DIALOGUE

A Journal of Mormon Thought

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is an independent quarterly established to express Mormon culture and to examine the relevance of religion to secular life. It is edited by Latter-day Saints who wish to bring their faith into dialogue with the larger stream of world religious thought and with human experience as a whole and to foster artistic and scholarly achievement based on their cultural heritage. The journal encourages a variety of viewpoints; although every effort is made to ensure accurate scholarship and responsible judgment, the views expressed are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or of the editors.

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Song of Songs

Another forbidden subject breached. The brave ones lead. Molly Bennion's "Singing the Song of Songs" (Autumn 2003) was bold and showed wisdom. Mormons seem frightened to talk about our humanness. More like that, please.

Mike Oborn
Bellevue, Washington

Reply to Professor Hamblin

I am gratified and delighted that my modest piece "Prophecy and Palimpsest" was of sufficient interest to call forth the remarks of Professor Hamblin (Winter 2003). He has afforded me the welcome chance to try to clarify things that I, a novice in Book of Mormon scholarship, have left blurred. He raises four points that I would like to discuss.

First, though, as Dr. Hamblin surmises, I am shamefully ignorant of some relevant work previously done on these issues, I am aware of a large volume of apologetics for the ancient authorship of the Book of Mormon. But I must say that it strikes me as basically axe-grinding in nature. And I do not feel it is wise for those unconvinced by such attempts to delay attempts at creative, new critical experiments, feeling that we are forever obliged to refight the same battles with the rear guard again and again. There may be a place for that (as when I debate evangelicals on the historicity of the gospels and the resurrection of Jesus), but I want to get on with the studies made possible by a new paradigm—not spend all my time trying to beat the old one to death.

So, in my opinion, articles like mine properly take as read the apologetics debate and invite the consideration of those who have come out of that debate on the same side, those of us who agree that the Book of Mormon is a monument of the nineteenth century. We must take the trouble to follow out the implications of our basic insight. I don't see why our team should let the other side forever set the agenda for us. If we do, we will never get anywhere. Of course, apologists probably don't want us to.

Second, let me try to clarify my position on whether Joseph Smith should be considered a hoaxer, a deceiver, etc. This is really a manifestation of the intentional fallacy. We can never be sure we have captured the intention of any author; and even when we do happen to know it, it is not the final word. It is the text—the work itself—that tells the tale, not the writer. In this sense, with Roland Barthes, we can speak of "the death of the Author." When we engage the Book of Mormon as a text to see what it has to say for itself, it becomes evident that it is a massive work of edifying fiction. It has not the nature of a malicious hoax, which we might describe as propaganda, disinformation, incitement to fear or hate, or manipulation of the reader for financial exploitation. It is a work of edifying fiction, like a parable, no matter what may have been said by the first one to promulgate it.

We may indeed seek to infer what

was going on in Joseph Smith's mind (or in his temporal parietal lobe!), but this will be a provisional, tentative judgment of a biographical kind concerning Joseph Smith, not about the Book of Mormon. I would be willing to say that Joseph Smith, like Madame Blavatsky, Father Divine, G.I. Gurdjieff, and others was something of a hoaxer. But I would rather use the anthropological term *trickster,* which usually refers to mythic characters embodying the sort of serious divine "play" we see when Zeus and Hermes visit Baucis and Philemon in mortal disguise, when Jehovah invites Abraham to think he must sacrifice his son as a test of faith, or when Krishna plays tricks on his faithful milkmaids.

Religious founders are playing such a trick when they undertake the almost ritual procedure of claiming revelations from God, whether immediately vouchsafed to the imagination's eye (what Jung would call the "active imagination") or laboriously composed like Deuteronomy or the Book of Mormon. I believe all such "tricks" carry with them a whisper of "he who has ears, let him hear." In short, I think the Book of Mormon *is* put forth as a parable.

The claim that it is an ancient book from God is more a metaphorical characterization of the role in the faith community the book will play. This is why I am happy, in the responsive readings of my beloved Episcopal Church, to say "Thanks be to God!" when the Scripture lesson is completed with the formula: "The Word of the Lord." To me that phrase does not count as a theory as to the production of the book being read from, but rather as an acknowledgment of the centrality the text holds in our worship life.

The degree to which Joseph Smith actually did his best to persuade people to adopt a factually inaccurate belief (known by him to be nonfactual) would be the degree to which he was a deceiver but, as I say, a benign one. But his intent hardly matters. The text tells its own story. And besides, for a man to have spent hour upon hour, day after day, gazing into the bottom of that hat . . . ! Well, he must have thought he was scrying the secrets of the past in some manner or other. It can't simply have been a hoax. The psychology of religion in general and of prophets in particular is perhaps more complex than the syllogisms of Professor Hamblin leave room for.

Third, have I contradicted my own theory when I make Joseph Smith a writer of pseudepigrapha? Dr. Hamblin points out two ambiguities in my article. First, I offer *biblical* examples of pseudepigraphical texts while defining pseudepigrapha as writings that resort to sacred pen names because it is too late for them to have been included in the canon of scripture. But there is no problem here after all. The canon has evolved. The book of Daniel didn't make it into the canon when it contained only the Law and the Prophets, but later there was a new "catch-all" division added to the canon, "the Writings," and Daniel was deposited there. With Deutero-Zechariah, part of canonical Zechariah, it was a case of someone adding new chapters to a book that already had a place in the canon, really

a large-scale textual interpolation. And then again, different sects and churches have different canons, different lists, so that today the Ethiopian Church has 1 Enoch in its canon, just as Tertullian wanted, while most others don't. Joseph Smith was certainly trying to secure admission for the Book of Mormon into the Christian canon, at least that of his own new sect. Even today the Book of Mormon is packaged and promoted as "another Testament of Jesus Christ," which certainly suggests it is more Bible.

The second ambiguity with regard to pseudepigraphy was the fact that, whereas I said ancient pseudepigraphists hid behind the names of biblical heroes, Joseph Smith did not. Yes, but that seems to me an irrelevant distinction here, since, given the nature of the fiction—a collateral Bible representing an unknown dispensation in the western hemisphere—you would have had to use Bible-related characters with new names since, unfortunately, the Bible contains the names of no Americans. If only because the Book of Mormon must report the final slaughter of the Nephites, the narrators cannot have been portrayed as (much more ancient) Bible personalities. In any case, they *are* ancient Israelite characters. I do not think it weakens my point.

On a related matter, the fact that the Prophet Joseph Smith began promulgating revelations in his own name previous to and simultaneous with the publication of parts of the Book of Mormon seems to me not that important. Dr. Hamblin contends that Joseph Smith need not have resorted to pseudepigraphy to gain credence by circumventing canonical bounds (which is why, I said, people wrote under sacred pen names) since he already had acknowledged prophetic authority. Well, yes and no. It remains true that his announced discovery of new portions of scripture was instrumental in making his first converts (and many subsequently). And it is safe to say that his own prophecies carried weight only with those who no longer needed convincing. So he hid behind Mormon's and Moroni's names to get people to believe in him, then spoke in his own name once they did believe in him. Even today, if TV evangelism is any clue, outsiders are attracted by the offer of "another Testament of Jesus Christ," not by the oracles of Joseph Smith in the Doctrine and Covenants.

The fourth major point I want to address is that of my own faith. Am I disingenuous? Do I claim that the Book of Mormon is what I believe does not even exist: a work of divine inspiration? Dr. Hamblin has erred in reading my various articles as direct commentary upon one another. In fact, I believe my various fragmentary writings are quite consistent in a manner that I now find myself obliged to sketch. Basically, my theological position is a phenomenological one, a theology of religious experience as it appears to consciousness. I do not suppose that mortals can have knowledge of ostensible metaphysical realties. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high; I cannot attain it" (Ps. 139:6). In Kant's wake, I regard the failures and absurdities of conventional arguments for theism as

the inevitable and farcical results of the doomed attempt to speak of the unknowable in terms of the known. It is such absurdities and fallacies I seek to combat, along with the kindred fallacies of evangelical biblical apologetics (which strike me as bad biblical studies), in my writings for atheist and humanist venues. I take very seriously the dictum of Paul Tillich who said that the God the atheists reject is rightly rejected. In some of my writings, I am busy doing that.

I agree with Don Cupitt that the only proper place for God-language is worship, not, for instance, scientific or historical explanation, as if one were to explain a plane crash by saying, "Well, it looks as if God wanted those people dead." It would not be so much false as ludicrous. Where is God? He inhabits the praises of his people (Ps. 22:3). Where may we speak of God? In the zone of worship, like the ancient high priests who dared utter his name only once a year behind the veil. Recent brain science bids fair to account for how we have religious/spiritual/emotional/esthetic experiences. Fine. That does not spoil their value, any more than a knowledge of optics undermines or co-opts the appreciation of art. I think the core religious experience—the sense of awe and wonder before Being itself—is basically esthetic. Thus, esthetic means are needed to awaken it, as all hymn-writers and church architects know very well. So I am not ashamed of the "dramatic" or "theatrical" understanding of worship as Dr. Hamblin appears to be. While no doubt appreciating the artistic dimension, he seems to think that a metaphysical opinion about what is going on in worship is required as well, like the Catholic priest who demands that the communicant believe in Transubstantiation before he will allow him to partake.

If asked whether I "believe in" God, I have but an oblique answer: I worship God. I do not make him an object. When asked if I believe Joseph Smith is a true prophet, my criteria are twofold: Did/does he so function in the life of the community he founded? And do his teachings lead his people into a wholesome and virtuous life? I answer "Yes" to both. I offer the same answer to the question of whether Rev. Sun Myung Moon is a true messiah. I am an atheist in that I reject the personal deity of literalistic biblical religion. I am an agnostic and a humanist in that I do not see how we may get around the insight of Protagoras: Man is the measure of all things. I am a Christian and an Episcopalian in that I rejoice to sing the hymns, to observe the liturgical cycles, to partake of the Eucharist, and to cherish the Bible.

Reality is vast, and I do not think I am in any position to map it all out neatly. I do not intend to wait to have religious experience, which is plainly available and wholesome, till I can figure out unseen metaphysical realities. Nor, as a lover of the Bible, do I wish to let discredited hokum be ascribed to it in vain. Further, as a worshipper, I feel obliged to knock down theological idols unworthy of that worship. How the pieces of this puzzle fit together, I do not know, but I see nothing inconsistent between them.

Robert M. Price
Selma, North Carolina

The Long Honeymoon: Jan Shipps among the Mormons

Klaus J. Hansen

THIS ESSAY HAD ITS ORIGINS in a projected review of Jan Shipps's *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000). I have expanded it into an assessment of Professor Shipps's *oeuvre* as a scholar of Mormonism, set within the context of the historiography of Mormonism and American culture.

Not long ago I had occasion to drive Interstate 15 down the spine of Utah from Salt Lake City to St. George, a figurative stone's throw from both Arizona and Nevada, then drove back by way of the eastern side of the range, winding my way north along U.S. Highway 89, from Mount Carmel Junction east of Zion National Park, following the Sevier River to the town of Richfield. After traversing a sagebrush-covered ridge, my car crossed into Sanpete County, where the Manti Temple, gleaming white in oolite limestone hewn from the nearby mountains, reminds travelers that this is Mormon country. Of course, a few days earlier, when my plane had

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swooped down across the Wasatch Range into the Valley of the Great Salt Lake, I was entering Mormon country as well, flying almost literally above the route that the Mormon pioneers had followed down Emigration Canyon in July 1847, where now a larger-than-life statue of Brigham Young reminds modern visitors that "This Is the Place." As every Mormon knows, these are the very words that the founder of the Great Basin Kingdom (the felicitous title of an iconic book by the late dean of Mormon historians, Leonard J. Arrington) reportedly used to indicate to his weary followers that they had finally arrived at the place "that God for us prepared"—in the words of Mormondom's unofficial national anthem, "Come, Come, Ye Saints."

Yet within the space of my thirty-hour trip I learned that there is a subtle yet palpable difference between the world of Salt Lake City and I-15, located on the western slope of the Wasatch Mountains, and Sevier Valley, Manti, and U.S. 89, hugging the eastern slope of the range. This difference is not fully explained by the obvious difference between rural and urban Utah.[1] Many visitors to the Salt Lake City Olympics had expected to encounter an exotic species of *homo mormonis*, only to find that Mormons, in the words of historian of religions Martin Marty, "are just folks down the block."[2] Although Marty might have used the same words to describe most of the people of Manti and those living along the eastern slope of the Wasatch Range, the observant traveler cannot help but notice that the world of U.S. 89 is not quite the same as that of I-15, harking as it does back to an age when all of Utah (as well as parts of present-day Idaho, Wyoming, Arizona, and Nevada—even California) was the kingdom of God, gathering the Latter-day Saints like wheat from tares from the four corners of the earth to a western "city upon a hill" in the everlasting mountains. In this "imagined community," Mormons achieved an identity that influential commentators have likened to ethnicity, fostered by a religio-political community embodied in the short-lived State

1. Those familiar with the geography of Utah should understand that I use the I-15/U.S. 89 dichotomy symbolically. A number of Mormon towns off the I-15 exits, such as Beaver or Scipio, fit the U.S. 89 pattern, while a U.S. 89 city like Richfield fits better into the I-15 conceit.

2. Quoted in Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), x.

of Deseret—named after the Book of Mormon word for honey bee signifying industry.[3]

The modern world encroached on the Mormon kingdom almost immediately with the gold rush '49ers, transforming Deseret into Utah Territory and later the State of Utah. Still, many Mormons continued to cling to the ideal of Deseret. In his presidential address to the Mormon History Association in 1976, Charles S. Peterson asserted that the Mormon village pattern of settlement, representing isolation from the larger world, allowed, even encouraged, the creation and maintenance of a Mormon identity resistant to the forces of modernization that overtook ecclesiastical centers such as Salt Lake City. Thus, the Mormon village culture at the periphery—in Cache Valley, in southern Utah, in northern Arizona, and even in southern Alberta—became the quintessential Mormon heartland, characterized by a social type whom University of Utah historian Dean L. May has called the "Deseret Mormon." It was at the periphery of Mormondom that the Deseret ideal prevailed the longest, preserving old Mormon ways. Vestiges of this culture can still be encountered in a string of old Mormon towns along U.S. 89, even if most residents, with the exception of a tenacious minority, have accepted the church's ban on polygamous marriages.[4]

This world is part of what historical geographer Richard V. Francaviglia has described as *The Mormon Landscape: Existence, Creation,*

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3. Shipps underplays the controversy about whether Mormons are, in fact, an ethnic group, taking her cue largely from Dean L. May, "Mormons," *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups,* edited by Stephen Thernstrom (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), 720–31. See Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 5–11, 51–55, 151, 197; his "Mormons as Ethnics: Variable Historical and International Implications for an Appealing Concept," and Keith Parry, "Mormons as Ethnics: A Canadian Perspective," in *The Mormon Presence in Canada,* edited by Brigham Y. Card et al. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1990), 329–65; Patricia Nelson Limerick, "Peace Initiative: Using the Mormons to Rethink Culture and Ethnicity in American History," in *Something in the Soil: Legacies and Reckonings in the New West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), 235–55, 368–71. For the broader context, see the influential work by Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* 2d. ed. (New York: Verson, 1991).

4. Charles S. Peterson, "A Mormon Town: One Man's West," *Journal of Mormon History* 3 (1976): 3-12; Dean L. May, *Three Frontiers: Family, Land and So-*

and Perception of a Unique Image in the American West (New York: AMS Press, 1978), a blend of religious values and material culture that finds expression in brick, stone, or adobe houses situated on large lots watered by irrigation ditches, adjoined by weathered outbuildings, the whole protected by a "Mormon fence," shaded by Lombardy poplars reaching into a deep blue heaven—a Mormon sky that rarely turns gray (captured in some magnificent landscapes of Depression painter Maynard Dixon), so that the desert was made to "blossom like a rose" only through the defiant labor of pioneers diverting reluctant mountain streams onto a parched land. Such towns could be found along the Mormon Corridor from St. Charles on Bear Lake in Idaho to St. George in southern Utah and on into the settlements along the Little Colorado in eastern Arizona. More than trees, houses, and barns, however, this landscape also represented a psychological and spiritual frame of mind. Edward Geary has evoked this world in his elegiac "Goodbye to Poplarhaven."[5] Some future historian may describe it as "the world we have lost."[6]

As it happened, it was into this fading world that Jan Shipps found herself transported in 1960 when her husband, Tony, accepted a position at Utah State University in Logan. Cache Valley had been part of the very heartland of Deseret Mormonism—in fact, one of May's prime examples. It is therefore wonderfully appropriate that a painting of the valley by artist H. Reuben Reynolds evoking the Mormon landscape adorns the cover of Shipps's volume. A young mother, she made the best of her situation

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ciety in the American West, 1850–1900 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 185–243. The concept, however, is not uncontroversial. Mormon anthropologist John L. Sorenson expands the term "Deseret Mormon" to include virtually all Mormons in the intermountain West: "Toward a Characterization of the Mormon Personality," in his *Mormon Culture: Four Decades of Essays on Mormon Society and Personality,* edited by Matthew R. Sorenson (Salt Lake City: New Sage Books, 1997), 172–82.

5. Edward L. Geary, *Goodbye to Poplarhaven: Recollections of a Utah Boyhood* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1985); and his "For the Strength of the Hills: Imagining Mormon Country," in *After 150 Years: The Latter-day Saints in Sesquicentennial Perspective,* edited by Thomas G. Alexander and Jessie L. Embry (Provo, Utah: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University, 1983), 71–94.

6. I borrow the term from Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (London: Methuen, 1965).

and enrolled in the history program at USU to complete her baccalaureate. To her bemusement she discovered that, although Utah State was nominally a state university, her history courses all had a Mormon subtext. The Utah War figured prominently in a study of the causes of the Civil War—as indeed it should, though they don't teach you this at Harvard or at Stanford. The Reformation course, taught by a Presbyterian professor, involved a not-so-subtle dialogue with Mormonism, not always to the latter's advantage. Though Shipps and her family moved to the University of Colorado after only nine months in Logan, the culture shock so intrigued and fascinated her that she was motivated to do a thesis on the Mormons for her master's degree at the University of Colorado. This thesis was stretched into a Ph.D. dissertation, also at Colorado, on "The Mormons in Politics: The First Hundred Years" (1965) and launched her on a lifetime career in Mormon studies—as a "sojourner in the promised land."

Shipps arrived at a crucial juncture in Mormon history, witnessing first-hand the transformation of a regional religion with a membership of less than 1.5 million, which, she asserts in *Sojourner,* shared an ethnic heritage "as distinctive and important as that of Chicanos, Asians, and Native American groups" into a world religion that in 2004 numbered nearly 12 million members, most of whom had never visited the promised land and whose ethnic identity, if they had one, was separate from their religion.[7] As Shipps observed, "Not until 1960, and then for the first time since the early decades of Mormonism's existence, were more people added to the LDS Church membership rolls through conversion than as a consequence of natural increase. This persisted, initiating a new state of affairs for the church in which exponential growth fueled by conversion would become the normal condition. Although it was not obvious at the time, it so happened that my arrival in Zion in 1960 occurred during a pivotal year" (368). Until then, for more than a century, the majority of Latter-day Saints had been "birthright" Mormons, born "under the covenant." This transformation "from peoplehood to church membership," or from "insularity to universality," to use Shipp's words, is a major thread holding this collection together (6).

For Shipps to grasp the full significance of this metamorphosis, she had to get a handle on the kind of Mormonism she had encountered in

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7. Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land,* 35. From this point, I cite this work parenthetically in the text.

Cache Valley. The Colorado Ph.D., it turned out, was a bit of a detour, though it helped establish her credentials as a "Mormon" historian, giving her entry to archives and connections to practitioners in the field. But as she tried to work her way through the maze that she had unwittingly entered, she realized that the more she learned the more complicated Mormonism became. Her work on Mormon politics was simply too limited for understanding Mormonism as a religion. She saw the same limitations in sociological, psychological, or cultural approaches to Mormonism, becoming persuaded that the discipline of religious studies provided the most fruitful approach to a more comprehensive understanding of the strange world she had entered. She reported her discoveries in her first and foundational work, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985).

As an "inside-outsider" or "participant observer," she assumed a nonjudgmental attitude, attempting to describe Mormonism from the inside, the way believers themselves experienced their religion and their history, although she came to Mormonism as an outsider. Taking her cue from Fawn M. Brodie's insight that Mormonism "was no mere dissenting sect [but] . . . a real religious creation, one intended to be to Christianity as Christianity was to Judaism: that is, a reform and a consummation,"[8] Shipps construed the Mormon experience as a biblical analogue, narrated through the history and the beliefs of its followers who, like the Children of Israel, had become a people by separating themselves from the world through an arduous journey to the Promised Land. Living in "sacred time" in their mountain kingdom, the Saints, under the onslaught of the modern world, had to sacrifice the kingdom (and plural marriage) and had to learn to live in "ordinary time"—transcending in her explanation a process sociologists have generally described as a transition from sect to church, or from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*. In Shipps's view, this adjustment was the necessary price to pay for transforming Mormonism into a "new religious tradition"—neither an esoteric cult nor a modern denomination.

Shipps believes that she has had at least a glimpse of the pioneers' entry into sacred time through her own journey to Cache Valley with her

8. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet* (1945; 2d ed. rev. and enl., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), viii.

family in a Rambler station wagon along much of the route taken by the Mormon pioneers—which had a dramatic structure of its own as they entered the valley through the winding and precipitous gorge of Logan Canyon. (Those who believe in the interconnectedness of the cosmos might also point out that the Rambler was manufactured by a car company at that time presided over by prominent Mormon George Romney.) Yet aware of the subjectivity of such stories, she makes it clear that she is merely taking advantage of personal experience as a kind of heuristic device (not a term she herself uses) to gain entry into a larger historical landscape as well as creating connective tissue to tie together writings that would otherwise have stood alone, if not disjointed, thus making the whole larger than the sum of the parts. However, this device does not mean that these essays and articles are cut from the same bolt of cloth, written as they were for different occasions, for different reasons, and addressed to different audiences. Thus to insist on too much consistency could be regarded as "foolish" (with a nod to Emerson). Occasional contradictions and inconsistencies may also reflect the realities of a cultural transformation at its most intense, even while Shipps was writing many of these observations and analyses—with Mormonism as an emerging world religion and a slowly fading "tribal culture" (369) in as uneasy a coexistence as the worlds of I-15 and U.S. 89.

Part memoir, part history, and part methodology, the articles and essays are divided into five parts, bracketed by a "Prologue" and an "Epilogue" that effectively contextualize the volume. An introductory essay includes an explanation of why historians of the American West circumnavigate Mormon country in their accounts—"the hole in the doughnut," as Shipps calls it. Mormons, being "different," are difficult to fit into traditional or modern historical frameworks. Religion compounds the problem for historians who "tend to be a secular lot."[9] Of course, it may simply be the case that most of these historians would agree with Bernard DeVoto that those who write about Mormonism overrate its importance:

9. Ibid., 35. Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Something in the Soil*, 239, also addresses this issue, arguing that Frederick Jackson Turner bears much responsibility for this neglect, because the history of Mormonism did not support his argument. She further notes that, while writing *The Legacy of Conquest*, she saw "considerable common ground in the cause of Mormon history and Western American History" (239).

"It is at best a minor thing in America as a whole, and at best an aberration of the principal energies involved in it."[10] While not going this far, I am on record as having argued that Mormonism made a contribution to the debate over the meaning of America in the nineteenth century but that the movement has declined in importance as it blends more and more into the modern mainstream—its significance being inversely related to its numbers.[11] This argument is, naturally, heavily weighted toward the relationship between Mormonism and American culture. Shipps, however, disagrees, attempting to disengage Mormonism from American culture and making the central theme of her argument the story of an emerging world religion representing "a new religious tradition."[12]

In what is the most ambitious academic research project in this collection, Shipps reports on this change as it was perceived by the outside world through a sample study of more than 100 popular journal and magazine articles from 1860 to 1960, announcing the results in the title: "From Satyr to Saint." A follow-up article picks up the story in 1960. The internal transformation led to a flowering of historical research, both by Mormon and non-Mormon scholars (albeit not of the "western" kind), which she discusses and analyzes from an impressive fund of knowledge, even if, as will be seen, I sometimes disagree—particularly on interpretations of theological and societal change that comprise a substantial part of the remainder of her *Sojourner*. For example, I am not convinced that Mormons have internalized a "Christian" identity to the degree that Shipps asserts. That is not to say that she doesn't have astute eyes and ears. Clearly, this is a remarkable document chronicling religious, social, and cultural change in modern times—regardless of who is right about the importance of Mormonism in the larger scheme of things.

When Shipps arrived in Logan, it was of course as an outsider; and an important part of her story is the process by which she became an "inside-outsider." Though she doesn't say so explicitly, it is clear that in the

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10. Bernard DeVoto, Letter, December 28, 1945, in Wallace Stegner, ed., *The Letters of Bernard DeVoto* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), xx.

11. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, xv–xvi.

12. In a different key, Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), likewise argues for the enormous importance of Mormonism in what he calls the "Post-Christian" era.

world of Cache Valley Mormons she always remained an outsider. The "insider" status was achieved in the Mormon world of I-15, where a modern academic woman could communicate to modernizing Mormons in the intellectual milieu of the contemporary academy and in the higher echelons of a sophisticated Church bureaucracy—and in some instances even the hierarchy.

Shipps made her entry into Mormon scholarship, not only at a critical juncture of demographic change, but also at a transitional time in Mormon intellectual life, one that witnessed the founding of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (an independent quarterly, 1966); the Mormon History Association in December 1965 (Shipps is a proud charter member); the *Journal of Mormon History* (1974); *Exponent II* (concerned with women's issues, 1974); *Sunstone* (an independent monthly, 1975); the John Whitmer Historical Asociation (founded by members of the Reorganized Church, now Community of Christ, in 1977), and the *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* (1981). These events coincided with the flowering of what has been called the New Mormon History—an elastic term that has been defined differently by different historians, though in its most generic meaning it refers to those works, largely published after World War II, that Shipps sees as departing from the "them" and "us" mentalities of the Mormon-Gentile dichotomy. A representative work of the "us" mentality is *Essentials in Church History* by Joseph Fielding Smith, who was a grandson of Hyrum Smith, a Mormon apostle, the Church Historian, and later Church President. This work, first published in 1922, is still in print.

A major representative of the "them" mentality was Fawn M. Brodie's magisterial and controversial biography of Joseph Smith, *No Man Knows My History*, which attempted to explain the Mormon prophet as a product of his time and place. This approach was in keeping with the secular assumptions dominant in the American academic culture of which she was a part. Written in a brilliant prose style still unsurpassed (though Shipps, in her own way, is just as impressive), the work is still in print and regarded as balanced, even positive in academic circles, although it is heavily criticized by most Mormon historians (including Shipps herself) for being reductionist, unsympathetic, and deficient in its sources. Brodie was particularly hard on the historical claims of the Book of Mormon and on the authenticity of the Book of Abraham. Unlike Smith's revelations published in the Doctrine and Covenants, which must be accepted on

faith (like such sacred texts as the Qur'an, Mary Baker Eddy, or Ellen G. White), she argued that the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham invited empirical verification: the first because it is deemed to be the sacred but actual history of pre-Columbian America, the second because it claims to be a translation of real documents—Egyptian papyri—in possession of the Mormon Church. Brodie insisted that because historians, linguists, archaeologists, and ethnologists have so far been unable to establish a connection between the story of the Book of Mormon and ancient American history and culture, the book's claims are open to serious doubt. So are the claims of the Book of Abraham. Egyptologists who were invited to examine the papyri thus far have been unable to make a meaningful connection between these documents and the Abrahamic story, declaring the papyri to be one of numerous copies of the common "Book of Breathings."[13]

However, by Shipps's own definition, Brodie does not fit comfortably into the New Mormon History mold because, just like Joseph Fielding Smith, she insists on pursuing the "Truth" question, which in the world of religious studies is bracketed as a matter of course. Shipps does this in her own work on Joseph Smith, i.e., he is a genuine prophet because he behaves the way prophets are supposed to—"as one who speaks for God" (331). Moreover, if believers are not bothered by the kinds of discrepancies that critics like Brodie find troublesome, then why should Shipps, to whom truth is in the eye of the believers? Here she is in very good company—the movers and shakers of the *Zeitgeist.* For example, I am reminded of attempts to rehabilitate the tarnished reputation of Sigmund Freud by circumnavigating his scientific claims through an hermeneutical approach in a close reading of his message—though in the case of Freud, the onus is on his critics. He has heavy guns like Paul Ricoeur and Jurgen Habermas on his side, while in the case of Joseph Smith it is the heavy guns who are trained on him.[14]

There is a general consensus that Leonard Arrington was the founding father of the New Mormon History. His *Great Basin Kingdom: An Eco-*

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13. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History,* 421-24; "The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: Translations and Interpretations," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought,* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 67-105; Klaus Baer, "The Breathing Permit of Hor, " *Dialogue* 3, no. 3 (Autumn 1968): 109-34.

14. For attacks on Freud, see especially Frederick Crews, *Unauthorized*

nomic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958; reprinted Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966; and Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press and the Tanner Trust Fund, 1993),[15] set the standard and the tone for the scholarly studies pouring out over the rest of the century, mostly by believing Latter-day Saints, but including also notable works by sympathetic outsiders.[16] Unlike faith-promoting histories like Joseph Fielding Smith's, which saw the hand of God in human affairs, these studies had naturalistic explanations for the course of events, although believers could also choose to see divine guidance behind the historical process. Arrington himself—as well as most Latter-day Saint historians emulating his example—professed to believe in the fundamental principles of Mormonism, arguing that the truth could stand on its own feet, requiring neither special pleading nor the omission of crucial if uncomfortable historical facts. Perhaps the most dramatic example of this approach is Juanita Brooks, *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* (1950; 2d. ed., Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), a scrupulously honest and searching account of a tragic event during the Utah War (1857), when an entire wagon train of emigrants from Arkansas was murdered in southern Utah by fanatical

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Freud: Doubters Confront a Legend (New York: Viking, 1998); and his *The Memory Wars: Freud's Legacy in Dispute* (New York: New York Review of Books, (1995); on Ricoeur and Habermas, see Peter Loewenberg, "Psychoanalysis as a Hermeneutic Science," in *Whose Freud? The Place of Psychoanalysis in Contemporary Culture,* edited by Peter Brooks and Alex Woloch (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), esp. 97.

15. The term "New Mormon History"was coined by Moses Rischin, "The New Mormon History," *American West* 6 (March 1969), 49. For a superb overview and analysis, see Ronald W. Walker, David J. Whittaker, and James B. Allen, *Mormon History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 61–112.

16. See Thomas O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of CVhicago Press, 1957); Mario S. DePillis, "The Quest for Authority and the Rise of Mormonism," *Dialogue* 1 (Spring 1966): 66–68 and "The Social Sources of Mormonism," *Church History* 38 (March 1968): 50–79; Mark P. Leone, *Roots of Modern Mormonism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979); Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); and Kenneth H. Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty: Momrons in America, 1830–1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1989).

Mormons in collaboration with local Indians.[17] Earlier histories such as Joseph Fielding Smith's had emphasized only the persecutions and sufferings of the *Saints*.

Not surprisingly, such honesty was and continues to be upsetting to some conservative Church leaders and followers, who believe that their history should be presented only in the best light, with the hand of faith always guiding the pen of the historian.[18] Nevertheless, the general tenor of the New Mormon History was never to question the essential foundations of the Church. Brooks herself remained active in her religion her entire life. So did Arrington and his associates, as well as the many students and scholars who saw him as a role model. Thus, in spite of the criticism engendered by the New Mormon History, it never strayed far from orthodoxy. Still some scholars who were seen as pushing too far beyond these boundaries were excommunicated, the first being Brodie herself. A more recent case (1993) is that of D. Michael Quinn, one of the most prolific authors of the New Mormon History.

Of course this means that, if the New Mormon historians want to remain in the Church, certain subjects are taboo—too close a look at the historical context of antebellum America, the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon, or the suggestion that the Book of Abraham may be a product of the inventive mind of Joseph Smith. As Ronald W. Walker, Da-

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17. D. Michael Quinn, "Editor's Introduction," in *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), vii, argues that the New Mormon History began with the publication of *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*. The massacre has once again become a focus of scholarly debate, mostly recently in Will Bagley, *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002). Babley describes his work as "not a revision but an extension of Brooks's labors" (xiv). Brooks's "Achilles' heel," he argues, is her reliance on the "testimony of murderers" and a too-sympathetic treatment of John D. Lee (357). However, he concedes that, at the end of the day, Brooks did conclude that "white men, not Indians, were chiefly responsible" (363). A sympathetic critic, Gary Topping, *Utah Historians and the Reconstruction of Western History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 202, asked, "How can one accept the soundness of everything that led up to the massacre, then condemn the act itself?"

18. A classic authoritative statement is Apostle Boyd K. Packer, "The Mantle Is Far, Far Greater than the Intellect," *BYU Studies* 21 (Summer 1981), 264-68. A more sophisticated approach, respecting both the mantle and the intellect, is Richard L.Bushman, "Faithful History," *Dialogue* 4 (Winter 1969): 18.

vid J. Whittaker, and James B. Allen, authors of an impressive new historiographical synthesis and interpretation—*Mormon History*—suggested, the new history was often "introspective and self-confining," much of it motivated by an impulse of self-discovery of greater importance to the Mormon community than to the outside world (94). Even more severe in his criticism was Charles S. Peterson, who argued that the New Mormon History had fallen between two stools, on the one hand alienating conservative members of the hierarchy and their followers, on the other failing to engage mainstream Americanists. A case in point is biographical studies of secondary figures, which, though they filled out the story of the Latter-day Saints, offended believers by paying too much attention to the human side of their ancestors, while historians in the "real world" couldn't have cared less. Perhaps the irony of the enterprise is best illustrated in Leonard Arrington's biography of Brigham Young which, by slighting his spiritual side (according to Shipps), offended believers, while it failed to tackle the hard questions that would have been unavoidable in a biography of Joseph Smith.[19]

Although the New Mormon History is an umbrella for diverse ways of looking at the Mormon past, it appears that, at its center, have been works that approached the subject from two perspectives (vis-à-vis Shipps's position)—that of the inside-insider, and that of the outside-insider, with Leonard Arrington as the representative, commanding figure exemplifying both approaches. It is in *Great Basin Kingdom* that he comes perhaps closest to succeeding as an outside-insider. In *The Mormon Experience* (1979; 2d ed., Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), written with Davis Bitton, the constraints of membership in the higher Church bureaucracy were all too apparent. Much of his other work is clearly that of an inside-insider. So was most of the work produced under his direction as Church Historian and later as director of the Joseph Fielding Smith Insti-

19. Charles S. Peterson, "Beyond the Problems of Exceptionalist History," in *Great Basin Kingdom Revisited,* edited by Thomas G. Alexander (Logan: Utah State University, 1991), 143–48; Leonard G. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985); Jan Shipps, review of *Brigham Young: American Moses,* in *Journal of American History* 73, no. 1 (June 1986): 190–91; and her "Brigham Young and His Times: A Continuing Force in Mormonism," *Journal of the West* 23 (January 1984), 48–54; reprinted in *Sojourner in the Promised Land,* 244–57. For a perceptive discussion of Mormon biography, see Walker, Whittaker, and Allen, *Mormon History,* 113–52.

tute for Latter-day Saint History at Brigham Young University. It was professional, scholarly, well-researched, well-written explorations of the vast geography of Mormon territory. By pointing out that some of this work involved putting new wine into old bottles (or the other way around?), I am merely reporting the obvious, though perhaps a better way to describe it is to say that it was unaffected by linguistic turns and various postmodern agendas. To fit it into the conceit of my essay, this history straddles the worlds of I-15 and U.S. 89. I am inclined to call it the Arrington paradigm.

Yet the work of the perhaps most important scholar emerging out of this tradition does not fit comfortably under this umbrella. Thomas G. Alexander has made a serious attempt to confront some of the theoretical and methodological problems essentially ignored by the Arrington paradigm which, in spite of its professionalism, did not succeed entirely in bridging the credibility gap between "faithful history" and the critical standards of the modern academy. Of course this is no problem for those scholars, such as the celebrated apologist Hugh Nibley, who profess contempt for the opinion of the world; but it was for Arrington, who cared deeply about the respect of Harvard and Stanford and the rest. (Here we touch on one reason for Shipps's success among the Mormons, who have always craved the attention and respect of the outside world). Alexander, though having a strong institutional identification, insisted on bracketing the truth question, borrowing the term "behaviorism" from historian Robert Berkhofer, which allowed for an honest and unflinching description of religiously motivated actions without getting involved in evaluating them by the standards of the secular world.[20] This approach stood Alexander in good stead in his study of Mormon apostle and Church president Wilford Woodruff, a pivotal figure in the abolition of polygamy, as well as in broader studies such as *Mormonism in Transition*.[21]

However, as Mormon anthropologist John Sorenson has cautioned, even the most careful and "objective" scholars working within an institu-

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20. Thomas G. Alexander, "Historiography and the New Mormon History: A Historian's Perspective," *Dialogue* 19 (Fall 1968): 25-49; Robert Berkhofer, *A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis* (New York: Free Press, 1969).

21. Thomas G. Alexander, *Things in Heaven and Earth: The Life and Times of Wilford Woodruff, A Mormon Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1991);

tion tend to be perceived as "insiders."[22] Outsiders like Shipps benefit from being perceived as more "objective" by the non-Mormon scholarly community—an advantage that has been a valuable asset to her work. In a paradoxical way, this perception allows her to be more sympathetic to the Mormon story than insiders, without the danger of being tainted as an apologist. To be fair, Shipps has brought an original point of view to the enormous sea change that engulfed Mormonism and its history in the second half of the twentieth century. Realizing that Mormonism as a religion and a culture is incredibly complicated, she has also made great efforts to look at Mormonism as if she were an insider, avoiding the mistakes of so many outside observers who have often been like the blind men of Hindustan attempting to describe the elephant. Although, to change the metaphor, Shipps did not exactly get into the "skin of the lion," she has been remarkable in her ability to absorb the intricate details of Mormonism, enabling her work to achieve credibility both among insiders and outsiders.

It is perhaps too much to call the Arrington paradigm, in the language of the distinguished historian of science Thomas Kuhn,[23] "normal" history, and Shipps's history "revolutionary." Yet in a less technical sense, Shipps's interpretation of Mormonism can be called a new paradigm, though her new understanding is based less on history than on a variant of religious studies that relies on analogies and comparisons, such as between early Christianity and Judaism. In the case of Joseph Smith, this approach resulted in a modern "reinvention" of ancient beliefs and practices, leading to a "new religious tradition"—a notion that to those favoring interpretations derived from traditional, historical scholarship may well appear as a contradiction in terms. I have called it "meta-history."[24] Critics, however, are very much in the minority, hardly sufficient to challenge by their numbers the paradigmatic status of the new religious tradition interpretation, which by now has become entrenched as the equivalent of "normal science," both within the Mor-

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and his *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

22. Sorenson, *Mormon Culture*, 5.

23. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

24. I made this comment in a review I no longer have.

mon intellectual community and among sympathetic outsiders. Skeptics of the new interpretation include both orthodox and liberal Mormons who insist that the evasion of the "truth" question places the historical enterprise in as much doubt as an open attack by unbelievers, and who see Shipps's assertion that questions like the historicity of the Book of Mormon are not on her "agenda of things to find out" as an evasion.[25] (I call it the "religious studies escape hatch.")

In recent years individual historians, all motivated by respect for the beliefs of faithful Mormons, yet conscious of the potential credibility gap between these and the critical standards of the modern academy, have adopted various strategies that can be lumped together under a generic definition of postmodernism—though it is not a term Shipps uses to describe her methodology. It is instructive, however, that Richard Bushman, who has expressed a healthy disrespect for the tribal customs of the academy, has opted for a postmodern approach in his own work-in-progress, "A Joseph Smith for the Twenty-first Century."[26] Perhaps the smartest among the conservative "believers," Bushman is acutely aware of the problems he is up against. Superficially, his approach to Smith is not unlike that of Shipps, though kindred spirits they are not, coming as they do from opposite ends of the believer spectrum. Bushman, of course, cares deeply about those hard questions raised by Brodie, although he comes to different conclusions than she because of his profound religious commitment, which forces him to insist that the Book of Mormon is a "revelation," thus exempting it from challenges as a historical document.

Unlike Shipps and Bushman, literary scholar Terryl Givens makes a serious—and courageous—attempt at dealing with the historicity question. Realizing that a refusal to parse the text/revelation conundrum could be perceived as an evasion, he does his best to answer Brodie, John Brooke, and others who acknowledge the reality of the text—though as a nineteenth-century artifact.[27] Yet if Givens's attempt to deal with the Book of Mormon as an ancient text—however sophisticated—is weighed down

25. Shipps, "An 'Inside-Outsider' in Zion," *Dialogue* 15 (Spring 1982): 143.

26. Richard L. Bushman, "A Joseph Smith for the Twenty-first Century," *BYU Studies* 40, no. 3 (2001): 155–71.

27. Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

by evidence considered highly controversial in the world of scholarship, it is more appealing than the postmodern evasions.

Getting back to Shipps, the Book of Mormon debate impinges on a hot-button issue she *does* address—the question of whether Mormons are Christian. Befitting their status as an aspiring world religion, Mormons have become highly sensitive on that point. Their emphatic insistence that they are, indeed, Christian, is in part a reaction to persistent attacks by conservative evangelicals that they are not—given Mormons' anthropomorphizing of the divine, their materialistic monism, their belief in a plurality of gods,[28] in the premortal existence of spirits, in the doctrine of eternal progression, and in the plurality of wives in the afterlife (even if no longer in this life)—to name only those beliefs causing the most offense. Shipps takes issue with such a list of particulars, ending a rather complicated, on the whole sophisticated, and somewhat convoluted argument by agreeing with contemporary Mormons that they have a right to their own definition of what it means to be Christian.

Unlike the question of the historicity of the Book of Mormon, this one cannot be reduced to a true/false exam. I myself tend to be more open to arguments to the negative, such as those of Father Richard John Neuhaus, editor-in-chief of the religious intellectual journal *First Things*, who can hardly be accused of sharing the prejudiced opinions of religious red-necks. Neuhaus is on solid ground in his argument that it was the Mormons themselves who initiated the distance between their religion and the Christian world. This assessment agrees with the historical importance of a central text in the Mormon canon, Smith's First Vision, which contains an explicit rejection of the Christianity of its day—that the churches of his time "were all wrong; . . . that all their creeds were an abomination in his [God's] sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: 'they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof'" (JS—H 2:19). The First Vision has evolved as a central part of the modern canon and can be construed as a firm, contemporary rejection of mainline Christianity. At the same time, like Shipps, Neuhaus would not withdraw Christian fellowship

28. A recent attack on Mormonism as non-Christian is Richard Abanes, *One Nation under Gods: A History of the Mormon Church* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2002).

from any who seek it. But unlike Shipps, he makes a clear distinction between the two issues.[29]

Terryl Givens also weighed in on this controversy in an earlier book. In a brilliant discussion of the construction of heresy, he observed, "To insist that Mormons are Christian, but in a sense peculiar to them, is to appropriate the term to their private meaning and to impudently assert that heresy is orthodoxy, and orthodoxy heresy. . . . Mormonism sees itself as redefining in a radical way the essence of Christianity, and both Mormonism and its critics deny the possibility of accommodation because of the way Mormonism reconceptualizes religion itself."[30] Richard Abanes, one of the most knowledgeable among the legion of anti-Mormon Christian polemicists avers that the fundamental theology of Mormonism has not changed and that the Church's contemporary campaign to reinvent itself as a Christian religion is merely a smoke screen to promote acceptance as a world religion.[31] Although this is too crass and simplistic an assessment of Mormon motives, it is a point Shipps should take into consideration as she observes (or thinks she observes) a shift in consciousness from "Mormon" to "Latter-day Saint" to "Christian." The last, especially, is used mostly vis-à-vis outsiders as an indication of how Mormons wish to be perceived, much less (if at all), as an internalized self-image defining identity.

On another issue, while it goes without saying that the "Protestantization" of Mormonism had a momentum of its own, Shipps's arrival on the scene at a propitious moment may have helped in giving it a spin that served the interests of the Church. When I pointed this out to her, adding that I likened her role to that of the observer of subatomic particles as described by the Uncertainty Principle of Werner Heisenberg's quantum physics (the fact of observation affects the behavior of the particles), she modestly demurred, averring that she was merely the messenger. That the relationship between Shipps and the Mormon Church has been mutually beneficial is obvious. It is perhaps more interesting to sort out just exactly how she fits into the complicated politics of scholarship of an institution that makes claims on allegiance not unlike those demanded of scholars

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29. Richard John Neuhaus, "The Public Square: Is Mormonism Christian?" *First Things*, March 2002, 97ff.

30. Terryl L. Givens, *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 76–93.

31. Abanes, *One Nation under Gods*, 384–89.

working in African American or American Indian history. It is here that the insider-outsider arithmetic, in its various combinations, may be helpful in locating Shipps more precisely. For example, Richard Bushman writes as an inside-insider and John Brooke as an outside-outsider, while Fawn Brodie wrote as an outside-insider. As an inside-outsider, Jan Shipps, in a way, is in an ideal position, sitting in a kind of strategic catbird seat, so that in the eyes of readers and reporters she can be perceived as having more credibility than those scholars whose allegiance is more firmly defined or who, because they are on the outside altogether, are seen as being less informed than those who have some connection to the "inside." In all these configurations, the politics of scholarship is perhaps least signficant in relation to the outside-outsider position, and most significant to that of the inside-outsider position.

However, like all analogies, this one has its limitations. Shipps may be freer than insiders to discuss some controversial topics, such as race.[32] However, denial of the lay priesthood to males of African descent, a policy rescinded in 1978, was largely a public-relations issue generating little internal controversy. Of much greater potential for internal conflict are gender issues, such as the demand, voiced by some Mormon feminists, for ordaining women to the priesthood. This is an issue that affects more than half of the adult membership of the Church and has been a matter of serious concern to the hierarchy. Shipps herself, in a fascinating essay, "Dangerous History," reports on a number of incidents involving Church authorities' action to curtail women's discussion of gender issues, even while conceding that she can understand why the authorities acted the way they did.[33] In a perceptively intuitive discussion, she points out that the larger issue involved in these cases may have been the question of who controls Mormon history. Though she did not address the question of how she herself fit into this picture at the time that she wrote this essay, the issue hit close to home in connection with the production of the dust jacket for *Sojourner in the Promised Land.* The original design included a photograph of the iconic Mormon temple in Salt Lake City. It was only after the jacket was already in production that

32. Jan Shipps, "Second Class Saints," *Colorado Quarterly* 11 (Autumn 1962): 183–90; "The Mormons: Looking Forward and Outward," *Christian Century,* August 16-23, 1978, 761–66.

33. Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land,* 193–203.

the publisher learned that the Church would not give permission for the use of the photograph, even though Shipps was using only an exterior shot taken by a photographer she had commissioned. Although I think the Reynolds's painting of Cache Valley is actually a better choice, the Church's move to disassociate Shipps from the temple and Shipps's acquiescence are an interesting comment.

Six years earlier, in contrast, the Church entrusted Shipps with preparing a scholarly edition of the rediscovered, important *Journals of William E. McLellin, 1831–1836* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), even though she was persuaded to accept as coeditor John W. Welch, at the time director of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), a Book of Mormon research institution that began as Welch's private foundation but which has since been integrated into BYU, while Welch himself, a professor at BYU's J. Reuben Clark Law School, has gone on to become editor of the influential *BYU Studies* and director of a publishing program that includes the output of the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History.

An Ohio schoolteacher who became one of the early converts to Mormonism, McLellin quickly rose to the rank of apostle in the new religion. His journals record in great detail his role in promoting the fledgling church, providing important clues to the appeal of Mormonism in its earliest years, although the reader must be able to reimagine the lens through which McLellin viewed his world. McLellin presents a Mormonism dramatically different from the religion that had evolved by the time of Smith's murder in 1844, more biblical and more Christian. Quite likely a major reason why McLellin left the church in the late 1830s was his perception that it had veered sharply from its biblical roots. In her introduction, Shipps emphasizes these differences, which point to a kinder, gentler, more Christian early Mormonism than that described in most histories—whether pro or con. As modern Mormonism is attempting to reemphasize these Christian origins on the assumption that they will enhance its worldwide appeal, the McLellin journals—especially given the spin Shipps is putting on them—fit perfectly into this agenda. Shipps sees in the diaries a foreshadowing of much of modern Mormonism, dispersed in the congregations of the diaspora—in but not of the world.

While most of the early Saints "gathered" in communities, many lived scattered here and there in the countryside, carrying on their daily

activities and attending church meetings, much like their Protestant neighbors, and much like modern Mormons in Boston, New York, Washington, or Charleston, or even Berlin and Tokyo. By way of sorting out the cultural relations of Mormons and their neighbors at the center and on the periphery, Shipps argues that Saints like McLellin were content to see themselves as *different* from those around them, while those in the gathered communities developed a profound sense of *otherness*—with belief (being largely invisible) as the defining criterion for *difference*, behavior made visible as the essential determinant for *otherness*.

These are useful insights. However, the difference between the gathered and scattered Saints was less a matter of belief and doctrine than of expediency or accident, so that the division becomes somewhat artificial. Shipps's argument misses a point she herself has made regarding polygamy. In the nineteenth century, it didn't matter that the majority of Mormons were monogamous. What mattered was that all lived under "the principle" and that polygamy defined Mormonism for the entire community. Likewise, until it was rescinded in the 1920s, the doctrine of the "gathering" defined Mormonism for all Saints, even for those who, out of expediency, were temporarily forced to live in the world. Impressing upon his audience the importance of the "gathering" at a time when it was still actively on-going, Apostle Orson Pratt declared: "None of the Saints can be dilatory upon this subject, and still retain the spirit of God. To neglect or be indifferent about gathering, is just as displeasing in the sight of God as to neglect or be indifferent about baptism for the remission of sins."[34] Although Pratt's statement was made after McLellin had left the Church and when the Salt Lake City settlement was a year old, the practice of gathering had begun very early, even before McLellin had become a Mormon. It is difficult to imagine that "Mormons in the countryside" did not *believe* in the principle of the gathering. Thus, the distinction between belief and practice appears to be somewhat arbitrary, at least in the early years.

Shipps's point seems most useful in sorting out the schism that occurred after Smith's death in 1844, when perhaps a third of the Saints refused to accept Brigham Young as Smith's successor. Young insisted on maintaining his predecesssor's "Hebraisms," radical innovations such as plural marriage, temple worship, and the political kingdom (a theocratic

34. Orson Pratt, *Millennial Star* 10 (1848): 247.

government). Those who had developed doubts about these doctrines during Smith's life now made their break, later formed the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and remained in the Midwest—preferring to be seen merely as "different" from their neighbors, while the Saints moving west under Brigham Young defiantly asserted their "otherness."

However, Shipps's attempt to apply McLellin's diaspora as a model for modern Mormonism is problematic, as is evident from her (on the whole) perceptive discussion of the Mormon diaspora, especially after World War II. Bringing the memory of their native Zion into the cities on both coasts and into the Midwest, these Mormon migrants recreated surrogate Zions, centering on newly constructed meetinghouses built according to standardized plans and therefore easily identified as Mormon—thus maintaining their identity of "gathered" Saints even as they made their way in the secular world. That is not to say, of course, that there is no difference between a self-perception of *being* other and of being *perceived* as such. Shipps no doubt would argue that most modern Mormons would much prefer to be perceived as different, however strong their identity as "Deseret Saints" might be—and that this would be as true in both I-15 territory and along U.S. 89.

Related to this discussion is the question of the relative importance of the Bible in the Mormon canon. The idea that Mormonism was born in a biblical culture is obvious. It has been expressed with considerable sophistication and analytical depth by scholars such as Timothy Smith, Philip Barlow, and Grant Underwood, who argue that the Bible helped prospective converts to appreciate and understand the Book of Mormon.[35] It is not surprising that William McLellin was steeped in the Bible. So was Parley P. Pratt, another prominent Mormon missionary and apostle. But as Mormonism evolved, more and more of its cos-

35. Timothy L. Smith, "The Book of Mormon in a Biblical Culture," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980), 3-21; Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World View of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

mology transcended biblical origins.[36] McLellin may not have shared this perception, even though he left the Church in the late 1830s, in part because of objections to the "Hebraic" innovations. In any case, Mormonism, in its defining particularities, is identified not by its similarities but by its differences with mainstream Protestant American culture. I am reminded of Freud's concept of the "narcissism of small differences," a point Edward Pessen overlooked when he emphasized similarities over differences in his comparison of the antebellum North and South.[37] Of course Shipps is not unaware that, for a century and a half, the Saints were proud to call themselves a "peculiar people" (381). Yet while I agree with her that Mormons, on the whole, have been blending in with the larger culture, differences persist. Shipps herself seems of two minds, conceding in her epilogue that "in time," it will be the Book of Mormon and temple worship that will define what it means to be a Latter-day Saint.

Consistent with the preceding discussion is my disagreement with Shipps regarding her take on John L. Brooke's controversial *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994). The book won several awards, among them the prestigious Bancroft Prize in Amerian History. In a major essay in *Sojourner,* Shipps charges that Brooke doesn't know his Bible. If he did, the hermetic tradition to which he traces Mormon cosmology would be dwarfed by the biblicism of Mormon thought, as expressed for example in the McLellin journals.[38] However deficient Brooke may be in biblical scholarship, it is a fact that most nineteenth-century Americans were deeply immersed in the same Bible. Only some—most notably the Mormons—took their theology in the direction of hermetic perfectionism. Therefore, something other than the Bible must have been at work. It is clear, however, that by giving considerable weight to

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36. Clyde R. Forsberg Jr., *Equal Rites? Mormonism, Masonry, Gender, and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), argues that much of this cosmology was already contained in a Masonic subtext underlying the Book of Mormon.

37. Edward Pessen, "How Different from Each Other Were the Antebellum North and South?" *American Historical Review* 85, no. 5 (December 1980): 119–49.

38. Shipps, *Sojourner,* 210–11.

nonbiblical sources, Brooke supports a "new religious tradition" interpretation fitting less conveniently into Salt Lake City's project of promoting Mormonism as an American world religion in the Christian mold.[39]

Richard Bushman claims that Brooke's evidence "has crumbled to dust," though there may well be more than one way of reading the sources. Of course, there is a great deal more at stake for Bushman (as there was for Brodie) than for Brooke.

For one, Brooke does not have an agenda of proving Mormonism wrong. As an intellectual historian, he was merely pursuing strands in a genealogy of ideas that led him beyond the Bible to folk beliefs and traditions that could be traced back to European and British hermetic ideas that crossed the Atlantic with the early settlers. Thus, he contradicts not only the historiography of Mormon believers but also the functionalist historiography attempting to locate the origins of Mormonism in the dislocations and the anomie of antebellum America. It is clear that for apologists the latter was easier to deal with than Brooke's approach. Thus, while the praise by secular historians has been high indeed, the onslaught from certain Mormon quarters has been savage—precisely because the work is so impressive. For this reason, there has been a great deal of deliberate misreading and misrepresentation of the work.[40] Contrary to some accusations, Brooke did not claim that Mormonism is an occult religion, only that some of its most distinctive theological beliefs can be traced to ideas derived from these traditions. Admittedly, it is a speculative work, and there are instances where Brooke may have overreached himself. Critics have latched on to such examples to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Shipps, however, was careful to temper her criticism with qualified praise so as not to imperil her outsider credentials—sometimes walking a tightrope while attempting to wear two hats.

Perhaps a telling illustration of the ambiguity of her position is her self-identification as a "birthright Methodist," a choice of language clearly

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39. A good example is Eric A. Eliason, ed., *Mormons and Mormonism: An Introduction to an American World Religion* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

40. The most savage attack is that of William J. Hamblin, Daniel C. Peterson, and George L. Mitton, "Mormon in the Fiery Furnace, Or Loftes Tryk Goes to Cambridge," FARMS *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6 (1994): 1-58.

addressed to Mormons, who, Shipps knows, will read it in the light of their own understanding of what a "birthright Mormon" is. The term thus enables her to establish a boundary as an outsider, while allowing her access to the Mormon world.

At the same time, the burden of Shipps's message is the fading away of birthright Mormons and their culture, their picturesque nineteenth-century temples preserved as historic artifacts (Shipps uses the appropriate analogy of a museum) (381), while a new generation performs temple work in nearly identical modernistic edifices around the globe—in the Jordan River Temple in suburban Salt Lake City in I-15 territory, in Accra, Toronto, London, Frankfurt, Sao Paulo, Sydney, Taipei, Tokyo, and more than a hundred other places. Unlike meetinghouses, which are open to all, temples are for sacred ordinances called "endowments," marriages, and vicarious baptisms, and require a recommend for entry—granted after a searching interview to determine the "worthiness" of the candidate. As Shipps points out, these are sacred spaces representing a modern version of sacred time, a contemporary retreat from the temporal world. Though removed from the culture of the kingdom in the mountains of the American West, they represent a kind of miniature Zion (even more so than the meetinghouses), a reflection of the "particular culture" of memory for the many "birthright" Mormons living in the world abroad, who return to their roots in Manti or St. George when they retire (381). For many more, of course, these temples represent the only Mormon kingdom they will ever know.

Such changes do not come without some cost. Shipps, with her usually keen ear, reports that Mormon intellectuals used to say that they have a history, not a theology (385). But in the wake of dramatic changes, the past is being reshaped to serve the needs of the present, even as a more clearly defined theology serves as a guide to lead Mormons around the globe into the future. When Leonard Arrington became the first professional to be appointed Church Historian in 1972—a post traditionally held by an apostle—theological and historical priorities had not been sorted out, resulting in disagreements and misunderstandings. These led to the eventual removal of the newly created historical department to Brigham Young University with a new name—the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History (now Latter-day Saint History)—with Arrington still in charge.

However, on the question of who owns and controls the history of the Church, the highest leadership confirmed itself as the ultimate au-

thority. Even if it allowed considerable latitude to professionals, an occasional shot across the bow—such as the excommunication of Michael Quinn (who had already resigned from his professorship in the history department at BYU)—served as a warning. Nevertheless, Arrington's frank account of his *Adventures of a Church Historian* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), perhaps more candid than some of his historical works, showed considerable diplomatic skill in navigating the choppy waters of Church politics. After his death, a struggle ensued over the possession of his extensive papers, which he had bequeathed to Utah State University. Shipps did not report on this episode because it happened after the publication of *Sojourner.* An agreement between Church president Gordon B. Hinckley and Utah State University president Kermit Hall defused a potentially unpleasant fight by allowing most of the papers to remain at Utah State University while effecting the return of some where the Church's claims were beyond dispute.

Of course, the important question is how Shipps fits into these dramatic struggles and changes. In the early 1970s, she had served as a research fellow in the newly reorganized LDS Church Archives during the "Arrington Spring," as Dean L. May called it, and "Camelot," as Davis Bitton termed it.[41] Beginning there but continuing over the next three decades, Shipps deepened her thorough knowledge of Mormon sources, made important contacts, and in time "became a virtual extension of the LDS public communications division,"[42] explaining her sophisticated understanding of Mormonism to the outside world. Yet I would argue that equally important was her role in explaining Mormons to themselves, who like fish in an ocean are not always aware of the tides and currents surrounding them.[43]

She continues that role in this fascinating book, although I detect a lessening enthusiasm for the role she plays among Mormon bureaucrats. I suspect nothing personal in this subtle change, merely a more overt assertion by Church authorities, not only of who owns Mormon history, but also of who is *perceived* as owning it, requiring a distancing from even the most

41. Davis Bitton, "Ten Years in Camelot: A Personal Memoir," *Dialogue* 16 (Fall 1983): 9–20.

42. Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land,* front flap of dust jacket.

43. I am indebted to Joyce Appleby for the image: "Republicanism and Ideology," *American Quarterly* 37 (Autumn 1985): 461–73.

sympathetic of inside-outsiders—though it does not necessarily signal the end of the long "Shipps honeymoon." If there has been any alienation, it is more from the cultural Mormons, whether active or inactive, who perceive her as having had a hand in the process of modernization, her disavowals to the contrary notwithstanding. However, rather than confronting a fork in the road, the majority of Mormons appear to be seeking an accommodation between the old and the new, and may well see Shipps useful as an interpreter of this shift. Perhaps the reconstructed Nauvoo Temple is pointing the way, representing as it does the most radical departure from McLellin's "Mormonism in the countryside" by the time the Saints were forced to abandon Illinois in 1846, while at the same time serving as a link to those modern temples that genuflect, if ever so slightly, in the direction of McLellin's "Christianized" Mormonism.[44]

Yet as the world changes, it is never easy to assess the costs and the benefits. I was rather startled when some years ago Harold Bloom detected an elegiac tone in my own work, though on reflection I think he is right.[45] Something will be lost as Mormonism marches into the modern world, monitored by Jan Shipps, or into the "post-Christian" era, welcomed by Harold Bloom—or if it becomes the kind of mega-religion predicted by sociologist Rodney Stark.[46] And I don't mean only the picturesque byways of Mormon country along U.S. 89. Indeed, I have been told that plans are underway to designate U.S. 89 a historic highway—though it is hard to preserve a living past in a quasi-museum. Yet when I stopped in Ephraim, just north of Manti, for a bite to eat, I was able to strike up a conversation with some young people, students at the local college, who were open-minded and inquisitive[47]—and, yes, they were Mormons—reminding me of the old days when, unlike today, there was an open, liberal spirit at

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44. For example, some criticisms of Protestantism have been eliminated from the temple ceremony. Brooke, *Refiner's Fire,* 295.

45. Bloom, *The American Religion,* 92.

46. Ibid.; Rodney Stark, "The Rise of a New World Faith," *Review of Religious Research* 26 (September 1984): 18–27. Stark underestimates the influence and number of charismatic and pentecostal Christians. See Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995).

47. An acquaintance who has a relative teaching at Snow College in Ephraim confirms the open-minded and inquisitive climate on the campus, with a student body predominantly Mormon.

Brigham Young University. If I may continue the I-15/U.S. 89 conceit, it may well be that the boundaries of the old Mormonism obviated the need for defensiveness and censorship, while it is in the brave new world of cosmopolitanism (BYU's motto is "The World Is Our Campus") that even some sculptures of Rodin were judged unfit for public display.[48]

Yet it may be unfair to load this baggage on Jan Shipps. If in her sojourn in the promised land she has made a few enemies along with her many friends, she will always remain an insider to the latter. And while we all want to be loved by our friends and peers, what we want more is their respect. Respect she has earned, even from those who disagree with her. Someday the history of her sojourn among the Mormons will have to be written. Arguably she is one of the important historians and commentators on Mormonism in the second half of the twentieth century. According to Tanner Lecturer Harry Warner Bowdoin, Shipps "can be said to have done for Mormon studies what [Perry] Miller . . . did for Puritans."[49] Even those who may disagree with some of Shipps's conclusions will acknowledge that she pointed the way by asking the right questions.

A younger generation of scholars is pursuing many of these questions, as well as some of their own, in a fresh crop of impressive publications.[50] When I started this essay, I was giving serious thought to titling it "the end of Mormon history." Scores of historians deserve credit that this is not so. Not the least of these is Jan Shipps.

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48. In 1997 the BYU Museum of Art was scheduled to have an exhibit of Rodin sculptures. University President Merrill Bateman ordered the exclusion of four pieces, including the famous *The Kiss*, because they were regarded as "inappropriate." *Deseret News*, November 14, 1997, B1, online edition.

49. Henry Warner Bowdoin, "From the Age of Science to an Age of Uncertainty: History and Mormon Studies in the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Mormon History* 15 (1989): 117.

50. See, for example, Kathryn M. Daynes, *More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840–1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001); Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon*; Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostles* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); and Forsberg, *Equal Rites*.

Mormons and the Omnis: The Dangers of Theological Speculation

David H. Bailey

ENGAGING IN DOCTRINAL SPECULATION, and then later adopting these speculations as religious dogmas, is as old as recorded history. One example is the adoption of the traditional geocentric, flat-earth cosmology of antiquity into the doctrinal system of the Christian Church. Early Christian theologians found support for this worldview, which everyone at the time assumed to be literally valid, in biblical references to the "four corners," "foundations," "pillars," and "ends" of the earth,[1] as well as in other passages describing the earth as fixed and immovable with heavenly bodies moving around it.[2] As a result, this cosmology became part of traditional Christian dogma, in spite of the fact that these ancient poetic passages most likely were never intended to be read as authoritative statements of scientific fact. In the sixteenth century, Copernicus's heliocentric theory was rejected as incompatible with this doctrine, and the In-

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1. 1 Sam. 2:8; 2 Sam. 22:16; Job 28:24, 38:4; Ps. 75:3; Isa. 11:12, 48:13; Jer. 31:37; Heb. 1:10; Rev. 7:1; and others.

2. Ps. 93:1, 104:5, 104:19; Eccl. 1:5; Job 9:6-7; Isa. 38:7-8; Amos 8:9; and others.

quisition forced Galileo to recant his arguments in support of it.[3] But this was not just a Catholic phenomenon. Martin Luther, who taught that the Bible was the infallible word of God, rejected the Copernican theory because Joshua commanded the sun, not the earth, to stand still.[4]

Another example is the Catholic doctrine of Mary. In the first few decades after Christ, early Christian theologians who had devised the doctrine of original sin were concerned that Jesus could have inherited Adam's sin from Mary. Thus, they taught that Mary was a literal virgin, in spite of some biblical passages that suggested otherwise.[5] Subsequently Mary was declared to be a permanent virgin, in spite of several biblical references to Jesus' brothers and sisters (Matt. 13:55-56; Mark 3:31, 6:3). Later she became a postpartum virgin, out of unease that she may have retained the physical evidence of her delivery. In the nineteenth century, once scientific evidence came to light indicating that both the male and female contribute genetic information (so that women, in the Catholic view, also transmit the sin of Adam), the Church taught that Mary herself was immaculately conceived. Finally, in the twentieth century, the Church taught that Mary was physically assumed into heaven. What started out with the good intention of resolving a point of theology eventually mushroomed into a system of doctrines that many now regard as both dubious and baroque.[6]

A third example, which leads to the main topic of this article, is the doctrine of predestination. It is well known that early Christian theologians were heavily influenced by Greek Platonic philosophy, which viewed qualities of this world as mere shadows of "ideals" that exist in an unseen world. Thus even by 413 C.E., God's omniscience was taken for granted in the writings of Augustine.[7] He argued that, since God sees the

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3. Will and Ariel Durant, *The Age of Reason Begins*, Vol. 7 of *The Story of Civilization*, 11 vols. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), 600-612. Ariel Durant is listed as coauthor on vols. 7-11.

4. Josh. 10:12-13; Durant, *The Reformation*, Vol. 6 of *The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), 858.

5. John 1:45, 6:42; Rom. 1:3; Gal. 4:4. See also John Shelby Spong, *A New Christianity for a New World* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), 87, 112, 118.

6. Spong, *A New Christianity for a New World*, 111-12.

7. St. Augustine, *The City of God*, translated by Marcus Dods, Vol. 16 of *Great Books of the Western World*, edited by Mortimer J. Adler (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1990), bk. 5, chap. 9.

future in all details, future events are irrevocably predestined.[8] During the middle ages, Augustine's predestination was deemphasized in Catholic thought; but in 1525, Martin Luther brought the issue to the fore again. Luther, citing Augustine, argued that, since God is omniscient, everything must happen as he has foreseen it. Therefore, all events through all time have been predetermined in God's mind and are forever fated to be. Citing Romans 9:18 and Ephesians 1:3-7 for additional support, Luther then concluded that by divine predestination the elect are chosen for eternal happiness. The rest are graceless and damned to everlasting hell because, according to Luther, man is as "unfree as a block of wood, a rock, a lump of clay, or a pillar of salt."[9]

John Calvin took these doctrines even further in 1535, conceding that, although predestination (the notion that God has arbitrarily determined the eternal fate of billions of souls) is a "horrible decree," its purpose was to promote our admiration of God's glory by the display of his power. As Calvin explained, "No one can deny that God foreknew the future final fate of man before He created him, and that He foreknew it because it was appointed by his own decree."[10] In other words, whereas Luther had argued that the future is determined because God has foreseen it and his foresight cannot be falsified, Calvin taught that God foresees the future *because* he has willed and determined it to be so. Historian Will Durant observed that Calvin ignored Christ's conception of God as a loving and merciful father, as well as numerous biblical passages (e.g., 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4; 1 John 2:2, 4:14) that describe human beings' freedom to mold their own destiny. Instead, Calvin developed the thought of his predecessors, in Durant's terms, to "ruinously logical conclusions." Durant summarized Calvin's career in unusually blunt terms: "We shall always find it hard to love the man who darkened the human soul with the most absurd and blasphemous conception of God in all the long and honored history of nonsense."[11]

Unfortunately, Latter-day Saints cannot take much comfort in the above examples, because there has also been a considerable amount

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8. Durant, *The Age of Faith*, Vol. 4 of *The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990 edition), 68.

9. Quoted in Durant, *The Reformation*, 6:375.

10. Ibid., 464.

11. Ibid., 467, 490.

of free-wheeling doctrinal speculation in LDS history. Some well-known examples of speculative doctrines that once were taught at least semi-officially in the Church include: (1) Adam was the father of Jesus;[12] (2) certain sins require one's blood to be shed in retribution;[13] (3) practicing polygamy is essential to exaltation;[14] (4) certain racial groups were "less valiant" in the pre-mortal existence;[15] (5) the seven periods of creation lasted a literal 1,000 years each;[16] (6) the Book of Mormon is the history of the entire ancient western hemisphere;[17] and (7) humankind will never venture into space.[18]

One common thread in these and other examples that could be cited is the attempt to justify, by doctrinal exposition, concepts that have already been widely assumed in the religious movement. Another common thread is the use of quasi-axiomatic reasoning to press questionable premises to logical extremes. But perhaps the most pervasive underlying thread is the perennial desire for "answers" among religious believers, even in cases where ultimate answers cannot be provided. According to the Apostle Paul, the early Christians, not content with "sound doctrine," had developed "itching ears" (Tit. 4:3). A similar comment could be made of religious movements in almost any age, including our own.

The Omni Doctrines

The terms *omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent,* and *omnibenevolent* play a central role in the definition of God for traditional Christian

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12. Brigham Young, April 9, 1852, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1855-86), 1:50-51.

13. Brigham Young, September 21, 1856, ibid., 4:53-54.

14. Brigham Young, August 19, 1866, ibid., 11:269; Joseph F. Smith, July 7, 1875, ibid., 20:28.

15. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 527.

16. Ibid., 255.

17. Spencer W. Kimball, "Of Royal Blood," *Ensign*, July 1971, 7; Mark E. Petersen, *Report of the Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 5, 1953 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, semi-annual), 81.

18. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 2:191; Joseph Fielding Smith, Letter to Orville Gunther, May 7, 1958, photocopy in my possession.

faiths, although at the present time they are used more often by conservative and evangelical denominations. Some Latter-day Saints also use these terms (at least the first two). Nonetheless it is a curious fact that these words, with the sole exception of "omnipotent" in Revelation 19:6, a highly poetic verse, do not appear in the Bible. Instead, these terms and corresponding doctrines were devised with the creeds of early Christianity during the first few centuries after Christ, when Christian theology was recast in terms of Greek metaphysics. As we mentioned above, the omniscience of God was already taken for granted by the time Augustine wrote his *City of God* in 413 C.E. By 1265, God's omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence were prominently featured in Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica.*[19]

Biblical support for these doctrines is mixed. In the Old Testament, one can certainly find passages describing God's great power and wisdom, but also God's compassion and flexibility. The Old Testament describes God as regretting his creation in light of human wickedness at the time of Noah (Gen. 6:5-6), being willing to negotiate with Abraham over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah on behalf of a handful of righteous people (Gen. 18:23-33), and instructing the Israelites not to consider children guilty because of the sins of their parents or ancestors.[20]

The New Testament also is largely devoid of absolutist theology. The Apostle Paul makes fleeting references to speculative doctrines such as predestination, as noted above, but his focus is clearly on the basic principles of salvation, as exemplified by his "faith, hope, and charity" sermon (1 Cor. 13:1-13). Christ's teachings focused on righteous, humble, and unselfish living, as exemplified by his Sermon on the Mount and numerous parables. Jesus described God as his "father" (Matt. 6:9, 7:21; Mark 14:36; Luke 10:21, 22:42; John 5:17). He reduced the extensive Mosaic law to just two principles: love God, and love your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 22:39). He mentioned only simple criteria for being considered one of his disciples: "continue in my word" and "love one another" (John 8:31, 13:35). Nowhere does the New Testament suggest that affirming a

19. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* Vol. 17 in *Great Books of the Western World,* edited by Mortimer J. Adler (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1990), pt. 1, chaps. 7-14.

20. Ezek. 18:1-32; cf. Deut. 23:2-4, where sins of fathers are to be visited on the heads of children for multiple generations.

detailed "creed" is required for salvation, much less the omni doctrines that later arose in medieval Christianity.

LDS people for the most part use the omni terms rather informally—the equivalent of referring to God as the "Almighty." But some modern-day Latter-day Saints use these terms as formal statements of theological fact. For example, LDS scholar Stephen E. Robinson, responding to criticisms that "Mormons aren't Christian," recently declared, "God is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, infinite, eternal and unchangeable."[21] Another LDS writer, after documenting in detail how the simple primitive Christian concept of God changed under the influence of Greek philosophy in the first few centuries after Christ, still managed to affirm that "Mormonism teaches that God is omnipotent" and omniscient.[22] Such writings appear to be characteristic of "Mormon neo-orthodoxy," as described by O. Kendall White. White referred to a trend away from the flexible doctrines of early Mormonism and toward doctrines more typical of modern-day evangelical Protestantism. In particular, this phenomenon (which White noted especially in the Church Education System) is marked by an increasing emphasis on the absoluteness of God, the inscrutability of God's ways, the depravity of humankind, salvation by grace, the need for unquestioning faith, and a minimization of human free will.[23] More recently sociologist Armand Mauss analyzed these developments and concluded that, since the middle of the twentieth century, the LDS Church has in some respects moved toward convergence with Protestant fundamentalists, partly under external pressures and partly because of internal forces.[24]

I often wonder if modern-day Latter-day Saints who teach and use the omni terms fully appreciate what they really mean, as they are generally understood today by the Christian world and by evangelical Protestants in particular. While a comprehensive study of the omnis is beyond

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21. Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide: A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 59, 72. The two authors wrote separate chapters in this book.

22. Richard R. Hopkins, *How Greek Philosophy Corrupted the Christian Concept of God* (Bountiful, UT: Horizon Publishers, 1998), 309-11.

23. O. Kendall White Jr., *Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy: A Crisis Theology* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), 89-137.

24. Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 177-92.

the scope of this article, we can get the flavor of this theology from the website of a large conservative Protestant organization: "The God of Biblical Christianity is at least (1) personal and incorporeal (without physical parts), (2) the Creator and sustainer of everything else that exists, (3) omnipotent (all-powerful), (4) omniscient (all-knowing), (5) omnipresent (everywhere present), (6) immutable (unchanging) and eternal, and (7) necessary and the only God that exists."[25]

This document elaborates further on the implications of these omni doctrines:

> Unlike humans, God is not uniquely associated with one physical entity (i.e., a body) . . . Unlike a god who forms the universe out of preexistent matter, the God of the Bible created the universe *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). Consequently, it is on God alone that everything in the universe, indeed, the universe itself, depends for its existence. . . . Omnipotence literally means "all-powerful." When we speak of God as omnipotent, this should be understood to mean that God can do anything that is consistent with being a personal, incorporeal, omniscient, omnipresent, immutable, wholly good, and necessary Creator . . . God is all-knowing, and His all-knowingness encompasses the *past, present, and future.* He has absolute and total knowledge. . . . Since God is not limited by a spatiotemporal body, knows everything immediately without benefit of sensory organs, and sustains the existence of all that exists, it follows that He is in some sense present everywhere. When a Christian says that God is immutable and eternal, he or she is saying that God is *unchanging.* . . . There never was a time when God was not God. . . . Moreover, since everything that exists depends on God, and God is unchanging and eternal, it follows that God cannot *not* exist. In other words, He is a *necessary* being, whereas everything else is contingent (or dependent on God for its existence).

For some denominations, especially some evangelical Protestant denominations, another corollary of the omnipotence and omniscience of God is that the Bible must be inerrant and complete. It follows that no further revelation is possible: "Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches. . . . Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teach-

25. North American Mission Board, "A Closer Look at the Mormon Concept of God," retrieved on March 27, 2004, from http://www.namb.net/evangelism/iev/Mormon/Concepts.asp.

ing. . . . We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings."[26]

Early LDS Doctrine and the Omnis

Just from this quick summary, it should be clear that the omnis, as these terms are widely understood in the Christian world today, correspond to theological concepts that most Latter-day Saints would find unacceptable. To begin with, Joseph Smith and other LDS leaders have taught that God is not incorporeal, but instead has a literal physical existence within space and time. Second, Doctrine and Covenants 93:29-33 clearly states that the "elements" are eternal, not created by God, and that human "souls" are also eternal and thus not contingent upon God. In 1835, Joseph Smith explicitly rejected the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*: "Now, the word create . . . does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship."[27]

In his 1844 King Follett discourse, Joseph Smith elaborated on these ideas, rejecting the traditional Christian notion that God is on an utterly different plane of existence than humans. Instead humans are, at least in intelligence, of the same race as the Gods:

> You have got to learn how to make yourselves Gods in order to save yourselves and be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done—by going from a small capacity to a great capacity, from a small degree to another, from grace to grace, until the resurrection of the dead, from exaltation to exaltation. . . . Intelligence is eternal and exists upon a self-existent principle. It is a spirit from age to age and there is no creation about it. The first principles of man are self-existent with God.[28]

Although Protestants and Catholics do not accept the concept that God has a physical form, in a larger sense Joseph Smith anticipated the thinking of many modern theologians who recognize that the tradi-

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26. "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," retrieved on March 27, 2004, from http://www.carm.org/creeds/chicago.htm.

27. Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 6 vols. published 1902-12, Vol. 7 published 1932; 1978 printing), 6:308-9.

28. Stan Larson, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," *BYU Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 198-208.

tional Christian notion of the depravity of humankind, compared with the solemn omnipotence of God, is an outdated concept that denies the tremendous human achievements in charity, science, art, and literature through the ages. Anglican bishop and theologian John Shelby Spong, for example, laments the "enormous chasm between the human and the divine" in traditional Christian thought, "a chasm so broad and so deep that we have almost come to think of human and divine as opposites."[29]

Joseph Smith also rejected the prevailing doctrine of predestination. He argued that the ancient apostles did not teach the unconditional election of individuals to eternal life. While individuals might be preordained to salvation, God "passes over no man's sins, but visits them with correction, and if His children will not repent of their sins He will discard them."[30] In the 1950s, President David O. McKay noted that several large Protestant denominations had revised their creeds to remove references to divine predestination, a theological concept that Joseph Smith had rejected a century earlier.[31]

In fact, Joseph Smith rejected all of the traditional creeds of Christianity. In his first vision in 1820, the young Prophet learned that the creeds of the competing churches were an "abomination" (JS—H 1:19). In 1843, in response to a question from a local political official, he declared: "I stated that the most prominent difference in sentiment between the Latter-day Saints and sectarians was, that the latter were all circumscribed by some peculiar creed, which deprived its members [of] the privilege of believing anything not contained therein, whereas the Latter-day Saints have no creed, but are ready to believe all true principles that exist, as they are made manifest from time to time."[32]

On another occasion, Smith recorded his strong disapproval of a disciplinary council that had accused an elderly member of preaching "false" doctrine: "I did not like the old man being called up for erring in doctrine. It looks too much like the Methodists, and not like the Lat-

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29. Spong, *A New Christianity for a New World*, 151.

30. Joseph Smith, "Sunday Morning May 16, 1841," *Times and Seasons* 2 (May 16, 1841): 429–30.

31. David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1960), 25–26.

32. *History of the Church*, 5:215.

ter-day Saints. Methodists have creeds which a man must believe or be asked out of their church. I want the liberty of thinking and believing as I please. It feels so good not to be trammelled. It does not prove that a man is not a good man because he errs in doctrine."[33]

In this regard, Joseph Smith again anticipated modern religious thought, at least in certain mainstream denominations, which now recognizes both the futility of attempting to encapsulate God in a creed as well as the potential for abuse in imposing creeds on others. Spong, for instance, recently wrote:

> In the Christian West today, we are far too sophisticated to erect idols of wood or stone and call them our gods. We know that such an activity no longer has credibility. In our intellectual arrogance, however, we Westerners—especially the Christian theologians among us—have time after time erected idols out of our words and then claimed for those words the ability to define the holy God. We have also burned at the stake people who refused to acknowledge the claim that God and our definitions of God were one and the same. Truth now demands that we surrender these distorting identifications forever.[34]

Subsequent LDS leaders continued Joseph Smith's open-ended tradition, avoiding for the most part traditional dogmas in general and the omnis in particular. Brigham Young emphasized that there is "no such thing" as a miracle, in the sense of God acting supernaturally from outside nature.[35] At the turn of the twentieth century, B. H. Roberts pointed out in detail how Mormonism's distinctive "finitistic" theology avoids many of the pitfalls of traditional Christianity.[36] James E. Talmage, later an apostle, amplified Brigham Young's rejection of miracles as supernatural: "Miracles are commonly regarded as occurrences in opposition to the laws of nature. Such a conception is plainly erroneous, for the laws of nature are inviolable. However, as human understanding of these laws is at best . . . imperfect, events strictly in accordance with natural law may appear

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33. Ibid., 5:340.

34. Spong, *A New Christianity for the New World*, 60-61.

35. Brigham Young, July 11, 1869, *Journal of Discourses*, 13:140-41.

36. B. H. Roberts, *The Mormon Doctrine of Deity* (1903; reprinted., Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1982), 95-114.

contrary thereto. The entire constitution of nature is founded on system and order."[37]

Once more, these notions have resonance in modern religious thought. Protestant scholar John F. Haught recently acknowledged: "Too often we have understood the conception of God as 'all-mighty' in a way that leads to theological contradictions, many of which have been pointed out quite rightly by scientific skeptics. Our view however, is that God's 'power' (which means 'capacity to influence') is more effectively manifested in a humble 'letting be' of a self-organizing universe than in any direct display of divine magicianship."[38]

On the other hand, some LDS thinkers and authorities have asserted or implied the omnis. Orson Pratt taught in 1853 that God was omniscient and therefore could not increase in intelligence. Subsequently in 1865, Brigham Young, in an official statement from the LDS First Presidency, declared Pratt's teachings "false."[39] Wilford Woodruff agreed in 1857: "If there was a point where man in his progression could not proceed any further, the very idea would throw a gloom over every intelligent and reflecting mind. God himself is still increasing and progressing in knowledge, power and dominion, and will do so world without end."[40]

In the twentieth century, James E. Talmage affirmed the omnis in his *The Articles of Faith,* although he did not provide much scriptural support.[41] McConkie affirmed the omnis in *Mormon Doctrine,* citing as his source this quotation from *Lectures on Faith,* which is traditionally attributed to Joseph Smith: "We here observe that God is the only supreme governor and independent being in whom all fullness and perfection dwell;

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37. James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith* (1899; rev. ed. 1924; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966 printing), 220.

38. John F. Haught, *Science and Religion: From Conflict to Conversation* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), 161.

39. James R. Clark, ed., 6 vols., *Messages of the First Presidency* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954), 2:214-23.

40. Wilford Woodruff, December 6, 1857, *Journal of Discourses,* 6:120.

41. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith,* 42-44.

who is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient; without beginning of days or end of life."[42]

However, historical research has cast doubt on Joseph Smith's authorship, identifying Sidney Ridgon as a more likely author, particularly for the Second Lecture, in which the omni doctrines are discussed.[43] In part because of the authorship question and also because of the presence of questionable doctrines, the *Lectures* were dropped from the LDS scriptures in 1920.[44] In any event, the question of who authored the *Lectures* is largely an academic one, because it is clear from other sources (notably the King Follett discourse) that Joseph Smith later distanced himself from the traditional omni theology of orthodox Christianity.

Difficulties with the Omnis

Christian scholars and theologians have recognized for centuries that there are numerous philosophical and scientific difficulties with the omnis. There is not room here to analyze these complex issues in detail, but five examples will illustrate the point.

1. If God is literally all-powerful and all-good and if he created all things, then what are we to make of Satan or of evil in general? Was evil created by God? Why?

2. If God is literally all-powerful and if he has acted in the world throughout history, why has he permitted human suffering, disease, and premature death? For example, why did God permit the September 11 terrorists to slam their hijacked airliners into the World Trade Center, killing thousands of good people from many religious faiths?

3. If God literally possesses all knowledge and can see arbitrarily far into the future with complete fidelity, then what is the meaning of human free agency? How do we escape the conclusion that we are mere robots, acting out a course that was irrevocably set in motion eons ago? How then

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42. Joseph Smith, *Lectures on Faith* (1835; reprinted., Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1985), 13.

43. Kent Robson, "Omnis on the Horizon," *Sunstone* 8, no. 4 (July-August 1983): 21-24.

44. Richard S. Van Wagoner, Steven C. Walker, and Allen D. Roberts, "The Lectures on Faith: A Case Study in Decanonization," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20, no. 3 (Fall 1987): 71-77.

can we justifiably be punished for misdeeds, or, for that matter, rewarded for righteous living?

4. If God is omnipotent in this strong sense and if God supernaturally intervenes in the world about us, then how do we explain scientific laws, where we see principles obeyed with extreme precision and unfailing consistency?

5. If God's nature is completely uniform and undifferentiated, then how can God also be omniscient, given that fundamental principles of thermodynamics and computer science rule out the possibility that such an entity could be the repository of information?[45]

On the question about human free will and God's foreknowledge, some theologians, beginning with Augustine, have argued that God's absolute foreknowledge does not imply that God is responsible for what happens. But if the future can be foreseen and/or predicted with complete fidelity by any means, even by a future super-powerful computer, then only one future course is logically possible. In that event, human free agency is at best an illusion, and we are indeed acting out a course that was defined eons ago. It only compounds these difficulties to further assert that God is the Being who possesses this absolute foreknowledge and who set the system into motion.

The notion that the future can be perfectly predicted goes back at least to Pierre-Simon Laplace who wrote in 1812: "An intelligence knowing all the forces acting in nature at a given instant, as well as the momentary positions of all things in the universe, would be able to comprehend in one single formula the motions of the largest bodies as well as of the lightest atoms in the world, provided that its intellect were sufficiently powerful to subject all data to analysis; to it nothing would be uncertain, the future as well as the past would be present to its eyes."[46]

Fortunately, Laplace's notion of a "clockwork universe" was destroyed by twentieth-century science. First, the uncertainty principle of quantum mechanics showed that the very information needed to make such predictions (namely, the unlimited precision measurement of the current state of a physical system) is unattainable. This is not a limitation

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45. Hollis Johnson and I examine this question in "Information Storage and the Omniscience of God," available at http://www.dhbailey.com.

46. Durant, *The Age of Voltaire*, Vol. 9 of *The Story of Civilization* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), 548.

of current measurement technology but is, rather, as far as we know, a fundamental characteristic of the universe that we inhabit. Some have questioned whether quantum mechanical laws can have any macro-scale impact worth taking seriously. But consider, for example, the moment when the genetic molecules from two human beings unite to form a new individual. Even a slight disturbance to such delicate processes, such as a chance encounter with a cosmic ray, can have drastic, long-term consequences. What's more, recent research in the field of chaotic processes suggests that this type of magnification of microscopic effects is more the rule than the exception. In many physical systems, very small changes or uncertainties in its current state can lead to arbitrarily large deviations in its future state.

This does not mean that any prediction of the future is impossible. Present-day supercomputers can, for example, accurately predict future climate patterns. But it appears fundamentally impossible to predict in detail the weather at a specific geographical location at a specific point far in the future. In a similar vein, it follows that, while general trends of future events can be anticipated, beyond a certain point their details cannot be foreseen.

Modern LDS Analysis of the Omnis

Issues related to the omnis have been studied by several LDS scholars, beginning with B. H. Roberts's book *The Mormon Doctrine of Deity.* In *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion,* philosopher Sterling M. McMurrin noted: "Mormon theologians have moved somewhat ambiguously between the emotionally satisfying absolutism of traditional theism and the radical finitism logically demanded by their denial of creation and encouraged by the pragmatic character of their daily faith. Here they have often failed to recognize the strength of their own position and have, therefore, neglected to grasp and appreciate the full meaning of its implications."[47]

In a 1975 analysis of LDS theology, philosopher Truman Madsen quoted Anglican theologian Edmond B. LaCherbonnier as observing: "Mormons also conceive God as temporal, not eternal in the sense of timeless. This idea of a timeless eternity is incompatible with an acting

47. Sterling M. McMurrin, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1965), 29.

God, for it would be static, lifeless, impotent. If God is an agent, then he must be temporal, for timeless action is a contradiction in terms."[48] In 1989, LDS philosopher Kent Robson, examining God's foreknowledge and human free agency, concluded: "The issue is this: as Mormons we believe in freedom and free agency. In order for me to have freedom, I must have alternatives in my future that are truly *open* and not just *appear* to be open . . . [If] God knows my every specific act, then I have no *real and meaningful* freedom."[49]

Other recent studies include a 1999 article and a 2001 book by Blake Ostler, and a 2000 article by Dennis Potter.[50] They discuss in significant detail issues such as the principle of free agency and the problem of evil.

Perhaps the most eloquent treatment of these issues in recent LDS scholarly literature is Eugene England's posthumously published essay, "The Weeping God of Mormonism."[51] England's title is a reference to a passage in the Book of Moses:

> And it came to pass that the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and he wept; and Enoch bore record of it, saying: How is it that the heavens weep, and shed forth their tears as the rain upon the mountains?
>
> And Enoch said unto the Lord: How is it that thou canst weep, seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity? . . .
>
> The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency;

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48. Truman G. Madsen, ed. *Reflections on Mormonism: Judeo-Christian Parallels* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1975), 157.

49. Kent E. Robson, "Omnipotence, Omnipresence, and Omniscience in Mormon Theology," in *Line upon Line: Essays on Mormon Doctrine*, edited by Gary James Bergera (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 71. Robson also quotes the same statement by LaCherbonnier as Madsen.

50. Blake T. Ostler, "Mormonism and Determinism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 32, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 43–75; his *Exploring Mormon Thought* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2001); and R. Dennis Potter, "Finitism and the Problem of Evil," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 83–96.

51. Eugene England, "The Weeping God of Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 63–80.

> And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father; but behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood. . . .
>
> And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Enoch, and told Enoch all the doings of the children of men; wherefore Enoch knew, and looked upon their wickedness, and their misery, and wept and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity; and his bowels yearned; and all eternity shook. (Moses 7:28–41)

This passage affirms that the agency that God has given to humankind is fundamental and cannot be abrogated. Partly for this reason, God's power to remove evil and sin is limited. So God weeps with Enoch over the suffering that results. England notes that this passage represents a theodicy which, if not unique to Mormonism, is at least unique among large, growing churches. He adds, "It is also, I believe, a theodicy that makes a crucial contribution to Mormonism's emergence as a mature, compassionate world religion, one that is able to contribute in important ways to God's efforts to save all his children not only through conversion but through sharing our revealed insights into the nature of God, in dialogue with others."[52]

England's essay has already attracted attention. Brian Ferguson, in a letter to the editor, recommended "Make copies for everyone you know" of England's essay, in an attempt to counter the lamentable trend of the omnis being advocated in some quarters of the Church Education System.[53]

Scholarly articles such as those listed above are not widely read in the Church. Nonetheless, many rank-and-file Latter-day Saints appear to have at least a fair understanding of these principles, even if they often do not fully appreciate the implications for omni doctrines. For example, many individual Latter-day Saints respond to the first difficulty (the existence of evil) by arguing that Satan lived in the premortal world and, like us, had an eternal existence independent from God. This is actually a rather effective response. But note that this argument implicitly rejects the traditional Christian omni doctrine that God is the only uncreated and noncontingent being.

Rank-and-file Latter-day Saints typically respond to the second difficulty (human suffering) either by assigning these calamities to the influ-

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52. Ibid., 64.

53. Ferguson, "A 'Traditional Mormon' Thanks Gene," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2002): v–vi.

ence of Satan or by appealing, as England did in the "Weeping God of Mormonism," to the indispensable nature of human free agency. Note that appeals to free agency beg the fundamental question of why human free agency is indispensable. Again, many Latter-day Saints would argue that this is a fundamental law to which even God is subject (or at least that he chooses to obey) based upon some higher principle. This notion is implicit in Moses 7, which England highlighted in his "Weeping" essay. But this argument rejects the traditional Christian omni doctrine that God's omnipotence places him absolutely above any other law or principle.

Some modern-day Latter-day Saints respond to the third difficulty (free agency and God's foreknowledge) by arguing that God's foreknowledge does not necessarily preclude human free agency. Others, notably LDS writers such as McMurrin and Robson, are not persuaded by these arguments and, in any event, are not content with the conclusion that free agency is merely an illusion. But as we have seen, modern science provides some important perspectives here, suggesting that there must be specifics that cannot be precisely foreseen by God, even if the overall course of human affairs proceeds as anticipated. In any event, most Latter-day Saints are generally aware that the Church rejects traditional Christian ideas about predestination.

Where the fourth difficulty is concerned (scientific law and God's omnipotence), there is a strong tradition of scientific excellence in the Church, and Church leaders in recent years have wisely attempted to steer clear of scientific controversies. On the minus side, many individual Latter-day Saints continue to hold to a highly traditional worldview that dismisses much modern science as mere "theories." It is also common to hear LDS accounts of answers to prayers in which it is taken for granted, to paraphrase Ambrose Bierce, that God has annulled the laws of the universe on behalf of a single petitioner, who by his or her own confession is unworthy.[54] In any event, the solution here is clear. Once one acknowledges that God works mostly, if not entirely, within the realm of natural law and not utterly beyond natural law or by capriciously setting aside natural law, then the scientific "issue" loses most of its impact. This principle

54. Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary,* 1911, s.v. "pray," retrieved on March 27, 2004, from http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Literature/Bierce/DevilsDictionary.

is also in keeping with the basic LDS precept that God allows free agency to operate largely without interference.

One important note here is to observe that, as a consequence of the modern scientific findings mentioned above, a God who works within natural law is not condemned to irrelevance. As Protestant theologian John Polkinghorne has written:

> The dead hand of the Laplacean calculator, totally in control of the sterile history of his mechanical universe, has been relaxed. In its place is a more open picture, capable of sustaining motivated conjectures that can accommodate human agency and divine action within the same overall account. Modern science, properly understood in no way condemns God, at best, to the role of a Deistic Absentee landlord, but it allows us to conceive of the Creator's continuing providential activity and costly loving care for creation.[55]

In this regard, Brigham Young, Talmage, and other LDS writers who have taught that there is no such a thing as a "miracle" and that behind every act of God is a rational, natural explanation are in accord with progressive thinking in this arena. This principle has also been taught in recent years, for instance by Apostle Russell M. Ballard: "'If there is a God,' the empathetic observer might wonder, 'how could He allow such things to happen?' The answer isn't easy, but it isn't that complicated, either. God has put His plan into motion. It proceeds through natural laws—which are, in fact, God's laws. And because they are His, He is bound by them, as we are."[56]

It should be noted that in each case, a reasonable response to the omni issues listed above is to qualify the notions of omnipotence and omniscience, or in other words to place reasonable, common-sense limitations on the absoluteness of these terms. What most Latter-day Saints do not realize is that these reasonable limitations implicitly reject the omni doctrines as they are widely taught in traditional Christianity and especially in the conservative Protestant world today. But Latter-day Saints are not obligated to accept these omni doctrines, certainly not in the same absolute sense as evangelical Protestantism. No one knows the full resolu-

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55. John Polkinghorne, *Belief in God in an Age of Science* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998), 75.

56. Russell M. Ballard, *Our Search for Happiness* (New York: Deseret Books, 2001), 76.

tion of these questions, but they generally are not (or at least should not be) crucial, burning issues for Latter-day Saints. This is a major, and largely unappreciated, advantage of Mormonism's rejection of traditional creeds.

Conclusion

We have seen that the traditional Christian notion, taught widely even today in numerous denominations, of an absolutely omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent Deity, is not only problematic from a number of philosophical and scientific points of view but also goes against certain fundamental beliefs that have been taught in the LDS movement from its inception. In this light it is truly unfortunate that these omni doctrines are being taught in the LDS Church today. Why follow other denominations down a theological path that has proven to be so problematic and destructive of faith and, indeed, which many would argue has been refuted both by modern thought and day-to-day experience?

Certainly it is reasonable to believe that God is very powerful and possesses great knowledge. Certainly it is reasonable to believe that everyone can experience God's presence in the form of a Holy Spirit that infuses all of creation. But it is essential that we avoid inflexible and dogmatic theological positions (creeds) in this arena. If this means that we must simply reject the omni doctrines, then so be it.

At the very least, Latter-day Saints must insist that God's omnipotence and omniscience (1) do not place God utterly beyond space and time, as the only uncreated entity, (2) do not require that God's ways be viewed as inscrutable or incomprehensible, (3) do not abrogate or trivialize human free agency, (4) do not require that God acts in violation of natural law, and (5) do not relegate humanity to a depraved status, utterly distinct in nature from God. It is also essential that Latter-day Saints not attempt to deduce, by technical arguments reminiscent of medieval scholastics, doctrines based on literal interpretations of the omnis.

Some may say that modern "conservative" LDS discourse, which often includes the awe-inspiring language of the omnis, should be countered by a more "liberal" flavor of discourse, such as the progressing nature of God as taught by several early LDS leaders. But it seems to me that the deeper and more significant lesson here is that there is danger in any sort of theological speculation or dogmatism, as both LDS and modern non-LDS theologians have observed. We have seen all too many instances where well-meaning speculation in one era becomes a theological

quagmire for subsequent eras, and this is true both in general Christian history and in LDS history as well.

Besides, there is also an everyday, practical benefit to steering clear of theological dogmatism. When someone teaches or insists on a questionable doctrinal notion in a church meeting, experience has shown that engaging in a debate with this person is often more divisive than convincing. In contrast, it is usually much easier and less likely to give offense to merely point out privately that the notion in question represents an extrapolation from well-established principles and thus should be avoided, at least in official settings. But it is important to keep in mind that this sword cuts both ways. LDS "liberals" are often annoyed when they hear someone commenting authoritatively about what "really" happened in the council of heaven or what "really" is contained in the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon. But do such persons expect LDS "conservatives" to react any differently when they hear someone discussing at length the attributes of Mother in Heaven? Dogmatism is dogmatism, and speculation is speculation, whether it is "conservative" or "liberal" in origin.

Along this line, it follows from the fundamentally creedless nature of the LDS religion (and the ninth Article of Faith) that Latter-day Saints should never presume that the current understanding of any precept is forever unchangeable or unchallengeable. Perhaps even some rather basic doctrines, such as some of those mentioned in this paper, may one day be changed, refined, or set aside.

Mormonism has a tradition (even if it is not always followed very faithfully) of being a practical, reasonable religion; people are more important than dogmas. In this regard, the Church is well advised to maintain a relatively simple doctrinal foundation, avoiding theological quagmires, and focusing instead on good, clean, charitable living. This is one arena where all the Church can unite—liberals and conservatives, young and old, newly baptized and life-long members, foreign converts and five-generation pioneer descendants. And it is also an arena where thinking Latter-day Saints can participate with full intellectual honesty.

What Does God Write in His Franklin Planner? The Paradoxes of Providence, Prophecy, and Petitionary Prayer

R. Dennis Potter

> Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do. (John 14:13)
>
> I know the end from the beginning. (Abr. 2:8)

THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE states that God is the supreme governor of the world—past, present, and future. Different versions of the doctrine depend on different interpretations of governance. The strongest version of this doctrine comes from the Calvinists who assert that each and every event in the history of the world is planned by God and happens only because God wills it, including anything that humans do. Thomists weaken this assertion by saying that God's will concurs with our will when we act freely. And Arminians weaken the doctrine even further by asserting that, although God's will influences us and is necessary for our ability to act, it does not determine what we will do. Nevertheless, according to the Arminians, God does know *what* we will do and can include this in His plan—God has everything planned out in advance.

Mormons are not very likely to sympathize with Calvinists and are

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not very likely to understand the Thomist view. However, they are very likely to hold something like the Arminian view. In this paper, I will argue that this view is philosophically problematic because it does not allow for substantive prophecy or petitionary prayer. Moreover, I will even suggest that it is not consistent with the most natural understanding of scripture.

Divine Foreknowledge, Correlation, and Governance

I never really caught on to this day-planner fad. I know that this makes me somewhat of a jack Mormon. After all, the eleventh commandment for Latter-day Saints is "Thou shalt correlate," and how can we correlate without a day planner? This does not mean that I don't have plans. I may be a Generation X-er, but I don't wander aimlessly through life. I even write things down on a calendar once in a while: important meetings, final exam dates, my wedding anniversary, etc. But these are usually the most important things in life and, given my long-term goals, things which are quite inevitable. This lack of planning on my part helps me to fit the stereotype of the absentminded philosopher (not an unmixed advantage), but from one perspective, it is quite the character flaw.

Being a good Wasatch Front Mormon, God has a Franklin planner and He isn't afraid to use it. Not only does He plan everything that He *can* plan, but He *can plan* everything. And so He does. Everything that happens is according to God's plan. It was meant to happen all along. This doesn't mean that God *causes* everything to happen; God can intend certain things to happen without directly causing them by knowing the precise nature of every aspect of His creation and being able to predict exactly what will occur.

So, what does God write in His Franklin planner? He writes everything that will happen. Let's call this the doctrine of divine providence. I think that this doctrine is false, not because I think God shares my character flaw, but because the idea that God plans everything winds up contradicting other assumptions which are more central to Mormon theology.

Let's be more precise about this doctrine. First of all, it entails that God knows everything that will happen before it will happen. He knows the precise time and date of your eventual death. Let's call this the doctrine of absolute foreknowledge. It is important to distinguish absolute foreknowledge from the claim that God knows everything that can possibly happen. The latter does not entail that God knows which possibility will actually obtain. Second, divine providence claims that God takes His

foreknowledge and makes a plan for each and every event in the history of the world. He knows what can happen, He knows what He wants to happen, and so He plans it to happen that way. Let's call this the doctrine of divine correlation. Third, divine providence also states that whatever will happen happens according to God's plan. It is God's will and plan that you choose to visit the washroom precisely when you do. There is no deviation from God's plan. Let's call this the doctrine of divine governance. These are not entirely separate claims. They are intertwined. They emphasize different aspects of the doctrine of divine providence. However, each claim is essential to the doctrine of divine providence as I will discuss it here.

Foreknowledge, Free Will, and Prophecy

Three doctrines create problems for various aspects of divine providence. I will call these free will, prophecy, and petitionary prayer respectively. The doctrine of free will states that, with respect to some things we do, we have a choice—i.e., it is possible for us to choose otherwise than we do. The doctrine of prophecy states that God uses His knowledge of what will happen to inform us through prophets what will happen with the idea of changing what we will do. And the doctrine of petitionary prayer is that our prayers can make a difference.

I claim that each of these doctrines is found in scripture. Lehi says we are "free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death" (2 Ne. 2:27). So there is at least one free choice that we can make. Moreover, it is clear from the Book of Mormon that many prophecies are for the purpose of changing human hearts (e.g., Hel. 4:14–15). Finally, God sends an angel to Alma the younger as a result of the prayers of Alma the elder (Mosiah 27:14). There may be some twisted and convoluted ways that such scriptures can be interpreted to avoid these doctrines, but the most plausible and most common interpretation of such scriptures commits us to the above doctrines. And yet these doctrines are inconsistent with divine providence.

Let's start with the most obvious one: absolute foreknowledge. If we are free with respect to some actions, then God cannot have complete foreknowledge. For if God has such foreknowledge, then He not only knows what we will do but He knows that we do it freely. Moreover, He knows each and every detail that leads up to each and every event. These facts make it impossible for us to actually be free. To see this, consider the

"Case of Sariah at Sunstone." In this scenario, God is having a correlation committee meeting just about the time of the first Egyptian Pharaoh. The meeting is intended for planning Sariah's actions on August 2, 2000. He writes in His Franklin planner as follows: "Sariah freely chooses to attend the Sunstone Symposium. A tornado strikes the Marriott Hotel. And everyone except Sariah escapes alive." Now one of God's angels is not as careful as He should be, and the Sariah edition of God's Franklin planner ends up in the library of the University of Utah. On July 4th, Sariah, an unpatriotic professor of philosophy, finds the planner that describes every detail of her boring academic life. It even gives an account of her finding the planner in the library. She finds that the last entry of the planner is on August 2, 2000. She reads what it says about her untimely death.

Now the question is whether she can deviate from the plan. Indeed, it doesn't even need to be a plan. God writes down what He knows is going to happen. Sariah is certainly going to want to avoid death if she can. So, she will try to avoid the symposium. But if the planner is right, and it must be, then she will be at the symposium. So it seems that she is not free to avoid attending Sunstone. But if she is not free, then the planner is wrong after all, since it says that she freely attends the symposium. On the other hand, suppose she can avoid the symposium. If she does, then the planner is wrong as well. Either way we have a contradiction: the planner must be right and yet it is wrong.

How can we get out of this paradox? We have assumed the following:

(1) God has absolute foreknowledge.

(2) We are free with respect to some actions.

(3) God can tell people about what He knows about the future (whether through a book or through verbal communication).

(4) Knowing what God believes about the future may affect what we will want to do.

And from these assumptions the contradiction follows. Clearly, if we find out about our untimely deaths, then we will want to avoid them. So (4) is fairly plausible. That leaves (3) as the only candidate for avoiding the paradox if we are to preserve absolute foreknowledge and free will. But (3) is entailed by the doctrine of prophecy. So, it seems that we cannot affirm absolute foreknowledge, free will, and prophecy without contradicting ourselves.

It is important to notice that this argument does not presuppose that God *causes* Sariah's action. And so pointing out that the existence of

God's foreknowledge does not cause us to act in a certain way is not a response to this argument. Moreover, even accepting a compatibilist view of free agency will not get us out of the problem. Even if Sariah's ability to do other than she does causally depends on her internal mental state, it should be clear that she is not free in the sense that, if she wants to, then she can avoid the symposium. Indeed, reading the book will cause her to *want* to avoid Sunstone.

A more plausible line of response argues that God can tell us about some future events, but just not all of them. The idea is that, although in Sariah's case knowing about the future will change the way she will act (thus leading to the paradox), in many cases knowing something about the future will *not* change the way we will act. God can tell us about those future facts that will not affect the way anyone will act even if they know about them. There are two problems with this response, however. The first problem is that any fact might be one that will, if known, affect the actions of someone. If we knew all of the consequences of our actions, we would certainly almost always act differently than we do. Practically everything that happens is something that *someone* will regret. So, this leaves God with very little to inform us about.

The second problem is worse yet. Even if there are some things left in the category of things that God can inform us about, they cannot be things that will have an effect on how we will act. This means that God cannot inform us of the future in order to have an effect on how we will act. But such a situation denies the doctrine of prophecy explained above. Certainly God tells prophets about the future to affect what we will do.

The defender of absolute foreknowledge might object that I am misunderstanding how foreknowledge functions causally in time. To see this point we should consider time travel, the objector will insist. Time travel may seem to lead to paradoxes. For example, if I could time travel, then I could go back and kill my grandfather. However, philosopher David Lewis has suggested how we can avoid the grandfather's paradox.[1] Clearly, my existence rules out that my grandfather dies before he begets my father. So, if I travel back in time before he begets my father, then there must have been some historical event that prevented me from killing my grandfa-

1. David Lewis, "The Paradoxes of Time Travel," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 13 (1976): 145–52.

ther. Let's say I slipped on a banana peel. No matter how many times I go back, something similar will happen.

The case of foreknowledge is similar. It is just that what travels back in time is a piece of information, not a person. This information can do nothing to make what happens before the time that it refers to different than it was. Instead, it can be involved only in the very causal chain that leads to what in fact happened. So, for example, if Sariah finds out that she will be killed at Sunstone, this fact must be involved in some way in bringing it about that she freely goes to Sunstone. Or, at least, it cannot be involved in preventing her from attending Sunstone.

This is subtle stuff. But I think in the subtlety a fallacy hides. Time travel and foreknowledge are disanalogous in the following way: we cannot change the past but we can change the future. If we are free, then what we do will have an effect on what happens in the future. However, even if we are free, what we do will have no effect on the past. What does the defender of absolute foreknowledge do with the fact that Sariah will want to avoid Sunstone? He claims that it doesn't keep her from attending Sunstone. But surely it does, since she is free to do as she wills, and since preserving her own life would be of paramount interest to her!

Of course, this argument raises the issue of whether the future and the past are really disanalogous in this respect. Perhaps we can affect the past. If one assumes that there is such a thing as backwards causation, then one might think that there is another way out of the problem that I have posed. But this is not necessarily true. We must affirm something much stronger than backwards causation. There are two theses that we could affirm about our control over the past. The first is that we have the power to bring about things in the past. That is, we have the power to be involved in a cause whose effect has occurred earlier in time. This condition does not allow for the compatibility of free will and foreknowledge, because free will entails not only that we have the power to *do* something but that we have the power to *refrain* from doing it. Thus, it requires, in effect, that we have the power to make the past different than it was. "Weak" backwards causation claims that we have the power to bring about something in the past, but not that we have the power to make the past different than it was. "Strong" backwards causation claims that we have the power to bring about an event in the past where the event is the way it was or where the event is the way it was not. If I have a real choice as to what to do, then I presently have the power to produce either X or not-X. If I cause

God to believe this in the past, then I have the power to bring it about that God believes that I do X, and I also have the power to bring it about that God believes that I do not-X. This is obviously strong backwards causation and not weak. If God knows what is going to happen due to weak backwards causation, then we are not free. This is because we can only cause Him to believe what He in fact already believed. So, we can only do what He in fact already believed that we would do.

As a matter of fact, I think that weak backwards causation is perfectly possible. However, strong backwards causation is not possible. The reason it is not possible is that it violates the rule that we cannot change the past. And when this rule is violated, we run into the traditional paradoxes of time travel. If I can alter the past, then I could cause something to happen which would prevent my birth.[2]

Divine Correlation and Petitionary Prayer

The doctrine of petitionary prayer says that our prayers can have an effect on what God will do. It is hard to reconcile this idea with the doctrine of divine correlation, i.e., that God plans what is going to happen before it happens. The problem is that God makes His plans long before we pray. So, our prayers cannot have an effect on what plans He makes. Consider a concrete case. Ann's husband has stage four colon cancer. She prays to God that he will be cured. Now aeons before she kneels down to pray, God has already written down in His Franklin planner whether her husband will be cured or not. So, how could Ann's prayer have an effect on God's plan regarding her husband's life? Indeed, why should she even pray? God already knows what He is going to do; her prayer, it would seem, cannot make any difference.

The traditional response to this problem is what I will call the internal response. This response says that, although Ann's prayer cannot affect what God will do, it does affect her relationship with God. It brings her to God and affects her moral disposition. That is, Ann's prayer is not sup-

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2. David Lewis has pointed out that time travel is perfectly consistent, despite the traditional paradoxes. (Ibid.) All we have to affirm is the claim that we cannot change the past. So, whatever we do when we go back has already happened. This means that time travel could not be used to alter history. And so the plots of many excellent science fiction stories based on this paradox will have to go out the philosophical window.

posed to have any external effects but is only supposed to have internal ones.

The internal response does not allow for robust petitionary prayer. Robust petitionary prayer is the doctrine that says that the way in which petitionary prayer makes a difference is external. The idea is that we pray because we believe that praying will make a real difference in the world and not just because of what it does to us. There may be several ways that prayer can make a difference in the world. Perhaps it can be like "casting a spell" in that it directly causes something to happen without the intervention of any other agent. On the other hand, it could affect what happens by convincing an agent, like God, to do something. Either way, the difference that prayer makes is external to the person doing the praying. I assume that Mormons believe in robust petitionary prayer. At least, the prayers that we utter when we heal the sick have a real effect, we think. So, the internal response is not enough.

Another response is the one given by St. Thomas Aquinas. He argues that God has planned out everything in advance, so God must have planned our prayers as well. God plans to have certain things come about as a result of our praying. There are several problems with this. First, it is not clear that it allows us to be free to pray or not pray. But that aside, it also fails to explain why God would do such a thing. Why are the "prayer-caused" events "prayer-caused" and the others are not? Finally, Aquinas's theory does not really seem to allow for robust petitionary prayer. The problem is that the ultimate cause of God's doing what He does when we pray is God's planning it and not our affecting how He plans it by deciding to pray. In one sense, we affect what God does: He chooses to have our prayers be the occasion of His doing something that He had planned to do. But it does not seem that Aquinas's account allows for our prayers to be the deciding factor in bringing something about.

Philosopher Elenore Stump has offered a theory of petitionary prayer that allows for robust petitionary prayer in some cases.[3] The basic idea is that, if God decides that He is willing to do certain things only in the event that we ask Him to, then things will be better than if He always gave us everything we need. An analogy will help. Take a teacher and a pupil. The teacher could just give the pupil everything he needs. But then he

3. Elenore Stump, "Petitionary Prayer," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 16 (April 1979): 81–91.

would be spoiled. It is better for him to learn to ask for what he needs. The same applies to God, Stump claims. This is because we are supposed to have a significant relationship with God. Making it so that we can affect what God will do in some cases allows for such a significant relationship. Moreover, it will keep us from being spoiled. It will teach us faith, and it will help us to come to God with other things besides petitions.

Surely there is something right about Stump's theory. Moreover, it does seem to allow for robust petitionary prayer to some extent. But the problem is determining that extent. It seems that, in cases where the way God decides to act will make a huge moral difference, our prayers can have no effect, according to Stump's theory. This is because, in Stump's view, the net good gained from the fact that if we don't pray to God then God will not do X must outweigh any net good lost from the fact that God won't do X. But if God's doing X can make things very much better than they would be otherwise, then it is not clear that the moral calculus would allow Him to be affected by prayer in this case. To see this with a concrete analogy, imagine that the pupil is doing something that will endanger his life. Shouldn't the teacher help him even without his asking her to do so? Hence, Stump's theory allows petitionary prayer only where the outcome does not make a significant moral difference in the world. This seems very odd indeed. Wouldn't we think that we should pray about the most important things and not the least important things?

One might think that most Mormons do not have to contend with the problems of petitionary prayer. Indeed, many Mormons deny God's absolute foreknowledge. And the idea is that, if God does not have absolute foreknowledge, then we can make sense out of His changing His mind about what to do (not, of course, changing His mind about the principle upon which to act). If we can affect His plans, generally speaking, then we should be able to affect Him in our prayers as well. So, there is no problem with robust petitionary prayer.

However, the appearance of a solution here is deceptive, I think. The problem is that God still has more knowledge than we do about what will happen, what is happening, and what has happened. He is, by far, a better judge than we are about what should happen. And He should bring this about. If we pray to Him to ask for something, our prayer surely cannot affect His deliberations for two reasons. First, He already knows about any problems that we might propose He fix. Second, He already knows whether they should be fixed or not (given His best judgment). Now, we

might do something that will change His plans. For example, the Nephites might repent and avert their destruction. But if it seems, from God's inordinately better perspective, that Sodom and Gomorrah should be destroyed, then how could Abraham's prayers have any effect on God's action?

One might think that, by praying, we enable God to do something that He would not have been able to do otherwise. Then we can make sense out of how our petitionary prayers can affect God, since God has new options open to Him as a result of our prayers. Let's call this the enabling theory. And it is plausible that we can enable God to do things that He otherwise could not do, since, for example, only we can do what is necessary to enable God to exalt us. By virtue of our free agency, we are able to empower God to reward us.

However, this solution to the problem is also problematic for two reasons. First, it seems that, when we engage in petitionary prayer, we are praying for help with what we cannot ourselves do. We are powerless to do anything, so we turn to God who has more power. But, on the enabling theory, God is powerless with respect to something until we pray. This seems to put things backwards. Second, what is the mechanism by which we give God this power to do what He otherwise could not do? Some may argue that it is by a show of faith on our part that God is allowed to help us. But then this sounds an awful lot like Stump's theory, which we have already rejected.

It seems that we petition in prayer because we want God to do something that He can do and that we cannot do. He is more powerful than human beings. But, on the other hand, by the very act of petitioning, it seems that we assume that we can have an effect on what He decides to do. Since God is not whimsical, our ability to affect God cannot be that we merely persuade him to prefer to do what we want to do rather than what He knows is the best thing to do. God will do what is best regardless. So, if we truly affect by our prayers what God will do, then we must persuade him that what we want is the best. If God is persuaded, then He is rightly persuaded. So, we must rightly persuade God. But people are rightly persuaded only when they find out something they did not know, or they see a logical consequence that they did not formerly see. Surely God can and does see any logical consequences that we see. So, it seems that we must tell God something that He doesn't already know. But this seems absurd.

I argue that it is not absurd. God may know our hearts and our per-

sonalities. But He doesn't necessarily always know what we desire in the moment. This is not to say that He *couldn't* know what we currently desire. Indeed, it seems very likely that He can just decide to "inspect" our hearts and know what we want. But having a capacity to do something and having done it are two different things. One way that we can ensure that God knows what we desire is to pray and tell him. And when He learns of our desires, He can modify His plans accordingly. Indeed, what we desire will have an effect on what the overall best outcome will be. So, it will have an effect on what God should do. Therefore, if we can inform God of our desires through our prayers, then our prayers can affect what God plans to do. Let's call this the information theory. We give God some information that He needs.

Now this is quite a radical theory, I admit. There are three objections to this theory that are fairly substantive. The first objection is that the theory seems parochial. After all, some people pray and others do not. So, it would seem that this theory would entail that only those who pray will be considered in the plan. But this would not seem fair. There are two responses to this objection. First, the information theory does not rule out God's finding out about the desires of others as well. It only rules out that God already knows everyone's desires automatically. Second, even if this theory does mean that God will take into account the desires of those who pray more than others, this fact is not necessarily a bad thing. After all, those who pray are thereby more righteous than those who don't. They are more deserving of reward.

Another objection to the information theory is that it seems to deny God's omniscience. But omniscience is a tricky and complicated thing. We might define omniscience in the following way. God is omniscient if and only if God knows everything. But this is an ambiguous definition. What counts as "everything"? What is true may change with time. If this is right, then what God knows will also change as well. For example, at the time of writing this, it is now true that I am typing. But at the time you are reading these words, it is not true that I am typing (or at least, if I *am* typing, it is other words). Moreover, many people—Aristotle and myself included—believe that the future is vague. What is true about the future is not yet decided. So, if "everything" includes only what is true at a given time, then we need to modify the definition: God is omniscient at *T* if, and only if, God knows every truth that is true at *T*. This definition would allow God to be omniscient and yet not know what will happen in the fu-

ture: As of a given moment, there is nothing that will happen in the future.

But then it still seems that God's omniscience, according to this modified definition, would continue to rule out the information theory. This is because the information theory presupposes that God does not know something which is true right now—namely, that I desire such and such. This is right. Still the definition remains ambiguous in a certain way. Knowledge can be occurrent or latent. What this means is that knowledge can be present before my mind or just in storage, so to speak. So, for example, until I pointed it out, you were not thinking about whether or not you were naked. Now you are thinking about it. But you knew all along, in some sense, that you were not naked. This is the sense of latent knowledge. I want to argue that we should define God's knowledge in terms of what is latent knowledge for Him. So, God is omniscient at *T* if, and only if, God latently knows every truth that is true at *T*. By praying we make God's latent knowledge occurrent—i.e., present before His mind and under His current consideration.

Of course, one may object that all of God's knowledge surely is occurrent. Everything is present before Him constantly and perpetually. But I reject this view as being inconsistent with the Mormon view of God. We think that God is literally an embodied person. He reasons, deliberates, becomes angry, considers options, etc. These thought processes make no sense at all if everything is always before His mind. Thought process requires that what was latent becomes occurrent.[4]

The Open God, Theology, and Scripture

So far, I have argued that God does not have absolute foreknowledge and that He does not have the occurrent knowledge of our present desires and aspirations for the future. This view of God contradicts the view advocated by the doctrine of divine providence. In that view, God plans everything out to the last detail. The future is not open from God's perspective. But in the view of God that I am advocating here, the future is open to God in more ways than one. It is open because He does not know which

4. We might also argue that, since God is embodied, what He knows is finite because embodiment implies that the mind is matter. If the mind is made of matter, then information takes up space, and any body, even an eternal one, has only a finite amount of space in it.

of the various possibilities will be realized. It is also open because He is open to being persuaded about what plans He should make as to what should be done. I argue that the doctrines of free will, prophecy, and petitionary prayer force us to accept this conception of an open God.

Now, someone might argue that this conception of God is unsatisfactory even if it is the most philosophically satisfying. This is because it does not accurately describe the God of the scriptures. In this brief and final section, I want to argue that this objection is wrong. First, I will give an example from the Old Testament that I read as implying that the purpose of prophecy is to allow people to change their minds and hence change what the future will be. Second, I will give an example that makes it clear that God changes His mind about what to do as the result of someone praying.

The story of King Ahab goes as follows (1 Kgs. 22). Ahab wants to know whether he should go into battle against Aram at Ramothgilead. He consults a slew of prophets who say that he will be victorious. But then he consults another prophet, Micaiah, who initially predicts success and then, when pressed, changes his prediction to failure. Micaiah further adds that the Lord had planned to entice Ahab to battle at Ramothgilead so that he would be destroyed. To accomplish this goal, God had planned to tell him (through the prophets) that he would be victorious. The king decides to go to battle even with this information. He disguises himself but is still killed by a stray arrow.

There are several difficulties with this story. One is that, if God had truly planned to deceive Ahab with prophets, then why would He also send Micaiah? Is Micaiah telling the truth or not? If so, then God's plan is foiled by Micaiah. Micaiah says that he is telling the truth and that he is supposed to be the only prophet with the truth (from the point of view of the author). Second, this situation leads to the same paradox as in the story of Sariah at Sunstone. It seems clear that Micaiah is giving King Ahab the chance to opt out of the path that will lead to his destruction. But if the king decides not to go to battle, then what Micaiah has told him will no longer accurately describe future events. All of these problems with the text can be solved with a very simple and natural interpretation of it. God sees that King Ahab's pride is leading him to a battle that will destroy him. He purposely sends lying prophets to him who will feed his pride and facilitate his downfall if he believes them. But He leaves Ahab a way out. If Ahab is humble enough to question his own abilities to win the

battle and the slew of prophets predicting victory, then he can find out the real truth about what will happen if he goes to battle. King Ahab takes this option, learns the truth about what will happen, but is still prideful enough that he goes into battle. Ahab tempts his own fate.

According to this interpretation, the true prophecy is conditional. It tells what will happen *if* Ahab doesn't repent. The prophecy does not tell us what *will* happen. So, God's plan is conditional and not set in stone. God's plan is such that if Ahab believes those who flatter him, then he will be destroyed; but if he believes Micaiah and sees that he should not go to battle, then he will not be destroyed. And God gives Ahab a glance into a possible future for much the same reason that the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come gives Scrooge a vision of his own tombstone: so that Scrooge can avoid what might happen otherwise.

According to this view, God is open. He "pencils" in His appointments in His Franklin planner. To see that this is the correct view of the role of prophecy, consider Jeremiah 18:7–10 (NRSV):

> If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from evil, I will repent of the evil that I intended to do to it.
>
> And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will repent of the good which I have intended to do to it.

The second Old Testament story is even more familiar than the one about Ahab and Micaiah. In Genesis 18, Abraham prays to the Lord and convinces him not to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah as long as there are a certain number of righteous people. He even appears to bargain with the Lord about how many righteous people it should take to make Sodom worthy of being spared His wrath. God agrees with him. On the face of it, this appears to be a story where Abraham convinces God to do differently than He has planned.

Of course, the objection on the part of the defender of divine providence is that God knows all along that He will spare Sodom if there are at least ten righteous. And Abraham is only "convincing" God to do what He already plans to do. But this makes nonsense out of the story. God comes to Abraham and not the other way around. So, if God is not reacting to what Abraham is saying, then what is the purpose of the conversation? I would argue that the purpose of this conversation is not unlike the

purpose of everyday conversations. Our relationship with God is unsurprisingly not unlike our relationships with our own parents. We plead for mercy, and we sometimes get it. This is the picture of God in the Bible, and the reading of these passages only becomes strained when we try to force these passages into the framework constructed by the advocate of divine providence. The resulting style of biblical interpretation is the philosophy of men mingled with scripture at its best (or, rather, its worst).

Conclusion

If God is not certain about what will happen, and if His day planner is written in pencil, then how can we have faith in Him? How can we devote ourselves entirely to a project that we cannot be sure will succeed? The concept of faith tacit in these questions is one that presupposes certainty. If I have faith in something, then I am unwavering. Nothing can undermine my faith. This is the faith that Joseph F. Smith says "confirms and strengthens us and establishes beyond a question or doubt."[5]

But this view of faith is not the only one. Alma's concept of faith is different in that it does not require certainty but a mere "desire to believe" (Alma 32:27). It is not a faith of unflinching belief and security, but a faith that takes a leap. It is a faith that is willing to experiment to see if the "seed" planted is one that will "bring forth fruit" or one that "groweth not" (Alma 32:28, 32, 38).

It is a faith that will face the risk of life with optimism. William James's description of faith harmonizes with Alma's:

> Suppose that the world's author put the case to you before creation, saying: "I am going to make a world the perfection of which shall be conditional merely, the condition being that each several agent does its own level best. I offer you the chance of taking part in such a world. Its safety, you see, is unwarranted. It is a real adventure, with real danger, yet it may win through. It is a social scheme of co-operative work genuinely to be done. Will you join in the procession? Will you trust yourself and trust the other agents enough to face the risk?[6]

It may be that many people need the faith that Joseph F. Smith re-

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5. *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), 50.

6. William James, *Pragmatism* (1907; edited with an introduction by Bruce Kuklick, Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1981), 130.

quired. If so they are unlikely to be persuaded by any of these arguments, however logically flawless they might prove to be. But for those who, like Alma and James, enjoy a risky faith—the faith of the spiritual gambler—there is an alternative to divine providence in the doctrine of an open God. And this doctrine is more logically consistent with several of Mormonism's most central tenets. This is the kind of faith that I enjoy. So, although I don't mind if God "pencils me in," I'm also glad that he's got an eraser.

"Changing Times Bring Changing Conditions": Relief Society, 1960 to the Present

Tina Hatch

THE 1960S MARKED FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS the commencement of a new era of consolidation and growth that have led to multiple changes in the Relief Society. The organization experienced the automatic enrollment of women in 1971, the change to a consolidated meeting schedule in 1980, and an increase in membership from 220,000 in 1960 to over 4 million sisters worldwide in 2000. A major force driving these changes was the correlation program, which greatly impacted Relief Society's publications, curriculum, financing, and social services operations. Correlation aimed to realign auxiliaries and women's organizations under priesthood direction to make programs more "priesthood centered."[1]

Scholars of Mormonism have frequently framed changes in Relief

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1. Harold B. Lee, "The Correlation Program," *Improvement Era* 66 (June 1963): 502.

Society under correlation in terms of subordination or loss: women's loss of financial autonomy, loss of voice, loss of power, and loss of decision-making capabilities. Maxine Hanks, a Mormon feminist, has interpreted LDS women's experience of the twentieth century as one of increasing disempowerment in a patriarchal culture. For Hanks, correlation is primarily a male-focused movement concerned with reasserting males in positions of authority in reaction to their perceived loss of power. Hanks attributes this male perception of loss in large part to the changing American cultural climate in which the moral underpinnings of family and manhood appeared threatened. In reaction to outside cultural forces that both demanded and gave women more authority and credibility, the LDS Church reacted by emphasizing men's authoritative role in both Church administration and home. According to Hanks, as women generally made gains in sociological and economic terms, in access to power and choice in lifestyle, education, and reproductive issues, LDS women simultaneously lost institutional, ecclesiastical, and spiritual power.[2]

Tarla Rai Peterson, an LDS professor of environmental communication at the University of Utah, asserts that the move to correlation further codified hierarchical relationships within the LDS Church. These changes were particularly damaging to women "because their subordinate status, as in many religious organizations, expedites systematic domination."[3] Peterson indicts "priesthood correlation" for normalizing female subordination through Church handbooks and lessons, narrowly defining gender and organizational roles, and overemphasizing technological discourse that ignores complexities of organizational life. Similarly, Jill Mulvay Derr and C. Brooklyn Derr, a husband-wife team with interests in Mormon organizational behavior, note the shift of auxiliaries from rather autonomous organizations to "helping" organizations. They interpret the professionalization and bureaucratizing of the Church as part of a

2. Maxine Hanks, editor's introduction, *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), xi–xxx.

3. Tarla Rai Peterson, "Structuring Closure through Technological Discourse," in *Communication and the Culture of Technology*, edited by Martin J. Medhurst, Alberto Gonzalez, and Tarla Rai Peterson (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1990), 80.

large trend affecting secular organizations as well.[4] Their work offers a useful description of formal authority, contrasted with informal influence that often grows in response to human needs unmet by the formalized efficiency of bureaucracy. Informal influence, the sphere in which women have most access to negotiation within the organization, is "based on personal relationships," "vulnerable to change," and "tentative and erratic." Derr and Derr comment that while over half of LDS Church membership is female, women "speak for and act in behalf of women only insofar as they can wield informal influence" because "formal representation is not just unlikely but impossible."[5]

A number of recent sociological and cultural studies have placed changes affecting LDS women in the context of organizational change on a national scale. For example, Marie Cornwall notes that correlation within the LDS Church has paralleled a national trend toward bureaucratization, a trend which has caused women in a variety of religious denominations, including Mormon, Methodist, and Presbyterian, to experience some loss of autonomy and control over their benevolent societies.[6] This paper similarly attempts to situate historical Relief Society changes within a broader Church context, acknowledging the practical needs of a growing international Church. I recognize much validity to the view that an increasingly formalized and strengthened hierarchical line of male authority within the LDS Church has weakened women's voice and crippled equitable access to organizational authority. However, I also believe that a strict insistence

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4. Jill Mulvay Derr and C. Brooklyn Derr, "Outside the Mormon Hierarchy: Alternative Aspects of Institutional Power," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 (Winter 1982): 28.

5. Ibid., 34–35.

6. Marie Cornwall, "The Institutional Role of Mormon Women," in *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives,* edited by Marie Cornwall, Tim Heaton, and Lawrence Young (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 239–64, esp. 250. See also Laurence R. Iannaccone and Carrie Miles, "Dealing with Social Change: The Mormon Church's Response to Change in Women's Roles," ibid., 265–86; Jill Mulvay Derr, "'Strength in Our Union': The Making of Mormon Sisterhood," and Grethe B. Peterson, "Priesthood and Latter-day Saint Women: Eight Contemporary Definitions," in *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective,* edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 153–207, 249–68.

upon this view as a complete interpretation of Relief Society's recent history is simplistic and ethnocentric. Focusing exclusively on narratives of loss neglects other valid historical narratives that contribute to our understanding of the Relief Society's past.

While I do not deny that many women have experienced loss from the changes, the Relief Society has undergone from 1960 to the present, I highlight correlation as a valuable phase of Church organization that, despite the losses, has on the whole benefitted Relief Society's worldwide sisterhood and the Church. This paper first summarizes the general history and stated purposes of correlation, particularly beginning in the 1960s. This context is important as the history of Relief Society is inextricably linked to and in part defined by what happened in priesthood correlation. I next discuss two major changes or transitions within the Relief Society since 1960 that were influenced by or were a result of priesthood correlation and the international growth of the Church. The first is the loss of the *Relief Society Magazine* and the growth of the *Liahona*, the international magazine, which serves as a guiding example of the trade-offs, losses, and gains for the Relief Society in the Church's attempts to restructure and adapt to changing conditions. Second, I will look at changes in curriculum production and content as a reflection of the changing role of the Relief Society under correlation and the growing emphasis placed on adapting to the needs of a worldwide Church.

Early Attempts at Correlation

The massive priesthood correlation efforts of the 1960s and 1970s were not the first time the LDS Church had attempted to correlate and redefine the sometimes unclear relationship among priesthood quorums, the Relief Society, and other Church auxiliaries. The first two decades of the twentieth century had likewise seen revisions. Between 1908 and 1920, President Joseph F. Smith implemented a "priesthood reform movement" in which the Relief Society and other women's organizations became "auxiliaries" with "the priesthood hierarchy supervising the women's auxiliaries."[7] Original descriptions of the Relief Society do not relegate it to the status of an auxiliary. Elaine Jack, who served on the Relief Society board from 1972 until 1984 and as Relief Society general

7. Derr and Derr, "Outside the Hierarchy," 25. This paper will generally use the term "auxiliary" to describe the Relief Society and other women's organi-

president from 1990 to 1997, commented in 2003: "Relief Society is not an auxiliary. The church was never fully organized until 'women were thus organized after the pattern of the priesthood.' It's the Lord's organization for women. And we act as a companion role to the priesthood."[8] This view of Relief Society lost its currency, as noted, between 1908 and 1920 when the priesthood reform movement reasserted the duties of priesthood holders in response to priesthood quorums' "identity crisis."[9] This reform movement was also aimed at achieving "increased growth spiritually" through organizational changes at the stake and ward level.[10] Committees were organized to study and create uniform courses of study for the priesthood quorums, emphasizing the quorums' central importance in Church structure. Joseph F. Smith described his vision of the Church's future: "There will not be so much necessity for work that is now being done by the auxiliary organizations, because it will be done by the regular quorums of the Priesthood."[11] Between 1928 and 1937, Church activities and auxiliaries were further consolidated with priesthood quorums.[12]

In their history of the Relief Society, Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher note of this period: "The division of the church organization into priesthood quorums and auxiliaries gradually decreased auxiliary autonomy and posed a particular challenge to Relief Society sisters, who would struggle to mesh two different but not

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zations. While I find this label problematic and inconsistent with original descriptions of the Relief Society, it is difficult to escape the term, as Church statements currently refer to Relief Society as an auxiliary organization.

8. Elaine Jack, interviewed by Tina Hatch, July 20, 2003, 16, transcript, in my possession.

9. Derr and Derr, "Outside the Hierarchy," 40.

10. Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 107.

11. Quoted in Marion G. Romney, "Report from the Correlation Committee," *Improvement Era* 65 (December 1962): 938.

12. Meg Wheatley, "An Expanded Definition of Priesthood?: Some Present and Future Consequences," in *Women and Authority*, 151-66.

necessarily contradictory self-definitions."[13] Both their role as "complement or partner to priesthood quorums" established in Nauvoo and the evolving definition of the Relief Society as one of several auxiliaries under priesthood direction influenced Relief Society's experience during the transitional years, 1901 to 1920.[14] Disappointing events, such as the Relief Society's struggle and failure to obtain a Relief Society building of its own, despite having raised the necessary funds to finance the project, established a pattern of dealing with uncomfortable change, setbacks, and shifting organizational identity with courage and resilience.

Throughout this early era, the Relief Society continued its efforts to foster sisterhood, support education, perform charity work both locally and abroad and, in Orson F. Whitney's words, to "stand side by side" with the brethren as the Prophet Joseph Smith had instructed Relief Society women.[15] Derr, Cannon, and Beecher's reflections on this early period of correlation, accommodation, cooperation, and change fittingly frame the struggles and growth that the Relief Society would experience again in later years: "To the Relief Society, as to the flowerbed, all three operations were essential: new programs must be initiated; the soil must be maintained, loose and moist; and the perennials, those faithful vines which grew year after year, must be pruned. The cutting back, however painful it might be to the gardener, or, metaphorically, to the vine, was essential. It would provide opportunity for new growth without destroying the stock or root."[16]

Correlation: A Refuge from the Storm

Similarly, correlation efforts of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s would prove painful, yet essential, and generally profitable for Relief Society, whose membership would diversify and grow exponentially. In 1960, the First Presidency addressed a letter to the general priesthood committee:

> We have noted what seemed to be a tendency toward a fundamental, guiding concept, particularly among certain of the Auxiliary Organizations, that there must be every year a new course of study for each of the

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13. Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 154.

14. Ibid.

15. Orson F. Whitney, as quoted in ibid., 172.

16. Ibid., 179.

> Auxiliary Organizations. . . . We question whether the composite of all of them might not tend away from the development of a given line of study or activity having the ultimate and desired objective of building up a knowledge of the Gospel. . . .
>
> We have sometimes been led to wonder whether there was a *proper observance* of the field of a particular Auxiliary of what might be termed its jurisdiction. . . . We would therefore commend to you Brethren of the General Priesthood Committee the beginning of an exhaustive, prayerful study and consideration of this entire subject, with the co-operative assistance of the Auxiliaries themselves so that the Church might reap the maximum harvest from the devotion of the faith, intelligence, skill and knowledge of our various Auxiliary Organizations and Priesthood Committees.[17]

This letter set in motion a number of changes in Church programs in the years to come. In 1962, Apostle Harold B. Lee called priesthood correlation a "program of defense" designed to be "a refuge from the storm."[18] It was a consolidation of forces that echoed earlier rallying cries to priesthood quorums to fulfill their duties. Apostle Hugh B. Brown appealed to Church members to fight "an ideological war, a spiritual war," to raise their defenses against the perceived growing dangers of the outside world that threatened to displace the home and diminish traditional authority. He likened members to an army in which "absolute loyalty" was critical to survival.[19]

The autonomy of the various auxiliaries was viewed increasingly as an organizational impediment rather than a strength. To correct this fault, Lee's program of defense altered the Relief Society's publications, curriculum, lines of communication, finances, and decision-making by placing the organization more firmly under priesthood direction and correlation committees. Correlation was the means, Lee noted, "to place the priesthood of God where the Lord said it was to be—as the center and core of the church and kingdom of God."[20] The aim of consolidating "the forces of the Lord" and realigning auxiliaries under priesthood direction was, ac-

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17. Quoted in Lee, "The Correlation Program," 502.

18. Harold B. Lee, "New Plan of Co-Ordination Explained," *Improvement Era* 65 (January 1962): 37.

19. Hugh B. Brown, "Loyalty to the Church," *Improvement Era* 65 (January 1962): 38–39.

20. Quoted in Meg Wheatley, "An Expanded Definition of Priesthood," 154.

cording to Lee, to accomplish "the salvation of the children of men in the most effective way possible."[21]

This consolidation and central control, he foresaw, would facilitate the "rapid expansion and growth of the Church," funding lesson materials, buildings, increased temple work, genealogical work and welfare activities through cost reduction and simplification.[22] Paul's vision of the Church as "the body of Christ" signaled to Lee the necessity of constant correlation so that the Church could "perform as a perfectly organized human body, with every member functioning as it was intended."[23]

To reach the objectives of correlation, several committees were formed under priesthood leadership to identify the original purposes of the auxiliaries, to realign the auxiliaries to the newly defined Church goals, and to oversee all curriculum production and content for children, youth, and adult members.[24] These committees were responsible for keeping all Church programs, like the nervous system, "operating harmoniously together."[25]

What this streamlining meant in practical terms for the Relief Society's leaders was a decreased ability to directly control content and programs for their members. Prior to correlation, the Relief Society general presidency and board chose writers and content for their lessons and magazine with relative freedom. Under correlation, the Relief Society continued to have important input on curriculum committees (see discussion below), but ultimately, the locus of decision-making and information control was shifted away from the women.

Nonetheless, I argue that the results of an increasingly bureaucratic, "priesthood-centered" church, although at times costly in terms of organizational autonomy and decision-making representation, have proved generally beneficial for the expanding and transforming Relief Society organization.

Church Magazines

Church magazines and periodicals have been a consistent and valuable part of the auxiliaries' efforts to provide their members with a voice

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21. Lee, "New Plan of Co-Ordination Explained," 37.

22. Ibid., 36.

23. Ibid., 36, 34; D&C 84:108-110.

24. Lee, "New Plan of Co-Ordination Explained," 35-36.

25. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Report from the Correlation Committee," *Improvement Era* 65 (December 1962): 936.

and a means of disseminating important information regarding the gospel and Church members. The Church has a long history of periodicals, beginning with the *Evening and Morning Star,* a monthly paper published in Independence, Missouri, beginning in June 1832.[26] *The Latter-day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* followed soon after in Kirtland, Ohio. In 1837 the magazine was changed to the *Elders' Journal,* which carried on for another year. Others included *Times and Seasons* in Nauvoo, *Millennial Star* from 1840 until 1970 in England, and *Austral Star* from 1929 to 1958 representing the Australian Mission.[27] The list of Church periodicals in English, with name changes included, represents over forty periodicals from the beginning of the *Evening and Morning Star* until the Church's introduction of the *Ensign* (for adults), the *Friend* (for children) and the *New Era* (for teenagers) in 1971. These periodicals replaced all existing publications by auxiliaries and missions. Among the magazines retired under this new policy was the fifty-seven-year-old *Relief Society Magazine.*

Mormon women in Utah had historically supported their own periodicals. Lula Greene Richards had founded the *Woman's Exponent* in 1872, a newspaper with ever-close ties to the Relief Society, especially when Emmeline B. Wells, future general president of the Relief Society, became its editor in 1877. It was transformed in 1914 into the *Relief Society Bulletin* as an official publication of the organization and, in 1915, into the *Relief Society Magazine.* The *Young Woman's Journal* began publishing in 1889, followed by the *Children's Friend* in 1902. The Relief Society was wholly responsible for financing, publishing, and managing subscriptions to the magazine throughout its existence.[28] Each ward Relief Society had magazine representatives, and officers diligently encouraged women to subscribe to "their" magazine.

The *Relief Society Magazine* reached English-speaking sisters in countries such as Canada, the United States, New Zealand, Australia, and the

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26. Doyle Green, "The Church and Its Magazines," *Ensign* 1 (January 1971), 12.

27. *1974 Deseret News Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1974), 200–201.

28. Belle Smith Spafford, Oral History, interviewed by Jill Mulvay Derr, February 9, 1976, typescript, 182, James Moyle Oral History Program, Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives).

Pacific Islands. At its inception, it was characterized as "a beacon light of hope, beauty and charity."[29] Fifty years later, its aim was still "to uplift women in their God-given work as wife, mother, grandmother, homemaker, and charitable neighbor."[30] Its pages were filled with news from Relief Society sisters in "From Near and Far," as well as messages, poetry, recipes, and fiction written for and usually by women. One issue notes that its stories were "fortunately" not "confined to the realm of man's achievement."[31] "Notes from the Field" highlighted Relief Society bazaars, visiting teaching, Singing Mothers (Relief Society choirs), homemaking, and socials that were a vibrant part of the organization. The magazine also included lessons, editorials, and birthday congratulations to individuals.

An editorial in the January 1963 *Relief Society Magazine* celebrating the magazine's fiftieth anniversary represented the sentiment many women felt toward "their" magazine:

> The *Magazine* represents Relief Society, both in its historic aspects and in its present greatly enlarged scope and distribution. Just as Relief Society is a unique organization—organized, and in its early days, directed by the Prophet Joseph Smith—so the *Magazine* is unique, keeping always the same purpose, but being a voice to reach the tens of thousands who now constitute the worldwide sisterhood. . . . Transcending the borders and barriers of nations and of continents, the *Magazine* carries far and wide a uniting voice. . . . The *Relief Society Magazine* belongs to every member of Relief Society—a unique messenger—unlike any other magazine available anywhere—our *Magazine*, serving the purposes and ideals of the sisterhood, representing the women of the Church and speaking for them.[32]

Women were encouraged to express "their hopes, fears, aspirations, needs, counsel, and conclusions . . . preserved for future generations"[33] in the pages of the *Relief Society Magazine.* In very real terms, the magazine gave

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29. "The Mission of Our Magazine," *Relief Society Magazine* 2 (January 1915), 38; reprinted in Marianne C. Sharp, "Relief Society Magazine's Fiftieth Anniversary," *Relief Society Magazine* 50, no. 1 (January 1963): 14.

30. Sharp, "Relief Society Magazine's Fiftieth Anniversary," 15.

31. "Editorial: Backward and Forward," *Relief Society Magazine* 10 (October 1923): 254.

32. Vesta P. Crawford, "Editorial," *Relief Society Magazine,* 50 (January 1963): 34-35.

33. Sharp, "Relief Society Magazine's Fiftieth Anniversary," 16.

women power and validity as authors and "image makers"[34] in a Church that highlights the male voice. It provided an official and creative forum for women to unite in the gospel, in their lives, and their interests. The sense of ownership and voice given to women through the magazine, and its attention to topics of particular interest to its female readers aided in creating a community of English-speaking sisters united and bonded together.

On January 26, 1966, Belle Spafford made an announcement that showed the Relief Society's resolve to reach more of its sisters. With close coordination between the Relief Society and the translation, publishing, and distribution departments of the Church, the *Relief Society Magazine* became available in Spanish.[35] Comments of appreciation flowed to the Relief Society general offices from Spanish-speaking sisters delighted to be further connected to their sisters in other parts of the world. Sister Neda H. Strong, Relief Society supervisor in the Argentine Mission, responded to the news, "I am sure words cannot express the great thrill we all feel on learning that the *Relief Society Magazine* will be published in the Spanish language. This is surely a dream come true."[36] Spanish-speaking sisters in Mexico adorned their special Spanish magazines with organdy covers to preserve them.[37] Marianne Sharp, magazine editor and member of the Relief Society general presidency, recalled that President Belle Smith Spafford and Louise Madsen, her second counselor, visited Mexico and found the Spanish-speaking sisters "so thrilled to know that they were getting just what the rest of the Church was getting. So it was just wonderful."[38] The Spanish editions necessitated careful consideration of the content of the magazine, as

34. Vella Neil Evans, "Empowerment and Mormon Women's Publications," in Hanks, *Women and Authority*, 49–68.

35. John E. Carr, "For in *That* Day," 1980, typescript, 83, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as Perry Special Collections); photocopy of typescript in LDS Church Archives.

36. Quoted in ibid., 83.

37. Spafford, Oral History, 184.

38. Marianne C. Sharp, Oral History, interviewed by Jessie L. Embry, May 19, 1977, typescript, 58, Moyle Oral History Program, LDS Church Archives.

Spafford noted, "because then we became aware that we were becoming a universal Church."[39]

As Church membership grew, however, and correlation tugged the Relief Society in new directions, change was inevitable. Even before the push of priesthood correlation of the 1960s, a male presence was clearly evident in the *Relief Society Magazine.* While men had written only 20 percent of signed articles in 1937, by 1956, men were writing 75 percent of the lessons and 33 percent of the magazine's articles.[40] Other changes were evident as well. In later issues of the magazine, traditional items were necessarily eliminated and modified, as space to accommodate growing needs was limited. For example, "Sixty Years Ago," which featured excerpts from the *Woman's Exponent* from 1944 to 1962, was eliminated. Because the magazine could not feature all of the events being reported by stakes, it limited the number of submissions. The magazine had paid tribute to Relief Society members ninety years and older on their birthdays, a feature that was not carried over in the *Ensign.* "That was a loss to the older women who loved to see their names in the magazine," Spafford recognized. Naturally, women in other language groups also wanted the *Relief Society Magazine* in their own language, but Spafford knew it was a desire that the organization could not accommodate.[41] Clearly, the day was approaching when women would have to find new and more local outlets for uniting in sisterhood and celebrating individual members.

In 1970, the publication's final year, Relief Society reported a membership of over 338,000 sisters with 301,000 subscriptions to the magazine.[42] It meant that the magazine would have been reaching an enviable 89 percent of its potential audience, although, in fact, at least some non-Mormon women also subscribed. Marianne Sharp, the *Magazine*'s

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39. Spafford, Oral History, 184.

40. Evans, "Empowerment and Mormon Women's Publications," 63.

41. Spafford, Oral History, 182, 184.

42. Belle Spafford, "Reports and Official Instructions," *Relief Society Magazine* 57 (November 1970), 814. Editorial, *Relief Society Magazine,* December 1970, 895, reported the subscription figure, a number that Sharp repeated in her oral history (59). Spafford noted in her own oral history that "foreign language missions, where the sisters were not as far along in an understanding of the doctrine of the Church," received different lessons than those presented in the *Relief Society Magazine.* They dealt primarily with "the first principles of the gospel" (194).

editor, boasted, "We had a larger circulation than the Era. . . . The sisters loved it."[43] Spafford noted, though without details, that from time to time "somebody would come up with the idea of discontinuing the *Relief Society Magazine* and having one family magazine"; but Spafford had shown priesthood leaders—she mentioned Apostle Albert E. Bowen in particular—how a single, family-oriented Church publication could not meet the needs of Relief Society sisters and "still preserve the priesthood aspect of it."[44] Such efforts preserved the Relief Society's "voice."

By 1970, however, the climate had changed. Despite the impressive subscription numbers and a carefully written letter from Relief Society leaders requesting that the magazine be kept, priesthood leaders chose to end the magazine along with all others representing organizations, auxiliaries, or geographical regions. Aiming to simplify and consolidate, they doubted the necessity or practicality of continuing with the Church's numerous publications.[45] In 1962, correlation had called for the "elimination of the insignificant" with an emphasis on providing what was "essential in every life, everywhere in the world."[46] For enthusiastic subscribers, the *Relief Society Magazine* was anything but insignificant. The implications, however, of correlation's call to eliminate spelled out the inevitable demise of the woman's magazine. Correlation, expansion, the shift to a Church-wide budget, and an evolving vision of how to meet the needs of the greatest number of its members ended the esteemed *Relief Society Magazine.*

In the Church's effort to reach its worldwide membership, some of the old-time familiarity and "female voice" cherished by English-speakers was lost as the *Relief Society Magazine* gave way to the *Ensign* for adult English-speakers and the *Unified Magazine,* which translated selections from all three of the English publications for non-English speakers.

In the closing issue of the *Relief Society Magazine,* editor Marianne

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Foreign language missions did not generally receive most other parts of the magazine.

43. Sharp, Oral History, 59.

44. Spafford, Oral History, 186.

45. See Spafford, Oral History, 186; and Sharp, Oral History, 67, for accounts of the the magazine's end.

46. Richard L. Evans, "Elimination of the Insignificant," *Improvement Era* 65 (January 1962), 37–39.

Sharp wrote a restrained editorial to console readers and reaffirm the women's support of priesthood leaders:

> Changing times bring changing conditions. That is basic to Latter-day Saints who believe in continuous revelation. Changing times have brought the end of the journey to the Relief Society Magazine. The times were different when it began in 1914—and that time was the end of the journey for the Woman's Exponent. . . . And with 1970 begins a new era in Relief Society when Relief Society members join with other adult members of the Church in supporting an adult Church magazine. . . . As we detail and recall nostalgic memories, we still, obedient to the priesthood and receiving direction from them, face forward in step with the new era of the 1970's with anticipation and a sense of dedication and support for the all-adult magazine. *Morituraе te salutamus.*[47]

Despite calls to face forward with the new era, adjustment to changing times was difficult for many sisters who had thrived on their magazine's tradition. President Spafford, who called change the "the handmaid of progress," experienced resistance and dismay from her Relief Society sisters. In a letter to a friend, Spafford notes, "Everywhere I go the women seem to be grieving over the loss of the Magazine. Strangely, they seem more sad over this than the change in the financing program."[48] While the *Ensign* published articles, poetry, and comments written by and sometimes directed to women, the collective effect was not the same for English-speaking sisters. Women would lament, "'Oh, we miss the *Relief Society Magazine*! . . . The *Ensign's* wonderful, but it isn't a women's magazine.'"[49] In 1975, five years after the end of the magazine, Spafford commented:

> The women are still longing for their magazine. I think almost the last letter I got as president of Relief Society [she had been released in October 1974] was a plea to have the magazine again. . . . The Ensign . . . just can't do it all in the space that they have. When we had our own conferences and our own magazine we could publish verbatim the talks of the First Presidency, the talks of the Relief Society presidency. . . . Women who never in the wide world could come to conference and hear those great men, could

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47. Marianne C. Sharp, "Editorial: Facing Forward," *Relief Society Magazine* 57 (December 1970): 894–95. Sharp translates *Morituraе te salutamus* to read, "We salute you in death."

48. Belle Spafford, Letter to Mrs. Ethyl Sessions, September 14, 1970, Perry Special Collections.

49. Sharp, Oral History, 59.

read their messages. And their messages were directed toward the women, not toward the Church as a whole, but to the woman, and her role, and her place in the eternal plan. To me this is a great loss.[50]

An International Voice

What were the tradeoffs and benefits of this difficult change? Amid the "great loss" of the *Relief Society Magazine,* a new voice representing the Church-wide body was already underway, extending to greater numbers of Saints, both women and men, benefits hitherto enjoyed chiefly by English-speaking members, particularly those nestled along Utah's Wasatch Front. As non-English membership increased, the need to reach more nations and more members in their primary languages in a uniform voice from the official Church became evident. The complexity of translating massive quantities of material into numerous languages at several printing locations also signaled the need for a new approach that would be more efficient and reach greater numbers at an affordable cost.[51]

Elder Dean L. Larsen, the General Authority in charge of the *Ensign,* reminded members in 1974 that the "international, intercultural, multilingual nature of the Church membership" had become "emphatically more pronounced" with members living in 102 countries and speaking 112 languages."[52] At that point, the Book of Mormon had been translated into fewer than thirty-five languages, a sign of how urgently the Church needed to fully address the immediate gospel needs of international members.[53] Members of a "worldwide kingdom" were cautioned that there was "no room" in the "far-flung Church membership for narrow local interests and provincialism," hinting that the time had come for a more equitable distribution of resources previously focused on meeting

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50. Spafford, Oral History, 187-88.

51. Carr, "For in *That* Day," 19, 39-66, 92, 106-9. He reports two studies (101-5), including one by Safeway Stores, of the Church's production and distribution of published materials. It details the need for closer coordination of "writing, publication, and distribution" structures (103).

52. Dean L. Larsen, "The Challenges of Administering a Worldwide Church," *Ensign,* July 1974, 20.

53. *1989-1990 Deseret News Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1990), 194-95.

the needs of members in a rather small geographic area.[54] While the *Relief Society Magazine* had reached English-speaking members around the world, its content was in fact at times ethnocentric and of decidedly local appeal. Its poetry and fiction, for example, were not easily adaptable or translatable for an international audience. Given the scarce resources, it would have been difficult to make a case for translating fiction into numerous languages.

As women in English-speaking areas struggled to embrace the adult *Ensign*, correlation committees and the emerging translation and publication department simultaneously strove to reach Relief Society sisters abroad. Magazines, curriculum, teaching aids, lesson manuals, and scriptures became increasingly available as auxiliaries and correlation committees worked interdependently to meet the needs of an increasingly international church. The membership in 1960 had been 1,693,180; but twenty years later it had reached 4.5 million and, in 2000, over 11 million. This growth was made possible in part by correlation's streamlining of communication channels. Over half of the Church's membership by February 2000 was located outside the United States and Canada, with over 700,000 members in Asia, 850,000 members in Mexico, 136,000 in Africa, and over 2.4 million in South America.[55] Clearly, correlation committees and Church leaders in well-established stakes carefully weighed local interests and fond traditions against the need to bind the growing membership into the body of Christ.

While several missions had published their own magazines intermittently between 1840 and 1970, concerns were growing over the number and variety of magazines published and the range in quality and content. The process of translating and producing the various magazines was laborious and often involved mission presidents and missionaries whose efforts, time, and money could be more appropriately channeled.[56] Both the Mexican Mission and the Argentine Mission were publishing magazines in Spanish. Carr provides an in-house administrative report by Elder Gordon B. Hinckley in 1966: "Both *Liahona* and *El Mensajero* are rather ambitiously put together. They exceed in content and excel in makeup the magazines issued in the European Mission, in South Africa, and in the

54. Larsen, "Challenges of Administering a Worldwide Church," 20.
55. *1980–1990 Deseret News Church Almanac*, 194–95.
56. Carr, "For in *That* Day," 70–71, 93, 246–47.

South Pacific. . . . Each magazine is edited and mailed by missionaries. The Mexico Mission advises that 360 man hours per month are required for this, with one missionary spending all of his time on the magazine."[57] Hinckley recommended "that the Church publish one Spanish-language magazine [at Church headquarters] for distribution in all of the Spanish-language missions." That recommendation was implemented, leading to several benefits for Spanish readers, including added selections from the *Children's Friend.*

In 1966, J. Thomas Fyans, managing director of the Distribution and Translation Services Department, requested the Relief Society and auxiliaries to select materials representative of their program to be included in a monthly non-English publication. He also set up monthly meetings with representatives of the auxiliaries, three English magazines, and the Translation Department to accomplish this task. After much consideration of the European mission magazines and the possible benefits of a more united effort, in 1967 the Church introduced the baldly named *Unified Magazine,* published in nine languages by the Translation Services Department.[58] The centralization and professionalization of this department represented a long stride toward the Church's goal "to unify the common message to all the world simultaneously, to effect a savings in costs, and to assure a high degree of quality worthy of the Church."[59] Belle Spafford, Relief Society general secretary Hulda P. Young, and board member Evon W. Peterson attended an April 1967 seminar for magazine representatives, managers, and auxiliary representatives working on the new magazine. Along with other auxiliary leaders, Relief Society leaders "gave hearty endorsement" to

57. Quoted in ibid., 247.

58. This department had been created in 1965 by the First Presidency. Carr, its managing director, wrote in "For in *That* Day," 113, that it may have seemed "just another routine" reorganization, but in hindsight it positioned the Church to effectively manage "an explosive and miraculous growth. . . . For the first time there was an independent stewardship for translation created which would lighten ecclesiastical burdens and provide a professional service competent to keep pace with the predicted growth within the Church."

59. Ibid., 250.

the project, pledging support to the new unified magazine.[60] By 1969 the magazine was published in seven additional languages, representing the sixteen "established languages" of the Church.[61] In 1970, reflecting the growth of the Church, the magazine was renamed the *International Magazine*, with each language maintaining an individual name for its magazine, such as *L'Etoile* in French and *Lys over Norge* in Norwegian.

In April 1976, non-English speakers received for the first time the full texts of the entire general conference, a benefit long enjoyed by English-speaking members.[62] In 1987, the visiting teaching message, an important vehicle for uniting and reaching the women of the Church, was moved from lesson manuals to the *Ensign* and international magazines. This change allowed greater flexibility in addressing current concerns as well as making the message more accessible to women worldwide. Today, the visiting teaching message, is published in the nineteen monthly international magazines, while fifty-five languages receive the message as a separate monthly publication.[63] The international magazine, now called *Liahona*, is published twice a year in approximately fifty languages for the general conference reports.

Although the Church's women no longer had a unique forum for communication, the Church was now meeting the needs of an expanding worldwide membership in ways unfeasible and unimaginable in earlier

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60. Ibid., 252.

61. The Church established an introduction, Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III program for various languages depending on the number of speakers of the language, number of members speaking the language, and other factors. The "established languages" were Phase III languages that received the full "church program" including scriptures, missionary teaching packets, videos, discussions for new members, forms for ward operation, lesson manuals for youth and adults, and so on. Phases are currently called "Basic Member Program," "Simplified Full Church Program," and "Full Church Program." See "Church Curriculum: Helping Us Learn and Live the Gospel," *Ensign* 16 (January 1986): 20–24. Although Carr gives the number of languages as sixteen, he names seventeen into which the unified magazine was published as of 1969: Chinese, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Philippines, Portuguese, Samoan, Spanish, Swedish, Tahitian, and Tongan.

62. Ibid., 255.

63. Chart displaying languages into which the First Presidency and visiting teaching messages are translated, September 17, 2002, courtesy of LeRoy Chambers, Church Correlation Department.

years. As Spanish-speaking sisters in 1966 delighted in receiving the *Relief Society Magazine* in Spanish, women of many languages today celebrate a common gospel message connecting them to a worldwide sisterhood and brotherhood.[64]

Over thirty years after the end of the *Relief Society Magazine* and the beginning of the *Ensign* and *International Magazine*, Elaine Jack, five years after her own release as general president, reflected her awareness of a new era for the Relief Society, challenging narratives of loss and looking to the growing Church:

> I can see in the long run, you lose a little and you gain a little and you go along with the development. The internationalization of the Church has made a big difference. I think Relief Society has benefited as a result. . . . We need to look to the future. We need to look outside of our little box, because we've got to progress. If you really love somebody in Indonesia, or you really love somebody in Afghanistan, then we've got to be willing to give up something that we have for somebody else.
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> I don't think it [*Relief Society Magazine*] was that great of a loss. It served the purpose of its time, like the *Woman's Exponent* served that time. . . . We have developed so far since that time. . . . I think the *Ensign* has done extremely well for a Church magazine and I think they are improving constantly. Their articles are maybe not as pointed directly to women, but they are *embracing all church membership in more important subjects.* They have very good articles that are not for the men, not for the women. *They are for us.* We have to give up in the minute, but we got something much better. So it's okay.[65]

Clearly, the termination of the *Relief Society Magazine* with the substitution of the *Ensign* and the international magazines for the Church's adults, including its women, brought moments of sacrifice and loss, raising questions about how a growing church could meet and represent the needs and voices of its members. Who would speak and what message would be told? Would women lose their voice altogether? Or would their voice be unified with men's voice in a common gospel message? Correla-

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64. This response is evident in many women's responses to a 1991 Relief Society call for conversion stories and statements on what it means to be a Latter-day Saint woman. The Relief Society received hundreds of letters, 333 of which were thematically categorized by a volunteer committee and titled "Women's Voices." Photocopy of unpublished report courtesy of Cherry Silver, former general board member.

65. Jack, Interview, 14–15; emphasis mine.

tion provided answers to questions of voice and representation that were unsatisfactory to many while practical and beneficial for many others, particularly for non-English speaking Church members and Relief Society sisters who would enjoy the gospel message in greater numbers. My evaluation is that, overall, the sacrifices and trade-offs were worthwhile. They allowed the Church to move forward with a unified voice in the face of scarce time, money, and resources, and competing needs.

Relief Society Courses of Study

As with Church magazines, the effects of Church growth and the aims of correlation were significant in shaping the Relief Society's curriculum and its role in curriculum development after 1960. Elder Larsen's 1974 *Ensign* article on "The Challenges of Administering a Worldwide Church" described the phenomenal efforts involved in translating curriculum materials and adapting them "to suit a wide range of cultural backgrounds and customs." At that time, he said, the Church was working on 18,000 translations including "scriptures, lesson manuals, visual aids, organization bulletins, missionary tracts, report forms, and certain hardbound books." The international magazine alone took one month to translate into a single language.[66] The article reminded English-speaking members in more comfortable circumstances that they enjoyed comparative affluence and access to Church materials while "some of their fellow saints" were "meeting in condemned and inadequate buildings" and could not "receive even a rudimentary education." For some of these international saints, "the price of a Sunday School manual represent[ed] a week's wages."[67]

The move in new directions was spurred not only by economic concerns and problems of translation and distribution but also by a desire to correlate member instruction in principles that the Church deemed most critical to support the family and increase knowledge of the gospel. In addition, the move reflected a conscious response to concerns and suggestions given to the Relief Society general presidency from sisters throughout the world.

While changes would lessen the Relief Society's direct control over curriculum content, they would open realistic ways to accomplish the task

66. Larsen, "The Challenges of Administering a Worldwide Church," 20.
67. Ibid., 22.

of producing basic materials in a more efficient, culturally sensitive manner. This point becomes apparent in examining in greater detail (1) the *process* of lesson production (from Relief Society committees to curriculum committees overseen by priesthood leaders), and (2) the changes in *content* that reflected correlation's goals of simplifying and focusing on gospel principles for a diverse, international membership.

The shift to curriculum committees which write lessons and influence the content of lesson manuals is seen by some scholars of Mormonism as evidence of the Relief Society's loss of power and authority to speak for and to its own constituency.[68] However, a closer look at the process involved in curriculum production before and after correlation raises some frequently overlooked points that create a more complex picture. First, while the Relief Society had relative autonomy in determining curriculum topics and commissioning lessons prior to correlation, it frequently used priesthood leaders and some form of external review as mediators of lesson content and quality. For instance, in 1944, the Relief Society lessons became subject to approval by the Church Publications Committee, who reviewed lessons for doctrinal accuracy.[69] Relief Society autonomy was never complete. In addition, all auxiliaries necessarily gave up some control under correlation to coordinate their efforts and meet unified goals encompassing all members of the Church. In other words, this was not a change required only of the Relief Society. Second, a close examination of curriculum production reveals a continuation of important contributions and input by women within the correlation structure as well as a general increase in the professionalization of curriculum writing for men and women's organizations of the Church.

Prior to priesthood correlation of the 1960s, each auxiliary had the responsibility to develop its own curriculum and write its own lessons, which presented both advantages and disadvantages. While it allowed the Relief Society greater flexibility in choosing the content of its curriculum, it also allowed the overlap or neglect of important topics between auxiliaries. Missions were often left with the burden of adapting or rewriting les-

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68. See, for example, Peterson, "Structuring Closure through Technological Discourse"; Hanks, editor's introduction, *Women and Authority;* and Evans, "Empowerment and Mormon Women's Publications," in *Women and Authority.*

69. Evans, "Empowerment," 179; *1975 Deseret News Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1975), F25.

sons that did not meet their needs. Additionally, prior to 1980 when the Church changed to a calendar year and twelve-month lesson schedule, missions were faced with the burden of filling the gaps created by the eight-month lesson schedule designed primarily to accommodate summer vacation months enjoyed by American and Canadian members.[70]

Before correlation, the general Relief Society board commissioned its own writers, both men and women, whose work was reviewed and approved or sent back for revision by delegated members of the Relief Society board, oversaw the *Relief Society Magazine*'s content.[71] Although the Relief Society initially chose its own writers, Spafford notes, "We always had them approved." Relief Society leaders also sought and valued input from their priesthood advisors, including Joseph Fielding Smith (the society's senior advisor for approximately twenty-two years), Harold B. Lee, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, and Thomas S. Monson, who often made suggestions on writers.[72] Thus, the pattern of obtaining approval from and working closely with priesthood leaders was well established before correlation more noticeably altered communication channels in the 1960s, placing ultimate decision-making control further from the Relief Society. Changes that appear on the surface to represent drastic reductions in women's control over lesson material are thus more properly viewed on a continuum where women have consistently worked and negotiated with priesthood leadership, to greater or lesser degrees, in the production of lesson material.

For example, according to Spafford, before correlation efforts of the 1960s, the general Relief Society presidency established "rigid editorial policies" for the magazine that reflected their own vision for magazine content yet were sensitive to the vision of priesthood leaders. She notes, "We were cautioned against publishing articles wherein some brother or sister felt they had a—I won't say revelation—but some divine inspiration

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70. (No author), "A Decade of Growth," *Ensign*, January 1984, 14.

71. It is not clear whether the magazine's editors also had oversight for the lessons published in it. According to Spafford, Oral History, 193, "The [lesson] writers would come up to our office and sit in that small conference room for hours with the committees and they'd talk through the plans. . . . Then the committee would bring it to the board and then the board would approve of that, or disapprove and make recommendations for modifications."

72. Ibid., 96, 193.

which affected the women of the Church." Spafford did not see this caution as restricting the Relief Society. Rather, it "safeguarded the material that went into the magazine so that it would be worthy of the Church and the Relief Society organization."[73] When asked if the *Relief Society Magazine* was subject to review from the Brethren or later from the Correlation Committee, Spafford characterized correlation and some form of content review as a continuation of practices established in earlier decades rather than a sudden shift in the 1960s.

Under President Grant, from 1918 to 1945, Spafford commented, "the editors of Church publications were all aware of the scrutiny . . . that President Grant exercised over the magazines to assure that they reflected what the Church stood for." Spafford continued, "As long as I can remember the Church has labored with correlation. At one time, early in my administration . . . we had a meeting at regular intervals where all of the auxiliaries would be represented by a member of the presidency or the superintendency." The purpose of these meetings was similar to post-1960 correlation efforts: to avoid overlapping material and to "harmonize auxiliary policies."[74] While articles prior to the 1960s were not subject to the same level of clearance, mechanisms were obviously at work, regulating the information flow within the Church and screening its quality. If articles were published in the magazine that a General Authority did not approve of, Spafford recalls, "you may be sure we heard about it."[75]

Today, the mechanism for regulating information has increasingly become the work of professionalized correlation committees, consisting of educators, scholars, volunteers, board members, and paid employees who devote time to researching and writing lessons. Correlation committees are under the ultimate direction of priesthood leaders. Yet, in the day-to-day operation of producing curricula, these committees consist of both men and women who participate in the writing, planning, and implementation of Relief Society curricula as well as the curriculum for all auxiliaries and priesthood quorums. The Relief Society presidency and board enjoy a generally positive and productive relationship with workers on curriculum committees. While Elaine Jack served on the Relief Society general board (1972-84), she worked with the curriculum committees that

73. Ibid., 179.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.

wrote the mother education and cultural refinement lessons. After the curriculum department "took over the writing of the lessons," Jack notes, "we still had some input and worked closely with them. . . . I think they probably mostly chose the writers according to the subject, but we had developed the outlines for them." Jack found the procedure of producing outlines and then leaving the bulk of writing to professional committees to be beneficial for the Relief Society, particularly since board members who were slow to complete lessons sometimes missed deadlines. "It was a big help," she says, "and really, there was a good professionalism and a good interchange after the curriculum committee took the lessons over. We had a lot of input."[76]

The curriculum was planned according to master charts that made sure essential gospel principles were taught at regular intervals and that parents and children learned the same concept on the same day. These charts were not just a management tool, but were designed to produce a curriculum that would create "a greater love of our Father in Heaven and our Savior, Jesus Christ."[77] Correlation committees prioritized areas of study that all members should encounter at various stages of their lives. These areas were modified over the years and included topics such as spiritual matters, recreation, home, and family. The spiritual area was further divided into the Godhead, principles of the priesthood, and so on.[78] Planning charts indicated "the degree of complexity, the lesson objectives, supporting materials, the age group being taught, and the organization teaching the principle."[79] Curriculum for children aimed to "acquaint" children with the gospel. Youth curriculum "reinforces" this learning and adult curriculum "solidifies a member's understanding of the scriptures and teachings of the prophets."[80]

Priesthood lessons and Relief Society lessons had slightly different foci yet were more closely coordinated with each other. A 1986 *Ensign* article lists the major emphases in adult curriculum for Relief Society as "gospel doctrines and principles, service, parenting skills" and "human

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76. Jack, Interview, 2.

77. "Church Curriculum: Helping Us Learn and Live the Gospel," 20.

78. Jack, Interview, 3.

79. Carlos E. Asay, "'For the Perfecting of the Saints': A Look at Church Curriculum," *Ensign*, January 1986, 16.

80. "Church Curriculum: Helping Us Learn and Live the Gospel," 20.

relations." For Melchizedek Priesthood, the emphases were "gospel doctrines and principles," "priesthood service and responsibilities," "parenting skills," and "temple preparation."

Elaine Jack, who worked with the Melchizedek Priesthood curriculum, recalled: "We [Relief Society] may not have had the same lesson, written exactly, but they were correlated so that men and women got the same subject. I don't think anybody knew that, except the person who looked at the chart." Jack describes the hours she spent over her pool table charting lessons with committee members. Her comments reflect the openness and cooperation she experienced with curriculum committees. Her experiences therefore modify the view that shifting curriculum production to correlation committees damaged the Relief Society and left women powerless. "I felt that they [members of the curriculum committee] were very *receptive* and I felt we had a good relationship and we could discuss things quite openly," she recalled. "In fact, I sort of *felt in charge.* But I also respected their expertise. These were Ph.D.'s in the curriculum department. I'm not and I understand that."[81]

In addition to coordinating materials for all age groups of the Church, correlation strove to meet the needs of a diverse adult membership. It proved difficult to create palatable lessons suited to a worldwide audience, while also meeting the needs of particular groups, such as college-age sisters, "Lamanite" sisters, and members at varying levels of gospel and cultural immersion in the Church. The changes in curriculum content, particularly the Relief Society lessons, illustrate the struggle of both the Relief Society and the correlation department to adapt to changing times and different personal circumstances while connecting the worldwide sisterhood in universal gospel principles.

A letter dated December 18, 1950, from the "Education Counselor" in Belle Spafford's presidency (she would have been Velma N. Simonsen) communicated the difficulty the Relief Society faced in making material applicable and relevant to an international sisterhood. Her letter illustrates both the freedom and challenges created by relying on missions to adapt, discard, or write their own lessons:

> As the new year approaches, we are wondering how the lesson work of Relief Society in your mission is progressing.
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> All the lesson material is based on gospel principles and teachings and

81. Jack, Interview, 3; emphasis mine.

> should prove helpful and inspiring to Relief Society members. . . . We do not know if the optional lessons for work meeting are at all suitable for your mission but if you find they are, from reading them in the Magazine, you might be able to adapt parts of them, at least, for use on that day. Such material, however, probably, needs to be different for each mission, taking into account the living conditions of each country.
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> It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to write lessons entirely suited to the varying needs of sisters throughout the world, however, the gospel is understandable to all. . . . The lessons as outlined for 1951–1952 contain material on the settlement of North America with special reference to it as a part of the promised land. Do you feel this material would be unsuited to present conditions in your mission? Please advise us at your early convenience.[82]

Changes to more culturally adaptable gospel lessons reduced work for missions, which had hitherto borne individually the burden of rewriting or finding substitutes for irrelevant lessons. The shift facilitated difficult translation, publication, and distribution deadlines to accommodate Church leaders' desire for members throughout the world to receive usable materials on time.[83]

With Relief Society women and correlation goals in mind, the Relief Society curriculum from 1960 to the present has shifted from lessons of local appeal to more universal application. There has also been a shift from more prescriptive lessons on the practicalities of womanhood, motherhood, and Mormon living to more descriptive lessons on spiritual living and essential gospel principles, with the application of principles left generally to the individual member. Earlier lessons instructed, at times quite explicitly, what women needed to do (and how to do it) to be "good" LDS

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82. Letter without salutation (a handwritten notation at the head of the sheets designates it as "to the foreign missions"), from "Counselor in Charge of Education" (no name or signature), December 18, 1950, Circular Letters, 1892–1985, item 20, CR 118, LDS Church Archives.

83. Carr, "For in *That* Day," 105–7. In January 1972 the Internal Communications Department was created with J. Thomas Fyans as managing director. The department's goal was to provide members of the Church with "approved materials and literature of high quality and sufficient quantity *on time* and at the most reasonable cost." Ibid., 106; emphasis mine. Prior to 1972, units of the international Church often received essential manuals and other materials late. Centralizing and professionalizing the writing, printing, and shipping functions made an immense difference in terms of worldwide coordination.

women. Examples included how to mother, housekeeping practices, dress and grooming, gardening, sewing, teaching, budgeting, being a good neighbor, table manners, losing weight, and so on. Vinni Andersen, an employee for the Church Translation Department since 1970, describes efforts to adapt Church curriculum to an international membership: "Before, there were several problems culturally with the materials we used. For example, one lesson for homemaking was on cuts of meat. It is so different in Mexico and other countries that the lesson had no applicability. . . . Things we tell people to do sometimes may be culturally inappropriate."[84] Andersen notes that previous materials often had games, puzzles, stories or illustrations that were contemporary phenomena of Utah's Wasatch Front inappropriate for foreign cultures. For example, she recalls, "In Japan, competition is so high, that the games in lessons were simply time killers. They wanted meat, substance, not games." In other words, games that functioned positively to encourage gospel learning and stimulation in the U.S. culture proved noticeably distracting from more important lesson objectives in Japan.

Similarly, Relief Society pre-correlation curricula posed challenges for translators and adapters. "Cultural refinement," says Andersen, "was a very interesting one! It was hard to deal with. Some were very well done. Others I felt were offensive and difficult to adapt." Among the lessons which proved difficult to translate appropriately was the popular series, "Worldwide Sisterhood," which portrayed the culture and life of a Relief Society sister in each country represented by the Church. Andersen notes: "Sometimes they would quote a sister" but the literal translation into English would "mak[e] her sound unintelligent. Also, they chose women from different levels of society, which was a problem. For the lesson on the U.S., they chose a doctor's wife . . . Her life did not reflect 95% of women in the United States. They should have chosen someone from a different level of society." The literature and social science lessons proved equally difficult to translate. Andersen calls the literature lessons "bears" to adapt, remarking, "You could take those into the South Pacific and [the

84. Vinni Andersen, interview by Tina Hatch, June 30, 2003, notes in my possession.

members] could probably [not] care less! They simply didn't work for everyone."[85]

In the early 1960s, lessons for Relief Society consisted of theology, work meeting, literature, and social science. Visiting teacher messages were included in the *Relief Society Magazine* for English-speaking sisters. In 1966 the lessons were renamed, although content did not shift drastically. Theology lessons became "spiritual living," literature became "cultural refinement," and social science became "social relations." Work meeting became "homemaking," a change reflecting the Church's need to reassert women's value as homemakers in a society that increasingly diminished housewives.[86] At the encouragement of Harold B. Lee, courses in mother training were added in 1972 and renamed "Mother Education" the following year.[87]

Weekday lessons moved to Sunday in 1980 with the consolidated Sunday three-hour schedule. For some women, the change increased Relief Society's formality and decreased their sense of sociality within the organization. For the international membership, however, the change primarily facilitated participation and attendance for those who often traveled considerably longer distances to church than their Utah counterparts.The first Relief Society meeting of the month consisted of a spiritual living lesson. Homemaking was taught the second meeting of the month. Women chose between mother training and social relations for the third meeting according to where they felt "the greater need."[88] The fourth meeting of the month was dedicated to the cultural refinement lessons.

In 1984, the homemaking lesson was moved again, from a Sunday meeting to a monthly meeting on a weekday evening. One American woman told me: "This was really a hard transition for me as well as many of the sisters then. We needed those hours at home with husband and families

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85. Ibid. See also Carr, "For in *That* Day," 79–81, for similar descriptions of translation and adaptation difficulties.

86. Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women of Covenant*, 377.

87. The Relief Society had introduced "Mother's Classes" in 1902. Sharp, Oral History, 64; Derr, Cannon, and Beecher, *Women of Covenant*, 157–60.

88. Foreword, *1973–74 Relief Society Courses of Study: Relief Society Personal Study Guide* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973), v.

to guide minds and actions and transport them to activities."[89] But for women who worked during the day, the change to an evening meeting allowed them to attend. With homemaking during the week, all women attended mother education the second Sunday of the month.

Lessons changed during Barbara Winder's administration (1984–90), reflecting an increased focus on spirituality and an increased acknowledgement of women's different living conditions. The cultural refinement lessons, which had been difficult to translate and adapt, were eliminated in the study guides beginning in 1987. Winder said that the change was to "help strengthen our women" in dealing with today's demands and to meet the needs of a worldwide Church that called for greater "simplicity, flexibility, and adaptability in the Relief Society Curriculum."[90] The number of spiritual lessons doubled in the new manuals, reflecting, according to Winder, women's "need and desire for spiritual instruction." The curriculum alterations were designed to assist Relief Society sisters in their mission "to build individual faith, to strengthen families, to give compassionate service, and to sustain the priesthood."[91] The lessons addressed other concerns of women as well. Lessons included titles such as "Building Self-esteem," "Eliminating Your Own Self-defeating Behavior," "Conquering Loneliness," and "Fighting Drug Abuse." Other lessons were carried over from previous lesson manuals with minimal changes. For example, the lesson "Social Forces Challenging the Latter-day Saint Woman" in the 1982 manual appeared again in the *Learn of Me* manual used in the 1990s.

In addition to changes in curriculum, the Relief Society experienced major adjustments in its organization. In January 1987, stake boards and the stake Relief Society staff could consist of as few as four women: a president, two counselors, and a secretary-treasurer.[92] Reported the *Ensign:* "The changes were made to better meet the needs of Relief Society

89. Merrill Lyn Hiller, Letter to Tina Hatch, June 30, 2003.

90. Barbara Winder, "A Conversation about Relief Society Curriculum Adjustments," *Ensign,* August 1986, 75.

91. Ibid., 75, 76.

92. Gerry Avant, "Relief Society Simplifies Structure," *Church News,* August 31, 1986, 3, 11.

women worldwide, according to Sister Winder," since staffing a stake board could be challenging in some settings.[93]

Elaine Jack's administration from 1990 to 1997 made curriculum a priority. Lessons that had been used since the 1970s had become outdated. Jack reflected, "I was in on the development of the first lessons, and then we compacted them from eight years to four years." (These lessons had originally been designed to be repeated every eight years; for at least two cycles, the four-year curriculum was then repeated.) "Then some of them were still being taught in President Winder's administration. And I thought, 'I know the genesis of these lessons.' . . . They needed more than refreshing. They needed rewriting." Jack felt the lessons needed a new focus that would acknowledge developing areas and the worldwide church. Like earlier administrations, Jack's administration sought input from Relief Society members through stake Relief Society presidencies, wives of General Authorities, and surveys. They recognized the need for including questions in the lessons that would facilitate discussion and foster relationships in Relief Society meetings.[94] Aware of the vast differences and challenges facing her Relief Society sisters, Jack emphasized the need for lessons that would help women develop an individual testimony. Such faith would allow them to resolve problems that the Relief Society could not address for individual women.

When Jack's presidency asked to rewrite the lesson study guides, the Brethren asked them to wait. Elder Dallin Oaks and the writing committee for Melchizedek Priesthood were researching a series of lessons on the teachings of Brigham Young. At the time, the men's study guides were also in need of serious revisions. After much consideration, the decision was made by the curriculum committees, Relief Society, and Church leaders to create a joint lesson manual to be used by Relief Society and Melchizedek Priesthood.[95] On April 1, 1996, Elaine Jack outlined the change in manuals to her board members with Elders Robert D. Hales

93. "Relief Society Organization Simplified," *Ensign*, November 1986, 100.

94. Jack, Interview, 5.

95. See Cherry B. Silver, "International Women in High Relief, 1990–1997: The *Something Extraordinary* Era of Relief Society History," 2003; photocopy of typescript in my possession courtesy of Silver. Used by permission. Silver was a member of the Relief Society General Board during Jack's administration.

and Jeffrey R. Holland in attendance. The two apostles conveyed President Gordon B. Hinckley's enthusiasm for the new manuals, quoting his statement to them: "This is a momentous day. We will finally have brothers and sisters walking side by side out into the future. This will change the outlook of men and women. Let's get it done."[96] The intended inauguration date for the new series of manuals containing teachings of Brigham Young was 1997. However, to allow time for translation so that members throughout the world could commence their study at the same time, the manual was distributed in January 1998.[97] The message was clear. Men and women would learn together, and they would learn together throughout much of the world.

As this episode shows, during an era of changes, losses, and gains, the Relief Society watched and participated in a transforming Church. The international church envisioned by Harold B. Lee in 1960 was no longer a vision. It was a reality in which the Relief Society participated with some sense of loss, yet also with due recognition of the benefits.

Conclusion

The loss of the *Relief Society Magazine* and the changes in curriculum production and content offer a useful way of looking at the Relief Society's history amid changing times and conditions. Prior to correlation efforts of the 1960s, the Relief Society, like the other auxiliaries, enjoyed relative autonomy. Or as Elaine Jack put it, they were "little dominions . . . each running their own organizations."[98] The strength that came from autonomy was clear, as were the growing weaknesses. Narratives of loss elicited by Relief Society changes are valid. Still, they tend to focus on the strengths of autonomy while neglecting the benefits to members worldwide of greater interdependence and coordination.

The correlation movement of the 1960s and 1970s radically transformed the Relief Society and other auxiliary organizations. Under correlation, priesthood authority is central to the organizational system. The strengths of priesthood governance, however, simultaneously risk crippling the organization if it is out of balance. Clearly, the vision and possibilities that priesthood correlation elicits in terms of a truly unified body

96. Relief Society, Minutes, April 1, 1996, 1-2, in Silver, "International Women in High Relief," 15.

97. Ibid., 16.

98. Jack, Interview, 17.

of Christ and "refuge from the storm" have failed to reach the ideal. As many have pointed out, what President Lee called a "priesthood-centered Church" risks placing women at the margin, especially if "priesthood" is misinterpreted to mean "men."

I recognize that narratives of loss and subordination respond to such experiences of marginalization and structural inequity. Admittedly, women have less direct access to organizational authority and less ability to facilitate and implement change within the current organizational structure. However, focusing only on this fact distorts the larger picture and mutes the ways in which the Relief Society has maintained influence, adapted to, and even benefitted from correlation's changes. In practical terms, the scarcity of money, time, and resources and the need to accommodate an international Church made centralization and procedural change inevitable. A new era called for a new vision.

Unquestionably, expanded vision and new organizational changes await in the future. In 1877, Apostle Orson Pratt reinforced this theme: "To say that there will be a stated time, in the history of this Church, during its imperfections and weaknesses, when the organization will be perfect, and that there will be no further extension or addition to the organization, would be a mistake." Furthermore, "organization is to go on, step after step, from one degree to another, just as the people increase and grow in the knowledge of the principles and laws of the Kingdom of God, and as their borders shall extend."[99]

The renewed emphasis on universal sisterhood and brotherhood and greater inclusiveness for people of all backgrounds reflected in magazine and curriculum content exemplify correlation's nobler aims. The increasing willingness and ability of men and women to work in interdependent and mutually beneficial relationships through ward councils is another encouraging evolution. Chris Aston, a Relief Society president in Utah, commented, "I have seen some changes in the way the priesthood works with the sisters. For example, in ward council meetings the sisters' ideas and thoughts are given much more value. I'm not sure women were included in councils with the priesthood very often if at all in years past. I

99. Orson Pratt, address, May 20, 1877, *Deseret News Weekly*, July 18, 1877, quoted in Derr and Derr, "Outside the Mormon Hierarchy," 40.

find that as a Relief Society President now, the bishop often asks my opinion on many different situations."[100]

In 1978, a policy designating those who prayed in sacrament meeting as Melchizedek Priesthood holders was changed specifically to make that service available to women.[101] In 1989, women spoke for the first time in general conference since 1845.[102] Women's role as teachers of doctrine has expanded. Do these welcome changes represent a backlash against the principles of correlation? Or do they represent an evolving understanding and more holistic embodiment of Paul's vision of the body of Christ invoked in priesthood correlation rhetoric? Will the future hold new visions and patterns of working together for priesthood quorums and women's organizations?

As the Relief Society grapples with change, it also grapples with the uneasy balance and uncomfortable mixture of the divine, the practical, the corporate, the temporal, and the humanness of the Church. Despite such paradoxes of organizational life and instances of loss, Relief Society has ultimately benefitted from changes under correlation and looks hopefully to the future. The programs of the Church and Relief Society are more widely available and more realistically adapted to a culturally diverse membership. The benefit of change does not remove the sting of loss. It does, however, beckon us to look forward. To conclude, I quote Belle Spafford who summarized this vision for the Relief Society during an era of change and growth:

> While adjustment to change usually brings a degree of sadness as we part with those things with which we are familiar and which we have learned to love and value, and while certain misgivings assail us with regard to how best we may preserve traditional values as we move forward into new patterns, experience has taught us that it can be done successfully and worthy expanded goals can be achieved. Experience has taught us that always change has been the handmaid of progress. So, as much as we revere the past, we

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100. Chris Aston, Letter to Tina Hatch, July 28, 2003.

101. Spencer W. Kimball, quoted in "Report of the Seminar for Regional Representatives," *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 100.

102. General conference proceedings appear in *Report of the Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, semi-annual); and (usually) in the May and November issues of the *Ensign*, 1971–89 <www.ldschurch.org>.

look forward to the future, knowing that the new plan for forwarding the work of the women of the Church will prosper.[103]

103. Belle S. Spafford, "Change: The Handmaid of Progress," address given at final Relief Society conference, Salt Lake City, October 1975, LDS Church Archives.

Relief Society's Golden Years: *The Magazine*

Jean Anne Waterstradt

MY MOTHER WAS AN ENTHUSIASTIC, devoted member of the Relief Society—the old Relief Society, the pre-block-meeting-schedule, pre-Correlation Relief Society. She belonged to a Relief Society that LDS women chose to join by paying a small annual membership fee; that had its own meeting day and its own budget; that organized bazaars; that sponsored Singing Mothers choruses; that published its own songbook;[1] that held its own conference each autumn in the Salt Lake Tabernacle; that built its own headquarters in Salt Lake City on the southeast corner of Main and North Temple Streets; that published its own magazine.

For my mother, who, I think, was a typical member, the *Magazine* was indispensable because it was a tangible reminder in her home of all that Relief Society offered and accomplished. And, this magazine had an influence beyond its Relief Society constituency. For example, my teacher, friend, and colleague Ralph Britsch has written that when he was a youngster, the women whose names appeared on the masthead of the *Magazine* and as authors of various features "ranked only a little lower in my mind than the General Authorities."[2] The context for his remark was a memoir honoring Alice Louise Reynolds, a BYU professor, a member of the Relief Society General Board, and an associate editor and then editor of the *Maga-*

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1. I had two, copyrighted 1919 and 1942, now in Special Collections, Stewart Library, Weber State University, Ogden, Utah.

2. Ralph A. Britsch, "Alice Louise Reynolds: A Remembrance," in *They*

zine.[3] Like Professor Britsch, I early discovered the pleasures of the *Magazine* and was delighted when I found my mother's hoard of back issues.

When the *Magazine* ceased publication with its December 1970 issue, a ward representative visited my mother to inquire about transferring her subscription to one of the new Church journals. She was adamant: "If I can't have the *Relief Society Magazine,* I don't want *any* Church publication." And she held fast to her decision. When she died several years later, she still had not succumbed to a replacement for "her" magazine.

My mother's collection of the *Relief Society Magazine* comprises forty-nine years, beginning in January 1922 and ending in December 1970. These hundreds of issues made deciding the limits of this paper difficult, but browsing through the magazines again has brought me great enjoyment. I have been struck once more by the dedication and ability of the women who edited the *Magazine* and by the remarkable variety of its contents. It is that variety which I intend to emphasize in this brief miscellaneous survey of a journal that existed for fifty-seven years and that, over those years, entered tens of thousands of homes and influenced millions of women and their families.

In addition to the spiritual messages, which are a staple of any Church journal, and the lesson guides, the *Magazine* published articles on contemporary issues; biographical sketches; travel accounts; articles on nutrition and child-rearing; recipes; articles on home decoration and management; poems, short stories, and serial stories; articles on music and paintings; articles on gardens; and reports from Relief Societies across the United States and around the world under the title "Notes from the Field."[4] It was in such a report in the February 1942 *Magazine* that I discovered a picture of the North Weber Stake Relief Society Board, with my mother appearing in the second row. Finally, the *Magazine* pub-

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Gladly Taught, edited by Jean Anne Waterstradt (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University and the Emeritus Club, 1988), 3:141.

3. Miss Reynolds served as associate editor from 1923 until 1928 under Clarissa Smith Williams, editor and general president. When Williams was released, Reynolds became editor, beginning with the November 1928 issue. Her resignation from the *Magazine* was announced in September 1930.

4. A short list is sufficient to illustrate the variety of feature articles typical of the *Magazine:* "What Utah Is Doing for the Blind," "The Scenic West and Its Natural Resources," "Pasteur's Contribution to the Relief of Human Suffering,"

lished the society's annual report, which included cash receipts and disbursements and statistics on membership and average attendance at meetings, as well as reports on such activities as preparing bodies for burial, special visits to the sick, and days spent in temple work.

The front cover of the *Magazine* was drawn from a variety of sources: for example, sketches, landscapes, old photographs, monuments, and classical art. As photography grew more sophisticated and film technology advanced, covers in beautiful colors became commonplace. The *Magazine*'s final cover, celebrating Christmas, was taken from a painting by Andrea del Sarto, *Virgin and Child with Joseph.*

A major feature in most issues was the lesson guide for each of the four subjects regularly scheduled for study. These lessons were published initially with a lead time of two months, which was later increased to three. For instance, the January issue dealt with the April lessons. In my mother's Relief Society, the curriculum was designated as "Theology and Testimony," "Work and Business," "Literature," and "Social Service." "Work and Business" later became "Work Meeting," and "Social Service" was changed to "Social Science." The "Visiting Teachers' Message" was also published. No lessons were published for the summer months. The original ten-month educational year was finally reduced to eight months, with June, July, August, and September lesson-free.

Although there was, inevitably, through the years repetition of subject matter, the lessons were varied and were often supplemented with a list of questions and problems to stimulate study and discussion. Sometimes references were included. A sampling of subject matter, all from pre-correlation years (before 1966), underlines the many-faceted concerns of that earlier Relief Society. It emphasizes the "remarkable variety" to which I have referred. In some educational years, a course of study might pursue a theme or basic idea, in others the work or life of an individual, in still others a single important book. In the sampling that follows, I have purposely used random order and have mixed one-lesson topics with year-long subject matter.

"Dallin's Gift of Massasoit to Utah," "Diets for Some Special Diseases," "A Trip through Scandinavia," "Illustrating and Story-writing for Children," "How to Remodel a Fitted Suit," "Women in the Utah Legislature," "The Open Mind," and "Books for the Family."

Theology lessons, which were presented at the first meeting of the month, included the following: "Memorable Prayers," "Guardian and Ministering Angels," "Habits and Customs in Heaven," "The Parables of the Savior," "The Book of Mormon," "The Doctrine and Covenants," "Forgiveness," "Intelligence and Future Life," "The Agency of Men," "Prophets of the Mosaic Dispensation," James Talmage's *Articles of Faith*, "Church History," and "The Life and Ministry of the Savior."

Work and Business Meeting, later called Work Meeting, at first had no lesson guide, but eventually a topic was introduced even for that day, which had been intended primarily for activity, not for discussion. Among the topics for the second meeting of the month were these: "Health in the Home," "Personal Attractiveness, a Factor in Happiness," "Cooperation in the Home in Work Habits," "Finances of the Home," "The Eternal Family," "Children's Clothing," "Buttonholes and Fasteners," "Modern Housekeeping Methods," "Food Facts and Food Fads," "Managerial Aspects of Clothing the Family," and "Better Buymanship" (instruction on purchasing such articles as hosiery, dresses, and coats).

Because of my personal interests, my training, and my professional life, I was especially interested in examining the literary lessons. During the third meeting of each month, Relief Society sisters studied such subjects as the short story, the novel (for example, *Les Miserables*), the Bible as literature, "Poetry of Faith in God and Man," LDS authors, Mark Twain, "Literature of the *Doctrine and Covenants*," Shakespeare, Nathaniel Hawthorne, hymns written by women, "Exploring Right and Wrong Attitudes through Literature," "Periods in American Literature," Benjamin Franklin, Ralph Waldo Emerson, "America as Revealed in Its Literature," "Humor in Life and Literature," Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters, George Santayana, the hymns of George Careless, and *The Devil's Disciple* by George Bernard Shaw.

My biggest surprise in surveying these literary lessons came with the discovery that Ibsen's *A Doll House* had been a Relief Society topic. You remember Nora, Torvald Helmer's child-like wife; Nora, who naively believes that "a wonderful thing" will happen when her husband learns what she has done for him; Nora, who reaches toward real maturity only when she begins to understand the hollowness of her marriage and faces her lack of self-identity. I assume that Alice Louise Reynolds was responsible for including *A Doll's House* among the topics for the literary lessons. Miss Reynolds brought to the *Magazine* both her training as a teacher and

scholar and her deep, unwavering devotion to the LDS faith. She would have seen no difficulty, only advantage, in promoting discussion among Mormon women about the problems and ideas suggested by Ibsen's play.

Probably because, at times, the literary lessons could present special problems if they were used in the mission field, the *Magazine* sometimes published optional courses that mission Relief Societies could choose to study in place of literature. For example, in 1940–41, LDS history was an alternate course, and in 1941–42, LDS hymns. In 1946–47, the option was "The Gospel as a Way of Life."

Social Service, or Social Science, lessons were scheduled for the fourth meeting each month. These lessons treated such general areas as personal relationships; ideals of home and family; and community, state, and national concerns. Social Service subjects included these: "Child Welfare," "Divine Law and Church Government," "The Care of the Aged," "What Courtship Should Reveal," "Social Aspects of a Community Health Program," "Problems of Behavior," "Types of Welfare Work," "The Home and Its Material Obligation," "The Home and Its Spiritual Obligation," "Spiritual Living in the Nuclear Age," "Homeless Children," "Problem Children," "What America Means" (example: "Growth of Political Parties in America"), "Foundations of Successful Marriage," and "Personality Study: The Psychology of Conversation, Public Speaking and Writing."

A major change in lesson nomenclature did not occur until June 1966 when the *Magazine* announced:

> In harmony with the Correlation Program, the lessons for the coming year are being written so they may be presented in such a way that every sister at Relief Society will become involved in the discussion. The titles of the courses, beginning in October 1966, reflect this new concept of involvement. Theology is now called "Spiritual Living"; Work Meeting—"Homemaking"; Social Science—"Social Relations"; and Literature has taken on a new depth and becomes "Cultural Refinement."[5]

This action seems to have marked the beginning of the end of the Relief Society that my mother's generation cherished, for the Correlation Program brought a sea change to the organization, the results of which became evident in the Relief Society that emerged after the *Magazine* was abolished, the Relief Society that LDS women now know.

The same issue that carried news of the new names for the Relief So-

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5. *Relief Society Magazine*, June 1966, 460.

ciety courses of study celebrated the expansion of the *Magazine's* influence with the announcement in an article by Elder Marion G. Romney that the journal would now also be published in Spanish. In a joyful editorial in this issue, Belle S. Spafford wrote:

> It was a blessed day, indeed, when, as an aid in furthering the work of this organization, the Society was given a *Magazine* of its own, "to be edited managed, and published by the General Authorities of the Society." This publication has served as the voice of the Relief Society. It has helped to unify and standardize the work. It has served as a lesson manual for the educational courses. It has been an outlet for the literary aspirations of Latter-day Saint women. Its contents have been animated by the spirit of the gospel[,] and its gospel [—] teaching articles by Priesthood and Relief Society leaders [—] have strengthened faith and built testimonies.

Sister Spafford continued:

> In the centenary of Relief Society, issued on the hundredth anniversary of Relief Society, we read, "This Magazine belongs by right to every woman of the Church." While language barriers stand in the way of full realization of this at the present time, a great step forward has been made as the Magazine becomes available in Spanish for the many Spanish-speaking sisters throughout the Church. The General Board rejoices that this instrument which has proven so valuable to the English-speaking sisters and such an important factor in the strength of their Relief Societies, may now intimately touch and influence the lives of the Spanish-speaking sisters and reach into their Relief Societies as a bulwark of strength.
>
> The advent of the *Relief Society Magazine* in Spanish is a history-making event.[6]

In reality, the *Magazine* had only four and one-half years of life remaining.

The inclusion of fiction and poetry in every issue of the *Magazine* encouraged women who were creative writers.[7] The poets received a major advantage when, in August 1923, the *Magazine* announced a memorial to Eliza R. Snow, to be known as the Eliza Roxcy Snow Memorial Prize Poem. That this competition was inaugurated only three months after Alice Louise Reynolds's appointment to the associate editorship of the *Magazine* was, I think, no coincidence. Two prizes were announced for this

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6. Belle S. Spafford, *Relief Society Magazine,* June 1966, 411.

7. Some issues carried only a few poems, but in one issue (May 1966) I counted eighteen. Up to six stories might appear in a single issue (for example, June 1959).

first year: first place, $20; second place, $10, both considerable sums seventy years ago. Forty-seven entries were received in that first year. The winning poems, which were announced the following year in January, Eliza R. Snow's birth month, were written by Sarah Ahlstrom Nelson and Claire Stewart Boyer. By 1969, the last year of the contest, now known only as The Relief Society Poem Contest,[8] the first prize was $40; the second, $30; the third, $20. These final prize poems, all published in April 1970, were written by Virginia Maughan Kammeyer, Hazel Loomis, and Alice Morrey Bailey. In congratulating the winners, the *Magazine* noted that 415 entries had been received. In August 1970 the *Magazine* announced the discontinuance of the poetry contest because of the impending discontinuance of the *Magazine*.

Equivalent encouragement for LDS women fiction writers came two decades after the first poetry competition. As part of the Relief Society Centennial celebration in 1942, the *Magazine* announced in its August issue that the Relief Society General Board had inaugurated "an annual short story contest designed to stimulate fiction-writing among Latter-day Saint women, to develop greater appreciation for this type of creative writing, and to encourage high standards of work."[9] The following prizes were established: first place, $25; second place, $20; third place, $15. Twenty-one manuscripts were submitted in this first contest. The winning authors were Norma Wrathall, Blanche Kendall McKey, and Mary Ek Knowles. By 1969 the first prize had grown to $75; the second to $60; and the third to $50. The 1969 winning stories, all published in April 1970, were written by Sylvia Probst Young, Sara Brown Neilson, and Joan B. Kearl. At that time the *Magazine* noted that seventy-seven stories had been submitted. Like the poetry contest, the short story contest died with the *Magazine*.

During the years in which the *Magazine* was "an outlet for the liter-

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8. The 1966 poetry contest was announced in the June issue as the Eliza R. Snow Poem Contest. When the winning entries were published in January 1967, the notice began, "The Relief Society General Board is pleased to announce the names of the three winners in the 1966 Relief Society Poem Contest (formerly the Eliza R. Snow Memorial Poem Contest)" (19). As far as I can determine, the *Magazine* did not offer an explanation for this change, but I call attention to the announcement in June 1966 of the change in course titles "in harmony with the Correlation Program."

9. *Relief Society Magazine*, August 1942, 552.

ary aspirations of Latter-day Saint women" (Spafford), many authors became repeating contributors. These women had impressive credentials: they had published extensively, many in national magazines; they were members of authors' organizations; they were recognized in chronicles of achievement, such as *Who's Who in the West.* They were clearly well disciplined in their craft. A short list of these authors might include Mabel Law Atkinson, Alice Morrey Bailey, Claire Stewart Boyer, Elsie Talmage Brandley, Olive Woolley Burt, Annie Wells Cannon, Elsie Chamberlain Carroll, Alberta Huish Christensen, Christie Lund Coles, Vesta Pierce Crawford, Ruth May Fox,[10] Mabel Jones Gabbott,[11] Mabel Harmer, Lael Woolsey Hill, Ethel Jacobson, Bertha A. Kleinman,[12] Mary Ek Knowles, Rosa Lee Lloyd, Caroline Eyring Miner, Anna Prince Redd, Lula Greene Richards, Dorothy J. Roberts, Dorothy Clapp Robinson, Iris W. Schow, Helen Candland Stark, Margery S. Stewart, Ora Pate Stewart, Eva Willes Wangsgaard, Maryhale Wolsey, and Sylvia Probst Young.

Almost a quarter of a century has passed since the demise of the *Relief Society Magazine.* An entire Church generation has been born and grown up without knowing the publication, and those who were young when it perished possibly have no recollection of it. But just ask any Relief Society member who was a mature adult when the final announcement came. These sisters remember well the pleasure, the help, and the strength derived from reading the *Magazine,* and they still mourn its loss.

In her farewell editorial, Marianne Clark Sharp, who was also first counselor to the Relief Society general president, expressed the hope that the *Magazine,* which she termed "a treasure house of inspiring material," would be preserved by both members and organizations "for present and future reference." I do not believe this hope has been realized. Sister Sharp also noted that, in August of its final year, the *Magazine* had reached 301,000 subscribers, adding somewhat wistfully that the number

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10. Ruth May Fox is the author of "Carry On," *Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), no. 255.

11. Mabel Jones Gabbott wrote four of the hymns in the 1985 hymnal: "We Have Partaken of Thy Love," no. 155; "In Humility, Our Savior," no. 172; "Lord, Accept into Thy Kingdom," no. 236; and "Rejoice, Ye Saints of Latter Days," no. 290.

12. Bertha Kleinman is the author of "Two Little Hands," which at one time was one of the most popular songs for LDS children.

"would have been greatly increased by the end of the year had the *Magazine* continued."[13]

Sister Sharp's editorial conclusion is both ironic and ambiguous. She has rendered in the feminine plural the gladiators' salute to the Emperor Claudius, as recorded by Suetonius in his *Life of Claudius, #21:* "*Morituræ te salutamus*"–"We who are about to die salute you."[14]

My mother's Relief Society was a semi-autonomous Church auxiliary. That it loomed so large in the lives of its women was due to its splendid central leadership, the variety of its activities, and its firm spiritual undergirding. The *Magazine* that it published for fifty-seven years was a powerful instrument, a testament to the ability and determination of its general board, to the value of Relief Society programs, and to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual commitment of Relief Society members. There is now, of course, no comparable voice for LDS women.

13. Marianne Clark Sharp, *Relief Society Magazine,* December 1970, 895.
14. Ibid.

Resurrection

Lisa M. de Rubilar

I

What if the Resurrection were not pent
for the vast reendowment of all flesh
but occurred as if by chance, like birth
(that miraculous appointment), and just
as unnoticed. What if these were the terms?:

You must die. You must taste the earth
on your tongue and ride the wind among leaves
until the last, very last, mortal soul who remembers
your name returns to the soil. Then the entropy
of your meat and bones, swishing cilia,

webbed filaments, coursing capillaries
reverses itself and you appear, not
near your grave, but in the spot where you suffered
most on this green nonpartisan sphere. You
appear in jeans and flannel shirt. Your beard

is shaved to the quick. The wind stings your face
and you gasp to find yourself separate
from the wind; to feel it part and circumvent
your solid form instead of riding with you
through empty limbs and dangling leaves of time;
to displace molecules, take up space.

It is the same and different. Now you know
some things not transmittable in words;
you feel the motes of souls buffet your cheeks
and hear their voices infiltrate every sound.
Now this becomes your task: to speak for them all.

II

Jacob Tucker recomposes on the slopes
of Kennesaw Mountain. A few tourists
laugh on the trail ahead but have no reason
to keep watch to rearward, and the ranger
is sleeping it off in the movie room

where every quarter hour bugles pledge defeat
to empty chairs or groups of Japanese
businessmen. Tucker touches his shaven jaw
and watches a hawk rise from a giant oak.
He knows the place. Is luckier than most.
Only the groan of combustion beyond

the shaven battlefield, only the jet
intoning like an angel of revenge,
tell him things have changed. And the silence forced
through the cheesecloth of 130 years.
Just he and the innermost core of the oak

remember the twang of death, the howls
of dying men, the obscene blasts
of cannons strategically installed (now)
for kids to climb while parents aim the camera.
His foxhole remains. A shallow leafy dent

rimmed by haphazard rotted logs labeled
with explanatory plaque. Tucker
kneels in the meal of leaves, breathes deep,
weeps. He died here; but that was not the worst.
The worst was watching, hearing, breathing death

and living on; discerning the maw of Hell
in his own bloodthirsty core. Now he recalls,
almost hears, the tenderest unseaming
sound—cannon balls parting the leaves—
and the boy at his side screaming, "Ma!"

III

What if death were not the end of time?
What if, as you unloose your molecules
one by one in the ground or in the fire,
each ticks on in calmest synchrony
with the orbit of the moon; and you must wait

to be forgot. You must blow through scritching weeds
on vacant lots, past panes where high school girls
stretch pallid toes into stockings for Prom,
through scarlet gills of fish and plankton guts
till you become a cloud approaching low

across the hills and the farmer looking up
swipes his chin and smiles to see you come;
you must pass through forests slated for the ax,
and pigeon-grimed squares, widows' marigolds,
school yards, fair grounds, prison yards, dust.

Time is slow as you sink in unison
with billions of trembling things into soil
and silt, as you spread, widen, and descend
like manna to the ground. Morning, night, spring,
summer, week, year—and you wait—impatiently

at first—then at last resigned until
the instant comes when you find yourself dressed
in a gabardine coat and coarse wool gloves,
a freshly coifed bun at the nape of your
neck, walking the teeth of a wintry wind.

IV

Rosa Abramowitz has waited
a mere fifty years because all her folk
were chunked into a communal hole
brambled in human limbs from which they rose
within months—no one left to remember
another—and were mistook by dumbfounded

saviors at horror's end for citizens
come to mourn the dead. But Rosa could not
rise with the rest because she'd accepted bread
through barbed wire from a passerby who suffered
a moment's lapse of self-preservation.
She told him her name, and was therefore sealed

to earth by insomniac dreams of one
dim soul whose courage never rose again
to such heights, but who found that name lodged fast
in his skull till the day of his demise.
So Rosa walks alone in an unchanged

place that was preserved to prevent forgetting
(although the rending wind has kept us all
in our beds). She died here. But the worst
was not death; the worst was standing witness
to ultimate possibilities—

no Hell left to imagine; Holiness
no more than a hot cup of tea. She lost
her faith—the most grievous loss of all—
on this cindery spot where she was shot
at roll call for briefly resting her head

on the shoulder of a friend she'd known
from childhood. (Hadn't they racketed round
her parlor together after Seder
in search of the *Afikoman* to redeem
for peppermints? Or was that, too, mere lie?)
She died fast. No farewell. Only now, her cry.

V

What if the secret to Resurrection is this?:
You must use your new eyes to weep. You must
use your lungs to breathe and your mouth to cry
from the dust: *O earth, cover not thou my blood.*
No one will hear you. The wind will divide

against your solid form and the atoms
of all the dead will land on your tongue—
and you will know who they are. They have names.
Speak them. They have memories. Cry them.
Feel the bark of the trees and the cinders

of the paths. Smell the pollen and the ice
on the air. Take off your gloves; kneel among
ashes and leaf meal; feel volition surge
through your limbs, and blood drive life once more
into embodiment. Feel. Breath. Hear

how the lark still sings in the bush afire
as that old Pol Pot plots, Hutus hack,
Ceausescu kills, Pinochet cherishes
slaughter, and the self-satisfied, from afar,
depress the lever of Devastation.

See. Bear witness. Open your mouth to hymn
and to harrow. Eat the world whole. Breathe flame.
Say, "I am" as the burning bush replies
"And I AM."
At last, corporeal, ascend
in Peace. The rest we can barely envision.

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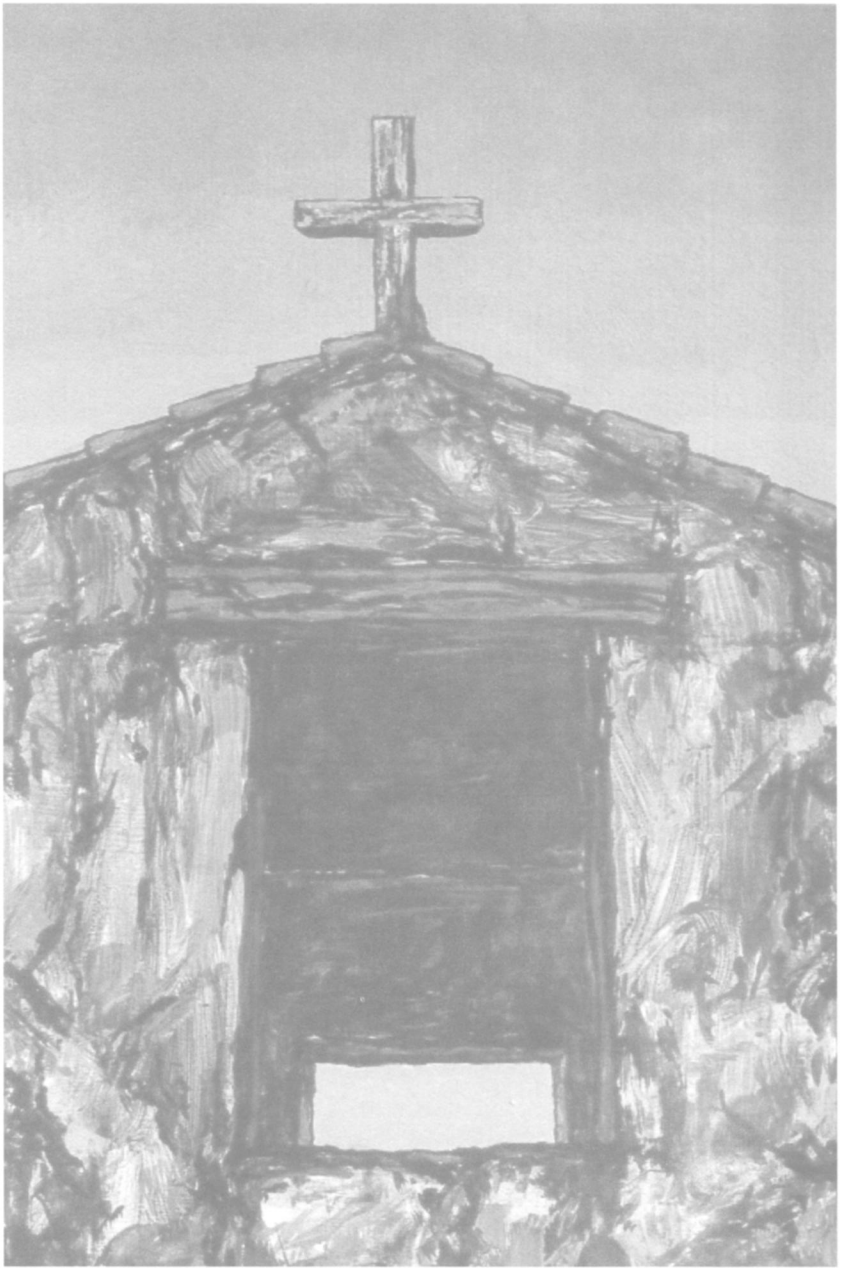

Chapel for Leonard; 1997; acrylic on masonite; 10" x 8"

PERSONAL VOICES

Sexual Morality Revisited

Wayne Schow

IT'S A BOGGY ACRE, SURELY. Is there any greater conundrum than human sexuality? Is there any aspect of our lives about which it is more difficult to generalize? Is there anything in our experience so full of surprises and contradictions, so paradoxical in its potential to elevate or to demean us, to make us feel like gods or to plunge us into guilt and self-loathing?[1]

To be sure, myriads of treatises have been written on this subject by persons who were sure they had it figured out. These writings vary enormously. Some of them proclaim that our sexual being should be suppressed because it is animalistic or unspiritual or dangerous or sinful—these are mostly religion-based. Some celebrate sexuality, give explicit instruction on the methods of sexual expression, and treat sex as if it existed amorally in an airtight compartment of its own. Some describe sexual physiology and behavior scientifically and clinically, a useful contribution certainly, as far as it goes.

The problem with most of these reductionist treatises—and the teachings that derive from them—is that ultimately they oversimplify the complexities of sexuality and human nature. It's like the six blind men running their hands over a different section of the elephant. The result is

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1. See William Butler Yeats's poem, "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop," which highlights the following striking paradox: "But Love has pitched his mansion in / The place of excrement."

that many individuals, trying to make sense of this inescapably central, mysterious, and challenging aspect of their lives, cannot square their partial perspectives adequately with the physical, psychological, and relational realities they face. Too often this failure leaves them deprived, damaged, diminished.

We need a more nearly holistic vision that takes into account the complexities and paradoxes of sex, an informed vision that acknowledges the power and potential beauty of sex and, at the same time, considers it in the context of a wholly realized personality and social responsibility. I decided, therefore, to articulate that holistic view.

Easier said than done, I must admit. My efforts to generalize on the confluence of sex, morality, and religion only prove how slippery the subject is. But if the reader is willing to consider my attempt as a quixotic work in progress, I'll risk raising the first questions for a broader, more expanded dialogue.

My four-part discussion focuses on important aspects of sexuality/morality underdiscussed by Latter-day Saints: (1) the nature of the sexual moral codes we live by, their origins, justifications, and deficiencies; (2) our sexual nature, its centrality, its power, and the implications that result; (3) several controversial issues, including the morality of homosexuality and the morality of erotic art and literature; and (4) the impact of religious moral restraint on individual sexuality.

Sexual Moral Codes

Recently, a young woman of my acquaintance asked me: "Why is our culture so invested in monogamy, so rigidly committed to moral enforcement of it?" As a counselor, she had seen too many marital failures stemming from infidelity. From this evidence it seemed clear to her that "such a model is unrealistic for many. Monogamy is the prescribed ideal, but pitifully few people manage to remain sexually faithful to one mate over the long haul. From disappointed expectations comes pain. Why set people up to fail?" Fair question. I am not as pessimistic as she about the track record of monogamy. I think that monogamy works well for a great many, but I acknowledge that the percentage of those who confine their sexual experiences entirely within marriage and do so happily is not imposing. So her question gets right down to bedrock: On what does the justification for monogamy and sexual fidelity rest?

For those committed to the Judeo-Christian tradition, the primary

answer is simple: God said that's how it should be. He ordained the sacrament of marriage; in lovely poetic language the Bible declares that a man should leave father and mother to cleave unto his wife (Gen. 2:24) and that a wife's desire should be to her husband (Gen. 3:16). The seventh commandment forbids adultery (Exod. 20:14). Jesus spoke forcefully on this subject: "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:9). He said that a man should not divorce his wife except on grounds of fornication, that to do otherwise and to remarry would be effectually committing adultery. In short, within this powerful tradition a well-established scriptural basis supports faithful monogamy.

Moreover, it is strongly reinforced by romantic idealism. Plato's little fable about soul mates, separated in a previous existence, being reunited here to restore their oneness is an early source, but the ideologies of courtly love in the late medieval period[2] and of romanticism dating from the later eighteenth century elevated the ideal of faithful and enduring commitment between lovers. Virtually ignoring the practical reasons for a marriage partnership, this romantic ideal viewed the permanent bond between a man and woman as transcendent and ennobling. Combined with the moral force of the Judeo/Christian view of marriage, it still occupies the dominant ground in Western culture.

Given this strong buttressing, why do humans so often fall short of the sexually faithful monogamous ideal? Let me review the obvious. Partnering is complex and challenging. Not everyone can secure a mate in the dance of marital musical chairs. Among those who do, some must make a compromised choice in terms of real compatibility, in terms of finding a mate with the qualities desired. Such compromises may, over the long term, make the partners vulnerable to outside attractions. But even those who enter into marriage happy in their choice and optimistic about their future together cannot escape the fact that life is flux, that not only do circumstances change but that people in that moving stream change as well. Romantic idealism is based on the premise that the essence of relationships is permanent. But reality often challenges that assumption. You can wake up one morning along the way and realize with surprise and perhaps

2. Ironically, courtly love often celebrated adulterous relationships but justified them on the grounds that the woman's marriage was in fact a marriage of convenience rather than one based on passionate choice. Having found her *true* lover, she would henceforth remain in her emotional inclination faithful to him.

disappointment that the person sitting across the breakfast table from you is not the person you took to the altar. What happens then?

Moreover, the persistent psychological and physiological facts of human nature intrude. For many, the surfaces of daily life become ordinary. Even that which has much pleased us can come to seem commonplace and unexciting. Humans often grow bored with what is familiar and easily accessible (including relationships); we crave novelty. Compound this reality with our tendency, when our personal relationships become stressed, to cast about for something more immediately gratifying, and it is little wonder that the path of least resistance leads many to sexual infidelity or a severed marital relationship or both.

There is, not least, the fact that, after all, we are at base animals and most animals are not naturally monogamous. Our sexual compulsion, the powerful drive in us that serves to facilitate our survival as a species, is opportunistic and irrational. We may attempt to curb it, to rise above the level of beasts of the field. But when hormonal chemistry asserts itself, when sexual desire is fully awakened, the result is a floodlike force. Chance or other circumstances can weaken the levies that otherwise help us to channel that passion. At such times, the sensible mind is temporarily disenfranchised; and if a powerful, habitual discipline is also lacking, irrational desire carries all before it.

Greek myths represent vividly that we are largely helpless before Eros. To be struck by Cupid's arrow is to be blindsided, smitten in spite of oneself. And in the story of Queen Phaedre, for example, who is overwhelmed with consuming desire for her beautiful stepson, Prince Hippolytus, her passion is presented as a madness cruelly inflicted upon her by the goddess Aphrodite. There is some degree of psychological truth in this. Or consider the medieval romance of Tristan and Iseult: When these two accidentally drink together the magic potion, they are henceforth fated to love each other passionately, if illicitly (because she is married to King Mark), until death, and are powerless to do otherwise. The potion is simply a symbol for their irresistible erotic, amorous attraction.

Why, then, do we go to such lengths to privilege monogamy and sexual fidelity? Why do we muster in their defense the formidable power of religious establishments and their moral codes? *Because society's interests and, broadly speaking, individuals' interests are generally served thereby, that's why.*

Social groups have long understood that, in order to promote stability, peace, safety, and justice, certain natural impulses need to be re-

strained. These include the inherently disruptive potential of sex. Without the responsibility that needs to accompany sexual behavior, society is left to deal with the inevitable fallout. Therefore, sexual prohibitions arise out of practical social concerns. Adultery is forbidden to secure fidelity and stability in marriages, thereby reducing the disruptive effects of sexual competition and sexual promiscuity, and creating conditions conducive to rearing children. Fornication is forbidden to discourage relationships in which the participants are not prepared to assume responsibility for the complex outcomes of sexual intimacy. Homosexual intimacy is forbidden, at least partly, based on a widespread social perception (mostly fallacious) that it undermines heterosexual bonding, procreation, and male protection of offspring, and that it constitutes a threat to the traditional nuclear family.

Many, perhaps the majority, assume that sexual prohibitions (and moral tenets in general) originate at some universal level of abstraction, that they were decreed in the beginning by God, more or less arbitrarily, as a test of obedience—"thou shalt not"—or because sex is somehow inherently evil or because God thinks asceticism is good for us and doesn't want us to have too much pleasure. But if we look at history, we see evidence that moral codes evolve, reflecting cultural change. Perhaps they do express—more or less—God's will, but we came to that conclusion based on cumulative analysis of our evolving social experience.

In short, moral codes (including sexual rules) rest on a very *practical* relationship between acts and outcomes. In the final analysis, that is what justifies them. We need to remember this when we attempt to assess moral questions.

The trouble with sexual moral codes is that they are blunt, rough-and-ready instruments. Quite simply, it is very difficult to write codes sufficiently nuanced to deal reasonably with all of the variables that occur in human situations. Still, the social consensus seems to be that if the lines are drawn rigidly and conservatively enough, the broad interests of society at least will be protected. What typically results, then, is a one-size-fits-all morality.

Frequently, however, something subtler is needed to address personal psychological differences and personal circumstances that fall outside the common matrix. Consider the fact that some persons are attracted sexually to the opposite sex; this orientation of desire isn't a choice, it's just the way they are. Some persons are powerfully attracted sexually to those of their

own gender, through no fault of their own; that's just the way they are. Some persons have very strong libido. Some persons are only moderately interested in sex. Others with very low libido would prefer to avoid sex altogether. In short, the orientation of sexual desire and its relative intensity or lack thereof vary enormously in persons. These differences appear to be more driven by complex bio-psycho-social factors than by personal intent. They are givens, quite likely from God. How adequately do generalized moral codes address the implications of these differences?

Consider further that sexual feelings and sexual acts do not occur in a vacuum. They always arise in a context. Doesn't moral assessment demand that those varied contexts be considered? Apropos of the seventh commandment, the presumption is that those governed by it are situated within a functioning marriage, with a partner whose presence is sufficient to satisfy—at least minimally—the conditions necessary for human sexual intimacy. But what if this is not so? What if there is a permanent and insurmountable separation—a mate is missing or suffers from an illness of mind or body that entirely cuts off physical intimacy? What if this deficiency occurs at a relatively early age? What if a person is bound in an abusive marriage, one in which she or he suffers physical or emotional cruelty from an uncaring mate, or an egregious lack of acceptance and understanding, a marriage in which the very soul is stifled? (The marriage of Hester Prynne and Roger Chillingsworth in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* comes to mind.) Under such conditions, would adultery growing out of an understandable human need for tender intimacy be adequately evaluated by a generalized rule? Does one size *really* fit all? Do not the circumstances of such infidelities require that they be evaluated based on the nature and quality of relationship, both within the violated marriage *and* between the adulterers—and all the other contextual variables in those persons' lives? Must not morality in the final analysis be judged by outcomes?

I am, of course, opening the door here for situational ethics, a concept that is frightening to many. If you take away the firm boundaries, doesn't that just invite wickedness?[3] Well, it does require that persons be willing to make subtle moral choices and assume responsibility for them. Now that *is* scary.

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3. While orthodox Latter-day Saints generally reject in abstract the concept of situational ethics, they readily endorse one very striking example of it in the Book of Mormon. In 1 Nephi 4, Nephi slays the drunken Laban and justifies this

Our Sexual Nature

Once in my high priests' quorum, a member of the group observed: "The average man thinks about sex roughly three hundred times in the course of a day." While some of those in attendance might have quibbled about the number he came up with, no one challenged his general premise. Like it or not, we are sexual beings, and the fact is that, for most of us, sex is one of the most fascinating, most intriguing, most mysterious aspects of life. Like the Grand Canyon, it's awesome, dazzlingly beautiful, and very challenging to negotiate. It is also potentially dangerous. Little wonder, then, that so many of us are so curious about it.

What *is* our sexuality after all? A still influential strain of Christian interpretation holds that it is tied closely to the original sin of Adam and Eve, that it is intrinsic to our fallen condition. These physical bodies and their lustful desires are the avenues through which Satan undermines the realization of our higher spiritual nature. This persuasion, strongly fostered by the teachings of the Apostle Paul and later by Saint Augustine (among others), proclaims a dualism between the body and the spirit. The latter must strive to overcome the former. From this contest comes the practice of asceticism—the self-denial of pleasure (especially physical pleasure) as a means of achieving spiritual discipline.

I find this assertion of dualism unconvincing, misleading, wrongheaded, and harmful to psychic health. Empirical observation persuades me that body and mind are intimately, indeed inextricably, linked in mortality, and that our best, most elevating perceptions often owe much to the perceptual faculties of our bodies just as our minds must bear proportionate responsibility for our baser thoughts, feelings, and acts. Sex is certainly not just "of the body" but is profoundly related to the mind/spirit as well.

We may be like the lesser animals in the inescapability of our sexuality, but how can we not acknowledge the power that is in it? On some primordial level, we *know* that sexuality is an energy (frightening to some) that underlies and drives creation. It is a godlike capability. Mythology and folklore from earliest times and disparate cultures perceived this power and framed the creative acts of the gods in sexual metaphors. In

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breach of the sixth commandment on the grounds that a higher good will be served. Once accept such reasoning, and you have allowed the camel of situational ethics to get his nose into the tent.

ancient religions, the cosmic generative principle was celebrated in explicit eroticism. In Hinduism, for example, the yoni and the lingam were venerated[4] as central to the forces that maintained all life. In early Mediterranean cultures, the phallus and vulva were sacred images at religious festivals. And even though the Judeo-Christian-Islamic cultures have striven to eradicate this explicit sexuality in worship, remnants of the inherent belief in divine sexual creativity can still be found in the Bible.[5]

I embrace the view that our sexuality is a God-given gift. It is more than just the power of procreation. In the fully realized personality, it is complexly present. Central to the Dionysiac life force in us, it is a means of surrendering ourselves to a power larger than ourselves, of being swept up in comprehensive union with all in a way that temporarily obliterates our individuality. At the same time, paradoxically, our sexuality is self-expressive, a dynamic assertion of personal identity; it is a "fingerprint" of personal force. But more than these, it is ideally the means by which, in a personal sense, we can overcome our isolation, the means by which we can focus our desire to be fully present to and with another. As the primary ritual of interpersonal intimacy, sexual connection has the potential power to integrate the mysterious, soulful facets of human life. More than simple gratification of all of our physical senses, sexual union can unify body, mind, and spirit in a way that eloquently contests the old reductive Christian dualism. To ignore this aspect of sexuality is to give up a rich and integrative dimension of personal wholeness. A life without sexual realization is not a complete life, however good it otherwise may be.

However, even though I consider sexual self-realization to be highly desirable, it is not my intent to advocate sexual license. A great force uncontrolled has as much potential for damage as for benefit. Here is where the morality of sex becomes relevant. Appropriate boundaries should be articulated and maintained. Doing so adequately is a subtle challenge.

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4. The connection between sex and religion is evident in the word *venerate,* which like *venereal* derives from Venus, goddess of love and desire.

5. For example, the biblical language associated with Jesus's identity and birth imply the sexuality in God's creative act. Mary was told that "the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). A literal interpretation of these words is certainly possible.

But in our zeal to control, we ought not to draw the rules so rigidly as to stifle the very benefits we would protect. We don't need to say "no" just for the sake of saying "no." Those who do—with whom I obviously disagree—are taking the ascetic view that the body and all physical satisfactions relating to it are evil, unspiritual, and to be suppressed. Such a view would deny the legitimacy of sex even within marriage except when conception is the goal. The trick, I feel, is to grant as much leeway for sexual realization, with as much acceptance of individual human differences, as is consistent with positive outcomes.

If two people join to give each other sexual pleasure, is there anything inherently wrong with that? Considering only the physical side, probably not, any more than there is something wrong in dancing with another or in enjoying with another the satisfaction of a fine dinner. No, the problem is not necessarily the legitimacy of sharing pleasurable bodily sensations *per se*, which can be seen as generous, but rather the complications of the larger contexts—psychological and social—that surround sex. And that is where morality must focus. If two people engage in a sexual act but with a damaging psychological cost to one or both, or to others to whom they are committed, or with a social cost which they may not justifiably ask society to pay, then there is a moral complication that would be wrong to ignore.

This is where the discussion gets sticky, because such considerations exist most of the time, and they can be very subtle and hard to evaluate responsibly, particularly in the heat of passion. If there really were a strict duality of body and spirit/mind, casual or unfaithful physical sex could occur with fewer negative consequences, as it does with lesser animals. But we humans are more complexly constituted; the fact is that our bodies and their acts and sensations are inseparable from our psyches. Our sense of self derives from the totality of what we are and do and from how we are situated in the world; our sexual feelings and interactions—powerful as they are—ultimately influence and are influenced by that larger, holistic context. For that reason, sexual intimacy with another is inevitably more than simply physical gratification: It makes the participants vulnerable in a manner that is potentially very far reaching. That is at once the beauty, the wonder—and the danger—of sexuality.

Here is where fidelity has its great value. It recognizes—indeed, it asserts—that sex should be placed in the larger contexts of the holistic self and social responsibility. Fundamentally, we humans need acceptance

and security, and these conditions are most powerfully fostered in intimate, trustful partnership. In a world that continuously batters the self, most of us need to know that another cares deeply for us, will consistently defend, counsel, encourage, and console us, and will share with us the dark as well as the light places on the mortal journey. And it is precisely because the sexual embrace so powerfully symbolizes such commitments to another that its exclusiveness is typically so vital. Not only literally but figuratively as well, lovers bare themselves to each other, an intimate revelation of self in a way that powerfully implies a reciprocity of intimate concern for the welfare of the other. Their actions symbolize the giving and receiving of the most personal of gifts. How could such gestures not involve gratitude and responsibility? No wonder that when infidelity occurs, betraying a commitment previously symbolized in this most moving interpersonal ritual, the betrayed partner typically is devastated.

Some will say that I generalize too broadly. They may argue that sexual acts don't necessarily have the larger significance I attribute to them. Sometimes individuals just want to take a flyer, to experience the excitement of "stealing" briefly a forbidden fruit. The risk, the intrigue, the unpredictability of it heightens its kick. If a person is single, if he or she does not subscribe to a moral code that forbids sexual intimacy outside marriage, if he or she takes precautions to avoid unwanted pregnancy, then what's the harm? If the person is married but knows his or her mate accepts such behavior, or feels confident the mate will never know, and takes due care to avoid subsequent complications, what's the harm? Such a "fling" could be a piquant experience, gratefully remembered years later. Something like that.

Well . . . I have already intimated that I don't favor a meat-cleaver approach to making moral judgments, that I recognize differences in persons and their contexts. Nevertheless, most of the "illicit flyers" described above are going to come with some downside. However casual one's approach may be, it is simply very difficult to divorce sex from all the aspects of life that are connected with it. That mate who one thought was accepting of free love may, after the fact, prove to be not so accepting, and the fling will have come at the cost of future trust and closeness. The confidence that one's mate will never find out usually proves to be mistaken. Secret acts do very often have a surprising and unpredictable way of coming to light. There may, after all, be an unwanted pregnancy—and if you hold human life to be sacred, as I do, abortion is not a desirable solution.

Morally considered, I believe that two people should never even remotely risk conceiving a child unless both are prepared to provide the long-term nurturing an unexpected child will need. And however easy one may feel about departure from religious moral codes, personal guilt may after all assert itself when one considers how one has betrayed the trust of a loving spouse. Or guilt may take the form of disappointment in oneself, that one could have so cheaply, so superficially, shared that most deeply personal dimension of himself or herself with someone unknown or barely known or scarcely respected. But even if one manages personally to avoid negative results from an illicit, uncommitted sexual intimacy, can one be sure that one's partner will not be negatively affected? And isn't there then some co-responsibility for introducing undesirable complications into that person's life, complications that may have an enduring impact?

These cautions should make clear that I favor a conservative stance in these matters. General guidelines, after all, have their value, because, although there may be exceptions, *most* of the time they are valid. A wise and responsible person does not casually ignore them. The likelihood is that the short-term gratifications of unsanctioned sexual acts will not be worth the long-term cost. In most cases, someone will pay. In many, many instances, the debt incurred can never entirely be removed. That's just the way the real world works.

Controversial Issues/Applications

We live in a sexualized environment. Today, perhaps more than ever before, sex visibly permeates our culture. The mass media—advertising, television, cinema, books and magazines, popular music—together with the fashion industry, shout that sex is central in our lives and remind us unceasingly that a wide range of sexual attitudes and behaviors exists. Indeed, it is scarcely possible for any of us to negotiate our way through this ubiquitous sexual course without being influenced.

In some ways, these circumstances are problematic. For example, anyone raising children knows how very difficult it is to shelter them in their immaturity from this confusing, constant bombardment. Such premature exposure for the very young is particularly undesirable when the substance of these messages is superficial, devoid of meaningful contexts, therefore unevaluated, and often downright sleazy. On the other hand, the greater openness about sexuality that characterizes the present scene has at least a

qualified upside: By recognizing the power of human sexuality, it encourages sexual self-realization rather than puritanical suppression.

Our challenge as free agents is to sharpen our moral and practical intelligence as we negotiate the obstacle course of sexuality, to draw what benefit we can without being adversely affected. We must learn to judge wisely which dimensions of sexual possibility are worthwhile, meriting our attention and our approval, and which dimensions are destructive, deserving to be condemned and eschewed.

To this end, what moral guideposts can we rely on? Highly specific, simplistic rules will be found to have their shortcomings; but some general principles, contextually applicable, can, I think, be enunciated. I will attempt to do so in terms of several questions particularly relevant to moral outcomes.

1. What moral precepts apply to sex between legitimate partners? Conventionally we think of marriage as the defining criterion for legitimate sexual partnering—and in the great majority of instances this will be so. In theory, at least, married couples have accepted mutual obligations to each other, have committed themselves to the comprehensive well-being of their partner, and have accepted mutually the full responsibility for all the outcomes of their shared sexual experience. There will be some morally justified situations (fewer than some might think) in which sexual partners are not in fact married, but such relationships can be defended only if the partners meet the same criteria for responsibility and for securing positive outcomes as if married—and that is not casually achieved.

Even between fully committed partners, the ongoing sexual relationship is complexly nuanced and changeable, requiring continued moral tuning. Here are some principles that should apply.

- Ideally, sex should be joyous, a celebration, an expression of mutual desire, the ultimate manifestation of willing vulnerability, trust, and generosity, a means of overcoming existential isolation. It should express a psychically healthy personality. Respect and mature concern for one's partner ought to be *sine qua non.*

  Clearly, then, there should be no element of compulsion in a healthy sexual relationship. If force enters into it, the act is corrupted. Rape (including marital rape) is for this reason patently reprehensible, but any sexual encounter in which one

partner is reluctant for whatever reason, compelled against whole-hearted inclination, is at best pathetic, at worst despicable. Less obviously but in the same vein, insistence by one married partner (usually male) on conjugal "rights" against the wishes of the other has missed this important point. Such a notion of unqualified conjugal entitlement may stand up in a civil court of law, but it cannot pass moral muster.

- There should be no power trips in sex. It goes without saying that no older person should take unfair advantage of one too young in age or experience to resist such advances. No one holding inherent authority over another in employment or in a teacher-student relationship or in any kind of hierarchical structure should use that leverage for sexual advantage. Nor should withholding of sexual favors be used as a bargaining chip or lever in disputes between partners (unfortunately a common practice).
- Sex should not be a competition; metaphors of hunter and hunted betray a perverse motivation in which advantage is sought at the expense of the other (unless, of course, the chase is a game wholeheartedly enjoyed by both parties). Sex can be playful, and playfulness should be encouraged. But it ought not to assume forms that humiliate one of the partners.[6] Its effect should be to build self-esteem, not diminish it. If the experience leaves one feeling reduced or cheapened in self-regard, something has gone amiss.

In a famous essay entitled "Pornography and Obscenity," D. H. Lawrence wrote that "pornography is the attempt to insult sex, to do dirt on it."[7] I think his assertion is metaphorically insightful, and I will comment below on how it applies to sexual depictions in the arts. But I think it is also useful as a general

6. The phenomenon of sexual sado-masochism in varying degrees must be acknowledged. It betrays a state of mind that I consider evidence of a less than healthy psychic adjustment. If it is allowed to enter at all into the sexual relationship with another, I think it should be only with *unambiguous* mutual consent. Even then, I think it simply perpetuates rather than resolves the psychic maladjustment it signifies.

7. Anthony Beal, ed., *D. H. Lawrence: Selected Literary Criticism* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), 37.

guideline for the moral practice of sex. Those who enter into a sexual relationship should not feel afterwards as if a profoundly meaningful human interaction has been degraded nor their inherent dignity compromised. There ought to be no shame felt, nor any deserved. The participants should feel as if the light of day can shine on the beauty of what has happened between them—as well as the circumstances under which it has occurred. If these tests cannot be met, they have indeed "done dirt" on sex.

2. Can erotic imagery—written and visual—have any legitimate place in moral sexual self-realization? Sexual representation is seemingly ubiquitous in contemporary life. Some of it is subtle, some of it is frankly erotic, and some is downright pornographic. Can any of this imagery be tolerated, or even utilized, in a healthy personal sexuality?

The conservative answer is that it all should be rigorously avoided. Moral cleanliness forbids it. Don't let Satan have any purchase in your mind. Eschew sexy fashions, sexy cinema, sexy literature. Nudity is bad. The body is the gateway to wickedness. Again, I see this as the meat-cleaver approach. It comes from fear of the power of sex.

Such advice has the virtue of being super safe. It is like someone saying, "Stand well back from the Grand Canyon's rim. Best not even to look over the edge. You'll see much, much less of it, of course, but you won't risk falling to your death."

But as I have already noted, the Grand Canyon of sex is awesome, dazzlingly beautiful. Its breadth and depth and potentiality stagger the imagination. Little wonder, then, that from earliest times artists and writers have been drawn to depict sexual beauty, sexual desire, and sexual danger.

After all, a fundamental purpose of art—visual and verbal—is to evaluate and to clarify our experience. Sexual depictions in art, if adequately done, have that benefit. They expand our understanding, they enhance our sense of beauty, they channel our emotions, and in subtle or even explicit ways they clarify values. They do this by examining sexuality in larger contexts. To assert that the arts should not in this way treat our sexual selves and sexual experience as they do all other facets of life seems a strange and illogical assertion. (Indeed, given the centrality of sex, its artistic treatment would seem to be unambiguously important.) Under the right circumstances, the right kind of sexual representations of the body

and of sexual intimacy—in visual art, literature, and cinema—can be both legitimately pleasurable and helpful.

The obvious questions that follow are these: What, then, is the "right kind" of erotic art? And how much of it? Again, I acknowledge that individuals are different and that one specific prescription does not fit all. But in general, I would refer to the guidelines above that delimit healthy sexual self-expression. Ideally, sexual representation ought to show contexts realistically, which means that it should demonstrate that sex has consequences, good or bad. It should make clear that—if integrated holistically in lives that are balanced and responsible—sex is positive, joyous, and life enhancing, a creative force that promotes psychic well-being. One should exclude types of sexual art that "do dirt on sex," for such art is, as Lawrence asserted, pornographic, whether explicitly so or not. The degree of explicitness is not always a reliable barometer in such matters.[8] This includes representations of perverse sexuality, forms that humiliate, violate, cheapen, or demean the human spirit. If in complexly thoughtful depictions of the human condition these play a part, they should demonstrate the destructive and despicable dimensions of such distorted sexuality.

One of the hallmarks of pornography is that it oversimplifies and therefore often distorts the truth about sex. This is so primarily because it typically presents sex in a vacuum of contexts—and it is the contexts of sex that enable us to evaluate it maturely.

As to the question of how much erotic imagery/representation one should allow in one's life, once again balance, proportion, and holistic psychic well-being are the key. The particular effects of any exposure must be carefully considered. If it enlarges one's understanding and refines

8. Ironically, *haute couture* in its calculated exploitation of sexual innuendo is often more pornographic than frank nakedness. The poet Robert Graves makes this point effectively in a short lyric, "The Naked and the Nude." In my opinion, one of the most pernicious effects of the exploitative manipulation of sexual imagery in fashion, advertising, magazines, and television/cinema is the cultivation of a perversely narrow stereotype of physical beauty, a narrowing that excessively limits the range of "acceptable" body types and features and leaves a great percentage of the population, particularly women, disillusioned with their own bodies. One adverse effect is to leave the individual feeling less than adequate as a desirable sexual partner. A healthy representation of sexuality in fashion and in mass media would recognize the wide diversity of body types and features that are genuinely beautiful.

one's moral and esthetic sensibilities, that is a good outcome. If it contributes to a more vital and loving relationship with one's partner, so much the better. On the other hand, if it leads to preoccupation, to a distortion of a normally balanced life, to any discord with one's partner, or if it threatens to become an end in itself, displacing healthy real experience, then obviously reassessment of one's personal boundaries is imperative.

In summary, the admission of sexual imagery and sexual subject matter into one's life is a highly individual matter. Some will choose the safer route and attempt to eliminate such imagery as much as possible from their lives because of its perceived potential for disruption. Others will undertake the challenging task of careful selectivity, making the requisite esthetic and moral judgments. That requires time and painstaking attention. Such individuals will do the work of serious reflection to evaluate how such subject matter fits in a comprehensive philosophy and a holistic life. They will tolerate some risk for the sake of potentially richer understanding. They will accept the responsibility of establishing effective limits.[9] Both approaches can be defended. We should respect the right of individuals to make such decisions responsibly in their own lives.

3. How does outcome-based moral assessment apply to homosexual expression? The morality of sex is not about physiology—not about the mechanics of sexual organs. It is all about the contexts—psychological and social—in which sexual activity occurs. Sexual behavior comes attached to much else in our personhood, to much else in our situational relationships, and it is the responsible recognition of this dynamic that allows sex to be moral. This is always the case, regardless of sexual orientation.

I propose two premises: First, homosexual orientation is in most cases a given; it is not consciously chosen any more than heterosexuals consciously elect their sexual orientation.[10] Moreover, the nature of homosexual longing is more than just superficially sexual. Just like heterosexual longing, homosexual desire embraces the deepest, most comprehen-

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9. An excellent discussion of judicious, responsible evaluation as it applies to cinematic viewing choices is Molly McLellan Bennion, "Righteousness Express: Riding the PG&R," *Dialogue* 36 (Summer 2003): 207–15.

10. Actually, sexual orientation is a matter even more complex than this statement suggests. Based on conclusions from a large body of data, sexologists do not view orientation as being simply dichotomous. The famous Kinsey scale describes a spectrum of sexual attractions. Beyond this, some scientists believe that

sive intimacy sought with another. The evidence supporting this premise can scarcely be denied by reasonable minds.

Second, sexual being and sexual expression satisfy human needs beyond simply enabling procreation; rightly used, God's gift of sexuality has the power to bind and to unify partners in desirable ways that go far beyond simple physical union.

Grant these two premises and the morality of homosexual relationship is greatly simplified. Homosexual love and homosexual relationship can be as legitimate as heterosexual love and sexual relationship. The moral question is not *whether* one is homosexual but *how*, just as that is the question with heterosexual persons. Homosexual promiscuity has precisely the same moral and practical pitfalls that characterize heterosexual promiscuity—it cheapens and diminishes the persons involved, and it is usually irresponsible. But a homosexual relationship between partners who are sincerely and maturely committed to each other has the same potential to enrich their lives as such a relationship between committed heterosexual partners. As with any sexual behavior, its moral status can be gauged by whether or not it produces "good fruits," i.e., good outcomes in the lives of those directly and indirectly involved. There is abundant evidence that many committed homosexual unions are fruitful.

It is ironic that conservative religious institutions, which wish to promote social stability and moral behavior, do not see that recognizing civilly and religiously sanctioned, committed gay and lesbian unions would have precisely those effects.

4. Are there any appropriate ways in which single adults who are unable to marry or join in a committed relationship may express God's gift of sexuality—or are they simply out of luck?

This is a delicate moral question, one that is difficult to answer briefly. The response given by conservative religious codes is that sex is legitimate only within marriage and that those outside the married state can be moral only by accepting the conditions of a celibate life. That is a doctrine that seems to me unfair, uncaring, and unrealistic: unfair because often those who are single are not so by choice, yet they do not cease to have

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within individuals are various possible orientations (biological, psychological, social) that may be operative during different life phases. The point is that individuals are legitimately various in their bio-psycho-sexual makeup.

sexual desire; uncaring because those who police the doctrine are typically not celibate themselves, and yet they declare that the deprived must accept such a situation; unrealistic because it not only denies the genuine difficulty of suppressing legitimate sexual desire but also refuses to allow for some avenues of gratification that would not have negative outcomes and could thus fall within the bounds of morality.

I do not mean to suggest that those who are single without choosing to be so should simply seek out random sexual encounters; sex always occurs in a context, with great potential for moral complexity, for undesirable outcomes; promiscuity is absolutely not morally acceptable. But I do think that, at a minimum, if such a person is not called to celibacy (as some religions put the matter), self-pleasuring harms neither oneself (provided religiously imposed guilt does not intrude) nor anyone else, and I think that such persons may find in sexual literature and art some legitimate gratification if that material is serious and thoughtful about human nature, affirmative in the best sense of our sexual possibilities, and not pornographic in D. H. Lawrence's sense of the word.

These circumstances can be very challenging indeed, requiring discrimination, moral sensitivity, avoidance of excess, and so forth. Unshared sex is unlikely to be anywhere near as deeply satisfying as sex shared with another, someone loved and trusted. But it does not seem reasonable to say that, if one can't have the whole package, one can't have anything at all. Does it?

5. How much should Eros enter into a healthy psychology? Individuals differ significantly, and accordingly there is not a single appropriate level for everyone. But I think it is reasonable and realistic to say that the amount of sex in one's life is too much (and likely immoral) if it leads to imbalance, distortion, or obsession. Sex should be part of a whole life. It should allow other facets of experience—work, education, ordinary relationships with family members and friends, hobbies—to be realized in a healthy manner. At whatever level sex is pursued, if it becomes a preoccupation that renders one dysfunctional in other areas, or if it occasions such disproportion in one's focus that the normal coherence of daily life is impaired, then obviously there is an inappropriate excess. Sex can indeed become compulsive. A moral person recognizes the signs of excess and makes adjustments by whatever means necessary.

Religious Restraint on Individual Sexuality

I come now to a central issue in my essay: On balance, is the influ-

ence of religious moral restraint on individual sexuality as generally beneficial as it might be? Certain major religions (notably Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) have long been the principal police officers of sexual morality, in part because from early times they were in a larger sense the conservative guardians of social stability. To control the effects of sexual behaviors, some influential prophets, apostles, and theologians have emphasized firm restrictions and even ascetic renunciation, marshaling for this purpose the formidable resources of theological authority and language.

A scriptural passage from the Book of Mormon furnishes a clear-cut example. In Alma 39, the prophet Alma reproves his son Corianton for having consorted with the harlot Isabel. "Know ye not, my son," he says, "that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost? . . . And now, my son, I would to God that ye had not been guilty of so great a crime" (Alma 39:5, 7).

That was a scriptural text used to put the fear into us horny teenagers as I was growing up in Mormondom. Notice the choice of words: "abomination" (in the eyes of God), "sin" (and in the hierarchy of sins, almost at the very top), "guilt," "crime" (and a very "great" crime at that). That is highly charged language. If you listen to it long enough, it will surely color your attitude toward the subject with which it is associated.

But is adultery/fornication a sin next to murder in seriousness? In all cases? Is this not a statement that cries out for qualification? Is sin not best defined as behavior that is demonstrably hurtful, that impedes growth or well-being in self and others? And doesn't one have to consider carefully the context and outcomes for those specifically involved before pronouncing what is sinful and to what degree? One adultery may be much worse—or more justified—than another; some crimes of deception, of violence, of betrayal, of desertion are conceivably much more hurtful overall than—to suggest an easy example—simple fornication between plighted lovers. But the charged, condemnatory language of the cited text does not distinguish. It simply aims to scare the daylights out of us.

I am not without appreciation for the restraining role that religions assume for governing sexuality. General wisdom has its place. I think we see in society today some of the considerable problems that come from irresponsibly permissive attitudes toward sexual indulgence. But I regret religious indoctrination that, whatever its good intentions, oversimplifies or ignores individual contexts. I regret that some persons are condemned

without regard for their particular circumstances, without knowledge of the thoughts and motives of their hearts, without even giving them a fair chance to accept responsibility for their actions.

And I regret religious indoctrination that, whatever its good intentions, has the effect of heavy-handedly painting sexuality in ugly, disgusting colors, making it seem base and despicable, and making individuals ashamed of their sexual feelings, inhibited, shut down. In whatever degree this repressive indoctrination occurs, it is a virtual amputation, a desexing, a violation.

In my childhood and youth (the '30s, '40s, and '50s), a good deal of this religious indoctrination was going on. Victorian attitudes were very much still with us, reinforced by religious establishments. We just didn't talk about sex in polite company. When it came up officially, it was discussed very briefly, in the language of laundered abstraction and always in the context of abomination, sin, guilt—and embarrassment. I remember being made to feel uncomfortable as a child when the word "body" was used; I associated it with verboten sexuality. Sex was "naughty"; sex was "dirty." Severe modesty in manner and dress was a badge of honor. Sex was hidden; and if it was hidden, there had to be good reason. All in all, I grew up in a climate of repression.

Little by little, my own instincts asserted that sexuality is, after all, natural and desirable, not ipso facto to be repressed. I made real efforts to understand and experience it in a healthy way. I had the benefit of a liberal education that encouraged me to think about it freely and broadmindedly. I think my psychic adjustment in this area is reasonably good. Yet even now, I feel in some subtle ways the effects of that early experience of repression and delegitimization, and I regret it.

Conclusion

So, since I am qualifiedly critical of the way major religions have viewed sexuality and attempted to control it, what changes would I like to see? I admit it is a difficult problem, perhaps now more than ever,[11] and I don't have an easy answer. There is such a fine line between too little and too much governance. The costs of excess in either direction can be pain-

11. For two reasons: (1) On average, children now enter puberty with its awakened sexual desire earlier than ever before, perhaps because of hormones introduced into the production of foods like dairy products and meat. At the same

fully high. I do understand the impulse toward conservative control. If someone says to me, "What about your grandchildren? What kind of sexual/moral training do you wish them to have? What kind of advice would you give them on these matters?" my inclination, based on prudence and long conditioning, is to be tempted by strategies that promise safety in the permissive climate of our contemporary culture. At the same time, I want them to develop a healthy realization of their personal sexual vitality. I hope they acquire the qualities of mind and character that will enable them to look over the canyon's edge and, when they can do so responsibly, go into that thrilling canyon with zest and confidence to discover its inner grandeur. I hope their upbringing will not have compromised their ability to do that.

I do not presume to call the shots for the Church, of course, but if anyone there cared to engage me in dialogue on the sexual/moral education of the young, I would suggest some revisions. I believe it possible to teach sexual discipline and responsibility without some of the adverse outcomes of negative suppression. I would, for example, avoid educational strategies that awaken shame about the body and its natural responses. I would abandon the teaching of a body/spirit dualism that implies the body is suspect, the avenue of temptation, the enemy of spirit. I would, for example, throttle way back on the futile crusade by the establishment to stamp out masturbation by young people. It doesn't need to be promoted *per se*, but in moderation it is a mostly harmless natural means of self-discovery—and a safety valve. I am persuaded that the psychic damage caused by guilt and self-loathing—which are the primary results of worthiness interviews on this subject conducted with individual youths by ecclesiastical leaders—far outweighs any likely negative effects of the act itself.

I would also encourage young people to be completely honest in acknowledging the orientation of their sexual desire and would allow those

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time, the increasing complexity of our economic culture requires generally longer periods of education before younger adults are prepared to be self-supporting and economically viable in marriage. This lengthens the period of sexual abstinence expected of young people by conservative institutions. (2) We live in an increasingly permissive sexual environment which implicitly—and often explicitly—encourages instant gratification. Teaching restraint and responsibility in such a climate is like swimming upstream.

who are attracted to their own gender to acknowledge that desire without shame or guilt, without its being regarded as a moral failure or a flaw in their character. They would simply be expected to meet the same moral tests required of all of us, i.e., by whether their acts and feelings produce good fruit. Certainly, I would discourage the kind of distortion evident in a statement attributed to a General Authority some years ago to the effect that he would rather see one of his children in the grave and "virtuous" than alive and stained with the sin of impurity. That strikes me as a misevaluation of priorities so egregious as to be perverse. And the fact that this possibly apocryphal statement is so often cited approvingly highlights the climate of receptivity for such thinking among us.

Instead, I would emphasize the positive aspects of our sexuality. I would encourage the young to see themselves holistically and to feel pride in the body, its beauty and its power. I would discuss sexual morality not in terms of sin, guilt, shame, and repression but rather as a challenging stewardship over a pearl of great price. I would attempt to prepare them—not through fear, not by diminishing sex—but by helping them understand the opportunity, the complexity, and the accompanying responsibility of this divine gift. The stress would be laid on self-mastery, on the wisdom of patient deferral of gratification. As Hamlet said to Horatio in another context, "The readiness is all" (V.ii.233). I would help them understand in terms of practical outcomes the real costs of carelessness and impulsiveness. Such a positive emphasis seems greatly preferable to sullying their perception of the impressive sexual power that is theirs. And if a youth acted unwisely and went into the canyon prematurely, I would try very hard not to compound the practical price by heaping on him or her a lifetime of guilt.

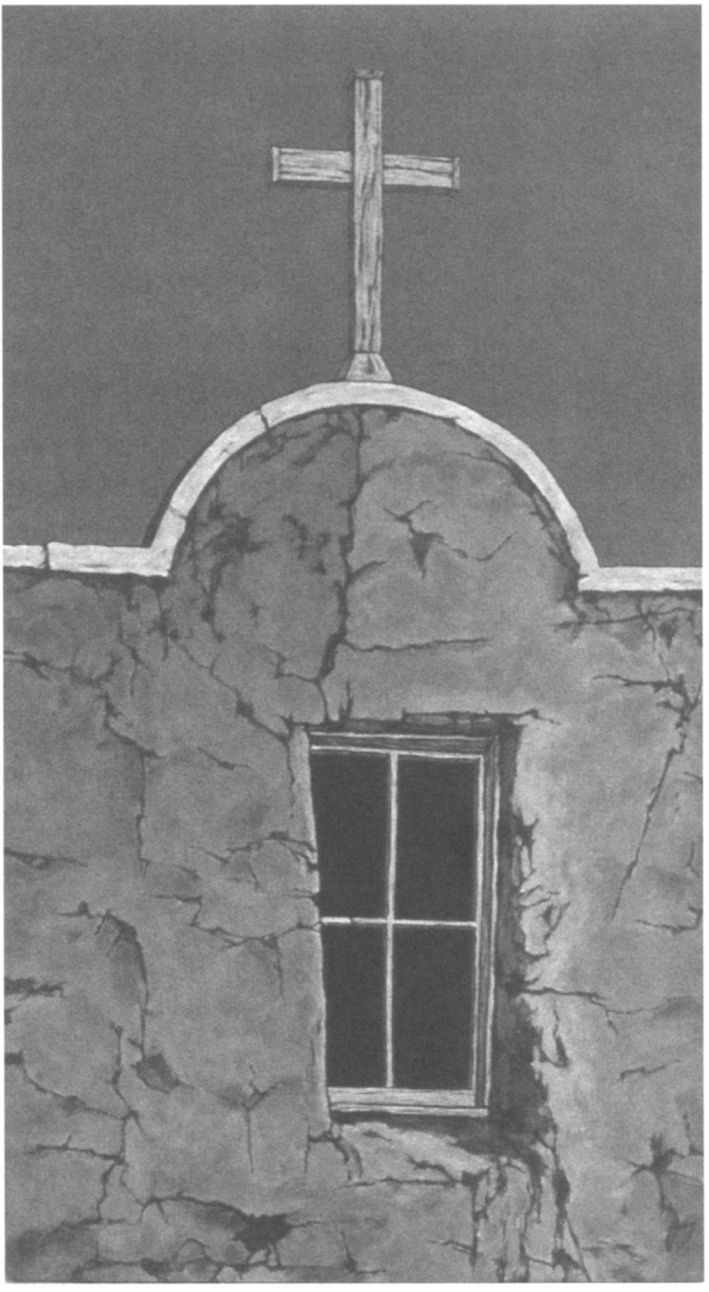
Perhaps I am unrealistic in thinking that we could in these respects have it both ways. Such an approach would unquestionably set the bar higher—not only for the youth but their teachers as well. To present sex as potentially positive, desirable, beautiful, an aspect of our fully realized humanity, and yet bring its expression under reasonable control would require greater openness and a willingness to consider moral issues painstakingly in holistic contexts. A great many adults among us, raised with negativity and repression, conditioned to feel that in a religious context they cannot openly acknowledge their own sexuality, may find this very hard to do. But after all, is not such an approach more in keeping with the very principles that lie at the heart of LDS Christian theology—a bedrock

belief in the necessity of freedom to choose, with acceptance of the risk and responsibility that entails but also the possibility for growth?

If the Church wishes its members see their sexuality in proper perspective, it could scarcely do better than to send them directly to the Bible for guidance—specifically to the Song of Solomon, or Canticles, called in Hebrew the Song of Songs. (Can anyone remember the last time a Sunday School lesson was devoted to serious discussion of this important canonical gem?)[12] Because it is neither discursive history nor narrative but an unabashedly erotic, almost palpably sensual love poem, many have wondered how it came to be part of the holy book. Desperate to justify its inclusion, scholars and clergy have attempted to interpret it as an elaborate allegory of Christ's love for his church and as a vision of the church's historical future. Give them credit for ingenuity—but the fact is we do better to read it at face value.

In strikingly vivid, figurative language, the Song of Songs celebrates earthly love. It invites us to experience vicariously—to feel—the exquisite joy of physical rapture in the context of love and faithful commitment. Its inclusion in the canon is undeniably inspired because, in overcoming the separation of vital sexuality and spirituality, it provides an appropriate model for our lives, reminding us of the greatness of this specific gift of God to us. In this instance, whether they knew it or not, those old canon-makers had a sure instinct for including in the Bible one of life's most important lessons.

12. A welcome exception is Molly McLellan Bennion, who has taught Gospel Doctrine classes for sixteen years. See her "Temporal Love: Singing the Song of Songs," *Dialogue* 36, no. 3 (Fall 2003): 153–58.



Cross Window; 1995; acrylic on canvas; 40" x 20"

Heart Mountain

Robert A. Rees

At the Japanese American National Museum
a pile of small stones, most
no bigger than my thumb, each
with a single *kanji*,
found buried at Heart Mountain.
Each stone names something of the world—
horse, river, flower, snow,
kimono, sword, blossom, death—
piled up like a miniature mountain
in a bonsai landscape.

No one knows why.

I see her there walking along the barbed fence
and the empty river bed that runs
through the camp. She bends or squats
to pick up the stones,
carefully choosing each one
before placing it in her pocket.
As she walks, she thinks of her son
buried in a forgotten field of France,
of her aging husband sick in the barracks
with no medicine, of her home in Fresno
inhabited by strangers, and of her daughter
whose dreams lie dead along the San Joaquin.

She dreams herself of a village outside Kyoto,
of the peonies in her father's garden,
of plum blossoms on Mount Fuji.
She fears she will go mad here
where summer dust blows through the walls
and in winter no fire can keep them warm.
Each day she picks up new stones
and carries them to the tar paper rooms
where they are prisoners.
At night when everyone is asleep, she
names the world and all its parts—
earth, apple, jade, moon,
sun, dog, table, heaven.

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Where Can I Turn for Peace?

Emma Lou Thayne

9/11. FOR SEEMING FOREVER, a call for help. Since 2001 a blast of grief swallowed like debris from the heap of rubble and human remains on the streets of Manhattan, of the New York until then mesmerizing for its plays and Times Square billboarding of sports or perfume or long-ago Camel cigarettes with smoke blowing casually from a woman's mouth five stories high. For my generation, this was a celebration place for the *end* of war in streets jammed with servicemen kissing jubilant girls, not the start of something called war but indefinable as the knot of despair in a psyche used to buoyancy, now amorphously ending plans to travel or invest or save for retirement. Or even, as reported later, to diet, Jenny Craig and Weight Watchers stock plummeting.

Like a New Yorker who said, "We couldn't bear to look, and all we did was look." And see.

At our front door at 7:00 P.M., our Siberian friend, Valentina, just home from her annual month in a disintegrating Russia. Arms around

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me, crying, her response so like our disbelief, "Oh, Emma Lou, not in America." No. Yet together we sat with Mel to watch for more hours in horrified verification of Yes—in America.

In the week that followed, our president declaring that we were at war, the suspension of belief in taken-for-granted security, mobility, everyday American pursuits of pleasures and palaces. Warnings of more terrorism. A frightful need to peel off the secrecy of who might be responsible. Even a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, Betty Williams, admitting to an audience of women honoring women of peaceful inclination that her first impulse on hearing about the attack was, "Let's nuke 'em." In most responses bewilderment, disbelief, then Get on with routing them out, the doers of evil, the killers and their accomplices!

Naiveté and trust swelled as we took to "God Bless America" and expectation of strength to overcome. I was a girl again, back on the campus watching our ROTC boys march from the plaza of the Park Building into army trucks singing "I am a Utah man, sir, / And I will be till I die," Pearl Harbor and war suddenly a reality, any not-believing dispelled then in four years of lists in the paper of "Wounded, Missing, Dead," stars in windows along the bus route changing from blue to red to white as those boys we'd gone to school with met the enemy in far-off places like Iwo Jima and Tobruk and Utah Beach. War. Now a new kind of war, the enemy a phantom of hate and secrecy and cunning.

On Friday came the day of memorials, of presidential edict to pray for faith and hope, for the release of hatred and anger. In Washington, in the National Cathedral, the President and assembled dignitaries heard "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and proclamations of love for right that could surely counter acts of evil. In Salt Lake City in the new Conference Center, twenty thousand at a time heard two sessions of the First Presidency and music, including the signature rendition of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" by the Tabernacle Choir. Be patient. Hold to your faith. Trust in the Lord—televised to millions.

The first number that the choir performed was "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" "When with a wounded heart, anger or malice, / I draw myself apart, searching my soul . . ." words I had written in personal anguish those years before when our daughter was desperately ill. Now, surprisingly, they resounded with an expansion greater than any private agony. For my country, for my people and others around the world: where to turn for peace? The hymn ended:

He answers privately,
Reaches my reaching
In my Gethsemane,
Savior and friend. . .
Love without end.

Half an hour later I was at a birthday lunch at the Red Lobster with seven of my oldest friends. We'd been pals since grade school, for more than seventy years. Two were in wheelchairs (both have since died); one was bent with osteoporosis, another with rheumatoid arthritis and a stroke; two of us had healed from small strokes, and another from bouts with debilitating depression. But we would make the lunch no matter what. We had been part of that "good war" Tom Brokaw described in his *The Greatest Generation.* Our husbands had served on carriers, in planes, in the invasion with General Eisenhower. Mel was overseas at nineteen helping to free Paris. Now we sat, remembering and shaking our heads over a new kind of war. It was noon, time for the moment of silence to honor the dead, the injured, the heroic in New York and Washington. In a crowded restaurant, what for our table of old women? We were linked by three quarters of a century of keeping homes as we kept our equanimity in capricious history, from the Great Depression to four distant wars, through recessions and deaths of enough loved ones that we were older than almost everyone. But we were there, caring about each other, our progeny, our intimate welfare, and our now-broader-than-ever take on the world.

Without cue, we eight bowed our heads and took hold of hands, something we had never done in all our years of celebrations and trials. On one side I felt Virginia, in a wheelchair from a broken hip and despondence over the recent death of her husband of fifty-two years. On the other, Pat, on an hour's leave from duties as matron of a temple. I felt in their hands a pulsing of strength. No timid or forced flowing of self into self: This circle raced with a kundalini usually evoked by intense well-being, from meditation or sensuous awareness. None of us could know what even the next hour might bring; but in that moment of connecting to each other and to the God we all believed in, I was privy to a peace beyond understanding, what mystics seek and devotees hope for. The peace that moments before felt so bludgeoned by a whole new acquaintance with

horror. A poem I wrote during the Gulf War about the birth of my eleventh grandson ended:

> And to you, little boy: When you are
> the weight of a man, do more than whimper
> I am only one, there is nothing I can do.
> There is so much.

Was it all just grandma talk? I am still only one. In a world now shivering again—*my* world this time—I talk to my friends or to my senators in Washington: What to do? How to help? How ever to make even a minute difference? What comes to mind is that circle of very old friends, matriarchs all, leaning on our learned belief in restoration through prayer.

And I remember a magic New Year's Eve in 1986 when 500 million of us around the world joined in just such a prayer and meditation for peace. On the program were members of sixteen faiths. In scripture and music sacred to their traditions, each brought personalized faith to pray and meditate for world harmony. That night to a packed Kingsbury Hall on the University of Utah campus, I told of my mother's tapping our ancient barometer to "work on the weather" when any of us were traveling. Now we were working on the weather of peace. That year President Ronald Reagan and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev held their first meetings. The end of the Cold War was barely three years away. I also remember in 1990 being with 300 delegates from twenty-three countries, come together in Kazakhstan in the then-Soviet Union, only a border away from Afghanistan, to champion a universal test ban treaty. Since then, I think of the daring and dignity of my peace friends, eager to dismantle mines, making roads and fields safe for innocents in Cambodia or Afghanistan or to take food and schools to the hungry and uneducated instead of bombs. And I find solace in the good I know to be in those asking for patience in any plans for scouring out terrorism. We need each other. And each other's strengths. And prayers.

Meanwhile I'll remember what that "Battle Hymn of the Republic" has to say. Written by a woman, Julia Ward Howe, during the Civil War, it declares: "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. / He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored." What better to trample out than this season's yield of anger and malice? To be healed by whatever grounds us in hope and love? No, I will not let invaders

of our financial and military strongholds have access to my strongholds of faith and caring. I must find ways still to nibble away at whatever anger there is the world as it grows in nations across the globe and in hearts filled with fear in my own neighborhood.

Blazing in my mind will stay the impromptu prayer of President Gordon B. Hinckley in the closing session of Mormon semi-annual conference on Sunday, October 7, 2001. In one of the Saturday sessions the day before, he had said, "I have just been handed a note. It says a U.S. missile attack is under way [in Afghanistan]. I need not remind you that we live in perilous times."[1] An impatient, inflamed 90 percent of the nation approved the bombing to begin rooting out the terrorists. But there had to be more than bombing.

Articulate as well as compassionate at ninety-one, he ended his Sunday talk, "Now we are at war. Great forces have been mobilized and will continue to be. Political alliances are being forged. We do not know how long this conflict will last. We do not know what it will cost in lives and treasure. . . . Let us not panic nor go to extremes. Let us be prudent in every respect. And above all, my brothers and sisters, let us move forward with faith in the Living God and His beloved Son."[2]

Then, without precedent of any president in more than a century and a half of Mormon general conferences, his spontaneous prayer: "Bless the cause of peace and bring it quickly to us again, we humbly plead with Thee, asking that Thou wilt forgive our arrogance, pass by our sins, be kind and gracious to us and cause our hearts to turn with love to thee."[3]

And from the invocation at a luncheon the next day for the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Utah by one of my best "peace" friends, Dee Rowland, government liaison for the Salt Lake Catholic Diocese: "Let us pray for those who are powerful and those who are powerless. Let us pray for those who are hopeless without power and those who are with power but without conscience. Let us pray for all those who lie under bombs and for those who dispatch them and for those who

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1. Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Times in Which We Live," Saturday, October 6, 2001, LDS General Conference, retrieved in November 2003 from www.lds.org.

2. Ibid.

3. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Till We Meet Again," Sunday, October 7, 2001, LDS General Conference, retrieved in November 2003 from www.lds.org.

make them. Let us pray for the innocent, the firefighters, the police, and the rescue workers, for the villagers halfway around the globe and for the soldiers, and for those who go to kill and are killed. Let us pray for all who believe and yet do not hope. Let us pray for all those who hope and yet do not live out their hope. Let us pray for ourselves and for all we love and for all, finally, who await our love."[4]

And for any suffering this war will cause and has already caused. As Jeanette Rankin has said, "No one can win a war any more than anyone can win an earthquake."

The earthquake continues these months after the war in Iraq has been declared over. Nothing could have brought that reality closer than a visit in November 2003 with a thirty-three-year-old officer of an engineer battalion home on two-week leave from duty in Iraq.

He called me from Arizona where he was home, to be with his wife and two young daughters and to see for the first time his five-month-old son. After his degree in engineering, he had gone to Harvard for his MBA, started a dream job near Phoenix. Three days later he was called to head up his group of nearly two hundred headed for Iraq, November 2002. Their primary task: locating and dismantling land mines. Mines, he told me, are the perfect soldiers—always on duty, never any worry about morale, just right there to blow to bits any unwary man, woman, or child who might cross a street or head for a field. I thought of Mel's dearest friend nearly sixty years after his World War II encounter with a mine in France. Miraculously, he had lived, and his wounded legs had healed for him to play basketball and coach tennis. But a twelfth surgery in recent years on his nose could not stop the hemorrhages that send him from Manti to the emergency room in a Salt Lake City hospital every few months these sixty years later.

Now my young friend tells me of leading his battalion, called "9-11," on high-profile missions. In emergencies, they are the quick response, the first to arrive with soldiers to search for bodies and machines to clear the debris, like at the bombing of a U.N. center.

The day before we talked, the death toll in Iraq since "victory" had passed the 115 killed in combat. Regular army personnel were going home after a year there. Men like him in the Reserve or National Guard

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4. Typescript in my possession, courtesy of Dee Rowland. Used by permission.

had just been told that their service had been extended to a year and a half and could be extended over and over again.

In the Union Building at the University of Utah, as of Veterans (Armistice) Day, November 11, 2003, students had hung a black paper chain, like those we used to make for Christmas of red and green. I had heard about it. Students always in the forefront of any awareness. Nothing could have prepared me for the sight. Strung across the two-story ceilings, up and down columns, over walls and windows, the black reminder. Down the broad hall students bent over studies or slouched in overstuffed chairs, on break from classes. Next to them high windows reflected the prayed-for snow on still-leafed trees after long drought. Relief. In lower case, *theater* at the far end hung high between wide scallops of the black chain. A red poster in the front foyer:

CHAIN OF REMEMBRANCE.
Each one of these links represents an individual who has
died as a result of war since September 11, 2001.
Soldiers
Civilians
Iraqis
Journalists/Reporters
All part of the conflict.
ONE HUMAN FAMILY

On this day, 17,000 links.

My young captain was headed back to Iraq the next day.

"So how do you feel about being there?" I asked.

"Nobody wants to be there. People are getting along, doing a job. Can't do anything about getting out sooner. People still thank us—mostly poor people. The 10 percent who were wealthy under Saddam are leading the resistance. We have to keep telling ourselves that the only thing worse than war are the reasons that drive people to war. We can't ransack and then desert. We need to see it through. I wish Bush would be more humble, get some help. Iraq would welcome Middle Eastern support more than anything from the West. They don't trust Christians. They want the United States out, others in. As long as we're there, attacks will never stop. Too much bad blood."

Nearly forty-five minutes later after our long visit, I knew an in-

formed sadness I could never have imagined even as I had anguished over the idea of my America delivering a first strike. Pearl Harbor had driven us to war to protect ourselves from an already invading enemy. I asked, "And what can we do, back here, to support you?"

"To give total support for troops, there needs to be a human face to war."

I had my human face—his. Beneath his dark crew-cut, his picture with his battalion in army fatigues, eager and young. For a long time, he will be waving good-bye again, holding his baby and hugging his wife and little daughters. And then he'll be back in that Humvee approaching overpasses laced with hidden bombs and digging through rubble for bodies.

The black chain a statement in my grey head, I ask, "But how do I show my support?"

"Be for or against. Be politically active. Voice opinions either way. Just don't be passive."

I thought of my poem to my eleventh grandson: "Be anything but maybe."

"Soldiers resent not caring—forgetting," he emphasized. "Now instead of faces of the dead or interviews with their families in the media, there are only minor headlines: 'Two soldiers killed in Baghdad.' Write your congressman. Say you want the reserves home. Tell them we're people over there."

People. Of course. An idea needs to be peopled. Our talk took me back to 9/11, this time actually to Ground Zero. Where better to mourn the start of a war and cheer the preservation of more even than the Leonardo exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art? It was the end of March, an annual girls' trip with my five daughters. There in the silence of 5:00 o'clock on a late afternoon, the gaping hole, smoothed mud waiting for the newly designed mega replacement with a 1776-foot pinnacle. Faces from posters and TV floated over the emptiness. Cold. We walked the short block, and those faces followed us to the quiet of St. Paul's chapel. Part of lower Manhattan for 235 years, it had been the haven, the resting place. Miraculously, even its windows were not shattered in the blast and collapse of the Twin Towers. Hundreds of workers found comfort here in twelve stations around the chapel, from buckets of candy and lip balm to massages and counseling. And praying. They still inhabit this rainy Sunday. Gashes from their belts and boots are left as sacramental marks in the benches where they slept, after foot baths dried by hands that stroked

away the burning of hot ashes, with teddy bears cozied into their arms as they sat dazed from fourteen-hour duty in rubble. How like the searching of my young captain and his battalion in a seeething Iraq two years later.

Helplessness? Distance? The human spirit can span it all.

I now remember the next day being on top of the Empire State Building, tourists looking down at bug-sized police cars, sixteen of them converging to control the crowd assembling for blocks. "Why?" I ask a stranger peering down next to me.

"A protesters' parade," he points out.

"But why? The war has already started. So many I know protested every way we knew how before last week. But what's the point of protesting now?"

His answer is exactly like that of my young captain in Iraq. "Look at me. I was in Vietnam for five years. I would still be there if it hadn't been for protesters. And for people being more than anguished at the reality of war."

Here in the baffling conundrums of politics and power, we can offer sustenance of heart and means. I can do more than grieve over death and destruction. I can love my country by caring enough to keep informed, by listening to all sides and expressing my views. I can hold hands and pray with old friends or for a newly found one on his way back to Baghdad. *Please, not another link in the black chain.* I can hold to my faith that prayers do matter, whether in cathedrals or conference centers, places of meditation or with children by a bedside. I can turn for peace every hour of every day or night and be assured that He will answer privately, reach my reaching—anybody's reaching. And for that reaching, reach to others on either side of battles way beyond my ken. Only by working on the weather of peace can we expect to nibble away at any anger in the world.

Kill the Poets

Emma Lou Thayne

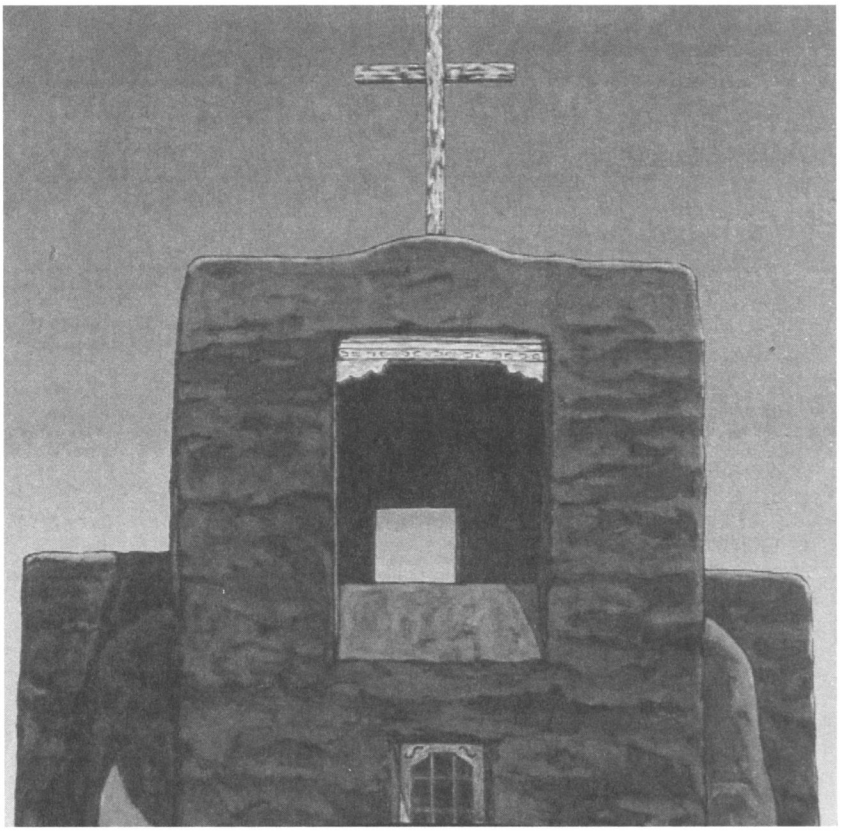
On the occasion of canceling the invitation to my poet friends to read at the White House before the invasion of Iraq

A dangerous bunch, these.

Never content to let be
the fomenting of an idea in the night

to let this side talk unsurreptitiously
to that side,
color or cause notwithstanding
to disregard those set jaws
those confident smiles

to pull from a page of words
the drowning body
of what counts more
than a bottom line.



Oldest Church; 1995; acrylic on canvas; 30" x 30"

Why Mormons Should Celebrate Holy Week

Robert A. Rees

EACH SPRING THE CHRISTIAN WORLD celebrates the most important week in history—Passion Week or Holy Week, the time between Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem and his atonement, death, and resurrection. Throughout the world the majority of Christians mark these special days—Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good or Great Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday—with special services and ceremonies. For many Christians, the preparation for this week begins on Ash Wednesday, the day when Lent begins, the forty days of fasting and penitence before Easter. Passion week is the last week of Lent. One commentator has called these days "the most concentrated, symbol-laden, primitive, critical, foundational, animating . . . liturgical time in the Christian calendar. . . . [During this week] we stand before the emotional well-spring of Christian liturgical experience."[1]

The last week in Christ's life encompasses both his most tragic and his most triumphant days. These days mark not only the last week in Christ's life but also constitute one of the world's great dramas, one filled

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1. James Oregan, "Celebrating Holy Week's Symbols," retrieved on March 1, 2004, from http://www.jamesoregan.com/Liturgy/litholyweek.htm.

with both earthly and cosmic import. In many ways, it is an archetypal drama—the low-born, uncrowned king of Israel riding on an ass, hailed by the common folk with palm fronds and garlands of flowers as he descends from the highest point on the Mount of Olives to enter the great City of Kings. Instead of his enthronement, however, his death is plotted by his enemies. Before they succeed, he clears the temple, teaches in the synagogue, instructs his disciples, introduces the sacrament, washes the feet of his chosen twelve, and goes to Gethsemane. There, his suffering causes him to bleed from every pore and fall upon his face in astonishment at the pain he has to bear. He is betrayed, beaten, and spat upon; is taken before Pilate; and is forced to carry his own cross until he stumbles under its weight. Finally, he is taken to Calvary where he is nailed to the cross, drinks the bitter cup, forgives his torturers, and yields up his spirit. He is laid in the tomb provided by Joseph of Arimathaea from which he rises triumphant on Easter morn, the victor over death and the devil. There is no greater story in all the annals of human myth and history.

Christians celebrate this week, as Dennis Bratcher of the Christian Resource Institute says, "to commemorate and enact the suffering (Passion) and death of Jesus through various observances and services of worship."[2] While these seasonal celebrations differ from church to church, a full commemoration includes:

- Lent: the forty-day fast between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday, which symbolizes Christ's forty-day fast in the wilderness and signifies the worshipper's willingness to identify with Christ's privation and suffering.
- Palm Sunday, which in many churches includes a service which both celebrates Christ's entry into Jerusalem and foreshadows his later suffering.
- Holy Monday, which includes a Eucharist service.
- Maundy Thursday, a Eucharist service, a foot-washing ceremony, and a vigil until midnight which symbolizes the apostles waiting for Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Increasingly, Christians also celebrate a Passover meal on this night.
- Good or Great Friday: special services of meditation and prayer

2. "The Days of Holy Week," The Christian Resource Institute, retrieved on March 1, 2004, http://www.cresourcei.org/cyholyweek. html#Palm.

that focus on the suffering Christ endured on the cross. This is the only day of Holy Week during which there is no Eucharistic celebration (although sacramental emblems saved from the previous day's service are served in some churches). Some traditions include walking the Stations of the Cross to mark Jesus' journey to Golgotha. Other traditions include a tenebrae (Latin for "shadows" or "darkness" sometimes called "Service of Darkness") in which candles are "gradually extinguished to symbolize the growing darkness, not only of Jesus' death, but also of hopelessness in the world without God. The service ends in darkness," or sometimes with the final candle, representing Christ, being carried out of the sanctuary, "symbolizing the death of Jesus."[3]

- Holy Saturday, which often includes an Easter vigil after sundown in a darkened church as "a time of reflection and waiting, of weeping that lasts for the night while awaiting the joy that comes in the morning."[4]
- And finally, Easter Sunday, which represents the culmination of all these events and is marked by special services, some at sunrise, that are joyful celebrations of the resurrection.

Thus, Holy or Passion Week is a full-hearted, full-spirited commemoration of the crowning events of Christ's life. It is a time of sober reflection, quiet contemplation, and, ultimately, joyful celebration. It is a time when Christians renew their covenants with the Lord and refresh their devotion to him. It is the holiest season of the year, even more so than Christmas, because Christmas celebrates the promise of salvation whereas Passion Week celebrates its reality.

The seeds of liturgical practices which characterize Holy Week are found in the primitive church. It is likely that, in spite of the growing fragmentation and disintegration of their ecclesiastical community, the earliest Christians began to mark at least some of the events of Holy Week while the apostles were still alive. In speaking of other early liturgical rites, early Christian historian Henry Chadwick remarks, "The form and pattern of the actual rites used in the period before Constantine and the Nicene council can be known only very imperfectly from scraps and frag-

3. Dennis Bratcher, "Good Friday, or Holy Friday," ibid.
4. Bratcher, "Holy Saturday," ibid.

ments of evidence contained in casual passing allusions or in illustrations of an argument about other matters."[5] There is evidence, for example, that within the first century of the Christian era Christ's resurrection was celebrated each Sunday rather than once a year. As Greek culture specialist Gary Van Haas reports, "From the earliest days after Pentecost, the Apostles designated the first of the Sabbath of each week for the remembrance of the Resurrection of Christ." According to Van Haas, this practice still characterizes the Greek tradition: "In Greek religion, every Sunday is dedicated to the Resurrection of the Lord, but one hundred days also are dedicated to Easter, 50 before its actual preparation, and another 50 after it in commemorating the glorification of the Lord. Easter is therefore considered, the 'Feast of Feasts.'"[6]

According to Chadwick, beginning with the fourth century, Holy Week observances began to be formalized: "From the fourth century onwards the ceremonial structure of Holy Week evolved, first with the special observance of Maundy Thursday, then (by the sixth century) Palm Sunday. . . . The custom of holding no celebration of the Eucharist on Good Friday is found as early as 416."[7]

As the church gained strength and prominence after Constantine, the Holy Week liturgy became more firmly established so that, by the Middle Ages, it was recognized as the most sacred week of the Church liturgical calendar. The Protestant Reformation brought some changes in attitude toward the formal marking of these events. Some Protestant churches, in an effort to separate themselves from what they considered "popish" practices, began to adopt a simpler liturgy which led to the abandonment of Lent and some Holy Week practices as well as a number of other characteristics of Catholic worship and practice. In England, especially, this retreat led to the divergence of those Christians who practiced a

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5. Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Berdaman, 1968), 260. According to Herbert Thurston, "From an attentive study of the Gospels, and particularly that of St. John, it might easily be inferred that already in Apostolic times a certain emphasis was laid upon the memory of the last week of Jesus Christ's mortal life." "Antiquity of the Celebration of Holy Week," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, retrieved on March 3, 2004, from htt://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09399a.htm.

6. Gary Van Haas, "Greek Easter Holy Week," retrieved on March 3, 2004, from www.gogreece.com/learn/easter.htm, 1, 2.

7. Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 259.

"low church" as opposed to a "high church" liturgy. According to Sydney F. Smith, writing in the *Catholic Encyclopedia:*

> The Low Churchmen are distrustful of what they call human traditions, regard the Holy Eucharist as a symbolic meal only, hold firmly that the grace of justification and sanctification is imparted to the soul independently of visible channels, and dislike all rites and ceremonies, save those of the simplest kind, as tending to substitute an external formalism for true inward devotion. In short, the one party attaches a higher, the other a lower degree of importance to the visible Church and its ordinances; and this may suffice to justify the retention of the names ["Low Church" and "High Church"]—though it must always be borne in mind that they state extremes between which many intermediate grades of thought and feeling have always subsisted in the Anglican Church.[8]

It was, of course, out of the low-church tradition that Mormonism emerged. There was a strong anti-Catholic, pro-evangelical Christian environment in the New World when the Restoration took place, and therefore little emphasis was placed on Holy Week in early Mormonism. And although in recent years a number of Protestant churches, including some evangelical churches, have begun to include Holy Week celebrations and liturgical practices, especially noting Palm Sunday and Good Friday, more fundamentalist churches have not.

A search through Latter-day Saint scriptures, sermons, and other documents reveals very few references to Holy Week or the particular holy days within it. In fact the computerized LDS Reference Library reveals no mention of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, or Holy Saturday in nineteenth-century LDS documents, except for the designation of "Good Friday" as a date or occasional references to it as a day that other Christians celebrate. One of the very few twentieth-century references to Good Friday occurred in Elder Marion D. Hanks's address to the April 1969 general conference: "I bear testimony and thank God for this Good Friday, tragic as are the events which it commemorates, and for what it means to me and to all men, for what it lays before men of a future, for this

8. Sydney F. Smith, "Low Church," *Catholic Encyclopedia,* retrieved on March 3, 2004, from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09399a.htm.

day had to happen in order that Easter and its glorious events could come to pass."[9]

Perhaps more characteristic of Latter-day Saint attitudes is Bruce R. McConkie's reference to Palm Sunday in his *Mormon Doctrine:* "Sectarians traditionally celebrate the Sunday before Easter as Palm Sunday in commemoration of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem." McConkie adds:

> Among the Latter-day Saints it is the accepted practice to hail Christ as Lord, King, and Messiah, and to shout hosannas to his holy name, on all days and at all times. But it is not the common practice to single out Palm Sunday for any special commemorative worship. Rather the Latter-day Saints memorialize the transcendent events of their era, such things as the coming of John the Baptist, the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood, the conferral of the sealing keys by Elijah, and the organization of the Church again on earth."[10]

One wonders at McConkie's "rather"; there should be no conflict between celebrating Palm Sunday in addition to these particular Restoration commemorations.

Does Holy Week play a role in the Restoration? Although we do not know the precise date of the First Vision, it is possible that it took place on Easter Sunday, April 2, 1920. Joseph records the time simply as "early in the spring" (JS—H 2:14). My reason for speculating that the Father and the Son chose this day to reveal themselves to the young Joseph is that, sixteen years later when Christ appeared to Joseph and Oliver in the Kirtland Temple, April 3, 1836, it was Easter Sunday.[11] That entire week, in fact, seems to have been a holy week, for on Sunday, March 27, Joseph dedicated the temple and, at the conclusion of his dedicatory

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9. *Report of the Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* April 4, 1969 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1969), 25.

10. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine,* 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 552.

11. Another piece of evidence to bolster the argument that certain celebratory days were significant in the Restoration is that the day Joseph took the plates from the Hill Cumorah (September 22, 1822) was the Jewish New Year. According to Robert F. Smith and Stephen D. Hicks, "New Year's Celebrations," *Reexploring the Book of Mormon,* edited by John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 221: "Joseph Smith apparently had no inkling of the significance of

prayer, the congregation sang "The Spirit of God like a Fire Is Burning" and then partook of the sacrament. Joseph recorded, "We sealed the proceeding of the day by shouting hosana to God and the Lamb 3 times sealing it each time with Amen, Amen, and Amen."[12] Although Joseph does not so indicate, this is the shout given by those who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday.

The following Tuesday and Wednesday of this week witnessed the ceremony of washing of the feet, first among the presiding elders and then among a larger group of 300 Saints and, finally, as the First Presidency washed the feet of the Twelve. On this same Wednesday, according to Joseph Smith, "the Savior made his appearance to some, while angels ministered unto others, and it was a penticost and enduement indeed."[13] Maundy Thursday was another ceremonious day in the temple, but the historical record is silent as to whether Good Friday and Holy Saturday were celebrated in any particular manner. Easter Sunday, however, included a series of remarkable spiritual manifestations, including the appearance of Moses, Elias, and Elijah. The most glorious vision was of the resurrected Christ, who stood "upon the breast work of the pulpit. . . . Under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber: his eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was like the pure snow, his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun, and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters."[14]

That these remarkable events should occur during Holy Week is, to my mind, highly significant. Throughout the scriptures the Lord uses dramatic events, including the marking of significant days or anniversaries, to teach important principles. I believe that part of the message that week in Kirtland was that these holy days should be remembered. That they haven't been can be attributed, I believe, more to the insular nature of the Church during its first 150 years; to a lingering vestige of anti-clericalism, especially anti-Catholicism, including a suspicion of things

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the special day upon which he removed the golden plates of the Book of Mormon from the hill near his home. It was the Jewish New Year's Day. It was also the autumnal equinox."

12. Dean C. Jesse, ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 181.

13. Ibid., 184.

14. Ibid., 186.

"high church"; and to an investment in remaining "a peculiar people." Thus, Latter-day Saints tend to associate such things as priestly vestments, crosses, incense, and set liturgy with a corrupt priesthood and an apostate church. In our devotional expressions and in our architecture, we prefer a nonliturgical service in which the congregants address one another to a more ritualized service addressed to deity. We identify clearly with the plain tradition of Christian worship, preferring the more horizontal to the vertical.

While I think it unlikely that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would ever become high church, there is little in the traditional devotions and celebrations of Holy Week that should be objectionable or offensive to Latter-day Saint sensibilities. I would like to suggest that, not only is the celebration of at least some of the events of Holy Week among the Latter-day Saints long overdue, but that it is entirely in keeping with and a logical extension of the Church's new emphasis on being known as the Church of Jesus Christ.

As a move in that direction, I believe that there are a few steps we could take right now that would open the way for Holy Week observances. One would be to make spring general conference a moveable feast like Easter so that when the two coincide (or rather, collide), Easter would be given precedence over general conference. As it is now, general conference takes precedence over Easter. This has sometimes led to unusual practices. When Ruth and I were living in Madison, Wisconsin, during our graduate school years, and general conference and Easter fell on the same Sunday, the ward mission president had some of the members drive their cars to the church parking lot and then carpool back to their homes to watch conference on TV because he didn't want others to think we didn't celebrate Easter!

A related step would be to avoid scheduling stake conferences on either Palm Sunday or Easter. A number of years ago, we invited a nonmember friend to attend our stake conference, which was held on Easter. There was very little if any reference to Christ or the resurrection during the conference; and the concluding speaker, a General Authority, spoke for half an hour on "Archeology and the Book of Mormon." Our friend left before conference ended; and when later I asked him what he thought of the conference, he responded, "I'm sorry. I was confused. I thought it was going to be an Easter worship service."

I enjoy stake and general conference; but when they fall on either

Palm Sunday or Easter, I am drawn to services with other believers, celebrating with them these crowning events in the Savior's life—and in our lives. After all, conferences, no matter how inspiring, are not worship services (this is especially evident when general conference is watched on a TV screen in a darkened room), and even those that fall on Easter often do not focus on the Savior or his passion. One can always get the tapes of conference addresses, read them in the *Ensign*, or access them on the internet, but one cannot replicate the special holy feast that Easter provides.

The absence of any recognition of the events leading up to Easter is sometimes one of the most difficult adjustments for converts from other Christian faiths. I remember Arthur Henry King, the distinguished poet and Shakespearean scholar who converted from the Church of England and moved to Utah where he taught at BYU, telling me how shocked he was to find no observance of Good Friday among the Mormons. He said, "I can't believe it. They go to dances and to ball games on Good Friday." He added intensely, "That is the day my Lord died!"

When asked, "Why do members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints do not observe Good Friday as other Christians do?" Joseph Fielding Smith responded with what seems a perplexing explanation:

> The reason why we do not observe Good Friday should be clear enough. Easter is taken from a pagan spring holiday that was governed by the moon. The Roman Catholic Church connected the birth of the Savior with this pagan ceremony. As you know, Easter is governed by the moon, and this spring pagan festival was celebrated according to the moon, any time in March and the end of April. . . . Now as you well know the resurrection did not vary and it is foolish to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord at the end of March or the first of April, or middle of April or near the first of May, and put Good Friday the Friday before Easter Sunday. I think you are wise enough to see the foolishness of it. The resurrection of the Savior does not vary year by year but it is a constant thing. Why should we follow the silly custom rather than to have one day for the resurrection?[15]

According to this logic, Latter-day Saints would not celebrate either Good Friday or Easter!

A number of years ago when I was music advisor in the Los Angeles

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15. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957–66), 5:155.

Stake, I arranged for our stake choir to do a performance of Bach's *St. John's Passion* on Good Friday. When I invited several ward choir directors to join in the stake choir, one of them declined, remarking, "We don't believe in Good Friday." That Good Friday, by the way, was one that I remember with special gratitude, for Bach's magnificent music touched my soul deeply as it immersed me in the events of Passion Week.

It is my hope that the Church, especially with its new emphasis on being the Church of Jesus Christ, will open the way for members to celebrate Palm Sunday and Good Friday in its devotional services. There is no doctrinal reason why this shouldn't happen; in fact, one could argue that there is a doctrinal, if not a scriptural, imperative for us to do so. At the very least the Church could encourage marking these significant days in family devotionals. Doing so would give Latter-day Saints an opportunity to focus their attention on Christ's atonement and resurrection in a concrete, sustained way, thereby increasing their devotion and strengthening the Church.[16]

As it is today, the vast majority of Mormons do not even pause during this week to think of the great events that profoundly affect our lives—both mortal and eternal. We go about our business, shopping, working, going to movies, going on Scout trips, holding dances, playing ball games—seemingly oblivious to the sober devotions of other believers or to the penultimate and ultimate acts of Christ's life.

One of the costs of our not focusing on Holy Week is that our Easter celebrations tend to be flat and mundane. Perhaps we don't make more out of Easter because we haven't spiritually prepared ourselves for this day of joy and gladness by preparing for it during the week before. Rarely are our Easter sacrament services marked by more than the singing of a few Easter hymns (and we have only a few) and a "talk" on an Easter theme. For the most part, we pretty much go about things in our usual way. And in doing so, I believe we rob ourselves of the opportunity to bring Christ more fully into our hearts.

Earlier I quoted Bruce R. McConkie as saying, "Among the Lat-

16. An added advantage of increasing our Holy Week devotionals is that it would give us an expanded common cause with other Christian believers at a time when the Church has placed a new emphasis on interfaith relations; it would remove some of the criticism of those who contend that we are not Christian; and it would make the adjustment of converts from other faiths more hospitable.

ter-day Saints it is the accepted practice to hail Christ as Lord, King, and Messiah, and to shout hosannas to his holy name, on all days and at all times." But this ideal is not realized in practice. Latter-day Saints rarely praise the Lord verbally, let alone hail him and shout hosannas to him continuously. When asked by a group of Christian ministers why Latter-day Saints did not have crosses on their churches, President Hinckley replied, "We believe in worshipping the living Christ not the dead Jesus." But, one wants to ask, "Why is it necessary to choose between the two? Don't we in fact worship the Lord who suffered and bled in Gethsemane and who hung on the cross as well as the one who rose from the dead?" His resurrection has no meaning without all that preceded it. It was more dramatically triumphant for those first Christians precisely because they were without hope. The light that dawned on that first Easter was made the more glorious by the utter darkness and despair that preceded it. Not to mark that despair, that deep sorrow, that time Christ's body lay in death's dark prison, is to miss at least some of the significance of that first Easter dawn that was so resplendent with his glory.

Because our own faith tradition does not celebrate the events of Holy Week, with the exception of Easter, our family has often found our own ways of marking these holy days. Ruth and I have often gone to Good Friday services at other churches. When our children were young, we sang hymns and read from the gospels on Good Friday. This past Good Friday we continued this tradition with the next generation when our young grandsons were visiting us.

Our friends David and Susan Egli first introduced us to the tradition of celebrating a Passover meal or seder on Maundy or Passover Thursday. A couple of years ago on a trip to Los Angeles, we participated in such a meal with a group of Latter-day Saint friends. In the seder, each part of the meal has meaning for both Jews and Christians. As we celebrated that meal and what it symbolizes, I couldn't help but think of what it might mean for the Church if Latter-day Saints regularly had such an opportunity.

Our Holy Week celebrations have always included generous time for listening to great sacred music. While our musical fare during this season is drawn from such works as Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, Mozart's *Mass in C Minor*, and a number of other major and minor sacred choral works, we are particularly drawn to Bach's exquisite music, to his Passions according to St. Matthew and St. John, his Holy Week cantatas,

his *Easter Oratorio,* and his magnificent *Mass in B Minor.* No Christian can, I believe, listen to Bach's passions dispassionately or without being immediately and deeply enveloped in the drama of Christ's last mortal week. The ariosos, arias, recitatives, choruses, and chorales tell the story of Christ's suffering with such dramatic and lyric power that we are imaginatively and emotionally present at the sorrowful events of his last week. This is particularly true with the chorales which traditionally were sung by the congregation. Bach wrote these passions for Holy Week services in the German Lutheran church, and no composer before or since has so completely captured the intense devotion and deep spiritual immersion it is possible to experience in the felt presence of Christ's passion. As Professor Robert Greenberg of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music says, "Bach's Passions demand engagement."[17] At the same time, no composer has helped us feel the power of the resurrection more powerfully than Bach does in the B Minor Mass. The chorus of "Et resurrexit," which follows the quiet, almost indiscernible last notes of the "Crucifixus," explodes with such musical force that there is a powerful kinesthetic sensation that seems to symbolize Christ rising boldly from his tomb. As one of our Jewish friends who considers himself an atheist said, after listening to the B Minor Mass, "I don't believe in God, but if I did, that's what he would sound like!"

To my mind, these works, too, constitute the music of Zion—certainly so in the original meaning of that word—"the pure in heart." I imagine that when heavenly beings attend services, this is among the music they hear.

During the time I served as bishop and for periods when my wife has served as ward choir director, we have been able to create special worship services on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday and, on one occasion, on Good Friday. Ruth has prepared wonderful musical offerings for these occasions, including performances of cantatas, motets, and selections from Bach's "Christ lag in todesbanden" ("Christ Lay in Death's Prison"), his Passions, and on several occasions his *Easter Oratorio.* These were glorious occasions for all present.

Some of my most memorable Holy Week devotions have taken place in other churches. Let me name just two. Several years ago, Ruth and I had

17. Robert Greenberg, "Bach and the High Baroque" (Springfield, Va.: Teaching Company, 1998), audiotape.

the privilege of attending the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., on Palm Sunday. It was a beautiful spring day. The landscapes were resplendent with the cherry blossoms that gossamer our nation's capital during this season. Around the cathedral, tulips, daffodils, and crocuses were all in bloom. As we entered the cathedral along with other worshippers, we were given a strand of a palm frond. Palm branches have been used for centuries as symbols of joy and victory.

As the service began, the celebrant said, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord," and the congregation answered, "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest." There followed a reading of Christ's entry into Jerusalem from Luke. The celebrant said, "On this day Jesus Christ entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph, and was proclaimed as King of Kings by those who spread their garments and branches of palm along his way. Let these branches be for us signs of his victory, and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our King, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life." The celebrant again said, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," and the congregation, each holding our strand of palm on high, responded, "Hosanna in the highest."

The music that day, which focused on Palm Sunday, included the following hymns: "Procession of the Palms," "All Glory, Laud, and Honor" (the only hymn in the LDS hymnal specifically related to Palm Sunday), and the spiritual "Ride on!":

> Ride on, king Jesus. No man can a-hinder me.
> He died for you and he died for me
> He died to set poor sinners free.
> He died for the rich and He died for the poor.
> He ain't come here to die no more.

After the hymn, the tone of the service shifted from joyful praise to somber contemplation as the darkening clouds of Holy Week began to gather. Now the words and music focused on Christ's betrayal, trial, and crucifixion. The Passion from Luke's gospel was read by Charles Robb, former governor and U.S. senator from Virginia, with various other voices representing Jesus, Peter, the chief priest, Pilate, and witnesses. The congregation represented the crowd. Thus, those of us who earlier had shouted "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,"

were now shouting, "Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!" and, "Crucify, crucify him!"

I must confess that these last words were difficult for me to say, but say them I did, and as I did so, I instantly assayed the measure of my devotion to the Lord. I wondered if I would have been among those who shouted him welcome the previous Sunday and then cried his death these few days later. It was a sober moment.

The service continued with Reverend Nathan Baxter, the dean of National Cathedral, delivering a sermon on the conflicting emotions between Palm Sunday and Good Friday, between the shouts of "Hosanna!" and "Crucify him!" Speaking of those ambivalent first disciples, he said, "We too are caught between the poles of devotion and disobedience, between praise and peccata, between wanting to welcome him into our lives and wanting also to crucify him." I looked up at the carved wooden statue of Christ hanging high at the crossing of the cathedral and was filled with remorse for those things I had done to add to His sorrow. I joined my prayer with that of Reverend Baxter: "Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross."

The service ended with choir and congregation singing "O Sacred Head, Sore Wounded" ("O Savior, Thou Who Wearest a Crown" in the LDS hymnal). I was particularly moved by the third verse, which is different from the one in the LDS hymnal:

> What language shall I borrow to thank thee, dearest friend,
> for this thy dying sorrow, thy pity without end?
> Oh, make me thine forever! And should I fainting be,
> Lord, let me never, never, outlive my love for thee.

Needless to say, this was a fitting way to begin the celebration of Holy Week. The spirit of that service echoed throughout the week, and still echoes during times of reflection about my bond with Christ.

The second experience took place three years ago on Easter Sunday when we had conference in our stake and my daughter, Julianna, and I attended services at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. It was a stunningly beautiful day, the sky a cerulean blue, the city sparkling like a giant dew-lit field lying below and beyond the cathedral itself, which sits on a hill. As

we approached the cathedral, we were stuck by how the stained glass windows bejeweled its massive gray walls.

As we entered the cathedral, we passed a labyrinth floor tapestry patterned after the labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral, "a symbolic diagram of the pilgrim journey," according to a pamphlet we picked up in the church, signifying the winding path to the center of the world, which is Christ. We took our seats and listened to the prelude music, organ renditions of "Offertoire pour le Jour de Pâques" by Jean-Francoise Dandrieu and "Christ lag in todesbanden" by Bach.

A few moments of silence were followed by three raps at the giant bronze Doors of Paradise at the front of the cathedral. The three raps startled me for a moment since I had heard three similar raps not long before in the Oakland Temple. I turned around to see the heavy doors, which are patterned after the famed doors by Lorenzo Ghiberti that hang on the Baptistry in Florence, swung open. Sunlight flooded the nave as the dean, chapter, and choir entered, singing the introit by Christopher Tye, accompanied by a brass ensemble and timpani:

> "O who shall roll away the stone,"
> the faithful women said;
> "the heavy stone that seals the tomb,
> and shuts us from our dead?"
> But looking up, at dawn, they saw
> the great stone rolled away,
> And from the empty tomb a light
> more dazzling than the day.

The choir and congregation together sang, "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today," with its repeated alleluias. Following scripture readings from the Old and New Testaments, respectively, William E. Swing, the Episcopal Bishop of California, delivered the sermon. He spoke of a recent murder in Johannesburg and of the murderer's refusal to see his victims and their families as real people because he saw them as through a telescope. He said, "It is hard to see humanity through a telescopic lens." He then spoke of Paul's inability to see Christ until he was "blinded by the resurrection" on the road to Damascus. He concluded his sermon by saying, "Easter has everything to do with a new way of seeing. The angel at the tomb said to the women, 'Look!' The last word was no word at all, but an empty tomb."

In the Episcopal Church, Easter Sunday is a day of renewal of baptismal vows, so following the bishop's sermon, all who wished to, reaffirmed their denunciation of sin and recommitted themselves to Christ. This reaffirmation of their discipleship took the form of answers to a series of questions, including the following:

> Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?
>
> I will, with God's help.
>
> Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?
>
> I will, with God's help.
>
> Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?
>
> I will, with God's help.
>
> May Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and bestowed upon us the forgiveness of sins, keep us in eternal life by his grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

As I listened to these questions and tried to answer them honestly, I felt a renewal of my bond with Christ in an expanded way, felt anew the purifying waters of baptism wash over my soul.

The service continued with the Eucharist or sacrament, additional musical numbers by the choir and congregation, the bishop's blessing of the congregation, and, as we walked out into the spring sunshine, the organist playing Widor's great *Toccata.*

Needless to say, I was filled with the Spirit during and after this service. My heart was full of praise. I felt like Joseph Smith who described his feeling after the First Vision, "My soul was filled with love and for many days I could rejoice with great Joy."[18]

I am aware of the fact that these were unusual Palm Sunday and Easter services and that they took place in churches with a professional clergy and many of the trappings of large, wealthy, urban churches. While such services can be dramatically appealing, it isn't necessary to celebrate Holy Week in such grand style. Some of my most memorable Holy Week experiences have taken place in simple, humble church services, including Latter-day Saint services where as Christians we gathered to center our lives on Christ and to renew our devotion to him. What is important for

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18. "History, 1832," in *Personal Writings,* 6.

Latter-day Saints, I believe, is that we should elevate the significance of Holy Week and expand and deepen our ways of expressing praise and devotion to our Lord during the season that marks his triumph over sin and death. The seeds of such worship exist both in the primitive church and in the first years of the Restoration. Perhaps it is time that we allowed them to flower among us.

I pray for the day when the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recognizes the full significance of Holy Week, when honoring Christ's suffering and death as well as his resurrection becomes more important than stake or general conference, celebrating the restoration of the priesthood, or remembering the coming of the pioneers into the Salt Lake Valley. I don't want to be misunderstood: I value these important events of the Restoration, just as I value being instructed and inspired by modern prophets in conference; but my ultimate commitment is to Jesus Christ whose sacrifice and resurrection have imparadised my heart and whose amazing grace has set me free.

I have always seen the Restoration as an ongoing process, not as a series of events that happened 170 years ago. I believe it is a process which continues to this day. Anyone with eyes open knows that we need continuing restoration as well as continuing revelation. I respectfully submit that observance of Holy Week, at least to the extent it was practiced in the primitive church, is one of the things that awaits our preparation.

Blind Tears

Robert A. Rees

One hundred Cambodian women living in California are blind even though physiologically there is nothing wrong with their sight. Doctors call this seeing disability "hysterical blindness."

—News story

From that first dark day
the Khmer Rouge,
a scourge of scarlet locusts,

drove us like cattle
into the countryside.
The rivers ran red,

the bodies of my people
floating like dead fish
on the water. The sky

was the color of dried wounds
as rice fields yielded their corpses
from shallow graves,

their clouded eyes blind
to the harvest of dark blisters
ripening on the killing fields.

For many months I prayed
to Buddha to give me death,
to bind my eyes with darkness

that I would see no more,
but my body was filled with eyes
and I could not escape seeing.

There was never enough food.
When I saw my children's eyes,
watery as our thin rice broth,

I traded diamonds for milk,
a gold bracelet for one sweet potato,
and my wedding ring for a cup of rice.

My children caught frogs
along the river bank
and tiny green locusts in trees.

We ate red ants, rats,
roots, leaves, and bitter bark.
Water lily stalks were a delicacy.

When at night my husband
stole carrots and cabbage
from the village garden

the soldiers beat him with sticks
and threw him bound into a fire.
I tried to cover my children's eyes,

but the soldiers forced us
to watch and a black mist
began to rise before me.

As my children grew thinner,
their cries invaded my sleep
and I awoke in their ravening dreams.

I dug worms and dung beetles,
boiled leaves for tea and
gave my body to the village leader

for one sack of rice. All this I
could see until the woman in the
next hut kept her baby when it died

then she too ate like the crows and
wolves, like the vultures that circled
all day in the darkening sky.

When my sister went blind
they accused her of deception
and tied her in a graveyard

where ghosts cried all night long,
weeping for their lost ones
under a blood-red moon.

When she saw our grandmother's ghost
and cried out, they killed her with a
pickaxe and left her with no stone.

One by one, all my little ones
perished before my sight. Some died
of starvation and others of dysentery.

I tried to do koktchai for each one,
to send them on to the next world
in the proper way, but even this

was forbidden. My son who was
impaled on spears of bamboo
for stealing an extra bowl of soup

and my little granddaughter
whom the soldiers beat against
a tamarind tree.

I buried them all—
at Viel Trumph, and Prey Veng,
at Battambang and all along the Mekong.

When I became too weak to work
in the fields, they put me in charge
of digging children's graves.

I dug each one slowly, for I could
barely see by now, spooning the
dark earth tenderly, then

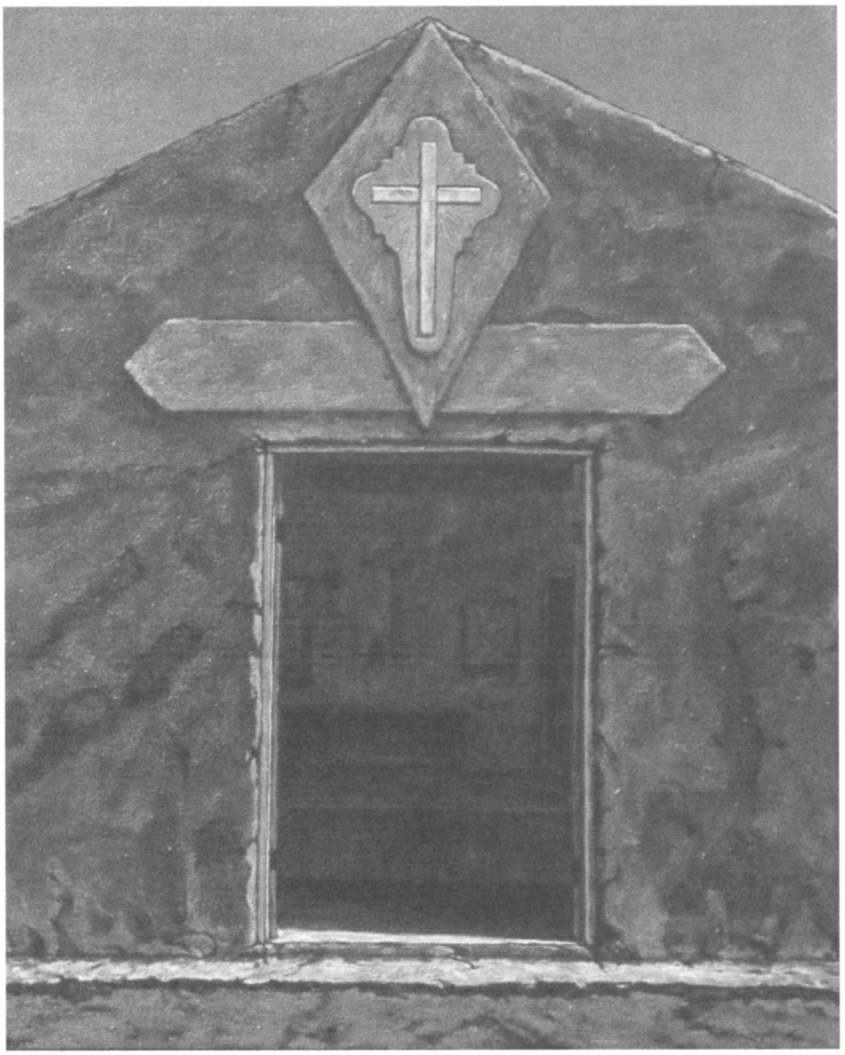
wrapping the small bodies
in whatever I could find, sometimes
only paper or leaves,

and laying them in the ground.
At the end, my sight completely gone,
I did all this by touch,

feeling for the softest ground,
making sure the children's eyes
were closed, and then covering them

with earth. Although it was forbidden,
for some I placed a flower or planted
a seed, and once or twice I even

rocked them for a few moments
and kissed them goodbye
before I laid them softly down.



Sanctuary in Cement; 1994; acrylic on canvas; 30" x 24"

Antidote for Solitude: The Life of Bonnie Bobet

Karen Rosenbaum

THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE may evoke anguish, regret, confusion, anger, shock, bitterness, despair, relief, gratitude, nostalgia, even joy. But the death of my friend Bonnie evoked in me, both on that Friday morning in September of 2001 and now, three years later, wonder. Her remarkable life began in New Orleans on June 19, 1948, when a young and single Canadian woman bore an infant she would give to Niona and Bertram Bobet, a childless, older couple from Oakland, California. Defying her destiny as an only, adopted child, Bonnie would repudiate the adjectives "only" and "alone" and would make herself the center of an enormous family.

Even as a child, Bonnie made sure she rarely had the back of the family car to herself. Her cousin Connie spent most weekends and vacations with the Bobets, and the two regarded themselves as sisters. After Bonnie learned to drive, they shared the front seat of the car as well; when they were sure that Niona and Bertram were asleep, they would sneak over to the garage, release the car's brake, roll it down to the street, and go for a clandestine spin. Later, when Connie would become a too-young wife and mother, Bonnie became a doting aunt to little Richard; and to give Connie some time off she would wrap him in blankets, lay him on the floor of the car (this was before mandatory seat belts and car seats), and take him home with her for a good session of spoiling.

By the time I met Bonnie in the early 1970s at Berkeley's University Ward, she had already recruited innumerable siblings from the Oakland

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public schools (where she wrote in a non-Mormon friend's yearbook, "Man is that he might have joy"), from dorms and classes and activities at BYU and the University of Utah (where her wry wit and ready tongue earned her the appellation "the great snapdragon"), and from university communities around the country. In Berkeley, Palo Alto, Los Angeles, Boston, and Washington, circles of bright, young Mormons flourished, and Bonnie had contacts in most of them.

Those college-connected clans were very important to those who had loosed their callused hands from the Iron Rod. We took comfort in like-minded individuals who, in the words of Joe Jeppson, had questions for all the gospel answers. In our Sunday School classes, we quoted Hugh B. Brown, Lowell Bennion, Gene England, Emma Lou Thayne. If *they* could be Mormons, so could we. We read with enthusiasm *Dialogue, Sunstone, Exponent II.* We journeyed to foreign countries; we worked and studied far from Zion; we saw ourselves as the Diaspora of the new children of Israel. Outraged at the Church's forays into politics, especially the ERA, most of us registered as Democrats. We rejected a celestial kingdom scenario full of undifferentiated Paul and Polly Perfects. We wanted to be good, yes, but we wanted, perhaps more, to be *interesting.* Those of us who were still single yearned for marriage, usually temple marriage, with partners who had fervent testimonies of the complexity of life. It would also help if they volunteered at homeless shelters and had graduate-school projects that would save the whales or maybe the world. We stayed friends with those who gave up on the Church as too repressive, provincial, nonintellectual, or Republican.

And nobody stayed friends with more people—people in the Church, people halfway in or on the way out of the Church, people never in the Church at all—than Bonnie. To suggest even the variety of those friendships is dizzying—the gay actor, the concert pianist, the brash Francophile, the blind German major, yuppies, hippies, old ladies, wanderers. When one of us would telephone, from across Berkeley or across the country, she would interrupt before we identified ourselves. "Hi, Kevin," she would say, or "Hey, Holly," her voice going up on the "Hi" and the "Hey." She zeroed in on our concerns. "How's your brother?" (She would substitute for "brother" the caller's current worry: troubled child, ambiguous boyfriend, doctoral dissertation, Sunday School class, tyrannical boss, impossible diet.) She was the epitome of empathy.

Although she never limited her views to Mormonism nor her

friends to Mormons, Bonnie was a Mormon to the core. In her twenties, not anticipating immediate marriage or mission, she chose to receive her temple endowments. In university wards, one could often serve as the gospel doctrine teacher or the Relief Society president while maintaining a robust unorthodoxy, and Bonnie managed both of those. She and I were both present at that first Sunstone Symposium, but I was merely a fascinated observer; Bonnie was an enthusiastic participant. It was she who helped organize some of the Bay Area's early Sunstone or Sunstone-like symposia—a small one at Santa Clara University, a bigger one at the Berkeley Marriott.

For an orderly person—she was a wizard at keeping track of her many associations and responsibilities—Bonnie had a remarkably high tolerance for chaos. There was the Albany house on Brighton Street where the bedrooms were always full and the refrigerator was usually empty except for the freezer stuffed with ice cream cartons of Swenson's Swiss Orange Chip. The unmowed lawn marred the tidy aspect of the neighborhood; and occasionally, sighing neighbors would trot over with their garden tools. Bonnie and some of her rowdy housemates housesat for me one spring, and there was so much energy within the walls that I returned home to find that both the front door and the water lines under the front lawn had exploded. Albany proved too tame, so Bonnie found an apartment in Berkeley near the lively old Shattuck Avenue Co-op. Many of her close friends were marching or tiptoeing into marriage—some of those young former housemates, many of her college contemporaries, even some of the old hold-outs, like me. Acknowledging perhaps that life as a single woman now seemed more likely, she moved to a funky apartment on Dwight Way, a block from fraternity row. The streets sang with noisy students; the radiators banged, but produced no heat; the tenants, by now all members of Bonnie's big family, organized and sued their landlord. Bonnie communed with cats that roamed the apartment and curled up on quilts. An old Ronald Reagan movie poster hung from the kitchen wall. When I visited, the apartment always seemed full of people, the kitchen sink full of plates, often stained by Bonnie's culinary masterpiece, a mean Reine de Saba, a cake so chocolately as to render flour unnecessary.

During the first two decades of our friendship, Bonnie was almost always running somewhere, but she invariably ran late. I adjusted to her tardy arrival at dinners and other social events; what shocked me was her

missed deadlines for graduate papers. I had been in graduate school during the '60s—and it would never have occurred to me that a teacher might accept a late paper. It never occurred to Bonnie to turn a paper in on time. She also found it quite normal to take leaves of absence from her doctoral work—sometimes to do advertising for a Bay Area bank, sometimes to free-lance and, I suspected, to work discreetly on relationships. But then Bonnie regarded her professors as peers, as companions, and not as emperors and gods, as *I* had.

It was during the Dwight Way days that Bonnie, secretive about the details but eager to share her burden and her joy, announced that she was about to extend her family in a different direction. One summer Saturday in the Piedmont living room of Dianne and Steve Roland, dozens of friends gathered to shower her with love and support and gifts, the most memorable of which was a wooden rocking chair. On August 15, 1988, she gave birth to Jane Elizabeth, a baby with Bonnie's own delicate skin and reddish-gold hair. There was quite a crowd in the birthing room, two friends at the head of the bed, chanting encouragement, two at the foot. Three of those close friends were women with first-hand experience in giving birth; the fourth was someone who had never expected to share in such an adventure—Bonnie's long-time gay friend Kevin Simmers.

One reason Bonnie was able to embrace such an enormous circle of friends was that she was intimidated by no one—not professors, not bosses, not bishops. She was very close to a number of Mormon bishops—from young and sensitive to old and crusty. Among the former was Oakland First Ward's Richard Palfreyman, who counseled her and helped her stay a Mormon the year of Jane's birth. He presided over Jane's most extraordinary naming and blessing ceremony, held at the Palfreymans' home, during which two or three dozen friends—Mormons, ex-Mormons, non-Mormons, men and women—bestowed their own blessings on and wishes for the baby.

When the leukemia was first diagnosed, in February of 1992, Bonnie was in Salt Lake City, wondering why she couldn't get over a persistent cold. Leaving Jane in Utah with her close college friend Susan Walker Anderson, Bonnie flew back to the Bay Area. There, her former housemate Holly Larsen, sobbing one moment and shouting the next, had already mobilized Bonnie's big family. Each week one person was designated as a contact person so Bonnie wouldn't have to be bothered with giving health updates or requesting services. Friends scrubbed down,

donned long-sleeved gowns, and pushed through the double doors to Bonnie's sterile hospital room, which looked neither sterile nor hospital-like. Books, jigsaw puzzles, favorite pieces of furniture (I think I remember both the much-loved rocking chair and an exercycle), knick-knacks, and quilts gave the room a distinctly homey look. Only missing were the cats and houseplants. Among the many pictures on the wall was one signed by Spanish tenor Jose Carreras, who had responded to a request from one of Bonnie's friends and had wished her well in the battle he himself had fought—and won. I bought tapes of his arias for her to play on the cassette player with the big box speakers.

In all things a student, Bonnie was open to learning from widely diverse books and teachers. She applied her scholarly techniques to become an expert on acute mylogenous leukemia, and she efficiently managed her own health care. She researched alternative medicine and was willing to try Chinese herbs and meditation. Her stays in sterile rooms lasted weeks before and after the autologous bone marrow transplant, and she knew every nurse and nurse's aide and understood and appreciated what each one did for her. She was inordinately fond of her oncologist, "Doctor Gary," who advised her that it might increase her chances to be part of a study employing a particularly aggressive treatment of the bone marrow. At the time, her widowed mother was feeble, vague, and devastated; her daughter was a toddler. "I can't be checking out of here," Bonnie told me. "The very old and the very young are dependent on me."

Dr. Gary didn't use the term "in remission"; he used the term "cured." As appreciative as she was of medical personnel and strategies, Bonnie attributed her "miracle cure" to the prayers and positive thinking of her wide family of friends. Her religious chums had fasted and got down on their knees; her agnostic pals had wished on stars and hoped for healing vibrations. In 1993, the experimental bone marrow treatment which Bonnie had received was declared a failure. Only one patient of the eighty or so in the program had survived—Bonnie.

When she was allowed to leave the hospital, Dick and Lindy Palfreyman turned part of their upstairs into a private convalescent home. There they not only cared for their patient but also greeted the endless stream of visitors who needed to reassure themselves that Bonnie had indeed survived her ordeal.

For the eight years that she was cancer-free, Bonnie no longer ran—much of her energy had been depleted in the initial battle with the

disease—but she managed to maintain and amplify her existing relationships and even add close new friends to her cadre. She was able to comfort and eventually bury her mother. She and Jane spent time with cousins. She had already contacted her birth mother in British Columbia and had developed a close association with her, her husband, and her children, especially her half-sister Caroline. After Bonnie and Jane moved to Albany—tameness now seemed an asset—they began attending the Berkeley Ward, and she made more friends—among others, Betts and Mark Sandberg, whose rambunctious twins were Jane's age. "We're kind of raising our kids together," Bonnie said. She also felt close to the ward's senior citizenesses—some of whom knew what it was like to be single parents. And she delighted in some of the younger student families as well.

During this time, Bonnie joined a writing group and started work again on some of her graduate school projects. When she showed her writing to her Cal advisor, the advisor, by now a good friend, told her she had done enough work for a Ph.D. in American studies. To celebrate, Bonnie and Jane took the Sandbergs out to dinner. The dissertation, with the esoteric title, "Domestic Constructions: Mary Wilkins Freeman and the Anxious Locale," occupied one chair at the restaurant table.

Most of Bonnie's efforts in those years were devoted to Jane. Even in the Bay Area and the accepting climate of the Berkeley Ward, it wasn't easy to raise a child without a father. There were the Primary and Young Women's lessons on temple marriage and traditional families. Once, when Bonnie wasn't diligent in getting to church, Jane complained, "Mo-om, we might as well be *jack* Mormons." Bonnie was chastised; and though they rarely attended all three meetings, in times of good health, they usually made it for the last two.

During one Sunday School lesson, a woman shocked the teacher and class with her vilification of Jews. I was not present, but was told of the stunned silence. Bonnie later reported to me that she was defending my heritage when she raised her hand and with controlled anger said she could not let such remarks go unanswered. The woman would later scream at Bonnie that she and Jane didn't belong in the ward, but many ward members sought Bonnie out to tell her how grateful they were that she had dared do what they had been too cowardly or startled to do. I saw no tears shed when the anti-Semitic woman moved her family's membership records into the ward in whose boundaries they actually lived. Many tears were shed when Bonnie's leukemia returned in the fall of 2000 and

again, after an eleven-month remission following chemotherapy, in the late summer of 2001.

It is not easy to ask for and accept help, but Bonnie managed this with grace, gratitude, and, often, humor. She threatened conservative Dr. Gary that if he didn't get her through the leukemia one more time, she planned to turn in his name to the Democratic Party as a potential Deep Pockets. The recurrences of the disease meant that she needed a great deal of nonmedical help too—care and transportation for her and for Jane, household tasks, food, but mostly companionship and contact.

What loyalty Bonnie elicited from members of her "network"! There were blessings and prayers—private and from the pulpit. During her Berkeley hospital stays or when she was allowed to convalesce at home, she was almost never alone at night. In the hospital, a woman friend (or, on some "good" nights, Jane) bunked on the chair-bed in the sterilized room. Her devoted friend Marilyn Thompson drove up from the peninsula so often that the oncology staff thought she deserved a paycheck. At times, the person on the night shift would be the aide to the nurse's aide. If Bonnie's temperature crept up, it might be necessary to pack her in ice; if she got Reicher's shakes, it might be necessary to call for Demerol. During bad nights, the companion got little sleep. In Bonnie's first month or so back home, women from the ward—young mothers, middle-aged matrons, older widows—took turns camping out at the apartment to make sure that she didn't spike a fever or need anything in the night. During her last hospital stay, many of the older women in the ward regularly sent her cards and notes. Mary Wallmann wrote her a postcard every single day. "Don't let them give up on me," Bonnie urged me once. The great ladies of the Berkeley Ward never gave up.

Bald, but round-faced, sturdy, clear-eyed, Bonnie never looked to me like a dying woman, even the morning before she died. She did seem more solemn though. While I was sitting near the foot of the bed, the substitute doctor, a thick woman dressed like a '60s hippie, breezed in and announced that the number of Bonnie's white cells had jumped. Although the words sounded hopeful, I saw Bonnie nod, and I sensed they both knew this was a very bad sign. The last time this had happened, it signified that the chemotherapy had not worked.

I had driven to the hospital that morning after driving Susan Anderson to the airport. Bonnie's soulmate from BYU and the person who had probably shared more experiences with her than anyone else, Susan had

taken one of her many leaves of absence from her own family and had been staying in Bonnie's apartment with Jane. I worried that Jane didn't have her apartment key, and I suggested to Bonnie I take *her* key. That way, when I picked Jane up from school, we could be sure she could get into the apartment to get her flute and to pack her things. After her flute lesson, she would be spending the night at the Sandbergs' home.

"We'll trust Jane," Bonnie said. "She always remembers her key."

That afternoon, Jane did not have her key, so we drove up to the hospital to get Bonnie's. "It was good I forgot it," Jane said when she stepped back out of the elevator. "Mother was having the shakes, and I was able to help her." Shortly after we left, Betts Sandberg arrived at the hospital. She noted that Bonnie looked as weak as she'd ever seen her, but she didn't see how she could spend the night since she had Jane and her own sons to care for. At that moment, Holly walked in, took one look, and announced that she was staying. "She was very tired, very sick, and had trouble talking," Holly wrote later. "But as she turned over in bed, turning from the interior wall to the large window that looked out on the Berkeley hills, she exclaimed, 'Holly, look at the sun.' I looked. There at the top of the hills, which were enshrouded in a gray mist, was a brilliant path of sunshine, illuminating the clouds. It was lovely, and Bonnie was able to give me this gift of beauty, of life, in one of the saddest and most difficult moments of my life and, surely, of hers."

Very early the next morning, the nurses sent Holly home to Alameda, and they transferred Bonnie to intensive care. Barely inside her front door, Holly picked up the ringing phone and rushed back to the hospital. She was there when Betts and Jane arrived. "Oh Jane," she said, throwing her arms around her, "your mom is gone!"

In the hours, days, weeks, months after her death, Bonnie's "brothers" and "sisters" tried to comprehend that sentence. Many of us gathered at the Sandbergs' home that September 21 to stroke Jane's hair, to make necessary plans, to comfort one another. "I've lost my best friend," Holly wailed when I hugged her. "But *she* had dozens of best friends!"

At first, we could speak and think of nothing else. The sacrament meeting talks in the Berkeley Ward the Sunday after her death focused on the value of community and of what that had meant to Bonnie. From across the country, we gathered memories for the eulogy at her memorial service and for a book we gave to Jane. As those of us in the Bay Area boxed up her dishes, her clothes, her books, her treasures, we recalled her

vitality and tried to determine her wishes—what should be stored in Utah for Jane, what should be donated to charity, what should be given to whom. I went through sacks and sacks of letters and cards from people who loved Bonnie. I hated to consign any of them to the recycling barrels, but how could we keep them all? They would require another storage locker.

Bonnie's big, big family web is already unraveling—it was Bonnie who knit us together. During her last illness, Andy Goldblatt, one of the neighbors from the noisy Dwight Way apartment building, sent out regular email updates on her condition. Some of us hadn't met in person until she died, and we aren't likely to meet each other regularly again. Others of us do often talk—we contemplate Jane, now sixteen, living with Susan Anderson and her family in Salt Lake City, and how keenly conscious we are of Bonnie's absence. Her will nominated Susan and her husband as Jane's guardians, but also specified a kind of parenting "committee"—not a viable alternative, it has turned out, but an affirmation of Bonnie's faith in the abilities and good will of her friends.

We do try to stay connected. In the spring of 2002, Holly bought up a big block of Giants' tickets for June 19, which would have been Bonnie's fifty-fourth birthday. That way, instead of sagging morosely around our various abodes, Bonnie's friends could cheer for Bonnie's favorite team. Ah, Bonnie—we would have loved to grow old with her. She would have been, as her neighbor-sister-friend Deborah Dunster has said, a sensational old lady, draped in vivid colors, treating us to her healthy laughs and her acute observations of life.

Sometimes when I'm writing, as I am this moment, I think, "I'd like to run this by Bonnie." She was surer than I about what happens to the spirit after death, so I don't picture her hovering about—but I suspect that if that *is* possible, that is what she's doing—keeping track of all of us as well as catching up on what's happened to those who got there—wherever there is—first. I believe we—all her hand-picked siblings—will be able to remember her features and her voice and her nature as long as we can remember anything in this life, and in that way we will keep her alive and around as best we can. In that way we will minister to our own solitude.

FICTION

The Homecoming

Aaron Orullian

ELDER JEFF LEE JOHNSON came home on January 24 at 2:14 in the afternoon. The plane had made its way north all that day, stopping in Miami, then Atlanta before finally arriving six minutes ahead of schedule at John Wayne International. They had waited all day it seemed, waited by phones, waited in the car, waited at the terminal and then at the wrong terminal before finally being led back to the place where they had waited before, the management being so sorry, and couldn't they get them something to take their mind off the wait?

After the plane had landed, they were escorted to yet another place—a special place where they could meet him; not the best place, the airline person apologized, but a place where they might get a few moments' privacy—away from where other people were greeting sons and daughters and still holding out hope for the rest of their lives.

Lee and Cheryl Johnson stood alone by the casket of their son in that small, gray room under the United terminal and wept. Lee had been at the chapel a couple of nights ago conducting temple recommend interviews; Cheryl would forever wonder what she had gone into the garage to retrieve or why she went back to find it again after the call came.

Their stake president had laid out the facts as he had learned them himself from the mission president: Their son had been found stripped

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AARON ORULLIAN graduated in film from Brigham Young University in 1997. He writes and directs films and teaches film studies and screenwriting at the Orange County High School of the Arts in Santa Ana. His feature script *Mount Pleasant* was a finalist in several screenplay competitions and received an honorable mention at the second LDS Film Festival. He resides in Fullerton, California.

and beaten to death outside his *pension* early last Tuesday morning. He had retired to bed at 9:30 P.M. the night before, feeling sick, according to his companion, who had suspected nothing. It had been a simple, brutal act of robbery, nothing uncommon for that area. A local girl had gone nearly crazy with grief and claimed they were in love and had planned to get married soon. He had been at her house that night, as he had for several nights. She still wore his silver CTR ring. It was a small town, and his companion would be transferred immediately. That was all the stake president could tell them at that point. He was sorry, so terribly sorry. The body of their son and his things would be sent up soon. There was no need for them to go down there.

With the news, arrangements had to be made. There was no getting around it. They had wanted everything to be done quickly and quietly. Their hope was that the fewer details that went out, the fewer questions. The fewer questions, the fewer answers, and the Johnsons did not want to think of the answers. Their son had been killed, abruptly taken: that was the official line.

By next day, the whole ward was in tears. There was the news posting on the internet, the one the Johnsons wouldn't have seen but heard about when Sister Morton called. There was the brief message of condolence left mistakenly by Jeff's mission president in the clerk's voice mail, who then told his wife, who then told the Relief Society president, who then went over immediately to the Johnsons with the second counselor and sputtered and skirted and asked if there was anything they could do. They felt so terribly bad for them, they all felt bad when they found out—to have a son go forth with faith to preach the gospel—but didn't they at least feel so blessed with the assurance that now he would go directly to the celestial kingdom?

Lee and Cheryl Johnson had been married to each other for most of their lives and they had worked and arranged and compromised and held things together somehow on the thinnest threads of perseverance and faith. They had six children: four sons, two daughters. This is what the Lord had offered them and what they had offered the world.

They called Stacy first; she would know how they should tell the others. Jesse would probably cry and lose himself in his anxiety. Patrick would be difficult to read, and Lynn would have to call Steven. They would tell them what they had told everyone else, and nothing more. The rest they would pass on when the facts became clearer.

* * *

Elder Jeff Lee Johnson
c/o Johnsons
5169 Birch Woods Drive
Brea, California
U.S.A.

His two suitcases came a day early, anticipating his arrival. They pored over the contents and found what they had been looking for. There were two alpaca suits, beautiful suits that hardly seemed worn. There were sweat pants and a pair of jeans and t-shirts and six rolls of garments. There were letters from friends, letters from family, from them—precious letters that encouraged and joked and anticipated. And there was his journal (finally the truth!) and inside its last entry a small photo.

A girl of about twenty or younger stood smiling between an elder they didn't recognize and their son's companion outdoors somewhere. She was an amazing person, he wrote, and he desperately hoped others would understand, since he was in love and needed to be with her (they had felt the Spirit) and would they please please not be so sad and disappointed when he finally had the courage to tell them?

* * *

The funeral was held that Saturday morning at the chapel off State College Boulevard, the stake center having been previously scheduled for basketball tournaments every weekend to the end of the month. The stake president had offered to preside and the various auxiliaries and quorums had worked together quickly to carry out their assignments. Two beautiful floral arrangements flanked each side of the casket that lay just below the podium—the condolences and gifts of others spreading out from the chapel into the south foyer where Sister Gibson had helped Cheryl select and arrange a few artifacts and photos.

There was Jeff, crawling around in Kodachrome at six months, teeth too big for his face at eleven, smile too big for the world at sixteen.

There was Jeff at the dance, Jeff on that campout in Big Bear, Jeff on the couch lying so cute and asleep and unaware.

There was his Disneyland name tag and his Duty to God award and a letter from the president. There was his trumpet (look at Jeff play that trumpet at the game!) and the scrapbook of his Eagle project.

Jeff had never cared about sports, but he had liked the teams and

loved the girls who lingered and laughed and thought they knew for a few brief years what life was all about—friends who now, in their little black dresses and desolate faces, quietly filled the chapel.

And there were Jeff's scriptures and his mission call, enshrined in the center of all these things—the places where he had finally found sanctuary from the lush lies of all his many wildernesses.

* * *

Lee had smiled as he looked at the first question—one he had memorized years ago.

"Jeff, do you have faith in the Godhead? In God the Eternal Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost?"

"Yes."

Jeff Johnson had come a long way in the six months leading up to his nineteenth birthday. His father had noted his progress and had delighted in his change. It had meant everything in the world to him that his son had turned things around and wanted to go on a mission. In the early stages of his son's conversion, Lee had worried that perhaps Jeff was repenting just to please him and that it wouldn't stick. That he would go the way of his oldest brother Steven who had served two years behind a mask of disbelief and resentment and then left it all to return to Canaan. But Lee wouldn't believe that of his youngest son. He knew it had never been easy for Jeff—Jeff of the wide smile and endless friends. He had been such a good kid, good person, in spite of his weaknesses . . .

Lee had sat across the table from his son and handed him the papers. Lee had had doubts in the past, strong doubts about this boy, but the only thing he could feel now was peace. His son had made the changes, and he was worthy. Lee wouldn't have signed those papers had he felt otherwise; he wouldn't have sent his son out alone into a dreary world with greater fear and love if he hadn't believed inside his heart that it was now completely out of his hands.

* * *

Stacy and her family arrived first; Jesse, Lynn, and Patrick followed in succession with theirs and joined them in the front rows reserved for immediate family. Lee and Cheryl stood in the foyer and accepted regrets as they greeted and smiled. It would have been wrong and selfish to sit and

wait and fall apart. It gave them satisfaction to go against their feelings; it made them strong.

There was kind-hearted Brother Hardin, and the soft-spoken Taylors, and Brother and Sister Collins who had health problems yet came to everything. There was Janice Taylor, Jeff's primary teacher who called her students her "kids" and never forgot them. There were the Reids, who had wayward children and held the best dinner parties, and the Hofstetlers, who told terrible jokes—he was Lee's second counselor. There were those they knew, those they didn't know; Jeff's friends, their friends, member and nonmember alike. There were those who said nothing, those who cried, those who looked about in vague discomfort, people who had never looked so solemn. Some needed drinks, while others had answers and smiled satisfaction through their mourning since the salvation of martyrs was assured. Jeff would join company with the Best Saints, they said. Parley P. Pratt had died for the cause. So had Joseph and Hyrum and the Apostle Paul and countless others. Each had been faithful to the end. And one could not wish for a better end, whispered Sister Jones, whose husband, she reminded them, had died of a heart attack in the temple.

By 10:30, the chapel had filled to overflowing, and the back partition was opened and additional chairs set up.

As Lee and Cheryl made their way through the heavy double doors into the chapel, Lee caught a glimpse of the back corner of the overflow. A tall, thin-lipped man in jeans jacket and tie sat next to another woman from the stake and her two restless children. He looked terrible in his mock best and long hair, his arms and breath no doubt still bearing the tokens of broken covenants.

Lee tried not to think about him even as his heart leapt out and would embrace him. He had hoped he would come, but he had learned to expect nothing from this child. He had not seen Steven in over six years, and Steven had not seen or known them in twice that. They had mourned him already, mourned him in anger and returned bitterness and near-hate; he had shown them the way. With words and choices, he had torn himself out of their family. Now he lingered on the periphery, and he was still alive.

* * *

I believe in Christ,
So come what may . . .

Cheryl Johnson sat alone next to her husband on the front row pew and wondered why the Lord had done this to her. It didn't matter that she had loved Him or served Him—obviously that didn't matter. And for that, it didn't matter that she had loved her son or taught him well or gave so much of her own faith and testimony to him that he couldn't help but believe (there were many times when she would have gladly given more); it didn't matter that he had done one right thing in his life or seventy—he had done this one wrong thing; and as the dark chaos of coincidence aligned with that choice, he was now completely, irrevocably lost from their family forever. The scriptures were clear about this: he would be cut off, having died in his sins; and there was nothing she could do about it. Absolutely nothing.

What the Lord giveth, he taketh away.

So come what may . . .

Lee's eyes moved over the words of the hymn without decoding, and he wished beyond himself that he had made Jeff wait to go until he was ready. His repentance had been too green, his desire to serve too eager. But sons' missions are never about sons. Four sons, four missions. Could he have lived with anything less than a perfect statistic? He thought about the thin-lipped man who sat in the back and bore his features yet none of their values and wondered if symmetry mattered at all when it ultimately didn't amount to anything. He followed the grain of the podium as President Ulibarri got up and spoke with tears and perfect delivery and commanded them to be comforted. Jeff had been such a perfect example to others; his parents were always such perfect examples to others. Jeff had been about his Father's business; they were always about their Father's business. Jeff would be called forth in the First Resurrection; no doubt they would be there to greet him.

The stake president spoke and wept, wiped thick tears from tanned checks and found his seat again on the stand next to the others who preached about faith and trials and approached sorrow with the curious distance of those never called to suffer, their lives so good, their sons all good. Lee imagined that the laws of opposition were so finely balanced that there was never any happiness or misery to spare—it was all cold rearrangement—and as he sat there and waited for this numb, earnest spectacle to end, he wondered who now was having the time of their lives at his expense.

* * *

I know that my Redeemer lives,
What comfort this sweet sentence gives . . .

Stacy spoke of her brother's life (what an example he had been!) and about the resurrection (how she believed!) and about her faith and things that made no difference at all. It was sad to see her up there, living in the hope of the things she had been taught, hoping to endure all things—unaware that the last fruits of motherhood were loss and the annihilation of meaning.

Cheryl listened to her daughter and tried to wrap her mind around it all again. It wasn't enough that she had lost one son to the world. Now He had taken her favored and most beloved one. And He had taken him in his sins, too—foreordained him to damnation—how could anyone with so much love have done this to their son? She didn't care about herself; how could He have done this to Jeff? What "wise purpose" was there (Sister Holtshaw lacking the most essential requirements to know) in damning someone to hell who was supposed to do some good in this world (his patriarchal blessing was clear about this) when his MISSION WASN'T EVEN COMPLETED (ditto); what Mercy what Justice is there in a God (2 Ne. 9:19; Alma 12:33; etc.); Jeff had never hardened his heart; and weakness and human frailty are not the same things as hardness; TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN A SON and why let her raise him when He Knew he would fall? (weakness, Ether 12:27, *is not* hardness); like the son she once knew and THAT was hardness! (Alma 12:11; Alma 24:30).

* * *

Oh sweet, the joy this sentence gives,
I know that my Redeemer lives!

"I guess I had to ask my brothers to sing that song because it was my favorite and they're my favorite singers."

Jeff had paused before continuing.

"I wasn't always sure that I was going to make it here today."

He turned around and looked at his mother—and at his father, who sat where he always sat on that stand, week after week. Lee tried to subdue his emotions, though he knew he was sitting somewhere entirely holy at that moment.

"I know it hasn't been easy for my parents, trying to teach all of us

kids the right way to live our lives. It's also not always easy to have a bishop for a dad, or a mother who knows the scriptures like the back of her hand."

Cheryl smiled and wondered why everyone always thought that about her.

"I guess I could say I'm going on a mission for them. Or for myself."

His eyes were red now, his voice tremulous.

"But the truth is, I'm going on this mission for my Brother."

* * *

It took six of them to carry the casket out to the hearse, Lee holding up the back left and setting the perfect example. He glanced around at the crowd of assembled losers, weeping and wailing, and couldn't believe these people had been given the benefit of the doubt. Repentance on the extended plan. Even the good ones weren't so good—Brother Reid over there secretly wallowing in his digital fantasies; Sister Collins with her lust for hot caffeine; the Gredlins, large butts on green cushions, riding this wake in a terrestrial haze and their extra 10 percent. With what extra grain of mortal pity had these Most Noble Spirits touched the Almighty and bartered their prisons for life with probation? And to what had their son owed such divine disregard?

* * *

The procession of cars worked its way up State College to Lambert and from Lambert toward Central, passing intersections and houses, strip malls and corners—some more difficult than others. There was the restaurant where Jeff had earned money for his mission. There was the side street where Jeff had been pulled over and had given the policeman a Pass-Along Card.

In their limo, she cried and begged him to go to Peru and he held her and said nothing and wished she wouldn't be so ridiculous. He didn't want to go down there. He didn't want to dig deeper. Did she really think it would change anything?

In long lines they passed and slowed and took forever. In slow lines they gathered around the hole and contemplated the Astro-turf. Cheryl got to sit up front with Lee—it was their day—the others had to find their own places and excuses.

* * *

Then sings my soul,
My Savior God, to thee–
How great thou art!
How great thou art!

Lee looked around at his son's fans and marveled that they were so easily fooled. It had been a simple, brutal act, nothing uncommon for the area. He couldn't remember anything being so simple.

"And please bless those that mourn, that they may be comforted . . ."

As Patrick rambled on with the dedicatory prayer, filling out his hopes with familiar references, Cheryl glanced up at the bowed faces, eyes closed to be closed, and for the first time saw her prodigal child–Steven of the mocking smile and endless condemnations.

They never loved him, he said. They never cared. They never let him do what he wanted; why did he even bother to come?

Church sucks and so do you. Screw you all.

I can do whatever I want. It's called free agency. Screw you all.

There was a quiet fear in his eyes, a hollow disorientation that startled her in its sharp and frightening unfamiliarity.

She had raised and taught and loved this son (and gave him so much of herself he couldn't help but believe), and after all these years he had come back to show her the damned.

Hardness and weakness. Two sons dead, one among the living. Two sons left, only time before they all slipped away.

* * *

"We just want you to know that we love you."

Cars were pulling out and people were now starting to leave, but it was far from over. It would never be over until they had gotten to the bottom of things, until they were given answers both verifiable and satisfactory. Journals lie; his letters were never this insane. What of this girl who had wanted him so badly? Maybe their son had gone to say good-bye that last night. Maybe he had gone to repent. Would that girl have been so kind in her love to have let him choose the right without the contract of her wrath being carried out upon him? Or had it been the mistaken retribution of jealous friends or another who felt replaced by their son?

There were too many holes, too many unanswered questions. They would talk to the girl (that ring was theirs), talk to her family, find his com-

panion. They would leave as soon as possible, use their ready passports and countless air miles.

* * *

At the luncheon afterward, they announced to their dwindling posterity that they were going to Peru. An investigation was probably underway; and if not, they would open one. They would stay till it was finished—a week, maybe less—it wouldn't cost much to get things done down there. And when they came back, they would have the answers to this mystery and put all their minds at rest.

Stacy and Jesse protested, but they weren't listening. Patrick just cried and Lynn tried to dissuade them with reunions and appeals and tiresome peace treaties—Steven would be in town for a few more days; they were all going to Disneyland on Monday; things had all happened so fast—so could they please wait and spend some time with them before they went off to Peru?

In silence, they drove home, their mouths working out the details, their thoughts devising alternate endings.

They would take only what they needed; what they couldn't bring or needed they would buy. They would get a translator maybe at the airport; they would rent or buy a car there, too. They would travel light and bring plenty of money; people in these countries weren't too up to speed. They would pay for the truth and if someone else had to pay, so be it.

Peru. They hated the thought and sound of it. They hated the soft contours of a language that belied the Gadianton desperation of a people and culture that meant death. Didn't their pleading children know they would go the same lengths for them? It didn't matter what they would suffer when the comforting truth would release them all. They would lose themselves to find their peace, and they would retrieve their son from hell.

As they walked into the darkened house, she grabbed the mail and began to sort. Condolences, condolences, trash and utter waste. As she rifled through the endless stacks of bills and cards, her eyes caught a glimpse of air mail stripes and for a split second she found herself in the world of a week ago. Lee took the letter from her shaking hands and then stopped and shook himself. It would be Jeff's last message and then no more. Of all the things they could have hoped for—if it gave them their

truth (and how it would! they couldn't deny the peace and warmth they were now feeling)—then things could be made manageable again.

It had been written on P-Day, the morning before he died. It covered less than half a page, two short paragraphs (truth is brief) and there was a small three-by-five photo tucked inside. A man of about twenty or younger stood smiling between their son and his companion. He was supposed to have been baptized that Sunday, Jeff wrote, but he had disappeared and had gone back to old ways. He and his companion were distraught; they didn't know where he was. But they loved him, for they knew the worth of his soul. And they trusted that the Lord, who loves and knows the souls of all men (D&C 18:10) would judge him in mercy despite his hardness and his weakness—and be there to help him when he was ready to come back so please, please could they pray for this lost, hurting child that he loved?

They read it over and over and over. They held the letter tight and read it again. And with a piercing devastation that slowly gave way to a quiet exhaustion, they sobbed and pleaded and refused to be comforted.

Trusting Lilly

Coke Newell

WHEN I JUMPED THAT WESTBOUND TRAIN climbing north out of Fraser, Colorado, I wasn't intending to come back. Not for her. Not for anybody.

The soggy June fields between Tabernash and the pulp mills were literally hopping with deer mice, and I'd had to scrape back and forth across the long grass with the toe of my boot for a full five minutes before I felt safe in throwing my bag out. Sleeping with mice is one thing; lying down and hearing a couple three go squish is something else entirely.

It was my second trip through that area with the dog, and I mean a canine: cute little Aussie shepherd unit with eyes the color of the Minnesota sky in late November. Good dog, too. Picked her up at a roadside roof north of Torrington, Wyoming, and I mean a roof. Trucker coming west out of Wisconsin said they called them "ramadas," which I always thought was a brand of hotel. That's what I told the trucker, big fat dude that never quit sucking on the stub of a cold cigar. Never lit it, just sucked and sucked, rolling it around. Spit little bits of tobacco toward the dashboard every half mile or so. I didn't count. Anyway, what I said to him, and he re-

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COKE NEWELL is living proof that the Mormon missionary net is very generous in its haul. Tracked down in 1976 while enjoying a peaceful flower-child existence in the Colorado mountains, he now spends the better part of his time with his childhood sweetheart and their seven children at their home in northern Utah where he raises honeybees, dabbles in the garden, and writes and records guitar-centered rock and roll. A widely published nonfiction author, his most recent book, *Latter Days: A Guided Tour through Six Billion Years of Mormonism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), is used in college classrooms and by journalists nationwide. He is currently working on the feature film adaptation of "Trusting Lilly."

plied, "Yeah, that's probably why the hotel got its name: Spanish word meaning place of rest or something like that."

So anyway, there's just these two corrugated steel roofs on top of big metal Highway Department posts out there on the side of the two-lane highway in Nowheresville, Wyoming, absolute heaven-in-every-direction Nowhere. Kind of country makes a man feel he's the most blessed important creature ever born, yet the country itself probably never knowing you or any other man ever existed, and caring less.

But here's this dog, just sitting there wagging its tail at me for a good quarter mile as I come hiking up, me let out at a ranch road three miles back, Bronco Buster heading home to the missus after picking up a cow branding something-or-other back in Lusk. I said, "Bet you couldn't find one of those at the Ace Hardware in St. Paul," and the guy just looks at me like I'm the dumbest man ever walked.

I bet you couldn't.

So I walk up talking soft. Dog never stood up until I was ten feet away, just sat there wagging its tail, probably guarding the spot for its owner's return, the faithful best friend. Only in the two hours I sat there talking to her before the next car came by and on through the next thirty minutes until one actually stopped, coupla cotton-headed giggle giggle cowgirls in mama's minivan, and gave us a ride, no owner ever came.

So I called her Princess, and she came with me.

It was that summer I first slept in the wildflower fields south of Fraser. By then I had both Princesses, the one who loved me forever after I gave her a can of Alpo Choice Cuts in the parking lot of a Safeway in Cheyenne and only left me cuz she got taken, and the other who touched my soul, melted right into my heart and swore she'd never leave me and then did just that not four months later when I told her I wanted to go south and see the cedar waxwings come through Madera Canyon migrating south and she said she wanted to go home to see Jesus.

Well I'd never been on a road to heaven anyway, and that just served to piss me off at first. I mean, she'd never brought it up before and I wondered what kind of game she was playing. Which particular comment, voiced, didn't help. We stood there on an aspen-gilded hillside northeast of Santa Fe while Princess One chased spruce squirrels and chipmunks and Princess Two—her name was Lilly Anne Lebris—buried her face in her beautiful knees and cried. Said she'd broken her parents' hearts, freaked out her little brothers and sisters, maybe even put herself at serious risk of

life and limb. Possibly even pregnant, although we'd done what we could to avoid that.

We had talked about everything important on earth—meat-eating and war and Iraqi oil and the total bone-headedness of public school and DARE and the merits of relocating to Canada or Australia, either one—but she never told me the God thing. Which is the one thing I did not want to talk about. That and her leaving me.

See, me and the dog had been heading southbound out of Durango on the road that eventually crosses the Big Rez, and here's this girl selling apricots.

I said, just to talk, "Where's the fruit from?" And she said, "Oh, I picked it here and around." I'm thinking, yeah, right, no apricots for a hundred miles, clear to Grand Junction at least, and probably not there this early in the year.

But I didn't want to walk on, so I said, "What about the bags?" Perfectly crisp little brown bags, like right out of a grocery store. Hand-lettered sign saying, "Apricots: Dollar a bag." And she said, straight out, "Oh I borrowed these from the City Market." Smiling at me.

God, and I don't mean Jesus, she was beautiful.

I laughed and she says, "What's your dog's name?"

So I told her that whole story, her practically tearing up at the Ramada Roof in Wyoming thing, a good dog just left out in the middle of nowhere, and I asked her why she was selling apricots. Sitting on a curb 200 feet from the City Market didn't bug me at all. I'm an entrepreneur of sorts. I just wanted to know: Why apricots? And to talk a little longer. I'd been on the road longer than I cared to think, since life went to hell back home, and I just wanted to talk.

The dog had cuddled right up to her, so close and so quickly I was wondering maybe the girl was the one left her in Wyoming in the first place. For about five seconds. But she said, real circumspectly, "I'm trying to get to Portland."

Alone. Out of money.

Well, long story short, which is kind of how ours turned out, I asked her if that was home and she said no way, it's where a girlfriend's family had moved that winter, the place she was going to find refuge. I said, from what, thinking, somebody hurt this girl, I'll bust their head, but she just told me her family was nuts; I think her words were "religious kooks."

It took a few days to build up some trust. It really freaked me out that

she was traveling all alone looking like she did, and only eighteen years old. So I told her so, the realities of crossing the country, and she said, "No crap. Tell me about it." Reluctant to cuss and kind of drawing back into herself. All the way from Baton Rouge in four days, guys offering all varieties of help.

Well, I sat down on the other side of the dog and just looked off to the south.

She said, "What about you?"

And I looked back at her, right into her almond-brown eyes, and said, "I'm going to Portland." Which she didn't believe at all.

But I did. Something in the air there, and it wasn't, I swear, just me wanting to get into her sleeping bag. I only had four years on this girl, but I'd been mostly on the road for seven, and by God or Buddha or whoever cared, I was really tired of being alone. Not a single friggin' direction in the world and sick of it. So I committed right there. I said, "I mean it. I won't be able to live with myself knowing I left you all alone. A traveling partner to Portland, a few pesos for the journey, and I'll keep my hands to myself."

She looked at me a while, then at the dog, then said, "Okay."

I said back, "I'll prove it. We'll camp right here above Durango for a few days, let me make a few bucks doing day labor, sleep in our own tents."

And she said, looking right into me: "I trust you."

Test me, okay, but *trust* me I thought was a little premature.

"Let me prove it," I said.

And she said, "I trust the dog, and she obviously loves you."

So that's what we did. We stayed right there in the piñon woods above town, she in her bedroll, me in mine. I got a gig unloading freight at the Wal-Mart, me and a bunch of Navajos up from the Rez. Way they do it in Durango: cash-daily migrant workers everywhere but the law offices, I suppose, and probably a few there.

Day two I was actually afraid Lilly Anne wouldn't be there when I got back at night, and I told her as much. She said, "How 'bout I come down and hang out around Wal-Mart all day so you can keep an eye on me?" And I said, "I'd like that, but please leave the merchandise on the shelves cuz a shoplifting rap will wrap our trip up quick." I said "our." And then added: "And I'd just have to hang around waiting for you till they let you out."

She kissed me quick on the cheek and said, "You're sweet, Nick. See you tonight."

And she did.

Eighty-seven dollars in our pockets, we made Colorado's North Park on day seven and made out for the first time right there in the Mouse Meadow, Princess One rolling (alone) in the cool afternoon grass thirty feet away.

We never did get to Portland. I convinced Lilly Anne to at least send her folks a postcard from Steamboat Springs, saying, "Man, if I had parents, I'd let them know, girl. They gotta be going nuts." To which she agreed: "Mom and dad, I'm okay, I'm safe, and almost to Portland. A friend is helping me out, Bye."

We got as far as Craig on U.S. 40, then headed south and west to Grand Junction where we pitched our tents (gear in hers, bodies in mine) in a farmer's field and picked Bing cherries for almost three weeks, then summer apples.

Plenty of food and nearly $400 between us, one day we bought a big truck tire inner-tube at a Sinclair station and floated seven hours down the Colorado River, the dog right on Lilly's or my lap most of the way, then all of us climbing out somewhere east of Moab. We followed a slot canyon back into the cool north bank of a low mesa and set up housekeeping. Princesses One and Two both thought this was the finest spot on earth, and I told them both it was. We'd bathe in the river, day-trip into Moab once a week for vittles, hike and read and just lie around, the dog coming to believe she actually owned the place. Until August, when even the slot canyon was hitting 80 degrees before 10 A.M. and all three of us were needing some high-country cool.

It was at a country market in Gunnison that some guy buying fishing tackle mentioned the Sangre de Cristos. He and the clerk were talking big fish and deep water. Lilly Anne walked right up to him and said, "What are the Sangre de Cristos?" Saying it real foreign-like, which I suppose it is.

And the guy just stared at her and said: "Mountains. Range over east of here."

Lilly Anne said, "How far?"

And the guy looked up to see me coming closer with the dog, they don't even care in Gunnison, and says, "I suppose that depends on where you want to go. Bout sixty miles to Poncha Springs, up over Monarch Pass,

then south into the San Luis Valley," which he pronounced "Looey." "You can head up into the Crestones from there, not a lot of roads, or clear down to Taos and Santa Fe. All the same range."

We got as far as Red River, New Mexico, before Lilly Anne went to Jesus Pieces on me.

She called her folks from a pay phone in front of the Red River Laundromat while I watched a mule deer doe and three identical fawns still in spot cross the highway, just amble right across, four of the fifty-eight residents of that heartbreaking little town.

I shuffled on over near the phone booth, and I could hear her dad crying, actually pleading with her to please just catch a bus or find the nearest airport. They'd pay for the ride and meet her anywhere she wanted. Lilly crying back, then sobbing to her mother, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry."

So we sat at a broken-down picnic table near the river and just kind of stared for nearly two hours. She let me hold her hand, in fact she held real tight, but that's as far as it was going. She told me about the call, and we talked about her home and family for quite a while, her Mormon family, always so damn happy and solid and sweet she had decided it just couldn't be real, it couldn't be everything. So she decided to shatter every dream they'd ever had for her and hit the road like a gypsy, hit that daisy-train highway all the way to the West Coast.

But now she was really wanting to go home. Something broken back in Baton Rouge.

Finally I said, "Baby girl, I love you. What did I do?" And she said, "It wasn't you. It was these mountains."

I said, "These mountains make you want to go back to Louisiana?"

And she said, "No, what they mean, Sangre de Cristo." And just stared at me like I should know something.

I actually raised my left hand and shrugged, my right hand so tight around hers my own knuckles hurt. I did not want to lose this girl, but there was a ticket in her pocket. Just one. And she still looked at me. I know now what she was doing, probably wondering if I was worthy of her confession. Or if she was.

She said, " . . . the Blood of Christ."

I almost said "Bullshit," but she really meant it. It was coming out all over her face. So I just said, "Lillygirl, tell me about it." But she just shook her head and looked down, so I had no idea what was going on in there.

And then the bus came and my Princess kissed me real long, hugged the dog, then climbed on that big bus and went away.

I spent that fall picking fruit in Grand Junction, living in a tent out under the Book Cliffs. Then I got an actual job stacking caramel corn and Twinkies at the Wal-Mart and rented a little trailer home on Grand Avenue near the River for the winter. Me and Princess headed down toward Moab a couple of times just to sit on the lip of the bluff and look off across the canyon, my eyes seeing nothing beyond what was in my head. For weeks, the dog was as morose as I was.

Come April we cashed the last paycheck, closed the door, and headed back to the Sangre de Cristos just so I could sit at that picnic table in Red River and try to relive, relieve, do anything of the sort. Nothing worked.

She had written her address on a ripped chunk of a cereal box top and stuffed it in my pack, but I never wrote her until right there in Red River nearly seven months later, which was stupid because no way she could write me back. But it was sincere, oh God, it was everything left in my heart:

> My dearest Lilly Anne,
>
> I am sorry I have not written before. Now that you are back home, perhaps you no longer care to hear from me, and I suppose I will come to understand if that is the case. But Lillygirl, I love you. My whole soul hurts daily, hourly, minute by minute as I remember what you are, what we had, and where we wanted to go.
>
> We did love, didn't we.
>
> I hope to write again (and send an address).
>
> In complete love and loneliness,
>
> Nicholas Who Loved You

Me and Princess Number One, whom I'd taken to thinking of as Princess Number Two, headed back to the north, taking the long route through Winter Park and Fraser just because I had to do the full circle. And that's where one more ending turned into a beginning, although of what I'm still not entirely sure.

We were walking a back road south of the wood pulp mill, having spent a cool night full of crickets and scritch-scratch in the Meadow of a Million Mice just north of town. I had just decided that night, and espe-

cially that morning when the sun came up over the mountains, that it was time to move on, move ahead, to get back to Still-life with Nobody and Nothing, especially not the heartache. Me and the dog. So anxious was I to get gone that we jumped an empty boxcar at the pulp mill on a Union Pacific heading all the way to Portland.

I was hanging back in the shadows until we got out of town, trying to keep Princess right there with me; but at the sound of some kids playing across the field, she headed right out into the full sunlit doorway and stood there, wagging her tail. And one of them shot her, right through the brisket. I can't say that they were aiming for her, they may have just been peppering the sides of the boxcars as they went by, the weekly ritual, but she sat down, and then fell to her side and lay there bleeding. I saw her fall about the same time I saw the kid yelling to his buddy and pointing from the far side of the meadow, the Mice Meadow, and I knew something was wrong.

I just sat there and held my dog over my legs as she whimpered and wagged her tail until it stopped. And then I just sat there.

When the train finally stopped in Ogden, I carried my Princess to a shady spot on the Weber River and laid her down as deep as I could in some rocky soil under a cottonwood. At some point I realized I was digging in Mormon soil, planting a piece of my heart. I didn't know much else; but by then I'd had some time to look at life with a long lens, and so I sniffed the wind, threw a few pebbles in the creek, and headed back to the rail yard as lonely as I've ever been.

So now I'm somewhere in the middle of Nebraska, the rails roughly paralleling the North Platte. I'll ride to Omaha, then find my way down to Baton Rouge with only one thought on my mind: Lilly Anne knew nothing more about me than the fact that a dog found me worth trusting. I can't offer her any less about the things I don't, at this point, know for sure.

REVIEWS

Utah Historians

Utah Historians and the Reconstruction of Western History, by Gary Topping (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 368 pp.

Reviewed by Peter H. DeLafosse, Salt Lake City

BERNARD DEVOTO GAVE an impromptu lecture about the process of writing nonfiction at the 1955 Bread Loaf Writers' Conference. Conference Director Theodore Morrison described the lecture as "an exacting intellectual test for his audience. . . . He took his hearers all the way through the process of grasping, researching, and treating an ambitious subject. . . . As the central clue to his writing method, he invoked the word 'synecdoche,' the rhetorical figure that makes one thing stand for another or for a class."[1] Although DeVoto's western histories employ this literary device to great effect, the author of this important book asserts that DeVoto's storytelling method sometimes resulted in his overstating the importance of events and inaccurate portrayals of historical figures. Five Utah historians who worked primarily in the period during and after World War II are included in this study which examines the strengths and weaknesses of each historian: Bernard DeVoto, Dale Morgan, Juanita Brooks, Wallace Stegner and Fawn Brodie.

Topping opens his study with an overview of the historical tradition these writers grew up with in Utah. From its founding, the Mormon Church has emphasized the importance of keeping records. A chronicle of people, places, and events can provide raw material for the historian to use, but the writing of history requires interpreting the material. These historians grew up with a tradition of record keeping and the avoidance of controversial subjects in the writing of Mormon history.

Topping's thesis is that these historians worked hard to establish a baseline of primary source material by using existing records and uncovering and publishing new records, but each had limitations when it came to interpreting his or her material. In particular, DeVoto, Brodie, and Stegner tended to overstate conclusions, while

1. Theodore Morrison, *Bread Loaf Writers' Conference: The First Thirty Years (1926–1955)* (Middlebury, Vt.: Middlebury College Press, 1976), 82

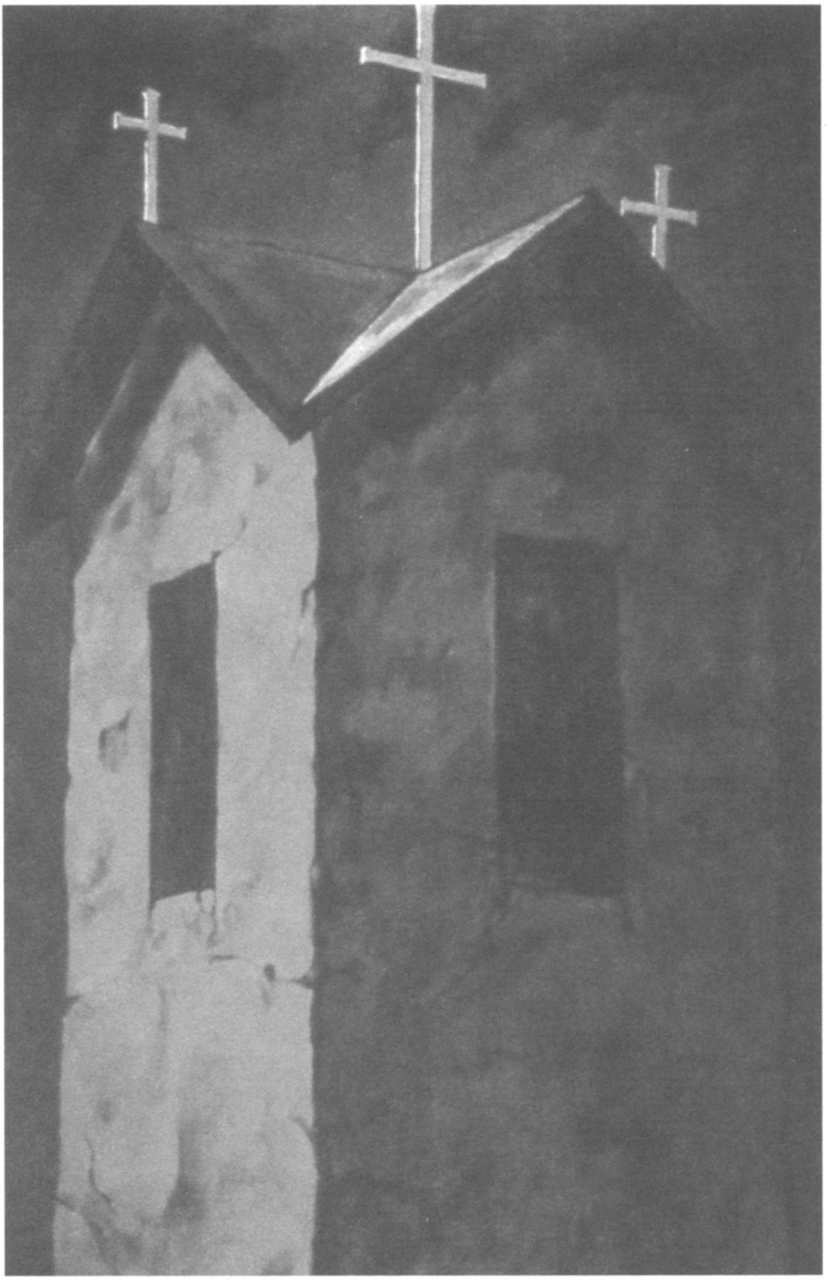
Brooks and Morgan tended to let the material interpret itself.

An overview of the life of each historian is followed by a critical analysis of the historian's major works. In *The Year of Decision,* for example, DeVoto used the year 1846 to represent the broad themes of westward expansion (synecdoche), but 1846 was not the only important year in this history. Stegner portrays John Wesley Powell in *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian* with contemporary conservationist sensitivities, but Powell probably would have approved of Glen Canyon Dam and the reservoir that bears his name. Joseph Smith is portrayed as an imposter in *No Man Know My History,* but Fawn Brodie does not provide any theories about Smith's motives. While Topping praises Juanita Brooks's *Mountain Meadows Massacre* as a pathbreaking study of this horrific crime, he challenges her conclusions that the Mormon participants were otherwise good people influenced by outside factors—war hysteria and provocative actions of the emigrants. In *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West,* Dale Morgan meticulously documented Smith's western travels, but "the book is the story of movement through space and time, with only the most perfunctory account of ideas, personality, and motives" (158).

Topping believes that the interpretive flaws in these works are due to the influence of the culture these historians grew up in and to the fact that none had academic training in history. His judgments may appear harsh and negative, but Topping notes: "The books I discuss here *invite* criticism as much as praise, for they provoke our intellect, they stimulate our imagination, they enlarge our vision" (10–11).

Collectively the historians who are the subject of this book have left an important legacy and have influenced the contemporary New Mormon History and New Western History. *The Year of Decision, Beyond the Hundredth Meridian, No Man Knows My History, Mountain Meadows Massacre, Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West,* and many other books by these writers have remained in print over a half century since their publication—a testament to their quality of scholarship and to their popularity with readers.

Utah Historians and the Reconstruction of Western History is a meticulously researched and thought-provoking book about the process of writing history. The arguments are well reasoned, and the author succeeds in providing a fresh look at this classic body of work. Readers may not agree with all of Topping's conclusions (and they shouldn't), but this is a book that I shall return to frequently.



Trinity II; 1993; acrylic on canvas; 36" x 24"

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[Errata]

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Royden Card was first introduced to the desert as a child growing up in Utah. He spent many family trips in Utah's red rock desert and the nooks and crannies of canyons. He loved drawing and painting the landscape—arches, trees, rocks, and old sheds. By the age of ten, he had decided to become an artist.

He graduated in 1976 from Brigham Young University with a BFA in painting and received an MFA in painting and sculpture in 1979. After teaching at BYU for sixteen years, Royden opted for a life as a full time artist.

He has also taught at the University of Utah, Utah Valley State College, and North Sanpete High School and served residencies through the Utah Arts Council and the Entrada Institute. His work can be found in individual collections and museums throughout the country, including the Smithsonian Institution Library, the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Ohio University, and Illinois State University.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Traveling through New Mexico I found myself emotionally moved by the old adobe and stone churches in the small pueblos and villages. At first they seemed to be appropriate symbols for the state of organized religion—the structure in decay, with God always beyond, above, never contained within the crumbling edifice. Yet they were more than that. Old, earthy, and heavy with a sense of history, they haunted me. And at the same time evoked a humble dignity ... a reverence. I have returned to Arizona and New Mexico numerous times since I began the series in 1993. I have met with the people who worship in the churches, been invited into their homes. These paintings are not meant to be a visual record of the churches. They are an act of devotion, my testament of those journeys.

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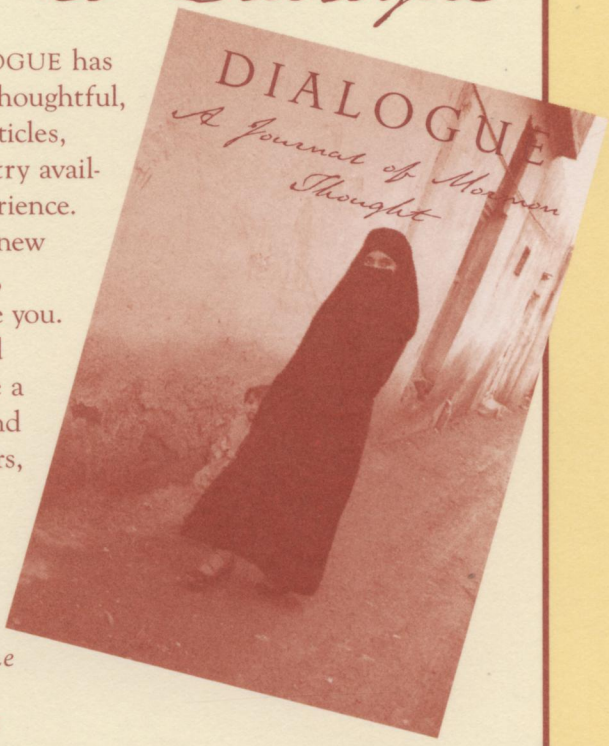

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