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*A Journal of Mormon Thought*

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# DIALOGUE

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Manuscripts should not exceed thirty-five double-spaced pages, including notes, references, and tables. They should follow the 15th edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* and be submitted in either electronic and hard copies. Electronic copies are preferred. They should be submitted as attachments in Word or WordPerfect to dialoguemss@aol.com. A hard copy may be mailed to the Dialogue Submissions Office, 704 228th Ave. NE #723, Sammamish, WA 98074. For submission of visual art, consult the editor for specifications at dialoguemss@aol.com.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*Unhealthy Rhetoric*

I enjoyed Allison Stimmler's reflections on missionary motivational rhetoric (Vol. 36, no. 3). Given the wealth of research showing that men are more overtly aggressive than women, Stimmler is probably right to suggest that rhetoric based on tropes of competition, sports, and war appeals to elders more than sisters.

However, I would caution against concluding that because such rhetoric appeals to male missionaries, it is therefore "right" for them—that such rhetoric meets their particularly male needs. It is not inevitable that, because most LDS missionaries are male, missionary culture will be driven by a business-like concern for numbers, nor is it inevitable that missionary rhetoric be dominated by athletic and military metaphors. The Church could foster a missionary culture that is pastoral rather than numbers-driven, that values quiet dignity over locker-room exuberance, and that encourages missionaries to think of themselves as sowers, shepherds, or teachers rather than warriors. One can, in fact, find statements that indicate Church leaders *want* missionaries to exemplify quiet dignity and pastoral concern. This is not so much a question of gender as it is one of different models of religiosity.

The motivational strategies used in the sisters' conferences that Stimmler describes (talking frankly about depression and the frustrations of the work, being assured that it's all right to feel negative emotions) could benefit many missionaries, regardless of gender. There are two reasons I suspect such strategies are not widely used—and here gender does come into play, but more indirectly.

First, in order to talk about their feelings in the way the sisters did at their special conferences, elders would have to open up in a way that is atypical for men in our society. Men aren't supposed to admit that they feel vulnerable or weak (though I'm inclined to think it would be healthy for them to do so). Instead, elders, along with sisters, get pep talks from the mission president and stand together to belt out "We Are All Enlisted." The point of these performances is to help missionaries overcome feelings of inadequacy but in a way that doesn't require them to articulate those feelings, since that's not "what men do."

Second, I suspect that mission leaders craft their motivational rhetoric on the assumption that most missionaries spend most of their time in a state of moderate motivation and therefore need to be "worked up." Hence the pep talks: the lofty goals, the incredible stories about other missionaries' successes, the extravagant promises of the blessings that follow sacrifice, the constant insistence on doing better. This rhetoric is delivered on the assumption that, after the high of zone conference wears off, most missionaries will settle back into a less demanding routine and will therefore need to be worked up again next month. I further suspect that, for most missionaries, this rhetoric works exactly as it's intended to. The problem is that for missionaries who start with a high motivation, this rhetoric can produce debilitating feelings of guilt or inadequacy.

Perfectionists of any gender face this problem. But sisters, as a group, may seem more vulnerable because

they, unlike the elders, aren't expected to serve and therefore may come to missionary service with higher levels of motivation than most elders.

My point is that it would be a mistake to think elders need martial pep talks while sisters need to discuss their feelings of inadequacy. The dominant rhetorical strategies for motivating missionaries are problematic for highly motivated individuals, regardless of gender. And this rhetoric is implicated in corporate and militant styles of religiosity that are arguably unhealthy for everyone.

*John-Charles Duffy*
*Salt Lake City*

*Response to Tobler*

Douglas Tobler's letter to the editor ("Writing Something That Matters," Spring 2003) demonstrates, I believe, that the adjustment back to "civilian life" after a mission is a difficult one. When I was serving in the presidency of the Baltic States Mission, I remember feeling that the experience of trying to make the gospel work in the former Soviet Union reduced my spiritual life to its essence. When my wife, Ruth, and I first went to Lithuania, we were the only members of the Church in the entire country. In those first months, not only did we face the challenges of finding enough food and keeping our apartment warm (and praying for hot water), but we found our spiritual lives reduced to the fundamentals. I remember writing to a friend that, in trying to plant the seeds of the restored gospel in a land that had lain barren for nearly a hundred years (the restored gospel had first been introduced to western Lithuania at the turn of the last century), we didn't have the luxury of worrying about some of the problems that had occupied us at home. In the face of finding places to meet, supervising translation of Church materials, facing hostile media, working with young missionaries, etc., intellectual complexities, doctrinal nuances, or questions about ecclesiastical practice just didn't seem that important.

Perhaps some of this explains the substance and tone of Professor Tobler's letter; and yet it is surprising, that having lived in a country (Poland) in which the suppression of personal expression, the manipulation of history, and the repression of intellectual inquiry not only retarded Polish culture but, I would guess, also made it more difficult to spread the gospel message there he could be so starkly anti-intellectual. In fact, I would characterize his sentiments as not simply anti-intellectual but angrily so. How else explain such expressions as "self-styled intellectuals," "worldly intellectuals," "know-it-all intellectuals," "intellectual drivel," "intellectual fads," "arrogant intellectual pride," and "intellectual . . . immaturity"?

Tobler's characterization of naturalist intellectuals is not softened by any qualifiers: "*All* lack the absolute prerequisites for saying something true, wise, or significant: faith in God and Jesus Christ, a living testimony of the gospel and the Restoration, real experience in responsible Church callings, and the living companionship of the Holy Ghost" (emphasis mine). According to Tobler, intellectuals lack "*any* form of meekness and humility" (emphasis mine). This kind of anti-intellectualism is dangerous, for it stereotypes intellectuals as enemies of the Church at a time when anti-intellectualism is on the rise.

Tobler goes beyond attacking the scholarship and thinking of intellectu-

als who represent "a purely naturalistic viewpoint" to attacking their spirituality. He sees them as "faithless," as seeking "the applause and honor of other worldly intellectuals and secular fame," as "worldly," as "spiritual pygm[ies]," and as lacking "*any* kind of spiritual qualification" (emphasis mine). He seems to argue that intellectuals have no role in the Church: "The world of faith is a world they know nothing about"; they are "without the Holy Ghost and a living testimony"; and "most do not believe . . . that the Lord plays a role in human history generally and especially in the direction of his church."

While I do not personally know all of the scholars Tobler lists, I do know several quite well and feel that his characterization of them is unfair and inaccurate, not to say uncharitable. How does Tobler know whether these people have the Holy Ghost or whether they "believe . . . that the Lord plays a role in human history"? Over the past thirty years, the Church has had no better friend than Jan Shipps. Besides being an excellent historian and commentator on Mormon culture, Jan is a believing Christian. She has made an invaluable contribution to Mormon history, especially in helping outsiders see some of our more positive characteristics. The same could be said for Michael Quinn. Although he has been excommunicated (unjustly, many of us believe), Michael has retained his testimony of the gospel and his belief in the historicity of the Book of Mormon. (See Quinn's "Apologia Pro Mea Via" in the December 2003 *Sunstone*.) In addition, he has written some of the most important studies on Mormon history in the past several decades. While I may not always agree with his conclusions, I have had no reason to question his integrity as a historian or as a believer.

One wonders how Tobler arrived at such a portrait of intellectuals, many of whom are committed Latter-day Saints with profiles of faithfulness that match or even exceed those of the general Church population. This isn't to say that, in the Mormon intellectual community, there are not those who may have some of the characteristics Tobler lists, but it is to argue that most do not. Some of those who publish in *Dialogue* and *Sunstone* might be characterized as antagonistic to the Church and some might clearly be said to have anti-Mormon biases, but most with whom I am acquainted are honorable and honest and appear to be attempting to understand Mormon history and culture with the best tools they have, including spiritual tools.

Anyone who has read very much Mormon history over the past three or four decades knows that some of our worst history has been written by faithful members (those Tobler characterizes as having the Holy Ghost) and some of the best by those Tobler denigrates as faithless. Apostates, excommunicants, and nonmembers as well as faithful members are capable of writing good or bad history. Some of the most significant insights into the Mormon experience in modern times have come both from those who write "faithful history" as well as those who write from a more skeptical, naturalistic scholarly position. Both are limited and yet both can enlighten us. We should be open to what each can teach us.

On a recent trip to Washington, D.C., I saw Brecht's *Galileo* (David Hare's translation). Galileo is a good example of the problem we sometimes have with determining truth. The Catholic Church insisted on its

version of the solar system (relying on what it considered the supremacy of the Bible and the declarations of the pope) in the face of scientific evidence to the contrary. At one point in the play, Galileo says, "Truth is the daughter of time, not the prisoner of authority." Sometimes Mormon history has been the prisoner of authority.

I don't wish to be unfair or uncharitable to Professor Tobler. I appreciate the fact that he has given a lifetime of faithful service to the Church. I know he enjoys a reputation among his former students and colleagues at BYU as an outstanding teacher and scholar. And there is some truth in the points he makes; sometimes intellectuals are proud, arrogant, and perhaps even "faithless." Some seem to be contentious, hostile, and unfair to the Church. Worse, some seem to lack charity for General Authorities, faithful Saints, or the writers of "faithful history." But to draw such an extreme and distorted picture of intellectuals is also unfair, hostile, and uncharitable.

As a long-time supporter of and participant in Mormon intellectual circles (serving both as editor of *Dialogue* and as chair of the Sunstone Board of Trustees), I know that there are risks to having open dialogue about our past. I share Professor Tobler's disdain for those who are motivated by pride or anger, for those whose scholarly work is destructive rather than constructive, and especially for those who lack basic civility in their discourse. Unfortunately, however, I have found such characteristics among apologist as well as naturalist writers and critics.

In his letter to the saints at Corinth, Paul gives sound advice to all of us—intellectual and nonintellectual alike: "Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts" (1 Cor. 4:5).

*Robert A. Rees*
*Brookdale, California*

*A Final Thank You*

I learned with sorrow that a devoted *Dialogue* volunteer, author, and subscriber, Marc Schindler passed away a few months ago. Marc emailed me several years ago, explaining in a sincerely gentle and matter-of-fact way, that I was handling our email mass mailing incorrectly and compromising the privacy of our subscribers. I asked him if he would be willing to take on the tedious task so that I could be sure it was being done right. He readily agreed and told me that due to a medical condition, he was no longer employed and didn't know how long he'd be around; but to help him keep his mind active, he would gladly take on the job of maintaining our ever-changing email list and sending out the notices. He warned that he might not always be available if he wasn't feeling well and offered a back-up system. I was touched that he shared this part of his life and elated that this would be a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Each time I asked him to do another project, he was always concerned that he couldn't finish what he started, but the back-up system was never necessary. He was always there, always said yes, always completed his projects on time. He was, of course, greatly overqualified for this important, tedious, and laborious task. I was so grateful for his selfless willingness to repeatedly take on such an unglamorous task and for teaching me things

that ultimately made my job easier and more efficient.

Marc's contribution to *Dialogue* in his condition speaks volumes about the character of the caring, sensitive, and generous man he obviously was. My heart goes out to his family and friends. Though I never met him, he touched my life, and I will be forever thankful for knowing him and for his help. I know I said this to him when he was here; but if there is a place that he can hear me now, "Many, many thanks again, Marc, for all the work you did. I miss you."

*Lori Levinson*
*Dialogue Business Manager*

*Correction*

The former editors regret that the last line of Newell G. Bringhurst's article, "A Biographer's Burden: Evaluating Robert Remini's *Joseph Smith* and Will Bagley's *Brigham Young*," *Dialogue* 36, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 97–107, was cut off in production. The final sentence should have read: "Indeed, as with Joseph Smith, the truly definitive biography of Brigham Young remains to be written."

*Neal Chandler*
*Editor Emeritus*

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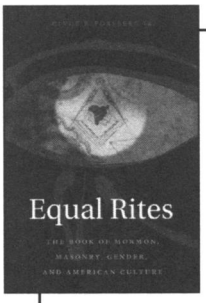


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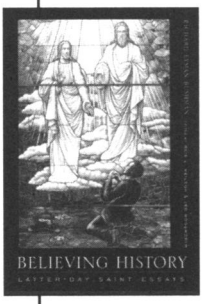


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# Living and Dying with Fallout

*Mary Dickson*

> "There is no danger." –Atomic Energy Commission[1]
>
> "Going back to testing has nothing to do with a war on terror. It is terror itself." –Darlene Phillips, downwinder[2]

LAST SUMMER, WHILE I WAS reading the *Salt Lake Tribune*, I stumbled across the obituary of a beautiful woman who looked uncannily like my older sister, Ann. That's why I read her obituary. Only when I saw the list of Lisa McPhie's survivors did I realize she was Lisa Lundberg, who had grown up with me on a quiet tree-lined street in Salt Lake City. Her older sisters were my best friends in junior high school. We were inseparable then. Thirty years later, Lisa, who watched our teenage escapades with a hint of bore-

---

MARY DICKSON *is an award-winning Salt Lake City writer who has written about nuclear testing-related topics and worked on issues of peace and justice for three decades. A former newspaper reporter who now works in public broadcasting, she has written newspaper and magazine articles, essays, and opinion pieces on a broad range of subjects. She wrote and coproduced the PBS documentary* No Safe Place: Violence Against Women. *Her monologue,* Eager, *was performed and published by the Salt Lake Acting Company and is used in several college English courses.* *This essay includes some excerpts from her "Downwinders All," in* Learning to Glow: A Nuclear Reader, *edited by John Bradley (Phoenix: University of Arizona, 2002), 127–31.* *©2000 The Arizona Board of Regents. Reprinted by permission of the University of Arizona.*

1. Voice-over narration, Atomic Energy Commission, *Atomic Tests in Nevada*, film, 1955; VHS tape of film in my possession.

2. Darlene Phillips, "Radiation Is Radiation," letter to the editor, *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 26, 2004, A-6.

dom, was dead of a rare blood disorder that had defied diagnosis since she first became ill in 1985.

The same week she died, I learned that Terry Cantrell, another friend from our Canyon Rim neighborhood, had died of the brain tumor that plagued her since we were teenagers.

I added their names to the long list of my elementary school classmates, neighbors, and friends who have died or become ill over the last forty years. The list begins with Mr. Howell, who left behind a wife and five children when he died of a brain tumor at age thirty-nine. Next was ten-year-old Tammy Packard, whose head had been shaved before a futile operation to save her from a brain tumor when I was eight. Her younger brother died within a few weeks at age four and a half of testicular cancer, a rare cancer for a child so young. Tammy's devastated parents asked the pediatrician if it could be a coincidence that ten other people in the neighborhood also had cancers, including several brain cancers.[3]

The cancers took longer to grow in other kids my age. Quiet LaDawn Montague was twenty-nine and pregnant when she was diagnosed with a bone marrow-related childhood cancer rare in adults. She died in 1985, five days after her daughter was born. I remember it because it was the same year I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. Like me, perky Janine Bush around the corner was in her twenties when doctors found nine malignant nodes on her thyroid. Joyce Rees, across the fence, has struggled for fourteen years with a primary immune deficiency disorder that has meant a lifetime of repeated infections. Her sister bore three children with birth defects. Her aunt, who lived next door to them, died of brain and ovarian cancer. Michael Hill, who lived down the street from my family, died of non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Gordon Hillier, who lived a few doors down, died of leukemia. Marcie Boley, one street over, has suffered for more than a decade with a malignant brain tumor. The cancer has now spread to her spine. No wonder our friend Murray Howell said he felt lucky to turn forty.

My sister Ann and I counted almost twenty-six people we knew of from our old neighborhood who died or became sick from various can-

3. Cathy Packard, Tammy's mother, says she was later asked to release her children's medical records to researchers. The request was made through the hospital. Packard was never told who the researchers were, what they were looking for, or what they found.

cers, autoimmune diseases, or rare blood disorders. Marilynn Rogers and Colleen Hill, who grew up with us, keep a list of their own. Colleen's brother died of lymphoma; her sister has lupus, an autoimmune disease; and Colleen was diagnosed in her twenties with primary immune deficiency disease.

Colleen was twice a patient at the UCLA Medical Center, where she was seen by a doctor who went to Chernobyl after the meltdown. "I always thought it was odd that they thought it was brought on by radiation exposure," she told me. "I told them I was never in Southern Utah during testing, but they kept insisting that something happened, that I got the exposure some place. They thought perhaps I just didn't remember being in Southern Utah on a childhood vacation. They kept saying the immune system doesn't just shut down without a reason, and that radiation exposure was one of the biggest." When she told her immunologist about all the cancers in her old neighborhood, he asked her where she grew up as "he wanted to make sure he didn't buy a house in that area."[4]

Colleen's list includes forty-two people, many of them my old schoolmates and their family members, whom I hadn't heard had died or were sick. They suffered from brain tumors, leukemia, lymphoma, thyroid cancer, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, pancreatic cancer, lung cancer, liver cancer, stomach cancer, neuroblastoma, lupus, multiple sclerosis, miscarriages, and birth defects. The list is still growing. Keeping it hasn't been easy. Many of our old neighbors have married, left the state, or moved on, taking their illnesses and their medical histories with them. I regularly read the obituaries, looking for others. Often, I find strangers on those pages who share an important connection: "'Kip' Riches. Born May 4, 1931. Died after a five-year battle with a bone marrow disease. He witnessed atomic bomb testing in Yucca Flat, NV."

Two years ago, I wrote my sister Ann's obituary. She was forty-six when she died after suffering for nine long years from lupus. Summing up her life in a few short paragraphs was the hardest assignment I ever had. After struggling for words to define her and the three children she left behind, I included one important line: "She was a downwinder." A simple declarative sentence, just as "He witnessed atomic bomb testing"

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4. Except where indicated, the quotations in this article are based on personal interviews I conducted between February and December 2003.

was a simple statement of fact that belied the years of suffering and the human toll of four decades of nuclear testing.

I can't prove that our illnesses were caused by exposure to fallout from nuclear testing. Determining cause and effect is a problematic, incredibly complex business, made more difficult by notoriously incomplete record-keeping during the years of testing. But although direct cause is nearly impossible to prove, the data have led many researchers to conclude that there is a strong correlation between exposure to fallout and cancer. What I keep running up against in my search for answers is the dichotomy between the demand for conclusive scientific evidence and the undeniable evidence of human experience, and I'm led to ask why so many of my friends and neighbors got sick or died without explanation. There could be other causes for our illnesses,[5] and I can't say for certain that they are radiation related, but it is true that for many years all of us lived downwind. There is no denying our experience. This much I have learned: No one can prove that exposure to radiation *didn't* make us sick.

How many others like us have there been? How many more will there be?

* * *

A war doesn't have to be declared for it to claim victims. In the name of protecting us from the threat of Communism, our own government conducted what amounts to a secret nuclear war, dropping more than a hundred atomic bombs on the deserts of Nevada from 1951 to 1962 and regularly exploding hundreds more underground until 1992. Those bombs, a quarter of them more powerful than the one dropped on Hiroshima, were exploded only when the wind blew eastward. An exaggerated fear of Communism led the U.S. government to be the first to develop and use weapons of mass destruction. They used those weapons against the civilians of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing an estimated

5. For decades, the U.S. Army also tested germ agents, nerve gas, and radiological weapons in Utah's west desert. Lee Davidson, "Can Utah's MS Rate Be Linked to Tests?" *Deseret News*, December 31, 1994, A-1, reported that 328 open-air germ warfare tests took place in Dugway, Utah; 1,174 open-air tests of chemical arms, mostly nerve gas; and 74 tests of weapons that spread radioactive particles in the wind.

220,000 people instantly and in the immediate aftermath.[6] Then, for four decades our own government used similar nuclear weapons against us as part of the program of nuclear testing. No foreign enemy has done as much harm to American civilians as has our own government. "They done to us what the Russians couldn't do," one downwinder said.[7]

* * *

I did not always realize these connections. Growing up in Salt Lake City in the 1960s, I don't remember hearing about nuclear testing. We had bomb drills in grade school that sent Tammy Packard, LaDawn Montague, and the rest of us scurrying under our desks as part of the "duck and cover" defense which supposedly would keep us safe if the Russians dropped an atomic bomb. Or we shuffled off to the school's dark basement, toting our Clorox jugs of water, laughing about what we'd eat and where we'd pee if we were really trapped in that dirty basement. We greeted these drills more as unannounced recesses than serious preparation for possible disaster.

We watched films in school assemblies about what America would look like if the Communists took over. We heard about the "Red menace" and godless Communists, but we didn't hear about cancers or strange tumors or fallout. We drank our milk and ate our vegetables, assuming that, as the Mormon hymn told us, all was well. In the winter, we ate snow cones made from snow and sugar.

My father was a professor of meteorology at the University of Utah. He understood weather patterns and jet streams. Still, we didn't hear about how the winds carried radioactive fallout across the heartland and as far as the eastern seaboard. Our neighbors who could afford it were busy in those years building fallout shelters. When the Reds dropped atomic bombs, they'd be ready. My family couldn't afford to retrofit, so we settled instead for a well-stocked food storage room in our unfinished basement. Little did any of us know that the Department of Defense was

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6. Arjun Makhijani and Stephen I. Schwartz, "Victims of the Bomb," in *Atomic Audit: The Cost and Consequences of U.S. Nuclear Weapons since 1940*, edited by Stephen I. Schwartz (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 1998), 396.

7. Elmer Pickett, quoted in Carole Gallagher, *American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War* (Boston: MIT Press, 1993), 151.

bombing us regularly and that the fallout had already worked its way through our neighborhood and into our lives. Our concrete shelters and rows of canned beans were as useless as ducking under a desk or carrying a Clorox bottle of water to the basement.

In the spring before my thirtieth birthday in 1985, I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. I had no symptoms other than the pea-sized nodule on my neck. The "Big C," as my uncle called it, was growing inside me for no apparent reason. My world lost its predictability with two words: "It's malignant." Facing surgery and radiation treatments, I didn't think it mattered how I got cancer. The only thing that mattered was to get rid of it. Friends and family gave me long, sad looks, as though they expected the worst. Unable to face me, my youngest sister left her favorite Madame Alexander doll on my desk with a note: "You have to be O.K. You're the only radical sister I have." Did she think I wasn't coming back? The day before surgery, I overheard a friend at the office whisper, "She's so brave," as I pounded away at the keys of my typewriter, trying not to think about my surgery the next day.

The surgeon cut out my thyroid gland and the lymph nodes around it. A few days later nurses gave me radioactive iodine, euphemistically called a cocktail, to drink. It was supposed to destroy whatever thyroid tissue may have escaped the scalpel. After I swallowed it, a nurse wheeled me back to my room in a high-backed wheelchair made of lead—to protect her from me. On the door of my room was a sign: "Caution! Radioactive Material." Stamped on my hospital bracelet was the same symbol. I was the radioactive material. Every day a radiologist opened the door to my room and pointed his Geiger counter at me to see how "hot" I was. Knowing it wasn't safe to enter the room, the nurses shoved trays of food under my door. I did nothing but drink water in a desperate attempt to flush out the radiation. I was isolated in my hospital room for four days until the reading on the Geiger counter was low enough that I could be around people again. When I left the hospital, they destroyed my clothes and everything I had touched.

After six weeks deprived of any thyroid hormone, I underwent a body scan. The doctor showed it to me. I saw the "hot" spots in my ovaries and on my bladder. They warned me not to get pregnant for at least a year. They cautioned that it was best for me not to be around babies or pregnant women for a few more days. Frightened by their warnings, my husband moved to the back room for several weeks. Like him, some peo-

ple felt it best to avoid me, whether out of fear of the radiation or because I was a reminder of the randomness with which misfortune strikes. If it could happen to me, it could happen to them. When I ran into an old acquaintance and told her why I'd been out of the office the last three months, she backed away from me as if my bad luck might be contagious.

She wasn't the only one I made nervous. My husband scolded me when, months after my surgery, my hand instinctively went to my neck, feeling for more lumps. "Stop looking for more," he cried, as if my vigilance would bring the disease back. "They said they got it all. Stop looking for more!" I'll never stop feeling for more.

"Since I've had thyroid cancer, does that mean I had my bout with cancer and I won't get any other kind?" I naively asked my doctor, desperate for reassurance. He smiled and said there are no guarantees of anything. What he did tell me was that I now had a "compromised immune system," meaning that I would be especially vulnerable to certain types of infection for the rest of my life.

After I recovered, I went back to coediting the *Desert Sun*, a newspaper that monitored the Nevada Test Site and carried stories about underground nuclear tests, leaks, and radiation. I knew about the 100 bombs exploded in Nevada during the twelve years of open-air testing.[8] I knew about the mushroom clouds of deadly particles they spewed during the years I was growing up. I knew about the 804 underground tests conducted until 1992.[9] I knew that the Department of Energy admitted that many of those tests leaked, or "vented," radiation, some of them at levels comparable to Chernobyl.[10]

I interviewed Chuck Mays, a University of Utah radio-biologist, who told me thyroid cancer was common among those exposed to radiation as children. Children, particularly girls, were most susceptible to the effects

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8. Untitled reader's note, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection website, retrieved September 26, 2003, from http://ndep.nv.gov/boff/photo01.htm. See additional statistical information at the U.S. Department of Energy website, http://www.nv.doe.gov/news&pubs/publications/historyreports/default.htm.

9. Ibid.

10. These leaks are discussed in "The Radioactive Effluents Released from Announced U.S. Continental Tests, 1961 through 1988," DOE/NV-317. Washington D.C.: Department of Energy, 1990.

of radioactive iodine, one of the primary byproducts of nuclear fission, which was easily absorbed by the thyroid gland. He told me that the damage caused by radiation is not from what falls on us but from what we ingest. Fallout that fell on the plants was eaten by cows grazing in the fields, and children drank the milk from those cows. While radioactive iodine has a half life of eight days, it is concentrated in the thyroid gland, where it can have a more intensely focused effect. It can take twenty or more years for the resulting thyroid abnormalities like nodules and malignant tumors to surface.

I grew up drinking fresh milk delivered to us every morning by trucks from a local dairy. Still, I didn't think of my own cancer as anything but bad luck in a random universe. I grew up in Salt Lake City, 300 miles from the blasts of the Nevada Test Site. Like so many of us, I assumed radiation was something that only affected people in southern Utah, those who had the bad luck of living directly downwind of the blasts at the Nevada Test Site. They were the ones who got cancer and died. They were the ones the government finally had decided to compensate with the 1990 Radiation Exposure Compensation Act.

Then I met Carole Gallagher. She was a New York photographer who moved to Utah to document the effects of nuclear testing on people living downwind of the Nevada Test Site. She interviewed and photographed hundreds of people, collecting one horror story after another. Ordinary people from around the West recounted countless medical problems, unspeakable suffering, and always endless tales of death. They talked about playing in the fallout that landed like snow, of sand that melted like glass, of hair that fell out in clumps, of lambs born with hearts outside their bodies, of school children dying of leukemia, of entire families being stricken—all while the government assured them there was no danger.

The first time I interviewed Gallagher for an article I was writing, I mentioned my thyroid cancer. She latched onto the story of my disease and started grilling me about my life—when I was born, where I was raised, if I drank milk.

"Testing," she said. "You got cancer from testing!"

"But I grew up in Salt Lake," I protested.

She shook her head. "You people are so naive. You think fallout stopped at Richfield. It went everywhere."

She showed me a map of the fallout. Utah and Nevada were blot-

ted out and the black ink spread as far north as Canada and as far east as New York. She explained how the jet streams spread silent poison that rained out on unsuspecting neighborhoods like mine. She told me how contaminated hay, milk, wool, wheat, and meat from Utah and Nevada had been shipped all over the country. Then Carole Gallagher asked to interview me.

When Gallagher's book, *American Ground Zero: The Secret Nuclear War,* was released nationwide in 1993, I reluctantly opened my copy. I read two stories before bursting into tears. I saw my face among the photographs of ranchers, teachers, and scientists, all of us downwinders. I had been lucky. Doctors pronounced me recovered. Other people in Gallagher's book were not so fortunate. Many have died.

I waited a few days before opening her book again. I read the list of diseases possibly related to radioactive fallout: cancers, heart disease, neurological disorders, reproductive abnormalities, sterility, birth defects, and immune system-related illnesses.[11] My sister's lupus was an autoimmune disorder. The multiple sclerosis that plagued several friends was a disease of the nervous system. Could there be a connection?[12]

* * *

Since Gallagher interviewed me, I've had another major surgery. In 1994, doctors opened me up to remove my reproductive organs. I remembered the warning during my bout with thyroid cancer not to get pregnant for at least a year after I drank the radioactive "cocktail." I never did get pregnant. After years of trying, I gave up. Tumors in my uterus and on my ovaries were to blame for that. What else might show up in years to come?

Meanwhile, more obituaries are being written, more cancers diagnosed—friends and neighbors, acquaintances, my Utah grandfather, a

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11. Gallagher, *American Ground Zero,* xxv.

12. I pose the question here because of the incidence of lupus and multiple sclerosis (MS) in our area. In Utah, unfortunately, there are many smoking guns, including other open-air testing by the U.S. Army at Dugway Proving Grounds involving nerve, chemical, and radiological agents, which constitute another form of bioterrorism to those of us who know what that means. Researchers for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society have asked if Utah's high rate of MS could possibly be connected to viral infections caused by decades of those tests.

cousin, co-workers, former colleagues, the University of Utah radiobiologist I interviewed, Carole Gallagher, and my coeditor at the *Desert Sun*. I get calls from strangers telling me about their cancers and the cancers that have claimed their relatives. They want advice, comfort, a sympathetic ear. An atomic veteran emailed me about his only child, born with birth defects, who died a few days later. A beautiful young mother who lived across the alley from me in Salt Lake City's Avenues came to my door in tears a few years ago to tell me she had been diagnosed with aggressive leukemia. The first thing her doctor asked her: "Did you grow up in Utah?"

A friend who recently underwent surgery for thyroid cancer recalled staring at a map of the United States as she lay on the table for her body scan. "All I could think of was that the place I loved had betrayed me." More recently, a reporter friend who works at the public radio station in my building, a lifetime Utahn, was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, the same disease that claimed Utah's former governor, Scott Matheson. My friend is undergoing chemotherapy and stem cell transplants that he hopes will give him a few more years with his family. He remembers finding a weather balloon as a child and bringing it home, where he played with it for days. He thinks the balloon may have been one released during tests at the test site to track fallout.

"There's my cancer," he told me in the parking lot one day. "My father-in-law who was with the FBI and worked at Los Alamos died of lung cancer. My wife's first husband was exposed to Agent Orange. Do you think my family's made enough sacrifices in the name of national security?" he asked.

A student of mine at the University of Utah looked at me the first day of class and said, "You have the smile." At first, I thought it was his embarrassing attempt at flirting. Then he pointed to the scar on my neck."

"I had thyroid cancer," I told him.

"Yeah," he said. "So did my sister and my girlfriend. We call that scar 'the smile.'"

"Where did you grow up?" I asked.

"Ogden." It is a city forty miles north of Salt Lake.

"Where in Ogden?"

"Ogden Canyon."

I asked him if he knew about fallout, if there had been other thyroid problems in his family. His sister was the first to get thyroid cancer, but both of their parents had had brain tumors. Had fallout slammed against

the canyon walls the same way that air pollution gets trapped there during winter inversions? According to a former AEC researcher, radioactive fallout can concentrate in "hot spots" such as canyons, which act as a natural reservoir.[13]

In 1954, John Wayne, Susan Hayward, Agnes Moorehead, Dick Powell, and the cast of *The Conqueror* were filming near St. George in Snow Canyon, Utah, 137 miles from the Nevada Test Site. Shot Harry and Shot Simon, two especially dirty tests detonated in 1953, had blanketed the canyon with fallout that remained radioactive. By 1980, ninety-one of the 220 cast and crew members had contracted radiation-related cancers. At least half of them, including Wayne, Moorehead, and Powell, later died of their cancers. Upon hearing the news, a Pentagon scientist from the Defense Nuclear Agency, said, "Please God, don't let us have killed John Wayne."[14] Children who accompanied their parents to the set, including John Wayne's sons Michael and Patrick, also developed cancer later in life. It was lupus, not cancer, that ultimately claimed Michael. In 1980, when the fate of *The Conqueror* cast was made public, the director of radiological health at the University of Utah said the "case could qualify as an epidemic."[15]

I think of that cast, of my student, and of my neighbors on the canyon's rim. Why did so many of us get sick? How many Americans could have been poisoned by the deadly winds of the Cold War? When the pink clouds of fallout drifted across the skies in all directions as I was growing up, no sirens rang out to signal the danger. We blithely went about our lives, assuming we were safe. We trusted our government to protect us.

* * *

I can't prove that I got thyroid cancer from drinking the milk or

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13. Dr. Robert C. Pendleton, former director of radiological health at the University of Utah and a former Atomic Energy Commission researcher, is paraphrased in Karen G. Jackovitch and Mark Sennett, "The Children of John Wayne, Susan Hayward and Dick Powell Fear That Fallout Killed Their Parents," *People*, November 10, 1980, 44.

14. Unnamed Defense Nuclear Agency scientist, quoted in ibid., 46. Norman Solomon and Harvey Wasserman, *Killing Our Own: The Disaster of America's Experience with Atomic Radiation* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1982), 80-81.

15. Dr. Robert C. Pendleton, quoted in Jackovitch and Sennett, "The Children of John Wayne," 42.

eating the vegetables. No one can tell me for certain how I got it. All these years later, after spending hundreds of millions of dollars on studies, scientists are still arguing about radiation levels and health consequences, cause and effect relationships, dose reconstruction, and health implications. Some studies say that cancer rates weren't significantly higher in downwind populations as a result of testing, while other studies find excess cancers in residents downwind of the test site. Some say the epidemiological proof is solid, impugned only by those in government who have consistently lied to the public. Sorting through conflicting reports can be confusing, but the most compelling research shows a definite link. That link is addressed in many forums, including a synopsis in Richard L. Miller's book, *Under the Cloud: The Decades of Nuclear Testing.*[16] Miller is an industrial health specialist with field experience in onsite coordination of health and safety investigations. His major areas of focus have included efforts to determine population exposure to past radiological releases and clusters of disease that may have been caused by such exposures. He has researched the U.S. nuclear test program extensively.

Miller cites a 1984 article by Colorado physician and researcher Carl J. Johnson, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* entitled "Cancer Incidence in an Area of Radioactive Fallout Downwind of the Nevada Test Site." Johnson found a "startling increase" in cancer rates among residents living in an area of Utah downwind of the test site. Downwinders, he found, had significantly higher levels of leukemia, lymphoma, and melanoma, as well as cancers of the breast, thyroid, colon, stomach, and bone.[17] How likely is it that these increased rates of cancer have occurred by coincidence?

Sadly, the burden of proof rests with victims. But proof dissipates and disappears, becoming one of the first things to blow downwind. Sci-

16. Richard L. Miller, *Under the Cloud: The Decades of Nuclear Testing* (Woodland, Tex.: Two Sixty Press, 1986), see esp. 379–89, "Evidence."

17. Carl J. Johnson, "Cancer Incidence in an Area of Radioactive Fallout Downwind of the Nevada Test Site," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 251, no. 2 (1984); quoted in Miller, *Under the Cloud*, 383–84. Miller reproduces Johnson's table showing how many times higher than expected cancer rates were between 1958–66 and 1972–80. Cancer of the bone (10 times and 12.5 times respectively) was the highest.

ence's demand for hard evidence overshadows the truth of our lives. My evidence is my body. What is written on my body is more important than any numbers or calculations written in a report or in a book. I have "the smile." This is what nuclear testing did to me. Like countless Americans affected by fallout, I have no recourse. Unless we lived within a narrow rural region around the Nevada Test Site, the government has decided that our cancers and illnesses aren't related to nuclear testing. We can never be adequately compensated. "We never asked for this mess," Colleen Hill told me. "And our government just won't or doesn't see the damage they did to us all."

In her book, Carole Gallagher reports the circumstantial evidence linking nuclear fallout to disease. Her work and the work of many others show that the government knew the facts—about fallout, about contaminated milk, about the susceptibility of children—and that they lied to the American people. People like me, my sister, my friends, and neighbors. They continued to tell us we were safe even when they knew how far the fallout went and how high its levels of radiation were. Norris Bradbury, who ran the testing program and served as director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, knew the risks involved with fallout. While the government was trying to convince Americans that testing was safe, Bradbury warned his own family, who lived in southern Utah at the time, to leave the area. In a 1994 interview with ABC's Peter Jennings, Bradbury's former daughter-in-law says he told her, "This is a serious situation, and this is not a good place to be, and you ought to go somewhere else."[18] Bradbury failed to provide a similar warning to other Americans.

The release of formerly classified documents reveals more disturbing facts. A 1997 article in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* told what happened at the Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, New York. In 1951, two days after the Atomic Energy commission began testing nuclear weapons at the Nevada Test Site, Kodak's Geiger counters detected high levels of radiation in the snow that blanketed the city. When Kodak complained that its film was fogging, the AEC agreed to provide Kodak and other photographic companies with advance warning of nuclear

18. "Cover-up at Ground Zero," *ABC News: The Turning Point*, February 2, 1994, Betsy West executive producer. Transcripts are available for purchase at ABCNews.go.com/Sections/Primetime.

tests so they could protect the film.[19] The American people were never granted the same courtesy.

In conjunction with the Department of Defense, the Atomic Energy Commission sent planes to follow and track nuclear clouds as they crossed the continent. Colonel Langdon Harris of Albuquerque, New Mexico, flew some of those planes through fallout clouds to take samples with specialized equipment and track where fallout went. Carole Gallagher quotes him in *American Ground Zero* as saying, "There's not anyone who lived in the United States during the years of testing who is not a downwinder."[20]

Plenty of evidence lends support to his claims. From 1951 to 1958 the Environmental Measurements Laboratory monitored fallout at one hundred sites across the country, using gummed-film collectors. Though incomplete, data from those collectors measured fallout more than 2,300 miles from the Nevada Test Site. A November 1990 EML report showed that Albany, New York, ranked third behind Salt Lake City and Grand Junction, Colorado, in total deposits of I-131 from all atomic bomb testing in Nevada.[21] A 1996 Lawrence Radiation Laboratory report showed that, between 1952 and 1955, ten western states were "covered with relatively high doses of radiation from open-air nuclear tests and that a densely populated section of the Northeast, including Boston and Albany, received unexpectedly heavy doses of radiation" from some of the early atomic tests in Nevada.[22]

Albany journalist Bill Heller spent fifteen years researching the fallout that doused upstate New York in the aftermath of one nuclear test detonated in Nevada on April 25, 1953. In his disturbing 2003 book, *A Good Day Has No Rain*, Heller presents compelling independent data documenting how an extremely violent storm on April 26 rained out excessive levels of radioactive fallout on the Albany-Troy-Utica area of New York. Had Geiger counters at the Rennselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy not registered the radiation that day, the people of New York

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19. Makhijani and Schwartz, "Victims of the Bomb," 422.

20. Gallagher, *American Ground Zero*, xxv.

21. Paraphrased in Bill Heller, *A Good Day Has No Rain* (Albany, NY: Whitston Publishing, 2003), 149, 153.

22. Paraphrased in Joe Costanzo, "Boston and Albany Got Fallout Dose, Too," *Deseret News*, February 2, 1979, A-1.

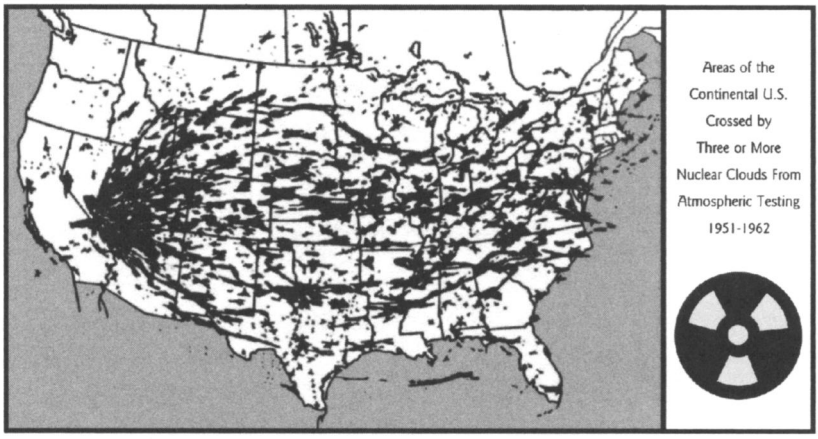
may never have known that radiation from Shot Simon was raining down on them. Initially, scientists suspected that something was wrong with their equipment because their readings were so abnormally high. But when other researchers in the area showed the same results, they called the Atomic Energy Commission with their findings, suggesting they might be connected to Shot Simon. The AEC waited five days to send its own scientists to take measurements. The levels the AEC officially reported were more than twenty times lower than what independent scientists in Troy had found. In his research, Bill Heller uncovered documents from a secret meeting of the AEC, which recorded much higher levels of radiation. The AEC kept those levels secret from the residents of upstate New York for more than twenty years, lest they "alarm the public."[23] Not surprisingly, Heller also writes about the incidence of leukemia, cancers, and other illnesses suffered by the people of upstate New York in the aftermath of Shot Simon.

Richard L. Miller also writes about Shot Simon in *Under the Cloud: The Decades of Nuclear Testing,* noting that "an area thousands of miles from the epicenter [Albany] was hotter than some areas of the Nevada Test Site." A government meteorologist, he says, cautioned that other areas, especially the Midwest, may have experienced much higher levels. "As far as fallout exposure was concerned," Miller writes, "distance from the test site was of small importance. Towns and cities across the entire continent were at risk."[24]

We know the disturbing details of what Shot Simon did to New York because independent records were kept. What happened in other communities across America where such records were not kept?

I carry a credit card sized map in my wallet. It's from Miller's *Under the Cloud,* and it shows how far fallout from the twelve years of open-air testing was tracked. Miller, probably the country's foremost researcher on charting fallout patterns from nuclear testing, compiled his map after collecting and analyzing data from the Atomic Energy Commission, the Defense Nuclear Agency, and the U.S. Weather Service. He put a black dot on any area of the country that was crossed three or more times by fallout clouds. His map, which he calls a "connect-the-dots" of fallout's trajectory, is the powerful image that Carole Gallagher first showed me

23. Heller, *A Good Day Has No Rain,* 148.
24. Miller, *Under the Cloud,* 8.




*"Areas of the Continental United States Crossed by Three or More Fallout Clouds," from Richard L. Miller,* Under the Cloud: The Decades of Nuclear Testing, *444. Reprinted by permission.*

in 1989.[25] "Areas where fallout actually fell encompass a much larger area—the entire United States," he says. I carry that map as a reminder, not so much to myself, but as a way of bearing witness and as a warning to remain vigilant. I don't need any reminders of what fallout did to people living in those areas of black on Miller's map, but a lot of other people, including those who govern us, need a primer.

Whether people live in Idaho, Missouri, or New York, they need to

25. While this map doesn't show how much fallout was deposited at any one location, that information is revealed in the extensive data from the 1997 National Cancer Institute Study published online: *Estimated Exposure and Thyroid Doses Received by the American People from Iodine-131 in Fallout Following Nevada Atmospheric Nuclear Bomb Tests: A Report from the National Cancer Institute* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, October 1997), 120,000 pp.; available under that title on November 30, 2003, at http://rex.nci.nih.gov/massmedia/fallout/contents.html. I read and downloaded part of an executive summary with the same title from http://rex.nci.nih.gov/massmedia/exesum.html on November 30, 2003. Neither document was available in February 2004, although there were still links to them. Miller analyzes this data in *The U.S. Atlas of Nuclear Fallout 1951–1962* (Woodland, Tex.: Legis Books, 2000).

know about this country's nuclear history and its continuing consequences because some of those people, no doubt, are already suffering those consequences. I've shown Miller's map to people around the country, who are always shocked. Most of them had no idea that fallout may have drifted over their cities and towns or that rainouts were regular occurrences.

I have maintained correspondence with Richard Miller since I interviewed him in February 2003 for an article I was writing. He is generous in sharing his research in the hopes that it will help stimulate further research in the field. He has written that "millions of curies of radioactive isotopes were deposited across the country, making their way into the food chain and exposing several generations of Americans to radiation."[26]

In July 2003, I asked Miller to send me a list of counties he identified—based on government data—that were especially hard hit by fallout. In addition to counties in Utah, Nevada, and "anywhere in upstate New York due to Shot Simon," his list included Des Moines, Iowa, and southern Iowa, which were hammered by Shot Tumbler-Snapper 7. Adair and Knox County, Missouri, were also hit hard by Shot Tumbler-Snapper 7. New Orleans was hit hard by the Plumbbob series of tests in 1957. Tumbler-Snapper 8 was detonated in advance of a cold front that brought down exceptionally hot rains on Southern Idaho, particularly Gem County. Also on Miller's list are counties in Colorado, New Jersey, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Arkansas, Kansas, Maine, and Tennessee. "In addition," he wrote me, "there's a raft of scientific papers studying Nebraska and, I believe, South Dakota farmers trying to figure out why the multiple myeloma rate is high there. . . . Missouri has a significant number of cancer clusters—some of which have been studied by the Centers for Disease Control. Missouri also is, largely, one huge fallout hot spot."[27]

Miller reminds us that fallout is memorialized only if it is recorded; and many times, detectors, particularly those east of the Mississippi River,

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26. Miller, *The U.S. Atlas of Nuclear Fallout, 1951–1962. Vol. 1: Total Fallout* (Woodlands, Tex.: Legis Books, 2002), vii. Since 1951, radioactive releases have emitted over 12 billion curies of radioactive material into the atmosphere. U.S. Congress Office of Technology Assessment Management, cited in "Human and Environmental Effects of Nuclear Testing: A Citizen Alert Factsheet," retrieved September 26, 2003, from http://222.citizenalert.org/fctshts/humenv.html.

27. Miller, email to me, July 9, 2003; printout in my possession.

were never turned on. In fact, record-keeping was woefully inadequate during the decades of nuclear testing. While the AEC knew that thunderstorms could rain out high levels of radioactive fallout, it made no effort to evaluate hot spots and rainouts downwind of the test site.[28] The agency did not conduct health assessments of those living downwind, nor did it evaluate potential links between fallout and radiation-related disease.

The only major study mandated by Congress was the fifteen-year investigation by the National Cancer Institute released in 1997: "Estimated Exposures and Thyroid Doses to the American People from Iodine-131 in Fallout from Nevada Atmospheric Nuclear Bomb Tests." As its rather long title says, it looked only at radioactive iodine and the link to thyroid cancer. But fallout contained more than 300 other radioactive isotopes,[29] many of them far more lethal and with much longer half-lives than I-131.

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Richard Miller's map is just a piece of the story. It shows only the trajectory of fallout from open-air testing, not from thirty additional years of underground testing that ended only in 1992. Detonating nuclear bombs underground instead of dropping them from the skies did not make them safe. According to a Citizen Alert factsheet, every underground nuclear explosion in Nevada was associated with the risk of a major release of radioactivity beyond the test site's boundaries. In addition, deficiencies in monitoring systems mean that major releases could go undetected.[30]

As a child, I remember going to a Saturday matinee called *Crack in the Earth.* The movie was about scientists who exploded a nuclear bomb

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28. Miller, *The U.S. Atlas of Nuclear Fallout,* 1:vii.

29. Livermore physicist Harry G. Hicks calculated ratios for 128 radionuclides produced by every above-ground test detonated at the Nevada Test Site. Miller used these ratios in his work, noting that different nuclear tests produced different groups of radionuclides. Ibid., 1:641-46.

30. According to Bernd Franke's 1987 "A Review of Off-Site Environmental Monitoring of the Nevada Test Site," as cited in "Human and Environmental Effects of Nuclear Testing: A Citizen Alert Factsheet," retrieved September 26, 2003, from http://www.citizenalert.org/fctshts/humenv.html: Deficiencies in the monitoring system mean that major releases of radioactivity "could go undetected."

underground to stop a crack in the earth. The explosion doubled the speed at which the crack spread, nearly wiping out life on the planet. I was only seven, but it made perfect sense to me that if you exploded a bomb underground, the earth would shift.

The earth shifted many times when atomic bombs exploded underground. When underground test Jangle: Uncle was detonated on November 29, 1951, it affected communities far from the Nevada Test Site. The explosion, set off 17 feet below ground, created a crater 260 feet in diameter and 53 feet deep and sent an 11,500-foot plume of radioactive dust soaring above the Nevada desert. The resulting cloud crossed into Utah, passed over Salt Lake City, and dropped fallout over Wyoming, Nebraska, South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Maine, and the Canadian provinces of Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick.[31]

The notorious Sedan Shot, detonated on July 6, 1962, from 635 feet beneath the earth, generated seismic energy equivalent to a 4.75 magnitude earthquake. It displaced 12 million tons of earth, creating a crater 1,200 feet wide and 300 feet deep. At 10,000 feet, the resulting cloud traveled over Utah and soon crossed Salt Lake City, taking fallout over Cheyenne, Wyoming; Pierre, South Dakota; and into southern Minnesota. At 16,000 feet, Sedan's cloud followed a path just south of Pocatello, Idaho; then over Casper, Wyoming; and between Sioux Falls, Iowa and Omaha, Nebraska, ultimately crossing Missouri, Kentucky, and much of Tennessee, making it, in effect, an atmospheric test.[32]

Sedan, incidentally, was just one of five tests conducted at the Nevada Test Site that week. The resulting fallout exposure has led to what has been called "The Summer of '62." In *Killing Our Own: The Disaster of America's Experience with Atomic Radiation,* Norman Solomon and Harvey Wasserman tell the story of Dr. Robert C. Pendleton, former director of ra-

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31. Miller, The U.S. Atlas of Nuclear Fallout, 1:89. A map, "Buster–Jangle, Uncle (11/29/91), Figure BJ/0/1," National Cancer Institute (NCI) Study website: retrieved November 27, 2003, from http://www2.nci.nih.gov/I131/maps/bj/Bj06trg.gif.

32. Miller, *The U.S. Atlas of Nuclear Fallout. Vol. 1: Total Fallout,* General Reader Edition (Woodlands, Tex.: Legis Books, 2000), 1:327. Another map is available at the National Cancer Institute study website, retrieved November 27, 2003, from http://www2.nci.nih.gov/I131/maps/ue/Ue06trg.gif. "Underg. Era, Sedan (7/06/62) Figure UE/6/1," shows both the 10,000 and 16,000-foot trajectories reaching the Atlantic Ocean.

diological health at the University of Utah. Pendleton was in Big Cottonwood Canyon with graduate students taking measurements of granite in the area with Geiger counters when Sedan went off on July 6, 1962. Those Geiger counters picked up the radiation. Pendleton then tracked the fallout to Salt Lake, the Uintah Basin, and across the entire northern section of Utah. When he reported his findings to the State Health Department, it defied the Atomic Energy Commission and pulled milk from the shelves in Salt Lake City. No milk was pulled from the shelves in southern Utah because northern Utah had been harder hit.[33] Mason City, Iowa; Minneapolis-St Paul, Minnesota; as well as Howard, Mitchell, and Worth Counties in Iowa were also hit hard by fallout from Shot Sedan, according to Miller.[34]

The Baneberry Shot, detonated December 18, 1970, was buried 900 feet below ground but spewed a visible cloud of radioactive debris 10,000 feet into the atmosphere. Its trajectory meandered over Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Colorado, heading through Arizona, Texas, and Louisiana. At higher levels, the cloud wandered over Nevada, then headed northeast over Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, and into Canada.[35] Preston Truman, director of Downwinders, Inc., told me that the hottest levels of fallout fell on Snyderville, Park City, and Heber City, Utah.[36]

As recently as 1986 at the Nevada Test Site's Rainier Mesa, where the Defense Nuclear Agency conducts weapons effects tests, the Mighty Oak explosion resulted in a radioactive release 2,000 times greater than Three Mile Island. According to the Department of Energy's assistant manager at the Test Site, the accident was caused when rock beneath the Rainier Mesa caved in from the shock of the blast.[37]

According to an analysis of the Department of Energy data conducted by Downwinders, 54 percent of all underground tests in Nevada

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33. Solomon and Wasserman, *Killing Our Own*, 114.

34. Miller, *U.S. Atlas of Nuclear Fallout, Vol. 1: Total Fallout*, General Reader Edition, 1:340.

35. "Underground Era Test Series, Nuclear Test Baneberry," National Cancer Institute study website; retrieved November 27, 2003, from www2.nci.nih.gov/I131/intros/BK5.html. A map is available at http://www2.nci.nih.gov/I131/maps/ue/Ue17trg.gif; retrieved November 27, 2003, "Underg. Era, Baneberry (12/18/70) Figure UE /17/."

36. Truman, email, November 23, 2003.

37. James K. Magruder, assistant manager for operations, paraphrased in

did leak. Many of those were small puffs of radiation. The more dramatic, spontaneous releases like those from Shot Baneberry or structural releases like those from Mighty Oak were less common but resulted in consequences far beyond the Nevada Test Site.[38] So many underground tests leak that Miller says there is "really no such thing as a totally underground test." He states, "Any test that produces measurable offsite radiation should be considered an aboveground test."[39] As Dr. Anthony Robbins of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War told *Newsday* in 1991, "Underground nuclear weapons tests must not be assumed to be safe."[40] The National Cancer Institute's fifteen-year study on estimated exposures of I-131 includes maps that show the trajectories for each nuclear test, including underground tests through 1970. Those maps are a stunning reminder of how far fallout is carried by the winds. Anyone with internet access can look up these maps at http://www2.nci.nhi.gov/I131/maps.

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What is so disheartening is that the government knew as early as the Kodak and Shot Simon incidents how far fallout went and how many Americans could be exposed, but it continued to test atomic bombs for four decades. Instead of warning us, the Atomic Energy Commission printed a pamphlet applauding families who lived near the test site for being "active participants in the nation's atomic test program." The pamphlets claimed that the radiation in bombs was no more harmful than

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unspecified *New York Times* article, February 17, 1989; article quoted in "Human and Environmental Effects of Nuclear Testing: A Citizen Alert Factsheet," retrieved October 16, 2003, from http://citizenalert/org/fctshts/humenv.html.

38. [No author], *Radiological Effluents Released from U.S. Continental Tests 1961 to 1988*, DOE/NV-317 (Washington, D.C.: Department of Energy, 1990). Downwinders analyzed data in this report in the early 1990s to arrive at the 54 percent figure, according to Steve Erickson of Downwinders, email to me, September 19, 2003.

39. Miller, interviewed November 21, 2003; notes in my possession.

40. Quoted in Heller, *A Good Day Has No Rain*, 156.

sunshine. "Fallout does not constitute a serious hazard to any living thing outside the test site," the pamphlet assured.[41]

In the heat of the Cold War, a desire not to alarm the public or spread panic was a common rationale used by government officials who manipulated data, minimized risk, and hid the truth about the potential danger to human health. In *A Good Day Has No Rain,* journalist Bill Heller writes about secret government discussions to establish a test site on U.S. soil. Worried that the Russians would use the nuclear weapons they were building, the government wanted to know what those weapons would do. An island off Alaska was a possibility, but Atomic Energy Commission officials chose a site in the heart of the West—Nevada. Heller quotes the AEC's Dr. Gioacchino Failla saying, "The time has come when we should take some risk and get some information. . . . If we look for perfect safety, we will never make these tests."[42] In essence, Americans became unwitting test subjects in a secret nuclear war. *New York Times* correspondent Keith Schneider, in his foreword to Gallagher's book, calls testing "the most prodigiously reckless program of scientific experimentation in U.S. history."[43]

The morality of such an experiment was lost in the hazy cover of national security. War is predicated on fear—real or manufactured. The fear of Communism enabled the government to justify poisoning its own people, just as that fear enabled the public to accept reassurances of safety without question. Communism, not fallout, was considered the greater threat. National security was paramount, not the welfare of the people in the nation. "Risk," writes Heller, "was something the AEC accepted on behalf of the American people—without telling them—when it began testing atom bombs." He quotes AEC Commissioner William Frank Libby, who said February 23, 1953: "People have got to learn to live with the facts of life, and part of the facts of life are fallout." In a secret meeting after Shot Simon, discussing fallout dangers, AEC Commissioner Thomas Murray said, "We must not let any-

41. Atomic Energy Commission, *Atomic Tests in Nevada* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1957), 2, 13.

42. Heller, *A Good Day Has No Rain,* 17.

43. Scheider, Foreword, to Gallagher, *American Ground Zero,* xv.

thing interfere with this series of tests."[44] Nothing was going to deter the government from its course of testing nuclear weapons. Military and political objectives outweighed public health concerns. That's how our government could bomb America more than any other nation has bombed us. Downwinders were casualties of war, collateral damage.

* * *

It's discouraging that so many people think atomic testing affected only southern Utah. Radiation does not respect arbitrary lines on a map. No magic shield stopped fallout at county lines mid-point in Utah. Yet the federal government decided to compensate only those people living within one of twenty-two rural counties around the test site who had suffered from multiple myeloma, lymphoma, leukemia, or primary cancer of the thyroid, male or female breast, esophagus, stomach, pharynx, small intestine, pancreas, bile ducts, gall bladder, liver, lung, salivary gland, bladder, brain, colon, and ovary. In addition, the act compensates only those who can prove that they were physically present for at least twenty-four cumulative months between January 21, 1951, and October 31, 1958, or for the entire period beginning June 30, 1962, and ending July 31, 1962. Underground testing through 1992 is covered. "RECA [the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act] was political, not scientific," says Preston J. Truman, director of Downwinders, Inc. "Continually insisting the problem belongs only to southern Utah, and keeping the issue and the whole compensation fight to a small isolated part of the entire fallout path truly aided the government in sweeping it under the rug."[45]

Using Miller's data, Truman has shown that counties in northern Utah, Colorado, Iowa, and New York received levels of fallout as hot as, or hotter than, some of the "politically correct counties," as Truman calls those counties eligible for compensation. One RECA county in Arizona, for instance, is 186 times less hot than the adjacent Mohave County, which is not eligible for compensation. Truman sent me maps he has designed which rank each county in the country according to the levels of fallout it received. They show how arbitrary RECA coverage is. RECA's limited coverage is likely a very large part of the reason that the

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44. Quoted in Heller, *A Good Day Has No Rain*, 156, 57.

45. Information RECA and claim forms are available at the U.S. Department of Justice website: http://www.usdoj.gov/civil/torts/const/reca/.

vast majority of downwinders in America don't understand they may be downwinders.

Because most Americans don't know they were at risk, getting them to care about this issue is a constant exercise in frustration, even in Utah where too many downwinders remain, oblivious to their own past. A neighbor who lost a sister and mother to brain and colon cancer blames the sun for their maladies. Some of those affected by testing can find convenient rationales. "It was a good job," was a common refrain Carol Gallagher heard from ailing test site workers and their survivors. "We could all be speaking Russian now," others whispered.

A friend of mine in the thick of alternative culture asked me why I bother dredging up America's nuclear past. "No one cares," she said. "It's an old issue." Her own cancer was not enough to make her wonder if the issue might have some personal relevance. Like so many Utahns whose obituaries I continue to collect, she preferred not to consider any connections.

Denial is a powerful force, particularly in a culture conditioned to believe that those in authority—whether it be government or ecclesiastical—will make wise decisions on their behalf. We adopt a quiet obedience to laws and leaders, both religious and civil. Why would we question a government that urged us to "participate in a moment of history"? Most of us do not ask questions when told we have nothing to fear, all is well. We do not resist, even when we suspect all is not well. We are too easily persuaded that questioning is impolite and protesting unpatriotic, a mind-set we see increasingly in America today, though anyone, particularly those convinced they are in danger, can develop an unconscious willingness to be deceived. Combine that universal tendency with a national predisposition for denial, a desire to demonstrate patriotism, and a refusal to reflect, and you don't find many Americans resisting plans by the Bush administration to usher in a new atomic age.

How many times, growing up Mormon, did I hear Primary, Seminary, and Sunday School teachers tell us that the American Constitution was divinely inspired? that God favors America? This is the same refrain we see plastered on bumper stickers now as terrorism strikes fear into the nation: "God Bless America." But a divinely inspired government doesn't poison its own citizens.

* * *

During a conversation about the health consequences of nuclear testing, a coworker racked by arthritis asked me, "What good will it do to show any links to health problems? You'll only upset people."

"I guess that's my job," I said, shrugging sadly. "To upset people. So they won't let it happen again."

If the good people of Utah—so many of whom have suffered the effects of fallout—are indifferent to the legacy and future of atomic testing, why would those beyond Utah's borders, who view themselves as far removed from this unpleasant business in the "hinterlands," be interested? To most Americans, atomic testing is something that happened long ago in a remote area of the country they probably couldn't place on a map. They may have heard that some sheep died or that some people in southern Utah died. But they think that was long ago and far away, that it doesn't have anything to do with them, and that if testing should resume at the Nevada Test Site, they'll be far from its effects. Sadly, however, the opposite is true, a fact confirmed for me constantly not only by my own experience but also by that of so many, many others.

* * *

During the years of atmospheric testing, there were an estimated 40 million cancer deaths in the United States; but the true health impact of nuclear testing is impossible to ascertain. The government estimated that only 11,000 of those deaths were related to fallout.[46] According to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, as of 1967 between 35,000 and 85,000 people worldwide had been killed by nuclear testing.[47] They studied only deaths that occurred before 1968. A 1991 study by the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War said that fallout from worldwide atmospheric atomic bomb testing in the 1950s and 1960s could ac-

46. Christopher Smith, "Downwinder Studies at End," *Salt Lake Tribune,* February 12, 2003, B-1.

47. Cited in "Human and Environmental Effects of Nuclear Testing: A Citizen Alert Factsheet," retrieved September 26, 2003, from http://www.citizenalert.org/fctshts/humenv.html.

count for 430,000 cancer deaths worldwide by 2070.[48] Other estimates range from 70,000 to 800,000 people in the United States and around the world who have died or will die of cancer from atmospheric tests in the United States.[49]

Perhaps we rely too much on numbers. Whether it was 11,000 or 800,000 people who were affected isn't really the main point. We focus too much on statistics and not enough on real people and their suffering. That's why the stories of my neighbors and the people in Carole Gallagher's book are so important and so powerful. It's impossible to ignore the faces and stories of real people who were victims of a military/political experiment I can only describe as misguided. We are a living—for now—testament of the tragedy of our nuclear past.

While we will never know how many cancers or other illnesses across this country were caused by fallout from four decades of nuclear testing in the desert of Nevada, we can be fairly certain that many more cases exist than the government has acknowledged.

John Gofman, M.D., Ph.D., was a former associate director of the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. He codiscovered uranium 233 and isolated the first milligram of plutonium for J. Robert Oppenheimer during the Manhattan Project. He has written definitive works on the effects of exposure to radiation, including *Radiation and Human Health* and *Radiation-Induced Cancer from Low-Dose Exposure.* He is skeptical of government studies which, he says, consistently downplay the effects of radiation.[50] He believes that the government likely underestimated by more than twenty times the rates of cancer caused by nuclear testing. Based on Hiroshima findings, he estimates twenty-six fatal cancers for

48. Paraphrased in Heller, *A Good Day Has No Rain,* 156.

49. Makhijani and Schwartz, "Victims of the Bomb," 428–29. The authors note that these are fatalities and that the rate of cancer incidence is 50 percent higher than cancer deaths.

50. Quoted in Gallagher, *American Ground Zero,* xxvi, 326. Like Gofman, several interviewees in Gallagher's book, as well as sources quoted in Heller's book, expressed skepticism regarding government-funded or government-related studies and studies involving those with ties to the nuclear industry.

every 10,000 people and twice that number for non-fatal cancers.[51] For a better estimate, researchers would need to know the dosage of radiation from each test and how many people received that dosage. Unfortunately, populations in areas of significantly high fallout were never evaluated for radiation-induced illnesses.

It's not in the government's interest to know how many victims nuclear testing created. The National Academy of Sciences in February 2003 said that detailed health studies on the extent of cancer risk to people living downwind are unnecessary. That was discouraging news to those of us who have lived with cancer, birth defects, and disabling diseases. The National Academy of Sciences stated: "Although a more detailed study is technically possible, neither the data nor the consequences appear to justify it."[52] Ironically, the government continues to fund studies in Russia examining fallout risks to residents downwind of the 1986 nuclear reactor accident in Chernobyl. According to 1998 congressional testimony from Owen Hoffman, chief scientist for the International Atomic Energy Agency, the accumulated fallout exposure from the Nevada Test Site was three times as much as that from Chernobyl.[53]

The National Cancer Institute's 1997 study shows that virtually all Americans were exposed to fallout and that up to 212,000 lifetime cases of thyroid cancer alone may be related to testing. When Dr. Richard Klausner, Director of the NCI, appeared before a Senate subcommittee on October 1, 1997, to discuss the study, he said, "Some radio-iodine was deposited everywhere in the U.S., with the highest deposits immediately downwind of the NTS."[54] Anyone with internet access can view this study at http://www2.nci.nih.gov/fallout/html, click on one's state and county, and type in one's birth date to see what one's exposure was. One

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51. Ibid., 326.

52. Smith, "Downwinder Studies at End," B-1.

53. Elaine Jarvik, "Cancer Gave Utahn a Healthy Mistrust," *Deseret News*, February 15, 2001, online edition: www.deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,250011091,00.html.

54. Dr. Richard Klausner, "Testimony before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies on Estimated Exposures and Thyroid Dose Received by the American People from Iodine-131 in Fallout Following the Nevada Atmospheric Nuclear Bomb Tests," retrieved November 30, 2003, from http://rex.nci.nih.gov/massmedia/klausnerreport.html

can request the information by specific test, or by series of tests, including underground testing through 1970. More than 100,000 pages of data from that study are online.

Miller's five-volume *The U.S. Atlas of Nuclear Fallout 1951– 1962*, correlates fallout levels with cancer levels county by county across the United States. He based his correlations on NCI data about radioisotopes and total fallout and on cancer rate data from a 1983 NCI survey and the Center for Disease Control's WONDER site, which assigns diseases an international classification code and shows the rates of the disease for every county in the United States.[55]

Miller's study of these reports finds cancer clusters across the country in areas hit hard by fallout. These cancer rates, he says, are significantly associated with certain components of fallout. While he cautions that such associations do not prove fallout caused these cancers, he believes that the results warrant further study. He plans to do similar correlations for other diseases. Miller sees these findings as potential diagnostic tools for physicians. If physicians knew their cities and towns were hit by certain radionuclides from testing, they could provide screening within those populations for related cancer and disease.[56]

"How many people were affected by fallout?" he asked in response to my question. "The answer is probably a simple one: all of us were affected. The question is, to what degree?"

Given the way radiation works, we have yet to see all the damage caused by fallout. At a certain level, radiation damages cells and alters genetic codes. But people don't always get sick immediately after exposure. It can take decades for radiation-related illnesses to manifest. Many cancers, for instance, don't appear until ten to forty years after exposure. As I've

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55. Miller's sources are: (1) National Cancer Institute, "Estimated Exposures and Thyroid Doses"; (2) Harry G. Hicks's tables of radionuclides published as "Results of Calculations of External Gamma Radiation Exposure Rates from Fallout and the Related Radionuclides Compositions," July 1981; (3) National Cancer Institute, *U.S. Cancer Mortality Rates and Trends 1950–1979* (National Cancer Institute/Environmental Protection Agency, 1983); Center for Disease Control's Wide-Ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER) website (http://wonder.cdc.gov), which shows the incidence of several diseases, including cancer, HIV/AIDS, and diabetes for every U.S. county from 1979 onward with a lag time of three or four years for collecting and compiling data.

56. Miller, Interview, February 2003, notes in my possession.

noted, the half life of radioactive iodine is eight days, but the latency period for the thyroid disease, tumors, and the cancer it causes can be twenty years or more. Cesium-126, with a half life of 29.1 years, lodges in the muscles. Strontium-90, which mimics calcium and lodges in the bone, teeth, and blood-forming tissue, has a half life of 30.1 years. It can remain in the bones for a lifetime, where it continues radiating surrounding tissue, which can lead to bone cancer, leukemia, and cancers of the soft tissue. Because it also concentrates in breast milk, it can lead to breast cancer. Carbon-14, which has a half-life of 5,730 years, can be incorporated into the DNA of cells, creating biological damage that can lead to birth defects, miscarriages, and hereditary defects. When you take into account the half life of radioisotopes, the latency factor of various diseases, and the genetic damage that can affect future generations, you realize that many fallout-related illnesses have yet to appear.

We will be living with the effects of fallout for a very long time.

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And now, despite the terrible price we have paid for nuclear testing, our government is considering a revival of testing at the Nevada Test Site as part of the war on terrorism. The climate of fear that drove the Cold War is mirrored in the response to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center that extreme measures are necessary for our defense.

Even before 9/11, however, the Bush administration was making noises about nuclear testing. Shortly after taking office, the administration announced that it was going to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which arms control experts have described as the cornerstone of nuclear arms control for the past thirty years.[57]

In late June 2001, three months *before* the 9/11 terrorist attack, the administration ordered nuclear weapons scientists to study a range of options to "reduce lead times" to resume nuclear bomb explosions at the Nevada Test Site, saying that testing would be necessary to ensure the reliability of our nuclear arms stockpile. Former defense official

57. Briefing: "The Bush Doctrine: New Nuclear Weapons for a New Nuclear Arms Race," Green Peace Online Media Center; retrieved October 16, 2003, from http://www.greenpeaceuse.net/media/publications/bushdoctrinetext.htm.

Frank Gaffney said in May 2001, "We're going to have to resume on a limited basis underground testing of our nuclear arms."[58] (The first President Bush had declared a moratorium on underground testing that has been in effect since 1992.)

Then, in February 2002, just three months after the attacks, the administration delivered to Congress its controversial Nuclear Posture Review, which was basically a blueprint for overhauling the nation's position on nuclear weapons and a dramatic departure from the course taken by any previous administration. That review called for the research and development of new usable, preemptive nuclear weapons and shortened the timeline to start new nuclear tests in Nevada.[59]

The new generation of nuclear weapons includes "mini-nukes" (fewer than five kilotons) and the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, or "bunker buster," designed to destroy deeply buried underground bunkers. The ground-penetrating bunker buster could supposedly be used against underground bunkers of rogue nations and terrorist cells to destroy stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons that may be buried there. Neither of these weapons has been requested by the military.

At the urging of the administration in May 2003, Congress approved a partial repeal of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty as part of the massive Defense Authorization Bill, a move which would allow research and development of the new nuclear weapons.

In a Dr. Strangelove-like gathering in August 2003, 150 scientists, administration officials, arms experts, and planners met secretly at the Offutt Air Force Base outside Omaha, Nebraska, to discuss the Nuclear Posture Review, the next generation of nuclear weapons, and the possible resumption of nuclear testing. Troy Wade, a former Department of Energy defense chief and nuclear arms adviser, told a *Las Vegas Re-*

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58. Steve Erickson and Preston J. Truman, "N-Testing to Resume?: Administration Preparing to Break Out of the Nuclear Weapons Testing Moratorium?" Downwinders website; retrieved November 17, 2003, from http:// www.downwinders.org/commentary.html.

59. Ellen Tauscher, "Cold War Comeback? The Nuclear Threat from Within," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 18, 2003, reprinted online at the WagingPeace website; retrieved December 18, 2003, from http:// www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2003/11/18_tauscher_cold-war.htm.

*view-Journal* reporter, "You're going to have to do everything to know it will work. And the best way to ensure it will work is through a test."[60]

Before the Thanksgiving recess last November, Congress passed two spending bills giving the administration almost everything it wanted in the nuclear arena, including authorizing approximately $25 million on upgrading the Nevada Test Site so that it could be ready to resume testing within twenty-four months; $7.5 million to study bunker busters; and $6 million to research mini-nukes.[61] A determined White House came back in February 2003, asking for $30 million to increase test readiness and $27 million for the bunker buster.[62]

The wheels are being set in motion.

Representative Ellen Tauscher (D-California) is one of many critics who sees the Bush attitude toward nuclear weapons as a hypocritical move that undermines global nonproliferation efforts. "This is a major departure from where we were three years ago and deserves serious debate," she wrote in an op-ed piece for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "Do we want a world in which the United States is spurring a new global arms race?"[63]

Apart from what the administration's course says about our abandonment of hard-won nonproliferation treaties and testing moratoriums, logic would lead one to wonder about the scientific wisdom and military utility of creating and testing these weapons.

Princeton University physicist Robert Nelson, a senior fellow in science and technology at the Council on Foreign Relations, said that an explosion caused by bunker-busting devices would probably not destroy chemical and biological agents but would disperse them into the surrounding environment. In addition, even a very small bunker buster

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60. Quoted in Keith Rogers, "Experts Say U.S. Should Consider Using Mininukes," *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, August 25, 2003, B-1.

61. William M. Adler, "Nukes Are Back!: The Bush Administration Plans for the Next (Little) Nuclear Wars," *Austin Chronicle*, January 16, 2004; retrieved January 17, 2003, from http://www.austinchronicle.com/issues/dispatch/2004-01-16/pols_feature.html.

62. Ian Hoffman, "White House Seeks More Nuke Funds," *Oakland [California] Tribune*, February 3, 2004, A-1.

63. Tauscher, "Cold War Comeback?"

could blow out a crater and send a huge cloud of radioactive dust and debris into the atmosphere.[64]

Richard Miller says that some of the proposed nuclear bunker busters are supposed to have warheads three times as powerful as Shot Sedan. "There is no way a device like that can be field tested without producing a huge radioactive debris cloud," he says. The November 1951 Jangle: Uncle shot, one of the dirtiest underground tests, was designed as a bunker buster. Miller says that testing new bunker busters will likely resemble the Uncle shots—small, but extremely dirty.[65]

The whole proposition seems preposterous. How the issue will play out remains to be seen. Much depends on public and political response, as well as November 2004 election outcomes. If Bush is reelected, we will likely see a continued push for the weapons and for test readiness. Miller's outlook is bleaker: "We're going to get nuclear testing. As we've seen, the Bush administration can do what it wants to."[66]

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Writer Gore Vidal calls us "The United States of Amnesia,"[67] which seems to describe our attitudes toward nuclear testing. How can our government so easily ignore the legacy of our nuclear past, abandon test ban treaties, and usher in a new nuclear era? Where is the public outrage?

If Americans across this nation and their leaders don't recognize that they could again be at risk, why would they resist the resumption of nuclear testing? If they don't know what the declassified documents show, why wouldn't they believe hollow assurances that limited underground testing, should it be deemed necessary in the war on terrorism, will be safe?

As a downwinder, I have earned the right to be outraged at the administration's callous willingness to abandon the moratorium on nuclear testing. I am particularly dismayed that Utah's Congressional delegation,

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64. Quoted in Shawn M. Schmitt, "United States I: Nuclear 'Bunker Busters' May Disperse WMD Agents Not Destroy Them, Expert Says," Global Security Newswire, August 11, 2003; retrieved August 17, 2003, from www.nit.org_newswire/issues/2003/8/11/4p.html.

65. Miller, Interviews, February 28, 2003, November 22, 2003; notes in my possession.

66. Miller, Interview, November 21, 2003.

67. Gore Vidal, *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace: How We Got to Be So Hated* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2002), ix.

which has battled for more compensation for downwinders, voted with Congress to pave the way for nuclear testing. Only Representative Jim Matheson (D-Utah), whose late father was a downwinder, has actively resisted such a plan, introducing legislation in February 2003 to make the resumption of testing more difficult. The rest of Utah's Congressional delegation betrayed me and my family, the families of LaDawn Montague, Colleen Hill, Lisa Lundberg, and countless others by voting to study employing first-use weapons and to clear the way for nuclear testing.

When a concerned group of Utahns met with Representative Matheson, he told us he was disheartened by how little those in Congress know about nuclear testing, as evidenced by debate during voting. It's obvious there is a lot of educating to do, even in my home state.

When I called Senator Orrin Hatch's office in May 2003 to help me understand his vote, the young man who answered the phone told me, "He's not just the senator of Utah, you know. He's a United States Senator. He has to look at what's good for the country."

*What's good for the country.* Is nuclear testing, with the fallout it could generate, good for the country?

Senator Hatch would do well to reread what he said on July 14, 1981, when introducing Senate Bill 1483, the radiation exposure compensation bill: "A great wrong was committed by the federal government in exposing thousands of Americans to radioactive fallout while simultaneously conducting a massive campaign to assure the public that no danger existed. . . . There are now many innocent suffering victims of the mistakes made by Government officials over two decades ago. . . . We must make sure that it does not happen again."[68]

*We must make sure it does not happen again.*

In an interview with public radio station KUER in Salt Lake City, Senator Hatch claimed that underground testing isn't like atmospheric testing, that underground tests will be small with few, if any, serious consequences for public health.[69] Representative Rob Bishop (R-Utah) said in a January 10, 2004, town meeting that he would do anything to support

68. Quoted in A. Costadina Titus, *Bombs in the Backyard: Atomic Testing and American Politics* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1987), 137.

69. Orrin Hatch, interviewed by Dan Bammes, KUER-FM, May 23, 2003, Salt Lake City, audiocassette in possession of Dan Bammes.

the military, even if it meant testing nuclear weapons. He said, "We'll find a way to do it without harming citizens."[70]

We've heard these assurances before. The experiences of Eastman Kodak, Shot Simon, Shot Sedan, and Shot Baneberry show just how far-reaching and unexpected the consequences of testing can be. Barton C. Hacker spent two decades writing and researching the history of radiation safety in nuclear weapons testing. In *The Atomic West*, he stressed "the uncertainty inherent in any test program and the impossibility of making safety the top priority."[71] Princeton University physicist Robert Nelson reminds us that there is no such thing as a "clean" nuclear weapon.[72]

If the administration resumes testing, Americans once again become expendable in the name of national defense. It strikes me as ironic that our government, under the pretext of securing our safety, is so willing to sacrifice it. Is the war on terrorism, like the war on Communism, worth sacrificing our own people again?

Perhaps it is a matter of perspective. We are at war because terrorists killed 3,000 Americans. How many more Americans did our own government kill with atomic testing? As Claudia Peterson, a downwinder in St. George, Utah, said in a *National Geographic* interview, "We've watched how quickly the government has put together compensation for 9/11 victims, and that has been a tough one to swallow. What happened that day was horrible, but they are so quick to recognize what someone else did and shove under the rug what they've done to their own people."[73]

When bombs are exploded on the land of an innocent people, leading to sickness and death months or years later, is that not in itself an act

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70. Quoted in Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Rep. Bishop Voices Concerns over New Immigration Proposals," *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 11, 2004; retrieved January 12, 2003, from http://www.sltrib.com/2004/Jan/01112004/utah/127958.asp.

71. Barton C. Hacker, "Hotter Than a $2 Pistol," in *The Atomic West*, edited by Bruce Hevly and John M. Findlay (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 158.

72. Quoted in "Nuclear Bunker Busters: Unusable, Costly, and Dangerous," April 12, 2002, Council for a Livable World website; retrieved on September 30, 2003, from www.clw.org/control/nukebusters.html.

73. Quoted in Miki Meek, "Compensating Life Downwind of Nevada," *Weapons of Mass Destruction Online Extra, National Geographic Magazine*, Novem-

of terror, regardless of who detonates those bombs? Is nuclear testing less an act of terror because people do not die immediately? Do we need a reminder that America is the only nation ever to actually use nuclear weapons against human targets under the pretext of military necessity? President Harry Truman's own Chief of Staff, William D. Leahy, said, "In being the first to use the atomic bomb, we had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages."[74]

After her book was first released, Carole Gallagher's photographs of downwinders were exhibited in several galleries around the country. The commentary from her book that accompanied the exhibitions drew a conclusion that seems especially pertinent today: "Deadened by 50 years of nuclearism, we may have mutated into a world unwilling to see. Out of this blind silence, a brief whisper of the voices of the living and the dead can now be heard. The nuclear war which claimed these gentle lives is no longer a secret. They leave their memories to us as a warning."[75]

* * *

Before I got cancer, I always thought I led a charmed life, that things pretty much went my way. I eased my dark fears by convincing myself that really terrible things happened to other people in other places. I would be spared. I still feel lucky. But after being labeled "radioactive material," after watching my sister die, and after seeing too many friends fall ill, I realize that I and all those I love are just as vulnerable as anyone else. May our lives serve as warning. If we learned anything from being the unwitting subjects of the massive experiment of atomic testing, it is that we all live downwind.

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ber 2002; retrieved August 31, 2003, from magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0211/feature1/online_extra.html.

74. Quoted in Peter Scowen, *Rogue Nation: The America the Rest of the World Knows* (Toronto, Ont.: McClellan and Stewart, 2002), 41.

75. Gallagher, *American Ground Zero,* xxxiii.

*This photo montage by downwinder and cancer survivor Mary Dickson, pictured here in 1962, is how she now views her childhood in Salt Lake City. Photo courtesy of Mary Dickson.*

# The Red Peril, the Candy Maker, and the Apostle: David O. McKay's Confrontation with Communism

*Gregory A. Prince*

THROUGHOUT HIS LONG TENURE as a General Authority, David O. McKay was consistently opposed to Communism, as were his fellow General Authorities. Ironically, once he had become president of the Church, opposition to Communism became a seriously divisive issue among the Mormons. On the one hand, McKay gave his special blessing to Ezra Taft Benson as an opponent of Communism, enabling this strong-willed apostle to propagate his ultra-right-wing views among Church members—views that included an endorsement of the John Birch Society, founded by candy maker Robert Welch. On the other hand, McKay also responded to General Authorities who, despite their own opposition to Communism, took exception to the extremism of Benson and the John Birch Society. These included Apostles Joseph Fielding Smith and Harold B. Lee, as well as Hugh B. Brown and N. Eldon Tanner, McKay's counselors in the First Presidency. Neither the strong-willed Benson nor his protesting colleagues among the apostles ever achieved a clear upper hand with the aging prophet. As a result, Latter-day Saints who endorsed the extreme views of

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the John Birch Society and those who opposed them found reason to believe that the prophet was on their side, and the divisive issue remained unresolved until the death of McKay in 1970.

McKay initially greeted the Russian revolution of 1917 with optimism, telling a general conference audience, "It looks as if Russia will have a government 'by the people, of the people, and for the people.'"[1] However, he quickly became convinced that Communism was a threat to democracy and freedom. As he assumed his duties within the First Presidency in 1934, he was tutored on this threat by his ecclesiastical superior, First Counselor J. Reuben Clark, Jr., whose many years of service in the State Department gave him a broad exposure to world politics. In 1936 the two counselors joined with President Heber J. Grant to issue the first LDS policy statement regarding Communism, a statement that would be cited repeatedly in coming decades:

> The Church does not interfere, and has no intention of trying to interfere, with the fullest and freest exercise of the political franchise of its members, under and within our Constitution. . . .
>
> But Communism is not a political party nor a political plan under the Constitution; it is a system of government that is the opposite of our Constitutional government, and it would be necessary to destroy our government before communism could be set up in the United States.
>
> Since Communism, established, would destroy our American Constitutional government, to support communism is treasonable to our free institutions, and no patriotic American citizen may become either a communist or supporter of communism. . . .
>
> Communism being thus hostile to loyal American citizenship and incompatible with true Church membership, of necessity no loyal American citizen and no faithful Church member can be a Communist.[2]

Throughout the decade, McKay remained convinced that Communism was a greater threat than the rising power of Germany. Writing to a colleague as the 1940s dawned, he made it clear that he saw Communism as a clear and present danger, one that had already begun to infiltrate

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1. David O. McKay, Address, *Report of the Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 7, 1917 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, semi-annual), 49; hereafter cited as *Conference Report*.

2. First Presidency, "Warning to Church Members," July 3, 1936, *Improvement Era* 39, no. 8 (August 1936): 488.

American society: "Communist rats are working here in the United States and are gnawing at the very vitals of our government, and I wish every one of them could be sent to Russia where he belongs."[3]

When the attack on Pearl Harbor brought World War II to the United States, Japan and Germany became an immediate threat and McKay's wartime rhetoric focused on them. In the first general conference after the attack, McKay decried war in principle but noted that there is one condition in which a righteous nation is justified in going to war: "To deprive an intelligent human being of his free agency is to commit the crime of the ages. . . . So fundamental in man's eternal progress is his inherent right to choose, that the Lord would defend it even at the price of war."[4] A common thread connecting wartime Germany and Japan with Soviet Communism was that all three systems deprived humankind of free agency, a gift from God that in McKay's view was second only to life itself. Time after time over the next three decades, McKay returned to the theme that the primary evil of Communism was its denial to the individual of free agency.

Following the war, McKay resumed his anti-Soviet rhetoric. Speaking on the "Church-of-the-Air" program in 1947 he said, "Today America is reputedly the only nation in the world capable of sustaining western civilization. Opposed to her is Russia. . . . There can be no question about the outcome of the anticipated ominous clash, which we earnestly hope and pray will never come."[5] Addressing general conference the following year, he said, "The choice today is between dictatorship with the atheistic teachings of communism, and the doctrine of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, obedience to which alone can make us free."[6]

McKay's primary responsibility as second counselor in the First Presidency was the supervision of the Church's forty-six worldwide missions; and as the 1940s came to a close, he watched anxiously as the Iron

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3. David O. McKay, Letter to Jeremiah Stokes, April 19, 1940, quoted in D. Michael Quinn: *J. Reuben Clark: The Church Years* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1983), 190.

4. *Conference Report,* April 5, 1942, 71–73.

5. "Faith Triumphant," Church-of-the-Air address, July 20, 1947, David O. McKay Scrapbook #12, Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; hereafter LDS Church Archives.

6. *Conference Report,* April 5, 1948, 70.

Curtain began to choke off Church activity in Czechoslovakia, the only mission headquartered in a Communist bloc country.[7] In a move that forced the Church's hand, Czech police arrested two LDS missionaries early in 1950, alleging that they had entered a restricted area.[8] The missionaries were held incommunicado for three weeks, and it gradually became apparent that their release was contingent upon the Church's closing the mission.[9] This quid pro quo was a bitter pill for McKay; and a month after closing the mission, he remarked in a general conference address, "Every member of the Church should take a lesson from what has occurred in that communistically dominated land."[10]

The memory of Czechoslovakia was still fresh when McKay received news that carried even more ominous implications for his missionary portfolio: the invasion of South Korea by Communist North Korea on June 25, 1950. The drafting of young men greatly reduced the supply of missionaries, and the threat of an invasion of Hong Kong obliged McKay to instruct the mission president to abandon the Chinese Mission and move his remaining missionaries to Hawaii.[11] Furthermore, fear of an imminent Russian invasion of western Europe clouded McKay's plans for missionaries there.

Thus, in the year preceding his becoming president of the Church, McKay had been forced to take three reluctant steps backward because of Communism: the forced abandonment of the Czechoslovak Mission, the preemptive abandonment of the Chinese Mission, and the reduction by over two-thirds of the missionary force. In his first interview after becoming president, he warned, "A third World War is inevitable unless Communism is soon subdued. Communism yields to nothing but force."[12]

During the first year of his presidency, 1951–52, McKay traveled to Europe to select sites in England and Switzerland for the first LDS tem-

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7. A mission also operated at this time in the Soviet sector of Germany.

8. Senator Elbert D. Thomas, Letter to David O. McKay, February 14, 1950, in McKay, Diary, typescript, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City. These diaries are not paginated nor are there numbers for the different volumes. They are photocopies, made by Clare Middlemiss, of the originals.

9. Elbert D. Thomas, Letter to David O. McKay, February 23, 1950, in ibid.

10. *Conference Report*, April 8, 1950, 175.

11. McKay, Diary, January 13, 1951.

12. "LDS President Concerned over Red Attitude toward Christianity,"

ples outside of North America. Upon his return he reported that the trip "was a glorious one and that everything is promising and hopeful except for the threat of Communism."[13] Speaking to the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, he used strong rhetoric. According to the minutes, "President McKay said we are facing Satan himself. They are anti-Christ. They want to destroy Christianity . . . [and] it looked to him as though there is only one way to meet them and that is by force, the only thing they understand."[14]

The year 1952 had dual significance for McKay's confrontation with Communism. During that year, his trip to Europe made him an eyewitness to the ills of Communism and socialism and strengthened his resolve to battle both systems. Also during that year, the apostle destined to become McKay's staunchest ally in the battle, Ezra Taft Benson, began his political ascendancy.

Benson had entered the national spotlight in 1939 when he accepted a position in Washington, D.C., as executive secretary of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.[15] He rose in prominence over the next four years, at one point being featured on the cover of *Business Week*'s October 30, 1943, issue; but his political career was temporarily curtailed by a call, in July 1943, to serve in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Benson's desire to combine political activities with his Church calling was not unprecedented, for Apostle Reed Smoot had earlier been elected to five terms in the United States Senate (1903-33) after being called to the Quorum of the Twelve. In August 1952, Benson requested permission from the First Presidency to serve as chairman of the American Institute of Cooperation. His request was approved, on the condition

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*Salt Lake Telegram*, April 26, 1951. All newspaper articles cited are photocopied and inserted in the McKay diaries under the date of publication.

13. "Church Leader Tells Rotary Club of Trip to European Missions," *Deseret News*, August 6, 1952.

14. First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Meeting, Minutes, August 28, 1952, in McKay, Diary.

15. For an account of Benson's life, see Sheri L. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson: A Biography* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1987). Although otherwise detailed (565 pages in length), the biography skirts the issue of Benson and Communism to the point where the terms "Communism," "John Birch Society" and "Robert Welch" do not appear in its index.

that "he does not devote so much of his time to other interests that the Twelve would be deprived of his help."[16] It would not be long, however, before Benson received permission without restriction for an even more prestigious position in the cabinet of the newly elected U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The latitude McKay allowed Benson in this position is explained by his fervor for Eisenhower. That McKay was a Republican was not widely known. Only a week prior to the 1952 presidential election, a Church member called McKay's secretary, Clare Middlemiss, and said, "A group of us have had an argument regarding whether President McKay is a Republican or a Democrat, and we wonder if you will tell us." She referred to McKay's nonpartisan statement at the conclusion of the October general conference and added, "Therefore he is not proclaiming himself publicly."[17] Nonetheless, McKay was a Republican and privately rejoiced when Dwight Eisenhower won the election. The morning after the election he noted, "We were all thrilled with the News. In my opinion, it is the greatest thing that has happened in a hundred years for our country."[18] It was not surprising, then, that McKay reacted favorably to Eisenhower's request two weeks later, transmitted through newly reelected Senator Arthur V. Watkins (R-Utah), who "told me that Elder Ezra Taft Benson is being considered by General Eisenhower for the position of Secretary of Agriculture, and wondered if he would be permitted to accept the position should it be offered to him. I said yes that I thought he would be permitted to accept."[19]

The following morning McKay and Benson arrived in the parking lot of the Church Administration Building at the same time. According to Benson's son, "President McKay spotted my father and said to him, 'Elder Benson, I received a very important phone call last night, and my mind is clear on this matter. If this job is offered to you in the proper spirit, you are to take it.'"[20] Three days later, President-elect Eisenhower announced his selection of Benson; and in January 1953, Benson began an eight-year term as Secretary of Agriculture. Upon hearing the news, a reporter called

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16. McKay, Diary, August 1, 5, 1952.

17. McKay, Diary, October 27, 1952.

18. McKay, Diary, November 5, 1952.

19. McKay, Diary, November 20, 1952.

20. Reed Benson, Interview, Provo, Utah, September 15, 1999. Unless otherwise noted, I conducted all interviews; typescripts in my possession.

McKay. "He desired to know if the report were true that Brother Benson would be given a leave of absence from his Church duties. I told him this was correct."[21]

At Benson's request, McKay gave him a blessing that Benson would thereafter consider a mandate to fight Communism by whatever means he chose: "We seal upon you the blessings of . . . sound judgment, clear vision, that you might see afar the needs of this country; vision that you might see, too, the enemies who would thwart the freedoms of the individual as vouchsafed by the Constitution, . . . and may you be fearless in the condemnation of these subversive influences, and strong in your defense of the rights and privileges of the Constitution."[22]

During the years he served in Eisenhower's cabinet, Benson avoided controversy regarding Communism, although he quickly became a lightning rod over agricultural policy. Often under fire from others,[23] he nonetheless had McKay's unwavering support and admiration. Indeed, McKay wrote in his diary, "I suppose it is not overstating the fact when I say that only the present responsibilities of the President himself exceed those which Brother Benson is carrying."[24]

During the eight years that Benson worked in Washington on agricultural matters, McKay's focus on Communism remained sharp. At a 1953 meeting of national executives of the Boy Scouts of America, he spoke of a death struggle between religion and Communism: "Today two mighty forces are battling for the supremacy for the world. The destiny of mankind is in the balance. It is a question of God and liberty, or atheism and slavery. The success of Communism means the destruction of Religion."[25]

The following year, at a time when the anti-Communist crusade reached a fever pitch, McKay gained national attention with a statement

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21. Notes on telephone conversation between David O. McKay and Ned Redding, publisher of the *California Intermountain News,* McKay Diary, November 25, 1952.

22. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson,* 259.

23. Benson's autobiographical account of his cabinet years is *Crossfire: The Eight Years with Eisenhower* (New York: Doubleday, 1962).

24. McKay, Diary, August 19, 1954.

25. David O. McKay, "Forward in Spiritual Ideas," address delivered to the Executives of the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America, Statler Hotel,

that ultimately proved prophetic. As reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, he told Church members gathered in Wisconsin for a chapel dedication: "People under Communist domination will some day rise against their rulers, the world leader of the Mormon church predicted today. White-haired Elder David O. McKay, Salt Lake City, said free will—the freedom to choose between right and wrong—is the people's most valuable possession. 'No power on earth,' he said, 'can take this freedom away.'"[26]

At the same time McKay made this statement, Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-Wisconsin), came under attack for going too far in his crusade against Communism. McKay initially had been in favor of McCarthy's extremism. Referring to what he termed "the farce that is going on now in Washington between McCarthy and the Army," he told his counselors and the Quorum of the Twelve that "the Communistic influence is being exerted there to lessen the influence of men who would ferret out the enemies in the high places of our government."[27] As the summer of 1954 wore on, however, and the extent of McCarthy's improprieties became evident, McKay switched sides on the issue.

Perhaps McKay's switch was facilitated by the fact that one of his Mormon friends, Senator Arthur V. Watkins (R-Utah), reluctantly accepted from Vice President Richard M. Nixon the assignment to chair the bipartisan committee investigating the censure charges against McCarthy. "In my more than 80 years with daily encounters and exchanges with people of diverse opinions," Watkins wrote in his memoirs, "I have never suffered such intense and continuing distress."[28] Nonetheless, Watkins's fairness in chairing the committee engendered respect in many quarters. None of his supporters was more sincere than McKay who, shortly after the censure vote in early December, wrote to Watkins:

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Los Angeles, July 17, 1953, David O. McKay, Discourses, LDS Church Archives. These discourses are, like the diaries, filed chronologically in binders 8.5" x 14".

26. "Head of Mormons Predicts Revolt in Red Countries," *Los Angeles Times*, April 26, 1954.

27. McKay, Diary, June 3, 1954.

28. Arthur V. Watkins, *Enough Rope: The Inside Story of the Censure of Senator Joe McCarthy by His Colleagues–The Controversial Hearings That Signaled the End of a Turbulent Career and a Fearsome Era in American Public Life* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969), ix.

"Now that your victory is won, permit me to extend to you many hearty congratulations and high commendation for your clarity, sound judgment, and true dignity manifested throughout the entire hearing and the final disposition of this most difficult case. You have won merited honor to yourself, retained the prestige of the Senate, and brought credit to your State and to the Nation."[29] Watkins, in return, paid McKay the highest tribute: "In all sincerity I want you to know that I appreciate that expression from you more than anyone in the country, not even excluding President Eisenhower."[30]

While McKay backed away from the extremism of McCarthy, he was no less fervent in his own opposition to Communism. When the Soviets forcefully put down the Hungarian revolt of 1956, McKay sided with the Hungarians, who "should be called 'patriots' rather than 'rebels.'"[31]

In 1957 McKay was visited by Senator John F. Kennedy, who had already made known his intention to run for President in 1960. McKay asked Kennedy about the future of the Soviet Union. "Would the system break up first, or would it have to come to a clash of arms?" Kennedy replied that he expected to see continuing Soviet expansionism and that he did not expect to see Communism break up, since there was no alternative system to replace it. McKay responded that he could not see how the system could continue indefinitely. "They are fundamentally wrong. Free agency is inherent in every individual. Rule by force has been fought against by men throughout history." Kennedy responded by noting "they have the power to continue. Their prospects for the immediate future are bright."[32]

McKay's philosophical objections to Communism were two-fold: It was atheistic, and it robbed humankind of free agency, a principle that for McKay was of fundamental importance. Even free agency, however, was subject to some restrictions if necessitated by the fight against Communism. Meeting with Stanley Tracy, a former assistant to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, McKay lamented Chief Justice Earl Warren's recent condem-

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29. McKay, Letter to Arthur V. Watkins, December 11, 1954, quoted in ibid., 195.

30. Arthur V. Watkins, Letter to McKay, December 31, 1954, in McKay, Diary, December 13, 1954.

31. McKay, Diary, November 15, 1956.

32. McKay, Diary, November 12, 1957.

nation of Hoover for engaging in wiretapping: "I stated that I am in sympathy with Hoover in this regard, and think that sometimes it is necessary. I told Mr. Tracy that I look upon Communism as an enemy, whose sole purpose is destruction of Capitalism and our form of government, and the use of wiretapping is justifiable in the preservation of our government."[33]

McKay's opposition to Communism was soon to become more complicated because of the activities of Ezra Taft Benson. Benson returned to full-time activity as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve in 1961 but did not abandon his political activities. Ernest L. Wilkinson, president of Brigham Young University, commented after Benson spoke at the university in May of that year: "Presided at devotional, at which I introduced Elder Ezra Taft Benson. He gave a fine talk. It is apparent, however, it is very difficult for him to divorce himself from the active politics in which he has been engaged, and get into his work again as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. While I agreed with every word that he said, I suspect there were some Democrats who did not, and he took one-third of his time talking on current political problems."[34]

The following month, McKay had to rein in Benson's political activities. "Brother Benson has received an invitation from the senators and congressmen to go back to Washington as an adviser. I feel that if this matter comes up again that Brother Benson should remain here; that we need him at home."[35] Benson did remain "at home," but a few months later he entered an arena of political activity that would occupy much of McKay's attention for the remaining decade of his life and that would cause acrimony and division among the Church's highest leaders.

In December 1958, a Massachusetts candy maker, Robert Welch, founded a right-wing extremist organization that took up where Joseph McCarthy left off in attacking Communism but went beyond McCarthyism to target civil rights and government in general, proclaiming that "the greatest enemy of man is, and always has been, government; and the larger, the more extensive that government, the greater the en-

33. McKay, Diary, June 6, 1958.

34. Ernest L. Wilkinson, Diary, May 24, 1961, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Wilkinson dictated this diary to his secretary, who typed it. I made a word-for-word typescript copy.

35. McKay, Diary, June 29, 1961.

emy."[36] Welch named the organization after an American soldier, John Birch, who was killed by Chinese Communists ten days after the end of World War II. Within a year, Ezra Taft Benson had a close association with one of the society's national leaders. During 1961 he became personally acquainted with Welch,[37] and the two men's political agendas quickly aligned. Benson's son recalled: "After his cabinet years, when he came back to Utah, he could see things happening in this country that put him on alert. He saw it with his eyes in Washington, but his focus was so much in the Department of Agriculture that he had enough problems there without him trying to take care of the problems in a lot of other areas."[38]

Four days after the Soviets began constructing the Berlin Wall, Benson spoke out in a meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, saying "that personally he thought the Communism threat is very real and very dangerous, and that there is need for some organized effort to meet this great threat." His colleagues, while acknowledging that Communism should be fought, warned against extreme measures, particularly the use of the Church as a platform. McKay, while agreeing that "our Sacrament meetings should be reserved for spiritual enrichment and spiritual instruction," cautioned that "we must be careful about condemning any efforts that are anti-Communistic because Communism is a real danger in our country."[39] In taking this stand, McKay implicitly endorsed Benson's position, as he would do regularly in the future. Benson, in turn, never hesitated to remind people of McKay's support. "When the flak began to fly, my father, who didn't want to do anything to harm the Church, would constantly be in touch with President McKay, and President McKay would *consistently* encourage him to keep speaking out."[40]

By September, Benson's outspokenness was causing enough turmoil that some Church members began to complain to Hugh B. Brown of the First Presidency. Brown, a Democrat who in earlier years had been po-

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36. Robert Welch, *The Blue Book* (Belmont, Mass.: Robert Welch, 1961), 108. For an overview of the John Birch Society, see Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, *The Politics of Unreason: Right-wing Extremism in America, 1790–1970* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

37. D. Michael Quinn, "Ezra Taft Benson and Mormon Political Conflicts," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 7–8.

38. Reed Benson, interview, September 15, 1999.

39. McKay, Diary, August 17, 1961.

40. Reed Benson, interview, September 15, 1999; emphasis his.

litically active, quickly became a sounding board for Latter-day Saints who felt that Benson's message and tactics were too extreme. Benson, undaunted by the criticism, lashed out strongly in the October general conference, linking socialism directly to Communism: "Communism is fundamentally socialism. We will never win our fight against communism by making concessions to socialism. Communism and socialism, closely related, must be defeated on principle. . . . No true Latter-day Saint and no true American can be a socialist or a communist or support programs leading in that direction."[41]

The conflict between Benson and moderate Church leaders, particularly Hugh B. Brown, was tactical rather than strategic. "Certainly all of us are against Communism," Brown wrote late in 1961. But that end did not justify certain means, and he was overtly critical of the means of the John Birch Society in a personal letter:

> The Church has not taken any stand officially relating to these various groups who nominate themselves as guardians of our freedom, except in the case of the John Birch Society, and we are definitely against their methods. . . . We do not think dividing our own people, casting reflections on our government officials, or calling everybody Communists who do not agree with the political views of certain individuals is the proper way to fight Communism. We think the Church should be a modifying, steadying institution and our leaders, or even members, should not become hysterical or take hasty action.[42]

The day after Brown wrote this letter, Ernest Wilkinson met sequentially with Benson and Brown, and captured in his diary the essence of the conflict between the two men: "I then had a conference with Brother Benson, who is very much concerned over the socialistic tendencies of Brother Brown. I then had a conference with President Brown, who is very much concerned over the super-patriotic tendencies of Brother Benson. It is apparent that I am caught in the center. I think Brother

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41. Benson, Address, September 30, 1961, *Conference Report*, October 1961, 73–74.

42. Hugh B. Brown, Letter to Alicia Bingham, December 28, 1961, Edwin B. Firmage Papers, Accession 1074, Box 48, fd. 21, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

Benson, as a matter of principle, is right, but he has made some strategic mistakes."[43]

By early 1962, Benson's anti-Communist activities became the focus of an hour-long discussion within the First Presidency. McKay's two counselors, both of whom were Democrats, felt that Benson was too extreme in his tactics. Henry D. Moyle, McKay's other counselor, felt that it was not proper to discuss such controversial matters in Church meetings, particularly when "the people were not well enough informed to discuss it" and when there had not yet been an official First Presidency statement on the subject to guide Church members. Referring to Benson's talk at October general conference, he noted that it had assumed something of official stature without having received formal endorsement. McKay, who was consistently more concerned with the overall fight against Communism than with tactics, replied that he "knew nothing wrong with Elder Benson's talk, and thought it to be very good." Brown then said that his only objection to Benson's talk was that it placed socialism and Communism in the same category: "All the people in Scandinavia and other European countries are under Socialistic governments and certainly are not Communists. Brother Benson's talk ties them together and makes them equally abominable. If this is true, our people in Europe who are living under a Socialist government are living out of harmony with the Church."[44]

The meeting ended with the decision to have Benson meet with the First Presidency the following Monday, with the hope of reaching a consensus that would result in an official policy statement. After meeting with Benson, however, "the First Presidency agreed that now was not the time for the Church to make a statement as to its stand against Communism, but that such a statement could be made at a later date."[45]

As 1962 progressed, tension within the hierarchy over the John Birch Society increased. On the one hand, McKay became more supportive of a hard-line approach towards Communism, while on the other, Brown continued to criticize extremism. Yet the public perception was that Brown reflected McKay's beliefs, as shown in a newspaper report of a general conference address in April:

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43. Wilkinson, Diary, December 29, 1961.
44. McKay, Diary, February 15, 1962.
45. McKay, Diary, February 19, 1962.

> The First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Saturday reaffirmed the Church's long standing opposition to the evils of communism in the world today, but denounced extreme anti-Communist movements as more of a hindrance than a help. Speaking for the presiding body of the church, Hugh B. Brown, second counselor in the First Presidency, told a packed Tabernacle crowd of priesthood bearers "the leaders of the church now, as has always been the case, stand squarely against the ideals of communism. We'd like the world to know that. However," he added, "we urge you not to become extremists on either side. There is no place in the church or the priesthood of God for men to be fighting each other over a menace such as communism."[46]

Those who took offense at Benson received Brown's words gratefully. A UCLA graduate student wrote that the speeches and writings of Benson "have been the object of derision by competent scholars—not for being anti-Communistic, but rather because of apparent lack of scholarship in their analysis of current politics." Noting that he had occasionally been placed in the uncomfortable position of disagreeing with "what has appeared (until recently) to be the position of the Church," he complimented Brown for his general conference address, "which I interpreted to be a general censure of the 'Right Wing' trend in the Church." He acknowledged, however, that some of his fellow Church members "refuse to see extremism in these movements,"[47] thus correctly characterizing a growing rift within the Church.

Brown wrote in response, "It is encouraging to some of us who are on the firing line to find that our attempts to stem an undesirable tide of emotionalism are considered partially successful." However, he also acknowledged the rift by noting that letters received since general conference had come down on both sides of the issue. "The differences between some of the talks given in Priesthood Meeting and others in the general conference leave some of the readers and listeners a bit confused. This I very much regret." Nonetheless, he did not apologize for his remarks, which clearly had been aimed at the Birch Society. "While we do not think it wise to name names in our statements of Church policy, the cries which come from certain sources would indicate that some-

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46. "LDS Hits Extremes in Anti-Red Battle," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 7, 1962.

47. Harley R. Hammond, Letter to Hugh B. Brown, April 24, 1962; photocopy in my possession.

body was hit by some of our statements and that was what we hoped would be the result."[48]

However, while many complained to Brown, many others, perhaps indicative of the majority of Latter-day Saints, were comfortable with Benson's approach. And knowing that he had McKay's explicit approval, Benson plunged forward fearlessly, occasionally requesting McKay's direct intervention to stem criticism. A month after Brown's general conference address, Benson phoned McKay to tell him that he would be traveling to Seattle for a Church conference, where "there has been some reflection cast on him." McKay thereupon called the stake president in Seattle and said, "All I wish to say to you is that Brother Benson is not under any cloud whatever regarding his attitude towards communism."[49]

In October 1962, the world came to the brink of nuclear war over the issue of long-range missiles being deployed in Cuba. In the midst of this crisis, Ezra Taft Benson made his boldest move yet, attempting to solicit McKay's endorsement of the John Birch Society. Benson explained that his son Reed, "after spending a year in studying the aims and purposes of the John Birch Society," wished to accept the position of coordinator for Utah, and wanted McKay to bless the move. McKay's response was not what Benson had hoped to hear. "I have heard about the John Birch Society, and everything so far has been negative, so it is up to you and Reed as to whether or not this position is accepted." Pressing the issue further, Benson said that he had read the *Blue Book*, Robert Welch's manifesto and, in meeting with Welch, found him to be "a fine Christian gentleman." He referred to the Birch Society as "the most effective organization we have in the country in fighting Communism and Socialism," adding that Reed "is convinced that he can best serve his country by working with this organization." McKay was adamant in his refusal to become involved. "I said, 'I have nothing whatever to do with it.' Brother Benson said that Reed would not go into this if I told him not to, and I said that this is a matter that I shall leave entirely with him and Reed."[50] The following day, Reed Benson announced his acceptance of the position with the John Birch Society, and his father's endorsement of the society thus

48. Hugh B. Brown, Letter to Harley R. Hammond, April 25, 1962; photocopy in my possession.

49. McKay, Diary, May 18, 1962.

50. McKay, Diary, October 26, 1962.

became public.[51] Newspapers across the country reported the story, and headlines such as "Ezra Benson's Son Takes Birch Society Post," and "Benson Birch Tie Disturbs Utahans"[52] heightened the controversy.

Although Ezra Taft Benson never joined the John Birch Society, his position as a senior apostle gave his public endorsement of the society the flavor of official Church endorsement, a situation that infuriated many Mormons. In a rare acknowledgement that public opinion can influence Church policy, Moyle wrote to a political science professor at the University of Utah: "When we pursue any course which results in numerous letters being written to the Presidency critical of our work, it should be some evidence we should change our course."[53] As a result, on January 3, 1963, the First Presidency issued its first policy statement dealing with the society:

> The following statement is made to correct the false statements and unwarranted assumptions regarding the position allegedly taken by the leaders of the Church on political questions in general and the John Birch Society in particular. . . . We deplore the presumption of some politicians, especially officers, co-ordinators and members of the John Birch Society, who undertake to align the Church or its leadership with their partisan views. We encourage our members to exercise the right of citizenship, to vote according to their own convictions, but no one should seek or pretend to have our approval of their adherence to any extremist ideologies. We denounce communism as being anti-Christian, anti-American, and the enemy of freedom, but we think they who pretend to fight it by casting aspersions on our elected officers or other fellow citizens do the anti-Communist cause a great disservice.[54]

Many Church members welcomed the statement. One bishop wrote to the First Presidency: "May this Bishop express heartfelt gratitude for your forthright policy statement of January 3 on the Birch Society. President Brown's declaration for the First Presidency at the Priesthood session of April Conference, 1962, decrying extremist groups of all sorts,

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51. "Reed A. Benson Takes Post in Birch Society," *Deseret News*, October 27, 1962.

52. "Ezra Benson's Son Takes Birch Society Post," *Sacramento Bee*, October 27, 1962; "Benson Birch Tie Disturbs Utahans," *New York Times*, November 4, 1962.

53. Henry D. Moyle, Letter to J. D. Williams, January 9, 1963; photocopy in my possession.

54. "Church Sets Policy on Birch Society," *Deseret News*, January 3, 1963.

seemed plain enough. But apparently some of our number either refused to listen or could not read."[55]

Benson was blindsided by the statement. The day after it was issued, he called McKay, who was at his farm in Huntsville, and asked for an audience. McKay demurred, telling him "to call my counselors [both of whom were Democrats] and tell them to hold a meeting with him this morning in the office of the First Presidency."[56] Two days after Benson's phone call, Brown visited McKay in Huntsville to discuss the matter and, at McKay's request, wrote a memorandum describing the meeting with Benson:

> The first subject under discussion was the recent declaration made by the First Presidency and published in the newspapers regarding the John Birch Society and its officers, stating that the Church does not endorse them. You asked that I read a number of opinions from various sources, including the editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, the Attorney General of the State of California, the Ministerial Association of California, and others. After reading and discussing these, we agreed that we had done the right thing in letting the members of the Church and the world know that the Church does not in any way endorse or subscribe to the John Birch Society. You mentioned that we might have erred in that we did not call the Bensons in before making the announcement. I called your attention to the fact that we had called Brother Benson in and discussed Reed's activities during the campaign in disregarding our former statement regarding the use of our chapels and meeting places for political purposes. At that same meeting we discussed the John Birch Society, and Brother Benson denied having any association with them.[57]

Benson's denial of "any association" with the Birch Society, if not overtly duplicitous, indicates that he was using the words in their narrowest possible sense, such that, in his view, not being a card-carrying member of the society allowed him to deny having "any association." He used a similar tactic several years later when he nearly succeeded in getting McKay's photograph on the cover of *American Opinion*, the Birch Society's monthly magazine.

In late January, McKay finally met with Benson to discuss the First Presidency statement. It was one of the rare instances in which McKay

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55. J. D. Williams, Letter to the First Presidency, January 4, 1963; photocopy in my possession.

56. McKay, Diary, January 4, 1963.

57. McKay, Diary, January 6, 1963.

came down hard on him—albeit in private—for his political activities: "Elder Benson said the statement seemed to be leveled against him and his son, Reed, and also Brother [W. Cleon] Skousen. I told Brother Benson that it was intended to apply to them. I said that the statement made by him (Elder Benson) in favor of the John Birch Society was made by him, one of the Twelve, who is an international character and received international publicity, and that that is one reason the Presidency had to make the announcement in the newspapers."[58]

A week later, Ernest Wilkinson met with McKay's secretary, Clare Middlemiss, and discussed the First Presidency statement. Wilkinson was sympathetic to the John Birch Society and, at one point, traveled to Illinois for a multi-day society meeting before deciding not to join. Middlemiss, who also never joined, was even more sympathetic to the society and to Benson, so much so that Hugh B. Brown concluded that she was the conduit through which information flowed from Benson and the society to McKay.[59] Middlemiss told Wilkinson that McKay had received "at least 25 letters vigorously protesting the statement of the First Presidency, many of them very intelligent letters." She then informed Wilkinson "that the President, himself, thinks that the First Presidency probably went a little too far."[60]

Four days later, Middlemiss met with McKay and showed him "hundreds of letters from all over the United States which have been received from members of the John Birch Society."[61] What she did not tell him was that the letters were not spontaneous but came in response to a notice in *The John Birch Society Bulletin* that urged Mormon members of the society to write to McKay, thanking him for his stand against Communism and praising "the great service Ezra Taft Benson and his son Reed (our Utah Coordinator) are rendering to this battle, with the hope that they will be encouraged to continue."[62] At McKay's instruction, Middlemiss wrote a form letter to be sent out to any society members who voiced concerns over their Church standing. The letter, which

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58. Ibid., January 23, 1963.

59. Edwin B. Firmage (Brown's grandson), Interview, Salt Lake City, October 10, 1996.

60. Wilkinson, Diary, January 31, 1963.

61. McKay, Diary, February 4, 1963.

62. *The John Birch Society Bulletin*, February 1963, 28–29. Eventually

went out over her signature instead of his (although beneath her signature she always typed "Secretary to President David O. McKay"), read in part: "I have been directed to say that members of the Church are free to join anti-communist organizations if they desire and their membership in the Church is not jeopardized by so doing. The Church is not opposing The John Birch Society or any other organization of like nature; however, it is definitely opposed to anyone's using the Church for the purpose of increasing membership for private organizations sponsoring these various ideologies."[63]

The letter provided society members with an antidote to the First Presidency statement, and it was thereafter quoted frequently, although often in a truncated form that ended with the words "of like nature." Within a month of the statement, therefore, both sides had an authoritative source to quote in favor of their own position. Consequently, the sparring proceeded and intensified.

Early in March, Ernest Wilkinson met with W. Cleon Skousen, who, though not a member of the society, shared many of its views. Wilkinson recorded in his diary: "I found out that despite the manner in which he [Benson] is being criticized by President Hugh B. Brown, President David O. McKay is squarely behind him and has told him to keep up his good work."[64] It was typical of McKay to allow colleagues wide leeway in their public statements and not contradict them in public. In private, however, he was not as circumspect; and his private statements, which were not always consistent, sometimes led to major conflicts and misunderstandings.

The day after Wilkinson's meeting with Skousen, an article with the headline "Benson Not Speaking for Mormons on Birch" appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*.[65] It quoted Hugh Brown as saying that Benson was entitled to his own opinions but that, in expressing them, he spoke for himself only and not for the Church. In a subsequent First Presidency meeting, McKay agreed with Brown and then criticized Benson:

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McKay received over 2,000 such letters. See McKay, Diary, February 26, 1963.

63. McKay, Diary, February 4, 1963.

64. Wilkinson, Diary, March 3, 1963.

65. "Benson Not Speaking for Mormons on Birch," *Los Angeles Times*, March, 4, 1963.

> Following the publication of the [First Presidency] statement, I was asked to apologize for what was said against Brother Benson and his son Reed because if we had called them "we would have done anything that you suggested." I said, "Yes, and nobody in the Church or in the world would have known that you were doing that, but everybody knew that you are a national character and everybody knew that you favor the Birch Society and that you approve your son representing it in Utah, and when the First Presidency gave that statement it received the same publicity which your statement received, and we offer no apology."[66]

The following week, on March 12, 1963, Lela Benson, wife of Ezra Taft Benson's other son, Mark, sent a handwritten request to Clare Middlemiss. The letter gives the appearance of having been engineered by other Bensons; it also gives the clearest known indication of Middlemiss's sympathy toward the John Birch Society: "Yesterday I talked to a Bishop who said he would like to see one of 'those' letters that President McKay has sent out regarding the John Birch Society. However he claims that it won't hold much weight unless it is signed by the President and not you. (I disagreed of course—but he stands firm!) Therefore, could you possibly send me one and have it signed by President McKay himself? *I understand from Father Benson and his family that you are a dear, sweet, loyal, true blue soul.*"[67] There is no record of whether Middlemiss complied with the request.

The following day, in response to mounting pressure and after consulting with McKay, Ezra Taft Benson issued a statement to affirm that "only one man, President David O. McKay, speaks for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on matters of policy."[68] While on the surface the statement seemed to be conciliatory, in fact it was carefully crafted to have just the opposite effect. First, while disclaiming that he spoke for the Church, Benson began the statement by reaffirming his own strong support for the John Birch Society: "I have stated, as my personal opinion only, that the John Birch Society is 'the most effective non-Church organization in our fight against creeping socialism and godless communism.'" Second, by stating that only McKay could speak for the Church authoritatively,

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66. McKay, Diary, March 6, 1963.

67. Lela (Mrs. Mark A.) Benson, Letter to Clare Middlemiss, March 12, 1963; photocopy of original in my possession. The underlining, which is in the original, was apparently added by Middlemiss.

68. "Elder Benson Makes Statement," *Church News*, March 16, 1963.

Benson took a swipe at Brown's credibility as a spokesman for the First Presidency. And third, Benson quoted only from the Middlemiss letter, which was sympathetic to the society, and neglected to mention the January statement of the First Presidency, which was openly critical of the society.

Having issued his disclaimer, Benson continued to speak out publicly in support of the John Birch Society. The following week, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported an interview with him:

> Although he is not a member of the society, he "strongly" believes in its principles. . . . "I have stated, as my personal opinion only, that the John Birch Society is the most effective non-church organization in our fight against creeping socialism and godless communism." . . . Elder Benson, whose son, Reed, is Utah coordinator for the John Birch Society, said he is completely impressed by the people who are pushing the work of the society and praised the "honesty and integrity" of Robert Welch, the founder.[69]

Three weeks later, Ernest Wilkinson went to a social event that included two senior Church officials, Henry D. Moyle of the First Presidency and senior apostle (and eventual Church president) Harold B. Lee. Earlier in the day Wilkinson had received a phone call from Benson "who read me the riot act for having invited a Communist to speak to our students." (The speaker was advertised as a Communist but, in fact, was not; the pose was a publicity device.) As Wilkinson explained the unpleasant matter to Moyle and Lee, "Brother Lee commented that anyone who didn't agree with Brother Benson's mind was, indeed, a Communist. Brother Moyle said that he was happy that I was finding Brother Benson out, that when it came to this subject, he just didn't have any reason."[70] Lee was particularly distressed by Benson's actions and, according to an acquaintance, later said privately "that the brethren would never permit another member of the Twelve to serve in the Cabinet or in a high political position because, as he put it, 'Elder Benson had lost his spiritual tone and would no longer accept counsel.'"[71]

Moyle and Lee were not alone among the General Authorities in dis-

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69. "Benson Clarifies Views on Birch Society Stand," *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 21, 1963.

70. Wilkinson, Diary, May 13, 1963.

71. L. Ralph Mecham, Letter to Gregory A. Prince, March 21, 2001.

approving strongly of Benson's actions, yet Benson, as one General Authority later commented, continued to enjoy the support of "a majority of one":

> Early in my career [as a General Authority] I found that there was not a whole lot of support or appreciation for Benson constantly harping on the communist issue. Although, every time President McKay was present or in a meeting, he would be the endorser, or thanking President Benson for doing what he was doing. That kept the other elements sort of quiet. Hugh B. Brown really thought President Benson had gone overboard. And yet President Benson—I talked with him several times, not on this subject but just in conversation—would remind me that he was doing what the prophet had asked him to do.[72]

In August 1963, Robert Welch sent McKay a letter requesting that Ezra Taft Benson be permitted to join the National Council of the John Birch Society. While McKay was broadly supportive of Benson's outspokenness, he drew a firm line in responding to Welch's letter, one that he never allowed Benson to cross in spite of repeated pleas: "I said that the letter will be answered that Brother Benson may not join that Board; that he cannot be a member of that Board and be a member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles."[73] Deeply disappointed by the decision, Benson met with McKay later that month and said that he would "never say another word on the subject if that was President McKay's wish. [President McKay] said he wanted me to continue to speak out with the assurance I had his support as I have had in the past."[74]

Buoyed by the reaffirmed vote of confidence, Benson obtained McKay's consent to speak at a testimonial dinner for Robert Welch in Los Angeles the following month. On September 23, Benson delivered the speech; and although he called Welch "one of the greatest patriots in American history," the speech took a back seat to what Benson said to reporters afterwards. Welch had recently published a book, *The Politician*, in which he accused Eisenhower of being a tool of the Communists. When asked if he agreed with Welch's statement, Benson sidestepped the question, refused to defend Eisenhower, and stated merely that Ei-

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72. Paul H. Dunn, Interview, Highland, Utah, May 21, 1996.
73. McKay, Diary, August 9, 1963.
74. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson*, 371–72.

senhower "supported me in matters of agriculture. In other areas we had differences."[75]

The morning after the banquet, Reed Benson escorted Welch into McKay's office, where Welch "reviewed the success of the meeting of his organization in Los Angeles in which Elder Ezra Taft Benson was the featured speaker."[76] McKay's diary made no mention of the Eisenhower comment, which had already ignited a firestorm in Washington, D.C.

At the center of the protest in the nation's capitol was Democrat Representative Ralph Harding, like Benson, an Idahoan. When Harding received a call to serve as a missionary in the Central States Mission in 1949, he requested that Benson, his "favorite General Authority," set him apart. Benson complied. After returning from his mission, Harding went into the army and was at Fort Riley, Kansas, when Dwight Eisenhower was elected U.S. president in 1952. He recalled: "I remember the papers were full of President Eisenhower and his cabinet selections, and for Secretary of Agriculture it had been narrowed to Ezra Taft Benson of Utah and Clifford Hope, a Congressman from Kansas, whom all the Kansas papers were supporting. I can remember just as clearly as if it had happened yesterday kneeling down by my bunk when I was saying my prayers, and praying that Elder Benson would be appointed to that position. And he was."[77]

In 1960 Harding won a Congressional seat representing Idaho and arrived in Washington, D.C., just as Benson was completing his eight-year tenure as Secretary of Agriculture and returning to Utah. Harding was midway through his second term when Benson gave his speech in Los Angeles:

> I was on the House floor when that report came in over the wires, the Associated Press and UPI. I was upset, and I stayed up there all night, taking that report and the information I had, and I wrote a speech criticizing Brother Benson for using his Church position to promote the John Birch Society. Then I called Milan Smith, who was a staunch Republican and my Stake President then. [Smith had been Benson's Chief of Staff during his eight years in the Department of Agriculture.] I told him I would appreci-

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75. "Benson Speaker at Testimonial Dinner," Associated Press Wire Service, September 24, 1963, *Congressional Record-House* 108, No. 13 (September 25, 1963): 18125–28; McKay, Diary.

76. McKay, Diary, September 24, 1963.

77. Ralph R. Harding, Interview, Arlington, Virginia, October 24, 2000.

> ate it if he would come up to my office, that there was something that I needed to discuss with him. He did. I let him take the speech, and he went through it. He was crossing out things here and writing more there, and he toughened it up! He made it even tougher than I had. He, [Washington D.C. Stake] President J. Willard Marriott, and most of the leaders of the Church back here were very, very upset about Brother Benson's actions. Then I called President [Hugh B.] Brown. We didn't have faxes, so we sat right there in my office, with Milan Smith on an extension, and I read the speech to President Brown. After I finished he said, "Well, Brother Harding, can you stand the brickbats?" I said, "I think so, President Brown." But he said, "No, I mean can you *really* stand the brickbats?" I said, "I think so." He said, "You know this speech will probably defeat you." I said, "I realize there is a chance of that." He said, "Well, if you are willing to take that chance, and you are wide aware of the brickbats that are going to come your way, you can do the Church a real service by going ahead and delivering that speech." I said, "That's all I wanted to know, President Brown." So I gave it the next day. It broke loose, especially in Utah and Idaho![78]

In his speech to the House of Representatives, Harding recounted his personal relationship with Benson: "It was just 14 years ago this month . . . that I was ordained by Ezra Taft Benson prior to my 2 years' service as a Mormon missionary." He recited the pride he had felt while Benson served as Secretary of Agriculture but lamented that, when he "left his position as Secretary of Agriculture, if not before, he began to change. . . . It was only a short time later that he became a spokesman for the radical right of this Nation."[79]

Reaction to Harding's speech was both pointed and mixed. The majority of mail received in Harding's office chastised him for criticizing Benson in public. As Brown had conjectured, he lost his campaign for reelection the following year. But other letters were highly complimentary of Harding's action. One was particularly noteworthy:

> I am grateful for your letter and for the speech that you made in Congress concerning the support and encouragement that the former Secretary of Agriculture, Ezra Benson, has allegedly been giving to a Mr. Welch, said to be the founder and leader of the John Birch Society. Your honest and unselfish effort to set the record straight is something that warms my heart.
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> Frankly, because I rarely read such trash as I understand 'The Politician' to be, I had never before read the specific accusations made against

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78. Ibid.

79. "Ezra Taft Benson's Support of John Birch Society Is Criticized," *Congressional Record-House*, 109, No. 13 (September 25, 1963): 18125-28.

> me by Robert Welch. But it is good to know that when they were brought to your attention you disregarded all partisan influences to express your honest convictions about the matter. It is indeed difficult to understand how a man, who professes himself to be an anti-Communist, can so brazenly accuse another—whose entire life's record has been one of refutation of Communist theory, practice and purposes—of Communist tendencies or leanings.
>
> With my best wishes and personal regard,
> Dwight D. Eisenhower[80]

A year later, when L. Ralph Mecham, an aide to Senator Wallace F. Bennett (R-Utah), escorted Wilkinson, then a candidate for U.S. Senate, to meet with Eisenhower, the former U.S. president spoke of Benson's actions. Long afterward, Mecham recalled:

> When I took Ernest Wilkinson up to Gettysburg to visit with Eisenhower, I believe in the spring of 1964, to get Eisenhower's blessing for Wilkinson in his Senate campaign, Ike was almost wistful. We had a great conversation about many things. In the course of it he asked us quizzically, "Whatever happened to Ezra?" or something like that. The implication was clear. He could not understand, I believe, why a man to whom he had been so loyal had not reciprocated that loyalty but instead had adopted the extremist views of the John Birch Society.[81]

Benson's actions put McKay in a dilemma. On the one hand, there was a rising tide of criticism directed at Benson, both from Church members and from national media. On the other hand, McKay thought highly of Benson, received his intense, loyal support, and shared his deep, visceral disdain for Communism. While Benson's tactics occasionally caused embarrassment and distress for McKay, neither man ever questioned the goal.

McKay resolved the dilemma temporarily by sending Benson out of the country for two years to preside over the European Mission. McKay gave Benson the news privately, less than a month after the Robert Welch dinner. Both men's accounts of the meeting show that it was upbeat, with no hint that Benson was being punished or exiled. McKay wrote that, after he told Benson of the assignment, "Brother Benson expressed himself as being willing to go. He had a lovely spirit, and said he would do what-

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80. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Letter to Ralph R. Harding, October 7, 1963; photocopy in my possession.

81. L. Ralph Mecham, Letter to Gregory A. Prince, March 21, 2001.

ever I wanted him to do."[82] Benson's biographer described the meeting in similar terms: "'Brother Benson, I have a great surprise,' the prophet began. 'President McKay,'" Ezra responded, 'this church is full of surprises.' Both men laughed and then President McKay announced that Elder Benson had been selected to preside over the European Mission with headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany."[83]

Regardless of McKay's intent, however, the move was widely seen as a rebuff to Benson's political activism. The same day that McKay met with Benson, one of McKay's sons expressed such a sentiment in a letter to Congressman Harding: "We shall all be relieved when Elder Benson ceases to resist counsel and returns to a concentration on those affairs befitting his office. It is my feeling that there will be an immediate and noticeable curtailment of his Birch Society activities."[84] Two weeks later, Harding received a letter from Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Quorum of the Twelve and immediate successor to McKay, that conveyed a similar message: "I think it is time that Brother Benson forgot all about politics and settled down to his duties as a member of the Council of the Twelve. . . . It would be better for him and for the church and all concerned, if he would settle down to his present duties and let all political matters take their course. He is going to take a mission to Europe in the near future and by the time he returns I hope he will get all of the political notions out of his system."[85]

Reaction in the press was mixed. For example, the Church-owned *Deseret News* reported the story with a benign headline, "Elder Benson to Direct European Mission," while a story in the nearby *Ogden Standard-Examiner* bore the headline, "Apostle Benson Denies Being Sent into 'Exile' for Political Views."[86] The *National Observer,* in a lengthy article entitled "Mormons Split over John Birch Society Campaign," attempted a balanced perspective:

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82. McKay, Diary, October 18, 1963.

83. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson,* 371-72.

84. Robert R. McKay, Letter to Ralph R. Harding, October 18, 1963; photocopy in my possession.

85. Joseph Fielding Smith, Letter to Ralph R. Harding, October 30, 1963; photocopy in my possession.

86. "Elder Benson to Direct European Mission," *Deseret News,* October 24, 1963; "Apostle Benson Denies Being Sent into 'Exile' for Political Views," *Ogden Standard-Examiner,* October 29, 1963.

> The Benson connection with the John Birch Society has created somewhat of a "schism" in the Mormon Church. To a few Mormons, Birch philosophies appear to coincide with church doctrine. . . . But to others, especially those in the liberal Republican and Democratic ranks, the John Birch Society still meant political extremism, and they began asking for Ezra Taft's scalp. . . . When the elder Benson received his new assignment to Europe many of his critics said the Mormon Church was "shipping out Benson to get rid of him." But to this charge, the former Secretary of Agriculture declared: "Ridiculous—members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are subject to call anywhere in the world anytime. That's our job, and I welcome the call with all my heart." President McKay, who called Mr. Benson on this mission, also termed the charge ridiculous. He, too, said the mission was a routine church assignment for a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.[87]

On the eve of his departure for Europe, Benson stirred up yet more controversy. On December 13, he delivered a farewell speech in Logan, a third of which was either direct quotations or paraphrases from Robert Welch's manifesto, the *Blue Book.* Particularly inflammatory was a direct quotation from the *Blue Book* that was given wide publicity in a subsequent article by nationally syndicated columnist Drew Pearson. Benson charged that the United States government was so infiltrated with Communists that the American people "can no longer resist the Communist conspiracy as free citizens, but can resist the Communist tyranny only by themselves becoming conspirators against established government."[88] When U.S. Senator Frank E. Moss (D-Utah) read an account of the speech, he wrote a candid letter to Hugh B. Brown:

> I read the account of Apostle Benson's speech in the Logan LDS Tabernacle in the December 15th issue of the *Herald Journal.* I won't comment on the contents of the speech except to say that it appears that he has not changed his position at all from that that he expressed in Los Angeles at the testimonial dinner for Robert Welch. On page 10 there is a picture of Reed Benson passing out copies of the speech of Ezra T. Benson, and on that same page the following paragraph in the article says: "Copies of Elder

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87. "Mormons Split over John Birch Society Campaign," *National Observer,* November 4, 1963.

88."We Must Become Alerted and Informed," typescript, MSS A 328-2, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City. Attached to the typescript is the analysis by B. Delworth Gardner, N. Keith Roberts, and E. Boyd Wennergren tying it to the *Blue Book.* Pearson's column, "Benson's Cure for Communism," appeared in the *Washington Post,* January 4, 1964.

> Benson's complete speech were available at the meeting or can be obtained by writing directly to him at the LDS Church Offices in Salt Lake City, the Apostle said." I don't know how we could be tied in more closely as a Church with the doctrines espoused by Ezra Taft Benson than by an announcement of this sort. I continue to be bombarded daily by questions and criticisms back here.[89]

The same speech elicited a second letter from Joseph Fielding Smith to Congressman Harding: "I have the comments regarding Brother Benson's speech in Logan, December 13, 1963. I am glad to report to you that it will be some time before we hear anything from Brother Benson, who is now on his way to Great Britain where I suppose he will be, at least for the next two years. When he returns I hope his blood will be purified."[90]

In the midst of the whirlwind of controversy and on the same day that Smith wrote his letter to Harding, McKay dictated a letter to Robert Welch in response to his earlier request that Benson serve on the national board of the John Birch Society: "I told Mr. Welch that Elder Benson's duties as European Mission President would preclude his accepting his invitation."[91] The benignly worded letter left the door open for Welch and Benson to repeat their request after Benson returned from Europe.

In late January 1964, McKay accepted an invitation from U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson to meet with him at the White House, the first such invitation extended to any religious leader since Johnson assumed the Presidency after the death of John F. Kennedy. Following lunch, Johnson invited the Mormon delegation in Congress, including Congressman Harding, to join them. As Johnson led the group on a tour of the White House, Harding took McKay aside for a moment: "I told President McKay, when we were walking out to the swimming pool, 'President McKay, I want you to know that just because I've had my problems with Elder Benson over the John Birch Society, that I still have a strong testi-

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89. Frank E. Moss, Letter to Hugh B. Brown, December 20, 1963, Frank E. Moss Papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

90. Joseph Fielding Smith, Letter to Ralph R. Harding, December 23, 1963; photocopy in my possession.

91. McKay, Diary, December 23, 1963.

mony of the gospel.' He said, 'I know that, Brother Harding. Several of us have had problems with Brother Benson over the Birch Society.'"[92]

The flap over Benson's departure to Europe had barely subsided when the controversy boiled over again. In late February the *Idaho State Journal* published extracts from several of the letters Congressman Harding had received, including Eisenhower's, Robert McKay's, and both letters from Joseph Fielding Smith. The Associated Press picked up the *Journal* article and published it nationwide. The *Salt Lake Tribune,* in publishing extracts from the letters, rekindled the debate over Benson's assignment. "There was speculation last December when Mr. Benson was sent to Europe by the church that he was being exiled for his political views. The LDS Church officially denied the rumors."[93]

McKay was deeply upset by the publication of the letters, which included his son's, and told his secretary, "I shall have to take steps to have these accusations stopped." He authorized her to send an explanatory letter to inquirers, stating, "Elder Ezra Taft Benson was not sent to Europe for any of the reasons given in your letter. Elder Benson was called by inspiration to preside over the European Mission."[94]

Then, in an unusually candid meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, McKay broached the subjects of Benson, the John Birch Society, Harding, and the published letters. He subsequently recorded a lengthy account of this "Very Important Meeting," summarized below.[95] He began the meeting by saying, "Before partaking of the Sacrament this morning, I should like to refer to an unfortunate incident which has occurred since the Council last met in this capacity." McKay was particularly upset at letters he had received stating that "a lack of harmony among the leaders of the Church" was "creating confusion among members and friends of the Church." He then put Joseph Fielding Smith on the spot:

> I said that I should like to know today that there is no dissension among the members of this Council, and that we partake of the Sacrament in full fellowship and full support of one another. I mentioned that since

92. Harding, Interview, September 19, 2000.

93. "Ike Praises Idaho Solon for Benson Criticism," *Salt Lake Tribune,* February 21, 1964.

94. McKay, Diary, February 20, 1964.

95. Ibid., March 5, 1964.

> President Smith's name is associated with Brother Benson, particularly in the matter of the John Birch Society, that I think it would be well for President Smith on this occasion to explain his association with the controversy.

Smith replied that "he was glad to do so." He acknowledged "that he did say that when Brother Benson comes home, he hoped he would not get into politics and would keep his blood pure." However, he did not intend his comments to be a personal attack on Benson, but rather as an acknowledgement "that in politics a lot of things are done that are somewhat shady. He said he was speaking of conditions that exist in the political world, and intended no reflection upon Brother Benson." Smith said that he had discussed the matter of his letters with Benson and that the two men "are on the best of terms and fellowship with each other." He said he would not do anything to hurt Benson, but added that "he hoped Brother Benson would keep himself out of politics."

McKay accepted Smith's explanation, then defended Benson:

> I then said that Elder Benson had permission from the President of the Church to give the lecture that he gave in the auditorium in Hollywood. I mentioned that some people had said that that was one activity wherein Brother Benson went contrary to the counsel of the Presidency and General Authorities. I said that Elder Benson had full permission to give that lecture and he gave a good talk. . . . I further said that Brother Benson had said publicly that he was in favor of the John Birch Society, and that I had told Brother Benson that he could not, as one of the Twelve, join that Society. This was before Brother Benson was called to be President of the European Mission, and his call as President of that mission had nothing whatever to do with the John Birch Society. I said that I had told him back in November last that he could not join the Society as one of the Twelve. . . . Brother Benson's call to preside over the European Mission had no relationship whatever to his desire to join that Society. I stated that so far as this Council is concerned, we have no connection whatever with the John Birch Society, no matter how good it may be and how noble its purposes; that Brother Benson received his call to go to Europe without any thought of associating his call to the European Mission Presidency with his views regarding the John Birch Society, and that so far as we are concerned this morning as the Council of the First Presidency and the Twelve, we have nothing whatever to do with it, and Brother Benson's call over there had nothing to do with it. I then said: "We shall partake of the sacrament this morning in the spirit of the opening prayer; that we be one in all things pertaining to this Church."

Although McKay's defense of Benson was categorical and impassioned, it sidestepped the issue that had catapulted Benson's talk into the

national spotlight, which was Benson's implicit sanction of Robert Welch's charges that Dwight Eisenhower, a close friend of McKay, was a tool of the Communists. In fact, there is no record that McKay ever took Benson to task on that issue, either publicly or privately.

With Benson in Europe, McKay tried, with little success, to put the whole matter of the John Birch Society to rest. In May 1964, Louis Midgley, a youthful Brigham Young University political science professor, published an article in the university newspaper that again fanned the flames of controversy:

> I have been asked by the Editor at the *Daily Universe* to make some comments on the John Birch Society. It is difficult to believe that anyone at a university—anyone who reads books and thinks—would take such a movement seriously. . . . The man who wrote *The Politician* did so to inform his followers that former President Eisenhower was a communist. Of course he provides no evidence but the usual collection of garbage. For absurdity, the charge against Ike would have to be placed next to the belief, as far as I know, held by no one, that President McKay is secretly a Catholic. What Welch-Birch really wants is to return to a world without taxes, the U.N., labor unions, racial minorities demanding some kind of legal equality; Birchers want a world without fluoridation, the Soviet Union, large cities and emerging nations and all the rest that goes with our world.[96]

McKay reacted strongly to the article, telephoning Earl C. Crockett, who was acting BYU president while Wilkinson was running for the U.S Senate and directing him to meet with Midgley "and ask him why he should have written the editorial 'Birch Society Reviewed' for ten thousand students to read. . . . This matter of the John Birch Society should be dropped."[97] In a follow-up letter after the requested meeting, McKay wrote, "It would be well for faculty members to hold no discussions whatsoever on the John Birch Society, and to drop the matter entirely."[98]

Though continuing to distance himself from the society, McKay kept the heat turned up on Communism, in June authorizing the publica-

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96. Louis Midgley, "Birch Society Reviewed by Prof. Louis Midgley," *(BYU) Daily Universe*, May 22, 1964.

97. McKay, Diary, May 26, 1964.

98. David O. McKay, Letter to Earl C. Crockett, June 4, 1964, in McKay, Diary, May 26, 1964. Crockett was Acting BYU President while Ernest Wilkinson ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate. Wilkinson returned to BYU in 1965 and, after McKay's death, lamented to Benson that McKay's instructions

tion by Church-owned Deseret Book of a pamphlet consisting of his "Statements on Communism and the Constitution of the United States." And for his part, Benson refused to stay out of politics, even from across the Atlantic. In August, Mark E. Petersen, Benson's colleague in the Quorum of the Twelve and president of the West European Mission (Benson was president of the European Mission), wrote to Hugh B. Brown, "stating," as Brown reported in a First Presidency meeting, "that he wished there was some way to keep Brother Benson out of politics." Europe, Petersen said, "hates" Barry Goldwater, the Republican presidential candidate, yet Benson had recently given an interview to Danish journalists that resulted in a story with the headline, "Mormon Apostle Says America Needs Goldwater." Petersen said that this kind of publicity hurt the Church in Europe and asked if there was any way to stop it. Brown put the request to McKay, who "said that this ought not to be done, but asked that a communication be sent to Brother Benson calling attention to the report, and asking as to the accuracy of it."[99]

The following day, Benson wrote a note to Clare Middlemiss that confirmed his continuing political activities: "Hardly a week passes without someone writing, urging that I come home to help in the great fight to preserve our freedom."[100] A month later Arch Madsen, president of the Church-owned radio and TV station KSL, relayed to the First Presidency an inquiry from a committee of broadcasters working to select a new president of the National Association of Broadcasters. The committee wished to know if Benson, who was on their short list, would be available to serve full-time in that position. An affirmative answer would involve, of course, terminating his assignment in Europe as well as giving him another leave of absence from his duties in the Quorum of the Twelve. "After hearing all the facts pertaining to the matter," McKay wrote, "I indicated that so far as the Church is concerned, Brother

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had blocked any attempts to establish a chapter of the John Birch Society at BYU: "I would personally like to have one at BYU, and I am seeing what I can do, but my lieutenants insist I would be violating the letter that President McKay sent us sometime ago if I did." Ernest L. Wilkinson, Letter to Ezra Taft Benson, May 4, 1971; photocopy in my possession.

99. McKay, Diary, August 18, 1964.

100. Ezra Taft Benson, Letter to Clare Middlemiss, August 19, 1964; photocopy in my possession.

Benson would be available for such an appointment." Hugh B. Brown concurred with McKay's decision but added a strong qualifier: "If Brother Benson severed his relationship with [the John Birch Society] and accepted this position as a non-partisan assignment for the benefit of the Church primarily, he could do a lot of good; otherwise, he could do us a lot of harm."[101] Benson was not offered the position, but McKay's strong support of his nonecclesiastical activities was a clear message to other General Authorities.

From Europe, Benson authorized the John Birch Society to use his photograph on the cover of its monthly magazine, *American Opinion*, in October. Reed Benson, acting as a surrogate for his father, published full-page advertisements in Idaho quoting his father's endorsement of the society.[102] Benson returned regularly to Salt Lake City for the Church's semi-annual general conferences. In April 1965, Ernest Wilkinson recorded that Benson's conference remarks were "a typical address against loss of our freedoms. He has great courage and I have great admiration for him. I'm sure some of his Brethren may have thought it was untactful, but yet [it] is apparent that Ezra is not going to give up in a cause in which he knows he is right. I know also that he has encouragement from President McKay.[103]

While Benson's general conference address pleased Wilkinson, it had the opposite effect on many other Church members. The *Washington Post* stated, "The Mormon Church revealed sharp and bitter differences among its leadership on civil rights during its recent conference here." Noting that Benson "spoke darkly but without specifics of 'traitors in the church,'" the *Post* quoted the most inflammatory portion of Benson's speech: "Before I left for Europe I warned how the Communists were using the civil rights movement to promote revolution and eventual take-

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101. McKay, Diary, September 17, 1964.

102. Jack Anderson, "Reed Benson Spreads Birch Gospel," *Washington Post*, January 15, 1965. In response to Anderson's column, the *John Birch Society Bulletin*, March 1965, referred to Anderson as Drew Pearson's "right-hand stooge, . . . viciously attacking what Anderson referred to as 'the Benson father-and-son team.'"

103. Wilkinson, Diary, April 6, 1965.

over of this country. When are we going to wake up? What do you know about the dangerous civil rights agitation in Mississippi?"[104]

According to the *Post* article, Hugh B. Brown "said tartly that Benson 'speaks strictly for himself.'"[105] Meeting later with his counselors, McKay raised the issue of Brown's outspokenness against the John Birch Society, which had been the subject of many letters of protest received by McKay: "I asked President Brown why he is so bitter against the organization. President Brown said that he did not consider it a good society, and he thought that they were doing more harm than good. He further stated that since I had told him about a year ago to be quiet on that subject, he had said and done nothing further regarding it. I said that it is wise not to mention the society."[106]

Brown countered by bringing up the subject of Benson's general conference address and the resulting *Washington Post* article. He reported hearing many unfavorable reactions to Benson's remarks. "Brother Benson," he concluded, "should be told to take care of his missionary work and leave such matters alone." McKay responded, "I had not noticed anything objectionable in what Brother Benson had said" and asked Brown to bring him a transcript of the talk. Later, Brown did so and McKay agreed with his suggestion that the offensive paragraphs be deleted from the official published report of the conference.[107]

In the immediate post-conference meeting, N. Eldon Tanner, who had been appointed McKay's second counselor in October 1963, also reported receiving negative feedback that he had heard about Benson's talk and summarized: It had "split the people down the center" in their Church meetings. McKay, obviously hoping to make the whole problem disappear, ended the meeting by saying, "I had told everyone not to mention the Birch Society but let the matter die out."[108]

In October 1965, just returned from his European assignment, Benson met with McKay to discuss new political ambitions with him. "A

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104. "Benson Ties Rights Issue to Reds in Mormon Rift," *Washington Post*, April 13, 1965.

105. Ibid.

106. McKay, Diary, April 23, 1965.

107. Ibid., May 3, 1965. The conference addresses were also published in the *Improvement Era*.

108. Ibid., April 23, 1965.

very prominent man, representing a large group of Americans who are strongly in favor of freedom," said Benson, had approached him about forming a third political party, because "even the Republicans are becoming soft toward socialism and Communism." McKay "told Elder Benson that he must not have anything to do with a 'third party,'" but nonetheless "he should look into what these men have in mind."[109]

Thorpe B. Isaacson, whom McKay had added as an extra counselor in the First Presidency in October 1965, was present at the meeting and wrote a memo describing it in greater detail, which he sent to McKay. As he described it, the "very important prominent man" asked Benson to contact Senator Strom Thurmond (R-South Carolina) and request that Thurmond join Benson in taking "throughout the states of the nation" a movement "to preserve freedom and to develop a conservative attitude and conservative government in the hopes that we could stem the tide of socialism and the softness towards communism." The hope was that they could initiate a groundswell that would carry this plank into the Republican platform in 1968. "Brother Benson explained that the Republicans were becoming soft toward communism and drifting toward socialism and away from conservatism about as badly as the Democrats"; and while he hoped they could reform the Republican Party, they were prepared "to start a third party" if their message was ignored. When McKay cautioned him not to affiliate with a third party, Benson "stated that he did not care to get into politics, but he thought the Church should take a stand; that if somebody did not do something it would be too late. President McKay agreed with this" and told Benson "to go ahead and make further inquiry and to do what he thought was right."[110]

In November, McKay met privately with Benson, who "gave a report on the serious inroads the Communists have made in this country. . . . I am convinced that our country is already on the road to Socialism, and that the Communists are making gains here." Benson then suggested that Isaacson be sent to a two-day John Birch Society seminar the following

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109. Ibid., October 21, 1965.

110. Thorpe B. Isaacson, Memorandum to David O. McKay, October 21, 1965, in McKay, Diary. In light of Benson's prior and subsequent political activities, his declaration "that he did not care to get into politics" seems ingenuous.

month to learn about "Communism and conditions in our country." McKay agreed.[111]

It is easy to see how McKay's pattern of holding a firm line against the John Birch Society in council meetings, yet acquiescing and supporting Benson when he met with him privately, generated internal confusion and frustration. Hugh B. Brown particularly felt dissatisfied with the constantly changing signals. Although there is no record that Brown ever flared up at McKay, he sometimes took his frustrations out on Clare Middlemiss. Middlemiss recorded in her own notes one particularly heated exchange:

> President Brown said, "Why cannot we have harmony?" Clare answered, "Yes, why?" [Brown] "You got off the wrong track with me over the John Birch Society and Brother Benson." [Middlemiss] "I have only wanted to fight Communism, and have answered letters on the John Birch Society the way President McKay has told me to." President Brown said, "I have wanted to fight Communism also, but not the way Benson or the John Birch Society are doing it—everybody is against them."[112]

On January 11, 1966, McKay noted that he had received complaints from Church members who, understandably, were confused about the Church's stand on Communism on the one hand and the John Birch Society on the other: "I said that I think the time has come for the First Presidency to make a statement as to the Church's attitude regarding Communism; that this, however, should have nothing whatever to do with the Birch Society, and should be a message from the First Presidency of the Church. The Brethren agreed that there is a great need for such a message, and I was persuaded that I am the one who should prepare such a statement."[113]

However, before he could take action, Benson preempted him only five days later by making another public endorsement of the John Birch Society. Speaking in Boise, Idaho, Benson called the society "probably the most effective non-church group in the United States in the fight against galloping socialism and Godless communism." Still forbidden by McKay

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111. McKay, Diary, November 19, 1965. Later, Isaacson elected not to go to the seminar. In January 1966, Isaacson suffered a massive stroke from which he never recovered.

112. Clare Middlemiss, "Notes," November 24, 1965; photocopy in my possession.

113. McKay, Diary, January 11, 1966.

to join the society, Benson nonetheless suggested that he was everything but a formal member. "This is a fine group," he said. "I know their leaders, I have attended two of their all-day council meetings. I have read their literature. I feel I know their programs." He ended his remarks by emphasizing that McKay "has said he doesn't understand why the people do not become alerted and informed regarding the greatest evil in the world—the Communist conspiracy."[114] In the context of Benson's preceding remarks, it sounded as if McKay was endorsing the John Birch Society. Indeed, U.S. Senator Wallace F. Bennett (R-Utah) noted as much to McKay's oldest son in a letter that referred to the speech: "I have just been reading the report in the *Tribune* of the 16th of the speech Brother Benson made in Boise in which he praised the John Birch Society and ended with a very clever statement about your father which would seem to give your father's endorsement."[115]

Benson's attempts to imply McKay's endorsement of the society did not end with speeches. Early the following month he met privately with McKay and presented his most audacious proposal yet. McKay described the meeting in his diary:

> Met by appointment Elder Ezra Taft Benson who said that the editors of the *American Opinion* magazine would like to have my portrait on the cover of their April issue. He said this magazine is published in Belmont, Massachusetts, and is a high-class publication. He showed me several past issues with pictures of Senator Barry Goldwater, the Honorable J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the FBI, and other prominent Americans. Brother Benson said that they needed a colored photograph and some biographical material, and I asked him to get these from my secretary, Clare. After discussing the matter, I could see no reason why I should not grant permission for the editors to use my picture.[116]

In presenting the matter to McKay, however, Benson had elected not to divulge one crucial detail: *American Opinion* was the monthly magazine of the John Birch Society. At a subsequent First Presidency meeting, Apostle Mark E. Petersen dropped a bombshell by stating that the Church Informa-

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114. "LDS Apostle Backs up Birch Group," *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 16, 1966.

115. Wallace F. Bennett, Letter to David Lawrence McKay, January 21, 1966, Wallace F. Bennett Papers, Accession 290, Box 24, fd. 3, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

116. McKay, Diary, February 9, 1966.

tion Service had received a bill for $25 for a color photograph of McKay for the cover of *American Opinion*, "which is the John Birch Society organ. . . . Elder Petersen said that if my picture is so published it will certainly look as though the Church is endorsing the John Birch Society." McKay reacted strongly, making it clear in the process that Benson had deceived him by failing to inform him that *American Opinion* was a Birch Society magazine:

> I said that my picture should not appear on this magazine; that the Church has nothing to do with the John Birch Society. I authorized Brother Petersen to tell Brother Benson that he had brought this matter to my attention, and had been told by me to stop the printing of my picture on this magazine; that I do not want it used in that way. I said to Brother Petersen, "You are ordered in the presence of these men to stop it." I further said that I do not want to have anything to do with the John Birch Society; that the Church has had nothing to do with it in the past, and that so far as Brother Benson is concerned, I do not think we would hear anything more about it.[117]

The day after McKay's decision to withdraw his permission to print the picture, Benson met with him. According to McKay's diary entry, Benson avoided the issue of *American Opinion*'s sponsorship, instead repeating that it "is considered a high-type magazine" on whose cover the photographs of Senator Barry Goldwater, J. Edgar Hoover, and other prominent men had appeared. Furthermore, he reminded McKay that he had given his word on the matter, to which he replied, "I told Brother Benson that they had better go ahead with it since I had given my permission for this to be done."[118] Unfortunately, McKay did not tell any of his other associates that he had reversed field on the issue.

Even with the benefit of over four decades of hindsight, it is not possible to conclude with certainty why McKay acted as he did on this issue, but the reason likely involved an interplay of factors. McKay was ninety-two, older than any previous Church president. Although he was not intellectually impaired, his declining physical condition severely limited his direct contact with the outside world. On an organizational chart, Hugh B. Brown and N. Eldon Tanner, his first and second counselors, would clearly have been considered his closest confidants. However, a sharp exchange with Tanner a year earlier over the Church's

117. Ibid., February 18, 1966.
118. Ibid., February 19, 1966.

finances had led to a rift between McKay on the one side and Tanner and Brown on the other. Following that incident, McKay became increasingly dependent upon other voices within his inner circle. The most persuasive of those voices, when it came to the issue of Communism, were Ezra Taft Benson, Thorpe B. Isaacson, and Clare Middlemiss, all of whom were strong Birch Society sympathizers. The *American Opinion* incident occurred less than a month after a massive stroke permanently incapacitated Isaacson, with the result that Benson's and Middlemiss's voices became even more prominent. Furthermore, Middlemiss functioned as McKay's chief-of-staff and controlled access to McKay. Benson had ready entree, but Middlemiss often blocked others from seeing the president.[119]

But perhaps most importantly, McKay, from the 1930s onward, was consistently and vehemently opposed to Communism. He was not speaking hyperbolically when he called it the greatest threat in the world to freedom and to the Church, and he felt that way long before Benson embraced the same philosophy. If one can understand the depth of McKay's feelings against Communism, perhaps his continual waffling over Benson's involvement with the John Birch Society can better be appreciated.

Early in the morning of March 8, 1966, N. Eldon Tanner placed a phone call to McKay, who was resting in Huntsville. He said "it was very urgent" that he, Joseph Fielding Smith, Mark E. Petersen, and David Lawrence McKay (McKay's oldest son and an attorney) see him that morning. McKay agreed, and by 10:30 A.M. the four men, along with First Presidency secretary Joseph Anderson, who took minutes, arrived in Huntsville. A summary of Anderson's account with various quotations follows here:[120]

Tanner began the meeting. "Last night I received a letter, and when I

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119. Some correspondents were concerned that Middlemiss would intercept mail addressed to McKay. For example, Robert H. Hinckley, who worked for the American Broadcasting Company in New York, wrote a letter to McKay on March 17, 1966 (photocopy in my possession), to which he added the following postscript: "Forgive me for sending this letter via your son, but I am concerned that some letters may not be getting beyond the desk of Miss Middlemiss."

120. The account that follows is drawn from these minutes in McKay, Diary, March 8, 1966.

read it I got in touch with Mark E. Petersen. This letter is signed by Philip K. Langan, Circulation Manager of the *American Opinion.*" The letter confirmed what McKay's colleagues had feared in the prior month's meeting on the subject: that the John Birch Society intended to use McKay's photograph on the cover of the magazine to promote the society. The letter read in part:

> The cover of the April 1966 issue of *American Opinion* will feature the President of the Mormon Church, David O. McKay. We feel that our Standing Order Agents will want to increase their monthly shipment, as newsstand sales should improve with the well-respected President McKay on the cover. Our Subscription Agents now have a good selling point for any Mormon prospects they might be trying to "sign up." And for our regular Subscribers and John Birch Society Chapter leaders, you now have an opportunity to favorably impress your Mormon friends, who are not yet actively involved in the battle against Communism.

Upon reading the letter, Tanner had immediately called Petersen. The two men were baffled because, in their prior meeting with McKay, his instructions to withhold his photograph and cancel permission to use it had been explicit. They had contacted Lawrence McKay to see if he knew of any change in his father's wishes, but he knew of none. At that point, Tanner moved quickly to arrange the meeting.

They then read to McKay the minutes of the First Presidency meeting of February 18 in which he had unambiguously ordered Petersen to stop the printing of his photograph on the magazine. Without mentioning Benson by name, McKay replied, "They have resorted to everything they could to get me associated with that." Tanner said, "One reason we thought we should come this morning is if you thought it should be stopped we ought to get word to them immediately." McKay replied, "You get them by telephone. Tell them I do not want anything to do with it, that I do not want my name associated with John Birch." Tanner then showed McKay the issue of *American Opinion* with Benson's picture on the front cover and said, "That is the way they would want to put your picture, and even if they have it printed they could put a new cover on without any trouble." McKay replied, "I do not want my picture on it. Stop it!"

While Lawrence McKay telephoned the society in Massachusetts, Petersen raised the issue of Benson's involvement. As the discussion progressed it was clear that, from McKay's point of view, Benson had not been forthcoming with him in their private discussions. It was also clear

how deeply Benson had offended his closest associates by consistently overreaching the limits McKay placed on him:

> Petersen: "It would seem to me something ought to be said to Brother Benson also to stop it. He will carry on his campaign. He is the man we have to deal with. You are the only man that can stop him."
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> McKay: "What campaign is Brother Benson carrying on?"
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> Petersen: "He is out speaking on this all the time. It was only about ten days ago that he attended a John Birch Society meeting in Seattle and spoke vigorously in favor of their program, and he mentioned another meeting last Thursday. He gives press interviews and is promoting this all the time."
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> McKay: "Why is he doing it?"
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> Petersen: "I am sure he will not stop for anybody but you. I do not think he will pay any attention to any of us, like he paid no attention to me when I told him about the picture. He paid no attention to it. It hasn't been stopped."
>
> McKay: "What has he in mind? He is one of the Twelve."
>
> Tanner: "After you gave such firm and positive instruction and said 'I want to say it before you men,' we knew how you felt about it, and to see this come out shocked us. I cannot understand his position. We all feel opposed to communism as much as can be, but when you and all the Twelve say not to use the Birch Society, it is quite serious."

At this point in the conversation, McKay asked Lawrence to get Benson on the phone. Joseph Anderson was not on an extension, so he recorded only McKay's part of the dialogue. Nonetheless, it is clear that, as he began to talk to Benson, his tone changed immediately, for on this as well as other occasions when he spoke privately with Benson, he simply could not come down hard on him. Unfortunately, the result was that he left the door open for Benson to continue his activities:

> McKay: "Good morning, Brother Benson. My associates in the Presidency are here and they inform me that the publishers want my picture on the outside cover of *American Opinion*.
>
> Benson:
>
> McKay: "Now would be a very poor time to put my picture on it. I wish they would not do it."
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> Benson:
>
> McKay: "At the present time I think it would be unwise because the members of the Church conclude that my giving permission to have my photograph on it was an implication that I belonged to this and was in favor of their ideals. I do as far as opposing communism. I would like a telegram sent to the publishers of the *American Opinion* telling them not to print my picture."

At McKay's direction, Lawrence then phoned the editorial office of *American Opinion*. Anderson recorded Lawrence's half of the conversation:

> "Hello, this is David Lawrence McKay speaking from the office of President David O. McKay of the Mormon Church. Word has just reached him that the *American Opinion* plans to publish his picture on the front cover of the April issue. He is very much upset over that and asks that it be stopped no matter what the cost. In fact, he has directed us to take whatever steps that are necessary in order to stop it. This implies the approval of the John Birch Society by him as President of the Mormon Church and if that happened it would be necessary to deny that throughout the Church, besides taking any necessary legal action if there is any."

At the conclusion of the phone call, Lawrence said to the other men in the room, "He says there is plenty of time to stop it." His father concluded the meeting by saying, "I am glad you came."

Having resolved one crisis, McKay was quickly brought into another. On the same day that he pulled the plug on *American Opinion*, J. Reese Hunter, who identified himself only as "Dinner Chairman," sent a letter to bishops throughout the Church inviting them to a John Birch Society banquet honoring Robert Welch.[121] The timing of the event, April 7, was crucial, for the annual general conference, which would be attended by thousands of bishops throughout the Church, was to be held on April 6, 9, and 10. The banquet would thus fill a gap in their schedule. The letter made strong reference to a Benson talk in the Assembly Hall the previous month, implying that McKay had sanctioned it, which he had not done: "This talk was delivered to a turn-away crowd of over 2,000 persons. President David O. McKay had requested that he be allowed to view the proceedings over closed-circuit television." In order "to continue this education process respecting the things which threaten us today," Robert Welch would speak at the banquet. "Elder Ezra Taft Benson will be present and will introduce Mr. Welch." The letter concluded, "As you know, Conference will be held April 6th, 9th, and 10th this year. Thursday evening will

121. Although Hunter's letter did not indicate it directly, the banquet was an official John Birch function, as indicated in a subsequent article, "Birchers Applaud LDS Policy," *Deseret News*, March 23, 1966.

be free for most people and we invite your attendance, along with your counselors and wives, at this dinner."[122]

The following day, the First Presidency published a "Notice to Church Members," denying any Church involvement in the banquet. It concluded: "In order to avoid any misunderstanding we wish to notify bishops, other church officers, and members of the Church in general, that the Church is not involved in this dinner in any way, and furthermore, that the Church has no connection with the John Birch Society whatever."[123]

The day thereafter, a friend and former neighbor of McKay wrote an impassioned letter from New York City, pleading with McKay to rein in Benson's extremist activities:

> The head of the Birch Society, Robert Welch, is due in Salt Lake City on April 6th or 7th, the time of general conference. Efforts will be made to have him recognized in some way during Conference (Elder Benson may even propose to have him come to the stand to make some brief remarks). But this is the Robert Welch who slandered President Eisenhower by writing that "there is only one possible word to describe his purposes and actions. That word is 'treason.'" Welch bore the same kind of false witness against Eisenhower's Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, calling him "a Communist agent." He also accused the late President John F. Kennedy, during his brief term in office, of being sympathetic to the Communist goals of world conquest. . . . President McKay, I beseech you to give heed on [sic] these matters to all of your dedicated Counselors in the First Presidency. . . . I fervently hope that Mr. Welch, the Birch head, will receive no recognition of any sort from you or the Church while he is in Salt Lake City. And I beseech you to require a decision from Elder Benson forthwith as to whether his life will be dedicated to Church or Birch. He is doing the Church a great, great disservice by mixing the two.[124]

A week later, McKay met privately with Benson to discuss the Birch Society banquet. McKay gave him a gentle message not to speak at the banquet or other society functions, but in such a way as to leave him plenty of maneuvering room if he chose to take it: "I told Brother Benson that I think it would be best for him not to speak at strictly John Birch So-

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122. J. Reese Hunter, Dinner Chairman, to "Dear Brethren," March 8, 1966, McKay, Diary, March 15, 1966.

123. "Notice to Church Members," *Deseret News,* March 16, 1966.

124. Robert H. Hinckley, Letter to David O. McKay, March 17, 1966; photocopy in my possession.

ciety meetings, but approved of his filling speaking appointments already accepted which were not associated with this group."[125]

On the following day, McKay and Benson attended the regular weekly meeting of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve in the Salt Lake Temple. McKay's diary entry for the day gives no indication as to what was discussed in the meeting, merely stating, "Many problems and important Church decisions!"[126] However, a diary entry from the following week described a portion of the meeting:

> President Tanner reported that following the meeting on Thursday last, Elder Benson had told him that he thought he, President Tanner, was a little hard on him in his presentation of the case pertaining to his relationship to the Birch Society. President Tanner told Brother Benson he thought that he was as reasonable as he possibly could be under the circumstances. Elder Benson raised the question as to what he should do about the dinner to be given by the Birch people the evening of April 7. President Tanner told him that he did not see how the question could have been stated more clearly to him by the President and by the Twelve, that everyone wanted to let him know that he should discontinue speaking about the Birch Society and for it, and that President McKay in the discussion had said two or three times that he should not participate further with them. Brother Benson inquired about the dinner, that in the letter that had been sent out it was announced that he would be in attendance and introduce the speaker. President Tanner said that he told Brother Benson that he could not give him any further answer than was given in the meeting on Thursday. Elder Benson asked President Tanner if he would clear this matter for him with President McKay, and President Tanner had said no, that he felt that it was just as clear as anything could be.[127]

The day after the meeting in the temple, Benson met privately with McKay to discuss further the matter of the banquet and wrote a memo to McKay, written the same day and "read and approved" by McKay, summarizing their discussion.[128] Benson noted, "I desire to follow your counsel at all times," and then reaffirmed his continuing and unqualified support of the John Birch Society, once again implying McKay's endorsement: "I am still convinced that the John Birch Society is a great patriotic, non-po-

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125. McKay, Diary, March 23, 1966.

126. McKay, Diary, March 24, 1966.

127. McKay, Diary, March 29, 1966.

128. Ezra Taft Benson, Letter to David O. McKay, March 25, 1966, McKay, Diary.

litical, voluntary, educational organization which is doing great good in the fight against the Godless socialist-communist conspiracy which you have warned is the greatest evil in this world." He ended the memo by stating, "If you feel at any time I am getting off the right track please do as you promised and 'tap me on the shoulder.'"

The combination of McKay's unwillingness to give Benson an ultimatum, and Benson's willingness to assume *carte blanche* support from McKay, no matter what caveats McKay had intended, ensured that Benson would continue to push his political agenda as long as McKay lived. It also ensured that Benson's fellow General Authorities who disagreed with his extremism would be continually frustrated in their attempts to rein him in, for he would always appeal directly to McKay.

Meanwhile, having been thwarted in his attempt to involve Benson in the banquet, Robert Welch shifted tactics and initiated a letter-writing campaign to lobby his cause directly with key Church leaders. In the March issue of *The John Birch Society Bulletin,* he praised McKay's long-standing efforts to combat Communism, quoted part of McKay's general conference talk on the same subject, and then urged society members to write "to express their appreciation to this great religious leader, who is also—whether or not he would even recognize the word—a great Americanist."[129] Welch urged correspondents to keep their letters brief, "make it clear that you do not expect any answer," and mark both the letter and the envelope "Personal and Confidential," a move that would ensure that the letters would go directly to Clare Middlemiss (who pasted this issue of the *Bulletin* in her personal scrapbook).[130]

The day after general conference began, Welch was honored at the announced banquet at the Hotel Utah. Benson attended but did not speak. In his speech, Welch described the Church as "a very good recruiting ground."[131] Two days later, in the priesthood session of general conference, McKay, in marginal physical health, asked his son Robert to read

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129. *The John Birch Society Bulletin,* March 1966, 22–24.

130. Clare Middlemiss, Scrapbook, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah. These multivolume scrapbooks are unlabeled and unpaginated.

131. Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, *America's Saints: The Rise of Mormon Power* (New York: G. Putnam's Sons, 1984), 78.

his statement regarding the Church's stand on Communism. The statement said, in part:

> Church members are at perfect liberty to act according to their own consciences in the matter of safeguarding our way of life. . . . They are free to participate in non-Church meetings which are held to warn people of the threat of Communism or any other theory or principle which will deprive us of our free agency or individual liberties vouchsafed by the Constitution of the United States. The Church, out of respect for the rights of all its members to have their political views and loyalties, must maintain the strictest possible neutrality. We have no intention of trying to interfere with the fullest and freest exercise of the political franchise of our members under and within our Constitution . . . The position of this Church on the subject of Communism has never changed. We consider it the greatest Satanical threat to peace, prosperity, and the spread of God's work among men that exists on the face of the earth. In this connection, we are continually being asked to give our opinion concerning various patriotic groups or individuals who are fighting Communism and speaking up for Freedom. Our immediate concern, however, is not with parties, groups, or persons, but with principles. *We, therefore, commend and encourage every person and every group who are sincerely seeking to study Constitutional principles and awaken a sleeping and apathetic people to the alarming conditions that are rapidly advancing about us. We wish all of our citizens throughout the land were participating in some type of organized self-education in order that they could better appreciate what is happening and know what they can do about it. Supporting the FBI, the Police, the Congressional Committees investigating Communism, and various organizations that are attempting to awaken the people through educational means, is a policy we warmly endorse for all our people.*[132]

These italicized sentences were seen by McKay's counselors as an implicit endorsement of the John Birch Society, and they became the subject of an internal tug-of-war. Three days later, McKay summoned Henry A. Smith, editor of the *Church News*, to his office and told him that he had learned that Smith did not plan to publish the statement on Communism in the forthcoming *Church News*, which carried a report of the general conference. Smith, without describing the rationale behind the decision, acknowledged that to be the case. McKay replied, "Well it should go in. I made that statement to 85,000 Priesthood members; the press has it, and many recordings have been made of it. I think it had

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132. *Conference Report*, April 9, 1966, 109; italics mine.

better go in."[133] Accordingly, the statement was published in the *Church Section,* but the controversial (italicized) passages were deleted at McKay's request.[134]

When Clare Middlemiss found out about the deletion, she brought up the matter with McKay, saying that "many recordings had been made of the statement and that many people are calling the office to find out why these paragraphs had been deleted." McKay replied that his son Lawrence, at the instigation of Hugh B. Brown and N. Eldon Tanner, had urged that he omit them, "pointing out that they would tie the Church in with the John Birch Society."[135] Three days later, Middlemiss again pressed the issue with McKay, saying that she had received many letters protesting the deletion of the paragraphs. Furthermore, Mark E. Petersen had recently published an editorial in the *Church News* that was critical of the John Birch Society. The offending passage proclaimed: "The Church has nothing to do with Communists, nothing to do with racists, nothing to do with Birchers, nothing to do with any slanted group."[136] At that, McKay reversed his previous position: "I told Clare that I did not wish these paragraphs deleted; that I gave them and the statement should stand as given; that many people have recordings of the full statement. . . . These things are very upsetting to me, and the deletion of what I said at Priesthood Meeting is causing a lot of people to question and to wonder what is going on."[137]

As a result, the deleted paragraphs were restored when McKay's statement was published in the official *Conference Report* and in the Church's monthly *Improvement Era.* Middlemiss was not satisfied, however, and pushed for the statement's publication in full the following week in the *Church News*—a presumptuous move by a secretary that strongly suggests she was acting as a surrogate for Benson, who in fact had brought up the same subject with McKay two days earlier but had

133. McKay, Diary, April 12, 1966.

134. "Conference Talk Texts," *Church News,* April 16, 1966, 7.

135. McKay, Diary, April 15, 1966.

136. "Politics and Religion," *Church News,* March 26, 1966. *Church News* editorials, both then and now, are unsigned.

137. McKay, Diary, April 18, 1966.

not been as insistent as Middlemiss.[138] This attempt, however, brought Middlemiss into direct conflict with Lawrence McKay, who strongly opposed the society and who was acting to block publication of the disputed passages. On April 21, the two met face-to-face and confronted the issue. According to Middlemiss's account, Lawrence argued that the passages should not be published, "that it will do a lot of harm to the Church; that the John Birch Society will use it as meaning members of the Church should join their society." Middlemiss countered that she "did not see how they would take it that way; that they had already been called and said that the statement was not for them, and they are not to distribute it from their office."[139]

The following day Middlemiss visited President McKay in his apartment in Hotel Utah and again brought up the subject of publishing the entire statement. She also reported her confrontation with Lawrence. McKay, referring to his earlier discussion with Lawrence when he had agreed not to publish the statement in full, noted, "I have never seen my son Lawrence so upset—he hates the John Birch Society."[140]

McKay's attention was deflected momentarily from the John Birch Society by another of Benson's political initiatives: a run for the U.S. presidency. Months earlier, Benson had presented to McKay a rather nebulous plan whereby he and Senator Strom Thurmond would press the Republican Party for reforms, with the intention of forming a third party if the Republican Convention balked. That plan, however, had not included presidential aspirations. In mid-April 1966, Benson met with McKay and described "The 1976 Committee," which would be composed of 100 prominent men from throughout the country. This committee, a third party despite its name, would nominate him as president and Thurmond as vice president. McKay again expressed doubts about the wisdom of forming a third party, to which Benson replied that he also was "opposed to this, but this Committee and movement might result in a realignment between the two political parties." McKay responded, "This nation is rapidly moving down the road of soul-destroying socialism, and that I hoped and prayed that the efforts of the 1976 Committee would be successful in stemming the tide." He told Benson "to let them go ahead

138. McKay, Diary, April 16, 1966.

139. Clare Middlemiss, "Notes," April 21, 1966.

140. Ibid., April 22, 1966.

and wait and see what develops." Benson presented him with proposed statements that he and McKay might make if the committee proposed his nomination. McKay approved the statements. The statement drafted under his name concluded with: "His doing so has my full approval."[141]

Three weeks later when Benson was on a Church assignment in Germany, the 1976 Committee announced its intention to draft him as a candidate for president in 1968. Benson, speaking disingenuously in view of his prior conversation with McKay, told a reporter that he was in "shock" over the committee's proposal. "It's the first I've heard of it," he said. The same newspaper report indicated "about half of the committee's 30 organizers are members of the Birch Society."[142]

Benson's bid for the presidency ran out of momentum and was discontinued a year before the 1968 political conventions. However, it placed McKay in the awkward position of maintaining political neutrality toward one Mormon presidential candidate who was a serious contender, Michigan Governor George Romney, while at the same time endorsing the candidacy of Benson, who was never regarded as a serious candidate. A lengthy article in the *Wall Street Journal* noted the dilemma, pointing out that Benson "obtained from David McKay, the 92-year old prophet and president of the Mormon Church, an unpublished letter giving full approval to any campaign that Mr. Benson might make." The article noted that political activity among American churches was on the rise; but while larger denominations such as Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Lutherans had generally espoused liberal positions, the Mormons remained "deeply conservative." Wrote the unidentified reporter: "In great part this is due to certain doctrinal teachings unique to Mormonism. But it also is due to the energetic efforts of Mr. Benson, whose flirtation with the John Birch Society has produced deep divisions within the church. 'What Benson is doing could rend the church,' says a Western governor, 'and that would be bad for the church and bad for the West.'"[143]

In a nationally syndicated column, Drew Pearson also noted the shift in Mormon political philosophy, characterizing it as atypical of McKay: "David O. McKay, president of the Church and now 93 years old, once

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141. McKay, Diary, April 16, 1966.

142. "Presidential Draft for Elder Benson," *Deseret News,* May 3, 1966.

143. "Mormons & Politics: Benson's Influence Helps Keep Growing Church on Conservative Track," *Wall Street Journal,* August 8, 1966.

championed the principle of free discussion, of letting Mormons have and listen to sharply divergent views. He still stands by that principle in theory. But the *Deseret News*, the Church-owned newspaper which circulates throughout Utah, shies away from publishing views not approved by the Church elders. Chief reason for the new Mormon trend toward political and philosophical isolation is probably the influx of outsiders into Utah, plus the steady drumbeat of John Birch Propaganda from Ezra Taft Benson."[144]

For his part, McKay disregarded the criticism and stood solidly behind Benson. Meeting with him in late October 1966, McKay reread his letter of support, reaffirmed its content, and assured Benson "that I would support him in any effort which he might make in his efforts to help preserve the Constitution."[145]

In November, McKay's counselors met with him about Benson's request to duplicate and distribute widely his own talk in the most recent general conference. Tanner, normally nonconfrontational, protested: "From this talk one would conclude that Brother Benson and President McKay stand alone among the General Authorities on the question of freedom." Although Tanner did not quote from Benson's speech, it contained a thinly veiled shot at Brown and other General Authorities who urged moderation in the struggle against Communism: "Of course, the war in heaven over free agency is now being waged here on earth, and there are those today who are saying, 'Look, don't get involved in the fight for freedom. Just live the gospel.' That council [*sic*] is dangerous, self-contradictory, unsound."[146]

McKay agreed that it went too far, and "decided that the talk should not be mimeographed and distributed in pamphlet form."[147] Two weeks later, however, Benson met privately with McKay and asked him to reconsider his decision. After rereading Benson's talk, McKay decided "there is

144. "Mormons Reverse Clock," *Washington Post*, October 16, 1966.
145. McKay, Diary, October 31, 1966.
146. Ezra Taft Benson, *Conference Report*, October 2, 1966, 122.
147. McKay, Diary, November 16, 1966.

nothing wrong with the talk, so I told my secretary to tell Elder Benson he could have it mimeographed if he wished."[148]

During this period while Benson's bid for the presidency was still alive, he renewed his efforts to obtain McKay's sanction for his formal affiliation with the John Birch Society. On February 24, 1967, McKay received a 12-page letter from Robert Welch, "a cursory glance [at] of which indicates or pleads for permission for Ezra Taft Benson to serve on the National Council of the Society."[149] In closing the letter, Welch indicated that Benson had already agreed to serve on the council, subject only to McKay's consent.[150] McKay deferred acting on the request for a month. Benson scheduled a private meeting at the month's end to push for a decision. McKay told Benson, "I enjoyed reading Mr. Welch's letter and felt that he is sincerely dedicated, and that he displayed a very good spirit in his letter." Nonetheless, he declined, for the second time, Welch's request. However, he worded his response in such a way as to leave the door open: "It was agreed that Elder Benson would answer Mr. Welch and tell him that it would be impossible for him to serve on the Council at this time."[151]

It did not take long for Benson to raise the issue a third–and final–time. One month later in mid-April 1967, he brought Robert Welch to meet McKay. Welch made an impassioned plea and presented McKay with a letter, beginning, "This is probably the most important letter I have ever written."[152] Welch pulled out all the stops in the letter, alleging that Communist infiltration of the United States government "has now reached so far that rampant treason is gradually but surely establishing Communist control over the United States." Standing between the Communists and complete takeover was but "one formidable, unshattered bulwark, . . . the one enemy which the Communists fear most anywhere in the world": the John Birch Society. Unhampered by modesty, Welch alleged that "but for the opposition of the John Birch Society our country

148. McKay, Diary, December 2, 1966.

149. McKay, Diary, February 24, 1967.

150. Robert Welch, Letter to David O. McKay, February 21, 1967, McKay, Diary, March 22, 1967.

151. McKay, Diary, March 22, 1967.

152. Robert Welch, Letter to David O. McKay, April 18, 1967, in McKay, Diary.

would already have been carried by Communist internal subversion beyond the point of 'no return.'" In concluding his letter, Welch called Benson "one of the world's truly great men" and proclaimed that allowing Benson to join the society council would enable him "to perform for his country an act of greatness equal to that of many another hero in our history."

Although McKay had for years hardened and then softened his stance on the John Birch Society and, more particularly, Benson's interaction with it, he never softened to the point of allowing Benson a formal affiliation. In spite of the dual pressures exerted by Benson and Welch, McKay held the line. "I explained to him, as I have on two other occasions by letter, that it would not be wise for Elder Benson to serve in this capacity."[153] This time the message got through, and Benson never asked the question a fourth time. Three days later, McKay showed Welch's letter to Mark E. Petersen who, upon reading, it said: "President McKay, Elder Harold B. Lee has some hair-raising stories to tell about the Birch Society which I am sure he will tell you, which I think would scare you to death. We have the Church, and if we live up to its teachings, we do not need to worry about what will happen to this country!"[154]

Benson continued to pursue a conservative political agenda, though with a lower profile once it became clear to him that McKay would never allow his formal affiliation with the John Birch Society. And Hugh B. Brown, for his part, continued to be a sounding board for moderate and liberal Mormons who were upset at Benson's activities. Typical of the letters Brown received was one from a Church member in Maryland: "I personally feel that Brother Benson is misusing his Priesthood Authority. . . . I am finding it increasingly difficult to raise my right hand in Quarterly Conference and sustain Brother Benson as an Apostle. Isn't there something that can be done to curb this type of political involvement of the Church in general?"[155]

While Brown's responses in the past had always been critical of the activities of Benson and the society, they now became even stronger, suggesting that McKay had finally realized that Benson's activities, if left un-

153. McKay, Diary, April 18, 1967.

154. McKay, Diary, April 21, 1967.

155. Dorothy L. Skinner, Letter to Hugh B. Brown, March 24, 1967; photocopy in my possession.

checked, would do lasting damage to Church members individually and to the Church as an institution. Three weeks after McKay's meeting with Benson and Welch, Brown wrote to a correspondent: "We did discuss your letter and numerous others like it on the same subject with the First Presidency and are taking it to the Twelve as soon as Brother Benson returns from Europe, and we prefer to have him present when the matter is discussed. I think you can be assured that something definite will be decided upon and activities in this connection will be curtailed."[156] While McKay's diaries contain no contemporaneous account of the follow-up to Brown's assurance, a later statement by Tanner indicated that the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve jointly advised Benson to "discontinue this kind of thing."[157]

While Benson reduced his visibility with the society, he did not cut back on his political activities. Early in 1968 his ambitions took him in a different direction, and he approached McKay for permission to join Alabama Governor George C. Wallace, running for U.S. president on a third-party ticket, as his vice presidential candidate. Unlike Benson's earlier presidential ambitions, this proposal met McKay's immediate and unambiguous rejection. It is not clear how much of McKay's decision had to do with his aversion to a third political party (which he had expressed at the time of the Benson-Thurmond initiative), his personal feelings toward Wallace, his unwillingness to have an apostle square off against announced Mormon candidate George Romney, or growing weariness with Benson's political activities. In writing to Wallace, McKay couched his decision in ecclesiastical language: "Please be assured that my decision is not political in essence, but one that involves Mr. Benson's calling as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of the Church."[158] McKay's decision was not, however, an indication that he had softened his stance on Communism. Indeed, several months later when he learned of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia he said, "The Communists will never surrender

156. Hugh B. Brown, Letter to Burns S. Hanson, May 11, 1967, Firmage Papers, Box 48, fd. 21.

157. McKay, Diary, May 29, 1969.

158. McKay, Diary, February 13, 1968.

their main aim—that of world conquest—no matter what they say or do."[159]

Two months before the 1968 presidential election after Romney had dropped out of the race, Benson approached McKay with a second request for permission to join Wallace as a third-party candidate. McKay responded: "My decision is still the same; . . . I feel that Elder Benson should not launch out on this political campaign; that it could lead to confusion and misunderstanding in the Church."[160]

Shortly after the election, Hugh B. Brown summarized his feelings about Benson and the John Birch Society in an interview recorded by his grandson, expressing sentiments that proved to be accurate: "There are some [General Authorities]—I won't put it in the plural even—who sustain the John Birch Society. Others of us do not. I don't think that that should be an issue, should not be a question involving one's standing in the Church whether they approve of that or not. I do think that in this case all members of the General Authorities should keep out of that discussion. I think the John Birch Society will run its course and finally be rejected. That's my own opinion."[161]

In 1968, Benson made one last attempt to recruit McKay's support of the John Birch Society. Telephoning Clare Middlemiss from New York City, he pleaded:

> Clare, President McKay has told me on various occasions that there are two things he regretted in his presidency: (1) the untimely decision, which was later changed, to move the college at Rexburg to Idaho Falls; and (2) the issuing of the statement in the public press against the John Birch Society. Now, in order to alleviate that feeling about the John Birch Society, I wonder, since they are celebrating their 10th Anniversary tonight at a meeting and banquet in Indianapolis, Indiana, if President McKay would send a telegram similar to the following: "John Birch Society, c/o Mr. Robert Welch, Stauffer Inn, Indianapolis, Indiana—Congratulations upon reaching ten years of courageous and effective service in defense of our freedom and acquainting the American people with the insidious dan-

159. McKay, Diary, August 26, 1968.

160. McKay, Diary, September 9, 1968.

161. Brown, interviewed by Firmage, November 30, 1968, Firmage Collection, Ms 674, Box 51, fd. 29.

gers of the atheistic communistic conspiracy. Best wishes for future success in the fight to preserve our God-given liberties."[162]

Middlemiss attempted to reach McKay with the request, but he was in a meeting and could not be interrupted. She then presented the matter to Alvin R. Dyer, whom McKay had appointed as his fifth counselor in the First Presidency. Although Dyer, a conservative and Middlemiss's cousin, was sympathetic to the concerns of the society, he vetoed the request before it could reach McKay.

In the final year of McKay's life, his relationship to Communism and to Benson changed slightly but significantly. While continuing to condemn Communism as forcefully as ever, he gradually acknowledged that there was a difference between Communism as a system, and a Communist (and even more so, a socialist) as a person. N. Eldon Tanner inquired in a First Presidency meeting: "If a man were an avowed communist, would our position be to excommunicate him or disqualify him for any position in the Church?" McKay responded that he should not hold any Church position but allowed that he might remain a member of the Church, a softening of his earlier stance.[163] It is likely that this change came with the realization that European Church members were not of the same political stripe as American members and that socialist and even Communist parties in their countries carried far different baggage than in the United States. Indeed, even Benson was occasionally reminded by European Church members of the difference. One British member spoke of a dinner conversation with Benson: "Elder Benson was talking away to me and he said this and that. I said, 'Well, Elder Benson, I've got to be honest with you. I was very upset when I sat in the Tabernacle and heard you attack my politics.' 'What do you mean?' I said, 'Well, I'm a socialist. I've been a socialist all my life. My father was a great radical socialist. I don't think you know what socialists are when you come up and criticize them so harshly.' He explained to me the difference between the socialist he was attacking and the socialists I believed in at that time."[164]

McKay's friendship with Benson never waned, but tolerance for his extremism gradually wore down. In a First Presidency meeting eleven

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162. McKay, Diary, December 7, 1968.

163. McKay, Diary, May 29, 1969.

164. Arthur Forbes Herbertson, interviewed by Gordon Irving, April 2, 1986, James H. Moyle Oral History Program, LDS Church Archives.

months before McKay's death, the subject of Benson's political remarks from the pulpit again came up. After McKay's counselors weighed in with assorted anecdotes highlighting the problem, McKay "asked what conclusion the brethren had reached regarding the matter. President Tanner said the same conclusion that was arrived at about two years ago, that Elder Benson should discontinue this kind of thing, and particularly in stake conferences, and should limit himself to talking about the gospel and its applications. President Tanner said that he thought I made as clear a statement on the subject as he had heard made in the meeting of the Council of the First Presidency and the Twelve at that time. I said that there is no reason why we should not continue that understanding."[165]

When Benson gave an inflammatory speech at BYU three months later, in which he was particularly critical of U.S. government officials and the United Nations, McKay authorized Hugh B. Brown to go to BYU and give a strong rebuttal, stating, "I did not think that any government officials should be accused of these things."[166]

Although McKay and Benson had both been willing to go to war to fight Communism, the war never came. Instead of going out with a bang, the Soviet Union went out with a whimper, collapsing under its own weight in the late 1990s. With its collapse, Communism as a successful form of government quickly became discredited throughout the world. With the gradual opening of archives in the former Soviet Union and other Communist states, it has become apparent that some Communist infiltration of organizations and government institutions within the United States had occurred, yet the threat that the "Communist conspiracy" posed to the West never approached the magnitude of which Benson and Welch had warned.

In spite of the claims of Robert Welch, there is no convincing evidence that the John Birch Society was effective in combatting Communism. It was very effective, however, in polarizing Americans against each other and in fostering an atmosphere of hate and intolerance. Welch's attacks on Dwight D. Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles, Martin Luther King, and other individuals and institutions gradually brought discredit and disdain upon himself and his organization; and although the society still ex-

165. McKay, Diary, February 12, 1969.
166. McKay, Diary, May 12, 1969.

ists, it long ago ceased to have significant visibility within American society.

Benson's political activism diminished abruptly upon McKay's death, for he lost his patron and protector. McKay was succeeded by Joseph Fielding Smith and, subsequently, Harold B. Lee, both of whom had strongly objected to Benson's political activities during McKay's presidency. A comparison of Benson's general conference talks before and after McKay's death attests to their effectiveness in curtailing his political extremism.

Fifteen years after McKay died, Benson became Church president; and to the surprise of many Church members, whose memories of his earlier political activities were still vivid, he was a gentle, pastoral Church president whose consistent message was a plea for Mormons to become reacquainted with the book that gave them their nickname: the Book of Mormon. The controversy that highlighted so many of his years as an apostle never returned.

Sadly, Mormonism's involvement in the 1960s with right-wing political extremism left a legacy that affects the Church adversely to this day. As early as 1961, one Mormon Congressman, David S. King (D-Utah), warned McKay that the Church seemed to be abandoning its position of neutrality in politics, to the extent that "Sunday School teachers are making broad hints and innuendoes in classes that those who follow the Democratic program are handmaidens of Communists, and cannot expect to consider themselves in full fellowship in the Church."[167] Mormonism's identification with right-wing politics did not go unnoticed in Communist countries, as indicated in a 1985 internal report by Stasi, the East German secret police: "In the May 18, 1985, political-operational report of Department XX . . . regarding the political-ideological orientation of the US-American Mormons, it was determined that they are to be classified as representatives of the right wing of American conservatism. There are close connections between their leadership and ruling circles within the government [at that time the Reagan administration]. Relationships also exist between persons and institutions of the church and the American secret service."[168]

Utah is now one of the most Republican states in the country, and Mormons have become so identified with the Republican Party that, de-

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167. McKay, Diary, November 16, 1961.

168. Karlheinz Leonhardt, *Die ersten hundert Jahre: Eine Geschichte der*

spite their national prevalence, they have become almost invisible in Democratic presidential administrations. In recent years, this matter became of sufficient concern that one of the few Democratic General Authorities, Marlin K. Jensen, a Seventy, was assigned by the First Presidency to give an interview to the *Salt Lake Tribune* in 1998, in which he noted: "One of the things that prompted this discussion in the first place was the regret that's felt about the decline of the Democratic Party [in Utah] and the notion that may prevail in some areas that you can't be a good Mormon and a good Democrat at the same time. . . . I think it would be a very healthy thing for the church—particularly the Utah church—if that notion could be obliterated."[169]

Although McKay's fears of worldwide Communist conquest were overblown, his concerns that Communism was atheistic and that it robbed people of free agency remain well founded. One need only look at the countries formerly under Soviet domination to see the extent of damage to churches and individuals of seven decades of Communist oppression. And his prediction that Communist rulers would fall if they continued to rob people of their free choice between good and evil proved to be prophetic. His words spoken in 1954 are a potent reminder for all ages: "No power on earth can take this freedom away."[170]

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*Gemeinde Freiberg* (Freiberg, Germany: Privately printed by Karlheinz Leonhardt, 2000), English translation by Raymond Kuehne; photocopy courtesy of Leonhardt and Kuehne in my possession.

169. Dan Harris, "LDS Official Calls for More Political Diversity," *Salt Lake Tribune*, May 3, 1998.

170. "President McKay Predicts Fall of Red Leaders," *Deseret News*, April 26, 1954.

# The Freiberg Temple: An Unexpected Legacy of a Communist State and a Faithful People

*Raymond M. Kuehne*

ON APRIL 23, 1983, a groundbreaking ceremony for the only temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints built behind the Iron Curtain was held in the city of Freiberg, in the German Democratic Republic (GDR)—then East Germany. Henry J. Burkhardt, president of the Dresden Germany Mission and a key figure in that surprising event, provided this enduring image of the ceremony:

> We had invited a long list of government representatives, Communists who did not believe in God, who did not pray. . . . President Monson told them that before we have the ground breaking ceremony, we will dedicate the land. We will bow our heads, fold our hands, and pray to our Heavenly Father. Well, I sat there across from these people and thought, I must work with them. How will they react? I prayed with only one eye, and with the other I looked upon that miracle. All the Communists sat there with

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> bowed heads and folded hands. . . . At the conclusion, they came to me and said, "We've never experienced anything so beautiful as this." They were deeply impressed. The county council chairman told me, "If you ever need anything, come to me and I will help you."[1]

Two years later in June 1985, 90,000 visitors (in a city of 50,000) toured the completed temple and adjacent meetinghouse during a two-week openhouse. Visitors wanted to see what a small American-based church had been allowed to build in the officially atheistic GDR. Many stood in line for as long as seven hours. One evening, many visitors were still waiting outside at the normal closing time of 8:00 P.M. The doors remained open until the last visitors exited at 1:15 A.M.

How did this unusual event come to pass? And why was the government so willing to help?

For many observers, economics is the preferred explanation, for the GDR needed the western currency that the Church paid for its construction. For others, it was truly a miracle brought about by the faith of devoted members. For a few, it indicated that their local leaders had become too friendly with the Communists. This article discusses these and other explanations.[2] I give particular emphasis to the recollections and insights of President Burkhardt, who was the Church's main point of contact with the GDR during most of that country's existence. No general history of the Church in East Germany would be complete without reference to his experiences and perspective. Information and memories attributed to him without another source come from our informal conversations be-

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1. Henry J. Burkhardt, Interviewed by Raymond A. Kuehne, February 25, 2003, tape and typescript in English. Unless otherwise noted, I conducted and translated all of the interviews. Additional material, identified in the text but not cited, came from informal conversations with President Burkhardt, whom I saw every four or weeks in the temple during his service as an ordinance worker, with Karlheinz Leonhardt, whom I saw almost daily, and with other members as they came to the temple. I made notes on these conversations, in English, usually on the same day. Full names are not always given for German officials because it is customary to use titles and surnames only.

2. For more information about the GDR's relationship to the LDS Church, see Bruce Hall, "'And the Last Shall be First': The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Former East Germany," *Journal of Church and State*, 42, No. 3 (Summer 2000): 485ff; and Bruce Hall, "'Render unto Caesar': State, Identity and Minority Religion in the German Democratic Republic, 1945–1989" (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Buffalo, 2003).

tween January and November 2003 when my wife, Genie, and I were serving as temple missionaries in Freiberg.

In 1952, at age twenty-two, President Burkhardt become a counselor to the president of the East (later North) German Mission, which covered all of East Germany and part of West Germany. He coordinated activities in the east for the next seventeen years. In 1969, East Germany was organized as a separate Dresden Mission, with Burkhardt as president. He served in that position until 1984 when East Germany was organized into stakes. He then became president of the Freiberg Temple but also continued as the "President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in the German Democratic Republic" until the demise of East Germany in 1990.

Among those present at the groundbreaking ceremony in 1983 was Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Quorum of the Twelve, who led the Church's delegation. For him the temple was to be explained as a miracle. Following its dedication in 1985, he wrote in his journal: "Frequently people will ask, 'How has it been possible for the Church to obtain permission to build a temple behind the Iron Curtain?' My feeling is simply that the faith and devotion of our Latter-day Saints in that area brought forth the help of Almighty God. . . . [I]t is only through His divine intervention that these events have taken place."[3]

Ten years earlier, on April 27, 1975, Elder Monson had requested that divine intervention when he rededicated East Germany from a hill overlooking the Elbe River near Dresden: "Heavenly Father, wilt Thou open up the way that the faithful may be accorded the privilege of going to Thy holy temple, there to receive their holy endowments and to be sealed as families for time and all eternity. . . . [W]ilt Thou intervene in the governmental affairs. Cause that Thy Holy Spirit may dwell with those who preside, that their hearts may be touched and that they may make those decisions which would help in the advancement of Thy work."[4]

Those who heard Elder Monson's prayer did not imagine that a temple would be built in their country in their lifetime. They simply hoped

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3. Thomas S. Monson, *Faith Rewarded: A Personal Account of Prophetic Promises to the East German Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 105–6. Elder Monson, the title by which I refer to him in this article, was then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles; he became a member of the First Presidency in 1985.

4. Ibid., 36.

for permission to leave their homes long enough to visit the existing temple in Switzerland.

## The Influence of the Swiss Temple

The Freiberg Temple may be seen as the last step in a series of previously unsuccessful attempts to make temple ordinances available to members behind the Iron Curtain. One of those was a little-known effort to build an Endowment House[5] in Chemnitz (known as Karl-Marx-Stadt from 1953 to 1990) in the late 1970s. However, the temple's history actually begins much earlier, with the 1955 dedication of the Swiss Temple. That event had a major impact upon the Church in East Germany and led directly to the construction of the Freiberg Temple thirty years later.

The Iron Curtain did not descend upon East Germany immediately at the end of World War II. The political isolation that would eventually befall its citizens was not obvious to everyone in 1945. Therefore, many members stayed where they were and began to rebuild their shattered homes and lives. After all, conditions in West Germany were almost as stark as in the eastern zone in the immediate postwar years. And since no one anticipated that a temple would be built soon anywhere in Europe, whether one lived in West or East Germany, a temple was still a dream for most.

But as the economy revived, West Germans could consider traveling to temples in the United States. East Germans had no such hope. Their ability to leave their country, legally or otherwise, was increasingly limited over the years. They could wait until their productive working years had ended, when the government might be glad to let them leave without their children. Or they could risk fleeing to West Berlin and waiting there until they found a way to reach the United States. But the wall between East and West Berlin, erected in 1961, soon blocked that exit route, too.

However, the dedication of the first European temple in Switzerland in 1955 changed the course of history for the Saints in East Germany. Without its attraction and influence, it is difficult to imagine that a temple would ever have been built in Freiberg. President Burkhardt wrote:

> The commandment to the Saints to attend the temple . . . remained an im-

5. An endowment house is a temporary facility of limited function in which selected ordinances normally restricted to a temple can be administered. See LaMar C. Berrett, "Endowment Houses," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 1:456.

> portant but unfulfilled part of the gospel plan for everyone in Europe and other parts of the world where no temple existed. Hardly anyone had the expectation of attending a temple during their lifetime, despite their faithfulness to the commandments of God. . . . [But] after the temple in Zollikofen was dedicated in 1955, the wish burned within many Saints to go there. . . . Nothing was more important to the priesthood leaders of our country than to fulfill this wish of our members. The temple in Zollikofen—so near and yet so far for the members of the GDR—was our most longed-for goal.[6]

The Swiss Temple brought hope to East German members and a new incentive to reach the west. Members immediately began to make the necessary spiritual preparations. Temple-related topics dominated Sunday School, priesthood, Relief Society, and sacrament meetings throughout East Germany in 1955 and 1956.[7]

Many East German members actually managed to reach the Swiss Temple in its first two or three years of operation. In those days, GDR citizens could request permission to visit relatives in West Germany. If granted, their travel was officially limited to West Germany. But once there, members found ways of reaching the temple. Arrangements were made for Church leaders in West Germany to issue temple recommends, and the West German government issued temporary travel documents with which members could cross into Switzerland. This process is common knowledge among the older members but not documented in the local records for obvious reasons. Some members were required to travel without their children, but couples could at least receive their endowments and be sealed. Of course, the GDR government soon learned of the illegal travel to Switzerland and stopped issuing visas to West Germany. To protect itself, the Church also stopped issuing temple recommends except in those few instances where the members could show they had permission to travel to Switzerland. Thus, travel to the Swiss temple effectively ended after 1957,

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6. Henry J. Burkhardt, "Wie es zum Bau des Freiberger Tempels kam," 1, unpublished typescript, October 1983; photocopy in my possession, used by permission. Translations mine.

7. Karlheinz Leonhardt, *Die ersten hundert Jahre: Eine Geschichte der Gemeinde Freiberg* (Freiberg, Germany: Privately printed by Karlheinz Leonhardt, 2000), 223–24. Leonhardt became a member of the local temple committee in 1982 and was called as recorder at the Freiberg Temple in 1985. Translation mine.

except for some older pensioned members who were given greater latitude for travel.

After 1957, President Burkhardt continued to seek ways to bring members to the Swiss Temple, but without success. Once, in the early 1970s, he asked all of the district presidents to assemble lists of members who were worthy and desirous of going to the temple. He hoped such information might soften the hearts of GDR officials. He took a list with the names of 300 members to Berlin but was fortunate to be allowed to return home that night. He was threatened with imprisonment because he had violated a law against collecting personal information for religious purposes.

## "Befriend the Communists"

On June 14, 1969, the Church established a separate Dresden Mission with Burkhardt as president. That administrative change responded to a new GDR law requiring churches to be led by its own citizens. This change was a second major event that would have a far-reaching and unanticipated influence on the future East German temple.

President Burkhardt had never attended a general conference in Salt Lake City. One year after he became mission president, Elder Monson asked him if he could imagine coming to conference. The two men have written about this conversation with some differences. Burkhardt wrote, "On the basis of my experiences in this country, I told him that there was no chance of that ever happening. Whereupon Brother Monson made a prophetic utterance: 'When the Lord determines that the time is right, you will attend General Conference in Salt Lake City!'" According to Elder Monson's account, "Brother Burkhardt is a man of great faith. He responded, 'I believe the Lord will open the way.' I [Monson] shall pursue this matter.'"[8] The First Presidency officially invited him to the April 1972 Conference. To attend, he needed government approval. His first contacts with local GDR officials in Dresden were unsuccessful. They sent him to the State Secretariat for Church Affairs (Staatssekretariat für Kirchenfragen) in Berlin. There, he encountered more obstacles. But after driving more than 1,800 miles, repeatedly calling on East German and U.S. officials in Berlin

8. Burkhardt, "Wie es zum bau," 2.; Monson, *Faith Rewarded*, 16.

and Prague (the closest U.S. embassy was in Czechoslovakia), he finally received a visa.

Thereafter, he attended conference regularly. Each trip had to be approved separately. This process forced him to have frequent and direct contact with the Secretariat for Church Affairs and other senior GDR officials. At each visit, he "did not miss an opportunity to mention the wishes and needs of the church members, especially regarding the temple."[9] The conference visits also provided regular opportunities to report to the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve on conditions in the GDR. During a visit with President Spencer W. Kimball in April 1973, President Burkhardt was surprised when he was told to "develop a good relationship with the government." He received similar advice at each subsequent visit. President Burkhardt found it difficult at first to accept Kimball's advice. He responded inwardly, "You don't know the Communists. You can't have a good relationship with those people. They are anti-religious, they have threatened to throw me in jail several times, and they constantly make trouble for me."[10]

During one such visit, President Kimball expressed his personal philosophy that political solutions were generally ineffective—that the world changed when individuals changed. He gave President Burkhardt the following challenge: "Brother Burkhardt, if you want to see a change of things in East Germany, it must begin with you personally. It must begin with you because you are the leader of the Saints there, and you must have a change of heart, which means you must force yourself to befriend the Communists. You cannot hold any grudges against them. You must change your whole outlook and attitude."[11] Eventually, Burkhardt accepted the advice. "It took a long time, from 1973 until 1976, before I came to realize that Communists were also children of our Heavenly Father, and that I should deal with them accordingly, in a friendly manner. . . . And from that time forth, miracle after miracle occurred in the his-

9. Burkhardt, "Wie es zum Bau," 2.

10. Burkhardt, Interview, February 25, 2003.

11. Edward L. Kimball, *The Presidency Years of Spencer W. Kimball* (working title); forthcoming. Quoted by permission; confirmed in personal conversation with Burckhardt.

tory of the Church in this country. They became friendlier and more receptive to me, as a representative of the Church."[12]

### Why Not Establish an Endowment Room?

On May 10, 1978, Bishop H. Burke Peterson of the Presiding Bishopric visited the Dresden Mission. During that visit, he and President Burkhardt visited several branches where the members had, at considerable personal sacrifice, created modest meeting rooms in old buildings. As Peterson and Burkhardt visited these locations, they spoke with admiration of the faithfulness of the members and their desire to go to the Swiss Temple. President Burkhardt reported:

> While visiting one such building [in Groitzsch, near Leipzig], Bishop Peterson initiated a subject that I had never before considered. He said, "Why wouldn't it be possible to dedicate one or more newly renovated rooms in such a building in which members could receive their personal endowment?" He was remembering the one-time Endowment House which existed before members in Salt Lake City had access to a temple. Bishop Peterson returned and gave this report to the First Presidency. And although I never saw that report myself, he certainly reported that the possibility existed to create an Endowment Room in a selected meeting house.[13]

Elder Monson did not mention Bishop Peterson's report in his book, but the topic might have been discussed in a meeting between Elder Monson and the First Presidency on May 25, 1978: "President Kimball asked that I remain and meet with him and his counselors relative to a discussion pertaining to our Saints in East Germany and the inability of the Saints to receive temple ordinances."[14] Instead of pursuing the endowment room idea, the meeting apparently initiated a new plan to seek travel permits for six couples at a time to visit the Swiss Temple with the Church guaranteeing their return. Monson reviewed that plan with Burkhardt during a meeting on August 25, 1978, which he described in these words:

> We discussed a plan whereby six specified couples' names would be provided to David Kennedy,[15] and he in turn would make an effort with the government to emphasize the importance of a one-time visit to the temple

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12. Burkhardt, Interview, February 25, 2003.

13. Burkhardt, "Wie es zum Bau," 2; Burkhardt, Interview, February 25, 2003.

14. Monson, *Faith Rewarded*, 47.

> by every Latter-Day Saint.[15] The theory was that if we could establish a record of credibility, with about six couples going to the temple . . . and returning to their homes in the German Democratic Republic, and then having perhaps six other couples go, the approximately eight hundred worthy but non-endowed persons in the German Democratic Republic could receive these blessings.[16]

I have found records of three visits Kennedy made to East Germany before the temple was built. First, he met with President Burkhardt in East Berlin in September 1975. Second, he accompanied President Kimball to Dresden and West Berlin in August 1977. Third, on August 29, 1978, four days after Monson briefed Burkhardt about the Swiss Temple plan, Kennedy was at the East German foreign ministry in Berlin.[17] On September 8, 1978, Elder Monson "held a meeting with the First Presidency relative to East Germany and the visit of David Kennedy to that country. Our desire is to open up a way for faithful members of the Church in that land to gain exit visas to have their sacred ordinances performed in the Swiss Temple, after which they would return to their homeland. Our hopes are high, but realistically, we feel our prospects for gaining the necessary approval are rather dim."[18]

## The GDR Suggests a Temple

Prospects for approved travel to Switzerland were not just dim. They were nonexistent. However, in the meantime, the government had proposed another, totally unexpected, option. President Burkhardt explains:

> During a May [31,] 1978 meeting at the Secretariat for Church Affairs in Berlin, at which time I again raised the topic of our members traveling to the temple, I was given a different suggestion, namely, to build a temple in the GDR. That suggestion was entirely unexpected, and I tried to present

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15. Kennedy was the former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury and ambassador-at-large in the Nixon administration. He later served as a special representative of the First Presidency during the Kimball administration to improve Church relations with foreign governments.

16. Monson, *Faith Rewarded,* 47–48.

17. "Geschichte der Dresdener Mission" (History of the Dresden Mission), Freiberg Temple Archive, unpaginated. This history consists of entries at weekly or more frequent intervals. The writer is not identified but was probably Burkhardt and/or his wife, Inge.

18. Monson, *Faith Rewarded,* 48.

> all possible reasons why it would not be possible. I mentioned that we did not have the required number of members for a temple district. I especially mentioned the *Unantastbarkeit* [sanctity][19] of such a building once it has been dedicated. Also, that only the First Presidency could decide such a question. Despite all my reasons for declining the suggestion, I was politely requested to discuss the idea with the First Presidency.[20]

President Burkhardt knew that government agents often attended LDS services and assumed that some of the Church's buildings contained hidden listening devices. He did not mention the sanctity issue when he recounted Bishop Peterson's idea of an Endowment Room within a meetinghouse. But he did tell GDR officials now that unauthorized persons could not enter a dedicated temple. They told him that such restrictions would not be a problem.

President Burkhardt immediately sent the GDR's proposal to the First Presidency via Dan C. Jorgensen, the Regional Representative, who was in Dresden the following weekend. Its receipt did not alter the Church's Swiss Temple plan or influence Kennedy's contact with the GDR's foreign ministry in Berlin on August 29. It seems safe to assume that the Church preferred to bring East German members to the Swiss Temple rather than build a temple in a Communist country for the relatively few members who lived there.

However, on September 5, just a few days after Kennedy's visit to the foreign ministry, the Secretary for Church Affairs told President Burkhardt that Kennedy's visit had not been appreciated, that the plan to bring members to the Swiss Temple was unacceptable, and that all discussions regarding the Church's affairs in the GDR were to be initiated and coordinated through the secretary's office by Burkhardt alone. (That had been the government's longstanding policy, and it continued until 1990.) Moreover, the secretary told him that members' access to temple ordinances was to be accomplished through the government's proposal on May 31, 1978, to build a temple in the GDR.[21] In retrospect, it is clear that the Church's plan to transport 600 East Germans to Switzerland, even guaranteeing their return, was not realistic. Such an exception to the

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19. *Unantastbarkeit* translates awkwardly to "unviolable" or "inviolable." I have retained the German word or use "sanctity" throughout the text.

20. Burkhardt, "Wie es zum Bau," 3.

21. "Geschichte der Dresdener Mission."

GDR's restrictions on foreign travel would certainly have subjected the government to charges of favoritism from the country's other churches. Moreover, the GDR's recent program to rebuild historic (and some new) structures for the Lutheran and Catholic churches with western currency was a precedent that could solve the temple issue and bring in needed western currency.

One month later, Elder Monson met with President Burkhardt during the October 21–22 conference in Dresden. His first mention of the GDR's temple proposal appears in his journal a month later on November 22: "I mentioned to the Presidency that the East German government has asked why we do not build a temple in their country. . . . It appears as though the government will not permit its citizens to have visas to go to the Swiss Temple; hence, the only possible way we can provide endowment and sealing blessings for the Saints would be through providing a facility of our own in that country."[22]

Again, on January 24, 1979, Elder Monson wrote: "This morning I again met with the First Presidency to discuss the Dresden Mission and how our people might best receive their temple blessings. Due to their inability to leave East Germany, it may be necessary to provide some facilities there for such ordinance work."[23] A week later, on February 2, 1979, the First Presidency addressed a letter to Burkhardt expressing their pleasure in learning that "the authorities of your government had suggested that we build a sacred edifice in the German Democratic Republic, that our members there may receive these ordinances which mean so very much to them." Included in the letter was "a preliminary sketch of the exterior of such an edifice, as well as a floor plan. After you have had an opportunity to meet with the appropriate officials, you could so advise us [of] their response, after which more formalized drawings would be prepared."[24]

On February 10, 1979, Elder Monson delivered the letter and sketch to President Burkhardt in a touching meeting:

> Took the plane to Berlin, Germany, where I had the opportunity to

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22. Monson, *Faith Rewarded,* 53.

23. Ibid.

24. First Presidency, Letter to Henry Burkhardt, February 2, 1979, photocopy in my possession courtesy of Ivan R. Briggs, who obtained it from Burkhardt.

> join Dan Jorgensen and Elder Theodore M. Burton. We had a special prayer at our hotel room, where I revealed to these brethren some tentative plans for a small facility to be erected in the German Democratic Republic for the purpose of temple work.
>
> We then placed the temple drawings as inconspicuously as we could within Brother Jorgensen's briefcase and drove across the border into East Germany. There we met Henry Burkhardt. . . . [He] had tears come to his eyes when he saw the beautiful drawings of a projected building. He felt very good about the proposal and will respond to his government's invitation now.[25]

The proposed design was of one building with two separate functions: a meetinghouse on one side and an endowment facility on the other side with common support facilities in the middle. By placing these two functions under one roof, the endowment space could be used by the branch for other purposes if it were desecrated. Elder Monson initially referred to the endowment component as a "facility" while President Burkhardt called it an endowment house. Regardless of its name, this proposal did not provide for construction and operation of a regular temple. As President Burkhardt explained to me, ordinances would be performed only for living members. The building plans did not include a baptismal font for proxy ordinances. Interviewed in 1991, Burkhardt explained: "The First Presidency wanted to make the blessings available to the members via an Ordinance or Endowment House. The situation was so unsure, that no one could trust the government not to violate the building. They might attempt to enter it. So it was planned at first as an Endowment House."[26]

President Burkhardt presented the plan and sketches to the government the next month. They were favorably received. He was asked to inform the First Presidency that construction could only occur within the so-called special building program, meaning that the Church must pay the construction costs with freely convertible Western currency, a condition

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25. Monson, *Faith Rewarded,* 53–54.

26. Henry J. Burkhardt, Interview by Matthew K. Heiss, Frankfurt, Germany, October 24, 1991, James H. Moyle Oral History Program, Historical Department, Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives); translation mine.

that President Burkhardt and Elder Monson had anticipated.[27] Monson subsequently wrote on March 28, 1979: "Brother Burkhardt indicated that the government authorities liked the building plans which we have submitted and, after indicating that Western money would be required to purchase materials, seemed to give the green light for us to proceed in our steps to have a suitable building in Karl-Marx-Stadt."[28] This is the first reference to Karl-Marx-Stadt as the intended site for the proposed facility. President Burkhardt's record also states that the First Presidency authorized him to obtain a building permit for an endowment house in Karl-Marx-Stadt.[29]

## The Karl Marx Temple?

Why did the church choose Karl-Marx-Stadt (Chemnitz) as the location for the endowment house? And why wasn't it built there?

In conversations with me, President Burkhardt proposed two reasons. First, Karl-Marx-Stadt had a large concentration of members. It had once had three large branches, each with its own rented meeting hall. After the war, the remaining members were organized into the single Chemnitz Branch and met in one inadequate facility after another, as assigned by the local governments. In 1979 when the endowment house was planned, the members were still meeting in ruined buildings. Among all the needy branches, Karl-Marx-Stadt's need was especially urgent. Furthermore, its members could provide the staff for an endowment house. Of course, no one except Burkhardt knew that the proposed building included an endowment house component. But the GDR's offer to build a temple provided a way for the Church to achieve two goals simultaneously in Karl-Marx-Stadt.

When President Burkhardt returned to Berlin at the end of April 1979 to begin negotiations for the building, GDR officials asked him to make a written application. This he did on May 17 with a letter that provides considerable information about the project.

> Ever since the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was restored and organized again on the earth in 1830, it has been known as a "temple building church." Ordinances, which are conducted in the temples of the

27. Burkhardt, "Wie es zum Bau," 3.
28. Monson, *Faith Rewarded,* 58–59.
29. Burkhardt, "Wie es zum Bau," 3.

Church today as in ancient times, cannot be performed in any other place. It is the goal of every member of the church to be joined there as couples and families for eternity.

Our discussions over many years with the Secretariat have repeatedly been concerned with the possibilities that may exist for members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the GDR to visit one of the sixteen temples located throughout the world, in order to receive there the ordinances that are the goal of every true member.

The nearest opportunity for members in the GDR to visit such a temple would be either the temple in Zollikofen, near Bern, Switzerland or the temple near London, Great Britain.

During our May 1978 discussion, you asked if the First Presidency of the Church would be prepared to construct such a building in the GDR. Since our present membership of about 5,000 in the GDR is not enough to justify construction of a temple, I personally met with the First Presidency of the Church during my General Conference visit on March/April of this year.

Following intensive deliberations, we came jointly to the decision to construct a so-called Endowment House in our country, that also would be available to members of the Church in other socialistic countries.

An Endowment House, as existed once at the beginning of the Church's history when it was not feasible to build a Temple, is in its functions decidedly less than a Temple, but achieves almost the same purpose.

We have decided to erect this House at an appropriate location that would simultaneously resolve the longstanding need of our branch in Karl-Marx-Stadt for a better place in which to conduct its regular worship services.

The plans prepared by the Church architects, which you have already received, is a project unique in the entire world, which provides for a building to be used partially as an Endowment House (in the east wing reserved for that purpose) and as a meeting house for the Karl-Marx-Stadt branch in the western part.

The Church, however, requires that the east wing be "unanstastbar."

In further explanation, permit me to perhaps mention that a Temple (Endowment House) can be visited by the public before its dedication, but afterwards can be entered only by members of the Church who possess a valid Temple Recommend from their branch president. For this reason, I wish to emphasize once again the "unantastbar" issue—as mentioned in our discussion of May 1978.

The First Presidency of the Church has declared its readiness, after an appropriate building lot for this purpose has been found and acquired, to finance the building of the Endowment–Meeting House in the full amount of the estimated cost of about $700,000, through a lawful method. We are thinking in that regard of the Limex building contractor, regarding which, however, further discussions with you would be necessary.

> Overnight lodging opportunities with all sanitary facilities could be arranged for out-of-town visitors in the middle and western portions of this project.
>
> Since the First Presidency of the Church, and I as mission president in the GDR, have carried this decades-long need of our members close to our hearts, we wish to quickly realize the project's completion. I would be very thankful if this great religious need of our members could have your support and assistance. Our members would then no longer search for ways to travel to one of our temples.
>
> Since only the First Presidency and I are aware of this planned project at this time, the First Presidency requests that further negotiations be conducted only with me.[30]

The two years following this formal application in May 1979 were a critical period in the history of the East German temple. An understanding of this period depends on President Burkhardt's notes and recollections, because Elder Monson's journal contains little information. After the March 28, 1979, entry, Elder Monson next wrote on December 2, 1979: "The only problem seems to be the insufferable delays of government red tape."[31] He didn't comment on the project again for nineteen months—until June 1981.

But the plan to build in Karl-Marx-Stadt had run into more than government red tape. It had run into strong Communistic ideology in the city. A center for leftist ideology long before the creation of the GDR, the change of its name from Chemnitz to Karl-Marx-Stadt in 1953 reflected the desire of local leaders to honor their political and philosophic hero. No church building of any denomination had been built there since World War II, and local officials saw no need to make an exception for the Latter-day Saints.

After the meeting of May 17, 1979, President Burkhardt met with Frau Dr. Schumann-Fitzner, the Justitiarin (legal counsel) of the Secretariat for Church Affairs, the following August. She informed him at that meeting that his written application was in her office for review. They discussed the organization of the Church, the purpose of temple ordinances, and the dual function of the building as both an endowment house and a meetinghouse for the Karl-Marx-Stadt branch. At the conclusion of the meeting, Schumann-Fitzner promised to support the proposal and make

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30. Burkhardt, "Wie es zum Bau," 3–4; parentheses his.

31. Monson, *Faith Rewarded,* 63.

the necessary contacts with other government offices, including the district council whose jurisdiction included the city of Karl-Marx-Stadt. She said that the review process could take up to a year.

President Burkhardt contacted her again on March 7, 1980, while making preparations for travel to general conference. She promised to give him an answer within the next week. When she failed to do so, he telephoned her and was told she would be going to Karl-Marx-Stadt in late March to meet with local officials and negotiate an appropriate location for the building. Burkhardt went to the conference without a specific answer. After he returned, the Justitiarin invited him to Berlin. There, she informed him that the district council had agreed to find a suitable building location and that he should return on June 30 to receive that information. However, the site would not be within the city or county of Karl-Marx-Stadt but elsewhere within the district.[32]

Any location outside the city would not meet the Church's twin goals: a meetinghouse for the local members and an endowment facility in a city with enough members to staff it. Therefore, instead of waiting to learn which city the district council would choose, President Burkhardt went directly to the council to present his case. But they told him in no uncertain terms that they would not issue a building permit for any location within the city because it already contained enough church buildings.[33] He persisted, repeating the Church's needs. After asking several questions about the Church and its requirements, the council agreed to reconsider. He then informed the Berlin office, reminding them of the Church's requirements. Berlin also agreed to review the decision.

In the midst of these negotiations, one of President Burkhardt's counselors learned that the Lutheran Church had property in the city on which a large church had stood until 1945. Local church officials were interested in selling the land. Burkhardt returned to the district council on September 5, 1980, and proposed this option to them. They told him that they would not issue a construction permit for a church

32. The GDR was divided into fifteen *Bezirke* (districts), each covering several *Kreise* (counties). Karl-Marx-Stadt was the name of a city, a county, and a district. The temple site would be somewhere within the district but not in the city or county.

33. Burkhardt, "Wie es zum Bau," 5.

within the city's boundaries because there were enough underused church buildings in the city. Furthermore, the council had already decided to locate the temple in Freiberg, about twenty-one miles east of Karl-Marx-Stadt. As for the local branch in Karl-Marx-Stadt, the council would try to find an existing building in the city that might be renovated to meet its needs.[34]

It had become clear that, even in the GDR, the strong central government was not able or willing to override the firm position of the district council. As President Burkhardt later described these events, "Karl-Marx-Stadt was at this time a major socialistic city. Atheism was thought to be moving victoriously forward. It would have been a blow against the ideology of the day to approve even one new church building in that city."[35]

### From an Endowment House to a Temple in Freiberg

At this point, President Burkhardt consulted with his counselors, Walter Krause and Gottfried Richter. He was concerned that, if he resisted the Freiberg location, the council might assign the Church an even more remote location. Therefore, they began to seriously consider the pros and cons of Freiberg. He wrote:

> The more we became acquainted with the available facts, and as the result of our fasting and prayers, we realized that Freiberg should not be rejected out of hand. . . . This city was located between Karl-Marx-Stadt and Dresden; the Annaberg-Buchholz branch was only 56 kilometers away; an Autobahn route between Leipzig and Dresden had been recently completed, which passed near Freiberg, so that Leipzig members would only have to travel 100 kilometers to Freiberg; and there were several smaller branches in the vicinity of Freiberg. So we could not ignore our feeling that Freiberg should not be rejected. Further days of fasting strengthened this feeling, which I then shared in writing with the area president [Apostle Robert D. Hales, executive administrator of the Europe Area] and the First Presidency.[36]

Elder Monson did not refer to these developments in his journal, and there is no indication that President Burkhardt received any immediate response from Church officials. In the meantime, the district council

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34. Ibid., 6–7.
35. Ibid., 7.
36. Ibid., 7–8.

had asked the Freiberg county council to accommodate the Church. On January 15, 1981, the district council asked Burkhardt to send a floor plan and an external sketch of the proposed building to Freiberg.[37]

The Freiberg county council and the city mayor, Dr. Werner Runge, subsequently invited President Burkhardt to meet with them on March 24. At that meeting, which was conducted in a very friendly and open manner, Runge said that the city welcomed the opportunity to build something for the Church, especially since Freiberg would be celebrating its 800th anniversary in 1986 and wanted to upgrade its appearance. The temple would be a welcome addition. However, the inner city was a cultural/historical site subject to relevant guidelines of the United Nations. It would not be possible to accommodate the type of building the Church had proposed within the inner city. The officials requested additional details about the Church's needs so they could suggest appropriate building sites. They also suggested that the Church include lodging and car parking facilities since they understood that the building would be used by members from other socialistic countries. Burkhardt left with the feeling that the city and county were proud to be able to undertake this project.[38]

President Burkhardt left for general conference the next day. On April 2 he briefed Elders Monson and Hales on these developments. Three days later, he met with Elder Hans B. Ringger, the Regional Representative and ecclesiastical contact for the project; Church Architect Emil Fetzer; Bishop H. Burke Peterson, a counselor in the Presiding Bishopric; and Marvin R. VanDam, a representative in the Church's Frankfurt Area Presiding Bishopric Office assigned to coordinate communications and planning between Europe and headquarters in Utah. At the conclusion of these two meetings, the plan for an endowment house had become a plan for a free-standing temple. In a letter summarizing the second meeting, Bishop Peterson wrote: "The facility, hopefully to be constructed in Freiberg, East Germany, can probably serve and be referred to as a temple." The building would include "an ordinance room large enough to hold a busload of Saints plus a few, a sealing room, a baptismal font, an area for initiatory ordinances, clothing/dressing facilities, a small en-

37. Burkhardt sent Freiberg the same plans that had been prepared for Karl-Marx-Stadt, which provided for one building with two separate functions. He did not receive plans for a free-standing temple until June 21, 1981.

38. Burckhardt, Wie es zum Bau," 8.

trance foyer, an interview/instruction/office room for the president, and, a records office for the recorder." Because patron attendance would be "scheduled–by appointment in effect," there would be no need for a full-time temple president.[39]

After returning from Salt Lake City, President Burkhardt wrote to the Freiberg county council on April 29: "We have definitely agreed upon Freiberg as the location for our Temple, and our architects have begun to prepare the detailed project plans in accordance with the suggestions and thoughts of the mayor and city architect."[40]

Elder Monson had not attended the April 5 meeting. He does not mention this meeting nor any of the events in 1980 and early 1981 which resulted in Freiberg as the proposed temple site. His next entry was on June 3, 1981, when he noted: "Met with Burke Peterson and Emil Fetzer relative to schematic plans for a new temple in the German Democratic Republic."[41]

Two days later he wrote:

> I met with the First Presidency and with Burke Peterson, there to discuss the matter of the proposed temple in the German Democratic Republic. I asked the brethren of the Presidency if they felt it was time to share with any of the other General Authorities the confidential work we are doing with regard to this building. The Presidency felt that such sharing could be deferred until we are more certain of our location and the approval of the plans of construction.[42]

Interestingly, neither of Elder Monson's June entries refers to Freiberg as the new proposed location, despite the letter of April 6. As for plans, President Burkhardt received a new set on June 21, which he forwarded to Berlin. Until this point, GDR officials had been in possession only of the plans previously prepared for Karl-Marx-Stadt, which reflected a single building with two separate functions. For the first time, these plans showed two separate buildings. Burkhardt wrote: "To the temple (and no one speaks any more about an Endowment House) was added a meeting house for the Freiberg branch, which should also serve as a hostel

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39. Peterson, Letter to Burkhardt et al., April 6, 1981; photocopy courtesy of Ivan Briggs.

40. Burkhardt, "Wie es zum Bau," 9.

41. Monson, *Faith Rewarded,* 69.

42. Ibid., 69-70.

(Herberge) for temple visitors."[43] He described these developments in a 1991 interview: "[I] received authorization from Salt Lake to enlarge that building, whereupon the concept of Endowment House began to crumble and a Temple emerged."[44]

The project appears to have sat on government desks in Berlin during the summer vacation period; but on September 22, the Secretariat's legal counsel, Dr. Schumann-Fitzner, told President Burkhardt that the state had given the "green light" to the Freiberg project.[45]

That news might have been a reason for rejoicing. But there is no evidence of it in Elder Monson's journal, and subsequent correspondence shows that unnamed individuals continued to have doubts about the Freiberg location long after the apparent decisions of April 5. Konrad Nagele, Building Division Manager for Europe, strenuously attempted to dispel these doubts on October 2, 1981, in a memo which he drafted on behalf of Elder Ringger, President Burkhardt, and himself to Marvin VanDam in Frankfurt. Nagele cited the previous problems with Karl-Marx-Stadt, the decision of April 5, 1981, and Burkhardt's subsequent success in getting the approval of the GDR government for the Freiberg project. He said that failure to continue with the Freiberg location "would mean starting all over again, and that is out of the question." To suggest that the temple be built elsewhere ran "the risk that the project could be delayed for years, with the eventual risk of losing all that we have accomplished so far."[46]

A month later, President Burkhardt sent his own letter to Elder Monson, giving additional reasons why he and his counselors supported the Freiberg location:

> A long time has passed between our conversations last spring and the recent submission of the necessary documents for the Freiberg project, during which time I prayed frequently for clarity concerning this project. I now feel quite sure that the decision that has been made concerning Freiberg is the best and most correct decision that could be made. During the intervening time, I tried again and again to evaluate other options, to determine

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43. Burkhardt, "Wie es zum Bau," 9; parentheses his.

44. Burkhardt, Interview, Heiss, October 24, 1991, 13.

45. Burkhardt, "Wie es zum Bau," 9.

46. Nagele, Memorandum to Marvin VanDam, October 2, 1981; photocopy in my possession courtesy of Ivan Briggs.

if there were other places better suited for the establishment of this building. But every time I came back to Freiberg.

At first, the decisive factor for me was that our government had given its approval for this city. Since the city fathers of Freiberg were very friendly and receptive to this project, understood its purpose, and considered it important that we build there, a very good relationship developed between both parties. I came to understand that to reject the approval we had obtained from the government would delay for many years the opportunity to make all of the ordinances of the gospel available to our members. It would be irresponsible for me to initiate such a delay.

However, when I viewed the situation from the perspective of the entire mission, Freiberg is a more favorable decision than either Karl-Marx-Stadt or Leipzig. If Karl-Marx-Stadt had been the choice, there would have been, other than Karl-Marx-Stadt, only Annaberg-Buchholz as another large branch in the area. If we had chosen Leipzig, there would have been only the Leipzig branch itself available to manage the extensive work. . . . In the case of Freiberg, we have the nearby larger branches of Annaberg-Buchholz, Dresden, and Karl-Marx-Stadt, and in the immediate vicinity of Freiberg there are five smaller branches. These are all within 5 to 50 kilometers from Freiberg. . . . The traffic circumstances are very favorable. Freiberg can be reached easily by car via the Autobahn. . . . Since most of our members will have to come by train, we have good connections [via] the county seats of Dresden and Karl-Marx-Stadt. . . . After consideration of all these factors, I find the prospect of locating in Freiberg to be a great blessing.

I desire only that you, dear Elder Monson, understand that I am very comfortable with the Freiberg location and that I stand completely and fully behind this decision. My counselors have shared this same feeling with me and they are in complete agreement with these considerations.[47]

After reassuring Elder Monson about the Freiberg location, President Burkhardt's next task was to locate a specific building site. Although cars and buses are the predominant means of travel to the temple today, fewer members had cars in 1981 and Burkhardt assumed that most would come by train. Therefore, he wanted a location with access to/from the train station. On January 19, 1982, he met with Freiberg officials, who told him they had identified two potential sites. He visited those sites that day, accompanied by Frank Apel, the mission executive secretary. One site was immediately adjacent to the old town, just outside the old city wall. While it had good connections to the train station, it was rather small,

47. Burkhardt, Letter to Monson, November 5, 1981; photocopy in my possession courtesy of Ivan Briggs. Translation mine.

was next to a heavily traveled road, and was so far below the level of that road that travelers would look down upon the temple. Moreover, the site was over a former mine shaft, with indications that the ground might be settling. The second site was on the extreme northwest edge of the city near the top of a small hill. It was farmland without nearby public transportation at that time. Utilities would have to be extended to that site at additional cost. But the site offered expansion possibilities. President Burkhardt said, "At that time, we received a very definite revelation in our heart that this was the place where a worthy house should be built to the Lord."[48]

President Burkhardt reported these findings to Elder Hales, who viewed the two sites on February 9. He also preferred the second site. Elder Monson visited the site on February 28 and wrote a long account of that day's events. They are noteworthy for the absence of any comment about the lot itself and for only a brief description of the city: "This morning we drove to Freiberg . . . and saw the site selected for a temple there. All of the buildings in Freiberg are ancient and dilapidated. This is a university city where Henry D. Moyle studied following his mission in Germany. New apartment buildings, though stereotyped and somewhat drab in appearance, are planned to be constructed across the street from our site."[49]

The last two words, "our site," reveal Elder Monson's acceptance of Burkhardt's recommendation to build the temple in Freiberg. His otherwise unenthusiastic journal entry might be explained by President Burkhardt's recollection of their conversation that day, in which Elder Monson asked him: "Have you thoroughly considered this choice? Freiberg? Is that really the right place? How will the people come here without adequate public transportation?" As President Burkhardt discussed this episode with me, he felt that Elder Monson "wanted to create doubts in our mind, that is, to challenge our conclusions." President Burkhardt did his best to answer Elder Monson's questions but felt that his best answer was to communicate the strong positive feeling he and his counselors had received following their prayers and fasts. They felt deeply that this was the place the Lord wanted, despite all the reasons they had presented earlier while trying to build in Karl-Marx-Stadt.

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48. Burkhardt, "Wie es zum Bau," 10.

49. Monson, *Faith Rewarded*, 72–73.

## Buying the Land with Local Currency

Although Elder Monson usually attributed the existence of the temple to the hand of the Lord, he also wrote in his journal on September 23, 1981: "It looks as though the public officials of the German Democratic Republic, due to their desire for Western currency, will be cooperative in the endeavor."[50] While most of the temple's construction costs were paid with convertible Western currency, the land itself was bought with local currency. If Western currency had been the main motivation of the GDR government, they missed a great opportunity to obtain even more through the sale of the land.

The use of land in East Germany was tightly controlled by the state, and its use for private construction projects was severely restricted. Allocation of land for the construction of new churches was virtually unknown in the GDR prior to this time. In his comments regarding the earlier Karl-Marx-Stadt effort, Elder Monson had implied that leasing the land would be acceptable. He still was willing to consider this option after visiting the Freiberg site: "The government is willing to make the temple site available on a very long-term lease, that we might construct a building."[51]

Given the Church's concern (discussed below) that the temple might not have a long life under Communism, land ownership probably was not a major concern for Elder Monson. But President Burkhardt felt otherwise and brought the issue to the attention of county and district officials. He described to me that when he told them that land ownership was a prerequisite, their response was positive: "No problem," they responded. "If the land must be purchased, that will have to happen."

The temple site was owned by two elderly couples. Decades earlier, the GDR had moved them off the land, which was now being used as a "people's farm cooperative." The owners had never received any income or other compensation. In the GDR, private property was assigned a value for taxation purposes, which usually became the official sales price. However, actual sale prices generally were higher. The official price of this farm land was only 17 East German Pfennig (cents) per square meter, which was a small fraction of the land's potential value as a building lot. Burkhardt said he was not comfortable taking the land at such a low price. He obtained permission from the Church to pay the

50. Ibid., 70.
51. Ibid., 73.

owners 50 East German pfennig per square meter. Dr. Dieter Hantzsche, the German architect assigned by the GDR to oversee the project, had researched the property records and found the original owners. He later said that it was he who suggested the 50 pfennig price to Burkhardt. The initial purchase of almost 12,000 square meters was completed in July 1982.[52] In any event, the extra money was given to the owners informally, as was the custom. They were overjoyed to receive it. Later, the Church bought a small additional piece of property behind the temple from the same owners. At the city's suggestion, the Church also purchased an adjacent corner lot from the city to extend the street frontage and protect the view to and from the temple.[53] The two additional sections of about 2,800 square meters were purchased in June 1987 and February 1990.

During the groundbreaking ceremony of April 23, 1983, Elder Monson asked President Burkhardt, "Where will the temple president live?" President Burkhardt said they had never considered that question, since the letter of April 6, 1981, had said there was no need for a full-time temple president. But Elder Monson replied, "I have one requirement. He cannot live here on the temple grounds, but may not live more than ten minutes away. Find a lot where you can build a house for the temple president."[54] Shortly after this conversation, Dr. Reinhard Vetter, the county council chairman, approached President Burkhardt. He had been impressed by the ceremony and had offered to help. Burkhardt immediately told Vetter that the Church needed a building lot for a single family house for the future temple president. Burkhardt related that Vetter told him, "Okay, it will be done." Burkhardt gave Vetter "the requirements and he provided the lot where the president now lives. And that at a time when individuals were rarely allowed to build private homes. They did everything possible for us."[55] That

52. Both Burkhardt and Leonhardt related these developments in informal conversations.

53. Karlheinz Leonhardt, "Grundstücke der Kirche in Freiberg" (Church Property in Freiberg), February 2004, a one-page summary in my possession.

54. Burkhardt, Interview, February 25, 2003.

55. Ibid.

property, consisting of 875 square meters, was also purchased with local currency.[56]

Why did the East German government pass up these opportunities to acquire additional convertible currency through the sale of the property? The answer is complex, and I discuss a possible explanation later; but these purchases do not support the idea that the GDR initiated the temple project primarily to obtain western money. To President Burkhardt, these developments were the guiding hand of the Lord at work. On the day following the official announcement of the temple's construction, President Burkhardt and Elder Monson both spoke at a stake conference in Utah. Monson later recorded this comment by Burkhardt: "The building of a temple has never before been permitted in a Communist nation. In this case, the government itself suggested the building of the temple [and] our land was purchased with German Democratic Republic marks rather than with currency from the Western nations. All in all, the event has been miraculous."[57]

A related story about western currency is noteworthy. The initial temple plan included a heating plant to burn the highly polluting brown coal widely used in East Germany. However, its smokestack would tower far above the temple. President Burkhardt told Dr. Hantzsche that such a structure was unacceptable and that the temple would not be built under those circumstances. Hantzsche promised to review the matter. He later called Burkhardt and told him that a pipeline carrying natural gas from Russia to West Germany passed close by Freiberg. It was a major source of convertible currency for the Soviet Union. Some private homes were permitted limited access to that pipeline, but large facilities, including the nearby Bergakademie (the highly rated mining technical university) were not. Together, Burkhardt and Hantzsche requested access to that pipeline. After their initial request was denied, Burkhardt informed the Foreign

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56. Leonhardt, "Grundstücke der Kirche in Freiberg." By GDR law, all contributions to the Church stayed in the GDR, where the Church had its own account. President Burkhardt was authorized by the First Presidency to expend tithing funds and other Church contributions in-country. After the temple was announced, contributions were invited from each ward/branch. Joyfully, the members donated about twice the suggested amount, some of which was spent on temple furnishings and for operating and maintaining the temple during the GDR period. The construction itself, as noted, was paid for in western currency.

57. Monson, *Faith Rewarded,* 85.

Trade Ministry that the project would not proceed without natural gas. His request was approved, and the fuel was paid for in East German currency until reunification in 1990.[58]

### A Temple with a Limited Life Expectancy

While President Spencer W. Kimball encouraged President Burkhardt to establish good relations with GDR officials, Church leaders in general were strongly opposed to Communism. The most vocal was Ezra Taft Benson, who succeeded Kimball in 1985. He expressed his opposition to Communism and Communists at every opportunity, in and outside of church meetings. It is a common belief among members in the former East Germany that the temple would not have been built if President Benson had succeeded President Kimball sooner than he did.

Perhaps Benson's vocal opposition to Communism was the reason for an unusual promise that President Kimball made in 1982. Elder Hales organized the local temple committee in Freiberg on February 8, 1982 (eight months before its public announcement). As Karlheinz Leonhardt related the story to me, Elder Hales brought a personal promise from Kimball that he would remain on the earth until the temple was completed. President Kimball's health problems were widely known at that time, and he died shortly after the temple's dedication. Perhaps that promise was given to reassure East German members who were aware of Benson's attitude toward Communism. A full review of the Church's attitude toward Communism and the East German government or the GDR's attitude toward the Church in general is beyond the scope of this article.[59] But in light of the Church's concern that the temple might be violated, it is appropriate to ask why the Church went ahead with the project and to consider the impact of that concern on the actual construction.

The decision to proceed with a temple (or earlier with an endowment house) was ultimately a recognition by the Church that there was no other viable option whereby East German members could receive temple

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58. Burkhardt, Interview, February 25, 2003; conversation with Leonhardt.

59. See Hall, "'And the Last Shall be First,'" and his "'Render unto Caesar,'" as well as Gregory A. Prince, "The Red Peril, the Candy Maker, and the Apostle: David O. McKay's Confrontation with Communism," this issue.

ordinances.[60] But that decision did not mean that the Church trusted the government to honor the temple's sanctity. President Burkhardt had frequently raised the issue of *Unantastbarkeit* with GDR officials, and the earlier plan for the facility in Karl-Marx-Stadt would have allowed the endowment space to be used for other purposes if it were violated. Similar concerns persisted as plans for the Freiberg Temple moved forward.

Given the concern that the temple could be desecrated, priority during the first few weeks was given to members who had not previously been to a temple. Members came by appointment, with each day reserved for one or more specific LDS branches. Most members received all of their personal ordinances on that day. Therefore, even if the temple were desecrated, it would have accomplished its major purpose.[61] Because of this uncertain life expectancy, it is not surprising that the Church would try to limit its financial loss in the event of a violation. Several examples of cost avoidance can be seen in the temple's size, facilities, and materials. Members frequently describe the materials as "*mittelmäßig,*" a word that translates to "average" quality, but which means "mediocre" in everyday German. The Church's official website states that "quality construction materials were not available during the original construction of the temple."[62] However, in many instances, availability was not the main issue. Both Burkhardt and Hantzsche have told me that better quality items were available within East Germany or could have been imported from the West through the foreign trade ministry if needed.

Hantzsche also added that the temple was built in strict accordance with detailed instructions from Salt Lake City. Many of his own recom-

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60. Another option might have been considered. President Kimball received a memorandum from G. Homer Durham, dated January 4, 1979, that cited examples of sealings performed in Arizona outside a temple and without a prior endowment, due to difficult travel circumstances. On his copy, President Kimball wrote "E. Germany." My thanks to Edward L. Kimball for sharing this information with me.

61. Burkhardt, Interview, July 4, 2003.

62. See Freiberg Temple page, www.ldschurchtemples.com, checked February 2004. The website also repeats a common belief that the GDR had not allowed a statue of Moroni to be placed on the temple. However, Burkhardt and others have said that Church representatives never requested permission to position a statue of Moroni, nor was it drawn in on any of the plans. They feel that the GDR would likely have approved it if they had asked.

mendations regarding temple facilities, features, and upgraded materials were rejected by the Church's architect, Emil Fetzer. For example, Fetzer specified galvanized iron for the temple's interior water system, despite Hantzsche's warning that local water quality would lead to corrosion of those pipes. More expensive alternatives, such as copper piping, were available but not authorized. As feared, the pipes quickly corroded and had to be replaced within a few years.

Hantzsche told me that he called the temple a "closed building" since none of its windows could be opened for ventilation. He knew that the limited system specified by the Church's architect (which did not cool or dehumidify the air) would not maintain a comfortable temperature on hot and humid days. He recommended the installation of a complete air conditioning system. Excellent systems were available and used in East Germany, especially when manufacturing projects required "clean rooms" in windowless buildings. Leonhardt confirmed to me that an air-conditioning system was already functioning in such a building in Freiberg at that time. Nevertheless, Hantzsche's recommendation was rejected. As a result, it was not unusual that members would faint during endowment and sealing sessions due to the high temperature, humidity, and poor air circulation. A cooling system was finally installed in 1994, after the reunification of Germany.[63]

It should be noted that two other European temples received air conditioning from the outset: the Stockholm Sweden Temple (also dedicated in 1985) and the temple near Frankfurt, West Germany, which was announced before Freiberg but not completed until 1987. Frankfurt weather is like Freiberg's, while Stockholm is considerably cooler. But there was no concern about the life-expectancy of those temples, which probably accounts for the discrepancy in facilities.

Hantzsche recommended that the deep excavation specified for the temple's foundation walls be used to create basement space for future expansion or for functions that could not be accommodated within the small floor plan. Basements are normal practice in German construction. However, he was told to push the dirt back into the excavation. Without a

63. Burkhardt reported that a total of 250–300 temple patrons had become unconscious due to overheating and poor air circulation in the endowment and sealing rooms between 1985 and 1990. Regional Council meeting, Berlin, Minutes, July 14, 1990; photocopy in my possession.

basement or other options, the temple's laundry space was an interior room of seventy square feet that lacked adequate venting from the washers and dryers. Temperatures often reached 90 degrees, with high humidity, and created very difficult conditions for the temple workers who staffed the laundry. According to Hantzsche and Leonhardt, the lack of air conditioning in the temple further complicated the laundry room problem.

Hantzsche also recommended that the space under the adjacent meetinghouse be finished to provide for overnight lodging of foreign patrons or for other future needs. Again, he reported to me, he was told to push the dirt back into the excavation. Patrons who came from long distances and remained at the temple overnight or for an entire week had to be accommodated in makeshift sleeping, eating, and washing facilities in the adjacent meetinghouse or in a former meetinghouse in Grosshartmansdorf, eight miles to the south. Finally, in 1994, two additional buildings were added to provide for a hostel (*Herberge*), adequate laundry facilities, workrooms for the temple engineer and maintenance staff, changing rooms for temple workers, and the sale of temple clothing.

Lothar Ebisch, a local Church leader and regional building supervisor, participated in meetings with both Hantzsche and Fetzer during the construction of the temple. He confirmed that Hantzsche's recommendations for upgraded facilities and materials were not accepted and recalled that Fetzer expressed concern about the temple's life expectancy during those meetings.[64] Given this concern that the temple could be desecrated, President Burkhardt was not surprised that President Gordon B. Hinckley, when he arrived for the multiple-session dedication on June 29–30, 1985, was heard to express the hope that it would not soon become a museum. However, President Burkhardt added that Hinckley appeared to be more relaxed about the temple's future after he lunched with Hermann Kalb, who represented the State Secretary for Church Affairs.

## The Temple from the GDR's Perspective

The Ministry of State Security (known as the Stasi) was famous for its extensive spy network. In addition to its army of regular employees, it recruited thousands of citizens known as "Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter" (IM or unofficial co-workers) to covertly monitor and report on their friends and associates at home, on the job, and in their social activities. One study esti-

64. Lothar Ebisch, Interview, November 16–17, 2003.

mates that, in 1968, "anywhere between one and two million people worked for the Stasi, a number which constituted between 8 and 12 percent of the total population."[65] The Stasi thought that this American-based church might be engaged in espionage. Therefore, it was not unusual to have Stasi employees and/or IMs attend and report on Church meetings and observe other activities of local Church members. President Burkhardt himself had been designated "an enemy of the state" and at least three IMs were assigned to cover his every activity. Therefore, he always exercised extreme care in selecting places where he could hold private conversations.[66]

Thus, it would be expected that the Stasi would actively monitor Church members associated with the temple project. Leonhardt established from one member's Stasi file that at least twenty-one IM informers were assigned to monitor the temple's 1985 openhouse as well as the daily activities of local Church officials.[67] When the Stasi made an assignment to an IM, it had to provide a justification in writing for the record. The following justification, filed by a local Stasi office when it authorized coverage of one Church member, is typical of many and provides an interesting summary of the Stasi's attitude toward the LDS Church:

> Regarding the political-ideological orientation of the US-American Mormons, it was determined that they are to be classified as representatives of the right wing of American conservatism. There are close connections between their leadership and ruling circles within the American government. Relationships also exist between persons and institutions of the church and the American secret service. As a result, it has been determined that

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65. David Childs and Richard Popplewell, *The Stasi: The East German Intelligence and Security Service* (Washington Square, N.Y.: New York University Press, 1994), 86, quoted in Hall, "'And the Last Shall Be First,'" electronic text (unpaginated) in my possession courtesy of Bruce Hall.

66. Burkhardt told me that, while he knew some of the individuals who reported on his activities, he preferred that faithful members report factual and harmless information to the Stasi rather than have disaffected members report malicious and untruthful information. He also chose not to review his own Stasi file to avoid knowledge of others who had been required to engage in such activities.

67. Leonhardt, *Die ersten hundert Jahre*, 358–62.

> the Mormon organization provides favorable conditions for the development of hostile intelligence gathering or even broader negative activities.[68]

But the Stasi did not view the Church's assumed "close connections" only in a negative light. One East German Church leader told me that his Stasi file showed an interesting change of emphasis over the years. While an early 1970s entry stated, "It must be assumed that the leaders of the Church, knowingly or not, could become tools of American policy," an entry in 1985 said: "With the construction of the temple in Freiberg, the Church has become more politically important to us." Or, as an official of the Secretariat for Church Affairs told this same member in 1985, "We do not judge your Church according to its number of members here but rather by its influence in the USA and increasingly in the world."[69]

The GDR wanted to improve its public image in the West, and the Stasi as well as other government officials had come to believe that favorable treatment of the Church might help them achieve that goal. Similar references to the Church's assumed influence appeared in the GDR's newspapers. For example, a 1974 *Wochenpost* article said, "A tiny sect has become one of the richest and most powerful churches in the USA . . . and its influence reaches into the highest government positions in Washington." It cited Ezra Taft Benson's position in Eisenhower's cabinet, which had ended more than a decade earlier in 1961.[70]

The extensive monitoring of Church members and research of Church doctrine and practices became a positive factor in the decision to build the Freiberg Temple. Kurt Löffler, the GDR's last State Secretary for Church Affairs, said that his government had observed the Church over many years and had determined that its members were hard working, honest, reliable, family-oriented citizens who did not participate in anti-government activities. He was especially impressed that members practiced the principles in their Twelfth Article of Faith, which speaks of "being subject" to kings and other rulers and of "obeying, honoring, and sustaining the

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68. Ibid., 358. The Stasi assigned this particular informant to report on possible criminal activity, family relationships, associates and colleagues, and estimates of the number of temple ordinances from 1985 through 1989.

69. This source is confidential.

70. Wolfgang Carle, "Prophet und profit, die mormonen: Ihre geschichte und geschäfte" (Prophet and Profit, the Mormons: Their History and Businesses), *Wochenpost*, n.d. 1974, no. 51, p. 11; photocopy in my possession.

law."[71] As Löffler saw it, the exemplary life of the East German members was more significant to the government than the anti-Communism rhetoric of its Utah leaders. Therefore, the Church in the GDR met two key criteria: its members were seen as "true and valuable citizens," and the Church had a "good relationship with the state in which its members lived."[72]

Bruce Hall confirmed Löffler's opinion in his previously cited study of the GDR-LDS relationship. While the GDR was well aware of the strong anti-Communist attitude of Church leaders in Utah, Hall concluded his review of the GDR-LDS relationship with this statement: "The accommodation and cooperation exhibited by the GDR for the Mormons is astounding." Interestingly, he also said, "What exactly their ulterior motives were has not been exactly determined."[73]

In Löffler's opinion, another essential factor was the emergence of a new generation of leaders within East Germany and later in the Soviet Union. Erich Honeker took effective control of the GDR in the early 1970s. Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the mid-1980s. Löffler considered the new generation of GDR leaders to be more pragmatic and less doctrinaire than their predecessors. He preferred to identify them as "socialists" rather than "Communists." They were willing to accept and accommodate the religious interests of their citizens as long as those interests did not threaten the government. According to Löffler, the temple would not have been suggested a decade earlier by the previous GDR administration.[74]

While most Germans would not share Löffler's view of Erich Honecker as "more pragmatic and less doctrinaire," Löffler cited the GDR's initiative in the 1970s to define and establish a new relationship between churches and the state. Within that definition, churches were officially recognized and accepted as long as they did not threaten the sovereignty and authority of the state. Based on that understanding, the GDR began to rebuild (with funds provided from western sources) many historic

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71. Kurt Löffler, Interview, Berlin, Germany, May 19, 2003. Although he was appointed State Secretary for Church Affairs in 1988, he had previously been a State Secretary in the Ministry of Culture and had been involved in the GDR's program to restore historic church buildings, which were viewed as cultural rather than religious edifices.

72. Ibid.

73. Hall, "'Render unto Caesar,'" 279.

74. Löffler, interview, May 19, 2003.

churches destroyed during the war. Löffler said that the GDR's initiative to build the Freiberg Temple was an extension of this new GDR program.

GDR law prohibited any reduction in the amount of state-owned land. While the state had begun to build a few new Lutheran or Catholic churches where no previous church property existed, in those instances the state traded its land for church-owned land elsewhere. However, the LDS Church did not own any previous church sites nor did it have other property that could be traded. Elder Monson would probably have accepted a long-term lease, but President Burkhardt wanted to buy the land. Therefore, according to Löffler, the good will that had been developed between the state and the Church caused the GDR to look for ways to help the Church. "It was a question of fairness," he said. "Other churches had their land. The LDS did not. Without land, the temple couldn't be built."[75]

The state found and proposed property that was privately owned, although it was being used as a state-operated farm. Therefore, its purchase did not technically reduce the amount of government-owned land. Thus, when Burkhardt told government officials that the land must be purchased, they were able to assure him that this requirement was not a problem.

But why did the GDR accept East marks? Why didn't the government use this opportunity to obtain more convertible currency? When I asked Löffler this question, he explained that land, in principle, was not for sale to outside interests. Although "Western money was needed for construction to compensate the state for the loss of its material resources, that applied only to building costs. If we had sold our land for Western money, it would have opened doors to other buyers. We didn't want that kind of precedent." Since the proposed temple property was still officially owned by the two elderly couples, the deal went forward with the fee being paid in local currency to its legal owners. I have not presented Löffler's interpretation of these events as the official GDR interpretation, but it is compatible with Hall's description of the GDR's relatively warm relationship with the LDS Church beginning in the latter 1970s. It is also compatible with President Kimball's assurance to President Burkhardt that "the world changes most effectively when individuals change."

Does an official GDR explanation for the temple exist? One has not yet been found. But even if one were found, would it be credible? Hall

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75. Ibid.

found an interesting one-page, undated, untitled, and unsigned document in a file on the LDS Church among the papers of the State Secretariat for Church Affairs. Because of its defensive tone, it was probably intended as background information for officials who might need to justify to its critics the government's decision to approve the temple's construction. It reads:

> 1. Reasons for the GDR's Decision to Authorize the Construction of the Temple.
>
> Mormons are one of over 40 religious groups in the GDR. They are a very small group but equal under the law. Churches and religious centers are being built by many of these groups. Since funds were available, the government approved the Church's application under normal procedures. Comparable Mormon centers will be built in Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, and Karl-Marx-Stadt by 1990.
>
> 2. Why Was Freiberg Chosen as the Location?
>
> Freiberg was chosen following constructive negotiation because a building lot was available there which met the temple's requirements. Freiberg is exactly between two large Mormon congregations in Dresden and Karl-Marx-Stadt and an appropriate site was not found in either of those two larger cities. In the opinion of the architects, the Mormons, and the local governments, the temple fits harmoniously into this historic city and its historical landscape.
>
> 3. What Does the GDR Government Think of the Mormons?
>
> All religious organizations within the GDR are guaranteed religious freedom and equality under our constitution. The position of the GDR government toward the Mormons is the same as toward any other religious organization.[76]

There is some truth to the statements in this document, but not much. Despite the claim that the temple's construction constituted "business as usual" for the GDR, the LDS Church clearly received special handling from the government. And the 90,000 visitors that came to the open-house testify to the public's perspective that this was an unusual event. The stated reason for selecting Freiberg is particularly interesting and contrary to fact. Freiberg was selected by the district council despite President Burkhardt's repeated explanation that the Church needed to

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76. Cataloged after reunification as: Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO-BArch): DO 4/987; photocopy in Bruce Hall's possession. I express appreciation to him for providing me with a typescript copy by e-mail. Translation mine.

build in Karl-Marx-Stadt. Furthermore, the district council selected Freiberg before any building lot was identified in that city. Moreover, the Church was never a party to any "constructive negotiation" about the move to Freiberg. Finally, despite the beauty of the temple itself, no one who has visited the city of Freiberg would believe that the temple was built there because it "fit harmoniously" in that historic city or the surrounding area.

## Summary and Conclusions

Even though Freiberg was not the Church's first choice of location, President Burkhardt often said, "The Lord held this undertaking firmly in his hand and inspired all participants in such a manner that decisions were made that would support this important event."[77] Was the "hand of the Lord" evident in the failed effort to build an endowment house in Karl-Marx-Stadt? Without the doctrinaire resistance of that city's Communists, a limited function facility (without a baptistry for proxy ordinances) would have been built there. It would have been inadequate and outdated just five years later.

In that case, would a regular temple have been built elsewhere in eastern Germany? Not likely, given the availability of the Frankfurt Temple. The result would have been a major loss not only for members in the eastern part of Germany, but for the growing church membership in the Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Byelorussia, the Czech and Slovak republics, and Kaliningrad who attend the Freiberg Temple. By being forced (or led) to Freiberg, the Church obtained enough land for the initial 1985 temple, its enlargement in 2002, living quarters for temple missionaries, and lodging for the many patrons from within Germany and abroad who stay for a week at a time. None of those facilities were included in the plan for Karl-Marx-Stadt.

The Freiberg temple as it exists today is best understood and appreciated in the context of its historical origins. It evolved out of intersecting (whether conflicting or complementing) priorities of the LDS Church and the East German government. It began with efforts of East German Saints to reach the Swiss Temple after its 1955 dedication. The GDR effectively closed that door after 1957 as part of its effort to stem the flood of emigration that threatened its very existence. The Church then tried to

77. Burkhardt, "Wie es zum Bau," 11.

bring a few couples at a time to the Swiss Temple with a Church guarantee of their return. The GDR rebuffed that proposal but simultaneously made its own proposal: to build a temple in the GDR. The Church somewhat reluctantly accepted that offer but proposed only a limited function endowment house in Karl-Marx-Stadt that would meet the most pressing need of its members—access to personal ordinances. That plan failed to overcome the resistance of local Communist officials to any new religious facility in that city. But the GDR's own priorities led it to find an alternative and willing host in the city of Freiberg. Local Church leaders enthusiastically accepted that offer, and leaders in Salt Lake City eventually agreed. And despite their continued concern about the sanctity of the building, the Church actually expanded its proposal to include a full-function (albeit very small) temple instead of an endowment house.

Observers of this historical process will make their own assessment of the critical or supporting factors that converged to produce this temple. They include, on the one hand, Elder Monson's 1975 dedicatory prayer; the faith of the East German members in its promises; their dedication to living the associated Church principles; their resulting reputation as honest, true, and valuable citizens; and the acceptance by their local leaders of President Kimball's challenge to establish good relationships with GDR officials.

On the other hand, one can recognize the emergence of new GDR leaders; their need for convertible currency for their faltering economy; their program to rebuild historic churches with convertible currency; their need for better relations with the West, especially the United States; and their belief that the LDS Church could help them achieve that relationship. It is impossible to replay history, removing one variable at a time, to determine which of these factors were most important. However, the available evidence indicates that the GDR's need for convertible currency was an essential but not a sufficient factor. The GDR also needed a "partner" that it could trust, a "partner" that did not present an overt challenge to its legitimacy. The Church met that criterion. And President Burkhardt said that after he accepted President Kimball's challenge to develop better relationships with GDR officials, those officials became more willing to assist him and the Church.

One factor that cannot be measured objectively is President Burkhardt's perception that "the Lord held this undertaking firmly in his hand." Elder Monson requested that help when he prayed in 1975 for divine intervention in governmental affairs: "Cause that Thy Holy Spirit

may dwell with those who preside, that their hearts may be touched and that they may make those decisions which would help in the advancement of Thy work."[78]

To what extent hearts were actually touched and softened might best be known by those officials who bowed their heads during the groundbreaking ceremony and who subsequently said, "We've never experienced anything as beautiful as this. If we can do anything to help you, let us know."[79]

78. Monson, *Faith Rewarded,* 36.

79. Burkhardt, Interview, February 25, 2003.

# The Quaker Peace Testimony

*Diana Lee Hirschi*

> We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fighting with outward weapons for any end or under any pretense whatsoever; this is our testimony to the whole world . . .
>
> . . . The Spirit of Christ by which we are guided is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing of evil and again to move us into it; and we certainly know and testify to the world that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us into all truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ nor for the kingdoms of this world. . . . therefore we cannot learn war anymore.
>
> —The Quaker Peace Testimony[1]

QUAKERS, OFTEN CALLED FRIENDS, have several core "testimonies" that can be remembered by the mnemonic "SPICE"—Simplicity, Peace, Integrity,

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1. From "A Declaration from the Harmless and Innocent People of God, Called Quakers, Against All Sedition, Plotters, and Fighters in the World: For Removing the Ground of Jealousy and Suspicion from Magistrates and People Concerning Wars and Fightings," *North Pacific Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice* 35 (1993). This declaration is found in virtually every Quaker edition of *Faith and Practice.*

Community, and Equality. Each of these interrelated testimonies is essential to our identity as Friends, but we are clearly best known for one of them. As H. Larry Ingle has pointed out, "[T]he Quaker peace testimony [is] the most remarked-on feature of the Religious Society of Friends. When the world's people think of Friends, they think of our [fundamental disapproval] of war, and when Quakers want to distinguish themselves from other Christian groups, they identify themselves as one of the 'historic peace churches.'"[2] Today, in the aftermath of September 11 and with the continuing American war against Iraq, our peace testimony has attracted renewed attention. Many look to the Quaker peace testimony for a possible alternative to the destructive violence of waging war, and no doubt it could act to deter war if enough people subscribed to it. In today's world, however, the peace testimony cannot prevent governments from running amok. As a Quaker, "convinced" in 1978 and a member of the Salt Lake Monthly Meeting of Friends, I believe that the Quaker peace testimony is a true expression of the spirit of Christ.

Quakers established early in our history that we would neither fight wars nor violently resist governments. In 1661, after twelve years of Cromwell and the Protectorate, Charles II returned to England from France and was crowned king. The Fifth Monarchists, who had believed that the next king of England would be Jesus himself, saw Charles's ascension as a kind of blasphemy and took up arms. They were handily defeated and beheaded, but their uprising made the king and parliament even more ill-disposed toward the radical groups that had flourished during the revolution. Quakers were of particular concern to the government because, unlike most of the other radical groups, secular and religious, the Quakers did not go underground.[3] To convince the king that Quakers, despite some rather radical beliefs, were not dangerous, George Fox and a number of other Quakers sent a long epistle to Charles II entitled "A Declaration from the Harmless and Innocent People of God, Called Quakers,

2. H. Larry Ingle, "The Politics of Despair: The Quaker Peace Testimony, 1661," retrieved on November 16, 2003, from www.kimopress.com/Ingle-01.htm.

3. These historical details are summarized from H. Larry Ingle, *First Among Friends* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), chap. 13.

against All Sedition, Plotters, and Fighters in the World."[4] It is this document that contains the first expression of the Quaker peace testimony, quoted at the beginning of this essay.

It is not clear how much influence this letter had on the king and parliament. They certainly did not let the Quakers be, but they did not behead them either. Instead Quakers were sent to jail en masse pursuant to the Quaker Act of 1662, which forbade attendance at Quaker meetings, and the Conventicle Act of 1664 directed against all nonconformist religious services. (I know a lot of teens who would love to belong to a church whose meetings they were forbidden to attend.) Thousands of Quakers were imprisoned and their meeting houses were destroyed because they held their meetings openly, refusing to gather secretly. Those not in jail continued to meet on the rubble. Finally, in 1689 the Toleration Act put an end to imprisonment for attending church. Quakers' nonviolent resistance to these unjust acts had borne fruit. They had put the peace testimony into practice through their nonviolent response to intolerable government action.[5]

After this period, Quakers were never again the kind of social radicals that preached a world turned upside down. (Many of us long for those olden days!) But the Quakers were preserved, and they never practiced and always preached against war thereafter. Ingle correctly characterizes the importance of Quaker opposition to war when he writes,

> Although "testimony" does not have the same connotation as "dogma" or "creed," it still points to the most fundamental practice that corporate bodies of Quakers have always adhered to; while some individual Friends have participated in or approved of every war that has torn their human communities since 1661, when the peace testimony was published, no yearly nor monthly meeting. . . has ever repudiated it. . . . To do so would be to cut that body off from other Quakers even more surely than, for example, employing those whom early Friends dismissed as "hireling priests."[6]

Still, as Ingle suggests, individual Quakers have participated in virtually every war since the peace testimony was first declared. In the 1670s,

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4. John L. Nickalls, ed., *The Journal of George Fox* (Philadelphia: Religious Society of Friends, 1997), 398.

5. Howard H. Brinton, *Friends for 300 Years* (Wallingford, Pa.: Pendle Hill Publications, 1994), 157–59.

6. "The Politics of Despair: The Quaker Peace Testimony, 1661," available in October 2003 at www.kimopress.com/Ingle-01.htm.

Quakers controlled the colonial government of Rhode Island, but individually, as colonial administrators and as settler colonists, they prepared for and prosecuted Rhode Island's part in King Phillip's war, a war against the confederated northeastern Indian tribes. In their preparations, however, they did enact a statute exempting anyone with conscientious scruples from service in the war. This statute was promptly rescinded when the traditional Protestants regained control some time later.[7]

Quakers, being in the forefront of the antislavery movement, were of course very sympathetic to the Union cause in the American Civil War, and it is hard to believe a large number didn't support the fight and actually participate in it, although I am not aware of any study on this question. Quakers signed up in large numbers to fight in World War II.

My own observation is that the response of individual Quakers to the peace testimony ranges over a wide spectrum. Most refuse to serve in the military; a small but significant number resist war taxes; many maintain a vigilant and active participation in peace and antiwar activities; and some adhere generally to the testimony as long as there is no war on (much like being a strict vegetarian between meals). Of course, the differing responses to any particular war cause conflicts in yearly and monthly meetings. Members discuss what the testimony means in relationship to the war in front of them and how the peace testimony should be expressed to the wider community. At the end of these discussions, unity is reached on the action the meeting wants to take. These discussions can get quite intense, but the meeting survives them. The process itself is an important part of Quaker belief, and we could almost add another testimony—the testimony of right Quaker process. All of this springs from fundamental Quaker beliefs, held variously within each individual Friend, of what our right relation with each other is.

One might wonder, given the relatively small number of Quakers throughout history, what kind of effect, if any, the peace testimony has had upon the world. Let me describe three examples of the impact of the peace testimony on recent world events.

Most of us, when asked to name someone whose life was devoted to nonviolence, would think of Mahatma Gandhi, yet few know that Gandhi's beliefs and practices were influenced by American Quakers. In

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7. Meredith Baldwin Weddle, *Walking in the Way of Peace: Quaker Pacifism in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 169–82.

1894, while a young barrister in Natal, South Africa, Gandhi received a copy of an English translation of Leo Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*. Gandhi said in his autobiography that the book overwhelmed him. He reread it while in jail in 1906 and carried it with him from jail to jail throughout this period early in his great campaigns of civil disobedience, or *satyagraha*. During this time, Gandhi and Tolstoy had struck up a correspondence. The last long letter Tolstoy wrote was to Gandhi.[8]

On the very first page of *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*, Tolstoy acknowledges his correspondence with American Quakers and the pamphlets, journals, and books they had sent him. He concludes his remarks about his indebtedness to Friends:

> Further acquaintance with the labors of the Quakers and their works . . . showed me not only that the impossibility of reconciling Christianity with force and war had been recognized long, long ago, but that this irreconcilability had been long ago proved so clearly so indubitably that one could only wonder how this impossible reconciliation of Christian teaching with the use of force, which has been and is still, preached in the churches, could have been maintained in spite of it.[9]

The path of influence may be indirect, but if Quaker belief had so strong an influence on Tolstoy, and Tolstoy had a similar effect on Gandhi, then Gandhi's nonviolent achievements in twentieth-century India were partly inspired by the Quaker peace testimony.

Another tangible expression of the Quaker peace testimony is the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), formed during World War I to assist people affected by that war. It continued its efforts after the war and still continues them today. In 1947, the AFSC shared the Nobel Peace Prize with its British counterpart. In the conclusion of his speech at the presentation of the prize, the chairman of the Nobel committee summarized the contribution of the two organizations with these words:

> The Quakers have shown us that it is possible to translate into action what lies deep in the hearts of many: compassion for others and the desire to help them—that rich expression of the sympathy between all men, regardless of nationality or race, which, transformed into deeds, must form

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8. Martin Green, "Foreword," in Leo Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), v–xi.

9. Tolstoy, *Kingdom of God Is Within You*, 2–3.

the basis for lasting peace. For this reason alone the Quakers deserve to receive the Nobel Peace Prize today.

But they have given us something more: they have shown us the strength to be derived from faith in the victory of the spirit over force. And this brings to mind two verses from one of Arnulf Överland's poems which helped so many of us during the war. I know of no better salute:

The unarmed only
Can draw on sources eternal.
The spirit alone gives victory.[10]

A third expression of the peace testimony is seen in the work of the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL), an organization which lobbies the U.S. Congress on legislative matters of concern to Quakers. FCNL describes the broad areas of its policies and projects by the following phrases, which may be found at the head of its publications and websites: "We seek a world free of war and the threat of war; we seek a society with equity and justice for all; we seek a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled; we seek an earth restored." For example, FCNL is working, and encouraging citizens to work, to defeat the development of nuclear "bunker busters," a pet project of the present regime in Washington.

When the Trade Towers and the Pentagon were attacked, FCNL, being a Quaker organization, knew immediately what its response would be. It advocated action governed by international law and cooperation to bring the attackers to justice. FCNL's headquarters are across the street from the Senate Office Building. The morning after the attack and to this day, everyone leaving the Senate Offices is greeted by a huge banner on the FCNL building which says "War Is Not the Answer."

To conclude, let me describe the Quaker decision-making process and the wellsprings of Quaker belief as I understand them. With respect to process, my understanding is essentially the same as any other Quaker's: We take no action until everyone is in unity with it. We have lots of guidelines for getting to unity. Unity does not mean that everyone is delighted with the decision finally taken. On questions of war and peace when the dogs of war have been unleashed, we usually even lose a member or two. We don't seem to come to unity on extreme or provoca-

10. Gunnar Jahn, Chairman of the Nobel Committee, "Presentation Speech," Nobel Peace Prize 1947, Nobel e-Museum, retrieved on November 16, 2003, from http://www.nobel.se/peace/laureates/1947/press.html.

tive action. For example, no Quaker meeting—and in fact, no Quaker, to my knowledge—has endorsed or participated in a Plowshares action where weapons are beaten and damaged, much as many of us admire the courage and commitment of those involved. But we oppose war and the preparation for war.

Where does this commitment come from? Here each Quaker must give his or her own answer. We have no creed or dogma. You can be a comfortable Quaker and an agnostic, in the usual sense of that word, but probably not a *militant* agnostic. (I learned what a militant agnostic is from a bumper sticker: "I don't know, and neither do you!") That is, you would have to make your peace with common Quaker concepts such as "the inner light" and sayings such as "Christ has come to teach his children himself" or there is "that of God in everyone." We have no authorities to tell us what these things mean, so you would have to figure them out for yourself.

For me, with no dogmatic ideas about God and Christ, these fundamental Quaker truths can be summed up with a statement by the great nineteenth-century Quaker Elias Hicks, as quoted by Walt Whitman: "The fountain of all truth is in *yourself* and your inherent relations."[11] And this is true of all persons. We must as Quakers look to the Spirit within, as tested against our traditions and confirmed by our community. For this reason, we cannot look for truth from a prophet, from a pope or archbishop, or from a book or a boss. So we have no hierarchy; no one gives commands or bosses others around—not with the sanction of Quaker faith and practice, at least. This spirit, however any individual Quaker experiences it, leads those who stay with us to agree with William Penn, who said, "A good end cannot sanctify evil means; nor must we ever do evil that good may come of it. Let us then try what love can do."[12]

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11. Walt Whitman, "November Boughs: Notes (Such as They Are) Founded on Elias Hicks," *Prose Works* (Philadelphia: David McKay, 1892) retrieved November 4, 2003, from Great Books Online, Bartleby.com, 2000, www.bartleby.com/229/5021.html.

12. A common Quaker conflation of two sayings, numbers 537 and 545, by William Penn. See William Penn, *The Peace of Europe, The Fruits of Solitude and Other Writings*, edited by Edwin B. Bronner, Everyman Library (London: J. M. Dent, 1933), 61, 62.

# Two Friends for Peace: A Conversation with Diana Lee Hirschi

*Allen D. Roberts*

MY "INTERVIEW" WITH DIANA HIRSCHI was not so much an interview as a wonderfully civilized conversation over dinner at the Singing Cricket in Salt Lake City. I had never met Diana before, but Karen Moloney had asked me to interview her. I read "The Quaker Peace Testimony" (this issue) in preparation for that interview. Diana and I met on August 25, 2003, to discuss her essay.

I had been intrigued by the seemingly irreconcilable dilemmas presented by the war and peace problem since well before I assisted *Dialogue* in organizing an earlier thematic issue on the same topic in winter 1984 (Vol. 17, no. 4). That issue had resulted from my attending a conference of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) in Denver and bringing back

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several papers, all by believers from other religious traditions than Mormonism, exploring various aspects of the war and peace conundrum.

The purity and simplicity of Diana's "The Quaker Peace Testimony" appealed to me but immediately raised several questions. Diana's answers to these questions (typical, I think, of those most Mormons might ask) would in fact complement her essay by delving more specifically into the practical implications of her beliefs. By the time we met for dinner, Diana had answered my first nine questions by email; she later answered three more, including the two about Hitler, again by email.

During dinner I learned how seriously our author lives as she preaches. In our wide-ranging discussion, she emphasized the difference between being passive and being a pacifist. She is the latter but is very active in her pursuit of peace. Diana organizes rallies, demonstrations, and protests, speaking for peace wherever she can get a hearing. In June 1985 she began witnessing at the Nevada Test Site and, from May 1987 to May 1988, lived at the Peace Camp there for three to four weeks at a time, coming home for about a week to see family and get supplies, and then returning. She ran for Salt Lake County Council at-large on the Green Party ticket in 2002 (winning enough votes to keep the Green Party on the ballot for 2004). She is troubled by paying taxes used to finance the military machine and supports abortion rights and equal rights for women. We spoke of suicides, anti-Nephi-Lehis, and the Mountain Meadows Massacre. Of Iraq, she said, "I'll do what I can [to protest the war], and I'll die before I go along with it." She stands on the political left.

Raised a Mormon in Cedar City, Diana believes there is "no one true church." After attending Quaker meetings for a few years, she was convinced (similar to Mormon conversion) and became a Quaker in 1978. We talked of Jesus and whether his gospel is entirely about love, or whether it contains elements of divisiveness, even violence. "Jesus was just a man," she offered, suggesting to me she is a secular Quaker, and then reached a conclusion I have sometimes reached myself, "I *know* nothing. It's all a mystery."

*Allen*: Given that religions (Quakers excepted, though not Mormons) have been responsible for much of the world's violence and death, where do religious people find credibility for their supposed moral authority for advocating peace?

*Diana*: About authority in general: I think most Quakers would say

that if a religious "people" advocates peace as a people (or a religious person does so), their moral authority comes from the "inner light" or "that of God within everyone" or the "spirit of Christ." As for religious people in hierarchical groups, I suppose their authority comes from those who set the rules and give the orders—popes, prophets, councils of bishops—and these leaders get their authority, including their moral authority, by being The Authority. The 1661 Declaration (written to Charles II by George Fox and other Quakers) said the Spirit of Christ is not changeable, and that seems to be true for Quakers, at least with respect to the peace testimony. The papacy, for example, has been quite changeable, and I believe the declarations from Peter's Chair urging against the attack on Iraq seemed to lack moral authority for that reason.

*Allen:* Conversely, what would you say to those who use religious rationale and authority in support of war?

*Diana:* Well, obviously I can't believe they are moved by the Spirit of Christ. It seems to me that violence, domination, and coercive control of others contradicts this Spirit as it is found within us and in our inherent relations. I might quote Penn again—"A good end can never sanctify evil means; nor must we ever do evil that good may come of it."[1]

*Allen:* Quaker peace-seeking seems to be, both in testimony and practice, absolute. Can you (or Quakers) conceive of any circumstances today (such as preservation of life through self-defense) under which you might feel justified in resorting to violence or war?

*Diana:* Of course we are always being challenged with the "what would you do if's. . . ." John Howard Yoder, a Mennonite, put together a nice little book titled *What Would You Do?* He points out that the hypotheticals are framed to evoke an immediate violent image with no way out but violence—"What would you do if an intruder in your house had a knife to your wife's throat"—when a violent response in real circumstances might be quite inadvisable. But these "what would you do's?" are usually based on the belief that only violence can contend with violence. And I believe that this assumption permeates our politics and culture.

To oppose institutional violence, as I do, does not mean one cannot

1. A common Quaker conflation of two sayings, numbers 537 and 545, by William Penn. See William Penn, *The Peace of Europe, The Fruits of Solitude and Other Writings,* edited by Edwin B. Bronner, Everyman Library (London: J. M. Dent, 1933), 61.

defend oneself. I do not know what I might do in the event of a violent attack upon my person. One Quaker I know says that for him the peace testimony means that he will not kill or injure any human at the command of another. This would not preclude self-defense. He could probably assist a war effort more than he would like to if this were all it meant to him; but if everyone adopted this version of the peace testimony, wars would be hard to do.

*Allen:* Mormons, especially in the nineteenth century, have had a violent history, and they have never, as a church, been active advocates of peace. If you could speak with Mormon leaders, what would you say to "convince" them to adopt and practice something equivalent to your "peace testimony"?

*Diana:* Mormon leaders have a good situation, and I doubt they would want to give it up. I certainly could not appeal to them on practical or worldly grounds. The peace testimony is not about worldly power. Simone Weil says somewhere, "God presents himself to man as power or as perfection, and then leaves it for man to choose." (I think this is quite close to the English translation I read). I think she meant that one of the choices could be wrong—something like free agency even in our vision of God. This might be an opening to "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48), a text I understand is often preached in Mormon ward houses. Jesus is of course talking about the perfection of love, which, if perfected, I believe, would encompass the peace testimony and much more that I am not foolish enough to claim. But if Mlle. Weil is right, it's one or the other—power or perfection—and I know the former is hard to resist.

*Allen:* Does it not weaken the forcefulness of the Quaker peace testimony to have so many individual Quakers violate it by participating in wars? Do they insist on nonviolent military jobs? If yes, doesn't any participation in and support of the military contradict and compromise the peace testimony?

*Diana:* I don't think so, really; no more than Mormons who stray into alcohol, tobacco, feminism, or the Democratic Party necessarily impugn the gospel. I think most who pick up a weapon and go to war are lost to Meeting. Exactly what the peace testimony requires is not spelled out anywhere. During World War II, many Quaker men worked in labor camps, and a large number served in medical corps. Quakers who had been assigned to work in mental asylums during that war were active in

the reform of these institutions after the war. Their service probably did often contradict the peace testimony, just as do my taxes that support this country's wars and weapons. Exactly what is required of us is often hard to discern.

*Allen:* Regarding the Quaker requirement of unity before action is taken, is this not immobilizing in terms of supporting worthy but perhaps extreme peacemaking activities, such as the Plowshares initiative to destroy weapons?

*Diana:* I wouldn't say immobilizing. Quaker action can be forceful because of the force of Quaker unity. Quakers often unite around a member who is witnessing in a way that the entire group cannot—such as my witness at the Nevada Test Site. Quakers are not immune to the blandishments of "respectability"—often to my personal annoyance. However, if a Quaker were to join a Plowshares action on her own initiative, I'm certain she would not be shunned, eldered (i.e., counseled about her behavior), or otherwise disciplined by her Meeting.

*Allen:* Recognizing the value of Quaker activism, what more could Quakers (and similar others) do to move from peace-teaching to active peacemaking, and how can war-makers and the peace-indifferent be persuaded to change and adopt peacemaking policies?

*Diana:* I think Quakers (and others) are doing what they can through AFSC [the American Friends Service Committee], FCNL [Friends Committee on National Legislation], and other efforts. I myself work on a rather limited local level associating with others for purposes of public witness and education. What can and is being done on a larger scale is described in an old interview with Elise Boulding, a Quaker who has been active in various kinds of peace work. I hope you don't mind my referring you to this interview. It's an easy read: http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/conversations/Boulding/boulding- con0.html.

*Allen:* Given the prevalence of violence in American popular culture, how can the virtues of peace be instilled in our youth and general populace?

*Diana:* Well, I don't think it's popular culture, if you mean, for example, the movies and television. I think they reflect something much deeper, and I don't know how to get at it. Maybe the kingdom in which evil is not resisted with evil is not of this world. But I think it could be. I think we can live our lives and speak our words in the service of peace and compassion.

*Allen:* Given human history and nature (such as our proclivity to act in what we perceive to be our own self-interest), is there a realistic prospect of ever attaining world peace? If yes, what paradigm shifts would need to occur?

*Diana:* I am sometimes comforted by the thoughts of that old trouble-making agnostic Bertrand Russell, who points out that many human follies that were defended as bound up in basic human nature have been eliminated or at least thought of as substantially reformed—slavery, dueling, disenfranchisement, and the legal disabling of women. Simone Weil says at the end of her marvelous, long essay, "The Iliad, or The Poem of Force": "But nothing the peoples of Europe have produced is worth the first known poem that appeared among them. Perhaps they will yet rediscover the epic genius, when they learn that there is no refuge from fate, learn not to admire force, not to hate the enemy, nor to scorn the unfortunate. How soon this will happen is another question."

*Allen:* How do the Quakers (or you) respond to the idea (most recently practiced by George W. Bush) that peace must sometimes be obtained through war, waged preemptively rather than strictly defensively? The argument goes: Wouldn't it have been much better to have assassinated Hitler several years earlier, perhaps preventing World War II and saving millions of lives, than to have allowed him to live? In the Mormon tradition, we have the Book of Mormon prophet Nephi killing wicked Laban to obtain the metal plates of scripture the latter possessed. The act of murder was justified in the statement, "It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief" (1 Ne. 4:13). The idea here is that Laban's death would prevent the spiritual death of the people. The U.S. rationale for dropping two atomic bombs on Japan near the end of World War II was, in part, that many more Allied forces and Japanese lives would be saved by ending the war than lost in the two bombings. Does the "kill one or a few to save many" theory have any merit, especially given the apparent absence of other mass lifesaving alternatives in these examples?

*Diana:* I guess it makes sense that one might die so that others may live. As I understand the Passion story, Jesus willingly died so that we all could live—spiritually, our sins redeemed, or physically for ever and ever, but in some versions not so happily. There is the story of the man at Auschwitz who threw himself into the gears of a diabolical machine so that others could live a bit longer. We hear that old Eskimos wander into

the freezing night so that others may survive the shortages of winter. All of these seem considerably different than killing one or some so that a greater number might go on.

I've mentioned already John Howard Yoder's thoughts on similar questions. They (the questions) are always formulated so that it's kill or be killed, or, kill some or have many perish. By definition in these "what would you do" problems, only a violent response will rectify the situation, and the nonviolent resister is put in the position of choosing violence or letting a horrible event take its course. (You see it in the movies when the good Amish farmer finally has his epiphany and runs one of the bad guys through with his pitchfork.) Of course, by definition again, the violence proffered as the solution always works.

Would I have assassinated Hitler? In 1940 an assassination could have made a martyr of him and, at the same time, brought to the fore a more strategically adept but as virulently racist a Nazi, who might have avoided the disasters on the Eastern Front but been equally vicious with the Jews, gypsies, and gays. Who knows? I think Mr. Bush and his retinue of neocons might have something to say about the difficulty of predicting and controlling the consequences of violent actions when they write their memoirs. Who knows?

Assuming that Nephi prayed as intensely about the contemplated homicide as we all hope we would do if we were facing such a task, his rationale for it must have been furnished and the consequences ordained by God. I can't argue with that unless he acted without talking to his spiritual friends. I hope, however, if God tells me that a killing will be a very good thing, I remember to take it to my Meeting and perhaps run it by a clearness committee before I act on it.

I can't agree with the premise that the perfection of terror bombing at Hiroshima and Nagasaki saved lives. To assume that it did would require me to believe that less terrible options were not available. And that is hardly ever the case except in "what would you do" hypotheticals.

The peace testimony works in single lives. It's not a strategy for war fighting. It will prevent men and women, one by one, from killing others at the command of the state. If others need killing, don't come to me or (I hope) mine to get the job done. I might wander out into the freezing night, but I won't do that work.

*Allen:* Could the peace testimony have been used to stop Hitler?

*Diana:* First, I try to remember that neither the German army, the

SS, nor the Nazi bureaucracy was composed of Hitler. They were manned and supported by millions of German citizens who seem to have been at least as happy to serve as were our soldiers and citizens, in that war and in wars before and since. But when people challenge the pacifist position with the question, "What about Hitler?" they do not usually ask, "What about the millions who followed Nazi orders?" Hitler could not have done his work without them. Of course, if we make that horrible war into a civics lesson about the duties of citizenship, we're immediately in trouble. Not only are our hands (as citizens) not particularly clean, but we would be asking those German citizens to do what is so vigorously denounced whenever we want our citizens to line up behind a belief that takes them off to bayonet, shoot, bomb, and strafe others, i.e., to ask, "This is evil, isn't it?" Those German citizens were no weaker (nor stronger) than I am, but they did not have a peace testimony. The peace testimony would have stopped Hitler—if enough German citizens had had one.

But of course the question is not meant to inquire into the moral obligations of citizens. I think it could be recast as, "What about absolute evil?" or "What about evil on the march?" I've got to admit that the peace testimony does not present a strategy for intercepting the blitzkrieg as it swept around the Maginot Line or for lifting the siege of Leningrad. (Leningrad reminds me that fighting evil does not establish goodness. Remember that Stalin fought Hitler.) Once the war starts, oughtn't we lay down our pacifist principles and join in? If not in Vietnam or Panama, at least, for goodness' sake, against Hitler? "Resist not evil with evil" can't take us this far, can it? Well, for me it has to. If it doesn't take me this far, it doesn't take me anywhere. It would not have stopped the Golden Horde's sack of Baghdad, or the calvary at Wounded Knee, or our friend Indonesia's rape of East Timor, but I don't think these are reasons to give up on it. As has been said: God doesn't call us to be effective; he calls us to be faithful.

*Allen:* In the context of today's national and worldwide conditions, particularly as linked to 9/11, how would you define "patriotism" and what it means to be a "patriot"?

*Diana:* As the words of a hymn in our Quaker Meeting songbook suggest, patriotism is the love of the land, of hearth and home, and neighborhood, generalized with the realization that one's fellow citizens have or are capable of a similar love. Being aware of the roots of his or her patriotism, the citizen might allow all persons everywhere a similar relationship with their land. Of course, more useful to the war state is the ease with

which it can create or amplify an enemy and persuade us to hate it. It seems the modern nation-state cannot exist without an enemy to oppose; and for it, patriotism is essentially this hatred. The peace testimony cannot coexist with admiration of force and hatred of the enemy. So, to be patriots, we must try love.

# November 2001

*Robin Russell*

You notice the smells first, more spring, or
even summer, than late fall, the stale-clean
scent of wet sunlit streets after last night's
heavy rain, the musk of soaked dead leaves,
humid decay in a season usually dry, a
shining solstice sigh through open windows,
suspended on a candent morning breeze.

U.S. military planners think insurrections
encouraged by U.S intelligence operatives
will pressure the Taliban into . . . for the first
time in many years, a woman strides freely
through the ruined streets, her face uncovered,
the burqa thrown back like a superhero's cape.

His eyes bright with fear and resignation, his
captors in felt hats and heavy flowing robes,
an old man has his beard torn out in fistfuls
before he is shot through the head in a jagged,
burnt-bone sparkle of matted and bloody
hair, his mouth still pleading after he is dead.

Tracking brittle leaves into the house, finally
autumn comes with them, blustering through
the rooms and settling darker colors and cooler
air everywhere. Now, it is just a moment from
snowing, and in shadowy places, huddled in the
coming cold, winter snaps, just out of sight, waiting
to dress the land. Silent, scarred, peaceful.

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# August 6

*Marden J. Clark*

"Go get dressed. You're no man for this army!"
I went, thanking for the first time that crook
In my spine that had stopped me buck naked
From buck privacy, taken me back to you
After a three-hour, not a three-year, separation.

Together we heard the celebration:
Hiroshima Wiped Out! With one bomb!
With one bomb! Now the war will have to end!
We celebrated with the rest. Celebrated the bomb,
Celebrated rejection, celebrated your birthday, my love.

For forty years now, to celebrate your birthday
We've had to celebrate the bomb, but on
A sliding scale: from first exuberance
To slow knowing to terror now. Your poor birthday,
Growing on an opposing scale, tonight
Gets only a bad movie as celebration.

The spine that bought my rejection
Has cost me plenty since in pain, but none
Like that of the bomb I failed to feel as pain.

"The crowning savagery of war," J. Reuben Clark
Called those bombs. But we dismissed him:
Old and embittered. I'm old and bitter now.
I call him back to witness—against me,
Against all who would not hear, who do not hear.

The speed of light squared! That bomb still lives,
Mushrooming in our memories, a ghost in the galaxy
A thousand times alive in its sleek rude brood
Begotten of that equation
On technology, the mushroom prefiguring
And portending, Cassandra-like, the progeny
Expanding at the square of the speed of light.

Ah, love, let us be true . . . The ebb and flow
Are sucking and swelling to a tidal wave!
Our leaders run like children
Down the sand in the deep ebb sucked out
By the coming wave, like children down the sand
To pluck for their crowns the shining baubles
Bared before the wave.

We love. That may be all we do or have
When the wave bursts over us.
And if the voice of apocalypse be not heard
We must at least let the silent waves of our love
Be known: We love.

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*MARDEN J. CLARK, who taught English at Brigham Young University until his retirement (1981), worked into this poem a story he heard in a Sunday School lesson while traveling in southern Utah. The teacher, from Hawaii, told how people would risk their lives running far down the beach for baubles as the tide was coming back in. Among his publications are* Modern and Classic: The Wooing Both Ways *(Merrill Monograph Series, BYU, May 1972),* About Language: Contexts for College Composition, *with Soren Cox and Marshall Craig (New York: Scribners, 1970),* Morgan Triumphs *(novel) (Salt Lake City: Orion Books, 1984), two collections of poems–*Moods: Of Late *(Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1979) and* Christmas Voices *(Orem, United Order Books, 1988)–and* Liberating Form: Mormon Essays on Religion and Literature *(Salt Lake City, Aspen Books, 1992). He and his wife, Bessie Soderborg Clark, taught at the University of Qing Dao, China (1989–90), and traveled to every continent. He also wrote a column, "Matter Unorganized" for the* Provo Daily Herald (1994–2002). He died May 15, 2003.

# The Push

## (Captain Pratt's Story from Korea)

*Ruth Salter*

That whole war we were never told what
was happening, never given a plan. We thought there
were only a few, but one day they covered
the hilltops around us. One shot would mean a massacre;
we stood still as trees. Then some of my men
waved. The Chinese waved back. Slowly we turned
and walked back the way we came.

A later patrol pushed farther than we had.
The Chinese opened fire and some of our wounded
were left behind. We found them later wrapped
tightly in blankets. Their wounds were bandaged and
they lay quietly on litters by the side of the road.

We gathered them and tried to figure it out,
but it made as much sense as our fingers did
lacing our stiff boots, freezing to our triggers.

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*RUTH SALTER lives with her husband, baby daughter, and more than twice the legal limit of pets in Boise where she teaches writing part-time at Boise State University. Her past adventures include rehabilitating injured wildlife, flying airplanes upside down, and receiving nominations for two Pushcart prizes.*

PERSONAL VOICES

# What You Don't Know

*Melody Warnick*

A MAN OF MANY STORIES, my father left behind only a handful in the end. Primarily this is my fault; my mind long ago funneled such information into a vast reservoir of forgotten knowledge, where tales of my father's childhood in working-class Brockton, Massachusetts, swim in the same nameless stream as what I wore to school on the first day of kindergarten. The stories that remain with me have hung on by luck or sheer tenacity—the story of my father's first tricycle, for instance, stolen by neighborhood toughs when he was three or four. He was being raised by his maternal grandmother, Jennie Upham, then, in a house with a covey of spinster aunts whose names, I suppose, are written down somewhere.

In the makeshift chronology that I can construct for him, the tricycle story occurs first. Then comes his running away from home, his working as a soda jerk at the Manhattan YMCA, and his hitchhiking to California, where he once delivered a telegram to Mae West and shared a round of drinks at Dean Martin's house. At some point he married and raised two boys, then divorced, remarried, and raised two girls. I was in the second batch.

The last story of my father's life was one that he didn't tell me himself. Rather, I heard it from my mother, on a long-distance phone call from California, in October 1999. "Your dad had chest pains this morning, so they took him to the hospital," she said.

"Is he okay?"

"He died."

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He took everything with him when he went—all the stories I had forgotten, and all the stories I had never been told in the first place. Over time I have realized that there were more absences than presences in what he said, that there are strange and mysterious lacunae in my understanding of who my father was. A month after my dad died, my mother called to tell me that in her efforts to organize her financial affairs, she had discovered an account in my dad's name at a bank he and my mother never used. There was twenty thousand dollars in it. From the account's history, Mom could see that he had been withdrawing regularly. Shortly before he died, my father spent seventy-five dollars at a place called Alpaca Pete's, though nothing made of alpaca wool ever turned up at our house.

This particular breed of financial secrecy was unexpected. How do you squirrel away twenty thousand dollars without the knowledge of the woman who cashes your paychecks, pays the bills, and manages the vagaries of the family budget by refinancing liberally and often? On the phone telling me this, however, my mother sounded only mildly put out. She conjured an army of justifications for the account's existence: It was an East Coast thing, a child-of-the-Depression thing, a man thing, a "your father" thing. She thought it was perfectly reasonable for my father to want to have a bit of his own money, though she said this as if she were referring to a stash of quarters he used to buy Snickers bars from the vending machine at work.

But for me, the money confirmed what I had suspected for some time before he died: My father had been having an affair—perhaps several affairs, drawn out over the course of many years. It would not have been difficult for him. He kept an oddly truncated teaching schedule at the community college, taking on both early morning and late evening classes, so that he often left home before my sister, Heather, and I woke up and returned after we had gone to bed. Once I was still sleepless when he pulled into the driveway after midnight, and he let me go with him in my nightgown to the all-night grocery store for milk.

Teaching also meant that he kept company with an ever-renewing supply of eager, beautiful twenty-somethings, who threw their arms around him and planted loud kisses on his cheeks. As children my sister and I loved these women; they fussed over us at football games and fraternity meetings, gave us candy bars, and let us sit on the sidelines while they practiced their cheerleading routines. But I remember being wary of them, too, sensing instinctively that they posed a threat I could only guess

at. For several years when I was in elementary school, I believed that my dad was having an affair with Gina, a horsey, likeable woman who worked with Dad at the college. The word "affair" would have meant little to me then, signifying only the kind of bland kissing and emotionless ogling that passed for romance among my Barbies and Kens. But I was relieved when, a few years into my knowing her, she got married. I had been wrong all along. Of course, of course.

If there were indeed a mistress, she has remained meticulously anonymous, even after my father's death. No one has come forward to get it off her chest, or to demand money, or to offer protracted, weepy condolences. But I assume that she is out there with an alpaca rug draped over the back of her sofa. I think about this woman occasionally, wondering who she was to my father, and how they met. Was she my father's age or much younger? What was the attraction? What did my dad's sudden death of congestive heart failure mean to her? If I had thought of it sooner, I might have found her out, but my father's PalmPilot is long gone, and the hard drives of his computers were reformatted shortly after the funeral. She is a secret still, though I believe that she exists, and that she is in possession of the stories that I lack.

* * *

My father, if you asked him, was a Presbyterian, and he believed in God and Jesus Christ, thank you, not that it was any of your business. He was not active in any church, however, and certainly not in ours, though he dutifully showed up in blazer and tie when Heather and I gave talks in sacrament meeting and received our Young Womanhood medallions. He sat down with the home teachers, if he happened to be around, and was never less than perfectly friendly with any of them. At the ward Christmas party one year, he played a red-faced, jovial Santa; a long line of children coiled out from his chair because he spent too much time admiring each one.

At some point my mother was told in a priesthood blessing that her husband would indeed join the Church, and this brought us all comfort, though even Mom couldn't say whether that meant the conversion would happen in this life or the next one. "A dry Mormon" is what we called him: Latter-day Saint in everything but baptism. When new sets of elders dropped by our house to get the back story on our part-member family, Mom always told them that it was just a matter of my father's will-

ingness to eke out the time to take the discussions, read the scriptures, and integrate church attendance into his life. He was simply too busy. One day he would slow down, and the gospel, panting after him, would finally catch up.

This is what we told ourselves, anyway. My sister and I put on doe-eyes and gave Dad wrapped and inscribed copies of the Book of Mormon for Christmas. "Please read it," we implored. "For me. For us." Even as a Primary child, I was sick of mentally having to exclude myself from lessons and omit myself from the songs. No, I could not seek a father's blessing. No, my family would not be together forever. I believed that, if I died, I would be cut loose, to float untethered from the whole human family for eternity.

* * *

In summer 1997, I left on a mission to Puerto Rico while my sister was still serving in Lisbon. Our missions would overlap for six months, and there was something striking in this. Perhaps the combined power of our mutual sacrifice would extract some softness from our father, some blessing from God. Before I left I bought a copy of the discussions in English and cornered Dad at the table one evening, where he was grading term papers. "Can I practice my missionary discussions on you?"

He laughed. "I don't think that would be a good idea."

"Why not?" I persisted.

"Because I love you, but I don't believe the same things that you do."

"Like what?"

"Well, Joseph Smith, for one." This had been one of his original sticking points. Having worked for most of his career with adolescents and post-adolescents, he found it inconceivable that any fourteen-year-old would be vessel enough for live transmissions from God.

"Have you ever read the Book of Mormon and prayed about it?" I asked.

"Sure."

"You have?" I was dubious.

"When your mother and I got married, I met with the missionaries for a while, and I read the Book of Mormon and prayed about it. But I just was never convinced. Can you understand that, Melody?"

"But think about this," I said. "I'm about to sacrifice a year and a

half of my life to teach this to other people. Do you think I'd be doing that if it weren't true?"

"I think that you think it's true," he said gently. "But there are plenty of other people in the world who have dedicated their lives to their religion. What about Mother Teresa? Or Buddhist monks? There are plenty of great Presbyterian people who believe in their religion just as strongly as you believe in yours."

Incredibly, this had never occurred to me before. And although the thought that my religion was just one of many inspiring total devotion around the globe did nothing to dissuade me from my belief in it, it was the first time I seriously doubted that, for my father, baptism was just a matter of time. He would not join the Church in this life, I remember thinking.

That summer before my mission, I was living at home, not working, just biding my time until July rolled around and I could enter the MTC. Dad, as always, was in and out of the house, maintaining his baffling schedule. Although classes hadn't started, he went to campus every day to attend meetings or sort files. I was used to not seeing him. What happened on a steamy morning in mid-June happened because, miraculously, we were in the same place at the same time, though it would have been better if neither of us had been there at all.

It was such a little thing—ridiculous almost. From the room next to my parents', where I was curled up studying Helaman 5, I overheard a phone conversation, or rather, the intimations of a conversation. I heard my father dial, then speak, but not in his normal hail-fellow-well-met phone voice. He was whispering. I could hear the susurrations, the playful upswing to his tone, but not the words. Uneasy, I listened in earnest, and finally made out something about meeting at 5:30, I couldn't hear where. And then Dad tipped the phone carefully into its cradle and creaked down the stairs, never knowing that I was in the next room listening.

My father had a lover. That was that. He had a lover and he was meeting her at 5:30. Such a strange conclusion, but then, I had suspected it at various points since childhood. I remember having a conversation with my sister just as I was starting my senior year of high school, and she was starting college: Why hadn't our parents divorced, we wondered. Their twenty-five-year marriage seemed an inevitability, as steady as the mountains, but there was a strained quality to it, too. They were, in their own words, "ships passing in the night."

There was more evidence. First, Dad had used an MCI calling card to make the call, which I discovered by pressing redial on the phone (with only a wink of moral compunction). But the family, my mom affirmed, didn't have an MCI calling card, just AT&T. I concluded that this was a measure to keep certain mysterious phone numbers from showing up on the monthly bill. Second, my father announced to my mother that he would be leaving shortly to go to campus to pick up his mail, and then he shut himself into the bathroom and emerged twenty minutes later in a haze of woodsy cologne. Who smelled that way to pick up mail?

One thing was clear to me: My parents would get a divorce. My faltering-but-functional set of parents would split up, and my father would slither off into whatever netherworld errant husbands inhabited. I envisioned the circles that would ripple out from the plashing of this single stone: the destruction of the family (how would we tell Heather?), the selling of the home where I spent my childhood, the awkward divvying-up of a lifetime of Thanksgivings and Christmases. I balled myself up in my bedroom and cried at the horror of it.

In the afternoon, I took my car into Carbon Canyon, to drive off the accumulating anger on ten miles of hairpin curves; but after an hour or so, I veered back and took the 95 freeway out to the college where my father worked. I had set an ultimatum of sorts. My father had said he would be in his office all afternoon, so I decided that I would check to see if his car was in the parking lot. If it was, I could discard the whole fretful afternoon as a misunderstanding. If the car wasn't there, I would know that he had lied. Feeling sick and shaky, I turned onto Alondra Boulevard and into the lot. The car was not there.

I drove straight home and told my mother what I had surmised, expecting that there would be tearing of hair and gnashing of teeth and the donning of sackcloth and ashes when I was through detailing my evidence. But she merely smiled and said, "You're right. It looks bad. When Dad gets home, I'll get to the bottom of it." Her calm was bewildering. Across the kitchen table from me, she cracked jokes and called me Harriet the Spy. When I asked her if she was surprised by anything I had told her, she said, "Not really. Once before I thought your dad was having an affair, but it turned out to be nothing."

When my father finally pulled into the driveway, I was in my bedroom, shaking with expectation. I could hear him and my mother talking in the kitchen below me, then laughing, of all things. A few minutes later

there was a tapping at the door. Dad entered, bent down to me, and pulled my hand to his chin, which was scuffed with stubble. "If I were meeting a lady friend," he said, "would I go like this?"

That was the crux of his defense: No man goes unshaven to meet a lover.

Eventually, in response to my skepticism, he produced more elaborate explanations. The call that morning had been to a colleague. The MCI calling card was issued by the college, to pay for business calls. He hadn't been at his office because he had had a meeting on the far side of campus. I stared at the floor as he talked; but when Dad finished and stooped for a conciliatory kiss, I leaned away. I could not be kissed by him. It was all too real to me and too hurtful to have my parents behave as if nothing had ever happened, though maybe theirs was the outsized cheerfulness of those who narrowly avoid disaster.

In my own way, I, too, was anxious to believe. That night I wrote in my journal, "I'm glad there's no affair and it's all normal, and yet I'm still weirded out. I just really need sleep is all." As if it had all been a hallucination, the product of a too-late night.

In the eighteen months of my mission, I sometimes thought about that day. I even occasionally told my Puerto Rican investigators about it, blurring the details in a mouthful of Spanish, only referring vaguely to a "really bad day." What I told them was what I didn't record in my journal—about finally reopening the Book of Mormon that afternoon to finish Helaman 5, the story of Nephi and his brother Lehi, who are imprisoned by an army of Lamanites for preaching the word of God. Their captors starve them for several days and finally remove them from their cells to kill them. But before they can, Lehi and Nephi are engulfed by flames that do not burn—a divine manifestation of God's love and protection. Crazy with fear and confusion, the Lamanites hear "a pleasant voice, as if it were a whisper, saying: Peace, peace be unto you, because of your faith in my Well Beloved, who was from the foundation of the world" (Hel. 5:46-47). Such a different kind of whisper than I had heard from my parents' bedroom and portending such a different thing. Because I needed it so desperately, I took myself to be the person on whom the Lord was urging peace.

After I returned from my mission, I spent a few months at home before I went back for a final semester of college. And one day, I overheard another odd conversation: my dad whispering, giggly, making a promise

to meet someone at the train station at 5:30, or at least that's what I heard. I wrestled with wanting to drive to the Fullerton train station, to see for myself that my father was an adulterer. I even worked out the logistics of it: I would go early, park in the lot, and hunker down in the back of my mother's Subaru station wagon to watch.

But the choice between knowing and not knowing was too frightening. I had already learned that what I didn't know could indeed hurt me; but the pain of uncertainty was nothing, I assumed, compared to the fruits of this particular tree of knowledge. I brooded that afternoon, and in the end I made my decision: I went to the mall with my mother.

Where my father went, I can never be entirely sure.

* * *

My father must have known that he would end up a Mormon. It was the family joke: Why not do it now and save us all that trouble later? A year after his death, my mother, my sister, and I traded a flurry of long-distance phone calls to work out the details of his conversion. I was by then living in Maryland with my husband, Quinn; my mother and sister had sold the family home and moved into an apartment that they shared in Laguna Nigel. "Don't you want to be there when we baptize him?" Heather asked. "We've been waiting for this for a long time."

"It's okay. Just do it without me," I urged her. "When you and Mom come for Christmas, we'll do the endowment and the sealing here. I'm just worried that, if we wait, we won't be able to get it all done in one day."

And so in October 2000, one year after his death, my uncle Ken was proxy for the baptism and confirmation in the Los Angeles Temple. Two months later, on a bitter December morning in Kensington, Maryland, my mother, my sister, and I were endowed on behalf of women we didn't know—from Europe or America, I forget which—whose lives had never overlapped ours and whose stories we would never know. And my husband was endowed on behalf of my father, born May 22, 1941, Brockton, Massachusetts, died October 8, 1999, Fullerton, California.

After the endowment, we were guided to the top of the Washington DC Temple by Brother Windley, a white-haired temple sealer from our Maryland ward. He had us kneel on the velvet cushions around the sealing room altar and told my mother in a visionary tone, "You are marrying the right man." Using ritual words that I knew from my own temple mar-

riage, he sealed my parents to each other, and then my sister and me to them both.

My sister and mother were weeping, and I wept, too, to finally be a part of my own family, as legitimate in the eternities as a child born under the covenant. But there was something in me that held itself back. My hands refused to open to the miracle of the day. It was not, after all, wholly a triumph.

I have been taught to believe that vicarious temple ordinances deliver the saving graces of the gospel to the righteous dead who were deprived of it when they lived on earth but who, like Joseph Smith's brother Alvin, would have embraced it had they had the chance. Granted, righteousness and ignorance are vague parameters for posthumous salvation, but even with the most generous of definitions my father failed on both counts. His rejection of a baptism repeatedly offered was not ignorant and not, as my family believed, because he just lacked the time. It was well thought out, intractable under pressure. But then again, Mormonism wasn't his birthright, as it was for Mom and Heather and me, and who can account for the effects of personal history and a lifetime of cultivated disposition? Surely there is some forgiveness somewhere for those.

Righteousness is the stickier issue. My father, it is widely acknowledged, was a good man. He was a gifted teacher. He brought home stray dogs. He picked up hitchhikers. He stopped to help when he saw a car accident. He adored children. He entertained at our birthday parties by pulling red handkerchiefs from his thumb. He was the family peacemaker; once, when I stormed out of the house after a particularly livid fight with my mom, my father rode his bicycle through the dark streets calling for me. Much of what I know about personal Christianity—the part of the gospel that is not repentance or baptism or being the ward Sunday School teacher but is simply emulating the selflessness of Jesus Christ—I learned from my father.

But the stories I don't know are the ones that have taken hold of me so that, four years after his death, I'm still unsure how to handle his memory. I can't tell you whether my father was a good man or an evil one. Even his sweetness seems suspect to me now. I am not entirely sure where my father went after he died. If he went to spirit prison—a place I envision as a Leavenworth constructed entirely of wisps of cloud, guarded only by air and mortal guilt—was he sprung by our work on his behalf? Did we absolve

him, send his soul flying straight to the celestial kingdom? Or is he still in limbo somewhere, paying penance for sins long past?

I'm not sure if my mother and sister share my ambivalence, but we have almost stopped talking about Dad altogether. Holidays continue merrily without him. My daughter is growing up without him. My father's birthday in May passes without comment, though I've marked it on my calendar as a private memorial. In the past two years, both my mother and my sister were married, and I can't remember hearing my father mentioned at either wedding. Because we don't talk about him, I don't know where he stands in the others' memories—whether they have forgotten him, by accident or by design, or simply moved on, smoothing over his place in the family so thoroughly that only a slight tenderness indicates that he was ever there.

* * *

After getting the call at 9:00 P.M. that my father had died, my brand-new husband drove us the ten hours home to California. Neither of us was familiar with the protocol of grief; and after eight hours, we were so punchy from lack of sleep that we cracked jokes and spat sunflower seeds to keep ourselves awake. But when we pulled into my cul-de-sac a little before dawn, the sight of my father's car—unwashed, loaded for work—closed my chest like a fist. I cried often that week and, almost as often, found that I was the only one crying. My mother and everyone else said that it was a blessing that he went suddenly, but I loved my father and found it hard to feel blessed.

Apparently it was only the force of his personality that kept us all attached to him. Now, even though we are sealed to him, we have spun off into new orbits and allowed the collective family memory of him to grow weaker. This saddens me when I remember him as a good man, a loving father. But when I think of him as a liar and an adulterer, I can only presume that such fading is a just end. Either way, I have lost him twice over, once in his death and once in my own not knowing. And because he is gone, the distance between us never closes.

One day, perhaps, my father's mistress will appear at my door with a legacy for me. She'll be silver-haired, hazy with age, but she'll press letters into my hands, or a ring, or a photograph that I have never seen before. Maybe she'll tell me, to provide some small comfort, that my father spoke often of me and that he loved me very much. She will deliver to me the sto-

ries that I lack and allow me the knowledge to make my own decisions about who my father was and where he is now. Until that happens, I must rely only on the stories I have—the stories my father gave to me.

This is one of them: Just two months before my father died, I married my husband in the San Diego Temple. Because my father couldn't, of course, enter the temple to see the wedding ceremony, we saved the exchanging of rings for that night, at the reception at the Fullerton Arboretum. Dad was so happy, I remember. With his chin bowed down over the bow tie of his rented tuxedo, he pronounced on Quinn and me an Irish blessing:

> May the road rise to meet you.
> May the wind be always at your back.
> May the sun shine warm upon your face
> And rains fall soft upon your fields.
> And until we meet again,
> May God hold you in the hollow of his hand.

The memory of my father in that moment, pronouncing on me his own breed of blessing, has become one of the most beautiful stories I know about him. In time, it will perhaps become the story of him that I choose to remember, the only story I want to tell.

FICTION

# MacDonald and the Jungle Monk

*Walter Jones*

"WHERE CAN I FIND Captain Vernon Endicott?" Captain John MacDonald asked one of a cluster of clerks in the 9th Cavalry's regimental headquarters.

"Oh, oh," the clerk said, looking at the rubber-mat floor behind MacDonald. He jumped out of his chair and grabbed a mop, then began cleaning. "The sergeant major blows a gasket whenever anyone gets his floor wet." It was raining hard outside, and MacDonald had left glistening

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footprints across the black mat. Looking relieved, the clerk sat back down and said, "Captain Endicott's with Charlie Troop. They're on an op near An Lao, sir."

"When's he coming in?" MacDonald asked.

"Not soon, sir. They've been finding beaucoup NVA out there."

Disappointment trickled through MacDonald. He'd just returned from the States, from his mother's funeral, and had looked forward to visiting with Endicott. After more than twenty-four hours of air travel back from his hometown, he felt tired and unkempt in his wrinkled khaki uniform.

"Sir?" the clerk asked with an edge of hesitation.

"Yes?"

"Could you do something for me?"

"What?"

"I've got to run a file over to 7th's HQ. Could you sit in for me until I get back? I'm supposed to be waiting for some sort of VIP to show. The sergeant major wants me to meet the guy and tell 'im to hang tight 'til S-3 gets in."

"Take off."

"Thank you, sir."

Captain MacDonald sat down in the clerk's chair and closed his eyes. The sounds of typewriters, office chatter, and a radio faded into incoherent buzzing behind MacDonald. He felt himself drift into a light sleep.

"Sir? Excuse me, sir."

MacDonald opened his eyes and saw a soldier standing in front of the clerk's desk. The soldier's face was smeared with camouflage paint, and he was wearing a poncho and helmet. He held an M-16 in his right hand. The poncho was dripping wet.

"Your weapon have a round chambered?" Captain MacDonald looked at the soldier's rifle.

"I cleared it out front, sir."

The soldier's boots were caked with red-clay mud. Behind him a trail of mud and water led across the room's black rubber mat.

"Sir, why am I here?"

MacDonald shook his head. "You tell me."

"I was told to report here, sir. That's all I know. They helicoptered me out of the field this morning."

MacDonald pointed to a chair next to the desk. "The clerk'll be back mo-skosh. Have a seat."

The soldier laid his M-16 down carefully, then took off his helmet and put it beside the rifle. Slipping his poncho over his head, he folded it neatly and placed it under the chair. He had on a rucksack and web gear. Two fragmentation grenades hung from the web straps.

Captain MacDonald watched silently as the soldier removed his rucksack, grenades, and web belt. There was about the man's movements a weary grace, an athletic self-confidence that suggested to MacDonald that the man was a competent soldier.

"Who you with?" MacDonald asked after the soldier had sat down.

"Third platoon, Charlie Troop, sir."

"Endicott's unit?"

The soldier's eyes widened. "You know Captain Endicott, sir?"

MacDonald nodded. "We were platoon leaders together at Fort Lewis."

"He's a fine officer, sir."

"People used to get us mixed up. Whenever someone called us to the orderly room over the P.A. system, we both had to go see who they really wanted." MacDonald paused. Talking about Endicott made him feel good. "That was before I went to Korea."

"You kind of look like him, sir." The soldier hesitated for a moment, then smiled. "I've been to Korea."

"What unit?"

"No unit, sir. I was on a Mormon mission there."

"You don't look old enough to be a minister."

"The LDS Church doesn't have ministers, sir. We have bishops who are like ministers. I was nineteen when I went. That's the normal age."

"You speak Korean?"

"*Ji gohri mahnkum ahmnida.*"

Captain MacDonald smiled. "What does that mean? It's almost two years since I've heard any Korean. I led a recon platoon and had an interpreter, a kid who'd gone to the Defense Language Institute."

"It's an idiom for 'I know a rat-tail's worth,' sir. I spent two and a half years in Korea on my mission. Then went back to teach English for a year before the draft called me."

MacDonald nodded. "What's your rank?"

"PFC, sir."

"How long have you been in the country?"

"Nearly eight months. I'm thinking of extending here so I can get out of the army early."

"Have you thought about OCS?"

"No, sir. No offense, but I want to get on with life, sir." He shifted his weight and leaned to one side to pull a wallet out of a thigh pocket. He had a photograph wrapped in cellophane. Taking the picture from the wallet, he looked at it for a moment then handed it to Captain MacDonald.

MacDonald looked at the photo. It was of a Korean woman with long, black, straight hair and a serious look on her face.

"Her name's Haeryun, sir. I baptized her, and then we started dating while I taught Korean. We're going to get married when I'm out."

A vague uneasiness cut into MacDonald's exhaustion. He'd had a girlfriend at the time he'd joined the army. Seven years ago. A blonde with short, wavy hair and piercing green eyes and milk-white skin. Her name was Alicia, and she played a violin in the city's symphony orchestra. When he had enlisted, she screamed at him and cried and beat her fists against his chest until he left her standing alone in the dark on the front porch of her house. That seemed a hundred years ago. He had seen her a week ago at his mother's funeral. She had long kinky hair and smelled of pot. He was wearing his uniform, and she had told him the war in Vietnam was immoral. He had shaken his head and walked away.

Handing the photograph back, MacDonald noticed that the soldier squared his shoulders and sat up straight as he reached out for the picture. He could have been a drill instructor.

"Ever been to Hong Ch'on?" MacDonald said. His father had died in Korea, near Hong Ch'on, in a Wyoming National Guard armored unit, in April 1953. A Chinese night attack. Two years ago, before he flew to Vietnam, MacDonald took his interpreter to Hong Ch'on to look for his father's battle site.

"No, sir. I was down in Pusan and Taegu mostly. My fiancée's from Kimhae."

MacDonald remembered the feeling he'd had when he visited the place his father died. It was an abandoned rice field. Quiet. At the edge of a steep-sloped, pine forest-covered mountain. The remains of a deserted, thatched-roof hut stood nearby. Dark, thick, early-spring rain clouds hung over the area. Standing in the vacant field, MacDonald had felt alone and

uneasy. He'd seen a fox run from the crumbling hootch into the trees beyond.

MacDonald realized that the soldier in the wet poncho was staring at him.

"You all right, sir?"

"Jet lag."

"What company are you with, sir?"

"No unit, really. I work with the Bru, you know, a group of Montagnards, up in the Highlands."

"What do you do there?"

"I'm an advisor. There's six of us, and we train the Bru to use M-16s, and things like small unit tactics. We take them out a lot on recon patrols."

"What's it like where you're at, sir?"

MacDonald was silent for a moment before answering, "Remote." He pictured heavy fog moving through deep, triple-canopied forests and steep-walled mountain slopes that swallowed the lonely sounds of outgoing helicopters. Then he continued, "You wouldn't believe the place. Some of the trees are three hundred feet tall, and the people . . . ," he paused looking directly into the PFC's eyes. "The people. They walk around naked a lot, and prefer bows and arrows to our weapons. Before they go on recon, they kill a chicken to see if their gods favor the mission. Sometimes we can't get them to budge."

"I think I'd rather be back in Korea, sir. Do you think Captain Endicott would like the Highlands?"

MacDonald nodded. "Without a doubt. But his goal in the army has always been to command a rifle company."

"Captain Endicott thrives in the jungle, sir." The soldier looked down at his muddy boots. "Once when my squad came in from a night ambush position, sir, he called me 'the jungle monk.' I had my poncho on, and he said I looked like a medieval monk lost in some ancient rain forest."

"Does he know you're Mormon?"

"Yes, sir, and he kids me about it. When I told him about baptizing Haeryun, he said it sounded like I was trying to drown her. He told me in his church they only sprinkled water on his head."

MacDonald felt a sudden surprise. He thought he'd known a lot about Endicott. "What's his church?"

"Presbyterian, sir." The soldier turned toward a radio that was on top of a nearby file cabinet. "Listen, sir," he said in a low voice.

"To what?" MacDonald asked.

"The music, sir."

MacDonald hadn't been paying attention to the radio. Now he listened. AFVN was playing Martin Denny's "Cast Your Fate to the Wind."

The soldier had a serene look on his face. His eyes were shut. His brown, matted hair hung in ringlets over his forehead.

MacDonald studied the soldier's camouflaged face. He liked Endicott's calling him "the jungle monk," and it made sense that Endicott belonged to a church. Once, during an FTX at Fort Lewis, Endicott had called MacDonald "Prester John." It was on a very cold night while rain sounded like a waterfall as it cascaded down through the trees. As MacDonald led his men through Endicott's platoon, Endicott shouted above the roar of rain, "Look! Prester John, dressed in battle array, goes forth into this night of Egyptian darkness." Thereafter MacDonald's radio call sign had become "Prester John." He still used it in the Highlands.

When "Cast Your Fate to the Wind" was over, the soldier opened his eyes and spoke quietly, "That was one of my favorite songs in high school."

MacDonald nodded. He, too, had heard "Cast Your Fate to the Wind" in high school as a senior. He was seventeen years old and anxious to graduate so he could join the army. He was determined to be a soldier, like his father, but his mother had been extremely upset when he brought the recruiter's papers home for her to sign. So he'd put off enlisting for nearly a year, until he could no longer resist the desire to join. He looked at the soldier across from him and smiled again.

A sergeant major suddenly burst into the room. He was tall and heavy, as big as a football lineman, and stood in the doorway, looking down.

"Who on God's damned earth defecated on my floor?" he shouted.

The room became silent. No talking. No typing. Someone quickly turned off the radio.

Glaring at the PFC's muddy boots, the sergeant major shouted, "You! You dirt bag piece of whale dung, clear the hell out of my orderly room. Now! Move it, meathead."

The soldier stood up without saying a word. MacDonald noticed he

was as tall as the huge soldier and calm. Quietly the man began putting on his gear. His web belt first, then his rucksack. After slipping into his poncho, he picked up his helmet and rifle, and, looking at MacDonald, said softly, "Have a good day, sir."

The sergeant major stood with hands on hips until Endicott's man had left. Then he demanded of MacDonald, "Where's my clerk?"

MacDonald shrugged.

Screaming at no one in particular, the sergeant major ordered, "Get this floor cleaned up. ASAP."

Several clerks jumped to their feet. A folding chair tipped over backwards and crashed against the floor.

In a calmer voice the sergeant major addressed MacDonald. "Damn, captain, it's been a screwed-up day. Weather's so bad I can't get resupply out to the bush. The old man's got a wild hair up his ass about a fragging we had at oh-three hundred. And now I gotta puke me a god-damned Korean talker for S-3. They got some liaison work going with the ROKs today."

A tired, perplexed look crossed the man's face. "Where the devil's my clerk?"

MacDonald looked at him eye-to-eye and stated in a low, steady voice, "You just ran your Korean linguist off, sergeant major."

The huge soldier looked toward the door he'd just come through and whispered, "I'll be go to hell."

Endicott's soldier was standing a short distance from the headquarters building in the rain, his back to the orderly-room door. The sergeant major walked outside. MacDonald couldn't hear what was being said, but he watched the sergeant major gesturing with both arms. The PFC did not speak as he listened. His poncho glistened from the water streaming down it.

* * *

Captain MacDonald had to wait two days for the weather to clear enough for a Huey to fly him up-country to his Montagnard village. He left without seeing Endicott.

Six weeks later Endicott sent MacDonald a note, scrawled in pencil on a piece of cardboard from a C-ration box. "PFC Pratt told me he met you, Prester. Said we look alike."

"Thought you should know," the note went on, "Pratt's on his way to Camp Zama. Lost his right leg."

Endicott ended his message, "Keep faith, Prester. The war goes badly, but we must remain the priesthood of true believers."

MacDonald folded the note, wrapped it in cellophane and put it in the wallet he kept in a thigh pocket.

Two months after receiving Endicott's note, MacDonald flew out of the mountains to his unit's base camp at Nha Trang to extend his tour another year to stay with the Bru. Sitting in the camp's administrative office while a clerk typed his extension papers, he picked up a recent *Stars and Stripes* newspaper. On the front page was an article about a battalion of the 9th Cavalry's suffering heavy casualties during a series of fierce firefights in the A Shau Valley. MacDonald felt a sickening, dizzy sensation even before he looked at the 9th's casualty list. He knew Endicott's name would be among those killed in action.

The article ended by stating that the 9th Cav was one of the combat units selected to return to the United States at the end of the year. President Richard Nixon had started his Vietnamization program.

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The monsoons flood the Highlands with as much as 160 inches of water a season, and often, at moments during nights when the rains flailed the earth so hard they seemed to be trying to destroy the forests, MacDonald would put on a poncho and walk out to stand alone in a jungle clearing. There he'd think about Endicott's PFC draped in his glistening poncho, and he'd whisper his radio call sign before shouting Endicott's name into the night as the stinging rain washed down his face and drowned out his voice. Then he'd leave the clearing to make his way back through the Egyptian darkness to his thatched hut among the Bru.

FICTION

# Prologue to *Mokusatsu*

*Gordon T. Allred*

"YOU SHALL NOT DO IT," she said. A mere murmur, those words, deceptively soft, even gentle. Almost subliminal, though distinctly determined to anyone who knew her as he did. She had, in fact, employed the imperative form of the verb: *iccha*. At nineteen, some four years his junior, Midori possessed a remarkable vocabulary and a spectacular intellect, both matched only by her will power and determination.

For some time he gazed at her in wonderment—half vexed, half amused, then fondly indulgent. "Shall not do it?"

She barely nodded, and again her very restraint evoked resolution. "*Hai . . . iccha dame*!" The tip of her tongue glistened between the final words. They were sitting upon cushions covered in velvet of midnight blue, separated by an oval-shaped table two feet high. In its center was an ivory chess set, to the left, a china teapot, its spout faintly steaming, the matching turquoise-colored cups still empty and expectant in their saucers. To the right lay an ancestral dagger with its smooth gold handle, its steel blade engraved down the center with tiny chrysanthemums, sixteen petals each.

For a time he simply gazed into her eyes, remarkably large, dark, and pellucid. Captured now within their depths were the high, light-filled window panels, the somber pines of the hillside taking on the beginning day at their tips. The northern outskirts of the city three miles beyond were beginning to shimmer.

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His own eyes were extraordinarily keen, more so than those of nearly all his compatriots within the Matsuyama Air Force Wing to which he would shortly be returning. From only three feet away, he could actually descry his own reflection in her pupils against the sharply angled light of morning. Twin replicas of himself, yet somehow not himself, staring back with a steadfastness remarkably earnest. For some reason they made him want to cry.

"You presume to command me?" he inquired, speaking as quietly as Midori had, almost as gently. It was an attempt at irony, levity to lighten the strain, to forefend against the sense of glistening at the edges of his tear ducts. A descendant of the samurai did not cry. And was he not, indeed, a member of the proud and honored Yamato race? His very name, like her own, was in fact Yamato. Unbidden, the words were echoing within his mind now, words he had repeated often at moments of far greater emotion. Repeated in sonorous and chanting unison with his fellow pilots, especially those who were about to embark upon their rendezvous with the gods of annihilation—of *kamikaze,* the divine wind:

The airman's color
is the color of the cherry blossom . . .
See, oh see, how the cherry blossoms fall
on the hills of Yoshino.
If we are born proud sons of the Yamato race,
let us die fighting in the skies.

In reality, of course, it would not be death in the skies, not for a *kamikaze.* Like many of his compatriots, he would die instead, if he were skilled and brave enough, unwavering in his desperate mission, within a mere fleeting instant, a mere second of profound and ultimate realization. He would plunge his bomb-laden aircraft into an American ship off Okinawa, and they would all die together. His friends his enemies, his enemies his friends. Who were they really? Who was he? In the end, perhaps it made no difference, for their ashes would drift at the command of forces beyond the control of frail mortals from the beginning. Perhaps some of them would mingle indiscriminately at times within the restless bosom of the sea.

"What?" he asked, wrenched from his reverie.

"I said 'yes,'" her voice repeated. "I command you."

Laughing despite himself, he reached out, wincing slightly, knocked over some of the ivory chessmen with the sleeve of his kimono, and placed his hand, deeply tanned, a knuckle badly scarred, upon her own. A small hand, achingly graceful, exquisitely manicured and vulnerable, the color of the daylight. "You?" he inquired. "A mere girl? You? My cousin?"

"I am not a mere girl," she proclaimed at last. "I am now a woman." And suddenly the truth of her words surged unexpectedly within him, almost seemed to thrum like startled wings.

Midori's kimono, in contrast to the slate-like drabness of his own, was somehow quite miraculous. Green and blue, silver and shimmering with flecks and eyelets of pink and lavender. It was not the usual attire for anyone attending the Yoshitaka Women's College—a formless long-sleeved blouse and skirt, both an almost dingy black.

Why, he wondered, had she dressed in her most expensive and exotic attire on such a day as this? Momentarily he felt rising amusement. If anyone alive were the stark antithesis of obeisant Japanese womanhood, it was his cousin. But why the kimono? To commemorate somehow their pending separation two days hence when his sick leave would be over? To savor and celebrate this special time of absence and nostalgia there in her father's household, everyone gone but the two of them? Surely, one way or another, it had to be for him. And yet . . . it seemed there was something more.

Creative like her mother, Midori had early on broken with the gracious yet stereotypical art forms of Japanese heritage. "We have more than enough paintings of snow-capped Fujiyamas," she had once asserted during one of his brief leaves from the military, "toris, glowing lanterns, and snow flakes, or adorable little chickadees flitting about among the cherry blossoms. And of course . . ." even more emphatically, casting up her lovely young hands like swallows, "all those impossibly fragile ocean waves, scrolled and crinkled with froth like lace at their edges."

Astonished and mystified, Zenji had laughed, replying that perhaps there would never be enough of such things, that they were and always would be an intrinsic part of Nippon's identity, its essence and mystique. Once the tradition was gone, he argued, what remained? Ironic indeed that they should hold such opposing views considering their backgrounds. Midori as usual, however, was not to be dissuaded. Tradition, why, of course, she had countered, but to be constantly and permanently immured in the past was neither to live nor to die. It was merely to exist.

How did one truly live without freedom and without the power to innovate?

The nearby wall, in fact, contained a compelling, indeed imposing, example of her artistic iconoclasm: an abstract oil three feet wide and eight feet high of something that might, Zenji reflected, have been born of fire. But what? He was never sure—a bird-like creation, unquestionably, rising in triumph heavenward. Part flamingo perhaps, part pheasant, even peacock, and who knew what else? Eagle as well? All of it wreathed in voracious flames of scarlet, orange, and yellow that dazzled the eye and startled the heart. It might, Zenji mused, even scorch the fingertips of a blind person, just before it cooled along the edges with aquamarine and blue, smoke of muted purple-gray. Definitely no dear little chickadee!

"So then, what is it?" he had once inquired, immediately mindful of his crassness.

"What would you like it to be?" came the reply, leaving him at a momentary loss for words. "I must confess," she mused reluctantly, "that it was inspired in part by the ancient phoenix legend, but it is also intended to be a highly personal matter."

"It shows tremendous talent in any case," he had assured her.

"True, I am your cousin," Midori now observed, returning him to the present, "but I am also a good deal more than that."

Zenji's thick, dark eyebrows rose. "Oh?"

"Yes," she said. "Always have been."

"*Ah so desuka!*" He managed a tone of good-humored indulgence. Outward calm and feigned indifference. Inwardly, a rising turmoil. "Do you wish to—ah—explain?"

Her head was bowed slightly, her eyes gazing into the mirrored surface of the table. "No, the time is not ripe." A flight of crows drifted by the vaulted windows, cawing, rising upon the thermals, their feathers a lacquered black in the gathering light. Momentarily Zenji felt a sense of foreboding. "But it has always been so," she murmured, "from the days of my earliest childhood. Before you ever left this land . . . to become an American."

"I am no longer an American," he replied, finding it difficult to keep his voice steady. "I never was, in fact—not officially. I couldn't become one if I wanted to. Having been born in Nippon, I am not deemed worthy of U. S. citizenship."

Her glance rose, regarding him once more. "You still do not know

who you are, Zenji." A long and simmering pause. "And that is the heart of our problem."

"*Our* problem," he said, half question, half confirmation.

"Yes, *our* problem." Eyelids lowering, she reached for the teapot, deftly pouring them each a cup of the steaming liquid. "That is only one reason of many, however, why you must not volunteer." She placed the teapot back on its pad. "For one thing, you are still too badly injured to fly."

"Not that badly," he insisted, knowing that she was probably correct.

"You are. I can see it in your every movement, your face and eyes. You need a lot more time to convalesce. Special care. Besides, what earthly good will it do?" It was a question she had reiterated one way or another frequently since his return from the air base on Shikoku. But now it came with unexpected passion. "Is it not enough—" Her voice fractured. For a time, she sat there, refusing to look at him," that my brother whom you love as I do—that my brother was blasted from the sky and into oblivion at the mere touch of a stupid button? Nothing left . . ." The words clotted, and she began to weep almost inaudibly.

"Stop, Midori, please." His throat was filled with alum.

"The spirit that was . . ."

"Don't! I am telling you," he commanded. "It has already been hard enough." Suddenly, relentlessly, the obsession had returned. And he was back there again in the skies of Yamaguchi, the American fighter wildly banking and rolling, Shigeru tenaciously pursuing in his Mitsubishi Zero, cutting inside the enemy's immense and desperate arc through feathery clouds of morning pink.

"The face that was once my brother!" she gasped in a desperate sob.

He winced, as much from heart pang as his own recent injury, feeling a sharp acidic twinge, hoping fervently to avert the image. No use. For suddenly, two Mustang P-51s had materialized, seemingly from the void—energy transformed into matter. Diving unexpectedly out of the sun at steeply opposing angles, they were pumping a steady stream of lead into his cousin's cockpit. Fifty caliber bullets ravaged his body in an instant, tore away the top of his leather helmet and skull, blasted free the entire canopy, and sent it tumbling back into the slipstream, shearing off a wing as though it were made of cardboard. The wing vaulted and flipped end over end, its brave red circle, insignia of the rising sun, intermittently flashing and vanishing in the emptiness below.

Simultaneously, the decimated remains of Shigeru's Zero spiraled into a vast and groaning barrel roll, vomiting smoke which spawned a ferocious orange fireball and obliterated all that remained of man and plane. Nothing but particles, some still faintly flickering like the remains of holiday fireworks in their descent toward the ocean. Water, in the end, as always, prevailed over fire.

All this, Zenji had viewed from a mere two hundred yards, such stark and swift violence that he'd scarcely had time to react. Only a sensation in his gut like the impact from a lead pipe—that and utter incredulity. Before he had closed the distance in pursuit, the Mustangs were sweeping upward in an immense, exultant gyre, vanishing into a cloud of celestial whiteness, so luminous with the morning sun that it hurt his eyes. For a mere slivered instant, however, he had spotted one of the pilots giving the other a two-fingered "V" for victory, teeth bared in a savage grin of triumph, goggles flashing like heliographs.

Luckily, they had not detected him, for by then he was too devastated over the sudden annihilation of his cousin for a rational response.

"Shigeru awaits us at the Yasakuni Shrine in Tokyo," he said quietly, struggling to contain himself. "Your parents may be visiting there this very—"

"The Yasakuni Shrine!" Midori wailed. "That is not *good* enough!" Her cry was so sudden and desolate he jerked as though slapped. "Who is Shigeru now, really? What has he become? "Religious answers are all so . . ." For a moment she gazed upward as though seeking a sign, demanding one. "So elusive. Like smoke, like mist, that vanishes in the morning sunlight."

"Many people have found great comfort in religion," he reminded her, "highly intelligent people including your own parents, in fact."

"True," she agreed. "But I cannot. And like so many others, they embrace both Buddhism and Shintoism. They pick and choose from each whatever best suits their emotional needs. Covering all bases. Isn't that how they say it in America? Last week, in fact, just before they were leaving, Mother told me she hoped that Shigeru was now a guardian warrior in the spirit world."

He watched her, waiting. "So?" A stubborn pause. "What did you tell her?"

"I didn't answer, Zenji. I bit my tongue. But guarding what and why?" Her laughter was cold, almost metallic. "What in the name of

heaven is he guarding, and from whom? America? Australia and England? Will they be bombing us there in the next realm, if there actually is one, as well? And if so, why can't the million and one gods of Shintoism do a little guarding on their own for a change?"

"You are very irreverent, Midori," he said, realizing simultaneously that his observation was a bit hypocritical.

"I don't care," she countered. "I only care about the truth." She drew a deep, shuddering breath, holding it, staring into her teacup as though it were a talisman. "Who knows?" she added with seeming irrelevance. "Perhaps some day I may join you in your curious little Utah religion." A pause. "For want of anything better," she added indifferently.

He stared. "My curious little *Utah* religion? Are you joking?" She shrugged again, still absorbed in the teacup. "Why? To spite your parents and your ancestors?"

"No, not to spite them by any means, but I cannot reconcile their views with my own, Zenji. Never have, never will."

"Because we have lost Shigeru?" he persisted. She failed to reply, her features seeming to dissolve. "Besides, you know almost nothing about Mormonism."

"Nor do you," Midori retorted. "Not nearly as much as you should, in any case." Momentarily he felt irritated, insulted, yet also had to admit that it was true. "But sometimes I just feel things," she murmured.

The tops of the hillside pines were now rinsed in a light the color of lemons, and several crows had returned, settling there. One had landed on a locust branch beside the nearest window. There it teetered for a moment, fluttering its wings and bending its tail a time or two. Its eye, glossy and dark purple like a ripe currant, regarded them steadily except for an occasional dimpling. The nictitating membrane, Zenji reminded himself, something learned in his high school zoology class from the pink-faced, silver-haired Albert Pendleton. A man of gentle good humor and benevolence who had also been his ward bishop.

"I must leave now to pick up my report card and yearbook, " Midori said, relatively calm once more. Her graduation was scheduled for the next evening, and Zenji planned to attend, along with two of their uncles and aunts. "But I will not remain for the autographs and all those trite and sentimental messages."

"You might regret it," he warned, remembering his own yearbook at graduation time, the Ogden High School 1940 *Classicum*, with its rows of

familiar faces in black and white, the ink-scrawled messages in pencil or fountain pen—corny, half-baked, some sentimental, some laughable, yet also endearing and already redolent with the past. At the moment he recalled especially that flamboyant scrawl above his photo with the wrestling team: "Hey, Champ—way to go at State!!! What say we grab some babes and hit the beach at Pine View now school's out??? Your Buddy Always—Danny Boy."

More than four years ago, wafted off and away like bright balloons on the wind. What, he often wondered, had become of Danny? Most likely in the military now. Army Air Force? Some irony, that one! What about Dolly Murasaki and "J Town," Ogden's own little Japanese community? Everybody carted off to Lord knew where along with his father?

"No, definitely not." Midori shook her head, retrieving him from the embrace of nostalgia. Clearly, there was no sense in discussing the matter. "I will return in about two hours, and we shall have a late breakfast. Something special."

She peered at him inquisitively as though in imitation of the crow, reading his thoughts perhaps. "So? Will your stomach wait?"

He grinned. "It has waited all night. What is another hour or two?"

"But . . . " Her countenance grew mournful, and he knew that she would not be denied. Now, within the few minutes remaining, she would force a showdown. "You must promise me, Zen, upon your honor, that you will not even think of such insanity. Never again."

"It may be insane to you—" he began, but she cut him off.

"Promise me, that under no circumstances will you volunteer for such a flight, insist on casting your life away in such a dubious cause. A lost cause, to tell the truth."

Tucking in his chin, he savored his tea, eyes half closed. "Whether this country's cause is lost or not remains to be seen. But when I return to Matsuyama, I may ask to be assigned."

"But why? Zenji, that is so stupid! So blind and stubborn! Because of Nishizawa?" He took a deep breath, the memory rife with bitterness and pain, magnified constantly now by his injury. Nishizawa, his mentor and hero, the greatest Japanese fighter pilot of all time, over a hundred enemy planes to his credit. Late member of the Matsuyama Wing now, along with her brother Shigeru. The wing to which Zenji himself still belonged for at least a brief season. "Because he volunteered instead of waiting to be

summoned?" she asked. "You may be summoned all too soon regardless, without rushing headlong into it."

He merely shrugged, breathing still more deeply. Increasingly, the pressure of life and of death was so great he could not seem to get enough air. "Volunteered, yes, immediately after our first suicide attack at Leyte Bay," Zenji replied, "but there is great irony in the manner of his death."

"How so?"

He paused. "Despite Nishizawa's wishes, our deputy commander would not permit him to die in that manner. He insisted that a man of such phenomenal talent would be a greater boon to his country as a living fighter pilot than a dead kamikaze."

"Why, of course! That makes perfect sense. And so would you."

"I am hardly a Nishizawa," he replied. "Never could be."

"Maybe, maybe not, but you are one of the best."

Zenji shook his head, his lips clamped. "Anyway, no one knows for certain what became of him. The day after that first attack, he was assigned to fly some of our pilots to the Philippines in an unarmed transport plane. The plan was to pick up more Zeros and return with them to Matsuyama. That was the last we ever heard of him. Any of them."

"And no one knows what happened?"

Again, he shook his head, repeated, "The last we ever heard." He added, "But we have a good idea. Probably shot down by Hellcats. Whole area's lousy with them."

"Oh!" Midori gasped. "What incredible irony!" Steam wreathed faintly from the teapot spout. "And what a senseless waste, this whole abominable war."

He offered no reply. "Nishizawa knew, in any case, that he was going to die, had a premonition—told his closest friends he had only a day or two left. Some of them say he had a death wish."

"And does my dearest Zenji also have a death wish?"

In silence they watched the steam as though it might condense into a glimpse of the future. *Dearest*, he mused. Her use of the word touched him deeply and unexpectedly. "I don't know," he said at last, "but maybe, poor as I am by comparison, I can become Nishizawa's proxy. Maybe I can play some small part in avenging his death and the death of Shigeru. Gain a little revenge for the betrayal and imprisonment of my father, of our grandparents and friends, the entire Japanese population in the American West by the very country we all trusted, honored, and loved."

Midori closed her eyes and sighed. "Revenge, always revenge. Where would we be without it? Where would the world be?" For a moment he regarded her curiously, her lowered lids so delicately veined and faintly trembling. Then her eyes opened, more luminous than ever within the burgeoning light.

"That's all well and good," he said, "easy for you to say. But sometimes we just do what we have to do."

"Oh, yes, of course!" Half in accusation, half in lament. "We do what we have to do, business as usual. Blindly chart our course, no matter where it may take us. That's the whole essential problem."

"I suppose," he sighed, unwilling to pursue the matter. "As you have pointed out, I don't know who I am. I have nowhere to turn in the end, no place to call home." His ribs were aching bitterly beneath their bandages, several of them fractured two weeks earlier from a near-crash landing on the great carrier *Kamamutsu* during a storm. A day later he had been consigned to the Second General Army Hospital because of internal bleeding.

"You will always belong to this home," she said quietly. "And you will always belong to . . . " Again the corners of her eyes grew moist.

"Always belong where? To whom?"

Silence. He waited, watching her intently.

"Oh, never mind," she murmured. For an instant her voice was a faint little singsong of petulance. Perhaps a hint of irony as well. "You would not care to understand. Never have."

"I care to understand or I wouldn't have asked," he said.

She sighed exactly as he had seconds before and changed the subject. "I am not in any way minimizing the gravity of your dilemma." The words now were so quiet he strained to hear them. In their aftermath, he could detect only the tone-deaf ringing of the day. "But others have faced even greater ones and still survived—even found happiness."

"It is not a question of surviving," he said a bit stiffly. "Or finding happiness. What good is survival or happiness if a person fails to do what he thinks is right, if he fails to live with honor?"

"Honor!" Her eyes flashed. Sometimes she actually scared him a little. "I hate it! I hate the honor that comes from blind tradition, that requires the mindless taking of human life, including one's own. Absolutely abhor it! Do you realize, Zenji, that just this past year three of my school friends, all with bright, happy—yes, happy!—futures, killed themselves in

the name of honor? And for what? Because they didn't do well on their final examinations. Didn't fail, mind you! Simply did not do 'well' according to some arbitrary standard that has almost nothing to do with actual intelligence, whatever that is. That has virtually no relevance whatever to life itself."

"You express yourself most impressively for a girl of nineteen," he said. For a moment Midori closed her eyes again, breathing deeply, sucking in her cheeks so that the bones stood out. "I'm sorry," he added hastily. "I shouldn't have said that last. For a woman of—a *person* of any age. And I'm very sorry about your friends, truly."

"Thank you," she said, still breathing unevenly, eyes remaining closed, accentuating lashes that were strikingly long and thick and dark. She was still a bit dangerous. "But I don't really care about expressing myself well, only to the degree that I may convey thoughts of value and of truth." The crow beside the window fluttered awkwardly upon the branch then flapped upward cawing. "Besides," she added, warming to a lighter tone, even a nascent smile, "I'm much closer to twenty than nineteen. Tomorrow, in case you've forgotten, is not only my graduation. It is also my birthday."

"How could I forget? I have your whole day planned, in fact."

"You do?" Unfeigned child-like delight, her entire countenance brimming with it.

"Including a special place for dinner after the ceremony. I mean, unless you already—"

"I don't," she interrupted happily. "I'm free as the summer breeze."

"Nothing with anyone else?" His smile became more quizzical. "No Toshifumi?" he added mischievously, referring to a young male admirer who had been spared from military service thanks to severe myopia. An all-too-visible presence about the Yamato domicile in recent months.

"Toshifumi and I have undergone a parting of the ways," she murmured. "He needs someone far more acquiescent, for one thing. As, in fact, do nearly all Japanese males. While I, on the other hand, need someone who actually enjoys thinking once in a while. Not some walking platitude."

A burst of laughter. "Is walking worse than sitting?"

"Why, of course!" she giggled. "If walking, there's no escape!"

He shook his head, still grinning almost savagely. "*So desuka.*" Poor, decent, good-hearted, platitudinous Toshifumi. For the moment Zenji

was feeling quite happy, unaccountably so. Pleased as well that he had already purchased her a present. Nothing lavish but rather expensive, and perhaps appropriate, everything considered. A tiny golden bottle of perfume elegantly lettered in black with the brand name Kinsuru—a rare find at this stage of the war. Acquired from a withered *oba-san* in an obscure little shop off Shiratori Street following his release from the hospital the previous afternoon.

"Anyway," he said at last, "I'm sorry about your friends, but at least you've never had to worry about doing 'well' on the tests. You have been head of your class so consistently, from the very beginning, that everybody takes it for granted. You even have some of your *sensei* intimidated." Midori merely smiled, shrugged almost imperceptibly. During her senior year in high school, she had received scholarship offers from some of the nation's top universities. Much to her father's disgruntlement, however, she had elected to enroll at Yoshitaka, a private two-year women's college only three miles distant, a quasi-elitist institution at best and never rated highly in terms of accreditation. As everyone knew, in any event, her decision stemmed entirely from a fear of leaving home.

Despite her intellectuality and sophistication, Midori's reluctance to be separated from her family was almost phobic, a source of no small amusement to those of her inner circle. Once a few months earlier, staying with a friend for the weekend only a short distance beyond the city, she had feigned illness her first night away and called home for deliverance. Shigeru, there on one of his rare military leaves, had promptly come to her rescue in the family limousine.

"Perhaps I don't have to worry about 'doing well,'" she mused, "but that creates other problems, doesn't it?" He failed to comprehend. "Pride, for example. Sometimes I am a very prideful person. Is that not a sin? And what if some day I should fail after all—not live up to the expectations of those I care about most? Of my parents and family? Or my own expectations?" He merely shrugged, holding out his palms. "Should I therefore go out into the garden and kill myself? End my pathetic little life in the glorious and time honored fashion with this—" reaching out with infinite deliberation, as though mesmerized, Midori withdrew the dagger from its sheath "—this splendid family heirloom?" The blade glittered.

"That would be insane," he said.

"Oh, would it?" She pounced—an obvious checkmate. "Then we must be a nation of crazy people, don't you agree? Maybe the 'stupid west-

erners' from your other country are right after all. Maybe we truly are fanatics of the worst order." He began to reply, but she persisted. "*Hara kiri*, perhaps, the time-honored and highly respectable death of choice. Self-disembowelment. Wouldn't that be enchanting? Imagine the sight countless families have returned home, or perhaps awakened, to throughout the long centuries, Zen. Or, better still, why not *yuba kiri?* I could bleed to death by biting off my own tongue."

"All right, all right," he muttered, "I get the idea."

"Do you? Really and truly get it? And think what a fitting way to go for one so garrulous!" She paused but for an instant, then persisted remorselessly. "Only months ago, Keiko's father," she added, referring to the father of her best friend, "slashed open his stomach with perfect precision, the perfect inverted 'L', six by six inches. And why? Because his business failed, though from no fault of his own. He nearly worked himself to death. The fault of the war, actually. His family all tried to dissuade him, tried desperately. But no, the great god honor had its day as always. It took him six hours to die, bleeding like a slaughtered pig in all that gore, his insides spilling out."

"Don't talk that way," he said. "That's too much."

"It is not too much!" she flared, "never ever enough until the lunacy is over. Honor? Face? Tradition? Or sheer barbarism and perversion? Anyway, in addition to pride I would also have to worry about compassion."

"You have immense compassion," he said. "Too much if anything."

"Not really, Zen. I will never have enough." She inspected herself critically in the narrow mirror of the blade. "And what about generosity?" Her slender shoulders rose and fell. "What about love?" The final word barely uttered. "All of the virtues, really. And, of course, one never fully arrives, at least one shouldn't."

Unexpectedly she regarded her painting, her glance slowly rising. "I have never really liked that frame."

"The frame? Well then, why not get another?"

Her smile was wryly amused, almost condescending. "Not *any* frame. At least not for that painting. I mean, once you have arrived, where is there to go? Once progress ends, it ends, in my view; and when there is nothing ahead, one has not attained heaven."

"*Ah so desuka.*" Zenji nodded steadily, very faintly, staring into the table. "Most interesting. My own 'little Utah religion,' incidentally, teaches that very strongly. I know that much."

"Good. That's a distinct mark in its favor. But we are avoiding the issue. So I make my petition again, for the hundredth time whether it angers you or not." Once more she paused, marshalling all her remaining resources. "I am almost late, so you must promise—absolutely promise me, Zenji—that you will not volunteer, that you will, at the very least, await my parents' return from Tokyo." He offered no reply. "It is utterly foolish to do anything unnecessarily until we have learned whether my father's views have any weight with the premier and his cabinet. Because one thing is at last certain. Japan is losing. That is an inescapable fact, and it is time to end the war without further destruction, without further sacrifice of countless innocent lives. On both sides."

He could smell incense, the first tendrils wafting in through an open window at the rear. Upon rising, she must have lighted a stick of it in the urn beside the family shrine there in the back garden, then knelt, head bowed in prayer. Prayer for whatever might remain, if only the memory, of Shigeru. "Father, despite all his former militancy, is passionately convinced of that now," she continued. "You know that as well as I." Her gaze drew vaguely inward. "I thought it would never happen, but even he—the last of our family samurai—even Father, has come to understand that there is no honor in dying for a lost cause. In dying for the mere sake of dying. Do you not agree?" He waited, knowing that she had trapped him. "How in the name of rationality, of humanity itself, can you not agree?"

For a time he looked down, lost in the red dragon adorning the straw tatami floor covering. He himself was actually seated within its jaws. Reluctantly, he gave one long, descending nod, chin almost prodding his chest.

"And all those thousands of kamikaze," she persisted. "What have they accomplished except to die and leave their families in sorrow? All those sad little letters and tender poems, those locks of hair, even fingers, sent home to be cremated, ashes for the family shrine. And what will it do to your family if you insist upon dying yourself? Our grandparents? Your own dear father? Will it liberate them from bondage? Will your loss be their happiness?"

Her gaze was utterly uncompromising. "Can the common people of this country truly believe that our terrible losses throughout the Pacific, especially at Iwo Jima and now Okinawa, are simply part of some grand and cunning strategy designed to lure the Americans closer and closer un-

til Japan can suddenly turn and pounce? Utterly overwhelm them? That would be hilarious if it wasn't so pathetic."

"Not necessarily," he replied. In some respects the idea reflected valid military strategy: Lure one's enemy to the point of over-extension, beyond his sources of supply . . . then the consummate, gargantuan counterattack with everything at one's disposal. But he had to admit that little remained at Japan's disposal for anything, only the tattered remnants of its once proud military. That and its people. People bereft of almost an entire generation of their young men. People with nothing left soon but bamboo spears and their own frail flesh.

The B-29s especially symbolized America's power. Winged Super Fortresses, aptly named, one of which had nearly sent him down, annihilated two of his comrades, then escaped virtually unscathed. Those same aircraft, like a plague of fire-spewing monsters, had burned much of greater Tokyo to ashes in a single incendiary raid five months earlier.

"I really must leave," Midori persisted. "But not until I have your answer." Still, he hesitated. "Zenji, the surrender may be only days away!"

Yes, possibly, he thought, depending on who prevailed in Tokyo. Depending ultimately upon the Emperor himself. But what would happen to Japan once surrender occurred? If loyal Americans like his father and grandparents could be incarcerated along with thousands of others simply because of their ancestry, what would become of Japan itself? Did not his own integrity demand the courage to fight on at any cost, to join in one final and consummate effort to turn the tide?

He sat there, head bowed, staring fixedly at the dragon teeth, then glanced up. Midori was regarding him with auger-like intensity, her cheeks sucked in, eyes unblinking, fairly smoldering, yet moisture was collecting in their outer corners, glimmering at the apex of one cheek bone. "I cannot promise such a thing," he said.

"Very well." Her voice was thick, scarcely audible. Slowly, with great deliberation, she raised the dagger, placing its tip, sharp as the corner of a razor blade, against the right carotid artery directly below the angle of her jaw line.

Zenji's eyes bulged. "What are you doing?"

"I am doing . . ." she began and flinched, blinking rapidly as the blade point nicked the pale skin, directly against the very throbbing of her pulse.

"Idiot!" He reached out to restrain her, gritting his teeth from the pain in his ribs, the electric spasm in his whip-lashed neck.

"Don't touch me!" she commanded. "I am doing what needs to be done."

He stared, mouth half open, hand half extended. "My God, girl, you've cut yourself! You're bleeding!" A tiny red line was curving its way down the artery, bifurcating and enlarging as it neared her collar bone. "Put down the stupid knife and let me at least . . . " Again, he reached out, thinking perhaps to stanch the flow with his finger tips, only to be forestalled with an even sharper admonition. "Midori, please. You're going to bleed on your beautiful kimono. What kind of craziness is this?"

"It is a craziness that pales beside your own," she said, "and countless others. Do you understand what I am telling you?"

For a time he continued to stare in disbelief. "All right," he assented at last, the words hissing between his teeth in vexation. Or was it relief? Or both? The whole business was inordinately complex. "All right! For now—" frowning profoundly—"I will observe a policy of *mokusatsu.*" He paused, allowing the word to germinate.

Midori eyed him uncertainly, suspiciously, lowering the blade a mere half inch. "The word has two essential meanings. Which is it? To refrain from comment?" She searched his face. "Or to ignore?"

"The first meaning, of course," he assured her. "To refrain from comment, to ponder. I will take time to reflect, to consider the possibility, but that is the best I can offer."

"All right then," she sighed and lowered the dagger, placing it carefully beside the chess board. The blade tip was still faintly rimmed with red. Shifting, Zenji half rose, rounding the table. Kneeling beside her, he reached into his pocket, extracted a clean white handkerchief, and pressed it gently against the tiny wound, cupping the back of her neck with his other hand.

"It is a mere nick, little more than a pin prick," Midori assured him, gazing upward, almost wonderingly now, into his eyes. Her glance contained a rare and remarkable sweetness, a spirit looking out. Something hovered fleetingly on the rim of his consciousness that he had heard long ago from his mother, about the eyes being the window of the soul. "And certainly worth it, considering," she added in little more than a whisper.

"You really had me worried," he confessed. "Please don't ever do such a thing again."

Then they were standing up as Zenji, hurting more than ever, gingerly lifted her by the arms. "I will observe a policy of *mokusatsu*," she said. "That is the best *I* can do." Her smile was highly mobile and again silvery, almost as though flowing with mercury. The girl was definitely too much for him, and now she was heading toward her room with rapid, delicate little steps across the red of the dragon, the flames of its mouth. One hand was pressed to her throat.

Minutes later she had returned, clad in her amorphous black uniform, the garb of calculated conformity. A mere college girl now. "I must hurry," she announced. "The bus has already gone. But my bicycle is in good working condition, and luckily it's all downhill. I'll get there in less than ten minutes if I really give it my best."

"Right." He had little doubt that she would really go for it. All out. "It will be a little more taxing on the return trip, though."

"That doesn't matter," Midori replied, "because you will still be here. And because—" she angled a glance toward the windows "—we made each other a promise." Unexpectedly she reached out, placing her hands, light as butterflies, on each side of his shoulders. He could see the cut clearly now, a miniature eye the color of raw meat that pulsed and puckered as she canted her head. Unbandaged because it wasn't necessary, but also as a special little reminder. Indeed, an ongoing warning. He knew that without question. "And now . . . " Her tone was suddenly impish, playfully mocking, for she was also an actress. "I think it would be an excellent thing if we were to seal that promise with a kiss. Isn't that what they do in the West?"

"At times, I guess, but . . ."

"But what? Because it is not appropriate?" Her gaze lifted, utterly uncompromising, yet not bereft of its ineffable sweetness. "I fear greatly that we shall all die from appropriateness one of these days. Kiss me, then, for my coming birthday, for my coming graduation at the head of the class. That will be my finest reward. The kiss, I mean. Even if it is . . . well, strictly platonic." Her hands remained upon his shoulders, ever so lightly. His own, Zenji scarcely realized, were on each side of her waist. Still, he hesitated, filled with something akin to superstition. "Am I really that repellant?" For an instant her smile wavered.

"Don't be silly," he replied, "you're not at all re—" Then, somehow, with no real sense of transition, they were embracing, their lips highly tentative, barely brushing each other.

"Very gently," she murmured, "I don't want to hurt you." Her scent was that of lilacs.

"Nor I you," he replied. Then, tentatively at first, inquiringly, their lips were melding in a strange and magical alchemy. Her own, cool and pliant, flavored with something that generated the faintest tingling burn as though traced with peppermint, or even wintergreen.

"Well, now," she said withdrawing slightly, striving to contain a faintly quivering inhalation. "That wasn't as platonic as I expected. Certainly not as terrible, I hope, as you expected." Then, before he could reply, she brightened. "Anyway, my fine young man, *sayonara.*" He laughed, shaking his head in wonderment. Withdrawing and darting toward the alcove, she slid back the wood and papered panel with its fading imprints of hummingbirds and daffodils, then made her exit.

He followed her, gazing toward the narrow concrete road, cracked in places, crumbling here and there along the edges. It was already casting off heat waves in its distant descent, waves that somehow blended with the awakening hum of a cicada. "Oh, by the way!" She paused astride her bicycle, adjusting her skirt and plucking a particle of lint from the hem, poised there to thrust off into the embrace of gravity and into something else that he could not fathom, that sucked away his breath. "What has become of your other friend and hero, the great Sakai?"

"Saburo Sakai? He was finally injured in an air battle, as I said in my letter. He lost an eye and may never fly in combat again. Yet even so, he is alive."

"I'm glad," she said, "that he's alive, I mean. That's rather important, isn't it? And, oh . . ." On the very rim of momentum she caught herself for a final instant. "You said that he recently married a beautiful young woman who also happened to be his cousin. Is that not so?"

"Yes, that is so!" he replied. "I attended the celebration with fifty others from our wing."

"Hmmm, most interesting." Then, she was on her way, pedaling earnestly, already sixty and seventy yards down the hill, passing a procession of multi-colored rose bushes and occasional dancing dragonflies. "I was just curious!" she called. Her voice fading, tender and high and lyrical, like something out of a dream. He could almost hear the sound of *samisens.* "Merely wondering!" The final word—faint, fading, and mysteriously attenuated—actually seemed to echo.

He stood there, his own smile an unconscious duplication of the

sound itself, watching her etherized in the distance, vanishing around a long, steep curve. Then there were only heatwaves shimmering across a bend in the road. That and the increased humming of the cicadas, scarcely distinguishable from the high-pitched keening within his own ears. It was, for a moment, as if she had passed through a bend in the ever-mysterious continuum of time itself, and once again he wanted to cry. Unthinkingly he touched a finger to his lips, then tasted them with the tip of his tongue.

The city of Hiroshima below was awake and vibrantly alive now, ringed by its verdant, ever-protective mountains, its gleaming and sinuous rivers, a bright and beckoning blue. The date was August 6, 1945.

# "Once More into the Breach, Dear Friends . . ."

Robert C. Freeman and Dennis A. Wright, *Saints at War: Korea and Vietnam* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2003), 500 pp.

*Reviewed by Robert M. Hogge, Professor of English, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah*

"I was not a man of war, but one of peace" (259). This epiphany came to Stephen G. Biddulph, an LDS combat Marine in Vietnam, as he described a sobering attack he had participated in behind enemy lines. Near a burned-out village among the rubble and chaos and stench of war lay a dead enemy soldier, a diary in his pocket. Biddulph took the diary and later obtained a rough English translation, reading it one night by flashlight. As he read, he realized that the dreaded enemy had been a warm human being who loved his family and homeland; he had hated war but was there to repel the American invaders; he was a brother, despite cultural and political differences.

In the earlier Korean War, Richard D. Wilson, a seventeen-year-old Marine full of youthful exuberance, began his personal account with this stirring epigraph: "Fighting a war without having your scriptures is like being baptized without going in the water" (184). But his youthful enthusiasm is tempered when he meets a good family man, a Bible-reading Marine, a likeable person who loved God. Wilson saw him one day carrying his Bible in an open area when a mortar exploded a few feet from him, killing him instantly. And then the hard questions came to Wilson, the questions that every sensitive, thinking person struggles to answer. That day a naive combat Marine became subdued as he spoke this profound truth: "It took me a long time to deal with that event—if I ever have!" (184).

These are just two excerpts from hundreds of personal accounts of Latter-day Saints either in combat or in support roles during the Korean and Vietnam wars. The book itself is a sequel to *Saints at War: Experiences of Latter-day Saints in World War II* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2001), a "triple combination" now, as Freeman and Wright take us once more into the breach with this new "mini-archive," a compilation of historical materials (both secular and religious), photographs, maps, time lines, feature stories, newspaper clippings, and other memorabilia both preceding and interspersed among individual veterans' accounts arranged alphabetically by surname. A few LDS General Authorities tell their stories of war: Joe J. Christensen, Russell M. Nelson, Hartman Rector Jr., and Lance B. Wickman. Included also are accounts

by revered warriors Bernie Fisher, Arden Allen Rowley, and Larry Chesley.

But the most rewarding experience is sifting through the accounts of hundreds of virtually unknown veterans to find the often-buried gems—those ideas, issues, images, single sentences, selected passages and, occasionally, full accounts of most value to each reader. I remember Douglas P. Bush's account of his patriarchal blessing—not for its actual words, but for what the patriarch years later told him he had seen in vision while giving the blessing but did not tell him or his mother at that time. I also remember Ronald Billings, seeing the explosion and hearing the screams of a young Marine, "Mommy, Mommy!" And "Tad" Derrick and his Mormon Meteor jet aircraft. Yes, and Stanley Shultz and his jeep named Mahonri Moriancumer. But the spiritual accounts of Judy and Michael Kigin, Virgil N. Kovalenko, and Kent Hansen impressed me the most.

The book's target audience is primarily women (70 percent of the shoppers in LDS bookstores), buying it as a gift for men in their sixties and seventies who are interested in discovering what faithful Latter-day Saints can accomplish, even amid the trials, heartache, and brutality of war. The release date for the book and the *Saints at War: Korea Documentary* (DVD and VHS) was Veterans' Day, November 11, 2003. The documentary features LDS members of the 213th Armored Artillery Battalion, an activated National Guard Unit from southern Utah, one of the most celebrated units in "The Forgotten War." Keith Pendleton called the members of this battalion "Second Helaman's Army" (136) because they were led by a faithful LDS colonel, Frank Dalley, and all of the 600 men returned home safely.

Both the book and documentary have been extracted from the much larger Saints at War Archive, the only living archive of LDS veterans' wartime experiences. More than a thousand veterans who have never spoken publicly about their experiences are choosing to speak now. Some of the accounts in this book focus almost uniquely on combat experience; these veterans seem to reflect the mindset of the fictional character Frederic Henry who feels that the only things that have meaning in war are "the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates."[1] But I found the accounts of the latter-day spiritual warriors much more satisfying. All of these accounts (both oral and written), along with journals, diaries, newspaper clippings, and other memorabilia, are housed in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections Department at BYU's Harold B. Lee Library.

On November 8, 2003, three days before the release of the book and documentary, a special conference for LDS servicemen and women was held at BYU as a tribute to all veterans of twentieth-century military conflicts, with

1. Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (New York: Scribner's, 1969), 185.

special recognition being given to veterans from the Korean and Vietnam wars. The keynote speaker was Hartman Rector Jr., a Seventy emeritus. He expresses a hint of his almost "Catch-22" conversion story during the Korean War in these words: "They're trying to kill me out there. And if they do, I'll bear testimony against you at the last day that you kept me out of the Church!" (142) Then he records a vision he had as a pilot bombing North Korean railroads. But I'll let you read that story.

## Opening the Fiery Portals: World War II and the Saints

Donald Q. Cannon and Brent L. Top, eds., *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saints Church History. Vol. 4: Europe* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, Department of Church History and Doctrine, 2003), 207 pp., index, $19.95.

*Reviewed by John Sillito, professor of libraries, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah*

Not long after learning of the cancer that would ultimately take his life, my father faced a difficult course of experimental radiation and chemotherapy. As I drove him to the hospital to take his first treatment, I asked him if he was frightened. "Yes," he admitted, "and I have only been this scared once before in my life—June 6, 1944." D-Day in Europe.

If I hadn't known it before, our conversation confirmed that, like the Vietnam War for my generation or the Great Depression for my grandparents, World War II was the defining moment for my parents' generation. Over the years we have called it the "Good War" and characterized those who fought it and defeated Fascism as the "Greatest Generation." Without the efforts of that generation, no doubt the world would be a far different and much worse place. Yet despite our hopes that the world would emerge from that terrible war free of conflict, we still know all too well the suffering and costs in human life, resources, and psychic trauma that war brings.

For Latter-day Saints, World War II presented a unique set of challenges. After a century of missionary efforts in Europe, it was inevitable that Mormons would be involved on both sides of that conflict as civilians and combatants, and would feel, especially in Germany, but elsewhere as well, the horror of war personally.

The four essays dealing with World War II in this volume of *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saints Church History*, edited by Donald Q. Cannon and Brent L. Top, help us better understand those realities and the impact they had on the people involved. The topic makes this volume especially appropriate for review in this issue of *Dialogue*. In addition, Cannon and Top have included in this eclectic volume excellent studies of the Mor-

special recognition being given to veterans from the Korean and Vietnam wars. The keynote speaker was Hartman Rector Jr., a Seventy emeritus. He expresses a hint of his almost "Catch-22" conversion story during the Korean War in these words: "They're trying to kill me out there. And if they do, I'll bear testimony against you at the last day that you kept me out of the Church!" (142) Then he records a vision he had as a pilot bombing North Korean railroads. But I'll let you read that story.

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mon Tabernacle Choir's European tours; missionary work in difficult fields like Iceland, Estonia, and France; and temple building in Germany and Switzerland. Scholars and general readers alike will gain from these other essays as well.

Drawing on the letters her father wrote while serving a 1935–38 mission in Germany, Jessie L. Embry explores an important question: was Adolf Hitler a "deliverer or oppressor"? In the 1930s, Mormons, both leaders and rank-and-file members, held differing views. While Bertis Embry had a negative view of Hitler, saying he was against religion and had introduced "a day of the anti-Christ" in Germany, Jessie Embry found that some missionaries had a more favorable impression. They pointed to Hitler's oratorical skills, commitment to order and efficiency, efforts at political stability, and support for marriage, motherhood, and the family. He even emphasized genealogy, which seemed to parallel Mormon concerns, although they seemed unaware that it was used for the sinister purpose of identifying those of Jewish descent. Other missionaries, however, recognized the reality of the Nazi regime noting the arrests, suppression of free speech, and general fear that permeated German society. As Embry's father expressed it, the German people were held down "by an iron hand" (56) and hesitated even to take a tract from missionaries. As much as he loved the German people, he anticipated returning to his homeland where people "don't have to be scared to death all the time" (56).

Still, missionaries and Church officials, both locally and from Utah, tried to make the best of a difficult situation. Seeing the "troubled times" as conducive to spreading the gospel, General Authorities like John A. Widtsoe and Richard R. Lyman, and even President Heber J. Grant urged missionaries to avoid politics in favor of purely religious discussions.

Clearly, as Jessie Embry realizes, our more "complete picture of history" validates those missionaries who saw Hitler negatively, even though for "those missionaries who grew to love the German people and wanted to share the gospel with them," tolerating Hitler may have "seemed the best course of action at the time" (60). Such tolerance may have been a useful policy for those American missionaries; but as war loomed on the horizon, they were evacuated to the States, while local Latter-day Saints were left to deal with the reality of war.

David Boone explores the story of these historic evacuations. During 1938 and 1939, missionaries were first removed from Germany, but over time they also left other places in Europe and Scandinavia. Ironically, by the time of Pearl Harbor, the only missionaries laboring outside of the continental United States were in Hawaii.

Two other important topics are explored. Robert Freeman examines the experiences of German Saints during the war, while Dennis Wright dis-

cusses the role played by LDS servicemen on D-Day.

As Freeman notes, when war broke out in Europe in 1939, the Church "had a strong presence in Germany" (89), ranking third in total membership behind the United States and Canada. As missionaries were evacuated, local leaders confronted a situation where the Church's presence was problematic. Finding it difficult to communicate and facing suspicion, indigenous leaders balanced loyalty to country and church. Such a balancing act was not without irony. In Hamburg, for example, local German Saints commemorated the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Relief Society, an event canceled in the United States because of wartime restrictions. A month earlier three brave young Latter-day Saints—Helmuth Huebner, Karl-Heinz Schnibbe, and Rudi Wobbe—were arrested by the authorities for distributing anti-Nazi propaganda. Eventually Huebner became a martyr for freedom, beheaded in prison. Schnibbe and Wobbe served lengthy prison sentences. Simultaneously, Salomon Schwartz, a local Jewish convert, was sent to a concentration camp, while his branch leaders posted a sign over the branch building proclaiming, "Jews are not allowed" (91). Such signs were found throughout the land, but the ironic combination demonstrates some of the difficulties of wartime life.

Even more problematic, hundreds of German Saints "wore the uniform of the Third Reich during the war" (91). Nearly five hundred were killed; many more were wounded. Civilians also faced privation and death daily as well. More than one hundred Church members died, including mission and district presidents; many were left unaccounted for, while even more became homeless. The German Saints, both combatants and civilians alike, reached out to each other, relied on their faith, and hoped for a better day. And like their fellow Mormons in Europe and North and South America, their lives were never the same again.

The lives of those young Latter-day Saints who found themselves at D-Day were never the same either. As Dennis Wright chronicles, they were there as soldiers, sailors, and airmen. Some landed on the beaches, while others flew support in the skies above. They witnessed death, acts of unselfish heroism, even small acts of kindness from local civilians. Many evaded capture; others did not and spent months in German prison camps. More troubling, perhaps, young German Latter-day Saint men faced young American Mormons on the field of battle. Each was motivated by patriotism and love of homeland. Would loyalty lead a German Saint to kill an American or vice versa? Probably.

As Wright notes, the invasion was chronicled in the *Deseret News*, which reported that the news was received calmly: There were "no noisy receptions in Salt Lake" (125). The paper included a photo of Mrs. Samuel W. Jones, reading her scriptures, under "three stars in her window indicating the number of her sons serving in the

military." One son, Private Sherwood Jones, had participated in the invasion. His mother said, "I do not care to read the headlines today. . . . I pray for the safety of my son, but that is not all I want. I want him, under any test, to be true and truly brave. Also I want him to pray" (125). The paper also contained the comments of one observer that, while D-Day represented the beginning of the final stage of a long and terrible war, for the time being "let's temper our enthusiasm with caution" (125). Wright's article captures and preserves the recollections of a score of Latter-day Saint veterans of that decisive day in June 1944, and our understanding of that event is richer for it.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can fault those missionaries who did not recognize the evil of the Nazi ideology and the personal hold Hitler had over the populace. Such a judgement would be somewhat unfair, since we would be asking them to be more prescient in their analysis at age nineteen or twenty than much older individuals, including British Prime Minster Neville Chamberlain and aviator Charles Lindbergh, who also believed the world could work with "Herr Hitler." Today we celebrate the martyrdom of Huebner and the courage of Wobbe and Schnibbe. But the measure of respect we now have for their action developed only after years of controversy.

War, the poet William Stafford observed, despite our views to the contrary, really produces two losers. Even in victory, even in a cause as noble as defeating Fascism, the world is never the same. The suffering lasts for generations. Perhaps Willy Deters, a district president in Germany, said it best in journal entries toward the end of the war. Faced with death, destruction, and despair he notes: "Hell has opened its fiery portals. . . . No rest can be found at night. . . . Reasoning now has changed to madness" (96–97). It is a sobering thought worth considering at this time of history as well.

# U.S. Navy Photo: "Dawn Landing on Wake Island"

*Ruth Salter*

All nature's knowledge
Is to stay unknowing–
Ours, to confess confusion:
–Fyodor Tyutchev

I knew it was dawn
With the sun blurring whitely
Through the gray clouds,
But I'm glad someone wrote that.
The light and the words make a bridge
Across the water to the sand.

In this place there is no wind:
A big flag on the landing craft hangs straight down.
Silhouette men hold their stick guns
Above the sea and wade to shore.

I don't know the story of Wake.
I don't know these men,
But I know other soldiers with other stories.

They're all about the place
Where it's good to fight
Where time unmakes itself
And death is awake.
Somewhere I can't go.

This beach looks like many beaches.
These small waves could be anywhere,
And the clouds, too, with the sun
Erasing the sky and spilling down.
But this is nowhere.

---

*RUTH SALTER lives with her husband, baby daughter, and more than twice the legal limit of pets in Boise where she teaches writing part-time at Boise State University. Her past adventures include rehabilitating injured wildlife, flying airplanes upside down, and receiving nominations for two Pushcart prizes.*

# Christmas Conflict: 2001

*Dawn Baker Brimley*

> . . . for love is of God, and every one
> that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.
> —1 John 4:7

How were we to know
through the thick, smoking days,
the awful rubble of terror

and the warring words? How were we
to remember, except through the insistence
of our own hearts in the slow blue

of morning, another day for some of us
to take December seriously,
to practice hope like birds anticipating

south? There are towns still wanting to believe:
rooms where trees stand as monuments
so beautiful they might have wings.

And Bethlehem is, after all, as near
as any town where gifts are not bombs,
where greetings are not gunfire,

and where a shepherd could stop for directions.
It floats, this village, on hills in snow,
under the same stars flaring over the plains

everywhere, for anyone who survives, shivering
and wounded, but expecting to be allowed to love
on this rolling, reeling, fast darkening

Christmas earth.

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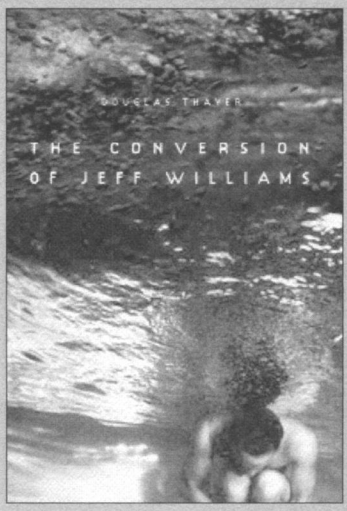
*DAWN BAKER BRIMLEY graduated from Brigham Young University with a B.S. degree in sociology and psychology (1954). With the equivalent of a major in English, she has taught children's literature at BYU and elsewhere. She has published one poetry collection,* Waking Moments *(Provo, Utah: Bushman Press, 1989), and is working on a second book. Among her honors are first-place and second-place awards in the BYU Eisteddfod competition for lyric poetry, a first-place award in the Eliza R. Snow contest, and second place in a* BYU Studies *contest. Her poetry has appeared, among other places, in* Dialogue, Sunstone, BYU Studies, *and the* Ensign.




The Conversion of Jeff Williams

by Doug Thayer

234 pp. / $18.95

Provo is a world away from San Diego. In this topsy-turvy tale, it is the wealthy, religious, east-bench Provoans who enjoy the best that life can offer and share it with a less privileged, laid-back, So Cal teenager over one summer vacation. At first, Jeff finds himself dazzled by east-bench affluence and faith. But as the summer progresses, events persuade him to rethink this religion-and-riches culture and to accept that the normal temptations and foibles of youth—without the Porsche—are just fine: "Every September before school, Dad gave me a blessing and told me to be receptive to the guidance of the Holy Ghost. I didn't particularly like the idea of the Holy Ghost following me around, checking up on what I was doing all the time, but Mom said I needed all the help I could get, particularly when it came to girls. I liked living in Aunt Helen's eight-million-dollar house. It made me feel like I might enjoy the summer more than I had thought I would. I knew that I wouldn't be able to wander around the house in my boxers and t-shirt, but I felt important."

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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Maryann Webster was born in San Francisco and grew up in northern California. She received an MFA and a Research Fellowship award from the University of Utah where she now teaches. Recent exhibitions of her work have been in galleries in New York, Chicago, Berkeley, Santa Fe, and Portland.

She works with porcelain and glaze-like enamels that withstand extremely hot temperatures. She likes to imagine these durable materials outlasting our civilization.

## ARTIST'S STATEMENTS

### THE FRONT COVER: *Destroying Angel*
(center panel from triptych)

I am interested in ancient icons and their naïve style of expression. Ezekiel refers to fierce angels with eyes on their wings, and also great wheels called thrones or ophannim, which seemed to transport these beings. This angel is poised on a mushroom-shaped cloud with a radiation symbol at the center of the wheel. The planes represent the B-29 bombers that carried atom bombs. Nearby Wendover, Utah, was the top-secret take-off point for the Hiroshima-Nagasaki bombings. Growing up with the culture of constant nuclear threat and bomb testing in Nevada have greatly influenced this piece.

### THE BACK COVER: *Mutant Garden Diptych*

Adam and Eve represent pure, untouched nature. In this instance, however, the animals around them are sickly or altered in some way. Behind the two figures are seen a nuclear power plant and the mushroom-shaped clouds of atomic bombs. In one corner an angel witnesses the precarious scene, while Adam and Eve seem unaware of the destruction. Most of the background is covered with 22-karat gold leaf, which is intended as a metaphor for radioactivity. Historically, a gold leaf background represented the holy light of heaven. I have included a nuclear power plant because radioactive contamination is considered a serious threat to nature and human life. Utah is targeted by the federal government as the site of the world's largest nuclear waste dump at Skull Valley, fifty miles from the Wasatch Front.

DIALOGUE
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