer.

Karl Christian Sandburg—so aptly named—why is it that your absence is such a palpable presence!

Mary L. Bradford,
Leesburg, Virginia

Toward a Latter-day Saint Poetics

I appreciated reading Robert Hughes' essay, "Poetry Matters in Mormon Culture" (Vol. 36, No. 2). I am impressed that a business executive could write about poetry with both understanding and clarity. With Hughes I lament the decline in poetry in Mormon culture, but I disagree that this decline can be blamed on the poets themselves or on the fact that so many contemporary poets are rooted in the academic world. Were it not for the academy, the state of poetry at the beginning of the twenty-first century would be even more dire than it is.

While Hughes is nostalgic for previous eras when poets wrote in more traditional forms and when, apparently, poetry was more popular in Mormon culture than it is now, as a

thoughtful critic he must agree that much of what passed for poetry in the *Improvement Era*, the *Relief Society Magazine*, and other church publications tended to be maudlin, sentimental verse that celebrated Mormon religion and culture but, to borrow a line from Emily Dickinson, left no "internal differences where the meanings are." There may be many reasons the audience for serious poetry in Mormon culture is small (and even shrinking), but it isn't confined to poetry; the audience for serious music, art, architecture, dance, etc. is limited as well.

To decry the flowering of free verse and more open forms of poetic expression as Hughes does is akin to decrying modern experimentation and exploration in all the arts. What would modern architecture be like if its only models were those from the past? (What would Mormon architecture look like if it were suddenly free of the stale formulaic structures which dot the landscape?) I am thinking of such modern buildings as Gaudi's Sacrada Familla Church in Barcelona and Frank Geary's new museum of art in Bilbao. What would modern music be like were it not for the wild atonal music of Stravinsky or the free forms of such composers as Cage and Adams? If modern painting had been restricted to the representation and palette of previous ages, we would not have such masterpieces as Picasso's "Guerinica" or Dali's "Sacrament of the Last Supper."

Hughes identification of the problem with poetry's popularity as the decline in more traditional poetic forms and styles and the rise of free verse seem oversimplified. While I appreciate poetry in its more formal, traditional forms (sonnets, villanelle, sestinas, etc. written in iambic meters), I am grateful that modern poetry has been freed from a slavish reliance on fixed forms and "the tyranny of the iamb." The more open forms of modern poetry have expanded the boundaries of what Wallace Stevens has called "the supreme fiction." The fact remains that to compose a worthy poem in either fixed for open forms, in blank or free verse takes skill, imagination, thought, a lot of hard work and, if the poet is fortunate, luck. The best free verse tends to conform to certain limits, but as Pound suggested these relate to "the sequence of the musical phrase, not. . . the sequence of the metronome." Fortunately, we don't have to choose but can take equal delight in the poetry of Yeats and Stevens, of Wordsworth and Whitman, of Frost and Plath, and of Richard Wilbur and Adrienne Rich.

Two examples from recent issues of *Dialogue* demonstrate that both traditional and open forms allow for significant poetic expression. An example of the former is Karl Sandberg's "Shadow" in the same issue in which Hughes' commentary appears. Written in a loose iambic meter, irregular line length, and a loose rime scheme (abcdbefegf), the poem also includes alliteration, assonance, and allusion (the last line borrowed from e. e. cumming's "Buffalo Bill's Defunct"). But what makes the poem so successful is the contrast between the diction of the first nine lines and that of the last line:

as we begin reading, we expect this to be a love poem with its archaic language and romantic imagery and therefore are shocked to find that it is death (addressed formally as "Mr.") and not a lover who casts a shadow over the poet.

An excellent example of a successful poem written in free verse is Eugene England's "Two Trains and a Dream" in the special issue of *Dialogue* devoted to him (Vol. 35, No. 1). Although without noticeable form (three stanzas of irregular length) or regular meter, the poem is nonetheless powerful in its expression of an important experience. There is a tension in the poem between the matter of fact recitation of events associated with both trains, the diction flat as a journalist's report, and the detail in the dream section of the poem where objective fact gives way to image ("a green satin French provincial/Couch, in a room painted by Watteau) and allusion ("The transition room in Kubrick's *2001*") where the detail is subjective ("I notice he is luminous under his robe,/And his face is serene beyond all description") and where the diction is rich and biblical (e.g., England using the phrase from Isaiah 50:7 "like flint" in the last line). The poem works so well because of the disquietude set up between the idea that God would send personal revelation to spare a prophet's life but apparently be unwilling to intervene to save a mother and her children, only to have the tension resolved in the third stanza with the revelation that, inexplicably, both "trains, children" were in God's hands. The last word of the poem, "All," expands the idea even further to suggest that even though it may not appear so to our limited vision, all trains and all people are in Christ's hands (which England ironically and dramatically changes in the last stanza to "*on* your hands"). The poem causes us to wrestle with our set ideas of how God operates in the world (symbolized by the fixed iron tracks) and the mystery of his love in a tragic world (symbolized by the tears in Christ's eyes and the drops of blood falling from every pore and by the inexplicable yet ultimately possible world of dreams).

Rather than concentrating on forms, we should judge a poem by the effect it has on our minds and hearts. As Emily Dickinson argued: "If I read [a book of poetry] and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry. These are the only ways I know it. Is there any other way?" But to get to such experiences often requires a certain level of sophistication and a degree of experience in reading poetry. Many general or casual readers of poetry are likely to miss much that a complex or deep poem has to offer. The good news is that anyone who wishes can learn to read a poem.

While, as Hughes notes, some free verse is inexact, imprecise, and obscure in its expression and while a good deal of free verse relies too heavily on linguistic pyrotechnics or academic obtuseness (what Carl Sandberg spoke of as "poetry sealed in plastic bags labeled 'not touched by human

hands'"), the same could be said of some poetic expressions written in traditional forms. While modern free verse may not please us in the same way traditional verse does (with regular rhythmic lines, rime, and set forms), it pleases us in other ways (with invention, open musicality, and experimentation with language). Any poem which is able to capture and convey a significant "thought-felt" experience, to use Frost's term, has the power to enlighten, delight, and surprise us. X.J. Kennedy speaks of the advantage of free verse: "Free to use white space for emphasis, able to shorten or lengthen lines as the sense seems to require, the poet lets the poem discover its shape as it goes along, moving as water flows downhill, adjusting to its terrain, engulfing obstacles."

One of the reasons there is not more of an audience for serious poetry in our culture is that we have given too much of our hearts to the market place, to management, to entertainment, to correlation. Perhaps this is no more evident than in the way we approach the scriptures. Even though sixty percent of the Old Testament and significant sections of the New are poetry, in our scripture study, lesson manuals, and addresses, we focus on the literal, the familiar, and the dogmatic while we ignore what the Psalmist called "the beauty of holiness." Wallace Stevens said that poetry is "a revelation in words by means of the words." When we can rediscover the deep power of language, when we can learn to celebrate the imagination's endless possibilities, when we can understand that, as Frost said, "the figure [for poetry] is the same as for love" (both of which begin "in delight" and end "in a clarification of life")—only then can we hope for poetry and an audience for poetry that are worthy of our expansive theology and our truly radical religion.

Robert Rees
Brookdale, California

Beyond Reservations and Obstacles

I wish to thank Michael Warner for his thought-provoking letter and the perspective he provides in response to my two-part article "Moving Zion Southward" addressing the potential through church welfare for eliminating malnutrition and childhood disease in the LDS children of less developed countries (Vol. 35, No. 4 and Vol. 36, No. 1). I would also like to discuss a number of the issues Warner raises.

(1) The Cost of World Health Organization (WHO) intervention package as proposed in "Moving Zion Southward"—Warner writes that my "estimation of $33 million for basic interventions is probably five times too little": I would encourage those deriving cost estimates for an intervention package to research the documents from WHO, the World Bank, or Harvard's publication *The Global Burden of Diseases*, as the estimates are counterintuitive for someone from a wealthy country (they surprised me when I researched them). "Moving Zion Southward" proposed $90 per person year, quite conservative compared with published estimates of $70,

or even as low as $50, per person year. As an example, humanitarian organizations advertise that for $15 per month, one can provide a child not only with the minimal package as proposed, but also with education and food staples ($180 per person year). The income level of the malnourished children in the study was 25-50 cents per day or annually $90-$180. If one were to spend five times the estimate of $90 per person year ($450 per person year), the income level of these children would be more than doubled, and in some cases more than quadrupled.

(2) Economic Conversions—"Any time services are subsidized, demand increases significantly": I agree it is imperative to avoid economic conversion, and, if necessary, the package must be combined with a work requirement (I felt economic conversions to be unlikely with this particular package for the large majority of current church poor). In any case, would it not be preferable to give church parents a chance to alleviate the malnutrition of their children through a work program rather than simply remaining on the sidelines as witnesses to their suffering?

(3) Logistic difficulties—"Administration of the program would be a practical nightmare. Volunteer organizations are notoriously inefficient, poorly managed, and have difficulty sustaining programs even when beneficial": I see no reason the church could not operate an intervention package at a high level of efficiency similar to that of Catholic Relief Services, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, CARE, Christian Children's Fund, and OXFAM, to name a few. Of course there will be logistical difficulties. That is true of missionary work in these same countries, but that hasn't prevented us from attempting to reach every individual living in those countries with a pair of missionaries. And the church should have no more difficulty sustaining operations than it does sustaining missionary work.

(4) Administration of the program—"Local leaders do not have the training or capacity to administer a medical or food program": I agree and therefore proposed that an organization similar to LDS Family Services administer the program.

(5) LDS church's intentions—"I do not believe the institutional church has the energy, the time, or commitment to initiate such a program": I believe our church leaders would like to intervene but are paralyzed by fear of the cost and consequences. Could a few efficient "demonstration projects" show them the way?

(6) What's the next step?—"How do we meet and explore the possibilities": Currently multiple "ad-hoc" efforts are in place, most of them not following efficiency guidelines and simultaneously failing to reach the large majority of malnourished children with any intervention. I do not mean to demean these efforts as I have been involved in one of them myself over a period of years. Nevertheless, this is the question I would ask: Can a program be implemented to systematically eliminate malnutrition in LDS children and pregnant women in a cost effective manner without at least tacit church approval or involvement? I would answer no. However, it is conceivable that a group of individuals in

Utah with appropriate church connections and with administrative backgrounds in international assistance could organize such an effort, raise the necessary $33 million annually, and convince church leaders to at least tacitly support their private efforts. Thus, they would gain approved access to church leaders and members in less-developed countries. Like Michael Warner, I do not have the correct background or political connections to undertake this, but I would be happy to donate to such an effort.

Finally, for groups of ex-missionaries considering "organizing something," they might consider imitating the effort being made on behalf of malnourished LDS children in Guayaquil, Ecuador, consequent to the "Moving Zion Southward" study. (You can contact Bob Rees at brees@heartmath.org in the U.S. or Teresa Fuentes at *teresavfuentes@yahoo.com* in Ecuador or, alternatively, Brad Walker at kwalker22@aol.com.) The goal is to spend $70 per person year, purchasing food supplements, and to monitor and eliminate malnutrition in LDS children and pregnant women in Guayaquil (as funding allows), all via local purchase and local volunteer workers. Subsequently, we intend to publish a study documenting the improved nutrition status of these children. Our guidelines emphasize children from weaning to age three and pregnant women. This humanitarian organization "fundacion" in Ecuador consists at this point strictly of volunteers from multiple stakes. With perhaps 4% of all malnourished LDS children living in Guayaquil and surrounding areas, a comprehensive effort would conservatively cost $250,000 annually. But of course, we are not expecting funding anywhere near that level (perhaps $15,000 can be raised), so the humanitarian organization in Ecuador will have to select a group of perhaps 200 children to receive the assistance and leave the other approximately 2000 children malnourished.

Brad Walker
Las Vegas, Nevada

"Either/Or"? Vogel's False Dilemma

Dan Vogel may be the unabashed leader of "New Mormon History" and an intrepid collector/editor of early Mormon documents, but his critique of Mark Thomas' form-critical analysis of Joseph Smith's 1823 vision of the Angel Moroni (Letters, Vol. 36: No. 1) champions his own self-imposed "either/or" approach over Thomas's less dogmatic "both/and," (i.e. *both* historico-critical analysis *and* historically grounded faith in Smith's divine calling) with misplaced methodological self-assurance.

Is there anything "wrong" with Joseph Smith's "[b]eing confused about which passages [of Malachi] the angel quoted in 1823"? Who says true prophets cannot be "confused" before clarifying revelation is later forthcoming? Smith was no bibliophile. His mother, Lucy, characterized Joseph as "much less inclined to the perusal of books than any of the rest of our children, but far more given to meditation

and deep study." Joseph likely had to review those numerous and orally repeated 1823 Malachi quotations, compare them with published English Bible(s) before recognizing the quotations were *not* standard, but variant; hence, the classical Biblical text of Malachi was misleading and unreliable. The latter took time, Bible study, reflection, as part of young Smith's later growing realization that he was not limited merely to obtaining and translating gold plates. There was much more in store in God's enterprise of gospel Restoration. Smith's knowing that he was directly and manifestly "called" of God to do important work didn't at all manifest what the nature of that future work might be. For Vogel to fault Smith as "manipulative" for the latter's natural and normal delay in realizing, as a 17-year-old teenager, the broader scope of his own divine calling is to fault human limitations generally, especially Smith's "inability" to see precisely into his own future.

How, exactly, is Smith supposed to correct the foundational errors of centuries-old orthodox Christianity without "manipulating" (Vogel's word) Biblical and/or Christian history? More precisely, how is Smith to do that massive "correction" (Restoration) when, as yet, he doesn't realize the miasma of orthodox Christian error from which he has been called of God. Meanwhile his family is locally scorned, he becomes a target of orthodox hatred, physical and moral assault, calculated vilification, and is tainted with "glasslooking," "necromancy" (Vogel's word), "money-digging," and lately a ridiculed "magic world view." It took time, observation, and deep thought (besides divine revelation) for Smith gradually to "understand" Jesus' Gospel to be already fragmented, lost, and altered down the Christian centuries. Indeed, it wasn't until shortly before his 1844 murder in the King Follett Discourse that he fully discovered the "great secret" revealing fully anthropomorphic aspects of God, and hence God's own natural limitations, including "contingent" omniscience.

It's not fair to fault Smith in 1823 with incompleteness in his understanding of his own calling. Prophets must learn gradually "line upon line" in their own due time, precisely as the rest of us. We all may have "anachronistic elements" in our later comprehension as we come to realize and appreciate earlier elements forming our present understanding. This is surely true for Smith's 1823 "Malachi." Vogel appears to misunderstand the "great secret" of God's natural limits as well as Smith's gradually developing understanding of himself and the scope of his divine calling.

Vogel's stated assumption that Smith's 1823 "necromantic encounter" with the Angel Moroni was founded upon Smith's "treasure-guardian spirit" in a "purely treasure-seeking context" (*xi*) falls unwitting victim to the innate incredibility of Howe's 1834 published "affidavits" deliberately gathered against the Smith family by admittedly virulent and excommunicated "Doctor" Hurlbut (he wasn't a "doctor," rather that was his given *name*) for the express purpose of discrediting Smith and his family.

We know the Hurlbut affidavits were inordinately biased against the Smith family because of (1) Hurlbut's anger and deception at being excommunicated from the LDS church, and (2) Hurlbut's proven violent threats against Smith's personal safety. Vogel himself admits that Hurlbut sought solely a "specific kind of [anti-Smith] testimony" (Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, vol. 2, p. 14).

According to Richard Lloyd Anderson, "The story of [Hurlbut's] obtaining these statements must leave an impression of crumbling foundations of any study erected upon these" (*Dialogue*, Vol 4., No. 2 [summer 1969]: 15). Hurlbut had a thesis to prove; in fact, he set out to create a calculated deception. In modern criminal trials in most states, it is mandatory to instruct the jury to the effect that a "*witness willfully false in part of his or her testimony may be distrusted or disregarded in all of it.*" Failure of a criminal trial judge to instruct the jury on this point of evidence requires mandatory reversal of any defendant's conviction on appeal. The "jury instruction" on trial evidence, derived from centuries of Anglo-American trial experience, doesn't allow objective "detachment" or "segmentation" of willfully false statements. Some witnesses are so animated by personal bias, partiality, and prepossessing intolerance that they cannot present objective "evidence" at all. Such is the case with Hurlbut and his most important "witnesses."

Hurlbut personally selected, drafted, and prepared both the "witnesses" themselves and their written "testimony." The affiants themselves may also have been "willfully false" or otherwise evilly disposed, but even ignoring their individual motivation, scholars, like jurists, should and can not be allowed to admit Hurlbut's own malicious and "willful falsity" while simultaneously imputing seeming "independence" to those affiants who were selectively chosen solely by Hurlbut. This is especially the case where many Smith "neighbors" were specifically *not* selected by Hurlbut because of their pro-Smith opinions.

"Historians," writes Vogel in Early Mormon Documents (1:xv) "do not automatically exclude hearsay, perjured, or even biased (or interested) testimony." In other words, historians may "prove" whatever they wish by relying upon "junk" evidence if they so choose—truth and justice be damned! Let us remember that Mormon history has been set upon (and not only recently) by unscrupulous "evidence seekers" (e.g. Mark Hofmann) who were not above forging entire documents in order to make Smith and/or Mormonism appear dishonorable. I claim no Hurlbut "forgeries." But where to draw the line between Hurlbut's extreme bias and the affiants' own purportedly "independent" recollections is difficult to guess. Hurlbut plainly discussed each anti-Smith tidbit with many affiant detractors. Hurlbut's group statements alone (co-signed by many hearsay "witnesses" at once) are plain evidence that Hurlbut "organized" and drafted those group responses so as to cross-fertilize each other. Hurlbut may have done so with individual statements and individual "affidavits" as well.

The primary source for Vogel's "treasure-guardian spirit" (peepstoning, treasure seeking) assumption with its foundation in those same Hurlbut affidavits is the so-called "1826 trial" of Joseph Smith. This was, in fact, not a "trial" at all, was won entirely by Smith, produced no "trial record" nor official "transcript" at all, and cannot result in condemning Smith for glasslooking (peepstoning, treasure seeking) as consensus historians now mistakenly assume. Vogel and other published Smith critics expressly rely heavily upon the so-called "March 1826 court transcript," a document, not at all a "court transcript," uncovered by Rev. Wesley Walters in 1971, to cement (wrongfully) their certainty of Joseph Smith treasure seeking. I have no objection to the authenticity of Rev. Walters's documentary discoveries. My complaint is with his blatantly distorted misinterpretation of the discovered documents. This fiasco was the result of Walters's failure to notice one important word in the so-called "bill of costs"—the word "trial." Where the judge in question, Judge Neely, participated in a "trial" he plainly listed it as such in that very document. Where he conducted a "trial," he plainly said so. Indeed, it was in Neely's pecuniary interest to mention "trial" whenever such occurred, for "trial" usually produced the largest amount of judicial time, effort, and services ($3.68). "Examinations" were less work, less complex, than "trials" and brought in the lesser amount ($2.68) listed for the Smith litigation.

Neely's "bill" to the county was for $2.68 for his judicial services in the "examination" of the Joseph Smith litigation. Was it a "trial"? Not at all. It was an "examination," also called a "preliminary examination" or a "preliminary hearing." The evidentiary difference (burden of proof) between an "examination" and a "trial" is much like the difference between a foothill and Mt. Everest. All that was required March 20, 1826, in order to "bind over" Joseph Smith for later trial was that the prosecution show that Smith appear moderately "guilty" of a misdemeanor, one by the way which the document does not specify. We ignore here the problem of an unspecified "misdemeanor" because, in fact, Smith won the litigation, and hence Neely felt no need to specify exactly what "misdemeanor" might have been originally charged. The prosecution was unable to produce enough, or convincing enough, evidence at Smith's 1826 "examination" even to meet the minimal "probable cause" standard of proof.

The Neely-invoice "bill" to Chenango County "for my services" discovered (but wholly mischaracterized) by Rev. Walters and virtually every anti-Smith critic since its discovery in 1971 demonstrates conclusively that the Smith litigation was not a trial. It was a preliminary "examination" which *Smith won hands down*. No "trial" followed. Walters's own investigation verified the absence of such a trial before Justice Neely (or anyone else) in Chenango County, N.Y. at any time between 1826 and 1830.

I wrote *Dialogue* in 1971 or 1972 my own complete analysis of the then

newly discovered Walters's documents, explaining precisely why the Neely "bill of costs" was a purely fiscal document for Neely's income, telling us nothing whatever about the nature of the charge against Smith nor if it involved "glass looking." Here are the important points: (1) the 1826 litigation was not a "trial" but rather an "examination" which Smith won; (2) Smith could not possibly have been found "guilty" of anything since guilt is not in issue at a preliminary "examination"; (3) it is extremely unlikely that Smith actually testified at his own preliminary examination whereby he would necessarily have waved his Fifth Amendment rights (state and federal) to silence at both that hearing and later at trial, should he have been "bound over" for trial at a later date; (4) there was no "official record" of that examination (official court reporters or stenographers did not then exist), rather any purported "record" of testimony was happenstance note-taking (or, worse, biased, "planted" recorders provided by interested litigants themselves); (5) there is no official Neely "court docket," or if so, Neely's fiscal notation to his paymaster uncovered by Rev. Walters was not it; (6) Neely's handwritten "glass looker" notation (intended for his eyes only and/or perhaps his county's comptroller/paymaster) was merely Neely's own reminder of which Joseph Smith was involved in that litigation, there being many "Joseph Smiths" including Joseph's father, "Joseph Smith," who reportedly appeared and testified at that examination; (7) if "glass looking" were involved in that criminal "examination," Neely plainly decided in favor of Smith and against "glass looking" based upon the evidence presented. Smith was immediately released from custody and not "bound over for trial."

Vogel's mistaken assumption that Smith "began" as a wholly secular "treasure seeker" (even in 1823), later transforming himself into the Mormon religious prophet is largely misshapen by Vogel's undue reliance upon both the largely unreliable Hurlbut affidavits and the purported 1826 "examination" testimony which was so insubstantial as to require Justice Neely to dismiss all charges against Smith. As Vogel noted above, historians are not required to obey judicial rules of evidence. But I respectfully suggest that they choose to abandon such rules at the probable cost of historic truth.

Gerry L. Ensley
Los Alamitos, California

www.urimandthummim.com

Marc Schindler's lengthy comment ("Errors of Men," Vol. 36, No. 2) on my letter ("Translated Correctly," Vol. 36., No. 1) about Earl M.Wunderli's "Critique of a Limited Geography for Book of Mormon Events" (Vol 35, No. 3) requires a response since Schindler completely misunderstands my point and, in trying to refute it, makes factually incorrect or irrelevant assertions.

My comment was about the translation of the plates, not about the orig-

inal text on the plates. Schindler completely misses the distinction. He seems to think that I am demanding that the Book of Mormon be "inerrant," which I nowhere implied. My only suggestion was that the *translation* was supposed to be correct. That certainly is in accord with Mormon teachings. The Eighth Article of Faith suggests that although the Bible is reliable "as far as it is translated correctly," no such qualification need apply to the Book of Mormon.

The church has consistently taught that the translation of the plates was done "through the power of God." (D&C 1:29, 20:8). One must ask, then, how a translation done "through the power of God" would differ from one done simply by human intelligence alone. One would think that a translation done with divine power would be correct, at least to the extent that "horse" would not appear where "deer" or "tapir" would have been more accurate. But what is a "correct" translation? Having spent my professional life as a linguist, and having taught translating at the graduate school level, and having worked professionally as a translator, I know something about translating. A good translator must know both the language and culture of the people where the original text was produced, and the language and culture of the audience which will be reading the translation. A good translator must do more than the automatic translating machines one finds nowadays on the Internet. For example, if the Nephites had a word which originally meant "north" but changed its meaning to mean "west," it would be a gross translation error mechanically to translate that word as "north" for an audience where "north" means in the general direction of the Pole Star rather than towards the setting sun. Perhaps Schindler is suggesting that the Urim and Thummim was simply a dictionary look-up device that God provided, leaving Joseph Smith to make the blunders that a first-year language student might make?

Schindler wonders whether "that person [referring to me] has actually read the Book of Mormon. It is full of references to the 'errors of men'. . ." And I must wonder whether this Schindler person has actually read the Book of Mormon, since the phrase "errors of men" never occurs in the text. There is only a single passage in the entire body of the text that is even similar, at Mormon 8:17, prophesying of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon: "And if there be faults, they be the faults of a man." Schindler then also refers to "Joseph Smith's introductory material [which] also makes such references." Schindler may be referring to the title page of the Book of Mormon where the same sentence occurs (with "mistakes of men" rather than "faults of a man"). But now one must also wonder whether this Schindler person has read the *History of the Church* or the *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* since the Prophet clearly stated that the title page is a translation from the plates (HC 1:71, TPJS 7).

These two statements are the *only* such passages in the Book of Mormon, which hardly supports Schindler's as-

sertion that the book is "full" of such references. But even these two statements, written by Mormon, cannot be referring to mistakes in the English translation, since that translation did not yet exist. Mormon is obviously talking about his own writings as he wrote them in his own language. Schindler does not seem to be able to make this distinction. A mistaken translation obviously has nothing to do with the original text.

Most of Schindler's other comments have to do with the human tendency to use words inaccurately sometimes. But that thoroughly human weakness is quite irrelevant to what is supposed to be a divinely inspired translation. Doesn't God (and his divinely aided translator) know the correct meanings of English words? Is it too much to assume that a divinely inspired translation should be a *correct* translation, as the Eighth Article of Faith suggests?

Schindler sarcastically suggests that I take a marking pen to an animal preserve and change the "buffalo" signs to "bison." One must ask whether Schindler has likewise corrected his copy of the Book of Mormon by changing "north" to "west," "south" to "east" and "horse" to "tapir" so that they are now correctly translated (or I suppose he could simply add the phrase "as far as it is translated correctly" to the reference to the Book of Mormon in his copy of the Eighth Article of Faith).

Richard Packham
Roseburg, Oregon

From the Editors:

OUR FIVE-YEAR TERM as editors of *Dialogue* comes to an end as this issue goes into the mail. It seems, of course, a natural moment for reflection, but in truth we haven't much time. We are still busy with the considerable work of the journal, the transfer to new editors, and otherwise complicated lives. What does strike us in the midst and because of our work is the enormous debt we owe to those people, mostly out of view, whose devotion and tenacious labor have kept us in motion: our Associate Editor Keith Norman, our Copy Editor Dynette Reynolds, our Art Director Warren Luch, Editorial Assistants Miriam Allred and Teresa Carr, Book Review Editor Stacy Burton, Poetry Editor Susan Howe, the unflappable ladies of Professional Book Compositors, the world's most flexible printer Carl Zweigle, the many, many unsung reviewers who took time and care to evaluate manuscripts and recommend improvements. At the very forefront come our successive office managers Robin Johansen, Sunny Morton, and Lori Levinson. We must tell you clearly that it is on the shoulders of all these good people that *Dialogue* comes to you through the mail.

We are also enormously indebted to an editorial board that kept us heartened and chastened and mostly sane; as well as to *Dialogue*'s first formal Board of Trustees who are earnestly engaged in the earnest work of supporting the journal and securing its future. We stand in awe of the editors and staff who, in the three decades before our editorship, kept *Dialogue* vibrant and available, even through hardship, even under assault, even without email. We admire the new team of editors taking over, have long admired their work, but now also their preparation and selflessness in an undertaking where, we assure you, no one will get rich, no one's election will be made sure, and no one will get tenure.

This, of course, is a string of the kind of clichés to which retiring editors are given, but it's a string, nonetheless, that deserves to be played out. Like conscientious moviegoers who recognize the enormous collaboration that is film by staying for the credits, we recommend that, after finishing an issue of *Dialogue*, you spend a few moments with the inside front cover, reading the names, acknowledging the web of labor, arcing complexly from writer to mail carrier, that has brought you the journal—and not just this journal, but a 37 year conversation recording vividly the growing pains, the inner conflicts, the intuitions, celebrations, and maturation of what may well yet be a world religion.

We are grateful to have helped enable that conversation for a while, extending the invitation and moderating the talk. We are also grateful to return now among the audience to follow the discussion and perhaps sometimes offer a reflection for which there will actually have been time. And for all of you, whether on the dais or in the back row near the exit, we ask a blessing on this house.

Rebecca and Neal Chandler
Shaker Heights, Ohio

The Psychology of Prophetic Charisma: New Approaches to Understanding Joseph Smith and the Development of Charismatic Leadership

Lawrence Foster

THE ISSUE OF CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP—whether in religious, political, or other types of groups—has been the focus of widespread popular and scholarly attention. The word "charismatic" derives from the name of the Greek goddess Charis and suggests that the person perceived as charismatic possesses very special, quasi-divine "gifts" or qualities. In the early twentieth century, German social theorist Max Weber provided a particularly insightful assessment of some of the larger issues associated with such leadership, an assessment which continues to influence scholarly thought. In popular parlance, however, the word "charismatic" suggests that someone has, for whatever reasons, been able to attract a substantial personal following.[1]

Despite the interest that the phenomenon of charisma has generated over the years, surprisingly few serious efforts have been made to reconstruct and analyze systematically the psychological dynamics and social interactions of

1. For Weber's major writings on charismatic leadership, see his "The Sociology of Charismatic Authority," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. and trans. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 245-52; "Three Types of Legitimate Rule," *Berkeley Publications in Society and Institutions* 4, no. 1 (Summer 1958): 6-15; *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York: Free Press, 1964), 358-73; and *On Charisma and Institution Building*, S. N. Eisenstadt, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968). This article is a revised version of a paper I presented at the annual conference of the Mormon History Association in Aalborg, Denmark, on July 1, 2000.

charismatic individuals. Psychological analyses of specific charismatic individuals are legion, of course (witness the fascination with Hitler),[2] but few studies have convincingly combined qualitative and quantitative assessments of significant numbers of individuals at a particular time and place.

One notable exception to the generally impressionistic studies of particular charismatic individuals is the path-breaking study, *Prophetic Charisma: The Psychology of Revolutionary Religious Personalities* by psychologist Len Oakes. The book uses both qualitative and quantitative measures to analyze the psychological characteristics of the leaders of twenty contemporary New Zealand religious/communal groups and their followers. Oakes conducted in-depth interviews with the leaders of these groups and with two or three key associates from their top leadership cadre. These interviews lasted many hours—or days, in some cases. In addition, both leaders and followers in the groups completed a standard psychological inventory known as the Adjective Checklist, which provided a quantitative sense of how they compared psychologically with a standard population.[3]

Len Oakes has special strengths which allow him to combine participant-observer involvement with and detachment from his subject. For eleven years from 1980 until 1991, while doing the original research and writing for this study for his Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Auckland in New Zealand, Oakes was both a member of and the historian for an extraordinary New Zealand communal experiment, the Centrepoint Community, which might be characterized as a cross between the Esalen Institute, the Rajneeshees, and the Oneida Community.[4] The leader of the Centrepoint community, Bert Potter, was viewed by many

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2. Among the myriad assessments of the sources of Hitler's personality and impact, see especially Ron Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler: The Search for the Origins of His Evil* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1999); John Lukacs, *The Hitler of History* (New York: Random House, 1997); R. G. Waite, *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler* (New York: New American Library, 1977); and Ian Kershaw's *Hitler, 1889-1936: Hubris* (New York: Norton, 1999) and *Hitler: 1936-1945, Nemesis* (New York: Norton, 2000).

3. Len Oakes describes his methodology and approach in *Prophetic Charisma: The Psychology of Revolutionary Religious Personalities* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 1-24, 199-214. Oakes discusses the literature on charismatic leadership, analyzing the perspectives of Max Weber, Heinz Kohut, and Erich Fromm (25-43). Oakes's study involved a total of twenty leaders (three of them deceased, but approached through their writings and other sources) and 136 of their followers, who were interviewed and/or surveyed, either in person or retrospectively, for the New Zealand portion of the research (202). Substantial additional research on Australian groups also was conducted after Oakes completed his Ph.D. dissertation in Psychology at the University of Auckland in 1992.

4. On the Centrepoint Community, see Len Oakes, *Centrepoint: The Story of a New Zealand Community* (Auckland, New Zealand: Benton Ross, 1986). Oakes is currently editor of the journal *Psychotherapy in Australia*. He has participated in some forty seminars under a wide range of contemporary leaders in psychology and social theory, including Albert Ellis, R. D. Laing, Larry Constantine, Joseph Barber, Eva Reich, Michael Barnard, Robert Dawson, Rob McNeilly, Ken Keyes, and others. He first met Bert Potter in 1972, joining the Centrepoint Community as its historian from 1980 through 1991.

group members—in a kind of New Age sense—as "God." When I visited the group in 1986, members told me openly in the presence of Potter himself that if Potter were gone, the group would disband. Eventually, after Potter was arrested one time too many for illegal drug possession in 1990 (and then later for engaging in sexual relations with underage girls), the community did largely disband. During this troubled time, Oakes, like many other thoughtful members of the group, felt profoundly let down by Potter, and he left.[5]

Based on his intensive research, personal experience, and wide reading on similar groups, Oakes has developed in *Prophetic Charisma* a typology of the psychology of charismatic leaders and the stages in their vocation for leadership. Much as Erik Erikson posited a set of developmental stages through which normal individuals may pass during their lives,[6] Oakes suggests a set of interrelated sequential stages through which prophetic leaders may progress, laying out the complexities and ambiguities of each stage.[7]

This article will review some key points in Oakes's analysis of the dynamics of prophetic leadership, then briefly evaluate the extent to which the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith, Jr.'s charisma and sense of mission may be illuminated by, or bear on the validity of, Oakes's theoretical framework. No single theoretical framework, of course, can "explain" the nature of religious genius and charismatic leadership.[8] Nevertheless, I shall argue that Oakes's well-artic-

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5. This personal disillusionment undoubtedly helps account for the poignant and sometimes bitter undertone of the chapters concerning Oakes's *Prophetic Charisma* entitled "The Soul of the Prophet," 165-75, and "Decline or Fall?" 176-84. In an undated letter I received from Oakes in April 1990, he told me how Potter, who publicly crusaded against drugs, had been busted for possession of a $15,360 (N.Z.) supply of LSD and also for possessing and supplying MDMA (also called "ecstasy"). He'd been sentenced to three and one-half years in jail on drug charges. Oakes noted: "We all gave it our best shot in court, but you can't save someone from himself."

6. See Erik Erikson's *Childhood and Society* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993), and *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994).

7. Thomas Robbins's review in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37 (December 1998): 764, describes *Prophetic Charisma* as "a wonderfully provocative and fascinating book."

8. If any single framework could account for the complexity of genius, the phenomenon would be far less interesting. See my article, "The Psychology of Religious Genius: Joseph Smith and the Origins of New Religious Movements," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26 (Winter 1993): 1-22, which presents an alternative but complementary approach to Oakes, emphasizing the possibility that some manifestations of religious genius may be associated with manic-depressive tendencies. For other recent treatments on the nature of genius, particularly in its religious and psychological dimensions, see Arnold M. Ludwig, *The Price of Greatness: Resolving the Creativity and Madness Controversy* (New York: Guilford Press, 1995); Harvey Mindess, *Makers of Psychology: The Personal Factor* (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1988); Anthony Storr, *Feet of Clay—Saints, Sinners and Madmen: A Study of Gurus* (New York: Free Press, 1996); and Philip Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

The great advantage of both the manic-depressive and the narcissistic interpretations of the roots of charismatic religious leadership is that they are not necessarily reductionistic regarding *content* of the message itself. Either manic-depression or narcissism, or both in concert, might provide

ulated theory of how a sense of prophetic vocation develops—with both the promise and the pitfalls inherent in that development—offers an important new way of beginning to grapple with many complex, contradictory, and seemingly intractable aspects of "the Prophet Puzzle," to use Mormon historian Jan Shipps's term.[9] Besides Joseph Smith, many other charismatic religious, communal, and even political figures might also be illuminated by this analysis.

The approach in this article is primarily naturalistic. I focus on human factors, both psychological and social, which may have influenced human behavior. Although such an approach—or any naturalistic approach—may be viewed as "reductionistic" by committed religious believers who are convinced that the hand of God is the one factor which encompasses and supersedes all others, my intent here is to present an open-ended analysis compatible with the hypothesis of religious inspiration.[10]

As the late Leonard Arrington said in the preface to his path-breaking economic history of nineteenth-century Utah, *Great Basin Kingdom*, the approach to Mormonism in this study is "that religion, as with all social institutions, must be judged according to its usefulness in attacking the ageless problems of humanity. . . .The true essence of God's revealed will, if such it be, cannot be apprehended without an understanding of the conditions surrounding the prophetic vision, and the symbolism and verbiage in which it is couched."[11] Similarly, as William James indicated in the first chapter of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, the only ultimate test of the validity of religious inspiration is practical—in Jesus' words, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20). James adds: "If there were such a thing as inspiration from a higher realm, it

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the *occasion* for creative activity, but neither is associated with any particular *content* for that creative activity or product. Moreover, the possibility that the human agent promulgating any specific message might have eccentricities or "feet of clay" bears no relation to the validity of the insights expressed. For example, Isaac Newton might well have had a severely eccentric or flawed personality, but his laws of celestial mechanics must be judged on their own merits.

9. Jan Shipps's essay, "The Prophet Puzzle: Suggestions Leading toward a More Comprehensive Interpretation of Joseph Smith," first appeared in the *Journal of Mormon History* 1 (1974): 2-20, and was reprinted, along with a number of other important essays, in Bryan Waterman, *The Prophet Puzzle: Interpretive Essays on Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 25-47.

10. For my approach to such issues, see my articles "New Perspectives on the Mormon Past: Reflections of a Non-Mormon Historian," *Sunstone* 7 (January-February 1982): 41-45; "A Personal Odyssey: My Encounter with Mormon History," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1983): 87-98; and my MHA Presidential Address, "A Personal Odyssey Revisited: My Continuing Encounter with Mormon History," *Journal of Mormon History* (forthcoming, Spring 2004).

11. Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1958), vii, ix. This Classic study, ironically, was originally categorized by the LDS Church Library in Salt Lake City as an "anti-Mormon" work (See Leonard J. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian* [Urbana: University of Illinoi Press, 1998], 34).

might well be that the neurotic temperament would furnish the chief condition of the requisite receptivity."[12]

I

In *Prophetic Charisma*, Oakes posits a five-stage process in the development of the religious prophetic vocation. At the heart of this analysis is what Oakes calls an initial period of "Early Narcissism." Oakes's primary concern here is to understand why prophetic figures eventually come to believe that their own perceptions provide a universally valid basis for understanding both the nature of reality as well as how others ought to live properly in the world. This "narcissistic" orientation toward the world, Oakes argues, ultimately derives from early childhood experiences. In those experiences, the prophet-to-be is protected by his mother or primary caregiver for an unusually long time from the inevitable disappointments and adjustments of coming to terms with a larger world in which he is *not* omnipotent, *not* the primary center of attention.

Eventually, however, a crisis occurs which shatters the idyllic impression that the world revolves around the young child. Rather than trying to adapt to the outside environment as normal people do, the developing charismatic personality attempts instead to adjust the world to him. He sees everything and everyone in terms of their impact on him; he cannot genuinely relate to others independent of this underlying personal self-absorption. Oakes emphasizes that this narcissistic orientation of the prophet toward the world can make him both an unusually strong and effective leader and unusually vulnerable psychologically, especially when people fail to acknowledge his primacy.[13]

This initial experience of the world does not, according to Oakes, lead immediately to the prophetic vocation, but instead to a second stage of "Incubation." During this stage, the future prophet is

> . . .at first perplexed by the indifference shown toward him by others. In trying to understand this, he may conclude that there is "something special" about him and "something wrong" with the world. This experience may drive him to develop a revelation of salvation that recruits others and explains his failure to get the love he assumes is his right.[14]

12. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: New American Library, 1958; orig. 1902), 37.

13. Oakes, *Prophetic Charisma*, 44-73. Oakes gives three examples of well-known figures whose early life experiences illustrate these dynamics: Werner Erhard, the founder of "est"; Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, the controversial leader of the Rajneeshies; and Swami Vivekenanda, the founder of the Vedanta Society, who helped popularize yoga in the West at the turn of the twentieth century. Oakes notes, "Narcissistic people seldom seek therapy, preferring to focus on problems in the world rather than in themselves" (56). Narcissistic leaders, according to Oakes, display "a subtle detachment" and "a certain fearlessness," associated with "acute insight into other people," which tend to attract those who are less self-confident. Yet if the prophet's primacy is questioned, he feels threatened and may react with intense anger.

14. Ibid., 21.

This incubation process, when the prophet-to-be is at loose ends and "wandering in the wilderness," is not brief and sharply defined, but rather a long-term crisis during which the prophet struggles, often initially without much success, to understand himself, his distinctiveness, and his future calling. The future prophet has a curious sense of detachment from others and from normal life though he eventually gains experiences and skills that will later stand him in good stead (especially in areas such as teaching, preaching, selling, counseling and alternative healing, and entertaining). At this stage, prophets develop images of themselves which later become important in their charismatic appeal.[15]

If the future prophet is able to gain some recognition from the world, he may move into the next step toward his prophetic career, "Awakening." This can be a profoundly powerful process, often of a mystical or quasi-mystical nature, which transforms and focuses the future leader's goals and sense of mission. Oakes discusses a variety of examples of such experiences which lead individuals not simply to a personal conversion to another faith, but to an attempt to convert the entire world (or a specific subset thereof) to the prophet's new understanding of the nature of reality.[16] One is reminded of the phenomenon described by anthropologist Anthony F. C. Wallace in his "revitalization movements" analysis as a "mazeway resynthesis," a transformation of the perceptions and life of a prophet around a new or revitalized paradigm he feels compelled to share with others.[17] This awakening, Oakes stresses, is not usually a single, life-transforming realization, but rather the product of a series of interconnected events, extended over time, which gradually reorient the prophet's understanding of the world: "Awakening solves some problems for the prophet—it changes his view of himself and the world—but it may cause others. As a result of awakening, the prophet assumes the mantle of God's messenger—a burden from which many initially recoil, asking aloud, 'Why me, Lord.'"[18]

After the Awakening comes a fourth stage, which Oakes calls "Mission." During this stage, the prophet's mission becomes clear. To recruit followers, the leader advances a bold claim to be the source of ultimate goodness for others.

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15. Ibid., 74-97.

16. Ibid., 98-113. Based on the experiences of the twenty New Zealand leaders, Oakes takes issue with the "standard model" of mystical experience that sees it as "a sudden, unprecedented, once-in-a-lifetime, total, and permanent transformation of the person wrought by supernatural means" (101). Rather, he sees awakening as "most often a series of interconnected events" that are "extended in time" and that encompass and rearrange "all aspects of one's life" (104). Oakes also argues, after a lengthy discussion, that "it seems likely that awakening is much less important in the lives of prophets than is often assumed" (110).

17. See Anthony F. C. Wallace's seminal articles, "Revitalization Movements," *American Anthropologist* 58 (April 1956): 264-81, and "Mazeway Resynthesis: A Biocultural Theory of Religious Inspiration," *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences* 18 (1956): 626-38, as well as his revealing study of the Seneca prophet, Handsome Lake, in *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Vintage, 1972). Also highly suggestive is Kenelm Burridge's essay "The Prophet" in his *New Heaven, New Earth: A Study of Millenarian Activities* (New York: Schocken, 1969), 153-63.

18. Oakes, *Prophetic Charisma*, 22.

The boldness of this claim induces a fascinating effect, arousing faith, hope, and love in the hearts of those who become his followers. In pursuing his mission, the leader heads an organization dedicated to supporting him and spreading his truth. He begins to function somewhat as a manager, relying on whatever managerial skills he possesses as well as certain qualities which induce compliance with his wishes. He adopts a double strategy to retain and expand his following, first, by ensuring that the daily lives and mundane concerns of his followers are adequately taken care of and, second, by devising rituals that allow for the experience of transcendence.[19]

According to Oakes, successful prophets at this stage are typically "practical, warm, down-to-earth, pragmatic, and, above all caring leaders."[20] The leader's inner life is quite different from that of his followers: "The leader risks becoming preoccupied with issues of power and may be tempted to bend his teaching to self-serving ends, subordinating his vision to his need for control. The prophet is accused of being power-mad, but this is not quite so. Rather, power is necessary to realize his divine vision, which may be narcissistic at base, but in itself power holds little interest."[21]

At this point, Oakes defers his discussion of the final stage of the prophetic vocation in order to present his reflections on "The Followers and Their Quest" and "The Soul of the Prophet." The first of these sections examines the much discussed basis of attraction of charismatic groups for their members. Oakes argues that treatments stressing the "oppressed" nature of those attracted to such groups are misleading: "[P]eople join such groups for a wide variety of reasons . . . .They come from all levels of society and comprise pretty much all types of people."[22] He stresses the positive factors that lead people to join such unconventional groups: People "join the leader *for* something."[23]

Using materials derived from his research and his broad general reading and experience, Oakes attempts to understand the "deeper agenda" attracting individuals to such groups. He mentions two open-ended questions which brought striking responses from the close associates of charismatic leaders, namely: "What has been your major change or achievement in your time here (with the leader)?" and "If something happened which forced you to leave the group and (the leader) and you could never return, what would be your most enduring memory?"[24] Oakes finds that: "Many followers before joining a charismatic group, actively search for a vehicle for their great work. . . .Rather than follow-

19. Ibid., 22.

20. Ibid., 121.

21. Ibid., 122.

22. Ibid., 124.

23. Ibid., 126.

24 Ibid., 126. Oakes used other open-ended questions which elicited sometimes striking responses. One involved Joseph Smith's "No man knows my history" statement shortly before his death (200). In a letter to me on 20 July 1992, Oakes commented on one response: "I had a hunch that asking what Smith meant by that statement might produce some interesting material, as well as answering for me the question of what was the 'true' 'inner' 'deeper' message of the prophet. It was

ers being spontaneously swept off their feet by a leader, or a group of followers 'constructing' a leader, both leader and follower find each other for their own purposes."[25]

Oakes describes a series of stages a follower may experience after joining a group, a sort of "natural history of the follower." The new follower begins by enthusiastically embracing the group in a sort of honeymoon stage, then undergoes a difficult process of trying to adjust and find an appropriate niche within the group; at some point he experiences a sense of let-down and disappointment as the group's imperfections become apparent, and eventually he decides either to leave the group or to stick with it despite its limitations.[26] Oakes says:

> Ex-members who still felt warmly about the leader were those who had succeeded in their great work. They had used the group for their own purposes and moved on at the right time. Success gave them a new appreciation of the leader, gratitude for his help but also pragmatism about his faults. They no longer needed to believe in him so intensely. Usually by the time they were successful they had witnessed some of the leader's less savoury attributes—his mistakes and excesses. They held few illusions about his nature but retained a fondness. After success they felt restricted by the group and needed a new challenge.[27]

In this chapter and throughout much of his analysis, Oakes describes a range of psychological dynamics which might apply to *all* of us. This provides us a certain "shock of recognition," which could make Oakes's work of interest to the general public as well as to scholars and students in fields such as history, anthropology, sociology, political science, and religious studies.[28]

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kind of an attempt to canvass expert opinion. . . .I thought you might be interested in an answer given to me by the leader of the New Zealand Rastafarians. With hardly a pause he said 'Oh, I know what he means by that. He is a holy man. He means "No man knows my heart like God knows it."' I don't know if you are as moved by that reply as I am, but what a world it would be if only we could all know each others' hearts as only God does (using "God" as a metaphor etc etc)."

25. Oakes argues that many followers of charismatic religious leaders "have a goal they are aiming for, and following a charismatic leader is their strategy for achieving this goal" (*Prophetic Charisma*, 125). He adds that the followers' "great works were not consciously expressed as such" and defines "great work," in this context, as "a hope held for future possibilities for transformation of one's self. It can be deduced retrospectively from the changes that the follower makes in his life after joining the group" (127).

26. Ibid., 131-43.

27. Ibid., 139.

28. The idea that Oakes's insights might have broader applicability resonated strongly with Robert Flanders, who wrote in a letter to me on 20 February 1998 (in response to a copy of my eighteen-page letter evaluating a book manuscript I had sent to Syracuse University Press on 25 November 1995): "I cannot emphasize too much the impact upon me of your brilliant description and analysis of Oakes work. . . .At the bottom of your page 13 you said, 'It strikes me that Oakes is describing. . .psychological dynamics that apply to *all* of us.' I had been thinking about the universality of Oakes's insights as I read your account, and stopped at that point, struck by your conclusion which was like an exclamation point to my own thought."

In "The Soul of the Prophet," Oakes discusses the paradoxical, contradictory, and unpredictable ways the prophet behaves because "every leader in the study appeared to have split off part of his or her self in order to pursue their vision."[29] All the charismatic figures Oakes studied seemed to have focused so intensely on their mission that other aspects of their lives and awareness were downplayed, ignored, or repressed entirely. Consequently, they had "blind spots" about weaknesses in their own motivation and behavior, weaknesses that were obvious to all who knew them, but which the leaders themselves could not see or admit. Oakes further explains that ultimately the prophet needs his followers more than they need him. He notes that the prophet often has what he describes as an infantile, magical view of the world "wherein one need only wish to make it so" and, as a result, the prophet often has a willingness to distort reality.[30] The prophet also displays a peculiar experience and transcendence of time often associated with memory distortions.[31] Oakes concludes this chapter by arguing that "what the prophet knows as reality has some of the qualities of a dream, with fluid boundaries between the real and unreal, self and other, past and future, between God and humankind."[32]

Finally, Oakes considers the last of the five stages in his typology of prophetic vocation, which he titles pessimistically, "Decline or Fall?"[33] In this chapter, he highlights two types of prophetic personalities, "messianic" and "charismatic." He argues: "The messianic types were not prey to the kind of erratic and provocative behaviours to which charismatic types are prone. . .For messianic prophets the orientation to an external God keeps them in touch with reality and in rough conformity with society's norms, whereas the orientation to an inner God on the part of charismatic prophets inclines them towards conflict with society and hastens their demise."[34]

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29. Oakes, *Prophetic Charisma*, 80-84, 165.

30. Ibid., 171. In this regard, Oakes is especially caustic in his discussion of L. Ron Hubbard's prevarications, noting: "He couldn't understand when others refused to take him seriously because *he took himself so seriously that he believed his own lies*" (emphasis in the original).

31. Ibid., 172-75. In a striking statement, Oakes speculates: "Is it possible that the narcissistic mind locates its meanings as much in the future as in the past? In the telling of a great lie, the lie would not be felt as false because it would not be compared with facts located in memory. Rather, it would be compared with "facts" from an imagined, yet-to-become f*uture that is experienced as just as real as the past*" (174; emphasis in original).

32. Ibid., 175.

33. Ibid., 176-84. By using "decline" or "fall," Oakes does not refer to the possibility of the movement's success, but rather to the way in which prophets deal differently with their impending mortality. He argues that "messianic" prophets, who emphasize loyalty to a larger ideal rather than to themselves, are often prepared to gradually step aside and facilitate the transition of new leadership into positions of power, while "charismatic" prophets, who emphasize loyalty to themselves more than to their larger ideals, are more likely to attempt to retain full power for as long as possible, frequently with disastrous results.

34. Ibid., 177.

> The messianic type usually adopts the posture of being merely a vehicle for God or God's mouthpiece. This enables him to admit mistakes, to compromise, and to advance a less than total claim. If the messianic leader fails it is only God's vehicle which is at fault. Hence the messianic type really advances no special claim for himself other than the possession of God's grace. But the charismatic type is, by Max Weber's definition, "exemplary" and usually claims to be God in one guise or another. This is a more precarious and seductive role; if he fails then God has failed, and if he succeeds then he has proof that he really is God and may become ever more grandiose and self-indulgent, a clear recipe for failure.[35]

> The prophet's credibility founders most over his failure to be truly human, that is, to reflect on his behavior, to doubt himself, to concede error and to show genuine regret for hurt to others. This lack unnerves and embarrasses the followers. They bring with them enormous good-will and loyalty, but when the leader shows not mere refusal but sheer inability to admit any insufficiency, when vain boasting and ranting, naive invincibility alternate with bouts of self-pity and paranoid fantasies, and when the followers sense that the leader's fancies are more important to him than their welfare, their affections change.[36]

Oakes argues that while many prophets found and lead successful movements, the tendency toward prophetic failure is higher than in other types of leadership, especially in the case of what he has termed "charismatic" prophets.[37]

II

Oakes's insights might prove helpful in better understanding the dynamics of the Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith, Jr., as well as other charismatic religious and communal figures. Oakes's analysis seems most useful not as a Procrustean bed into which we cram personalities who are far too complex to be easily comprehended by lesser minds, but rather when used as good historians use social theory, namely, to suggest fresh perspectives for analyzing difficult issues. Let us briefly examine each of Oakes's postulated five stages in the development of the sense of prophetic vocation and how they might help us better understand Joseph Smith's distinctive development and sense of mission.

Oakes's first stage, "Early Narcicissism," suggests the value of re-examining the nature of Joseph Smith's strong personal ties with his mother Lucy Mack Smith as well as the larger family dynamic, which scholars have seen as a key to both the strengths and weaknesses of Smith's leadership. Scholars from Fawn Brodie to Richard Bushman to more explicitly psychohistorical writers such

35. Ibid., 177-78.
36. Ibid., 180-81.
37. Ibid., 182-83.

Jess Groesbeck, Robert D. Anderson, and William D. Morain have all emphasized the distinctive sense of a Smith *family* mission and the powerful role played by Lucy Mack Smith in developing and sustaining that sense of family mission. Could Oakes's perspectives help us arrive at a better understanding of those Smith family dynamics and how they may have influenced Joseph Smith eventually to assume a role not only as leader of his family but also as prophet, seer, and revelator for a new religious movement?[38]

Oakes's second stage of prophetic development, "Incubation," might prove fruitful in understanding the sharp divergences in public perceptions of the young Joseph Smith and his family. Clearly, young Joseph and his family were "seekers," filled with a deep sense of their family heritage and distinctiveness, yet struggling to understand what role God might have for them in his larger plan. This sense of "special-ness" felt by both Joseph and his mother, combined with the world's rejection of that self-perception, clearly extends throughout the crucial decade of the 1820s when Joseph was experiencing his initial visions and what he would eventually describe as his "translation" "by the gift and power of God" of the Book of Mormon.[39]

The Incubation may be seen as overlapping and influencing the third stage of Smith's prophetic development, his "Awakening." Oakes alerts us to the possibility, increasingly being explored by Mormon scholars, that Joseph Smith's initial visionary experiences may have been more complex and extended over a longer period of time than often has been acknowledged. Instead of a single,

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38. From the vast literature on this complex subject, let me simply mention the following works here: Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet*, 2nd. ed. rev. (New York: Knopf, 1971); Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977); Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984); William D. Morain, *Joseph Smith, Jr., and the Dissociated Mind* (Washington, D. C.: American Psychiatric Press, 1998); Robert D. Anderson, *Inside the Mind of Joseph Smith: Psychobiography and the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999); Jess C. Groesbeck, "The Smiths and Their Dreams and Visions," *Sunstone* 12 (March 1988): 22-29; David Persuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins of The Book of Mormon*, 2nd. rev. ed. (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Company, 2000); and Waterman, *The Prophet Puzzle*. Primary documentation is provided in Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), and in documentary collections on Joseph Smith discussed in the following footnote.

39. Young Joseph's complex struggle to understand himself and his role is very evident in the studies cited here in the preceding footnote, and in the comprehensive documentary collections now being published on Joseph Smith's early experiences, including Dean C. Jessee, comp., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002); Scott A. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1989); Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 2001); and Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents*, vols. 1-4 (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1996-2002); and Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book*. When the authoritative eleven-volume scholarly edition of virtually all known contemporary documents by or about Joseph Smith is completed by historians of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it will provide a resource unsurpassed for any major religious movement.

clearly identifiable "First Vision" experience, for example, Joseph Smith (like Malcolm X, who compressed two pivotal visits to the Middle East into one Meccan epiphany in his *Autobiography*),[40] may have retroactively combined key elements from several powerful early visionary experiences into a compelling narrative of his call to mission.[41] Smith's long delay, from 1823 to 1827, in beginning his "translation" of the Book of Mormon plates also makes better sense if one considers the possibility that he was still struggling with just how his sense of mission might best be expressed.[42]

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40. The "canonized" version of Malcolm X's trip to the Middle East and to Mecca—which is presented as a single occurrence leading to a dramatic reversal of his earlier belief in the racial exclusiveness of the Nation of Islam—is found in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, written with the aid of Alex Haley (New York: Grove Press, 1966), 318-42. A supplement and corrective to aspects of Malcolm X's Autobiography is presented in Bruce Perry, *Malcolm: The Life of a Man Who Changed Black America* (Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill, 1991). Perry's biography refers to Malcolm's trip to the Middle East in 1959, including an unsuccessful attempt to visit Mecca. During that first trip, Malcolm increasingly began to see the flaws in the Black Muslim's "white devil" stance (205-06). This Middle Eastern experience predated by five years Malcolm's second, completed Meccan pilgrimage, described on pages 260-268 of Perry's biography, which occurred in April 1964 after he had already split from the Black Muslims. Perry notes that the *Autobiography* claimed that Malcolm "first began to reappraise" Elijah Muhammad's "white devil" theory on his 1964 trip, "despite his earlier trip and the cordial relations he had maintained with Dr. Shawarbi and other fair-skinned Muslim scholars, diplomats, and officials" since 1959 (264).

41. The complexity of Joseph Smith's visionary awakening(s) has been a hotly debated issue, especially since the publication of the significantly different versions of the "first vision" in Dean C. Jesse, "The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision," *Brigham Young University Studies* 9 (Spring 1969): 275-294. Historian James B. Allen emphasizes the greater importance of Joseph Smith's "first vision" to present-day Mormons than to his nineteenth-century contemporaries, who placed greater stress on the Book of Mormon as a key source of authority (Allen, "The Significance of Joseph Smith's First Vision in Mormon Thought," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1, no. 3 (Autumn 1966): 28-45). Consider, for example, Oliver Cowdery's early history of the church which omits the "first vision" entirely, stressing rather the role of the 1823 vision which eventually led to Joseph Smith's dictation of the Book of Mormon (Cowdery, "Early Scenes and Incidents in the Church " *Messenger and Advocate* 1-2 [1834-1835]). This shift in emphasis is also discussed in Dale L. Morgan, *Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History*, ed. John Phillip Walker (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1986). My own take on the "first vision" is suggested in my article, "First Visions: Personal Observations on Joseph Smith's Religious Experience," *Sunstone* 8, no. 5 (September-October 1983): 39-43. Richard L. Bushman brilliantly reconstructs the extent and character of visionary experiences contemporary to those of Joseph Smith (Bushman, "The Visionary World of Joseph Smith," *Brigham Young University Studies* 37, no. 1 [1997-98]: 183-204).

42. Even more controversial have been recent studies stressing the visionary character of the Book of Mormon—not simply its discovery but also, possibly, its dictation. I presented a summary of some possible arguments in this regard in my book *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 294-97, as well as in my article, "New Paradigms for Understanding Mormonism and Mormon History," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 55-63. A provocative discussion of the Book of Mormon as a possible example of trance dictation is found in Scott D. Dunn, "Spirit Writing: Another Look at the Book of Mormon," *Sunstone10*, no. 6 (June 1985): 17-26. Other important recent analyses of the Book of Mormon are presented in Robert M. Price, "Prophecy and

Oakes's fourth prophetic stage, "Mission," may help illuminate the powerful and well-directed energy displayed by Joseph Smith after the publication of the Book of Mormon and the founding of his new church in 1830. During that period, Smith showed the full force of his charisma by rapidly attracting and developing a large and dedicated following, and solidifying that support by paying close attention to temporal matters and developing distinctive religious rituals, especially during the final phase of his life in Nauvoo, Illinois (1839-1844). During that final phase, he also began to generate some of his most bitter enemies among previously dedicated followers, who eventually became convinced he was arrogating too much power to himself.[43]

In the final phase, "Decline or Fall"—which occurs during Joseph's last several years in Nauvoo and especially after the devastating apostasy of his second in command, John C. Bennett, in 1842—Joseph Smith struggled with some of the deeper prophetic tensions, which Oakes explores by contrasting his two types of prophetic personalities, the "messianic" and the "charismatic." Probably no successful prophet fits exclusively into only one of these psychological categories, but it might be revealing to explore the extent to which Joseph Smith might be seen as primarily "messianic" or "charismatic" (using Oakes's terminology) during different periods of his life. My impression is that Joseph demonstrated his "prophetic" qualities most clearly during the earlier stages of his career when he cast himself as God's agent who "translated" the book of Mormon and gave divine revelations about how to prepare for a new dispensation from God, which would eventually usher in the millennium. During this period, Smith was able to separate his own personal desires from his sense of mission, as is reflected in his famous statement, "A prophet is a prophet only when he is acting as such."[44] By the final years of his life, however, Joseph Smith appears increasingly to have adopted the problematic "charismatic" persona; he tended more and more to identify his own will directly with that of God and thereby alienated some of his previously loyal followers. They came to feel he

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Palimpsest," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 67-82; Brigham H. Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, 2nd ed., Brigham D. Madsen, ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992); Grant H. Palmer, *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002); and Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe, eds., *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002). Whatever the merits of these particular arguments, scholars of early Mormonism would do well to consider the full range and complexity of Joseph Smith's personal and visionary experiences when trying to understand the nature and appeal of the early Mormon movement.

43. For scholarly accounts critical of Joseph Smith's behavior during his final years in Nauvoo, see Robert B. Flanders, "Dream and Nightmare: Nauvoo Revisited," in F. Mark McKiernan, Alma R. Blair, Paul M. Edwards, eds., *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History* (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1973), 141-66, and Gary James Bergera, "Joseph Smith and the Hazards of Charismatic Leadership," in Waterman, *The Prophet Puzzle*, 239-57.

44. Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Period 1*, ed. Brigham H. Roberts, 6 vols., 2nd. ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1948), 5:265.

was becoming so autocratic and idiosyncratic that he was a "fallen prophet," unfit to lead the very church he had founded.[45]

These have been preliminary thoughts about difficult issues deserving further exploration. Prophetic charisma raises many complex and important questions. The line between madness and the highest visionary reconstruction of personality is often an extremely fine one. In the words of William James, quoted in the introduction to Oakes's *Prophetic Charisma*, "When a superior intellect and a psychopathic temperament coalesce—as in the endless permutations and combinations of human faculty they are bound to coalesce often enough—in the same individual, we have the best possible condition for the kind of effective genius that gets into the biographical dictionaries. Such men do not remain mere critics and understanders with their intellect. Their ideas possess them, they inflict them, for better or for worse, upon their companions or their age."[46] Oakes's suggestive analysis may help us better understand the dynamics of how such contradictory prophetic creativity may develop in a prophetic personality, as well as, at a more modest level, how our own minds may work, both at their best and at their worst.

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45. The classic account of Mormon Nauvoo is Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965). Key essays interpreting the Nauvoo period and its significance are found in Roger D. Launius and John E. Hallwas, eds., *Kingdom on the Mississippi Revisted: Nauvoo in Mormon History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996). The most comprehensive and balanced study of the complexity of the conflicts in Mormon Nauvoo is found in John E. Hallwas and Roger D. Launius, eds. *Cultures in Conflict: A Documentary History of the Mormon War in Illinois* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1995). For a more positive interpretation, see Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, A People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 2002).

46. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 36-37.

The Prophet's Fall: A Note in Response to Lawrence Foster's "The Psychology of Prophetic Charisma"

Len Oakes

AS IS USUAL AND TO BE EXPECTED, Lawrence Foster's article is excellent. Let me simply share a few additional thoughts about how my understanding of the charismatic prophet's regress and demise has changed since my book *Prophetic Charisma* went to press. I now believe that such prophets die, basically, from lack of love. Their minds are structured in such a way that they cannot be *real* or equal, cannot commune or just *be* with another person in the I-Thou sense because they are constantly attuned to issues of power, trust, and control. Nonetheless, they yearn to be whole and in a genuinely loving relationship. I think we all move towards healing in our own ways, and this is true of prophets as well. Love is what heals, and their mission is an attempt to achieve the kind of love that heals and redeems. The charismatic prophet inspires much loving of a kind that, although naively idealistic, could with time and work become genuine love, that is of a kind that ultimately places the other's welfare before one's own—as when some people marry young and for a number of years seem quite out of their depths but then somehow make the transition from immature, romantic, illusory love to the sort that is realistic, responsible, and mature.

But if one cannot fully accept others, relinquishing control of them and trusting them with one's own ultimate concerns, admitting that one needs them; if long ago one adopted subtle strategies to avoid or delay recognizing other persons as being just like oneself (with equal claims to life, love, and freedom, and with their own integrity and destiny); if one cannot invest oneself in others, nor take them inside as part of oneself, then one's relationships with others will always be unsatisfying. Individuals who are structured in this way don't relate to others; they use them. They don't have friends; they collect followers. But the

subtle rewards of friendship and relating, of being equal and close and open with another human being, the kinds of things that people capable of love say are their bread and water—these elude prophets. Their missions may succeed, they may have great control and influence over their followers, but in the end, this simply does not satisfy.

So they become increasingly desperate and are driven to more and more extreme acts in order to get love. But these acts don't satisfy either, and so charismatic prophets lose affection and respect for their followers, whom they perceive as having let them down. And, indeed, some or all of the followers may have failed the leader in various ways, but a cold indifference towards them grows in the leader's mind that is much more than just a feeling of disappointment in people who have personal failings. Contempt can grow, and some combination of rashness and anger may lead prophets to even wilder behaviors that eventually can cause their demise.

From Captain Kidd's Treasure Ghost to the Angel Moroni: Changing *Dramatis Personae* in Early Mormonism

Ronald V. Huggins

ONE DAY IN LATE MARCH 1697, a ship named the *Adventure Galley* arrived at the Island of Mohilla, one of the Comoro Islands. Its fever-stricken crew careened the vessel for cleaning and then proceeded to die off one by one, fifty men dead in about a week. The *Adventure Galley* had come to the Comoros the previous month, after stopping first at the neighboring Island of Johanna. It would not depart again until April 18. Its captain, William (a.k.a. Robert) Kidd, did not know he would soon become one of history's most famous, and notorious, pirates.

In those days pirates, even famous ones, were no oddity in the Comoros. Anyone who read, for example, the popular two-volume *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates* (1724 and 1728) by Daniel Defoe (a.k.a. Captain Charles Johnson), would find the Comoro Islands figuring into the accounts of Captains England, Misson, Tew, Kidd, Bowen, White, Condent, Cornelius, Howard, Williams, Burgess, North,[1] and la Bouche.[2] The pirate to whom Defoe dedicated his first chapter, Henry Avery (Every), also had a connection with the Comoros, which the author fails to men-

1. The edition used here is Daniel Defoe, *A General History of the Pyrates*, ed. Manuel Schonhorn, (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina, 1972). Johanna is mentioned in the accounts of Captains England, 118, 130, 132; Misson, 407-16; Tew, 424-26; Kidd, 443; Bowen, 461; White, 478; Condent, 584; Cornelius, 605; Williams, 503; Burgess, 510; and North, 516. Mayotta is mentioned in the accounts of Captains England, 118; Bowen, 461, 478, 481; White, 478, 481; Howard, 493; Williams, 503; and North, 516, 521, 539. Mohilla is mentioned in the accounts of Captains Misson, 407-14, 416, 418; Kidd, 443; and Williams, 503. Comoro is only mentioned in the account of Captain North, 516.

2. See Defoe, *General History*, 118, and the note on la Bouche, which speaks of his being "wrecked on Mayotta" (671).

tion.[3] There were other pirates not treated by Defoe such as William Ayer, Captain Quail, John Ap Owen, Thomas Harris, William Cobb, and Davy Jones—all famous pirates who visited the Comoro Islands at one time or another.[4]

B. F. De Costa long ago noted that the Indian Ocean of the late seventeenth century was "swarming with pirates."[5] It was the principal eastern theater of their piratical activity, just as the Caribbean was the principal western theater. The Comoro Islands were especially attractive to pirates because of their location at the northern end of the Mozambique Channel between the East Coast of Africa and Madagascar. Their goal was to take merchant ships, such as those of the East India Company, heading south toward the Cape of Good Hope loaded with rich stocks of cargo from ports in the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and India. The only way these vessels could avoid sailing by the Comoros was to go around the eastern side of Madagascar, but of course there were lots of famous pirates hanging around over there, too. Captain Kidd himself would eventually make his way there and scuttle the *Adventure Galley* near one of the most notorious pirate hangouts, the Island of St. Mary's.

The largest of the Comoro Islands, Grand Comoro, was less interesting to pirates than it later would be to Mormons. For a long time it was ruled by twelve Sultans. One of the most important of these was the Sultan of Bamboa, who ruled over two large towns on the west coast of the island: Iconi and Moroni, the latter having a harbor. In the *Swahili Chronicle of Ngazija* written by Said Ali, the last of the Sultans of Bamboa (abdicated to the French in 1912), it is explained that these two towns (*Ikoni* and *Mroni*) were among the island's most ancient.[6] Today Moroni is the capital of the Comoros. But we were talking about Captain Kidd.

Early in 1698, Captain Kidd departed the East and headed for the West Indies. He was now commanding a ship he had taken, the *Quedah Merchant*. Arriving in the West Indies, he was greeted with the news that a charge of piracy had been leveled against him. He made a hasty return to New York in yet another ship, the *Antonio*, hoping to clear his name. From there he made his way to Boston, where he was promptly placed under arrest, sent to England, tried, and hanged on May 23, 1701.

There is very little in Captain Kidd's actual career that would explain his peculiar noteriety. Some of it, to be sure, must derive from the fact that he had initially set out, armed with a commission from King William III of England—which spoke familiarly of him as "our trusty and well beloved Captain William Kidd"—to fight the pirates. No doubt the kind words of the King

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3. Captain Avery wrote a letter from Johanna on February 18, 1695 (see Defoe, *General History*).

4. "Pirates," in Martin Ottenheimer and Harriet Otteneimer, *Historical Dictionary of the Comoro Islands, African Historical Dictionaries* 59 (Metuchen, N.J. & London: Scarecrow Press, 1994), 68.

5. B. F. De Costa, "Captain Kidd-Why Was He Hung," *The Galaxy* 7, no. 5 (May 1869): 743.

6. Said Bakari Bin Sultan Ahmed, *The Swahili Chronicle of Ngazija*, ed. Lyndon Harris (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1977), 12, 41.

served to underscore the wretched villainy of Kidd, who ultimately joined the very people he had been sent to destroy.

But it was the rumor of an enormous treasure trove buried somewhere, or scuttled along with the mysteriously missing *Qedah*, which did most to immortalize the man. The fact that Kidd was arrested so soon after arriving in Boston made it highly likely, or so many believed, that his treasure was still out there, somewhere, waiting to be discovered. Thus, Kidd's treasure became the most vigorously sought pirate's prize of all. For Mormons, the fact that the pirate was hanged for crimes allegedly committed in the vicinity of Moroni on Grand Comoro is significant because the hunt for his treasure came to play a part in the story of Moroni on Comorah. To discover how this came to pass, we must begin on page 275 of E. D. Howe's *Mormonism Unvailed.*

From Money-Digger's Yarn to Restoration History

Eber D. Howe complained in his 1834 book, *Mormonism Unvailed*, that a "great variety of contradictory stories were related by the Smith family, before they had any fixed plan of operation, respecting the finding of the plates."[7] On 2 December of the previous year, Parley Chase remarked similarly, "In regard to their Gold Bible speculation, they [the Smiths] scarcely ever told two stories alike."[8] Abner Cole, writing under the pseudonym Obediah Dogberry, reported in the 14 February 1831 Palmyra *Reflector* that "[i]n the commencement, the imposture of the `book of Mormon,' had no regular plan or features."[9] Yet a careful study of the *Traditionsgeschichte* (tradition history) of the story of the initial discovery of the plates indicates these criticisms were only partly justified. Admittedly, there are considerable differences in detail between the various accounts, but ultimately only two basic versions of the story exist. The first is a fairly typical preternaturalistic money-diggers' yarn while the second has become an integral component of the story of the restoration of authentic primitive Christianity. I am interested here in the earlier version and especially in the identity, character, and function of the angel Moroni in that version.

Yet to speak of the "angel Moroni" in connection with the earlier version of the plates story is to commit a double anachronism. The figure who would become the angel Moroni, was not called Moroni in that version, nor was he an angel. The personage who met Joseph Smith, Jr., on the night of October 22, 1823 at the site where the plates were discovered did not begin to be named "Moroni" until the early 1830s. In the original 1835 edition of the *Doctrine and*

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7. E[ber]. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed: Or a Faithful Account of that Singular Imposition and Delusion, From Its Rise to the Present Time* (Painesville, Ohio: by the author, 1834).

8. Affidavit of Parley Chase in Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 248.

9. "Golden Bible, No. 4," *The Reflector* 2, no. 1 (February 14, 1831): 13. Dan Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 2: 244-45.

Covenants (50:2, now 27:5)[10], a revelation dated September 4, 1830 speaks of "Moroni, whom I have sent unto you to reveal the book of Mormon." However, the parallel version of the same revelation in the 1833 *Book of Commandments* (chap. 28) does not have this statement.[11] In 1834-1835, Oliver Cowdery wrote an account of the "origin of the Book of Mormon and the rise of the Church of Jesus Christ," which appeared as a series of eight letters written to W. W. Phelps and was published in the *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate.* In the sixth letter, appearing in the April 1835 issue, Cowdery refers explicitly to "the angel Moroni" as the name of the guardian of the plates.[12] The name Moroni had also appeared the previous year in a story dating from "some time after" the translation of the Book of Mormon was finished and the plates had been returned to the ground (1829-1830).[13] This story appeared in E. D. Howe's *Mormonism Unvailed* (1834), based on testimony given by Leman Copley in the trial of Philastus Hurlbut in April 1834. Copley said he heard the name, "Moroni," first from Joseph Knight, after which "it was confirmed to him by Joseph [Smith] himself":

> After he had finished translating the Book of Mormon, he again buried up the plates in the side of a mountain, by command of the Lord. . .he was going through a piece of woods, on a by-path, when he discovered an old man dressed in ordinary gray apparel, sitting upon a log, having in his hand or near by, a small box. On approaching him, he asked him what he had in his box. To which the old man replied, that he had a MONKEY, and for five coppers he might see it. Joseph answered, that he would not give a cent to see a monkey, for he had seen a hundred of them. He then asked the old man where he was going, who said he was going to *Charzee.* Joseph then passed on, and not recollecting any such place in that part of the country, began to ponder over the strange interview, and finally asked the Lord the meaning of it. The Lord told him that the man he saw was MORONI, with the plates, and if he had given him the five coppers, he might have got his plates again.[14]

E. D. Howe was so impressed by Copely's story that he included an engraving of the scene opposite the title page in the front of his book, *Mormonism Unvailed.*

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10. Modern editions of the D&C date this revelation August 1830.

11. The 1833 *Book of Commandments* statement, "I will drink of the fruit of the vine, with you, on the earth, and with all those whom my Father hath given me out of the world" (p. 60; 28:6), becomes in the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*, "I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth, and with Moroni, whom I sent unto you to reveal the book of Mormon, containing the fullness of the everlasting gospel" (180; 50:2). For an account of the expansion of this revelation, see H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text & Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 72-80.

12. Oliver Cowdery, "Letter VI to W. W. Phelps, Esq.," *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 7 (April 1835): 112. Cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:443.

13. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 277.

14. *Howe, Mormonism Unvailed*, 277.

Whether or not the story is true, its publication in Howe's book proves that the name Moroni was being used for the overseer of the plates by the first half of 1834, the time of Copley's testimony and the publication of Howe's book. Of course, it may also have been used earlier. As we shall see in the earliest preserved account of the plates, the figure overseeing them is described as "the spirit of the prophet who wrote this book."[15] The precise date of the origin of the name matters less than that we avoid using it when referring to early accounts containing a figure who corresponds to the later Moroni, but who is not actually called Moroni.[16] It is cumbersome to speak continually of "the figure who later became Moroni," or, "came to be called Moroni," or "appeared only later in the literature as Moroni." So for convenience's sake, we shall henceforth call that figure Moroni except where it might otherwise become an occasion for confusion.

Moroni's Pre-Angelic Status

Obediah Dogberry (Abner Cole), writing in the 28 February 1831 Palmyra *Reflector*, stated: "It is well known that Jo Smith never pretended to have any communion with angels, until a long after the *pretended* finding of his book."[17] Joseph Capron reported that when Joseph Smith, Sr., first told him of the translation and publication of the golden plates, "He gave me no intimation, at that time that the book was to be of a religious character, or that it had any thing to do with revelation."[18] Emma Smith's cousins, Joseph and Heil Lewis, confirmed this when they commented on the version of the story expressed in their hearing "at the commencement of his translating his book" (Spring 1828):

> In all this narrative, there was not one word about "visions of God," or of angels, or heavenly revelations. All his information was by that dream, and that bleeding ghost. The heavenly visions and messages of angels, etc., contained in Mormon books, were after-thoughts, *revised to order.*[19]

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15. Affidavit of Willard Chase in ibid., 243.

16. Historian D. Michael Quinn says on one occasion that Joseph Knight's history was "the only Mormon source for details of the angel Moroni's annual visits with Smith from 1823-1827" (*The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994], 20) while on another occasion, "Smith's earliest autobiography (1832) gave the angel's name as `Maroni'" (*Mormonism and the Magic World View* [rev. ed.; Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998],199). Knight's history, however, does not contain the name Moroni, and Smith's 1832 autobiography has "Maroni" as the spelling of the name of the *Book of Mormon* author, not the angel.

17. "Golden Bible, No. 5" *The Reflector* 2, no. 1 (February 28, 1831): 13, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:246.

18. Affidavit of Joseph Capron in Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 260.

19. "Mormon History. A New Chapter, About to Be Published," *Amboy Journal* 24 (April 30, 1879): 1, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:303, 305.

The significance of the phrase "that bleeding ghost" will be discussed later. Earlier we said that, apart from differences in details, there were only two basic versions of the story of the finding of the plates. It is by observing the changes in the details—one added here, another dropped there—that one is able to trace the story's development from its earlier to its later version. This process is essential because, while the date usually given for the initial encounter with the plates is September 22,1823, the earliest account—that is to say, the one preserving the earliest version of the story—is found ten years later in the December 11, 1833 affidavit of Willard Chase, who relates the story as told to him by Joseph Smith, Sr., in June 1827. As we will see, a number of evidential indicators within this affidavit suggest that this account is indeed the earliest. The elder Smith tells Chase that his son Joseph, Jr., had been told in a vision of the existence of "a record on plates of gold"[20] and that "he must repair to the place where was deposited this manuscript, dressed in black clothes, and riding a black horse with a switch tail, and demand the book in a certain name, and after obtaining it, he must go directly away, and neither lay it down nor look behind him." Joseph then goes forth, dressed and mounted in the prescribed fashion, arrives at the spot, recovers the book of plates, but then "fearing some one might discover where he got it, he laid it down to place back the top stone." The lid in place, Joseph turns again to pick up the book, only to discover it has disappeared. Then,

> He again opened the box, and in it saw the book, and attempted to take it out, but was hindered. He saw in the box something like a toad, which soon assumed the appearance of a man, and struck him on the side of his head. . .he again stooped down and strove to take the book, when the spirit struck him again, and knocked him three or four rods, and hurt him prodigiously. After recovering from his fright, he enquired why he could not obtain the plates; to which the spirit made reply, because you have not obeyed your orders. He then enquired when he could have them, and was answered thus: come one year from this day, and bring with you your oldest brother, and you shall have them.[21]

Joseph Sr. then identifies the personage his son encountered as "the spirit of the prophet who wrote this book, and who was sent to Joseph Smith, to make known these things to him."[22]

However, Joseph Sr. tells Chase that the final instruction could not be carried out because his oldest son Alvin Smith had, by "*an accidental providence*," died before the year was out. The reference to the death of Alvin is significant. It suggests there may have been at least some talk of the plates prior to November 19, 1823, the date of Alvin's death. Peter Ingersoll, in his affidavit in Howe,

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20. Affidavit of Willard Chase in Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 242.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 243.

traces the origin of the plates story to soon after August 1827 when Joseph Jr. promised his father-in-law Isaac Hale that he would give up money-digging. According to Ingersoll, Joseph had been out walking after a rain when he happened across some "beautiful white sand," several quarts of which he tied up in his frock and carried home. When questioned by his family about the contents of his frock, Joseph reported. "At that moment I happened to think of what I had heard about a history found in Canada, called the golden Bible; so I very gravely told them that it was the golden Bible. To my surprise, they were credulous enough to believe what I said."[23] The impression given by Ingersoll's account is that the golden bible story was hatched on the spur of the moment in the fall of 1827.

At the very least, there was more to this story than might appear. As we have seen, Joseph Sr. first spoke to Willard Chase about the plates at least three months earlier, in June 1827, but the part played by Alvin in the elder Smith's telling of the story in Chase's account, pushes the origin of the story back several years. Why otherwise would the spirit's request for the presence of Alvin be mentioned at all? None of the early accounts of the second vision are dated anywhere near 1823, the year the event is said to have occurred. Most date from the time after the plates were already said to be in Smith's hands, September 1827. Except for the role that was supposed to have been played by Alvin on September 22, 1824, we might have suspected that no plate story existed prior to c. 1827. Alvin's role in the story also may explain why Joseph Sr. felt compelled to dig up Alvin in the presence of some neighbors and then place an advertisement in the *Wayne Sentinal* to quell rumors that his son had been "removed from the place of his interment and dissected."[24] Brodie remarked, "It is difficult to explain this cruel practical joke as other than someone's attempt to ridicule the digging activities of the Smith family."[25] A better explanation is found when one considers that the date of both the public exhumation of Alvin's body and the placement of the advertisement was September 25, 1824, just three days after Alvin was supposed to have made an appearance with Joseph Jr. in the presence of the spirit at the location where the plates were hidden. If it was known that Joseph Jr. would only be able to obtain the plates with his brother, Alvin, someone might easily have jumped to the conclusion that this had been accomplished in the only way possible: by digging Alvin up and taking his body (or part of his body, perhaps a finger or something) to the spirit.

Chase says that when Joseph Jr. appeared before the spirit without Alvin, he was instructed to return again after another year and to "bring a man with him. When Joseph asked who the man might be, he was told that *he would know him when he saw him.* Joseph believed that one Samuel T. Lawrence was the man alluded to by the spirit, and went with him to a singular looking hill, in Manches-

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23. Affidavit of Peter Ingersoll in ibid., 235-36.

24. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:218.

25. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith*, 2d ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 28. See also Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:18.

ter, and shewed him where the treasure was" (italics added).[26] Lawrence later disappears from the story, and Emma Hale replaces him as the one Joseph would recognize "when he saw him." For example, in the story told Henry Harris by Joseph Smith, Jr., sometime between Martin Harris's February 1828 trip to New York to consult Professors Mitchell and Anthon, and the publication of the *Book of Mormon* in March 1830, Joseph reported having

> had a revelation from God that told him they [the golden plates] were hid in a certain hill and he looked in his stone and saw them in the place of deposit; that an angel appeared and told him he could not get the plates until he was married, *and that when he saw the woman that was to be his wife, he should know her, and she would know him.* He then went to Pennsylvania, got his wife, and they both went together and got the gold plates. (Italics added)[27]

Joseph Knight's account appears to reflect a stage soon after Emma replaced Lawrence as the person Joseph would know:

> But when the 22nt Day of September [1824] Came he went to the place and the personage appeared and told him he Could not have it now But the 22nt Day of September nex[t] he mite have the Book if he Brot with him the right person[.] *Joseph Says, who is the right Person[?] The answer was you will know[.]* Then he looked in his glass and found it was Emma Hale. (Italics added; Vogel's bracketed improvements)[28]

Knight further reports that Lawrence "had Bin to the hill and knew about the things in the hill and he was trying to obtain them" and that Joseph "was some afraid of him that he mite be a trouble to him."[29]

Emma's significance in the story was tied to the claim made by Joseph Jr. that the plates would be translated by his and Emma's firstborn son when the child was two years old.[30] The death of the child at birth on June 15, 1828 undermined this claim, and the special significance of Emma disappears from later accounts of the story of the plates.[31]

In the affidavit of Henry Harris quoted above, the transformation to the later, Christianized version of the second vision is almost complete; Joseph learned of the plates via a "revelation from God," and he received his instruc-

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26. Affidavit of Willard Chase in Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 243.

27. Affidavit of Henry Harris in ibid., 252.

28. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:13.

29. Ibid., 4:14-15.

30. See the affidavits of Willard Chase, Isaac Hale, and Sophia Lewis in Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 246-47, 264, 269, respectively.

31. Sophia Lewis reportedly said that "she heard Smith say, 'the Book of Plates could not be opened under penalty of death by any other person but his (Smith's) first-born, which was to be a male.' She says she 'was present at the birth of this child, and that it was still-born and very much deformed'" (Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 269).

tions about getting them from "an angel."[32] These two items are consistent with the final form as it appears in the official version published in church literature today. However, the mention of Joseph's use of his seer-stone and of Emma's role are remainders of the earlier version. The account given by Emma Smith's cousins Joseph and Heil Lewis appears just on the earlier side of the dividing line between the two versions:

> He said that by a dream he was informed that at such a place in a certain hill, in an iron box, were some gold plates with curious engravings, which he must get and translate, and write a book; that the plates were to be kept concealed from every human being for a certain time, some two or three years; that he went to the place and dug till he came to the stone that covered the box, when he was knocked down; that he again attempted to remove the stone, and was again knocked down; this attempt was made the third time, and the third time he was knocked down. Then he exclaimed, "Why can't I get it?" or words to that effect; and then he saw a man standing over the spot, which to him appeared like a Spaniard, having a long beard coming down over his breast to about here, [Smith putting his hand to the pit of his stomach] with his [the ghost's] throat cut from ear to ear, and the blood streaming down, who told him that he could not get it alone; that another person whom he, Smith, would know at first sight, must come with him, and then he could get it. *And when Smith saw Miss Emma Hale, he knew that she was the person*, and that after they were married, she went with him to near the place, and stood with her back toward him, while he dug up the box, which he rolled up in his frock, and she helped carry it home. That in the same box with the plates were spectacles; the bows were of gold, and the eyes were stone, and by looking through these sbectacles [spectacles] all the characters on the plates were translated into English. (Italics added, Vogel's bracketed improvements)[33]

This account is still clearly related to Joseph Smith's earlier money-digging yarn, and the links between this version and that related by Willard Chase are numerous and obvious. As would be expected, there is no longer any mention of Samuel T. Lawrence. Instead the spirit's directions lead Smith directly to Emma. Also, the seer stone used before to find the plates has been replaced with "sbectacles" in the box with the plates. But what will be especially important here are the additional details describing the spirit. He is referred to both as a ghost and as a man. He has a long beard down to the "pit of his stomach" and looks "like a Spaniard." The most significant detail is the statement that "his (the ghost's) throat [was] cut from ear to ear, and the blood streaming down." Why was the ghost's throat cut? Joseph and Heil Lewis do not offer any suggestion as to the meaning of this detail, which lends a certain credibility to their recollection of it as part of the account. People conversant in treasure-digging lore would have

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32. Affidavit of Henry Harris in ibid., 252.

33. "Mormon History: A New Chapter," in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:303-305.

recognized that the cut throat pointed to the ghost having been murdered and buried along with the treasure to serve as treasure guardian. Folklorist Ernest W. Baughman summarizes this motif as: "Person burying treasure kills person to supply treasure guardian."[34] Had Emma's cousins been familiar with the motif, we would have expected them to mention it since they would surely have regarded such a detail as discrediting Smith, which they seemed eager to do.

The significance of the cut throat is made explicit in Fayette Lapham's account. Lapham visited Joseph Smith, Sr., in 1829 or 1830 and reported the following:

> [Joseph Jr.] then told his father [Joseph Sr.], that, in his dream, a very large and tall man appeared to him, dressed in an ancient suit of clothes, and the clothes were bloody. And the man said to him that there was a valuable treasure, buried many years since, and not far from that place; and that he had now arrived for it to be brought to light, for the benefit of the world at large; and, if he would strictly follow his directions, he would direct him to where it was deposited.[35]

Joseph Jr. fails in his initial attempt to obtain the plates, and this is when we learn why the spirit's clothes were bloody:

> [H]e looked up and saw the same large man that had appeared in his dream, dressed in the same clothes. He said to him that, when the treasure was deposited there, he was sworn to take charge of and protect that property, until the time should arrive for it to be exhibited to the world of mankind; and in order to prevent his making an improper disclosure, *he was murdered or slain on the spot*, and the treasure had been under his charge ever since. (Italics added.)[36]

Treasure-Guardian Spirits

A stock character in the theater and lore of money-digging is the treasure guardian spirit. The spirit might be a demon, an animal familiar spirit, a ghost, or even Old Scratch (the Devil) himself. The business of treasure-guardian spirits was to befuddle and thwart people trying to recover buried treasure. Sometimes they did this by scaring off the money-diggers, other times by making the treasure sink away out of their reach, usually in response to some bungle in cer-

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34. Earnest W. Baughman, *Type and Motif Index of the Folktales of England and North America*, Indiana University Folklore Series 20 (The Hague, The Netherlands: Mouton, 1966), E291:1. Baughman says that "this motif is implicit in most of the E291 references." See also Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, rev. and enlarged ed., 6 vols. (Bloomington and London: Indiana University, 1966), E291.

35. Fayette Lapham, "Interview with the Father of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, Forty Years Ago. His Account of the Finding of the Sacred Plates," *Historical Magazine*, 2nd Ser. 7, May 1870, 305, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:458-59.

36. Ibid., 1:459-60.

emonial procedure on the part of the money-diggers. That the Smiths as money-diggers would have been conversant in the lore of treasure guardians is well known and regularly discussed.[37]

The salamander in Mark Hofmann's "Salamander Letter" was a treasure guardian. In his forged 1828 letter from Joseph Smith, Jr., to Josiah Stowell, Hoffman had the prophet speak of treasure being "guarded by some clever spirit."[38] Winchell, the Vermont money-digger who stayed for a time in the home of Oliver Cowdery's father, also included a treasure-guardian spirit as part of his routine, impressing on the participants that "there was a `divinity' guarding the treasure, and that if there was any lack of faith in any one of the party, or any should utter a word while removing the stone and taking out the chest, that this divinity would put the money forever beyond their reach. . . ."[39] Barnes Frisbie, who tells the story of Winchell in his 1867 *History of Middletown, Vermont*, also suggests a possible connection between Winchell and Joseph Smith, Sr.[40]

One of the most common types of treasure guardians was not the devil, nor a demon or animal familiar, but the ghost of a person who had been murdered and buried with the treasure. The treasure ghost, in contrast to other types of treasure guardians, was not necessarily evil. Usually he was an unfortunate victim. What has not been adequately appreciated is the link between Moroni and this particular type of treasure guardian. It is this connection, upon which I will ultimately focus, but there is one detail in the account of Willard Chase which needs to be discussed first, namely, the toad-like creature Joseph saw in the box with the plates.

According to Chase, Joseph Smith, Sr., told him that when Joseph Jr. had first unearthed the plates, he had seen "in the [stone] box something like a toad, which soon assumed the appearance of a man, and struck him on the side of his head."[41] A second account including this detail comes from Chase's brother-in-law, Benjamin Saunders, who recalled: "I heard Joe tell my Mother and Sister how he procured the plates. . . .When he took the plates there was something down near the box that looked some like a toad that rose up into a man which forbid him to take the plates."[42] D. Michael Quinn expresses concern over the presence of the toad in the story:

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37. See, e.g., Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois, 1984), 71; Ronald W. Walker, "The Persisting Idea of American Treasure Hunting," *BYU Studies* 24 (1984): esp. 430-33, 442-45; D. Michael Quinn, *Magic World View* (see Quinn's index under "Treasure-quest. . .'treasure guardian,'" 638). See also the testimonies of William Stafford and Joshua Stafford in Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 238-39, 259.

38. Quoted in Marvin S. Hill, "Money-Digging Folklore and the Beginnings of Mormonism: An Interpretive Suggestion," *BYU Studies* 24 (1984), 473.

39. Barnes Frisbie, *The History of Middletown, Vermont* (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle, 1867), 47, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:605.

40. Ibid., 61, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:618-19.

41. Affidavit of Willard Chase in Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 242.

42. Benjamin Saunders Interview, 1884, quoted in Quinn, *Magic World View*, 49.

> In the Anglo-American occult tradition, the toad has always been associated with Satanism, black magic, sorcery, and witchcraft. The toad has only an evil meaning in the magic world view, a perception to which Joseph Smith and his family were demonstrably attuned. . . .To such people, it would be an evil "omen" to confront an ordinary toad just before the appearance of an other-worldly visitor.[43]

Quinn is correct in asserting the satanic associations of the toad. Animal familiars (familiar spirits) often adopted the form of toads.[44] It is not unheard of for the toad to be associated with treasure. For example, a thirteenth-century Kentish divine "told of a miserly peasant who was horrified to see a devil, in the shape of a gigantic toad, squatting upon the hoard that he had so painfully accumulated."[45] In some cases, the toad represents the prince of darkness himself. In Joost van den Vondel's play *Adam in Exile* (1664), Lucifer, cast out of heaven, is transformed into a toad. Satan is described as "Squat like a Toad" as he crouches whispering temptations into the ear of Eve in the fourth book of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (lines 801-802).[46]

Quinn says that Chase and Saunders actually had in mind not a toad but a salamander. Chase did not say Joseph "saw a toad," but that he saw "*something like* a toad,"[47] and Saunders also spoke only of "something. . .that looked *some like a toad*" (italics added).[48] Quinn argues further that Howe, who published Chase's affidavit, illegitimately gave additional specificity to it when he said that "Jo. . .looked in the hole, where he saw a toad."[49] Quinn writes, "Joseph Sr. and Joseph Jr. undoubtedly used the word 'salamander' or one of its equivalent descriptions."[50] Key to Quinn's case is an account of Benjamin's story, related by his nephew Orson Saunders in the June 25,1893 edition of the *New York Herald*. In Quinn's words: "Smith allegedly said that 'the place seemed on fire' just before he saw the 'enormous toad' which became a 'flaming monster with glittering eyes.'"[51] Quinn argues the reference to fire in this passage indicates that Smith had originally been thinking of a salamander, a creature traditionally thought to live and thrive in fire. Despite the fact that, as Quinn admits, the newspaper account is "a hostile third-hand version of Benjamin's friendly account," he still wants to see in it a bridge between Joseph's early account of the

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43. Quinn, *Magic World View*, 152.

44. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Scribner's, 1971), 445-46.

45. George Lyman Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1929), 204.

46. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World* (Ithica and London: Cornell University, 1986), 95 (for *Adam in Exile*), 118 (for *Paradise Lost*).

47. Affidavit of Willard Chase in Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 242.

48. Benjamin Saunders Interview, 1884, quoted in Quinn, *Magic World View*, 151.

49. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 276.

50. Quinn, *Magic World View*, 152-53. Quinn is aware, of course, that the so-called "Salamander Letter" made public in 1985 is a recent forgery.

51. Quinn, *Magic World View*, 153.

discovery of the plates and his later official account, in which "Smith still used such words as 'fire,' 'flame' 'brightness of the sun,' 'brilliant,' and 'lightning' for the eyes, face, and general appearance of Moroni and other heavenly visitors."[52]

But there are compelling reasons to reject Quinn's proposal. First, the 1893 *New York Herald* article strays too far from the other account of Benjamin Saunders to be trusted for its additional details. Second, this late account says the creature *was* a toad, rather than it was *like* a toad; in other words, it made the same mistake Quinn had already faulted Howe for making. Also, in the same connection, there is ambiguity regarding how the use of the word *like* in the accounts of Chase and Saunders should be understood. Was the creature *like* a toad but really a salamander, or was it *like* a toad but really a spirit being? Third, flames were simply not a feature in either the earlier or later versions of the plates story. We find no reference to flames or fire in the accounts of E. D. Howe, Willard Chase, Joseph Smith, Jr. (1832, 1836, and 1939),[53] Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph and Heil Lewis, Joseph Knight, Fayette Lapham, Henry Harris, Abigail Harris, nor even in the earlier account of Benjamin Saunders. In view of this third objection especially, the reference to the fire and a "flaming monster" in the 1893 *New York Herald* article should almost certainly be regarded as inauthentic. Since Quinn's suggestion that the toad-like creature was a salamander depends heavily upon this reference, it too ought to be rejected.

In a sense, Quinn's objection to Smith's use of toad imagery on the grounds that "[t]he toad has only an evil meaning in the magic world view" is beside the point, because treasure guardians were almost always regarded as evil in the magic worldview, no matter what form they took. Obediah Dogberry (Abner Cole) accurately summarized popular belief when he said that "treasures were held in charge of some *evil spirit*, which was supposed to be either the *Devil* himself, or some one of his most trusty favorites."[54] The one exception, and that by no means always, is the murdered treasure-guardian ghost.[55]

In any case, when we come to the stage in the developing story reflected in the testimony of Willard Chase, the toad is not the devil, nor even a demon or familiar spirit, but rather, "the spirit of the prophet who wrote this book."[56] There are thus at least two ways to account for the toad in the story. The first is to regard it as a leftover from an earlier version of the story in which the devil or an

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52. Ibid., 152-53.

53. See the histories of 1832 (Scott H. Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith*, 2d. ed. [Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1989], 6-7) and 1839 (Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:66-67) and Joseph Jr.'s 1836 conversation with Robert Matthews (Faulring, *American Prophet's Record*, 51-52).

54. "Golden Bible, No. 3," *The Reflector* 2, no. 1 (February 1, 1831): 12, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:242.

55. For example, an 1857 reference says that treasure guardian ghosts were "set as a watch, in league with the evil spirit" (William Hallam Bonner, *Pirate Laureate: The Life & Legend of Captain Kidd* [New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University, 1947], 115).

56. Affidavit of Willard Chase in Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 243.

animal familiar served as treasure guardian. This explanation fits well with the diabolistic tradition already discussed. From that point of view, it would be perfectly natural to find the toad serving as guardian. Howe's written and graphic account of the fleeing Smith being kicked three or four feet off the ground by the devil,[57] might also point to the existence of such an earlier version. In any case, that is not what the toad reflects as it stands in Chase's account, since it transforms itself not into a demon or devil but into an ancient prophetic author. If we want to suggest that the toad is a leftover from an earlier account, we would have to explain why Joseph would have consciously retained a reference to a creature so clearly associated with evil, then have it transform itself into spirit of a prophet. Would that not imply that toad, prophet, and book were alike evil?[58]

A second solution is suggested by another nineteenth-century treasure yarn. In "A Summer Trip to Newfoundland," S. G. W. Benjamin relates a tale told by a certain Johnnie Feene about a friend who,

> four years previously, had left his family starving at Bay of Bulls village and gone to St. John in search of employment. Failing of this, he started for home, and was met after nightfall by a black dog, who addressed him, and then assuming human shape, informed him that he was an enchanted person fixed by a spell in a subterranean cavern near the Bay of Bulls, and that his enchantment could only be abated by the entrance of some one sufficiently bold to brave the guardians of the cave and carry hence the riches it contained. Overjoyed at the suggestion, the fisherman gladly volunteered to accompany the enchanted stranger, who accordingly introduced him to a subterranean hall, vast and gorgeous with oriental magnificence, where the wealth of the Indies lay apparently at his disposal, and he had it in his power not only to relieve the poverty of his condition, but also to become the most opulent of Queen Victoria's subjects. But suddenly he was assailed by a troop of unwholesome ghouls, who so disturbed his resolution that he fled to the upper air, renouncing possession of the riches in his grasp, and leaving the enchanted man enchanted there forever.[59]

In Smith's story, a toad-like creature transformed itself into a man. Here it is a black dog. But dogs, especially black dogs, had little better reputations in terms

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57. See the illustration opposite the title page of Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed.*

58. There is a suggestive detail in the account Joseph Smith, Jr., told Robert Matthews in 1836: "I went and found the place where the plates were according to the direction of the Angel. Also saw them and the angel as before. The powers of darkness strove hard against me" (Faulring, *American Prophet's Record,* 52). In this passage it is not the angel who keeps Joseph from obtaining the plates. The angel is present, but it is the "power of darkness" that actually foils him. Admittedly the detail is likely of little value in interpreting the earlier account since it probably arose as a way of avoiding having the Angel Moroni knocking Smith on the head, a type of behavior not perhaps becoming to angels (but see Gen. 32:24-32).

59. S. G. W. Benjamin, "A Summer Trip to Newfoundland," *Scribner's Monthly* 2, no. 6 (October 1871): 619.

of their occultic associations than did toads. "The demonism of the dog," wrote Moncure D. Conway in 1872, "has been more universal than that of any other animal not fabulous. . . .[I]n the witch-times there perished many a poor creature the only evidence of whose sorcery was fondness for a black dog."[60] Nevertheless, in this story of Johnnie Feene's, the black dog which assumes the form of a man does not represent an evil being, but rather a hapless victim of enchantment. Perhaps then we should similarly consider the toad-like creature in Smith's story equally benign, despite the more generally malignant reputation of toads.

MURDERED TREASURE-GUARDIAN GHOSTS

The conventional wisdom on ghosts is and has for a long time been that they became what they are by coming to a bad end, by being murdered, or by suffering some other sudden traumatic death. This very kind of story played into the founding of Spiritualism, a movement which, like Mormonism, came to birth in the "burned-over district" of western New York during the first half of the nineteenth century. On the evening of March 31, 1848, a spirit nicknamed "Mr. Splitfoot" began rapping out answers to questions on the farm of John and Margaret Fox in the little village of Hydesville, New York. Mr. Splitfoot revealed that he was the spirit of a man who had been murdered and buried in the Fox's cellar before they had moved in. Mr. Splitfoot and other spirits like him would only rap, however, when two of the Fox's daughters, Katie and Margaretta, were present. In 1888 the sisters admitted they had made the rappings themselves by cracking their toes.[61] Nevertheless, the story of Mr. Splitfoot's untimely end, born in Mrs. Fox's imagination and confirmed by her children's cracking toe joints, reflected perfectly conventional ideas about the origin of ghosts. We are all too familiar with this explanation of ghosthood even today.

But there was once another common reason people became ghosts. The ghost "walks," writes K. M. Briggs in her study of Elizabethan era beliefs, "be-

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60. Moncure D. Conway, "The Demons of the Shadow," *Scribner's Monthly* 5, no. 1 (November 1872): 75. In the section on divination in the Jesuit Martín Del Rio's *Disquisitiones Magicae* (Investigations into Magic), we read of a sixteenth-century treasure dig:

> They say that in 1530, someone from Nuremberg saw treasure in a crystal, shown to him by an evil spirit. Later he, with one of his close friends acting as a witness, looked for the treasure which was buried in a certain spot in front of the city, and both of them saw a box in the hole they had dug. Lying next to it was a black dog. The magician (*magus*) approached the hole to open the box and drive off the dog, but he had not brought with him the bone of Cerberus. So he rummaged round the top of the hollow. But the structure collapsed on top of the wretched man and the hole filled up with earth. (Martín Del Rio, *Investigations into Magic*, trans. and ed. by P. G. Maxwell-Stuart [Manchester and New York: Manchester University, 2000], 158)

61. Gilbert Seldes, T*he Stammering Century: Minor Movements, Cults, Manias, Fads, Sects and Religious Excitements in 19th Century America* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, [1928] 1965), 332.

cause of wrong done to it, *or* buried treasure" (italics added).[62] Both these reasons are alluded to in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The real reason the ghost of Hamlet's father appears in the opening scene is that he had been murdered by his evil and designing brother Claudius, but when he is seen by Hamlet's friend Horatio, the young man suspects he became a ghost for the other reason: "[I]f thou hast uphoarded in thy life // Extorted treasure in the womb of the earth // For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death, Speak of it: stay and speak!"[63] Philip Massinger (d. 1640) in his play, The Old Law, has a vindictive wife threaten to bury treasure so as to be able to continue to plague her husband after death: "I'll plague thee as long as I live with thee; and I'll bury some money before I die, that my ghost may haunt thee afterward."[64]

The link between ghost and treasure was also a common one in early America. In Washington Irving's story *Wolfert Webber*, we encounter a ghost story similar to those we have been describing. A character argues that a recently discovered pot of money must have belonged to the long-dead Peter Stuyvesant because the Dutch governor's ghost had been seen one midnight, "stalking about in the meadow with his wooden leg, and a drawn sword in his hand, that flashed like fire? And what can he be walking for, but because people have been troubling the place where he buried his money in old times?"[65]

In chapter 33 of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), Tom, Huck, and friends go to the place where the recently deceased Injun Joe had buried his treasure under a cross. As they arrive, the troubling possibility of Joe's ghost lurking around the spot starts to worry Huck:

> "Tom, less git out of here!"
>
> "What! and leave the treasure?"
>
> "Yes—leave it. Injun Joe's ghost is round about there, certain."
>
> "No it ain't, Huck, no it ain't. It would ha'nt the place where he died—away out at the mouth of the cave—five mile from here."
>
> "No, Tom, it wouldn't. It would hang round the money. I know the ways of ghosts, and so do you."[66]

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62. K. M. Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck: An Examination of Fairy Beliefs among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and Successors* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959), 144.

63. *Hamlet*, 1.1.36-39.

64. *The Old Law*, act 4, scene 1, in *The Plays of Philip Massinger* (London: for Henry Washbourne, 1845), 515. Another English dramatist, James Shirley (d. 1666), again connected "walking" with buried treasure in a play called *The Wedding*: Call this a church-yard, and imagine me / Some wakeful apparition 'mong the graves, / *That, for some treasure buried in my life*, / Walk up and down thus. [italics original] (quoted in Plays of Philip Massinger, 515).

65. Washington Irving, *Works of Irving* (New York: Putnam, 1860-1863), 7:420-21.

66 Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Hartford, Chicago, and Cincinnati: The American Publishing Company, 1876), 259.

When one speaks of buried treasure, the class of historical figure who comes most readily to mind is the villainous raider of the high seas, the pirate. As already noted, the most vigorously sought pirate's treasure ever was that of Captain Kidd. Willard Hallam Bonner says that "*any* mention of buried treasure in the New World almost inevitably gravitates to Kidd" (italics original).[67] "Kidd's wealth," wrote Samuel Adams Drake in a book published in 1875, "must have been beyond computation. There is scarcely a headland or an island from Montauk to grand Meman which according to local tradition does not contain some portion of his spoil."[68] Alexander Winston provides an overview of the breathtaking extent, both temporally and geographically, of the quest for Kidd's treasure as well as its regular occult features:

> So many midnight diggers pitted a New York farm in 1762 that the owner begged them to dig by day—and fill in the holes. A housewife's "mesmeric revelation" in 1846, placing the sunken *Quedah* on the Hudson bottom, jewels heaped in her "like ducks' eggs in a pond," started a gold rush up the river. The more occult have searched with Bible and key, sieve and shears, hazel wand, incantations, while business corporations, lacking the psychic gift, resorted to dredges and dynamite. By one means or another, they have scoured the Atlantic coast from Nova Scotia to Key West, and the treasure was usually called Kidd's.[69]

Particularly in connection with Kidd's treasure, stories of murdered guardian ghosts—the very kind Moroni started out as—were especially prevalent. Ronald W. Walker, for example, notes that "a murdered pirate (often a black man because they were believed to be `the more honest') protected Captain Kidd's many treasure troves."[70] Appledore Island long boasted the presence of a ghost sometimes identified as one of Kidd's men. Nathaniel Hawthorne, for example, once visited the island and reports: "The island is said to be haunted by a spectre called `old Bob.' He was one of Captain Kidd's men, and was slain for the protection of his treasure."[71]

67. Bonner, *Pirate Laureate*, 115.

68. Samuel Adams Drake, *Nooks and Corners of the New England Coast* (New York: Harper, 1875), 36.

69. Alexander Winston, *No Man Knows My Grave: Sir Henry Morgan, Captain William Kidd, Captain Woodes Rodgers in the Great Age of Privateers and Pirates 1665-1715* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 161.

70. Walker, "Persisting Idea," 443. I have not found that murdered treasure ghosts are predominantly black. Walker appears here to be paraphrasing a comment in Thomas Hazard's *The Johnny-Cake Letters* (1882): "Captain Kidd. . .always buried one of his men (generally a nigger, because they are the most honest,) to keep guard over it." Hazard's remark is quoted in Richard M. Dorson, *Jonathan Draws the Long Bow* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1946), 174, which Walker cites as one of the sources for the paragraph containing his own very similar comment.

71. Nathaniel Hawthorn, *The American Notebooks*, Centenary Edition of the *Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne VIII*, ed. Claude M. Simpson (n.p.: Ohio University, 1972), 518. See further on the old Bob legend the editors note, ibid., 668 and Abbie Murphy, "New England's Ghostly Pirates," *The Lookout* 58 (October 1967): 4.

Robert Kidd (1849) tells of a black man named James Marks of West Warren, Massachussetts, who was said to have been with Captain Kidd when young and who died at the age of 115 in 1802. As a boy of twelve, Marks and a white boy were said to have helped Kidd bury a chest of treasure on Long Island:

> After the hole was dug and the chest lowered to the bottom, Kidd said to the boys "which one of you will take care of this money when I am dead and gone?" The white boy instantly answered, "I." At the same moment Kidd severed his head from his body and tumbled him into the hole with the chest.[72]

Since Shaw's biography was partly fictionalized, we cannot vouch for the authenticity of James Marks's story,[73] but it reflects the common theme.[74]

In her 1870 story, "Captain Kidd's Money," Harriet Beecher Stowe makes reference to murdered spirit-guardian ghosts. Her character Sam Lawson relates how Kidd, when burying his treasure, "allers used to kill one or two men or women or children of his prisoners and bury [them] with it, so that their sperits might keep watch on it ef anybody was to dig arter it."[75] This story is one of Stowe's *Old Fireside Stories*, meant to reflect life as the author remembered it as a child. Bonner maintains that the tales of Sam Lawson in these stories are "in all probability the true small talk and old wive's [sic] gossip of the 1820's."[76]

One hundred fifty miles upriver from the mouth of the Connecticut River, there is an island nicknamed "Kidd's Island" because of a local tradition that Captain Kidd and Miles Braddish had buried treasure there along with the body of a beautiful Creole girl they had kidnapped in the West Indies, "covering in one grave their gold and their victim; setting as a watch over their pirate treasure, the spirit of her who was once a guileless maiden on the earth." The 1857 *Chicago Magazine* notes that on this island "the credulous a generation or two ago, dug up the earth to find the pirates' hoarded gold and silver." But they did not find it, nor apparently was any of Kidd's other treasure found, despite the fact that "traditionary legends of Kidd's buried treasure" are "[i]nnumerable." And why not? Because of Kidd's close alliance with the devil, and because

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72. Quoted in Bonner, *Pirate Laureate*, 146.

73. Shaw's biography of Kidd was part of a hoax perpetrated along with his brother Samuel, who had forged a letter purportedly written by Kidd in 1701 then "discovered" by the boys in a bottle in a cave near Palmer, Massachussetts. Bonner calls the biography "well garnished with error, local legend, and three spurious documents" (ibid., 145).

74. Charles M. Skinner in an account of similar incidents in the Long Island area, reports that "certain tough old bay men swore. . .they had seen. . .five men go ashore from a queer, black vessel, and bury a chest, only four of the men returning. Some seekers for this chest were alarmed by a skeleton, holding a dagger like a blue flame, that circle about them, nearer and nearer, till they dropped their spades and Bible and ran away." Charles M. Skinner, *American Myths & Legends* (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott, 1903), 2:289.7

75.Harriet Beecher Stowe, "Captain Kidd's Money," *Atlantic Monthly* (November 1870): 523.

76. Bonner, *Pirate Laureate*, 179.

"[t]here was always buried with them, as tradition saith, the body of some murdered victim, who was set as a watch, in league with the evil spirit, to protect them from the grasp of any one who might discover and attempt to seize them."[77]

Examples of stories about Kidd's treasure-guardian ghosts abound. Another, recounted in the 1835 *New-England Magazine*, tells how Kidd's murdered mistress and baby guard a treasure trove on the southern shore of Nassau Island.[78] Still another article, published in the same magazine in the same year, reports of Blacks on Long-Island: "[F]ully do they believe that, all along the shore, lie buried the inexhaustible treasures of Captain Kidd, each deposit guarded, by the ghost of a murdered man. . . ."[79]

The motif of the murdered treasure ghost was also sometimes employed in texts not directly related to the Kidd legend. In "A Summer Trip to Newfoundland"—an article we have already encountered—S. G. W. Benjamin recounts a story in which a man had assisted in drawing "an irron chist of threasure" to the water's edge, when the ghost of a man, who was killed and buried with it to keep watch over it, suddenly appeared and spirited it away, "nevermore to be seen by mortal eye."[80] The Vermont writer Daniel Pierce Thompson's 1835 novel, *May Martin, or the Money Diggers*, tells of treasure diggers who are guided by a charlatan named Gow.[81] Gow uses a divining rod but also a seer stone, which he identifies as the "same thin, yellow, speckled kind of stone I used when I said to discovered the pot of money on Cape Cod that they supposed Kidd buried there." Gow uses the stone "with his face protruded into his hat, which he held in his lap, seemingly gazing at something at the bottom."[82] He claims to have obtained his information on the treasure from the last surviving member of the band of three who had buried it. He also says that when the treasure was buried,

77. "Kidd's Island: A Story of the Dorrillite Imposture," *Chicago Magazine: The West as it Is* (Chicago: J. Gager and Co. for Chicago Mechanics' Institute, 1857), 430.

78. "An Extract from the Ms. of 'Edmund Allerton,'" *New-England Magazine* 9, no. 11 (November 1835): 328-29.

79. "A Modern Pilgrimage," *New England Magazine* 9, no. 7 (July 1835): 37-8. This article refers to an 1827 journey.

80. Benjamin, "Summer Trip," 619.

81. Daniel Pierce Thompson wrote to his cousin on June 17, 1835, explaining that "the story is founded on facts. A band of money diggers made quite a [noise] in one of our back towns about 10 years ago" (H. Michael Marquardt Papers, Accession 900, Box 155, Folder 14 [Manuscripts Division, University of Utah Marriott Library, Salt Lake City, Utah], 3).

82. Judge [Daniel Pierce] Thompson, *May Martin; or, The Money Diggers* (The Romancist and Novelist's Library; London: J. Clement, 1841 [orig. ed. 1835]), 11, 20-22. The pages are quoted here from photocopies in H. Michael Marquardt Papers, Accession 900, Box 155, Folder 14 (Manuscripts Division, University of Utah Marriott Library, Salt Lake City, Utah).

a man was murdered and buried on the spot to serve as spirit guardian.[83] In the novel, Gow is in actuality an associate of the notorious Stephen Burroughs in Southern Canada whose band of counterfeiters preyed on the gullibility of rural bumpkins across the line in Vermont and other adjoining states. Captain Kidd's chronicler William Hallam Bonner summarizes the rest of the story:

> [Gow] leads a group of simple Vermonters to the mountain treasure spot where, when they have uncovered the first dollar, they are to pay him a hundred dollars each. They strike a planted chest—and hear ghostly groans from the thicket. They finger the planted counterfeit dollars—and an accomplice properly rigged up with phosphorus and a mask runs screeching among them like some human hound of the Baskersvilles, with fiery eyes, flaming mouth, and severed throat.[84]

Thompson's description of the terrifying figure indicates that one of its "skeleton arms" was "pointing to his bloody throat, which seemed to be cut from ear to ear."[85] Here, of course, we have a severed throat just like the early Moroni figure in the account of Joseph and Heil Lewis.

The ghosts of murdered people serving as treasure guardians are still sometimes mentioned. Maurice Alley, in an interview that appeared in a 1964 book on American regional folklore, tells how his grandfather, Quafie Faulkingham, had trouble with enchanted lizards while digging on Mark Island: "That's Mark Island where they claim pirates has buried money there. There's two people died there, man and a woman. The pirates left them there to guard the money."[86]

Captain Kidd and the Young Joseph Smith

> *Captain Kyd was his delight, and his favorite amusement was to rig up like that piratical gentleman, and roar out sanguinary sea-songs at the top of his voice.*

Louisa May Alcott wrote the above words about the boy Emil in the second

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83. John E, Flitcroft, *The Novelist of Vermont: A Biographical and Critical Study of Daniel Pierce Thompson* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ., 1929), 84. For the relation of *May Martin* to the original local legend see pp. 82-85.

84. Bonner, *Pirate Laureate*, 177. Quinn sees a parallel to the "slippery" treasure of Helaman 13:35 and Mormon 1:18 in the *Book of Mormon* in the *May Martin* phrase, "prospects of another trial for the slippery treasure" (Quinn, *Magic World View*, 196).

85. Thompson, *May Martin*, 21.

86. Richard M. Dorson's interview with Maurice Alley in *Buying the Wind: Regional Folklore in the United States* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago, 1964), 62-63. Faulkingham claimed he had succeeded in carrying off the treasure, but only after he "rubbed the lizards and took the enchantment off" (63).

chapter of her 1871 novel, *Little Men*.[87] She might just as easily have written them about Joseph Smith, Jr. Stories about pirates and, especially, stories about Captain Kidd, played a particularly important role in the young Joseph's imagination. According to J. H. Kennedy, Joseph "made confession" that the autobiography of Captain Kidd "made a deep impression upon him."[88] Kennedy does not say in what context Smith made this "confession." Palmyra native Philetus B. Spear recalled in an 1873 interview that as a boy Joseph "had for a library a copy of the 'Arabian Nights,' stories of Captain Kidd, and a few novels."[89] Pomeroy Tucker also mentions Joseph's youthful fascination with Captain Kidd, Stephen Burroughs the counterfeiter, and others, noting that such stories "presented the highest charms for his expanding mental perceptions."[90] Ellen E. Dickinson similarly wrote:

> It is said that Joseph at an early age could read, but not write; and when quite young committed these lines to memory from the story of Captain Kidd, the notorious pirate, which seemed to give him great pleasure:
>
> "My name was Robert Kidd,
> As I sailed, as I sailed;
> And most wickedly I did
> As I sailed, as I sailed."[91]

The lines cited are from a popular song about Kidd. The tune was also given different words and made into a popular hymn, "How Precious is the Name," which was sung twice during the course of the assembly that gathered at Kirtland, Ohio, on 17 August 1835 to vote on the inclusion of the *Doctrine and Covenants* among the LDS church's scriptures.[92]

But Joseph's interest in stories about Captain Kidd did not end with boyhood. Both he and other members of his family were regularly engaged in the pursuit of Kidd's lost treasure. J. H. Kennedy informs us that even before the

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87. Multiple editions. See, e.g., Louisa May Alcott, *Little Men: Life at Plumfield with Jo's Boys* (Garden City, N.Y.: Nelson Doubleday, 1955), 28-29. Also, available at digital.library.upenn.edu/women/alcott/men/men.html.

88. J. H. Kennedy, *Early Days of Mormonism: Palmyra, Kirtland, and Nauvoo* (New York: Scribner's, 1888), 13.

89. Philetus B. Spear's recollections of c. 1873 are reported in the *Marion Enterprise* (Newark, N.Y.), September 28, 1923, 43:1, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:130.

90. Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism: Biography of its Founders and History of its Church* (New York: D. Appleton, 1867), 17, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:94.

91. Ellen E. Dickinson, *New Light on Mormonism* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1885), 28-29. Cf., Kennedy, Early Days, 13, and Ann Ruth Eaton *The Origin of Mormonism* (Woman's Executive Committee of Home Missions, 1881), in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:148-49.

92. *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, August 17, 1835, available on *New Mormon Studies CD-ROM* (Salt Lake City: Smith Research Associates, 1998). See also Fred C. Collier and William S. Harwell, eds., *Kirtland Council Minute Book* (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing, 1996), 126, 129.

Smiths settled in western New York, Joseph Smith, Sr., had been "at times engaged in hunting for Captain Kidd's buried treasure" in Vermont.[93] Kennedy's statement is corroborated by a letter of February 15, 1844, written to Joseph Smith, Jr., by some antagonistic former Vermont neighbors: "If you studied piracy while digging for the money your Father pretended old Bob Kidd <had> buried, you should also have studied the fate of the pirates."[94]

Nor would Joseph and his family abandon their pursuit of Kidd's treasure after moving to western New York. E. D. Howe describes the prophet's parents as "having a firm belief in ghosts and witches; the telling of fortunes; pretending to believe that the earth was filled with hidden treasures, buried there by Kid[d] or the Spaniards."[95]

Rumors of Kidd's treasure were not limited to sites on the Eastern seaboard. Nor were the Smiths particularly unique in digging for it. John Hyde, Jr., wrote in 1857: "It was quite common in the western part of New York, about thirty years ago [i.e., 1827], for men to dig for treasure which they supposed had been hidden by Captain Kidd and others."[96] The Smiths' Manchester, New York, neighbor Orrin Porter Rockwell told Elizabeth Cane in the early 1870s that "[n]ot only was there religious excitement, but the phantom treasure of Captain Kidd were sought for far and near, and even in places like Cumorah."[97]

The February 16, 1825 issue of Palmyra's *Wayne Sentinel* reprinted a piece from the *Windsor* (Vermont) *Journal* bemoaning the fact that "the frightful stories of money being hid under the surface of the earth, and enchanted by the Devil or Robert Kidd, are received by many of our fellow citizens as truths."[98] In the course of his later activities in the counties along the New York/Pennsylvania border (after October 1825), Joseph might again have encountered legends concerning Kidd's treasure, such as the one relating to Spanish Hill near Waverly, New York, where it was said that Captain Kidd had buried his treasure and the devil was sometimes seen running along its top.[99] W. D. Purple, describing Joseph Jr.'s treasure digging in Pennsylvania, said "[w]hether it was the 'Ninety bars of gold And dollars many fold' that Capt. Robert Kidd, the pirate of a preceding century, had despoiled the commerce of the world, we are not able to say."[100]

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93. J. H. Kennedy, *Early Days*, 8.

94. "Green Mountain Boys to Thomas Sharp," February 5, 1844, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:597 (< > indicates words written above the line).

95. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 11.

96. John Hyde, Jr., *Mormonism, Its Leaders and Designs*, 2d ed. (New York: W. P. Fetridge, 1857), 263.

97. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:406-7.

98. Quoted in Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism* (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 75-76.

99. *Harper's New York and Erie Rail-Road Guide Book* (New-York: Harper & Brothers, 1855-1856), 151-52.

100. W. D. Purple, "Joseph Smith, The Originator of Mormonism. Historical Reminiscences of the Town of Afton," *Chenango Union*, May 3, 1877, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:129-30.

A Palmyra native and one-time governor of Utah Territory likewise recalled in 1882 having read a newspaper report in 1827 about how a "Golden Bible" had been discovered by "Joe Smith, who had spent his time for several years in telling fortunes and digging for hidden treasures, and especially for pots and iron chests of money, supposed to have been buried by Captain Kidd."[101] Likewise, Ann Ruth Eaton in her 1881 account describes how, armed with his "peek stone," Joseph was able to discover "Caskets of gold stored away by Spaniards, or by his hero, the redoubtable Captain Kidd."[102] Early Danish convert John Ahmanson, reports that "Joseph Smith found his [plates] while he was digging for treasure which was supposed to have been buried by the notorious buccaneer Captain Kidd in the western part of New York State."[103]

Two of the affidavits collected by Arthur B. Deming for his *Naked Truths about Mormonism* speak of Joseph and his father continually digging for Kidd's treasure along the New York-Pennsylvania line. The first account by William R. Hine recalled in 1885 how Joseph dug for Kidd's money "on the west bank of the Susquehanna, half a mile from the river, and three miles from his salt wells":

> Jo Smith claimed to be a seer. He had a very clear stone about the size and shape of a duck's egg, and claimed that he could see lost or hidden things through it. He said he saw Captain Kidd sailing on the Susquehanna River. . .and that he buried two pots of gold and silver. He claimed he saw writing cut on the rocks in an unknown language telling where Kidd buried it, and he translated it through his peep-stone.[104]

In another affidavit, Ketchel E. Bell similarly recalls having been told by her brother Milo in 1885 that "he knew Jo Smith when he was digging near the Susquehanna River for Capt Kidd's Money. Jo had a peep-stone through which he claimed to see hidden or buried treasures."[105]

Two Accounts of Kidd Treasure Hunts Led by Joseph or His Brother

We will now examine two accounts of Kidd treasure digs directed by the sons of Joseph Smith, Sr. Both are highly typical of treasure hunting accounts

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101. Dictated letter of Stephen S. Harding to Thomas Gregg, February 1882, in Thomas Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra* (New York: John B. Alden, 1890), 35, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:153-4.

102. Ann Ruth Eaton, *The Origin of Mormonism* (Woman's Executive Committee of Home Missions, 1881), cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:148.

103. John Ahmanson, *Secret History*, trans. Gleason Archer (Chicago: Moody, 1984 [1876]), 90.

104. W[illiam]. R. Hine in Arthur Deming, *Naked Truths about Mormonism*, January 1888, 2, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:182-84.

105. K. E. Bell's affidavit, May 1885, in Arthur B. Deming, Naked Truths about Mormonism, 3, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:179.

from that time. The first account relates to Joseph Smith, Jr., and comes from Palmyra native Philetus B. Spear, recorded c. 1873:

> No one could find it unless digging in the night. When they came near the devil would frighten them away. Hey [sic] must never mind him but dig on, or he would drag the treasure down deeper.
>
> The men worked hard and long but saw no signs of gold, when Mr. Ellsworth, growing convinced of his folly, determined to play a joke upon his comrades. Going to the hill before the others, he scattered a train of powder around. About midnight, when the men were thinking of the signs that might come any moment, Ellsworth dropped his pipe on the powder. As it flashed, he shouted, "The Devil is coming! The Devil is Coming!" when one and all ran for dear life.[106]

Spear's statement about the actions of Ellsworth (tentatively identified by Dan Vogel as Philip Ellworth, then in his fifties)[107] is very interesting but probably naïve. The directing seer at treasure digs usually needed the secret assistance of one or more helpers. Daniel Pierce Thompson, for example, introduced us to the associate of Gow, who rushed into the midst of the money-diggers in the costume of a specter with its throat cut. But there might also have been a plant among the group of diggers themselves, someone who would break the ceremonially imposed code of silence at the pre-arranged moment when the preternatural fireworks were set to begin. This usually took the form of some exclamation of surprise or alarm.[108] It is hard not to suspect that Ellsworth was a plant of the latter kind, who only gave the excuse reported by Spear after being inadvertently caught in the act.

Within a month-and-a-half of the Book of Mormon's first public appearance on the shelves of Grandin's bookstore in Palmyra, an article appeared in the *Rochester Gem* (May 15, 1830) describing an attempt by one of the Smith sons at finding Kidd's treasure. It is not clear whether the "oracle" referred to is Joseph or one of his brothers:

> Numbers flocked to him to test his skill, and the first question among a certain class was, if there was any of [Captain William] Kidd's money hid in these parts in the earth. The oracle, after adjusting the stone in his hat, and looking in upon it some-

106. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:130. The account says that Joseph Smith then organized another company, and "It was while digging with this second company that Smith claimed to find the Gold Bible" (130-31). This statement agrees with the one quoted earlier from John Ahmanson (*Secret History*, 90), which also said that Smith discovered the plates while looking for Kidd's treasure.

107. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:130 n1.

108. See the examples of exclamations to break ceremonial silence in Alan Taylor, "Early Republic's Supernatural Economy: Treasure Seeking in the American Northeast, 1780-1830," *American Quarterly* 38 (Spring 1986): 12. However, Taylor views these exclamations as unplanned responses on the part of the diggers, rather than pre-arranged signals.

time, pronounced that there was. The question of where, being decided upon, there forthwith emerged a set, armed with "pick-axe, hoe, and spade," out into the mountains, to dislodge the treasure. We shall mention but one man of the money-diggers. His name was Northrop. . .Northrop and his men sallied out upon the hills east of the river, and commenced digging—the night was chosen for operation—already had two nights been spent in digging, and the third commenced upon, when Northrop with his pick-axe struck the chest! The effect was powerful, and contrary to an explicit rule laid down by himself he exclaimed, "d—n me, I've found it!"

The charm was—scream of demons,—the chattering of spirits—the hissing of serpents rent the air, and the treasure moved! The oracle was again consulted, who said that it had removed to Deep Hollow. (Vogel's bracketed words)[109]

A Murdered-Treasure Guardian Ghost at Joseph Smith's 1826 Trial

Apart from the accounts of the earlier version of the Moroni story, the most significant piece of evidence suggesting that Joseph Smith, Jr., both knew and exploited the motif of the murdered treasure-guardian ghost came to light in testimony given at Joseph's March 20, 1826 Bainbridge glass-looking trial. One of the witnesses, Jonathan Thompson, testified that on one occasion, when Joseph was asked to consult his stone again to get a better fix on the location of the treasure chest they were seeking, he refused, "on account of the circumstances relating to the trunk being buried came all fresh to his mind; that the last time that he looked, he discovered distinctly the two Indians who buried the trunk; that a quarrel ensued between them, and *that one of said Indians was killed by the other, and thrown into the hole beside of the trunk, to guard it, as he supposed*" [italics added].[110] The incident is reminiscent of a Kidd story associated with Wethersfield, Connecticut. While burying some treasure at Tyrone's Landing in the neighborhood of that town, Kidd "in anger killed one of his mates with a water bucket, whose ghost still keeps watch."[111]

Conclusion

The angel Moroni began his career as a type of murdered treasure-guardian ghost particularly (though not exclusively) associated with the story of Captain Kidd's treasure. Smith must have learned of the motif while helping his father dig for Kidd's treasure and while studying Kidd's life and lore as a boy. That

109. "Imposition and Blasphemy!!-Money Diggers, &c.," *Rochester Gem*, May 15, 1830, 2:15, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:272-3.

110. "Mormons," *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883), 2:1576. Cf. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 4:254.

111. Dorson, *Jonathan Draws the Long Bow*, 175-76.

Joseph Smith, Jr., knew the motif and could have employed it is confirmed by the 1826 testimony of Jonathan Thompson, who heard him use it while digging treasure with him. That Smith used it again in the earlier of the two versions of the story of the finding of the plates is strongly implied in the account of Joseph and Heil Lewis, and is stated directly in that of Fayette Lapham. Smith's choice of the Kidd motif may have been motivated by the fact that among traditional preternatural treasure guardians, only the murdered treasure-guardian ghost was, as an innocent victim, morally neutral—that is to say not necessarily evil. When Moroni became an angel during the shift between earlier and later versions of the story, the motif ceased being relevant.

Scrying for the Lord: Magic, Mysticism, and the Origins of the Book of Mormon

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JOSEPH SMITH GREW UP in a time and place where folk magic was an accepted part of the landscape. Before he was a prophet, he was a diviner, or more specifically, a scryer who used his peepstone to discover the location of buried treasure. While most members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the twenty-first century know nothing of Joseph's magical practices, there is ample evidence to support the claim that they occurred. From a series of articles published in the Palmyra *Reflector* in 1830 and 1831, to the 1834 publication of Philastus Hurlbut and E. D. Howe's polemical *Mormonism Unvailed*, to Fawn Brodie's 1945 biography of Joseph Smith *No Man Knows My History*, to D. Michael Quinn's 1987 *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, Joseph Smith's involvement with magic has been well documented. Even the respected Mormon historian Richard L. Bushman reports that Joseph possessed a seerstone and was probably involved in "helping people find lost property and other hidden things."[1] Quinn's book in particular, which more than doubled in size when it was revised and reissued in 1998, is encyclopedic in its coverage of the Smith family's magical activities and those of their early Mormon contemporaries. To the objective reader of Mormon history, there can be little doubt that Joseph Smith practiced magic. There is also no question that just a few years later Joseph would become the leader of a vibrant new religion with thousands of followers who considered him a "prophet, seer, and revelator." What is not clear from the historical record is how he transitioned from diviner to translator to prophet. Was Joseph's dabbling in magic a youthful indiscretion or was it a

1. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 69-70.

catalyst of change? This paper is an attempt to understand the role magic played in that transition.

The paper is divided into three sections: first, an account of the events leading to the discovery of the plates and of the translation process, because it is here where the intersecting worlds of magic and religion are most discernible and where Joseph's use of magic first transitions from secular to religious; second, a presentation of three theories that may explain why Joseph so assiduously followed magical procedures during this time, including a discussion of how Joseph Smith's experiences with magic may have introduced him to the world of religious mysticism where ineffable spiritual experiences provide enlightenment (and under the right circumstances can lead to the development of new doctrine and a new religion); and third, an examination of magic's role in transforming Joseph Smith from translator to prophet.

Section 1: From Diviner to Translator

> The mystery of Mormonism cannot be solved until we solve the mystery of Joseph Smith.
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> — Jan Shipps[2]

The available historical evidence demonstrates that throughout the long process of acquiring and translating the golden plates Joseph Smith behaved in a manner consistent with that of a true believer in magic. The facts presented in this section have been published elsewhere and may seem redundant to students of this subject, but for the benefit of those who aren't familiar with the literature, they require repeating. Moreover, to discern the connection between Joseph's actions and his beliefs requires a basic understanding of the underlying magical principles gleaned from the various occult texts and *grimoires* (manuals of ceremonial magic that describe how to invoke and control spirits) that were available in the early nineteenth century.

Solving the "prophet puzzle" is complicated by the fact that much of the information available about the early life of Joseph Smith is either polemic or apologetic. The official history of Joseph Smith as canonized in the Pearl of Great Price makes no reference to either magic or treasure hunting. Joseph Smith acknowledged that he wrote his history in 1838 to dispel "reports which have been put in circulation by evil disposed and designing persons."[3] He was probably referring to the dozens of affidavits from residents of Palmyra/Manchester, New York, and Harmony, Pennsylvania, collected by Philastus Hurlbut

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2. Jan Shipps, "The Prophet Puzzle: Suggestions Leading toward a More Comprehensive Interpretation of Joseph Smith," in Bryan Waterman, ed., *The Prophet Puzzle: Interpretive Essays on Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 43.

3. Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith History 1:1.

and E. D. Howe and published in the book "*Mormonism Unvailed.*"[4] The affidavits make frequent reference to the Smith family's involvement with magic and money digging and generally impugn the family's character. Mormon apologists have tried for years to dismiss these affidavits as biased and unreliable. While they are likely correct in some of their assertions, other firsthand accounts and newspaper articles predating the affidavits have provided independent support for many of the claims.

One likely reason Joseph Smith downplayed his involvement in magic is that in 1826 he was tried and convicted of being "a disorderly person" due to his treasure hunting activities. A well-to-do farmer named Josiah Stowell hired him to help locate a lost silver mine that was rumored to have been worked by the Spaniards. Stowell's nephew, Peter Bridgeman, filed a complaint against Joseph for being "a disorderly person and an imposter."[5] It was not a crime in the state of New York to be an "imposter," but there was at that time a statute in New York defining "disorderly persons" as "all jugglers [deceivers], and all persons pretending to have skill in physiognomy, palmistry, or like crafty science, or pretending to tell fortunes, or to discover where lost goods may be found."[6] In the course of the trial, Joseph testified in his own behalf and acknowledged he had a stone which enabled him to see "where hidden treasures in the bowels of the earth were" and that he had used this stone to help others look for treasure. Joseph Smith, Sr., confirmed his son's story, as did the alleged victim, Josiah Stowell, who testified that Joseph had not deceived him but saw genuine visions in the stone. Stowell was a respected member of the Presbyterian Church and had a good reputation in his community. He, like many men of his time, had little difficulty reconciling his Christian beliefs with a belief in folk magic. Also testifying on Joseph's behalf was one of the workmen hired to dig for the treasure, who explained how his spade struck what he believed was a treasure chest before it sank into the ground due to an enchantment.[7]

Central to Joseph Smith's abilities as a seer was his seerstone. Sources both friendly and unfriendly to Smith provided verification that by the age of fourteen Joseph had acquired his first seerstone or peepstone, as they were more commonly known, and that he possessed at least three of them during his teenage years. Joseph dug up his first seerstone after he saw its location while gazing into a stone that belonged to Sally Chase, a schoolgirl who lived about

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4. Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed* (Painesville, Ohio: E. D. Howe, 1834).

5. Dan Vogel, "Rethinking the 1826 Judicial Decision," 1 December 2002, http://mormonscripturestudies.com/ch/dv/1826.asp.

6. Ibid.

7. Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 57; Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 61-66. Dale Morgan, *Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History*, ed. John Phillip Walker (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 327-28, also avail on *New Mormon Studies CD-ROM*, Smith Research Associates [CD-ROM], 1998.

three miles away. According to William D. Purple, a non-Mormon and the scribe for the 1826 trial, Joseph said that he had heard Sally

> could look into a glass and see anything however hidden from others; that he was seized with a strong desire to see her and her glass; that after much effort he induced his parents to let him visit her. He did so, and was permitted to look in the glass, which was placed in a hat to exclude the light. He was greatly surprised to see but one thing, which was a small stone, a great way off. It became luminous, and dazzled his eyes, and after a short time it became as intense as the mid-day sun. He said that the stone was under the roots of a tree or shrub. . . .[H]e borrowed an old ax and a hoe, and repaired to the tree. With some labor and exertion he found the stone.[8]

This occurred sometime around 1819-1820. Ironically, this same Sally Chase years later looked into her green stone to discover where Joseph Smith had hidden his "golden bible."[9] Two years later, while helping dig a well for Willard Chase near the Smith family farm, Joseph discovered another stone, which his wife Emma described as "a small stone, not exactly black, but was rather a dark color."[10] Another report described it as "almost black with light colored stripes. . .about the size but not the shape of a hen's egg."[11] It was this stone that Joseph's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, said enabled him to see things "invisible to the natural eye,"[12] and it was with this stone that Smith would later translate most of the Book of Mormon.[13] Joseph used the seerstone in the same manner that he had seen it used by Sally Chase: With the stone in his hat, he placed his face into the opening of the hat so as to block out all the light. Numerous firsthand accounts describe this process.[14]

According to the following article, which ran in 1831 in *The Reflector*, a Palmyra newspaper, the use of "mineral rods [i.e., divining rods] and balls" and "peep stones" was a common practice in the area where Joseph Smith grew up:

> Men and women without distinction of age or sex became marvelous wise in the occult sciences, many dreamed, others saw visions disclosing to them, deep in the

8. William D. Purple, "Joseph Smith, the Originator of Mormonism: Historical Reminiscences of the Town of Afton," Chenango Union (Norwich, N.Y.), 2 May 1877, p. 3, reprinted in Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 42.

9. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and his Progenitors for many Generations* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853), 109.

10. Emma Smith Bidamon to Emma Pilgrim, 27 March 1870, in Dan Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, 1998), 1:553.

11. Jaunita Brooks, ed., *On The Mormon Frontier, The Diary of Hosea Stout*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press/Utah Historical Society, 1964), 2:593.

12. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 91-92.

13. Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, "Joseph Smith: 'The Gift of Seeing,'" in Waterman, *The Prophet Puzzle*, 2:87-112.

14. See Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, ch. 2; LaMar Petersen, *The Creation of the Book of Mormon: A Historical Inquiry* (Salt Lake City: Freethinker Press, 2000), ch. 3; Van Wagoner and Walker, "Joseph Smith: 'The Gift of Seeing,'" 87-112; Hill, *The First Mormon*, 67.

> bowels of the earth, rich and shining treasures, and to facilitate those *mighty* mine operations, (money was usually if not always sought after in the night time,) divers devices and implements were invented.
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> Mineral rods, (as they were called by the imposters who made use of them,) were supposed to be infallible guides to these sources of wealth—"*peep stone*" or pebbles, taken promiscuously from the brook or field, were placed in a hat or other situation excluded from the light, when some *wizard* or *witch* (for these performances were not confined to either sex) applied their eyes, and nearly starting their [eye]balls from their sockets, declared they saw all the wonders of nature, including of course, ample stores of silver and gold. (emphasis in original)[15]

Peeping, or glass looking, is an ancient and universal form of divination known today as *scrying, crystal-gazing*, or *crystallomancy*. It involves gazing upon an object like a crystal ball or a mirror until visions are seen. *Scrying* comes from *descry*, meaning "to discern." The tool used by scryers is called a speculum, and it typically has a reflective surface. The oldest and most common form of scrying is gazing at the reflective surface of still water in a lake or pond. Egyptians practiced scrying centuries ago. The French physician and astrologer Nostradamus used a bowl of water on a brass tripod to make his prophecies. The magic mirrors in the fairy tales of Snow White and Beauty and the Beast are specula, as were the crystal egg and black obsidian mirror used by Edward Kelley, the assistant of John Dee, Queen Elizabeth I's royal mathematician and magician. Kelley, an adept scryer, claimed that his black shiny stone, cut in the shape of a diamond, allowed him to communicate with angels in the Enochian language. People with this ability tend to manifest it in early childhood. In Arab countries young children, primarily boys, are employed as thumbnail scryers: The backs of their thumbnails are filed smooth and polished, and they stare at their nails until they begin to see visions. Usually these boys are used only until the age of ten or eleven, when their abilities typically start to diminish.[16]

Scrying is just one of many methods of divination. A *diviner* is a "religious specialist who seeks from the spirits hidden information about the past, present, or future. In addition, the diviner's method of inquiry is usually said to involve the manipulation or interpretation of physical objects or natural phenomena."[17] Through the centuries divination has provided a means for determining the will

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15. "Gold Bible No. 3," *The Reflector* (Palmyra, N.Y.), 1 Feb. 1831, 92-93, reprinted in Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: The Book of Mormon*, 2 vols. (Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing, 1951), 1:69.

16. Rosemary Ellen Guiley, *Harper's Encyclopedia of Mystical and Paranormal Experience* (Edison, N.J.: Castle Books, 1991), 533-34; Nevill Drury and Gregory Tillet, *The Occult: A Sourcebook of Esoteric Wisdom* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1997), 98-99; Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 40.

17. Robert R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 26; see also Guiley, *Harper's Encyclopedia*, 151-152.

of the gods and for solving problems or disputes. The responsibility for divining has historically been assigned to a "priest, prophet, oracle, witch, shaman, witch doctor, medicine man, psychic, or other person reputed to have supernatural powers."[18] Some forms of divination, such as horoscopes, tarot cards, palm reading, and water witching (the use of a divining rod to locate an underground source of water),[19] remain popular among segments of western culture, while others, such as the reading of entrails, are less common.

Joseph Smith came by his practice of divination through a long history of oral and written traditions. Numerous occult manuals and grimoires were compiled over the centuries, and as historian Michael Quinn has shown, many were likely available in the Manchester/Palmyra area. Notable among these are Ebeneezer Sibly's 1784 book, the *New and Complete Illustration of the Occult*; the pseudoepigraphic *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy* by Cornelius Agrippa; and *The Magus, Francis* Barrett's 1801 compendium of magic that was based on pseudo-Agrippa's *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*. Even Reginald Scot's book, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*—a 1584 compilation of magical rites and rituals from various medieval texts that had been out-of-print for over 150 years—was "available in America's rural areas in the mid-nineteenth century."[20] Inexpensive paper-bound chapbooks explaining the magic arts were also available in the Palmyra area at the time of Joseph Smith,[21] although there is no direct evidence that the Smiths owned any books of magic. There is evidence that Joseph's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, used seer stones,[22] and Joseph may have gained most of his knowledge regarding their use from her, but Quinn also points to the probability that Joseph had one or more occult mentors, Luman Walters being primary among them.[23] Regardless of whether the family owned any magic manuals, Joseph Smith and his family did possess several tools used in ritual magic, including a silver Jupiter talisman, which Quinn has shown relied on *The Magus* as its source, as well as a magic dagger featuring symbols from the same book. Daggers inscribed with planetary sigils (seals or signets), signs, and various names of God were used for creating magic circles. Quinn has also established Sibly's the *New and Complete Illustration of the Occult* as the source for one of the Smith family's magic parchments (small folded parchment sheets, also known as lamens, used in ritual magic, on which are written various magical names, phrases, and symbols).[24]

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18. Ibid, 151.

19. During my twenty-year career as an architect, land planner, and builder, I have encountered numerous engineers, soil scientists, and hydrologists who claim to have seen "water witching" performed successfully where more scientific efforts to locate a well have failed.

20. Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 100-101.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., 42.

23. Ibid., 116-135.

24. Ibid., 83-85, 98-116.

The use of divination and magic ritual to discover buried treasure is part of a belief system wherein subterranean spirits control precious metals that can be captured by a knowledgeable magician. In the *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*, we are told "there are Spirits of the earth, which inhabit in groves, woods and wildernesses, and are the plague and mischief of hunters. . . .There are also subterranean Spirits, which do inhabit in dens and caverns of the earth, and in remote concavities of mountains, that they might invade deep pits, and the bowels of the earth; these do dig up metals, and keep treasures, which oftentimes they do transport from one place to another, lest any man should make use thereof."[25] Ebenezer Sibly's 1787 book, *A New and Complete Illustration of the Occult Sciences*, elaborates:

> Distinct from fiery spirits are a species which properly belong to the metallic kingdom, abiding in mountains, caves, dens, deeps, hiatas or chasms of the earth, hovering over hidden gold, tombs, vaults, and sepulchers of the dead. These spirits are termed by the ancient philosophers "protectors of hidden treasure," from a principle of quality in their nature whence they exceedingly delight in mines of gold and silver, and places of hidden treasure; but are violently inimical to man. . .ever haunting those places where money is concealed, and retaining malevolent and poisonous influences to blast the lives and limbs of those who attempt to make such discoveries; and therefore extremely dangerous for magicians to exorcise or call up.[26]

In order to wrest a treasure away from one of these "fiery spirits" one must, of course, discover the treasure's whereabouts. *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, a 1584 compilation of magical rites and rituals from various medieval texts, contains an elaborate conjuration that involves the use of a "christall stone" to force a spirit to divulge its knowledge about hidden treasure:

> I conjure thee spirit, by God, the father, that thou shew true visions in the christall stone, where there be anie N. [the specific name],in such a place or no, upon paine of everlasting condemnation, *Fiat*, Amen. Also I conjure thee spirit N. by God the sonne Jesus Christ, that thou doo shew true visions unto us, whether it be gold or silver, anie other metals, or whether there were anie or no, upon paine of condemnation, *Fiat*, Amen. Also I conjure thee spirit N. by God the Holie-ghost, the which dooth sanctifie all faithfull soules and spirits, and by their virtues and powers I constreine thee spirit N. to speake, open, and to declare, the true waiae, how we may come by these treasures hidden in N. and how to have it in our custodie, & who are the keepers thereof, and how manie there be, and what be their names, and by whom

25. Henry Cornelius Agrippa [alleged], *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*, (Montana: Kessering Publishing Company, n. d.), 116. The unknown author is often referred to as pseudo-Agrippa. The book was first published in 1655 and reprinted in 1665 and 1783.

26. Ebenezer Sibly, *A New and Complete Illustration of the Occult Sciences*, Book 4, pp. 1084-85, 3 March 2001, http://www.esotericarchives.com/solomon/sibly4.htm.

> it was laid there, and to shew me true visions of what sort and similitude they be, and how long they have kept it, and to know in what daies and houres we shall call such a spirit, N. to bring unto us these treasures, into such a place N. upon paine of everlasting condemnation.[27]

Once the treasure has been located, the magician must go about the task of digging it up very carefully, due to the dangerous nature of these spirits. In the medieval grimoire, *The Key of Solomon the King*, the subterranean spirits are called gnomes, and we are told that they put workmen to death who fail to heed their warnings.[28] The author assures us, however, that with the information provided in the book, "thou shalt be able. . .to make them submit unto thine orders." Upon arrival at the treasure site, the magician's first task is the formation of a magic circle in order to protect the treasure seekers from harm. Sibly tells the story of a British magician and his associates who were "instantaneously crushed into atoms. . .in the twinkling of an eye" when they left the protection of their magic circle.[29]

The author of *The Key of Solomon the King* describes how a magic circle is made, as does Sibly, and similar descriptions can be found in other grimoires. The details vary widely from source to source, with some descriptions being simple and others very elaborate. According to *The Key of Solomon*, one should draw a circle on the ground with a "Sword of Magical Art" and then consecrate it with incense three times during the day. At night, when the magician goes to enter the circle, he must be properly attired and must suspend a lamp "whose oil should be mingled with the fat of a man who had died in the month of July."[30] Sibly's magic circle is far less morbid but more detailed. The plot of ground needs to be about nine feet square, and two circles are drawn, one inside the other. A square is drawn inside the circle where the magician sits with his companion. The spaces inside the circle are to be filled with drawings of various crosses and with different names of God. If a spirit is to be summoned, then a separate triangle is drawn outside the circle to contain it. Elsewhere we are told that the triangle should be drawn using a consecrated sword and that the spirit can be compelled to swear an oath on the sword.[31] *The Key of Solomon* says that

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27. Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), 357. Scot's book is a polemic document intended to expose witchcraft's practices.

28. The legends of leprechauns and their pots of gold are undoubtedly rooted in similar wide spread beliefs. J. K. Rowling, for instance, in her book *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, borrowed from these legends when she introduced Gringotts, a bank of sorts where gold, money, and other valuables are kept in underground vaults magically guarded by goblins.

29. Sibly, *Occult Sciences*, 1085-86.

30. S. Liddel MacGregor Mathers, trans. and ed., *The Key of Solomon the King* (Clavicula Salomonis) (York Beach, Me.: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 2000), 57-58.

31. Francis Barrett, *The Magus or Celestial Intelligencer; Being a Complete System of Occult Philosophy* (London: Lackington, Allen, and Co., 1801), 100-101, in *New Mormon Studies CD-ROM*, Smith Research Associates [CD-ROM], 1998.

each of the magician's companions should hold a sword in his naked hand. These swords are in addition to the "Sword of the Art" used to make the circle.[32] Here also the proper attire is necessary. Both grimoires specify that white linen be worn, linen being frequently specified in magic rituals for clothing, altar covers, and as a covering for magic tools.[33] Sibly also specifies that a black priest's robe be worn over the white linen and that the magician have a magic parchment of virgin paper on which are drawn certain seals attached to his clothes.[34] The Smith family had several magic parchments, and the symbols on their "Holiness to the Lord" magic parchment were based on symbols in Sibly's book.[35] Scot's book similarly specifies the attachment of parchments to the breast of the magician and is the source for the Smith's "Jehovah, Jehovah, Jehovah" parchment.[36] According to *The Magus*, the main purpose of that particular lamen was the conjuring of spirits. *The Magus* was first published in England in 1801 and was the source of a magic talisman that belonged to Joseph Smith, his silver Jupiter medallion.[37] Ritual purifications—including washings, annointings, fasting, prayer, incantations, incense, and sprinkling with holy water—also feature prominently in the various manuals.

It was Joseph Smith's reputed abilities with a seerstone that brought him to the attention of the treasure seekers of the Burned-over District. Josiah Stowell traveled a considerable distance to hire Joseph Smith at relatively high wages because of Joseph's ability.[38] One of the best firsthand accounts of the Smiths' treasure hunting activities was provided by fellow treasure hunter William Stafford. His statement to Philastus Hurlbut on December 8, 1833, is generally negative in his appraisal of Joseph Smith's activities, but he provides many insightful details. He points out that most of the money digging was carried out at night when it was believed the money could be most easily obtained.[39] This is consistent with the directions in the *Key of Solomon*, which states that it is

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32. Mathers, *The Key of Solomon*, 99-100.

33. *The Key of Solomon* recommends "Silk" if the means is available. It also says that "Instruments of the Art should be wrapped in Silk" after they are consecrated. See Mathers, *The Key of Solomon*, 92, 116.

34. Sibly, *Occult Sciences*, 1104, 1105, 1110; see also Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 337.

35. Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 107

36. Ibid., 110

37. Ibid., 20, 67, 113; Barrett, *The Magus*, 93-94.

38. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 91-92; Hill, *The First Mormon*, 61. In 1838 Joseph Smith answered a series of questions for the Kirtland, Ohio, Elder's Journal including the question, "Was Jo Smith a money digger?" He replied, "Yes, but it was never a very profitable [sic] job to him, as he only got fourteen dollars a month for it." While Smith may not have considered the wages substantial, they should be compared to the eight to twelve dollars a month that the workers on the Erie Canal were paid. Lucy Smith said that Stowell offered "high wages" (Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:52-53).

39. William Stafford Statement, 8 December 1833; Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 237-40, reprinted in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:59-61.

"much better to perform these experiments at night, seeing that it is more easy to the Spirits to appear in the peaceful silence of night than during the day."[40] Stafford said that Joseph

> could see by placing a stone of singular appearance in his hat, in such a manner as to exclude all light; at which time [he] pretended he could see all things within and under the earth. . . .At certain times, these treasures could be obtained very easily; at others, the obtaining of them was difficult. The facility of approaching them, depended in a great measure on the state of the moon. New moon and good Friday, I believe, were regarded as the most favorable times for obtaining these treasures. I at length accepted of their invitations, to join them in their nocturnal excursions.
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> Joseph Smith, Sen., came to me one night, and told me, that Joseph Jr. had been looking in his glass, and had seen, not many rods from his house, two or three kegs of gold and silver, some feet under the surface of the earth: and that none others but the elder Joseph and myself could get them. I accordingly consented to go, and early in the evening repaired to the place of deposit. Joseph, Sen. first made a circle, twelve or fourteen feet in diameter. This circle, said he, contains the treasure. He then stuck in the ground a row of witch hazel sticks,[41] around the said circle, for the purpose of keeping off the evil spirits. Within this circle he made another, of about eight or ten feet in diameter. He walked around three times on the periphery of this last circle muttering to himself something which I could not understand. He next stuck a steel rod in the centre of the circles, and then enjoined profound silence upon us, lest we should arouse the evil spirit who had the charge of these treasures. After we had dug a trench about five feet in depth around the rod, the old man by signs and motions, asked leave of absence, and went to the house to inquire of young Joseph the cause of our disappointment. He soon returned and said, that Joseph had remained all this time in the house, looking in his stone and watching the motions of the evil spirit—that he saw the spirit come up to the ring and as soon as it beheld the cone which we formed around the rod it caused the money to sink. We then went into the house, and the old man observed, that we had made a mistake in the commencement of the operation; if it had not been for that, said he, we should have got the money.[42]

Stafford then tells the story of another outing where a black sheep was killed and its blood spread in a circle to appease the wrath of the evil spirit controlling the treasure they hoped to obtain.[43] Stafford, Pomeroy Tucker, and

40. Mathers, *The Key of Solomon*, 80.

41. "Hazel rods" are featured as essential tools for treasure hunting in Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft,* 163.

42. William Stafford Statement, 8 December 1833.

43. In an 1881 interview, Stafford's son John Stafford said that his father also had a stone, and Lucy Smith tried to borrow it at one time. He confirmed the stories of the Smith's money digging, but when asked about the sheep incident, he said, according to the interviewer's notes, "My father is

Stephen S. Harding tell the story in separate accounts, and they all assume the killing of the sheep was an elaborate ruse concocted by the Smiths to put meat on their table. Both Tucker and Harding believed that Joseph asked for the black sheep because it was "large and in excellent condition for mutton." As Harding tells the story, "Stafford hesitated, and was loth [sic] to give him up, offering a white wether of smaller size, yet in good condition. But the coming prophet was not to be foiled in his purpose, and resorted to logic that confounded the objector. 'The reason why it must be a black sheep,' said the young deceiver, 'is because I have found the treasure by means of the black art.' This, of course was unanswerable, and the black wether was given up."[44] Unnoticed by previous chroniclers of Joseph Smith's magical practice is the fact that this story, always told to disparage him, actually confirms the depth of his knowledge of magic lore. According to the *Key of Solomon the King*, sacrifices are required in some magical operations; white animals are sacrificed to good spirits and *black ones to evil spirits*.[45] Joseph Capron, a neighbor of the Smiths who lived south of them, similarly gave an affidavit in which he described a treasure-digging incident next to his home. He said Joseph Smith had discovered a chest of gold watches in the possession of an evil spirit by placing a stone in a hat "in such a manner as to exclude all light, except that which emanated from the stone itself." Capron also describes sticks being stuck in the ground in a circular pattern directly over the spot where the treasure was located. According to his affidavit, a messenger was sent to Palmyra to procure a polished sword, and then one of their party, "drawn sword in his hand, marched around to guard any assault which his Satanic majesty might be disposed to make." Unfortunately, the "devil" was victorious and carried away their prize.[46]

In Joseph Smith's 1838 history, he explained that in the three years following his first vision he had been subject to "temptations; and, mingling with all kinds of society. . .which led [him] into diverse temptations, offensive in the sight of God." It is in this context that Joseph establishes his need for repentance on the evening of September 21, 1823, which led to the first appearance of the angel Moroni. While many Mormons might take comfort in the idea that Joseph's dabbling with the magic arts was only a youthful indiscretion that ended with this angelic visitation, such a belief cannot be sustained. Joseph's 1826 trial and other

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said to have furnished a sheep—but I don't think my father was there at [the] times they say [the] sheep was sacrificed." This wording was changed in the printed version to read, "I have heard the story but don't think my father was there at the time they say Smith got the sheep." Some have used these statements to discredit the William Stafford statement, but as Vogel points out, when the added material is removed, the two Staffords' statements are consistent. See Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:121-22, 122n9.

44. Stephen S. Harding to Thomas Gregg, February 1882; Thomas Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra* (New York: John B. Alden, 1890), 34-56, reprinted in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 3:166.

45. Mathers, *The Key of Solomon*, 119 (emphasis added).

46. Joseph Capron Statement, 8 November 1833, Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 237-40, reprinted in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2: 24-25.

accounts show that he continued to participate in treasure hunting until he received the golden plates in 1827. According to Martin Harris, Smith had been involved in an unsuccessful treasure hunt earlier that same evening in 1823.[47]

Joseph Smith began praying late on a Sunday night. According to Oliver Cowdery, Smith began praying "to commune with some kind of messenger" at about eleven or twelve o'clock,[48] which is the time that Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft specifies for conjuring the dead.[49] In all his attempts to locate treasure, Joseph had used his stone to see the location of the treasure in the ground, but on this night, according to his official history, he would learn the location of "a book deposited, written upon gold plates" after an angel appeared in his room in response to his fervent prayer. Joseph goes on to say that while the angel was "conversing with me about the plates, the vision was opened to my mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it."[50]

Questions arise about the reliability of Joseph's account of how he learned the location of the plates. If, as he described it, the room filled with a light that "was lighter than at noonday" and he then spent the entire evening conversing with an angel,[51] we have to wonder why none of the five siblings who shared the small attic bedroom with him were awakened. It becomes apparent to visitors to the reconstructed cabin in Palmyra that was the Smith family home that Joseph and the angel would not have been alone in the room together, though this has not been reported in the many retellings of Moroni's visit.[52] In the earliest accounts we have of this experience, Joseph claimed to have seen the angel in a dream.[53] In his earliest autobiography, written in 1832, he acknowledged having questions about the nature of the experience, "I supposed it had been a dreem [sic] of Vision,' he wrote, "But when I consid[e]red I knew that it was not."[54] For Joseph to have equated dreams with visions would not have been surprising. The Bible equates visions and dreams (Job 7:14). In the Book of Mormon, Lehi, the first prophet named in the book, proclaims: "I have dreamed a dream; or, in other words, I have seen a vision" (1 Nephi 8:2). In the magical world, dreams were one way to learn the location of treasure. Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* discusses the "art and order to be used in digging for monie, revealed by dreams."[55]

47. Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 143.

48. Oliver Cowdery to W.W. Phelps, February 1835, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:428.

49. Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 334.

50. Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith History 1:42.

51. Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith History 1:30, 47.

52. During a July 2001 visit to Mormon historical sites in Palmyra, N.Y., I noticed a painting of Moroni's visit to Joseph Smith which showed Joseph sitting up in bed with the angel hovering nearby while his five siblings continued to sleep. I have never encountered a written counterpart to this painting, however.

53. Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 138-39

54. Ibid., 139

55. Scott, *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 163.

As described above, most buried treasure is guarded by dangerous spirits. It was not, however, unprecedented for a good spirit to appear and provide information. *The Key of Solomon* describes how a magician can conjure an "intelligence" and interrogate him by forming a magic circle and reciting a special prayer. Francis Barrett in *The Magus* defines intelligences as "the presiding good angels that are set over the planets" and further, "the spirits or daemons are subject to the intelligences, or good spirits."[56] Interrogating an intelligence would allow one to gain information required to locate a treasure and wrest it away from its guardian. *The Key of Solomon* continues, "When thou shalt be desirous to make thine interrogations, choose the night of full or of new moon, and from midnight until daybreak. Thou shalt transport thyself unto the appointed spot if it be for the purpose of discovering a treasure; if not, any place will serve provided it be clean and pure." Also required is a virgin parchment on which special characters and names are written. This parchment is to be held to the magician's forehead while he lies prostrate and recites an additional prayer. Having done so, the magician should be able to hear the answers he seeks.[57]

In spite of Joseph's 1838 claim that he saw the location of the plates in a vision, Mormon and non-Mormon sources state that Joseph found the plates through the use of his seerstone. Martin Harris recalled in 1859, "Joseph had before this described the manner of his finding the plates. He found them by looking in the stone found in the well of Mason Chase. The family had likewise told me the same thing."[58] Willard Chase claimed that in 1827 Joseph Smith, Sr., told him "that some years ago, a spirit had appeared to Joseph his son, in a vision, and informed him that in a certain place there was a record on plates of gold; and that he was the person that must obtain them. He [Joseph Smith] then observed that if it had not been for that stone, he would not have obtained the

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56. Barrett, *The Magus*, 146. This definition may explain the puzzling Mormon belief that prior to being created as spirit children in the pre-existence, we existed as intelligences. In his King Follett discourse, Joseph Smith said, "Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle. It is a spirit from age to age, and there is no creation about it" (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1967], 354). In 1907 B. H. Roberts, one of the seven presidents of the Seventies, expanded on Smith's statements, claiming that even before spiritual birth in the pre-existence, man existed as an individual, self-conscious entity known as an "intelligence." The First Presidency appended their approval: "Elder Roberts submitted the following paper to the First Presidency and a number of the Twelve Apostles, none of whom found anything objectionable in it, or contrary to the revealed work of God, and therefore favor its publication" (B. H. Roberts, "The Immortality of Man," *Improvement Era*, April 1907, 401-23). See also Blake T. Ostler, "The Idea of Preexistence in Mormon Thought," in Gary James Bergera, ed., *Line Upon Line: Essays on Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 137.

57. Barrett, *The Magus*, 146.

58. "Mormonism—No. II," *Tiffany's Monthly: Devoted to the Investigation of the Science of Mind, in the Physical, Intellectural, Moral and Religious Planes Thereof*, 5 August 1859, 163-70 as reprinted in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:309.

book."[59] If we theorize that Joseph either dreamed about the location of the plates or saw their location through the use of his seerstone and then followed the magical procedures with which he was familiar, he would have gone to the location where they were buried, formed a magic circle, said the requisite prayers, and only then attempted to dig them up. Without precisely following the magical procedures, he would have been unable to possess the plates, and they would have remained under the control of their guardian spirit, Moroni. There is no historical evidence known to me that Joseph formed a magic circle or used any magical implement other than his seerstone on this occasion, but we do know that had he chosen to do so, the Smith family possessed magic parchments and the requisite magic dagger, and Joseph was familiar with the making and operation of magic circles. We also know that Joseph was unsuccessful in his first attempt to obtain the plates. According to Oliver Cowdery, when Joseph reached out to take the plates, he received a "shock. . .upon his system" three different times. Joseph wondered if this was because of an "enchantment," and when he asked aloud, "Why can I not obtain this book?" the angel appeared and told him "Because you have not kept the commandments of the Lord."[60] According to his mother, when he returned to the same spot the following year, he was able to take the plates, but he set them down to search the box for anything else that might be "of some pecuniary advantage." Then he ". . .turned round to take the Record again, but behold it was gone, and where, he knew not, neither did he know the means by which it had been taken from him."[61] On at least this one occasion, the "golden plates" behaved like the elusive "slippery treasures" of Joseph's treasure quests. That Joseph thought his failure was due to an "enchantment" indicates that he viewed the process magically. It would be another two years before he would take and keep possession of the plates.

It is interesting to note that Smith specifically recalls the exact date of this first Moroni appearance while providing only a general time frame, spring of 1820, for his vision of God and Christ. Astrology has long played an essential role in magical practice, and September 21 was a day of great significance. There had been a full moon the night before, and the time of the full moon was considered advantageous to search for buried treasure. *The Key of Solomon* says in its first chapter that without knowing the "order of hours and of days, and of

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59. Willard Chase Statement, c. 11 December 1833, in Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*), 240-48, as reprinted in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:71-72. Other accounts of using the stone to find the plates were given by Henry Harris, Orsamus Turner, John H. Gilbert, W. D. Purple, and Hosea Stout. See Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:72n27, and Van Wagoner and Walker, "Joseph Smith: The Gift of Seeing," 96.

60. Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps, October 1835, Letter VIII in Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate 22 (October 1835): 195-202, reprinted in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:458-459.

61. Lucy Smith, *Biograhical Sketches*, 83. See also Oliver Cowdery's description of this event in Latter Day Saints *Messenger and Advocate* 2 (October 1835): 197.

the position of the moon" the magician's efforts will be of no effect.[62] Similarly, Barrett's *The Magus* says, "you must observe the Moon. . .for you shall do nothing without the assistance of the Moon."[63] Perhaps more significantly, it was the day of the autumnal equinox, although Mormon apologists have argued that the connection is Jewish rather than astrological.[64] Anciently, the autumnal equinox was celebrated as the Day of Atonement, and it was the only day of the year when the Isrealite High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies in the temple. Since the temple faced east, this was the day the sun penetrated all the way to the back of the structure where the Holy of Holies was located. There is, however, no evidence that Joseph Smith was aware at this time of Jewish practices regarding the High Holy Days. In any case, it was on this day every year that Joseph Smith returned to the same spot in his efforts to get the plates.

On the night he finally received the plates, he made some unusual preparations, dressing in black clothes that night and borrowing a black horse and a carriage from Joseph Knight.[65] As we have seen, a black robe or black garment can be required for some rituals, and Quinn has elaborated on the importance of black in magic lore. However, no one has yet discussed the importance of the "linen frock" which his mother mentions Joseph wearing.[66] According to Sibly, the attire for a magician who intends to conjure a spirit should be made of black cloth and white linen, linen having an "abstracted quality for magic."[67] *The Key of Solomon* tells a magician that prior to engaging in the magic arts, he and his companions should disrobe, bathe, perfume, and clothe themselves in clean white garments over which the "exterior habiliments," preferably linen or silk, are placed. It further requires that certain magical "characters. . .should be embroidered on the breast with the needle of Art in red silk."[68]

Joseph and Emma left the house at around midnight and didn't return until morning. No one knows whether Joseph inscribed a magic circle around the location where the plates were buried, nor does anyone know whether he recited any incantions or used a magic parchment, but their use would have been consistent with magical practice.The record is unclear regarding what part Emma played in the process. According to one account, they arrived at the hill where the plates were buried, and Joseph disappeared into the woods, reappearing sometime later with a bundle wrapped in his linen coat, which he claimed was

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61. Mathers, *The Key of Solomon*, 11.

63. Barrett, *The Magus*, 148.

64. See Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 167-68

65. Willard Chase Statement 11 December 1833, in Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed*, 237-40, reprinted in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:66-67; see also Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 100.

66. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 104. The word "linen" is only used three times in the book, two of which are in reference to the "frock" Joseph Smith wrapped the plates in while transporting them.

67. Sibly, *Occult Sciences*, 1104, 1105, 1110; see also Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 166.

68. Mathers, *The Key of Solomon*, 88-93.

the plates.[69] According to Emma's cousins, she "stood with her back toward him, while he dug up the box."[70] Martin Harris stated that while Joseph was retrieving the plates, Emma "kneeled down and prayed."[71] Joseph claimed the angel required Emma's presence if he were ever to get the plates, and that was the reason he took her with him, but the question remaining unanswered is why she was required to be there. If her presence were essential to a successful operation, she would probably not have remained behind in the wagon while Joseph retrieved the plates. It would also have been inconsistent with magical practice for Joseph to have attempted to retrieve buried treasure, i.e. golden plates, from a spirit without the aid of a companion. Most magic rituals described in the various grimoires require the magician to have companions who assist in various ways. Sibly explains that, when forming a magic circle, it is always necessary to have two people, "the master and his associate."[72] *The Key of Solomon* recommends three companions:

> When the Master of the Art wisheth to put in practice any Operation or Experiment, especially one of importance, he should first consider of what Companions he should avail himself. This is the reason why in every Operation whose Experience should be carried out in the Circle, it is well to have three Companions. And if he cannot have Companions, he should at least have with him a faithful and attached dog.[73]

The book makes no mention of a wife serving as a companion, but it does say that a young girl or boy "will be still better" than the dog provided that he "ordain them as he hath ordained the dog."[74]

Joseph did not return home with the plates, but instead stopped and hid them in a hollow tree, still wrapped in his coat. He did bring with him what he called "a key." Lucy Mack Smith described it as follows: "Upon examination, [I] found that it consisted of two smooth three-cornered diamonds set in glass, and the glasses were set in silver bows, which were connected with each other in much the same way as old fashioned spectacles."[75] It would be referred to as the "spectacles," "interpreters," and later on as the "Urim and Thummin." Lucy did not handle the key directly but through a silk handkerchief which Joseph had

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69. Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984), 20-21.

70. Lewis and Lewis, "Mormon History"; Wyl, pseud. [Wymetal], *Mormon Portraits*, 80, reprinted in Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 477n288.

71. Martin Harris Interview with Joel Tiffany, 1859, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:304.

72. Sibly, *Occult Sciences*, 1102-1103.

73. Mathers, *The Key of Solomon*, 86.

74. Ibid, 87.

75. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 101.

wrapped it in.[76] She also described being allowed to handle the "breastplate" found with the plates, which was "wrapped in a thin muslin handkerchief,"[77] and she eventually "hefted" the plates, which were similarly wrapped.[78] By wrapping each of these items in linen or silk, Joseph was following prescribed magical guidelines. As *The Key of Solomon* says, "When an Instrument of the Art is properly consecrated, it should be wrapped in silk and put away."[79]

Joseph used the "spectacles" to translate the original 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon. He placed them into his hat and placed the hat to his face, blocking out all light. After Martin Harris lost the manuscript pages, Joseph reverted to using his seerstone, so virtually all of the existing Book of Mormon was translated with the stone.[80] Emma described the process of translation in an 1879 interview by her son Joseph Smith III:

> In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us. . . .The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table-cloth, which I had given him to fold them in.[81]

Again, the plates are wrapped in linen. According to Emma, she never attempted to uncover the plates but did acknowledge touching them through the tablecloth and moving them around so she could dust.[82] In an 1883 interview, William Smith, Joseph, Jr.'s, brother, similarly described being able to hold and feel the plates through cloth.[83]

In 1838, after leaving the church, Oliver Cowdery confirmed that the plates were not actually referred to during the translation process: "I have sometimes had seasons of skepticism, in which I did seriously wonder whether the Prophet and I were men in our sober senses, when he would be translating from plates,

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76. Lucy Smith, "Preliminary Manuscript," 19-115, Frags. 1-10, in LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:328, 328n137.

77. Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 111.

78. Sally Parker to John Kempton, 26 August 1838, in private possession (microfilm, Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah), cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:218-219.

79. Mathers, *The Key of Solomon*, 116.

80. Emma Smith Bidamon to Emma S. Pilgrim, 27 Mar. 1876, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:532. Oliver Cowdery and others wrote that the plates were translated using the Urim and Thummin, but Joseph's seerstone was also often referred to as a Urim and Thummin (see Van Wagoner and Walker, "Joseph Smith: "The Gift of Seeing,'" 89-90; Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, 174-75).

81. Emma Smith Bidamon interview with Joseph Smith III, February 1879, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:539; Van Wagoner and Walker, "Joseph Smith: 'The Gift of Seeing,'" 89. See also pages 88-93 for additional accounts of the translation process.

82. Ibid, 539-540; Newell and Avery, 25.

83. William Smith, *On Mormonism*, 1883, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*,1:497. William says that the plates were contained in a pillow case.

through 'the Urim and Thummim,' and the plates not be in sight at all."[84] That Joseph Smith "translated" the Book of Mormon with his face buried in a hat and the plates carefully hidden away or sitting nearby is not well known within Mormonism. The actual mechanics of how the Book of Mormon was created are generally not discussed, as can be seen by the following extract taken from the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, published in 1992:

> Little is known about the translation process itself. Few details can be gleaned from comments made by Joseph's scribes and close associates. Only Joseph Smith knew the actual process, and he declined to describe it in public. At a Church conference in 1831, Hyrum Smith invited the Prophet to explain more fully how the Book of Mormon came forth. Joseph Smith responded that "it was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; and. . .it was not expedient for him to relate these things.[85]

This author claims that little is known of the translation process, and understandably, Joseph Smith would not have been eager to share the details with the congregation at a church conference. However, a paper trail of documents written by both friend and foe does exist, and while it is impossible to conclude exactly what was happening, there is enough information for us to focus our attention on some plausible explanations.

Section 2: Translating the Book of Mormon—Three Theories

Considering the information given above regarding Joseph Smith's activities in magic and his use of some of those magical practices in obtaining the gold plates and in translating the Book of Mormon, it should be apparent that the official history of Joseph Smith neglects the facts: It does not mention that Joseph was engaged in treasure hunting up until 1827 and had been put on trial because of it, nor that he had been engaged in a treasure hunt on the same day that Moroni is said to have first appeared; nor does it explain why an astrologically significant day, the autumnal equinox, was chosen for the annual visits; it also doesn't explain how Joseph could have had a vision lasting all night without disturbing the five siblings who shared the room or even the two who shared his bed. Neither does the official history acknowledge reports that Joseph originally

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84. Oliver Cowder, *Defense in a Rehearsal of My Grounds for Separating Myself from the Latter Day Saints* (Norton, Ohio, 1839); also *Saints' Herald* 54 (20 May 1907): 229-230, cited in Van Wagoner and Walker, "Joseph Smith: "The Gift of Seeing,'" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 50-51. When this article was reprinted in Waterman, *The Prophet Puzzle*, this quote was omitted.

85. Daniel H., Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992); "Book of Mormon Translation by Joseph Smith," in *Infobases Collectors Library*, Bookcraft [CD-ROM], 1996.

claimed to have encountered the angel in a dream, that he claimed to have found the site where the plates were buried using his brown seerstone, that the angel shocked him three times to prevent him from taking the plates, or that the plates mysteriously vanished when he set them down. Nor does it explain why the angel required him to be married and bring Emma with him the night he finally received the plates, why he wrapped the plates in his linen coat and later in a linen tablecloth, why they went to the site in the middle of the night and didn't return until morning; or why Joseph translated the plates without referring to them physically but instead dictated the Book of Mormon to his scribes while his face was buried in a hat into which he had placed his seerstone. This paper is an attempt to connect these puzzle pieces, collected by others, into some sort of unified theory accounting for them all. I will present here three possibilities. In the first theory, Joseph Smith appears as a pious deceiver; in the second, Joseph Smith is a true believer in magic who may have used some deception; and in the third, Joseph's magical experiences introduce him to the world of mysticism, which gives rise to his unique religious beliefs and convictions, which nonetheless he may have supported through pious deception. All three theories involve some degree of deception, and while that may be disquieting to some, it should be remembered that Joseph Smith, later in his life, was involved in numerous deceptions regarding the secret practice of polygamy and on at least one occasion wrote in justification of what today we would call a situational ethic:

> That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be and often is right under another. God said, "Thou shalt not kill"; at another time He said, "Thou shalt utterly destroy" This is the principal on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. Whatever God requires is right, no matter what it is although we may not see the reason thereof 'til long after the events transpire. . . .But in obedience there is joy and peace unspotted.[86]

Theory 1: Pious Deceiver

The first theory postulated by skeptics for decades goes something like this: Joseph Smith, Jr., and his father were knowledgeable in magical practices but had no magical, supernatural, or paranormal abilities. As poor farmers doing anything they could to supplement their income and keep food on the

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86. Joseph Smith, Jr., et. al., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1902-1912), 5:134-5; in *New Mormon Studies CD-ROM*. The statement was originally part of a letter written to Nancy Rigdon after she refused to become one of Joseph's plural wives. See Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 32-33. For a broader discussion of truth and deception, see Clay Chandler, "The Truth, the Partial Truth, and Something Like the Truth," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 97-119.

table, they exploited the gullibility of the local population by providing them with what they wanted—belief in a quick and easy route to a better life. According to this theory, Joseph pretended to be able to see things in his seerstone so that people like Josiah Stowell would hire him to aid in their treasure quests. They sacrificed the black sheep in one of their treasure quests because they wanted the meat. After Joseph's trial, he wanted to find a different way to supplement the family income and concocted a scheme wherein he would claim to have finally succeeded in taking a treasure away from a spirit or angel, but this gold treasure was, as it turned out, a history, a written record with religious significance that would confirm that America was a blessed land and that the American Indians were descended from the lost tribes of Israel. During those four years when Smith was making his annual trips to the hill where the plates were buried, he was, according to this theory, secretly writing and memorizing the Book of Mormon, and when it came time to "translate," he simply recited what he had memorized. He took Emma with him because magical formulas called for a companion, and he would be expected to take a companion. He also took her because he wanted a witness to substantiate his story. He wore a black linen coat and wrapped the plates in linen because that was what people knowledgeable about magic would expect him to do if he really had found an "enchanted" book. And, finally, Joseph didn't use the plates in the translation process because he had faked them. He and the eleven witnesses who claimed to have seen the plates were part of a larger conspiracy whose purpose was to gain credibility for him and his family and make money from the sales of the completed book.

There are a number of problems with this theory. First, there is no evidence of a conspiracy. Emma, according to the historical record, seems to have been a true believer in her husband's gifts. Also, the three witnesses who claimed to have seen the plates and the angel all remained basically true to their stories, even after excommunication or disassociation from the church Joseph founded. Perhaps the most significant problem with this theory is that it doesn't explain why Joseph would have proceeded to found a church after the Book of Mormon was published and then commit the rest of his life to it in spite of persecution, hardships, and physical danger to himself and his family. Critics point to a narcissistic personality and a need to remain in the spotlight when explaining Joseph's founding of the church. They cite his personal charisma to explain his success in gathering followers. Apologists for the church have spent a considerable amount of time and effort pointing out these and other problems with the pious deceiver theory, but those same apologists have also argued against the magical connection in general. Believers see in Joseph, above all, a God-given ability to lead and a prophetic calling. Neither the skeptic's nor the apologist's arguments are particularly satisfying, but this first theory may be the simplest explanation that accounts best for the available evidence, and as such would survive Occam's razor's insistence on minimal complexity.

Theory 2: True Believer in Magic and Altered States of Consciousness

A second theory that could account for all the available facts does not require that we believe in magic, but requires us to believe that Joseph Smith *did*. Before I can explain the theory, however, it will be necessary to better understand the mechanics of scrying.

Harper's *Encyclopedia of Mystical and Paranormal Experience* describes the techniques used by scryers to induce their visions and provides some insights as to how the process works:

> Some who use crystals focus on points of light on the surface. Others enter an altered state of consciousness and allow images to float into their inner awareness. Some images are couched in symbols, which the scryer must learn to interpret. In the Middle Ages, there was a belief that the images formed on a crystal ball or other tools were caused by demons that had been trapped inside by magic.
>
> It is possible to learn the art of scrying with patience and practice. Paramount to success is the ability to relax both mind and body and put the mind in a passive, unfocused state. Some scryers say that when clairvoyance develops the speculum will appear to cloud over with a curtain or mist, which then parts to reveal shapes and colors. With more skill the shapes and colors sharpen to reveal discernible objects, people, and symbols.[87]

According to this description, some scryers enter into altered states of consciousness (ASC). Although the existence of ASCs has long been known in both advanced and primitive cultures, systematic study of them began only recently. Our western culture, rooted in rationalism, has resisted acknowledging the value and even the existence of these states.[88]

Contemporary researchers list the major ASCs as sleep, the hypnagogic (drowsy pre-sleep) state, hypnosis, various types of meditation, mystical or transcendental experiences, experimental sensory deprivation experiences, and states associated with psychoactive drugs. Any method used to deliberately produce an altered state of consciousness is referred to as an induction technique, and they generally can be sorted into four categories: changes in external stimulation (amount and variety), changes in physical activity (amount and variety), changes in physiological state (e.g., psychoactive drugs, hypoxia, dehydration, starvation, malnutrition), and changes in focus of attention (e.g., meditation). Many induction methods are centuries old and often were used in combination.

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87. Guiley, *Harper's Encyclopedia*, 534.

88. R. Walsh, "States and Stages of Consciousness: Current Research and Understandings" in *Toward a Science of Consciousness II: The Second Tucson Discussions and Debates*, ed. S. R. Hameroff, A. W. Kaszniak, and A. C. Scott (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), 677-86.

Ancient Gnostics induced sensory deprivation by sitting quietly in pitch-black caves for days while waiting for enlightenment. They would also fast for days and very likely used some kind of psychoactive drug. The Whirling Dervishes, a variety of Sufi mystic, induce motor overload by spinning while repetitively chanting until they collapse in ecstasy. American Indians have long undergone "spirit quests" through the use of Peyote, an hallucinogenic cactus. Yoga-trained mystics have for centuries sought union with the divine through exercise, diet, maintaining certain postures (which may reduce or increase the flow of oxygen to the brain), controlled breathing (which can also effect brain chemistry), and inwardly focused concentration. Many of today's youth attend "rave" parties where they attempt to achieve altered states of consciousness through a combination of motor and sensory overload involving rhythmic dancing, flashing lights (including glow sticks waved rapidly before their eyes), pulsating repetitive music, and the appropriately named drug, Ecstasy.

Some crystal gazers prefer to stare into their speculum by the light of a flickering candle to achieve an altered state of consciousness. Whether focusing on the flickering lights of a crystal ball or the flickering reflections of the surface of a still lake, the change in external stimulation could induce an ASC. Modern psychologists use a similar technique of flashing lights combined with rhythmic auditory pulses to access parts of their patients' psyche that would otherwise be unavailable.[89] For other scryers, the device may act as a "blank screen," and as they focus more intently on the object, sensory deprivation may occur. In his 1931 book, *Witchcraft Magic & Alchemy*, Grillot De Givry described how English crystal gazers operated by "maintaining a complete silence and remaining in meditation, without thinking of anything, for a quarter of an hour before consulting the mirror (crystal); they call this 'letting the mind remain blank.' They make use by preference of an egg-shaped globe of crystal."[90] His description is consistent with what has been described as an altered state of consciousness.

In most descriptions of the translation process, Joseph Smith placed his stone in a hat and held it up to his face, blocking out all light. If these descriptions are accurate, he was likely doing two things: First, he was creating a state of sensory deprivation; and second, he was changing his blood chemistry. What should be pointed out here and, I believe, has been overlooked heretofore, is what Joseph Smith was *not* doing: Technically, he was not crystal gazing, since with no light in the hat, it would have been impossible for him to see the stone. Unless one is willing to grant the stone actual magical powers or the ability to glow in the dark, then the stone becomes irrelevant to the proceedings except for

89. This process is known as EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). EMDR Institute, web site, http://www.emdr.com/, 1 Jan 2003.

90. Grillot De Givry, *Witchcraft Magic & Alchemy*, trans. J. Courtenay Locke (New York: Bonanza Books, no date), 307. This book was first published in English in 1931.

a possible placebo effect. Nonetheless, by staring into the darkness, Joseph was likely inducing an altered state of consciousness where his mind could become blank as described above. It's also possible that Joseph, much like a hyperventilating person who breathes into a paper bag, changed his blood chemistry slightly, increasing the amount of carbon dioxide and reducing the amount of oxygen getting to his brain. This state, known as hypoxia, can cause brain damage and even death if the oxygen deprivation is complete, but minor changes in blood oxygen level may have helped Joseph induce a trance state. Prolonged periods of even mild hypoxia would likely have impaired Joseph's judgment and reduced his motor coordination,[91] so we must consider the possibilities that his hat was either porous enough to let him breathe freely, he didn't really hold it tight around his face, or he was constantly removing his head from the hat in order to get oxygen. If either of the first two is correct, then some light may have gotten in, and Joseph may indeed have been crystal gazing. If the third possibility is correct, it's unlikely that Joseph could have maintained the trance state for the long periods of time that he was reported to have spent dictating.

If the second theory is correct, then a combination of sensory deprivation, hypoxia, and/or Joseph's natural aptitude induced an ASC, allowing him to dictate the contents of the Book of Mormon. It is an admittedly huge leap from the former to the latter, but while highly unusual, this form of auto-dictation is not unheard of and is very similar to what is known in the occult as automatic writing or spirit writing. A number of books have allegedly been written in this way, some of which are scripture-like, others very literary. The popular New Age book, "A Course in Miracles," for example, was created by Helen Schucman, Ph. D., between 1965 and 1972 through a process she called "inner dictation." According to Schucman, she began writing her 1500-page book when a clear inner voice spoke to her with the words, "This is a Course in Miracles, please take notes." The voice would later identify itself as Jesus Christ.[92] Scott C. Dunn, in his article, "Spirit Writing: Another look at the Book of Mormon," documents that people with this ability are capable of writing for hours at a time without stopping, as Joseph Smith did. In some cases, the "author" communicates with a person who has died. A person with this ability is a *medium*, which is a "broad designation for anyone who acts as a channel of communication between the human and divine realms."[93] Often the author exhibits paranormal writing skill and knowledge of historical events to which he or she was never exposed, as may have been the case with Smith. Many, including Smith and

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91. "Cerebral Hypoxia," MEDLINEplus Medical Encyclopedia, http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001435.htm, 27 Dec 2002.

92. "The Scribing of a Course in Miracles," 5 July 01, http://www.acim.org/about_acim_section/scribes.html.

93. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 25.

Schucman, could stop dictating and resume later at the exact same point without having to review what had been previously dictated.[94]

It has often been pointed out that the Book of Mormon is filled with quotes from the King James Version of the Bible. Their presence is easily explained if the source of the Book of Mormon was Joseph Smith's subconscious. Joseph Smith was, prior to the dictation of the Book of Mormon, well-versed in the Bible. Mormon apologists have tried to claim that during the translation process Joseph had a copy of the Bible nearby, and whenever he recognized a quote he would just look it up. However, none of the known accounts of the translation process support that theory. As Dunn points out, automatic writing provides a very simple explanation:

> Just as individuals under hypnosis have been able to quote lengthy passages in foreign languages which they heard at the age of three, so have automatic writers produced detailed information from books which they have read but in some cases cannot remember reading. Thus, if Joseph Smith's scriptural productions borrow material from the Bible he was known to study, this is entirely consistent with other cases of automatic writing. This phenomenon of memory, known as cryptomnesia, may also explain the presence of writing styles and literary patterns which are found both in the Book of Mormon and the Bible.[95]

Whether through auto-dictation, automatic writing or some other means, Joseph Smith may have generated the Book of Mormon through an ecstatic process. If the descriptions of people experienced at scrying are to be believed, then Joseph emptied his mind and words or images flooded in to fill the void. Joseph would have needed to interpret those words or images, form them into coherent sentences, and dictate them to his scribe. Joseph's response to Oliver Cowdery's failed attempt at translating takes on new meaning when viewed in this light. Oliver came to Joseph as a trained rodsman—i.e., someone trained in the use of divining rods—and as such, would probably have expected that the correct translations would be received from an outside source. Instead, he was told that it was necessary

> to study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right. But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong; therefore, you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me. Now, if you had known this you could have translated (D&C 9:7-10).

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94. Scott C. Dunn, "Spirit Writing: Another look at the Book of Mormon" *Sunstone* 10, no. 6 (June 1985): 17-26.

95. Ibid., 25.

Staring into the darkness of the hat, Joseph's mind could have filled with images or visions, which he then "studied out in his mind" until he felt that they were correct, creating a coherent text as he went along. Whether or not the words or images he saw came from God or from his own subconscious is impossible to determine and is ultimately a matter of personal belief.

If Joseph Smith was a true believer in magic, as proposed by the second theory, then it becomes clear why Joseph chose to seek a divine visitation on the date of the autumnal equinox and why he began the prayer late at night. In the world of magic, dreams and visions are equivalent, so he could have dreamed that he was visited by the angel Moroni and then used his seerstone the next day to locate the area seen in his dream. He followed precise magical procedure because he believed it was necessary to be successful. A somewhat large leap of faith, involving altered states of consciousness and the efficacy of scrying, also explains why Joseph didn't need the plates to translate. But the question of whether he actually found gold plates and why they were necessary if he wasn't going to translate from them remains unanswered. It makes no sense that Smith would spend four years trying to get an actual history written on plates and then leave it wrapped in linen, unopened. One possible explanation, however, is consistent with the theory and is rooted in the same magic texts and traditions that informed his treasure hunting. To my knowledge, this explanation has never been suggested. In Barrett's *The Magus*, we find instructions on how to make a magic book. After explaining how to construct the book using virgin parchment, Barrett says:

> let [the book] be brought, in a clear and fair night, to a circle prepared in a cross-way, according to the art which we have before delivered; and there, in the first place, the book is to be opened, and to be consecrated according to the rites and ways which we have before delivered concerning consecration. . .then let the book be wrapped up in a clean linen cloth, and bury it in the midst of the circle, and stop the hole so as it may not be perceived or discovered: the circle being destroyed after you have licensed the spirits, depart before sun-rise; and on the third day, about the middle of the night, return and make the circle anew and on thy knees make prayer unto God, and give thanks to him; and let a precious perfume be made, open the hole in which you buried your book and take it out, and so let it be kept, not opening the same. Then after licensing the spirits in their order and destroying the circle, depart before sun rise. And this is the last rite and manner of consecrating, profitable to whatever writings, experiments, &c. that direct the spirits, placing the same between two holy lamens or pentacles, as is before mentioned.[96]

Sibly and Agrippa describe similar procedures.[97] If Joseph had been aware of this procedure and followed it, it would explain why he went out late at night

96. Barrett, *The Magus*, 91.

97. Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy*, 58-59; Sibly, *Occult Sciences*, 1123-24.

and didn't return until sunrise on the day he retrieved the plates. Since this procedure is a magical one, he would have required a companion, which explains why he took Emma along. Wrapping the book in linen and leaving it unopened are two specific magical requirements that explain why he wore the linen coat, used a linen table cloth for a covering, and kept the book wrapped up at all times. If this is what occurred—that is, if Joseph Smith was making a magic book according to a traditional formula—then he deliberately deceived Emma, his family, the eleven witnesses to the Book of Mormon, and countless others when he claimed to have found a written record on gold plates.

There are, of course, a number of problems with this theory. Reports from people who "felt" the plates say that the pages sounded and felt like metal, not the virgin parchment required above. There are also the eleven witnesses who claimed to have actually seen the plates. There are questions as to whether the witnesses saw the plates with their own eyes or in vision, but their testimonies cannot be ignored.[98] These magic books are intended to be used by the magician as aids in summoning spirits and demons, so Joseph's use of the book in translation would be new and unusual. But if Joseph Smith, as part of his training in magic, learned how to make a magic book that would be "profitable to whatever writings, experiments, &c." he required, then he could have created a book, consecrated it, buried it, dug it up again after three days, wrapped it in linen, and then, being careful not to open it, used it in writing the Book of Mormon. It's not the simplest explanation, but it is possible.

If, as described in our first theory, Joseph's sole motivation for creating the Book of Mormon was to make money, we are left wondering why he went on to found a religion and suffer the persecutions that resulted. It is difficult to believe that Joseph would have continued down this religious path without compelling religious conviction that the doctrines he was sharing were true.

Theory 3: True Believer and Mystic

A third theory to explain the available evidence proposes that Joseph Smith's early experiences with magic and scrying inadvertently unlocked the door to the world of religious mysticism, a world where sudden illumination and encounters with the divine are hallmarks. Joseph's "First Vision" may have been just such a mystical encounter, and his subsequent activities, including the cre-

98. Of the three witnesses who saw both the plates and the angel, two—Martin Harris and David Whitmer—were later quoted as saying they saw the plates only in vision. Martin Harris also claimed that the eight other witnesses who only saw the plates never saw them with their eyes (Stephen Burnett to Lyman E. Johnson, 15 April 1838, cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:288-293; see also the "editorial note." See Warren Parrish to E. Holmes, 11 August 1838, in the Carthage, Ohio, *Evangelist* 6 (1838): 226-27, quoted in Edward H. Ashment, "'A Record in the Language of My Father': Evidence of Ancient Egyptian and Hebrew in the Book of Mormon," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, ed. Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 332n10, 391.

ation of the Book of Mormon, follow paths traveled by other known mystics.

Definitions of mysticism abound, but in general we understand it as the experience of communion with Ultimate Reality. Gershom Sholem, the great scholar of Kabbalah (a form of Jewish mysticism), defined a mystic as someone who has been favored with an immediate, and to him or her real, experience of the divine, of ultimate reality, or someone who at least strives to attain such experience. This experience may come through sudden illumination, or it may be the result of long and often elaborate preparations.[99] Modern researchers have divided mystical experiences into two categories, Apophatic and Kataphatic. Apophatic mystical experiences are trophotropic and devoid of sensory content. They are oriented toward emptying. Kataphatic mystical experiences are ergotropic and involve activity. They are oriented toward images and can involve hallucinations and visions.[100] More simply stated, "meditative techniques fall into two categories. There are passive approaches, in which the intention is to clear the mind of all conscious thought, and active approaches, in which the goal is to focus the mind completely on some object of attention—a mantra, for example, or some symbol or scriptural verse."[101] Focusing on a crystal or stone would be another example of an active approach, while gazing into the darkness of a hat would be passive. The similarities between these descriptions of mystical experiences and the earlier descriptions of induction techniques for alternate states of consciousness are obvious.

Mystical experiences vary, depending on the mystic's religious tradition, but they tend to share the following four characteristics. They are (1) *ineffable*–the experience cannot be described in words; (2) *noetic*—they give insight into deep truths; (3) *transient*—these mystical states cannot be sustained for long periods and generally last from a few seconds to a few minutes; and (4) *passive*—the oncoming of mystical states can be induced through voluntary operations like meditation, but once established, the mystic feels out of control, as if he or she were grasped by a superior power.[102] Additionally, mystical experiences are often characterized by strong, contradictory emotions such as terrifying fear and incredible joy.

There have been recent studies supporting the belief that when entering into ecstatic states, a certain part of the mind is quieted. In 2001, Andrew Newberg, M.D., and Eugen D'Aquili, M.D., reported the results of studies on Buddhists and Franciscan nuns who meditated and prayed. Using SPECT cameras (Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography), they were able to analyze brain func-

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99. Gershom Scholem, *On The Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1996), 5.

100. Robert K. C. Forman, "What Does Mysticism Have To Teach Us About Consciousness?" http://www.imprint.co.uk/Forman.html, 27 December 2002.

101. Andrew Newberg, M.D., Eugen D'Aquili, M.D., and Vince Rause, *Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief* (New York: Balantine Books, 2001), 117.

102. F. C. Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology* (London: Penguin Books, 1990).

tion in their subjects while the subjects were in ecstatic states as a result of meditation and fervent prayer, respectively. What they discovered was that the posterior superior parietal lobe of the brain became unusually quiet during those periods when the subjects were in ecstatic states. This particular part of the brain is responsible for orienting individuals in physical space, and it helps us distinguish where we end and our surroundings begin. As Newberg and D'Aquili explain:

> With no information flowing in from the senses the OAA (orientation association area) wouldn't be able to find any boundaries. . . .In that case, the brain would have no choice but to perceive that the self is endless and intimately interwoven with everyone and everything the mind senses. And this perception would feel utterly and unquestionably real.[103]

The ultimate goal of most mystics is to achieve the *unio mystica* (mystical union), the ultimate union of the mind with the divine. Descriptions of this experience tend to emphasize the complete connection between, the intermingling of, the mystic and God. As one Sufi master reported:

> I am He Whom I love, and He whom I love is I:
> We are two spirits dwelling in one body.
> If thou Seest me, thou seest Him,
> And if thou seest Him, thou seest us both[104]

The medieval Catholic mystic Meister Eckhart explained:

> How then am I to love the Godhead: Thou shalt not love him as he is: not as a God, not as a spirit, not as a Person, not as an image, but as sheer, pure One. And into this One we are to sink from nothing to nothing, so help us God.[105]

This is not the kind of God described by Joseph Smith in his official history. The God of Mormonism is discrete and separate, and Joseph Smith never claimed to have had a union with him. But as many researchers have pointed out, mystical experiences come in all shapes and sizes and with a variety of intensities. The Jewish Merkebah (Chariot) Mystics of the first and second centuries attempted through ecstatic ascents to see "the one who sits on the Throne,"[106] but did not attempt to unite with God. Kabbalah mystics seek an "intimate union" called *Devekut* (cleaving to God) but carefully distinguish devekut from complete unification.

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103. Newberg et al., *Why God Won't Go Away*, 4-7.
104. cited in Newberg et al., *Why God Won't Go Away*, 102.
105. cited in Ibid.
106. Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 16.

None of Joseph Smith's experiences with the plates or with Moroni could be categorized as an "experience of communion with Ultimate Reality." Joseph Smith's first vision was unarguably a communion with the divine, but not an *unio mystica*. In Doctrine and Covenants 137, Joseph describes his vision of the celestial kingdom and seeing the "blazing throne of God" in terms that would be the envy of any Merkebah mystic. He describes the heavens being opened and seeing the "transcendent beauty of the gate. . .which was like unto circling flames of fire. . .the beautiful streets. . .which had the appearance of being paved with gold." Most importantly, in verse 1 he says he "cannot tell" whether his vision was "in the body or out."[107] According to Joseph, this vision came to him while he was in the Kirtland Temple during administration of the endowment ordinances. The vision was apparently noetic, transient, and passive, but not necessarily ineffable.

Mystics who have experienced the *unio mystica* typically describe a universal, absolute reality that encompasses and accepts all religious beliefs. Religious intolerance, however, is based on the presumption of "exclusive" truth. Newberg and D'Aquili speculate that this form of intolerance "may rise out of incomplete states of neurobilogical transcendence":

> If religions and the literal Gods they define are in fact interpretations of transcendent experience, then all interpretations of God are rooted, ultimately, in the same experience of transcendent unity. This holds true whether this ultimate reality actually exists, or is only a neurological perception generated by an unusual brain state. All religions, therefore, are kin. None of them can exclusively own the realist reality, but all of them, at their best, steer the heart and the mind in the right direction.[108]

The available evidence indicates that Joseph Smith's encounters with God, whether ecstatic or otherwise, were less than total union. Joseph Smith was not trained in mysticism as a Kabbalist or a Buddhist would be, and no one showed him the way to enlightenment. Whatever mystical states he attained would have come through his own abilities and/or through his experiences with magic.

David Steindl-Rast, a monk at Mount Savior Monastery in the Finger Lake Region of New York, who has also practiced Zen with Buddhist masters and holds a Ph.D. in psychology, explains the process by which the mystic attempts to make sense of his mystical experience and how that leads to the formation of new doctrine:

> How does one get from mystic experience to an established religion? My one word answer is: inevitably. What makes the process inevitable is that we do with our mystical experience what we do with every experience, that is, we try to understand it;

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107. Similar wording can be found in 2 Cor 12:2-3 and 3 Nephi 28:14-15.

108. Newberg et al., *Why God Won't Go Away*, 165.

> we opt for or against it; we express our feelings with regard to it. Do this with your mystical experience and you have all the makings of a religion. This can be shown.
>
> Moment by moment, as we experience this and that, our intellect keeps step; it interprets what we perceive. This is especially true when we have one of those deeply meaningful moments: our intellect swoops down upon that mystical experience and starts interpreting it. Religious doctrine begins at this point. There is no religion in the world that does not have its doctrine. And there is no religious doctrine that could not ultimately be traced back to its roots in the mystical experience—that is, if one had time and patience enough, for those roots can be mighty long and entangled.[109]

However, mysticism is inevitably held suspect by established religions,[110] and the vocal mystics—the ones who try to explain their experiences and, thus, find their places in the history of religion—inevitably come into conflict with established religion. Whereas some mystics like St. Theresa or Moses de Leon manage to remain within their traditions, the most radical of the revolutionary mystics aspire to establish a new authority based on their own experience. As we will see in the next section, these people are usually referred to as prophets. Mohammed, Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy (founder of Christian Science), and Ellen Harmon White (founder of the Seventh-day Adventists) were all prophets, but as we will see, mystics and prophets are closely related and their roles often overlap.

Prophets base their teachings on the claim of personal revelation from the supernatural rather than from the study and interpretation of a preexisting theology.[111] It shouldn't be surprising that they feel free to invalidate the literal or historical meanings of the scriptures of their respective traditions and replace them with their own mystical interpretations.[112] Joseph may have been deliberately deceptive when he claimed that the Book of Mormon was an ancient work, but like other mystic/prophets before him, he would have felt inspired by God to do so. *The Zohar*, the primary literary work in Kabbalah, is a prime example. *The*

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109. David Steindl-Rast, "The Mystical Core of Organized Religion," *Council for Spiritual Practices*, 5 July 2001, http://www.csp.org/experience/docs/steindl-mystical.html.

110. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 38. Blenkinsopp quotes I. M. Lewis, who said, "The more strongly based and entrenched religious authority becomes, the more hostile it is towards haphazard inspiration. New faiths may announce their advent with a flourish of ecstatic revelations, but once they become securely established they have little time or tolerance for enthusiasm. For the religious enthusiast, with his direct claim to divine knowledge, is always a threat to the established order (I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion* [Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1971], 29).

111. Victor W. Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, Lectures on the History of Religions Series, 1978), 81-82, cited in Richley H. Crapo, *Anthropology of Religion: The Unity and Diversity of Religions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 221-22.

112. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 13-14.

Zohar (The Book of Splendor) first appeared in Spain around 1275. There is very little question that the book was written by the Spanish mystic Moses of Leon over a period of approximately twenty years. The book is pseudepigrapha, falsely attributed to the third-century Talmudist Simeon ben Yohai.[113] The doctrines expounded in *The Zohar* were initially given added weight and credibility because they were believed to have come from an ancient and respected source. Joseph Smith may have similarly felt that the truths he was conveying would be better received if they seemed to come from an ancient source.[114]

The third theory—that Joseph Smith's practice of magic inadvertently unlocked the door to the world of religious mysticism—differs from the first theory primarily with regard to Joseph's motives. This last theory does not require a belief in magic or the paranormal, but it does require a belief in the altered states of consciousness that accompany mystical states, as verified by Newberg and D'Aquili, and it also requires a belief that Joseph Smith had at least one such experience. Joseph's ecstatic experience(s) may have been the call he needed to begin creating new doctrine, and the Book of Mormon was his response. This final theory is far simpler than the second theory, and it accounts for as many, if not more, of the known facts than the first two. Unlike the first theory, however, this one would explain why Joseph remained so committed to his chosen path.

Section 3: Becoming a Prophet

> Behold there shall be a record kept among you, and in it thou shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.
>
> —A Book of Commandments, 22:1

Regardless of which translation theory is correct, if indeed any of them are, Joseph Smith was fated to become a prophet in the eyes of some members of his society once the Book of Mormon was published, although it's questionable whether he knew this at the time. To understand why, we need to explore what a prophet is and what is required to become one.

In his book, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*, Robert R. Wilson surveys a wide range of anthropological studies and then defines a variety of terms commonly applied to prophetic figures. His list includes Prophets, Shamans, Witches/Sorcerers, Mediums, Diviners, Priests, and Mystics, and he considers

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113. Karen Armstrong, *A History of God: The 4,000 Year Quest of Judaism, Christiantity, and Islam* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), 247; see also Gershom Scholem, ed., *Zohar: The Book of Splendor, Basic Readings from the Kabbalah* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977), xii-xxi.

114. Compare this to Robert M. Price, "Prophesy and Palimpsest," *Dialogue: a Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 67-82.

each a specialty with titles that often overlap and distinctions that are not always clear.[115] According to Wilson, most anthropologists avoid using the word "prophet" in reference to modern religious specialists because of the inevitable biblical comparisons and also because the word is ambiguous even in its biblical context.[116]

"Prophet" comes from the Greek *prophetes*, meaning one who "speaks forth" or "proclaims" the message of a deity.[117] In ancient Greece "the prophet" was a member of the temple staff whose office was to interpret the ecstatic and unintelligible utterances of the priestess of Zeus or the Pythia respectively.[118] It was substituted for a variety of Hebrew words during the translation of the Greek Septuagint. As Wilson explains, "The Septuagint translators thus apparently did not distinguish the various types of Israelite prophetic figures but applied to all of them the title "prophetes," which the translators must have understood as a general term capable of characterizing diverse religious specialists."[119] The Jewish scholars who translated the ancient Hebrew apparently chose to emphasize the more controlled aspects of religion by using *prophetes* over similar words like *mantis* or *manteuomai* which connote an ecstatic element.[120] The closest Wilson comes to defining "prophet" is to say that a prophet, along with mediums and diviners, are "religious specialists. . .concerned with proclaiming and interpreting divine messages and on occasion with speaking about the future," and that all three "provided means by which people could contact the gods."[121] For simplicity, he combines the prophet, shaman, medium, and diviner together to form a set he refers to as "intermediaries," because they all "serve as intermediaries between the human and divine world." He deliberately omits priests because of their unique religious function in the maintenance and operation of the cult.[122] "Prophets, shamans, witches, mediums, and diviners," he informs us, "can also be priests if they have regular cultic roles in their societies," and "priests can on occasion function as diviners, prophets, or mediums."[123] He likewise omits mystics, which he defines as someone who has a "temporary union with divine reality," because anthropologists rarely use the term and because mystics are "frequently unwilling or unable to verbalize their experience and often have no clearly defined religious role

115. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 22-28.

116. Ibid., 22.

117. Ibid., 22-23.

118. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy*, 27. This ancient practice of utterance and interpretation is a cognate of the early Mormon practice of speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues, a practice that has vanished from Mormonism in spite of its inclusion in the 7th Article of Faith, but is still practiced in some Pentecostal religions.

119. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 23. See also 23n4.

120. Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy*, 27.

121. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 22-23.

122. Ibid., 26-27.

123. Ibid., 27.

within their societies."[124] Based on these definitions, we see Joseph Smith as a diviner when he was guiding treasure quests. He was both diviner and mystic-medium when he translated the book of Mormon. After the church was founded, he became diviner, prophet-medium, and priest. He may have had ecstatic or mystical experiences during any of those periods, and he was an intermediary during all of them.

In his chapter "Prophecy in Modern Societies," Wilson summarizes the social prerequisites of intermediaries, the mechanisms of intermediation, and the making of an intermediary. Before I summarize his findings, I should point out that Joseph Smith and Mormonism are not mentioned in this book, nor does the book refer to any of Smith's contemporaries. The focus is on ancient Israel, but the author could just as easily have been referring to the Burned-over District of the 1830s.

The social prerequisites of intermediation are: 1) a belief in the reality of a supernatural power or powers; 2) a belief that those powers can influence earthly affairs and can in turn be directly influenced by human agents; 3) a positive view toward the intermediaries' actions (the activities of the intermediary need to be either encouraged or at a minimum tolerated); and 4) societal conditions require the services of an intermediary. All four social prerequisites are evident throughout Joseph Smith's career. His services as a diviner, for example, were in demand because his society believed in the reality of subterranean spirits that controlled slippery treasures. The society's acceptance of magic attests to its belief that those powers can be directly influenced by human agents; its acceptance of Joseph and others as diviners reveals a positive view toward intermediaries; and as everyone knew, a successful treasure hunt required the services of a seer. As Joseph transformed from diviner to prophet, the same prerequisites held true, but his target audience was seeking salvation instead of lost treasure.

Wilson further elaborates on the conditions that favor the development of intermediaries:

> Intermediaries are often found in societies undergoing stress and rapid social change. Sudden economic reversals, wars, natural disasters, and cross-cultural contact can all lead to social instability. Under such conditions a society may seek to restore its equilibrium by renewing its contacts with the supernatural world. Intermediaries may have a role in this process, and if so, their numbers will increase as social conditions deteriorate. The converse is also true. As social conditions become more stable, the need for intermediaries lessens, and their numbers are likely to decrease."[125]

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124. Ibid.

125. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 31.

Compare the quote above to the following description of Joseph Smith's environment:

> The situation throughout the union was unsettled and things were extremely fluid in this period when all America seemed to be streaming westward after the Revolution. A new physical universe was there to contend with. A new and somewhat uncertain political system existed and Americans had to operate within it. The bases of social order were in a state of disarray, and as a result of the nation's having cut its ties with England and her history, a clear lack of grounding in the past was evident. . .[U]ncertainty placed in jeopardy the religious dynamic that for centuries. . .had passed from one generation to the next a body of unquestioned information about divinity, humanity, the system of right relationships that created the social order, and the nature of experience after death.[126]

It is not by accident that upstate New York and the western frontier were the birthplaces to scores of new religions.

The section of Wilson's book dealing with the making of intermediaries should be of great interest to students of Joseph Smith. Wilson explains, "It is popularly believed that individuals become intermediaries by virtue of possessing certain religious, psychological, or social characteristics. People who have these characteristics are thought to develop naturally, even inevitably, into intermediaries."[127] But not all charismatics, mystics, etc., become intermediaries, so other developmental factors must be considered. In fact, intermediaries tend to share certain social characteristics: "For the most part, these people play peripheral roles within their societies prior to becoming intermediaries and sometimes belong to an oppressed or minority group. Although they may have social status, they have little actual social, political, or religious power."[128] Additionally, the transformation process is more likely to occur in individuals undergoing a personal crisis, severe stress, or uncertainty about their proper social role. People have been known to become intermediaries as a response to unbearable family tensions. In possession societies, the initial experience of the intermediary often occurs at puberty. Parallels to the life of Joseph Smith are obvious. According to Joseph's own story, he was a young boy, fourteen years old, and uncertain about which religion to join. His family was facing not only a religious crisis, but also a financial one, having just lost their family farm. Joseph was able to receive some social status for his abilities with his peepstone, but the family was clearly marginal, poor, and powerless.

In the same way that Mormons believe Joseph Smith was "called" to become a prophet by direct divine intervention, most societies that support intermediaries

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126. Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 33-34.

127. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 46.

128. Ibid..

believe they are the result of supernatural action. "Spirits or deities choose their own intermediaries," writes Wilson, "either by granting them a mystical experience of some sort or by possessing them directly. In the former case the person's spirit leaves his body during a trance or during a dream and travels to the supernatural realm, where the spirits inform him of his future vocation."[129]

When Joseph Smith first delivered the news that he'd had a vision of God, he received no support outside his own family. His community was unwilling to accept him as a religious intermediary, which left him to complain, "Why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it and I knew God knew it, and I could not deny it."[130] Only after he produced the Book of Mormon did his community have a means to evaluate his prophetic calling. There were plenty of "diviners" in the neighborhood—people claiming the ability to find water or lost items or even treasure. But a restored ancient scripture was something of a different magnitude. Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Mormon helped him appear as someone with truly exceptional supernatural powers. In effect, it gave him the charisma necessary to become accepted by society in his new role.[131] Of course, many still rejected him and his book, but others were accepting because its message was consistent with their internally held beliefs. The Book of Mormon struck a resonant cord, and followers eagerly responded to its message.

With the founding of the new religion, and with followers behind him, Joseph had completed the transition from diviner to mystic to prophet/priest. The end result was a vastly improved social status for him and his family, regardless of whether this had been his goal. He now had support within a small, devoted, and growing group. However, tensions quickly increased between the group and the larger community. An intermediary, explains Wilson, can survive within a small support group as long as he or she doesn't generate too much conflict within the larger society.[132] The church's relocations to Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, and Utah, were a result of the tension caused by the larger society's unwillingness to accept Smith's message or his status as a prophet. Joseph's eventual martyrdom was the result of those continued conflicts. He was not by any means the first prophet to become a martyr, and his death may actually have helped the church survive. According to Wilson, "Once the leader has begun the process of group formation and has sketched a program for the group to follow, his actual physical presence within the group is no longer necessary for its successful growth. History is full of examples of charismatic leaders who were

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129. Ibid., 49.

130. Joseph Smith, Jr., et. al., *History of the Church*, 1:7-8.

131. Max Weber defines charisma as a "certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities" (*The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* [New York: Free Press, 1964], 358-59).

132. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society*, 68.

martyred or who simply disappeared early in the process of group formation. In many cases these leaders became more effective catalysts after their departure than they were before."[133]

Today the Mormon church is no longer a marginal sect. It has wealth, power, prestige, and wants nothing more than to be considered a world religion. It's not by accident that the more mystical aspects of Mormonism have all but vanished. Prophets start new religions among marginalized, powerless peoples, and once those people gain control of their situation, the charismatic element is regularized or eliminated in favor of organization and control. Today's prophets, seers, and revelators—the ordained apostles who lead the church—do not speak in tongues or use divining rods, and Joseph's seerstone is safely tucked away in the First Presidency's vault. Only on rare occasions have LDS leaders added to the official cannon. From an organizational viewpoint, that is as it should be. Joseph Smith lived in a time and place where magic and religion often co-existed harmoniously and where religious leaders and magical practitioners could be one and the same. But even then, as soon as Joseph Smith found himself in a position of power, he began the process of distancing himself from his magical roots. (Hence, the absence of these elements from his later official accounts.) Over the years, the Mormon church has attempted to increase that distance. Mysticism is almost non-existent in the modern church, and in fact, it is now the church that marginalizes its more mystical members. History shows that after the mystically inspired founders of new religions pass on, their followers begin to canonize. Commentaries are piled on top of commentaries on top of the original doctrines, each layer moving the brave new religion farther away from its mystical core. From the mystic's point of view, this is regrettable. To quote Steindl-Rast, "[L]ive doctrine fossilizes into dogmatism."[134]

In truth, however, the Correlation Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is, from an anthropological perspective, the predictable result of the church's growth and success. A young, poor, and marginalized Joseph Smith would most likely be as uncomfortable today with the church he founded as he was with the established denominations of his time. Then, a confluence of societal conditions created an opportunity for a deprived but genial young man with a background in magic to reinterpret and recast the scriptures and change the history of American religion. To understand how that happened—how a boy became a prophet—one must surely take into account his treasure hunting, his knowledge and use of magic, the connection between magic and the creation of the Book of Mormon, and how these things led almost unavoidably to the establishment of a new religion. Magic opened a door for Joseph Smith into the world of religious mysticism and, as a tool for producing the Book of Mormon, may have set him on the path to becoming a prophet.

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133. Ibid,, 79.

134. Steindl-Rast, "The Mystical Core of Organized Religion."

"There Really is a God, and He Dwells in the Temporal Parietal Lobe of Joseph Smith's Brain"

William J. Hamblin

IN A RECENT ISSUE OF *DIALOGUE*, Robert M. Price offers his perspective on the origin of the Book of Mormon and a recommendation for how Latter-day Saints should understand the significance of that book.[1] Dr. Price's position is straightforward and none too innovative; while providing no evidence, he insists "virtually all critical scholars. . .agree that Joseph Smith did not discover the Book of Mormon but rather created it" (67).[2] He further maintains that the claims Joseph Smith made surrounding the origin of the Book of Mormon are "manifestly false" (76). But all hope for Mormons is not lost. If we recognize that fiction can be called "inspired," then the Book of Mormon—as fiction—can also be called inspired. Price asserts that this insight will provide "a quantum leap in interpretative possibilities" that will "only enhance Smith's prophetic dignity, not de-

1. Robert M. Price, "Prophecy and Palimpsest," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 35, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 67-82. A fuller version of this article, "Joseph Smith: Inspired Author of the Book of Mormon," appeared, in Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe, *American Apocrypha*, (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 321-366. There is no indication in *Dialogue* that this article is actually an abridged reprint; it is unclear why the editors felt this article merited reprinting less than a year after it originally appeared. My citations are to the *Dialogue* article. Additional material not in the *Dialogue* abridgement can be found in the *American Apocrypha* version on pp. 321-327, 328-9, 335-6, 339, 341-2, 346, 347-366. Parallel passages in the *Dialogue* article and the *American Apocrypha* edition are as follows: 67=321-4; 68-77=324-339 (with several paragraphs omitted), 78=340, 342-3; 79-82=343-7.

2. Dr. Price seems to be completely unaware of, or at least unwilling to engage, a large body of scholarship which challenges his prejudices on this issue. For the most recent popularizing summary (with detailed notes to numerous technical studies), see Donald Parry, Daniel Peterson, and John Welch, eds. *Echoes and Evidences*, (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2002); see also Noel Reynolds, ed., *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: the Evidence for Ancient Origins*, (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1997).

bunk it" (82).[3] In reality this is simply more of the same kind of assertions we have been hearing for years from some cultural Mormons.[4] Price's entire case rests largely on argument from analogy. Unfortunately, none of the analogies he proposes are valid.[5]

Inspired Fiction?

Price believes that the insistence of most Latter-day Saints that the Book of Mormon is historical derives from our stubborn inability to

> . . .understand the difference between fiction and lying. The problem was one of "bifurcation," the reduction of a complex choice to an over-simple one. One's alternatives are not either "fact or deception," "hoax or history." For example were the parables of Jesus either factual or deceptive? Did he intend anyone to think he was talking about a real prodigal son? . . .Of course not; he knew that his audience knew he was making it up as he went. (68-69)

I admit to being baffled by such statements. Is Dr. Price so uninformed about the controversy over the origin of the Book of Mormon that he thinks this is a significant analogy? While it is true that Jesus never claimed his parables were intended to describe actual historical events (and no one has ever understood them as such), does Price really not know that Joseph Smith consistently claimed the Book of Mormon was authentic ancient history and that *all* of his early followers accepted it as such?[6] It is obscure how the two examples are even vaguely analogous.

On the other hand, no one who accepts the Book of Mormon as authentic ancient history and scripture rejects the idea that fiction can be revealed and inspired by God. Indeed, acceptance of the historicity of the Book of Mormon necessarily entails the existence of inspired fiction since the Book of Mormon itself contains examples of inspired fiction: Jacob's allegory of the olive tree (Jacob 5) and Alma's allegory of the seed and the tree of life (Alma 32) are the two most obvious examples. The problem is not—as Price asserts—that believing Latter-day Saints are so simple-minded that we don't understand the difference between lying and fiction, or the possibility of inspired fiction such as

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3. Price makes these types of assertions throughout his article without ever attempting to actually argue for his position. Why an inventive fiction writer—Stephen King, for example—should be said to have greater "prophetic dignity" than a man who actually saw God and spoke with him still remains obscure to me.

4. The most recent examples can be found in Vogel and Metcalfe, *American Apocrypha.*

5. For a discussion of the fallacies of false analogy—several of which occur in Price's article, see David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought,* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1970), 243-259.

6. Kent P. Jackson, "Joseph Smith and the Historicity of the Book of Mormon," in Paul Y. Hoskisson, ed., *Historicity and the Latter-day Saint Scriptures* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 2001), 123-140.

Jesus' parables. The problem is that some of those who reject the historicity of the Book of Mormon don't seem to grasp the fact that the debate surrounding the origin of the Book of Mormon is not framed by believers as a question of history vs. fiction.[7] The issue is: if the Book of Mormon is fiction, then Joseph Smith could not be a true prophet, a point tacitly accepted by most of those who reject historicity, since all of their accounts include serious equivocation or redefinition of the key concepts revelation, inspiration, and prophet (as I'll explain below).

I have elsewhere outlined a simple logical argument related to the historicity of the Book of Mormon.

> 1. Joseph Smith claimed to have had possession of golden plates written by the Nephites and to have been visited by Moroni, a resurrected Nephite.
> 2. If the Book of Mormon is not an ancient document, there were no Nephites.
> 3. If there were no Nephites, there were no golden plates written by Nephites; and there was no Nephite named Moroni.
> 4. If there was no Moroni and there were no golden plates, then Joseph did not tell the truth when he claimed to possess and translate these nonexistent plates and to have been visited by a resurrected man.
> 5. Hence, Joseph was either lying (he knew there were no plates or angelic visitations, but was trying to convince others that there were) or he was insane or deluded (he believed there were golden plates and angelic visitations, which in fact did not exist).
>
> If [agnostics and some cultural Mormons] wish to maintain that the Book of Mormon is not an ancient document, but that Joseph Smith was somehow still a prophet, they must present some cogent explanation for Joseph's wild claims of possessing nonexistent golden plates and being visited by nonexistent angels. Thus the argument [made by believers in the historicity of the Book of Mormon] is not "If the Book of Mormon is not ancient, then it is not scripture," as [agnostics and cultural Mormons] would have us believe, but "If the Book of Mormon is not ancient, then Joseph Smith was not a prophet."[8]

Throughout his paper Price ignores the real issue; indeed, there is no evidence that he is aware that such arguments even exist. Instead, Price emphasizes his claim that the fact that "Joseph Smith [is] the author of the Book of Mormon, with Moroni and Mormon as its [fictional] narrators," (69) does not imply that Joseph Smith was "a mischievous or malicious hoaxer" (73) or "charlatan" (69).

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7. For a general introduction to a number of issues surrounding this question see Hoskisson, *Historicity and the Latter-day Saint Scriptures*.

8. William J. Hamblin, "An Apologist for the Critics" *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, 6, no. 1 (1994):453.

Unfortunately, Dr. Price never explains why he feels this is the case; it is mere assertion, not argument.

Instead of a serious study of the historical evidence and arguments, Price only argues by analogy that Herman Melville, the author of *Moby Dick*, uses Ishmael as a fictional first-person narrator; and no one has ever accused Melville of being a charlatan or hoaxer (69). Unfortunately, this is again an extraordinarily weak analogy. Melville never claimed that the resurrected Ishmael appeared to him and gave him the manuscript of *Moby Dick* on golden plates. Nor did he convince eleven people to publicly testify that they had seen the golden plates of the *Book of Moby*. He did not proclaim the divine origin of *Moby Dick* throughout his life, nor did he go to the grave defending those supernatural claims. I think we are justified in maintaining that there are some significant differences between the claimed origins of *Moby Dick*—which Melville always represented as fiction—and the claimed origins of the Book of Mormon, which Joseph Smith always represented as ancient and divinely inspired. Of course, using a first-person narrator in writing fiction does not make one a charlatan. But writing fiction and falsely testifying that the fiction is actual ancient history, taken from an ancient document provided by an angel, and proclaiming oneself a prophet on the basis of that "fiction" does make one a charlatan or a madman. Although not all fiction writers are charlatans, some fiction writers most certainly are. None of Joseph Smith's contemporaries had any confusion about this issue. They either accepted the Book of Mormon as authentic ancient scripture or a fraudulent fiction.

In the full version of his article in *American Apocrypha*, Price actually attempts to engage the question of historicity in a bit more detail.

> It would take a large-scale scrutiny of the Book of Mormon, and in minute detail, to determine if there is evidence of oral, preliterary traditions underlying the stories of the book. If scholars were to conclude that the narrative of the Book of Mormon had been worked up from traditional material, this would go a long way toward vindicating the claim of the book to be based on ancient accounts of ancient events.[9]

Remarkably, Price seems to be genuinely unaware that such studies have been going on for years by literally dozens of scholars, with quite positive results.[10]

I have seen variants on Price's claim—that fiction can be inspired and,

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9. Price, "Joseph Smith," 346.

10. For an excellent overview of the cultural and historical background to such debates, see Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). In addition to Parry, Peterson, and Welch, *Echoes and Evidences*, and Reynolds, *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited*, see Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, eds. *The Allegory of the Olive Tree* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1994); S. Kent Brown, *From Jerusalem to Zarahemla* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 1998), Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, eds. *King Benjamin's Speech* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1998), Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch, eds., *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1998).

therefore, that the Book of Mormon can be fiction and still be inspired—asserted endlessly by some cultural Mormons. I have never *once* seen a response to the actual arguments of the believers in the historicity. From this perspective the "inspired fiction" model is a red herring and a straw man.

PSEUDEPIGRAPHA?

Another major claim of Price's article is that the Book of Mormon is pseudepigraphic—that is falsely attributed to an ancient prophetic author. According to Price, in the formulation of biblical pseudepigrapha "both the new prophets [authors of pseudepigrapha] and the establishment [supporters of a closed canon] try to hide behind the names of the ancient, canonical prophets in order to claim authority" (72). He believes the Book of Mormon was created in precisely the same way that Old and New Testament pseudepigrapha were written (67-74). Indeed, for Price much of the Bible itself is essentially pseudepigrapha (78-81). He believes, for example, that Peter's vision in Acts 10:9-16 never really happened; instead it was a literary pastiche created by cobbling together carefully selected phrases from the Septuagint Old Testament (79-80).[11] For Price, "the Book of Mormon must be the product of the same process. . .the scrambling of motifs and distinctive phrases from previous literary texts in order to produce a new text of the same basic type" (81).

Dr. Price's argument in relation to the Book of Mormon is problematic at a number of levels. First, according to Price, new "inspired" pseudepigraphic authors wrote their new "revelations" under biblical pseudonyms such as Enoch, Moses, or Daniel (70).[12] This was because new scripture would not be accepted since the scriptural canon was closed:

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11. To consistently apply Price's method—that because an author describes events using scriptural language we should assume that the event being described did not really happen—leads to historical absurdity. Using Price's method, we must assume there was no First Crusade because the crusaders are described as circumambulating Jerusalem before their attack in conscious imitation of the ancient Israelite attack on Jericho (Joshua 6). Martin Luther King never led the civil rights movement because he used biblical language and models when proclaiming "Let my people go!" (Exodus 9:1). And because Brigham Young consciously imitated the camp organization of the Israelites as described in Exodus, there was obviously no real Mormon trek westward (D.C. 136); after all, they even claim to have gone to a land with a Jordan River and a salt sea! While conscious imitation of biblical models or language may indicate fictionalization, it is by no means proof of lack of historicity of the events being described. If the principle is manifestly inaccurate in many verifiable historical examples, why should we assume it is necessarily valid in interpreting scriptural texts?

12. Price's overall explanation for pseudepigraphic writings is simplistic at a number of levels. There is no scholarly consensus as to the definition of pseudepigrapha; ancient and modern ideas about pseudepigraphy change through time; the writing of pseudepigraphic texts began centuries before the closing of the canon—thus the existence of a closed canon cannot be the core cause for pseudepigraphy; many different Christian and Jewish communities understood canon and scripture differently; some, like first century Christians, had an open canon rendering pseudepigraphy pointless; some pseudepigraphic texts are accepted as canonical in some traditions (e.g. 1 Enoch among the Ethiopian Christians), etc. Furthermore, in Price's view, many canonical biblical texts are in fact pseudepigraphic (78-81), making his distinction between pseudepigrapha and canon rather arbitrary.

> the new visionary [author of a pseudepigraphic text] may not dare appear in public, but neither will the authorities dare to condemn "newly discovered" writings by the old, canonical prophets. In this way, the new prophets managed to slip under the fence built around the scriptural canon (71).

Whatever the merits of this interpretation—and it is surely overly simplistic[13]—it is not analogous to Joseph Smith because the Book of Mormon does not claim to be the work of ancient *biblical* authors. Rather, it is an entirely new set of scriptures by *non-biblical* prophets. Joseph's intention was clearly not to make the Book of Mormon acceptable to contemporary Christians by creating new prophecy in the mouth of a revered biblical author such as Moses or Isaiah.[14] By Price's own definition the Book of Mormon is not pseudepigrapha.

As a further part of his assertion that Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon as a pseudepigraph in order to make it more acceptable to readers of a closed biblical canon, Price believes that, "after setting forth the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith began to prophesy in his own voice" (74-5). Unfortunately for Dr. Price, the historical reality of Joseph's prophecies is quite different than Price's model. In an example of pure speculation, Price describes what he believes Joseph was thinking while considering foisting a fictitious Book of Mormon on the Christians of early nineteenth century America: "If writings of old prophets are the only ones taken seriously, then by all means let's write one! It's the only way to gain media access!" (72). According to Dr. Price, Joseph decided to write fictional scripture set in ancient times because the closing of the biblical canon prevented his own personal prophecies from being acceptable among other Christians. But the Book of Mormon was actually published in March 1830.[15] By that time Joseph Smith had already revealed seventeen sections of the Doctrine and Covenants (DC 2-18) over the course of twenty-one months in his own "prophetic voice." If the purpose of writing the Book of Mormon was to avoid the problems associated with claiming to be a new prophet and revealing new scripture in a prophetless world with a closed canon as Price claims, why was Joseph Smith making independent new prophecies originating from his own new personal revelations at precisely the time he was supposedly writing a book to avoid the very problem he was obviously creating for himself?

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13. Price provides no bibliographic references to scholarly discussions of the pseudepigrapha providing the details and evidence for his theory.

14. This statement applies to the Book of Mormon as a whole, even though it does contain quotations from biblical figures: e.g., Isaiah (2 Nephi 12-24 = Isaiah 2-14) and Christ (3 Nephi 12-14 = Matthew 5-7). On the other hand, Joseph does restore revelations from Moses (Moses 1-6), Enoch (Moses 7) and Abraham (Abraham 1-5), after—not before—the start of his prophetic career; Price does not mention these texts in his argument.

15. Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 110.

WHENCE GOD?

A final serious concern I have with Dr. Price's article is its unclear use of religious language. Throughout his article Price talks of God and inspiration as if they were real objective facts. He describes "reading the prophetic Word of God" (70); he claims (again without providing any evidence), that "most theologians now accept that God might inspire an authoritative pseudepigraph as easily as he might inspire a parable" (74). Joseph was "inspired" (76) in the writing of his scripture. Elsewhere Price speaks of the "divinely inspired prophecy of Joseph Smith" (77). Take, for example, this statement:

> If we feel entitled to decree that God could never sink to inspiring a pseudepigraph (and if we think we are privy to the literary tastes of the Almighty, we are claiming to be prophets ourselves!) then we have no option but to dismiss the biblical pseudepigraphs along with the Book of Mormon. (73)

All of this language is certainly confusing given the fact that Price is an atheist and believes in neither God nor divine inspiration.

Price's personal atheism is made abundantly clear from his publications in other venues, of which I will cite only a few.[16] In "From Fundamentalist to Humanist,"[17] Price documents his personal odyssey from fundamentalist adolescent through seminary to a liberal Christian view, and finally atheism. As such it is a fairly typical "testimonial" of the conversion from belief to disbelief. The result is that for Price religion is merely a form of literature, poetry, or drama.

> [Religion] was really a kind of esthetic experience. Worship was something akin to the awe we feel at great art or at beholding the starry sky. Poetry could offer essentially the same, genuinely spiritual experience. Religion came to seem to me basically a matter of drama and theater. That is not to denigrate it. Rather, to see it as theatrical is to explain why it is so powerful, like an engrossing film or play that leaves the viewer changed.[18]

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16. Price is a member of the Atheist Alliance and an editor for their journal, *Secular Nation*, http://www.atheistalliance.org/library/news_082602.html. He is also associated with Paul Kurtz' Prometheus Press and Secular Humanist Movement, (see *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, "Contributors," 249), on which see Louis Midgley, "On Caliban Mischief," *FARMS Review of Books* 15, no. 1 (2003):xi-xxxv; Louis Midgley, "Atheists and Cultural Mormons Promote a Naturalistic Humanism," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 7, no. 1 (1995):229—238; Louis Midgley, "George Dempster Smith, Jr., on the Book of Mormon," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 4 (1992):5-12.

17. "From Fundamentalist to Humanist" (1997) http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/robert_price/humanist.html.

18. Ibid. I am puzzled by what Price might view as a "genuinely spiritual experience," given the fact that in his world view there is no "genuine spirit." I suspect the term "spiritual" is reductionistically used by Price as a synonym for "emotional."

For Price, God is simply a recurring fictional character in multifaceted works of fiction: "I had come to view religion simply as a matter of spiritual experience. 'God' was mainly part of the language of worship, not necessarily anything more."[19] "To get something out of a Shakespeare play," he insists, "you by no means need actually believe in Hamlet or Polonius. Only a fool would think you do. And, I suggest, no Christian need believe in a historical Jesus or his resurrection to have a powerful Easter."[20]

If there is no God, there is naturally no inspiration. Prophecy and revelation are merely exotic forms of literature.

> But this meant that religion is nothing more than a creation of human imagination . . .I realized I do not esteem Jesus as any greater a teacher than Aristotle or Epicurus. I guess I agree more with Nietzsche than with Jesus. . .Religion now seems to me a kind of nursery school version of philosophy. . .The Bible continues to fascinate me. . .though now it seems as bizarre to 'believe' the Bible as it would be to 'believe' the Iliad or Hamlet![21]

In fact, religious experiences are nothing more than brain chemistry:

> One of the most intriguing areas of recent research in brain science, and one that bears directly on our question, is that of the physical, organo-chemical character of religious experiences. As discussed in books like Matthew Alper's *The God Part of the Brain*, studies indicate that the mystical experience of God. . .are *all functions of the temporal parietal lobe of the brain*. . . .I suspect that this is the final reduction, the ultimate demystification of religion's metaphysical claims.[22]

Far from believing that Joseph Smith's writings are truly inspired in the sense the Latter-day Saints understand the term, when Price writes that Smith's writings are "the same sort of thing as the Bible. . .[and are] no more a hoax than Deuteronomy," he is simply saying they are both equally bogus, but bogus in an

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19. Ibid.

20. "Religious and Secular Humanism: What's the difference?" http://www.secularhumanism.org/library/fi/price_22_3.htm. On the other hand, as noted above in relation to Melville, Shakespeare never said that the resurrected Hamlet appeared to him in a dream and gave him a prewritten play *Hamlet* on golden plates. Shakespeare also never claimed to have been resurrected and ascended into heaven. Frankly, I am astonished that anyone would think the two examples are even remotely analogous.

21. Price, "From Fundamentalist to Humanist"

22. Price, "Religious and Secular Humanism," emphasis added. What studies like Alper's actually deal with is brain activity during "mystical" experiences, which Price reductionistically assumes are normative for all types of religious experience. But even if the temporal parietal lobe of the brain were stimulated during all religious experiences, it no more proves that there is no objective divine reality outside the brain than the fact that certain regions of the brain are stimulated by light or sound proves that there is no such thing as light or sound outside the brain.

interesting and pleasantly aesthetic fictional sort of way—though necessarily nursery-schoolish. When he talks of the God of Mormonism, Price is referring to electro-chemical activity in the temporal parietal lobe of Joseph Smith's brain—nothing more.

I could go on, but I think the point is obvious. Price is an atheist who believes that scripture can be called inspired in precisely the same way that literature or art can be called inspired. Spirituality is simply a subjective human emotion with its origins in brain chemistry. In his publications outside of *Dialogue* Dr. Price makes no attempt to mask his beliefs, or lack thereof. On the contrary, he openly evangelizes for atheism. I am not claiming that Dr. Price is a bad person because he is an atheist; he may well be a wonderful father and ethical human being. I am not even claiming that his atheistic beliefs are necessarily incorrect. But his confusing use of religious terminology in his *Dialogue* article does make a monumental difference in trying to understand what he is really saying and the implications of those claims. His talk of God, prophecy and inspiration is at best imprecise when presented to an LDS audience who understand those terms in a very specific, real, and concrete sense. What Dr. Price is really saying is that if we cease to believe in the reality of God and revelation, then the Book of Mormon is scripture in precisely the same sense that the Bible or Qur'an or Bhagavad-Gita is scripture-they are all equally "inspiring" fiction. In this I agree with him.

In my view, however, Dr. Price's article ignores the truly fundamental questions. Does it not make a difference if God exists? Does it not make a difference if Jesus is the Son of God? Does it not make a difference if Christ really rose from the dead? Does it not make a difference if Joseph Smith really saw God? Does it not make a difference if the resurrected Christ really appeared to real Nephites? Does it not make a difference if there is really the possibility of eternal life? Does it not make a difference if the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the restored church that has the keys to eternal life? The answer, I think, is obvious: it makes a difference; it makes all the difference in the world and in the world to come. For those genuinely seeking the way, the truth and the life, Price's view is lentil pottage he is trying to trade us for our true birthright. A slightly different version of this article appears in The FARMS Review of Books, 16/1 (2004).

Joseph Smith in the Book of Mormon

Robert M. Price

DID JOSEPH SMITH WRITE the Book of Mormon? To this over-familiar question the orthodox Latter-day Saint answer is a resounding "No" because the official belief is that a series of men with quasi-biblical names wrote the book over many centuries. For some critics of Mormonism the answer is an equally emphatic No, but for a different reason. Such critics have charged that the Book of Mormon was plagiarized from Solomon Spaudling's lost novel of Israelites in ancient America, "Manuscript Found."[1] A third group, liberal Mormons and fellow travelers, tend to recognize Joseph Smith as the author of the book, inspired though he may perhaps have been by earlier works such as Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews*.[2] I find myself in company with this third group. Here I want to call attention to the obvious. Given that those of us in this category agree on the nineteenth-century origin of the Book of Mormon, we may dismiss any theory that ascribes to it a non-Mormon, pre-Mormon origin; the Mormon origin of the scripture is clear from the straightforward fact that Joseph Smith and the Latter-day Saints movement, even the Book of Mormon itself, are repeatedly mentioned in its pages in an unmistakable fashion. While this observation does not preclude the possibility that some apostolic confederate of the Prophet may have written the book at his direction, the references to Joseph Smith and his church in the Book of Mormon make it fully evident that the text was not borrowed from some non-Mormon work. It is impossible that someone outside the

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1. Gordon H. Fraser, "Who Did Write the Book of Mormon?" *What Does the Book of Mormon Teach? An Examination of the Historical and Scientific Statements of the Book of Mormon* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1964), 102-109. The title sounds strange to today's readers but is of a piece with contemporary works such as Poe's "MS. Found in a Bottle" available, e.g., in *Complete Stories of Edgar Allen Poe,* International Collectors Edition (Harden City; NY; Doubleday, 1966), 148-155, originally published in 1831; and the anonymous *A Strange Manuscript Found in a Copper Cylinder* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1888).

2. David Persuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins of The Book of Mormon* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1991).

movement wrote the book as a Bible pastiche and that Joseph Smith subsequently decided to build a religion upon it.

MESSIAH BEN JOSEPH

The first piece of evidence which indicates a Mormon origin to the Book of Mormon is the fact that the Book of Mormon "anticipates" the coming of a future scion of the line of Joseph the Genesis patriarch, son of Jacob. The Old Testament Joseph's own boyhood visions (Genesis 37:5-10) prefigured his eventual rise to the right hand of Pharaoh, to viceregency over all mankind. Much later, Jewish sectarians appear to have understood these dreams to have further prophesied the eventual advent of a Northern, Ephraimite Messiah, a Messiah ben Joseph, who, for the sake of the sins of Israel, should die in battle against the heathen in the Last Days, clearing the way for the victorious Judean Messiah ben David to emerge. As Geza Vermes has suggested,[3] this role may have been created to dignify the vanquished second-century CE messianic pretender Simon bar Kochba, assigning him a genuine role in the prophetic scenario, even if not that of the final deliverer.

I am suggesting that, in effect, the Book of Mormon revives such a role for Joseph Smith. As virtually all commentators acknowledge, granting this messianic role to Joseph Smith is the point of 2 Nephi, chapter 3:

> Yea, Joseph truly said: Thus saith the Lord unto me: A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins. . .And he shall be great like unto Moses. . .Behold, that seer will the Lord bless; and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded. . .And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father. And he shall be like unto me; for the thing, which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation.

Likewise, Jacob 2:25, "I have led this people forth out of the land of Jerusalem, by the power of mine arm, that I might raise up unto me a righteous branch from the fruit of the loins of Joseph."

Unless Joseph Smith ever made claim to Jewish descent, we must suppose he implicitly numbered himself among that remnant of the Lost Tribes of Israel who, in the course of their migrations, splintered from the main group, henceforth to live among the Gentiles, thereby becoming a leavening influence among them and preparing the heathen nations for the coming of faith in Christ.[4] This Mormon version of the British Israel theory would seem to underlie Joseph Smith's claims to be the latter-day scion of the tribe of Joseph. In fact, one might

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3. Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian's Reading of the Gospels* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1977), 139-140.

4. R. Clayton Brough, *The Lost Tribes of Israel: History, Doctrine, Prophecies, and Theories About Israel's Lost Ten Tribes* (Bountiful: Horizon Publishers, 1979), 32-37.

view him as following in the footsteps of English messiah Richard Brothers (1757-1824), who esteemed himself to be the heir to the House of David, one of an imagined great legion of Jews living among the British population, oblivious of their own true racial identity.[5]

Perhaps the ancient prophetic figure most closely analogous to Joseph Smith would be the Prophet Muhammad (if not the Apostle Mani, founder of Manichaeism in the third century). Muhammad, too, planted a retroactive scriptural endorsement of his own mission. In a section of the Koran which supposedly represents the preaching of Muhammad but was at least composed by early Muslims, we read of Jesus foretelling the coming of his Arab successor: "Jesus. . .said to the Israelites: 'I am sent forth to you by Allah to confirm the Torah already revealed and to give news of an apostle that will come after me whose name is Ahmed" (61:6).

Among more recent messiahs, we may think of Pentecostal faith healer William Marrion Branham, whose followers cherished various exalted estimates of him, some deeming him the forerunner of the Second Coming, others seeing in him the Messiah himself, still others a separate incarnation of God in his own right. His own view of his mission seems humble by comparison, for he implied transparently that he was the Elijah heralding the return of Jesus Christ. And, to create his own credentials for the job, Branham revealed that he who should occupy this role should have a name at least partially modeled upon "*Abraham.*"[6] Similarly, the Rev. Sun Myung Moon explained that the Lord of the Second Advent, he who should fulfill the suspended mission of Jesus Christ, would have to be born in Korea, the Third Israel.[7] To recount these parallels is not an invitation to cynicism. It seems altogether fitting, in fact, for such a figure to accentuate his messianic status by creating, as it were, a scriptural door through which to walk onto the stage of history. Hugh J. Schonfield understood Jesus himself to have created a prophetic identity, that of the Suffering Servant, from synthesizing various scriptures, then raising that identity like a cross on his shoulder as he marched into destiny.)[8]

Infinite Regress

The Book of Mormon story of the Plates of Jared (Mosiah 8:5-19; 28:11-18; Ether, chapters 1-3) surely seeks to furnish a scriptural subtext to which the

5. Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 6. See also Jack Gratus, *The False Messiahs* (New York: Taplinger, 1975), 179-185; H.L. Goudge, *The British Israel Theory* (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1933).

6. William Marrion Branham, *Twentieth Century Prophet: The Messenger to the Laodicean Church Age* (Jeffersonville, IN: Spoken Word Publications, nd.), 68-69.

7. Divine Principle, 2d ed. (New York: Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, 1973), 527-529.

8. Hugh J. Schonfield, *The Passover Plot: New Light on the History of Jesus* (New York: Bernard Geis Associates/Random House, 1965), 215-227.

"discovery" of the Book of Mormon itself may be seen to correspond. The first followers of Joseph Smith will have recognized themselves in an "ancient" "history" that provided the script for their own performance. Readers of the Book of Mormon are warned or reassured that model faith, such as the blessed ancients possessed, pointedly included belief in newly discovered ancient records.

Like the Prophet Smith himself, King Mosiah translated these metallic records not by the exercise of linguistic skills, but by use of the oracular Urim and Thummim, pictured as a pair of glasses so large that the frame encompassing the two lenses was as big as an archer's bow—presumably the legacy of antediluvian giants of the Bible (mammoth Jaredites are also hinted at in Ether 1:34; 13:15; 14:10; 15:26).[9] Who has the power to handle such things? The account of the translation of the Jared text takes the opportunity, again, of magnifying the role of Joseph Smith, for which Mosiah provides a scriptural counterpart: "a seer is greater than a prophet. . .a seer is a revelator and a prophet also; and a gift which is greater can no man have. . .a seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed" (Mosiah 8:15-17). The mention of "things which are past" is a revealing hint. When we think of a seer, literally a visionary, one who sees clairvoyantly, we are not to think of him as tied to written texts which may predict the future, but think rather of such texts as themselves the products of seers in the past. Likewise, for a seer to have clairvoyant access to the past ought presumably to denote his special mission—as do Rudolf Steiner's claims to be able to read past history, including the hidden history of Jesus, from the Akashic Record (etheric imprints of all past events).[10] In this verse, in this claim, I think we have a candid expression of what Joseph Smith was really doing with his seer stone, gazing into the bottom of a hat all those hours and days as he sat concealed behind the blanket veil and gave dictation. He was seeing an unknown American past in his mind's eye, letting his imagination run free, much as Lord Dunsany did when he dictated jeweled prose-poetic fables off the top of his head to his wife who, pen in hand, sought to keep up. The result in that case is a fictive scripture called *The Gods of Pegana*, only Lord Dunsany never tried to get anyone to believe in the literal truth of it.[11]

We might compare the Prophet Smith's literary labors, his inspired penmanship, with that of the Roman Catholic mystic Anna Katherina Emmerich, whose *Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (1862) is still avidly read by old-school Catholics curious to know the details behind the gospel stories of Jesus,

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9. David Chandler, *Book of Mormon Studies* (http://www.mormonstudies.com). "Parallels," 4.

10. Rudolf Steiner, *The Fifth Gospel: From the Akashic Record*, trans. A.R. Meuss (East Sussex: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1995).

11. Lord Dunsany, *The Complete Pegana: All the Tales Pertaining to the Fabulous Realm of Pegana*, ed. S.T. Joshi (Oakland, CA: Chaosium, 1998).

as well as more stories about him. Edgar Cayce, too, supplied new gospel vignettes by mining the ostensible memories of previous lives of many for whom he gave psychic readings.[12]

And again, we need not seek far for a parallel with the Prophet Muhammad and the Koran. Muhammad, too, claimed, or had Allah claim, to be vouchsafing hitherto secret episodes of sacred history (3:44; 7:101; 11:49, "That which We have now revealed to you is secret history; it was unknown to you and to your people;"[13] 11:121; 12:102; 20:100; 28:1), including new versions of old stories. Invariably these new versions had a way of casting light on Muhammad's own career, of paralleling it—which is to say of actually being based on it. Time and again the reader of the Koran is told that Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others suffered the same sort of opposition, even the same specific insults and cat-calls, that Muhammad is said elsewhere in the Koran to have brooked. The stories serve either to encourage the Prophet or to refute his opponents by showing how the ancient heroes faced the same conflicts and used the same polemics with their enemies as Muhammad did against the hostile Quraiysh tribe. If Muhammad's opponents mock his warnings of the final catastrophe (34:3; 79:42; 82:9), so did those of Noah and Shoaib (11:32; 29:36-37). If the unbelievers demand miracles from Muhammad (10:30; 13:27; 29:50), they did the same to Houd (11:53). If they accuse him of merely practicing "plain magic" (46:7; 74:24),[14] Jesus and Moses received the same insult (5:110; 10:77). If Muhammad be accused of subverting the religion of the fathers (34:43; 25:42), so were Moses and others (10:79; 14:10). Is Muhammad called a madman (52:29)? So was Noah (54:9). In other words, the polemics of Muhammad's day are prophetically retrojected onto the careers of the worthies of the past.

And so it is with Joseph Smith and his Book of Mormon prophets. Samuel the Lamanite refers to himself, of course, but also Joseph Smith, we cannot help but think, when he excoriates the Nephites:

> . . .if a prophet come among you and declareth unto you the word of the Lord, which testifieth of your sins and iniquities, ye are angry with him, and cast him out and seek all manner of ways to destroy him; yea, you will say that he is a false prophet, and that he is a sinner, and of the devil, because he testifieth that your deeds are evil (Helaman 13:26).

To say of a man "he is of the devil" reflects American sectarian mudslinging rather than biblical idiom. And we see nineteenth-century polemics no less in 2 Nephi 28:29: "Woe be unto him that shall say: We have received the word of

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12. Anne Read, *Edgar Cayce on Jesus and his Church* (New York: Paperback Library, 1971).

13. *The Koran*, trans. N.J. Dawood (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1956).

14. It is generally supposed that in his lifetime or soon after the Prophet Muhammad was not believed to have performed miracles, though later Muslim hagiography credited him with many. But we must ask if the accusations of magic do not imply that he did claim to perform miracles.

God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough." Biblical writers never refer to scripture as "the word of God." For them the phrase always denotes a particular message, oracle, command, promise, etc., of God, not a written book. That is Protestant idiom, and the opinion expressed here is that of conventional Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, and their ilk, whether faced with a new scripture (like the Book of Mormon) or new prophetic and glossolalic utterances from the Pentecostal movement.[15] The persecutions against which King Mosiah must pass laws to shield the believers anticipate those of the Mormon faithful while the false churches of 2 Nephi 28:3-6, which err by reason of too much fancy education, rejecting the possibility of new miracles and revelations, are plainly those stale Protestant sects of the Burned Over District with which young Joseph Smith had grown so disillusioned. And then, of course, Mormon prophetically predicts that in the days when his record is discovered, the churches will have sunk to the same lows, prizing treasure over repentance, stubbornly denying the possibility of new miracles (Mormon 8:26-33).

Finally, Joseph Smith has provided an ancient counterpart to himself in the person of Alma the church-planting high priest, the chosen vessel of the Lord (Mosiah[16] 25-26). Not coincidentally, Alma baptizes his many converts in the waters of Mormon (Mosiah 25:18; 26:15), as if to make them Mormons before Mormonism.

The Rest of the Story

There is, of course, much more to the Book of Mormon than the elements surveyed so cursorily here. But I venture to suggest that the rest of the book exists to support these featured elements and cannot be easily separated from them. The lion's share of the Book of Mormon narrative is taken up with a fictive American pre-history parallel, not to the actual history of Israel, but to that history as rewritten by the Deuteronomic redactors of the Old Testament. Some of the seventh-century writers of Deuteronomy, and their heirs, cooling their heels by the waters of Babylon during the Exile, undertook a retrospective history of the nation, rewriting it according to the reward-and-punishment schema of the Book of Deuteronomy. In this schema, fidelity to the covenant assures God's blessing while apostasy and backsliding call forth from God a series of wake-up calls, to put it mildly, in the form of famine, disease, military defeats, and finally deportation. The Deuteronomic historians gathered what scraps they could of tribal epic and saga, stories of local victories over Canaanite city states, the establishment of tribal independence from Amorite landlords and warlords,

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15. See, for instance, Merrill F. Unger, *New Testament Teaching on Tongues* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1971), 148-149.

16. "Moses" by itself is half an Egyptian name, meaning "—has begotten" or "Son of—," as in Ra*mses*, "Ra has begotten him," or Thut*mose*, "Thoth has begotten him." But "Mosiah," albeit a hybrid of Hebrew and Egyptian, would at least have the virtue of completing the fragmentary name as "Yahweh has begotten him."

and on this mixed bag, they superimposed, like an ill-fitting shoe, a theological framework of apostasy bringing judgment (enslavement to Canaanites) and of repentance bringing deliverance (at the hands of the Judges). If not for the redactional reminders (Judges 2:11-23; 3:7-9, 12-15; 4:1-3; 6:1-2, 6-8; 8:33-34; 10:6-16; 13:1) that the story was supposed to be tending in this direction, it would never be evident from the stories themselves. The scenario of "karmic" payback is already a foreign theological imposition on the original patriotic, nationalistic traditions.

Nonetheless, devout Christian readers created an additional layer of spiritual meaning by reading the Deuteronomic History, especially Joshua, as an allegory of the Christian "victorious life," in which one might attain any desired level of victory over personal sin as long as one yielded to the leading of "Joshua" (Jesus) in one's day to day life. Besetting sins might be conquered so long as one left the battle to the grace of God instead of trusting to one's own "fleshly" efforts. The only result of self-reliance or of cherished sins held back from God could be Ai-like disasters (Joshua 7:1-13). This allegorical reading was the only distinctly Christian relevance such a book, with its bloody genocide and "take no prisoners" militarism, could have.

The Book of Mormon actually takes things further in the same direction. In effect, it combines the Deuteronomic History with the Acts of the Apostles, producing an explicitly Christianized saga of the whelming of the Promised Land (America as Canaan, a familiar patriotic theme). The Book of Joshua is no more merely an allegory: The apostate Lamanites represent, quite correctely, the forces of sin and backsliding, the constant temptation for virtuous Nephites, whose virtue, however, is as fragile as the airy currents of the Spirit upon which the "victorious Christian life" of the Revivalist Christian floats. Spiritual setbacks in the Christian life (and the life of the church) are one and the same with the political and military reversals of the Camp of the Saints. The tribes of Israel have become one with, the very same as, the apostolic churches of Acts. The twin models of evangelical piety, Joshua's host, and the idyllic "Early Church," have combined, and the result is a potent paradigm of sectarian enthusiasm which early (and many, many modern) Latter-day Saints emulated.

The story of the Book of Mormon is that of a new and holy people who will not be satisfied with believing that once upon a time such things happened to some people, but rather who expect to live out such adventures—and do so. Without the elements considered above—the central role of Joseph Smith as Messiah ben Joseph, as Alma, and as Mosiah—the Book of Mormon would hang vaguely in space. The historical *Sitz-im-Leben* of such a book demands a fledgling movement such as that founded by Joseph Smith. The calm evening hours of leisurely writing in the study of some New England parson would not have produced such a book which resembles more than anything else a modern role-playing game scenario book: an elaborate sketch of a fantasy world into which the enthusiastic players enter as combatants in imaginary battles and dreamlike adventures of chivalry and courage. The Book of Mormon is a script,

not just a scripture, and it invites action. And the name of the drama is Mormonism. The Book of Mormon was written for that reason and purpose and no other. And it is no surprise to see that Joseph Smith assumes an important role in the play that bears such extensive traces of his creative hand.

A Biographer's Burden: Evaluating Robert Remini's *Joseph Smith* and Will Bagley's *Brigham Young*[1]

Newell G. Bringhurst

DURING THE PAST YEAR, I have had the opportunity to read and review two significant books——Robert Remini's *Joseph Smith* (New York: Viking Press, 2003) and Will Bagley's *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002). The two reviews—one for each book and each for a different publication—were extremely brief and perfunctory due to space limitations. This prevented me from doing full justice to the books, and I wish to rectify that now. I confess from the onset that I am favorably impressed with both. Both provide fresh, illuminating insights into their principal subjects, Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, thereby advancing the craft of Mormon biography, although I do find deficiencies in both works. The books have received nationwide attention, including reviews in such prestigious publications as the *New York Times* and the *New York Review of Books*.[2] Such widespread notice would seem to suggest a coming-of-age for Mormon historical scholarship.

Indeed, the fact that non-Mormon Robert Remini, a distinguished professor emeritus at the University of Illinois at Chicago and a nationally renowned Jacksonian scholar, would choose to write on Joseph Smith lends credence to such a coming of age. Remini is known for his definitive multi-volume biography of President Andrew Jackson, and he is a winner of the National Book Award. He has produced a compelling and, on the whole, sympathetic biogra-

1. This was a presentation at the Sunstone West Symposium, San Francisco, April 2003.

2. Also reviewed in Dialogue: Romini's *Joseph Smith* in this issue (see p. 236) and Bagley's *Blood of the Prophets* (Vol 36, No. 3, p. 261).

phy of Joseph Smith. Despite its brevity, totaling a mere 190 pages—a limit imposed by the constraints of the "Penguin Lives Series,"of which this biography is a part—Remini skillfully places the Latter-day Saint leader within the context of Jacksonian American society: "To a large extent Smith and his Church were products of a uniquely American milieu. The Jacksonian age with its democratic trust and reach for perfection provided the conditions and impetus for sudden and massive changes" (181). Remini is also even-handed and empathetic in presenting Joseph Smith as the religious leader he claimed to be: "After considerable thought, I decided to present his [Smith's] religious experiences just as he described them in his writings and let readers decide for themselves to what extent they would give credence to them. I am not out to prove or disprove any of his claims. As a historian I have tried to be as objective as possible in narrating his life and work" (x).

Using this approach, Remini effectively discusses Joseph Smith's background, specifically, his family's strong religiosity, their economic difficulties, and other adversities. Joseph Smith's early life is carefully presented, with seventy-four pages (some forty percent of the text) devoted to Smith's activities prior to 1830 when the Mormon church was formed. The author provides keen insights into young Joseph's behavior and complex personality. The youthful Smith, according to Remini was:

> A quick-witted, ambitious boy, gifted with a soaring imagination, [who] demonstrated a talent for leadership and a personal need for attention and recognition. He was an outgoing and gregarious young man when playing or working with his friends. But at home in the quiet of his room or in the fields out of sight he was self-absorbed and intensely concerned about the salvation of his soul. His mother said he was much less inclined to read books than any of her other children. Like his father, he was "far more given to meditation and deep study" (41).

Remini includes a vivid account of five-year old Joseph's bout with typhoid fever complicated by osteomyelitis, a serious bacterial infection of the bone and marrow in his leg. The young boy was compelled to endure the trauma of invasive surgery. A team of surgeons from nearby Dartmouth College removed chucks of diseased bone without anesthesia in order to save his leg. With perceptive insight, Remini theorizes concerning both the short and long-range consequences of this ordeal:

> What emotional and psychological scars he carried into adulthood is impossible to state with certainty. But surely the illness, the excruciating pain he suffered for months, and the limp he developed must have had a tremendous psychological impact on him and on the kind of person he became. It is entirely possible that it conditioned him for the career he chose and the suffering and persecution he later endured. It may even have focused his attention more sharply on the afterlife (26).

The factors which made Smith a successful religious leader are succinctly described. In Remini's words, Joseph "demonstrated remarkable administrative skills in establishing the [LDS] Church, shaping its focus and guiding its future direction" (86). As a religious leader, moreover, Smith was sensitive to the mood of the Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century when citizens "wanted preachers who could rouse their emotions and offer them dramatic evidence of their faith and commitment" (86). Smith fit into "this mold to perfection." Smith projected

> a new voice, a dramatic voice, a certain voice, a voice that throbbed with convictions and seemed to many to be divinely inspired. He claimed direct and frequent communication with God—and the people believed him. He offered to ordinary citizens, especially the poor, a sense of self-worth and a sense of belonging. In a constantly changing world, one in which the future seemed so uncertain, his followers found an identity in a community of other believers. They found meaning and direction in their lives. The Mormon Church met some of their deepest psychological and emotional needs because to them it offered a guarantee of truth (87).

Moreover, Smith was "a man of compelling charisma, charm, and persuasiveness, a man absolutely convinced that his religious authority came directly from God" (87).

At the same time, Remini carefully outlines the many reasons "Joseph and his Mormon brethren [were] hated with such intensity as to provoke mob violence and murder" (175). Foremost among these was Smith's "contention that all other religions and their preachers were corrupt and an abomination in the sight of God" (175). Also considered "outright blasphemy" to non-Mormons were Smith's claims that "he spoke regularly to God" and "had brought forth another bible [the Book of Mormon] that provided a true history of the lost tribes of Israel" (176). "To make matters worse," the Mormon religion "seemed to make a mockery of fundamental Christian beliefs, with such teachings as polygamy," baptism for the dead, a plurality of gods, the ability of mortal men and women to become gods themselves, and the concept that "God the father being once a man. . .passed through a stage of mortality before becoming God" (176). Also engendering hostility were "economic factors. . . .Either Mormons were criticized when impoverished because they placed an 'insupportable burden of pauperism' on the community; or when prosperous they aroused the jealousy and resentment of those less fortunate" (176-77). Intolerance toward the Mormons "frequently sprang from their clannishness"—specifically their tendency to act together, vote together, and patronize only Mormon establishments (177).

According to Remini, Smith's assassination resulted directly from the Mormon leader's "political activities" in Nauvoo, which were viewed as "extremely dangerous to the citizens of surrounding towns." Specifically, Smith "had built a theocratic dictatorship in Nauvoo," guarded by the Nauvoo Legion, "a standing

army of five thousand heavily armed men. . .whose very existence terrorized Gentiles" (177). The "last straw" was Smith's 1844 campaign for U.S. president, whereby many non-Mormons felt that he "had become a menace to freedmen everywhere and had to be eliminated" (178). As Remini perceptively notes, "Mixing religion and politics can have disastrous consequences and release forces that tarnish the most cherished ideals of American Justice" (181).

With balance and sensitivity, Remini sums up the multifaceted personality and significance of Joseph Smith as follows:

> As a prophet Joseph was burdened by many human frailties. He craved recognition and appreciation of his work. Shrewd and even cunning at times, he was a proud man who knew his own worth yet suffered many moments of insecurity and self-doubt. At once kind and generous toward others he also scrambled after material gain for himself and his Church. He had a deeply controlling temperament and brooked no opposition to his leadership. An optimist, he remained steadfast in his beliefs to the end, despite repeated reversals and defeats. In him the strains of egotism, pragmatism, courage, gentleness, pretension, and jealousy were blended together. A man of little formal education but of striking intellectual power, he produced a vast amount of religious writing that has influenced millions around the world (180).

Despite its strengths, Remini's biography is not without flaws. Among the most significant is its superficiality of analysis and, most disturbing, its numerous errors of fact. Such problems stem from the apparent haste in which the book was researched and written. The author failed to consult and make use of crucial primary sources written by Joseph Smith and his associates as contained in the LDS Church Historical Archives in Salt Lake City and in the Community of Christ (formerly RLDS) Archives in Independence, Missouri. Instead he relied on the published writings of Smith and his mother, along with biographical writings of other individuals, including Fawn M. Brodie, Richard L. Bushman, Donna Hill, and Heidi S. Swinton— essentially producing a synthesis. Remini also drew on information from the works of various other scholars, specifically Richard Lloyd Anderson, Leonard Arrington, Milton V. Backman, D. Michael Quinn, and Grant Underwood. Yet he ignored important works of other writers in the field of Mormon studies.

These problems are reflected in Remini's treatment of Joseph Smith and polygamy. The author is inaccurate when he says that "[m]ost of his [Joseph Smith's plural] wives were teenagers" (154), and his conjecture concerning the "number of wives" Smith took "under this new covenant" is confusing. In the author's words, "the exact figure is still debated; but it is 'at least twenty-seven', according to one Mormon historian." Further obscuring the issue, Remini claims, "[O]ther historians have guessed" that Smith had a number that "might be as low as a few or as high as eighty-four" (153). The confusion stems from the simple fact that Remini failed to consult the most recent scholarship on the

topic, specifically, Lawrence Foster's *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1981); Carmon Hardy's *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1992), and especially Todd L. Compton's I*n Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997). Through meticulous research, Compton has narrowed the estimate of Joseph Smith's plural wives at somewhere between thirty-three and forty. Of this total, ten were teenagers at the time of their marriages.

Also problematic is Remini's error-filled treatment of race, slavery, and the changing status of African-Americans within Mormonism. The author mistakenly states that the Mormon printing house and press in Independence, Missouri, "were destroyed after printing a pro-abolitionist article" in July 1833 (115). Actually, the Latter-day Saints at that time were anti-abolitionist rather than pro-abolitionist. Mob violence against the Mormons in this instance was due to publication of an article "Free People of Color" in the church-owned newspaper, *Evening and Morning Star*. This article outlined the necessary procedures for the migration of free African-American Latter-day Saints into Missouri, the location of Mormonism's Zion. Remini's discussion of the origins of the controversial policy of Mormon black priesthood denial is misleading. The author's suggestion of a link between Smith's Book of Abraham and this now-defunct practice is confusing. In the words of Remini, the Book of Abraham verse that "the Pharaoh of Egypt [as] a descendant of Ham could not hold the priesthood. . .later justified Church policy of denying the priesthood to African-Americans, since they supposedly descended from Ham" (107).

Actually, Mormon black priesthood denial was not implemented until 1847, and not by Joseph Smith but rather by Brigham Young, some three years after the first Mormon prophet's death. Moreover, this practice emerged in a complex, tangled fashion, historically documented by the extensive works of Lester E. Bush, Armand L. Mauss, and me—none of whom are cited in Remini's biography. As for the Book of Abraham, it was not used as a scriptural proof text for black priesthood denial until many years after Joseph Smith's death.

These significant problems notwithstanding, Robert V. Remini's Joseph Smith is an important work, deserving the attention of scholars and interested lay readers concerned with Mormon studies. This biography is a readable revisionist account standing in contrast to Fawn Brodie's more hard-edged *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, The Mormon Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), as well as the more recent, positive biographies of Donna Hill, Richard Bushman, and Heidi Swenton. Despite Remini's skillful, lively prose style and articulate placement of Joseph Smith within the context of Jacksonian America, the book's shortcomings dramatize the fact that the truly definitive biography of Mormonism's founder remains to be written.

* * *

In contrast to Remini's Joseph Smith, Will Bagley's *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* is not a biography *per se*, although the colorful, controversial Utah Mormon leader is a central figure in Bagley's work, as suggested by its subtitle. Bagley carefully notes that his study is "neither a complete biography of Brigham Young nor a comprehensive history of the Latter-day Saints," stating that Mountain Meadows was but "a single incident in the long career" of the Mormon leader" (xv, xvi). Correctly characterizing Young "a complex man" who must be recognized for "his many achievements," Bagley suggests grudging respect for the Mormon leader, whom he describes as "one of the most remarkable Americans of any age" (xvi, 18). At the same time, the author characterizes the Mountain Meadows Massacre as "a watershed event" in the life of Brigham Young and for the larger Mormon church (xiv-xv).

Particularly compelling is Bagley's discussion of Joseph Smith's influence on Brigham Young as the Mormon prophet's successor. Young was "disheartened by the murder of his beloved friend [Joseph Smith] but determined to carry on his legacy" (18). "Young's determination to complete the work of Joseph Smith by any cost and by any means created. . .a culture of violence," according to Bagley (39), but at the same time, Young "was never comfortable with his role as prophet" and felt "caught in" this role. Young's religious insights, moreover, "lacked the certainty of Joseph Smith's personal conversations with the Lord." Instead, "uncharacteristic hesitation marked Young's conduct. How would he lead the Saints if he could not speak with God face-to-face as Smith had done?" This problem was resolved in what Bagley describes as a "powerful personal epiphany," "vision," or "dream," wherein Young encountered and "talked with" the dead, departed Smith, this supernatural event occurring in February 1847 at Winter Quarters:

> Brigham Young found Joseph Smith sitting near a bright window. Taking Smith's hand and kissing him on both cheeks, Young asked "why we could not be together as we once were." Smith told him "it was all right, that [they] should not be together yet." The dead seer addressed the question that most troubled his disciple: How to be a prophet and keep the spirit of the Lord. "[The] mind of man must be open to receive all spirits in order to be prepared, to receive the spirit of the Lord," he advised. "When the still small voice speaks always receive it." Smith gave Young a sweeping vision of the plan of salvation. When it ended, "Joseph was in the edge of the light; but where I had to go was as midnight darkness," Young recalled, and he "went back in the darkness." Young told his fellow apostles to remember his dream, for it was "a vision of God and revealed through the Spirit of Joseph. . . .This profound experience resolved Brigham Young's doubts about his role as Joseph Smith's heir. It gave him the confidence he needed to lead the Saints and inspired his belief that God had called him to implement Smith's vision. A new dynamism and conviction replaced Young's self-doubt and hesitation, for he believed God would inspire and direct his actions" (39).

However, Bagley is somewhat confusing elsewhere in assessing the significance of this event. He maintains that Young's self-doubts remained strong throughout the course of his life. Young's deep-seated insecurities, according to Bagley, prompted Young "to make greater spiritual and economic demands of his followers" and to "habitually" blame "others for his own mistakes" and bad decisions. His insecurity about his role as prophet and "his total devotion to the most radical doctrines of Joseph Smith also led to provocative acts that had fateful consequences for his people" (40). Bagley asserts that Young "was never comfortable with his role as prophet." Upon being "sustained as Prophet, Seer, and Revelator in October 1857, Young said, '[The] titles always [make] me feel as though I am called more than I am deserving of. I am Brigham Young, an Apostle of Joseph Smith, and also of Jesus Christ'" (39). Yet Bagley overstates his case concerning the nature and depth of Brigham Young's insecurities, particularly after he assumed leadership of the church following Joseph Smith's death.

Bagley is more convincing when discussing Young's qualities as a pragmatic leader: "Brigham Young's pragmatism persuaded him to keep his options open, always maintaining a contingency plan in case his prophetic powers failed him" (75). Young's pragmatism was evident during the difficult period of the 1850s, as the Mormon leader considered various options regarding Mormonism's permanent gathering place: "During the famine of 1855, Young considered abandoning the Great Basin and moving the entire church to San Bernardino" (48). Yet these same "desperate economic conditions. . .fueled a new [Mormon] drive for statehood" (48). On a grander scale, Young envisioned Mormon "control [of] the whole [North American] continent" (48). He summed up his options: "I say, as the Lord lives, we are bound to become a sovereign State in the Union, or as an independent nation, by ourselves, and let them [the enemies of the Church] drive us from this place if they can; they cannot do it" (48).

Particularly thoughtful is Bagley's excellent account of Brigham Young's complex attitudes and multifaceted relationship with Native Americans, which the author develops throughout his study. Young led the way in asserting that the Indians, among whom the Latter-day Saints had settled, were the literal descendants of the Book of Mormon Lamanites and, thus, "shared the blood of Israel with the Mormons and were destined to assist them [the Latter-day Saints] in the conflicts that would precede the return of Christ" (22). As colorfully stated by Bagley, American Indians as the so-called "'stick of Joseph' would be the [Mormons'] most powerful allies and fearsome weapon, the battle-ax of the Lord" (26).

At the same time, Young "preached that the Indians 'must be saved, for they are the children of Abraham'" (26). To further this end, and in literal fulfillment of Book of Mormon prophecy, Young predicted that "the Elders would marry Wives of every tribe of Indians," enabling "the Lamanites [to] become a White & delightsome people" (28). In further pursuit of this goal of Mormon eugenics, Young advised his followers "to buy up Lamanite children as fast as they could, educate them and teach them the gospel so that many generations would not

pass ere they should become a white and delightsome people" (31).

Negative aspects of Mormon-Indian relations are also carefully chronicled by Bagley: "Brigham Young's 'regrettable strategy of selective extermination' ultimately challenged their very survival." Young's Indian policy, essentially an "open hand and mailed fist" approach, "gave the Indians the choice of becoming enemies or dependent clients of the Mormons" (25). To make matters worse, Brigham Young's tenure as Utah Territorial Superintendent of Indian Affairs was "riddled [with] corruption. . .but with a twist," in that the Mormon leader "never spent a dollar on the Indians in Utah" except to wage war against them or "to promote the interests of his church" (25). Moreover, Young clashed with federally appointed Indian Agent Garland Hurt over Indian policy. Acting against Young's wishes, Hurt promoted a policy of "large farms for the Utes" designed to eliminate that tribe's dependency on the local white Mormon population (47).

Also compelling and convincing is Bagley's discussion of Mormon millennialistic expectations as they affected Brigham Young's behavior. Young's apocalyptic expectations that "the end of time was near" (36) reached a climax during the heightened tension surrounding the Utah War of 1857. Such expectations clearly influenced the Mormon leader's actions in the events leading up to the Mountain Meadows Massacre (81). Even after this crisis, Young's "profound belief in the millennium remained unshaken, even if its imminence required recalculation" (210). Indeed, Mormon millennialistic expectations enjoyed a sharp revival with the advent of the Civil War, wherein Young and other church leaders proclaimed that "the nation was doomed to destruction and no power could save it" (253).

Bagley is much less satisfactory in his account of the complex, tangled relationship between Brigham Young and John D. Lee, a key figure in the Mountain Meadows Massacre. In places, the author's discussion is confusing and less-than-convincing. In noting that Lee was "adopted" as a son into Brigham Young's family in December 1845, just prior to the Mormon evacuation of Nauvoo, Bagley appears to downplay the significance of this event: "Through the law of adoption, a temple ordinance since abandoned, virtually every priesthood member was adopted into the extended families of Mormon authorities." Thus, Lee was merely one of thirty-eight men sealed to Young "as sons." However, Bagley proceeds to note that Lee himself attached great importance to this act, claiming to be "Young's first adopted son" and actually "began signing his correspondence J. D. L. Young" (19).

A more serious deficiency is Bagley's vagueness in outlining the dynamics of the Young/Lee relationship. Left unanswered is a basic question: What precisely, brought the two men together in the first place? A second question remains: What bound them together through good times as well as bad? Bagley does note that a crucial point of contact was a romantic attraction felt by both Young and Lee to the same woman, Emmeline Free. Lee actually met Emmeline first, and in late 1845 was engaged to marry her. Shortly thereafter, Young met Emmeline "and, much to Lee's dismay, also "fell in love with her." At this criti-

cal juncture, Young promised Lee that if he would surrender Emmeline, Young in compensation "would uphold Lee 'in time and eternity & he never should fall,' and that he [Lee] would sit at Young's right hand in his kingdom." Despite its grand theological implications, Young's offer "tormented Lee, for he loved Emmeline dearly." But in the end, Lee gave in to Young's wishes. Emmeline became one of Young's favorite wives, bearing him a total of ten children" (21). In his account, Bagley implies (without directly saying so) that Young's courtship of and marriage to Emmeline Free was linked to his decision to adopt John D. Lee as a son. This same incident might also have influenced Young's willingness to include Lee in his inner circle through membership in the exclusive, secret Council of the Fifty, important in Mormon millennialistic plans to establish their temporal Kingdom of God (20).

The dynamics of the Young-Lee relationship continued in the years following the Mormon migration to the Great Basin, even though Lee was prone to erratic often excessive behavior, making him something of a "loose cannon." This is evident in several incidents described in Bagley's narrative: "Lee's domineering personality spawned speculation about his business dealings and sexual habits. 'Lee was a swindler in dealing; a liar in conversation, and a low sensual brute of a man,' who had eight wives living with him in a home 'that was little better than a house of ill fame'" (263).

Particularly intriguing and, indeed, perplexing about the Young-Lee relationship, is the remarkable fact that Lee, despite his erratic, excessive personality and despite being made the sole "scapegoat" for the Mountain Meadows Massacre, did not implicate Brigham Young as an accessory *before* the fact. This is evident in the "Confessions" penned by Lee just prior to his execution in February 1877, wherein he blamed the Indians, "thereby shifting primary responsibility away from both the LDS church and himself" (313). As for Brigham Young's response, Bagley—in a critical, most revealing account—notes that when the Mormon leader received word of John D. Lee's execution, that the condemned man "had remained true to the church, [he, Young] 'fell on his knees and cried like a baby.'" Young allegedly remarked that "John [D. Lee] always told me he would stand between me and the mouth of the cannon, but I was afraid he would falter when it came to the test" (317).

The central question addressed in Bagley's book is, of course: Was Brigham Young, indeed, an accessory before the fact? The author answers this question with a resounding and unequivocal "Yes!" Indeed, Bagley does present a compelling case. In the author's own words, the "fate" of the Fancher party was "sealed in a [1 September 1857] meeting in Great Salt Lake between the leaders of the Southern Paiute [Indian] bands" and Brigham Young whom the Indians addressed as "Big Um" (112). Present at this meeting were various "tribal leaders said to have been at the massacre" (128). These events took place against the backdrop of the Utah War and the dispatch of Federal troops to Utah. Brigham Young warned U.S. Army Captain Stewart Van Vliet, sent to Salt Lake City ahead of the troops: "If the government dare to force the issue, I shall not hold

the Indians by the wrist any longer. . . .If the issue comes, you may tell the government to stop all emigration across the continent, for the Indians will kill all who attempt it" (135). In elaborating on the role of the Indians, Brigham Young stated in a significant and important 12 September 1857 letter:

> The check rein has broken, and cousin Lemuel is out at large, in fact he has been already collecting some of his annuities. Day after day, I am visited by their chiefs to know if they may strike while the iron is hot. If President Buchanan did not deal justly with the Mormons, "the war cry will resound from the Rio Colorado to the head waters of the Missouri—from the Black Hills to the Sierra Nevada—travel will be stopped across the continent—the deserts of Utah become a battle ground for freedom. It is peace and [Mormons'] rights—or the knife and tomahawk—let Uncle Sam chose. (139)

Bagley succinctly sums up Young's "mixed feelings about the massacre" after it had occurred. According to Bagley, Young characterized the massacre as "a righteous and necessary act of vengeance that confirmed his hope the Lamanites were ready to take up their role as the battle-ax of the Lord and help usher in the millennium. But he recognized the peril to him and the Latter-day Saints' cause if word leaked out that the Mormons had joined the Indians in the slaughter of an entire wagon train" (175-76). At the same time, Bagley asserts that "Young felt that this was the most unfortunate affair that ever befell the Church" (176).

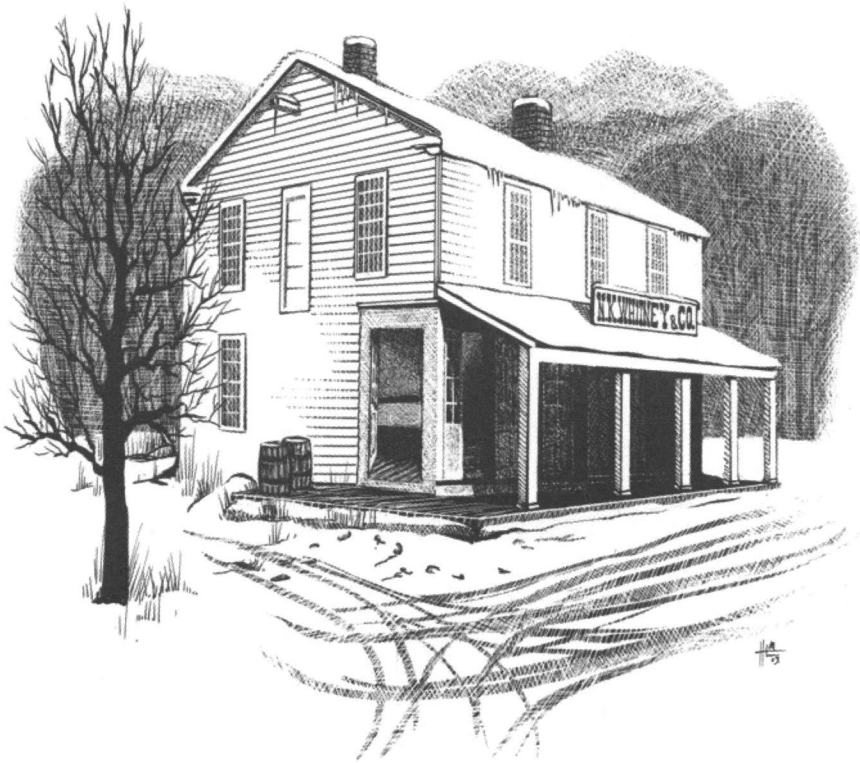
As for Bagley's basic contention that Brigham Young was an accessory before the fact in the events leading to the Mountain Meadows Massacre, this reviewer remains unconvinced. Brigham Young in his rhetoric to the Saints clearly contributed to a "culture of violence" and millennialistic fervor during the Utah War, a time of extreme tension, and in this explosive environment, it seems clear that the Mormon leader also encouraged general acts of Indian depravation along the Overland Trail. However, Bagley has failed to make a convincing case as to *how* and *why* Brigham Young would single out the Fancher Party for destruction. Bagley's evidence notwithstanding, in this reviewer's opinion the author has not sufficiently proven his case that Brigham Young specifically ordered the massacre of the Fancher Party at Mountain Meadows.

Also problematic is Brigham Young's primary motive—as cited by Bagley—to "avenge the blood of the prophets," a central argument in his book, and indeed, its primary title. In particular, Bagley's assertion that Young sought to atone for the recent murder of Apostle Parley P. Pratt in Arkansas is both tenuous and unconvincing. Much more viable as causes for the massacre were various conditions involving extreme tension within the Mormon community, sparked by the advance of federal troops into Utah in the Fall of 1857, compounded by the "white hot fervor" of the Mormon Reformation which created a heightened urgency and sense of millennialistic expectations or "end times," wherein only righteous true believers would survive to witness the Second

Coming and related glorious events. By contrast, wicked non-believers would and should be destroyed, in the opinion of more fanatical Latter-day Saints. Brigham Young and other church leaders further whipped these tensions through fiery sermons and inflammatory rhetoric. This, in turn, stirred up "grass roots" Latter-day Saints to a fever pitch, especially in southern Utah, causing leaders there to strike against the Fancher Party, which unfortunately happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Bagley is on much firmer ground when he captures the essence of Brigham Young's personality, providing keen insights into a complex, multifaceted individual. I confess that Bagley's critical, hard-edged presentation has caused me to rethink some of my own preconceived notions concerning Young. But even here, Bagley's portrait tends to be skewed, overemphasizing the negative—which is understandable, given the author's emphasis on Young's involvement with the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Focusing on a significant, negative aspect of a biographical subject's life inevitably inspires an overall negative portrait. This was certainly evident in my own initial examination of Brigham Young in *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks: The Changing Place of Black People Within Mormonism* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981). In this work, Young emerges as highly racist in his attitudes and behavior, particularly toward African-Americans. This was most significantly reflected in the Mormon leader's role as chief architect of the church's ban on ordaining black males to the priesthood. In reaction to such highly negative perceptions of Young, I felt compelled to examine the Mormon leader within the larger context of his total life and career. The result was my brief biography, *Brigham Young and the Expanding American Frontier* (Boston, Mass: Little, Brown and Co., 1986) wherein I sought to present the Mormon leader in a more balanced and comprehensive light.

As for Bagley's portrayal of Brigham Young, his compelling portrait will hopefully stimulate renewed scholarly interest in the Mormon leader, building upon Leonard Arrington's 1985 magnum opus, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985). While Arrington's biography was certainly a seminal work for its time, it was far from definitive. Arrington failed to adequately use the essential primary sources written by and to the Mormon leader, along with the papers of other church leaders who knew and interacted with Young, all then available in the LDS Church Historical Department. More problematic was Arrington's basic interpretation of the Mormon leader, wherein he overemphasized Young's role as church and corporate leader, giving inadequate attention to Young's human side, particularly the complex aspects of his personality, with all its flaws, frailties, and insecurities. Indeed, Arrington's highly positive portrait is very much reflective of the optimistic time in which it was produced—the so-called "Camelot Period" of Mormon studies, which Arrington himself promoted and vainly fought to preserve. Now in much different times, both for the church and American society at large, an extensive biographical reexamination of Brigham Young is in order. Indeed, as with Joseph Smith,



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Simply Implausible: DNA and a Mesoamerican Setting for the Book of Mormon

Thomas Murphy

IN A RECENT ARTICLE, "Lamanite Genesis, Genealogy, and Genetics," published in the anthology *American Apocrypha*, I summarized existing genetic research into Native American origins, concluding, "While DNA shows that ultimately all human populations are closely related, to date no intimate genetic link has been found between ancient Israelites and indigenous Americans, much less within the time frame suggested by the Book of Mormon."[1] Instead of lending support to an Israelite origin as posited by Mormon scripture, genetic data have confirmed already existing archaeological, cultural, linguistic, and biological data, pointing to migrations from Asia as "the primary source of American Indian origins."[2]

Researchers associated with the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) have rejected hemispheric models of the Book of Mormon but still express "confidence in an Israelite genetic presence in Central America and perhaps as far away as Arizona to the north and Colombia to the south."[3] I have found no genetic research to support this expectation. Instead, studies of mtDNA (even ancient mtDNA), Y-chromosomes, and protein polymorphisms in Central American indigenous populations indicate the same Asian origins found elsewhere in the Americas. Given overwhelming genetic evidence against the Book of Mormon's historical claims, I advised in my article "against confusing a spiritual witness [of the Book of Mormon] with scientific evi-

1. Thomas W. Murphy, "Lamanite Genesis, Genealogy, and Genetics," in Dan Vogel and Brent Metcalfe, eds., *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 48.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 63.

dence."[4] As Mormons, it appears, we tend to place far too much trust in prayer as a valid means of historical and scientific investigation. Our tendency to confuse our answers to private prayers with valid historical and scientific information has produced a classic science vs. religion conflict, comparable to evolution vs. creationism. I concluded:

> From a scientific perspective the Book of Mormon's origin is best situated in early nineteenth century America, and Lamanite genesis can only be traced historically to ca. 1828. The term Lamanite is a modern social and political designation that lacks a verifiable biological or historical underpinning linking it to ancient American Indians.[5]

In other words, the best explanation—i.e., the most plausible one—remains a nineteenth-century origin of the Book of Mormon.[6]

My purpose here is to review and respond to critiques of "Lamanite Genesis, Genealogy, and Genetics." Because those critiques have depended primarily upon a limited geographic setting for the Book of Mormon, my primary focus is upon such models.

Points of Agreement and Disagreement

Before identifying points of disagreement, I think it worthwhile to review the striking points of agreement between myself and other LDS scholars, especially those associated with the Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research (FAIR) and FARMS. Trent Stephens and D. Jeffrey Meldrum (LDS biologists at Idaho State University), Scott Woodward, Bill Bradshaw, and Michael Whiting (LDS biologists at Brigham Young University), Brant Gardner and Kevin Barney (LDS authors writing for FAIR), and Jeff Lindsay (LDS scientist maintaining his own web site) all agree that current genetic evidence indicates the principal ancestors of the American Indians came from Northeast Asia rather than ancient Israel. They accept the validity of the genetic evidence, my basic interpretations of it, and acknowledge that it poses fundamental problems for

4. Ibid., 68.

5. Ibid.

6. Despite my request that he stop misrepresenting my research, Dr. Michael Whiting of Brigham Young University continues to distort my conclusions, setting up a straw man, which he then attacks for greater effect. This is most evident in his exaggerated claims that I have announced "that modern DNA research has conclusively proved that the Book of Mormon is false and that Joseph Smith was a fraud," that I hold "the naïve notion that DNA provides infallible evidence," and that I tout my conclusion as being "assumption free" (Michael F. Whiting, "DNA and the Book of Mormon: A Phylogenetic Perspective," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 [2003]: 24-25, 35). To the contrary, I have only maintained that a nineteenth-century origin of the Book of Mormon is the best explanation of existing historical and scientific data. The scripture may be historical fiction and still contain inspired spiritual truths emanating from a prophet of God.

the traditional understanding of the Book of Mormon as *the* history of American Indians.[7] Daniel Peterson, former chairman for the Board of Trustees at FARMS, even endorses the label "Galileo Event" as an appropriate description of the implications of genetic research for Book of Mormon Studies.[8]

An apparent consensus on some central issues of debate about the Book of Mormon appears to be emerging. Most Book of Mormon scholars today, including those associated with FAIR and FARMS, reject a literal reading of the Book of Mormon and "agree that Nephites and Lamanites never actually rode horses, traveled in chariots, used steel swords, raised cattle, or ate wheat."[9] We basically agree that the English text of the Book of Mormon does not accurately describe the flora and fauna of ancient America in Central America or elsewhere. We agree that the population growth attested in the Book of Mormon is mathematically impossible for groups of the size and make-up described in the text and that the descriptions of distances traveled in the scripture are not consistent with a population that spread to "cover the face of the whole earth" on the American continents "from the sea south to the sea north, from the sea west to the sea east" (see Hel. 3:8). We agree that ethnonyms like *Lamanite* from the Book of Mormon can have social and political meanings, in addition to genealogical ones. We have reached a virtual consensus that the traditional interpretation of the Book of Mormon as the history of the American Indians has been thoroughly discredited by the discoveries of anthropology, biology, and history. Thus, we would seem to agree that the teachings about Israelite and Lehite ancestry of American Indians espoused by every LDS prophet since Joseph Smith must necessarily be disregarded as incorrect.

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7. Trent Stephens, D. Jeffrey Meldrum, and Thomas Murphy, "DNA and Lamanite Identity: A Galileo Event," panel discussion chaired by Brent Lee Metcalfe, Salt Lake City Sunstone Symposium, August 2001; KUER Radio West, "Science and Foundations of the Book of Mormon," interview with Terryl L. Givens, Thomas Murphy, and Scott Woodward, hosted by Doug Fabrizio, Salt Lake City, Utah, 19 December 2002, retrieved electronically April 12, 2003 from http://audio.kuer.org:8000/file/rw121902.mp3, transcript available at http://www.fairlds.org/; Bill Bradshaw, respondent to "Sin, Skin, and Seed: Mistakes of Men in the Book of Mormon," by Thomas W. Murphy, Salt Lake City Sunstone Symposium, August 2002; Michael F. Whiting, "Does DNA Evidence Refute the Authenticity of the Book of Mormon," streaming video of lecture at BYU on 29 January 2003, retrieved electronically 11 April 2003 from http://farms.byu.edu; Kevin L. Barney, "A Brief Review of Murphy and Southerton's Galileo Event," retrieved electronically 26 June 2003 from http://www.fairlds.org; Brant Gardner, "The Tempest in a Teapot: DNA Studies and the Book of Mormon," retrieved electronically 26 June 2003 from http://www.fairlds.org; Jeff Meldrum, "Children of Lehi: DNA and the Book of Mormon," Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research Conference, 8 August 2003; Jeff Lindsay, "Does DNA Evidence Refute the Book of Mormon?" retrieved electronically 25 August 2003 from http://www.jefflindsay.com/; Whiting, "DNA and the Book of Mormon," 24-35. D. Jeffrey Meldrum and Trent D. Stephens, "Who Are the Children of Lehi?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003): 38-51.

8. Daniel Peterson, "Random Reflections on the Passing Scene," Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research Conference, 8 August 2003.

9. Murphy, "Lamanite Genesis," 61-62.

The primary disagreement between scholars centers on how best to explain the inconsistency between the evidence and the traditional readings of the Book of Mormon text. Most scholars associated with FARMS and FAIR prefer to settle these inconsistencies by insisting on a limited geographic setting for the Book of Mormon in Central America. Non-LDS scholars and many Mormon scholars prefer the simpler explanation: The Book of Mormon is nineteenth-century fiction, produced by Joseph Smith. These scholars recognize that fictive accounts and allegorical stories are found in the sacred texts of all the world's major religions, and thus many are willing to accept the status of the Book of Mormon as scripture.[10] Let's take a closer look at this dispute as it has played out in critiques of my article, "Lamanite Genesis, Genealogy, and Genetics."

Argument #1: Murphy's conclusions are not scientific

While no LDS scholar has offered any historical or biological evidence to contradict my conclusions, several have raised objections to the article. Brant Gardner has contended, "[Murphy's] conclusions are not consonant with the science."[11] Michael Whiting told reporters that I failed to get the science right and that my article does not stand up to scientific scrutiny.[12] Kevin Barney accused Simon Southerton and me of confusing science with theology in a related article appearing in *Anthropology News*. Yet despite such bold statements, each critic basically concedes the scientific evidence. Gardner wrote:

> Is it true that, as Murphy writes, "...virtually all Native Americans can trace their lineages to the Asian migrations between 7,000 and 50,000 years ago." It is true enough. What does this tell us? We may correctly conclude from the evidence that the popular opinion long held among Latter-day Saints that the Book of Mormon explains the origins of all Native American populations is mistaken.[13]

Barney acknowledges:

> The extant DNA evidence simply confirms what scientists already knew: that most Native Americans ultimately derive from Asia. This is inconsistent with the hemispheric model of the Book of Mormon. To that extent, Murphy and Southerton are not arguing against a straw man; many contemporary Latter-day Saints (to the extent that they have thought of the issue at all) continue to uncritically accept a hemispheric model of the Book of Mormon. To the extent that the kind of DNA research

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10. I am comfortable regarding the Book of Mormon as scripture, but not as history.

11. Gardner, "Tempest."

12. William Lobdell and Larry B. Stammer, "Mormon Scientist, Church Clash over DNA Test," *Los Angeles Times*, 8 December 2002; Antone Clark, "Murphy's DNA Claims Debated," *Standard Net*, 12 December 2002.

13. Gardner, "Tempest."

> publicized by Murphy and Southerton causes these people to reexamine their assumptions about the nature of the text, I think the effect will be a salutary one.[14]

While Whiting, in his presentation for FARMS at BYU, exclaimed delight at the prospect of evolutionary biology coming to the defense of the Book of Mormon, he offered no scientific data to substantiate an Israelite origin of indigenous peoples anywhere in the Americas. In fact, he conceded, "current genetic evidence suggests that Native Americans have a genetic history representative of Asia and not the Middle East."[15] Mel Tungate, an LDS chronicler of debates about DNA and the Book of Mormon, has observed key differences between Whiting's earlier statements to the *LA Times* questioning the science behind my conclusions and his embrace of the same scientific evidence in his presentation at BYU.

> A few weeks before his talk, [Whiting] criticized Murphy for not getting the science right, but in this presentation he in effect said "Murphy is right in his DNA science. He is not right in his other hypotheses.". . .Dr. Whiting's talk is good in that it puts him on the same side as almost all scientists who have studied the historic roots of the American Indians. He is on the same side as Tom Murphy in this area. In his talk, he did not address the hard issues (nor did he intend to)—the abandonment of the church's traditional teachings of the ancestry of the Amerinds (of the Book of Mormon), and the influence of the 19th century Joseph Smith on the translated book.[16]

I concur with Tungate's summary. LDS scientists and scholars have not presented any scientific data that challenge or contradict the basic conclusions of my original research.[17] Each critic has basically conceded that genetic research

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14. Barney, "A Brief Review."

15. Whiting, "DNA Evidence."

16. Mel Tungate, "DNA and the Book of Mormon," http://www.tungate.com/murphy.htm (accessed June 26, 2003).

17. One of the most surprising critiques to emerge was the false allegation that I am evading peer review or that the research I reviewed would not stand up to peer review. Whiting made this allegation in a statement to Antone Clark, a reporter for the (Ogden) *Standard-Examiner*. T. Allen Lambert of SUNY-Albany made similar assertions in a letter to the editor of *Anthropology News*. While it is uncommon for articles in anthologies to be subjected to peer review, "Lamanite Genesis, Genealogy, and Genetics" first appeared in *Mormon Scripture Studies*, where it had been subjected to peer review prior to publication. Neither claimant checked with the editor of *Mormon Scripture Studies* or me before making these allegations. Most importantly, though, the article was a summary of genetic research on Native American origins, nearly all of which had been subjected to peer review prior to publication in leading scientific journals such as *American Journal of Human Genetics, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, and American Journal of Physical Anthropology*. Whiting's and Lambert's claims are little more than an inaccurate projection of the inadequacies of LDS apologetics onto my publications (see Clark, "Murphy's DNA"; T. Allen Lambert, "Views on the Book of Mormon," correspondence, *Anthropology News* 44, no. 5 [May]: 4).

fails to offer any support for the Book of Mormon's historical claims, either regionally or hemispherically.

Argument #2: Murphy failed to consider a limited geographic setting

The central aspect of dispute from Gardner, Barney, Lindsay, and Whiting is my alleged failure to consider a limited geographic setting for the Book of Mormon. Contrary to their representations of my research, I did consider such proposals in the section of my paper entitled "Limited Geography" where I concluded that a narrowed geographic setting for the Book of Mormon also lacked support from extant genetic research. Let me quote my summary of that section from the original article.

> While FARMS researchers are careful to note the importance of cultural influences on the construction of categories, they express confidence in an Israelite genetic presence in Central America and perhaps as far away as Arizona to the north and Colombia to the south. As we have seen, genetic studies of indigenous peoples throughout North, Central, and South America have failed to link Native Americans from these locations to ancient Hebrews.[18]

Assertions that I failed to consider a limited geographic setting for the Book of Mormon are incorrect. Regardless, the implication that a limited geographic setting or a local colonization model rescues the Book of Mormon from contrary genetic evidence deserves more careful scrutiny than I originally provided.[19]

In subsequent presentations entitled "Sin, Skin, and Seed: Mistakes of Men in the Book of Mormon" at Sunstone Symposia and elsewhere, I presented a more detailed analysis of DNA evidence from Central America which has since been validated by other scientists. Simon Southerton, an Australian geneticist and former LDS bishop, presented substantiating data in Salt Lake City in October 2001.[20] His examination of published mtDNA lineages from living and ancient indigenous peoples of Central America (including Maya, Mixe, Mixtec, Nahua, Zapotec, and others) revealed that of 496 individuals studied, 99.2 percent possessed mtDNA lineages A-D, traceable back to Asia but not the Middle East.[21] The remaining 0.8 percent may have the X lineage, or a lineage resulting

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18. Murphy, "Lamanite Genesis," 63.

19. The implication of exoneration is most forcefully expressed in Mark Nolte's title for a news article at BYU Newsnet: "BYU Professor Refutes Book of Mormon DNA Claims," http://newsnet.byu.edu/story.cfm/41852/ (accessed July 16, 2003).

20. Simon Southerton, "DNA Genealogies of Native Americans and Polynesians," given at the Ex-Mormon Foundations Conference, 2002, manuscript copy and Powerpoint file in my possession.

21. Simon Southerton, "Losing a Lost Race," manuscript copy in my possession, appendix B. The four unidentified samples could belong to X or may be the product of intermarriage with Europeans or Africans.

from intermarriage with post-Columbian immigrants. The X lineage is found in the Middle East and Siberia, but in the Americas it typically occurs with distinctive mutations which are also found in Siberian, but not Middle Eastern, populations.[22] The evidence collected to date from Central America is just as problematic for the Book of Mormon as that found elsewhere. In fact, Stephen Whittington, a non-LDS bio-archaeologist at University of Maine specializing in Mesoamerica, concurs with Southerton and me about the lack of supporting data from both archaeology and physical anthropology for limited geographic settings in North, South, or Central America.[23] Despite appealing for a consideration of a limited geographic setting in Central America, none of the defenders of the Book of Mormon have presented a summary of existing regional genetic data to their audiences.

Argument #3: Everyone has Jewish ancestors

Jeff Lindsay, John Sorenson, and Matthew Roper get a lot of mileage out of some erroneous statements made by science reporter Steve Olson in *Mapping Human History: Discovering the Past Through Our Genes*.[24] Olson reported:

> The forces of genetic mixing are so powerful that everyone in the world has Jewish ancestors, though the amount of DNA from those ancestors in a given individual may be small. In fact, everyone on earth is by now a descendant of Abraham, Moses, and Aaron—If indeed they existed.[25]

Earlier in his book, Olson made the same case in a more general manner:

> The exponential growth in the number of ancestors going back in time connects us tightly to the past. If a historical figure who lived more than 1,600 years ago had children who themselves had children, that person is almost certainly among our ancestors. Everyone in the world today is most likely descended from Nefertiti (through the six daughters she had with Akhenaton), from Confucius (through the son and daughter he is said to have had), and from Julius Caesar (through his illegitimate children, not through Julia, who died in childbirth). One need go back only a couple of millennia to connect everyone alive today to a common pool of ancestors.[26]

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22. Miroslava V. Derenko et al., "The Presence of Mitochondrial Haplogroup X in Altaians from South Siberia," *The American Journal of Human Genetics* 69, no. 1 (July, 2001): 237.

23. He concludes, "Archeologists and physical anthropologists have not found any evidence of Hebrew origins for the people of North, South and Central America" (*DNA vs. the Book of Mormon*, videorecording, Living Hope Ministries, 2002).

24. Lindsay, "DNA Research."; John Sorenson and Mathew Roper, "Before DNA," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003): 23.

25. Steve Olson, *Mapping Human History: Discovering the Past Through Our Genes* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 114.

26. Ibid., 47. He makes similar assertions regarding Kennewick Man (195).

Unfortunately, Olson is simply wrong. He based these statements upon an erroneous reading of the research by Yale statistician Joseph Chang. In an otherwise affirmative review of Olson's book published in the *American Journal of Human Genetics*, Lynn Jorde, a geneticist from the University of Utah, highlighted Olson's error:

> The one assertion I found troublesome—in part because it appears multiple places in the book—is that all humans alive today are direct descendants of virtually everybody who lived more than a few dozen generations in the past. Thus we are all said to be direct descendants of Confucius, Julius Ceasar, Nefertiti, and even Kennewick Man. This claim is based upon a statistical analysis by J. Chang (Adv Appl Prob 31:1002-1026) that assumes random mating throughout the population, no geographic structure, and a constant population size. As Chang himself recognized, these assumptions are completely unrealistic for the entire human population and therefore would not support Olson's conclusions.[27]

Lindsay's extended claim that "every Native American may literally be a descendant of Abraham and even Lehi," and a similar one by Sorenson and Roper, is likewise unsupported by an informed reading of Chang's research.[28]

Argument #4: Biological processes may account for genetic extinction

Scholars like Whiting, Woodward, Stephens, and Meldrum have suggested that common biological processes, like founder effect and genetic drift, could account for the lack of an Israelite genetic presence. They argue that Lehite, Jaredite, and Mulekite migrations involved small groups of colonists who intermarried with a much larger population of indigenous peoples. The genetic founders of these parties, they contend, may have had DNA that was not typical of contemporary or ancient Israelite populations, thus producing what is commonly known as a *founder effect*. They also suppose that chance events may have resulted in the loss of the genetic markers, a broader process encompassing founder effect and commonly called *genetic drift*.

Problems and Inconsistencies

There are four key problems with these arguments. First, genetic extinction of Book of Mormon founding populations is not consistent with statements in the scripture which identify multitudes—many thousands and millions—of descendants. Second, prophets in the Book of Mormon foretell the persistence of

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27. Lynn Jorde, review of *Mapping Human History in American Journal of Human Genetics* 71, no. 6 (December 2002):1484-85.

28. See Lindsay, "DNA Research"; Sorenson and Roper, "Before DNA," 23.

Lehi's descendants to the present and beyond. Third, genetic lineages in putative founding populations from the ancient Middle East would not likely have included those commonly found in Siberia. Fourth, the chance events required for founder effect and genetic drift must occur not just once, but in three separate founding populations, for more than a hundred different genetic markers. These compounding problems significantly undermine the plausibility of a local colonization in Mesoamerica as the geographic setting for the Book of Mormon.

Problem #1: Book of Mormon describes numerous Israelite populations

The Book of Mormon explicitly identifies numerous populations as descendants of ancient Israelites. An angel told Nephi that the multitudes he saw in a vision were "thy seed and also the seed of thy brethren" and that later "many waters" divided the Gentiles from the seed of his brethren (1 Ne. 12:1-20, 13:10). In Mosiah 11:19, King Noah's people boasted about their ability to fight "thousands of Lamanites," identified as "their brethren." The prophet Abinadi, subsequently preaching to the people of King Noah, identifies them as members of the house of Israel brought out of bondage in Egypt (Mos. 12:34). Alma 56:3 describes two thousand stripling warriors as "descendants of Laman." In 3 Nephi 15-17, Jesus addresses an assembled multitude of "two thousand five hundred" as "a remnant of the house of Joseph" and as the "house of Israel," distinguishing them from the Gentiles for whom they were instructed to keep a record. Ether 15:2 describes Jaredite populations in the millions. Given Book of Mormon descriptions of many thousands of descendants of Israelites in the New World, a scenario where genetic drift results in no genetic markers of the founding parties surviving is highly unlikely.

Problem #2: Prophecies foretell persistence of Lehite descendants

Prophecies in the Book of Mormon tell of descendants of Israel who will live to receive the Book of Mormon, build a New Jerusalem, and even persist to the end of the earth. The angel promised Nephi during his vision that "the Lord God will not suffer that the Gentiles will utterly destroy the mixture of thy seed, which are among thy brethren. Neither will he suffer that the Gentiles shall destroy the seed of thy brethren" (1 Ne. 13:30-31). Nephi prophesied to his brothers of a day when "the remnant of our seed [shall] know that they are of the house of Israel. . .then shall they know and come to the knowledge of their forefathers" (1 Ne. 15:14). Lehi blessed the "children of Laman" that "the Lord God will not suffer that ye shall perish; wherefore he will be merciful unto you and unto your seed forever" (2 Ne. 4: 3-7). Ether 13:5-8 prophesied that "a remnant of the seed of Joseph" would come out of Jerusalem, occupy "this land," build a holy city, and most importantly "perish not. . .until the end come when the earth shall pass away." The prophet/general Mormon offers a parting sermon addressing the remnant of the people who survive the apocalyptic ending to the scrip-

ture, explicitly identifying them as "the house of Israel," calling them to the knowledge of their "fathers" (Mormon 7:1-5).[29] The Book of Mormon clearly does not describe a small population which fails to leave genetic descendants.[30] Instead, it both describes and predicts a numerous descendant population that will persist to receive the Book of Mormon as a record of their forefathers and survive to the end of time on earth.

Problem #3: Middle Eastern founder effects unlikely to produce Siberian genetic markers

If the Mulekite and Lehite parties were both unusual representatives of Jerusalem's Israelite population, they would not likely have had Siberian genetic markers commonly found among Native Americans. Geneticists identify those maternal lineages commonly found in contemporary European and Middle Eastern populations as H, V, J, K, T, U, W, I, X, M, and L. The largest percentage of Middle Eastern and European populations comes from lineages H and V. Native American/Asian lineages A-D are not present in Middle Eastern, European, or African populations. Only lineage X is also present in significant quantities in the Middle East, Europe, and Africa. A founding female from a Middle Eastern population who was genetically unusual would likely have come from lineages M, L, U, or perhaps X, but not from lineages A-D.[31] Even if the parties of Lehi, Mulek, and the brother of Jared were genetically unusual for the Middle East, the chances that they would have carried genetic markers of Siberian populations are extremely slim.

A founder effect in maternal lineages is only likely to produce the results we find in ancient and living Native American mtDNA if all the likely dozens of females in the Jaredite, Lehite, and Mulekite populations came: a) from the same branch of the X lineage, or b) from the approximately 0.5 percent of living Native American mtDNA typically attributed to intermarriage with European or African populations. Of course, these scenarios are both highly unlikely. Native American and Siberian (Altaian) X lineages typically have a distinctive mutation sequence distinguishing them from European and Middle Eastern variations of the same lineage. In a recent study by Miroslava Derenko, et al., all but one of the samples of the Native American X lineage they examined were directly descended from Siberian branches of the X lineage.[32] Could a branch of the X

29. Numerous other passages similarly identify the seed of Lehi, Nephi, and/or Laman as consisting of thousands and even many thousands: Alma 2:19, 3:26, 4:5, 23:5, 24:22-27, 26:4-22, 28:2-12, 37:9-19, 43:5, 49:23,50:22, 51:11-19, 53:18-22, 56:3-54, 57:6-26, 58:8, 60:5-22, 62:5-17; Hel. 3:24-26, 5:19, 11:6, 3 Ne. 3:22-24, 4:21-27; Mormon 1:11, 2:9-25, 4:9, 6:10-15.

30. One can have descendants who do not carry particular genetic markers. For example, women do not carry their father's Y chromosome. Thus, one's genetic markers can go extinct even though one has descendants. However, the greater the number of one's descendants the less likely it is that genetic markers will go extinct.

31. Southerton, "DNA Genealogies."

32. Derenko et al., "Mitochondrial Haplogroup X," 237.

lineage, represented by one individual in the Derenko study, represent an Israelite presence in the New World?[33]

The likelihood of such a scenario becomes even more improbable when we examine the distribution of the X lineage in Native American populations. The X lineage is largely restricted to northern American Indian groups like the Ojibwa, Sioux, Yakima, and Navajo. It has also appeared in a few ancient Brazilian samples, but is nearly absent from Central American populations.[34] Out of 496 Central American mtDNA sequences surveyed by Simon Southerton, not one has been confirmed as coming from an X lineage.[35] While it is plausible that members of the X lineage will yet be found in Central America,[36] evidence to date suggests a far different pattern of distribution in the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas than would be expected if a founder effect were at play in the genetic makeup of Book of Mormon populations. If American X lineages were a result of migration from the Middle East to Central America, they should appear most frequently in that region rather than in North America.

What about the approximately 0.5 percent of living American Indian mtDNAs typically attributed to intermarriage with Europeans and Africans? Evidence indicates these individuals are not likely to have had Lehite ancestry. First, they are found most frequently in tribes with the most contact with Europeans or Africans after Columbus. Second, they are found at very low frequency all over North, Central, and South America, not in a "hot spot" as would be expected for a localized Lehite presence. Third, European and African lineages have not been found in ancient DNA samples from individuals who lived before Columbus.[37] While a founder effect would most likely occur if small populations left the Middle East for the Americas, it is highly improbable that it would produce the patterns of genetic markers currently found in Central American or other Native populations.

Problem #4: Unlikely chance events must recur multiple times

For Michael Whiting's local colonization model to concur with current genetic evidence, there would have to have been multiple occurrences of similar,

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33. While Lindsay continues to place a glimmer of hope in the X lineage, Meldrum and Stephens considered the controversy of the X lineage "put to rest" with the Derenko study in 2001. Lindsay, "DNA evidence;" Meldrum and Stephens, "Who Are the Children of Lehi?"

34. Murphy, "Lamanite Genesis," 56-57.

35. Southerton, "Losing a Lost Race."

36. David M. Reed, Univ. of Michigan, has tentatively identified an X lineage individual among skeletons found at Iximché, Guatemala but cautions that he has yet to verify his results (David M. Reed, "Recent Activities," retrieved electronically 30 July 2002 from http://www-personal.umich.edu/~dmreed/Activities.html). In a letter Reed cautiously notes, "We haven't prepared anything for distribution regarding the Iximché ancient DNA. We must verify our results before establishing the genetic composition of those peoples" (David Reed to Thomas [Murphy], letter, nd. Envelope bears the postmark of 5 July 2002).

37. Simon Southerton to Thomas Murphy, electronic mail, 17 August 2003.

yet unlikely, events. All the female founders of the Jaredite, Mulekite, and Lehite migrations would have to leave no genetic descendants, or else come from rare lineages usually attributed to post-Columbian admixture. If genetic extinction is to explain the lack of mtDNA from Middle Eastern populations, then it must have occurred not just once but independently in three separate migration events. Because the evidence from paternal lineages substantiates the Siberian origin indicated by maternal lineages, a similar set of unlikely occurrences would also have to be repeated for all the male founders of the Jaredite, Mulekite, and Lehite migrations.[38] Evidence from the Y-chromosome thus makes Whiting's hypothesis doubly implausible.[39]

When we look more broadly at over a hundred different genetic markers, the plausibility of Whiting's local colonization model rapidly dissipates. L. Luca Cavalli-Sforza's monumental *History and Geography of Human Genes* examines more than 110 different traits in more than 1,800 predominantly indigenous populations around the world. The data he considers include blood groups and protein and enzyme polymorphisms (polymorphism refers to multiple forms or alleles of a gene), including the highly informative human lymphoctye antigens (HLA) and immunoglobulins. Their global analysis—using 120 allele frequencies—found Central and South American populations clustering most closely with other Native Americans and Northeast Asians rather than with Middle Eastern or Southwest Asian populations. Likewise, a more extensive analysis of thirty different Central and South American populations using more than sixty genetic markers found their closest relatives among other Native Americans rather than Middle Eastern populations.[40] The implausibility of Whiting's model escalates exponentially with each additional genetic marker examined.[41]

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38. Murphy, "Lamanite Genesis," 58-59.

39. While Whiting contends that his hypothesis is not testable, Meldrum and Stephens took a more cautious approach, suggesting that any limited colonization hypothesis may not be testable. Whiting also ignores the existence of ancient DNA. In regard to living Native Americans, Whiting's assertion could only be true if one assumed that gene flow and genetic drift would exterminate genetic traces of the Book of Mormon populations. As noted above, this assumption is not warranted by internal evidence from the Book of Mormon. Whiting's claim appears to be just another attempt to circumvent the scientific method (see Whiting, "DNA and the Book of Mormon," 31; Whiting, "DNA Evidence"; Meldrum and Stephens, "Who Are the Children of Lehi?").

40. L. Luca Cavalli-Sforza, Paulo Menozzi, and Alberto Piazza, *The History and Geography of Human Genes* Abridged Paperback Edition, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994, 78, 328.

41. Rich Deem, whose analysis of DNA evidence and Molecular Genetics has substantiated the conclusions reached by Southerton and me, expands the analysis beyond just human genetics. He notes that founder effect must occur not only in mtDNA but also in Y-chromosome data and polymorphic Alu insertions (apparently inactive pseudogenes found in numerous copies in the human genome). Because the results are similar to that from maternal and paternal lineages, "the founder effect would require the simultaneous mutation of at least 5 polymorphic Alu insertions in Lehi's sons and wives—not likely!" He adds, "Not only do Mormon apologists have to deal with human genetics, they also have to explain the genetics of certain intestinal bacteria and domesticated dogs. . . .All of

COUNTER ARGUMENTS

After identifying these four problems with a limited geographic setting, I offer here six counter arguments. First, limited geographic proposals derive from circular reasoning, commonly referred to as a tautology. Second, limited geographic settings rest historically upon a rejection of the scientific method. Third, the most prominent proposal by John Sorenson has failed initial evaluation by a more careful Mormon scholar, Thomas Stuart Ferguson. Fourth, Sorenson's proposal fails to meet his own standards, as set forth in published statements. Fifth, several scholars have successfully refuted Sorenson's model by more careful study of the Book of Mormon text and evaluation of external evidence. Finally, the popularity of Sorenson's model at FARMS and FAIR rests primarily upon its social functions, and not on an evidentiary basis.

Counter #1: Proposals for a limited geography are tautological

John L. Sorenson, emeritus professor of anthropology at Brigham Young University, has credited Louis E. Hills, writing between 1917 and 1924, with a series of innovative interpretations of the Book of Mormon, which would become increasingly common in the treatments of Book of Mormon geography. Among Hills's innovations were "the first regionally limited model" and a Mesoamerican setting, with the Isthmus of Tehunatepec as the narrow neck of land described in the Book of Mormon.[42]

The methodology employed by Hills began with the presumption of the validity of the Book of Mormon's history, then reshaped indigenous and mestizo histories to fit the Mormon view of the past.[43] By careful selection of facts from post-conquest narratives, removal of all contradictory elements as "cobwebs and dusts of fiction," and filling in blanks with the narrative of the Book of Mormon, Hills tautologically reshaped the ancient history of Mesoamerica to conform to his predetermined model of truth.[44] Similar methods would underlie the increas-

these five extremely improbable, multiple mutation effects would have had to have happened within one or two generations in the same small populations. The idea is scientifically ludicrous" (Deem, "DNA Evidence and Molecular Genetics Disprove the Book of Mormon," retrieved electronically 26 June 2003 from http://www.GodAndScience.org.).

42. John L. Sorenson, *The Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book*, rev. ed. (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1992), 32-33; L. E. Hills, *A Short Work on the Geography of Mexico and Central America from 2234 B.C. to 421 A. D.* (Independence, Mo.: L. E. Hills, 1917).

43. Hills claimed, "Indian traditions and legends, handed down for about 2,000 years, would probably become distorted" (Hills, *A Short Work*, 6). Consequently he "condensed many quotations for the sake of brevity, and to better gather out facts from the mass of fables, thus getting a clearer view of the true history by brushing away the cobwebs and dust of fiction, which have been accumulating for many centuries" (Louis E. Hills, *Historical Data from Ancient Records and Ruins of Mexico and Central America* [Independence, Mo.: Louis E. Hills, 1919], 1).

44. Hills's approach is tautological because it never seriously considers the possibility that the Book of Mormon might not be historically accurate. He assumes the Book of Mormon is true and dismisses contradictory evidence as "cobwebs and dusts of fiction" (Hills, *Historical Data*, 1).

ing popularity of limited geographies in the twentieth century. Scholars at FARMS have adopted Hills's methodology, along with his limited Mesoamerican geography. The inside back cover of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* includes a mission statement making the tautological approach of FARMS explicit:

> The work of FARMS rests on the conviction that the Book of Mormon and other ancient scriptures are authentic historical documents written by prophets of God.[45]

With a methodology that presupposes the validity of the Book of Mormon, it does not matter whether DNA evidence supports or challenges the historicity of the scriptures, because researchers at FARMS have already reached a conclusion before they started their research. Whiting's claim that his local colonization model is not testable simply covers a tautological methodology (i.e., the regional genetic evidence may point to either Asia or Israel, but regardless the scripture remains true). Tautological methods such as those mandated by FARMS and employed by Whiting implicitly reject the validity of scientific methodology, which otherwise would require that statements of historical authenticity be subjected to rigorous evaluation.

Counter #2: Limited geography's advocates reject scientific method

John Sorenson, the most prominent advocate of a limited geography, abandoned scientific tests which had proved so disappointing to his predecessors, B. H. Roberts and Thomas Stuart Ferguson. He turned instead to interpretive social science to propose a "plausible" model for the Book of Mormon in a limited region in Central America. In *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, Sorenson explicitly dismisses scientific approaches, making it very clear that his "intention is not to put the Book of Mormon 'on trial' in some make-believe scientific dock." He presumptuously and incorrectly rejects scientific testing as outdated.[46] Sorenson took the same difficulty faced by all scientists when they aim for objectivity as a license for his own subjectivity. He recently explained his approach to Hampton Sides, a reporter for *Doubletake*:

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45. The 12th volume of *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* no longer contains this statement. A similarly worded statement remains, however, in a prominent position under the heading of "By Study and Also by Faith" at http://farms.byu.edu. Retrieved electronically November 19, 2003.

46. Sorenson wrote, "Well then, do I present a 'hypothesis' to be 'scientifically tested'? The whole idea is rather out-of-date. Scientists never did that sort of thing in the cool, 'objective' way many laymen have been led to suppose, except perhaps for minor, uninteresting problems. Nobody ever examines 'all' the evidence on any issue, for there is too much to discover or manage. In any case the investigator's own feelings and presuppositions, certainly on a matter like this, enter into phrasing the issues, so ultimately objectivity is all but impossible" (Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, xviii-xix).

> I've never asked the question, '*Did* the events in the Book of Mormon happen?' I was born and raised in the church, and so for me this is beyond doubt (ital. original).[47]

Rather than confronting and working to minimize the difficulties inherent in scientific quests for truth, Sorenson used the limitations of science to dismiss its methodology. Thus, he began and continues his quest for establishing the historicity of the book with the unassailable tautological presumption of the text's historical truth.

Sorenson has to reject scientific methodology because his model consistently fails to withstand rigorous evaluation and hypothesis testing. If he is to adhere to his belief in the Book of Mormon, he cannot provide a more honest evaluation like that of his predecessor B. H. Roberts.[48] The same rejection of scientific methodology underlies more recent attempts to use limited settings for the Book of Mormon as an evasion of DNA evidence. When Whiting presents a purportedly untestable local colonization model as a vindication of the Book of Mormon, he is averting not advocating scientific methodology.

Counter #3: Sorenson's proposal failed initial evaluation by Ferguson

Thomas Stuart Ferguson, LDS founder of the New World Archaeological Foundation (NWAF) and another advocate of a limited geographic setting for the Book of Mormon, was invited in 1974 to participate in a written symposium. David A. Palmer, an LDS chemical engineer, hoped to generate some consensus on Book of Mormon geography through the circulation of papers by V. Garth Norman, NWAF archaeologist, and John Sorenson, BYU anthropologist. Palmer invited Ferguson to join other LDS scholars in responding, via writing, to the propositions of Norman and Sorenson. In his twenty-nine-page analysis, Ferguson outlined four areas of critical difficulty in Sorenson's proposal: "[T]he Plant-Life Test, the Animal-Life Test, the Metallurgy Test, and the Script Test."[49]

Stan Larson, curator at the University of Utah library, has summarized and reapplied each of Ferguson's tests at the end of the twentieth century.[50] Ferguson had expected any legitimate Book of Mormon geography to provide evidence of

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47. Hampton Sides, "This is Not the Place," *Doubletake* no. 16 (Spring 1999): 50.

48. Sorenson's approach stands in stark contrast to that adopted by his predecessor B. H. Roberts, a vaunted defender and later critic of the Book of Mormon, who rejected contemporary arguments for a limited geographic setting. Roberts welcomed challenges in a 1911 address on the Book of Mormon and higher criticism: "The Book of Mormon must submit to every test, literary criticism with the rest. Indeed, it must submit to every analysis and examination. It must submit to historical tests, to tests of archeological research and also to higher criticism" About a decade later Roberts subjected the Book of Mormon to more rigorous analysis and found the scripture wanting (B. H. Roberts, "Higher Criticism and the Book of Mormon," *Improvement Era* 14 (June 1911): 667; see also B. H. Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Signature, 1992]).

49. Stan Larson, *Quest for the Gold Plates* (Salt Lake City: Freethinker Press, 1996), 175-77.

50. Ibid.

wheat, barley, figs, and grapes, plant life mentioned in the text. He found Sorenson's proposed geographic setting lacking evidence in each of these cases. Ferguson may have expected too much, as the Book of Mormon's references to figs and grapes are biblical quotations. Domesticated barley has since been found in Arizona, Illinois, and Oklahoma, but it is a New World rather than Old World strain and is not found in the limited Central American setting where he expected to find it. Wild but not domesticated figs have been found at the archaeological site of Don Martín in Chiapas. In his reevaluation of the evidence, Larson concludes, "The lack of evidence for the existence of wheat in the New World remains a major difficulty in verifying antiquity of the Book of Mormon."[51] Likewise, the lack of evidence for plow agriculture remains an obstacle to Sorenson's proposal.[52]

Sorenson's proposal failed Ferguson's animal-life test. Any viable geography for the Book of Mormon must be complemented with evidence for animals described in the scripture: ass, bull, calf, cattle, cow, goat, horse, ox, sheep, sow (swine), and elephant. Ferguson found Sorenson's and Norman's geographies inadequate on each of these accounts.[53] While there is ample evidence of the existence of horses in America during the Pleistocene, none of these extinct horses appear to have survived into Book of Mormon times, nor do they appear to have been domesticated by ancient Americans. Rather, it was a common assumption "in early nineteenth century America that horses—as well as asses, oxen, cows, sheep, goats, and swine—were native to America though serious scholars were aware that these animals had been imported by the Europeans."[54]

Ferguson likewise dismissed the geographic settings proposed by his colleagues because they failed to pass his metallurgy test by supplying evidence of the Book of Mormon's references to "bellows, brass, breastplates, chains, copper, engravings, gold, hilts, iron, ore, plowshares, silver, steel, and swords."[55] Evidence of pre-Columbian metalworking—shaping metals like gold, silver, and copper by cold hammering—is found in Peru by about 1000 B.C. for gold and silver and by 500 A.D. for copper, but not in Mesoamerica until the ninth century A.D. Evidence for pre-Columbian iron metallurgy, which requires temperatures of 700° to 800°, is absent from the entire New World.[56]

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51. Ibid., 179-81.

52. John A. Price, "The Book of Mormon vs Anthropological Prehistory," *Indian Historian* 7 (Summer 1974), 35-40.

53. Larson, *Quest for the Gold Plates*, 182, 246.

54. Larson concludes, "The absence of support for the animals mentioned in the Book of Mormon—at the same time as there exists clear evidence of what the Mesoamerican animals actually were [deer, jaguars, turkeys, coatis, dogs, etc.]—constitutes a serious obstacle to verifying the historicity of the Book of Mormon" (*Quest for the Gold Plates,* 194).

55. Ibid., 195.

56. Larson concludes, "The absence of Mesoamerican copper/bronze/brass metallurgy during Book of Mormon times and the complete absence of Mesoamerican iron metallurgy during any pre-Columbian time period constitute a major problem for the historicity of the Book of Mormon" (ibid., 197, 199, 204).

Ferguson considered his script test to be definitive, the most exacting and precise test that a viable Book of Mormon geography must pass. Based upon the Book of Mormon's claims, he expected evidence of cuneiform from the Jaredites, and Egyptian and Hebrew scripts from the Nephites, but found the proposed geographies wanting. Ferguson had previously accepted a cylinder seal found at Tlatilco, Mexico, as containing a Hebrew inscription of the name Hiram. Despite a purported translation by diffusionist scholar Barry Fell, the claim did not stand up to scholarly scrutiny, and by 1982 Ferguson was convinced there was no evidence of Hebrew scripts from pre-Columbian America. The best evidence located was "a three-inch cylinder seal, found at Chiapa de Corzo, state of Chiapas, Mexico, by the New World Archaeological Foundation."[57] Although the inscription had been identified as Egyptian by the famed biblical archaeologist William Albright, other leading scholars seriously questioned this identification.[58] Despite tremendous advancements made in the decipherment of Mayan hieroglyphics in the latter part of the twentieth century, no personal or place names from the Book of Mormon have been found, let alone compelling evidence of Hebrew, Sumerian/Akkadian, or Egyptian languages or scripts in the New World.[59]

The two geographies proposed by Norman and Sorenson overwhelmingly failed the tests originally posed by Ferguson and recently reapplied by Larson. While Norman did not publish his geographical model, highlights of Sorenson's proposal would appear in the Ensign a decade later. While openly admitting that many questions remained and that he was not satisfied with the results, he revised his original manuscript and published it as *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* in 1985.[60]

Counter #4: Sorenson's proposal fails by his own standards

Sorenson's *Ancient American Setting* dramatically reinvents the Book of Mormon. Rejecting a hemispheric model, he locates the events of the Book of Mormon in a limited region near the isthmus of Tehunatepec in southern Mexico. He sets aside or reinterprets geographic references in the text, turns direc-

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57. Thomas Stuart Ferguson, "Written Symposium on Book of Mormon Geography: Response of Thomas S. Ferguson to Norman and Sorenson Papers," (typescript March 12, 1975), 24, in Ferguson Collection, University of Utah. Cited in Larson, *Quest for the Gold Plates,* 206

58. Larson, *Quest for the Gold Plates,* 204-206.

59. Larson concludes, "Especially now that the Mayan writing system can be understood to a great degree, this lack of confirmation has become a serious problem for the Book of Mormon" (ibid., 210).

60. Ibid., 178. See also John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1996 [1985]), xiii-xx; John L. Sorenson, *Geography of Book of Mormon Events: A Source Book Study Aid,* rev. (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1992 [1990]), 29-31; John L. Sorenson, "Digging into the Book of Mormon: Our Changing Understanding of Ancient America and Its Scripture," *The Ensign* 14 (Sept. 1984): 26-37; (Oct. 1984): 12-23.

tional references sideways, transforms Old World flora and fauna into misnamed species from the New World, accepts linguistic terms for metallic substances as evidence of metallurgy, ignores the descriptions of pastoral cultures in the scripture, neglects prophetic claims of the scripture, dismisses Joseph Smith's knowledge of the Book of Mormon as geographically invalid, and abandons two centuries of interpretations by church leaders, which most Mormons believed were inspired by God. Despite these deficiencies, Sorenson's geographic model has emerged as the dominant paradigm in the scholarship of FAIR and FARMS.

Sorenson's efforts to situate the events of the Book of Mormon in a limited Tehuantepec region of Central America, however, fail by his own interpretive standards. In his geographic source book, he claims, "Any discussion of the geography must be exhaustive; selective citation of the scriptures treating lands, elevations, etc., will not do, for each clue ultimately should fit with every other."[61] Yet, elsewhere in the same book, he admits parenthetically that his model cannot adequately account for geographic statements in the book of Ether:

> The Jaredite record is impossible to deal with except where it connects with the Nephite account; thus I ignore those geographical statements and hints in the book of Ether which I cannot connect to Mormon's account.[62]

Passages "omitted" by Sorenson pose devastating problems for his model. For example, the Lord's commandment to the party of Jared and his brother that they "gather thy flocks, both male and female, of every kind; and also of the seed of the earth of every kind. . .[and] go forth into the wilderness, yea, into that quarter where never had man been" (Ether 1:41, 2:5) undermines Sorenson's claim that the peoples of the Book of Mormon were a small group in a land already occupied by immigrants from Asia with primarily indigenous plants and animals. Likewise, while he acknowledges that Ether 13: 2 can be interpreted to refer to the whole continent, he fails to note the verse's apparent reference to the post-diluvian Jaredite settlement of the land: "After the waters had receded from off the face of this land it became a land choice above all other lands." Sorenson's approach is selective in its quotations from the scripture and inconsistent with the biblical literalism reflected in the Book of Mormon. Even when discussing passages elsewhere in the scripture, Sorenson often has to omit or reinterpret contradictory parts from the verses themselves.[63] For example, in discussing the four

61. Sorenson, *Geography of Book of Mormon Events*, 216.

62. Ibid., 2. See also p. 307.

63. Sorenson represents his model as being the most consistent with the Book of Mormon text; but as we have seen, it depends heavily upon a selective and misrepresentative reading of the text. Even Sorenson acknowledges, more forthrightly than fans of his model, the limitations of his own interpretations: "Many purport to 'let the text speak for itself,' but that is nonsense. For practically all of us, our anxiety *to hear* what we want to hear almost invariably overwhelms the other voice(s) the text conceivably may be directing toward our ears" (Sorenson, *Geography of Book of Mormon Events,* 210).

seas of Helaman 3:8, he limits the reference to "the land northward" and fails to acknowledge the reference to covering "the face of the whole earth."[64]

To make his model fit Mesoamerica, Sorenson must shift Nephite direction terms "by 45 degrees or more." He justifies his claim of a different directional framework through references to an outdated translation of the Popol Vuh in which the translators conflate references to Mexican brothers "in the east" with the northern location of lowlands of the Yucatán peninsula.[65] In a more recent translation of the Popol Vuh directly from Quiché to English, rather than via Spanish to English, Dennis Tedlock draws upon other Mayan narratives and inscriptions at Copán to suggest, more practically, that the eastern city of the Quiché and Cakchiquel narratives is either Kaminaljuyú, the eastern outpost of the Mexican empire, or Copán, whose leaders claimed descent from the royal line of Teotihuacan.[66] Both Copán and Kaminaljuyú lie to the east of the Quiché highlands, with Kaminaljuyú a little more to the southeast. No distortion of directional references to the rising sun in highland Mayan narratives is needed with the increased knowledge now available from translations of hieroglyphic inscriptions at Copán, but it remains a necessary precondition of Sorenson's geography.

While Sorenson's approach may help soothe the fears of believing Mormons, it fails to propose a plausible model which meets his own standards, let alone the expectations of those who believe a truthful text should be able to pass the most basic scientific tests.

Counter #5: Scholars have successfully refuted Sorenson's model

Not only did Sorenson's model fail to meet his own and others' tests prior to publication, it has also been successfully refuted since its publication. I have already discussed Larson's reapplication of Ferguson's plant-life, animal-life, metallurgy, and script tests, but his is not the only work to refute Sorenson. Deanne Matheny, an LDS archaeologist and a former part-time faculty member at BYU, evaluated Sorenson's limited Tehuantepec geography and found "issues of directionality" to be the "most fundamental geographical problem" with his model. She points to evidence collected by Barbara Tedlock that Quiché terms for east mean "at the rising sun," and west "at the setting of the sun," as well as

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64. Sorenson, *Geography of Book of Mormon Events*, 289. The scripture actually reads as follows: "And it came to pass that they did multiply and spread, and did go forth from the land southward to the land northward, and *did spread insomuch that they began to cover the face of the whole earth*, from the sea south to the sea north, from the sea west to the sea east" (Hel. 3:8; emphasis added).

65. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 39-41. For the Popul Vuh translation, see Adrián Recinos, *Popol Vuh: Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiché Maya*, trans. by Delia Goetz and Sylvanus G. Morley (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), 68-69, 207.

66. Dennis Tedlock, "Introduction," in Dennis Tedlock, trans. *Popol Vuh: The Definitive Edition of the Mayan of the Dawn of Life and the Glory of Gods and Kings* (New York: Touchstone, 1996[1985]), 22, 45-47.

similar evidence from the common Israelite directional system.[67] She finds Sorenson's efforts to circumvent the problems associated with the lack of evidence for metallurgy and Old World flora and fauna to be inadequate.

Matheny employs archaeological reports to evaluate Sorenson's claim that Zarahemla (a Nephite capital city) is the site of Santa Rosa in Chiapas, Mexico. However, Santa Rosa lacks evidence of metallurgy, carved monuments or other forms of early writing, Old World plants and animals, walls and fortifications like those described in the text, evidence of destruction by fire at the time of Jesus' death, a large population center, or a role as a significant trading center.[68] Not only does Sorenson fail to present evidence of metallurgy and Old World flora and fauna, but also the archaeological evidence in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec at about 3000 B.C. "consist[s] of a few small horticultural villages and groups of Archaic hunters and gatherers," not the vast civilization of Jaredites described in the Book of Mormon.[69] Sorenson's method, Matheny concludes, "is a bits-and-pieces approach involving a large area and all time periods rather than the specific area and time he has selected, failing to take into account the specific cultural processes and developments in that area."[70]

Other scholars have discredited Sorenson's proposal. For example, Dan Vogel and Brent Metcalfe, editors of *American Apocrypha*, characterize his model as pseudoscientific and "a last gasp of Book of Mormon apologetics."[71] It rests on "an *ad hoc* hypothesis designed to shield a central hypothesis from adverse evidence," and this approach violates "the principle of parsimony, or Occam's Razor, which posits that the best hypothesis is the simplest or the one that makes the fewest assumptions."[72] In addition, to recognizing its inconsistency with the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith's "divine edicts," and Mesoamerican archaeology, Vogel and Metcalfe challenge the idea that the Isthmus of Tehuantepec is a narrow neck of land, emphasize the directional failures of the model, and attribute the geography of the Book of Mormon to the nineteenth-century myth of the mound builders which preceded it.[73] Sorenson and most other advocates of a limited geography have yet to adequately respond to these critiques.[74]

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67. Deanne G. Matheny, "Does the Shoe Fit? A Critique of the Limited Tehuantepec Geography," in Brent Lee Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 277.

68. Ibid., 312-17.

69. Ibid., 317-19.

70. Ibid., 322.

71. Dan Vogel and Brent Metcalfe, "Editor's Introduction," *American Apocrypha*, viii.

72. Ibid., ix.

73. Ibid., ix-xiii.

74. Meldrum and Stephens acknowledge that the principle of parsimony drives scientific rejections of a local colonization model, but they contend the principle of parsimony does not guarantee the scientific response is the correct one. Such an assertion is only valid if one begins with the belief that the Book of Mormon is historically accurate (Meldrum and Stephens, "Who Are the Children of Lehi?" 43).

Earl M. Wunderli, a retired LDS attorney from Sandy, Utah, draws upon the Book of Mormon itself to challenge "the validity of any model smaller than a hemispheric model," "the Isthmus of Tehuantepec as the narrow neck of land," and "the survival of the Jaredites and the presence of other people to mix with Nephites and Jaredites."[75] Wunderli observes that the Book of Mormon: a) attributes a literal biblical history to the Jaredites, thus disallowing more ancient non-biblical migrations to the Americas, and b) presents Jaredites as the world's greatest nation rather than a tiny enclave engulfed by a larger Asiatic population.[76] He points out that southern Guatemala and Mexico are not surrounded by water, as required for the "land southward" by Alma 22:32, and that the Isthmus of Tehuantepec at 120 miles wide is neither small, narrow, nor a "neck" of land.[77] He observes that Sorenson ignores the word only in the description of the narrow neck as "only the distance of a day and a half's journey. . .from the east to the west sea" (Alma 22:32), and that Sorenson uses contradictory measurements for journeys of a similar length elsewhere in his analysis.[78] Likewise, Sorenson's claim of a directional shift contradicts the use of a familiar concept of direction during the departure of Lehi from Jerusalem (1 Ne. 2:5-6, 16:13-14, 17:1).[79] The hemispheric model, unlike the limited one, requires neither contortions of Alma 22 nor directional shifts, and it neatly fits the geographic descriptions in the text.[80] Furthermore, only the hemispheric model is consistent with Lehi's prophecies of North American historical events in 2 Nephi 1.[81]

Sorenson's model has been thoroughly discredited. Matheny, Vogel, Metcalfe, and Wunderli have each demonstrated key failings of Sorenson's methodology, his distortions of the text of the Book of Mormon, and the refutation of his geographic setting by external archaeological evidence.

Counter #6: Sorenson's model serves social functions

The appeal of a limited geographic setting and a local colonization for the Book of Mormon is based primarily on social factors rather than on scientific evidence. In this respect, the limited setting model resembles the arguments of creationists in the creation and evolution debate.[82] First, the model serves the function of facilitating anthropological, molecular biological, and historical research

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75. Earl M. Wunderli, "Critique of A Limited Geography for Book of Mormon Events," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 172.

76. Ibid., 175.

77. Ibid., 184-85.

78. Ibid, 185-87.

79. Ibid., 190.

80. However, Wunderli concedes that the bulk of Nephite history appears to reflect a limited range (ibid., 182).

81. Ibid., 176-79.

82. For an insightful discussion of the social and political functions of creationism see Niles Eldredge, *The Triumph of Evolution and the Failure of Creationism* (New York: W. H. Freeman and Company, 2000).

and teaching at BYU and elsewhere by church members, despite a repressive social atmosphere which exacts heavy penalties for forthright examination of the historical, biological, and anthropological record.[83] Second, the limited setting model serves a social function when it presents a "plausible" explanation for why someone might get a prayerful witness of the book's truthfulness despite the lack of corroborating external evidence. Unfortunately, scholars at FARMS and FAIR too frequently have confused this social and spiritual function with scientific and historical methodology and evidence. Prayer, while important for emotional and spiritual reasons, is not a valid scholarly means of discerning history or science. Perceived answers to prayers vary by individual and are necessarily preconditioned by experiences and cultural background of the individual seeking knowledge through prayer. We might be more effective in accommodating genetic evidence if we reconsidered the way we understand prayer: Whereas prayer might provide an emotional, psychological, or spiritual confirmation of feelings, it should not be employed as a tool for answering historical or scientific questions.

The dogmatic believer's tendency to confuse prayer with historical and scientific inquiry produces a stifling social atmosphere which is destructive to free inquiry and honest introspection. Lacking substantive evidence, the church, its subsidized scholars, and its defenders depend on this questionable social imperative for defending the Book of Mormon. Consequently, primary methods of promoting a limited geographic setting for the Book of Mormon have included intellectual intimidation, character assassination, and ecclesiastical abuse.[84] Social actions like church disciplinary courts, dismissals from BYU, disregard of outside peer review, sheltered discourse, and a reluctance to participate in genuine interfaith

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83. For discussions of the repressive social atmosphere in the LDS church and at BYU, see the following articles. D. Michael Quinn, "150 Years of Truth and Consequences about Mormon History," Sunstone 16 (February 1992): 12-14; Lavina Fielding Anderson, "The LDS Intellectual Community and Church Leadership: A Contemporary Chronology," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 7-64; "Six Intellectuals Disciplined for Apostasy," *Sunstone* 16, no. 6 (November 1993): 65-73; D. Michael Quinn, "Dilemmas of Feminists and Intellectuals in the Contemporary LDS Church," *Sunstone* 17 (June 1994): 67-73; "Disciplinary Actions Generate More Heat," *Sunstone* 16, no. 7 (December 1993): 67-68; Anonymous, "'Clipped and Controlled': A Contemporary Look at BYU," *Sunstone* 19, no. 3 (August-September 1996): 61-72; Brian Evenson, "Unwritten Rules," letter to the editor, *Sunstone* 19, no. 4 (December 1996): 2-5; Scott Abbott, "On Ecclesiastical Endorsement at Brigham Young University," *Sunstone* 21, no. 4 (April 1997): 9-14; "Academic Freedom Organization Investigates BYU," *Sunstone* 20, no. 2 (July 1997): 73-74; Thomas W. Murphy, "Laban's Ghost: On Writing and Transgression," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 105-126; Bryan Waterman, "Policing 'The Lord's University': The AAUP and BYU," *Sunstone* 21, no.4 (December 1998): 22-38; Lavina Fielding Anderson, "DNA Mormon: D. Michael Quinn," in *Mormon Mavericks*, eds. John Sillito and Susan Staker (Salt Lake City: Signature, 2002), 329-63.

84. An untitled insert, signed by the editor of *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003): 37, notes that I have a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Washington but falsely claims that I have "little or no scientific background." The editor is apparently unaware that the discipline of anthropology bridges social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences. In addition to training in biological anthropology for my B.A., M.A,, and Ph.D. in anthropology, I have partici-

dialogue typify the means through which the limited geographic model has attained ascendancy among some LDS scholars.[85] These approaches are destructive to our community and undermine legitimate questions and intellectual discourse.

CONCLUSION

The insistence by LDS scholars on a limited geographic setting for the Book of Mormon should not be confused with the accrual of actual scientific or historical evidence. A limited geography or local colonization in Central America does not save the Book of Mormon's historical claims from the implications of genetic research. In fact, no evidence from molecular anthropology supports a limited colonization of Middle Eastern or Israelite populations in Central America. The idea that founder effect and genetic drift may account for the lack of genetic evidence is contradicted by statements and prophecies in the Book of Mormon itself, and would require hundreds of unlikely chance events in three different founding populations. While John Sorenson has made the best case for a limited geographic setting for the Book of Mormon in Central America, his proposal depends upon a rejection of the scientific method and a tautological faith in the historicity of the text, as well as requiring unwarranted directional shifts and an assumption that most references to flora, fauna, and technology in the scripture are misnomers. LDS scholars had already soundly refuted particulars of his proposal prior to publication, and other LDS scholars have done the same following publication. Sorenson's limited geography has gained ascendancy through repetition and as a byproduct both of a repressive social atmosphere in the LDS research community and a confusion of prayer with science. But however ascendant, a limited geography for the Book of Mormon anywhere in the Americas is, in sum, simply implausible.

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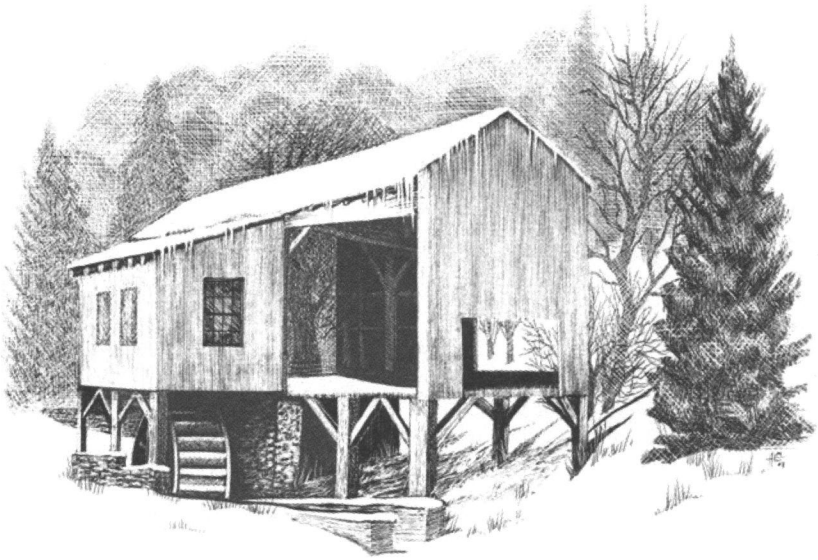
pated in ethnobiological research, funded by the National Science Foundation, in a Zapotec community in southern Mexico. I teach a course in "Human Origins," transferable in fulfillment of natural science distribution requirements at major research universities across the country. In the laboratory portion of this class, students extract and amplify DNA, send samples to another laboratory for sequencing, and analyze the sequenced DNA using publicly available databases of global populations. As an additional example of intellectual intimidation, John Tvedtness (Institute for the Preservation and Study of Ancient Texts at BYU) sent an email message to Dean Richard Asher at Edmonds Community College, claiming I was not qualified to lecture on either genetics or the Book of Mormon. In the midst of my tenure review, he falsely alleged, "Murphy is unacquainted with the vast array of scholarly publications on the Book of Mormon, both pro and con, and has been fed the material he uses by an avowedly anti-Mormon writer who is not in the academic community and hence wants Murphy, who is in academia, to disseminate his material" (John Tvedtness to Richard Asher, "Tom Murphy Lecture," 7 February 2003). At my request, the Dean responded by inviting Tvedtness or another representative of FARMS to our campus to offer an alternative view. Tvedtness did not accept the invitation and his allegations failed to derail my tenure process. I was granted tenure the following month.

85. See examples in previous notes. For yet another example of character assault, see Allen Wyatt, "Motivation, Behavior, and Dissension," retrieved 1 Aug. 2003 from www.fairlds.org. See my response at "DNA and the Book of Mormon," retrieved 1 Aug. 2003 from www.tungate.com. For a justification of such tactics, see Daniel C. Peterson, "Text and Context," *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6, no. 1 (1994): 524-62.



Saw Mill

The Search for the Seed of Lehi: How Defining Alternative Models Helps in the Interpretation of Genetic Data

Dean H. Leavitt, Jonathon C. Marshall, and Keith A. Crandall

A CULTURE'S LEVEL OF SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING significantly influences how its religious texts are interpreted. The interplay between scientific discovery and scriptural understanding has been controversial throughout history. For example, the Catholic church's response to scholars who disproved the geocentric understanding of the universe is well known. The studies of geology, astronomy, and organic evolution have all caused numerous problems with literal interpretations of the Biblical account of creation. Similarly, the Book of Mormon, a sacred text for a number of American religions, has been subject to reinterpretation in light of new scientific understanding. Its particular account of the history of the American continent has been intensely examined since its introduction by Joseph Smith, Jr., in the mid-nineteenth century.

BACKGROUND ON THE BOOK OF MORMON

The current introduction of the Book of Mormon states that it is a record of God's dealings with two ancient civilizations of the Americas. The earliest group, known as the Jaredites, arrived in the western hemisphere shortly after God confounded the languages at the Tower of Babel (about 2200 B.C.E.). The other group came to the Americas after a prophet named Lehi was directed by God to leave Jerusalem in 600 B.C.E. with a small group that included his family (two of his sons were named Nephi and Laman) and others. Upon arriving in the "Promised Land" (the Americas), Lehi's party split into two groups: the Nephites and the Lamanites. The Book of Mormon also includes the people of Zarahemla, who similarly left the Near East around 600 B.C.E. This group is

often referred to as the "Mulekites" because it included Mulek, a son of the Jewish king Zedekiah. The Mulekites were assimilated by the Nephites sometime between 279 and 130 B.C.E. The Book of Mormon further relates a personal ministry of Jesus Christ to these New World inhabitants. The prophets of these groups recorded their history on a series of metal plates. Around 400 A.D., the final Nephite prophet—Moroni—buried the records, so they would be preserved. In 1823 Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, claimed he had been visited by a resurrected Moroni who showed him where the plates were hidden. A few years later, Joseph was allowed to retrieve the plates and translate them by the power of God. The Book of Mormon is that translation.

The Book of Mormon is considered sacred scripture by many faiths, the largest of which is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), and is fundamentally important to their beliefs. Joseph Smith stated that "the Book of Mormon was the most correct book of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion."[1]

The Controversy

The introduction to the current LDS version of the Book of Mormon claims that the principal ancestors of the American Indians are the Lamanites, one of the groups descending from Hebrew colonists that arrived in the Americas slightly after 600 B.C.E. However, physical similarities, cultural and linguistic ties, and archeological and molecular data all indicate a Siberian/Asiatic origin for Native Americans, not a Hebrew one.[2] Molecular data, specifically DNA sequence data, have been particularly useful in illustrating the Siberian/Northeast Asian source for indigenous Americans. This apparent discrepancy has obvious significance to the LDS church, whose evangelization of Amerindian peoples is heavily tied to a particular interpretation of the Book of Mormon.

Recently, this controversial issue has received significant media attention.[3] After reviewing the published data, one researcher concluded that the Book of Mormon—and the concept of Lamanite ancestry for Amerindians—is best understood as a work of fiction that originated in the cultural/religious milieu of

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1. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973 edition), 4:461.

2. Jason A. Eshleman, Ripan S. Malhi, and David Glenn Smith, "Mitochondrial DNA Studies of Native Americans: Conceptions and Misconceptions of the Population Prehistory of the Americas," *Evolutionary Anthropology* 12, no.1 (2003): 7-18.

3. W. Lobdell Stammer and L. B. Stammer, "Mormon Scientist, Church Clash over DNA Test: Anthropologist May Be Ousted for Questioning Teachings about Native Americans," *LA Times*, December 8, 2002. See also P. Anderson, "Disciplinary Hearing for Mormon Writer Postponed Indefinitely," Associated Press article in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, December 8, 2002, http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/local/.

early nineteenth-century New England.[4] Naturally, this conclusion is discordant with traditional LDS theology and has put LDS apologists on the defensive. It has been argued that this conclusion oversteps the data and fails to take into consideration Book of Mormon scholars' current understanding of the book.[5] Until this point, the genetic data have not been considered in relation to explicit models of Book of Mormon colonization. The aim of this paper is to present different models that have been suggested for the Book of Mormon and address them in relation to the available genetic data. This paper cannot address every suggested model, and admittedly the models presented in this paper may be over-simplified. However, these models attempt to accurately represent the principal suggested scenarios. Our intent is not to defend any particular perspective of the Book of Mormon, but rather to clarify the issue by an explicit description of a number of Book of Mormon models and the implications of the current genetic data for each.

Models of Book of Mormon Colonization: Models That Do Not Assume a Pre-Book of Mormon Asiatic Colonization

> "And behold, it is wisdom that this land should be kept as yet from the knowledge of other nations; for behold, many nations would overrun the land, that there would be no place for an inheritance" (2 Nephi 1:8).

Traditional Hemispheric Model (T.H.M. Model)

The traditional model of Book of Mormon colonization is a hemispheric one—"traditional" because it is the model that has been most commonly taught historically and continues to be accepted by the majority of LDS members and leaders. In this scenario, two very small groups (probably <50 people, many of whom were members of the same family), the "Lehites" and "Mulekites," arrived somewhere in North or South America around 600 B.C.E. All Native Americans are assumed to have descended from these colonizers. While the Mulekites had contact with the sole survivor of the earlier Jaredite population (who had arrived earlier in the Americas, ~2200 B.C.E.), the Jaredites otherwise died out and had no input into the genetic component of contemporary Native Americans. The concept that the lands of the Book of Mormon include the entire Western Hemisphere is derived from a number of in-text references, including those to geographical features like the "land northward," the "land southward," and a "narrow neck of land," which have long been interpreted as North America, South America, and the Isthmus of Panama (Darien), respectively.

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4. Thomas W. Murphy, "Lamanite Genesis, Genealogy, and Genetics," in Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe, eds., *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002).

5. Michael F. Whiting, "DNA and the Book of Mormon: A Phylogenetic Perspective," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003): 24-35.

Statements by various church leaders and interpretations of many LDS scriptures also support this model. In a divine revelation for Oliver Cowdery, delivered through Joseph Smith, Jr., and recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord states, "I say unto you that you shall go unto the Lamanites and preach my gospel unto them" (D&C 28:8). Here "Lamanites" refers to the native tribes of eastern North America. The Lord also later commands Joseph Smith and his followers to flee "unto the regions westward, unto the land of Missouri, unto the borders of the Lamanites" (D&C 54:8). Here "Lamanites" were also understood to be the Native American tribes living on the western frontier that was then Missouri.

Other quotes attributed to Joseph Smith give additional support for this model. For example, on one occasion while traveling in the Mississippi River drainage, Smith and some of his followers encountered a Native American burial. Upon observation of the remains, Joseph proclaimed that the skeleton was that of Zelph, a white Lamanite.[6] Statements such as this indicate that Joseph Smith, Jr., and his contemporaries considered Native Americans throughout the western hemisphere to be descendants of the Lamanites.

The following statements by Spencer Kimball, the LDS church's twelfth president, are representative of traditional LDS understanding:

> With pride I tell those who come to my office that a Lamanite is a descendant of one Lehi who left Jerusalem six hundred years before Christ and with his family crossed the mighty deep and landed in America. And Lehi and his family became the ancestors of all Indian and Mestizo tribes in North and South and Central America and in the islands of the sea, for in the middle of their history there were those who left America in ships of their making and went to the islands of the sea.
>
> Not until the revelations of Joseph Smith, bringing forth the Book of Mormon, did any one know of these migrants. It was not known before, but now the question is fully answered. Now the Lamanites number about sixty million; they are in all the states of America from Tierra del Fuego all the way up to Point Barrows, and they are in nearly all the islands of the sea from Hawaii south to southern New Zealand. The Church is deeply interested in all Lamanites because of these revelations and because of this great Book of Mormon, their history that was written on plates of gold and deposited in the hill. The translation by the Prophet Joseph Smith revealed a running history for one thousand years—six hundred years before Christ until four hundred after Christ—a history of these great people who accompanied this land for those thousand years. Then for the next fourteen hundred years, they lost much of their high culture. The descendants of this mighty people were called Indians by Columbus when he found them here.[7]

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6. Kenneth W. Godfrey, "The Zelph Story," *BYU Studies* 29, no. 2 (1989): 32-56.
7. Spencer W. Kimball, "Of Royal Blood," *Ensign* 1 (July 1971): 7-10.

The current LDS president, Gordon Hinckley, made the following remark during the dedication of a temple in Guayaquil, Ecuador:

> [I]t has been a very interesting thing to see the descendants of Father Lehi in the congregations that have gathered in the temple. So very many of these people have the blood of Lehi in their veins and it is just an intriguing thing to see their tremendous response and their tremendous interest.[8]

Clearly, many LDS leaders have taught the hemispheric model, so it should be no surprise that this is the scenario accepted by the majority of church members. Students of the Church Education System learn that "In addition to being descendants of Jews in a national sense, there is also a blood relationship among the modern Lamanites."[9] Further evidence that this interpretation has been the historically sanctioned view is the introduction found in the current edition of the Book of Mormon. This document of unspecified origin and authorship first appeared in the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon and explicitly states that the Lamanites are the "principle ancestors of the American Indians."

Hemispheric Model with Jaredite Remnants (H.M.J.R. Model)

Some Mormon scholars are skeptical that all Native Americans could have descended exclusively from the Lamanites. The variety and number of Native American languages indicated that people had lived in the Americas long before Lehi's party first arrived in the New World.[10] The Jaredites seemed like the natural answer to the "pre-Lehite" populations. While the traditional model implied that the Jaredites were almost entirely killed off in a war of annihilation, Nibley has suggested a different model, according to which many Jaredites survived to perpetuate a strong Asiatic element in the culture and blood of the American Indian.[11]

The place and time of origin of the Jaredites is not explicitly stated in the Book of Mormon, as it is with Lehi's group and the Mulekites. Emerging from the resulting confusion of the Tower of Babel, they are usually dated at about 2200-2100 B.C.E.[12] While this group most likely originated from somewhere in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), Nibley has suggested that the Jaredites migrated east through the steppe region of Asia.[13] As they journeyed, they likely assimi-

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8. Gordon B. Hinckley, 1999, http://www.ldschurchtemples.com/cgi-bin/pages.cgi?guayaquil &geographical. See also *Church News*, August 7, 1999.

9. *Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121 and 122* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989), 41.

10. Brigham H. Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, ed. B. Madsen (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992).

11. Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert; The World of the Jaredites; There Were Jaredites*, in J. W. Welch, ed., *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, vol. 5 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988).

12. See the *Book of Mormon Student Manua*l, cited previously.

13. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*.

lated into their group a number of individuals from the different regions. By the time they reached the eastern coast of Asia, the composition of the Jaredite group could have significantly altered from what it had been when they left their place of origin, including more "steppe" Asians (e.g., Mongolians) than Mesopotamians. As these immigrants came to the New World in a small group of barges, the founding population would have been small, but then quickly expanded. While Nibley states, "It is nowhere said or implied that even the Jaredites were the first to come here,"[14] in this model we will assume they were the first for simplicity's sake.

Models That Assume a Pre-Book of Mormon Asiatic Colonization

Generic Limited Geography with Admixture 34 AD (G.L.G.A. Model)

In addition to the linguistic evidence (~1,500 Native American languages), the growing archaeological evidence of Asian migrations across the Bering Strait into the Americas that certainly pre-dated the Jaredites necessitated a change from the traditional hemispheric model.[15] Geographic clues from the text of the Book of Mormon (e.g., time required to travel between cities) indicate an area of perhaps several hundred square miles—a significantly smaller scale than that required by the hemispheric model. A number of candidates for Book of Mormon lands have been proposed, such as the Finger Lakes region of New York.[16] However, the most popular region suggested for the Book of Mormon lands has been Central America.

The Book of Mormon Student Manual, prepared by the Church Education System,[17] provides a commonly accepted model of the Lehites: Soon after their arrival to the New World, Lehi's descendants split into two groups, those who followed Nephi and those who followed Laman. The Book of Mormon teaches that God bestowed a "sore cursing" upon the Lamanites, which was designated by a "skin of blackness" (2 Nephi 5:21). God discouraged the Nephites from mingling with the cursed Lamanites by promising the same curse upon "the seed of him that mixeth with their [Lamanites'] seed" (2 Nephi 5:23). Daniel Peterson, a researcher at FARMS (Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies), discussed a possible mechanism of this curse:

> Of course we don't know exactly what the mechanism of that "curse" in quotes, was. It may well have been something like inter-marriage of the original descendants of

14. Ibid., 249.

15. Earl M. Wunderli, "Critique of a Limited Geography for Book of Mormon Events," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 161-97.

16. Phyllis C. Olive, *Lost Lands of the Book of Mormon* (Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 2000).

17. *Book of Mormon Student Manual*, cited previously.

> Laman with the populations out there coming from groups that we know nothing about. Presumably the Nephites would have been careful about not marrying outside of the covenant. But I don't know if Laman and Lemuel cared all that much about such things. One striking thing is that very early in the Book of Mormon, very, very soon, the Lamanites vastly outnumber the Nephites which makes you think that something funny has gone on there. Unless they've had some really unprecedented population boom.[18]

In this scenario, the Lehite colonists did not arrive to an empty continent; the land was already inhabited by a large resident population of Asiatic/Siberian origin whose skin color was darker than their own. The new colonizers had a founding population of Middle Eastern (Hebrew) descent that underwent a significant population expansion as they multiplied in the land (2 Nephi 5:14). This group split, with the Lamanites intermarrying with the native population and the Nephites avoiding intermarriage. Of course, it must be remembered that the Nephites merged with the Mulekites, who were also purportedly of Israelite origin and colonized at about the same time. For the sake of this model and in consideration of the Nephites' alleged aversion to intermarrying with the darker-skinned Lamanites, one must assume the Mulekites had experienced little or no admixture with the native Amerindian population before they merged with the Nephite population.

After the schism, the Nephites essentially remained distinct from the Lamanites until the visitation of Jesus Christ (although various small groups of Nephites did defect to the Lamanites before that) at about 34 A.D. Following this visitation, there was no distinction between Nephites and Lamanites for almost two hundred years: "There were no . . . Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ" (4 Nephi 1:17), and "the two lines [Nephites and Lamanites] had become as one" (Larson 1966). Importantly this meant that the once relatively pure gene pool (the sum total of the genetic material of a population) of the Nephites would have mixed with the Lamanites who by now would have been primarily composed of people from the original Siberian/Asiatic populations. At this point (around 201 A.D.), those who broke away from the church took on the name of Lamanites. This was apparently an ideological/political designation and not one of ancestry: "It is significant that the name 'Lamanite' here appears to become a generic term. That is, it refers to a general classification of people—those who revolted from the church. These people may or may not have been the direct descendents of Laman and Lemuel."[19] These "new" Lamanites, with their mixture of Hebrew and Siberian genes, would then become the principal ancestors of contemporary Native Americans.

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18. Daniel Peterson, August 12, 2003, http://tungate.com/whiting_panel.htm.
19. Dean L. Larson, *You and the Destiny of the Indian* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966).

The Limited Tehuantepec Model (L.T.M. Model)

John L. Sorenson's *An American Setting for the Book of Mormon* has been perhaps the most influential work in establishing a concrete model for Book of Mormon geography.[20] Sorenson's model is essentially the only current hypothesis with any consensus of support from those Book of Mormon scholars who defend the historicity of the book. This model identifies the Isthmus of Tehuantepec as the "narrow neck of land," the Mexican states of Oaxaca and southern Veracruz as the "land northward," and the Mexican states of Chiapas and Tabasco along with Guatemala forming the "land southward."

With this model, the three immigrating groups mentioned by the Book of Mormon would have arrived at an already inhabited continent. Population growth within both groups of Lehi's descendants would indicate recruitment from a pre-existing native population.[21] The Jaredites were a relatively small group that would have been assimilated by, or would themselves have assimilated, surrounding peoples (again, ~2200 B.C.E.). Sorenson and others link the Jaredites to the Olmec culture in southern Veracruz. Lehi's party contained around seven couples, a small number of single adults and an undisclosed number of children.[22] Both Nephites and Lamanites would have incorporated native peoples into their respective tribes.

The record on the Mulekites is also scant. In Sorenson's model, Mulek arrived via a Phoenician ship(s) with a crew of more than twenty men.[23] Sorenson says nothing is known about women on board, but he seems to suggest there would have been few if any, and the crew would have been ethnically heterogeneous. Of the crewmen, Sorensen states, "their genes would have continued only by their finding native women in the new land."[24]

While not part of Sorenson's own views of the Mulekites, a variation of his model would minimize genetic input from the Near East even more. It has been suggested that the Mulekites were not actual descendents of Judeo-Phoenician immigrants, but were natives who invented the story of descending from King

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20. John L. Sorenson, *An American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985).

21. John L. Sorenson, "When Lehi's Party Arrived in the Land, Did They Find Others There?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1, no. 1 (Fall 1992): 1-34; James E. Smith, "Nephi's Descendants? Historical Demography and the Book of Mormon," in Daniel C. Peterson, ed., *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994); James E. Smith, "A Study of Population Size in the Book of Mormon," paper read at FARMS Book of Mormon Lecture Series, 1994; John C. Kunich, "Multiply Exceedingly: Book of Mormon Population Sizes," in Brent Lee Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993).

22. Sorenson, "When Lehi's Party Arrived."

23. John L. Sorenson, "The Mulekites," *BYU Studies* 30, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 6-22.

24. Ibid., 10.

Zedekiah in an attempt to establish the right to rule.[25] This practice has a precedence in Mesoamerica, as seen when the Aztecs claimed Toltec ancestry to validate their position of power.

The L.T.M. model specifies a particular geographic region for the Book of Mormon peoples. It should be noted that many different models of limited geography could be proposed. One non-testable (genetically, archeologically, linguistically, etc.) model would be that of limited geography with no specified geographical region. Since this is a non-testable model, it will not be part of our review.

Genetic Predictions

Genetic Markers and Theory

Genetic data can be used to investigate the origin, time, and size of the Americas' founding population(s). The question of origin is addressed by surveying the genetic material of Native American populations (both modern and ancient) and determining which regions of the world share more closely related genes. It is assumed that populations with more similar genetic material are also more closely related and share a more recent common ancestor. The time and size of a colonizing population are investigated by assessing the genetic variation of contemporary Native American populations. Other factors, such as the movement of genes from one population to another, population sizes, and the associated random sampling errors, etc. can affect estimates of variation, so studies of these types must take these effects into consideration. The general assumption is that smaller founding populations, as well as more recent colonizing events, will give rise to contemporary populations with much smaller genetic variation. Therefore, large founding populations and colonizing events in the more distant past give rise to populations with higher genetic variation.

Another body of theory is also used when estimating colonization dates, one that can be described as a backwards-looking gene genealogy. It uses mutation rates and the sum of genetic differences to estimate the time of divergence between two alternative forms of the same gene. This estimation is commonly known as coalescent time.[26] The complexity of population histories can give rise to a diverse array of genetic patterns, but genetic studies have proven quite useful, especially when used in concert with other independent evidence, such as archeological data, when investigating general large-scale events in a popula-

25. Orson Scott Card, "The Book of Mormon—Artifact or Artifice?" from a speech given at the BYU Symposium on Life, the Universe, and Everything Else, February 1993, http://www.nauvoo.com/library/bookofmormon.html.

26. R. R. Hudson, "Gene Genealogies and the Coalescent Process," in P. H. Harvey and L. Partridge, eds., *Oxford Surveys in Evolutionary Biology*, vol. 7 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 1-44.

tion's history.[27] Some of the above models predict such general large-scale events with predictable patterns of genetic structure.

The two markers most commonly used in studies of human population genetics, including the study of Native Americans, are mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and the Y-chromosome. As opposed to the vast majority of our nuclear genes, neither of these genetic markers recombines (mixes sections of genetic material during the formation of sex cells). This provides a number of advantages when one is using these markers to detect population history, but their mode of inheritance prevents a complete genealogical reconstruction. Mitochondrial DNA only allows reconstruction of the maternal line, and the Y-chromosome the paternal line. Recently scientists have begun to use fast-evolving nuclear markers such as microsatellites and single nucleotide polymorphisms in conjunction with these traditional markers. This has resulted in an impressive arsenal of diverse molecular tools that can be used to address questions of population's movements, relationships, origins, etc.

Assumptions of Genetic Makeup

One potential problem in testing the above hypotheses is that we must make assumptions about the genetic makeup of the immigrant parties. Uncertainty over the exact genetic makeup of Lehi's party has led some to suggest that this lack of knowledge presents a considerable obstacle in resolving the Book of Mormon controversy.[28] While the genetic data reflect the Middle East's crucial role in human dispersal,[29] Y-chromosome data have revealed remarkable genetic contintuity among both contemporary Jewish populations as well as their historic Middle Eastern neightbors.[30] The Book of Mormon gives little or no reason to suppose that the genetic makeup of Lehi's group was drastically different from that of other Middle Eastern groups historically or contemporarily.

Genetic Predictions of Models

We are now in a position to address specific predictions of the four general models of Book of Mormon history. The predictions that follow are the most likely results of the given models. As mentioned above, all possible scenarios can not be addressed, and random sampling events such as occur with genetic drift and founder effect can result in less probable results. However, our predictions are based on the principle of parsimony and address only the more likely results.

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27. Eshleman et al., "Mitochondrial DNA Studies."

28. Brant Gardner, "The Tempest in a Teapot: DNA Studies and the Book of Mormon," http://www.fairlds.org/apol/bom/bom/bom07.html.

29. N. Al-Zahery, et al. "Y-chromosome and not DNA polymorphisms in Iraq, a crossroad of the early human dispersal and of post-Neolithic migrations," *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 28, no. 3 (September 2003): 458-472.

30. Almut Nebel, et al. "The Y Chomosome Pool of Jews as Part of the Genetic Landscape of the Middle East," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 69, no. 5 (November 2001): 1095-1112.

First, in the T.H.M. model of Book of Mormon colonization, the expected genetic make-up of Native Americans is straightforward (Table 1). Genetic markers should show affinity to modern Jewish and/or other Middle Eastern populations. The colonization of an entire continent from such a small group of immigrants in the relatively recent past (~ 600 B.C.E.) should result in extremely low estimates of genetic variation, and estimates of the peopling of the New World should be in the neighborhood of 2,500 years before present (Y.B.P.).

The predictions of the H.M.J.R. model are not as straightforward (Table 1). This model is less clear on the ethnic make-up of the colonizing Jaredites. Nibley has suggested that the Jaredite colonizing population had significant contact with Asiatic people during their long journey to the Western Hemisphere.[31] Possible gene flow into the population could have given it a mixed genetic signature such that one would expect to find DNA in current Native American populations resembling both Middle Eastern and "Asian steppe" markers (Table 1). Like the first hemispheric model the founding population of Jaredite colonization model is also relatively small and in the recent past (~ 2200 B.C.E.). However, according to this model, Lehi's party could have contributed to the genetic make-up of the founding Jaredite population when they arrived some 1,500 years later. It is uncertain how much Lehi's party would have contributed, because few references to Jaredite population size at that time exist. A significant genetic contribution from Lehi's party would have increased both the genetic variation and proportion of Middle Eastern genes in the current Native American population. Variation within founding gene types due to mutation since colonization would again point to two relatively recent immigrations.

With the G.L.G.A. model, the admixture of several hundred thousand Middle Easterners with a larger native population derived from ancient Siberian stock two thousand years ago would likely be detectable (Table 1). While the size of the "native" Siberian population was significantly larger than that of the Nephite culture and would affect the frequency of the Middle Eastern markers, it is highly probable that such Middle Eastern markers would still be present at some detectable frequency level. How densely one must sample to detect this marker, however, depends on population sizes at the time of admixture. An estimate of genetic variation for this model would reflect more the timing and size of the founding Asiatic population, rather than the Book of Mormon populations of interest. Estimates of the time of colonization should, at a minimum, predate the arrival of Book of Mormon peoples.

DNA data are much less useful in investigating the L.T.M. model, because the historical events of this model occurred on a much smaller scale. Book of Mormon events and people would have been largely overshadowed by the much larger and widespread native Asiatic population. With such small parties inte-

31. Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*.

Table 1
A Summary of Predictions for Genetic Data from Various Common Book of Mormon Models

Model	Origin of Genes	Size of Founding Populations	Timing of Colonization
Traditional hemispheric model	Genetic material should be most closely related to Middle Eastern genes	Small founding population should result in low genetic variation among descents	Relatively recent colonization ~ 2,500 YBP[1]
Hemispheric model with Jaredite remnants	Genetic material should be predominately Middle Eastern with some Asiatic genes	Small founding population should result in low genetic variation	Relatively recent colonization ~ 4,700 YBP
Generic limited geography with admixture 34 A.D. model	Genetic material should be predominately Asiatic with some Middle Eastern genes	Should represent size of migrating Asiatic populations for which the Book of Mormon makes no prediction	Should represent timing of Asiatic colonization, but should at least predate Book of Mormon peoples (~ 4,700 YBP)
Limited Tehuantepec model	Genetic material should be overwhelmingly Asiatic with some possible Middle Eastern DNA in the Tehuantepec area	Should represent size of migrating Asiatic populations for which the Book of Mormon makes no prediction	Should represent timing of Asiatic colonization, but should at least predate Book of Mormon peoples (~ 4,700 YBP)

1. YBP = years before present

grated into a larger population of natives descended from northeastern Asia, Middle Eastern markers would either exist in very low frequencies or would be lost altogether. If this were the case, a researcher would not expect to find much Middle Eastern DNA in current Native American populations. It is even possible that a researcher may never find Middle Eastern DNA, regardless of sampling intensity. Under this scenario, Book of Mormon people would have had little effect on the genetic variation of current Native American populations, and colonization dates would again reflect the original migration(s) from Asia rather than Book of Mormon peoples (Table 1). In this paper, we deliberately avoid the debate on whether this model accurately reflects Book of Mormon history[32] and instead comment only on the implications, if any, that DNA evidence has for this model.

Available Genetic Data

One reason relationships among groups of people are difficult to discern using genetic data is the ubiquity of genetic interchange between human populations.[33] Human genetic differences are relatively small, and gene flow compounds the issue. Despite these problems, DNA evidence has confirmed archeological, linguistic, etc. data for an Asian origin for Native Americans.[34] Five principal haplogroups of mtDNA have been found in the New World: A, B, C, D and to a lesser extant, X, all of which connect North America with Eastern and Central Asian regions.[35] While debates rage over the number of migrations to the New World and the specific Asiatic region of origin for each of these migra-

32. Wunderli, "Critique of a Limited Geography."

33. Alan R. Templeton, "Out of Africa Again and Again," *Nature* 416 (March 2002): 45-51.

34. Antonio Torroni et al., "mtDNA and Y-Chromosome Polymorphisms in Four Native American Populations from Southern Mexico," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 54, no. 2 (1994): 303-18; Theodore G. Schurr, "Mitochondrial DNA and the Peopling of the New World," *American Scientist* 88 (May-June 2000): 246-53; Murphy, "Lamanite Genesis"; Eshleman et al., "Mitochondrial DNA Studies."

35. D. C. Wallace, K. Garrison, and W. C. Knowler, "Dramatic Founder Effects in Amerindian Mitochondrial DNAs," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 68, no. 2 (October 1985): 149-56; Theodore G. Schurr et al., "Amerindian Mitochondrial DNAs Have Rare Asian Mutations at High Frequencies, Suggesting They Derived from Four Primary Maternal Lineages," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 46, no. 3 (1990): 613-23; Joseph G. Lorenz and David Glenn Smith, "Distribution of Four Founding mtDNA Haplogroups among Native North Americans," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 101 (November 1996): 307-23; Michael D. Brown et al., "mtDNA Haplogroup X: An Ancient Link between Eruope/Western Asia and North America?" *American Journal of Human Genetics* 63 (December 1998): 1852-61; Smith et al., "Distribution of mtDNA Haplogroup X among Native North Americans," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 110 (November 1999): 271-84; Miroslava V. Derenko et al., "The Presence of Mitochondrial Haplotype X in Altians from South Siberia," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 69 (July 2001): 237-41; Ripan S. Malhi et al., "The Structure of Diversity within New World Mitochondrial DNA Haplogroups: Implications for the Prehistory of North America," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 70 (April 2002): 905-19.

tions, virtually no evidence exists to support a Middle Eastern connection.[36] Notably, Southerton has reviewed data from forty-six scientific papers and found that nearly all Native American maternal DNA originated in Asia and are unrelated to Israelite maternal lineages.[37]

Studies of genetic variation have produced a variety of coalescence times and colonization dates, with relatively large confidence intervals. This variation results partly from the selected markers and methods used to calculate molecular divergence and molecular clocks. This process is problematic when trying to determine very specific historical events but can be effective for more general estimates of historical events. In the above models, both the T.H.M. and the H.M.J.R. models couple small colonizing populations with relatively recent colonization events. This should result in at least some recent estimates of colonization dates. Therefore, estimates of colonization should prove useful in determining the validity of these two models. Using 574 mtDNA control region sequences, Forster et al. estimated the major migratory wave occurred 20,000-25,000 years ago.[38] Stone and Stoneking used ancient DNA from 108 individuals who lived around 700 years ago and concluded there was a single wave with a signature of expansion 23,000-37,000 years ago.[39] Starikovskaya et al. hypothesized that the first humans expanded into the Americas ~34,000 YBP, with a second wave coming in 13,000-16,000 YBP.[40] Lell et al. also found support for two Siberian migrations based on the Y chromosome.[41] Also of interest, Ward et al. found considerable diversity in one Northwestern tribe that predates their entry into the Americas; they conclude that the data don't support a dramatic founder effect during the peopling of the Americas.[42] Table 2 summarizes a number of these studies.

Estimating specific population sizes from the available genetic data may prove difficult due to the above reasons. Coupled with the fact that the Book of

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36. Eschleman, "Mitochondrial DNA Studies."

37. Simon Southerton, "Re: Lamanite DNA," e-mail to Dean Leavitt, January 23, 2003. See also Southerton, *Losing a Lost Race* (Signature Books, in press).

38. Peter Forster, Rosalind Harding, Antonio Torroni, and Hans-Jurgen Bandelt, "Origin and Evolution of Native American mtDNA Variation: A Reappraisal," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 59 (October 1996): 935-45.

39. Anne C. Stone and Mark Stoneking, "mtDNA Analysis of a Prehistoric Oneota Population: Implications for the Peopling of the New World," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 62 (May 1998): 1153-70.

40. Yelena B. Starikovskaya et al., "mtDNA Diversity in Chukchi and Siberian Eskimos: Implications for the Genetic History of Ancient Beringia and the Peopling of the New World," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 63 (November 1998): 1473-91.

41. Jeffrey T. Lell et al., "The Dual Origin and Siberian Affinities of Native American Y Chromosomes," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 70 (January 2002): 192-206.

42. R. H. Ward, Barbara L. Frazier, Kerry Dew-Jager, and Svante Paabo, "Extensive Mitochondrial Diversity within a Single Amerindian Tribe," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 88, no. 19 (October 1, 1991): 8720-24.

Table 2
Range of Colonization Dates Estimated from mtDNA Haplogroups[1]

Study of Haplogroups	Range of Estimated Colonization Dates
Torroni et al. 1994	
Haplogroup A	25,862-34,091 YBP[2]
Haplogroup B	11,724-15,456 YBP
Haplogroup C	33,105-43,636 YBP
Haplogroup D	18,276-24,091 YBP
Schurr et al. 1999	
Haplogroup A	26,969-35,550 YBP
Haplogroup B	13,483-17,773 YBP
Haplogroup C	40,972-54,009 YBP
Haplogroup D	19,483-25,682 YBP
Forster et al. 1996	
Haplogroups A, B, C, D	19,180- 21,180 YBP
Horai et al. 1996	
Haplogroups A, B, C, D	14,000-21,000 YBP
Brown et al. 1998	
Haplotype X	12,000-17,000 or 25,000-57,000 YBP
Stone and Stoneking 1998	
Haplogroup A	12,000-30,000 or 25,000-57,000 YBP
Haplogroup B	8,000-21,000 or 16,000-41,000 YBP
Haplogroup C	6,000-21,000 or 13,000-40,000 YBP
Haplogroup D	9,000-27,000 or 19,000-51,000 YBP

1. Table is redrawn from Eshlemann et al. 2003.
2. YBP = years before present

Mormon makes teasing out population numbers from the text very problematic,[43] the task of estimating population size (as opposed to estimating the origin and colonization dates of Native American peoples) becomes less promising with regard to insights that might be gained from genetic data. The inadequacies of estimating population sizes based on archaeological data also compound the issue.

Implications of Genetic Data

Genetic data are most useful when used in conjunction with cultural, archeological, and linguistic data.[44] The T.H.M. and the H.M.J.R. models both predict a relatively recent colonization by smaller populations that would contain predominately or exclusively Middle Eastern DNA. Based on genetic studies to date, these models are highly improbable. No significant link between Middle Eastern and indigenous Native American genes has been discovered. None of the estimates of colonization dates is concordant with the 2,500-4,500 Y.B.P. predicted by these two models (Table 2). The genetic evidence in conjunction with the abundant archeological evidence pre-dating 4,500 Y.B.P. make fairly certain conclusions against the plausibility of these first two models. Table 3 summarizes conclusions for each of the four general Book of Mormon models. Neither model that assumes a pre-Book of Mormon Asiatic colonization is seriously threatened by the deeper colonization dates, as these dates would reflect an early Asiatic arrival. The strong relationship between Native American DNA and Asian DNA poses less of a problem for the L.T.H. model than it does for the Generic Limited Geography model.[45] The L.T.H. model reduces Book of Mormon peoples to minor players in the continent's archaeological history and to nearly non-contributors to the continent's gene pool. Under this model, Middle Eastern DNA would not necessarily be found because of its limited nature. It should be remembered, however, that genetics represents only one approach to testing models. This theory may in fact have other significant shortcomings.[46] Under the G.L.G.A. model, one would expect a much larger potential contributor of Middle Eastern DNA. Although no Middle Eastern DNA has yet been found

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43. James E. Smith, "Nephi's Descendants?" and "A Study of Population Size," both cited previously; John C. Kunich, "Multiply Exceedingly: Book of Mormon Population Sizes," in Brent L. Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993).

44. Eshleman, "Mitochondrial DNA Studies."

45. Murphy, "Lamanite Genesis."

46. Dan Vogel, *Indian Origins and the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City; Signature Books, 1986); see also "Dan Vogel's Reply to Kevin Christensen," http://www.xmission.com/~research/central/reply.htm#N_51_; Grant H. Palmer, *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002); John L. Sorenson, "Viva Zapato! Hurray for the Show!" in Daniel C. Peterson, ed., *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994); Deanne G. Matheny, "Does the Shoe Fit? A Critique of the Limited Tehuantepec Geography," in Brent L. Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993); Wunderli, "Critique of a Limited Geography."

Table 3
Summary of Genetic Implications for Each of the General Book of Mormon Models

Model	Origin of Founding Population	Timing and Size of Founding Population
Traditional Hemispheric Model	Predicts a Middle Eastern origin. DNA evidence indicates a Middle Eastern origin highly improbable.	Genetic diversity of Native Americans and estimated colonization dates argue strongly against a colonizing event by a small population ~ 2,500 YBP
Hemispheric Model with Jaredite Remnants	Predicts a Middle Eastern/Asiatic origin dominated by Middle Eastern DNA. DNA evidence collected until now makes this model unlikely but not impossible.	Genetic diversity of Native Americans and estimated colonization dates argue against a colonizing event by a small population ~ 4,500 YBP
Generic Limited Geography with Admixture 34 A.D.	Predicts a Middle Eastern/Asiatic origin dominated by Asiatic DNA. DNA evidence collected until now makes this model more probable than HMJR model, but some Middle Eastern DNA should have been identified with current sampling. Model unlikely but not impossible.	Genetic diversity and colonization date estimates pose no serious challenge to this model since most genetic material would reflect DNA from the pre-Book of Mormon populations of Asiatic origin
The Limited Tehuantepec Model	DNA evidence poses less of a threat to origins in LTM model than any other model reviewed, because Middle Eastern DNA could have been swamped out by the "native" Asian genes as Book of Mormon peoples outbred with the original inhabitants.	Genetic diversity and colonization date estimates pose no serious challenge to this model since most genetic material would reflect DNA from the pre-Book of Mormon populations of Asiatic origin

in Native American populations, it is reasonable under this model to expect that some could be detected with more extensive sampling.

Future Work

Of all the models, work remains to be done principally with the G.L.G.A. model. More definite population estimates can be incorporated to determine the expected frequency of Middle Eastern DNA. Of nearly five hundred native Central Americans sampled so far, over 99 percent are clearly descended from Siberians, and no individual has been linked to the Middle East.[47] Since it is dependent on population estimates of Nephites and also of the total inhabitants of a specified region at 34 A.D., the G.L.G.A. model seems questionable given the current sampling in Central America, but the issue remains unresolved conclusively.

This review has examined a few general models of Book of Mormon peoples and the implications that current DNA data have for each. As mentioned before, many possible models exist since numerous interpretations of Book of Mormon text are possible. It is unreasonable to expect that a thorough investigation of all models is possible. We reviewed here some of the more widely accepted ones. Some readers will note that we have obviously omitted an alternative model accepted by some LDS scholars and nearly all non-LDS scholars, one that views the Book of Mormon people as literary and not historical figures. As no specific genetic predictions can be made for such a model, it was left to other areas of investigation. Scholastic endeavors help us to better identify the historical, allegorical, and spiritual aspects of religious text. Only when the faithful are open to these separate sources of knowledge can scripture be fully appreciated and understood.

47. Southerton, "Re: Lamanite DNA."

Sidney Rigdon's 1820 Ministry: Preparing the Way for Mormonism in Ohio[1]

Richard McClellan

ONE MONTH AFTER SIDNEY RIGDON'S conversion to Mormonism, he visited Joseph Smith in New York, occasioning the following revelation:

> I say unto my servant Sidney, I have looked upon thee and thy works. I have heard thy prayers, and prepared thee for a greater work. Thou art blessed, for thou shalt do great things. Behold, thou wast sent forth, even as John, to prepare the way before me. . .and thou knewest it not. (Doctrine and Covenants, hereafter D&C, 35:3-5)

In this remarkable passage, Sidney, a new initiate to Mormonism, is compared to John the Baptist and acknowledged for having unknowingly cried in the Ohio wilderness to prepare the way for Mormonism. In a later revelation, Sidney was appointed "spokesman to this people" with "power to be mighty in testimony" and in "expounding all scriptures" (D&C 100:9-11).

What was it about Sidney Rigdon that made him so valuable to Joseph Smith and Mormonism? This paper examines some of his activities and relationships during the 1820s that "prepared the way" for the Mormons in northern Ohio. It also documents Rigdon's pre-Mormon development of skills that earned him the sobriquet "mighty spokesman."

Sidney Rigdon was familiar with the Baptist ministry from an early age. His three cousins, John, Thomas, and Charles Rigdon, grew up on a neighboring farm near Pittsburgh and become prominent Baptist ministers while Sidney was still a youth. John and Thomas settled in northern Ohio and were active in the Beaver Baptist Association, made up of congregations along the Pennsylva-

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1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Mormon History Association Annual Meeting, Graceland College, Lamoni, Iowa, May 1993.

nia/Ohio frontier. Thomas served as an Ohio State Legislator and State Senator between 1813 and 1829.[2] John was overseer to several congregations in the Huron Baptist Association west and south of Cleveland.

In 1815, 1816, and 1817 Charles Rigdon represented Sidney's home congregation at the Conferences of the Redstone Baptist Association[3] of west-central Pennsylvania and what is now West Virginia. He surely told young Sidney of the luminaries gathered there. In 1815, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, the controversial father and son ministers, had been admitted to the Association. These former Presbyterians from Wellsburg, (West) Virginia, west of Pittsburgh, immediately assumed leadership roles, preaching both of the Conference Sunday worship sermons. Thomas wrote the Association circular for 1816, and Alexander wrote the circular for 1817. By the 1817 meeting, charges were already being brought, unsuccessfully, against the Campbells regarding the unorthodox doctrines they championed.[4]

In 1818, Sidney began studying for the Baptist ministry. The next year he moved to Warren, Ohio (about midway between Pittsburgh and Kirtland), where he lived and studied with his future brother-in-law, Adamson Bentley. Sidney attended the 1819 Beaver Association Conference. Adamson Bentley was Moderator, John Rigdon was Clerk, and Thomas Rigdon hosted the Conference and was a member of the Board and of the Missionary Committee. The Conference voted to divide, creating a new Association in Ohio, and to ordain Sidney Rigdon to the ministry, "provided application is made to that amount."[5]

In 1820, Sidney married Adamson Bentley's sister-in-law, Phoebe Brooks. He was ordained and received his own congregation at Bazetta, north of Warren. That August, several congregations around Warren formed the Mahoning Baptist Association, with Adamson Bentley in charge and Sidney Rigdon "second-in-command."[6]

In 1821, the first Mahoning Association Conference was held, representing 13 congregations with 513 members.[7] One of the strongest congregations was comprised of members around Hiram, Ohio, fifteen miles northwest of Warren. Hiram was represented by Oliver Snow, a member of the congregation since

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2. Henry K. Shaw, *Buckeye Disciples, a History of the Disciples of Christ in Ohio* (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1952), 79.

3. Redstone Baptist Association, "Minutes of the Redstone Baptist Association," 1815, 1816, and 1817, *Western Reserve Historical Society Archives*.

4. Ibid.

5. Minutes of the Beaver Baptist Association convened at New Lisbon, Columbiana County, Ohio, 19-22 August 1819, Western Reserve Historical Society Archives.

6. Harriett Taylor Upton, *A Twentieth Century History of Trumbull County, Ohio* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1909), 266.

7. "Minutes of the Mahoning Baptist Association convened at Palmyra, Portage County, Ohio, Wednesday and Thursday, the fifth and sixth of September, 1821," Western Reserve Historical Society Archives.

1809,[8] a former Justice of the Peace and County Commissioner,[9] and the father of Lorenzo and Eliza R. Snow. By 1821, Sidney was traveling extensively northwest of Warren to preach, form new congregations, and train local leaders. He was assigned as messenger to the Grand River Association, made up of congregations along the Ohio shore of Lake Erie. Sidney was so well accepted there that he was invited to preach the closing sermon of their 1821 Conference.[10] Moderator of the Grand River Association was John Gee, brother of Salmon Gee. Other future Mormons William Cahoon and John Corrill represented the Kirtland and Ashtabula congregations.[11]

Adamson Bentley had been acquainted with Alexander Campbell for many years. They were prominent, liberal Baptist ministers, living less than seventy miles apart, and both were members of the Warren, Ohio, Masonic Lodge[12] at a time when all of northeast Ohio contained only several hundred people. In 1821, Bentley took Sidney Rigdon to Wellsburg to meet Campbell. This meeting was the genesis of what later became the Disciples of Christ Church.

In November of 1821, Campbell used his influence to secure Sidney a position as minister to a congregation in Pittsburgh.[13] Soon thereafter, the minister of the neighboring congregation withdrew (to publish a newsletter, *The Christian Baptist*, with Alexander Campbell), and the two congregations were combined. Rigdon, thus, achieved the status and income of a large congregation. The minister who resigned was Walter Scott, the fourth co-founder of the Disciples of Christ, with Campbell, Bentley, and Rigdon.

By 1823 Alexander Campbell had made enough enemies in the conservative Redstone Association to assure his ouster. He was charged with heresy. However, Campbell and his followers voted to grant themselves "honorable dismissal" from their old congregation. They then formed a new congregation, applied to Bentley and were admitted to the Mahoning Association.[14] When the Redstone Association met to consider Campbell's excommunication, Campbell announced that he was outside their jurisdiction. The Association subsequently turned its attention to Rigdon and his refusal to preach the Baptist dogma of in-

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8. "Garrettsville Ohio Baptist Church" (record book 1808-1860), Western Reserve Historical Society Archives, 4. This is the original record book of the Baptist congregation of Hiram, Mantua, and Nelson.

9. Orrin Harmon, "Facts Appertaining to the Township of Mantua," 1866, typescript, Western Reserve Historical Society Archives, 29.

10. Grand River Baptist Association, *Minutes of the Grand River Baptist Association convened at Jefferson on the twelfth and thirteenth of September, 1821* (Cleveland: Z. Willes and Co., 1821).

11. Ibid.

12. *History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches,* (H. Z. Williams and Bro., 1882), 1: 295.

13. Shaw, *Buckeye Disciples*, 80.

14. Daryl Chase, "Sidney Rigdon, Early Mormon" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1931), 19.

fant damnation.[15] "Charges were brought against him for not being sound in the faith, [they] brought him to trial, but denied him the liberty of speaking in self-defense and he declared a non-fellowship with them."[16] Sidney remained in Pittsburgh for two years and started a "reformed Baptist" congregation, which met in the courthouse.[17] He also worked in a tannery owned by his brother-in-law, Richard Brooks.

During the winter of 1825-6, Sidney moved his family to a tiny cabin in Bainbridge, Ohio, twenty miles south of Kirtland and five miles northwest of Hiram. He began immediately to proselytize, to build his influence among existing Baptists, to establish new congregations, and to train leaders. His primary center of influence was at Hiram where he preached every month for the rest of the 1820's. This group was already a bellwether of reformation, having challenged even the liberal Mahoning Association on issues of dogma throughout the early 1820s. In 1824 it had renamed itself the "Baptist Church of Christ" and voted "to renounce the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, the (Baptist) Constitution, the Articles, and the Covenant. . .and to take the Word of God for our rule of faith and Practice."[18] Oliver Snow chaired that meeting.[19] Among the future Mormons in this congregation were the families of Noah Packard,[20] Oliver Snow, Lucius Scovil, David Pond and Rufus Edwards.[21] Rigdon was a frequent guest at the Snow home, where young Eliza R. Snow was his protégée.

Until 1828, the leader of the Hiram congregation was Zeb Rudolph, whose wife was a daughter in the family that raised Symonds Ryder. Ryder joined the Disciples in 1828. "He was by far the most influential man in Hiram and his accession gave the infant church new strength and standing."[22] Ryder became the presiding elder at Hiram and most of his large extended family followed him into the Disciple fold. Symonds and his brother Jason were both neighbors of John Johnson, whose daughter Fanny was married to Jason.

The leadership of the Mahoning Association was now clearly established. Alexander Campbell was the scholar and writer; Adamson Bentley was Bishop to several congregations near Warren. Walter Scott was Bishop southwest of

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15. Karl Keller, ed., "I Never Knew a Time When I Did Not Know Joseph Smith," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1, no. 4 (Winter 1966): 20.

16. Chase, *Rigdon, Early Mormon*, 14.

17. Ibid., 21.

18. B. A. Hinsdale, *A History of the Disciples in Hiram, Portage County, Ohio* (Cleveland: Robison, Savage and Co., 1876), 14. This group is referred to as "Hiram" for ease of reference. It included members from several communities, primarily Hiram, Mantua and Nelson. Its meetings rotated among these three towns. It ultimately divided into several congregations.

19. Ibid., 12.

20. "Garrettsville" record book, 64.

21. Elmer F. Pfaff, Esq., *Rediscovering Mantua* (Mantua, Ohio: The Image in Nation Co., Inc., 1985), 35.

22. Mary Bosworth Treudley, *Prelude to the Future: The First Hundred Years of Hiram College* (New York: Association Press, 1950), 35.

Warren; Sidney Rigdon was Bishop northwest of Warren. One Disciple historian describes Sidney as "a winning speaker, one who used copious language, fluent, eloquent, enthusiastic, and of great personal influence. . .the orator of the Mahoning Association, and declared by many to be superior to Campbell as a preacher."[23]

The Disciples remained a "renegade Baptist association" until early 1830 when the Philadelphia Baptist Confession finally excommunicated Campbell, Bentley, Rigdon, Scott, the entire Mahoning Association, the congregations and even the meetinghouses.[24] However, much earlier the members of the Mahoning Association had rejected the Baptist Articles and begun referring to themselves as Disciples, Church of Christ, Reformed, Freewill, Campbellite, or Rigdonite rather than Baptist.

In June of 1826, the Baptist minister in Mentor, just north of Kirtland, died and Sidney was invited to preach the funeral sermon. That fall, Orris Clapp offered to build Sidney a home if he would assume the Mentor pastorship. Rigdon seized the opportunity, and within a short time, the congregation at Mentor and another at Chardon had embraced the reformation. Mentor exchanged its Baptist "articles for the new covenant. . .choosing to be known simply as the disciples of Christ."[25] Mentor and Chardon joined the Mahoning Association when the Grand River Association voted "to withdraw fellowship" from both congregations because they "had departed from the faith of the gospel, by embracing the novel notions of Alexander Campbell."[26]

Judge Orris Clapp was a prominent citizen of Mentor and the leading member of the Mentor Baptists. He and Sidney became close friends and his family became wholly immersed in the reformation. Four younger Clapp children, Harriet, Phebe, Thomas, and Matthew, studied with Sidney Rigdon and Thomas Campbell. Harriet married Darwin Atwater, a Disciple Minister in Mantua. Phebe married Alexander Campbell's brother Archibald, also a Disciple Minister. Thomas and Matthew became Disciple ministers and Rigdon protégés. Thomas married Sidney's niece Lorinda Bentley, and Matthew married Alexander Campbell's sister Alicia.

The oldest Clapp daughter Julia was married to John Murdock, already a Rigdon lieutenant, who presided over the Disciples at Orange. This is the same Julia who later died giving birth to the famous Murdock twins given to Joseph and Emma Smith. No Disciple membership records exist from Orange, but the congregation probably included the families of future Mormons Sirenes Burnett, Caleb Baldwin, and Benjamin Covey.

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23. Shaw, *Buckeye Disciples*, 79.

24. Thomas W. Grafton, *Alexander Campbell, Leader of the Great Reformation of the Nineteenth Century* (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Co., 1897), 125-26.

25. A. S. Hayden, *Early Years of the Disciples in the Western Reserve, Ohio* (Cincinnati: Chase and Hall, 1875), 193-94.

26. Grand River, "Minutes" 1828, 1830.

The reformation movement was incredibly energetic during these years. At the 1827 Mahoning Association Conference, Campbell reported: "Bishops Scott, Rigdon and Bentley, in Ohio, within the last six months have immersed about eight hundred persons."[27] During 1828 and 1829, Rigdon organized nine new congregations.

In 1829, the Huron Baptist Association, west of Cleveland, suspended Sidney's cousin, John Rigdon, "on a charge of heresy in embracing certain teachings of the Disciples and Alexander Campbell."[28] John reorganized his followers as non-associated Freewill Baptists. Sidney immediately organized a supportive mission into John's territory. Sidney and Matthew Clapp were accompanied on this 1829 mission to Amherst and Florence by a young protégé who lived and studied in the Rigdon and Clapp homes—Orson Hyde. Hyde returned in the spring of 1830 to serve as Disciple Minister to these two congregations. Other future Mormons in those congregations included Milo Andrus, Orson and Parley Pratt, and Parley's neighbors, Warren and Amanda Barnes Smith. Other neighbors included the families of Simeon Carter, Joel Hills Johnson, Sylvester Smith, and Royal Barney although no record exists indicating whether they were Disciples.

Much attention has been given Sidney's congregation at Kirtland. Mormons are fond of citing its wholesale conversion while Disciples point to its radicalism, claiming it along with Rigdon's position on communalism caused a split between him and Campbell before Sidney's defection to Mormonism. How much of the Kirtland congregation actually joined the Morley commune is difficult to ascertain. However, Rigdon did not "withdraw" to Kirtland as some Disciples have implied. After the formation of the Morley commune and after Rigdon's confrontation with Campbell on communalism, Rigdon continued to live in and preach regularly at Mentor. He did not move to the Morley commune,[29] nor does he appear to have supported the Morley group with a tannery he allegedly owned near the Morley farm.[30] It is significant that Sidney introduced the Mormon missionaries to his Mentor congregation before sending them to Kirtland and that Kirtland was only one of several stops on their itinerary of Disciple congregations.

The Kirtland congregation was perhaps more subject to Sidney's personal influence than any other group. It was certainly the most fully "prepared" for the coming of Mormonism and included the families of such Mormon notables as Titus Billings, Isaac Morley, Newell K. Whitney, Lyman Wight, and Frederick

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27. Alexander Campbell, "Christian Baptist," June 2, 1828, 5;263.

28. A. J. Baughman, History of Ashland County, Ohio (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1909), 237.

29. Mark McKiernan, *A Voice of One Crying the Wilderness: Sidney Rigdon, Religious Reformer 1793-1876* (Lawrence, Kansas: Coronado Press, 1971), 29.

30. Elizabeth G. Hitchcock, "Houses Along the East Branch," *The Historical Society Quarterly, Lake County, Ohio* 18, no. 1 (February, 1976): 3.

G. Williams. Wight was literally in the act of loading his wagon to move to Mayfield to organize a new Disciple congregation when the Mormon missionaries met him.[31] (Another prominent Disciple, Edward Partridge, is sometimes listed among the Kirtlanders. His hattery was in nearby Painesville, which had no Disciple congregation, but his farm was east of Painesville, and he probably belonged to the Disciple congregation in Perry.)

As the 1820's ended, Rigdon's territory included seventeen congregations.[32] Disciple records mention seven lieutenants who traveled with Sidney and preached to congregations other than their own: William Collins of the Chardon congregation, Matthew Clapp of Mentor, Symonds Ryder and Zeb Rudolph of Hiram, John Murdock of Orange, Lyman Wight of Kirtland, and Orson Hyde of Florence. After Rigdon's conversion to Mormonism, Murdock, Wight, and Hyde followed him with many from their congregations. Collins, Clapp, and Rudolph became some of Mormonism's most bitter critics. Symonds Ryder did both. Much of Ryder's extended family joined the Mormon church with him. "Numerous conversions took place in Hiram, Mantua, and adjoining towns. Especially did the south part of Hiram run after Mormonism. . .for the time it seemed that the [Disciple] Church would be broken up." When Symonds Ryder left the Mormons, the Hiramites "left the Mormonites faster than they ever joined."[33] Many of them participated in the tar-and-feathering of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, which one Disciple historian referred to as a "conflict between Disciples and Mormons."[34]

Sidney's first meeting with the Mormon missionaries lasted through the night. When it ended, Sidney ran to his neighbor Judge Clapp and interrupted breakfast to tell about the Mormons.[35] The family had recently celebrated the marriage of Phebe to Archibald Campbell, and his father, Thomas Campbell, was still a guest in the house. Clapp and Campbell viewed the meeting as a top-level defection and a declaration of war. Campbell remained several months to personally lead the Disciple battle against Rigdon and the Mormons. He and Judge Clapp were assisted by Matthew Clapp and by William Collins from Chardon. Alexander Campbell rushed to Hiram to preach against Mormonism with the help of Zeb Rudolph and Darwin Atwater. They focused their efforts around Hiram at the same time the "Ravenna Star" was publishing Ezra Booth's anti-Mormon letters near there. The battle there climaxed with the tar-and-feathering, in which Symonds Ryder was instrumental.

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31. *Saints Herald* RLDS 29:12 (June 6, 1882).

32. Birmingham, Chardon, Elyria, Euclid, Farmington, Freedom, Hambden, Hiram, Huntsburg, Kirtland, Mantua, Mentor, Nelson, Orange, Perry, Shalersville, Warrensville—extracted by the author from various Disciple histories.

33. Hinsdale, *Disciples in Hiram*, 15-16.

34. Winfred Ernest Garrison, *Religion Follows the Frontier—A History of the Disciples of Christ* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1931), 206.

35. Hayden, *Early Years of Disciples*, 210.

Sidney's three cousins and his brother-in-law, Richard Brooks, had all become Disciple Ministers, and they vigorously attacked Rigdon and the Mormons. Adamson Bentley moved his family from Warren to a spot not far from Sidney's old cabin in Bainbridge, founding the town of Bentleyville. He "frequently denounced [Rigdon] in public and succeeded in influencing Mrs. Rigdon's father to exclude her from a share in the family estate."[36] The Disciples, of course, went on to be very successful. By 1847, their membership had passed 150,000.[37]

Rigdon and his associates were equally active. "The Mormon movement struck the entire Western Reserve like a roaring storm," according to one local history.[38] Early missionary efforts were directed at those areas in which Rigdon's prestige and contacts would provide an entree. Sidney and Luke Johnson began one mission with the baptism of 50 or 60 at the Disciple stronghold of New Portage. They worked their way through the Disciple territories of Walter Scott and Adamson Bentley all the way to Pittsburgh where they organized a branch and baptized Sidney's mother and brother.[39] "One of (Sidney's) most powerful exhortations" was given while standing waist deep in the Chagrin River at Mayfield and performing thirty baptisms "with no intermission of the discourse on the part of Rigdon."[40]

John Murdock, who had led the Disciples at Orange, organized a Mormon branch there and "baptized 70 or 80 members in about 3 or 4 months."[41] After being ordained a High Priest at the Orange Conference, Orson Hyde took Hyrum Smith as a missionary companion to Amherst and Florence where Orson had previously been the Disciple pastor. He reports, "baptizing many of my old Campbellite friends."[42] Gideon Carter and Levi Ward Hancock served missions in the same area. Hancock "baptized and confirmed seventy-one at one meeting under my own hand" with the result that they "had nearly broken up the [Disciples] Church."[43] A local history claims Sidney was also active west of Cleveland, where he "held meetings quite frequently. . .aroused a considerable excitement, and. . .gained 40-50 adherents."[44]

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36. McKiernan, *Voice in the Wilderness*, 28.

37. Robert E. Chaddock, *Ohio Before 1850, A Study of the Early Influence of Pennsylvania and Southern Populations in Ohio* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), 125.

38. *Pioneer and General History of Geauga County, with Sketches of Some of the Pioneers and Prominent Men* (n.p.: Historical Society of Geauga County, 1880).

39. Andrew Jensen, *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jensen History Company, 1901), 85.

40. Judge John Barr, "Early Days of Mormonism, Statement of Judge John Barr" (September 10, 1874), manuscript, Western Reserve Historical Society Archives.

41. *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, 362.*

42. Orson Hyde, "Orson Hyde Autobiography," *Millennial Star* 26 (1864): 775.

43. Levi Ward Hancock, "Autobiography of Levi Ward Hancock," manuscript, Brigham Young University Archives, 31.

44. *History of Lorain County, Ohio* (Philadelphia: Williams Brothers, 1879), 332.

Unfortunately, there was little record kept of who these converts were. Still, at least 106 heads of household were baptized into the Mormon church in northeast Ohio in 1830 and 1831. Of these 23% were from the Kirtland area; 22% from Hiram; 17% from Orange; and 12% from Amherst.[45]

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Given this context of Sidney's activities along the frontier of the 1820s, a clearer picture begins to emerge—a picture of the role he unknowingly played to "prepare the way" for Mormonism, a picture of his suitability to serve as "spokesman" and a picture of his gift of being "mighty in expounding:"

First, Sidney was one of the most influential religious figures in northern Ohio. His reputation, visibility, and prestige created instant credibility for the fledgling Mormon church.

Second, Sidney's skill and fame as a religious orator provided ready audiences throughout northern Ohio.

Third, Sidney brought with him a vast network of acquaintances—former Baptist and Disciple converts, followers, admirers, and others simply curious to learn how Sidney had been "snared" by the Mormons. This provided ready contacts for the many novice Mormon missionaries sent out in Ohio without purse, scrip or experience. Included in this pool of acquaintances were several groups who joined the church. It is no coincidence that the early conferences of the church were held at the Rigdon strongholds of Kirtland, Orange, Amherst, and Hiram.

Fourth, Sidney's experience as a religious organizer, trainer, minister, missionary, biblical scholar, and scriptorian far exceeded that of any other early convert.

Fifth, Sidney had spent years grooming a number of individuals for the ministry: administrators like Edward Partridge, Newell K. Whitney, Isaac Morley, and Frederick G. Williams; missionaries like Parley P. Pratt, John Murdock, and Orson Hyde; and scholars like Eliza R. Snow and Orson Pratt, all of whom would play significant roles in the fledgling church.

As the 1830s unfolded, Sidney Rigdon and Joseph Smith must have often pondered, and marveled at those words spoken to a new convert and stranger in December of 1830: "Thou wast sent forth, even as John to prepare the way before me. . .and thou knewest it not."[46]

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45. Susan Easton Black, *Membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints 1830-1848* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 1989), from a data base extraction made by the author in 1992.

46. D&C 35:3-5.

The Ashery

On Being Adopted: Julia Murdock Smith

Sunny McClellan Morton

JULIA MURDOCK SMITH WAS ONE OF THE INFANT TWINS adopted by Joseph and Emma Smith. She was raised as the oldest child in the Smith household. In recent years, biographers have claimed Julia as primary subject material, and her fascinating character and life have begun to take shape. However, in some ways Julia remains an enigma, even to devotees of the prophet and his family—as if even after her death, she has been touched by the same disconnectedness that influenced her relationships and sense of self during her life. She was adopted: not quite a Smith, not quite a Murdock, and to historians of Mormonism, not quite a Mormon.

In this paper, I examine the ways adoption may have shaped Julia's life, drawing on modern psychological literature that characterizes the experiences of those who have been adopted. I ground my approach in the theory that the human response to being given away by one's birthparents transcends generational effects.[1] In other words, Julia's feelings about being adopted shouldn't differ significantly from those of modern adoptees. I will first provide biographical information on Julia. A description of nineteenth-century adoption practices and modern closed adoptions will follow, with comments on their relevance to Julia's experiences. These materials will provide context for an exploration of Julia's relationships with her adoptive and biological families and a discussion

1. A model and rationale for this approach may be found in Paul C. Rosenblatt's *Bitter, Bitter Tears: Nineteenth-Century Diarists and Twentieth-Century Grief Theories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983). His approach is the reverse of mine: to understand the psychosocial process of grief through a study of nineteenth-century writers, rather than to understand a nineteenth-century adoptee through current psychosocial literature on adoption. He concludes that "the great landmarks of the life cycle seem to have had the same impact on people then as now. And the things that upset people the most now seem to be the same things that upset them the most then. . . .I will not deny the possibility that in some crucial way the experiences of personal losses by people in the nineteenth century are different from those of people in the twentieth century, but I am unable to detect at present any difference that would invalidate the use of nineteenth-century diaries to understand grief in the twentieth century" (8-9).

of how adoption issues affected them all. Themes emerge: Julia's love and loyalty for those who claimed her as family, her conflicts of identity, and her deep sense of loss of her biologic genealogy. Finally, I will highlight aspects of her personality that often emerge in adopted persons. The end result will be to show that viewing Julia from the perspective of adoption psychology gives us valuable new insight into her life and character.

A Biographical Sketch of Julia[2]

Julia and her twin brother were born to John and Julia Murdock on a spring day in 1831 only a few miles from Kirtland into a family recently converted to Mormonism. The mother, Julia, died after giving birth, and suddenly John was a widower with newborn twins and three older children. On the same day, Joseph and Emma Smith, also living near Kirtland, gave birth to twins. The Smith twins died, and John Murdock gave his own twins to Joseph and Emma to raise as their own although subsequently one of these died as well. His three older children were placed in the care of others as well, but John eventually reclaimed them. Interestingly, he did not place any of his children with his deceased wife's family although they lived nearby and were a large, prosperous clan. John Murdock and his in-laws had severed ties over religious differences when John and his wife joined the Mormon faith.

At the tender age of five, Julia discovered she was adopted. Apparently a spiteful neighbor put it to her none too kindly. Eventually she also learned that some believed her to be an illegitimate daughter of Joseph Smith by one of his devoted female followers. Rumors of Joseph's polygamous relationships only fed gossip about Julia's presence in the Smith home. Julia's childhood was marked by the gradual addition of several younger brothers to the Smith household, constant upheaval as the Smiths moved from one place to another, and the trials of belonging to an adoptive father who was both revered and hated for his religious claims and activities.

Julia was only thirteen when Joseph Smith was murdered in an act of mob violence. Her friends and neighbors in the Mormon city of Nauvoo, Illinois, mourned the loss of her father, then deserted the city for safer haven in the western deserts. However, Julia's widowed mother chose to keep her family in the Nauvoo area. Among those who left was Julia's birth father, whose identity she knew, yet with whom she had not formed a relationship. Julia's adolescence was quieter although when she was 16 years old, her adoptive mother remarried and she gained a stepfather.

Julia herself married soon after; recent evidence unearthed by researcher Reed Murdock suggests that she eloped when she was seventeen.[3] She and her

2. Biographical details, when not noted, may be found in that study. Mormon Historical Studies 3(2): Fall 2002: 35-60. Sunny McClellan Morton, "The Forgotten Daughter: Julia Murdock Smith."

3. Conversation with S. Reed Murdock, 22 May 2003. Evidence to be fully described in his forthcoming biography of Julia Murdock Smith, publication pending.

husband, who was twice her age, moved to Texas where he soon died in an accident. She returned home to Nauvoo where she married again, this time a local Irish Catholic man, John Middleton. At his request, Julia converted to Catholicism. The young couple moved to St. Louis to build a life together, but John's alcoholism and chronic illness prevented financial success, as well, apparently, as marital happiness. John finally deserted Julia, and she returned penniless to Emma shortly before her adoptive mother's death. By this time, Julia was herself ill. She was cared for by old friends in Nauvoo until she died and was buried in her friends' family plot in the local Catholic cemetery.

Adoption Practices in the 19th and 20th Century: Context for Julia

Adoption in Julia's day was different than the legal and social institution we now know.[4] In the early 1830s, adoption took place through informal community systems; a child was placed in an adoptive family through relatives and friends without any legal involvement.[5] A child could grow up in a town where everyone knew the story of her birth and adoption[6] as was the case with Julia. During her childhood, Julia was surrounded by many of the same Mormon converts in a community that moved from Kirtland to Missouri to Illinois. That group of converts included her birthfather and many others who would have witnessed her adoption firsthand.

During the early 1800s, adoption was viewed as a benevolent act on the part of the adoptive parents rather than as fulfillment of a couple's desire to become parents.[7] Relationships with birthparents sometimes continued, and adoptive families often filled a fostering or surrogate role rather than that of full-fledged replacement parents. Adoptive mothers like Emma were not necessarily considered "real moms" because they hadn't given birth to the adoptive child.[8] Therefore, society *would* have considered Julia to be a part of the Smith household but *not* a real "Smith child" like her Smith brothers. She would still have been a Murdock, especially since her father lived nearby, and it would normally have been acceptable for some sort of relationship to continue between Julia and her father.

But in important ways, Julia's emotional experience with adoption parallels that of those who grew up under the legal framework of twentieth-century closed adoption. By the turn of the century, adoption had become something more than simply finding a place for a child. Would-be parents now sought children to adopt: adopting a child had become a privilege. As adoption agencies formed to serve the needs of adoptive parents, new interest arose in protecting the new par-

4. Julie Berebitsky, *Like Our Very Own. Adoption and the Changing Culture of Motherhood, 1851-1950* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 18.

5. Ibid. 13.

6. Ibid., 20.

7. Ibid., 2.

8. Ibid., 9.

ents' sole rights to the child. Birth parents lost access to their children as a condition of the adoption, presumably to protect the new parents' emotional and financial investment in the child and to prevent complications that might arise from a child having multiple sets of parents. The end result for the child, it was assumed, was full legal and social identity with the adoptive family.

Julia's adoption agreement, although it happened under the older, informal system, anticipates modern closed adoptions. John describes an arrangement laid out by Emma. (He refers to both Julia and her twin brother, who though also placed with the Smiths died in infancy.)

> Sister Smith requested me not to make myself known to the children as being their father. It was a hard request and I said but little on the subject. She wanted to bring the children up as her own and never have them know anything to the contrary, that they might be perfectly happy with her as their Mother. This was a good thought, yet selfish, and I was sensible it could not always remain so. Joseph told me it would one day all come to light, which it appears has taken place without my divulging it, for I have always held my peace. . .I resolved to wait till time and providence should divulge the matter.[9]

John seemed surprised and unhappy with these conditions. Both he and the adoptive father Joseph appear to have consoled themselves with the idea that one day the relationship would be more open, per the norm for the day. John implies that had not these conditions been made, he would have pursued an open relationship with Julia. As further evidence that he still perceived himself as a parent to Julia, John provided financial support for her and her twin brother even after he had placed them with the Smiths.[10]

So Julia had to live by Emma's "closed adoption" policy—meaning that Emma wouldn't allow Julia to identify herself with the Murdocks—within a society that would not allow her to be a Smith either. She got the worst of both adoption worlds. The inherently conflicting setting of Julia's adoption circumstances undoubtedly complicated her ability to resolve issues of belonging and identity.

Finally we should note that both of these adoption models show mixed feelings about adoption in general. In the earlier model, adopting a child, while part of the open life of the community, is a (perhaps grudgingly granted) favor; in the later model, adopting a child is a privilege, yet also a sometimes shameful secret. These ambiguous feelings would have imbued Julia's adoption experience with cultural meaning that she may not even have recognized and probably couldn't reason away. One clinician describes the conflicted societal attitude toward adoption in the following way:

9. John Murdock, "Autobiography," 148-149. Microfilm. Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

10. John Murdock, "A Synopsis of My History," Typescript, 168. Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

> Although adoption is a widely accepted form of substitute care for children whose biological parents could not or would not care for them, there is still a feeling within most cultural groups that it is a "second best route to parenthood" and a "second best way of entering a family." To be part of an adoptive family is to be exposed continually to the challenge represented by society's ambivalent attitude about adoption.[11]

JULIA'S FAMILY LIFE: LOVE AND LOYALTY, IDENTITY AND LOSS

Two points should be made before discussing Julia's family relationships and the psychological impact of adoption on them. First, adoption psychology reflects general themes and trends. Whether and to what degree individual adoptees and their families experience any of these issues vary by circumstance. Second, just because adoption has a psychological impact does not mean that adoptees are psychologically troubled. One recent study, in fact, provides evidence that adoptees are no less functional than non-adoptees, emotionally or otherwise.[12] Many adoptees never have clinically-significant psychological issues. However, when adoptees *do* look for psychological help, adoption issues often play a role in their difficulties.[13] Psychologist Betty Jean Lifton explains this phenomenon in the following way:

> Hearing that one was not born to one's mother is a profound and unrecognized trauma. . . .The child finds it incomprehensible. This is not to say that the child is irreparably damaged. . . .Children are known to be resilient, to suffer all kinds of early abandonments and other traumas and to recover. But when the adopted child learns that he both *is* and *is not* the child of his parents, the shock connects to that earlier preverbal trauma the baby had at separation from the mother and has retained as an inner experience.[14]

Julia's overall psychological health is impossible to determine. Her letters contain a full spectrum of emotional tones, including affection, empathy, teasing, melancholy, grief, resignation, homesickness, hope, and confidence in her ability to cope. She writes lively comments on a full range of subjects, including family visits, neighborly gossip, local weather and culture, and even politics. These

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11. David M. Brozinsky and Marshall D. Schechter, *The Psychology of Adoption* (New York: Oxford UP, 1990), 17.

12. Ann E. Brand and Paul M. Brinich, "Behavior problems and mental health contacts in adopted, foster, and nonadopted children," *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 40, no. 8 (1999): 1223-25.

13. Brozinsky and Schechter, 23, 42; Daniel W. Smith and David M. Brodzinsky, "Coping with birthparent loss in adopted children," *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 43, no. 2 (2002), 213.

14. Betty Jean Lifton, *Journey of the Adopted Self: A Quest for Wholeness* (New York: BasicBooks, 1994), 48-49. While other major psychological texts cited in this paper contain much of the same information shared in Lifton's book, Lifton is most often quoted due to her readable writing style.

characteristics do not point to modern-day symptoms of depression like lack of energy or of interest in life, withdrawal, flat emotional affect, or persistent, overwhelming sadness—although, again, a real diagnosis is impossible to make. Specifically where adoption is concerned, Julia's passionate expressions of anger, bitterness, and grief toward her birth family at what "might have been" are common and certainly not pathological: unresolved adoption issues didn't appear to consume her life or thoughts for extreme periods of time. Neither, it seems, did her relationships with her adoptive family members suffer permanently.

I will first explore Julia's relationships with her adoptive family members because these were the first and most significant relationships she knew. Without question Julia loved and accepted Emma as the only mother she ever knew. Julia's letters to her adoptive mother are filled with love for her. She signed letters to "my Dear Mother" from "your ever affectionate daughter,"[15] and "loving and affectionate child."[16] She always referred to Emma as "mother" except when she wrote to her birth family. Then Emma became "foster mother." Julia shows her love for Emma in the opening paragraph of a letter to her:

> Your most welcome letters of May June and August came safe. . .and it was a real treat to get them and most eagerly I read them I assure you[.] God Bless and preserve my Mother to write to me many more such kind good letters[. P]oor Ma It is such a Task for you to write, but Dear Ma It is such a great comfort to me to read one of your letters[.] I have not the Heart to say don't write although it is selfish in me, but take your time to write them. Oh how much I wish to see you.[17]

Lifton writes about the adopted person's hunger for a mother:

> No one is more romantic about mothers and mothering than the adopted. They are like a blind person who tries to envision the radiance that nature has bestowed upon a flower [s]he will never see. Those who know their mothers cannot imagine what it is like not to know the woman who brought you into the world.[18]

An adopted baby "wants its own mother, and can only perceive of her disappearance as abandonment. . . .This sense of abandonment and mystery about origins [shapes] a child's life."[19]

Emma needed Julia as well. Emma's grief over the loss of her own first two children was fresh when Julia came to her, and Julia probably served as a balm. Lifton proposes that the adoptive mother and child share a mutual need, offering as evidence the finding that adoptive mother-child pairs emotionally make up

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15. Julia M. Middleton to Emma Smith Bidamon, 8 September 1873, St. Louis, Missouri.
16. Julia M. Middleton to Emma Smith Bidamon, 28 January 1872, St. Louis, Missouri.
17. Julia M. Middleton to Emma Smith Bidamon, 8 September 1873.
18. Lifton, 13.
19. Lifton, 20.

for lost prenatal time: one study showed no less attachment between adopted toddlers and mothers than toddlers and birth mothers.[20] However, Emma's maternal insecurity was evident from the beginning when she insisted on John Murdock's complete abdication as a father. Hers was a common expression of an adoptive parent's fear that somehow she will lose exclusive emotional ties and emotional control over the child or that the child's well-being will be compromised.[21] That possessiveness betrays her need for Julia.

Julia showed great affection for her adoptive brothers as well. She corresponded with them and often mentioned how much she missed them. She was especially close to Joseph III and signed one of her letters to him, "with much love I am always *your sister*."[22] She had a maternal love for the youngest boy David Hyrum, whom she helped to raise. She wrote a homesick letter about him the first time she left home, and even as an older adult reminisced about caring for him as a baby.[23] Julia's relationships with her adoptive brothers appear not to have been threatened by adoption conflict. As for Julia's relationship with her adoptive father, that ended abruptly when he was murdered. She never mentioned him specifically in reminiscences to her adoptive family.

When she was away from Emma's home, Julia ached to be there. Her memories of fireside and friendship are all of Nauvoo. She spoke of extended Smith family members as her own: Grandmother, Aunt Sophronia, even cousins.[24] One letter reveals that her heart was with the Smiths even when she was in Texas as a newlywed. She recites a poem that repeats a phrase about longing to be with "those we've left behind us." She also writes

> I often think of you all I can ashure you and Dream of you to for you are never out of my thoughts, my Dear Mother, and I Some times immagin I can See you all as I left you[.] The last time I Saw you the Boyes and Geralda were in the North Room and you were in the front Door and Joseph was beside the Gate. . . .Every night I breath a prayer to [God] to Grant that we all may meet again in this World.[25]

Julia's letters to the Murdocks tell another story, one of insecurity and loss, conflicting loyalties and desires—a story that shows that although she did her best to be a Smith, she knew she didn't belong with them. The first hint of her anxious desire to know her birth roots appears in her mention of a visit from her

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20. Lifton, 34.

21. Lifton, 241-243.

22. Julia M. Middleton to "Dear Joe," Joseph Smith III, 5 January 1877, emphasis added.

23. Julia M. Middleton to "My Dear Mother," Emma Smith Bidamon, 28 January 1870, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

24. Julia M. Middleton to "My Dear Mother," Emma Smith Bidamon, 8 Sept 1873; Julia M. Middleton to "My Own Dear Mother," Emma Smith Bidamon, 18 March 1853, both at Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

25. Julia M. Dixon to "My Dearest Mother," Emma Smith Bidamon, 25 March 1851. Community of Christ Archives. Lewis C. Bidamon Papers, P12-2, f17.

birth mother's cousin, Henry Moore. He tried to visit her in Nauvoo when Julia was about seventeen, but she was out of town at the time. All that is known is Julia's later recollection:

> [Henry] did not call on my foster Mother, not knowing what her feeling might be, he said. But he could rest assured of one thing, she would have received him kindly on my account. . .I wrote to Cousin Henry to this effect, and he answered it.[26]

This gesture by her mother's family must have meant a great deal to her. It was probably the first time any birth relative had stepped forward to claim kinship as well as her first opportunity to learn firsthand about her mother's large, prosperous family back in Ohio and their undoubtedly strong opposition to her adoption into the Smith family. In fact, when Julia wrote to her birth father about ten years later, she used some of her maternal relatives' complaints as ammunition against John. She wondered why she hadn't been placed with her biological mother's family, commenting, "If she [my birth mother] has seen the way her family have been divided and estranged she must feel unhappy, I think."[27]

The most compelling evidence of Julia's longing for her birth family comes in her reply to a letter from her biological brother, John Riggs Murdock. Julia was about twenty-eight when John Riggs wrote to her (he was about four years older). She responded to his letter; her response was forwarded to their birth father John Murdock, who then responded to Julia. This triangle of letters is filled with anguish, loss, accusations, and explanations. In Julia's letter to her brother, she seems to release years of pent-up emotion:

> John, can you imagine a brother and sister raised as we have been, so totally estranged from one another? It is awful, God knows. Mine has been no easy life. Until I was a child of five years old I was happy, it was then I was first told I was not a Smith, and by Mrs. Walker, she was little older than myself, and she done it through spite. . . .From that hour I was changed. I was bitter even as a child. O how it stung me when persons have inquired, "Is that your *adopted* daughter?" of my foster mother. John, you little know what I suffered in my early life, and even since I was grown. . . .*Why was it, I have often said to myself, that I could not have been raised with my own blood and kin and not with strangers, and bear a name I had no claim on?*[28]

Such feelings of alienation and loss are common among modern adoptees. While many adopted children fare well with their new families, by the time they reach adolescence, they begin to understand the implications of being adopted

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26. John Murdock, "Autobiography," 142.
27. John Murdock, "A Synopsis of My History," 163.
28. John Murdock, "Synopsis of my History," 164, emphasis added.

and realize how different their situation is from non-adopted children. They feel keenly that in order for them to have been "chosen" by their adoptive parents, their birth parents had to reject them. They feel identity limitations when their family or genetic stories don't deepen in complexity or relevance. As Lifton states, "If your personal narrative doesn't grow and develop with you, with concrete facts and information, you run the danger of becoming emotionally frozen."[29] Adoptees learn of their loss of an entire biological heritage,[30] both in terms of ancestry and in terms of a personal prenatal and newborn life narrative.[31] In a parallel manner, they lose the heritage of the adoptive family. These losses can lead to feelings of alienation and rootlessness. While some of these feelings are unavoidable, recent research has proposed that feelings of alienation and loss are intensified for adoptees who have been denied knowledge of and relationships with their birth families as was Julia.[32] That Julia herself was aware of her changing perceptions from childhood to adulthood is reflected in a statement written to Emma as a young adult:

> This is a strange world I think and the longer we live the mor[e] it puzzles us to account for some things. . . .I think in Childhood we see every thing through a Coulerd Glass as it were and it Coulers every thing in the most Brilyant light and Pleases our Eye but as we Grow Older we see through a Glass Still I think but it is a magnifying one and we see things as they really are.[33]

Julia wrote that even as a child, she longed for her birth family, yet she purposely avoided John Murdock during her childhood in Nauvoo. Perhaps that avoidance was Emma's rule, but Julia didn't blame it on her. She focused on her deeply conflicting feelings, which are consistent with those of many modern adoptees who choose not to contact their biological families. Julia explained to her biological brother:

> I shunned you and my father, and why? Because I had a dread of being taken from those I was raised with and loved, with the same love that should have been yours. Many a sleepless night I have spent thinking of this when I was a child. But I was a woman in thought, even then. After seeing some of you [the Murdocks], I have almost cursed the day I was born. . .*I chose to love those I knew.*[34]

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29. Lifton, 65.

30. Brodzinsky and Schechter, 13-14.

31. Lifton, 36.

32. Irving G. Leon, "Adoption Losses: Naturally Occurring or Socially Constructed?" *Child Development* 73, no. 2 (March/April 2002): 661, J.V. de Monleon , "Who are my parents? Filial adoption and the function of time and place" (French, English language abstract) *Arch Pediatrics* 7, no. 5 (2000): 529-35.

33. Julia M. Dixon to "My Own Dear Mother," Emma Smith Bidamon, 18 March 1853, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

34. John Murdock, "Autobiography," 141, emphasis added.

In this statement, Julia expresses her loyalty to the Smiths and a fear that she would lose the Smiths if she were to become close to her birth family. This fear still paralyzes many adoptees and their adoptive parents and prevents or delays many reunions between birthparents and children.

Herein lies one of the major tensions felt by many adoptees: They can feel deep love, loyalty, and gratitude for their adoptive families while still feeling angry at having been placed with them. They want to be part of both their birth and adoptive families and feel that they will never really "belong" to either. Lifton comments:

> Adoptees, then, are caught between the loyalty they feel to the adoptive parents who rescued them and the invisible loyalty to the [parents] who gave birth to them. Troubled as they are by feeling ungrateful, they remain ambivalent about accepting their adoptive parents as their "real" ones. Yet because they have not had any real experiences in the real world with the birth [parents], they cannot accept [them] as real either. Their split loyalties prevent them from resolving their issues with either set of parents. . . .The task of adopted children is to reconcile these [two sets of parents] within them—the [parents] who made them [orphans] and the psychological [parents] who [parented] them.[35]

Some adoptees keep their distance from their birth families while waiting for a sign that their birthparents want them. These adoptees don't want to feel rejected by their birthparents for a second time. Julia may have had such feelings, given her silence toward her biological kin until they initiated contact with her.

It is difficult to imagine Julia's feelings when she finally read a letter from her birth father, who responded to the emotionally-charged questions and even accusations she had filtered through her biological brother. One can almost hear his voice trembling with emotion as he wrote ". . .with feelings of gratitude to my Father in Heaven for the privilege of [receiving your letter]. . . .It was a great treat. . .like receiving intelligence from the dead. . . .For, my Dear Julia, you have been a lost child to me all your days."[36] He continued with an invitation for her to come visit him, as he was old and his health was failing. He also added a fervent religious desire that she would come to Utah, be taught the Mormon gospel, and participate in temple rituals that would unite them in faith and family.

This reunion appears never to have happened, and no further correspondence between Julia and her father has been found. It is not known whether their relationship progressed past this point. Julia may not have worked through her grief and anger at having been given up by her birth father, especially since she had lost her adoptive father as well and therefore never had a fulfilling, mature relationship with a father. However, it may also be that John's religious appeal

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35. Lifton, 57, 14. In these passages, Lifton specifically mentions "mothers," which I have replaced throughout with "parents."

36. Murdock, "Autobiography," 142-143.

actually prevented her visit, as by this time she was already married to John Middleton and had become a Catholic herself. Middleton's active dislike of Mormonism would not have helped.

An interesting indication of Julia's feelings about herself as a Murdock is the fact that she did not use the name "Smith" in her correspondence. The name "Julia Murdock Smith" seems to have been imposed by historians after her death as an easy way of identifying her with Joseph and Emma. Julia took her middle initial from "Murdock" and used this throughout her married life. "M" for Murdock even appears on her tombstone.

Julia's claiming of her biological family's name anticipated a trend among modern adult adoptees:

> Even when they cannot have a relationship with their birth parents, adoptees may reclaim their names as a way of reclaiming their original identities. They may use the first name, or take it or the surname as a middle name. . . .Sometimes adoptees will use both their adoptive and their birth names, as if not sure which is the real one and which the imposter.[37]

The Adoptive Personality

It seems curious that Julia's letters to the Smiths never mention adoption-related issues. She may have discussed the topic with them, but not in letters;[38] she may not have approached it at all. It has been found that, in some modern, upper-middle-class families, the absence of "adoption discussions" actually reflects the absence of a serious problem.[39] Another psychologist explains that adopted children may shut out the subject of adoption when their culture requires them to emotionally abandon their birth parents.[40] A third explanation stems from some modern adoptees' feelings that loyalty and gratitude prevent their sharing feelings that might cause pain to the adoptive family.

> Adopted children, who get the message that not only were they chosen, but they were chosen to be the light of their parents' lives, often do not feel entitled to express any negative feelings, such as grief or anger at being cut off from their origins. Some become so successful at splitting off their feelings and keeping up a cheerful façade that they do not even know when they are angry.[41]

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37. Lifton, 268.

38 Rosenblatt comments that grief also tends not to be expressed in writing, i.e. emotional responses to life events (like loss and adoption) are "worked out in conversation, reverie, and. . .ritual" rather than in written form, and that the "writing [conventions of the day] did not allow for substantial expression of [feelings] that may have been bottled up" (100).

39. Brozinsky and Schechter, 21.

40. Lifton, 51.

41. Lifton, 89.

Lifton describes how adoptees assume the role of perfect, grateful substitute children. "The adoptee continues in [this] artificial role rather than risk losing her place in the family, but goes underground with her forbidden thoughts, which make her feel more isolated and alone."[42] This "underground" is the fantasy world or alternate reality of the adoptee. This imagination zone is often described as the adoptee's "what if" world, in which birth family members figure prominently. Sometimes in these fantasies, the birth family raises the adoptee; a birth parent kidnaps the adoptee; there are battles between the birth and adoptive families; a birth parent assumes an imagined celebrity or infamous identity. Interestingly, in some adoption fantasies, the adoptee imagines that she has a lost or invisible twin.[43] Julia was in fact born with a twin, but he died as an infant. It would be interesting to know how this other loss played out in her mind. Some of the most important manifestations of the adopted person's fantasy world are the psychological presences that can follow the adoptee in real life.

> "Psychological presence," simply put, refers to some person being in a family member's heart, or on his or her mind. It is the symbolic existence of an individual in the perception of other family members in a way that influences thoughts, emotions, behavior, identity, or unity of remaining family members.[44]

An adoptee might feel the psychological presence of her birthmother watching over her, of the birth child her adoptive parents really wanted, or of the child she might have been had she been raised with her birth family.[45] Birthmothers are nearly always psychologically present.[46] Julia's writings to the Murdocks reveal the psychological presence of her birthmother. She was quick to follow up on contact from her birthmother's family and to incorporate their perspective into her own. She was defensive about "the stain on my mother's name" when her own legitimacy was called into question.[47] Finally, she flung her birthmother's presence at her birthfather: "If [my mother] has seen the way her family have been divided and estranged she must feel unhappy, I think." Additional psychological presences that may have followed Julia, although they are never mentioned, are her biological twin and the Smith twins, who themselves were born and died on the same day that Julia was born and whom Julia and her brother were supposed to "replace." Lifton states that "the adoptee who replaces. . .a dead child. . .must bear the burden of the parents' unresolved. . .grief over not having their [birth] child, while trying to be what that. . .child would have been."[48]

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42. Lifton, 56.

43. Brozinsky and Schechter, 50.

44. Jayne E. Schooler and Betsie L. Norris, *Journeys After Adoption: Understanding Lifelong Issues* (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 2002), 18.

45. Lifton, 11.

46. Schooler and Norris, 21.

47. John Murdock, "A Synopsis of My History," 164.

48. Lifton, 46.

Finally, Julia's personality and choices show some curious traits common among adoptees. One interesting trait is the tendency to marry someone quite a bit older, who will be a parent figure who does not abandon them. This tendency is more pronounced in male adoptees; however, Julia's need for a father may have led to her acting out this tendency. Remember that she lost both her birth father and adoptive father. Her first marriage was, in fact, to a man twice her age. After a whirlwind summer courtship, she flouted her family's wishes by eloping with this man when she was only seventeen.[49] However, references to Julia after her marriage make her sound happy with the flush of first love. She was understandably devastated when her husband soon died in a work-related accident. She later described that period of her life as "the darkest days I have ever know[n]."[50] If he really was a father figure to her, he would have been the third one she'd lost. Sadly, her fourth important relationship with a man would turn out to be an unhappy marriage to an alcoholic.

Another unusual trait of adoptees is a tendency to identify with animals, perhaps because they share some state of grace that is outside the human condition. "Many adoptees have [a feeling] of being a stray who has been taken in, and is not suited for ordinary human attachment. They may feel more comfortable with animals than with people."[51] Julia had a special place in her heart for pets. In one letter she mentions having three birds and a dog who "is doing well and is as much of a Pet as his Mistress is;" she also laments the loss of another pet, Chloa. She even included a philosophical poem about nature's way of taking away dear pets and flowers through death.[52] Another letter mentions that she had gotten "another" dog;[53] yet another discusses the fate of a family horse.

Taking a Step Back

It is surely important to emphasize one of the hopeful findings of this paper. Julia loved the Smiths and was obviously well-cared for in their household. That her psychological issues with adoption were not more intensely evidenced in her daily life can probably be credited to the nurturing environment in which she was apparently raised. In fact, Lifton states:

> Probably the most important interpersonal factors influencing the adopted child's adjustment are the experiences he or she has with family members. These experiences are related to the general quality of the caregiving environment, the adjust-

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49. Evidence of the elopement was discovered recently by S. Reed Murdock. He provides further details in a forthcoming biography of Julia.

50. Julia M. Middleton to "My Dear Mother," Emma Smith Bidamon, 8 Sept 1873, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

51. Lifton, 73-74.

52. Julia M. Dixon to "My Dearest Mother" Emma Smith Bidamon, 25 March 1851.

53. Julia M. Dixon to "My Own Dear Mother," Emma Smith Bidamon, 18 March 1853, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

> ment of adoptive parents, and the way in which adoption issues are communicated between parents and children.[54]

In other words, if Julia had to experience the trauma of losing her birth family, the Smiths were at least able to help her cope with it as best she could.

It is difficult to conclude whether Julia ever resolved her adoption issues satisfactorily. (It seems a small consolation to say that at least she had pets.) It is unknown whether the intense emotions she expressed about her Murdock connections were "left hanging." According to psychologists, a great deal of emotional work remains after an adopted child reconnects with a birthparent. Sometimes the reunion brings rejection, unanticipated information, a new sense of grief and loss, confusion, or even depression.[55] An adoptee must respond to the reunion by reframing her family ties and her sense of self. It is not known whether after her contact with her birth family, Julia accepted their reality and their response to her expressions of confusion and abandonment. Whether and/or how she redefined relationships with her adoptive and biological families are also unknown.

Julia must have maintained some kind of relationship with the Murdocks. It is painfully poetic that she finally formed a relationship with a Murdock during the last days of her life when her biological brother John Riggs Murdock paid her an extended visit in Nauvoo. According to his own account,

> I found her at the home of a Mr. Moffet, whose wife took care of her with a sisterly kindness. Julia's foster mother, Emma, had died, and she was left without a home and under the most distressing circumstances. She was suffering from a cancer in her right breast. . . .I remained with her about one month, but on leaving I left sufficient means to provide for her and cover the expenses of her burial and of a tombstone. She died soon after my departure.[56]

After a lifetime of tragic losses and the feelings of abandonment and alienation that accompanied her adoption, Julia must have been deeply moved to be attended to on her deathbed by a Murdock brother. One hopes this experience would have healed some of her feelings and answered some of her questions in a way that gave her a measure of peace in her final days.

Taking Another Step Back

Clearly modern adoption literature has relevance to Julia's life and experiences. This method of approaching Julia, while by definition somewhat speculative, does shed new insight on her personality. Additional insight may possibly

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54. Brodzinsky and Schechter, 16.

55. Schooler and Norris, 224.

56. Quoted in J.M. Tanner, *A Biographical Sketch of John Riggs Murdock* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1909), 169-170.

be gained by exploring existing literature on other relevant subjects, such as grief in children whose parents are killed violently; grief in young widows; the psychological effects of being raised in the public eye (children of celebrities); and the effects of spousal alcohol abuse. Each of these areas of study may illuminate Julia in ways that make her life even more accessible and relevant to twenty-first century readers.

Whitney Home

The LDS Church and Community of Christ: Clearer Differences, Closer Friends

William D. Russell

AT THE BIENNIAL WORLD CONFERENCE of the RLDS church in April 2000, the delegates voted to change their name to "The Community of Christ." In this paper I will refer to the "RLDS church" rather than the new name because virtually everything I write about happened before April 6, 2001, the date on which the name change became official. Clearly one reason for the change was to end or limit the comparison and confusion with our Utah-based cousins. As President W. Grant McMurray said at the Mormon History Association meeting in Kirtland last May, over the years we have tended to identify ourselves as belonging to "The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. We're Not the Mormons."[1] Historically we denied we were Mormons, but we couldn't shake the label. When the church name proposed by the First Presidency was debated at the conference, one delegate from Tennessee reported being kicked off of ball teams for supposedly being Mormon. In our sports-crazed culture, that is the ultimate rejection. The First Presidency's proposed name change passed with only 22 percent of the delegates voting against it.[2]

It used to be that we "prairie Mormons" outnumbered "mountain Mormons"[3] in parts of the country, especially Missouri, Iowa, and Michigan. I grew up in Flint, Michigan, and attended the RLDS-sponsored Graceland College in Lamoni, Iowa, for four years. I never in my life consciously met a Mormon until a year after my graduation in 1960. Granted, I probably had met a few Mormons

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1. W. Grant McMurray, "A 'Goodly Heritage' in a Time of Transformation: History and Identity in the Community of Christ." Address given at the Mormon History Association, Kirtland, Ohio, May 22, 2003, p. 3. Copy in the possession of author.
2. *2002 World Conference Bulletin* (Independence, Mo.: Community of Christ, 2002), 424.
3. I am indebted to Jan Shipps for the labels "mountain Mormons" and "prairie Mormons."

along the way, but they were all "in the closet" as far as I was concerned. In Flint, we prairie Mormons had two branches with well over one thousand members while there was one small LDS branch at the edge of town.

Since I met my first Mormon at the Liberty Jail in 1961, the Utah church has grown dramatically and spread all over the country as well as to many parts of the world while RLDS U.S. membership has leveled off and declined slightly. Our growth has largely been in Third World countries. In recent decades, the Utah church has become more conservative while we have taken a giant step to the left in our theology. The greater theological divide may have made many prairie Mormons anxious to avoid being confused with the mountain Mormons. This has carried over into politics as well. Many of our members and leaders are Democrats who abhor the "Christian Right," with which so many Mormon politicians are aligned.

In this paper I will briefly discuss what I see as the six major differences between the two churches during the first century of their existence, and then I will look at eight new differences that have emerged over the past forty years or so. I make no claim that either is a complete list.

Part I—The First Century

The two major issues that divided us in the beginning, in the 1850s and 1860s, are no longer issues between us. Polygamy was probably the major issue at the outset. One reason for RLDS success in rallying dissident Mormons in the Midwest from the 1850s onward was the fact that we were the only significant Mormon splinter group which did not embrace polygamy at one time or another, in one way or another. Many of the early RLDS members had been Strangites when James J. Strang was monogamous. But when he met 17-year-old Elvira Field and was inspired to revise his theology of family, many of his followers ended up RLDS, including our founder Jason W. Briggs. After their defection, Briggs and others followed William Smith until they discovered that, like Strang, William didn't live the monogamous ideal either.[4]

Polygamy is no longer an important issue dividing the churches because about a century ago most Utah Mormons quit practicing "the principle." However, Wilford Woodruff only suspended the practice. If Gordon B. Hinckley announced today—in a new manifesto—that the LDS church would be restoring the practice of polygamy because the Supreme Court would uphold it now, I believe the reaction of many Mormons would be to vomit. The public image of

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4. Alma R. Blair wrote the best single article history of the origins of the RLDS church in his "The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints: Moderate Mormonism," in F. Mark McKiernan, Alma R. Blair, and Paul M. Edwards, *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History* (Lawrence, Kan.: Coronado Press, 1973), 207-230; James J. Strang is covered in the same book by William D. Russell, "King James Strang: Joseph Smith's Successor?" (231-56), recently reprinted with slight revision in John Sillitoe and Susan Staker, eds., *Mormon Mavericks: Essays on Dissenters* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002):131-57.

Mormon family values would be down the tubes. It would destroy the fragile political alliance between the Religious Right and many Mormon politicians. The LDS church might have to enter into a political alliance with the gay rights people to defend against the attacks of religious conservatives!

For years we RLDS insisted that Joseph Smith did not practice polygamy, nor did he write Section 132.[5] We said Brigham wrote it and published it under Joseph's name in 1852, eight years after Joseph died and could no longer defend himself. But by the 1980s, RLDS opinion shifted dramatically, partly stimulated by Church Historian Richard P. Howard's article on polygamy in the 1983 *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, which cautiously admitted Joseph's involvement.[6] Current Church Historian Mark A. Scherer suggests another shift in thinking has occurred since the 1980s: "In the past, polygamy has been viewed [by the RLDS] in the historical context as a controversial belief associated with the newly emerging Nauvoo Temple theology. But today let us view polygamy as an issue of human worth, peace and justice, and ministerial abuse."[7] Our Director of Peace and Justice Ministries in the church, Andrew Bolton, has said publicly that today we would refer to at least some of Joseph Smith's marriages as "clergy abuse."

It should be noted that for the past thirty-five years our policy has allowed the baptism of polygamous men in the Third World—if they promise to accept our policy of monogamy and not take additional wives—while the LDS policy does not allow for the baptism of polygamous people in non-western cultures.[8] Or in Utah, of course.

Lineal succession in the presidency was the other major issue for the RLDS in the beginning. On November 18, 1851, Jason Briggs had a spiritual experience in which he concluded it was God's will that a son of Joseph the Martyr should lead the church, succeeding his father.[9] Clearly, for Briggs—and probably most early RLDS—these were the two major issues: polygamy and lineal

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5. See the following three classic twentieth-century RLDS books on the basic differences in the two churches' treatment of polygamy: Elbert A. Smith, *Differences That Persist between the RLDS and LDS Churches* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1959), ch. 3; Russell F. Ralston, *Fundamental Differences between the LDS and RLDS Churches* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1960), chs. 5 and 6; Aleah G. Koury, *The Truth and the Evidence: A Comparison between Doctrines of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1965), ch. 4.

6. Richard P. Howard, "The Changing RLDS Response to Mormon Polygamy: A Preliminary Analysis," John Whitmer *Historical Association Journal,* 3 (1983):14-29.

7. Mark A. Scherer, "Re-visioning Our Church Heritage," *Saints' Herald*, September 2001, 16.

8. Maurice L. Draper of the First Presidency wrote a defense of the new policy in "Polygamy among Converts in East India," *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action* 1, no. 2 (December 1970): 85-88. Verne Deskin wrote a strong critique of the new policy in the same issue, pp. 89-92. The Editorial Committee of *Courage* wrote an editorial more liberal than the church leaders' policy, pp. 107-08.

9. Blair, "The Reorganized Church," 214.

succession in the presidency of the church. However, lineal succession in the presidency is also no longer a difference separating us. When President Wallace B. Smith called W. Grant McMurray to be president of the church after 136 years of Joseph Smith's descendants leading the Reorganized Church, he discarded the position enunciated by Briggs and many other church leaders. One principle of succession remains unchanged: Each prophet names his successor, indicating divine guidance in the choice. There were five Smith presidents in all: Joseph Smith III and his three sons, Frederick, Israel, and W. Wallace, and then finally W. Wallace's son, Wallace B. Smith, who retired in 1996.

Lineal succession in the presidency was very important in the early years, with an authority-conscious church in the Midwest contending with their authority-conscious cousins in the West.[10] But we can't brag about that anymore. I suspect there were a reasonable number of saints like my late father—a loyal church appointee—who complained that he had never liked the idea of "the divine right of kings" and implied that was a factor in his move from Canada to the United States in 1923 when he was 25.[11]

In addition to the two issues of polygamy and succession in the presidency, at least two other differences became important although they were not issues when 27-year-old Joseph Smith III assumed the presidency of the prairie Mormons on April 6, 1860. One of these matters was the plurality of gods. Most notably enunciated in the Book of Abraham and in the King Follett sermon, this doctrine was clearly assumed by some RLDS members, in our early years at least, to be part of church doctrine.[12] But over the years we abandoned and then denounced the idea.[13] Sometimes we simply noted that the Book of Abraham is not in the RLDS canon of scripture. It is possible that the 1878 General Conference resolution establishing the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants as the "standard of authority on all matters of church government and doctrine"[14] was, in part, a decision to exclude the Book of Abraham from our RLDS canon of scriptures.

The other key source for this doctrine, the King Follet sermon, was not published until after Joseph Smith was martyred, and not from Joseph's own notes, but from notes taken by listeners who were present.[15] We have argued that the

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10. See Smith, *Differences*, ch. 5; Ralston, *Fundamental Differences*, ch. 1; Koury, *Truth and Evidence*, ch. 5.

11. R. Melvin Russell (1898-1982). Possibly reflecting my father's negative views with regard to succession, I wrote an editorial in which I argued that the question is not which method of presidential succession is best—the RLDS or the LDS—but rather, which method is worst—succession or seniority? (*Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action* entitled "Needed: A New Method of Sucession," 2, no. 1 [September 1971]: 326-27).

12. Blair, "The Reorganized Church," 222-23.

13. Smith, *Differences*, ch. 2; Ralston, *Fundamental Differences*, ch. 3; Koury, *Truth and Evidence*, chs. 2-3.

14. RLDS General Conference Resolution 215 (September 13, 1878).

15. Ralston, *Fundamental Differences*, 53-55.

text of the sermon cannot be trusted, suggesting—sometimes not too subtly—that the Mormon editors who published the King Follett sermon shortly after Joseph's death no doubt changed the text, like the monks of the Middle Ages who removed "plain and precious truths" from the Bible (except the Mormons were adding falsehoods, rather than removing truths). On both polygamy and the plurality of gods, we took the position that you can't trust "Utah sources." Once those Nauvoo diaries were hauled across the plains and the mountains to the Great Basin Kingdom, they had somehow been corrupted.

While the mountain Mormons held to the plurality of gods and eternal progression to godhead, the prairie Mormons maintained fairly orthodox Protestant concepts of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. When I went to the Methodist seminary in Kansas City[16] to study Systematic Theology, I did not find any real disconnect between what the Methodist theologians were teaching about the Trinity and the teachings of my RLDS upbringing or my studies as a religion major at RLDS-sponsored Graceland College. We prairie Mormons believed in an unchangeable God, and we have spilled a lot of ink condemning the notion of progression to Godhood.

Another issue—the fourth on my list—was baptism for the dead and the even larger matter of secret temple rituals. Many early RLDS members and leaders assumed we would baptize for the dead once we had an appropriate temple. As late as 1960, one of our Presidents of Seventy, Russell F. Ralston (later an apostle), suggested we didn't baptize for the dead because we didn't yet have a temple built for that purpose.[17] He anticipated that eventually an Independence Temple would be built and include this ritual. I remember being a bit shocked when I read this in Ralston's book not long after it came out. I couldn't imagine our church conducting proxy baptisms.

When President W. Wallace Smith announced in his 1968 revelation (Section 149 of the RLDS Doctrine and Covenants) that we would proceed to build the long-awaited temple in Independence, Graceland professor Paul M. Edwards was concerned that we might include baptism for the dead and other secret temple rituals in our temple. Paul scheduled a meeting with Duane Couey of the First Presidency, traveling two hours from Lamoni, Iowa, to Independence for the discussion. President Couey assured Paul that the temple would not have secret rituals and certainly not perform proxy baptisms—in secret or in public. Paul returned to Graceland only somewhat reassured. Unbeknownst to him, the general authorities[18] were already well into the process of revising their

16. Saint Paul School of Theology Methodist.

17. Ralston, *Fundamental Differences*, ch. 7.

18. I have used the LDS term "general authorities" even though the RLDS Church used the term "The Joint Council of the First Presidency, Council of Twelve Apostles, and the Presiding Bishopric," which could be shortened by referring to "The Joint Council."

interpretation of some of the major doctrines of the church.[19]

Russell F. Ralston, the author of the 1960 book, *Fundamental Differences between the LDS and RLDS Churches*, had been our missionary seventy in Salt Lake City, one of our full-time paid appointee ministers hired by the general authorities in Independence. Another missionary seventy, who followed Ralston to the Salt Lake City assignment, was Aleah G. Koury. He also wrote a book on the basic differences between our two churches and also was later ordained an apostle. Koury's book, *The Truth and the Evidence*, was published by the church in 1965.[20]

I have often used the title of Koury's book, *The Truth and the Evidence*, as a model for the research methods we used in dealing with the Utah Mormons. We began with the truth, then marshaled the evidence to support what we already knew was the case. Koury deals with various topics—polygamy, succession in the presidency, the plurality of gods, etc. Miraculously, when one reaches the end of each topic, the prairie Mormons "win." Our position was the right one on every count! Ironically, Koury told me the reason he wrote his book, just a few years after Ralston, was that he wanted to be more objective about "the Mormons" than Ralston had been. It was to be a friendlier book, so I expected Koury to concede that the Utahns were right about something. By then I realized that as long as the focus was on Kirtland, the prairie Mormons held the advantage, but whenever the debate turned to Nauvoo, the mountain Mormons would win.

Part of the RLDS criticism was directed to the fact that baptism for the dead and other LDS temple rituals were conducted in secret. Against this "abomination," we could cite the denunciation of secret societies in the Book of Mormon, then build upon the general antipathy in American society toward other secret societies such as the Masons.

These four issues were the central ones debated between our two churches for at least a century: polygamy, succession in the presidency, the plurality of gods, and baptism for the dead and other secret temple rituals. We also debated other matters such as differences on tithing and Brigham Young's views on Adam-god. In addition, there were two other early differences that may not have been so apparent to many RLDS members during the course of that first century. One resides in the fact that the RLDS church rejected the close church-state relationship that developed in Nauvoo and continued in Utah. Living among the

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19. In 1968 the Council of Twelve, after consultation with the First Presidency, approved the idea of baptizing polygamous men in third-world cultures who understood that monogamy is our ideal. By that year, the general authorities were being taught by Methodist seminary professors Paul Jones, Carl Bangs, and Dale Dunlap in what were called the "Joint Council Seminars." Staff members at the church's Religious Education Department during the late 1960s were drafting quite liberal position papers for the new church school curriculum, and the church's Basic Beliefs Committee began publishing in the *Saints Herald* that year a new faith statement, published in book form in 1970 as *Exploring the Faith* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House).

20. Both books cited previously.

more numerous Methodists and Baptists and other Gentiles in the Midwest, and remembering the hostility of the larger society in Nauvoo and elsewhere, we did relatively little gathering to central locations, and we did not often meddle in politics. (Unless, of course, an issue like liquor reared its head.)

The other issue often overlooked in our first century was race. Very early in RLDS history, the ordination of African Americans was affirmed by way of a revelation from Joseph Smith III in 1865 at the end of the Civil War.[21] As is well known, it was not until 113 years later that the LDS church changed its policy to acceptance of the ordination of black men. The fact that we made little polemical use of this difference until the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s changed public attitudes toward blacks is a sign of the racism in both American culture and the RLDS church. One would think we would have beaten our Utah cousins over the head with this issue. We had Joseph Smith on our side, the "good prophet" who ordained Elijah Abel. You had the "bad prophet," Brigham Young with his strict prohibition on ordination. But for ninety years we were largely silent until the inclusion of blacks as equals in America became somewhat popular, at least in the North.[22] Even then we were cautious, fearing to offend racist church members. We were not prophetic on race.

Interestingly enough, one Seventy assigned to Salt Lake City did make a major issue of race. John W. Bradley served in Salt Lake City in the 1960s—after Ralston and Koury—and wrote a series of three articles in the 1963 *Saints' Herald*, making the case for racial equality and defending our scriptures as preaching racial equality.[23] Likewise, in his 1960 book, Ralston made a five-page statement on race at the end,[24] reflecting the rising American consciousness on race. Writing five years later, toward the end of the civil rights movement in 1965, Koury ignored the difference on race as an issue between the two churches. Perhaps this difference in the Ralston and Koury books merely reflected differing personal views held by the two men toward the civil rights movement. When the ministers of the Kansas City Council on Religion and Race asked people in the Kansas City area to sign a pledge that they would not discriminate on the basis of race in selling their homes, Ralston signed the pledge while Koury, when I personally solicited his support, explicitly declined.

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21. RLDS D&C 116.

22. William D. Russell lists forty-eight articles and editorials on the issue of race published in the official church publication, the *Saints' Herald*, the church's youth magazine *Stride*, and the church's magazine for college and university students, *The University Bulletin* ("A Priestly Role for a Prophetic Church: The RLDS Church and Black Americans," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 12, no. 2 [1979]: 37-49, esp. 48n36). See also Arlyn R. Love, "The First Presidency's Response to the Civil Rights Movement," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 4 (1984): 41-50, and Roger D. Launius, *Invisible Saints: A History of Black Americans in the Reorganized Church* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1988).

23. John W. Bradley, "Race in Restoration Scriptures," *Saints' Herald* 110 (November 15, December 1, December 15, 1963): 772-75; 812-13, 816; 850-51, 862.

24. Ralston, *Fundamental Differences*, 230-34.

Five days later, at our World Conference, he was called to be an apostle. Only six of the eighteen "General Authorities" in the First Presidency, the Presiding Bishop, and the Council of Twelve signed the good neighbor pledge.[25] All were asked to sign it, but our leadership was very cautious.

The differences between the churches that I have enumerated here lead me to agree with Alma Blair and others who have long contended that we RLDS rejected the Nauvoo innovations and developed a theology that was fairly consistent with Mormon theology in the Kirtland period, 1831-1838. I refer to our traditional doctrines as the "Kirtland Theology." I believe the theology that we finally settled on by about 1880 was essentially the theology of the church at the end of the Kirtland period in 1838. This is also pretty much the theology of the LDS "Articles of Faith," since Joseph Smith didn't enlighten John Wentworth about the more exotic Nauvoo doctrines that had already developed by the time he wrote to Wentworth in 1842. As such, the LDS Articles of Faith comprise a far-from-complete statement of the LDS faith. They make no mention of the Doctrine and Covenants or the Book of Abraham or Pearl of Great Price. Nor do the articles mention baptism for the dead or other temple rituals, plurality of wives or of gods, or progression to godhead. There is also no mention of temples. It sounds like a rather orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, with no mention of Jesus as our Elder Brother. Joseph avoided giving undue offense to the readers of the *Chicago Democrat.*

Presumably we could say that in 1842, when Joseph wrote to John Wentworth, the Nauvoo innovations were not fully developed. Joseph had married plural wives, but "the principle" was still a secret. Writing to the outside world, Joseph deleted the more exotic parts of Mormon theology. Interestingly, much of what he left out was what the RLDS church, organized a decade later, rejected. We attempted to be more normal or legitimate to our Midwest neighbors, just as I presume Joseph was putting on the best face of Mormon theology when writing to newspaper editor John Wentworth, leaving out what our kids today might call "the weird stuff." Weird at least to Gentiles. Four of the six issues of differentiation are closely associated with Nauvoo—polygamy, the plurality of gods, secret temple rituals (most notably baptism for the dead), and the close church-state tie.

Using the analysis of "sect" employed by Jan Shipps, who describes a sect as a religious group trying to recover a lost tradition,[26] we can make certain observations. In its early years the RLDS church was a sect. We agreed with the Palmyra and Kirtland doctrines but rejected the later Nauvoo doctrines. We accepted the early part of the Mormon tradition but rejected the later, more extreme Mormon

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25. Four of the apostles signed it, as did Maurice L. Draper of the First Presidency and Walter N. Johnson of the Presiding Bishopric. President W. Wallace Smith specifically declined my invitation to sign the Good Neighbor Pledge.

26. Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religous Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 48.

doctrines. Clare Vlahos has said that we RLDS tried to balance our desire to be both "reasonable to gentiles and legitimate to Mormons.[27] We tried to be seen as legitimately Mormon and legitimately Christian. Hence, Alma Blair has characterized the RLDS version of the restoration as "moderate Mormonism."[28]

Between about 1880 and the 1960s, the theological differences between our two churches changed very little, except for the mainline LDS abandonment of polygamy in the 1890s. However, in the 1960s the prairie Mormons began to shift from being a sect, trying to recover or preserve the "Kirtland version" of Mormonism, to becoming a denomination more in the mainstream of American Protestantism. By "mainstream denomination" I mean the more liberal and generally longer-established denominations, not the evangelical fundamentalist denominations. As Philip Barlow has suggested, the accident of a liberal Methodist seminary—the Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City—locating itself only a fifteen-minute drive from RLDS headquarters in Independence may have affected the church's move toward mainstream Protestantism. Many RLDS attended Saint Paul, including Grant McMurray and Peter Judd of the First Presidency, and several apostles. If either of the Kansas City seminaries operated by the Southern Baptists or the Church of the Nazarene had been closer to RLDS headquarters, the church today might be closer to evangelical Protestantism.[29]

Part II - Recent Differences

It seems incongruous that during the past four decades, as we RLDS moved toward mainstream Protestantism and farther from traditional Mormon doctrine, closer friendship ties have developed between the two churches. Possibly the largest influence in this direction has been the meetings of the Mormon History Association, the John Whitmer Historical Association, and Sunstone Symposiums, where RLDS and LDS scholars have interacted in a friendly, respectful manner. There have also been more frequent contacts between the leaders of the two churches during that time. And meetings of the Smith family have brought people together across denominational lines.

Let us now look at the new differences that have developed in recent years, considering first the founding document of Mormonism, the book which Joseph Smith modestly called "the most perfect book ever written," a book which he said—by way of revelation—contains the fullness of the gospel.[30] For more than a century, mountain Mormons and prairie Mormons agreed that the Book

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27. Clare D. Vlahos, "Images of Orthodoxy: Self-Identity in Early Reorganization Apologetics," in Maurice L. Draper and Clare D. Vlahos, eds., *Restoration Studies I* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1980), 176.

28. Blair, "The Reorganized Church," 210.

29. Philip Barlow, "Transformation in Context: Mormonism, the Community of Christ, and Religion in America," address given at the John Whitmer Historical Association World Conference Banquet, Independence, Mo., April 6, 2002.

30. See RLDS Book of Mormon I Nephi 3:19; 4:16; III Nephi 7:34-37; 9:66, 69 (LDS Book of Mormon I Nephi 10:14, 15:13; III Nephi 16:10-13; 20:28, 30).

of Mormon was true in every sense of the word. It was a true history, its doctrines were true, and it was a fundamental sign of the truthfulness of Joseph Smith's prophetic role.[31] Most of us hadn't read it, but we knew it was true.

In recent years, however, most of the RLDS leaders, and many of the rank-and-file members, have come to doubt the Book of Mormon's historicity as well as some of its doctrinal affirmations. For example, Leland W. Negaard wrote his thesis at Union Theological Seminary in New York in 1961 on the problem of Second Isaiah. He noted that most scholars conclude that many of the later chapters of Isaiah were written in the mid-sixth century BCE rather than in the eighth century. Thus, the Book of Mormon contains passages from the book of Isaiah which had not yet been written when Lehi and family departed from Jerusalem, in 600 BCE. Negaard taught religion at Graceland College, and the RLDS church's publication for college and university students, the University Bulletin, published an article by Negaard on Second Isaiah in 1966.[32]

In the late 1960s, Wayne Ham wrote a paper for the church's Department of Religious Education on "Problems in Interpreting the Book of Mormon as History."[33] He outlined nine problems with the orthodox view which holds that the book is history. Today it seems that although the Book of Mormon is still part of our canon of scriptures, it is not revered as highly as it used to be. It is used less in worship services and is cited far less in church publications than previously. Most leaders and many members doubt its historicity. Those who doubt can be grouped into two camps. One group finds little value in the book and would just as soon it were not in our canon of scriptures. The other camp, which I believe is much more numerous, regards it as scripture because of its message and its place as the founding document of the movement.

Two months after W. Grant McMurray was ordained president of the church in April 1996, he was interviewed on Martin Tanner's religion talk show for a Salt Lake City radio station. In response to a caller, Grant said that historical research simply doesn't give us the tools to determine whether the Book of Mormon is historical or not. When pushed by another caller, who asked, "Do *you* believe it is historical?" Grant gave the same response: Historical research simply doesn't give us the tools to determine whether the Book of Mormon is historical or not. So historicity of the Book of Mormon is a recently developing difference between us.

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31. A. Bruce Lindgren, "Sign or Scripture: Approaches to the Book of Mormon," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 19, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 69-75. Reprinted in Dan Vogel, ed., *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 55-62.

32. Leland W. Negaard, "The Problem of Second Isaiah in the Book of Mormon," unpublished thesis, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1961. An abbreviated version was published later as "Literary Issues and the Book of Mormon," *University Bulletin* 18 (Spring 1966): 21-24.

33. Wayne Ham, "Problems in Interpreting the Book of Mormon as History," published with slight revisions by the author in *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action* 1, no. 1 (September 1970): 15-22.

We have also recently developed significant differences with our LDS cousins over the nature of revelation and prophecy. Both the mountain Mormons and the prairie Mormons have historically tended to view revelation as "propositional," as retired RLDS Church Historian Richard P. Howard has suggested.[34] We have viewed God as issuing commands to prophets or to disciples, with specific directives such as, "Martin, pay the printer's debt," or, "Spencer, kill the ERA!" However, we prairie Mormons are now more inclined to see revelation as the disclosure of the person of Jesus Christ and what it means to be a disciple in our particular time and culture. Maybe the problem in the Mormon movement lies in the language used, when from the beginning we affirmed that human beings are touched by the divine in all ages. To express this in the phrase "God speaks today" was understandable in the biblical culture in which our movement was born, but it implies that God's disclosure to humans normally takes the form of words uttered. The RLDS are now asking themselves whether that model really describes the nature of the most profound religious experiences.

A third emerging difference is that we have recently come to view Joseph Smith and succeeding prophets quite differently. During that first century of RLDS history, we felt the need to defend the prophet, assuming his doctrines were true and his character consistently virtuous. Where we differed doctrinally with the LDS, we often defended our position on the basis of Joseph's canonical writings. We considered polygamy immoral, so rather than accepting the idea that the prophet yielded to temptations of the flesh, we denied that he had polygamous wives. Incredibly, we blamed it on Brigham. Today we view Joseph Smith as a very flawed human being, but most of us still see him as a legitimate prophet.

The fourth issue is women in the priesthood. In the first century, priesthood eligibility for African Americans was a difference, but since 1984, priesthood eligibility for women has become a more significant difference between the churches. In 1973 *Dialogue* published my letter-to-the-editor on the subject:

> Members of the Reorganized Church like to point out that there are black men in its priesthood. However, we Reorganites tend to overlook that we deny a much larger segment of the human race the opportunity to hold the priesthood. I see no difference between denying the priesthood to women and denying it to blacks. Both practices seem absurd today.[35]

Eleven years later the priesthood ban on women was lifted at the World Conference of 1984. The issue had been festering in the church for about fifteen years. The debate was heated, and roughly one-fourth of our active members left the church as a result of Section 156 of the RLDS Doctrine and Covenants, which makes women eligible for priesthood ordination.

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34. Richard P. Howard, "Latter Day Saint Scriptures and the Doctrine of Propositional Revelation," *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action* 1, no. 4 (June 1971): 209-25.

35. *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 8, no. 2 (1973): 10.

The fifth recent issue is homosexuality. In the 1950s and 1960s, racial discrimination was a big issue for the RLDS church, but in the 1970s and 1980s the issue was gender. In the 1990s, the church began to address the issue of homosexuality. In that debate, the church leadership began to recognize an organization of church members called GALA (Gay and Lesbian Acceptance), allowing the organization to have a booth and to sponsor special worship services at conference. In 1997, Graceland College added "sexual orientation" to the list of categories in which it promises "non-discrimination," and more recently the college applied that policy to domestic partner benefits for employees. Church President Grant McMurray made affirming statements at the 1998 and 2002 World Conferences.[36] However, as of this writing, the official policy remains that a homosexual can only be in the priesthood if she or he is celebate. In practice this policy is sometimes ignored, and President McMurray admitted in his 2002 conference address that he has sometimes ignored it.[37] There has been strong conservative resistance to President McMurray's 2002 conference address.

A sixth difference in recent years has to do with our views about apostasy and restoration. In the last generation, many RLDS leaders and rank-and-file members have drastically revised their understanding on this matter. During the first century, RLDS views on apostasy and restoration were pretty much the same as LDS. We held that Christ established his church and it later fell into apostasy, only to be restored again after more than 1000 years in darkness. (We also saw a modern wave of apostasy brought about by Brigham Young.) The person who did the most to debunk this concept among the RLDS was Roy A. Cheville, the first RLDS to receive a Ph.D. in religion (University of Chicago, 1942). Cheville taught at Graceland College for nearly four decades, then served for nearly two decades as the presiding patriarch of the church. In his book, *Did the Light Go Out?*, Cheville argued that there was much good in medieval Christianity and thus "the light" was never extinguished.[38] Cheville and others in the church also concluded that "restoration" is a relative term with a variety of meanings.[39]

Most significantly, RLDS scholars came to the conclusion that it is not historically accurate to say that Jesus established a church during his earthly min-

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36. W. Grant McMurray, "The Vision Transforms Us" (1998 World Conference Sermon), *Saints' Herald*, June 1998, 232.

37. W. Grant McMurray, "Called to Discipleship: Coming Home in Search of the Path" (2002 World Conference Sermon), in *2002 World Conference Bulletin*, 182.

38. Roy A. Cheville, *Did the Light Go Out?* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1962).

39. See also Geoffrey F. Spencer, "The Spirit and the Forms: Church Life and Order in the First One Hundred Years," *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action*, 2, no. 2 (Winter 1972): 353-67, and C. Robert Mesle, "The Restoration and History: New Testament Christianity," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 19, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 55-68, and "The Development of the New Testament Church," *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action* 3, no. 1 (Fall 1972): 23-35.

istry, with various priesthood offices and sacraments. If Jesus did establish something like a church, it was a far cry from the church which Joseph Smith established eighteen centuries later. These days you will not hear the concepts of apostasy and restoration mentioned as often in church meetings as they were in the past. Many of the local splinter groups organized after we began to ordain women chose the name "Restoration Branch," because they strongly affirm the traditional doctrines about apostasy and restoration.

A seventh recent difference is that we prairie Mormons used to be very much focused on the next world, on life after death: Repent, be baptized, do your church duties, and upon your death you will be ushered through the pearly gates, possibly with a ticket to celestial glory. Today there seems to be very little concern about life after death in the Community of Christ. Many don't have the foggiest idea what happens after death—or before birth, for that matter. We just try to muddle through this life without messing up any more than we have to. If my observation is accurate, the mountain Mormons still retain a strong emphasis on life after death. For example, when I delivered a paper at the Mormon History Association meeting in Ogden in 1982, my good friend Bob Matthews commented that I ought to consider my eternal status when choosing topics for research and publication. While it had occurred to me that my choice of controversial topics could get me in trouble with church officials on this side of the grave, I had never thought of having to answer to St. Peter about my publications. Maybe that will be the ultimate disciplinary hearing!

Finally, the Community of Christ interest in this world more than in the next is reflected in our current attempt to be a "peace church." In the 1984 revelation calling for the ordination of women, Section 156 also stated that the temple "shall be dedicated to the pursuit of peace. It shall be for reconciliation and for healing of the spirit."[40] In 1994, RLDS church leaders developed the following mission statement: "We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace."

Community of Christ Theologian-in-Residence Tony Chvala-Smith sums up the recent shifts by saying that "the Community of Christ no longer treats the Joseph Smith story as the normative lens through which it interprets the Christian message."[41] Or, as our Coordinator for Peace and Justice, Andrew Bolton, has put it: "We used to see Jesus through the eyes of Joseph; now we see Joseph through the eyes of Jesus." Church leaders now see their task as developing a Christ-centered theology of peace. Some critics of these theological shifts say, "Why don't you all just go join the Methodist Church?" But what could be more challenging and worthwhile than to develop a Christ-centered theology of peace, making use of elements of our Mormon tradition? While we were once focused on an inward, self-absorbed attempt to prove our own worth as "the one

40. RLDS D&C 156 (1984).

41. Tony Chvala-Smith, email to Bill Russell, July 10, 2002.

true church," we are now trying to be a "community of Christ." The new name focuses our attention on the Zionic ideal of community and the desire to be authentically Christian. It is a reminder that our best glimpse into the kind of people God would have us be comes from the life of the humble carpenter from Nazareth whom we see portrayed in the four gospels rather than in the revelations of modern church prophets or the legislative enactments of ecclesiastical conferences. It remains to be seen whether a church born into a culture of violence in the American frontier[42] can transform itself into a community of Christ seeking peaceful solutions to the conflicts of today's world.

42. See D. Michael Quinn, "National Culture, Personality and Theocracy in the Early Mormon Culture of Violence," *The John Whitmer Historical Association 2002 Nauvoo Conference Special Edition* (The John Whitmer Historical Association, 2002):159-186.

Power and Powerlessness: A Personal Perspective

Robert A. Rees

> You shall have joy, or you shall have power, said God; you shall not have both.
> —Emerson

> To be alive is power,
> Existing in itself,
> Without a further function,
> Omnipotence enough.
> —Emily Dickinson

IN HIS BOOK *POWER AND INNOCENCE*, Rollo May defines power as "the ability to cause or prevent change." May identifies five kinds of power: exploitative, "the simplest and, humanly speaking, most destructive kind of power"; manipulative, which is "power over another person"; competitive, "power *against* another"; nutrient, "power *for* the other"; and integrative, "power *with* another person."[1] May argues that all five kinds of power are present in healthy individuals, and that "the goal for human development is to learn to use these different kinds of power in ways adequate to the given situation."[2] He makes a distinction between what he calls the lower forms of power—those which are exploitative and manipulative—and the higher forms, those which are nutrient and integrative. He argues that the lower on the scale we go, the more power is associated with violence, and the higher on the scale we go, the more it is a manifestation of love.[3]

As a white American male I was taught to pursue power as measured in the marketplace—through wealth (although I never had much, I was always eager to get more); through rank (I was aggressive in advancing to the top academic

1. Rollo May, *Power and Innocence: A Search for the Sources of Violence* (New York: Norton, 1972), 105-110.
2. Ibid., 113.
3. Ibid., 118.

rung in my profession); through position (I knew I could pick up a telephone and mention my title, and the person to whom I was speaking would take me seriously); and through perquisites that go with position. I was aggressive in the pursuit and use of these traditionally masculine kinds of power.

In the church I was also taught in subtle ways to be aware of power. I grew up viewing the priesthood in terms of hierarchical power. I was pleased to be advanced to the Melchizedek priesthood and to be ordained in turn an elder, seventy, and high priest. Sometimes when I saw others whom I considered less capable or less worthy advanced to high positions, I felt diminished and less powerful. Like most men in the church, I have occasionally used priesthood power inappropriately, including within my own home. I have at times exercised too much control and compulsion over the hearts of God's children, some of whom happened also to be my children.

Perhaps I was more vigorous in the pursuit of power because as a child I experienced profound powerlessness. Having been abused and abandoned, I did not see myself as a powerful person. In fact, I felt impotent in the face of the powerful and often violent adults in my environment. Whatever power I had was devoted to preserving some vestige of ego that helped me to survive with my sense of self intact.

Ten years ago I sustained a series of losses that provided an opportunity to consider power and powerlessness in a new way. Over the course of several years, I retired from the directorship of a large academic department (thereby surrendering many of the traditional perquisites of power), was released as bishop of a ward I had served for more than five years, suffered some financial setbacks, was involved in a serious automobile accident, and went to live for nearly four years in the former Soviet Union under dramatically less comfortable circumstances than I had enjoyed in the United States. These losses—of position, prestige, power, influence, financial security, and physical strength—gave me an opportunity to challenge my pursuit of traditional kinds of power, to explore my fear of powerlessness, and to examine my spiritual life in relation to a myriad of issues having to do with power. Losing the traditional kinds of power—those most closely associated with assertiveness, manipulation, and competitiveness—put me in closer touch with the higher kinds of power associated with nurturing and integration.

One of the realizations I came to is that in pursuing traditional kinds of power in my professional, church, and personal life—most associated with patriarchy—I had neglected other kinds of power. One of these was the power of creative expression, especially the power of poetry. Freed from administrative duties that had occupied so much of my time as a university and church administrator, I found the space in my life to read and write more poetry than I ever had before. I discovered (or perhaps rediscovered) that there is a transformative power in language. As John F. Kennedy said in a speech at Amherst College in 1963, "When power leads a man to arrogance, poetry reminds him of his limitations. When power narrows the areas of a man's concerns, poetry reminds him

of the richness and diversity of his existence. When power corrupts, poetry cleanses. For art establishes the basic human trust which must serve as the touchstone of our judgment."[4]

What is true of poetry is also true of the other arts. No longer occupied by administrative responsibilities, I have had more time for reading, for theater, for music, and for art. I also have had more time for reflection and contemplation. Theodore Roethke asks, "What is freedom for?" His answer: "To know eternity."[5] In my freedom, I am enjoying the time to think more about eternal things.

Most importantly, I have expanded my understanding that the greatest power is love and the greatest use of power is loving. I am grateful that giving up other kinds of power has given me more time to love my wife and to discover the power we have in loving one another. It has been one of the great blessings of my life to understand how deep, abiding, and joyful marriage can be. As Rainer Maria Rilke observes, "For one human being to love another human being: that is perhaps the most difficult task that has been entrusted to us, the ultimate task, the final proof, the work for which all other work is merely a preparation. . . .[Love is] a high inducement for the individual to ripen, to become something in himself [or herself] to become a world. . .for the sake of another person; it is a great demanding claim. . .something that chooses [a man and a woman out of the world] and calls [them] to vast distances."[6]

The same can be said about my relationships with my children. Even though our children have all married and established their own homes, over the past several years I have had more time to work on my relationships with them. I now also have the joy of establishing relationships with my grandchildren and, hopefully, benefiting from the mistakes I made with my own children. I also have had more communication with my family of origin and have been able to undertake some of the intergenerational work that I have prepared for in therapy over the years. I am grateful for Wendy Ulrich's important article in *Sunstone*, entitled "Not for Adam's Transgression: Paths to Intergenerational Peace,"[7] for its perceptive insights into how we can find the power through the principles and ordinances of the gospel to break the negative influences from past generations that can free them and us. To quote Chauncey Riddle, "The greatest joy [in this life] comes in perfecting the family associations which the New and Everlasting Covenant offers in this existence."[8] I am excited about the possibilities of that power for my own family—past, present, and future.

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4. *New York Times*, October 27, 1963, 87.

5. "I Knew A Woman," in *Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961), 127.

6. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*, trans. Stephen Mitchell, http://www.sfgoth.com/~immanis/rilke/letter7.html.

7. *Sunstone* 15, no. 5 (November 1991): 30-38.

8. "What a Privilege to Believe!" *Sunstone* 12, no. 3 (May 1988): 9.

The first time I felt powerful as a child was when I was introduced to the gospel of Jesus Christ at the age of ten. From that time onward, I had a sense that there was a God who loved me and that there were other people who would love me and provide the safety and security lacking in my own home. To have the spirit bear witness to me that I was God's child had a profound effect on my life. To have a patriarch lay hands on my head a couple of years later and speak to me as though he were intimately acquainted with my soul gave my life a sense of direction and destiny. Since he lived in a distant stake, the patriarch knew nothing of my family or background, which were completely lacking in anything associated with an academic or artistic life. In fact, our home had been singularly bereft of culture, and yet when Patriarch Alma Davis laid his hands on my head, he said, "Develop these beautiful gifts and talents with which [the Lord] has blessed you, the beautiful in music, the beautiful in thought, the beautiful in literature and the higher and finer things of life. Seek after these things and you will be lead into the paths of truth and righteousness."

As my life unfolded in the church, I gained an even greater sense of personal power. The more I applied the principles of the gospel to my daily life, the more I tried to integrate the teachings of Christ into my behavior, and the more knowledge I gained about who I was and what my purpose was, the more I was able to transcend the powerlessness of my childhood.

Since, as the Doctrine and Covenants tells us, it is the "nature and disposition of almost all men" (121:39) to abuse power, many of us have had some experience with being abused by those in authority. But we have also been blessed by those who used priesthood power "by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness, and pure knowledge" (D&C 121:41-42). Also, through fasting, praying, serving in callings, going to the temple, doing missionary work, performing community service, and participating in other programs and activities, we have seen spiritual power work as a positive force in our own and others' lives. I believe the scriptures are a particular source of power, for when we read stories of God acting in the lives of others, it emboldens us to believe that he can act in our lives as well. When we see others acting with power for good, we know that we too can act in this way.

During the years I served as a bishop, I learned a great deal about power. I viewed the power of a bishop as a sacred stewardship, one that could too easily, even unknowingly, be abused. Never have I tried to use power with the humility and respect I did as a bishop, especially in trying to bless the lives of others. In this calling I understood in a new way what I had discovered as a boy: that the power of God and Christ can work through and in us to change us individually and ultimately to change the world.

As a bishop I also learned more about personal powerlessness. I ministered almost daily to people who felt powerless, often as a result of being subject to the abuse of power by others. This abuse—physical, sexual, and emotional—gave its victims the sense that they were powerless (as indeed they often were). As they continued to act out that powerlessness in adulthood, nega-

tive effects could be seen in their relations with family and friends, in their romantic relationships, and in their relationships with God.

Sometimes the sense of powerlessness experienced by these people was a result of their own choices. Some had given up so much power that they scarcely had any personal landscape over which they could claim ownership. In such cases, I tried to convince them that their personal landscape was their birthright, and that, in spite of what others had done to them or what they had done to themselves, they could begin reclaiming it step by step. I tried to convince them that in the gospel of Christ and in his kingdom there is immense power. It was exciting to see individuals begin to act with faith in their own power to repent, to diminish the negative influences from their past, and to magnify their power through priesthood blessings, loving attention from visiting and home teachers, fasting and prayer, temple worship, and other redemptive experiences.

I believe one of the most profound teachings of the gospel is that we have the hope of ultimate power within ourselves. If indeed we are gods in embryo, then we already have the seeds of power that will enable us to create worlds, command light, and have dominion over space and time. We have within us the potential to live in a glory brighter than the light of the sun, to defeat the powers of darkness, to beget and redeem other souls. We have power over our own eternal destinies. Most of all, we have the potential to become beings of pure love, which is the ultimate inheritance of godly glory and power.

The greatest power we can know comes through Christ. It is in experiencing the mystery of his love through the atonement that we find hidden treasures of power. When we experience his love in the deepest recesses of our souls, we understand that we are powerful to love ourselves and others. Beyond this, we know we have the power to do all things that are good. It was this power that gave Nephi the confidence to return to Jerusalem and claim the brass plates; that gave him the courage to tell his older brothers if they touched him, they would wither; that gave him the faith to build a ship and set sail on uncharted waters. Like Paul, Nephi could have said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

Paradoxically, we often must lose power in order to gain it. Religious history is replete with examples of people who acted with great power at the moment of their greatest sense of powerlessness. In the now famous account of Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail, Parley P. Pratt tells how, after continuous abuse at the hands of his captors, Joseph rose to his feet and shouted with prophetic authority, "Silence, ye fiends of the infernal pit! In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute and hear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die this instant!" Pratt describes that moment of transcendent powerfulness in eloquent and moving prose: "He ceased to speak. He stood in terrible majesty. Chained and without a weapon; calm, unruffled and dignified as an angel, he looked upon the quailing guards. . . .I have seen the ministers of justice, clothed in magisterial robes, and criminals arraigned before them, while life was suspended on a breath in the courts of England; I have

witnessed a Congress in solemn session to give laws to a nation; I have tried to conceive of kings, of royal courts, of thrones and crowns; and of emperors assembled to decide the fate of kingdoms; but dignity and majesty have I seen but once, as it stood in chains, at midnight, in a dungeon, in an obscure village in Missouri."[9]

In *King Lear*, Shakespeare gives the greatest dramatization in all of literature regarding the transformation that comes to the heart of a powerful person when he loses his power. Shakespeare aligns those who abuse power (Goneril, Regan, and Edmund) with those who have power taken from them or who willingly give it up for others (Cordelia, Gloucester, Kent, and Edgar). In the middle stands Lear. As king, Lear is the most powerful person in the play, but he begins losing his power when he uses it to manipulate his daughters into competing for the one power that cannot be wagered—love. Through the evil machinations of his two older daughters and his own moral blindness, Lear loses all he has—his crown, his retainers, his kingdom, and the companionship of the one daughter who honors him as king and father. Because of these losses, he also comes perilously close to losing his sanity.

Wandering the stormy heath, Lear encounters Edgar disguised as a naked fool and is made aware for the first time of his own previous indifference to poor, suffering humanity. Deprived of all the trappings of kingly power, he can at last empathize with those who are dispossessed. He says,

> Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
> How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
> Your looped and windowed raggedness, defend you
> From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
> too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
> Expose yourself to feel what wretches feel,
> That thou mayst shake the superflux to them
> And show the heavens more just.[10]

In other words, "As I look around and see these poor defenseless people, I realize that I have been too insensitive, too unaware of their wretched condition. Those of us who have been blessed to have so much should let our hard hearts be healed by such sights as these and in so doing share our bounty with these poor creatures so that God's concern for his children might be more evident than it now appears." Or as Alfred Harbage says, "The justice of heaven can only be revealed through the acts of men."[11]

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9. *The Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* (New York: Russell Brothers, 1874), 229-30.
10. William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, III.4.28-37.
11. Alfred Harbage, *William Shakespeare: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Octagon, 1971), 418.

This is the lesson of Christ's birth. Whereas Lear was forced to give up all earthly power before he could identify with suffering humanity, Christ chose to give up all heavenly power that he might feel what we feel. When he said to Samuel the Lamanite, "Lift up your head and be of good cheer; for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night shall the sign be given, and on the morrow come I into the world" (3 Nephi 1:13), he was Jehovah. Light was his scepter, space his dominion, and earth his footstool. Within hours he had surrendered his divine dominion to become the most helpless of creatures, a baby cradled in a manger. This is the meaning of the condescension of God: that he would give away all power in order to understand the powerless, that he would descend below all things in order to help us rise above all things.

We take on Christ's power when we act as he would act in relation to other people, when we participate in the redemption of humankind by expressing to others in concrete ways the pure love of Christ. Elie Wiesel speaks of these encounters as "messianic moments." He says, "I believe today that it's possible for you or me or anyone to bring a moment, a messianic moment, to each other. . . .[By messianic moment] I mean to humanize destiny, to give that person. . .a different environment, a different way. . .of finding truth without cruelty, without pain."[12]

There are striking contemporary examples of people who, either deprived of worldly power or willingly surrendering it, have ministered in messianic ways. The most potent examples may be found in the lives of women, perhaps because as a group they have suffered powerlessness for centuries. All the individual women I have chosen as examples have been awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace.

For example, I think of Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity who for decades have been angels of mercy to the dying, diseased, and abandoned on the streets of Calcutta. To the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, Sister Teresa added a fourth: "To give wholehearted, free service to the very poorest." These Missionaries of Charity have rescued tens of thousands of those Sister Teresa referred to as "the dying, the crippled, the mentally ill, the unwanted, the unloved. . .Jesus in disguise."[13] Before her death, Sister Teresa founded a home for the dying, an orphanage, a leper colony, and a home for the aged. She also organized missions similar to the one in Calcutta in a number of locations throughout the world. Emphasizing the source of her power, she said, "The more you have, the more you are occupied, the less you give. But the less you have, the more free you are. Poverty for us is freedom." When she won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work, she gave all the money to build more homes for

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12. "Facing Hate With Elie Wiesel and Bill Moyers," PBS, November 27, 1991. Transcript no. BMSP-19, available through Journal Graphics, Inc. 1535 Grant Street, Denver, CO 80203.

13. "A Pencil in the Hand of God" (an interview with Mother Teresa by Edward W. Desmond), *Time*, 4 December 1989, 11, 13.

the poor and destitute. Summarizing her philosophy, she said, "We can do no great things, only small things with great love."[14]

In this regard, a story of Moses is told in the Midrash. Long before he was the Father of Nations, Moses was a shepherd. Once when he was tending his father-in-law's flock, he noticed one of the lambs was missing. He searched a long time, and when he finally found it, it was drinking from a pool of water. Moses waited patiently until the lamb was finished drinking and then said tenderly, "I did not know you ran away because you were thirsty. You must be weary." He then carried the young sheep on his shoulders and returned it to the flock. When God witnessed Moses' mercy, God knew Moses would be kind to his people. Commenting on this story, Rabbi David Wolpe says, "How we treat the weak and needy is the measure of our heroism. For each of us, the question is not what dragons we have slain, but how we tend sheep."[15]

The Nobel Prize for Peace in 1978 went to two women from Northern Ireland, Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams. Believing that "violence was not the way of Christ," these women faced the bloody conflict that divided their country for decades by organizing legions of women to march for peace throughout Ireland and England. The Community of Peace People movement was one of the forces that eventually brought peace to that divided country. In her Nobel acceptance speech, Williams stated, "We are deeply, passionately dedicated to the cause of non-violence. To those who say we are naive, utopian idealists, we say that we are the only realists, and that those who continue to support militarism in our time are supporting the progress toward total self-destruction of the human race."[16]

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese woman who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, is, like her sister prize winners, a woman of courage and vision. Representing a people who are among the poorest in the world, this Oxford-educated daughter of the former ruler of Burma has led protests against the repressive regime that holds her country in bondage. She has refused a life of freedom until all political prisoners in her country are released and until she is guaranteed the right to be a spokeswoman for her people. This one woman willing to surrender her own freedom for her people has demonstrated more courage than all the men in power in her country.[17]

There are also many ordinary women who make messianic moments possible for those in need. Most of these women are unknown and unheralded. In every community and congregation they work quietly to transform institutions to be more responsive to human needs; they organize groups to give service; they provide primary care to the disabled, the elderly, to those dying of AIDS, to

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14. Tyler Wasson, ed., Nobel Prize Winners (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1987), 1048.

15. *The Healer of Shattered Hearts* (New York: Henry Holt, 1990), 92-93.

16. Wasson, *Nobel Prize Winners*, 226.

17. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, *Freedom from Fear and Other Writings* (New York: Viking, 1992).

the homeless, to abused children. They do Christ's work as he would do it without fanfare, without acknowledgment, without reward.

An example of such women is provided by the poor Christian women of El Salvador who, during the decades of violence and turbulence that wracked their country, worked to relieve suffering and to bring peace. These humble women, many of them Mothers of the Disappeared—meaning that their sons, fathers, husbands, and brothers had been killed by the military or the death squads—brought a new faith and hope to the people of El Salvador by making a covenant with Christ that they would minister to the needs of the poor, no matter the cost. These poor, uneducated women established what are called "base Christian communities" throughout their country to minister to those who were disenfranchised and dispossessed by a corrupt government.

Before the armistice was signed in 1992, politicians and soldiers wantonly murdered 75,000 people in El Salvador. In the face of this violence, these women who organized the *Iglesia Popular* (the Popular Church) created a powerful force among El Salvador's most powerless populations. Most gave up all they possessed in order to minister to the needs of the poor. As one of them said, "Our dream is to see the birth of a different kind of church, better yet, to recover the church of Jesus."[18]

The testimonies of these women were collected in a book entitled *The Hour of the Poor, the Hour of Women* by Renny Gordon. Their voices testify to the fact that one can become extremely powerful in the absence of all worldly power. Taking hope from the Spanish translation of the Bible authorized by the Second Vatican, these women began to change their religious expression. As one of those who started the base Christian community north of the Torola River in Morazan said of the Bible, "This book of God is subversive because it turns the tortilla over, because it throws down the order of kings and empires and it puts the poor on top. This book with its stories of liberation. . .taught us that we, the poor, are the preferred ones of God, that God wants the poor to stop being poor and that God calls us to work to change things."[19] These women administered to the sick and—defying the orders of the Catholic Church—even celebrated the Eucharist. As Ana, one of the most respected, said, "Yes, I celebrate Mass. We have brought a tortilla, blessed it and shared it with the people."[20]

While the military and the politicians continued to exercise power over the people of El Salvador, these women transformed the soul of their country, making God's love evident in spite of the secret murders of the death squads, the mass destruction of military bombings, and the silent acquiescence of the official church. As Renny Gordon says, "This is the epiphany, the moment when everything is turned on its head, when God is revealed anew—not the expected

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18. Renny Gordon, ed., *The Hour of the Poor, the Hour of Women: Salvadoran Women Speak* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 37.

19. Gordon, *Hour of the Poor*, 42.

20. Ibid., 55.

Father God, but a vulnerable, tenacious God broken and bloodied in Morazan, Cabanas, and Chalatenango, yet full of hope. What a surprise, an assault really, to discover that this God

> is not a Jesuit,
> not even educated,
> not ordained
> not inevitably a male militant,
> this God is not an individual,
> but a people,
> this pueblo who are
> peasants and workers,
> women and anonymous,
> who are mostly
> all there is of God.
> This obscure God who seeks
> solidarity,
> who makes everything
> new in history,
> everything possible.
> This god who announces
> the audacity of women.
> What a surprise!"[21]

These women understood better than the men in their country that the ultimate and most enduring power in this world is love. Love is the one word the scriptures most clearly equate with God. "God is love" is both a statement of fact and a promise. When all other powers have fallen away, vanished with the vanities of the world, love will remain. It alone is the power that will save the world, save us from ourselves, keep us from the ultimate power of darkness. As the black priest Misumangu says in Alan Paton's novel, *Cry, the Beloved Country*, "There is only one thing that has power completely, and that is love. Because when a man loves, he seeks no power, and therefore he has power."[22]

I hasten to recognize, however, that those who are born without power and who endure powerlessness for most if not all of their lives, may not have the luxury of considering the theological and philosophical implications of losing power as I do. Perhaps many of them dream of getting power and using it against the powerful who have abused them. As Misumangu says, just before the passage quoted above,

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21. Ibid., 38.

22. *Cry, The Beloved Country: A Story of Comfort and Desolation* (London: Penguin, 1988), 37.

> Because the white man has power, we too want power, . . .but when a black man gets power, when he gets money, he is a great man if he is not corrupted. I have seen it often. He seeks power and money to put right what is wrong, and when he gets them, why, he enjoys the power and the money. Now he can gratify his lusts, now he can arrange ways to get white man's liquor, he can speak to thousands and hear them clap their hands. Some of us think when we have power, we shall revenge ourselves on the white man who has had power, and because our desire is corrupt, we are corrupted, and the power has no heart in it.[23]

Likewise, the Lord taught the Prophet Joseph Smith in his great revelation on priesthood and power, "It is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion" (D&C 121:39). This revelation on power was given to Joseph Smith when he was in Liberty Jail, a period in which he experienced profound powerlessness.

When we are deprived of power or voluntarily give it up, we may begin to wonder if all transcendent power doesn't begin in powerlessness. As I have mentioned, it is significant that the most powerful person to walk the earth had his beginning as a helpless child. It is also significant that he who could command the elements, cast out demons, heal the sick, claim the ultimate victory over death, had no wealth, possessed no physical beauty (Isaiah 53:2 says he would "have no beauty that we should desire him"), governed no nation, commanded no army, held no position of worldly power. And yet so powerful is his life that ultimately it will affect every mortal for good.

Because Christ knew the power of love, he eschewed all other kinds of power. He demonstrated his greatest contempt for worldly power when Satan took him up to "an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" and offered Christ power and dominion over them if he would worship him, the god of earthly power (Matt. 4:8-9). Just as he had forsaken nourishment by refusing to use his power to turn stones into bread, and declined to demonstrate his divine power by refusing to throw himself off the pinnacle of the temple, so Christ refused all the power the world offered. When he returns to reclaim this broken world, he will put an end to all the destructive kinds of power that have dominated history and which still dominate our present world. Paul says, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24).

Christ abandoned kingship to serve the poor and powerless, but found a greater power within himself by surrendering those things that are always hard to surrender—comfort, accolades, privilege, dominion, wealth. These are the

23. Ibid., 37.

things the self cries out for so loudly that it is hard to hear the cries of the forsaken, the homeless, the least among us. It may be that only when we are willing to give up all we desire so that others may be fed and clothed and nurtured, both physically and spiritually, that we can call ourselves true disciples of Christ.

Just as Christ came into mortality by giving up all his power, so at the moment of his death he surrendered all earthly power—even that power connected through friendship and fellowship with his most devout followers. At his darkest hour, even the heavens withdrew their power so that our Lord was completely alone when he performed the most powerful act in human history. Kneeling in Gethsemane and hanging on the cross, abandoned by his friends and disciples, in unspeakable agony, he took upon himself the sins and burdens of all humankind, from the beginning to the end of the world.

To become like Christ is to become one with the powerless, to minister to their needs, to lift their burdens, to speak peace to their hearts, and to help them in all ways to feel his power as the transcendent and transforming force in their lives.

What are the implications for Christ's church? Among other things, it means that those of us who are vested with priesthood power have a responsibility not to misuse or abuse that power. It means that we have a sacred obligation to bless and empower others. It means we must be spiritually open to the possibilities as to how God's power may be shared with all his children. It means that our hearts are broken for the broken-hearted, that we hunger to relieve the suffering of the hungry, and that we work to make the powerless powerful.

I am grateful for the events in my life which have reminded me of my obligation to use Christ's power as he would use it. I am grateful that giving up certain kinds of power has made me aware of those rarer more elusive powers which cleanse and enlarge the soul. I am grateful that in losing power, I have to some degree been able to identify more closely with the powerless, to empathize with the disenfranchised, the disabled, and the dispossessed. Most of all I am grateful that as a powerless ten-year-old boy I was blessed to find the restored gospel, to come to know Jesus Christ as my savior, and to have revealed to my soul that God loves me unconditionally. I now understand that my most important tasks in this life are to testify of Christ's love, to let his love shine through me, and to bless others with whatever love I am capable of giving.

Plinka! Plinka! Plinka!

Bessie Soderborg Clark

WE HAD TO GET TO GLENDORA, California, to comfort our daughter, whose husband had died, suddenly and unexpectedly, the previous Sunday morning. When we finished loading the car and turned the key, nothing happened. The battery was dead. We panicked. It was still tricky learning to drive our hybrid Toyota Prius. But we tracked down a mechanic, who told us how to jumpstart the little auxiliary battery in the trunk of the car. We made it to Cedar City about 11:00 p.m., found a Comfort Inn and had a good night's sleep, followed by a high cholesterol breakfast. On the road again, we had bypassed St. George when the car's red light went on. We had to get gas. Just over the state line into Nevada, we turned into a shabby gas station/store. The gas station consisted of two gas pumps, unattractive restrooms, a bar with three or four stools, and shelves of the kind of nibblers you eat only when you're bored and want to get somewhere more exciting. Oh, and yes, the ever-present slot machines.

Marden, Sherri, Harlow, and I couldn't help but notice the dancing lights in the machines. They took dollar bills. We knew the odds of winning were against us. We weren't enticed. We didn't have money to throw away. Near the door, however, we saw one machine that took quarters. Sherri dropped one in and pulled the handle. I immediately launched my lecture about how she might just as well throw her money out the door as put it in the machine. So far so good. I had a quarter in my pocket and to fortify my lecture, I put it into the slot. Plinka, a quarter came out. I immediately put it back in just to show Sherri that it didn't really pay. Plinka, plinka, plinka. Out came 30 quarters. The rest of the family came running, fully intending to put them back in, but I rescued enough to buy us all hamburgers.

As we left, I felt betrayed by that machine. It had made a liar out of me. We bypassed the Las Vegas strip and all the exciting hoopla, not daring to test our virtue and take a chance on becoming hooked and degenerate.

Our son-in-law, Bruce Campbell, had been a professor at Cal State Los Angeles for more than 25 years, head of the family sociology department. It was an unexpected comfort to see the elaborate floral displays at the funeral home, which was bulging with family and friends, colleagues and students. Bruce hadn't always been the most diplomatic person. He had, however, been instru-

mental in implementing a new college method for students pursuing teaching degrees. His students were varied—Indian, African-American, Asian, Hispanic, white. The flowers were as varied and profuse as his students.

Two Hispanic sisters came in carrying a huge floral arrangement. They looked somewhat bewildered, and I greeted them and invited them to sit down and tell me about Bruce. He was their favorite teacher. They talked about his new method. He had organized "cohorts," groups consisting of thirty teaching majors who moved through their program together. They were able to act as backup teams for each other, discussing classes and other issues with the group and helping one another. If they couldn't get the classes they needed, had financial trouble, or had to drop out, Bruce immediately went to bat for them. The two sisters, with tears in their eyes, told me how he had helped them.

At the funeral the next day, brief eulogies were given by the bishop and Marden. Then the service was opened to any who wanted to express themselves. At some of the sentiments and remarks, I imagined a quiet laugh or slight movement coming from the coffin.

At the cemetery, a piper came toward us dressed in a Stuart plaid, piping a Campbell on his way.

After the ceremonies most of the guests and relatives congregated at Diane's home, eating the abundant food prepared by friends and the Relief Society and reminiscing about Bruce and the many jokes and stories he liked to tell about others—some not exactly complimentary.

The next morning we were all a little awkward, not knowing how to react or what to say. Well, what do women do under such circumstances? They go shopping! We didn't buy much, mostly drooled at some of the new home improvement creations. Back at the house, the younger generation was anxious to examine our new Toyota Prius and marvel at its pluses. One or two drove it around the block and vowed to get one some day.

After many "I love you"s, we headed back home. It was early evening. The wind was blowing near Vegas and hail was dropping heavily, plinka, plinka, plinka, reminding us of the slots. We saw a beam of light that went straight up as if to reach the moon. As we got closer to the source, we could see it was coming out of the point of a huge pyramid. Beams of beautiful blue and gold light were dancing up and down the structure. We were fascinated. It was nearing midnight; a fierce wind began blowing; hail pounded the car, plinka, plinka, plinka. We wanted to get far away from the strip and shut out the temples of sin. We ducked into the last motel in North Las Vegas and were lullabied to sleep.

The next morning we ate another high cholesterol breakfast and headed north to the promised land of Utah, out of the sound of the slots. As we neared the same little border store, we noticed that the gas tank was getting low. This time I decided I would not put even one quarter in. We gathered our trove of unhealthy snacks and headed for the door. Dad was in a hurry and went out the door first, followed quickly by the other two. I paused for a minute, feeling the hot coin in my hand. Something pulled my hand to the slot, and I hurriedly put

in a quarter, pulled the handle, then headed for the door. As I was opening it, I heard plinka, plinka, plinka and a little boy say, "Maw, look at all that money!" Momentarily I wrestled with my conscience. Should I go back and claim it?

I decided not to, since it was the Sabbath. I hurried and caught up with the others, saying absolutely nothing about my weak moment. I didn't want them to know that I, their strong, upright, God-loving, church-going mother had succumbed to gambling. No, especially not on the Sabbath and entering the pure state of Utah, home of my church-loving ancestors. All the rest of the day, a little weird thought kept nagging me. Did I actually hit the jackpot? I felt very virtuous in not knowing.

Scenes from the Movie

Kim Simpson

I SPENT MY 1970S BOYHOOD in one of those remote subdivisions that had begun sprouting up along the foot of the Oquirrh Mountains in the westernmost part of the Salt Lake Valley. From just about any vantage point, one could look east and clearly see Salt Lake City stretching across the face of the Uintahs, with the spires of the Mormon temple jutting upward in the center. My bedroom was upstairs, and I would lie awake at night gazing across the sea of rooftops and steeples to where the nearby drive-in movie screen stood out against the night sky. Although the images on the screen were blurry with distance, I would still watch them flash by, the city lights twinkling behind them, and my transistor radio jangling away in my ear. To me, the movie screen, the city lights, and the transistor were parts of the same world—distant, mysterious, exciting. I would listen to the music and make up movies in my head about people far beyond my neighborhood who knew secrets of untold happiness.

Because Dad would travel for work and Mom sometimes went with him, whenever they were going to be gone for any extended period, Mom used to drop me off at the Cleggs' house which happened often enough. The Cleggs lived just outside of our subdivision at the end of a long, unpaved driveway. Their house was originally a two-room shotgun house built shortly after the Mormon pioneers entered the Salt Lake Valley in 1847. A century or so later, Brother and Sister Clegg inherited the home and built an upstairs section, including four new rooms. I always wondered if their old house was haunted. Brother and Sister Clegg had nine kids, and their youngest son, Gavin, was my age.

One thing I remember most clearly about the Cleggs was how they would regularly gather around their television to watch the "old shows." Their television was an enormous wooden box that made a sound like a firecracker going off when you turned the channel dial. Sister Clegg was a plump, squinting, good-humored woman, who wore her horn-rimmed glasses around her neck on a chain. She was particularly crazy about the old shows. She would mark up her *TV Guide* thoroughly and often watched them alone. Anything black and white that featured a recognizable Hollywood movie star qualified as an "old show." It was at the Cleggs' that I first heard of Cary Grant and Doris Day and that songs

like "Animal Crackers in My Soup" or "Aba Daba Honeymoon" first started knocking around in my head. To this day, when I hear the staccato cadences of old movie dialogue in the distance, I think of Sister Clegg.

Brother Clegg was like a Mormon John Henry—towering, muscular, and pensive. He had single-handedly built all of the upstairs addition of their pioneer house, as well as the stables and chicken coops in their backyard. He rode his bicycle twenty miles daily to and from the power plant where he worked. And every evening, he was ready to lead Family Home Evening. This Mormon tradition of reserving one night a week for family meetings goes back to David O. McKay's years as president of the church in the fifties and sixties, but in the seventies at the Cleggs', every evening was Family Home Evening. Usually, after the old show ended, a sort of family program would begin. Brother Clegg might tell an animated story in Spanish, having served as a missionary in Mexico. Sometimes Victor and Pam would play their guitars, or Brother and Sister Clegg would play a piano duet.

More often than not, though, Brother Clegg would read from the Book of Revelation about how iniquity would sweep the land, how the Earth would one day shudder with natural disasters, how there would be wars and rumors of wars, how the four horses of the apocalypse would gallop across the sky, and how the world was careening toward its end. He would sit in front of the roaring fireplace with the kids all in a circle around him, frozen.

After Brother and Sister Clegg went to bed, Victor would usually tell us ghost stories, stories about the ghosts of old soldiers residing in their cellar, or the strange noises he had sometimes heard in the attic, or the sleeping mummy who'd once surprised him in the tall grass of their backyard. Those nights, I had trouble sleeping. Gavin had an upstairs room like mine, and I would lie awake just as I did at home, staring at the glittering city. Often I thought I could see faces peering in through the window. But eventually I would concentrate on Gavin's radio, which played softly on his corner desk, its tuner dial glowing like a city light or a bright star in the night sky. And the music, along with the movies in my head, usually chased the eerie faces away.

One afternoon my mother dropped me off at the entrance of the Cleggs' long driveway, and I found Gavin at the end of it, playing in a big pile of charred clothes, toys, and books. Behind the pile was their television—gutted, its green glass screen shattered. Gavin was spry and energetic—muscular, like his dad, but hardly so pensive. He climbed into the TV and started hamming it up: First he was Shirley Temple singing "Animal Crackers," her voice taking a sudden dive into a Cookie Monster growl. Then he was a newscaster who began to address his audience by name in the middle of the broadcast. Then he was the "Six Million Dollar Man," whose bionic strength allowed him to carry the TV frame across the yard with him as he ran. Then it was time for the channel switching game: I'd spin the firecracker dial around, and Gavin would contort himself into a new position at every pop. I wished my parents would throw out things for me to play with the way Brother and Sister Clegg did for their kids.

Several years later Gavin told me about a time when his dad swept the devil out of their house. The devil was burdening their home with material things. He had placed evil in the eyes of their dolls. He had stuffed their shelves and closets to the breaking point with clothes and books. The television was constantly on, and it played only at high volume. In a desperate rage, Brother Clegg yelled commands to the devil and swept him into their furnace. Out onto the driveway went the books, clothes, dolls, and the television, and up went a bonfire. It was the day after this that we'd played with the empty TV frame. Mom later told me that Brother Clegg had a "condition" that ran in his family and sometimes made him do extreme things. Still, I never doubted Gavin's story that Brother Clegg had swept the devil from their house. After all, I'd always known their house was haunted. Soon enough, Brother Clegg bought a new TV for Sister Clegg, so she could continue watching the old shows.

Sister Clegg's addiction to the old shows went beyond television. On the other side of the valley was a tiny theater called the Avalon, which showed nothing but old movies. She would regularly pile the lot of us into their family car, a white Ford station wagon, and drive us to the Avalon. We'd crowd into the cramped entryway where a white-haired man sat at the ticket desk. Peering out from between a sputtering popcorn machine on his right and a big jar of pickles on his left, the man always nodded graciously to Sister Clegg and greeted her by name. After buying pickles and popcorn, both of which the ticket man would wrap in brown paper towels, we'd disappear into the viewing room.

We always sat on the left side of the theater—Gavin told me later that his mom had a theory about this, which had something to do with which side of the brain a person prefers to use in processing information. Since Sister Clegg never expected all of us to be as enamored with the old shows as she was, she didn't mind if Gavin and I crawled back behind the last row and played with the Matchbox cars we'd brought in our pockets. Several times, when we were the only people in the entire theater, Gavin and I went over to the right side of the theater and raced our cars down the aisle. Nobody seemed bothered—not Sister Clegg, not Brother Clegg if he was with us, not Janice, Christa, Victor, Maryann, Valerie, Carmine, Lucy, or Pam; not the ticket man; not Katherine Hepburn, Ronald Colman, Raymond Massie, Joan Crawford, or anyone else who may have been there.

If movies like *The Philadelphia Story* or *His Girl Friday* weren't enough to keep us in our seats, movies like *It's a Wonderful Life* were. Until I learned that this was one of Frank Capra's most famous films, I grew up thinking it was my own (and the Cleggs') little secret. Whenever I heard myself say—even think—"I wish I'd never been born," I'd think of Jimmy Stewart's dark stroll through a version of his own world in which he'd never been born, and I'd change my mind. And then there was *Stairway to Heaven*, which began with David Niven narrating a tour through the same sky I'd gaze at nightly through my bedroom window, and which ended with a dazzling trial in heaven that included every famous being imaginable: Moses, Napoleon, Abraham Lincoln, the works.

Two movies I saw as a double feature during the Avalon days stand out in particular: *Trapped by the Mormons* and *Brigham Young—Frontiersman*. These are both curios that occasionally play in Utah theaters for a chuckle. But as far as I knew, those movies indicated that Mormonism was as prevalent in Hollywood as it was in my own little Utah world. Sometimes, as in *Trapped by the Mormons*, the religion was portrayed unsympathetically. But this film was also erroneous enough that even an eight-year-old completely ignorant of the concept of camp value could laugh. A silent movie from the twenties, it features an actress named Evelyn Brent as an English girl who falls under the spell of a lecherous, black robed Mormon missionary. Addressing her as "child," he talks her out of her engagement with some poor chap and into the waters of baptism—a ceremony requiring her to wade into a font all by herself while the missionary stands by, still in black, waving his hands and uttering incantations. The missionary also proposes to the young woman, promising to take her with him to the land of the "river Jordan" and the "crystal temple." Shortly after committing to marriage, she discovers the missionary's resentful "sister" is really his wife, setting off a string of events including the attempted murder of both women by other missionaries and the women's eventual rescue. Foremost in my memory are the main missionary's attempts to steal hugs and plant as many kisses as he can on the struggling Ms. Brent before his inevitable capture.

Brigham Young—Frontiersman was different. It was a Hollywood movie from 1940 and a sympathetic portrayal of Mormonism, as far as I could tell. What I remember most is Tyrone Power in a buckskin jacket looking continually alarmed and Linda Darnell spending the entire movie swooning in his arms. And who was that familiar face playing the Prophet Joseph Smith? It was Vincent Price, whom I recognized chiefly from his countless cameos in 1970s variety shows. Who was playing Brigham Young's sidekick Porter Rockwell? The ubiquitous John Carradine, whom I surely knew by face if not by name. As far as I was concerned, *Brigham Young* was just like any movie that had pioneers or mountain men in it, and I considered all of these to be Mormon movies. *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, for example. *Jeremiah Johnson*. And even TV shows, like the consistently gut wrenching *Little House on the Prairie*.

Even though it seemed fine then, I look back with some disbelief on the fact that Sister Clegg would take us to see such gentile treatments of our history. In American Mormon culture, the early persecution of saints by mobs has not been forgotten, and thus, misrepresentation of the religion in any form, even as a joke, tends to sting more than it ought to.

My family and the Cleggs belonged to the same ward. The old building we met in smelled of old leather-bound hymnals. I was in the same Sunday school class as Gavin, whose hair Sister Clegg always combed over with Dippity Do. Our class met in the basement of the building, which had no windows, a low ceiling, and stacks of chairs in every corner. And there, in that dark room, we would listen to the sad stories of persecution, of the arduous journey the pioneers made across the plains to the promised land, of their struggles with the lo-

custs that devoured all their crops, and of the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith. What a sad, sad movie Mormon history would make, I used to think. And maybe that's why we went to see those two films at the Avalon. Perhaps they were the perfect mergers of Sister Clegg's two religions: movies tempered by the reality of Mormonism, and Mormonism invigorated by the imagination of movies.

By the time I was ten years old, my parents felt they could leave me home alone for extended periods of time, and thus I stopped going to the Avalon with the Cleggs. When I earned my driver's license at sixteen, though, one of my first solo flights took me straight across town to find the Avalon, which had by then taken on a rather hazy, mythical status in my mind. Lacking the reliable sense of direction of a more experienced driver, I followed my nose and ended up at a small, X-rated cinema that I could have sworn had once been the Avalon. I peered self-consciously through the locked front door and saw a similar ticket booth and concessions area. I stood awhile and thought. Was the white-haired man still there, I wondered.

In order to get out of our subdivision, you had to stop at a T intersection. On the other side of the intersection stood the Valley-Vu Drive-In. During the summer, any car that drove down that road was treated to moments of free movies against the backdrop of the night sky.

My parents were not avid moviegoers, so I usually went to movies at the Valley-Vu with the Cleggs. Going to the Valley-Vu, as to the Avalon, was one of the Cleggs' rituals. I never got the feeling that Brother Clegg shared the movie mania his wife had, but he tended to go along for the ride. We would all squeeze into the station wagon along with blankets, popcorn, and lawn chairs, and Brother Clegg would weave through the rows of cars, the gravel grinding under the tires and dust wafting in through our open windows. Once the station wagon settled on a spot, we'd all get adjusted—some of us climbing onto the roof, some of us settling for the hood, some of us in lawn chairs, and others remaining inside the car.

It was here with the Cleggs that I first witnessed the terror of Bambi and friends running for dear life as fire devoured their forest. It was also here that I saw my first "In Search of" film—*In Search of Noah's Ark*. Though this was a fairly dull film about an excavation party's successes and failures in the Himalayas, it somehow seemed terribly significant to me then—a worthy replacement for Brother Clegg's evening sermons.

Every night the drive-in played a double or triple feature, the first one starting when it got dark, around 8:30 p.m. There were an awful lot of unforgivably boring Disney live-action films playing at the Valley-Vu, like *One of Our Dinosaurs Is Missing, The Snowball Express*, and *The Boatniks*. I slept through all of these and more.

What I didn't sleep through were the movies Gavin and I would sneak off to see when we were older, when I wasn't being babysat by the Cleggs so much as being invited over to spend the night for fun. Around this time, when we were

twelve or thirteen, new management had taken over the Valley-Vu, and this new management proved to be hell-bent on reaping the big drive-in bucks that the teen market had to offer. Thus, *Bambi* gave way to *Beach Girls*, and *Charley and the Angel* gave way to *Cheech and Chong*. These were awkward times. When my parents' own station wagon pulled up to the T intersection, it was almost always at a moment when a pair of bare breasts filled the screen. "Good heavens," my mom would say. Dad usually leaned forward, ready to gun it at the first opportunity. And I was absolutely riveted, stealing another peek or two as we'd turn and drive away.

I guess because he was the youngest of nine kids, Gavin's parents were much less protective of him than my parents were of me, and so for us to sneak out of his house and walk down the road to the drive-in was all too easy. We'd settle into the long, unruly crabgrass surrounding the drive-in lot, able to hear most everything if the wind was gentle and carried just so. *Enter the Dragon. Up in Smoke. Saturday Night Fever. Malibu Beach. Good Guys Wear Black.* Our fear of getting caught never allowed us to watch a film in its entirety, but the scattered R-rated images we were able to see satisfied our curiosity.

I always thought—and still think—about how other families in my predominantly Mormon neighborhood dealt with their moments at the T intersection stop sign. I thought about the Williamsons, who'd recently moved in from Montpelier, Idaho. They were Mormons almost Pentecostal in appearance and were completely oblivious, as far as I could tell, to the modern world. And I thought about the frightful sermons our next-door neighbor Brother Christiansen likely delivered in his booming baritone to the family in his own station wagon.

My questions concerning Brother Clegg's handling of the latest drive-in offerings were answered one night as I was riding home with the Clegg family from a church dinner. As we drove by the movie screen, all twelve sets of eyes in the car, which had turned toward it magnetically, were met by a topless volleyball scene in full swing. My own eyes, all a-wonder, positively glued themselves to the screen. "Gross!" yelled Pam and Vicki, and a pair of hands from the backseat wrapped themselves around my eyes. A shrieking chaos arose and carried on for about a mile. And then, in an instant, Brother Clegg yanked the wheel of that old Ford station wagon, long as a hearse, pulled a U-turn, and drove back toward the drive-in.

We all sat silent, the way we would for those scripture readings by the fire, as Brother Clegg rumbled past the ticket booth and parked the car behind the snack bar, effectively severing us from the offending movie screen. At the ticket booth, Brother Clegg spoke intently with the ticket man. We couldn't hear a thing, but remained silent just in case we might. Then Brother Clegg took two steps back and pointed his index finger at the man as though he were setting a curse. We watched his lips move silently for what seemed like hours, looking not unlike that baptism scene in *Trapped by the Mormons*. I still don't know what he said, but when the drive-in changed management again the following summer, family films were back. I remain convinced that the exchange between

Brother Clegg and the ticket man had everything to do with it.

"The moving picture together with all the other modern inventions is to help us carry the Mission of Christ to all the world, and to bring humanity home to the true principles of salvation," proclaimed an official church statement in 1913. By 1916, the church commissioned two brothers named "Shirl" and Chester Clawson to film various church events and leaders. This era of film production for the church ended tragically in 1929 when a fire killed Shirl Clawson, destroying the studio and many of the films. Among the Clawson employees who survived the fire: a young runner named Verle Weber, uncle to Jane Weber, otherwise known as Sister Clegg.

Sister Clegg used to say that her Uncle Verle spoke often about motion pictures as a potential tool of righteousness. Movies should depict the kinds of lives that people would want to emulate, he used to say. The Clegg daughters always had records playing, and one of their favorites was by the Osmonds, the Mormon teen brothers group that made a brief run for album rock glory before Donny and Marie Osmond's variety show overshadowed them. At the tail end of their popularity, they released a collection of Mormon doctrine rock songs called *The Plan*—two of which made the American Top 40. But the song I remember most from that record was called "Movie Man": "You're in living color, it's your picture show," sang the Osmonds. "Even what you're thinking, everyone will know." I always wondered how they could sing that without sounding terrified.

I clearly remember a Sunday school lesson in the basement of that old church that had to do with this idea of life being a movie. According to the teacher, everything we did was recorded, and the only way we could cut out the parts we didn't like was through repentance. Through a renewed commitment to be obedient to church teachings, and through resolving to make right any wrongs we may have committed, our lives could get the Frank Capra treatment. The teacher gave each of us a piece of paper and told us to write down how we'd like our movies to be. I couldn't seem to write. I was too overwhelmed at the thought of how many wrongs I'd committed which I couldn't even remember well enough to right. I wanted my movie to be happy, and that's what I wrote down.

One night I walked up the stairs of the Cleggs' pioneer house to get ready for bed. I saw Brother Clegg looking through a window at the same view I'd see from my bed at night. "Look at all the sadness," he said, without looking at me. "Look at all the confusion, all the pain, all the evil—what terrible movies our lives will make if we're not able to rise above it all." I stood quiet for a while, trying to take it all in, trying to conjure up an adequate picture of sadness, confusion, pain, and evil. I continued trying as I lay in bed that night, but I just couldn't find that sad picture. I'd scan the blanket of city lights, moving my eyes across the rooftops and steeples. And inevitably I'd find those blurry, distant images flashing across the screen of the Valley-Vu Drive-In. And with the transistor radio softly playing, I'd begin to make movies in my head, about people far beyond my neighborhood, who knew secrets of untold happiness.

Cemetery Life

Kylie Nielson Turley

MY YELLOW 1946 HOUSE faces Provo's peculiarly Mormon-Utah-style cemetary. Tall trees line small lanes which are set at precise right angles, a perfect grid made by Latter-day pioneer planners. The lanes come complete with miniature street signs marking the corners: "Center" and "Main," "2000 South" and "100 West." I eat my breakfast toast, drink my milk, and think strange thoughts: *391 South Main would be a pleasant, shady place to be buried.* Disturbing the precise system of their forefathers, later generations arranged the southeast corner roads in twirling cul-de-sacs and circular drives, a strange little maze with only one entrance and one exit. Some metaphor is doubtless begging to be made about how pioneer grandchildren modernize things, yet so much is the same: between the drives in every cemetery section are the stretches of always-green grass, watered every summer night at precisely eleven o'clock, even in the middle of monstrous thunderstorms.

When I tell people where I live, conversation fades then resurrects with a vengeance. People tease me about "quiet" neighbors who "don't disturb you with loud music." Cemetery humor soon grows dull as far as I am concerned, yet everyone seems to think it hilarious—as if they are the first to make the joke. I rarely explain that I am the one who is uneasy; I pull the blinds when I do step aerobics at home, and I blush when my swim-suited children screech in the sprinklers. There is an odd reverence demanded by a 21-gun salute, even if I hear it while scrubbing the toilet or changing a diaper.

Living here changes things. My neighbors and I gossip about the number of funerals (two last Saturday), about the Memorial Day flowers (wilted almost beyond repair by the time they are thrown out), and about the headstones we want when we die (plain and simple—no little bunnies or scroll writing). Another neighbor, who worked at the cemetery for a summer, let us know whenever an old grave was accidentally upset while workers were digging a new one. Apparently the otherwise meticulous nineteenth-century pioneers did not keep very good records of where they buried each other in the acres of green grass. Most people find that tidbit morbidly fascinating.

Funerals are commonplace, worthy of casual, across-the-fence chatter. The number varies greatly—one week there will be two funerals a day; the next

week, not a one. Most of the funerals are large, extravagant affairs with dozens descending in Sunday best. Funeral manners allow for black clothes, but more often I see navy suits and dresses of cool hunter green, autumn brown, or medium to dark blue. The style of choice tends towards simplicity. Certainly loud prints or strong clashing plaids are inexcusable, although teenage girls manage to get away with trendy florals and boys have little taste for conservative ties, if they wear ties at all. The mourners always seem to forget their coats in winter, so they huddle in a tight pack for the ceremony before leaving clumsily, wandering back to their cars in awkward little groups of two or three.

This funeral etiquette amuses me. Mere hours before they come, the gaudy yellow backhoe is chunking out dirt, dumping it in the back of a white Provo City truck. Minutes after the ceremonies, the dump truck lumbers back like a bulky dinosaur, carelessly dropping the old dirt beside the new grave, while cemetery workers crank down the coffin and get ready to heave shovels full of soil back into the hole. The somber ambiance and mystique of grief collapses under the roar of the truck and the mundane logistics of digging and dumping, although the bereaved families avoid these details. The mourners have their rituals, and the employees have their work; the worlds rarely collide.

A year ago, I noticed one of those rare instances. Shiny SUV's and dark colored Sedans parked head-to-toe in an affluent funeral procession, ironically joined by a battered green and white pickup truck, which is what originally prompted me to spy. When there were only five or ten people remaining by the grave, I saw the truck's owner. As the rain started dripping, he trotted back to the truck to grab his old black umbrella and help those last people to their cars. Then he stayed. Five minutes later, a lone worker came to crank down the brown coffin. The man watched, asking questions, casually chatting with the worker. He kept talking as he shrugged up the sleeves of his charcoal suit and hoisted one side of the metal coffin-support framework as easily as a hay bale. He balanced the weight comfortably between his hands and bounced it twice to get a solid grip. The worker set one side of the support in the back of the cemetery work truck, then the man in the suit shoved the frame forward. He was reaching for a shovel when another worker arrived, so he relaxed, propping his elbows against the vehicle. He glanced towards my picture window, but I ducked.

His casual observations of the real burial surprised me, jolted my assumptions. For all four-and-a-half years of my cemetery life, I have heard people make dumb jokes or walk away, tell me bizarre death trivia or choke on their ice water and change the subject to politics. The owner of the green and white truck cut through the fear and the ceremony; he encountered the dirt and details I see from my picture window. He crossed through my worlds, buried his dead, and left me wondering where he would go with his wet suit and muddy hands. A family luncheon? Does one wash grave dirt away under the harsh lights of a church bathroom? It seems like digging a grave should be a moment to remember, but dirt is dirt. Perhaps not.

My personal experience with the details of death is, frankly, lacking. My great grandparents died one by one, but they were so old—and I was so young. My only memories of them are snips, flashes of people I never really knew: "Grandma Great" thought someone was stealing her underwear and burying it in the yard, and Grandma Villa snapped at us during a family dinner because "all you kids are making Doris [her daughter] work too hard." I cannot visualize my great-grandfather at all, except for a few photographic memories recalled solely from fishing pictures taken the summer before he died. I remember his funeral, my Grandma Great perched on a stool at the head of the coffin, although this memory doesn't make much sense. Why would a ninety-year-old woman be sitting ramrod straight on a high stool?

One girl from my hometown died in a car accident driving back to BYU after Thanksgiving vacation. I was fourteen. Truth be told, I barely knew her, but that did not stop me from sobbing at her funeral. Everyone sobbed. It was tragic. But at least three-quarters of the people crammed onto the rows of metallic folding chairs never would have seen her again in their lives, excluding the rare high school reunion. In any case, we all came to the funeral and mobbed the cemetery. We talked about how we knew her and when we had last spoken to her. I secretly envied those with real grief. I was jealous of that world-worn, gray-lined look.

The crying, pale face showed up grieving in my mirror when my Grandfather Nielson died. I expected that. I planned for it. After all, I live across the street from the cemetery; I plan for death. Still he surprised me by dying October 19, 1998. I knew he was dying, but somehow I had ceased to notice the addition of another wrinkle, the bending over of another inch, the loss of a little more memory. Right after the phone call announcing his death, I slipped on my classy navy blazer with gold buttons and rushed out. One-half hour until class—too late to find a substitute. When I explained to my students why I would be absent on Friday, I surprised myself: despite my professional blazer, comfortable heels, and non-waterproof mascara, I cried, alternatively staring down at the floor, then up at the ceiling, muttering, "Sorry, sorry." An eighteen-year-old freshman clumsily patted my arm as the others filed out looking pointedly at anything but me.

"Was it expected?" my friend queried when I asked her to water my plants, and I found myself confused. How could I explain? He was ninety-four and ill, but I did not know that his death would be that day. I was shocked to find an anniversary to remember, one that I had lived through for years without realizing.

My meticulous plans worked sporadically at best. The plastic-doll-looking grandfather in the casket was expected. I cried sadly, not wildly, at the funeral, and my speech for my three-year-old about how grandpa "is still alive in heaven" went over perfectly. But—so silly—I had forgotten to decide what to wear. I sat on my bed the day he died and stared at my overstuffed hanging rod: fifteen or twenty dresses from which to choose, and each one was too flowery or too tight, too wrinkled or too casual. None would pack and travel to a funeral. I

hated them and all the stupid stuff of mortality. Still I wanted to look chic and beautiful, successful and skinny. I don't know who I was trying to impress.

Little things got complicated. I did not know that his hands would look alive, blue veins running ragged across puckers and wrinkles. It upset me that my cousins, who came respectfully, did not cry. My grandmother insisted that her husband was on a business trip. Then the day of the funeral, she eyed my sisters carefully, "Do you know where your grandfather is?" They looked at each other, wondering what words would come and how to respond. She stared at them calmly, then enunciated each syllable with a shake of her pointed finger and the click of her tongue, "He's dead."

A few years later, I find my grandfather in surprising places: a Christmas card address list, a roll of film lost in the bottom of a black nylon camera bag, the twenty-sixth of a random month—not even May, his birthday. I think of those last few memories, the ones when I sternly directed myself I will remember this. We ate a Dairy Queen lunch the Christmas before he died, and I grinned in my napkin when grandma and grandpa each ate their "full meal deal" despite looking so frail. On that visit—just as on all those last visits—he would finally figure out who I was, re-discover I was married, then recall, "Oh, yes. Your husband is a roofer. Doing quite well, isn't he? I always said roofing would be a good business to go into." For some reason, that flash of memory and precise response came back the same for the last four years of his life.

There is the memory of visiting grandma in the hospital the previous November, her bones barely lifting the bed sheet. Grandpa found us waiting in the square visitors' room, seated uncomfortably on hard chairs. He sat, then had someone bring him a book so he could show off his strangely improved eyesight, reading smaller letters than he had read in twenty years. After that he lapsed into silence, unable to join the conversation he could not hear. He roused himself to ask for his gloves, so that his hands would be warm when the nurses finally allowed him to touch his wife's palm. I watched the old man tuck his shaking fingers into the sheepskin-lined leather, and I thought I will remember this.

I hoard these memories and my trinkets. I have a quotation from the girl who died in the car accident, which is not nearly as profound as I used to think it was, but I keep it anyway because of her long, slanting pencil marks. I have a set of pink envelopes and one dollar bills from Great Grandma Villa. And I have stockpiled three dainty strawberry teacups; one opaque, shell-looking creamer bowl; and four delicate china saucers that Grandma Nielson gave me one by one for birthday presents, always wrapped carefully in tissue, never a complete set. I do not know the point of having a few mismatched teacups, especially when I don't drink tea. I like knowing that I have them, though, especially now that my grandmother has died.

Grandma Nielson's funeral was on a windy Saturday in October, almost exactly two years after her husband's death. Nearly a year before she died, I had decided that I would wear a light green two-piece suit, tailored and cinched with a thin green leather belt. She liked that color. We were the last to drive out of the

cemetery, and I looked back deliberately. The shoulder strap of my seat belt bit into the side of my neck, but I caught a glimpse of a yellow backhoe galloping towards the grave. That pleased me. I wore the right dress. I cried the right tears. But it was the backhoe that made me feel at home.

I do not desire a more personal familiarity with the how and when and where of death, but a cemetery circles my life. I see it every time I leave, every time I come home, every time I open my blinds. Some day we will move, but I plan to remember that grave dirt smells earthy and sweet whether it is dug by a yellow backhoe or a man in a charcoal Sunday suit who drives a battered green and white truck. I will not forget my daughter giggling on her new training-wheeled, two-wheeler bike as we wandered down the shady cemetery lane, and I will not forget those first Memorial Day flowers I fished out of the trash bin. I was unacquainted with funeral flowers then, surprised when they blossomed randomly all summer, shocked when they sprouted green leaves the following spring. I think of these things: I grew flowers left to wither on someone's grave; I tried to look pretty at my grandfather's funeral; I live across the street from the cemetery.

Another Death

Thomas Rogers

ONE SATURDAY MORNING Jimmy wondered about himself as he lay in bed instead of watching cartoons on TV or shooting baskets through the hoop under the eaves. They didn't have a garage, but they didn't need one since they didn't own a car. Jimmy's classmates were now learning to drive. This distressing fact made him feel underprivileged as well as undeserving. In grade school he'd been ashamed to have his classmates know he chopped kindling for his mother's coal stove, and because his mother had no refrigerator, twice a week he hauled ice from a nearby service station in his "High Flyer" wagon. He always waited until dark to avoid them going to their parties or music lessons. They might not notice him in the shadows, but he always turned his head anyway.

His immediate neighbors knew of his situation and accepted him. But those students who mattered most to him lived in fine homes in the prestigious neighborhoods on the bench. Every one of them had a father who defended clients, owned his own business, or lectured at the university. Although Jimmy was seldom included in their after school activities, these same students had chosen him to edit the student paper. If he'd had a car, he might have been invited to join them. But then they might start visiting him too and see his house and learn his family's secrets. It was better to see them only at school.

This resentment caused Jimmy to smolder with jealousy and self loathing. His friends never seemed frustrated. There must be a connection between what one had and didn't have and who one was. One thing his friends all had that Jimmy did not have was a dad.

He had a father somewhere but in name only. What he knew about him made it doubly hard and would have been scandalous for the others to know. It wasn't prison. Prison would have been easier to explain. Jimmy worried that it might be hereditary. His father had been committed to an "institution" as older people called it or "the funny farm" as it was known to some of Jimmy's classmates. Jimmy was only two years old when his father had been pronounced schizophrenic. He had been hospitalized for fourteen years now and had spent his best years playing cards with uniformed attendants or pacing before rows of chairs in a room with dull green walls in a mental ward.

Jimmy's mother saved her money and had once or twice taken him on a two day bus ride to see and talk to this man. On those occasions she had to remind him to call the man "Dad." They always met in a smaller room just off the ward. A room whose walls were somewhat brighter—a lemon yellow. During some visits the man would only sit and stare. Other times he spoke too much—telling of elaborate plans to put Jimmy to work on a dry farm in a remote location where he imagined he owned title to some land. The man told Jimmy that he would have to stop attending school then. Jimmy didn't care about farming, but he really loved school. He hoped to go college.

Last night his mother told him that his father was going to be released from the hospital and would return to live with them. He would arrive the next afternoon. She would meet him at the bus station while Jimmy was delivering papers. When Jimmy returned that evening, his father would already be there insinuating himself back into their lives in the home he was used to sharing only with his mother. Why should he despise the man's coming back to live in his own home? Jimmy felt ashamed and hoped to appear cheerful. But he was used to suspicion and deceit. In the third grade he'd been asked to bring his bugle to school. He had received it as a Christmas present. After school, they were tutored for only a week. The teacher praised his progress. He was assigned to stand with the others each morning and afternoon to play taps for the flag ceremony. After an entire year, they were honored at a special reception where they were served donuts and all the ice cream they could eat. The teacher praised all of them, including Jimmy. The principal shook their hands and thanked them. No one noticed that Jimmy barely touched his food. He knew that he had never once managed to blow a single note. During those thirty weeks he had stood with the others—his cheeks puffed out, his temples bursting, his face red with exertion but only pretending to play his bugle. He was never sure if anyone else ever knew or if they just humored him so as not to expose him. During those younger years, it became his most unforgettable lesson in deceit. And by junior high he became very conscious of his social position and the terrible stigma he would feel should his father's illness ever become known.

His entire childhood seemed one long ordeal of personal ineptness and uninvited trauma. He recalled his hysteria when he'd run screaming from a wolf spider on a neighbor's lawn. Or there was the day he'd picked wild flowers and discovered that their stalks were filled with small red ants that swarmed over him. He only stopped screaming after his aunt tore the weeds from his hands, removed his clothes, and put him in a tub of water.

Another time his mother had trusted him to rent the apartment which was attached to their home. The woman who answered the ad seemed polite and well dressed. She wore a fashionable suit trimmed with the pelt of some animal whose small beady eyes, like her own, stared through him. She paid the required deposit and demanded the key. Her name was Miss Olyer, and they never saw her again. But he heard disquieting noises at night as she entertained gentleman friends. This had filled him with dark foreboding. Before Jimmy's mother could

evict her, Miss Olyer left without paying the rest of her rent. Jimmy felt this was one more instance of his personal inadequacy—another death.

There were additional deaths as well. The girl who sat next to him in math in the fifth grade seemed normal and healthy before the Christmas holidays but died suddenly and never returned. Her name was Leilani, and he remembered her telling him that her parents had honeymooned in Hawaii. Her name became confused in his mind with the Hawaiian word "Aloha." After that experience, Hawaii became a morbid place of shadows he wished to avoid.

Then there was Jimmy's cousin who swallowed a tack when he was a baby. It became lodged in his lung. His parents were poor farmers, and they mortgaged their land to take him to specialists at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, New York. But the tack remained in Burdean's lung. When he came to visit, he would hack large globs of yellow phlegm into wads of tissue. They always carried tissues with them. They put the soiled ones into brown paper bags, perhaps to show to the doctors or to burn in their own coal stove.

When they were older, Jimmy and Burdean would play games—checkers, pit, and Parcheesi. Burdean would smile gratefully. He had a strange rasping voice and a country drawl. He'd been out of school so much due to his poor health that there was little Jimmy could talk about with him. It would certainly never do to expose Burdean and his mucous to Jimmy's classmates.

Jimmy took piano lessons from a friend of his mothers who taught him at a reduced rate. Her studio was on the top floor of the elegant McCune Mansion. Jimmy was always her last lesson of the day. One afternoon when his lesson ended, she walked with him down the hill, took him to a soda fountain where she treated him to a hot fudge sundae. As he left to go home, snow began to fall and it was cold and overcast. Jimmy noticed a shabby newsboy on the corner where he caught his bus. He was skinny and stooped. His mittened hands were chapped and raw. And his lips were nearly blue. Jimmy heard a familiar raspy cough. It was Burdean. He must have been in town for a check-up and was selling newspapers to help with expenses. He hadn't visited Jimmy this trip. Maybe he was too busy or maybe be sensed how Jimmy felt about him. Jimmy's bus arrived. He hoped that Burdean hadn't noticed him, and he quickly boarded the bus. Later that year his Aunt phoned from the country to inform them of Burdean's death. Jimmy's mother urged him to travel with her to the funeral. Jimmy told her that he didn't feel well. Another ruse-like his bugle playing.

His piano teacher's semi-annual recitals had been a nightmare for him. During the last two recitals, he'd frozen during his performance and could not continue. Rushing for the second time from the Mansion's ornate recital hall, Jimmy ran outdoors and raced down seven tiers of sandstone steps. He vowed never to return. How had he lasted for four tortuous years when he played so abominably and never with inspiration? He had never learned to memorize. These lessons had become another mortifying deception.

Jimmy's piano lessons were bound up with yet another death. He stopped to see a movie on his way home from his weekly lesson. Something about the

poster under the marquee drew him inside. It showed a glass ball which enclosed a miniature village and produced a snow storm when it was turned. Jimmy's mother had a ball like that on her mantle. The ball in the picture was immense. In the foreground was a child's sleigh which was covered with snow and consumed by flames. Jimmy could barely make out the inscription on the sleigh. On that same night he learned of his dear grandmother's death. This was the first death in his immediate family and it caused a feeling like the strange mood of the film. After that he never thought of one without the other.

Jimmy was haunted in his sleep. He would find himself in a recital hall of a great mansion at a keyboard which suddenly became a sleigh. It bore the inscription of "High Flyer." He didn't know how to begin. It was snowing in the hall and the snowflakes were wads of tissue which stung his hands. They suddenly became red ants that swarmed over him. When he looked up at the piano sleigh, it had become a coffin, his grandmother's. But how does one play a coffin, how do you play your own grandmother?

In the audience were friends from school, and their fancy parents wore their leis and fur pieces with unblinking eyes, which resembled Miss Olyer. Some smiled, some thumbed their noses and shouted "aloha." In the middle, oblivious and smiling, was his hacking, spitting cousin, Burdean. Were they all mocking Jimmy because he couldn't play or because Burdean was his cousin? Was Burdean smiling at Jimmy's distress? He couldn't be sure.

Another death had occurred just months before. The eighty-year old man who sat on his porch all day drawing nature scenes with pastel chalk. He had people call him Uncle Art. Uncle Art lived with his niece and her husband. They looked after him and prepared his meals. Uncle Art was always beckoning the neighborhood boys to come up on the porch and talk to him. Very few did. Whenever his name was mentioned, there were snickers and knowing looks. It seems that Uncle Art had solemnly lectured boys about sex.

Jimmy had his own paper route now and Uncle Art was one of his customers, so he was obliged to speak to him. Uncle Art persuaded Jimmy to follow him to the cellar to see his landscapes. They pored over gauzy sunsets and mountain streams. Before they finished, the old man sat next to him and urged Jimmy to loosen his belt and allow Uncle Art to test his manhood.

Repulsed to numbness, Jimmy endured the old man's groping. He recovered his nerve and rushed to his bike and freedom without asking for the paper money. Days later Uncle Art became ill and no longer sat on the porch. The next month at collection time, Jimmy spoke to his niece. She told him that Uncle Art had died the night before in the hospital. She invited Jimmy to the funeral. She said Uncle Art had thought he was the finest young man who had delivered their paper. Jimmy did not go.

Flinging the last paper on the last porch, Jimmy headed home. What would his father be like now that they shared the same roof? Another Uncle Art? Pleasant or demanding? Would Jimmy learn to cover up how he really felt and play along? Probably. He had plenty of practice. Entering the house he saw his

mother who was smiling too broadly. She informed him that his dad was resting in her room upstairs. He was tired from his long bus ride, but he was not asleep. Jimmy should go upstairs and greet him.

Blanking his mind as he had with Uncle Art, Jimmy dutifully plodded to his mother's bedroom. There under a quilt was a man whose profile Jimmy vaguely remembered. "Hello Dad," he finally blurted. The man slowly turned his head. "Jimmy?" Then he roughly kissed him. The man's bristles scraped Jimmy's beardless checks. "How are you, Dad?" The man waved him back. "Get to bed now. We'll talk in the morning." Then he turned from Jimmy toward the wall. Jimmy stayed at the bedside awhile before returning to the stairs. It wasn't like he'd expected. This wasn't Uncle Art or his music teacher. But it was a man who knew what he wanted—whatever that might be—and from now on would have his own way. Would this be their only conversation? The encounter somehow fit the dreary impressions in his mind. The fact that none of them were pleasant seemed to confirm that he must be made in his father's mold. He would gradually discover who he really was as he got to know the man now lying on his mother's bed. For the moment it struck him like one more death—Jimmy's own. He knew his response would be further evasion.

Coyote Laughter

Joe Staples

THE FLASK LAY UNDER A LOOSE PLANK on the back porch. To someone lifting the board there was only an empty space, but when Wayne knelt and reached to his elbow beneath the adjacent board, he could just touch the flask with his fingertips. He uncapped it, took a quick pull on the warm Scotch, and slipped it into his shirt pocket. He stepped on the board, tamped it flush, and thought yet again that he would nail it down and throw the flask in the ditch where tomorrow's turn would wash it away. But he did not.

His old rocker sat on the porch and he eased into it, propping his feet on the rail. People looking at him for the first time would have thought him a hard man. Deep grooves framed his eyes, his face tanned to the hairline, his hair as thick now at seventy as it had been at twenty. It was lighter, though, having gone nearly white around fifty. Thin lips granted no cushion for the eye between the sharp jaw and angular nose, and a thin stubble covered his face every day but Sunday.

The big dipper tipped above his peach trees in the early evening, as if to empty itself in slaking them. Summer smells came to him from the fields—someone had cut hay today. He smoothed the hair back from his forehead and stretched his hands behind his head, let out a long breath and rolled his neck to this side, to that. Small popping of vertebrae. The warmth from the flask began to grow in his stomach. It was one of his few pleasures, he believed, and sipped again.

It always made him sad, this combination of Scotch and stars. Sad and reverent. He had read that the stars were moving further away from each other and from Earth all the time. Sometimes he wondered how much distance there had to be before distance started to matter to God. Surely he, too, had boundaries of far and near. A point beyond which he would have to say this far and no farther, or I won't hear if they do call. That God should be aware of him, in all that untellable distance, was a terrible and powerful thing. To never be free of that love or that wrath. Sometimes this certainty scared him, and sometimes the arrogance and smugness of it amused him. But it had often been of great comfort, as well. His father's father once saw Satan. Talked to him like one man talks to another. He was a missionary in the northeast when it happened. He and his companion

climbed the porch of a darkened house and found the door ajar. As they hesitated, a voice within said, "Come in, Elders." They entered and found the room dark and cold. A dampness hung in the air. A large man sat at a table. He said, "I know who you are, and I know why you're here." He had a Book of Mormon open on the table, and laid his hand on it. "I know this book is true," he said. "But I can't do anything about it." Each time he told the story, Wayne's grandfather talked of the smell inside the house. "It smelled evil," he'd say. "Just like when a ball of rattlesnakes comes outta their den in the springtime."

The man at the table called them by name and went on. "I will mow you down like hay if you stay here and preach about this book."

"My companion skedaddled," Grandfather always said, "but I didn't feel afraid. I looked him in the eye then turned and left. When I looked back, he was standing at the table just starin' at me."

Wayne accepted that evil was abroad in the Earth and knew his name. He accepted, also, that God was about, and that he, too, knew his name. He had often felt him very near. He felt him at certain places out in the fields, and sometimes when he talked to the church members in his office. But never when I ask, Wayne thought. Only when you want. The first time Wayne saw the sea—saw its gray meet the clouded horizon—he realized that the world was vast and he was nothing in it. He felt soothed to sense his own smallness and to remove himself from the center of all purpose and action. To let an Unknowable Something direct the world, the stars, the beating of his heart. He chose sometimes to call it God.

Things made the most sense to him when he was able thus to let go. The flask, his calling as Bishop, the great distances and strangeness of the world. Whenever he succeeded, even briefly, to remove himself from the equation, the broken pieces reformed themselves. He did not know another way to explain that God had called him, knowing his vice. Called him anyway. This he felt sure of. His Stake President was his friend. They had grown up together. "Well, Wayne," President Jensen had said, "it seems kinda strange askin' you these questions seein' as how I've known you so long."

"Ask," Wayne replied. "Maybe you don't know as much as you thought you did."

"Do you believe in God the Father and that His Son Jesus Christ is the savior of the world?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe that Heber J. Grant is a Prophet of God and support him as Seer and Revelator?"

Wayne began to nod his head midway through the question, and President Jensen picked up his pace.

"Are you morally clean?"

"Bob, I'm sixty."

"Yes, I suppose you are. I'll take that as a 'yes.'" There was nothing unusual about the questions—predictable ones Wayne had answered perhaps hundreds of times. He had even asked them on occasion, though doing so brought sweat to his palms. The questions, he knew, were on this occasion designed to explore his worthiness to be a Bishop. "Do you obey the Word of Wisdom?" President Jensen continued.

Wayne held his gaze with effort and a pause interrupted the rhythm of the interview. "Yes," he said, asking himself, which is the bigger sin?

President Jensen paused as well, returning Wayne's gaze for a moment of silence. "All right, then. Can you think of any reason you would not be worthy to serve the Lord as Bishop?"

Wayne could think of plenty. Yes, he thought. I'm human. But he tried to lighten the tone and said, "Well, Bob, like I said—I'm over sixty."

President Jensen laughed. "Yeah, Wayne. I'm sure the Lord knows that. But he's called you anyway. 'Even unto the renewing of their bodies' as the scripture says."

Called you anyway. Called you anyway. It echoed in Wayne's head like water dripping at the back of a cave. Two weeks later, Wayne was ordained Bishop of the third ward, wondering all the while what it meant that God had failed this test. Or had President Jensen failed it? Or that perhaps it was neither a failure nor a test at all, but just another web that would weave itself with or without his reckoning or permission, or even his agreement to play the part of tangled moth.

This evening on the porch, eight years later, he still did not know. He pulled on the flask, capped it, and slipped it into his pocket just as the screen opened and Ella came onto the porch. Forty-five years of marriage, many of them silent, lay behind them. She sat in the chair near his and leaned her head against its tall back.

She fanned herself with the dishrag. "Anybody goin' with you to Sevier tomorrow?"

"I asked that Sorenson boy to come along. He'll be 'round about daylight."

"Which one? Milt? Couldn't you find a grown man to go with you? Hope he likes sourdough. It's gettin' ahead of me with you not eatin' much."

"Who don't like sourdough? And he's fifteen. Been around stock his whole life."

"Their stock is dairy cows. Not beef cattle."

They rocked side by side. Did not look at each other. The coyotes yipped far out in the sagebrush.

"Looks like he'd like sourdough, 'th all the bread they eat over there. I know Melba bakes a dozen loaves twice a week."

Wayne said nothing. Everyone ate a lot of bread. And Milt was just one of Owen and Melba Sorenson's thirteen children.

"I wonder if sometimes that's all they eat?"

"Nothing wrong with that," he said. "Bread and milk and some green onion

makes a good supper."

"Alright. Just remember you said that. He know anything about bulls?"

He felt the weight of the flask in his pocket. He licked his lips. "Don't need to know much. Just need him to hold the gate."

Ella rocked faster. "Don't you go drivin' 'im with that mare. You're gettin' too old for that much horse."

"I'm not too old 'til I can't get on."

"Well, that'll be soon enough you keep ridin' like you used to. You let Milt drive 'im. You're not too old to hold the gate."

"I ain't lettin' no kid on my horse. All you got to worry about is breakfast 'fore we go. Best use that 'sparagus 'fore it gets too tough. Zucchini gettin' too big already."

"I'm 'bout zucchini'd out. That stuff just keeps comin' on."

"Land of milk and honey. And zucchini."

They stopped talking. When no grandchildren were around, silence filled the spaces between talk as easily as water runs to the level. Their chatty daughter, now grown, once asked Ella how she could stand it, not talking for hours or days. "Forty-five years, we been married," she had told her. "I guess anything we had to say, we said already. If he thinks of anything new, I reckon he'll holler." Still, they met each evening on the porch for such chat as this. And maybe that is all that should be asked of half a lifetime.

"I'm fallin' to sleep," Ella said. "Guess I'll get to bed."

"All right then. I'll set up a while. Prob'ly couldn't sleep anyway."

Ella touched his shoulder as she passed. The screen door swung to.

"Sure is a good woman." Wayne started, his eyes darting to the screen. Had he said it aloud? He was confused a moment, and knew he'd had enough Scotch.

That new bull was giving him some pains, so he drank more than usual. He bought it at a good price from Grant Hessop, on condition that he go to Sevier and bring the bull back himself. Hessop said he couldn't spare the men. "Like hell he couldn't," Wayne muttered. "Coulda hired anybody. Ornery fart just wants to put me out cause I drove him a hard bargain." And he knew the bargain had been successful because he knew too much about Grant Hessop. As Bishop, he was not only the spiritual leader of his ward, but was often a social leader and quasi-legal arbiter of disputes. Hessop had figured in many of them. Wayne once denied him a temple recommend because when he asked, "Are you honest in your dealings with your fellow men?" and Hessop answered, "Yes," Wayne knew it was a lie. It was not that the Bishop would tell anyone what he knew, but knowing gave him a certain power in Hessop's eyes.

He took a final swallow from the flask, then put it back under its board. He stepped on it to make it flush with the porch and thought about nailing the board into place. He wondered what would happen if someone found the loose board and went exploring. Scenarios played out in his mind as he imagined who would be the worst person to find the flask. A grandchild? A ward member? No, the worst would be Brother Thomas, his home teacher. Because he would feel it his

duty to help him "overcome" his problem. He imagined the subtle messages about the Word of Wisdom and obedience and Brother Thomas's sanctimonious face, heartily enjoying admonishing his Bishop.

He went in and went to bed, and sleep did come, eventually, from the Scotch and Ella's steady breath. Her back to him, he lay his hand on her hip, where it fit so well, had always fit, even as her waist thickened over the years. As he lay there, a breeze stirred the curtains, and he smelled the sage blossoms. The coyotes were still complaining out in the sage as his mind grew foggy, and he dreamed they were angels laughing and playing when God's attention was elsewhere. And in his dream, he sat on the porch with his flask and watched stars so bright they cast shadows. And as he watched, a man walked out from among the peach trees, out of the shadows like he was of their element, and stepped onto the porch and eased himself into Ella's rocker. Wayne nodded, passed him the flask. He tipped and lowered it quickly, wiped his sleeve across his mouth, shook his heavy jowls. The coyotes fell silent, the dipper tipped its contents into the orchard, light lay upon the dark surface of the world.

Milt found Wayne in the barn at dawn, scooping oats for his chestnut mare.

"Mornin', Bishop," he said.

"Mornin', yourself," Wayne said, shaking Milt's hand. "We're 'bout ready. Go 'round back and bring the truck up, so we can hitch up the trailer. Then we'll have breakfast and head out. You like sourdough?"

"Yeah."

"Figured you would." Milt brought the truck, and they hitched the old stock trailer to it. Wayne lifted the hood, climbed onto the bumper and checked the oil, filled the radiator with the garden hose. They had a breakfast of sourdough biscuits with sausage gravy, fried eggs, sliced tomatoes, cantaloupe, and cucumbers in iced vinegar. There were tomato juice and buttermilk to drink. Ella loaded Milt's plate again and again, as soon as it was nearly clean, until Wayne stopped her. "You tryin' to fatten him up for somethin'? Girls don't like too much flesh on a man." Milt laughed and blushed and could not finish the last servings Ella had given him.

They finished eating and rose, and Wayne went out to load his mare in the trailer while Milt thanked Ella ("Thank you kindly, Sister Doherty"). She gave him their lunch in a box covered with cheesecloth. "Thank you, Ma'am," he said, blushing again.

"Don't you let that old man on that horse," she said. "He falls off, he'll break 'bout everything he's got what ain't already broke."

"Yes Ma'am," Milt said. "I won't." When he got to the truck, Wayne had already got Caramel into the trailer. Bishop Doherty's horse was the object of many a covetous glance. He liked to ride her on his ditch rounds and made sure everyone got a good look at her. Sometimes he went out of his way to talk to someone changing water in the field, just so he could watch his eyes sweep over Caramel.

"Is that a lunch box?" he asked. "Told her we'd get somethin' on the road."

Milt looked down, shuffling his feet. "But I guess we'll bring it, now she went and made it. We might need it, the way you eat."

"Yes sir," Milt said, laughing.

The hour's drive to Sevier was largely quiet. They made some forays into chit-chat, but neither was very skilled, and silence was less awkward than trying to think of something to say. Finally they turned onto a dirt road and Wayne slowed, watching the fields and trees as they passed. At length he stopped. "Well, there he is," he said. A large hereford bull stood looking at them under the trees some distance from the road. It swung its great head to look into the cedars in the hills behind it, then looked back at them. "I sure hope he don't spook," Wayne said. "I'd hate to have to chase him through the cedars."

Milt cleared his throat. "I been meanin' to talk to you 'bout somethin'," he said. Wayne turned his head away, watched the bull intently. It kept turning to contemplate the thick cedars and hills behind it. Wayne wanted no part of what Milt had to say. He had heard too many teenage boys say that to him, in that pained tone of voice, much the way Milt just had. Too many adults, too, had approached him with eyes aflight—"I need to talk to you a minute." He saw his out, and took it.

"My hell, boy," he laughed. "You got nothin' to say for an hour drivin' here, and now there's work to do, you want to stop and yammer?"

Milt laughed, embarrassed. "Okay, it'll wait."

"What is it?" Wayne asked. As much as he disliked it, he knew Milt needed this talk, so he would hear it. He knew Milt had sweat and squirmed trying to screw up enough courage to say what he had just said.

Milt began to speak, but the bull saved them both. He wheeled and trotted twenty yards up the hill toward the cedars. "There he goes!" Wayne said. "Now what set him off? Soon's I get Caramel out, you back the trailer up to the loading chute." They both leapt from the truck, Wayne to open the trailer, Milt to take the driver's seat. Wayne got Caramel and his saddle and gear, and led the horse into the enclosure through the gate. He saddled her quickly and stepped up to mount, then Milt was by his side.

"Sister Doherty told me not to let you ride."

"You just get that trailer parked square with the chute."

"It's parked."

Wayne looked at the truck and trailer, backed to the stock chute and ready for the bull. "Well, you see Sister Doherty around?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"Alright then," Wayne said, and lifted his foot to the stirrup. Someone must have cinched the straps because he could not get his boot high enough to reach the stirrup. He lost his balance and held to the saddle horn to steady himself. He squared his body, lifted his knee again, higher than he should have, and a crick in his hip sent a pain stabbing down to his foot. "I'll be damned," he said, his face growing red. "Come on over here and give me a hand, will you?"

Milt stepped to Caramel's shoulder, bent and locked his hands together be-

tween the ground and the stirrup. Wayne stepped into his hands, despite the pain that warned him not to, and said, "On three. One, two three!" He transferred his weight and they both grunted as Milt began to heave, but as Wayne brought up his leg to swing over Caramel's rump, his left knee buckled and he splashed to the ground, kicking Caramel as he fell. She turned to look at him on the ground and cleared her throat.

He swore through gritted teeth as the dust rose around them. "Haven't you ever hoisted a body on a horse before?" he said, the words flowing even as he regretted them.

But Milt choked down a laugh. "I hoisted just fine. Your leg give out."

"I know, damnit!" Wayne said. "Help me up and let's get her over to the fence, so I can crawl up."

"Whyncha just let me ride?" Milt asked, levering Wayne to his feet.

"Leg's numb," Wayne said as they walked to the fence. "I'll be all right once I get up on her." He led Caramel to the corner near the stock chute where the posts were low to the ground and spaced close together. He stepped onto the first rail, then the second, but could not lift his foot to the third. He panted through clenched teeth, his nostrils whistling. "Crippled ol' fart!" He looked up at the bull, milling in the cedars, measured the walking distance. Moments passed while he rubbed his numb leg and the bull meandered further away from them.

"You think you can handle Caramel?" he asked the boy.

"I guess so."

"Well, get up on her then. Don't kick her, she don't like that. All you got to do to make her go is click your tongue. And easy on the bit—she's used to a light touch."

"Yessir." Milt was already mounted, and Caramel stepped sideways under the unfamiliar weight and smell of the boy.

"Easy, girl," Wayne said, patting her neck. "Don't go directly at him or he'll run more. Circle around him up the fence-line here and get back of 'im, then just walk 'im slow toward the truck."

Milt was already going up the fence.

"Slow down," Wayne said, walking behind him. "You look like you're up to somethin'. Ride natural." Milt did not hear him or did not care, and did not slow down. Wayne looked at the bull. He had forgotten them and was grazing, so Wayne limped his way toward the chute. He leaned on a rail and rubbed his tingling leg. He watched Milt grow smaller as he rode toward the trees, riding his horse, the mare he had raised from a foal and who knew what Wayne wanted before he knew it himself. He didn't like the way Milt sat her, too upright in the saddle. Too uptight. Caramel would know he was nervous and would think it his first time; she would take the reins and ride him over the hills, him squeezing her between his thighs, hoping he didn't wet himself, and they would not be back until she was satisfied, which might be dark. "Rides like a greenhorn," Wayne muttered, massaging some feeling back into his leg. The bull was still ig-

noring horse and rider, and Milt had got into the hills behind him. Wayne limped to the truck and struggled to the seat. He wished for his flask.

From the first, Milt wasn't sure he could handle Caramel at all. She seemed anxious to break from him at every step, and his hands grew tired from a too-tight grip on the reins. His legs were tired, too, and he realized he had been squeezing his thighs, as if to hold her in check with that impotent pressure on her ribs. He forced his hands and legs to relax, and tried to loosen his back and shoulders. Caramel blew and lifted her head higher.

Milt wished they could see him now. He imagined she belonged to him, that he rode her to church and school, and brushed her coat smooth and felt her soft lips pick sugar cubes from his hands. She was pure and good; you could see it in her eyes, in the way she stood, the way she ignored stallions' attentions when they smelled her. He once heard his uncle Grant offer the Bishop $500 to breed her to his roan stallion, but the Bishop had refused. As Grant stormed away, the Bishop caught Milt's eye and winked. Milt grinned.

"Whoa," Milt said, and reined her up gently. He looked around him and back down to the truck far down the slope. He could not see the bull, but guessed his position by where he had seen him last. The ground grew steeper ahead of him and the cedars thickened, and he hoped the bull had not gone farther up. "Where is he, girl?" he said. Caramel twisted her ears to him then dropped her head to crop the sparse grass. He clicked his tongue and cut across at a right angle from the fence he had been following. He rode a few minutes then turned Caramel down the slope, making his way toward the truck in long, indirect sweeps. At length he saw the bull close below him, looking at him between the trees.

He stopped. Bull, boy, and mare regarded one another. The bull had a large, squarish head with short horns that stood out at odd angles. His jaws worked slowly, and drool stretched nearly to the ground, swinging like a threaded pendulum whenever he moved his head. His nose shone with moisture and black flies walked in and out of his nostrils. His legs seemed too short for his massive shoulders and bulk, and his eyes stared dully at them. Beauty and the brute gazed at each other, mutually wary, the uncertain youth irrelevant between those extremes. Milt did not turn Caramel directly to the bull, but continued on his sweep hoping the bull would move slowly away from them toward the truck. But instead of turning down the slope away from the noise of the hooves, the bull turned his mass of flesh toward the horse and began to move toward them, slowly at first, then faster, intent.

Milt became nervous imagining the bull's short sharp horns buried in the flanks of the Bishop's prized mare. He waved his hat in the air and hollered at the bull as it walked, quickly now, up the slope to intercept them. "Ho! Git, you dumb cow!" The bull kept coming, gave a snort in response to Milt's voice. His tail stood erect in the air.

He had never seen a Hereford act this way, not even a bull. They were generally inert, hard to get in motion, lazy, uninterested shit machines. Was it

Caramel? The thought horrified him. Was she in heat? Would a bull act like this for the smell of a horse? He decided to try to turn the bull by riding straight at him, so he pulled Caramel's head downhill, nudging her in the ribs with his heels at the same moment he remembered Wayne's warning against kicking her.

She gave a short squeal and wheeled in the direction he reined her, but went too far and when she leapt into a run, was headed uphill into the thick cedars, away from the bull. Milt barely kept his saddle, choking the horn to stay on, then began to saw hard on the reins to turn Caramel or get her to stop. "Whoa! Ho, now!" He glanced over his shoulder to see the bull trotting toward them as Caramel sidled and jumped. "Oh, shit!" Milt said, digging her flanks with his heels. Caramel squealed again and, leaping sharply to her blind side, landed in a run. Milt's head snapped back and his hat dropped to the dust, rolling behind them as they crashed uphill through the cedars with the bull running hard behind.

Milt finally turned Caramel and she calmed down enough to begin to pick her way through the trees, so Milt no longer had to both dodge branches and try to keep his seat. He looked around him but could not see the bull. Or his hat. He patted and stroked Caramel's neck, and she slowed to a walk. He turned her down hill. The sun was high and it was hot already. The cedars smelled strong and mixed with the smells of dust and sage and horse sweat. "Is that bull after you, girl?" Milt said. The trees began to thin, and he looked down to the truck. Bishop Doherty was sitting in the shade of the trailer, leaning against the wheel. Milt's stomach grumbled. "Where's that damn cow? I'm gettin' hungry." He began to sweep again, backtracking slightly to find where the bull had turned away.

He spotted the bull just as it broke from the trees toward them, tail erect, head high. Caramel shifted her hooves and her shoulders shivered. "Easy, easy," Milt said, patting her neck. "I bet he's bluffing. Come on, you fat bastard!" he yelled. The bull stopped short and looked at them. Then it gave a long bellow and walked quickly straight toward them. Milt's hair stood on his neck. Caramel turned to glance at him, then arched her neck and flipped her muzzle, all in one motion, took the bit in her teeth, and wheeled down the hill toward the truck. Milt choked the horn again and tried to rein her up, but she held the bit and went her own way, the bull lumbering along after them. But it stopped as they neared the truck.

Wayne stood as they approached, brushing dust from his pants. "Well, that was some fine ridin', son," he said. "If you'd choked that horn any harder, you'd a broke it off." He wore a thin smile, but his jaw was tight. Milt said nothing as he slid from the saddle. He walked to the truck and drank from the water jug. "Took the bit from you, didn't she?" Wayne continued. "She must a decided she was better off 'thout you yankin' her around. I told you she liked a light touch."

"Well, it's hard to keep a light touch with a mad bull chasin' after you," Milt shot.

"Oh, he didn't mean nothin'. He's just bein' friendly. Prob'ly hasn't seen a man nor animal neither for weeks."

"Sure didn't look friendly," Milt said. He nearly asked if Caramel were in heat, but thought better of it. Wayne was not listening anyway. He had taken the saddle from Caramel's back and was rubbing her with the blanket. He led her to the trailer and reached into a bucket, drawing out a double handful of oats. She snuffed them from his hand, nickered. He bent down and took a forehoof in his hands and leaned into her until she lifted it. He inspected the shoe and hoof, cleaned debris from the frog and let it down. He checked each hoof then filled a bucket from the trailer with water. She drank long.

Milt sat in the narrow shade of the truck and drank also. The Bishop's care with Caramel embarrassed him, he felt he shouldn't be watching the scene, prayed there was nothing wrong with her hooves. What could he say? He had been given a chance every boy in the county had dreamed about and instead of acting like a man, he had nearly ruined the Bishop's horse. His neck burned and he breathed fast, splashed water on his face in case he should cry.

Wayne saw and let up. "Well, you hungry?" he asked. "We'll try the bull again later," he said but thought, I don't know how. There was no way he was letting the boy back on Caramel, and his hip and leg were growing stiffer. He took the lunch box from the truck and brought it to the shade where Milt sat with the water jug. He lifted the cheesecloth and removed hard boiled eggs, ham sandwiches wrapped in wax paper, salted radishes, and two pint jars filled with fresh peach sections and thick cream. "It's a wonder nothin' spoiled. There's just no tellin' that woman," Wayne said, laying out the food on the ground between them. He cracked an egg on a small rock and began to peel it.

"Eat up," he said. "You must 'a worked up an appetite hangin' on to that saddle."

Milt smiled and looked away, but began to eat. "Good ham," he said.

"Yeah," Wayne answered, chewing. "She was a good pig." Milt forked the peaches to his mouth with his pocketknife. The cream was thick and cool.

"Bulls are a lot like people" Wayne said. "Some of em's pretty smart, but most are dumber'n rocks. And there's mean ones and friendly ones, and the mean ones are almost always smarter'n you expect a cow to be. So since most of em are dumb, that means most of em are friendly. And that there is one dumb bull."

"How do you know he's dumb?"

"Hell, he don't even have sense to find shade. Look at 'im there." The bull stood some fifty yards from them, its tongue lolling from the effort of pulling his large form around the hillside after the horse. He stood in the sun, though shade was nearby. "Come to think of it, I've only known one smart Hereford. And he was nasty mean. Years ago."

They finished the meal in silence, and Milt began to fidget and clear his throat. Wayne stretched and sighed. "It's gonna be hard to get up now. You know, I been gettin' up early most of my life to work, usually from sunup til sundown. An' most ever' one of those long days, she's packed a lunch. I used to be the only feller on the crew who didn't have cold biscuit and bacon for lunch." He

stretched out his leg and rubbed it. He could think of nothing else to say to distract Milt from his purpose.

Milt cleared his throat once more and began to talk. "So anyways, I wanted to talk to you about somethin'."

"Oh, yeah," Wayne said with clenched teeth. "What is it?"

Milt paused and Wayne took the hat from his head, wiping his forehead on his sleeve. But before Milt could continue, the bull's large form trod once more upon that tenuous space between the resolve to speak and the utterance. "I'll be damned," Wayne said, looking past Milt up the hill. "Would you look at that!" Milt turned to look. The bull was walking steadily toward them from his sunny spot on the cedar covered hill. His head was low and his tongue was lolling, nearly brushing the ground. Thick froth hung from the corners of his mouth.

"I guess he smells our water," Milt said. "He's lookin' pretty thirsty."

"Yeah, thirst'll humble a Hereford just as quick as it will a man." Wayne watched the bull. It had stopped about thirty feet from the stock chute and regarded them dully. "I think he likes you," he said, smiling at Milt.

Looking at the boy, Wayne could see his burst of courage had left him, and that he would not again come so close to speaking out his ache.

"It's a funny thing," Bishop Doherty said. "You reckon animals got souls?"

"I don't know. I guess so."

"Look at 'im there. Just another beast of the field, and dumber 'n most. But even with the finest horse in the state, we couldn't make him do what we wanted. And now here he comes all by himself, maybe cause he's thirsty, maybe lonely. Maybe cause he's just good an' ready."

Milt sniffed. "Lonely? I never seen a lonely cow."

"Well, maybe. I don't know. Can't cows get lonely? Point is, that bull came by himself when he was ready. If we had just known that, we could've backed the trailer up to the chute and kicked back 'til he showed up. Thing is, I figure God knows that about us."

"But a man's not a bull."

Bishop Doherty laughed. "I reckon you're right about that. But the Lord don't go chasin' us 'round in the hot sun, either. He calls and waits. He knows the good ones will come. Maybe take a long route and trip a lot along the way, and drink some, and whack off, but they come. And he knows it. And Milt, he knows you're a good one." The bull stood at the mouth of the chute and sniffed the cedar posts, scratched his back and neck on the rails.

"You're sayin' to not—"

The bull took a few tentative steps up the chute, stopped to look at them, then walked quickly into the trailer. Wayne struggled to his feet and pushed home the bars that would separate the bull from Caramel during the drive home. When he turned, Milt was watching him, tense, waiting.

"I'm sayin' if you ain't got nobody pregnant or shot up, then don't be too eager to confess 'You're not always gonna be runnin' 'round the hillside. And don't mistake runnin' around in the trees for smashing down the fence and gettin' lost."

They loaded Caramel and were soon on the road. The wind coming in through the open windows was a relief, both from the heat and the pressure to talk. Once again, the man and the boy were largely silent on the road. It cost too much effort to talk above the rush of wind through the cab. And anyway, what was there to say?

Milt thought of his father and thought that he now understood what it meant last spring when his father had walked up on him masturbating behind the chicken coop. It had been a cool morning, and the sun on the coop's south side warmed his skin, his pants. It must have been the warmth—the spring all around. He sat down and bared himself to the sun and his dad walked around the corner. Both were shocked mute. Both numb with embarrassment. Milt put his penis back in his pants and stood to receive whatever was coming. He expected a lecture or a lesson on morality and the law of chastity, or briefly, even a beating. But after a moment his father put his hand on his shoulder and said, "Zip yourself up, boy. We got chores." He never mentioned it again. Milt had not known what to make of it. Prob'ly wished he'd never seen it, he thought, with the Bishop beside him and the wind in his hair. Soon he dozed, dreaming of girls and horses.

Wayne stopped the truck in front of Milt's house and thanked him for coming along. "No problem," Milt said. "See you Sunday." He jumped out of the truck and walked around the corner of his house toward the back. Wayne watched him go, the long skinny neck between t-shirt and hat so like a boy's, the arms and legs long enough for a man. One leg of his pants was hung on the back of his boot, but Milt walked on, not aware or not caring that he didn't look quite the man he felt. He was fifteen and the center of the world. Wayne put the truck in gear and pulled into the street. His hip and leg were stiff and throbbing. The old truck and trailer rattled as they moved.

Identifying the Sites at Mountain Meadows

A New Look at Old Sites on Mountain Meadows: Historical Topography, by Morris A. Shirts and Frances Anne Smeath (Cedar City, Utah: Southern Utah University Press, 2002), 71 pages.

Reviewed by M. Guy Bishop, Woods Cross, Utah.

This slim volume is intended by its publisher to inaugurate a series of monographs devoted to the study of the infamous 1857 massacre of over 100 emigrants by misguided Mormons and their Indian allies in southern Utah. The massacre was initially treated by historian Juanita Brooks in *Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1950) and, more recently, by Will Bagley in *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Mountain Meadows Massacre* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002). The current volume, centering upon the historical topography of the massacre, looks at "site issues": 1) Where at Mountain Meadows did the emigrant train camp? 2) Where were they attacked? 3) Where were they killed? 4) Where were they buried? and 5) What marks their graves?

Morris A. Shirts, professor and eventually Dean of the College of Education at Southern Utah University at Cedar City, dedicated his scholarly life to the history of Iron County, Utah, the scene of the atrocity. Shirts commenced work on this monograph at the urging of amateur historian and writer V. Lee Oertle of Beaver, Utah, and some of the descendants of the ill-fated California-bound emigrants who were massacred at Mountain Meadows. At the 1988 dedication of the new monument marking the events that had taken place at the site some one hundred and thirty years earlier, Oertle, the amateur historian, and Shirts, the college professor, began discussing their joint passion. The two men shared a compelling commitment to historical accuracy. In their view, the neglected aspects of the Mountain Meadows Massacre were the actual sites where the events had occurred. Following Shirts's passing in 1997, Frances Anne Smeath, a professional writer from Springville, Utah, completed his monograph.

The current volume and Will Bagley's definitive treatment of the massacre will doubtlessly be compared by future readers. Such a comparison may be blatantly unfair to this

volume, for the two books were written with totally different purposes in mind. *A New Look at Old Sites* is a limited monograph on site issues bearing upon the carnage while *Blood of the Prophets* is intended as a broad, sweeping coverage of the event.

Unfortunately, Shirts's passing some years before this monograph appeared and the publication dates of the two books (both 2002) rendered it impossible for the monograph to incorporate any insights from Bagley's work. Still, it should not be discounted as extraneous by students of the atrocity. Helpful, though limited, insights can be gained from A New Look at Old Sites. It does adequately meet its purpose of examining the site issues of the massacre. But this reviewer sees only a limited audience for the monograph.

Charismatic Leader and Organizing Genius

Joseph Smith, by Robert V. Remini (New York: Viking Books, 2002), 190 pages.

Reviewed by Paul Guajardo, Associate Professor of English, University of Houston.

In this biography of Joseph Smith by a non-Mormon historian, we have a short, readable, mostly chronological narrative that presents Joseph Smith and Mormonism as the products of a particular historical period. A professor emeritus from the University of Illinois, Robert Vincent Remini has written extensively about Andrew Jackson and what he calls "The Second Great Awakening." In this new book, he brings this perspective to bear on the life of Joseph Smith. Remini views or interprets most early nineteenth century events through this lens—a practice that is often enlightening, sometimes limiting. Certainly, the ethos of the times influenced Joseph Smith, but perhaps not as much as Remini thinks. He is sometimes guilty of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* (Y follows X, therefore X caused Y) reasoning. For example, in discussing the Word of Wisdom, Remini comments, "Joseph was obviously influenced by the rising activities of the Temperance Union, whose membership. . .agitated for total abstinence from all alcoholic beverages" (pp. 103-4). Maybe, maybe not. Remini's hypothesis does not account for the Word of Wisdom's injunction against tobacco, nor for its vegetarian bent, decidedly not popular at the time:

> "And it is pleasing unto me that they [flesh of beasts and of fowls] should not be used, only in times of winter, or of cold, or famine" (D&C 89: 12-13).

Remini also attributes the law of consecration to the spirit of the age:

> "Communitarianism was rampant in antebellum America. A number of experiments in communal living emerged. . . ." (p. 97).

This approach discounts revela-

tion, and or even the possibility of coincidence since for Remini Mormonism is largely the result of *zeitgeist* and the LDS church thrived "because so much of what [Smith] believed and taught resulted from the social, political, and intellectual dynamism of the Jacksonian age" (p. x). According to Remini the "United States changed more profoundly in the thirty years from 1790 to 1820 than during any other period" (p. 2). At this time, "The old Puritan belief in a stern deity poised to punish sin-prone man slowly yielded to the notion that humans were created in the image of God and therefore possessed the touch of divinity that elevated them above the rest of creation. . . .The idea of an elect chosen by God no longer had the same force it enjoyed in the colonial era" (p. 5). This was an era when "countless sects and other permutations of Christian belief suddenly appeared" (p. 7).

This careful and conscientious biography takes pains to be objective and balanced—and it is no easy task to avoid displaying one's personal disbelief or bias. Remini's sympathy for Mormons seems especially evident in the preface and in passages like this: "Lord knows, the Mormons needed a place of rest, away from those who would kill and rob them. They had been harried from state to state, suffering physical and mental torment. But they believed they were called by God through revelation to a higher destiny. . . ." (p. 141). While the book has merit for general readers, such readers might be rare. This volume will certainly appeal to Mormons and perhaps to critics, but neither will be fully satisfied with Remini's endeavor to be objective. Joseph Smith was either a prophet of God who restored the true church of Jesus Christ or he was an utter charlatan. Discussions of whether he was an organizing genius or a charismatic leader are of secondary or tertiary concern. Thus, Mormons will tire of Remini necessarily qualifying so many of his statements: "Mormons will most likely believe every word of it; non-Mormons will be understandably skeptical" (p. 23); "it claims to recount God's interaction" (p. 68); "the revelations Joseph allegedly received" (p. 107); "a decent man who claimed to be a prophet" (p. 181), and so forth. As a historian writing objectively, Remini has no other course. Nevertheless, Latter-day Saints will find this method a bit tedious while critics might feel Remini is too open-minded.

The value of this scholarly biography lies in the historical context Remini provides. He portrays a time of romanticism, utopian dreams, transcendental philosophies, socialism, spiritualism, divination, folk magic, sectarianism, and general religious fervor. "Into this maelstrom of economic, political, intellectual, and religious turbulence Joseph Smith Jr., the Prophet, was born. Religious excitement was part of the very air he breathed" (p. 8). In regard to the First Vision, Remini shows that such manifestations were not unheard of: "During the Second Great Awakening many men and women—particularly adolescents—claimed to have seen and talked with God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ" (p. 10). He notes that the Book of Mormon "has a distinctly American character. . . .It is a story that people of

the Jacksonian era could easily relate to and understand because it is part of a very American tradition. . . .[I]t radiates revivalist passion, frontier culture and folklore, popular concepts about Indians, and the democratic impulses and political movements of its time" (p. 72).

While certainly not hagiography, this biography is positive and sympathetic, and the praise it bestows on Joseph will be well-received by church members, as was Harold Bloom's *The American Religion*, which proclaimed Joseph Smith a religious genius. Remini writes that "The founder of this Church. . .is unquestionably the most important reformer and innovator in American religious history" (p. ix) and that "Joseph Smith is the religious figure in United States history who has had the largest following" (p. x). In addition to his role as prophet, Joseph Smith was "Nauvoo's mayor, chief justice, lieutenant general, trustee of the university, real estate agent, publisher of a monthly newspaper, proprietor of a store, part owner of a Mississippi steamboat, a subscriber to the Nauvoo Agricultural and Manufacturing Association, and a member of the newly formed Masonic lodge" (p. 163). Remini labels him " [a] charismatic leader and an organizing genius. . .of little formal education but of striking intellectual power, [who] produced a vast amount of religious writing that has influenced millions of people around the world" (p. 180). "He was obviously a remarkable man who accomplished something truly exceptional" (181).

Aside from being situated within the useful historical context of "The Second Great Awakening," this biography adds no new material. LDS readers might take some exception to Remini's occasional regurgitation of some unsubstantiated biographical speculations, allegations, and hearsay concerning Joseph's many wives (e.g., he quotes Fawn Brodie but not the more thorough *In Sacred Loneliness* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997] by Todd Compton). Nevertheless, the book provides a good balanced introduction for general readers. Perhaps this biography will be responsible for increased interest in our faith, for ultimately Robert Remini effects a positive service to Joseph Smith and to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

A Frank Analysis of a Troubling Legacy

All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage, by Armand L. Mauss (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 343 pp.

Reviewed by Thomas W. Murphy, Chair, Anthropology Department, Edmonds Community College, Lynnwood, Washington.

Armand Mauss, professor emeritus of Sociology and Religious Studies at Washington State University, has produced the authoritative and definitive study of the evolution of Mormon conceptions of race and lineage. As a practicing Latter-day Saint, former editor of *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, and former president of the Mormon History Association,

Mauss brings together the intimacy of an insider, the empirical rigor of a social scientist, and a historian's attentiveness to change in an admirable weaving of three intertwined story lines.

In his first story line Mauss "illustrates the power of religious ideas and human behavior on each other, indeed on the operational definition of reality itself" (p. 1). He delicately examines the interplay between Mormon evangelism and the religious ideas and self-conceptions of Mormons and their new converts. For example, the failure of Mormons in the nineteenth century to achieve much enthusiastic reception and retention of the indigenous peoples they called Lamanites was followed late in the century by a shift in their perception: instead of seeing them as chosen Israelites, destined to join the saints in the construction of a new Zion, they saw them as just Indians, an image comparable to that found elsewhere in the United States. In the mid-twentieth century, largely under the leadership of Spencer W. Kimball, Mormons came once again to view Indians primarily as Lamanites as they engaged in renewed efforts to evangelize, foster, and educate Indian children. Disappointed with the results from these educational and social endeavors directed towards North American Indians, church leaders abandoned Indian programs in the mid-1980s, shifting focus and attention to the new Lamanites of Mexico and Central America where proselytizing had been more effective. Mauss finds similar patterns of influence between evangelism and identity construction among Mormons from Europe and Polynesia.

Another story line examined by Mauss "implicates religious ideas in the creation of racial prejudice and invidious ethnic distinctions" (p. 1). The influence of church policy and doctrine on Mormon prejudice towards Blacks illustrates the power of religious ideas. Belief that Blacks belonged to the cursed lineage of Cain "virtually prevented proselyting altogether until 1978" when through revelation Kimball lifted the ban on Black participation in the priesthood (p. 274). Ironically, the change in this case came about after "longsuffering prospective converts themselves. . . reached out to the church and patiently waited for the LDS leaders to abandon their anachronistic understanding of Africans and their lineage" (p. 274). The effects of this legacy are felt most heavily in the United States where the LDS church still faces considerable difficulty attracting and retaining African-American members. Africans, at a distance from U.S. racial politics, appear to have been more receptive to the LDS gospel. Mauss notes, "The identification of blacks with Cain, however, has never been officially dropped or even mildly disavowed by church leaders" (p. 275). Interviews with black Mormons suggest, "As long as the folklore about Cain continues to circulate among white Mormons, many of them will continue to impose an identity on blacks that will greatly complicate relationships and church growth" (p. 275).

Mauss's third story line "explores the construction and reconstruction of various people's identities" (p. 1). He identifies ethnic, religious, and family identities as "products of negotiations

across time between peoples—often peoples of unequal power" (p. 1). This negotiation can be seen not only in Mormon relations with American Indians and Blacks, but also in the peculiar Mormon relation with Jews. Despite the obvious strength of their claim to an Israelite heritage, Jews have not been significant targets of Mormon evangelism.

> The Mormons came to see their relationship with the Jews as one of two brothers, Judah and Joseph (or Ephraim), kneeling before the same Father. Ephraim might claim a superior understanding of the Father's ultimate will and might even reach out to the more recalcitrant brother, but it is left up to the Father himself finally to bring Judah back into the tent with the rest of Abraham's children. (p. 273)

While this view is "condescending. . .it has proved historically to be a strong neutralizer of the hostile anti-Semitism characteristic of mainstream Protestantism and Catholicism" (p. 273). Jews stand out as an exception to general patterns of Mormon missionary initiatives; they occupy a somewhat protected state characterized by "a deferential reluctance about proselyting" (p. 273).

While this book is an exceptional and rigorous evaluation of Mormon constructions of race and lineage, it does not fully examine the influence of LDS scriptures on racialism and prejudice in LDS thought. Mauss focuses on the uses Mormons have made of their scripture, not on the influences of similar religious ideas in Joseph Smith's environment on the sacred narratives he published. Yet Mauss forthrightly acknowledges questions regarding the historicity of those texts, especially the Book of Abraham. He writes of the discovery in 1967 of the Joseph Smith papyrus fragments:

> All the experts who studied the papyrus, Mormon and non-Mormon alike, agreed that it seemed to be a common funerary text from an Egyptian period much later than that of Abraham. Translated into English by the usual academic methods, the text bore no resemblance to the writings that Joseph Smith had attributed to Abraham. This discovery did not, of course, receive much publicity in the church, but it set Mormon scholars and apologists to work searching for an alternative explanation for the Book of Abraham. (p. 239)

He is similarly frank about the Book of Mormon, but in this case he leaves the impression that only non-Mormons regard it as a nineteenth-century document: "Although Joseph Smith presented the Book of Mormon to the world as his translation of an ancient document, it is generally regarded by non-Mormons as a nineteenth-century product, whether or not it was divinely inspired. (p. 117) Of course, there are many Mormon scholars who agree with the conclusions of their colleagues that the Book of Mormon is a product of the nineteenth century. Mauss appears to have left a fuller exploration of the constructions of race and lineage in Joseph Smith's cultural environment and his scriptural productions to other scholars. Given the necessity of focusing his narrative

and the costs that such endeavors may entail, this omission is understandable, even if regrettable.

One of the significant strengths of the book is the attention Mauss devotes to the perspectives of LDS ethnic minorities. His examination of constructions of race and lineage treats Nahua Mormons such as Margarito Bautista and Agrícol Lozano and Navajo Mormons like George P. Lee and Ella Bedonie as active participants in the development of Lamanite identities (pp. 101-103, 129-131, 146-150). He similarly devotes attention to interviews of African American Mormons by Alan Cherry, "a prominent black convert of many years" (p. 243). Of course, there is still much work to be done to better record and understand the views of ethnic minorities in the LDS church, but Mauss makes great strides in Mormon historiography by engaging and incorporating recent scholarship on identity and subjectivity.

All Abraham's Children is not only a book for scholars; it needs to read widely by members and church leaders alike. Mauss does a very impressive job of synthesizing four decades of research and making it accessible to lay persons as well as specialists. The book is an excellent testament to the compassion, integrity, balance, and enduring legacy of one of Mormonism's best social scientists.

CONTRIBUTORS

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HEATHER MCCLELLAN is a freelance artist working with a variety of corporations, journals, individuals, and LDS-related publications. Her current work with the world's largest publicly held social expressions company has fanned her interests in graphic design and children's illustration. Heather's "Sites of the Saints" series (included in this issue of *Dialogue*) was completed in 2002 as part of her thesis requirement at the Cleveland Institute of Art; it includes eight ink drawings of the restored Mormon sites in northeast Ohio. While she is continually experimenting with other media and subject matter, Heather aspires to expand her portfolio in the directions in which she's now headed—with special emphases on LDS and children's art. Most of all, she hopes to express her versatility and creativity in her family life as much as in her artwork. She and her husband, Richard, share the joys of a 19-month-old daughter and have a second child on the way. Ms. McClellan can be contacted at <wrinhker@comcast.net>.

DRAWINGS:

All drawn in 2002 with ink on a scratch-board surface

Cover:	*Kirtland Temple*
Back Cover:	*John Johnson Inn* (originally known as the Peter French Inn)
Inside Back Cover:	*Kirtland Schoolhouse*

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